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Article

The Interiorization of Public Higher Education in Santana do Araguaia, Brazil

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Abstract
As part of the interiorization program of public higher education in Brazil, and following the dismemberment of the Federal University of Pará (UFPA), the Federal University of South and Southeast of Pará (Unifesspa) was created in 2013 in the Eastern Amazon. In 2014, the Araguaia Engineering Institute (IEA) of Unifesspa was set up in the city of Santana of Araguaia, providing a licentiate degree course in Mathematics. The bachelor's degree in civil engineering was added in 2018, and architecture and urbanism in 2019. Santana of Araguaia is a relatively new municipality, located in the state of Pará, away from the main centralities and between the borders of agribusiness and the Amazon. Our research analyzed the evolution of the first years of this university campus in the municipal and regional contexts and reports the development indexes of IEA and Santana do Araguaia. It is observed that there are numerous challenges to improving this asymmetry; however, the interiorization of public higher education does have the potential to overcome some of this inequality, stimulate the development, and guarantee the right to public, free, and quality higher education.

Keywords
Brazil; Eastern Amazon; public higher education; Unifesspa

Issue
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1. Introduction

Public university education in Brazil has faced—and faces still—many obstacles to guarantee the right to free, high-quality education, especially in the country's interior. In more remote areas of the Brazilian Amazon, the policy of "interiorizing" courses at this level of education requires the analysis of trajectories and impacts to encourage reflection, systematize indicators, and create inductive proposals for public policies that strengthen the different educational contexts of public universities and their campuses. Our study discusses the trajectory and impacts of the public higher education "interiorization policy" in the southeast of the state of Pará, the north region of Brazil until its arrival in the city of Santana do Araguaia.

It is important to emphasize that, until the second part of the 20th century, the capital of Pará, Belém, concentrated most of the higher education courses available to the population, while the interior was mostly dedicated to forest preservation. In southeastern Pará, the main non-indigenous migratory flows occurred during (a) the second half of the 19th century, based on cattle ranching mainly from the neighboring state of Maranhão; (b) the early 20th century, during the exploitation of rubber; and (c) the second half of the 20th century, from the highway works and the exploration of ores that consolidated the city of Marabá as the main urban center of the region (Monteiro & Silva, 2021). In the 1970s, the first higher education classes were given in the city of Marabá; four decades later, in 2013, the Federal University of the South and Southeast of Pará

(Unifesspa) is established. Thanks to this achievement, Marabá becomes the headquarters of a recent regional university that advances through new interiorization fronts, such as the implementation of the Unifesspa campus in 2014 in the city of Santana do Araguaia (see Figure 1).

Our research seeks to analyze the trajectory and impacts of this achievement on inclusion and the social, economic, and scientific development in the region covered by Unifesspa in Santana do Araguaia. To do so, we use the guidelines of a qualitative approach, exploring descriptive data with documentary analysis from institutional collections and official data from the state of Pará and the city of Santana do Araguaia. To understand university interiorization policy in Southeast Pará and its impact, this article will next present a brief history of higher education in Brazil, focusing on policies for democratizing access to federal public higher education.

2. Brief History of Higher Education in Brazil and Unifesspa of Santana do Araguaia

In the European invasion of the American continent, while the Spanish established the press and founded 24 universities in their colonization lands until the 18th century, in the colony of Brazil, people with the greatest resources generally went to study in Portugal. The Society of Jesus was the main body responsible for teaching in Brazil. One of the first higher education courses was the philosophy course offered by the Jesuits in 1572 in the city of Salvador (the capital of the colony between 1549 and 1763) as well as in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Olinda, Recife, Maranhão, and Pará. The Jesuits were also responsible for the foundation of the Faculties of Mathematics in Salvador, in 1726, and in Rio de Janeiro, in 1757. There were attempts to convert the College of Salvador into a university, but these were denied by the University of Coimbra and the Court of Lisbon. With the expulsion of the Jesuits from Portuguese colonization lands in 1759, the allocation of the Brazilian capital to the city of Rio de Janeiro in 1793, and the French and Dutch invasions, the teaching of military engineering became predominant, with the Royal Academy of Artillery, Fortification, and Design being founded in 1792. However, the most significant changes occurred from 1808 onwards, when the Portuguese royal family came to Brazil to flee the Napoleonic invasion: These included the foundation of the Royal Printing Press in 1808, the creation, between 1808 and 1809, of medical-surgical academies in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro, the establishment of the Royal Military Academy in 1810 and the Royal School of Sciences, Arts and Crafts in 1816, among others (Barreto & Filgueiras, 2007).

