



Expansion and interiorization of federal universities from 2003 to 2014: a debate on governmental perspectives

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ABSTRACT. The reduction of influence of the public sector over Brazilian higher education has been underway since the end of the last century, as a consequence of the lack of investments in this sector. During the two mandates of Lula da Silva (2003–2006 and 2007–2011) the foment to the private sector and the destination of investments to the public sector were maintained, with the concern of establishing new federal universities and the purpose of interiorizing them, since the headquarters of most of these universities were concentrated in the state capitals. The government of Dilma Rousseff (2011–2014) followed the same directives of her predecessor's, seeking to continue the policy of opening universities in the inner areas of the country. This paper analyzes the constitution of this policy focused on the interiorization, integration and regionalization of higher education – basis for the creation of these universities – which occurs contradictorily to the existing budget constraints. In addition to the bibliographical survey on the subject, we used secondary data referring to the rate of higher education enrollment in the sites of the universities surveyed. Despite the contradictions that accompany this policy, there are indications that it has contributed to reduce regional asymmetries in the country, which does not prevent other criteria from being equally considered.

Keywords: expansion of higher education, interiorization, federal universities.

Expansão e interiorização das universidades federais no período de 2003 a 2014: perspectivas governamentais em debate

RESUMO. A redução da influência do setor público na educação superior brasileira ocorreu desde o final do século passado, motivada pela falta de investimentos nesse setor. Os governos Lula da Silva (2003–2006) (2007–2011) mantiveram o fomento ao segmento privado, direcionando investimentos ao setor público com a preocupação em criar novas universidades federais com a perspectiva de interiorizá-las, já que a sede da maioria dessas universidades estava concentrada nas capitais dos estados. Dilma Rousseff (2011–2014) orientou-se pela mesma linha de seu antecessor, procurando dar continuidade a abertura de universidades no interior do país. Neste trabalho analisou-se a constituição dessa política com foco na interiorização, integração e regionalização da educação superior, base do processo de criação dessas universidades, que ocorre contraditoriamente às restrições orçamentárias existentes. Além do levantamento bibliográfico sobre a temática, utilizou-se dados secundários referentes à taxa de escolarização de educação superior e os sítios das universidades pesquisadas. Apesar das contradições que acompanham essa política, há indícios de que a política contribuiu para a diminuição das assimetrias regionais existentes no país, o que não impede que outros critérios tenham sido igualmente considerados.

Palavras-chave: expansão da educação superior, interiorização, universidades federais.

Expansión e interiorización de las universidades federales en el período de 2003 a 2014: perspectivas gubernamentales en debate

RESUMEN. La reducción de la influencia del sector público en la educación superior brasileña ocurrió desde el final del siglo pasado, motivada por la falta de inversiones. Los gobiernos Lula da Silva - 2003–2006 y 2007–2011 - mantuvieron el fomento al segmento privado y, en relación al sector público, dirigieron las inversiones con la preocupación de crear nuevas universidades federales con la perspectiva de interiorizarlas, puesto que la sede de la mayoría de ellas estaba concentrada en las capitales de los estados. Dilma Rousseff (2011–2014) se orientó por la misma línea de su antecesor, buscando dar continuidad a la apertura de universidades en el interior del País. En este trabajo, se analizó la constitución de esta política, con enfoque en la interiorización, en la integración y en la regionalización de la educación superior, base del proceso de creación de estas

universidades, hecho que contraría las restricciones presupuestarias actuales. Además de la búsqueda bibliográfica sobre la temática, se utilizaron datos secundarios referentes a la tasa de escolarización de la educación superior en sitios electrónicos de las universidades investigadas. Pese sus contradicciones, hay indicios de que esta política contribuyó para la disminución de las asimetrías regionales existentes en el País, lo que no impide que otros criterios hayan sido igualmente considerados.

Palabras-clave: expansión de la educación superior, interiorización, universidades federales.

Introduction

This paper is grounded in the project entitled ‘Brazilian Higher Education Expansion Policies’, which considers that since the 1990s the Higher Education scenario has undergone several revisions expressed by the regulations aimed at this educational level, among which, outstand the expansion and diversification of the system, the broadening of the private sector and the management practices in both private and public sectors.

The decade of 1990s was admittedly marked by constant tensions and changes in Latin America in respect to what was thought to be the role of the State and its limitations to tackle the need for reorganization of the capitalism in its new phase, the global capitalism. (Cabral Neto, 2012).

