

10 Years of the Special Selection Process at UFPA: Achievements and challenges of the insertion of the indigenous movement in higher education in Pará¹

10 Anos do Processo Seletivo Especial na UFPA: Conquistas e desafios da inserção do movimento indígena no ensino superior paraense

10 Años del Proceso Selectivo Especial en la Universidad Federal do Pará: Conquistas y desafíos de la inserción del movimiento indígena en la educación superior paraense

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Abstract: The debate on the access of indigenous peoples to higher education institutions is still recent, considering the time that universities and the admission of indigenous peoples as students in undergraduate courses have existed. Marked by conflicts and questions about the structures of universities, the admission of indigenous peoples to these educational institutions meets the demands of the indigenous movements themselves. At the Federal University of Pará, admission to undergraduate courses occurs through the Special Selection Process in 2010, which completed 10 years in 2020. This article seeks to understand what advances have occurred in this first decade, as well as to summarize the challenges faced by this institution. To this purpose, we researched official data, carried out a bibliographic survey, and interviewed three leaders of the Association of Indigenous Peoples Students of UFPA. Thus, we understand the significant progress of the institution in ensuring the completion of these students, at the same time that many spaces were occupied with a view to the inclusion of these populations. It became clear that the main challenges relate to tackling institutional racism and student retention in a new environment.

Keywords: Indigenous peoples; Higher education; UFPA; Affirmative actions; Public policies.

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Resumo: O debate sobre o acesso dos povos indígenas nas instituições de ensino superior ainda é recente, considerando o tempo de existência das universidades e do ingresso de indígenas como estudantes em cursos de graduação. Marcado por conflitos e questionamentos às estruturas das universidades, o ingresso de pessoas originárias nessas instituições de ensino atende às demandas dos próprios movimentos indígenas. Na Universidade Federal do Pará, o ingresso na graduação ocorre a partir do Processo Seletivo Especial em 2010, o qual completou 10 anos em 2020. Este artigo busca compreender quais avanços ocorreram nessa primeira década, bem como sintetizar os desafios enfrentados nessa instituição. Para tal, pesquisaram-se os dados oficiais, realizou-se levantamento bibliográfico e entrevistas com três lideranças da Associação dos Povos Indígenas Estudantes da UFPA. Dessa forma, compreende-se o avanço significativo da instituição na garantia da conclusão dos cursos desses e dessas estudantes, ao mesmo tempo, em que muitos espaços foram ocupados com vistas à inclusão dessas populações. Evidenciou-se que os principais desafios se referem ao enfrentamento ao racismo institucional e à permanência estudantil em um novo ambiente.

Palavras-chave: Povos indígenas; Ensino Superior; UFPA; Ações Afirmativas; Políticas Públicas.

Resumen: El debate sobre el acceso de los pueblos indígenas a las Instituciones de Educación Superior sigue siendo reciente, considerando el tiempo de existencia de las universidades y la entrada de estos pueblos que se caracteriza por conflictos y cuestionamientos a las estructuras universitarias. En la Universidad Federal de Pará (UFPA), el ingreso a la educación superior se inició a través de la aprobación del Proceso de Selección Especial en 2010, que cumplió 10 años en 2020. Este artículo tiene como objetivo comprender los avances que han tenido lugar en esta primera década, así como resumir los desafíos enfrentados dentro de la institución. Para ello, se recopilaron datos a través de revisión bibliográfica y entrevistas con tres líderes de la Asociación de Estudiantes Indígenas de la UFPA. De esta manera, se aprecia el avance significativo de la institución en la garantía de la graduación de estos estudiantes, al mismo tiempo que se ocuparon muchos espacios para la inclusión de estas poblaciones. Sin embargo, los desafíos persisten, como la lucha contra el racismo institucional y la permanencia estudiantil en un nuevo entorno.

Palabras clave: Pueblos indígenas; Educación Superior; UFPA; Acciones Afirmativas; Políticas Públicas.

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Access of Indigenous Students to Higher Education in Brazil

The admission of indigenous people to higher education is part of a set of demands made by these peoples as a guarantee of rights provided for in the Brazilian Constitution, enacted in 1988. In this regard, access to education that practices interculturality dialogues from the beginning of the learning process up to higher education. This concept is defined as the constant exchange of knowledge, information and learning between those who teach and those who are learning

(Bergamaschi, 2015). This aspect also includes the incentive for these students to be encouraged to continue their studies when they enter undergraduate and graduate courses.

Institutional spaces have historically been occupied by non-indigenous people, which has shown that the indigenous movement needs to be involved in ensuring their basic rights. These demands include schooling and the right to a differentiated education that follows the cultural parameters of each indigenous people. This factor also contributes to the demand for more public policies that meet the specific needs of indigenous peoples.