In Pará, one of the most prominent and symbolic achievements of higher education is the establishment of schools of law in 1902, medicine in 1919, pharmacy in 1904, dentistry in 1914, and agronomy and veterinary schools in 1918. These courses contributed to the creation, in 1957, of the University of Pará which, in 1965, was renamed as the current Federal University of Pará (UFPA). This university is managed by Brazilian resources and, for much of its history, its activities were concentrated in the city of Belém, the capital of Pará. In 1971, in the southeast region of Pará, the city of Marabá offered a campus to temporarily receive professors from the University of São Paulo in the Rondon Project. Furthermore, in the same year, UFPA began offering special courses in the interior. Then, with the Interiorization Project of UFPA (1986–1989), new academic actions were initiated in Marabá from 1987, offering full degree courses in history, language studies/humanities (*letras*), mathematics, geography, and pedagogy. The infrastructure of the Rondon Project was used with the implementation of interval courses (which occur in the months of school recess), and there was support from the City Hall in the appointment of employees (administrative support, security staff, and drivers) and in the payment of accommodation and food to the eleven first professors

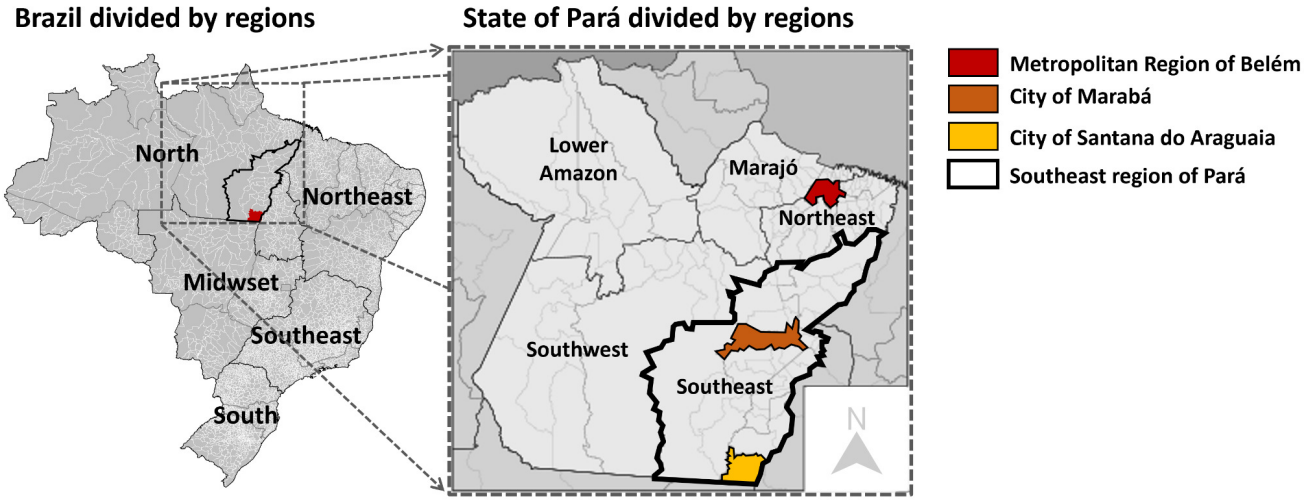

Figure 1. Location of Santana do Araguaia in Brazil and the state of Pará.

who came sporadically from Belém to teach in Marabá. The first courses to be offered regularly in Marabá were humanities, in 1992, and mathematics, in 1993. In 1994, three new centers were created in the nearby cities of Xinguara, Parauapebas, and Rondon do Pará. Over the years, new courses have been implemented both in Marabá and in neighboring municipalities. Moreover, between 1997 and 2000, the number of teachers grew from 18 to 26 (Camargo et al., 2011; Freire & Pimenta, 2010; Sousa, 2011).

At the state government level, the main mark of higher education is the creation of the School of Nursing of Pará in 1940. In 1993, this school and others were also responsible for the foundation of the State University of Pará (UEPA), also based in Belém. In the 1990s, the first interiorization centers were set up in the southeast of Pará, specifically in the cities of Marabá and Conceição do Araguaia, which functioned as an extension of the pedagogy course of Belém through the modular system (offering one subject at a time). By 1996, the UEPA had already recognized itself as multicampus and, in 2001, officialized the campus of Conceição do Araguaia and Marabá (Martins, 2020; UEPA, 2021).

Meanwhile at UFPA, gradually, the interior campus gained greater administrative autonomy and representation in the councils of the university. At the same time, the Federal Government began to encourage a process of expansion and interiorization of the sector with the plan *The Democratization and Expansion of Higher Education in the Country, 2003–2014*: In 2003, the Expand Program was implemented—a public higher education expansion program running from 2003 to 2006—followed by the 2007 REUNI Program, which supported the restructuring and expansion of federal universities (Federative Republic of Brazil, 2007).

The expansion of higher education, in general, could be related to a capitalist society's interest in qualified technical labor (Sousa, 2011). But, in this case, it is known that the right to higher education was expanded throughout the country, although not far enough. Between 2003 and 2008 there was an increase of 104 new campuses and 180 courses with an emphasis on the interiorization of Brazil (Ministério da Educação [MEC], 2009). By 2011, there had been an increase of almost 130,000 vacancies (Guerra & Rocha, 2018).

Although there are still many asymmetries in access to public higher education in Brazil, these transformations contribute to overcoming part of the inequality in the geographical distribution of public institutions. In 2019, 67% of the 302 public institutions in Brazil were in the interior (Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira [INEP], 2020). It is in this context that the UFPA campus in Marabá went through its expansion with the creation of new courses and an increase from 26 to 131 teachers between 2000 and 2010 (Sousa, 2011).

