Educação em Revista
ISSN: 0102-4698
ISSN: 1982-6621
Faculdade de Educação da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais

Oliveira, Adriana Leonidas de; Freitas, Maria Ester de
MOTIVAÇÕES PARA MOBILIDADE ACADÊMICA INTERNACIONAL:
A VISÃO DE ALUNOS E PROFESSORES UNIVERSITÁRIOS
Educação em Revista, vol. 32, núm. 3, 2016, Julho-Setembro, pp. 217-246
Faculdade de Educação da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais

DOI: 10.1590/0102-4698148237

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MOTIVATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC MOBILITY: THE PERSPECTIVE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND PROFESSORS

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ABSTRACT: The present study seeks to analyze the motivations of university students and professors for their international academic mobility and to provide a better understanding of the advantages this experience can bring to their personal, professional and academic lives. The empirical research was conducted with thirty Brazilian and foreign students, as well as with Brazilian professors, who have all chosen international mobility as part of their academic formation. The information obtained was submitted to thematic content analysis, a process that was supported by Ethnograph software. Bourdieu's theoretical perspective was used for interpretation. Results pointed out personal, academic, and professional motivations in the three interviewed groups, although among the Brazilian students personal factors had a stronger influence, which can be related to their age and phase of development. Academic and professional motivations, however, prevailed among the professors and foreign students, the majority of whom were at the post-graduate level.

Keywords: Internationalization of Higher Education. International Academic Mobility. Motivational factors.

MOTIVAÇÕES PARA MOBILIDADE ACADÊMICA INTERNACIONAL: A VISÃO DE ALUNOS E PROFESSORES UNIVERSITÁRIOS

RESUMO: O presente estudo tem como objetivo analisar as motivações de alunos e professores universitários para realização da mobilidade acadêmica internacional, podendo contribuir com um melhor aproveitamento pessoal, profissional e institucional dessa experiência. A pesquisa empírica foi conduzida com 30 estudantes, brasileiros e estrangeiros, e professores brasileiros que optaram pela mobilidade internacional como parte da sua formação acadêmica. O material obtido foi submetido à análise de

http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/0102-4698148237

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conteúdo temática, cujo tratamento foi auxiliado pelo software *Ethnograph*. A perspectiva teórica de Bourdieu foi adotada para interpretação. Os resultados apontaram motivações pessoais, acadêmicas e profissionais nos três grupos de entrevistados, embora entre os alunos brasileiros os fatores pessoais tenham se manifestado com maior força, o que pode estar vinculado à própria idade e ao estágio de formação que vivem. Entre os alunos estrangeiros, a grande maioria de pós-graduação, e entre os professores, as motivações acadêmicas e profissionais prevalecem.
Palavras-chave: Internacionalização da educação superior. Mobilidade acadêmica internacional. Fatores motivacionais.

INTRODUCTION

We live in a globalized society and the force exercised by globalization can be seen in different fields, such as economics, politics and culture, and also in the field of education. One of the great sources of wealth of societies today is associated with their knowledge capital, which generates new discoveries and new inventions and leads to advances in technology that are getting increasingly more rapid and significant. This panorama drove the internationalization movement in higher education, which has grown stronger on the world scene, and particularly since the 1990s. It is also beginning to signal the reality of many universities around the world as being veritable "global campuses", not only because of the human diversity they represent, but because they develop an intercultural mentality as part of their way of being in the world.

The current internationalization in higher education shows that there are many possibilities for developing cooperation between universities, such as scientific, technological or cultural collaboration, joint research teams, shared diplomas, the mutual acceptance of graduate and post-graduate students and the mobility of their teachers, indicating that the internationalization process in higher education institutions involves a broad set of policies, strategies, actions and players.

Academic mobility programs are one of the main modalities of international academic cooperation that for some time now have been implemented on a worldwide basis for effectively establishing and strengthening the internationalization process in higher education. Although academic mobility is by no means a new phenomenon, it has become a study category that is very relevant at the beginning of this century due to the intensity with which it has manifested itself, as evidenced by the numbers (UNESCO, 1998, 2009). Since 1999 there has been an increase of 53% in the number of international

students in circulation, which represents average growth of 5.5% a year (UNESCO, 2009). The estimated number of foreign students in the world in 2010 was 4.1 million (OECD, 2012) and exponential expansion is forecast over the next few years as a result of the increase in student expectations, the benefits accruing to the higher education institutions involved, improvements in the quality of human capital and the competitiveness that mobility can provide, especially in emerging economies (VÁZQUEZ et al., 2014).

Despite international student mobility not having the same meaning and importance in every region in the world (KNIGHT, 2014; LIMA; CONTEL, 2011), the internationalization of higher education has moved center stage in the educational directives of Latin American countries. In Brazil, too, academic mobility is a phenomenon that has grown in numbers and relevance, since changes to the direction in which democratic public policies of internationalization in higher education are implemented are beginning to be outlined (LIMA; CONTEL, 2011).

This article seeks to contribute towards an understanding of the phenomenon of academic mobility in Brazil, where studies and analyses are still few and far between. The objective of this research is to analyze what motivates both university students and professors to become academically mobile internationally. It is based on the qualitative research we carried out, in which we sought to understand the perspective of Brazilian students and professors who undertook studies abroad as part of their academic formation, as well as that of foreign students who came to Brazil with this purpose in mind. We believe that the interpretation of experiences enables us to go into the meaning and the choice process of international mobility in greater depth and this can become a powerful aid for defining academic guidelines and incentives with the university population.

Taking as the basis the notion of symbolic capital as presented in the work of Bourdieu (1982, 2003, 2006), in this work we propose dealing with the issue of mobility, understanding it as something good or of value, and more specifically as symbolic capital in the contemporary world: mobility capital (FREITAS, 2005; 2008; 2009; ALLEMAND, 2004; MURPHY-LEJEUNE, 2007, 2003, 2002). This perspective is justified by the fact that mobility today has acquired great value, not only in professional life, because of the strategic needs of organizations, but it is also characterized as being a broader demand of society, which is crying out for fluidity, movement and change (FREITAS, 2005).

