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Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Brazil: Towards an Omnilectical Policy Analysis

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Abstract: The present paper aims to offer some theoretical insights into the understanding of how the cultures, policies and practices of educational inclusion of disabled people in the Brazilian national context is impacted by national and international policies, but also how far beyond they are affected by other aspects when one takes a broader perspective of analysis, here named as omnilectical. Some international and national policies are taken as starting point to develop the arguments, but the analysis itself shows inevitably that there is far more to be considered. In fact, it is argued that such aspects may be endless, and as such, complex to control. Yet, by adopting an omnilectical view it is believed that control may not always express quality when it comes to carrying out deeper analyses. Perhaps what is needed is some courage to engage in the exercise of breaking through some given-for-granted “traditional” ways of thinking in an attempt to create an epistemology that may open some room for the multidimensional variables at stake in today’s realities so that they can be taken into account as part and focus of the analysis.

Keywords: *Omnilectical perspective, inclusion policies, disability inclusion in Brazil.*

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Introduction

In times of inclusion, many are the groups of people with disabilities who remain persistently and perversely excluded. The various exclusions to which such groups are subjected are so glaring that they are reflected in the number of regulations and guidelines related to these groups. Upon observing the wide-scoped guidelines internationally produced on the inclusion/exclusion of disabled people, for example, it is noticeable that those relating to these groups are quite numerous, as compared to other excluded groups.

However, quantity is not always synonymous with quality. Nor does the existence of guidelines and regulations ensures their implementation. Also, the ways in which they reflect upon national contexts vary considerably.

This paper aims to analyse, by means of an analytical perspective which I call Omnilectical, some international and national Policies and Guidelines on the inclusion of disabled people with a view to a) present how the Omnilectical perspective works, and b) discuss the idiosyncrasies that are present not only in the texts, but also in the process of “translating” them into a singular national context.

These aims shall be accomplished over the following steps in this paper: a) presentation of the concept of policy according to our main theoretical basis; b) presentation of the Omnilectical perspective and its etymological as well as epistemological roots; c) presentation of and comments on the international and national policies chosen for this paper with a focus on some of their disability inclusive education aspects and on the basis of our references’ categories (cultures, policies, practices and context of effect); and d) discussion of the whole “picture” presented in an omnilectical perspective.

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Conceptualizing Policy and the Omnilectical Perspective of Analysis About Policy

Common sense tends to view policy as legislation in its strictest sense: Constitutions, Laws and Decrees. The concept I usually adopt for policy, however, has to do with two central aspects that distinguish it from the common-sense view: the intentions and values that originate it and the organization of support for its implementation. In other words, policy is something that goes beyond what is written in a Guideline: it means every explicit intention whose purpose is to guide actions, and any organizational arrangement that mobilizes and are mobilized in people, groups, institutions and systems, so that such intentions are put into practice.

One can notice, then, that every policy has something of a cultural dimension (the values and perspectives it is based on and predicts) and of a practical dimension (the very thing it proposes to do or change). This concept is closely linked to one of the two authors whose studies I have been following for quite a few years: Tony Booth. The second author is Stephen Ball.

Booth (1987, 1996, 2002, 2011), besides having built a three-dimensional perspective for the understanding of the processes of inclusion and exclusion in education, presents within these his very own conceptualisation of policy. In fact, policy is one of the three proposed dimensions, along with those of culture and practice. While the cultural dimension relates to the beliefs and values that found our policies (whether personal, institutional or systemic and governmental) and practices, and while the practices refer to what is done in our daily lives and how it is done, which tends to be culturally and politically inspired, the political dimension takes on an ethical and moral character (either visibly or invisibly connected to values and beliefs) as well as one of organisation and support to practices. He says:

Putting the word 'policy' on the cover of a document does not make it a policy in any important sense, unless it represents a clear intent to regulate the practice. Without a strategy for implementing, a document regarded as policy becomes rhetoric, used perhaps just to impress visitors and inspectors (Booth & Ainscow, 2011, p.45, free translation).

It is clear, then, the close relationship between policy, cultures and practices, which is the reason why the author always addresses the three dimensions as inseparable. It is clear, too, that policy will assume a wider connotation. They can be of all sorts (personal, institutional, government, etc...) and varied scopes (personal, institutional, local, regional, state, national, international ...).

Ball, in turn, considers that policies serve to create circumstances in which the conditions for the effectiveness of the practices are changed or reduced, or where targets are launched:

Policies usually fail to tell us what to do, they create circumstances in which the range of options available on what to do is reduced or modified or in which particular goals or effects are established (2006, p. 26).

Ball developed, throughout his works, the concept of policy cycle in order to explain the processes through which a policy is made. According to Mainardes (2006), Ball's Policy Cycle consists of 5 contexts: the contexts of influence, production, practice, result and the context of policy strategy. These contexts, apart from being inter-related, are not tied to any time sequence or order of importance. They take place always and continually throughout every policy production.

The context of influence is where:

[...] usually public policies are initiated, and policy discourses are constructed. It is in this context that interest groups compete to influence the definition of the social purposes of education and of what it means to be educated. Social networks operate in this context within and around political parties, the government and the legislative process. It is also in this context that the concepts acquire legitimacy and form a speech of basis for the policy (Mainardes, 2006, p. 51).