Also, regarding federal policies, in 2008, it was sanctioned that the Federal Network of Professional, Scientific and Technological Education be created, which then set up the Federal Institutes of Education, Science, and Technology from federal technical schools (Federative Republic of Brazil, 2008). In Pará, the first school of this segment was the School of Apprentice Craftsmen of Pará, established in 1909 and renamed, in 1999, as the Federal Center for Technological Education of Pará (CEFET/PA) and finally, in 2008, as the Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of Pará (IFPA). IFPA offers professional, technological, bachelor, licentiate, and postgraduate degrees. In southeastern Pará, there are the campuses of Marabá, Parauapebas, and Conceição do Araguaia.

In 2006, public higher education institutions in Pará, together with the State Department of Education (SEDUC), signed the SEDUC-IES protocol, an interinstitutional cooperation action aimed at improving public education in the state. Strategies were designed for mixed-degree training with interval courses (SEDUC, 2009). In this context, Santana do Araguaia received its first public higher education classes. In the 2000s, the UEPA offered individual classes of teacher training and a degree in mathematics (UEPA, 2021). Then, CEFET/PA (renamed as IFPA) offered, also in Santana do Araguaia, individual classes in geography and technology in public health in 2007, after the public call of the Open University of Brazil (UAB; SEDUC, 2009).

In 2009, the federal government created the National Plan for the Training of Basic Education Teachers (Parfor), which provided free tuition for a first or second degree. This was available for teachers from public networks who did not already have a higher education degree or for those who were teaching in an area outside the one in which they had been trained (MEC, 2021). In 2010, as part of the Parfor program, UFPA offered an individual licentiate degree in natural science in Santana do Araguaia (UFPA, 2013).

In this interiorization process, the UFPA campus in Marabá was "rebranded" in 2013 as the headquarters of the new Unifesspa. Unifesspa is a regional university composed of four more campuses in the municipalities of Rondon do Pará, Santana do Araguaia, São Félix do Xingu, and Xinguara, as shown in Figure 2. Between 2013 and 2019, Unifesspa went from 16 to 42 graduate-level courses and from 624 to 1852 students. In 2012, the law on quotas for federal universities was created to promote the inclusion of students from low incomes, public schools, black and brown people, indigenous communities, and, since 2017, for people with disabilities. Students from Unifesspa are mostly brown and from public schools. There have been records of self-declared indigenous entrants since 2014, and people from the *quilombola* (Afro-Brazilian) community and with disabilities since 2016 (Centro de Registro e Controle Acadêmico, 2021).

According to Fialho (2005), studies in this area are very limited and restricted to the understanding of campus, regionalization, and geographical interiorization of higher education. Therefore, our research seeks

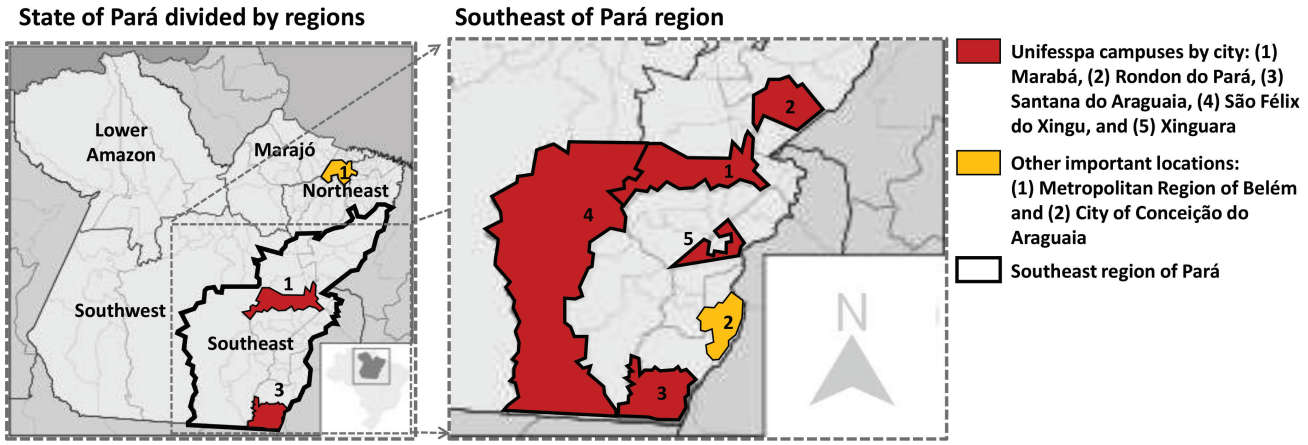

Figure 2. Location of cities with Unifesspa campus in the southeast of Pará.

to contribute to the analysis of the evolution of the Unifesspa campus in Santana do Araguaia within its municipal context.

3. Unifesspa Campus of Santana do Araguaia

The city of Santana do Araguaia is in the extreme southeast of Pará, between the borders of the north and midwest regions of Brazil, the states of Mato Grosso and the Tocantins, and the biomes of the Amazon and the Cerrado. It is a relatively new municipality whose current delimitation of 11,591,441 km² was made in 1988, after the emancipation of Santa Maria das Barreiras (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [IBGE], 2021). As the city has no commercial airport and the land route to the capital Belém is 1,082 km, the municipalities of Marabá, the headquarters city of Unifesspa at 541 km, and Palmas, capital of the neighboring state Tocantins 330 km away, become the main hubs for air connection and other services.

