

The road(s) not taken and internationalization in Brazil: journey or destination?

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ABSTRACT. The purpose of this article is to discuss the possible directions that the process of internationalization of higher education in Brazil can take in a post-pandemic scenario of COVID-19 based on institutional self-assessment as proposed in the Amorim (2020) matrix. Inspired by Robert Frost's poem and the bifurcation metaphor on the way, we approach two guidelines for the internationalization of higher education, namely: cooperation and competition. The literature review in the area points to a possible paradigm shift (from competition to cooperation) and the discussion proposed here concludes that this change can be amplified/accelerated in the post-pandemic context. The study is reflective and uses the GPS metaphor to assist the self-assessment of Brazilian higher education institutions (HEIs) on the two roads of the poem, in the context of internationalization, in order to guide HEIs on roads that have not yet been traced in the face of the unprecedented context imposed by the pandemic. We conclude that the change of route/paradigm can be done more safely with the use of a(n) GPS/institutional self-analysis of the internationalization process.

Keywords: internationalization; COVID-19; self-assessment; higher education.

A(s) Estrada(s) Não Tomada(s) e a Internacionalização no Brasil: Jornada ou Destino?

RESUMO. O objetivo deste artigo é discutir os possíveis rumos que a internacionalização do ensino superior no Brasil pode tomar em um cenário pós pandemia da COVID-19 a partir da autoavaliação institucional conforme proposta na matriz de Amorim (2020). Inspirados pelo poema de Robert Frost e pela metáfora da bifurcação no caminho, abordamos duas orientações da internacionalização do ensino superior, a saber: a de cooperação e a de competição. A revisão da literatura da área aponta uma possível mudança de paradigma (da competição para a cooperação) e a discussão proposta aqui conclui que essa mudança pode ser ampliada/acelerada no contexto pós-pandemia. O estudo é de cunho reflexivo e usa a metáfora do GPS para auxiliar a autoavaliação das instituições de ensino superior (IES) brasileiras nas duas estradas do poema, no contexto da internacionalização, a fim de orientar as IES em estradas ainda não trilhadas em face do contexto sem precedentes imposto pela pandemia. Concluímos que a mudança de rota/paradigma pode ser feita de maneira mais segura com o uso do GPS/autoanálise institucional do processo de internacionalização.

Palavras-chave: internacionalização; COVID-19; autoavaliação; ensino superior.

La(s) ruta(s) no Tomadas y la Internacionalización en Brasil: Trayecto o Destino?

RESUMEN. El propósito de este artículo es discutir las posibles direcciones que la internacionalización de la educación superior puede tomar en Brasil en el escenario post pandemia COVID-19 a partir de la autoevaluación institucional como se propone en la matriz de Amorim (2020). Inspirados por el poema de Robert Frost y la metáfora de la bifurcación en el camino, abordamos dos pautas para la internacionalización de la educación superior, a saber: la cooperación y la competición. La revisión de la literatura en el área apunta a un posible cambio de paradigma (de la competición a la cooperación) y la discusión aquí propuesta concluye que ese cambio puede amplificarse/ acelerarse en el contexto pos pandémico. El estudio es reflexivo y utiliza la metáfora del GPS para ayudar a la autoevaluación de las instituciones de educación superior (IES) brasileñas en los dos caminos del poema, en el contexto de la internacionalización, con el fin de guiar a las IES en los caminos que aún no se han trazado en el contexto sin precedentes impuesto por la pandemia. Concluimos que el cambio de ruta/paradigma se puede hacer de manera más segura con el uso de un GPS / autoanálisis institucional del proceso de internacionalización.

Palabras clave: internacionalización; COVID-19; autoevaluación; educación superior.

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Two roads diverged in the wood, and I –
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference (Robert Frost, 1915)¹.

Introduction – Paving the road

Almost a decade ago, Brandenburg and De Wit (2011) published a paper entitled ‘The End of Internationalization’ arguing that the why and wherefore of internationalization had been taken over by a focus on more exchange, more degree mobility, and more student recruitment, despite the alternative movement of Internationalization at Home (IaH) of the late 1990s. On a similar tone, Beck and Ilieva (2019) question internationalization practices based on Stier’s (2004) call to ask ourselves why we do what we do and what we want to achieve in relation to the process of internationalization of higher education.

