
INTERNATIONALIZATION AIMED AT GLOBAL SOCIAL JUSTICE: BRAZILIAN UNIVERSITY INITIATIVES TO INTEGRATE REFUGEES AND DISPLACED POPULATIONS

INTERNACIONALIZAÇÃO VOLTADA À JUSTIÇA SOCIAL GLOBAL:
INICIATIVAS DE UNIVERSIDADES BRASILEIRAS PARA INTEGRAR
REFUGIADOS E POPULAÇÕES DESLOCADAS

INTERNACIONALIZACIÓN ENFOCADA EN LA JUSTICIA SOCIAL GLOBAL:
INICIATIVAS DE LAS UNIVERSIDADES BRASILEÑAS PARA INTEGRAR A LOS
REFUGIADOS Y LAS POBLACIONES DESPLAZADAS

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ABSTRACT

The increased immersion of global higher education in a competitive, economy-oriented paradigm calls for perspectives on international interaction that are explicitly aimed at shaping cooperative, sustainable, and alternative futures. In Brazil, higher education internationalization efforts driven by the Brazilian government have historically been attached to the State's development interests. As these efforts have consolidated in a hegemonic way, initiatives pursued by individual higher education institutions themselves gain relevance in that context. In this article, we explore the projects developed by two Brazilian federal universities – the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) and the Federal University of Parana (UFPR) – seeking to integrate refugees and displaced populations into higher education and the Brazilian society more generally. Our approach combines bibliographic and document analysis with interviews of key actors. Based on the results, we emphasize: 1. The role of Brazilian higher education institutions' autonomy in order to develop internationalization strategies that are both contextually relevant and aimed at promoting global social justice; 2. The importance of linking existing university outreach/extension activities aimed at marginalized groups to institutional policy for internationalization, so that internationalization efforts do not end up suppressing the more direct social role of those institutions.

KEYWORDS: Higher Education. Internationalization. Social justice. Displaced populations.

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Submetido em: 04/05/2020 - **Aceito em:** 02/08/2020

RESUMO

A crescente imersão da educação superior global em um paradigma competitivo e orientado para a economia suscita a busca por perspectivas de interação internacional explicitamente voltadas ao desenho de futuros cooperativos, sustentáveis e alternativos. No Brasil, os esforços de internacionalização na educação superior conduzidos pelo governo brasileiro têm sido historicamente vinculados aos interesses desenvolvimentistas do Estado. À medida que se consolidam de forma hegemônica (principalmente com foco na integração do Brasil no mercado capitalista global), as iniciativas desenvolvidas pelas próprias instituições de educação superior ganham relevância. Neste artigo, exploramos os projetos desenvolvidos por duas universidades federais brasileiras - Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC) e Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR) – que visam à integração de refugiados e de populações deslocadas nos contextos da educação superior e da sociedade brasileira em geral. Nossa abordagem combina análise bibliográfica e documental com entrevistas com atores-chave. Com base nos resultados, enfatizamos: 1. O papel da autonomia das instituições de educação superior brasileiras para desenvolver estratégias de internacionalização que sejam contextualmente relevantes e que busquem promover a justiça social global; 2. A importância de vincular as atividades de extensão universitária existentes a grupos marginalizados à política institucional de internacionalização, para que os esforços de internacionalização não acabem suprimindo o papel social mais direto dessas instituições.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação superior. Internacionalização. Justiça social. Populações deslocadas.

RESUMEN

La creciente inmersión de la educación superior global en un paradigma competitivo y orientado a la economía plantea la búsqueda de perspectivas de interacción internacional dirigida explícitamente al diseño de futuros cooperativos, sostenibles y alternativos. En Brasil, los esfuerzos de internacionalización en educación superior llevados a cabo por el gobierno brasileño han estado históricamente vinculados a los intereses de desarrollo del Estado. A medida que se consolidan de forma hegemónica (centrándose principalmente en la integración de Brasil en el mercado capitalista global), las iniciativas desarrolladas por las propias instituciones de educación superior se vuelven relevantes. En este artículo, exploramos los proyectos desarrollados por dos universidades federales brasileñas: la Universidad Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC) y la Universidad Federal de Paraná (UFPR), cuyo objetivo es integrar a los refugiados y las poblaciones desplazadas en los contextos. Educación superior y sociedad brasileña en general. Nuestro enfoque combina análisis bibliográfico y documental con entrevistas con actores clave. Con base en los resultados, enfatizamos: 1. El papel de la autonomía de las instituciones de educación superior brasileñas para desarrollar estrategias de internacionalización que sean contextualmente relevantes y que busquen promover la justicia social global; 2. La importancia de vincular las actividades de extensión universitaria existentes a los grupos marginados con la política institucional de internacionalización, de modo que los esfuerzos de internacionalización no terminen suprimiendo el papel social más directo de estas instituciones.

PALAVRAS-CLAVE: Educación superior. Internacionalización. Justicia social. Poblaciones desplazadas.

1 INTRODUCTION

Despite the benefits and opportunities of internationalization of higher education, this process has been largely immersed in a competitive, economy-oriented paradigm, potentially reinforcing geographical inequalities of knowledge, power, and being. Dilemmas such as Global North epistemic privilege and its consequent hegemony in providing educational services and receiving the flows of mobility; the submission of universities and researchers to multiple forms of competition; the devaluation of contextual specificities of institutions and research agendas; the tensions between institutional, national and global commitments; as well as the threats to the idea of university as a public and social good suggest the existence of a close relationship between internationalization and differentiation/stratification.

