Abstract

The objective of this article is to analyze, from the current government policies point of view, the way higher education is faced in Colombia. The methodology used is the descriptive analysis following these steps: 1) characterization of quality and person concept. 2) Analysis of scope and limitations from relevant categories for the subject of study. 3) Identification of the anthropological principles not covered by the system's agents in quality assurance in Colombia. 4) Development of a complementary proposal which, in addition to the existing ones, addresses the criterion of "education with quality" and not just "quality in education" in a framework of excellence focused on the person as an aim of the education task. Finally, the article will provide interesting conclusions about critical principles of education.

Keywords: Government Policies; Higher Education; Anthropological Vision; Person; Quality; Selfless Service; Ethics, Virtues; Commonwealth of Society.

1. Introduction

"...The authority, at the student’s home, it’s not exercised ordering but suggesting and loving." Teaching ". If there is not a mystical link between the one who teaches and the one who learns, all teaching is hostile and therefore sterile. Education is an extensive labor of love for those who learn... Henceforth, only true soul builders, creators of truth, beauty and goodness may be teachers at the Republic University... "(Manifesto of Córdoba extract, Argentina,
The Manifesto of Córdoba was a youth movement in Argentina (Córdoba) written to free men from South America on June 21st 1918, claiming, among other requests, a purely democratic government in which the concept of authority could not rely on the importance of foreign substance to the same disciplines of studies, but suggesting and loving, and that is, teaching. (Cordoba, 1918) (Adapted version from Spanish)
Commission for quality Assurance in higher Education (CONACES) and Law 30/92. 2) Analysis of the effect and limitations from relevant categories to the subject under study. 3) Identification of causes and effects in the system of quality assurance in Colombia, when there is a lack of a humanizing perspective of service and growth in education. 4) Development of a complementary proposal which, in addition to the existing ones, addresses the criterion of “education with quality” and not just “quality in education” in a framework of excellence focused on the person as an aim of the education task. The article will allow concluding that the essential principles of education are not negotiable, since from freedom, being elective or moral\(^1\), and the emotional and intimate engagement between teacher and learner, emerges the true anthropological perspective of service among them, as on one hand the non-utilitarian donation solidarity and loving dedication of the teaching vocation increases, and on the other hand, promoting personal and social virtues in students, for their integral growth as a person and of course the search of common wealth of society, where the State must play a key role of subsidiary intervention as guarantor agent of education.

2. Characterization of quality and personal concepts

From the primary sources of information from the Ministry of National Education of Colombia (MEN), National Accreditation Council (CNA), inter sectoral National Commission for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CONACES) and Law 30 / 92, by which the public service of higher education in the country is organized, the following concepts can be found:

2.1. Characterization of quality concept

Law 30, 1992 has, among some of its goals, to deepen the comprehensive training of Colombian people within the modalities and qualities of higher education, enabling them to meet professional, researching and social service functions required by the country and offering the community a worth service, which refers to academic outcomes, means and processes used, institutional infrastructure, the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of it and the conditions under which each institution develops, as aims for the search of truth, free and responsible exercise of criticism, professorship and learning. Even so, Colombia suffers from a single and generally accepted definition of quality given by the quality assurance system stakeholders at the level of higher education. Only a few attempts from the National Accreditation Board have been raised from the enactment of Act 30, 1992, as a result of the need to define the first guidelines of accreditation in the country. Consequently, quality for the National Board of Accreditation (CNA) has been understood, at least in the document for accreditation of programs dating from 2006, this way: "The concept of quality as applied to the public service of higher education refers to the synthesis of features to recognize a specific academic program or a particular type of institution, and make a judgment about the relative distance between the way in that institution or academic program, gives the corresponding and optimal service of its nature”(CNA, 2006, p.26-27) (Adapted version from Spanish). With CONACES the situation is not different. When, in virtue of the Decree 2566 of 2003, the demand of the qualified register emerges to authorize the operation of programs at higher education, or the creation of new ones, the Decree does not refer to any notion of quality. Therefore, the concept of quality that is inferred is precisely the associated to the compliance of fifteen quality standards defined by the mentioned norm. This situation persists with the issuing of Law 1188 of 2008 and lately with Decree 1295 of 2010, which does not include a concept of specific quality. However, for the current model of assurance in Colombia, continuous quality improvement involves a systemic process and all elements in it, tending to promote, manage, improve, ensure and control the quality of institutions of higher education in the country, based on a system of quality assurance, consisting of 3 components related and integrated with each other, which are: information, evaluation and promotion. However, quality has not been as expected, since due to the way higher education is structured and integrated in Colombia, the results have not been the best in one aspect or