Mobility as symbolic capital can be seen as an inner disposition, as learning and the exercise of opening up to constant changes, which

represents almost an ideology, according to which stability begins to appear as being something negative and problematic (FREITAS, 2009). With this we mean that while mobility capital is also the result of personal choice, it is not limited to such. We cannot ignore that there is also an appeal, a demand from the market and from organizations that need professionals who have this capital so they can have a competitiveness differential in a global market. Denying this reciprocity would be reinforcing an ideological bias that encourages mobility in the individual as a merely individual and glamorized project. Mobility capital is based on skills and competences that are particularly valued currently (ALLEMAND, 2004), with learning and learning about the diversity that exists in the world representing a desire for the individual, but also a need for society (FREITAS, 2009).

Murphy-Lejeune (2002; 2007) discusses the construction of mobility capital in the university context and defines it as a component of human capital that expresses both the starting point and the richness accumulated during the mobility experience, seeing that it comprises the family and personal history, linguistic competences, mobility experiences and the individual's personality traits, like flexibility and openness to what is new and to cultural differences. Mobility capital expresses a broadening of the feeling of identity, of personal growth and intellectual maturity, these conquests being transferable to other situations in life that go beyond the university aspect, since it is a "knowing how to be" that encompasses "knowing how to do" and includes other aspects of knowledge, in the best Bourdieu tradition (BOURDIEU, 2006; 2003; 1982).

Academic mobility, which has been sought by an ever-growing number of people, is one of the actions within the context of the internationalization of higher education that can contribute towards the development of the mobility capital of students and professors. Turning it into a reality, however, demands a complex process of adaptation of the individual to academic, social, cultural and psychological factors (LAUERMANN, 2012). So understanding the motivation behind seeking academic mobility and the expectations associated with it can favor an understanding of this phenomenon and make a contribution towards providing better quality educational guidance, anticipating student needs and preventing different types of adaptation problem. It can also contribute towards taking greater advantage of the experiences and intercultural learning of the various players involved.

With a view to meeting the objectives proposed, this article is structured in three parts: a brief review of the literature of the scenario involving the topic, the methodological procedures adopted

and a presentation and interpretation of the data collected in the field, which leads us to the final considerations.

THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC MOBILITY

We can understand the internationalization of higher education as being "the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution" (KNIGHT, 1993, p.7). It is a consensus in literature that internationalization is a mark of the relationships between universities and is not, therefore, a recent phenomenon, although it intensified on the world stage as from the 1990s with the speeding up of the globalization process (MOROSINI, 2006; STALLIVIERI, 2004; LIMA; CONTEL, 2011; KNIGHT, 2012; CASTRO; CASTRO NETO, 2012; GUIMARÃES; TADEUCCI; OLIVEIRA, 2013). This affirmation is sustained by the fact that the international character of universities has been present since the Middle Ages, with the setting up of the European schools. These schools, which were called *universitas,* had professors and students from different regions and countries in Europe, who came together around the same objective, which was the search for and construction of knowledge.

Mobility programs have grown stronger over the last few decades and stand out as being the most fertile fields for international academic cooperation (KNIGHT, 2014; VÁZQUEZ et al., 2014; LAUERMANN, 2012; DE WIT, 2010; ALTBACH, 2008). The 1980s can be indicated as representing a phase in the advance of mobility on a large scale, strongly encouraged by the creation of programs by the European Union. Recognized as programs that had a great repercussion in the European Community, like Socrates and Erasmus, they developed mobility in various areas and were rolled out as different cooperation programs, like the university consortiums, which promoted multilateral cooperation and make it possible for thousands of students to move every year (STALLIVIERI, 2004).

UNESCO also emphasized the importance of mobility in the World Conference on Higher Education, which was held in Paris in 1998, in which trends in higher education for the 21st century were discussed. At this meeting, mobility was considered as a means which enables young people to show a growing awareness of the world and an interest in preparing themselves for living in an interdependent world (UNESCO, 1998).

To situate Brazil in the panorama of international university cooperation we can look again at the history of the process of

internationalization in higher education and the central role played by the state and by the federal government, which were responsible for the international cooperation programs that led to the introduction of the first public universities. So we can say that the start of the international cooperation policy in Brazil began between 1920 and 1930, with the founding of the federal universities of Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo (LIMA; CONTEL 2011).

According to Lima & Contel (2011), the internationalization process of Brazilian higher education can be divided into four periods, which are determined by motivations that were transformed over time due to the infrastructure, the players, and the interests involved in each period. The **first, inaugural period** (between 1930 and 1950) was marked by the presence of visiting professors who came from Europe to work in the young Brazilian universities. These international cooperation programs, therefore, laid an emphasis on welcoming these professors from foreign universities in order to consolidate the academic project of emerging Brazilian institutions. In the **second, reformist period**, (between 1960 and 1970), the programs emphasized the presence of American consultants and awarded scholarships for undertaking Master's and PhD studies abroad. So the motivations in this period were to train researchers and professionals to serve the modernization project of public institutions and the developmental project that had been formulated for Brazil. The **third, consolidation period** (in the 1980s and 1990s) emphasized academic and marketing aspects, as internationalization sought to expand and consolidate *stricto sensu* post-graduate programs in the country and to increase leading-edge research in strategic areas and the competitive differential found in some institutions and courses. The **fourth, diversification period** (from 2000 on) reflects the maturing of the internationalization process, which was managed and financed by government entities. This was when the first steps were taken in managed internationalization in private initiative.

Analysis of the panorama of the internationalization of higher education on the world stage enables us to see that in those countries that are at the center of the world system, the latter is consistently integrated with a state policy and is put into practice by the universities along with government ministries and agencies (LIMA; RIEGEL, 2013; LIMA; CONTEL 2011; LIMA; MARANHÃO, 2009). In countries that are peripheral and semi-peripheral to this, on the other hand, a category in which Brazil is situated, it seems there are difficulties when it comes to continually implementing democratic policies of internationalization that are long-lasting.

There is unquestionably a need to propose public policies that are capable of defining higher education internationalization priorities for Brazil that have medium and long-term objectives. Changes in this direction are already beginning to take shape, like the *Ciência sem Fronteiras* (CsF) Program [Science without Borders], the objective of which is to consolidate, expand and internationalize Brazilian science, technology, innovation and competitiveness by way of international exchange and mobility (CIÊNCIA SEM FRONTEIRAS, 2014). Although some distortions have been detected in its execution, the importance of a program of this breadth is not in question, especially when the assessment is that Brazil, as the seventh largest economy in the world, will be able to assume a greater presence in scientific and technological development in the near future.