The policy context refers to the linguistic forms used to build the policy discourse to be adopted. Ball speaks of texts to mean the representation of policy itself, possibly taking various forms: official and unofficial, formal and informal. He calls attention to the idea that such texts are not necessarily consistent either within or among themselves, precisely on account of reflecting the tensions arising from the various interests involved in the production of policy.

The context of practice corresponds to the stage of policy implementation. However, this process does not take place either directly or expectedly, as if the policy could simply be applied. Policies, in this context, are "translated" according to the demands of practice, and such "translation" may change, moderately or significantly, the policy in its original text and meaning.

It is worth noting that so far, Booth and Ball are in full conjunction of ideas: the three contexts of Ball (of influence, policy and practice) would correspond, conceptually speaking, to the three dimensions proposed by Booth (those of cultures, policies and practices).

As stated above, however, Ball adds two more contexts to his proposition: that of results and that of the policy strategy. The context of outcome refers to the expected impacts of policies, the effects they should produce, once in practice. This

context, of course, is permeated by the values considered as priorities at each historical time, to the point of becoming the ultimate purposes of the policies. By way of example, we can say that the guarantee of human rights is, nowadays, an extremely desired effect in the policies. In the words of Mainardes (2006, p. 60), "[...] the essential question of the context of the results/effects and of the context of policy strategy is the deep reflection on conjunctural issues and on social inequalities that are created or reproduced by the policy [...]."

Finally, the context of policy strategy involves, according to Mainardes (2006, p. 55), "the identification of a set of social and political activities that would be needed to address the inequalities created or reproduced by the policy investigated." This context is linked to the role of the researcher in surveying the policy in the sense of assuming an "ethical responsibility to the theme investigated, presenting activities and strategies in order to deal more effectively with the inequities identified in the policy." (idem, p. 60). In this paper, the context of the strategy constitutes the very paper itself, and therefore will not be directly returned to at each item discussed hereafter.

Thus, for the purposes of this paper, by way of example in institutional terms, I consider as policies the mission of the institution, its principles, goals, objectives, etc... In the case of a school, I cite the political-pedagogical project, circulars and circular-letters as examples of institutional policy, as well as a list bearing the rules of conduct in classroom. On more macro terms, policies can be translated nationally, not just in the form of laws and decrees, but also in ordinances, opinions, resolutions, technical notes, and so on. At the international level, I consider examples of policy the major conventions and declarations, and the treaties, agreements, opinions of international committees and workgroups, and so on. It is worth mentioning that this definition considers, above all, the dialecticism and complexity present in the relations between the actors involved in the construction of these policies, beset with tensions and having in view their different backgrounds and interests.

The Omnilectical Perspective

This word is a neologism created by me. Etymologically, I associated the Latin prefix *OMNI* to the Greek noun *LETO* and the Greek suffix *ICO*. *Omni* means 'everything', 'all' and can be added to almost any noun or adjective. *LETO* is adopted in two senses: in its noun nature, meaning 'the set of elements (usually linguistic) that identifies a group within a speech community', thus assuming a sense of variety; and as a verb, meaning 'to be hidden', 'to make forget'. *ICO*, is a nominal unstressed suffix forming scholarly adjectives and nouns with a sense of 'pertinence', 'relation', 'reference', 'participation', meaning, in the neologism created here, 'related to', or 'containing'.

By omnilectics I mean, therefore, a relational perception of diversity, of what is varied. Such a variation can be either present or concealed, at one and the same time or at differentiated time-spaces. It is a way of perceiving social phenomena as totalities, which constitute, in themselves, endless possibilities of variation, not always immediately perceptible, visible or imaginable, but in no way missing or impossible, because their relational, referential and participatory nature (in the sense of being a part) makes what is perceived from the phenomenon both its established part, and at the same time its establishing one. That is, the phenomena we perceive and the way we perceive them are both established by and establishing of themselves and always in relation with an infinite totality of phenomena, visible and not-so-visible yet, predictable and unpredictable.

An omnilectical perspective of analysis means, ultimately, understanding social phenomena in their visible entirety and in their potentiality (still invisible, but not necessarily absent, either because it is just concealed, or because it is there only potentially yet). It means understanding this wholeness in its unique elements, intimate and dialectically related (culturally, politically and practically) in a spiralling motion of complexity, creating new levels of awareness and understanding of the phenomena that will never be the same again, despite keeping in themselves much of their original elements, however complexified.

In this sense, the omnilectical perspective also borrows from the morinian idea of complexity as an analytical method. Morin (1987), in his book *Method 1 - The nature of nature*, explains that one of the first features of the concept of complexity is (the desire of) breaking the linear circularity by which we have come to see and understand things of the world, heritage of a Cartesian logical world, marked by antinomies, dichotomies and opposites. Assuming a complex thinking means, then, first, to mobilize the relationships between things, both tangible and immediately visible relations and those of which we have not yet caught a glimpse of. Thinking about (and analysing) complexly the world means relating (to ourselves and the phenomena) in the world. It is to understand the world systemically. In complex thinking, "a system is a whole which takes shape while its elements transform" (Morin, 1987, p. 111).

