Chapter 16
The Constitutive Crisis of Universities: Born to Be for Few, Challenged to Be for All

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Since their historical origin, European universities appear in the beginning of the post-Medieval Age of Enlightenment to amplify the offer of educational qualification, that was until then limited to the claustrum of monasteries. It seems that Charlemagne in 814 determined this high-level educational role for the Church, through his decision that every cathedral and monastery in his empire should establish a school to provide free education to every boy (no girls) that could follow a course of study.

The emperor's aim was to create a group of educated ***priests*** upon which both the empire and local communities could rely on leadership. Educational offers during the medieval–ecclesiastical period were rich and diverse, even though this period is frequently called "Dark Ages". Most plans of study covered a "three-part curriculum", a ***trivium***, consisting of ***grammar, rhetoric***, and ***logic***—and a ***quadrivium,*** a "four-part curriculum", covering ***arithmetic, geometry, astronomy***, and ***music.*** Grammar covered reading and writing properly, both in vernacular language and Latin (the universal language of the European educated classes); rhetoric focused on the ability of publicly speaking and disputing ideas; and logic aimed to provide means of demonstrating the validity of propositions, as well as serving as an introduction to the ***quadrivium*** (http://tinyurl.com/y9pwve26).

A central characteristic marked this medieval system of complete education—it was designed for very few people, not only due to logistics (reading materials were manuscripts available in very few copies), but also because it was only addressed to "trusted" people—those for whom the epistemological position could be described in terms of "*believe* (as in have faith) *in order to see/understand*—***crede ut***

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intelligas", opposed to "*see/understand/demonstrate* in order to believe—***intellige ut credas***", also represented by the motto ***sappere aude*** ("dare to know").[1]

The first precursors of universities emerged along with the first printed books (with special emphasis for the Encyclopaedia and the Holy Bible in vernacular language), the beginning of the French Revolution, the scientific revolution and scientific academies, literary salons, coffee houses—all of which constituted a very strong social–historical context of appearance of a new, post-scholastic frame for knowledge. The fulcrum of scientific revolution was the substitution of religious dogmas as frames of inquiry by reason, assisted by empirical evidence. From this point of view, authority (politically or scholastically based) should be replaced by demonstrable reasoning, as proposed by Galileo Galilei—which cost him the accusation of heresy: "All our Fathers of the devout Convent of St. Mark feel that [Galileo's] letter contains many statements which seem presumptuous or suspect, as when it states that the words of Holy Scripture do not mean what they say; *that in discussions about natural phenomena the authority of Scripture should rank last*… [the followers of Galileo] were taking it upon themselves *to expound the Holy Scripture according to their private lights and in a manner different from the common interpretation of the Fathers of the Church*… (Letter from Lorini to Cardinal Sfrondato, Inquisitor in Rome, 1615—http://tinyurl.com/gll6fr9, italics added). Political, religious and philosophical zeitgeist by the Age of Enlightenment contributed to the flourishing of ideals like separation of church and state, constitutional government, civil rights, tolerance, citizenship and democracy (Outram 2006, p. 29). But it must be said that the Church itself, by the year 1079 and through a papal decree issued by the controversial Pope Gregory VII,[2] had ordered that all European cathedrals and major monasteries should establish schools for the training of clergy.

The result was a great expansion of education by the end of Medieval Age, which somehow prepared the society for the Enlightenment revolution. That was the case in the medieval village of Paris, whose cathedral of Notre Dame and buildings nearby logged many teachers and students attached to the cathedral and monasteries schools (Sainte Geneviève, Saint Germain des Près et Saint Victor were among the most known—http://tinyurl.com/y9pwve26). This pre-university community of students and teachers, all of them Latin speakers (since most courses were given in Latin), would give rise to the renowned Quartier Latin. A union of students from the Quartier Latin, formed in order to face Parisian bartenders after a street battle in the year of 1200, was given the usual Latin term ***universitas***, and is considered the embryo of latter University of Paris, at first named *The University of*

[1]The struggle between these two epistemological positions is illustrated by the drama of Saint Abelard and his pupil (who became his wife and intellectual partner) Heloise, described in Abelard's *Historia Calamitatum* (A history of my calamities—1132—cf. http://tinyurl.com/yax77a3z).

