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Keywords: *evaluation; higher education; brazil; portugal; england; comparative analysis.*

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Portraits of the Evaluation of Higher Education: The Cases of Brazil, Portugal and England

Rodrigo de Macedo Lopes [α], Camila Ferreira da Silva [σ], Mariana Gaio Alves [ρ] & Georgia Sobreira dos Santos Cêa [ω]

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Keywords: evaluation; higher education; brazil; portugal; england; comparative analysis.

I. Introduction

Pointed out by the classical theories of Sociology (Simmel, 2014; Marx, 2016; Durkheim, 1999; Weber, 2009) and especially by Durkheim (1999), the larger interdependence of the social spheres has deepened in the contemporary social structure from the nineteenth century, mainly by the phenomenon of the division of labor. This reasoning was appropriated by Bourdieu (2007) when analysing the market of symbolic assets. According to his argument, the intellectual and artistic field, which were under the tutelage of the court throughout the Middle Ages and much of the renaissance in France, progressively was liberated economically and socially from the Church and the aristocracy and constituting itself in a relatively autonomous field, called by him of market of symbolic assets, with a complex system of production, circulation and consumption of the assets produced.

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The consideration of the interdependence and differentiation of social spheres is an important object for sociological studies from the annunciation of the classical theses of this field of knowledge. In an analogous way to the theoretical and practical dilemmas of the interdependence and differentiation between State and Church, which between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries crossed western societies in the period of consolidation of modernity, the relations between economy and education have mobilized today the interpretations of several areas of the knowledge and stimulated strategies of action of public and private agents on a global scale. In the midst of this theoretical-practical construct, they dialogue and debate tendencies of nuances that are not always easy to reconcile, such as those that support the imperative of promoting social justice (Lipman, 2011; Macpherson, Robertson & Walford, 2014) and those that advocate the primacy of market demands irrespective of their social risks (Lubienski, 2003; Tooley, 2001).

The constant and growing process of perfecting the productive forces of labor leads to increasingly complex forms of combining the workforce with the means of production and deepens the dialectic of differentiation/interdependence between knowledge and wealth in the transition of the XX and XXI centuries, or in other words: between education and economy. The form and content of the human formation to be promoted by the school systems are then soaked in the current economic, political and cultural transformations, so that the search for the specificity of systematized education in its articulation with the material production of wealth has marked the direction of education systems in different countries.

Despite the idiosyncrasies of the process of educational reforms in countries on different continents, the thesis prevails is the close relationship between adequate allocation of resources for investment in human capital and economic development, in order to positively impact the financial rates of return of both nations and individuals (Schultz, 1961). This premise of the Human Capital Theory, which constitutes the most influential economic theory in educational policy since the 1960s, strengthens in the context of the global economy even though it is being objected not only by economic studies, but also by studies anchored in the

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human and social sciences (Fitzsimons, 2017; Gillies, 2017).

During the twentieth century, there have been increasing transformations as a result of the intensification of relationship between knowledge and wealth. It is only necessary to look at the producers of knowledge and observe how much their field of practice has been transformed in function of the contemporary arrangements. The expansion of higher education on a world scale – through the expansion of vacancies, the creation of new courses and the emergence of new institutions (Freitas, 2010; Pereira et al., 2015) – has diversified higher education institutions in at least two different directions: the broad and continuous training of professionals oriented to the demands of the labor market and the more restricted training of knowledge-producing agents who, in most cases, return to higher education institutions as belonging to their staff. In any case, the relationship between education and economic development is expressed more clearly in higher education than in basic or elementary education, given the degree of pressure of economic transformation on the training of professionals from different fields of knowledge, including there the arts, humanities and social sciences (Gillies, 2017), with strong pragmatic and instrumental appeal (Frankham, 2016). Due to the character of current economic and political transformations, higher education reforms tend to commodify and subordinate academic work to the imperatives of competitiveness, so that ideas such as performativity, employability and the knowledge economy, for example, are gaining space in this context (Frankham, 2016; Robertson & Keeling, 2008).