Regarding education, the primacy of the private sector was observed, allowing clear perception of the neoliberal reasoning solid establishment, fostering actions of austerity reduction of State impact and flexibilization of public policies regarded as required goals for a supposed ‘development’. In short, according to Mancebo, Maués and Chaves (2006, p. 42) this period is noticeably characterized by:

[...] Implementation of neoliberal adjustment policies, redefinition of public and private sectors within the most varied human activities, in the scopes of the State and of the civil society. Under the neoliberal reasoning, a process of expansion of the private dimension has been triggered, not only in terms of activities connected to the productive sector, but also to the field of social acquired rights by the workers’ struggle. As a consequence for the educational sector, especially to the Brazilian higher education, successive governments have been implementing structural reforms of universities.

During the mandates of Lula da Silva (2003 - 2006), (2007-2010) and Dilma Rousseff (2011-2014), the rationale behind the incentives to the private sector went on unchanged and included the establishment of policies, that privileged fiscal resignation, as in the case of the Program University for all - PROUNI¹, and the

maintenance of Funding for Students in Higher Education- FIES launched during the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Moreover, in their governments, possibilities for widening State responsibilities towards education and investments were broadened in the public sector, despite the predominance of the neoliberal reasoning.

A model of foment of private higher education has been adopted, allocating financial resources from the Public Fund. Besides that, part of the investments was targeted to the public sector resulting in expansion and interiorization of federal universities.

In 2003, beginning of president Luís Inácio Lula da Silva’s administration, 3.887.022 registrations in face-to-face delivered undergraduation courses were verified. Among the Brazilian regions presenting greatest percentage of registrations are the Southeast region with 49,34%, followed by the South region with 19, 17% and the Northeast region with 16,07% of the total; sequentially were the Central-west and North regions, respectively, showing 9,49% and 5,92%. These figures revealed an asymmetrical scenario among regions (MEC/INEP², 2003).

With regard to the policies of expansion for higher education, the document entitled ‘Higher Education Democratization and Expansion 2003-2014’ elaborated by the Ministry of Education – MEC and the Secretary of Higher Education - SESU, states the clear intention of expanding the access to public higher education, thus contributing to attenuate regional asymmetries (Brasil, 2014b).

We might assert that the actions promoted by the State are not restricted to what is conventionally called the negative ground rules of economy, since “[...] the State is permanently in charge of a series of positive *material measures* for the population, even when such measures reflect concessions imposed by the struggle of dominated classes” (Poulantzas, 1985, p. 36)³.

Neves (2007) highlights that the rhythm and direction of educational policies as part of the

² MEC- Ministry of Education in Brazil. INEP - National Institute for Educational Studies and Research “Anísio Teixeira”.

³ Our translation from the original “[...] o Estado encarrega-se ininterruptamente de uma série de medidas materiais positivas para as massas populares, mesmo quando estas medidas refletem concessões impostas pela luta das classes dominadas” (Poulantzas, 1985, p. 36).

¹ Acronyms in this text are were maintained in language of origin.

general State social policies, in a certain concrete social formation, within the capitalist society are determined “[...] by the stage of development of forces of production and of relations of production as well as by the transitional clashes of several educational proposals competing for the State hegemony, in strict sense, and in civil society” (Neves, 2007, p. 208). That is to say that, despite the hegemonic nature underlying the political and economic measures in the last decades, they did not take place without reactions coming from distinct sectors of society, especially from those historically deprived of equality and spaces primarily occupied by the Brazilian elites. These sectors managed, yet minimally, to pressure governance for a more solid participation in the various sectors of society through social movements, including higher education, not only within national domains, but also in different international contexts.

In respect to higher education, it can be observed that “[...] the expansion of higher educational systems in all regions has welcomed new economic segments into the university with greater cultural diversity, varied instructional backgrounds and academic expectations” (McCowan & Schendel, 2015, p. 20)⁴. The authors substantiate the idea that the development of educational systems emerge both quantitatively and qualitatively from the new relationship patterns between science and work and science and life, inherent to urban industrial civilizations (Neves, 2007). On these grounds, they start to include effective demands from the proletariat, pursuing the socialization of knowledge and also reflecting the continuous pressure for professional qualification and qualified workers for the market.

It also legitimate to affirm that “[...] higher education may produce changes in the way people interpret the world, their relationships with others and their chances of living a prosperous life, and such impacts are not always possible to assess” (McCowan & Schendel, 2015, p. 41)⁵.

Within this perspective, we managed to analyze the establishment of eighteen federal universities during the government periods of Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff, along with the constitution of 173 campuses in the inner cities of the country. This governmental policy was fostered by the Support

Program for the Restructuring and Expansion of Federal Universities - REUNI, instituted by the decree no. 6.096/2007 (Brasil, 2007), which injected financial resources into federal public universities upon management contracts required to be signed by these Institutions of Higher Education - IES.

According to the previously mentioned document elaborated by MEC/SESU (Brasil, 2014b), there was an upscaling in the budget of federal universities in the period between 2003 and 2013, showing a substantial increase from 45 existing federal universities to 63. That is a total increment by 40%.

