

“Perceptions of European Higher Education in third countries”

A study carried out by the Academic Cooperation Association

COUNTRY REPORT BRAZIL

I Executive Summary

After presenting some general information about Brazil, this report first gives an overview of Higher Education and its internationalisation in the country, second explores the interviews with the different actors carried out for the study concerning their perceptions of European Higher Education, and third tries to make a conclusion and to give some tentative recommendations for a European promotion campaign on Higher Education.

In general, Brazil's basic and higher education system reflects the many regional, socio-economic, political and cultural gaps in the country, especially through the division between the private and public sector. Children from the middle and upper class normally go to expensive private secondary schools which allow to pass the difficult access exams of the public universities free from tuition fees; children from lower classes use to attend the gratis, but rather bad public secondary schools, often fail in the public exams and therefore have to go to private institutions which are expensive and mostly worse than the public. The Brazilian Higher Education Institutions (HEI) which offer undergraduate and postgraduate courses according to the Anglo model, are concentrated in quantitative and qualitative terms in the South and Southeast regions. In the last decade the private sector increased spectacularly, by offering mostly undergraduate courses in (academically restricted) “faculties”, whereas public institutions are often full “universities”, dominating the postgraduate level. Exchange, internationalisation and marketing activities also feature some contradictions. Traditionally Brazilian HEI (incl. the governmental organisations) realised exchange and cooperation programmes with USA and European core countries, but recently a more nationalist stance prefers partnership on a South-South level. In order to catch the great potential of free mover students, international agencies have intensified their efforts in the last year, but were only partially successful.

According to the three groups of interviewees – higher education officers, university international officers, parents – the internationalisation of the Brazilian HEI as well as the exchange with abroad should be intensified. Describing specific reasons and necessities, the different groups agreed that Brazil has to face globalisation also within the HEI. As governmental agencies have preferred so far the PG level in their exchange and grant policy, there is a great necessity at the UG-level. The interviews also evidenced various fears, especially of an internationalisation that would be dominated by the most developed countries. The perception of the EU, US and Canadian HEI, being the best and most important target regions, is quite dialectical. Many feel a cultural and political affinity with EU, but recognise the often more specific and orientated study and research opportunities in the US. All asked for better information policies about study opportunities in EU, which

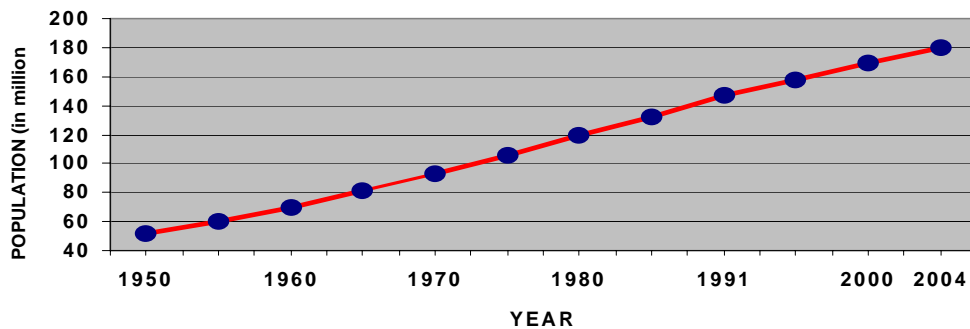
should be an essential point for a possible campaign, as well as pointing out the academic and research excellence of places which embody for most predominantly tradition.

II Country Information

1. General Facts

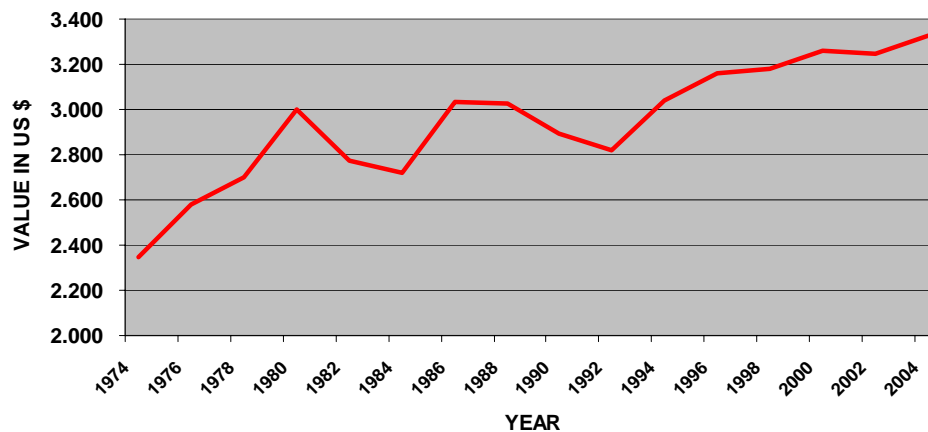
With an extension of more than 8,5 Mio. km², Brazil is Latin America's largest country. Its population, a heterogeneous mixture of different American-Indian, African and European origins, has grown continuously. According to the projections of the last census (made in 2000), the country has actually around 180 Mio. inhabitants (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT



Although the demographic growth has slowed down in the last decades, nearly half of the Brazilians are younger than 30 years old. Despite reverses in the 1980s, the economic performance has been able to go along with this growth and to increase the PIB per capita to 3.325 \$ in 2004 (Figure 2), putting Brazil among the emergent economies and on the 11.th place world wide. In political terms, Brazil is a federative republic with 26 states and one federal district, which have some autonomy in political, military and fiscal aspects, although the federal government, led by a directly elected president, determines most public policies.

Figure 2 – DEVELOPMENT OF PIB (P.P.)



Brazil has continental dimensions. Its socio-economic, cultural and educational landscape is, despite some decades of compensatory policies, characterised by great regional differences. The country's economic and industrial locomotive is (the state of) São Paulo, whose metropolitan region counts more than 20 Mio. inhabitants (and more than a third of the nation wide registered cars) and concentrates more than half of the national industrial production. Around this most populous and wealthy state with a prosperous hinterland, the other states in the South and Southeast regions (from the border to Argentina/Uruguay in the South along to the Belo Horizonte and Vitória in the North) still hold a disproportionate part of national welfare, concentrating as well the most and best cultural and educational institutions. Of course there are some islands of modernity in the other regions: the federal capital Brasília, founded 45 years ago and highly dependent on the public administration, has the highest income per capita and also initiated a broader development in the Middle-West region; Manaus in the North is booming thanks to its tax-free zone; Fortaleza, Natal, and Salvador in the Northeast are competing with the traditionally leading Recife; Goiânia, Cuiabá and Campo Grande in the Middle West are doing well due to booming agro-business – which also led to the development and modernisation of the educational areas. But in a whole, Brazil is still a very heterogeneous country, with sharp social, economic and cultural gaps between the capitals or metropolitan areas and the rural, semi-feudal hinterlands – and often also within each. In many aspects it is still similar to a so called “Belindia”, meaning – according to a famous description by an economist in the 1970s – a mixture from (industrial) Belgium and (rural) India.

2. Education System

Brazil's Education system shows traditionally strong differences between the public and the private sector, which generally refer to different socio-economic contexts. Children from lower classes use to go to a public primary and secondary school (together 11 years), where as most middle class and all upper class students normally go to private institutions when ever their parents can afford it. Apart from some exceptions, such as the famous and traditional public "Colégio Pedro II" in Rio de Janeiro, the private schools generally are a lot better than the public ones, which suffer from old fashioned equipment and badly paid teaching personal, and therefore are especially affected by the (often lasting) strikes of public teachers or administration staff.

Brazil's final secondary school degree takes one year less than in Europe, and therefore is not equivalent e.g. to the German *Abitur*. The curricula follow international standards, but do not permit the (little) choice of subjects that German pupils of the *Oberstufe* can still make. Also contrary to the *Abitur*, the conclusion degree does not automatically open the door to Higher Education. The access to university is organised by the institutions themselves, consisting mostly of a proper exam ("vestibular") which is slightly different according to the respective course. Candidates often prepare themselves in massive special courses ("cursinho") during months (if they are able to), but pupils from private secondary schools use to reach better results and consequently more study places. Additionally, didactics and methodology are mostly frontal and teacher-centred, consisting predominantly of memorising facts and patterns instead of a more creative and autonomous work. Unfortunately, this model is not only also predominant in the (better equipped) private secondary schools, but also in undergraduate level at the HEI. Due to these characteristics (especially of the public system) Brazil has been ranked on a very bottom position in the last two PISA-Studies. But contrary to the debate in badly ranked European countries, this has not caused a broader discussion neither in public nor among teachers, specialists and bureaucrats. As the actual left-wing government has not been persistent enough to change things fundamentally, too (for example by qualifying and paying better the public teachers), the social and economic cleavages in secondary education are supposed to persist still for decades.

