EXPLORING THE REPRESENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE BOLOGNA PROCESS: evidence from the documents of the Social Dimension Working Group

EXPLORANDO A REPRESENTAÇÃO DA EDUCAÇÃO INCLUSIVA NO PROCESSO DE BOLONHA: evidências nos documentos do grupo de trabalho da Dimensão Social
EXPLORACIÓN DE LA REPRESENTACIÓN DE LA EDUCACIÓN INCLUSIVA EN EL PROCESO DE BOLONIA: datos extraídos de los documentos del Grupo de Trabajo sobre la Dimensión Social

Sinomar Soares de Carvalho Silva
PhD student in Sciences, Technology and Inclusion (PGCTIn) at Universidade Federal Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Master in Communication and Society from the Federal University of Tocantins, Palmas, Tocantins. sinomaruff@gmail.com

0000-0003-3201-213X

Francisco Gilson Rebouças Pôrto Júnior PhD in Communication and Contemporary Cultures from the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA). Master in Education from the University of Brasília (UnB). Bachelor in Social Communication/Journalism from Centro Universitário Luterano de Palmas (CEULP-ULBRA) and degree in Pedagogy from UnB. Professor of the Postgraduate Program Sciences, Technology and Inclusion (PGCTIn) at Universidade Federal Fluminense and Pedagogy course at UFT. Coordinator of the Research and Extension Center Observatory of Research Applied to Journalism and Teaching (OPAJE-UFT). gilsonportouft@gmail.com

0000-0002-5335-6428

ABSTRACT:
The aim of this article is to analyse how inclusive education is represented in the Bologna Process. Based on the concept of the educational set (Robertson & Dale, 2014), a documentary study was carried out by analysing the Social Dimension working group between 2014 and 2024, the time frame of this research. This group is responsible for promoting equity and inclusion policies in higher education in Europe. The results showed that there has not been a balance between the policies that make up the Bologna Process's educational package. The policies of the working group analysed have a homogenising character, without distinguishing their target public, due to the specific socio-cultural difficulties that Europe has faced in the last decade, marked by economic difficulties, wars and the immigration crisis. Issues linked to the education market have evolved more and the social dimension has not occupied the same space in the debates at evaluation meetings.

KEYWORDS: Inclusion; People with disabilities; Global education policies; Bologna Process.

Introduction

In universities in the Czech Republic, students with disabilities who access higher education, despite being protected by legislation, still have the lowest graduation rate compared to the European Union average (European Commission, 2017). In Colombia, only 1.7% of students with disabilities graduate from university, despite the legal guarantee of access approved in 1994 (Vidarte, Zambrano, & Mattheis, 2022).

In these examples and in several other countries, there has been a greater presence of people with disabilities accessing higher education, mainly since the 1990s, as a result of inclusive education public policies (Martins, Leite, & Lacerda, 2015). Thus, public policies in the field of inclusive education are considered to be global educational

policies (Verger, 2019). But this argument, which classifies a policy as global only because of its presence on several continents, requires problematization in order to understand its nature and scope as global.

Legislation on inclusive education passed in Europe and Latin America has been influenced by elements of the globalization of education and the work of international institutions that create an agenda with ideas to solve global problems (Koh, 2011).

In the field of global education policies, there is a complex relationship between globalization processes and their recontextualization in local environments. Both are relational and not dichotomous (Verger, 2019). The local environment of the Czech Republic, which the European Commission (2017) points to as having difficulties in programs for people with disabilities to remain in higher education, is the same one that has undergone profound structural changes since 1989 with the change from a Soviet regime to greater freedom of curriculum, admissions and assessments (Matějů & Simonová, 2003), but which still remains dependent on centralized state funding (Bondar et al., 2020)

The analysis of these local policies is a starting point, not an end point, for the investigation of global educational policies (Mainardes, 2006). Only by seeking to relate education, a social activity, to broader issues and other groups of institutions that distribute resources, such as the state, can we analyze the implementation of global policies and how some groups have historically been helped and others excluded (Gandin & Lima, 2016).

Inclusive education is a complex set of multiple relationships that influence its implementation, and the parts of this set are related to each other and have an effect on the current stage of implementation of inclusive education policies (Robertson & Dale, 2014). It's not just the lack of resources, but the negative view of disability, government interest, i.e. the economic, political and cultural position that people with disabilities occupy in society.

Recent literature reviews on inclusion in higher education have demonstrated this practical work of the state, through analysis of barriers and facilitators that challenge the permanence of people with disabilities in higher education (Waltz & Schippers, 2020; Fernández-Batanero, et al., 2022), also showing the discrepancies between what local legislation advocates and what happens in practice (Goodall, et al., 2022). They also discuss the work of sectors within universities responsible for developing adaptations that facilitate the integration of people with disabilities (Römhild & Hollederer, 2023). These studies have shown that in practice there are several barriers to inclusion (Fernández-Batanero, et al., 2022).

The aim of this article is to show how education for people with disabilities is represented in the Bologna Process, a European initiative to create a higher education area with an approximate architecture. In the quest to harmonize education systems, the Bologna Process shapes the agenda of the signatory countries, even though their adherence is voluntary. It is therefore important to demonstrate how inclusive education is represented in the documents of such a relevant initiative within global education policies.

The Bologna Process is part of a set of initiatives to globalize higher education (Robertson, Gomes, & Kay, 2009) and was intended to create a unified educational architecture, with the approximation of curricula, the creation of teaching cycles, investment in mobility and an emphasis on the internationalization of education. All the elements discussed above, such as neoliberal policies, the influence of international organizations, and social movements, are not new in the field of education, but form a set of ideas accumulated over many decades and which are all present in the Bologna Process (Robertson & Dale, 2014).