In the omnilectical perspective, this complexity is verified when we consider and dialectically put into play aspects of the cultures, policies, practices, contexts of effect and political strategy. It's like Morin (n.d.) himself says while explaining the cognitive procedures of complex thinking:

It is not, in any way, a thought that expels certainty with uncertainty, separation with inseparability, the logic to allow all transgressions. The demarche consists, instead, of a constant coming and going between certainties and uncertainties, between elementary and global, between separable and inseparable. It uses classical logic and the principles of identity, non-contradiction, deduction, induction, but acknowledges their limits and knows that, in certain cases, one should transgress them. It is not the case of abandoning the principles of

order, separability and logic - but of integrating them in a richer conception. This does not entail opposing an empty global holism to a mutilating reductionism. Instead, it entails replacing the parts in the totality, to articulating the principles of order and disorder, separation and union, of autonomy and dependence in dialogical (complementary, competing and antagonistic) in the universe. (s / d, p. 18).

In short, taking an omnilectical perspective of analysis means thinking in terms of integrality, dubiousness, complementariness and transgressivity which are or may be present in the cultural, political and practical dimensions of life, as well as of those contexts, purposes and strategy in a complex and dialectic relationship, all at the same time. So, as a part of my own context of policy strategy, in the next the section I will initiate the exercise of an omnilectical analysis while commenting on the policies chosen as the focus of discussions.

Introducing and discussing the focus policies of this paper

Given our aims, I chose the one international that are acknowledged in Brazil as having a Constitutional status, and recognized by the Ministry of Education in Brazil as the sources upon which the current Brazilian policies on special education were built after 2006: the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Thus, I chose the 2007 - UN Convention - Rights of Persons with Disabilities after considering this Convention as a political milestone on the world stage, as well as the main base for the Brazilian policies that ensued.

Nationally, I picked two pieces of legislation which, although being not so “new”, are still to-date: the 2011 - Decree 7611, which provides for special education, the specialized educational services and gives other provisions; and the following 2011 - Decree 7612, which establishes the National Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - Living without Limits Plan.

I also considered the following international documents for analysis, considering that they influenced many national policies in different countries, setting out new trends in the international arena, Brazil included: the 2009 - Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (UNESCO) and the 2011 - World Report on Disability (WHO).

It is important to note that the focus of my discussion and analysis will be on their educational sections, as there is not enough room in a paper to approach the whole policy analysis of one document, let alone of four.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

Like any convention, this one also starts with the recognition of some basic principles and then unfolds into sections, organized into specific topics.

There are 25 paragraphs recognizing ideas and principles that underlie and preface the Convention. Of these, I highlight item ‘e’, which reads: “**Recognizing** that disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with other people” (emphasis by the author).

The highlight goes to the very conception of disability. It is no longer a phenomenon in itself, as in models of clinical and medical order. Instead, it is a social process by which a certain condition is regarded as socially disadvantaged and inherently connected to disability, having as an effect the demeaning consideration of inequality and consequent exclusion.

Of the 50 sections that make up the Convention, the section of our focus of interest concerning Education is the 24th. This section has 5 items, two of which (items 1 and 2) I think are worth exploring in this paper.

I - Party States **recognize the right** of persons with disabilities to education. To achieve this right **without discrimination** and on the basis of equal opportunity, Party States shall **ensure an inclusive educational system at all levels, as well as learning** throughout life, with the following objectives: (Emphasis by the author).

The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;

The maximum possible development of the personality, talents and creativity of people with disabilities as well as their physical and intellectual abilities;

Effective participation of disabled people in a free society.

From this item, I would draw the reader's attention to the connection that is made between educational inclusion as a principle linked to education as a human right. In a resumption of the authors here adopted as the basis of analysis, we can say that in terms of cultures, this sentence contributes to unlink the proposal of inclusion from an exclusively medical-therapeutic vision, which has lasted for too long in most places and in Brazil, since the 19th Century until the mid-90s, having then undergone some major changes toward the social model in the first and second decades of the 21st Century. Nonetheless, that medical model is currently coming back to the Brazilian scene with a new sort of

political strength, heavily led and supported by the movements of parents of people with disabilities. This has been so especially after the national elections of October 2018, when an extreme right-wing president won.

In terms of practices, the influences of this Convention have been noted in several domains: from the classroom to the national policy arena, where many debates have been promoted, some favourable and some unfavourable to certain aspects of inclusion, the most polemic one being the non-segregated provision. The effects of these debates (Ball's context of effects) have turned out quite confusing and uncertainty-driven, as we see political and practical initiatives that reflect all such views in our daily lives (for example, the closure and shortening of special schools and classes all over the country during the years 2008-2015, and the attempt to reopen them during and after this period).

The second item is placed as follows:

II - **For the achievement of this right**, Party States shall ensure that:

People with disabilities are not to be excluded from the general educational system on the grounds of disability and that children with disabilities are not to be excluded from free and compulsory primary education, on the grounds of disability;

People with disabilities can have access to inclusive primary education, of quality and free, on an equal basis with others in the community in which they live;

Reasonable adjustments according to the individual needs should be provided;

People with disabilities should **receive the required support**, within the general educational system, in order to facilitate their effective education; and

Effective **individualized support measures** should be adopted in environments that maximize academic and social development, compatible with the **full inclusion** goal. (Emphasis by the author).

It is noteworthy the emphasis given in this Convention to the idea of inclusion, especially that of full inclusion. This becomes apparent when, in the paragraphs that compose item II, the need for the participation of children with disabilities in regular, or general, educational systems is reinforced.

Another aspect that draws attention in the paragraphs above is one related to the need for governments to ensure that full conditions for such full participation be guaranteed. Among these conditions are the adaptations (whichever necessary) and equalization of opportunities.

