

Experiences of Management Activities in University Teaching

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ABSTRACT – Experiences of Management Activities in University Teaching. Bearing in mind the context of transformations in, and of the, Higher Education and the intensification of professors' work, this paper debates academic management in the daily routines of university professors in regard to teaching, research and extension. The discussion focuses on the experiences of 23 university professors, from Brazil and Portugal, collected through biographic interviews. Amongst the positive features of management are the possibilities to democratically participate in the university's decision making and of a clear view on the functioning and structuring of higher education. The convergence between management with bureaucratic and administrative activities is seen as a negative feature, leading to a depreciation and discredit of management.

Keywords: University Teaching. Academic Management. Teaching Work. Narratives.

RESUMO – Experiências da Gestão Acadêmica da Docência Universitária. Considerando um cenário de transformações do e no ensino superior e de intensificação do trabalho docente, este artigo apresenta uma discussão sobre a gestão acadêmica no quotidiano do professor universitário, relacionada com o ensino, a investigação e a extensão. Discutimos as experiências de 23 professores universitários, do Brasil e de Portugal, a partir de entrevistas de tipo biográfico. Entre aspectos positivos da gestão está a possibilidade de uma participação democrática nas decisões da universidade e de uma visão clara da estrutura e do funcionamento do ensino superior, enquanto alguns aspectos negativos reforçam a aproximação da gestão com atividades burocráticas e administrativas, gerando desvalorização e desprestígio da dimensão.

Palavras-chave: Docência Universitária. Gestão Acadêmica. Trabalho Docente. Narrativas.

Introduction

Based on an extensive bibliography review, it is possible to note that higher education has been an object of both a paradigmatic transition (Santos, 2010) and constant changes that impose new demands to the university, thus implying new challenges for university professors. Therefore, an intensification of professors' work may occur, divided in teaching, researching, extension (knowledge exchange) and academic management. This paper discusses the places and spaces for academic management, from the experiences of the very protagonists of the profession, through the analysis of the narratives of 23 professors: 13 from a Brazilian university, and 10 from a Portuguese university.

This article begins with the deepening of references about the transformation of higher education, addressing its current configurations and logics. Later on the article presents a discussion regarding academic management, as a dimension of the university professors' work. What are the meanings attributed by participants to academic management, considering several aspects inherent to their profession? Previous to the discussion of the results, the article presents the premisses and procedures of the empirical work in some methodological notes. Finally, we discuss the results derived from the narratives' analysis with focus on the management experiences of the professors participating in this study.

Changes on Higher Education and challenges for professors

Considering the relationship with knowledge as an essential aspect of the academic profession, we do recognize that these changes affect the work of the university professor. Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott and Trow (1997) alert to the transformation of both the objectives and nature of knowledge production. Production of knowledge, according to the authors mentioned above, evolved from a mode 1, where the knowledge was privileged as public good, aiming towards the development of the society, to a mode 2 concerned with the applicability of knowledge for a specific purpose or situation, being the production of knowledge marked by transdisciplinarity, heterogeneity, and diversity

Santos (2005) alerts to the changes of and at the university, derived from the society of information, where economy and knowledge have to be developed in parallel, aiming at productivity. A neoliberal logic of corporation and entrepreneurship has been established on education (Ball, 2012). According to the author, education is developed as other businesses, framed by a profit system that cuts the expenditure and seeks for other sources of income other than public resources.

In this sense, a massification of education is observed, as well as a marketization of the university and the fragmentation of education, aiming at economy, efficiency, and efficacy (Becher; Trowler, 2001).

There is a search for a constant short-termism. Times for science, research, and teaching are shorter and shorter, because there is a higher demand for publications, results, and classes in an increasingly shorter term. In that scenario, the university has to respond with a flexible training, considering the plurality of the societies themselves. In that sense, there is a demand for a more entrepreneurial and corporate university (Magalhães, 2006). According to literature, the university becomes more utilitarian and vocational, concerned with the applicability of knowledge and focusing on the competencies that are demanded by the labor market (Harris, 2005). Magalhães (2011) affirms that the identity of higher education becomes diluted in detriment of its economic function.

