

Preliminary observations on colonialism in Amazon education research

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Abstract

The work presents a reflection on the data of a research, considering the results of its first twelve months. Thus, the analysis is part of the study "Epistemological and Methodological Aspects of Research in Education in Amazonia" that investigated the research in education of the Postgraduate Program in Education of the Federal University of Amazonas, focusing on epistemological issues and methods. The research is qualitative in nature, the result of the survey of theses and dissertations in the Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations of the Federal University of Amazonas within the time frame between 2013 and 2015. The research was done with the eight theses available online, centering on their theoretical frame, based on the analysis of the geographic origin of the listed works that gave rise to a reflection on scientific colonialism. In this way, we identified researchers from different contexts, with regard to the advisor, other professors from Postgraduate Program in Education of the Federal University of Amazonas and the specific productions from Latin America.

Keywords

Research. Education. Colonialism.

Preliminary observations about education research in the Amazon

Resumo

O trabalho apresenta uma reflexão com base nos dados de uma pesquisa com resultados preliminares dos seus primeiros doze meses. Desse modo, a análise é parte do estudo "Aspectos epistemológicos e metodológicos da pesquisa em educação no Amazonas", que investiga as pesquisas em educação do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação da Universidade Federal do Amazonas, com foco nas questões epistemológicas e metodológicas. A pesquisa é de natureza qualitativa, fruto do levantamento das teses e dissertações na Biblioteca Digital de Teses e Dissertações da Universidade Federal do Amazonas do recorte temporal de 2013-2015. A análise corresponde a oito teses disponíveis *on-line*, que colocam como centralidade a fundamentação teórica presente nos trabalhos disponíveis, com a análise da origem geográfica das obras listadas que deram alicerce para uma reflexão sobre o colonialismo científico. Assim, identificaram-se pesquisadores de distintos contextos, destacando o orientador, os demais docentes do



Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação da Universidade Federal do Amazonas e as produções específicas da América Latina.

Palavras-chave

Pesquisa. Educação. Colonialismo.

Observaciones preliminares sobre la investigación educativa en la Amazonía

Resumen

El trabajo presenta una reflexión basada en datos de una encuesta con resultados preliminares de sus primeros doce meses. Por lo tanto, el análisis es parte del estudio "Aspectos epistemológicos y metodológicos de la investigación en educación en Amazonas", que trata de la investigación educativa en el Programa de Posgrado en Educación de la Universidad Federal de Amazonas, centrándose en cuestiones epistemológicas y metodológicas. La investigación es de naturaleza cualitativa, resultado de la encuesta de tesis y disertaciones en la Biblioteca Digital de Tesis y Disertaciones de la Universidad Federal de Amazonas en el período 2013-2015. El análisis corresponde a ocho tesis disponibles en línea, que se centran en los fundamentos teóricos presentes en los trabajos disponibles, con el análisis del origen geográfico de los trabajos enumerados que proporcionaron la base para una reflexión sobre el colonialismo científico. Así, se identificaron investigadores de diferentes contextos, destacando el orientador, los otros profesores del Programa de Posgrado en Educación de la Universidad Federal de Amazonas y las producciones específicas de América Latina.

Palabras clave

Ciencia. Educación. Colonialismo.

1 Introduction

The growth of educational research in Brazil began in 1970 with the creation and expansion of postgraduate courses. Their focus was on teaching education and research, characterized by the concentration of dissertations and theses that were the testimony of the systematic elaboration of knowledge in the area of education (BENITE, 2009).

For Fávero (2009), the process of expansion of the Graduate Programs in Education occurred in two concurrent movements in the early 1990s, related to the previously mentioned episode. The first is that, with the expansion of the Graduate courses, it was expected greater consolidation of the area, and the second was with the coming of a second expansion of the courses, especially in the North and Northeast regions of the country, and in this context, there was a fear that the new courses would go

through the same mistakes as the pioneer programs, such as having teachers from different areas other than education and, therefore, not proposing themes and problems in the educational field.

Thus, with the growth of studies in the field of education, it is assumed the need to understand how this process is being organized and systematized. According to André (2007), in the last 20 years, due to the expansion of postgraduate studies, there have been changes in themes, problems, theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches, as well as in the contexts of work production.