Thus, a research question was formulated to understand how inclusive education, which has been shaped on the global agenda by the political, economic and socio-cultural influences discussed above, is represented in this process. The question guiding this research is: considering the Bologna Process as an educational whole, how is the inclusion of people with disabilities represented in the documents produced by its Social Dimension Working Group over the last decade (2014-2024)?

The use of the word "ensemble" in the research question is related to the epistemological lens of this study, which is based on the Sociology of Education, whose role is to analyze social transformations and their consequences on contemporary educational systems (Robertson, 2010).

In constructing the research question, we consider the Bologna Process to be an "educational ensemble", due to its complexity, the construction of multiple bilateral relationships and the intense production of documents. This expression is part of the approach that will be used to answer the research question. Proposed by Robertson and Dale (2014) as the Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education (CCEPE), this perspective has helped us to understand the inclusion of people with disabilities in the context of the Bologna Process.

Thus, the Bologna Process is not only seen as a neoliberal strategy focused on reformulating post-welfare state universities in favor of employability (Marcon, 2015), but also as a political movement towards a Europe of knowledge. In addition, it highlights the importance of education in building a European socio-cultural identity,

strengthening the sense of belonging (Lino, Martini, & Barbieri-Figueiredo, 2022). Therefore, the Bologna Process is the result of the relationship between these various elements that form a complex whole. The next section will detail the methodological processes for understanding how inclusive education is represented within this complex educational whole, made up of disputes between political, economic and socio-cultural elements.

Methodology

The Bologna Process is the result of a European integration that is based not only on economic aspects, but also on the search for social cohesion through the creation of a citizen with a European vision, in an attempt to combat narrow nationalism (Robertson, Gomes, & Kay, 2009). It therefore involves a dense and complex relational system of education that we can call global because of its repercussions on other continents (Cabanda, Tan, & Chou, 2019).

This research investigates how the inclusion of people with disabilities has been represented in the documents produced by the Social Dimension Working Group, which is tasked with developing instruments and policies to improve access and completion for underrepresented and vulnerable groups in European higher education (EHEA, 2024).

In order to capture the complexity of a system that sought to build a unified pedagogical and political architecture in a heterogeneous continent like Europe, we opted for the exploratory qualitative approach, which is robust and flexible enough to capture the dynamism of education (Ponce, Gómez-Galán, & Pagán-Maldonado, 2022).

In the first two decades of the 21st century, the qualitative approach has seen greater evolution and refinement in the study of educational problems due to its greater connection with social criticism, which helps in the investigation of educational policies, generating explanations about the functioning of institutions and contributing to improving their processes (Ponce, Gómez-Galán, & Pagán-Maldonado, 2022). Thus, qualitative research was the model that came closest to the theory used in this research, the EPCCE developed by Robertson and Dale (2014). This theory considers it fundamental to study education and its links with other fields of society and their influences, avoiding considering education an isolated field.

Ministerial meetings are held every two or three years to make decisions on the direction of the Bologna Process, and the decisions made at these meetings are supported by reports created by working groups. This analysis was supported by 3 public documents (127 pages), collected in the fall of 2024 from the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) portal, on the homepage of the social dimension working group. These

documents were chosen rather than the statements issued after the ministerial meetings because preliminary readings revealed elements of the construction of inclusive policies, with debates between various representatives of governments, academia and students. Thus, these documents are aligned with the object of analyzing the representation of inclusive education in the last 10 years (2014-2024).

As mentioned, the epistemological lens of this research considers educational policies to be the result of the convergence of economic, political and social elements. Thus, the most appropriate model for analyzing this quantity of documents was documentary analysis, which, according to Cellard (2008), is a far-reaching undertaking that has its quality and validity attested to through the intersection between the documents and other studies and contexts. Document analysis is therefore not just the synthesis of content.

The analysis that relates the parts of a set of documents, the research question, the researcher's theoretical or ideological framework, this synchronicity, the fruit of many readings, forms a valid explanation when document analysis is used as a data analysis technique (Cellard, 2008).

In order to analyze the documents, it is necessary to carry out a preliminary study, divided into five stages. The first consists of getting to know the political, social, economic and cultural context that led to the production of the document, and who it was intended for. The documents analyzed in this research were produced 15 years after the start of the Bologna Process, in which the change in the structure of universities to adapt to this process is being discussed (Santos, 2012); the emergence of new actors who influence their directions and guidelines (Fronzaglia, 2016) and their pedagogical meanings and influence on learning (Xavier & Leite, 2023).

In the context of education, a re-examination of educational policies is being debated in the midst of global inequality, which is driving large-scale migrations and geopolitical rivalries that have an impact on educational systems, especially in Europe, coupled with the Covid-19 pandemic that has changed teaching models and the vision of the support of technologies in education (Johnstone, Postiglione, & Teter, 2023). The results section will therefore present an analysis of the documents that make up the research corpus, relating them to this situation and the current debates on education in the global context.

The second stage consists of analyzing the authors of the documents and who they are intended for, with a critical look at their perspectives and intentions, which influence their structure and how the content is presented (Cunha, Yokomizo, & Bonacim, 2014). The relationship between the documents, their authors and the context in which they

were produced is important so that in the future the history of people with disabilities in the Bologna Process is not the history of this working group and the reports they produced to support the bloc's decisions. The third and fourth stages consist of analyzing the authenticity and reliability of the text and its nature and structure (Cellard, 2008).