The estimated population of Santana do Araguaia, as of 2021, was 75,995 inhabitants. In the last census, conducted in 2010, 56,153 inhabitants were recorded, 52.83% of whom lived in urban areas, in the locality of the municipal office areas, and 47.17% were from rural areas (Cadastro Nacional de Endereços Para Fins Estatísticos, 2021; IBGE, 2021).

Regarding rural activities, it is observed that 55.85% of the establishments, in 2010, were agribusiness whose activity covered (in 2017) 74% of the municipality's territory, while the natural forests represented only 6.73%, and lands destined for permanent preservation or legal reserve, 14.25%. The herd of cattle in 2019 totaled 422,292: five times larger than the human population. This rural production has been growing in recent years, as observed in Table 1. In 2019, there are records of other forms of production, such as 625,000 units of pineapple, 720 t of watermelon, 8,700 t of sorghum, 313 t of banana, and 1,333 t of latex (IBGE, 2021).

However, despite the significant agricultural production, public administration, defense, education, and health and social security totaled the highest percentage of municipal GDP in 2018, at 30.94%. Services follow with 28.61%, agriculture with 25.26%, and industry with 15.19%. In 2010, the GDP per capita was approximately 10.5 times the minimum wage, which stands in stark contrast with the fact that 44.6% of the population had nominal monthly per capita income of up to only 1/2 the minimum wage, a poverty rate of 37.56% in 2003, and the presence of child labor. In 2010, 3.75% of child laborers were illiterate, 12.11% were not attending school, and 77.36% were black and brown. The city has 11,748 people in the 10–19 age group and 9,845 in the 10–17 age group were registered as child laborers. Although these are not comparisons of the same age group, it is possible to observe a significant level of child labor in the city (IBGE, 2021).

Regarding the total of 14,678 homes, the last census also reveals that only 9.74% (1,430) had a computer and 39.64% (5,866) had no piped water or any other form of water supply. In 2010, the municipality also presented a 0.602 municipal human development index,

Table 1. Rural production in Santana do Araguaia (tonnes).

	2007	2019	Increase
Soy	26,400	191,337	625%
Rice	1,107	6,386	477%
Beans	43	1,700	3,853%
Corn	3,027	109,150	3,506%

Source: IBGE (2021).

15% of adequate sanitary sewage, and 0% urbanization (IBGE, 2021).

In 2020, there were 26 elementary schools (with 214 teachers) and three high schools (with 39 teachers). In relation to the 2010 census, only 1.58% of the population (888 people) had completed higher education, 45.60% (25,604) were not attending school, and 20.60% (11,569) had never even attended. In the 6–14 age group, the schooling rate was 90.9%. The illiteracy rate was significant, although it had fallen from 21.7% in 2000 to 14.7% in 2010 (IBGE, 2021).

The evaluation of the city's public network by the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB) was not good. It is a measurement of the performance of the Brazilian educational system based on the combination of Portuguese and mathematics assessments and the approbation rate. The IDEB of the public network of Santana do Araguaia is below the state, North, and national averages. According to Figure 3, the IDEB in the initial years of public elementary school has shown growth, although it did not reach the target of 4.7 for 2019, and its evolution is lower than the other spheres. However, the performance of the public network in the final years of elementary school is even worse: there was a significant decline from 2011 and a much lower rate than the municipal target of 4.9, which had been predicted for 2019 (see Figure 4). In high school, the public network only presents sufficient data to calculate the IDEB in 2017 with growth for 2019, although much below the average in the other spheres (Figure 5).