This, associated with contemporary societal challenges faced across the board— global warming, migratory crisis, xenophobia, and others – calls for more cooperative forms to engage internationally and interculturally, in explicitly aligned actions with broader social justice efforts, aimed at shaping more inclusive, sustainable, or alternative futures. In Brazil – the national context of interest in this article – higher education internationalization initiatives have been historically submitted to the Federal government’s development interests and sustained by its will to actively participate in the capitalist global market. Following historical trends both in foreign policy and in higher education, recent programs in this field demonstrate a clear preference for partnerships with countries and universities well positioned within the world system.

As this hegemony has shaped and restricted what internationalization is or could be in the country, initiatives pursued by individual higher education institutions themselves gain relevance and might shed light on how to link internationalization with global and local societal challenges in various productive ways. Additionally, there is still a relative absence of qualitative data on institutional experiences with internationalization of higher education in Latin America (BERRY; TAYLOR, 2014). As “different political-institutional and contextual logics converge in the dynamics of university internationalization” (OREGIONI, 2015, p. 16, our translation), case studies on how this phenomenon has manifested in different institutions in the region are relevant.

Given this context, the present article aims to understand how initiatives focused on integrating refugees and displaced populations into higher education and the Brazilian society more generally function and dialogue with institutional internationalization efforts. To do so, it explores two projects that have been conducted at individual Brazilian federal universities: The Federal University of Parana (UFPR) and the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC). Combining bibliographic/document analysis and interviews with key actors, it establishes a connection between non-hegemonic internationalization and university autonomy, emphasizing the importance of linking existing university outreach/extension⁴ activities to institutional policies of internationalization.

⁴ From “extensão” in Portuguese or “extensión” in Spanish. One of the institutional missions of Latin American public universities, often translated to English as “outreach”.

2 INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION: DECONSTRUCTING THE IDEA OF UNCONDITIONAL GOOD AND CALLING FOR INITIATIVES ALIGNED WITH BROADER SOCIAL JUSTICE EFFORTS

Contemporary discourses in the literature on internationalization of higher education go in at least two major directions, as analyzed in the contribution of de Wit to this issue. The first concerns the evolution of both the concept and the practices of internationalization. In conceptual terms, the phenomenon has been increasingly defined as ‘comprehensive’, an idea initially presented by the American Council on Education (ACE) and adopted by Hudzik (2011) in the publication ‘Comprehensive Internationalization: From Concept to Action’, from the Association of International Educators (NAFSA), to express the ‘need’ for the process to reach the university institution entirely, reshaping its reason of being and its values, with the purpose of achieving goals such as ‘academic excellence’ and the education of ‘global citizens’ with ‘multicultural competencies’.

Thus, instead of being indiscriminately associated with one of its dimensions – such as international academic mobility, its most recurrent (KEHM; TEICHLER, 2007) and visible (LIMA; CONTEL, 2011) manifestation – internationalization in this particular design has more structural contours. Expressions of this development are its bifurcation into two distinct pillars: ‘abroad’ and ‘at home’ (KNIGHT, 2012; KNIGHT; DE WIT, 2018), as well as the transition from a direct focus on individuals, like the government programs of international academic mobility historically promoted in various higher education systems around the world, to a direct focus on universities and research institutes (PROLO *et al.*, 2019). As Mwangi (2017, p. 35) notes, “higher education institutions continue to shift their emphasis from cross-border mobility of individual students/ faculty between the Majority and Minority World to capacity-building and collaboration at the institutional level involving research, teaching/curriculum development, and the creation of programs and campuses”.

According to the idea of internationalization as a structural necessity, university communities have been asked to commit and engage in internationalization activities so that the process fulfills its purposes. However, it is common for such communities to have little understanding of what internationalization is, should or could be (BUCKNER; STEIN, 2019).

The second development in the field refers to a greater recognition that alongside the opportunities that internationalization offers, there are political and ethical issues that are contradictory and contestable (STEIN, 2017; MWANGI *et al.*, 2018); that there is no ‘internationalization’ model that serves all contexts (DE WIT, 2019); and that despite the dominant political discourse, internationalization is not an unconditional good (MORLEY *et al.*).

Criticism around internationalization processes include the understanding that economic rationales have been predominant (excluding academic rationales, sociocultural rationales, etc.) (YEMINI; SAGIE, 2015; DE WIT; GACEL-ÁVILA; JONES, 2017; HUNTER; SPARNON, 2018); that internationalization is “losing its way” (KNIGHT, 2014, p. 76); that ‘competition’ advances at the expense of ‘cooperation’ (KEHM; TEICHLER, 2007; KNIGHT, 2014; HUNTER; DE WIT; HOWARD, 2016; DE WIT, 2019); that internationalization should be more inclusive and less elitist (DE WIT, 2019); that the link between internationalization and neoliberalism has been narrowing (BAMBERGER; MORRIS; YEMINI, 2019); that international collaboration has become complex (REISBERG, 2019). According to these perceptions, there is “an evident shift from (only) cooperation to (more) competition” (DE WIT, 2019, p. 12). Post-colonial and decolonial perspectives place internationalization of higher education within a colonial matrix of power, associating this process with the colonial history of exploitation; identifying power dynamics and colonial patterns that emerge in contemporary practices, and seeking for ways to internationalize that are distanced from this dominant rationality (LEAL, 2020).

These two developments are in many cases conflicting, as comprehensive internationalization is assuming a more cooperative and inclusive approach, where these dimensions are lost in a more competitive approach to internationalization. In summary, what is preached is not much applied or seen in practice.

