

Mobile Students and Newly Performed Spaces: Mapping Complexities and Shifts in Social Capital Actor-Networks

Alfredo Salomão Filho, BSc, MSc

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of

PhD

Dublin City University

Supervisor: Dr Charlotte Holland

External Supervisor: Dr Annelies Kamp (University of Canterbury)

Co-Supervisor: Dr Veronica Crosbie

School of STEM Education, Innovation & Global Studies

Institute of Education

Dublin City University

August 2017

Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Ph.D. is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work

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(Candidate)

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Acknowledgements

The craft of writing a PhD thesis is a beautifully disconcerting expedition. It is written by the mind and hands of one individual, but where many other minds and hands interfere in the process. My heartfelt thanks go to those who participated in the craft of this thesis: in one way or another. Muito obrigado.

I am honoured to have had the expert assistance of my supervisors, Dr Annelies Kamp, Dr Charlotte Holland, and Dr Veronica Crosbie, talented and dedicated academics who provided me with high-quality guidance: reading all my hard-to-read drafts, and stimulating a series of enjoyable and inspiring discussions (where some of my arguments were still immersed in confusion). Their brilliance and wisdom go beyond performing the task of supervising a PhD candidate. It has been my pleasure to inspire my own practice as an educator on the manner in which they produce knowledge and interact with students.

My parents, Alfredo and Meryângela, for providing me with all the instruments to live a good life in the broadest sense. They are the best indicators that distance is a relational performance. Despite residing in Brazil, they have always encouraged me – candidly and genuinely – in both good and bad times.

My aunts, Margarida e Paquinha, inspiring educators with whom I have the pleasure to have many thought provoking theoretical and political discussions, and whose vast knowledge has always fascinated me.

Tanja's parents, Mr. Tillmanns and Marianne, for their great support, whether by telling witty jokes, or sending many crates filled with the finest German food by post.

My good old friends, Andrezin, Marcelo, and Pedron, and my cousin Kikão, whose humorous long distance interactions, and a few visits, contributed to alleviate the pressure of my academic endeavour.

All staff from Dublin City University (then) School of Education Studies, especially Justin, Peter, James, Jane, Margaret, Conor, Joe, Francesca, and Trudy, for their kind words and support throughout the years of PhD.

The participants of this study, who generously gave me their time for the interviews, enabling this study to be brought into existence.

The most special thanks go to minha queridíssima Tanja, who entered the same “jungle” at the same time, but found the “monkey” much earlier. Our unscheduled academic discussions were pivotal to the way this thesis was brought into being. For an array of reasons, she is the one who contributed most to my disquietude about ontological singularity.



Living and Dying – Trust Gallery British Museum (Salomão Filho 2008)

Everywhere people deal with and produce realities of life – whether tough or not (...) Challenges we all share but for which there are many different responses (Trust Gallery British Museum 2008).

Table of Contents

List of Tables	i
List of Figures	ii
List of Photographs	iii
Abstract	iv
A Note to the Reader: When Modern Meets ANTian	1
Chapter 1: Opening the File.....	11
1.1 Introduction	11
1.2 Research Genesis	15
1.3 Research Agenda.....	16
1.4 Research Rationale.....	17
1.5 Composition of the Thesis	21
Chapter 2: Mapping Relevant Out-thereness	25
2.1 Introduction.....	25
2.2 Foreword to Actor-Network Theory: Revisiting Existence.....	28
2.3 Actor-Network Theory: Turning the Mundane into Complex.....	35
2.3.1 Translation as Transformation in the Making.....	44
2.3.2 Nothing but Enactment or Performance.....	54
2.3.3 An ANT Ontology	57
2.4 Globalisation(s) In-here and Out-there	60
2.5 International Education Complexities.....	68
2.6 Social Capital: Capitalising Human Relations.....	83
2.7 Summary	95
Chapter 3: Performative Methodology	100
3.1 Introduction.....	100
3.2 ANT as a Research Methodology	102
3.3 Doing Case Study Research.....	104
3.3.1 Assembling Texts.....	106
3.3.2 Assembling Students.....	107
3.3.3 Assembling Policy Actors.....	112
3.4 Methods for Enacting and Discovering Realities	112
3.4.1 Interviews as a Mode of Inquiry	113
3.4.1.1 Interviews with Students.....	115
3.4.1.2 Interviews with Policy Actors.....	125
3.4.2 Documentary Analysis.....	128
3.4.3 Research Notebooks.....	129
3.5 Abstracting Empirical Data.....	135
3.6 Ethics.....	144
3.7 Summary	148
Chapter 4: The Twelve Mobile Students	151
4.1 Introduction.....	151
4.2 The Twelve Mobile Students	154

4.2.1 Purple's Story: "The visa should be simpler"	154
4.2.2 Green's Story: "Everything is a strategy"	155
4.2.3 Grey's Story: "My connections were not built overnight"	156
4.2.4. Yellow's Story: "It is a rebirth"	156
4.2.5 Orange's Story: "I didn't have the usual international students' headaches"	157
4.2.6 Red's Story: "Brazilians made me feel at home"	157
4.2.7 Blue's Story: "Taking risks"	158
4.2.8 Brown's Story: "I lost my job and had a moment of decision"	159
4.2.9 Silver's Story: "To learn is to deal with difficulties"	159
4.2.10 Pink's Story: "It's a fight"	160
4.2.11 Beige's Story: "This experience is an adventure"	160
4.2.12 Lavender's Story: "There is a world overseas"	161
4.3 Reflective Vignette: Alfredo's Story	162
4.4 Summary	162

Chapter 5: Debating Unmodern Agency in International Education Realities

.....	165
5.1 Introduction	166
5.2 Debating Non-human Agency	166
5.3 Non-human Entities in International Education	175
5.4 Inscription Devices	185
5.5 Reflective Vignette: "Get here earlier tomorrow"	193
5.6 Summary	196

Chapter 6: Shifts in Social Capital Actor-Networks..... 198

6.1 Introduction	198
6.2 Tracing Social Capital with an ANT Sensibility	200
6.3 Reassembling Social Capital from Brazil to Ireland.....	217
6.3.1 Family and Friends.....	219
6.3.2 Disconnected	222
6.3.3 Strategies of Enrolling Actors in Dublin.....	223
6.3.4 Centres of Social Capital Actor-Networks.....	227
6.4 Social Capital by the Actors Themselves	237
6.5 Cyborgs of International Education	239
6.6 A Brazilian "Community" in Dublin? The English Language and Paradoxical Enactments	245
6.7 Reflective Vignette: A Philosophical Problem	262
6.8 Summary	265

Chapter 7: The Four Moments of Policy 269

7.1 Introduction	269
7.2 The Four Moments of Translation	271
7.2.1 Problematisation.....	272
7.2.2 Interessement	279
7.2.3 Enrolment.....	286
7.2.4 Mobilisation	291
7.3 More than Rules, More than <i>Having</i> Power	295
7.4 What if the Translator was not the Irish Government?	298

7.5 Reflective Vignette: Fractal Policy	303
7.6 Summary	311
Chapter 8: Closing the File	315
8.1 Introduction.....	315
8.2 Contribution to Knowledge.....	317
8.3 Limitations of Research	327
8.4 Future Research.....	329
8.5 Recommendations.....	331
8.6 Reflective Vignette: Closing the File.....	334
References	337
Appendix A: Purple’s Story	
Appendix B: Green’s Story	
Appendix C: Grey’s Story	
Appendix D: Yellow’s Story	
Appendix E: Orange’s Story	
Appendix F: Red’s Story	
Appendix G: Blue’s Story	
Appendix H: Brown’s Story	
Appendix I: Silver’s Story	
Appendix J: Pink’s Story	
Appendix K: Beige’s Story	
Appendix L: Lavender’s Story	
Appendix M: Alfredo’s Story (reflective vignette)	
Appendix N: Informed Consent Form	
Appendix O: Plain Language Statement (for students)	
Appendix P: Plain Language Statement (for policy actors)	
Appendix Q: Ethical Approval	
Appendix R: A Possibility of Social Capital Translation (reflective vignette)	

List of Tables

Table 1: Translation Strategies	49
Table 2: Social Capital: Issue, Contention, and Problem	92
Table 3: Interviews with Students.....	116
Table 4: First Event of the First Interview Guide	117
Table 5: Second Event of the First Interview Guide.....	117
Table 6: Third Event of the First Interview Guide.....	118
Table 7: Fourth Event of the First Interview Guide.....	118
Table 8: First Event of the Second Interview Guide.....	122
Table 9: Second Event of the Second Interview Guide	123
Table 10: Interviews with Policy Actors.....	125
Table 11: Policy Actors Interview Guide	127
Table 12: International Education Policy Reports	129
Table 13: Analytical Framework	144
Table 14: Questions that Oriented the Craft of the Case Studies.....	152
Table 15: Reverse Blackboxing	184
Table 16: Terminology of the Forms of Capital Actor-Networks	216
Table 17: What Brings Members of a Group Together?	237
Table 18: Shifts in Social Capital Actor-Networks	261
Table 19: Higher Level Group on International Education	280

List of Figures

Figure 1: Analytical Map of Discussion Chapters	8
Figure 2: Research Inquiries	17
Figure 3: Quasi-object.....	34
Figure 4: Principle of Symmetry.....	40
Figure 5: Networks Helping Tool	119
Figure 6: Notebook 1	132
Figure 7: Notebook 3	135
Figure 8: Actors Birth Place.....	154
Figure 9: Modern/Unmodern Agency.....	171
Figure 10: Imagined Community/Fragmented Bubble Form Community	251
Figure 11: Problematisation Diagram.....	278
Figure 12: Some Participants of the IPAN.....	281
Figure 13: Tuition Fees	294
Figure 14: Non-Tuition Spend	294

List of Photographs

Photograph 1: Letter from Pero Vaz de Caminha to Dom Manoel I.....	11
Photograph 2: Out-thereness.....	25
Photograph 3: Translation.....	100
Photograph 4: Research Point of Assembly.....	110
Photograph 5: The Interview Room.....	111
Photograph 6: The Messy Process of Unmodern Coding.....	141
Photograph 7: Actor-Networks.....	151
Photograph 8: Robot Dances with Paralympic Athlete.....	165
Photograph 9: Queue to the Point of Surveillance.....	193
Photograph 10: Social Capital.....	198
Photograph 11: Green's Web Before Dublin.....	218
Photograph 12: Green's Web in Dublin.....	218
Photograph 13: Obligatory Passage Point.....	269
Photograph 14: Presence and Absence.....	315

Abstract

Mobile Students and Newly Performed Spaces: Mapping Complexities and Shifts in Social Capital Actor-Networks

Alfredo Salomão Filho

This philosophically oriented thesis engages with the growing and multi-faceted phenomenon of global student mobility and the forms of capital which underpin, are changed by and, in some form, evolve from these experiences. Drawing on Actor-Network Theory, the practices and experiences of Brazilian students – and their shifts in social capital as they embark on their journey to Ireland – are at the core of the analysis. The focus is on the description of strategies deployed by the students to enrol and mobilise other actors, therefore extending their actor-networks. The investigation continues by tracing the heterogeneous associations that assemble the Irish international education policy strategy in light of its agentic capacity to enact realities in a particular way. The task of closely “following the actors”, whether human or non-human, allows the emergence of a hybrid discussion between scholarly enquiry and empirical study, where ontological disquietudes are favoured over epistemological rules. This thesis falls into an ontological debate on the consequences of an encounter between Actor-Network Theory, international education realities, and the idea of social capital. In this, all the actors involved – primary and secondary data, and researcher – are seen as entities performing a series of associations in the same plane of immanence, rejecting *a priori* categorisations established by Cartesian modes of knowledge production.

In electing case study as a research methodology, this study was brought into being by assembling in-depth interviews, documentary analysis, and reflective diaries as research methods. The fluid concept of translation was used to describe the socio-material practices of students, policy, and their associations; framing the often paradoxical ways realities are enacted. Actor-Network Theory’s artifices – that favour the craft of unfamiliar theoretical repertoires – generated the concept of “social capital actor-networks”. This hybrid theoretical construct illuminates how human and non-human entities’ singular and precarious processes of mobilisation are performed until some form of ontological security is achieved via alliances. This thesis demonstrates how a relational philosophical sensibility can flourish as it concomitantly explores and brings into existence previously unknown international education realities.

A Note to the Reader: When Modern Meets ANTian

This thesis engages with *a* relational/flat ontology offered by Actor-Network-Theory (ANT). My intention here is not to create a tension, or dualism between “ANT” and “Non-ANT”, but to clarify some key theoretical and analytical issues. First, I provide a brief guide to the reader on the ontology, epistemology, and axiology of ANT. Second, I flag what ANT has to offer to social research, and its theoretical and methodological differences from more traditional ways of doing social science. Finally, as the title of this thesis suggests, the act of “mapping complexities” is elucidated. I offer a map of my analytical journey through this thesis, explaining the purpose and origin of all its Discussion Chapters. In this foreword, I would like to acquaint the reader with ANT, hoping for a smooth expedition throughout the relational world of this thesis.

ANT's ontological position is relational or flat. These terms are used interchangeably as they refer to the same philosophical sensibility. Truth(s) come into being as an effect of relationships among *actors*. ANT's relational/flat ontology is closely associated with the idea of the actor. Any entity that demonstrates agency, or the capacity to alter a given state of affairs, is an actor, and must always be analysed in relation to what it transforms. It is important to note that an actor is not necessarily human, which indicates the heterogeneity in relations ANT is defending.

The analytical symmetry between human and non-human entities has the potential to trigger strong reactions from scientists engaged in the process of exploring

ANT. ANT does not suggest that humans and non-humans are the same. However, if actors are formed in/by the relation with others, they should be analysed in the same terms, whether they are human or non-human. Interaction is not exclusive to human intentionality as objects make humans do (un)expected things. For instance, a laptop that breaks down transforms one's workday into a visit to a computer repair shop.

In the cosmos ANT navigates, any social phenomenon is the result of associations among heterogeneous actors. The collective phenomenon I am interested in this thesis lies in students' international education experiences. Such experiences can be seen as the interweaving of different actors, such as educational qualifications, motivations, emotions, policy agenda, universities, accommodation, "social capital", fellow students, and so on. They are all actors that constitute one another as they relate to one another. In other words, actors change their identity as they interact with others. For instance, a Brazilian individual without a visa *is* an illegal immigrant in Ireland, whereas if the visa is part of their actor-network, the individual *is* thus, an international student.

In a world where one only sees actor-networks in action (or movement), always altering their nature as they associate/disassociate with other actors, the idea of relational/flat ontology represents the hybridisation of such world. This position opposes to modern divisions between nature, society, and discourse. Everything is messily related to something else until a phenomenon is formed. For instance, this PhD thesis could be understood as the effect of associations between actors, such as "thoughts-laptop-people-data-books-regulations" rather than only seeing

humans with intentions making use of objects and written and oral speech when interacting with other humans. In ANT, all actors have the same ontological status and relate freely with one another; agency is democratised. What is most important is to investigate how they relate to one another, modifying not only themselves, but also the way reality is. Reality itself is the result of a set of associations among heterogeneous actors.

ANT's flat ontology opposes to the more consolidated idea of establishing *a priori* dichotomies, such as conscious/inanimate, subject/object, inside/outside, local/global. This is not to say that dichotomies do not exist, but are rather "socially constructed". Once they are constructed, they are taken for granted, influencing how one makes sense of reality. Thus, analysing the role of the actors in the process of "*constructing*" something, such as mobile students trying to *mobilise social capital*, is welcomed by ANT.

Therefore, the use of the term "flat" not only acts as ontological guidance, but also as an abstract visual aid for depicting what an "ANT world" might look like. The idea is to imagine reality as a flat surface where an array of moving actor-networks increase/decrease their size as they attach/remove other actors to it. The task of becoming more connected (longer, "bigger", more influential, more "global") is only achieved via *translation*, or when A establishes a novel link with B, modifying who/what they are, precisely because they are, now, related. For instance, a student who decides to use a previously abandoned bike in the garage to cycle to campus stops being a "student-taking-the-bus-to-campus" and becomes a "student-cycling-to-campus" or a "student-saving-on-bus-tickets". In

the same (“flat”) line of analytical symmetry: the bike stops being “an-abandoned-bike-in-the-garage” and becomes “a-bike-taking-the-student-to-campus¹”. If we focus on the student as the actor to be “followed”, we observe how their actor-network is now, with a bike, more connected, or “bigger”. Yet, in this illustrative event, the student has to be analysed in relation to the bike – both on the same ontological plane; or “surface”. The student acts upon the bike and vice-versa. Both are actors.

ANT’s understanding of *epistemology* intimately derives from its ontological articulations and the idea of hybridisation of entities. If there is no *a priori* and arbitrary separation between knowledge and the interpretation of this very knowledge – if reality is a flat plane with no depth – knowledge production is the result of an encounter among different actors, such as analyst, primary and secondary data, research methods, and so on. For ANT, epistemology is nothing but ontology. Heterogeneous actors will relate to one another until scientific knowledge is produced; or *made real*. My role as a social scientist writing a PhD thesis serves as an illustration of this phenomenon. I know because my relations with other actors allow me to know; knowledge is also an effect of associations among actor-networks².

Despite ANT’s provocative and abstract ontological/epistemological constructs, its *axiology* is clear. ANT rejects the more traditional view that scientists are endowed with the capacity to detect “hidden meanings” of social life. The voices

¹ In ANT research, hyphenation is applied in order to describe all the elements that are associated

² See Fenwick & Edwards (2010).

of the actors, whether describing their actions or making sense of their own world, are the only valid empirical data. The analyst should rely heavily on what is being presented by the actors in order to generate scientific knowledge, and must neither censor nor judge what is being said.

Given ANT's "features" or principles – seen as radical to some schools of thought – it is unavoidable to point out how different the former is from the latter. As ANT's ontological, epistemological and axiological teachings are considered, that which is conceived as scientific research also changes. In the next paragraphs, I focus on what ANT offers for social research, and its more substantial differences from non-relational approaches.

ANT offers localised *descriptions*³ of the practices of the actors, rather than generalising research findings or providing solid accounts on how society works. ANT's commitment with detailed description of processes abstains from predicting how the future will look like, as relations among actors are contingent and fluid. Thus, the analyst should focus solely on *how* actor-networks are formed and how they manage to expand and/or stabilise. This does not mean that scientists should disregard the *whys* of social life. The *whys* are explained by the actors themselves and by the analysis of *how* processes unfold.

The differences between the relational and more traditional ways of seeing and doing science are thus, exposed. ANT's reliance on the description of how entities associate/disassociate with others might raise more questions than answers.

³ See Latour (2005).

Furthermore, its writing style is a feature to be considered as “atypical”. ANT research is done through descriptive case studies that resemble stories of a certain event. Vignettes are also common; aiding the reader to assimilate and follow who/what is acting, or what transformation is happening as actors relate to one another. Finally, ANT research concerns the controversies, complexities, and paradoxes that emerge from collective life, and should thus, be given space in the sociological/philosophical treatise. It is important to note that the analyst must “follow the actors” before selecting what theory will “frame” the study. The “frame” of the study is given only after the actors were “followed”, relying exclusively on the empirical data generated by the actors themselves.

ANT’s devotion for description as the tool that generates scientific knowledge does not stand alone as the only ANTian analytical possibility. The acknowledgement that every social arrangement might change rapidly and unpredictably is extended to ANT as a (scattered) theoretical body itself. ANT analysis is never standardised. Each scientist travelling with such approach will produce *a* specific ANT account as relational ontologies cannot be reduced to rigid frameworks, or “n-step” models. If the way entities relate to others is singular and “produces” a certain reality, ANT is always under transformation as long as social scientists choose to engage with it.

The notion of *betrayal/enrichment/movement* is advocated by key ANT scholars, such as Bruno Latour, John Law, and Annemarie Mol. The idea is to modify what ANT *is* every time ANT is invoked in social research. In this sense, being a “betrayal” of ANT does not refer to someone’s dubious character, but to the idea

that a given set of relations will produce a given, unique reality. In a sense, being a “betrayal” is the ultimate “classical” ANT approach. The focus is on the creation rather than replication of scientific knowledge.

ANT’s world is multiple and inclusive, meaning that ANT research generates *a*, rather than *the*, Truth. If complexity refers to one’s incapacity to fully grasp reality, ANT defends that complex (or messy) realities demand complex (or messy) studies of this very reality⁴. The rationale for embarking on a relational journey lies in the fruitful possibilities to do social research “alternatively”, accepting, and dialoguing with, complicated, highly mutable, and non-linear twentieth first century realities, such as international education. ANT’s argument is that orthodox and rigid theoretical and methodological frameworks do contribute to scientific debates but might not be *always fluid enough* to analyse objects that change their nature as they relate with other objects. ANT invites the analyst to welcome and discuss complexity, rather than reducing or simplifying it. In this study, I consider the fluidity inherent to the entanglements of collective life when actors become mobile.

My own association with ANT reveals my commitment with detailed description of the practices of the actors, and scholarly debates and experimentations (“betrayals”). In this thesis, I am concerned with mobile students’ associations (translations) that are performed until a support actor-network is mobilised, and the more philosophical consequences of an encounter between ANT, the idea of social capital, and international education realities. Above all, I am engaged in

⁴ See Law (2004; 2006b).

seeing the phenomenon of international education through relational ontology lenses.

A map can orient those exploring unknown terrain. Figure 1 indicates which “complexities” were generated (or mapped) as an effect of ANT’s primordial task of “following the actors”. In what follows, I explain the purpose and origin of each one of the four Discussion Chapters (or “complexities”) of this thesis. I invite the reader to consider my process of writing this thesis as the effort made by the “translator”, or the actor who enrolls others in order to form a functioning actor-network. In a sense, I am the translator of this research enterprise. I enrol other actors (from participants to theories and concepts) in order to produce scientific knowledge (the PhD thesis itself).

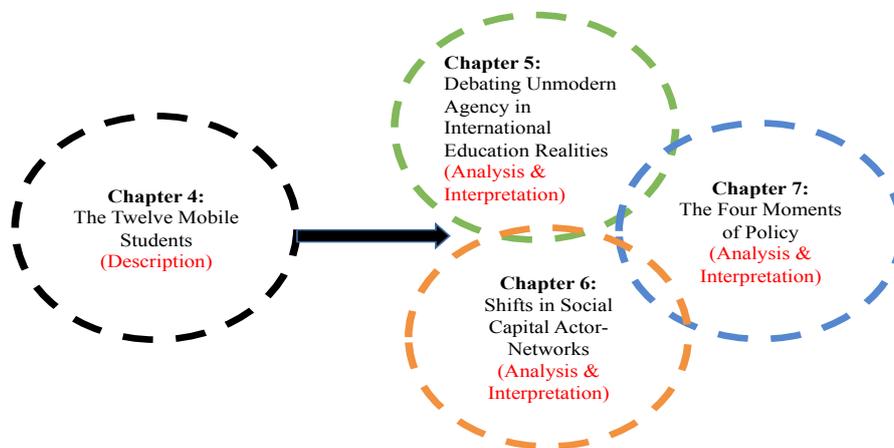


Figure 1: Analytical Map of Discussion Chapters

Although I provide an overview of the chapters of this thesis in Chapter 1 (Opening the File), I believe it is helpful to explain to the reader my analytical journey with empirical data (Discussion Chapters). My first “entry point” was to

start “following” twelve mobile students in order to write their stories of international education, focusing on theorisations of social capital. From the writing up of the descriptive stories of the twelve mobile students (**Chapter 4**), I started “betraying” ANT as – besides descriptive – analytical, interpretive and reflective dimensions are also part of this thesis⁵. The stories (descriptions) of Chapter 4 were pivotal to the elaboration of the other Discussion Chapters, revealing the performative (rather than structured) methodological inclination of this study. If I consider all Discussion Chapters as “actors”, I could think of Chapters 5, 6, and 7 as the result of my association (or reflective interaction) with the students’ stories in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 represents the shift from *description* to *analysis & interpretation* of primary and secondary data. This chapter is warranted by the high degree of controversy attributed to ANT’s provocative articulations of non-human agency. I aim not only to discuss this idea, but also to point out how the agency of objects, whether mundane or influential, is highly visible in ANTian international education landscapes.

Remaining in the analytical and interpretive dimension, **Chapter 6** works to establish a dialogue between ANT and social capital theory, a process (or “betrayal”) that I call “social-capital actor-networks”. The chapter continues by analysing the shifts in social capital (now “social capital actor-networks”) when students engage in mobility, and concludes with the appreciation of various

⁵ See Chapter 3 for explanations of the research process.

international education complexities, such as space, language, work, and community. These actors can be seen as enablers of complexity. They are the “betrayers of meaning” rather than “couriers of causality”⁶ thus, becoming relevant to be analysed in light of relational ontologies.

Chapter 7 concerns how the Irish international education policy strategy is slowly composed thus, acting as one synchronised entity that alters the realities of mobile students. The task of illuminating the agency exerted by policy not only “reveals” a greater area of the “flat surface” that I am investigating in this thesis, but also opens space for the analysis of actors who greatly influence how international education processes are seen and managed.

The next chapter opens the file.

⁶ See Chapter 2.

Chapter 1: Opening the File



Photograph 1: Letter from Pero Vaz de Caminha to Dom Manoel I Dated 1st May 1500⁷.

The thread of argument is never straight. Those who talk of “logic” have never looked how something is spun, plaited, ranked, woven, or deduced. A butterfly flies in a straighter line than a mind that reasons. (Sometimes, of course, woven patterns may represent a straight line which is pretty to look at) (Latour 1993a, p.179).

1.1 Introduction

On April 22, 1500, the Portuguese accidentally anchored on Brazilian shores for the first time in history. Admiral Pedro Álvares Cabral was in charge of this maritime expedition intended to go to India, bypassing the African coast, in search of incredibly valuable spices at that time, such as black pepper. The

⁷ Available from: https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pero_Vaz_de_Caminha#/media/File:Carta-caminha.png [Accessed 7 April 2017].

scrivener Pero Vaz de Caminha was in one of the thirteen caravels, and was one among 1,400 men that landed in this country of very “healthful” air (Caminha *apud* Willis & Schwartz 2010, p.9). He was the author of the letter (Photograph 1) that described to Dom Manoel I – King of Portugal – the newly *discovered* land, where one can find an “infinite of waters” (ibid). It is inhabited by naked men and women “of a dark brown, rather reddish colour” with “good well-made faces and noses” (ibid, p.3). At that time, Caminha narrated to the King that he was unaware if the land was rich in gold, silver, or any kind of iron. “From all that, the best fruit that could be gathered hence would be, it seems to me, the salvation of these people” (ibid, p.9).

Mobility has always been a condition of our existence. Whatever the apparent driving force, the will to travel – whether for long or short distances – has been a common feature of human civilisation since the most remote times. In today’s world, it has been argued that mobility is performed faster, reaches farther distances, involves a large number of entities – human and non-human – and is profoundly facilitated by technological advancements (Larsen 2016). The need for mobility is also encouraged via discourse, although the freedom to do so has become an irregularly disseminated option in what Bauman (2000) named as “liquid modernity”.

Mobility has also become a key sociological concept (Law & Urry 2004), troubling more immutable frameworks that rejoice in analysing social phenomena as something perfectly knowable and static. Borders, culture, identities, and capital – all have their presumable ontological security questioned as a result of

the effects generated by movement, spatiality and fluidity. If A, who was born and raised in B, went to, transforms and was transformed in C, and came back to B; then, who is A? The apparently direct answer to this question becomes increasingly difficult not to be contested. Mobility, hybridity, and their implications have trembled centenary foundations of scientific thought and the way one can understand reality – I argue – in its ephemeral condition of existence. Stephen Hawking believes that we are living in the “century of complexity”. He also advises graduate students to “embrace complexity”, and – as unnerving as it can be – I tend to follow his advice (Jogalekar 2013).

The point is that actors in unprecedented numbers have been engaging in mobility for education, a process that contributes directly to the so-called accumulation of capital. Capital is the buzzword in social sciences, and society – now referred to as “knowledge society” – is not only portrayed as the medium where everything happens, but also *establishes* what it is needed. As one engages in mobility and finds oneself in the midst of a search for cultural capital – which in turn is expected to generate economic capital in the future – social capital enters the scene. It can be crucial as never before. The consequences of mobility on social capital seem to intensify the action of entities – both human and non-human. The enactment of more favourable realities involves struggle; or the efforts one makes not only to *translate* into unknown heterogeneous networks, but also to transform the role they play: a shift from indifference and unpredictability to alliance and benefit. As John Law puts when describing the intricacies of Portuguese maritime expansion in the sixteenth century: “the metaphor, that of struggle with, attempts

to extract compliance from, and making use of, potentially hostile elements, is one that works equally well for the human and the inanimate” (Law 1986, p.8).

This thesis concerns the interplay between Brazilian individuals, who become students of English language and in Higher Education in Dublin, and the Irish international education policy strategy. The students’ lived experiences, struggles, efforts in overcoming all kinds of difficulties, their shifts in social capital as they engage in mobility, and the agency exerted by policy, are at the core of this research. The reliance in heterogeneous associations of human and non-humans actors is thus, pivotal and will be analysed in the light of an anti-essentialist approach. Embarking on Actor-Network Theory (Callon 1986a-b; 2006; Latour 1993a-b; 2011; Law 1992; 2007), I am interested in investigating and describing actor-networks – good, bad, promising, contradicting, the ones that matter – and how realities changed as students made the decision to come to study in Ireland. I believe that it will be philosophically (and sociologically) stimulating to investigate how far actor-networks can extend, how durable they are, and especially, how they were fostered; not to mention the tactics used, and efforts made, to maintain them working.

This is a thesis about empirical ontology that asks questions not about pre-given realities, but how they are “done in practices” (Law & Lien 2013, p.365). This leads me to an ontological discussion on the idea of social capital – its limitations and possibilities for new articulations (Bourdieu 1986; Lin 2008; Portes 1998; Putnam 2000). Hence, this thesis falls into a scholarly and empirical debate on the consequences of an encounter between Actor-Network Theory, international

education realities, and the idea of social capital. In this, all the actors involved – primary and secondary data, and researcher – are seen as entities performing a series of associations in the same plane of immanence, rejecting Cartesian dualism and reductionism in the craft of science.

This chapter continues by describing the genesis of this study; the research agenda; and its rationale. It proceeds by displaying the structural arrangement of this thesis. Drawing on Actor-Network Theory, I invite the reader to join the debate held throughout this thesis. I need to find a *home* for the actors, if “modernism itself is homeless, forcing its inhabitants to dream of a place to live that is uninhabitable” (Latour 2009, p.144).

1.2 Research Genesis

To interest someone in something means, first and above all, to act in such a way that this thing – apparatus, argument, or hypothesis ... – can concern the person, intervene in his or her life, and eventually transform it. An interested scientist will ask the question: can I incorporate this ‘thing’ into my research? (Stengers 1997 *apud* Law 2004, p.39-40).

During my experience as an international student in Ireland I became puzzled by the shifts in social capital that one might experience through this displacement. Precariousness, fluidity, and action. I reflected on how much effort one has to make to mobilise heterogeneous networks and how many counter-networks could block, or discourage, *translation* attempts. These reflections helped me to envisage my research agenda. International students negotiate multiple attachments across national borders and I became interested in investigating what

these negotiations are, how they are enacted, and what difference they could make in terms of extending the influence of one's actor-network. In addition, the agency of more stable actor-networks, such as policy, became a matter of concern for me when trying to grasp the complexity of international education realities. I started thinking of the rules to be followed – and more importantly – how impactful they were in my life as a mobile student⁸.

1.3 Research Agenda

The craft of this study aims to *generate* and *illuminate* international education realities. I focus on the encounters between the experience of mobile students, the idea of social capital, international education policy, and ontological reflections. The increasing number of students who become mobile – seeking international qualifications and experience beyond their native countries – and the policy concern with structuring and organising HEIs – to become competitive in the global market of higher education – are complex landscapes of the twentieth first century. They generate diverse effects for an array of actors. My research agenda is composed by the exploration of what these effects are; how they are produced; and the contemplation of reality as multiple and unpredictable.

This thesis is a case study ponderously inspired by Actor-Network Theory, and formed by reflective, descriptive, analytical, and interpretative dimensions. I reflect on my experience as an international student; tell the international education stories of twelve students; hold a debate on non-human agency; analyse the shifts in social capital actor-networks of these students; and examine how

⁸ See Appendix M for a more detailed story of my experience of mobility.

Ireland's current international education strategy is assembled. All these tasks are performed with an attention to the ontological postulates of Actor-Network Theory and the possibilities of theoretical articulations it offers. My investigation is guided by the following inquiries (Figure 2):

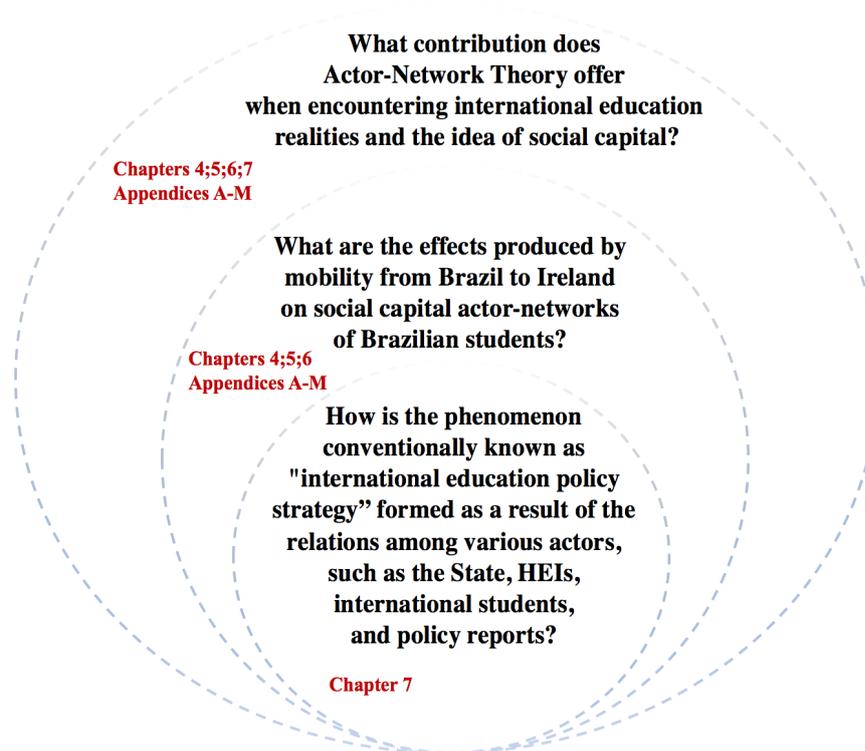


Figure 2: Research Inquiries

1.4 Research Rationale

This study engages with the growing concern in investigating the many facets of international education realities, whether considering the experience of the day-to-day lives of mobile tertiary students, or the role played by institutions and their respective policies in shaping international education processes. It is argued that – despite the growth in research in international education (Stein & Andreotti 2015) – there is a “desperate need for on-going international debate, discussion,

and regular data collection” as we currently have only a “fragmented picture at best” (Altbach 2014a, p.6).

This research aims to add a piece to this relevant but “fragmented picture” as a result of the exploration of international education realities. International students are crucial actors of, and for, international education processes, being considered as the “quintessential avatars of globalization” (Favell et al. 2006, p.7). Thus, a detailed appreciation of their experiences of mobility – when they are “forced to take charge of their own life” (Beck 1992, p.94) – can contribute to enhance the understanding of how international education realities unfold. Moreover, it is relevant to investigate what happens when students become independent of traditional ties in their home country and experience their very own “personal destiny” (ibid), as mobility and change – if not the conditions of modern life – are, in a way, its conditions of possibility (Foucault 2002).

The examination of the thus far under researched group of Brazilian students in Ireland (ESOL, Undergraduate, Master’s and PhD) makes “noises” (Law 2006a). It engages in making the students’ voices heard in light of the rapidly changing and fluid “knowledge society”. The fact that I write this study as an international student also offers its own rationales. First, I wish to comprehend the struggles lived by mobile individuals – those who share with me a sensibility for change and exploration. Second, the craft of this study can aid me in reflecting on my own reality as an international student and all the cross border attachments that are negotiated when new spaces are performed: the shifts in the possibilities to mobilise allies – human and non-human.

Scholars have argued that the potential for interconnectedness among multiple actors – institutions, individuals and knowledge – has never been so possible, so desired, so indispensable (Tillman 2012). The investigation of multiple and interconnected realities that escape from our capacity to fully grasp them can only become less fragmented and foggy if relevant actors of the story are considered and examined. Therefore, the attention to Ireland’s international education policy strategy – and how it is assembled – is interpreted as vital for this study. The directions taken by institutions, such as Higher Education Institutions, the State, and supra-national organisations, directly influence the realities of mobile students, and consequently, that of global higher education.

I now turn to the rationales related to the craft of scientific work and my ontological stance. Although the absence of a dominant “paradigm” in sociology can be seen as an unfortunate fact (Bryant and Peck 2007, p.5), I am inclined to think of this lack of hegemony as a possibility for the entrance of more unfamiliar theoretical constructions. In this, unknown spaces can be created and experimented in light of twentieth first century complex and uncertain realities, questioning the consolidated rupture between sociology and philosophy (Latour 2002). I endorse the argument that static concepts cannot capture the complexity of the flows of heterogeneous actors, or that which is fleeting, distributed, multiple, sensorial, and kinaesthetic (Law & Urry 2004).

In this study, I offer a series of rationales for my choice for the ontological bedrock that simultaneously describes and produces international education realities. The relational ontology of Actor-Network Theory extends the

possibilities of describing how realities are *done in practice*, and the negotiations deployed by the students in strengthening their actor-networks of resources and influence. It also ensures that the students' voices are heard, as actors should be *allowed* to construe and theorise their own worlds (Latour 1993b; 2005). The concern with the mundane exchanges going on within “educational life” (Fenwick 2010) positions Actor-Network Theory as a promising philosophical sensibility to investigate the lived experience of international education in its complexity and detail.

The investigation of social capital of international students using more traditional approaches, such as critical sociology (Bótas & Huisman 2013; Tran 2016) and social network analysis (Gill & Bialski 2011; Roggeveen & van Meeteren 2013) are extremely valid and do contribute to the debate concerning international education. However, I follow a somewhat different path. I make use of the theoretical fluidity and freedom advocated by Actor-Network Theory, in light of the apparently endless confusion around the idea of social capital, to engage in an uncommon and risky theoretical errand: to establish a partial connection between social capital theory and relational ontology, which I call *social capital actor-networks*.

Actor-Network Theory is still an emerging field in regard to explorations of higher education policy change and critical policy analysis. Although it remains more as a “conceptual framework for researchers than a supportive tool for decision-makers” (Saarinen & Ursin 2012, p.151), I aim to *use* it as an attempt to uncover the processes that form the Irish international education policy strategy.

If policy is seen as a rule, it must “reflect and respect the fact that the world is irreducibly multiple and irreducibly distributed between different practices across time and space” (Law & Singleton 2014, p.392). In taking up complexity – or the multiplicity of realities – policy might be framed to consider different arrangements of actors, which could impact students’ experiences more positively.

The ontology that brings this study to life stands as a critique of the binary, deterministic dichotomies of Cartesian thinking that have established much of the form in which scientific work has been done in the last centuries. I argue that possibilities of challenging taken-for-granted assumptions and exploring controversies – both theoretical and empirical – can offer Other ways of knowing about international education, a field magnanimously conquered by anthropocentrism and sociocentrism.

1.5 Composition of the Thesis

Before displaying the composition in which this thesis was crafted, I would like to flag to the reader that I attribute a great importance to the use of footnotes. Such importance has an ontological rationale as I reject *a priori levels* and encourage ontological flatness. In academic writing, footnotes are used to add information to a sentence, whether further readings, bibliographical references, or to guide the reader through the continuation of an argument that would hinder the flow of the text – features that appear in this thesis. I also provide page numbers for arguments that are located elsewhere in the thesis, but are related to the main

body of text. In this way, I attempt to enable connections between arguments that are separated by pages, yet related. This thesis is composed by eight chapters, as follows.

Chapter 2 surveys relevant “out-thereeness” (Law 2004), or scientific material published in the field of Actor-Network Theory (ANT), globalisation, international education, and social capital. More than acting as a frame in which this study is “placed”, the material I expose in this chapter should be seen as the way science is organising the worlds of the actors that relate to the phenomenon of interest. From a “translator” perspective, this chapter represents my process of enrolling other actors (theories and concepts) in order to generate “out-thereeness” (the thesis as a whole, or scientific knowledge).

Chapter 3 sets the scene for the intricacies of the craft of this study, revealing the processes of knowledge generation. This chapter explains the use of *an* ANT case study methodology; how the participants (both human and non-human) were assembled; which methods were chosen to enact (and discover) realities; and how the empirical data was further transformed. It concludes with considerations of ethics in research.

Chapter 4 describes the international education stories of twelve students (and my own), focusing on the relations (translations) enacted by these students with an array of actors, and the effects generated by these associations. This chapter follows ANT’s position to remain as close as possible to the practices and the world(s) depicted by the actors themselves, with a focus on their theorisations on

the idea of social capital. All stories can be seen as the first effects generated by the task of “following the actors” (international students) from which the remaining Discussion Chapters (5,6,7) emerged. This chapter is closely connected to Appendices A-M. Each of the twelve stories (and the reflective vignette) displayed in this chapter has their continuation in the referred Appendices⁹.

Chapter 5 analyses the roles played by non-human entities in the world(s) of international education, altering the way realities are performed. It can be seen as a contribution to the debate on non-human agency, reinforcing my ontological position on the hybridisation of entities, and demonstrating how the associations of non-human and human entities have an impact on one another’s nature of being. Given the provocative ANT ontological teachings, this chapter opens space for a discussion on the analytical symmetry adopted by ANT when analysing relations between human and non-human entities.

Chapter 6 analyses the concept of “social capital actor-networks”, formed by an encounter between more traditional social capital postulates and *an* ANT ontology. Such articulation advocates a more democratic conceptualisation of social capital, focused on processes, where more actors should have their agency acknowledged. This chapter thus, accepts ANT’s invitation to change, distort, and betray ANT itself. It continues by discussing the shifts in social capital actor-networks when students become mobile, illuminating complex issues of work, language, and community in the newly performed space.

⁹ I offer a rationale for this structural arrangement in Chapter 4 (p.153).

Chapter 7 analyses Ireland’s current international education policy strategy. The focus is on the enactment of power relationships and processes that formed the “internationalisation-policy-actor-network”, allowing it to be seen as one *macro* entity that produces effects in the world and alters the realities of other actors, such as mobile students. I also propose an alternative way of seeing how policy actors can be assembled.

Chapter 8 closes the file, exposing the contributions this study offer to knowledge. The limitations of this study are outlined and indications for future research are flagged. I make a few recommendations that emerged from my process of data analysis and reflection.

Apart from Chapters 1, 2, and 3, all other chapters close with a reflective vignette at the end. This is aligned with the reflective and performative nature of this study, and the “unmodern” manner to *represent* reality – or the refusal to demarcate *a priori* ontological borders between subject and object.

Chapter 2: Mapping Relevant Out-thereness



Photograph 2: Out-thereness (Salomão Filho 2012)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to contemplate the ontology in which this study is crafted – Actor-Network Theory – and to map the landscape of relevant themes for my scientific enquiry: globalisation, international education, and social capital. Given the ontological stance of this study, the literature review should not be considered as an *a priori* domain in which the thesis is framed. Instead, each publication that I *enrol* in this chapter should be seen as an actor of importance for the thesis, acting in pursuit of the enactment of a particular reality.

The title of this chapter refers to “out-thereness”, or the result of scientific work rather than its cause (Latour & Woolgar 1986; Law 2004). Instead of considering all the academic publications as foundationalist explanations for the international education realities that I investigate, my interest in these contributions rely on their potential to inform my analysis and influence how I make sense of complex

issues, such as globalisation, international education and social capital. From *an* Actor-Network Theory perspective, if scientific material is “out-there”, it is because it managed to achieve a considerable degree of ontological security. I point out, however, that my relation/translation with these theories will produce a particular understanding of each one of them. The four sections that compose this chapter are outlined below.

I commence with a brief debate on philosophy of science, followed by an examination of Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and the relational ontology it offers. This theoretical movement, or philosophical sensibility, stands as a critique of Cartesian dualism, presenting ontological teachings that interfere in the way one sees the craft of science, and reality itself. ANT is the main *flow* of this study, in which the other theoretical and empirical articulations become entangled. I continue with a discussion on globalisation.

Globalisation has become a major object of inquiry for a wide range of academics. I start with the observation on how globalisation is a plural concept; its definitions, and its various “facets”, such as social, economical, cultural, technological and political. The concept of “glocalisation” and the material semiotic relationship between local and global are investigated, followed by an appraisal of the notion of mobility and the idea of risk – considered as conditions of today’s world, especially for mobile students.

I continue with an appreciation of the literature of international education; *real* actor-networks in the “knowledge society” that have influenced the way a wide

range of actors perform realities. I propose an ontological lens based on post foundational theories to look at rather “consolidated” objects, such as space, students, and universities. I follow by presenting definitions of international education/student mobility and its context. I provide a brief historical overview of international education and investigate international education encounters with the State and universities. Subsequently, I analyse the relations between international education and work, outlining the complexities related to Brazilian mobile students in terms of the series of rationales for becoming mobile. I close this section with a discussion on the relation between cosmopolitanism and international education.

Mobile students and their effort to mobilise actors in a foreign space inform the last section of this chapter. The plural and multifaceted metaphor of social capital is explored. I gather and demonstrate the ideas from key scholars on social capital – Bourdieu, Coleman, Putnam, Lin, Portes, and Burt – pointing out the controversies and commonalities across their contributions. I highlight a crucial dimension of the discussion on social capital – how it *works*. The chapter ends with an overview of publications involving social capital and mobile students.

The following section begins with a brief debate on philosophy of science as the foreword to the section on Actor Network Theory.

2.2 Foreword to Actor-Network Theory: Revisiting Existence

Interpretation consists in developing what is enveloped in the sign. The woodworker brings the qualities of the wood to a certain expression. His interpretation is a creation, not just of a physical object, but of a use-value, a cultural object, a table for steak and potatoes. Although the activity of the woodworker may seem to occur on a conscious level as a “will” or “intention” translated into action, it is no more subjective than the sign was merely objective. Only a Horatio Alger would say that it was by free choice alone that the woodworker-to-be became a manual laborer. The training he received is a particular institutionalization of craftsmanship formalizing knowledge accumulated over centuries by countless people. What product he makes from the wood is defined by the cultural needs and fashions of countless others. Interpretation is force, and an application of force is the outcome of an endless interplay of processes natural and historical, individual and institutional (Massumi 1992, p.11).

The quote above is found in Brian Massumi’s 1992 book, “A User’s Guide for Capitalism and Schizophrenia”. The illustration of the relations between woodworker, wood, and skills offers a way to think of interpretation and meaning. The former is a “force”, an outcome of different processes – not necessarily linear in time and space. The latter, rather than an essence, relates to the idea of assemblage, encounter, relations: “more a meeting between forces than simply the forces behind the signs” (Massumi 1992, p.11).

As this research is not rooted in Euro-American metaphysical tradition (Escobar 2016; Latour 1993b; Law 2004; 2009), I deem necessary to provide an explanation of the substantial ontological differences between more consolidated modernist/Cartesian inspired ontologies and the ones I embrace in this study: that of political and relational. For this purpose, Massumi (1992) helps to set the scene. More importantly, it is imperative to equip the reader with a certain set of “tools”, so they can make “use” of this thesis. But these tools too are relational,

and I am unable to provide the last word. Regardless of the possibilities to make sense of, or attribute meaning to, social phenomena, it would be impossible to exhaust the possibilities of “arrival” (or construction) of more and different meanings. I can analyse and represent the relations between entities in a specific moment, but other different forms of relations (with more or less entities) and representations are possible. The idea that any Truth – or scientific statement – could have been interpreted or made sense of differently dialogues with the inclination of much of the research done in the field of Science & Technology Studies (STS). Or as Woolgar (2014, p.330) would put: “it could be otherwise” – STS’ catchiest slogan. As one modifies what *being* means, new concepts, methods, realities (and representations of these realities) can be created in scientific settings¹⁰.

Before explaining what Actor-Network Theory (ANT) is, the next paragraphs will hold a brief overview of an on-going – and relatively recent – debate on philosophy of science. This is not a rhetorical strategy that I deploy here to demonstrate non-linearity, the hybrid chaos that permeates our existence, and the often confusing ways we make sense of it. Rather, I present the debate before introducing ANT postulates – that will be embraced in this study – for clarity purposes. Although ANT does offer concepts that could resemble a conventional understanding of what a theory is, it is not a theory per-se (Latour 1999b; Law 2009; Mol 2010). ANT is completely *infused* in the empirical – it is how it

¹⁰ New ways of seeing realities can also be enacted in mundane interactions in our day-to-day life, such as when A listens to B’s view of B’s world and before succumbing to judgments, A understands that B’s world is just another – perhaps distant – world.

manifests, and makes “noises” (Law 2006a). According to Gad & Jensen (2010, p.75): “ANT may be viewed as a vessel of intellectual resources that can only bear fruit in specific constellations with empirical matters”.

Deleuzian Guattarian rhizomatic philosophy, STS, and ANT are manifestations of the “post” movement in scientific inquiry. The debates on the political, epistemological, ontological and ethical differences between Cartesian thought – the genesis of foundationalism (St. Pierre et al. 2016) – and a range of “posts” (postmodernism, poststructuralism, postfoundationalism, postcolonialism, post-humanism, post-qualitative, *inter alia*) illustrate a tension in scientific thought that has urged academics to transform the way science is contemplated – and practiced. It is an ontological debate that has significant epistemological consequences. According to the propositions defended by exponents of the “post” movement, the manner in which scientists represent reality is not detached from reality itself¹¹.

The “post” movement and all its reframing advocates the use of new approaches to science and the abandonment of traditional categories and distinctions – the “old way” of doing science. In this sense, “posts” are a critique of “Enlightenment humanism’s ontologies as well as its epistemologies and its science” (St. Pierre 2013, p.647). Such transformation, turn, or the shift between *old* and *new* scientific paradigms – although such dichotomy might be misleading (St. Pierre 2013) – is needed in light of ethical and scientific challenges posed by twentieth first century realities (Greene 2013; Lather 2013; Law & Urry 2004; St. Pierre

¹¹ See Chapter 3 (p.121-122).

2013; St. Pierre et al. 2016). Or in the words of St. Pierre et al. (2016, p.2): “when our encounters with the world can no longer be explained or justified by orthodox thinking, when new problems overtake us that demand our attention, our finest curiosity”. In this sense, the “post” movement is an alternative answer to dualism, rigidity, reductionism and arbitrariness of Cartesian, Euro-American metaphysics (Law 2004), One-World World (Law 2011) or Modernism (Latour, 1993b) when encountering with the world.

Thus, how does such dualism, rigidity, reductionism and arbitrariness look like? Law (2004, p.23-27) elaborates five ontological assumptions, or “intuitions” about reality that permeate not all, but a considerable part of Euro-American metaphysics¹², which are: *out-there-ness, independence, anteriority, definiteness and singularity*. These notions, “invented by the philosophers of science” (Latour, 1993b, p.6), are built upon the idea that there is a reality “out-there” waiting to be discovered, or that a reality – ontologically separated from ourselves – exists beyond our existence and does not necessarily respond to one’s stimuli. This imagined reality “contains” us, or precedes our existence. An interesting metaphorical way of visualising this thought is to imagine reality as a reservoir (Latour 1996b; 2005) in which we would be immersed. It is there before us, and has a shape and/or form that we – as social scientists – struggle to understand. One’s failed efforts to capture what reality is direct the blame to the methods employed to “gather proper knowledge, rather than being an attribute of the world itself” (Law 2004, p.25).

¹² Law makes a reservation about quantum mechanics, “in which the reality in question is taken to be closely related to any attempt to measure it” (Law 2004, p.24).

Law's (2004) fifth assumption refers to *singularity*, or the idea that there is one and only reality everywhere, where the physical world (nature) is ultimately perceived from this perspective. Rocks are rocks, atoms are atoms – in the same form, wherever they are in the globe. Yet under the umbrella of Euro-American metaphysics, Law (2004), however, makes a reservation about the way the social world is perceived, which might be considered as multiple from a cultural perspective. This is a crucial ontological understanding that might pass unnoticed but must not. Various “versions” of the real are not the same as a number of different perspectives on the same reality, a point to which I return in this chapter.

Following with the critique of foundationalism, Bruno Latour's 1993 book, “We Have Never Been Modern”, articulates a critique on modernism that sustains my argument developed throughout this study. One of his rhetorical questions is particularly engaging: “Is it our fault if the networks are simultaneously real, like nature, narrated, like discourse, and collective, like society?” (Latour 1993b, p.6).

The author portrays modernism as an ontology that worked towards the *purification* of reality. The work deployed by such *purification* defines a dichotomy between the world of non-human entities – that which “belongs” to Nature, including scientific facts – and the human world – that which is related to society, discourse, and culture, including politics and language. For Latour (1993b), and that is the point he articulates throughout his book, the “unmodern” world is what should be ontologically considered as *real*: a stance that I embrace in this study. Unmodern realities stand for multiple worlds of messy and hybrid connections. Once the mess is artificially organised by scientists, or *translated*

into facts, reality becomes a spiral of purified essences (or facts) that reduce the complex work of attachments deployed by hybrid entities. In this sense, modernism – or the modern “Constitution” – is related to how one sees the world as a result of the way science has organised/purified this very world for centuries. In his 1988 book, “The Pasteurization of France”, Latour exposes the *mess* “behind” Pauster’s domestication of microbes.

When I describe Pasteur's domestication of microbes, I am mobilizing nineteenth-century society, not just the semiotics of a great man's texts; when I describe the invention-discovery of brain peptides, I am really talking about the peptides themselves, not simply their representation in Professor Guillemin's laboratory. Yet rhetoric, textual strategies, writing, staging, semiotics - all these are really at stake, but in a new form that has a simultaneous impact on the nature of things and on the social context, while it is not reducible to the one or the other (Latour 1993b, p.5).

The work done by purification had impactful and long lasting consequences, maybe a reason why Latour has been the target of much criticism in the Academy (Bloor 1999; Collins & Yearley 1992). The distinction between the “superior” human knower (the subject) and the “inferior” object of inquiry (whether human or not, passive or not) shall be abandoned in scientific inquiry. St. Pierre et al. (2016) observe that

We accept that existence is separated into subjects and objects. Furthermore, we accept a particular existence of the subject, that to be is to know. We are not trained to critique that model and its assumptions; we simply repeat it in study after study (St. Pierre et al. 2016, p.4).

This is not to say that dualism is inexistent but to point out how misleading, or how much complexity would be lost if one starts – from the outset – delineating

borders around *things* and guiding scientific enquiry through such binary, reductionist lenses. If dualism or ontological borders exist, they have to be produced, and such production must be traced. Latour (1993b), drawing on Michel Serres' contributions¹³, prefers to use the terms *quasi-subject* and *quasi-object* in order to illustrate the complexity and hybridity of entities that belong neither to the Nature nor to the Society “pole”, but are produced as a result of their entanglements.

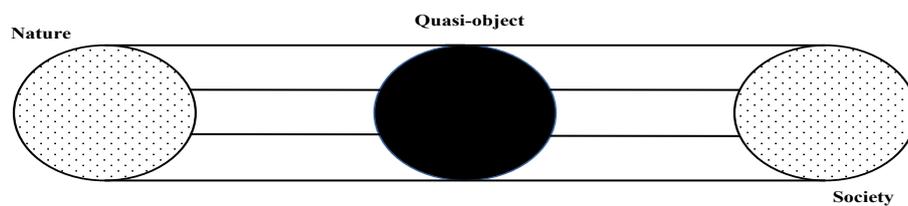


Figure 3: Quasi-object (Adapted from Latour 1993b, p.52)

In this sense, both humans and objects – quasi subjects and quasi objects – are attached to each other, and are produced in an array of relations, defining “our social bond by their very circulation” (Latour 1993b, p.89). Once again, they are real, narrated, and collective. Universalist conceptions, such as “inherent” essences of a subject/object, and a wide range of “-isms” are erased by what came to be called Actor-Network Theory (ANT). Have you ever seen someone’s

¹³ See Serres, M. 1974. *Hermes III. La traduction*. Paris: Minuit.

reaction when “their” smartphone, or an object with “sentimental value” is missing? Have you ever observed how scientists become infuriated creatures when their presumably unshakable scientific hypothesis are disproven by other scientists? Have you ever heard an international student describing their bond to their birthplace based on its climate and culinary?

From such an unmodern perspective, “forces” that are attributed to be purely social, or purely technological (or natural) becomes blurred, and if the analyst “jumps” to clear-cut conclusions (Latour 1999b; 2005), much of the hybridity and complexity of the collective world would be overlooked. It is exactly because relations are dispersed and heterogeneous that there is an impossibility to define the exact “pole” to which a subject, or object would *belong to*. In Latour’s (1993b, p.81) words, “Nature and Society are no longer explanatory terms but rather something that requires a conjoined explanation”, a position corroborated by Callon (1986a-b; 1991; 2007) and Law (1992; 1999; 2004; 2007).

2.3 Actor-Network Theory: Turning the Mundane into Complex

The previous debate leads me to the explanation of what ANT is – a task that makes perhaps any scholar travelling with this approach uncomfortable, as not delineating fixed borders around anything, including concepts, is exactly ANT’s main agenda (Law 1999; 2006a). As Law (1999, p.10) puts: “how to talk about complexity, to appreciate complexity, and to practice complexity?”

If the answer to the question “what is scientific knowledge?” transforms with time, and is associated with scientific paradigms that are culturally considered as “valid” in a specific period in history (Kuhn 1970), ANT could be seen as a critical, non-mainstream – or even radical – philosophical sensibility. ANT progressively came into being initially by the works of Bruno Latour, Michel Callon and John Law in the 1980s, emerging from the broader field of Science and Technology Studies (STS). ANT is also referred to as “sociology of translations” (Callon 1986a), “sociology of associations” (Latour 2005), “material semiotics” (Law 2007) and cannot be considered as a homogeneous body of theory. Rather, ANT is assembled by a series of different scientific publications on various fields of study, ranging from empirical experimentations via case studies to ontological discussions¹⁴. ANT dialogues with a series of theoretical traditions, such as: Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizomatic philosophy; Michel Foucault’s (1977) articulation of micro-powers; Michel Serres’ philosophy of science¹⁵, *inter alia* (Latour 2005). Law (2007) describes ANT in the abstract, as follows.

Actor-network theory is a disparate family of material-semiotic tools, sensibilities and methods of analysis that treat everything in the social and natural worlds as a continuously generated effect of the webs of relations within which they are located. It assumes that nothing has reality or form outside the enactment of those relations. Its studies explore and characterise the webs and the practices that carry them. Like other material-semiotic approaches, the actor-network approach thus describes the enactment of materially and discursively heterogeneous relations that produce and reshuffle all kinds of actors including objects, subjects, human beings,

¹⁴ See Callon (1986a-b); Latour (1993a; 1996a); Law (1986; 1987).

¹⁵ Serres, M. 1974. *Hermes III. La traduction*. Paris: Minuit.

machines, animals, 'nature', ideas, organisations, inequalities, scale and sizes, and geographical arrangements (Law 2007, p.2).

From the above definition, the double-edged sword carried by ANT is exposed. Although this philosophical "sensitivity" has gained a somewhat recognisable shape from studies of technological innovations (Latour 1993a), virtually any phenomena could be described as an effect of heterogeneous relations. The positive aspect of this is that space for creativity and new ways of looking at well-travelled territory – such as encounters between forms of capital and international students – is opened. On the other hand, ANT might raise more questions than answers, as its descriptive anti-essentialist approach is only concerned with *how* actor-networks come into being. In this sense, if an international student is accessing "embedded" resources *in* their networks, the investigation would focus on the description/analysis of how such process is happening, and who/what is involved. ANT is not concerned to predict *why* society would work in a certain way, but *how* it – momentarily – worked in a certain way (Latour 1987; Law 1999; Mol 1999). However, "to the extent that ANT explores the contingencies of power it also generates tools for undoing the inevitability of that power" (Law & Singleton 2013, p.500).

One's commitment to ANT will not result in a form of analysis that can be standardised and given an "ANT label", which is perhaps the reason for so much turmoil and "attacks" from more traditional theoretical schools (Bloor 1999). However, this is ANT (and I risk here with my choice of words) in its "purest form". It is expected that ANT scholars will produce, and intervene in realities in a singular way – especially because ANT ontology is relational. As Eriksson

(2005, p.311) puts: “the ontology of networks does not allow itself to be captured into a law, the theory under investigation is nevertheless an (...) attempt to formulate this ontology precisely in these terms”.

Gad & Jensen (2010) use the terms “traditional-ANT” and “post-ANT” to indicate the transformations that ANT has experienced throughout the years. Law & Hassard’s 1999 book, “Actor-Network Theory and After”, signalises the theoretical distinction between earlier and more recent work done under the umbrella of ANT. In this thesis, any event or set of relations that I describe includes contributions from both ANT “periods”. Apart from an apparent absence of guidance on how to perform an ANT study¹⁶, there is a set of theoretical articulations and concepts that are essential for the comprehension of this sensibility. In the next paragraphs, I will introduce ANT main principles (*agnosticism, generalised symmetry and free association*) elaborated by Callon (1986a), and concepts that accompany ANT research, such as: *actors (and actor-network), translation (and intermediaries and mediators), and enactment (or performance)*. Finally, I provide the reader with an ontological guide to be considered throughout this study.

Callon (1986a) highlights three of the main differences between more traditional sociological accounts and ANT – namely writing style, theoretical, and methodological approaches – which could create barriers and difficulties to understand ANT ontological particularities. In order to avoid confusion – and guarantee the disputability and uncertainty that the term “society” entails – Callon

¹⁶ Except in Latour (2005) and Callon (1986a).

(1986a) articulated the following three main methodological principles that guide ANT research.

The principle of agnosticism defends the absolute impartiality of the observer. The analyst neither judges nor censors what the actors are stating about themselves or their world. Consequently, “no point of view is privileged and no interpretation is censored” (Callon 1986a, p.4). This principle stops the analyst from freezing the identity of the actors, as their identity is being constructed and “negotiated” (ibid). The concepts formulated by the actors should be stronger than those of the analyst.

The principle of generalised symmetry requires the analyst to explain the world of actors in the same terms, regardless if they are human or non-human, and whether they are seemly “closer” to Nature or Society. Callon (1986b, p.4) explains that this methodological principle is vital as the “ingredients of controversies are a mixture of considerations concerning both Society and Nature”, an observation that begs the use of the same repertoire when describing entities in an ANT account. In other words, the “technical” and the “social” should be treated in the same way. Latour (1993b) illustrates the principle of generalised symmetry in Figure 4.

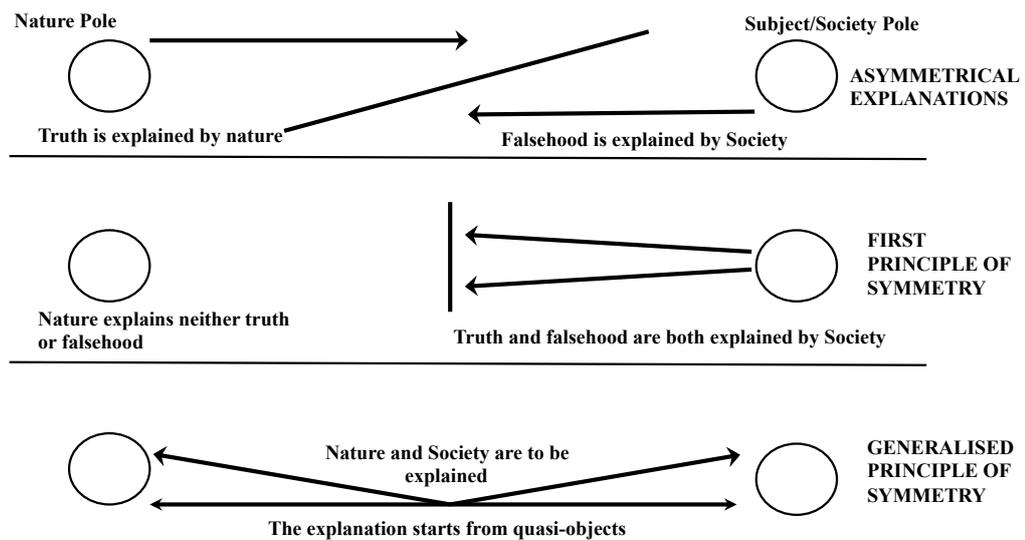


Figure 4: Principle of Symmetry (Adapted from Latour 1993b, p. 95)

The principle of free association advocates the abandonment of “a priori distinctions between natural and social events” (Callon 1986b, p.4), which precludes the idea of immutable boundaries that separate the actors. The division between the actors is the outcome of scientific work, rather than “its point of departure” (ibid, 4). This principle values the relationships of the actors, or how they transform one another.

Instead of imposing a pre-established grid of analysis upon these, the observer *follows the actors* in order to identify the manner in which these define and associate the different elements by which they build and explain their world, whether it be social or natural (Callon 1986a, p.4, *my emphasis*).

Therefore, the *actor* metaphor is central to ANT. An actor is anything that has agency, transforming a certain state of affairs. This is a crucial consideration: in ANT, anything that produces an effect on something else is an actor (Latour 1993b; 1996b; 1999b; 2005). This understanding is closely related to issues of

agency that are not constrained by human intentionality¹⁷ – but seen as an effect of heterogeneous webs of relations. Moreover, the idea of the “actor” does not come without triggering intense reactions from the reader – whether positive or negative – as it modifies what one understands as being “real”. In my view, this idea expands the possibilities of engaging with social phenomena in novel and creative ways – albeit it involves more risk in the task of constructing meaning to the reader. Whether it is a policy, an individual, an ant, or a thought, they are all actors if their action results in change in realities.

From an ANT perspective, humans and non-humans can be actors – but the latter does not refer only to inanimate objects, such as glass or machines. If A felt inspired (in any form) by the fictional characters of a book that A read as a child, these characters (and A’s inspiration) are as real as the physical book A held in their hands. Another example: The fact that B altered their route because C was standing in B’s way is analytically no different than B altering their route because a banana peel was on B’s way. In both cases, I described the existence of actors (C and banana peel) that modify the behaviour of the actor I was focusing on: B.

Considering my hypothetical illustrations above, I could offer how the three ANT principles (Callon 1986a) could be understood empirically. The principle of agnosticism avoids me judging someone who narrates to me how a fictional character inspired the way they act (as much as I might see such a character as boring and irrelevant). The principle of free association is the one that allows the relations between reader-book-character-inspiration to exist in the same

¹⁷ Chapter 5 discusses non-human agency in more detail.

ontological plane. The principle of generalized symmetry is the one that guides the analyst to treat both reader and book character in the same terms, as they relate to one another. Being both real, the book character is modified by the reader (now it is a book known to the reader) in the same way the reader is modified by the book (now it is an individual inspired by a story written in a book). Callon (1991) defines actor as

(...) any entity able to associate texts, humans, non-humans and money. Accordingly, it is any entity that more or less successfully defines and builds a world filled by other entities with histories, identities, and interrelationships of their own (Callon 1991, p.140).

At first glance, I could consider B and the banana peel as actors of this hypothetical illustrative event, and their relations (B-banana peel) as an actor-network. If I did this, I would be only concerned with analytical clarity, missing much of the ontological complexity. The idea defended by ANT is to eliminate dualism and *a priori* ontological borders, which is achieved by its irreducible ontology (Latour 1993b). An actor is not reducible to an actor-network and vice-versa. They are both entangled in a set of heterogeneous relationships, where Nature, Society and Subjectivity “circulates locally” (Latour 1999c, p.19). In this sense, “an actor-network is simultaneously an actor whose activity is networking heterogeneous elements and a network that is able to redefine and transform what it is made of” (Callon 1987, p.93).

The “intentionally oxymoronic” term “actor-network” (Law 1999, p.5) entails the idea of reversibility, or a concept that helps one to redistribute and reallocate action (Latour 2011) – “an actor is nothing but a network, except that a network is

nothing but actors” (ibid, p.800). Latour (2011, p.801) explains that actor-network helps one to visualize how entities “pay the full price” for their extension, acting as a “great way to get rid of phantoms such as nature, society, or power, notions that before were able to expand mysteriously everywhere at no cost” (ibid, p.802). The point here is that any transformation has to be described in its smallest detail, where the attention to the empirical replaces the foundational explanatory capacity of more traditional terms, such as social “factors” or social class. Instead, *following the actors* – how they do “things”, and how they make sense of their reality – is the most *real* way to describe how actor-networks organise themselves, managing to create effects on the world (Law 1992). In a sense, actor-network represents “a change of metaphors to describe essences” (Latour 1996b, p.2), where its “nodes (...) have as many dimensions as they have connections” (ibid).

Prior to the explanation of how entities pay the “full price” to expand (translations), I now describe the spatial properties that are common to all actor-networks, as demonstrated by Latour (1996b). ANT’s commitment with connections has implications in conceptions of distance, opposing to notions of Euclidean space (Latour 2009; Law 2002; Law & Hetherington 2000). Latour (1996b) explains that what defines the proximity between entities is their connection, rather than geographical distance. In this sense, a person in South America is close to another in Europe as long as they engage in interaction. Two people in the same room, but not acting to reduce the “distance” between them are seen as remotely distant. If connections are erased, nothing remains. In this

sense, connections between actors are not being established *in* a space. Instead, they *produce* a space.

The other characteristic refers to scale. ANT erases the idea that society has a bottom and a top and any kind of prior order. Rather than being bigger or smaller, actor-networks are more or less extensive; they are “simply longer or more intensely connected” (Latour 1996b, p.4). The implications of this “new” view on scale are evident on the much used binary form of global and local phenomena.

Instead of having to choose between the local and the global view, the notion of network allows us to think of a global entity - a highly connected one - which remains nevertheless continuously local... Instead of opposing the individual level to the mass, or the agency to the structure, we simply follow how a given element becomes strategic through the number of connections it commands and how does it lose its importance when losing its connections (Latour 1996b, p.4).

I now turn to one of ANT’s central concerns (or its central concern): that every actor-network has to pay the “full price” to become longer and more densely connected; increasing its importance and influence. It has to translate other actors. According to Latour (1993b, p.212), the only way to “become strong” – or become *global* – is by associations, which in turn is “always achieved through translation”.

2.3.1 Translation as Transformation in the Making

In ANT, the idea that the interest of actors should be seen as a direct cause of action, dictating how and why entities act the way they act, is rejected (Callon & Law 1982). More than acting according to interests, it is in the transformation of

the interests of others where the complexity lies. When A attempts to define B's interests in alignment with A's project, translation occurs. "In the world ANT is trying to travel through, no displacement seems possible without costly and painful translations" (Latour 2005, p.5).

The concept of "translation" was initially proposed by Michel Serres¹⁸, being further developed by Callon, Latour, and Law¹⁹. It was initially articulated to describe the power play observed in scientific domains, serving to describe how scientists turn their claims into Truth, and how they manage to convince others to support their projects. It is a relational, precarious, momentary, contextualised, and open-ended process where actors can further (or not) their connections, as "everything happens only once, and at one place" (Latour 1993b, p.162). Callon & Law (1982) argue that the main aim of the concept of translation was not to establish a general set of rules to analyse how interests explain action. Rather, translations aims to uncover the micro negotiations of the actors, illuminating how A enrolls B and why successful or unsuccessful translations occur.

By translation we understand all the negotiations, intrigues, calculations, acts of persuasion and violence thanks to which an actor or force takes, or causes to be conferred to itself, authority to speak or act on behalf of another actor or force (Callon & Latour 1981, p.279).

According to Callon (1991, p.143), "if A translates B, A defines B – noting that it is not important whether B is human or non-human, a collectivity or an

¹⁸ See Brown, S. D. 2002. Michel Serres: Science, translation, and the logic of the parasite. *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 19(3), pp.1-27.

¹⁹ Relevant publications on translation are: Callon (1986b; 1991), Latour (1987; 1993b, 1999a; 1999b; 2005), Law (1992; 1999; 2006a; 2007), Callon & Latour (1981) and Callon & Law (1982).

individual”. Furthermore, A translating B would not reveal any property of “B’s status as an actor”, whatever B’s interests, desires, projects, and strategies are. Callon (1991) points out, however, that A might not have endless freedom to act, “for how A acts depends on past translations” (ibid, p.143).

Thus, one should start the analysis from the “*vinculum* itself” (Latour 1993b, p.129). Drawing fix borders around the actors being followed is no longer needed if one uses the idea of translation, specifically because the work of delineating borders and the focus on how actors emerge from their relations (with other actors) are the rationales for considering translation practices (Latour 1991). The use of such practices by the analyst helped to consolidate ANT anti-foundation/anti-essence agenda if “nothing is, by itself, the same as or different from anything else (...) there are no equivalents, only translations” (Latour 1993b, p.162). In the same line of thought, if identities, equivalence, or exchanges between actors exist they were the result of a laborious process “built out of bits and pieces with much toil and sweat, and because they are maintained by force” (Latour 1993b, p.162). Thus, “to translate is to create convergences and homologies out of particularities” (Callon *apud* Law & Williams 1982, p.553).

Callon (1986a) proposed a framework for the study of translations, or the “logic of tactics” (Law 2009, p.11) when analysing how a group of scientists translated fishermen and scallops in order to investigate the reproduction and domestication of the latter in St Brieuc Bay, France. According to Callon (1986a), translations would be practiced in four moments – not necessarily linear – namely *problematization*, *interessement*, *enrolment*, and *mobilisation*.

Problematization refers to a problem that is posed by the “translator” (in this case the scientists) where their presence in the actor-network is rendered indispensable to the other actors. The scientists gather those actors who will be relevant to their enterprise (scientific colleagues, fishermen and scallops) proposing an obligatory passage point (OPP) through which all actors must pass through in order to become part of the actor-network. The OPP is the solution to all actors’ problems. The scientists want to produce knowledge about the domestication of scallops and in order to make this possible, they have to align their interests with those of the other actors.

(...) if the scallops want to survive, if their scientific colleagues hope to advance knowledge on this subject (...), if the fishermen hope to preserve their long term economic interests (...) then they must (...) recognize that their alliance around this question can benefit each of them (Callon 1986a, p.7-8).

Interessement stands for the practices by which the translator builds alliances with other actors in order to define their identity and the role they should play in the actor-network. This moment of translation will determine if the *problematization* was solid enough, preventing the actors to engage in other actor-networks. A series of resources can be used in order to stabilise the roles and identities of the other actors, such as force, seduction, persuasion, texts, or a “simple solicitation” (Callon 1986a, p.9). It will all depend on how “close” the other actors are from the *problematization*. The scientists used devices (towlines) to isolate the scallops and their larvae from their predators (starfish) and from currents that could carry them away. Texts and conversations lured the fishermen to accept and collaborate with the scientists’ project. Thus, “social structures comprising both social and natural entities are shaped and consolidated” (Callon 1986a, p.10).

Callon (1986a) argues that *interessement* does not necessarily lead to *enrolment*. While the fishermen did not need “extra work” to be kept enrolled (they accepted the argument of authority made by the scientists on how to domesticate scallops) the scallops offered resistance. The use of towlines had to be reviewed if the scallops were to remain safe from starfish and currents, therefore being able to be analysed. The enrolment moment determines and tests the identity of the actors.

Mobilisation deals with issues of representation. The scientists converted the scallops that anchored in the bay into scientific analyses (figures, graphs, tables), which in turn, were used in a scientific publication or conference presentation. In a scientific setting (such as a conference), the analysis performed by the scientists will reach (or not) legitimacy, authorising them to represent, or speak for the scallops and the fishermen of St. Brieuc Bay (although the whole population of fishermen and scallops is represented only by a few representatives).

To mobilize, as the word indicates, is to render entities mobile which were not so beforehand. At first, the scallops, fishermen, and specialists were actually all dispersed and not easily accessible. At the end, three researchers at Brest said what these entities are and want. Through the designation of the successive spokesmen and the settlement of a series of equivalencies, all these actors are first displaced and then reassembled at a certain place at a particular time (Callon 1986a, p.14).

It is relevant to note that the web of relationships between the actors of this story (with many other possible identities and roles that have been negotiated through the four moments of translation) offers the possibility to be challenged, demonstrating the fluidity that translation implies. Callon (1986a, p.16) denominates such possibility as “treason” – an observation corroborated by Law

(2006a). In the case of scallops of St Brieuc Bay, the treason was clear. After two years, the scallops stopped from anchoring and the fishermen did not resist the temptation to try to fish a probable “miraculous catch” of scallops (Callon 1986a, p.16). In other words, the actor-network did not manage to be kept mobilised, or become a “black-box” (Latour 1987) – an actor-network that is “taken-for-granted”. In a black-box, input will generate expected output, meaning that an actor-network reached stability and can perform as one “synchronised” entity – or a “punctualized” actor-network (Law 1992). However, even black-boxes can break down, changing the state of affairs surprisingly and unexpectedly.

Yet on conceptualisations on translation, Latour (1987, p.108-144) demonstrates a series of translations strategies used by scientists when struggling to transform scientific work – involving machines, substances, politics, graphs, analysis, humans, thoughts and laboratories – into scientific facts. The following strategies are displayed from the smallest to the highest degree of complexity of a given event, as “we need others to transform a claim into a matter of fact” (Latour 1987, p.108).

Translation one: I want what you want	The use of persuasion or force is not needed as actors share common interests; the control of the situation does not lie only in the hands of the translator
Translation two: I want it, why don't you?	Actors would engage in this strategy “if their usual way is cut-off”; a rare strategy
Translation three: if you just make a short detour	“You cannot reach your goal straight away, but if you come my way, you would reach it faster, it would be a short cut”; a situation to be considered as long as the “detour is well signposted”

Translation four: reshuffling interests and goals	The translator convinces the other actors to create new goals that would strengthen the actor-network
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Table 1: Translation Strategies (Latour 1987, p.108-32)

The possibilities of analysis offered by the idea of translation have expanded since Latour’s 1987 book “Science in Action”. Apart from transforming scientific claims into facts, Law (1992, p.386) argues that translation is the process that generates “ordering effects”, such as “devices, agents, institutions, or organizations” – and I will argue – social capital actor-networks²⁰. Law (1992) understands translation as a verb which implies “transformation and the possibility of equivalence, the possibility that one thing (for example an actor) may stand for another (for instance a network)” (ibid, p.386).

Although pointing out that translations are highly contingent and localised, Law (1992) articulates that a few translation strategies could be considered empirically more embracing. Translations where more durable materials participate in are able to maintain their “relational pattern” (ibid, p.387) for longer, such as the durability of oral speech compared to written speech. Latour (1987) named “immutable mobiles” those actor-networks that can hold their spatial form while moving through Euclidean space, such as a policy text, or a sixteenth century Portuguese caravel (Law 1986; 1987). This idea relates to Latour’s (1987) concept of “centres of calculation” – laboratories where “appropriate relational circumstances such innovations have important calculational consequences, which in turn increases network robustness” (Law 1992, p.388). In other words, a laboratory is a mobilised actor-network that works towards the generation of

²⁰ See Chapter 6.

more actor-networks, as it exists to organise messy relations (arrays of relations between empirical data, objects, and scientists are transformed into *real* scientific facts).

