

EDUCATION CO.: E-LEARNING HEGEMONY IN ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM IN BRAZIL EDUCAÇÃO S/A: HEGEMONIA DE EAD EM ARQUITETURA E URBANISMO NO BRASIL ZANDER PEREIRA FILHO, MAYARA DOS REIS, MARIA CALIL, VÍTOR HALFEN

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the current panorama of Architecture and Urbanism (AU) teaching in Brazil, focusing on the significant expansion of undergraduate courses offered in Distance Education (EaD) modality in recent years. This trend has been driven by factors such as: the state divestment in public Higher Education Institutions (IES), the influence of economic groups that control the private education sector, and the recent COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The research is based on the quantitative and qualitative data interpellation — extracted from the e-MEC and discussions found in the literature — in order to criticize the given reality. The analyses demonstrate the private IES hegemony in this segment, in which the current market logic — maximum profit — results in lowering quality due to infrastructure and personnel costs reduction, the teaching-learning process weakening, and homogenization of places and subjects. Also noteworthy is the public IES infrastructure dismantling as an obstacle to in-person education, although this segment still shows more resistance to adhering to EaD modality. Finally, it is expected that the analysis will encourage us to think about counter-hegemonic ways to overcome this situation and reinforce the arguments in defense of the AU teaching quality and dimension of in-person teaching in Brazil.

Keywords: Distance Education, Expansion of EaD in Architecture and Urbanism, Architecture and Urbanism Teaching, Counter-hegemony in Architecture and Urbanism.

1 Introduction

Architecture and Urbanism (AU) teaching in Brazil has a history of struggles and achievements, in which the search for autonomy and quality is a constant in this trajectory. Currently, the main battles in this field take place against public policies of divestment in public Higher Education Institutions (IES) and the advancement of Distance Education (EaD) modality, endorsed by the experiences of Emergency Remote Teaching (ERE) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2016, when the first AU undergraduate course in this modality began¹, the main category entities² have been standing against this situation. Even so, in the meantime — marked by legal imbroglios — the e-MEC platform data (Brasil, 2022) reveals a significant expansion of this segment in recent years. Facing this problem, this article aims to analyze the institutional panorama of AU undergraduate courses in the country. Particularly, it seeks to elaborate a chronological framework of the subject comprising normative acts, category entities and student organizations manifestations, and political and historical milestones; to qualify and quantify IES, undergraduate courses, facilities, and admissions vacancies; to map the data distribution over the territory; to investigate EaD modality expansion and constraints, as well as the actions of the main business conglomerates of the segment.

The term Education S/A, used in the title, is a reference to the large private economic groups, the so-called corporations, which operate in the higher education sector in Brazil and assert their common interests in a hegemonic way — in Gramsci's conception of the power relations analysis between the state³ and civil society through the balance of force and consensus (Liguori; Voza, 2017). We, therefore, consider that the growth of AU undergraduate courses in EaD modality in recent years represents one of the most significant expressions of this hegemony. Thus, to think about counter-hegemony⁴, it is necessary to characterize this hegemonic formation. Faced with this interest, the basic questions of this work arise, in short: how has

¹ University Center Vale do Rio Verde (UNINCOR), located in the city of Três Corações, State of Minas Gerais, in Brazilian southeast. Based on e-MEC data, Calil and Ribeiro (2021) point out that the first AU undergraduate course in EaD modality was created at the University Center Braz Cubas, in the city of Mogi das Cruzes, State of São Paulo, also in the Brazilian southeast, in December/2015. However, as we consider the year of the operation start as a basis, the latter was disregarded since it only started in August/2020.

² Brazilian Association for the Architecture and Urbanism Teaching (ABEA), Brazilian Institute of Architects (IAB), National Federation of Architects (FNA), National Federation of Architecture and Urbanism Students of Brazil (FeNEA), and Council of Architecture and Urbanism of Brazil (CAU/BR).

³ In the “Integral State” sense, the Marxist conception projection of the state, in which the dominant classes use not only coercion to guarantee their domain (state-force) but also new strategies that guarantee the “political direction to govern with the consent of the governed” (Dore and Souza, 2018, p. 245, our translation).

⁴ It is noteworthy that the term “counter-hegemony” is used in this article from the capitalist hegemony overcoming perspective that currently affects AU teaching in Brazil.

this situation evolved in recent years? Which and how many companies predominate in this market? How are they distributed in Brazilian territory? What is the standing of category entities, student organizations, and public IES in this scenario? To direct the investigation, we consider the hypothesis that AU undergraduate courses in EaD modality in Brazil reproduce a restricted sense of reality, established by the hegemonic neoliberal project of power through the standardization and distribution of their curriculum on a national scale, in which diversity and differences of places and subjects may be disregarded and, thus, compromising the critical education of the architect and urban planner.

In order to investigate this hypothesis, the research⁵ followed a qualitative-quantitative approach — of a historical, exploratory, and descriptive nature — and has the following concepts as the analyzes and research theoretical support: hegemony from Antonio Gramsci, capital educator from Olinda Evangelista, and banking conception of the education from Paulo Freire. Initially, the e-MEC detailed data quantitative analysis was carried out in June 2022. A total of 3,131 records⁶ were found, which were subsequently treated in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. It is worth noting that some of them were excluded⁷ after the following filtering: a) located outside Brazil; b) marked as in Extinction process or Extinct; c) located in IES categorized as Special⁸; d) courses that have not yet set dates to start operations. Finally, 2,611 records remained, corresponding to 719 different code courses — the total of this research. For the graphs and maps preparation⁹, we considered the following fields: code and start date of the undergraduate course, IES (administration category and academic organization), state, municipality, number of undergraduate courses, admissions vacancies, and facilities. With these data, it was possible to quantitatively analyze the undergraduate courses expansion across the territory and the existing war of position¹⁰ between public and private education. Thus, it is expected that the results produced can serve as a stimulus to think about strategies to overcome the current situation and strengthen arguments in defense of the AU teaching quality and the dimension of in-person teaching in Brazil.

2 Context of architecture and urbanism teaching in the post-1988

The scenario of higher education in Brazil in recent decades has been marked by a significant private education expansion in contrast to a modest one of the public system. Although it originated in the university counter-reform instituted by the civil-military dictatorship in 1968, it was in the context after the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil's promulgation, in 1988, amid the rise of neoliberal adjustment policies and the technocratic prescriptions of multilateral organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and The World Bank, that this dynamic gained new proportions and centrality in the education sector.

Along with this expansion, there was a profound change in the private IES profile, with the growing dominance of big private groups, to the detriment of private IES with philanthropic, confessional, community, and non-profit nature. This capital centralization movement and mercantile expansion started to advance even faster in the last two decades, driven by two main vectors. On the one hand, the initial public offering (IPO) of these private educational groups on the stock exchanges

⁵ This article is based on the doctoral research of Zander Filho, Vitor Halfen, and Maria Calil — financed by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) —, in progress at the Postgraduate Program in Urbanism (PROURB) of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), in addition to the transversal collaboration of Mayara Reis, a master's student in the Postgraduate Program in Architecture and Urbanism (PPGAU) at the Fluminense Federal Institute (IFF).

⁶ The records refer to the e-MEC platform's detailed data. In simplified data, they are restricted to the regulated undergraduate courses of each IES, based on a code course, without covering its reproduction (including admission vacancies) in multiple teaching hubs. Thus, in the detailed data, the number of admission vacancies is greater than the simplified one.

⁷ The following records were excluded: 18 courses located abroad; 284 courses extinct or in extinction process; 3 courses located in IES administratively categorized as "Special"; and 215 courses not yet started.

⁸ According to INEP, this category includes higher education institutions created by law, state or municipality, and existing on the enactment date of the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil in 1988, which are not wholly or predominantly maintained with public resources, therefore, the admission is not free.

⁹ Produced in Microsoft Power BI software.

¹⁰ The proposed term by Gramsci corresponds to “the most current form of confrontation with the state, which personifies the 'civil hegemony' formula: the dominant social groups intellectual and moral direction, exercised by the force and consensus combination” (Dore and Souza, 2018, p. 257, our translation).

from 2007 onwards, subordinated the educational environment even more drastically to the private profit and financialization logic (Seki, 2020). On the other hand, the decisive role of the Brazilian State in inducing this expansion through private education financing policies through the University for All Program (Prouni) and the Higher Education Student Financing Fund (FIES), with special emphasis on the second one, which had its scope expanded as of 2010 by Federal Law 12202/2010.

This higher education big picture of the last three decades has direct repercussions on the more specific AU teaching expansion process in the same period. It is possible to identify the same trends when analyzing the historical AU undergraduate courses' evolution in the country, represented in figure 1. If, from their origins in 1820, until the mid-1970s, public courses predominated over private ones, it was only in the 1980s that this relationship was reversed. Especially from the mid-1990s onwards, with the deepening of the education neoliberal commodification, the number of private institutions began to grow at an accelerated rate. Between 2001 and 2002, 100 private AU undergraduate courses were opened in the country. In ten years, this number doubled, reaching 200 in 2011. This growth intensified even more in the following period, when the number of courses exploded, mainly driven by FIES public funds. In eight years, the number of courses almost tripled, reaching 588 in 2019.