Bearing in mind that mobility is the main visible characteristic of the internationalization process in education (KNIGHT, 2005, 2010), the factors that have an influence on the decision to have this type of educational formation need to be understood. We notice, however, that the main approach to the phenomenon has been by way of quantitative studies (LIMA, 2013; LIMA, et al., 2009; FINDLAY et al., 2012; LLEWELLYN-SMITH; MCCBE, 2008; TEICHLER, 2004, 1999).

METHOD

This study is exploratory in nature and was developed by way of a qualitative approach. Semi-structured interviews were carried out and analyzed using qualitative content analysis techniques.

Participating in the research were Brazilian and foreign graduate and post-graduate students, as well as Brazilian university professors, all attached to public or private universities in the State of São Paulo and who had chosen international mobility as part of their academic formation; these were the criteria adopted for their inclusion in the sample.

The data collection and analysis processes occurred at the same time and formation of the group of participants was guided by the theoretical sampling procedure. Theoretical sampling, a qualitative research tool proposed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 within the context of social research, suggests guiding the choice process of new research cases in order to compare them with other cases that have already been studied (STRAUSS; CORBIN, 1998; STRASS; CORBIN, 2008). So the objective of the researcher is not to collect a representative sample of all possible variations, but to have a deeper understanding of the cases analyzed, since this enables the categories identified to be developed in terms of their

properties and dimensions. Unlike statistical sampling, in which a random sample is sought that is representative of the population, in theoretical sampling the basic criterion for selecting the participants is their relevance when it comes to understanding the proposed thematic categories (OLIVEIRA, 2007).

So with the aim of maximizing opportunities for comparing the different experiences of international academic mobility, the sample group comprised 12 Brazilian students, 10 foreign students and 8 Brazilian professors, the characteristics of whom can be seen in Table 1:

TABLE 1 – Characterization of the participants

	Brazilian students	Foreign students	Brazilian professors
Gender	Female (8) Male (4)	Female (4) Male (6)	Female (4) Male (4)
Marital status	Married (0) Single (12)	Married (2) Single (8)	Married (4) Single (4)
Study area/ Formation	Social sciences (6) Biosciences (3) Sciences (3)	Arts (10)	Social sciences (6) Biosciences (2)
Average age when they moved	21 age	27 age	35 age
University of origin	Public (8) Private (4)	Public (5) Private (4)	Public (3) Private (5)
University of destination	Public (9) Private (3)	Public (1) Private (9)	Public (6) Private (2)
Country of origin	Brazil (12)	France (4); Germany (1); Colombia (1); Spain (1); Denmark (1); Angola (1) Mozambique (1)	Brazil (8)

Countries of destination	Italy (1); Spain (1) Portugal (2); France (3) United Kingdom (2); Germany (1); Singapore (1); Chile (1)	France (4); Germany (1); Colombia (1); Spain (1); Denmark (1); Angola (1) Mozambique (1)	France (2) Portugal (2) United States (3) Canada (1) Spain (1)
Reason for choosing to move	Graduate sandwich course (10) Master's (2) PhD (1)	Brazil (10)	Master's (1) Sandwich PhD (5) Post-doctoral studies (4)
Mobility modality	Institutionalized (12)	Graduate sandwich course (3) Master's (5) PhD (2)	Institutionalized (8)
Did they receive a scholarship (financial help) for the mobility?	Yes (7) No (5)	Institutionalized (10)	Yes (8)
Had they already traveled abroad before the mobility program?	Yes (8) No (4)	Yes (3) No (7)	Yes (8)
Had they already mastered the language?	Yes (9) No (3)	Yes, to other countries (10) and to Brazil (4) No (0)	Yes (4) Partially (4)
Length of the mobility program	A semester (7) A year (3) More than a year (2)	A semester (5) A year (3) More than a year (2)	1 semester (3) 1 year (4) More than 1 year (1) Several short-period stays (2)
Did their family accompany them?	No (12)	Yes (0) No (10)	Yes (3) No (5)

Source: Authors

For dealing with the data obtained in the interviews we used content analysis and, of the various forms that content analysis can assume (BARDIN, 1995), we chose analysis by thematic categories, which were constructed from text codification into units or elements, followed by a classification of these elements, in this case defined *a posteriori,* into the categories that were induced by the collection instrument used. Classification by themes is the most widely used variation of this technique.

Ethnograph v5.0 software (SEIDEL, 1998) was used as an auxiliary instrument in the data codification process. This software was developed to help with the handling process of qualitative data and offers resources that enable the researcher's analysis exercises to be recorded in suitable compartments and promptly consulted during the time the work is being undertaken. Ethnograph software does not do the codification work for the researcher, but helps with this process (SEIDEL; CLARK, 1984), as its tools enable the data to be organized, which facilitates content analysis.

Ethical issues

The procedures used in this research obey the Ethics Criteria in Research with Human Beings, in accordance with Resolution 466/12 of the National Health Council, the research project having been approved by Opinion 559,238/14.

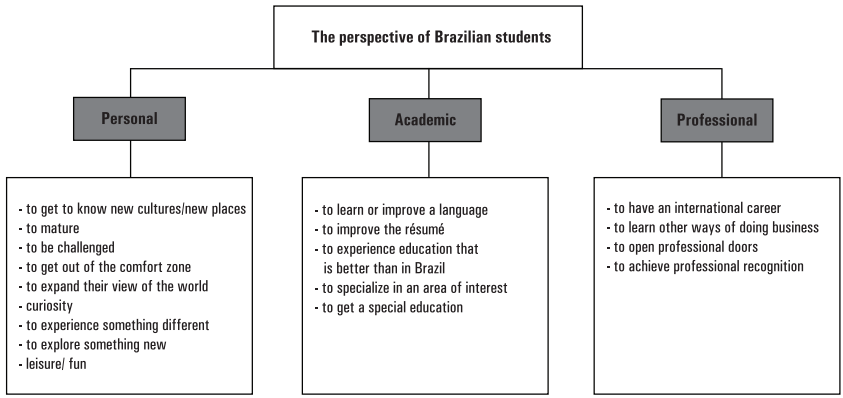
RESULTS

Three similar content categories were identified in the three groups analyzed. These were called: 1 – Personal motivations; 2 – Academic motivations; and 3 – Professional motivations. We found, however, that the elements varied in importance among the different groups surveyed. These references seem to be related to social, demographic, cultural and stage of formation characteristics of the respondents. The categories for each group studied will be presented and subsequently discussed comparatively.

