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ABLEISM AND ACCESSIBILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
A Case Study Regarding a Wheelchair User in a Psychology Course

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to discuss accessibility and ableism in Higher Education from the academic trajectory of a psychologist with physical disabilities/a wheelchair user. To this end, concepts such as disability, inclusion, accessibility and ableism are discussed. For the production of data, a semi-structured interview was carried out with a wheelchair user, who was invited to speak, among other aspects, about his inclusion in Higher Education in a Psychology undergraduate course. In addition to this interview, the data was complemented by informal conversations to resolve any questions about what had been discussed during the interview. Data analysis followed the principles of Textual Discourse Analysis, with the steps of unitarization, categorization and construction of a metatext. Among the results, the following stand out: ableist manifestations in different situations that influenced the participant's professional training; aspects related to (in)accessibility to services offered by the university; and a lack of knowledge about the characteristics of academics with disabilities as a disadvantage to their inclusion. As possibilities for advances in improving the quality of inclusion in Higher Education, there should be more dialogue with persons with disabilities, including organizing discussion groups within the university environment as one step towards reducing barriers against inclusion.

Keywords: accessibility; ableism; inclusion in Higher Education; persons with disabilities.

CAPACITISMO E ACESSIBILIDADE NO ENSINO SUPERIOR: UM ESTUDO DE CASO ACERCA DA FORMAÇÃO DE UM CADEIRANTE EM PSICOLOGIA

RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é discutir a acessibilidade e o capacitismo no/do Ensino Superior a partir da trajetória formativa de um psicólogo com deficiência física/cadeirante. Para tanto, são discutidos conceitos como deficiência, inclusão, acessibilidade e capacitismo. Para a produção dos dados foi realizada uma entrevista do tipo semiestruturada com um cadeirante, o qual foi convidado a falar, dentre outros aspectos, de sua inclusão no Ensino Superior em um curso de Psicologia. Além dessa entrevista, a produção dos dados foi complementada por diálogos informais para dirimir dúvidas acerca do que havia sido abordado durante a entrevista. A análise dos dados seguiu pressupostos da Análise Textual Discursiva, com as etapas de unitarização, categorização e construção de um metatexto. Dentre os resultados destacam-se: manifestações capacitistas em diferentes situações que influenciaram na formação profissional do entrevistado; aspectos relacionados à (in)acessibilidade aos serviços ofertados pela universidade; e desconhecimento das características do acadêmico com deficiência como um fator que desfavorecia sua inclusão. Como possibilidades para avanços na melhoria da qualidade da inclusão no Ensino Superior, aponta-se para a maior valorização do diálogo com pessoas com deficiência, incluindo a formação de grupos de discussão no ambiente universitário como oportunidade de diminuição das barreiras contrárias à inclusão.

Palavras-chave: acessibilidade; capacitismo; inclusão no Ensino Superior; pessoas com deficiência.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of disability has been redefined over the years, like so many others, influenced by changes in society, culture, etc. The way society understands and relates with persons with disabilities, in different contexts, expresses how they are usually seen. Changes in the understanding of this concept start from discrimination/exclusion and, consequently, dependence on medical treatments, aiming at the rehabilitation or normalization of their bodies. More recently, we have been seeing discussions posed in studies about disability considering it as a different way of being in the world, closer to what has been called the Social Model of disability. In this sense, disability cannot be understood in isolation, but always in relation to the social context, that is, limitations are imposed and not natural for people with disabled bodies (Diniz; Barbosa; Santos, 2009, p. 65).

These changes in concept walk hand in hand with the implementation of access and inclusion policies (Brasil, 1996, 2008a, 2015), both in Basic Education and in Higher Education. As a result, there was an increase of 87.7% (from 2011 to 2018) in the number of students with disabilities enrolled in public and private universities in Brazil. Physical disability, our focus in this text, represented 35.8% of the total, with 15,647 enrollments, according to Inep (Inep, 2018).

However, there are still misconceptions about persons with disabilities: “the condition of their bodies is something that, naturally, defines them as less capable” (Vendramin, 2019, p. 17). This is an “ableist” view that is present in different everyday situations, directly impacting the quality of socio-educational inclusion of these people and their development at all levels of education, also influencing their future experiences in the job market.

According to Gesser and Nuernberg (2017, p. 154), “[...] every day, people who live with body injuries and impairments are faced with many barriers that hinder social participation at the university and in other social environments.” Minimizing architectural, physical, attitudinal, and methodological barriers, among others pointed out in the legislation (Brasil, 2004), is a challenge to be faced head on by Higher Education institutions for effective inclusion to take place. Considering the increase in the number of students with disabilities in Higher Education and the importance of a thinking that goes “beyond access,” one alternative that should be included in the debate is to give a voice to these people, to talk “to them” and not just “for them.” Their narratives contribute to facing the challenges imposed by a society that, itself, was constructed historically and socially on a basis that defines who can or cannot participate in education, regarding school as a space for a select, privileged group.

From these first considerations, we underscore the goal of this article, which is to discuss accessibility and ableism in Higher Education. It starts from the academic trajectory of a psychologist with physical disabilities. Although a Psychology student was chosen, we consider that the discussions presented here are relevant to all higher education courses to some extent. In the next section, we discuss the paradigm of socio-educational inclusion, the concept of disability, accessibility in Higher Education, and the concept of ableism.

INCLUSION, DISABILITY, ABLEISM AND ACCESSIBILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Education in institutionalized spaces intentionally conveys the knowledge produced and reproduced by society, aiming at the cultural, scientific and technological development of its pupils. As such, it is one of the essential social rights guaranteed in Brazil by article 205 of the 1988 Federal Constitution: “Education, which is the right of all and duty of the State and of the family, shall be promoted and fostered with the cooperation of society [...]” (Brasil, 1988).