The fact that ANT is not a uniform body of theory could be illustrated when different theorists articulate their ideas around a certain concept – such as translation – from a particular perspective. Latour (2005) uses a conceptual vocabulary that differs from the contributions of Callon and Law, but could be seen as relevant for this study, making a distinction between actors that act as *intermediaries* and actors that act as *mediators*. While the former only carries causality – or “transports meaning or force without transformation” (Latour 2005, p.39) – the latter might “transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry” (ibid).

Latour’s (2005, p.108) idea of translation is thus refined, being defined as “a relation that does not transport causality but induces two mediators into coexisting”. The author uses the example of a functioning computer as an intermediary (although formed by a series of other actors) that becomes a mediator as soon as it stops working properly – a black box that was opened. In the same line of thought, a banal conversation might become a “terribly complex chain of mediators where passions, opinions, and attitudes bifurcate at every turn” (Latour 2005, p.39). Furthermore, a “highly sophisticated panel during an academic conference may become a perfectly predictable and uneventful intermediary in rubber stamping a decision made elsewhere” (ibid).

Latour (2005) distinguishes the “sociology of the social” (traditional sociological approaches, such as critical sociology) and ANT, or “sociology of associations”, based on the treatment given to intermediaries and mediators by these two theoretical streams. While the first analyses social phenomena considering only intermediaries, ANT focuses on the *traces* left behind by mediators. In this sense, traditional sociology would consider “social capital” as the explanation to why someone managed to acquire benefits in a certain event (social capital as an essence that causes transformation). On the other hand, ANT would focus the analysis on the controversies and unexpected events that occurred as someone was negotiating the mobilisation of “social capital” (social capital as an effect of heterogeneous relations which in turn might contribute to transform the state of affairs). This view of reality as fluid and uncertain reinforces the consideration that the identity of the actors are not given in the order of things (Law 1992; 1999), but are formed in the web of relations they participate in (Callon 1986a; 1986b; 1991; Latour 1999b). Metamorphoses can be explained only if

(...) we redistribute essence to all the entities that make up this history. But then they stop being simple, more or less faithful, intermediaries. They become mediators - that is, actors endowed with the capacity to translate what they transport, to redefine it, redeploy it, and also to betray it (Latour 1993b, p.81).

From Callon’s (1986a) story of the domestication of scallops in St Brieuc Bay, it is observable how the efforts of the scientists were concentrated in shaping the identities of the scallops and fishermen from being mediators to becoming intermediaries (which occurs through translation). In other words, translation was successful only when mediators became intermediaries (scientists acted towards transforming behaviours of the scallops and fishermen from unpredictable to

predictable). The moment when their behaviour became unpredictable once again, they betrayed the translation process.

It could be reasoned that Latour (2005) makes a distinction between causal relation and translation, urging ANT analysts to solely focus on the work done by mediators when describing actor-networks in action. This is a solid *postulate* which I follow in this study. However, I argue that translation – making use of the theoretical freedom that ANT research praises – could be considered in more general terms. In a sense, causal relationships are also a form of translation. Although they might not leave “traces” and should give their way to the description of translations in an ANT account, causal relations also refers to action and connection. I argue that translation – as a change process – does not necessarily need to be constrained only to the field of science and technology. It can be considered as a wider process of transformation, including international education realities. A pen that does not burst while being used to write a text might not offer a worthy description from a translation point of view. However, this pen that helped to write a text – apart from being an actor – could play a role in possible future encounters between mediators. The reactions from others to the written text could be seen as unpredictable, producing bifurcations in various complex chains of mediators. Yet, the pen did what was expected from it. The important consideration here is that the pen enacted realities.

2.3.2 Nothing but Enactment or Performance

I have stated previously that ANT is experiencing translations itself and often borrows concepts from other theoretical streams. The debates held around the idea of translation – and the various case studies generated from it – have not been immune to critique. After two decades of “traditional-ANT” (Gad & Jensen 2010), it was understood that the result of the analysis of a phenomenon using the concept of translation would reveal the Truth; or how things came into being and how they stand as a result of the relations constructed between actors (Law 2004; 2007; Law & Singleton 2013).

Scholars, such as Star (1991), pointed out the utmost relevance given to the “translator” (the actor who creates the obligatory passage point) while other less influential actors are not properly accounted for. The Machiavellian effect on “traditional ANT” studies seemed to have simplified reality, reducing it to the way the “prime-mover” acts and shapes the realities of the others with whom relations are established (Latour 1994). Although there have been some answers to this critique, electing “misunderstanding” as the main reason for it (Law & Hassard 1999), ANT started engaging in even more complexity, shifting its metaphorical and explanatory tools to reinforce the scepticism about essentialism and to hear the voices of actors that are not “central” in the story. This transformation is, above all, a struggle with scientific representation, and the recognition that realities are multiple. In other words, the reformulation of the idea that even objects that appear to be “finished”, “pre-existent”, “ready-made” and “black-boxed” might generate controversy (Woolgar & Lezaun 2013).

ANT – or “post-ANT” (Glad & Jensen 2010) – associates itself with the “turn to ontology” in STS (Lynch 2014; Woolgar 2014; Woolgar and Lezaun 2013) employing the term *enactment or performance* in its accounts to describe how “objects, persons, things, facts, theories, instruments can all be enacted” by a web of relations (Woolgar and Lezaun 2013, p.325). Therefore, the metaphor of construction is abandoned (Law 2007) as “*social shaping* connotes a relatively mild intervention in presumptions about the pre-existence of entities, and *enacting* connotes the most provocative²¹” (Woolgar and Lezaun 2013, p.324, *authors’ emphasis*).

Objects do not acquire a particular meaning in, or because of, a given context; they cannot be accounted for by reference to the external circumstances of their existence. Rather, objects are brought into being, they are realized in the course of a certain practical activity, and when that happens, they crystallize, provisionally, a particular reality, they invoke the temporary action of a set of circumstances (Woolgar & Lezaun 2013, p.323-4).

Annemarie Mol’s 2002 book, “The Body Multiple”, influenced the genesis of ANT’s concern with multiple realities²². Gad & Jensen (2010, p.65) argue that while a “traditional-ANT” approach would concern the description of how a collectivity of heterogeneous actors managed to “gain monopoly on defining arteriosclerosis”, Mol’s (2002) approach is rooted in empirical philosophy (praxiography) and her commitment with practice and multiplicity.

²¹ This term could also be understood as “aggregating, affording, providing for, constructing, apprehending, performing, accomplishing, bringing into being, and constituting”. (Woolgar & Neyland *apud* Woolgar & Lezaun 2013, p. 324).

²² See Law & Singleton (2005) for an analysis of different enactments of liver disease, and Woolgar & Lezaun (2013) for an analysis of how a mundane bin bag assumes ontological difference.

Mol (2002) argues that different practices – more than representing an object – give rise to (or enact) multiple ontologies. The consequence of this shift from representation to enactment is that an object is – in practice – more than one. If an object is made by its practices, then a single object is utopian. In her words: “different enactments of a disease entail different ontologies. They each do the body differently” (Mol 2002, p.176). Mol (2002) reached this understanding as she analysed how atherosclerosis is differently enacted in distinct hospital departments. This disease takes different forms for different medical specialities. While atherosclerosis manifests as pain on walking to the general practitioner; it is an X-ray of a blocked blood vessel to the radiographer – and a blocked blood vessel itself to the surgeon.

Although one could still consider that all medical specialists were talking about the same disease, Mol (2002) rejects the argument – it is not a matter of different interpretations or perceptions, or even meanings. From a theoretical perspective, the human body is seen as one, but medical practice would suggest that there are multiple bodies, as (once again) different practices configure multiple ontologies. However, this is not an argument in favour of limitless plurality. Interestingly, the possibility of connecting one practice (one reality) to another is possible, although practical “work” has to be done to achieve such ontological singularity. For instance, the atherosclerosis enacted in the surgery room can be enacted in similar ways in the pathology laboratory if the practices of doctors, language, politics, rhetoric, knowledge, graphs and exams “align” their ontologies on what atherosclerosis *is* (Mol, 2002).

Multiple ontologies do not deny the possibilities of intersecting realities, mutual inclusion, or partial connections (Strathern 1991). In this sense, an object is complex as it creates a tension between its various versions and the common relations between these versions (Gad & Jensen 2010). Law (2003b, p.7) makes use of the metaphor of the fractal, or a “line which occupies more than one dimension but less than two”. He then poses a rhetorical question: “So a fractional object? Well, this is something that is indeed more than one and less than many. Somewhere in between” (ibid). Law (2003b) argues that visualising such ontological multiplicity can be difficult due to the impossibility of reducing the object to a stable, simple condition – whether in terms of singularity or pluralism.

2.3.3 An ANT Ontology

In the first 2016 U.S. presidential debate, held on the 26th of September at Hofstra University, New York (DTSPC 2016), Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump were engaging in direct confrontation. They were discussing issues related to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Clinton was stating that she was against such agreements – once she saw the terms that were laid out – when she was abruptly interrupted by Donald Trump. Gesticulating frantically, he started accusing her of having said that NAFTA and TPP were the “golden standard of trade deals”. Clinton replies: “Donald, I know you live in your own reality but that is not the facts”. I could “locate” ANT in ontological terms if I consider Clinton’s statement – not focusing on trade agreements – but on ontological issues.

Notwithstanding the subtle variations between “traditional” and “post-ANT”, the almost obsessive insistence in relational practice is ANT’s main ontological condition – as demonstrated throughout this section. However, there are some potential theoretical traps that require clarification. First, ANT is not fully relativist as it does not acknowledge multiple versions of the same object (Latour 1993b). Objects are multiple but possibilities of intersection are possible. Second, ANT is not fully realist as it does not believe that reality is out-there, existing before and above us. The relational ontology of ANT is a hybrid between social constructionism, relativism and realism – it is found *in between* these conceptions of the real. Actors have their own worlds (Trump was accused of living in his own reality) and reality out-there, although it is *made*, does not exist only in one’s mind. A mobilised, black-boxed actor-network (such as a trade agreement) gathered enough allies to be made real and exist out-there – although it might not mean the same for different actors (the reason for the disagreement between Clinton and Trump) and it is highly complex (or impossible) to be fully grasped (Harman 2009; Latour 1993b; 1996a 1999b; 2005; Law 2003b; 2004; 2007).

The idea of relations as meaning generators dialogues with one of the multiple definitions of ANT: material semiotics (Law 2007). Mol (2010) provides a rich example based on De Saussure’s version of semiotics in which a word does not refer *in vacuum* to a referent, but is formed from and by an assemblage of words.

Words

(...) acquire their meaning relationally, through their similarities with and differences from other words. Thus, the word “fish” is not a label that points with an arrow to the swimming creature itself. Instead, it achieves sense through its contrast with “meat”, its

association with “gills” or “scales” and its evocation of “water”. In ANT this semiotic understanding of relatedness has been shifted on from language to the rest of reality (Mol 2010, p.257).

Thus, the fish exists as a result of its relations, but not exclusively. It is not only determined by its relations, as this would be conceived as a deterministic causal relationship that usually “remove activity from what is *being caused*” (ibid, p.257-8, *author’s emphasis*). Actors are “afforded by their very ability to act by what is around them” (ibid, p.258). This would imply the actor’s failure if the actor-network to which they are connected fails too. Mol (2010) uses the illustration on how camembert can only be sold in California due to the existence of cold chains of transport for food.

If realities are being enacted in heterogeneous actor-networks of practice, the concept of translation – I argue – expands the possibilities of visualising and understanding transformation. As “associations are always achieved by translations” (Latour 1993b, p.212), the possibilities for further theorisations and uses of this concept seem fruitful – especially if “translation is the only encounter between entities” (Fenwick & Edwards 2011, p.4).

The debate presented in the previous paragraphs illustrates the anti-foundationalism in which ANT research is contemplated and practiced. The key to make an ANT account *work* in social research lies in the analyst’s abilities to visualise a series of actors *in action*, describing how they relate and merge into one another (defining one another), enrol in other actor-networks, and enact/perform *a* world – among multiple possibilities – as a result of their

relations. If “it is only by making flatness the default position of the observer that the activity necessary to generate some difference in size can be detected and registered” (Latour 2005, p.220), speaking of a relational ontology is to speak of a flat ontology: an unmodern realm of existence where all actors have the same ontological status and become as they relate. If I am concerned with the effects generated by the encounters between international (mobile) students and forms of capital (especially social capital), I agree with Callon & Latour (1981, p.279) when they state that “size is what is primarily at stake in their struggles, it is also, therefore, their most important result”.

Having discussed the relational ontology offered by Actor-Network Theory, the next section holds a debate on notions of globalisation.

2.4 Globalisation(s) In-here and Out-there

When we speak of the global, of globalization, we always tend to exaggerate the extent to which we access this global sphere (...)
There is no access to the global for the simple reason that you always move from one place to the next through narrow corridors without ever being outside (Latour 2009, p.141).

In 1990, Giddens worked towards answering the question “what exactly is globalisation, and how might we best conceptualise the phenomenon?” (Giddens 1990, p.63). He argued that the relevance of various global processes had not yet been matched by sociological discussions. Sixteen years after the publication of his book “The Consequences of Modernity” – and many related debates – my survey of literature on globalisation indicates that there is no single definition for such concept – it can be seen and defined from numerous perspectives, where

different scholars choose to highlight one of its facets over others, and disagreements are constant.

If that which is *global* is an actor-network that managed to expand through numerous forms (Callon & Latour, 1981; Latour 1993a), inhabiting the imaginary of many as a “force”, discourse, reality, or entity that frames existence, I turn my attention to it. Globalisation is a widely discussed concept – not only in the academy – but also in organisations, media, and politics. The *idea* of globalisation can be used as a “macro” reductionist framework to explain a range of phenomena observed in current times, whether economical, ideological, technological, political, social, cultural, *inter alia* (Appadurai 1996; 2000; Beck 1992; 2009; Bauman 2000; Castells 1996; Clark 1997; Giddens 1990; 1994; Holton 2005; 2008; Pyketti 2014; Sennett 2000). It has become a “key” discussion for a large number of people – whether conservatives or liberals; white or blue collar workers; sociologists or organisational theorists; students or educationalists; those who embrace it or those who resist against it. In the next paragraphs I provide a survey of the main ideas discussed within the spectrum of globalisation.

Particularly with the development of ICT, globalisation is turning the idea of space, connections, time, and boundaries into a more elusive and flexible phenomenon (Castells 1996). The idea of globalisation challenges the notion of well-delineated national borders if commerce and trade operates within the global

market. Goods, people, and money could be seen as actors in a constant flow²³ – catapulted by neo-liberal processes – where the *loci* of the means of production are not restrained by national borders, but determined by the best opportunities, or lower costs of production offered by a deregulated, free-market. In a sense, Adam Smith’s metaphor of the “invisible hand” has never actually left the scene.

So, if you’re, say, the CEO of Walmart or Dell or Hewlett-Packard, you are perfectly happy to have very cheap labor in China working under hideous conditions and with few environmental constraints. As long as China has what’s called economic growth, that’s fine (Chomsky 2015, p.91).

The sovereignty of nation-states has also been challenged by scholars approaching globalisation and its consequences. The State that once worked towards the maintenance of its own identity – pushing the Other away from its boundaries – progressively loses influence and capacity to establish what is *in* and what is *out* (Hardt & Negri 2000). Supra national organisations, such as OECD, The World Bank, and IMF assume a key role in shaping global economics and geo-politics, influencing political decision-making across the globe. Some authors would argue that the interaction among supra national organisations, technology, and economics constitute “empires”, whose aim is to pursue power and profit, maintaining the inequalities between the “South” and “North” (Escobar 2016, Hardt & Negri, 2000; 2004; 2012). However, it is argued that the “moves and flows of capital are destructive as well as creative” (Law 2003a, p.3).

²³ Giddens (1990) disagrees with the use of the metaphor of “flow” to illustrate how money circulates in modernity. For him, money does not circulate: “money does not relate to time (or, more accurately, time-space) as a flow, but precisely as a means of bracketing time-space by coupling instantaneity and deferral, presence and absence” (Giddens 1990, p.25).

(...) there is not a unified global society; there are exceptional levels of global *interdependence*; unpredictable shock waves spill out ‘chaotically’ from one part to the system as a whole; there are not just ‘societies’ but massively powerful ‘empires’ roaming the globe; and there is mass mobility of peoples, objects (...) (Urry 2000, p.13, *my emphasis*).

Yet, although this study does not encompass historical analysis, global interdependence and interconnectedness is not a new phenomenon. Law & Hetherington (2000) point out to imperialist practices, such as the Portuguese maritime expansion in the sixteenth century, as a characteristic of globalised realities. Hirst and Thompson (1999) wonder about the nature, or even the existence of a thing called globalisation, as they argue that the period from 1850 to 1914 might reveal a greater globalised world than of today. However, for Holton the argument is not to position globalisation as a thing that exists, or not, but to understand it as continuous and multiple processes shaped by human agency “far too complex to be encompassed within a single master process” (Holton 2005, p.15).

The high degree of complexity of globalisation processes is corroborated by Appadurai (1996; 2000). The author suggests that the understanding of globalisation as a “world of things into motion” (Appadurai 2000, p.5) is too simplistic. The nature of the movement of people, discourses, objects and even images is divergent and not necessarily spatially consistent. Although this conceptualisation – the “relations of disjuncture” (ibid) – appears confusing at first glance, that is particularly what the author intends to portray: the disorganisation of such *flows*, or when “paths or vectors taken by these kinds of things (*people, discourses, objects*) have different speeds, axes, points of origin

and termination, and varied relationships to institutional structures in different regions, nations, or societies” (ibid, *my text*).

Furthermore, the impacts of globalisation on discussions about culture²⁴ are also noted (Appadurai 1996; 2000; Robertson 1992; Swyngedouw 2004). Due to the immense power of organisations and the exacerbated production of goods and services, consumerism is seen as a great manifestation of globalisation (Beck 1992), often coined as “Westernisation” (Klein 1999), or “Americanization” – a “pallid term” (Appadurai 1996, p.29). On the other hand, authors such as Appadurai (1996; 2000) believe in the resistance of localised cultures against “macro” cultural influences, implying that globalisation does not necessarily lead to homogenisation.

(...) the central feature of global culture today is the politics of the mutual effort of sameness and difference to cannibalize one another and thereby proclaim their successful hijacking of the twin Enlightenment ideas of the triumphantly universal and the resiliently particular (Appadurai 1996, p.43).

The idea of “glocalisation” (Robertson 1992), an interplay between that which is macro (coming from *outside*) and micro (residing in the *localised* context), also finds space to define, or understand how globalisation can be perceived around

²⁴ ANT challenges the idea of culture as a unified reality (or essence) that explains who the actors are and why they act in a certain way. Culture, as an object of study, does not acquire meaning only by exterior circumstances or stereotypes. Rather, it is a practical matter that can be mobilised – momentarily – producing a certain reality. Although I followed actors who were born in one country and were studying in another, I chose an *unmodern* perspective of inquiry (Latour, 1993b), rejecting binary modes of analysis. As a result of such choice, culture becomes not only a localised and highly changeable effect of heterogeneous relations, but also incredibly complex to be analysed in detail, which would go beyond the scope of this study. However, as pointed out by Montgomery (2010), the mobilised actor-network that could indicate culture as an “essence” is the language shared by individuals who were born in a certain country.

the globe (Swyngedouw 2004). Glocalisation allows one to reflect on the – previously described – ANT ontology, in terms of its efforts to extinguish the arbitrary division between macro and micro. Whatever takes a “global” form, or is perceived as “macro” is always rooted in the “local”.

In this sense, if some decision is made in an office in Wall Street and has “global” implications on financial systems worldwide, it is exactly because it has managed to spread across long distances and connect with numerous other actors, becoming a “macro” phenomenon. The global is not “out-there”. Although ANT denies the existence of *arbitrary global forces*, it does not try to challenge the existence of far reaching or influential phenomena. Instead, it calls one’s attention to the *net-work* needed to make practically anything turn into something which could be perceived – conventionally – as “macro”. Action is always local and if it has implications somewhere else, it is because certain conduits, vehicles allowed such diffusion (Callon & Latour 1981; Latour 1996b; 2005). For instance, in the “age of terrorism” (Friedman & Kaplan 2002), the global implications of a terrorist attack are undeniable. It mobilises governments, media, and the way the general population perceive the world and/or theorise about safety, prejudice, *inter alia*. However, an attack – be it a bomb explosion or a mass shooting – always happens, or starts, in a specific, local spot: a street, nightclub, or café (where non-humans also participate²⁵). Thus, “the global is part of local histories” (Latour 2009, p.142).

²⁵ The exercise of violence was a subject of reflection for Haraway (1991). For her, the greatest manifestation of the “cyborg” can be seen in war and/or conflict zones, where what is human and what is machine becomes ontologically impossible to distinguish.

The existence of a multiplicity of local processes shaping numerous realities can be illustrated through increasing dynamism of social, labour and capital relations. In this sense, people also may become more mobile, no longer working and or studying at the same place for their whole lives: “disembeddedness” (Giddens 1990) is a universal experience; and one that is expected to be central to the experience of global student mobility. According to Urry (2000, p.3) “mobility is taken to be a geographical as well as a social phenomenon”.

(...) in pre-modern times (...) the large majority of the population were relatively immobile and isolated, as compared to the regular and dense forms of mobility (and awareness of other ways of life) provided for by modern means of transportation. The locality in pre-modern contexts is the focus of, and contributes to, ontological security in ways that are substantially dissolved in circumstances of modernity (Giddens 1990, p.103).

The phenomenon of mobility is an observable characteristic of current realities – whether globalised modernity (Giddens 1990) or risk society (Beck 1992; 2009). Ulrich Beck, presenting a more fluid manner to write sociological treatises, coined the term “risk society” to portray how processes of modernisation created an array of risks that transcend national borders, such as unemployment, deskilling, and natural disasters. If risk is the “*conditio humana*” in the twenty-first century (Beck 2009, p.6), individuals try to avoid the former due to the conformation of the decisions they make in their day-to-day life. The important concept here is “individualisation” (Beck 1992, p.89), which tries to guarantee a minimum degree of “ontological security” (Giddens 1991, p.103) to the “free wage labourer” (Beck 1992, p.94). In other words, the individual is responsible to write their own biography who – influenced by competitiveness – becomes an agent of the reflexive modernisation.

The way one writes their own biography is directly influenced by globalised realities, where the educated enhances their chances of writing a story of success²⁶. In current times, feelings of certainty – whatever their form and how they manifest – are seen as atypical. The individual moves away from traditional forms of support, such as family and friendship, disentangling from their own culture in order to satisfy the needs of the labour market. According to Beck (1992, p.88), “the mobile individual” is “required by the labor market”. In this sense, education, mobility, and competition are intertwined conditions of modernity, shaping one another and influencing in the way they manifest in the lives of individuals.

Given the complexity, fluidity and tension that conceptualisations of globalisation entail, Rizvi and Lingard (2010) *apud* Brooks & Waters (2011, p.5) offer three different perspectives on what globalisation *is*: a way to describe the change processes happening in the world; a discourse that is used to justify power plays and political interests; and an image residing in people’s imaginary to aid their sense making process of their own identity.

For this thesis, notions of globalisation and risk (Giddens 1990; 1994; Beck 1992; 2009) are relevant as they could be considered as a “way to represent”²⁷ a series of translations that produces effects in the way students – as well as universities – establish their agendas and operate across the globe (Knight 2004; Montgomery

²⁶ However, Beck (1992) makes a reservation about such possibilities of success. For him, “upward mobility through education is an illusion, since education is little more than a protection against downward mobility” (ibid, p.94).

²⁷ Representation should be “handled with care” in material semiotics (see p.121-122).

2010). Despite the myriad of subjects and discussions that can emerge from talks on globalisation, I would like to stress that this concept reinforces the idea of interconnectedness (Urry 2000), and the performance of space (Larsen 2016; Latour 1996b; Law and Hetherington 2000; Urry 2000), which in turn, informs the debate on global student mobilities. The term globalisation(s), including the notion of “global networks” and the internationalisation of capitalism (Castells 1996; Holton 2008), is substantially used in the narrative of academic internationalisation – if globalisation is bringing the “outside²⁸ world into the most isolated campus” (Dassin et al. 2014, p.73).

2.5 International Education Complexities

When I proposed, in the previous paragraph, to hold onto the idea of messy interconnectedness (or long distance translations) among an array of actors – seemingly the only consensus among distinct theorisations on globalisation – I tried to do more than neutralise my thoughts on globalisation as “a source of anxiety” (Appadurai 2000, p.1). My intention was to elaborate an argument that could sustain the development of the analysis performed in the subsequent chapters of this study, without being haunted by an overwhelmingly high number of definitions of a single concept. Similarly, academic internationalisation follows the same path of confusion.

In the foreword of the “Sage Handbook of International Higher Education”, published in 2012, Mestenhauser exposes the disorder in which international

²⁸ Noting that the notion of *inside/outside* should be considered from a material semiotic perspective in this study.

education – as a broad subject – is immersed. He states that when he is asked what his field of study is, he feels that the answer he gives – “international education” – is inadequate. His foreword helps one to start thinking of the diverse contributions that could be assembled as international education material. In this sense, partially agreeing with Mestenhauser, international education “does not reside in its own box, but is found in many boxes” – it is “multidimensional, multidisciplinary, and cross-cultural” (Mestenhauser 2012, p.vii). Thus, my task for the next paragraphs is not to define *an* identity of an imagined field of “international education”, but to select and open some “boxes”²⁹ that can contribute to the discussion held in this thesis.

Firstly, it is important to clarify terms and concepts that are used interchangeably and might mean different things for different scholars (Knight 2004). Hoare (2011, p.273) argues that there is “no global terminological consensus (...) within and between literature and policy referring to the international mobility of education”. I will be adopting the term “international education” to refer to the various processes of interconnection between, and movement of, tertiary education actors, regardless of the “level” of analysis – national, sector, or institutional (Knight 2004).

Another consideration that is of ultimate importance for this study relates to the ways of seeing international education. If one understands such phenomenon through ANT lenses, dualism is rejected, and this has analytical implications.

²⁹ The box metaphor, although pertinent in this case, could be seen as reductionist: a trace that I ignore here. The boxes should not imply the idea of enclosed spaces, but dispersion.

Choosing to deny the Cartesian/Modernist view on social phenomena – that which Larsen (2016, p.8) named “binary logic”, or Latour’s (1993b) “Great Divide” – implies that more imaginative efforts are required from the analyst. More abstract visualisations of how actors interact – and which effects are generated via translations – are necessitated if one decides to embrace complexity and resist to the “seductive” properties of reductionism and simplification (Larsen 2016, p.8). Ultimate conclusions and thorough analysis of social life are replaced by the attention to that which is contradictory and paradoxical (Larsen 2016; Latour 1999b; Law 2004; Law & Urry 2004).

ANT ontology, including STS “turn to ontology” (Lynch 2014; Woolgar 2014; Woolgar & Lezaun 2013), allows one to consider the local/global as relational, as well as the various spatial performances of scholars, students, ideas, programmes, money and policies. In this sense, adopting nation-states, universities, and the cultural identities of mobile students as homogeneous units of analysis would either miss much of the complexity of processes of mobility in the twentieth first century (Urry 2000; 2007), or deviates from the anti-essentialist stance that this thesis holds onto.

Although not considering relational ontology from a material semiotic perspective, spatial and mobility theories (Larsen 2016; Soja 2009; Urry 2000; 2007) are part of the post-foundational movement (Larsen 2016) – or post-humanist. These theories concern the idea that spatial performances and movements enact the social, helping one to visualise how a university should be ontologically considered. Yes, university *campi* are constructed with bricks and

cement in Euclidean space with a correspondent address. They are a fixed point in space. However, they are more than that. University *campi* are also a spatial performance (Larsen 2016; Latour 1996b; 2009; Law & Hetherington, 2000) if their activities/interactions are not restricted to the Euclidean space of their *campi*, but to a “wider geography of power/knowledge relations in twenty-first century academia” (Larsen 2016, p.10).

International education is often seen as a facet of globalisation processes (Altbach 2014a-b; Altbach and Reisberg 2013; Montgomery 2010). From a relational perspective – however – international education complexities are not simply *in* the globalisation “box”. Furthermore, globalisation and international education are not intertwined; precisely because – *a priori* – they have no border that define them as separated entities (the borders are “achieved” as academics publish books and articles on these subjects, which in turn, connect them). Global, or long distance processes – whether globalisation or international education – are actor-networks performed by a wide array of actors, such as students, money, organisations, universities, discourses, governments, feelings, aspirations, educators, *inter alia*. Dividing them in “smaller” units of analysis – actor-network A or B – is purely an arbitrary analytical necessity. The implications of the commitment with the relational are exposed below.

Thinking relationally allows us to see how mobile students, academics, knowledge, programs, and providers are enmeshed in networks that both enable and constrain possible individual and institutional actions. The landscape of higher education is transformed through these new, transnational forms and processes. Therefore, the definition of internationalization (...) is: the expansion of the spatiality of the university beyond borders through

mobilities of students, scholars, knowledge, programs, and providers (Larsen 2016, p.10).

Having translated my understanding of international education, I continue with more descriptive definitions of international education and its “context”. Whether a “big business of international student recruitment” (Knight 2014, p.54), one method of “encouraging the civic of global citizenship” (Wynveen et al. 2011, p.335), or “the spread of international students around the globe” (Montgomery 2010, p.3) – over recent years – international education has involved approximately four million students seeking third level education in a foreign space (Choudaha and de Wit 2014). These numbers not only demonstrate the substantiality of this phenomenon, but also give some indication of its centrality to the global flows of actors in the context of a “knowledge society”. In such a society, the potential for interconnectedness among multiple actors – institutions, knowledge, objects and individuals – has never been so possible, so desired, so indispensable (Tillman 2012). It is argued that universities have no other choice but to answer to the effects of the global environment (Rumbley et al. 2012).

A brief historical overview is helpful here. As much as globalisation translates more easily the idea of being a recent phenomenon, international education might follow the same path. However, universities have always been “international”, attracting students and staff from many distinct geographical locations across the globe. In the sixth century AD, for example, Nalanda University in India attracted students and staff from all over the Buddhist world (Altbach & de Wit 2015).

The mobility of students and scholars hoping to “find learning” dated back to the Middle Ages, followed by the Reformation and the Enlightenment (de Wit & Merckx 2012, p.44). Towards the second half of the nineteenth century, however, the movement of people across nations – “*peregrinationes academicae*” (ibid) – decreased as a consequence of the rise of nationalism: both political and cultural. From this period to the beginning of the twentieth century, the European and North American agendas focused on the development of their national systems of higher education. After World War II, industrialised nations started approaching international education in a more structured manner, developing national scholarship programmes for students and scholars, such as Fullbright, and creating national agencies, such as the British Council (de Wit 2002; de Wit & Merckx 2012).

The twentieth century was definitive to the shape of international education processes as one sees today. Teichler (2004) and de Wit & Merckx (2012) consider the 1980s as an essential period that consolidated efforts made by industrialised nations towards international education, turning their focus on related policy development and implementation. The current period is considered as transitional, as rapid changes in the global landscape – including the fast development of ICT – will continue impacting how international education is seen and, most importantly, practiced around the globe.

From a political perspective, although industrialised countries compete for talented international students who can potentially “fill the gaps in their knowledge economy” (de Wit & Merckx 2012, p.57), the diversification of the

global academic *landscape* can be noted in other dimensions. For instance, “sending countries” are turning into “receiving countries”, such as the BRICS, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea (Choudaha & de Wit 2014). Despite the higher number of students travelling from the Global South to the North, this shift from “sending” to “receiving” – albeit of limited substantiality – indicates how international education complexities are experiencing constant change. While industrialised countries seek to increase the retention rate of talented international students, there is also the interest of *industrialising* countries to reverse this situation, since the sum of students who remain in foreign territory after graduation is significant – although not measured (Lee 2013). Altbach (2013) argues that the idea of the responsibility for encouraging doctoral students of *industrialising* countries to return to their homeland is totally absent from the current debate³⁰.

I have demonstrated that the “trend” of international education (Lasonen 2010) has been put at the centre of the agenda of industrialised nations. Thus, the landscape in Ireland is no different. The Irish Government has been investing heavily in redeveloping the nation as a competitive actor in the international education landscape (or market), as clearly stated in DES (2016). International education, a business that moves approximately 1 billion euros per year, has motivated the Irish State to develop “Ireland’s visa, immigration and labour market access policies” (to be) strong and competitive” (DES 2010, p.13).

³⁰ The Brazilian scholarship programme “Science Without Borders”, however, demands the return of their PhD students to Brazil after graduation. It also requires that these graduates remain in Brazil for the same amount of time spent in the host country.

The management of internationalisation of education processes, however, is surrounded by doubt, being called – perhaps exaggeratedly – as “an academic arms race” (Lee 2013). Supra national institutions, such as UNESCO, World Bank, and OECD, have participated actively in the policy design and data generation surrounding such phenomenon – contributing with large donations and exerting influence over national governments (Allen et al. 2004). The degree of governmental freedom to manage international education processes within national borders is a contested terrain. Despite the power exerted by supra national organisations on State policy, each country manages its internationalisation initiatives, projects, and programmes in a particular way (de Wit & Merckx 2012). Ball (1998; 2007) argues that the capacity of the State to make decisions towards education has been restricted by such large organisations, and other contemporary processes. Although deregulation and privatisation have curbed “in both practical and ideological terms” the direct intervention of the State on educational matters, the former is still responsible to enact regulations, which in turn, influences the management of such phenomenon (Ball 1998, p.120).

At an institutional stance, and despite public managers’ slow response to “break free of the bureaucratic paradigm that still dominates the field” (Agranoff & McGuire 2003, p.34), universities have embraced what has been called the “New Public Management” (Olssen & Peters 2005; Walsh & Loxley 2014). This is an idea associated with an entrepreneurial form of management (Brooks & Waters 2011), or the “market model” (Ball 1998, p.120). It is argued that the pressures of globalisation and neo-liberal discourses have forced universities to become more

organisationally efficient, where sourcing of funding, enrolment of international students, and adaptability to change are turned into main institutional concerns (Brooks & Waters 2011).

Apart from the “academic arm race”, enacted by the State and universities (Lee 2013), or their efforts to remain (or become) competitive – whether economically, academically, or technologically – my survey of the literature on international education led me to other rationales that enact such processes. In the next paragraphs, I develop the ideas on the relationship between international education and work.

The relationship between international education and labour market participation worldwide is a research concern, but due to the complications to generate data on this phenomenon – at least in terms of evidence of employment after graduation – this issue remains obscure. However, drawing on a range of scholars, Brooks & Waters (2011) demonstrate how Asian countries tend to value international education experiences of their returning students. For instance, Malaysian employers would consider academic titles obtained in Australian universities as a sign of distinction, which is understood to enhance possibilities of employment in that country. On the other hand, according to Bratch et al. (2006) *apud* Brooks & Waters (2011, p.86)³¹, Erasmus’ students did not point out any significant advantage for having studied abroad in terms of enhanced employability. Later in 2009, the same report indicated that “most university leaders perceive an increase

³¹ “The Professional Value of Erasmus Mobility” (final report presented to the European Commission, Directorate-General Education and Culture in 2006).

of the professional value of temporary study abroad over the last decade” (Janson et al. 2009, p.157).

It is argued that international education would enhance one’s international competence and resilience (Marginson 2014), nurture the “entrepreneurial self” (Kelly 2006), and develop “soft skills, such as leadership, drive and determination” (Brooks & Waters 2011, p.144). Tillman (2012) claims that a more mobile workforce can be seen as one central characteristic of today’s global markets. In this sense, the author sees the “transnational academic narrative” as an effect of globalisation, where he supports ‘the realignment of international programs to achieve gains in competencies that add value to the student career decision making and postgraduate job searches³²’ (ibid, p.191).

The case of Brazilians students who become mobile dialogues not only with current globalised, but also historical realities, electing utilitarian and subjective rationales for their engagement with international education (Nogueira et al. 2008; Windle & Nogueira 2015). Amorim (2012) states that Brazilian students who travel abroad to undertake a course – whether a short English language course or a degree in Higher Education – do not delineate a freshly new phenomenon, but follows a historical tendency initiated in the Brazilian colonial period.

³² Research findings presented in a global report prepared by a German engineering company suggest there is “a significant lack of knowledge about proven theories and effective practice practices for instilling global competence” (Tillman 2012, p.192).

In the last few decades, the progressive increase in the access to tertiary education in the Brazilian context contributes to the efforts made by the “upper class” to differentiate themselves from “lower classes”. The *mobile* Brazilian student presents a more socioeconomically/culturally “advantaged” background than the *immobile* Brazilian student (Nogueira et al. 2008 Windle & Nogueira 2015), which dialogues with Bourdieu’s view on the reproduction of inequality among social classes and the maintenance of the privileges of the elites (Bourdieu 1984; 1986). Amorim (2012) argues that a way to guarantee such “distinction” is to invest in education in a foreign industrialised country.

As a matter of fact, youngsters who went abroad for six months, whether to the U.S., England, Canada, Australia, New Zealand or Ireland, convert their international experience in scholarly and professional advantages when they return to Brazil (Amorim 2012 p.53).

Amorim (2012) elaborates a series of distinctions that are produced between those Brazilians who go abroad and those who do not. Apart from the acquired “cultural *savoir faire*” (ibid, p.54), mobile Brazilian students focus on the enhancement of their English language skills as the main rationale for international education endeavours. The role played by the English language, or the need to be fluent in this language, is pivotal if one considers the labour market as a global space and the influence of the human capital discourse (OECD 2007). In this “space”, the hegemony of the English language is unquestionable³³, acting as a major obligatory passage point for international education actor-networks (Callon 1986b). Altbach and Knight (2007, p.295) point out how economic initiatives,

³³ This discussion dialogues with post-colonial constructs (Spivak 1990), or the One-World World (Law 2011).

such as “new types of providers, forms of delivery, and collaborative partnerships” foster the creation of a demand for international education, where the English language assumes a central role as the “*lingua franca*” of both international education and work realities (ibid, p.291). Furthermore, the fact that most courses in international higher education are being delivered through English – even where English is not the native language – increases competitiveness in the international education market. This has become a policy concern for English speaking countries, such as Ireland (DES 2016).

The fact that employers are demanding “global-ready” graduates (Tillman 2012, p.205), or those who display not only organisational, but also “intercultural competencies” (Deardoff 2006) – including (English) language improvement (Altbach and Knight 2007) – compose only a fragment of the current understanding of the long distance translations performed by students and universities. From an ANT standpoint, I would not deny the degree of *reality* – or the ontological security such landscape “achieved”, but there is still more complexity to be considered in the present discussion – especially if I place the analytical lenses on the mobile student and their relations. Although it might be complicated to make an arbitrary distinction between rationales for, and effects of, international education actor-networks, studies have shown that mobile students are not only concerned with *becoming employed in the globalised world*, but also with another series of *becomings*. These include personal and identity transformations, which are related to the process of becoming more familiar with, and more tolerant towards, different cultures (Brooks & Waters 2011; Caruana 2014; Deardoff 2006; Larsen 2016; Murphy-Lejeune 2002).

Whether from a voluntary or “compulsory cosmopolitanism” perspective (Beck 2009, p.4), international education and global citizenship education are closely intertwined concepts. It is argued that cultural diversity can contribute to the development of global citizens, where “lifeworlds of different peoples converge in a social landscape” (Caruana 2014, p.86). The recognition of international education as an “enhancer” of cosmopolitan practices – although questioned by Caruana (2014) – dialogues with Kim’s (2010) articulation of the concept of transnational identity capital.

(...) transnational identity capital involves generic competences to engage with otherness (...) It is a mode of cosmopolitan positioning to forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations, which can facilitate free movement among diverse groups and contexts, including ethno-national sub-cultures (Kim 2010, p.583-84).

The concept of “transnational identity capital” serves as an interesting representation of the effects (or goals) of international education translations. However, an observation on the “cosmopolitan positioning” (Kim 2010, p.584) is required due to the ANT ontology of this study. I do not deny the positive interpretations, especially in terms of having respect³⁴ for the Other, that cosmopolitanism – the humanity “as a whole” (Nussbaum 1997 *apud* Saito 2010, p.336) – can offer. The greater focus on humanity rather than nationality³⁵ is

³⁴ The word “tolerance” sits unwell with me. I believe that one *has to* tolerate something that is unwelcome, such as a headache in a day of work, or a neighbour playing loud music when one only wants to rest. Although much of international education literature suggests that enhanced tolerance is the desired outcome of student mobility processes, I prefer to think in terms of “respect” for the Other. This might be only a semantic issue, but I see tolerance as an inadequate term to be used in terms of one’s encounters with the Other – unless the analyst assumes *a priori* that anything that is different and distant from them is, from the outset, unwelcome thus – requiring tolerance.

³⁵ Especially in today’s world, where populist far right European political parties – willing to “regain national sovereignty” – are on the rise.

valid, as certain issues are not restrained to national borders (global risks³⁶, ethical practices, *inter alia*). However, if there is no “whole” – only heterogeneous attachments – how can one proceed? The answer is to switch from cosmopolitanism to cosmopolitics³⁷ (Stengers 2010): “Give us back attachments”, as Latour (1999a, p.27) puts.

This, again, is an ontological issue. The Stoic/Kantian understanding of cosmopolitanism was inspired by a definition of science, which has to be modified if one is articulating unmodern ontologies (Latour 1993b; 2004b). For Latour (2004b), the traditional understanding of cosmopolitanism is taking a *shortcut* if

(...) cosmopolitans may dream of the time when citizens of the world come to recognize that they all inhabit the same world, but cosmopolitics are up against a somewhat more daunting task: to see how this *same world* can be slowly composed Latour (2004b, p.457).

In other words, a world – a cosmos – cannot be disentangled from politics, and vice-versa. The Gordian knot – a reference made by Latour (1993b) – is mercilessly cut by The Stoic/Kantian cosmopolitanism, separating knowledge from power. Without engaging too wholeheartedly in the debate cosmopolitanism vs cosmopolitics, I would just stress one difference on the understanding of attachment and detachment by the two perspectives. The Stoic, Kantian view on cosmopolitanism considers detachment as emancipation and attachment as “slavery” (Latour 2004b, p.457); “by definition a citizen of the cosmos is free; an

³⁶ See Beck (2005).

³⁷ This is a substantial and highly interesting debate but goes beyond the scope of this study.

Egyptian, Greek, or Jew is attached (enslaved) to his or her locale and local knowledge”. For the purposes of this study, and acknowledging that mobile students enact forms of cultural discoveries as they undertake courses in a foreign space, the work of Saito (2010) is of relevance. Students have the possibility (and the goal) to become cosmopolitans – or mobilise transnational identity capital (Kim 2010) – as international education practices might generate more openness to the Other – whether from a cultural perspective, or simply by exploring that which was previously unknown to them. In this sense, from an ANT point of view, cosmopolitanism is

(...) not about becoming detached from one’s particular community. Rather, it is about working through attachments to people and objects across multiple particular communities. In other words, cosmopolitanism means a multiplication of attachments that criss-cross group categories and boundaries (Saito 2010, p.336).

Saito’s (2010) understanding of cosmopolitanism through ANT lenses dialogues with Margolis’ (1994; 1998; 2014) idea of transnationalism. In her writings about Brazilian migrants in the United States, Margolis (2014) pointed out how migrants maintain their ties to the home country despite the geographical distance. In this sense, transnationalism is “used to indicate the ease with which people, objects, and ideas flow back and forth across international borders” (Margolis 2014, p.640).

The previous paragraphs, as pointed out by Mestenhauser (2012), concerned the exploration of the various “boxes” *in* which international education demonstrates its multidimensionality as an area of knowledge. There is another “box” that – albeit not only related to international education – is of ultimate importance for

this study. Students become mobile due to the mobilisation of a series of actors that make the former's mobility possible, which Urry (2007) named "mobility capital". Thus, documents, humans, money, personal relationships, qualifications, vehicles, and devices are meshed together, performing spaces and realities. Apart from this form of capital, (mobility), mobile students also negotiate attachments in this new space/reality, where the importance of translating with potential employers and other students assumes a pivotal role in international education realities (Tillman 2012). As Montgomery (2010, p.40) puts: "friendships and social relationships are a significant element for the learning experience of international students", which – together with the fluctuations and/or shifts of power – makes the investigation of the metaphor of social capital relevant for this study.

2.6 Social Capital: Capitalising Human Relations

The reference to 'capital' suggests that all who use the term see it as an ingredient of resource allocation mechanisms (Dasgupta & Stiglitz 2000, p.x).

The idea of "capital" has nurtured a wide series of debates in social theory and beyond. Lin (2008) points out that capital can be considered both as a theory and a concept. As a concept, capital represents investments in resources that are considered valuable. As a theory, "it describes the process by which capital is captured and reproduced for return" (Lin 2008, p.51) – the perspective that I focus on.

In the previous section of this chapter, I have demonstrated some articulations that are rooted in the idea of capital, such as *transnational identity capital* (Kim 2010) and *mobility capital* (Urry 2007). In a sense, there is a “family of capital theories” (Castiglione 2008, p.18). An example of a member of such family is the *human capital theory*, regarded as a powerful discourse in neo-liberal globalised realities (Lin 2008). According to this theory, one’s talents, skills and knowledge – seen from a utilitarian “value” perspective – produce economic gain not only for themselves, but also for organisations where they work³⁸ (OECD 2007). Bourdieu’s (1986) contributions on the forms of capital are also relevant, being frequently invoked in studies of international education (Bótas & Huisman 2013; Tran 2016). Apart from *economic* – the forerunner form – capital can also be understood as *cultural, symbolic and social*. Although separating forms of capital from one another is a risky theoretical task, it is also analytically unavoidable.

In the following paragraphs, I am concerned with the largely disseminated, plural, and not easily defined idea of *social capital* (Dasgupta & Serageldin 2000). Van Deth (2008, p. 152, *my text*) observes that “virtually every article in this area (*social capital*) begins with complaints about the wide variety of definitions and conceptualizations available”, which could not be different in this study. According to Esser (2008, p.22), “social capital is now understood to encompass almost everything connected to social embeddedness: ranging from neighbourly help to the civil morality of a globalized world society”. However, social capital is more commonly seen as a “source of network-mediated benefits beyond the

³⁸ According to Burt (2000, p.347): “The human capital explanation of the inequality is that the people who do better are more able individuals; they are more intelligent, more attractive, more articulate, more skilled”.

immediate family” (Portes 1998, p.12), calling attention to the importance of nonmonetary assemblages as “important sources of power and influence” (ibid, p.2).

I start with the definitions of social capital elaborated by “key” scholars, namely Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam. The fact that I considered them as key is due to the degree of influence they exert on the debate of social capital, shaping the way many academics understand and apply social capital in empirical and theoretical studies. Lin (1990; 1999; 2001; 2008), Burt (2000), and Alejandro Portes’ 1998 seminal article, “Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology”, are also considered as thorough guides through such a slippery concept, and will join the discussion.

Pierre Bourdieu defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu 1986, p.51). From a perspective of profitability – not necessarily economic – individuals have to deploy (the less costly) strategies in order to form and maintain networks that might accrue profits for its members, or “produce and reproduce lasting, useful relationships that can secure material or symbolic profits” (Bourdieu 1986, p.52).

A significant contribution from Bourdieu (1986) is related to his elaboration of the relationship between different forms of capital, and the “specific labour” (ibid, p.54) required for the “conversion” from one form of capital into another (social,

cultural, economic, symbolic). He cites an example of a gift giving situation where economic capital is being transformed into social capital (and where I am calling the actors involved A and B). In this, A spends a seemingly unrewarded amount of time with B in order to be able to personalise a gift to B. Due to “the logic of social exchanges” (ibid, p.54), A is making such an effort as they wait for a possibility of receiving *something* from B in the future, where *something* can be related to a specific form of capital. Bourdieu (1986) also illustrates the transformation from economic to cultural capital (in the institutionalised form of educational qualification), where time and effort (from one and one’s family) are necessary to make such a conversion.

Bourdieu (1986) considers that “economic capital is at the root of all the other types of capital” (ibid, p.54), a view which has been criticised for attributing an interest based view of human relations (Jenkins 1992). For Bourdieu (1984; 1986) and Bourdieu & Wacquant, (1992), social inequalities are maintained as a consequence of the degree to whether or not actors can access the resources from networks. In this sense, the dynamics of all forms of capital would be able to draw a picture of how a certain society *works*, based on its positional and structural division in social classes.

A few observations could be made in regards to the work of Bourdieu on social capital. First, the author does not distinguish between two differentiations elaborated by Lin, (2008, p.52), which are: social capital’s potential capacity (access) and its actual use (mobilization). Second, although Bourdieu states that “the existence of a network of connections is not a natural given, or even a social

given” (Bourdieu 1986, p.52), he does not assume an investigative posture – as a material semiotics scholar probably would – towards the concept of “membership”, omitting the performative and uncertain character of, in this case, human relations and group formation. Third, Bourdieu draws attention to the size of one’s social network as an indicative of the availability of resources and/or benefits. This idea opens space for qualitative questionings rather than quantitative measurements of a given social network. Fourth, the author expresses that profitability of social networks are related to past accumulated social capital, raising an ontological question: “Just what is social capital a stock of?” – as put by Solow (2000, p.7).

James Coleman sees social capital as a public good rather than a social phenomenon that reproduces inequality (Bourdieu 1984; 1986; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). His definition implies that social capital is productive and “exists *in* the relations” among actors (Coleman 2000, p.19).

Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors – whether persons or corporate actors – within the structure (Coleman 2000, p.16).

Coleman (1988; 2000) was the first scholar to articulate a relationship between social capital and the creation of human capital, placing trust as a key factor for the production of these forms of capital. For the author “a social group within which there is extensive trustworthiness and extensive trust is able to accomplish much more than a comparable group without that trustworthiness and trust” (Coleman 2000, p.19). Whether in a familial or societal context, social capital is

essential as it creates human capital. However, human capital – even if it is held by A – would not be transmitted from A to B if social capital is not present in the relationship between A and B in a given context.

The role given to trust by Coleman (1988; 2000) is of great analytical relevance, as it informs his theorisation of social capital established upon norms of reciprocity. The “credit slip” (Coleman, 2000, p.20) governs the relationships that might generate social capital (and in turn, human capital) for the actors. In his words “if A does something for B and trusts B to reciprocate in the future, this establishes an expectation in A and an obligation on the part of B” (ibid, p.20).

Robert Putnam formulations of social capital follow a more “macro”, or “collective” approach (Portes 1998, p.18). He gained notoriety for his work on social capital in Italian communities (Putnam 1993b), grounding “his influential work in Coleman's argument” (Burt 2000, p.348).

For Putnam (1993a, p.35) social capital refers to “features of social organizations, such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit”. In this sense, social capital acts as a facilitator of human relations and is directly related with the degree of trust and civic participation of individuals in their communities – whether attending voluntary meetings, voting and/or caring for one another in various forms – or in Putnam’s words: “voting, giving, trusting, meeting, visiting” (Putnam 2000, p.183). Such voluntary civic participation would affect the degree to which a certain community is politically, economically and socially stable. Therefore, from a community perspective, high levels of

social capital indicate high quality of life, trust, and democratic values. In other words, social capital is both a cause for, and a consequence of, communities with high civic participation – an argument considered as tautological by Portes (1998).

The work of Putnam raises some observations. For instance, Foley and Edwards' (1999) critique of Putnam's approach to trust is of relevance. The treatment given to trust in a societal "level" begs the question if the analyst can rely on every member of a certain community being trustworthy to one another. In this sense, Putnam assumes that trust can become a "macro", all-encompassing characteristic, which is viewed with disbelief by Foley and Edwards (1999). Such disbelief could be exemplified by a quote in his 2000 seminal book, "Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community", which says that "newspaper readers (...) trust their neighbors more³⁹" (Putnam 2000, p.235).

Despite the differences between the views of Bourdieu (1986), Putnam (1993a; 2000) and Coleman (1988; 2000), they also display one commonality. The metaphor of social capital is closely related to the idea that social networks offer resources that can be *used* by its members, in the sense that "better connected people enjoy higher returns" (Burt, 2000, p.348). One discussion, however – that is of importance for this study – relates to the way social capital "works", especially regarding access to advantageous information and resources, an observable characteristic of actors performing new spaces.

³⁹ Putnam (2000, p.603), however, provides a series of references to support his argument, such as various surveys and reports.

The access to information and resources was a concern for Coleman (1988; 2000) and Lin (1990; 1999; 2001; 2008) when analysing whether social networks favour or hinder the functioning of its information channels. For Coleman (1988; 2000), the denser a network is, the more access to information its members have. On the other hand, Lin (2001; 2008) believes that information circulates more efficiently from and through the weak ties of a social network, basing his argument on the contributions of Granovetter (1973) and Burt (2000).

Although not mentioning “social capital”, Mark Granovetter’s 1973 seminal article “The Strength of the Weak Ties” deconstructed the idea that closure between actors is a *sine qua non* condition for social advantages, such as access to employment via dissemination of information. Albeit the measurement of the strength of interpersonal ties remains intuitive, the author concludes that removing weak ties would cause more “damage to transmission probabilities” than extinguishing strong ties in one’s network (Granovetter 1973, p.1366). He provides an illustration of his theory.

If one tells a rumour to all his close friends, and they do likewise, many will hear the rumor a second and third time, since those linked by strong ties tend to share friends. If the motivation to spread the rumour is dampened a bit on each wave of retelling, then the rumor moving through strong ties is much more likely to be limited to a few cliques than that going via weak ones; bridges will not be crossed (Granovetter 1973, p.1366).

Burt (1992; 2000) proposes a similar understanding on how weak ties – which he called “structural holes” – can favour the circulation of people in either side of the structural hole, accessing distinct flows of information. For him, “individuals with contact networks rich in structural holes are the individuals who know about,

have a hand in, and exercise control over, more rewarding opportunities” (ibid). The “knee-jerk” reaction from the argument proposed by Burt (1992; 2000) is explained. How does a network with holes work more efficiently than a dense network? A structural hole between two groups does not mean that one group is oblivious to the existence of the other. Instead, each group is focused on their particular activities, which precludes attendance in one another’s social events. Burt (2000, p.353) argues that “holes are buffers, like an insulator in an electric circuit”, where an individual whose relationships “spans” these holes will acquire beneficial information.

Putnam’s (2000) recognises the existence of both weak and strong ties, but makes use of a different nomenclature: bonding social capital (strong ties) that increases group cohesion but implies “narrower selves” (ibid, p.21) – and bridging social capital (weak ties) that is responsible for the expansion of a given social network and might imply in the generation of “broader identities⁴⁰” (ibid, p.21). The author states that the most lucrative form of capital will depend on the actor’s context. For instance, small children might benefit more from bonding social capital in order to be properly stimulated and cared for. On the other hand, bridging social capital may be more beneficial among the “disadvantaged” due to their lack of material and social resources⁴¹ (Putnam 2000). Citing Xavier de

⁴⁰ While bonding social capital is related to the concept of homophily, bridging social capital relates to heterophily (Lin 2008).

⁴¹ Putnam (2000, p.21) provides examples of both forms of social capital: “examples of bonding social capital include ethnic fraternal organizations, church-based women’s reading groups, and fashionable country clubs. Other networks are outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages. Examples of bridging social capital include the civil rights movement, many youth service groups, and ecumenical religious organizations”.

Souza Briggs, Putnam (2000, p.20) states that bonding social capital is “good for *getting by*, but bridging social capital is crucial for *getting ahead*”. Lin (1990; 1999) believes that dense networks (bonding) are useful when actors are keeping already mobilised resources, whereas bridging social capital helps more effectively those actors who are searching for resources.

Lin (1999) provides a table that illustrates the controversies across the contributions of Bourdieu, Putnam and Coleman. It must be noted that Putnam (2000) recognises that both bridging and bonding social capital can be important, a position, however, that was published one year after Lin’s (1999) article. In this sense, Putnam changed his position as showed in his earlier works. Putnam’s (2000) major publication⁴² indicates that he agrees with Lin (1999) and disagrees with Coleman’s (1988) arguments.

Issue	Contention	Problem
Collective or individual asset (Coleman, Putnam)	Social capital as collective asset	Confounding with norms, trust
Closure or open networks (Bourdieu, Coleman, Putnam)	Group should be closed or dense	Vision of class society and absence of mobility
Functional (Coleman)	Social capital is indicated by its effect in particular action	Tautology (cause is determined by effect)
Measurement (Coleman)	Not quantifiable	Heuristic, not falsifiable

Table 2: Social Capital: Issue, Contention and Problem – adapted from Lin (1999, p.33)

The problem of “absence of mobility”, as shown above, together with a great degree of confusion around the idea of social capital will inform the analysis

⁴² “Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community”.

subsequently in this thesis⁴³, where I articulate a translation between teachings of social capital and an ANT ontology (*social capital actor-networks*). How can one think of social capital in regards to a mobile actor when sociability acquires a different meaning?

Apart from the theoretical disagreements and controversies demonstrated in the previous paragraphs, empirical encounters between social capital and mobile students have been articulated by a range of authors. From a Bourdieusian perspective, Tran (2016) analyses global student mobility as a process of becoming, aiming to understand the logics and practice of the social field of international education. Bótas & Huisman (2013) investigate the cultural and social capital perspectives of the participation of Polish students in the Erasmus programme and the extent to which students develop their cultural, social and linguistic capital.

Using the framework proposed by Putnam (1993a; 2000), Guo et al. (2014) suggest that Chinese international students in Japan engage in virtual social networks, building social networks and benefiting from psychological well-being. Rienties et al. (2015, p.1212) uses Lin's (2001) understandings of social capital to investigate the establishment of social capital links in a British university. The results show that Asian students "lived in separate social worlds", while English and other international students engaged in forming multi-national networks.

Inspired by Coleman (1988), Neri and Ville (2008) aimed to shed light on how international students renew their social networks, and whether such investments

⁴³ See Chapter 6.

could be associated with the enhancement of their human capital. The results show that investments in social networks renewal are only related with wellbeing, rather than academic performance.

Investigations of social capital of Brazilian individuals in Ireland did not contemplate mobile students⁴⁴. Sociological analyses of Brazilian migrant communities in Ireland were conducted by McGrath (2010), Maher (2010), Maher & Cawley (2014; 2015), and Sheringham (2009). These investigations focused on the town of Gort, where the “influx” of Brazilian nationals coming to work in meat processing and other rural activities was significant in the 1990s. These studies, conducted from a “sociology of the social” perspective (Latour 2005), concerned issues of ethnic identity, community support, and access to the local labour market through social networking – themes that were associated with diverse social capital postulates.

The metaphor of social capital – in all its multidimensionality, tension, and complexity – was able to gather three general common understandings, as illustrated by Van Deth (2008, p.152). In this sense, it is agreed that social capital can be seen as “(1) consisting of structural and cultural aspects, (2) something that requires investments for future goods and actions, and (3) a concept defined by the functions it performs”. However, these theoretical agreements have neither been conclusive nor have articulated a “precise meaning” of social capital (ibid).

⁴⁴ As far as I could investigate.

2.7 Summary

This chapter offered a brief debate on philosophy of science, introducing the *post* movement (St. Pierre 2013; St. Pierre et al. 2016), and articulating a critique of Cartesian dualism and the work done by *purification* in modernism (Latour 1993b). It continued by elucidating ANT main principles elaborated by Callon (1986a): agnosticism (non-judgement of the researcher on what is being said by the actors); generalised symmetry (human and non-human entities being treated in the same analytical manner); and free association (the capacity of heterogeneous actors to relate in the same ontological plane).

This chapter proceeded with the examination of crucial concepts that accompany ANT research, such as: actors (any entity that has agency); intermediaries (actors that transport meaning); mediators (actors that distort meaning); translation (the only encounter between actors); and enactment (reality done in practice). ANT's view that the proximity between entities is the result of their connection – rather than geographical distance – and the dismissing of the micro/macro dualism were analysed. Finally, I provided the reader with an ontological guide to be considered throughout this study: *an* ANT anti-essentialist and relational ontology where meaning is acquired as a result of semiotic and material practices.

This chapter followed by surveying relevant literature for this study, approaching the frequently discussed idea of globalisation before analysing international education realities and social capital. In all these three themes, I sought to elucidate three dimensions of the literature: what it is; how it is understood; and how it is practiced.

The multifaceted manner in which globalisation is studied demonstrates its importance in the way one understands today's world; how it works and why. The accelerated development of ICT, the borderless global market, the shift in the degree of sovereignty of nation States, and the increasingly more influential role of supra national organisations is turning the idea of space, connections, time, and boundaries into a more elusive and flexible phenomenon (Appadurai 1996; 2000; Beck 1992; 2009; Castells 1996; Giddens 1990; 1994). All these processes contribute to the shape of global economics and geo-politics, influencing political decision-making across the globe. The idea of fast, unpredictable, and complex interconnectedness among an array of actors – that which Appadurai (2000, p.5) coined as “relations of disjuncture” – whether geographically distant or not, is allowing the rise of “empires” roaming the globe (Urry 2000) and feelings of ontological insecurity (Giddens 1990).

Views on culture were also relevant for the globalisation debate. The tension between views of “Westernisation” (Klein 1999) and the resistance of local cultures against such phenomenon raised the question if globalisation has led to processes of homogenisation (Appadurai 1996; 2000). The idea of glocalisation (Robertson 1992) set the scene for the debate on the performance of space, or the transformation of the local into global. Drawing on ANT scholars, such as Latour (1993b; 1996b), I demonstrated that action is always local and if it has implications somewhere else, it is because certain conduits (other actors) allowed such diffusion. Moreover, I analysed how theorisations on mobility and risk society (Giddens 1990; 1994; Beck 1992; 2009) display an increasing dynamism

of social, labour, and capital relations, becoming interesting notions to be considered when looking at international education realities.

This chapter continued with an appreciation of the literature of international education, seen as a common feature of the “knowledge society”, which is being influenced by more powerful discourses, such as globalisation and neo-liberalism (Altbach 2014a-b; Altbach and Reisberg 2013). A discussion on post-foundationalist ontologies was held in order to propose a way of seeing how actors of international education move across time and space. Students, universities, and nation states engage in spatial performances – enacting the “social” – which rejects modernist ontologies and its binary logic – or *purification* (Latour 1993b). On the contrary, this ontological lens celebrates the idea of movement and the configuration of ontologies (Larsen 2016; Latour 1999b; Law 2004; Law & Urry 2004).

Apart from various definitions of international education, I provided a brief historical overview of such phenomenon, indicating its existence since the sixth century AD (Altbach & de Wit 2015). I pointed out how the “landscape” of international education is under constant change, especially in regards to the way such processes are managed by governments and universities. The current “academic arm race” (Lee 2013) has adopted the “New Public Management” perspective (Ball 1998; 2007), becoming more receptive to the idea of managing change and working towards the enrolment of international students as sources of funding (Brooks & Waters 2011).

The encounters between international education and employment were also examined. Employers are demanding “global-ready” graduates (Tillman 2012, p.205), or those who display not only organisational, but also “intercultural competencies” (Deardoff, 2006) and/or transnational identity capital (Kim 2010). These skills include English language improvement (Altbach and Knight 2007), highlighted as the main motor for Brazilian students to engage in mobility (Amorim 2012). This chapter’s section on international education concluded with a re-work on the Stoic view on cosmopolitanism, highlighting the idea of multiplication of attachments across different communities, rather than seeing humanity as a “whole” (Saito 2010).

The last section of this chapter concerned a debate around the metaphor of social capital. This concept/theory (Lin 2008) is of ultimate relevance as I envisage to analyse the efforts of mobile students to mobilise actors, increasing the influence (power) of the former’s networks in the “newly” performed space. Although a precise meaning of social capital is far from reaching academic consensus (Van Deth 2008), the works of Bourdieu (1986), Putnam (1993a-b; 2000) and Coleman (1988; 2000) – key scholars on social capital – were surveyed.

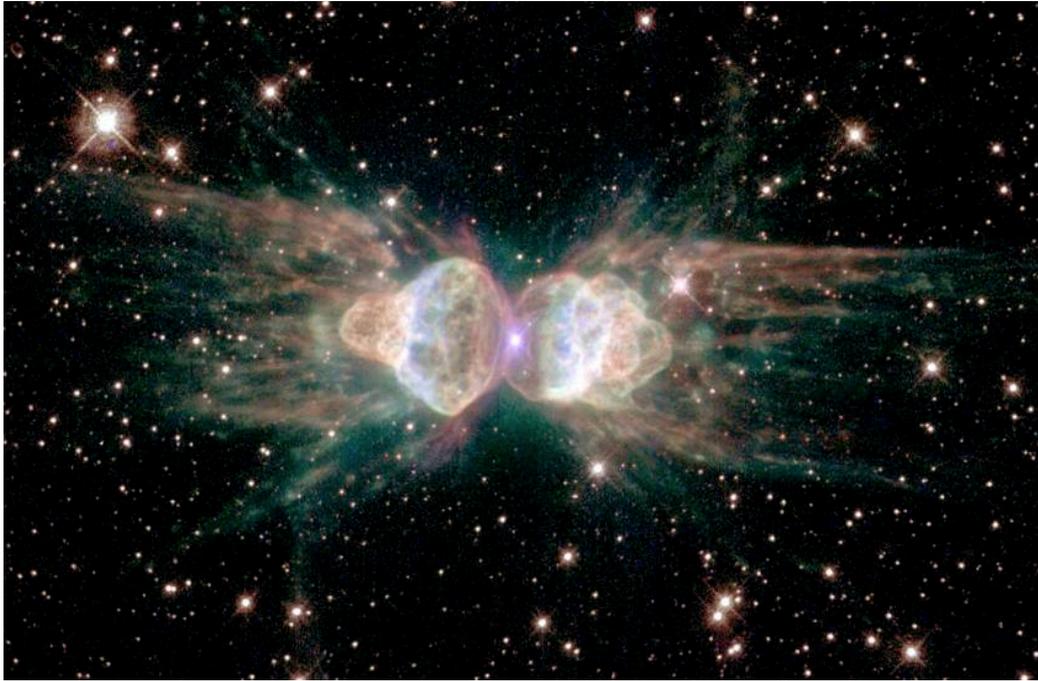
Despite conceptual plurality, the metaphor of social capital is closely related to the idea that social networks offer resources that can be *used* by its members. I have conducted an overview on how social capital can *work*, where the discussion on the strength of weak ties (Granovetter 1973), structural holes (Burt 1992; 2000), or bridging social capital (Putnam 2000; Lin 2008) assumes an important role in disseminating information and/or resources for members of a given

network. The strong ties, or bonding social capital (Putnam 2000) should also be considered – as defended by Coleman (1988; 2000).

This chapter concluded with an overview of publications where the object of analysis regarded social capital of international students. Although social capital of Brazilian migrants in Ireland has been examined, studies of Brazilian mobile students in Ireland – where social capital is used as an analytical framework – constitutes a research gap.

The next chapter concerns the performative methodology employed in this study.

Chapter 3: Performative Methodology



Photograph 3: Translation – Ant Nebula (NASA 2002⁴⁵)

What they do to expand, to relate, to compare, to organize is what you have to describe as well. It's not another layer that you would have to add to the 'mere description'. Don't try to shift from description to explanation: simply go on with the description. What your own ideas are about your company is of no interest whatsoever compared to how this bit of the company itself has managed to spread (Latour 2005, p.150).

3.1 Introduction

In this study, I position myself as the observer (Callon 1986a), or the spokesperson (Latour 1988a; 2005) of the “Brazilian student net-work in Dublin” (BSND) – the one who describes what the other actors are doing. Latour & Woolgar (1986) observed the work being performed in one laboratory of

⁴⁵ Available from: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/hubble-heritage/3190926775/> [Accessed 5 June 2016].

neuroendocrinology in California as social scientists, not as neuroendocrinologists. Although medical doctors might not behave too differently than any other “tribe” (Latour & Woolgar 1986, p.17), the innovation in this ANT case study is my more stable participation within these actor-networks I am approaching, interfering with, and making more “real”. Making an association with Callon’s (1986a) story, I am concomitantly a “scientist” (as the “translator”) and a “scallop/fisherman” (as the “quasi-object”).

I am making no claims for neutrality. I share or have shared many Dublin presences with my object of study. ANT studies show how scientists inevitably become a member of the research-object-network (Latour 1988a; Strathern 1996), but this study deepens this notion as I am a Brazilian student in Dublin myself, the very first “entry point” of the fieldwork. Thus, I share in a fractal manner my Brazilian student identity with the actors (Law 2003b). In other words, I could say that we have enacted *similar* “social capital actor-networks” on Irish ground, at least *in/with*⁴⁶ the same buildings (Immigration Office, university), or “wherever learning is occasioned through specific purpose, content and activity” (Fenwick & Landri 2012, p.3).

This chapter aims to elucidate the research design; how this study came into being. I start discussing ANT and its possibilities as a case study methodology. Then, I describe how the actors – informants⁴⁷ (students and policy actors) and

⁴⁶ The use of the conjunction “with” is related to ANT’s flat ontology and will be explained in Chapter 6.

⁴⁷ Nomenclature used by ANT scholars to designate research participants (Latour 2005).

texts (policy reports) – were assembled. I follow by displaying the methods I used for enacting and discovering the realities described in the subsequent discussion chapters (in-depth interviews, documentary analysis, and research notebooks). This chapter proceeds with a description of the process to transform the generated empirical material (qualitative analysis) offering an account on issues of research ethics. Finally, the chapter summary is provided. If the purified, “modern” world (Latour 1993b) is left behind in my ontological concerns, how should I proceed? The next section presents ANT as a research methodology.

3.2 ANT as a Research Methodology

The single-minded commitment to relationality makes it possible to explore strange and heterogeneous links and follow surprising actors to equally surprising places (Law 2007, p.8).

(...) the relation between my mind and the room is metaphysically no different from the relation between the computer and the desk within that room. In both cases, there is a problem of communication between two actants⁴⁸ vested with full autonomous rights (Harman 2009, p.35).

Euro-American metaphysical certainties that emerged within the nineteenth century are abandoned in this study (Law 2004). Freeing oneself from the use of “essences” that usually inhabit our “modern” sociological mind, often offering “purified” explanations of social phenomena, is not necessarily a smooth process (Latour 1993b; 1999b). In this study I *displace* thoughts, from seeing issues of power, gender, ethnicity, social class, social engineering *as explanations*, to issues of connectivity, transformation, effects, enactments, paradoxes, uncertainty

⁴⁸ Throughout ANT literature, it is possible to observe a distinction made between actants (potential actors) and actors (entities with agency). I made a choice to use only the term “actors” for purposes of analytical clarity.

and heterogeneous actors with *the same* flattened agency. In other words, I am considering quasi-objects that are immersed in nothing (Latour 1993a-b; 1996a-c) – and where reality *exists* only through enactment, emerging through socio-material practices (or relations). In this sense, I am not implying that more traditional sociological concepts do not exist. Instead, those are seen *as effects* of mobilised actor-networks that interfere in the world.

The methodology employed in this study must not be viewed as a *social network analysis* (Kadushin 2012). Human interactions are part of what international students do abroad, but when students are *doing things*, objects, emotions, and thoughts are *doing*, analytically, the *same*. ANT has no intention to add social networks to social theory, but to “rebuild social theory out of networks” (Latour 1996b, p.2). In this regard, traditional social network analysis, although offering a detailed view “on the ground” of how a given collectivity is connected, would still consider a modern, purified ontology (Latour 1993b) – which is rejected in this study. Actors configure ontologies as they relate, which differs from the consideration of objects with immutable borders establishing connections with one another. In ANT, “network” is a tool to describe something, the “methods of association” (Latour 1986) and not the object which is being described – although this is also possible (Latour 2005).

One of the strengths of ANT as a sensibility, or a way of being (Law 2004) – not as a rigid theory – is related to its *use*. Its representation is unique to each individual who decides to see the world as “nothing other than patterned networks of heterogeneous materials (...) where all social life may be similarly pictured”

(Law 1992, p.381). Rather than acknowledging ANT scattered methodological guidance⁴⁹, I highlight some notable differences in the writing style between an ANT account and traditional sociology (Callon 1986a). Long lists are often used to describe the elements, or the extension of a given actor-network, and a vocabulary made of “weak terms” (Callon 1986a-b; Akrich & Latour 1992; Law 2004) is deployed in the descriptions, stories, and vignettes. Latour (1993a; 1996a) explains that a specific vocabulary was needed to articulate the new understanding on issues of agency brought by Science and Technology Studies (STS). In this vocabulary there is inseparability, in any actor-network, between nature, society and discourse as such divide is “irrelevant for understanding the world of human interactions” (Latour 2002, p.82). Moreover, ANT’s “infra-language” (Latour 1993a; 2005) guarantees that the world of the actors is deployed more strongly than the one of the researcher. This is reflected by a large use of direct quotes from the empirical material generated from the interviews, assuring that the voices of the actors are exhaustively heard, and that shifts in frames of reference are reflected in the account⁵⁰.

3.3 Doing Case Study Research

People are doing things when they make meaning, and the things they are doing, and the various communicative and collaborative resources that they bring to bear in doing them, might be just as important for the construction of meaning as more generalized cultural understandings are (Gibson & Brown 2009, p.151).

⁴⁹ See Callon (1986a); Latour (1986; 2005); Callon and Latour (1981).

⁵⁰ This relates to the principle of “agnosticism”, in which the researcher assumes impartiality in conducting the study, and does not censor the actors when they speak about their own worlds (Callon 1986a).

Many accounts oriented by ANT – considered as “a very successful methodological programme” by Alvesson & Sköldbberg (2009, p.33) – have been written in the format of case studies (Latour 1996a; Law 1986; 1987). In this study, I follow Law’s advice to keep “exploring a small number of case studies rather than seeking to uncover its fundamental rules. By telling of examples, representatives of actor-network theory” (Law 2006a, p.48). ANT research often includes vignettes and many of its accounts resemble a story of a particular event. Law (2004) and Latour (2005) argued that ANT researchers need to be familiar with literature in order to become “less wooden” (Latour 2005, p.55). This intersection between literary and qualitative research is endorsed by Wolcott (1994, p.17), who points out that “qualitative researchers need to be story tellers”.

Case studies are largely used in qualitative inquiry, being defined in multiple ways (Blatter 2008). They allow the researcher to focus on a case of interest, its context and its complexity (Mabry 2008). Whether a bounded system (Stake 2005), an empirical investigation (Mabry 2008), or a research strategy (Hartley 2004), case studies are usually rich in data, offering “deep understanding of particular instances of phenomena” (Mabry 2008, p.214). Such richness of data is the result of the possibility given to the researcher to “invest heavily in in-depth interviews or discourse analysis” (Blatter 2008, p.71). Moreover, case studies allow a high level of flexibility in research (Hyett et al. 2014), advocating in-depth strategies, such as thick description (Geertz 1973), and process tracing (Gibson & Brown 2009), enabling – as in ANT – “rich analyses of contexts” (Fenwick & Edwards 2011, p.6). As I need to represent the complexity of my *social* phenomenon of interest, a case study of translations performed by student

actor-networks in Dublin, I shall assemble a Brazilian student net-work in Dublin (BSND), the actors that allow the study to exist.

3.3.1 Assembling Texts

Facilitating student mobility is often seen as a vital part of internationalisation of higher education policy and has been much advocated in the current neo-liberal philosophy (Altbach & Reisberg 2013). However, the effort made by the State and HEIs to increase the number of enrolled international students has been critiqued (Altbach 2013; 2014a-b; Altbach & Reisberg 2013; Haigh 2014), especially due to the danger of institutions “milking the cash cows” too exaggeratedly (Haigh 2014, p.8).

Following ANT, this case study includes the agency of objects, and more particularly of policy documents from the Irish international education agenda. In Ireland, the “National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030”⁵¹ plays a key role in the Irish agenda for education. In addition, regulations of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS 2017) were consulted, as they are seen as obligatory passage points (Callon 1986a) for international students entering Irish territory, or translating into global student mobility actor-networks. Assembling policy texts – or immutable mobiles (Latour 1987)⁵² – more than bringing objects to the scene and enriching the case study, links the investigation with the Irish Government and their active agency in shaping global student mobility processes.

⁵¹ And other international education policy reports. See DES (2011; 2013; 2016).

⁵² Or inscription devices (Latour 1987).

In ANT, a policy report is part of collective action, since human action itself cannot be prolonged without the participation of objects that participate in, and enact, realities. Callon & Latour (1981, p.28) believe that “in order to stabilize society everyone – monkeys as well as men – need to bring into play associations that last longer than the interactions that formed them”, a role played by written government documents. The next section explains how the students were enrolled in this study.

3.3.2 Assembling Students

With the approval from the university’s Research Ethics Committee⁵³, the data generation process, or the beginning of my task of enrolling participants in my “sample-actor-network” – Brazilian Student Net-work in Dublin (BSND) – started on June 10th, 2015. In order to gain insight, albeit in a fractal manner, into the collectivity of Brazilian students in Dublin, I recruited twelve students from four distinct courses of study: three students of English language (ESOL), three undergraduates (from the Brazilian scholarship programme “Science Without Borders”), three Master’s, and three PhD candidates; all from one university in Dublin, Ireland.

The decision of limiting this study within one university reflected the barriers often found in fieldwork. As discussed in Chapter 1, the genesis of this research was influenced by my own experience as an international student in Dublin and my reflections on *my shifts* in social capital when moving from Brazil to Ireland.

⁵³ See Appendix Q.

Initially, I considered recruiting students of English from one particular language school in Dublin where I studied in 2009. Another option involved the recruitment of Master's students from another university in the city, where I undertook my Master's course in 2011-12.

These options were discarded due to the refinement of the research design, as coming back to places where I had been would not offer any methodological validity in ANT lenses. The realities I enacted in my first two years in Dublin, for example, have changed dramatically if compared to those stated by the interviewees of today. From 2009 to 2017, the country went from the discomfort of recession to the relative peace of economic recovery. Keeping the analysis within one university facilitated the research logistics and my enrolment (recruitment) process.

The process of recruiting research participants followed the ideas proposed by snowballing processes (Browne 2005; Heckathorn 2011; Waters 2014). Snowball sampling, a procedure closely related to network sampling, refers to a process whereby “new participants to the study are recruited when current participants refer other potential participants to the researcher” (Saumure & Given 2008, p.562). The issue, however, is to recognise the various uses of such approach. Browne (2005) suggests that the researcher should be as clear as possible to specify the meaning of snowballing sample used in a particular research. The participants of this study are not, in a sense, a “hard to reach” population – a setting in which snowball sampling is most commonly used (Browne 2005). However, students are busy with their assignments and projects; therefore

participating in someone else's research should not be taken-for-granted. The use of snowball sampling in this study was aligned not only with its convenience as a sampling mechanism, but also with the fluid process of assembling *a* BSND for its further exploration in a case study.