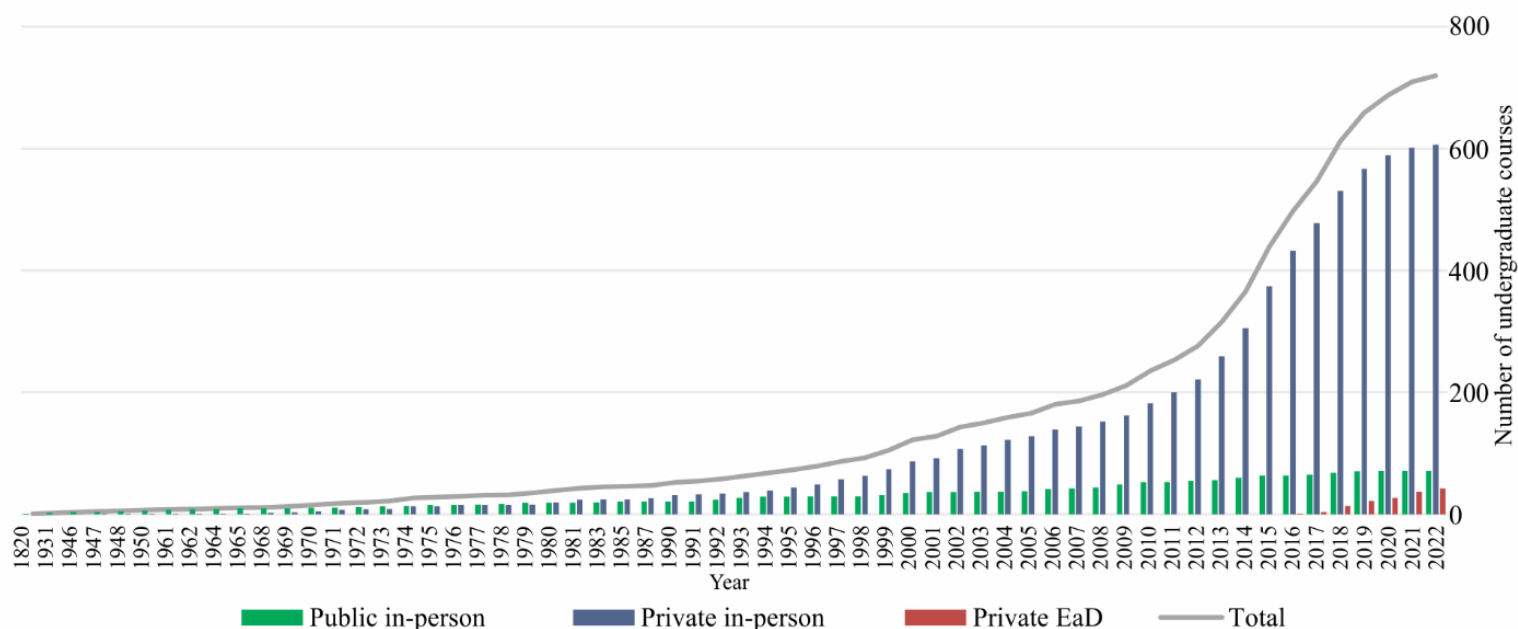


Fig. 1: Evolution of the number of AU undergraduate courses, from 1820 to 2022. Source: Authors, 2022, e-MEC adapted data (Brasil, 2022).

This scenario began to change in the following years after the coup that deposed¹¹ President Dilma Rousseff. We align ourselves here with Fontes and Leher (2021), who affirm that the Brazilian State policy aimed at the education sector has changed – specially due to the FIES crisis caused as much by the volume of the public resources employed as by the high default rates. In addition, Constitutional Amendment No. 95/2016¹² froze, for 20 years, state expenditure on social policies and other public investments in basic rights, including education. Although it had more tragic consequences for public education, representing a deliberate policy of dismantling federal universities and institutes, the Expenditure Ceiling also had consequences for the private sector.

Still according to Fontes and Leher (2021), the FIES crisis and the consequent reduction in transfers of public resources to the private sector led to a change in the large educational private groups' strategy, which sought alternatives to reduce costs, among which the increase of undergraduate courses offered in EaD modality emerged as one of the main ones. We add that

¹¹ In this context, we highlight Felipe Demier's contribution (2017), for whom the process that culminated in the then republic president's dismissal was configured as a legal-parliamentary coup that altered the current regime and instituted a new democratic model more shielded from the conquest of social rights.

¹² Constitutional Amendment No. 95 of December 15th, 2016, which amends the Transitory Constitutional Provisions Act, to institute the New Tax Regime - Expenditure Ceiling and other measures.

already in the following year, Michel Temer's government issued Decree No. 9057 of 2017¹³, which instituted new regulations for EaD modality, granting greater autonomy to private IES for courses creation, initiating a new stage in the private higher education modality. Therefore, we consider that this expansion follows the neoliberal hegemonic logic and is carried out in favor of the capital educator¹⁴ mercantile interests that control the private education sector; and materializes itself from the reduction of the investment in structures and workforce involved, thus generating a consequent increase in business entrepreneur's profits (Fontes and Leher, 2021).

Until 2015, AU undergraduate courses were still among the most impervious to EaD modality. However, from this new stage of private IES expansion, the advance of the modality also affected the courses in the field. In 2016, 100 admission vacancies were offered in this modality. Between 2017 and July 2022, there was an increase of 7,706%, reaching 3,490,851 vacancies. In the same period, the in-person teaching modality registered increases of 16.1% and 7.2%¹⁵, in private and public in-person admission vacancies, respectively. The evolution of the number of the admission vacancies is represented in figure 2.

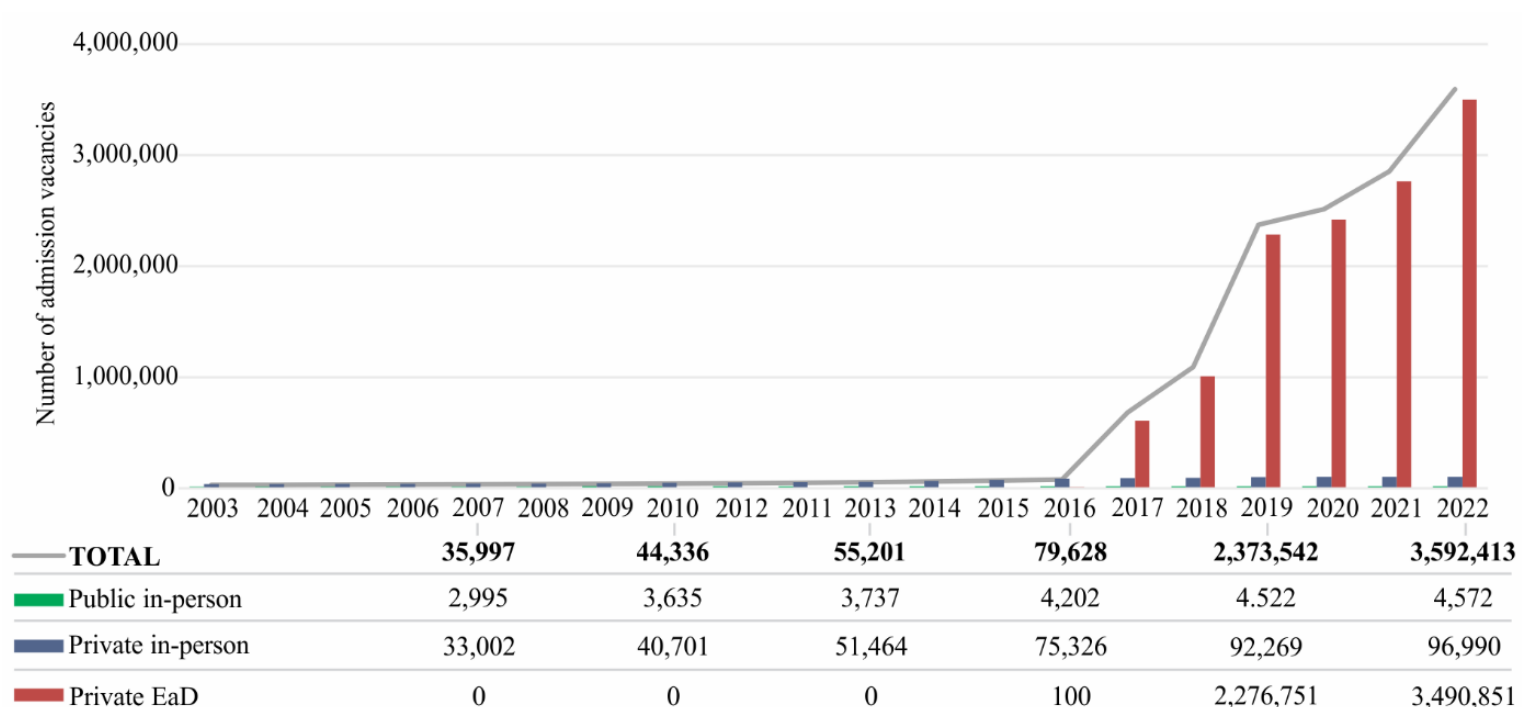


Fig. 2: Evolution of the number of admission vacancies of AU undergraduate courses, from 2016 to 2022. Source: Authors, 2022, e-MEC adapted data (Brasil, 2022).