Internationalization of higher education in Brazil currently reflects these two major developments and the challenge between preaching and implementation. In one hand, the process has become increasingly intentional, systematic, and referred by national and institutional authorities as an imperative. Recent directions at the federal government level – which largely defines the sector as a whole – suggest a shift on the understanding of this process as a synonym of international mobility, directly focused on individuals – as in the case of the Science without Borders (SwB) Program (2011-2015) – to a broader phenomenon that affects the ethos and values of higher education institutions – as in the case of the Program for Institutional Internationalization (Capes-PrInt) (since 2018) (LEAL, 2019). Additionally, these two programs, added to other public policies implemented throughout the years, demonstrate a clear preference for partnerships with countries and universities well positioned within the world system (LEAL, 2020), signaling that internationalization has consolidated in an hegemonic way. As such, preferences have shaped and restricted what internationalization is or could be in the country, providing little space for initiatives distanced from the dominant rationality. In this sense, initiatives pursued by individual higher education institutions themselves gain relevance and might shed light on how to link internationalization with global and local societal challenges.

3 INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS A MEANS TO INTEGRATE REFUGEES AND DISPLACED POPULATIONS

The fact that internationalization of higher education has become an increasingly commercial and elitist enterprise, benefiting a small and privileged group of stakeholders instead of the wider society (ASSEFA; RUMBLEY; DE WIT, 2018), calls for more cooperative forms to engage internationally and interculturally, explicitly aligned with broader social justice efforts and aimed at shaping more inclusive, sustainable and alternative futures. This perspective dialogues with the idea of education for emancipation, that is, education as a means to transform a reality historically marked by unequal geographies of power, knowing, and being. One of these possibilities, as Brandenburg, de Wit, Leask and Jones (2019) argue, is to better link work on internationalization with work on social engagement, addressing issues such as xenophobia, populism, climate change and the preservation of democracy. Another is to consider the migration experiences of domestic students enrolled at universities in pursuit of “Internationalization at Home” or “Internationalization of the Curriculum” discussed by Beelen, Jones, and Leask, among others (LEASK, 2010, 2015; BEELEN; JONES, 2015). Indeed, the need to bridge the divide between domestically-focused “diversity” or “inclusion” initiatives and internationally focused internationalization programs has been discussed by scholars cross-nationally (MATURANA-SENDOYA, 2018; MOON, 2016; UNANGST; DE WIT, 2020).

Understanding that the contemporary migratory crisis is a societal issue to which internationalization efforts might be intentionally addressed – so far, around 70,8 million people were forced to leave their places of origin for different types of conflict (UNHCR, 2019b) – Streitwieser, Miller-Idriss and de Wit (2017, p. 29) argue that “universities’ reception of refugees ought to be understood within broader higher education internationalization frameworks and global engagements”. In this line, Streitwieser *et al.* (2019) collect empirical data on barriers of access to higher education faced by refugees in North America and Europe, and propose adding ‘humanism’ as a fifth category in Knight and de Wit’s (1995) rationales for internationalization of higher education (academic, political, economic and socio-cultural). Accordingly, Ergin, de Wit and Leask (2019) put forth the concept of ‘forced internationalization’, defining it as an intentional, strategic emerging phenomenon that addresses the three core functions of universities, and is aimed at integrating people who have been forcibly displaced as a result of conflict, violence, or persecution. In their words, “universities and governments should remember how significantly forced immigrant scholars and students have contributed to national research development and institutional quality” (ERGIN, DE WIT; LEASK, 2019, p. 9). De Wit *et al.* (2020) emphasize the issue of migration as a phenomenon inextricably linked to the story of humanity, arguing that any discussion on strategies of internationalization of higher education is incomplete without attention to

displacement. Such perceptions gain relevance with the Global Pact on Refugees, signed by 181 countries in December 2018 and which included universities as strategic actors in the international protection of these populations (UNHCR, 2019c).

Another area addressed by cross-national literature is the intersection of legal status, university admission and fee structures. Specifically, Oliveira and Kentor (in press, p. 3) argue that “immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers all move through a period of ‘statelessness’ in which their political rights and identities are suspended. The different processes to which they are subjected can, in this way, end up having a similar effect on their sense of belonging and personhood while differentially shaping their institutional access.” Specifically, this relates to student access to higher education institutions and the programs and tuition structures that may support, alternately, domestic students of migrant background, recognized refugees, or those with an asylum case in progress (BAKER; DEVEREUX, 2020; UNANGST; STREITWIESER, 2018). There has also been recent work advancing critical theoretical frameworks in scholarship around migration studies, education, and internationalization (ANDERS; LESTER, 2019; HARVEY; MALLMAN, 2019; MARTIN *et al.*, 2019; UNANGST; CREA, in press). These have included Critical Race Theory, Intersectionality, Participatory Action Research, and Constructivist Grounded Theory. Indeed, only 3% of refugees worldwide have access to higher education (UNHCR, 2019d), a scenario that not only intensifies the existing marginalization of these populations (PHAN, 2018), but also reduces the idea of equitable access to higher education as a matter of social justice. As universities have actively participated to the perpetuation of hierarchies (SOUSA SANTOS, 2016, 2018; STEIN; ANDREOTTI, 2016), denying, in different ways, the epistemic and ontological simultaneities, their ethical commitment to minoritized groups, combined with their contribution to the shaping of more inclusive, sustainable, or alternative futures is to be intensified and contrasted to their current institutional policies of internationalization.