Brandenburg and De Wit (2011) discuss whether we can move from a defensive perspective on internationalization towards a more innovative grip. According to them, as advocates rather than pioneers of internationalization, we are no longer the spearhead of innovation but, rather, holding onto traditional views while the world around moves forward, “[...] losing sight of innovative developments such as the emergence of the digital citizen for whom mobility can be at least as virtual as real (Brandenburg and De Wit, 2011, p. 17)”. Had they seen through the crystal ball into the post COVID-19 scenario and they would know that physical academic mobility as it was practiced then was doomed almost a decade after they wrote that article, as a consequence of COVID-19 pandemic. Even as we write this paper, in the midst of the pandemic, we realize that despite the distribution of a vaccine worldwide, things will not be the same and we will not go back to the ‘old normal’. Thus, we assume that we are at the dawn of a new era as suggested by Brandenburg and De Wit (2011) in the same paper, but without the necessary preparation/gear.

Four years after that paper on the ‘End of Internationalization’, De Wit, Hunter, Howard, and Egon-Polak (2015) claimed that internationalization had to evolve into a more intentional and comprehensive process, less elitist and focused on physical mobility, and more concerned with enhancing the quality of education and research, in order to make a meaningful contribution to society. Again, had they seen through the future and they would be astounded to see the role of universities in the provision of meaningful answers to society during the pandemic.

In Brazil, a country where the pandemic was highly politicized, and where public universities were resisting fierce attacks and financial cuts since right-wing president Bolsonaro took office, universities regained their relevance in society through the fight against the pandemic, as evidenced in many research and outreach projects. This is so true that the pandemic was even considered a wake-up call for Brazilian universities (Leal, 2020b) and a way to recalibrate Brazil’s relationship with the Global North.

Going back to the global scenario, just a year before the pandemic, De Wit (2019) asked whether a more diverse and inclusive internationalization focused on cooperation was replacing the western competitive paradigm, thus shifting from a competition to a cooperation orientation. And as the pandemic hit the world a year after that, we realized that many of the problems we were facing, among them, the pandemic, could not be solved or circumvented without cooperation, even though some countries (Ankel, 2020) still showed a competitive orientation, as seen in the way they purchased equipment and inputs for fighting the virus and in the orientation of internationalization programs in the case of Brazil. While international organizations struggled to be at the center of the public eyes (for fame), researchers from various higher education institutions (HEI) from around the world pleaded on a unified effort to find the vaccine to fight the new coronavirus (Saraswat, 2020) and a more cooperation-oriented approach to combat its effects on society.

One year later and right before the pandemic, De Wit (2020) answers his own question by confirming that internationalization was more about competition than cooperation. Based on that observation De Wit offered a much-needed critical reflection on internationalization in the current nationalist, populist and anti-global political scenario in which internationalization is still navigated with a competitive orientation and with westernized, mostly Anglo-Saxon and English-speaking lens and maps (Jones & de Wit, 2012).

Indeed, as put forward by Majee and Ress (2018, p. 4) “Very little research has aimed to understand and conceptualize internationalization efforts in the context of the historical particularities of the postcolonial condition”. Because we agree with Jones and de Wit (2012, p. 50) that it is important “[...] to learn from other

¹ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. (2017, August 16). *The Road Not Taken*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Road-Not-Taken>. Retrieved from on August 16, 2022.

non-western national and cultural contexts – to understand the full extent of internationalization as a phenomenon [...]” we aim to provide different maps, journeys and destinations for this trip we are using as a metaphor through which to (re)think internationalization in the post COVID-19 pandemic scenario.

The map and the journey

In the beginning of 2020 and before the outburst of the global pandemic, despite criticism of internationalization as a “[...] competitive and exclusive tradeable commodity” (De Wit, 2020) and despite the development of notions like Internationalization at Home (IaH) (Beelen & Jones, 2015), Internationalization of the Curriculum (IoC) (Leask, 2015), global learning for all (Gibson, Rimmington, & Landwehr-Brown, 2008) and the like, the view of internationalization as a tradeable commodity was still strong (De Wit, 2020). However, as of March of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the world to switch gears and internationalization to consider new destinations and alternative routes, some of which were roads still not taken.

