NEW MODELS OF HIGHER EDUCATION: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF ABC

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Abstract

In the formerly so-called third world countries, now called emerging countries and or peripheral and semi-peripheral countries, there are innovative counter-hegemonic experiences whose higher education projects are situated in a perspective of social equity and justice including historically marginalized social groups and away from the right to higher education. The present text intends to reveal and reflect on the institutional structure that underpins a new model of higher education in Brazil, particularly at the Federal University of ABC (UFABC). The democratization processes of the countries, accompanied by policies aimed at investing in new institutions of higher education, allowed a considerable diversity with regard to the new student publics. Universities, traditionally reserved for elites, have opened up to new students, both in terms of gender, ethnicity, social class, and even of different generations. This opening created challenges and expectations regarding the democratization of higher education, the inclusion of cultural and epistemological diversity, the promotion of

interculturality and the decolonization of power and knowledge relations. Some institutional experimentation policies merit particular reference. In Brazil, the actions of the post-neoliberal governments of Lula and Dilma also focused on the creation of popular universities, presenting different profiles and responding to specific objectives of political action. The first one was the Federal University of ABC (UFABC), whose institutional matrix is the object of our study. We will focus first on qualitative documentary research using discourse analysis from N. Fairclough's perspective (2001) in order to infer the structuring lines of the new model of higher education with a specific focus on the conceptual foundations, in the pedagogical model and in the principles governing pedagogical practice. As a new model of higher education that promotes interdisciplinarity, the social inclusion, cultural and epistemological diversity in view of the promotion of cognitive justice, we intend to know the epistemological foundations that support the institutional matrix of the Federal University of ABC and that regulate all the academic activity of the institution and its relations with society. One of the conclusions of the study points to the existence of some contradictions between discourses and practices.

Keywords: Conceptual fundamentals; Pedagogical model; university education; Counter-hegemonic higher education.

INTRODUCTION

Centuries after the predominance of a single university model that has produced and disseminated a single paradigm of knowledge, and has been characterized by its exclusionary nature, other models of Higher Education that breaks away from this traditional paradigm of university are emerging in some Latin American countries, especially Brazil. One example of these models is the object of this study. More specifically, in this article we analyze the case of the Federal University of ABC[1] (UFABC) founded in 2005.

Through documentary analysis, taking as its "empirical field" the Institutional Development Plan (PDI) and the Institutional Pedagogical Project (PPI), we intend to infer the principles and grounds that support its institutional matrix and the new pedagogical model. The democratization of the university and its openness to new audiences (historically excluded

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[1] ABC stands for a group of municipalities in the São Paulo metropolitan área: Santo André, São Bernardo do Campo e São Caetano do Sul.

from civilizational processes) is a demand of contemporary societies in which epistemological capital represents one of the fundamental grounds of social development and affirmation of a cognitive justice.

The university, as we know it, works in its organization according to structures inherited from colonialism: centralized management; its division into disciplinary departments; the traditional pedagogical model supported by a monocultural paradigmatic vision; deprives multiple social groups of the right to free and quality education (e.g., poor, indigenous, Afro-descendant, disabled). The colonial structures of the university are still great obstacles to the inclusion of other knowledge considered non-scientific.

The UFABC, having as conceptual foundations social inclusion and interdisciplinarity presents, from the outset, a new curricular perspective under democratic openness that sustains a new pedagogical model. Curricular flexibility has implications for the pedagogical model which, in its relation to research and extension, intends to overcome the monocultural vision of higher education and the specialist teacher who, in a masterly way, reproduces knowledge. The decolonization of higher education, with its obstacles, contradictions, dilemmas and paradoxes, implies the dissolution of all "long-term" structures domination [15] and the multiculturality and interculturality spotlight [25, 26] out as a respect for the multiple cultures existing in the higher education setting at the same time, the practice of dialogue between cultural diversity. To overcome monoculturalism is not only a theoretical question, if not a transforming proposal that demands praxis changeover and political and conscious commitment. The theorists who reflected on these themes with a counter-hegemonic and decolonial perspective were, essentially, Boaventura Santos [17, 19]; Walter Mignolo [9, 10], C. Walsh, [26] A. Quijano [13, 14] and other authors who work mainly in higher education.