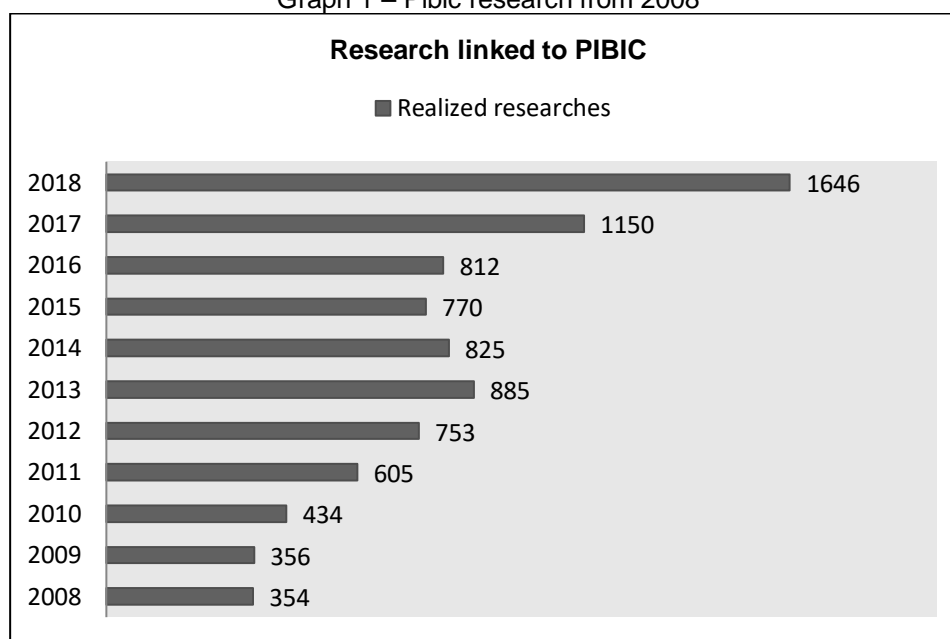
As part of the scenario described, the Graduate Program in Education (PPGE) was established at the Federal University of Amazonas (UFAM) in 1986, with the partnership between the Faculty of Education (Faced) and the former Institute of Humanities and Letters (ICHL). And, after more than thirty years, the Program was consolidated in the offer of master and doctorate, which until mid-2018 trained about 426 masters and 30 doctors, according to the website itself (UFAM, 2018). Thus, the consolidation of the PPGE took as its reference the knowledge of the reality of the Amazon Region, as well as its challenges in the educational field, promoting the dialogue between the various knowledge, in order to articulate the spaces for discussions and their dissemination (BRITO, 2016).

According to the information available in the Sucupira Platform for 2017, available at Coleta Capes (BRASIL, 2018), the Program was established with the thematic nucleus Education, Cultures and Amazon Challenges to express the complexity, emergence and the consequent challenge of forming masters and doctors in a region with its own geographical, political and historical aspects that clash with the concept and with nationally established development processes. Thus, PPGE was the pioneer in the training of professionals in the Northern Region, being, until 2003, the only Postgraduate Program recognized by Capes.

The historical path of consolidation of PPGE in the Amazon context was established from joint actions that were carried out by the faculty and students. It is worth mentioning the presence of graduates who currently represent a little more than 30% of the teachers of the Program, as also recorded in the Capes Collection (BRASIL, 2018). The presence of graduates in the Program reinforces the idea that the formation of new researchers is a necessary challenge within the university itself to establish