A luta dos movimentos indígenas e indigenistas por políticas e práticas diferenciadas relaciona-se ao avanço escolar indígena, permeado pela resistência à educação escolar universalizante, que não levava em conta sua especificidade e diversidade cultural entre as etnias. Entretanto, a literatura nacional mostra que, apesar do empenho dos povos indígenas para concretizar os instrumentos legais integrantes do sistema educacional, há ainda muita dificuldade por parte das instâncias do Estado para desenvolver políticas públicas na perspectiva intercultural (Ressurreição, 2015, p.67).

In this sense, students who enter higher education become strategic agents and spokespeople for their communities in the face of the traditional university model, in which a favored socioeconomic profile is common. With the implementation of social quotas in higher education, it was possible to change this reality with Law No. 12,711/2012, which discusses in article 1 the need to reserve 50% of places for students from high school attending public schools (Brasil, 2012).

Public universities are spaces for learning and are viewed by lower-class Brazilian families as a means of social transformation and economic advancement to build a new future without financial inequalities. With regard to indigenous peoples, this law guarantees entry into higher education in accordance with article 3, which provides for the reservation of places for people who self-declare as black, brown and, indigenous (Brasil, 2012).

However, access for indigenous peoples would not occur in large numbers simply by competing in a selection process – the National High School Exam (ENEM)⁶, which considers access to education to be common for students who use public and private education. Public schools have less structural capacity than private schools; when it comes to indigenous schools, this access is even more unequal since the ENEM is an extensive test that does not

⁶ ENEM is a test taken by Brazilian high school students to access public universities.

convey the reality experienced by indigenous people (especially the cultural aspect). Therefore, access through this quota also proves to be an unequal process.

In view of this fact, the indigenous movement of Pará, in conjunction with partner teachers in their struggles, demanded and fought for the guarantee of differentiated admission to universities. In Pará, the Federal University of Pará (UFPA) was the first major stage for demands that were met with the approval of the Special Selection Process (PSE⁷) by the Council for Education, Research, and Extension (CONSEPE⁸) in 2009, the objective of which is to ensure the admission of these populations to UFPA in a differentiated manner. Starting in 2010, the selection process began at the university and continues to this day with constant adjustments and improvement seminars, held in conjunction with the Association of Indigenous Students of UFPA (APYEUFPA).

In 2020, the PSE completed 10 years of existence as a public policy for expanding and diversifying the student body at UFPA. In this context, this study is justified by the growing visibility that indigenous people have built throughout their struggles around the issues of health, education, land legalization, culture, and a different way of life that contradicts the capitalist system. In addition to these factors, the rights of indigenous peoples are gradually being attacked by threats of temporal demarcation, a reduction of student assistance grants, and uncertainty regarding the annual renewal of the PSE.

In this sense, it is necessary to research the impacts on the university, the advances over these 10 years, the difficulties and achievements, in order to know what UFPA learned during this first decade of affirmative action policy. These questions led us to produce this work, which is a joint effort by APYEUFPA – mainly with the support of Elaine Baré and Antônio Piratapuaia in conducting the research – and the Eneida Correa de Assis Study Group on Indigenous Peoples (GEPI/UFPA).

Thus, this research was divided into two stages: (a) bibliographical survey on the topic, both to understand the national context and the local situation of indigenous students at UFPA, in addition to data collection at the Academic Records and Indicators Center (CIAC⁹); (b) interviews and conversations with colleagues about experiences on the Belém campus, in the courses themselves, and other spaces offered by the university.

⁷ ENEM is a specific form of selection for indigenous peoples. This selection considers the candidates' knowledge and reasons for choosing the undergraduate courses offered, as well as offering a written test for this audience.

⁸ CONSEPE is a consultancy, supervision and deliberation body on topics related to teaching, research and extension.

⁹ CIAC is UFPA's information records center.

Politics in debate: occupying decision-making spaces

Indigenous peoples in Brazil have several agendas to fight to ensure the continuation of their way of life, which is different from capitalist logic: bilingual education, focused on the culture of each community; specialized health care; access to higher education; and demarcation of the lands of the peoples who lived there for centuries before the arrival of the colonizers. In this sense, according to article 231 of the Federal Constitution, “the social organization, customs, languages, beliefs, and traditions of the indigenous peoples, as well as their original rights to the lands they traditionally occupy, are recognized, and it is the responsibility of the Union to demarcate them, protect them, and ensure respect for all their assets” (Brazil, 1988). This recognition in the law of property rights is necessary to show the contradictions that exist in the political situation faced by indigenous peoples, especially with regard to discussions about the Temporal Framework, which are constantly being debated.