The same transformations that pressured our arrangements in higher education systems also aimed at the emergence and development of systems for the evaluation of this level of education. In fact, it is in higher education that the process of evaluating and accrediting institutional policies begins in the 1980s, with significant changes since then in the scope and amplitude of the social agents involved – with emphasis on strengthening the presence of private entities, from companies to international organizations – and changes in strategies and mechanisms to control the results of practices concerning that level of education (Afonso, 2013).

In this sense, the recent globalization of the idea and processes of evaluation of educational systems has enabled, among other discussions, the emergence of the debate about the relation between the homogeneity of the abstractly universal models and the heterogeneity of the experiences with the evaluation in each national context. Therefore, this debate is taken as the guiding thread of this text: the scenarios of the evaluation of higher education in Brazil, Portugal and England constitute scopes for a comparative analysis whose central purpose is to characterize them on the one hand and situate them in the broader or global context of state and supranational regulation on the other. The National System of Evaluation of Higher Education (SINAES) of Brazil, the Portuguese Evaluation and Accreditation System (coordinated by the Agency for Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education, a private law foundation) and the recent UK Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) constitute the corpus for this study, in the direction of documentary analysis, their official results and dialogue with the specialized literature.

The comparative perspective that guides this work considers particularities of the systems of evaluation of higher education in Brazil, Portugal and England, presupposing that such systems should be considered from their relational, dialectical and co-constitutive nature, since they all fit into globally articulated educational policy movements (Dale & Robertson, 2012).

The text is divided into three distinct and complementary moments, namely: in the first moment the text brings a brief contextualization of the recent realities of higher education in the three countries studied, aiming to understand these scenarios and the emergence of the evaluation of this level of education; in the second moment will be presented the portraits of the respective evaluations of the Brazilian, Portuguese and English cases, whose analytical constructions took into account aspects such as principles, involved organs, objectives, results, etc.; and finally the comparative exercise will be privileged, based on a dialogue between the realities in question.

a) *Higher education in Brazil, Portugal and England: brief situational outline and emergency context of the evaluation*

At the international level, higher education has been marked since the 1960s by a trend towards massification that involves the expansion of the number of students, teachers and institutions, as well as the respective diversification of academic functions and institutional arrangements. This trend is inseparable from the dissemination of the Human Capital Theory and from the acceptance that education and higher education in particular are a crucial element in promoting the development of countries, as has been seen by the main international organizations and governments since the end of the Second World War. According to Afonso (2015, pp. 274): "Regardless of the theoretical-conceptual discussions that it raises, knowledge is considered the main productive force and this fact reinforces the economic function of the school and the university"[1].

The international trend of expansion of higher educationis justified by its contribution to the development of each country. And in a context of flexibilization of work, financialization of the economy and increased competitiveness this becomes

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observable in Brazil, Portugal and England, even though it assumes specific configurations in each of the countries, as well as contingencies of the structuring of higher education systems in these territories. In Brazil, the preoccupation with expansion of the higher education system emerges in the context of a military dictatorship, between 1964 and 1985,whose justification was the modernization and rationalization of the State and the economy, as well as the formation of specialized cadres to occupy careers of work created from the import substitution policy.In Portugal, the expansion of higher education is particularly significant as a result of the political change of 1974 and in a context of political democratization in which the promotion of equality of opportunity among social groups in access to the education system emerges as a strategic orientation inherent to the bet in the sector educational. In England, the expansion of higher education is a national bet that began shortly after the Second World War, coupled with the effort to rebuild the economy and society that had been profoundly and negatively affected as a result of the war years.

In the following decades, investments in expansion and expansion of national education systems reached new heights. The massification of higher education, which corresponds to a coverage rate between 16% and 50% of the age group between 18 and 24 years, as established by Trow (2010), was achieved by some countries. This level was, more broadly, reached by a convergence of factors. The main ones are: the struggles for universalization of access to the higher education system, undertaken by social movements as well as families and young people interested in obtaining diplomas and certificates of this level of education; and the expansion of the formation of a workforce capable of performing more complex and productive tasks.

