

ARTICLE

“UNIVERSITIES FOR THE WORLD”: ANALYSIS OF BRITISH COUNCIL REPORTS IN BRAZIL**GISELLY CRISTINI MONDARDO BRANDALISE**¹ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3015-9840>
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ABSTRACT: This article aims to understand conceptions, challenges, and strategies for the internationalization of higher education in Brazil according to the “Universities for the World” reports issued in the years 2018 and 2019 by the British Council. The international and national theoretical references used are students of the internationalization of higher education. The methodological and data analysis procedures are based on the precepts of documentary analysis by Cellard (2012). The data indicate that multilateral and private organizations acquire and conquer an increasing space as executors of educational policies, guided by coherent conceptions and consonant with discussions of inclusive aspects, but it is necessary to analyze in detail how these processes develop. The topics highlighted in the reports are events for discussions on advances in internationalization processes; development of language policies; internal, interinstitutional, and international cooperation strategies; quality parameters, such as inclusion and diversity. Generally, point to the challenges of progression through internationalization at home.

Keywords: Internationalization, Internationalization of Higher Education, British Council, Internationalization policies.

“UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO”: ANÁLISE DOS RELATÓRIOS DO *BRITISH COUNCIL* NO BRASIL

RESUMO: O presente artigo tem por objetivo compreender concepções, desafios e estratégias para a internacionalização da educação superior no Brasil, de acordo com os relatórios “Universidades para o Mundo”, expedidos nos anos de 2018 e 2019 pelo *British Council*. Os referenciais teóricos utilizados são estudiosos da internacionalização da educação superior. Os procedimentos metodológicos e de análise de dados se baseiam nos preceitos da análise documental de Cellard (2012). Os dados indicam que os organismos multilaterais e privados adquirem e conquistam espaço crescente como executores de

políticas educacionais orientados por concepções coerentes e consonantes às discussões de vertentes inclusivas, mas é necessário analisar minuciosamente de quais formas esses processos se desenvolvem. Os temas de destaque nos relatórios são eventos para discussões sobre os avanços nos processos de internacionalização; desenvolvimento de políticas linguísticas; estratégias de cooperação internas, interinstitucionais e internacionais; parâmetros de qualidade, tais como inclusão e diversidade. De modo geral, apontam para os desafios da progressão por meio da internacionalização em casa.

Palavras-chave: Internacionalização, Internacionalização da Educação Superior, *British Council*, Políticas de internacionalização.

“UNIVERSIDADES PARA EL MUNDO”: ANÁLISIS DE LOS INFORMES DEL BRITISH COUNCIL EN BRASIL

RESÚMEN: Este artículo tiene como objetivo comprender concepciones, desafíos y estrategias para la internacionalización de la educación superior en Brasil según los informes "Universidades para el Mundo" emitidos en los años 2018 y 2019 por el *British Council*. Los referentes teóricos utilizados son estudiosos de la internacionalización de la educación superior. Los procedimientos metodológicos y de análisis de datos se basan en los preceptos de análisis documental de Cellard (2012). Los datos indican que los organismos multilaterales y privado adquieren y conquistan un espacio creciente como ejecutores de políticas educativas, guiados por concepciones coherentes y en consonancia con discusiones de aspectos inclusivos, pero es necesario analizar en detalle cómo se desarrollan estos procesos. Los temas destacados en los informes son eventos de discusión sobre avances en los procesos de internacionalización; desarrollo de políticas lingüísticas; estrategias de cooperación interna, interinstitucional e internacional; parámetros de calidad, como inclusión y diversidad. En general, señalan los desafíos de la progresión a través de la internacionalización en casa.

Palabras clave: Internacionalización, Internacionalización de la Educación Superior, *British Council*, Políticas de internacionalización.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the theme of the internationalization of higher education has been developing together with the complexities of globalization and the consequent involvement of governments with different organizations, many of them of a private nature. From this juncture, Stallivieri (2019, p. 4-5) highlights that the emergence of “Mobility and strategic cooperation programs of governments to increase collaboration between different countries have strengthened and brought greater visibility and breadth to the concept of Internationalization”.