\(^1\) Barrio (2013) says that elective freedom has to do with self-determination, that is, do something or not, and moral freedom, the ability to really want the good, ie, true freedom. It means what is best for the person and the common good.
another, or it has become palpable. Big differences have become noticeable only in some specific HEIs thus affecting the integrity of the system. Proof of this, is the document entitled "Reviews of National Policies for Education: Tertiary Education in Colombia 2012."\(^1\), report where the vulnerability of the Colombian education system is clearly stated when it says that despite the progress made, the country has to take enormous challenges for the integration of all the actors involved into the system, increasing coverage, promoting equity, improving the quality and relevance, optimizing management, governance and finance, improving the scope of loans and grants, reforming the existing legal framework, requiring greater emphasis on measuring learning - strengthening mechanisms for this quality assurance - making greater efforts to promote international integration as part of globalization, and encouraging new information technology, research, innovation and funding. But despite the existence of such a technical and mechanistic scenario, there is still hope. There is a definite improvement on the concept of quality in the sectorial plan in the current government of Juan Manuel Santos, when he refers to it as: "Which creates better human beings, citizens with ethical values, respectful of the public, who exercise human rights and live in peace (...) generating legitimate opportunities for progress and prosperity for themselves and for the country. A competitive, relevant education, helping to close gaps in equity and in which the whole society participates" (MEN, 2012, p. 6-7). (Adapted version from Spanish). Still, it is unfortunate that this orientation of quality with huge advances at least compared to the ethical approach is not being promoted, secured and/or stimulated in the country, far from being socialized within the same assurance system of quality.

2.2. Characterization of “individual” concept

As for the individual, the situation is not different. None of the primary sources referred starts from a specific and measurable conceptualization of person, despite that for Law 30 of 1992 higher education is an ongoing process that enables the development of human potential in a comprehensive manner, beginning after middle or high school and has as a goal the full development of students and their academic or professional training. In this regard, Law 30 of 1992, through the development of an evaluation process that supports, encourages and dignifies higher education, ensures the best moral, intellectual and physical training of students, among other objectives. Similarly, Article 117 of the same law, determines that "... higher education institutions must develop wellness programs, being this understood as the set of activities that are geared to the physical, psycho-emotional, spiritual and social development of students, teachers and administrative staff...” (Adapted version from Spanish). Here, it is worth noting that currently and worldwide, the largest network of national agencies for quality assurance, "INQAAHE" with 87 countries associated, including Colombia, has been insisting since 2007 on a quality under the comprehensive development of good practices, the response to global and regional knowledge needs, the definition of quality standards with features and indicators that take into account the importance of accountability to the quality of service provided by HEIs and safeguarding the interests of society with quality standards. For this, the “INQAAHE” network stresses the need to talk, develop and improve the quality of programs for students, this means for people, through activities that strengthen the university well-being and other extra-curricular areas, that careers are taught by efficient, effective and transparent organizational structures, and where advocates the existence of external consultants for advice on the quality as a key for the system solidification. Undoubtedly, this may be the emerging beginning of a search for the rescue of the person in the systems of quality assurance, but really with no major incidents and reflections on the conception of the person as the cardinal axis of the education service.

\(^1\) This report on higher education policy was conducted within the framework of the work program of the Direction of Education, OCDE, in collaboration with the World Bank. The financing of the report was provided by the Government of Colombia and the World Bank.
3. Scope and limitations

3.1. On the “quality” concept

As formerly seen, the quality has become a systematic and continuous improvement process of the elements comprising it within organizations. This is why HEIs governments have focused only, as stated before, in achieving a "quality in the education" from the perspective of excellence vs. results, - forced of course, by the desire to respond to demands of a competitive, changing and increasingly globalized environment - and not from the perspective of an "education with quality" where the vocation of service and the person constitutes the center of the steering board task, and where inspiring behaviors and side effects thereof, are underpinned by inalienable, indisputable and dignified principles, so they always bring out the best in each person, towards themselves, the university community, the family and society. If it is added to this, among other things, the influence of existing multilateral organizations in Latin America and that, as Toscano, (2005) says, impose their policies both to this country and other developing nations, under the fundamental logic of profitability economic and the conditioning toward the granting of financial loans on commercial assumptions of supply and demand, but never thinking about quality as a mean to help people growth.