Higher education institutions all over the world saw themselves at a crossroads where ‘two roads diverged’ without a map in the pandemic, very much like the traveler in Frost’s poem wondering: which path to take? What is the best route? Which route is going to benefit HEIs the most or, better yet, which route is going to hurt HEI the least? The pandemic forced countries to shut down their borders, disrupted education in all levels forcing institutions to either cancel or move classes to an emergency remote teaching mode imposing a huge drop in revenue for HEIs that depended on incoming international students (and fees). Thus, the business model and competition/economic paradigm that surrounded the internationalization gear/GPS (De Wit, 2020) had to be replaced by new maps and territories.

It is important to note that long before the disruption caused by the pandemic, the prophets of internationalization had already prophesied about the myths (Knight, 2011) and misconceptions (De Wit, 2011, 2017) of internationalization, resulting in an updated definition of internationalization as

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. 29).

As criticism about internationalization as a Global North², Western paradigm rose, so did a call for the Global South to take the wheel and lead its own way. The movement to rethink internationalization had started long before the pandemic, though it was certainly sped by it, calling for a more ‘comprehensive internationalization’ (Hudzik, 2011) in reaction to the appeals to return to a more cooperative mode as opposed to an exclusive focus on student mobility.

Sabzalieva, Martinez and Sá (2019) claim that we should move beyond North/South perspectives on international collaboration as these notions are made based on assumptions and ideologies underpinning these categories that are rarely made explicit. The authors state that in practice, these claims are often based on the understanding that countries in the ‘North’ can enhance research quality and impacts whereas countries in the ‘South’ are left with the role of mere recipients. In this view, the notion of North/South oversimplifies world geography failing to position countries that do not directly align with the North/South view in socioeconomic and political terms. Furthermore, the authors argue that the North/South view overemphasizes national contexts while obscuring the specific capabilities and constraints of those engaged in specific contexts. Based on Aksnes, Frølich and Slipersæter (2008), Sabzalieva et al. (2019) claim that researchers’ socialization is not necessarily bound by national borders in a world where “[...] the geographical location of researchers becomes more and more irrelevant” (Aksnes et al., 2008, p. 456).

Yet, evidence of the Global North/South divide abounds in the literature, especially in terms of Latin America (Guzmán-Valenzuela & Gómez, 2019) which is why we think that the Global North/South notion helps us see the world in terms of geopolitical rather than geographical borders, or in what Sousa Santos’ (2007) and Sousa Santos and Meneses (2014) call abyssal thinking, inviting us to turn the light on the Global South, making it visible. In so doing, we accept Sousa Santos invitation to move beyond global abyssal lines into an ecology of knowledges where both the North and the South and their knowledges can be seen.

Despite this caveat about the geopolitical notion of Global North/South, geography matters! As put forward by many authors (Finardi, 2022, Guzmán-Valenzuela & Gómez, 2019; Finardi & Guzmán-Valenzuela,

² Boaventura de Sousa Santos and Meneses (2014) uses the notion of Global North to refer to the visible side of the abyssal lines and it is important to observe that this is a geopolitical and not a geographical concept.

2021) the place/local and the geographical/institutional link of researchers is determinant and plagued with biases towards views of who produces relevant knowledge (Hamel, 2013), who benefits from internationalization and the unquestioned use of English in this international territory (Martinez, 2016; Baumvol & Sarmento, 2019).

Given that our aim in this paper is to (re)think internationalization using the poem ‘The Road Not Taken’ as a metaphor to guide our trail, we will keep the geopolitical notion of the Global North/South divide as a useful notion/metaphor, along with others that we will use along this text and despite Sabzalieva et al. (2019) warning regarding possible limitations of using a Global North/South perspective.

