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THE PEC-G AND THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE UNIVERSITY

RESUMO

This article presents a broader research clipping that aimed to understand the strategies and trajectories of foreign undergraduate students at a Brazilian public university. In this text we focus on the PEC-G (Undergraduate Student Agreement Program) and the relationships established by African students linked to this program as an internationalization and academic mobility policy. Based on some concepts of Bourdieu, we seek to understand the meanings attributed by students to the educational process in Brazil and their expectations with the conclusion of the course. Based on assumptions of qualitative research, we produced two different types of data, the interview being the main source. Fourteen students and the university's international affairs advisor were interviewed. Another source of data were the documents on the MRE (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and MEC (Ministry of Education) websites that characterize the PEC-G. The results indicate that it is necessary to engage these young students and assist them in their specificities, both in academic education and in cultural and critical education. This service goes through a quality reception that provides relevant information and really helps them to make the most of the experience in our country.

Palavras-chave: PEC-G. Internationalization. Cultural capital. University Education.

O PEC-G E A INTERNACIONALIZAÇÃO DA UNIVERSIDADE

ABSTRACT

Este artigo apresenta um recorte de pesquisa mais ampla que visou compreender as estratégias e as trajetórias de estudantes estrangeiros no ensino superior em uma universidade pública federal. Neste texto focamos no PEC-G (Programa Estudantes-convênio de Graduação) e nas relações estabelecidas pelos estudantes africanos vinculados a esse programa enquanto política de internacionalização e mobilidade acadêmica. Tomando por base alguns conceitos de Bourdieu buscamos compreender os sentidos atribuídos pelos estudantes ao processo de formação no Brasil e às expectativas com a conclusão do curso. Baseando-se em pressupostos da pesquisa qualitativa produzimos dois tipos de dados, sendo a entrevista a principal fonte. Foram entrevistados 14 estudantes e a assessora de assuntos internacionais da universidade. Outra fonte de dados foram os documentos presentes no site do MRE (Ministério das Relações Exteriores) e do MEC (Ministério da Educação) que caracterizam o PEC-G. Os resultados indicam que é necessário engajar esses jovens e atendê-los em suas especificidades, tanto na formação acadêmica quanto em formação cultural e crítica. Esse atendimento passa por uma recepção de qualidade que preste informações pertinentes e realmente contribua para que a experiência em nosso país seja aproveitada da melhor maneira.

Keywords: PEC-G. Internacionalização. Capital cultural. Ensino superior.

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I INTRODUCTION

The internationalization of the university has been the subject of discussion in the Brazilian academic scenario, receiving different outlines, including not only research and graduate studies, but also undergraduate courses. Authors have ascribed the most effective influence on internationalization policies in Brazil and also throughout Latin America to the Bologna process, which started in Europe in 1999 (ROBERTSON, 2009), (TEODORO; GUILHERME, 2017). However, the phenomenon is not recent, as foreign students have sought our universities since the early 1960s, through a policy established by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE) in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MEC), the PEC-G (Exchange Program for Undergraduate Students) which will be detailed in this work later.

Jane Knight (2010, 2018), one of the pioneers in the study of the internationalization of higher education, presents dimensions that involve such process, among them: academic mobility of students and professors, the existence of international networks, associations and projects of research and training, the diffusion of education to other countries through partnerships/agencies, the inclusion of an international/intercultural and/or global dimension in the curriculum and in the teaching-learning process. The academic mobility of students enhances the process of "internationalization at home", according to Gonçalves (2009), involving several actions that universities can implement to favor formation at a global level, without necessarily implying the physical departure of professors and students from their country of origin.

In this article, we present an excerpt of a wider research (SANTOS, 2019) that aimed to understand the strategies and trajectories of foreign students in higher education at a federal public university. The university chosen was UFSJ (Federal University of São João del-Rei) in which, despite being still in an incipient internationalization process like most Brazilian higher education institutions (CAPES, 2017), at the time of the research, there were about 28 students of different nationalities enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs, being seven of them were associated to PEC-G. We present the elements that underlie the PEC-G and the relations established between the institution and the African students, mediated by the program as a policy of internationalization and academic mobility.

Based on some concepts by Bourdieu (1989, 2004, 2007) we seek to understand the meanings the students attributed to the formation process in Brazil and the expectations regarding the conclusion of the course. The text is structured in six topics, plus the introduction. In the first one, we describe the data production process and the research subjects. Then, we present a description and an analysis of the PEC-G policy as a cooperation device with Africa. In the following topic, we used Bourdieu's theory of capitals to discuss higher education and the search for a Cultural Capital, from elements of the students' profile and speech. Thereafter, we present some elements of the students' narratives about their arrival in Brazil and

their expectations for the conclusion of their courses. We end it with the final considerations pointing out possibilities for further research.

2 SUBJECTS AND DATA PRODUCTION

Based on assumptions of qualitative research, we produced different types of data, in which the interview was the main source. Valuing a research process that sought to reduce the symbolic violence that scientific investigations usually cause, we relied on the precepts of Bourdieu (2007) in order to discuss the participants' speeches. Another source of data was the documents available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE) and the Ministry of Education (MEC) that characterize the PEC-G.

We started the research by identifying the types of foreign students assisted by UFSJ. Three groups with three different types of association have been identified: Degree Mobility (students who will graduate in Brazil); Credit mobility (students linked to institutions from their countries who only carry out a particular period of studies in Brazil, usually six months or a year, and validate these studies in their courses in their countries of origin) and researchers without attachment to the institution (associated only to the university's labs; they are not exactly students, but interns or researchers from foreign institutions).