From the methodological point of view, as we have already mentioned in the abstract, we adopted a qualitative approach using discourse analysis, from Fairclough's [6] perspective, as a data analysis technique. The analysis categories were: conceptual fundamentals; inclusion of cultural and epistemological diversity; pedagogical model; pedagogical training and practice; admission and permanence.

CONTEXTUALIZATION AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

In today's world, universities are facing powerful winds of change that will surely bring key transformations in societies, from the way people live to plan the future. The most significant

material change that conveys neoliberalism in the twenty-first century is the rise of the relative weight of knowledge as capital [24; 11]. In this environment, the role of Higher Education in economic competition and competitiveness has assumed even greater importance. Universities are presented as the main drivers of economic growth in the economic knowledge, once encouraged to develop close links with industry and business from a diverse set of partnerships.

Neoliberalism has failed completely as a model of economic development, but as a cultural policy, it continues (still) substantial, as a result of having become a common sense that shapes the actions of governments and those responsible for education [22].

Valuing other rationalities that dignify the human dimension of development, seems to be one among central objectives of the new models of higher education, specially taken in consideration their projects aimed at the inclusion not only of new audiences but of new epistemologies arising from cultural diversity of peoples. Initial and continuing teacher training is certainly one of the fundamental dimensions that can contribute to the recognition and affirmation of new rationalities. As well as to the operationalising of the projects for cultural and epistemological inclusion and diversity, that characterizes in contemporary times the higher education venue and the new university models.

Latin America was the first region where neoliberal policies were implemented after General Pinochet's military coup in Chile in 1973. Then, in the 1980s, as a result of the serious external debt crisis in several countries (Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, among several other countries with a smaller demographic dimension and economic expression), the World Bank and the IMF intervened to restructure their economies and reduce the fiscal deficit, following the traditional orthodoxy of these institutions: devaluation of currency, privatization of public enterprises, removal of customs barriers, sharp decrease in public spending on education, health and housing. [5] In education, the policies implemented meant privatization of education provision (particularly in higher education), decentralization, evaluation, accountability and teacher performativity [1]. In many Latin American countries, enrollment in higher Education private institutions exceeded 60%, mostly commercial and with very low scientific quality - known as "garage" universities or "patito" universities [7].

The twenty-first century brought changes in this panorama. The election of progressive and leftist governments in some Latin American countries are generally linked to ethnic and social movements with great traditions and implementations of struggle and resistance of neoliberal

policies, what, thus, allowed to develop policies of redistribution of wealth and fulfillment of basic needs for the most deprived populations. At the same time, in countries with strong indigenous communities, there was a recognition of the cultures of these peoples and the development of intercultural policies [for Bolivia, see 21]. Universities and education in general have regained public resources, with affirmative action policies targeting populations historically excluded from higher education (Afro-descendants, indigenous communities, poor students) in many countries.

In the so-called third world countries, now called emerging countries and or peripheral and semiperipheral countries, there are innovative counter-hegemonic experiences which projects of higher education are based on a perspective of social equity and justice including the historically marginalized social groups and from the perspective of higher education as social right. We refer to countries like Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Argentina and others. However, the fact that they are new experiences does not mean that they are successful in their entirety. The newness has downsides not only regarding old theories and old concepts, but also social, academic, political and economic forces that mobilize to prevent novelty from happening. The counter-hegemonic movements have against themselves a broad set of structures of long-term domination [15] of colonial and neo-colonial inheritance, which perpetuate and legitimize them by reproducing relations of domination, subordination and hierarchies, typical of colonialism. The coloniality of power [13] invades all institutional spaces and, of course, universities and the knowledge produced and transmitted.

This coloniality is the hidden facet of modernity [13] and, in this sense, it exists, subliminally, in all modern paradigms still hegemonic: institutional or epistemological. The imposition of a historical sense and Eurocentric-colonial rooted knowledge of Geopolitics constitutes a great obstacle to any counter-hegemonic movement and to true university decolonization. On the other hand, in view of the market demands, higher education has become more an ingredient of competitiveness in the commercial world than in a human right and an essential instrument for the construction of citizenship [4].

