

As IB World Schools In São Paulo, Lisbon And Maputo: Growth And Diversification Of The Field

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Abstract

The article analyzes the recent expansion of international schools, with a focus on educational establishments that provide International Baccalaureate® (IB) curricula and exams, based on three intersecting axes of study. First, it seeks to map the research produced on this movement, at an international level. Second, the evolution of the number of schools and students in the world is discussed, with particular attention to the trends observed in Portuguese-speaking and Latin American countries. Third, results of a documentary analysis on IB schools in the regions of São Paulo, Lisbon and Maputo are presented, focused on their institutional missions and visions. In addition to less expression, compared to Spanish-speaking countries, it is concluded that the growth of IB schools in metropolises with the official Portuguese language has been fueled by both the conversion of the traditional international school model and the emergence of business projects. specialized in this type of schools. The narrative of academic excellence and the formation of global leaders has become hegemonic. There are similarities, but also differences between the IB schools in these three cities, which we relate to their respective contexts.

Keywords: InternationalBaccalaureate; international schools ; internationalization ; globalization; elites.

1. Introduction

In recent decades, internationalization processes have increasingly affected national educational systems around the world. They start from the areas of higher education – for example, in terms of international mobility of students and teachers or international rankings – and progressively enter the school field. This field, internationalization processes, is manifested, on the one hand, in the uniformization of national educational systems through initiatives promoted by intergovernmental and transnational entities such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, or the World Bank and the European Union (eg, Felouzis & Charmillot, 2012 ; Martens et al., 2007 ; Robertson et al., 2012). On the other hand, we are assisting the development of a global educational market, in which there is a growing number of teaching establishments that claim to be “international”, many of them with curricula and endorsement systems validated by transnational educational organizations such as the International Baccalaureate® (IB) [previously designated International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO)] or Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE) (eg, Adick, 2018 ; Hayden et al., 2015 ; Bunnell, 2020).

The concept of 'international' is, in this field, marked by polyssemia and a high degree of indefinition, being associated with a great variety of educational intentions and objectives, as its “market value” is indisputable and is bound to grow. As Waldow (2018) notes , “being international” can be understood as a slogan for legitimacy and distinction between individuals, organizations and also nation-states. In this context, the author highlights: “Therefore, schools, pupils, parents and other actors can project different meanings onto this ideal – so it comes to mean quite different things in different circumstances” (Waldow, 2018, p. 249). No field of international schools, or 'international', is the associated state, on

the one hand, to the normative ideal of the 'city of the world' and, on the other hand, to the needs of a global market for knowledge, capital and work (Keßler & Schippling, 2019).

The field of international schools – one aspect of the internationalization processes in the school field – has grown very much and, at the same time, has diversified in recent decades. Especially not globally, we observe a growing demand for international school diploma programs, not only by transnational elites, but also by economically privileged local families seeking to prepare and promote their children in the global market (Gardner-McTaggart, 2016 ; Bunnell, 2019 ; Schippling et al., 2020). Yemini et al. (2022, p. 2) observe in this sense: “[...] international schools are shifting from an international solution for mobile professionals to a form of education that offers affluent local families an international oriented and internationally validated alternative to national curricula.” In parallel with the devaluation of two national educational systems, the pursuit of 'English' education is central to the new demand from native families, given that it is considered a condition for access to reputable universities in the English-speaking world, preferably in the United States and the United Kingdom. United, which proves that it will place its descendants in a favored position in the global market (Tarc and Mishra Tarc, 2015, p. 36). For the situation in Brazil, for example, Michetti (2022, p. 48-49) states that “familiarity with the international community is part of the formation, reproduction and reconversion of 'dominant classes'” and is not restricted exclusively to those classes. sociais.”

The growth of international schools is also due to the expansion of transnational educational organizations that offer globally recognized programs and diplomas such as the International Baccalaureate® (IB). IB is a non-profit educational

foundation with headquarters in Geneva that can be considered “uniquely transnational” (Adick, 2018, p. 129-130), because it operates at the global government level of education and is not linked to a specific national educational system.