In this context, one of the oldest internationally recognized bodies emerge the British Council, an international organization of public origin based in the United Kingdom, which seeks partnerships in the area of Education and Language, within the country and in other locations (BRITISH COUNCIL, 2020). In recent decades, the British Council has stood out positively in the articulation of international relations, through the promotion of research in different fields of education, culture, and technology, developing cooperation agreements with countries around the world, and, in this way, promoting and disseminating British culture and the English language.

In Brazil, the organization has been operating since 1945 (BRITISH COUNCIL, 2020) and, over the years, has been gaining ground in the formulation and development of policies and actions that

make up the universe of internationalization. Thus, this article aims¹ to understand conceptions, challenges, and strategies for the internationalization of higher education in Brazil, according to the reports “Universities for the World”, issued in 2018 and 2019 by the British Council.

Thus, the methodological procedures are based on the precepts of Cellard's (2012) document analysis, which, based on predetermined dimensions and analysis indicators, enabled interpretations of the data presented in the previously mentioned reports.

This writing is organized as follows: first, the concepts and theoretical reflections on the internationalization of higher education are presented, anchored in authors such as Knight (1994; 2004; 2015), De Wit et al. (2015), Leask (2015; 2009), Morosini (2017; 2019) and Stallivieri (2019). Then, the methodological choices and the analytical approach will be better clarified. Subsequently, the analyzes of the delimited categories for reading the British Council reports are presented, which precede the final considerations.

CONCEPTS AND ASSUMPTIONS OF THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Especially since the 1990s, higher education incorporates, in a more accentuated way, new constitutive elements interconnected, especially, to the principles of economic globalization and, consequently, neoliberalism. Brandalise and Heinzle (2020, p. 67) narrate that “the Bologna Process, established in 1999 in Europe, emerges as a historical and conceptual framework, developed and presented as a policy for the broad improvement of Higher Education on the continent”. It strengthens cooperation, and encourages innovation and productivity of the European Union before the world, reverberating in a movement of global order, which spread the principles of internationalization for higher education, with special emphasis on student mobility (DIAS SOBRINHO, 2008).

Although many studies in this field are focused on mobility, the internationalization of higher education is beyond a one-off action or strategy. Several authors have, over the years, worked to expand the scenarios and guiding concepts of the theme, such as Jane Knight (1994; 2004; 2015), Hans de Wit (2015), and Betty Leask (2009). In Brazil, the works of Marília Morosini and Luciane Stallivieri, among others, also stand out.

A pioneer in definitions and concepts in the area, Jane Knight (1994; 2004; 2015) demonstrates, in her writings, that she is attentive and aware of the need to update the terms that make up the discussions on the internationalization of higher education, under the argument that the policies, guidelines, and strategies in this field of action use such principles to compose their official documents. In this way, the author proposes the concept of internationalization at the national, sectoral, and institutional levels, “is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education” (KNIGHT, 2015, p.2).

For Knight (2015), the international dimension of higher education must be related to all aspects of education and the role it plays within society. More strongly since the 2000s, other authors have been expanding and delimiting understandings oriented toward higher education.

In 2015, Hans de Wit et al. define the concept of Internationalization of Higher Education as the

the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions, and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society. (DE WIT et al., 2015, p.283).

On the occasion, the authors highlighted the challenges observed in the internationalization of higher education, faced by many institutions and private companies from a growing market bias aimed at obtaining profit, when it should be focused on overcoming social inequalities observed in emerging contexts, as well as in the quality dimensions of teaching, research, and outreach (DE WIT et al., 2015).

¹ Research carried out with the support, respectively, of the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - CAPES and the Universidade Regional de Blumenau - FURB.

In a new reinterpretation, in 2019, Brandenburg, de Wit et. al, Jones, and Leask, noted the need to expand the understanding of these scopes, considering that, in a growing and expansive context of globalization, internationalization in higher education must advance beyond institutional limits, that is, contribute to the whole of society. Therefore, the authors propose the concept of Internationalization in Higher Education for Society - IHES, with the aim of, through education, benefiting the community in general, in an attempt to promote international or intercultural engagement, whether in its local context or abroad, through research and the service offered. In other words, a more comprehensive, integrative internationalization that brings results and contributions to society in a broader way is proposed, favoring the development of qualitative interrelationships between different groups and cultures.

