

The University in the Twenty-First Century: Toward a Democratic and Emancipatory University Reform¹

Eleven years ago, I published a brief essay about the university, its crises and the challenges that it faced at the end of the twentieth century. The essay was titled “From the idea of the university to the university of ideas” and was published in my book *Pela Mão de Alice: o Social e o Político na Pós-Modernidade*. In this essay I identified three crises facing the university. First, the crisis of hegemony was the result of contradictions between the traditional functions of the university and those which had come to be attributed to it throughout the twentieth century. On the one hand, the production of high culture, critical thinking, and exemplary scientific and humanistic knowledge, necessary for the training of the elites, which had been the concern of the university since the European Middle Ages. On the other, the production of average cultural standards and instrumental knowledge, useful for the training of the qualified labor force demanded by capitalist development. The university’s inability fully to carry out contradictory functions led the State and its economic agents to look beyond it for alternative means to attain these objectives. When it stopped being the only institution of higher education and research production, the university entered a crisis of hegemony. The second crisis was a crisis of legitimacy, provoked by the fact that the university ceased to be a consensual institution in view of the contradiction between the hierarchization of specialized knowledge through restrictions of access and credentialing of competencies, on the one hand, and the social and political demands for a democratized

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university and equal opportunity for the children of the working class, on the other. Finally, the institutional crisis was the result of the contradiction between the demand for autonomy in the definition of the university's values and objectives and the growing pressure to hold it to the same criteria of efficiency, productivity, and social responsibility that private enterprises face.

In that essay I analyzed in some detail each one of the abovementioned crises and the way they were managed by the university, especially in the central countries. My analysis was centered on public universities. I showed that, far from being able to solve its crises, the university, relying on its long institutional memory and the ambiguities of its administrative profile, tended to manage them formulaically to avoid their growing out of control. This pattern of action depended on external pressures (it was reactive), incorporated more or less acritically external social and institutional logics (it was dependent) and was blind to medium- or long-range perspectives (it was immediatist).

What has happened in the past decade? How can we characterize the situation in which we find ourselves? What are possible responses to the problems that the university faces today? In this chapter, I will try to provide answers to these three questions. In the first part, I will undertake an analysis of recent transformations in the system of higher education and their impact on the public university. In the second part, I will identify and justify the basic principles of a democratic and emancipatory reform of the public university, that is, a reform that allows the public university to respond creatively and efficiently to the challenges it faces at the outset of the twenty-first century.

Part I

The Last Decade

The predictions I made eleven years ago have come to pass, beyond my expectations. Despite the fact that the three crises were intimately connected and could only be confronted jointly and by means of vast reform programs generated both inside and outside the university, I predicted (and feared) that the institutional crisis would come to monopolize reformist agendas and proposals. This is in fact what happened. I also predicted that concentrating on the institutional crisis could lead to the false resolution of the two other crises, a resolution by default: the crisis of hegemony, by the university's increasing loss of specificity; the crisis of legitimacy, by the growing segmentation of the university system and the growing devaluation of university diplomas, in general. This has also happened.

Concentrating on the institutional crisis was fatal for the university and was due to a number of factors, some already evident at the beginning of the 1990s, while others gained enormous weight as the decade advanced. The institutional crisis is and has been, for at least two centuries, the weakest link of the public university, since its scientific and pedagogical autonomy is based on its financial dependency on the State. While the university and its services were an unequivocal public good that was up to the State to insure, this dependency was not problematic, any more than that of the judicial system, for example, in which the independence of the courts is not lessened by the fact they are being financed by the State. However, contrary to the judicial system, the moment the State decided to reduce its political commitment to the universities and to education in general, converting education into a collective good which, however public, does not have to be exclusively supported by the State, an institutional crisis of the public university automatically followed. If it already existed, it deepened. It can be said that, for the last thirty years, the university's institutional crisis in the great majority of countries was provoked or induced by the loss of priority of the

university as a public good and by the consequent financial drought and disinvestment in public universities. The causes and their sequence vary from country to country. In countries that lived under dictatorships for the previous four decades, there were two reasons for the onset of the institutional crisis: to reduce the university's autonomy to the level necessary for the elimination of the free production and diffusion of critical knowledge; and to put the university at the service of modernizing, authoritarian projects, opening the production of the university-as-public-good to the private sector and forcing the public university to compete under conditions of unfair competition in the emerging market for university services. In the democratic countries, the onset of the crisis was related to this latter reason, especially beginning in the 1980s, when neoliberalism was imposed as the global model of capitalism. In countries that made the transition from dictatorship to democracy in this period, the elimination of the former reason (political control of autonomy) was frequently invoked to justify the goodness of the latter (creation of a market for university services). In these countries, the affirmation of the universities' autonomy was on a par with the privatization of higher education and the deepening of the public universities' financial crisis. It was a precarious and deceiving autonomy because it forced the universities to seek new dependencies much more burdensome than dependence on the State and because the concession of autonomy was subject to remote controls finely calibrated by the Ministries of Finance and Education. Consequently, in the passage from dictatorship to democracy, unsuspected continuities ran beneath the evident ruptures.

The onset of the institutional crisis by way of the financial crisis, accentuated in the last twenty years, is a structural phenomenon accompanying the public university's loss of priority among the public goods produced by the State. The fact that the financial crisis was the immediate motive of the institutional crisis does not mean that the causes of the latter can be reduced to the financial crisis. The analysis of the structural causes will reveal that the

prevalence of the institutional crisis was the result of the impact upon it of the two other unsolved crises, the crises of hegemony and of legitimacy. And in this domain there have been, in the last eleven years, new developments in relation to the picture I described at the beginning of the 1990s.

The public university's loss of priority in the State's public policies was, first of all, the result of the general loss of priority of social policies (education, health, social security) induced by the model of economic development known as neoliberalism or neoliberal globalization, which was internationally imposed beginning in the 1980s. In the public university, it meant that its identified institutional weaknesses—and they were many—instead of serving as justification for a vast politico-pedagogical reform program, were declared insurmountable and used to justify the generalized opening of the university-as-public-good to commercial exploitation. Despite political declarations to the contrary and some reformist gestures, underlying this first collision of the university with neoliberalism is the idea that the public university is not reformable (any more than the State) and that the true alternative lies in the creation of the university market. The savage and deregulated way in which this market emerged and was developed is proof that there was a deep option in its favor. And the same option explained the disinvestment in the public university and massive transferences of human resources that, at times, looked like a “primitive accumulation” on the part of the private university sector at the cost of the public sector.

I identify two phases in the process of mercantilization of the public university. In the first, which goes from the beginning of the 1980s to the middle of the 1990s, the national university market is expanded and consolidated. In the second, along with the national market, the transnational market of higher and university education emerges with great vitality and so much so that, by the end of the decade, it is transformed by World Bank and the World Trade Organization into a global solution for the problems of education. In other

words, the neoliberal globalization of the university is under way. This is a new phenomenon. Certainly, the transnationalization of university exchanges is an ancient process, dating back to the medieval European universities (not to speak of the early Islamic universities in Africa). After World War II, it was translated into the training, at a post-graduate level, of students from peripheral or semi-peripheral countries in the universities of the central countries and into partnerships between universities from different countries. In recent years, however, such transnational relations have advanced to a new level. The new transnationalization is much vaster than the former one and its logic is, unlike its predecessor's, exclusively mercantile.

The two defining processes of the decade—the State's disinvestment in the public university and the mercantile globalization of the university—are two sides of the same coin. They are the two pillars of a huge global project of university politics destined to profoundly change the way the university-as-a-public-good has been produced, transforming it into a vast and vastly profitable ground for educational capitalism. This mid- to long-range project includes different levels and forms of the mercantilization of the university. I will deal with the forms later. As for the levels, it is possible to distinguish two. The primary level consists of inducing the public university to overcome the financial crisis by generating its own resources, namely through partnerships with industrial capital. On this level, the public university maintains its autonomy and its institutional specificity, privatizing part of the services it renders. The second level consists of the biased elimination of the distinction between public and private universities, transforming the university as a whole into a business, an entity that not only produces for the market but which is itself produced as a market, as a market of university services as diverse as administration, teaching programs and materials, certification of degrees, teacher training ,and teacher and student evaluation. If it

will still make sense to speak of the university as a public good when this second level is attained is a rhetorical question.