This organization produces curricular guidance and exams, the levels of primary education (Primary Years Programme), lower secondary education (Middle Years Programme) and upper secondary education (Diploma Programme and Career-related Programme). According to the annual statistics published on this organization's website, the number of non-world schools that apply curricula and secondary school final exams – designated IB World Schools – increased from 279, in May 1990, to 2,932. , in May 2022, being applied, in this year, in educational institutions located in 150 countries. In the same period, the number of candidates for the IB secondary education diploma rose from 7,395 to 113,732 (IB, 2022a).

This growth has been, however, very uneven. Most of the students and schools are in the United States and not Canada, countries in which, furthermore, the network also includes public educational establishments (IB, 2022a). China, India, the United Kingdom and Holland also present very expressive numbers, with an annual number of graduation candidates close to 5,000. Below in these countries, there are some two countries in the Ibero-American space, namely Peru, Spain and Mexico, all with more than 4,000 candidates for graduation in 2022, with Spain standing out for having more than 200 IB schools (see table 1).¹

By comparison, the growth in Portuguese-speaking countries has been more modest: in a country with the size of Brazil there are 55 schools and a little less than 1,000 students graduating annually, in Portugal, or the number of graduates

here is two 500. No In the case of two remaining official Portuguese language countries, this offer does not exist in Cape Verde, Guiné-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe or Timor Leste, while its presence in Angola, Macau and Moçambique is still quite reduced, even in comparison with other countries. respective regions ([IB, 2022a](#) , [2022b](#)). This language may be relevant here, once the IB has adopted Spanish as one of its working languages, both in English and French, while Portuguese has not been recognised. Thus, an IB school can assume a bilingual model, in which languages are either Portuguese, but the attribution of an IB diploma implies that the student performs his or her studies and exams in remade languages, regardless of whether All schools in Portuguese or English speaking countries.

Table 1. IB schools and diplomas, in Ibero-American countries and in African countries with the official Portuguese language

	Schools					DP candidates (Higher Secondary exam)	
	1st (year)	Total	Primary	Sec Inf	Sec Sup	2014	2022
Argentina	1973	53	4	2	52	1381	2009
Bolivia	1993	3	1	1	3	141	144-152
Angola	2001	1	1	1	1	22	25
Brazil	1980	55	26	eleven	Four. Five	670	1087

Chili	1980	30	14	10	27	1031	1235
Colombia	1977	64	twenty-one	fifteen	61	1371	2122
Costa Rica	1991	49	2	3	29	532	1069
Ecuador	1981	80	twenty-one	23	77	1894	2827
Spain	1977	217	60	46	191	2361	4720
Mexico	1981	118	59	46	80	3035	3945
Moçambique	2005	4	3	2	3	29	Four. Five
Peru	1987	78	16	eleven	77	1048	4075
Portugal	1986	14	4	4	13	233	443
Venezuela	1983	13	1	2	13	213	152-160

Source: own elaboration from IB (2022a and 2022b) | Note: the two exam candidates present themselves in two periods (May and November)

2. An exploratory study of IB World Schools in Lisbon, São Paulo and Maputo

The approach to studying in IB schools is not a Portuguese-speaking space apart from this unique duo. On the one hand, there are some studies that address the development of this field in countries with the official Spanish language, such as, for example: the study by Resnik (2014, 2015) in Spain, Argentina, Chile and Ecuador, based on ator-rede theory; The study by Ponce and Intriago (2022) on the impact of IB in public schools in Ecuador; or the investigation by Saavedra et

al. (2016) on the preparation for a university through the Diploma Program (IB DP) in IB schools in Mexico.

However, these works do not include Portuguese-speaking countries. There, the state of the art on international schools and, especially, on IB schools, in countries with the official Portuguese language, is still very limited. We have studied international schools, including IB schools, and our former students in the Lisbon region (eg, Schippling & Abrantes, 2018, 2022 ; Schippling et al., 2020). In Brazil, there are some studies that analyze internationalization processes and international schools (eg, Cantuaria, 2005 ; Aguiar & Nogueira, 2012 ; Almeida et al., 2004 ; Almeida, 2015 ; Windle & Nogueira, 2015 ; Nogueira e Alves, 2016 ; Carvalho Junior et al., 2022 ; Michetti, 2022), but it is not focused on IB schools.