Marília Morosini (2017; 2019) is dedicated to revealing especially the impact of the theme in emerging contexts, especially in Brazil. For her, it is the process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension in higher education, arising from interactions that are supported by collaborative networks, composed of developed socioeconomic blocks and, also, with other organisms that have cultures, differences, times, and different locations, contributing to the strengthening of scientific capacity at the national level, to disseminate sustainable development.

For Stallivieri (2019), based on the study by Qiang (2003), the internationalization of higher education should be seen as one of how countries respond to the impact caused by globalization while respecting their individualities. In other words, it means considering the social, economic, and cultural specificities of each context. This is related to the fact that “in the same proportion as the concept of Internationalization evolves, so do the questions and the need to think about how everyone can benefit from Internationalization” (STALLIVIERI, 2019, p. 6). In this same line of thought, for Thiesen (2017, p. 997), Internationalization should reveal “paths or alternatives to broaden and deepen intercultural, social and educational relations in international and transnational contexts”.

Therefore, it is possible to infer that it is a concept and a relatively recent field in society, which follows the development of economic globalization in the world conjuncture, and enters the field of education. It is essential to discuss the elements that surround and are incorporated in and by higher education since the economy does not represent the objective of democratic education.

Thus, it is necessary to raise and discuss possibilities of internationalization that provide alternatives for the favoring and development of aspects of internationalization in higher education, from qualitative perspectives, not only for students but for all social agents that make up the universities, including professors and administrative technicians. In any case, the social responsibility of governments and organizations that propose to develop internationalization needs to be critically analyzed to ensure that the future of internationalization, as exposed by De Wit and Jones (2018), does not perpetuate as an excluding movement and discriminatory.

METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES

This research, with a qualitative approach, aims to understand conceptions, challenges, and strategies for the internationalization of Higher Education in Brazil, according to the reports “Universities for the World”, produced by the British Council and published in 2018 and 2019.

The aforementioned program was launched in 2017 and has been developed through projects, events, and other cooperation initiatives between Brazilian and British universities and institutions to advance the internationalization of higher education in Brazil. The data of the reports include the dialogues in these interaction movements and, in addition, they present principles of internationalization, proposals for actions and strategies, compiled from information arising from meetings and congresses, interviews with experts, as well as analyzes of the contexts of universities and projects being carried out in different regions of Brazil².

In other words, the reports concentrate on the main initiatives and debates on the challenges and advances of this theme in the Brazilian territory and within the partner universities that corroborate the development of internationalization strategies.

² The program will be better presented later.

The criterion for choosing these documents is because they are, respectively, the first and second editions published in this format (Box 1), in 2018 and 2019 and, therefore, indicate certain originality. Thus, the intention is to verify how these data are presented, as well as the relationships established between one and the other.

Box 1 - Documents analyzed

Type of document	Title	Year of publication
Report	Challenges and opportunities for internationalization	2018
Report	Strategies and advances during internalization	2019

Source: Prepared by the authors.

We chose a documental analysis, a method of data collection that eliminates, at least in parts, the possibility of influences exerted through the intervention of the researcher in the face of the set of interactions and events researched (CELLARD, 2012).

Considering the documents as a source of constituting a satisfactory corpus, which provides the identification of important information, Cellard (2012) suggests the use of five dimensions to carry out the document analysis: a) the production context: it is the analysis at the social and global level on which the texts were written; b) the authors, that is, those who write it, assuming that clarifying this identity is related to the credibility of the text and the authors' position; c) authenticity and reliability, which perform the function of verifying the quality of the exposed information; d) the nature of the text, in terms of structure and meaning; e) key concepts and internal logic of the text, adequately defining the meaning and context of the words used.

Thus, based on the methodological procedures of this author and the theoretical reflections that guide this research, this article shows the following regrouping (Box 2), which acted as a guide of dimensions and indicators for carrying out the analysis of the aforementioned British Council documents.

Box 2 - Analysis of scripts

Dimensions of document analysis	Analysis indicators
Analysis of the production context and authors' position	Multilateral organizations, the British Council, and the "Universities for the World" program
Key concepts, nature, and internal logic of the text	Concepts, principles, and strategies of internationalization of higher education
Authenticity, reliability, and quality of documents	Challenges and potential for the internationalization of higher education in Brazil

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Subsequently, the analysis of the documents will be presented as explained above.