The professor's work is altered when the logic in which education is based on is transformed by the influence of political, economic, and social issues. Popkewitz (1987) refers that professor's autonomy as well as their actions and their everyday activities, are marked by administrative and bureaucratic mechanisms, and are determined by historical configurations, since the university is a space for political and economic interests (cit. in Zabalza, 2004). Currently, some issues regarding the teaching profession are altered, such as the emergence of a stronger assessment of the work of a profession whose autonomy and self-regulation were significant (Kogan; Teichler, 2007). Santiago, Magalhães, and Carvalho (2005) alert to the affirmation of a business model as reference for higher education's structure and configuration, taking its social and cultural dimensions off the center of the process.

Given some of these changes, university professors face diverse challenges, such as to prepare students for problems that they do not know yet (Brew, 2010). Robertson (2010) mentions aspects that need to be balanced by professors in order to guarantee a high quality education. The author lists the need of balancing an education focused on creating competencies for both the industry and entrepreneurship, and that, at the same time, cares about developing critical thinking citizens. On one hand, to balance an extended access to higher education, and on the other, the loss of value of getting a university diploma; and the need to combine the response to the pressure for projects inside regional and global levels, and also, to improve the local relevance of the work. Thus, professors face significant challenges to maintain the quality of higher education

Professors are required to have new competencies, new concerns, and new activities, which raises a concern about the intensification of their work. There are transformations on the dimensions of the teaching work (teaching, research, extension, and academic management) and on the relationship and articulation of all of them. We also identify many changes in relation to university management, as more hierarchical and less collegiate ways of management, that are many times close and related to institutions more oriented towards the market.

Transformations of Academic Management

When analyzing the transformations on higher education and on the work of the university professor, Kogan and Teichler (2007) concluded that the university was organized on a more collegiate way considering professors that were involved in its functioning. To the authors the pressure for focusing on efficiency has an impact on the collegiate way of organization and turns it into something more hierarchical. Magalhães (2011) points to the import of private ways of university governance that replace collegiate forces, also stating that there is a change from an academic leadership to a management leadership, together with many other effects, such as the fragmentation between research and teaching, the search for private resources, the constitution of an entrepreneurial and corporate narrative. Henkel (2002) addresses the issue that universities are subjected to more control and more evaluations by external audits, at the same time that they need autonomy and entrepreneurship when looking for resources and funding.

Musselin (2007) describes that the diversification and specialization of the professor's tasks are consequences of importing practices from the private and business sectors to the university. Those new practices increased the control on the teaching work, and decreased the professor's autonomy, placing them in a position of "knowledge workers". According to the same author, the transformation of academic activities in industrial academic work reduces the distance between university professors and company employees. In that sense, some studies on the academic profession currently confirm the intensification of the teaching work in different countries and point to the lack of time as a consequence of the excessive accumulation of tasks (cf. Ylijoki; Ursin, 2013; Valenzuela; Barnett, 2013a).

Intensification of the teaching work is also related, among other factors, to the requirements of the professor's evaluations that promote a constant pressure for publications in high impact journals, and for the development of research projects, with international cooperation, for instance. It is observed, in these practices, that the characteristics and the kind of knowledge produced by the universities are many times regulated and monitored by external evaluation agencies that are imposed from outside the university (Musselin, 2007).

That external regulation quantifies the professor's work by, for instance, counting how many articles were published, inside an academic productivism rationale. This aspect is also important for the discussing the place of management in the teaching work, since the activities related to academic management are ignored by the evaluation processes. What matters in those processes is the visible work that allows supervision and evaluation (Bleikle; Høstaker; Vabø, 2000). The activities directly related to research, such as participation in projects and publication of results, are the ones that promote prestige and recognition in the academic circle (Ylijoki; Ursin, 2013).

Besides of being able to consider it as an invisible activity, since it does not count for professors' evaluation systems, management is seen as a dimension that takes the time that could be used to develop activities in other dimensions (Guzmán-Valenzuela & Barnett, 2013). Santos, Pereira e Lopes (2016) use the expression "administrative professor's work" as one of the facets of the intensification of the professor's work, because the accumulation of bureaucratic and administrative tasks implies longer periods of time of the professor's work. Moreover, these are not necessarily pleasant tasks, since the participants value other aspects of the profession such as teaching and researching and the articulation between them. Therefore, administrative tasks can be affirmed as an excessive amount of work for professors, and are considered by both participants and literature, as a misuse of the time that could be used for other activities such as research (Ylijoki; Ursin, 2013).

