Expansion And Internalization of the Open University of Brazil: The Scenario of Sergipe

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Abstract

This research aims to map the advances of the Open University of Brazil (UAB) in Sergipe in relation to the expansion and internalization of the graduation courses offered, in order to highlight the impact of the public policy promoted by the federal government that seeks to expand and internalize the courses offering and higher education programs, through e-learning. To do so, we performed quantitative research using basic statistics techniques to describe the percentage, mean and standard deviation. The results indicate that the innumerable obstacles to public policy and the lack of recognition of the profession are obstacles to the valuation of the teacher, issues that directly affect the demand of individuals for graduation courses in the country.

Keywords: Open University of Brazil. Expansion. Internalization.

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Expansão e Interiorização da Universidade Aberta do Brasil: O Cenário de Sergipe

Resumo

Esta pesquisa tem como objetivo mapear os avanços da Universidade Aberta do Brasil (UAB) em Sergipe quanto à expansão e interiorização da oferta de cursos de licenciatura, na perspectiva de evidenciar o impacto de uma política pública promovida pelo governo federal, por meio da educação a distância (EaD). Para tanto, realizamos uma investigação de natureza quantitativa com técnicas de estatística básica com vistas à descrição de percentual, média e desvio padrão. Os resultados sinalizam que os inúmeros óbices das políticas e a ausência de reconhecimento da profissão são obstáculos voltados para a valorização do professor, questões que impactam na demanda de indivíduos para os cursos de formação inicial docente no país.

Palavras-chave: Universidade Aberta do Brasil. Expansão. Interiorização.

Expansión e Interiorización de la Universidad Abierta del Brasil: el Escenario de Sergipe

Resumen

Esta investigación tiene como objetivo mapear los avances de la Universidad Abierta de Brasil (UAB) en Sergipe en cuanto a la expansión e interiorización de la oferta de cursos de licenciatura, en la perspectiva de evidenciar el impacto de una política pública promovida por el gobierno federal que busca expandir e interiorizar oferta de cursos y programas de educación superior, por medio de la educación a distancia (e-learning). Para ello, realizamos una investigación de naturaleza cuantitativa por medio de técnicas de estadística básica con vistas a la descripción de porcentual, media y desviación estándar. Los resultados señalan que los numerosos obvios de las políticas públicas y la ausencia de reconocimiento de la profesión son obstáculos para la valorización del profesor, cuestiones que impactan directamente en la demanda de individuos para los cursos de licenciatura en el país.

Palabras clave: Universidad Abierta de Brasil. Expansión. Internalización.

Introduction

The Open University of Brazil (UAB) is a public policy of expansion, democratization and internalization of higher education in Brazil. It is a system¹ made up of Public Institutions of Higher Education (PIHE) offering higher education courses to a public with access to university education, through the use of the e-learning methodology, considered in Decree No. 9.057²/2017 as an educational modality whose mediation occurs “[...] with the use of information and communication media and technologies... and develop educational activities by students and education professionals who are at different settings and moments”. (BRAZIL, 2017, unpagged, our translation).

The UAB was established by the Ministry of Education (MEC) through Decree No. 5.800 of June, 8, 2006, electing the e-learning modality as a promotion for the expansion and internalization of higher education in Brazil, it also offered space for teaching, research and extension activities. The system has in its composition the integration of public institutions with the focus on democratization and access opportunities. The positions at university are aimed at the general public, however, teachers who work at basic education (Elementary) are priorities in the system, followed by the managers and professionals employed in the area of basic education in the states, municipalities and the Federal District.

In this sense, the UAB Program was acceded by the Federal University of Sergipe (UFS), with the purpose of meeting the social and local needs for the teachers’ education, as well as the continuing education for teachers who work at basic education. The creation of an Academic Unit of E-learning was instituted by the Resolution of the University Council No. 49/2006/CONSU³, on November, 20th, 2006. The Center for Higher E-learning (Cesad) emerged with the challenge of initiating “[...] an e-learning system within an on-site institution, including transposing, almost literally, the curricular structure of these on-site courses [...]” (SOBRAL, 2010, p. 4, our translation).

In the state of Sergipe, ten years ago, the UAB under the coordination of Cesad/UFS has provided education to teachers throughout the territory of Sergipe and surrounding areas. Within this context, this research aims to map the progress of the UAB in Sergipe in the expansion and internalization of the offer of graduation courses, in order to highlight the impact of a public policy promoted by the federal government, through e-learning.

As for the methodological procedures, this is a quantitative research. The data were collected through descriptive statistics with a view to the representation of percentage, mean and standard deviation, making it possible to “[...] focus on greater detail the regularities which are presented in the data collected by the researcher. Averages, rates,

1 “The UAB System was created by the Ministry of Education in 2005, in partnership with ANDIFES and State Companies, within the framework of the State Forum for Education with a focus on Policies and Management of Higher Education. It is a public policy of articulation between the Secretariat of Distance Education - SEED/MEC and the Directorate of Distance Education - DED/CAPEs with a view to the expansion of higher education, within the scope of the Education Development Plan – PDE”. (CAPES, 2016, unpagged, our translation).