The significant admission vacancies increase in EaD teaching hubs was mainly due to the approval of Decree No. 9057 of May 25th, 2017, in which IES now has more autonomy to expand the undergraduate and postgraduate courses offered in EaD modality. Given this, it is also necessary to understand how field entities and organizations standing in the face of this process.

3 Standings of the category entities and student organizations

To contribute to the understanding of the scenario exposed above, we verified from Braida (2019), the standings of entities and organizations in the field that were carried out from 2017 to 2019 — all contrary to the EaD modality in AU undergraduate

¹³ Decree No. 9057 of May 25th, 2017, regulates art. 80 of Law No. 9394 of December 20th, 1996, establishes the national education guidelines and bases.

¹⁴ A concept from Evangelista (2021, p. 188, our translation), in which the author relies on the analytical hypothesis that "we are in the presence of the 'capital educator' presence, understanding that such an educator is not restricted to an individual, but is a historical subject, of class, the bourgeoisie, just as the educator refers to the working class or, more broadly, in Gramsci's perspective, to the subaltern classes".

¹⁵ 15,559 and 330 new admission vacancies, respectively.

courses. According to the author, the charters from ABEA¹⁶, the IAB to the Minister of Education, the FNA¹⁷, and the FeNEA¹⁸, in addition to the Plenary of CAU/BR manifestation on the situation, were published in 2017, one year after the beginning of the first AU undergraduate course offered in EaD modality. In 2018 and 2019, the CAU/BR, CAU/UFs, and FeNEA maintained their position on the subject. After the conclusion of the first AU undergraduate course in the EaD, in 2021, all CAU/UFs complied with the Federal Regional Court 1st Region (TRF-1) court decision — which ruled on the absence of impediments to the EaD course undergraduates' professional registration — thus contradicting all positions published so far. In 2022, CAU/RS filed a lawsuit against MEC and the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research (Inep) which, by a court decision, suspended Anhanguera UNIDERP's AU undergraduate course in EaD modality recognition¹⁹. Among the allegations, attention was paid to the Course Pedagogical Plan with Resolution No. 2/10 of the National Council of Education; absence of hearing from CAU/BR in the course recognition process; absence of supervision and course evaluation, and absence of on-site external evaluation by the Ministry of Education's Secretariat for Regulation and Supervision of Higher Education.

Continuing the research by Braida (2019), Wilderom and Arantes (2020), Monteiro (2021), and Calil and Ribeiro (2021), figure 3 presents a non-exhaustive systematization for the understanding of this process. Thus, a fragmented and sometimes confusing vision of the process is offered, aligned with the state divestment in education in recent years. The list is structured in the following timeline, emphatically on normative acts; political and historical milestones; and category entities manifestations, related to the time frame proposed for the article and dealt with in this item²⁰. It is worth noting that the information selection criteria for the composition of figure 3 were the scope and events' political and economic impact at the national level within the established time frame, in addition to their intertwining with the researched objects analysis.

¹⁶ ABEA - Associação Brasileira de Ensino de Arquitetura e Urbanismo (2017).

¹⁷ FNA - Federação Nacional dos Arquitetos e Urbanistas (2017).

¹⁸ FeNEA - Federação Nacional dos e das Estudantes de Arquitetura e Urbanismo do Brasil (2017).

¹⁹ See: CAU/RS (Conselho de Arquitetura e Urbanismo do Rio Grande do Sul). Vitória em nome do ensino de qualidade!. [online] CAU/RS, 3 August 2022. Available at: <<https://www.caurs.gov.br/vitoria-em-nome-do-ensino-de-qualidade/>> [Accessed 5 November 2022].

²⁰ The data categorization and representation were an adaptation, by the authors of this study, of the methodology developed by Ventura and Reis (2021).

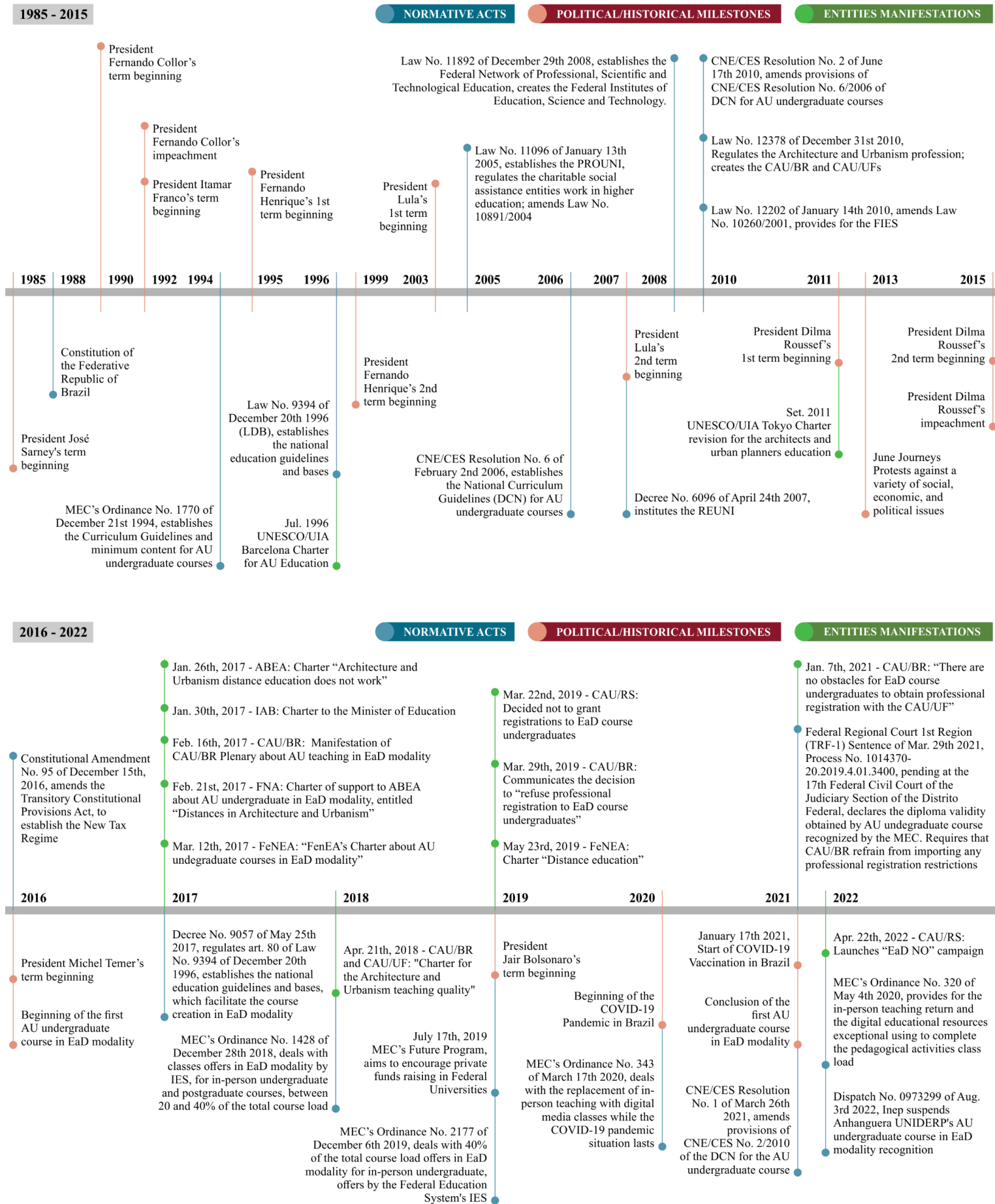


Fig. 3: Timeline with the main normative acts; political and historical milestones; and category entities manifestations, divided into two parts, each corresponding to periods 1985 to 2015 and 2016 to 2022. Source: Authors, 2022.

4 Overview of undergraduate courses in Architecture and Urbanism in Brazil

The current framework of AU undergraduate courses in Brazil is a reflection of the context previously presented. To broaden our understanding of this situation, we will analyze the education network's current structure in the area. Subsequently, we will present an institutional panorama with the spatialization of the numbers found in the territory, as well as an investigation of the main business conglomerates in this branch. Finally, we will complement the analyses discussing the EaD modality expansion, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.1 General framework

This research includes a total of 719 AU undergraduate courses in Brazil, 71 of which are public (all in-person) and 648 private (42 EaD and 606 in-person). These are offered in 559 different IES (63 public²¹ and 496 private), settled in 2,607 facilities²², 69 of which are public campuses, 604 private campuses, and 1,934 private EaD teaching hubs²³. The network's conformation is represented in Figure 4.