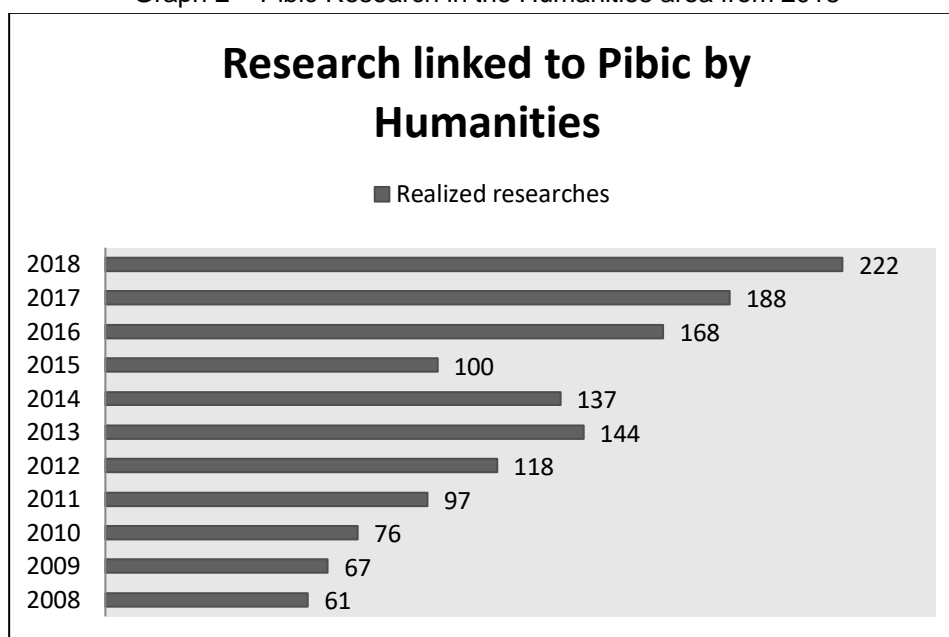
minimum conditions for its consolidation. In this case, the scientific initiation at the Federal University of Amazonas is an integral part of the scientific training developed in the undergraduate courses with the Institutional Program of Scientific Initiation Scholarships (Pibic), being governed by Resolution 040/2012 - Consepe. By the year 2018, 8,590 researches linked to PIBIC have been carried out, corresponding to the capital and inland campuses. Among them, about 1,378 are from the Humanities area, accounted for as of 2008, as this is the period in which project management is carried out by Lira Plataform. Such action enables the verification of the mentioned data, according to data provided by the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies (Propesp-UFAM) through protocol No. 23480027119201815 held at the Transparency Portal – e-Sic.

Graph 1 – Pibic research from 2008



Fonte: Created by the authors with data from Propesp-UFAM.

Graph 2 – Pibic Research in the Humanities area from 2018



Fonte: Created by the authors with data from Proresp-UFAM.

According to the graphs above, it was possible to identify the gradual growth of research linked to the Scientific Initiation. In relation to the initial year of registration, 2008, only in 2014 and 2015 there was a reduction in the total number of researches, growing steadily from 2016 and having a qualitative leap in 2018, when the number doubled compared to 2015 and quadrupled, if compared to the first record.

Pibic, among its objectives, seeks to arouse the scientific interest of undergraduate students through their participation in research projects; promote student access and approach to the scientific context; encourage researchers in the insertion of students regarding the technological, artistic-cultural and scientific activities of the University (UFAM, 2018).

The Pibic growth is part of the strengthening of research in the Region, as an institutional element that integrates its Institutional Development Plan (PDI) 2016/2025 (UFAM, 2016). In this plan, UFAM reaffirms its focus on research, which is aimed at seeking excellence in postgraduate education, expanding postgraduate courses, stimulating research, fostering research partnerships and internationalizing research as institutional policy.

It is in this institutional context that the research project entitled “Epistemological and Methodological Aspects of Educational Research in the Amazon” proposed to investigate educational research. For the sake of clipping and methodological choice, the research refers only to studies developed within the Graduate Program in Education - PPGE/UFAM. As part of its proposal, this article aims to present the results of some data collected in the theses defended in the period 2013-2015 and available online at the University's Thesis and Dissertation Bank. The time frame was defined from 2013 onwards, as it corresponds to the beginning of the first four-year evaluation of the Programs by Capes, and - most importantly - was the moment when the PPGE-UFAM was first evaluated as a Program and not just as a Master's degree course.

