

University Management: Fundamentals and Challenges for a Multicampi Public University in Brazil

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Abstract: The public universities in Brazil have peculiar intrinsic characteristics that distinguish them and stand out among the organizations that promote higher education. This study, based on a literature review, addresses as the main theme the discussion about the nature of these institutions, how management practices are embedded in their environments and the challenges faced by managers. Initially, considerations were made about the purpose and essence of universities. Subsequently, the focus of the study was directed to the multicampi structure in which the State University of Bahia was formed, analyzing some of the strategies that this University uses to remain socially relevant and promote development. The results of the analyzes showed carried out showed the capacity for transformation and adaptation that these institutions can present in order to maintain their social commitment even in the midst of crises that threaten their existence as they are known.

Key words: Multicampi University, university management, college education

1. Introduction

Universities, especially public universities, characterizes itself by the complexity of their peculiar institutional nature, whose purposes are particularly social in nature and whose attributions refer to the democratic reciprocity of their members with society; besides to preserve the shared management in their collegial practices. These aspects distinguish them in the world of organizations and require a different analysis and treatment of administrative theories and practices.

The purpose of this study is to search for theoretical sources that can support a literature review that provides an understanding of what to consider in the fetch for a university management that demonstrates positive results both in the administrative and academic spheres. For this, the initial discussion will focus about the essence and purpose of the University Institutions.

Subsequently, the role of the university manager will be analyzed and then it will be proposed a research about multicampi university management, taking the management model of the State University of Bahia as an example.

According to Chauí (2003), the university, while a social institution, manifests the structure and society mode

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of functioning. This gets clear by the presence of diverse opinions and attitudes in the inner from the university that reflects the existing social divisions and contradictions.

That author emphasizes that the distinction of the public university from other social institutions lies in its legitimacy as a social institution in face of the public recognition of its attributions. However, how to seek the understanding of what really characterizes universities? And what legitimizes them? These questions cannot be answered without reflection guided by the analysis of its formation and integration with the society that nurtures them.

2. Nature and purpose of Universities

The social relevance of universities, as fundamental institutions for the development of society through the production, transfer and application of knowledge, is an important factor that corroborates the strengthening of its legitimacy. The recognition of the importance of these institutions in face of society is fundamental and besides it explains in part their longevity over the time (Meyer Junior, 2014).

For the conquer of the university legitimacy, Santos (2008) considers that the acquisition of adequate knowledge of the place where it is inserted is essential, aiming to create ties with the local community and assuming with it a commitment to promote democratic actions and social justice, without losing focus about the globalization of university knowledge in a broader perspective.

For him, the university has been suffering the effects of a crisis centered on its hegemony and its legitimacy mostly during the twentieth century when it began to accumulate contradictory attributions such as the production of culture, critical and humanistic thinking in contrast to the production of technical and instrumental knowledge. This factor is associated particularly to the hegemonic crisis. On the other hand, the crisis of legitimacy is associated to the segmentation of access and hierarchy from specialized knowledge. The author still states a third crisis named by him as the institutional one. This last one is closely related to the previous two and it results from the tension between the claim of autonomy in the definition of the values of the university and the increasing pressure to subject it to criteria of business effectiveness and productivity.

The questions raised lead us to the reflection about important points that tend to affect the development and maintenance of university institutions, at least as they are still known. For many authors, the essential nature of the university has been suffering from the interferences promoted by the capitalist power present in the commercialization of higher education (Sander, 2007; Almeida Filho, 2008; Meyer Júnior, 2015; Chauí, 2003). This situation became more concrete because of the reduction of the State's commitment to the maintenance of the universities, opening the way for the more effective action of private initiative in university education in Brazil.

In discussing the place of state universities in Brazil, Professor Nádia Fialho (2013) begins the debate on the primacy of the constitutional right to access to education, defining it as an originating and therefore imprescriptible right whose organizational responsibility lies over the federal entities, the Union, the States, the Federal District and the Municipalities. However, the author presented a worrying fact: according to the census of university education performed in 2009, private institutions make up 89.4% of the offer related to university education in Brazil.