Having said that and going back to the paradigm change afforded by the disruptions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we ask: Is the time ripe for HEI in the Global South to look more inwards (internationalization at home) and less outwards (importing models from the Global North)? Is the disruption caused by the pandemic an opportunity to shift from a competition to a cooperation paradigm allowing us to bring internationalization (back) home fostering more South-South cooperation? How can HEI in the Global South travel these uncertain roads or in Frost’s terms, take the road not (yet) taken?

De Wit (2020) claims that optimism is naïve for a pendulum swing in regards to a more inclusive internationalization at home policy, but he sees the core principles and values of ethical internationalization as a possibility to move forward. Leask and Green (2020) adopt a more optimistic tone portraying a scenario of change presenting a vast array of possibilities that should help HEI rethink, redesign and re-signify internationalization to move beyond the long-travelled roads of international student mobility.

We depart on this journey, inspired by Frost’s poem, resolved to offer a map with alternative trajectories and destinations for internationalization of higher education in a post COVID-19 pandemic scenario. Thus, a few roads not taken in the internationalization territory are presented and discussed in this paper, among which are the pedagogy of the encounter outlined by Welikala (2011), the transformative approach proposed by Joseph (2012) and Stallivieri’s (2017) model for responsible internationalization. What all these approaches have in common is that they all lead to the cooperation road and away from the competition road.

Diniz De Figueiredo and Martinez (2021) suggest the confrontation of epistemological racism in an attempt to decolonize scholarly knowledge and invite researchers to break barriers and expose their *loci* of enunciation to do so. Thus, we accept Diniz de Figueiredo and Martinez’ (2021) invitation and expose our *loci* of enunciation (or map, if you prefer) in regards to the process of internationalization in Brazil and in what follows as a way to contribute to the exploration of other territories in the internationalization world map.

Internationalization in Brazil

Boosting a population of more than 210 million people, 8 million of whom are enrolled in higher education, Brazil represents an important player in the process of internationalization of higher education (IHE) in the Global South, defined by Hudzik (2011) as the intentional and comprehensive process of infusing, through action, international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of HE. So as to be comprehensive, the process of IHE should shape institutional ethos and values, reaching the entire HE community and society at large.

As such, it is essential that the IHE is embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and staff as an institutional imperative and collective construction, not just a desirable goal of some. Considering that the Brazilian higher education system is a complex one comprising more than 2,500 institutions, of which, almost 90% are private, it is important to see how this complex scenario relates to internationalization as a whole.

Public higher education institutions in Brazil are completely free of charge and are responsible for almost 90% of all research and internationalization actions and the inclusion of the majority of low-income students (70.2%), in the case of federal universities. Because of this disparity between public and private HE institutions, private HEI are not economically motivated to internationalize since the domestic ‘market’ is very comfortable for them, whereas public HEI, given their tripartite goal of providing teaching, research and outreach services to the community, are more prone to internationalize as means to improve the quality of their services (teaching, research and outreach), rather than as a means to finance their mission.

The COVID-19 disrupted education worldwide and imposed a new world order in terms of the IHE institutions, even more so in Brazil where public and private HEI reacted very differently to the pandemic. While private universities started to offer classes in an emergency remote mode so as to guarantee the

continuation of payment of fees by the students, public universities, concerned about students and faculty's access and conditions to migrate to remote modes of education, concentrated on research and outreach actions targeted to alleviating the effects of the pandemic. Brazilian public universities continued their research, administrative and outreach activities online but suspended classes during the lockdown and peak of the pandemic to return to either remote or in-person classes once it was possible for all.

The COVID-19 pandemic was aggravated in Brazil by the political crisis that resulted in the resignation of two Health Ministers and two Education Ministers between the months of March and July 2020. The administration of former Minister of Education Abraham Weintraub became known (and hated) for his fierce attacks on public universities that somehow backfired coming out stronger, showing their relevance to society during the struggle to find solutions and alleviation measures to the pandemic (Kapa, 2020).

Before the pandemic, the process of IHE was usually seen as relating to academic mobility, despite de Wit's (2017) and Knight's (2011) warnings about this misconception and myth that internationalization = academic mobility. Even though the number of Brazilians who benefit from academic mobility (less than 1% of the academic population), it was only during the pandemic that Brazilians started to consider other possibilities for internationalization, such as international virtual education (Stallivieri, 2020).