[2]The Pope Gregory VII became famous because of the ***Investiture Controversy,*** a conflict between him and the German King Henry IV concerning the right to appoint church officials in the Catholic Church (http://tinyurl.com/y79sppaf).

the Masters and Students of Paris (http://tinyurl.com/y9pwve26). Soon realizing their power and prestige in Parisian society, this union obtained from the French King Philip corporate rights, privileges and protection: the members were given the rights to establish curriculum, requirements and standards of accomplishment; to debate any subject and uphold in debate any subject; to choose their own members; protection from local police; and the right of each member to keep their license to teach as soon as they had been admitted to full membership (http://tinyurl.com/y9pwve26). The University, as an institution, was born.

The first western universities, following this historical movement, were no more institutions exclusively devoted to educate priests in a philosophical–religious–rhetorical domain, but offered instead opportunity to the development of inquiries based on research questions in domains like cosmology, laws of floating, human anatomy, blood circulation. Since their historical roots, as a union of students and masters, universities were designed for a limited number of people, admitted in conformity with internal rules. Their first, central and common aim was to "maintain quality in terms of pursuing scholarship", as mentioned by Misra and Mishra (2018), referring to contemporary universities from India. In fact, this founding aim is constitutive of the ethos of all universities across time and countries. At the same time, the effort of opening the arena of inquiry and reasoning to *everyone* that was able to consider any *thesis* as *hypothesis,* submitting it to empirical examination and proof, dislocated the source of regulations and power from the Church. Power, nevertheless, is like air—it fears the vacuum. That is why, from the time of their ancestor, the *University of the Masters and Students of Paris,* one of the most cherished principles of universities is the right of self-regulation. However, since their very beginning, universities were never situated in social, cultural and historical emptiness and thus have been submitted, in fact, to many structural, constitutive paradoxes in their historical route.

We have quoted above the chapter of Misra and Mishra (2018) in this volume, when they stressed that the first, central and common aim of universities (in India and elsewhere) was to "(…) maintain quality in terms of pursuing scholarship", but there is a second and equally challenging aim of all universities, since their historical beginning to contemporary, globalizing times: "(…) becoming inclusive and adhering to the values of equality and secularism". These same Indian authors, quoting Altbach, 1976,[3] mention that "…some of the demands placed on higher education are impossible, others are contradictory and all are difficult to achieve". In fact, how to be exclusive and inclusive at the same time? This constitutive drama can be summarized in terms of three aspects, mentioned in the chapters of Part II of this book—Universities in the middle of globalization. The commonality of these aspects across the chapters shows how global and pervasive they are. The first one concerns having access to the university, both as student and teacher; the second is how to evaluate universities, which is directly linked to the third, which includes the

[3]Altbach (1976). Quoted by Misra and Mishra (2018).

ways of acquiring and maintaining academic power, and also money. Let me problematize these aspects.

Entering the University

One of the strongest memories I have from the day I presented my doctorate thesis for a jury at University of Paris-5—René Descartes/Sorbonne is a compliment I received from one of the civil servants in charge of cleaning and housekeeping of the university buildings: "*Now, you are able, together with the bishop of Paris, the King of France and the other doctors of this university, to cross once a year the Porta Magna of la Sorbonne!*" Doors are powerful cultural symbols, since they represent, with the concreteness of strong metaphors, the rite of passage from outside to inside—the very process, as mentioned by Arnold Van Gennep, where the aggregation to a new community is formally achieved (http://tinyurl.com/ybbg28cr).[4] I, previously a southern foreigner from the amazing country of Brazil, had become a member of an extremely selective community—and this was realized by the civil servant—also someone from abroad, but in the condition of immigrant worker excluded from the selected group I had just entered.

Becoming a member of a university, in current global times, means crossing a door in theory open to anyone, but in fact mostly restricted to the elites. In southern countries like India and Brazil, with very unequal societies, Universities (especially public ones) and Government struggle to implement the project of including everyone in the university community, as opportunities of access to quality basic education—which determine the chances of later accessing universities—are not equal from the start. Aiming to reduce this gap, Brazilian governments institute policies of affirmative quotas to benefit at-risk groups. Since 2012, a law[5] establishes the obligatory reservation of 50% of vacancies of 59 Brazilian public universities and 38 federal institutes of science and technology to individuals coming from public schools or individuals that consider themselves as belonging to ethnic groups like black, brown ("pardos") and Amerindians (Andrade 2004) (the other half of vacancies is filled through grade-based ranking without priorities). Brazil, it must be noted, has the largest black population in South America, but universities and private elementary and secondary schools are still predominantly white. The effectiveness and adequacy of the quotas have been under debate since their legal enforcement, not only inside the universities but across Brazilian society.

