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The Influence of Migration Processes on Transnational Higher Education Development

Abstract

The article is devoted to the modern theoretical and methodological approaches to investigation of “transnational educational space” and “transnational higher education” phenomena. The author analyzes the shifting concepts of nationhood and the challenges that transnational migrants’ mobility pose to ideas of cultural homogeneity in education and feelings of belonging. In the paper the influence of migration processes on transnational educational space and transnational higher education development has been exposed. The individual transnational mobility of students has been studied in the context of globalization and internationalization. The article argued that education systems should constantly reformulate themselves to accommodate newcomers successfully.

Keywords: globalization; transnational educational space; transnational higher education; student mobility; migration; cultural homogeneity; social areas.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of transnational education spaces was put forward by German scientist Cristel Adick in 2005 on the base of theoretical assumptions that follow the conceptualization of “space” developed by T. Faist and L. Pries within the context of the sociology of migration (Adick, 2005: 244). In this case, migration, other than traditionally in the pedagogy of migration, is not understood as a uni- or bi-directional process between the areas of origin and arrival, but as a “genuine component of definitely continuous biographies” (Pries, 1996: 458). We devoted the article to the potential that the concept of transnational educational space and migration processes have for conceptual work and research on transnational and cross-border developments in education. Since growth in the internationalization of higher education has accelerated during the past several decades, reflecting the globalization of economies and societies, and also the expansion of higher education systems and institutions throughout the world.

International migration statistics shows that over the past three decades, the number of students enrolled outside their country of citizenship has risen dramatically, from 0.8 million worldwide in 1975 to 4.1 million in 2010, more than a fivefold increase. The number of international students continued to grow in 2009, increasing by 6% to reach more than 2.6 million in the OECD countries and the Russian Federation. Australia replaced France as the third main destination after the United States and the United Kingdom. International students account on average for more than 6% of all students in OECD countries. China and India between them account for a full 25% of international students, who are an important source of future labour migration (OECD, 2012).

2. THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION SPACE CONCEPT

“Trans-nationalism”, which means a social phenomenon that has developed as a result of increased connectedness between people on the one hand, and the neglect of economic and social significance of boundaries between nation-states on the other. In particular, Glossary of UNESCO in the field of social sciences and humanities treats “trans-nationalism” as multiple ties and interactions that connect people and institutions across the borders of nation states [UNESCO]. Note that the term “trans-nationalism” was first encountered in the early twentieth century in the work of American journalist Robert Bourne to describe “a new way of understanding the relationship between cultures” (Randolph, 1916: 86 – 97).

Over the last decade, it is widely used among contemporary leading scholars in the social sciences, particularly in the scientific literature of cultural studies, anthropology, and history of A. Appadurai, L. Buell, J. Clifford, and H. Bhabha et al. Thus, social anthropologists have provided trans-nationalism with theoretical definition as a process by which immigrants create and maintain multisocial relations that link the different societies of origin and territorial policies (Caglar, 2001: 607). Cultural studies in his writings focus on the changes of attitudes towards categories of space, due primarily to the presence of large numbers of people who now live in social centers, both located in multiple physical locations and social environment in two or more nation-states. Together, these form the multiple contexts, according to Professor of Transnational Anthropology, University of Oxford S. Vertovec, so-called “transnational social field”, “transnational social space”, “transnational village”, “translocality” (Vertovec, 2001: 578). Apparently, researchers in the social sciences, the term used mainly to define social spaces that create immigrants despite geographical, cultural and political boundaries. Over time, the term “trans-nationalism” began to use not only for cross-border mobility of people, as well as the transition through the boundaries of cultural, informational, economic etc. threads. Therefore, the “trans-nationalism” is the new analytical view, which shows the intensity of circulation of goods, information, people, caused by international labor migration (Caglar, 2001: 607).

Social scientists L. Pries and T. Faist consider the phenomenon of transnationalism and transnational social developments in terms of “transmigration”. In particular, L. Pries consider this kind of migration to be “a modern type of a nomadic way of life that gives rise to transnational social spaces” or to “transnational spaces” as T. Faist names it. Such spaces can extend across nations or continents and are constituted through the transmigrants’ conduct of life. According to the transnational spaces approach, migration is no longer understood “as a singular or twofold changeover between two sites (as of origin and arrival), but as a genuine components of definitely continuous biographies” (Pries, 1996: 458).

Although T. Faist emphasizes the fact that states are not always identical with nation states, their national territories and governments, he pays attention to a discourse started in the early 1990 by ethnographic scientists N. Glick Schiller, L. Basch and C. Blanc-Szanton. They focused their research on unconsidered phenomenon “social areas” created by migrants who link the nation of their origin with the nation of their residence (Hornberg, 2009: 248). These results gave the first contours of transnational perspectives on migration processes.