Before the pandemic, the process of IHE in Brazil was designed for the elite who could afford to go abroad with the support of academic mobility programs such as the Science Without Borders (SwB), the largest and most expensive academic mobility program aimed to send Brazilian undergraduate students abroad (mostly to universities of the Global North). Even before the cancellation of the SwB program, Brazilian HEI had apparently started a trip with no return, as can be seen in the programs that came after the SwB seeking not just financial support but also alternatives to ensure the continuity of the internationalization process in the institutions.

Two years after the shutting down of the SwB and as a response to the internationalization demands of HE institutions, the Brazilian government launched the Capes PrInt Program for Institutional Internationalization in 2017. The direction in this internationalization program/compass was still very much the North, as can be seen in the list of countries towards which the funding was targeted (Capes, 2020), the only difference with the previous SwB being that the Capes PrInt was directed towards graduate programs and not to the undergraduate level, though it continued to focus very much on academic mobility.

Despite its 'good intentions', only 36 institutions (public and private) (Capes, 2020) were funded by the Capes PrInt leaving more than 90% of Brazilian higher education institutions out of the map and the possibility of having public resources for their internationalization programs and agendas. One of the basic requirements to compete for the Capes PrInt call was the approval of institutional internationalization plans, something not all higher education institutions had, given that the process of IHE in Brazil is still incipient, passive and reactive as put forward by Lima and Maranhão (2009) and Amorim (2020).

Given this scenario, it is possible to say that the level of internationalization of Brazilian higher education institutions, despite many efforts and few exceptions, still needs to be carefully assessed and strategically planned, so that it does not depend so much on individual initiatives, government funds and South-North one-sided directions in the world map. Moreover, we now see that the pandemic imposed the migration of many face-to-face activities to the virtual space, though clearly private and public universities took two different roads in that regard. The former was more concerned with providing classes in what has been called a disruptive/remote mode of education, taking the 'financially-motivated road' whereas the latter, more concerned with the quality and conditions of the university to offer solutions to society through their tripartite mission of teaching, research and outreach, and more recently through internationalization (Santos & Almeida Filho, 2012), took the 'public good' road considering Virtual Exchange a relevant alternative to physical academic mobility, despite the challenges down that road (Stallivieri, 2020).

The imbalance between public and private HEI in Brazil was thus escalated and fought in a new arena: the internationalization of higher education (IHE). For virtual exchange to have more robust results in the process of IHE, it is essential that higher education institutions, both public and private, from the North and the South, participate more equally and sustainably in what some have called 'intelligent internationalization' (Rumbley, 2015), 'responsible internationalization' (Stallivieri, 2017), sustainable internationalization (Ilieva, Beck, & Waterstone, 2014), a sustainable model for internationalization at home and virtual (Woicolesco, Cassol-Silva & Morosini, 2022) or even an internationalization otherwise (Stein, Andreotti, Bruce, & Suša, 2016), that involve the recognition of power relations and diverse understandings coupled with a cooperative orientation.

In a moment of potential virtual internationalization with social distancing measures that highlight the digital gap, if Brazilian higher education institutions are to be included in the new Virtual Exchange turn and world map, issues of access to technologies and teacher/digital training are an important aspect of how these new scenarios will come to be (re)dressed (Guimarães & Hildeblando Junior, 2022). According to data of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [IBGE], 2019), around 88% of Brazilians have internet access, but that still leaves almost 36 million Brazilians without access to online education, let alone virtual international education or exchanges.

Besides the impact of the digital gap towards the potential to internationalize now, Brazil has to acknowledge and address a linguistic divide and potential limit to the access of Brazilian academics to this 'new' virtual internationalization. According to Stallivieri (2020), though Brazil is undoubtedly an economic power, in addition to being a country with powerful educational potential, and the fact that the Brazilian higher education system is well regarded with major well-ranked universities, the pandemic highlighted some of its challenges towards the adoption of the virtual exchange model. Stallivieri (2020) stresses three significant gaps that need to be addressed in that direction, namely: the digital gap, the linguistic gap and the fragility of Brazilian international cooperation partnerships.