On the other hand, taking into account the great expansion worldwide and, in particular, in Spanish-speaking countries, over the last two decades, the field of schools with IB programs and diplomas in Portuguese-speaking countries is still limited. Currently, there are 14 IB World Schools in Portugal, 11 days in the Lisbon region. In Brazil, there are 55 schools with this designation, mainly located in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Four schools are registered in Moçambique, concentrated mainly in Maputo. Our remaining Lusophone countries are now present: a school in Angola, a school in Timor-Leste and another in São Tomé and Príncipe, Cabo Verde or Guiné-Bissau (IB, 2023).

All IB schools in these countries are private, which means that they are only exclusively accessible to socioeconomically privileged families, and can be considered a segment of elite education. It is certain that there are other schools that present themselves as “international schools”, in the name of presenting a

bilingual curriculum, but in this article we focus on schools that are integrated and only remade with IB.

The study of two metropolitan complexes in São Paulo², Lisbon and Maputo resulted, precisely, in confirming that IB schools, not a Portuguese-speaking space, tend to concentrate in these territories. There are only global centers that have shown tremendous growth in recent decades and are deeply integrated into the dynamics of the global market, with a vast contingent of migrant populations and headquarters of various international organizations and companies. For this reason, the comparative study of these three areas allows a comparison between three regions that, although they share the same language and maintain intense flows of people, capital and information among themselves, do not cease to be integrated on different continents, with patterns of development not always convergent.

3. Theoretical and methodological foundation

The objective of the research project on the implementation and development of IB in metropolitan regions of Lusophone countries is situated, in the first phase, in an analysis of the general characteristics of IB world schools in the regions of Lisbon, São Paulo and Maputo. An analysis of the institutional orientations of these schools is also carried out on the basis of their mission and vision declarations. The article presents central results of this exploratory study to provide a panoramic view of the field of IB schools in these three regions, in a comparative perspective.

In theoretical terms, the study refers to the approach to critical research on elites (Hartmann, 2004), with focus on the theory of social reproduction of Bourdieu (1979, 1989), given that the relationship as 'international' can be understood as a Strategies of dominant classes for their reproduction. This theorization is, at the same time, challenged by post-colonial approaches in education (eg, Takayama et

al., 2016) once the educational realities observed in the three regions are framed in a colonial history that formed, to a large extent, the its educational systems and ideários that represent contrastive contexts for the implementation of IB.

In light of two processes of globalization of educational policies, we orient our analysis to the global approach developed by Resnik (2015) and which aims to compare the impact of IB in regions with different social, political and economic contexts , using IB as a tertium comparationis and addressing these regions means that “they are involved in the same global education process in which the IB is the common global actor” (Resnik, 2015, p. 4). We also review the concept of school identity (Draelants & Dumay, 2005, 2011) to analyze the institutional orientations of these schools focusing on their declarations of missão and vision. With Draelants and Dumay (2005, p. 9) we understand school identity as “the way the actors of a school establishment present or define themselves socially or their establishment.”³ It is, therefore, a social construction that results from the interaction of the school organizations themselves with their contexts (Abrantes, 2003). School missões and visions are understood here as central markers of a school identity that is intended to be constructed or, at the very least, projected. In methodological terms, the exploratory study is based on an analysis of websites and other official documents of schools in three regions – with a focus on their declarations of missão and vision – complemented by information extracted from databases on international schools (IB, 2022a, 2022b, 2023 ; IBYB, 2023 ; ISD, 2023).

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Characterization of schools and field development

In the Lisbon region there are currently 11 IB World Schools, which is the largest concentration of schools in Portugal where there are currently, in total, 14 IB schools ([IB, 2023](#)). All IB schools in Lisbon offer complete schooling levels from primary school (often also pre - school) to upper secondary school. All schools are private and part of Catholic schools with a mono-educational system. The dominant language of instruction is English, while five schools are presented as bilingual, with both English and Portuguese as languages of instruction. The IB was introduced in Portugal in 1986 in a British school in the Lisbon region.

The IB was introduced in Brazil a little while later, in 1980, in an American and Catholic school in the region of São Paulo. It is the region where there are currently more IB schools (23), representing a large part of the 55 existing IB schools in Brazil ([IB, 2023](#)). In the region of São Paulo, 21 schools have all their teaching levels, while both have primary schools. There are two Catholic schools and one Jewish religion. Among these schools, 18 have English as a language of instruction and 11 have bilingual, Portuguese and English as a language of instruction.