ANALYSIS OF THE PRODUCTION CONTEXT AND AUTHORS' POSITIONING: THE BRITISH COUNCIL AND THE "UNIVERSITIES FOR THE WORLD" PROGRAM.

Private institutions and multilateral organizations are globally acquiring space, especially since the 2000s, not only for the execution but for the formulation of public policies in the area of education. Regarding the context of production, based on the studies of Mészáros (2011), Peroni (2013) argues that this situation arises from the structural and universal crisis of capitalism, which affects not only issues of the economic order, but the entire social complex, as is the case of education.

Peroni (2013) explains that it is a broader crisis: it also encompasses neoliberalism, globalization, productive restructuring, and the third way, which are strategies arising from the capital to

overcome the collapse of the decrease in profit rates, and redirect the role of the State along with the changes arising from the financial and productive globalization of world markets. For the author, in this context, the minimal state becomes the “maximum state for capital and minimum state for social policies” (PERONI, 2003, p. 51), considering the reduction of state participation in matters of public interest.

On the other hand, based on studies by Ball (2014), Grim, Sossai, and Segabinazzi (2016) emphasize that the emphasis on the political crisis of the State, in the field of education, has contributed to private institutions offering solutions to state weaknesses, influencing processes of expansion of the educational market. In this way, there is “a terrain of political possibilities created within the framework of a global and multilateral political structure, which directly and indirectly privileges private solutions to public problems” (GRIM; SOSSAI; SEGABINAZZI, 2016, p. 854). In this sense, educational policies, in recent years, have made it possible for Higher Education Institutions - IES, to be attended by private organizations, which can promptly offer analyzes and transformations of their contexts in the face of State bureaucratization.

In this regard, Grim, Sossai, and Segabinazzi (2016) state that the solutions brought by external institutions will not only be part of but will also dispute “their premises in the context of the development of educational policies, as well as acting in loco, through donation and the sale of educational products” (GRIM; SOSSAI; SEGABINAZZI, 2016, p. 854). Currently, it is possible to identify the performance of several multilateral organizations and private institutions around the world, such as the British Council. There are also other prominent agencies, such as the Fulbright Commission, the *Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst* - DAAD, the *Agência Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo* and the *Agence CampusFrance*, as examples.

Thus, the analyzed reports present the British Council as a production context, which was founded in 1934 by the UK government and opened its first offices outside the country in 1938. At the time, it was called the “British Committee for Relations with Other Countries³” (BRITISH COUNCIL, 2020).

In its first general report, issued in 1940-41, its objective was:

[...] to create in a country overseas a basis of friendly knowledge and understanding of the people of this country, of their philosophy and way of life, which will lead to a sympathetic appreciation of British foreign policy, whatever for the moment that policy may be and from whatever political conviction it may spring” (BRITISH COUNCIL, 2020, n.p.).

At that moment, there was a greater emphasis on the importance of British contexts, establishing few relationships with foreign cultural issues. In any case, over time, with the British government's official relations with other countries and its consequent economic relations, the British Council expanded through bilateral relations. Despite currently being independent of the UK government, the organization receives tax and financial incentives from the UK government, as well as following the UK and international standards (BRITISH COUNCIL, 2020).

The British Council also has a second structure, classified as charitable by the international body, which includes subsidiary companies within the United Kingdom and in other countries, such as Algeria, China, Mexico, Thailand, and Brazil, among others. The council has a royal authorization, called the Royal Charter, created in the 13th century and which is occasionally granted to companies and bodies that act in the public interest (BRITISH COUNCIL, 2020).

In Brazil, the organization has been operating since 1945. Currently, to serve the country, it has two offices, one in the city of Rio de Janeiro and the other in São Paulo, in partnership with several local, national and international organizations, focusing on the arts, creative economy, education, Higher Education and Research, as well as civil society. Known for its participation in Higher Education, the British Council has at its roots the network of *Culturas Inglesas* and great political and cultural ties, including, for example, the training of Vinicius de Moraes in Oxford, as well as the promotion of exchanges, exhibitions and economic and political agreements between the British crown and the Brazilian government (BRITISH COUNCIL, 2020).