2 Methodology

The study on the epistemological and methodological aspects of educational research in the Amazon was a study linked to the Institutional Program for Scientific Initiation Scholarships (Pibic-2017/2018). It was methodologically configured from two angles: the first was guided by the objectives that characterize an explanatory nature, as it analyzed the conditioning and contributing factors for the occurrence of a given phenomenon. According to Gil (2008), this is the propitious type to know a given reality, because it explains the reason, the cause of things; The second angle was manifested in technical procedures - cataloging of papers, identification of the themes, areas defined by Capes, lines of research and methodological approach, culminating in two tables - typifying the study in a documentary research, because the documents - theses and dissertations (PPGE) - which were used as bases did not receive analytical treatment in its entirety or content itself.

The research is framed in this second angle, because, at first, the cataloging of theses and dissertations published in the Graduate Program in Education of the Federal University of Amazonas (PPGE), from 2013 to 2014, was carried out. In the survey, two tables were elaborated - one for the dissertations and the other for the theses -, which typified the works according to their themes, the areas defined by Capes, the research lines and the methodological approaches. It is worth mentioning the change in the temporality criterion initially established in relation to the theses, since only one was

found, referring to the year 2014. This fact led to the enlargement to the year 2015, thus integrating eight theses. Despite the reduced number of theses, the quantitative represents all the existing works in the period, and, as a qualitative research, the quantitative is not a limiting factor for the proposed analysis. In total, three tables were prepared: the first two correspond to the objectives initially outlined in the project, built from readings of Marlí André's productions (2001, 2007) - more specifically the "Pesquisa em Educação: buscando rigor e qualidade"¹, which indicates some aspects of research that have historically changed, such as the themes and methodological approaches that make up the structure of the tables.

The tables were completed by reading the abstracts of the analyzed works, which sought to identify the theme, the framing in the areas defined in the Capes Worksheet, research lines and methodological approach. As for the themes, they were determined by the keywords indicated in the summaries themselves. In the definition of the areas foreseen by Capes, two or more areas were identified in a single work, a fact that justified the choice for the classification based on the research line indicated in each thesis. The research line was determined from the linkage of the work advisor analyzed in relation to the existing lines in the PPGE. Finally, the aspects of the methodological approach as well as the thematic approach were extracted based on what the master's and doctoral students defined in the analyzed abstracts.

When the summary was not sufficient for the framework described above, it was necessary to extend the reading to the chapters that corresponded only to the methodologies. This procedure was adopted in both dissertations and theses, in order to standardize the research action to meet the aspect of the methodological approach.

In addition to the readings, the orientation processes were fundamental for the options and referrals adopted regarding the search for information, analysis and interpretation of results. As part of this moment, an orientation book was built that, in addition to the referrals, also recorded reflections, doubts and advances identified in the course of the research. In this case, some methodological options were constituted as part of the study, without necessarily being foreseen or determined. The systematization of data in tables and the framing of themes in areas defined by Capes

¹ Education Research: seeking rigor and quality.

reflects the process described, as it resulted from the orientation and dynamics of the research itself.

In fact, in the scientific initiation, at times we realize that the readings and the initial project do not account for the complexity experienced. In the case of the themes, initially the reference was the studies by André (2001, 2007), which guided the study, but the proposed set could not fit some works according to the proposed themes, because the production of PPGE-UFAM has transversal and specific themes, fact equated when taking as reference the researched advisor line. Most works did not textually display the Program Line ID.

As mentioned earlier, three tables were prepared. The third refers only to the theses as a development of the research, identifying if the productions cited works by PPGE researchers and the advisor and contained local, national and international references, especially productions from Latin America. These aspects came from an additional concern that arose during the course of the study.

The research constantly used resources linked to information and communication technologies. In this way we highlight the cataloging in the Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations of the Federal University of Amazonas and the Transparency Portal - e-Sic. Thus, we confirmed the determinant use of digital technology, such as the sources of free access to online journals, which allowed the expansion of access to productions that contributed to the foundation of this study. Thus, it is noteworthy how digital technologies have been composing the content of various researches in the field of Social and Human Sciences.

It is this perspective of expanding access to online productions that the study began to assume in relation to the productions of PPGE and Latin America, since, from the use of the internet, we expected a greater possibility of circulation of these productions, and, consequently, its use, formally indicated in the thesis reference lists, equating to those of geographically privileged spaces and, thus, reaching a more significant level in the scope of academic productions.