The Disinvestment of the Public University

The crisis of the public university as a consequence of disinvestment is a global phenomenon, although its consequences are significantly different at the core, the periphery, and the semi-periphery of the world system. In the central countries, the situation is differentiated. In Europe where, with the exception of England, the university system is almost totally public, the public university has had the power to reduce the extent of the disinvestment at the same time that it has developed the ability to generate its own income through the market. The success of this strategy depends in good measure on the power of the public university and its political allies to block the significant emergence of the private university market. For instance, in Spain, this strategy has so far been more successful than in Portugal. However, it is important to bear in mind that, throughout the decade, a private, non-university sector emerged in almost every European country, aimed at the professional job market. This fact led the universities to respond by structurally modifying their programs and by increasing their variety. In the United States, where private universities occupy the top of the hierarchy, public universities were motivated to seek alternative funding from foundations, in the market and by raising tuition fees. Today, in some North American public universities, the state funding is no more than 50 per cent of the total budget.

On the periphery, where the search for alternative income in the market is virtually impossible, the crisis attains catastrophic proportions. Obviously, the ills are long-standing, but they have been seriously aggravated in the past decade by the State's financial crisis and the structural adjustment programs. A UNESCO report from 1997 about the majority of African universities drew a dramatic picture of all sorts of shortages: the collapse of infra-

structures, almost total lack of equipment, miserably remunerated, unmotivated, and easily corruptible teaching personnel, and little or no research investment. The World Bank diagnosed the situation in a similar way and, characteristically, declared it irreparable. Unable to include in its calculations the importance of the university in the building of national projects and the creation of long-term critical thinking, the Bank concluded that African universities do not generate sufficient “return” on their investment. As a consequence, the African countries were asked to stop investing in universities, concentrating their few resources on primary and secondary education and allowing the global market of higher education to resolve the problem of the university for them. This decision had a devastating effect on the universities of the African countries.

The Brazilian case is representative of the attempt to apply the same logic in the semi-periphery.(see Chauí 2003). The World Bank’s 2002 report on higher education assumes that Brazil is not going to (that is, it should not) increase the university’s public resources and that, therefore, the solution is in the expansion of the university market combined with the reduction of the cost per student (which, among other things, serves to maintain the pressure on teachers’ salaries) along with the elimination of free public instruction, as is now beginning to happen in Portugal.

This is a global process and it is on this scale that it should be analyzed. The development of university instruction in the central countries, in the thirty or forty years after the Second World War, was based, on the one hand, on the successes of the social struggles for the right to education, translated into the demand for a more democratic access to the university and, on the other hand, on the imperatives of an economy that required a more highly qualified workforce in key industrial sectors. The situation changed significantly, starting with the economic crisis that peaked in the mid-1970s. Since then, there has been a growing contradiction between the reduction of public investment in higher education and

the intensification of the international economic competition based on the search for technological innovation and, hence, on the techno-scientific knowledge that makes it possible, as well as on the training of a highly qualified workforce.

As for the demand of a qualified workforce, the 1990s revealed another contradiction: the growth of the qualified workforce required by an economy based on knowledge coexisted with the explosive growth of very low-skilled jobs. The neoliberal globalization of the economy has deepened the segmentation of the labor markets between countries and within countries. At the same time, it has allowed both the qualified worker and the unqualified worker *pools* to be recruited globally—the former, predominately through *brain drain* and *outsourcing* of technically advanced services, the latter, predominately through businesses delocalizing across the globe and (often clandestine) immigration. The global availability of skilled labor permits the central countries to lower the priority of their investment in public universities, making funding more dependent on market needs. Actually, there is another contradiction in this domain between the rigidity of university training and the volatility of the qualifications required by the market. This contradiction was shaped, on one hand, by the creation of modular non-university tertiary training systems and, on the other, by shortening the periods of university training and making the latter more flexible.. Despite *ad hoc* solutions, these contradictions became enormously acute in the 1990s and had a disconcerting impact on higher education: the university was gradually transformed from a generator of conditions for competition and success in the market into an object of competition, that is, into a market of university services.

The Transnationalization of the University Market

The other pillar of the neoliberal project for the university is the transnationalization of the market for university services. As I said, this project is linked, but not limited, to the

reduction in public financing. Other equally decisive factors are: the deregulation of commercial exchanges in general; the imposition of the mercantile solution by multilateral financial agencies; and the revolution in information and communication technologies, especially the enormous growth of the internet, even if a crushing percentage of the electronic flows are concentrated in the North. Because it is a global development, it affects the university-as-public-good in the North as much as the South, but with very different consequences. The inequalities between the Northern and Southern universities are thus enormously exacerbated.

World expenditure on education has grown to two trillion dollars, more than double the world market for automobiles. It is therefore an alluring area with great potential for capital avid for new areas of valorization. Since the beginning of the 1990s, financial analysts have called attention to education as potentially one of the hottest markets of the twenty-first century. Merrill Lynch analysts feel that the educational sector possesses characteristics similar to those displayed by the health field in the 1970s: a gigantic market, very fragmented and unproductive, looking to improve its low technological level, with a tremendous deficiency of professional administration and a very low rate of capitalization. The growth of educational capital has been exponential and the rates of return are very high: 1000 pounds sterling invested in 1996 were worth 3405 in 2000, a gain of 240 percent, vastly superior to the general growth rate of the London stock market, the FTSE: 65 per cent (Hirtt 2003, 20). In 2002, the USA-OCDE Forum concluded that the global market for education was being transformed into a significant part of the world services market.

With the growing dominance of neoliberal globalization in mind, the following ideas are likely to guide the future expansion of the educational market:

1. We live in an information society. Administration, quality and speed of information are essential to economic competition. Dependent on a very qualified workforce, information

and communication technologies share the characteristic of not only contributing to increased productivity but, also, serving as incubators of new services, particularly in the field of education.

2. The economy based on knowledge demands more human capital as a condition for informational creativity and the efficient growth of the service economy. The higher the skill-level of human capital employed, the greater the ability to transfer cognitive capacities and aptitudes in the constant processes of recycling and innovation expected by the new economy.

3. To survive, universities have to be at the service of these two master ideas—information society and knowledge-based economy. For that, they must undergo internal transformation, by way of information and communication technologies and the new kinds of institutional management and of relations among knowledge workers and between suppliers and users or consumers of technological knowledge.

4. None of this is possible if the present institutional and politico-pedagogical paradigm dominating public universities remains in place. This paradigm does not allow for relations between the relevant publics to be mercantile relations; for efficiency, quality, and educational responsibility to be defined in terms of the market; for technological mediation (based on the production and consumption of material and immaterial objects) to become commonplace in professor-student relations; for the university to be open and vulnerable to pressure from its “clients”; for competition between “instructional operators” to be the stimulus for flexibility and adaptability to the expectations of employers; for selectivity in the search for niches of consumption (i.e., student recruitment) to be the highest return on the capital invested.

5. To confront this, the university’s current institutional paradigm must be replaced by an entrepreneurial paradigm to which both public and private universities would be subjected,

and the educational market in which they are involved must be designed globally to maximize profitability. The favoritism bestowed upon the private universities stems from their being able to adapt much more easily to the new conditions and imperatives.

These are the ideas that govern the educational reforms proposed by the World Bank and, more recently, the idea of its conversion into a knowledge bank (Mehta 2001). They are also those which structure the General Agreement on Trades in Service (GATS) in the area of education currently under negotiation in the World Trade Organization, which I will mention later. The World Bank's position in the area of education is perhaps one of the most ideological that it has assumed in the last decade (and there have been many), because, being an area where non-mercantile interactions are still dominant, investments cannot be based merely on technical language, as can those imposed by structural adjustment. Ideological inculcation is served by analyses systematically twisted against public education to demonstrate that education is potentially a commodity like any other and that its conversion into an educational commodity is evidence of the superiority of capitalism as an organizer of social relations and of the superiority of neo-liberal economic principles as the driving force of capitalism through mercantilization, privatization, deregulation, liberalization, and globalization.