2 Decree that regulates art. 80 of the Law on Guidelines and Bases of National Education No. 9.394/1996.

3 “Maximum normative, advisory and deliberative body of university in administrative and university policy matters”. Available at: <<http://www.ufs.br/pagina/20013-conselhos>>.

and percentages are ways of summarizing the characteristics and relationships found in the data” (MITCHELL, 1987, p. 81-82, our translation).

The subjects were public school teachers⁴, graduated teachers from UAB/Sergipe, connected to Cesad/UFS who accomplished their respective graduation courses in the period from 2012 to 2015. This time-cut is due to the timetable of the courses and to the fact that UAB/Cesad/UFS had its first group graduated in the first half of 2012. The sample was 16.1% (57) of the graduated students of the Letters (Portuguese), Geography, History, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biological Sciences courses in a total of 354 teachers, an initial result of a data collection that began with a survey on the website of the Federal University of Sergipe, more specifically on the Entrance Examination Coordination page (CCV), when teachers were selected in the process from 2007 to 2011⁵. Afterwards, a research was carried out in Cesad/UFS, precisely in the Integrated System of Management of Academic Activities (Sigaa), selecting subjects in the profile of enrolled, unregistered, cancellations, attending and graduated.

Mapping of the Open University of Brazil/Sergipe campuses by microregions

Sergipe is constituted by 75 municipalities organized in three mesoregions: a) East, that groups seven microregions: Aracaju, Baixo Cotinguiba, Boquim, Cotinguiba, Estância, Japarutuba and Propriá; b) Agreste (driest region), that includes four microregions: Agreste of Itabaiana, Agreste of Lagarto, Nossa Senhora das Dores and Tobias Barreto; c) Hinterland, that congregates two microregions: Carira and Sertão do São Francisco. They are, therefore, 13 microregions. In 2007, the Sergipe government,

[...] through the State Department of Planning, Housing and Urban Development, in partnership with the Federal University of Sergipe and organized civil entities, respecting criteria such as economic-productive, geoenvironmental, social, political-institutional and cultural dimensions, divided the state into eight territories, which will serve as the basis for the planning of public policies. (SEPLAG/SERGIPE, 2009, p. 15, our translation).

The microregions⁶ were essential to develop the mapping of the UAB/Cesad/Sergipe on-site support campuses and made it possible to carry out an analysis on the expan-

4 It should be noted that UAB/Cesad/UFS in the selective processes (2007 to 2011) reserved half of the vacancies (25 for each course) to teachers working in public basic education, with proof of job linkage. Thus, the subjects of this study were already working as teachers.

5 It is important to note that although the 2007 entrance exam process was held on July 22, 2007, the university term officially began on 11/30/2008. In order to resolve the temporal discrepancy, Resolution no. 18/2011/CONEPE changed in the academic system the admission of students' classes, taking as entrance reference the year of 2008.

6 The microregion of Aracaju is composed of four municipalities: Aracaju, Barra dos Coqueiros, Nossa Senhora do Socorro, São Cristóvão, where the Center of support is installed, maintained by the state government of Sergipe through SEED/SE. At that point, the degrees were only offered in the 2014 selection process. Previously, there was only a bachelor's degree in Public Administration. However, due to the deactivation of the Center of Laranjeiras, three graduates were enrolled in this Center, in accordance with resolution no. 03/2016/CONEPE, which on February 23, 2016 decided to transfer students from the Cesad/Laranjeiras Center. The microregion of Cotinguiba includes four municipalities: Capela, Divina Pastora, Santa Rosa de Lima and Siriri. None of these counts on the UAB on-site meeting.

sion⁷ and internalization⁸ from the territorial reality of the state⁹ in accordance with the terms of art. 1 of Decree No. 5.800/2006 which is provided for the UAB System. The selection by microregions was inspired by Gatti (2010) that in the work “Teacher Education in Brazil: characteristics and problems” presents a representative research of the five regions of the country. See picture:

Picture 1 – Map of the of the UAB/Sergipe Centers

Source: Authors (2017)

The main trends in the expansion of higher education in Brazil point to four axes: a) policies of the Secretariat of Higher Education (SESu) to increase access to initial education through programs of financing students enrolled in private institutions, such as the University Program for All (Prouni)¹⁰, the Student Financing Fund (FIES)¹¹; b) implementation of affirmative action programs, such as those of ethnic and social quotas, in federal and state public universities; c) expansion promoted by the federal government through the Program to Support Restructuring and Expansion Plans of Federal

7 Based on the New Houaiss Dictionary of the Portuguese Language, the word – “expansão” (expansion in Eng.) - is a feminine noun and means: enlargement; action of increasing, expanding, expanding something, territorial, commercial, economic expansion. In this perspective, this research uses the sense of territorial expansion to define the municipalities that the UAB attended whose students come from another state of the federation, in the study: Alagoas and Bahia, which have borders with the state of Sergipe: the first, on the North and the second, on the West and South.