The perspective of Brazilian students

Three thematic categories were identified (Figure 1), the first (personal motivations) being the most significant for Brazilian students.

FIGURE 1 – Brazilian student categories



Source: Authors.

With the exception of one female student, who indicated academic motivation as being central to her choice, the other Brazilian students who were interviewed indicated **personal motivations** in first place, as being the most significant element in the decision process for undertaking academic mobility. These motivations have to do especially with issues that involve the desire and interest the students have of getting to know new cultures and new places. Another element that also appears prominently in this category is the wish to mature. Maturing seems to be very closely linked to the desire to be challenged, to "get out of their comfort zone", to the need "to get by on their own", because they are living far from their families, and to their desire to expand their view of the world.

> I wanted to get to know new cultures. I always liked history a lot and so when the Science without Borders program appeared I registered. (P6, 21, female, doing a degree in Architecture)
>
> I believe that any experience that makes us get out of our comfort zone enriches us. Living away from home is an experience that makes you mature a lot. That's what I wanted. (P2, 19, female, doing a degree in Advertising and Marketing)

It was possible to identify that personal motivations, especially motivation linked to the desire to get to know different cultures and places, seem to be influenced by family experiences. The accounts of some students is evidence of this influence, to the extent that they say that they always came across examples of "mobility" in their family: parents who always traveled a lot in Brazil

or abroad, close relatives who had already lived, worked or studied abroad, parents who always encouraged them to learn cultural issues, like languages, the arts and literature.

> My parents always traveled a lot. They were forever visiting lots of places, so I always loved to travel with them, via photos. And so I was excited with this possibility of getting to know the world. (P8, 20, male, doing a degree in Business Administration)
>
> Because my father was in the army he worked in the United States and in Italy, so listening to stories from my father and also from my family, from my mother....so that was encouragement... our family has some immigrant elements in it. (P5,30, male, doing a PhD in Law)
>
> My family encourages me a lot to do everything that involves my cultural, professional and personal formation. (P7, female, 22, doing a degree in Economics)

The influence exercised by the social context also appears in the words of some of those interviewed, who say that mobility is something expected and to a certain extent required within their social and academic context.

> Almost all my friends have already done or intend doing an exchange [...] what's not common is someone **not** trying to do something abroad. (P1, 18, female, doing a degree in Law)
>
> Exchange in my university is part of the educational process; it's expected that practically everybody will do it. (P8, 20, male, doing a degree in Business Administration)

The family and social context seem, therefore, to be elements that are conducive to the willingness to try mobility and have an influence on the aspirations and personal projects of the students.

The motivations indicated by some students refer to their own personality characteristics, such as curiosity and the urge to explore what is new and experience what is different. "I think that it's in me.... I'm curious, I want to explore what's new." (P12, 23, male, doing a degree in Computer Engineering)

Personal motivation also involves the desire for pleasure and fun. As some students emphasized, because they still do not have professional or marital commitments this is a time in life that is very conducive to experiencing this desire. We perceive, therefore, that the students' age (21 years old on average), marital status (all single) and stage in their education (start of first degree) are all relevant factors driving this motivation.

Academic motivation is also very strong and was indicated by the majority of the students studied as being the second main motivation and by some as the main motivation. The desire to learn or improve another language and to enhance the résumé are the main

elements identified in this category. The expectation that they will have a better educational experience than in Brazil is also indicated, as shown in the words of Participant 3: "I used to think to myself 'I'm going to look for something better', so outside we think that everything's better, don't we? So I went to look for an alternative to improve my CV." (P3, 21, female, doing a degree in Biology)

Among other academic motivations we also find the desire to specialize in a particular area of interest. This desire, which was present in the two post-graduate students who went to do a Master's and a PhD abroad, was also identified in the words of one of the female graduate students, who seemed to be clearer than the others about her academic goals:

> [...] In was looking at other universities that focused on marine biology, because our course here is general biology. So I was looking to specialize in the area I wanted and in the universities abroad they could offer me this opportunity. (P3, 21, female, doing degree in Biology)
>
> I was looking to enrich my résumé in the precise subject I was looking to work in. The prestige of the laboratory and the university provided me with a special education. (P11, female, 25, doing a Master's in Cognitive Sciences)

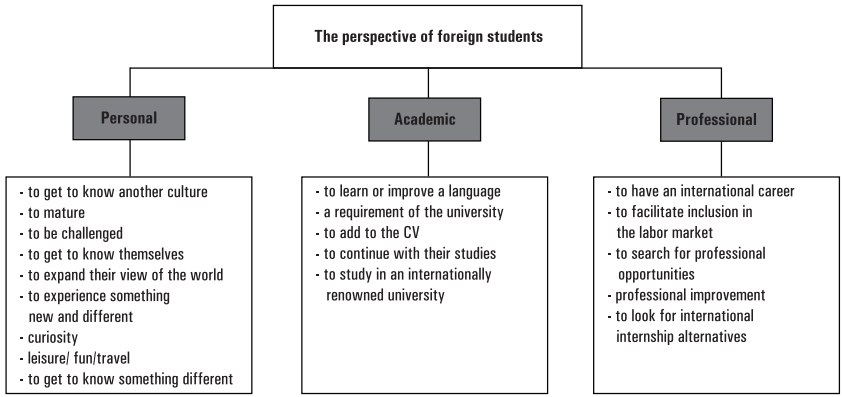
Professional motivations appear less strongly among the students interviewed. The desire to have an international career and the expectation of learning other ways of doing business were elements pointed to by some graduate students, especially those from the administration area. But the expectation that the mobility experience would open professional doors and bring professional recognition were motivations indicated only by post-graduate students, who seem to have a clearer picture in their minds when it comes to career planning.