The reformist zeal of the Bank reverberates wherever it identifies the weaknesses of the public university, the power held by the faculty being one of its main targets. Academic freedom is seen as an obstacle to the responsibility of the entrepreneurial university vis-à-vis firms that wish to enlist its services. The power of the university must be wrested from the faculty and given to administrators trained to promote partnerships with private agents. What is more, the World Bank foresees that the power of the faculty and the centrality of the classroom will inexorably decline as the use of pedagogical technologies *on-line* becomes

more prevalent. In accordance with this, the peripheral and semi-peripheral countries can count on the Bank's financial aid directed toward private higher education, provided they reduce public investment in the university and create legal frameworks that facilitate the expansion of private higher education as an essential complement of public higher education. For example, in Brazil, during the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the Ministry of Education, through the Program for the Recuperation and Expansion of the Physical Infrastructures of Institutions of Higher Instruction and in partnership with the National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES), established a line of credit of about R\$750 million (approx. US\$250 million) for institutions of higher learning, with resources originating from a World Bank loan. These resources were in large part channeled to private universities. Since 1999, the BNDES has loaned R\$310 million (approx. US\$103 million) to private universities and only R\$33 million (US\$11 million) to public universities.

The transformation of higher education into educational commodity is a long-term goal and this horizon is essential for understanding the intensification of transnationalization currently underway in this market. Since 2000, the university's neoliberal transnationalization is under the aegis of the World Trade Organization and the General Agreement on Trades in Service (GATS) (Knight, 2003). Education is one of the twelve services covered by this agreement whose goal is to promote the liberalization of commercial services through the progressive and systematic elimination of commercial barriers. Recently, GATS has become one of higher education's most controversial topics, involving politicians, professors, and entrepreneurs. Its defenders see it as an opportunity for broadening and diversifying the educational supply in such a way that combining economic gain with greater access to the university becomes possible. This opportunity is based on the following conditions: the strong growth of the educational market in recent years, a growth only obstructed by national frontiers; the diffusion of electronic means of teaching and

learning; needs for a qualified workforce that are not being met; the growing mobility of students, professors, and programs; and the financial inability of governments to meet the growing need for higher education. This is the market potential that GATS hopes to achieve through the elimination of trade barriers in this area.

GATS distinguishes four major ways of offering the transnational mercantilization of educational services: trans-border offerings, foreign consumption, commercial presence, and presence of natural persons.

Trans-border offerings are represented by transnational provisions of service without the need for physical movement on the consumers' part. Included are distance learning, on-line learning and "virtual" universities. It is still a small market but one with strong growth potential. A fourth of foreign students taking courses offered by Australian universities do so through the Internet. Three great North American universities (Columbia, Stanford, and Chicago) and one in the U.K. (London School of Economics) formed a consortium to create Cardean University which offers Internet courses to the world at large.

Foreign consumption consists of the provision of services through the transnational movement of the consumer. This is currently the big slice of the university's mercantile transnationalization. A recent study of the OCDE calculates that this commerce was worth \$30 billion in 1999. At the beginning of the year 2000, 514,000 foreigners were studying in the U.S., more than 54 per cent of them from Asia. India alone contributed 42,000 students. This area, like so many others, demonstrates the North/South asymmetries. In the 1998-99 school year, only 707 U.S. students were studying in India.

The third area has to do with commercial presence and consists of private producers of higher education establishing branches in foreign countries to sell their services. These are usually local branches or satellite campuses of large global universities or local institutions operating under franchise contracts with such universities. It is an area of great potential

and the one most directly on a collision course with national educational policies, since it implies that local centers or satellite campuses submit to international rules agreed upon by foreign investors.

Finally, the presence of natural persons is represented by the temporary dislocation of suppliers of services, professors or researchers, established in one country and offering service to another (foreign) country. This is an area that appears to have great development potential given the growing mobility of professional people.

The case of South Africa should be cited in this context as it effectively illustrates the risks of GATS. South Africa has come to assume a position of total reserve in relation to GATS. It refuses to subscribe to international commercial commitments in the area of education and incites other countries to do the same. This is a significant position given the fact that South Africa exports educational services to the rest of the continent. However, it does so through bilateral agreements and within a framework of mutual benefit for the countries involved and outside the regime of international trade policies. This conditionality of mutual benefit and mutual respect is absent from the logic of GATS. South Africa's rejection of GATS is based on the experience of foreign offerings of higher education providers and of World Bank financial aid that supports them, which, according to those responsible for South African education, have had devastating effects on the continent's higher education. The refusal of GATS is based on the idea that any non-commercial considerations are strange to it and that this invalidates any national educational policy that considers education as a public good and a major component of the national project. An example given by the then South African Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, in a March 4, 2004 communiqué to the South African *Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry* illustrates this. It is known that, with the end of *apartheid*, South Africa launched an enormous program to combat racism in educational institutions that had, among its principal

targets, the so-called “historically white universities,” a program involving a multiplicity of actions—among them, affirmative action regarding access. The anti-racist struggle is thus a central part of the national project underlying educational policies. It is against this backdrop that the Minister of Education gives as an example of unacceptable conduct the fact that a foreign institution intended to operate in South Africa by selectively recruiting students from the upper classes, and particularly white ones. The Minister commented: “As you can imagine, the impact of these agendas on our efforts to construct a non-racist higher education in South Africa can be very profound” (Asmal, 2003, 51).

From University Knowledge to Pluriversity Knowledge

The developments of the past decade presented the university with very demanding challenges, especially the public university. The situation is near collapse in many countries on the periphery and it is difficult in the semi-peripheral countries. Although the expansion and transnationalization of the market for university services has contributed decisively to this situation in recent years, they are not the only cause. Something more profound occurred and only this explains why the university, while still the institution par excellence of scientific knowledge, has lost its hegemony and has been transformed into an easy target for social criticism. I think that in the past decade the relations between knowledge and society began to change significantly and these alterations promise to be profound to the point of transforming the way we conceive of knowledge and of society. As I said, the commercialization of scientific knowledge is the most visible side of these alterations. However, and despite their enormity, they are the tip of the iceberg and the transformations now in progress have contradictory meanings and multiple implications, some of them epistemological.

University knowledge—that is, the scientific knowledge produced in universities or institutions separate from the universities but which retain a similar university *ethos*—was, for the whole of the twentieth century, a predominantly disciplinary knowledge whose autonomy imposed a relatively de-contextualized process of production in relation to the day-to-day pressures of the societies. According to the logic of this process, the researchers are the ones who determine what scientific problems to solve, define their relevance, and establish the methodologies and rhythms of research. It is a homogeneous and hierarchically organized knowledge insofar as the agents who participate in its production share the same goals of producing knowledge, have the same training and the same scientific culture, and do what they do according to well-defined organizational hierarchies. It is a knowledge based on the distinction between scientific research and technological development and the autonomy of the researcher is translated as a kind of social irresponsibility as far as the results of the application of knowledge are concerned. Moreover, in the logic of this process of the production of university knowledge, the distinction between scientific knowledge and other kinds of knowledge is absolute, as is the relation between science and society. The university produces knowledge that the society does or does not apply, an alternative that, although socially relevant, is indifferent or irrelevant to the knowledge produced.

The university's organization and *ethos* were created by this kind of knowledge. It happens that, throughout the past decade, there were alterations that destabilized this model of knowledge and pointed to the emergence of another model. I designate this transition, which Gibbons et al. (1994) described as a transition from “type1 knowledge” to “type 2 knowledge,” as the passage from *university knowledge to pluriversity knowledge*.

Contrary to the university knowledge described in the preceding paragraph, pluriversity knowledge is a contextual knowledge insofar as the organizing principle of its construction is its application. As this application is extramural, the initiative for formulating

the problems to be solved and the determination of their criteria of relevance is the result of sharing among researchers and users. It is a transdisciplinary knowledge that, by its very contextualization, demands a dialogue or confrontation with other kinds of knowledge, which makes it more heterogeneous internally and allows it to be more adequately produced in less perennial and more open systems organized less rigidly and hierarchically. All the distinctions upon which university knowledge is based are put in question by pluriversity knowledge but, most basically, it is the relation between science and society that is in question. Society ceases to be an object of scientific questioning and becomes itself a subject that questions science.

The tension between these two models of knowledge highlights the extremes of two ideal types. In reality, the kinds of knowledge produced occupy different places along the *continuum* between the two poles, some closer to the university model, others closer to the pluriversity model. This heterogeneity not only destabilizes the current institutional specificity of the university, it also questions its hegemony and legitimacy in such a way as to force it to evaluate itself by self-contradictory criteria.