The expansion and interiorization of federal universities continuously increased with the establishment of REUNI, a federal program oriented to the implementation of “[...] conditions for broadening access to and promoting permanence in higher education at undergraduate level, improved utilization of physical structure and human resources existing in federal universities” (Brasil, 2007). Consequently, REUNI has achieved the status of one of the official programs that subsidized the dynamics of interiorization of federal Brazilian universities, along with the program entitled Open University in Brazil - UAB (Brasil, 2006)⁶.

We conceive that the democratization of access into higher education is translated by changes in social indicators, namely those involving the least privileged segments of the Brazilian society and the growth in attendance rates at this educational level. Analyzing the adjusted Net Rate of Schooling in Higher Education⁷, one can observe that within 2003 and 2013 this figures evolved from 10% to 18% (Brasil, 2014b), indicating, from the quantitative perspective, a positive result from higher education expansion policies, which include: REUNI – devoted to federal public institutions – PROUNI (Brasil, 2005) and FIES (Brasil, 2001), initiated during the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Both PROUNI and FIES are programs that implicate fiscal resignation of private sectors in order to promote the extended admission offers to higher education.

⁴ TN: Our translation from the original “[...] a expansão dos sistemas de educação superior em todas as regiões trouxe novos grupos econômicos para a universidade, com uma maior diversidade de culturas, níveis de formação e expectativas acadêmicas” (McCowan & Schendel, 2015, p. 20).

⁵ Our translation from the original “[...] a educação superior pode produzir mudanças na compreensão do mundo das pessoas, suas relações com os outros e sua capacidade de ter uma vida próspera, e tais impactos nem sempre são possíveis de serem avaliados” (McCowan & Schendel, 2015, p. 41).

⁶ TN: Our translation for the original “[...] condições para a ampliação do acesso e permanência na educação superior, no nível de graduação, pelo melhor aproveitamento da estrutura física e de recursos humanos existentes nas universidades federais” (Brasil, 2007). Dessa forma, o REUNI se colocou como um dos programas governamentais que contribuiu para o movimento de interiorização das universidades federais no Brasil, além do programa Universidade Aberta do Brasil - UAB (Brasil, 2006).

⁷ Adjusted net schooling rates in higher education – percentage of individuals between 18 and 24 years old who attend undergraduate courses in higher education or who have already finished one undergraduate course in comparison to the population aged between 18 and 24 years old.

This paper seeks to analyze the conception of this federal policy highlighting the process of interiorization of higher education, one of the pillars for the establishment of these universities, defying existing budget restrictions. We tried to identify the central focus underlying this policy by collating schooling rates from the states where these universities were established. The intention was to contrast the social indicators in order to assess the progress, expansion and interiorization of the established institutions, regarding the fact that one of the purposes of this policy is intended for the reduction of Brazilian regional asymmetries.

The methodological procedures involved literature review, data collection and document analysis of the expansion policies regulatory frameworks for higher education, mapping of interiorized universities, analysis of secondary data about the schooling rates of higher education and of information obtained from the universities loci, namely the Plan of Institutional Development (PDI) of each institution and their respective management reports.

Expansion and interiorization of higher education in Brazil: historical and conceptual elements

The literature on the issue of interiorization of higher education in Brazil is usually approached in two perspectives: as a form of democratic access to education, thus addressing and fulfilling regional demands; and as a process controlled by the prerogatives of the Capitalist State, related to international capital and exploitation of resources and local work force. We propose to examine how these tendencies have been materialized within the selected literature.

The broadening of educational opportunities does not take place as a homogeneous process in Brazilian society. This fact accounts for the different forms of policies organized and adopted by the State. According to Neves (1994), at the beginning, admission offers were intended to fulfill the limited demand for educational measures promoted by the State, aiming to create a professional staff properly prepared to perform management tasks and other specialized assignments required to support an organized scientific production, and fostering, in a broader sense, the development of their 'organic intellectuals'. Another relevant and decisive aspect concerning the implementation of the educational apparatus is related to:

[...] The need to understand the essential instruments required for the employment of a new cultural code, concretely translated into the content underlying the occupation of new job positions and into the effective participation in socio-political institutions emerged from the urban-industrial society, and in turn, transformed into educational demands. (Neves, 1994, p. 28)⁸.

The higher education policy of expansion, such as that observed in Brazil since 1960 endeavored to fulfill the demands of the prevailing economic model at the time, which required professionals with superior qualification. In addition, with the widening of the middle class segment of the population, this portion exerted pressure for more educational opportunities, with emphasis to higher education, as this represented, for many, the chance of social ascent.