The mass movement was accompanied by transformations in the economic field that pushed national education systems to adapt. In contemporary capitalism, the approach has been privileged between spheres such as politics, economics, culture and education, and here we are especially interested in the massification of education and higher education, through the supremacy of the so-called "Knowledge Society" (Bindé, 2007) within the ambit of a governability internationally marked by the historical processes of globalization and neoliberalism. In Brazil, these approaches emerged from the scenario of re-democratization and deepen with what Antunes (2005) called "neoliberal desertification" experienced in the country in the 1990s, which, as regards higher education and its massification, represented a re-reading of the conservative modernization and privatization that once marked the dictatorial period (Martins, 2009). On the other hand, Portugal and Englandare historically close in this case because of the changes brought about by the alignment initiatives of countries currently called the European Union and, more precisely, since the end of the 1980s with the discussion about the role preponderant of education and consequently of the Bologna Process (Bianchetti, 2015). Thus, the evolution of participation in higher education over the years is reflected in the number of graduates of this level of education in each of these three countries at the present time, which shows the differentiated rhythms of the expansion trend. According to data from the OECD (2016), the percentage of graduates among adults (25-64 years) is around 15% in Brazil, around 23% in Portugal and 44% in the United Kingdom, making the latter clearly above average figure recorded in the OECD.

Although the expansion of higher education has assumed distinct configurations in each of the three countries, it is verified that it is accompanied in each of them by the emergence of systems for evaluating the quality of education. The relationship between expansion and evaluation is relevant for the three countries we are studying, since the emphasis on evaluation in Europe and Brazil was mainly due to the massification of the respective educational systems: in the first case, from the massification, urgently adjust education to the demands of a changing labor market (Neave, 1988); and in the second case, it was a question of designing in education policy the need to evaluate a system whose eminence and necessary expansion could not happen without a revision of the "quality standards " (Dias, Horchuela & Marchelli, 2006).

In this sense, from the socio-historical point of view, it is necessary to reflect on the emergency contexts of the need to evaluate education and more particularly higher education. Schwartzman (1992) points out that in the 1990s, both in the European context and in Latin America, the idea of the evaluation of this level of education represented something quite new, in contrast to the North American environment, in which the evaluation has already been a tradition in higher education institutions. In the late 1980s, Neave (1988) indicated the emergence of an “Evaluative State” in Europe, markedly replacing the a priori bureaucratic control based on the planning by some posteriori evaluation mechanisms. In the same decade, the Brazilian post-dictatorship scenario was marked by the American influence, which during the dictatorship evaluated Brazilian education and higher education and "offered" agreements and "solutions" to the country, and by the interference of international financial organizations (Sobrinho, 1996). It can then be said that, in the case of the countries under review,

> In the last two decades, the evaluation of institutions and courses in higher education has gained an unprecedented dimension at the global level as multilateral organizations and national governments have encouraged the creation of evaluation systems

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and accreditation and quality assurance agencies under the justification of maximizing social benefits of educational systems[2] (Bretolin& Marcon, 2015, p.106).

According to this perspective, mechanisms have been created with different nomenclatures such as evaluation, accreditation and quality audit, also called peer review processes (Pereira et al., 2015).

Therefore, the relationship between quality and quantity is crucial for understanding the evaluation of higher education in contexts of expansion and massification. This is because, even with their own socio-historical influences and specificities, Brazil, Portugal and England – and we could bring other countries here for this topic – started from the association between increased volume and diversification of the profile of subjects in higher education and the need to rethink and to evaluate this degree of education to maintain or improve its quality, since "In the quest for excellence, quality becomes a relevant differential factor for the prominence and survival of Institutions of higher education in the market"[3] (Pereira et al, 2015, pp. 62).However, it is necessary to look at the differences in what has been placed as a parameter to measure this quality, which is discussed when the topic is the evaluation of higher education systems in different countries. However, it is necessary to look at the differences in what has been placed as a parameter to measure this quality, which is discussed when the topic is the evaluation of higher education systems in different countries.