The debate to be held is about the need for the State of Brazil to recognize the differences that exist for indigenous peoples and the lack of oversight in the face of constant threats to the lands of these peoples. However, this negligence shows itself to be a policy aimed at these populations., who fight arduous battles with the self-demarcation of their own territories, as a form of resistance and to pressure the State of Brazil to accelerate the guarantee of rights assured in Brazilian legislation. In this sense, Molina (2017) discusses this process with the Munduruku (PA) when facing these demands.

As autodemarcações não se encerram no caráter de pressão sobre o governo, e estão longe de reduzir-se à dimensão técnica e a um momento pontual de um processo que, ele mesmo, não é apenas legal ou administrativo, mas também político – como a literatura antropológica não cansa de frisar há pelo menos três décadas (Molina, 2017, p.25).

In this way, we can see the struggle and resistance waged by these peoples and how essential it is for them to be in political decision-making spaces. In this sense, according to De La Cadena (2020), indigenous cosmopolitics reveals itself as an alternative to confronting modernity, which is based on Europeanized logic and imposes invisibility on certain voices and visions, and tries to deny the existence of some humans and non-humans.

In the separation of peoples, which we currently consider “cultures”, there is an emphasis between nature and humanity, whose impact is shown to be contradictory in the relationships established between the populations of the Amazon region when it comes to plants, since a relationship of respect and affection is established that results in care for others

than humans, which include plants, animals and the landscape (De La Cadena, 2020). In this context, indigenous peoples bring non-human “things” into politics, which constitute their own cosmogony, which De La Cadena (2020) emphasizes is a response to the logic of politics established by liberalism that tries to separate “humanity” and “nature”.

A presença dos seres-terra nos protestos sociais nos convida a desacelerar o raciocínio, pois pode evidenciar um momento intrigante de ruptura epistêmica com essa teoria política. Sua emergência se desentende - para usar a expressão de Rancière - tanto com a política quanto com a ciência; isso pode perturbar o lugar da enunciação do que é “política” - quem pode ser um ator político ou o que pode ser considerado uma questão política e, assim, embaralhar os antagonismos hegemônicos que por mais de quinhentos anos organizaram o campo político nos Andes, e que, gradualmente articulados através dos paradigmas moderno-científicos, baniram os seres-terras da política (De La Cadena, 2020, p.11).

In this sense, indigenous peoples should not be viewed by the State of Brazil and the logic of liberalism as “enemies”. Thus, indigeneity is connected to the decisions taken by the State of Brazil, through a very complex historical formation, but it makes it, according to De La Cadena (2020), with inclusive practices, but denies the existing ontological difference.

Based on these conceptions, Stengers' (2018) idea of cosmopolitics considers it a great challenge to visualize the existence of a world that is not homogeneous, especially in Latin America, where there is a plurality of indigenous peoples. According to the author, cosmopolitics is made up of the cosmos and politics, in which the latter tries to carry out its actions exclusively with human beings without considering other beings and entities that must be considered. In this context, the cosmos is a resistance to the movement carried out by politics, which must be insisted upon so that it is present in the resolutions adopted in the decisions.

In this way, the notions employed by cosmopolitics dialogue with the diversity of struggles of indigenous peoples in Brazil and the need to occupy political spaces to voice their own demands, which the State's actions tend to neglect. By dialogizing with universities and associating the knowledge offered with traditional knowledge, indigenous peoples support their demands to occupy more places in higher education, to be included in legislative houses, to debate health and differentiated education, among other essential topics.

From conversations with protagonists amid the Covid-19 pandemic

The coronavirus crisis has led to a change in perspectives for the continuation of the higher education routine. Brazilian universities were directly affected by the shutdown, given

their leading role in research in different areas of science, in which there were pauses in in-person fieldwork, academic lesson planning and the dilemmas of Emergency Remote Education (ERE) – which involve precarious internet access in some regions of Brazil, the lack of adequate electronic devices to attend classes, the residential environment being a challenge for students with large families, among other difficulties.

In this context, the research development process faced communication challenges with the interlocutors, since with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic and the suspension of classes, colleagues returned home to neighboring municipalities – and even neighboring states, mainly Amazonas and Maranhão. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting the choice of the Guamá campus (located in Belém-PA) as the focus of the research, since it is the location that receives the most indigenous students and because it is the headquarters of APYEUFPA, although most of these students do not reside in the capital.

In this sense, to overcome these adversities, the proposed methodology is virtual ethnography (netnography). According to Lewgoy (2009), both cyberspace and the internet are places where individuals constantly create socialization, as well as virtual communities, in which virtual conditions for human existence arise. The pandemic has also brought new challenges for anthropology in the area of research, especially when it comes to forging relationships in order to carry out ethnography. In this sense, Miller (2020) discusses these challenges of building the relationships necessary for trust in online research, but without losing the ethical stance necessary for science; in addition, involvement in social networks themselves can be decisive in creating sensitivity with those involved in this academic process.