3.2. The concept of “person”

None of the primary sources consulted begins from a specific conceptualization of individual. Moreover, although the system of quality assurance in Colombia has been able to focus as inferred from the factors, characteristics and indicators to assess it, to excellence, to obtain expected purposes, zero error in the product, the value - cost-benefit relationship, none of its manifestations has been focused on the transformation of the people as the core of educational work. If it is added to this, the system of quality assurance in Colombia is also supported in 4 categories globally accepted, such as the resources, environment, connectivity and performance. It is noticeable that person does not appear nor the preached quality projection depending on themselves and their inner self. Instead, everything goes around subject to what surrounds it or which it is part, this means their outer self. In this regard, Toscano (2005) points out that education is displayed in the context of educational policies that prevail in Latin America, with a strong predominance of autonomy on individual training and superficiality that only covers the immediate technical and functional knowledge, since education more than a right of people, becomes a commodity that can be bought, sold, used or disposed according to financial objectives required. In other words, education is not focusing their efforts to think of people as their missionary objective and from there allow them to transform and contribute to the growth of humanity, but instead is taking them to a context of individualism, where, according to Taylor & Perez (1994), pathologies full of subjectivism and relativism that encourages them to make decisions throughout their lives come first, going against the human being’s humanizing and dignifying principles. That's why, nowadays people award great prominence to the interests and individual and focused projects, rather than social, inclusive and humanizing, and especially regardless of the ethical precepts that influence the action, leaving aside the moral freedom expressed by Barrio, (2013) when he says: "Freedom is not much doing what I am pleased to but doing good because I feel like it " (p. 49). (Adapted version from Spanish).

4. Identification of causes and effects in the quality assurance system in Colombia, when education suffers from a humanizing perspective of service and growth

Taking into account the current and future government's educational policy of the country, and if what has been analyzed is considered from the same system of quality assurance in Colombia, it is clear that while the leaders continue, on one hand, assuming a diffuse conceptualization of man, not as a person who grows, transcends and coexists with themselves and others, but as an individual under the free development of the personality and misunderstood respect of the fundamental rights of man must tend to their personal and economic interests under the premise of impulses imposed by the consume society that permanently call people to have, like , own, embrace power and wealth to give vent to their pleasures and to be socially acceptable or as Polo, (1982) says, to suffer a
deficit of ethical freedom, to lose sight of the purpose as a corollary of the abundance of media and reduce learning habits, or even more, to live at the society’s expenses to be part of a real context from which is materially fed and served, it is impossible to humanize education from an anthropological perspective of service.