> I expected to publish international articles, acquire experience and professional recognition [...] (P11, female, 25, doing a Master's degree in Cognitive Sciences)
>
> There was the professional stimulus, that studies abroad could open up this professional world to me... The University of Bordeaux is well-known in public law and that's my area professionally. (P5, 30, male, doing a PhD in Law)
>
> Professionally the course would give me different view of the law [...] (P5, 30, male, doing a PhD in Law)

The perspective of foreign students

Three categories of motivation were identified from analyzing the view of foreign students. These can be seen in Figure 2:

FIGURE 2 – Foreign student categories



Source: Authors.

Among the foreign students it was also possible to identify just how strong **personal motivations** were in the decision to undertake mobility. Like Brazilian students, the desire to get to know another culture, the wish to mature, to enjoy leisure and to have fun, and personal characteristics, like curiosity, stand out as drivers of mobility. Family experiences and the social context also appear as important influences for molding the motivation of foreign students. But unlike Brazilian students, **professional motivations** are in greater evidence. This scenario may be because our sample of foreign students mainly comprises post-graduate students (7), who are doing a Master's course (5 students) or a PhD (2 students) in Brazil. Since most are already professionals, the desire to acquire professional improvement, to make it easier for them to be included in the labor market and to lever their professional career with a mobility experience appear as prominent elements. The search for professional opportunities is also a motivation factor for mobility and also for choosing Brazil as the country of destination. Some students believe that because Brazil is an important economy in Latin America, today it offers good professional opportunities. Looking for an international internship alternative is also one of the motivations indicated.

> To find a job in Germany is kind of hard if you don´t have international experience. (P2,23, male, German, doing a degree in Business Administration)
>
> I think I have job opportunities here. (P3, 22, male, Colombian, doing a degree in Business Administration)
>
> I thought that Brazil was in good shape economically. I think it's a great

> opportunity now to do an internship here and, who knows, maybe look for work. I think that in my area Brazil is better than Europe. (P4, 26, female, Spanish, doing a Master's degree in Business Administration)
>
> I would like to have the opportunity of an internship in Brazil. (P2, 23, male, German, doing a degree in Business Administration)

Among the **academic motivations,** the desire to learn or improve another language was one of the elements identified. It was also a decisive factor for choosing Brazil as the country of destination. The similarity between Portuguese and Spanish, a language that some students had already mastered, or having fluent Portuguese (in the case of students from Mozambique and Angola) was a decisive factor when it came to choosing Brazil. **"**I also wanted to learn another language, Portuguese for me... I knew I could learn it because I already knew Spanish. Portuguese is a Latin language." (P9, 23, male, French, ding a Master's in International Management).

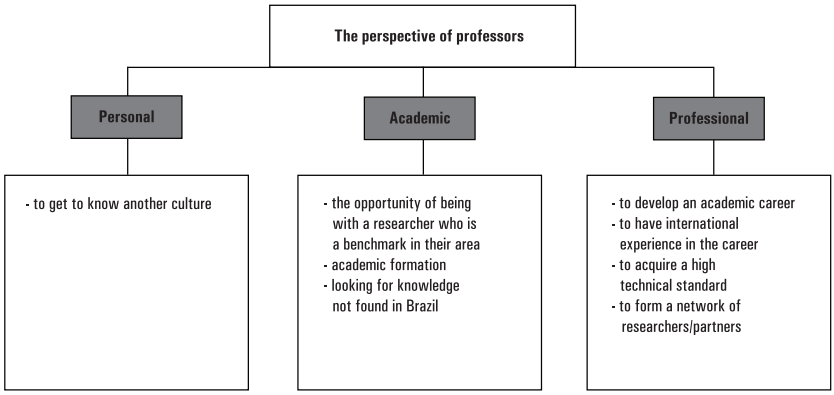
Some students also said that achieving mobility was the result of a requirement of their university of origin, since they could only conclude their post-graduate studies by way of international experience. But even for these students personal and professional motivations entered the picture. The possibility of enhancing their résumé by obtaining a double diploma was also a motivating element. The possibility of studying in a Brazilian university with international recognition and prestige was also a motivating element for the majority of the foreign interviewees.

Finally, among the academic motivations, we also identify the fact that the international mobility experience enabled some people to continue with their studies, which was indicated by students coming from Africa to do a PhD in Brazil. In this case we can perceive the strength of social, economic and educational aspects of the country of origin having an influence on the mobility option.
"The first point is that there's no PhD course in Mozambique." (P10, 45, male, Mozambican, doing a PhD in Business Administration).

The perspective of university professors

Based on an analysis of the experience of the university professors the same three thematic categories were also identified, although academic and professional motivations are intertwined and stand out in this group. Figure 3 shows the elements identified:

FIGURE 3 – University professor categories



Source: Authors.

In analyzing the motivation of the professors, it is obvious that **academic and professional motivations** override **personal motivations**. Only two professors indicate the wish to get to know another culture as an important factor in the decision to undertake academic mobility, because all of them had already had the experience of being abroad previously, especially in congresses, which to a certain extent had already given them some intercultural experience. We can see that although didactically separated between academic and professional motivations, the two are closely intertwined for the professors, since their professional motivations are linked to an academic career. The desire to develop an academic career, of having international experience in their career, of acquiring a high technical standard and forming a network of researchers and partners were elements identified in the **professional motivation** category. Based on an analysis of the words of the professors who were interviewed, we can see that they expect the mobility program experience to have the potential to bring benefits not only to their professional career individually, but also to lead to gains for the institution, since the formation of a network of researchers might lever more joint research and publications.

We perceive that **academic motivations** are very clear and matured, because with the exception of one case, all the other interviewees undertook mobility to achieve part of their PhD or a post-doctoral qualification. So the possibility of working with a researcher who is a benchmark in their area, the possibility of completing their academic formation and the desire to obtain knowledge not found in Brazil, were elements identified as being academic motivations.