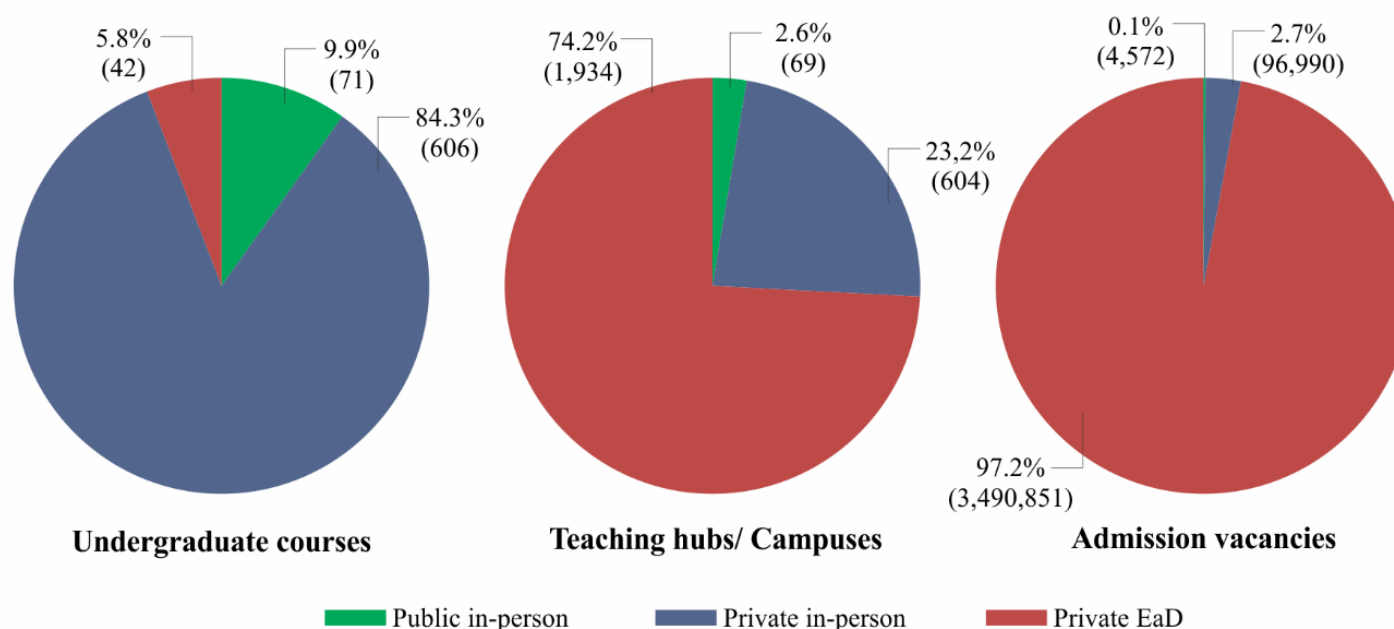


Fig. 4: Current percentage of AU undergraduate courses, teaching hubs/ campuses, and admission vacancies in Brazil. Source: Authors, 2022, e-MEC adapted data (Brasil, 2022).

Based on the scenario presented in figure 4, we identify that the current number of undergraduate courses in EaD modality (42) is close to the total number of public ones (71). However, the distance between them turns out to be more significant when comparing the vacancies offered: EaD ones comprise almost the whole (97.2%) whereas the public ones respond to the minority (0.1%) of all admission vacancies offered in the country. Observing figure 5, it is noted that until 2016 the number of private in-person IES increased progressively. Since 2018, a smaller growth of them is observed accompanied by a significant increase in private EaD IES, especially in the last two years. In concert with the private EaD IES expansion, there is a consequent growth of their respective number of teaching hubs, represented in figure 6.

²¹ Public IES UnB and UFBA offer 2 undergraduate courses (with distinct codes) assigned to the same campus. The same happens with private IES University Center Methodist Izabela Hendrix and University Center Bráz Cubas. On the other hand, public IES UFG, UFAL, UNESP, USP, UFMS, and UFMS have 2 undergraduate courses each (with distinct codes) assigned to different campuses.

²² It depicts the places where AU undergraduate courses are offered, the term campus being related to in-person courses, and teaching hubs to EaD modality. We emphasize that this distinction was intended to organize and clarify the information in this research since the term campus is used in e-MEC platform for all modalities.

²³ 40 teaching hubs are located in the campuses of the same IES.

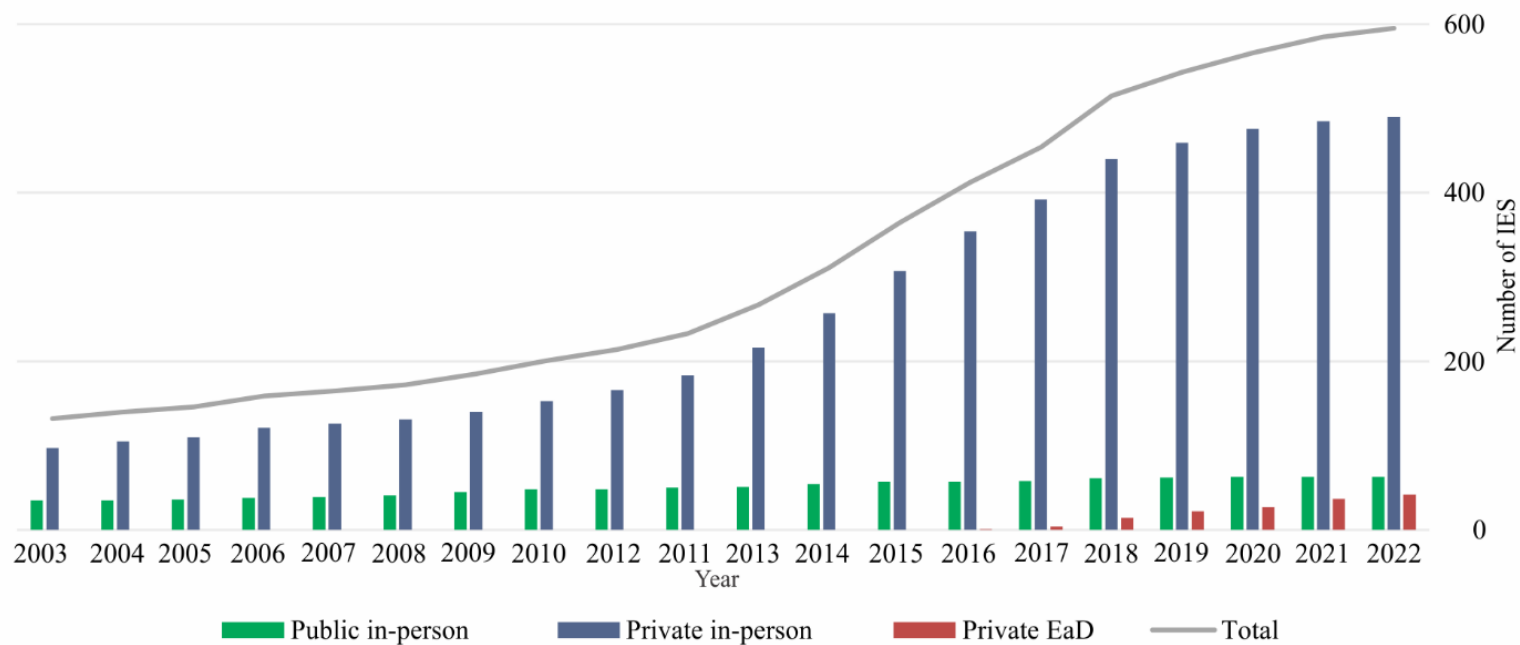


Fig. 5: Evolution of the number of IES offering AU undergraduate courses, from 2003 to 2022. Source: Authors, 2022, e-MEC adapted data (Brasil, 2022).