The last stage, before producing the analysis, studies the key concepts and internal logic of the document. Delimiting the meaning of words and concepts is a pertinent precaution in the case of recent documents, which may use jargon and regionalisms typical of particular environments. You should also analyze the key concepts, their importance and meaning according to the context in which they are used. How did the argument develop? What are the main parts? This contextualization is important when comparing various documents of the same nature, looking, for example, at how the inclusion of people with disabilities has evolved in the documents produced by its working group on the social dimension over the last decade (2014-2024) (Cellard, 2008).

The limits of this research and its method are represented by the challenge of answering the research question by analyzing these documents which were not prepared for academic purposes, but as part of a state bureaucracy. It is therefore up to the researcher to get the most out of these documents with a critical eye on their production context and their links to other elements of the Bologna Process.

This analysis can be complemented by future research which, in addition to analyzing the documents, also interviews their producers and the students who are effectively the most impacted by this process of constructing educational policies.

Results and discussions

Preliminary analysis

The documents analyzed in this research are the main ones that discuss the social dimension of the Bologna Process, making them fundamental to answering the question of this research. However, they cannot be transformed, they are what they are, and the researcher must accept them and compose with them (Cellard, 2008).

Therefore, before presenting the analysis that points out how the inclusion of people with disabilities is represented in the documents produced by the working group on the social dimension in the last decade (2014-2024), it is necessary to understand their production context, their authors and who they are intended for. Clarify elements such as authenticity and reliability, nature, internal logic and their key concepts. These are assumptions of documentary analysis defined by Cellard (2008), and may confuse the reader about their position in the structure of the article, whether in the method or results section. It was decided to include them in the Results section to complement an analysis

not only of the content of the documents and their connections with political, economic and social aspects, but also the elements that enabled and influenced their construction. The Bologna Process is one of Europe's initiatives aimed at advancing its geopolitical ambitions, making it act as a State (Robertson, Gomes, & Kay, 2009). Thus, this process establishes, through regional relations, the interconnection of several countries that jointly organize working groups on various topics (EHEA, 2024). The documents analyzed by this research were published by the working group of its social dimension that supports the decisions of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG), and are considered authentic and reliable by this research.

Therefore, the documents were intended for the BFUG, an entity that plays an important role in the supervision and implementation of the process' objectives. Thus, after analysis by the BFUG, these documents are taken to ministerial meetings and can be part of the communiqués at the end of the meetings of government representatives that take place every two or three years (EHEA, 2024). And after the meetings and the issuance of the communiqués, new working groups are formed to implement their decisions. The social dimension working groups studied in this research were co-chaired by Ireland and the European University Association - ESU (2012-2015), and have since been co-chaired by Croatia and ESU. There is no guarantee that this working group will continue in the coming years. The report for the period 2024-2027 argues that:

> It would be necessary to continue the Working Group on the Social Dimension for the period 2024-2027 with specific tasks. Alternatively, if the BFUG is unable to support the convening of this working group, in order to avoid losing ambition and derailing the growing momentum towards achieving an inclusive EHEA, exploring the possibility of establishing a Thematic Peer Group on the Social Dimension for the next period could serve as an alternative (Schmidt & Onița, 2024, p. 16).

This need to mention and defend its maintenance in the report was also adopted in the previous report that sought support from the BFUG for the maintenance of a database created to foster the exchange of experiences among Bologna signatories (EHEA, 2015). The analysis of the database showed that all countries have some engagement with inclusion policies, but the tool was not maintained and there is no mention of the topic in subsequent reports. The 2020 report also defends "a clear need to establish a new advisory group on the social dimension in the period 2021-2024 to continue developing the social dimension in the EHEA" (EHEA, 2020, p. 5). Thus, there is an influence on the nature of these documents, which should be proactive, based on studies and participation of government and civil society actors representing universities

and students, but there are uncertainties about their effectiveness. The structure of the documents, which is essentially textual, consists of an executive summary, an introduction that usually provides a historical overview of the social dimension and points to the activities carried out by the working group.

Thus, the internal context of the production of the documents is marked by uncertainty about the continuity of the work of the groups and the tools they have developed, even considering the importance of inclusion for the Europe 2020 Strategy, which aims to promote sustainable and inclusive growth on the continent, but which has had a decade marked by the refugee crisis, wars, rising nationalism and the Covid-19 pandemic, elements that complicate social inclusion (Becker, Norlén, Dijkstra, & Athanasoglou, 2020).

The last stage of the preliminary analysis is the understanding of the key concepts. This is an especially important element in this research because the conceptualization of disability has evolved since the 1970s. The inclusion process is dynamic and moves according to the views of the political, economic and social agents involved, so it is important to point out how the topic is conceptualized in the documents analyzed (Pletsch, 2020). The central terms of the documents are three concepts used as a basis for the construction of documents by the working groups. These concepts are: underrepresented, disadvantaged and vulnerable students (EHEA, 2020).

These concepts are present in all documents explored by this research. Thus, this preliminary analysis already indicates that the focus of the process is not on the specificities of the disadvantaged categories, their identification and development of specific policies, a task delegated to the signatory countries to carry out according to their local contexts (Crosier & Haj, 2020).

This understanding points to clues on how to analyze the representation of the inclusion of people with disabilities in this educational set that is the Bologna Process. Not by looking for barriers and facilitators (Waltz & Schippers, 2020; Fernández-Batanero, et al., 2022), for example, but by clarifying which approaches are used to construct this representation that influences the agenda, development and implementation of educational policies, since non-decision-making is also an important domain of public policy research (Lingard, Henry, Rizvi, & Taylor, 1997). The prioritization of certain themes over others offers clues to debate power struggles, imbalances, contradictions and the influences that generate such imbalances within educational groups, themes that will be debated in the following analysis through the Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education (CPEE).