4 METHODOLOGY

Research on internationalization of higher education has been predominantly oriented towards the practice, with insufficient attention given to the contradictions, dilemmas, and contextual specificities of this phenomenon. As the current moment of history “asks that social sciences and humanities become grounds for critical conversations around democracy, race, gender, class, nation-states, globalization, freedom and community” (DENZIN; LINCOLN, 2006, p. 16, our translation), we sustain this study in the qualitative research tradition, linking internationalization with the broader aim of global social justice, that is, associating internationalization to emancipation and considering internationalization as a means to transform the reality. In order to understand how initiatives focused on integrating refugees and displaced populations into higher education and Brazilian society more generally function and dialogue with internationalization efforts, we carried out case

studies in two federal universities in Southern Brazil which presented themselves as fruitful contexts for this research endeavor. The two universities are the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) and the Federal University of Parana (UFPR).

The study is descriptive-interpretative and combines bibliographic and documentary resources, covering documents of the Cátedra Sérgio Vieira de Mello (CSVM) available at its official website⁵, such as institutional documents, news, reports, and academic publications – which served as an umbrella for the projects aimed at the integration of refugees and displaced populations – and documents on policies for internationalization at UFSC and UFPR, such as their institutional plans of internationalization. The fact that one of the authors is an employee and recently defended her PhD dissertation on internationalization at UFSC also contributed to the knowledge about this university. Finally, the study involved primary data from semi-structured interviews with the coordinators of the projects. Such interviews were conducted in Portuguese, in March 2020, by one of the authors. The interview at UFSC took place at the main campus, in Florianópolis, and lasted 47 minutes; the interview at UFPR was online, and lasted 36 minutes. Both interviews were transcribed for analysis. Results were organized in three parts, reflecting the line of argument of the article: a) The absence of a comprehensive public policy for refugees in Brazilian higher education and the role of individual universities; b) UFSC and UFPR experiences with the integration of refugees and displaced populations; and c) Becoming truly comprehensive: autonomy, extension, and participation of minority groups as part of internationalization policy.

5 THE ABSENCE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC POLICY FOR REFUGEES IN BRAZILIAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL UNIVERSITIES

Debate on migration in Brazil intensified in the 1980s, when the country entered the list of labor exporters, attracting the attention of social scientists and the media. In the 1990s, Brazil became the 2nd largest receiver of remittances in Latin America, fostering a number of governmental initiatives related to the migratory issue. In the 2000s, Brazil's economic growth and its relative stability led to a shift in the migratory flow, attracting people from countries like Bolivia, and reaching around 1 million immigrants by 2010 (either documented or not). Public policies for immigrants, however, were less prominent. For example, Law 6815/1980, implemented during the military dictatorship and currently considered unconstitutional and contrary to human rights (REIS, 2011, OLIVEIRA, 2017) remained active, with minor changes, until 2017.

By 2010, the growth in the number of refugees and asylum seekers intensified and diversified South-South immigration in Brazil. From 2010 to 2015, there was an increase of 2.868% in requests for the refugee status and, from 2010 to 2016, there was an increase of

⁵ <https://www.acnur.org/portugues/catedra-sergio-vieira-de-mello/>.

127% in the total number of refugees recognized in the country, many of whom were from Haiti (CONARE, 2016). According to the CONARE report “Refugees in numbers”, by the end of 2018, 11,231 people were recognized as refugees (51% from Syria) and 161,057 people had set processes of recognition in progress (52% from Venezuela). Due to the exponential flow of displacement from Venezuelans – by June 2019, 4 million people had left the country (UNHCR, 2019c) – 2018 was when most requests were made. In total there were 80,000 requests, 61,681 from Venezuela. Following, there were requests from Haitians (7,000), Cubans (2,749), Chinese (1,45) and Bengali (947) (UNHCR, 2019b). Even though many initiatives to support these populations currently exist, there is a significant fragmentation of government action in regard to this matter, thus characterizing Brazil as one of the most restrictive countries in terms of immigration. Despite the important role of the Federal Public Ministry in refugees’ recognition, the Federal government delegates most of the responsibility to states and cities, consular services, and NGOs (REIS, 2011, LEÃO; DEMANT, 2016).

In regard to the participation of higher education in this specific societal matter, Law 9.474/1997 states that refugees and asylum seekers have the right to access education in Brazil, including higher education (UNHCR, 2019c). However, no comprehensive policy aimed at supporting refugees exists under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education (MEC). The most direct action implemented by the Brazilian government through MEC and the Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE) was the *Programa Emergencial em Educação Superior Pró-Haiti*, created in 2010 as a response to the earthquake in Haiti, and aimed at offering places to Haitians (specifically undergraduate students in Porto Príncipe) at some Brazilian universities (BIZON; DANGIÓ, 2018). According to Bizon and Dangió (2018), 89 students were selected and 78 effectively entered four Brazilian universities: State University of Campinas (UNICAMP) (41 students), Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar) (5 students), UFSC (24 students), and Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) (8 students).

