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## INTERNATIONALIZATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: ASSUMPTIONS, MEANINGS AND IMPACTS

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A INTERNACIONALIZAÇÃO NA EDUCAÇÃO SUPERIOR:  
PRESSUPOSTOS, SIGNIFICADOS E IMPACTOS

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INTERNACIONALIZACIÓN EN LA EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR:  
SUPUESTOS, SIGNIFICADOS Y IMPACTOS

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The internationalization of higher education is understood within the framework of the globalization of knowledge, economic integration, advances in information and communication technologies. “As knowledge is universal, its search, advancement and dissemination can only take place thanks to the collective efforts of the international university community” [...]. **Mutual trust and solidarity are fundamental principles of this international dimension:** “members of the world university community must be interested not only in the quality of the institution to which they belong, but also in the quality of higher education and research worldwide”<sup>4</sup> (DIAS SOBRINHO, 1999, p. 34, emphasis added).

Although assuming a new role nowadays, the internationalization of higher education is one of the integral aspects that have constituted the organization of the university since its origin. As a complex phenomenon (MOROSINI, 2006), it has demanded an explanation of its conception and planning from the Higher Education Institutions (HEI). Moreover, it demands consistent goals and strategies that meet the institutional particularities with the purpose of

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<sup>4</sup> In the original: A internacionalização da educação superior se entende no marco da mundialização do conhecimento, da integração econômica, dos avanços das tecnologias da informação e da comunicação. “Como o conhecimento é universal, sua procura, seu avanço e sua difusão só podem ter lugar graças aos esforços coletivos da comunidade universitária internacional” [...]. A confiança mútua e a solidariedade são princípios fundamentais dessa dimensão internacional: “os membros da comunidade universitária mundial devem interessar-se não só pela qualidade da instituição à qual pertencem, senão também pela qualidade da educação e da pesquisa superiores no mundo inteiro” (DIAS SOBRINHO, 1999, p. 34).

promoting and valuing the development of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff. If, on the one hand, we currently see the presence of internationalization in a large number of universities, on the other, we see the need to reflect on its meaning, assumptions, policies, actions and impacts, be it in the HEI, or at the national and international level.

Considering this scenario, the objective of this special issue entitled “Internationalization in higher education: assumptions, meanings and impacts”, was to provide space for analysis and dissemination of the views on internationalization that are being processed, in contemporary times, at the institutional, national and international levels. In this sense, the articles in this special issue represent an important contribution to the field of Higher Education and, especially, to the scholars of internationalization, bringing research, studies and reflections on concepts, policies and practices, seen from different perspectives. This special issue is composed of a set of nine articles and an interview, with a wide range of reflections on the topic at hand, encompassing the epistemological, social, economic, theoretical and practical discussion of internationalization, as well as its place in institutional educational policies.

The variety of analyses of the texts can also be observed in the diversity of institutions and regions in which the authors work both in Brazil and abroad. Thus, the articles are authored by Brazilian researchers from the following HEIs: the Federal University of Espírito Santo (UFES), the Federal University of Parana (UFPR), the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS), the Federal University of Para (UFPA), the Federal University of Amapa (UNIFAP), the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP), the School of Advertising and Marketing (ESPM), the State University of Mato Grosso (UNEMAT), the Regional University of Blumenau (FURB) and the University of Vale do Rio dos Sinos (UNISINOS), as well as foreign researchers from Boston College and the Florida Atlantic University (FAU), both in the USA; and the University of British Columbia (UBC) and the University of Toronto, in Canada.

It should be noted that the articles in this special issue were written and represent the reflection on the theme of internationalization before the phenomenon of the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, comments that refer to the paths and directions of internationalization should not be expected after the changes that will take place in the political, economic, social and educational post-pandemic world. Notwithstanding, some articles consider the possible impacts of the pandemic on the issue of the internationalization of higher education in this unfolding scenario.

The special issue opens with an interview carried out by **Claudia Schiedeck Soares de Souza, Maria Julieta Abba** and **Danilo Romeu Streck** (UNISINOS) with Prof. Dr. **Jane Knight** (University of Toronto – Canada). Entitled “Internationalization as a process of change: an interview with Jane Knight”, the interview took place in June 2019, during the event “Shaping Sustainable Futures for Internationalization in Higher Education”, where Professor Knight participated as a guest speaker. The interviewers focused on aspects that permeate internationalization in contemporary times, based on Knight's experience and trajectory over the past 25 years as one of the most well-known and referenced researchers in the area of internationalization. From the author's perspective, the interview sought to find out which elements of the concept of internationalization would still be present in today's definition of internationalization. So as to answer this question, Knight considers the changes that have occurred in the world in recent decades, particularly in terms of connectivity and interdependence. Knight points out new elements in addition to those commonly cited, such as: mobility, language study, joint development of research projects, publications, events and teaching practicum. The new elements refer to aspects that include, but are not limited to the internationalization of the curriculum, teaching of the learning process, development of intercultural skills and global competencies.