Studies carried out by Madeira (1982) on the expansion of higher education in Brazil, within 1960-1974, remark this process would meet double requirements: the rising of consumption levels and the selection of the best professionals to integrate the board of employees in large companies or on the market of symbols, as higher education has always been viewed as a factor of social mobility, a target to be achieved. The author also identifies some predominant features of higher education in Brazil along these decades, namely, the proliferation of isolated establishments at this instruction level; the growth of private and isolated establishments causing them to outnumber public institutions; offers have been mostly concentrated in the Human Sciences field and; implementation of an education network in the inner cities.

This allowed a certain portion of the Brazilian capital to be employed in this process of expansion and to partially fulfill the need for implementation of schooling opportunities in the inner cities of Brazilian states – an aspiration of the more favored social groups. Within this perspective, the expansion of higher education in Brazil, mainly in the inner cities, was justified by the necessity to promote regional development as the least favored strata, including those in the rural area are the most affected by centralization of access to public higher education, as demonstrated by Medeiros (2008), in his master's thesis.

Furthermore, the process of centralization of public higher education corroborated the migration

⁸ TN: Our translation for the original [...] necessidade de compreensão dos instrumentos imprescindíveis a utilização de um novo código cultural, que se traduz concretamente, no conteúdo das ocupações de novos postos de trabalho e na participação efetiva em instituições sócio-políticas emergidas da sociedade de corte urbano-industrial, transformadas por sua vez, em demandas educacionais (Neves, 1994, p. 28).

of inner cities dwellers to larger cities and state capitals motivated by the possibility of ascent in social condition. Many times this migration movement included other family members and turned to be a permanent residence change even after graduation was concluded (Rieder, 2011).

In what concerns the creation of the federal network of higher education, it is clear that several federal universities were established in the inner cities of Brazilian states within 1950 and 1960. This was the case of the Federal University of São João Del Rey – UFSJ, the Federal University of Uberlândia – UFU, the Federal University of Triângulo Mineiro – UFTM, the Federal University of Juiz de Fora - UFJF, the Federal University of Ouro Preto- UFOP, the Federal University of Viçosa UFV (federalized in 1969), located in Minas Gerais.

Other federal universities established in this period were the Federal University of São Carlos located in the city of São Carlos in the state of same name, the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM) and, the Federal University of Pelotas – UFPel, the last two, located in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. These institutions pioneered the process of interiorization of federal universities, which were predominantly located in the capitals until then.

The ideological use of higher education is approached by Oliven (1990), who indicates that the actualization of these institutions in the inner cities is a required condition for development. This fact would, therefore, justify the interest of so many small cities towards the establishment of higher education institutions within their geographical limits. This movement was likewise observed, in the 1980s when the process of interiorization of public universities started to occur more systematically. It also corresponded to the period of political relaxation as mentioned by Camargo (1997) in her master's thesis about the interiorization of the Federal University of Pará - UFPA and by Dourado (1997), in his doctoral dissertation on the expansion and interiorization of higher education in Goiás in the 1980's.

Studies developed by Camelo (1992) on the interiorization of the Federal University of Ceará - UECE, identify the presence of political election maneuvers, when he refers to the implementation of degree courses in inner cities, considering the close relationship between the implementation of degree courses and the political prestige enjoyed by members of a certain party in a given municipality, thus reaffirming the usual strategy of exchanging favors.

On this matter, Avelar (1996), approaching the issues of exchanging favors for electoral purposes conducted by the State and Brazilian educational policy indicates the co existence of different stages as part of the political process impacting Brazilian educational policy. According to the author, there is a close relationship between the so-called social policies and the traditional elites. She emphasizes a substantial influence of the later over the control of the former. The situation is facilitated by the fact that intense State bureaucracy always surrounds the articulation of these policies.

Analyzing the expansion and interiorization of the Federal University of Goiás - UFG during the 1980s, Dourado (1997) stated that the implementation of the expansion processes takes place through different dynamics, combined or not, either by the establishment of new institutions or by broadening admissions opportunities in existing institutions. In his view, expansion and interiorization

[...] not always come about by means of qualitative planning, being most of the times, a result of social pressure and political bargains of all sorts. These characteristics, however, do not confer to the process the status of disorganized, but points to the fact that despite their superficial indications these policies are oriented by choices, by options, therefore, essentially characterized and constituted as policies (Dourado, 1997, p. 539).

Accordingly, the interiorization phenomena of higher education has been justified by the development and growth of large cities, supported by the need of setting smaller cities inhabitants to their original places, where there is always a progressive demand for better conditions of health and education.