With the promulgation of the Law of Education Guidelines and Bases (LDBEN), the country assumed the policy of inclusion, defining Special Needs Education as a type of school education, preferably offered within the regular school system (Brasil, 1996). Later, the National Policy on Special Needs Education from an inclusive approach was instituted to ensure the inclusion of students with disabilities, global developmental disorders and high abilities/giftedness (Brasil, 2008a). The aim was to guide education systems to ensure:

> Access to regular education, with participation, learning and continuity at the highest levels of education; transversality of the special needs education modality from early childhood education to higher education; offer of specialized educational assistance; training teachers and other education professionals for specialized educational services and inclusion; family and community participation; accessibility in architecture, transportation, furniture, communications and information; and intersectoral articulation in the implementation of public policies (Brasil, 2008a, p. 14).

In 2013, LDBEN was amended by Law no. 12 796 to address aspects of teacher training for specialized educational services, also ensuring that this service would be offered in Higher Education institutions, which is the focus of this paper. The struggle for the protection of the right to education, participation and equal opportunities has established the paradigm of socio-educational inclusion, considering that “it will not be possible to achieve a truly inclusive education in an excluding society” (Bueno, 2008, p. 55). Therefore, building a more inclusive society presupposes the provisions for active, democratic participation of all children, young people and adults, covering all persons.

For a long time, the fact that disabilities were viewed as “abnormalities” was a pretext for various forms of segregation and even elimination of disabled persons. According to Maior (2017), the struggle for the rights of persons with disabilities went from guardianship to the search for autonomy, with two distinct phases that started by engaging family and caregivers and, later, involving the persons with disabilities themselves, initially supported by family members. In both phases there was support from civil society associations to fight for the promotion of public policies to ensure these rights. This history about disabilities can be revisited as a change in concepts: if disabilities were previously seen from a more medical perspective, more recently, we see a more socially-centered concept being advocated (Diniz, 2012), as we will briefly discuss in this section.

From a medical perspective, the concept of disability is understood as “[...] a consequence of a disease or accident, which generates some inability to be overcome through rehabilitation treatment" (Maior, 2017, p. 31); this view is based on the normal--pathological binary. The understanding of disability from a social model, which we defend in this text, has been redefining the care given to these people, to students in institutions or segregated classes and rehabilitation centers, for the defense of the right to enroll in regular schools, respecting their needs for equitable education. This concept is supported by the National Policy on Special Needs Education from an inclusive approach (Brasil, 2008a), which understands people with disabilities as "[...] those who have long-term impairments of a physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory nature, who, when interacting with various barriers, may have their full and effective participation in school and society restricted" (p. 15). We highlight from this previous excerpt the fact that impediments are not the only characteristic for the definition of disability and must always be considered observing the barriers that society imposes historically and culturally, which oppose the participation of these people in school environments.

The boundary between what is considered normal or abnormal is not well defined. Historically, the metric to approximate or distance bodies with and without disabilities has been set by medical authorities that determine whether individuals belong to the normal or the pathological. In this conception, there is no room for individuality, since "it is seen as a deviation and, therefore, must be corrected to adapt the person to what is considered normal, avoiding discrimination" (Santana, 2007, p. 23). Disability as a variation of the normal was a narrative produced in the 18th century that presented the body of disabled persons as unfit, when compared to a body without disabilities, causing these people to be more discriminated against in different educational spaces, in their professional life or personal relationships, due to inhabiting a different body (Diniz, 2012).

Later on, disability studies associated this discourse with the concept of able-bodiedness, which refers to the compulsory existence of an ideal body, capable of participating in life and society, with people who do not fit this pattern being considered unfit. Based on this concept, discrimination against people with disabilities now has its own name, similar to racism, sexism, homophobia: ableism. It denotes "a type of discrimination that materializes in the form of mechanisms of interdiction and biopolitical control of bodies based on the premise of (in)ability, that is, on what people with disabilities can be or are capable of being" (Mello, 2016, p. 3267).

With disability studies (1970), feminist and postmodern critiques (in the 1990s and 2000s), the medical model was confronted within the field of the Humanities. Disability began to be seen as a new way of being and inhabiting the world, a possibility among many others (Diniz, 2012). This means that "inhabiting a body with physical, intellectual or sensory impairments is one of the many ways of being in the world" (Diniz; Barbosa; Santos, 2009, p. 65). From this perspective, disability is not "an injury that imposes restrictions on a person's social participation. Disability is a complex concept that recognizes the injured body, but also denounces the social structure that oppresses the disabled person" (Diniz, 2012, p. 10).

The social model of disability is understood as a historical, social and cultural concept, which is, therefore, under continuous construction. It denounces explanations about the performance of individuals based solely on their abilities, focusing on the limitation posed by the injury, without considering the conditions of the environment in which the person is inserted. "Is it a body with an injury that limits social participation, or is it a context that is not sensitive to diversity that segregates the disabled?" (Diniz, 2012, p. 17). With this in mind, the international movement for the rights of persons with disabilities grew, culminating in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities-CRPD (2006) under the motto "Nothing About Us Without Us." This event characterized persons with disabilities according to the definition previously explained here and presented in the National Policy on Special Needs Education from the perspective of inclusive education.

The social model of disability has advanced in relation to the medical model in the literature on inclusive education and in the Law, where the responsibility for inclusion in society was the exclusive responsibility of individuals, their family or specialized professionals. The effort is now bilateral; society and persons with disabilities, together, must strive to find solutions. We understand that, in line with the paradigm of inclusion, if we want to advance towards good quality education for all, it is the social model that brings us the best possibilities.