³ British Committee for Relations with Other Countries (our translation).

The Universities for the World Program

The “Universities for the World” program aims to “contribute to the prosperity and development of both Brazil and the United Kingdom, in particular of the higher education sector” (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2019, p. 9).

The British Council reports of 2018 and 2019 are compiled results from the actions of this program. They point out that the partnerships presented in the documents have been taking place through long-term links, which are based on quality, strategic alignment, and solid relationships between HEIs, governments, and the promotion and research agencies of Brazil and the United Kingdom, to enable institutionally through internationalization (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2019). Eight decades later evidence of its expansion of acting in Brazilian territory: what once seemed to be more related to the teaching of English language and culture, now seems to see the need to look more widely to the processes of institutional internationalization.

The documents indicate the existence of relationships between the British Council and universities, and foundations of support for research and innovation, which are intended to bring Brazilian and British realities closer. The strengthening of this bond has been taking place through meetings promoted by the body, especially through local and regional seminars on internationalization in various universities in Brazil. In general, it is clear that they are HEI with a considerable degree of internationalization and that they have potentialities for intensification in the quality and expansion of existing processes.

Also, British Council has been offering consultancies for the Brazilian public and private universities to plan strategic actions within the “Universities for the World” program: It “[...] was launched in May 2017, coinciding with *Think Brazil*” from several events “held in the United Kingdom to promote ties with Brazil”. (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2019, p. 8).

The partnerships established by British Council involve bodies linked to the Ministry of Education - MEC, such as the *Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior* - CAPES and the *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* - CNPq. According to the organization, from these approaches, we intend to develop collaborative experiences and policies so that Brazilian academics can experience “an international academic environment without leaving Brazil” (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2019, p. 24). From a broader look, it shows evidence in the development of strategies of internationalization at home, that is, for the dimensions of internationalization and interculturality to be present in the institutional learning environments, from formal and informal curricula, for all students (BEELEN; JONES, 2015).

The documents also show information on the search and existence of approximations with the institutions contemplated by CAPES -PRINT - Institutional Internationalization Program, by promoting successful partnerships such as the stimulus of mobility, offering scholarships, and actions oriented to innovation.

KEY CONCEPTS, NATURE, AND INTERNAL LOGIC OF THE TEXT: CONCEPTS, PRINCIPLES, AND STRATEGIES OF THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The British Council reports of the “Universities for the World” program, although they have distinct structure and focus from non-standard subtitles, complement each other in content. While the first edition, published in 2018, focused on challenges and opportunities for internationalization, the second edition, produced in 2019, was centered on strategies and advances in the path of internationalization, observed over the previous year.

Several terms related to the internationalization of higher education are clarified throughout the documents⁴, positioning the perspectives of the institution. It is possible to verify the existence of a

⁴ The reflections shown here are centered on main concepts that are directly and indirectly discussed throughout the text. In any case, the following terms stand out throughout the reports: internationalization, internationalization at home, cycle of internationalization, language policies, English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), among others.

complex articulation and reflection on how these terminologies are applied to policies and practices that include students, teachers, and employees as central elements for the development of internationalization actions.

The 2018 report presents the internationalization view that the institution incorporates on the topic, also represented in the theoretical framework of this article:

[...] what does internationalization mean? The most celebrated definition is by Jane Knight, from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education: “A process that integrates the international, intercultural and global dimensions to the purposes, primary functions - teaching, research and extension - and the delivery of higher education in institutional and national levels”. [...] British Council supports this agenda and helps strengthen the internationalization skills of Brazilian universities, based on the knowledge and experiences of UK institutions in this area (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2018, p. 10).

Regarding this statement, the support offered by the British Council for internationalization has as a reference the socio-cultural-economic context of the United Kingdom, while they argue, as the starting point for internationalization, on the recognition of the importance that institutions must start from themselves, from objectives and their strengths to plan consistent institutional plans that can be put into practice by the team and the academic community.

The potential strategies that are highlighted by the 2018 and 2019 reports are generally centered on internationalization at home (IaH). To this end, they point to the need to align expectations and learning results, so that the skills to be developed by students and the expected results can be recognized internationally.