Despite some contradictions and crises that higher education goes through, some policies of institutional experimentation are worth particular mention. In Brazil, the actions of post-neoliberal governments of Lula and Dilma [16], also focused on the creation of "popular" universities, presenting different profiles and responding to specific objectives of political action. Some, such as the Federal University of Fronteira do Sul, have resulted from a strong tie of social movements, in particular, countryside movements. Others, such as the University

of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony International Integration (UNILAB), or the Federal University of Latin American Integration (UNILA), correspond to geo-strategic options of Brazilian foreign affairs. Even more, other institutions such as the Federal University of South Bahia, have undergone profound changes in curricular architecture, organization of school time, and links to the public school and the poorest and most marginalized social sectors of the region (quilombolas, indigenous populations, poor landless groups). The Federal University of ABC, whose institutional matrix is   the object of study in the present text, with ten years of existence, represents, undoubtedly, the model for the creation of other universities that present themselves as other models of university as opposed to the classic or traditional universities. In its Institutional Development Plan (PDI, 2013-2022), the mission of UFABC is to "promote the advancement of knowledge through teaching, research and extension actions, having as basic foundations: interdisciplinarity, excellence and social inclusion" [12, p.11]. For starters we emphasize two conceptual foundations that stand out in this mission and that we will analyze later: interdisciplinarity and social inclusion. From the point of view of its organization, the institution is based on a new conception of higher education, establishing ruptures with traditional paradigms:

The organization of UFABC is based on a new conception of higher education, in which curricular flexibility is present, as well as multicampi performance, which expounds major challenges to university management. In addition to being a young university, in addition to being innovative, UFABC has in its hands great challenges, which are its full implementation, its development and its consolidation, creating, at the same time, new paradigms of teaching, research and extension, as well as management. [12, p. 133]

Undeniably we face the breakdown of several paradigms resulting from the struggle of the various social groups that, historically, were excluded from civilizational processes. The expansion of higher education, despite obstacles, has been irrefutable in the last decades of the twentieth century and the first of the twenty-first century, the result of policies promoted and implemented by progressive governments. In summary, it can be stated, according to the available data, that "worldwide, in thirty-seven years, the frequency of higher education rose from 28.6 million in 1970 to 152.5 million in 2007 , meaning an annual growth of 4.6% in the period considered " [21, p. 15]. In Latin America and the Caribbean over the same period, growth has also been considerable: the number of students having access to tertiary education has increased by about 10 times, totaling 17.8 million students in 2007. According to

UNESCO data (2010), growth in higher education in the countries of Latin America stamped an expansion rate of 6.8% per year, considering the first decade of the twenty-first century.

One of the driving forces behind this expansion was the understanding that scientific research, technological innovation and the qualification of the population are determining factors in the making of wealth, which social welfare and citizen security systems ultimately depend on. Increasingly globalized competition has required new and rapidly applicable knowledge, making the cycle of technological innovation shorter in almost all areas of society and production. The rhythm of scientific production knowledge at the beginning of the twenty-first century doubled every five years, projecting a growth that in 2020 could double every 73 days [24].

The democratization processes of the countries, accompanied by new higher education institutions investment policies, allowed a considerable diversity in regard to the new student public. Universities that used to be traditionally reserved for elites have opened up to new students, both in terms of gender, ethnicity, social class, and of different generations. This breach created challenges and expectations regarding the democratization of higher education, the creation of new pedagogical models, the inclusion of cultural and epistemological diversity, the promotion of interculturality and the decolonization of power and knowledge relations. [14; 10; 12; 13]. The new proposals for higher education, that emerge against the classical (Humboldtian and Napoleonic) models, which still make up the Brazilian scenario of tertiary institutions, intend to establish a rupture with traditional paradigms. Rupture to both: access and permanence of students in its academic organization and in the inclusion of cultural and epistemological diversity.