Another issue emerging from the transformations of/on higher education is that the increase in the number of employees and professors on Portuguese and Brazilian universities, is not in line with the massification of higher education, and creates excessive work for professors. Consequently, management activities can characterize an undesirable aspect of teaching, making the profession be considered as a sum of tasks (Correia; Matos, 2001) and promoting a feeling of non-fulfillment and personal and professional devalue (Lopes; Ribeiro, 1996). Some movements point to an invasive bureaucracy on the profession, marked by constant meetings where the professors have little time to respond to institutional demands (Candau, 2010).

Santos, Pereira e Lopes (2016) say that management can be underprivileged by the fact that university structure can legitimize a funneling hierarchy, without an effective participation of all, since some professors have administrative and bureaucratic functions which are not related with decision making. In contrast, according to the author, management positions that allow more contact with the students, as well as a wider view and knowledge on the institution's employees, are seen as the more positive aspects of management.

Guzmán-Valenzuela and Barnett (2013a) discuss the academic profession within this scenario of changes, pointing to an increasing pressure for being productive at publishing, in a context of volatile work conditions, with fragmented and numerous tasks for professors. With that increase of tasks, the difficulty to meet the expectations of the profession also increases, due to the lack of time, exhaustion and to the diversity of tasks required. Authors address the ontological exhaustion that together with physical fatigue, presents a feeling of stress and continuous complexity because of the university demand and of external demands. Today it is necessary to plan and to engage in different tasks simultaneously. Priorities in those activities many times are not clear, as the professor needs to accomplish certain tasks, while he would like to dedicate deeply to other activities. Also in this line of thought, Ylijoki and Ursin (2013) point to a narrative about the excessive amount of ad-

ministrative work, whose protagonist is an exhausted worker under the pressure of the constant increase of administrative burden.

Literature about university teaching widely and deeply addresses the relationship between teaching and researching, as desired by professors. Management is an area that steals time to the other two dimensions and to knowledge exchange, because of the excessive number of bureaucratic tasks that professors need to accomplish.

However, regarding a positive aspect of university management, Guzmán-Valenzuela and Barnett (2013b) consider the fact that on the academic management roles it is possible to have an alignment between the institutional values and the values of the professors that work there. Thus, management would be a job that would allow the professor to understand how the university functions and this would be a benefit for the institution.

The management of the university made by the professors is based on a democratic and collegiate ideal of higher education governance, which aims to guarantee democratization inside the university, thought by professors who know the daily activities of the profession. In the statutes for university teaching career of both Brazil and Portugal, academic management activities are considered together with the other three dimensions of the teaching work (teaching, research and extension). Portugal's Statute for University Teaching assumes, among others, the function of participating in the management of the respective university institutions. "To participate in other tasks distributed by competent management bodies that are included in the scope of university teaching activities" (art. 4, d). In the Brazilian document, administrative work is explicit as "consisting on the performance of activities of direction, leadership, co-ordination, consulting, programs or project management, and participation in collegiate bodies, commissions or similar" (art. 3, §IV).

Considering that scenario, this paper presents the results of the discussion about the experience of academic management on the daily activities of two universities. Through the professor's narratives, it is possible to perceive the experiences and the meanings they attribute to academic management activities inside the university.

Methodological Notes

The results presented here, emerge from a multicase study on the trajectories and trends of academic identities, considering the scenario of transformations in higher education that impact directly the work of universities' professors. The study, developed in two countries – Brazil and Portugal – aimed to understand the (re)construction of academic identities of professors in public universities in both countries, through a biographic-narrative research. The multicase study allows to investigate the context in a deep and ecologic way (Amado; Freire, 2013). We conducted biographical interviews with 23 professors: 13 in the Brazilian context, and 10 in the Portuguese context. All participants work on

the Pedagogy area for the Brazilian context, and on Education Sciences for the other country.