Pluriversity knowledge has had its most consistent realization in university-industry partnerships in the form of mercantile knowledge. But, especially in the central and semi-peripheral countries, the context of application has been non-mercantile as well—cooperative and dependent on the solidarity created by partnerships among researchers and labor unions, NGOs, social movements, particularly vulnerable social groups (women, illegal immigrants, the unemployed, people with chronic illnesses, senior citizens, those afflicted with HIV/AIDS, etc.), working-class communities, and groups of critical and active citizens. There is a growing sector of civil society developing a new and more intense relationship with science and technology, demanding greater participation in their production and in the evaluation of their impact. In multiethnic and multinational countries, pluriversity

knowledge begins to emerge from inside the university itself when incoming students from ethnic and other minority groups understand that their inclusion is a form of exclusion. They are confronted with the *tabula rasa* that is made of their cultures and of the traditional knowledge of their communities. All of this leads scientific knowledge to confront other kinds of knowledge and demands a higher level of social responsibility from the institutions that produce it and, consequently, from the universities. As science becomes more ingrained in the society, the society becomes more a part of science. The university was created according to a model of unilateral relations with society and it is this model that underlies its current institutionalism. Pluriversity knowledge supplants this unilateral notion with interactivity and interdependence, both processes enormously invigorated by the technological revolution of information and communication.

In light of these transformations, we can conclude that the university finds itself in the presence of opposing demands which have the convergent effect of destabilizing its current institutionalism. On the one hand, the ultra-private pressure to commodify knowledge displaces the social responsibility of the university with a focus on producing economically useful and commercially viable knowledge. On the other hand, an ultra-public social pressure shatters the restricted public sphere of the university in the name of a much broader public sphere traversed by much more heterogeneous confrontations and by much more demanding concepts of social responsibility. This contrast between ultra-private and ultra-public pressures has not only begun to destabilize the university's institutionalism, it has also created a profound fracture in the university's social and cultural identity, a fracture translated as disorientation and defensive tactics and, above all, as a kind of paralysis covered up by a defensive attitude, resistant to change in the name of university autonomy and academic freedom. The instability caused by the impact of these contrasting pressures

creates impasses in which it becomes evident that demands for larger changes often accompany equally large forms of resistance to change.

The End of the Country Project?

The passage from university knowledge to pluriversity knowledge is, thus, a much more ample process than the commodification of the university and of the knowledge it produces. It is a process most visible today in the central countries, although also present in semi-peripheral and peripheral ones. But in both semi-peripheral and peripheral countries another transformation has been occurring for the last two decades one that is linked to neoliberal globalization and not limited to economic dimensions nor reducible to the commodification of the university. It is, moreover, an eminently political transformation. In these countries, the public university—and the educational system as a whole—was always tied to the construction of a national project. This was as evident in Latin American universities in the nineteenth century or, in Brazil's case, in the twentieth century as it was in African and various Asian countries, as was the case of India after the independence in the middle of the twentieth century. I am referring to projects of national development or modernization led by the state and aimed at generating and consolidating the country's coherence and cohesion as an economically, socially, and culturally well-defined geopolitical territory for which it was frequently necessary to wage border-defining wars.. The study of liberal arts and social sciences (and frequently of the natural sciences as well) was aimed to lend consistency to the national project, creating knowledge and shaping the personnel necessary for its realization. In the best of times, academic freedom and university autonomy were an integral part of such projects, even when they criticized them severely. This involvement was so profound that, in many cases, it became the second nature of the university: to the point where to question the national political project was to question the

public university. The reactive defensiveness that has dominated the university, namely in its responses to the financial crisis, derives from the fact that the university -- endowed with reflexive and critical capacity like no other social institution—is lucidly coming to the conclusion that it is no longer tied to a national project and that, without one, there can be no public university.

In the last twenty years, neoliberal globalization has launched a devastating attack on the idea of national projects which are conceived as obstacles to the expansion of global capitalism. From the standpoint of neoliberal capitalism, national projects legitimate logics of national social production and reproduction embedded in heterogeneous national spaces and geared to intensify such heterogeneity. Moreover, the operation of these logics is guaranteed by a political entity endowed with sovereign power over the territory, the nation-state, whose submission to global economic impositions is problematic from the start in regard to its own interests and to those of the national capitalism on which it has been politically dependent.

The neoliberal attack has as its special target the nation-state and particularly the economic and social policies in which education had played a major role. In the case of the public university, the effects of this attack are not limited to the financial crisis. They have direct or indirect repercussions on the definition of research and training priorities, not only in the areas of social science and liberal arts but also in the natural sciences, especially in those areas most closely connected to technological development projects. The political disempowerment of the State and of the national project was reflected in the quasi-epistemological disempowerment of the university and its consequent disorientation as far as its social functions were concerned. University policies of administrative autonomy and decentralization, when adopted, have had the effect of dislocating the fulcrum of these national project functions toward local and regional problems. The identity crisis affected the

university's critical thinking itself and, more broadly, the university's public sphere as well. The university was faced with two equally self-destructive options: on the one hand, an isolationist nationalism from which it has always distanced itself and that has now become totally anachronistic and, on the other, an hegemonic globalization which reduces nationally based critical thinking and public sphere to the condition of a defenseless or indefensible local idiosyncrasy in the path of an unstoppable global flood.

Working in subterranean waters, this lack of a country project does not know how to affirm itself except through uneasiness, defensiveness, and paralysis. Meanwhile, I think that the university will not escape from the tunnel between the past and the future in which it finds itself, as long as the country project is not reconstructed. Actually, this is exactly what is happening in the central countries. The global universities of the U.S., Australia, and New Zealand act within national scenarios that have the world as their playing field. Otherwise, it is difficult to justify the support that the diplomacy of these countries gives to such projects. We are before a third-generation colonialism that has the colonies of second-generation colonialism as its protagonists. From the perspective of the peripheral and semi-peripheral countries the new global context demands a total reinvention of the national project without which there can be no reinvention of the university. There is nothing nationalistic about this demand. There is only the need to invent a critical cosmopolitanism in a context of aggressive and exclusive globalization.

Part II

What is to be done?

In the second part, I will try to identify some of the master-ideas that should preside over a creative, democratic, and emancipatory reform of the public university. Perhaps the first step is to identify the subjects of the actions that need to be undertaken efficiently to

confront the challenges that face the public university. In the meantime, in order to identify the subjects, it is first necessary to define the political meaning of the response to such challenges. In light of the precedent, it becomes clear that, despite the fact that there are multiple causes of the university crisis and some of them are long-standing, they are currently being reconfigured by neoliberal globalization, and the way they affect today's university reflects that project's intentions. As I have suggested for other areas of social life (Santos 2000; 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003), I think the only efficient and emancipatory way to confront neoliberal globalization is to oppose it with an alternative, counter-hegemonic globalization. Counter-hegemonic globalization of the university-as-public-good means that the national reforms of the public university must reflect a country project centered on policy choices that consider the country's insertion in increasingly transnational contexts of knowledge production and distribution. These will become increasingly polarized between two contradictory processes of globalization: neoliberal globalization, and counter-hegemonic globalization. This country project has to be the result of a broad political and social pact consisting of different sectoral pacts, among them an educational pact in the terms of which the public university is conceived of as a collective good. The reform must be focused on responding positively to the social demands for the radical democratizing of the university, putting an end to the history of exclusion of social groups and their knowledges for which the university has been responsible for a long time, starting long before the current phase of capitalist globalization. From now on, the national and transnational scales of the reform interpenetrate. Without global articulation, a national solution is impossible.

The current global context is strongly dominated by neoliberal globalization but is not reduced to it. There is space for national and global articulations based on reciprocity and on the mutual benefit that, in the case of the university, will reconstitute and broaden long-

lasting forms of internationalism. Such articulations should be cooperative even when they contain mercantile components; that is, they should be constructed outside the regimes of international trade policy. This alternative transnationalization is made possible by the new information and communication technologies and is based on the establishment of national and global networks, within which new pedagogies, new processes of construction and diffusion of scientific and other knowledges , as well as new social (local, national, and global) commitments circulate. The goal is to resituate the role of the public university in the collective definition and resolution of social problems which are now insoluble unless considered globally. The new university pact starts from the premise that the university has a crucial role in the construction of its country's place in a world polarized by contradictory globalizations.

Neoliberal globalization is based on the systematic destruction of national projects and, as these were often designed with the active collaboration of university professors and students, the public university will be targeted for destruction until it is fine-tuned to neoliberal objectives. This does not mean that the public university should be isolated from the pressures of neoliberal globalization which, apart from being impossible, might give the false impression that the university has been relatively protected from such pressures. Actually, it might be said that part of the university's crisis is the result of its passive incorporation of and co-optation by the forces of hegemonic globalization. What is called for is an active response to this co-optation, in the name of a counter-hegemonic globalization.