Considering that the process of IHE, at least before the pandemic, benefited more HEI from the Global North than those in the Global South (Vavrus & Pekol, 2015, Sousa Santos & Meneses, 2014, Finardi et al., 2020), it is important to reflect about how we can address and redress this imbalance in the face of the new world order imposed by the pandemic. Having outlined this scenario for Brazil and given the potential of virtual internationalization to destabilize the "disbalance" between public and private HEI in Brazil, it is important to pause and go back to a fundamental question, namely, why internationalize at all? How could HEI travel around the bumpy road or the road(s) not taken of internationalization? So as to provide possible journeys to this question, this paper offers a reflection accepting Amorim's (2020) invitation to look at assessment as input for critical auto-reflection. Thus, without further due, we pose the question that motivated this reflective paper and hit the highway.

Why should Brazilian higher education institutions seek to internationalize?

Robert Frost's poem can be interpreted as referring to the dilemmas of everyday life and the impetus to blaze the trail ahead by taking the road(s) less travelled by. This was the provocation put forward by Amorim (2020) in regards to the direction(s) of internationalization of Brazilian higher education institutions that inspired this study. In the view of Amorim (2020), based on Frost's poem, perhaps we should face internationalization in Brazil under other premises.

Brandenburg and De Wit (2011) invited us to think about the following questions: 1) can we move away from dogmatic/limiting views of internationalization?, 2) can we understand internationalization as a means rather than as an end?, 3) why do we do what we do in terms of IHE?, 4) can we regard academic mobility and other activities as activities or instruments rather than as goals in themselves?, 5) can we worry less about instruments and means than about questions of rationales and outcomes of IHE?

We can say that the pandemic has enabled or accelerated the reflection on some of these questions. De Wit (2019) contributes to the reflection on the 'roads' travelled by internationalization by further questioning whether we can see a shift in paradigm moving from competitive models of the IHE to more cooperative models. The author, looking at the evolution of internationalization as a concept asks whether a more diverse and inclusive internationalization may be replacing the western paradigm. He also asks whether we can see an ongoing dominance of the internationalization abroad component at the cost of internationalization at home, and inasmuch as academic mobility goes, we think that the pandemic has triggered or accelerated this process.

De Wit (2019) argues that the critical reflection on these issues is especially relevant in the current nationalist, populist and anti-global political climate we live in and we add that in Brazil, this climate is deeply intertwined with the pandemic crisis which, in turn, is fueled by a political, economic and ideological crisis/view of the role of the State and the citizens in it. So, more than ever, the current panorama in Brazil offers a perfect and complex map in which to discuss the roads taken by the process of IHE and the best gear to travel those roads.

In this scenario and in the realm of this paper, we aim to discuss the question of whether we should consider alternative roads to the process of Brazilian IHE, thus accepting Amorim's (2020) invitation to think about some of the following questions: why internationalize Brazilian higher education institutions?

Considering that the modern internationalization agenda goes back at least two decades (beginning of SwB) in Brazil and that, more recently, it has been driven by government-funded programs such as the Languages without Borders (LwB) and Capes PrInt, we aim to dig deeper into the why HEI should invest in such a process and how they should go about it in a post pandemic scenario.

Some researchers (Zanchet, Selbach, & Vighi, 2017; Ramos, 2018; Villela, 2018) claim that the process of IHE in Brazil is still biased in relation to international rankings (Leal, Stallivieri, & Moraes, 2018), and it is peripheral (Morosini, 2011), passive (Lima & Maranhão, 2009) and competitive, despite individual collaborative attempts/initiatives (Leal, 2020a). What do Brazilian HEI seek? Financing of the federal government through public calls/programs? Compete or cooperate with other HEI worldwide? Or just those from the Global North?

How can we make sense of this process, already underway and under revision due to the pandemic disruption worldwide and in Brazil? So as to aid HEI in the self evaluation/reflection process, Amorim (2020) proposed a unified instrument in the form of a (self) assessment matrix that we will see as a GPS to guide our journey and which brings us to the next question.

Why should HEI assess their internationalization processes?