Choosing these participants is justified by the fact that the professors from those areas work in training teachers or other professionals that can work on formal, non-formal or informal education. Thus, the contexts where the students are going to work in the future also suffer from some of the effects felt on higher education.

Facing the complexity of the phenomenon we study, we search for qualitative methods that dismiss a simple or unidimensional discourse (Charlot, 2006) and that respect the subjectivity of the participants of this research. We defined the narrative approach as fundamental to this research, since it values the subjectivity of the personal experiences of each participant. Biographical interviews are “the places of subjectivity, practice, and social interaction, that is to say, they are mainly the places of the world of life” (Pereira, 2010, p. 343) that is why the interviews bring to the study experiences of professors that practice the profession every day. Biographical interviews allow to access the professor’s point of view, that is historically placed on that context of transformations, as mentioned above. That is, the subject is seen within a specific social, cultural, and institutional context. When talking about himself, the subject talks about him, about his time, his environment, his references (Rivas Flores & González, 2013). We understand that the subject, when narrating his story, includes his own interpretation of lived situations and experiences (Bolívar, 2006).

We consider as essential for this study to listen to the protagonist of the profession and to identify how the professor gives meaning to his/her experiences. This meaning is essential for an empirical study that aims to listen to the participant’s voice. Thus, when talking about his job, the professor is able to present examples of some moments, some cases, and tell some histories about his day-to-day profession. The challenges, expectations and the real work of each professor is narrated in the first person and interpreted by the researchers.

The Brazilian university that participates in this study has 93 professors, being 30 men and 63 women. For this study we interviewed 13 professors, being 3 men and 10 women. The Portuguese university has 28 professors, being 8 men and 20 women. Of them, we interviewed 5 men and 5 women.

The participants enroll in university through a public tender, and are full time professors. They have different ages, years of service, and initial training. Even though they work in the same university course (Pedagogy in Brazil, and Education Sciences in Portugal), they have different interests and they work in different research areas. Regarding management, the professors also have different tasks. While some of them have administrative positions, others accumulate different functions, as can be seen in the results’ presentation and discussion.

The interviews had a duration of 1 hour 30 minutes on average, and were conducted by one of the authors of this article, in different

places. Mainly in the faculty where the professor works and, on isolated cases, in a public garden and at the house of one of the participants. The interviews were semi structured and biographical, and more than asking closed-ended questions, it focused on questions that could start a conversation. The interviews were transcribed and shared with the participants for them to validate it. Transcriptions and following reading of the documents allowed the researchers to build a narrative for each professor analyzing each story. Hence, the trajectory of each professor, with their interpretations, was rewritten by the researchers to build a narrative that contributed to the discussion of the results. Parallel to that analysis, the interviews once transcribed and reviewed by the professors, were subjected to a content analysis (Bardin, 2011), hence a transversal analysis of all narratives was conducted, looking for singularities and differences that could characterize the teaching profession.

Content analysis was conducted on the basis of a categorization system of the topics that emerged from the material. Among these analysis categories, there are four dimensions of the teaching work: teaching, research, extension, and academic management. This article addresses one particular dimension of analysis: the spaces of academic management in the university professor's work. The experiences that professors relate to university management, their description of activities, and their reflections about the relationship between academic management and the other dimensions of their work will be discussed below. For further discussion and in order to elucidate results, the article presents fragments of the interviews.

We make it clear that, in the transcribed fragments used for this article, we cut the identifying elements such as name of the institutions and specific positions held by the professors. Real names of the participants were replaced by fake names.

Discussion of Results: experiences and the meanings of management according to the professors participating in the study

The results that emerged from the content analysis of the 23 narratives can be grouped into two big groups, related to the positive and negative aspects of the management in the professor's everyday activities. However, we highlight that we are not interested in polarizing the professor's opinion, mainly because management is seen as ambivalent by some participants. Their narratives have, at the same time, positive and negative aspects of the experience with management. This study is interested in identifying the characteristics of management that contribute to a cohesive and quality academic work, on one hand, and the elements that could fragment the teaching activity on the other.