However, L. Pries and T. Faist change the term “social area” for “social space” and defined this expression as follows: “We suggest understanding transnational social spaces as kind of pluri-local interrelations, which are relatively stable condensed configurations of social daily routines, symbolism and artifacts, allocated on various sites or spread between multiple extended areas. Transnational social spaces emerge together with transmigrants and transnational companies, both determine each other” (Pries, 1996: 504).

It is evident that in this context, the term “space” is not used in a physical meaning, in the sense of a location, but in the sense of relatively stable, nationally defined relationships between individuals. Scientists (Bravo-Moreno, 2009: 288-292) convince that the concept of transnational social spaces allows us to recognize the transnational relationships that exist alongside the government level, namely, those that have accompanying consequences for national actions and organizations on the systemic level and for autonomous individuals on the social-life level.

S. Hornberg emphasizes that participation in transnational processes is possible without geographic mobility of people, such as via internet (Hornberg, 2009: 249). Within the context of information and communication technologies’ rapid development social closeness appears despite geographic distance. But, to our mind, perspective on migration plays a key role in conceptualization of transnational educational space phenomenon.

In the educational science literature a few article concerning the concept of transnational educational space. C. Adick conceptualizes transnational educational space by linking three separate but parallel discourses: socialization in transnational spaces, transnational convergence in education, and transnational education itself (Adick, 2005: 262-266). Thus, socialization in transnational spaces refers to the approaches spelled out by T. Faist and L. Pries that were developed on the background of a sociological perspective on migration. The term transna-

tional convergences in education is represented through worldwide isomorphic developments in education, which are at the same time, a prerequisite for and the result of transnational educational spaces. That is because the participation in transnational educational space relies on the connectivity of educational processes, learning experience, curricula contents, and certificates and so on. Transnational education itself takes into account the economic dimension of education. This term identifies learning opportunities such as distance/online courses, usually offered by internationally operating educational organizations, namely colleges, universities and private professional providers.

As we can observe, at the heart of these approaches stand transnational interrelations positioned adjacent to and below levels of nation-state societies. The definition of space introduced in these concepts comprises social and symbolic relationship of individuals in and between territories and locations. In the terms of conception of transnational educational space, this reference extends the theoretical dealings with socialization of migrants in transnational social spaces.

The debate over relation of ethnic culture and existing structures has come to dominate our understanding of immigration and education. Transnational studies have examined how migrant groups have historically reconstituted belonging, mobilized territory-based identities across geopolitical borders, and challenged existing pedagogies in the education systems of host countries. It has become necessary to move beyond the imagery of “territories” as spatially fixed geographical containers for social processes and to contest terms such as “local” and “global” as powerful descriptors of space (Bravo-Moreno, 2009: 420).

However, before the contemporary situation is analyzed, it is important to contextualize concepts of education and nationhood characteristics of modern states, and the creation of cultural homogenization and modern nations. We should try to do that on the example of the United States.

In the USA the rise of the public (state-maintained) schools was part of a policy response to the large waves of immigration in the 19th century (Urban & Wagoner, 2003). The public schools considered as the “social balance wheel” of the republic: no at least by assimilating their children of immigrants into America – to avoid importing the conflicts of Europe, including religious tensions that flourishing there. This historically significant development meant that – at the level of individual states in the USA – a system of publicly financed schools began replacing the network of semi-public independent and charity schools. The new educational institutions were designed to achieve social goals, indeed political ones. The common schools movement helped to absorb the immigrants of the 19th century, initially from north and west Europe between 1830s – 1840s and later, especially in the 1880s – 1890s from south and east Europe. Revisionist American historians have strongly emphasized that, from the dominant Anglo-Saxon and protestant perspective, the immigrant influx offered the threat of social tension and disorder. The political mix of Protestantism and faith in capitalism and

republicanism helped to define the reformers' wish to control moral and create an "American" population through state schooling.

Immigrants in their turn were made anxious that the common school movement sought to Americanize their children at the expense of traditional customs and beliefs. The beginning of the 20th century saw an escalation in the battle about cultural choice and identities, including new anxieties, not merely about European immigration from southern Europe and from western Russia but also immigration from East Asia. In the United States, the histories of immigrants are also continuous and contemporary. Recent waves of immigration have included Vietnamese and Koreans as well as new waves of immigration from Eastern Europe and Russia (Jones, 2007: 330). The point is that historical patterning of relationship between migration and nationalism in the USA, which can only be sketched in the short article, affect the contemporary moment. The USA took up the formation of the nation theme in the 19th century and obtained remarkable experiences as a society of immigrants, particularly in relationships of the Church and the State, and changes in the directions of immigration flows. In the next pages we will consider the contemporary policy practices and implications regarding education and immigration in the USA.