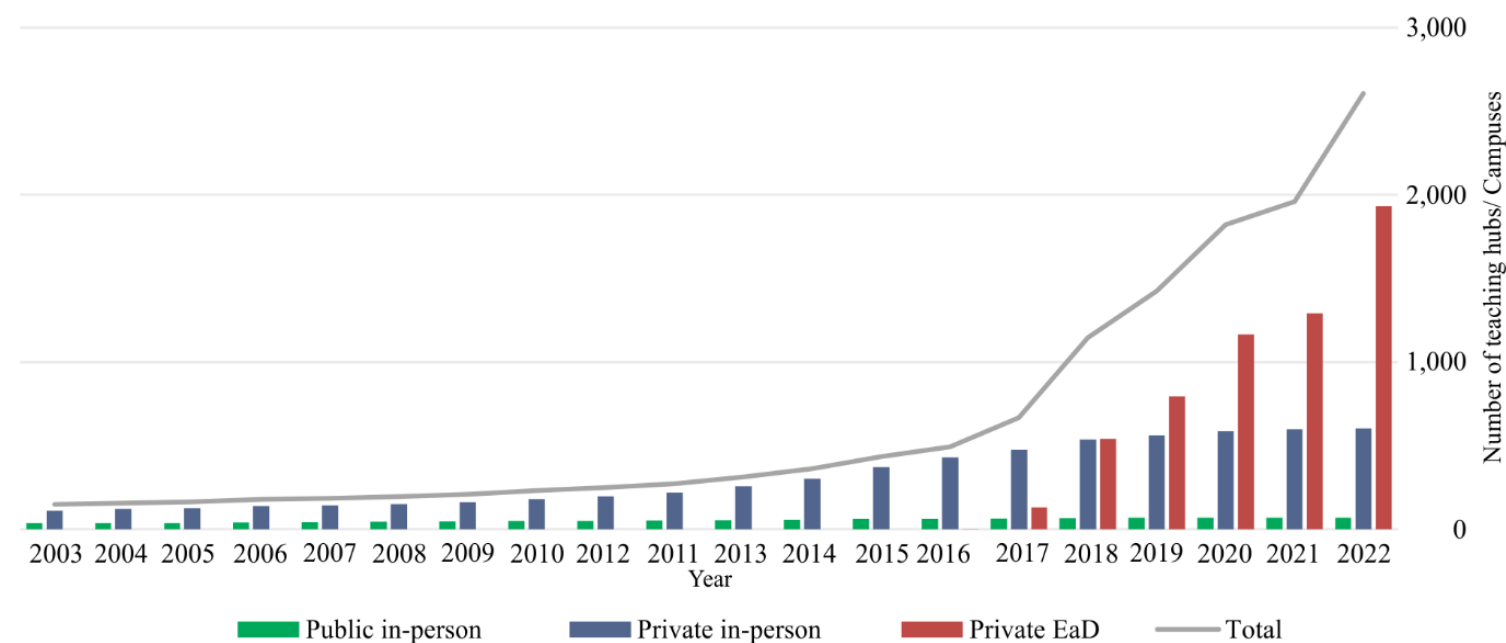


Fig. 6: Evolution of the number of the AU undergraduate courses facilities, from 2003 to 2022. Source: Authors, 2022, e-MEC adapted data (Brasil, 2022).

In 2016, there was only 1 teaching hub. The following year, this number jumped to 130. From 2017 to 2022, the increase was 1,388%, that is to say, there are 1,934 EaD teaching hubs currently in operation. The analyses of figures 5 and 6 indicate a trend of changing strategies in the private IES expansion. The territorial distribution of EaD teaching hubs, both public and private campuses, and their respective admission vacancies, are shown in figure 7. The EaD teaching hubs (1,934) and the in-person private (604) and public (69) IES campuses are located in 965, 271, and 67 municipalities, respectively. We stand before a replacement movement of in-person teaching to EaD²⁴, which takes place alongside the reproduction of courses with the same code in different places of the Brazilian territory. It is noticeable that the IES operates mainly in the same regions of the country (south, southeast, and coastal strip), regardless of teaching modalities or administrative categories. Therefore, the argument for democratizing access to higher education through EaD modality does not hold, at least for the AU courses, since they are practically concentrated in the same territories as in-person ones.

²⁴ This is supported by the analysis of the “extinct” and “in extinction process”, in which 94% of them are of private IES.

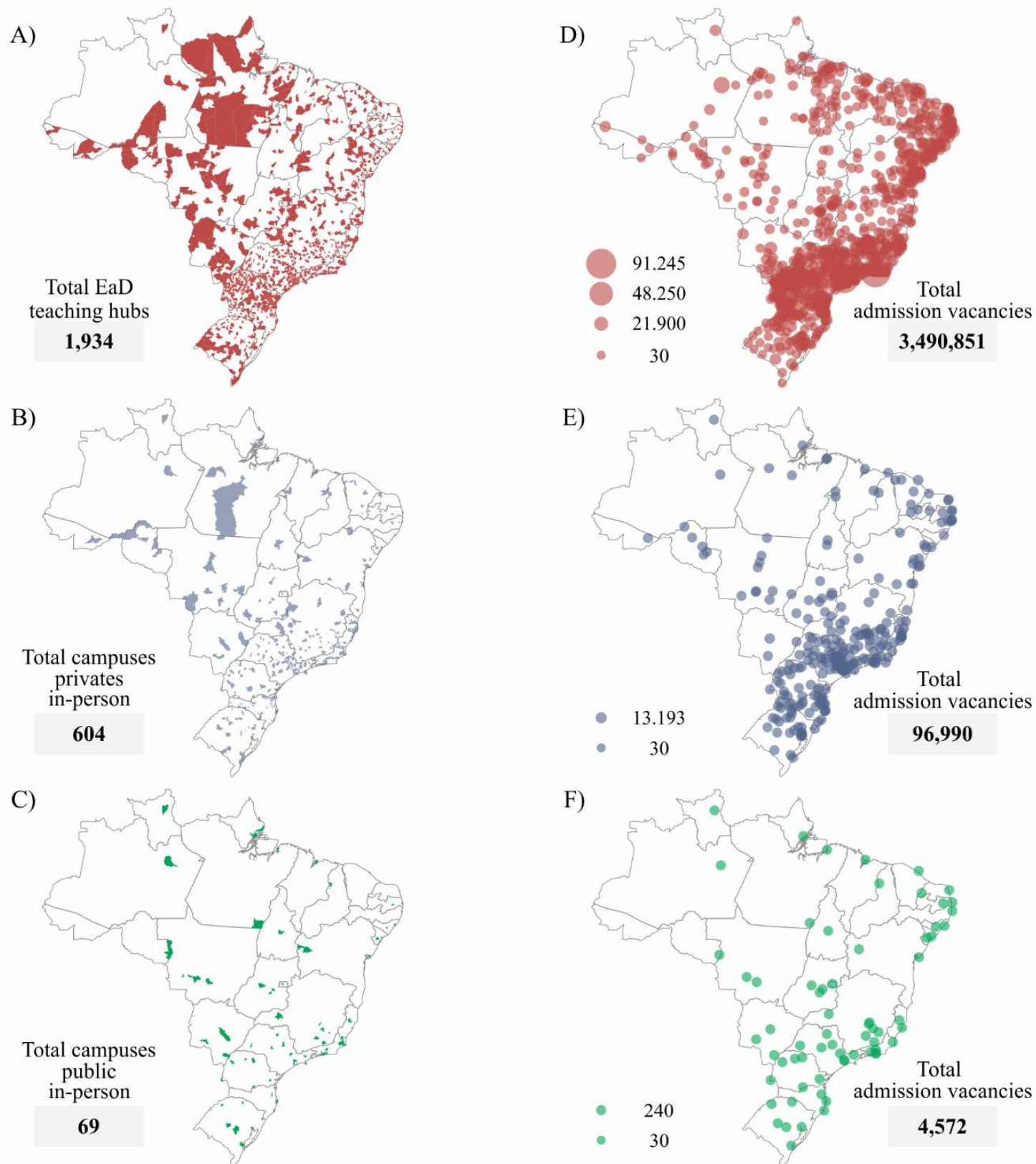


Fig. 7: Spatial and quantitative distribution of facilities and places of AU undergraduate courses. Source: Authors, 2022, e-MEC adapted data (Brasil, 2022).

Public IES

As already mentioned, the data analyzed indicate that there are no public AU courses offered in EaD modality so far. On the one hand, if that indicates a stronger resistance of public IES to incorporate the Distance education logic — at least in the case of AU IES — on the other hand, the analysis must be deeper in order to consider other aspects that complexify this

picture. It is important to note that it is not merely a matter of ideological position from these IES against EaD. In fact, there are pragmatic issues involved, such as the high investments needed to put this new modality in place in contrast with the lack of public IES investment resources to do so, as well as teacher training issues and precarious work, resistance from agents and structures, reluctance about quality standards, among others. Figure 8 shows these IES' campuses and admission vacancies distribution, classified according to the following administrative categories: Federal Universities (UFs) and Institutes (IFs), State Universities and Municipal IES. It is worth mentioning that the state of Acre, in northern Brazil, is the only one with no public IES offering admission vacancies in AU undergraduate courses.