In this context , the introduction of the IB happened much later, in 2005, in an American school in the Maputo region. There are no total of four IB schools, three days after they are found in the Maputo region. These three schools offer a complete educational cycle and one school only operates at the secondary education level. All schools in Maputo are private and have a denominational character. All schools have English as the language of instruction and a bilingual school (Português/English).

We observe, in three regions, a trend of increase in the number of IB schools, which seems to result from a confluence of factors. On the one hand, there is an

increase in business groups providing international education that create networks of schools with the character of franchises, such as, for example, Nord Anglia Education in the region of São Paulo, or Inspired Education Group in Lisbon or Enko Education in Maputo. On the other hand, there are also international schools – linked to a particular foreign system – or traditional schools that come to adopt the IB model.

4.2 Missões e visões das escolas IB

In the analysis of the misses and visions of IB world schools we identified five central themes with knowledge that vary according to the regions observed: 'excellence', 'holistic education', 'international attitude and (global) citizenship', 'multiculturalism and peace' as well as 'success and leadership' and 'best universities in the world'. This analysis aims to reconstruct elements central to the meanings around “being international” in IB world schools that can, in light of the theory of distinction (Bourdieu 1979, 1989), be understood as forms of their legitimization and distinction (Waldow, 2018, p. . 248).

The reference to 'excellence' is a central theme in most IB schools in the São Paulo region. In some cases, this concept is directly associated with academic learning, but we have a broader meaning, as trying to achieve a form of “excellence in everything we do”⁴. In Catholic schools, the idea of excellence is linked to Christian values such as, for example, a school that has the vision: “Being a reference in the education of academic, human and ethical excellence , based on the Christian and innate concept of being human and do world.” Intimately related to the search for excellence, in this broader sense, it is an orientation for a holistic education of the individual, which is another key element of self-representation of many of these schools, which characterizes education as “a collective exercise,

which for “We must integrate intellectual, social, emotional and physical development.”

Education for (global) citizenship and international attitude is also a central element of the mission and vision declarations of these schools. Some schools aim to train “citizens so that they act responsibly in society and continually develop the capacity to reflect on the reality in which we live”, which relates to the idea of citizenship as having to reflect and act responsibly in the face of the challenges of the world. current A school in São Paulo, founded by a Japanese philosopher and educator who experienced crimes against humanity during the Pacific War, has as its educational mission “creating creative values for peace.” Other schools link the theme of global citizenship to an idea of distinction. An American school, for example, has the following vision for its students: “Like Giants, we will [...] make a difference as global cities.”

We find, especially in more recent IB schools, an orientation for success in leadership. A school characterizes its students as “trustworthy ethical leaders” and promises an education that offers “academic, social and personal success for every student.” We hope that some “bem-happened” ones have a sense of responsibility for a positive and transformative impact on the global world. Linked to the idea of success and leadership, the objective of entry is found in internationally renowned universities, especially Anglo-Saxon ones, although in no case in Brazil there is also reference to top national universities. These most recent schools have a growing local population and are also identified with the Brazilian nation, culture and language: a school characterized as “an international school with Brazilian identity.”

A central theme of the mission and vision declarations of IB schools located in the Lisbon region is education for an international attitude and global citizenship. This education aims to “give positive contributions to our diversified and constantly changing world.” There is awareness that the current world faces various challenges – such as, for example, creating “a sustainable future for our planet” – and requires active and responsive people, capable of reacting positively to these challenges and “shaping a better future.” bright". There is also a school that aims to “promote and reinforce multiculturalism throughout the world” by teaching different foreign languages and knowledge of world cultures to promote dialogue between these cultures.

To achieve these goals, students are expected to constantly “challenge themselves” – an idea related to the theme of excellence – to “reach the limits of their own capabilities”, as well as develop as human beings from a perspective. holistic. The idea of a comprehensive education for students is central, especially in confessional schools that are associated with a “character education valuing aspects such as order, generosity, or joy in work without faith, in companionship, or in joy.”