The entrance of the private initiative in the Brazilian university sector shows itself as a symptom of the aggravation in the crisis of the Brazilian public universities. The effects of the actions from private university institutions might be perceived in the prioritization of access for those who can afford it and by priority training of

the courses directed principally to the needs of the work market and not ones of society as a whole.

Universities, as high-level education institutions, must respond to the needs demanded by society in order to fulfill its original role. The commodification of these institutions tends to transform them into mere organizations representing economic power, reflecting the interests of one minority to the detriment of the others.

For Santos (2008), the current educational public policies influenced by neoliberalism, or neoliberal globalization, fail to prioritize public universities resulting in the various difficulties faced by those institutions. Instead of serving as a justification for a program of political-pedagogical restructuring, such difficulties turned into an argument for the use of the public good as a marketable product.

In front of the worldwide phenomenon fostered to value the high-level education market to the detriment of the public university, it is inevitable to think about ways of stare this present process in order to minimize its effects or even to counter its progress. It seems an unequal struggle in view of the large investments directed towards the privatization of education. However, some authors, through analyzes based on research aligned between theory and practice, point to ways of coping with this situation.

In addressing university reform in order to a new university in the midst of the growing expansion of the university market, Santos (2008) proposes to reconquer the university's legitimacy. To do so, he suggests five areas of action in this area: access, extension, research-action, ecology of knowledge, university and public school. He stresses the importance of the democratization of access to universities; the necessity of promote extension actions related to the expansion of scientific culture; the advancement of research-action and the ecology of knowledge in order to involve the community in research projects (aligning scientific interests with social ones by bringing the knowledge of diverse cultures to dialogue with scientific knowledge) and the linking between the university and basic education.

To the preservation of university institutions is essential the understanding that their peculiar nature must be respected when planning actions that will be directed to them. Its managers have the hard task of adjusting the administrative functions to their important pedagogical and social ends. It is necessary caution about the expanding the university market, especially as a factor that threatens the existence of full and quality higher education. For this, Santos considers that the institutional political-pedagogical paradigm of the university should not be replaced by a business paradigm.

This paradigm does not allow: that the relations between the target audience be mercantile relations; that the efficiency, quality and educational accountability be defined in terms of the market; that the teacher-student relations should be generalized to technological mediation (based on the production and consumption of material and immaterial objects); that the university opens itself (and turn itself vulnerable) to the pressures of the clients; that the competition between "educational operators" be the stimulus for flexibility and adaptability to employers' expectations; that the selectivity of the search of consumption niches (recruitment of students) with higher return to the capital invested (Santos, 2008, p. 30).

The constant interference of the business world in the universities can also be noticed in the administrative practices adopted by its managers in order to maintain the operation. From the outset, theories of management were thought out and directed to commercial organizations. Because they do not adapt well to eminently social institutions, they may results in losses related to the fulfillment of their fundamental objectives.

Different historical moments influenced the construction of knowledge about the administration of education in Brazil resulting in four specific conceptions of education management, which often overlaps in practice one another: economic efficiency, pedagogical effectiveness, political effectiveness and cultural relevance. Nowadays,

schools and universities are oriented through conception, or conceptions, that best suit their training and their goals (Sander, 2007). However, considering the complex and very particular nature about it, Sander stresses that the use of the four models, as they were conceived, reflects reductive and fragmented conceptions of educational administration.

In this viewpoint, Sander (2007) presents a multidimensional model of education management, proposing a theoretical synthesis, in which the practice of educational administration is a complex phenomenon, with multiple analytical and praxiological dimensions articulated simultaneously. In this model, the economic, pedagogical, political and cultural dimensions link, respectively, with criteria of administrative performance of efficiency, effectiveness, effectiveness and relevance. This proposal is defined by human natural needs and it is organized in intrinsic (cultural and pedagogical) and extrinsic (political and economic) dimensions, where extrinsic ones are subsumed by the intrinsic ones, taking into account of simultaneity and the dialogue between the dimensions and the whole.