Below, in chart 01, the number of foreign students enrolled at the institution during the period of our interviews (October-December/2017) is presented. This period is highlighted because, mainly for students in Credit Mobility and in Research situation, this flow is highly unsteady. There were 28 foreign students enrolled at the university in this period, 16 of them were linked by Degree Mobility, 6 by Credit Mobility and 4 were performing research. There were also two students enrolled in postgraduate courses not allocated in the chart.

The cooperation programs that enabled them to come to Brazil, as well as the native country of each student, the course and the situation are described. It is possible to notice that the courses attracting most of foreigners to this institution were those related to Engineering and health fields such as Medicine, Psychology and Biochemistry.

Chart 1 - Disposition of students according to program, native country, course and situation of the link with the university (October – December/2017)

Program	Native Country	Course	Situation
Brazil - East Timor Cooperation	East Timor	Accounting Sciences	Degree Mobility
Brazil - East Timor Cooperation	East Timor	Production Engineering	Degree Mobility
Brazil - East Timor Cooperation	East Timor	Production Engineering	Degree Mobility
Brazil - East Timor Cooperation	East Timor	Production Engineering	Degree Mobility
BRACOL	Colombia	Psychology	Credit Mobility
BRACOL	Colombia	Psychology	Credit Mobility
BRACOL	Colombia	Business Administration	Credit Mobility
BRAMEX	Mexico	Production Engineering	Credit Mobility
BRAMEX	Mexico	Production Engineering	Credit Mobility
LMU	Germany	Psychology	Credit Mobility
PEC-G	Honduras	Agronomic Engineering	Degree Mobility
PEC-G	Chile	Medicine	Degree Mobility
PEC-G	Saint Thomas and Prince	Biochemistry	Degree Mobility
PEC-G	Cape Verde	Medicine	Degree Mobility
PEC-G	Cape Verde	Medicine	Degree Mobility
PEC-G	Cape Verde	Agronomic Engineering	Degree Mobility
PEC-G	Cape Verde	Biochemistry	Degree Mobility
PEC-G	Saint Thomas and Prince	Agronomic Engineering	Degree Mobility
PEC-G	Peru	Medicine	Degree Mobility
PEC-G	Honduras	Agronomic Engineering	Degree Mobility
PEC-G	Honduras	Agronomic Engineering	Degree Mobility
PEC-G	Guatemala	Biochemistry	Degree Mobility
DEPEB	Morocco	Research	Search
DEPEB	France	Research	Search
DEPEB	France	Research	Search
DEPEB	France	Research	Search

Source: Advisory for International Affairs of the University of São João del-Rei

The interviews were performed with 14 of the 28 foreigners linked to the university in the period, seven of them were taking the university degree course in Mobility of Degree, all linked to the PEC-G. The seven students are from Latin America and Africa, as well as East Timor, in Asia. We also interviewed the university's international affairs advisor. Due to the volume of data and short-range of this work, in this article we focus on interviews with African students. At the time of the research, the four students were in units located in other cities, outside the headquarters campus located in São João del-Rei MG. Thus, the interviews were conducted through *Skype* and were recorded and later transcribed.

The interviewees were Márcia¹ and Marisa from Saint Thomas and Prince who study Biochemistry and Agronomic Engineering, respectively, besides Jéssica and Joaquim, both from Cape Verde who study Biochemistry and Agronomic Engineering, respectively. We believe that narratives about their experiences can promote different perspectives and stimulate significant changes not only in the formulation of policies at the federal level, but also in the conduction of programs like this by the Brazilian higher education institutions themselves. In the next section, we address the PEC-G as an international mobility policy, presenting key aspects such as selection via Celpe-Bras and statistics released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

3 PEC-G AND BRAZIL-AFRICA INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC COOPERATION

The Exchange Program for Undergraduate Students (PEC-G) is an international cooperation agreement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed between the Brazilian government and developing countries with which Brazil maintains relations, focusing on socioeconomic development. Despite having started in 1917, it only became operational in 1965 through the protocol that regulated its actions (BIZON, 2013). On average, about 533 foreigners are selected annually, most of them from African. In 20 years, between 2000 and 2019², there were 10,670 foreigners coming from African, Latin American, Caribbean and Asian countries. It should be noticed that 7,991 of them are from African origins, constituting 75% of the total (MRE, 2019).

As determined by the Decree No. 7.948, March 12, 2013, the PEC-G enables foreigners to graduate in Brazilian higher education free of tuitions, based on activities developed preferably between developing countries, determining the foreigners to return to their country of origin by the end of the course (BRASIL, 2013). It is known as the first of the international cooperation programs in Brazilian higher education. "In addition to cooperating in the formation of professionals from developing countries, the PEC-G also contributes to the internationalization and diversification of the Brazilian academic scenario" (MEC, 2020, p. 5).

Cabral (2015, p. 74) states that between 1965 and 1974, the program did not develop the South-South relationship as it currently occurs. Students from the USA and Portugal were selected during this period and there was strong presence of Latin American students, more specifically: "Bolivians, Paraguayans, Peruvians, Panamanians and Uruguayans". The author also states that the arrival of Africans

¹ The participants' identities have been protected by the use of pseudonyms.