In the analysis of the results, it is worth to notice a certain difference between the professors that hold management positions and the professors that do not have that experience. Professors that hold admin-

istrative positions stress the need for other professors to participate, in order for the process to be, in fact, participatory, democratic, and more collegiate, so that the decision making does not lie in a central figure. On the other hand, the professors of our study that do not hold administrative positions, reveal greater distance from this concern, and sometimes a disbelief in an effective participation regarding university decisions. There lies the difference between, on the one hand, identifying the importance of the participation of different professors in those activities, in order to decrease the amount of work of professors with management positions, and promote an effective participation of all of them, and on the other, identify the view of a narrowing of the people that have the power to make decisions, which could impede the effective participation.

One of the positive aspects of management is the knowledge on the university structure. Thus, it would be possible to establish a balance on professor's participation and allow them to contact with different kinds of services that are transversal to the professor's work in the university.

Some of us are involved in too many things. Personally, I think that we all should have the opportunity to experience this. Not in the sense of penalizing someone, but in the sense of this being important even in this point of view of creating a common identity. This workload accumulation on specific persons... Although sometimes I may feel very happy to see my colleagues giving me their votes, on the other hand, I do not think that is necessarily good. It is not. We should have more diversity of who are representing the different university departments and sectors (Professor Carlos, Portugal).

I believe it is very important to experience these positions because it gives a very concrete vision of the institution's functioning and of how difficult it is to manage an institution at the level of the services and the people that are part of these services [...] I think it is important and whenever I am requested to participate, obviously I am available for this (Professor Gabriela, Portugal).

Professor Luciana talks about learning the structure and functioning of the faculty, and about the contact with other professors and employees.

I enjoyed very much, because, it gave me a global vision of college, how it works [...]. It was another way of looking at a university institution: knowing how they work, how things are articulated, the financial management, operations, services, the relationships (Professor Luciana, Portugal).

Professor Joana, from the Brazilian context, highlights the learning about the configuration of the university too, and also make us reflect about the importance of more experienced professors for socialization in that positions.

The department sub-office that I share with Emília, that is an experience, like, a huge learning, because I never imagined that this kind of work was made by professors. To me, this kind of work was made by an

administrative body or a technical-pedagogical body. But it is done by professors, so we learn a lot about how the university works. Every day I am learning something [...] But I think that demands a little more than this. It requires a leadership, something that I believe Emília does very well (laughs). [...] I learn a lot with Emília, because she, it seems that she has the university in her memory, because she knows how things work, knows what is allowed and what is not, what a document says and what the other contradicts. She is so smart, so smart in the best way. She has got such experience to deal with this part that is more of management, because to me this is total new (Professor Joana, Brazil).

Professor Bruno, from Portugal, does not highlight positive aspects. At the beginning of his career, he was unable to hold management positions, and ironically reinforces the idea that he would not miss those activities because the excessive amount of meetings. He affirms that he is not interested in those increased responsibilities, because they take too much work time.

What a luck, you don't know... I was martyred by desire to be on management positions... I used to thought: Oh, My God, I do not have any management position, I am not in any administrative sector. I miss many meetings on my week! What would I do with my time? (laughs) (Professor Bruno, Portugal).

Regarding this same topic, in the Brazilian context, professors Márcia, Carla and Maria, at the beginning of their careers, reveal that they do not think about university management and that they try to build their own academic identities between research, extension, and teaching. Management is seen as a dimension they are not interested in, but one that is a mandatory part of the profession, in the future. Thus, they do not have expectations in assuming activities related to management, however they recognize it as a solidarity, cooperative work with the other professors.

We can see, in the trajectory of professors at the beginning of their careers, that management is not considered when they build their teaching identity, because professors prefer to build up their work based on teaching, research and extension, rather than having management positions. That non-preference for management is not only limited to professors that have fewer time in university teaching and it is not exclusive to any context. Professor Leonardo is involved in management because he sees its positive aspects. He says he wants to study the university budget, that is why he is in the university council. He already worked in management in different times and functions. However, despite of attributing a strong significance to management activities because they allow him to know the university structure and to cooperate with its functioning, he defends that, he prefers teaching. "What I like the most is teaching! I, I am a professor. I have a professor's DNA, I love teaching!" (Professor Leonardo, Brazil).