The bad situation of foreign languages is a part of this picture. By federal law, at least one foreign language has to be taught from the fifth course on in all private or public secondary schools. Since the end of WW II, English became nation wide the most taught language (substituting French, which has been now also surpassed by Spanish). Due to the historical and cultural traditions brought by the numerous immigrants, in many regions other languages such as German and Italian (Southern states), Polish (Paraná), Japanese (São Paulo) and French (Rio de Janeiro) are offered additionally. Actually a federal law project aims to introduce, within five years, Spanish as an obligatory foreign language in secondary schools. If this law (already approved by the first chamber) became true, it would certainly affect the status of the minority languages. Regardless from this, language

teaching at secondary schools suffers especially from old-fashioned didactics and methodology and the bad pay and qualification of most teachers. Even if this might change slowly, the effective results of language teaching are still unsatisfactory, especially but not only at public schools. To compensate this deficit, middle and upper-class pupils generally attend a language course (at a private cultural or language institute) in the afternoon.

3. Higher Education system

Brazilian Higher Education system has experienced different upheavals and periods of development. When the first law faculties and polytechnic institutes (in the second half of 19. Century) and the modern universities (from the 20s to the 40s of last century) were founded, the French and German scientific institutions served as a model, in order to establish civilisation and Progress also in the tropics. In the 1960s and 1970s this system was extended, differentiated and modernised (mostly by the Military Regime) similar to the Anglo-American model, aiming to produce technocrats and academic specialists, and to promote national development. Consequently this period was characterised by the implementation of a differentiated post-graduation sector, the creation of so called state universities, which followed the pattern of the federal institutions, and the beginning but still timid multiplication of private HEIs.

Nowadays, there may be about 2000 higher education institutions in Brazil, according to the projection of the last census in 2003. To be called “university”, an institution has to offer a certain number of undergraduate courses in three different faculty areas and at least three areas of postgraduate courses; otherwise it is called “faculty”. In 2004, about 11% of all the HEI (absolutely: 219) were public (mostly federal and state-run universities, sometimes municipal); where as nearly 89% (1859) were private institutions – sometimes confessional and philanthropic, but mostly purely commercial – which have more than doubled their own number and students’ enrolment in the last five years (see Figure 3). In academic terms, the great majority of the private HEI (more than 85%) are “faculties” offering only undergraduate courses in few subject areas (see Figures 4 and 5).

Figure 3 – HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEI)

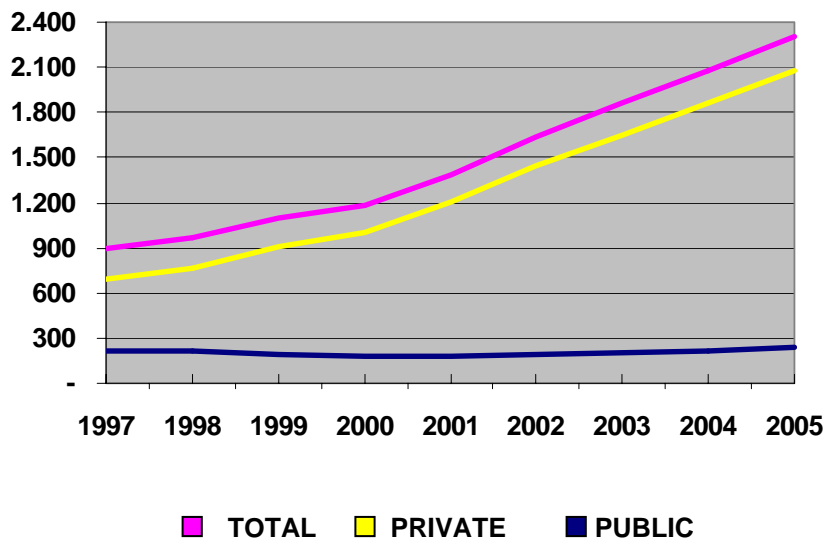


Figure 4 – HEI DISTRIBUTION BY ACADEMIC TYPE

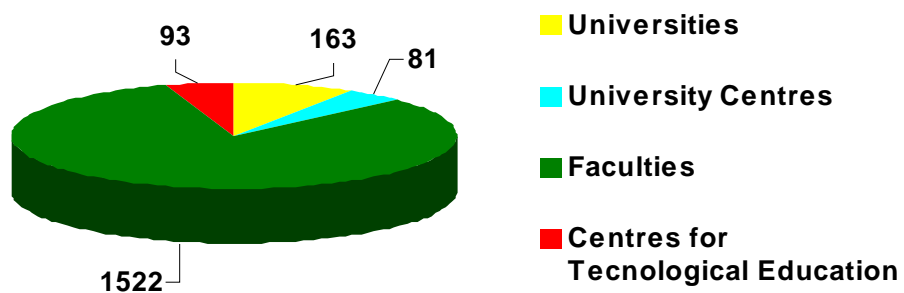


Figure 5 – HEI DISTRIBUTION BY FINANCIATION

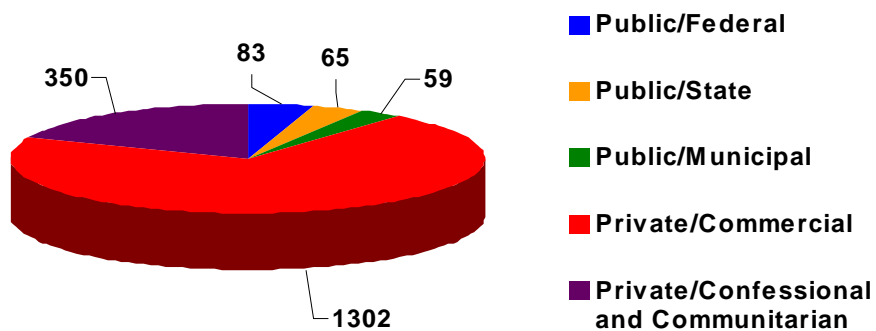
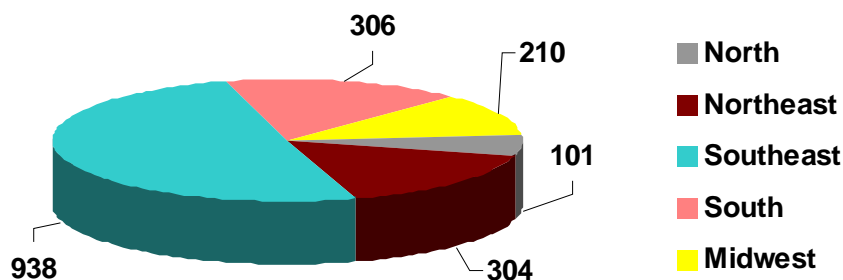


Figure 6 – HEI DISTRIBUTION BY REGION



Following the Anglo-American model, courses of HEI are organised in under- and postgraduate programmes, the latter consisting of *mestrado* and *doutorado*. The basic university course, called “graduação”, can be finished with a *licenciatura* (which allows teaching activities) or *bacharel*-degree, mostly within three or four years, except medicine and engineering which use to last one year longer. PG-Students normally need two and a half years more to take the following *mestrado*-degree, and about four years for the PhD-like *doutorado* which also includes obligatory subjects and credits. Actually about four Mio. students (in 2003: 3,85 Mio. [by 56% feminine]) are enrolled in a HEI, predominantly (about 85%) in an undergraduate programme of a private institution (about 75%) (Figure 7). Although the number of enrolled students at HEI has increased continuously in the last decades, it still represents only about 10% of the respective age group. Concerning the subject areas, the enrolment is widely differentiated. The most frequented areas are administration, law and social sciences, which together sum more than the half of all the students. By their great social prestige, engineering and medicine are traditionally considered as a guarantee of social ascent, where as natural and life sciences have become (as in the whole world) more attractive within the last years (Figure 8).