² The PEC-G has been in force since 1965, however, the data until 1999 were not systematized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

took place from 1977 on as Cape Verdeans, Guineans and Nigerians started arriving. The program started to select Africans more often during Lula's government, which redirected the focus of Brazilian Foreign Policy to partnerships between Brazil and African countries (CABRAL, 2015).

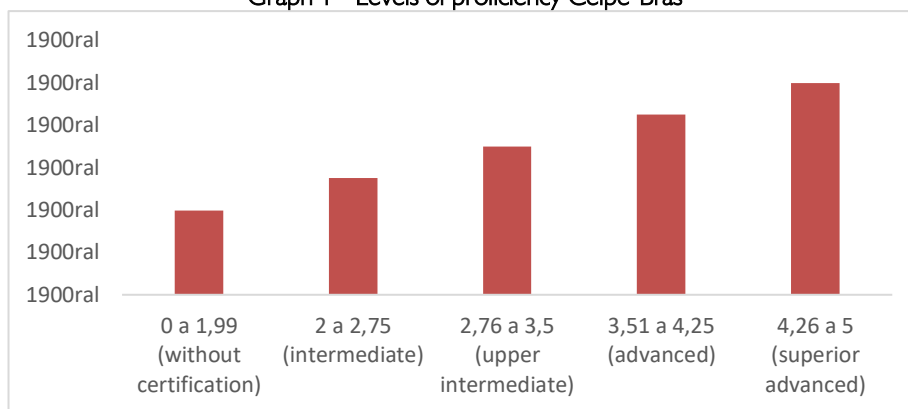
The program requires the students to be aged between 18 and 23 years old to present their certificate of completion of high school as well as their Celpe-Bras exam result, in order to certify their proficiency in Portuguese language. The foreigner does not have to apply for the university entrance exams or take the National High School Exam (ENEM). Celpe-Bras can be held in Brazil and in some other countries. Students usually arrive in Brazil one year before submitting to the selection for the PEC-G so that they can take the Portuguese course for foreigners in Brazilian Upper Education Institutions (IES) and thus prepare themselves here for the exam. Cabral (2015, p. 157) points out that many students from non-Portuguese speaking countries are concerned about not being approved by the exam and that during this course "some universities frequently 'ghettoize' them for being temporary students, impairing their access to the entire university structure".

As stated on the MRE website, candidates from countries where Celpe-Bras is not available will be able to take the Portuguese course for foreigners in Brazil and later take the exam in our country. However, the exam can only be taken once, so if the candidate does not reach a satisfactory grade on the first attempt there will be no second chance and the student must return to his/her native country. Therefore, the participants in Cabral's research (2015) highlighted the fear of non-approval, since the very coming to Brazil, itself, already constitutes for many of them an experience involving sacrifices and difficulties.

Celpe-Bras is the only Brazilian proficiency certificate in Portuguese as a foreign language officially recognized (MEC / CELPE-BRAS, 2019) and consists of an annual test that certifies proficiency at five different levels: from 0 to 1.99 (without certification), 2 to 2.75 (intermediate), 2.76 to 3.5 (upper intermediate), 3.51 to 4.25 (advanced) and 4.26 to 5 (upper advanced). The exam considers candidates who obtain at least level 2, equivalent to the intermediate level, to be eligible to apply for vacancies. The exam, first applied in 1998, emerges to meet the need for a certification in Portuguese language; in addition it contributes to the definition of a linguistic policy for teaching Portuguese as an Additional Language (PLA) (BIZON, 2013).

Such levels are detailed in the chart below:

Graph I - Levels of proficiency Celpe-Bras



Source: Adapted from MEC/INEP/Celpe-Bras (2020).

The assessment, which enables foreign students to reach any of the above levels, basically consists of open-ended questions of argumentative nature in a written test and another 20 minutes oral exam. Below, the motivating questions of the second edition of the 2019 exam are shown. It is possible to notice that different topics are presented (indigenous languages, importance of breastfeeding, environment and sustainability and harassment through the inappropriate use of sound devices in public environments such as beaches). Different media are used to produce meanings about each question: in the first question, a video from a television news report is presented while in the second one, a news report from “Rádio Senado” (the Senate House official radio channel) is heard and in the third question, a text from the “Pequenas Empresas Grandes Negócios” (a business magazine) is presented and finally in the fourth one, there is an opinion article published by the “Estadão” newspaper. The motivating questions are transcribed below:

Task 1 Indigenous Languages

As a teacher, you watched the video about the celebration of the international year of indigenous languages and decided to write an article to publish on the school's website. Must your text not only inform about the celebration but also address the situation of indigenous languages in Brazil and present the initiatives that have been proposed to preserve them.

Task 2 Breastfeeding support networks

You are a member of a non-governmental organization (NGO) that encourages breastfeeding. Based on the audio, write a leaflet to be distributed in health centers, maternity hospitals and other public places explaining the benefits of breastfeeding, what support networks are and why they are important.

Task 3 Sustainability

You are a biologist and after reading about João Campos-Silva's project, you decided to suggest a similar project in your city. Write an email to private companies requesting financial support. In your text, highlight the positive aspects of the project that inspired you and present your proposal.

Task 4 Speaker

After reading the text “Speaker: hit and controversy of the summer” you decided to write for section Reader’s Letter of the “Estadão” newspaper, defending your point of view regarding the issues raised by Felipe Mortara (MEC/INEP/CELPE-BRAS 2019a).