With many years of career, professor Inês reveals the non-preference for management and the trust in other people who perform well those activities.

I would not say management positions please me. I will not say I was unhappy as coordinator. When I accepted this, I accepted because I wanted and because I like many activities management brings. But I say we have two happiness as manager: when you get the position and when you leave it. There are two moments of happiness. But I would say that, if I consider someone is going to do a good job, I will be happy that another person does it. It does not need to be me. But teaching and research, this I want it to be me! (Professor Inês, Brazil).

Oh, no! Not management positions! What I really like to do is teaching and research! (Professor Rafael, Brazil).

Thus, we can identify a “mandatory feature” in those administrative functions. Through the analysis of the biographical interviews, it is possible to identify that among the four dimensions of university professors’ work, extension is the less mentioned one. However, it is not the less valued by them. Management is the dimension with the smallest preference, because professors consider it as an overload for their daily work.

Even for professors that hold management positions and believe this is a positive activity for the profession, there is an apprehension about an effective participation in decision making, because sometimes they need to hold positions with which they do not agree as professors.

We are affected by that ‘no way out’ syndrome. [...] We see ourselves confronted by no way out. Even if we think about other ways, in the end, it all converges into standing towards positions or making decisions which we may not think are necessarily the most interesting ones. Sometimes we even got ourselves into a ridiculous situation, where all of us think that it would be for the best to make it in another way but, due to several reasons that are not up to us, this is the best possible resolution.

Is it interesting to note that in the Portuguese context the most appreciated management positions are those related to other dimensions of the teaching activity. For instance: management bodies involving students are seen as a space for democracy because of the equity in the number of professors and students, and for the possibility they have to discuss. Thus, the educational relationship is strengthened, and it is possible to give students a voice. For example, another experience from the Portuguese university is the pedagogic council, that is very appreciated because is it not only a management activity. So, the most appreciated aspect by professors participating in that management activity has to do with its feature of meeting with other dimensions, such as event organization, and the contact with students, among other aspects.

At the time we organized some scientific meetings. I was involved in the organization of a junior researchers forum of the faculty. What we wanted was that first and master degrees students, also PhD students, as we extended to the PhD, to participate in an event during the day and to present the research works they have done in the course. It was an stimulus to research practice, right? (Professor André, Portugal).

However, there are also some issues concerning an actual significant discussion even in those organizations, because many times the

time for meetings is used to resolve bureaucratic issues. Nevertheless, we see some resistance to not losing that feature of exchange and training in a management space.

For instance, something that we are trying to do in the Pedagogical council, but which is very difficult, is for it to have its own life, its own planning, basically, to have small groups specialized in specific issues, to have its own production and not be a recipient of problems. But the disposal of problems is so demanding that this is relegated to other times. In fact, today, the meetings are always like this because the emergencies have to be solved and, when problems are solved and we are able to address this more productive dimension, there is no more time and, therefore, it is very difficult (Professor André, Portugal).

Other management activities that are appreciated regard to the coordination of research projects that, despite of being also management activities, firstly involve research and scientific decisions.

By analyzing the narratives, we highlight that is possible to detect that some professors have an accumulation of positions because of their “management skills”, that is to say, professors who perform well in those functions and are pressured to continue holding the positions they have. Thus, professors with “management skills” are penalized, because there is no good distribution of positions and leadership, assuming that there is a more efficient management when it is done by a professor with skills for those activities.

The more some say they are not available, the more the others, that maybe do not know how to say “no”, take an absurd workload (Professor Flávia, Portugal).

To some of our colleagues – and pardon me if I am not being fair to someone –, it is a very comfortable situation, isn't it? Because, if I would count the number of hours that I spend in those meetings, every month – I would like to spend them reading, that is something that would give me much more pleasure, or doing nothing, which is also a good thing... Therefore, I think that sometimes it would be better if we could manage a best distribution within ourselves, so that we can all have the opportunity to participate. It is also an equity issue, so we can all have, at least, the time conditions to do other things other than meetings (Professor Carlos, Portugal).