Representation of the inclusion of people with disabilities in the documents of the Social Dimension of the Bologna Process

The social dimension was introduced into the Bologna Process at the initiative of students at the meeting of ministers held in Prague, Czech Republic, in 2001 (Schmidt, Matijević, & Anic, 2023). The students' demand was for greater diversification in academic and decision-making environments regarding the direction of European universities, something that was not mentioned in the first statements about the initiative (ESIB, 2001).

As we saw in the first section of this article, it has been a hallmark of disability studies to include it in broader spaces of discussion and to analyze it as a result of the relationship with these spaces (Mladenov, 2015). In addition, many movements that promoted its global rise were impacted by the work and activism of associations and institutions defending people with disabilities (Biermann & Powell, 2022).

However, this inclusion in 2001 did not result in concrete actions until 2007, when the social dimension was conceptualized at the London evaluation meeting: "we share society's aspiration that the student body that enters, participates in and completes higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations" (EHEA, 2015, p. 34). This definition, despite taking almost a decade to be created, brought more clarity to the debate on inclusion. Crosier and Haj (2020) argue that this delay may have been motivated by leaving the action of states open, while at the same time they would be free not to commit to anything or to other more important elements of the initial agenda of the process, such as convincing and adhering to more countries. The Bologna Process has been characterized as a structural revolution due to its ambition to modernize educational policies in heterogeneous countries and has in fact achieved this objective in some nations. However, in its social dimension, it has not challenged the socially elitist nature of the European university (Holford, 2014), which is why the London Declaration (2007) signals a break with this characteristic.

However, the shift towards the social dimension in London occurred only in rhetoric and not in practice. The report of the working group on the social dimension presented in 2015 indicates that very few countries have adopted strategies to identify barriers to access to university or produced reliable data for practical actions (EHEA, 2015).

This report was produced by a working group that was also responsible for debating the concept of lifelong education, one of the main themes of the Bologna Process. The document acknowledges that there are doubts as to whether national

policies prioritize the social dimension in their decisions and about the effectiveness of the measures (EHEA, 2015).

To improve national strategies, the working group suggested adopting guidelines that would develop tools to identify barriers, produce data to support action, and also promote peer learning through a database that would demonstrate national realities and good practices that could be replicated (EHEA, 2015). The document concludes that "most countries have implemented a wide range of very different measures, but it appears that these measures are rarely evaluated and their impact is unknown" (EHEA, 2015, p. 15).

The difficulty in measuring indicators and comparing them in the early years of Bologna seems to show that the social dimension does not fit into the models of comparison and measurement. It also shows that inclusive education, with complex social priorities, may have difficulty being framed in management models, because it needs a more humane character (Holford, 2014; Pletsch, 2020; Piccolo & Mendes, 2022). Another element that makes it difficult to relate disability to managerial measurements is that the burden of disclosing disability remains with students and many do not want to deal with this experience, which can be stigmatizing (Kendall, 2016; Lehrer-Stein & Berger, 2023).

The working group report published in 2020 argues that "the time has come for a clear political commitment from EHEA ministers to truly improve the social dimensions of higher education" (EHEA, 2020, p. 10, our translation). This declaration was made two decades after the beginning of the Bologna Process, demonstrating that until now the social dimension has been reduced to the construction of some guidelines and a database that has not been kept in operation, with no clear commitment to its implementation. Several studies (Štech, 2011; Amaral, 2015; Marcon, 2015) argue that the concrete commitments of the Bologna Process have been to neoliberal elements of education, emphasizing issues such as quality assurance (external control), attractiveness and competitiveness of the European system. The research by Domínguez and Gutiérrez (2022) evaluated the success of the Bologna Process in terms of employability, its main objective, according to the authors. Analyzing graduates who completed their courses between 2013/2014, the research findings showed that in Spain there is less job stability and lower salaries for university graduates after Bologna. These studies argue that there is an antagonism between neoliberalism and inclusion, which may account for the limited success of the social dimension (Holford, 2014). Kushnir's (2020) research points in a different direction. Analyzing that universities are open systems that interact with local and international communities and need to adapt to survive, the author argues that there

is a mutual relationship in which both, neoliberalism and inclusion, mix and shape each other, with neoliberalism accepting the global discourse for inclusion and inclusive policies being shaped by neoliberal discourses. The working group report presented in 2020 argues that:

> Increasing the participation of vulnerable, disadvantaged and underrepresented groups in higher education produces wider benefits in terms of reduced welfare provision, improved health outcomes and greater community engagement (EHEA, 2020, p. 40).

This report shows concern for health and greater involvement with the community, but also for the reduction of benefits for a significant portion of the population. Kaščák (2023) points out that in Slovakia, a country still undergoing a post-Soviet transition, the Bologna Process represented a second wave of neoliberalism, after the shock of the first years with the fall of the Berlin Wall. A similar case to that of the Czech Republic highlighted in the initial section of this article, where there are prescriptions on inclusion in legislation, but there are no concrete moves towards its implementation (Mladenov, 2015; European Commission, 2017).

The working group report presented in 2020 advocates an expansion of the concept of the social dimension, with the intention of improving inclusion holistically, creating an inclusive and equitable environment, not being restricted to the identification of vulnerable groups (EHEA, 2020). In this sense of expansion, this report defines 10 principles and guidelines, which are recommendations to guide countries in formulating their inclusion policies. These were the activities developed by the working group for the 2020 report, to expand a concept and define guidelines. This work was characterized by the report as "significant milestones" of the working group (EHEA, 2020).