In 2008, Brazil ratified the CNPD, which was incorporated into the Federal Constitution of 1988 in paragraph 3 of article 5 by Constitutional Amendment no. 45 of 2004. Legislative Decree no. 186/2008 (Brasil, 2008b) approved the text of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratifying it. Thus, the social concept of disability began to be part of laws, decrees and other legal provisions, expanding and guiding the obligations of society in order to guarantee the rights of this population.

Among these legal provisions, we can refer to Law 13 146, the Brazilian Law of Inclusion (Statute of the Person with Disabilities). This is the result of a historic process of actions for social inclusion, bringing together other specific laws, whose objective is to "ensure and promote, under conditions of equality, the exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms by persons with disabilities, aiming at their social inclusion and citizenship" (Brasil, 2015, Art. 1º).

Educational inclusion cannot be achieved without different sectors being prepared to deal with this public, promoting the principles of the CNPD, namely: autonomy to choose; independence; non-discrimination; full participation and inclusion in society; respect for difference as part of human diversity; equal opportunities; accessibility; respect for the development of children with disabilities.

Higher Education can provide citizens with greater and better opportunities for professional development in society. These institutions were created in the imperial era in Brazil to serve the elites and were not committed to the democratization of education. The selection process for admission was another instrument of segregation that reflected educational and social differences, and those who managed to overcome this entry barrier would have to make an effort on their own to overcome the difficulties encountered in their academic trajectory. And what is clear to us is that the consequences of this selective history are still present today, albeit to a lesser extent.

According to Pimentel (2013), the scenario of inclusion in Higher Education has been transformed in recent decades with the implementation of affirmative policies in Brazil, a result of the struggle of those who were historically excluded from cultural assets and public services. These policies, according to Pimentel (2013, p. 4), are "[...] gradually inciting the democratization of access and inclusion in the university context, enabling the exclusion imposed on differences/to those who are different to be acknowledges, and guaranteeing access to knowledge at all levels of education. In the processes of approval and re-accreditation of courses at Higher Education institutions, accessibility and permanence are taken into account. In this regard, Legislative Decree no. 186/2008 also highlighted the task of the signatory States:

> The State Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities have access to higher education in general, vocational training in accordance with their desire, adult education and continuing education, without discrimination and on an equal basis. To this end, the State Parties shall ensure the provision of reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities (Brasil, 2008b, Art. 24, n. 5).

Persons with disabilities are ensured special care when they inform their condition and specificity at the time of registration of the selection processes. However, according to Pimentel (2013), there is still a lack of adjustment in assessment instruments and their time of execution, although this right is guaranteed in Art. 27 of Decree no. 3298 of 1999 (Brasil, 1999). When these persons manage to enter the university, they continue to need adaptations in assessments and classes to gain access to knowledge.

With this new conception of disabled persons, new attitudes are required. Society must assume responsibility for eliminating barriers, considering the specific needs of each individual, but also developing and ensuring accessibility to products and services. The concept of accessibility, in its various dimensions, can be understood as a "quality, a facility that we want to see and have in all contexts and aspects of human activity" and, if a project is based on Universal Design, it can benefit all people, not only those with disabilities (Sassaki, 2009, p. 2). This concept has broad meanings and comprises several dimensions for thinking about accessibility, such as the six highlighted by Sassaki (2009):

> Architectural (no physical barriers), communicational (no barriers to communication between people), methodological (no barriers to leisure, work, education, etc.), instrumental (no barriers to instruments, tools, utensils, etc.), programmatic (no barriers embedded in public policies, legislation, standards, etc.) and attitudinal (no prejudice, stereotypes, stigma, and discrimination from society against persons with disabilities) (p. 2).

Barriers to accessibility enhance the condition of disability and are reinforced by discourses and social practices that end up preventing all people from participating in society. We are considering the social model of disability, which sees it as a condition that, although linked "to a specific organic cause, related to physical," auditory, visual, intellectual or multiple "dysfunctions or limitations, can be potentiated by the context in which the subject is inserted" (Pimentel, 2013, p. 8). Specifically to physical disability, our focus in this paper, this can be understood as:

> Impairment of the locomotor system that comprises the osteoarticular system, the muscular system and the nervous system. Diseases or injuries that affect any of these systems, alone or together, can produce affected body conditions depending on the type of injury that occurred. (Pimentel, 2013, p. 10).

In Decree no. 5296/04, which establishes general rules and basic criteria for promoting accessibility for people with reduced mobility, physical disability is defined as:

> Total or partial alteration of one or more segments of the human body, causing impairment of physical function, presenting in the form of paraplegia, paraparesis, monoplegia, monoparesis, tetraplegia, tetraparesis, triplegia, triparesis, hemiplegia, hemiparesis, ostomy, amputation or absence of a limb, cerebral palsy, dwarfism, limbs with congenital or acquired deformity, except for aesthetic deformities and those that do not result in difficulties in the performance of functions (Brasil, 2004, Art. 8, section II).

Thus, there are physical variations that distinguish the type of physical disability. We have to be clear that two people with physical disabilities are different and therefore need different services. In this document, we also find the different barriers that limit or prevent access, safe movement and access to information and communication for people with disabilities or reduced mobility: a) urban barriers; b) barriers in buildings; c) barriers in transportation; d) barriers in communications and information. Paying attention to these barriers is a basic criterion that must be met to promote accessibility.

According to Pimentel (2013, p. 10), the functional possibilities of people with physical disabilities can be expanded if Assistive Technology resources are offered “that ensure accessibility and autonomy in their right to come and go.” The term “assistive technology” refers to “products, equipment, devices, resources, methodologies, strategies, practices and services that aim to promote functionality, related to the activity and participation of people with disabilities or reduced mobility,” with the purpose of promoting autonomy, independence, quality of life and social inclusion for people with disabilities (Brasil, 2015, Art. 3, section III).

