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Internationalization and *Pensamiento Curricular Latinoamericano*

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Introduction

Curriculum Studies have historically been linked to the idea of a national culture (Da Silva, 1999). The nation-state has been its unit of prescription and analysis. This is all but strange. As historical phenomenon, curriculum emerges as that device which allows and controls the transmission of a cultural heritage. The curriculum was created as a homogenizer and standardizing device against cultural diversity within national boundaries (Johnson-Mardones, 2015a). However, in recent decades, we have witnessed a growing interest in studying and understanding curriculum internationally (Autio, 2006; Pinar, 2003, 2014a; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995; Popkewitz, 2013; Ropo & Autio, 2009; Westbury, Hopmann, & Riquarts, 2000; Tröhler, 2011; Trueit, 2003; Yates & Grumet, 2011). The present work draws on that movement taking upon the concept of internationalization in Curriculum Studies to self-reflect on the existence and possibilities of Latin American curriculum thinking. Three assumptions underlie that endeavor.

The first assumption is that academic disciplines are better understood as traditions: a concept whose semantic field offers us the possibility of situating ourselves beyond the rigidity of paradigmatic gaze, while at the same time is broader than the idea of a research program, as well as it allows us to sketch at least some conceptual continuity without ignoring their variations and disruptions. In addition, a tradition is never neither hermetic nor uncontaminated; and it is always historically constructed. Those considerations seem particularly relevant when thinking about academic disciplines in the field of education in Latin America. The second assumption has to do with the mestizo identity of Latin America; asyncretic being born in the underside of modernity an as a consequence of its traumatic foundational phenomena. This Latin American existential hybrid resonates in the hybridity of each tradition. Such as mestizo identity in the field of education expresses in the presence of at least three educational "western," yet no quite, traditions: pedagogy, didactics and curriculum. Finally, the third assumption is that the intellectual history of an academic field, once written, is reified in historical periodifications that open and close possibilities of understanding. In this way, the critique of these devices helps to denaturalize such taken for granted temporal frames by favoring the disciplinary self-reflexivity in terms of heightened historical consciousness. This need to increase self-awareness is crucial to think of an international academic field from Latinoamérica, where Eurocentric time lines frame the intellectual history of academic disciplines and their teaching. Those three assumptions delineate an understanding to reflect upon the concept of



Curriculum Studies and Internationalization

There were my doctoral studies what brought my Latin American body north of the Rio Bravo to further my study of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of Curriculum Studies. My dissertation problematized that tradition by understanding that field as a complicated international conversation. Somehow, such understanding was an answer to my own voluntary experience of self-estrangement in which my intellectual curiosity took me into. In that educational experience the U.S. and the Latin American traditions collide, emotionally and intellectually, opening a space of biographical and historical reconstruction. Upon those bases, I wonder about the possibility of building a truly global academic field based on an academic dialogue among equals, a conversation among adults. Consequently, what is needed is an intercultural dialogic encounter that does not deny but it recognizes, resists, and works on overcoming the neo-colonial dynamics present in the production, circulation, and exchange of knowledge worldwide. There is no real internationalization without decolonization. A truly international academic field maintains a permanent *decolonial* suspicion in the conviction of the decolonize project cannot be deferred anymore in a field. Only embracing such a project a worldwide academic field may emerge. At least that's my, and others', hope.

In providing a historical perspective of the field of Curriculum Studies in the United States, William Pinar has distinguished three main moments in the field's history. According to him the American Curriculum Studies has faced

(1) the field's inauguration and paradigmatic stabilization as curriculum development, 1918–1969; (2) the field's reconceptualization, 1969–1980, from curriculum development to curriculum studies, an interdisciplinary academic field paradigmatically organized around understanding curriculum, 1980 to current; and (3), most recently, the field's internationalization, 2000 to current (Pinar, 2008, p. 495).