Apart from their course of study, the only criterion used concerned the students' visa status. Brazilians who hold a second passport, usually European, were not considered for this research as I intended to limit, or *cut* (Strathern 1996) the actor-network to those individuals who have the agency of texts – the student visa and policy related to non-EU students – acting directly in their reality. In other words, I wanted to include objects that paradoxically constrained and enabled the actions of the *Other* in a foreign land.

Information *constructed* in interviews brings an inherent richness and variety (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009; Seidman 2006). Aligned with ANT ontology, I attributed importance on “working longer and with greater care with a few people than superficially with many of them” (McCracken 1988, p.17). Those choices and criteria find their warrant once BSND was not assembled as a representation of the larger community of Brazilian students in Dublin. Instead, it is BSND's inherent complications, local complexities, and specific practices that orient my investigation. In addition, the task of following, and keeping the contact with the actors in ANT is, wherever they go, laborious. Therefore, it should be planned as carefully as possible, which alerted me to time constraints of the PhD programme, and guaranteed my access to my informants.

As suggested by Latour (2005), the detailed description of how each student was enrolled in my study is presented in Appendices A-M. The actors themselves were invited to choose a place of their preference for the first round of interviews. With the exception of Green (PhD), whom I met in her shared office on campus for the first round of interviews, I met all the other participants in front of the university campus' mini-market, a nice albeit busy area where students, usually undergraduates, can sit on little garden benches with a view to the library building.



Photograph 4: Research Point of Assembly (Salomão Filho 2015).

From this spot we would walk a short distance to the interview room in the School of Education Studies building, and this was planned. I intended to have a few minutes to chat informally with the students before the official moment of interview – a form of “ice-breaker”. The content of these talks would not differ much from what I would ask them during the interview, but I thought it would be *valid* to walk, albeit briefly, *before* and *to* the interview. The experience of “being

in Dublin” is an actor-network itself: “*So, are you enjoying your stay?*” Following advice from my supervisory panel, I used an *empty* lecture room in the School of Education Studies building, at least during the summer, where the interviews could be conducted peacefully (aiming for a smooth transcription process, where no noise other than our voices could be heard).



Photograph 5: The Interview Room (Salomão Filho 2015)

This location was of high strategic and methodological concern as the majority of the students did not have their own office, or were even pleased to *go somewhere* for the interview. Some participants suggested that the interview should take place at the student common area, or in the pub on campus, but were easily convinced otherwise when I mentioned that I would need to audio record the interviews. The laptop used to record the interviews was a full-fledged actor, requiring a specific conformation of reality in order to perform its functions. Sitting in an empty lecture room, surrounded by chairs, tables, computers, and an interactive board on the wall, “a nice invention” (Latour 1992, p.154), I handed

them the research plain language statement followed by the informed consent form. After signing the latter, the actors took on average ten minutes to engage in the interview wholeheartedly, considering the peculiarities and the worlds of each actor, some more talkative, relaxed and philosophical; others more objective, tired, or shy. Through the glass on the door, I could see some curious faces passing by in the corridor and discretely looking inside the room. The next section describes how I assembled the policy actors for this study.

3.3.3 Assembling Policy Actors

The policy actors consisted of one representative of the Irish Department of Education and Skills (SOG); and the Head of the International Office of one Irish university (HIO). The process of enrolling these actors was concluded without any major difficulty. They promptly answered my email with the invitation for participating in this study. We scheduled an interview – which was conducted in their respective offices – where they signed the informed consent form. The next section discusses the methods employed for enacting and discovering international education realities.

3.4 Methods for Enacting and Discovering Realities

So what of research methods? Our argument is that these are performative. By this we mean that they have effects; they make differences; they enact realities; and they can help to bring into being what they also discover (Law & Urry 2004, p.393).

Law & Urry (2004) advocate the use of a multiplicity of methods in social research in order to enact realities and to *discover* “out-thereness” (Law 2004).

This study makes use of three different research methods: *two rounds of in-depth interviews with free drawing of actor-networks by the students; one round of in-depth interviews with the policy actors; three research notebooks; and documentary analysis*. These methods were assembled and guided me through the writing up of this thesis.

3.4.1 Interviews as a Mode of Inquiry

Interviews, or a pattern of verbal interaction (Mishler 1986), are used in distinct ways in social research and are embedded in historical and social context (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). I chose interviews as a research method of this study to “create analytically focused discourse that provides insights into specified research questions” (Gibson & Brown 2009, p.86) which – in ANT research – can be seen as a *proposition* (Latour 1999b). Issues of flexibility (Leeuw 2008) and the “natural aspect” inherent to interviews – if one sees them as the everyday practice of asking and answering questions transformed into a research method (Mishler 1986) – were also of fundamental value for its selection.

The task of assembling BSND and investigating its complexities “using” case study research seemed feasible with the use of interviews as a research method, through which actors were given the conditions to “describe as precisely as possible what they experience and feel, and how they act” (Kvale 2007, p.12). I believe if I had used “colder” methods, such as survey, the “capture” of the richness of BSND enactments would have been jeopardised, not to mention the

risk of not reaching “far enough” with the data as a case study methodology entails.

I needed not only to assemble, but also maintain BSND mobilised, as its elements were interviewed in two distinct moments over a one year period. The idea of interviewing BSND in two sequenced interviews was pivotal for the appreciation of the shifts in social capital actor-networks. Giving the one-year period between the first and the second interview, the actors were able to inform me about changes they experienced. This methodological practice contributed to the depiction of the precariousness of any actor-network, and to capture the efforts made in order to stabilise one’s actor-network.

I categorise the interviews performed in this study as “face to face interviews employing an interview schedule”, opposed to “free-format interviews” (Wilson 1996, p.94). Although having an interview schedule with prompts at hand, I kept a “sensitivity to the developing conversational structure” (Gibson & Brown 2009, p.87). This sensitivity is aligned to the flexibility case study research offers (Hyett et al. 2014), listening actively to the actors’ “history of the contingent bifurcations” (Latour 1996a, p.155). Above all, I adopted the perspective of performing interviews as a craft (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009), highlighting its “performative sensibility” (Denzin 2001, p.25).

I attempted to perform the interviews with the students as an “I-Thou” relationship (Schutz *apud* Seidman 2006, p.95), where “*Thou* is someone close to the interviewer, still separate, but a fellow person”. As the students’ enacted

realities are not distant from my understanding, my fractal participation in BSND was used intentionally as a methodological strategy to establish *more real* and open conversations, minimising possible *masks* – although inevitably creating space for others (Goffman 1969). This is said as “interviewer and interviewee strategically present themselves to each other (...) making assumptions about what sort of event this is” (Abell & Myers 2008, p.157). Holstein & Gubrium (1995, p.45) classify as “invaluable” the interviewer background knowledge for helping participants “to explore and describe their circumstances, actions, and feelings”. The participants would not be depicting their world to a complete *outsider*, such as Western anthropologists interacting with Polynesian tribal natives *in loco*, but to a more *acquainted actor*.

3.4.1.1 Interviews with Students

In what follows, I present, in chronological order of the first round of interviews, the dates and the duration of the two phases of interviews held with BSND (composed by six male and six female students). I recorded and transcribed the totality of interviews with the consent of the participants (26 hours 26 minutes 7 seconds) and used colours to represent each informant⁵⁴, as follows:

⁵⁴ I considered using colours as pseudonyms as a result of my own subjectivity and reflexivity. I was transcribing one interview and decided to use “Blue” as a pseudonym in order to depict the interviewee’s sadness I had perceived at a particular moment. However, the use of colours has no “specific” meaning, being applied to guarantee the anonymity of the participants.

Informant + course of study	Date of the First Interview	Date of the Second Interview	Duration of the First and Second Interview	Total of Interview Hours
Purple (PhD)	12/06/2015	10/05/2016	54:04 + 44:12	1:38:16
Green (PhD)	13/06/2015	22/06/2016	1:23:02 + 49:05	2:12:07
Grey (Master's)	25/06/2015	05/07/2016	1:08:34 + 35:19	1:43:53
Yellow (PhD)	29/06/2015	28/06/2016	2:01:00 + 2:14:14	4:15:14
Orange (Undergraduate)	22/07/2015		1:07:46	1:07:46
Red (Undergraduate)	08/08/2015		1:47:30	1:47:30
Blue (ESOL)	11/09/2015	24/02/2016	1:23:44 + 47:03:01	2:10:45
Brown (ESOL)	11/09/2015		45:18:41	45:18:41
Silver (Undergraduate)	18/09/2015	25/04/2016	49:46 + 1:43:04	2:32:50
Pink (Master's)	24/09/2015	13/07/2016	1:50:41 + 1:34:50	3:25:50
Beige (Master's)	29/09/2015	18/05/2016	1:37:48 + 1:22:50	3:01:38
Lavender (ESOL)	12/10/2015	21/06/2016	1:38:16 + 32:31	2:10: 47

Table 3: Interviews with Students

The interview guides from the first round were constructed in order to illuminate processes and changes, and the analysis is mainly guided by the idea of social capital actor-networks and its shifts from Brazil to Dublin. More than thick descriptions, this study is concerned to show how BSND's actors *associate* and *disassociate* with other actors. The first round interview guide was divided into five distinct events, as follows:

1. Life before coming to Dublin
2. Decision to come to Dublin
3. Initial phase in Dublin
4. Current phase in Dublin
5. Free drawing of actor-networks

The first event identifies the actors assembled around the student actor still in Brazil. As identities of the actors are problematic (Callon 1986a; Latour 1988a), this event allowed me to gather background information from the actors, or their *vinculum* with other entities:

First Event: life before Dublin
1. Tell me about your life before coming to Dublin. What networks and groups (formal and informal) existed in your community in Brazil?
2. How would you describe your relationship with your family, friends and acquaintances?
3. Do you keep contact with them? How often do you communicate with them? Who initiates contact?
4. Whom did you turn to for advice? Who did you trust most?

Table 4: First Event of the First Interview Guide

The remaining four events ought to shed light on the shifts in social capital experienced by the actors. The second event deals with the decision to engage in global student mobility and its specificities, opening space for the investigation of the newly enacted space by the students.

Second Event: decision to come to Dublin
5. How did it emerge? Why did you come to Dublin?
6. Who were your sources of financial, emotional and any other kind of support?
7. What were your expectations?

Table 5: Second Event of the First Interview Guide

The third event aimed to explore the initial phase of the actors in Dublin, inviting them to expose their counter-networks. Moreover, I emphasised the examination of the formation of social actor-networks on their arrival – a key moment for

international students – and considered if any educational and or professional assemblage in Brazil “made their way” to Dublin.

Third Event: initial phase in Dublin
8. Did you experience any obstacles on arrival? If so, can you talk about them?
9. What kind of assistance would you like to have had?
10. Were your educational and professional networks in Brazil of any help in Dublin?
12. With whom did you establish your first connections? Who were they? How did you establish these connections? Are you still in touch with these individuals? How often?

Table 6: Third Event of the First Interview Guide

The fourth event focuses on the actors’ life in Dublin after their transition phase, and it is composed by questions addressing two particular issues: their life experiences at the present moment, and more abstract considerations around the idea of social capital. Finally, the actors were invited to consider one major uncertainty, especially regarding Brazilian communities abroad. Is there a Brazilian student community in Dublin?

Fourth Event: current phase in Dublin
13. Do you feel that you have changed as a person since the moment you first arrived in Dublin?
14. How do you manage your tensions between the work and education spheres in your life?
15. What key resources or services are provided in your community that you make use of?
16. What bring members of a group together? How do you maintain your group of friends and acquaintances in Dublin?
17. What kinds of event (or any other tool) support the formation and maintenance of your network? How many people are involved? How often do these events occur? How are these connections maintained?
18. What characteristics are most valued among your network members?

<p>19. Who plays a key role for you in Dublin? Why?</p> <p>20. Whom do you turn to when you are experiencing difficulties at work, at school or in your private life?</p> <p>21. What is exchanged in your network? What is the main objective of this exchange?</p> <p>22. Is there a Brazilian student community in Dublin?</p>

Table 7: Fourth Event of the First Interview Guide

In the fifth event I invited the actors to draw actor-networks. Despite the impossibility to represent actor-networks accurately (Latour 2011), the students were asked to *draw a network connecting (them) with everything that matters to (them), whether people, institutions, objects, thoughts, or anything (they) want – first, please draw a network before Dublin and then, another network in Dublin.* For those who had difficulty in drawing their networks, the template below was presented as a “helping tool”.

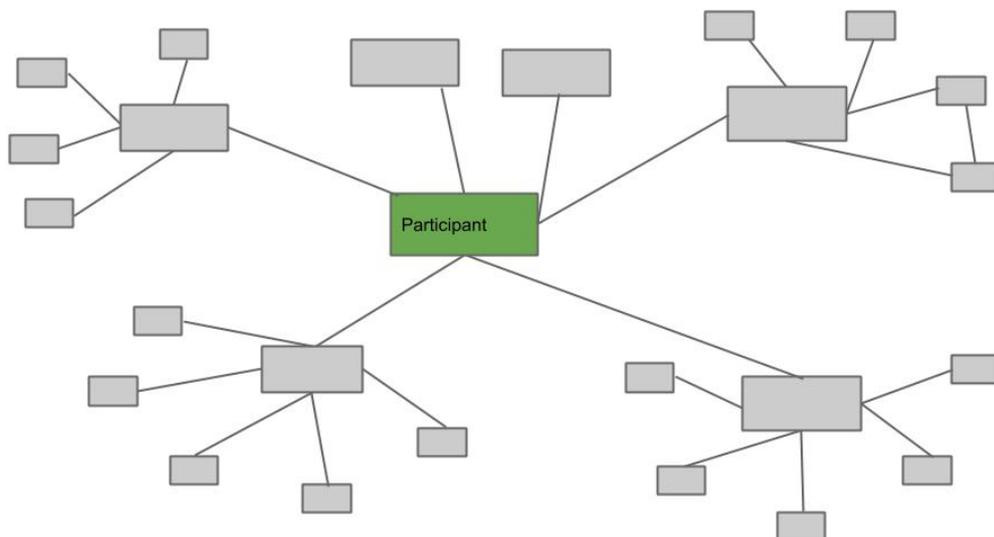


Figure 5: Networks Helping Tool (Salomão Filho 2015)

This task allowed the actors themselves to depict through imagery their most important networks, or their *own world of connections*. On many occasions, the actors brought completely new actor-networks to the scene. For instance, Yellow's story about being a "wonder woman" in Dublin; a Halloween costume, an event that was only presented in the fifth event of the interview. Another rationale for the use of such "event" refers to the focus on the differences between the actor-networks drawn in Brazil and Dublin, illuminating differences (Law 2006a-b), their extension (Latour 1996b), or the shifts in social capital actor-networks.

After the first round of interviews was completed in October 2015, I engaged in analysing the generated empirical material. In June 2016, I assembled the students once again for the second round of interviews. Unfortunately, I could not interview three of them for a second time⁵⁵: Red, Orange (undergraduates) and Brown (ESOL). Eight second round interviews were performed in the same location as previously displayed (Photograph 5), while Lavender was interviewed via Skype.

The use of virtual platforms in social research interviews, such as Skype and FaceTime, is associated with the "modern day researcher" (Deakin & Wakefield 2013). Although challenging assumptions of face-to-face communication, virtual platforms facilitate communication overseas and can be used as an alternative in social inquiry (Deakin & Wakefield 2013; Ruppert et al. 2013). Given cases are capable of "qualitative change" (Ragin 2009, p.527), they can move from one

⁵⁵ They did not reply to two emails.

location in space to another, as happened with Lavender, who went back to Brazil after the completion of his English course in Dublin.

The interview guide for the second round of interviews was partially influenced by the empirical data generated in the first round. After reading the interview transcripts of the first round of interviews, I selected the students' events that were most controversial and those which I would like to have further clarification or elaboration. The interview guide for the second round of interviews was divided in three events, as follows:

1. Revisiting the earlier interview
2. Current phase in Dublin
3. Free drawing of actor-networks

The first event of the second interview revisited the first interview and was decisive to give continuity to the students' stories, adding on the empirical material already generated, and illuminating processes of change. I also investigated their plans for the future and asked for a metaphor – “or any kind of representation” – that could relate to their international education realities. However, the issue of representation must be given the required attention here, as the use of this very word causes “trepidation” in relational ontologies (Woolgar 2014). The use of a metaphor does not represent a “mimetic or symbolic relation to an independent reality” (Lynch 2014, p.325), but *is reality itself*. Latour explains that

Because there is no literal or figurative meaning, no single use of a metaphor can dominate the other uses. Without propriety there is no impropriety. Each word is accurate and designates exactly the networks that it traces, digs, and travels over. Since no word reigns over the others, we are free to use all metaphors. We do not have to fear that one meaning is "true" and another "metaphorical." There is democracy, too, among words. We need this freedom to defeat potency (Latour 1993a, p.189).

Thus, although I asked the students to articulate a metaphor that could “represent” their lives as a mobile student, I was still not drawing an ontological border between the student’s self and a representation of out-thereeness. It was just a tool used to enact *more reality*.

First Event: revisiting the earlier interview
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have you kept the same contacts or have you connected with more people, groups or networks? If yes, who are they? How did you connect with them? 2. What has changed substantially in your life regarding your educational and professional pathway since our last interview? 3. Tell me about the benefits of your journey so far and your thoughts for the future. 4. Give me a metaphor that describes your experience of travelling abroad. Explain the reasons for your choice. 5. Have you got any questions or would you like to make any suggestions on my study?

Table 8: First Event of the Second Interview Guide

The second event of the second round of interviews focused on their current life, whether in Dublin or in Brazil, which continues the discussion of the fourth event in the first round of interviews (*current phase in Dublin*). I focused on the role played by institutions; the complexities of connecting with other human actors; and issues of leadership, as follows:

Second Event: current phase in Dublin
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who plays a leadership role in your network? Why? What factors contribute to that? 2. What are the important groups (formal or informal) existing within your community in Dublin? 3. What role do institutions (schools, universities, government) play in your life in Dublin? 4. To what extent do people in your network collaborate with one another in order to solve problems? 5. At this stage, to what extent do you feel integrated in Dublin? 6. Is there any difference between the way you connect with people in Brazil to the way this is done in Dublin? 7. Do your contacts from Ireland make any difference to you in terms of pursuing a career or future education in Dublin/or Brazil? Why? 8. Explain the contrast between your professional and educational life in Brazil and in Dublin. How do you deal with these changes? 9. What are the preferred sources of information and assistance for you in Dublin? 10. Do cultural, social or legal constraints limit your participation in the Dublin community? If yes, which? Why? 11. What obstacles have you overcome and what is still considered a challenge?

Table 9: Second Event of the Second Interview Guide

In the third event of the second round of interviews, students were asked once again to map their most significant actor-networks for means of comparison and illumination of the shifts in connections. Before moving to the examination of the interview guide for with policy actors, I make an observation referring to translation.

The transcript is (...) a hybrid between an oral discourse unfolding over time, face to face, in a lived situation where what is said is addressed to a specific listener present – and a written text created for a general, distant public (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p.192).

As the atmosphere of the interview plays a central role in the data generation process, I thought more and *better* information could be “constructed” with the

students if they felt completely free and comfortable to express themselves in their native language. Therefore, the two rounds of interviews with students were held in Portuguese.

Two of the three PhD students asked me if I would rather prefer to conduct the interview in English, aiming to facilitate my process with the data. One Master's student was particularly eager to give the interview in English. In other words, they showed solidarity (I presume) by trying to avoid me translating the interviews from Portuguese to English (I inevitably made them aware of my intentions to translate their full interview to English as they asked me how I would proceed in dealing with the data). Although I was aware that a considerable amount of time would be consumed in this process, I preferred to conduct the interviews in Portuguese and kept my translation practices, or "the struggle to twist tongues around strange words" (Phipps 2011, p.373). However, I changed the approach after conducting three interviews. Translating the totality of the interviews would have required an immense (and unavailable) amount of time. Moreover, I would be taking a serious risk of distorting the "original" empirical material considerably, as language translation might imply "betrayal" (Callon 1986a; Law 2006a). Then, I started transcribing the audio of the interviews in Portuguese, therefore only translating to English the quotes used in the final document. In a sense, it was difficult to establish a border between my thinking process in English and Portuguese, as the analysis was performed in both languages almost concomitantly. The next section covers the interviews with the policy actors.

3.4.1.2 Interviews with Policy Actors

In what follows, I present the dates and the duration of the interviews held with one Representative of the Irish Department of Education and Skills, and the Head of the International Office of one Irish university. I recorded and transcribed the totality of interviews with the consent of the participants (1 hour 27 minutes 42 seconds). I used acronyms from their job title to represent them, as follows:

Informant + Occupation	Date of the Interview	Duration of the Interview
University's Head of the International Office (HIO)	28/07/2016	39:01
Representative of the Irish Department of Education and Skills (SOG)	05/08/2016	48:41

Table 10: Interviews with Policy Actors

I considered practically the same interview guide for my interviews with HIO and SOG, tailoring minor alterations in accordance to each participant. For instance, in the question “what is the university doing to tackle this problem?” – directed to HIO – I would replace “university” with “the government” in the interview with SOG. As I considered a series of relevant issues raised in the interviews with the students, my aim was to uncover the agency exerted by the Irish international education policy on the lives of international students in Dublin. While the interview with HIO focused on an institutional approach to international education, the interview with SOG illuminated how the Irish State is managing issues of international students – particularly the strategic nuances of this process. I organised the interview guide in five distinct events, as follows:

- A) Growth and Sustainability
- B) Student Support
- C) Attracting Global Talent
- D) Cultural Integration
- E) Future Strategic Plan

The craft of the interview guide was based on the content of a collection of Ireland’s international education policy reports (DES 2010; 2011; 2013). I selected meaningful quotes from such documents in order to contextualise the “events” of the interviews (except event “E”), seeking to establish a connection between the policy actor, the content of the policy reports, relevant observations made by the students, and my research agenda.

The manner in which I conducted the interviews was partially inspired by the performances of the acclaimed journalists Tim Sebastian, host of “Conflict Zone” (aired by Deutsche Welle⁵⁶), and Mehdi Hasan, host of “UpFront” (aired by Al Jazeera⁵⁷). I was definitely not as confrontational as (and much less skilled than) Mr. Sebastian and Mr. Hasan, but I did try to establish a conversation (yet formal) inviting the interviewee to elaborate their answers further if necessary. I sought to avoid the interviewee replicating the content of the policy reports to issues that I considered valuable for this study. The interview script is displayed below.

⁵⁶ Available from: <http://www.dw.com/en/conflict-zone/t-18812340>.

⁵⁷ Available from: <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/upfront/>

A) Growth and sustainability (National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030)

“The flow of students cannot be turned on and off” (p.84).

1. We have seen the rise and fall of the Brazilian scholarship programme Science Without Borders. Now that the program will not award any scholarship for undergraduate students in the near future, how do you see the future of the educational partnership between Ireland and Brazil?

B) Student Support (International Education Strategy 2010–15)

“The needs and interests of learners will be at the heart of the internationalisation process” (p.30).

2. How does the Department of Education and Skills (or university) learn what the needs and interests of international students are?

3. What could be considered as a complex issue that you had experienced in the past in terms of implementing the international education strategy? Why?

C) Attracting global talent (Statement of Strategy 2015-2017⁵⁸)

Expected output of policy: *“attract international students who make significant contributions to the local economy and who can retain social and economic links to Ireland in the future” (p.12).*

4. How do you evaluate this expected output?

5. In your opinion, what can be done in order to assist skilled international students to seek a career in Ireland?

D) Cultural Integration (International Education Strategy 2010–15)

Research indicates that “significant intercultural interaction [between domestic and international students] is unlikely to occur spontaneously to any large extent” (p.46).

6. How do you evaluate the way universities are (or government is) dealing with this issue?

E) Future Strategic Plan

7. Based on your experience and expertise in the area, what suggestion would you make in regard to the improvement of Ireland’s international education policy and its implementation?

8. What justifies the fact that Non-EU student fees are higher than EU student fees?

Table 11: Policy Actors Interview Guide

⁵⁸ Available from: <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Corporate-Reports/Strategy-Statement/Department-of-Education-and-Skills-Statement-of-Strategy-2015-2017.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2016]. This Statement of Strategy falls into DES (2010; 2011).

I have explained how the two rounds of interviews with the students and the round of interviews with the policy actors unfolded, detailing the analytical roles played by the respective interview guides and illuminating certain issues with translation. I proceed with an account of the other research methods employed in this study: documentary analysis, and the three research notebooks.

3.4.2 Documentary Analysis

The policy analysis then becomes a question of how things like standards – that is, the assemblies of texts, objects, bodies, practices, and desires that instantiate what we recognize as ‘standards’ – become enacted (Fenwick 2010, p.131).

ANT studies and critical policy analysis have given attention to issues of enactments of educational policy in practice (Fenwick 2011; Hamilton 2012; Shiroma 2014; Singh et al. 2014). The various education policy texts from Ireland are seen as *inscription devices* (Latour 1987), being part of BSND. As it is the case with BSND, academic internationalisation policies “will not simply be at the mercy of the various actors in such network but will become an actor itself” (Prior 2008, p.485). In refining the investigation with objects, I looked at how policy reports are an important actor⁵⁹ of BSND, exerting agency on, and illuminating the lived experience of education policy.

The following four policy reports were pivotal not only to inform my interviews with the policy actors, but also to be analysed in the light of Callon’s (1986a) “four moments of translation” in Chapter 7. I described the process of translation

⁵⁹ Latour (2005, p.79) provides an explanation on how to make objects talk, offering five solutions: study of innovations; distance; accidents; using archives, memoirs, museums; and the resource of fiction.

that enables an “internationalisation-policy-actor-network” to be assembled and mobilised thus, acting as one “macro”, “black-boxed” entity (Latour 1987).

International Education Policy Reports
Investing in Global Relationships: Ireland’s International Education Strategy 2010-15 (DES 2010)
National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (DES 2011)
Review of Ireland’s International Education Strategy 2013 (DES 2013)
Irish Educated Globally Connected: an international education strategy for Ireland 2016 – 2020 (DES 2016)

Table 12: International Education Policy Reports

The gathering of policy documents in addition to the information generated by the interviews serves as a way of enriching the description of international education realities, ensuring research validity (Denzin 2001). I triangulated the data obtained by the above four documents with the empirical material of the twenty-three interviews (twenty-one interviews with students and two interviews with policy actors) and the three research notebooks, which are discussed below.

3.4.3 Research Notebooks

Contrary to Euro-American common sense, (...) it is not possible to separate out (a) the making of particular realities, (b) the making of particular statements about those realities, and (c) the creation of instrumental, technical and human configurations and practices, the inscription devices that produce these realities and statements. Instead, all are produced together. Scientific realities only come along with inscription devices. Without inscription devices, and the inscriptions and statements that these produce, there are no realities (Law, 2004, p.31).

It is on purpose that Latour (2005) does not provide more details in his argument on research notebooks, keeping a paragraph for each. Latour’s (2005) research

notebooks inform much of *a* valid research methodology in *an* ANT account. However, they are supposed to act just as a reference for action and sociological practice. Elsewhere⁶⁰ I discussed the plurality of approaches within ANT, and the difficulty in representing ANT as a uniform theory – especially when Latour (1999b) himself does not consider it a theory at all. Instead, ANT, or *material semiotics* welcomes an array of distinct and possible methods, which does not only describe, but also help to produce *realities* (Law 2004; Law & Urry 2004).

There are reasons for using Latour's (2005) notebooks, which certainly enhances *performativity*, transparency as well as descriptions of mundane research events – three aspects welcomed in ANT research. Latour's notebooks called my attention to issues of data reliability and the register of the craft of research, which influenced my decision to use three notebooks in my study. I adapted those notebooks (my inscription devices) according to both my research design and the organisation of the empirical material. A brief summary of each notebook is provided below.

The first notebook – “inscription device” – works on data validity, as I clarify the craft of the research itself, which steps were taken and how – a study travelogue where I registered all the transformations undertaken during, and *behind*, the study – a registry of how I *made* knowledge (Latour & Woolgar 1986). What I experienced along the way, whether assembling BSND, making sense of relational ontology, or looking for policy updates, gained space in this notebook. Thus, this “thinking space” is a resourceful research-driven document

⁶⁰ See Chapter 2.

(Gibson & Brown 2009, p.77) as it allows the researcher to rehearse and further develop ideas that emerge *within* and *along* the research journey (Stake 1995).

The use of this notebook has to do with the specificities of knowledge practices. It relates to ANT itself and how it became a sensibility, or approach which sheds light into science “in the making”, as it is “through the back door of science in the making we enter” (Latour 1987, p.108). This walk from *back* to *front* door allows one to “see the relative messiness of practice” (Law 2004, p.18). In this notebook, I wrote entries as BSND’s *spokesperson*, the researcher who assembles the actor-network of interest giving voice to the actors (Latour 1988a; 2005).

This notebook also contained my observations on the effects generated by my participation in conferences during my PhD years. I presented papers at three postgraduate conferences⁶¹; Education Studies Association of Ireland Annual Conference⁶²; and the European Conference of Education Research⁶³. Moreover, I attended a two-phased STS workshop, “Analytical Methods and Theory

⁶¹ **1)** Salomão Filho, A. (2014) “The Brazilian Student Community in Dublin: analysis of the impact of migration in the formation and maintenance of social capital”. In: *Fourth Annual Postgraduate Conference in Humanities and Education*, St Patricks College, 25/04/2014. Dublin, Ireland. **2)** Salomão Filho, A. (2014) “Brazilian Students in Dublin: analysis of the relations between mobility and social capital”. In: *Postgraduate Research Showcase Day*, Dublin City University, 10/05/2014. Dublin, Ireland. **3)** Salomão Filho, A. (2014) “Brazilian Student Networks in Dublin? Tracing Complexities and Shifts in Social Capital for Educational and Professional Development” In: *Limerick Postgraduate Research Conference and Limerick Postgraduate Research Journal*, 29/05/2014. Limerick, Ireland.

⁶² Salomão Filho, A. & Kamp, A. (2016) ‘Actor-Network Theory Meets Educational Internationalisation: some preliminary findings’. In: *Education Studies Association of Ireland Annual Conference*, 2016, *Education Studies Association of Ireland*. 31/03-02/04/2016. Galway, Ireland.

⁶³ Salomão Filho, A. & Kamp, A. (2016) ‘Assembling Actor-Networks: 'Following' Brazilian Students in Dublin’. In: *European Conference of Education Research, European Educational Research Association*, 23-26/08/2016. Dublin, Ireland.

Building”, held by Aalborg University and Technical University of Denmark; and one Creative Interviewing Workshop, held by Dublin City University. All these events were excellent opportunities not only to communicate the research I was doing to a broader audience, but also to gain invaluable insights and feedback from other academics on my work. I provide an extract of this notebook below.

In the first of July 2015, the busiest month for English schools, I went to an *English school* to recruit participants; a school where I studied five years ago. I was authorised by the school secretary of studies to hang the research posters on two distinct areas of the school, the student common area and the student cafeteria. After one week without response I decided to go back there. Instead of relying on the posters, I started a conversation with a few Brazilian students who were outside the school’s main door smoking cigarettes, having coffee and complaining about the “lack of sun”. In order to enhance the possibilities of participation in the research I distributed many “leaflets” (the research posters but printed in A4 black and white sheets) and briefly explained my study to them. They said they were willing to participate. I went back home praising the good day of work I just had. I waited for more two weeks and again, no response. Apart from inevitable reflections on the sense of community Brazilians might have when abroad, I made some decisions. The research has just gone through another change. I turned my attention to one language school of one university instead.

Figure 6: Notebook 1 (Inscription Device) Extract

The second notebook – “plugging machine” – contains the empirical material from the three rounds of interviews with my informants: the transcription of the twenty-one interviews with the twelve students (rounds one and two), and the two interviews with the policy actors (round three). It refers to the medium where the organisation and abstraction of qualitative data occurred. This notebook is where the analysis “took place”, a machine to be “plugged in”⁶⁴.

⁶⁴ See Section 3.5. (p.135).

The third notebook – “reflective journal” – registered my reflexive hindsight (Kamp & Kelly 2014) about being a Brazilian student in Dublin. Latour (1987; 1988a; 1993a) and Law (1994) highlight the importance of the voice of the actors in informing scientists walking in *unknown* terrain. This study was not only designed to *hear the voice of the actors*, but also makes use of this notebook, a reflexive journal, as a research method. In this sense, I hear the voices of various actors – students, policy actors, inscription devices, and my own – as I walk in a terrain that, while being *unknown*, is not completely *strange*.

The choice of such methodological tool has its roots in the genesis of this study⁶⁵. Reflexivity in social research can be associated with a scientific will to expand epistemological possibilities. Authors, such as Alvesson & Sköldbberg (2009) and Denzin (2001) advocate for an increasing “reflexive rigour”, leading to more creative ways of doing qualitative research. This *reflexive journal* makes use of “reflexive hindsight” as articulated by Kamp & Kelly (2014). I am not only a participant in BSND because I study it, but also by virtue of my experience of having lived in Dublin for eight years as a mobile student – among the performance of other identities⁶⁶.

(...) whether or not I choose to acknowledge it, reflexive hindsight informs my thinking about the problem of (*social capital of Brazilian students in Dublin*) in the same way that my thinking about (*social capital of Brazilian students in Dublin*) informs my understanding of myself as a former (*Brazilian student in Dublin*) (Kamp & Kelly 2014, p.897, *my text*).

⁶⁵ See Chapter 1 (p.15).

⁶⁶ See Appendix M.

Following Vannini (2008, p.764) and aiming for its trustworthiness, the reflexive journal was regularly written in a personal and unorganised manner, and its entries included “emotions, beliefs, interpretations, interactions, events, and activities” related to my experience in Dublin; first as a ESOL student and temporary worker, then as a Master’s student, and finally, as a PhD candidate/lecturer conducting this study. The content of this notebook was written in hindsight. I provide an extract below.

The Embassy Event: reflecting on a trajectory
16/07/2014 – email conversation started

In the middle of PhD progress reports and a couple of scholarships possibilities, my application for the Irish Research Council Employment Based Scholarship brings me to the Brazilian Embassy in Dublin. I needed an organisation on my behalf in order to apply for this particular scheme. I was searching for connections and sent the ambassador an email – after a discussion with my supervisors about this matter. Although the Embassy couldn’t help me in legal terms, I was invited for a chat. The ambassador answered my email and redirected me to a diplomat from the Cultural and Cooperation Section, with whom I set a meeting.

24/07/2014, 10:00 AM – meeting

It wasn’t the first time I went to the embassy. Taking new passports and justifying absence in the elections are common civil obligations. An always polite security guard gently allowed me entrance to the building. This time I went to the top floor. There, after I went across the office secretariat desk, a diplomat at the Cultural and Cooperation Sector warmly welcomed me in her office. We talked for an hour and twenty minutes. This event was not covered by the university’s Ethical Approval as an official moment of data collection, therefore I consider this talk as an informal part of the “research walk”. At the end of the meeting she invited me to follow her to the Ambassador’s office. I was surprised. The Ambassador was having a meeting with the Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs when we came in. After the greetings we sat on a large white sofa in the middle of his spacious office. Brazilian and Irish flags could be seen standing at each corner of the office and a large face portrait of then Brazilian president Dilma Roussef hanging on the wall, above his desk. He asked me about the Irish Research Council scholarship application, showed interest in my research, and then we talked briefly about the Science Without Borders (SWB) Scholarship Programme. After the end of this surprising ‘encounter’ – that lasted fifteen minutes,

the diplomat walked me to the elevator of the 11th floor. She asked me how many years I had left on my PhD programme. After I answered, she did some mental calculations, said she would be staying in Dublin until 2018, and offered me her support. I thanked her and stepped in the elevator. This meeting generated many reflections about “where” I used to be and what I used to do when I arrived in Dublin and where I had just been and what I was doing in the present moment. It felt really good. I can’t deny it.

Figure 7: Notebook 3 (Reflexive Journal) Extract

Having described the research methods employed for generating and discovering realities (Law 2004; Law & Urry 2004), I explain how the empirical data of this study was transformed into “discussion chapters”. How to proceed when empirical data has been generated, but “traditional” coding is not a desirable option? As one abandons dichotomies (in-here and out-there, subject and object), centenary epistemological rules and requirements vanish and a sensibility to relational ontologies becomes the only thing that can guide the “analyst-data-actor-network”. This is paradoxically liberating and terrifying. It might take time (and training) until one feels fractionally comfortable with the unfamiliar, the Other way to analyse qualitative data. ANT elaborations on the fluidity of reality imply that the same fluidity or “flexibility” (Hamilton 2012, p.41) should be a matter of concern for the “analyst-data-actor-network”. I delve into it in the next section.

3.5 Abstracting Empirical Data

Perhaps everything exists on the same flat plane with no depth, with no hierarchies of subject/object or real/language/representation. But that is not the plane of thought Descartes laid out (St. Pierre et al. 2016, p.5).

This case study concerns the description of heterogeneous and collective practices through ANT lenses, providing a way to enact and characterise it, as well as to draw attention to particular specificities of it (Gibson & Brown 2009; Law 2004; 2009). My first contact with the empirical data was featured by the identification of many translations, or negotiations enacted by the students – members of BSND – and institutions, such as the State and universities. If the world is *populated* solely by more or less precarious actor-networks performing multiple translations – or heterogeneous practices of associations – that is not surprising. Therefore, the analytical issue relies on describing *key* translations that relate directly with the objectives of this study⁶⁷. As Wolcott (1994, p.14) puts, the analyst should ask: “Is this relevant to the account?”

If different practices help to produce different realities (Law 2004; Law & Urry 2004; Mol 2002), the manner in which I transform and interfere with the data is intimately related to the *kind* of reality I want to bring into being. This study considers that besides scientists and engineers, international education actors also “speak in the name of their allies that they have shaped and enrolled (...) they add unexpected resources to tip the balance of force in their favour” (Latour 1987, p.259).

The fluidity of ANT research is subject to discussion, and a matter of judgment (Law 1999). I have stated that an ANT account gains shape according to the researcher’s own sensibility to the relational ontology as a lens for analysis – which can be seen as a “way into the data” (Hamilton 2012, p.43). It is to my

⁶⁷ See Chapter 1 (p.17).

“way into the data”, or the “conversation between theory and data” (ibid, p.41) that I now turn.

Bruno Latour constantly invokes the metaphor of “war”. John Law, although embracing many different metaphors, enjoys the one of “struggle”. Taken from a military vocabulary, Michel Callon likes using the word “allies” in his accounts. Bearing in mind that ANT is extremely concerned with the complexities of agency, the use of these metaphors can illustrate the arduous process of analysing empirical data from an unmodern stance; that of the relational – where flat ontology is all there is (Latour 2005; St. Pierre et al. 2016). In a sense, the key is not to “defeat” the data, but to “persuade” it to become a faithful “ally” – bearing in mind that there will be a struggle throughout such transformational process.

The specificities of my analysis of empirical data were directed by ANT but (as ANT itself) dialogued with STS, and postqualitative contributions (Latour 1993a-b; 2005; Law 2004; Mazzei 2014; St. Pierre & Jackson 2014; St. Pierre et al. 2016). I avoided any Cartesian rigidity, dichotomy, and previous out-thereeness when dealing with the abstraction and organisation of empirical data and theory. Mazzei (2014) and Fenwick & Edwards (2010) articulate such encounter between data and researcher.

‘(...) it is not a matter of coding or thematizing according to a theorist or concept. It is instead a moment of plugging in, of *reading-the-data-while-thinking-the-theory*, of entering the assemblage, of making new connectives’ (Mazzei 2014, p.743, *my emphasis*).

In ANT analyses, there is no ‘out-there’ reality separated from an ‘in-my-head’ interpretation of this reality and an ‘in-the-book’ scientific coding of this reality. For ANT writings, *knowing is enactment*, brought forth and made visible through circulations and connections among things (Fenwick & Edwards 2010, p.24, *my emphasis*).

The process of “reading-the-data-while-thinking-the-theory” (Mazzei 2014, p.743) should neither be underestimated nor simplified. St Pierre & Jackson (2014) explain that the overall tendency to equate qualitative analysis with coding data is due to the possibility of teaching what coding is. In a sense, data analysis is the “black hole of qualitative research”⁶⁸ (Lather 1991 *apud* St Pierre & Jackson 2014, p.715). Thus, I am aware that I am not able to describe *ipsis litteris* the intricacies of my abstraction of empirical data. Black holes are mysterious. However, I still can describe my actions, or my *translation of the data* in three partially non-linear steps.

Although this sounds obvious and is expected from academics, the first essential step is to take the reading of scientific material (very) seriously. Apart from encounters outside formal educational settings, neither in my undergraduate nor my Master’s (both in management and organisation studies) was I trained to think differently than the Cartesian plane (St. Pierre et al. 2016). Thus, frequent discussions with my supervisory panel and colleagues, and reading, formed an

⁶⁸ On a personal note, I confess that I almost “fell into the black-hole” as I faced a blank World document and had the first set of empirical data already “waiting” to be analysed. I believe that this feeling of confusion is related to the disciplinary acceptance of Cartesian modes of knowledge production – what *is* social research, and how it should be done. As explained in Chapter 2, we are induced to reproduce Cartesian dichotomies, and are not trained to critique them. It is a laborious process to understand and embrace flat ontology, or to practice the “data-researcher-actor-network”, becoming confident that the result of such practice can also be meaningful knowledge. However, if that which is more *real* is due to a higher number of mobilised allies, Cartesian modes of knowledge production are still more real than the ontologies the ‘post’ movement stands for.

important “assemblage” of my analytical endeavour. The use of my electronic library (using software⁶⁹) facilitated my access to, and organisation of, a high volume of literature (including the relevant international education policy reports).

The second issue is related to the enactment of active listening during interviews. Interpersonal skills are essential to (try to) create a research environment that works *for* you rather than *against* you. Apart from my ethical commitments, I believe when interviewees feel respected and comfortable in an interview setting, the degree of openness they are willing to reach is maximised. During an interview, data is not only being generated, but also – in a sense – is already being analysed.

The third step concerns the abstraction of the already generated empirical data, what I call “unmodern coding”⁷⁰. I transcribed the twenty-three interviews that informed this study, and read the transcriptions multiple times (alternating between reading transcripts and scientific publications). Despite the possibility of having several “windows” opened in one laptop, I wanted to leave two “planes” constantly opened before my eyes. Thus, I worked simultaneously with two laptops (**A** and **B**).

⁶⁹ Mendeley Desktop.

⁷⁰ Any abstraction of data could be considered as a form of “coding”.

Laptop **A** would display a heretofore blank Word document (the “plugging machine” notebook to be⁷¹), while laptop **B** would show the transcripts of the interviews with the students. In laptop **B**, I engaged in *reading* and *highlighting*. I highlighted in **yellow** the key translations, or the (often controversial) events where I could observe the agency of mediators interfering in the practices of the students (Latour 1993b; 2005). Inevitably – for purposes of syntax of the stories-to-be – I also highlighted the causal relations in **green**. Furthermore, I highlighted in **blue** the extracts where students were construing their world and in **red** their ideas of social capital. The agency of non-human entities was highlighted in **orange**.

Frequently, I would see the need to use more than one colour for a specific extract from the transcript. I solved this issue highlighting in one colour the first letter of the sentence, while using the other colour for the remaining of it. The use of colours only guided me through the analysis and writing up of the discussion chapters, rather than fixating the meaning I attributed to the text. The craft of the stories of the twelve students happened during and after my highlighting tasks in laptop **B**, having **A** as the medium where I would type the text, translating the chosen direct quotes from Portuguese to English⁷².

⁷¹ See p.132.

⁷² See p.123-124.



Photograph 6: The Messy Process of Unmodern Coding (Salomão Filho 2017)

The writing up of **Chapter 4** (The twelve mobile students) and **Appendices A-M** were synchronized with my performance of the above described “unmodern coding”. This chapter as well as the Appendices A-M followed ANT serious commitment with description and favoured the infra-language of the actors being followed (Latour 2005). The twelve stories of the mobile students’ translations and their shifts in social capital acted as an orientation to the craft of the other discussion chapters.

Chapter 5 (Debating unmodern agency in international education realities) was written taking into consideration Chapter 4; highlights in **orange** (non-human agency); and literature on translation, non-human agency, and relational ontology (Callon 1986a; 1991; Latour 1987; 1994; 1999b; Latour & Woolgar 1986; Law 1987; Law & Singleton 2005). This chapter can be seen as a theoretical debate built upon empirical data.

Chapter 6 (Shifts in social capital actor-networks) considered Chapter 4; 5; highlights in **blue** (world of the actors); **red** (ideas of social capital); **orange** (non-human agency); and literature on social capital, translation and relational ontology (Bourdieu 1986; 1990; Latour 1996b; 2005; 2009; Law 2002; Law & Hetherington 2000; Portes 1998; Putnam 2000). This chapter merges theoretical discussions and experimentations with analysis rooted in empirical data.

Chapter 7 (The four moments of policy) was built upon Chapter 4; 5; 6; policy reports (DES 2010; 2011; 2013; 2016); interviews transcripts of SOG and HIO⁷³ (with unmodern coding similarly applied); and literature on translation, power, and relational ontology (Callon 1986a; Latour 1986; Law & Singleton 2014). This chapter is mainly analytical.

The previous demonstration of my “way into the data” (Hamilton 2012) was only the initial interference with the data. I was inspired by a series of theoretical and methodological constructs in order to connect empirical data and literature, bringing the discussion chapters into being. The first interference concerns the study of power.

I have shown elsewhere⁷⁴ that the study of translations is highly associated with the “performative” study of power (Latour 1986, p.273) and how it circulates (Latour 1986; Law 1991). For ANT, power is a localised effect (Latour 1986;

⁷³ The human policy actors.

⁷⁴ See Chapter 2.

Law 1992) thus, I also orient my analysis on Foucault's *four methodological precautions* when studying power (Foucault 1980, p.94-100), as follows:

1. Power should be analysed in its extremities, where it becomes capillary (*regional and local forms and institutions*) rather than in its legitimate form (*central locations*).
2. We should not focus the analysis on the powerful individual and what s/he does, their intentions and motivations, but rather the practices and effects of power; its relationships.
3. Power should be seen as a circulating entity, where individuals are the *vehicles of power, not its points of application*. Power does not remain static, occupying a space or filling a reservoir. Instead, it functions as a network.
4. Foucault states that we should conduct an *ascending* analysis of power which is not merely following power in its errands starting from its "centre". If power is distributed and circulates, the researcher should be alert to its *infinitesimal mechanisms*, which:

(...) each have their own history, their own trajectory, their own techniques and tactics, and then see how these mechanisms of power have been and continue to be invested, colonised utilised involuted, transformed, displaced, extended etc (Foucault 1980, p.99).

Another theoretical contribution that not only assisted me to frame the study, but also provided a warrant to the way the thesis was written, refers to the metaphorical movement of "zooming in", turning the focus to a thicker representation of the practices of the actors, and "zooming out of", starting an

exploration of the effects of the relations being investigated (Latour 2005; Nicolini 2009) and/or considering connections performed in longer distances. This STS’ resource only “works” in flat ontology. In addition, the strategy suggested by Wolcott (1994) to transform qualitative data, “description, analysis and interpretation”, also acted as a methodological inspiration. The analytical framework of this study is displayed below in Table 13:

Discussion chapters	“Distance” of analytical lenses (Nicolini 2009)	Analytical strategy (Wolcott 1994)	Analytical Focus
Chapter 4: The Twelve Mobile Students + Appendices A-M	Predominantly zooming in; occasionally zooming out of	Description	Predominantly human actors
Chapter 5: Debating Unmodern Agency in International Education Realities	Predominantly zooming in; occasionally zooming out of	Analysis; and interpretation	Predominantly non-human actors
Chapter 6: Shifts in Social Capital Actor-Networks	Predominantly zooming out of; occasionally zooming in	Analysis; and interpretation	Hybrid
Chapter 7: The Four Moments of Policy	Predominantly zooming out of; occasionally zooming in	Analysis; and interpretation	Hybrid
Chapter 8: Closing the File	Zooming out of	Interpretation	Hybrid

Table 13: Analytical Framework

All descriptions, analysis and interpretations that these chapters consist of should not be understood as a representation of a single, coherent, *tidy* reality. It is *a* reality among multiple possibilities. I approach the issues of research ethics in the next section.

3.6 Ethics

How useful it is to live in an intellectual world defined by criticism, defense, and the desire to “win” arguments? This is a complicated question, but one way of translating it is to ask whether we really think that there is a single intellectual and political space to be

“won.” Perhaps if we wash away this assumption we might conceive of theoretical intersections differently: as a set of possibly generative partial connections (Law 2007, p.150).

Despite being far from tragedies such as the one of Sophocles, I vehemently reject hubris. I advocate democracy not only for the agency of the actors, but also in science, not engaging too deep in any kind of *science war* (Latour 1993b; 1999b). I keep the simplicity and decency to acknowledge the possibilities of knowledge, as “there is no agreement even on the criteria for what would count as meaningful knowledge” (Cilliers 2005, p.255). I learnt about my research in many distinct ways; through reading, dialogue, reflection, planning strategies for localised contexts, exploring my objectives and immediate reality. I learnt with, and used ANT, in order to “represent” the action of bringing, moving, displacing the actor-networks of mobile students – from Brazil to Ireland – and their effort to *connect* and become more *real* in the light of the agency of non-human entities, such as international education strategy policy reports. However, this study does not intend to point “the Truth”, but one truth. The realities I describe in the subsequent discussion chapters (and Appendices A-M) were brought into being in accordance to the methods I chose (Law 2004; Law & Urry 2004). Yet, those descriptions face the limitations of BSND complexities and the scientific methods themselves.

If connections *are made, performed, enacted*, I agree with Law (2007, p.152) when he states that better ways of enactment are possible. I would like to empower Brazilian students in Dublin by the *making* of my research. Viewed through ANT lenses, I would be searching for *better* connections, for opportunity

translations, creating conditions in which they might enact, in better ways, their own “patchwork of reality” (ibid, p.13). This task seemed difficult but organised my methodological plan of investigating Brazilian student actor-networks in Dublin at a very initial stage of this study. As my understanding on ANT refined, I turned the focus to descriptions, stories, and negotiations of heterogeneous and precarious networks *at work* (net-work), aiming for a more “mundane sociology” (Law 1994) – a “sociology of translations” (Callon 1986a; Latour 2005). Thus, I remained faithful to ANT’s teachings to describe the “hows”, abstaining from the scholarly temptation to see “reality as it really is” (Mol 2010, p.255). One of my tasks was to illustrate the struggle enacted by international students in order to strengthen their actor-networks, as they enact different forms of capital, such as cultural, social and financial (Bourdieu 1986). The other is related to analyse the agency of non-human entities; the ones that enable and constrain movement, change, and are changed by, other actors. Holding a debate about the nature of the collective throughout this thesis was a primordial task, which opened spaces for theoretical experimentations. The act of thinking about the nature of being is an ethical matter itself. Above all, I had a sense of “responsibility both to the real and to the good” (Law 2007, p.17).⁷⁵

The act of interacting with human actors enables a series of other actors to start exerting agency on the research process. My supervisory panel warned me *a priori*, but it was only by entering the field that I could fully understand how

⁷⁵ Singh et al. (2014) cites an interesting thought articulated by theoretical physicist and feminist theorist Karen Barad: “As Barad (1998, p.102) puts it, “[W]e are responsible for the world within which we live, not because it is an arbitrary construction of our choosing, but because it is sedimented out of particular practices which we have a role in shaping” (Barad 1998 *apud* Singh et al. 2014, p.837).

experiences of mobility – normally immersed in positivity – can be highly subjective, offering various unexpected surprises – or risks to the research process. Given the in-depth and flexible nature of the interviews held with the students, that which was *supposed* to be an investigation of social capital in light of student mobility, became a serious and emotionally charged conversation in a few occasions. My ethical duty was to remind those involved that the counselling services of the university was an available and immediate source of help if deemed necessary. I acknowledged the delicate issues that were being exposed, always asking the interviewee if they were feeling well to proceed, offering my moral support.

In a sense, my ethical commitment partially hindered the approach – advocated by ANT – to offer the most detailed description of the actor’s experience as possible. Due to my commitment to ensure the anonymity of the participants, I chose not to disclose delicate issues that could jeopardise the integrity of the involved. It is a choice that finds its warrant in the absolute prioritisation of research ethics over extremely detailed description of empirical data. In my political task of composition (Latour 2005), I had to enact absence in order to bring presence into being (Law 2004), as “that which fits and is desirable is impossible without that which does or is not” (Law & Lien 2013, p.9).

All twelve students and the two policy actors read the plain language research statement and the informed consent form⁷⁶, signing the latter before the start of

⁷⁶ See Appendices N-O.

the very first interview. At the second round of interviews with the students, I ensured if they were still willing to participate in the study, confirming with them if their information could be used for research purposes. The process of data generation started only after this study had been approved by the university's Research Ethics Committee⁷⁷.

3.7 Summary

This chapter concerned the description of the performative methodology that brought this study into being. I elucidated how the research processes were shaped in light of *an* ANT case study methodology and its fruitful possibilities of examining social phenomena, rethinking the *nature* of the collective. I described how the research participants (students, policy actors, and texts) were enrolled in this study, providing the details of, and rationales for, this process. As research methods complexly and concomitantly enact and discover realities, I described what they were and how they worked in, and for, this thesis (in-depth interviews, documentary analysis, and research notebooks).

When I stated that my methodology is performative, I intended to demonstrate to the reader that no rigid framework guided the investigation of the shifts in social capital actor-networks. Instead, the analysis of the empirical material progressively acquired a certain *form* as the processes of “reading-the-data-while-thinking-the-theory” (Mazzei 2014, p.743) – “the unmodern coding” – were being enacted.

⁷⁷ See Appendix Q.

Thus, the performativity of this thesis can be observed as the discussion chapters unfolded. I performed the analysis based on ANT diverse contributions and a blend of Wolcott's (1994) various strategies to transform empirical data (description, analysis and interpretation). I placed my analytical lenses on the actions of the key actors of international education realities, such as students – *humans who “live” the policy* – policy reports – *the “instruction manuals” of how realities should be performed* – and policy actors – *humans who work to implement what the manual “says”*. The translations between empirical data, literature and researcher⁷⁸ were inspired by the idea of “zooming in and out of” (Nicolini 2009) in order to switch the analytical lenses in regard to the *distance* between researcher and empirical data. While “zooming in” refers to a localised focus on how a specific actor-network “works” (the net-work⁷⁹), “zooming out of” refers to the effects produced by a more stabilised actor-network, or when my intention was to illuminate connections performed in longer distances. This chapter concluded with an account on research ethics.

The reflective “mode” in which this thesis was written also contributed to the way the analytical process was performed. Despite my role as an actor (researcher and international student), and the significant influence of the three research notebooks in the craft of this research, I made an effort to find balance between the reflections on my own experience, the attention turned to the craft of the research itself, ontological discussions, and the analysis of empirical data

⁷⁸ As “the theorist’s interpretation are as much networks as any other combination of elements” (Strathern 1996, p.521).

⁷⁹ See Kamp & Kelly (2014).

generated by human and non-human entities. My aim was to write a philosophical ANT account, where manifestations of reflective, descriptive, analytical and interpretative practices could find their space. The next chapter brings the stories of the “quintessential avatars of globalization” (Favell et al. 2006, p.7): the mobile students.

Chapter 4: The Twelve Mobile Students



Photograph 7: Actor-Networks (Salomão Filho 2009)

Daily practice needs no theorist to reveal its "underlying structure." "Consciousness" does not underlie practice but is something else somewhere else in another network. Practice lacks nothing. Where are the unconscious structures of primitive myths? In Africa? In Brazil? No! They are among the filing cards of Levi-Strauss's office. If they extend beyond the College de France at the rue des Ecoles, it is through his books and disciples. If they are found in Bahia or Libreville, it is because they are taught there (Latour 1993a, p.179).

4.1 Introduction

This chapter concerns the effects of the encounter between ANT, international education realities, and the idea of social capital. The following twelve descriptive case studies (and one reflective vignette) represent the implications of such encounter. My scientific commitment is not only to the content of the case

studies, but also to the way they are crafted: that of description. The case studies demonstrate how the Brazilian students, the actor-networks of choice for this chapter, make use of tactics to translate other actors into their networks – or the effort they make to sustain more or less stable networks of relations when becoming mobile. The case studies also illustrate the effects that are produced by the students’ translations when enacting realities in Dublin, and their ideas on social capital. Drawing on Latour (2005), Dolwick (2009, p.40-1) provides the questions below – which served as an orientation to the craft of the case studies – and should all be answered by each student’s story.

So, after having identified an actor, it is necessary to ask:
What other actors were assembled around it?
How were they being organised?
What allies were they picking up, enrolling?
What actors were resisting?
What special category labels were they placing on one another, and how were they attempting to organise the rest of the world?
When an action cannot be directly observed, what do the available sources of evidence suggest?
What work was required to induce two or more potentially disagreeable actors into coexisting (perhaps even acting together)?
What tools and techniques were used?
What physical processes were involved?
What did the authors of the written accounts have to say?
What were the referenced actors doing?
Was there a controversy brewing, or some topic of concern?
What special negotiations and translations were being made, and which ‘agencies’ were being invoked; i.e. were the actors talking about gods/spirits, laws of nature, military forces, or the coercive powers of legal courts?
Ultimately, are we dealing with ‘causes’ and their intermediaries or a concatenation of little mediators?
Which objects were being enrolled into (or removed from) an assemblage? How were they being combined, mobilised and dispatched?

What objects were the actors mentioning in their written accounts?
What were these things doing or not doing?
Ultimately, were they mattering and making a difference in the course of some other agent's action or not?
How do many links act like a chain and how might such a chain expand?
How do they do what they do? What is involved in their work? How are these projects getting done?

Table 14: Questions that Oriented the Craft of the Case Studies (Dolwick 2009, p.40-1)

I shall make an important observation about the manner in which the stories of the students are displayed. Academic conventions are also an actor if they interfere in the way other entities act. The regulations of the doctoral thesis, or the word limit, *made me put* the continuation of the twelve case studies (and the reflective vignette) in Appendices A-M. However, they are still fundamental for the thesis, and should not be seen as “mere appendices”; they are all an absent presence in the body of my work.

I am about to describe practices. The students are defined through action, as we are not searching to decode their soul or uncover their true essence. Drawing on Sartre and Pasteur, Latour (1999b, p.179) states that “essence is existence and existence is action” – which indicates that my philosophical standpoint relies on considering existence as the only “essence” (Latour 1991). There are no extra layers of meaning. That which will define the identity of the students are their actions: *how* they are interfering in the world, as they modify other actors in order to translate their interests. Allies, counter-networks, a concatenation of actors “inhabit” – because they matter to the story – and enact – because I am only concerned with local performances – international education realities.

4.2 The Twelve Mobile Students

The following map (Figure 8) provides an overview of where the twelve students (and myself) come from. The titles of each story, in their own words, partially illustrate what their international experience meant to them. I used colours and their course of studies to designate them, and have provided the Appendix correspondent to each account. The stories are presented in chronological order, based on the first round of interviews.

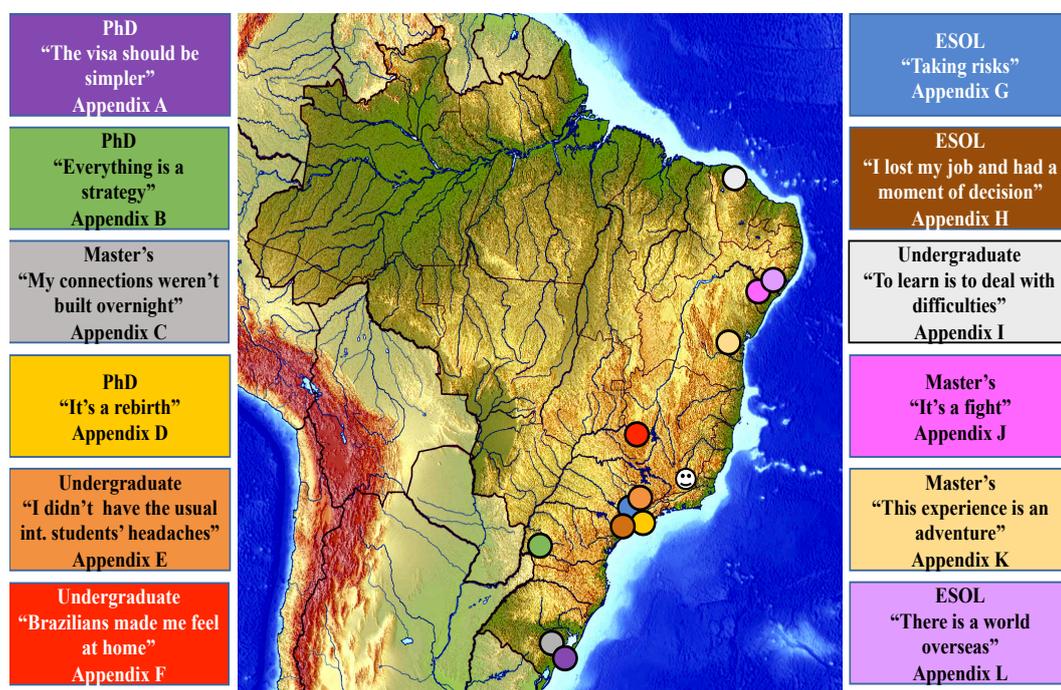


Figure 8: Actors Birth Place

4.2.1 Purple's Story: "The visa should be simpler"

This is a story of Purple, a 31-year-old PhD student. He is from the state of Rio Grande do Sul, where he worked as a systems analyst before coming to Dublin. He holds an honours bachelor degree in Computer Science (did not specify the Brazilian institution) and a MSc in Mathematics, Statistics and Computing at University Aberta de Lisboa, Portugal. The Brazilian Government awarded him

with a “doctorate scholarship abroad”, giving him full support for the whole programme (maximum 48 months). Purple lives in a flat in North Dublin with his wife, an undergraduate student. Serene and focused on his research, he tells me his life is “basically university and home, home and university” (continues in Appendix A).

4.2.2 Green’s Story: “Everything is a strategy”

This is a story of Green, a 32-year-old PhD student. She is from the state of Paraná, where she graduated in Linguistics at State University of Oeste of Paraná, and then worked for two years as a teacher. She was awarded a scholarship by Erasmus Mundus and went to England in 2009, where she undertook a Masters in Natural Language Processing. After her Master’s course was finished in September 2011, she stayed in England for three more months – working in a project – and then returned to Brazil as she “didn’t have any PhD scholarship anywhere”. She was introduced to her PhD supervisor-to-be by her Master’s supervisor, who flagged the existence of a “very nice research centre in (their) area that works closely to the industry in Dublin”. Green sent the former an email, but was told that there were no scholarships available at that time, when the financial crisis was showing its effects – “they were cutting everything”. In Brazil, she kept applying for scholarships until she was awarded with one in Spain, which she later refused as the academic in Dublin contacted her, offering a scholarship at the end of 2012 (continues in Appendix B).

4.2.3 Grey's Story: "My connections were not built overnight"

This is a story of Grey, a 26 year-old Master's student. He is from the state of Rio Grande do Sul, where he graduated in Business Administration at Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. He has been living for two years in a house in North Dublin with two other Irish people whom he knows "well enough". One is an accountant and the other is a social media manager. Grey arrived in Dublin on the 15th of June 2013 already holding an IELTS certificate (grade 8), which made him confident to interact with others, and was classified as "a differential" and "essential" (continues in Appendix C).

4.2.4. Yellow's Story: "It is a rebirth"

This is a story of Yellow, a 33-year-old PhD student. She is from the city of São Paulo, where she worked as a lawyer before coming to Dublin in 2012. She holds an honours bachelor degree and a Master's, both in Law, from São Paulo University. Before starting her PhD, she concluded another Master's in Law from another university in Dublin and worked briefly in an NGO. Yellow met an academic from her current university with whom she wrote a project and applied for a scholarship from the university, obtaining success. She lives on her own in a flat in North Dublin, and tells me that the best scenario would be if she could live in Dublin surrounded by her family and friends who live in Brazil. Nevertheless, Yellow believes that "life in Dublin is simpler and freer than in Brazil" (continues in Appendix D).

4.2.5 Orange’s Story: “I didn’t have the usual international students’ headaches”

This is a story of Orange, a 23-year-old Science Without Borders (SWB) undergraduate student. She lived in the university’s student residence with three of her close Brazilian friends. She arrived on the 15th of June 2014 with intermediate level of English, and left on the 16th of August 2015 with advanced level. In Brazil, she used to be part of a “junior company”, her “strongest involvement in groups”⁸⁰. She also participated in sports societies, such as futsal and handball. After her experience in the junior company was over, she became a counsellor – a position usually held by former members. She spent six months without having any extra curriculum activity until she travelled to Dublin. At the time of the interview, Orange had one and a half year left to conclude her undergraduate course, and would look for (compulsory) internship possibilities as soon as she returned to Brazil⁸¹, which she would do in three weeks time (continues in Appendix E).

4.2.6 Red’s Story: “Brazilians made me feel at home”

This is a story of Red, a 24-year-old SWB undergraduate student. She arrived in Dublin on the 14th of September 2014 with upper-intermediate level of English and left on the 16th of August 2015 with advanced level. She took the plane from

⁸⁰ In Brazil, undergraduate courses of Business and Manufacturing Engineering have companies called “junior”, formed by undergraduate students and supervised by academics. It has professional status and serves as a laboratory for practising the content learnt in the course (experiential learning). Large companies very often contract their consultancy services due to the low cost and high commitment from its members.

⁸¹ Orange did not answer to two emails sent to arrange the second interview, which would have been held via Skype.

Brazil to Dublin with her mother and shared an accommodation with four other students, whom she knew “very well”, from the SWB programme.

Before starting the interview⁸², and motivated by the queries from previous students, I asked Red how she would feel if I conducted the interview in English. She said she would not mind giving the interview in English, but guaranteed me that grammar mistakes would certainly be made. However, she told me that speaking in her native language allows her to be more natural and freer, which would contribute to a more open and honest conversation (continues in Appendix F).

4.2.7 Blue’s Story: “Taking risks”

This is a story of Blue, a 27-year-old ESOL student, bachelor in business, from the state of São Paulo. He used to be a bank clerk before coming to Dublin, where he arrived on the 28th of July 2015 with intermediate level of English, and left on the 6th of July 2016 with advanced level. Apart from his honours degree in Business Administration, he undertook three vocational education courses in Brazil: Business, Statistics, and Data Processing, where he met a lot of people and took pride in being a sociable person, eager to participate in different networks (continues in Appendix G).

⁸² Similarly to Orange, Red did not respond to my request for a second interview.

4.2.8 Brown’s Story: “I lost my job and had a moment of decision”

This is a story of Brown, a 34-year-old ESOL student in Dublin. He holds a bachelor degree in information systems, and a MBA. He used to be a marketing coordinator in the state of São Paulo, but lost his job as his company experienced downsizing, when more than three hundred people lost their jobs in a single day. He travelled to Dublin with his girlfriend, who was also unemployed. She is his biggest source of trust – as well as his parents and two of his closest friends, his “confidants”. A few days before the interview⁸³, Brown and his girlfriend had moved from the English school accommodation to a house in North Dublin with four other Brazilian ESOL students and one Irish bank clerk (continues in Appendix H).

4.2.9 Silver’s Story: “To learn is to deal with difficulties”

This is a story of Silver, a 21-year-old SWB undergraduate student. He arrived in Dublin on the 7^h of July 2015 with pre-intermediate level of English, and left on the 5th of July 2016 with upper-intermediate level. Silver travelled to Dublin on his own, sharing the university’s accommodation with three Irish students whom he had just met. With his smartphone always at hand, and praising his guitar, “a good companion”, he tells me that he has made the best choice of coming to Dublin and studying in this particular university, and does not spare his gratitude to SWB (continues in Appendix I).

⁸³ Brown was not available for the second interview.

4.2.10 Pink's Story: "It's a fight"

This is a story of Pink, a 24-year-old Master's student. She graduated in Language Studies from University of Pernambuco. She started studying in Higher Education at a very early age (seventeen years old) and, during this period, she was asked to replace an English teacher in a language school. She accepted the challenge and had never stopped teaching until she travelled to Dublin. Fluent in French and Italian, Pink was involved in the circus community performing as an acrobat in the city of Recife, and tells me that all her social circles are related to arts and education. She lived in an Irish family house where she worked as an au pair. After two years, she moved to a shared apartment with four undergraduate students whom she did not know "at all". Currently, she lives in a house in North Dublin with her Irish boyfriend and two other Irish couples, "who work the whole day, arrive home, say hello, go to their bedrooms, and that is it". In the first interview, Pink told me that her "mission" as a Brazilian student in Ireland was to disseminate Brazilian literature, a goal that made her stay in the island and pursuit a Master's degree. Ten months later, at the second interview, Pink was very busy with her assignments. She was trying to cope with the pressure from the Master's, reflecting about the meaning of doing research and the difficulties faced by international students (continues in Appendix J).

4.2.11 Beige's Story: "This experience is an adventure"

This is a story of Beige, a 28-year-old Master's student. She is from the state of Bahia, where she worked as a reporter at the culture section of a local newspaper before coming to Dublin. She graduated in Journalism (didn't specify the

Brazilian institution). She lives in a shared house in North Dublin with her Irish boyfriend and three ESOL students: a South Korean, a Japanese and a Brazilian. The first interview took place two weeks after her Master's course had started, while the second interview, eight months later, was conducted towards the end of her course. She was going to meet her group, after the second interview, in order to work on a group assignment for her Master's and told me how complicated it is to work with other people. Beige tells me she is "in shock" that the Master's is almost over. She shows concern, as one of her lecturers flagged that nobody would finish the course with a first honours degree (continues in Appendix K).

4.2.12 Lavender's Story: "There is a world overseas"

This is a story of Lavender, a 24-year-old ESOL student. He is a manufacturing engineering undergraduate in the state of Pernambuco, and lives in an apartment with four other Brazilian ESOL students in North Dublin. He arrived in Dublin on the 28th of July 2015 with pre-intermediate level of English, leaving with upper-intermediate level on the 10th of February 2016. Lavender always "dreamed" to go abroad and study English, but could never rely on his mother to support him financially with this particular project. He studied English in Brazil but would never continue due to his awareness of his mother's sensitive financial condition. Besides "finding beautiful" the ability of people to speak other languages – especially English – Lavender believes that, as an manufacturing engineer, he needs to master that language in order to conduct projects in his area of preference, sustainability. The opportunity to travel to Dublin arose when his contract with a major engineering firm in Brazil ended and was not renewed. He

had then saved enough money from his work and saw this moment as “the right one to travel” (continues in Appendix L).

4.3 Reflective Vignette: Alfredo’s Story

This is a story about myself, written by myself. In this reflective ANT study, I am methodologically inclined to describe my trajectory as a mobile student in Dublin. In *a* relational/flat ontology, the manner in which I interfere in the world of the twelve mobile students – enacting their realities – is much related with my own translations attempts and the effects of such translations on who I am and how I see, even momentarily, the, or *a* world. In doing this, however, I take the risk of being judged or misinterpreted by the reader, which I sincerely hope it is not the case⁸⁴ (continues in Appendix M).

4.4 Summary

This chapter (and Appendices A-M) can be seen as the entry point of my task of “following the actors” (Latour 2005). My aim was to describe what the actors of choice (students) were doing, illuminating their deployed tactics and strategies in their day-to-day international education practices at a “particular place, moment, and occasion” (Law 2009, p.02). International students – as any other actor – extend their actor-networks through relations (translations). *What* these relations are and *how* (and *why*) they are enacted is an empirical matter (Law 1992), which justified the craft of the twelve individual case studies with an attention to detailed description. The students’ accounts are real if the “real is no different

⁸⁴ As Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992) put, exposure always brings risks.

than the possible, the unrealistic, the unrealizable, the desirable, the utopian, the absurd, the reasonable, or the costly” (Latour 1991, p.117).

The principles of agnosticism, free association, and generalized symmetry (Callon 1986a) were considered. Although the students were my actors of choice for this chapter – “the informants” – the reader should not consider them as ontologically superior than the other actors assembled around them, whether humans, objects, feelings, or representations of realities. Pasteur’s endeavours, for instance, would not make much sense without considering the actors that were being assembled around him (Latour 1993a). In the words of Harman (2009, p.129), “there is no Pasteur-in-himself, but only Pasteur in relation with everything that he modifies, transforms, perturbs, and creates”. Actors act and are acted upon. I described a series of translations as “the world of meaning and the world of being are one and the same world, that of translation, substitution, delegation, passing” (Latour 1993b, p.129).

The case studies demonstrated that worlds are multiple (Mol 2002; Law 2004), meaning that the international education realities were singular to each student. However, this idea should not be seen as another dualism: singularity and plurality. In order to avoid this ontological “trap”, the reader should see the realities of the twelve students – when combined – as “fractal”, or “partially connected” (Law 2003b, p.6).

The partial connections between the realities of the twelve students can be seen in different forms. For example, fractality gains shape if one considers their course

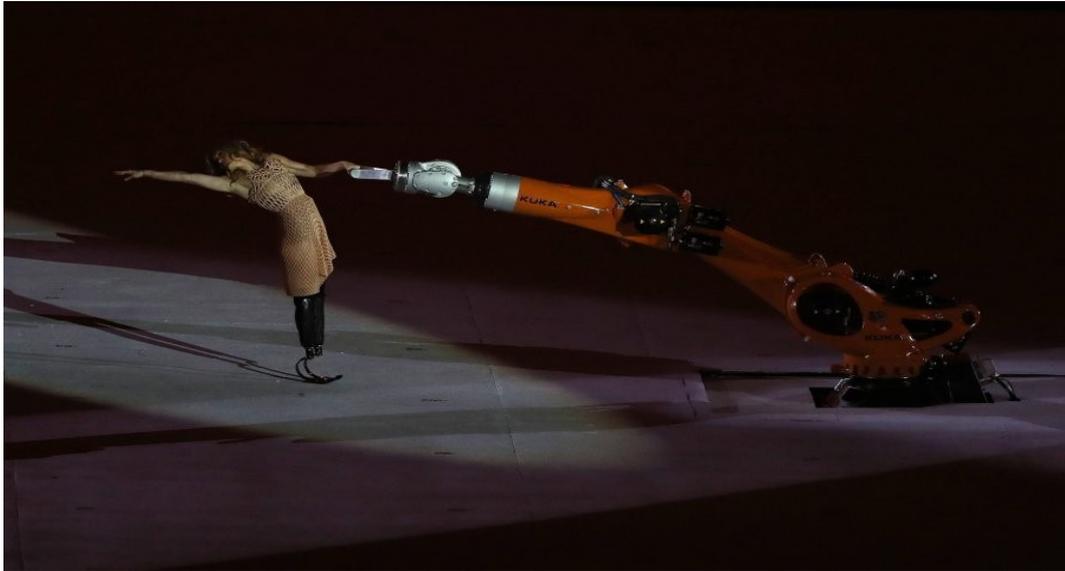
of study: ESOL, SWB undergraduate, Master's, and PhD. Each of these more stable actor-networks will shape realities that might seem similar – to some extent – if one wishes to make a comparison across the case studies. For instance, ESOL students were aiming to translate with “casual-employment actor-networks”⁸⁵. Science Without Borders' undergraduates were focused on their studies and had to return to Brazil after spending one year abroad. Master's and PhD students were concerned to join more stable employment actor-networks in Dublin. The totality of students aimed to mobilise the “English-language-actor-network” and had their permanence in the Irish State dictated by the student visa. Apart from Red and Orange, the students rejected membership in *any* “Brazilian community” in Dublin.

The way students theorised and enacted social capital abroad (or social capital actor-networks) is also a fractal object. Although the concept of social capital can be closely related to the mobilisation of other actors and the extension of one's actor network (Callon & Latour 1981); social capital is “something that is indeed more than one and less than many. Somewhere in between” (Law 2003b, p.7). The enactment of social capital actor-networks might involve different actors, from a bicycle to a job opportunity – but always bringing the idea of benefit for those engaged in translation.

The chapter concluded with my own story as an international student in Ireland. It consisted of a reflection on my trajectory abroad and the relations that were performed during this period.

⁸⁵ Although the exact way this struggle is performed is singular to each student.

Chapter 5: Debating Unmodern Agency in International Education Realities



Photograph 8: Robot Dances with Paralympic Athlete at Paralympics Rio 2016 Opening Ceremony⁸⁶

I arrived from work and saw a couple of dirty pans lying on my bed. They were placed there by one of my housemates, who alleged that I was not cleaning them after use. Luckily, although slightly angry with his barbaric attitude, I was able to convince him that dialogue is the only way to “get things done”. I assumed my fault for not cleaning the pans for the last two days – due to my insane workload at the time – and he agreed that his attitude was not too civilised. I could have initiated a heated argument with him, which potentially would have made me move to another accommodation inhabited by different actors. Instead, as we reached an agreement, our association became stronger. The fact that objects have agency through ANT lenses allows us to tell these little stories – uninteresting to non-semiotic approaches – gaining a closer insight of the complexities of social phenomena and seeing action being performed by surprising actors, especially when they do unexpected things (Notebook 3).

When I moved recently, there was only a very old cooker in the apartment, and I told the landlord that I could only move if he bought a new cooker. And he did! I feel at home, I feel that Dublin is my home as it is the place where I cook (Green).

⁸⁶ Available from:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2016_Summer_Paralympics_opening_ceremony,_Amy_Purdy_dancing_with_robot.jpg [Accessed 17 September 2016].

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4 (and Appendices A-M), I focused on the description of the translation practices enacted by the twelve international students (and my own), as they were my actors of choice. In this chapter, I turn my attention to objects, or non-human entities that are active participants in the performance of actor-networks, observing the principles of free association, generalised symmetry and agnosticism (Callon 1986a).

This chapter initiates by holding a theoretical debate about non-human agency, illuminating the analytical possibilities of considering *anything* that has agency as an actor – not necessarily human. Subsequently, I aim to demonstrate how non-human entities are active players in the enactment of actor-networks of international education, shaping reality and influencing other actors to act in a particular way. I highlight the role of inscription devices – the policy texts – and their central agency in enacting hybrid international education realities. I conclude this chapter with a reflective vignette on the agency of the student visa, followed by the chapter summary.

5.2 Debating Non-human Agency

The following excerpt is found in Law & Singleton (2013). This article, “ANT and Politics: Working in and on the World”, presents a dialogue between John Law and Vicky Singleton on ethnography of salmon fishing in Norway, and ANT.

Vicky: We need to remember that some people don't like ANT because it says objects are pretty much like humans; that they are actors too. And vice versa. For some people this sounds uncaring. Inhumane. But I think this is a bit of a misunderstanding. ANT isn't saying that people are robots. It's saying that people can be understood as an effect of the unfolding web of relations they're caught up in. And that human and non-human actors are assembled together.

John: (...) we need to "follow the actors" to find out how they are shaped by those assembled relations.

Vicky: At the same time, an actor is something that acts. Makes a difference. Is therefore detectable in the scene.

John: That's how I try to work in practice. It's what I was trying to do on the fish farm. The oxygen acts—it calms the fish. The fish act—they lead the people to go looking for oxygen. And the people are acting too, of course. They stop what they are doing and go off looking for oxygen. It's a kind of dance, a form of choreography. Everything is related to everything else. And gets itself assembled, one way or another (Law & Singleton 2013, p.491).