The access and permanence of people with disabilities in Higher Education does not depend exclusively on architectural changes for access to spaces, instruments, books, teaching resources, etc. However, “it is necessary to promote changes in the modus operandi of institutions in their traditional practices, both in teaching, research and extension, as well as in the infrastructure offered to the entire teaching, student and administrative community” (Poker; Valentin; Garla, 2018, p. 129).

Based on the social model of disability, the appreciation of accessibility, the refuting of any ableist attitude, and, above all, the expectation that Higher Education increasingly represents the human diversity of our society, we decided to draw from the motto of “nothing about us without us” to justify the importance of listening to students with physical disabilities about their experiences in Higher Education. In the next section, we explain the methodological procedures.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The present study follows the qualitative research design, which, for Minayo (2009), focuses on the “[...] universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values, and attitudes” (p. 21); characteristics that cannot be quantified when dealing with the reality of social facts. Within the possibilities of qualitative approaches, this research is characterized as a Case Study. For Yin (2005), case studies allow a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under analysis, in addition to favoring a holistic view of real-life events. Therefore, our "case" deals with the higher education experiences of a student who is a wheelchair-user, in a Psychology undergraduate course. We understand it as a case following the contributions by Yin (2005), since we do not delimit it to any given aspect, but we analyze as many nuances as possible identified from our data production procedures. Below, information about data production and analysis is presented.

Data production followed two stages: a semi-structured interview and additional conversations to complement information that was not clear. At all times, the exchanges took place via Google Meet, considering the pandemic caused by Covid-19 that Brazil and the world were facing in 2020, when the data production took place. The interview was based on a script; however, we added new questions in cases of need for further clarification. Regarding the topics, both in the interview and in the other conversations, the following were addressed: biographical aspects of the interviewee Jorge; studies in Basic Education and Higher Education before and after his injury; the process of entering Higher Education for a student in a wheelchair, from the entrance exams to the first contacts with other people; learning assessments; possible adaptations and/or changes in teaching and institutional practices for the care of student in wheelchairs; courses or training stages that were more or less difficult; the mandatory supervised internship; the physical accessibility of the institution and the means of transport used by Jorge; the need for changes in favor of the inclusion of wheelchair users in Higher Education; and his future professional aspirations. During the interview, the two authors of this work were present in the conversation.

Having transcribed the interview in full, we moved on to data analysis. For this, we are guided by the Textual Discourse Analysis proposed by Moraes and Galiazzi (2011), following the processes of unitarization, categorization and the production of a metatext. For the first stage, unitarization, we read the transcript in search of excerpts that could bring possible answers to our research objective. These excerpts were numbered in an ascending sequence with the following codes: US1 (for the first unit of meaning), US2, US3... and so on. In all, 145 units of meaning were selected. According to Moraes and Galiazzi (2011), unitarization is the "[...] initial movement of analysis. It constitutes a deconstructive exercise in which information is gradually transformed into elementary constituents [...]" (p.48).

With the 145 units of meaning in hand, we moved on to the categorization process. In our case, the categories were created a posteriori, that is, we did not adopt previous categories, but let the research corpus guide the definition of these categories through the convergence of the same topic addressed at different times by the interviewee. For the definition of the categories, our criterion was to group units around a topic that had been addressed in at least 15 units of meaning from different moments of the interview. Regarding categorization, Moraes and Galiazzi (2011) call it a "[...] organization, ordering and grouping of sets of units [...], always in the sense of being able to express new understandings of the phenomena under investigation" (p. 74). With these criteria, we arrived at a total of 3 (three) categories, namely: *Ableist manifestations*; *Aspects related to (in)accessibility*; and *Ignorance of Jorge's characteristics*.

Next, we bring a text of a biographical nature so that the readers know a little more about Jorge's characteristics, which we deem relevant to justify our interest in this research. We continue with the description and analysis of data from the 3 (three) categories, to end with our metatext, which will be produced in our final considerations. Our metatext is committed to responding to our research goal, with a more distant and global look at the categories, their approximations and distancing.

THE INTERVIEWEE, JORGE

Jorge[3] studied in a private school since the early years of elementary school in a city in the inland of Bahia. According to his narrative, despite not being the first in his class, his performance was satisfactory in all subjects, as he never failed a single school year or had learning difficulties. In addition, he was always a curious student and considered intelligent by the teachers, especially in the curricular components of the exact sciences in High School. He had a real connection with laboratory experiences in Physics and Chemistry classes. He finished the senior year of high school, called “scientific” at the time, in 1984.

In 1985, Jorge left his hometown like some of his classmates to take the entrance exam in the state of Espírito Santo and was approved among the top ten for the entrance exam for the undergraduate course in Agricultural Studies at the Federal University of Espírito Santo (Ufes) – Alegre/Espírito Santo, where he studies until November of the same year. Then, the accident occurred: a dive in shallow water causing a spinal cord injury in the region between the C3 and C4 cervical vertebrae, leaving him with spastic quadriplegia. Because of this, he was unable to return to the city of Alegre-ES and did not even complete the undergraduate course.

After the accident, he underwent surgery in his city, then he was referred to the Sarah Kubitschek hospital network in Brasília for treatment and rehabilitation, for approximately six months. During that time, he had contact with a support network made up of doctors, physical therapists and psychologists. In 2001, he suffered a fracture in his femur and went to the Sarah Kubitschek network again to be operated. He received care from a quadriplegic psychologist, and that was how the desire to study Psychology emerged, and he saw the opportunity to enter the job market.

