



## Internationalization policies and strategies in Ireland and Brazil: a comparative study<sup>a</sup>

*Políticas e Estratégias de Internacionalização na  
Irlanda e no Brasil: um estudo comparativo*

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### Resumo

Este estudo tem por objetivo principal apresentar e comparar o processo de internacionalização do ensino superior na República da Irlanda e no Brasil em termos macro (políticas de internacionalização) e micro (estratégias voltadas à internacionalização). As principais questões de pesquisa são: (a) como está apresentado o processo de internacionalização nos documentos oficiais? (b) quais são as principais estratégias usadas na sua implementação? Trata-se de uma revisão sistematizada de cunho qualitativo realizada por meio de análise documental, fundamentada por pesquisadores do campo da internacionalização (Knight, 2004) e da Sociologia da Educação (BALL, 2011). A análise foi balizada a partir de duas perspectivas: uma hegemônica e outra contra-hegemônica (Abba e Corsetti, 2016). Ao final, conclui-se que há a predominância da perspectiva hegemônica de internacionalização em ambos os países que, apesar de suas diferenças, compartilham a ênfase significativa nos aspectos e benefícios predominantemente econômicos envolvidos no processo de internacionalização do ensino superior.

**Palavras-chave:** Internacionalização. Ensino Superior. Irlanda. Brasil.

### *Abstract*

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*This study presents and compares the internationalization in education process in Ireland and Brazil in terms of macro-level (policies), and micro-level (strategies and practices). The main research questions are: (a) how is the internationalization process presented in official/government publications? (b) what are the main strategies used towards its implementation? This is a qualitative study based on non-comprehensive scoping review on documents, such as policies, recommendations and guidelines, and at the strategic level (micro level), reports, journal articles and student guides. The analysis was oriented by two perspectives: hegemonic and counter-hegemonic (Abba & Corsetti, 2016). Amongst the findings, it can be inferred that both countries follow the hegemonic perspective, with significant emphasis on the economic implications and benefits of internationalization.*

**Keywords:** *Internationalization. Higher Education. Ireland. Brazil.*

## *Resumen*

*El objetivo principal de este estudio es presentar y comparar el proceso de internacionalización de la educación superior en la República de Irlanda y Brasil en términos macro (políticas de internacionalización) y micro (estrategias de internacionalización). Las principales preguntas de investigación son: (a) ¿cómo se presenta el proceso de internacionalización en los documentos oficiales de estos países? (b) ¿Cuáles son las principales estrategias utilizadas en su implementación? Se trata de una revisión sistemática de carácter cualitativo realizada por medio del análisis documental, fundamentada por investigadores en el campo de la internacionalización (Knight, 2004) y la Sociología de la Educación (Ball, 2011). El análisis se basó en dos perspectivas: una hegemónica y otra contrahegemónica (Abba y Corsetti, 2016). Al final, se concluye que existe un predominio de la perspectiva hegemónica de la internacionalización en ambos países que, aunque sean distintos de muchos modos, comparten el énfasis significativo en los aspectos y beneficios predominantemente económicos que implica el proceso de internacionalización de la educación superior.*

**Palabras clave:** *Internacionalización. Educación superior. Irlanda. Brasil.*

*As it moves, it morphs.  
Robert Cowen.*

## **Introduction**

This comparative study aims to present, discuss, and compare policies, strategies, and practices underlying the macro- and micro-levels of implementation of internationalization in education and academic mobility in Ireland and in Brazil. The reasons for choosing these two

countries lay on the fact that the author spent one year (2019-2020) as an international graduate student<sup>1</sup> in Ireland, hence experiencing the implications of the process of internationalization from a local although foreigner point of view (as a Brazilian citizen in Ireland), and from an international, global one (being in Ireland). Local and global aspects merged in a rather peculiar way, finding ground to grow inside an outsider<sup>2</sup>.

The leading research questions are: (a) how is the internationalization process presented in official/government publications? and (b) what are the main strategies used towards its implementation? This is a qualitative study based on non-comprehensive scoping review on documents such as policies, recommendations and guidelines, and at the strategic level (micro level), on reports, journal articles and student guides. The research topics were: “internationalization”, “higher education”, “internationalization policies”, “academic strategies”, and “international students” in both countries, and it was carried out under the supervision of some of the lecturers in the college in Ireland.

