

## **INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND PUBLIC POLICY: ADVANCES AND SETBACKS IN THE STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION OF BRAZILIAN UNIVERSITIES**

**JOSÉ ALBERTO MIRANDA**

[jose.miranda@unilasalle.edu.br](mailto:jose.miranda@unilasalle.edu.br)

He holds a degree in Law from the University of Vale do Rio dos Sinos (1996), a Specialization in Integration and Mercosur from UFRGS (1999), a Master's degree in International Relations from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (2004) and a PhD in International Strategic Studies from UFRGS (2012). He is currently Advisor for Interinstitutional and International Affairs, Deputy Coordinator of the Postgraduate Program in Law and a member of the teaching staff of the International Relations Course at La Salle University (Brazil). He is also a distinguished visiting professor at the Catholic University of Trujillo in Peru. He has experience in International Relations and International Law, with an emphasis on International Society, International Cooperation, Global Governance, Regional Integration, Foreign Policy and International Education. He also coordinates the La Salle University support for immigrants extension project.

**JACKSON LUIZ NUNES BENTES**

[jackson.bentes@lasalle.org.br](mailto:jackson.bentes@lasalle.org.br)

Postdoctoral student in International Relations at the Autónoma University of Lisbon (UAL), Portugal. Post-Doctorate in History from the State University of Rio de Janeiro (2018). PhD in Education, Art and History of Culture from Mackenzie Presbyterian University (2014). Master's in Psychology from the Catholic University of Brasília (2008). Graduated in Philosophy (BA and BSc) from La Salle University in Canoas, RS (2001). General Director of La Salle College/Manaus. Director of La Salle Educational Center (Brazil). Professor of "Ethics", "Education" and "Philosophy" at UNILASALLE/Lucas. Member of the Research Group at La Salle University-Canoas/RS. Has experience in Philosophy, working mainly on the following subjects: Philosophy, Ethics and Philosophy of Education, History of Education. BASis evaluator.

### **Abstract**

The establishment of a comprehensive national public policy for the internationalization of higher education in Brazil has been identified as an urgent and indispensable priority. Brazil continues to face challenges in its strategic planning aimed at enhancing international integration within the higher education sector, particularly in effectively promoting its universities on the global stage. This study seeks to underscore the significance of implementing a national internationalization policy tailored to Brazilian universities, grounded in a thorough understanding of the current dynamics and characteristics of the internationalization process in the country. To achieve this objective, the study first examines the organizational structures of key government agencies, along with their respective initiatives and programs related to internationalization. Subsequently, these elements are critically analyzed in relation to the internationalization management processes at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), weighing their advantages and disadvantages. Through this analysis, the study identifies the principal challenges confronting the development of a cohesive national policy for internationalization. Methodologically, this research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing bibliographic and documentary analysis. The findings reveal that while the Brazilian government has played a significant role in the internationalization of higher education, its actions have often been fragmented across various agencies. This lack



of coordination has resulted in both benefits and setbacks for the internationalization efforts of Brazilian HEIs and for the country as a whole. Based on these findings, the study recommends fostering stronger collaboration between the government and HEIs in the formulation of national strategies, as well as promoting a clearer understanding of Brazil's existing capabilities, ambitions, and potential within the internationalization landscape.

### Keywords

Brazil, Internationalization, Higher Education, Public Policy, Management.