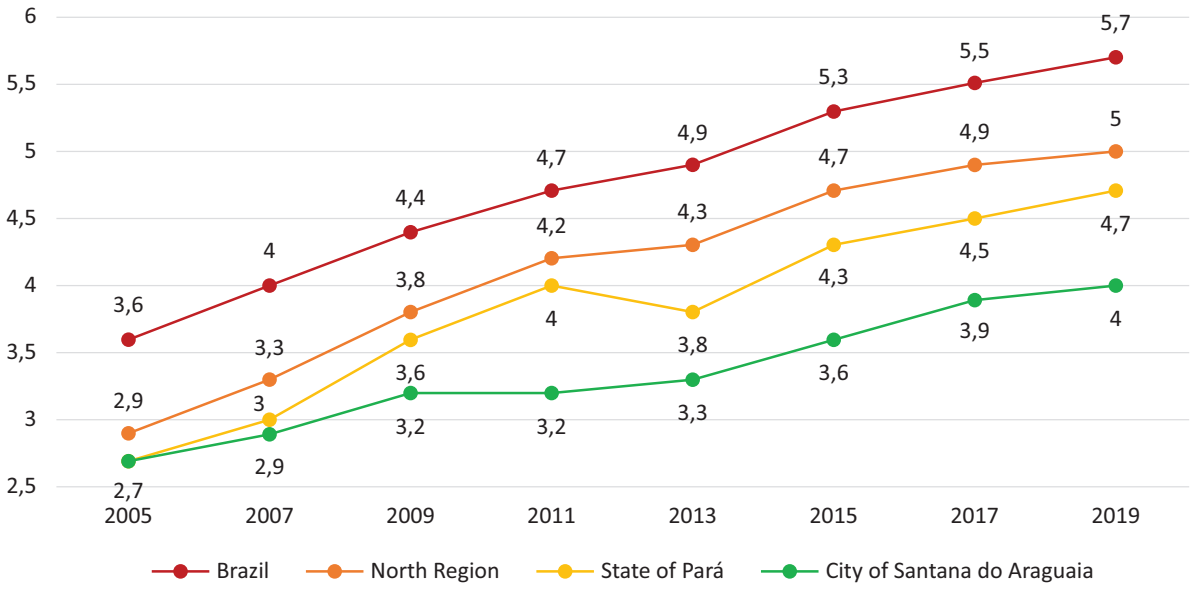

Figure 3. IDEB in the early years of elementary school in the public network. Source: INEP (2021).

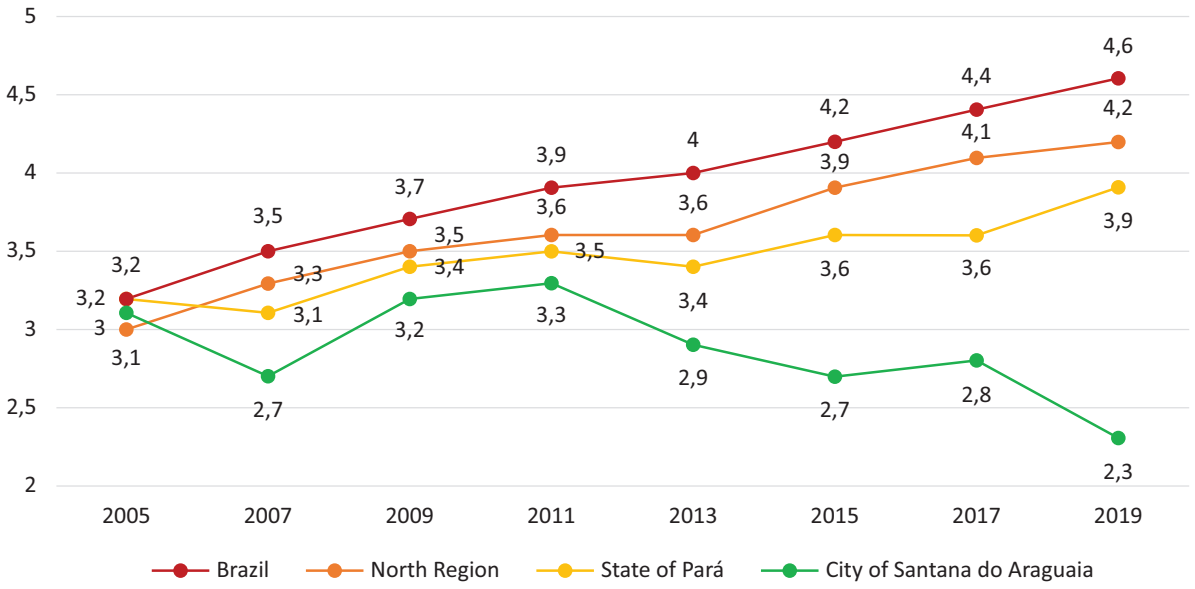

Figure 4. IDEB in the final years of elementary school in the public network. Source: INEP (2021).

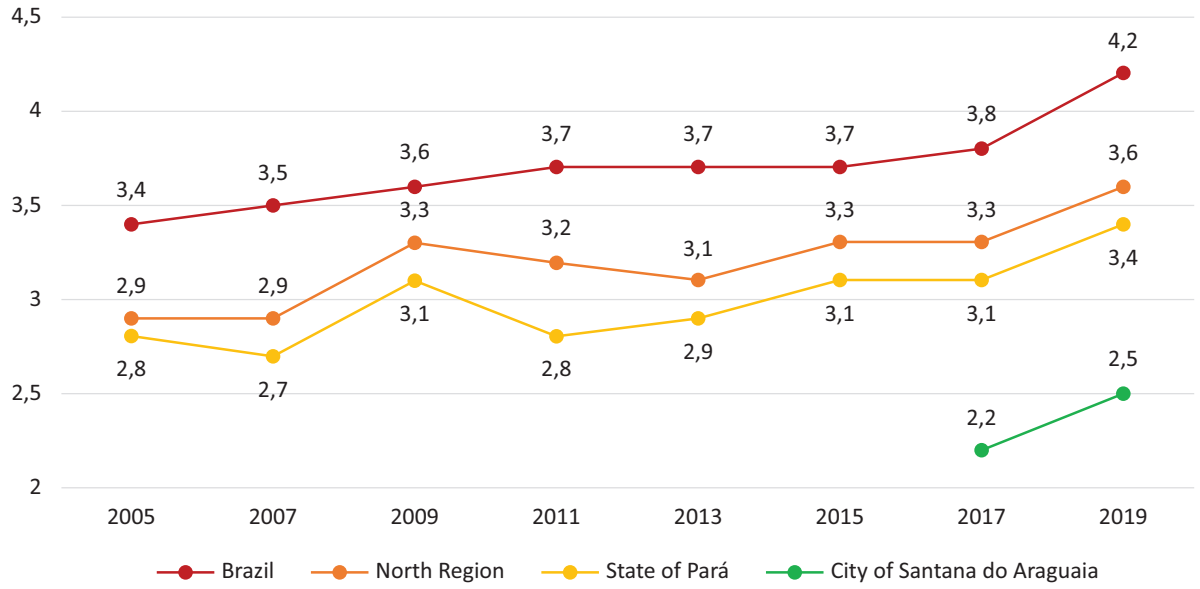

Figure 5. IDEB in high school in the public network. Source: INEP (2021).