What is intriguing about Pinar time-conceptual-line is the third moment: internationalization. To my knowledge at least, while several academic publications praise internationalization, the international or the global, as an issue to be taking into consideration by the U.S. curriculum field; in this periodification, internationalization is conceptualized as a moment of the field itself. The situation became even more intriguing when one looks at the definition of the field's internationalization suggested by this U.S. curriculum scholar. To Pinar, the choice of the word internationalization was made in order to distinct it from globalization; which, according to him, has a neocolonial and neo-imperialistic connotation. Therefore, in Curriculum Studies the term internationalization is coined to name a movement aiming to build an international community of scholars willing to engage in a dialogical encounter. In his address to the first International Conference for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies held at Louisiana State University (LSU) in 2001, where the internationalization movement was born; Pinar suggested to his colleagues from around the globe, that as curriculum theorists they should "depict the field's efforts to extend its scholarly conversation beyond the national borders in which it is practiced" (Pinar, 2006, p. 165). Drawing on this statement, I suggest that internationalization is one of those words; and needs to be reconceptualized by an international dialogue. Consequentially, I think of internationalization not just as a moment of the U.S. field but also as a dimension of



Curriculum Studies thought from a planetary horizon (Johnson-Mardones, 2016). This enables me to suggest that from that point of view, and specifically from the global south, the current movement of internationalization of Curriculum Studies is a third wave of internalization.

Three Waves of Internationalization

As it has been just suggested, from the Global South (De Sousa Santos, 2014), internationalization has been a dimension of Curriculum Studies since its consolidation in the United States at the end of the 1940s². Thus, the main historical moments suggested by Pinar (2008, 2014b) acquire a new meaning when situated at a global scale; they more or less coincide with three waves of the internationalization of the U.S. field of curriculum. The first wave coincides with the consolidation and crisis of the field in the 1950s and 1960s in the U.S., and it is given by the global exportation as a new technology-driven field of curriculum in the 1960s and 1970s. The second wave is the reconceptualization of the U.S. field by opening itself to mainly European and Latin American international intellectual influences, and coincides with a process of hybridization within and beyond the U.S. borders. Finally, the third wave is the present moment marked by the internationalization movement and the ongoing worldwide international conversation in which we are engaged in. These waves are not fixed historical stages but tendencies that are still present in the field with different emphases in distinctive contexts.

The field of Curriculum Studies arrived into Latinoamérica during the first wave of internationalization. Somehow, the concept of curriculum in Latinoamérica is still related to *curriculum development* as it was imported from the United States; a process began in the 1960s, but which unevenly reached every Latin American country in the following decades. While in Chile, for instance, the process started in the context of an educational reform led by a democratic government, in Brazil the field was introduced during the military dictatorship that had taken over in 1964. Therefore, the first wave of internationalization had as general context the increasing intervention of the United States in the region informed by the Cold War rationale. The international deployment of such educational discourse meant a mechanistic application of concepts and procedures brought from outside without consideration of local contexts and cultures. Curriculum Studies, then, arrived into Latinoamérica as a cultural monologue rather than an intercultural dialogue, a sort of curriculum epistemicide (Paraskeva, 2016). Latinoamérica is, then, a worthwhile reminder to the scholars in the field that the first wave of internationalization in Curriculum Studies was a neocolonial one, and that the effort to overcome it is an ongoing one.

In the intellectual production of Latin American curriculum scholars, this wave of internationalization has been termed "acculturation" (Garcia-Garduño, 2011), an act of "cultural imperialism" ³(Barriga & Garcia-Garduño, 2014, p. 11), the introduction of the "U.S. industrial pedagogy" (Díaz-Barriga, 1984), the beginning of the influence of the "educational technology" expressed for instance in Tyler's work (Magendzo, Abraham & Lavín, 2014, p. 176), and the technical curriculum (Montoya-Vargas, 2014). Before this wave, "the traits of a view of education based on efficiency and productivity were absent" (p. 11) in *Latinoamérica*, conclude Diaz Barriga & Garcia-Garduño (2014) in their study of the historical development of Curriculum Studies in ten Latin American countries.