One of the crucial aspects in this debate is mentioned by Misra and Mishra (2018) when referring to efforts of the Indian Committee on Corporate Participation

[4]"Le seuil est par excellence le lieu où (…) s'initient et s'achèvent les «rites de passage» : lieu de sortie, de séparation de sa communauté d'origine, il est aussi le lieu qui marque l'entrée et où s'opère l'agrégation à une communauté nouvelle" (Arnold Van Gennep, in http://tinyurl.com/ybbg28cr).

[5]Brazilian Federal Law nº **12.711, from 29 August 2012**—http://tinyurl.com/ng7a7rf.

in Higher Education, established in 2012 and accused to "(…) accept a massified HE (higher education) without quality substance". This is, in fact, a global dilemma, a societal debate everywhere.

Evaluating Universities

Evaluation is a pervasive, global idea that is central to universities all around the world. Evaluation is directly linked to competitiveness, as pointed out by Satsyk (2018) in the title of his chapter, and competitiveness is the condition to the maintenance of universities. Evaluation, on the other hand, is the way through which society and its political instances can influence university profile and targets. In the context of the Ukrainian scenario, Satsyk points out some crucial determinants of competitiveness of universities: they are, in general, "(…) internationalization of education and research activities, sweeping innovative changes in teaching and science, broad diversification of fundamental and applied research". Yes, but as the saying goes, *you get what you pay for*: how much does it cost to build a good/excellent competitive university? According to a study of 50 countries conducted by the same author (Satsyk 2014[6]), the "optimal" amount of average government spending, in order to ensure maximum representation of universities in the world rankings and high-quality higher education, is about 6000–18,000 USD per student/per year. In Brazil, the cost invested is about USD 5000. As pointed out by Satsyk "(…) universities from developing countries have to deal with advanced research and improve quality standards of higher education simultaneously (a combination called "breadth" and "depth" strategies at university level)". This is a second dilemma, close to the exclude/include one: how to provide means for general standards of teaching (undergraduate level) and, at the same time, advanced, innovative research? This very question has also a clear impact on planning teachers' careers.

According to Heidmets and colleagues (2018), there are at least four groups of relevant players concerned with evaluation of universities, each of them with specific interests and aims: the state, the academia, the market and the students. For these authors, "(…) a common and shared understanding of a "good university" or an "excellent lecturer" does not exist". We completely agree. It also has important political consequences in countries where the choice of leading administrators (rectors, deans, directors of joint academic unities) is based on vote—as is the case in most Brazilian public universities.[7]

[6]Quoted in Satsyk (2018).

[7]The indication of rectors for Brazilian public universities was based on lists elaborated by colleges of professionally distinguished academic staff members of concerned universities. These lists were usually compounded by six names of indicated candidates (sextuple lists—"listas sêxtuplas"—in decrescent order of recommendation from the first to the sixth name), and the president of the Republic had the institutional authority to choose one among these six names,

Evaluation of universities, in a global-comparative way, leading to international rankings, forces evaluators to establish parameters, and these parameters must be objective, explicit and rigorously defined. Here again, the diversity of activities covered by a university makes it difficult, perhaps impossible, to be equally objective when evaluating research and teaching, for example, as discussed by Heidmets and his colleagues. In Brazil, as in many other countries, university research is centrally evaluated according to the quantity and quality of specific products—papers/chapters/books published and effectively read (i.e. published in journals with high impact factors[8]) by the members of the scientific community; projects with their own budgets; and patents—are among the most important products, as discussed by Stavytskyy (2018) in his chapter. In this context, specific domains internally generate their evaluation criteria, through the annual average number of publications, or the indication of the best products in a specific period. Expressing quality in terms of numbers is, per se, a very difficult activity, but at the same time widely disseminated. The task can be even harder, as in the case of trying to propose "products" in order to evaluate teaching, services, social engagement, among others.

Prestige and Money: Power for Universities

What should the profile of a good/excellent teacher in these globalizing times be? Heidmets and colleagues (2018) ask this very question in their chapter. Here, once more, the struggle between societal (external) demands and academic (internal) ones is present. Society, as pointed out by Heidmets, "(…) is not a coherent whole with universal expectations", but is instead "(…) composed of very different interest groups." In fact, three groups compose the societal source of demands, as mentioned by these authors: the "state"—seen as government/political forces worried about general policies (as, for example, *should our university system be clearly connected to our specific demands?)*; the "academia" mainly worried about offering teaching and doing (pure and applied) research; and finally, the "market" worried about paying for papers, but especially for products and industrial patents. We very much agree with Heidmets and colleagues' comment that "(…)

independently of any ranking order, or to refuse the whole list, asking for another. This system lasted until the end of military dictatorship in Brazil, being modified after re-democratization in terms of the constitution of the sextuple list, that turned to be based on a voting system with the whole university community: teachers, students and technical staff (even though there still exist some variation in the proportional participation of each of these three segments for the final result of the election).