Strategies via language policies are strongly encouraged by the British Council, because, according to the organization, these actions are related to the principles of quality and inclusion in higher education, manifested as one of the possibilities for advancing in the context of internationalization and higher education in several aspects.

The British Council emphasizes, especially throughout the 2019 report, the use of English as a Medium of Instruction - EMI. Reports point out that students, teachers, and staff must be prepared and effective in communicating in English, whether informally, for moments of living with people from other cultures, and formally, for instruction and other processes. According to the British Council (2019, p. 24), the “diverse experiences in the language allow students to experience an international academic environment without leaving Brazil”.

Regarding this, the 2018 report discusses the existence of “regional, ethnic-racial, socioeconomic and opportunities for people with disabilities and with different sexual orientation” (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2018, p. 51), as well as elitism in access to Brazilian universities. According to this organization, contact with other cultures and scholarship possibilities contribute to “oxygenation” research and teaching: “racism, sexism and economic disadvantage cannot bar development and opportunities in higher education” (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2018, p. 51).

It is necessary to consider that elitism and privileged access that are both fighting in the discussions of internationalization in higher education, when seen from exclusionary perspectives such as mobility, can act contrary, reinforcing social inequalities as only a few, to the detriment of the majority, will be covered and will have access to some international experience, that is: this item does not reveal concrete ways to overcome the observed inequalities. As pointed out by De Wit et al. (2015) and Brandenburg, De Wit, Jones, and Leash (2019), internationalization in higher education should be concerned with reaching and benefiting all society qualitatively.

Similarly, the organization also points out that the issue of quality has been very present in the world rankings, but that the parameters used have different metrics. In a national context, experts point to the lack of a national public policy that defines university extension quality indicators. In this sense, the British Council highlights as priorities:

1 - Internationalization as a means of improving quality; 2 - Internationalization as a tool for social inclusion and global citizenship; 3 - robust and reliable indicators to measure the implementation of internationalization components and their broad impact on regions and

societies; 4 - Strong networks of collaboration and construction of capacities between Brazilian institutions in the consolidation of partnerships with the United Kingdom and the operationalization of internationalization plans (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2019, p. 11).

It is possible to verify that the organization's priorities are related to the implementation strategies, which demonstrate to be guided by quality, but possibly, they are also related to interests that strengthen its objectives as an organization that refers to the British language and culture. Both faces contribute to the improvement of the field of higher education and are present in the theoretical and guiding discussions of the theme.

It is known that, although the assumptions of internationalization highlighted by theorists in the area point to the development of strategies in an inclusive aspect, the context of production of higher education policies, since the Bologna Process, denounces an extensive search to meet the demands of economic globalization that induces the competitiveness of universities, so that they generate as much profit, through the number of attraction and retention of students, as well as the use of academic manpower in the production of science and its subsequent commercialization.

In this sense and more broadly, multilateral organizations and private institutions contribute to reinforcing the characteristics of the contemporary educational phenomenon: on the one hand, they reinforce the State's distance from its responsibilities to maintain its duty and, on the other hand, reinforce marketing ideas, offering their services to obtain exchanges in their favor or monetary profits. This is an important issue to be discussed.

AUTHENTICITY, RELIABILITY, AND QUALITY OF DOCUMENTS

As previously presented, the origin of the reports is related to the propositions of the seminars organized by the organization for Brazil to “discuss these challenges and strengthen its national and international relationship networks” (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2018, p. 9). The British Council (2018, p. 16) highlights that

Knowing the internal reality of our universities and their situation in the world helps to understand what is necessary to reach the level of internationalization and make the research carried out in Brazil impact and recognized abroad.

Regarding this recognition, the organization also systematizes and presents statistical data, which have sources in official national and international databases, including research on the internationalization profile of Brazilian HEIs carried out by CAPES or global innovation indices; mapping of scientific production at a global level, student and teacher mobility, as well as the percentage of linguistic proficiency carried out in Brazil.

Through these data, the British Council weaves theoretical concepts and reports of the processes of development of the universities' internationalization plans and strategies, emphasizing what happens in the United Kingdom and Brazil. It also discusses the subject, based on principles and decrees issued through government agencies, such as CAPES, which benefits Brazilian HEIs through the CAPES PrInt program, with the promotion of internationalization projects, observing, in this case, the attenuated interest of the British Council's “Universities for the World” program in these specific HEIs.