The counter-hegemonic globalization of the university-as-public-good that I am proposing here maintains the idea of a national project but conceives it in a non nationalistic way. In the twenty-first century, nations only exist to the extent that their national projects are qualified for a relatively autonomous insertion in the global society. For peripheral and semi-peripheral countries, the only way to qualify is to resist neoliberal globalization with

strategies for another kind of globalization. The difficulty and, often, the drama of university reform in many countries resides in the fact that it involves re-visiting and re-examining the idea of the national project, something that the politicians of the last twenty years have hoped to avoid, either because they see such an idea as throwing sand in the gears of their surrender to neoliberalism or because they truly believe nationhood to be outmoded as an instrument of resistance. The public university knows that, without a national project, there are only global contexts and these are too powerful to be seriously confronted by the university's resistance. The university's excess lucidity allows it to declare that the emperor has no clothes, and for this reason only the university reform will always be different than the rest.

The counter-hegemonic globalization of the university-as-public-good is, thus, a demanding political project that, in order to be credible, must overcome two contradictory but equally rooted prejudices: on the one hand, that the university can only be reformed by the university community and, on the other, that the university will never reform itself. These are very powerful prejudices. A brief examination of the social forces potentially committed to confront them is in place. The first social force is the public university community itself; that is, those within it interested in an alternative globalization of the university. The public university today is a very fractured social field within which contradictory sectors and interests fight each other. In many countries, especially peripheral and semi-peripheral ones, such contradictions are still latent. Defensive positions that maintain the *status quo* and reject globalization, whether neoliberal or alternative, predominate. This is a conservative position, not just because it advocates hewing to the *status quo*, but mainly because, deprived of realistic alternatives, it will sooner or later surrender to plans for the neoliberal globalization of the university. University personnel who denounce this conservative position and, at the

same time, reject the idea that there is no alternative to neoliberal globalization will be the protagonists of the progressive reform that I am proposing.

The second social force of such reform is the State itself, whenever it is successfully pressed to opt for the university's alternative globalization. Without this option, the national State ends up adopting, more or less unconditionally, or succumbing, more or less reluctantly, to the pressures of neoliberal globalization and, in either case, transforming itself into the enemy of the public university, regardless of any proclamation to the contrary. Given the close, love-hate relationship that the State carried on with the university for the whole of the twentieth century, the options tend to be dramatized.

Finally, the third social force to carry out the reform are citizens collectively organized in social groups, labor unions, social movements, non-governmental organizations and their networks, and local progressive governments interested in forming cooperative relationships between the university and the social interests they represent. In contrast to the State, this third social force has had a historically distant and, at times, even hostile relationship with the university, precisely because of the latter's elitism and the distance it cultivated for a long time in relation to the so-called "uncultured" sectors of society. This is a social force that has to be won through a response to the question of legitimacy, that is, via non-classist, non-racist, non-sexist and non-ethnocentric access to the university and by a whole set of initiatives that deepen the university's social responsibility in line with the pluriversity knowledge mentioned above (more on this below).

Beyond these three social forces there is, in the semi-peripheral and peripheral countries, a fourth entity that may be loosely called national capitalism. Certainly, the most dynamic sectors of national capital are transnationalized and, consequently, part of the neoliberal globalization hostile to the emancipatory reform of the university. However, in peripheral and semi-peripheral countries, the process of transnational integration of these

sectors is filled with tensions .Under certain conditions, such tensions may lead these sectors to see an interest in defending the project of the public university as a public good, , especially in cases where there are no realistic alternatives to the public university for the production of the kind of technological knowledge needed to strengthen their insertion in the global economy.

In the following I identify the principles that should guide the emancipatory reform of the public university.

1. Confront the new with the new

The transformations of the past decade were very profound and, in spite of having been dominated by the mercantilization of higher education, they were not reduced to this. There were also transformations in the processes and social contexts of knowledge production and diffusion, and the changes are irreversible. Under such conditions, the new cannot be viewed as the problem and the old as the solution. Besides, what existed before was not a golden age and, if it was, it was just for the university and not for the rest of society and, within the bosom of the university itself, it was for some and not for others.

Resistance has to involve the promotion of alternatives that address the specific contribution of the university-as-public-good to the collective definition and solution of new national and global social problems.

2. Fight for the definition of the crisis

To abandon its defensive position, the university has to be sure that the reform is not designed against it. The idea of an educational pact is crucial here since there can be no pact when there are non-negotiable impositions and resistances. The question is under what

conditions and why should the university abandon its defensive position? To answer it it is necessary to review the concepts of the crisis of hegemony and of legitimacy.

The attack against the university on the part of the States that have yielded to neoliberalism was so massive that it is now difficult to define the terms of the crisis in any but neoliberal terms. This is the first manifestation of the university's loss of hegemony. The university lost the capacity to define the crisis in a hegemonic way; autonomously but in a way with which the society could identify. Herein lies the preponderance of defensive positions. However difficult it is crucial (now more than ever) to define and sustain a counter-hegemonic definition of the crisis.

For the last twenty years, the university has suffered a seemingly irreparable erosion of its hegemony, originating in part in the current transition from conventional university knowledge to pluriversity knowledge, that is, to transdisciplinary, contextualized, interactively produced and distributed knowledges which, thanks to the new communication and information technologies, have altered the relations among knowledge, information and citizenship.. The university has been unable, until now, to take full advantage of these transformations .

3. Fight for the definition of the university

There is a question of hegemony that, while seemingly residual, is central to enable the university to fight successfully for its legitimacy: This is the question of the definition of the university. The big problem of the university in this domain has been the fact that what easily passes for a university is anything but. This was possible due to the indiscriminate accumulation of functions attributed to the university throughout the twentieth century. As they were added without logical articulation, the market for higher instruction was able to

self-designate its product as a university without having to assume all of its functions, concentrating only on those that made it profitable.

The reform should start from the assumption that a university must have graduate and post-graduate training, research, and socially responsible extension . Without any one of these, what you have is higher instruction, not a university. In the terms of this definition, in many countries, the overwhelming majority of private universities and even some of the public ones are not universities at all.

Thus, the reform must distinguish more clearly than it has up until now between university and tertiary education. With respect to public universities that are really not universities, the problem ought to be solved by creating a public university network (proposed below) so that universities without autonomous research or post-graduate courses can offer them in partnership with other universities in national or even transnational networks. A university system in which post-graduate programs and research are concentrated in a small minority of universities cannot guarantee the sustainability of a national educational project in a cultural and political context pulled apart by contradictory forms of globalization .

As far as private universities are concerned—in case they wish to maintain the status and designation of universities—their licensing ought to be subject to the existence of post-graduate, research, and socially responsible extension programs subjected to frequent and demanding reviews. As is the case with public universities, if private universities cannot autonomously sustain such programs, they must do so through partnerships, either with other private universities, or with public ones.

The definition of what is a university is crucial to protect the university from predatory competition and society from fraudulent consumer practices. A successful

struggle for the definition will allow the public university a minimal playing field in which to conduct the most encompassing and demanding struggle, the struggle for legitimacy.

4. Re-claim legitimacy

In a situation in which hegemony is irremediably affected, legitimacy is simultaneously more urgent and more difficult. Thus, the battle for legitimacy is going to be ever more demanding and university reform must be centered on it. There are five areas of action in this domain: access, extension, action-research, ecology of knowledges, and university/ public school partnerships. The first two are the most conventional but they will have to be profoundly revised; the third has been practiced in some Latin American and African universities during periods of greater social responsibility on the part of the university; the fourth constitutes a decisive innovation in the construction of a post-colonial university; the fifth is an area of action that had a great presence in the past but that now has to be totally reinvented.