Professor Paola holds a management position for many years. She recognizes that others see in her management skills, and they insist that she holds those positions. However, that recognition exerts pressure on the management tasks and reduces the time for other dimensions such as research and teaching. Therefore, it is possible to identify, on the one hand, the professors that recognize in others more skills to assume those positions, and on the other, the professors with recognized skills and with an accumulation of responsibilities and tasks because of that.

I try to avoid the management positions for sometimes, but I do know I have a vocation – said by others, not by me (laughs) for managing. You must have a management capacity. That is why... What is terrible is that here in the university, there is teaching, research and knowledge ex-

change. When you are holding management positions, the research is outside. You can not focus the same way. The relationship with research is always on lame. That is why I do not want to be away from teaching. The management positions seem to swallow you. You are nothing else, you are only manager (Professor Paola, Brazil).

In addition, there is the “inherence management” as called by one of the study participants, that is the participation in different organizations from a single position. Therefore, professors that assume management positions, are, many times, limited to those administrative duties that take many time and do not allow them to develop other activities that they also could performed.

The organization model of the faculties implies many inherent positions. I am on sector 1 as director of a course and I am the president of sector 1. As president of sector 1 I have 2 or 3 positions. Also, I am, by inherence, on a position in the executive body [...]. Besides that, I am also on area 1 department. It is a “pick one!” lol. I am senator, president, director, titles, everything together. [...]. The management model of university and faculties works in this inherence logic. Who holds management positions has a totally conditioned life. I accepted this without wanting it. Not at all. Last year, when this new mandate started, I wanted to devote more time to writing [...] but in this moment I am totally drowned on this (Professor André, Portugal).

Looking for a cooperative and shared work, professor Helena, who has management experience in different universities, talks about the risk of not participating in management and thus being subordinated to the others that do participate. She defends a collegiate management, with decisions made through the discussion among professors.

I think management activities are collective. [...] Maybe not only because they are new, but in general new professors do not consider the value of this. Maybe because they have not lived in contexts where there was no possibility of participate and decide. Sometimes they want to have a head person to solve and etc. They do not get involved, do not take responsibilities. But I think this is a huge risk: we get subordinated to the wiliness of another person and we don not understand our work as a collective and public work. That is to say, it has to be shared (Professor Helena, Brazil).

Nevertheless, through the participants' narratives, it is noted that academic management does not only refer to decision making activities regarding the internal functioning of the university. Many of the duties related to this dimension have an exclusively bureaucratic and administrative nature.

In this time we are drowned in management activities. There are many things that could be easily be done exclusively or almost exclusively done by administrative staff. Unfortunately, many time they require the presence and the decision of professors and I think many of them didn't need it (Professor Jorge, Portugal).

This excessive amount of administrative work does not allow the professor to develop other areas of the university teaching. Professors' stories also make us think that they impose on their students what was

first imposed on them. Thus, the pressure of the university professor's work, also has effects on the students' training, in its quality, rhythm, and educational relationship.

Management activities take a lot of time. There are times management steals my time of researching, steals my time of teaching. Why do I say this question of stealing? Because I think it is a dimension of work that for too many times is dissociated of a pedagogic work. Therefore, there is a lack of structure... (Professor Emília, Brazil).

This administrative and bureaucratic issue goes... I think it is a burgeoning presence. Burgeoning. It is something that is constraining our availability to get involved in other kinds of work [...] We get a limited time to develop our work with durability, more consistency.

Professor Helena says that the number of administrative employees and the course structure are not in line with the growing and massification of the university, as seen in the literature review.

It is something overloaded. It is too intense and the time I should devote to research and even teaching is limited. I wanted to have more time to read, to write, you know? There are many tasks and I identify two complicated things: the structure of coordination and the administrative part of the university, specifically on post-graduate level, has a layout that has not followed the gigantism the course reached (Professor Helena, Brazil).

We also highlight that academic management, as part of the professor's work, is not considered when assessing the professors' work for career progression. The university and the higher education system do not consider those tasks as countable inside a system that seeks to measure in numbers the professor's involvement in his/her activities. Professor André, had already held management positions in his previous professional experiences, related to training. He talks about the devaluation of management in tenders and in career development.