Another reinforced aspect observed in the documents approaching the issue of interiorization is the accentuated worry in emphasizing what is 'regional' and the intention of fulfilling regional demands, reviving traditions and traditional knowledge of provincial towns. In this sense, Medeiros (2008) conveys the dynamics of interiorization as a move towards regionalization, though not exclusively, as there is an implicit process of inclusion involved, decentralizing the intellectual capital usually concentrated in large urban centers and directing them towards the inner cities. The author describes this movement as spatial democratization of knowledge and access.

The Secretary of Higher Education – SESU subordinate to the Ministry of Education, in analysis carried out on the expansion of higher

education, published in 2014, qualifies interiorization as “[...] essential to combat the regional development imbalance and reach students who are unable to travel to other regions” (Brasil, 2014b, p. 20). According to this document, the policy of interiorization is justified considering that:

The former students from *ensino médio*⁹, deprived of opportunities for higher education in their regions tend to migrate, sometimes permanently, to other places, where admission offer is ampler and more diversified. The abandoned region loses the chance of keeping highly qualified professionals and students, whose financial condition prevents them from migrating to more enabling environments, thus losing the chance of qualification (Brasil, 2014b, p. 20).

A new topic ensuing from this positive aspect of the interiorization process comes into discussion, bringing up the issues of democratization of access, decentralization of intellectual capital, and foment of social inclusion.

On this topic, Brito (2014) discusses the importance of interiorization of universities and raises questions such as: who benefits from interiorization? and what does it effectively propose? The author says “[...] REUNI has promoted the establishment of universities not only in metropolitan regions, but also in inner cities. However, this program proposes interiorization in a fragmented way, with no university structure” (Brito, 2014, p. 9). The author points out contradictions in Brazilian policy of interiorization process when he affirms:

We do not believe the fundamental role of interiorization of these institutions is to perform as “regional brains” and create ‘*intelligentsia*’ to think and produce knowledge to foster social economical development. [...] we may perceive interiorization, in essence, as close to being another instrument of qualification of the territory, by means of public policies conceived for local development and grounded in technical-mercantile criteria. We believe the process of interiorization of higher education institutions may certainly foster new forms of sociability that might coexist, resignify, break with and dialogue with the former ones, even if these institutions are fragmented or imposed by economic precepts or motivated by mere professional and symbolic qualification. This is not to say Universities are redemptive or the greatest benefactors of modernity, but they surely carry out

multiple functions and promote inherent social relations (Brito, 2014, p.10, author’s emphasis)¹⁰.

It is clear, however, that the author’s position is not to describe interiorization as negative, but to approach it as a multifaceted process that deserves to be viewed from different angles, especially those, which are not always evident. Medeiros (2012), reviewing the policy of expansion of federal universities promoted by REUNI, observes that this movement reflects a conception of higher education that is generally “more faithful and in line with the orientations of the neoliberal matrix, sustaining the capitalist mode of production that dehumanizes any social relation” (Medeiros, 2012, 286)¹¹.

From this viewpoint, it becomes evident among other aspects, the exacerbation of academic productivism, further development of heteronomy, precariousness of teaching, and the deterioration of working conditions within a context of adversity without substantial financial contribution required for such programs, thus reinforcing managerial practices, that affirm it is possible to do more with less.

Following the same critical attitude towards the process of interiorization in Brazil, Rodríguez and Martins (2005) shed light over the discussion about who benefits from interiorization, in their work focused on the expansion and interiorization of higher education in the Central-west Region entitled: “Policies of Privatization and Interiorization of Higher Education: Massification or Democratization of Brazilian Education”¹².

In this study, the authors propose a discussion on the expansion phases of higher education in Mato Grosso do Sul, and start a debate on the criterion of localization adopted for the interiorization program, as the model assumed for that state was centrally taken over by private initiative. The author affirms, “[...] the inner cities are perceived as a good business opportunities for

¹⁰ TN: Our translation from the original “Não acreditamos na ideia de que a interiorização de tais instituições tenha fundamentalmente um papel de ser um ‘cérebro regional’ e criar um ‘*intelligentsia*’ para pensar e produzir conhecimento para avanços desenvolvimento socioeconômicos. [...] podemos entender que a interiorização das instituições de ensino superior públicas não se distancia desse processo de ser mais um instrumento de qualificação do território a partir de políticas públicas para o desenvolvimento local com base em critérios técnico-mercantis. Acreditamos que tal processo, na medida em que uma instituição é interiorizada – mesmo fragmentada e impingida pelos ditames instrumentais econômicos ou de mera qualificação profissional e simbólica – pode sim possibilitar novas sociabilidades, convivendo, rompendo e dialogando com as antigas. Não que a universidade tenha um papel de redentora e represente as maiores benfeitorias da modernidade, mas pelo de que ela é, sem sombra de dúvidas, recheada de múltiplas funções e relações sociais que lhes são próprias (Brito, 2014, p.10, grifo do autor)

¹¹ TN: Our translation from the original “[...] mais fiel e alinhada às orientações da matriz neoliberal, sustentadora do modo de produção capitalista que desumaniza toda e qualquer relação social” (Medeiros, 2012, p. 286).