Again with reference to the authors adopted for analysis, one can see that this item of the Convention seeks to promote a culture of inclusion closely linked to the idea of full participation and provision of concrete conditions for inclusion and that these aspects, as rights, be guaranteed. Regarding the policy dimension, this text points to decisions of operational order that will fall to the school managers, mayors and governors, to say the least, since the guarantee of adaptations cannot depend on the child's family, in that education is a right and the duty of the State. This does not exempt the family from participating in this process (as the very Brazilian Law of Directives and Bases of National Education No. 9394/96 provides), but family is not the main actor when it comes to constitutionally guaranteeing rights. In turn, in the dimension of practice, these guidelines will most probably apply in all sorts of places: from the classroom to the school as a whole, since the concept of reasonable accommodation respects a number of aspects ranging from review and reflection on curriculum to more specific work that may become necessary. Regarding the context of result, we can predict many, but in particular it should be noted a complete overhaul in terms of attitudes of the school members, its very structure of values and practices.

Brazilian Decree No. 7611, of November 17, 2011

This Decree provides for special education, the specialized educational services and amends sections 9 and 14 of Decree 6253 of 2007, which provides for the National Fund for the Development of Basic Education (FUNDEB), the main means of financing Brazilian Basic Education. When it comes to special education and specialized educational services, the decree maintains the same terms as the Decree that inspired it, namely Decree Law 6571 of 2008, which provided for Educational Specialized Support Services and which was revoked by the Decree 7611. However, its amendment to Section 14 seems worthy of further notation. The previous decree (6253/07) read:

Section 14. As of January 1, 2008, in order to effect the distribution of FUNDEB resources, the statement of enrolment effected in specialized educational services offered by community, religious or philanthropic non-profit institutions working exclusively in special education, in partnership with the competent Executive Authority shall be admitted, **without prejudice to the computation of these regular enrolment in basic education**. (Emphasis by the author)

It currently reads:

Section 14. Shall be admitted, to the effect of the distribution of FUNDEB resources, the statement of enrolment effected in specialized educational services offered by community, religious or philanthropic non-profit institutions working exclusively in special education, in partnership with the competent Executive Authority.

As one can see, if before the funding would open the possibility for children who were in segregated settings not to have their common school enrolment impaired, now the gap is opened for this to be revised, opening the possibility, for example, for such enrolments to cease to be computed twice. Ultimately, this may mean an option for one OR the other system (common or segregated), which does not contribute to inclusion and directly contradicts the principles of the International Convention of the Rights of Disabled People when it comes to inclusion.

On resumption of our authors, we can see that in terms of cultures there is a throwback in this section: from a perspective that valued the participation of all together with everyone to one that provides the isolation or an impoverished companionship (only with the supposed "peers"), if deemed "necessary". Thus, the possibility of segregation is reopened. No matter how much of a process inclusion is, as I always advocate it is, we must remember that it is a process towards securing a basic and inalienable human right. This right in no way can be accomplished through the separation of people, but only with the companionship of people in their school, academic, social and cultural lives. Politically speaking, this can lead to undesirable actions, such as the return of excessive categorizing practices, generating unnecessary labels to education. One may need to ask: who will be responsible for analysing whether a separate provision will or will not be "necessary"? What criteria will dictate this decision? Educational ones? Medical ones? And based on what kind of logic? Benchmarking? Again, in the field of practices, these risks testify completely against the idea and the principle of inclusion. The context of the results is obvious: exclusion.

It should be further added that section 14 had 3 paragraphs:

§ 1 Shall be computed in the form of the caput, only the enrolment effected in specialized educational services complementary to the education of students with disabilities enrolled in regular public schools, in compliance with paragraph of Section 60 of Law 9394, 1996.

§ 2 For the purposes of this Decree, are considered specialized educational services those educational services institutionally organized, provided as a complement to regular education, to meet the educational specificities of students with disabilities.

§ 3 The accreditation before the competent agency of the educational system, in the terms of section 10, section IV, sole paragraph and, and section 11, item IV of the Act in 9394, 1996, pending approval of pedagogical project that **enables the evaluation of specialized educational services, complementary to schooling in state education.** (Emphasis by the author).

These paragraphs are now only two (the second was transferred to the Section 2 and divided into two specific paragraphs, keeping and expanding the original text, which is not evaluated in this paper) and are thus so arranged:

§ 1 Shall be considered for special education, enrolment in mainstream classes, in regular classes or special classes in regular schools, and in special or specialized schools.

§ 2 The accreditation before the competent organ of the educational system, in the terms of section 10, item IV and sole paragraph, and section 11, item IV of the Law 9394, of 1996, pending approval of pedagogical project. (NR)

As can be seen, one of the most important steps regarding the control and monitoring of the actions of specialized institutions in the third and religious sectors, the obligation to evaluate these actions, became extinct! I believe such omission in the latest text needs no further comment, but the questions remain: why was this part deleted? To whose interests the failure to evaluate actions belongs? Who profits and who loses from it? To what kind of ideology that measure corresponds?