3 Results and discussion

The schedule for the development of the study established four months for reading and bibliographic analysis, but, with the progress of the research and the orientations, it was noticeable that the foundation of the theme is an inseparable activity from the other stipulated phases. Consequently, the methodological conduct itself was an important result, since it was configured as an experience for the exercise of what theoretically presents itself as a characteristic of the development of research in education.

Thus, the Scientific Initiation has become a fundamental activity to understand and carry out issues related to the research axis defined as part of the teaching, research and extension triad, necessary for the training of educators at the Federal University of Amazonas, because among the competences and skills of this professional it is assumed, that at the end of graduation, he/she will be able to “[...] articulate teaching and research in the production of knowledge and pedagogical practice” (UFAM, 2012a, p. 13). In a continuous, procedural and integrated manner, the theoretical and bibliographic foundation was methodologically based on the authors who initially constituted the project proposal, such as André (2001, 2007) and Gamboa (1998, 2013). André’s studies contributed to guide the understanding of the context of educational research in Brazil, regarding the expansion of Graduate Programs, together with Benite (2009) and Fávero (2008).

The researches were also associated and corroborated by the perspective of the search of the rigor and quality of the productions proposed by Gamboa (1998, 2013), as fomentation for methodological and epistemological reflection about the productions, in the company of authors like Mello (1983), Gouveia (2005) and Gatti (1983).

Throughout the stages, other authors were composing the founding body of the study, such as Santos (2002, 2007) and Quijano (2005), coming from both the orientation and the process of autonomy that should be a premise for those who already dedicate themselves to the research process while still undergraduate.

Regarding the cataloging of theses and dissertations of the timeframe from 2013 to 2014, twenty-seven dissertations and one thesis of the year 2014 were identified in the UFAM Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations. It was immediately noticed that only

one thesis would be sufficient for the proposed analysis. The existence of the only thesis lies in the fact that the Postgraduate Program in Education (PPGE) in 1998 - two years after the first selection for the doctorate - was suspended as a result of an evaluation by Capes (BRITO, 2016). Thus, the offer of the doctorate was resumed only in 2010, after the expansion of the network that resulted in the defense of new theses from 2014, which is why the study was expanded to 2015, in relation to the theses, thus totaling eight papers for the analysis.

From the available works and the indicated references, an analysis matrix was constructed, represented by two tables - one for each modality - that typified dissertations and theses regarding the predominant theme, the area defined by Capes, the research line and the methodological approach. This activity directly met the proposed objective for scientific initiation in relation to the epistemological and methodological issues of research in education in the Postgraduate Program in Education (PPGE), without this being an element of analysis in this work.

Table 1 – Dissertations (2013-2014)

Line	Theme	Fins		Methodology			Focus		
		BIBL.	CAMP.	QL.	QT.	QL./QT.	POS.	FEN.	M.H.D.
1	Cultural identity (4/7)	-	7/7	6/7	-	1/7	-	1/7	-
2	Public policies (5/11)	5/11	6/11	9/11	-	2/11	-	-	4/11
3	Teacher training (4/6)	1/6	5/6	6/6	-	-	-	1/6	1/6
4	Special Education (2/3)	3/3	-	3/3	-	-	-	-	1/3

Source: Created by the authors from the data obtained from the dissertations.

Before presenting the second table, related to the theses, it is necessary to clarify that the PPGE, when offering the Doctorate, has only two lines of research, since the four lines of the Master's degree are integrated and transformed into Lines 2 and 3. Thus, Line 2 of the Doctorate integrates the menu of line 4 of the master, while Line 3, integrates line 1 of the master.

Table 2 – Theses (2014-2015)

Line	Theme	Fins		Methodology			Focus		
		BIBL.	CAMP.	QL.	QT.	QL./QT.	POS.	FEN.	M.H.D.
1	Diverse (3)	1/3	2/3	3/3	-	–	–	–	–
2	Teacher training (4/5)	1/5	4/5	4/5	–	1/5	–	–	1/5

Source: Created by the author from the data obtained from the theses.