We were delighted to welcome Capes' new policy to encourage the internationalization of the best universities in Brazil. In this sense, the British Council funds research grants between British and Brazilian universities to work together on internationalization strategies (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2018, p. 7).

In this context, Stallivieri (2019) draws attention to the fact that the institutions contemplated with the promotion of internationalization projects have a more solid history of actions in this area. While less internationalized universities were underprivileged, information was also confirmed through one of the interviews presented in the 2019 report, in which it was highlighted that the first CAPES PrInt

selection notice was intended to strengthen institutions that are already advanced and able to carry out actions of excellence in terms of internationalization.

The British Council's role in choosing these universities seems to go in the direction of providing special support to these institutions. Thus, the option for the most privileged universities reveals one of the oppressive faces of internationalization, which reinforces the distance in access and quality between elite institutions and less developed universities in the ideals of internationalization.

It is possible to infer that the information in the reports is authentic, and has quality and reliability, since they present, in their course, informative, statistical, and theoretically grounded data and in an articulated way with the issues of the internationalization of higher education, oriented to the improvement of the quality of the teaching. On the other hand, it is necessary to highlight that although the organization's effort to meet the assumptions of inclusive internationalization is perceived, the actions presented do not attribute direct and deeper interrelationships in the development of internationalization as democratic access to the entire academic population of Brazil.

Challenges and potential for the internationalization of higher education in Brazil

Although working more especially with universities that are internationalized in the context of Brazil, the reports show the existence of challenges, as well as suggest advances in the internationalization of higher education in Brazilian territory.

They point to the difficulty in developing collaborative and interdisciplinary projects, indispensable for sustaining lasting partnerships with other work teams, HEIs, and other countries. “The word university implies bringing the universe to students and researchers, that is, the best that is available in research and teaching in the world” (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2018, p. 6), considering internationalization as one of the ways to achieve this goal.

The British Council argues that, as collaboration increases, the perceived impact on society is greater. Fostering contributes to raising the quality of research and establishing partnerships must be one of the central elements to be observed in institutional plans for internationalization, given that the development of scientific production is better encouraged by collective work and, also, in this way, tends to expand the dissemination of findings through global publications (UNIVERSITIES FOR THE WORLD, 2019). Stallivieri (2019) highlights that investing internally in the construction of internal structures so that there is a flow of information on the generation of knowledge adds value to international cooperation actions and is therefore fundamental for the creation of internationalization ecosystems. In this sense, he promotes the engagement of universities in different territories.

On the structural issue, both documents argue that Brazilian institutions need to be rethought to offer greater receptivity and structure for internal and external mobility. For internal mobility, it is necessary to improve the application of foreign language courses and the training of professionals - academic or administrative - of the HEIs. For external mobility, the document reports on the challenges of HEI websites that are not available in a foreign language, to the lack of linguistic knowledge of administrative technicians, teachers, and other subjects that make up the academic universe (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2019; 2018).

When discussing the gaps regarding foreign languages in Brazil, the reports address that, in some of the cases analyzed during the seminars, academics did not have “sufficient proficiency to follow the studies abroad, there were no large-scale assessment centers to attest their levels of knowledge, nor an effective policy for teaching additional languages in basic and higher education” (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2018, p. 36). They also observed that “the knowledge of the English language is still well below expectations and the student soon 'hits the ceiling' (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2018, p. 37, emphasis in the original), considering that the learning of different languages in basic education is still, in Brazilian reality, a privilege of the wealthier social classes.

The 2019 report suggests, as a niche of opportunities, the creation of “islands of excellence” (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2019, p. 16) for the better qualification of students, not only those embarking on international mobility but also of those who operate in the national territory. In this

way, it can establish greater “horizontal relationships with partners, despite differences in national policies and financing conditions” (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2019, p. 16). About this:

Allied to institutional investments, it is essential not to put aside the habit of systematically supporting individual initiatives, helping researchers to participate in public notices, doing a sandwich doctorate funded by funding agencies, taking sabbaticals and circulate, networking at international conferences (UNIVERSITIES FOR THE WORLD, 2018, p. 18).