Between 2021-2024, the working group remained with the same presidency, Croatia and ESU (EHEA, 2024). Its main function was to create indicators and descriptors for the guidelines created by the previous group. The function of the indicators and descriptors "is to allow the creation of a system for monitoring the implementation of the principles of the social dimension, both at the EHEA and national levels" (EHEA, 2024, p. 5, our translation).

In the construction of these indicators, which seek to facilitate the understanding of the guidelines, another element of homogenization can be seen that demonstrates the vague nature of the documents of this working group on students with disabilities. The seventh guideline indicator states that buildings should be "easily accessible and adapted to the needs of underrepresented, disadvantaged and vulnerable students and

staff" (EHEA, 2024, p. 33). A disadvantaged student with low family income and without a physical disability, for example, does not have the same need for accessible ramps as a person with a disability. This element indicates that there is no minimum approach to the topic in these reports.

This group was essentially marked by the work on the construction of these indicators and monitoring systems for the implementation of measures. However, as mentioned above, the group is working to have these documents approved and included as part of the final statement of the evaluation meeting that would take place in Albania in May 2024. There was disapproval of the way in which the results of the work of the previous group (2020) were addressed, in which the documents were included as an annex to the statement and not as a separate document, with more personality and visibility (EHEA, 2024). Therefore, between 2014 and 2024, the working groups developed and expanded the concept of social dimension developed in 2007 and created principles, guidelines, indicators and descriptors to support the creation and monitoring of public inclusion policies, without distinction between underrepresented groups. Thus, when analyzing these reports, one can see a vague discussion that has been revolving around the same themes for a decade. Although these discussions are characterized as vague (Crosier & Haj, 2020) and of limited success (Holford, 2014), it is important to point them out because it demonstrates that this is an area of non-decision-making in a process that aimed to harmonize European education systems, but does not have agency in all its dimensions.

The Bologna Process, according to the EPCCE, the theoretical perspective used by this research, can be analyzed as an educational set because what we call a process is a set of ideas and activities accumulated over generations (Robertson & Dale, 2014). This process is built on the civilizing idea of higher education and its capacity to create a cultural citizen with "European" values, and this idea is not new (Robertson, Gomes, & Kay, 2009). It is also characterized by the close connection between economic and managerial precepts affecting the internal processes of universities (Marcon, 2015), which also did not originate with Bologna, which also has a relationship with important actors in global educational policy, such as the OECD, which is part of a group of international actors that have recently become protagonists of educational decisions with global reach (Schmidt & Onița, 2024; Verger, 2019).

There is no balance between these components of the educational set because there are different influences from globalization and other elements that establish inequalities between them (Robertson & Dale, 2017). Thus, for example, there is a vague and poorly detailed character of the target audience of the social dimension, but this is

due to a major problem that Europe has faced in the last decade, the migration crisis. Holford (2014) points out other elements that complicate the work of the Bologna Process in delimiting an audience for its social dimension, such as legal impediments, recent conflicts, changes in national territories and the fact that, for example, ethnic groups are not fixed in certain nations.

Thus, within this educational set, is it relevant to analyze these documents classified as vague? Would this really be the ideal place to answer the question of this research? According to Bauman (2010), asking the right questions makes all the difference between drifting and traveling. Therefore, analyzing the social dimension of a project involving 49 countries in Europe (EHEA, 2024), a continent that provides the common root for most of the world's universities (Holford, 2014), is important for inclusive education because the representation in these documents demonstrates how the problem is framed by the continent's most important education policy. Furthermore, education is not reducible to what happens in schools and universities, to barriers and facilitators, or in the relationship between teachers and students, but there are other important actors and their actions generate results for education (Robertson & Dale, 2014).

When the Bologna Process forms working groups that work for more than a decade and present as a result the formulation of 10 guidelines and indicators, it is clearly shifting its focus to other dimensions and causing impacts on the social dimension. Kaščák (2023) points out that Slovakia followed the more economically focused agenda of the Bologna Process and did not develop its social dimension, for example.

According to the EPCCE, the Bologna Process is a "moment in educational policy", and this is the moment that this research focuses on. This moment concerns political, economic and cultural structures, where basic limits are established (such as the definition of principles, guidelines and indicators) to achieve the "possible" and "desirable in education" (Robertson & Dale, 2014, emphasis added).

The ideas of Lingard, et. al., 1997, show that the degree of commitment of the Bologna Process to its social dimension can characterize it as a symbolic policy. This type of policy is characterized by "broad, vague, ambiguous and abstract objectives, with little or no commitment of resources and little reflection on implementation strategies" (Lingard, et. al., 1997, p. 34, our translation). However, symbolic policies are important to legitimize the opinions of certain groups, which can generate new developments for policies.

Lingard, et. al., 1997, point out that there are also material policies, which are characterized by concrete goals and implementation strategies. Within the Bologna Process, we can mention the implementation of teaching cycles, its most visible change.

Despite the results pointing to a fragmented image of the results with unequal levels of implementation and assessment of benefits (Kroher, Leuze, Thomsen, & Trunzer, 2022). These results, although fragmented, demonstrate that some elements of the agenda created by Bologna were successful.

On the other hand, the implementation report of the social dimension 2024, which analyzed the data based on the 10 guidelines created by the 2020 working group, pointed out that the guidelines with the lowest implementation rate are those on mobility, political dialogue and the creation of inclusive environments across academic environments (Eurydice, 2024). Its development depends fundamentally on a change in the organizational culture of universities, a pillar that has faced resistance since the beginning of the Bologna Process, from the non-acceptance of the term globalization of education, which was replaced by internationalization, which is more widely accepted, to the change in historical systems such as the Soviet model and the cultures, beliefs and values of teachers (Shaw, Chapman, & Rumyantseva, 2013).