The researcher emphasizes the mobility of students and teachers within the regions of their own country, virtual classes with the participation of students from different regions and countries, dual degree programs and a broader understanding and comprehension of the concept of internationalization. Knight draws attention to the moment in which we live, marked by turbulence, with borders being closed for geopolitical or health reasons, intercultural tensions and racism, and says that it is time to look at new forms of academic mobility and cooperation. In this sense, Knight suggests that it is limiting to define internationalization in terms of strategies and highlights the importance of understanding it as a process, for which generations capable of developing research collaboratively must be prepared – for global challenges, with benefits and results for all the participants so as to become citizens of the world. The definition Knight brings in this interview is that of internationalization as a process that integrates international, intercultural and global dimensions in the purpose of teaching, learning, research and service to society, at the institutional and system level.

The article entitled “The future of internationalization of higher education in challenging global contexts”, by **Hans de Wit** (Boston College), reminds us that, in the last three decades, internationalization has been one of the main focuses of international, national and institutional policies and has two related components: internationalization

abroad and internationalization at home. The 'abroad' component includes academic mobility and has been more prevalent than the 'at home' component, which includes the internationalization of the curriculum and learning outcomes perceived as being part of a neoliberal and western paradigm. De Wit points out that there have been many challenges in recent decades and that we are facing new and bigger challenges in and for global internationalization, which will be even more dramatically affected in the post-pandemic. The author identifies a gradual but increasingly visible change in 3 directions, namely: from a more marginal and fragmented component to a more central and comprehensive one; from a domain of academic mobility to an internationalization of the curriculum; from attention to reputation and rankings to contribute to the United Nations' sustainable development goals; and attention to marginalized groups of refugees, immigrants and minorities. Based on these findings, the author asks: "What will be the future of internationalization?" and concludes the text by considering the impact of these changes.

In the text "The challenges and complexities of decolonizing internationalization in a time of global crises", authors **Sharon Stein** (University of British Columbia) and **Jhuliane Evelyn da Silva** (UFPR) assume that the internationalization of higher education is often structured as a means of preparing individuals, institutions and nations for an increasingly interconnected and uncertain future. Like other authors in this issue, they point out that traditional internationalization practices tend to reproduce unequal power relations at the local and global levels. Stein and Silva review different decolonial views to reflect how they can inform a new meaning of internationalization. With that aim, the authors consider the decolonial implications for internationalization in Brazil and Canada suggesting what each country can learn from the other. The authors criticize the xenophobic movement, particularly Trump's policy with the famous "travel ban" and, in Brazil, President Jair Bolsonaro's policies that culminate in attacks on the supposed leftist ideologies. Stein and Silva affirm that by redirecting internationalization away from the continuity of the existing modern/colonial global system, and with the possibility that this system is ending, one could open space for something new though still undefined. In this sense, they understand that this can be an internationalization approach that prepares them to face "the end of the world as we know it" with the end of harmful and unsustainable systems so as to enable other alternatives. The authors propose to consider the possibilities, challenges and complexities of engaging in decolonial futures in the context of internationalization.

The special issue features a second collaboration by **Hans de Wit** (Boston College) co-authored with **Fernanda Geremias Leal** (UFSC) and **Lisa Unangst** (Boston College), with the title "Internationalization aimed at global social justice: Brazilian university initiatives to