It is in this context that the borders of the interiorization of public university education to Santana do Araguaia have been advanced since the 2000s. The teacher training course and degree in mathematics offered by the UEPA, the full degree in geography and technology in public health by the CEFET/IFPA, and the degree in natural sciences by the UFPA are the first records listing public higher education in Santana do Araguaia.

With the creation of Unifesspa in 2013, the possibilities for the interiorization process of public higher education are expanded with the implantation of the first public university campus in Santana do Araguaia in 2014, at the Araguaia Engineering Institute (IEA), by Unifesspa. The investigation presented here is structured with the mapping of official Unifesspa data that were treated in tables, graphs, and descriptive summaries about the process of implementing the IEA and correlated from academic-scientific-cultural activities and actions carried out by the campus with sociodemographic, educational, and economic conditions in the covered region. Data were analyzed based on analysis axes: academic education and the inseparability of teaching, research, and extension.

3.1. Academic Education

In 2014, the Unifesspa campus in Santana do Araguaia started offering the licentiate degree in mathematics. Through the Parfor program and with teachers from another Unifesspa campus, individual classes in Portuguese and mathematics were also offered—but only in 2016. In 2018, the first bachelor's degree in civil engineering started at the IEA. As of 2019, there were three important actions carried out by IEA: (a) the third course in architecture and urbanism was offered; (b) the Unifesspa joined Forma Pará ("To Form Pará"), a program to promote individual classes in other cities (SECTET, 2021) as the IEA's civil engineering class in the city of Redenção; and (c) at the postgraduate level, the first specialization class (lato sensu) was offered in safety and environment management by civil engineering professors. Currently, in 2021, three more specializations are undergoing approval process: cities, buildings, and sustainability; mathematics education; and work safety engineering.

Between 2021 and 2022, new classes will be initiated through the Forma Pará program: (a) civil engineering in the cities of Rio Maria and Eldorado dos Carajás; (b) mathematics in Cumaru do Norte and Santa Maria das Barreiras; and (c) architecture and urbanism in Redenção and Canaã dos Carajás (see Figure 6). This allows the IEA to build a base of professors who can contribute to the education and training of citizens not only in Santana do Araguaia but also in neighboring cities, fulfilling its role as a regional university.

It is important to place IEA courses in the context of the national scenario. In Brazil, as of 2021, public institutions provide 441 courses in mathematics, of which 25 are in the state of Pará; out of the 174 civil engineering courses in the country, eight are in Pará, and of the 67 courses in architecture and urbanism created in Brazil, the one at Unifesspa of Santana do Araguaia is the second course in Pará (MEC, 2021). In comparison, architecture and urbanism is a course with lower supply at the national level, and there is also an unequal distribution. Currently, according to Simas et al. (2021), the majority of vacancies offered are still concentrated in capitals, even though most institutions are in the interior. Concerning the regions, the North of Brazil has the lowest number of courses and the longest spatial distances, as shown in Figure 7.

Table 2 shows the offer of mathematics, civil engineering, and architecture and urbanism in Brazil in 2019. It is observed that courses on mathematics and the concluding index in public institutions are greater in number than in the private sector, which has more vacancies.

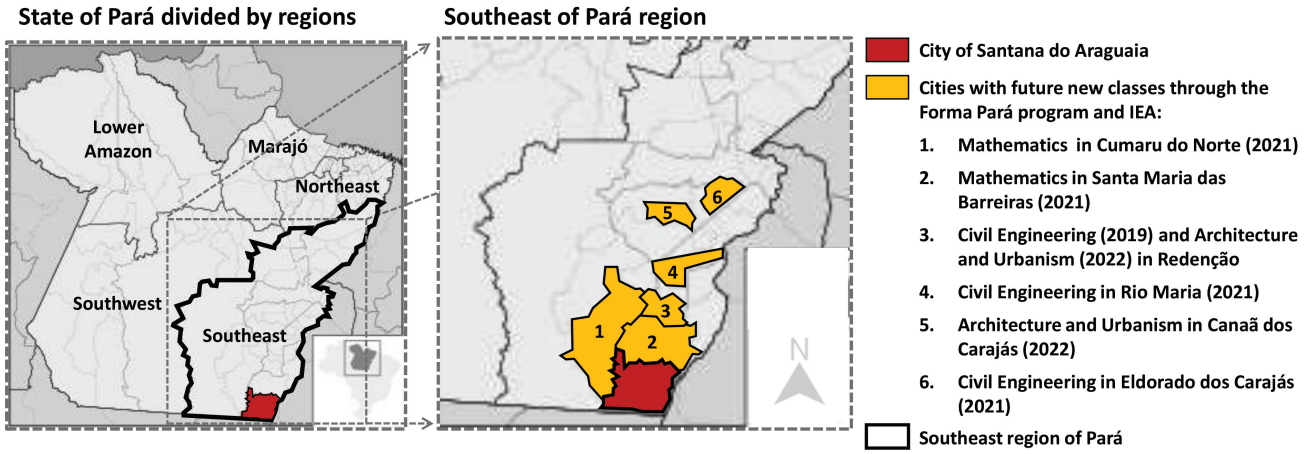

Figure 6. Individual classes in other cities offered by IEA/Unifesspa.