By conducting interviews and conversations with people involved in the dialogue regarding their participation in these 10 years of PSE, we sought to learn about the achievements and challenges faced by the institution. Due to the pandemic context, digital media were used, such as Google Meet meeting platforms and social networks (WhatsApp and Facebook), to obtain reports. Table 01 shows the results of this stage.

Table 01 – Interviews with Indigenous Students

Questions Asked in Interviews	Interviewees' Responses
Question 1: What spaces in universities were conquered during these 10 years of PSE at UFPA?	Female protagonism; MOBAF ¹⁰ ; indigenous presence in the PSE selection process; housing assistance; inclusion pavilion; PSE seminar; indigenous peoples' hut; support from the psychology clinic for students;
Question 2: What are the main difficulties with admission via PSE? What barriers still exist for students at UFPA?	Disclosure and registration in the PSE; strict documentation; decentralization of Belém and Altamira to carry out tests and interviews; education in the territories; student retention; change of routine and adaptation; institutional racism;
Question 3: How do students overcome obstacles during their undergraduate studies?	Collectivity; sharing rent/housing; welcoming among students;
Question 4: What are the challenges to completing undergraduate courses?	Environmental differences, adaptation, finances, dealing with new people; poor basic school education; the Portuguese language as a barrier for some indigenous people; psychological illness;
Question 5: In these 10 years of inclusion of indigenous people at UFPA, how important was the organization of the Indigenous Movement and what political participation processes were they involved in?	Involvement in the campaign for the rectorship of UFPA in defense of democracy; contest in the DCE election; representations in the University Council; achievement of the diversity pavilion; national reference of APYEUFPA;
Question 6: How has the process of including students in postgraduate studies been?	The PSE discussion began at the PPGD/UFPA (Law) in 2008; PPGA (Anthropology), PPGSA (Sociology and Anthropology), PPGHIS (History), PPGP (Psychology), PPGED (Education) offer places in postgraduate studies; reserving places is important to guarantee inclusion; more incentives for scientific initiation would help more indigenous people to enter postgraduate studies;

Source: Table constructed by the authors based on interviews with interlocutors.

¹⁰ MOBAF is a selection process for indigenous students to change their undergraduate course with unoccupied places within UFPA, if they are dissatisfied with the course chosen in the first selection.

The table above addresses the main questions about the experiences of the students interviewed for this research. Due to the pandemic restrictions, we ensured conversations with three important students who are leaders of the indigenous movement at UFPA: Telmiston Guajajara (a law student who joined in 2019), Eliene Rodrigues¹¹ (student of the Postgraduate Program in Anthropology at UFPA, joined UFPA in 2012) and Virginia Braga¹² (Administration student, joined in 2016).

Throughout the process of solidifying public policies of affirmative action for indigenous peoples at UFPA, the PSE underwent improvements based on the organized struggle of indigenous students – especially with the organization of APYEUFPA –, in which Fernandes (2018) describes in detail the obstacles faced to creating this association and the reference created around it, both statewide and nationally.

The leaders' reports converge on three structural problems regarding the impasses faced by indigenous people in higher education: a) financial, structural or permanence, since many students choose the Belém campus to pursue their undergraduate studies and are from other municipalities and, to make this dream come true, money is needed to cover the costs; b) pedagogical or academic, since students have difficulties with the Portuguese language, academic technical standards, the difference in basic education between that of large urban centers and schools in rural areas or municipalities far from the capital; c) and, finally, adaptation to a new life, given the change in routine, food, other people who have different rhythms of life in the community, the climate and study environment, as well as the longing to be with family and friends.

The dilemmas faced by indigenous people range from financial issues to institutional racism. As Braga and Cardoso (2022) reinforce, the challenges faced by indigenous students at UFPA are also the result of institutional unpreparedness in the lack of training for employees, from civil servants to outsourced workers, which indicates that there is still a need for internal progress.

The PSE is still recent, considering the 64 years of UFPA, but it has made progress as a national reference for the inclusion of these populations in higher education. It is also worth highlighting the organized struggle of the Indigenous Movement to guarantee rights at UFPA, such as political participation in decision-making processes: dispute for the Central Student Directory, student movement and involvement in general elections for institutes and the university's rectorate.

¹¹During the research, Eliene was still a postgraduate student, but defended her doctoral thesis in 2023.

¹²During the research, Virginia was still an undergraduate student, but graduated in early 2023.