To the extent that this aims to promote, manage and continuously improve the quality keeps on going, either through processes of institutional self-evaluation, external evaluation and/or accreditation of high quality, as a compelling and competitive end, but not as a means for holistically growing people, it will be impossible to return education that original and contribution approach, which forms people loving and involved with others, under a scenario of interaction and continuous and transcendental growth. So long as this policy and this system remain, it will be almost impossible to pave the path to allow undertaking an encounter with truth and the raison d’etre for Colombian higher education. Therefore, it will be an utopia that both educators and learners recognize synergistically each other: “the educator”, motivated by their interest in opening and non-utilitarian donation, as part of that trust that leads to help the learner growth on a gift called service and "the learner" expecting to grow as a whole, affirming in their will and in their rational and elective freedom, letting the educator to help them become better people. Only if this double purpose is fulfilled, framed logically within a public policy framework that so allow it, the system of quality assurance in Colombia can be impartially verified, as prayed by most higher education institutions missions of this country, among others, direct actors of the system, that in a loud voice profess "integral formation" of people. This is because integral formation involves not only achieving intellectual habits and knowledge, technical knowledge and habits and social habits and knowledge, but also the formation of moral habits that lead gradually to the achievement of human virtues and codes supported by truth, on the basis of inalienable principles and dignified person and for the principles that strengthen solidarity by promoting personal virtues to sponsor the social virtues, and that, integrated as a whole, contribute to the common good of society. In short, within the framework of respect for the rules (ethics) and a real culture, the purpose of shaping the institutional ethos or way of being permanent appearing as a result of the repetition of good habits or operatively good acts that gives the institution its inspiration. Evoking Rodriguez, (2012) when he speaks about service, "it is like giving accepting and like an accepting giving.” In conclusion, a system of quality assurance in higher education grounded in such limited quality and individual concepts, reflects the functionalist logic mentioned by Donati (quoted by Sandoval & Garro, 2012) with its base lib/lab code - free market for the creation of goods and services (lib) and social equality sought by the state through redistribution (lab) -. That is, a system that ultimately prescribe inclusion and exclusion of individuals as citizens of society - not speaking of people, depending on the degree of compliance or non-compliance with certain provisions imposed by the environment and where they play aspects, as pointed out by Carneiro (quoted by Sandoval & Garro, 2012) and social values related to the effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, performance, the preponderance of liberalism, the exaltation of the individual and his subjectivity and freedom as liberation to all types of coercive ties or commitment. Briefly, according to the concepts of person and quality referrals, the possible compilations of demonstrations have become apparent in the field of higher education. The lib/lab code in terms of Donati (quoted by Sandoval & Garro, 2012) results, among others quoted by the same author, that the individual exercising their rights of citizenship under dynamic biasing the understanding of the socio political organization to the extent that welfare is conceived only from the material, economic and commercial, without recognizing or identifying human, personal, social, relational, and spiritual nature needs, that generates an individualism by which is meant that those actions have to do with the sacrifice to the other lose sense and have no merit, and that networks of solidarity and mutual support that existed in earlier times being relegated to the private sphere, leaving the family and ethical values as part of the domestic jurisdiction of each. Therefore, from the perspective of Donati, the lib/lab code unfortunately has also penetrated the philosophy of the school projects, curricular structure and design of the HEIs and of course the way they approach their teaching models.
5. Development of a complementary proposal that, in addition to the existing ones, is addressed to the criterion of "education with quality" and not simply "education quality" in an excellence framework centered in the person as the goal of educational work.