### Resumo

A criação de uma política pública nacional abrangente para a internacionalização do ensino superior no Brasil tem sido identificada como uma prioridade urgente e indispensável. O Brasil continua a enfrentar desafios no seu planejamento estratégico destinado a reforçar a integração internacional no setor do ensino superior, sobretudo no que respeita à promoção eficaz das suas universidades no cenário global. Este estudo pretende sublinhar a importância da implementação de uma política nacional de internacionalização ajustada às universidades brasileiras, baseada numa compreensão aprofundada das dinâmicas e características atuais do processo de internacionalização no país. Para alcançar este objetivo, o estudo analisa inicialmente as estruturas organizacionais dos principais órgãos governamentais, bem como as suas respetivas iniciativas e programas relacionados com a internacionalização. Posteriormente, estes elementos são objeto de análise crítica em relação aos processos de gestão da internacionalização nas Instituições de Ensino Superior (IES), avaliando os seus benefícios e limitações. Através desta análise, identificam-se os principais desafios que se colocam ao desenvolvimento de uma política nacional coesa para a internacionalização. Do ponto de vista metodológico, esta investigação adota uma abordagem qualitativa, recorrendo à análise bibliográfica e documental. Os resultados evidenciam que, embora o governo brasileiro desempenhe um papel relevante na internacionalização do ensino superior, a sua ação tem sido frequentemente fragmentada entre diferentes órgãos. Esta falta de coordenação tem provocado tanto ganhos como prejuízos para os esforços de internacionalização das IES brasileiras e para o país em geral. Com base nestes resultados, o estudo recomenda o fortalecimento da colaboração entre o governo e as IES na formulação de estratégias nacionais, bem como a promoção de uma compreensão mais clara das capacidades, ambições e potencialidades do Brasil no contexto da internacionalização.

### Palavras-chave

Brasil, Internacionalização, Ensino Superior, Política Pública, Gestão, Brasil.

### How to cite this article

Miranda, José Alberto & Bentes, Jackson Luiz Nunes (2025). Internationalization of Higher Education and Public Policy: advances and Setbacks in the Strategic Actions for the International Integration of Brazilian Universities. *Janus.net, e-journal of international relations*. Thematic Dossier - *Internationalization of Higher Education: Experiences and Challenges*. VOL. 16, Nº. 1, TD1. June 2025, pp. 149-162. DOI <https://doi.org/10.26619/1647-7251.DT0325.10>.

**Article submitted on 8 April 2025 and accepted for publication on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025.**





## **INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND PUBLIC POLICY: ADVANCES AND SETBACKS IN THE STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION OF BRAZILIAN UNIVERSITIES**

**JOSÉ ALBERTO MIRANDA**

**JACKSON LUIZ NUNES BENTES**

### **Introduction**

The internationalization of Brazilian higher education has, over recent decades, become consolidated as a strategic element for fostering academic, scientific, and cultural innovation—particularly within an increasingly interconnected global context. According to Jane Knight (2020), internationalization is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the functions and missions of higher education. In Brazil, this movement has gained momentum, though it continues to face significant challenges stemming from the absence of a comprehensive strategic framework.

The internationalization process in Brazilian higher education institutions (HEIs) has sparked debate regarding its relevance, associated challenges, and its potential impact on national development. For João Sguissardi and José Silva Júnior (2009), internationalization can enhance knowledge exchange, expand global visibility for universities, and foster greater academic competitiveness. However, national initiatives often lack a coherent public policy that integrates governmental and institutional actions, thereby limiting the scope and effectiveness of such efforts. Moreover, international engagement initiatives have revealed substantial gaps in terms of strategic planning and integrated management. These deficiencies compromise the sustainability of internationalization projects and diminish their potential benefits—such as the formation of international research networks and the attraction of global talent.

It is also essential to recognize that internationalization goes beyond the mere mobility of students and faculty. As highlighted by De Wit (2015), the concept entails a broader institutional transformation, including the enhancement of internationalized curricula, strategic academic partnerships, and inclusion policies for international students. In



Brazil, developing a national internationalization policy requires a clear understanding of the role of HEIs in the global landscape, as well as strategies to overcome local challenges such as regional inequalities and budgetary constraints. As Stallivieri (2017) emphasizes, it is crucial for institutions to conduct internal assessments in advance in order to accurately identify their potential for international engagement and their capacity to absorb the demands arising from this process.

Thus, the internationalization of higher education in Brazil represents a phenomenon that offers significant opportunities but also demands coordinated efforts to address existing structural and political challenges. As argued by Souza and Almeida (2021), the success of this internationalization process depends on effective coordination between the state and higher education institutions, with strategies that foster integration and strengthen the Brazilian academic identity on the international stage.