It is unquestionable the need to maintain the functioning of public universities in the face of the current difficulties. The bureaucratic inheritance and the interference of the State, whether through public policies or control of financing, configure as management challenges them. Besides the performance of management it depends on the articulation of its administrative structure with its social aims.

3. Administrative Practices and the Role of University Managers

Matos et al. (2016) consider the existence of several challenges related to the academic and administrative practices present in the Brazilian universities, which must reconcile teaching, research and extension activities with the management activities of the institution, its patrimony (material, immaterial, artistic and architectural), its equipment, student body, teacher and administrative technician.

Meyer Junior (2014) defines the university as a complex system that challenges its administrators. For the author, it is undeniable that administration is necessary for the functioning of any social organization, as well as universities. His main question is what type of administration requires an academic organization in view of its distinct nature, social transformations and the challenges imposed on it by the environment. The main challenge is the inexistence of one theory of university administration that can be used to manage its complex system, from a structural, academic, social and political point of view.

Other areas of knowledge contributes to the strengthening of theoretical base of administrative theories, since it involves a vast field of action that goes from the understanding of the administrative practices in diverse organizations to the study of the performance of the people in the organizations and the answer the needs from the society. The knowledge about educational management is under construction and sometimes it needs to be rebuilt through the provocations imposed by the complexity of its nature and its environment.

According to Meyer Junior (2014) there has been increasing attention in recent years for the day-to-day practices of organizations, in order to study the nature of the work of the administrator, whose focus lies a lot of humanistic characteristics, related to fragmentation, brevity, variety and discontinuity, than rational, reflective characteristics of planning, organization, direction and control of actions.

Meyer Junior, analyzing thoughts of other authors (Starbuck, 1983; Mitzberg, 1973; Weick, 2007), considers that on many occasions the administrators do things different from those pointed out in their speeches. It also emphasizes that, given the complexity of administrative practice; sometimes it is necessary to abandon routines in

the face of the need to introduce new practices required by the context. In this sense, it still proposes the abandonment of approaches used when circumstances require; reinforcing the position that before such reductionist visions in relation to the complex reality of organizations, one can adopt the position of refusal to theories and administrative models.

Although these ideas are directed at the different types of organizations, in thinking about the reality of the practices that involve the administration of university institutions, one realizes the imminent need to review mainly ready-made and even imported models of administrative theories whose application in universities cause concern for being incomplete and inadequate to their reality.

Pressure for productivity influences the perceptions around the perspective of university management, generating conflicts between two opposing logics: one oriented toward the market, something very tangible, and another oriented by academic logic, something intangible and difficult to measure. To better understanding about how university administration works, you need to know its practitioners. These are mostly teachers, who emphasize the so-called “professorial administration”, whose experience is often limited to the institution itself. On the other hand, there is the expansion of educational companies, which bring the concept of “professional administration” to universities (Meyer Junior, 2014).

The shift of decision-making power from teachers to trained administration professionals can be considered as a gateway to entrepreneurship in higher education. The experience of the teacher, who is knowledgeable in the academic and pedagogical world, is essential to the practice of university administration. However, the question turns to how the teacher-manager can contribute to the development of administrative practices appropriate to university institutions.

In dealing with the importance of university planning, Saleme (1988) raises some significant questions regarding the administrative structure of universities, such as the lack of financial resources; lack of autonomy (dependence on government agencies) for decisions in the academic, political and financial areas; excessive bureaucracy; problems related to administrative staff and faculty (low salaries, lack of training, poor selection); besides the lack of planning.

This author points out the lack of preparation of the managers and department heads in relation to financial planning, as one of the main problems to be faced in the universities since they are often unaware of the expenses of their sectors and the real need of their budget units. Upon reaching the degree of rector, most teachers are not adequately prepared for the administrative and financial activities that await them. In addition, after four years of hard learning in practice, they are replaced by others professors returning to classrooms. It establishes the importance of forming a permanent technical staff capable of assisting in administration (Saleme, 1988).

Considering the foregoing, that is, the recognition of the social function of university institutions (through hegemonic crises and legitimacy), the “entrepreneurialisation” of higher education and the needs related to the recognition and improvement of administrative practices in universities it is necessary to understand that proposals and alternatives need to be found in order to strengthen these institutions in the face of the challenges imposed on them.