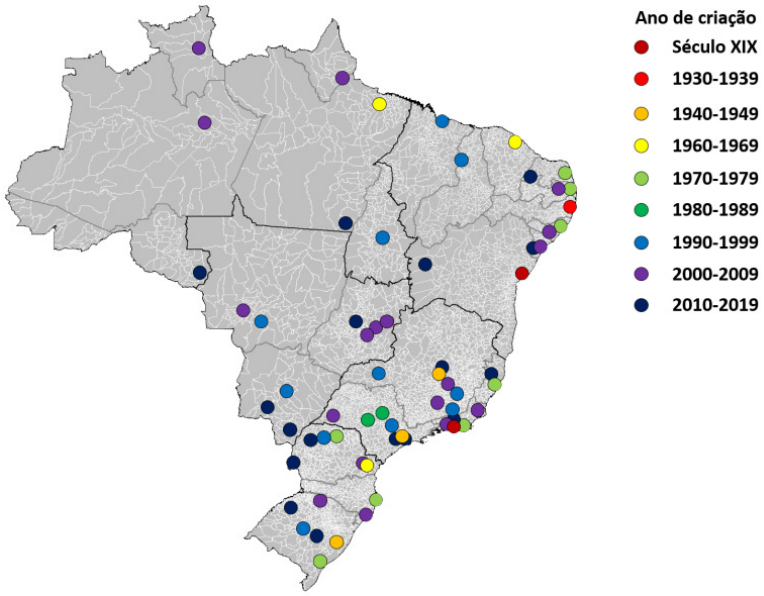

Figure 7. Map of architecture and urbanism courses by year of creation since the 19th century. Source: Simas et al. (2021).

Table 2. Offer of mathematics, civil engineering, and architecture and urbanism in Brazil in 2019.

		Total	Public	Private
Mathematics	Number of courses	601	403	198
	Offered vacancies	278,091	33,700	244,391
	Concluding	10,670	4,911	5,759
	Concluding index	3.84%	14.57%	2.36%
Civil engineering	Number of courses	1,144	176	968
	Offered vacancies	411,273	14,812	396,461
	Concluding	48,779	6,789	41,990
	Concluding index	11.86%	45.83%	10.59%
Architecture and urbanism	Number of courses	675	72	603
	Offered vacancies	177,408	5,144	172,264
	Concluding	23,753	2,933	20,820
	Concluding index	13.39%	57.02%	12.09%

Source: INEP (2021).

On the other hand, the number of courses and vacancies offered in public institutions of civil engineering and architecture and urbanism is smaller than in the private sector; however, there is a higher percentage of students who successfully graduate (INEP, 2021).

Regarding IEA classes, Mathematic courses admit students annually into a class of 40 vacancies, except for 2015 when two classes were formed. Civil engineering and architecture and urbanism classes also admit students annually with 30 vacancies, apart from the class at Redenção, which had 50 vacancies. However, as seen in Table 3, it is a challenge to fill all the vacancies in mathematics and architecture and urbanism. This low take-up may be associated with low levels of development in basic education, child labor conditions, or a lack of confidence in students from families with no graduates to act as role models. However, inadequate urban infrastructure and pollution from agricultural fires make this region less attractive to people from other cities.

In its recent history, the IEA has already had 13 mathematicians graduate from its classes of 2014 and 2015. Its average number of graduates of 10.83% is above the national average. For Santana do Araguaia, it means that there are more 13 teachers now available to improve the basic education of the city and region. It is important to emphasize that the egress profile has a greater predominance of women (78.57%), brown (85.71%), and those coming from the public education system (85.71%; Unifesspa, 2021). Other students in 2014 and 2015 classes are still studying, which will result in a greater number of graduates in the future.

3.2. The Inseparability of Teaching, Research, and Extension

Regarding research and extension projects, IEA has been carrying out more and more actions as new professors join the courses. There were 11 projects in 2017, 42 in 2019, when most professors of civil engineering and architecture and urbanism have entered, and 65 in 2020. Among the many projects aimed at the scientific, academic, and local communities, Emancipa is one good example of a preparatory course that helps students from local schools enter university education (IEA, 2021). Thus, professors from the three courses help with reinforcement classes so that candidates can reach the minimum grades for access to higher education.

Professors and students of civil engineering and architecture and urbanism are developing projects for public spaces, improving materials used in the works, and increasing citizen participation in the city's construction process, opening new opportunities to rethink urban and housing infrastructure.

Regarding events, in 2015, the IEA hosted the first Araguaiense Mathematical Meeting with 40 participants and an agenda of lectures, round tables, short courses,

Table 3. Classes of IEA/Unifesspa in 2020.