Figure 7 – STUDENT ENROLMENT IN HEI

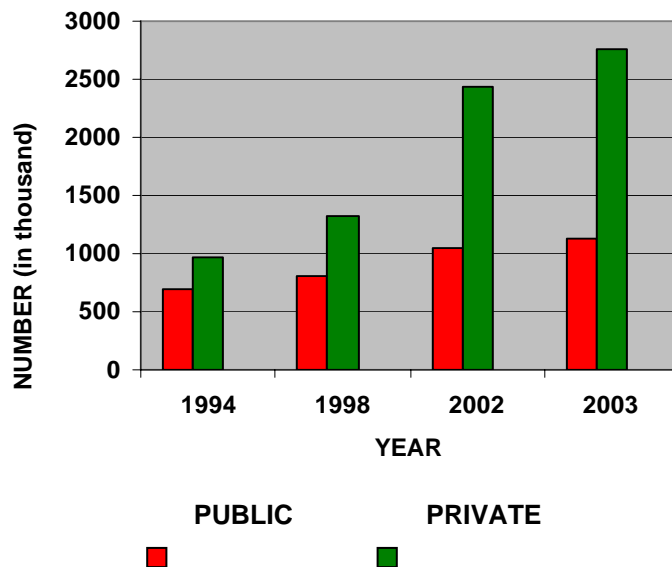
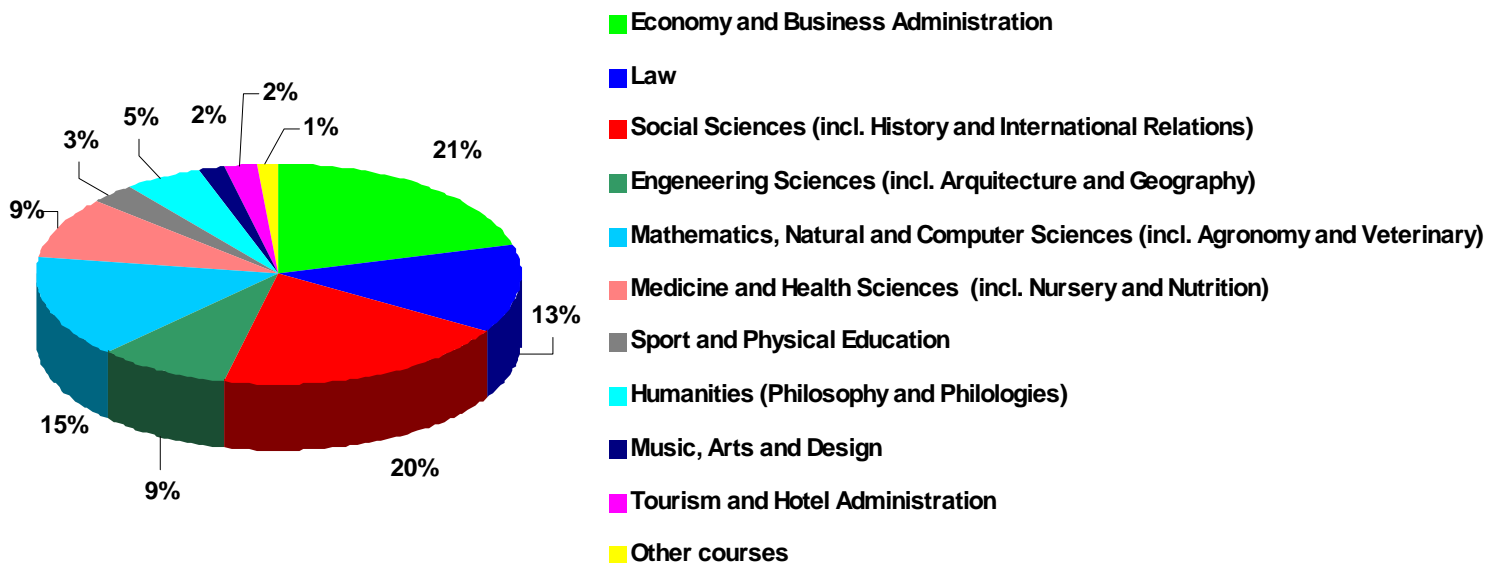


Figure 8 – DISTRIBUTION OF ENROLMENT BY AREAS



Some public organs control and monitor the development and performance of the HEI. The most important of them are CAPES (literally: Coordination for the Qualification of Higher Education Staff), founded in the 1950s and subordinated to the MEC, and the Council of Higher Education (CES). Where as the CES is appointed by the Ministry with representatives from all important sectors, comes together a couple of time per year and predominantly decides on the admission of new private HEI, CAPES is responsible for the qualification of HEI teachers and students, normally by providing grants for all levels, but

also for the acknowledgement and evaluation of the UG and PG courses. Every three years, the courses of all HEI are evaluated by CAPES' commissions through a very complex mix of criteria, considering the teachers' qualification and productivity, students' performance, institutional infrastructure and international links (etc) on a scale from 1 (worse) to seven (best), being 6 and 7 reserved for PG-programmes. Courses which do not fulfil the minima criteria receive 1 (sudden elimination) and 2 (permission only by improvement within one year), medium performance is evaluated with three, good and excellent performance starts with 4. Other important interest groups in the public debate and informal negotiations, are the Association of the Leaders of Federal Universities (ANDIFES) and the Council of Brazilian Rectors (CRUB), which in contrast to ANDIFES is dominated by the private institutions. Subordinated to the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology (MCT), the National Research Council (CNPq) is an de facto powerful actor and influences the development of PG-programmes, by giving grants and fostering research projects especially in the technological and life sciences. Doing the same thing on a regional level, the state run Foundations for Support of Research and Technology (the so called FAP's) also play an important role, at least in the wealthier states (as their budget depends on tax revenues, that means the economic performance of every state).

If in quantitative aspects Brazil's Higher Education System is one of the most privatised of the world (not only thanks to a favourable legislation legated by the former President, renown sociologist Fernando H. Cardoso), in qualitative aspects the picture looks quite different. The public institutions – and mostly especially the federal ones which traditionally constitute more than the half the financial allocations of the MEC – use to have much more prestige than the private ones, due to their teaching tradition, the better qualification of their staff and their quality (and sometimes excellence) in research activities. This goes especially for the federal and state universities of the most developed states in the South and Southeast, and for the *mestrado* and *doutorado*-courses which have been extended continuously in the last decades and are offered by 80% by public universities. Good PG-programmes now exist in all subject areas, even in more sophisticated technological ones, but they are still concentrated by about 2/3 in the South and Southeast regions (on a imaginary axis along the cities of Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Campinas, São Paulo, Curitiba, and Porto Alegre), reflecting the regional disparity also in the landscape of Higher Education. Only the Southeast region (and more specifically in the triangle between São Paulo, Belo Horizonte and Rio de Janeiro) concentrates more than the half of the nation wide nearly 1900 *mestrado* programmes, and more than 65% of the more than 1000 *doutorado* courses. The gap also exists in qualitative aspects: If from the nearly 300 *mestrado* and *doutorado*-programmes in the North and Northeast regions 51 were evaluated by CAPES with the top notes (5 to 7), the *Universidade de São Paulo* alone offers 97 similarly ranked PG-courses. Because of that quantitative and qualitative disparity many students still migrate from their home universities in the North, Northeast or Middle-West to attend a PG-programme in the South or Southeast.

In contrast to the booming private faculties and universities, external or foreign university providers still have not really made a great deal in Brazil. Hampered by vague cultural nationalism and thick bureaucracy, a rather restrictive legislation and omnipresent state control (via its numerous organs like CAPES, CES and CNPq), which emphasises short-term national benefits and reciprocity and obstructs pure commercialisation, foreign universities have seldom established own programmes in Brazil. Until now the initiatives to establish bilateral courses with double diplomas also have been rather obstructed.

Tuition fees differ a lot between public and private institutions, but also between the subject matters. Public universities use to demand only a small administration fee per semester. In private institutions, the tuition fees are monthly and vary strongly between the faculties and courses, according to the students' demand, the career prospects and the social valorisation of a programme, being medicine (incl. dental sciences), computer and engineering sciences the most expensive programmes. In order to democratise university access, a broad range of grants is offered by state agencies on the federal and state level, covering all study levels, from the so called "scientific initiation" to a Master and PhD-grant. Private universities, especially the philanthropic ones and renowned catholic universities, also provide a number of their students with partial grants or tuition fees reduction.