[8]As explained and discussed by Stavytskyy (2018), the impact of an academic journal is objectively indicated by the The Impact Factor or Journal Impact Factor (JIF)—a measure reflecting the yearly average number of citations to recent articles published in that journal (cf. http://tinyurl.com/n9syy2p).

expectations of different interest groups may not only differ but sometimes even contradict each other." Additionally, this contradiction has a clear impact on teachers' choices and careers. If a university teacher aims to be known for the excellence of their teaching, they will be disappointed sooner or later: nowadays, a socially recognized university teacher is one who effectively develops research and, of course, publishes the results generating impact.

What is pointed out for Tallinn University by Heidmets and colleagues (2018) also holds in Brazil and probably pretty much everywhere: "(…) the position of a university lecturer is degrading and changing from an honourable intellectual to a knowledge worker." "Knowledge workers" have increasingly low social reputation in the whole academic system—they have very limited chance to obtain budget support for any supplementary activity, as academic missions abroad, for example; the implacable logic of "publish or perish" became a mantra and an academic death sentence for most teachers in contemporary universities. On the other hand, as pointed out by Heidmets and colleagues 2018, lecturers and students differ clearly in their evaluation of a good university, and in their recommendations in order to build a university of excellence: for lecturers, research, development and creative activity are the main aspects to take into account in university institutional plans; while students strongly emphasize teaching and learning as crucial. Interestingly, the report mentioned by Heidmets and colleagues state that "(…) happiness and successfulness of graduates are not mentioned [as relevant aspects in universities evaluation] by academic staff at all".

Each of the three actors mentioned above (state, academia and market) are heterogeneous, as pointed out by Heidmets and his co-authors. Academia, for example, is proposed by these authors to encompass administrative staff (rectors, deans, presidents, directors of academic unities, etc.), and full-time academic personnel (teachers in various career levels). Their interests, emphases and worries, are not always convergent, but very frequently these teachers are invited to assume administrative responsibilities—even though these researchers have no administrative experience at all. This aspect, combined with the need of taking into account, simultaneously, academic and administrative–legal demands, has sometimes dramatic results: in October 2017, a Brazilian rector from an important public university—Federal University of Santa Catarina—committed suicide by leaping to death from the top floor of a shopping centre.

This reflects a structural difficulty, in many countries, and especially in Brazil. It is difficult to establish a dialogue among new scenarios of universities that try to advance in research, teaching and innovation, and the justice system based on previous, more conservative regulations that frequently mismatch new arrangements between public and private interests as corruption and inadequate use of public funds.[9] The same explanation applies to the arrest and coercive conduct of

[9]The Brazilian "Lava Jato Operation", inspired by a similar Italian initiative, called "Mani Pulite Operation", is a large police operation with 39 phases so far, that has already produced a deep impact on Brazilian politics and public administration. The operation led to the arrest of former

the rector and vice-rector of the Federal University of Minas Gerais, in November 2017, accused to have inadequately used public funds. Are these academic authorities dishonest? For those who have made this move from scientific laboratories to university administration offices, which is probably the case of many contributors for this book (including myself), the main challenges to accomplish are to acquire a complex set of abilities and competences in quite a short time (since we —teachers and researchers—were not formed in public administration), and to engage our private responsibilities (and even our honorabilities—what seems to be the crucial explanation for the suicide of University of Santa Catarina's Rector) when taking some technical decisions with serious legal consequences. That is the case, for example, among Brazilian university administrators of research who must decide if a project concerns effectively or predominantly research (instead of services, or teaching), in order to authorize the payment of scholarships, that are exempt of taxes according to Brazilian law. If a university responsible of this sector agrees in evaluating a proposition as a research project, but audit authorities disagree, the responsible person will be preliminarily considered suspicious and even eventually arrested, depending on the interpretation of a federal judge. In Brazil, nowadays, being inculpated is the same as being guilty—the traditional press and social networks amplifying this inquisition procedure.

The stress reported above has, nevertheless, a positive face: we leave, in global terms, a process called by Misra and Mishra (2018) a "knowledge-driven industrial revolution." Knowledge-building sites are moving from universities to private, commercial establishments; that is the case for many countries among those hosting the world top ten universities, as USA, South Korea and Japan. This revolution changes drastically a lot of patterns, beliefs and attitudes, beginning by the profile of universities budget providers. Universities around the world are (or might be) today integrated to their respective country's economy, and all countries are integrated to world economy. Usual representation of scientific researchers as monks exempt of any interest in personal profit, and laboratories completely funded by public budget and equally prohibited of benefiting from their industrial patents, are by now completely withdrawn.