Currently, the most prominent initiative in Brazilian higher education aimed at refugees and displaced populations is not managed by the government, but by UNHCR in cooperation with CONARE and individual universities. The purpose of Cátedra Sérgio Vieira de Mello⁶ (CSVM), implemented in 2003, is to promote teaching, research and extension activities aimed at refugees and displaced populations, including academic training of faculty and students in related topics, direct service, and advocacy on their rights and local integration. To do so, UNHCR establishes ‘terms of reference’ with Brazilian universities that are interested in contributing to the cause, specifying objectives, responsibilities and criteria of participation. By August 2019, 22 institutions were part of CSVM, with the vast majority

⁶ The name of the Cátedra is a tribute to Brazilian Sérgio Vieira de Mello, who dedicated much of his professional career to work with refugees within the United Nations scope, and was killed when he was the Special Representative of the General Secretary of United Nations in Iraq (UNHCR, 2019c).

located in the south and southeast of Brazil: twelve public federal universities, three public state universities, six private universities (four catholic), and a federal cultural institute, the Fundação Casa de Rui Barboza (FCRB), in Rio de Janeiro. In regard to teaching, CSVM encourages higher education institutions (HEIs) to incorporate themes related to the protection of refugees in their curricula. In 2019, twenty HEIs followed this recommendation at undergraduate and graduate levels, offering courses that reached around six thousand students from programs such as international relations, law, psychology, social service, political science, architecture, and medical science (UNHCR, 2019c).

With respect to research, CSVM encourages the production and diffusion of knowledge on themes linked to protection and integration of displaced people in Brazil and in the world, expecting that the generated information will impact relevant public policies. Together, participant HEIs have more than 40 research groups on such themes. CSVM also encourages the development of research with civil society and public institutions, as well as the diffusion of qualitative/quantitative data on refugees, as demonstrated by a report on the socioeconomic profile of these populations in Brazil published in 2019 (UNHCR, 2019b, 2019d). Extension is considered by CSVM to be the academic function with the most direct impact on the lives of refugees and displaced populations. Examples of extension activities in the scope of CSVM are the offer of legal advice; Portuguese language courses; health and psychosocial support services; and assistance to enter the labor market, among others. For example, 14 universities offered legal advice in 2019, reaching 860 people between 2018 and 2019; 12 universities offered health services, reaching almost 400 people between 2018 and 2019; and 18 universities offered Portuguese language courses in 2019, reaching almost 1400 refugees and immigrants (UNHCR, 2019c).

CSVM universities also have an important role in advocating for these populations at the municipal, state, or national levels. In 2019, 14 universities promoted advocacy actions by participating in networks and committees with this purpose (UNHCR, 2019c). In addition to actions focused on the protection and integration of refugees and displaced populations in the communities, CSVM encourages their integration into the university itself, including policies of diploma revalidation, facilitated access, and assistance for their permanence. Private universities such as PUC-Minas also offer scholarships for these populations. As Tozini (in press, p. 7) states, initiatives such as calls for applications “are vital initiatives created by HEIs showing an interest in diversifying their population, and in meeting the needs of a growing, vulnerable population”. For example, in 2019, 13 universities offered facilitated access for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants in vulnerable situations, and around 225 people were students from these categories at those same institutions (UNHCR, 2019c). Other universities that are not part of CSVM also have initiatives of similar nature. For example, in 2019, the Federal University of Latin-American Integration (Unila) and the Federal University of Para (UFPA) opened their first selection processes for these populations. These are recent

procedures in the country and align with the view of higher education as a public social good with cultural relevance, as emphasized by the regional conferences on Higher Education (GÓMEZ, 2019).

Indeed, the absence of a comprehensive policy aimed at supporting this highly vulnerable population at the national level reinforces the importance of initiatives such as the CSVM and other projects conducted by individual HEIs themselves, highlighting their social function and strategic role in creating spaces to welcome diversity. It is possible to assume, however, that these institutions face a number of challenges in implementing and operationalizing such projects, especially in light of the complex situation, including budget cuts and autonomy threats, currently faced by public universities (most of the CSVM partners are the ones with more capacity and resources to conduct projects of this nature) (KNOBEL; LEAL, 2019). An example of their limited action in this matter is the small number of diplomas they have so far revalidated. A recent study on refugees' socioeconomic profile, which interviewed a sample 487 people, demonstrates that these individuals have greater linguistic and educational capital than the average Brazilian. However, only 14 of 133 refugees who tried to revalidate their diplomas were successful (UNHCR, 2019a). This calls for a better understanding of how individual HEIs have worked in this matter.

6 UFSC AND UFPR EXPERIENCES WITH THE INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES AND DISPLACED POPULATIONS

The Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) and the Federal University of Parana (UFPR) are two public, tuition-free, multicampus, and research-based universities located in the South of Brazil. UFSC was founded in 1960 and is based in Florianopolis city, the capital of Santa Catarina State and has a community of approximately 51,000 people, including undergraduate and students, faculty, and administrative staff. The university offers 121 undergraduate programs, 12 specialization programs, and 133 graduate programs. UFPR was founded in 1912 and is based in Curitiba city, the capital of Parana State. UFPR has a university community of approximately 45,000 people, including undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and administrative staff. The university offers 136 undergraduate programs, 125 specialization programs, and 88 graduate programs. Both institutions have projects aimed at supporting immigrants and refugees under the umbrella or related to CSVM, offering valuable support for their protection and local integration.