In the process of typifying existing PPGE productions based on the reading of part of dissertations and theses, we noticed little reference to the research developed in PPGE itself and the almost absence of mention of the works published by the Program's teachers. In fact, this article is also motivated by this additional concern, because, even though not initially foreseen, the situation evidenced is part of an important scenario in the history of Education Programs in Brazil, linked to the issue of scientific production that imposes itself as the main quality criterion to the PPGs and the relation of scientific subordination of the existing productions in the Northern Region of Brazil.

In this context, the study sought to identify which theoretical bases are present in the list of references of all theses. This is based on the idea that research at PPGE-UFAM systematizes a way of understanding and explaining the educational reality present in the Amazonian context. In this interpretation and understanding of education in the Amazon, one could suppose the existence of a national and international theoretical basis, as part of the necessary dialogue, but which, based on independence and autonomy in relation to what characterizes and identifies us, would privilege authors and productions engaged in research in the northern region. However, by organizing the information for the proposed analysis framework, according to the objectives of the study, it became evident the reduced presence of local scientific productions.

Thus, the third table sought to highlight the use of works by the advisor of each thesis, other PPGE researchers, production from the state of Amazonas - local production -, national, international and Latin American production, in the eight theses. It was from this last specified table that we chose to present, at this time, the previous analysis of the data obtained, because the purpose is to indicate only the development of the research results.

Table 3 – Developments of the research

Theses 2014-2015					
8 Works		932 References			
Advisor	PPGE Researchers	National production	Local production	Internat. production	Latin American Production
4 (50%)	5 (62,5%)	585 (62,76%)	88 (9,44%)	248 (26,60%)	11 (1,18%)

Source: Created by the authors.

When quantitatively cataloging the number and characteristics of references present in the theses, we observed the low quantity of theses that cited works from Latin America. The option to emphasize local and Latin American researchers separately from national and international production is based on the perception that the research developed in the Program seems to reinforce a process of scientific colonization. Thus, of the eight theses, four allude to the advisor's own works and five others refer to internal productions or directly linked to the PPGE. Grossly, there was a presence of PPGE references in at least 75% of the theses defended and cataloged, but this relationship becomes residual considering that a total of 932 references used in the eight theses were identified.

Of the total references identified, only 88 productions are from the State of Amazonas, that is, only 9.44% of the total, for a majority of works from other regions, which represented about 62.76%, or 585 productions. The other references represent the international scientific production with about 26.60%, corresponding to 248. In the international field, it was considered significant the geographical and political location of the Amazon, and it is important to identify the dialogue between the productions and research developed within the Latin America, but only 11 works were registered - among the countries, Colombia and Cuba were identified, each with 02 works; Mexico and Argentina, each with 03 works; and Panama, with only one work. This constitutes 1.18% of the references.

The totals disposed are representative in relation to the debate established by Santos (2007) about the subordination of certain knowledge in relation to others, which are considered as the only ones relevant to society. And this fact is justified because our society is marked by the abyssal thinking, which:

It consists of a system of visible and invisible distinctions, the latter being the foundation of the former. Invisible distinctions are drawn through radical lines that divide social reality into two distinct universes: 'this side of the line' and 'the other side of the line'. The division is such that 'the other side of the line' disappears as reality, becomes nonexistent and is even produced as nonexistent. (SANTOS, 2007, p. 71, translated).

This characteristic of western modern thinking can be compared to the one identified in relation to the data resulting from the theses, because the aspects that involved the regional and Latin American scenario were the ones that presented the smallest quantities in the analyzed works.

According to Meneses (2008), the term "coloniality of power" was attributed to the hierarchies of knowledge, economic systems, politics and the hegemony of Eurocentric cultures. The author also exemplifies manifestations of the type of epistemic coloniality, such as the constant presence of reproductions of discrimination and stereotypes.

And this term portrays the colonial domination that constituted America, more specifically Latin America, decisively resulting in two implications of the new form of power - coloniality - which implicitly instituted the cognitive pattern, which conceived the knowledge of non-Europeans as outdated and inferior (QUIJANO, 2005).

Also according to the author, it was in America that the new historical identities were elaborated based on the idea of race and associated with hierarchies, also constituting relationships of domination, that is, racial identity became a criterion of social classification, and, principally, legitimizing the relations of domination, naturalizing them.