Just as the supports offered for understanding these statements are different, so are the genres required by the evaluation. The first question demands a story to be written for the school's website, the second one asks for a leaflet, the third task proposes an e-mail and the fourth one assigns a composition for a section called “Reader’s Letter” to be published by Estadão newspaper. Students will have up to three hours to complete this test. According to the INEP (National Institute of Studies and Research in Education) portal, the objectives of the written test and also the oral test are to simulate everyday situations in which students can get involved, as set out below:


The exam has a written part, which assesses oral and written comprehension and the production of written text in Portuguese language; and an oral part (face-to-face interaction), which evaluates the performance for understanding and speaking in the language. Proficiency is assessed based on the participant's performance in both parts. It includes practices of using the Portuguese language that may occur in the daily life of a foreigner who intends to interact in Portuguese, in Brazil (INEP, 2020).

On the other hand, the oral test is based on a material previously distributed to the evaluators called "interaction scripts". In these scripts, the “provocative elements” are established, which are topics to be debated, with previous issues to be orally discussed. In the material distributed to the examiners in the second edition of 2019, there were 20 provocative elements. Among those, three should be chosen to be debated. In general, an image is presented to the candidate and the interaction must be followed in three steps: 1) the image must be read silently; 2) the candidate must say, within a minute, what the material is about; and 3) some questions must be asked regarding specifically the theme of the image.

An example of the first provocative element that addresses global warming, listing the guiding questions to be asked by the examiners to the candidates can be found below:

Figure 1 - Provocative element 1 - Celpe Bras 2/2019

Elemento Provocador



Esta foto não conta tudo
The Observer Não se iludam com o frio que bate recorde. O aquecimento global continua sendo a ameaça de sempre
POR MICHAEL E. MANN

Que aquecimento global é esse? - Jullou, o especialista Tempo

Outras Informações

The Observer: periódico dominical britânico mais antigo do mundo. Pela forma como trata com seriedade suas matérias, contrasta com os tablóides sensacionalistas da Grã-Bretanha. Sua linha editorial é considerada social-liberal ou social-democrata.

Aquecimento global: é o processo de elevação da temperatura média da Terra, alterando o clima (condição média ao longo de um período). Essas mudanças em nível mundial podem gerar impactos locais nas condições do tempo (estado atmosférico de um local em determinado momento). A confusão entre os conceitos de "clima" e "tempo" têm gerado muitas discussões sobre a questão do aquecimento global do planeta.

Diga ao examinando:

Etapa 1 **1** Por favor, observe a imagem e leia o texto silenciosamente. (O participante faz isso silenciosamente)

Após aproximadamente um minuto, diga ao participante:

Etapa 2 **2** De que trata o material?

Siga o Roteiro abaixo e faça as adequações necessárias em função das respostas do examinando.

Etapa 3 **3**

1. O que você acha que esta foto não conta?
2. Como você explica o aquecimento global com tanto frio?
3. Na sua opinião, o aquecimento global é de fato uma ameaça?
4. Desde que se começou a falar sobre aquecimento global, você já observou mudanças climáticas? Quais?
5. Você acha que é possível minimizar o aquecimento global? Por quê?
6. Se tivermos que passar por uma mudança climática severa, o que você preferiria: calor ou frio? Por quê?
7. No seu país, qual é a percepção das pessoas sobre o aquecimento global?
8. Há algum tipo de campanha de prevenção contra o aquecimento no seu país? Se não houver, o que deveria ser feito?

Source: MEC/INEP/Celpe-Bras (2019b, p. 5)

As noticed in the image above, the question script for candidates involves inferences and previous knowledge. In fact, it is possible to understand that Celpe-Bras is not an exam that seeks purely to measure the communicative ability in the language, but to deal with different sociocultural contexts of its use. According to information from INEP, in 2018 Celpe-Bras completed its 20th anniversary and it has embraced more than 7 thousand students and in 2018 it counted on 126 application posts, being 48 of them located in Brazil and 78 abroad. "FAILURE TO PASS the exam will finish the student's relationship with the Program, without the possibility of appeal and will imply in an immediate return to the native country" (MEC/CELPE-BRAS, 2019).

The reading of Cabral's work (2015), allows us to understand that in a certain period there was a change in policy. Initially, the arrival of African students from Portuguese-speaking countries was not subjected to a verification of proficiency. However, the Decree No. 7.948, 2013, brings this prerogative without differentiating students from Portuguese-speaking and non-Portuguese-speaking countries. As Bizon (2013) points out, the PEC-G personnel at the institution where she conducted her research emphasize the importance of the exam, since having Portuguese as the official language does not mean that it is also be their mother language.

In our research, Joaquim, a Cape Verdean student, told us that in some African countries, Portuguese is used exclusively in official and formal contexts and denied in family contexts, in which more than one language is often involved in the interactions. This denial of Portuguese in family contexts is due to the fact that the language is sometimes seen as a prestigious language which is not mastered by everyone.

Therefore, if it is used in non-formal contexts, it is possible for family members and friends to consider that the user intends to somewhat distinguish himself/herself from the others (SANTOS, 2019).

When analyzing the Celpe-Bras test model, we wondered about its efficiency at stating the language proficiency, especially in a scenario where courses in the exact sciences field are more privileged by students than those in the humanity sciences ones. In our research, the seven foreigners who were linked to the PEC-G were studying either engineering or courses in the medical field (Medicine or Biochemistry). Among the 28 foreign students linked to the university, none of them were linked to courses related to the humanity sciences field (see chart 01). Is it possible to expect pure language proficiency to guarantee success in the academic environment? Macedo and Barroso (2010) showed that it is not.