> I do research in resilience and so studying in the University of Chicago and making this link with one of the main researchers in the area was a great opportunity... seeing how research is done there and what her work is like. (P1, female, did a sandwich PhD in psychology in the USA)
>
> First to acquire a technical standard in order to be able to do high level research. The second motivation is to establish a relationship with people. That's how you put together a network of researchers and you keep on working. You come up with results. (P4, male, did a sandwich PhD in the USA and post-doctoral studies in Portugal, both in Economics)
>
> International mobility is central... you have to take part... then you get to know people and people are going to get to know you and you start doing work with them. If you just stay here in Brazil it's very difficult to take part in this process (P4, male, did a sandwich PhD in the USA and post-doctoral studies in Portugal, both in Economics)
>
> International mobility is an interesting way of establishing ties, of getting to know people and of forming partnerships. (P3, male, did a sandwich PhD and post-doctoral studies in Sociology in France)
>
> The institutions that evaluate stricto sensu programs are demanding more internationalization. The first step is to establish partnerships, but that's not enough on its own. Partnerships are important, but you need to get products from this partnership; joint publications and actions that are developed together. The international mobility of the professor makes it possible to generate these products. (P6, male, did post-doctoral studies in Geography and Urban Planning in Portugal)

DISCUSSION

Analysis of the data obtained in this research and consultation of other texts that deal with student motivation to undertake international mobility allows us to come up with convergences in respect of the driving aspects identified. Personal, academic and professional motivations as a whole were also identified by Ramos (2009) and Teichler (2004). In a study that sought to verify the main reasons that had an influence on the decision taken by young Europeans to study abroad on the ERASMUS program, Teichler (2004) identified the opportunity for self-development and the desire to obtain experience and academic learning in another country, to improve their understanding of the culture of another country and to improve career prospects. In a Brazilian study, Ramos (2009) analyzed the motivations that lay behind 186 Brazilian students from the Federal University of Minas Gerais taking part in an international student mobility program. He identified that the young people he interviewed hoped that academic mobility would achieve a double function, in other words, they hoped to develop instrumental competences, like

linguistic improvement, but they also showed that they expected to form identity dispositions of tolerance and autonomy, which could be converted into future trump cards in academic and labor markets.

The various types of motivation found among Brazilian and foreign students reinforce the idea of mobility as symbolic capital (FREITAS, 2005; 2009; ALLEMAND, 2004; MURPHY-LEJEUNE, 2007, 2003, 2002). In other words, it seems that mobility is seen and experienced by students as a possibility for developing cultural capital, to the extent that they actually get to know new cultures, and more specifically as a possibility for developing mobility capital (FREITAS, 2005; 2009; MURPHY-LEJEUNE, 2007, 2003, 2002). Students expect that mobility will be able to expand not only their intellectual capital, but also provide them with maturity and self-knowledge, thus making them the protagonists of their own growth, which coincides with the findings of other researchers (LIMA et al., 2009; SILVA; PINTA, 2008; CICCHELLI, 2001). The search for personal autonomy is evidenced by the words of the students who were interviewed, when they say that moving away from the place where their parents live would force them "out of their comfort zone" and make them "get by on their own", by challenging their personal limits and expanding their view of the world. These aspects are particularly strong among the youngest students, which seems to provide evidence of the idea that mobility contributes to an effective entry into the adult world (OLIVEIRA; CERVENY, 2004).

The young average age of the Brazilian and foreign students interviewed, especially the graduate students, reinforces the data from other studies, which show that the university population has sought the mobility experience at an ever younger age and that there is a trend worldwide to bring forward the start of international formation (LIMA et al., 2009). This leads us to believe that mobility is increasingly gaining the status of a rite of passage to adult life.

Personal characteristics, like curiosity and the urge to explore what is new, and the influence of the family molding the desire to undertake academic mobility, also appear in the accounts of Brazilian and foreign students, since they state that travel experiences and incentives to explore inter-cultural life are found within the family context. Many of the students interviewed also report that academic mobility is something expected and even required in the social and cultural environment in which they find themselves and that family and academic structures exist for supporting this experience. This information shows that such aspects seem to have an influence on the development of the mobility

capital of these young people, which is beginning to be constructed even before they experience physical and spatial mobility itself.

Such ideas can be analyzed in the light of Freitas (2005; 2009), who suggests that we should think of the construction of mobility capital as occurring by way of such mechanisms. Something similar was proposed by Bourdieu & Passeron (1969), when they explain the reproduction of cultural capital. These mechanisms are: the **incorporated state**, referring to what the individual already brings with them, or what they were encouraged to undertake within their family and educational environments, which is the desire for adventure, curiosity and respect for differences; the **objectivized state,** which is the product of access to information, the learning of languages and mastery of technology; and the **institutional state**, which is encouraged and supplied by the university, by participation in study networks and by exchange experiences, training programs and government programs that promote education abroad. From this we can understand that mobility capital is not a gift, but a product of learning and socialization processes, which is similar to what Bourdieu says about the essence of cultural capital. But unlike what Bourdieu points out about what determines cultural capital, we have no evidence that *habitus* and class dispositions exclusively determine the acquisition of this new capital, although they seem to exercise an influence on it, as evidenced by our empirical data.

The social and cultural characteristics of the sample of Brazilian and foreign students that we studied seem to exercise an influence on the construction of mobility capital to the extent that these students come from the middle class in society, most had the opportunity to travel abroad previously and to learn languages and are encouraged by the family to undertake different cultural activities. But as Allemand (2004) emphasizes, mobility capital does not come from social, economic or cultural determinism. Referring to the work of Bourdieu, the author also defends the idea of mobility as capital, but points out that mobility capital is based on skills and competences and is also the result of the personal and strategic choices of the individual, although not limited to such.

In a similar way, we find the points made by Xavier de Brito (2004), who discusses the influence of *habitus* in the trajectories of Brazilian students abroad. The information she takes from her interviews shows that family dispositions, even when active, are not always incorporated in the sense of being reproduced. The author remembers that socialization differences may occur within the same kinship group.

Murphy-Lejeune (2002) also contributes to the discussion about the construction of mobility capital, which is influenced by many variables, including family and personal history, mobility experiences and linguistic competence, but also traits of personality, such as being open to what is different, flexibility and being open to others. All these aspects were identified in the accounts of our interviewees and appear as motivations for undertaking mobility as an academic experience.

The desire to learn or improve another language is strong academic motivation both for Brazilian and foreign students. Learning a new language as a motivating factor of mobility was also identified by other academics (LIMA; RIEGEL, 2013; RAMOS, 2009; LIMA et al., 2009; NOGUEIRA; AGUIAR; RAMOS, 2008; PRADO, 2004; DI VITO; PICHON, 2003).