Meyer Junior (2014) stresses the importance of valuing practices in university institutions in order to foster the construction of university management theory. This author emphasizes methods that provide the direct contact with the experiences and practices of the people in the organizations, which allow the construction of the learning about them. Examples are case studies, ethnographic studies and research-action. The university spaces are unique in relation to their context and results, given that they are environments that stimulate the use of creativity and

innovation, elements necessary for the formation of new ideas.

In fact, research methods that value the experience of the institution's participants are essential for its strengthening insofar as they can indicate strategies and mechanisms of action aimed at administrative practices at the same time may point out management misconceptions that need to be corrected or avoided. People and their practices should be the focus of studies in universities, since their actions are what make these institutions work.

The time has come to turn our attention to the field of one rarely explored activity by management scholars: the practice of university administration, who are its practitioners? What do they do? Moreover, how do they when they say that they are practicing administration in universities? New times require a new administration. Entrepreneurial approaches predominant in the literature and administration practice, with their rationalistic assumptions, do not fit the complex reality of academic organizations and their specificities. It is fundamental to keep in mind that the theory of university administration is an incremental construction thanks to the actions and initiatives of its practitioners, for their reflection and learning (Meyer Junior, 2014, pp. 23–24).

For Luce (2006), university management refers to thinking and doing the university reflecting on its scientific and educational purpose, which gives it a peculiarity as a social institution. It comprises a structure strategically planned, but embodied in the academic organization, involving people and formalized programs, projects and activities of teaching, research and extension. The administration of the material and technological resources of the academic institution is an important part of university management, but always subordinated to the institutional pedagogical project. It is necessary to consider this type of management as a cultural phenomenon, produced by language and discourses and a political phenomenon, of construction of projects, ideas and decisions; thus becoming a phenomenon of human relations and actions.

The challenges for the maintenance of university institutions include the attributions and actions of those who work in them, especially managers. They must understand that it is necessary to persist in the rescue and conservation of the mission of the university and its purposes based on political and pedagogical criteria besides which administrative practices should assist in strengthening these goals. The presence of information technology is an example of a tool that university institutions can use to help develop their activities and expand teaching, research and extension. These types of resources are valid and necessary.

The university administrative structure is composed by departments and sectors with specific functions however articulated among them; so, it is necessary to establish managerial criteria to maintain its operation in such level of organization that its objectives can be achieved. However, the university manager must possess more than technical skills. They have to understand specially the nature of the university as a social institution. He must cultivate a citizen's posture and act politically with the organized community, in the sense of seeking to guarantee the legitimacy and maintenance of the institution. In addition, it is important that the actions of the management are participative, composed also by criticisms and observations of the involved ones in both academic world and its environment.

Following the foundations of their nature, the university should not stay cloistered themselves just offering services to the community as a common organization, but it must present a posture open to dialogue and popular participation. In this sense, Santos (2008) proposes the cultivation of pluriversitarian knowledge instead of university one, abandoning the unilateral model of creation of the university to reach an institutional model who provides an interactivity with society, enhanced by the revolution in information technologies and of communication.

The Institutional empowerment also involves the concept of networks in order to promote partnerships

between universities and others higher education institutions that do not perform research or postgraduate studies so that they can count on these prerogatives according to Santos (2008). Networks can function as collaborative systems between universities not only national but also international, in order to stimulate partnerships, especially in the promotion of research and exchanges of experience.

4. Discussing Multicampi and Related Management Strategies

Besides the current reality, to which the universities are subject, the situation becomes particular in some characteristics for the state universities, especially the multicampi. Fialho (2011) addresses very particular issues that affect their functioning from government policies and the legal regulations that regulate them, especially regarding to the responsibility of government instances to maintain these institutions. Fialho points to the system of collaboration between the federated entities, established in regulations and laws, such as the Federal Constitution of 1988 and the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education of 1996, as a source of resources for coping with difficulties faced by them.