This study aims to analyze the predominant characteristics of internationalization within Brazilian universities, highlighting both the challenges and opportunities related to the construction of an integrated national policy. Adopting a critical perspective, it examines the actions and programs developed by key government agencies and their implications for university governance and management. Using a qualitative methodology grounded in bibliographic and documentary analysis, the study identifies both the gains and setbacks resulting from governmental disarticulation and points toward the formulation of more coherent strategies aligned with the broader interests of humanity.

In this way, the present article contributes to the ongoing discourse on the importance of a national public policy aimed at promoting the internationalization of higher education—specifically in Brazil—considering not only what has been accomplished, but, more importantly, what remains to be achieved and what the country can offer in a competitive global context. This analysis seeks to encourage a broader debate about the relevance of internationalization as a strategic vector for strengthening Brazilian universities and advancing the country's national development agenda.

In the first part of this text, we examine the impact of globalization on education and the integration of universities into the global landscape, primarily through the lens of Jane Knight's perspective and an analysis of how the internationalization process has unfolded in countries lacking a clear national framework to guide such efforts.

In the second part, we reflect on the challenges facing the strategic international engagement of Brazilian universities, with particular emphasis on how the development of an international education policy requires public policy elements aligned with the construction of a broader state project. This section highlights the weaknesses found in national policy documents regarding the promotion of university internationalization in Brazil.

In the third part, we present emerging trends in the international engagement of Brazilian universities and the challenges involved in advancing this process, particularly through South-South cooperation.



## **1. Globalization and the Strategic Integration of Universities into the Global Landscape**

Globalization, by expanding opportunities for academic and scientific cooperation, compels universities to rethink their strategies for international integration in alignment with the internationalization objectives of the countries in which they are embedded. This scenario presents numerous potential benefits, including the enhancement of student preparation for global labor markets, the elevation of institutional standards, and the promotion of enriching cultural exchange that contributes to national development.

Globalization directly impacts how students must be prepared to understand and apply their knowledge. The interconnected nature of global systems demands the capacity to comprehend complex problems and to research and implement solutions that take these interdependencies into account. Individual decisions can have transnational repercussions, necessitating the development of skills to anticipate, assess, and ethically evaluate personal and professional actions from a global perspective (Lauder, 2006).

The internationalization of higher education has become a strategic option for countries seeking to position themselves in a competitive and globalized environment, where, increasingly, "... internationalization is essential for survival" (Moreira & Ranincheski, 2019: 1). According to Jane Knight, there are several reasons a country might pursue the development of a national public policy on internationalization. While national motivations have evolved over the past two decades, key drivers include commercial interests, the acquisition of talent, human resource development, diplomacy, and nation-building (Knight, 2020).

Countries motivated by such objectives generally aim to align internal policies—particularly in education—with national technological, scientific, and economic development goals. Additionally, there is often an emphasis on integrating the country into the international arena, underpinned by foreign policy. In this context, a national public policy on internationalization represents a pathway through which the state establishes guidelines to be followed by the various stakeholders involved in the process. Despite the compelling nature of these motivations, many countries still lack a clearly defined national policy.

To date, the literature has devoted limited attention to how the process of internationalization unfolds in countries without specific national policies or strategic direction. In such cases, what often exists are isolated, fragmented, and inconsistent government initiatives. Moreover, universities are central actors in the internationalization process. They are both recipients of public policy and active agents in achieving policy goals, given that most internationalization-related actions are conceptualized, developed, and implemented within the academic environment. Thus, universities play a dual role—as both implementers and architects of internationalization strategies—placing them at the center of progress in this field.

Identifying a country's national interests and translating them into foreign policy strategy is a highly complex task, particularly in democratic contexts. Governments increasingly derive legitimacy from their ability to understand and address the needs and aspirations



of the populations they represent. For this reason, in the contemporary world, states and governments remain essential intermediaries in both domestic affairs and the international system (Lafer, 2007).

According to Giacomino, there are currently three sources of power in international politics: military power, economic power, and soft power. These sources are not mutually exclusive but carry different weights in the diplomacy of each country (Giacomino, 2009). Soft power strategies are often linked to culture, education, media, and tourism. For such strategies to produce lasting results, they must go beyond isolated events and be embedded in long-term programs, managed by specialists with secured financial resources. The use of international education as a soft power tool is common in the current international context. Countries such as Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the United States frequently leverage education in their foreign policy strategies.