8 Based on the source of the same dictionary, the term “Internalização” (internalization in Eng.) is a feminine noun and means act or effect to internalize, to take something that exists in the capital or on the coast to the countryside of the state or country (internalization movement of higher education). From this angle, we use the sense of internalization as the spatial geographical displacement between inhabitants living inside the same state and take a graduation course in a City-Center, located in another municipality.

9 It is important to consider that the territorial extension of the State of Sergipe is the smallest in the country, occupying a total area of 21,915,116 km². Its municipality with greater geographical area is Poço Redondo with 1,220 km² of extension. The smallest is General Maynard, with only 18.1 km².

10 Program that grants full and partial scholarships in undergraduate courses at HEIs, which receive, in exchange, federal tax exemption.

11 Program to finance higher education of students enrolled in non-free HEIs, with positive evaluation in the processes conducted by the Ministry of Education. It is the most important student financing instrument currently in existence.

Universities (Reuni¹²); d) framework for the expansion of E-learning. In this sense, the E-learning is “[...] clearly taken as a teaching modality for faster acceleration of the expansion of positions in Higher Education” (ALONSO, 2010, p. 133, our translation).

These axes changed the face of higher education and were also criticized as to the quality of the teaching and learning process and the intensification of the teaching work required by the E-learning modality in the management of Reuni contracts. According to Dias Sobrinho (2010, p. 1.225), quality “[...] is an essential and prior aspect of the construction of society, of the consolidation of the national identity and an instrument of socioeconomic inclusion. Therefore, to ensure it adequately it is an undeniable duty of the State”. However, it is not related to, and restricted to, the classroom and face-to-face contact with the teacher.

As researchers of the E-learning/UAB matter, we interpret quality from the perspective of sharing socially useful knowledge that gives citizenship, autonomy and security to education professionals involved in the E-learning scenario, improving their skills and knowledge. Of course, the internalization of the provision of higher education is essential in order to combat the misbalance in regional development and to reach students unable to travel to other regions, in order to serve those who live outside the major Centers, but also relates to interests, prejudices, absence of public policies and inclusion of the courses that contemplate the social needs.

Sousa and Coimbra (2016, p. 19) analyzed the process of expansion of the Federal Institutions of Higher Education (FIHE) attracted by the reform of higher education in progress, giving importance to the validity of Reuni. There is a gap in the internalization movement between the conception and materialization of the quality of higher education in the current conditions in which the process of expansion of this level of education takes place, especially through the process of internalization. The FIHE are facing a crisis, “[...] deepened by the process of disorderly expansion promoted by the federal government via Reuni to favor the quantitative indexes of access to higher education [...]” (SOUSA; COIMBRA, 2016, p. 19, our translation). A qualitative analysis of this process is necessary in order to understand

[...] the impact of this policy on the quality of teaching, scientific production and the insertion of graduates in the market to really assess what the “gains” of university expansion are in addition to the numbers boosted by the government, and dimensioning the ‘losses’ accumulated historically by the dismantling process of the Brazilian university. (SOUSA; COIMBRA, 2016, p. 21, our translation).

Here we resume one of UAB’s goals that refers to the internalization of the public university in distant and isolated places, encouraging

12 This program aims to expand access to and stay in higher education by adopting a series of measures to resume the growth of public higher education, creating conditions for federal universities to promote the physical, academic and pedagogical expansion of the federal higher education system. The actions of the program include the increase of vacancies in undergraduate courses, the expansion of the offer of night classes, the promotion of pedagogical innovations and the fight against evasion, among other goals are intended to reduce social inequalities in the country and is one of the actions of the Education Development Plan (EDP). (MEC, 2010, our translation).

[...] the development of municipalities with low Human Development Index (HDI) and Basic Education Development Index (BEDI). [The UAB] functions as an effective instrument for the universalization of access to higher education and for the requalification of the teacher in other subjects, strengthening the school in the countryside of Brazil, minimizing the concentration of graduation courses in large urban Centers and avoiding the migration to cities. (CAPES, 2018, nonpagged, our translation).

The quantitative results taken from the Cesad/UFS research allowed mapping the extent of expansion (territorial enlargement) and internalization (spatial geographical displacement) from the sample of graduated teachers from UAB/Sergipe's initial teacher education courses in the microregions.

The microregion of Boquim includes eight municipalities: Arauá, Boquim, Cristinápolis, Itabaianinha, Pedrinhas, Salgado, Tomar do Geru and Umbaúba. The UAB on-site support is maintained by the local city hall, it is installed at the Joaldo Costa Carvalho State School, José Dias Filho Street, at Alzira Costa Complex, in Arauá. The chart below explains the quantitative results of the four editions of the entrance exams and the general aggregation of the conditions of approved, enrolled, canceled, attending the course and graduated.