¹² TN: Our translation from the original ‘As Políticas de Privatização e Interiorização do Ensino Superior: Massificação ou Democratização da Educação Brasileira’.

⁹ In Brazilian schooling system, Ensino Médio is the stage prior to Higher Education.

expanding admission offers of higher education” (Rodríguez, & Martins, 2005, p.46).

Higher education, therefore, has assumed its participation in a context featured by accentuated mercantile nature, favored by the inequality of qualification opportunities from the regional or geographical perspectives, as already evinced by the enrollment figures of Brazilian regions. The inequality contributed to the expansion of higher education in inner cities with the support of private initiative, especially in the period prior to REUNI, when a decline in offers of public institutions was observed.

Sousa and Coimbra (2016), based on a case study carried out at the Federal University of Maranhão - UFMA, point out that the interiorization of higher education has been carried out with insufficient investment. For these authors, interiorization is being implemented precariously, under a pretended image of democratization of knowledge, immersed in a context of unemployment, recession and poor working conditions, in order to simulate social inclusion. Regarding infrastructure of federal universities, the authors state:

It is important to remark that, at the outset, even after these campuses had been formally established, some of them used to and still operate in buildings with precarious infrastructure or did not yet possess the area for the construction of their own facilities. This is the case of the Grajaú and Balsas, which began their activities in public school facilities assigned by the municipalities, while they waited for their own buildings to be finished. In these spaces, the conditions for the development of administrative and academic activities of teachers and students were quite precarious (Sousa & Coimbra, 2016, p. 14-15).

The authors report that the model of expansion proposed by REUNI, and more specifically the process of expansion and interiorization of UFMA, corroborate the deterioration and weakening of university education, whose conception is based in principles of inextricable connection between teaching, research and extension. This is explained by the conditions of operation of campuses established in inner cities, which constitute examples of the interiorization process reproduced all over the country.

Another recurrent mark in the literature on interiorization is the proliferation of undergraduate technological courses and the strong encouragement for institutional redesign of federal universities in inner cities, which are

progressively becoming more expressive such as baccalaureates and interdisciplinary degrees. Sousa and Coimbra (2016, p.17) also state that

[...] one of the aspects of UFMA interiorization process refers to the nature of courses implemented in most of the campuses created or which came into operation after REUNI in the interior of the state, where the priority for interdisciplinary degrees (LI's) is observed¹³.

After this brief review on the subject, it becomes evident how scholars are split into two different views explicitly stated in the beginning of this paper: one that understands the process as favorable to the democratization of access and regional development, and one which points to some precarious mechanisms in the implementation of interiorization – another way of thinking about education as an object of exchange for capital – and inner cities are presented as the new scenery for the exchange to be carried out.

Morosini Franco, and Segenreich (2011, 135) affirm that “[...] expansion is a historically constructed trend in Brazilian Higher Education”¹⁴; within this perspective, its valid to affirm that interiorization is not only a historically built process, but one which, at present, still carries the same features; therefore, careful analyzes are necessary addressing both the positive aspects of decentralization of knowledge and broadened access to higher education for the least privileged segments which have historically absent from higher education processes, as well as the negative aspects of precariousness and possible 'sale' of labor and natural resources to foreign capital.

The interiorization of federal universities from 2003 to 2014

From 2003 to 2014, which comprised the two mandates of Lula da Silva's Government and the first period of Dilma Rousseff's government, a total of 18 federal universities were created in different states of Brazilian regions. Out of these universe, only two institutions: Federal University of Health Sciences of Porto Alegre - UFCSPA and Federal University of Paraná - UTFPR (multicampi) have their headquarters located in a state capitals and UTFPR manages 13 campuses throughout the state of Paraná.

¹³ TN: Our translation from the original “[...] um dos aspectos do processo de interiorização da UFMA se refere ao caráter dos cursos implantados no interior do estado, onde, na maioria dos campi que foram criados ou passaram a funcionar no período pós-REUNI, foi priorizada a oferta cursos de licenciaturas interdisciplinares (LI's).

¹⁴ TN: Our translation from the original “[...] a expansão é uma tendência que se constrói historicamente na Educação Superior brasileira [...]”

The other institutions have their headquarters located in inner cities, as provided in the multicampi¹⁵ priority model. Some of these new institutions originated from the dismemberment of another pre-existing IES; or from another campus belonging to other universities, isolated institutions of higher education or technological education (UTFPR), which already had physical infrastructure and human resources available (faculty and administrative staff).