Another demand of the program is for those selected to declare financial capacity to afford their time Brazil by their own. In addition, students must dedicate themselves exclusively to studies, so they are forbidden to be hired for formal work purposes. "As we can see, even though there are other criteria for the selection of candidates, for example, high school background, economic power is still very relevant in the selection of candidates for the program" (CABRAL, 2015, p. 73). However, it is possible for students to participate in all public notices and aids to which Brazilian students are entitled, such as a discount at the university restaurant, tutoring scholarships, participation in junior companies and scholarships for scientific research, among others. We found Africans participating in public notices like those. They considered such activities strategic at improving their academic and linguistic performance.

Still on the financial issue, we found during an interview with the international advisory body at UFSJ, that it is common for foreign students to certify their financial capacity as a means of coming to the country; however, once they are settled in the university, they request assistance as a matter of urgency. Thinking of such cases, in 2003 the Brazilian government instituted the Milton Santos Project for Access to Higher Education (PROMISAES³) which consists of a monthly aid of R \$ 622.00 to students who prove their situation of vulnerability and present a good academic performance. As Cabral (2015) points out, students from African countries are the main recipients, constituting 91% in 2010, out of 749 beneficiaries in total.

According to a list published on MEC portal, there are 109 institutions accredited to the PEC-G and they are organized as follows:

Midwest Region: 10 institutions, 5 federal, 3 state and 2 private, distributed among States or Federation Units: Distrito Federal (2), Goiás (4), Mato Grosso do Sul (2) and Mato Grosso (2). Northeast Region: 23 institutions, 18 federal, 3 state and 2 private, distributed among the States: Alagoas (2), Bahia (5), Ceará (5), Maranhão (2), Paraíba (3), Pernambuco (3), Rio Grande do Norte (2), Sergipe (1) and Piauí (1). North Region: 8 institutions, 7 federal and 1 private, distributed among the States: Amazonas (1), Pará

³ There are also the financial aids known as MRE scholarship and "merit" scholarship.

According to data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019), there are currently 59 countries composing the internationalization strategies proposed in the PEC-G, among them, 25 countries in Africa, 25 in Latin America and the Caribbean and 9 countries in Asia. There were 10,670 students selected between the years 2000 to 2019⁴, with the African continent accounting for 75% of them. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs informs that the courses that offered most vacancies are: Languages, Social Communication, Business Administration, Biological Sciences and Pedagogy. However, research indicates (MACEDO; BARROSO, 2010), (CABRAL, 2015) that the courses mostly sought by foreigners belong to areas such as Medicine and Engineering and the reasons why they choose these courses may be related to greater demands for specialized labor in their countries and/or the possibility of achieving a certain social status.

Among the five countries that most sent students to Brazil in these 20 years are Cape Verde (3,169), Guinea-Bissau (1,416), Angola (753), Democratic Republic of Congo (552) and Benin (487). They represent 80% of the African countries participating in the PEC-G. We also highlight that, among the five African countries that most provided mobility via PEC-G, two of them (Democratic Republic of Congo and Benin) have French as their official language and not Portuguese.

Interestingly, although not being the subject of this article, when collecting information about students via PEC-PG (Post-graduation), the presence of African students is reduced. MRE data shows that between 2000 and 2019, 2,060 (68%) students from Latin American and Caribbean countries were selected, mostly from Colombia (724) and Peru (344). 870 students were selected from African countries, with 485 Mozambicans and 163 Cape Verdeans. Finally, only 97 Asian students were selected during this period.

For students who have graduated in Brazil, one of the requirements for the selection in the PEC-PG is the permanence in their country of origin for a minimum period of two years (MRE / PEC-PG, 2019). Next, we relate politics and the desire for a degree to the theory of capitals proposed by Pierre Bourdieu, reflecting on the presence or not of these capitals in the different processes, between the coming and training by which foreigners go through.

4 HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE SEARCH FOR CULTURAL CAPITAL

In this section, the concepts of *habitus*, Field and Capital (Cultural, Social, Economic and Symbolic) will be essential to raise hypotheses about foreigners' motivation to come to study in Brazil. Cabral (2015) says that one of the motivations for students of African origin to seek formation on the PEC-G program is

⁴ The results of the selection process that approved 515 foreigners for entry into the first and second semester of 2020 in Brazilian higher education institutions have already been released (MRE, 2020).

the desire to acquire Cultural Capital, materialized in university-level degrees. We realized in our investigations that, for them, this is one of the few opportunities for reaching higher education, seen as a form of emancipation through the acquisition and/or increase not only of Cultural Capital, but also of Social, Symbolic and consequently Economic Capital.

Once in the Academic Field, students tend to reproduce a specific *habitus*, that is, incorporated dispositions of being or acting. “The good player”, does what is necessary to do, tends to act strategically, aware of the rules of the game in favor of promoting or maintaining his position on the field (BOURDIEU, 2004). Our participants reported difficulties with the challenges that permeate the Academic Field in which they are inserted, the most reported being the Portuguese Language. This is a recurring complaint in all of our interviews (SANTOS, 2019), also appearing in the report of African students from Portuguese-speaking countries, an aspect also highlighted by Macedo and Barroso (2010). However, the difficulties are reduced or solved with the adoption of study strategies that focus precisely on the desire to acquire the desired degree, which includes meeting the expectations of the institution.