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is based on the concept of Internationalization as a process (KNIGHT, 2004, 2008), studies in Sociology of Education (BALL, 1994, 2011), and post- and de-colonial studies (SPIVAK, 1988; APPADURAI, 1996; MIGNOLO, 2007, 2010).

As far as the methodology approach is concerned, it is a qualitative study based on non-comprehensive scoping review on documents, such as policies, recommendations and guidelines (“macro-level”), and on reports, journal articles and student guides (at the strategic level - “micro level”). The analysis was oriented by two perspectives: hegemonic and counter-hegemonic (ABBA; CORSETTI, 2016).

Internationalization in education may be separated into two main perspectives: hegemonic and counter-hegemonic (ABBA; CORSETTI, 2016, p.

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<sup>1</sup> OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) points to a distinction between *foreign* and *international students*: *foreign students* are those who are not citizens in the country where they are currently studying. They may be residents or even have been born there, however they have not been granted citizenship for whatever reasons. *International students* are those who leave their home country to study abroad for a limited period of time. (OECD, 2017, p. 299).

<sup>2</sup> Becker (2008, p. 17) defines an outsider as “someone who diverges from the mainstream rules of a certain group.”

184). The hegemonic perspective follows the neoliberal market rationale, guided by international educational rankings and a market-driven education, considering students and their families as customers and consumers; it sets internationalization process in educational policies with the guidance of multilateral agencies like the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Bank and World Trade Organization (WTO). Also, this perspective is underpinned by heavy investment in knowledge industries worldwide which reflects the “knowledge society” we live in (ALTBACH; KNIGHT, 2007, p.290). In its wake, there can be seen the development of the service sector, varied knowledge products and commodities, and many societies’ need for highly educated personnel for their economic growth. As results of this rationale, it can be mentioned the use of English as the lingua franca for scientific communication, international labor market for scholars and scientists, and the use of information technology (ALTBACH; KNIGHT, 2007, p. 290-1).

The counter-hegemonic perspective, on the other hand, values the construction of the internationalization process based on international cooperation, humanistic values, like reciprocity, horizontality, complementarity, and solidarity as key principles for international partnership (ABBA; CORSETTI, 2016, p. 188). This perspective does take into account the economic factors involved, as well as the historical inequalities of power, living conditions and uneven levels of influence among the countries. However, it asserts that a process aiming at mutual growth and benefit is viable and doable, going beyond the market-driven goals.

Bearing such distinction in mind, this study presents and discusses parts of documents and government recommendations on internationalization from both countries, looking for macro marks of reference and how they are put into practice in these different contexts.

This paper is divided into five sections: (1) this introduction; (2) a brief presentation and discussion of the concepts of academic mobility, and internationalization in higher education; (3) macro- and micro-levels of reference in Ireland; (4) macro- and micro-levels of reference in Brazil; (5) Discussion and conclusion.

## Academic Mobility and Internationalization

The concept of academic mobility is linked to the concept of educational transfer in the “knowledge economy” (OCDE, 1996) we currently live in. Educational transfer has been reconceptualized by the new forms of mobility, especially due to the influence of new educational transnational actors – the multilateral agencies, which have a decisive role in the world educational scenario since the 1980’s (BEECH, 2009). Such reconceptualization has overcome simplified models that reduced the phenomenon to a mere instrument of control and domination used by Global North Countries<sup>3</sup> and easily imposed and received by the Global South Countries. Robert Cowen (2009) suggests the concept of *educational mobility* to better describe the present phenomenon, since one must take into account the fact that this concept, as a historical consequence<sup>4</sup> of the concept of educational transfer, seems to be more adequate if one considers all the agents and complexities involved in the internationalization process.

On the other hand, the concept of internationalization in education has its roots in another concept highly discussed in the 1980’s which is that of *transnational education*. According to the European Association for International Education (EAIE)<sup>5</sup>, “Transnational education involves the educational system of a country being offered to another”. Transnational education is based on the idea that educational transfer is not only possible, but also advisable. However, some authors (MOREIRA, 1997; BEECH, 2009) argue that in practice there is no such a thing as a direct transfer of knowledge, curricula, or educational system.