Many of these countries have developed specific policy documents. Spain, for example, in an effort to strengthen the identity of its higher education system, designed and implemented its internationalization policy through the publication of the document *Strategy for the Internationalization of Spanish Universities 2015–2020*. The document outlines the goal of:

“Consolidating a strong and internationally attractive university system that promotes the inbound and outbound mobility of top students, faculty, researchers, and administrative staff, enhances educational quality, leverages the Spanish language as a vehicle for higher education, and supports the internationalization of educational programs and research and innovation activities, thereby contributing to Spain’s attractiveness and international competitiveness.” (Spain, 2014)

The United Kingdom and Germany—countries that employ international education as a foreign policy instrument—have also developed strategic national documents that guide the internationalization of their higher education systems. These documents typically outline necessary actions for modernizing and enhancing the quality of university systems, identifying internationalization as a strategic area for national development.

National actions and programs that use education as a diplomatic tool illustrate the various forms of public diplomacy and aim to foster rapprochement and cooperative relationships between nations. Academic exchanges promoted by countries are a clear example of the practical application of soft power (Giacomino, 2009, p.159). Educational cooperation initiatives can be seen as a positive dimension of international relations, as they contribute to economic and social development and promote values such as tolerance and respect for cultural diversity. Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff (2003) argue that education can serve as a means of building a particular kind of political community. Through education, political actors are encouraged—within their national frameworks—to shift their loyalties, expectations, and political activities toward a new center, whose institutions claim jurisdiction over established nation-states (Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff, 2003, p. 648).

In this study, the internationalization of higher education is understood as a commitment to advancing international and comparative perspectives through teaching, research, and





service missions in higher education. It defines the institution's ethos and values, influencing the entirety of its educational enterprise. It should be considered an institutional imperative, not merely a desirable option (Hudzik, 2015). While internationalization envisions the institution beyond national borders, universities remain rooted in local and national contexts and influenced by national policies and local constituencies. The dichotomy between the local and the global is a false one; internationalization mediates between the two, with global dynamics impacting the local and vice versa.

However, internationalization does not solely mean the physical movement of individuals to distant locations, though mobility is often involved. The central notion is the mobility of ideas, which may circulate not only through travel but also via the internet and other digital media. According to Hudzik (2015), the dominant models of the modern university—shaped in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—paralleled the rise of the nation-state. Universities were fundamentally national institutions. Tensions often arose between serving national interests and fostering the transnational exchange of ideas and scholars in pursuit of global knowledge. Internationalization at that time was often in conflict with political, institutional, and cultural constraints, and viewed as an individualistic phenomenon.

Higher education institutions exhibit unique characteristics. Even within centralized national systems, institutions develop distinct formal and informal cultures and governance mechanisms shaped by local traditions and leadership. A comprehensive internationalization process must be consistent with and committed to the institutional principles of each HEI.

In developed countries, internationalization has been integrated into state policy and implemented not only by HEIs but by the executive branch as a whole. In other words, the role of state policy in promoting the internationalization of higher education institutions in developed countries is explicit (Lima & Contel, 2011; Laus, 2012; De Wit, 2015; Stallivieri, 2017).

This interdependence and convergence between state actions and HEI initiatives in higher education internationalization is of great importance, particularly when understood as a set of policies and programs implemented by universities and governments in pragmatic response to globalization (Gacel, 2003).

Thus, the central thesis emerges that the internationalization of higher education hinges on the political decision of the state to pursue such a process. However, for the country to move in a unified direction, HEI decisions must align with the guiding objectives of governmental policies.

## **2. The Challenges of the Strategic International Integration of Brazilian Universities**

In Brazil, there are some low-impact initiatives in the realm of foreign policy that nonetheless offer opportunities for young Latin American and African students to pursue



studies in the country. These programs aim to encourage educational exchange and promote Brazilian culture, primarily within the field of scientific cooperation. Examples include the Undergraduate Student Exchange Program (PEC-G), the Graduate Student Exchange Program (PEC-PG), and, in the past, the landmark Science Without Borders program.