To prepare for the entrance exam, he thought of taking a preparatory a course, but the courses in his city offered no physical accessibility. He could only find one where the stairs were shorter, so he attended classes for a month, then decided to study alone using books and conversations with his sister, who works in the healthcare field, as a source of study. Thus, he took the entrance exam in 2002 at a private university in the neighboring city (25 km away). It was the first class of this course to be offered at the institution, and he was approved in 1st place. Although he started with great motivation, the trips to the other city, often by bus that did not offer accessibility, rocking and putting his physical integrity at risk, added to some health problems and the difficulty of finding a specialized caregiver, that is, someone who was trained to guide him around, made him take some time off from the course three times. With this, Jorge’s course

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[3] Interviewee’s real name, who authorized its use through the Informed Consent Form.

completion schedule was different from the other students, the curriculum matrix was always changing, amounting to a heavier workload that he had difficulties in fulfilling.

Even with all these barriers, Jorge managed to finish the disciplines in 2015, as he came to an agreement with the professors to leave his Senior Thesis and mandatory internship for last. According to him, the internship was an additional challenge, as he was not accepted in Clinical Psychoanalysis, since the supervisor of this discipline considered that there would not be "transference[4]" between the subject and the therapist; so, he gave up, and then tried an internship in organizational psychology, but the course coordinator considered that the psychological tests for selection and recruitment should be applied by the intern himself.

Jorge developed his Senior Thesis on the topic of "Social invisibility as an obstacle to the inclusion of people with disabilities in society," defended in 2016. He was advised in the Gestalt Clinic internship working together with a group of colleagues, and he received his Psychology degree in 2018. At the time of the interview, Jorge did not work in the field of Psychology, but he had the desire to work with it, because he was promised invitations to work in friends' offices. Jorge considered himself to be a maker[5] and trader; he had an online store, assembled drones, model airplanes and sold them. He was also working on assembling and producing 3D printer models.

DATA DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

In this section, we describe and analyze the data produced by us, based on the proposed categorization. For this, we bring examples to our discussion with some of the units of meaning, chosen under the criterion of representativeness of our discussions, as well as bringing theoretical elements to our dialogue with the reader.

Ableist Manifestations

> [...] *So, I wanted to be recognized for what I knew*
> [...] *not the guy in a wheelchair that overcame the odds and is studying Psychology*
> [...] *I want to be a psychologist, that my chair be seen as just a detail* [...] (Jorge).

In this category of analysis, we gathered 20 units of meaning in which Jorge explains what we are calling ableist manifestations, that is, situations in which the interviewee suffered discrimination solely due to his physical disability. As if he was reduced to that characteristic. And with that, Jorge came to be judged almost exclusively by his inabilities rather than his abilities. People assumed that his disability would make it impossible for him to perform certain activities, such as acting as a psychologist. These manifestations, in our data, took place in the university, professional, and family context, and in other isolated situations, as we will discuss below.

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[4] A complex concept related to the psychoanalytic method: "It is through it that the psychoanalytic process is established [...] (Wachsberger *apud* Motta, 1989, p. 30).

[5] The maker movement is a technological extension of the Do-It-Yourself culture, which encourages ordinary people to build, modify, repair and manufacture their own objects, with their own hands. "This generates a change in the way of thinking [...]" (Silveira, 2016, p. 131, emphasis added).

In the university context, we highlight, to start, some surprise on the part of classmates when witnessing a wheelchair user not only studying Psychology, but succeeding in most disciplines. This surprise can be exemplified in the following excerpts: US51: [...] *a lot of people looked at me, "what is this guy doing here"* [...]; US62: [...] *it surprised a lot of people* [...]. In addition to his classmates, ableism was very evident when Jorge had to define the field in which he would do his mandatory internship, on the part of those responsible for this. Although this was his right, foreseen in the training curriculum of the Psychology course, our interviewee needed six attempts so that, finally, he could be accepted and fulfill the workload of the supervised internship. Some of the negatives for the internship were more subtle in camouflaging ableist manifestations. Others, on the other hand, explicitly started from the disability itself to justify why it was impossible for him to take on that internship.

> [...] *and I went around searching, begging to be accepted in any internship program* [...].
>
> [On the fifth attempt at a supervised internship] *I want you to tell me whether I can be a psychologist or not* [...] *I want you to tell me in writing* [...].
>
> [On the first attempt at an internship] *"in your case I don't think the clinic would be a good fit, I don't think there will be transference," because I had a lot of spasms, my leg moves by itself* [...].
>
> [On the fifth attempt at a supervised internship] *she thought the patient would get there and would not open up because they would feel ashamed, "come on, I have so many problems and here's this guy* [...] *doing so well and acting as my psychologist, how come?"* [...].

The problems generated by those responsible for the internship also reflected in the initial attempts to work in the field. According to Jorge, he sought professional partnerships with his own classmates at the university, who refused him in every attempt.: US138: [...] *after I graduated, I asked to be an assistant to some of my classmates, to share an office, anyway, they all said no* [...]. Jorge also tried taking civil service exams, and, according to him, barriers were created for his acceptance: US26: *But they all refused to let me work*! [...] *that the specifications of the exam weren't clear* [...].

In some of these refusals for work, Jorge even proposed that he himself do what would be the obligation of any institution in a truly inclusive society, that is, to be prepared for everyone, and not just wait for those who need more attention to be responsible for the changes in the environment. The interviewee even proposed hiring, on his own, a person to follow him in situations in which he would need some kind of help: US27: [...] *I always looked for a way, no, I will take someone with me, I will pay someone from my own pocket, let me work somewhere in this company* [...].

In the family context, the ableist manifestation came as a kind of protection against possible frustrations derived from discrimination. For the family, there would be no need for him to study after the accident: US18: [...] *my family* [...] *always created so many barriers: Why do you want to study?* We will also mention a situation with no direct relationship with the university context, in which Jorge tried to buy a model airplane for himself to fly. According to him, the seller suggested that he give up on the purchase, that it would not be possible for him to use it. With that, Jorge was motivated, out of a need, to create his own model airplane: US144: [...] *when I went to buy a remote control model airplane, the guy said: "Oh, you can't move your arms, no, it won't work," then he turned his back on me, so now, 10 years later, I managed to do it, fly a model plane* [...].