Few ones have been established from the very beginning, among which are the Federal University of ABC - UFABC, or some universities with internationalized profile such as the Federal University of Latin - American Integration - UNILA, University for International Integration of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony - UNILAB, Federal University of South Frontier - UFFS and the Federal University of Pampa - UNIPAMPA

Chart 01 indicates the federal universities created from 2003 to 2014, whose headquarters are located in the inner cities of the country, and the regions where these institutions are located.

The geographical distribution of these institutions is as follows: in the North Region, two institutions: the Federal University of Western Pará - UFOPA and the Federal University of Southern and Southeastern Pará - UNIFESSPA, were created in the state of Pará; in the Northeast Region: six universities were created in the states of Bahia, Ceará and Rio Grande do Norte. The Central-West Region registers the creation of a single university; the Southeast region registers four new universities and the South region, three universities.

From the viewpoint of regional asymmetries, seven universities were created in the South and Southeast regions, which historically have offered

greater access to higher education compared to other Brazilian regions. In a survey obtained in Datapédia¹⁶, a site built by the Brazilian Monitoring and Evaluation Network, a partnership achieved between João Pinheiro Foundation, the WBG - World Bank Group and IDB - the Inter-American Development Bank, it is possible to identify, among other data, the net attendance rates to higher education from states and inner cities where new campuses of federal universities were established from 2003 to 2014. The data refer to the 2010 Census (Datapedia, 2017) and Table 01 demonstrates this scenario.

In 2010, the net attendance rates to higher education in Brazil was 13.9%. In states where federal institutions were established the situation was: Pará (6.8%), Minas Gerais (14.97%), Rio Grande do Norte (12.5%), São Paulo (16.91%) and the state of Paraná (19.9%), Mato Grosso do Sul (15.9%), Bahia (7.9%), Rio Grande do Sul (18.5%), Santa Catarina (19.2%), Paraná 9.7%). (IBGE, 2010). Collected data show that states of the Central-West, Southeast and South regions have a higher net rate compared to the total of Brazil.

These numbers indicate that such states have a positively differentiated situation in relation to other Brazilian states of the North and Northeast regions, such as the case of Ceará, Bahia, Pará and Rio Grande do Norte.

If the main criterion to be observed in the process of establishment of federal universities in the studied period were the reduction of regional inequalities, then it's fair to point out that the states of North and Northeast regions are the ones presenting a net attendance rate lower than the Brazilian average.

Charter 1. Federal universities established from 2003 to 2014 in the government periods of Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff by region and location in inner areas of the country.

Name of HEFI (Higher education federal institutions)	Region	Location of University
Federal University of Alfenas - UNIFAL	SE	Alfenas - MG
Federal University of Jequitinhonha and Mucuri Valleys - UFVJM	SE	Diamantina - MG
Federal University of Triângulo Mineiro - UFTM	SE	Uberaba - MG
Federal Rural University of The Semi Arid Region - UFRSA	NE	Mossoró - RN
Federal University of ABC - UFABC (Foundation)	SE	Santo André - SP
Federal University of Grande Dourados - UFGD (Foundation)	CO	Dourados - MS
Federal University of Recôncavo da Bahia - UFRB	NE	Cruz das Almas - BA
Federal University of Pampa - UNIPAMPA (Foundation)	S	Bagé - RS
Federal University of South Frontier - UFFS	S	Chapecó - SC
Federal University of Western Pará - UFOPA	N	Santarém - PA
Federal University of Latin - American Integration - UNILA	S	Foz do Iguaçu - PR
University for International Integration of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony - UNILAB	NE	Redenção - CE
Federal University of Western Bahia - UFOB	NE	Barreiras - BA
Federal University of South Bahia - UFESBA	NE	Itabuna - BA
Federal University of Southern and Southeastern Pará - UNIFESSPA	N	Marabá - PA
Federal University of Cariri - UFCA	NE	Juazeiro do Norte - CE

Source: Location of federal universities (Datapedia, 2017).

¹⁵ See Datapedia at <http://www.datapedia.info/public/mapa>

¹⁶ On Multicampi university model, see Medeiros, Maues, & Chaves (2006).

Table 1. Net attendance rates to higher education¹⁷ in cities were federal universities were established from 2003 to 2014.

City of university location	Net attendance rates per city	Net attendance rates per state
Alfenas – MG	24,6	14,9
Diamantina – MG	15,9	14,9
Uberaba – MG	26,3	14,9
Mossoró – RN	16,9	12,5
Santo André – SP	25,9	16,9
Dourados – MS	23	15,9
Cruz das Almas – BA	13,5	7,9
Bagé – RS	15,2	18,5
Chapecó – SC	22,2	19,2
Santarém – PA	11,16	6,8
Foz do Iguaçu – PR	19,1	18,5
Redenção – CE	4,0	9,7
Barreiras – BA	13,8	7,9
Itabuna – BA	14,15	7,9
Marabá – PA	7,95	6,8
Juazeiro do Norte – CE	13,9	9,7

Source: Datapédia (2017).