I could apply [for a full professor position], but what is the areas ponderation of the application? 45% research, 35% or something like this to teaching, 80%. After this, 10% to knowledge exchange and, at the end, another part around 10% for all of what is management activities e etc. Probably, in this moment I am one of the 3 or 4 persons of this faculty that has more management positions. These positions require an almost total availability. But when it comes to applications, they value too little. Therefore, I did not even applied (Professor André, Portugal).

In fact, the value of having experience in management activities is very small when compared to the weight of academic and pedagogical merits. For instance, in the tender for university professor of the studied Portuguese university, academic merit weights 55% while pedagogic merit weights 35% of the candidate's mark, the other 10% is divided between extension and management. Within that 10%, 60% is for extension activities and 40% for academic management. The Brazilian case also emphasizes first research (through academic qualification, publications and technical-scientific and orientation activities) and second, teaching¹.

Throughout the narratives, it is possible to understand, from the discourse of many professors, that there is a proposal for all professors to participate temporally in management positions. If all of them participate, administrative work could be temporary, because many positions would be in fact rotating positions. This view of academic management as something punctual and temporary can be identified in many narratives, of different professors that acknowledge having “spent” some time on management, mainly in the Brazilian context: “My quota was fulfilled. However, there are situations that become unavoidable. See, this is the third time that I’m in the management of my department. [...] After many escapes from bureaucratic job, they caught me again, do you understand? (Professor Rafael, Brazil); “As all that kind of activities, you give your contributions some time, and then you leave it for other person to do it. That’s what I did.” (Professor Camila, Brazil); “I said: I fulfilled my quote! [...] so it’s time for other to assume. And if there is no one, I can’t continue because I’m already done. No pity!” (Professor Beatriz, Brazil).

Despite of easing the overburden of certain professors that concentrate management activities, we can observe the idea that if all professors hold administrative positions, participation would be more effective, because in a more balanced way, they could articulate other dimensions of the teaching work.

Some Conclusions

By the presented results, we perceive that positive aspects of academic management are mostly related with a broader understanding of the functioning of the university, and a deeper knowledge of the configuration of the institutions where the professors work. So they can identify processes, know people, and be part of the decision making process of the institution. At the same time, they can try to guarantee a more democratic participation of all the professors involved in the university. Management activities involving students or having an effective participation of the teaching staff of the university, are also highlighted as important.

On the other hand, the negative aspects of academic management that we identified in the interviews, are overburden of work due to excess of bureaucratic tasks. As professors said, in their experience that kind of activities take the time that could be used to develop other dimensions of the teaching work, for instance those that are more valued by professors and are given more prestige by the university system. Having said that, we can affirm that management is not an indifferent aspect when developing an academic identity, but it is a component which effects are noted in the professor’s work.

We can identify a more pessimist narrative of the academic identity, since the quality of teaching and researching can be affected by the lack of time. Academic management activities, instead of being one more element of the university teaching, end up by being an element

that fragments the academic identity. Some professors reveal that they feel, among other aspects, they are passing this accelerated rhythm to the classroom, so the effect is a less prepared and less planned teaching, that damages the construction of a more solid educative relationship, the development of deeper research jobs, the reflection about their work, the update of literature in certain area, or even just a moment of rest.

The Current academic identity of the professors participating in this study is marked by an intense work that demands different competences. Hence, in spite of being considered as one of the spaces for construction and confirmation of the academic identity that joins the four dimensions, management is marginalized when it on daily activities is confused, in the daily routines, with excess of non-academic work. This is due to bureaucratic and administrative issues and considering that the essence of academic teaching is the relationship with knowledge, research, teaching, and extension.

We stress the importance of the investigation on academic management, in order to propose both ways for more articulation between the dimensions of the teaching work, and work modes that could guarantee increased participation of the number of professors that have management activities. We suggest the guarantee of the ideal of democratic governance of university, by reinforcing the need of collegiate decisions. We also recommend that professors have fewer numbers of administrative and bureaucratic tasks, so that academic management could have protagonist tasks that are really related to university management and to academic decisions, thus increasing the interest of the professors and decreasing the intensification of their work.

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Note

1 Data collected from the final tender for a permanent position in the universities.

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