“The sense of the game, in this case, is more or less the sense of honor” (Ibidem, p. 87). For many, playing satisfactorily is achieving the title and returning to their country of origin with proper aptitude to contribute to national issues. Involved in the discussion, we have the concepts of Cultural Capital, regarding the capacity of perception and meeting the demands legitimized by the dominant culture, regarding school success, materialized in universities by the degrees that grant professional competence; Social Capital, which relates to the social relations in which the individual engages and that can result in some benefit, represented by the friendly and cooperative relationships with Brazilian or foreign professors and colleagues; Economic Capital, related to material possessions; and, Symbolic Capital, related to the recognition, reputation or prestige acquired in a given Social Field (BOURDIEU, 1989).

In addition, there is a desire for a degree, since, in order to higher education to be achieved, these students find themselves in the middle of power relations and desire for greater prominent positions when they return, culminating in the search for the capitals above described. Some interviews validate such interest in returning to help with national issues, however, as with a Cape Verdean participant, the desire to carry on with studies is something that can be acquired throughout their formation here, which, in the case of this student, ended up postponing his return, due to approval in the Master's Degree course. This continuity is even favored by the PEC-PG.

Cabral (2015) points out that, although the PEC-G is an important educational policy offering formation, mostly to African students, the term of financial responsibility excludes foreigners with low acquisitive power: “The family, as the first institution socialization of individuals, ends up being one of the great bases during their entrance and the trajectory of these young people in Brazilian higher education, through their economic and symbolic help” (CABRAL, 2015, p. 166). Despite the term, many foreigners,

as we saw in the previous section, demand aid from institutions after their arrival in Brazil and, for this reason, financial support policies are offered to them. We can understand that “going around” the term of financial responsibility is a strategy so the possibility of studies can be achieved, assigning a secondary place to defrayal, in view of the possibility of receiving a degree, which can be better understood with the extract below:

- a) students from elite families who can pay the required income through the Financial Responsibility Term;
- b) students of middle or upper class who are assisted by governments of the countries of origin, granting a monthly financial aid grant;
- c) students who need to circumvent the law, as they do not have the necessary resources required, looking for third parties to sign the document symbolically, without having to send the declared amount in the future (CABRAL, 2015, pp. 21-22).

This author found that there are three types of students who apply for the program. This defrayal, used by the “elites” to maintain theirs in Brazil, corresponds to at least four hundred dollars (400 USD) per month and the person responsible for signing the Financial Responsibility Term must prove an income of at least one thousand and two hundred dollars (1200 USD). However, the average minimum wage in African countries does not exceed 150 USD⁵. Just as an example, today (08/28/2020), one US dollar corresponds to R\$5.45, in a simple conversion, the highest minimum wage (Cape Verde), would correspond to R\$ 817.65, lower than Brazil's current minimum wage of R\$ 1,045.00. With the rise in the dollar, it is not possible to say that PROMISAES scholarship today exceeds the amount paid as minimum wage in Cape Verde. However, it is worth considering that this scholarship represents an important income during the students' stay in Brazil (approximately 114.11 USD). It is worth mentioning that the 400 dollars required by the Brazilian government is equivalent today to R\$ 2.180,40 which allows families that have the financial capacity to afford their relatives with this amount, leave them in a more comfortable situation, in relation to those who need the scholarship.

The Social Capital of these students is activated even before their arrival in Brazil, in the process between becoming aware of the possibility of studies and their coming. Their relations in their countries can provide them with access to professionals at embassies who can provide relevant information or even conversations with relatives and friends who study or have already done their studies here, influence in the decision. In our research and also in Cabral (2015), the speech of foreigners highlights the little access to information about the country and the destination university, in addition to the reception on their arrival in Brazil, which is usually in charge of colleagues of the same nationality. In many cases, students are warned about words that should not be used in the Brazilian context because they have different meanings and, in

⁵ Some minimum wages in 2014: Angola: 124 USD; Guinea-Bissau: 60 USD; Cape Verde: 157 USD; Saint Thomas and Prince: 53 USD; and Mozambique 100 USD (CABRAL, 2015, p. 21).

general, bad connotations (bixa = queue, bribe = fees commonly paid, rapariga = young girl⁶). This behavior is transmitted to new students, many of them are attentive to the lists of people who passed the subsequent exams to also perform this “work” of mediation and cooperation.

Although they seem to recognize the importance of Social Capital, especially among equals, relations between foreign students, more specifically Africans, are usually limited to foreigners from the same continent. For Africans at UFSJ, as there are few students linked to the university and they are in different cities, this contact is difficult. Therefore, Brazilian students are included in the networks or include African students. Nevertheless, this contact is not free of tension. Macedo and Barroso (2010) highlighted that, in academic works, Africans should initially demonstrate their academic skills to Brazilian colleagues before being included in the groups.

In our research, we did not evidence tense relationships, but studies have shown that they do occur, based mainly on racism and xenophobia as shown by Cabral (2019). The author highlights several cases involving police brutality, pejorative assimilation of these students to animals, comments on their intellectual abilities by professors and colleagues, situations in which shopkeepers or taxi drivers decide to take advantage of their condition as a foreigners, considering that they have 'money to spend' with abusive fees and unnecessary routes, among others.