The actual government has proclaimed some plans on qualitative and quantitative expansion of HEI and also submitted a law proposal on university reform, which also has been discussed widely with the most concerned interest groups ANDIFES and CRUB. Considering higher education as a public (non-commercial) good, the proposal wants to strengthen the position of the state and the public universities vis-à-vis the private ones. By establishing quota for minorities and historically discriminated groups (coloured students, indigenous students, etc.), contracting 5000 new teachers and creating more than 10 new public universities (or extension campuses of existing ones), all located in highly populated regions (greater São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro) or in the nation's periphery (North, Northeast and Midwest), the government wants to democratise and improve the public HEI – and appease its many critics on its still weak performance especially in educational affairs.

3. Internationalisation

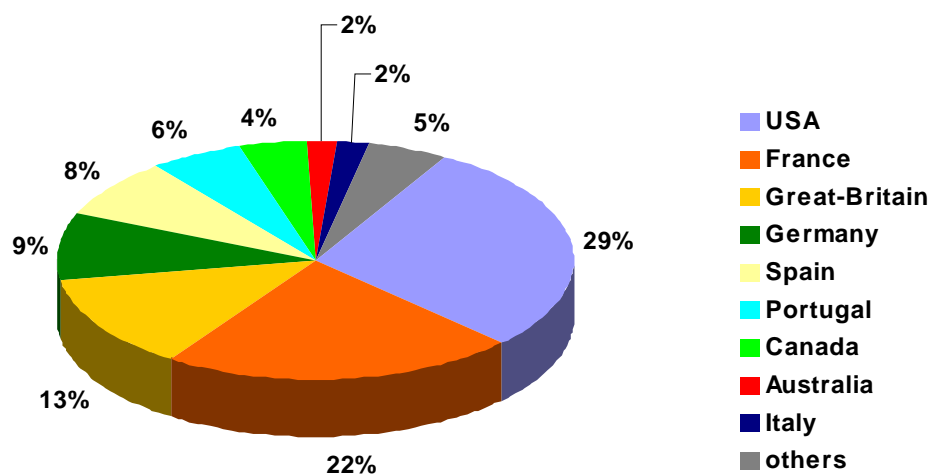
Overall, high importance has been given to further promoting internationalisation in the past years. Contrary to the restrictions of the participation of foreign providers at Brazilian HEI, there is no legal imposition or obstacles to obstruct studying abroad. Universities multiply considerably their exchange arrangements with partner institutions; and student mobility has increased continuously, although without the spectacular growth rates of other (belated opening) countries of the region (e.g. Mexico). Institutionally things have changed, too. Within the last decades, nearly all public, but also many private universities have established an International Office (IO) in order to support internationalisation and exchange systematically. The IOs normally provide information to the students on foreign study and research destinations, and deal within the university with the contacts with universities abroad, international partnership and exchange programmes, etc. More than 15 years ago was founded the “National Forum” of the International Offices of Brazilian Universities called FAUBAI (*Forum das Assessorias das Universidades Brasileiras para Assuntos Internacionais*). Bringing together the representatives of (today) more than hundred public and private institutions, FAUBAI helped a lot to put internationalisation on the agenda of Higher Education policy. FAUBAI’s performance always depends on the activism and initiatives of its presidency, but its annual meeting, held every year in a different university, became an important platform for a dialogue with representatives of Government, federal and state agencies, but also of the foreign agencies.

Nevertheless, student mobility also seems to have two faces. On the one hand, upper middle class families often make savings to afford a language course abroad for their children, especially when they are in the final classes of secondary school. On the other hand, Brazilian undergraduate students are often reluctant towards a longer study period abroad, whether in USA or in Europe. This seems to be caused by the good quality of the PG-Programmes at least in the South and Southeast, but also by the generally strong cultural and familiar ties to their local setting. As the Brazilians themselves, students are mostly “collective beings” which makes them go, if ever, with preference where their peers have already gone. Nevertheless, the demand for international education is still increasing, in the public universities as in the private institutions, especially at the UG-level. Additionally, in a country where most members of the national soccer team (the famous “seleção”) are playing and earning big money in Europe and sometimes in Japan, globalisation and labour migration is a daily issue and also contributes to a slowly growing tendency to plan and realise a study period abroad.

According to CAPES’ statistics, actually almost 20.000 students (UG and PG-level together) are officially enrolled in universities abroad. The main destinations traditionally are the USA, France and England (around 29, 22 and 13 %, respectively), which together concentrate nearly 2/3 of the students abroad (Figure 9). The advantages of the US lie in its general cultural and political attraction for the Brazilian middle classes (at least before September 11), the similarities of the US system of HEI to the Brazilian, which facilitates

especially to UG-Students a study period abroad with easy recognition of credits, but also for being geographically the nearest point of the first world to learn English abroad. In contrast, France traditionally has been the place of intellectual attraction for urban middle and upper classes with a more critical stance to capitalism, and served as a model for the foundation of federal universities. Despite its high living costs and the sheer distance, which also is a considerable obstacle for Great Britain, France still attracts a lot of PG-students especially in the humanities and social sciences, often also because of the affinities or souvenirs of their parents. After Germany, which is the fourth most attractive place and famous for philosophy and engineering courses, some other important European countries such as Spain, Italy and Portugal perform rather badly, despite more linguistic familiarities. Within the last years, especially after September 11, the US has lost attractiveness. Europe's universities have become more attractive – first because of the unification of the European Community which allows a Portuguese or Italian passport owner a permanent stay in England; second because of the offensive grant policy of the European Union – initiated with ALFA and extended with the individual ALBAN programme – that put EU back in the mind of international officers, researchers and students. Recently some new English-speaking destinations like Australia and New Zealand have been discovered by the Brazilian young middle and upper-class students. This goes especially for a short language-course and much less for a longer (UG or PG) stay, for which those universities (still) do not seem attractive or serious enough.

Figure 9 – BRAZILIAN STUDENTS ABROAD



4. Marketing Activities

As Brazil is considered a big potential market of international mobile students that is far from being explored, especially regarding free movers, international and European agencies have intensified their marketing activities in the country in the last years. Traditionally, the marketing activities of foreign universities and agencies had been concentrated on exposing in (often itinerant) education and students fairs. The most traditional and frequented fair is the “Salão do Estudante”, which used to take place in March in five or six big cities, representing (depending on the respective place) between 30 and 80 providers of HEI or language courses abroad. After having reached its peak at the beginning of this century, concerning the visitors’ number and public echo, the *Salão do Estudante* has declined in various aspects: It is now dominated by private commercial providers with a sometimes doubtful quality, and therefore put the public institutions (as EduFrance, DAAD, etc.) at the margin. The number of visitors has diminished constantly and considerably in the last four years, summing now about 40.000, and the public itself became every year younger (often secondary scholars) and less qualified.

Not only because of this, the promoting agencies of the EU member have become increasingly initiative within the last years and undertaken several activities at their own. Before installing a marketing officer (in exclusive charge) at its regional office in Rio de Janeiro, the DAAD had already started to send, about five years ago, lecturers in charge of marketing activities. Together with the lecturers based at the German Faculties of seven federal universities (Belém, Fortaleza, Belo Horizonte, São Paulo, Curitiba, Porto Alegre), they initiated a more systematic work in order to broaden information about study and grant opportunities in Germany, and to promote German universities as a destination for free flowers. Already before leaving the *Salão do Estudante* as a proper expositor, the DAAD started to organise information events called EnA (“Estudar na Alemanha”) in the most important public and private universities, often together with local Alumni Association or German-Brazilian Institute. To promote research and study opportunities in a more concentrated way, together with representatives of German universities, two bigger study road shows – both following the global campaign “Hi!Potentials – International Careers made in Germany” – were organised in 2002 (Rio de Janeiro, Porto Alegre, Recife, São Paulo) and 2003 (Brasília, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro), as well as a specific marketing event promoting German engineering programmes (São Paulo, 2004), which altogether attracted some thousand students. In its regional headquarter in Rio de Janeiro, DAAD has intensified other promoting and networking activities, such as a newsletter which has been subscribed since its launch in April 2003 by more than 3.000 people. In a whole, DAAD’s marketing work has the advantage to be based on solid institutional links to CAPES and CNPq, and on a multiplicity of exchange programmes between Brazil and Germany at the UG, PG and post-doctorate level, which have grown steadily during the last decades and now involves (in both directions together) more than 1000 students and researchers every year.