Access. In the area of access, the greatest frustration of the past two decades was that the goal of democratic access was not attained. In the majority of countries, factors of discrimination, whether of class, race, gender, or ethnicity, continued to make access a mixture of merit and privilege. Instead of democratization, there was “massification” and afterwards, in the alleged post-massification period, a strong segmentation of higher education involving practices of authentic “social dumping” of diplomas and degree-recipients. The most elitistic universities took few initiatives, other than defending their access criteria, invoking the fact, often true, that the most persistent discrimination occurs on the way to the university, within primary and secondary education. It is foreseeable that the transnationalization of higher education services will aggravate the segmentation phenomenon by transnationalizing it. Some foreign providers direct their offers to the best

students coming from the best (often, most elitistic) secondary schools or having graduated from the best national universities. In a transnationalized system, the best universities, occupying the top national rungs in peripheral and semi-peripheral countries, will become the bottom rungs of the global ladder. Of the four kinds of transnationalized services, foreign consumption is one of those most responsible for the new “brain drain,” particularly evident in India, but also present in some African countries, like Kenya and Ghana.

Among the master ideas that should guide the matter of access , I discern the following:

First, in countries where discrimination of university access is largely based on blockages at the primary and secondary instructional levels, progressive university reform, in contrast to the World Bank’s recipes, must give incentives to the university to promote active partnerships, in the areas of science and technology, with public schools.

Second, the public university must remain free with maintenance scholarships, rather than loans, going to students from subaltern classes. If it is not controlled, the indebtedness of university students will become a time bomb: a population encumbered by the certainty of a debt that can take twenty years to pay is being thrown into an increasingly uncertain labor market. Scholarships should be granted which include the possibility of student jobs in university activities both on and off campus, a rare practice specially in peripheral and semi-peripheral countries. For example, undergraduate and graduate students could volunteer some hours each week as tutors in public schools, helping pupils and, if necessary, teachers.

Third, in multinational and multicultural societies racial and ethnic discrimination should be confronted with programs of affirmative action focused both on access and attendance, especially during the first years when the drop-out rates are often high. Needless to say, racial and ethnic discrimination occurs in conjunction with class discrimination, but cannot be reduced to the latter; it must be the object of specific measures. In India, caste

discrimination is the object of affirmative action, despite acting in conjunction with class and gender discrimination. In South Africa, racial discrimination is the object of affirmative action, despite acting in conjunction with class discrimination. As happens in these two countries, anti-discrimination action in the university must be carried out in conjunction with anti-discrimination measures in other spheres, like access to public employment and to the labor market in general. In this way the university will be linked to a progressive national project and bearing witness to it.²

Fourth, the critical evaluation of access and its obstacles—like the rest of the discussion on the areas of extension and ecology of knowledges (more on this below)—must explicitly confront the colonial character of the modern university. In the past, the university not only participated in the social exclusion of so-called “inferior” races and ethnicities, but also theorized about their inferiority, an inferiority extended to the knowledge produced by the excluded groups in the name of the epistemological priority conferred upon science. The task to democratize access is thus particularly demanding because it questions the university

² In Brazil today, affirmative action politics are playing a leading role and merit special mention. In response to the growing pressure from social movements for democratic access to higher learning, especially from the black movement, Lula’s government launched the “University for All” program (PROUNI) in the first semester of 2004. The program proclaims affirmative action based on racial and socio-economic criteria and is based on two main measures. The first one provides access and full scholarships for low-income students to attend private universities in exchange for the fiscal and social security exemptions granted them by the State. The institutions that adhere to the program will earmark at least 10 per cent of their vacancies for low-income students and public school basic education teachers. The second measure determines that the public federal universities will earmark at least 50% of the enrollment for students coming from public schools (in Brazil the best secondary schools are private while the best universities are public). These vacancies will be distributed so they reflect the ethnic composition of each state of the Brazilian federative State leaving it up to the universities to fix the percentages of vacancies to be filled by low-income students and racial or ethnic groups underrepresented in higher education. This program represents a worthwhile effort against the traditional social elitism of the public university and has met with a lot of resistance. The debate has touched on the conventional theme of the contradiction between democratic access and meritocracy and also on some new themes, such as the difficulty of applying racial or ethnic criteria in a highly miscegenated society.

as a whole, not just who attends it but what kind of knowledge is transmitted to those who attend it.

Extension. The area of extension is going to have a very special meaning in the near future. At a moment when global capitalism intends to functionalize the university and, in fact, transform it into a vast extension agency at its service an emancipatory reform of the public university must confer a new centrality to the activities of extension and conceive of them as an alternative to global capitalism, attributing to the universities an active participation in the construction of social cohesion, in the deepening of the democracy, in the struggle against social exclusion and environmental degradation, in the defense of cultural diversity. The extension involves a vast area of service-provision for a variety of recipients: working-class social groups and organizations, social movements, local or regional communities, local governments, the public sector, and the private sector. Apart from providing services to well-defined recipients, there is also an entirely different area of service-provision that has the society in general as its recipient: the promotion of scientific and technical culture and the study of the arts and literature as tools to empower citizenship and deepen democracy.

In order for extension to fulfill this role it must avoid being directed toward money-making activities for the sole purpose of gathering non-state resources. In this case, we are faced with a discrete (or not so discrete) privatization of the public university. On the contrary, the extension activities I have in mind are designed to address the problems of social exclusion and discrimination in such a way as to give voice to the excluded and discriminated social groups..

Action-Research. Action-research and the ecology of knowledges are areas of university legitimacy that transcend extension since they act both at the level of extension and at the level of research and training. Action-research consists of the participative definition

and execution of research projects involving working-class and, in general, subaltern communities and social organizations grappling with problems whose solution can benefit from the results of the research. The social interests are tied to the scientific interests of the researchers and so the production of scientific knowledge is directly linked to the satisfaction of the needs of social groups lacking the resources to have access to specialized technical knowledge through the market. Action-research has a long tradition in Latin America, but it has never been a university priority. Just as with extension activities, the new centrality of action-research is due to the fact that the neoliberal transnationalization of higher education is transforming the university into a global institution of action-research at the service of global capitalism. Here too, the battle against this functionalism is only made possible by constructing a social alternative that focus on the university's social utility and defines it in a counter-hegemonic way.

Ecology of Knowledges. The ecology of knowledges is a more advanced form of action-research. It implies an epistemological revolution in the ways research and training has have been conventionally carried out at the university .³ The ecology of knowledges is a kind of counter-extension or extention in reverse, that is from outside to inside the university. It consists of the promotion of dialogues between scientific and humanistic knowledge produced by the university, on the one side, and the lay or popular knowledges that circulate in society produced by common people, both in urban and rural settings, originating in Western and non-Western cultures (indigenous, African, Eastern, etc.), on the other. Along with the technological euphoria, there is also today a lack of epistemological confidence in science that derives from the growing visibility of the perverse consequences of some kinds of scientific progress and the fact that many of modern science's social promises have not been fulfilled. It is beginning to be socially perceptible that the university, by

³ I analyse this epistemological revolution in great detail in Santos, 1995 and 2000.

specializing in scientific knowledge and considering it the only kind of valid knowledge, has actively contributed to the disqualification and destruction of much potentially invaluable non-scientific knowledge, thus causing the marginalization of social groups to whom these kinds of knowledge were the only ones available, and causing as well, more generally, the impoverishment of human experience and diversity. So social injustice contains cognitive injustice at its core. This is particularly obvious on the global scale, where peripheral countries, rich in non-scientific wisdom, but poor in scientific knowledge, have seen the latter, in the form of economic science, destroy their ways of sociability, their economies, their indigenous and rural communities, and their environments.

University and Public School. Here, I want to stress the relevance of “pedagogical knowledge,” which comprises three sub-themes: production and diffusion of pedagogical knowledge, educational research, and the training of public school teachers. It is a theme of growing importance, avidly coveted by the educational market. The public university performed once an hegemonic role in this area but it has withdrawn or been pushed aside from it in recent decades. This fact is now responsible for the university’s distancing itself from the public school—the separation between the academic world and the world of the school—a distancing that, if it is maintained, will destroy any serious effort to re-legitimize the public university as a collective good.

Under the aegis of neoliberal globalization, international agencies, non-governmental organizations and a number of foundations and private institutes have taken over some of the public university’s functions in the development of public education, especially in the field of applied educational research. This change in functional entitlement reflects on the content of its practice. The change is manifest in the primacy of quantitative methodologies, in the emphasis on studies of an evaluative and diagnostic nature informed by an economicist rationality, based on narrowly conceived cost-benefit analyses and, finally, in an obsessive

concern with measuring the results of learning through the periodic application of standardized tests. Themes like efficiency, competition, performance, choice, and accountability have become central to the educational agenda. The studies produced outside the universities, sponsored and financed by international organisms and private foundations, have had enormous influence on public educational policy, determining issues as diverse as the curriculum and the selection of public school system directors. Excluded from the debate and frequently accused of defending the *status quo* of corporate public instruction, the university has retreated to the role of questioning the dominant discourse about the public school crisis and has not bothered to formulate alternatives. Not surprisingly, educators and school administrators committed to progressive and counter-hegemonic projects often complain about the public university's lack of involvement and support.