In terms of the Brazilian context, government efforts towards academic mobility internationally date back to the late 1940’s, with the creation of the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) which had,

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<sup>3</sup> In spite of being aware of current discussions on the use of some binary terms (like Global North versus Global South, Developed versus Undeveloped countries and so forth), the author uses them in order to acknowledge a constructed historical distinction that still inhabits our social imaginary.

<sup>4</sup> Historical, yet not linear, consequence.

among other objectives, the mission to foster scientific and technological research both in Brazil and abroad. CNPq was the agency responsible for funding such scientific and academic enterprises through scholarships, awards and grants. By the same time CNPq was created, the Brazilian government also created the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES)<sup>6</sup>, devoted to “assuring quality in undergraduate and postgraduate institutions in Brazil.” (<https://www.gov.br/capes/pt-br>. Access date: 16/02/2021). CAPES was officially created in 1951 by a government decree.<sup>7</sup> In 1964, CAPES, bound to the Ministry of Education (CURY, 2004, p. 117), presented among its aims that scholarships and awards would be granted to postgraduates to study both in Brazil and abroad, which has exceptionally contributed to the development of research in various study areas in the country.

CNPq and CAPES are still the greatest research funding agencies in Brazil. Nowadays, these efforts may be seen through statistical indicators, like the growing number of scholarships and other kinds of awards granted every year to undergraduate and postgraduate students, scholars and researchers; the list of over 20 countries, institutions, companies and foundations, both public and private, that Brazil maintains cooperation programs with; the growing-over-the-years amount of money that has been invested in such programs<sup>8</sup>; the relevance of international exchange and mobility in official documents; and the acknowledgment of the importance to develop scientific and technological knowledge for the country’s economic growth.

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<sup>5</sup> [www.eaie.org](http://www.eaie.org) Access date: 27/03/2014.

<sup>6</sup> “CAPES” is a Brazilian Foundation within the Ministry of Education whose central purpose is to coordinate efforts to improve the quality of Brazil’s faculty, students and staff in higher education through grants, scholarships, awards and other funding programs. “CAPES is particularly concerned with the training of Doctoral candidates, Pre-doctoral short-term researchers, and Post-doctoral Scholars” (<https://www.iie.org/en/Programs/CAPES> Access date: April 17, 2017). CAPES has also been responsible for different aspects in Basic Education since 2008, such as continuing teacher education programs.

<sup>7</sup> Decree number 29.741 on June 11th, 1951 signed by President Getúlio Vargas and Simões Filho (Cury, 2004, p.117)

<sup>8</sup> Despite the constant research budget cuts as reported by Ricardo Westin (Agência Senado, 25/09/2020. Available at: <https://www12.senado.leg.br/noticias/infomaterias/2020/09/corte-de-verbas-da-ciencia-prejudica-reacao-a-pandemia-e-desenvolvimento-do-pais> - Access date: 16/03/21)

Our everyday lives are basically constituted by a diversity of kinds of mobility: social, people, goods, services, information, academic. The access to all of them is limited to a few, though. Regarding academic mobility, it can be said to a certain extent that besides the mobility of researchers, there has been a growing mobility of programs, curricula and, in a sense, of educational institutions themselves through joint and online programs, the opening of branches, franchises, campuses overseas, and internationalization of curricula, to name but a few strategies, which can be cited as one of the main characteristics of education in this century.<sup>9</sup>

In the current globalized scenario, a greater mobility of people – researchers, professors and students –, as well as mobility of concepts, theories, practices and policies among countries and their educational systems can be found in all corners of the world. Notwithstanding, unlevelled power relations, and determinations from multilateral agencies, with their standards of excellence, quality, assessment, and performance requested from all the countries alike subject the interpersonal and professional relations to such demands.