The relationship between education and economics is one of the aspects considered in the evaluation of the quality of education, namely through the articulations between higher education and the labor market that are observed in the dynamics of employment and work of graduates. This is because the expansion of higher education coexists with the strengthening of the valuation of the respective contributions to economic development. Thus, in any of the three countries, the systems and processes for assessing the quality of education include, as one of the aspects to be considered, the professional integration of graduates, involving the definition of indicators and the collection of data on this subject, with differentiated configurations.

b) Portraits of the Evaluation of higher education

Recognizing the centrality of the evaluation of higher education in the world at the present time, and without intending to present in an exhaustive way processes and mechanisms related to the evaluation of higher education in Brazil, Portugal and England, it is intended to briefly explain the main characteristics of teaching-learning evaluation. The following will be considered: institutional framework, general intentionality, type of information mobilized and expected effects.

c) The Brazilian case

In accordance with Article 9 of Law No. 9.394/1996, the National System for the Evaluation of Higher Education (SINAES) was instituted by Law No. 10.861/2004 as an expression of the discussion about the need to create a new system to evaluate this level of education in the year 2003[4], as well as the social and political context of social change that represented the election of the president Luís Inácio Lula da Silva for the country. Within the scope of the Ministry of Education, the National Commission for the Evaluation of Higher Education (CONAES) is responsible for coordinating and supervising evaluation processes, while the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP) operates these processes.

There are three main fronts in the analysis carried out from the SINAES, namely: evaluation of institutions, evaluation of courses and evaluation of student performance. According to INEP (2015), the main objectives of this evaluation are: a) improving the merit and value of higher education institutions (HEIs), their courses and programs; b) in the improvement of the quality of higher education by better targeting the expansion of university offer; c) and promoting the social responsibility of HEIs. These objectives are still presented by the official institutions with the objective of integrating the dimensions of teaching, research, extension, management and training, on the one hand, and respect the institutional identity and autonomy of each institution, on the other.

From the operational point of view, SINAES has a series of instruments that complement each other in the formulation of results, such as: the National Student Performance Exam (ENADE), the information tools (such as the census and register) and the institutional evaluations of the courses (external, on-site and self-evaluation). While the evaluation of undergraduate institutions and courses aims to identify the teaching conditions (involving teaching profile, building conditions and didactic-pedagogical organization), the students' evaluation seeks to assess their performance against the curricular guidelines and their abilities to adjust to the demands of the evolution of knowledge and their profession (Inep, 2015).

The results are made public through the dissemination of the Census of Higher Education and the following indicators: the Preliminary Course Concept (CPC), which consists of an indicator of quality based on the students' performance in ENADE and the value added by the training process and inputs related to offer conditions (teaching staff, infrastructure and didactic-pedagogical resources); and the General Index of Institution Assessed Courses (IGC), which crosses the data of the graduation (CPC) and the postgraduate in the country (in the evaluations carried out by CAPES), besides taking into account the distribution of students between the different levels (undergraduate or post-

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graduate studies). In addition, the SINAES results are used for the renewal of recognition and accreditation of the courses (Inep, 2015).

A grade, which in the case of graduation ranges from 0 to 5 points, is awarded to each higher education institution in the country, as well as to each course. Besides the promoting a ranking of HEIs and their courses, the following questions are crucial to thinking about SINAES: the problem of self-evaluation; ENADE as a current version of other large-scale tests applied to students of higher education in Brazil and hyper focus in the product of education (Barreyro, 2004); the constant production of value judgments by evaluators (Dias Sobrinho, 2000).

d) The Portuguese case

The Agency for the Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education (A3ES) has been in existence for a decade and was created in 2007 in close coordination with the publication of Law No. 38/2007, which approved the Legal Regime for the Evaluation of Higher Education. This law is in dissociable from another [the Legal Regime of Higher Education Institutions, Law No. 62/2007] and together constitute another way of institutional organization of universities and polytechnics, as well as their articulation with the national government. The aim is to clarify and reinforce the autonomy of higher education institutions in order to adopt the models of institutional organization and management that they consider to be most appropriate for the fulfilment of their mission and the specificity of the context in which they are inserted.