Brazil, like other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, is characterized by a clear phenomenon of multiculturalism and cultural diversity. Nevertheless, it does not mean that institutions of higher education have promoted and included this cultural richness in an emancipatory and decolonizing intercultural perspective. Some pessimism runs through the progressive academic world, in relation to the continuity and deepening of new models of higher education, pessimism generated by the right-party wave that crosses Latin American countries, including Brazil, and aggravated by the election of Donald Trump in the United States of America.

Policies are constituted by cycles, as advocated by Ball [2; 3] (*Policy Cycle Approach*). They operate in an organized way, stages-structured and, once the agenda is defined and the policy

formulated, it's in site to be implemented and to generate the expected results. The implementation of a public policy, specifically in the field of higher education, is not characterized as a post-formulation phase that implements a policy that is ready for reality. If not, other than, as a process of interaction between groups with different interests, mediated by the institutions and by the questions brought by the context of the practice, which permanently reformulates politics itself. This happens with policies that have reached new models of higher education in Brazil. The Federal University of ABC as paradigmatic example and as a model for other institutions that emerged between 2003 and 2015.

Inequality and exclusion have been understood as two dominant characteristics in Latin American Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (and, to a different extent, in the EU itself). In tackling the problem of fighting these two strong markings, it is necessary to focus on a perspective that can emanate from within higher education institutions themselves (inclusion policies in HEIs, government systems, relevance of university programs) within their respective systems of national education, and in a regional and world context, where Education and Science are two heavily globalized areas. Institutionalizing a higher education project implies a high degree of collaboration between researchers, in order to identify causes and factors that determine exclusion, and to attend some proposals aimed at overcoming processes and mechanisms that exclude from the frequency (and success) in higher education, populations ethnic groups, Afro-descendants, the poor, people with disabilities, minorities). It is also required that research projects be increasingly interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, intercultural and international, and that contribute to substantially altering conservative pedagogical practices.

The wealth of knowledge that exists in the world, emerging from cultural diversity and with specific historical contexts, implies a capacity for dialogue with other rationalities and with different ways of seeing the world and representing it. Only intercultural cooperation and dialogue, which presupposes the recognition of diverse cultures and knowledge, can dissolve the "long-term domination structures" [15] that underpin the dominant paradigm and its over-in the institutions, contributing to the decolonization of the university and the knowledge that it promotes. On the other hand, the problematic of interculturality and its practice establishes a rupture with the epistemological fiefs, of disciplinary quality that have characterized the epistemological production and the academic organization.

The initial and ongoing training of teachers is one of the challenges facing the new institutions of higher education. Teachers have been present, throughout history, in all

discourses and narratives about education. Eternally present in discourses and often absent from emancipatory and transformative practices. The new times and changes that have taken place in the universities, due to the new publics that attend it, require a new identity of the university professor, what passes for its initial and continuous formation that make possible innovative pedagogical strategies and practices. The university is no longer the only space where knowledge is built and, therefore, a new relationship with knowledge is required that goes through new pedagogical relationships sustained in a reflexive, critical and collaborative formation and through the exchange of academic practices.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Our object of reflection in this text is the institutional structure that grounds a new model of higher education, specifically at the Federal University of ABC (UFABC), universe and research locus. As previously mentioned, UFABC was the first Brazilian institution to present a new conception of higher education, establishing a rupture with the traditional principles and paradigms of education and higher education. The methodological approach, in a first phase, is of qualitative character with the documentary analysis [23]. The comprehension problematic sets as central mark in the qualitative approaches that take analysis and interpretation of the speeches produced. The documents under consideration are the Institutional Development Plan (IDP) and the Institutional Pedagogical Project (PPI). We build this analysis according to some categories, such as: fundamentals conceptual; inclusion of cultural and epistemological diversity; pedagogical model; training and pedagogical practice; ingression and permanence. Considering that the discourse present in the institutional documents has an essential and political purpose, focused on the institution and the local community, regional, national and international levels. Norman Fairclough [6] is the theoretical reference for discursive analysis. We make a critical analysis of the discourse, with some epistemological caution, in the sense that we do not consider "indisputable truths" what is present or underlying in and to discourse documentary. We are interested in highlighting the ideological and social dimensions institutional discourse that are always implicit with some rhetoric. It is also of our interest to unveil the contradictions arising from the intertextualities. On the one hand, a markedly ideological and counter-hegemonic discourse that promotes emancipatory and inclusive practices. On the other hand, a neo-liberal and hegemonic keynote address, aligned with some of the dimensions present in the discourses of international regulatory agencies. "The hegemonies in organizations and institutions and at the