At UFSC, CSVM is conducted by three different units: 1) The Group "Postcolonial and Decolonial Research and Practices Applied to International Relations and International Law" (EIRÉNE), linked to the programs on International Relations and Law; 2) The Group on "Research and Teaching of Portuguese" (NUPLE), that embraces the extension project "Portuguese as a Host Language"; and 3) The Research Group on Psychology, Migration, and

Cultures (NEMPsiC). CSVM/UFSC comprises the following activities: 1) Daily assistance to immigrants and refugees in the areas of Consular Law, International Humanitarian Law, and Human Rights (migratory regularization, asylum requests, family reunions, legalization of diplomas, renewal of passports, work and linguistic accessibility etc.), which takes place at the Reference Center for Immigrants Assistance (CRAI) 2) Organization of events around themes such as migration, refugees, international humanitarian law, diplomatic and consular law; 3) Implementation of databases on immigration in Florianopolis; 4) Promotion of concrete actions aimed at the integration of immigrants and refugees at UFSC and in the region; 5) Militancy in the Working Group to Support Immigrants and Refugees of Legislative Assembly of the Santa Catarina State (ALESC), and in the Support Group for Immigrants and Refugees in the Metropolitan region of Florianopolis (GAIRF); 6) Carrying out social actions to assist vulnerable immigrants. In partnership with CRAI, CSVM/UFSC has so far assisted more than 30,000 immigrants and refugees holding 56 nationalities. EIRENÈ/UFSC also partners with the Pastoral Care of Migrants in Florianopolis (an institution of the Catholic Church) to develop the extension project “Support Center for Immigrants and Refugees” (NAIR), which has so far assisted around 10,000 from 35 countries (EIRENÈ/UFSC, 2020).

At UFPR, CSVM is part of the “Program on Migratory Policy and the Brazilian University”, also composed of the following extension projects: 1. “Brazilian Portuguese for Humanitarian Migration” (PBMIH), which offers Portuguese language courses and cultural activities for migrants and refugees; 2. “Refuge, Migrations, and Hospitality”, which provides legal advice for these populations and does research on migration; 3. “Development of Computer Training Courses for Immigrants”, which offers them computer classes; 4. “Migration and Processes of Subjectification: Psychoanalysis and Politics in the Network of Service for Migrants”, which offers psychological assistance and participates in the selection processes of migrants and refugees at the University. Additionally, the Program has partnerships with the “Research Group on International Migration and Multiculturalism” and with the “Workshop on Brazilian History for Foreigners”, and others. Among the achievements of the UFPR Program, there is the offer of Portuguese classes which in 2017 served more than 1200 migrants; the publication of resolutions that facilitate the process of revalidating diplomas, as well as the entry of migrants and refugees as UFPR students through remaining vacancies. To help in their entrance, permanence, and integration, UFPR also provides the “Course on Linguistic and Academic Reception”, with a duration of 5 weeks (FRIEDRICH *et al.*, 2017; PPGD/UFPR, 2018).

Despite the specificities of the UFSC and UFPR programs, which are determined by multiple factors in each context, two similarities stand out. The first is the importance of university autonomy and partnerships with different actors, either at the university or external to it, in fulfilling the intended purposes. Autonomy has allowed them to evolve, adapting to contextual realities and demands, demonstrated by the statement of the

coordinator at UFPR that: *“We still have a lot to improve [...] but the merit of our program is that it was autonomously built by the faculties’ extension projects, from that we built a program, [...] and then we created a university policy”* (Coordinator at UFPR, 2020, in interview. Our translation). In regard to partnerships, within the university there is outstanding participation from the departments of Law, International Relations, Psychology, Portuguese as a Foreign Language, Sociology, Geography, and Computer Science. This integration gives the various refugee support programs a multidisciplinary approach that is particularly relevant when considered the complexity of the societal issue of migration. Also, not all of the actions that currently occur started together from the beginning, but emerged gradually according to demand: *“we always need to listen to the immigrants, because this can’t happen in a colonial perspective in which I say what I want to give, we need to listen to what the field tells us [...] and the immigrants wanted information on labor law [...]”* (Coordinator at UFSC, 2020, in interview. Our translation);

[...] In the beginning [there were Portuguese classes] [...] for Haitians and a number of demands emerged. First of all, legal issues [...]. Haitians were employed, most with formal contracts, but they had doubts, like why were they hired for a value and in the end of the month they had less, you know? [...]. And then they needed orientation on the humanitarian permanent visa [...]. In the class, we perceived the issue of trauma, absence of life project, problems of deterritorialization, homesickness, mental illness, so we called Psychology [...].” (Coordinator at UFPR, 2020, in interview. Our translation).

Thus, at both institutions, CSVN has served as a ‘magnet’ to engage people from different fields of knowledge and institutions from the state and civil society: *“CSVN made me leave my department and look for partnerships, because there were other people engaged with this cause”* (Coordinator at UFSC, 2020, in interview. Our translation). The second feature is the active participation of undergraduate and graduate students as researchers and volunteers. Through these initiatives, both UFSC and UFPR seem to encourage in students the values of an intercultural education based on solidarity, respect to diversities, and human rights, reinforcing their roles as citizens beyond their roles as ‘workforce’ for the global market. This feature also leads to a better integration among university functions of teaching, research, and extension, as idealized by the Córdoba Movement of 1918 (RUBIÃO, 2013; LEAL; MORAES, 2018; PROLO, 2019) – that is, the contextualization of universities’ functions, “in the sense that they dialogue with the society, jointly defining what is best for both parties” (RUBIÃO, 2013, p. 235, our translation). Therefore, the extension function in the Córdoba’s understanding has a broad meaning and seems to be particularly relevant for the concretization of these programs and functions as *“a place for social transformation”* (Coordinator at UFSC, 2020, in interview. Our translation): *“We need ‘extension’ [...] as much as we need research, because this is our reality in the Global South. [...] We need to produce knowledge from here to solve the problems from here”* (Coordinator at UFSC, 2020, in interview. Our translation). The coordinator at UFPR reports:

All my master and PhD. students go to ‘room 28’ (a room where refugees and displaced populations are assisted), I tell them: you can’t just stay upstairs, in the air conditioner, studying migration while these people are here suffering. [...] We try to conciliate things. They produce, publish, but they also volunteer. Everything is connected: teaching, research, and extension (Coordinator at UFPR, 2020, in interview. Our translation).