The term "non-human" inhabits the theorisations on the agency of objects in ANT. It is the pivot of many academic debates, and infuriated scholarly reactions (Bloor 1999; Collins & Yearley 1992). This term, although extending the idea that what is not human may also exert agency and alter the composition of actor-networks is, by itself, problematic. As the tenet defended by ANT theorists⁸⁷ is to eliminate *a priori* dualism between human and non-human, or the subject-object polarity, I am invited to make a reservation to the reader. To refer to an object as "non-human" has two possible implications. First, it still carries the potential to bring the idea of an ontological separation between human beings and the "mere" objects that surround them. Second, it might yet reflect the notion of human superiority. The aim of this chapter is to shed light on how objects, whether

⁸⁷ Bruno Latour, John Law, Michel Callon.

cutlery, climate, emotions, constructions, house utilities, and policies not only participate in actor-networks, but also produce effects in the enacted realities of international students. Thus, my intention is not to draw an ontological border between the “inanimate world” and the “conscious world”, but rather to elect objects as the actors of choice for this chapter. Through the lenses of the “sociology of the social” (Latour 2005), or the sociological anthropocentric tradition (Law 2011), objects – when not completely forgotten – only assist us to achieve our *rational minds*’ goals and desires, which is seen as a direct effect of our interests. I am going to demonstrate that it is not the case when one “sees” reality through relational and irreductionist ontological lenses. There is only one ontological “flat” zone (Latour 1993a-b; 1994; 1999a-c; 2005).

Although ANT defends the application of material semiotics in the description of the practice of actors – allowing the entrance of non-humans to the analytical frame – I am not trying to defend the idea that human beings are the *same* as objects. The challenge here is to leave ontological singularity behind and embrace ontological multiplicity. It is a matter of understanding that in ANT ontology, actors, from an individual to a doorbell, *do things*; they modify, and make other actors do things. Actors are what they do, not what they “inherently” are. ANT prioritises actions over essences – although an imagined “essence” might be the result of a series of actions. If I am found cheating in a poker game, the other players will consider me “a cheater”, but it is the fact that I hid one card under my sleeve that *makes* me “a cheater”. In this mundane and hypothetical example (I do not even play poker), what *makes* me a cheater is a concatenation of actors and a series of translations. I am not being a “cheater” alone. My long sleeve shirt, the

cards, and my desire to win the game at any cost (which is also an effect of different heterogeneous interactions and most likely highly complex to trace) are all translated, *producing* the way I act thus; composing the collective. I act as a result of translations enacted by different actors. Note that although the focus is on the “cheater”, more actors have agency in this example and need to be taken into consideration if one wants to describe an actor-network in action. As Latour puts it, “action is not a property of humans, but of an association of actants” (Latour 1999b, p.182). The consideration of both human and non-human having the *same* analytical capacity to exert agency on other actors is referred to as free association and generalised symmetry (Callon 1986a), as explained in Chapter 2.

Traditional social theory would argue that human beings have the gift to initiate action. From an ANT lens, however, intentionality and reflexivity are not precursory *sine qua non* attributes that allow interaction, or participation in the collective world of actors – as defended by Lee & Brown (1994). ANT is demonstrating that action does not need human capabilities in order to be performed, as these human features are nothing but an effect of an array of translations performed by various actors – both human and non-human (Law 2007). Any “characteristic” of a certain subject or object is the result of a relationship among heterogeneous actor-networks. Once we free ourselves from the idea that interaction is exclusively a human condition, objects – and the work they do – start becoming visible in social theory. An actor, whether human or non-human, can make things happen (Law, 1992). Critics (Collins & Yearley 1992) argue that ANT research is immoral when treating objects with the same analytical manner as individuals. These accusations of an immoral and apolitical

research can be defended, if one considers ANT as an alternative and provocative way of doing sociology – which challenges the “One-World World” (Escobar 2016; Law 2004; 2011; Law & Lin 2015) – and that in every writing craft, the author has the political task of composition to choose what will be enacted and what will be omitted in the accounts (Latour 2005; Law & Singleton 2013).

Various examples, or events could yet be invoked in order to insist on the agency of objects, or non-human actors – or at least – remain puzzled about issues of agency. For instance, let’s think of my interaction with my PhD supervisors. It is a matter of ontological perspective to see only a couple of human actors connecting with each other using language as a communication tool, and using objects as a support for our relations. We did interact, but we were not *alone*. Numerous objects mediated our interaction – allowing and denying the enactment of particular realities – and that is when the way of thinking through a relational ontology allows one to consider objects, as much as humans, as participants of the story.

It is on the hybridisation of entities that ANT focuses – “humans are no longer by themselves” (Latour 1994, p.41). I am writing this thesis using the keyboard of my computer and my supervisors, through data transmission via fibre optic cables, receive the material on their computer, I drive my car to the university campus in order to meet with them and receive feedback on my writing. A printer allows them to write down their notes on the paper. Every one of these actions alters the outcome of a particular reality. The attention to the source of action, or the “prime mover” (Latour 1994, p.34), is of little importance when analysing

material practices (Latour 1987; 1999b). The task of describing a course of action in detail is only possible if one considers action as being distributed among heterogeneous actors.

One might object, of course, that a basic asymmetry lingers – women make electronic chips but no computer has ever made women. Common sense, however, is not the safest guide here, any more than it is in the sciences (...) the prime mover of an action becomes a new, distributed, and nested series of practices whose sum might be made but only if we respect the mediating role of all the actants mobilized in the list (Latour 1994, p.34).

Analytical symmetry may seem radical. In ANT, I type on the keyboard in the same ontological sense that the keyboard touches my fingers. Instead of thinking that action is carried only by humans from A to B, one should consider action not only as a heterogeneous and uncertainly distributed practice, but also as a circulating “movement” (Latour 1999c; 2000; 2005).

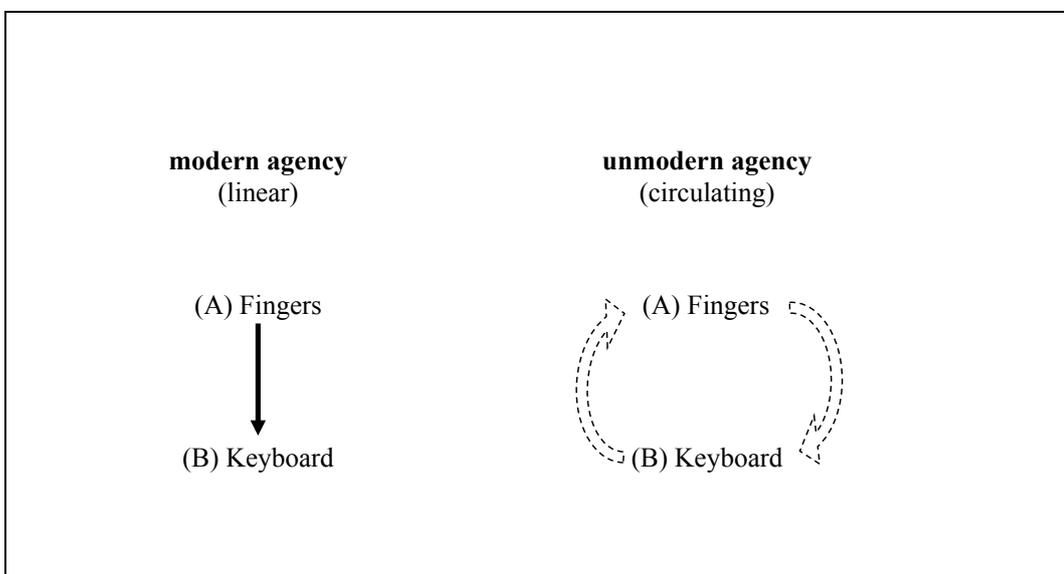


Figure 9: Modern/Unmodern Agency (Salomão Filho 2016)

Distinguishing action from behaviour, prioritising the former, is a concern for ANT (Latour 2004a), which can be seen as an argumentative resource used to

articulate the principle of symmetry (Callon 1986a)⁸⁸. I keep articulating this argument. If a breakdown occurs, it will be clearer that objects make us, humans, do unexpected things. They stop carrying causality (intermediaries) and start making their “voices” heard (mediators). If my computer stops working in the way it should, if it stops being black boxed (Latour 1987), my behaviour (or course of action) will be altered. I will have to go to a specialised shop and have it fixed. Latour’s (1994) examples of the “sleeping policeman” (speed bump), or the projector in a lecture room could also illustrate this argument. While the latter is being “invisible”, taken for granted, an intermediary, as it performs its function; it is black boxed. At the moment it breaks down, everybody in the room would turn their attention to it, watching the repairman disassemble it into pieces – not to mention that the lecture would have to be interrupted (Latour 1994).

Lavender, one of my ESOL informants, told me a story of his friend’s English school, where a water gallon was placed in the corridor only when the inspectors were about to come by. After the inspection was finished, the school staff removed the gallon, leaving the students with no free water to drink and causing general indignation. Blue, another ESOL student, wore jackets inside his accommodation as the radiators were kept switched off, which in turn, was an effect of the absence of money to pay the electricity bill. Yellow, one of my PhD informants, narrated how she felt intimidated – by a conference attendee – due to a noisy cooling computer fan.

⁸⁸ Whereas humans “behave” or “act”, objects only “act”. ANT favours the use of the verb “to act” in order to remain analytically symmetrical.

A madam told me to do something about the cooling fan of my computer, which was bothering her. Can you imagine? She said it was making too much noise. Conferences are a surprise-box and you have to have high self-esteem (Yellow).

As it no longer makes sense, from an ANT perspective, to ontologically separate what is human from what is non-human, one should proceed with an eye for the actor-network, rethinking issues of agency. ANT theorists have demonstrated the participation of objects in the collective, or social world (Callon 1986a-b; Latour 1991; 1992; Law, 1986; 1987) in ways that go beyond simply causal agency. Law (1987) illustrates in the passage below how heterogeneous materials are combined and “last longer than the interactions that formed them” (Callon and Latour 1981, p.283) therefore, producing an effect on the world.

The galley builders associated wood and men, pitch and sailcloth, and they built an array that floated and that could be propelled and guided. The galley was able to associate wind and manpower to make its way to distant places. It became a "galley" that allowed the merchant or the master to depart from Venice, to arrive at Alexandria, to trade, to make a profit, and so to fill his palace with fine art (Law 1987, p.116).

From an “unmodern” perspective⁸⁹ (Latour 1993b), where one is not purifying beforehand each object described in the event above, we can note how an array of actors is being interlinked together in order to form a “punctualised” (Law 1992) or “mobilised” (Callon 1986a) actor-network. Objects from nature, such as wood and wind, interact with members of society, namely merchant and masters, who in turn, interact with discourses, namely trade practices. Thus, that which is “real” (nature), “collective” (society) and “narrated” (discourse) is woven together, translating one another. The only classification one could give to an actor-

⁸⁹ Reality that has not been “purified” (separation between Nature and Culture) (see p.32).

network would be related to its hybrid composition. In the example above, it is unfeasible to reduce mercantilist practices to be purely a matter of power and politics, or exclusively a maritime phenomenon. Neither the galleys, nor the merchants, are alone when they act.

From this hybrid perspective, Latour (1999b) articulates the argument about gun control in the U.S. from two different standpoints. He cites the slogan used by those who wish to restrict gun sales, “Guns kill people”, which assumes a materialistic standpoint, *essentialising* the object. On the other hand, the National Rifle Association replies with the slogan “Guns don’t kill people; people kill people”, *essentialising* the subject. The former assumes that human beings are intermediaries, defending a radical technical determinism. One uses a gun to kill because one has a gun. Guns transform us. On the other hand, the latter isolates human beings as being the only responsible for murder, in which a gun is seen as a “neutral” instrument, an intermediary. Murder might be enacted in many distinct forms. From this view, carrying a gun would not simply *make* anyone kill.

ANT supports neither of those positions, but sees a partial *truth* in both. Instead of choosing sides, Latour is calling our attention to issues of hybridisation and symmetry in translation practices, (re) distributing both action and the responsibility for action among different actors, the quasi-objects and quasi-subjects (Latour 1993b). Humans might have the desire to kill using a gun, and the gun, itself, has its own goals (or “functions”) to eject a bullet out of its barrel at an extremely high speed (Latour 1999b).

The gun is no longer the gun-in-the-armoury or the gun-in-the-drawer or the gun-in the-pocket, but the gun-in-your-hand, aimed at someone who is screaming. What is true of the subject, of the gunman, is the true of the object, of the gun that is held. A good citizen becomes a criminal, a bad guy becomes a worse guy; a silent gun becomes a fired gun, a new gun becomes a used gun, a sporting gun becomes a weapon (Latour 1999b, p.180).

Latour illustrates how gun and human became an actor-network through translation, or “the creation of a link that did not exist before and that to some degree modifies the original two” (Latour 1999b, p.179). Passive, satisfied students become angry, thirsty students when the water-gallon-in-the-corridor becomes a water-gallon-somewhere-else. Accommodations become cold *caves* due to the absence of money, making radiators not work. Used computer cooling fans becomes an actor in a “bullying- actor-network” during a conference.

5.3 Non-human Entities in International Education

I could then, welcome objects to, or rethink agency in, the universe of international education with a special attention to translation. My conversations with the Brazilian students in Dublin, although with an interview script to hand⁹⁰, were characterised by the enactment of a series of bifurcations, or unexpected objects that became part of the dialogue. In this sense, the interview was a mediator (Latour 1993b; 2005). Pink, a Master’s student whose account was described in Chapter 4⁹¹, described her experience from a cultural perspective, where her “Brazilian identity” would be an actor, therefore influencing not only

⁹⁰ See Chapter 3.

⁹¹ See Chapter 4 and Appendix J.

her practices in Dublin, but also the way she depicted her world. I decided to follow a bifurcation generated by our interview and asked her: “What is culture?”

Culture is a set of values and dogmas that are constructed along education and the environment in which a person is inserted. Everything can play a role; the climate, architecture, and how the people react to that, which can change all the time (Pink).

Although considering that a person is “inserted” in an environment, which is a manifestation of the “Great Divide” itself (Latour 1993b), I could focus on three important aspects issued by Pink that are related to the philosophical sensibility proposed by ANT. First, the fact that architecture and climate were brought to the scene as actors that define culture. Second, that reactions to those can change “all the time”. Third, that “everything can play a role”.

In describing their displacement from Brazil to Dublin, and their performance as international students in that city, the agency of the climate was referred to in many informants’ accounts. Nature moves from the background, unstudied, to become an actor in the stories of the students, modifying the relationship among actors. From a perspective of “nature-culture” (Latour 1993b), Green became more tolerant and less judgmental when she considered the role played by the Irish climate, where sunny days are, knowingly through observation, rarer than in the tropical area of the world. When she saw Irish citizens wearing “summer” clothes in any glimpse of sunshine during autumn, she understood the reasons for such behaviour. Silver and Red narrated how the cold climate made them “lazier” and less propitious to leave their accommodation, with the latter attributing her “bad mood” as an effect of consecutive rainy days. Beige described how facing

the weather for the first time, when she arrived at Dublin airport, made her think that she would not be able to spend more than three months abroad.

Physical structures also modified the way the realities of the students were enacted. Whether an apartment or a house, accommodation spaces are actor-networks that generate more durable effects, resisting deterioration and maintaining stability throughout time (Law & Mol 1995), which allows them to temporarily translate with a high number of humans. The students described the need for living with people whom “you have never seen in your life” (Lavender) as a matter of difficulty. This difficulty changed the way students behave in, or perceive, their international life. Moreover, housing encouraged the existence of illegal landlords through sub-letting.

Students become illegal landlords due to the shortage of accommodation. It is wrong, but we don't have an option. If we look for other accommodation, we will see illegal landlords there too (Lavender).

A lack of regulation in the sector, and a shortage of student accommodation in Dublin (not only for international students) contribute to the enactment of such practices, a problem that is being tackled by the Irish Government (Kelly 2016). The Higher Education Authority estimates that 25,000 new beds should be offered in order to suppress the currently experienced high cost for accommodation, with students competing with families and young workers for places to live in the city (Kelly 2016).

It is *in/with* the accommodation-actor-networks where many relevant cases of the

agency of objects can be observed, participating in the enactment of the experiences of international students. It is *in/with* the accommodation space that the first “social capital translations” between international students are performed, as narrated by Blue, Grey, Orange, Red, Silver, Lavender, Beige and Brown.

Overall, the people around me helped me when I needed. For example, daily routine things. You need to fix a bike, and your housemate knows a place and goes with you from city centre to Dublin 22; just to show you the way. In the accommodation, people who are aware of a job vacancy tell the other who needs it in that moment (Lavender).

The fact that people “live together” does not nullify the agency exerted by the building (that here is black-boxed). The building and the shared living rooms are the actors that enable not only the experience of students living together, but also conversations and interactions among them as the one displayed above. The idea of the fragility of such connections – where a bike is just another participant – is elaborated by the students, which makes explicit how volatile international students’ “social capital translations” can be. Pink, for example, believes that the physical proximity with fellow students, whether in the school or accommodation, enables the formation of a group. However, she makes a reservation that “the relationship is conditioned to sharing a space”. Such relationships vanish as soon as the space is no longer shared. As social capital is enacted and “used” as an effect of membership in groups (Bourdieu 1986; Lin 2008), her argument illustrates the difficulties for international students to mobilise “social capital actor-networks”, a discussion that will be held in Chapter 6.

Another set of objects with *visible* agency in the students’ accounts refers to

house utilities and cutlery. When it carries food from the plate to our mouths, a fork is an intermediary. It does what is expected from it, transporting causality (Callon 1991; Latour 1993b; 1999b; 2005). However, when cutlery and house utilities force humans to enact new modes of behaviour, one starts seeing them as mediators, actors who bring uncertainty to other actors (human and non-human) and modify the current state of affairs of a given actor-network. In the narrative accounts, the work deployed by mediators contributed to what some informants called “learning” (Blue, Lavender, Green, Silver), where different actors engaged in the production of knowledge. In this sense, a form of knowledge is performed as a result of relating, with the participation of objects (Fenwick & Edwards 2010; 2012).

The first thing you learn as an ESOL student is to live with people whom you just met. Everyone does something that annoys you and you cannot start arguing with everybody all the time. I live with four other students and one of them is very laid back; he never cleans anything. You have to learn that people have different mind-sets; you cannot simply start a fight for any behaviour you don't accept (Lavender).

If I don't put the bin out, nobody else does. I avoid using the dishwasher when there is only one dirty plate there, because I like to be sustainable; but my housemates do differently. It is problematic and stops me from wanting to establish friendships with them, but at the same time you learn a lot with that (Beige).

The quotes above illustrate what Latour (1987, p.108) denominated strategies for “translating interests”⁹². While Latour considered the interplay between fact-builders (scientists) and the actors they enrol, I *place* house utilities, the students, and their housemates into the translation scene. Whereas students cannot control

⁹² See Chapter 2, Table 1 (p.49-50).

the behaviours of their housemates “in order to make their actions predictable” (ibid), they try to enrol others so “that they participate in the construction of a fact” (ibid). In this case, the *fact* refers to cleaning cutlery after use and managing house utilities in a certain manner in order to contribute to the functioning of the “collective-accommodation-actor-network”, where harmony would potentially prevail if all actors perform their functions as intermediaries rather than mediators.

The most serene form of translation, “I want what you want” (Latour 1987, p.108), is not feasible for neither above-mentioned events, as it is exactly the opposing interests that generates the friction. In Lavender’s and Beige’s case, one sees an invention of a new goal as an effect of the reshuffling of interests, what Latour (1987, p.113) called “translation four”. Although the displacement of goals is considered as a new form of knowledge by the actors, they previously tried – unsuccessfully – to convince their housemates to become aligned to their own interests. The students *had* to change their initial goals in order to keep the actor-network functioning. In this case, differently than what Latour (1987) demonstrates, I am able to focus the analysis on the students, although they are not the “translators” of the story – but the “translated”. The following event narrated by Green also includes a learning event which is mediated by humans and non-humans.

When I was doing my Master’s in England, I lived with undergraduates. There were six girls in the apartment sharing the kitchen, the shower, and the toilet. I remember one time there was a discussion because the German was complaining about the Indonesian who was occupying way too much space in the fridge, putting fruits there. And fruits are not to be put in the fridge,

according to the German. Then, the German asked the French, who lived in Northern France, if she puts fruits in the fridge, and the French said “no, I don’t put fruits in the fridge, fruits stay out of the fridge”. Then I came into the kitchen and the Indonesian asked me “where do you put your fruit?” And then I said “in the fridge, I won’t eat warm fruits”. And then we sat and understood that people coming from hot areas put fruits in the fridge, whereas people coming from cold countries don’t need to put fruits in the fridge. It’s a silly thing, but it’s a truth that, for me... “Where are you going to put a fruit? In the fridge”. This was my reality, but suddenly you see that’s not the reality for the other and then you’re shocked. Then I learnt to be more tolerant with the differences, and accept them. This helped me a lot when I arrived here. I didn’t have any cultural shock because I was already waiting to see lots of different things which was, actually, what I saw (Green).

Latour (1999b) provides four different meanings of “technical mediation”, an argument through which one can understand the agency of objects as being more complex than technical determinism, or that objects simply carry causality. Objects not only “act”, but also make other actors do the same. I will focus on the “third meaning of mediation”, or “reverse blackboxing” in order to make sense of how translation occurs among heterogeneous actors. In the vignette above, there would be no detour if the actor-network “fridge-fruits-students” were black-boxed. Every actor of the referred network has an interest, or “what lies between actors and their goals” (Latour 1987, p.108). There would have been no tension if the German student would have found enough room in the fridge to place her food and, symmetrically, if the shared fridge would have had enough room to stock her food (step 1: disinterest).

Thus, the unexpected, or a discussion in the kitchen of the student accommodation, was generated by the lack of space in the fridge (step 2: interest), or when the fridge shifts its role from being an intermediary to becoming a

mediator. This event cannot be seen as a phenomenon of pure causality as the goal of the human actor is to store food in the fridge and the goal, or function, of the fridge is to be able to offer space to store food. If the German student had found space in the fridge, that could have been considered a relation of pure causality, although the actor-network “student-food-fridge” would still be displaying the agency of objects (one buys food as one *has* space in the fridge to store them, or food is bought as it can be stored in the fridge).

I observe then, in “step 3” (composition of a new goal), that a new goal has been established. The German wants to have space in the fridge for her food and blames the Indonesian for blocking her to achieve her objective. The German’s new goal is to make the Indonesian clear space in the fridge. The former’s *matter of fact* (fruits are stored out of the fridge), is turned into a *matter of concern*⁹³ (Latour 2005), as the Indonesian enters the scene. The Indonesian’s matter of fact is that fruits are stored in the fridge, otherwise they will start decaying (one of the fruit’s function is to be eaten, whether by humans, animals or fungi). The German enrolled the French and the Indonesian enrolled the Brazilian to join the “fruit negotiation” with clear interests of recruiting allies, therefore becoming more influential, which in turn, would contribute to the achievement of their goals – or the success of the implementation of their *modus operandi*.

At this stage (step 4: OPP), the German enacts an obligatory passage point, through which fruits, fridge, Green, the French and the Indonesian student need to

⁹³ A “matter of fact” is the fact that achieved ontological security, whereas a “matter of concern” is the fact that has its ontological security challenged. I provide a more detailed explanation of matters of fact/concern in Chapter 6 (p.204).

pass through in order to participate in the actor-network being described. All students need to engage in the discussion “fruits-fridge” in order to have their interests satisfied – or at least to reach an agreement on where fruits will be stored.

Step 5 (alignment) is enacted when the allies of each side share their “truth”, or matters of fact (which is now a matter of concern). The arguments, or the sharing of each other’s “truth” are posed and, as the English climate is far from being classified as tropical, all the actors have their goals converged to one – interests are translated. Agreement is achieved as both the German and the Indonesian were invited to take a detour to change their frames of reference and to imagine an alternative reality (fruits are left out of the fridge in colder climates and in the fridge in hotter ones).

As a result, the actor-network is black boxed again (step 6: blackboxing), which makes the tension disappear. Finally, the fridge and the fruit perform their functions and the humans of the story are no longer engaged in controversy (step 7: punctualization). The table below illustrates each step of such “reversing blackboxing”.

Step 1	Disinterest	The fridge has enough space to store everyone's food
Step 2	Interest	There is no room for food in the fridge
Step 3	Composition of a new goal	German student wants to store her food in the fridge, and the fridge has the same "interest" (function), which is being able to store food in it. The newly composed goal is: Indonesian student must clear space in the fridge
Step 4	OPP	Discussion/negotiation of different matters of fact (now a matter of concern)
Step 5	Alignment:	Acceptance of different "truths" through shifts in the frames of reference
Step 6	Blackboxing	Fruits need not be stored in the fridge
Step 7	Punctualization:	Actor-network "student-fridge-fruit" works as one. People place fruits out of the fridge. The space of the fridge is not an issue anymore; it performs its function again

Table 15: Reverse Blackboxing (adapted from Latour 1999b, p.184)

A "common world" (Latour, 2004a) was thus enacted, where international students accepted that the enactment of other realities was possible. Turning the focus to Green who – as much as the Indonesian student – saw "putting fruits in the fridge" as her *truth*, makes the analysis of the event above possible through the lenses of translation. The effect of such translations is the enhanced "tolerance", a new actor enrolled into Green's actor-network in England that stopped her from experiencing (or helped her to overcome) a "cultural shock" when she moved to Dublin. Cross-cultural sensitivity and tolerance for the Other are well-rehearsed concepts in intercultural education literature, as "internationalisation should also induce tolerance and respect, in students" (Stier 2006, p.3), encompassing theorisations in cosmopolitanism and global citizenship (Brunner 2006; Clifford & Montgomery 2014; Kim 2010; Mansilla & Gardner 2007), as well as issues of multiculturalism (Frost 2010).

From a material semiotic perspective, Green's experience shed light on how such "cross-cultural sensitivity" was locally *composed*, rather than simply *acquired*. Instead of seeing this student "acquiring" knowledge that she previously "lacked", ANT allows one to see an entity making a connection, or enrolling an actor through translation, although such process is "always insecure" and "susceptible to failure" (Law 2007, p.6). Such an event could be considered as learning that is enacted as an actor-network effect – although taking place away from formal learning settings – if "learning is not simply an individual or cognitive process, nor is it solely a social achievement", but "becomes enacted as a network effect" (Fenwick & Edwards 2013, p.42). The point here is that both Green and "tolerance" have the same ontological status, or "pay the same semiotic price" (Latour 1996b, p.6). Yet, I insist that it is misleading to see Green and tolerance as two distinct entities. It is the hybrid actor-network "Green-tolerance" that ANT makes an effort to elucidate; first, how they were formed and second, how they sustain. In Green's account in Chapter 4, we observe the effects that the enrolment of tolerance (described above) produced in her world⁹⁴.

5.4 Inscription Devices

Another set of *active* objects refers to written material. It is undeniable that texts participate actively in social life (Callon 1991). The term "inscription devices" was first used by Latour & Woolgar (1986), and describes the processes that allow the messiness of the interactions of the actors in order to be turned into

⁹⁴ See Chapter 4 and Appendix B (p.5).

more traceable forms. In ANT studies, inscriptions are seen as crucial elements in the chain of translations that organise scientific statements (Latour 1987).

(...) "inscription devices" transform pieces of matter into written documents. More exactly, an inscription device is any item of apparatus or particular configuration of such items which can transform a material substance into a figure or diagram which is directly usable by one of the members of the office space (Latour & Woolgar 1986, p.51).

Basing on realities enacted in laboratories, Latour (1987) calls "instruments" everything that is *behind* a scientific text, using, *inter alia*, the example of a primatologist who observes the behaviour of baboons. Binoculars, pencil and a sheet of paper are considered instruments if her observations of the baboon's behaviour are transformed into a graph – the inscription. In this sense, inscription devices are the result of the many instruments that mesh together, producing a line in a scientific paper (or in a policy report).

For Latour, the difference between author and reader lies in the capacity to assemble a number of instruments; "devices, people and animals necessary to produce a visual display usable in a text" (Latour, 1987, p.70). Inscriptions could also be seen as immutable mobiles (Latour 1990), or actor-networks that are part of both Euclidean and the "network" space⁹⁵.

⁹⁵ Immutable mobiles move within Euclidean space and continue immobile within the space of the network. As Law (2002, p.96) points out, Portuguese vessels of the sixteenth century were immutable mobiles as they held together physically within Euclidean space and functionally in the network space, and "at the same time it is this immobility within network space which afford their displacement within Euclidean space, that allows them to sail successfully from Calicut to Lisbon".

I focus on the inscription devices in the universe of international education, including international education policy documents, that are the effect of a series of translations that acquired durability to circulate across time and space, engaging with the lives of human actors. Callon (1991, p.135) considers texts as “objects that define the skills, actions and relations of heterogeneous entities”. While a policy analysis of Ireland’s international education agenda is demonstrated in detail elsewhere⁹⁶, I include policy texts in this chapter as they are both the effects of policy discourse, and actors in the enacted realities of the students. In Law’s words, “reality and the statements that correspond to it are produced together” (Law 2004, p. 31). Thus, texts compose actor-networks as they shape the latter, ordering and forming the “medium of the networks they (texts) describe” (Callon 1991, p.135). Grey, a Master’s student, narrates an event where the agency of texts can be illustrated.

Grey: I remember I went to the Embassy when I arrived (in Dublin). I went there to ask about stuff, but they didn’t help me too much. Their support is somewhat limited. I remember that they did not help me too much at the counter, you know what I mean? When you have been here for two or three weeks and you don’t know what to do, and your experience is quite limited, the last thing you would want is to have someone not helping you when you need the information to regularise your situation or something like that.

Alfredo: Would you mind giving me more details about that?

Grey: It doesn’t work so well, simply doesn’t work so well. I think that... the staff... they help you if you have filled everything (the forms) the way it should be. If you did your research before going there, if you need to handle documents or whatever then, it’s cool, as it’s their job. But if you need extra help, if you ask the people who work there to support you, it’s different.

⁹⁶ See Chapter 7.

My dialogue with Grey reveals how texts dictate not only what human actors can do in a bureaucratic setting, such as an embassy, but also cannot, or need not do⁹⁷. Although it is difficult to trace how and which instruments were mobilised in order to become the “form” mentioned by Grey, it is clear that ordering (Law 1994) is performed with the use of inscriptions, which are stable across time and space. In this sense, the Brazilian Government, as the Portuguese State described in Law (1986), exercised long-distance control with the use of inscriptions devices (or immutable mobiles); buildings and people, disciplining and standardising the *modus operandi* of its citizens wherever they are located.

I now turn my attention to the visa-actor-network, another paramount inscription device and immutable mobile in the realities of the students. Borders do not exist *a priori*, but are enacted and then black boxed, becoming unquestioned to those on either side of them. This space dualism, or the idea of “outsiderness” is obtained by “enormous supplementary work” (Latour 1996b, p.5). One of the first questions that constituted my interview guide for the first round was “Why Ireland?”, but a reservation is needed here as I use ANT as a research toolkit for describing heterogeneous practices and enactments (Law 2002). That which could be seen as student agency in a “purified” ontology (Latour 1993b) is, for ANT, an effect of different actor-networks, including actions, desires, emotions; an array of translations that include the students, as much as the agency of texts, discourses and social imaginaries in education actor-networks (Fenwick 2011). In this, the apparently direct answer to the question “Why Ireland?” emerges through

⁹⁷ Policy demands distance, avoiding the formation of an assemblage with an actor that could imply some kind of “belonging”.

multitudinous translations (and betrayals) that are enacted by heterogeneous actor-networks.

Alfredo: Why did you choose Ireland?

Purple: Because of the visa. It's easy and cheap to get, and allows you to work. Ireland is an English speaking country. There are not too many choices. You need to have a lot of money to live here without working.

The most significant inscription device, or immutable mobile (Latour 1987; 1990) in the students' stories refers to the visa for non-EU students, as it displays a sensibility for complexity. It acts as a mediator (Latour 1993b; 2005), an obligatory passage point (Callon 1986a), and it is also multiple (Mol 2002). It could also be seen as mundane as it is an essential part⁹⁸, often not questioned, of the planning of non-EU citizens wishing to join the global student mobility actor-network in Ireland. In this argument, I am concerned with the fact that "the serfs have become free citizens once more" (Latour 1993b, p.81). This means that I turn my attention to the capacity of translation that the student visa endows, and how it betrays the aspirations of the international students whose course is about to finish and whose free intentions are to remain in Ireland for career prospects. The visa is an effect of many different actor-networks and its translations, and as such, produces other effects on these students' trajectories.

I think at a governmental level, the visa turn around time is an issue, the stay back is an issue, the GNIB processing... all of these creates barriers for international students and also create an impression that they are different, and that they will be treated in a different way. I think that anything that requires a group of students

⁹⁸ Or "black-boxed" (Latour 1987).

of other nationalities to have to be grouped together to look different than the rest of population is negative (HIO⁹⁹).

Brazilian nationals may remain in Ireland for a period of one month as tourists. Any longer period of stay will require a visa. For students, the latter is conditional on enrolment in a full-time course of study, the opening of a bank account in an Irish bank, the deposit of € 3000 in the bank account, and the issue of a social security number (INIS 2017). The visa is thus, a fully functioning actor that needs to be taken into consideration for its political, classificatory and paradoxical character – a mediator (Latour 2005). For the holder, the visa is an enabler of movement, while for the government, it acts as a mechanism of “long distance control” (Law 1986), “ordering” (Law 1994), or “action at a distance” (Latour 1987).

Visa policies are the major instrument for regulating and controlling the global “flow” of people, including international students. This control depends on the creation of a heterogeneous network that involves a wide range of actors that are interrelated, such as designated queues in the airport for non-EU citizens, immigration officers, visa stamps and policies, bank systems and clerks, the mail, government buildings, politicians, employees from the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, emotions, passports, employers, biases, students, *inter alia*. If Ireland, as a provider of international education courses wants to enlarge and “punctualise” (Law 1992) its network as a global actor in the knowledge economy, all the actors above must be enlisted and mobilised.

⁹⁹ Head of the university’s International Office.

The well-rehearsed ANT concept of obligatory passage point, a “central node in a network of delegation” (Law & Hetherington 2000, p.41), was first employed by Callon (1986a) and describes a “point” through which one needs to pass in order to be translated into another network. Students accept that the suggested translation, the issue of a visa, is parallel to their own objectives. Thus, a successful translation via obligatory passage points can create a functional actor-network. Although the visa as an obligatory passage point (Callon, 1986a) allows the students to join the global student mobility actor-network, it also dictates what the student can or cannot do while living in Ireland, which creates asymmetries. For example, non-EU international students cannot engage in any kind of career while studying and are forbidden to access any form of social welfare. They must be enrolled in a full-time course, not having the option to study part-time. Grey, Pink and Purple approached the visa as a factor of difficulty in their international life, as described in Chapter 4¹⁰⁰.

If one considers the visa as a plastic card with agency, which is stable across time and space, the idea of immutable mobile enters the scene (Law 1986; 1994; Latour 1990; 1992). This plastic card is generated by the result of checking procedures (i.e. paid fees), retaining students’ information (address, phone number, course of study, date of entry, time of stay)¹⁰¹. As Fenwick’s (2010, p.123) analysis of educational standards as immutable mobile¹⁰² shows, the visa

¹⁰⁰ See Purple (Appendix A, p.9), Grey (Appendix C, p.9) and Pink (Appendix J, p.9). Noting that, for Purple, the visa acts both as “enabler” and “constrainer”.

¹⁰¹ It also informs how many Brazilian nationals reside temporarily in Irish territory.

¹⁰² Contributions from “post-ANT” spark reflections on the mutability of the “immutable”, as an object may not be as immutable as the term entails. In our case, visa regulations can suddenly

also dictates terms and even “shapes the actualities of knowledge and action that should constitute acceptable” performances of international students.

If national borders are performed, one could consider Callon (1986a) in order to rehearse the proposition that the identity of individuals as “international students” is enacted with the participation of the Irish Government. Irish HEIs offer courses for international students, charging “non-EU fees” as the distinction between EU and non-EU student is a policy concern.

It’s important to separate EU and non-EU students when considering the incomes to (...) Higher Education Institutions (...) Non-EU students pay full tuition fees for the course they choose so their contribution per student to the HEI system is significantly greater than the contribution of Irish or EU students (DES 2016, p.54).

In this moment of translation, international students’ identities are defined as such, which can be illustrated by the actors joining the “international-education-actor-network” as they pay tuition fees in full. The first “task” of a non-EU citizen newly arrived in Ireland is therefore, to go to the Immigration Office with all the required documents in order to get the token, the plastic card, the visa, which not only defines them as “international students”, but also includes them in the immigration “system”, for State control. Such event¹⁰³, often covered by the Irish media (Pollack 2016), is a source of frustration for immigrants and international students as the supply in the number of public employees is much

change, or a more inconsequent student might decide to remain illegally in Ireland, disregarding the rules.

¹⁰³ However, an online registration system was put in place by the Irish Government in September 2016 – after the empirical data of this study was generated – in order to eradicate the constant, long queues. This only exemplifies the mutability of actor-networks.

lower than the demand of immigrants wanting to register with the State. Long queues and the need to arrive in the office early in the morning to guarantee service in the same day are some steps one needs to take in order to become an international student.



Photograph 9: Queue to the Point of Surveillance – Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service Office – Dublin 06:59 a.m. 13 May (Salomão Filho 2016)

As pointed out by Latour (1985) *apud* Law (1986, p.23), the advent of the printing press was an ultimately important actor to enact power, as inscription devices, or texts, enable the enrolment of numerous allies. Without a visa, foreign nationals are not students, but illegal immigrants, taking the risk of imminent deportation by those *behind* the visa, the State.

5.5 Reflective Vignette: “Get here earlier tomorrow”

The “horde” is outside the building waiting to be ordered (Photograph 9). They arrive early in the morning and stand for hours, facing the weather – whether pleasant or hostile. Some might bring a donut and a coffee in a thermal flask

bottle. Smartphones are their company. The building is the knowing location, “a point of surveillance” (Law & Hetherington 2000, p.37) where the masses are going to be classified, organised, and granted permission to remain in the State for a finite period of time. There is also a gatekeeper¹⁰⁴, a friendly staff member of the Immigration Office who is having a nicotine craving. Outside the building, after I waited for him to have a few drags on his cigarette, I come closer and ask:

Alfredo: It is really busy here, isn't it?

Gatekeeper: Yes, indeed... too many people. Some of them arrive so early you wouldn't believe. Three o'clock in the morning! Last night when I came to work there was a family sleeping on the floor, right over there. There was a child with them for god's sake.

Alfredo: Wow... Really? That's a tough scene.

Gatekeeper: Tough scene lad (takes a long drag in his cigarette)...Tough scene.

If everything runs smoothly, if documents are “in order” and perform the function required of them, then members of the “horde” will leave the building with a smile on their faces and a plastic card in their pockets. Unwary, the “horde” is now part of the “One-World World”, the English-speaking world (Law 2011; Escobar 2016). The fractiverse is, at one level at least, translated into a single universe (Law 2011). Let me be clear, I am not suggesting that learning another language is not an outstanding intellectual activity and should not be encouraged. One is certainly “richer” if they can communicate in more than one language. However, for the purpose of this vignette, the effort in becoming more international, where “international in practice means more oriented to North American concerns”, can be seen – *inter alia* – as a “market-oriented

¹⁰⁴ In ANT vocabulary, “gatekeeper” is the actor who *manages* the obligatory passage point.

parochialism” (Law & Lin 2015, p.8). In the moment captured by the picture above, the “horde” is most likely not thinking about it. One-World doctrines are so powerful that non-EU citizens leave the building with a sense of achievement, despite all the previous discomfort of waiting long hours to be served. Interestingly, and here is where non-Euclidean spatial performances are accounted for (Law 2002; Law & Hetherington, 2000), Ireland is still struggling “to be put on the map” (HIO) in terms of international education.

The biggest challenge is to establish Ireland as a brand. Many students don’t know where Ireland is. We are trying to attract them to this university, but they don’t know where Ireland is. That’s a difficulty (HIO).

I think that the biggest challenge Ireland would have is visibility (SOG).

However, the Brazilian scholarship programme Science Without Borders (SWB) was brought to the scene as a key actor, responsible for enacting spatial performances and allowing Ireland to become more *real* (Latour, 1999b), or simply functioning as an ally that enhanced Ireland’s visibility in matters of international education opportunities for Brazilian students.

I think SWB increased the visibility of Ireland for Brazilian students, now they know there is another opportunity apart from the U.K. and apart from Portugal and the U.S.; I think it has put Ireland on the map for Brazilian students (SOG).

5.6 Summary

This chapter elected non-human entities as the actors of choice and worked to support the argument of generalized symmetry and free association (Callon 1986a), two of the most controversial ANT postulates. The distinction between action and behaviour (Latour 2004a) should be taken into consideration. While not advocating that humans are the same as objects, the debate on unmodern agency finds *momentum* as it focuses on “whatever” makes another entity *act*, rather than focusing only on human intentionality. Humans and objects not only participate in the “universe” of international education, as much as in any other setting of social life, but also show to be essential to the very existence of it, translating into each other and producing effects in the world. In this, contemplating international students as “purely human”¹⁰⁵ would be a matter of judgement/perspective and/or ontology. In this study, they are materially heterogeneous as they are intertwined with nature, society and discourse – at the same time.

The contribution of the agency of objects to social theory is twofold. First, it reinforces the argument of the absence of any *a priori* ontological “border” or hierarchy between entities, focusing on the hybridisation of actor-networks. Second, it gives rise to the process of remaining puzzled about issues of agency when describing actor-networks in action, which opposes to the traditional anthropocentric Euro-American tradition (Law 2004) that concerns to identify the “prime mover” (Latour 1994; 1999b), or the sources of action (Latour 1987).

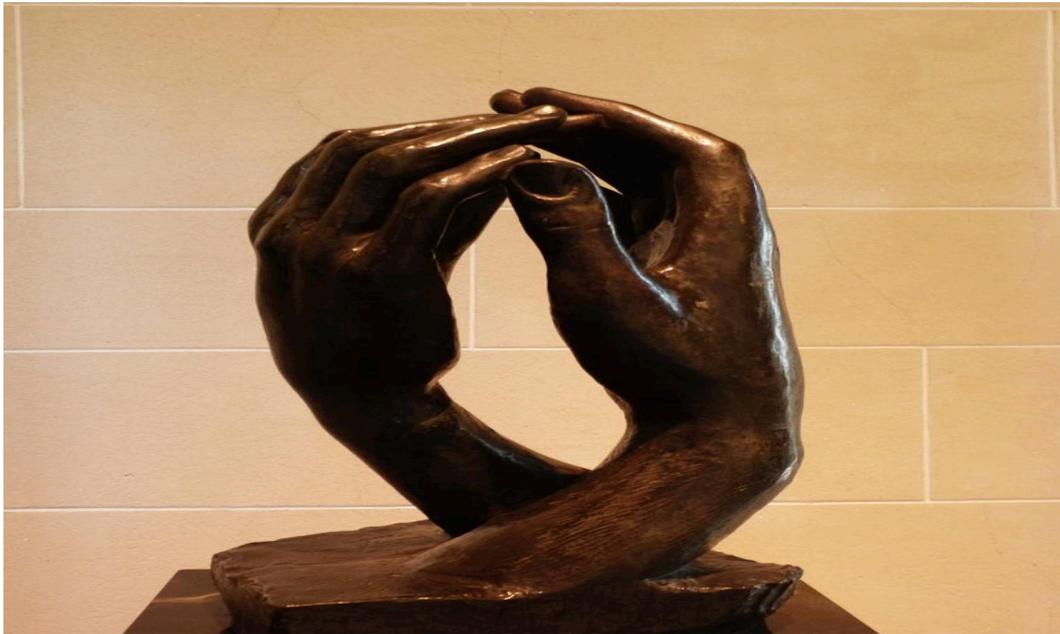
¹⁰⁵ A discussion elaborated by Haraway (1991) and her concept of “cyborg” (see Chapter 6, p.239).

ANT's agenda is to point out the heterogeneity and inseparability of collective life, where *agency* – more than simply *causal agency* – is distributed in practices.

The chapter concluded with a reflective vignette on the event of obtaining a visa in the performance of new spaces. The agency of the visa trespasses the possibility of one legally remaining in a foreign State. Paradoxically, the visa also enacts the conceivability of how an actor should perform realities, which shows its classificatory and controlling power.

Although climate, constructions, house utilities and texts were analysed in the light of an ANT sensibility, more objects – or non-human entities that are active participants in the students' enacted realities – will be analysed in the next chapter. They “deserved” a differentiated space of analysis as I change, once again, the focus, or my actors of choice. While Chapter 4 (and Appendices A-M) followed the human actors, and Chapter 5 the non-human actors, Chapter 6 will shed light on “social capital actor-networks”. Thus, actors, such as space, technology, the English language, work, and an imagined Brazilian student community in Dublin, help one to investigate the shifts in social capital actor-networks of the Brazilian students when becoming mobile. Although social capital theory is a “real”, *bonafide* part of the social (Latour 2005), I will trace it from an unmodern perspective (Latour 1993b), focusing on issues of performativity, precariousness and uncertainty that such theory entails.

Chapter 6: Shifts in Social Capital Actor-Networks



Photograph 10: Social Capital – Auguste Rodin, Philadelphia Museum of Art (Tillmanns 2016)

(...) ‘out-there-ness’ is the consequence of scientific work rather than its cause. We therefore wish to stress the importance of timing (Latour & Woolgar 1986, p.182).

It’s true that in most situations resorting to the sociology of the social is not only reasonable but also indispensable, since it offers convenient shorthand to designate all the ingredients already accepted in the collective realm. It would be silly as well as pedantic to abstain from using notions like ‘IBM’, ‘France’ (...) ‘*social capital*’ (...) etc. But in situations where innovations proliferate, where group boundaries are uncertain, when the range of entities to be taken into account fluctuates, the sociology of the social is no longer able to trace actors’ new associations (Latour 2005, p.11, *my emphasis*).

6.1 Introduction

This chapter concerns enactments of social capital as international students move from Brazil to Ireland. The performances of international education realities are analysed from the perspective of what I call *social capital actor-networks*, the result of the encounter between more traditional approaches of social capital and

ANT. First, I analyse social capital with an ANT sensibility, an argument composed of five parts. I start with the overview of ANT five sources of uncertainty (Latour 2005), highlighting ontological issues that interfere in the way one sees social capital research in international education. Then, remaining in the ontological realm, I highlight important analytical issues, such as timing, order and size; performativity; and the interplay between structure and agency, concluding with a formulation of a terminology that will equip the reader with the necessary tools to follow the subsequent analysis of empirical data in this chapter.

I follow my argument with the appreciation of the empirical data generated by interviews with twelve Brazilian students in Dublin, and with two “policy actors” (HIO and SOG). This section, “reassembling social capital from Brazil to Dublin” is formed by discussions that include: the relevance of family and friends for the informants; actors that are “disconnected” from the students’ actor-network; students’ strategies for enrolling actors in Dublin; and HEIs as “centres” of social capital actor-networks. I continue the analysis highlighting how technology plays a paramount role as an actor, and the paradoxical elements of an imagined community in Dublin, demonstrating the power the English language displays as students reject their membership in any kind of “Brazilian community” in Dublin.

This chapter concludes with a reflective vignette built upon Harman’s (2009) philosophical provocations in order to discuss issues of change, associations, and allies.

6.2 Tracing Social Capital with an ANT Sensibility

The concept of social capital is a puzzling actor. Social capital is made *real* by its allies and is *out there* in the form of various scientific publications¹⁰⁶. Although some central characteristics are common to ultimately all elaborations on social capital (networks, trust, and norms), there is a high degree of confusion in terms of determining a “coherent” concept of social capital, especially in terms of defining its *nature, focus and applicability* (Portes 1998). I will make use of such “incoherence gap” to re-work an understanding of how social capital could be seen through ANT lenses, but first I shall make a reservation.

Social capital can only be seen through relational lenses; in this it has a resonance with an ANT sensibility. While in ANT any phenomenon is seen as an effect of heterogeneous associations (Law 1992), social capital exists only as a result of human interaction (Coleman 1988), where individuals have access to “embedded” resources in social networks. Moreover, Bourdieu (1986) refers to social capital as the growth of an individual’s network, which is partially aligned with the argument of Callon & Latour (1981) when referring to the movement from micro to macro of an actor-network. Yet, there are ontological differences between more traditional conceptualisations of social capital and the “social capital actor-networks” that I am enacting in this chapter. I start my argument below, organising it in various “slices” (instead of using headings) in order to avoid purification (Latour 1993b).

¹⁰⁶ See Chapter 2 (p.83).

It would be a tautology to elaborate an argument sustaining that an individual needs others in order to acquire support for their endeavours, or to state that the other is a *sine qua non* condition to satisfy one's interests in a collective stance. It is argued that "humans are social animals (...) we need each other; we need to live in groups" (Fischer 2011, p.38). In effect, everyone/everything associates with someone/something in the enactment of realities (Latour 1991). There is no mobilisation without translation. As already made clear by Latour's quote at the beginning of this chapter, it is counter-productive to deny the acceptance a concept such as social capital has managed to *acquire* in sociological discussions. However, it is possible to reframe it, re-conceptualise it, or intervene in it; and the investigation of the realities enacted by international students – I argue – is a fruitful "landscape" where *social capital actor-networks* can be understood. The contributions of Latour (2005), framing ANT research around the "five sources of uncertainty" is an initial way of seeing such fruitful possibilities of investigation, or turning the attention to the circulation of social capital of international students from an ANT ontology.

Change and uncertainty in translation possibilities are experienced by any individual in any "context". In the case of international students, such experiences are heightened – as migration potentially denudes social capital – and might be even desired. Apart from seeking educational and professional qualifications, or acquiring greater "stocks" of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986), one travels to "experiment new things" (Blue), "broaden horizons" (Brown) and "to become an adult" (Grey). Putnam (2000) shows that mobility reduces actors' attachment and

involvement to a certain community,¹⁰⁷ a fact that shall be potentialised in international education “mobile” realities. The recognition that there are diverse actors that assemble in unique configurations in the practice of international education suggest the need for particular ontological elaborations that are capable of capturing the complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity that is not always made *real* – or it is not yet *out-there* via international education literature – only “rooted” in empirical data. As international students “step into the unknown” (“I had no idea what to expect when I moved to Dublin” – Blue), or enrol with previously unfamiliar actors, the study of these “unknown actor-networks” brings its own challenges. According to Kamp (2013, p.47), “in situations where innovation is central, where boundaries are unknown and group membership shifts, what is already part of the social and what is not, becomes increasingly difficult to trace”. The “five sources of uncertainty” (Latour 2005), elaborated as part of an ontological debate that guides ANT research, offer insights to the experience narrated by international students, as well as to the study of social capital enactments from an unmodern perspective.

No Group, Only Group Formation

In ANT premises, the research object assumes a fluid and uncertain nature, leaving the researcher with no choice but to remain puzzled about the existence of a clearly delineated group. International students (and all the non-human entities around them) engage in constant efforts to form, and belong to a group, playing a key role in their migratory experience and their access to support networks

¹⁰⁷ Drawing on Deleuzian Guattarian philosophy, Massumi (1992) states that possibilities of new assemblages lie in this process of deterritorialization and the loss of identity.

(Bennett et al. 2013; Gill & Bialski 2011; Montgomery 2010; Montgomery & McDowell 2009; Van Mol & Michielsen 2015; Volet & Ang 1998). The “task” of forming a group brings an additional difficulty as other international students are always “coming and going” (Pink), “arriving and leaving” (Beige), indicating that social capital actor-networks are volatile and might require time and work to reach durability (Latour 1993b).

Action is Overtaken

This uncertainty deepens the debate about issues of agency, suggesting a permanent investigative posture with regard to *what* is acting when the actor-network acts. The central idea of this uncertainty is that a particular course of action *always* involves an array of other actors; action is a “nested” series of practices, the sum of which – the outcome – can be calculated but *only* by being attentive to all mediating actors. The question is: who or what is making us act? International students elect a series of actors that “contribute” to their engagement in international education¹⁰⁸ – such as the enrolment in the “English-language-actor-network”. For the mobilisation of social capital actor-networks, the need to trust someone makes them act (Pink, Beige). In addition, actors other than only networks, norms, and trust are displaying agency when the students’ social capital actor-networks are traced, as will become apparent.

Objects too Have Agency

For ANT, the material is also “part” of the social, forming and reforming heterogeneous networks. The role of non-human actors in the universe of

¹⁰⁸ See Chapter 7.

education policies has been rehearsed (Fenwick and Edwards 2010; 2012; Hamilton, 2012). Education policy is an actor, transforming the meaning and goal of social activities: this third uncertainty illuminates the role of such “absent makers” and “technical delegates”; how a “prime mover” can be long absent, yet present (Latour 1994; 1999b). More “stable” actor-networks such as student accommodation, language, and HEIs play a role in the enactment of social capital actor-networks. Thus, the shift in the vocabulary is crucial. Where traditional social capital theorisations speak of “networks”, I will refer to as actor-networks – a way to bring non-human entities to the analytical scope even when they are not being directly mentioned.

Matters of Fact vs. Matters of Concern

The fourth uncertainty troubles the practices of knowledge generation. In 1979, Latour and Woolgar demonstrated how scientific facts are “socially constructed” in a laboratory. The authors followed the trajectory of the actors involved – human and material – until a fact could be considered *de facto* scientific (a “matter of fact”). According to ANT, facts are both real *and* produced. However, the production of such artefacts is somehow rendered opaque: action is “made invisible by its own success” (Latour 1999b, p.304). The scientific fact, among many other possible facts, is the one reality that, having political acceptance within a historical context, is likely to be “elected” by the actors involved - thereby acquiring a *real* nature. The argument here is that the more something succeeds, the less it can be understood as attention need focus only on inputs and outputs rather than the complexity that inheres *between* input and output.

In international education realities, students change their previous assumptions about reality and start accepting the other's realities as "valid truths" – a result of interactions with "new actors" (as demonstrated by Green¹⁰⁹). I am concerned with what happens *in between* social capital enactments; what it takes until one can (hypothetically) say: "I have a support network in Dublin".

Writing Down Risky Accounts

For Latour (2005), a *network* would be the result of a well-written sociological treatise, based on the scientist's ability to establish and describe "a series of relationships defined as so many translations" (Latour 2012, p.189); a good ANT account is a narrative, a description, a proposition where *all* the actors "do something and don't just sit there" (Latour 2005, p.128). The challenge of this is not to be underestimated: such an account can fail just as much as any laboratory experiment. My risky task in this thesis therefore has been to describe and analyse the students' local practices of social capital actor-networks being attentive to issues of performativity. In a sense, writing a PhD thesis is even a more risky task as I am working within a "context" that has particular requirements and particular limits. This, too, is acting.

The five sources of uncertainties begin to illustrate how the investigation of social capital actor-networks can bring complexity to the realities being described, challenging "mainstream" modes of knowledge production. I continue my argument by debating issues of timing, order and size; performativity; and the

¹⁰⁹ In Appendix B, Green describes how the exposure to different conceptions of reality taught her that realities are multiple (p.5) – see also Chapter 5 (p. 180).

interplay between structure and agency. I then articulate a terminology that will equip the reader to make sense of the analysis of social capital from such an unmodern stance (Latour 1993b).

Timing, Order and Size

In the volatile non-reductionist arrangement of actor-networks in international education, social capital, whether as an “essence” embedded in social relations (Burt 2000; Lin 2008), or a “reserve of energy” (Latour 1986, p.276), does not *explain* much, but is exactly what needs to be explained. This sets the scene to appreciate “social capital” as an effect, rather than a cause. The issue here is about “timing” (Latour & Woolgar 1986).

This argument may open space for confusion. For ANT, social capital is an effect of translations. However, if one sees social capital as a mobilised entity – although mobilisation is an effect of associations – it can cause effects on other actors. Thus, the following thought could come to one’s mind: if social capital is an effect of associations, but also causes transformation (has agency) then, social capital is both a cause and effect. I insist in denying this statement. Social capital is always an effect of heterogeneous associations, which in turn, can cause a change in the state of affairs. Yet, I repeat, it is *first* an effect. I am not trying to be obscure here. Rather, I would like to – once again – stress issues of “timing”, avoiding “logical circularity” (Portes 1998, p.19). This “logical circularity” was a critique posed by Porter to Putnam’s (2000) claims that social capital can be seen as a “macro” characteristic of communities. In other words, caution is required. One should analytically look for the slow composition of associations that is

needed to generate effects in order to avoid seen social capital leading “to positive outcomes, such as economic development and less crime, and its existence (being) inferred from the same outcomes” (Portes 1998, p.19).

From one perspective, international students’ “lack of”, or “low stocks” of social capital might have contributed to their experience of loneliness, such as narrated by Red and Orange¹¹⁰. However, one should understand how Red and Orange managed to enact only unsuccessful translations, and which actors (i.e. English language) were involved as mediators, *betraying* – in the human actors’ case – meaning. In this sense, social capital does not define what the world is, but what happens locally, according to the actors themselves. As much as translation, social capital actor-networks in international education are reversible, precarious and localised (Law 2009).

Thus, it would not be so bizarre to state that social capital relates to local practices and the techniques used by the actors to enact more stable actor-networks. Classifying or giving definitions in ANT is always an uncomfortable task, not only because tracing the *work* done by various actor-networks in order to attribute a definition to any phenomenon is the concern of the analyst, but also due to claims that ANT vocabulary has never been “poor enough” (Callon 1986a; Latour 1999a) – the only feasible way to allow actors to deploy their own categories (Latour 1993a; 1999a; 2005). However, for the purpose of mapping what is, or how “social capital actor-networks” can be understood, I could name it, for now, as a *process that needs to be described*. Actors engage in a constant group-

¹¹⁰ See Orange (Appendix E) and Red (Appendix F).

making effort (Latour 2005), where size is what is at stake (Callon & Latour 1981) as “entities achieve their form as a consequence of the relations in which they are located” (Law 1999, p.4). In this, such relations should be seen as a performative struggle.

Performativity

Bourdieu (1986) explains that the reproduction of social capital requires that actors engage in sociability, where exchange processes perpetuate the generation of social capital. In other words, a type of “work” is needed not only to transform one form of capital into another (i.e. from economic to social), but also to generate social capital itself. Wuthnow (2002), for instance, considered the habit of watching TV as an inhibitor of social capital in communities, as one would not attend civic meetings when engaged with a TV at home. I argue that seeing social capital through ANT lenses partially engages with the argument articulated by Bourdieu and Wuthnow – as social capital refers to action. However, because of its ontological principles, ANT is able to demonstrate the performativity of social capital from a localised, *short distance*, frustrating scholarly dreams of having full comprehensiveness of social life phenomena. Paraphrasing Latour (1987, p.220) on “knowledge”: what is called “social capital” cannot be understood without understanding what gaining social capital means – which is exactly what needs to be described; the “type of work” (Bourdieu 1986). In other words, the micro practices of the students provide the scope to travel through the series of social

capital actor-networks that have been enacted, or “performed in, by and through” those practices” (Law 1999, p.4)¹¹¹.

I praise ANT’s attention to the mundane encounters of day-to-day live in order to avoid theoretical short cuts (Latour 2005), leading – for instance – to Porter’s (1998) observation on the “circularity of social capital”. The empirical assumes a paramount importance as it is the only tool available for the analyst to scrutinise the practices of the actors and its effects. A translation between ANT and social capital can keep the analyst away from “erroneously” analysing social phenomena.

Saying, for example, that student A has social capital because he obtained access to a large tuition loan from his kin and that student B does not because she failed to do so neglects the possibility that B’s kin network is equally or more motivated to come to her aid but simply lacks the means to do. Defining social capital as equivalent with the resources thus obtained is tantamount to saying that the successful succeed (Portes 1998, p.5).

The consideration of the performativity of social capital, or its enactment through localised practices, implies that social capital as a quasi-object (Latour 1993b) is also multiple (Mol 2002). In this sense, referring to social capital “in general” (Law 2009) would be misleading – although possibilities of fractality are also possible (Law 2003b). In a sense, “just as the sources of social capital are plural so are its consequences” (Portes 1998, p.9). This discussion on performativity

¹¹¹ From a non-relational perspective, Burt (2000, p.346) poses a similar argument: “For, as it is developing, social capital is at its core two things: a potent technology and a critical issue. The technology is network analysis. The issue is performance”.

leads us to the final and perhaps most theoretically “pompous” *slice* of my argument: the interplay between structure and agency.

Agency and Structure

We do not suffer from the lack of a soul. We suffer, on the contrary, from too many troubled souls that have never been offered a decent burial. They wander around in broad daylight like miserable ghosts. I want to exorcise these souls and persuade them to leave us alone with the living (Latour 1993a, p.188).

In Chapter 2, I presented a literature review on more structural conceptualisations of social capital, and exposed ANT’s main ontological principles that guide the researcher when making use of this “method”, “tool-kit” or “philosophical sensibility” (Law 2006b; 2009; Mol 2010). My argument will require a brief recall of one of ANT’s most notable and criticised elaborations: the rejection of dualism in social science discourse to explain social life.

In the words of Latour (1999c, p.17): “maybe the social possesses the bizarre property of not being made of agency and structure at all, but rather being a circulating entity”. That is the main ontological difference between the many more traditional approaches to social capital and the one I am elaborating here: *social capital actor-network*. Law (1992) observes that there have been some conceptualisations aimed to propose more dynamic or dialectical relationships between agency and structure, remaining in-between objectivism and subjectivism, as it is the case in Giddens’ (1984) Theory of Structuration, and Bourdieu’s (1977) Theory of Practice. Yet, the division between the mentioned “domains”, although revisited, still appears. Those theorisations are still too

“modern” for ANT, which rejects any “anonymous field of forces” (Latour, 1999c, p.19).

Despite Bourdieu’s, (1986) and Bourdieu & Wacquant’s (1992) articulations of social capital from “relational” lenses, which is also ANT main tenet, they still bring an inevitable “essentialisation” of domains and forces to scientific discourse. According to these authors, “capital” (whether symbolic, financial, cultural or social) is something that a human possesses and accumulates, being the responsible force that leads them towards upward mobility. Moreover, *habitus*, or “structuring structures” (Bourdieu 1977, p.72) is seen as a result of the objective conditions of social structures, implicating that each social class would favour a certain habitus and legitimise a specific symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1996)¹¹². In a sense, the concept of habitus “remains a *black box*” due to its “deterministic” and “shadowy” nuances (Jenkins 1992, p.69, *author’s emphasis*).

Although perspicacious and (made) *real*, this thought *freezes* individuals to the class that they belong to, transmitting the idea that one “jumps” from one structure to the other as one *acquires* capital in all its forms. If that is the case, the task of analysing an actor, in particular, that “belongs” to two different social classes – at the same time – becomes increasingly difficult. This could be a point of discussion if I consider not only some of the students interviewed for this study, but also myself. It is only by tracing the trajectory of connections of each actor that one can get a more *real* picture of enactments of social capital, seeing

¹¹² See Bourdieu (1994, p.15) for a table of preferences for singers and music according to one’s social class.

social class not as *something* that explains phenomena, but a phenomenon itself, which is generated by the association of heterogeneous actors that lack ontological singularity. Mobility generates ontological messiness and causes trepidation in conceptualisations of social capital, urging the analyst to engage in detailed descriptions, which in turn depends on the willingness of the actors to disclose information about their personal lives (apart from ethical considerations, this cannot be taken for granted in social research). One “shadowy” nuance of Bourdieu’s argument is examined below.

(...) the possessors of an inherited social capital, symbolized by a great name, are able to transform all circumstantial relationships into lasting connections. They are sought after for their social capital and, because they are well known, are worthy of being known (...) they do not need to make the acquaintances of all their acquaintances, they are known to more people than they know, and their work of sociability, when it is exerted, is highly productive (Bourdieu 1986, p.52).

Bourdieu is not too parsimonious when he states that “well known” actors transform “*all* circumstantial relationships” into social capital (*my emphasis*). However, let’s suppose this is the case with a mobile student who is well known in Brazil and arrives in an unknown Dublin. There is a possibility that the well-known-in-Brazil-student will perform a less productive work of sociability as this very work will be performed in a newly produced space. Instead of seeing one leaving a structure and moving to another, the task of following and registering the minutiae transformation – I argue – is the “safest” way not to depict a world that does not “belong” to the actor being followed; or that which Foley & Edwards (1999, p.146) named as “context dependent nature of social capital”. Now that the actor *is* in another space, their very work of sociability must be

investigated. That is how ANT's argument to withdraw from the dichotomy agency vs structure finds its warrant to be used in investigations of mobile actors, where there is a considerable degree of uncertainty on what the *future will look like*.

Apart from their distinct views on the interplay agency vs structure, I could highlight another antagonism between Bourdieu and ANT contributions. Latour (2005) accuses Bourdieu of always *knowing more* than the actors themselves – seeing “reality as it really is” (Mol 2010, p.255) – while ANT's principle lies in learning from the actors. ANT accepts the enactments of multiple realities, rejecting the analyst's “supra capacities” to draw the worlds of the quasi-objects (Latour 2005)¹¹³. Although not directing his arguments to Latour, Bourdieu (1990, p.124) classifies the latter's approach as the concern with the “accounts of the accounts produced by social subjects”. My ANTian analytical focus on each student as the actor being “followed” corroborates not only the reliance on the accounts given by the actors, but also the position defended by Portes (1998, p.21), who believes that “the greatest theoretical promise of social capital lies at the individual level”.

The analytical attention to the “micro level”, however, should not be mistaken by an emphasis put on the heroic capacities of individual agency. As Latour (1993a) demonstrated, Pasteur was considered as a phenomenal scientist not because he was a genius *in potentia*. The idea of Pasteur as a genius – which he certainly was

¹¹³ Latour (2005) dedicates a considerable part of his book to articulate a critique of Bourdieu's contributions (critical sociology or “sociology of the social”).

– is an effect of a series of successful translations he enacted with other actors, such as microbes, laboratory paraphernalia, and other scientists. In this sense, as much as the students of Chapter 4 (and Appendices A-M) were given a slightly “privileged” analytical focus, their existence (whether successful or not) depends on their relations with other humans and non-humans.

Before moving into the terminology crafted to illustrate the translation between social capital and ANT, I present a series of “answers” to queries on social capital posed by Lin (2008, p.52). These “answers” contribute to stimulate the use of a re-worked understanding of social capital seen from a relational ontology.

The first question refers to “*whether social capital should be assessed in terms of its potential capacity (access) or its actual use (mobilization)*”. ANT erases action *in potentia* and is extremely cautious about – if not absent – from speculating the possible future actions of the entities. Thus, the actual “use” (mobilisation) is the best (or only) form of assessment of social capital.

The second question refers to “*how rigorous measurements can be developed*”. The commitment of the analyst with thick, detailed (and perhaps mundane) descriptions that emerge from the analytical task of following the actors – and the anti essentialism standpoint – is rigorous enough to “measure” social capital.

The third question concerns “*how social capital can be distinguished from social networks per se*”. Social capital can be distinguished from social networks per se as non-humans enact realities together with humans. Human action is hardly not

associated with non-human action, and the “reasons” why a social network exists and benefits its members can be non-human (money is an example). The hybrid world of ANT would not reserve a special place for human networks. In this sense, ANT is more democratic and favours the constant state of remaining puzzled about ontological singularity when social capital is being enacted.

The fourth question aims to elucidate *“how the theory clarifies the linkages among purposes of action (i.e. instrumental or expressive), network features (e.g. density, bonding, or bridging)”*. The purposes of action are those expressed by the actors (humans want something and non-humans have functions). As to network features, this is a tough question. My suggestion is to focus on the empirical data, which would require asking the actors themselves about the “nature of their relations”. As a result, the analyst would not see *reality as they think it is*, but would bring the worlds of the actors into being via scientific work.

The fifth question reflects on *“how the theory and its measures can consistently be used for both micro-and macro-level analyses”*. The analyst needs to investigate the connections on a flat ontological plane. The macro is only something that happened locally but spread far as it translated with more actors. The examination of the vehicles that allowed an actor to “expand” is thus crucial.

Terminology

It would be scientifically incoherent to consider two opposing theories when, in spite of undisputable similarities, one is the critique of the other in the ontological stance. However, I argue that it is possible to associate, or resonate across both

theoretical boundaries, generating a *translated* understanding of how international students become more or less real (Latour 1999b) when drawing on other actors to shape realities. I will use Bourdieu’s (1986) terminology of the forms of capital, although not considering his concepts of field and habitus. In other words, I only make use of his terminology but not his theoretical approach¹¹⁴. The idea here is to consider “capital” as an ordering effect (Law 1994), or a site of struggle in which an actor negotiates the “enlargement” of their actor-network. That is not only an analytical way to use a “real” terminology of capital – remaining faithful to the principles of agnosticism, symmetry and free association (Callon 1986b) – but also to leave the gates open to the “partial entrance” of other social capital contributions, such as the ones offered by Putnam, Coleman, and Lin. The terminology used in the subsequent analysis is explained in the table below.

Social capital actor-network	Effects of associations of heterogeneous actors thus, forming an actor-network. When mobilised, the actors trust, norms and networks can be seen as a benefit/advantage and a mean by which people can improve their lives or “grow” their actor-network
Cultural capital actor-network	Knowledge; fluency in English, educational background, course of study, curriculum, lecturers, teachers, university buildings, degrees
Economic capital actor-network	Money (a representation of value that is part of a complex actor-network conventionally called Economics). It can be seen whether as an immutable mobile or intermediary

Table 16: Terminology of the Forms of Capital Actor-Networks

¹¹⁴ The fact that I do not use Bourdieu’s approach does not mean that I disregard his contributions. I am arguing that an ontological articulation is necessary in order to allow a partial connection with his work to be enacted. Bourdieu’s contribution is an actor, as it plays a role in the discussion of social capital actor-networks. However, this role has a limited influence.

The next section approaches the different conformations of the students' actor-networks when enacting international education realities.

6.3 Reassembling Social Capital from Brazil to Ireland

Even if they are from an advantaged or elite background in their home country, once they arrive in their new context international students lose their social advantage, as they are in a totally new social context where they are not linked in to relationships that carry social advantage. They do not have access to the power that accompanies some forms of social capital (Montgomery 2010, p.70).

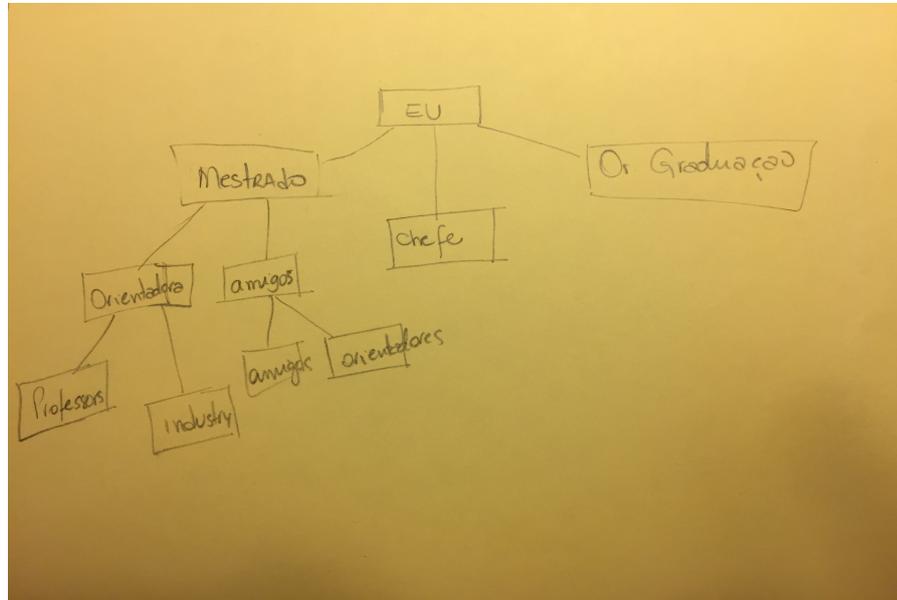
When you arrive here (Ireland), your life in Brazil is left behind. It's like your life in Brazil is there, and here you have another life. Many times, except in specific job positions, no one wants to know what you have done in Brazil. People want to know your references from here (Lavender).

For analytical purposes, I am considering that each informant is concomitantly an actor-network (produced by heterogeneous relations with other actors) and the "translator" (the actor that enacts OPP and persuades other actors to remain faithful to the alliance)¹¹⁵. I invited my informants to draw their associations when they were in Brazil, and then, when they were in Dublin – in order to capture the shifts in connections – but ultimately, I traced their associations based on their interview transcript, as "visually, there is something deeply wrong in the way we represent networks, since we are never able to use them to draw enclosed and habitable spaces and envelopes" (Latour 2011, p.800). Despite this visual limitation, it is still possible to see which actors *left the scene* and which *entered the scene*¹¹⁶ as the students engaged in mobility. Apart from Red's, all students'

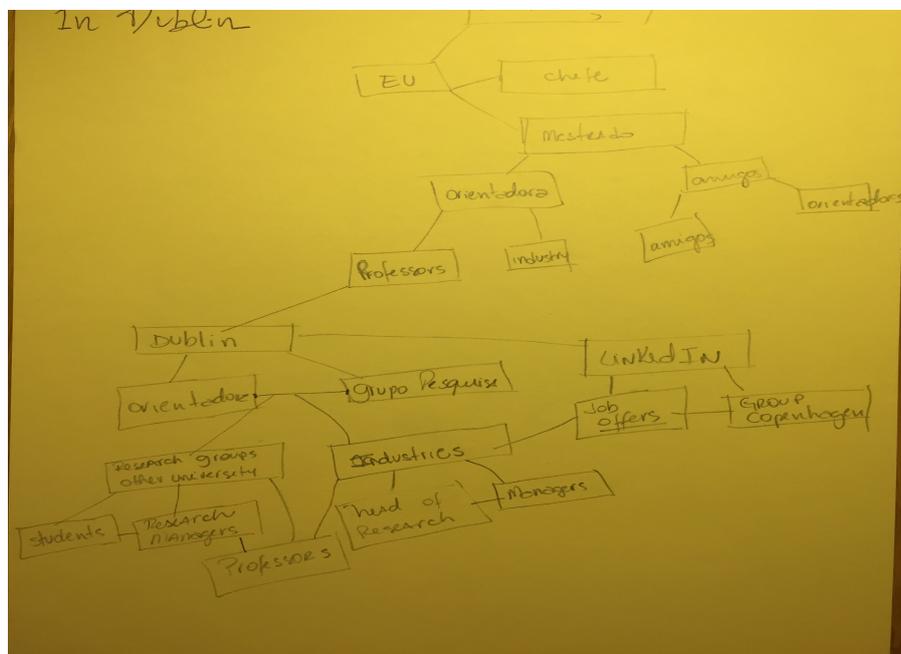
¹¹⁵ The rationale for my analytical choice of telling each student's story separately.

¹¹⁶ This sentence is purely rhetorical as in material semiotics the scene is *made*, enacted – there is not a "scene" that exists *a priori*.

network drawings were more intensely connected in Dublin than in Brazil. I provide an example below (designed by Green). Photograph 11 refers to her actor-networks “before Dublin” and Photograph 12 displays them “in Dublin”.



Photograph 11: Green’s Web Before Dublin



Photograph 12: Green’s Web in Dublin

The displacement from Brazil to Dublin resulted in change in the conformation of the students' actor-networks. After analysing the stories of the twelve students described in Chapter 4 and Appendices A-M, it is possible to notice more points of connections within their actor-network, as more actors have been enrolled and/or they started participating in other actor-networks.

6.3.1 Family and Friends

Actor-networks such as family and friends were kept mobilised. Although not sharing the same Euclidean space, the students maintained their connection with them due to the enrolment of technological platforms – an explanation that I will offer briefly – which is seen as a key effect of a “global and mobile era” (Law & Hetherington 2000, p.34) or “cosmopolitanisation” (Beck 2006, p.338), adding materiality to relations. The effects of the translations with friends and family also did not alter. For the students, family and friends, even at a distance, offer emotional support and act as a key source of advice.

The importance attributed to family in Brazilian society was articulated by Margolis (1994) in her analysis of Brazilian migrants in New York. Brazilian migrants, when not living around their family, maintain their ties with the latter via technological platforms. Freire (2000) also highlighted the key role family plays in forming and helping the individual to make sense of uncertain and highly changeable times. Ribeiro (2014) offers a detailed historical analysis of the formation of Brazilian family structures since colonial times. The students of this study categorically affirmed that family is an actor of paramount significance,

whose connection is not weakened because of the former's displacement. This indicates that family support is an effect of social capital (Portes 1998)¹¹⁷, as parents often give advice to young adults (Collins and Madsen 2006). Interestingly, Orange and Beige faced initial resistance from their respective fathers with regards to their experience of international education. However, their fathers were convinced that engaging in mobility would produce positive effects, "allowing" them to embark on their journey.

This strong connection with family indicates that distance, or space, is *performed* as a relational effect (Latour 1996b; 2009; Law 2002; Law & Hetherington 2000). In Euclidean terms, I am not arguing that a student in Dublin is not geographically far from their family and friends somewhere in Brazil, but ANT offers a radical view on distance and space which can challenge the concept of social capital, freeing one from the "tyranny of distance" (Latour 1996b, p.3). In a sense, "Brazilian allies" that offer emotional support and advice – such as friends and family – see no distance, a finding shared by McGrath (2010) when studying the Brazilian migrant community in the town of Gort, Ireland.

When highlighting the differences between the concept of network and actor-network, Latour claims that distance and proximity should not be defined by geographical proximity, but connectivity, as "I can be one metre away from someone in the next telephone booth, and be nevertheless more closely connected

¹¹⁷ Portes (1998) highlights the differentiation made by Bourdieu, to whom the form of capital offered by family is considered to be "cultural", as parents act on the development of their children. On the other hand, "social capital" refers to benefits acquired through membership in other networks.

to my mother 6,000 miles away” (Latour 1996b, p.3). This idea shows that a geographical map for instance, is an actor-network by itself, not a network that “contains” another network, or a “neutral container” given in the order of things (Law & Hetherington 2000, p.44). I am *closer* to my PhD supervisors (even if one of them is based in New Zealand) than to my fellow PhD candidates in the university’s postgraduate office. In this sense, family and friends who are located in Brazil nevertheless keep their proximity to my informants via communication and interaction, where technology acts as the *missing* link. The relations between these actors produce an “effect” – that I am calling social capital actor-networks.

ANT's intriguing proposal to re-consider notions of far/close (Latour 1996b; 2009), or spatial performances (Law 2002; Law & Hetherington 2000) does not come without questionings, especially if it is something pointed out by the actors. Although my analytical lenses rely on material semiotics, and practically all my informants affirmed that the “nature” of the relationship with their family and friends did not suffer negative consequences with distance, there were three cases where tension between ANT postulates and empirical data emerged. Red considered herself “out of” (her parents) space”; “out of their reality” – classifying as “surreal” the limitations of technology in approximating two different worlds. On the other hand, Yellow and Silver¹¹⁸ stated that distance was a factor that increased the sincerity and candour of their conversations with their friends and family members. I return to these spatial issues later in this chapter.