Again, using the proposed analytical framework based on Booth and Ball, we can say that in terms of cultures, there is another setback, and a contradiction: how to ensure the quality education so propagated in the texts if we do not evaluate the progress of this education? That is, we have conflicting values present at this point. In policy terms, besides observing that the contradiction of values stay almost explicit in the legal text, we can infer that the guidelines such policy will generate are at least confusing. On the one hand there will be serious institutions, concerned with accountability and showcase their work with seriousness and commitment, but on the other, we will also see again proliferated institutions that will present little or no actual service, despite government support and funding they were entitled to receive. The practical dimension will probably reflect this confusion, to the extent that, by not being given behaviour standards and criteria by which they should be evaluated, the actions taken in these institutions may range in scale from minimum (or no) to maximum quality. The context of effect, again, seems clear: more exclusion, because of more segregation and less accountability.

Decree No. 7612, of November 17, 2011.

This Decree establishes the National Rights of Persons with Disabilities Plan (Living without Limits Plan). Because it is a plan, it scope only launches the axiological bases and the preliminary organization of what should be further regulated by the instances set there, which is why its analysis might be briefer.

The Plan is structured around four main axes of action: I - access to education; II - health care III - social inclusion, and IV - accessibility. These axes of activity will be regulated by the two instances of the Plan Management, proposed therein: the Managing Committee and the Interministerial Coordination and Monitoring Group. Even though the National Secretary of Human Rights is the Coordinator of both, it is noted that in the Managing Committee the areas of education and health are left out, entering only in the Coordination and Monitoring Group. Also worth of note is the strong presence of Ministries and Cabinets related to budgeting, planning and management and finances:

Art 6 - Sole paragraph. The Managing Committee will be composed of the directors of the following organs:

I - Human Rights Secretariat of the Presidency, that will coordinate it.

II - **Civil House** of the Presidency,

III - **General Secretariat** of the Presidency

IV - Ministry of **Planning, Budget and Management**;

V - Ministry of **Finance**, and

VI - Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger.

Art 7 - § 1 The Interministerial Coordination and Monitoring Group will consist of representatives, holder and alternate, from the following organs:

I - Human Rights Secretariat of the Presidency, that will coordinate it

II - Civil House of the Presidency,

III - General Secretariat of the Presidency

IV - Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management;

V - Ministry of Finance;

VI - Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger;

VII - Ministry of Health;

VIII - Ministry of Education;

IX - Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation;

X - Ministry of Social Welfare;

XI - Ministry of Cities;

XII - Ministry of Sports;

XIII - Ministry of Labour and Employment;

XIV - Ministry of Communications, and

XV - Ministry of Culture.

Noteworthy in this Plan, still, is the fact that the implementation of the Plan will depend on compliance by states and municipalities, as required by Section 9:

Section 9 - **The binding of the City, State or Federal District to the Living without Limits Plan shall occur by means of a term of voluntary compliance**, with object according to the guidelines established in this Decree. (Emphasis by the author).

In theory, aspects related to economic concern in their own right, shouldn't be something negative in the Plan. However, in the way it is laid, the impression left is that the inclusion of people with disabilities is conditioned, first of all, to economic aspects, which goes against the spirit expressed in the International Convention for Rights of People with Disability. Somehow, Section 9 reinforces this idea to the extent that voluntary membership relieves the obligation, at least in part, of the State in ensuring greater commitments. That is because partnerships decentralize the execution of actions by transferring part of this implementation (and financial obligation) to states and municipalities.

It should be noted, however, that upon defining a membership plan, the central government does not decentralize the decision-making mechanisms on what should be done about inclusion and how to do it. This becomes clearer in Section

9, which points out that "The commitment of the City, State or Federal District to the Living without Limits Plan shall occur through a term of voluntary compliance, with the object **in accordance with the guidelines set forth in this Decree.**" (Emphasis by the author).

In returning to the theoreticians chosen, these passages allow us to say that in terms of the dimension of inclusive cultures, the implicit values in the manifest content of the text are social, rights and social justice oriented, but in its latent content it can be noticed how the economic value seems to prevail. In terms of the political dimension, it can be argued that these ideas may lead to organizational guidelines that will be primed for prioritizing aspects of inclusion, which can, in itself, undermine its systemic and integralising character: you cannot do inclusion by parts or in half. Each initiative for inclusion necessarily implies the involvement and committed participation of the whole school, not just of those who are visibly excluded. Similarly, the dimension of practice can leave something to be desired, since such values and orientations will likewise originate partial practices, and that prevents inclusion from occurring. Thus, again, we can have exclusion for context of effect.

Policy Guidelines on Inclusive Education (Unesco)

This document was drawn up during the International Conference on Education, held in Geneva in November 2008 and aims to serve as a guideline for policy makers, teachers, students, community leaders and members of civil societies to promote more effective strategies to achieve the goals of the Education for All Movement.

It is divided in two parts. In the first, it launches the conceptual aspects of inclusion and in the second it outlines strategies for inclusion policies to advance in many countries. I chose to explore the first part because it inspired the production of new documents relative to inclusion in the respective nations, Brazil included.

In this part of the document, the concept of inclusion is comprehensively contextualized, and it is this part that interests us, given its affinity with passages of our own policies:

Today, 75 million school-age children are not enrolled in school; more than half of them are girls. [...] Poverty and marginalisation are major causes of exclusion in many places around the world [...] Families in rural or remote communities and children from urban slums have less access to education than others. [...] Children with disabilities still face a visible educational exclusion - they constitute one third of all children who are still outside of the school. Working children, who belong to indigenous communities, rural populations and language minorities, nomadic children and those affected by HIV compose other disenfranchised groups. In all these cases, gender issues play an important role. In addition, at least 774 million adults are not literate yet, more than three quarters of them live in just 15 countries. Meanwhile, in richer countries, despite their resources, many young people finish school without any useful qualification, others are sometimes educated in separate common schools and still others prefer to leave school, since what they are taught is perceived as irrelevant to their lives.