As pointed out by Ramos (2018), Brazilian HEI present isolated and disjointed initiatives in relation to the internationalization process, and the existing data is mainly related to outbound academic mobility, which compromises the establishment of more systemic policies or plans. With a local assessment of the IHE process, it is possible to uncover potentials and flaws to articulate a more appropriate internationalization plan for HEI. Graves (2000) suggests that knowledge about reality and the context facilitates decision-making. Selasi (2014) romanticizes the idea by saying that the more we know about where the story takes place (the local reality), the more color and texture, the more details we have, the more we will be able to relate/guide ourselves considering that all experience is local.

The (self) assessment process conducted by the HEI can help answer the question posed previously in this paper, especially regarding the first question of whether we should internationalize at all. Higher education institutions should understand their *locus* of enunciation to define their priorities, reasons and motivations to internationalize. In order to assist them in the process of assessing their internationalizations, Amorim (2020) suggests the use of the (self)assessment matrix to foster awareness and feed decision making conducting their internationalization processes in a more critical, multilocal (Selasi, 2014) or glocal (Patel & Lynch, 2013) way.

Raupp and Kolb (1990) state that once the reason for evaluating is established, the next step is to decide how to evaluate. At this stage, it is expected that the 'evaluator' has already gained enough knowledge about the context (local) in which the evaluation proposal will be made to generate what Raupp and Reichle (2003) call goals, which in turn, need to be transformed into measurable objectives in the form of indicators. According to Raupp and Kolb (1990), only then an evaluation plan is formulated and can be organized in the form of a chart, checklist, matrix, etc.

Amorim (2020) chose to elaborate a multidimensional (self)assessment matrix composed of three dimensions, Teaching, Research and Extension, as these represent the pillars of higher education in Brazil and where (a comprehensive model of) internationalization should be translated into actions. The matrix is also composed of three categories of analysis, namely: Language Policy, Academic Mobility and Internationalization at Home.

Discussion: Where can this (self)assessment matrix/GPS take us?

Amorim (2020) dialogued with three authors whose thoughts and theories were, in a way, embedded in the construction of the (self)evaluation matrix for the internationalization of Brazilian HEI proposed by him. Selasi (2014) talks about identity and experience and how complex this can be, and that the analysis of experience makes us understand the process better, without defining it. Blommaert (2010, 2013), in his studies on linguistic phenomena in the context of globalization, invites us to re-think some concepts such as community, identity and citizenship, pointing out that languages and new information technologies have played an essential role in these social transformations. Moreover, he warns us that such events (globalization and internationalization) generate both wealth and poverty, and although we cannot stop globalization, we can (re)think internationalization in what Amorim (2020, p. 130) coins "[...] taking the road less travelled by".

Finally, Stufflebeam (1968, 1971) and his supporters Raupp and Reichle (2003), discuss the theoretical precepts of evaluation and the evaluation method called CIPP that recommends a detailed analysis of a context to better inform decisions.

In Brazil, researchers in the field have been working on the subject and seeking to better understand this reality through the analysis of documents (Associação Brasileira de Educação Internacional [Faubai], 2017; Brazilian Association for International Education [Faubai], 2018) to anchor the internationalization process in Brazil. Some authors (Lima & Maranhão, 2009; Leite & Genro, 2012; Morosini, 2011; Ramos, 2018; Streck & Abba, 2018) denounce the adoption of imported models of internationalization that renders our orientation as reactive. The matrix Amorim (2020) built helps HEI to self-assess and think about their internationalization process taking into account the directions they want/should/will take and who will benefit from it.

In metaphorical terms, Amorim's (2020) matrix could be a GPS on a vehicle for a family road trip. How does one make use of a GPS? It can be programmed according to one's needs and wants and, most importantly, to one's final destination. One may choose to travel 1) the faster roads at the expense of a number of tolls on the privatized roads; 2) the more pleasant roads at the expense of longer travel time; 3) through shortcuts, but on unfamiliar, perhaps dangerous roads. There are also places known for the discredited use of the GPS, like Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil. The locals advise the use of GPS only in the main federal roads and, as soon as one reaches the city center, follow the good, old-fashioned city signs to arrive at one's destination because a GPS might take one into an unsafe territory if one is not familiar with the geography of the city.