corporate level, are produced, reproduced, challenged and transformed into discourse" [6, p.28). For each of the categories, we have selected the discursive units that we consider most appropriate. The adequacy of the discursive units to the categories allowed us to answer the main question of the research (and issues arising from it) : what are the fundamentals of epistemological present in the institutional matrix of the Federal University of ABC that rule the entire academic activity of the institution and its relations with the society? What is the pedagogical model and what are its structuring lines? What is the affirmative actions policy for the inclusion of social diversity? How does the institution adjust the structuring principle of interdisciplinarity to cultural and epistemological diversity? The response, albeit provisional, to these research questions has enabled us to appraise some of the contradictions, dilemmas and paradoxes present between the principles and practices.

DOCUMENTAL SPEECH ANALYSIS

UFABC, founded in 2005 (Federal Law No. 11,145), located in Santo André in the São Paulo metropolitan area of ABC, presents itself as a new model of higher education rupturing with the elitist university paradigms. From the presentation of the Plan Institutional Development [12, p. XIV] it could be understood that the UFABC project goes beyond the local and regional scope. It was always intended to be a reference for excellence and technological innovation at national and international levels without losing its close relationship with local and regional spheres. By its humanistic, formative vocation and excellence in all dimensions (management, research, teaching and extension) it contributes to greater international prominence and to a new level in the national sovereignty: "editing a PDI for a decade shows several meanings. Through this document the institution appropriates its own project, to which it imprints its own rhythm and direction so as to assure it with their values   and mission. (...) In the external range, it is through the PDI that the nation and the region are aware of the perspectives and directions of UFABC, and opportunities to the individuals who connect the community that sustains it. Domestically, it represents the agreement, (provisory so be it) in which staff, teachers, technical-administrative workers and students will join forces to move forward. In 1822, Brazil discovered its identity as nation. In 1922, proclaimed its cultural autonomy in the Week of Modern Art. Leading us to the Bicentennial of Independence, the 2013 PDI-2022 will contribute into placing the country on a new level of prominence and sovereignty."

From the point of view of the conceptual foundations, inscribed in its institutional matrix, the UFABC defends "academic excellence, interdisciplinarity and social inclusion". This notional tripod represents the guideline of the whole development of the institution. The Academic excellence covers research, teaching, extension and management. Still from the point of conceptual basis, the ethical principle of respect is defended as "an indispensable condition for human and professional interaction" and interdisciplinarity as an "effective interaction between the various knowledge areas". The principle of interdisciplinarity dissolves disciplinary departments as a means of enabling and stimulating "free transit and coexistence among all members of the academic community". The belief is that the twenty-first century university is the stage for the fluidity and transposition of borders disciplines that characterized the entire course and university performance in the modernity. The overcoming of the disciplinary barriers, allows, according to the PDI,"interpenetration between science and society" and "inseparability between production and transmission of knowledge (p.19).

The Institutional Pedagogical Project (PPI) has established, since its foundation, some innovative paradigms in Brazilian higher education. The new pedagogical model, that served as an example to other institutions created in Lula's and Dilma's government, "aims to revolutionize the traditional academic structure of higher education in Brazil, paving the way and disseminating the successful aspects of its IDP throughout the country." (PPI, p. 45) The academic organization is structured through a transversal matrix that allows the interaction between its academic nuclei and their rectories. Thinking of institutional principles, this interaction should, in practice, enable dialogue, collaborative work and trades between the different areas of knowledge. Interdisciplinarity, such as previously mentioned, constitutes one of the pillars of the institution's IDP. It is identified as "the interaction between areas and the integration of knowledge, also as a way to solve the great issues of the 21st century, which requires the performance and intercommunication of professionals from different backgrounds and visions "(...). The basis of the curricular organization of the baccalaureate and its own organization is in the interdisciplinarity and in the identification of major systemic axes of human knowledge. "Differently from traditional universities, in which each course has its set of disciplines, in UFABC all the disciplines offered make up a unified catalog "(p.58).