The same pattern is observed at UFSC. For example, the undergraduate course “Topics in Immigration and Refuge”, created in the scope of CSVM/UFSC, requires students to actively work as volunteers with refugees and displaced populations, not only for the work itself, but to “*transform the structure*” (Coordinator at UFSC, 2020, in interview. Our translation).

7 BECOMING TRULY COMPREHENSIVE: AUTONOMY, EXTENSION, AND PARTICIPATION OF MINORITY GROUPS AS PART OF INTERNATIONALIZATION POLICY

UFSC and UFPR provide valuable support to immigrants and refugees. By using their agency to mobilize students, stakeholders, and the university itself, CSVM and related projects reinforce the social function of these institutions and situate the university as a strategic actor that promotes protection and integration to vulnerable populations (UNHCR, 2019c). In both cases, analyzed data suggest the existence of a will to promote social change through non-hierarchized dialogues. Additionally, the programs have contributed to the integration between different fields of knowledge that rarely dialogue, while also changing the structure of an institution that in Brazil has been predominantly elitist:

We needed to change the university, [...] by planning a lot, and thinking in the best way to integrate them, we approved four resolutions that allow them to occupy remaining vacancies. So if a Brazilian doesn’t occupy it, it goes to humanitarian migrants, the Venezuelans and Haitians, as well to as asylum seekers who had started in the university in their country and couldn’t finish it (Coordinator at UFPR, 2020, in interview. Our translation).

However, these programs face a series of challenges to operate. For example, in the case of UFPR – that, differently from UFSC, receives these populations as students and currently has more than a hundred refugees – there are several “*intercultural issues that need to be better addressed*” (Coordinator at UFPR, 2020, in interview. Our translation), such as racism, xenophobia, learning and language difficulties: “*There are professors who say: ‘you need to do the test in Portuguese’, complaining of their language and Portuguese mistakes [...]. We have faced many complex situations [...]. Everything is thought for the Brazilian student, so this is something we need to face*” (Coordinator at UFPR, 2020, in interview. Our translation). As important as facilitating their access, is to actively conduct actions aimed at their permanence and integration (RUANO; LOPES, 2019). Another outstanding difficulty is the low priority given to extension activities at the university. Indeed, both global and local

tendencies in higher education (including university rankings) have privileged research above all, indicating that projects with direct social impact tend to be devaluated in many ways.

[...] doing 'extension' is an act of faith, an act of courage, because teaching and research are the functions that 'count'. Even in our career progression, for example, extension does not count as research and teaching. That is, there is a whole structure that does not encourage you to do extension (Coordinator at UFSC, 2020, in interview. Our translation).

[...] so if you ask, for example, the vice dean about this extension project, she may not know about it, and it's one of the projects that has the strongest social impact today at UFSC, because we have already assisted more than 30 thousand refugees and immigrants from 62 nationalities (Coordinator at UFSC, 2020, in interview. Our translation).

[...] it costs a lot, even physically, because the extension project is outside the campus. And here I remain with the same activities [...]. Besides, as people don't see the immigrants here, they think I go there but there's nothing to do there, you know? [...] Currently we assist around 40 people a day, but in 2015-2016 we assisted around 100 people a day (Coordinator at UFSC, 2020, in interview. Our translation).

Related to this general devaluation is a low recognition of CSVM and related projects as truly institutional. Coordinators' discourses suggest a high interaction with other extension projects in the university, but a relatively weak articulation with higher instances, arguing that the programs tend to be 'reminded' when convenient for strategic purposes. For example, the coordinator at UFSC mentions that CSVM was only considered part of the graduate program in International Relations when a call of scholarships demanded direct social impact as a criterion. If not for that, *"it seems like an isolated initiative from the faculty"* (Coordinator at UFSC, 2020, in interview. Our translation). As the coordinator at UFPR argues (2020, in interview. Our translation): *"Sometimes we feel a little abused, we do everything but they go to events and talk about what the university does to migrants, and we think 'but what do they do to us [...] in a daily basis?'"*. This relative distancing also applies to universities' international offices, responsible for internationalization at an institutional level. For example, the coordinator at UFSC relates that so far her interaction with the international office was limited to a training that she gave to staff around the new law on migration. At UFPR there are more actions in progress with the international office, but the coordinator argues:

It's challenging to show that internationalization can be built in a bottom-up and South-South perspective. [...] We can integrate with countries that have similar socioeconomic and environmental challenges to Brazil. [...] But this is a process, it's a fight, because this is not how the University is used to do [...]. It's important that they show us their culture and that we don't overlap ours" (Coordinator at UFPR, 2020, in interview. Our translation).

In this regard, the analyzed data demonstrate a distancing between these initiatives and current institutional internationalization policies at both universities, but specially at UFSC (SINTER/UFSC, 2018; AUI/UFPR, 2018), although these programs actually take place at

the universities and offer valuable support to immigrants and refugees, with concrete results with local and global impact. As Leal (2020, p. 125, our translation) argues, at UFSC

from the central management perspective, internationalization is ultimately limited to: 1. The use of English in teaching, research and administration; 2. The publication of articles in indexed journals; 3. The curricular change to meet the expectations of the 'world market'; 4. The attraction of students and researchers from 'world-class universities'; 5. Partnerships with institutions well positioned in 'global university rankings' and 6. The use of 'regional cooperation' and 'South-South cooperation' for the purpose of your own recognition as 'international leader'. Given this framework, all other possibilities are implicitly neglected.