In this sense, it should be highlighted a kind of mobility that has been taking place all too often: academic institutional mobility. Phillip Altbach and Jane Knight (2007) affirm that the international dimension of higher education includes many new configurations, for example, internationalization at home and abroad; the growing demand for higher education has led to a greater expansion of academic mobility; and an unprecedented interest in cross-border education. Besides, international institutions themselves have developed new educational configurations, like merging with local institutions, adapting curricula, offering online courses, opening branches and overseas campuses, and so forth, which bring to the educational field new services on an international level. Consequently, one can observe a new form of transfer through which not only knowledge, information, practices, and theories are transferred, but mainly educational goods and services, attending to the logic of consumerism (NAIDOO *et al.*, 2011).

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<sup>9</sup> “Not only peoples move, but also their models of society” (MADEIRA 2009, apud COWEN 2009, p. 318)

Yet, as Bauman (1999) puts it,

Mobility climbs to the highest level among the most desired values – the freedom of movements, an always scarce and unevenly distributed good [...] Being local in a globalized world means social deprivation and degradation [...] A specific cause of worrying is the progressive communications rupture between extraterritorial elites increasingly more global, and the rest of population, increasingly more local (BAUMAN, 1999, p. 8-9).

Academic mobility involves both people and institutions within these new configurations. Nevertheless, as Bauman said, mobility also causes inequalities of various types, such as social, and academic.

Therefore, internationalization of higher education involves broader aspects, in which mobility is included. Internationalization is a process of integrating different dimensions into the “purpose, functions – teaching, research and service -, and delivery of higher education at the institutional and national levels” (KNIGHT, 2008, p. xi). The idea of being a process is paramount to think of the instances and spheres that are influenced by internationalization in an ongoing movement or cycle. It is changeable, dependent on choices in different levels and by distinct actors:

Globalization may be unalterable, but internationalization involves many choices<sup>10</sup>. Globalization tends to concentrate wealth, knowledge, and power in those already possessing these elements. International academic mobility similarly favors well-developed education systems and institutions, thereby compounding existing inequalities. (ALTBACH; KNIGHT, 2007, p. 291)

The role institutions of higher education play in knowledge production and distribution is regarded as fundamental to a country’s development and participation in the global economy nowadays. International and interdisciplinary collaboration is seen as central to seek general solutions for general problems like the environmental or health issues. Hence, governments, public and private institutions have been trying to render the international dimension of research and knowledge production

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<sup>10</sup> Altbach and Knight (2007) state that internationalization is one of the many facets to globalization, one that, for instance, is concerned with the relationship between countries or institutions in different areas (like education, culture, economy) without the overwhelming desire to homogenize the globe.



the main reason for the internalization of higher education. Yet, such a dimension is embedded in specific interests of governments largely ruled by the commodification of global education.

Taborga *et al.* (2013) go further in the definition of internationalization, since for them it is a tool for the development of teaching and researching skills and goals (micro-level) according to specific university projects, both at an institutional and a national/governmental level. In this sense, internationalization should also comprise in its definition the diversity of ‘on the ground’ strategies specifically for teaching and researching purposes, such as curriculum design, diverse methodologies, pedagogies and approaches to enhance learning and knowledge in an inclusive manner.

Beyond definitions, literature points to two contrasting perspectives on internationalization. A hegemonic one, represented by a more neoliberal foundation where ‘global’ standards of quality, excellence, and performance rank higher education institutions and staff all over the world. And a counter-hegemonic perspective, which praises and values the construction of the internationalization process based on international cooperation, humanistic values, like reciprocity, horizontality, complementarity and solidarity as key principles for international partnership:

The principles of exchange: Mutual collaboration, including mainly historical, cultural and international cooperation among universities in the South of the planet. [...] Search for a critical perspective of the process of internationalization of higher education. Development of concepts, categories and indicators that respond and represent the reality of Latin American universities. (ABBA; CORSETTI, 2016, p. 188)

The counter-hegemonic perspective assumes that there should be a shared-value sense in international relations in a resistant approach to neoliberal principles, as well as distributed force and influence among the countries, so as to avoid the polarization in just one perspective or group of characteristics, objectives, goals (macro-level of reference), and strategies and practices (micro-level of reference).