Chart 1 – Center of Arauá (2007-2008-2010-2011)

Source: Authors (2017)

These data show that the Center of Arauá had the highest number of graduated teachers with a percentage of 14.4% (51)¹³. Considering the number of graduated teachers¹⁴ and of the 11 municipalities served, seven belong to the same micro-region of the City-Center, but in a spatial difference, namely: Pedrinhas 25.6 km; Umbaúba 25.8 km away;

¹³ It should be noted that those trained in the Center of Arauá are residents of Aracaju (01), Arauá (13), Boquim (07), Cristinápolis (03), Indiaroba (02), Itabaianinha, Pedrinhas (13), Santa Luzia do Itanhy (01), Tomar do Geru (02), Umbaúba (06), totaling 51 graduates.

¹⁴ There were no students in Salgado (Microregion of Boquim) in any edition of university entrance exam, nor in any Center of UAB.

Boquim 30.3 km; Itabaianinha 33.9 km; Cristinápolis 35.2 km; Tomar do Geru 52.7 km, and Arauá that hosts the Center. In other microregions, four: the municipalities of Santa Luzia do Itanhy, at an approximate distance of 34.4 km; Indiaroba 35.1 km; Lagarto 59.1 km and in Aracaju 98.1 km.

The Centers of Brejo Grande and Propriá/UAB/Sergipe were implemented in the microregion of Propriá¹⁵ constituted by 10 municipalities: Amparo do São Francisco, Brejo Grande, Canhoba, Cedro de São João, Ilha das Flores, Neópolis, Nossa Senhora de Lourdes, Propriá, Santana do São Francisco and Telha. The Support Center of Brejo Grande is located in an exclusive building for the operation of the UAB, maintained by the local city hall, located at 510, Dr. Enéas Ferreira Street - Alzira Costa District. Chart 2 shows the results of the mapping of the three university entrance exams processes.

Chart 2 – Center Brejo Grande (2007 - 2008 - 2011)

Source: Authors (2017)

The mapping of the Center of Brejo Grande shows a total of 262 and 248 students enrolled in the three entrance exams processes: 2007, 2008 and 2011. Of this amount, 52 new entrants are in academic qualification and 15¹⁶ are graduated. Of these graduates, three are from the microregion of Propriá, including Brejo Grande, the City-Center and the others with approximate distance just as Ilha das Flores (9.7 km) and Santana do São Francisco (40.5 km). They are outside this microregion, namely: one in Pacatuba at 34.2 km and another in the state of Alagoas, in Piaçabuçu, at a distance of about 7.8 km, which route is preferably taken through Brejo Grande/Piaçabuçu highway - Piaçabuçu/Brejo Grande. There are five former residents outside the City-Center and five others in Piaçabuçu, Alagoas.

¹⁵ In Amparo de São Francisco and Canhoba no students at any university entrance exam.

¹⁶ It should be noted that those graduated in the Center of Brejo Grande, a total of 15, come from five municipalities: City-Center (05), Ilha das Flores (02), Pacatuba (02), Santana do São Francisco (01) and Piaçabuçu (05), in the state of Alagoas.

The UAB Support Center in Propriá is administered by the state government of Sergipe, through the State Secretariat of Education (SEED), it is installed at Joana de Freitas Barbosa State School (Block F - Room A) located at Bela Vista Street, América Neighborhood. The chart, then, depicts the two issues of the entrance exams process.

Chart 3 – Center of Propriá (2008 - 2010)

Source: Authors (2017)

The numbers indicate an approval of 296 for an enrollment of 267 and a cancellation of 213. There are still 28 academics and 26 graduated ones¹⁷. Considering the amount of graduated teachers from this Center, of the nine municipalities served, four come from the microregion on display: Cedro de São João 12.3 km, Nossa Senhora de Lourdes 34.8 km and Neópolis 42.3 km away and Propriá. There was representation of graduates from Malhada dos Bois and Muribeca with distance around 35.5 km and 31 km, respectively; and from Alagoas - the expansion of the offer, in: São Brás 22.7 km, Igreja Nova 31 km and Penedo 61.6 km, totaling five graduated teachers.

The micro region of Carira¹⁸ is formed by six municipalities: Frei Paulo, Nossa Senhora Aparecida, Pedra Mole, Pinhão, Ribeirópolis and Carira, and in this last one is located the on-site UAB support that works in an exclusive building at Luís Matos street, neighborhood: Vila Nova. It is maintained by the local city hall. Chart 4 represents the three editions of the entrance exams process and those graduated in the offer of the four graduation courses.

¹⁷ The 26 graduates of the Center of Propriá are from six municipalities of Sergipe: Cedro de São João (01), Malhada dos Bois (01), Muribeca (03), Neópolis (02), Nossa Senhora de Lourdes (03), the City-Center (11) and three from Alagoas: Igreja Nova (01), Penedo (01) and São Brás (03).