In this sense, it is necessary to talk about multicampi as having different characteristics that require appropriate management actions. One of the main ones is the relationship of dependence with the State, both financial and control. The university is in a position that reflects relative degrees of autonomy, or dependence, and which have repercussions on its management. Novaes, Leal and Carneiro (2014), highlight the role of state universities in the administrative structure of the Brazilian State, which presupposes a web of relationships involving a differentiated set of systemic functions and encompasses several sectors from both public administration and the hierarchical structure of the State.

The definition of Multicampi University is very complex, especially since in a more comprehensive sense given the scope of the term, as well as the challenges and potentialities associated with its existence. Its creation in Brazil favored the expansion of higher education to reach regions farthest from the urban metropolitan centers. According to Nez (2016), the Program to Support Restructuring and Expansion Plans of Federal Universities (Reuni) was one of the actions that democratized the higher education allowing the entry of more people who would not otherwise be able to enter university by using, among other alternatives, the multicampi model for this purpose.

The term multicampi refers to a concept of university with an organizational structure distributed in several geographical spaces, all defined with the same importance. Its action expands into poles situated in territorial contexts with different needs. Its purpose is to help and to strengthen the development of each region, through discussions on the particular nature and peculiarities, in order to harness the regional potential and generate opportunities for those who will study. It is a proposal that favors the internalization of Higher Education, where each campus is the headquarters of the university and important pole in the formation of knowledge, maintaining a deep relationship with its regional context and promoting its social, economic and cultural development (Lauxen, 2006).

Fialho (2005) provides important analyze about the emergence and the peculiar nature of multicampi universities. For her, it is essential that the concept of pluricampus should not be associated with that of multicampi, since the former refers only to quantity and location. However, the multicampi concept requires for its existence, an organizational structure that divides itself in multiple forms and influences the space that occupies and its own mission, emphasizing its implication with the occupation of the regional territory, interacting with its

social, historical and economic realities, acting with transforming power over them.

At first sight, the term multicampi is understood under the quantitative aspect, but when the etymological meaning of the word is verified, it can be inferred that the word campus comes from the Latin and means field, place where the seed is sown, place where life and construction is possible: a place where one prepares for the development of knowledge. That is, the multicampi theme can be considered as “the diversity of spaces in which knowledge is sown” (Fialho, 2005, p. 51).

From these inferences, it is possible to make observations about the nature of the multicampi universities, which, although geographically dispersed, are still complete in their mission and maintain the inseparability of their teaching, research and extension activities. That is, even though it is present in various places they need to take the completeness of their actions in order to maintain their university nature. Its integration in the localities is another aspect to be considered, because, despite maintaining its organizational characteristics, it must attend to the regional specificities through the insertion of the research and extension projects in the communities, besides attending the professional training needs of its members.

Its social function is not an easy task. Public universities in Brazil were initially formed based on a uniform and standardized model, both in the administrative sense (foundation in bureaucracy) and in the centralized way of carrying out its activities on a single campus in large urban centers. This profile is still supported when observing the legal and political guidelines that regulate its operation. This aspect interferes in the functioning of the multicampi universities, since it does not consider their peculiarities, be they administrative or academic.

The multicampi configuration presents distinct organizational characteristics through the spatial dimension that the Multicampi University reaches and the bureaucratic model adopted by the public administration often becomes insufficient. Their contact with diverse regional realities requires appropriate actions for their social insertion. These actions should be focused on both administrative aspects, taking into account, for example, the decentralization of decisions for better adaptation and breadth of management practices; academic aspects, such as the feasibility of projects that are able to insert themselves and interact with local realities. “The installation of the multicampi university obeys a logic of social and economic re(production), being the university itself product and means of this process” (Fialho, 2005).

Because they are subject to a model that values the standardization of procedures, in addition to the bureaucratic control exercised over them, multicampi universities face challenges, especially those related to regional adaptation and the scope of management actions, which should always be in line with interpersonal relations and performance of the servers, despite the management model subordinated to them. Fialho (2005) emphasizes that if there are gaps in the way of dealing with these interpersonal relations, as well as in the communication flow systems, it is possible to break important links in the establishment of a more organic character of the multicampi model and, without doubt, generate the feeling of isolation of the campuses. Thus, there is a need for a normative reorganization to adapt to the model, through decentralized management, not exclusively systemic, but regionalized.