¹¹⁸ Before articulating this argument, Silver states how “counter intuitive” his ideas may sound.

6.3.2 Disconnected

Whereas friends and family were kept mobilised by all students, former employers were *disconnected* from the majority of the students' actor-networks. The exceptions were Beige and Yellow, who told me that they still have professional contacts in Brazil. However, Yellow was the only informant who shared her strategy to keep the contact with her former employer and academic supervisor. Whenever she takes holidays in Brazil, she would meet with them in person in order to keep the connection "alive", as she depicts her future as uncertain – "you never know" (Yellow).

Apart from Silver's and Red's Brazilian undergraduate lecturers (providing advice on academic projects), the totality of the students stated that no human actor placed in Brazil "had an impact" on their life in Dublin. From an ANT perspective, it is possible to state that this is not completely "true". Students see the world from an Euro-American metaphysics standpoint (Law 2004), not considering, for instance, that their inscriptions of educational qualifications – or cultural capital actor-networks – were produced by heterogeneous actors, including humans. Considering non-human actors, a reference letter from their undergraduate lecturers – in the cases of Purple and Grey – influenced the enactment of realities in Dublin (Purple used it for his PhD application, while Grey used it for his Master's application). Grey also pointed out his post-primary school transcript as "something" from Brazil which influenced his life in Dublin, as his *employer-to-be* requested the document.

6.3.3 Strategies of Enrolling Actors in Dublin

There are two ontological clarifications that are required for this section. First, the strategies deployed by the students to enrol other human actors can resemble – at first glance – a “social network analysis” (Roggeveen & van Meeteren 2013; Van Mol & Michielsen 2015). However, although my focus at the moment is on human actors, an ANT sensibility prevails. It is a matter of “placing” the analytical lenses on humans, rather than considering them as the exclusive prime movers of action, or the only actors *enacting* social life. When two human actors “connect”, other objects – perhaps silently – are also connecting¹¹⁹ and might even act as the “enabler” of such connection (as the actor network “student-technology-parents”).

The second clarification refers to the way the reader should consider two or more actor-networks that are translated into each other. Instead of connecting two entities that existed previously and independently – and were separated from each other – ANT defends the ontological performativity of entities. In other words, the key is to adopt an analytical eye on *how* an actor-network (students and their heterogeneous associations) becomes more extended/densely connected, where each translation is not only *a* reality being enacted, but also a process of transformation that modifies all entities involved as they associate to one another (Latour 1999b).

It is “out-there” – in the form of scientific publications – that migrants have to negotiate their social capital when living in a new country (Anthias 2007;

¹¹⁹ See Chapter 5.

McGrath 2010). From the perspective of social networks formation, it is argued that international students engage in forming new social groups in the beginning of their experience in the host country (Gill & Bialski 2011; Van Mol & Michielsen 2015). The need for support for those sailing in uncharted waters is evident. Information about the specificities of the educational, work and other actor-networks, including housing, transportation, visa, social and cultural norms – when not already provided by travel agencies and education institutions – needs to be gathered, generated, processed and reassembled, making students act.

The extent to which students struggle to enrol heterogeneous actors in order to make their actor-network more densely connected varies, but it is possible to affirm that all the informants employed a number of strategies that contributed to such processes. Students – as much as migrants (Margolis 1998) – can favour a location for international education endeavours if they have established allies already living in the destination. This was an actor for Brown (who travelled with his girlfriend), Pink, and Yellow, students who had a friend living in Dublin prior to their arrival. Similarly, Purple's displacement was characterised by a spatial performance where social capital actor-networks were already assembled/mobilised. He travelled to Dublin with five friends from Brazil and his wife. The other informants travelled to Dublin on their own and engaged in the process of enrolling “unknown” social capital actor-networks.

The strategies of enrolling social capital actor-networks bring common actors to all the students' realities: *cultural and economic capital actor-networks, social media and language*. It is in this moment of the analysis that the inseparability, or

the existence of a “porous border” between social, cultural and economic capital actor-networks becomes evident, which reinforces both Bourdieu’s understanding that *capital* can be considered in immaterial forms, and ANT’s position to defend hybrid ontologies.

Thus, although social capital actor-networks are the focus of this chapter, it is necessary to investigate the problematisations of each actor as the first step of the analysis; in other words, the fact that students accepted an OPP (course of study) enacted by international education actors¹²⁰. Bourdieu considers educational qualifications as ‘the institutionalised state of cultural capital’ (Bourdieu 1986, p.47), which constitutes the prime mover interest of students, generating action and configuring an actor-network (Callon & Law 1982). Although an international qualification could be seen as a “distinction” (Bourdieu 1984) for Brazilian students (Amorim 2012), only Yellow made a reference to such idea. The students travelled abroad aiming to, *inter alia*, enrol cultural capital actor-networks (qualifications and enhanced English skills) in order to become more competitive in the labour market, therefore enrolling economic capital actor-networks¹²¹. The desire to engage in mobility thus, becoming “more competitive” can be seen as an effect of more far-reaching and stable actor-networks. I momentarily “zoom out of” the students’ practices (Nicolini 2009) to discuss the idea of risk (Beck 1992; 2009; Giddens 1990).

¹²⁰ See Chapter 7.

¹²¹ “Meeting new people” (Grey, Blue), or “experiencing new realities” (Brown) were also mentioned.

The concept of risk, as articulated by Beck (1992; 2009), helps one to draw my informants' actor-networks, as the "screening" has already happened (Latour 2005, p.189). Beck positioned the labour market as the motor of individualised risk for individuals. In the "context" of globalisation, individuals depend on the capital generated by work – work that is increasingly precarious in Bauman's (1998) "disordered jobless environment" – to enjoy the only certainty: consumerism.

In a sense, the students could be seen as what Standing (2011) named as the "precarariat": or the receivers of the risks and insecurities transferred from the flexible labour market in neo-liberal economies. In ANT terms, students (as Blue's account clearly shows¹²²) struggle to enrol money, a key immutable mobile (Latour 1990) that allows one's to increase the "size" of their actor-network. The empirical limitations in investigating the extent to which the students' can access familial economic capital, curbs the potential to discuss in-depth the degree of risk that they can borne. More than a sociological construct, risk is a mediator (Latour 1993b; 2005). It can be assembled in both positive and negative forms which is conditioned to how mobilised one's economic actor-networks are. Positive embracement of risk (such as a student relying on familial capital to survive while trying to mobilise cultural and social actor-networks abroad) can create wealth in the globalised context (Giddens 1990). Thus, effects of risk taking might be positive if "mobility capital" (Urry 2007) has been already mobilised.

¹²² See Appendix G.

6.3.4 Centres of Social Capital Actor-Networks

The networking functions in the following way. First, you connect with people from your accommodation. Then, you connect with people who live with you, your flatmates, and then, fellow students¹²³. Theoretically, these people should help you in case of necessity, because our family is not here, right? So, sometimes, we play the role of the family here (Lavender).

As I remain faithful to the main task of *following the actors* – in order to investigate their social capital actor networks – I keep discussing more stable actor-networks – although decreasing the zoom given in the last two paragraphs. The students’ accounts demonstrate that educational institutions and student accommodation are the “centres” of social capital enactments. It is *through/with* such centres that social capital actor-networks might flourish in the students’ assemblages.

Latour (1987) introduces the idea of “centres of calculation”, or the laboratory where scientists return to, after concluding their “expeditions, collections, and inquiries” (Latour 1987, p.232). The data that was collected, from observation sheets to maps and diagrams, are mobilised by the scientists in order to enter the “sure path of a science” (ibid), or “become” a scientific fact. In “Organizing Modernity”, Law (1994) sees the office of Andrew, the manager of Daresbury Laboratory, as a centre of calculation, where he enacts his position of authority in the organisation, delegating tasks to other employees from his desk with the participation of a computer, telephones, and organisational reports.

¹²³ Overall, international students live in student accommodation (or host family home) for the first two weeks of their programme, moving to a place of their preference (house or flat) after this period.

My conceptualisation of “centres of social capital actor-networks” – although borrowing the nomenclature – is not completely related to Latour and Law’s views on “centres of calculation”. The only resemblance between “centres of calculation” and “centres of social capital actor-networks” has to do with a space where transformations might occur – or where space becomes an actor. After accepting the OPP (course of study), students inevitably translate with “new” actor-networks, such as cultural capital actor-networks (they go to the classrooms, deal with knowledge, interact with fellow students), and student accommodation. This is a crucial moment. It is *in/with* these spaces that international students will start enrolling a wide range of actors, from humans whom they can potentially trust to new words of the English language.

This idea of centres of social capital-networks in international education troubles ANT’s position of highlighting relational connectivity over conventional geographical spaces (Latour 1996b; 2009; Law 2002; Law & Hetherington 2000). Previously in this chapter, I demonstrated (strictly based on the actors’ statements) how students do not weaken their association with their family and friends in Brazil. Instead, spatial realities are enacted, as technological platforms are active members of the students’ actor-networks (with Red being an exception). However, once in Dublin, the space that is shared by international students becomes an actor itself¹²⁴. All students’ stories indicate that their actor-network started growing (or became more densely connected) *in/with* accommodations and/or on campus. In this sense, for matters of social capital

¹²⁴ This was a reflection generated by Pink’s statements, when she stated that relationships in international education realities might only flourish if actors “share the same space” (Pink).

enactments, both Euclidean (?) space and “ANT space” are equally important. While the former can be seen as the “ignition” of social capital translations – or an enabler of a “shifting social experience” (Larsen 2016, p.20) – the latter is related to durability, or the effects that are produced when an actor-network is mobilised. This could refer to one’s “use” of social capital: the access to the so-called “embedded” resources (Lin 2008). In this sense, if an actor-network is already mobilised, space can be seen as a result of relational performance. The students did not disentangle from their family and friends in Brazil as they travelled to Dublin. On the other hand, if a student aims to establish new connections abroad, a specific geographical location – a centre – assumes a pivotal role in making this possible. This does not mean that such a “centre” existed before the translation with the student, or that it will remain – as a modernist medium would – after one “erases” the translation between “centre” and student.

Confusion (once again) might arise from this argument. Euclidean space is realist: it exists before, and independently from us – which is not what I am implying. In order to avoid such philosophical incoherence, I argue that it is possible to remain *in between* ANT and Euclidean space. The former is too radical while the latter misses a sensibility for complexity. I shall bring in Latour in order to aid me in extinguishing my spatial disquietude.

Is space what *inside* which reside objects and subjects? Or is space *one* of the many connections made by objects and subjects? In the first tradition, if you empty the space of all entities there is something left: space. In the second, since entities engender their space (or rather their spaces) as they trudge along, if you take the

entities out, nothing is left, especially space. (Latour 2009, p.142, *author's emphasis*).

I only partially agree with the preposition above. Latour's (2009) argument would not explain how actors A and B who shared a space – such as a square in a university campus – would perhaps spontaneously start a conversation as they are close to one another. Let's suppose that A has neither a lighter nor matches and wants to light up a cigarette. Suddenly A sees B, sitting on a bench, smoking. Then, A asks B for a lighter and they start talking to each other (which could be the start of a social capital actor-network). Although Latour (1996b; 2009), Law (2002), and Law & Hetherington (2000) are clear in their prepositions on space, their focus on its performativity does not explain when space becomes an actor itself, a mediator that does unexpected things (Latour 1993b; 2005). In the hypothetical example of students A and B starting a conversation in the university square, the space (and the cigarette, lighter, and so on) that allowed the association between them could not be considered as an *a priori* medium (waiting to be occupied by actors) or just a result of a relation between A and B. Space is not only the result of a connection, but could also be an actor (it has agency) if it participated in the approximation between A and B – such as a “spatial mover” in ANT vocabulary (as Latour likes the term “prime mover”¹²⁵). ANT's position is not perfectly clear on that, although Law (2002) reassures that reflecting on space offers endless possibilities of interpretation. If you remove the students the space vanishes, I concur with that. However, considering that “people close to each other in the social space tend to be close together – by choice or necessity – in the

¹²⁵ See Latour (1994; 1999b).

geographical space” (Bourdieu 1990, p.127), how can one consider space as the enabler of the hypothetical connection between A and B?

Aiming to cease my spatial disquietude, but still travelling with a relational ontology, I shall appeal to another theoretical articulation, although still considering ANT’s tenet of spatial performance. Kesselring (2006) denominated “mobility modes” two possible relational characterisations of space. It can act whether as a “transit space” (i.e. an innocent pathway), or in the case of centres of social capital actor-networks, as a “connectivity space” – a space where human and non-human entities might relate and translate (i.e. the “student area” of a university). However, it is relevant to note that if there was relation and translation in the “innocent pathway” then, it stops being only a “transit space”, becoming also a “connectivity space”.

I keep arguing about the centres of social capital actor-networks partially inspired by Kesselring’s (2006) conception: that of “connectivity space”. One could still insist that sharing the same connectivity space does not necessarily lead to translation; for instance two students who are in the same class but have never talked to each other. Beige, Silver, Blue, and Pink’s accounts also demonstrated that sharing accommodation does not lead directly to social capital enactments. They enacted very fragile and momentary social capital actor-networks as they enrolled (or were enrolled to) student accommodation: durability was not achieved. In this sense, accommodation (and its associated actors) obstructed more stable connections to occur. Disagreements regarding house cleaning, use of house utilities – or simply “everyone’s busy routine” (Pink) used as an rationale

for non-existent interaction between housemates – can exemplify the diverse ways a given actor might force one to act in a particular way.

However, there were exceptions where space – as an actor – allowed interaction which in turn, allowed connectivity, or the flourishing of social capital enactments. I could illustrate this argument with my own experience. From 2009 to 2011, I shared a house with the same three fellow ESOL students and worked progressively towards the creation of a “sense of community”, where I considered trust relationships – the “credit slip” (Coleman 2000, p.20) – as the goal of my translations. However, credit slips were laborious to obtain, requiring not only the continuous sharing/production of the same space, but consistent action throughout time from the entities involved. Bourdieu (1986) argues that investment in sociability that leads to trustworthiness is necessarily long-term as “time is one of the factors of the transmutation of a pure and simple debt into that recognition of nonspecific indebtedness which is called gratitude” (ibid, p.54). As Latour (1993a, p.172) puts, “capital” is never the first step. “First it (is) necessary to create equivalences, bend forces, and hold them in place for long enough to be (...) measured”.

The relations between linear time, connectivity space, and social capital actor-networks are highly localised. Orange and Red – SWB students who spent one year in Dublin – formed a temporary *micro community* of Brazilian students on campus accommodation. “We all lived so close to each other, if you were alone and bored you would just knock on their door and ask them: hey, what are you doing? Do you want to hang out?” (Red). This “community” offered emotional

support to Orange and Red (or the effect of other Brazilians being enrolled was emotional support) as “people from other nationalities were emotionally different” (Orange).

Brown, who had been sharing a house with an Irish human actor for two months at the moment of the interview, found himself receiving advantages, as the latter provided information about transportation in Dublin, and assistance to craft a CV. Grey successfully translated social capital actor-networks (if we consider trust as an essential actor of social capital actor-networks), where his accommodation was an actor of importance not only to enable connections with human actors, but also to allow the achievement of durability of such connections. In my interviews with Grey, he told me that he had been living with the same housemates for two years: “we always talk in the evenings, after everyone finished working... and is there (in the house) hanging around” (Grey).

From a non-ANT perspective and mapping the Canadian context, Martinovic et al. (2011) see the establishment of cross-cultural friendships as an effect of the possibilities of interaction among human actors. These “possibilities of interaction” are enacted when students share the same connectivity space (or when the space itself is an actor), and have been considered to be of ultimate importance by other actors such as, the Irish State and HEIs. Montgomery & McDowell (2009, p.456) make a case for a greater consideration of the “environment that surrounds the classroom” (including accommodation and social activities) in order to enhance social learning.

Research has shown that international students tend to relate more frequently to other international students and compatriots than to host students (Brown 2009; Harrison & Peacock 2010), a finding that is consonant to this case study. Apart from Grey, who established friendships with the Irish, and Green, Yellow, Pink and Beige, who had Irish boyfriends¹²⁶, no mobilised relationship with Irish nationals were described by the informants. In spite of its benefits, this “inter-cultural contact”, that is unlikely to occur spontaneously to any large extent, has been a policy concern (DES 2010). The Head of the International Office of one Irish university (HIO) considers that intercultural interaction – or the work needed to mobilise transnational identity capital (Kim 2010) – is a subject to be considered in the classroom as a requirement from current work landscapes.

There is a very strong focus, particularly in the business school, that recognises the benefits...Irish students or national students to work with international students... because it provides them a framework of this intercultural piece (...), but also sets them up for the work place because increasingly if they go to secure a position in Google, these are multicultural, multilingual environments and they will not be able to say, in a work situation, “I want to only work with the Irish”, because that is not available to them, they will need to work with someone based on their skill set, not their nationality and that’s what we are trying to do in the classroom (HIO).

The Representative of the Irish Department of Education and Skills (SOG) shared HIO’s position in relation to the organisation of the classroom space that contributes to the interaction between domestic and international students. He believes that “we have to make sure that we have a good differentiation of

¹²⁶ The accounts of Green, Yellow, Pink, and Beige indicate that social capital actor-networks were mobilised due to romantic relationships with Irish citizens. Although not describing the events when translations occurred, these informants clearly described how having “enrolled” an Irish partner helped them in finding various forms of support in their international education realities, increasing in possibilities to enrol other actors, such as Irish “cultural norms”.

international students in each discipline. You don't want to have too many *int* students from one country, because obviously they won't interact with domestic" (SOG).

It would be highly laborious and complex to track if a local interaction between international and host students were to develop into a relationship that could be seen as a social capital actor-network. Human interaction is ephemeral, and the "responsibility" to mobilise actors is from the actors themselves, if they wish to do so. While more stable actor-networks cannot control how the specificities of the interaction between human actors will play out, efforts are being made to facilitate, or create possibilities of translations between these two "kinds" of actors. HIO and SOG described a series of initiatives taken by the State and HEIs in order to "bring students together and create intercultural awareness" (HIO), which could foster more durable relationships within international education realities, such as clubs, societies, and sports activities.

The Students Union this year is very focused in creating a cultural space, they will be working with all students to provide opportunities for that exchange to happen, one of the areas that has proven difficulty for the social side is an over focus on the pub culture that exists in Ireland which can be difficult for international students to integrate with or even to understand (HIO).

The Irish Council for International Students (ICOS) website shared an article (published online) concerning the ways prospective international students can plan to maximize campus life¹²⁷. This article presents a mini-interview with HIO,

¹²⁷ I do not provide the web link to this article, as it brings HIO's real name (which would not guarantee the anonymity of the research participants).

where, apart from academic results, the “networking” is emphasised when one engages in international education. The three ways that maximises “campus life” (reinforcing the arguments of HIO and SOG) consists of joining a club or sports team, volunteering activities (such as class representative) and the student ambassador programme (which Pink participated in).

Although some of the informants (Orange, Blue and Pink) were engaged in social groups and cultural activities in Brazil¹²⁸, they did not join any club or society in the university¹²⁹. In his first interview, Blue flagged that he would like to join the university’s dance society, but this did not happen due to the action of a membership fee that he was not willing to pay. Regarding sports, Purple and Yellow made use of the gym on campus, although there was no mention of any social capital-actor network being enacted *in/with* this space.

The idea of centres of social capital actor-networks, where “cross-cultural” classrooms, clubs and societies, and sports events are seen as facilitators¹³⁰ for the enactment of social capital actor-networks, represents the possibilities international students encounter to enrol new actors, from humans to non-humans. While the previous pages described what happened to the actors, or the purely existential aspect of their journey, I now turn to the way actors see their own

¹²⁸ Orange was a member of her undergraduate “junior company” and sports society (futsal and handball). Blue was a member of the NGO “Mensa”, and Pink participated in the circus community and the religious group “Focolare”.

¹²⁹ Pink joined the Irish “Focolare”.

¹³⁰ These events can be seen as mediators, as they only facilitate social capital actor-networks to flourish, instead of ensuring it – which would be expected only from an intermediary.

world. More specifically, how one believes that social capital actor-networks can be successfully mobilised.

6.4 Social Capital by the Actors Themselves

Relying on the actors’ own ideas of social capital was key for this study¹³¹. I asked them questions related to more general social capital theory postulates, such as “What brings a group together?” and “How do you keep your social group(s) together?” This “piece” of empirical data, although described in Chapter 4 and Appendices A-M, is revisited below for analytical purposes. Here, I am concerned to uncover the actor that might spark a social capital translation, or how membership in a social group (Bourdieu 1986; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992) can be achieved. After all, what brings members of a group together?

Purple	Common interests
Green	Common interests
Grey	Common interests, trust, and open-mindedness
Yellow	Common interests, respect, and tolerance
Orange	Common interests
Red	Common interests
Blue	Common interests, affinity
Brown	Need
Silver	Similarities
Pink	Common interests, and integrity
Beige	Common interests, sharing the same language
Lavender	Common interests

Table 17: What Brings Members of a Group Together?

¹³¹ Only my participants’ previous knowledge of ANT would have allowed me to ask more “ANTian tailored” questions in order to investigate social capital, such as *What is the work involved in bringing heterogeneous actors together?* and *How could you describe translations if you see your reality as a myriad of actor-networks?* See Silver’s (Appendix I, p.9) metaphor of “discovery” for a somewhat ANTian description of an experience of mobility.

Table 17 shows what the informants consider to be the actors that are needed to spark a social capital translation. From a social capital point of view, it is interesting to observe that “trust” was mentioned only by Grey, while the predominant norm for group formation relies on the existence of common interests of its members. This exemplifies Latour’s (1987, p.108) first form of translation “I want what you want”, which demonstrates how international students try to enact social capital actor-networks abroad. For instance, Blue organised a group formed by fellow students who would gather after their English class in order to practise oral language development.

Human actors seeking out for others who are similar to themselves, or social groups being formed from the attachment/shared activity, are not an extraordinary finding. Representatives of the university and government demonstrated awareness of this fact as they elaborated arguments on how clubs, societies, and sports activities might facilitate and enhance “cross-cultural” interactions. According to HIO, “when you have people working together through a shared interest, that makes a big difference”. In terms of scientific publications, whether in the field of sociology or social psychology, issues of human interaction as an effect of similarities and the reasons why people join groups – not only in “cross-cultural contexts” – have been well documented (Brooks 2005; Byrne 1971; Byrne and Nelson 1965)¹³².

¹³² If the reader is concerned to know the whys of human behaviour, or why similarity connects and dissimilarity distances individuals, social psychology is a fruitful field of study. Rosenbaum (1986) “repulsion hypothesis”, Newcomb (1961) “balance theory” and Festinger (1954) “social comparison theory” are some formulations that try to explain how and why individuals form and join social groups. As to this thesis, my concern is purely local. I describe the localised reality of my 12 informants from a relational point of view, rather than generalising forms of behaviour.

The importance of the centres of social capital actor-networks in international education realities have been exposed. I now turn to an actor that is common to all students' stories, acts directly in the durability of actor-networks, and might bring positive effects in terms of allowing one to have advantages and benefits (that is, an extension of an actor-network).

6.5 Cyborgs of International Education

WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, FaceTime, Skype, wow, I am nothing without them... social media, email, telephone...telephone is an interesting thing. Text messages are still useful, but nowadays everybody is a "WhatsApp slave" (Yellow).

Currently, it is not uncommon to "add" people to social media platforms, or to spend a considerable amount of time updating, posting "content" on, and browsing it. Having an online profile on LinkedIn is expected from professionals, which has become an unwritten social norm in the organisational world. Social practices in all its forms such as, familial, commercial, governmental and academic, *influence and are influenced* by technological innovations, the main concern of the field of Science and Technology Studies (STS). As I conducted this study, many participants were "added" to my Facebook and/or WhatsApp, which facilitated the scheduling of interviews. Currently, the world is inevitably and mercilessly made aware of what is going through Donald Trump's mind via Twitter.

My intention in this section is not to analyse the "digital age", that which Castells (1996) named "network society", but to shed light on how software can be seen as

a participant of social capital actor-networks: increasing its “size” (Callon & Latour 1981), acting on the performance of distance (Latour 1996b; 2009; Law 2002; Law & Hetherington 2000), and contributing to the durability of associations (Latour 1993b).

The understanding that different elements are joined in the enactment of heterogeneous networks – where actors are formed in/by webs of relations – differs from more conventional ways of seeing social media, such as the development of information and communication technologies (ICT). From this perspective, there is a virtual reality *out-there*, where smartphones, tablets, and computers are the devices, or “portals” through which one enters and interacts with other humans *in* that reality: a different domain of existence than the “physical” realm. Whichever the perspective one adopts, the “connected generation” (Haigh 2014, p.8) enacts realities that “provide a new way of being in the world that is more inclusive” (ibid, p.15), a position which I endorse. However, thinkers, such as Zygmunt Bauman would see people’s use of social media as a way of locking “themselves in a comfort zone” (Querol 2016), or allowing “the invasion of fools” – in the words of Umberto Eco¹³³ (La Stampa 2015). Montgomery (2010) argues that international students might rely on the use of social platforms as a way to compensate the lack of local friendships in the newly performed space – “at least in the initial stages of their time abroad” – taking the risk to prioritise online to “offline” networks (ibid, p.69).

¹³³ Eco’s statement given to journalists after being awarded the Honorary Degree in Communication and Media Culture at Cavallerizza Reale, Turin, Italy, 2015.

Although much of her work concerns epistemological and political positions, Haraway's (1991) feminist material semiotics can aid me in theorising how my informants can be seen as *cyborgs*, rather than humans using technological devices. Cyborgs, "a hybrid of machine and organism" (Haraway 1991, p.149), challenges the idea that agency is exclusively human and highlights the ontological hybridisation of actors who are neither purely human nor machine. The focus is on the relationship between these "parts" rather than delineating boundaries that separate one from the other, as "the boundary between physical and non-physical is very imprecise for us" (Haraway 1991, p.153). It would be almost redundant to state how technological devices, such as smartphones and laptops, are seen as "first necessity items" by humans and modify the way they behave to a great extent. The important analytical consideration here is that technological devices also "behave" and are modified by human entities, assuming a pivotal role in the enactment of social capital actor-networks in international education realities.

As stated earlier in this chapter, the performance of distance between students and their family and friends in Brazil is achieved via technology. The students stated that the most effective way of keeping connections "alive" is to add people whom they meet abroad on social media platforms, which might allow not only the increase of the size of their actor-network (Callon & Latour 1981), but also aids in the mobilisation of actors. In his second interview (via Skype), Lavender shared his plans to "get in touch" with students from São Paulo due to the possibility of moving to this city. These students, whom he met in Dublin and are

now back in Brazil, could provide him with advice in terms of finding apartments to rent in the city.

While “getting in touch” might indicate the exchange of private messages, the work done by “postings” on social media platforms deserves attention when analysing what *cyborgs* are doing; and how they are enacting social capital actor-networks. Postings enrol other actors and require a wide array of heterogeneous allies in order to perform new spaces (laptops, internet connection, humans and so on). Thompson (2012b) observes that the concept of immutable mobile (Latour 1987) illustrates how a certain “post” can be seen from an ANT lenses. However, postings remain fluid, oscillating between being an intermediary and a mediator as it “can change as it moves” (Thompson 2012b, p.256). These dynamics exemplify how the “identity” of an actor is defined by its relations. My dialogue with Yellow below clarifies the fluidity of social media posts.

Alfredo: Do you keep your connections through social media?

Yellow: Yes. It’s a curious thing. Some people say “I don’t like to publish much of my life in social networks”. I like to keep it balanced. I will not post a picture in which I am crying, but if I went for a walk and saw a nice view, I will publish it... because it gives people a sense of proximity... with my people from Brazil who are not here. They can say “oh, she saw this beautiful sunset, she’s ok”. I feel this. I don’t need to dissect my life and publish everything, but exposing my life here a bit tranquilises me...it approximates people who are distant, giving them a showcase of my life. It brings me tranquillity, as they know I am well and I know they are still there.

Alfredo: That’s actually nice. I don’t know... I am a bit critical towards the overuse of social media to be honest.

Yellow: I completely respect that. My sister, for example... she publishes very little in social media, she doesn’t like to do so, whereas I have a more expositive approach. She says: “in social

media, the less you publish, the best your life goes”. Jealousy... this kind of thing. I partially agree with her. For example, I have been dating... almost for two months now, although I have been going out with the person since November... and when it became a relationship my sister told me “don’t put this in social media, this creates a lot of reactions”, “Oh, who is he?” This is not needed. You have it for yourself.

In this sense, a post might change when translating into different actor-networks. That which is a harmless “showcase” of one’s life can become a reason to foster jealousy. Drawing on Law & Singleton’s (2005) work on the fluidity/multiplicity of objects, Thompson (2012b) points out the tension in defining an object – a posting – either as mutable or immutable mobile. Whether an intermediary or a mediator (Latour 2005), postings enrol/mobilise other actors and might contribute to the durability of social capital actor-networks¹³⁴.

Apart from modifying the way human actors present themselves online, the majority of one’s social media “friends” (whether *real* friends or acquaintances) and “contacts” could be associated with the idea of “weak ties” (Granovetter 1973), “bridging social capital” (Putnam 2000), or “structural holes” (Burt 1992; 2000). Lin (1990) describes a more instrumental form of social capital responsible for social mobility, which refers to opportunities human actors have in terms of career development and/or opportunities. This form of social capital is more commonly associated with relationships with weak ties (acquaintances), rather than strong ties (family and friends) – as first elaborated by Granovetter (1973).

¹³⁴ Although social media or “social networking sites” produce positive effects on the mobilisation of social capital, the qualitative aspect, or the nature of connections, remains an object to be further explored. A detailed investigation is necessary in order to gain insight on how “virtual” social ties can be turned into *real* resources for users (see Tian 2016).

The informants Green¹³⁵ and Yellow (PhD candidates) were particularly fluent in describing their strategy to enrol actors that could lead them to a job position in the future. From the perspective of social capital actor-networks, occupational mobility involves more than just a social network articulated by human actors. Social platforms such as LinkedIn and Twitter are active players in the enactment of social capital actor-networks, where the effect of their mobilisation would refer to work opportunities that become available to the translators¹³⁶. In this sense, occupational mobility is an effect of an actor-network that managed to become mobilised. Yellow describes her strategy below.

I am going towards the end of my PhD and I need contacts. I am smart enough to look for people. I am on Twitter and I have a business card. After I made the contact, I send an email to the person, then they start following me on Twitter, retweet what I twitted and then you generate your networks (Yellow).

The fact that technology “behaves” as an actor within social capital actor-networks also refers to the way information is obtained. Although information flows (Coleman 2000; Lin 2001) are considered as a form of social capital (also more common to weak ties) and will inform the analysis of the next section (Brazilian community, English language and paradoxical enactments), my informants gained much of the information they were looking for as they accessed websites, both before coming to Dublin and during their stay. Facebook groups of Brazilians in Dublin, and blogs about one’s experience in Dublin as an

¹³⁵ See Appendix B (p.10) for a detailed strategy of how Green enrolls a series of actors, such as conferences, academic subjects, researchers, and LinkedIn, in order to achieve the mobilisation of her actor-network. Once mobilised, the effect generated by an “occupational-mobility actor-network” would refer to job opportunities being enacted.

¹³⁶ In this case, students are the translators. Deciding who the translator *is* is a methodologically political act. One might also see actors (students) assembling others (LinkedIn and cultural capital actor-networks) in order to pass through the OPP of other actor-networks (employers).

international student were used as a tool to acquire information: from rent opportunities to compulsory bureaucratic obligations (i.e. issue of a visa, social security number). The fact that information, whatever its “kind”, is *on* the internet, made redundant my question to the students on what their most used source of information was. The issues of information flows, work, the enrolment of the English language, and the rejection of membership in the “Brazilian community” in Dublin are analysed in the next section.

6.6 A Brazilian “Community” in Dublin? The English Language and Paradoxical Enactments

I acknowledge the analytical limitations I had when investigating if a “Brazilian community in Dublin” could be considered *real – or real enough* – to the extent of producing effects of support for its members as one entity. From a relational point of view, this investigation is problematic by itself. In order to be able to state that “there is a Brazilian community in Dublin”, the analyst would have not only to consider that s/he can see “reality as it really is” (Mol 2010, p.255), but also enrol a significantly larger sample of research participants – perhaps using survey as a research method. The fact that Brazilian students are – temporarily – living in Dublin¹³⁷ would not constitute a community in the conventional sense of the word, where individuals help, and live close to, one another. Despite the fact that I might share, in fractal terms (Law 2003b), parallel realities with other Brazilians students in Dublin, I am left with no analytical choice but to learn from

¹³⁷ “Figures from the (Irish) Department of Justice show that Brazil tops the league for the number of students – 9,225 – studying in Ireland from outside the EU” (O’Halloran 2017).

the actors themselves. After all, is there a Brazilian community in Dublin? And most importantly: Does it offer any form of support for mobile students?

My investigations of social capital actor-networks thus far have considered what Pichler and Wallace (2007) classify as “informal social capital”, or the translations occurring between friends, fellow students, families and neighbours – which in turn could be further divided in weak and strong ties (Granovetter 1973). From the empirical data generated *by/with* the students, the absence of “formal social capital” (Pichler & Wallace 2007; Putnam 2000), or the formal membership in civic organisations within a community, is clear. My informants mobilised more local actor-networks and saw themselves either “not belonging” to the “Brazilian community in Dublin”, or classifying the “types” of individuals who would belong to such *community* (ESOL students). Blue was the only informant who stated that a Brazilian community in Dublin is “inexistent”. In a sense, only a *fragmented and temporary micro community* is mobilised by the students, that which Grey called “disorganised communities”.

Studies of Brazilian migrant communities have shown that “strategic shunning” (Wulfhorst 2014, p.478) is recurrent in the realities enacted by mobile Brazilians, whether in Australia (Wulfhorst 2014), the Netherlands (Roggeveen & van Meeteren 2013), or Portugal (Padilha 2006). However, compared with the findings offered by Wulfhorst (2014), the reinforcement of distinction from other Brazilians was not conditioned to students from an “upper middle class strata”. Students who informed me about their financial disadvantage, such as Silver (“My family is really really poor”), and Green (“I grew up in a very poor

neighbourhood”) also enacted behaviours of aloofness while in Dublin, as demonstrated in Appendices A-M.

This “strategic shunning” (Wulfhorst 2014, p.478) – although raising questions on issues of identity recognition as a manifestation of social capital (Lin 2001) – does not mean that Brazilian students do not manage to mobilise other Brazilian actors in order to enact social capital actor-networks. In spite of the internet being the actor from which much information is translated by my informants, “other Brazilians” in Dublin participated in one essential translation: work actor-networks.

According to the Irish visa regulations, non-EU students have limitations on the “kind” of work they can perform while residing in Ireland (INIS 2017). The so-called “stamp 2”¹³⁸ will be granted to those undertaking an English language course or in Higher Education, which allows them to “work in *casual* employment for a maximum of 20 hours per week during school term and 40 hours per week during holidays (...) not (engaging) in any other business or trade” (INIS 2017, *my emphasis*). The definition of “casual” employment is not placed in the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Services website. However, from my own experience as an international student – and the students’ accounts – I could define “casual” as any job position, very often in retail or hospitality, where employees are easily replaceable, and the English skills required for the

¹³⁸ The “Stamp 2A” is given to those engaged in a semester of “studying abroad at an Irish university” (INIS 2017) as it is the case of SWB students (Red, Orange and Silver). They are forbidden to perform any form of work, both by the Irish and Brazilian State.

performance of the work are not advanced. For instance: kitchen porter, cleaner, pub floor staff, barista, waiter, assistant chef, shop assistant, cashier – and more “informal” positions such as, “rickshaw *operator*”, au pair, and “sign holder”.

It is relevant to observe that only ESOL students engaged in the above mentioned “casual-work-actor-networks”. Despite his tertiary qualification, Blue tried to acquire a casual job in Dublin but did not succeed, which led him to do voluntary work in an English school in Morocco. Brown, MBA in Finance, managed to find employment in a multinational retailer in Dublin where he worked as a stock taker. Lavender, a third year manufacturing engineering undergraduate student, sought “casual” employment but did not manage to translate into these actor-networks. Grey¹³⁹, Beige, and Pink (Master’s students at the time of the interviews) worked as shop assistants and au pair, respectively, during their two-year period as ESOL students in Dublin. As to PhD’s (Purple, Yellow and Green¹⁴⁰) and undergraduate SWB students (Red, Orange, and Silver), none of them were performing any kind of casual work in Dublin.

It is *with* the casual-work-actor-network – into which ESOL students struggle to translate – that “other Brazilians” might assume an important role in terms of social capital enactments. Apart from Grey, who found both of his jobs via employment websites, Brown, Beige and Pink described how they managed to

¹³⁹ Grey was the only Master’s student who was working in Dublin at the time of this study. He managed to upgrade his status from intern to organisational member of a NGO. Pink worked temporarily as an English teacher during summer. Beige was not working at the time of her Master’s.

¹⁴⁰ However, Purple worked temporarily as a Maths tutor, while Yellow not only worked as a tutor but also as a guest lecturer in one undergraduate module. When living in Dublin as an ESOL student, Purple worked as a stock taker.

find casual employment in Ireland through a process that Roggeveen & van Meeteren (2013, p.1089) called “system of job rotation”. Although the authors’ analysis concerned Brazilians in the Netherlands, fractalities of this “system” are also in place in Dublin.

If someone leaves the country he or she might give his or her job – usually in housekeeping – to someone else. In the past, jobs were given to friends and family, but also to co-nationals one did not know. Being a fellow Brazilian in need was simply enough to provide help (Roggeveen & van Meeteren 2013, 1089).

However, it is relevant to point out that the “system of job rotation” is an effect of “individual networking” (informal social capital or weak ties), or the performance of an actor translating with others who might either be leaving a job position, or are aware of an opportunity of casual employment. This observation dialogues with Wulfhorst’s (2014) understanding that “the idea of Brazilian community is an unfeasible project and should be rather analysed in terms of networking” (Wulfhorst 2014, p. 490). The imagined “Brazilian community in Dublin” acts as “yellow pages” (Grey, Beige) for ESOL students. The effect of the translations with “other Brazilians” – who might be at the *centres of social capital actor-networks* – consists of information flows and/or goal achievement (Coleman 1988; Lin, 2001).

ESOL students are “prepared” to assume casual job positions and might be engaged in a “job hunt” (Brown). The power of their cultural-capital actor-networks is “weakened” as they enact realities in Dublin, meaning that educational qualifications *obtained* in Brazil do not show capacity to *produce* occupational mobility in Dublin (Burt 1992; 2000). From a human capital

perspective, Favell et al. (2006) articulates how international students “leave their skills behind” in the moment they cross international borders.

ESOL students accept the “kinds” of jobs that are available to them due to the agency of “hostile” actor-networks (Law 1987), whether the formers’ basic/intermediary level of English – frustrating any aspiration for a “better” job – or the rules imposed by the visa. Shifting the English-language-actor-network from being a hostile adversary to becoming an ally is their goal. Law (1987) exemplifies below the effort implied in the performance of such shift.

(...) a network of associated heterogeneous elements that is stable has been generated because it is able to resist the dissociating efforts of a wide variety of potentially hostile forces and to use at least some of these forces by transforming them and associating them with the project (Law, 1987, p.122).

It is through the extension of the students’ cultural-capital actor-networks that occupational mobility might be achieved (if the visa allows). In other words, it is by continuing education and enrolling more “English language allies” that possibilities of finding a “non-casual” job in Dublin are increased (Grey worked at a NGO, and Green became a postdoctoral fellow). Interestingly, the mobilisation of social capital actor-networks is one of the necessary performances to “enlarge” cultural actor-networks, as it is through practice and interaction (translation) with human and non-human entities that one learns English; if learning is an actor-network effect (Fenwick 2010).

The performances of the Brazilian students in Dublin did not rely on a *mobilised* community – formed by members of the same nationality and acting as one entity,

challenging Putnam’s (2000, p.436) idea that social capital is “inevitably easier to foster within homogeneous communities”. Instead, students relied on (what seems to be) weak ties (Granovetter 1973), enacting realities that resembled “bubbles”¹⁴¹ (Pink). These “bubbles” refer to the actor-network of each student, where potential members of an imagined “community” are enrolled by my informants, producing localised effects (that here I am calling social capital actor-networks).

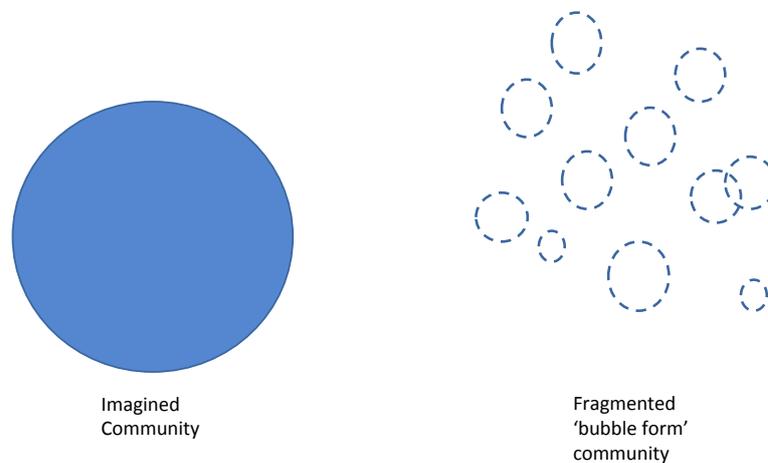


Figure 10: Imagined Community/Fragmented Bubble Form Community

My argument continues with the examination of paradoxical enactments encompassing social and cultural actor-networks. ANT is concerned with the contradictions that emerge from social life, tracing the controversies deployed by the actors (Latour 2005). At this stage of the analysis, I am confronted with a major paradox, or a “paradexity”: “the convergence of paradox and complexity” (Howard 2010, p.210). I dismiss the discomfort that “paradexities” might cause.

¹⁴¹ See Appendix J (p. 12). This idea might resemble Karl Marx’s distinction between an atomized class-in-itself and a mobilized and effective class-for-itself, as stated by Portes (1998).

Instead, I am embracing them¹⁴². Thus, “accepting paradox means recognising that a thing can simultaneously *be* and *not be*” (Howard 2010, p.211, *author’s emphasis*). Similarly to Deleuze & Guattari (1987, p.25) rhizome “and...and...and” ontology, Howard (2010) believes that “the world in which we live is no longer a world of simple black or white, either or. It is a world of *and*” (ibid, p.211, *author’s emphasis*).

Previously in this chapter, I presented table 17¹⁴³ containing the students’ answers for the question: “What brings members of a group together?” Given that all my informants (except Brown) stated that “common interests” is the actor – also seen as a norm – that might spark social capital enactments, it would not be an exaggeration to understand Brazilian students in Dublin forming *micro communities of interest*¹⁴⁴, or “social groups connected by common interest” (Howard 2010, p.211). Each informant stated their interests with the three major ones being learning English, experimenting new realities, and finding work/becoming more employable. That is when “paradexities” are exposed.

If a paradox can be seen as a “set of mutually inconsistent claims” (Cuonzo 2014, p.18), I bring three “facts” that, when juxtaposed, can cause confusion. First, Brazilians might offer support to compatriots in need, as the cases of Brown, Beige, and Pink (and my own) demonstrated. Second, students claimed that they join or form a group based on common interests of its members, a depiction of the

¹⁴² As Stephen Hawking advises. See Chapter 1 (p.13).

¹⁴³ See p.237.

¹⁴⁴ Trying to frame the empirical data under Wenger’s idea of “communities of practice” becomes unfeasible as there was no mention to, or no agency exerted by, “newcomers”.

world(s) of the actors that stands as a reality. Third, my informants (except Red and Orange) rejected their membership in the imagined Brazilian community in Dublin, enacting a “strategy of shunning” (Wulfhorst 2014).

The paradoxical element of this argument consists of seeing the Brazilian students “in the same boat” (Blue), which indicates that common interests may preponderate within a group who shares fractal realities (Law 2003b). However, common interests do not nullify the enacted aloofness, as shown in the students’ accounts. If A and B have common interests, why would A and B reject each other? If A and B are the Other, why would A and B reject the Other?

The word “competition” (or competitors) appeared only twice in the students’ narratives. It was mentioned once by Yellow as she elaborated her argument on the possible reasons why the university’s PhD candidates – “even acting on different fields of study” – would not support one another. As I investigated the sense of community of Brazilians when performing a new space, Lavender stated that international students see “each other as competitors” as “no one will illuminate the right path for you, especially in regard to job positions. They would tell you where the nearest hospital is but never where the job offer is”.

Given Yellow’s and Lavender’s statement – and as I try to find partial answers to the paradox “same-boat-common-interests-alloofness” – I could not avoid considering Beck’s (1992, p.95) articulation on the processes of “individualization among equals” – an effect of growing competition in the risk society.

Especially where such a shared background still exists, community is dissolved in the acid bath of competition. In this sense, competition undermines the equality of equals without, however, eliminating it. It causes the isolation of individuals within homogeneous social groups (Beck 1992, p.95).

Although Beck's sharp articulation appears to solve the posed paradox, only two out of ten students made a reference to the "acid bath of competition" as a possible reason why students would not engage in reciprocal support. The remaining eight students' statements steer my investigation to a different direction. Although paradoxes lack "clear-cut solutions" (Cuonzo 2014, p.139), the following analysis of the English language as an actor-network – likely to be one of the central mediators of international education enactments – can contribute to an enhanced understanding of such complexity.

Latour's rhetorical questions are invoked once again: "Have you never fought with a word? Is not your tongue hardened by talking? (...) Who could believe that words have a clean history of their own?" (Latour 1993a, p.184). ANT does not consider language as signs that hold privileged ontological status, a position that might seem disturbing to some. Latour (1993a) insists in bringing across his provocative thoughts, disagreeing with conventional communication models (sender-receiver). Elements that constitute communicational forms, such as words, texts, or images are seen as actors in material semiotics. In this sense, language is not *dominated* by human actors, as "these actors are themselves part of a common field of semiotic production" (Høstaker 2014, p.7). Signs are reacting to other signs. Non-humans; humans, and what they produce – including

language – are seen as “entangled flows that are in a continual process of making and unmaking” (Mazzei 2013, p.735).

I would not be able to provide *final answers* to a highly complex, elaborated, and longstanding discussion on linguistics. However, I do need to explain the ontological in order to describe the empirical. I could only remind the reader that the principles of generalised symmetry and free association (Callon 1986a) also *apply* to language, and that will (hopefully) suffice to help one understand the role played by the extensive, mobilised and far reaching “English-language-actor-network” in the case of the Brazilian students in Dublin. Differing from the more traditional view that grammar is a system of rules or norms internalised by the speaker, Kono (2014) offers her understanding of grammar as an actor-network.

Languages are embedded and embodied in distributed ways that reveal the fundamentally social, public nature of the activity. Grammar should not be identified with the custom or the disposition that the speaker has inside, but it is realized as a dynamic network of relation among speakers, authorities in language (parents, teachers, grammarians, linguists, the Ministry of Education, and so on), grammar texts, books on linguistics, mass media, etc (Kono 2014, p.58).

At this stage of the investigation, language is part of the puzzle of international education realities and should be seen as a contributor to the overall analytical agenda of this study: to describe how entities act when they are meshed together and the effects of these practices. Moreover, if one sees language as an actor-network, as unconventional as it may seem, one might be able to “go out and walk new roads” (Mol 2010, p.261).

The interesting fact here is that semiotics informs much of Latour's metaphysical position, where relationality is the condition for meaning to be created. In a sense, ANT is "borrowing" the way semiotics functions, bringing this notion to the unmodern world of human and non-human actors (Mol 2010). As Høstaker (2014) explains, the principle of generalised symmetry (Callon 1986a) is derived from the properties of language in bringing *freely* human and non-human "on a joint plane of immanence" (Høstaker 2014, p.124).

My understanding is that each word could be seen as an actor¹⁴⁵, while the language itself is the mobilised actor-network. This perspective reveals the possibility of seeing the English language as an entity which the students *need* to translate *with*. This is done progressively and singularly as one learns words and sentences until fluency is achieved. Students change the way they are – as they enrol "English-language-actors" – which in turn, changes the way the language itself is (if I consider that speakers make use of a second language in an unique manner, or that anyone makes "use" of a language in distinct ways). The goal of human actors is to learn the language, while the goal of language is to allow "connection", "communication", "translation" between entities. As they establish a link, both actors transform (Latour 1999b). An extract of my dialogue with Grey illustrates this argument.

Alfredo: Do you see differences between the way you connect with people when you speak Portuguese and the way you connect with people when you speak English?

¹⁴⁵ I call a word "an actor" just for the purpose of maintaining the flow of the argument. From a "closer", irreductionist view, a word is both an actor-network (with its letters as actors) and an actor in a "sentence-actor-network" (See Callon 1987;1999).

Grey: The way I connect is very different... but I have been away from Brazil for so long that I believe that I changed the way I connect in general. The language makes all the difference. Brazilians have a different way to communicate with each other than English speakers. The language makes me communicate in a different way.

Alfredo: Could you give me an example?

Grey: I am more confident. Here I speak more, I used to be quieter.

This thought, although offering possibilities to be easily challenged by linguists, can *work* in this ANT study. The reason why the chances of making this idea *work* exist is due to my commitment with experimentation, and I could bring allies who offer support for this form of “commitment”. Mol (2010, p.257), for instance, defends that every ANT case study might offer “different lessons about what an actor might be”¹⁴⁶.

Thus, I return to the role of the English language and its exerted influence on the *non-enactment* of an imagined and unified Brazilian community in Dublin – according to the empirical material generated for this study. Here, the English language is the key to the paradox/paradexity discussed in the previous paragraphs. Brazilian students dismiss possibilities of mobilising social capital actor-networks with “other Brazilians” as they prioritise cultural-capital enrolments while enacting international education realities. If one “hangs out” (Lavender) only with Brazilians, one does not learn English (Grey, Brown, Green). Nonetheless, Brazilians are the most *accessible* form of support for “other Brazilians” if one contemplates an actor swimming in uncharted waters of

¹⁴⁶ Which could encompass my “spatial disquietude” (see p.228).

“unknown” actor-networks. In the words of Beige: “if you need help, you will look for someone who speaks your language... naturally”.

Regarding the unsettling strategy of shunning (Wulfhorst 2014, p.478) and placing the analytical lenses on myself, I must admit that I had a similar attitude when I arrived in Dublin in 2009 as an ESOL student. I used to guide my actions based on the following thought: I am leaving Brazil, *inter alia*, to learn English, so I cannot relate too closely with “other Brazilians”, even fellow Brazilian ESOL students in Dublin. If I do so, my English learning will be jeopardised. However, my experience showed me that such desire is hard to be materialised, and insisting on implementing the strategy of shunning might generate awkward behaviour. When concerned with social capital enactments, at least in the initial stage of my foreign exchange programme, Brazilians were the ones whom I could consider as *allies*. They were *easier and quicker to translate with* as we shared “membership” in the Portuguese-language-actor-network¹⁴⁷. As my cultural capital actor-networks became more stable/mobilised, they started producing effects on my world. In other words, as I enhanced my English skills, I stopped “essentialising” individuals. I would relate with anyone as long as we could communicate whether in Portuguese, Spanish or English – nationality lost its agency.

Interestingly, and that is when “paradoxities” (Howard, 2010) return to the argument, Brown stated that help will always come from Brazilians, not from people of other nationalities, despite his refusal to join Brazilian cultural

¹⁴⁷ International students might feel comfort by speaking a shared language (Brown 2009).

activities, such as typical food gatherings and capoeira demonstrations. Feeding off the controversial statements from Brown even more, he was the actor who was sharing a house with an Irish human actor, “a tremendous help for (him)” (Brown).

It is possible to see differences in the shifts of actor-networks – whether social and cultural – in each account of the twelve students of this study, a “fact” which stands aligned with ANT ontological views that realities *are done* in practice: they are multiple but might relate with one another (Law & Lien 2013; Mol 2002). The fact that the students’ accounts (except Red and Orange) did not indicate the enactment of a unified or mobilised Brazilian community in Dublin does not mean that students’ translations in Dublin do not produce diverse effects of social capital.

Although the dichotomy between weak and strong ties (Granovetter 1973; Lin 2008; Putnam 2000) serves as a useful categorisation of the nature of one’s associations, it could be either erased, or only applied after the work done by the detailed descriptions of the practices of the actors – or the “screening” (Latour 2005, p.189) is concluded. This argument relates not only with ANT ontology, but also with more recent contributions on the debate of migrants’ social capital (Ryan 2011), suggesting analysts to focus on the intricacies and performative issues of social capital, rather than assuming *a priori* assortments on the nature of associations. Despite my belief that the elaboration on strong/weak ties is theoretically valuable, the analyst’s choice between them – in order to characterise an actor’s ties – is problematic. In hindsight, I should have asked the

actors themselves to inform me about the nature of their narrated associations – after providing them with a brief explanation of what weak and strong ties stand for. In a critical sociology, or “sociology of the social” account (Latour 2005), I could “deduce” whether a connection is weak or strong, but this would be a quite serious betrayal from an ANT perspective. Furthermore, I am not able to state if a specific association has been transformed whether into a weak or strong tie. The last observation refers to the total disregard for non-human entities – crucial enablers of social capital – that these conceptualisations imply. In the light of these limitations, I lean towards the representation of “informal capital” (Pichler & Wallace 2007) – a more embracing and less “risky” concept. The analysis of this chapter suggests that the students enacted “informal”, *localised, partial, and volatile* social capital actor-networks in Dublin.

Aiming to aid the reader to visualise the shifts in social capital actor-networks as the students become mobile – one of my concerns of this study – I present Table 18 below. It summarises both the social capital practices in the stories told by the students about their international education life, and the drawing of their “actor-networks” representing social capital translations: first in Brazil, then in Dublin. Table 18 illuminates the shifts in social capital as it displays the trustworthy actors (where the effect of a translation between a trustworthy actor and student is the enactment of a social capital actor-network); actors who were kept mobilised from Brazil to Ireland; and actors who were mobilised in Ireland. Albeit I make only a few references to non-human entities, they are present in each of the social

capital actor-networks¹⁴⁸. Regarding manifestations of cultural capital, all students managed to transform it into a more densely connected actor-network, as enrolment in courses of study and enhanced English skills were realities enacted by all participants in this study.

Student + Course of study	Trustworthy Actors	Actors from Brazil that were kept mobilised in Ireland	New social capital actor-networks in Dublin
Purple (PhD)	Mother; wife; PhD supervisor	Family; reference letter from undergraduate lecturer; PhD scholarship; wife; five friends who moved to Ireland with Purple	Two fellow PhD candidates (one Brazilian, one non-Brazilian)
Green (PhD)	PhD supervisor; Primary Investigator of her research group	Family; friends	Two friends from the university (Yellow and American) and one “non-academic” friend (Argentinian)
Grey (Master’s)	Friends; Immigration Office; NGO’s; Citizens Information	Family; friends; reference letter from undergraduate lecturer; transcript from secondary school	Five friends from the university; two flatmates (Irish)
Yellow (PhD)	Mother, twin-sister, friends in Brazil; Boyfriend; four friends in Dublin	Family; friends; connections with her former employer	Boyfriend; four friends (non-Brazilian and Green)
Orange (undergraduate)	Family	SWB; family; friends; undergraduate lecturer	Brazilian friends
Red (undergraduate)	Family	SWB; family; friends; undergraduate lecturer	Brazilian friends
Blue (ESOL)	Family	Family; friends	Eleven friends (ten Japanese and Brown)
Brown (ESOL)	Family; girlfriend; friends	Family; friends; travel agency	Two housemates (Irish and Brazilian); and Blue
Silver (undergraduate)	Family; friends	Family; friends; undergraduate lecturer	Two friends (non-Brazilian); three acquaintances (Irish); lecturer (Irish)
Pink (Master’s)	Mother; sister	Family; friends	Irish family (former employer); religious group; Brazilian friend; Irish boyfriend

¹⁴⁸ See Chapter 4 (and Appendices A-M), and Chapter 5.

Beige (Master's)	Family	Family; friends; connections from her former employer	Three friends (Brazilian, Chinese and Indian); Irish boyfriend; boyfriend's mother
Lavender (ESOL)	Family	Family	None

Table 18: Shifts in Social Capital Actor-Networks

Having described the shifts on social capital actor-network of each student as the actor of choice I now present the reflective vignette of this chapter.

6.7 Reflective Vignette: A Philosophical Problem

In his 2009 book, “Prince of Networks Bruno Latour and Metaphysics”, the philosopher Graham Harman, *translates* much of Latour’s publications over the years. More specifically, in the first half of his book, Harman presents, and agrees much with Latourian relational metaphysics, while the second half holds a philosophical debate where other thinkers, such as Heidegger, are also referenced.

ANT, although a full-fledged philosophical sense making “tool-kit” for those unsatisfied with reductionism and action *in potentia*, does not have the properties to cease academic discussions on what reality *is*. The discussion initiated by Harman (2009) is just an example of it. Writing this reflective piece is a way to acknowledge this paradox. One has to “hold to” one ontology – even if it is an STS/ANT relational ontology or a Deleuzian Guattarian¹⁴⁹ ontology of “and and and” – in order to write a *coherent* PhD thesis. However, this does not mean that one cannot be challenged by other ontologies, or start seeing limitations of *an* ontology.

¹⁴⁹ See Deleuze & Guattari (1987).

In a “metaphorical” sense, the door that is opened if one “let oneself go” in philosophical questionings leads to labyrinths where the “exit” is most likely never to be found. In other words, I would like to acknowledge a potential problem that Harman (2009) poses, which is based on Latour’s metaphysics, with no intentions to provide final answers. The consideration of such problem finds its warrant in the exact kind of phenomenon that I investigated in this chapter: shifts or change processes.

In this study, one might argue if the students – as they engage in mobility – have to stop *being* one actor-network to become another. That is true to the extent that identity is the product of the actors’ relations. Harman, however, wonders if “something” from previous translations remains when an actor experiences transformation. He provides an example.

(...) it is Latour who interacts with Sciences-Po to form a new proposition, not Latour-at-Ecole-des-Mines, an actor who no longer exists. While it may be true that Latour did not emerge unscathed and unaltered from his decades at the ENSMP, he is still able to disengage from that ally and join with another. The years in his former office surely left many traces, but there is also plenty of ‘information loss’: many features of the previous Latour-ENSMP alliance are gone forever. Those that continue in the new proposition Latour-Sciences-Po endure only if they are somehow etched into the actor Latour, not into a now-vanished former proposition that no longer walks the earth (Harman 2009, p.130-131).

Apart from Blue and Pink, the students affirmed that their international education experience positively changed them to some extent, as shown in Chapter 4 and Appendices A-M. When I asked them if their experience of mobility “changed them as a person”, Blue answered with a surprisingly paradoxical “yes and no”.

He told me that he changed as he became more knowledgeable; his character, however, was left *intact* – “something” remained. Similarly, Pink answered the same question with a “yes and no”. She told me she had to adapt to the Irish culture, but she did not stop “being Brazilian”. Yellow – in the same line of thought – “didn’t kill who (she) was, but had to make many adaptations to survive”. An extract from my notebook 3 also considers this thought.

Holidays in Brazil: I was in a shop buying flip flops when was told by the clerk that she had never been thanked that much by a customer. From a rigid cultural perspective, in Brazil we tend to say thanks once, while in Ireland people may say thanks more than once during an interaction, or event. Was I acting “as Irish” in Brazil? Saying too many “thanks”? I don’t think saying thanks can be overused, but in that moment I felt something had changed. My assemblages established in Ireland had somehow changed me in a significant way (Notebook 3).

I am inclined to agree with Harman (2009) and accept that “something remains”, which troubles ANT’s position of considering the identity of an actor as a result of their present associations. The exact mechanism – the answer to the question of “how” something remains – however, remains unknown. ANT shows its limitations to explain what happens inside the human mind, or what Humphrey (1994, p.4) called “brain processes”. My understanding is that whatever “remains” is an actor-network that managed to become mobilised “inside” one’s mind; an actor-network that “made sense” thus, acquiring strength to endure and producing effects wherever one goes and whoever one interacts with. As any philosophical provocation, this argument is purely abstract. In a sense, “the subjective thought is provoked by brain processes, whatever *is provoked* means. The problem is to explain why, how and for which purpose this subjective thought was created” (Humphrey 1994, p.4, *author’s emphasis*). How *something*

“makes sense” to someone – although extremely challenging to investigate – configures a fruitful field of inquiry (i.e. from a neural science perspective).

6.8 Summary

This chapter engaged in describing the shifts in my informants’ social capital actor-networks when they became mobile, moving from somewhere in Brazil to Dublin. For analytical purposes, and making use of a wide variety of, and the confusion among, approaches to social capital, this concept was translated with an ANT sensibility. Latour’s (2005) “five sources of uncertainty” introduced ontological issues that supported the analysis of a more heterogeneous form of social capital. Although similarities between material semiotics and more traditional approaches to social capital were observed, such as relationality, I argued that it is possible to trace social capital from an ANT sensibility as long as one considers a variety of theoretical constructs, such as issues of performativity, – seeing social capital as an effect of translations – and the rejection of the binary interplay between structure and agency. I concluded this theoretical experimentation crafting a Bourdieu inspired terminology that is able to capture the complex array of actors – not only human – that enacts relationships of mutual support in international education realities (social capital actor-networks, cultural capital actor-networks and economic capital actor-networks). This distinction between the forms of capital is an artificial analytical interference. However, this is a tool to guide the reader through the analysis of the empirical data, aiding in the visualisation of actor-networks and translations. Instead of seeing social

capital as a substance, or embedded resources in social networks¹⁵⁰ (Lin 2008), the focus of the analysis should be on the localised “work” needed to produce “social capital” as an effect of heterogeneous webs of relations.

This chapter continued with the description of the conformations of the students’ actor-networks, illuminating actors that were kept mobilised (technology-family-friends), and the ones that were disentangled from my informants realities as they engaged in mobility (former employers). The strategies used to enrol actors in Dublin, encompassing the discussion of HEIs acting not only as cultural capital actor-networks but also as “centres of social capital actor-networks” – shed light on the possibilities for different performances of social capital in international education realities, challenging ANT position of prioritising connectivity over Euclidean space (Latour, 1996b; 2009; Law, 2002; Law & Hetherington, 2000). While connectivity is vital, a geographical space where human actors are spatially close to one another (i.e. accommodation or HEIs) performs as an actor itself for the enactment of social capital actor-networks. However, the limited period of linear time in which international students stay in the host country can act as a counter-network for the mobilisation of more durable social capital actor-networks. Key actors that participated actively *in* and *on* both the extension and durability of social capital actor-networks, such as communication technologies, were analysed in the light of Haraway’s (1991) concept of cyborg.

Considering the relationship between the idea of social capital and community (Putnam 2000), this chapter followed with an analysis of the “strategy of

¹⁵⁰ Or to take for granted one’s membership in a certain social group (Bourdieu 1986).

shunning” (Wulfhorst 2014) used by the informants, as they reject membership in the imagined Brazilian community in Dublin. This investigation led to paradoxes involving social and cultural capital actor-networks, where the English language – as an actor-network – is pointed out as the mediator that contributes not only to the existence of paradoxities (Howard 2010), but also to the enactment of messy realities in international education. Despite their idea of group formation as an effect of shared interests, my informants displayed intentions of not translating with “other Brazilians” in Dublin in order to work towards the mobilisation of cultural capital actor-networks. Although there was no indication of the enactment of a unified Brazilian community in Dublin, students managed to mobilise “informal”, provisional, volatile and fragmented social capital actor-networks as they become mobile. The description of how such performances unfolded was demonstrated in Table 18, considering each student individually.

Apart from provoking and challenging well *mobilised* conceptual constructs, writers, such as Latour, Law, Callon, and Mol, stimulate other scholars – those who are unsettled with reductionism in social research – to engage in ontological debates. I concluded this chapter with a reflective piece based on Harman (2009), acknowledging the limitations of any ontology.

Despite its array of definitions and applications, social capital has gathered common “themes”, which are human connections, trust and norms. I needed to re-work these “themes” in the light of my ANT approach in order to situate both the analysis performed in this chapter, and the description in Chapter 4 and

Appendices A-M. The next chapter concerns the analysis of Ireland's international education policy strategy.

Chapter 7: The Four Moments of Policy



Photograph 13: Obligatory Passage Point (Salomão Filho 2013)

Understanding what sociologists generally call power relationships means describing the way in which actors are defined, associated and simultaneously obliged to remain faithful to their alliances (Callon 1986a, p.19).

7.1 Introduction

Internationalisation of education is a primary policy concern for Ireland. Policy reports are inscription devices (Latour & Woolgar 1986; Latour 1987); full-fledged actors in the story thus far. Encounters between students and policy texts are thus, crucial events in international education enactments. The related texts and human actors are not given, but formed in the actor-networks that enact more

durable realities, which makes explicit my focus on *how* actor-networks emerge and transform: stability as well as power is a result of an effort. In this chapter – where ANT meets policy – I am concerned to describe how the phenomenon conventionally known as “international education policy strategy” is formed as a result of the relations among various actors, such as the State, HEIs, students, and policy reports.

The agenda for this chapter is to use the translation strategy – “the four moments of translation” (Callon 1986a) – as a critical tool to open the “black-box” of Ireland’s international education policy (Latour 1987). As much as in Chapter 5, this chapter engages in the process of making non-human entities “speak” by offering an ANT analysis of policy documents and speaking to humans who are affected by them. Apart from the students – who “live the policy” – policy actors, or professionals whose work is closely “ordered” by the content of current government policies, were brought to the scene to aid the analysis (Law 1994). These are a Representative of the Irish Department of Education and Skills (SOG), and the Head of the International Office of one Irish university’s (HIO). The non-human actors considered for this chapter are the following policy strategy reports elaborated by the Irish Government.

- Investing in Global Relationships: Ireland’s International Education Strategy 2010-15 (DES 2010)
- National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (DES 2011)
- Review of Ireland’s International Education Strategy 2013 (DES 2013)

- Irish Educated Globally Connected: an international education strategy for Ireland 2016 – 2020 (DES 2016)

This chapter follows with a debate on power seen from the perspective of the “translation model” (Latour 1986). It continues with a “zooming out of Ireland” analysis (Nicolini 2009), approaching more powerful actor-networks that shape the enactments of international education realities, such as neo-liberalism and “new public management” discourses. Finally, it concludes with a reflective vignette where “post-ANT” contributions (Law & Singleton 2014) help one to imagine alternative ways of seeing Ireland’s international education policy – or how international students’ realities could be enacted more favourably based on the agency “texts” exert on them.

7.2 The Four Moments of Translation

Callon’s (1986a) four moments of translation¹⁵¹ are presented in an apparently linear manner for analytical purposes, but the reader should consider the possibility of any of those moments overlapping with one another, as translation is never a linear nor complete process (Callon 1986a, Latour 1999b). There are two key analytical questions here. First: How is the “internationalisation-policy-actor-network” enacted? And second: How does it hold its bits and pieces together, producing effects in the world as a single entity?

¹⁵¹ See Chapter 2 (p.46-49).

7.2.1 Problematisation

Callon's sociology of translations elects a key actor as the "translator", or an actor who holds a number of allies. This translator is able to enact a power relation *with* other actors by presenting an obligatory passage point (OPP), or the only solution to their problems that is not only collectively "relevant", but also the "entrance gate" of a actor-network. Problematisation is about defining who/what is included and excluded from the actor-network which is being enacted (Edwards 2012; Hamilton 2012). The Irish Government is chosen as the "translator" not only for holding many other entities under its influence, but also for being "*real* enough" (Latour 1999b). It is the controlling actor. Although the problematisation moment is the "initial force" (Latour 1986), the subsequent moments are important to understanding how power needs *the other* in order to be continuously "preserved". The government's strategy on international education is only powerful if the students and other entities – HEI's, industry with skills shortages, immigration agents – accept the proposed OPP.

In the problematisation, I should display who the actors engaged in framing their problems are, and how their propositions will be "solved" as they move through, and accept, the OPP proposed by the translator. As participants of this actor-network – the "internationalisation-policy-actor-network" (IPAN) – I am including the Irish Government, Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), English Language schools (ELT), and Brazilian students; each one of them having distinct interests.

Government and supra-national organisations policies consider international education as a key driver of economic development (OECD 2007; 2016). For this study, problematisation refers to the global (and Irish) neo-liberal policy discourse around the “knowledge economy”, and the pressing need for international student mobility, as “Irish institutions need to grasp the opportunities presented by this increasing trend towards internationalisation of higher education” (DES 2011, p.80). The most recently published Irish international education policy report (DES 2016, p.23) displays a series of goals within international education assemblages, such as:

- To increase the number of international students studying in Ireland
- To attract outstanding researchers to our institutions and to build research capacity and commercialisation of research
- To connect the benefits gained from internationalisation in education with enterprises to support the achievement of national economic ambitions
- To enhance our international alumni networks to build global connections for greater social and economic outcomes for Ireland at home and abroad

Despite acknowledging that the education internationalisation agenda is a complex process in which many actors participate, I focus on “the need to attract international students into Ireland” (DES 2011, p.81; DES 2016, p.23) – an existing consensus among policy actors (DES 2013; 2016; HIO; SOG) – and considered as the most relevant policy goal (DES 2016). Such “need” is also discussed in the Irish media, where one question is posed: “Overseas Students: an international solution to an Irish problem?” (McGuire 2016). This “Irish problem” refers to “cash-strapped third level institutions” that rely on fees paid by non-EU

students in order to boost financial performance (ibid). The fact that international students choose Ireland as a destination for international education enactments could potentially help to “plug the funding shortfall” (ibid). The delicate subject of “non-EU fees”, or “the real price” (SOG) was approached in my interviews with HIO and SOG.

I think organisations will always be able to provide an argument to justify what they are doing. I think that the real underpinning issue here is that the funding model for education in Ireland is wrong and it is not addressing the requirements of the universities, and in order to make up for that gap in funding, full fees being charged to international students as well is a way of doing it (HIO).

If people choose to come here, I think it’s worth mentioning that we are extremely more cost competitive than other countries (...) it’s a big investment (made by international students), but we believe that the investment is worthwhile because of the product and the quality of the product that they are going to get here. I believe that we are very cost competitive if compared to other countries that provide a similar product (SOG).

As I screened a number of policy reports, I encountered only one mention to the current “skill shortage” in Ireland (DES 2016, p.27), another rationale for increasing the engagement between Ireland and international students. The argument is that international students can contribute to “Ireland’s talent pool in areas of high skills and specific language demands” (ibid) as long as they are “retained” by the Irish Government – a strategy to be executed by the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Justice and Equality in consultation with the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. The content of this strategy refers to facilitate mobile students – through the post-graduation permission provision and work permit system – to access strategic “skills and

language needs as identified by business” (ibid, p.27). This was a discussion brought to my interviews with SOG and HIO.

(...) there is already a skill shortage in Ireland, the Irish students are not necessarily studying maths to get into these various areas, so there is skills deficit, a numbers problem, and that is part of the rationale of attracting international students (HIO).

Ireland does have certain skills gaps, especially around IT and around languages (...) can international students fill these skill gaps? Even short term... And that’s the way we would like to see it... that the short term are filling the gaps. And then Ireland’s educational system can actually meet the demand of the skills gap (SOG).

The skill shortage problem – articulated by the Irish Government – is brought into connection to Irish HEIs, institutions that are funded by the government, and “the drivers themselves of internationalisation” (SOG). In a sense, both actor-networks (government and HEIs) have the same “obstacle problem”, as the latter is a spokesperson for the former. According to (DES 2011, p.85), HEIs “should set out their international vision in an institutional strategy that is related to (...) wider national policy goals”. The “Strategic Plan 2012-2017” of one Irish university is to double the number of non-EU students over the next five years.

In this analysis, I consider the *obligatory passage point (OPP) as any course of study*¹⁵² offered by HEIs or members of the English Language Training sector (ELT)¹⁵³. In turn, the OPP enrolls more actors that are essential for the individual

¹⁵² A course of study is an actor-network itself, enacted by classrooms, curriculum, lecturers, timetables, scientific articles, emotions, fees, academic standards, *inter alia*.

¹⁵³ “Research has established that the inclusion of ELT in the broader international education package would improve the ability of our Agencies to sell Ireland as destination for international students” (DES 2016, p.8)

to join the “internationalisation-policy-actor-network”: a provider letter of acceptance and a visa¹⁵⁴ (at a cost of €300 per year) issued by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (which in turn will require more actors, such as an Irish address, to be enrolled).

In the face of the assembled actors, attracting international students into Ireland is only possible if, from a global perspective, Ireland establishes itself as a brand in the international education “market”. In ANT terms, Ireland is working towards the enactment of multiple and long distance connections (Latour 1996b; Law 1986). Such connections, however, should have a “short-term”, “filling gap” purpose if one considers SOG’s previous statements.

The interests posed by the students – that encourage them to accept the OPP – appear in a series of different articulations throughout this thesis¹⁵⁵, but are flagged once again here for analytical purposes. Each interest regards the unique assemblage of each individual, as follows:

- To continue education and enjoy the experience abroad in Ireland (Purple, Beige, Pink)
- To find employment in Ireland (Green, Yellow, Grey)
- To meet different cultures (Grey, Blue, Brown, Lavender, Silver)

¹⁵⁴ See Chapter 5 (p.189).

¹⁵⁵ See Chapter 4 and Appendices A-M.

- To learn English thus, becoming more employable and/or able to undertake a postgraduate course abroad (Blue, Brown, Lavender, Red, Orange, Silver, Beige)
- To be close to family (Brown, Red)

According to the intricacies of translation thus far described, students join the actor-network as they do not see any other feasible alternative to fulfil their aspirations, but to engage with the full range of actors enrolled by the Irish Government. Furthermore, they never critically questioned the functioning of the “internationalisation-policy-actor-network” (except Pink¹⁵⁶). I point out that this actor-network is formed (*inter alia*) by “macro institutions” – or more durable actor-networks legitimised by the “coercive apparatus of laws” (Hart *apud* Latour 2013, p.359). The coercive aspect of such apparatus is not easily observed as they do not imply “duties or obligations”, but persuade one to interpret the law as a provider of “means to fulfil their intentions” (*ibid*). Even a simple attempt to investigate the actor-network modes of ordering (Law 1994) might trigger enactments of “resistance” from the translator’s spokes-person.

Alfredo: What justifies the fact that non-EU student fees are higher than EU student fees?

SOG: It is not the case that one country is treated more favourably or less favourably than the other. I think maybe that question is geared towards somebody’s lack of understanding of how it works... that we have a very high quality product.

¹⁵⁶ See Appendix J (p.7).

Similarly to the diagram designed by Callon (1986a), the problematisation moment of the “internationalisation-policy-actor-network” (IPAN) is depicted below.

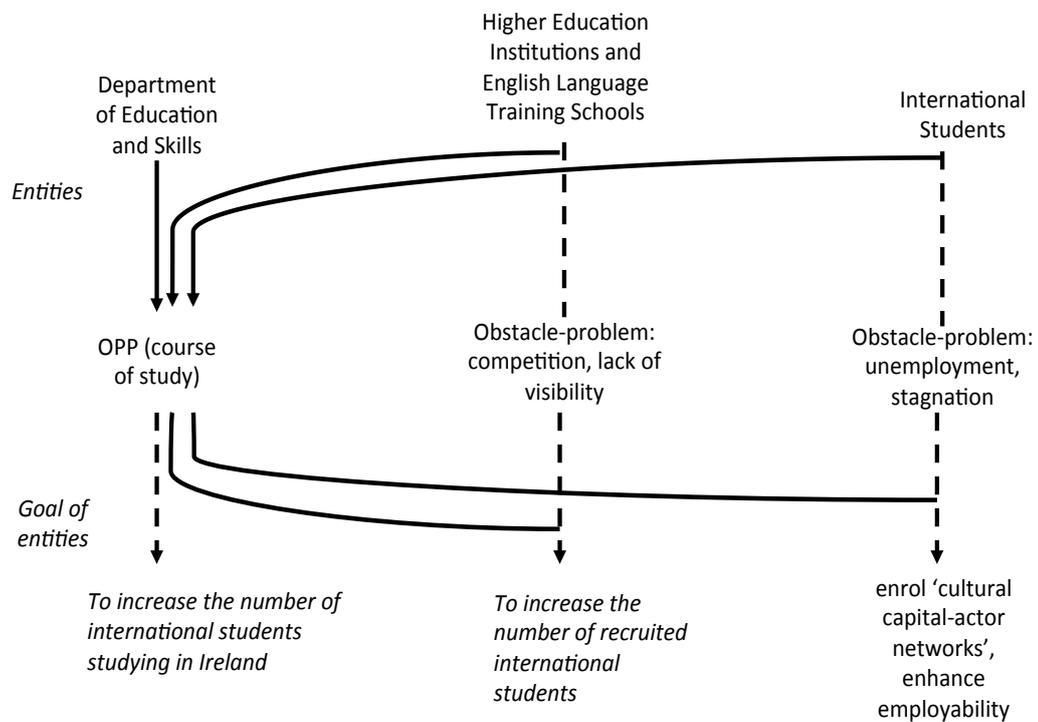


Figure 11: Problematisation Diagram of the “internationalisation-policy-actor-network” (IPAN) based on Callon (1986a)

The IPAN starts gaining shape with the enactment of the problematisation moment. The Irish State is the prime mover (Latour 1994), or the translator¹⁵⁷ (Callon 1986a) who initiates the formation of the actor-network. At first glance, one might see the Irish Government as an ontologically singular entity that acts “first”, however, the point ANT wishes to bring across challenges “common sense” (Latour 1994, p.34). Yes, the State acts first – but as it translates with other entities, the prime mover becomes a “new, distributed set of practices” (Latour

1994, p.34) exactly because other actors have now joined the actor-network, challenging the ontological singularity of all entities involved. This thought could be illustrated by the use Latour (1999c) makes of one Mafalda cartoon. Mafalda is looking at her father as he smokes a cigarette, leading her to ask him *who is actually smoking whom*.

I now return to the IPAN diagram. The Irish State needs to become indispensable to other actors (HEIs and students). Thus, the State enacts an obligatory point of passage (course of study offered by HEIs) as its goal is to increase the number of international students enrolled in Irish HEIs. If students want to enrol cultural capital actor-networks and enhance employability (avoiding unemployment and stagnation); and if HEIs want to increase the numbers of recruited international students (becoming competitive and tackling the lack of visibility of Ireland as an international education provider), they should accept the OPP – the “solution” to all entities’ problems. The next moment of translation is analysed below.