integrate refugees and displaced populations”. The authors consider that despite the opportunities and benefits that internationalization offers, it is a process that emerges from an economic and competitive orientation, reinforcing geographic and geopolitical inequalities of knowledge and power. The authors criticize the epistemic hegemony of the Northern Hemisphere that receives the greatest flow of mobility, criticize the submission of universities and researchers to these parameters, the existence of a close relationship between internationalization and differentiation/stratification and the threats to the idea of university as a public and social good. For De Wit, Leal and Unangst, these issues are associated with the challenges of contemporary society with migratory crises, xenophobia among others and call for more cooperative forms of international and intercultural engagement explicitly aligned with broader social justice efforts, aimed at a more inclusive, sustainable and alternative future. The text analyzes internationalization in the Brazilian context, which, in the authors' view, focuses more on developmental interests and active participation in the global capitalist market. The authors point out that internationalization programs have emphasized partnerships with countries and universities that are well positioned in the world system, restricting what this process could have been and/or could be. However, they understand that individual initiatives of higher education institutions can gain relevance and shed light on how to link internationalization to global and local social challenges. De Wit, Leal and Unangst consider that against the increasing immersion of global higher education in a highly competitive and economy-oriented paradigm, other perspectives on international interaction are needed. In this article, the authors explore projects developed by three Brazilian federal universities – UFSC, UFPR and UFPA – which seek to integrate refugees and displaced populations into higher education and Brazilian society in general. Based on the results, they emphasize: 1. The role of the autonomy of Brazilian higher education institutions to develop internationalization strategies that are contextually relevant and that aim to promote global social justice; 2. The importance of linking existing university extension activities to marginalized groups to the institutional internationalization policy so that internationalization efforts do not end up suppressing the more direct social role of these institutions.

In the article, “Internationalizations in two *loci* of enunciation: The South and Global North”, by **Kyria Rebeca Finardi** (UFES), **Sabrina Sembiente** (FAU), **Gabriel Amorim** (UFES) and **Thiago Veronez** (FAU), the authors reveal their *loci* of enunciation in the Global South (UFES) and in the Global North (FAU) as a way of confronting epistemological myopia by questioning knowledge generally considered to be universal. The authors assume that language policies and models of international cooperation are closely related to internationalization actions/plans and represent footprints of the vision of

internationalization of a specific HEI. Based on this assumption, the authors analyze language policies and international cooperation agreements in their *loci* of enunciation as a way of reflecting on the internationalization processes in these institutions. The analysis of UFES' language policies and international agreements suggests a reactive and colonial nature of the institution's internationalization process, evidenced in the number of agreements with institutions in the Global North and in the language policies that favor the use of English. The analysis of FAU's international cooperation agreements and language policies suggests that internationalization strategies are largely designed based on the university's privileged position as an English-speaking institution located in the Global North. Taken together, the results of the study suggest that, despite the direction (Global North) and the challenges of the partnership between UFES and FAU, this cooperation has the potential to pave the way for more balanced international models/relations, thus moving from a traditional internationalization model to a more horizontal one.

The article by **Joyce Wassem** and **Eliza Bartolozzi Ferreira** (UFES), "UFES' internationalization policy: the search for academic excellence", also takes the Federal University of Espírito Santo as an object of analysis. The text presents part of the post-doctoral research results of Wassem supervised by Ferreira, with funding from FAPES/CAPES, which sought to analyze how internationalization appears in UFES' institutional documents, that is, to understand the internationalization concepts, reasons and strategies adopted by that institution. The research design uses a qualitative approach, with data composed of documents. The text makes considerations about UFES, which was founded in 1954 and is considered the main HEI in the state of Espírito Santo. The authors point out that the institution has developed and implemented a strategic plan with goals and actions among which is the creation of an International Relations Office; the participation in the creation of the Network for the Internationalization of Education in Espírito Santo (RIEES, *Rede de Internacionalização do Espírito Santo*); the elaboration of a collective project financed by the Institutional Internationalization Program (PrInt) of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES). The analysis carried out by Wassem and Ferreira demonstrates that such actions are directed to the evaluation carried out by CAPES of the *stricto sensu* post-graduate programs. In other words, the main focus has been the search for excellence of the post-graduate programs, indicated in the evaluation by grades 6 and 7. The study also highlights that, in addition to the historical difficulties experienced by the HEIs and their post-graduate programs, new challenges are currently observed, mainly due to the Brazilian political and economic context. The strong disqualification of academia led by the current government, the cuts in funding for research and graduate programs, the contingency

of resources for education, in addition to the health crisis caused by the Covid-19, among others, pose a challenge for HEIs in general and for UFES, in particular, to evaluate its internationalization policy and establish more plural, ethical and socially just cooperation.

In the article by **Marília Costa Morosini** and **Manuir José Mentges** (PUCRS), “International organizations and higher education: propositions of the Agenda E2030”, the authors understand higher education as a complex task. For them, one of the factors that characterizes such complexity is the relationship among different socioeconomic levels that interfere in higher education. Morosini and Mentges point out that, currently, the global level has a strong influence on higher education and gives a marked importance to internationalization. This understanding is configured, for the authors, in an umbrella with its multiple rods, constituting a shelter from weather adversities of a global world that confronts traditional university models and 21<sup>st</sup> century university models. These models coexist with configurations of emerging contexts. To account for this umbrella, the authors analyze the global and regional perspectives and, in the latter, the perspective aimed at Latin America and the Caribbean, raising considerations to (re)think the internationalization of higher education. The text, characterized by the authors as a state of the art text, presents the identification, selection and systematization of proposals from emblematic international organizations for higher education in contemporary times.