This report shows that, as in other dimensions of Bologna (Kroher, Leuze, Thomsen, & Trunzer, 2022), there are irregular implementations. This is due to the fact that the national state still has a significant influence on the definitions of its local educational policies, despite the displacement of the capacity for elaboration to the regional level in many cases (Robertson & Dale, 2014).

Thus, what Bologna can do for the inclusion of people with disabilities is to create an agenda that prioritizes the topic, this is one of the most important functions of policymakers who have gained space with globalization. Although education policies are being made in new locations (Forsberg, 2019), they are still effectively implemented within national states, after intense debates on translations and recontextualizations of international policies.

These results confirm the theoretical assumptions of the EPCCE by pointing out the importance of national states in advancing regional or global projects. The implementation report (Eurydice, 2024), working groups (EHEA, 2024) and academic research (Kroher, Leuze, Thomsen, & Trunzer, 2022) indicate that there are irregular implementations in the Bologna Process, precisely because they depend on changes within states and these depend on factors that are contingent, often related to individual interests.

The answer to this research question indicates that the inclusion of people with disabilities is scarcely represented in the documents of the social dimension of the Bologna Process. There is no differentiation between the target groups of the social dimension and all the guidelines formulated have a homogenizing character. This model

is the same used by the Nordic countries, examples of inclusion because they offer a considerable number of scholarships through state resources and do not identify any specific group because everyone receives support (Crosier & Haj, 2020). This element is a clue that points to the same conclusions as Robertson and Dale (2017) when they argue that states have been a force for advancing regional projects. However, as demonstrated by Holford (2014), there are other cultural and legal difficulties for the non-identification of these groups among national states. And on the other hand, research such as that of Kendall (2016) indicates that revealing a disability can be an unpleasant experience due to the (still) existence of stigmas related to disability. Therefore, the Bologna Process does not have a relevant representation for the issues of inclusive education in the documents analyzed.

Final considerations

The Bologna Process and its leaders took almost a decade to define what they called the social dimension. Their first definition indicated that universities should reflect the same diversity of European society in their student body. From 2012 onwards, successive working groups were created to discuss the issue and encourage the implementation of policies in the signatory states. The results showed that at the end of the work, there was no guarantee that these groups would continue to discuss the social dimension.

This research analyzed how the inclusion of people with disabilities is represented in the documents produced by these groups. After using a documentary analysis, it was concluded that there is no relevant representation in these documents.

Between 2014 and 2024, the work of these groups was limited to creating a database that was not kept online and guidelines, indicators and descriptors that should be used by states to model their inclusion policies in higher education. Not only people with disabilities, but all those identified as vulnerable, disadvantaged and underrepresented, from a homogenizing perspective.

The theoretical assumption used by this research (EPCCE) argues that policies such as the Bologna Process are moments in educational policy, that is, education is not limited to what happens within universities or schools. This moment is used to define structures and what is desirable and possible in a given public education policy. Therefore, it is expected that this will not be the time for incisive demands. However, the research demonstrated that in other elements - linked to the economic aspects of education - the process has advanced, even if unevenly among the signatory states.

Taking the Bologna Process as an educational set, it was noted that the elements of this set are out of balance. The policy has been carried out with the holding of evaluation meetings and management of working groups by different countries. The economic issue has been responsible for the core of Bologna, which reduced graduations and introduced managerial changes to measure quality. However, the social aspect has not evolved in the same way.

The intersection between the elements of the set that have evolved the most and those that have evolved the least is represented by the figure of the state, which according to the epistemological lens of this research is still important for advancing educational policies, even with limited power in their creation, due to the influence of globalization and the deterritorialization it has caused in education.

The limitations of this research are represented by the use of only one moment of policy (building bases for the formulation of local policies), not using the moment of practice, for example. Future research that has the possibility can interview teachers to analyze how cultural changes are established within universities to create transversally inclusive environments, as guided by the guidelines created by the working group of the social dimension of Bologna.

Referências

Amaral, A. (2015). O processo de Bolonha: Da harmonização à sintonização, passando pela convergência. *Revista Espaço Pedagógico*, *22*(2), 1-20. UPF Editora. https://doi.org/10.5335/rep.v22i2.5563

Bauman, Z. (1999). *Globalização: Consequências humanas*. Zahar.

Becker, W., Norlén, H., Dijkstra, L., & Athanasoglou, S. (2020). Wrapping up the Europe 2020 strategy: A multidimensional indicator analysis. *Environmental and Sustainability Indicators*, *8*, 100075. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indic.2020.100075

Biermann, J., & Powell, J. J. W. (2022). Internationale Disability Studies. In *Handbuch Disability Studies* (pp. 19-34). Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-18925-3_2

Cabanda, E., Tan, E. S., & Chou, M.-H. (2019). Higher education regionalism in Asia: What implications for Europe? *European Journal of Higher Education*, *9*(1), 87-101. https://doi.org/10.1080/21568235.2018.1561310

Cellard, A. (2008). A análise documental. In J. Poupart et al. (Orgs.), *A pesquisa qualitativa: Enfoques epistemológicos e metodológicos* (pp. 295-316). Vozes.