¹⁸ It is worth pointing out that the municipalities of Nossa Senhora Aparecida and Ribeirópolis, both from the micro-region of Carira, did not present graduates.

Chart 4 – Center of Carira (2008 - 2010 - 2011)

Source: Authors (2017)

The Center of Carira has 226 approved students and 210 enrolled ones in the three entrance exams processes: 2008, 2010 and 2011. Out of this amount, 44 new entrants are attending the course and 24 are graduated¹⁹. Analyzing the total number of students in the Center of Carira, out of the five municipalities served by UAB, three belong to Carira microregion: Carira, Pinhão, 34.5 km City-Center and Frei Paulo 28.9 km. In Coronel João Sá and Pedro Alexandre, both in the state of Bahia, with a spatial geographical displacement of approximately 36.7 km and 45.9 km, have two graduates respectively.

The Center of Estância/UAB/Sergipe is located in the microregion of Estância²⁰ which includes the municipalities of Estância, Indiaroba, Itaporanga d'Ajuda and Santa Luzia do Itanhy. This Center is installed at 75, Jackson de Figueiredo Square, in the city of Estância. The chart below shows the quantitative data obtained in the 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2011 entrance exams processes.

Chart 5 – Estância Center (2007 - 2008 - 2010 - 2011)

Source: Authors (2017)

¹⁹ Those graduated in the Center of Carira, for a total of 24, come from five municipalities, three in the state of Sergipe: City-Center (18), Pinhão (02), Frei Paulo (02) and two in Bahia: Coronel João Sá (01) and Pedro Alexandre (01).

²⁰ Itaporanga d'Ajuda did not present any student.

The Center of Estância graduated 29 teachers²¹, considering the group of graduates from the nine municipalities served by the UAB, four are located in the state of Bahia, with a total of 11 graduates: Jandaíra 47.5 km; Rio Real 72.9 km; Esplanada at 93.3 km and Crisópolis at 130 km, characterizing the expansion of UAB/Sergipe in the territory of Bahia. In the microregion of Estância, there are 18 graduates in the municipalities: the City-Center; Santa Luzia do Itanhy and Indiaroba, with an approximate distance of 11.5 km and 39.8 km respectively; Umbaúba at 38.9 km and Itabaianinha at 52.1 km.

The Center of Japarutuba is located in the micro-region of Japarutuba, that includes the municipalities of Japarutuba, Japoatã, Pacatuba, Pirambu and São Francisco. In the first, UAB's face-to-face support is installed at Rio de Janeiro Avenue, maintained by the local city hall. Chart 6 shows the quantitative results of the four editions of the college entrance exams.

Chart 6 - Center of Japarutuba (2007 - 2008 - 2010 - 2011)

Source: Authors (2017)

The total signals 293 approved for an enrollment of 251. Cancellation of 189, 51 remain in courses and 11 have graduated²². Observing the composition of those who studied at Japarutuba Center, of the six municipalities served by UAB/Sergipe, only one is located in the micro-region of Japarutuba, the City-Center, with a representation of two graduates. There were no graduates enrolled in the UAB system in Japoatã, Pirambu and São Francisco. There were graduates in Rosário do Catete 24.6 km, Capela 26.5 km, Aracaju 62.4 km, Aquidabã 64.4 km and São Cristóvão 72.6 km.

The micro-region of Baixo Cotinguiba consists of the municipalities of Carmópolis, General Maynard, Laranjeiras, Maruim, Riachuelo, Rosario do Catete and Santo Amaro das Brotas. The UAB presence Center was installed in Laranjeiras and was maintained by the local city hall. Due to lack of compliance of the term of technical cooperation by the Municipal Education Department and the city hall, this Center was deactivated

21 We portray that of the 29 undergraduates, they come from five municipalities of Sergipe: Estância (13); Indiaroba (01); Itabaianinha (01), Santa Luzia do Itanhy (01) and Umbaúba (02) and four municipalities in the state of Bahia, distributed as follows: Rio Real (01), Jandaíra (02), Esplanada (05) and Crisópolis (03)

22 Of the 11 graduates in the Center of Japarutuba two of them live in this city, the others in Aquidabã (03); Aracaju (01); Chapel (02); Rosario do Catetes (01) and São Cristóvão (02).

and the attending students were transferred to other Centers. Resolution No. 03/2016/ Council on Education, Research and Extension (CONEPE) indicates that the deactivation of the unit was due to the

[...] precarious state of preservation of the building where the UAB Center in Laranjeiras works, the lack of safety for students and staff who study and work there, and the unfeasibility of achievements of academic activities in the CAIC Coronel José Sizino da Rocha, in the city of Laranjeiras [...]. (SERGIPE, 2016, p. 393, our translation).

On July 27th, 2016, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Cesad published public notice 001/2016 of Center transfer of the UAB/UFS system of E-learning for the second academic term of 2016. Among other considerations, the document stated that removal requests would be fulfilled as long as they met the requirements, in view of the outcome of the technical cooperation established between the entities.