The other major European agencies have also intensified their activities. The most active has been the British Council which runs several well equipped offices in the whole country (besides its headquarter in São Paulo also in Rio de Janeiro, Brasília and Recife) and publishes regularly a well made publication called "UK Link". In the recent years, it has also organised its own study fairs in the most important cities (generally in Curitiba, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte), which had been produced with considerable resources and a sometimes huge presence of UK universities. Concerning the numbers the fairs were surely a success, with some thousands visitors at each place. Nevertheless, as the BC operates with only one (comparatively small) grant programme, the number of free movers might not have satisfied the expectations.

Until now, EduFrance has had a more discrete presence through different types of offices (called EduFrance, Espace France, CENDOTEC, etc.), which are partially relying on governmental exchange programmes. In this year, officially declared "year of Brazil" in France, EduFrance tries to follow the paths of DAAD and BC and is by now organising a massive marketing campaign. At the End of September some regional workshops on academic cooperation will take place (in Recife, Porto Alegre, and Belo Horizonte), as well as a big study road show in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, with representatives of more than 50 French Universities. The Dutch NUFFIC, which some years ago promoted a massive presence of Dutch universities at the *Salão do Estudante*, actually also tries to enter the market and is looking for the right place of its Brazilian Office.

Despite all this, the number of Brazilian free movers to EU, especially to the UK, has not increased spectacularly, and often less than expected. The might have several reasons, which are to be discussed forwardly. The weak performance made the former BC-Marketing director Neil Kemps speak of the "Brazilian enigma". This image was chosen in order to describe the unsatisfying little output (of free movers) compared to the great input (of marketing investments). In Germany, the number of Brazilian students at the scientific, technical and applied universities, increased about ten percent within the last three semesters, summing now about 1800, but there is no statistic distinguishing grant holders and free movers (the latter might be the minority). This performance is not so bad, at least regarding the input/output balance. The German case suggests that one of the keys of success is the right mixture of programme, exchange and marketing activities. In a society in which decisions on academic and professional future are influenced by (inter) personal relations, the positive experiences of those involved in exchange and partnership programmes contribute substantially to a broader interest among the possible free movers. The other way round, it seems to be difficult to run marketing campaigns, as BC is doing it, without the bases of substantial exchange programmes, which likely are to be the best and cheapest publicity, and to have efficient multiplication effects also for free movers.

III Implementation of the Survey

Already before the survey's website was launched by ACA, the survey had been promoted in Brazil by several ways. First of all, we used the *Salão do Estudante*, which in this year took place end of February and beginning of March, to distribute massively the information flyers on the survey. This happened in São Paulo, Curitiba and Rio de Janeiro, where the handouts were distributed by the DAAD staff that attended our little information point within the stand of the Goethe-Institute. The same flyers were also distributed at two other fairs in March, at the tourist BELTA-fair mid-March in São Paulo and at a medium student fair in Salvador, where the DAAD was represented by the local Goethe-staff. Altogether more than 4000 flyers were distributed at fairs.

The same number of flyers was distributed by the end of March to three different multiplier persons and institutions. The greatest quantity was sent, together with an explanatory letter, to the International Offices of the (most important) 60 public and private universities. Although not every institution was reached, it guaranteed a well balanced regional and qualitative cover. The other distribution points were the German diplomatic representations all over Brazil. In order to reach interested people also in the hinterland, the flyers were sent not only the German Embassy in Brasília and the four General Consulates (in Recife, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Porto Alegre), but also the so called 13 "Honorary Consuls" posted all over the country, even in more remote locations such as Amazonas, Pará or Mato Grosso. Finally a little quantity was sent to the German-Brazilian Cultural Centres, mostly smaller and associated institutions of the Goethe-Institute, in the South (Santa Maria, São Bento do Sul) and the Northeast (Recife, Maceió).

Besides this traditional distribution, the survey was promoted several times by the internet. When ACA launched the internet site of the survey, we installed a very visible link within the homepage of DAAD's office in Rio de Janeiro. This site serves as the central internet portal for students and researchers interested in exchange with Germany in whole Brazil and is world wide one of the most accessed DAAD-regional branch homepages. In order to support and promote this internet link, we also announced the survey twice by our monthly newsletter – first at the beginning, shortly after the site's launch, secondly two months before the site was taken out – which is subscribed nation wide by about 3000 persons, mostly under- and postgraduate students. In a whole the high number of Brazilian participants in the online survey seem to confirm the success of our strategy.

The target institutions were chosen according to mixed criteria. On the one hand, they should represent the Brazilian HEI as a whole, on the other hand they should also reflect their particularities at a regional and institutional level. Finally, we tried to find institutional facilitators we could rely upon. The final choice reflects, in our opinion, the complexity of the HEI in Brazil in various aspects. Most target universities are federal institutions (mostly federal, some state-run) and most of them are located in the Southeast region, around the axis Rio de Janeiro - São Paulo (this goes for UFRJ, UNICAMP, UNESP, and UNIFEI as a small federal university specialised on engineering courses).

UFPE (Recife) and UFBA (Belém) are two big federal universities in the Northern and Northeast region, which is also represented by UNIFOR, a renowned private university in Fortaleza. The very important sector of the Catholic Universities (called PUC – Pontifícia Universidade Católica), which represent the go-between type of a semi-private/semi-public university with a relevant PG sector, was represented by the PUC-São Paulo and PUC-Brasília. A similar institution type in the Southern regions are the so called community universities, represented by the Universidade Caxias do Sul, located in the metropolitan area of Porto Alegre. Finally, the huge and multi-campi Universidade “Estácio de Sá”, located in Rio de Janeiro and attended by nearly 100.000 students, represented the big sector of private universities concentrating on UG-courses.

The secondary schools were also chosen according to criteria of an adequate organisational and regional representation. The *Escola Corcovado* (Rio de Janeiro) and the *Colégio Porto Seguro* (Valinhos/Campinas) are two private (and rather expensive) international or bilingual orientated institutions; the *Colégio Pedro II* and the *Colégio de Aplicação da UFRJ* two traditional and renown institutions representing the public sector, where as the Catholic *Colégio Marinista* in Recife finally is a confessional based institution in the Northeast region. In the whole, in our choice there could be a bias towards public and high-quality institutions, but it is there where we can suppose the most students and staff interested in exchange and internationalisation affairs.

IV Interview Results

The interviews were carried out (mostly by the country coordinator) at the offices of the interviewees and normally lasted 30 to 60 minutes. Following the given structure of questions, the answers were noted in sketches and transcribed afterwards in a formalised manner.

1. Higher Education Experts

Interviewees:

- *Maria Diogo and Carmen Negraes, Administrators, Director and Officer for International Cooperation at CNPq, Brasília (3/6/05)*
- *Prof. Dr. Benício Schmidt, Political Scientist, Director for International Cooperation at CAPES, Brasília (12/5/05)*
- *Prof. Luciane Stallivieri, Linguist, President of FAUBA (and Director of the International Office of the Community University of Caxias do Sul), (7/6/05, by telephone)*
- *Dr. Timothy Ireland, Sociologist, Secretary in the MEC, Brasília (24/7/05)*
- *Neil Kemp, Expert and Consultant in International Higher Education, London (13/7/05)*

The interview partners were chosen because of their strategic functions. Mrs. Diogo and Mr. Schmidt are in charge of the international cooperation in the two biggest state agencies for academic and scientific qualification and exchange, being also important interlocutors for the International Officers at the Brazilian universities. These are represented by Mrs Stallivieri, who is (in her second term) the President of the Forum of the International Offices of Brazilian universities. Her predecessor was Timothy Ireland (an English who became Brazilian), former Director of the IO of the Federal University of Paraíba, who is now secretary in the MEC and therefore participating in the formulation of higher education policies. Neil Kemp was interviewed spontaneously as former BC-director and an expert on educational internationalisation during his participation at the Forum of the Marketing Officers, at the DAAD in Bonn, because of his thesis on the "Brazilian enigma".