It is seen that the sense of inclusion relates to various exclusions, permeated by poverty, social inequality and violation of human rights. The document further states that:

Inclusive education is a process of strengthening the capacity of the educational system to reach all students and can therefore be understood as a key strategy for achieving education for all. As a general principle, it should guide all educational policies and practices, starting with the fact that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just and egalitarian society. [...] Inclusion is thus seen as a process by which the diverse needs of all children, youth and adults are addressed and responded through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and the reduction and elimination of exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies within a common vision which covers all children in appropriate age and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular educational system to educate all children.

This excerpt reinforces what was said above about the ineffectiveness of making inclusion in half or by parts. Each small inclusion initiative is systemic, complex and causes profound impacts that always leave marks. The less sustainable is inclusion, in contrast, the more exclusive these marks may be. On the other hand, in an omnilectical perspective of the matter, still greater will be the urgency of struggle for inclusion.

Regarding the analysis of the dimension of inclusive culture, one can say that these passages propagate values enshrined like human rights, equality and social justice. Politically, they tend to point to operational strategies grounded on a systemic and comprehensive approach to services and actions articulated, and whose economic aspects are not prioritised. The dimension of the practice would entail cross-sectoral actions, in teams, of integral approach (the school as a whole, not just its parts) and revision of curriculum and ideological issues as well as of the school itself. The context of effect would be, therefore (assuming, of course, there would be complete consistency between all these dimensions and contexts), one that would result in more cooperation and learning all about.

These definitions and concepts are consonant to the 2011 Brazilian policies which are focus of this article in terms of the broader conception of inclusion. It is sad to notice, however, that such meaning has been changing lately, yet again to a more conservative view of inclusion, so to speak, both in Brazilian legislation and international contexts.

In the Brazilian policies we see it in the current legal provisions taken by the federal government initiated in 2019 (after the October 2018 national presidential elections). A clear example comes from the recent attempts of the Brazilian federal government to “update” the 2008 Brazilian Directives for Special Education in the perspective of Inclusion in Education (BRAZIL, 2018[†]). There are too many passages in such a document that could be brought to attention here. Needless to mention it has since initiated another major division and commotion between different sectors of society, including educational, which would be worthy of another article. However, for the sake of not extrapolating the length of this paper, we shall bring just the words of the Director of Accessibility, Mobility, Inclusion and Support to Disabled People of the Ministry of Education, Nidia Regina Limeira de Sá – in a recent interview about this “updating” process, presently coordinated by her. She considered the “updated” policy proposal as flexible enough for the different Brazilian Educational systems (local, regional and national, as well as state and private) and stated that the Ministry

“does not consider that the education for people with disabilities or autism should happen only and exclusively in regular, inclusive schools. This Policy offers flexibility in the sense that the systems can organize themselves in order to be able to offer special schools and classes, bilingual classes and schools (with lessons in Portuguese and in Brazilian signed Language) as alternatives. You can get better results for the students with special Educational needs in special classes or schools because the focus of this Policy is on the singularity of the persons, and not on the group as a whole” (Agencia Brasil, 2019).

In other words, the Brazilian Ministry of Education is now openly going against most current international orientations, policies, treaties and regulations about inclusion in education, signed by itself as a complying member.

As for the international context, the change into a more conservative, economically-tied view of inclusion can be seen on the document *A Guide to Ensure Inclusion and Equity Education* (UNESCO, 2017) – and quite a few of its predecessors –, particularly when it associates the idea of inclusion to equity. Although this is a matter to be deepened in another article, but it seems fair to point out some restrictions regarding the term “equity”, especially when it is used as a foundation for quality, which in turn is subjected to governments’ budgetary limitations. The following passage of the Guide is an example of it:

While all countries face difficulties in finding the funds to support inclusive and equitable developments, this is particularly challenging in the parts of the world that are economically poorer. Therefore, it is important to find ways of addressing the needs of the most marginalized and of student diversity that **do not necessarily demand extra funding and additional resources. The crucial factor is ensuring that available resources, particularly human resources, are used to best effect.** Countries should make sure that the criteria for allocating financial and human resources for education reflect the goals of inclusion and equity (UNESCO, 2017, p. 30) (my own emphasis).

Notwithstanding the importance of always making a sensible use of budgetary funds, one is to question to what extent is this possible if one takes into consideration the current level on worldly social injustice and inequality within and, especially, amongst countries? To what extent will the developed nations (and the ideologically colonized developing world – Brazil being one of them, of course, even though no longer being considered one of the poorest ones nor the most depending economy) not see that as long as there are enormously richer countries there will always be enormously poorer countries? To what extent is it not really perceptible that this is so because, among other factors, Nature (the very basis from which every raw material for production is extracted) is finite and the most powerful economies are the first ones unwilling to give up on their profits, advantages and benefits (mostly obtained at the expense of exploitation of natural and human resources of developing countries, to put it frankly) to more fairly distribute resources and actually promote the so claimed equity among societies and countries?