This appreciation of autonomy coexists with the reinforcement of accountability through quality assessment systems. In this context, the creation of the A3ES aims to promote a quality internal institutional culture through the implementation of the evaluation and accreditation processes of higher education institutions and their courses. In other words, the main focus is placed on each institution and on the need to safeguard the quality of the respective training offer, giving an independent institution the power to validate the training offer by universities and polytechnics.

The accreditation and evaluation processes implemented by the A3ES take into account information related to the courses, in particular their general characteristics (curricular structure, working regime, internships), resources (materials, teaching and non-teaching staff, students) and results (academic, employability, scientific, technological and artistic activities). Bachelor's, master's and doctoral courses are analysed. The procedures involve the elaboration of a report of self-evaluation by the own institution that is appreciated by a team of evaluators (teachers from other Portuguese universities and other countries) who later visit the institution and interview teachers and students of the course and even employers of graduates. The result of the process is the accreditation (or not) of the course being evaluated for a period of 1, 3 or 6 years. One of the critical aspects of this process is the need to ensure the impartiality of the evaluators who are themselves teachers and responsible for courses of the same scientific area in other universities and polytechnics.

e) The English case

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) emerged in England in 2016 with the general intention of encouraging excellence in teaching and providing information to students to choose the courses and institutions to attend. This initiative has been developed by national government bodies and is justified on the basis of the need to consider the quality of teaching and learning following the implementation of the reforms of the 1990s that transformed polytechnics into universities and increased costs for students with enrolment and attendance at university.

Within the framework of the commercialization of higher education that characterizes the English scenario, TEF is a result of massification and aims to provide elements that allow students to make the best and most appropriate choices based on information on the costs of attendance of course and institution and the results obtained by the same in the TEF. Besides that, TEF also means an intention to value teaching and learning activities in English universities and to assess their quality, questioning the great importance given to the "Research Assessment Framework" which since the 1980s has helped to promote and ensure the quality of research activities in higher education.

The TEF considers information on three major aspects: Quality of Teaching; Learning Environment; Student Results and Learning Gains – using data obtained through questionnaires applied at the national level to the students to measure their levels of satisfaction (National Student Satisfaction Survey) and to the graduates to characterize their courses of professional insertion (Destinations of Leavers of Higher Education). The result of the evaluation is expressed in the attribution of a medal (bronze, silver or gold) to each institution, in a logic of commercialization of courses and institutions in which the future student is a consumer who needs this type of information to make rational choices in the frequency of courses and institutions. One of the critical aspects of this process is the adequacy and validity of the results obtained in the national questionnaires already identified, as well as the way in which they effectively reflect the quality of courses and institutions.

II. A Comparative Portrait

The confrontation between the three countries illustrates how the worldwide tendency to develop systems of evaluation of higher education assumes

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diverse configurations across national contexts that reveal similarities and differences between them. Concerning the institutional framework, it is observed that the assessment of education is under the responsibility of national governmental bodies in the Brazilian and English cases, being delivered to a foundation of private law in the Portuguese case. This observation is inseparable from the fact that the evaluation conducted by A3ES in Portugal is mainly undertaken as an accreditation of courses aimed at guaranteeing the quality of higher education, while in the other two countries the main objective is to improve quality (Brazil) and promote excellence (England).