The second wave of internationalization is the 1970s' reconceptualization of the North Anglo-American curriculum field of Curriculum Studies; a wave of a different sort than the first one. The direction of this second wave took now an outside-inside (of



the United State) dynamic; the opposite of the previous neocolonial first wave's. This process of reconceptualization meant a "paradigmatic shift from a focus on social engineering and the business model to the project of understanding, which involves the concept of curriculum as conversation" (Pinar, 2004, p. 19). Such a shift was nourished by Continental and British intellectual influences. In its project of understanding curriculum "historically, politically, racially, autobiographically or biographically, aesthetically, theologically, institutionally and internationally," (Pinar, 2008, p. 493), the reconceptualization movement sought beyond its national borders means to increase the *élan vital* of that moribund patient diagnosed by Schwab (1969) the previous decade. It is important to notice, that besides the northern western intellectual influences, there was also a southern one: Paulo Freire (Johnson-Mardones, 2015b). Paulo Freire had a strong presence in the first writings of the reconceptualization movement (Greene, 1974, 1971; Pinar, 1975, 1974; Pinar & Grumet, 1976). This second wave of internalization in Curriculum Studies was also Latin American. Put into perspective, these influences advanced the idea of internationalization as a conversation among equals as well as the field's hybridity. Nevertheless, these beginning strides toward an international conversation, however, faded in the following years. The current international conversation in Curriculum Studies may be considered a continuation of that first dialogical encounter.

The hybridization of Curriculum Studies during the U.S. reconceptualization was not the only process of this sort, however. As early as the 1960s a similar process of external influences and internal developments critical of instrumental or technocratic approaches in education took also place in *Latinoamérica*. These critical perspectives were an effort of thinking education within our own tradition as well as a reaction to the social engineering *ethos* of the first wave. Those developments affected the reception of the new imported field of curriculum distinctively across countries. Garcia-Garduño (2011) terms this second moment in *Latinoamérica*: "hybridization." He writes:

An Argentinean anthropologist living in Mexico, Néstor García Canclini, coined a concept that can help us understand the *mestizaje* or fusion that the curriculum field has undergone since the 1973 Spanish translation of Tyler's *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*. García Canclini understands by hybridity "sociocultural processes where discrete structures or practices that existed separately combine themselves to generate new structures, objects and practices." (2000, p. 8; cited by Garcia-Garduño, 2011, p. 16)

Temporally located in the 1970s and 1980s, this Latin American hybridization happened not without contradictions. The imported field of curriculum was little by little "adopting, adapting, syncretizing, rejecting and rearticulating" (Díaz Barriga & Garcia Garduño, 2014, p. 12). This hybridity was not only the result of external critical intellectual influences, although they were certainly present, but part of a Latin American critique of modern schooling commenced in the 1960s that had as its main figures Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich. This critique had a clear Latin American vocation, intellectually but also geographically speaking. To the works of Illich, written in Mexico, and those of Freire written in Brazil and Chile; we can add others, such as those of the so-called "grupo cordobés," the Cordoba group, that reflected on "methodological aspects of teaching, apart from technical rationality" (Feeney, 2014, p. 21). In relation to the Mexican context, Díaz Barriga & García Garduño (2014) elaborate:



The development of critical perspective in curriculum "was a hybrid process led by young scholars, recently arrived from Argentina, such as Azucena Rodríguez, Alfredo Furlán, Eduardo Remedi y Roberto Follari; and young Mexican curriculum scholars such as Ángel Díaz-Barriga, Patricia Aristi y Alicia De Alba. (pp. 250-251)

As a result of those processes the field of curriculum in *Latinoamérica* became hybrid; or one may say that in *Latinoamérica*, Curriculum Studies has its own hybridization. In fact, in general, the influence of the U.S. hybridization–namely the reconceptualización movement of the 1970s– only reached the region around the 1990s. All of this "was enabling the conformation of a distinctive curriculum thought, with an element that gives identity: it sought to be Latin American" (Diaz Barriga & Garcia Garduño, 2014, p. 252). As *Latinoamérica*, the Latin American curriculum thinking is also a *mestizo* field. That is its strength to address the current moment.