Furthermore, there is a discussion about the expanded reservation of places in postgraduate courses, but this is recent and restricted to programs in the humanities, such as education, law, psychology, anthropology and sociology. Among the reports of the interlocutors, the issue of encouraging scientific initiation and voluntary research was raised, which does not happen at UFPA. To a certain extent, it is necessary to encourage the production of science in undergraduate courses as a way of continuing studies outside of class, since this measure contributes to the demand for postgraduate courses at the university.¹³

It is clear, then, that the PSE and the quota system for indigenous people in public universities are rights under construction (Ressurreição, 2018), since it is necessary to implement actions aimed at coexistence between different cultures and ways of life, more effective programs for student retention, etc. However, according to Fernandes (2018), this commitment requires the participation of interested parties throughout the process of including these people at UFPA. Therefore, the engagement of the teaching community, higher administration, and indigenous movements and partners is necessary to guarantee this fundamental right of plurality.

A decade of affirmative action policies at UFPA

The PSE was an arduous battle fought by indigenous people students and leaders from the state of Pará whose objective was differentiated admission to undergraduate courses. It is important to emphasize that the selection notices that provided for differentiated admission were initiated in 2007, first for postgraduate courses in Social Sciences (currently the Postgraduate Program in Sociology and Anthropology – PPGSA) and in Law (PPGD), with reserved places, and later for undergraduate courses. Fernandes (2018) goes through this historical aspect of the events experienced during the confirmation of the differentiated process in 2010, in which he deals with the new subjects with the protagonism of these indigenous people in the academic scenario, as well as the movements of leaders inside and outside universities in Pará.

The importance of being in these spaces also involves the construction of new intellectuals, of indigenous intellectuals who appropriate traditional academic knowledge, but who dialogue with the knowledge of these people in an exchange relationship, whose objective is the well-being of society. This is one of the great challenges in federal universities.

¹³There is still no precise data on the inclusion of indigenous people in postgraduate studies. However, it inspires us to carry out studies on this topic at UFPA, based on our search for bibliographies on the subject.

Aqui reside o maior desafio da formação superior de indígenas nos contextos das atuais Instituições de Ensino Superior, fundamentadas na organização, produção e reprodução de saber único, exclusivo, individualista e a serviço do mercado. O desafio é como esta instituição superior formadora pode possibilitar a circulação e a validação de outros saberes, pautados em outras bases cosmológicas, filosóficas e epistemológicas (Baniwa, 2019, p.171).

Within UFPA, through collective organization, this scenario undergoes a significant change, since the sense of collectivity shown by these students is an example for Brazil with the APYEUFPA foundation. It is one of the factors that allows students to face the difficulties experienced at UFPA. However, through this self-organization, it was possible to demand that the institution seriously collect data to characterize the profile of indigenous people at the university, which makes it possible to understand their reality.

According to Braga and Cardoso (2022), the successive years of the PSE were marked by many confrontations to continue existing, since the admission policy through reservation of places needs to be accompanied by student retention policies, which constitutes one of the main difficulties faced during graduation.

O debate sobre permanência estudantil é fundamental para discentes racializados, pois abrange horizontes econômicos e educacionais. A exemplo da APYEUFPA como órgão de referência de auto-organização para os indígenas, as ações institucionais também são mecanismos para se recorrer quando existem dificuldades (Braga e Cardoso, 2022, p.379).

Student retention actions are mechanisms that were the target of constant complaints from these students, who were not receiving financial assistance. The result of this measure can be seen in Figure 01, which covers a broad overview of data on entrants for each year of the PSE from 2010 to 2020.

Figure 01 – Admission of Indigenous Peoples to Undergraduate Studies at UFPA per Year



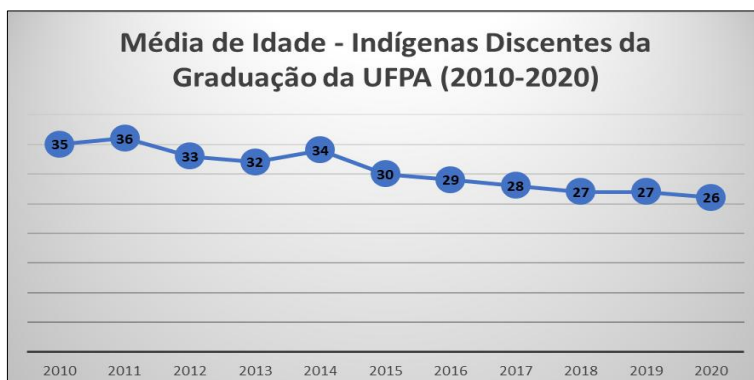
Source: Braga and Cardoso, 2022.

In Braga and Cardoso (2022), there was an effort to understand the main occurrences of this decade that were reflected in these numbers with significant drops between 2010 and 2014, which are the years without student retention policies. Based on the growing dialogue with the senior administration and the self-organization of APYEUFPA, the panorama within UFPA for indigenous peoples underwent a significant change.