Not rarely, Brazilians demonstrate wrong information and opinions about African countries, as reported by one of our interviewees, when a colleague believed that Africa was a country and not a continent, a situation clarified by the student. In general, African students are very supportive when they talk about their country and their culture to those who do not know them and they do it proudly.

Regarding the Symbolic Capital, we understand that it is involved in the actions of universities engaged in internationalization practices, which acquire prestige and can improve their grade in international rankings and, consequently, it is also involved in the students' own conceptions. As noted above, the choice of institution or state is not possible. Many students arrive in Brazil without knowing the city where they are going to study and with short knowledge about universities that are not as well known as USP and UFMG, for example. However, many factors contribute for the Symbolic Capital to be perceived in their speech, such as the recognition of the chosen area or even the fact that they are in Brazil, and have the opportunity to influence the political decisions of their countries in the future.

In summary, students from the PEC-G use the capitals described by Bourdieu to deal with the demands in the Academic Field, including acquiring certain *habitus* that can allow them to fulfill the expectations of professors and the institution itself. We believe that being approved at CELPE-BRAS is one of the essential requirements to enter higher education that many, already on Brazilian grounds, do not

⁶ Translator's Note: In Brazil, unlike some other Portuguese-speaking countries, these words are popular terms for fag (bixa), bribe (propina), hooker (rapariga) respectively.

reach. Logically, Economic Capital also appears as a primary factor and such need can be circumvented with the scholarships offered by the Brazilian government and the government of their countries of origin. However, we believe that this constitution of capital occurs in a process prior to entering Brazilian higher education institutions, in the trajectories of students, but that intensifies in the academic routine, as shown in our investigations. The following section presents impressions from African students on participation in the PEC-G.

5 NARRATING THE PEC-G: WHAT DO AFRICAN STUDENTS SAY ABOUT THEIR ARRIVAL IN BRAZIL?

As pointed out in the introduction, this is an excerpt specifically aimed to analyze the relations established between African students at UFSJ and the PEC-G as a policy of internationalization and mobility. Our cut is related to the scenario shown above, which shows a predominance of Cape Verde (3,169) in the basis of African students in Brazil associated to the program. Among the four students interviewed, two are from Cape Verde and two from Saint Thomas and Prince, taking courses in Biochemistry and Agronomic Engineering.

For students, UFSJ was not a first option, since the candidate is not allowed to choose the higher education institution in which he/she will study in the registration, they only indicate courses and cities of preference. As reported by Marisa, in many cases students receive the result with the indication of the institution without having previous knowledge about the it or city where they will study:

[...] even the choice of this university was based on the indication of a namesake of mine who works at the Brazilian embassy in my country that she talked about Lavras and Viçosa there, I had even made the enrollments there but only after that I was assigned to São João del-Rei [...] I didn't know anything, I didn't even know where it was, I knew it was in Minas Gerais (Marisa, Saint Thomas and Prince, Agronomic Engineering).

Márcia demonstrates a reality already known by many African students, which is the fact that they grow up knowing that they will leave their country to study: “[...] where I live, we already grow up knowing that one day we can leave the country, right, to study, and several countries offer vacancies in universities” (Márcia, Cape Verde, Biochemistry). She pointed out, as well as the other interviewees, that there were other options besides Brazil, however, in many countries, education is not free which makes a difference in their choice. Another aspect raised, which is also highlighted by Joaquim in the fragment below, is the fact that practically all the interviewees indicated cities where they know there are more institutions internationally known at the time of registration. These indications are not necessarily followed.

[...] the university, I had chosen another university, but they put me at UFSJ, I had chosen UFMG. You have to see if the university is choosing, the course you have chosen. Everyone asks me this:

Brazil, I always wanted to study abroad, always, always my dream was to study abroad, I wanted to have another type of knowledge, you know, cultural knowledge, another learning, that is, to live alone, then my course in particular, I saw that Brazil is one of the great pillars of agriculture [...] (Joaquim, Cape Verde, Agronomic Engineering).

It is noticeable, with the excerpt above, that studying in Brazil is a decision that adds several variables: financial matter, country in which the course is more renowned, taking into account the possibilities of the candidates, the linguistic matter, among others. The fact that Brazil is a Portuguese-speaking country attracts to a large extent Africans from Portuguese-speaking countries, there are also indications from friends or relatives who had this experience, whose advice is heard and respected by these students.

According to the students, after the confirmation of the approval, it is necessary for each one of them to register at the institution on an established date with the documents previously requested. According to Jessica, there were not many previous instructions about this process or even about the university in question. When asked if she was somehow received when she arrived in Brazil, the student states that she only talked to an employee responsible for collecting her documents for the enrollment that showed her some of the campus facilities: "the day I went there to enroll, the person who made my registration only showed me some parts of the university, but, like, the reception, the reception itself, I didn't have" (Jessica, Cape Verde, Biochemistry).

As a network of relationships and sociability ends up being established between students who are already in Brazil and students who are arriving, Márcia reports she had great help from a cousin and our other interviewee Jessica concerning issues like her reception at the airport, looking for a place to live, getting to know the city or the campus. The lack of knowledge also includes not knowing that the university to which she was assigned for has other campuses, as in the case of UFSJ, which has units in the cities of São João del-Rei, Divinópolis, Sete Lagoas and Ouro Branco. Márcia initially believed that she would study in São João del-Rei, but her campus is in the city of Divinópolis.