The university's marginalization goes along with the demand for the tertiary qualification of teachers at all instructional levels, resulting in the progressive privatization of teacher-training. The "training and empowerment of teachers" has become one of the most prosperous segments of the emerging educational market, confirmed by the proliferation of private institutions offering teacher-empowerment courses for school systems.

The wide gap between the public university and pedagogical knowledge is prejudicial both for the public school and the public university. The latter's resistance to the new educational prescriptions cannot be reduced to a critique, especially since criticism, in the context of the university's crisis of legitimacy, ends up increasing the social isolation of the public university. The critique produced in the schools of education has reinforced the perception that the university is completely obsessed with the defense of the *status quo*. To do away with this perception ought to be one of the main goals of a progressive and democratic university reform. The principle to be affirmed is the university's commitment to the public school. Among other directives, the reform defended here proposes: 1) valuing the

initial training and linking it to programs of on-going training; 2) restructuring degree-awarding courses so as to insure curricular integration between professional and academic training; 3) collaboration between university researchers and public school teachers in the production and diffusion of pedagogical knowledge, through the recognition and stimulation of action-research; and 4) creation of regional and national networks of public universities for the development of programs of on-going training in partnership with the public instructional systems.

5. Rethink university and industry connections

As we have seen, the industrial sector is growing rapidly as a producer of educational and university services. I mention it here in a consumer role. The current popularity of the concepts of a “knowledge society” and a “knowledge-based economy,” especially in the central countries, is indicative of the pressure that has been put on the university to produce the kind of knowledge needed to increase business productivity and competitiveness. The entrepreneurial pressure is so strong that it goes far beyond the sphere of extension, trying to define according to its own image and interests what counts as relevant research . This redefinition does away with both the distinction between extension and research and the distinction between fundamental and applied research. In the central States, especially the U.S., the relation between State and university has begun to be dominated by the central imperative in this domain: the university’s contribution to economic competitiveness and to military supremacy. Research policies have been directed to privilege studies in areas of interest to businesses and to the commercialization of research results. Cuts in the public funding of universities are seen as “incentives” for universities to procure private investments, enter into partnerships with industry, patent their results, and develop commercial activities, including the commercialization of their own brand-names.

The response to this pressure becomes quite dramatic and it raises the most serious challenges to the survival of the public university as we know it. There are four main reasons for this: 1) this is the area in which there is the biggest disconnection between the university's traditional institutional model and the new model that is implicit in the performances demanded; 2) this is the area in which the university enters into direct competition with other institutions and actors that emerged from the new demands; 3) it is here that the university's models of public administration are most directly exposed and negatively compared with the prevalent models of private management; 4) more than in any other area, it becomes here evident here that the university's legitimacy and responsibility in relation to dominant interests and social groups can signify its illegitimacy and irresponsibility in relation to subaltern interests and social groups.

In this area, the progressive reform of the university as a public good should be oriented by the following ideas:

First, it is crucial that the scientific community and the social groups it chooses to associate itself with not lose control of the scientific research agenda. For this to happen, it is necessary to prevent the financial asphyxia from compelling the public university to privatize its functions to compensate for budget cuts. It is crucial that "opening to the outside" be not limited to opening to the market. On the contrary, the university must develop spaces of intervention that somehow balance the multiple and even contradictory and at times conflicting interests circulating in the society, and endowed with the power to summon and interrogate the university. Even in the U.S., where the knowledge business is most advanced, the country's technological leadership is based on a kind of equilibrium between the basic research undertaken, without direct commercial interest, in the universities, and applied research subject to entrepreneurial rhythms and risk.

Second, the public research-funding agencies should act on behalf of emergent research topics considered socially relevant but without any foreseeable commercial value. The growing appeal of competitions for so-called “targeted research” must be moderated by general competition in which the younger scientific community has a chance creatively and freely to develop new areas of research that, for the time being, do not arouse the interest of capital.

The usefulness to the university of interacting with the entrepreneurial milieu to identify new themes for research, develop applied technology, and carry out impact analyses cannot be ignored. Indeed, it is important that the university be granted the ability to explore this potential and that, in so doing, be not placed in a dependent position, especially on the level of survival, in regard to commercial contracts.

The most polemical theme in this area is the patenting of knowledge. In the central countries, the fight for patents, especially in the commercially most attractive areas such as biotechnology, is completely transforming the processes of research and relations within the scientific community—threatening the collegiality of research processes and free and open discussion of findings. According to many, it puts the advance of science at risk, as well as provoking a fatal distortion of research priorities. The patent problem is one of those that best reveal the global segmentation of knowledge production. It is only relevant in the few countries where there is a great capacity for commercial absorption of the knowledge produced.

Toward a New Institutionalism

The institutional domain is a key area of the public university’s democratic and emancipatory reform. I previously noted that the virulence and salience of the institutional crisis reside in its being a condensation of the deepening crises of hegemony and legitimacy.

This is why I have focused up to now on these two crises. It is my opinion that university reform must be centered on the matter of legitimacy. In fact, the loss of hegemony seems irremediable, not only because of the emergence of many alternative institutions, but also because of the growing internal segmentation in the university network, both at the national and global levels. The university today is not the unique organization it was and its heterogeneity makes it even more difficult to identify the uniqueness of its character. The processes of globalization make this heterogeneity more visible and intensify it. What remains of the university's hegemony is the existence of a public space where the debate and the criticism of society can, in the long run, happen with fewer restrictions than in the rest of society. This core of hegemony is too irrelevant in today's capitalist societies to sustain the university's legitimacy. This is why institutional reform has to be centered on the latter.

The institutional reform I propose here intends to strengthen the public university's legitimacy in the context of the neoliberal globalization of education and envisions supporting the possibility of an alternative globalization. Its principal areas can be summed up in the following ideas: network, internal and external democratizing, and participative evaluation.

Network. The first idea is that of a national network of public universities upon which a global network can be developed. In almost every country, there are university associations, but such associations do not come close to constituting a network. In the majority of cases, they are merely pressure groups collectively demanding benefits that are appropriated individually. In another direction entirely, I propose that the university's public good begin to be produced in networks, meaning that none of the nodes in the network can insure by itself alone all the functions into which this public good is translated, be it knowledge production, undergraduate and graduate training, extension, action-research or ecology of knowledges. This implies an institutional revolution. Universities were

institutionally designed to function as autonomous and self-sufficient entities. The culture of university autonomy and of academic freedom, although defended publicly in the name of the university against outside forces, has been frequently used inside the university system to pit university against university. Competition for ranking exacerbates separation and, because it takes place without any compensatory measures, it deepens the existing inequalities, making the top of the pyramid even sharper and the overall segmentation and heterogeneity more profound. Building a public network implies the sharing of resources and equipment, the internal mobility of teachers and students and minimal standardization of course plans, of school year organization, of systems of evaluation. None of this has to eliminate the specificities of each university's response to the local or regional context in which it is located. On the contrary, maintaining such specificity gives each individual university more value within the network⁴. The network, while creating more polyvalence and decentralization, strengthens the public university network as a whole. It is not about making excellent universities share their resources in such a way that their excellence would be put at risk. Rather, it is about multiplying the number of excellent universities, offering each the possibility of developing its niche potential with the help of the rest.

Once the network is created, its development is subject to three basic action principles: make it dense, make it democratic, and qualify it. Network theory furnishes precious organizational leads. They can be multi-level and multi-scale, they should stimulate the formation of clusters and promote the growth of multi-connectivity among universities, research and extension centers, programs that deal with publicizing and publishing knowledge. I think it is useful to keep the example of the European Union in mind when

⁴ For example, in Brazil, I have become aware of extremely rich experiences in the extension services of Northern and Northeastern universities that are totally unknown or undervalued in the Central and Southern universities. And I am certain that the reverse happens too.

building a network. European university policy envisions the creation of a university network that will prepare European universities for the globalization of higher education. Although I do not agree with the excessive emphasis on the mercantile aspects, I think the strategy is correct in acknowledging that, until recently, relations among European universities were characterized by institutional heterogeneity, enormous segmentation and, reciprocal isolation—that is, a set of features that weakened the opportunities for inclusion of the European universities in the global context of higher education. What the European Union is trying to do at an international level, among its member countries, is certainly more difficult to achieve than at the national level. And if a central region of the world system concludes that it is vulnerable, in this domain, on the global scale and decides to prepare itself to remedy this through the creation of a European-wide university network, it appears that, with better reasons, the same should be done through associations among semi-peripheral and peripheral countries.