Authored by **Olgaíses Cabral Maués** (UFPA) and **Antonia Costa Andrade** (UNIFAP), the article “The Internationalization of graduate education programs in the Northern region from Brazil: policies, strategies and actions” considers that the internationalization of higher education has become fundamental in the logic of the knowledge society because, on the one hand, it shows the insertion of countries in the economic globalization, while on the other, it is precisely because this level of education is perceived by some international organizations as a lever for economic growth. Thus, the international dimension of higher education has become a priority both in the national (governments) and international (international organizations) and, in this context, universities are “invited” to organize themselves in order to meet such demand. In this logic, Maués and Andrade also point out that national funding agencies such as CAPES choose the internationalization criterion as one of the quality indicators of higher education institutions, particularly their post-graduate programs. From this perspective, the article analyzes the internationalization process of post-graduate programs in Education in the Northern Region of Brazil. The results suggest that the programs seek to develop several internationalization actions. Moreover, the authors highlight the absence of a qualitative assessment of internationalization actions and the existence of disparities of policies among the higher education institutions studied.

In the article, “Developments in the internationalization of higher education in Brazil: from international academic mobility to the institutionalization of the university process”, **Marcelo Knobel** (UNICAMP), **Manolita Correia Lima** (ESPM), **Fernanda Geremias Leal** (UFSC) and **Ivor Prolo** (UNEMAT) analyze the developments in the internationalization of Brazilian higher education based on three main government programs aimed at promoting the internationalization process, namely, the Science without Borders (CsF); the Languages without Borders (IsF) and the CAPES’ Institutional Internationalization Program (PrInt). The authors structure the article based on three main arguments. The first is that, in Brazil, there has been an evolution in the understanding of the internationalization of higher education, from international academic mobility to a broader conception of transformation of the university institution. The second is that the internationalization of higher education has been linked mainly to the developmental interests of the State and, finally, the third argument is that such directions indicate that this process has been consolidated in the country in a hegemonic way. Knobel, Lima, Leal and Prolo conclude the article with reflections on the perspective of internationalization proposed by the federal government program “Future-se” and highlight three aspects: the interference of outside agencies in academic life, the compromise of the autonomy of the university and pressure for self-financing of the public institution from various sources of funding.

**Marcia Regina Selpa Heinzle** and **Pablo Pereira** (FURB) present, as results of a qualitative research endeavor, the article, “The cosmopolitan professor: the internationalization social actions in *stricto sensu* graduate programs”, aiming at understanding the role of the post-graduate professor in the process of internationalization in the *stricto sensu* graduate programs of a municipal public institution of higher education. The authors propose some guiding questions for the development of the text: “What does it mean to become international, intercultural or global in the contemporary educational context? When and where have the discussions on the topic of internationalization of higher education emerged, especially of *stricto sensu* graduate studies? Who are the social actors responsible for teaching, research and extension activities with an international dimension in the universities? How are these actions linked and what are the reasons that motivate these actors to participate in this process?” The authors assume that the prominent role of a professor with a cosmopolitan vision is the spirit of university internationalization, since without the full and effective participation of these professionals, through their actions of teaching, research and extension, with an international, intercultural or global dimension, the university, as we know it in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, might not exist. Heinzle and Pereira seek to characterize the actions of professors in the internationalization process as well as find out

their reasons. As results for the activities of professors, the authors point out academic exchange, intellectual production, intercultural management and internationalization of the curriculum.

We observe that the articles that make up the special issue, although with specific approaches and discussions, bring to the debate the same understanding of the internationalization of higher education, seen as a means rather than as end in itself, aimed at the production of knowledge, for the construction of mutual trust and solidarity agreements between institutions and countries, seeking their understanding as a process that integrates international, intercultural and global dimensions to the tripartite mission of the university: teaching, research and outreach extension.

To our readers, we hope that the articles instigate fruitful reflections, practices and policies at the institutional, national and international levels, with the internationalization of higher education conceived as integration and solidarity collaboration, based on cooperation between HEIs and countries that contribute to the production of more plural knowledge, driven by principles such as social justice and global citizenship.

The organizers!

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