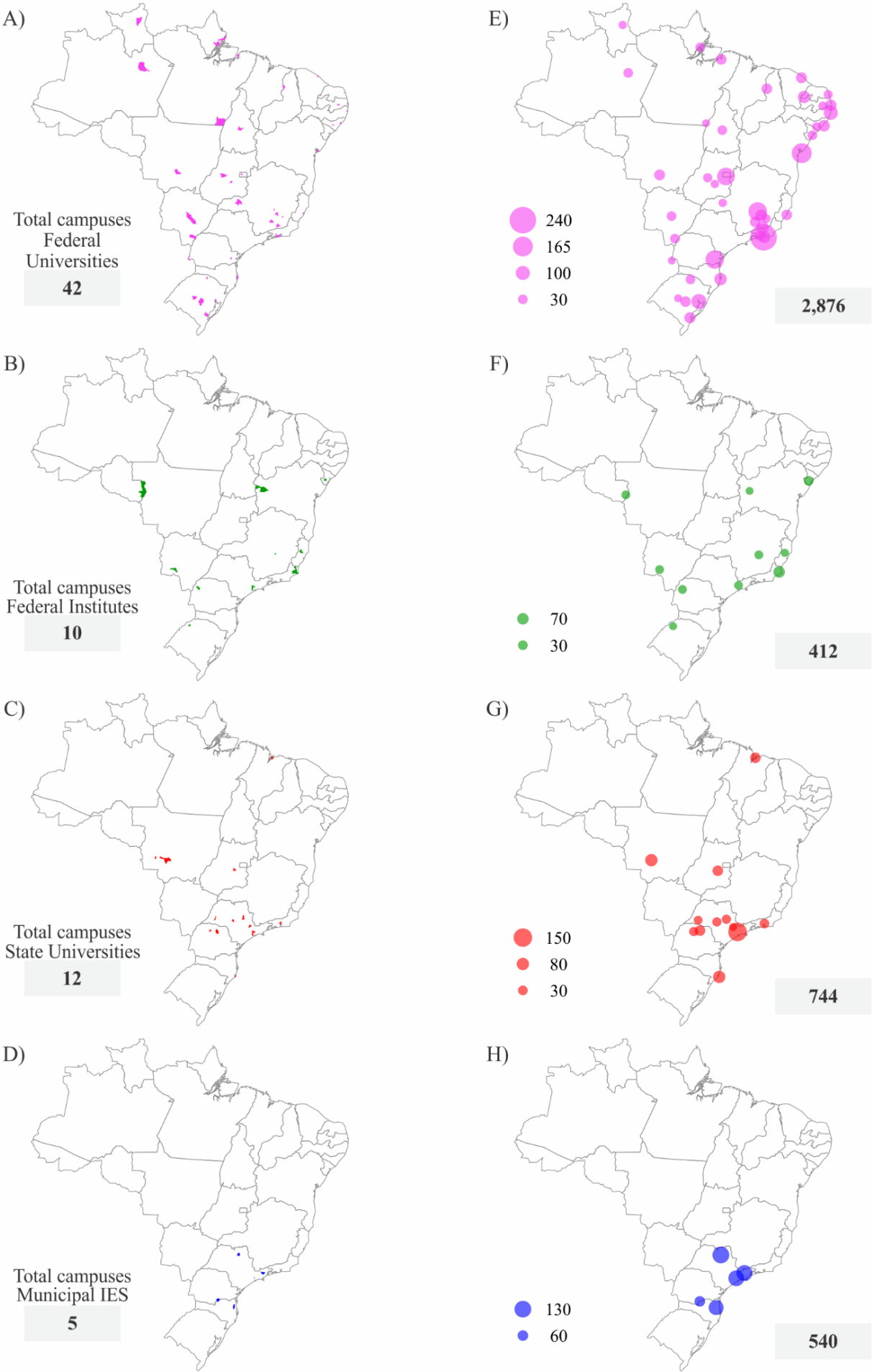


Fig. 8: Spatial and quantitative distribution of AU campuses and admission vacancies in public IES, sorted by administrative categories. Source: Authors, 2022, e-MEC adapted data (Brasil, 2022).

Among public IES, the UFs have the widest distribution across the Brazilian states, being present in 26 of them, with 42 campuses and 2,876 admission vacancies. These numbers represent 57.5% and 62.9%, respectively, of the whole. UFRJ holds the AU course with the higher number of vacancies (240/year). The IFs are present in 10 states and are distributed mostly in interior cities with 412 vacancies. The AU undergraduate course of the IFF stands out as the first established in this category and the biggest in number of vacancies offered among them (70/year). The State Universities have 744 vacancies distributed in 12 campuses, of 62 vacancies/campus per year average. The University of São Paulo (USP) stands out with two campuses and 185 annual vacancies. The municipal IES have 540 vacancies distributed over 5 campuses in 3 states (Paraná; Santa Catarina; São Paulo), with 108 vacancies/campus per year on average. Based on the data collected, it can be seen that between 2014 and 2021, while public investments in funds for the UFs and IFs²⁵ were reduced by 94.6% and 98.6%, respectively, the number of admission vacancies and EaD teaching hubs went in the opposite direction, rising steeply, as can be seen in Figure 9.

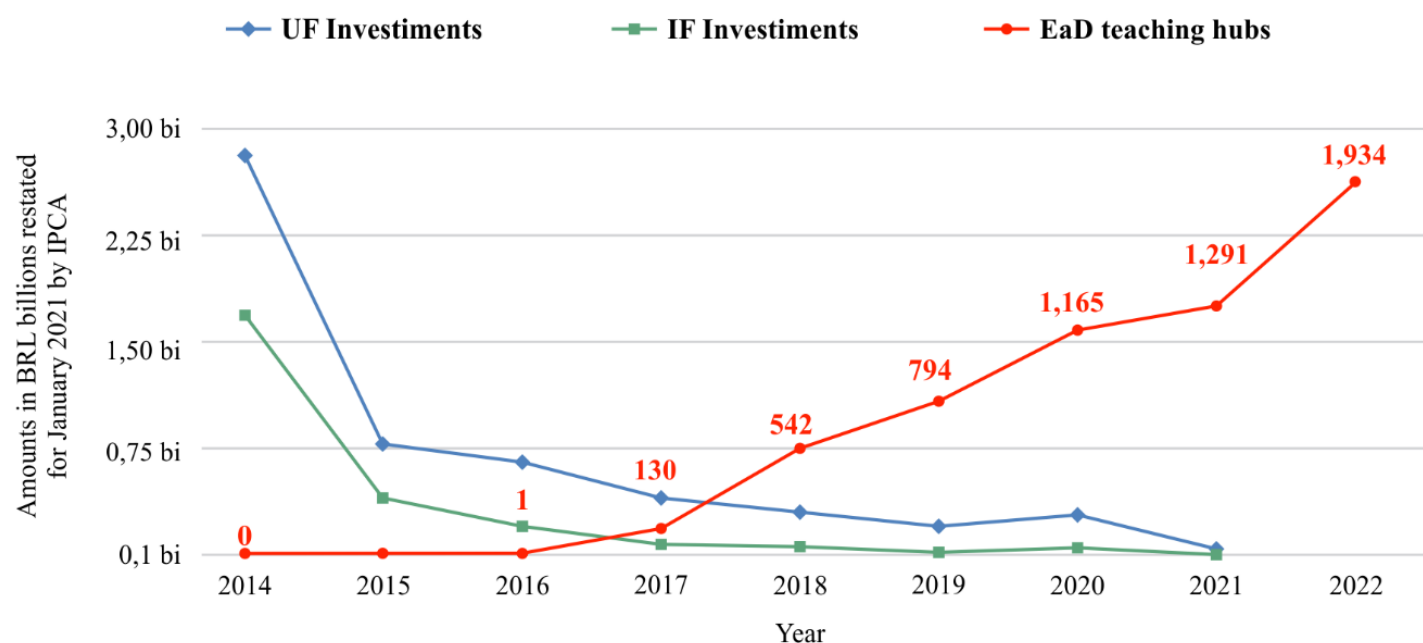


Fig. 9: Evolution of the number of EaD teaching hubs of Brazilian universities' AU undergraduate courses in the period between 2016-2022, and amounts invested in UFs and IFs in the period between 2014-2021. Source: Authors, 2022, adapted from Amaral (2021) and e-MEC data (Brasil, 2022).

These budget cutbacks compounded by the Constitution Amendment No. 95/2016, impacted directly on planning and management of public IES, making it infeasible to create, maintain and expand laboratories, classrooms, and other infrastructure (Amaral, 2021). These places, as well as those of conviviality, are inextricable parts of the teaching-learning process, which are impossible to reproduce in EaD modality, as pointed out by ABEA (2017), Wilderom and Arantes (2020) and Betoneira (2022)²⁶. Therefore, it is possible to state that the crisis of public funding also represents a crisis in these institutions' physical space.

In almost all campuses it is remarkable the presence of unfinished educational buildings, whose constructions were started in the context of REUNI and abandoned in the following years due to resource withdrawal. It is also noted the multiplication of container buildings installed as a supposedly temporary solution to house university functions, conceiving the educational space as a precarious space. Another central issue is the deficit of student housing, which compromises student permanence and impacts the urban dynamics since the demand for housing pushes the increase of land value in areas around the campuses. Finally, there is the deterioration of existing university structures due to lack of maintenance, among which the fire at the National Museum of UFRJ in 2018 stands as an example. This destruction scenario of the public higher education space, associated with the recent proposals for privatization, alienation, and concession of universities and federal institutes

²⁵ The public IES budget is divided into: i) personnel expenses, which include the payment of working and retired public servants; ii) other ordinary expenses, such as electricity, water, telephone, outsourced services, consumable supplies, etc; and iii) investment budget, related to maintenance, renovation, and expansion of infrastructure, buildings and campuses (Amaral, 2021).

²⁶ Interview granted by the current ABEA president Ana Monteiro to Podcast Betoneira.

facilities which composes their patrimony (Halfen; Ribeiro, 2022), as well as the experience of the ERE during the COVID-19 pandemic, seems to point to a serious problem directly related to the devaluation of the physical dimension of the teaching space, undermining the basic conditions for in-person teaching and puts the debate on EaD at the center of the agenda also in public institutions today.

Private IES

In the first analyses focused on the private IES segment that offers AU undergraduate courses in EaD modality, it was identified that among the 42 existing ones, 6 (14.3%) offer admission vacancies exclusively in this modality; while the other 36 (85.7%) offer both modalities. These numbers reflect the flexibility allowed by Decree n. 9057/2017, since offering undergraduate courses in the in-person modality to have them qualified for the EaD modality is no longer required. We verified 29 IES in this total that offered EaD admission vacancies in more than one location. In this way, the courses are approved with a code that is replicated indiscriminately in different municipalities, as in the case of the International University Center (UNINTER), exemplified in Figure 10.