[...] really, in this matter of the university assisting in our arrival here, I think they are right, if I didn't have this help, they wouldn't even ask or offer anything about it, but I also didn't ask any questions, didn't ask for any help, and they did not offer help, so I can't say if the college helps with this, but I don't think so, and that is very bad. We arrive and don't know anything, neither how to take a taxi or anything else, and things here are totally different. For the record, I had never taken the bus, the first time I took the bus here, I almost fell down because I didn't know anything (Márcia, Cape Verde, Biochemistry).

For Marisa, the situation was similar. According to her, the behavior of the institution's employee indicated that she did not know that the student would arrive or how to proceed with her enrollment, asking Marisa to return on another date to complete it, since she needed to check how the procedure should be done. Joaquim, who claims to have been the first student in the program on the Sete Lagoas campus, also reports difficulties communicating with the institution before his enrollment was completed.

According to him, the emails sent were not answered and what helped him was a random contact made with one of the university's students on a social network. Joaquim realized by the profile that he was a student at the institution and sent a message with questions, even without knowing him, still in Cape Verde:

[...] I logged in and found a person, then I sent a message and the person said like this, I said that I am from abroad, told about my situation, that I was going to arrive in February and that I wanted a place to stay there, the person understood my situation and said: "Okay, I'll do the following then, I'll find out, find somewhere for you to stay, then when you arrive here in Brazil, in BH you let me know" [...] (Joaquim, Cape Verde, Agronomic Engineering).

As explained by the student (who at the time of the interview was in the process of completing his course) there is apparently no prior contact from the institution of destination with the student selected by PEC-G. With the disclosure of the selection result, it is possible for the student to know which university he was assigned to. However, according to Joaquim, at the time of the interview, the institution's International Advisory Office, the department that recently started to deal with the PEC-G program at UFSJ, contacts him frequently to find out if there are any problems going on, something that did not happen with the department that kept their track previously.

The earliest selection on the program's website at the MRE dates back to 2012, with entry in 2013. This year, the disclosure was made in a table in which the following information was passed on: student's name, higher education institution, course, year and semester of admission and the student's country of origin. Since the 2013 selection, with entry in 2014, the campus information was added to the table. In addition, since the first registration of the selection result, the information: "It is the student's full responsibility to check the dates of enrollment and the beginning of classes" (MRE, 2013) is available, text that accompanies the selection results until the present date.

We noted in the interviews the clear intention of students to return to their countries to contribute to economic and social development using the knowledge acquired in this exchange experience in Brazil. Joaquim, who is currently pursuing a master's degree, told us about the importance of this training and constant professional improvement in a scenario in which his country is lacking in formation in several areas. Clearly, the experience provided by PEC-G may be able to offer opportunities that these students would unlikely have in other countries.

[...] I think it will be of great value to do that because, in a way, Cape Verde is a country that is still in development, a very young country and I would be making a great contribution both in terms of training, and in terms of experience. And in a way Cape Verde is in need of all areas, both in the humanities, human resources segment, which is what will make a difference. In the political issue, it has to improve, it has to train young people for the job market, to renew, to provide several learnings [...] (Joaquim, Cape Verde, Agronomic Engineering).

Finally, we highlight that a question was asked to these students about places of reference in the sense of belonging and their culture. The response was unanimous in stating that, for the, in the cities where they were, there were no demonstrations referring the African culture. Only in the city of Belo

Horizonte, capital of the state and nearest metropolis, with the largest number of Africans (because of UFMG), meetings were previously scheduled so that they could meet, dance and eat typical foods. We understand that, with the presence of foreign students in the country, such activities could have better use, if the university sought, through internationalization actions, to promote greater contact between Brazilians and foreigners, what could also be an interaction among foreigners themselves, including encouraging meetings like the ones that students go to in Belo Horizonte in smaller urban centers. Moving on to the following section with our final remarks.

6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We end this text by emphasizing the importance of the PEC-G as a public policy of cooperation between Brazil and developing countries, which provides, in addition to the physical mobility of foreign students, the possibility of expanding or appropriating important capital for the degree at the higher-level education. The globalization processes culminate in the internationalization of higher education and the policy is developed in a scenario that is not immune to power and subordination relations. Authors such as Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2011) defend the need to engage in the desire to reinvent a 21st century university, in favor of building emancipatory knowledge and valuing South-South relations.

It is present in our investigations and in other published research, the importance of engagement and exchange in Brazilian higher education institutions between Brazilian and foreign students and the potential of the PEC-G towards intercultural formation. It is essential that internationalization, in addition to providing visibility in rankings and prestigious positions, acts as an enhancer of human capabilities and the PEC-G provides us with a great opportunity to promote this contact.

This program is developed with a relatively stable number of new entrants (there were 515 with entry in the first and second semester of 2020) and selects annually, through its own notice, allocating places for public and private higher education institutions that choose to reserve vacancies in their units. Despite being a challenging experience, the search for the acquisition of Cultural and Symbolic Capital seems to move our interviewees amid the desire to return to their original countries and to actively contribute with the acquired knowledge.

We believe that a more active participation in universities can benefit more effective contacts between Brazilians and Africans and among Africans themselves. It is necessary to engage these young people and assist them in their specificities, both in academic and in cultural and critical formation. This service goes through a high-quality reception that provides relevant information and really contributes so that the experience in our country is enjoyed in its best. In addition, it is necessary to follow, in future

investigations, the trajectories of the students who have been part of this policy, seeking to understand the impact of the PEC-G on the lives and countries of origin of these students.

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