The understanding of these data is encouraged throughout the report, so that, in the 2019 publication, the British Council focuses on the development of language policies that enable Brazilian HEIs for exponentially growing Brazilian scientific production to value scientific research at international levels and, at the same time, provide real opportunities for access to all students and a wider range of institutions:

When describing the current context, essential discussions on quality assurance, language policies, operationalization in the practice of opportunities between the United Kingdom and Brazil, successful cases of Transnational Education (TNE), and the challenges of creating and supporting networks that open space for learning and the exchange of expertise between the most internationalized universities (which received the PrInt) and the institutions that intend to raise funds from Capes in the future (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2018, p. 11).

The path towards the accessibility of the internationalization of higher education, based on the contributions of this organization, as discussed during this article, points to the development of internationalization strategies at home and, in particular, linguistic strategies based on the establishment of cooperation in the environment of institutions.

Although linguistic issues are important when it comes to internationalization, it is necessary to emphasize that scholars in this area are not focused only on this issue, but, in a broader sense: to offer benefits to the community in general (BRANDENBURG; DE WIT; JONES; LEASK, 2019).

It is necessary to emphasize that the British Council is a private institution and, although the evidence declared by the institution through the documents is shown to be contextualized and in line with the reality of the universities, the intentions of these organizations must be verified by the HEIs with caution, as they will not always represent the local potentialities, as pointed out by Stallivieri (2019), but rather, they can focus more on their goals to strengthen the competitive educational system.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The objective of this article was to understand concepts, challenges, and strategies for the internationalization of higher education in Brazil according to the “Universities for the World” reports, issued in 2018 and 2019, by the British Council.

From the documentary analysis, it was possible to confirm the growing trend of the operationalization of public policies through private and multilateral organizations, which absorb the responsibilities of the State in the development of practices and new educational policies, as stated in the writings of Grim, Sossai, and Segabinazzi (2016).

Regarding the conceptions of internationalization in the context of higher education, we found that the institution has consistent theoretical foundations that are in line with internationalization more inclusively, although it attributes, in the reports, more focused looks to the most internationalized institutions in the world. Brazil, such as those contemplated by the first CAPES PrInt funding notice, is aware that CAPES first aimed to consolidate universities with better conditions to develop their internationalization propositions (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2019). This discussion, on the other hand, is already being presented in other works and deserves more careful attention in new writings, as already done by Stallivieri (2019).

Regarding the internationalization strategies presented, the themes mentioned in the reports start from events for discussions about advances in internationalization processes: there is an emphasis on the development of language policies and, in particular, those of the English language; internal, inter-

institutional, and international cooperation strategies; mobility programs and double degrees; as well as quality criteria and parameters, such as inclusion and diversity. These strategies, in general, point to the progression of Brazilian universities through internationalization at home, however, they are suggestible and subject to questioning regarding the access of the entire academic community.

The British Council reports reinforce the importance of developing competences for global citizenship within HEIs, not only in researchers and professors but also in students and administrative technicians, so that the process of internationalization of institutions occurs effectively: “The value of internationalization as part of the university ecosystem is to generate knowledge networks that promote more diverse environments for research, teaching and innovation” (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2019, p. 8).

The documents also highlight the advances already observed on national soil, highlighting the existence of committed Brazilian universities, which determine institutional policies and encourage internationalization practices based on the ideals of cooperation, access, and quality, worldwide (UNIVERSIDADES PARA O MUNDO, 2018). According to the reports, this seems to be the way to strengthen and develop the potential of Brazilian institutions for internationalization.

Although significant and positive elements have been verified in these reports, this article especially alerts to the need for universities to be aware of the fact that it is possible that private and multilateral organizations, through the sale of solutions, may distance institutions from their potential, as they tend to further their goals. It is understood that the monitoring of actions carried out by these agents is the institution's duty given its values, principles, and mission of the university, as highlighted by several internationalization scholars (KNIGHT, 2015; DE WIT et al, 2015; STALLIVIERI, 2019, among others).

The translation of this article into English was funded by Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – CAPES-Brasil.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1 – Data collection, data analysis, and text writing.

Author 2 – Data collection, data analysis, and text writing.

Author 3 – Project coordinator, active participation in data analysis and review of the final writing.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest with this article.

Submitted: 12/02/2020

Approved: 05/15/2021