Furthermore, together with the student retention policy with calls for financial resources, the university's support and tutoring program measures were fundamental for the growth of students entering the university, whose objectives involve helping students in the after-school period with academic support classes, such as learning ABNT standards, among others (Braga and Cardoso, 2022).

In this context, it is interesting to note another change that occurred over the course of this decade in terms of the age range of indigenous students, as can be seen in figure 02. A shift towards a younger audience can be seen from 2016 onwards.

Figure 02 – Average Age of Indigenous People in UFPA Undergraduate Studies



Source: Braga, Ferreira and Cardoso, 2022.

According to the data collected¹⁴, there is a decline in the average age of students entering UFPA each year. Initially, in 2010, the public was adults with an average of 35 years old and remained at this age until 2014. Subsequently, a large majority of a younger-adult population entered the PSE.

¹⁴This short session was published as a book chapter in Braga, Ferreira and Cardoso (2022), in order to address the theme of indigenous youth, but in this passage there were important contributions made during the presentation of this work at the II Student Seminar of the Postgraduate Program in Social Sciences at the Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos.

Fernandes (2018) reminds us of the importance of older people being vectors for the dissemination of UFPA's PSE among indigenous peoples who did not have access to the entrance exam. The presence of more experienced students to assist during the selection process interviews and the enrollment process with the submission of documentation are factors that contributed to boosting applications to compete for vacancies. Younger people build bonds of security with those who have been on this path for longer.

This process of indigenous youth taking the lead also fits in with the political situation in which young people are in the spotlight when it comes to demanding social rights. This entry into higher education is in line with the concern of the indigenous movement's members to teach the youngest students in a militant practice (Munduruku, 2012). In this sense, this new group of students is also determined to join the student movement at universities, since indigenous students, through the association, are also part of the struggle to defend the right to complete higher education with quality, especially since the entry of the youngest students occurred during the government of former president Bolsonaro – who implemented unpopular measures against indigenous peoples.

In this context, globalization has allowed the use of certain technologies in an expanded and borderless manner, especially the Internet, which has enabled the instantaneous dissemination of information to any place in the world. In line with this advancement of information, many social groups have appropriated these networks as a means to echo their struggles and demands, especially on Facebook and Twitter.

With regard to indigenous peoples, social media is also a strategic space for organizing struggles in defense of their rights, as well as expanding these rights at a national level. During the period of the government of former president Jair Bolsonaro, the indigenous movement played a very prominent role as a mobilizing agent of social movements, in which it was frequently observed the organization of this public in demonstrations together with social movements throughout Brazil, as shown in Figure 03, in which indigenous students from UFPA were present in mobilizations in defense of education in Belém (PA).

Figure 03 – Protest of May 30th, 2019 in Defense of the University



Source: APYEUFGPA (Facebook), 2019.

Participating in protests in defense of student aid rights and ensuring the renewal of a new PSE call for applications is essential for the existence of these people in universities. During the Bolsonaro government, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) delayed the opening of calls for applications for scholarships to support students' financial aid for undergraduate studies, one of the main reasons why indigenous students were organizing.

Furthermore, the diversity of indigenous peoples at UFPA advanced in the first decade of PSE, as can be seen in figure 04.

Figure 04 – Indigenous Ethnicities in UFPA Undergraduate Studies



Source: Braga and Cardoso, 2021a.

According to Figure 04¹⁵, there is a greater presence of the Tembé people with 82 people among the population of indigenous students at UFPA, followed by the Kuruaya

¹⁵This short topic was presented during the IX Seminar Indigenous Peoples and Sustainability: Ethnocide and Resistance Strategies, organized by the Dom Bosco Catholic University, and, in this article, it contains reflections arising from this presentation. Read Braga and Cardoso (2021a).

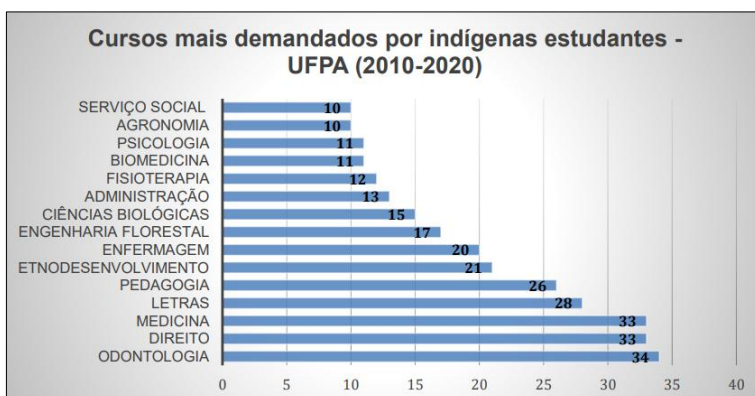
with 30 indigenous students, the Guajajara with 27 and the Xipaya with 21 indigenous students. On the other hand, the Amanayé, Arapasso, Arara, Gavião do Maranhão, Jeripankó, Kaxyuanã, Manoki-Irantxe, Waiana Apalaí and the Xakanywa have 01 student among the total public of 412 indigenous students who entered the undergraduate course in these 10 years.