The screenshot shows the e-MEC interface for the institution UNINTER. The top navigation bar includes 'Instituição de Educação Superior', 'Endereço', and 'Curso'. Below this, there are tabs for 'DETALHES', 'ATO REGULATÓRIO', 'PROCESSOS E-MEC', and 'OCORRÊNCIAS'. The main content area is divided into sections: 'DETALHES DA IES', 'RELAÇÃO DE CURSOS', and 'DETALHES DO CURSO'. In the 'DETALHES DA IES' section, the institution name '(1491)CENTRO UNIVERSITÁRIO INTERNACIONAL - UNINTER' is highlighted with a red box and labeled '1', and the status 'Situação: Ativa' is highlighted with a red box and labeled '2'. In the 'RELAÇÃO DE CURSOS' section, a table lists courses. The first row is highlighted with a red box and labeled '3', showing the course code '1596031', modality 'A Distância', degree 'Bacharelado', and course name 'ARQUITETURA E URBANISMO'. The 'Município' column for this row is 'Vários municípios', highlighted with a red box and labeled '4'. Below the table, there is a pagination control showing 'Registro(s): 1 a 1 de 1' and 'Página 1 de 1'.

Código	Modalidade	Grau	Curso	UF	Município	ENADE	CPC	CC	IDD	Situação
1596031	A Distância	Bacharelado	ARQUITETURA E URBANISMO		Vários municípios	-	-	-	-	Ativa

(Código) Grau	Modalidade	Data de início de funcionamento	Data prevista de início	Gratuito	Carga horária do Curso	Periodicidade (Integralização)	Coordenador	Situação de Funcionamento	Vagas Anuais Autorizadas
(1596031) Bacharelado	Educação a Distância	14/02/2022	-	Não	3900 horas	Não aplica - 15 quadrimestres	Norimar Ferraro	Em atividade	1500
(1596031) Bacharelado	Educação a Distância	14/02/2022	-	Não	3900 horas	Não aplica - 15 quadrimestres	Norimar Ferraro	Em atividade	1500
(1596031) Bacharelado	Educação a Distância	14/02/2022	-	Não	3900 horas	Não aplica - 15 quadrimestres	Norimar Ferraro	Em atividade	1500

Fig. 10: AU undergraduate course in EaD modality offered by UNINTER. In highlight: The "IES name" (1); "course status: active" (2) with only one code number "1596031" offered in "EaD" modality (3) and assigned to "several municipalities" (4). Source: e-MEC adapted data (Brasil, 2022, our highlight).

In these cases, it is implied that the same course model is reproduced by these institutions in several municipalities, in a franchising form, which disregards the places and subjects' diversity. From the Gramscian hegemony viewpoint, these educational institutions would be acting, with the consent of the state and civil society, as "hegemonic systems" to primarily serve the dominant groups' economic and ideological interests identified here (Liguori; Voza, 2017). The territorial distribution of the EaD teaching hubs relative to the 8 largest IES that offer AU undergraduate courses in this modality are structured as shown in figure 11. These IES concentrate 82.7% (1,599) of the total number of teaching hubs, distributed in 917 municipalities. These IES offer 70.6% (2,463,225) of the total number of admission vacancies. UNINTER has the largest number of teaching hubs (735) and is authorized to offer 1,000 admission vacancies in each one. The institution Universidade Pitágoras Unopar Anhanguera (PIT-UNO-ANH), on the other hand, has 79 locations and offers 3,200 admission vacancies/teaching hubs.

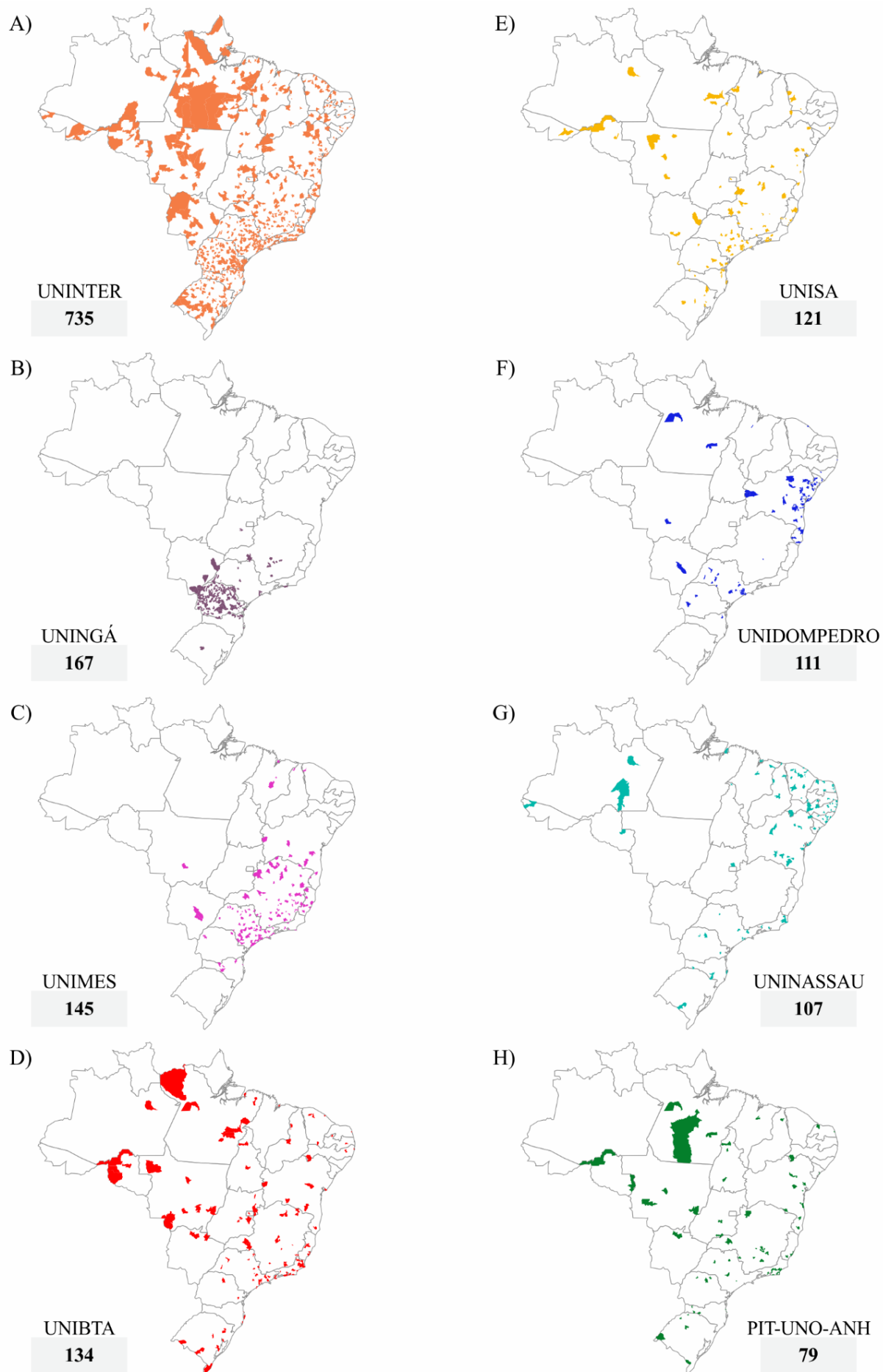


Fig. 11: Spatial and quantitative distribution of the 8 largest IES in Brazil, sorted by the number of EaD teaching hubs (The marks correspond to the municipalities' territorial limits). Source: Authors, 2022, e-MEC adapted data (Brasil, 2022).

The 8 private IES territorial distributions that offer the most EaD admission vacancies in country²⁷ is shown in figure 12. These cover 87% of the admission vacancies in this modality (3,038,566), distributed in 1,336 teaching hubs. UNINASSAU, the largest in number of admission vacancies, offers 946,950 and presents an 8,850 admission vacancies/teaching hubs average – the second largest UNIDERP²⁸ has the highest average with 9,999 admission vacancies/teaching hubs, a total of 339,966 vacancies. It's worth noting that several private IES are maintained by the same company. As an example, Editora e Distribuidora Educacional S/A maintains 59 IES. Among these, four²⁹ offer admission vacancies for AU undergraduate courses in EaD modality, when added together, which corresponds to a total of 592,766 admission vacancies in 113 teaching hubs, (16.5% and 4.8% of the total vacancies and facilities, respectively).

²⁷ It is noted the recurrence of six IES identified in the previous classification: UNINASSAU; PIT-UNO-ANH; UNINTER; UNIBTA; UNINGÁ; and UNISA.

²⁸ On July 21th 2022, the Inep, by a court decision, suspended Anhanguera UNIDERP's AU undergraduate course in EaD recognition after observing the CAU/RS irregularities pointed out.

²⁹ Anhanguera, Pitágoras, UNIDERP and Unopar.