What are the lessons learned from the GPS? Someone is conducting the vehicle, but others are embarking on the journey as well, so the trip should be pleasant for all. Also, there will be shortcomings on the way and one should make sure the instrument is updated with the latest map and calibrated to be used to the best of its capacity, so that it addresses the needs and wants of all parties involved in the trip. Finally, the more knowledge of the context one has, the better trip everyone will have. In other words, the GPS is an instrument which should be used aligned with a thorough study of the places through which one will travel by and, of course, the final destination at which one desires to arrive. Lastly, the concern should be about whether or not all travelers who embarked on the journey arrive at the chosen destination safe and sound. Or, perhaps, we should think of the journey as the destination itself, just as we suggest looking at internationalization as a means to improve the mission of university rather than as an end in itself.

So, what is the road less travelled by?

As previously mentioned in this paper, over the past decade, researchers from different corners of the world have called our attention to signs that internationalization was traveling down the competition road. So, as to venture the possibility of traveling the road less travelled by of cooperation, we now discuss some coordinates. Welikala (2011) suggests the pedagogy of encounter as a possibility for us to (re)think the complexities of the university curriculum, therefore adopting a more multilateral IaH perspective.

This multi-perspective curriculum as a direction to be taken for internationalizing the university acknowledges the diversity of the community and enables the co-creation of knowledge to meet the demands of the local academic community. Similarly, Joseph (2012) provides three approaches to internationalize the curriculum, so also a very local and inward movement to the IHE, acknowledging that the transformative approach is the one aligned with the greater purpose of higher education, for it provides a valuable contribution to society by promoting social justice. Joseph (2012) recognizes that the transformative approach to internationalization breaks paradigms with long-standing views of education as a commodity, a privilege of few. The primary coordinates for this approach are based on critical questions such as the following: How does knowledge work in this curriculum? How was the curriculum produced? Where does it come from? Why are we using this type of curriculum? How does this curriculum understand gender, racial and cultural differences? What does this curriculum mean to me as an educator and academic?

In regards to Stallivieri's (2017) notion of responsible internationalization, and Ilieva et al. (2014) sustainable internationalization, we can see how these views align with Rumbley's (2015, p. 17, emphasis in original) intelligent internationalization:

'Intelligent Internationalization' demands the development of a thoughtful alliance between the researcher, the practitioner and the policy communities. Those participating in the elaboration of internationalization activities and agendas have access to the information, ideas and professional skill-building opportunities that will enhance their abilities to navigate the complex and volatile the higher education environment of the next 20 years.

In short and using Stein et al. (2016) notion of internationalization otherwise or Piccin and Finardi's (2019) global citizenship education otherwise, we can say that there is no one-size-fits-all model, but all models must fit a world map that is inclusive, sustainable, responsible, intelligent and accountable, that is, a model that offers alternative realities and ways of engaging in and with the world around us in a more cooperative and a less competitive way.

Final considerations

Amorim's (2020) multidimensional matrix of (self)assessment suggests that the process of internationalization of higher education is multidimensional. Selasi (2014), in her speech in Rio de Janeiro, questions linearity and our *loci* of enunciation suggesting that we are multifaceted and multilocal. Though, not all people are equally multilocal and not all locals are multi. What is more, not all people are mobile and so internationalization should consider geographic and geopolitical barriers to connect, travel and transcend.

As pointed out in the literature reviewed in this study, the internationalization of higher education is not a new phenomenon but the pandemic has afforded it the possibility to pause, reflect and correct its GPS to leave the competitive road behind once and for all and to take the road less traveled by of international cooperation and virtual mobility.

What remains to be asked is why this subject remains increasingly popular in higher education agendas. Who cares? Who benefits from it? Considering that Brazilian HEI have, for the most part, more international cooperation agreements with HEI from the Global North, we can say that internationalization in Brazil is still restricted to financing the North reinforcing the competitive model. So as to move from competition towards cooperation, self-reflection is key to understand where we are coming from, where we are and where we can go from here. In that sense, we hope that the reflection/GPS offered in this paper may aid HEI down (or up) that process/road.

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