Indeed, the idea of internationalization has recently acquired expressive connotations at UFSC and UFPR. Both sent a significant number of students abroad through the Science without Borders (SwB) Program. They are also accredited units for the Languages without Borders (LwB) Program; and integrate a selected group of Brazilian universities that were selected by the Program for Institutional Internationalization (Capes-PrInt) to receive funding to internationalize. Additionally, they are active members of the International Association for International Education (Faubai); they have Institutional Plans for Internationalization (induced by the Capes-PrInt); they declare in their Plans for Institutional Development their will to advance in this process; and enjoy a significant national reputation and a relative international reputation (often listed by university rankings within the '10 best' in the Country) (THIENGO, 2018; LEAL, 2020). As a response to the strong historical presence of the state in higher education, in these two institutions the internationalization formal policy seems to reflect a hegemonic approach, largely reflecting the federal government's view on internationalization and on higher education, that is, a means to integrate Brazil into the 'knowledge global society', with its insufficient importance given to the relations with the South.

As such, preferences have shaped and restricted what internationalization is or could be in those contexts, providing little space for initiatives distanced from the dominant rationality, initiatives pursued by individual HEIs themselves. As such, CSVN and related projects gain relevance and might shed light on how to link internationalization with societal challenges that are both global and local. Assuming that it is possible that the same pattern takes place in other Brazilian public universities, we highlight: 1. The role of Brazilian HEIs and faculties' autonomy and partnerships to develop internationalization strategies that are both contextually relevant and aimed at promoting global social justice; and 2. The importance of linking existing university extension activities aimed at marginalized groups to induce institutional policy for internationalization, so that internationalization efforts do not end up suppressing the more direct social role of those institutions.

Intentionality, thus, seems to be a decisive factor for internationalization to fulfill its ‘promises’ or to be truly linked to social justice efforts, contributing to the transformation of reality in structural ways. The participation of marginalized groups such as refugees and displaced populations contributes to the development of a university that is not inward-looking, but also doesn’t neglect its own local context. As the coordinator at UFSC reflects, *“it’s important to do research, it’s important to publish, to go to events, but – as the song from [Brazilian singer] Milton Nascimento says: ‘the artist has to go where the people is’ – where the people is”*. The integration of refugees and displaced populations in an institutional context that has been historically elitist, however, requires structural changes, as well as a detachment to historical patterns of colonialism. These populations have knowledge that tends to be silenced since the selection processes (GÓMEZ, 2019) that they experience reflecting prejudice and racialization that emerge from certain cultural representations on what it means, for example, to be a black and Haitian student in Brazil (BIZON; DANGIÓ, 2018).

As immigrants and non-white refugees from the South-South axis tend to be made invisible and are “subjected to worrying processes of hyper-vulnerability” “due to the absence of state and municipal public policies of integration and reception” (SILVA; ROCHA; D’AVILA 2020, p. 1, our translation), internationalization strategies aimed at these populations cannot happen without dialogue with a broad history of unevenly constituted international relations that were present in the university context before the idea of ‘internationalization of higher education’ became popular.

8 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Given the understandings that: 1. Internationalization of higher education has been largely immersed in a competitive, economy-oriented paradigm, potentially reinforcing geographical inequalities of knowledge, power, and being; and 2. “There are many ways that governments, higher education as a sector and individual universities can respond positively to the presence of large number of refugees” (STREITWIESER; MILLER-IDRISS; DE WIT, 2017, p. 38), this paper described the projects developed by two Brazilian federal universities, UFSC and UFPR, to integrate refugees and displaced populations into higher education and the Brazilian society more generally.

Such projects were contrasted with the institutional policies of internationalization at both universities, identifying the existence of a gap between them. Whilst the projects emphasize the social function of these universities (beyond their economic function supporting the Country's positioning in the world market) and demonstrate both the importance of university autonomy and extension – integrated with teaching and research, as a legacy of the Córdoba Movement – the institutional policies of internationalization largely reflect the federal government’s view of internationalization and higher education more

generally, that is, as a means to integrate Brazil into the ‘knowledge global society’, with insufficient importance given to the relations with the South.

Broadly, this article is an invitation for Brazilian public universities to expand the horizon in which their internationalization policies are immersed, linking internationalization with global and local societal challenges, and thereby contribute to the larger agenda of fulfilling internationalization’s promise. Such institutions have become more diverse in recent years (for instance, with affirmative actions and the transformation of the quota system into law in 2012) and thus their internationalization strategies must consider this new reality. In this context, developing a perspective of internationalization that is truly ‘comprehensive’ (HUDZIK, 2011) (as currently desired by many HEIs), requires defining strategies that match the idea of university as “a [true] reflex of the society” (Coordinator at UFPR, 2020, in interview. Our translation), including initiatives that lead to questioning how the given institution has historically been a place for the institutionalization and naturalization of appropriation and exploration relations.

Only a model of ‘internationalization’ that fits the diversity of the subjects that inhabit it today and the society that sustains it will enable us to glimpse a “horizon that is open to multiple possibilities” (RAMOS, 1967, p. 24, our translation). In other words, practice what you preach in internationalization, in line with its definition by de Wit *et al.*, (2015) of a comprehensive internationalization for all students and staff making a significant contribution to society.

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