In addition to the geographical aspects, it is necessary to take into account the original configuration of multicampi university institutions, in terms of their regional and local integration in the various territories they reach, and the needs of transformative action that requires an approach capable of promoting reciprocity with communities. In addition, it is necessary to monitor social changes, through the incorporation of new technologies, concern with the environment and the monitoring of changes associated with the valuation of knowledge in organizations. Thus, the university, expressing the reciprocity relationship with the urban context, can be

“recognized for its specific mission to promote the advancement of science, the training of professionals and the development of societies and peoples” (Filaho, 2005, p. 76).

The Multicampi University plays an initial role in addressing the shortage of higher education in the most distant regions of the states, providing vocational training that cities lack. However, its key role is not restricted to this. These institutions, by participating actively in the society in which it is inserted, especially through research and extension, create a reciprocal relationship in which it reaches the means of studying local and regional phenomena and at the same time carries transformative critical knowledge, both political, economic and social, promoting the democratization of higher education.

5. The State University of Bahia and Its Management Structure

Bahia State University (UNEB), conceived under the multicampi model, since its formation has as one of the main purposes to democratize the teaching in order to reach all the regions of the State of Bahia, Brazil, through its extension programs and actions in 24 campuses and 29 departments (corresponding to 19 territories of identity¹ in Bahia) in almost all of the 417 municipalities of Bahia.

The multicampi model stands out the more effective way to achieve the objective of performance and adequacy of university actions in such different territories. Boaventura (2009) emphasizes that the multicampi format is the one that better incorporates the state circumstances, allowing the saving of means by avoiding the duplication of services within several university rectory and the isolation of university. In line with the reach of UNEB in the State of Bahia, it is necessary to emphasize its relation with the formation of teachers, as stressed by Boaventura:

UNEB was born committed to the drought and color of Bahia, directed to the main urban inner cities. We knew, and we still know, that academically it would not be easy. However, it was necessary to equip the regional centers of Bahia with higher education to strategic formation of teachers for elementary school, high school and university education (Boaventura, 2009, p. 22).

Since its organization in 1983, the relationship with formation of educators is a very strong feature of the UNEB. Under a special autarchy regime subordinated to the Secretariat of Education and Culture (article 1 of Delegated Law 66/83), UNEB was composed by the grouping of several existing colleges in various cities that worked in the formation of teachers: College for Training of Teachers, in Alagoinhas; College of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters, in Juazeiro; College for Training of Teachers, in Jacobina; College for Training of Teachers, in Santo Antônio de Jesus; Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters, in Caetité and the School of Education of UNEB, for example.

In studying the scope of UNEB as a formative institution and its contribution to the composition of cadres for local education systems, Barbosa (2016) highlighted in his research the effective capillarity of this university, not only in the municipalities in which its campuses are located, but also in the whole Bahia since its graduates act predominantly in elementary school.

Despite still maintaining its connection with education along 35 years of existence, UNEB has undergone transformations necessary to meet social expectations and normative requirements to preserve its university status.

¹ Decree 12354/10, Article 1st, § 1st, considers Territory of Identity the municipal identity group formed according to social, cultural, economic and geographic criteria, and recognized by its population as the historically constructed space to which it belongs, with identity which extends the possibilities of social and territorial cohesion.

Currently, UNEB offers more than 150 courses (undergraduate and postgraduate levels) both face-to-face and at distance, highlighting the growing number of *stricto sensu* courses both in Salvador and in the interior of the State. In order to keep up with this growth, it is necessary that the actions regarding university management be adjusted to the current changes and needs required by the multicampi model. Novaes, Leal, and Carneiro (2014) point to the fragmentation of decision-making instances and the lack of agility of the organizational structure as factors that make it difficult to respond quickly. In addition, they point out that UNEB's expansion has taken place in an unplanned manner and, on some occasions, without the study of space and consultation with the community for its installation, as well as without sufficient human and material resources to operate.