The data presented on the people entering UFPA show the extent to which the public policies of affirmative action at UFPA cover, as they are about which regions they can cover. According to Figure 04, it can be seen that ethnicities from the state of Pará are the majority that enter UFPA, however, according to Fernandes (2018), there is an increase in people from other states of Brazil, especially from the northern region (Amapá and Amazonas) and the central-western region (Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul). The author justifies this movement facilitated by the existing contact with the existing students of the courses who have relatives in other states. However, during the interview process, a determining factor was noticed to cover more applicants in the PSE UFPA: the expansion and dissemination of the process to more candidates from different communities was reported as a point to be improved by the higher education institution. In this sense, it is necessary to think of strategies so that this expansion is possible so that more people join the PSE.

In higher education, students enter universities as a tactic for their struggle for social rights, since they absorb knowledge and become professionals to help the community. Figure 05 shows a great demand for courses in the areas of health, law, undergraduate degrees and forestry engineering.

According to Fernandes (2018), indigenous students go through a different process when choosing a course at a higher education institution than non-indigenous people do: choosing a degree that takes into account both individual desires and the needs to help the community. In this context, there is a great demand for courses that cover health, education and the legal field as major pillars for choices in higher education. These options involve choosing what is urgent for their people, which includes helping to legalize the territory in legal proceedings; basic education in special schools or in proceedings involving the mother tongue; just as health is necessary for the treatment of relatives in the villages.

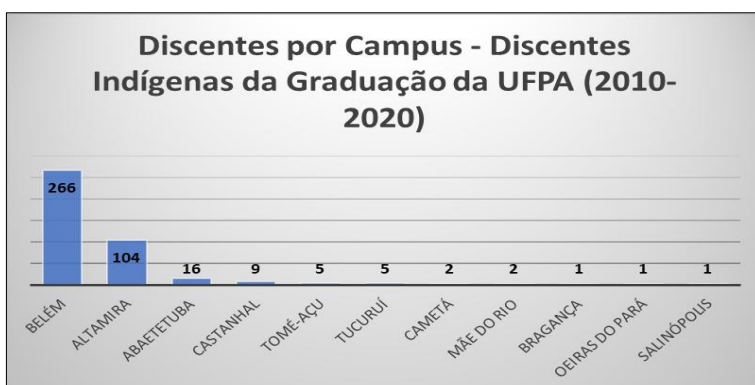
Figure 05 – 15 Courses Most in Demand by Indigenous People in UFPA Undergraduate Studies



Source: Braga and Cardoso, 2021.

Furthermore, Figure 6 shows the main campuses and centers chosen by students. The Belém campus, located in the Guamá neighborhood, has the largest number of students because it concentrates more undergraduate courses to choose from, from the humanities to engineering, applied social sciences and humanities, arts and health. In Altamira, the Ethnodevelopment course predominates with 21 enrollments, followed by undergraduate courses that alternate between literature, biological sciences and geography. It is also worth mentioning the existence of Medicine and Agronomy courses, which are also sought after by indigenous students at the Altamira campus.

Figure 06 – Main Campuses Where Indigenous People Are Located in UFPA Undergraduate Programs



Source: Braga and Cardoso, 2021.

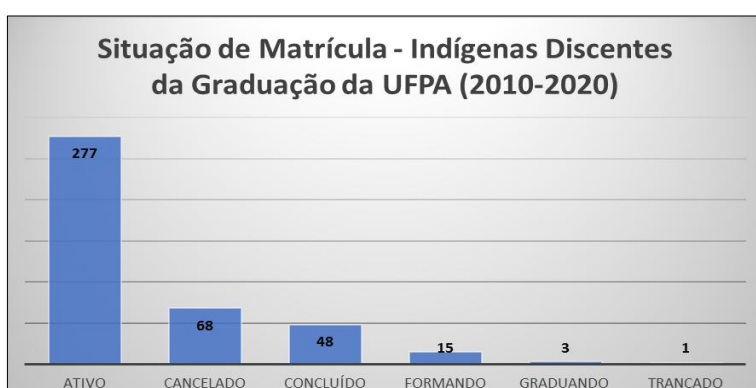
In the process of implementing affirmative policies, the work developed by the Faculty of Ethnodiversity stands out, which includes the courses of Ethnodevelopment and Degree in Rural Education, both degrees that accompanied the PSE in its foundation¹⁶. These follow the

¹⁶ Both figures 05 and 06 and the debates raised on this topic were presented at the 1st International Forum on Indigenous Peoples in History, organized by the Federal University of Maranhão (2021).

commitment to the needs of indigenous, riverside, fishing and rural peoples for higher education and training professionals to work in communities without the productivist logic, focused on capitalism, but rather to serve the needs of traditional peoples.