Traditional forms of international relations among states have come to require new expressions of power. Emerging international actors—such as multinational corporations, NGOs, media organizations, and international public opinion—are now influenced more by soft power than by hard power. To achieve national objectives, diplomacy has had to recognize the role of public opinion and the media. In other words, foreign policy is now shaped not only by governments but also by these new international actors. Among its many functions, education serves to promote culture and shared values, contributing to social cohesion and integration. Durkheim emphasized this point by identifying education as an essential support for the construction and consolidation of the nation-state (Durkheim, 1977).

In Brazil, the Division of Educational Affairs, located within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is responsible for developing foreign policy actions related to education in collaboration with other national government agencies. Among the Itamaraty's key roles in educational cooperation are its joint management of the PEC-G and PEC-PG programs with the Ministry of Education, its oversight of general issues related to educational cooperation in Brazil, participation in the negotiation of international education agreements, and coordination of educational cooperation activities conducted abroad (Brazil, 2016b).

Developing a policy for international education requires public policy components that align with a broader state-building project. Presently, although there are economic, political, academic, and sociocultural motivations supporting national development through education and technology, there remains a lack of clear strategies demonstrating how international education can strengthen Brazil's international position within the global higher education system.

According to José Alberto de Miranda and Luciane Stallivieri, there are numerous weaknesses in Brazil's official documents regarding the promotion of internationalization in higher education institutions. These documents, they argue, are not grounded in an ambitious public policy capable of defining the direction Brazil seeks to pursue regarding the global integration of its universities. Moreover, the absence of an official policy framework hampers progress in this field, complicating the conceptualization of internationalization for a country with Brazil's unique economic, geographic, and linguistic profile, as well as the definition of quality standards (Miranda & Stallivieri, p. 610).

In Brazil, scientific and technological knowledge production is largely concentrated at the graduate level. International cooperation typically begins with the training of doctoral students and professors abroad, which, over the course of their careers, leads to relationships not only through the consumption of international literature but also through academic partnerships with the departments and research centers in which they studied. This process enables advanced international cooperation, characterized by the joint production of knowledge through collaborative research projects. The development





of academic networks supported by funding calls promotes research and the training of human resources in partnership with international institutions. Graduate-level international cooperation is primarily managed by Capes/MEC and CNPq/MCT. Both agencies operate in overlapping areas. While CNPq is working to revitalize its research agenda, approximately 60% of its resources still go toward scholarships—that is, training.

Efforts to promote internationalization by the Ministry of Education focus, on one hand, on graduate student training, emphasizing the importance of international internships. Scholarships are allocated according to each academic field's domestic training capacity. "Doctoral programs in Brazil must be complemented with shorter-term international internships. Evidently, certain fields—whether due to the need for mass training, the underdevelopment of domestic programs, or the complete absence of such programs—heavily depend on foreign training." Furthermore, the plan proposes to "reinforce graduate education abroad as an integral component of Brazil's human capital development system; implement a more efficient system to improve the orientation, selection, and monitoring of scholarship recipients; and restore the international purchasing power of scholarships in the short term by creating differentiated mechanisms that consider, among other factors, the destination country of the candidate" (CAPES 2025). On the other hand, the plan also encourages researcher internationalization through international exchanges, the articulation of national and international partnerships, and the institutionalization of sabbatical opportunities, with a focus on postdoctoral studies to enhance scientific exchange.

It is also worth noting that some graduate programs are highly internationalized, with consolidated international academic networks, the regular presence of distinguished foreign researchers, high-quality joint international publications, and Brazilian scholars serving as visiting professors or guest lecturers abroad. At the same time, other programs exhibit minimal or no international engagement, remaining focused primarily on Brazilian or regional contexts. In other words, graduate programs in Brazil vary widely in their levels of internationalization (Morosini, 2011).