7.2.2 Interessement

The interessement moment is enacted when the translator defines the identities of the other actors who are being persuaded to accept the OPP. Through a series of actions, the actor/the policy introduces various mechanisms that aims to “lock” other actors into their respective roles, weakening their (possible) connections with actors who are not part of the network being enacted (Callon 1986a). In other words, having connected with the OPP, actions are shaped in particular ways through various mechanisms that strengthen alliance within the actor-network and, in the process, weaken other connections that may compete,

effectively weakening the OPP. This alliance is articulated by the Department of Education & Skills, responsible for Ireland’s internationalisation of education policy strategy. This Department is the chair of the “High Level Group on International Education”, which is formed by a number of different government departments and organisations, such as:

High Level Group on International Education
Department of Justice (deals with visa implications and issues)
Department of Foreign Affairs (which is connected with the Irish Embassy)
Enterprise Ireland and its brand, Education in Ireland (funded by the Irish government and HEI’s), whose function is to manage marketing and promoting Irish education abroad
English Language Schools representative bodies (i.e. Marketing English in Ireland, and Private College Network)
Irish Council for International Students (ICOS), representative body of international students
Higher Education Authority (HEA), an Irish state agency responsible for the higher education system – “their job would be to engage with the institutions about their internationalisation plans, they would monitor internationalisation in the campuses to ensure that is not to the detriment of the Irish student, that there is not too many international students coming, that we do have capacity” (SOG)

Table 19: Higher Level Group on International Education

I utilise the diagram below in order to aid the visualisation of *some* actors that participate in the IPAN (as depicting all of them is almost analytically impossible). Despite the impossibility of representing actor-networks accurately (Latour 2011), using imagery can help one to know who is acting, assembling, and being assembled.

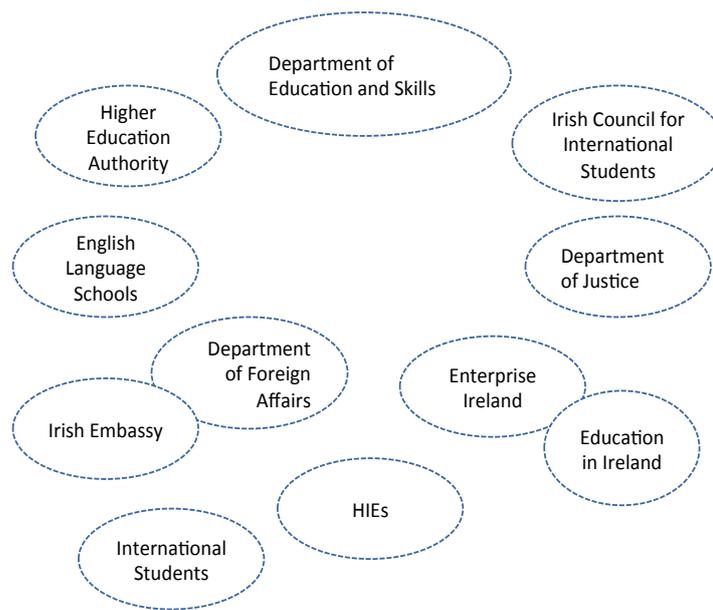


Figure 12: Some Participants of the IPAN

Although SOG tells me that there are “other smaller groups” who are members of the High Level Group on International Education (DES 2016, p.57), he highlights the above as the main bodies responsible to develop Ireland’s strategy on international education (DES 2016). As to HEIs, all of these organisations operate under the “umbrella” of the government. In ANT terms, I observe that the former is mobilised (Callon 1986a) by the government, working towards the increase in the number of international students coming to Ireland. Irish HEIs – despite having their own interests – represent the interests of the State (and depend on it to be accredited as HEIs).

A focus on the improvement of communication methodologies is part of the strategy for the enactment of the policy documents, or more specifically, how it should be locally performed. In this sense, communication between the entities that assemble the “High Level Group on International Education” is crucial to the

well functioning of the actor-network, and its strategic actions towards the enactment of desirable international education realities.

Smaller focussed groups around specific initiatives or markets need to be developed further to ensure that opportunities are maximised for Ireland and for HEIs and to ensure that the lines of communication remain open between all stakeholders (DES 2016, p.37).

It is pertinent to observe that communication involves a vast array of other actors rather than the members of the High Level Group only. Newspaper advertisement, glossy brochures, evocative imaginaries of the Emerald Island, university and State employees – all of them are participating in some form in the IPAN.

The focus on inscriptions devices, or immutable mobiles (Latour 1987) is important here. Apart from the proposed meetings and open “lines of communication” between the members of the High Level Group on International Education, the policy reports (DES 2010; 2011; 2013; 2016) exert considerable agency on the enactment of the intended international education strategy. They are inscriptions that not only participate in establishing the alliance proposed by the government, but also allow these translations to keep a more stable “relational pattern” (Law 1992), working to achieve and maintain the durability of the actor-network (Latour 1993b).

However, if I “zoom out” the analytical lenses of the enactments being considered (Nicolini 2009), I observe that the efforts made by the Department of Education & Skills – or the use of artifices to “lock” the identities of other actors that shall

be part of the actor-network being analysed – is extended to further distances. SOG tells me that the Department of Education is responsible for sending memorandums of understanding, “very successful government to government agreements”, allowing institutions in different countries to develop joint collaborations. Moreover, scholarship programmes from other countries could be seen as effective “interessement devices” (Callon 1986a, p.9) as they contribute to the maximisation of student mobility processes (DES 2016).

Focusing on Brazil, “a very important partner for Ireland” (SOG), one observes that the country increased its participation in the panorama of international education in Ireland as a result of a joint effort made both by the Brazilian and Irish government (Portal Brasil 2013). The Brazilian government scholarship programme “Science Without Borders” (SWB) was launched in 2011 to provide scholarship to study abroad for 101,000 Brazilian undergraduate and graduate students.

SOG tells me that before SWB, only 35 Brazilian students were enrolled in Irish HEIs. The number of Brazilian students enrolling in Irish HEIs has grown substantially since 2013, when Ireland first entered the programme, with 537 students. In 2015, the applications from Brazilian students reached the number of 1,084, while in 2016, the current number of Brazilian students enrolled in Irish HEIs is, according to SOG, 3,500. This increase in the number of Brazilian students in Ireland might suggest that the “word of mouth” has been performed, and that Brazilians international education experiences have been positive in that country. According to the director of international relations of the Brazilian

government agency with responsibility for the implementation of Science Without Borders, CAPES, “Ireland has been a lovely surprise for us” (Hennigan 2015).

However, the uncertainty surrounding SWB was present in my conversations with SOG and HIO. The Brazilian political turmoil initiated in 2016¹⁵⁸ made the future of SWB unclear. In this, such turmoil has become part of the IPAN. Recently, the Brazilian media reported that SWB has ended (Jardim 2017). According to SOG, “it’s too early to see how many Brazilian students will decide to travel for international education with SWB not happening”.

The development of relationships between the Irish and Brazilian governments illustrates the actions performed in the interessement moment of translation, where the identity of Brazil as a strategic partner for international education is “locked”. This partnership resulted in an increasing number of Brazilian students choosing Ireland as a destination for international education. I can only speculate: With the end of SWB, what other actors might become the prime mover? Is the network now sufficiently “real” that it will not matter if SWB is no longer being enacted?

What will happen in the next few years is that the relationships are being developed with our institutions in both sides, and have been developed to a level that collaborations are happening and I expect them to continue (SOG).

¹⁵⁸ The then Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff was impeached (seen as a coup d’état by many), and the country started facing low economic growth and the rise in the unemployment rate.

Having outlined the efforts the Irish Government has made, whether with the use of interessement devices to assemble the High Level Group on International Education, or the establishment of overseas educational partnerships, I turn my attention to the “actor-end”: the mobile students. Although articulations between States are highly strategic, Ireland needs to offer “an unique student experience” (DES 2010, p.48) in order to weaken /extinguish the possible links mobile students might establish with other “players” in international education worldwide, building a faithful alliance with Ireland. This competitive scenario – where online learning is a potential competitive “player” – is portrayed as follows.

The conventional model of international education, which involves students travelling thousands of miles to study in the developed world, is also being disrupted through lower-cost online provision and in-country delivery of international qualifications (DES 2013, p.2).

Policy reports place “quality of education” (DES 2010; 2011; 2016) at the “heart of Ireland’s international education offering” (DES 2016, p.13), aiming to enact “globally competitive and internationally oriented” HEIs (ibid). However, for the students of this research, apart from the wish to study in a European English-speaking country (Grey), quality of education was not mentioned. Rather, the visa was elected as an important ally in order to enact the interessement moment successfully. Purple, Blue, Brown, and Lavender were particularly emphatic in bringing the readiness of obtaining a student visa in Ireland as a “factor” that motivated them to choose Ireland as a destination for international education endeavours. This fact is aligned with the government’s current strategy to enact

“strong and competitive (...) visa, immigration and labour market access policies” (DES 2016, p.13).

The interessement moment illustrates the effort made by (all the actor-networks that could be conventionally seen as) the Irish Government in establishing links with other States, and assembling the High Level Group on International Education. The objective is to make international students pay their fees, after a course of study offered by an Irish HEI or ELT is chosen among a series of options worldwide. At this stage, students become funding; educators become service providers; immigration officers become gatekeepers; student advisors become salespeople. This is not to say that once fees are paid, students are irrevocably attached to the actor-network. I explain some possible complications in the next session.

7.2.3 Enrolment

Callon (1986a) suggests that interessement does not necessarily lead to enrolment. According to Edwards (2012, p.28), “while interessement sets the barriers to participation, enrolment fashions the alliances within the network”. The translator has to define the identities of the actors; a shift from unpredictable mediators to predictable intermediaries.

The partnerships established between the Department of Education and Skills and the members of the High Level Group on International Education “easily” form a functioning actor-network. For those actors, the moment of interessement does

lead to enrolment; members of the High Level Group on International Education offer no resistance, fully assuming the role allocated to them without the need of further persuasive actions from the Department of Education and Skills. Despite the necessity of on-going communication and articulation among those organisations (DES 2016), they need not be convinced to perform in a different manner than they already do.

On the other hand, international students may require further “work” if they are going to be active participants of the IPAN in Ireland. HIO pointed out that the biggest difficulty in his work is the result of a lack of agility from HEIs as to the recruitment of students (noting that the difference between recruitment and registering is of ultimate importance for this argument).

(...) because people change their minds, so quite often we have a student that is accepted to one course, the information goes through, we have an offer letter, everything else and actually no, “I want to switch on to this other course” and then that rather than being a simple edit, it requires the whole process to start again, so we lose students (HIO).

Zooming in (Nicolini 2009), I understand that competition is an actor that does not exert agency only at long distances, or at a “global level”. The competition for recruitment of international students also occurs more locally and involves a range of actors connected to other actor-networks. While HIO clarifies that the seven universities in Ireland cooperate with one another in some issues, he points out that Ireland is “a small country, with seven competitors for students in the same courses”. As an effect of such competition, students might have an offer from each Irish university and yet, “at the end of the day, they may choose to go

to the UK, to the US, and that's absolutely their choice" (HIO). HIO continues his explanation pointing out the reasons why the interestment moment does not necessarily lead to enrolment and uses examples of his own HEI to illustrate this problematic.

There is a huge level of effort that goes in recruiting students which may never result in students registering, that is a frustration. For instance, this year we have done pre assessments for over 700 Indian students and it is likely that we may have 40 students, so that is for many reasons, as you have had the cost, whether there is a scholarship or not, if it is in Dublin or outside of Dublin, because of the different cost of accommodation, whether they feel they will be able to access employment, so it is not just the course. That is a challenge internally, academics often feel that they are providing the best education, the best course available and that is part of it, but that is not the only reason why students make a decision to come and study (HIO).

The "other reasons" why students choose to join the IPAN were included in the strategy for internationalisation of higher education enacted in 2010 (DES 2010), and kept as priorities in the latest policy report (DES 2016). Those refer to a wide range of actors "beyond the sphere of educational equality" (DES 2010, p.46) including

(...) our reputation for friendliness, good quality of life, a vibrant and unique culture and heritage, a young, creative and imaginative population, stunning scenery, and exciting activities, as well as a safe and secure environment for international students (ibid).

Having international students enrolled in Irish HIE and ELT is not the final destination of policy. They need to be kept satisfied while undertaking their courses, as the last moment of translation – "mobilisation" – appears in the horizon, and is one of the major concerns of the Irish State in order to be successful in its international education strategy. The enrolment of international

students should be continuous throughout time¹⁵⁹, chapter point to which I will return.

In order to capitalise on these intrinsic advantages, appropriate mechanisms need to be in place to support the safety, security and well-being of students. Irish institutions already place significant emphasis on these issues (DES 2010, p.46).

In my interviews with SOG and HIO, I approached the issue of the needs of international students. While in DES (2010, p.28), it is framed that “the needs and concerns of international students will be at the heart of internationalisation process”, in DES (2016, p.30) the word “needs” appears only in terms of “local and national needs”. When conducting the interviews with the mentioned policy actors, I referred back to DES (2010) in order to investigate how the interests of already enrolled international students were being assessed and considered by the government and HIEs.

SOG flags that the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS), “who represents international students”, acts as a communication channel between the latter and the government. Education in Ireland is another agency engaged in listening to students’ concerns via the preparation of workshops with “students, parents and other stakeholders” (SOG), where students are interviewed, and invited to talk about their international education experience. These efforts aim to “refresh the message and the relationship” between Ireland and international students (SOG). According to SOG, the “very close relationship” between the

¹⁵⁹ In the conventional meaning of what time is (linear); not time as an effect of heterogeneous associations (“ANTian time”).

government and the High Level Group facilitates the former's access to information brought by the latter.

Zooming in, or moving the analytical lenses to a shorter distance (between students and institutions), HEIs themselves would also “receive constant feedback from the students” (HIO), both formally and informally. Such feedback is enacted as an effect of one-to-one relationships between student and international office that can happen prior to students' enrolment.

During this relationship, we get a lot of feedback around people's expectations and people's fears. How they will cope with settling in, we have questions on how will they cope with the weather, so the types of feedback we get from students, while there are differences between each of the countries that we worked with, students tend to have the exact same fears. What will I be studying, how hard will that be, will I find support, where will I live, will I have to travel far from the university, will I be able to get the food I eat at home, they tend to be the types of questions so there is a lot of support on those (HIO).

Despite enacting an “open door policy” to international students, HIO describes that the ideal role of the international office is to “link” students with other departments in the university if problems around academic, financial, and welfare issues arise. Although support services are available to all students, HIO believes that international students “may not be aware that they are available to them”, as suggested by Pink¹⁶⁰. HIO's expectation is to make the university's international office perform as a black-boxed intermediary, although not discarding the possibility to act as a mediator if a relationship between a student and a member of the office had been previously established.

¹⁶⁰ See Appendix J (p. 7).

Alfredo: So, it is a more strategic role that this office plays. Isn't it?

HIO: I would say that we facilitate, we don't own the students, we don't provide any of the programmes. If we are successful, we are actually invisible to the students.

HIO's comments refer to the main characteristic of a black box, as elaborated by Latour (1987). The simplicity of the black box consists in the reliability and durability of its translations. As a consequence, if an actor-network – such as the university's international office – is “invisible”, this implies that translations (or the office's functioning) are stabilised – or taken-for-granted.

The objective of having more international students coming to study in Ireland can only be achieved if the already enrolled students feel satisfied while enacting realities in the country, communicating their good experience to other actors who are not yet part of the “internationalisation-policy-actor-network”, but could potentially be in the future. The next section refers to the “last” moment of translation.

7.2.4 Mobilisation

Mobilisation is understood as the “final” moment of translation (Callon 1986a), where actions and negotiations among the actors will define if the actor-network being analysed can be functional and ultimately, stabilised (at least momentarily). Callon (1986a, p.12) suggests that the researcher should ask the following questions in order to analyse the mobilisation moment: “Who speaks in the name of whom? Who represents whom?”

Since 2012, there has been an increase in 25% in the number of international students coming to study in Ireland (DES 2016), which is an indication that the IPAN has been performing successfully and where actors are maintaining the roles imposed to them by the translator. Both the Irish Government and HEIs are aware that the mobilisation moment is of paramount importance to keep the actor-network stabilised, mobilising efforts to persuade students to become “spokespersons” of their international student experience in Ireland, which will, in turn, attract more international students. The government and HIE representatives, SOG and HIO respectively, pointed out the “student ambassador programme” and the “alumni network” as mechanisms that facilitate the performance of students speaking on behalf of the university and the government. The question here is: “Will the masses (students) follow their representatives (government and HEIS)? (Callon 1986a, p.13).

The student ambassadors are operating as representatives of the university and they will have a number of engagements that they need to work on (...) the Taoiseach is the person that they meet, or a senior member of the government. The fact that the student has an opportunity to meet somebody like that, they see as hugely significant. In an age of social media, the photo opportunities are always a positive. But for the university, what it provides is recognition that the students are not here sole as an income stream. They are provided benefit. Their stories are important. They can act as a role model for other students and it also gives a level of visibility that they might otherwise have (HOI).

At first – “non-relational” – glance, international students speak in the name of their host HEI and the Irish Government as they enact realities as student ambassadors, perform “world of mouth” (HIO), and might join the alumni network (DES 2016; HIO; SOG). They are persuaded to do so with the help from other actors, from a meeting with an authority to a “photo opportunity”. However,

if one considers Callon's (1986a) four moments of translation as the lenses to analyse this actor-network, it could be argued that what is being enacted is quite the opposite.

The government has assembled and mobilised a number of allies, modifying their beliefs and behaviours in the process (Latour 1990). The government performs as the spokesperson for all of them, including HEI and international students, which indicates that the IPAN is accepted by a wide range of actors, and functions as a black-box. The policy documents themselves are an indication of a number of alliances, and that such actor-network is producing *real* effects in the world. According to Callon (1986a, p.19), through the four moments of translation it is possible to understand how the government "obtain the right to express and represent many silent actors", namely the international students and all the other actors associated with them.

Paraphrasing Latour *apud* Callon (1986a), international students are transformed into numbers; the numbers into tables, charts and diagrams which represent easily transportable, reproducible, and diffusible sheets of paper, as seen in DES (2016, p.19). Thus, in ANT, the translator (if successful) represents the other actors who were interested, enrolled and mobilised.

Tuition Fees from International Students in HEA funded HEIs

Applying the student contribution to the total number of EU students in full time courses in IoTs and Universities, the value contributed to education institutions was €9.75m and income from non-EU students is estimated at €177m⁸. Overall tuition income from international students is estimated at €188m with non-EU fees accounting for 94% of this income to HEA-funded IoTs and Universities.



EU students in full time courses contributed income €9.75m to HEI's



Income from non-EU students is estimated at €177m.

Figure 13: Tuition Fees (DES 2016, p.19)

Non-Tuition Spend from International Students in Ireland

Overall monthly non-tuition spend by international students is estimated at €907 per month. Accommodation is the highest expenditure of all the non-tuition items considered at a median cost of €385 per month. The next most expensive items were; food and drink which cost the median student €151.67 per month and social activities which cost €108.33 per month. Shopping and other categories had a median cost of €86.67 and transport expenditures per month were €58.50. Students also pay visa and GNIB fees which are approximately €30 per month. In total international students in both private and public higher education spent approximately €182m in 2014/2015.



Non-tuition spend by international students is estimated at €907 per month.

Figure 14: Non-Tuition Spend (DES 2016, p.19)

7.3 More than Rules, More than *Having* Power

The previous paragraphs should not be misinterpreted as some sort of “plot” where interests are predominant over any other form of agency. I remind the reader of two important considerations. First, that the principles of generalised symmetry and free association (Callon 1986a) should be drawn on to facilitate understanding that humans and texts have the same capacity to act and change any reality(ies) being analysed. Second, that power is not only an effect of local associations, but should be considered as a consequence rather than cause of action (Latour 1986). I expand on these two considerations in the following paragraphs.

Starting with the work done by the policy documents, I bring Callon (2006) and what he refers to as “agencement” in order to clarify the non-separation between human actors and “things that have been arranged” (Callon 2006, p.13). When building an argument to illustrate that economics and performativity are inextricable, Callon (2006) refined his understanding of agency (probably as a result of his much discussed work about scientists, scallops and fishermen in St Brieuc Bay), re-defining it, as follows.

Agencements are arrangements endowed with the capacity of acting in different ways depending on their configuration. This means that there is nothing left outside agencements: there is no need for further explanation, because the construction of its meaning is part of an agencement (Callon 2006, p.13).

Humans adjust policy reports and policy reports “adjust humans”, or at least the manner in which they enact realities. Policy, as much as technology (Law & Singleton 2014) always changes; the token is transformed (Latour 1986). The

following extract of my dialogue with SOG clarifies such performativity that is common to all actors – human and non-human.

Alfredo: Based on your experience and expertise in the area, which suggestion would you make in regard to the improvement of Ireland's international education policy and its implementation?

SOG: What do you mean improvement? I think the easiest way to answer that is we have made improvements which will be seen in our new strategy 2016-2020¹⁶¹. That will be published in September, next month.

Alfredo: Oh! So more work for me... (laughter).

SOG: Yes (laughter). It's quite substantial, but that's the whole idea of policy... to look at where you were from 2010 to 2015, see what was successful, so our strategy will look at that and say what was successful then, we look at what measures should be improved on and what measures should be continued, what measures should be let go, so you can't have just one thing.

A heterogeneously assembled *agencement* (international education performances) will include the inscriptions (international education policy reports) that refer to it, as no reality exists outside its enactment (Law 2009; Law & Singleton 2013; Mol 2002). The interplay between *agencement* and inscription is what will allow any form of alignment between them. An actor-network will perform, at least to some extent, in accordance with the inscription (Callon 2006), precisely because the latter is also part of the former. Callon (2006) uses the example of a device and its operating instructions in order to exemplify the indissolubility between actors and networks – or how one should see “context” from an ANT perspective. According to the author, “operating instructions are part of the device and participate in making it work” (Callon 2006, p.13). In this sense, students' international education stories, as described in Chapter 4 (and Appendices A-M),

¹⁶¹ DES (2016).

the human and non-human actors of Chapter 5 and 6, and inscriptions devices of international education, as described in this chapter, are meshed together and produce *a* hybrid world where people, texts, buildings, money, and so on, are made of the same *ontological stuff* (Latour, 1988a-b; 1993a-b; 1999a-c; 2005; 2013), acting upon one another.

Another consideration, yet in the argument of symmetry and hybridisation, refers to our understanding of the IPAN as a black box. As demonstrated by my dialogue with SOG, the panorama of international education in Ireland has become more robust than it used to be six years ago, as an effect of various performances of numerous actors, including the policy reports. They are performative as they shape and are shaped, redefine and are redefined through a series of trial and error enactments. Those trials are allowed by the inscriptions and also change their conformation.

As to issues of power, yes, this policy analysis dialogues with the enactment of power relations, but the reader should see the IPAN through the lenses of a “translation model of power”, rather than a “diffusion model of power” (Latour 1986). While the former observes the local and practical links and the agency enacted as a result of such links – which relates closely to Foucault’s (1977; 1980) analysis of micro power¹⁶² – the latter sees power as emanating from a source, or the will of the State.

¹⁶² See Chapter 3 (p.143) for the four methodological precautions when studying power (Foucault 1980).

No matter how much power one appears to accumulate, it is always necessary to obtain it from the others who are doing the action – this is what I called from diffusion to translation (Latour 1986, p.276).

There is no question that the State, often seen as a “macro structure” through more conventional sociological lenses, is “more powerful” than international students, but such a phenomenon is a direct effect of the many alliances enacted by the actor-network that one calls “the government” (Callon & Latour 1981). In this sense, they are more “real” (Latour 1999b) than international students, as they are able to silence a wide range of actors and represent them in a momentarily stabilised actor-network that could be seen as one entity. Yet, actor A becomes “powerful” as actor B *obeys* A – or when A successfully enrolls B.

7.4 What if the Translator was not the Irish Government?

In the analysis of Ireland’s international education policy reports, I considered the Irish Government – more specifically the Department of Education and Skills – as the translator (not the central source of power); the controlling actor at the extremities who enacts the OPP and persuades the other actors (students, other government departments and organisations, and HEIs) to assume roles and stay faithful to them. But if we zoom out of the policy actor-network of international education, we will see other relationships of power being enacted by other actors such as, supranational organisations and political discourses, helping to bring the academic internationalisation scene into being.

The “National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030”, launched in 2011¹⁶³, and acting as a parameter for other international education strategy reports, such as DES (2016), is considered not only as an answer to economic and structural complications observed during and after the “Celtic Tiger” period, but also as a reflection of international trends (Walsh & Loxley 2014). These “trends” are enacted by actors with far-reaching influence, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank, and are *aligned* with the narrative of the knowledge economy. Rather than engaging in a debate on political philosophy¹⁶⁴, ANT invites one to ask questions, such as: how is this alignment achieved? What are the vehicles that allow such alignment?

(...) in a society such as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse (Foucault 1980, p.93).

In this sense, whether defining the following as a discourse or philosophy (here they are all actors), “new public management” practices emerge as a consequence of neo-liberalism which in turn, helps to enact processes of globalisation (Holton 2005; Olssen & Peters 2005; Walsh & Loxley 2014). The policy analysed in this chapter emerges as a response to “historically, culturally and materially located” higher education realities (Mol 1999, p.75), which are observed not only in Ireland, but also in other Western nations (the United States, Australia, and the UK, for instance). In other words, apart from promoting educational expansion to

¹⁶³ DES (2011).

¹⁶⁴ Which would be certainly valid, but goes beyond the scope of this study.

satisfy the needs of the labour market¹⁶⁵, my focus refers to the fierce competition for the enrolment of international students as an economic *boost* (Adnett 2010; Lee 2013; Stein & Andreotti 2015), where education is portrayed as “an input–output system which can be reduced to an economic production function” (Olssen & Peters 2005, p.324).

Walsh & Loxley (2014, p.1142) suggest that Ireland’s higher education strategy offered “a qualified and piecemeal endorsement of NPM approaches”, where utilitarian and economic rationalities appear predominantly as themes in all the policy texts considered in this chapter (DES 2010; 2011; 2013; 2016). Moreover, core dimensions of new public management can be easily observed as structural factors of policy such as, clearly defined objectives and a results orientation (Olssen & Peters 2005).

The neoliberal agenda has enrolled OECD countries over the last 30 years as to the management of higher education (Altbach & Knight 2007; Olssen & Peters 2005). The effects of such enrolment are observed in DES (2011), a report designed to “serve knowledge economy objectives” (Walsh & Loxley 2014; p.1142). More than a sudden conversion to neo-liberal and managerialist inclinations, the Irish education policy agenda dialogues with a dominant policy trend in the Irish “context” since the 1960s (Walsh & Loxley 2014).

The educational policy discourse around international education in Ireland (DES 2010; 2016) is a “chapter”, or an actor that is aligned with the overall strategy of

¹⁶⁵ The “human capital” rationale (OECD 2007).

the government, leaving no room for doubts regarding the proposed “goals”. Stein & Andreotti (2015) see the experience of international students using three different perspectives under the Western onto-epistemological and economic supremacy¹⁶⁶: “international students as cash”, “international students as competition”, and “international students as charity”. Although it could be valid to use each one of the above mentioned “perspectives” to analyse what work has been done by policy, the Irish case can be aligned with the first way of seeing international students: as “cash”. Apart from stating the financial benefits internationalisation of education can bring to the host country, as seen in policy reports (DES 2011; 2016), SOG referred to education as a “product” several times throughout the interview.

(...) we have a very high quality product.

(...) the quality product that we actually deliver.

(...) I believe that the investment is worthwhile, because of the product and the quality of the product that they are going to get here.

I believe that we are very cost competitive if compared to other countries that provide a similar product.

From a post-colonial perspective, Stein & Andreotti (2015) believe that international education dynamics refer to a “win-win” situation as students have access to a “quality product” (SOG), and the host institutions and nations welcome the money students spend not only in tuition fees, but also for living in the country while studying¹⁶⁷. The enrolment of international students is also a strategic action if a country, like Ireland, is experiencing a skill gap (Adnett 2010;

¹⁶⁶ Or the One-World World (Law 2011).

¹⁶⁷ See p.294.

Brown and Tannock 2009; DES 2016; HIO; Stein & Andreotti 2015; SOG), which could potentially enhance brain drain tendencies. As put by SOG: “we have to be careful that international education is not about brain drain. It’s about collaborating on a country to country basis”.

Differently than Canada, where the government has enacted immigration policies aiming to facilitate the change of identity of an individual from international student to immigrant (Stein & Andreotti 2015), Ireland has different interests in this regard.

International education is about collaboration. I do know that certain countries will have an ageing in demographics and see international students as their future tax payers of their country and stuff like that, but you need to balance that up with what is actually happening in the country where the students are coming from and I think that we in Ireland would see ourselves as a country that educates and has people working for a period of time to get the skills to improve what’s happening in the country where they are coming from (SOG).

Returning to the previously posed questions: how is the alignment between neo-liberal discourses and international student enrolment achieved? What are the vehicles that allow such alignment? Whether “global imaginary” (Taylor 2002; Stein & Andreotti 2015), neo-colonialism (Spivak 1990), or representatives of the “One-World World” (Escobar 2016; Law 2011), it is highly complex to elect *a translator*. There are different translators, or vehicles of power that spread so far, enact so many different connections, use various techniques, and translates with so many other actor-networks that it becomes a Herculean task to visualise what such an actor-network could look like. In methodological terms, ANT advocates the study of the “way in which actors attempt to impose worlds upon one another”

(Callon et al. 1986, p.228). In this chapter, I have demonstrated, adopting the term “translation”, that power as well as discourse is an achievement rather than an entitlement – or “something which (actors) are endowed by nature” (Callon et al. 1986, p.228). Thus, if “to speak for others is to first silence those in whose name we speak” (Callon 1986a, p.14), I shall conclude that an array of actors have been remaining silent, and that is what makes this huge actor-network, (for instance, neo-liberal discourses and the IPAN) seem so real, “macro”, and powerful. Despite unquestionable positive outcomes of global student mobility for students, they are “obeying”, *or being enrolled* by others when they *accept* the enacted OPP – which elucidates how power can be seen as an effect of associations. Such *acceptance* of an OPP (course of study), however, can be seen as the only viable alternative to satisfy one’s interests.

7.5 Reflective Vignette: Fractal Policy

Apart from methodological concerns, writing a reflective section in a PhD thesis is always an effect of an association of heterogeneous actors. As to this one, I would feel somewhat uncomfortable to analyse Ireland’s international education policy using Callon’s (1986a) four moments of translation if I did not talk about multiplicity. I feel academically safe to see a partial reality, or enacting *a reality* with the help from Callon’s theorisations for two main reasons. First, I am far from trying to delineate a single, complete reality, or make an argument that leads the reader to accept my analysis as the Truth. It is only *a reality, a truth*¹⁶⁸, as “it is most unlikely that whatever we are looking at is one thing at all” (Law &

¹⁶⁸ See Chapter 3 (p.144).

Singleton 2014, p.384). Second, Callon's contributions are a very provocative and astute way of seeing power through alliances and translations, instead of taking power, as an essence, out of a reservoir – and explaining how society works (Latour 1986). However, ANT has elaborated a series of arguments in the so-called “post-ANT” period and I would be academically irresponsible if I just ignored them. It is not a matter of multiple perspectives seeing the same object or phenomenon. Instead, it is a matter of considering that worlds are multiple, although possibilities of intersection might be possible (Law 2003b, Strathern 1991). This ontological stance sparks reflections on what is considered as the actor-network of choice for this chapter, the Irish international education policy strategy.

In the 2014 article “ANT, Multiplicity and Policy”, published in “Critical Policy Studies”, John Law and Vicky Singleton offer a *sensibility* to critically and politically analyse policy in the light of “post-ANT”, or material semiotic contributions. The authors make a reservation about their limited familiarity with policy studies, but argue that ontological performativity (or ontological politics) generates alternatives for policy, or the possibility to think of policy differently if reality is appreciated as incoherent and performed. In a sense, policy and its implementation is a messy quasi-object that is “more than one and less than many” (Law 1999; Mol 1999; 2002).

Law and Singleton (2014) provides a series of “theoretical steps” by exploring foot-and-mouth disease in its ontological performativity – as much as Law & Lien (2013) on salmon and Mol (2002) on arteriosclerosis. These steps are (1)

heterogeneity; (2) relationality; (3) multiplicity and (4) framing. They can *complicate* the way one sees international education policy realities.

(1) Heterogeneity

The IPAN is heterogeneously practised. Humans (policy-makers, students, lecturers), texts (policy reports, agreements, meetings minutes, regulations), discourses (new public management, managerialism, neoliberalism, globalisation), money (government funding, students fees, rent), buildings (visa office, HIEs, government), aspirations (Ireland as a brand for international education, job opportunities, fluency in English) are juxtaposed, indicating the hybridisation of an actor-network. For instance, students are given a “photo opportunity” with the Taoiseach (meeting the Taoiseach would not be the *same* without a picture posted on social media platforms); or need to post their experiences to a blog as student ambassadors; or need a scholarship award, or cash, even to become international students. Ireland’s fantastic scenery, safety and the reputation of friendliness of its people contribute to the enactment of a “unique student experience” (DES 2010, p.48). Quality of education not only includes the lecturers and their titles, but also an efficient transportation system, student facilities and buildings infrastructure. Each of these practices is locally enacted, where heterogeneous actors associate with one another, (erasing the purified dichotomies between “society”, “discourse”, and “nature”). Actors *become* as they relate, which leads us to the next theoretical step.

(2) Relationality

Relationality is the only thing that concerns those travelling with ANT. Such concern sounds disruptive to “essentialisms”, or Euro-American metaphysics (Law, 2004). Non-reductionist perspectives, like ANT, will not use more traditional sociological concepts to explain social phenomena. Instead of being analytically treated as causes, they are seen as effects of heterogeneous associations. According to Law & Singleton (2014, p.384), “if we want to understand what is going on and intervene in it effectively, then we need to find ways of thinking about and handling that heterogeneity”. In Chapters 4, 5, 6, and Appendices A-M, I described the practices of the students when enacting international education realities, who/what are the actors that they are associated with and who/what are the actors that they try to enrol into their actor-network.

(3) Multiplicity

Multiplicity is the consideration that might have separated the body of work entitled “traditional-ANT” from “post-ANT” – categorisations given by Gad & Jensen (2010). However, Law & Singleton (2014) suggest that ontological politics (Mol 1999; 2002), or multiplicity was already present in ANT publications in the 1980s.

(...) if realities are about relational patterns of association and dissociation in practice, then it follows that there will be lots of realities not just over time, but alongside one another at the same time that there is ontological multiplicity (Law & Singleton 2014, p.384).

This ontological consideration allows one to answer, in a way, the question “What is Ireland’s international education strategy?” Policy is done in practice and

constitutes multiple realities. Policy means one *thing* for SOG (make sure the Irish government is welcoming and managing *enough* international students) and another for HIO (make sure that his HEI is welcoming and managing *enough* international students), while it means a different *thing* to me (I am thinking about it as I write this thesis), which in turn, means completely distinct *things* to each and every student who was my informant in this study (enrolling cultural capital actor-networks, paying fees, considering the duration of the visa). For each of these actors, policy is *done* differently, but fractal realities (Law 2003b), or the point where they intersect, might be possible if coordination work is executed. These claims contradict the idea that there is a pre-given world out-there. Instead, the world is done in practices; messily, heterogeneously, where reality and the representations of this reality are not ontologically separated (Lynch 2014).

(4) Framing

Law & Singleton's (2014) argument is clear to an extent. A single policy considers the existence of one reality, assuming that international education is a single reality, albeit might change over time. However – and that is when the argument reaches a high degree of complexity – policies “also enact multiple worlds and multiple policies” (Law & Singleton 2014, p.387). Differently than policy reports on foot-and-mouth-disease in the UK, Ireland's international education strategy did not present any major controversies between the publication of DES (2010) and DES (2016). Yet, the publication of DES (2016) acted as an effect of DES (2010). In other words, there was an “improvement” (SOG). In this, DES (2010) enacted multiple realities and multiple policies such

as DES (2016), which in turn, changed international education realities in the eyes of policy makers.

What I have done thus far is related to *an analysis of policy*. But I would like to consider the previous pages where the INPA has been critically discussed and move a step further – a more objective, functional, pragmatic step – an analysis *for policy*. If the process of shaping realities is open as well as “contested” (Mol 1999, p.77), if the object of interest here – the policy – can have different versions, I shall try to visualise one of this possible versions of policy.

As it has been made clear elsewhere¹⁶⁹, I am an international student in Ireland writing about other international students, and had an initial intention to empower them, give them a voice, make them more *real*, which I hope I do, at least, simply because I am writing their stories. However, if I consider Ireland’s international education strategy, there might be a more substantial chance to make the students enlarge their actor-network via more translations (Callon & Latour 1981). That would be the case if they were able to join education or employment actor-networks (those who wish(ed) to do so, such as Blue, Brown, Green, Grey, Yellow, Pink, Beige, Lavender).

One policy can enact multiple realities, as I have demonstrated. Thus, the difficult task here is to suggest the enactment of a policy that might enact a *preferable* reality to the students. In other words, a policy, or a set of rules, that can make realities overlap. The reality enacted by the Irish Government and those

¹⁶⁹ See p.15, p.144, and Appendix M.

performed by international students can intersect at some point. That would mean that policy reached a fluid state, and is working with multiplicity.

In my interviews with SOG and HIO, I mentioned a policy output stated in DES (2011), referring to the intentions of the Irish Government to attract international students who make significant contributions to the local economy. HIO constructs his argument on the (potential lack of) agency and planning of international students, suggesting that they neglect the “toolkit” that enables one to join the work force, as they may have been so focused on their academic endeavours. He points out that “organisations are looking for a more holistic approach, where people demonstrate leadership and initiative”.

What I would say is that in order to the students to be successful is that they need to think about the career move, from the first day that they come to university, not the day that they get their results. Because if they wait until that point, there are other contemporaries that have already been engaging with the career office, the life skills centre that put together a set of skills that enable them to be successful in the employment process (HIO).

On the other hand, SOG refers to the way larger and more stable actor-networks are mobilised, indicating that my investigation would lead me to other government departments.

Alfredo: What can be done to facilitate Brazilian, or international students of any other nationality, who wish to seek a career in Ireland?

SOG: At the moment we have a stay back. It’s not a visa, it’s an automatic right for students who have done their studies in Ireland and I think that is very valuable. Without coming down on the policy side because we don’t specifically have a policy on it, but for the country that they are leaving, its not right and I believe that the country, like Brazil, doesn’t want to have a brain drain situation,

ok? So I think you need to look at this for your research both ways. We don't believe that we are engaging in brain drain, we believe that we are educating people to a very high level, we are using the Department of Justice stay back procedure to give them experience and to work in a top class multinational company and between their education and working experience they acquire skills they would bring home. The whole idea is to meet people all over the world in Ireland, they (international students) go home, they bring back their skills and they influence their own country because of the education and the skills they acquired in Ireland (SOG).

Alfredo: The only observation I would make here is that I've been talking to many students and the majority of them would prefer, if they could, to find employment in Ireland.

SOG: That's a question for the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, they look after the work permit and that's fine I suppose... we in education take to a point that we educate, we provide the stay back, the internships, stuff like that, that's our policy, the other side of it in the Department of Jobs is to do... work permits... and that's to do with identifying work and skills... there are a list of them available, so obviously if Brazilian students do meet that, those criteria, and do wish to stay here for longer the Department of Jobs can look at those processes, but I think we would be a bit cautious about that, because a lot of the countries the international students are coming from they require their students back as well ... if you look at Science Without Borders and the money Brazil spent on that, the last thing Brazil wants is for all the students to never come back, why would you send your best and your brightest abroad?

The reality enacted by the government of Ireland, or at least the one transmitted by one of its representatives, is uncomplicated. Unless the students' professional area is related to IT (as Green and Purple), due to a skill shortage in the country ("students are not necessarily studying maths", [HIO]), the trajectory for non-EU citizens who wish to seek employment in Ireland can be tortuous. After concluding their course of study (which needs to be full-time and classified as level 7 or higher in the National Framework for Qualifications), the non-EU

student is permitted to remain in Irish territory for a limited period of time¹⁷⁰, the “stay back” (SOG). During this period, the student can look for a full-time job position. If the occupation offers a minimum annual remuneration of €30,000 and falls into the “High Skilled Eligible Occupation List”, students would have the right to apply for a work permit (what Grey was trying to do). If the occupation is not part of the previous list, only an annual salary of €60,000 would make a non-EU citizen eligible for an employment application – as long as the occupation is not listed in the “Ineligible Category of Employment for Employment Permits” (DJEI 2017).

Respecting and acknowledging that every State has its own interests, it seems utopian to imagine that such “lists” could be altered in any significant way, unless the conformation of the Irish job market is radically altered. As to the students’ realities, a few suggestions will be made in the next chapter in order to facilitate the potential “enlargement” of their actor-networks (Callon & Latour 1981).

7.6 Summary

This chapter took an “analytical distance” from the localised students’ actor-networks¹⁷¹. It aimed to demonstrate what performances were needed in order to turn the internationalisation-policy-actor-network into a more stable entity. Considering that encounters between the State, HEIs, students, and policy reports are seen as “key” to the enactment of international education realities, this chapter

¹⁷⁰ See p.333.

¹⁷¹ The analytical effort of “zooming out of”, inspired by Nicolini (2009).

was informed by the analysis of Irish international education policy reports¹⁷² and interviews with “policy actors”¹⁷³ – or professionals whose work is closely *ordered* by the content of current government policies (Law 1992; 1994).

The analysis framed upon Callon’s (1986a) four moments of translation demonstrated that the Irish international education policy strategy is not a given phenomenon, but formed in/by the actor-networks that enact more or less durable realities. Such analytical choice made explicit my focus on *how* actor-networks emerge and are transformed – and that stability as well as power is a result of localised connections among actors.

The “internationalisation-policy-actor-network” (IPAN) is formed by the Irish government, Irish Higher Education Institutions, English Language schools, and international students, each one of them having distinct interests. In the problematisation, the Irish Government (the translator) is able to enact a power relation *with* other actors by presenting an obligatory passage point (course of study in an Irish HEI), or the only solution to their problems that is not only collectively important, but also the “entrance gate” of an actor-network. While one of the objectives of the State is to increase the number of international students in Ireland, the latter’s objective is to undertake a course of study in the country.

¹⁷² DES (2010; 2011; 2013; 2016).

¹⁷³ Representative of the Irish Department of Education and Skills (SOG), and the Head of the International Office of one Irish university (HIO).

In the interessement, the translator defines the roles of the other actors in the actor-network, persuading them on what they should do, and defining who they are (individuals become international students as they pay fees and HEIs become engaged organisations in recruiting these students). The translator persuades potential mediators to become intermediaries; a move from unpredictability to predictability.

In the enrolment, students need to be kept satisfied while studying in Ireland – alliances are strengthened. The objective of having more international students coming to study in Ireland can only be achieved if the already enrolled students feel fulfilled while enacting realities in the country, communicating their good experience to other actors who are not yet part of the internationalisation-policy-actor-network (IPAN), but could potentially be in the future.

In the mobilisation, the relations among the actors will define if the internationalisation-policy-actor-network can become stable thus, acting as one entity. This is the moment of translation where the *masses* follow their *representatives* (Callon 1986a), or when the Irish Government can *represent* students in the form of the income they produce and the visibility they give to Ireland as an international education provider. In the context of new public management that pervades the public service – including education – in Ireland, this mobilisation is achieved through various nonhuman actors including funding and performance agreements that are so thoroughly connected with notions of “best practice” governance, accountability, budget advisors, immigration concerns, and neoliberal ideologies as to hold immense power.

The analysis of the Irish international education policy strategy also acted as a form to see power from a different perspective, which Latour (1986) named as “the translation model of power”. Notwithstanding how powerful an actor might seem, power is seen an effect of localised interactions, rather than an essence that accumulates in a reservoir. In other words, A only *has* power over B if B does what A says (noting that B might not see any alternative option but to do what A says). As an effort to zoom the analytical lenses out of the Irish context, I stopped considering Ireland as the translator, engaging in a debate on how supra national agencies and discourses of new public management, neo-liberalism and globalisation influence the *quasi-immutable* way international education policies are enacted.

The reflective vignette of the chapter brought a discussion on Law & Singleton’s (2014) four theoretical steps (heterogeneity relationality; multiplicity and framing). I aimed to visualise alternative ways of seeing Ireland’s international education policy – or how international students’ realities could be “facilitated” by the agency exerted by “texts”. The realities enacted by the Irish Government and those performed by international students can intersect at some point (Law 2003b), indicating that policy is considering multiplicity. The next Chapter closes the file.

Chapter 8: Closing the File



Photograph 14: Presence and Absence – River Liffey flowing through the centre of Dublin (Salomão Filho 2009).

We often fall into the trap of thinking of a boundary as something which separates one thing from another. We should rather think of a boundary as something that *constitutes* that which is bounded. This shift will help us to see the boundary as something enabling rather than confining (Cilliers 2001, p.141, *author's emphasis*).

That which is complex cannot be pinned down. To pin it down is to lose it (Mol & Law 2002, p.21).

8.1 Introduction

Before the reader engages with this chapter, it is necessary to make a reservation about the meaning attributed to “conclusion” in Euro-American metaphysics (Law 2004) and the way ANT sensibility copes with conclusions. Law (1994; 2004) is clear when he articulates that the conventional understanding of concluding an inquiry does not sit well with those departing from a material

semiotics standpoint, as remaining puzzled about social research is the exact point ANT intends to bring across.

In this thesis, to conclude is to *close the file*. Conclusions are always charged with a reductionist touch if one sees reality as a continuum of uncertainty. My thesis is based on complex enactment of realities (or constantly mutable actor-networks), empirically localised tactics and strategies, theoretical experimentations, and aversion to generalisations – thus, concluding *in totum* is utopian¹⁷⁴. This thesis – or “experiment” (Latour 2005) – opens spaces for unpredictability and continuity. I deny the existence of a single world “out-there” waiting to be unproblematically discovered (Law 2004), which in turn nullifies the existence of any *a priori* essence (Latour 1988a-b; 1993a-b; 1999a-c; 2005; 2013). Complexity becomes *real* as shifts and oscillations trouble dualism and authoritarian hierarchical categories in scientific discourse (Mol & Law 2002; Strathern 2002).

This chapter is organised as follows¹⁷⁵. First, I discuss the contribution this study offers to knowledge, addressing the research inquiries posed in Chapter 1. I articulate the methodological contribution *an* ANT approach can make to studies in international education; consider the shifts in social capital of mobile students; and contemplate the formation of the Irish internationalisation-policy-actor-network. Second, I turn my attention to the limitations of this thesis and indicate

¹⁷⁴ However, I do “conclude” this study in this chapter. From an ANT perspective, I have no choice but to “allow” the power of academic standards to be enacted; or to meet the formal expectations of what a PhD thesis *is*.

¹⁷⁵ Although this thesis – or “risky account” (Latour 2005) – engages with the idea that only “messy” research can address “messy” realities (Law 2004; 2006b), this chapter is organised in a way that resembles a “conventional” thesis.

possible routes for future research. Third, I make recommendations based on my investigations of social capital actor-networks and the agency exerted by Ireland's international education policy strategy. Finally, I close the file with a reflective vignette.

8.2 Contribution to Knowledge

The analysis of empirical data was closely related to the theoretical debate held throughout this thesis. ANT – in all its complexity – needs to be “represented”, rather than summarised or applied (Law 2006a), turning the empirical into a *sine qua non* condition for scientific enquiry (Law 2009). The key idea proposed by ANT is to offer a relational ontology, allowing the analyst to perform their own translations with empirical data and scientific literature. This is not a relativist colocation, but the acknowledgement that the relational implies the enactment of different realities, which in turn, are dependant on the arrangement of the actors involved – and most importantly – *how* they relate to one another (Mol 2002; Woolgar & Lezaun 2013).

The analysis of the “net-work” (Kamp & Kelly 2014, p.371) of the twelve Brazilian students in Dublin configures an attempt to reinvent, and “play” with ANT itself (Mol 2010). This was done through case studies that organise thinking and emphasise the local, allowing the emergence of an ontological debate about various categorical moves and searches for *capital* associated with international student mobility. Such task is significant as it contributes to enhance knowledge on how international education realities unfold. This thesis serves as an addition

to the ANT “cloud” of scholarship: “one that emerges through the objects being engaged with, thought about and spoken of as well as the words and identities doing the speaking” (Fenwick & Edwards 2010, p.166). As pointed out by Fenwick & Edwards (2010), while ANT has explored science and technology related subjects (Callon 1986a-b; Latour 2002), it has yet little association with studies in education¹⁷⁶: a “gap” this thesis has addressed. The challenge was to transform a conceptualisation – such as translation – originally developed for studies in science and technology, and *make it work* when international education realities *encounter* the idea of social capital. Apart from the association between ANT and global student mobility – when one follows humans and non-humans through the enactment of international education realities – this thesis performed a novel link. Such link – or translation – did not come without risks. It served as an attempt to start offering a new way in which one could see social capital, as ANT research concerns the “lively craft that cherishes the slow processes of knowing rather than immediately seeking results or closure” (Law & Singleton 2013, p.485).

This thesis also offers a contribution on this specific and under-researched population of Brazilian mobile students. My investigations of the day-to-day practices and negotiations of PhD, Master’s, undergraduate, and ESOL students in Dublin, shed light on their shifts and local performances of social capital actor-networks within the global student mobility spectrum. Rather than seeing

¹⁷⁶ ANT related studies in education concerned literacy, curriculum, educational reform, policy and educational technology.

nationality as an ontological demarcation¹⁷⁷, the description of the experiences of these students enhanced the understanding on how “capital-actor-networks” (whether social, cultural or economic) underpin, are changed by, and evolve from performances *in* new spaces. My task of “following” the students throughout their international education endeavours, allowed me to offer a socio-political contextualisation of a portion of this specific “group” of human actors in Dublin, adding a piece to the “fragmented picture” of international education research (Altbach 2014a, p.6).

I considered the four moments of translation (Callon 1986a) as a theoretical tool to examine how the Irish international education policy strategy is assembled, producing effects on the world as a more stable entity. Such effort illustrated how a phenomenon that would occupy the “macro” order of society in the Cartesian plane (St. Pierre et al. 2016) is – from a relational ontology perspective – meticulously composed by a series of “micro” negotiations between heterogeneous actors, such as students, HEIs, State, policy reports, and discourses (Callon & Latour 1981). The “macro” nature of a given complexity is the effect of capillary power enactments, which in turn, are the result of a series of local negotiations. In other words, A *has* power over B only when B accepts A’s *demands*. This view refutes the idea that power emanates from a source. The only “source” of A’s power is B’s acceptance of A’s proposal (Latour 1986). One should note, however, that *demands* are assembled in such a way as to be undeniable.

¹⁷⁷ See Chapter 2 (p.64) and Chapter 3 (p.114).

The research inquiries that guided my investigation of international education realities are addressed below.

What contributions does Actor-Network Theory offer when encountering international education realities and the idea of social capital?

The main contribution offered by ANT when encountering international education realities and the idea of social capital is precisely the enactment of such unfamiliar *encounter*. This gathering demonstrated how *an* ANT relational/flat ontology can *generate and illuminate* Other realities in a field of study – such as international education and social capital – where anthropocentrism, and Cartesian dualism and reductionism are preponderant. This articulation enabled ANT to reach an area of inquiry that had not been thoroughly contemplated thus far. In other words, mobile students – seen as actor-networks – struggling to enrol new actors *in/with* newly performed spaces – actors in search of *the real; of becoming more real*. This study rejected the consolidated rupture between sociology and philosophy and attempted, on the contrary, to include all “the furniture of the world itself” (Latour 2002, p.82). In this sense, the “furniture of the world” could not be framed under the work done by “purification” (Latour 1993b), but by welcoming any actor – human or non-human – as long as agentic capacity is detected.

The contemplation of ANT as a philosophical sensibility inevitably changed the way international education realities were represented. Ontological disquietudes

were favoured over epistemological rules and concerns. Reality and its representation do not stand as two different realms of existence. Instead, they are produced together (Law 2004). The political task of selecting which research methods will be employed in scientific enquiry generates two effects. First, it brings a reality – one reality of many possible realities – into being. Second, it helps to illuminate that which struggled to acquire some form of ontological security, but has managed – via alliances – to do so (Latour 1999b; Law & Urry 2004).

The realities of the twelve mobile students and their efforts to extend their actor-networks were *represented* in the form of individually tailored case studies – stories, or vignettes. ANT’s commitment with existence favours thick descriptions of the practices of the actors as they associate and disassociate with other actors – or the attention to novel connections that imply ontological multiplicity. Mobile students sought to enhance their capacity to enact a particular reality: a more *favourable* one that required the mobilisation of a heterogeneous collectivity. As the principles of free association, agnosticism, and generalised symmetry were considered (Callon 1986a), they allowed the analyst to describe the experience of the mobile students as effects of material and semiotic relations, where the work undertaken in pursuit of ontological singularity has to be demonstrated before it acquires the status of that which is real, or an “essence”. The case studies must not be seen as mere descriptions. Drawing on Law (2009, p.2), “all there is are: specific sites and their practices, and then the specificities of those practices”. As observed in Chapter 3, this thesis makes use of the Appendices section in a somewhat unfamiliar way. The *word limit* is an actor,

altering the way other entities – such as myself – act. Consequently, I had to frame the twelve case studies (and the reflective vignette) as Appendices A-M in order to follow enacted academic regulations. I point out, however, how the twelve stories were pivotal; not only for what they brought into existence, but also serving as an orientation for the writing up of the other Discussion Chapters of this thesis.

The stories were crafted free¹⁷⁸ from the judgment of the researcher over what was being said by the actors. Albeit international students were *the actors of choice*¹⁷⁹ – “to be is to be related” (Mol 2002, p.54). Each story displays an array of heterogeneous actors relating *freely* with one another in a non-hierarchical cosmos. From such an inclusive metaphysical perspective, it is crucial to examine phenomena with analytical symmetry between human and non-human entities not only for ensuring scientific coherence, but also for honouring the ethical commitment of thinking about the nature of being. The craft of individual case studies illuminated (and produced) detailed intricacies of international education landscapes, and exposed how the mobile students – the “quintessential avatars of globalization” (Favell et al. 2006, p.7) – acted and made sense of their own reality. In other words, how students theorised about, and assembled, social capital actor-networks in newly performed spaces.

¹⁷⁸ Meaning that the researcher does not “see reality as it really is” (Mol 2010, p.255), but learns from the actors themselves. However, as in any qualitative research, the task of composition – or the interplay between presence and absence – is political (Latour 2005; Law 2004).

¹⁷⁹ To focus on A does not mean ignoring the influence of other actors that are assembled around A.

The encounter between ANT and social capital also generated a series of implications. If translation is a new relation between entities that transforms them (Latour 1999b), I can visualise my efforts in translating ANT with social capital as a partial contrast with earlier conceptualisations of both social capital and translation. Mol (2010) considers such initiative as being part of the “art” of ANT, where the idea consists of a shift in “existing theoretical repertoires” (ibid, p.261). Such flexibility potentially enhances the possibilities for the analyst to describe events that were not previously considered, or would be seen as uninteresting from non-relational perspectives. Associating the teachings of ANT to social capital postulates created a hybrid theoretical blend that is more democratic to the actors that have agency, and more concerned with the malleability and singularity of interactions (translations), advocating the description of minutiae relations. Moreover, the fact that social capital is a *bona fide* part of the social (Latour 2005) can create confusion. It is *real*, but not immutable. I have demonstrated that social capital should be redistributed in the form of actor-networks, embracing all the complexity that entails. In other words, social capital is locally and mundanely achieved, performed, or enacted (Mol 2002). The durability of social capital actor-networks of international education is the result of an effort – and it is this very effort (translations) that must be described.

From an ANT perspective, a researcher can only point out the existence of social capital actor-networks after the trajectory of the actors is mapped – the “screening” (Latour 2005). Thus, the actors themselves must clearly express how their actor-networks were extended and mobilised, producing benefits. What

social capital really is is an answer that only the actors themselves can formulate. On the other hand, albeit still learning from the actors, the analyst might consider philosophical sensibilities to examine how it was achieved and – even momentarily – mobilised.

What are the effects produced by mobility from Brazil to Ireland on social capital actor-networks of Brazilian students?

The webs of relations of mobile students are altered as soon as they start performing a new space. Students make an effort to sustain more or less stable heterogeneous associations with an array of actors, whether humans or non-humans (trust, money, educational qualifications, employment opportunities). Although the analysis of the shifts in social capital enables one to visualise the fractal problematisations of mobile students in their “search” for cultural capital actor-networks, each actor depicted a particular world.

Former employers were disentangled from the students’ social capital actor-networks. However, the latter kept their families and friends overseas – elected as the *most important* actors – mobilised through the use of social media platforms and communication devices. ANT’s position of prioritising connectivity over Euclidean space appears limited in explaining spatiality when space itself could perform as a prime mover of action. It is *in/with* accommodation and HEIs, or “centres of social capital actor-networks”, where possibilities of social capital translations for international students are most promising, and where empirically localised strategies of enrolling *informal social capital* are observed (Pichler and

Wallace 2007). Mobile students are in constant movement across international education spaces. Such movement jeopardises the enactment of durable social capital actor-networks. The limitations imposed by the visa policy, and the duration of courses of study, limit the period of stay of the actors in the newly performed space. These contribute to create volatility in connections that could potentially result in more stable webs of relations. Whether paradoxically or not, the goal to mobilise cultural capital actor-networks (the English-language-actor-network) interferes negatively in the anticipated mutuality between the representatives of Otherness. Despite awareness of common interests being a basis for the enactment of social capital, this was not the case. Rather, an aloofness is enacted among those who share fractal realities.

The understanding of the mobilisation of social capital actor-networks as a political and fragile process emerged from the analysis of the empirical data. I suggested that the “problem” of social capital enactments abroad refers to durability. The articulation of the concept *social capital actor-network* included non-human actors that are part of “manifestations” of social capital but are often excluded from the analysis, or do not have their agency acknowledged. I demonstrated that cultural and economic capital actor-networks are inseparable from social capital enactments. While the distinction between the forms of capital is an artificial analytical interference, its use is imperative to guide the reader through the analysis of the empirical data, aiding in the visualisation of actor-networks and translations. The seductive shorthand offered by a more structural idea of social capital has its use challenged if one contemplates actors performing

new spaces – where unpredictability troubles well delineated ontological boundaries and access to resources *in potentia*.

How is the phenomenon conventionally known as “international education policy strategy” formed as a result of the relations among various actors, such as the State, HEIs, international students, and policy reports?

The analysis of Ireland’s international education policy strategy served as an investigation of international education actor-networks with more stable relational patterns, illuminating a series of complexities. These include: the localities and far-reaching influences of power enactments; how the internationalisation-policy-actor-network is performed and manages to act as one *macro, black boxed* entity; and which actors participate in, and are formed by, this *story*. Although I offered an analysis *of* policy rather than an analysis *for* policy, the “translation moments” (Callon 1986a) acted as an analytical tool to gain insight on how the Irish international education policy is assembled in practice, or the consideration of the “dynamics of assembling and disassembling powerful interlinked entities” (Fenwick & Edwards 2010, x). Ireland’s inclinations in regards to international education strategy were elucidated, demonstrating its relational efforts to become an international education “player” on a global scale – via enrolment of international students – where policy reports, competition, globalisation, new public management, and neo-liberalism act as *powerful* translators.

8.3 Limitations of Research

Limitations in any qualitative research are not hard to find. In a sense, ANT started gaining momentum as a “theoretical” movement in the 1980s particularly because of its concern in acknowledging the limitations that traditional sociological approaches had when analysing twentieth first century realities (Law & Urry 2004). In the following paragraphs, I describe four of the most significant constraints in relation to this study.

The first limitation refers to the impossibility of meticulously mapping the full range of actors (mediators) into which the students were translating *before* engaging in mobility. Brazilian students were chosen as a purposive sample. The “I-Thou’ relationship”¹⁸⁰ established at the interviews (Schutz *apud* Seidman 2006, p.95) was active in contributing to the desired openness of the conversations, as personal information about the students’ lives was required for the investigations of the shifts in social capital actor-networks. However, I acknowledge the limitations in investigating – in the greatest detail – who the students *were* in Brazil, and how they were getting their projects done in Dublin. These limitations encompass the variable willingness of each actor to disclose personal information and research ethics¹⁸¹.

The second limitation concerns the establishment of the *analytical border* around the phenomenon being investigated. Strathern (1996, p.523) points out that

¹⁸⁰ See Chapter 3 (p.114).

¹⁸¹ See Chapter 3 (p.144).

“cutting the network” is inevitable for the craft of research, an argument that I endorse. However, as part of my task of “following the actors” (Latour 2005), I wonder if more *policy actors* could not have been followed – both human and non-human.

Considering human (policy) actors, SOG¹⁸² directed me to the Irish Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation when I started asking him about issues of employment for international students¹⁸³. From a non-human actor perspective, I could have invited other actors, such as Irish international education policy reports enacted before the so-called “Celtic Tiger” period. Although acknowledging that limited time was the factor that stopped me from following more actors, I must recognise that if I had engaged in exploring more actor-networks the description/analysis offered in the previous chapters would have been enhanced.

Whereas I see a limitation in not following more “policy actors” (whether human or non-human), I believe that the opposite should have been considered in terms of my student sample. In Brazil, there is a popular saying that can be closely related to this section of limitations. Based on sports, it is understood that it is much easier to comment on the match once it is finished. In other words, it is simpler to see limitations after the research is concluded. Considering that my analytical interest – supported by my ontological position – was not to generalise the case studies of the twelve mobile students, I reflect if it would not have been

¹⁸² Senior Representative of the Irish Department of Education and Skills.

¹⁸³ See Chapter 7 (p. 310).

more astute to reduce the research sample. If I had enrolled fewer participants I would have been able to hold more than two in-depth interviews in the period of one year, deepening the analysis. From an ANT perspective, I would have followed fewer translators for longer distances, offering more detail about their local performances as international students and the shifts in their social capital actor-networks when engaging in mobility.

The fourth limitation refers to the range of actors that participated in the enactment of international education realities but were not followed. For instance, passions and emotions¹⁸⁴ could have been given more space in the description/analysis in order to enrich the discussion on human/non-human agency.

8.4 Future Research

My indications for future research are derived from the acknowledged limitations demonstrated in the previous paragraphs. The investigation of the shifts in social capital actor-networks of mobile students – not only Brazilians – could continue. Actors should be followed for as long as possible¹⁸⁵ and the analyst should be able to follow the “leads” given by the informants.

¹⁸⁴ See van Vuuren, M., & Cooren, F. 2010. My attitude made me do it: Considering the agency of attitudes. *Human Studies*, 33(1), pp.85-101.

¹⁸⁵ Students should not only be followed until the very last moment of their international education experience, but also after their graduation (wherever they are located).

I also make a case for quantity. More case studies of international education realities can contribute to an enhanced understanding of the experience of those who are the enablers of international education landscapes worldwide. Despite the singularity of each case study and ANT's analytical aversion to generalisations, social capital actor-networks can be seen as quasi-objects that are "more than one but less than many" (Mol 2002, p.55). Thus, the search for the intricacies of the coordination work needed to achieve fractal realities (Law 2003b) is possible and invigorating.

From a pragmatic, policy perspective, the higher the number of actors who have their realities described, the higher the chances to understand what could happen with the performances of international students – particularly their efforts to translate with cultural, economic and social capital actor-networks abroad. This enhanced understanding of the experiences of the students brings the potential for the enactment of international education policies and strategies that recognise which actors deserve more attention, and which forms of connection should be favoured by the agency exerted by policy reports. In other words, one should investigate which connections should be amplified and which should be isolated. The diverse inscription devices (DES 2010; 2011; 2013; 2016) should be carefully scrutinised for their actions and contribution to ensure the maximum return to both international students, and to the Irish education sector and economy.

The craft of this study stimulated me to think of other pathways for future research. These include: a historical analysis of the processes of

internationalisation of education beyond Brazil and Ireland, the examination of sustainability practices in international education realities (including Stenger's idea of cosmopolitics¹⁸⁶) and a focus on learning-actor-networks of mobile students with due attention to the role played by formal learning settings.

From a theoretical standpoint, further work is required to translate social capital postulates with an ANT philosophical sensibility in order to transform this articulation into something more *real*. I consider this thesis as the first step of such process. However, more allies ought to be enrolled (in the form of journal articles and conference papers). Due to the degree of complexity of such translation, the complete range of publications on social capital, ANT, and STS should be analysed.

Finally, the philosophical space could be further explored. If ANT's elaborations on spatial performances provoked disquietude, the idea of time could also be discussed. As the rapid movement of entities *through* space acts on the durability of social capital actor-networks, I wonder if "ANT time" – time as an effect of heterogeneous associations – could not coexist parallel to linear time.

8.5 Recommendations

Although this thesis stands upon an explorative, experimental and descriptive stance, I take the liberty to be – momentarily – slightly managerial and prescriptive. This section concerns the following recommendations that emerged

¹⁸⁶ See Chapter 2 (p.80).

from my analytical efforts, the writing up of this thesis, and the reflections on my own performance as a mobile student.

First, international students should focus on advancing their knowledge of English – or mobilising as much as possible the “English-language-actor-network” – *before* they engage in mobility¹⁸⁷. One might see such recommendation as incoherent if mobilising cultural actor-networks is the very main goal of many students – particularly ESOL – when becoming mobile. However, I argue that having the “English-language-actor-network” mobilised to a certain extent prior to the travel (as in Grey’s case) can enhance the chances of ordering social capital actor-networks in a less stressful manner, minimising the “language barrier”. Acquiring an English language certificate would be advisable before departure, potentially reducing the negative effects that shifts in translations might produce in an actor’s reality¹⁸⁸.

Second, the analysis performed in Chapter 7, and my conversations with the students and policy actors, allowed me to make a few recommendations for the Irish international education policy landscape¹⁸⁹. Considering economic factors as pivotal to the success of the policy agenda, the following recommendations

¹⁸⁷ If their destination is an English speaking country.

¹⁸⁸ For a non-relational discussion on agency and language proficiency, see Sawir, E. Marginson, S. Forbes-Mewett, H. Nyland, C. & Ramia, G. 2012. International Student Security and English Language Proficiency. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 16(5), pp.434-454.

¹⁸⁹ Although the influence of scholarly work on policy making is limited (Stewart 2009).

respect and acknowledge that every State – and international students – have their own interests, and should be seen from a “win-win”¹⁹⁰ perspective.

- Increase the availability of scholarships awards contemplating all areas of knowledge for high calibre international students at all levels (undergraduate, Master’s and PhD)¹⁹¹
- The “stay back period” should be extended (period after the completion of a course of study in Higher Education when non-EU students are allowed to remain for a limited period of time in the Irish State in order to look for employment opportunities)¹⁹²
- Non-EU tuition fees should cost the same as EU fees¹⁹³
- Non-EU students should be allowed to enrol in part-time courses of study in Higher Education, therefore being able to work parallel to their studies¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ Thompson (2012a) refers to “win-win” situations when two parties have their interests satisfied in a negotiation.

¹⁹¹ Although this recommendation implies that students will no longer pay fees, off-campus expenditure would go on. Moreover, the increase in the availability of scholarship awards in the Humanities would serve to counter balance the absolute prioritisation given to technology and business related areas. Apart from considering Pink’s interviews (Appendix J), this recommendation was fostered by my own reflections after I participated in a meeting held by a research partnership between Brazil and Ireland (see Appendix B, p.2-3). In this event, I was informed that academics in the Humanities were not considered as potential participants in such initiative.

¹⁹² Recently (February 2017), the Irish Government has extended the period during which Master’s and PhD students may remain in Irish territory after graduation. The current “stay back period” for Master’s and PhD’s consists of two years. While honours undergraduate degrees allow students to remain in Ireland for one year after graduation, ordinary undergraduate degrees allow six months. See: <http://monitor.icef.com/2017/02/ireland-announces-24-month-stay-back-option-international-postgraduates/> [Accessed 10 June 2017]. See Grey (Appendix C, p. 9).

¹⁹³ Given that “a significant number of OECD countries have decided to offer international students the same fees as domestic students or to waive fees altogether because of their long-term strategic value or because of the needs of their economy” (DES 2016, p.27).

Thus, the aim is to enact an “educationally sustainable internationalisation”, where host countries would respectfully acknowledge the Other – establishing conditions of mutuality (Ilieva et al. 2014) – as “international education is about collaboration” (SOG). Thus, multiple realities (enacted by international students and government) would intersect – or meet in between – becoming “fractal realities”¹⁹⁵ (Law 2003b). It is envisaged that even larger numbers of non-EU students would be willing to accept the proposed OPP¹⁹⁶ (course of study), if the above recommendations were implemented.

8.6 Reflective Vignette: Closing the File

Whatever way shifts in social capital actor-networks are enacted, the ultimate effect of engaging in global student mobility is clear: there is even less purification of realities. Instead, there is more and more hybridization. Away from laboratory settings, matters of fact become matters of concern. Localised heterogeneous relations produce multiple meanings. Theory and practice are inseparable. Experience and existence should be taken seriously. In a sense, essences have proven to be misleading, but I am not being confrontational. This statement does not reflect an attack on essentialists. I rather see the effort in writing this thesis from a relational perspective as a way to respectfully point out how limited reductionisms can be – if I think about qualitative research – and how destructive this form of seeing reality can become – if I make a pause and think about what is going on in the world. Regardless, this is just a reflection and I do not want to “take sides” in a science or political war – although I might lean towards here and there. No ontology can fully capture or perform what is real. Whatever position one stands for, what really matters is the possibility of a good debate – and the heterogeneous relations that are generated by the debate itself (Notebook 1).

¹⁹⁴ This would reduce international students’ potential monetary deprivation and the distress related to such issue, creating better overall conditions for successful engagement with, and completion of, their courses of study – see Pink (Appendix J, p.13-14).

¹⁹⁵ Inevitably defying singular conceptions of reality (Latour 1993b; Law 2003b).

¹⁹⁶ Obligatory Passage Point.

The performativity of this thesis became evident as the months of PhD passed. I started conducting this study with more functional inclinations: empower Brazilian students, making them more *real* (Latour 1991; 1999b). However, I ended up not being able to leave the ontological “space”. I believe there are two main rationales that contributed for me having remained in this ontological space – or for not being able to leave it. I elaborate these in the following paragraphs.

First, it has to do with subjectivity. Challenges can seduce, and thinking about metaphysics – that which is “untestable” (Law 2004, p.23) – is the ultimate challenge (especially if one is new to this “parish”).

We social scientists will have to read philosophy and, even then, not assume that reading an article or two or a book or two is sufficient. Some will complain that philosophy is too hard to read, but why would we want to read what we already understand? (St Pierre et al. 2016, p.5).

I agree that I should read more philosophy. However, in contrast to St Pierre et al. (2016), I have reservations regarding what I “already understand”. My academic hybridity always challenges me – sooner or later – on what I “already understand”, do not understand, and want to understand. In my writing process I try not only to embrace, but also to handle complexity and – above all – the limitations of scientific analysis of social phenomena: to find coherence in something that is incoherent. It can be exhausting to freeze – even momentarily – that which is fluid, ephemeral, elusive, metamorphic, and “refuses” to be attributed ontological singularity. That is the reason why I have been faithful only to “existence” in its most crude, raw, “primitive” form – and to description. What were my informants doing as international students? How did they manage to

enrol and mobilise social capital actor-networks? The whys were left for the actors themselves to tell us. The researcher does not occupy a privileged position in the world(s) of the actors. In spite of the possibility for intersections, worlds are multiple (Latour 1999b; Law 2003b; 2004; Mol 1999; 2002).

The second reason for not leaving the ontological space is related to the moment when I realised that my informants would not need any extra help to perform *better* as international students – at least not from me directly. In a sense, albeit being partially denuded of “social capital” when becoming mobile, the students managed to mobilise social capital actor-networks that produced positive effects *in* and *on* their international education realities. They also saw their diaspora as an enriching experience: a “game changer” (Silver). I do not deny that realities can always become more favourable for some – especially with the enactment of policies framed in a particular way: including rather than excluding, seeing similarities rather than focusing on differences, facilitating rather than complicating. However, it seems that the restlessness of investigating issues of social capital in global student mobility was an effect of my own abrupt shifts in social capital actor-networks – to which the 2008 financial crisis played a considerable role – and the need to make sense of my own experience as an international student. More than providing “final” answers, this thesis is primarily philosophically oriented: What happens when one “loses” power? What happens when one becomes the Other? What does it take until one mobilises an actor-network anew? Which thinking spaces are opened when one embraces relational ontologies? If researchers allow themselves to be deliberately provocative, they may keep wondering.

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Appendix A: Purple's Story

“The visa should be simpler”

This is a story of Purple, a 31-year-old PhD student. He is from the state of Rio Grande do Sul, where he worked as a systems analyst before coming to Dublin. He holds an honours bachelor degree in Computer Science (did not specify the Brazilian institution) and a MSc in Mathematics, Statistics and Computing at University Aberta de Lisboa, Portugal. The Brazilian Government awarded him with a “doctorate scholarship abroad”, giving him full support for the whole programme (maximum 48 months). Purple lives in a flat in North Dublin with his wife, an undergraduate student. Serene and focused on his research, he tells me his life is “basically university and home, home and university”.

How Purple was enrolled in my PhD-actor-network

I met Purple in February 2014 as we undertook one module offered for PhD students across the university. Since then, Facebook and email have connected us. Eventually, I was invited by him to join two Facebook groups: “Brazilian Postgraduates in Ireland”, and “Science Without Borders Brazilian Embassy in Dublin”, where students exchange information about their courses of study. Purple promptly agreed to participate in my research. His immediate answer to my email (sent on the 11th of June 2015) filled me with good thoughts about the enrolment of research participants. On the next day, punctually at 10:30 am, we met at the grocery shop on campus and went to a lecture room in the school of Education Studies. He was my first interviewee of this study. The second

interview was held on the 10th of May 2016, scheduled by email. One week before this interview, I met Purple at a ceremony held by the university, where lecturers were being awarded for their contribution to the broader community. He told me he was going to a conference in China in June, which made me ask him if we could have the second interview before his departure. At the time of the second interview, on a Tuesday afternoon, he had just come back from the Irish Nationalisation and Immigration Services office, where he had renewed his student visa.

In Brazil, Purple used to live in a house with his wife, away from his parents. The fact that he was not living with his parents in Brazil helped him not to miss his family during his experience abroad. He describes his relationship with friends and family (he has four brothers) as “good”. His mother, who came twice to visit him in Dublin, is the member of his family whom he trusts most and with whom he keeps weekly contact. Purple never joined any club or society, telling me that his friends are the ones whom he met in his workplace. Facebook and WhatsApp participate in the communication between Purple and his friends in Brazil. In Dublin, depending on the kind of problem, he turns either to his wife, or his supervisor.

Alfredo: Can you give me a metaphor that describes your experience here?

Purple: Challenge. Everyday is a challenge, culturally speaking... language...the PhD.

Alfredo: Really? I believe you exert a considerable “amount” of power over your networks. Not only social networks, but that’s just

the approach I am using, so don't worry about that. Am I getting it wrong?

Purple: Well...overall, yes, it's ok. But everyday you have to resolve things. Today, "A" didn't work out. Tomorrow, another thing. It's like everyday you have something to resolve. Doing a PhD doesn't allow you to switch off. You are there with your friends on the weekend and you cannot stop thinking. I think about my research 24 hours a day. Even when I am sleeping. I always wake up thinking about my research, what needs to be done.

Purple is not a newly arrived international student. He first came to Dublin in 2011, with the money he saved from his work in Brazil as a systems analyst, staying for one and a half year studying English and working, first, as a kitchen porter and then, as a stock taker. The facility of obtaining a visa was a factor that helped him to choose Dublin as a destination. He wanted to improve his English skills and travel around Europe, as he knew that "it was easy to go from Dublin to anywhere in Europe". As an ESOL student, he experienced different enactments of realities. Sometimes, he would "simply live".

I ate, worked, studied and slept, that was my routine. At other times, I had way too much time to think about life which maybe was even worse. It's tough... but then I would settle a trip to somewhere (Purple).

As an English student, yes, it is very complicated – culturally speaking. You don't have fluency in the English language, so you cannot express yourself well enough. You couldn't go well in a job interview, so it's hard to get a job. Also, many of these vacancies are part-time, so in certain months I didn't have enough money to pay my bills (Purple).

Further on, still during this period, he started doing his Master's (distance learning), undertaking half of the modules while in Ireland and the remainder in Brazil, where he also wrote his dissertation, and had Skype meetings with his

supervisor. He was feeling a bit frustrated and tells me he did not want to be in Brazil at that time, as his “time in Dublin had not finished yet”. Purple wanted to explore more not only the “island”, but also Europe.

When I realised that it would be very hard to find a proper job in Dublin holding a student visa, and as I was enjoying being in the academic and industry area through the Master’s, I thought it would be a good idea to continue studying, so I decided to do a doctorate (Purple).

He finished his Master’s and found a PhD supervisor who supported him with his project, saying that they could start a research based on what Purple had proposed. His PhD scholarship application to CAPES (Brazilian Government Research Agency) was submitted and accepted, which took Purple back to Dublin as a PhD student. Today, as I write his story, he is focused on his last year of PhD, also working as an undergraduate tutor in Mathematics, and missing the existence of a window in his shared postgraduate office on campus, where he goes daily. When asked if any actor situated in Brazil had an influence on his life in Dublin, Purple states that his undergraduate supervisor wrote a recommendation letter for his Master’s course – “this was the only thing I used from Brazil... and the CV”. He sees himself as the leader of his own network for two reasons. First, “everything” needed for the journey was organised by him, and second, he is the one who researches more about things that are of common interest to the group.

I investigate his displacement from Brazil to Ireland focusing on an important actor of this story, the scholarship.

Alfredo: Without any scholarship award, would you have come to Dublin?

Purple: For my doctorate?

Alfredo: Yes.

Purple: No. I wouldn't have had the courage. Perhaps today, after I saw it is possible, I would have tried, but the initial courage to leave Brazil paying for everything... I am not sure.

Besides his passion for travelling, Purple believes that doing sports is a way to leave the research aside, and "reach equilibrium". He uses the gym on campus for such activities. In relation to human actors, his wife plays a key role in Dublin; she is Purple's "safe port". He talks to her about everything, including his research, although she does not understand much of what he is doing.

She helps a lot. Well... in terms of my research it would be even easier if she wasn't here. I would be able to focus more on my research. I could stay here (on campus) until 10:00 pm without thinking that there is someone at home waiting for me. On the other hand, I believe that the psychological pressure would be stronger (Purple).

Purple has not established "many new friendships, new groups". He tells me that his allies are the group of five friends who came together from Brazil to Dublin in 2011. Three of them are still in Dublin, whereas the other two returned to Brazil for "personal reasons". He tells me about his friends characterising what they do, or what passport they have. One has an Italian passport, the other has a working visa and the other is doing a PhD in another university in the city. Purple highlights that the latter is the only one who truly helps him.

I have one friend who is doing a PhD in another university here in Dublin. He gives me feedback, can read my stuff, as the majority of people don't care. When I was preparing for my PhD transfer I sent

my slides to six people and he was the only one who responded (Purple).

They rarely do something together as everyone's agenda is busy, but he tells me they go out occasionally to have dinner, a pint, or "go out somewhere". He connected with a few international students from his research group in the university at the beginning of his PhD. Two Iranians and one Egyptian finished their PhD, albeit Purple is still connected with them via Facebook. Currently, there is one Mexican student who eventually gives him advices and hints related to his project on a daily basis, "(...) in the university I have one colleague and one half colleague".