Crosier, D., & Haj, C. M. (2020). Evolving social dimension of the European Higher Education Area. In A. Curaj, L. Deca, & R. Pricopie (Eds.), *European Higher Education Area: Challenges for a new decade* (pp. 147-160). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-56316-5_12

Cunha, J. A. C. da, Yokomizo, C. A., & Bonacim, C. A. G. (2014). Miopias de uma lente de aumento: As limitações da análise de documentos no estudo das organizações. *Revista Alcance*, *20*(4), 431-446. https://doi.org/10.14210/alcance.v20n4.p431-446

Domínguez, J. F. C., & Gutiérrez, C. R. (2022). Bologna Process and its impact on Spanish graduates employability: Good news yet to come. *Higher Education Policy*, *36*(3), 556-577. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41307-022-00274-0

EHEA. (2015). *Report of the 2012-2015 BFUG Working Group on the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning to the BFUG*. https://ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2015_Yerevan/71/3/Report_of_the_2012-2015_BFUG_WG_on_the_Social_Dimension_and_Lifelong_Learning_to_the_BFUG_613713.pdf

EHEA. (2020). *Advisory Group 1 on Social Dimension*. https://ehea.info/Upload/AG1_Social_Dimension_Final_Report.pdf

EHEA. (2024). *Working Group on Social Dimension*. https://www.ehea.info/Immagini/BFUG_WG_Social_Dimension_Workplan_2021-2024_(1).pdf

ESIB. (2001). *Student Göteborg Declaration*. https://uluslararasi.yok.gov.tr/Documents/avrupa-yuksekogretim-alani-ile-uyumlasma-projesi/bologna-sureci-diger-bildirgeler/goteborg-2001.pdf

European Commission. (2017). *Country report on the European Semester - Czech Republic*. https://abre.ai/jEJC

Eurydice. (2024). *The European Higher Education Area in 2024: Bologna Process Implementation Report*. https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/european-higher-education-area-2024-bologna-process-implementation-report

Fernández-Batanero, J. M., Montenegro-Rueda, M., & Fernández-Cerero, J. (2022). Access and participation of students with disabilities: The challenge for higher education. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *19*(19), 11918. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191911918

Forsberg, S. (2019). Setting a global agenda of education: Cooperation and tension within the global education policy field. *Geoforum*, *100*, 32-40. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2019.01.019

Fronzaglia, M. L. (2016). O processo de Bolonha: Um estudo de caso de política pública internacional (1999-2010). *Idéias*, *6*(2), 59-80. https://doi.org/10.20396/ideias.v6i2.8649463

Gandin, L. A., & Lima, I. G. (2016). A perspectiva de Michael Apple para os estudos das políticas educacionais. *Educação e Pesquisa*, *42*(3), 651-664. https://doi.org/10.1590/s1517-9702201609143447

Goodall, G., Mjøen, O. M., Witsø, A. E., Horghagen, S., & Kvam, L. (2022). Barriers and facilitators in the transition from higher education to employment for students with disabilities: A rapid systematic review. *Frontiers in Education*, *7*, 882066. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2022.882066

Holford, J. (2014). The lost honour of the social dimension: Bologna, exports and the idea of the university. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *33*(1), 7-25. https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2013.873210

Johnstone, C. J., Postiglione, G. A., & Teter, W. R. (2023). Handbook of education policy: International perspectives in a pandemic age. *Handbook of Education Policy* (pp. 1-13). Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800375062.00009

Kaľčák, O. (2023). From neoliberalism to neoliberalism – Grappling with the Bologna Process in a post-socialist Slovakia. In *Towards social justice in the neoliberal Bologna Process* (pp. 107-122). Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80117-880-820231006

Kendall, L. (2016). Higher education and disability: Exploring student experiences. *Cogent Education*, *3*(1), 1256142. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186x.2016.1256142

Koh, A. (2011). Singapore's 'global assemblage': Digging into the culture of education policy making. *Critical Studies in Education*, *52*(3), 267-278. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2011.604076

Kroher, M., Leuze, K., Thomsen, S. L., & Trunzer, J. (2022). Did the. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 1-20. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4114283

Kushnir, I. (2020). The voice of inclusion in the midst of neoliberalist noise in the Bologna Process. *European Educational Research Journal*, *19*(6), 485-505. https://doi.org/10.1177/1474904120941694

Lehrer-Stein, J., & Berger, J. (2023). A path towards true inclusion: Disabled students and higher education in America. *International Journal of Discrimination and the Law*, *23*(1-2), 126-143. https://doi.org/10.1177/13582291231162215

Lingard, B., Henry, M., Rizvi, F., & Taylor, S. (1997). *Educational policy and the politics of change*. Routledge.

Lino, M. M., Martini, J. G., & Barbieri-Figueiredo, M. do C. (2022). Mobilidade acadêmico-profissional e internacionalização da enfermagem: Contributos do processo de Bolonha. *Texto & Contexto - Enfermagem*, *31*, 10-25. https://doi.org/10.1590/1980-265x-tce-2021-0319pt

Mainardes, J. (2006). Abordagem do ciclo de políticas: Uma contribuição para a análise de políticas educacionais. *Educação & Sociedade*, *27*(94), 47-69. https://doi.org/10.1590/s0101-73302006000100003

Marcon, T. (2015). Declaração de Bolonha no contexto de mercantilização da educação superior: O discurso neoliberal dos organismos multilaterais. *Revista Espaço Pedagógico*, *22*(2).

Martins, D. A., Leite, L. P., & Lacerda, C. B. F. de. (2015). Políticas públicas para acesso de pessoas com deficiência ao ensino superior brasileiro: Uma análise de indicadores educacionais. *Ensaio: Avaliação e Políticas Públicas em Educação*, *23*(89), 984-1014. https://doi.org/10.1590/s0104-40362015000400008

Matějö, P., & Simonová, N. (2003). Czech higher education still at the crossroads. *Czech Sociological Review*, *39*(3), 393-410.