It is interesting to observe that language is both a fact that motivates mobility, as well as having an influence on the student's choice of country of destination. Among foreign students, the similarity of Portuguese and Spanish, a language that some students had already mastered, was a decisive factor for choosing Brazil. The desire to master Portuguese was something indicated by the foreigners interviewed, due to the fact that Brazil is seen as a promising market. Among the Brazilian students, all of them talked about mastering English, but few chose English-speaking countries as their destination. We found that the desire to improve a third language motivated the interviewees to move to Spanish, French, German or Italian-speaking countries. Many say that this would be a differential in their résumé.

These results indicate the value attributed to languages, which are characterized as a form of capital (PRADO, 2004). It is also interesting to consider that the value attributed to the different languages may vary, as pointed out by Bourdieu (1987 apud PRADO, 2004, p.67): "[...] knowledge of English has an exchange value that is incomparably greater than knowledge of Spanish or Italian". However, the author remembers "[...] the weight of different languages may vary over time". In this sense, the force of the English language in the academic and professional environment is unquestionable. However, competitiveness in the professional world seems to be leading students to seek more and more diversification in their linguistic capital, which is an important motivation for academic mobility and for the decisions taken as to destination.

Analysis of the academic motivations of Brazilian and foreign students also allows us to formulate other reflections. Although these have been indicated by most Brazilians as being the second biggest

motivation, but also by some as being the biggest, the content of these replies ends up revealing little about academic projects, especially among graduate students. The main elements are the desire to perfect another language and improve the résumé, which reveals more general perspectives. Studying in a particular educational institution to achieve specific content was indicated by just one graduate student. Also looking for post-graduation alternatives abroad was not indicated by graduate students. This is in line with the findings of Lima et al. (2009) and Lima & Riegel (2013), who in both of their studies also identified that the motivators of international exchange in their sample of Brazilian students bore little relationship to aspects relating to academic formation and were mainly associated with the possibility of enjoying an intercultural experience and improving the proficiency level of a foreign language.

Among the foreign students, who were a little older (average age 27, in contrast to the average age of 21 of the Brazilian students interviewed) and mostly post-graduate students, academic projects are revealed more clearly and seem to be linked to professional motivations. The possibility of studying in a university that is internationally recognized and has prestige in their area of study and is in a promising country in terms of professional opportunities, which might lever their career, are among the motivations mentioned. It is interesting to observe that even one of the foreign graduate students interviewed reveals that one of his motivations was the desire to look for an alternative international internship during the period of mobility, which was yet another factor motivating the experience. It is here worth pointing out that some of the foreign students interviewed come from the social sciences area, and more specifically from the Management area. The Economics and Management area is one of the most sought after by international students (LIMA et al., 2009) and in Brazil there are prestigious public and private universities in this area. One of the private universities chosen by the foreign students interviewed is among the 100 best in the world for executive education (TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION, 2013).

Perhaps the little clarity as to the academic and professional motivations seen among the Brazilian students interviewed may be linked to the difficulty young people have of formulating medium-term and long-term academic projects and the difficulty they have when it comes to planning their career. This fact also seems to be linked to the question of mobility occurring at the beginning of the adult phase and in the initial graduate years.

Also with regard to academic motivation it is possible to observe what some authors, among whom Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe, (2008) and Lauermann (2012), call "push and pull factors" for analyzing the motivations behind studying abroad and deciding on the country of destination. Push factors are conditions the students want to avoid in their country of origin (such as few educational opportunities, or an unsatisfactory economic or social situation) and pull factors are desired conditions associated with the country of destination (such as a better quality education, costs, the country's reputation, its lifestyle, etc.). Among Brazilians we identify this pull factor when one of the female students points out that one of things motivating her to move was the expectation of having a better educational experience than Brazil could offer. Push factors were also in evidence in the words of foreign students from Angola and Mozambique, when they say that the motivation for their mobility was the possibility of continuing their studies and doing a PhD, which would not be possible in their countries of origin. In these cases, mobility seems to be not just an option, but also a need, which demands great mobilization of personal ("perseverance", "focus", "courage") and economic (obtaining a scholarship) resources, as was emphasized in the accounts of the students. It is worth highlighting the fact that the students from Angola and Mozambique who were interviewed are the only ones who are married in the sample group of foreigners, and their average age was 46, which is a profile that is very different from the rest of the group. This seems to have an important impact on their motivation.

With regard to the resources that made it feasible for the Brazilian and foreign students to move internationally it is interesting to bring to the discussion the issue of the type of modality undertaken and the influence of the social and economic characteristics of the participants. All the Brazilian and foreign students were involved with institutionalized mobility, although some of them received no financial help. According to the definition of Ballatore & Bloss (2008), the institutionalized modality is that which includes support for the program and an agreement between universities. The second type is spontaneous mobility, which occurs because of individual choice, in which the student registers in a foreign higher education institution without there being any university or inter-governmental agreements. These students receive no institutional or financial support (BALLATORE; BLOSS, 2008). So although five Brazilian students (three from private and two from public universities) and seven foreign

students (five from private and two from public universities) received no grant to defray their accommodation, food and transportation expenses, among other costs involved, all of them moved because of a bilateral agreement, which does not provide for any financial help for the student to cover costs during the period they are studying abroad, but does exempt them from academic charges, like the enrolment costs and monthly fees of the universities in the agreement.

Particularly in the case of Brazilian students, we see that mobility becomes feasible because of the social and economic conditions of their families and the support they receive from them, in view of the value that is attributed to the experience within the family context. This fact corroborates what was pointed out by Nogueira, Aguiar & Ramos (2008), who emphasize that in recent decades valuing the international dimension of the education of their children has been an element appearing with a lot of force in the educational practices of Brazilian middle class families, above all among the upper middle classes.

Analysis of the motivations of the professors reveals a very different picture from that of Brazilian and foreign students, which was to be expected, not only because of the phase in their development in which they find themselves, but also due to the stage in their career when they move. In this group, we find that personal motivations are of little relevance in their decision, although the desire to get to know and live the day-to-day life of another culture was an element that was indicated. The desire to mature, which was heavily emphasized by Brazilian and foreign students, was not a motivation aspect indicated by the professors. It is worth stating, however, that when they were questioned about gains in experience, an aspect that was not the object of discussion in this article, our participants stressed the possibility of gaining self-knowledge, as provided by the experience.