The organization of universities within the network must be directed to promote internal articulation in the four areas of legitimacy: access, extension, action-research, and ecology of knowledges.

Internal and external democratizing. Apart from the creation of the network, the new institutionalism must work toward the deepening of the university's internal and external democracy. When we discuss university democratization, we are usually thinking about ending forms of discrimination that limit access. But there are other dimensions. Recently, the university's external democratization has become a highly debated theme. The idea of external democratization gets conflated with the idea of the university's social responsibility, since what is being discussed is the creation of an organic political link between the university and society that ends the isolation that has demonized the university, in recent years, as a corporative manifestation of elitism, an ivory tower and so forth. The appeal for

external democracy is ambiguous because it is made by social groups with contradictory interests. On the one hand, the call comes from an educational market that invokes the university's democratic deficit to justify the market's need for greater access to it, something that is only possible if the university is privatized. External democratization implies the university's new relation with the world of business and its ultimate transformation into a business. On the other hand, the call for external democratization comes from progressive social forces that are behind the transformations occurring in the passage from the university model to the pluriversity model; it comes especially from the allies of historically excluded groups which today demand that the public university become responsible to their long neglected interests. The pluriversity model, in assuming the contextualization of knowledge and the participation of citizens or communities as users or even co-producers of knowledge, requires that such contextualization and participation be subject to rules which will guarantee the transparency of the relations between the university and its social environment and legitimize the decisions made in the ambit of such relations.

This second appeal for external democracy aims to neutralize the first, the call for privatizing the university. The appeal for privatization had an enormous impact on the universities of many countries in the last decade, to the point where university researchers have lost much of the control they had over research agendas. The most obvious case is the way research priorities are defined today in the field of health, where diseases that affect the majority of the world's population (malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS) are not given research priority. From the moment the regulatory mechanisms of the scientific community begin to be dependent on the centers of economic power, only external bottom-up democratic pressure can insure that matters with little commercial interest but great social impact make their way into research agendas.

The need for a new institutionalism of external democracy – a new university/society public sphere--is fundamental to making the social pressures on university functions transparent, measurable, and susceptible to reasonable regulation. This is one of the paths of participative democracy leading to a new platform of public university legitimacy.

The internal democracy is to be articulated with the external democracy. This is a theme that acquired great visibility in the central countries during the 1960s and all the countries that went through periods of dictatorship during the second half of the twentieth century introduced forms of democratic university governance as soon as the dictatorship was toppled. The entrepreneurial pressure on the university has launched a systematic attack on this internal democracy. The reason is obvious: to put the university at the service of capital entails the proletarianization of professors and researchers and that cannot occur while the mechanisms of internal democracy are in place, precisely because they sustain the academic freedom that bars the way to proletarianization. This is only attainable when an entrepreneurial model of administration and organization is established, professionalizing university functions and maintaining a strict separation between administration, on one side, and faculty and researchers, on the other.

The external democracy proposed by capital is, thus, strongly hostile to internal democracy. The same is not true of community and solidarity-based external democracy that can stimulate internal democracy and vice-versa. Therefore, the reform of the public university as a collective good must defend internal democracy for its own sake, and also avoid external democracy being reduced to university-industry relations. External democracy can be made concrete through socially and culturally diverse social councils, with participation based on social relevance rather than financial contributions, defined on local or regional, class, racial, and gender bases. The participation in internally democratic organs will thus be informed by the principles of affirmative action, bringing social groups and

interests to the Councils that are now quite distanced from the university. It is important that the Councils be more than a mere façade so that, apart from their consultative functions, they must be able to participate in the internal processes of the university's participative democracy

Participative evaluation. Finally, the new institutionalism entails a new system of evaluation that includes each of the universities and the university network as a whole. Mechanisms of self-evaluation and hetero-evaluation should be adopted for both cases. Evaluation criteria should be congruent with the aforementioned goals of the reform and applied through techno-democratic or participative tools rather than through technocratic ones. The latter are today strongly recommended by transnational educational capital. They entail quantitative external evaluations, both of teaching and research, leaving out the fulfillment of any other functions, namely extension and, of course, research-action and ecology of knowledges. In the case of research, evaluation is focused on what is most easily accounted for by bibliometric techniques that differentiate publication types and locations and measure the impact of the publications by the number of citations. Little evaluation has been done of the less easily quantifiable areas of extension and, when it occurs, it tends to privilege university-industry relations and to center on quantitative criteria like the number of patents, for example.

The fixation of criteria through mechanisms of internal and external democracy is fundamental since they define the social value of the different university activities. The university should not promote single models of professorial activity but, rather, differentiated models that value the specific competencies of different groups of professors. This allows the university to increase its social returns and to introduce internal incentives for new activities that serve as a shield against the unilateral pressure of the mercantile incentives. The participative evaluation models facilitate the emergence of sufficiently robust internal

evaluation criteria to measure up to the external criteria. The principles of self-management, self-regulation, and self-discipline allow the evaluative processes to serve as processes of political apprenticeship . These principles are the only guarantee that participative self-evaluation will not turn into narcissistic self-contemplation or an exchange of evaluative favors.

Conclusion

The university in the twenty-first century will certainly be less hegemonic but no less necessary than it was in previous centuries. Its specificity as a public good resides in its being the institution that links the present to the medium and long term through the kinds of knowledge and training it produces and by the privileged public space it establishes, dedicated to open and critical discussion. For these two reasons, it is a collective good without strong allies. Many people are not interested in the long term and others have sufficient power to be wary of those who dare to suspect them or criticize their interests.

The public university is, thus, a permanently threatened public good, which is not to say that the threat comes only from the outside; it comes from the inside as well. It is possible that, in this chapter, I have emphasized the external threat more than the internal one. But in previous work about the university—“From the idea of the university to the university of ideas,” published in my book *Pela Mão de Alice: o Social e o Político na Pós-Modernidade*—I paid more attention to the internal threat. The reason for this change of emphasis is that, today, the factors of the internal threat are stimulated by a perverse interaction, unknown to many, with factors of the external threat. I am more than ever aware that a university socially ostracized for its elitism and corporate tendencies, and paralyzed by the inability to question itself in the same way it questions society, is easy prey for the proselytes of neoliberal globalization. This is why the emergence of a university market--

first, a national market and now a global one-- by making the public university's vulnerabilities more evident, constitutes such a profound threat to the public good it produces or ought to produce.

The conjunction between factors of internal threat and factors of external threat is quite obvious in evaluating the university's capacity for long-term thinking, perhaps its most distinctive characteristic. Those who work in today's university know that university tasks are predominately short-term, dictated by budget emergencies, inter-departmental competition, professorial tenure, and so forth. The management of such emergencies allows for the flourishing of types of conducts and professionals that would have little merit or relevance were it possible and urgent to focus on long term questions. This emergency - ridden state of affairs, which is surely due to a plurality of factors, must also be seen as a sign that powerful outside social actors are influencing the university. What is the social return on long-term thinking, on using the public spaces for critical thinking or even the production of knowledge apart from what the market demands? In the World Bank's way of thinking, the answer is obvious: none. If it existed, it would be dangerous and, if not dangerous, unsustainable in semi-peripheral and peripheral countries, since it would have to compete with the central countries that have supposedly unequivocal comparative advantages in this domain. If this global and external logic did not find such fertile ground for local and internal appropriation, it would certainly not be so dangerous. The proposal I have presented in this chapter is antipodal to this global and external logic and seeks to create conditions to prevent it from finding a welcoming plot for its local and internal appropriation.

The university is a public good intimately connected to the country's project. The political and cultural meaning of this project and its viability depend on a nation's ability to negotiate, in a qualified way, its universities' insertion into the new transnational fields. In the case of the university and of education in general, this qualification is the condition

necessary for not making the negotiation an act of surrender and thus marking the end of the university as we know it. The only way to avoid surrender is to create conditions for a cooperative university in solidarity with its own global role.

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