In this context, Figure 07 shows many students with active enrollments at the institution, which Fernandes (2018) warned was an error in UFPA's data system when analyzing these students' withdrawals. It is difficult to analyze the data in Figure 07, as UFPA is not always informed of these withdrawals.

Figure 07 – Registrations of Indigenous People in UFPA Undergraduate Studies



Source: Table constructed by the authors according to CIAC data.

It is also necessary to observe UFPA's greatest concern so that the PSE has greater precision regarding those benefiting from this selection process, as a way of improving statistics to know where the errors are and what needs to be improved to qualify the entry of students.

Muitos indígenas ao desistirem, não seguem os trâmites burocráticos da Universidade, que requer que se faça o trancamento da matrícula ou o cancelamento, apenas retornam para as aldeias de origem, o que acaba mantendo sua matrícula ativa por muito tempo, não permitindo que o CIAC tenha números precisos sobre a desistência de indígenas (Fernandes, 2018, p.117).

These data on dropouts, suspensions and cancellations could provide accurate figures on how many students were unable to complete their undergraduate courses. Furthermore, there are also discrepancies in the data with the literature used regarding the number of new students per year at the university, according to Fernandes (2018), which reinforces the need for a common and public database to improve the PSE¹⁷.

¹⁷Currently, the Pro-Rectorate of Undergraduate Education (PROEG), through the Directorate of Support for Teachers and Students (DADD), has been systematizing data regarding the admission of indigenous and quilombola people to UFPA, via PSE.

Besides, when considering the number of students between 2010 and 2014, we have 105 students; considering the average time to graduate of 6 years, 48 completed their degree, which corresponds to 46% of the universe mentioned above; in addition to this data, 6 people are graduating from this time frame. Of this first generation, 43 people dropped out of the course (approximately 41% of this universe). Among the justifications for these numbers, the previous debates held on adaptation, permanence and racism are essential for dropouts from higher education, since the experiences of disrespectful comments in the classroom weaken these students.

In this sense, initiatives by the UFPA psychology clinic are essential to helping treat students. The number of cancellations, however, began to decrease in 2016, when there was a change in senior management and dialogue with the association took place in a more committed manner. This low number also contributed to the collectiveness built when the associations occupied block D, the diversity pavilion, and the creation of the Diversity and Social Inclusion Advisory Board (ADIS), an advisory board linked to the rectory whose role is to devise strategies to guarantee diversity and the inclusion of socially vulnerable students within UFPA, which showed significant progress for indigenous students to have institutional references to help them with possible adversities in everyday life (Braga and Cardoso, 2022).

Considerations about this study

The UFPA PSE demonstrates great progress in the context of the struggles of indigenous peoples in the Amazon region (since many students come from other states in the region, both in the North and the Central-West). The organized struggle to guarantee rights for these peoples is fundamental to the advancement of public policies of affirmative action for the PSE, which shows the leading role of UFPA in the North region and is a mirror for Brazil. Furthermore, the interviews and age group data point to a great protagonism among indigenous women and young people in the undergraduate program. This research aimed to contribute to the improvement of this process.

Based on this data, we realized the need to improve the control of data on indigenous students at UFPA, since the numbers, in line with the literature, indicate uncertainty in the number of students dropping out of undergraduate courses. To improve the admissions system and think of ways to ensure that these students remain, UFPA needs to work to ensure that CIAC has accurate data on students.

Furthermore, at the federal level, it is important to guarantee a scholarship and to think about mechanisms to improve the stability of these students. The PSE is responsible for ensuring diversity at UFPA among people who have rich histories and knowledge to contribute to the

universities. Access to universities is part of the guarantee of historical rights as a reparation for the murders of several indigenous ethnic groups, which existed before the invasion of Brazilian territory.

In this sense, some notes of this article focus on the need for research on postgraduate studies at UFPA, to train these undergraduates into future indigenous intellectuals who will serve Brazilian society with their knowledge, as well as to encourage the continuation of studies in postgraduate studies by reserving places for indigenous people, but also to think of mechanisms to encourage them to produce academic work in scientific initiation so that these students can continue their studies in the most diverse areas.

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