The excerpts we discussed in this category reflect that those involved, with the exception of Jorge himself, still see disability from the medical conception, not the social model one (Diniz; Barbosa; Santos, 2009). This medical model assumes a standard of normality for a body to function, or "able-bodiedness" (Mello, 2016). It is in this model that ableist manifestations are echoed, when the "disabled body" is judged based only on internal issues, which are not linked to the general context, to the barriers that are imposed for coexistence. These barriers exist because our society was not designed for everyone. Diniz, Barbosa and Santos (2009) state that a social model of disability, on the other hand, articulates the body with the social barriers that are imposed. In other words, the more barriers, the more we handicap people, and the opposite is also true. In a social model of disability, ableism is not viable.

Mello (2016) articulates the concepts of "disability, incapacity and vulnerability" (p.3265) to also denounce that ableism is associated with a medical conception of disability. As a result, people with disabilities receive a "[...] moral judgment that associates ability solely with functional body structures and is mobilized to assess what people with disabilities are capable of being and doing to be considered fully human" (p.3272). We need to discuss, in all spheres – here with emphasis on Higher Education –, the need to not see people with disabilities as just *the guy in a wheelchair*, but, on the other hand, to alert to the fact that, if our environments continue to be designed only for a few, people will continue to be surprised when they must coexist with differences. And there is nothing more coherent than that this discussion occurring in Higher Education, an environment whose supposed objective is to develop people in different aspects, including in relation to our attitudes when faced with differences.

The growing number of persons with disabilities entering universities also plays an important role, since coexistence, as we have seen here in the data presented by our interviewee, also contributes to the deconstruction of images established far from direct contact between different bodies. It remains for us to make a commitment not only to learn from these interactions, but to review our attitudes, the barriers imposed, the curricula, etc. Our goal must always be for the wheelchair to become a detail. But for that, we have to assume that we need to move forward in many aspects, and not run away from that commitment.

Aspects related to (in)accessibility

> [...] *they still don't have a voice software,*
> *I thought it best to hire someone* [...] (Jorge).

Just as in the literature the concept of accessibility is presented in a diversified way, our interviewee also discussed this topic under this scope. When we look at the 40 units of meaning that make up this category, we notice three types (in)accessibility that we have grouped and named: equipment/materials; architectural/transport;

knowledge/activities specific to the course. With these three groups, Jorge actually lists more problems of inaccessibility, in a space that was not planned to be occupied by him. Below, we discuss these three types of (in)accessibility.

Regarding the first subgroup of aspects related to (in)accessibility (equipment/materials), we noticed that Jorge mentioned several possibilities, mainly related to technologies that could contribute to his experience at the university. In some cases, it is even simple equipment that, supposedly, could be easily made available by the institution. Our interviewee listed the need for a computer; software with voice readers (due to his difficulty in leafing through books alone); content made available in digital format; keyboards with grip to make his typing easier, etc. In addition to these, Jorge also highlighted the importance of professors making textual materials available in digital format, to avoid making photocopies, as he depended on the help of other people for this task. In addition, these digitized materials would make it easier for him to handle the books, due to his inability to move his hands. Here are some excerpts from his report:

> [...] *there was no computer at the time* [for the entrance exam].
>
> [...] *nothing was easily accessible* [...] *a digitized content that would get to your home and you could just read* [...]
>
> [...] *I wasn't able to do everything by myself, neither the coordination nor the professors made things easier* [...].
>
> *It was like this, we have a student of this type now, he is doing well, what are we supposed to do? If it's all going well, there's no need for anything*!

The second group of aspects related to (in)accessibility (architectural/transportation) refers to issues such as: accessibility at home, which influenced his studies; lack of wheelchair-accessible buses; accessibility at the university, with adapted bathrooms; hospital care spaces at the university, since he had problems with blood pressure variation, for example, which, for a wheelchair user, made it difficult to have faster access to care; organization of classroom spaces with more ease of movement for wheelchair users among the other students, etc. These examples need to be located in time, since Jorge is talking about a period from 2002 (when he started the Psychology course). However, it is clear that these spaces were not designed to be occupied by everyone. In addition, Jorge did not have, like the others, options when it came to choosing the spaces he occupied in the classroom, on the bus, etc., as he depended on adaptations to what was already there. Here are some excerpts from his speech:

> [...] *it bothered the driver because I stayed in the middle of the corridor* [...] *the men jumped over me, the women couldn't do it because they were wearing skirts* [...] *I heard jokes from the driver, from the conductor* [...] *several times I fell, hurt my head*.
>
> [...] *the first adapted bus arrived when I finished university* [...].
>
> [...] *I had to be the first to get to the classroom and the last to leave, because if I arrived after people, the class had to stop* [...] *there was no access path so I could be at the back, middle or front of the room* [...].

The last subgroup of this category (knowledge/activities specific to the course) includes the problems that Jorge had when participating, like everyone else, in certain activities or having access to materials and practices fundamental to his training. There are reports of lack of a support person during class, which made taking notes and further studies unfeasible if he did not have voluntary help from another student; the impossibility imposed by the coordination for him to carry out the same learning assessments as the others, in the same space and with the same methodology; lack of personal support even in the entrance exam; the need for the mandatory supervised internship fields to consider his characteristics, which meant that he was denied the internship practice six times, resulting in changes in the course completion schedule and consequent delay in his graduation; lack of support at the university for questions, a kind of monitoring for all students, etc. However, of all these aspects, two of them were most strongly underscored in his speech, as discussed in the next paragraph.