1.1. All interviewees pointed out the importance and necessity of the internationalisation of Brazilian Higher Education. According to Mr. Schmidt, this is urgent especially for the UG-level which is until now broadly orientated toward regional or national exchange. With an outstanding emphasis, FAUBAI-President Stallivieri spoke about the necessity for the universities to form "global citizens with global competencies". Nevertheless, the representatives of MEC, CAPES and CNPq made also clear that this goal already had already been more important and actually often collides, especially within the policies of the governmental agencies, with a new "nationalist" approach in Higher Education policy introduced by Lula's centrist-leftist government in 2003. That view gives priority to the improvement of the Brazilian HEI themselves, considering a research or study stay abroad only necessary in those areas in which Brazil has not reached yet an international top level. As Brazilian PG-programmes have reached now (often thanks to international exchange or cooperation) a level that in many areas is equivalent to that in the most developed countries, the international exchange or mobility of students or researchers is not any longer a goal for its own (T. Ireland); it is sometimes to be substituted by short periods abroad or programmes that foster national exchange and mobility between the more and less developed areas within Brazil. Instead of increasing sheer numbers, the qualitative improvement of international exchange and the strengthening of the Brazilian Institutions has become the most important goal of internationalisation policies. By this

improvement, according to the CAPES and CNPq´ representatives, Brazilian UG- and PG-programmes universities would attract in the long run also more students and researchers from abroad, who should come especially from Africa, Asia and Latin America, often attracted by CAPES´ new specific grant programmes on the South-South level for a PG-course, and could equilibrate the still deficient incoming/outgoing-balance.

1.2. The financing schemes have been also subordinated to that reformulated nationalist view. Within their grant policy, investments of CAPES and CNPq give a clear priority to studies abroad at the PG level, generally for a doctorate, and to short instead of long periods abroad (“sandwich” instead of “integral” grants). This preference, which reflects on a considerable number of grant holders, aims to reduce the risk of a permanent stay (or migration to) abroad and the following brain drain for Brazil, and to minimise adaptation problems upon return. Only for research projects in underdeveloped subject areas in Brazil, whose return would benefit directly national HEI, state agencies still provide long-running grants or project support. In terms of areas, there is an explicit preference for innovative and technology-based key areas such as life sciences, energy and resource engineering or computer science, in which Brazil hopes to reach self-sufficiency and to be able to compete successfully with the first world. This priority aims also to foster the self valorisation of Brazil, or as Mr. Schmidt formulated, to avoid (or at least minimise) the “mistrust of Brazil and its institutions”, which according to him often occurs when grant holders return to the country (and increasingly with the number of years spent abroad). Institutionally speaking, Brazilian agencies always expect a financial counter part, which is one of the reasons for the close links to the (at least traditionally) rather generous European agencies, but they are also acknowledged for their reliability regarding financial obligations, despite the (always possible) domestic budget problems.

1.3. The views on the role of the EU as a study destination sometimes differ, although all interviewees agree in the (continuos) importance and attractiveness of European core countries such as Germany, France and England. These three countries traditionally are also – besides the often close individual and institutional links to the USA to which links were built up also thanks to NGOs like the Ford Foundation – the most important partners in academic and scientific cooperation, especially France and Germany. The recent grant and cooperation programmes launched by EU is considered as one more attractive point of Europe, although they are often criticised because of their bureaucratic structure and lack of transparency. According to the most interviewees, Europe’s main advantage is not really the academic or research excellence (which is regarded as very good, but not as outstanding), but the historical and cultural tradition and variety. (As this diversity is reflected, at a linguistic level, by the lack of a common language, it could also constitute a weakness). In Mr. Schmidt’s sociological view, Europe has additionally the advantage and attraction of constituting mostly rather homogeneous middle class societies, which is a promise of socio-economic stability and cultural richness. Very in contrast to the US, the

lacking image of common European Union-run or coordinated marketing campaigns of the European Higher Education is regarded, besides the high living costs, as one of Europe's biggest disadvantages. However, the homogenisation of European universities is not always welcome either, as important decision makers at the state agencies criticise openly the Bologna Process (due to mixing up the commercial orientated cooperation policy of some countries, e.g. Spain, with the whole EU). Contrary to the actual reluctance towards the traditional partners, exchange and research cooperation programmes with Canada, Argentina, Chile and Mexico were recently intensified. Government and agencies would like to strengthen even more the regional (Latin American) cooperation, but often do not find the adequate infrastructure, technological level or human resources in those new target countries. In order to build up a kind of South-South axis, the government wants to establish, in the long run, cooperation with emergent or developing countries in Africa and Asia, such as India, South Africa or Angola. Actually Cabo Verde's national university is rebuilt with CAPES' personal and infrastructural aid, following the Brazilian model.

1.4. Generally the future development of international cooperation and student mobility is seen quite positively. Most think that student and researchers mobility will increase a lot, not only with the traditional target and exchange countries (incl. Portugal), but also with some culturally speaking familiar countries that have not been exhaustively explored in terms of cooperation (such as Spain and Italy). The new EU members from Eastern Europe do not rise too many expectations, although some could imagine Russia and the more Western oriented countries (e.g. Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic) as interesting study destinations. As Mrs. Stallivieiri pointed out, there is still a broad "gap" between old and new, Western and Eastern EU countries, perhaps more in the perception and in the interest of students and researchers than in reality, which should be bridged as quick as possible. Among all interviewees there is also a conscience that Brazilian universities have to create the basis for this increase of interest and cooperation, also in order to equilibrate the income/outgo balance which actually has in a whole a negative saldo for Brazil, by becoming more attractive to foreigners. In the words of Mr. Schmidt: "We will make a lot of efforts to make Brazil a more important study destination".

2. Rectors, Vice-Rectors, Directors of International Relations or International Officers

Interviewees:

- *Prof. Dr. Luis Cortez, Agronomist, Director of the IO of the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP), Campinas (25/05/05)*
- *Prof. Dr. Maria Elias, Linguist, Director of the IO of the Federal University of Ceará (UFC), Fortaleza (2/5/05)*
- *Prof. Dr. Mauricio Freire, Musician, International Officer and Vice-Director of the IO of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), Belo Horizonte (1/6/05)*
- *Prof. Dr. Amaro Lins, Engineer, Rector of the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE), Recife (29/4/05)*
- *Prof. Dra. Suzanna Monteiro, Biologist, Director of the IO of the Federal University of Pernambuco, Recife (29/4/05)*

- *Prof. Dr. Paulo Speller, Political Scientist, Rector of the Federal University of Mato Grosso (UFMT), Cuiabá (12/5/05)*
- *Prof. Luciane Stallivieri, Linguist, Director of the IO of the Community University of Caxias do Sul (and President of FAUBA), (7/6/05, by telephone)*

Once again the interview partners were chosen in order to constitute a representative sample of sizes and regions of public universities. At the same time, we tried to interview officers from institutions that had not been present at the kick-off workshops in January, in order to catch some additional voices. Mr. Freire and Mr. Cortez are in charge of the international offices of two of the most developed universities in the Southeast (UFMG, UNICAMP), where as Mr. Lins and Mrs. Monteiro represent the best federal university in the Northeast Region (UFPE). Mrs. Elias and Mr. Speller come from two smaller federal universities in the periphery, but which have their specific thematic attraction (UFMT: environment, UFC: energy and water). Mrs. Stalliveiri represents the South and the type of a semi public, semi private "community university".

2.1. While all the international officers agreed on the importance of an explicit policy or strategy of internationalisation, most recognised that such was still missing at their institution. Due to the lack of "material, human and infrastructure resources" (Mr. Lins), but also of the necessary conscience or bureaucratic routines (Mrs. Monteiro), such a policy is at this moment, at best, under construction. The targets were also nearly consensual: at the one hand it has to provide a life experience abroad and a (sometimes) better academic qualification for the students and researchers, in order "to prepare them for a globalised world" (Mr. Cortez), on the other to strengthen the international exchange and cooperation as well as the international visibility of the own institution. These targets are supposed to be reached by exchange and partnership programmes on UG- and PG level, but also by the internationalisation of the internal university units. All interviewees stressed that exchange has to be intensified especially at the UG-level, where it has been until now very deficient and eclectic, and therefore should also imply a strong increase in the number of mobile students. Nevertheless, as Mr. Lins put it in words, there was also a broad conscience that "internationalisation is more than mobility" – involving attitudes, openness of mind and institutions, intercultural and linguistic skills – although the strategies and measures to reach this may remain often vague. Surprisingly only one of the interviewees (significantly Mr. Freire, from one of the best Brazilian universities) stressed the principle of reciprocity as an important guideline for internationalisation in his institution.