Academic and professional motivations are uppermost in the group of professors and their discourse is full of references to it. Their academic and professional projects are very clear in their minds and this leads them to carefully and specifically choose the country of destination, university and supervising professor, since all undertook mobility for *stricto sensu* post-graduate purposes, especially for PhD and post-doctoral studies. So in their accounts the professors clearly show that in undertaking mobility they looked for universities and researchers who are points of reference in their area of study. This clarity in terms of their medium and long-term objectives was certainly a determining factor when it came to taking full advantage of the experience.

All the professors, both those working in public as well as those from private universities, were involved with institutionalized mobility (BALLATORE; BLOSS, 2008), with financial help coming from study grants provided by Brazilian funding bodies. This was possible, as evidenced in their accounts, because of the incentive provided for the academic mobility of teachers in their universities, the good evaluation of the *stricto sensu* programs they were linked to, the appropriateness of the proposed project to their area of study and teaching activity and to recognition of the universities of destination as having a high academic and scientific standard.

The motivation behind undertaking academic mobility reinforces the idea that this is important symbolic capital for the professor. Expanding their social capital by forming a network of researchers and improving their human capital by acquiring an international technical standard are aspects that reveal the importance of academic mobility to the professors, not only individually, but also institutionally, as it familiarizes them with and draws them closer to the international way of practicing science and consolidates institutional agreements.

The importance of the relationship networks of the professors in the internationalization process of higher education institutions was discussed by Duarte et al. (2012). From the results obtained in the authors' comparative case study of two Brazilian universities, they indicate that the relationship networks of the teachers play an important role in the internationalization process, above all at the post-graduate level. Formal institutional agreements are essential for fostering the internationalization process, but for some specific actions the simple signing of the agreement is not enough. Joint research and publications are examples of actions that result in interaction between academics. Although formal agreements create conditions for internationalization actions, they only become effective when the relationships between institutions give way to the development of relationships between their members. In this sense, in the words of the professors interviewed in this study we observe that the possibility of establishing research partnerships and forming a network with other researchers from the area are important motivations for mobility, which certainly strengthens the internationalization process of the universities in which they teach.

From our investigation and analysis of bibliographic material on the topic of international mobility we found that research analyzing the motivations of university professors is practically non-existent. Research is directed almost exclusively at the student population. We found just one piece of research with a specific focus

on university professors, which sought to analyze why they choose academic expatriation (RICHARDSON; McKENNA, 2001). Thirty professors were interviewed on their "motivations for going", using a qualitative research methodology. Despite the objectives being different we can say that our results converge with some of the main reasons found by Richardson & Mckenna (2001), which were: the desire to explore the world more and to get to know other cultures and the desire to develop an international career by increasing their network and enriching future projects.

We believe that a study of the mobility processes from the perspective of professors is a fertile field and still unexplored in research.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The material presented and discussed in this article allows us to state that international academic mobility, a phenomenon that is already so expressive nowadays both globally and in Brazil, is revealed as being important symbolic capital for university students and professors. Different types of motivation drive the construction of this capital, which seems to suffer the influence of various factors, such as personal and family history, the cultural and social background, language competences, personality characteristics, and others.

Personal, academic ad professional motivations come into play when choosing international mobility as a path to be taken in the formation process. In drawing a comparison between the different groups studied, however, we find that these motivations have different strengths depending on the stage of development and formation. This fact reinforces the idea that the literature about the internationalization of higher education and international academic mobility should pay attention to the differences in the processes involved in graduation and post-graduation, as well as to the challenge of coordinating the actions of one and the other in order to maximize the benefits for the players involved and for the institution.

The experiences analyzed enabled us to observe that, especially at the graduate level, young people participate in international mobility programs in the initial stages of their university education, which ends up revealing motivations that are not very aligned with clear and consistent, medium and long-term academic or professional projects. The desire to get to know other cultures and to achieve greater maturity by experiencing mobility are personal motivations that stand out in this group, as does learning or improving a foreign language. This does not

mean that we are ignoring the importance of the mobility experience for the personal and intercultural development of the young person, which really is an aspect that is central to their global formation and to the development of their mobility capital. This also justifies the large investment by parents so the student can have this experience when they are still in graduate school. We would like to emphasize, however, that other aspects may increase when it comes to taking full advantage of the experience, taking into consideration the possibilities that arise not only because of personal and intercultural factors, but also because of the implied academic and professional factors.

In view of the fact that we are living at a time when more democratic public policies for encouraging international academic mobility are beginning to be implemented in Brazil, we would stress the importance of developing guidance and counselling projects for young people within the university context both before and after the mobility experience, so that this experience can be fully used for their personal, intercultural, academic and professional growth and so they can become multiplying agents of this experience within the context in which they find themselves.

At the post-graduate level, the important role of international academic mobility has to be stressed as a driver of the academic and professional projects of the players involved. We need also to stress the important role of mobility in the internationalization process of the higher education institutions involved, especially when we look at the teachers who invest in international mobility as part of their education. The contribution of the professor may become much greater for different reasons: to obtain the skills necessary for developing a more international résumé, for developing an approach to teaching that is more in harmony with a globalized environment, for acquiring a background in order to be able to work in guidance and counselling processes for students who are candidates for international mobility programs, thereby incentivizing and stimulating intercultural socialization within the university context. Social capital, which is expanded by the formation of networks of relationships with other researchers, also has an important influence on putting into place and consolidating international institutional agreements.

We hope that the knowledge here presented may encourage other studies about the topic, in view of the expanded understanding of the academic mobility process. As possible spin-offs from this study, interesting aspects on which to focus might be: analyzing the adaptation process of the individual in the country of destination;

the competences developed; the impacts of the mobility experience on academic formation and the professional career; and the impacts of the mobility experiences of teachers on the internationalization process of higher education institutions.

We are living at a time when universities are constantly opening up to a meeting and socialization with different cultures and knowledge. We hope that the specificities of this meeting and the constructions that result from it can become increasingly better understood.

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Submission: 08/04/2015

Approbation: 17/07/2015

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