Consequently, in the Portuguese case, the institutional evaluation focusing each institution as an organizational entity was absent until 2017/18, being the predominant focus in the courses. In the Brazilian and English cases, this organizational perspective may be more evident but also has a characteristic that is absent from the official rhetoric about evaluation of education in Portugal: the importance of providing information that aims to support the choices of courses and institutions by students and institutions in each country by assigning a "note" (Brazil) or a "medal" (England). Thus, in these two countries, the results of the evaluation of SINAES and TEF are closely associated with rankings of each institutions' prestige that are part of a very significant logic of higher education commodification, echoing the model existing in the United States of America since the 1970s. However, it should be noted that, since the 1960s, a broad set of studies in several countries has relativized the role of higher education institutions and evidenced the strong influence that students' socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds have on their own results (Bertolin & Marcon, 2015).

The comparative approach within the present study ends up demonstrating a potential for understanding the heterogeneity of the Brazilian, Portuguese and English cases, while allowing the evaluation of higher education systems to be objectified not as closed systems, but with a view to apprehending their specificities and positions within the international trends (Bray, 2002). In this way, we synthesize the approximations and distances between Brazil, Portugal and England in the following way:

Table 1: Characterization of the evaluation of higher education in Brazil, Portugal and England.

	Brazil (SINAES)	Portugal (A3ES)	England (TEF)
Institutional framework for the evaluation of education	SINAES - National System of Evaluation of Higher Education by the Ministry of Education through the National Commission for the Evaluation of Higher Education (Conaes), together with the National Institute of Studies and Educational Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP), another federal authority.	A3ES - Agency for Accreditation and Evaluation of Higher Education: Foundation of private law recognized as of public utility.	TEF – Teaching Excellence Framework: Exercise developed by governmental bodies such as the Department of Education of England and the Higher Education Funding Council for England.
Global aim of the evaluation	SINAES aims to improve the quality of education, guide the expansion of the offer and promote the social responsibility of HEIs. This is based on the evaluation of institutions, courses and student performance. Dissemination of the results is aimed at supporting public policies, informing students about their choices, and recognizing and reorganizing HEIs and courses.	The mission of the A3ES is to ensure the quality of higher education through the evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions and their courses. Insert Portugal into the European system of quality assurance in higher education.	The TEF aims to recognize excellence in teaching in addition to the quality required in national standards for higher education institutions. Provide information to support students' choices about the institutions to attend.
Type of information considered for evaluation of teaching	Institutions; Courses; Students' performance.	Characteristics of the courses (curricular structure, operating regime, internships); Resources (materials, teaching and non-teaching staff, students) Results (academic; employability; scientific, technological and artistic activities).	Quality of Teaching; Learning Environment; Student Results and Learning Gains.

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Effects of teaching assessment	Recognition and re-accreditation (or not), in addition to assigning a grade of 0 to 5 for each institution, as well as for each of its courses.	Accreditation (or not) of the courses for a period of 1, 3 or 6 years.	Attribution to each university of a gold, silver or bronze medal.

The consideration of the link between education and economics is present in the evaluation of education in the three countries, albeit in specific ways in each experience. While in Portugal and England this is expressed by a thematic area in which it is essential to collect and analyse empirical information that allows to characterize the transition paths of the graduates to into the labor market and the adequacy of the academic formation to the professional activities that they perform; in Brazil and in England the hierarchy of higher education institutions based on its performance in the assessment exercises is, as we have already pointed out, a significant expression of a kind of creation of an educational "market" in higher education; and also, from a wider point of view, this connection is manifested in the three contexts studied given the central position that education occupies within its territories valued as having an important role in the individual and collective economic development within the rationality of the national states and supranational organizations. The relationship between economy and education, which underlies the definition of human formation policies in capitalist society (Shiroma, Moraes& Evangelista, 2002), reinforces the mediating character that the form and content of the formative practices elected end up assuming, when assumed as those capable of responding more effectively to the expectations of development. In the three cases analysed, in different ways and with different emphases, the benchmarking of higher education is related with the qualification of individuals for the occupation of jobs in the technical and social division of labor.