Being themselves an important actor in the internationalisation of their institutions and representing all academic units, the international offices (IO) are mostly directly subordinated to the Rector's office. In that way, they implement and execute policies formulated by the Rector's office, perhaps after having counselled them, and function as an "interface" (Mrs. Monteiro) between the higher administration (Rector's office, various pro-Rector's offices, administration) and the other academic units. The direct dependency uses to be manifest also in the personal constellation. The appointment of the (officially responsible) director of an IO, given a minimum of expertise in international exchange of the candidate, normally follows first of all criteria of personal confidence and loyalty. As the directors of the IOs use to come and go with their rectors, the continuity of the work and

administrative routines depends on the qualification and consistence of the other personal. Consequently, the IOs rarely have a budget of their own, but use to depend on the Rector's office budget. The two cases in which the IO had a budget of its own (UFMG, UNICAMP), and consequently a greater autonomy, could not (or did not want to) specify this in concrete figures.

2.2. The patterns of student mobility were relatively similar. No university represented by the interview partners offered a study programme with an obligatory stay abroad – this uses to be a voluntary option which is institutionally prepared or framed by the university and its partnership contracts (mostly by faculty or IO), but which has to be financed predominantly by the students and therefore depends on individual resources. At the UG level, most student exchange happens within bilateral agreements and contracts with other universities, which seem also to be the best guarantee of a later recognition of foreign credits, whereas at the PG level the support through grants by national and foreign agencies is predominant. According to all interviews, the rate of involved and mobile students is still rather little. About 1-1,5% of the students of one institution benefit from an exchange programme every year, in the whole rather equally distributed between under- and postgraduates. That implies a much higher rate of mobile or exchanged students at the PG-level, which generally has much less enrolled students (between 10 to 40 % of the total number) than the UG programmes. Exchange traditionally happens with the US and some traditional partner countries in EU such as England, France, Germany, Spain and Portugal, with a recently greater participation of Argentina, Mexico and Canada. If all the faculties can participate, the most prominent are those of engineering, humanities and social sciences, more recently those of medicine and life sciences. The opinions about the balance of student mobility are less consensual: Most see the own university receiving more foreigners than Brazilians going out (UFPE, UFMT, UFC, UNICAMP), but some also think it may be the other way round (UFMG, Caxias do Sul).

As a very concrete support for mobility, nearly all the institutions off the interview partners offer language courses for students interested in exchange. In most universities this supplementary possibility exits within a language centre open for the whole academic community for the principle languages of the EU, that is English, Spanish, French, German and Italian (also in that order of preference). Only a few universities additionally offer (or plan to do so in the near future) languages referring to other, more distant cultural areas such as Chinese and Japanese (UNICAMP, UMFG, UFPE) or Arab (UFMG).

2.3. Student exchange or mobility was generally seen as something very positive. A period abroad implies the possibility to gain new cultural, academic and professional experiences, and to improve career prospects substantially. The chance was sometimes also seen as a necessity because of the “accelerated and irreversible globalisation” (Mrs. Stalliveiri). The possible problems refer less to the individual than to the institutional level. The high living costs abroad are consensually the greatest difficulty and a factor which actually is more

negative for Europe (because of the strong EURO) and in many cases even may impeach or abort a study period abroad. Other frequent problems are the cultural and language barriers and the often problematic recognition of the obtained credits or diploma abroad. But the adaptation might not only be difficult abroad, but also during the return. As many have lost their contact with life reality in Brazil, on an individual level, returning students or researchers might have problems to adapt again to Brazilian universities or omnipresent bureaucracy, or, as Mrs. Monteiro (UFPE) pointed out, might be disappointed with the ongoing status quo in Brazil, where things normally have not changed substantially – although the students themselves have changed a lot abroad.

The opinions about the best age for a study period abroad are not very consensual, varying from twenty to thirty. Consequently, some officers would like to establish more exchange programmes at the UG-level (where nearly all recognise a deficit in the policy of the grant agencies), considering these years as a phase of non-determined intellectual and cultural development. Others think that exchange should work (and be intensified) only at the PG-level, by rather limited study or research periods abroad for a master or PhD-thesis on a sandwich base, because of the greater maturity and the advanced academic formation of the students. But they also admit an inherent danger: Because the older and more qualified exchange students are, the greater is the risk that they decide to stay permanently in their new context abroad, which would be a great loss for their original institution in Brazil. Although most interviewees had conscience about that (individual) problem, which affects first of all the less developed universities in the periphery, they believe that a possible “brain drain” can be counterbalanced institutionally and equilibrated in the long run by the positive effects of global mobility. In that view, the positive effects would consist in the (multiplication of) contacts and cooperation projects that might happen when a Brazilian PG-Student stays in Europe, gets integrated in academic or scientific institutions and starts to create his own network corresponding to his research.

2.4. Similar to their colleagues in the governmental agencies, the international officers consider the EU generally as a very attractive study destination. The most positive points are the academic traditions and the scientific excellence, the cultural heritage and variety, and a liberal and open society. Especially relevant for Brazilians is that many students, especially those coming from the middle and upper classes, have own (even sometimes remote) familiar and historical roots in many European countries (not only in Portugal). This does not mean only a cultural and emotional nearness, but also some facilities in obtaining a visa (if they have not already a passport of an EU member state) or a first hosting. It became evident that the arguments in favour of Europe were based primarily on the evaluation of the socio-cultural context, not on the academic excellence itself. Some admitted that this was included in the positive attitude towards the European university tradition embodied in the prestige of places such as Cambridge, Heidelberg or Salamanca. But other interview partners also alerted that “tradition sometimes means inertia” (Paulo Speller), contrary to the USA which are regarded as a country with permanent innovation.

Nevertheless, the main disadvantages of the study destination Europe are, actually, the high living costs in Europe (due to the strong EURO), which make a stay for Brazilians very expensive and often impossible. (Due to the recent loss of value of the US-Dollar, this point turns comparatively even more in favour of the US or Canada). Some interviewees also mentioned negatively the unspecific academic formation and the ongoing differences between the university systems of the different EU member states, despite the Bologna Process, which are additionally also not very transparent. Consequently, apart from that negative point, the differences between the EU states are consensually seen as very important. These differences generally exist on two levels: on the one hand within the old European Union, e.g. between the core countries like GB, F, Germany, Italy, Spain and Portugal, to which exist many cultural linguistic and historical links with Brazil and which are therefore the most common target country for mobile students, and the more countries in the periphery of the old EU, such as Sweden, Finland, Greece or Netherlands, which therefore have less demanded. On the other hand (and on a second level), the differences also exist between the whole of the “old EU-countries” and the new eastern European members who entered last year. Although they tend to become smaller or even disappear in the future, they are supposed to continue for quite a while and to constitute an obstacle, especially for the students’ preferences. Similarly to the advisors, the international officers also project an increase of exchange and mobile students with EU universities, probably caused by more demand on both sides, which in the case of the UG-level could turn into strong “pressure” from UG students (Mr. Ireland), predominantly regarding the known core countries, but in a long run also towards some unexplored new countries.

2.5. Generally the international officers see themselves well informed about the study opportunities in EU, using internet and the material provided by (or the contacts to) foreign agencies and embassies, but this only refers to some, generally the main countries. They also admitted that knowledge about EU's HEI depend strongly on the individual interests and experiences of the exchange officer, and therefore vary strongly. Nevertheless, according to all interview partners, the information policy on opportunities abroad could be improved a lot, especially for the EU programmes. The negative experiences with ALFA, pointed out by Mr. Ireland as former International Officer at UFPB, and ALBAN, for which the institutions of two interviewees served as focal point, has made them reluctant toward the new Erasmus Mundus. The scepticism refers to various aspects. On the one hand, the programme is regarded as rather too ambitious, demanding personal skills and institutional qualification that, according to Mrs. Elias, probably only a few universities in the South and Southeast could provide and consequently participate. Therefore, a highly selective programme might intensify in a rather negative way the existing qualitative and regional differences between the universities. On the other hand, there is the fear that Erasmus Mundus will be another of the EU-programmes which have been resulted rather bureaucratic and non-transparent, and often non adequate to Brazilian reality. Mr. Cortez’

opinion resumed quite well the attitude of most: “Before launching a new and even more ambitious programme, the EU should first resolve their problems with ALBAN”.