	Year of entry	Vacancies Offered	Incoming students	Matriculation canceled	Studying	Concluding	Incoming index	Evasion index	Studying index	Concluding index
Mathematics	2014	40	33	23	4	7	82.50%	69.70%	—	17.50%
	2015.1	40	6	3	0	3	15.00%	50.00%	—	7.50%
	2015.2	40	25	14	7	4	62.50%	56.00%	—	10.00%
	2016	40	16	12	4	—	40.00%	75.00%	25.00%	—
	2017	40	22	15	7	—	55.00%	68.18%	31.82%	—
	2018	40	23	6	17	—	57.50%	26.09%	73.91%	—
	2019	40	40	7	33	—	100.00%	17.50%	82.50%	—
	2020	40	21	0	19	—	52.50%	0.00%	90.48%	—
	Total	320	186	80	91	14	58.13%	43.01%	65.57%	11.67%
Civil engeneering	2018	30	30	3	16	—	100.00%	10.00%	53.33%	—
	2019	30	29	4	18	—	96.67%	13.79%	62.07%	—
	2019 Redenção	50	50	0	35	—	100.00%	0.00%	70.00%	—
	2020	30	30	0	30	—	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%	—
	Total	140	139	7	99	—	99.29%	5.04%	71.22%	—
Architecture and urbanism	2019	30	27	2	17	—	90.00%	7.41%	62.96%	—
	2020	30	26	2	24	—	86.67%	7.69%	92.31%	—
	Total	60	53	4	41	—	88.33%	7.55%	77.36%	—

Source: Unifesspa (2021).

and a cultural event. In 2017, the second meeting had 54 entries and offered lectures, short courses, round tables, and presentations of projects and work.

In 2019, through the composition of three courses, the IEA launched itself into the challenge of holding its first congress, with the support of the Amazon Foundation for The Support of Studies and Research (Fapespa). So, in 2019, a free event was initiated, the first Araguaiense Congress of Exact, Technological, and Applied Social Sciences (Conara). With the central theme of problematizing, designing, and building for a more sustainable development, this first event had 168 participants, 37 submitted papers, and a diverse program with short courses, workshops, lectures, a poster exhibition, documentary shows, technical visits, round table, and a physics fair (IEA, 2021). Considering the high costs of other meetings, this was a unique opportunity for many low-income students to participate in such an environment of scientific discussion.

In 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2nd Conara event had the challenge of holding a free, socially distanced congress, even though funding calls had been suspended. However, this opened new opportunities of even greater proportions. With the title "University and Community: Knowledge in Integration With the Community," the number of papers submitted and people enrolled almost doubled compared to the first event. There were 72 submitted papers and 323 participants, including researchers from various Brazilian regions, as well as from other countries. A partnership was also made with the *Journal of Engineering and Exact Sciences*, where Conara's best papers were published (IEA, 2021).

In 2021, the 3rd Conara event is set to be free, remotely accessible, and it intends to discuss the "role of universities in a new time," reflecting on actions and challenges during and post-pandemic. The main novelties are the partnership with *ReDIPE: Revista Diálogos e Perspectivas em Educação* and the closing of the congress that will take place with the award ceremony of the first Science and Technology Exhibition of Basic Education of Santana do Araguaia (Moctec).

Regarding the 1st Moctec, it is a science fair with the work of students at schools that can receive scholarships funded by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovations. This event is expected to further integrate the university and schools of Santana do Araguaia. In addition to advancing scientific discussion, it contributes to raising awareness of Unifesspa among elementary school students and developing their interest in becoming future university students.

4. Conclusion

Historically, public higher education in Brazil can be seen as a right for only a few, although, in recent decades, there have been great federal efforts to expand it and reduce asymmetries, especially in the country's interior. The state of Pará has also expanded its policies in this regard, and many municipalities have supported such actions, as observed in the interiorization of public higher education to include Santana do Araguaia. It is a relatively new municipality with growth predominantly oriented around agribusiness to the detriment of forest preservation, which presents many challenges to achieving important human rights. Implementing the Unifesspa campus in Santana do Araguaia reverses part of its inequality by reducing the need for students to move to distant urban centers to study.

It is concluded that the presence of Unifesspa in Santana do Araguaia has an initial impact by attracting professors, mathematicians, engineers, architects, urbanists, and other professionals from so many other locations in Brazil to this locality. Research and extension projects have increased in recent years and have generated academic and local community results. However, the biggest step will be consolidated with the training of the local population to become new professors, mathematicians, engineers, architects, and urbanists who will amplify knowledge and drive the transformation toward a more just and inclusive society.

Currently, the number of students enrolling in courses still does not fully meet the expectations of the IEA/Unifesspa. It is considered that Unifesspa needs to rethink its strategies to expand opportunities, considering, in fact, its peripheral location in an underdeveloped city and its local context of poverty, low IDEB, illiteracy, and child labor, among other issues. This also means considering how to increase the support offered throughout the academic career to minimize student dropout rates, although the graduation rate in mathematics is above the national average. This also demonstrates that, despite being low in absolute numbers, the benefits from the recent emergence of the first Mathematics graduates will reverberate through the community through the educational development that they foster in others. Thus, it is believed that this internalization of public and free education aims to better distribute opportunities, especially for non-whites from public schools, who a few decades ago were minorities in public universities.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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