### **3. New Trends in the International Integration of Brazilian Universities**

As the internationalization of higher education continues to advance, new possibilities have emerged, reflecting global socio-economic realignments—such as the shift of the world's center of gravity from the North Atlantic to the Global South and East Asia, and a reduction in the process of Americanization, whereby the United States no longer holds undisputed global hegemony. This transition is also marked by the systematic weakening of the authority of nation-states (Hobsbawm, 2010). The BRICS countries—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and new members—stand out as emerging powers. Despite accounting for nearly half of the global population, 20% of the world's landmass, and 15% of global GDP, these nations still face major obstacles in becoming hubs of innovation. These challenges include authoritarian regimes, overpopulation, conflicting trade relationships, and linguistic barriers. Thus, the traditional model of international cooperation—characterized by a South-North qualification logic—remains dominant, although it is now



more commonly applied to specific programs and areas of expertise rather than general or isolated demands.

In summary, international higher education is shifting from an era dominated by public policies fostering South-North relations to a new phase increasingly marked by South-South cooperation. While the accumulated expertise of developed countries underscores the continued importance of South-North internationalization, South-South cooperation—grounded in solidarity among developing nations—has the added benefit of strengthening regional blocs in a transnationalized world.

As noted by Marília Morosini, every academic exchange has a dual character. The expansion of South-South cooperation can also stem from Brazilian commercial interests, thus mirroring the same logic found in traditional international cooperation. The point here is that as developing countries increase their qualifications, stronger exchange relationships can be established—ranging from graduate and postdoctoral education, to academic networks, and even commercial opportunities such as book publishing, faculty exchanges, and consulting services (Morosini, 2011).

According to Almerinda de Carvalho, head of the Division of Educational Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the internationalization of higher education affects Brazil's global standing in three key dimensions: (a) economically, by producing a more qualified workforce to drive national development; (b) politically, by strengthening diplomatic ties through educational cooperation as part of a positive foreign policy agenda, promoting Brazil's image as a nation grounded in solidarity and committed to peace, mutual understanding, and international trust; and (c) culturally, through interpersonal exchange, language acquisition, and shared experiences that foster closer bonds with other societies (Carvalho, 2014).

Capes has pursued a truly academic internationalization of Brazil's university system and is recognized internationally as an effective agency in this regard. One of the agency's original goals at its founding in 1951 was to address gaps in Brazil's educational system—particularly in comparison to major global powers—through scientific and academic cooperation (Canedo & Garcia, 2004–2005). With the development of graduate programs in Brazil over the years, conditions were created for internationalization to evolve from a reactive, receiver-oriented model to one based on more equitable collaboration among inter-institutional groups (Laus & Morosini, 2005).

At the governmental level, the promotion of university internationalization must acquire strategic significance for the nation. However, current policy documents rarely articulate this objective explicitly. Instead, they tend to reference broader goals such as national development, human capital formation, and the promotion of science and technology research. Brazilian universities' openness to the world must be accompanied by greater reciprocity, enabling modernization and innovation through international cooperation. Presently, much of Brazil's international cooperation remains one-sided, often benefiting only one of the participating partners.

This lack of reciprocity is not consistently addressed in Brazil's official documents. Although economic, political, academic, and sociocultural motivations for internationalization are acknowledged as essential to supporting the country's



development, there is still an absence of clear strategies showing how internationalization will strengthen Brazil's position within the global higher education system. In other words, there is no concrete vision for how Brazil intends to actively assert itself on the international education stage through its higher education institutions.

The absence of a comprehensive national document guiding the design and implementation of regional and national internationalization policies impedes progress in the field. This gap also hinders the conceptualization of internationalization in the Brazilian context and obstructs the definition of quality parameters that reflect the country's unique economic, geographic, and linguistic characteristics.

Only through the construction of a positive policy agenda, continuous and productive dialogue, inclusive debate, and the development of a national framework that incorporates the perspectives of key stakeholders can Brazil establish a coherent and long-term vision for higher education internationalization—one that aligns with the country's broader strategic objectives and global aspirations.

## Conclusion

The reflections presented in this study indicate that, over the past twenty years, the Brazilian government has played an important role in shaping the country's higher education landscape. However, it has acted in a fragmented and uncoordinated manner through its various governmental agencies when it comes to the internationalization of Brazilian universities. This disarticulation has had consequences for both the management of internationalization at the institutional level and the formulation of strategic directives that would enable Brazil to benefit more fully from global engagement.