The process of absorbing market logic as a regulatory parameter of the evaluation systems, regardless of the public or private nature of the institutions and is another aspect that is observable across the three countries. The systems of evaluation and accreditation of higher education are articulated to the premises of the globally structured agenda of education (Dale, 2004), being the local-global key important to understand the re-significations that these premises end up receiving in each social context. Finally, the evaluation practice, instead of supporting a diagnosis that helps national states to reformulate and reorganize higher education as a social right – in accordance with the official discourse about evaluation, promotes and stimulates a competitive environment for the sector.

In addition, it reinforces the disengagement of the State by promoting the improvement of the conditions of access and permanence of students, as well as the work of academic professionals. This can be evidenced by the fragmentation of institutions and courses promoted by the evaluations of higher education in Brazil, Portugal and England: the widely publicized results of each of the evaluations we studied bring enclose a subtle accountability of the individuals involved in these evaluations (higher education institutions and courses, the academics and the students).

III. Final Considerations

Considering the relationship between educational field and economic field, through the analysis of the context of the emergence of higher education evaluation systems and their structuring and operationalization, this work sought to highlight the ways in which the crossing lines of these spheres are expressed. This analysis eventually clarified the understanding of institutional rearrangements that the pressures derived from increased interdependence between nations promoted in national education systems, seen, for example, from the growing concern of multilateral organizations with the educational field.

This context can be taken as one of the elements to understand the homogeneity and heterogeneity that education and evaluation systems have assumed in the countries studied. The portraits of the evaluation of higher education revealed by the panoramas of Brazil, Portugal and England were able to point out similar directions and orientations in the comparison between different educational and evaluation systems. In this way, it was interesting to understand not only the particularity of the systems of evaluation of higher education in the three countries, but above all to point out the relations that each evaluation system maintains with the broader social process of qualifying higher education around the world.

From the second half of the twentieth century onwards, the three countries analysed were confronted by the increasing importance of the relationship between education and development, which pushed higher education systems to increase their vacancies and courses and triggered the debate on quality and the quantity in this degree of education. The evaluation of national higher education systems appears in this context as a way of equating national and international demands and of standardizing and framing the training of professionals in line with the demands of the market. Even if this growing centrality of the relationship between education and the economy is recognized,

> (…) this cannot mean the confinement of the functions of higher education to those that strictly were vocation for the formation of professionals. Alternatively, it is desirable to value other contributions from higher education, such as informing and involving civil society,

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promoting critical thinking about modalities of social organization and citizeinship[5] (Alves, 2015, pp. 896).

In this sense, finally it is evident that both the evaluation of this level of education and the analyses that start to be developed from their conceptual constructs and its results, with which this text sought to dialogue and contribute, make us reflect on the relations between the university field and the other social fields that influence it and still on the social functions of higher education.

1. Originally, it reads: "independentemente das discussões teórico-conceptuais que suscita, o conhecimento é agora considerado a principal força produtiva e esse facto reforça a função econômica da escola e da universidade".
2. Originally: "Nas últimas duas décadas, a avaliação de instituições e cursos da educação superior ganhou uma dimensão inédita em nível mundial visto que organismos multilaterais e governos nacionais incentivaram a criação de sistemas de avaliação e agências de acreditação e de garantia de qualidade sob a justificativa de maximizar os benefícios sociais dos sistemas educacionais" (Bertolin & Marcon, 2015, pp. 106).
3. In the original text: "Na busca por excelência, a qualidade torna-se fator diferencial relevante para o destaque e sobrevivência das IES no mercado".
4. Barreyro and Rothen (2006) present the details of the disputes of the projects for the system of evaluation of Brazilian higher education in this historical moment.
5. In the original work, in Portuguese, it reads: "não pode significar o confinamento das funções do ensino superior aquelas que estritamente se vocacionaram para a formação de profissionais. Alternativamente, é desejável valorizar outros contributos do ensino superior como sejam informar e envolver a sociedade civil, promovendo o pensamento crítico sobre modalidades de organização social e de cidadania".

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