A multicampi university has a transforming role when it establishes as a proposal the construction of paths with objectives committed to the reach of inner communities in order to promote the professional development of its participants, as critical, politically active and socially involved citizens. However, this complex insertion requires planned actions, financial resources and people aware of their performance in line with the mission and objectives of the institution.

Despite being subordinated to regulations and control of Bahia's State, including the availability and use of financial resources, the Internal Regime of UNEB, in its second article, establishes its didactic-scientific, administrative, financial and patrimonial management autonomy. Its administrative organization (defined in article 8th §1, §2, §3 and §4) is composed by deliberative agencies of the higher administration: the University Council (CONSU), the Higher Council for Education, Research and Extension (CONSEPE) and the Board of Directors (CONSAD); executive agency of the sectoral administration: University Rectory; deliberative agencies of the Sectorial Administration, Departmental Councils and Collegiate Officers; and executive agency of the Sectorial Administration, the Departments Director.

In this way, the complex management of UNEB is evident, especially in terms of decision-making that will affect not only the activities of Campus I, located in the capital, but also those directed to campi located in interior of Bahia. At this point, it is necessary consider that actions directed to meet the needs of the campus in Salvador may not be suitable to demands of the other campuses.

In front of the range of these peculiar issues, we can observe the several challenges that the UNEB has to overcome along of its course. Almeida and Santos (2014) define one of them as a cultural barrier to innovative management practices established by the cultural inheritance present in public administration. Despite this, some public institutions have sought new management practices in order to strengthen themselves in the pursuit of their objectives.

So, with a proposal to bring changes to its organizational culture still marked by the isolation of its departments in several regions of Bahia, UNEB adopted the network management system, creating the Departmental Management Networks (RGDs), established from affinities territorial, cultural, political, economic and social (UNEB, 2013).

Although there is no single broadly accepted concept of network that expresses the diversity of contexts that the term encompasses, it is recognized commonly as "the formation of a dynamic that favors integration between people or institutions around objectives specific". Among the main objectives of the networks are the development of the capacity to share knowledge, share risks and responsibilities and access to new technologies (Brazil, 2007, p. 16).

The establishment of networks is associated with the process of regionalization and is capable of generating positive results in order to know more about the participating regions, their potentialities and challenges to be

faced. For UNEB, RGDs can support the processes that involve the management of material and financial resources, providing more agility in the process, and connecting the regional campuses in projects that empower their performance.

The formation of networks requires a little of care for their proper functioning, such as guarantee of the performance of actions in a cooperative way, without abandoning the relationship with the central unit. In this way, we prevent both departmental isolation and possible disjointed local domination. Novaes, Leal and Carneiro (2014, p. 8) understand that the connection of networked structures “implies the sharing of resources and the creation of a common language that allows the exchange and synergy of shared actions”. This simultaneous collective effort is critical to the success of this project.

Thus, the UNEB Strategic Plan, while safeguarding the university autonomy, proposed the structuring of the RGDs by grouping departments according to their academic characteristics by the regional profile, by their physical proximity and accessibility, in accordance to the Territorial Development Plan of the State and the UNEB’s internal policy of regionalization (UNEB, 2010, UNEB, 2013). The RGDs conform to the following configuration:

Table 1 Departmental Management Networks

Departmental Management Networks		Departments/Municipalities
A	Low São Francisco	Bom Jesus da Lapa, Barreiras
B	Anísio Teixeira	Brumado, Caetité e Guanambi
C	Metropolitan Area	Salvador, Camaçari e Alagoinhas
D	Recôncavo Baiano / Palm Coast	Valença, Santo Antonio de Jesus, Ipiáú
E	Middle São Francisco	Juazeiro, Jacobina e Senhor do Bonfim
F	Antônio Conselheiro	Paulo Afonso, Serrinha, Conceição do Coité e Euclides da Cunha.
G	Chapada Diamantina	Irecê, Xique Xique, Seabra e Itaberaba.
H	Coast of Discovery	Eunápolis, Teixeira de Freitas

Source: UNEB Goals Plan, 2010–2013.