In the presentation of schools, especially those founded after 2000 in the Lisbon region, the educational objective is linked to the theme of “success”, relating to access to the “best universities in the world”, but also to happiness: “We aim to train and inspire students to be happy and successful in their adult lives. ” To be successful, these schools are more focused on the academic dimension, not in the sense that they aim to equip students with the “competences” and “values” necessary to “have extraordinary lives” and to become “compassionate leaders who will make a difference in creating a more inclusive and sustainable

world.” We can conclude that, as observed in the São Paulo region, the most recent schools reveal a greater focus on the formation of “leaders” and not so much on the formation of “cities.”

The theme of excellence is also central to IB schools in the Maputo region. It seeks to establish a “culture of excellence” that is closely linked to an orientation for the success and spirit of leadership as a reaction to global competitiveness, expressing the objective of “raising ethical leaders with a strong sense of civic responsibility, which will go towards best universities in the world and follow the careers of your school.” In this way, the objective of forming responsible leaders is closely associated with the strategic aim of pursuing successful careers.

The most recently founded school in Maputo, which is part of a chain of private schools located in several African countries, defines the aim of providing its students “with its launching platform for the best universities in the world”. It is related to the guidance of two students for their success, which the school promises to be assured through the frequency of international universities. In this sense, this school invites “all motivated students who dream of a great future.”

The idea of excellence, on the other hand, appears linked to the comprehensive education of students, focusing on individual performance. A school in Maputo, on its own, declares that “it strives for excellence by enabling students to achieve self-control, to progress in their communities and to grow in a constantly changing world.” The focus here is on individual-student development that is understood as a condition to have a positive impact on communities. It relates an orientation to international attitude and global citizenship in order to “release the potential of two students throughout Africa to improve the global future.”

5. Concluding notes

The expansion of schools with “international” curricula, exams and diplomas currently constitutes two movements through two advanced themes to the internationalization of basic and secondary education. In this article, we present a first exploration of how the field of IB world schools is developed in three metropolitan areas of Lusophone countries – São Paulo, Lisbon and Maputo – proceeding to some comparisons as observed by other authors in different regions of the world, named , not Ibero-American space.

In the three urban regions in this study, it is evident an increase in the number of schools and students that follow the IB model, which is advanced both by schools whose educational model is associated with a specific foreign country (generally, either the United Kingdom or the United States) as the emergence of new commercial projects that take the IB as the main curricular reference. Going through a typology that becomes a reference for two studies in this area (Hayden & Thompson, 2013), we can say that these different institutional profiles have also been observed in our regions of the world, even though Portuguese-speaking territories have had a third type – as schools oriented by philosophical and pedagogical principles associated with peace and interculturality –, emerging, on the other hand, a fourth type of school still not addressed in the previous References: the traditional national schools, often with a Catholic matrix, which also adopt the IB.

The analysis of the misses and visions presented by these schools allows us to find a certain uniformity of discourses – which will not be altered by the processes of institutional isomorphism – around the valorization of individuals and “excellence”, a narrative that, in other words, seems common. These schools are, above all, oriented toward more socially advantaged audiences (Torres, 2015),

even though in this case references are made to the training of “global leaders.” These are, therefore, values that are reflected in the spirit of global capitalism. It will also be worth mentioning that some schools highlight, at the secondary level, a valorization of cultural diversity, or that it is most evident in the case of Lisbon and that it can be understood as a certain adaptation of the IB to the European cultural universe, even though it is hypothesis lacks further investigation. In this sense, also the greatest association observed with Brazilian culture and identity, not the case of some schools in the São Paulo region, could be a field of research to explore.

It will be important to mention that this article constitutes a preliminary product of a research project in progress and that, just as it is common to carry out exploratory research on questões still recent and few known, it constitutes a first mapping, or which raises more questões do que conclusions. Thus, it is intended to continue this line of analysis in two projects that complement each other. On the one hand, it aims to deepen the role of two international agents (namely, the IB structure and the groups that administer schools) in the configuration of this process, in terms of development strategies, visions and objectives, it being important to understand the mechanisms Through two quais orientations, we support and supervise the educational establishments, as well as how we conceive their insertion in local/national contexts and cultures, including the relationship with national and local educational administrations. On the other hand, it aims to carry out case studies in these three territories that allow us to understand the “school identities”, forged in the interaction of institutional representations and strategies with the social structures and the dynamics of schooling, with a particular focus on two different perspectives school teachers.

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