With the goal of contributing to the development of new interpretations and policy pathways, this study identifies the urgent need for a national public policy on internationalization—one that recognizes the varying degrees, actors, and potentials of internationalization within Brazilian higher education. Cutting-edge research, aligned with Brazil's technological development needs, must be prioritized in order to enhance the country's global competitiveness and, in turn, contribute to its broader social and economic advancement.

Policy must not only guide efforts to increase the degree of internationalization across universities but also propose innovative approaches. For example, recognizing internationalization as an integral part of the university mission, promoting virtual collaboration initiatives to make internationalized training more inclusive, and creating incentives and mechanisms to involve more students and faculty with international experience are all key elements of a contemporary national strategy.

The international integration of Brazilian universities must be developed domestically and serve as the driving force behind a truly national process. It is necessary to move beyond the current duality in which institutions await guidance from the government, and the government, in turn, expects action from the institutions.



Placing the entire responsibility for developing internationalization on the universities themselves reveals the absence of a clear governmental intention to strategically position Brazil on a global stage through science, technology, extension expertise, and globally relevant education. It normalizes the country's reactive stance toward internationalization and, consequently, its marginal role in the global development of science and technology. This perpetuates a model in which Brazil remains primarily an exporter of intellectual talent and raw materials.

Therefore, it is urgent that internationalization be understood in a broader, more systemic manner—across all levels of education—so that higher education can truly contribute to societal transformation. Higher education is only the tip of the iceberg in the educational system.

To view Brazil exclusively through the lens of the “world-class university” model is to disregard the country's deep-rooted educational inequalities and social challenges. Internationalization initiatives that fail to address, for example, the large number of students pursuing teaching degrees—without any concerted effort to address this imbalance—are at best disconnected from Brazil's future and the preparation of its next generations.

Public policy and internationalization must not be detached from social realities, nor should they be designed solely to serve the interests of a narrow elite of individuals or institutions. The guiding principles must be inclusion, democracy, and alignment with the needs and aspirations of society as a whole, in the interest of ensuring that the benefits of internationalization are widely shared.

When education becomes a central component of a country's foreign policy agenda—aimed at identity-building and community development—it is essential to reflect on who formulates and who implements that policy. Such reflection is critical for enhancing the national discourse on how the internationalization of higher education institutions relates to the broader direction and destiny of the nation.

Nevertheless, it is evident that Brazil has yet to develop a clear identity framework for the internationalization of higher education as a matter of public policy. The absence of an official document capable of guiding higher education institutions, establishing clear directives, and promoting the balanced development of Brazilian education in the global arena reinforces the urgent need for a national identity framework. While several programs and documents with targeted actions have emerged and offer clear benefits, they have not stemmed from a cohesive public policy. As such, they have failed to provide strategic direction or meaning to Brazil's efforts to position itself more effectively in global higher education.

## References

Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2016). *A educação na política externa brasileira* [Education in Brazilian foreign policy]. Retrieved October 10, 2024, from <http://www.dce.mre.gov.br/PEB.php>



Canedo, L. G. A. (2005). *Les Boursiers Brésiliens et l'accès aux formations d'excellence internationales*. [Brazilian scholars and access to international excellence training]. *Cahiers du Brésil Contemporain*, (57/58), 21–48.

Carvalho, A. A. de (2014). "Cooperação Internacional em Educação Superior". In: *Seminário: Internacionalização: Desafio para Universidade*. [International cooperation in higher education. In Seminar: Internationalization—A Challenge for the University.] Retrieved December 8, 2014, from <http://www.pucrs.br/eventos/internacionalizacao/downloads/22.10-cooperacao-internacional-em-educ.-superior-almerinda-a-de-carvalho.pdf>

Coordenação De Aperfeiçoamento De Pessoal De Nível Superior (CAPES) (n.d.). *Plano nacional de pós-graduação* [National Graduate Education Plan] (PNPG) 2024–2028. Brasília. Retrieved 13 February 2025, from <https://capes.gov.br/plano-nacional-de-pos-graduacao>

De Wit, H. (2015). *Is the international university the future for higher education?* Spring.