Purple tells me that common interests are the key to bring members of a group together. He divides his social circle between "PhD", whose members want to evolve academically and finish their projects, and "social", those who share interests in restaurants, culinary, travel and beverages. Purple highlights the use of social media as the main "connector", the one that keeps the group alive, as busy agendas do not allow many events of socialisation to happen as often as he wishes.

Purple classifies his life in Dublin as more "intense" if compared to life in Brazil. As the individual is not as "relaxed" as they would be if they were in their own country, the effects of being abroad are clear for him. A different culture and language "make you think in advance about the way you are going to act towards other people". I ask him why he is dealing with these difficulties, and he does not

hesitate to answer me that overcoming those challenges will produce pleasant “things” in the future.

I was exchanging a lot of emails with my supervisor and we weren't reaching an agreement, and then I thought ‘my god, if these conversations were in Portuguese we would have already reached an agreement (Purple).

However, when asked to draw the differences between the way he connects with people in Ireland and Brazil, he tells me that he connects with people in Brazil in a “more intense way”. In Ireland, the relationships among Brazilians are more profound, whereas relationships with the Irish are “more complicated to understand, as you never know the level of friendship they have with you. I gave up on this. It's easier to relate with other Europeans”.

Alfredo: I would never generalise human experience. If I did that I would miss the point according to the philosophical underpinnings of this study. However, considering all the participants of this research, only one, I guess, managed to establish close friendships with the Irish. And that's so interesting. He seems so proud of that.

Purple: Of course he is. He “made it”.

Conversations about attempts to connect with Irish nationals were held in the first interview with Purple. This is a difficult and sensitive topic. He tells me he never tried to participate in the Dublin community, and does not have a problem with it. Furthermore, his perceived existing “distance” between international and Irish students on campus does not bother him. Purple makes sure to state that he believes the Irish are very polite, helpful, friendly and they know that “a foreigner does not master the English language 100%, so there will always be a difficulty of interaction”.

You should interview some Irish people. It is interesting and this maybe would be good for your research. When I take some module here, 95% of my colleagues are Irish. I talk to them, we do group work and then as soon as we leave the classroom the relationship is over. The probability of having them greeting you if you meet them on campus is minimum (Purple).

Purple believes he will be able to speak in the name of his allies when his doctorate is finished.

If I go through this here... I will be able to go through a post doc, I will be able to get a job more easily – perhaps in the industry...anywhere in the world. If you can overcome one challenge you will be able to overcome others. My Master's, although it was done abroad, was in Portugal, so... there was no major challenge, at least in terms of language. The PhD on the other hand... so if I manage to be a tutor here in English that will be a lot easier to do in Portuguese (Purple).

Purple tells me that he believes he will have benefits as a result of this journey, hoping to look back and say “it was worth it (...) because today it is hard to see anything coming. The future will consist in me going back to Brazil and hopefully work as a lecturer in the university”.

Although his return to Brazil after the end of his PhD is certain, Purple does not hide that he would like to stay in Europe, networking and looking for jobs. His area of expertise is IT, which makes Dublin tempting as “the Silicon Valley of Europe”. However, according to the regulations of his scholarship, he has to return to Brazil thirty days after his Viva, spending there the same amount of time he spent abroad with the support of the research agency. Thus, any immediate future step abroad would have to be authorised by the Brazilian Government, such as a post-doctorate. Purple states that his future could be “tricky”.

If it wasn't for CAPES (research agency) I would be establishing some networks... post doc networks... employment... I would be looking, thinking about the future. Not necessarily in Dublin, but in Europe (Purple).

I started exploring this subject further with Purple. He says he understands CAPES' policy to require the return of its scholars, as Brazil does not have enough PhD's and needs to improve its quality of education. However, he makes a reservation on this.

Partially I agree with CAPES decision (policy). On the other hand, you don't have the freedom to live wherever you want. They are not guaranteeing a constitutional right of free movement (Purple).

Purple tells me that some CAPES scholars disrespect the rules and never go back to Brazil in the name of their constitutional right of free movement. Moreover, it is worth noting that CAPES does not employ their scholars directly, but demands that they try to get a work position in Brazil.

Towards the end of the second interview, a mediator was brought to the scene. Purple and I established a dialogue about the power of the visa and its effects on his life.

Purple: I would probably stay in Europe if it weren't for the regulations imposed by CAPES. It has been five years already, considering the period I studied English and the doctorate.

Alfredo: Wow, in August I will have stayed here for seven years!

Purple: But you don't have a student visa, have you?

Alfredo: No.

Purple: I will complete my seven years as a student with the end of my doctorate, which means I could not stay here any longer. Seven

years is the maximum you can stay as a student in Ireland. Game over. Then you can only apply for a work visa. This visa is something very inconvenient, it bothers me a lot. It bothers my life in Ireland, and this may be important for your study. I have a student visa, but my wife hasn't, so she cannot do anything here.

Alfredo: Your wife has a dependent visa?

Purple: Yes, that does not count for citizenship application and she cannot work, she can do absolutely nothing. She lives here but cannot do anything. It is something really uncomfortable.

Alfredo: So she doesn't do anything?

Purple: She studied, now she is doing an internship, and then she can apply for a work visa, but if this doesn't work out she cannot do anything. This bothers me a lot in Ireland. Ireland wants to be nice and welcome people, but the dependent visa doesn't allow the holder to do anything. The internship she does has to be unpaid, because of her visa. It doesn't allow her to receive any payment.

Alfredo: That can be a complicated thing...

Purple: And that influences me as well. And the Irish law is messy in this regard. It is based on their interpretation of each case. My wife had a visa stamp 3, which is a dependant visa that allows one to work. When she went to INIS to renew it, they changed from stamp 3 to stamp 2a, which is the visa for students who cannot work at all.

Alfredo: Yes, and they are always changing the rules. In order to apply for citizenship for example, it was required that the individual had lived here for seven years, regardless of their visa stamp. Today, only residents, after five years, can apply for citizenship.

Purple: Yes, you see? If nothing works out, my plan is to go to Spain. In Spain you need two years of residence to obtain citizenship.

Alfredo: Two years?

Purple: The law says you need ten years, but for citizens coming from countries where they colonised or had huge influence they decreased the number of years to two. It used to be one year only. They changed that recently. You need to speak Spanish and pass Spanish culture exams. Great, isn't it? And like here, you need to be a resident. Then I wonder what I am doing here (laughter).

Alfredo: Do you have any suggestion to make about my study?

Purple: The way Ireland manages the visas is inconvenient. The way you are treated in the Immigration Office...the way Ireland treats its immigrants is inconvenient. I tried to complain about my wife's visa and they don't answer, they ignore you. They say that it was the Ministry of Justice that decided and if you want to complain you should talk to them. Then, you send letters, they don't answer. Unless you pay a fortune to hire an attorney to contest them... but then, you will spend more time and money. So, that's my suggestion for your study. The visa. Why don't they create a scheduling system? They did and yet, you have to face enormous queues, it doesn't work. The visa is the worst thing in this country. Moreover, you have to pay 300 euros every year. The PhD lasts for four years, but they just give you an one year visa, so you have to go there every year and pay, and listen to their "kindness".

Alfredo: Alright! It has all been registered. Is there anything else that you did not have, but wished you had in this journey?

Purple: I wish I had more direction from my supervisor. From Ireland, the visa should be simpler.

Appendix B: Green's Story

“Everything is a strategy”

This is a story of Green, a 32-year-old PhD student. She is from the state of Paraná, where she graduated in Linguistics at State University of Oeste of Paraná, and then worked for two years as a teacher. She was awarded a scholarship by Erasmus Mundus and went to England in 2009, where she undertook a Masters in Natural Language Processing. After her Master's course was finished in September 2011, she stayed in England for three more months – working in a project – and then returned to Brazil as she “didn't have any PhD scholarship anywhere”. She was introduced to her PhD supervisor-to-be by her Master's supervisor, who flagged the existence of a “very nice research centre in (their) area that works closely to the industry in Dublin”. Green sent the former an email, but was told that there were no scholarships available at that time, when the financial crisis was showing its effects – “they were cutting everything”. In Brazil, she kept applying for scholarships until she was awarded with one in Spain, which she later refused as the academic in Dublin contacted her, offering a scholarship at the end of 2012.

In Brazil, you do research but you limit yourself, you get cloistered within your laboratory and your research doesn't go out the university... and I like my research having results. If you work with companies, your research has results, so this is the main reason why I came to Dublin (Green).

She was a PhD student at the time of the first interview on the 13th of June 2015.

When I interviewed her for the second time on the 22nd of June 2016, she had

submitted her thesis, and was working as a postdoctoral fellow in one of the university's research group while waiting for her Viva. When she arrived for her PhD, Green lived in the university's accommodation, where the occurrence of too many "undergraduate parties" made her move. She then shared a flat with another Brazilian PhD student near the campus. Although she would "love" to live on her own, rent prices in Dublin turned that into an impossible scenario.

They protest in the streets against water charges, but what about rent? It is so expensive and the living conditions are poor and they just wait to see what the government will do. They try to avoid conflict I guess (Green).

Green is currently living with her Irish boyfriend, with whom she has been together for two and a half years, in an apartment in North Dublin. She feels very comfortable working with the university's research group, which she sees as a possibility for a career path. She trusts its members and intends to achieve a permanent position within the research group in the future. I asked her who would be the leader of her network in Dublin, and she named her former PhD supervisor and her current principal investigator of her post doctorate – both members of the research group.

How Green was enrolled in my PhD-actor-network

I first met Green in a meeting held by the university's research consortium called Research Brazil Ireland (RBI) on the morning of the 20th of October 2014. This meeting, held in a boardroom at one of the university's buildings, was joined by a dozen of Brazilian PhD students from all the faculties across the university. We watched a seven minute Power Point® presentation held by one member of RBI

'ISCA' (International Strategic Cooperation Award) Management Team. I joined this meeting with clear intentions of starting the snowballing processes and found out that the area of Humanities was not part of the strategic partnerships that were being articulated between Brazilian and Irish Higher Education institutions at that period. The first interview with Green was held in her shared office, while the second interview was held in the lecture room where all the other interviews with students took place.

Green is very close to her family and talks to them "almost all the time", a kind of family where "if (she has) to curse at them, (she) will (laughter), if (she has) to make them a compliment, (she) will... the same with (her) friends". There are four of her "good friends" in Brazil and three living abroad. One of them lives in Italy, one lives in England, and the other lives in Taiwan. WhatsApp and Facebook are part of her interaction with her group of friends. Skype calls are performed once a month to connect everybody, "so (she) can know what is going on".

Green knew that the PhD would be a lonely journey that "changes, shapes, and transforms you into a more serious person", where "there are some days, when (she) works from home for example, that (she) does not even open the door". When she was doing her Master's in England, she spent two years without visiting Brazil as she wanted to "enjoy everything... (she) didn't know if (she) would have that opportunity again". Green tells me that when she went to Brazil after her Master's was finished, she found "everything very strange there", which

made her decide that during her PhD she would visit Brazil at least once a year to see her family, friends, cats, and “to get some sun (laughter)”.

When I left Brazil for the first time I thought that I would discover the world... and it's true! I discovered the world! But I thought I didn't need anything that had stayed in Brazil, but we need it (Green).

Green trusts her sister to manage her bank account and other personal things in Brazil. I asked her to whom she turns when she needs advice, whether in Brazil or in Ireland.

Green: In general terms, I don't ask for advice, to be very honest with you. I came from a very poor family and I was the first who managed to go to the university. My sisters had given up education on secondary school, even primary school, so I looked around... To my family, my friends... And they had sort of given up on their studies, you know? But I didn't want that. I knew I had two chances to get out of that kind of life. Either I could marry a rich man, which would be impossible as I lived in a poor neighbourhood, or I could study... So I started studying. So, I don't ask people for advice. It sounds a bit arrogant, but it was the only alternative I found.

Alfredo: Not at all, I understand.

Green cites the example of the decision to come to Dublin, instead of Spain, in order to illustrate her argument of not asking for advice on her life. She asked her sisters: “I have two scholarships, where should I go?” and was told to go to Spain as the scholarship award would be more generous than the one in Dublin. Nevertheless, she decided for Dublin as possibilities of networking and “having companies such as, Intel and Microsoft as partners” could offer her a better future. “You are all wrong”, she told them.

Green has the support of her PhD supervisor, who is the most important person for her in Dublin, and her boyfriend who, as a lecturer with a PhD, understands the difficulties doctoral students face. The company that was participating in her research was delaying the delivery of results, disturbing her sleeping patterns and increasing her anxiety. She then turned to the university's counselling services, formed by a group of psychologists, in order to alleviate stress. "I trust Science and I recommend counselling to anyone who is having any trouble".

Green tells me that her Master's in England helped her to adapt to the life in Dublin as an international student – "I knew what I needed, I knew partially how it would be". She brought a "luggage of tolerance" from England as a result of her interaction with people from other cultures, where she learnt that her truth, "the truth you have been dealing with your whole life back there in your city in Brazil is not the same truth for other people". Green uses two situations as examples for displaying her "luggage of tolerance". First, she learnt how to talk to others without sounding too critical, as she only suggests her boyfriend to try to eat potatoes with other dishes, instead of "mashed potatoes with chips and boiled potatoes (laughter)". Second, Green stopped judging women who would wear "mini-skirts" in any glance of sunshine, as she understands the need one has to wear something different when one wears jackets all year long.

However, Green was surprised when she arrived in Dublin, as she thought that Dublin would be similar to England, but "one has nothing to do with the other". She cites the need of having to face the queue for getting the visa as an effect of a bureaucratic system that she did not know existed, and wonders the reason why

the Irish State does not implement an online scheduling system, especially having numerous information technology companies based in Dublin. She traces a parallel between England and Ireland, where the former has a “straightforward” approach, whereas the latter seems more “disorganised”. She also sees a similarity between Ireland and Brazil in terms of disorganisation and people’s laid-back “nature”.

Green: The city is a bit messy, the government doesn’t care about the rent issue, so there is nowhere to build, building is too expensive and I think this is “very Brazil like”. On the other hand we have the case of... Irish people are very friendly, they make you feel at home, “so, how are you doing? What’s the craic?”... this human warmth we find here. In this regard, actually, I was surprised when I came. I wasn’t expecting to be so welcomed as I was.

Alfredo: Do you think this “disorganisation” approximates Ireland to Brazil?

Green: Yes. That’s really true. I think that’s because they suffered a lot, they were poor for long years, oppressed. So the way they had to face life was to... they have a sentence that describes them very well... “it’s grand”. It doesn’t matter what. Everything could be horrible, the Irish wouldn’t return food in a restaurant. They are vegetarians, a piece of bacon comes to the table, but they say “it’s grand”. They don’t complain.

Alfredo: That can be lovely.

Green: That annoys me a bit because... “wait, I ordered some salad and you brought me bacon, I am a vegetarian, it’s not grand! I want my food”. So, that results in laid-back behaviour which is very similar to the one observed in Brazil. I remember when I went to Brazil and called the internet provider, and the price was just an absurd for a very slow internet and the connection would drop all the time, and I remember I called the company and said “look, you have to come and fix it” and I said to my sister “I can’t stand it”, and she replied “that’s the way it is”... No, it’s not the way it is, it doesn’t need to be that way. This laid-back behaviour that Brazilians show is the same that the Irish show and I believe this pulls them back a little, you know? But at the same time, this is what makes them similar to Brazilians in times of fun. Everything

is messy, so let's drink! (laughter). And it is in this sense that we get along.

I invite Green to use a metaphor to illustrate her international education life.

A metaphor about my life out of Brazil? It has to be a metaphor? Because there is a sentence that I like... I am bit geek, ok? (Laughter). It is a sentence from the TV show "The X-files" that says "the truth is out there". This, to me, is incredible because "out there" to me always meant outside Brazil. I knew my truth was outside Brazil. I always knew that I was not made to live in Brazil. I adore being Brazilian, I adore my family and friends, I love having this Latin background but I knew that my truth was out of Brazil. When I went to England I saw that this was true, the truth is out there and when I had to come back to Brazil after the Master's I became so homesick of Europe. It seemed as I was born in Europe and had to live in Brazil. I know that I am not made to live in Brazil. I still don't know if Ireland will be the country where I will settle down but meanwhile I will be looking... because the truth is out there; somewhere (Green).

I suggest Green to elaborate more about her "truth". She tells me that she likes honesty and punctuality and dislikes, is ashamed of, and is not represented by, the "jeitinho brasileiro", or "Brazilian way"¹⁹⁷. Green cites a number of examples that disturb her, such as: she wants to have her wallet returned if she has lost it, as she would return a lost wallet; companies that "rip you off" when offering services; and employees that sue companies maliciously. Although being careful not to generalise the "jeitinho" as a common feature of all Brazilians, Green closes her comments adding that "here (Ireland), although they are laid back, you don't need to fight on a daily basis for things that are your right to have".

¹⁹⁷ This is a very complex Brazilian expression that can offer various meanings, both positive and negative. Green's use of it has a negative connotation. She means that the "Brazilian way" refers to finding ways to accomplish something by circumventing rules or social conventions. However, this expression can also refer to flexibility, resilience and perseverance, finding a novel way to resolve problems, not necessarily by breaking any rule or convention.

Green shares her thoughts on the Brazilian community in Dublin. She says that because she wanted to explore the Irish culture and improve her English skills, she decided not to hang out with Brazilians.

There are some people here who won't go to the cashier in the supermarket... They go to the 'self-service' there, because they cannot communicate with the person (cashier). They have been here for three, four, five months (Green).

She makes a reservation that "everyone has their own story" and the first time one leaves Brazil, one would feel more confident if they are closer to other Brazilians who share the same situation of otherness. However, she believes they should try to talk to, and live with, people from other nationalities. Green extends her impression of clustering also to Italians, Spanish and French groups.

Green's efforts to network (translate) with human actors are described by her in a very clear and confident manner and are seen as vital in her international education life – "I would not have gotten my postdoc if it wasn't for my network in Dublin". She did not have many friends when she arrived in Dublin, which motivated her to try to be part of "everything that was happening", such as a birthday party of a "friend of a friend". She describes the university's academic community as "half Irish, half international", where the latter is "also lonely here" as they do not have family and friends physically close, "do not know anybody, and do not know about anything", which led her to be closer to this "kind of person".

When she started her PhD, Green shared an office with an Irish postdoctorate fellow, instead of staying in the shared postgraduate office. She tells me that the postdoctorate fellow introduced her to everybody, as he knew she did not know anyone on campus. Then, she progressively started to establish networks in the university as her research group would hold events very often to “know what is going on”.

Green tells me she belongs to two social groups in Dublin. A bigger group formed by PhD students who talk about work as its members are “in the same boat” – very focused on their responsibilities – and a smaller group formed by a North American, a Brazilian, and an Argentinian friend. Green goes out with the first group when she does not mind to talk about research. She exchanges information, tries to disseminate her work and to get feedback from them, as if they “know someone who know someone who will be interested in my work, maybe they will even help you if you are having a problem”. Green reserves the second group to have a “girls night out”, where shops, hairdressers, and shoes would be conversations topics – “a way to not to think about work, a stress relief”. In the second interview she tells me that it is hard to make new friendships, but not new acquaintances during a PhD. Consequently, she tried to establish as many friendships in her first year of PhD as she could, once she knew that towards the end of a doctorate programme the isolation would be inevitable. “I used to tell my boyfriend that yesterday was exactly like today, and tomorrow will be exactly like today”.

In my efforts to understand what brings a group of people to stay together

(mobilised or punctualised), Green says that “a few things you have in common” would contribute to form a group. When Green arrived in Dublin, she became friends with a Costa Rican and a North American due to their taste for salsa dance. As to Brazilians, she believes that they hang out together as they have the capacity to understand each other in regards to “saudade” they feel to their homeland, or a feeling that evokes a sense of incompleteness, a deep emotional state of missing someone or something that is much loved. The PhD group was being progressively formed as people sat close to each other in the postgraduate room. “Small talk” progressed to having lunch together in the university’s restaurant and invitations for a pint. Green presents a rationale for the formation of her “girls night out group”, where the North American and the Brazilian are PhD students, and the Argentinian “knows what means to be South American”.

In terms of professional assemblages, Green uses LinkedIn for the industry and Academia.edu for the academy, classifying them as essential actors of her networking strategy. She says she was contacted three times via LinkedIn.

Google has offered me a job, Amazon has offered me a job, and they offered me a post-doctorate vacancy in Copenhagen and I went there, stayed for a week... research visit... We have done an experiment, there was a paper, so LinkedIn helps a lot...not only LinkedIn, but also the names I have there (Green).

Green tells me that conferences also play a key role in networking, which in turn, brings LinkedIn to the scene not only as a way to enrol new actors into one’s network, but also to keep them, in a way, mobilised.

When head-hunters search for you, they go through these important people’s networks. Because you are not important. But they do like

this: “let me see the important people’s contacts, oh...look at this girl, let’s see what she does, oh, she is a PhD student with (supervisor’s name), let’s see what she did”, so I think everything, actually is a strategy, right? You know the people, you get interest in what they do and then you add them in your LinkedIn so... people who get interested in you can look and find you, so you are relevant. And I try to keep contact with all my networks, that’s why LinkedIn is important. I meet then I add the person, and even if you don’t talk to them, they are there (Green).

Green tells me that all contacts that her former supervisor and her research group have are now her contacts as well, which “makes a huge difference”. Green praises Ireland as a place where one “finds support for Science”, and has no doubt she would have no market in Brazil. She gives me an example of her thoughts when she mentions that (apart from the ones previously mentioned) she was offered two post doctorate fellowships and a job position, whereas in Brazil that would have never happened.

The opportunities are here. There are two different worlds. Here is the Silicon Valley of Europe. That’s why my research group is excellent as they gained funding from Science Foundation Ireland and collaborate with a lot of industries (Green).

Green concludes the second interview stating that some friendships were dismantled as she isolated herself to finish the PhD, although currently she is getting to know more people and forming new friendships. “Professionally, the PhD pushes you forward, but the social life is negatively affected”. Her biggest change since the first interview was to have submitted her PhD thesis in three years and two months, before her scholarship expired, and “got (her) postdoc before (she) ran out of money to pay the rent (laughter)”.

Appendix C: Grey's Story

“My connections were not built overnight”

This is a story of Grey, a 26 year-old Master's student. He is from the state of Rio Grande do Sul, where he graduated in Business Administration at Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. He has been living for two years in a house in North Dublin with two other Irish people whom he knows “well enough”. One is an accountant and the other is a social media manager. Grey arrived in Dublin on the 15th of June 2013 already holding an IELTS certificate (grade 8), which made him confident to interact with others, and was classified as “a differential” and “essential”.

How Grey was enrolled in my PhD-actor-network

Grey's enrolment was an effect of my snowballing sample strategy. At the end of my first interview with Green, I let her know about my intentions to recruit participants for my study. Green knew a Brazilian who was a student of her boyfriend. Green contacted her boyfriend who then passed my email address to Grey. I received an email from Grey flagging his willingness to participate in my study.

In Brazil, he entered university at a “young age” (seventeen years old), worked in a restaurant for two years, and then started doing an internship in a major private health insurance company until the end of his course. Grey tells me that he needed to leave Brazil, expand his horizons and “get to know” different people.

As he was living with his mother, he did not need to pay any bills or buy groceries, which allowed him to save money to invest in his travel, leaving his “comfort zone”.

Alfredo: What were your expectations?

Grey: I wanted to travel; I wanted to meet different people. My expectation was... I didn't have high expectations on building a career or getting a job in my area, but I had personal expectations to get to know different things and to change. To get mature, because I was very childish when I left home and I used to feel like a child, even in comparison with my friends. So, when I arrived here my expectation was to become an adult, let's say, not to depend on my mum.

Dublin was chosen as the destination due to its “less complicated bureaucratic requirements for non-EEA citizens”, and its size. Grey would not see himself living in a metropolis, such as São Paulo or London, and appreciates the fact that he can move by bike everywhere “without being disturbed” or “overwhelmed by so many people walking in the streets”. Grey obtained emotional support from his family, mainly his mum, and his five friends from Brazil. They all motivated Grey to travel to Dublin. He tells me that some of his friends, however, did not understand why he was staying in Dublin for so long, telling him that “(he) could be working in (his) area here (Brazil)”, “(he) could be making more money”, “(he) could be doing his Master's here too”. Grey believes that it is easy to forget that he has another life in Brazil as he is very focused in his life in Dublin, but maintains contact with his friends via Facebook and WhatsApp, and calls his mother every week. In terms of seeking advice, for example, Grey tells me that he would turn to people living in Dublin as “if I need an advice, it's something related to what is happening here and I believe that people from here understand

better what it's going on here". I asked him to whom he would turn if he needed any form of help. While his "friends would be an option", Grey named the Immigration Office, NGO's or Citizens Information if the problem had a legal aspect. In addition, the English school, university, and Internet groups formed by people who have lived in Dublin in the past could also assist Grey.

As an ESOL student, Grey started looking for jobs at the time he arrived in Dublin. He took two weeks to find a barista position in a cafe at Dublin airport, which was obtained via employment websites (Jobs.ie). He tells me his routine was "very demanding". He started his shift at 4am, leaving at 1pm. Then, Grey would go to the Business English class at 2pm, coming home at 6pm – "dying". Although not being completely sure if his project would be implemented, Grey had in mind that he could work very hard for a year in order to pay a percentage of a Master's course – with the remainder of the fees being paid by his mother. He stayed a "few months" working as a barista and then found another position in another shop at the airport, which he "hated". However, if one day he has a kid, he would tell them to have the same kind of experience, once "one learns to value things that otherwise one would not". As he could work on Sundays, his wages would be slightly higher, which was in accordance to his plan of saving money to invest in his education. Despite being very busy at work, Grey would never miss a class due to "respect for those who helped (him) to pay the course", namely his mother.

Support from his networks in Brazil was enacted "only once, or twice". When Grey was enrolling in the Master's, he asked his undergraduate dissertation

supervisor to write him a reference letter. Then, Grey needed the transcript and a letter from his secondary school in order to comply with the security check required by the shop at the airport. “Apart from that, I never asked for any help from Brazil”.

I started approaching issues of network formation in Dublin with Grey. He classifies the strength of social ties one has.

One thing is when you come and people are friendly with you, and something completely different is to build relationships that last, you know? I would say it took me two, maybe three months until I started meeting people with whom I could have strong friendships, so I needed to look for places to meet people, outside the work environment and outside the school environment (Grey).

In the beginning of his experience, Grey made use of Couch Surfing, where he met some “interesting people”. He describes the very first people he met.

I first met people in the school. I paid the school and two weeks of accommodation, so I could have enough time to find a house. I shared an apartment with a guy from Belgium and a girl from Israel. They stayed in Ireland for eight months studying English as well, and they were my first contacts, the first friendships I established. They arrived in the same weekend I arrived. When you share this experience, when you arrive together with other people, you share all the process. We would look at things with a different eye if we both had arrived here months ago and had become friends. I keep weekly contact with them via Facebook and WhatsApp. I went to visit him last year, while he also came once to pay me a visit (Grey).

Grey became friends with people with whom he used to live with, one from Donegal and the other from Carlow, reiterating that those could also be seen as sources of advice and help. He also highlights how “great” the university’s fellow students are.

Alfredo: How competitive is the university environment in your case? And how do you deal with that?

Grey: They are great. They are not competitive at all, and the multicultural aspect of the class is just great. Although we have been together for just one year, we have become close during this period. Super-close, they are super friends of mine now. I was lucky, I was lucky to meet the people I met here. I was lucky in the friendships I established here, I cannot deny that.

I kept investigating Grey's tactics of network formation. He tells me that the majority of his friends are Irish, and the only Brazilian whom he "met and kept the friendship" was a lady¹⁹⁸ who was in the plane he took when he was coming to Dublin. I then asked him how he builds his networks with Irish nationals. Grey points out that it takes time to build a friendship with an Irish individual, but what could help is "if you have two or three people from outside and one Irish. If it's only you and the Irish it is harder. But if there is a mix of the two it's easier for them as well". The fact that Grey was undertaking a Master's focused on international relations was also considered as a helping factor to form and consolidate networks. He mentions that his fellow students speak a second language, and have lived, or have the curiosity to live, "somewhere else". These factors would make a difference in connecting with people from other cultures, as they would have a "predisposition" to do so. "I think once you lived in a different place you don't go back home with the same disposition or mind-set".

Grey: Even in our case. If we had stayed in Brazil, we wouldn't have talked or established friendships with foreigners, because we are so involved in our life there, so... we don't even think about it. Here, it happens in the same way. People just don't think in leaving their circle... it's a question of mentality.

¹⁹⁸ She left Dublin and is currently living in London.

Alfredo: What is the work involved in keeping your networks? How do you maintain your group of friends and acquaintances in Dublin?

Grey: There is no work involved in keeping my networks together. It's not hard to keep the contact among the members.

I tried to investigate this issue further and Grey explained to me the way his life has been enacted in Dublin. He tells me that he sees his friends twice a week on average, and his Master's colleagues almost everyday. Moreover, Grey is close to his housemates "so, it's not difficult to make an effort in order to keep the friendship". As they have the same interests and "a lot in common", Grey does not find it hard to find conversation topics or something to share with them.

According to Grey, trust and open-mindedness are ultimately important conditions that allow social capital to flourish. Moreover, "sharing the same experiences" and having the same interests in "culture, sports, and travels" also plays a key role in fostering connections.

In my network, nobody is married, or has children. We are between one thing and the other. So we are just starting our career, or finishing our studies. We are still trying to identify ourselves and also trying to see where we are going to be in a few years. We are still having expectations for the future (Grey).

As Grey had stated that when he arrived in Dublin it was hard to find a house, since he did not want to live with Brazilians – "I didn't want to become a hostage of this situation" – I invited him to illustrate his views on the Brazilian community in Dublin. He tells me that "there is no community; there are disorganised communities", highlighting the high degree of disharmony among Brazilians, which differs from the "strong and cohesive" Polish or Chinese

community in Dublin. Despite the large number of Brazilians in Dublin, Grey does not see Brazilian families, and classifies the “community” in two different types: those who just arrived, and those who have been “here for two or three years”. Grey states that people having the same background, speaking the same language and sharing the same culture makes the interaction an easier process. He tells me that many immigrant “communities” in Dublin are enclosed, where members interact only between themselves and do not go away from each other. Grey sees not only the Brazilian community, but also the Polish and Nigerian community having those features. The learning of English is brought to the scene.

Many people come here and don't speak English. Then, they start to study English, and find it very easy to get connected with a social network formed by compatriots. At the end of the day these people are going to have even more difficulties to learn English (Grey).

I asked Grey if he would have any thoughts on how to strengthen the Brazilian community in Dublin. He tells me he has “mixed feelings” as to how this community could develop. The lack of unity is seen as a key factor for his perceived dispersion – “I see many groups of Brazilians here and there, many Brazilians going out to the same places, restaurants”.

Alfredo: Like (Name of a pub which is constantly visited by many Brazilians)...

Grey: (Laughter) sure! But I try to avoid there at all costs. Not to mention that I wouldn't know if these people who go to these places are inserted in the same community, or if they only socialise when they go out... I don't know if they related to each other as a community. This idea of community is only based on services, social and leisure aspects¹⁹⁹, but it's not a formal, structured

¹⁹⁹ Yellow pages services in Facebook groups.

community, which could benefit everybody. If you need, you cannot rely on them. Support networks are not visible.

Despite his critical view of an imagined Brazilian community, Grey would like to see a support network of Brazilians, especially for those who have been living in Dublin for a long time, and want to stay and establish relations in the city. However, he tells me he has “no idea” how that could be enacted and is not even sure if Brazilians would like that to happen.

At the second interview, a year and a week after the first one, Grey tells me how engaged he has been with his work. He has concluded his Master’s course and has been working for two NGO’s which try to help refugees in Ireland. Due to the nature of his work, he feels immersed in the job.

I work with refugees so it’s hard work. People depend on us, we are dependent on donations, things come up in the middle of the night, so my work is part of my life the whole time²⁰⁰ (Grey).

While his position in one NGO is voluntary, Grey has been promoted at the other. He started as an intern in this organisation while he was still undertaking his Master’s. His supervisor, whom he named as the leader of his network, trusted him “enough” to replace her, placing him as a member of staff. However, Grey says that he is at the beginning of his career, which makes him dependent on people – “I have no power to make decisions in my work, I am not in a coordinating position”. Grey praises his supervisor as his “mentor” and believes

²⁰⁰ Grey tells me that “3,000 refugees arrived in Ireland last year. In Ireland they are in a limbo. They wait five years until they get a result of their asylum application. In the meantime they cannot work or cook their own meals; they live in accommodations and earn 19,10 euro a week. Even if they get a refugee status, it is hard to establish themselves in Ireland. Landlords do not want them as tenants and to put their kids in school is problematic as many of them are not catholic and so on”.

she would be the one who would give him a reference letter, whether for professional or educational pathways. Grey highlights the role of collaboration as “key”, not only in his private life, but also in his work due to the need to accomplish objectives while working with scarce resources. Nevertheless, Grey reflects on the amount of effort he has been doing. He tells me that if he was working for an IT company he would be earning more money and his situation would be more stable – “I like doing this work, but will it bring me anywhere? I have no idea of what I will be doing in two or three years ahead²⁰¹”.

Grey attributes a negative role to the government, as he has to constantly memorise his period of stay, which papers he needs to have, and which alternatives he has in order to remain in the country. He cites an example of how much easier it would be if he had a job offer from a IT company, as he would be sure that he would obtain a work visa very easily – “the government is used to this kind of mechanism”. I ask him if he believed working for an IT company in Dublin would be a possibility and he rejects it. Grey would not sacrifice the area of work he enjoys, albeit he wonders if it is worth to remain working for NGO’s. “The role the government plays in my life is to force me to make decisions that I don’t want to make”.

Alfredo: What do you mean?

Grey: It limits my opportunities and access to work. I cannot remain in Ireland working part-time. I also cannot study part-time. There are legal issues of not having access to everything I want.

²⁰¹ Later in the interview he defines his plans: “I am an immigrant and I work with immigrants, so I know what is to feel as an outsider, at least in the beginning, when people have just arrived. If I come back to Brazil or if I go somewhere else, maybe Africa, I will stay in this area”.

After living three years in Dublin, Grey considers he has made true friends. He highlights five people from the university which he is still connected, and are committed to helping him with the visa process.

Grey: My friends here would leave their comfort zone to help me, but I don't like to ask for help. I have a support network here.

Alfredo: Was it difficult to build it?

Grey: Yes, it didn't happen overnight. But I believe it will not end overnight as it demanded effort to build. The connection is well established.

Grey makes remarks about the spatiality and range of his networks. He states that his contacts in Dublin make all the difference in terms of professional development, as "Ireland is minuscule and everybody knows everybody, especially in (his) sector". He says that someone whom he works with will know someone whom he already knows – "there is always a connection here and there". Grey tells me that in Brazil this would not happen due to the continental size of the country. If Grey goes back to Brazil, he would not know anyone in the professional sphere and concludes his thoughts saying that his "web of contacts have an influence here, not anywhere else".

Grey also highlights the role the university plays in his life, not only for the Master's degree, but also the "journey itself", turning him into a more realistic and not overly ambitious person. He values education more than he used to, as it gave him confidence to say "look, I know what I am doing". Grey tells me that when one has to "learn everything on their own, one would become more mature and learn how to "fight" for that which one wants". The effects of Grey's journey

are clear – “if I go somewhere else I would be fine with that. I took risks and became more proactive”.

Grey’s provides me with a metaphor in order to illustrate his experience abroad. It refers to the activity of sailing in the sea.

Your question makes me think about this project I’m currently working on. We send the youth to sail, where the crew is half Irish and half refugee. I think of the activity of sailing itself. When you are sailing in the sea it is not as fun as it looks. When I sailed for the first time I got sick in the first two hours. Everybody has to do something in the boat. If there are ten people in the boat, ten people are working there. I would say that you have to suffer in order to reach somewhere. In order to enjoy the ride you have to suffer, whether vomiting or pulling ropes, almost loosing your hand, something like that. So, I think that my metaphor would be that you have to suffer in order to reach somewhere (laughter). For fifteen, seventeen year-olds who are sailing for the first time, they don’t know what they will have to go through. They think they will simply enjoy a boat ride, but they have to work hard for that to happen (Grey).

The university campus was already empty when we finished the interview. I thanked Grey for his participation in my study and asked him about his plans for the future, if any. He tells me he wants to “keep working, meeting, new people, and developing as an individual, as cheesy as it sounds (laughter)”.

Appendix D: Yellow's Story

“It is a rebirth”

This is a story of Yellow, a 33-year-old PhD student. She is from the city of São Paulo, where she worked as a lawyer before coming to Dublin in 2012. She holds an honours bachelor degree and a Master's, both in Law, from São Paulo University. Before starting her PhD, she concluded another Master's in Law from another university in Dublin and worked briefly in an NGO. Yellow met an academic from her current university with whom she wrote a project and applied for a scholarship from the university, obtaining success. She lives on her own in a flat in North Dublin, and tells me that the best scenario would be if she could live in Dublin surrounded by her family and friends who live in Brazil. Nevertheless, Yellow believes that “life in Dublin is simpler and freer than in Brazil”.

How Yellow was enrolled in my PhD-actor-network

Yellow was based in the same postgraduate office as I was. I invited her orally to participate in my study when we met coincidentally outside the office. I became aware of her nationality as she had a picture of a Brazilian flag hanging on a board above her table, amidst other pictures and postcards.

Apart from using Skype and Facetime, Yellow exchange messages everyday, “sometimes many times during the day”, with her parents, her brother, and her sister, and believes that “distance” is a factor that increases the sincerity and candour of her conversations with her family members. She misses them and,

although the communication is performed “via the screen of a phone or computer”, her family is “present all the time”. Yellow’s groups of friends in WhatsApp are also part of her reality to the extent which “if (she) didn’t want to do her research, (she) could be all the time with her smartphone, living in the two worlds”. The main sources of trust for Yellow are her mother, her twin-sister, and her friends in Brazil.

After Yellow concluded her Master’s in another Irish university in 2013, she went back to Brazil and started looking for jobs. Yellow’s former boss offered her old job back in the law firm with unaltered wages, which made her refuse the offer. She sent her CV to many law firms, went to many career fairs, and became concerned as she was not being called for any job interview. Yellow was disillusioned with the socio-economical and employment situation in Brazil and classified her nine-month unemployment period as horrible; “it was like death (...) you feel useless. It is a very horrendous thing. The feeling of not contributing to society is very harmful to the mind and body”.

Yellow tells me that amongst so many “nos” she received, Ireland was the only “yes”, which made her think that she was supposed to return to the island.

I had one week to decide if I was going to accept the doctoral scholarship and I think it was one of the most stressful weeks of my life. I remember I wrote many lists, pro and cons lists, and what was the perspective of my life, my career. I had the possibility to do a PhD at São Paulo University with my supervisor, my former boss, but I thought “if I could include something international” and I don’t know, it seems a bit secluded... undergraduate, masters and doctorate in the same university. I needed to diversify, differentiate myself, otherwise you become just one more there, in that aquarium, everybody following that little model (Yellow).

Apart from being awarded a scholarship from the university and having saved money from her job as a lawyer, Yellow considers herself as the “daughter plus²⁰²”. She had financial and unconditional emotional support from her family to embark on her PhD journey in Dublin. She cites examples of her friends, other PhD students, whom – despite having scholarships – have to search for other sources of income, such as lecturing, correcting assignments and helping undergraduate students with disabilities – “otherwise it’s impossible. The budget is too small”.

Yellow points out the problem to find accommodation as an obstacle for international students in Dublin. In order to save costs, she decided she would look for a shared flat or house. She visited fifteen accommodations, but did not hear any response from them. As a result, she changed her mind and decided to live on her own in an apartment close to the university campus. The process of obtaining a visa, when “a day is lost” at the queue to the Immigration Office, and the inefficiency of the Irish health system, are also considered as minor difficulties. When I asked Yellow about the type of assistance she would like to have had, she goes back to 2012, the year she started her Master’s, and tells me that she cannot think of any kind of support that she needed but she did not have. Yellow tells me about her friend who had been living in Dublin for a long time, therefore being able to give her “lots of tips”. She also mentions a blog called “Vida na Irlanda” (Life in Ireland), which was “essential”. This blog was created by a Brazilian woman who has been living in Ireland for almost a decade, and contains relevant information for Brazilian students, such as how to look for

²⁰² The daughter who still needs some financial support from her parents.

accommodation online (Daft.ie), how the GNIB (Ireland's Immigration Office) routine is, information about "the neighbourhoods, how the bin collection happens, everything very well explained in Portuguese with all the corresponding links".

Yellow's educational and professional networks in Brazil did not help her with her life in Dublin, although "they could have". She saw that the university where she undertook her undergraduate and Master's degree in Brazil established a partnership with the university where she undertook her Master's in Dublin, but she had little participation in the process, only being asked, by the Irish institution, how her experience of doing a Masters at the Brazilian institution was. However, she always keeps a "foot" in Brazil. When she spent her holidays in that country in 2015, she visited her former boss and supervisor, and one of her undergraduate lecturers. Yellow tells me she has contacts in a NGO and in another university in São Paulo. She wants to have a plan in order to avoid repeating the experience she had after she finished her second Master's – "(She) does not know what is going to happen tomorrow".

In our conversation about social capital, Yellow states that "respect for differences" is a key feature of bringing members together and maintaining the group's cohesion. As she studied Human Rights, she sees respect as her "oxygen"; "(she) take this very seriously". She presents ideas that could be associated with Kantian ethics and are considered infallible if applied – "treat others as you would like to be treated".

Alfredo: I agree with you. Respect is the first block. It's foundational.

Yellow: Yes, one needs to respect the way the other is. Sometimes one is not compatible with you, but this doesn't mean that this person dislikes you, but they only operate in a different way. So what brings a group together is respect and acceptance of differences, and tolerance, but always maintaining the dialogue.

I asked Yellow what she thinks is the “currency” of a network, or what is exchanged when people relate to one another. She believes that the products of such exchange are “professional recommendations”, as this is a “universal reality”, and the learning lessons that one acquires from interacting with other people, whether the exchange is based on culture, musical preferences, culinary, or sport activities.

In terms of support networks in Dublin, Yellow turns to her PhD colleagues, friends who she can “really trust”, including her North American, Pakistani, and Dutch friend, Green, and her Irish boyfriend. Although she took time to realise it, Yellow believes that establishing friendships in a PhD context is complicated due to high amounts of competitiveness among the students, despite the differences in research interests. Yellow laments that her “safe port in her life in Dublin” – a Brazilian who holds a European passport – went back to Brazil in search of a better life. At the first interview, Yellow had just started having counselling sessions offered by the university, which has also been providing her emotional support, specifically in terms of “how to deal with difficult people in the academic universe”. Yellow praises the support she has been receiving from the university – “it's impeccable” – and tells me she had just talked to the priest in the university's “Inter Faith Centre”, who was “very friendly”.

Yellow narrates to me that she changed her PhD supervisor. She has been very happy with her two new “approachable, charismatic and well connected” supervisors, whom she considers the leaders of her network. They have suggested Yellow attend summer schools, conferences, and indicated a series of articles that are relevant for her research. However, Yellow is aware that she is “the one who has to look for opportunities”. She tells me that the university is helpful and supportive, citing the example of how fast the IT support department tries to solve related issues, and classifies the Irish government, “which has only to approve my visa”, as less bureaucratic than the Brazilian government – “they are more informal here, there are fewer barriers”.

Yellow recognises the existence of “many” Brazilian communities in Dublin, “organised in groups”, all of them formed around common interests such as, the Spiritism group and the Brazilian au pair community, besides groups that advertise products online and the opening of new restaurants.

Alfredo: So, at the end of the day you think there is a community although you are not part of it?

Yellow: Yes, I think it is because I am over the age group and have different interests... it’s a community of people in their twenties, who came to party and study English and I am not in the same “vibe”. I am done with that.

Yellow tells me that her international education experience has changed her in many significant ways. She “had” to become more patient, tolerant, and resourceful – “you develop this hard skin that you didn’t have before and then you become a stronger fish in the aquarium”. She mentions that the Halloween

costume of Wonder Woman she wore in 2014 represents the way she feels in Ireland, where “you have to make things work, solve problems”. In Brazil, one’s support networks would resemble a nest, where comfort would prevail. In Dublin, she asks herself: “Am I going to cry or will I do my thing? I will do my thing”. Yellow points out the “cultural issue” – “how they do things and how you do things, right?” – as an actor that changes the way she behaves in Dublin. She reaffirms that language is not an obstacle, but the culture, which made her a more formal and cautious person when communicating with others – “here, I have to think if I am going to be misinterpreted”. Yellow also portrays her identity, using an example of when her German friend told her “you are more German than I am”. Yellow considers herself as being the opposite to which she called the “Brazilian way” and defines what it means to be Irish – “they are not Brazilians, but they are not Germans neither. They are in the middle, in between”.

Yellow “thinks she will stay in Dublin” after the completion of her PhD as her relationship with her Irish boyfriend “is going well”. She was the lecturer of an undergraduate module, which confirmed her intentions to work as an academic. She presents her metaphor of “rebirth” in order to illustrate her international education experience.

It’s a rebirth. I guess that when I decided to do a PhD I was a young adult. Now I am sure I am an adult. It was a process of forced growth. During the Master’s I had the feeling I was doing a foreign exchange programme, if you will. There was a teenage touch in it. Now it is employment. Before, I was a larva, now I am a butterfly, although this is a LGBT thing. I had to... I didn’t kill who I was, but I had to make many adaptations to survive. The first year of my PhD was very heavy, but I am a more interesting human being now because of that, you know? Although it was painful, you become stronger. It is not a tiny thing that will put me down. Life has no

script, there is no recipe. Brazil is “jogo de cintura”²⁰³, we adapt a lot. If I were Germanic, I would expect functioning rules and punctuality from the world (Yellow).

²⁰³ Brazilian Portuguese expression that refers to flexibility and adaptability, a “moving waistline”.

Appendix E: Orange's Story

“I didn't have the usual international students' headaches”

This is a story of Orange, a 23-year-old Science Without Borders (SWB) undergraduate student. She lived in the university's student residence with three of her close Brazilian friends. She arrived on the 15th of June 2014 with intermediate level of English, and left on the 16th of August 2015 with advanced level. In Brazil, she used to be part of a “junior company”, her “strongest involvement in groups”²⁰⁴. She also participated in sports societies, such as futsal and handball. After her experience in the junior company was over, she became a counsellor – a position usually held by former members. She spent six months without having any extra curriculum activity until she travelled to Dublin. At the time of the interview, Orange had one and a half year left to conclude her undergraduate course, and would look for (compulsory) internship possibilities as soon as she returned to Brazil²⁰⁵, which she would do in three weeks time.

How Orange was enrolled in my PhD-actor-network

Orange's enrolment was an effect of my snowballing sample strategy. After interviewing Yellow for the first round of interviews, I expressed my concern in finding Brazilian undergraduate students who could participate in my study.

²⁰⁴ In Brazil, undergraduate courses of Business and Manufacturing Engineering have companies called “junior”, formed by undergraduate students and supervised by academics. These companies have professional status and serve as a laboratory for practising the content learnt in the course (experiential learning). Large companies very often contract their consultancy services due to the low cost and high commitment from their members.

²⁰⁵ Orange did not answer to two emails sent to arrange the second interview, which would have been held via Skype.

Yellow was at the campus gym, where she heard Orange speaking Portuguese with her friends, telling her about my research. Orange said she would be happy to be a participant and gave Yellow her email, who then sent it to me.

SWB students, such as Orange, might have to enrol in English courses before commencing their period of undergraduate course in the university. In the English course, “every week new students arrive and many leave”. Before living in the university’s student accommodation, she lived in a host family house, which “isolated” her from fellow SWB students at the initial stage of the programme. She believed that her “host parents” helped her considerably in improving her oral English skills, as they would talk to her very frequently. Orange refers to her housemate, a Japanese student who lived in the house for three months with her, as a “pleasant company”, although his English was “very limited”.

I truly missed my family. It was a real problem in the beginning here, but now I am OK, lots of saudade²⁰⁶, but as I am going home very soon, I am fine (Orange).

Orange is very close to her family and talks to “at least one family member” on a daily basis. She states that being apart from them was one of her biggest problems, even “painful”, but reflected on how this closeness, although seem as a positive feature, made her suffer more than she actually needed to. With the experience of being a year abroad, Orange tells me that “it is not impossible” to live temporarily away from her family and that she became able to manage her

²⁰⁶ See Green’s story (Appendix B). “Saudade” means missing something in a powerful, nostalgic manner. It is similar to the word “banzo”, created by African slaves during the 1500’s in colonial Brazil to express “saudade” of their homeland in Africa, an issue, however, that would never be solved. The English word “yearning” could be used in order to “translate”, in a way, “saudade”.

life on her own. Orange highlights the fact that recently acquainted people have the potential to become new friends, and that her old friends are not necessarily her only friends for life.

In financial terms Orange was fully assisted by SWB, a programme that enacts a “different reality” than the one experienced by English students, those who need to “find people to share accommodation, don’t know where to live, and are always getting into conflict with landlords”. Orange describes in detail all the bureaucratic procedures for her application to SWB until she arrived, finally, in the university in Dublin. A high GPA is needed in order to apply for a SWB scholarship, which has many phases of homologation. She mentioned that the Portuguese universities were saturated due to the large number of applications in the end of 2012, including hers. Orange tells me that she wanted to study in Europe and to improve her English skills, which made her discard the U.S., Canada, Australia, France and Italy. Universities from English speaking countries demand a certificate of English as an entry requirement, which she was trying to avoid as these certificates “cost money and (she) could not afford them”. The Brazilian Government then, facilitated even further the process for SWB students, creating the program English Without Borders, with a strong online structure, where students would not have to pay for their English certificates. Despite not knowing “anything about Ireland”, Orange chose the latter instead of the UK for “bureaucratic reasons”. After acquiring her English certificate, she explains her decision-making process.

I was between university A and university B and then I saw that many Brazilians were going to A, and in the beginning I thought this

would be very harmful, but at the end of the day I found out that if it wasn't for the Brazilians here we would have been in a even more complicated situation... in terms of sociability...it makes all the difference. Because there is no solution, we need social contact in the day to day; at least for me this is very important, as I am very close to my friends. If there weren't Brazilians here I would be very lost (Orange).

I investigated further this issue, and told her that I had a similar idea when I was an ESOL student in Dublin.

Alfredo: You travel to improve your English which is somewhat hindered if you stay too close to other Brazilians, as you would not practice your English as much as you could. Was that your thinking process?

Orange: Yes, you think that they will hinder your English learning, but then they are very important for your integration, and it was great because I met people from all over Brazil. I met people from cities that I didn't imagine existed.

Orange "established lots of friends, but mainly Brazilians", who truly helped and interacted with each other, serving as emotional support – "I never turned to any international student for emotional support, only Brazilians". She states that events organised by the university's international office, such as "international students lunch", contributed to the maintenance of "(her) recently formed friendships".

In terms of educational issues, Orange highlights the "key" support provided by the university's international office, mentioning a case where one of her colleagues was having serious "personal and health problems", but was assisted by the office in a thorough manner. When I asked about her interactions with Irish

nationals she compared the way she imagines people would do in Brazil with the way it is done in Dublin.

The interaction I had with the Irish happened only when I had to do group assignments. Apart from that they don't care at all to interact. It's not like in Brazil. When someone from abroad comes everybody behaves like an ET has arrived, but here this just doesn't happen. I think it is because they receive so many international students (Orange).

Later on the interview, Orange tells me that she interacted with a few Irish students in the student accommodation, but complains that the relationship never reaches a "deeper level", classifying as "superficial" the level of interaction with domestic students. "They are very helpful for some things, but emotionally others nationalities are very different".

Orange sought advice from one of her lectures in Brazil in order to define the research she would do for her undergraduate dissertation, which had an influence in her choice of modules in the Irish university. She tells me that her course coordinator in Brazil motivated her immensely to apply for SWB. However, Orange's engagement with the programme faced a barrier.

Orange: My family has some financial problems, so my parents need me to start working urgently so I can have an income. So my dad was completely against me doing a foreign exchange programme, even if it was paid by the government.

Alfredo: Would you mind if I asked why?

Orange: Because they spend a year abroad, students from SWB might take longer to graduate. That's why I really accomplished my objectives here. I improved my English, maybe not so much my oral skills, but writing, listening, and comprehension were really improved. But above all, I took modules here that are equivalent to the ones I would still have to undertake in Brazil, so at the end of

the day I will graduate on time. My dad needs that I join the work force as soon as I can.

Orange needed the help from the university's international office in order to take the exact modules she wanted. The manufacturing engineering curriculum in Brazil contains modules that in Ireland are placed in the business curriculum. Orange was able to demonstrate the similarity and proximity of the modules to one staff member of the university's international office. This negotiation allowed her to take the modules she chose, therefore keeping her graduation date in Brazil unaltered.

My investigations of social capital stimulated Orange to present her ideas on what could bring a group together. She tells me that her "academic, personal or professional networks see commitment as the key value". I then asked what is exchanged in her network, and she replied that everything would depend on the moment and context, but above all "any form of exchange depends on what is your interest in that specific moment. "What are your objectives? What do people have to offer?"

Orange says she used to believe that common interests would be the reason why people form social groups, "the societies they have here on campus for example". However, her experience abroad made her change her perspective on this issue. She tries to explain her view.

Let's suppose, I like country music and you like rock, but we get along cooking, so... It is valuing what is interesting about each other. I play the guitar and for you, it is interesting that I play the guitar (Orange).

I tell her that two people getting along cooking would be a common feature, a shared hobby or ability, which in turn, would bring members of a group together. She replies: "Yes, we formed a group because we were in the same situation".

Orange acknowledges the existence of a Brazilian student community in Dublin, but separates it into two strains. There are those who come to study in Higher Education, and those who come to study English – "as the visa is easy to obtain" – and work as an au pair, cleaner, sign holders, pub floor staff, or in the rickshaw – "whatever is available". She makes a reservation about a smaller group of Brazilians who travel to Dublin exclusively "because of the visa, with an excuse to do an English course". These people would gather in pubs where the price of a pint of beer is considerably lower than the average price in the city, "so it would be impossible not to find Brazilians in these places". I asked Orange if people collaborate with one another in the "community". She believed that Brazilians do help each other, "it doesn't matter what each one is doing, being a cleaner or a SWB student", and used the rickshaw as an example.

I love taking the rickshaw, because there will always be a Brazilian guiding it. You don't even need to speak English! "Would you take me to this place for one euro?" And they go for it! They are "brother"²⁰⁷. We play around, we say "riskshaw" instead of rickshaw, because we like adrenalin, Brazilians like to cycle fast and furious (laughter) (Orange).

²⁰⁷ In some parts of Brazil, the English word "brother" is used as a slang to designate someone who is a good friend, or a very friendly person – in a extremely informal context.

I finalise my interview with Orange listening to her interjection of surprise when I mention that I have been living in Dublin for seven years, “You are crazy!” She then tells me that she became more open minded and critical as an effect of her experience abroad.

I see people complaining about Brazil, talking our country down and I say “hey, is it bad?” It is indeed, but we are from there and who is going to improve the situation? I believe in this. And the people who go abroad end up wanting to know more about Brazil and work for its improvement...there...you know? So I think this was very positive. Everybody who goes abroad changes their mindset. We have numerous ‘Brasils’, it’s impressive! Lots of different realities, not only socio-economic, but cultural, familial, and of friendship (Orange).

Appendix F: Red's Story

“Brazilians made me feel at home”

This is a story of Red, a 24-year-old SWB undergraduate student. She arrived in Dublin on the 14th of September 2014 with upper-intermediate level of English and left on the 16th of August 2015 with advanced level. She took the plane from Brazil to Dublin with her mother and shared an accommodation with four other students, whom she knew “very well”, from the SWB programme.

Before starting the interview²⁰⁸, and motivated by the queries from previous students, I asked Red how she would feel if I conducted the interview in English. She said she would not mind giving the interview in English, but guaranteed me that grammar mistakes would certainly be made. However, she told me that speaking in her native language allows her to be more natural and freer, which would contribute to a more open and honest conversation.

How Red was enrolled in my PhD-actor-network

I asked Orange if she could indicate other undergraduate students from SWB, and she then indicated Red.

Red tells me that her experience in Dublin was not the first time she went away from her parents' house. She had to move to another city in Brazil after she passed the university entry exams, as the university campus was not located in her hometown. In that situation, she had to form her “networks all over again”. She

²⁰⁸ Similarly to Orange, Red did not respond to my request for a second interview.

believes that extracurricular activities made her step out of the “university bubble” as she connected with other actors in the community by being a mental health coordinator. Red states that the connection with her family and friends is invaluable, telling me that she gives advice to her parents as much as they give to her.

Technology plays a role in Red’s life, maintaining her connection with actors from her network in Brazil, whether friends or family. However, Red makes a reservation about the role of virtual platforms and social media. She says that since she arrived in Dublin she feels more distant to her family and friends, pointing out the limitations technology has in approximating the “two worlds”.

Skype acts as a relief but you are out of their space, out of their reality... this makes a huge difference. You cannot transmit what you live here and you cannot absorb what they live there, it’s surreal (Red).

The distance between Red and her family and friends in Brazil is enhanced by the notion of “Developing South” and “Developed North”. According to Red, there is a “gap”, which inhabits the imagination of people who does not know “the other side of the world”. She believes that people from developing countries assume that once a person is living in the developed area of the world, there will be no reasons to complain about anything. Red attributes this inferiority complex to a lack of knowledge about life in the Global North. She says that one needs to travel abroad and experiences the life in developed countries as an immigrant in order to give informed opinions.

I ask her if she believes technology could be an actor that would bring balance in her interaction with both “worlds” (North and South), maintaining connections with Brazilian actors.

My relationship with my boyfriend ended just before I travelled to Dublin, so you can see how things are. As you strengthen your connections in Dublin you consequently weakens your connections in Brazil. You try to find a balance, equilibrium, but at a certain moment you will be more disconnected either with one or the other. Sometimes, I was with my friends here and they would say “please, leave your phone behind for a moment, it seems you are not here with us”, and then I would do so and talk to them for forty minutes. As a result, people in Brazil would later tell me “oh, you have forgotten about us”. In the end, you don’t know what to do (Red).

Red talked about her enrolment with SWB and the final choice to travel to Dublin. However, apart from SWB enrolment mechanisms, she introduced two new actors to her story: her father and a resistance against the U.S.

Red: To be honest, I chose Ireland because my dad lives in London since 2011, so I could visit him, and at the time I had to choose a destination I wouldn’t choose the U.S.

Alfredo: Why not?

Red: I could visit the U.S. but would never live there; I don’t have the “American dream”. I have a resistance against the U.S. Part of my family lives there, and they think they are “better” because they live there.

This part of the interview went for quite a long time. Red started presenting all the counter-networks, everything that annoyed and disappointed her in Dublin. She made me feel empathetic for her case and all her bad experiences.

I don’t feel connected to Dublin. It didn’t change my life. Yes, it was good to have been part of SWB, but that was it. The cold, the rain... those things affected my mood. And also due to the fact that I was alone here (Red).

Despite her complaints, she was grateful to the university's international office, which provided her with all the support she needed, and told me how friendly and helpful the Irish are. Further on the interview, I started understanding her anger. Red started describing events of xenophobia that she experienced in Dublin. She described two events that she felt discriminated against by human actors. She also pointed out an aggravating factor regarding these events as they happened when she was seeking entertainment; a break from work.

I was at the grocery shop and this guy was cutting in line. I complained and he replied: "go back to where you are from" (Red).

It was 23:55 and the club had a policy of free entrance until midnight. Nevertheless, they asked me for the money (Red).

Regarding the episode in the club, Red tells me how important was the presence of one of her Brazilian friends at the scene who decided to support her. "We were there at this club and, thank god, my friend was with me, so after this episode we left together". Red narrates to me how those episodes made her feel.

These events nurtured an immense anger inside of me. I came to this country, legally, I am not doing anything wrong and I am being treated like that! Why would I create a sense of belonging, a connection with this place? Being welcomed like that? There is no reason. Of course, I created a thick skin, I adapted myself to that and I have to thank the Brazilians for that. They made Ireland my home during this period. They saved my programme (Red).

Red believes there is a norm of mutual respect in Europe "as long as A does not interact with B. If A has to interact with B, xenophobia would easily flourish". She was glad she had compatriots to assist and give her comfort during the period of stay in Dublin. In terms of networks of help from Brazil, Red states that her

lectures helped her with the case study she was writing while in Dublin and “that was all”.

In Dublin, Red felt that a leader was missing in her social group, the “the glue which would bring everybody together, the catalyser”. She refers to the Brazilian community in Dublin as well as the Brazilian student community in the university. According to Red, the “catalyser” could have helped people in solving problems more easily and faster.

I try to investigate it further with Red. She tells me that she missed the existence of events, “a Brazilian day event, for instance”. I tell her that the international office holds many events for international students and there are many academic societies on campus. She mentions that there was an international student lunch. She went there, but she did not know anybody. She suggested that the international office should have held a lunch prior to “the lunch”. The “first” lunch would be the starting point and then, based on common interests, groups would be formed and maintained.

Red said that members of her network in Dublin valued each one’s differences and the contributions each one could bring to the group. I insisted on the idea of the “catalyser”, seeking more clarification, and she replied.

The catalyser is the one who pours the glue. Then, the glue spreads based on individual differences and common interests of the members of the group, which creates a space to exchange experiences (Red).

I came back to Red's references to the global imaginary regarding North and South and how they relate to each other, trying to investigate how she makes sense of the Brazilian community in Dublin.

Some Brazilians would demonstrate the "stray dog complex"²⁰⁹. They do not want to recognise themselves as being part of the Brazilian group. They want to see themselves as outsiders to the Brazilian group. It's a funny thing. If you go to (name of a pub where Brazilians tend to go to), for example. If you are going there it is because you belong to the group of Brazilians. One would complain "people are speaking Portuguese here". Speak the language you want, Portuguese, English, German, but belong to the Brazilian group. Don't be ashamed of belonging, of identifying yourself. I belong to the group of immigrants; I belong to the Brazilian group of immigrants in Dublin (Red).

I tried to explore more of this issue with Red. She told me that there is a lack of unity in the Brazilian community abroad, "not only in Dublin". According to her, Brazilians treat each other disrespectfully and want to be away from one another when abroad, "but when there is a foreigner in the story, even if the foreigner is being somewhat disrespectful, the Brazilian would say *oh hello*. Character comes first than nationality. Why Brazilians do not help each other more?"

Red finalises the interview sharing her learning experiences generated by SWB. She tells me that she learnt to acknowledge the extent to which other people are important in one's life. SWB made her "a better person", calmer, more resilient and open-minded, helping her to create a strong bond with the Brazilians on campus. Red believes that if this group had not been formed, she would have

²⁰⁹ Nelson Rodrigues, a Brazilian journalist and playwright, invented the expression "stray dog complex" as a way to illustrate the inferiority that some Brazilians feel towards the "developed" world. He believed that football has made Brazilians proud of their country and helped them to overcome the "stray dog complex". See Rodrigues, N. 2012 *Brasil em campo*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira.

wasted her time. Her “gratitude was to have lived with each piece of Brazil, celebrating the difference”. Despite the exposed difficulties, Red mentions that “when things started to work out, the programme came to an end”.

Appendix G: Blue's Story

“Taking risks”

This is a story of Blue, a 27-year-old ESOL student, bachelor in business, from the state of São Paulo. He used to be a bank clerk before coming to Dublin, where he arrived on the 28th of July 2015 with intermediate level of English, and left on the 6th of July 2016 with advanced level. Apart from his honours degree in Business Administration, he undertook three vocational education courses in Brazil: Business, Statistics, and Data Processing, where he met a lot of people and took pride in being a sociable person, eager to participate in different networks.

I enjoy getting to know different things, you know? If someone invites me to play bocce I go, although I might not like the game itself. Like fishing... I dislike fishing, but if someone invites me to go fishing, I go, as there are people gathering around, having a conversation (Blue).

How Blue was enrolled in my PhD-actor-network

I met Blue on the university campus during a break from his English class in the morning of the 1st of September 2015. I was returning to the shared postgraduate office – after having struggled with a malfunctioning coffee machine – when I passed near two lads (Blue and Brown). They were speaking Portuguese in front of the entrance of the building and I did not hesitate to approach them, joining their conversation. “Olá Brasileiros!” (Hello Brazilians) I said. They had just arrived in Dublin; three days ago. Newly arrived students can enjoy meeting a

compatriot²¹⁰, especially if the latter has been abroad for a while, as information about the “experience abroad” can be shared – easing the anxiety for the unknown²¹¹. I told them about the research I was conducting, inviting them informally to be part of the sample. I was truly engaged in finding students to join my study; was on a “student hunt”, and knew I must be efficient and objective. Not desperate, but assertive. Thankfully, they happened to be nice citizens. They promptly agreed to participate in the study²¹² and were offered my support in regard to “anything they need”, especially with the homework from their English class, or crafting a nice CV. I interviewed both students, Blue and Brown, in the same day. Brown left for a while to have lunch with his girlfriend, and I walked with Blue to the “interview room²¹³”.

In the lecture room, prior to the beginning of the first interview, Blue stands up and moves his defective chair away. He pulls another chair and says: “just because this one here is ugly people ignore it, but it works better than the other”. He sits on it and smiles.

Alfredo: Objects participate in our life all the time, don't they?

Blue: Of course, all the time (he points to his phone).

²¹⁰ In her arrival, Beige referred to listen to Brazilian Portuguese while walking in the streets of Dublin as “an attractor, something that pulls you (...) comforts you”.

²¹¹ Which is also a form of social capital; information flows (Coleman 1988).

²¹² Informally, as the consent form was signed minutes prior to the meeting.

²¹³ See Chapter 3 (p.111).

A bag of chocolate cookies is opened by Blue and one is offered to me. “That’s my lunch”, he says.

Blue’s story was composed by two interviews. The second interview I held with Blue was enacted in a “farewell atmosphere” on the 24th of February 2016. He was about to fly to Morocco, giving continuity to his experience abroad. In the very last moment of the second interview I brought metaphors to the scene, as follows:

Alfredo: Can you give me a metaphor that describes your experience as an international student in Dublin?

Blue: Metaphor?

Alfredo: Yes, something that can illustrate your experience here. It can be a word that captures what is going on with you here in Dublin.

Blue: Ah! I would say risks.

Alfredo: Why?

Blue: We are taking risks and making decisions all the time, and we have to stand for the decisions we make. If I don’t take risks I will not gain anything, I will be doing the same things that are safe and the results will be more or less the same. If I do something different I have to take this risk to see whether I can harvest something or not, but I need to take this risk to get something.

Alfredo: What risks are you taking when you come to Dublin?

Blue: Risk of not adapting to the culture, risk of being sick, risk of missing my country, risk of running out of money and not being able to do anything; being in need of things.

Blue became an actor in global student mobility due to his need to enhance his English skills. He had a “dream” of pursuing capital, in all its forms, abroad. The

problem articulated by Blue derived from his outcomes in various job interviews, where he realised that “English skills were missing”. As he puts it:

I was always prepared for my job interviews but couldn't get the job because of my English skills, which are intermediate. That hurts. I couldn't get a job just because of my level of English (Blue).

After the problem was defined, Blue started enrolling other actors that were relevant for his project. He became determined to save R\$ 10,000 from his work at the bank in order to invest in his dream, as money was not highly visible in his familial context. Blue's girlfriend, along with his mother, provided him with all the emotional support he claimed he needed. He tells me that his girlfriend would have preferred he had stayed in Brazil, however “she supported me, with a heavy heart, but she supported me”.

After rejecting most English speaking countries due to their pricey English course fees, he chose to travel to Dublin, a place that is “not that expensive and it is closer to the world”. Blue enrolled another actor, a travel agency, which took care of giving him information about the specificities of the trip.

At his initial stage in Dublin, Blue sent an email to the “Irish Mensa”, a social group formed by people with high IQ scores, but experienced frustration when he found out that he would have to pay fees to join the group, and the length of time they took to answer him. In addition, his desire to join academic societies did not succeed.

Blue lived in two different locations during his stay in Dublin. The first had Venezuelans, an Irish, and Brazilians whom he met previously in the travel agency and spent the New Years' Eve in Scotland, "thanks to a cheap flight". At the moment of the second interview, he was living in an apartment in city centre with Brazilian ESOL students only, where tableware and pans – which were not cleaned after use – generated an array of discussions among the housemates.

I was living away from city centre and then I started wanting to become closer to where things happen, not spending with taxi when coming back from a night out, you know? Saving money. Now, I am cycling. I save even more money (Blue).

Blue's experience evolved around financial issues. Financial capital was a primary actor, the absence of which meant some linkages and alliances could not be forged and compromised his ability to flourish. He focused his "net-work" on assembling actors who could bring money, or avoid its loss, to his actor-network. He assembled a bike, "the cheapest transportation you can have", and lived in a house where its residents would not switch on the heater as a way to save electricity costs.

Alfredo: So... Do you stay indoors wearing a jacket?

Blue: Yes, I do. We all do in the house.

Employment, or simply "a job" was an actor whose enrolment was part of Blue's plans. Blue, in the first interview, had an open mind about his possibilities of finding a remunerated activity, even cycling a "rickshaw" if needed. He found two temporary jobs. The first, swimming instructor for kids, where he stayed for a

week, and the second, floor staff in a pub for two days (just to cover his friend's temporary absence). He signed in to a website commonly used to find temporary work in Ireland, without success.

My situation in Dublin almost became like homelessness. (He puts his hand on his chin and mumbles). No... that is an exaggeration, but I was walking a tightrope. The biggest problem of lack of money is that you have to accept some things, like cycling in the cold weather; not spending with taxi...there is no comfort (Blue).

In his seventh month as an international student in Dublin, Blue was introduced to a website called "Workaway" by one of his Brazilian friends who had previously experienced its services – "it allowed me to do something that I was looking for... I found the tool that I needed". Blue was going to take a plane to Morocco a day after the second interview, where he will be working four hours a day in an English School, including participating in English conversation sessions after class, and helping in the school reception. He chose a country which was closer to Ireland in order to spend less with the flight, and one that would be dissimilar to Ireland, in order to live a "completely different experience".

In Blue's case, the school acted as "the center" of his experience as an international student in Dublin. He was immersed in the campus life, where he went to the pub, library, and conversation workshops after class. He states that he made ten Japanese friends and "stays in touch" with them via social media, as they are now back in Japan. He intends to go to Japan some day, where he expects to have free accommodation. The fact that the English School is located on the university campus was pivotal for Blue. He knew he could "immerse in the culture more" and enjoy the campus life.

Blue believes that common interests and affinity are the “glue” of a social group. He says that the connection among individuals is generated out of a shared objective, such as “English study groups that I participate in were created due to the common goal of learning English”. He believes that overall he could feel a sense of camaraderie enacted by human actors with whom he interacted. He gives me an example when he offered his sofa to his French friend when she had no place to stay for the night. However, Blue mentions that there are limits, or things that one would not ask if they need, such as money – “overall, you are on your own”.

Alfredo: What about the institutions? Do you think they could help you in some way?

Blue: I just follow the rules established by the institutions, as I don't benefit from any right.

Alfredo: What do you mean?

Blue: If I need any help from the government I won't have. It is all up to me. I had to bring a certain amount of money in order to show them “hey, I can get by while I am here”. That's their function. They regulate for the population and I have to follow all the rules they created.

Blue highlights how the high turnover of students, “many people coming and many people leaving” makes the establishment of close friendships a hard process. However, apart from telling me that he has formed social groups in his accommodation and in the university, he stresses Brown's friendship.

Brown is my good friend, if I need anything I can count on him. We spent Christmas together. The concept of family, that we leave behind when we travel, was incorporated by him and his girlfriend. I tried to buy my flight to Morocco yesterday and I wasn't able to,

because they were not accepting my credit card for some reason. He then bought it for me. I will pay him back of course, but you know? It is a simple thing, but it helps a lot. I will travel now, and will leave my luggage at his house, this really helps (Blue).

I ended the interview asking Blue if he felt integrated in Dublin.

Yes and no. I feel at home as I know many people who are in the same boat as myself. If I think about the real Dublin, from the perspective to have Irish people around me... then the answer is no. But I reached my objectives.

Regarding the Brazilian community in Dublin, Blue believes that it does not “exist”, but the fact that people approximate to that which is familiar to them is “normal”. He also cites Facebook groups and blogs that illuminate the reality of Brazilian ESOL students in Dublin, or “how things work, what you need to do, and the types of work students usually get”, which helped him to construct a notion of the experience he would have ahead of him.

Blue arrived in Dublin with pre-intermediate level of English, leaving with advanced level, which he considers “an objective that was achieved”. He tells me that he intends to pursue a MBA in the near future, conditional on his winning a scholarship, as his level of English is now “competitive”. He overcame the Irish cold weather, and considered his travel to Morocco as a mechanism to “open his mind, expand his ideas, and acquire life experience, especially now that (he) is freer than ever, as (he) broke up with his girlfriend”. When I asked Blue if he had any help from actors based in Brazil, he told me that they made “absolutely no difference”. Despite maintaining the contact via social media, his friends in Brazil had no influence in any decision he made in Dublin. He told me that he

communicated most with his grandmother, making sure to call her every week as she “missed (him) immensely”.

Appendix H: Brown's Story

“I lost my job and had a moment of decision”

This is a story of Brown, a 34-year-old ESOL student in Dublin. He holds a bachelor degree in information systems, and a MBA. He used to be a marketing coordinator in the state of São Paulo, but lost his job as his company experienced downsizing, when more than three hundred people lost their jobs in a single day. He travelled to Dublin with his girlfriend, who was also unemployed. She is his biggest source of trust – as well as his parents and two of his closest friends, his “confidants”. A few days before the interview²¹⁴, Brown and his girlfriend had moved from the English school accommodation to a house in North Dublin with four other Brazilian ESOL students and one Irish bank clerk.

I had never been fired before. I worked for ten years in a bank and then I left. After that, I worked for three years in (name of the company) and was fired! What am I going to do now? It is this economic crisis... Then my girlfriend and I finally decided, “let’s improve our English skills, now it is time, Brazil is not fine, we are free, we don’t have kids, we have nothing that holds us back, let’s embark on this adventure” (Brown).

How Brown was enrolled in my PhD-actor-network

See Blue (Appendix G).

When Brown was fired, he stayed for a month at home in Brazil, period in which he adjusted every little detail of his travel to Dublin. In this month, he researched, chose the school, paid, and “took the plane”. He tells me he had a “dream” to stay three months abroad studying English, which turned out to be a year abroad, as he

²¹⁴ Brown was not available for the second interview.

and his girlfriend made a commitment to support each other in this journey. Although Brown had a chance to look for employment in Brazil, he saw himself in the midst of a “moment of decision”. Brown chose Ireland due to the possibilities of working while studying and for the “reasonably simple” process of obtaining a visa. Moreover, since his girlfriend’s family lives in Europe, the chance of visiting them while having this experience abroad was also pointed as a rationale for choosing Dublin as a destination. Friends who live in Dublin also motivated Brown to choose that city. Brown has a friend living in Dublin who he considers as a “rare case”. His friend has a work visa (stamp 4) and when he came to Dublin he was determined not to search for “sub-employment”. He found a job in his area, IT, and has been “very happy” ever since, working at the Revenue Office. However, he is leaving Dublin soon as his girlfriend can no longer stand the cold climate. Brown’s fifteen years savings were crucial to implement his plan of travelling abroad.

Brown is very close to his family and to be away from them was a factor of difficulty when he made the decision to come to Dublin. He has had the same group of five friends for thirty years and is not part of any society, or formal group in Brazil. Brown tells me that the frequency in which he communicates with his family and friends is currently higher than before. He used to live in a house ten minutes away driving from his parents house, which made him spend “three or four days” without getting in touch with them. Now that the distance is much longer, he feels the need to communicate more often, for which technology plays a crucial role.

Technology helps a lot. FaceTime, WhatsApp. I have the family group, the friends group. You know everything that is happening with their routine, you are just not there (Brown).

Apart from his family and friends, support from Brazil was restricted to the travel agency, which Brown bought the services from. He was going to spend a day in a pub to have a barista training, which would “capacitate” him to the job market. This training was organised by the travel agency, owned by Brazilians and with headquarters in Dublin. Brazilian educational and professional networks neither had any participation nor helped Brown in his endurance in Dublin.

My educational and professional networks in Brazil didn’t influence my decision to come, they didn’t have any participation on that, and they don’t make any difference to me here whatsoever (Brown).

In Dublin, Brown found his house and classmates to be important actors in his initial stage as an ESOL student “as they were discovering the land together”. In addition, Facebook groups were often used as source of information in the case of acquiring a student visa, opening a bank account, accommodation, and entertainment. Brown’s Irish flatmate assumes a role of significant support, including employment related issues.

Brown: This Irish fellow who lives with me helped me to write my CV in English. I do my homework and he corrects it and I also asked him to correct me if I make mistakes in English... Just because I asked... He would never do such thing! I asked him about jobs, what is good, what is bad. This is phenomenal. If I say “I want to go somewhere”, he tells me which bus I need to take, he even goes with us. This was pure luck. We found this house, which was his house. He has a Brazilian girlfriend, and he is like a Brazilian.

Alfredo: Like a Brazilian?

Brown: Yes. He's affectionate, energetic and caring. He wants to be around, and to do stuff together. In the second week after we arrived he asked us if we wanted to get to know some beaches. We took the car and spent the whole day driving around many places. If we had taken the bus we would have taken three, four days to know all the places he showed us. We went to Malahide and Howth.

Despite his “fear of the unknown”, Brown settled in Dublin quickly and tells me that he had a rational plan for acquiring a job and finding a house close to campus, where energy, initiative, and focus are the “key to get what you want (...) things don't fall from the sky, and there is the challenge imposed by the need to do everything through English, especially job interviews”. He describes the behaviour of one of his housemates who printed dozens of CV's, but was spending his days at home, instead of going out to the streets “knocking on the doors of the companies”. Brown then, asked him: “Are you waiting for someone to knock on our door?” At the moment of the interview²¹⁵, Brown was applying for jobs via employment websites (Jobs.ie; Irishjobs.ie) not minding which position he could find; from his professional area (banking and marketing) to anything, “even cleaner”. One of his flatmates, who works as a swimming instructor for kids, let him know about a job position that had just become available. Brown then, started to work as a swimming instructor for kids around ten hours a week, but kept looking for a more stable position which he could work the twenty hours allowed by the Irish law. He managed to be approved in an international retailer recruitment process, where he is currently working as a stock

²¹⁵ I interviewed Brown once and tried to arrange a second interview, after a year, according to my methodological plan. Although he was no longer available for the second interview, we exchanged a couple of WhatsApp messages, where he updated me about his life and future intentions in Dublin.

taker. The swimming instructor position was occupied by Brown's girlfriend²¹⁶. Updates given by Brown via WhatsApp indicate that he is "quite happy" in his job and is planning to renew his visa for one more year as an ESOL student in Dublin.