Students in any of the existing courses can enroll in any of the disciplines. Moreover, the student can enroll in up to three courses until the core requirements of the interdisciplinary entrance baccalaureate. Thus, it can be seen that the curricular matrices of the institution have

a flexibility that is not found in traditional universities. The disciplinary areas and their departments have been abolished and "the academic responsibilities were distributed in the three Thematic Centers, all of them bringing together scientific, technological and human areas, aiming at greater permeability, flexibility and flow of information " (p. 46).

Therefore, it is recognized that pedagogical practice still does not conform to these principles: the didactic techniques are still traditional, the classes are expository and there is an excess number of students per room. Interdisciplinary projects that put into practice and consolidate these principles are yet missing, or even "centers and courses that mobilize the academic community for the exercise of these structuring principles." Given that this is a project under construction an Interdisciplinarity Observatory was established with main task being to organize ways to follow up and improve the project and the respective pedagogical practices.

With regard to admission and permanence, UFABC has established affirmative action policies that intend "guaranteeing the conditions of access and permanence in public higher education, free of charge and of quality to a portion of the population that has historically been excluded from this possibility" (p..70). These affirmative actions aim to reinforce the role of the public university in the formation of critical citizens. Besides accelerating the "opportunity of equality to the vulnerable segments of population" (p.70) these critical citizens hold power to transform society and represent all social, ethnic and racial segments in the academic space. Institutional discourse, in addition to its ideological dimension characterized by a clear position in relation to the inclusion of "the most socially vulnerable" and ethnic-racial segments, promotes one of the dimensions of the identity of the institution.

 An institution that presents a differential in relation to traditional universities, both in its academic organization and model, and in its curricular matrices and its flexibility, as well as in the four-monthly system of teaching, which enables the student to have greater dynamics and variety in the choice of subjects. Even more, in the participative management of the various organizations that constitute it: the collegiate of the different spheres - University Council; Board of Education, Research and Extension; Undergraduate and Postgraduate Commissions; Affirmative Policy Committee, University Extension Committee, Center Councils and Course Coordination that have their legitimacy based on the transparency of their electoral processes.

On the other hand, in the documents under analysis are discourses that intersect, contradict each other, without consensus: the university adopts a neoliberal and hegemonic discourse

regarding the issues of quality and excellence, wanting to assert itself in the national and international institutions *rankings*. "UFABC could and should use *rankings* and evaluations as tools in the pursuit of excellence, but without giving up (...) its individuality and its unique profile that differentiates it from other national and international universities." (p.28). The concept of quality and excellence is not defined and, therefore, is not evaluated by a purely quantitative criterion, by the quantity of scientific production, or the place that the institution occupies in the *rankings* [4] or whether, for example, the principle of social inclusion also contributes to the institutional quality assessment.

Social discourse and inclusion, whereas, seems to be in the opposite of this discursive hegemony. How to include the poorest populations, their cultures and knowledge within a dominant epistemological paradigm? It is these intertextualities that seem to us, in their contradictions, to reveal a huge gap between what the institution is, what it wants to be and what it can really be, halting institutional policies in various difficult dilemmas to solve. This is even revealed in the following discursive unit:

"To build consensus on the institutional profile one must be guided by answers to some great questions. What are the major issues that today represent the main challenges to be faced? Should the university be a space of plurality of themes and knowledge, or should it emphasize major themes that represent the main challenges of the twenty-first century? Is it possible to combine the two perspectives? How to do it? What are the opportunities and constraints that the current context of the country in general and of the scientific and university organization, in particular, place for a university in development such as UFABC? In the Brazilian context and in the confrontation of these themes situated at the front line of scientific knowledge is it possible to reconcile the necessary social inclusion with the seeking out for academic excellence? Is there a dilemma between these two perspectives or is it possible to reconcile them?"