According to Ball (1994, p. 14), macro-level analysis of education systems and micro-level investigation should work together since it is in the relationship between these contexts that one may better understand the whole process of

education policies and strategies. Besides, Ball emphasizes the fact that “policies are decoded in complex ways” (p. 16), so much so that “action may be constrained differently [...] it is not determined by policy. [...] Policies create circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed” (pp. 18-19). In this study the macro-level of policy texts is presented, in order to paint the general picture of their implementation by different institutions and actors in the analysed countries.

## Ireland

The main research funding agency in Ireland is the Irish Research Council (IRC)<sup>11</sup>. IRC manage a suite of interlinked programs funding researchers across all career stages and disciplines, the only funder that supports basic research in the arts, humanities and social sciences, both for Irish and foreigners. IRC envision a healthy research ecosystem that provides a diversity of supports and opportunities to enable Ireland reap the full value of research; they operate within the policy framework of the Department of Education and Skills and the Higher Education Authority, but they are independent in their funding decisions, and their “core value is excellence, determined on the basis of independent peer review in an open, objective and transparent manner”<sup>12</sup>.

The documents: “National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 - Report of the Strategy Group”, also known as “The Hunt Report” (Walsh and Loxley, 2015), “Investing in Global Relationships: Ireland’s International Education Strategy 2010-15”, “Higher Education System 2018 -2020”, and “Action Plan for Education 2016 – 2019” provide general recommendations towards internationalization in higher education in Ireland.

These recommendations consider the position of Ireland in the global economic and social scenario as an influential partner in global affairs. They position the country as a leading, although emergent, force especially when it comes to business and education, innovation and competitive enterprises, culture, and

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<sup>11</sup> <https://research.ie> (Access date: 12 November 2022).

inclusive society. The recommendations highlight the country's vocation to welcome foreign investment and initiatives, foreign and international students, and overall tourists. They reinforce the country's potential in internationalization in the educational field, especially in higher education, where students can encounter a friendly environment alongside academic excellence in different institutions throughout the country.

The document "Higher Education System Performance Framework 2018-2020" was used as a main reference for this study since it seems to summarize the policy content of the other documents. It states that higher education institutions have a major role in the achievement of significant levels to "make Ireland internationally renowned for its talent, for its highly skilled and adaptive people, equipped with the higher order capabilities required in the 21st century workplace and for its openness to continuous learning" (p. 3). This document is divided into six "Key System Objectives for the Higher Education System" (p. 1), with explicit strategies for fulfilling them. The document also presents "high level targets", where they list, for example: (a) "increase the output value of internationalization to € 1.15 bn per annum by 2020 (International Education Strategy baseline € 819 m in 2014/15); (b) international students to represent 15% of full-time students by 2020 (In 2016/17, 11.6% of all full-time students in HEA-funded higher education institutions were international students; (c) progress towards Bologna target of at least 20% of those who graduate in 2020 to undertake a study training period abroad" (p. 12)<sup>13</sup>.

As far as the micro level of implementation is concerned, the strategies undertaken by higher education institutions do not present significant variation among themselves. They basically follow the recommendations, with some difference in regards of funds and investment, though. The most common strategies used in higher education internationalization process in Ireland are:

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<sup>12</sup> <https://research.ie/what-we-do/fund-excellent-research/> (Access date: 12 November, 2022).

<sup>13</sup> It is important to notice that these targets were designed well before the pandemic of COVID-19.

- Student (outward and inward), academics and staff mobility / international experience
- Courses with a mandatory built-in mobility period abroad
- Recruitment of international researchers and students
- Increasing number of staff in the higher education institutions' international sections and offices
- Increasing number of staff on Erasmus+ and on non-EU bilateral programs
- Increasing number of students from core and high potential markets
- Publications with international peers
- Organization of international conferences
- Further development of relationships with partner countries through an appropriate increase in the number of branch campuses / articulation agreements / joint awards / international online programs

Having the concept of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic perspectives as basis for analysis, internationalization in education in Ireland is strongly articulated with the hegemonic perspective. The process is highly market-driven, with a strong message of achievement, international best practice, economic targets associated with research, scientific development and focus on quality and academic excellence. The social and cultural aspects mentioned in the analyzed documents are but a background to justify the mostly economic targets aimed at the “Key System Objectives”. In addition, there is no reference in the analyzed documents concerning significant changes or adaptations in the curricula for international students, for instance, or any other inclusivity measures designed specifically to cater for international students, whether they be fee-paying or immigrants, temporary students or minorities, and so forth. It seems that these issues are left out of legislation and recommendations, which suggests that they are not part of the main concern of government and higher education institutions at first hand. Although in the context of practice (BALL, 1994) there may be some particularities in the application of the strategies by different actors in different institutions, by and large the dominant practice appears to be played by the book.