The results demonstrate an approval of 375 students for a considerable enrollment of 325. However, during these years, 233 students canceled, 58 remained in the courses and 35 graduated²³. Percentage of only 11% of those enrolled. Picture 7 shows the mapping of approved and graduated students who completed their courses prior to the process of extinction of this Center.

Chart 7 – Center of Laranjeiras (2007 - 2008 - 2010)

Source: Authors (2017)

Those graduated at the Center of Laranjeiras are part of seven municipalities served by UAB/Sergipe: one lives in the state of Bahia, in Macaúbas, 959 km away, at a considerable distance from the City-Center. The others in Laranjeiras - where the Center of Maruim was located 16.9 km away, in the sub-region of Baixo Cotinguiba. The others in

23 Of the 35 graduates who graduated in Laranjeiras, only three live in the municipality. The others are distributed as follows: Aracaju (20); Malhador (01); Maruim (01); Nossa Senhora do Socorro (01); São Cristóvão (02) and, in the state of Bahia, Macaúbas (01).

Nossa Senhora do Socorro are 9.9 km, Aracaju at 24.7 km, Malhador at 32.7 km and São Cristóvão at 34.9 km away from the Center.

The Center of Nossa Senhora das Dores is located in the microregion of the Agreste of Nossa Senhora das Dores and comprises the municipalities of Aquidabã, Cumbe, Malhada dos Bois, Muribeca, São Miguel do Aleixo and Nossa Senhora das Dores. In this last city, the UAB support Center is located at 134, Cônego Miguel Monteiro Barbosa Square, maintained by the city hall. The Chart 8 shows 305 approved for 164 enrolled, 141 cancellations and 48 graduates²⁴.

Chart 8 – Center of Nossa Senhora das Dores (2008 - 2010 - 2011)

Source: Authors (2017)

These graduates come from eight municipalities. Examining the spatial-geographical location of these cities²⁵ only two represent the microregion of Nossa Senhora das Dores: Cumbe at 18.1 km and Nossa Senhora das Dores. The others are from Siriri at 17.1 km, Capela at 18.8 km, Moita Bonita at 32.4 km, Santa Rosa de Lima at 34.2 km, Graccho Cardoso at 43.9 km and Gararu at 70.4 km.

The Centers of Nossa Senhora da Glória and Porto da Folha are located in the Sergipean microregion of Sertão do São Francisco, precisely in Nossa Senhora da Glória and in Porto da Folha, composed of the municipalities of Canindé de São Francisco, Feira Nova, Gararu, Graccho Cardoso, Itabi, Monte Alegre de Sergipe and Poço Redondo. These Centers maintain the state of Sergipe through SEED/Sergipe. Nossa Senhora da Glória is located at km 3, Engenheiro Jorge Neto Highway, Silos neighborhood and Porto da Folha, at Manoel Messias de Freitas Square, Downtown. Picture 9 details the mapping of the Center of Nossa Senhora da Glória.

²⁴ We highlight that of the 48 graduates, 13 live in the City-Center and the others live in the municipalities of: Capela (16); Cumbe (05); Gararu (01); Graccho Cardoso (04); Moita Bonita (02); Santa Rosa de Lima (01) and Siriri (03).

²⁵ The city of São Miguel do Aleixo had no students representation and the other municipalities of this micro-region have graduated in other Centers of the UAB/Sergipe.

Chart 9 – Center of Nossa Senhora da Glória (2008 - 2011)

Source: Authors (2017)

In the years 2008 and 2011, this Center totaled 259 approved, 236 enrolled, 183 cancellations, 44 students remain in course and nine were graduated²⁶. Considering the graduates, of the five municipalities served by UAB/Sergipe, Canindé de São Francisco is 79.8 km, Feira Nova (01) at 18.2 km, Graccho Cardoso (01) at 28.5 km, Monte Alegre (01) at 47.2 km and the City-Center five graduated students. All in the same Sergipean micro region of Sertão do São Francisco.

The Center of Porto da Folha scores 404 approved, 369 enrolled, 308 cancellations (a considerable number). 48 remain studying and 13 have graduated²⁷. Chart 10 presents quantitative data relating to the four editions of the Entrance exams.

Chart 10 – Center Porto da Folha (2007-2008-2010-2011)

Source: Authors (2017)

26 Of the nine graduates from the Center of Nossa Senhora da Glória, four come from the City-Center and the others from Canindé de São Francisco (02); Feira Nova (01); Graccho Cardoso (01) and Monte Alegre (01).

27 Of the graduates, in the City-Center had six as total. The others live in Aquidabã (01); Aracaju (01); Graccho Cardoso (01); Monte Alegre de Sergipe (01); Nossa Senhora da Glória (01) and São Cristóvão (02).