Dougherty, J. E., & Pfaltzgraff, R. L. Jr. (2003). *Contending theories of international relations* (Portuguese edition). Lisboa: Gradiva.

Durkheim, É. (1977). *O suicídio: estudo sociológico*. [Suicide: A sociological study] (2nd ed.). Lisboa: Presença.

Gacel-Ávila, J. (2003). *La internacionalización de la educación superior: paradigma para una Educación Global* [The internationalization of higher education: A paradigm for global education]. Mexico: CUSCH – Universidad de Guadalajara.

Giacomino, C. A. (2009). *Cuestión de imagen: la diplomacia cultural em el siglo XXI*. [Image matters: Cultural diplomacy in the 21st century]. Buenos Aires: Biblos.

Hudzik, J. (2015). *Comprehensive internationalization: Institutional pathways to success*. New York: Routledge.

Knight, J. (2020). *The internationalization of higher education: Concepts, trends, and challenges* (2nd ed.), Portuguese edition. São Leopoldo: Oikos.

Lafer, C. A. (2007). *Identidade internacional do Brasil e a política externa brasileira: passado, presente e futuro* [Brazil's international identity and foreign policy: Past, present, and future]. São Paulo: Perspectiva.

Lauder, H., et al. (Eds.). (2006). *Education, globalization, and social change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Laus, S. (2012). *A internacionalização da educação superior: um estudo de caso da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina*. [The internationalization of higher education: A case study of the Federal University of Santa Catarina] (Doctoral dissertation). Salvador: Universidade Federal da Bahia, Brazil.

Laus, S. P., & Morosini, M. (2005). "L'internationalisation de l'enseignement supérieur" [The internationalization of higher education in Brazil]. In H. de Wit et al. (Eds.), *L'enseignement supérieur en Amérique Latine La dimension internationale* [Higher education in Latin America: The international dimension]. Washington, DC: OECD.



Lima, M. C., & Contel, F. B. (2009). *Períodos e motivações da internacionalização da educação superior brasileira* [Periods and motivations for the internationalization of Brazilian higher education]. Paper presented at the 5th IFBAE Colloquium, Grenoble, France, May 18–19.

Moraes, A. C. F. (2017). *Cidade Feliz*. [Happy City]. Francesco Patrizi da Cherso. Traduction: Helvio Moraes. Cidade: Editora.

Morosini, M. C. (2011). "Internacionalização na produção de conhecimento em IES brasileiras: cooperação internacional tradicional e cooperação internacional horizontal" [Internationalization in the production of knowledge in Brazilian HEIs: Traditional and horizontal international cooperation]. *Educação em Revista*, 27, 93–112.

Moreira, L. C. D. P., & Ranicheski, S. M. (2019). *Análise da internacionalização da educação superior entre países emergentes: estudo de caso do Brasil com os demais países membro dos BRICS* [Analysis of the internationalization of higher education among emerging countries: A case study of Brazil and other BRICS member states]. *Revista Internacional de Educação Superior*, 5, 1–26.

Sguissardi, J., & Silva Júnior, J. R. (2009). *Trabalho intensificado nas federais: pós-graduação e produtivismo acadêmico, de Valdemar Sguissardi e João dos Reis Silva Júnior* [Intensified labor in federal universities: Graduate education and academic productivism]. São Paulo: Xamã.

Souza, P. R., & Almeida, M. de L. (2021). *Internacionalização da Educação Superior: Estratégias e Desafios*. [Internationalization of higher education: Strategies and challenges].

Spain, Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport. (2020). *Estrategia para la internacionalización de las universidades españolas* [Strategy for the internationalization of Spanish universities]. Retrieved April 10, 2025, from <http://www.mecd.gob.es/educacion-mecd/dms/mecd/educacion-mecd/areas-educacion/universidades/politica-internacional/estrategia-internacionalizacion/EstrategiaInternacionalizaci-n-Final.pdf>

Stallivieri, L. (2017). "Compreendendo a internacionalização da educação superior." [Understanding the internationalization of higher education]. *Revista de Educação do COGEIME*, 26(50), 15–36.

Stallivieri, L. (2017). *Internationalization and exchange: Dimensions and perspectives*. Curitiba: Appris.