## Brazil

In 1968 the Brazilian university reform explicitly stated that research and postgraduate studies should be key to knowledge and teachers' education in higher education. It also established that scientific research should be the final criteria for each professor's and for the whole higher education system assessment and evaluation.

The Brazilian government then has been establishing various partnerships with public and private higher education institutions and research centers worldwide, providing funds, grants, scholarships and awards to individuals and institutions, to various research projects, so as to foster the development of research in the country. Such policy highlights the association between the State, technology and science, and the continuous search for international knowledge references. It shows an official stance on the value of interchange and exchange programs seeking the progress and development of the nation facing the global scientific community. Brazil has been complying with international standards of productivity, competitiveness, quality, and knowledge in all its areas of study, thus following the international trend to having knowledge as key to a country's social, economic, and political growth and development, which is only done by following the overwhelming rules of the international scientific community which, according to Castells (1999), has always been not global, yet a Western scientific community since the European scholasticism.

Specific national regulation on internationalization in Brazil is scarce. It is mostly presented in terms of recommendations and suggestions, mainly provided by federal research-funding agencies (such as CAPES and CNPq) and followed by higher education institutions and research centers. Since CAPES is part of the Ministry of Education, it is the one that mainly sets the regulations for higher education institutions, both public and private, also in terms of internationalization goals and targets. Until 2017, a higher education program or even individual researchers, students, academics, and research groups could apply for grants or scholarships directly to CAPES. However, since the beginning of 2018, only higher

education institutions participating in the “Institutionalized Internationalization Program (PrInt)” can do so.

In the document named “Institutionalized Internationalization Program – PrInt” (CAPES, 2017/2019), the main terms and goals for internationalization in higher education institutions are presented as follows:

- Foster the process, implementation and consolidation of strategic internationalization plans in the institutions in the prioritized knowledge areas.
- Foster the creation of international research networks to improve the quality of academic production linked to postgraduate studies.
- Expand actions to support internationalization in graduate programs.
- Promote mobility of teachers and students, with special focus on doctoral and postdoctoral students and academics, abroad and from abroad, linked to graduate programs with international cooperation.
- Foster the creation of an international environment in the participating institutions.
- Integrate other actions from CAPES with the internationalization effort
- Higher education institutions must submit their “internationalization plans” to be assessed by CAPES.

Although PrInt’s main aims are to “enhance the quality of postgraduate programs and to foster greater international visibility to scientific research that takes place in Brazil” (CAPES, 2017/2019), it goes without saying that economic factors such as better ranked internationally qualified research play a key role in fundraising and other assistance resources from multilateral agencies, like the World Bank, OECD and even UNESCO. Besides, the more cooperation and joint programs among Brazilian institutions and foreign partners, the more social and economic mobility opportunities emerge for those who have access to these opportunities.

At the micro level of strategies and implementations, the most recurrent ones found in Brazil are:

- a. International cooperation and development projects (“at home”, like the experiences with UNILA – Universidade Federal da Integração Latino-Americana [Federal University for Latin-America Integration] – and abroad)
- b. Institutional agreements and networks.
- c. Research.
- d. Publications in international research journals.
- e. Participation in international events, congresses, conferences.
- f. Mobility of academics and students through exchange programs (e.g. the recently extinct “Science without Borders”).
- g. Recruitment of international students (mainly from African or other Latin American countries).
- h. Joint / double degree programs.
- i. Partnership with international higher education and other kinds of research institutions.

Unlike Ireland, Brazil is still building its reputation in the international scientific scenario, despite the mass “brain drain” (KNIGHT, 2014) it has historically been suffering since the beginning of its colonization.