Final Remarks

People use to say that the only way to be global is first being local. In fact, global tendencies are always locally translated, adapted or customized—there are plenty of terms to describe this dynamics between the specific, locally situated, and the

ministers, the ex-president of the House of Representatives, a senator and staff from the country's main civil construction companies (http://tinyurl.com/yb497nu3).

general, the global, those phenomena occurring outside and through the borders. In universities, the very topic of globalization (sometimes connected to the topic of internationalization) is frequently submitted, to some extent, to a political–ideological debate, concerning: (a) the need of taking into account the responsibility of a local–regional–national agenda of aspects; (b) such agenda probably having no interest at all for foreigners.

As vice-president for research in Brazilian Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, located in northeast of Brazil, I frequently hear such twofold argument against the need of internationalization (through publishing in English) from Human and Social Sciences researchers. "*What is the use, for a Japanese anthropologist, of the specificities of Brazilian hero Macunaíma*[10]*—the fictive representative of Brazilian ethos?*" On the other hand, physicists, biologists, chemists and other "hard-science" workers are highly unlikely to ask similar questions. This is a problem for me, as university vice-president for research, since we try to have general rules to central domains of university life—such as research. In this context, the usual consequence is the establishment of a two-level organization of "international" (first-rank) domains, and "local" (second-rank) domains (with written communication in Portuguese).

Yes, the character Macunaíma can be universal, international, a matter of interest for Japanese and other foreigners, as much as Japanese Kabuki theatre could be interesting for Brazilian students of arts and many other domains. Being able to be in contact with diverse ***weltanschauungs***, through very local, "private" phenomena, is a civilizing exercise. As proposed by Jaan Valsiner, "the developing person moves towards constantly open horizons both in the interior of one's Psyche and in the exterior of one's exploration of the external world and creating its meaningfulness through signs. Persons create signs and, through these signs, themselves, in their human uniqueness." He concludes pointing out that "The person is social because he/she is constantly transcending the immediate social context through semiotic mediation: "I am X but today I want to act as Y" leads to new personal experiencing that in its turns leads to the person actually becoming Y" (Valsiner 2014, pp. 64–65). It is possible being global though the uniqueness of being X_- or X-ian: Japanese, Portuguese, Brazilian, American, Estonian. It is not only possible but also necessary, in order to amplify the opportunities of dramatic collisions (Veresov 2014; Vygotski 2014).

Globalization of universities is submitted to the same tensions of globalization in general: this is a world of unequal opportunities. If universities in New Zealand, as mentioned by Robert D. Greenberg (2018) in his chapter, can elect enrolment of foreign students as a criterion for national university evaluation and budget allocation, this is much more difficult to universities from countries that historically have been sending students abroad, much more than receiving. Inequalities, by the

[10]Macunaima, novel written by Mario de Andrade and first published in Portuguese in 1928, and one of the masterworks of Brazilian literature, is a comic folkloric novel about the adventures of a popular hero whose fate is intended to define the national character of Brazil.

way, can equally occur inside countries: large countries like Brazil have universities very well evaluated, according to international criteria, and at the same time universities that seem to have dramatically stopped in the historical mouvance. Finally, inside each university in many countries it is possible to find once more, in miniature, the same global gestalt of diversity and inequality of importance, social place, power and access to opportunities. As Brazilians use to say, *rivers go towards the sea*….

Universities were born in the context of paradoxes—this is the main source of their historical, political and cultural interest. The paradoxical movement of opening the arena of debate to all those able to offer a good idea, together with the protection of a specific community by the establishment of admission and career criteria, is in fact constitutive of universities, across time and geography. Global competitiveness is, once more, a context where paradoxes are present; if we take a look at the list of "key determinants of the global competitiveness of universities", summarized and discussed by Satsyk (2018) in his chapter, we soon realize how difficult it is to carry out all requirements: consider, for example, being able "to achieve international competitive advantages in scientific research" and "to perform important social tasks for society". Efforts to face diversity, as those mentioned by Borkowski (2018) concerning the diverse funding schemes of research in Poland nowadays, are central to all those engaged in university management. Universities were born to be for all, but very soon became a specific union for few Latin speakers, inside Parisian Latin Quartier. Latin became English, but universities keep the structural feature of being a locus of culturally, historically situated inquiry, in a context of constitutive dilemmas.

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