In my attempt to understand "social capital", I asked Brown what bring members of a group together and how he maintains his social networks. He believes friendship and relationships are the result of an exchange that is seen as an effect of human actors' needs.

At a certain moment you will need someone and that person will be there for you. Then, the opposite happens. When you are happy you have someone by your side to laugh with you, and when you are sad, you have someone there for you. This exchange strengthens relationships and I try to construct this everywhere I go (Brown).

Brown²¹⁷ mentioned that support relationships are a result of "affinity", and describes the logics of human interaction based on a utilitarian perspective.

Everything you exchange, you also add. If you work with cars and then I need something related to cars I know that I can count on you. The other works with travels, so if I am going to travel I will look for this person, you know? It is about this exchange of necessities. At the end of the day you utilise other people and they do the same to you, but the objective of this exchange is to build partnerships, which becomes stronger and stronger with time, its roots become stronger everyday. It's an exchange of positive energy. If people make a blunder, the relationship stays in the name of what has been constructed in the past, together (Brown).

I moved on to explore the issues of an imagined Brazilian community in Dublin.

²¹⁶ She traveled for a week indicating Blue to cover her during this period.

²¹⁷ As Blue did.

Brown tells me that his objective is not to be immersed in this community, although he sees no problem in interacting with them eventually – “it’s inevitable”. He attributes the process of learning English, his will to experiment new realities, and to acquire a “broader view of things” as the rationale for a “calculated distance” to the Brazilian community – “Hey, I am not in Brazil!” Brown thinks of community as “something with borders”, where people restrict their living within an enclosed space. This “space” is created around specific spots where Brazilians go to, such as “certain” pubs, restaurants, capoeira²¹⁸ demonstrations, barbecue evenings, and shows of traditional Brazilian music genres, such as *samba*, *axé*, and *sertanejo*. Brown tells me that these spaces are occupied by people who do not want to go back to Brazil and are here to “venture” – “They only speak Portuguese, it is like they are living in Brazil, but in a different place”.

Alfredo: Do you think relationships of trust would flourish in these “enclosed spaces”?

Brown: Yes, and that is the way it is. We are Brazilian. When you need serious support, Europeans are not going to help you, but the Brazilians.

²¹⁸ Capoeira is an object that is “more than one but less than many” (Mol 2002). Currently is seen as a sport, or aerobic activity. In colonial Brazil, slaves developed capoeira as a fighting style in order to resist oppression from the landlords of sugar cane plantations. However, the former would tell the latter that capoeira was a dance, keeping it alive and possible to be practised (if the landlords knew that the slaves were training some sort of martial arts, the former would cease such practice).

Appendix I: Silver's Story

“To learn is to deal with difficulties”

This is a story of Silver, a 21-year-old SWB undergraduate student. He arrived in Dublin on the 7th of July 2015 with pre-intermediate level of English, and left on the 5th of July 2016 with upper-intermediate level. Silver travelled to Dublin on his own, sharing the university's accommodation with three Irish students whom he had just met. With his smartphone always at hand, and praising his guitar, “a good companion”, he tells me that he has made the best choice of coming to Dublin and studying in this particular university, and does not spare his gratitude to SWB.

How Silver was enrolled in my PhD-actor-network

Silver was an acquaintance of Blue, who passed me the former's Facebook account. The first interview was held on the 18th September 2015 and the second one²¹⁹ was held on the 25th of April 2016.

Silver commenced his undergraduate course when he was sixteen years old, two years prior to the usual age in which secondary students usually join Higher Education in Brazil. He applied for the university entry exams “just to see what could happen” and passed. During the university period he “deconstruct his beliefs and developed as an individual”, which made him love the Academy, and motivated him to pursue a career as a lecturer and researcher. He values education

²¹⁹ After the interview was done, we dedicated thirty-five minutes to talk about Brazilian politics. This interview took place one week after the fatidic session in the Brazilian Congress that approved the impeachment of the then President Dilma Rousseff.

immensely and its power to transform lives. Silver was told by his fellow students that he should become a lecturer, as he taught them how to solve Maths problems in secondary school.

In Brazil, he lived with his family, who provides him invaluable emotional support, and tells me that his group of “friends for life” was formed during his primary and secondary education. Silver has also made friends in the university, including lecturers. He tells me he had the luck to study in a university where the lecturers are very open and even socialise with students outside campus – “in my university, the lecturers don’t follow that idea that they are positioned a level above the students”. Both fellow students and lecturers are seen as sources of advice for Silver. He communicates with his family daily via Skype, updating them on what has been the “craic” in Dublin, which “keeps (him) healthy”. His friends are also contacted daily via Facebook. Silver tells me he has no WhatsApp, as he sees no reason to have two different tools that do the same thing and have the same contacts. Although it seems “counter-intuitive”, Silver tells me that during his experience abroad he strengthened his ties with his family and friends in Brazil.

Silver was delighted when I asked him why he travelled to Dublin. He tells me that this question is a “conversation starter”, helping him to connect with people in the city. The initiative to apply for SWB was motivated by Silver’s lecturers – “we developed this idea together, and they told me to go for it!”

This opportunity is priceless. My family wouldn't have the conditions to pay me a year abroad. We are poor, really poor, you know? That's why I have to study very hard and contribute to my country when I come back (Silver).

The SWB programme²²⁰ offers a wide range of countries where Brazilian undergraduates can undertake a semester abroad. Silver selected Ireland for being an English-speaking country. He states that it is impossible to learn English staying in Brazil and is fascinated with “some people” who can learn English only by watching movies, listening to music, and going to English classes. However, “I am not one of these people (laughter)”. According to Silver, “you have to live the language”, practice to think in English, immerse totally in an English-speaking environment. He considers English, the “official language of the world” and many articles in his academic area are written in that language. Despite his “dream to see London”, Silver chose Dublin as an effect of previous research he had done in the areas of international education and access to student visas. He learnt that the Irish are “very friendly”.

Alfredo: What do you mean?

Silver: I have read that the Irish are very open to different cultures. Then I thought “I need to live in an environment where people are willing to talk to me, interact with me”. We (Brazilians) have a stereotype of Europeans as being more reserved, quieter than us. In this sense, Ireland is more similar to Brazil. I have interacted with the Irish and it has been very positive.

²²⁰ Silver elaborates a critique on SWB: “The Brazilian government does not check if we pass the modules, it is a process that is very loose. I would say this is a weak spot of the SWB. The government is investing money on us and therefore, should check, at least, if we pass on the disciplines we choose to study here. If I had this kind of wicked character there would be no problem for me doing nothing here. When we come back to Brazil we don't have to present any documentation that shows our performance in the foreign university, nothing, absolutely nothing. They should have a control mechanism so we give Brazil a return”.

Despite the language barrier, especially due to the “particular Irish accent”, Silver highlights the support he had when he arrived in Dublin. He describes how helpful the bus driver and other passengers were when he was going to the host family house, and how surprised he was when a passenger started “using his own phone to help him to locate the house”. Silver tells me how impressed he was with his host family and how “smooth” they made his adaptation to Ireland. It was a couple in their fifties, with no children, who always talked to Silver when they had a chance – “It was an Irish lady and a English gentleman, always interacting with me and clarifying the doubts I had”.

Silver describes his newly formed networks namely host family, the university staff, his fellow students, and “now”, his housemates. Silver tells me he has made a French and an Italian friend. The latter, who has left Dublin, invited Silver to visit him in Italy, where there were “no worries” with accommodation due to the existence of an extra bed. Silver tells me that “the most sensational thing” has happened to him on campus. There was an already established group of Irish friends in the university whose members were making an effort to integrate him into the group – “They always include me in the conversations, we go out together. However, I am still not able to fully interact with them because of the language barrier”.

Despite his harmonious outlook on life, Silver considers himself as the one “outside” the group of Brazilians on campus. He believes that interacting with Brazilians can be beneficial as networks of support could flourish, however, “as you don’t leave your comfort zone, your learning of English is jeopardised”. I

asked Silver to elaborate further on this issue. He tells me that if one does not leave their comfort zone, “nothing happens”.

Alfredo: Nothing?

Silver: Your English will not improve as much, you will not meet people from around the world, you will not learn about other cultures. The student who does not leave their comfort zone will not learn things that they did not know existed.

Moreover, he highlights the importance of exchanging experiences with people from other cultures as a way to “destroy stereotypes”. Silver refers to the recent “wave” of Brazilians coming to Ireland due to SWB and, “if one is qualified enough”, there are possibilities for obtaining a work visa and establishing in the island. He also considers the “two euro pint phenomenon” as an indicative of the existence of a Brazilian community in Dublin, and asks me if I am aware of the high number of Brazilians living and working in the town of Gort, Ireland.

Silver states that similarities is what brings members of a group to “stick together”, whether “cultural” or “in terms of language” – “that’s why Brazilians tend to cluster, or Koreans, or Japanese, isn’t it?” According to Silver, members of the same “ethnic” group can understand each other “better”, therefore helping one another more substantially.

Alfredo: How about your own practices? How do you keep your connections?

Silver: My groups exist based on reciprocity. One needs to be spontaneous to help others without expecting anything in return.

Alfredo: Really?

Silver: Yes! Like a father would do with his son. It sounds slushy, I know (laughter), but that would be the core idea of the way people interact... in my case, of course.

In the second interview, I returned to issues of connecting with human actors. Silver tells me that he considers himself the leader of his network. Despite having met lots of people from around the world, he has not made any “true friend” – “it takes time to strengthen these networks and I do not know why”. Silver also reflects on the lack of true friendships as an effect of his calculated distance from Brazilians in Dublin – “Maybe because I am a SWB student. They stick together and form a strong network, almost like a family”. He said he stepped out of this network as he wanted, he reaffirms, to speak English, “I have spoken Portuguese my whole life”. Silver suggested his fellow Brazilian students to speak English to each other, but his plan did not go further. Only three out of fifty agreed, and the project quickly vanished. However, that does not mean that Silver did not interact with other human actors. He tells me that he made international acquaintances to go out with, and took some modules together with a Brazilian, whom he superficially interacted with. I asked about the three Irish undergraduates he lived with and had found “sensational” the effort they were making to integrate him in their group. Silver classifies them as “really nice” and tells me that they went out a few times – “we get along very well. But it is like this, we are cool with each other, but I cannot say they are good friends”.

However, Silver established a network of importance during his time in Dublin, more specifically “in the space of the university”. Although the cold climate “can make you lazy” and SWB students do not have much contact with Dublin society,

Silver tells me how he found a way to connect with other human actors who will make a difference for him when he is back in Brazil. Silver undertook a very interesting and promising module and decided to ask the lecturer if there was a possibility for continuing studying the subject through a partnership. I asked him to describe what happened.

Silver: This was a Brazilian thing. I knocked on his door and said “hey I loved that subject, can we keep studying it together?” And he said “yes”. He was great. We have been meeting every week to discuss the subject. I am sure this will help me when I am in Brazil, as it will contribute to my undergraduate dissertation. Maybe in the future, we can develop a research partnership and publish together, this was a real network.

Alfredo: Absolutely, well done. You went to his office and knocked on the door?

Silver: Yes. I thought about the cultural differences. Will I be invasive if I go and knock on his door? Then I asked a Brazilian lecturer if I should do that. My Brazilian lecturer told me to be Brazilian and do it.

Alfredo: Be Brazilian?

Silver: To show initiative. And then I created courage to do so. Maybe I was a bit nosy, I am not sure (laughter). The Irish lecturer already knew me from the classes anyways. I hope that will be a promising partnership. And the book I am using was written by him! I want to do a Master’s, I would love to be an academic, teaching and researching. And I wouldn’t mind if I did a PhD abroad.

Moving on to the role of institutions in his life in Dublin, Silver makes remarks about the university, which he found “fantastic”. He mentions the high number of clubs and societies, and a variety of departments, such as international office and student support and development. Above all, the fact that the “information circulates”, always reaching the students via email, inevitably makes Silver compares his Brazilian university to the Irish one. He also comments the power

the Student Union has – “they exist and function”. Silver cites the referendum about changes on drug legislation and abortion as a way to hear the voice of the student community, which he considered very positive. Before I move on to the next topic, he tells me he wants to register how supportive the university’s international office was and how efficient was the process of acquiring an institutional email, which would have taken “ages” in his Brazilian university.

Towards the end of the second interview, Silver talks about how much he learnt from this experience. According to him, benefits of this journey were countless and he flags that he could talk about this for hours. I tell him that I have all the time he needs. Silver tells me that he learnt a lot about himself, his limits and capabilities, and his interpersonal skills. I asked him to illustrate that with examples. He said that as he did not make any great friends, sometimes he reached a stage where he felt overwhelmed with “little things”, such as pans that were not been cleaned by his flatmates. However, Silver attributes these events as learning – “to learn is to deal with difficulties”. Moreover, the change of perspectives is mentioned by Silver, where comparisons are made. He reflects about how safe Dublin is.

You see that there is a reality that is more developed than ours, you start thinking “I wish my family could make use of this tranquillity”, go out in the streets, listening to music, and not worrying if somebody will point a gun to your head (Silver).

I concluded the interview inviting Silver to use a metaphor that illustrates his foreign exchange programme.

Silver: Discovery, in all dimensions. From self-discovery to the discovery of that which is external to you. What is outside your country, even outside your own state, as you get to know people from other states when you do a programme like this. You see the differences and this is so interesting. You see the nuances in language, accent, slangs. You start becoming a hybrid. You discover facets about yourself and things about other people, other places.

Alfredo: But are you considering the process of discovering a place that is already there? Or would you construct your own discovery?

Silver: It is a little bit of both. The reality was already there, it existed before independent of your existence. However, when you see the land, let's suppose, you start reflecting about it, based on your own judgment, own ideas, so you discover something that was already there, but as you are biased with your own ideas, you end up constructing a little bit of what was there. I would say it is a bit of both.

Appendix J: Pink's Story

“It's a fight”

This is a story of Pink, a 24-year-old Master's student. She graduated in Language Studies from University of Pernambuco. She started studying in Higher Education at a very early age (seventeen years old) and, during this period, she was asked to replace an English teacher in a language school. She accepted the challenge and had never stopped teaching until she travelled to Dublin. Fluent in French and Italian, Pink was involved in the circus community performing as an acrobat in the city of Recife, and tells me that all her social circles are related to arts and education. She lived in an Irish family house where she worked as an au pair. After two years, she moved to a shared apartment with four undergraduate students whom she did not know “at all”. Currently, she lives in a house in North Dublin with her Irish boyfriend and two other Irish couples, “who work the whole day, arrive home, say hello, go to their bedrooms, and that is it”. In the first interview, Pink told me that her “mission” as a Brazilian student in Ireland was to disseminate Brazilian literature, a goal that made her stay in the island and pursuit a Master's degree. Ten months later, at the second interview, Pink was very busy with her assignments. She was trying to cope with the pressure from the Master's, reflecting about the meaning of doing research and the difficulties faced by international students.

How Pink was enrolled in my PhD-actor-network

I approached the university's international office in order to locate Brazilian Master's students as I was not "finding" any. One member of the international office was particularly helpful and told me that, at that stage, there were only three Master's students from Brazil on campus. She contacted Pink and Beige, who then sent me an email expressing their willingness to participate in my study.

Pink has a close relationship with her family, which is very united, and considers her mother and her sister as key sources of advice. She considers a "heroic" achievement the fact she was able to travel to Ireland and live her life on her own in an international setting, leaving her "comfort zone". Skype is used every week and WhatsApp has a daily use, where her mother sends "good morning messages". Asked about her friends, Pink tells me that her family acts as her friends, and although she has friends outside her family circle, she only classifies "true friendship" as "those who help you when you really need".

Pink arrived in Dublin on the 24th of July 2013 as an ESOL student with upper-intermediate English skills. Her displacement was the result of "many things". She had a project of doing a Master's and a PhD straight after finishing her undergraduate degree as a way to "keep on moving". She had seen people postponing their plans and then, giving up, which she wanted to avoid. Pink narrates a period in her life in Brazil when she was teaching in two different institutions, undertaking nine modules in her undergraduate course, working in a circus and participating in literature and religious groups. As a result of such hectic routine, her "body asked (her) to stop". She was diagnosed with

depression, anxiety and panic disorder. Her doctor told her to decrease her workload. In this, she was left with only one student, which gave her time to start researching the possibilities for undertaking a Master's in France. Pink's initial plan was to spend six months in an English speaking country, three months in France, and three months in Italy, which changed in the moment she arrived in Dublin. Pink says that Dublin has taught her "to live the present and not worry excessively with the future". As a Portuguese and English teacher, she needed to acquire "absolute" fluency in the latter, for which she dedicated two years of her life. Pink received contributions for each member of her family to finance her travel to Ireland.

There is a lack of financial support from both the Brazilian and Irish government, so we have to access resources from our family, if you have them. If you don't, leave your dream aside, unless you are doing something in the area of technology. Otherwise, what are you doing that is so important? Do it later. Improving knowledge on human beings will help you to deal with human beings. Can people understand that in the end all professions are turned to human beings? Why are the Humanities so undervalued? That is the basis for everything else. That is the objective of medicine, law, business, including technology. It is incomprehensible, it is contradictory, but that's the capitalist system (Pink).

Pink built her online profile in order to find employment in Dublin. She was looking for an au pair position and was told by other ESOL students to build a "fake CV", lying about her experiences with children, "otherwise nobody would contact (her)". Pink felt uncomfortable with that and decided to be honest, displaying in her CV the truth about her experience with children. She said she has taught English for a class of thirty children, which would make her able to take care of three or four. Pink sent numerous messages for the families looking for au pair services, saying that "(she) would like to improve her English skills

and learn more about your culture, shall we make a cultural exchange?” A family answered her on a Friday and on Sunday she “signed an oral six month contract”, and started working. Pink tells me about her experience as an au pair which lasted for two years and was “perfect”. She understands that being an au pair is not portrayed as a job position, but a “programme of cultural immersion”. She lived in the family’s house taking care of “three beautiful children” who always respected her and were taken care as if they were her own children. Pink believes that she was chosen by the “right family”, who provided her with her own bedroom, would never make her work on the weekends, helped her to learn English and with her adaptation to the Irish culture, and accepted to hear a “no” if she was asked to do something that she did not want to do. According to Pink, the family was “very grateful” to her as they saw how much effort and care she dedicated to their children. Although her freedom was constrained in many occasions, such as not being able to choose what she could eat and not being able to bring friends home – not even to celebrate her birthday – Pink said that “it was worth it” and believes that “everybody” should have a similar experience – “there is a big difference between Brazil and Ireland in the way people give meaning to manual labour. Here, it’s dignifying, in Brazil, it’s humiliating”. She developed as an individual, and improved her English skills with the help from the children of the house, who would not feel ashamed to correct her English mistakes, “facilitating her learning experience”. Pink shows awareness to the fact that many au pair are being exploited in Dublin and laments that such situation is common.

The money you receive is not fair, because you always work a bit more than what was agreed. Paying a crèche is very expensive, “after school” is very expensive, and nanny services are very expensive because they are registered and paid per hour of work, as

any other professional. That is not the case with an au pair. There is no law regulating the work of an au pair. So, this discourse of “oh, we would like you to come and explore our culture”... No. We would like you to come and work here because you are cheap labour (Pink).

Pink has kept the connection with the Irish family after she left the job to undertake her Master's. Pink's family came to visit her in Dublin and was welcomed by the Irish family in their house, where they prepared dinner for everyone. She tells me she has received an email from them offering any help in case she needs it in her new phase of her life.

Pink's family supported her financially and emotionally on her new performance as an international Master's student. She was also awarded the Government of Ireland International Scholarship Scheme for one institution in Dublin and one in Limerick. She tells me she chose the institution in Dublin, where there was a condition for the award. She had to become the “Brazilian student ambassador”, which made her proud and honoured to represent her country on campus. She was in charge of helping Brazilian students who are coming to study in the university, recording videos that promote the institution in Brazil and writing about her experience as an international student in the university's international student blog.

I will not only represent Brazilian students, but will also help them to have access to information, which can be difficult to us, as the educational system is so different from one another. So, my job is to facilitate the lives of those who are coming to study in this university. It is a hard job, but it noble, it is worth it (Pink).

I was happy to hear what Pink was telling me about her new role as “the Brazilian student ambassador” and approached the subject once again in the second interview. She tells me that being the student ambassador was a “virtual job”. Apart from recording a video for the university’s international students blog, she did not do anything else, as “it is hard to know what can be done”. Pink tried to contact the international office “many times”, without success. She believes that besides SWB students, the other few Brazilian students on campus are “lost and don’t know anything”.

Alfredo: They don’t know anything?

Pink: There are departments and services provided by the university that are not disseminated to us. If there is not a person to show them, students will never get to know those services.

Pink’s first networks in Dublin were formed with her housemates and classmates – “as an international student, your connections are other international students”. She believes that international students are permanently making an effort to construct a network, but it vanishes as soon as a common space is no longer shared.

When you are living or studying with people, a group might be formed. Then, it disappears. The relationship is conditioned to sharing a space. We are alone here. It is a fight (Pink).

All members of her network formed in Dublin, except for one Brazilian friend, returned to their countries of origin, which made Pink understand that doing a foreign exchange programme is “to learn to say goodbye to people, because you have to”. Her connections with other students are kept with the help from social media platforms, but only serve to congratulate them on their birthday, as Pink

dislikes “things such as Facebook”. I invited her to share her thoughts on this issue.

I don't like to post anything on social media. People in Brazil believe that if you are in Europe, you are at the Champs Élysées drinking champagne. They don't understand that the difficulties you are facing here are way bigger than the ones you face in Brazil. They don't know anything, do they? People think you are superior because you are in Europe. In Brazil we believe that anything that comes from abroad is better than anything that is local. The “stray dog complex”²²¹, you know? People believe that the North American and or European educational system are better than the Brazilian, which is not always true (Pink).

Pink tells me about the members of the Focolare community, a religious group to which she used to be a member in Brazil, but exists all around the world, including Ireland. She highlights the role of the Focolare as being “key”, once they supported her in the beginning of her journey by inviting her to the group meetings – when her English skills were still poor. Pink tells me that she had a job opportunity, albeit temporary, that was facilitated by a member of the Focolare. In 2015 and 2016, she taught English to Spanish and Italian teenage students in the month of July, which was an “incredible experience”. However, she lamented the fact she cannot work in a full time position, because she is not “from here. Just because”.

The issue of employment is very unfair here in Ireland, especially for Brazilians who don't hold European passports. You either go for a precarious, temporary, menial job or you starve. I believe this situation deserves more attention. It is known that Ireland needs work force in many qualified job positions, they need to open their borders a bit more in order to guarantee that qualified personnel can assume these positions (Pink).

²²¹ See Red (Appendix F, p.6).

I invited Pink to keep describing how supportive the Irish Focolare group has been to her. She is grateful to them as they helped her “a lot”, not only in terms of the above mentioned work experience, but also when she needed to move to her new apartment as well as when her family came to visit her – “they welcomed us with open arms”. Pink concluded her thoughts telling me that it is hard to create and maintain a network in Dublin.

There is a contact, a connection, but not a real network. I don't have an interesting network in which members help one another. No. There are separated groups and the possibility of support virtually exists, but not much (Pink).

Pink also points out the lack of financial support from the university for international students – “they provide emotional support but when you need financial support, nobody is there for you”. She uses her own example to illustrate her ideas. She has been making use of counselling sessions offered by the university, as she sees herself in a very tense period of her life. Her therapist told her to start doing acupuncture as a way to reduce anxiety, but she could not afford the sessions. Then, Pink and her therapist, who works in the counselling department, tried to obtain financial support from the university in order to pay for her acupuncture sessions, which did not occur as she is not “from the EU”. Pink is concerned that financial, emotional and academic issues might hinder her performance in her Master's. Despite being awarded a scholarship, it was only partial, which made Pink wonder: “how are you supposed to support yourself during the course if you are forced to study full-time? There is no help, if I say I am jobless, there would be no reaction”. Pink also cites the lack of books in the university library as a huge problem for her. She needs more than Paulo Coelho,

“who is not a writer”. She needs Guimarães Rosa²²².

Apart from the perceived lack of interest in Brazilian culture, Pink understands that the legal aspect, enacted by the visa, is the most powerful actor that keeps her in “the international students bubble”. As the Irish law does not allow international students to be full-time employed, “except sub-employment”, they remain “out of the space of cultural contact with the Irish”. Pink believes that the government preclude social interactions between Irish and foreign citizens.

You arrive in a parachute and live as a tourist all this time. We do not participate legally or socially. Ok, maybe in the pub. But where is the interaction? Where is the cultural exchange? It does not exist (Pink).

When asked to name a leader of her network and explain the reasons for her answer, Pink does not hesitate to tell me that she is the leader of her network because she has to be “proactive in order to make things happen”. Despite efforts made by the university to promote a multicultural environment, she believes that the connection established among international students is not strong enough to create a network. Pink sees herself as an entrepreneur in the moment she says that “opportunities do not appear in front of you, so you have to create your own opportunities when you are in a foreign land”.

²²² “Where is Guimarães Rosa? I read an article from a Canadian writer who says that “in a world that confines Brazil to samba, carnival and football it is really hard to believe that Guimarães Rosa is part of Brazilian literature”. It seems that good and complex literature is only French and German. I looked for Brazilian literature, there is none. Only at Queens University in Northern Ireland I found. Only one university here in the Republic of Ireland offers Portuguese language courses, but it is just a language course, not academic. And you see many Irish dating Brazilians, marrying Brazilians, having children” (Pink).

I asked her about the groups that could be fostered in her Master's course and she replies that she is on her own. Pink believes that a Master's course differs considerably from an undergraduate course, as there is no group work, "except in one module". In this, members of the group relate closely to each other during the performance of the task but once the work is finished, "everybody goes in separate ways". Pink theorises about such event, telling me that

There is a huge cultural barrier between Irish students and international students. They are cool and friendly but the barrier avoids a relationship, a friendship to occur. You see international students getting together, but not with natives. I think it is a cultural thing. We, Brazilians, accept the other more easily and are more open to interaction.

I stimulated Pink to elaborate further the idea of "the barrier". She laments that "mutual acculturation" does not happen in reality. In terms of relationship with the Irish, "Russian and South Koreans are more distant to the Irish than we, Brazilians, are". She celebrates the existence of a common interest to establish pacific relationships and a minimum exchange of cultural values between Brazilian and Irish people, and says that, to an extent, "we are welcomed here". However, the barrier exists and starts being enacted when one stops being an international student and becomes an immigrant – "people start to question: Why do you have an Irish boyfriend? What are your real intentions? Or something like, hey, you are taking our jobs".

I then asked Pink if she is currently connected with someone in Dublin, apart from the Folcolare group. She says she has three different groups, where the level of affinity is different in each one of them (Folcolare, Brazilian friend, and her

boyfriend). However, she “cannot say she is part of a group. In Brazil, this is more delineated, but here it is different”. Pink tells me how crucial her boyfriend is for her life in Dublin and flags their intention to get married soon.

He is my family and my friends in Ireland. He is everything to me here. It is interesting to observe how things happen in this context we are in. You end up trusting a person immensely because you don't have an apparatus. Who are you going to trust? Who are you going to talk to? It is an adventure; it is a crazy thing (Pink).

I moved from the descriptions of her performances as an international student in Dublin to more abstract issues of social capital. Above all, Pink considers that integrity and authenticity must be present in any group in order to “make it work”. She believes that sharing a common interest acts as the main structure that holds a group together, “whether a foreign exchange programme, an ideology, or a literary or musical preference”. For Pink, a group exists when its members have something in common, “something that brings unity to a group”, and are maintained “when people exchange experiences and knowledge”.

Thoughts regarding the Brazilian community in Dublin changed from the first interview to the second. Initially, Pink told me that the Brazilian community in Dublin, the “second largest immigrant community” in the city, is “massive and very strong”. She cites a fact that the considered best restaurant in Dublin serves Brazilian food, which would illustrate the Brazilian influence in the city. Pink believes that the high number of Brazilians in the city is not a “bad thing”, although many Irish think that Brazilians speak Spanish and that the Brazilian capital is Buenos Aires or Rio de Janeiro. However, she made reservations about the “common practice of Brazilians only interacting with Brazilians”. If one is not

Careful enough, she says there is a risk of arriving in Ireland with poor English skills and leaving the country with unaltered level of English. Pink tells me that she does not see a problem in establishing friendships with other Brazilians, as long as the focus on English learning is maintained. She uses her own example when she spoke English with her Brazilian friend and would correct each other as soon as a mistake was perceived. However, “extreme situations” annoyed her. For example, she studied in an English school where the canteen employee would speak Portuguese to the students, and emails from the school board were written in that language.

At the second interview, Pink’s ideas on the Brazilian community in Dublin changed – “It is like yellow pages, it is not a community”. She highlights the need some Brazilians have to “stay in the bubble” in order to get a job, as “one’s job is passed to the other”.

Leaving Brazil to stay in the bubble makes no sense. The interesting thing about the bubble is that it is a transparent thing. You see what is inside and you don’t get in there. There is a barrier. From the interior, for the person who is inside the bubble, there is a protection, which keeps the other outside the bubble. Are we putting ourselves in the bubble? The Brazilian community is in the bubble. Many Brazilians come here and don’t speak English, and go back to Brazil without speaking English, because they stayed inside the bubble. There is a bubble that we create. There are also Brazilians occupying important positions in the Irish society and therefore cannot live in the bubble; they have to interact with the Irish. From the Irish perspective there is an Irish bubble and they don’t allow you to get into their bubble. There are many bubbles; it is hard to explain (Pink).

Pink does not see herself being part of any “bubble” and does as much as she can to make the “Irish burst their bubble”, although being respectful and trying to

show that she is “harmless”. After acknowledging the strong message brought by the bubble metaphor, I invited Pink to use a metaphor that describes her international education experience.

There is a rainbow after every storm... literally, because of the climate. But I have been through many awful things and many beautiful things as well (Pink).

Pink answers “yes and no” when I asked her if she felt she has changed as a person since the moment she first arrived in Dublin. She tells me she had to adapt to the Irish culture, but she does not stop “being Brazilian”. She sees herself as a quieter, more focused and confident person than she used to be, managing her time more efficiently. She considers issues of interaction with the Irish as a challenge she has yet to overcome.

Alfredo: But you have told me that Irish culture has similarities with your own culture. It’s a story of resistance against external domination and that many Irish writers express that.

Pink: Yes, and I am even thinking to trace a parallel between Ariano Suassuna and Seán O’Casey in my dissertation. The thing is... the Irish are so polite that you never know if they are being truthful, it is hard to know what they are thinking.

At the end of the second interview, Pink suggested me to “see the other side of the story”. She said that it would be interesting to investigate how Irish nationals “see” international students – “they know they exist but they do not know them”.

Pink: I feel I have no space here, especially because of my profession. If I were an IT technician, everything would be brilliant. But I am from arts and education. Sometimes I think about giving up. Why would I want to become a knowledgeable cadaver? You stop enjoying your life; there is no time to do anything else. Why

do you research so much if nobody will look at it? This does not fulfil me. I am disappointed.

Alfredo: Fight like a brave! Don't give up! I started my research with the same mind-set. Let's empower the students, make their voices heard.

Pink: Yes, but who is going to read that? Who is interested in that? Not even Brazilians are interested. We lack contacts, we have no professional future. I ask myself will I be able to go through my Master's? It's complicated. I don't know.

Alfredo: If there is a door and you want to go to the room behind it, how can you know if that door could have been opened if you haven't knocked on it?

Pink: In my life, I have never given up on anything. And a PhD is even worse right?

Alfredo: When you were undertaking your undergraduate course, didn't you think it was hard?

Pink: Yes.

Alfredo: Now that you are doing your Master's, don't you look back at your undergraduate period and think: "actually, that was not so complicated"?

Pink: That is true.

Appendix K: Beige's Story

“This experience is an adventure”

This is a story of Beige, a 28-year-old Master's student. She is from the state of Bahia, where she worked as a reporter at the culture section of a local newspaper before coming to Dublin. She graduated in Journalism (didn't specify the Brazilian institution). She lives in a shared house in North Dublin with her Irish boyfriend and three ESOL students: a South Korean, a Japanese and a Brazilian. The first interview took place two weeks after her Master's course had started, while the second interview, eight months later, was conducted towards the end of her course. She was going to meet her group, after the second interview, in order to work on a group assignment for her Master's and told me how complicated it is to work with other people. Beige tells me she is “in shock” that the Master's is almost over. She shows concern as one of her lecturers flagged that nobody would finish the course with a first honours degree.

How Beige was enrolled in my PhD-actor-network

See Pink (Appendix J).

Since her fifteen years of age, Beige always wanted to learn English and believed that she needed to live in an international environment for this to happen. Her father acted as a counter network, “for personal and financial reasons”, which impeded her to travel abroad at an early age. However, when Beige was able to save money from her work as a reporter, her project of travelling abroad concretised.

Beige arrived in Dublin on the 4th of April 2012, as an ESOL student with intermediate English skills, when she met her Irish boyfriend. She thought that one year was not enough to acquire fluency in English, which made her renew her visa for another year. Then, she renewed her visa once again. At the end of her third year in Ireland, she was decided to go back to Brazil. However, a “Master’s scholarship brought her back”.

I was done with sub employment. Doing a Master’s has everything to do with finding a proper job. You hear that in the classroom, the lecturers don’t allow you to forget that, you are always receiving emails about job opportunities. I used to work in a newspaper in Brazil. I even went to The Irish Times here, just to check it out. I was feeling bad in this universe of sub employment and then I asked myself: “What am I doing here? What am I gaining with that?” If I come back to Dublin I need to be doing something good, something that’s valuable. As I started a relationship here, everything somehow clicked (Beige).

Since the beginning of her experience abroad, Beige was looking for Master’s scholarships abroad – “I would go even to China”. As she did not manage to enter a public university in Brazil to do her undergraduate, she thought she needed to do a Master’s on a scholarship in order to compensate the money her family spent on her undergraduate course in a private university. She managed to be approved for a partial scholarship in the Netherlands called “Orange Tulips”, which she declined. She needed a full scholarship to support her during the whole course. Immersed in tensions, deadlines and paper work, Beige’s IELTS certificate was about to expiry. As a result, many applications were refused, although she tried to argue with the institutions that her English skills were up to date.

I told them I was living in an English speaking country, but they did not accept it. It was a mistake I made. In my naiveté, I thought

universities would accept my one month expired IELTS certificate (Beige).

In the beginning of 2015, she decided to go back to Brazil, a period when she felt “confused”. She had not given up yet on applying for Masters scholarships, but the many refused applications consumed her “energy”. In Brazil, she took a TOEFL certificate and then realised that the application dates for the majority of universities had passed, except one. She tells me “it was destiny. The only university (she) had left to apply was the university that accepted (her)”.

She found information about this university’s scholarship awards on the internet. She contacted a woman who had been awarded “The Government of Ireland International Scholarship” and had studied in another university in Dublin. After Beige was informed about the specificities of the application process, she contacted the university’s international office, applied for this scholarship and was successful. Beige reflects on the process of finally being awarded with a scholarship, highlighting the length of time she needed to be successful – “It took me three years” – and how prepared she feels, today, to “face a Master’s abroad”. She goes back in time and tells me how difficult it would have been if she had started a Master’s a couple of years ago. Beige cites the case of one of her scholarship applications for a university in Denmark, for which she needed the help of a friend to write a statement, and mentions how expensive a Master’s course in a respectable Brazilian institution can be. She also highlights the efficiency and great “customer service” provided by the international office of the university where she is currently doing her Master’s, contrasting on one event she

experienced when she was applying for a scholarship in a French university – “They did not even answer my emails”.

In Brazil, Beige has friends from secondary school, college, and work, and sees her groups of friends as ever growing as “friends introduce me their friends”, forming a larger group. She kept contact with her friends via email until the arrival of WhatsApp. She used to write long emails about what she was doing and what was happening in her life in Dublin. Skype was used only to speak to her family, as her friends “did not make an effort” to use this tool. Beige, who lived the “technological transition”, says that with the invention of WhatsApp, she can keep her friends up to date and vice versa, which approximates them to one another and keeps the relationship alive. She tells me that when she visited her friends, it did not seem that they were living so far away from each other – “we already knew what each one of our friends were doing. It’s like I have always been in Brazil”.

Beige narrates a series of problems she experienced when she arrived in Dublin as an ESOL student. The cold climate made her think that she would not stand living in Ireland for more than six months – “I thought that I would not be happy here”.

She also had to change her host family home twice. In the first host family home, she accepted the hosts, despite the “purely commercial relationship” they had with her. The fact that her host family house was located far away from her English school made her want to change accommodation. Beige was seeing her colleagues staying in houses close to the school, not spending with bus fares, and

could not accept of having to be at the house punctually at five o'clock in the afternoon – “the only chance to have dinner”. When she tried to change her host family house, she found resistance from the school (responsible for managing issues of host family for students). After a negotiation with the school staff she was transferred to another house. This house, although closer to the school than the first one, had “no bus to take”, which made Beige walk from, and to, the school every weekday for forty minutes. A week passed and she asked the school to provide her with a new host family house once again. Beige tells me that the couple living in the house, in their seventies, was “lovely”, but could not provide an environment for a student (the house was very messy). Trying to avoid the resistance and the “lack of manners of the woman at the school reception”, Beige contacted the travel agency in Brazil and asked them to find her a new house. Beige was invited to meet with the school director who told her she was being “complicated”; the school was losing money because of her, and that situations like that had never happened before. Beige tells me she felt very nervous because her English skills at that time were not “good enough” to articulate her thoughts and present her point of view. In tears, Beige denied the accusation of being complicated and told the director that the couple living in the house was having visits from nurses of the “home care”, and she was feeling bad for asking to change her accommodation for the second time. However, she had no choice but to do so.

The school offered resistance as I was asking to change my accommodation for the second time. In the end, everything worked out as I ended up in a host family that was amazing. I have no trauma. I tell this as a story (Beige).

After this struggle, Beige was transferred to a house that was “heaven”. She was welcomed by an “Irish fairy godmother”, who made her feel very comfortable and did not have a specific time for serving dinner. Despite the “lady at the reception”, Beige tells me that the English school was of good quality and assisted her when she needed. For the second year as an ESOL student, Beige enrolled in another “more mediocre” school, which ran out of business after a while.

Apart from studying English, Beige wanted to “find any job and live this experience, which is an adventure in itself”. She accepted that she would perform temporary jobs that would not be aligned with her educational qualifications. However, she started “feeling bad” with this scenario, where there was no “mental stimulation”. Money was the only benefit in performing such jobs. She worked for two months as a cleaner and then found a position in a bakery, where she would offer customers to try freshly baked pastries. In the latter, she worked part-time for almost three years until she started her Master’s course.

I got a job in a bakery because my friend who used to work there was leaving Dublin. He put me there and I spent three years in this job. This was how I supported myself here (Dublin). I worked as a cleaner as well. It followed the same dynamics. A friend who was leaving the position told her boss: “hey I know someone who can replace me” and that was it. The boss had not seen my face until my second month of work (Beige).

Beige attributed her Brazilian networks as invaluable to the process of finding a job in Dublin. She tells me that one recommends the other for a job because one expects the other to do the same. However, she makes a reservation in her case. According to Beige, she helps people without any expectations, although not

denying that everybody wants to find someone who can clarify eventual doubts about the experience of living abroad, “someone you can trust”.

Alfredo: Yes. Trust and reciprocity are key in these moments, aren't they?

Beige: Yes, you hope that someone becomes a safe port. You are always searching for this exchange, right? It's all about support and collaboration. When one person helps another, both go further.

I started investigating the process of formation of networks with Beige, which she classifies as “hard”. She tells me that it is complicated to keep a group of friends in Dublin due to the “constant flux” – “people come and people go, you get close to them and then they leave”. She tells me that she has no friends in Dublin at the moment, which made her start considering her boyfriend's friends as her own friends. After a while, she concluded that “they are just my boyfriend's friends”, telling me she would not call them to go out, for example. Beige tells me that if all the people she met in the last three years were still in Dublin she would have a “great” group of friends. However, “they are all in WhatsApp”. In the beginning of her period in Dublin, Beige was avoiding to live with Brazilians, but reflects on how positive the connections established with Brazilians were, as “if you need help, you will look for someone who speaks your language, naturally”. She tells me she is a person who is open for networking and even celebrated when she found out there was a Brazilian fellow student in her Master's class. She is Beige's first choice of support in the class not only because they are native Portuguese speakers, but also because she is the only person who understands Beige's jokes.

I tried to investigate what brings members of a group together. Beige considers life plans and priorities, common interests and a “desire to move further” as the characteristics she treasures when forming and maintaining a group of human actors. She also includes language as part of this process.

Beige: Language is what brings members of a group together. When I arrived in Dublin I found the whole process very magical. I walked on the streets and the visual was so different, then when I overheard Portuguese it was like a connection... Pa! Pa! It was like in that movie... “Avatar”, have you seen it?’

Alfredo: I have seen parts of it, I cannot recall some scenes. Do you know when you start watching a movie in the evening and you fall asleep?

Beige: Yes, of course (laughter). When the character of the movie connected with his animal, his dragon, or whatever, their fur would interweave. When someone spoke Portuguese it was like I was being pulled by my ear, I didn’t want to connect but the language pulled me.

Alfredo: That’s interesting.

Beige: When I was at the school’s canteen, many foreigners would be around... Spanish, Italian, Mexican. It did not matter how loud the noise was, if someone spoke Portuguese... that would fish me, it connected me.

I asked her, despite inevitable connections with the Portuguese language, how integrated she felt in the Irish society, considering that she has been living in the island for more than three years. Beige believes that having a love relationship with an Irish man helps her “immensely” to integrate, which was possible only after overcoming the language barrier. Before meeting him, she tells me that her objective, “a challenging one”, was to meet Irish people, because “internationals always find each other”.

Our conversation led us to the imagined Brazilian community in Dublin. Beige considers that the fact of doing a Master's moves her "away" from the Brazilian community in Dublin.

There is an enormous Brazilian community in Dublin. I didn't want to be part of it because stereotypes are highlighted when you think in terms of community. Every Brazilian wants to learn English and travel. Of course, this is so obvious. Who doesn't, right? So when you think about the Brazilian community you consider those who work in precarious conditions, go to parties, save money, and travel all over Europe... which is great. I see two groups. Those who would do whatever it takes to remain here because anything would be better than going back to Brazil, and those who spend a period here and then go back home. I used to be part of this community but I kept asking myself "what is the purpose of all that?" Now I am doing the Master's, now it's another experience, it's great (Beige).

I ask her about the role institutions play in her life. According to Beige, apart from her scholarship, she does not feel any participation from the government in her reality. As to the university, she regrets she has not enjoyed the clubs and societies. She tried to participate in the Yoga and Cycling societies, but blames the demands from her Master's course as the main cause of "not having time for anything". On the other hand, she believes undergraduate students can enjoy a wide range of events promoted by the university. Beige's only social group is derived from the Master's course, as she has no time to join any other network. As she has to perform various group assignments, she sees the need to collaborate to one another. She cites some people who are close to her, including an Irish fellow student who is the "stereotypical Irish; friendly and lovely, always asking how I am". Moreover, a Brazilian, a Chinese and an Indian student also are considered her friends. Beige tells me she was dazzled at the beginning of the course, "thinking that everybody was great", but then realised "it was not the

case”. For instance, students were competing on the number of words they wrote in an assignment. I invited her to elaborate more on this issue.

Beige: You know that women in particular have more problems to make friendships... naturally and unfortunately.

Alfredo: Me? I am not sure if I know that.

Beige: Yes. Believe me.

Alfredo: Oh!

Beige: We went to India as part of an activity for the Master’s. I saw that the Irish girls formed a closed group and did not interact with the other internationals. They were not as open as myself to establish new friendships. And I think they are great, but they never allowed me to approximate. Although I feel a bit sad because of that, I understand why they do that. When you have your group already established you are not interested to form other friendships. If you have your friends, you can be nice to others at certain moments, but you don’t make an effort to integrate new members into your already formed group. Perhaps, I have done that in my life as well. I try not to judge and criticise them for that, but in the trip to India it was kind of awkward, it was obvious. I even gave up on going to China because my closest friends would not go... and I would have to go with them... and then I thought the trip would not be pleasant. I will spend money and I will not feel treasured. I try not to think that is because of their age, they are younger, they are twenty four, twenty five, and single, which makes it difficult to connect with others who have a boyfriend, but I felt it was a cultural thing, although they are good friends with a North American, they love America. Moreover, there was a girl who undertook this course last year and today she works in the university. She went to India as well and I thought she would make an effort to connect everybody... but she did the opposite (Beige).

Beige sees her Irish boyfriend as the leader of her network due to his “impressive” communication skills. She tells me that when they visited Brazil, he made more friends than she would “ever be able to make”, as he can interact with people regardless of the language being spoken. She tells me that when she arrives home after class, he is always interacting with the housemates – “I would

not develop as many friendships if I was not together with him”. However, Beige believes that her connections outside the space of the university in Ireland are useless in terms of helping her to find employment. If she finds a job, it will be based on her “own effort, or maybe through the university, an indication made by a lecturer”. In Brazil, she sees it differently – “I worked in a newspaper, I still have connections there”.

Today, Beige feels she is in control of her own trajectory as she is doing what she has chosen to do. She reflects about doing a PhD not to work in the Academy, but for the recognition that it may bring. She intends to find employment in Ireland that can guarantee her a work visa, and tells me a story of one of her friends, illustrating how easy it is for employees in the area of IT to find employment in Ireland. Her friend had not even finished his undergraduate degree in Brazil and managed to find employment in an IT company, therefore obtaining a work visa. Beige tells me she has overcome “millions of challenges”, but still considers time management as something with room for improvement – “It will give me energy to go for that which I believe, regardless of how demanding it will be”.

As the last question of the second interview, I asked Beige to use a metaphor that illustrates her experience of international education. She thinks for a while but does not manage to “find” any. However

I could mention a word that is a cliché, but it makes sense to me. It is overcoming. I suffered, I cried. I had blockages that I couldn't write anymore for my assignments. I thought I was not going to pass my Masters course (Beige).

Appendix L: Lavender's Story

“There is a world overseas”

This is a story of Lavender, a 24-year-old ESOL student. He is a manufacturing engineering undergraduate in the state of Pernambuco, and lives in an apartment with four other Brazilian ESOL students in North Dublin. He arrived in Dublin on the 28th of July 2015 with pre-intermediate level of English, leaving with upper-intermediate level on the 10th of February 2016. Lavender has always “dreamed” to go abroad and study English, but could never rely on his mother to support him financially with this particular project. He studied English in Brazil but would never continue due to his awareness of his mother's sensitive financial condition. Besides “finding beautiful” the ability of people to speak other languages – especially English – Lavender believes that, as a manufacturing engineer, he needs to master that language in order to conduct projects in his area of preference, sustainability. The opportunity to travel to Dublin arose when his contract with a major engineering firm in Brazil ended and was not renewed. He had then saved enough money from his work and saw this moment as “the right one to travel”.

This has happened a lot in Brazil. People are fired and then go abroad. Due to the crisis, people get the rescission bonus, sell a car and embark on this journey. It wasn't different in my case (Lavender).

How Lavender was enrolled in my PhD-actor-network

Lavender was an acquaintance of Blue, who passed me the former's Facebook account upon my request. The first interview with Lavender was done in Dublin.

The second interview, eight months later, occurred via Skype, as he was back in Brazil at the time.

Lavender left his girlfriend “behind” in Brazil to spend six months in Dublin. She understands that he needs this experience abroad for his future career and, although the distance “can hurt”, she has been very supportive. They speak on the phone daily. Lavender tells me he has a little family, and provides me with his own idea of what a family really is. He believes that blood relations would not define family – “in a sense, they are family”, but the real family are the ones who, besides having the same blood, are there for you when you need; because they want to see you doing well”. Lavender also defines friendship.

I have loads of acquaintances, but friends I can count on my fingers. They are there for you, you can rely on them, no matter what. When you go abroad you make a lot of acquaintances, not friends. Friendship takes time and effort. I have no friends here (Lavender).

When he was planning his travel, a matter of concern for Lavender was related with the existing Brazilian community in Dublin. He thought that an incredible number of Brazilians living in Dublin would “frustrate” his experience, but he has been positively surprised since his arrival. He found Brazilians and many other people of a wide range of nationalities in the city – “based on what people tell you in Brazil, when you arrive here you think you will not find a single Irish in Ireland, only Brazilians (laughter)”.

He tells me that one week before the first interview, he was visiting Dublin Castle when he heard two recently arrived Brazilians complaining that their English

class was “filled with Brazilians”. Lavender explains to me that there is no need to avoid Brazilians and that he really appreciates when people help each other. I asked him how he deals with the “paradoxical” Brazilian community in Dublin. He sees the need to balance the interaction with Brazilians. One shouldn’t reject the Brazilian community as they are the ones who will eventually provide help if needed. On the other hand, the practice of conversations in English should be kept in mind, which creates the need for not exclusively socialising with Brazilians.

More experienced students tell me that you shouldn’t avoid Brazilians, as they are the ones who will help you if you need. Foreigners will not help you. No foreigner will offer you their sofa for the night if you have no place to stay, you know? At the same time you want to avoid Brazilians as you don’t want to speak Portuguese in Dublin (Lavender).

Lavender tries to explain the world around him. He states that despite the characteristic friendliness of Brazilians, “no one will illuminate the right path for you, especially in regard to job positions. They would tell you where the nearest hospital is but never where the job offer is. They see each other as competitors”. Considering my own experience as an international student and the statements given by the other students, I ask Lavender to provide me with an example.

For example, I was asked to give a statement about the university on Facebook, talking about how positively surprised I was, how good it was. I wanted to give this statement, but at the same time I thought: “if I give this statement, the school will be filled with Brazilians, which wouldn’t be interesting for me”. Maybe I give the statement when I am about to go back to Brazil (Lavender).

Lavender tells me that his biggest difficulty was to encounter suitable accommodation in Dublin. He tried to find accommodation without Brazilians, which did not happen. Now, he feels satisfied of not having to face a major

“cultural shock” as he shares the house with other Brazilians. He says that finding a house to live is like “lottery”, and is the first concern of an ESOL student who has just arrived in the city. Lavender tells me that the fact that one lives with foreigners does not necessarily mean that one will be speaking English all the time, as some people “wouldn’t interact”.

Alfredo: Why would you say that?

Lavender: I know a Brazilian guy who is in my English class. He lives with an Irish and had great expectations that he would have an excellent opportunity to speak English all the time in the house. Today, I met him in the corridor and he told me he wants to live with Brazilians from now on.

Alfredo: Why?

Lavender: The Irish guy doesn’t talk to anybody at all, you know what I mean?

Alfredo: Perhaps he is more reserved? Shy?

Lavender: No, he does not talk to anybody in the house, only on the phone. In the first week the housemates thought he was mute.

Lavender believes that much of the students’ experiences is related to the place where they live; “if it is near or far to the places where you need to go everyday... if the atmosphere is good”. He tells me that if one is unhappy with the place one lives in, a “cripple effect” would be generated, affecting one’s studies and psychological state. He tells me that the way the rent works in Dublin is very informal and many people are fooled as a result – “some students who have been living in a house or apartment for a long time become illegal landlords (subletting), taking advantage of other students who need to find an accommodation quickly”.

On the questions that tackle social capital according to the actors themselves, Lavender highlights that “people get together because of their interests, not because they are nice”. Parties are an excellent way to socialise and meet new people, apart from virtual platforms, such as WhatsApp and “Meet up”, a social media platform introduced to Lavender by a Saudi-Arabian fellow ESOL student. According to Lavender, ESOL students “get together” because of a shared interest: to practice English.

Lavender is clear when he states he weakened his connections with Brazil, although approaching the subject in broad terms.

When you arrive here, your life in Brazil is left behind. It is like your life in Brazil is there, and here you have another life. Many times, except in specific job positions, no one wants to know what you did in Brazil. People want to know your references from here (Lavender).

From Brazil, Lavender has emotional support from his mother, girlfriend, “some cousins” and friends. As his mother “worries too much about everything”, he sometimes turns to his former father in law, a person whom he respects and admires. When I asked if anyone in Brazil has made a difference for him in terms of education and or employment, Lavender tells me that “contacts from Brazil, apart from my family, never made any difference to me”. In Ireland, he considers those who share the same “space” with him as potential sources of advice.

I turn to my flatmates or my classmates for advice. I don’t think to turn to the government nor any Irish. I believe if I need I would turn to people who are close to me... and to Brazilians (Lavender).

When I interviewed Lavender for the second time, he tells me that “some people from São Paulo” could make a difference for him in the future, as he plans to move to that city. He considers that knowing people who live there is a benefit for him, as they can “illuminate his path when he is there” – “even if it is not for professional purposes, they can tell me where to live, for example. I keep contact with them via Facebook and WhatsApp”.

Lavender defined the foreign exchange programme as a flux under constant transformation, which might have implications for assemblages of social capital in Dublin.

This programme is a funny thing because people come and go, in and out of your life... lots of them! Sometimes a person spends two weeks in your life... all the time hanging out with you and then, vanishes...they depart to somewhere else... It is hard to form a fixed group (Lavender).

Lavender says that he would not be able to attribute an identity to the groups he was part of when in Dublin. He tells me that he interacted with his fellow students, where Blue would be pointed as the leader of this network. Blue’s charismatic and extroverted traces would attract people to “hang around” him. According to Lavender, Blue would motivate people to do extra class activities and meet up. Lavender follows explaining how he enrolls other actors to his actor-network.

The networking functions in the following way. First, you connect with people from your accommodation²²³. Then, you connect with

²²³ Overall, international students live in student accommodation (or host family home) for the first two weeks of their programme, moving to a place of their preference (house or flat) after this period.

people who live with you, your flatmates. Theoretically, these people should help you in case of necessity, because our family is not here, right? So, sometimes, we play the role of the family here (Lavender).

Lavender tells me that he called his flatmate on the phone after the latter spent a few days away from the accommodation, and did not make any contact – “If he disappears, his family is not here. Here in Dublin, these things are difficult, especially in the beginning, you don’t have anyone to trust”.

Lavender was not working when I interviewed him for the first time, although he told me he wanted to find a job as soon as possible. He had not started looking yet, as he did not feel confident enough with his English skills. Lavender told me that he would like to be able to express himself in English, making people aware that he is “differentiated” – “I want people to think that ‘oh, this guy thinks differently’”. He depicts the world of work for ESOL students as a paradox. Despite the need to work, he believes ESOL students cannot practice their English while performing jobs that are commonly reserved for them – “if you work as a cleaner, when are you going to practise your English?”

Lavender suggested that the government could participate in the recruitment of ESOL students who would be willing to work in companies based in Ireland. I asked him to articulate further his ideas.

English plays a key role. We want to fill job vacancies, but we don’t have the conditions for it. We cannot communicate very well, so for those who came to study English... It’s complicated, right? Well, maybe some companies could open a recruitment process... Many people would work for free, I would work for free without a doubt. If I had a place that develops me I would work for free until

the end of the programme... I would work for someone who could give me a reference letter. No one wants to arrive back in Brazil and say "I worked as a cleaner", you want to arrive in Brazil and say "I worked in a company" (Lavender).

Lavender tells me that, before coming to Dublin, he had never left Brazil. The contact with other cultures fascinated him – "this is so good that you can get addicted to it". When he arrived in the school accommodation he talked to people from all over the world such as Portugal, France, Turkey and discovered that "there is a world overseas". Apart from the inevitable broadening of one's horizons, Lavender highlights how the foreign exchange programme, more specifically the English school and its teachers, teaches one how "other cultures work" and that one should not only be respectful about it, but also adapt themselves when it is the case. He narrates an event to illustrate his argument.

There is a Saudi-Arabian lady in my English class. You cannot see her. Only her eyes. One day I wanted to give her a "high five" and she turned her back to me. The other day I realised that I could not touch her hand. We were playing a game in the classroom and I needed to give her the dice. Her friends, who were also Saudi Arabians, told me to put the dice on the table and then she would take it from there (Lavender).

Even when I was not asking for comparisons, Lavender compared Brazil with Ireland many times during the interview. He disliked the fact that alcoholic beverages cannot be sold in shops after ten o'clock in the evening, and that it is not allowed to drink in the streets. However, he was impressed by the existence of cycle lanes, and the facilities for people with disabilities, citing how every side walk has a ramp for wheelchairs – "That's brilliant, my city does not have that". Another observation he makes is related to how services in Dublin are performed more "professionally" than in the Northeast of Brazil – "In Dublin you see the

waiters running up and down, sweating; whereas in Brazil they are very slow and seem not to want to work”.

Although stating that there were no obstacles that limited his participation in the society in Dublin, Lavender states that Brazilians are “more open” than the Irish. He considers that it is easier to establish friendships with Brazilians than other nationalities, “especially the Irish”.

Alfredo: Really? Why?

Lavender: I found them not so receptive and open. They speak to you as a matter of politeness. They don't bother to integrate you in their group. That's what I felt. When they realise you don't master the English language they give you the information you are asking for, but then show they are annoyed.

At the time of our second interview, Lavender had finished his undergraduate degree in manufacturing engineering and was doing an internship in the same company he used to work before travelling to Dublin. Lavender has been participating in many recruitment processes and highlights his next challenge: to do a presentation in English. Via Facebook Messenger in the 29th of July 2016, Lavender tells me that he has a new job in Fortaleza, “which was only possible due to (his) English skills”.

“It was good while it lasted”. That was how the second interview with Lavender ended. I asked him to give me a metaphor about his experience in Dublin and he told me that sentence. I invited him to elaborate his idea further and he replied: “You have to enjoy the programme as an unique experience. It is a brief and powerful experience”.

Appendix M: Alfredo's Story (reflective vignette)

This is a story about myself, written by myself. In this reflective ANT study, I am methodologically inclined to describe my trajectory as a mobile student in Dublin. In *a* relational/flat ontology, the manner in which I interfere in the world of the twelve mobile students – enacting their realities – is much related with my own translations attempts and the effects of such translations on who I am and how I see, even momentarily, the, or *a* world. In doing this, however, I take the risk of being judged or misinterpreted by the reader, which I sincerely hope it is not the case²²⁴.

I was born in Juiz de Fora in 1985. With a population of 500,000 inhabitants, this fairly quiet city used to be called “Manchester Mineira”, given its accelerated economic growth in the nineteenth century.

Family is a very significant actor-network in Brazilian society, an idea already articulated by Paulo Freire. My parents are psychiatrists, avid enthusiasts of Freudian ideas²²⁵ in their medical practice. My late grandfather exerted a great influence on my family, a surgeon and professor of Medicine who acted closely in the enactment of the first public university campus of my city – the Federal University of Juiz de Fora – becoming its president from 1968 to 1972. Thirty years later, this position would be occupied by one of my aunts. I have an older

²²⁴ As Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992) put, exposure always brings risks.

²²⁵ My father, however, implemented a somewhat “Deleuzian” inclusion programme for mental health patients as the Director of the Department of Mental Health, Juiz de Fora City Hall. In this programme, patients with schizophrenia worked in a canteen, subsidised by the City Hall, serving snacks and interacting with the community.

sister, who works as a training consultant and lives with her husband and their five-year-old daughter in Poland. There are more than thirty people in my family, if I include my cousins.

I usually visit my family in Brazil once a year for Christmas, when every member gathers for a time of celebration. In Dublin, WhatsApp, telephone and Skype are active actors that help me to connect with them, including my three good friends whom I met while undertaking my business undergraduate degree at Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora. After my graduation on the 1st of August 2009, I embarked on my international education journey, as this is the Brazilian social norm for business graduates. It is expected that as a result of a foreign exchange programme, not only English skills are enhanced, but also the formation of an “entrepreneurial self”, qualities much desired by large corporations. I chose Dublin as a pathway to lifelong learning. I had the option to go to London, where my sister was living at the time. Although it took me courage to make such decision, I rejected London, as having a sister in the same city would certainly hinder the learning experience of sailing in uncharted waters. I was about to meet and connect with new actors, learn to manage my life on my own and form networks anew.

I was in a restaurant at Rio de Janeiro airport, before the flight to Dublin, thinking about the future as an ESOL student abroad. I was told before by those who had had foreign exchange experiences that “you will have a menial job, nobody knows or cares about who you are in Europe, you will be just another immigrant, a second class citizen, prepare yourself”. I had the heart full of soul. That’s what business graduates do. They go abroad and learn to nurture and develop the entrepreneurial self, so they become valuable for organisations. At that moment I was trying to see miles ahead, but could just had the feeling that what I was doing was the right and

only thing to do. My parents and my sister were trying to keep a calm countenance, but I could bet they were as excited/nervous as I was. No desserts this time. Time to go to the gate (Notebook 3).

I spent two years in Dublin as an ESOL student, learning English and performing new realities that I had never thought I would. The fact that I had studied English for five years in Brazil, had gone through a one-month foreign exchange programme in Bournemouth, England (at the age of fifteen), and had visited English speaking countries before, helped me to be able to communicate with other international students and Irish citizens. In Dublin, however, I realised how much effort I would have to make in order to master a second language.

As I undertook my undergraduate degree at the university of my home city, I had never left my parents' house until my travel to Dublin, where I lived with three other ESOL students: two Brazilians and one Mexican. They became my friends as time passed. We lived in three different locations: a tiny basement apartment, a medium sized second floor apartment, and a house with a backyard. I tried to create a sense of community, where trust and norms of mutual respect would preponderate, which was not always the case. Life in Dublin was concomitantly about some form of freedom and many responsibilities, and the 2008 financial crisis was showing its effects.

I arrived in Dublin and promptly started looking for work parallel to my English classes. It was a dry period when the word "job" would trigger strong emotions on people. For those who were employed; relief. For the unemployed; despair. I worked in many different jobs throughout my period as an ESOL student, which

kept my financial independency in Dublin. I had to either embrace whatever work opportunity appeared (what I did), ask for financial help (absolute failure), or go back to Brazil before the end of my English course (absolute failure). Some positions were extremely casual. I worked in a rubbish-recycling centre, sold tickets for a charity organisation, distributed leaflets, cycled a rickshaw, and washed industrial size pots and pans in a catering restaurant. After a few months living on uncertainty, I managed to start working a few days a week at an alcoholic beverage factory, where I would fill containers with boxes of liquor bottles manually. This job lasted for four months and did pay all my bills; despite the amount of money I spent on food to satiate my uncontrollable appetite, an effect of the intense physical activity I was performing.

Towards the end of 2009, a fellow ESOL student was going back to Brazil and facilitated the process for me to replace him as a shop assistant in a convenience shop in North Dublin, where I worked for four months. I did not have any experience as a floor staff and had to act against shoplifting. However, it incredibly seemed fine after the period of uncertainty that I had been through. Although the owner of the shop would never pay me the exact amount of worked hours, I finally had some stability. I could go home after work knowing that I would have work for the next day. When I decided to stand up for myself and asked the owner to be paid the correct amount based on the worked hours, he indirectly fired me. He never told me to leave, but would simply offer less hours for the weekly work schedule until it became unsustainable for me. This happened in June 2010 when I had, for the first time, thoughts of going back to Brazil. My visa was about to expiry, I had improved my English considerably

after a year living in Dublin, and the situation had reached concerning levels in terms of employment. It seemed overly hard to mobilise any actor-network at that time.

In the meantime, unemployed, I went to a job recruitment agency and managed to be placed to work for two days (twelve hour shift) wrapping plastic around magazines at a factory. I kept searching for job offers online for a month, until I found another job as a shop assistant – now in Temple Bar area. It worked well, despite having to deal with an attempted robbery, drunk partygoers and work shifts in the late evenings. This job made me stay in Dublin. I renewed my visa, paid a cheaper English school with my savings, and tried to enjoy life in the condition I was in. After six months working at this shop, the owner announced that he was running out of business. No profits and too much competition in the area, he claimed. I had to struggle to obtain my holiday pay, which worked out in the end.

I went to Brazil where I spent one and a half month studying for the IELTS exams. I returned to Dublin and then, as an experienced shop assistant, quickly found work in a convenience shop in North Dublin (again with the help of a website) that lasted for three months. The owner behaved towards her employees as if she was living in colonial times. At this job, I perceived I had changed. I had gained more confidence and leverage. I could no longer be – even in the smallest degree – exploited. I decided to be a little more proactive and started undertaking travels at the weekends. I went to Norway and a few weeks later to Sweden. I wanted to live the life that many ESOL students were telling me about, but I

wasn't, as I had been extremely focused on finding and keeping a job, never asking for a day off on the weekends. My "proactivity" was not well received by the owner, leading me to quit the job.

After one week being unemployed, one of my flatmates, who was working in a convenience store in Temple Bar, was asked by his manager if he knew someone who could start working there. I was interviewed and then employed as a shop assistant. After a few weeks I became the supervisor. This shop was the only professional setting in Dublin thus far where the owner truly respected his employees, acting in accordance to the law. He would pay more if we worked on Sundays, paid holiday leave and the correct amount for the number of worked hours. During this period, I took my IELTS certificate and was approved in a full-time MSc in Management and Organisation Studies in a university in the city. Despite being grateful for all the learning experiences in the last two years, I was thrilled to be back in the university space.

Despite being highly demanding and competitive, the Master's was invaluable. I would take the DART (train) from where I lived in North Dublin to the South, an unexplored area of the city thus far. I also started having closer contact with Irish citizens, as my co-workers for the previous two years were from everywhere, but Ireland. I met my partner, a fellow Master's international student, who is a paramount actor in my story. I was decided to go back to Brazil after my Master's in order to do a PhD there, which did not happen. Going back to Brazil would jeopardise her professional life, as moving to Germany could jeopardise mine. We were happy to decide to stay in Ireland. Holding an honours degree from that

institution would have potentially opened the doors of organisations in Dublin, but the close relationship between the business world and immoral practices had exerted some sort of agency on us. We knew that we would not be fulfilled working as managers or organisational consultants, despite having attended a conference in England after the completion of our Master's where managerial practice finally made sense through the lenses of complexity theories. Yet, more than simply joining the organisational world, we wanted to think about the complexities of social life, perhaps sparking critical reflections and fostering positive change, at least to some extent, instead of reinforcing the status quo – unexamined.

Then, we decided to work as ESOL teachers. Our level of English had reached an advanced level and we thought that it would be a job position that would make sense to us. However, we knew the barriers we would face as we wanted to teach English in an English speaking country not being native speakers. The process was not the easiest. We found out that we needed a Cambridge certificate of English teaching to adults in order to be considered for ESOL teacher positions. We both undertook the course and managed to teach English for two months, each one in a different school in Dublin. We were fascinated about teaching and knew that we had *found* our “actor-network”, but other crucial actors were still missing. That was the moment when we decided to write PhD proposals in Education Studies and “hunt” potential supervisors in all universities in Dublin. Currently, as I write this account, we are concluding our PhD in Education and have been working as part-time assistant professors in the university.

Appendix N: Informed Consent Form

Research Study: Brazilian Student Networks? Mapping Complexities and Shifts in Social Capital Towards Educational and Professional Development

Alfredo Salomão Filho, alfredo.salomaofilho3@mail.dcu.ie

Dr Charlotte Holland charlotte.holland@dcu.ie

Dr Annelies Kamp, annelies.kamp@dcu.ie

Dr Veronica Crosbie, veronica.crosbie@dcu.ie

School of Education Studies, Dublin City University.

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)

I have read or had read the Plain Language Statement.

Yes/No

I understand the information provided.

Yes/No

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study.

Yes/No

I received satisfactory answers to all my questions.

Yes/No

I am aware that I will be interviewed during the course of this research.

Yes/No

I am aware that my interview will be audio-recorded.

Yes/No

I am aware that my responses to interviews may be quoted in research-based papers and articles and that my identity will be protected to the degree that this is possible

Yes/No

I wish to be named in the research.

Yes/No

I am aware that I may withdraw from this study at any time without any consequence

Yes/no

Confirmation that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary:

Your involvement in this Research Study is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from this research study at any point and without any consequence. In this case, your data will not be used.

Confidentiality of data, subject to legal limitations:

Data will be securely held within the School of Education Studies, at Dublin City University, for two years after research is completed and accessed only by the named researchers within this study. The data will be securely disposed after this. Confidentiality of participants in this research is not assured.

Signature:

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project.

Participants Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Appendix O: Plain Language Statement (for students)

Research Study: Brazilian Student Networks? Mapping Complexities and Shifts in Social Capital Towards Educational and Professional Development

Alfredo Salomão Filho, alfredo.salomaofilho3@mail.dcu.ie

Dr Charlotte Holland charlotte.holland@dcu.ie

Dr Annelies Kamp, annelies.kamp@dcu.ie

Dr Veronica Crosbie, veronica.crosbie@dcu.ie

School of Education Studies, Dublin City University.

Lately, you may have noticed that Dublin has been the destination of many Brazilian students, both of English Language and in Higher Education. This research aims to explore the networks of Brazilian students in Dublin, assessing what difference such networks make in terms of educational and employment pathways. In this research I want to learn about how policy – by government or by organisations – can help make the process of migration for education more valuable.

I would like to invite you to work with me. If you do, you would be involved in two interviews which will each last a maximum of one and a half hours. The first interview would be in July 2015 and the second in July 2016. If you agree, I would like to audiotape the interviews, just to assist my analysis. I will arrange the interviews at a time and place that suits you and, if you wish to, you can withdraw at any time and there would be no consequence from that. I won't use your data if you choose to withdraw.

If you get involved I won't disclose your identity unless you want me to. If you wish your information to be confidential I will ensure it as much as I am able however, I cannot provide a guarantee of that. This is because I would be developing an in-depth story of your migration experience and others may be able to recognise that story. At the same time, I have to work within legal exceptions to confidentiality. Therefore, I will use pseudonyms and will offer you the chance to review your 'case' as it evolves.

It is important to note that this research is completely independent of your study and that involvement in this research project has no relationship at all with your programme of study. I will securely store all the data from the research in my offices at Dublin City University and no one other than me and my supervisors will have access to the data. After the study is finished, the data will be destroyed.

I really appreciate your interest in this research. Your participation would be of great value as it is envisaged that your contribution will support the development of a Brazilian student community in Dublin.

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

**The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office
of the Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-
7008000**

Appendix P: Plain Language Statement (for policy actors)

Research Study: Brazilian Student Networks? Mapping Complexities and Shifts in Social Capital Towards Educational and Professional Development

Alfredo Salomão Filho, alfredo.salomaofilho3@mail.dcu.ie

Dr Charlotte Holland charlotte.holland@dcu.ie

Dr. Annelies Kamp, annelies.kamp@dcu.ie

Dr Veronica Crosbie, veronica.crosbie@dcu.ie

School of Education Studies, Dublin City University.

(This one should be addressed personally)

Dublin has been the destination of many Brazilian students, both of English Language and in Higher Education. This research aims to explore Brazilian student networks in Dublin and assess what difference such networks make in terms of educational and employment pathways. In this research I want to learn about how policy – by government or by organisations – can help make the process of migration for education more valuable.

As an expert on the education internationalization agenda I would like to invite you to offer your perspectives on this issue. If you are able to assist, involvement in this research project will require the completion of one interview of no more than one hour duration. Ideally, the interview would take place in July 2016 at a time and place convenient to you. With your permission, I would audiorecord the interview to assist in subsequent analysis. You may withdraw from this research study at any point and, should you do so, your data will not be used.

If you wish your personal identity to be confidential I will ensure it as much as I am able. However, I cannot guarantee this given your specialist role and given the legal exceptions to confidentiality.

Data will be securely held by the researcher within the School of Education Studies, at Dublin City University for two years after the conclusion of the study and accessed only by the named researchers within the study. The data will be securely disposed after this period.

Your participation would be of great value as it is envisaged that your contribution will support the development of a Brazilian student community in Dublin.

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000

Appendix Q: Ethical Approval

Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University



Mr Alfredo Salomão Filho
School of Education Studies

2nd October 2014

REC Reference: DCUREC/2014/204

Proposal Title: Brazilian Student Networks? Mapping Complexities and Shifts in Social Capital towards Educational and Professional Development

Applicants: Mr Alfredo Salomão Filho, Dr Annelies Kamp, Dr Veronica Crosbie

Dear Alfredo,

This research proposal qualifies under our Notification Procedure, as a low risk social research project. Therefore, the DCU Research Ethics Committee approves this research proposal. Materials used to recruit participants should state that ethical approval for this project has been obtained from the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee. Should substantial modifications to the research protocol be required at a later stage, a further submission should be made to the REC.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Donal O'Mathuna'.

Dr. Donal O'Mathuna
Chairperson
DCU Research Ethics Committee



Taighde & Nuálaíocht Tacaíocht
Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath,
Baile Átha Cliath, Éire

Research & Innovation Support
Dublin City University,
Dublin 9, Ireland

T +353 1 700 8000
F +353 1 700 8002
E research@dcu.ie
www.dcu.ie

Appendix R: A Possibility of Social Capital Translation (reflective vignette)

I think I have a problem. It refers to a term that is already part of the “social”. Nevertheless, my investigations indicate that “social capital” is a concept immersed in confusion. It helps our sociological understanding on the way actors manage to acquire “benefits” when interacting with a collectivity, or “belonging” to a group. However, this idea is still quite “misty” and often approached quite differently in the Academy. Needless to say that many approaches to social capital say the same thing in different ways, and take for granted many black-boxes of social life. Generalisations on how social capital works for whole populations are conceptually flawed. The good news is that this “mist” might allow space for creativity, new approaches, and new understandings. On the other hand, I have been having difficulty in choosing a social capital approach, as ANT refuses to frame the phenomenon before the analysis is performed by the social scientist. Also, I see problems in making connections between different approaches of social capital, as frameworks that try to gather many theoretical concepts, in the end, wouldn’t have much to say and might even contradict one another. The only way to solve this problem is via an “ontological solution” (Notebook 1).

My reflections on my international education realities as well as the writing up of this thesis fostered some thoughts on how social capital could be *translated*, or seen from a material semiotic perspective. In this, I will offer my view on both social capital and translation as I explain how *a* four moments of translation²²⁶ (Callon 1986a) can be seen as a process where power is distributed between A and B, and where A defines B and vice-versa (which denies the so much criticised Machiavellian touch of the four moments of translation).

²²⁶ Although *the* “four moments of translation” (Callon 1986a) can be seen as an analytical tool to interfere and transform empirical data, translation is a disperse and open ended concept – see Chapter 2 (p.44).

This experimentation is only possible through the consideration of my own experience as an international student (my own empirical data), as very detailed, longitudinal and “rich” data is required for such articulation. In the following paragraphs I will explore how a *social capital translation* comes into being, analysing each “moment’ of translation” (Callon, 1986a) until a more stable configuration stands as a functional social capital actor-network. My intention here is to “play” with ANT based on empirical data and fluid concepts (Mol 2010), rather than trying to elaborate a fixed framework. As Latour (1999b) and Mol (2010) put it, ANT is not a theory. There is “no overall scheme, no stable grid, that becomes more and more solid as it gets more and more refined. The art is rather to move – to generate, to transform, to translate. To enrich. And to betray”. (Mol 2010, p.257).

Problematisation: More Reciprocity, Less Persuasion

A and B are international students. They have the same visa status (Stamp 2A) and are enrolled in the same course of study (not necessarily in the same institution). They share a common interest of extending their actor-network abroad. A needs support from B and vice-versa. The obligatory passage point is proposed jointly by A and B and consists of *any form of support that A and/or B can enact*. In international education realities, support can be enacted in the form of access to information on rent and job opportunities, invitations to cultural events and “night outs”, formation of study groups, *inter alia*. The existential aspect of the enactment of the OPP refers to the exchange of telephone numbers (or social media profiles) between A and B, a non-human that will enable that the next moment of translation to be performed.

The reader should note that there is no “translator”, or “focal actor” in this social capital translation. While Callon’s (1986a) translation indicates that A will define a problem and persuade B to join the actor-network – via OPP – as the only way to solve both A and B’s problem, a *social capital translation* rejects this initial power play. As A and B share the same goal from the outset (extension and future mobilisation of their actor-networks), there is no need for persuasion at this stage. A and B’s problem will be solved if A becomes the OPP for B and vice-versa. In Callon (1986a), the scientists enrol the fishermen. In my case, two students enrol each other (bearing in mind that other human and non-human actors participate, in some form, in the enrolment). The fisherman needed to be convinced by the group of scientists that an investigation of the population of scallops in St Brieuc Bay would be beneficial for the former (avoid the decline in the population of the shellfish). In my case, there is no need for A to transform B’s interests. This form of translation – although in a laboratory “context”²²⁷ – is referred by Latour (1987, p.108) as “I want what you want”. Here, the goal is to enrol a new member to, or to extend, one’s actor-network (use of “social capital” abroad).

Interessement: Black Boxing Behaviour

This moment of translation refers to the continuous interaction between A and B and the definitions of norms. These actors will behave in a certain way, judging whether or not each other’s displayed behaviour is acceptable, that which Blue called “affinity”. Both A and B will try to “lock” each other as allies, meaning that they will have to show commitment to a certain course of action that will

²²⁷ Where a claim is to be transformed into a matter of fact.

eventually benefit them. At this stage, the OPP is enacted and reciprocity plays a key role in the process.

Enrolment: Trials of Trust

Time will allow norms of reciprocity, fairness and mutual trust to be strengthened: events of “trial” will take place. A supports B and B supports A. Trust emerge from this moment of translation, and their roles (and identities) as allies are more stabilised than previously.

Mobilisation: Enactment of a Social Capital Actor-Network

If the enrolment phase is successful, “A-B-actor-network” might be seen as one entity producing *real* effects. A and B’s interests are aligned: they follow the norms enacted during intersement, and trust each other (although betrayal might occur at any stage). In this sense, A speaks in the name of B and vice-versa. A is part of B’s international life (and vice versa) and is seen as a supporting actor. A and B are *quasi* black-boxed. The reader should note that while persuasion can be used whether by A or B at some stage of the translation, the power enacted by A does not differ from the power enacted by B. The main actors that prevent one actor to become “more powerful” than the other are reciprocity and the equal condition from A and B to break the actor-network at any moment. Latour (1987, p.119) phrases this form of translation as “becoming indispensable”.

Thanks to translation, we do not have to begin our analysis by using actants with fixed borders and assigned interests. Instead, we can follow the way in which (*actors A & B attribute*) a fixed border to (*each other*), the way in which (*A & B assign*) interests or goals to (*each other*), the definition of those borders and goals shared by A

and B, and finally the distribution of responsibility between A and B for their joint action (Latour 1991, p.124, *my text*).

While in Callon (1986a) A translates the interests of B, in my case each actor translates norms of reciprocity and trust. Neither A nor B *obey* one another. Instead, they *support* one another throughout time – in various forms – which mobilises the actor-network. At first glance, if the rehearsal of this *social capital translation* seemed functional and interest based, it is pertinent to notice that A might have to alter their own practices in order to support B, which highlights supportive performances over crude interest. For instance, A helps B not only because A might need a favour from B in the future, but also because B is a trustworthy member of A's network. This articulation dialogues with Portes' idea of "source of advantage".

Whereas economic capital is in people's bank accounts and human capital is inside their heads, social capital inheres in the structure of their relationships. To possess social capital, a person must be related to others, and it is those others, not himself, who are the actual source of his or her advantage (Portes, 1998, p.7).