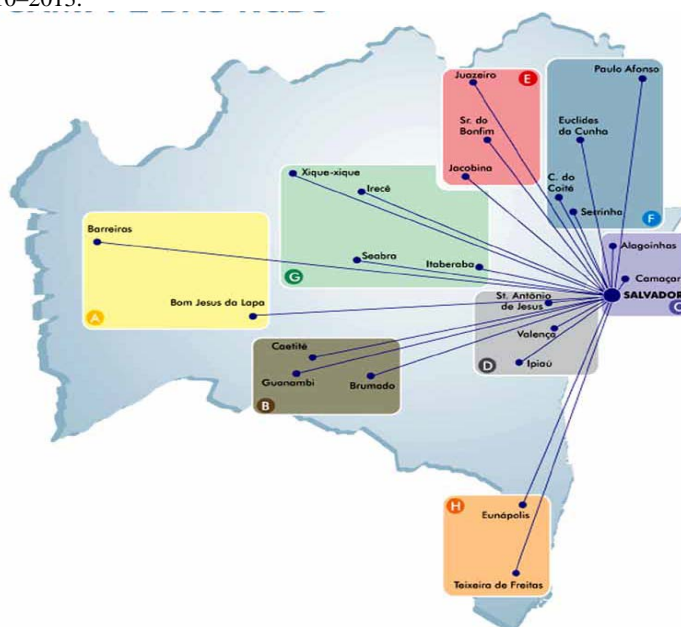


Figure 1 Location of Campuses and Departmental Management Networks on the Map of the State of Bahia, Brazil

Source: UNEB Strategic Plan, 2013

The UNEB Goals Plan (2013), based on the approximation of reciprocal interests and demands from different campi, establishes the formation of networks through the necessity of strengthen projects and institutional programs, as well as the qualification of the productivity and the public expense besides to promote the exchange of experiences and skills for the development of the university and, consequently, the region and the whole State.

The Departmental Management Networks, as planned by the UNEB, are a demonstration of innovation in public university management practices. It also has the potential to strengthen links between regional managers for local development. Almeida and Silva (2014, p. 191) stresses the model implemented by UNEB:

It reflects a new reality in the Brazilian public management, because in the contemporary, the organizational and social dynamics, it drives to the need of modernization of all the structures of the public entities, including in the way of administering. (...) the model adopted by UNEB, a public institution with great capillarity in the State of Bahia, has instruments potentially capable of succeeding in its administrative actions.

The efforts to manage UNEB in such way as to accompany the social transformations and at the same time guarantee the fulfillment of its institutional mission are the endorsement that there are attempts capable of building a university management in harmony with its own nature. With a broad organizational structure, UNEB copes the challenges posed by the current crisis that have settled in Brazilian public universities and the constantly changing social demands, both requiring a cohesive and democratic management.

6. Conclusion

The university culture initiated its organization through the installation of the first medieval institutions. Nowadays, this culture continues to reproduce both its articulated characteristics to the conception of the forms of management. Be training of citizens and professionals, be the recognition of their performance in society, be the reflections of the thoughts and attitudes of the people who engender it daily life (students, teachers and technicians).

Even in the midst of the crises that directly affect higher education in Brazil, UNEB has reaffirmed daily the social commitment inherent to its university composition, through the search for the improvement of actions related to the administration of its multicampi structure, mainly in what concerns the integration and insertion with the local communities of Bahia. The work of its graduates, its research and extension projects and its scope and performance highlight the essential legitimacy of the continuity of the existence of UNEB.

Thus, the importance of the execution of proposals and alternatives in order to strengthen the universities amid the challenges imposed on them is highlighted. The peculiarities related to university management must be considered especially by regarding the bureaucratic inheritance and the interference of the State (be it through the applied policies or the control of the financing), the challenge of maintaining a social institution of this kind in the midst of the privatizing actions of higher education in Brazil and the difficulties of balance between administrative and pedagogical aspects. Without forgetting, besides, the particular characteristics of the multicampi model adopted by UNEB.

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