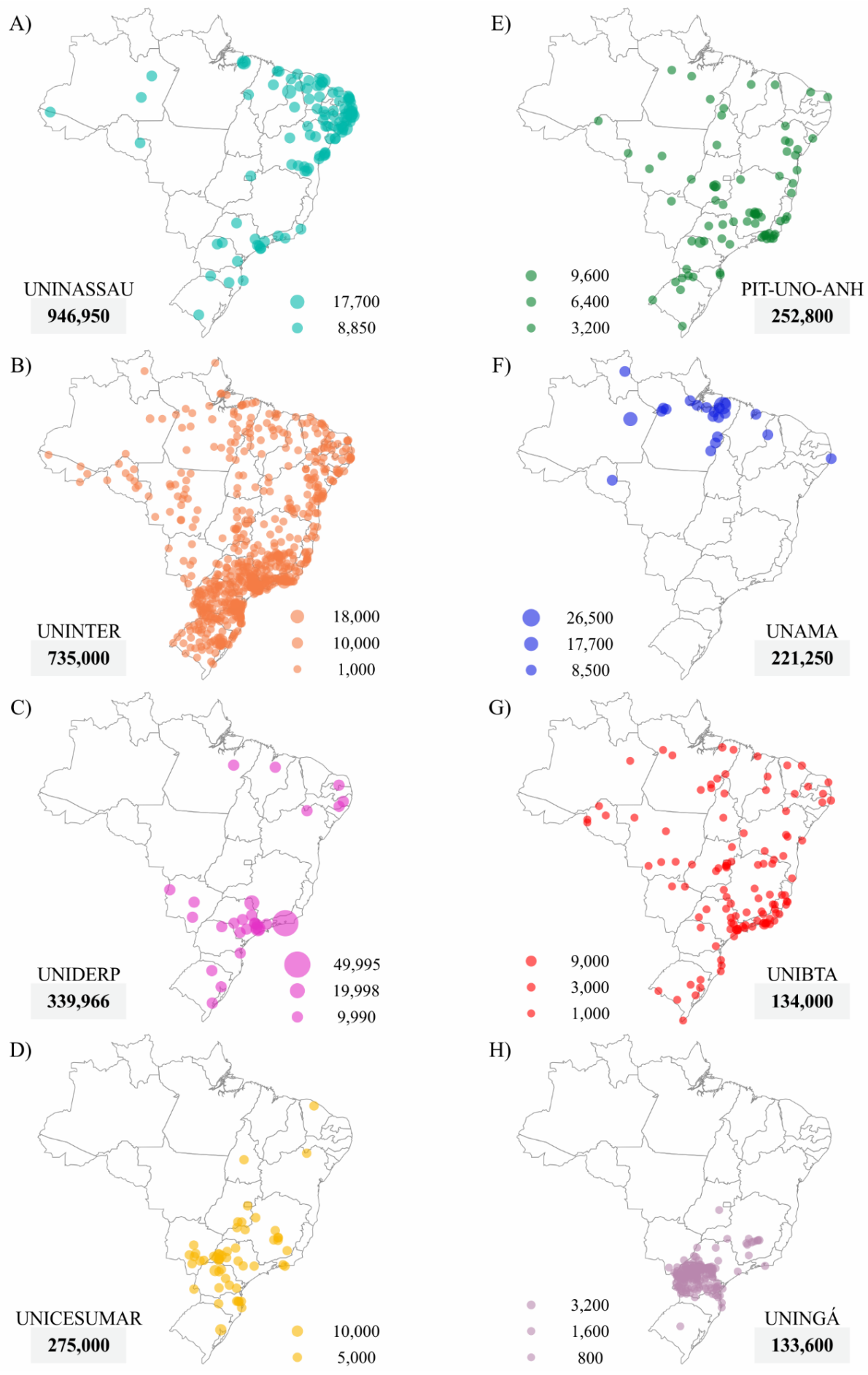


Fig. 12: Spatial and quantitative distribution of the 8 largest IES, sorted by the number of EAD admission vacancies in Brazil. Source: Authors, 2022, e-MEC adapted data (Brasil, 2022).

The significant parcel concentration of the admission vacancies offered in a few private IES and their sponsors is evidence that this EaD modality expansion stage is headed directly by the capital educator, in the figure of the large private educational groups and, therefore, represents the a deepening trend towards the capital centralization and the strengthening of the oligopolies in the sector. One of the consequences of these process has been the crisis' continuity in private non-profit IES, with difficulties in competing with the cheapening of EaD courses, besides the general decline in education quality, of which the postgraduate programs closure and the professors' dismissal in private IES³⁰ is a major indication. Aiming to situate the contemporary complexity of the theme, it can be noticed that this precarious conjuncture is revealed in a more accentuated way by the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent spending cuts implemented by the Bolsonaro's government (Amaral, 2021), as well as the negationism escalation towards science (Ventura; Reis, 2021). We will focus here on the EaD modality network expansion in this context³¹.

During the pandemic, in which in-person classes were suspended³², there was a rise of 18 new AU undergraduate courses in the EaD modality, representing a 42.9% increase of the total regulated in this modality. However, the MEC approval of undergraduate courses in this modality represents an impact that can be hidden, in a way, then the teaching hub and the number of admission vacancies increase are more significant than the number of courses. In this scenario, it can be seen that the number of admission vacancies increase was 53.3%, going from 2,277,071 to 3,490,851³³. As an example, the UNINTER EaD course was created in November 2021 and is already mentioned here as the largest in number of teaching hubs. Therefore, it's noted that the mercantile character is also revealed from these facilities' commercialization model, which can follow the logic of expansion through franchising³⁴. However, even in the face of this expansion and the attempt to normalize the EaD modality in the pandemic context, the main category entities maintained their positions against this modality in AU teaching.

5 Final considerations

This article's presented analyses essentially reinforce the need for an education aimed at overcoming the social inequalities and injustices historically produced and perpetuated in Brazil. In particular, they highlight the spatial and in-person dimension importance in the teaching-learning relationship in AU undergraduate courses and the role of the AU's public IES, category entities, and student organizations in this context, which impose, at different levels, resistance in adhering to EaD modality until then. We can see that in a total of 719 AU undergraduate courses in Brazil, the EaD modality ones (42) are already close to that of the public ones (71). However, it can be verified that there is a significant EaD modality predominance when comparing the number of admission vacancies available: 3,490,851 against only 4,572. In other words, EaD represents 97.2%, while public IES, is 0.1% of the total.

When we analyze these courses' current panorama, we realize that there are countless setbacks and losses resulting from this EaD modality expansion process. As far as the formation of undergraduate courses dictated by this logic is concerned, it is essential to emphasize the tendency to reproduce them according to the same model (franchises), approved by the MEC under a single code; and that begins to incorporate standardized structuring elements, replicating in different regions of the country a restricted sense of a (supposedly) objective reality, at the service of the hegemonic neoliberal project of power.

³⁰ See: Camargo (2022).

³¹ We emphasize that the ERE implemented by in-person undergraduate courses during the pandemic and the AU undergraduate courses in EaD modality have different characteristics, although both involve considerable quality loss in the teaching-learning relationship. The ERE was implemented in a provisional way during the social isolation, whereas the EaD results in an even more complex generalized precariousness process through professional training in the area.

³² Comprising March/2020 to April/2022.

³³ We understand that the number of vacancies significant increase does not correspond directly to the number of enrollments, but reveals the attempt to expand course access by accentuating precariousness. However, until this study was conducted, the authors did not have access regarding the number of active enrollments in AU undergraduate courses data in Brazil.

³⁴ See: Centro Universitário Internacional Uninter, 2022. Abra um polo UNINTER e inicie o seu negócio de sucesso. [online] Uninter. Available at: <<https://www.uninter.com/seja-parceiro/>>. [Accessed 05. November 2022].

From a Gramscian perspective, this would be an educational institution's hegemonic rigging to serve the dominant groups' economic and ideological interests.

In the scope of education, as Calil and Ribeiro (2021, p. 568, our translation) point out, the consequences fall on "a double and perverse consequence: the expropriation of professors' knowledge and, as a consequence, the professional training lightening and precariousness resulting from this category of teaching". The collectivity loss in pedagogical constructions occurs, above all, from the recorded class use. This direct transmission of content promoted by EaD modality is close to the banking conception of education, as discussed by Paulo Freire (2021), where the author deals with prescriptions based on the dominant minority interests — here tied to the groups that control the AU teaching network hegemony — and that operate in the scope of hindering the learner's authentic thinking.

All these facts lead to a more precarious, abstract, and uncritical education, increasingly disconnected from the realities of the professionals in formation, generating a successive distancing from the ideal of building a liberating and emancipatory education. Considering this teaching model that has been imposed in recent years, we should reflect on the place reserved for experimentation and what would be the effective possibility to build and propose counter-hegemonic practices in the field of architecture and urbanism based on teaching, research, and extension submitted to the logic of impoverishment of the educational process, that we intended to reveal through this panorama of courses and AU.

We understand that the questions addressed in this article open up possibilities for future research. In this way, we seek to follow a path that leads to reflections on overcoming the capitalist hegemony possibilities that currently affect training in our field; as well as on the critical character of the training and performance of these professionals, in face of their territories' realities. The arguments developed here are in dialogue with Freire's (2021) proposals in the sense that we need to think of alternatives to face this capital educator hegemony, through initiatives based on revolutionary praxis which leads to this structural transformation towards the counter-hegemonic, ideal conception of AU teaching.

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