A country's higher education sector can be affected either negatively (if it is experiencing a net brain drain as trained personnel move out) or positively [brain gain] (if trained personnel are moving in). (KNIGHT, 2008, p. 15)

The notion of circulation (mobility) masks the fact that there is net brain drain for some countries, usually smaller developing countries, and there is net brain gain for more economically advanced countries (KNIGHT, 2014, p. 16)

There are quite a few Brazilian researchers in different knowledge areas that have gained international recognition and status (for instance, Paulo Freire in Education). Nevertheless, these researchers, more often than not, are result of individual efforts and self-funding rather than a long-term state policy of investment in education, which apparently is not the case only in Brazil:

Individuals make many key decisions concerning destinations and fields of study. Students, though constrained by immigration regulations, decide whether they will return home following their academic work or stay at home and enroll in the programs offered by foreign education providers. Most of the world's more than 2 million international students are self-funded, that is, they and their families pay for their own academic work. Students are therefore the largest source of funds for international education—not governments, academic institutions, or philanthropies (ALTBACH; KNIGHT, 2007, p. 294)

Inequity of access and opportunities are big issues in Brazil in all levels of education and they are also reflected in the internationalization process. In addition, a high number of Brazilian students and researchers would pursue their career in a foreign country if they had the chance, contributing to the already worrying brain drain process.

In sum:

	<b>Ireland</b>	<b>Brazil</b>
<b>Macro level</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ireland in global economic and social scenario as an influential partner in global affairs;</li> <li>2. Ireland is a leading, although emergent, force especially when it comes to business and education, innovation and competitive enterprises, culture, and inclusive society;</li> <li>3. Due to the country's vocation to welcome foreign investment and initiatives, foreign and international students, and overall tourists, students can encounter a friendly environment alongside academic excellence in different institutions throughout the country;</li> <li>4. Considers internationalization</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage the implementation and consolidation of strategic internationalization plans in the institutions in the knowledge areas they prioritize;</li> <li>2. Encourage the creation of international research networks to improve the quality of academic production linked to postgraduate studies;</li> <li>3. Expand the actions to support internationalization in graduate programs;</li> <li>4. Promote mobility of teachers and students, with emphasis on doctoral students, postdoctoral students and professors;</li> </ol>
<b>Macro level</b>		



	<p>as an institutional strategy;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. International and global engagement in the widest perspective;</li> <li>6. Higher education institutions should put in place appropriate supports to promote the integration, safety, security and well-being of international students (in the case of internationalization 'at home').</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Foster the creation of an international environment in institutions;</li> <li>6. Universities must submit their "internationalization plan" to CAPES assessment process.</li> </ol>
<b>Micro level</b>	<p><u>Strategies:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establishing more collaborative institutional and research links;</li> <li>2. Further developing Irish involvement in trans-national education (delivering Irish academic programs overseas and establishing Irish-linked institutions outside of Ireland);</li> <li>3. Contributing to overseas development and participating in EU programs and multilateral initiatives such as the Bologna process.</li> <li>4. Attracting more international students into Ireland;</li> <li>5. Making it easier for Irish staff and students to study and to engage in research work abroad (outward mobility)</li> <li>6. Increasing number of staff in the higher education institutions' international sections and offices</li> <li>7. • Increasing number of staff on Erasmus+ and on non-EU bilateral programs</li> <li>8. • Increasing number of students from core and high potential markets</li> <li>9. • Publications with international peers</li> <li>10. • Organization of</li> </ol>	<p><u>Strategies:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. International cooperation and development projects ("at home and abroad");</li> <li>2. Fostering research in different areas, but primarily technology, engineering, science and medical areas (priority study areas);</li> <li>3. Institutional agreements and networks;</li> <li>4. Mobility of academics through exchange;</li> <li>5. Recruitment of international students, especially from Latin America and Africa;</li> <li>6. Student exchange programs;</li> <li>7. Joint/ double degree programs</li> <li>8. Mobility of academics and students through exchange programs (e.g. the recently extinct "Science without Borders")</li> <li>9. Partnership with international higher education and other kinds of research institutions</li> </ol>