3. Parents

The interviews with the parents' representatives were carried out during two meetings, one in Recife (29/4/05) and another in Rio de Janeiro (3/6/05), each with six or seven parents. The parents that participated had (mostly two or three) children between 17 and 26 years old (Recife) and 11 and 18 (Rio), who in their great majority attended a private secondary school and, in together three cases, had an exchange experience abroad (Canada, USA, France). Most parents had themselves a university education and now exercise various academic and liberal professions (Recife: doctor, economist, engineer, biologist, engineer; Rio: professor, engineer, artist), sometimes as couple. Resuming, they represented quite typically the urban middle and upper middle classes in Brazil.

3.2. The Parents, too, generally agreed on the importance of a study period abroad. As the other interviewed actors, they highly valorised the new cultural and linguistic experiences their children would make abroad. Additionally, the period abroad was considered as an important step within the education and orientation towards greater autonomy, and as a strong differential in the academic and professional curriculum. More than the university professionals, the parents pointed out the academic and scientific excellence of the universities abroad, considering that Europe and the US generally offer a better university education and more opportunities than Brazil does. As the advantages of a stay abroad would hopefully affect the whole family (by transmitting the new experiences to the other family members, stimulating brothers and sisters, and by permitting trips and new contacts also to the parents), the disadvantages would also. Most parents feared adaptation problems for their children at the moment of the return, not only during the reintegration in Brazilian university or labour market, but also in the family itself, especially concerning the reintegration into the hierarchies.

3.3. Thinking about (possible) host countries and institutions, most of them showed a slight preference for countries of the EU. This option was based in the preoccupation to find an interesting and safe place, very important after September 11, where at the same time a good university education would be guaranteed. Despite of admiring the economic and technological performance of the US, most parents felt an emotional (and sometimes even linguistic) affinity to lifestyle and culture of some of the EU countries and therefore would like their children to have or share that experience (in the cases that one parent has studied itself in the EU). Subordinated to the cultural aspect, the question of the HEI themselves became somehow secondary, perhaps as it was more abstract due to lacking specific information, or as their excellence was taken as granted. Generally the universities in EU, and not only the traditional and prestigious ones, were considered as trustful and had for many the advantage, at least in some countries, of being tuition-free (the more children a parent or couple has, the more important this argument – as the possibilities of obtaining a grant – becomes). Never the less some parents also would prefer the US,

because they think that university courses they do not only offer a better and more complete academic orientation (including the class system and the hosting within the campus), but also are more orientated to the demands of labour and professional market.

3.4. Generally the parents felt themselves badly informed about the study opportunities in the EU. This lack had several reasons. First the Brazilian mass media (newspapers as well as radio and TV) uses to vehicle much more information about the US than about the EU member states. Second, some parents also asked for a better information policy of the academic or diplomatic representations of the EU states, which should address not only universities or intermediary institutions, but also the parents who themselves (at least in Brazil) participate strongly in the final decision. Third, the ongoing heterogeneity of the HEI in the different EU member states contributes strongly to a perception of misinformation and lacking transparency.

3.5. In comparative terms between EU and US, as it was said before, the EU is considered by most parents as the more interesting place for a study period abroad, in several aspects. If the cultural attraction and the academic excellence are considered high, at the same time there is also a conscience that the EU (and even the more familiar core countries) might be the more difficult place for a (at least short) stay abroad, because of many languages, the different social and institutional structures and the greater autonomy that the students have to cope with. Most parents considered those differences as a nearly necessary challenge that their children should take – and hopefully master successfully. Those parents who preferred the US as a study destination did so because they supposed the US to offer a more specific and guided academic orientation, to prepare better for professional life, and to facilitate the recognition of the credits and diploma obtained there. In their view the HEI in the US, but also general lifestyle correspond much more to Brazil. Generally speaking: Depending on the cultural preferences, the greater similarities between Brazil and US increase or reduce also its attraction as study destination, what goes vice versa also for the relation with EU.

3.6. The decision process about the study destination abroad is mostly considered as a free exchange of opinions, although the parents do have the budget authority and mostly also the last decisive word. Most parents were aware of the fact they use to influence their children according to their own opinions, experiences and wishes, but consider this rather as a necessary “orientation” than an authoritarian procedure. According to the Brazilian consensual way of decision making and the generally much more guided adolescence of most Brazilian middle and upper class students, the decision process within the family is described as friendly and harmonious, respecting both sides’ interests.

V Conclusions and Recommendations

Generally, the interviewees of all the three actor groups evidence a positive attitude towards academic internationalisation and student exchange. On one hand, this was based on the generally good experiences made with the most traditional cooperation and target countries such as USA, France and Germany, on the other on the conscience that in some areas and levels, Brazilian universities still need a dose of internationalisation. The positive stance also is valid for the attitude towards the EU, which is seen by most actors as a very interesting study place abroad, due to the cultural, historical and lifestyle attraction of the old continent, despite sometimes less excellent or compatible academic programmes and the following problems of recognition of credits and diploma. Concerning the academic level of possible new exchange programmes, especially the international officers saw the necessity of new and more exchange programmes at the UG level, while the governmental advisors defended the concentration on the PG level.

If the perception of the comparative advantages (cultural and lifestyle aspects) and disadvantages (academic aspects) of the European HEI in comparison to those of the US was mostly consensual, the different opinions (especially between parents and the other groups) referred predominantly to the general aspects of formulation, implementation and execution of internationalisation policies. Generally the parents were much more worried about the safety and the cultural and educational experiences of their children, where as the officers or advisers stressed more technical aspects of curricula and excellence. If for the parents “going abroad” itself seemed to be the an important goal for their children, often independent of the destination, the governmental advisers had a more differentiated view on the choice of the target county and defended often the new “nationalist approach”, expressing a more critical attitude towards some tendencies of the internationalisation of Higher Education. The critique referred on the one hand on the possible domination of the international education market, in exchange programmes and the international students flow, by the countries of the first (developed) world, which would not only weaken the position of emergent countries such as Brazil, but also regard the academics of Southern Countries as a compensatory reservoir for own demographic needs. On the other hand it also referred on the fear of a domination by purely commercially orientated providers, what would be very contrary to the official political guideline of regarding higher education as a accessible public good, independent from market mechanisms, and (if possible) as a means of democratisation and social and racial emancipation.

As a tentative practical conclusion, we will make three recommendations to improve the perception of and attitudes towards European Higher Education in the Brazilian context. First of all, in order to build up a stronger and better image of European Higher Education, it would be necessary to create a proper promotion campaign and (perhaps) a common European Brand. This would imply a better and more coordinated cooperation between the national agencies and the European instances. As nearly all interviewees complained about the lacking or confuse information policy about study

opportunities in the EU, a lot can be still done here. This would include an information campaign about HEI in the new Eastern, still less known EU member states which in a certain way might have even more capacities to receive foreign students.

Second, as the cultural and life style aspects were broadly perceived as the most positive point for Europe, the academic and research excellence of European Universities should be much more pointed out. It has to make clear that names as Heidelberg and Salamanca, for example, do not only imply university tradition, but also up-to-date creative academic thinking and high tech research, besides that there are still many other very good universities to discover, also in the hinterland of all EU states. That the HEI in EU combine “mass and class”, constituting – contrary to the rather few renown “lighthouses of excellence” in the US lacking a broader basis – a broad landscape with a multiplicity of different, but always very good institutions (which often also form European networks beyond national borders), should be outlined as the perhaps most important comparative advantage.

Third, given the implicit or explicit critical and nationalist stance of many officers and decision makers in Brazilian Higher Education Policy, the implementation of new programmes (*Erasmus Mundus*) should be realised with a certain prudence and according the specific sensibilities in Higher Education politics. It should avoid especially the impression of a unilateral measure which supposedly disregards the national (Brazilian) interest of strengthening the quality and excellence of the own universities. That means, new programmes should not only be as less bureaucratic and as transparent as possible (differently to what sometimes happened with ALFA and still happens with ALBAN), and they should also stress the principles of exchange, cooperation, and reciprocity.

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