World Report on Disability (WHO)

This document is a study produced by the World Health Organization in 2011, aiming to illustrate and inspire new policies relating to persons with disabilities with emphasis on health. It does not focus attention specifically on education issues, but contains a piece of data that I considered important for the purposes of this paper because it shows trends of allocation of children with disabilities in different countries according to the types of provision: Special schools, special classes in integrated schools and inclusive classes:

[†] As a matter of fact, such attempt was initiated in 2017, some months after the completion of the impeachment of President Dilma Roussef and her replacement by her vice president, Michel Temer. The current government is continuing it and somehow turning it into an even more problematic and polemic process.

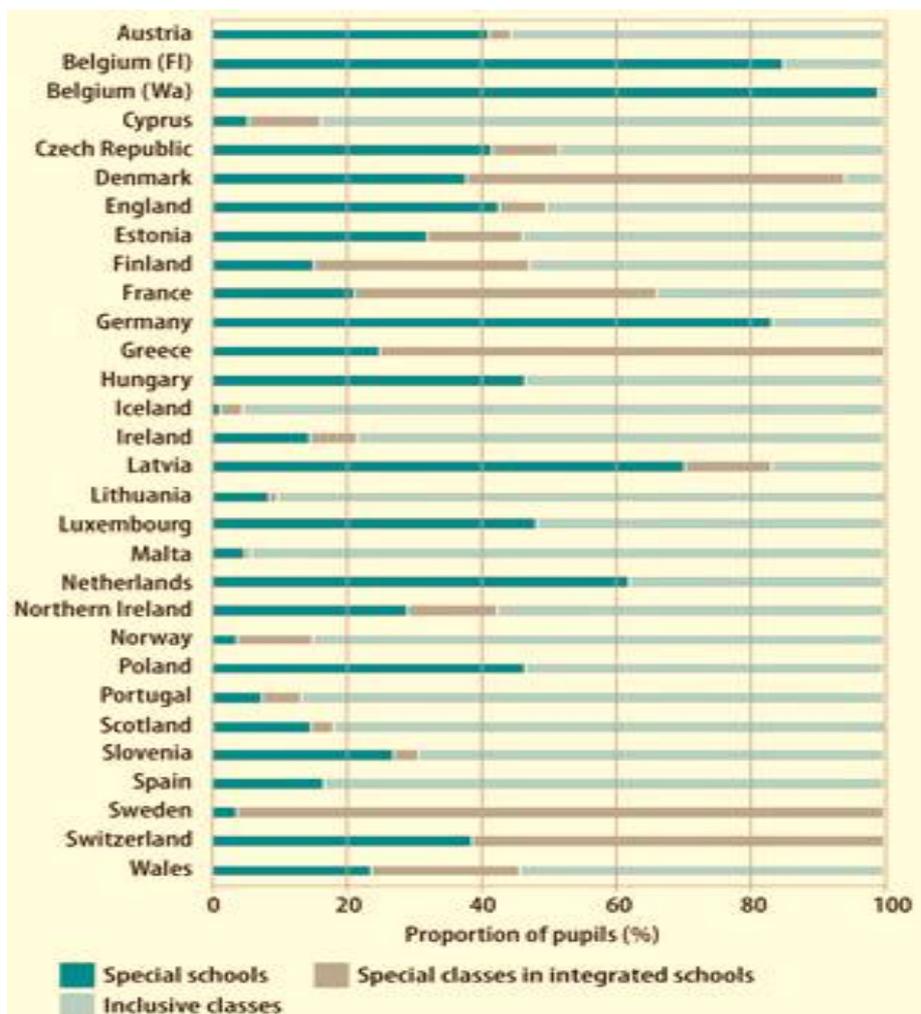


Figure 1: Delivery of education by type of model for selected European countries (Source: World Report on Disability, 2011, p. 211)

From the above data, we see that in the 29 countries, 5 (17.20%) present special schools as majority provision (Belgium (French and German), Germany, Latvia and the Netherlands). 14 (48.27%) countries (Austria, Cyprus, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain and Wales) present inclusive classes as a majority provision. Also, 5 (17.20%) of the countries (Denmark, France, Greece, Sweden and Switzerland) present special classes in inclusive schools as majority provision. 3 (10.30%) countries (Czech Republic, England, Estonia) present some provision of special classes in integrating schools that balances now special schools, then inclusive schools. 2 (6.90%) of the countries do not have the option of special classes in integrative schools and present provisions extremely divided between special and inclusive schools: Hungary and Luxembourg.

In terms of cultures, these data seem to indicate a predominance of inclusion values to the extent that most of the observed provision falls on inclusive schools. Regarding policies and practices, we cannot analyse them only on the basis of the numerical data presented, but we can assume that they should suffer their contradictions, having in view the still visible presence of countries that opt for continuing with segregated educational systems, either alone or jointly with other provisions. The context of effect appears thus as something of a mixed order of inclusion initiatives and aspects of exclusion, which confirms the idea of inclusion as a struggle, a process to be permanently pursued.

These data are consistent with Brazilian data in 2011, when the Decrees here analysed came about. According to the Anísio Teixeira National Institute for Educational Statistics and Studies – INEP (INEP, 2012), the year of 2011 registered, for the period 2007-2011, a raise of 7% in the number of students with disabilities who entered the educational system, as well as a raise of 15,3% of placement of these students (aged 4-17) in regular schools and classes. This demonstrates that at the time Brazil was investing in inclusion, and this was confirmed in the following Census Data (INEP 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018), in which these numbers continued raising up to 92,1% of disabled students in regular schools and classrooms in 2018.