3. CONTEMPORARY POLICY PRACTICES AND IMPLICATIONS ON TRANSNATIONAL MIGRANTS' MOBILITY

Migration has been a key channel for mobility – an opportunity to earn money, see new places, experience new cultures, gain skills and accumulate consumption goods. Migration however is a varied process, it can be seasonable and short term, or for a much longer duration, even permanent; it carries varying levels of risk in terms of security, payment of wages and legality and consequently has differential implications for earnings, remittances and consumption; it requires different levels of skills and resources, both financial and social. Nowadays migrants represent more than half of the student population in educational systems of many countries. Countries where international migrants constitute high proportion of population usually belong to English speaking ones, namely Australia (20%), Canada (19 %), and the USA (13%) (United Nations, 2006). These flows create new challenges for educational institutions in the mentioned countries as they prepare young people for the labour market and citizenship. Schooling and formal education has been seen as major route to socio-economic mobility – the path to secure skilled and better paid jobs, but more importantly, for its role in the expansion of opportunities for individuals in society and as a catalyst for social change. One of the important questions that these challenges construct is: How have schools and universities responded to the changing demographics of their transnational student population?

On the other hand, the employment opportunities have expanded globally, as there has been an increase in employment in the developed countries, where pro-

duction is more knowledge-based. Skill requirements are high and have attracted highly skilled workers from other countries. In fact, the migration of highly skilled workers has been encouraged to meet the skill requirements of the expanding knowledge economics of the developed countries, led by the USA. The skill requirements in the knowledge economy are not only different from that of the traditional manufacturing sector, but also the level of skills required and the qualifications demanded for job entry are also high and continuing to rise. Studies show that, in Canada, nearly 70% of all new jobs will require a post-secondary level of education (ILO, 2004).

Many of the knowledge economies have not produced the skills required. Even countries with the largest network of higher education institutions such as the USA, could not produce highly skilled workers in sufficient quality to meet their domestic demand and the global market demand, especially in the knowledge-intensive segments of the economy. This has resulted in competition among the developed countries to attract the best brains from other countries, notably from the developing ones. Many developed countries changed their visa rules to accommodate skilled in communication technology workers from other countries.

For example, the introduction of H-1B in the USA has helped attract skilled workers from other countries, and helped the inflow of highly educated. Nearly one million highly skilled workers entered the USA under the H-1B visa scheme between 2000 and 2003. It is also noted that the average qualification level of the migrants is higher than that of the indigenous population. For example, while 9% of all Americans born in the USA possess a university degree on the Master level, 38% of Indians born in the USA possess the same. Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom have introduced point-based emigration policies which give preferential treatment to candidates with higher level qualification (Varghese, 2009: 11). Awareness of the developed countries of the fact that educational programs are gradually turning into the best resource for the further recruitment of qualified staff was the impetus for the rapid development of transnational higher education. One of the major motivations in obtaining higher education for transnational model is its potential ability to expand employment opportunities and a high dividend of education concluded in private investment. Graduates of prestigious foreign universities have priority on the labor market in developing countries as well as in developed one. That is why migrant students are a reliable source of recruiting labor in a lack of qualified human resources. Employment opportunities of foreign students in the form of impulse are reflected even in the procedures for granting visas to some countries.

Besides, as we know, four different, but not mutually exclusive, approaches to transnational higher education emerge. Among them is skilled migration approach that has a strong economic drive and has emerged in the 1990s [OECD]. The skilled migration approach gives stronger emphasis to the recruitment of selected international students and aims to attract talented students to work in the host country's knowledge economy, or render its higher education and research sectors more competitive. Scholarship programs may remain a major poli-

cy instrument in this approach but they are supplemented by active promotion of a country's higher education sector abroad, combined with an easing of the relevant visa or immigration regulations. Sometimes, specific services are designed to help international students in their studies and their stay abroad and more teaching takes place in English. This approach can have a variety of targets, such as students from certain areas, post-graduates or research students rather than undergraduates, or students in a specific field. This approach generally results in a rise in the number of international students. Examples of countries having adopted this approach are Germany, Canada, France, the United Kingdom (for EU students) and the United States (for post-graduate students).