The coloniality previously defined is close to the understanding of the Western rationality model, supported by Santos (2002) ideas, which they call it indolent reason, with four different forms of occurrence: impotent, arrogant, metonymic and proleptic reasons. To overcome such a model of rationality, the author proposes cosmopolitan reason.

However, the preponderant presence of national and international references in the PPGE theses is far from cosmopolitan reason and approaches metonymic reason, where the logic for the whole and the parts is governed by a homogeneity, which prevents the parties from exist without the relation to the whole, and this relationship occurs through the dichotomy - the most refined way of such -, which is constituted by the junction of symmetry with hierarchy, as in the examples, scientific/traditional knowledge, civilized/primitive, man/woman, among others (SANTOS, 2002).

The data obtained in the analysis of theses may be related to what Mourão (2018) denounces in the presentation of the publication of *Revista Amazônica* of the second semester of 2017 regarding the productivist logic to which the Education Programs are submitted, with distanced evaluations from the specificities of the Brazilian regions, becoming necessary the constant resistance and struggle on the part of the Programs.

It should be pointed out that the metonymic reason requires three understandings, still according to the author: that understanding of the western world is limited to understanding of the world; that understanding generates and recognizes social power from conceptions of time and temporality; and that Western rationality is characterized by the contraction of the present and the expansion of the future.

Through these three understandings, cosmopolitan reason must seek the opposite course, that is, expand the present and contract the future, thus avoiding the waste of productions. Moreover, for each path a sociology is indicated, “[...] to expand the present I propose a sociology of absences; to contract the future, a sociology of emergencies” (SANTOS, 2002, p. 239). And, so that social experiences are properly explained, the author suggests the work of translation.

The reason that asserts itself as exclusive and homogeneous becomes a restricted understanding of the world, among the most diverse, and of itself. Also according to Santos (2002), such reason, together with the proleptic, are the ones that really found Western rationality, and should be further debated. This is why questions about the other reasons do not promote greater impacts.

Therefore, the research indicates the existence of the logic of abyssal thinking that founds Western rationality, basically acting to exclude, rendering nonexistent all that escapes the hegemonic parameters established by it, acting in a colonial relationship, either of domination or exploitation.

This model of Western rationality generates too much waste of various knowledge that is disregarded by society, justified by the indolent reason that assumes the homogeneity of the whole and the parts as order. In this way, all production that escapes this logic is excluded and fixed as non-existent for western society, promoting the devaluation of what does not fit the hegemonic standards.

The initial results of this work are part of a set of studies that intend to deepen and articulate the Postgraduate offer process in Latin America and especially in the Amazon, based on the Amazonian challenges that raise and point out issues such as the subalternity lived and reproduced that bring us closer to a South-South relationship that we have begun to establish.

4 Final considerations

In the analysis by the epistemological and methodological options of theses and dissertations, the research identified in the theoretical bases of the works the small number of researchers from the state, especially those linked to the University Program in Education. An unfolding of research that could not be overlooked, since the Postgraduate Program in Education of the Federal University of Amazonas commits to discuss about the Amazonian context, therefore, it was assumed the consolidation of authors from the region, fact which unfortunately did not present itself.

The timid presence of the productions of the State of Amazonas and Latin America compared to the quantity of works cited in the national and international scenarios among the eight analyzed theses reaffirms the denunciation of several scholars of the social sciences and related areas, of the existence of a subordinate relationship of knowledge, fruit of the relationship of domination imposed in the period of colonization of America, that triggered the coloniality of the power, lasting until today.

It is therefore necessary, in the struggle for autonomy, the urgency to overcome the current model of rationality, for one that starts from the presupposition of the existence and validity of various knowledge, in a perspective that goes against the homogeneity and especially the subalternity of knowledge.

The trajectory of the present research does not end with this work. It has been renewed. For its second year, it will seek to deepen the theoretical basis of research in education of the Graduate Program in Education of the Federal University of Amazonas, and compare them with those of six and seventh grade programs awarded by Capes in the last four-year evaluation.

Finally, the study initially sought to contribute to the fostering of discussion about what has been used as the theoretical foundation of research and which lenses the researchers of the Program are taking.

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