Limitations

I am aware that there are other policies and directives, both Brazilian and international, that can be used as basis for an omnilectical analysis and discussion. I have chosen the ones here focused because they are fundamental to understand

others that came afterwards, but still refer to them as reference point. In this sense, future articles could/should start from such current policies.

Recommendations

Policies are a product of the need for social changes but can also be the beginning of promoting them. They are never a clear-cut process, nor are all of their variables foreseen or controllable, though many can be if there is more social participation in the process. In this sense, it is advisable that politicians and policy makers take into consideration a closer link with stakeholders and activists and deepen their engagement in the policy making process by taking into account their demands and needs.

A Further Discussion and Conclusions

In an omnilectical perspective, thinking the texts here in the parts they were analysed means losing their entirety. On the other hand, there is no room in a paper for us to view an entire totality. Thus, tied to the current standards of scientific writing, we must conform to practices of choice, cutting, selection and prioritizing. What is interesting about the omnilectical thinking is that we can build new totalizing units of analysis from fragments, because each fragment, being a unit, is dialectically and complexly linked to and goes on and on making up other totalities. Each piece has its own identity, so to speak, but can be "kaleidoscoped" in new embodiments without losing its identity and its beauty but enriching them. So, there is always a subversive possibility when we adopt omnilectical thinking.

Thus, I will resume the comments on policies chosen in this section, in order to finish the section with an omnilectical overview thereof, as proposed for this paper. I emphasize that, on account of the space left, I will be forced to choose one aspect of analysis, and I opted for the dimension of cultures. So, I will review omnilectically what was said in terms of the cultural dimension (values and beliefs) through the selected documents.

I begin by thinking the parts for the whole and, in so doing, I highlight some aspects common to the international policies: (a) the close relationship between inclusion and Human Rights, (b) the idea of full, unconditional inclusion (although of course with support), (c) the intimate connection between inclusion, participation and social justice, (d) a broader view of inclusion, beyond just groups of people with disabilities, (e) predominance of inclusive systems as opposed to segregated classes and special schools.

From national policies, I could highlight: (a) lack of consistency in the precepts about inclusion: sometimes full and unconditional, sometimes with reservations, (b) ambiguity in the definition of inclusion and the criteria that guide (medical, educational, social) (c) its link to certain conditions (often dependent on the "degree" of disability verified), (d) limiting of the discussion on inclusion to focus environments: special or "inclusive" classes and schools (e) binding of inclusion to economic conditions, (f) loosening the requirements for monitoring and evaluation of inclusive processes.

What can we build, omnilectically, from these impressions? Before continuing, it should be said that the omnilectical perspective does not rule out the use of Cartesian logic. So much so that the intellectual exercise made extensive use of deduction and comparison hitherto. On the other hand, to bring the dimensions and contexts here applied to a dialectical and complex plan in a practice as linear as writing a paper imposes certain limitations on the task itself which I propose to undertake here, because thinking omnilectically implies extrapolating borders, even physical ones, whenever possible. It would be more illustrative to accomplish this task through speech and having the whole body as a helper. Anyway, I face the challenge and omnilectically start treating the parts viewed above toward a (new) whole to answer the question (the one chosen, since omnilectically there could be many others!): What can we build, omnilectically, from the impressions drawn from the policies addressed here?

Many things. Again, due to the space available, I shall pick some. The first would be to deconstruct the possible impression left that international policies are "good" and those national are "bad." It is nothing of the kind. An omnilectical perspective is not concerned with judgments. It is much more interested in the movement of the processes and systems, in what is clear, visible and present, as well as in what is invisible, absent and to come. In this sense, international policies are not "good" or in an upper level, nor are national policies "bad" or inferior. In their movements and dialectic historicity, they presently meet what was built out of consensus or of hegemonic practices and collective intentions in the world and national political movement. And they surely conceal new possibilities. For example: what conception of Human Rights (specified by whom) they serve? Would there be a universal conception, as some today would try to make us believe? And wouldn't realizing that there are other conceptions lead us to revise deeply, or even discard the current ones, at least in terms of historical possibilities?

A second task would consist of remembering that these policies, in their cultural, political and practical dimensions, and in their context of effect, are what they could have been, considering their respective contexts and stories. However, their texts do not represent all that they actually are or might come to be. In other words: what we see is concrete and so may be what we (still) do not see. This is because the cultures (the meanings, values, definitions, concepts, according to Booth), in accordance to their complex and dialectical relationship with the policies, practices and contexts of effect both change and are changed by these other dimensions and contexts.

A third aspect that can be omnilectically (re)considered is the impression of inconsistency in the concept of inclusion, raised in the national policies: are they really inconsistent? For whom, that is, according to what view? For if we look from the perspective of "hard" politics (different, therefore, from the broader definition of Booth I adopt in this paper), such inconsistency is highly consistent: wouldn't the contradiction engendered in apparent inconsistency be a form of "tying" certain actions that may not be of interest to some in a given moment in history, for example?

As one can see, an omnilectical perspective of analysis opens the door to the infinity of thought, proposal and action, well in light of what I have always advocated: inclusion (and many other social and human precepts and principles) as an endless and unpredictable process. It is in this sense, therefore, that I present and stand up for the omnilectical perspective: as a form of analysis, but also as a means for constructing new, or at least other paths on the bases of which to understand our ever complex and dialectical cultural, political and practical reality.

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