Seven municipalities were attended by UAB at the Center of Porto da Folha. In the City-Center, six graduated and the others in the same micro-region: Monte Alegre de Sergipe at 44.3 km; Nossa Senhora da Glória at 52.6 km ; Aquidabã at 79.9 km; Graccho Cardoso at 81.2 km; with the exception of Aracaju at 176 km and São Cristóvão at 182 km that belong to the micro-region of Aracaju. This Center is located in the Tobias Barreto micro-region integrated by the cities of Simão Dias, Tobias Barreto and Poço Verde, whose municipality locates the Center at 124, José Rodrigues de Melo Street, Downtown, maintained by the local city hall.

The results indicate 315 approved for 29 unregistered; 286 enrolled, 212 canceled and 30 attending. In total there were 44 graduates²⁸ for the three editions in seven degrees. See Chart below:

Chart 11 – Center of Poço Verde (2007-2008 -2010)

Source: Authors (2017)

Examining the spatial-geographical location of this Center, there was representation of the municipalities of the microregion of Tobias Barreto: the City-Center, Simão Dias at 44.2 km and Tobias Barreto at 56 km. From the micro-region of Aracaju: São Cristóvão (136 km) and Aracaju (150 km). The others live in the state of Bahia: Fatima 13.8 km; Heliópolis at 24.2 km; Cícero Dantas 36.6 km; Paripiranga, 51.8 km; Ribeira do Amparo 52.5 km; Ribeira do Pombal at 58.2 km and Banzaê at 73.4 km.

The microregion of Agreste of Itabaiana consists of seven municipalities: Itabaiana, Areia Branca, Campo do Brito, Malhador, São Domingos, Moita Bonita and Macambira. In this microregion there were two UAB on-site Centers: in Areia Branca administered by the local city hall, through the technical cooperation agreement between SEED/MEC, the municipality and UFS. This Center was deactivated in 2009 “[...] because it did not present the minimum conditions required by the UAB, and its students were dis-

28 We add that of the number of graduates, 14 live in the municipality of Tobias Barreto micro-region: six in the City-Center; four in Tobias Barreto and four in Simão Dias. The other graduates live in: Aracaju (01) and São Cristóvão (01), 28 graduated at this Center, are from Bahia and live in the cities of: Banzaê (05); Cícero Dantas (01); Fátima (02); Heliópolis (07); Paripiranga (07); Ribeira do Pombal (05); Ribeira do Amparo (01).

tributed in the best Centers located in relation to that municipality” (SOUZA JÚNIOR, 2016, 52, our translation). The other Center is located in São Domingos, with the city hall as the maintainer and is located at 310, José Freire de Lima Avenue, Downtown. See Chart:

Chart 12 – Center of São Domingos (2007-2008-2010-2011)

Source: Authors (2017)

The Center of São Domingos presents the following demand figures: 412 approved in the years 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2011 with enrollment of 383 students; significant cancellations of 268 and 42 graduates²⁹. Observing the composition of the graduates, of the 10 cities served by the UAB, six are located in the micro-region of the Agreste of Itabaiana and the others with the distances presented from the Center: Lagarto at 23.4 km, Frei Paulo at 50.6 km, Pedra Mole at 64.7 km and Aracaju at 78.6 km.

The Agreste of Lagarto micro-region includes the cities of Lagarto and Riachão do Dantas. The UAB support Center is located in the village of Colônia Treze, in the main lane, in the municipality of Lagarto, maintained by the local city hall. The Chart below details the enrollment numbers for the 2008 and 2011 entrance exam processes.

Of the 175 approved, 158 registered; 113 canceled and six graduated students³⁰. Examining the geographical location of the graduates, there was representation of the microregion: Lagarto and Riachão do Dantas 28.2 km from the City-Center and the municipalities, two: Aracaju 81.1 km and Boquim 38.8 km.

29 Of the number of graduates, in the Center of São Domingos 15 graduated. In the same microregion, they graduated in Areia Branca (03); Campo do Brito (05); Itabaiana (01); Macambira (02); Moita Bonita (01). The others, in other municipalities of Sergipe: Aracaju (01); Frei Paulo (02); Lagarto (11) and Pedra Mole (01).

30 Of the graduated students, there was representation in the two municipalities of the micro-region: Lagarto (03) and Riachão do Dantas (01). From other microregions: Aracaju (01) and Boquim (01).

Chart 13 – Center of Lagarto (2008-2011)

Source: Authors (2017)

The detailed mapping of the microregions, as a result of the analysis of the material available at Sigaa/UFS³¹ with regard to those approved in the offer of vacancies for teachers in the selective processes: UAB 2007; UAB 2007 - remaining vacancies; UAB 2008; UAB 2010 and UAB 2011, made it possible to identify the scope of UAB/Sergipe regarding the education of teachers from the year 2007 to the last academic curricular consolidation in 2015-2.