Out of 16 federal universities created in the period under analysis, 8 are located in the North and Northeast regions – a desirable situation from the point of view of the induction of public policies. Population of these regions (especially inner city dwellers) face financial difficulties that hinder them from entering private educational institutions and are historically marked by limited offers of education opportunities.

Despite this reality, only four states were benefited with the establishment of interiorized universities, which is not to say that other states of these regions do not need to expand the offers in public higher education for the reasons already referred in this paper.

We believe that the intended results of the interiorization policy could only be effectively accomplished, if it were expanded to other territories, that is, to peripheral Brazilian regions, such as the North and Northeast regions. This would certainly allow the desired regionalization to be achieved. Medeiros (2008), with the same convictions, associates the interiorization process to the inclusive social movement that implies decentralization of knowledge capital encapsulated in large urban centers.

This action would foster spatial democratization of knowledge and higher education admission besides allowing the setting of inhabitants in their original inner-state areas, as Rieder (2011) indicates.

The other newly established institutions are located in Central-West, South and Southeast regions, in states such as Mato Grosso do Sul, Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio

Grande do Sul. These states show schooling rates higher than the Brazilian average figures, thus indicating the existence of criteria underlying and directing the establishment of these federal institutions, other than those oriented by the purposes of diluting regional asymmetries as provided in the document issued by SESU/MEC (Brasil, 2014b). Evidences lead to the conclusion of actions moved by influence of political prestige of certain regions in Brazil.

Final Remarks

It is easily perceived that the broadening of educational opportunities in Brazil has not been accomplished homogeneously; it is as well, a consequence of the mechanism through which the Brazilian State has been managing its educational policies.

In terms of higher education, the need for implementing this stage of the educational trajectory constitutes one of the targets stated in Brazilian National Plan of Education (Brasil, 2014a), where the purpose of raising the gross rate of enrollments to 50% and the net rate to 33% is mentioned.

Educational policies are based on different criteria that involve both the development of expertise to cater for the states' needs, for example, the undergraduate courses aimed at the training of teachers already in service in basic education, as well as the demands arising from the productive process in the regions in which the educational offer occurs, thus fulfilling the needs of this sector. On the subject, Moreira and Ribeiro (2012) demonstrate how the implemented offers in higher education act as a form of attracting investments required to local development, since these expansion policies tend to invigorate the structure of the municipalities, generating job positions and other opportunities that go beyond the educational field.

If the establishment of the new federal universities were intended to reduce the regional asymmetries observed in the Brazilian regions, we conclude this criterion was partially met by the creation of eight federal universities in states of the North and Northeast regions, which have net attendance rates lower than the average observed in Brazil. In spite of this, we want to emphasize that the expansion was limited to only four states of these two regions, and in the case of the North region only one state was privileged.

As it may be attested by observing the sites of newly established institutions, they have often originated from the dismemberment of another pre-existing university or isolated institution of higher

¹⁷ Ratio between the number of people in the age group of 18 to 24 years old attending higher education and the total population of that same age group multiplied by 100.

education, which already had its teaching and administrative staffs, and infrastructure. This settlement pattern ended up favoring the promotion of higher education based on the neoliberal logic, emphasizing the idea of doing more with less, considering the structural reforms underway in Brazilian universities and their expansion did not necessarily occur with additional financial resources.

This dynamics also contributed for the creation of institutions with different missions and academic and intellectual weights, fomented later on by the adoption of other criteria such as the internationalization for higher education and regional integration, as in the case of UNILA, UNILAB, UNIPAMPA and UFSS. It is also important to point out that, as stated by Dourado (1997), the implementation of expansion does not always emerge from qualitative planning mechanisms, but many times is a response to social pressures and political bargains of all kinds. This allows us to say that options are always oriented by the most diverse reasons and end up shaping social policies.

Camelo (1992), in a study about the interiorization of the State University of Ceará (UECE) identified the presence of political-electoral practices as determinant in the expansion process of higher education institutions. Although there are no conclusive elements on the subject and given the limitations of the study presented here, we are able to affirm that other criteria may have guided the expansion of federal universities, such as the prestige and power of political groups. This seems to be the case of the UFABC established in the state of São Paulo and located in an area that constitutes the political cradle of Lula da Silva – president at that time – thus, replicating the process of expansion that had already occurred in the mid-1950s and 1960s, when a number of universities were created in Minas Gerais, during Juscelino Kubistchek de Oliveira's presidential mandate.

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