The solutions for the university's difficulties in thinking about Jorge's accessibility were not, in his opinion, adequate or inclusive. In the case of learning assessments, Jorge, unlike the others, had to carry out assessments orally. These assessments were carried out in separate spaces, outside the classroom where everyone else was. This made him nervous, afraid of making a mistake, as he was face to face with a professor. This solution, from our point of view and also from Jorge's, goes against the principle of inclusion: all together, within the same spaces and goals, even if some have the need for equitable treatment, with adaptations. The other aspect that was most strongly underscored in his speech was the problem with the completion of his curriculum, mainly due to delays caused by refusals in accepting him for the supervised internship. According to Jorge, he could not do an internship in his desired area (legal or organizational psychoanalysis), as most of his classmates did, but he had to make do with what was available to him. The biggest issue is that this decision was made both due to ableist manifestations (what they thought Jorge would be able to accomplish in practice) and (in)accessibility of the internship fields. Excerpts from this third subgroup are listed below:

> [...] *the help and adaptation I got was from my cousin, she wrote things down during the... during class, I sat next to her* [...].
>
> [...] *I never took a test with my classmates.* [...] *even when it was in pairs, I had to leave the classroom* [...].
>
> *No, only me!* [took oral tests]. *Of course, I thought it was unfair at the time!*
>
> [...] *I didn't have that advantage when taking a written test, when you can take some time to think, it had to be fast* [...] *I was afraid I'd say something stupid*.
>
> [...] *the assessment was like a type of exclusion, a different classroom* [...].
>
> [...] *at the internship, I think this would be the most important thing, an internship that is adapted* [...].

In a study in which the authors interviewed students with disabilities about their experiences as higher education students at the Federal University of Pará, Pereira *et al*. (2020) addressed aspects about accessibility. According to the authors, even with the progress that some policies have allowed, such as affirmative action policies and the definition of quotas for the admission of students with disabilities, we still have a lot to accomplish. The authors understand that academic monitoring programs, as well as extension and research projects focused on inclusion, would be relevant possibilities. Barriers were also identified by the authors regarding architectural accessibility, communication and teaching methodologies conveyed in the classroom, aspects that are echoed in Jorge's speech in our research.

Ciantelli and Leite (2016) addressed the Inclusion Program – Accessibility in Higher Education [*Programa Incluir – Acessibilidade na Educação Superior*], created in 2005 by the Ministry of Education (MEC). It aimed to develop policies/actions for the inclusion of people with disabilities in higher education in federal institutions. More specifically, the effects of this program on accessibility centers in each participating institution were investigated. For this, the authors analyzed questionnaires answered by the coordinators of these centers. Among the results, the following stand out: the advance in policies of methodological accessibility to teach these students, with the flexibilization of methodological alternatives by the professors; the reduction of attitudinal barriers (for example, with the reduction of discriminatory attitudes) in relation to students with disabilities in Higher Education; and, on the other hand, difficulties with organizing broader actions by universities, since such actions interfere in the entire organization of the university, in all its institutional normative documents, which requires a greater commitment from managers.

We emphasize that, given the understanding that accessibility manifests itself on different fronts, such as architecture, communication, methodologies, attitudes, etc., it is not enough to focus on just one of these aspects. For example, access ramps to classrooms are not enough if, inside, communication, methodologies and attitudes do not include students with disabilities. In addition, attention to a particular type of accessibility must reverberate in the others, in a broader action that considers accessibility as a set of factors with a common objective. We conclude this category by highlighting the importance of listening to the students themselves regarding the necessary actions for accessibility. Given our lack of knowledge of what and how to do it, a first step would be to ask how we can proceed for those who are directly experiencing (in)accessibility in Higher Education: the students.

Ignorance of Jorge's characteristics

> [...] *it was something that was new for everybody,*
> *no one knew how to deal with the situation* [...] (Jorge).

This category brings together 23 units of meaning in which Jorge dealt with situations that demonstrate, first, the lack of knowledge people in the university environment had about his characteristics (both his difficulties and their potential), and second, the immediate consequences for his inclusion due to this ignorance. This fact generated problems in interpersonal relationships, regarding the most appropriate methodologies for his training, as well as in relation to his needs for infrastructure, materials, etc. In order not to fall back on issues already addressed in the first two categories, since they are intertwined to some extent, our goal here is to discuss the fact that, if we are all different, which also applies to people with a disability in common, knowing individual characteristics has great potential for promoting a more inclusive education. And even more so when it comes to people who are minorities in certain spaces, as is still the case with students with disabilities in Higher Education.

One of the most immediate reactions to this lack of knowledge was the surprise in the other students. The surprise here comes in the sense of coming across something unusual, strange in the university environment: a student with physical disabilities studying Psychology. A surprise that can paralyze when thinking of to "how to deal with him," and also make social interactions unfeasible. Jorge considers that students and professors should participate in discussions that address attitudes towards people with disabilities. He also alerts to the fact that two wheelchair users, despite having a common disability, are totally different in terms of their abilities, and need to be treated individually. In another passage, Jorge even alleges that this surprise was stamped as a nuisance on the part of other students due to his interest in bringing up these discussions during classes. In his words: "[...] *I participated so much in class that I started to bother some classmates* [...]." Here are a few more excerpts that exemplify what we are talking about in this paragraph:

> [...] *some of them looked at me and didn't know what to do* [...].
>
> [...] *preparing the class for this, making the environment more welcoming* [...].
>
> [...] *it can happen with a person with a spinal cord injury, who has no control over both urine and feces, this is a common thing, right! And neither the students, nor anyone, nor the professor, knew how to deal with it* [...].