This scenario, when related to democratization³² of access to higher education, expressed a significant number of approved teachers, 4,287 and, out of this total, 3,890 enrolled in UAB/Sergipe, making it possible to affirm that there was a democratization of education “[...] as an inducement to expand access and increased student enrollment [...]” (DIAS SOBRINHO, 2013, p. 120, our translation). However, democratizing is not limited to expanding access. This term should consider the quality of the education and the knowledge learned at the undergraduate level.

Thus, access to higher education is a subjective social right, anchored in the obligation and gratuity of the Federal Constitution and LDB 9.394/1996, with a view to democratization that enables the production and diffusion of scientific and technological knowledge, as well as social and human development.

31 Available at: <<https://www.sigaa.ufs.br/sigaa/public/home.jsf>>.

32 We understand here democratization not only as the expansion of opportunities for access and creation of places in higher education and expansion of enrollments. It is essential to ensure means of permanence, that is, adequate conditions for the (re)construction of knowledge. Access and permanence are essential aspects of the wider process of “democratization”. (DIAS SOBRINHO, 2010, our translation).

Expansion and internalization of the Open University of Brazil/Sergipe³³: some considerations

In Sergipe, 74.7% (56) of the municipalities³⁴ graduated students from UAB in undergraduate courses. Only 25.3% (19) were not included with representation of academics from the program. It is worth mentioning that, in addition to our state, UAB expanded by undergraduate teachers in the state of Alagoas and Bahia.

The Center of Arauá had the highest number of graduates with a percentage of 14.4% (51) in 11 municipalities. The Center of Nossa Senhora das Dores reached eight cities in the state countryside, licensing 13.6% (48) teachers. The Center of Poço Verde graduated 12.4% (44) educators and reached 19 cities. Considering having its head office in a locality that borders Bahia, this Center expanded UAB/Sergipe beyond Sergipe's territory and involved seven municipalities. The Center of São Domingos comprised 11.9% (42) teachers from 12 localities in the countryside.

The Center of Laranjeiras licensed 10.2% (36) academics, covering seven cities of Sergipe and one located beyond the geographical limits. The Center of Estância graduated 8.2% (29) licensed teachers from 13 cities, including four of them in the territory of Bahia. The expansion of the offer to the state of Alagoas also occurred with the creation of the Center of Propriá. There were 7.3% (26) graduates from three municipalities of Alagoas and nine from Sergipe. The Center of Carira had 6.8% (24) graduates, reaching two cities in Bahia and five in Sergipe.

The Center of Brejo Grande graduated 4.2% (15) students and reached a municipality of Alagoas and five in Sergipe. The Center installed in Porto da Folha, Sergipe's hinterland, gave access to higher education to 3.7% (13) subjects and contemplated seven municipalities in Sergipe. The UAB/Sergipe at Japaratuba Center reached six municipalities in Sergipe and a percentage of 3.1% (11) graduated. The Center of Nossa Senhora da Glória reached five municipalities of the state and 2.5% (nine) graduates. The Center of Lagarto graduated 1.7% (six) students and covered six cities in Sergipe.

This research evidenced that UAB/Sergipe reached 18 municipalities in the states of Alagoas and Bahia (expansion), totaling 74 locations when we added the quantitative (56 cities) of our state (internalization). We infer that the program strengthened the countryside of Sergipe, minimized the concentration of undergraduate courses offered in the cities and avoided the migration. On the other hand the advances beyond the territorial limit of Sergipe occurred without much expressivity. Even so, this expansion allowed the increase of enrollments and offer conditions, emphasizing it as the preliminary stage of democratization of higher education.

We defend here the public policies of expansion and democratization of higher education to guarantee an education as a public good and subjective right, ensuring the access and permanence of students, regardless of social class. We highlight the current neglect of the government with spending cuts and investments in the area of education. This path distances the implementation of policies that stimulate the improvement of

³³ These results are part of the author's PhD thesis.

³⁴ Sergipe is made up of 75 (seventy five) municipalities organized in three mesoregions.

quality – through equity and inclusion – of higher education based on social, human and sustainable development.

From these results, UFS managers can invest in improvements. After all, there are also undergraduates with possibilities for graduating. There is a need to investigate the high number of cancellations. We evaluated as national the abandonment and dropout in E-learning courses. However, UAB/Sergipe has a much higher number than the average percentage. In this study, 72.8% (2,832) of cancellations in a universe of 3,890 enrollments were analyzed. There is only 9.1% (354) graduated between the years of 2007 and 2015. Therefore, we suggest future research to identify the factors that contribute to this scenario in initial teacher education courses.

Concrete democratization of higher education necessarily goes through effective public policies that strengthen the entrance and permanence of the academic student. We understand that the high rate of evasion may be the Achilles heel for UAB/Sergipe. We also note the commitment of Cesad/UFS to the maintenance of the commitments listed in terms of technical cooperation signed with municipalities and state. This means that improvements do not depend solely and exclusively on this Center. It is necessary to implement collective actions that promote initial quality teacher education, with guarantees of access and permanence.

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