The generalized drive in most OECD countries to enroll more international students may also reflect a skilled migration approach to the internationalization of higher education. This strategy can be viewed (and is sometimes explicitly pursued) as a means of attracting highly-skilled students who may remain in the host country after their studies, especially in the context of an ageing society, or at least stimulate academic life and research while they study. This is the approach largely taken by Germany (OECD, 2004). To some extent, this approach may also be viewed as a reaction to the increasingly competitive environment of transnational education induced by the revenue-generating approach: the effort to enroll more international students is a way of maintaining a country's relative share of international students when some countries are dramatically increasing the number of international students they receive. Whereas the revenue-generating approach brings economic benefits to the educational institutions as well as the economy of the receiving country, the skilled migration approach has a clear economic drive but a limited direct economic impact on the country's higher education sector.

A central part of the debate on immigration and education is how migrants in the specific class and ethnic location and with a particular immigrant status come to understand education in social contexts, which themselves influenced by broader political, historical, social, and economic trends of host societies. In this respect, R. Rhoads and J. Valadez introduce in 1996 the concept of critical multiculturalism, which calls attention to the role education as a powerful force in situating students' identities as privileged or marginalized. They argue that the major challenge facing educational institutions is to serve culturally diverse student populations by enacting multiple organizational roles and embracing multiple forms of cultural knowledge (Bravo-Moreno, 2009: 421). Educational institutions therefore, are not only a microcosm of society, but can play an active role in perpetuating prevailing hegemonic societal attitudes through their socialization processes.

In the USA over the past generation annual immigration flows have tripled, with more immigrants entering the country during the 1990s than any other decade of the last century. Therefore the educational future of young people, who grew up in the USA and have graduated from high school, is restricted by current US immigration laws, namely Section 505 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 discourages states from providing in-state

tuition or other higher education benefits without regard to immigration status. Since Section 505 became law, 10 states have enacted laws permitting everyone who attended and graduated from high school in the state, to pay the in-state rate at public colleges and universities (Bravo-Moreno, 2009: 428). As a consequence of the current law, thousands of students, who should not be punished for being taken to the United States, are left with a future in low-income careers. These children do not have equal opportunities in the education system or on the labour market, which in turn does not help them to integrate in the host society.

Despite unprecedented numbers of immigrants, few mainstream institutions have directly confronted the significance of immigration-driven demographic change for their policies and programmes. Schools are good example of this. Debates over educational opportunity, including vouchers, high-stakes testing, standards of learning and the like, rarely consider the needs of the children of immigrants. For example, in California schools, voters have overwhelmingly supported moves to limit the use of bilingual education and to restore California's proposition 187, which impeded irregular immigrant children from attending elementary and secondary schools.

In 2005 Hispanic immigrants (from Central and South America, Mexico, Cuba, Spain) accounted for more than 10.9 million students enrolled in the USA. They are also among the fastest growing student populations and the second largest group of students after whites. Latinos immigrant children account more than half (58 %) of all immigrant youth in the USA. In fact, while 42% of whites and 32% of blacks aged 18-24 were enrolled in post-secondary institutions in 2004, only 25% of Latinos of the same age group studied in higher educational institutions. Research has shown that the most troubling is the fact that Hispanic students have the lowest college completion rates of any other ethnic group. Even after surmounting the obstacles on the path to college, further barriers such as low financial resources and inadequate career guidance, remain. From early childhood through to higher education, Latinos continue to be underserved by educational programs designed to help the most disadvantaged students (Kohler, 2007).

4. CONCLUSIONS

To our mind, the disparity in educational attainment, combined with the fastest rate of population growth point to serious negative consequences for the United States as a whole. The problem is rather complex and multifaceted. Education is one of the fastest and most efficient means of social mobility; it is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially excluded immigrant children and their parents can rise above poverty and obtain the resources to participate fully in their communities. The article explored how education systems and definition of citizenship have perpetuated prevailing hegemonic societal attitudes through failing to offer everyone the opportunity to facilitate social mobility by raising their social capital, and by excluding part of the immigrant population as formal outsiders of the nation state. The analysis also attempted to examine how educa-

tion systems and relations emerging from geographical mobility are involved in the production of new expression of social and political inequalities from a comparative and historical perspective. Finally, the paper argued that education systems should constantly reformulate themselves to accommodate newcomers. On this view educational institutions are not a one-dimensional phenomenon – they have to be understood as constantly reformulating themselves as we can trace through their effects at different points in time and location in sociocultural spaces. Further research into transnational comparisons will enable us to analyze relevant factors on the success of social cohesion for native population and immigrants, including institutional arrangements in education as well as migration and integration policies.

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