A set of tensions and resistances in relation to the real ruptures that a new institution should operate can be read in the discourse It is true that one of the fundamental principles of the institution is the affirmation of diversity and plurality in the academic environment, whether of public or of cultures and knowledge. From a discursive point of view, not from practice, there seems to be no incompatibility or dichotomies between the pursuit and affirmation of excellence in certain scientific and technological areas and the inclusion of diversity. The escape from excessive specialization is one of the ways and the relationship of interdisciplinary research and extension projects with social and environmental problems

seems to be another path to follow: "The University must take account of social demands by placing academic values   as the cornerstone of university experience."(p.22)

Meeting the goals established in the IDP requires qualified professionals and, above all, professionals that fit the profile of the institution. It is recognized that teachers, trained in traditional institutions, still work within the scope of their disciplinary specialty manifesting "some difficulty in acting outside the limits of their topic of study, or even working to integrate their knowledge with that of colleagues from other areas." (p.46) In addition to the research projects, in line with the determinations of the funding agencies, the analyzed documents do not mention any institutional model of continuous training of their teachers in order to promote and adjust in their pedagogical practices and research, to the principles and profile of the institution. Innovative principles and conservative practices. Building an innovative model of higher education, in which an inextricable relationship between teaching, research and extension is sought, requires overcoming the stated contradiction.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Building a new model of higher education is a gigantic task. Especially when a hegemonic, conservative and elitist university long history lies upon with pressure. The analyzed documental discourses have, undoubtedly, a strong politic dimension: they define the political lines, and are up to a certain point, apologetic speeches of the institution itself and its social and academic work. That can be noted in documents that intend to be regulators of all university activity. We believe that UFABC formally establishes lines of rupture with the traditional paradigms of higher education once it dissipates the disciplinary departments, true centers of power and micropower inside the classical academic institutions.

The truly structuring proposal of the principle of interdisciplinarity points to the dialogue between the various discourses and disciplinary narratives, suggesting a collaborative and dialogic practice between the professionals from different areas. However, being a new model of higher education that also has a structuring line towards inclusion of diversity; it seems odd that the very concept of interdisciplinarity hasn't surpassed itself. Reflecting upon the concept remains a prisoner of disciplinary knowledge yet appears as an epistemological opening. The contradiction is, then, notorious: interdisciplinarity and inclusion of diversity, just as parallel lines, are concepts that do not meet. Thus, it seems that the rupture with tradition should be deeper proposing other concepts lined-up to the cultural and epistemological diversity present

in the institution. The notion to diversity of knowledge and interculturality (not inferred in the documents) would seem to be more adjusted to an institution that affirms itself as new, different, that breaks with paradigms and which goal is to contribute to the social inclusion of historically marginalized peoples, also disallowed from the right of quality and excellence higher education.

In this aspect, we consider that Walsh's studies on critical interculturality represent considerable theoretical bases for the implementation of a more innovative, fierce decolonial project, as proposed by Santos and Almeida Filho [20], Mignolo [9] and Quijano [14]. Teachers, though not just them, are certainly true protagonists of change. Nonetheless, documents enhance the difficulties with the adaptation with new instituted paradigms, their difficulty in adjusting pedagogical practice to the innovative principles of the institutional matrix, but they do not mention the need for continuous training of their professional faculty.

It seems to us as one of the paradoxes of a new institution that has in its core professionals with conservative practices. With regard to the issues we raised as research questions, we believe that the documents suggested some answers, albeit provisional ones, given that the UFABC project, for its short history, is a project under construction. Thus, we question if the willing to be a new model of higher education will be possible considering all the financial and political restraints that are currently present in Brazilian society.

In the eagerness for higher education to change profoundly and represent the main foundation for a truly democratic social transformation, in a perspective of social and cognitive equity and justice, we stand, expectant and active, between waiting and hoping.

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