Mladenov, T. (2015). Neoliberalism, postsocialism, disability. *Disability & Society*, *30*(3), 445-459. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2015.1021758

Pletsch, M. D. (2020). O que há de especial na educação especial brasileira? *Momento - Diálogos em Educação*, *29*(1), 57-70. https://doi.org/10.14295/momento.v29i1.9357

Piccolo, G. M., & Mendes, E. G. (2022). Maio de 68 e o modelo social da deficiência: Notas sobre protagonismo e ativismo social. *Revista Educação Especial*, 1-22. https://doi.org/10.5902/1984686x65328

Ponce, O. A., Gómez-Galán, J., & Pagán-Maldonado, N. (2022). Qualitative research in education. *IJERI: International Journal of Educational Research and Innovation*, *18*, 278-295. https://doi.org/10.46661/ijeri.5917

Robertson, S. L., Gomes, A. M., & Kay, R. S. (2009). O processo de Bolonha da Europa torna-se global: Modelo, mercado, mobilidade, força intelectual ou estratégia para construção do estado? *Revista Brasileira de Educação*, *14*(42), 407-422. https://doi.org/10.1590/s1413-24782009000300002

Robertson, S. L. (2010). *Spatializing' the sociology of education*. In M. W. Apple, S. J. Ball, & L. A. Gandin (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of the Sociology of Education* (pp. 179-190). Routledge.

Robertson, S. L., & Dale, R. (2014). Towards a 'critical cultural political economy' account of the globalising of education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, *13*(1), 149-170. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2014.967502

Römhild, A., & Hollederer, A. (2023). Effects of disability-related services, accommodations, and integration on academic success of students with disabilities in higher education: A scoping review. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, *39*(1), 143-166. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2023.2195074

Santos, L. L. C. P. (2012). Entrevista com o prof. Antonio Nóvoa. *Educação & Sociedade*, *33*(119), 633-645. https://doi.org/10.1590/s0101-73302012000200016

Schmidt, N. Sćukanec, N., Matijević, A. S., & Anic, Z. (2023). Linking quality assurance and the social dimension of higher education: Literature review and mapping national practices. *Neset Report*, *1*(1), 1-71. https://doi.org/10.2766/146281

Schmidt, N. Šćukanec, N., & Onița, H. (2024). BFUG Working Group on Social Dimension 2021-2024: Final Report for the Period 2021-2024. *BFUG*.

Shaw, M. A., Chapman, D. W., & Rumyantseva, N. L. (2013). Organizational culture in the adoption of the Bologna process: A study of academic staff at a Ukrainian university. *Studies in Higher Education*, *38*(7), 989-1003. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2011.614336

Stech, S. (2011). The Bologna Process as a new public management tool in higher education. *Journal of Pedagogy / Pedagogický Casopis*, *2*(2), 263-282. https://doi.org/10.2478/v10159-011-0013-1

Verger, A. (2019). A política educacional global: Conceitos e marcos teóricos chave. *Praxis Educativa*, *14*(1), 9-33. https://doi.org/10.5212/praxeduc.v.14n1.001

Vidarte, A., Zambrano, J. R., & Mattheis, A. (2022). Access and equity for students with disabilities in Colombian higher education. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *30*, 1-22. https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.30.6044

Xavier, A., & Leite, C. (2023). Sentidos pedagógicos do processo de Bolonha: Uma análise a partir de documentos de constituição do espaço europeu de ensino superior. *Currículo sem Fronteiras*, *23*, 1-20. https://doi.org/10.35786/1645-1384.v23.1962

Waltz, M., & Schippers, A. (2020). Politically disabled: Barriers and facilitating factors affecting people with disabilities in political life within the European Union. *Disability & Society*, *36*(4), 517-540. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2020.1751075

RESUMO:
Este artigo tem o objetivo de analisar como a educação inclusiva é representada no Processo de Bolonha. Apoiado no conceito de conjunto educativo (Robertson & Dale, 2014), foi realizado um estudo documental por meio da análise do grupo de trabalho da Dimensão Social entre os anos de 2014 e 2024, recorte temporal desta pesquisa. Este grupo é responsável por promover políticas de equidade e inclusão na educação superior na Europa. Os resultados apontaram que não tem havido um equilíbrio entre as políticas que compõem o conjunto educativo do Processo de Bolonha. As políticas do grupo de trabalho analisado possuem caráter homogeneizante, sem distinguir seu público alvo, por dificuldades socioculturais próprias que a Europa tem enfrentado na última década, marcada por dificuldades econômicas, guerras e a crise da imigração. As questões ligadas ao mercado da educação têm tido uma evolução maior e a dimensão social não tem ocupado o mesmo espaço nos debates dos encontros avaliativos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Inclusão; Pessoas com deficiência; Políticas educacionais globais; Processo de Bolonha.

RESUMEN:
El objetivo de este artículo es analizar cómo se representa la educación inclusiva en el Proceso de Bolonia. Partiendo del concepto de conjunto educativo (Robertson & Dale, 2014), se ha realizado un estudio documental analizando el grupo de trabajo de la Dimensión Social entre 2014 y 2024, marco temporal de esta investigación. Este grupo se encarga de promover políticas de equidad e inclusión en la educación superior en Europa. Los resultados mostraron que no ha existido un equilibrio entre las políticas que componen el paquete educativo del Proceso de Bolonia. Las políticas del grupo de trabajo analizado tienen un carácter homogeneizador, sin distinguir su público objetivo, debido a las dificultades socioculturales específicas a las que se ha enfrentado Europa en la última década, marcada por las dificultades económicas, las guerras y la crisis de la inmigración. Las cuestiones vinculadas al mercado de la educación han evolucionado más y la dimensión social no ha ocupado el mismo espacio en los debates de las reuniones de evaluación.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Inclusión; Personas con discapacidad; Políticas educativas globales; Proceso de Bolonia.