The complementary proposal results in the inclusion of qualitative and/or quantitative indicators in the system of quality assurance, inspired by the basic principles of education, and that are, according to Gonzales & Carbajo, (2005) the principle of personal growth, the principle of the educational intervention, and the principle of cooperation to achieve: 1. Personal growth, implying growth in unity and coherence, this means, integrity, judgment and courage to the person and their fellows. 2. The growth in personality or inner wealth, as initiative and creativity, putting all the effort in noble feelings. 3. Growth in solidarity to help others with service-minded vocation and respect. 4. The growth in the capacity of self-determination, commitment and freedom, but not in any way, but through a freedom that arises as part of a life project, so will merged will freedom chooses what understanding grants as good. So, the proposal considers the three components of quality assurance that are information, evaluation and promotion, so that from the current standard of "quality in education", whose substrate cannot and must not be disparaged, a change to a new logic of "education with quality", all-encompassing, that is, having the seal of academic excellence, but also the pursuit of personal growth, truth and the common good, taking the person as an end of educational work. For this, again González & Carbajo, (2005) clarify that the needs of people become evident in physiological needs, psychological safety, love and belonging needs, esteem needs and requirements to achieve self-realization, which emerge from vital trends such as the impetus to the activity or eating, individual tendencies, such as self-preservation, the desire to possess or to have power, and transitive trends and sense values, such as the association to the community, the desire to know, the love for the world, the impetus to produce, the impulse to beauty. These latest trends are to be promoted within the framework of Colombian higher education, because if these are enhanced and uplift, the rest will come as a result of what was disseminated. Based on the issues raised, the HEIs will be those that provide the State the concrete realities that inspire and supplements the policy, among other things, because the State promotes the process under a subsidiary and guarantor intervention constitutionally protected and regulated by Law 30 1992, which as noted, is the legal framework for higher education in Colombia. As such, there is no doubt. The only way to transform reality and therefore truly contribute to the construction and growth of this country, now so immersed in several kind of problems as a result of the degradation of personal and social values, will be taking on the challenge of the education low level back to a humanizing perspective of service and where, as Barri,o (2013) says, enable them to educate people in freedom, to be sensitive to what is valuable and what helps them grow as people and in this sense, the pedagogic value will be in teaching them not only how to obtain intellectual habits, but also moral habits. In this way, students can internalize and meditate constantly and throughout life, the reason that a person has to make sense of their existence. That is, under the explanation of Rodríguez & Altarejos, (2009) that as the person is dual – it is a something and it is someone - as something the person will know what it is, but as someone it will virtuously reveal in these manifestations that are the result of the acquisition of habits and moral and intellectual powers to be what the person wants to be, and thus transcend coexisting with them and everything around them. To summarize, when education is assumed under an anthropological perspective of service, the person not only will become the center of educational work and therefore on the priority of education policy in the country, but a great formative transition will happen for learners. From there, the quality of education can no longer relate exclusively on reviewing cognitive criteria, but will have to meet supported comprehensive curricula based on inalienable and dignifying principles for the person, which in turn can transversely inspire behaviors and the side effects thereof in lifelong learners. Finally, it will be necessary that the State, as part of its guarantees and subsidiary intervention, tending towards truth but without any indoctrination because, among others, education is a free act that makes that each unique and distinct person can grow according to their willingness to do so, and within which education gives tools so the person always wants to choose the right path. Therefore, a State which is subsidiary never enters the path of indoctrination, nor runs the risk of remaining in
socialization, letting aside sociability and educability**, so essential in the humanizing education. Moreover, it will create inclusive policies based on the concepts of cooperation and solidarity, which will drive the strategic routings of HEIs to strengthen from the social virtues and from promoting the encounter with the culture of love and rebirth. As said by Sandoval (2008), a work promoted for the common wealth from the material resources, culture goods and moral virtues or goods so that it service attitude and general cooperation towards good of the whole society becomes visible, with its radical anthropological harmony, solidarity and result-oriented, make the anthropological approach, together with the relevance, to the existence of the teaching ethos, a more suitable look to achieve. Undoubtedly, all HEIs will build pedagogical models that coherently articulate "learning to be a person" with the other existing learning, that is, "learning to learn" or "learning by doing" among others that may emerge. The important thing is that everyone is supported on the basis of inalienable, unquestionable and dignifying principles that transversely inspire behavior and learners lifelong side effects. Here it is not possible to forget the reflection of Naval & Altarejos, (2000) when they suggest to consider the declaration of the International Commission on Education for the XXI Century, sponsored by UNESCO, on the "four pillars or knowledge of education" and that according to the two authors should be considered as follows: 1. Learning to know: as a learning that tends less to the acquisition of knowledge classified and coded and the mastery of the tools of knowledge thereof, to thereby consider the means and purpose of human life time for the pleasure of learning and grow. 2. Learning to do: This learning for authors is related to the coexistence and personal donation. The decisive factor at work in the growing mode of the economy and society today is the ability of the person to bring creativity, initiative, and innovation for its own sake and of others. 3. Learning to live together, learning to live with others. The reference here is the coexistence of the person, because human training takes place in the social sphere. Therefore, it is necessary to intentionally promote sociability and further education in the affective powers that are the operating core of interpersonal relations. 4. Learning to be: for this purpose is referred to the integral development of the person in mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic sense, individual and spiritual responsibility. Thus, the consistency of the human being is as a unit and also as a whole, as an individual. In short, achieving this is no more than the permanent vocation of significant donation offered by some and accepted by others, only to facilitate the full realization and full happiness of people and the society’s wellbeing. That means keep on searching a true anthropological perspective of service in Colombian higher education. Returning to Rodríguez, (2012) openness and willingness to give something good to the educational community, and integrate the relation of coexistence to the world in which we live through service.

References


** To Naval and Altarejos (2000) Socialization is the process by which a person integrates and adapts to a particular society. Sociability is the exercise of the social virtues or coexistence with others through emotional powers that operate the fundamental relationships. Educability is the ability of students to learn and educate themselves throughout their lives, because the human being is called to transcend and seek improvement.


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