The third wave is today's internationalization. This academic movement interests itself in the study of Curriculum Studies outside of the United States (Pinar, 2014b) as well as in theorizing the idea of a worldwide non-uniform curriculum field (Pinar, 2014b; Miller, 2009). The two editions of the *Handbook of International Curriculum Research* (Pinar, 2003, 2014a) are great contributions in moving forward such a project. Nevertheless, this movement still struggles with a propensity to normalize "the linguistic, cultural, and racial differences under the authoritative canon of Euro-American rationality" (Ropo & Autio, 2009, p. 3). The next already ongoing step, then, is to develop transnational research on curriculum focused on the field interrelationships and discontinuities worldwide. It is within this interpretive space that a more comprehensive theory of curriculum and education can emerge.

As stated before, this third wave of internationalization seems to be recovering the dialogical encounter that began with the critiques of technocratic curriculum characteristic of the first wave of internationalization, and which the U.S. reconceptualization saw a way of raising consciousness (Pinar, 1974). Within that conversation, García-Garduño (2011) affirms:

In the case of Ibero-América, there are indications that processes of cosmopolitanism are underway. However, they are not completely clear. The most outstanding traits of cosmopolitanism are openings to other trends and scholarship, the acceptance of different points of view without losing one's own. Curriculum journals that exist in Brazil and in Spain publish articles from both Latin American and Anglo-Saxon scholars. (García-Garduño, 2011, p. 16)

Although the Latin American intellectual production on the internationalization of Curriculum Studies is still limited, it has certainly increased during the last decade. Important works have been published on Brazil (Pinar, 2011a) and Mexico (Pinar, 2011b). Both texts comprise chapters by main scholars in the field in each country, providing a broad view of the curriculum discourses in those contexts. *The International Handbook of Curriculum Research* (Pinar, 2003) also includes chapters on Argentina (Feeney & Terigi, 2003; Feldman & Palamidessi, 2003), Brazil (Moreira, 2003; Lopes & Macedo, 2003), and Mexico (Diaz Barriga, A., 2003a; Diaz Barriga, F., 2003). The second edition of this handbook (2014) has expanded its Latin American spectrum, adding chapters on Colombia (Montoya-Vargas, 2014) on Chile (Matus, 2014) and Peru (Manrique et al, 2014). Besides these works published in English, we find works in



Portuguese such as that of Moreira on Brazil (2007) and in Spanish such as Diaz-Barriga's (2003b, 2002, 1991, 1982) on Mexico. In addition, two important works have been published recently in *Latinoamérica: Desarrollo del Curriculum en América Latina: Experiencia de Diez Países* (2014) [Historical Development of Curriculum in Latin America: The Experience of Ten Countries] by Diaz Barriga & Garcia Garduño (Eds.); and *Diálogos Curriculares entre México y Brasil* [Curricular Dialogues between Mexico and Brazil] (2015) by Alicia De Alba and Alice Casimiro Lopes (2015). Therefore, the *pensamiento curricular latinoamericano* has entered into an international dialogue, including the South-South aspect of it, reconstructing its intellectual history and recognizing itself as a hybrid field.

In this sense, the words of the great Latin American pedagogue continue resonating. Born in a dependent country, Freire (1965) states that the basic dilemma of Latin American societies, and by extension of Latin American intellectuals, is whether to pursue a "society that decolonizes itself more and more" (p. 25). In the second decade of the Twentieth First century that is still our dilemma.

A Final Remark

Grounding my understanding of internationalization as a dimension of the field of curriculum here by juxtaposing the historical development of the field in the United States in relation to *Latinoamérica*, I would like to suggest again that the next step to building an international field of curriculum studies is enlarging the conversation beyond its Anglo-Saxon and European influences. My work may be understood as an attempt to bring the Latin American educational tradition more strongly into the international conversation that is now Curriculum Studies. In doing so, I am, to some extent, rejoining two educational traditions, the Latin American and the Anglo-American, to continue a conversation already begun in the 1970s but interrupted since then. I restore the concept of dialogical encounter as a fundamental practice in times of planetary agony.

Notes

³ Barriga & Garcia-Garduño (2014) refer the term "cultural imperialism" to the work of Martin Carnoy (1993) *La educación como imperialismo cultural* [Educatión as cultural imperialism].

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² Process usually related to the publication of Tyler's *The Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (1949).

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