This lack of knowledge, addressing the professors specifically, directly affected the quality of Jorge's education, even influencing his professional future, since some choices, during the supervised internship were not possible for him as they were to the other students. Regarding teaching, Jorge did not highlight any methodological initiative that considered his characteristics. According to him, what there was on the part of the professors, the direction, the coordination was "*a lot of good intentions* [...] *but they were totally lost*." These *good intentions* are questionable: in a higher education course, what we should aim for is good quality education for all. Analyzing Jorge's interview, we comprehended that these good intentions came more in the sense of accepting his permanence, of benevolence, tolerance, and not thinking about his learning. According to him, he had no direct access to professors to discuss any questions he might have. And due to that, Jorge was left with the task of facing the problems himself and, at the same time, thinking of the best possible alternatives, within his reach. Here are some excerpts that illustrate the discussion in this paragraph.:

> [...] *physical disability is treated as one thing and it's not* [...] *each subcategory has its own limitations and possibilities* [...].
>
> [...] *So I would change so professors were* [...] *prepared to receive that person, knowing what a disability is* [...].
>
> [there was a lack] *of accessibility to professors to ask questions* [...].

One of the alternatives for this lack of knowledge that was presented by Jorge and which, in our view, is the easiest to access: talking to him. Jorge suggests that, if he were to be heard, certainly many of the problems in teaching and learning, infrastructure, etc.

would have been alleviated. He believes that people with disabilities must be heard from the moment they register for the course, maintaining a dialogue on a permanent basis. We know that this does not apply only to people with disabilities; however, for them, and even more when we do not know how to deal with it due to a lack of knowledge, listening is a condition/possibility of improvement. Here are two excerpts in which Jorge exemplifies the importance of dialogue in case of ignorance of his needs: "[...] *because for a long time I felt like a guy screaming into the abyss, you know* [...]"; "[...] *this interview that you are doing, I think it should be done at the time of enrollment* [...]."

Many of the problems generated by the lack of understanding of Jorge's characteristics were the result, as we can see here, of a lack of dialogue, an option that is free and available to all those who are willing to talk. To talk about dialogue and education, we turn to Paulo Freire (1987). Dialogue, for the author, is, above all, trust in the human ability: we dialogue when we trust possibilities and not impossibilities, abilities and not inabilities. We dialogue when we recognize that we can learn from each other. To dialogue, we need to believe that people, in their interactions, collaborate with each other.

The discussed above need to be analyzed, we believe, in a connected manner, that is, ableism is the result of an inclusion that does not dialogue to get to know the characteristics of our students, who are unique. With this, we start from the assumption that those who are "different" are incapable, without even questioning the context where this encounter with difference is taking place. Likewise, (in)accessibility can also be reassessed as we seek to understand the needs of our students.

Rodrigues (2008) defends what he called the "dimension of attitudes" as one of the teaching knowledge necessary for an inclusive school and university (Rodrigues, 2008, p.15). For him, knowing the concepts we teach, mastering the appropriate teaching methodologies, or even an environment with an infrastructure considered accessible is useless if our approach to people with disabilities is not one that values differences, legitimizes it, and recognizes the possibilities of progress for all. Guimarães and Nagatomy (2021), when investigating social representations about Special Needs and Inclusive Education in a review of the Brazilian literature on the topic, highlighted the barriers against inclusion, mainly of an attitudinal character. We cannot assume what a person is or is not capable of doing, of learning. And if we want to know their abilities better, we have to dialogue, especially with those for whom we still do not have adequate pedagogical responses, for whom, without reflection and change in our educational environments, learning is compromised.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The analysis of the academic trajectory at the university of a person with a physical disability showed the back-and-forth movement traveled by Jorge, a quadriplegic who dreamed of studying Psychology and working in the area. His narrative expressed the perceptions, experiences and difficulties faced during his course, permeated by prejudice of an ableist nature and lack of accessibility.

This study highlighted the importance of listening to those involved in the inclusion process, whether groups, entities or persons with disabilities, as they know the condition of being and living as persons who depend on more inclusive actions. Attentive listening can direct the discussion on ableism and accessibility in Higher Education, in search of more positive attitudes, in the sense of valuing the potential represented by each person, their active contribution, instead of only looking at what they cannot do.

In the analysis of the narrative, three categories emerged, which we called: Ableist manifestations; Aspects related to (in)accessibility; and Ignorance of Jorge's characteristics. We consider that these categories are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, there is a direct link between them, which can be interpreted in different ways by different readers. One of the ways we see them as related is that ableist manifestations generate inaccessibility, and this prejudice in relation to persons with disabilities was historically and culturally constructed, highlighting what "others" think about them, without a dialogic approach, based on knowledge. That is, we talk about people and characteristics that we do not even know, often at all. Our proposal revolves around the motto "nothing about us without us," especially when we are dealing with people who have historically been excluded from different environments and services.

Jorge showed a great deal of awareness and knowledge of his academic needs, in the sense of justifying all his statements during the interview, based on legislation, institutional documents, etc. In this sense, we noticed a potential of dialogue as training, for professors, classmates, administrative staff and Jorge himself. We leave it as a possibility for Higher Education institutions to facilitate discussion and/or study groups on the topic of inclusion in collaboration with persons with disabilities, representative entities, university professors, academics, etc.

We understand that the paradigm of inclusion has already brought changes in our society. We corroborate Rigo (2016), who believes we cannot understand inclusive education as a process that will ever be finished, in total. It is a complex, continuous, unfinished process that, above all, must be part of the characterization of schools and universities, inseparable from them. For the time being, we understand that these changes still have more to do with greater visibility for the topic, which is also relevant. We hope, however, that this visibility will be reflected in changes in the structures of our universities, whether in structure, personnel, discussions, documentation, attitudes, etc.

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