	international conferences 11. • Further development of relationships with partner countries through an appropriate increase in the number of branch campuses / articulation agreements / joint awards / international online programs	
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Source: Author's research data.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The analysis of documents and official publications on internationalization for the purpose of this study indicates that: (a) there is a prevalence of the hegemonic discourse and practices in the process in Ireland and Brazil; (b) by and large, both countries seek international recognition, a wider range of foreign and international students to their campuses (especially Ireland), stimulate academic and knowledge mobility (also in Brazil), and increase their local and regional profit (direct and indirect profit); (c) both countries value international standards of quality, productivity, competitiveness, and seek for a higher participation in the international labor market through education; (d) both countries associate their governmental internationalization approach with the institutional one, sometimes one using the rhetoric and practices of the other without much distinction between the spheres of action.

In fact, both countries have similar approaches to internationalization despite their cultural, socio, economic and political differences. They only seem to be in different parts of the path. Brazil tends to use the same model used broadly in Ireland, even though both contexts differ in many aspects. One of these differences is the fact that in Brazil there are several public, non-fee paying higher education institutions, which in Ireland does not happen. Many of these institutions are considered of “excellence” even in international rankings, and they are responsible for a great part of Brazilian participation in academic mobility and in the internationalization process. These institutions tend to focus on research itself rather than on market-driven aspects, since most of their researchers and students are provided with some sort of grant, award, or scholarships by various research

agencies, national and foreigner. Nevertheless, the private higher education institutions, which are also in a high number in Brazil, tend to focus on approaches and strategies targeting the educational market, since the researchers, students and their families must self-fund themselves most of the time as Altbach and Knight (2007, p. 294) stated above. Besides, the fact, also mentioned above, that Brazil is going through research budget cuts may hinder the future participation of the country in the process, whether it be under a hegemonic or a counter-hegemonic perspective. Hence, what could be an advantage for Brazil, could also become its Achilles heel.

In addition, as far as public higher education institutions are concerned, we have been experiencing a moment of (internal and external) pressure towards their privatization, hence opening them to private investment little by little. Movements towards greater accountability, assessment methods, and other evaluation criteria have become more common among these institutions, and internationalization has also become one of the used criteria. It is our conviction that internationalization in Brazil is regarded under the hegemonic perspective, thus it will provoke huge changes in the public higher education institutions vision and mission in the long run. A distinctive characteristic of the hegemonic perspective is the importance attributed to the individual and their merit (meritocracy) at the expense of teamwork, group research, and shared knowledge.

Meanwhile, counter-hegemonic perspectives in internationalization seem to be losing strength (if there has ever been any), transferring their domain to the realm of solidarity and philanthropic initiatives instead of the mainstream educational environment in both countries. It can be found in Ireland institutions that foster volunteer work overseas among higher education students, even attributing academic credits for them to do so, which is rarely seen in Brazil. It is a valid attempt to create a more humanistic approach to internationalization, provided that it does not carry within an underlying neo-colonial intent.

Nevertheless, were Brazil to take different actions towards internationalization, this study findings would lead to: (a) Policies should be assertive towards internationalization considering the differences in rationales, purposes and aims between the public and the private education sectors; (b) There

should be further collaborative and cooperation programs with Global South countries, especially Latin American ones<sup>14</sup>; (c) The public education systems should promote internationalization-related topics in continuous development programs for elementary public school teachers, in order to also prepare the pupils in these schools for their critical engagement in the internationalization process (hence not becoming simply consumers and/or tourists, if ever). In the current educational context, only those pupils who have access to private basic education schools or other kinds of elite schools (military and federal elementary schools) have access to such 'privileged' perspective and to a more globalized education; (d) Enhance the overall debate as to the humanitarian needs and challenges involved in internationalization, such as human rights, climate issues, migration, gender and multiculturalism, so as to avoid the existence of one perspective only.

Finally, it is our overall conclusion that the internationalization in higher education processes in both countries demands macro and micro-level changes, as well as our conviction, looking at the evidence gathered in this study, that another path constituted by counter-hegemonic approaches is feasible and doable.

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<sup>14</sup> As the author has shown in a previous research (2018), most language exchange programs funded by Brazilian agencies target Global North countries' languages, especially English and German, regardless of the fact that most countries in Latin America are Spanish speaking ones.

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