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**HIGHER EDUCATION AS PUBLIC GOOD:  
PERSPECTIVES FOR THE CENTENARY  
OF THE DECLARATION OF CORDOBA**

Original in Portuguese and Spanish

English version without linguistic revision

This text, finalized in December 2016 and based on testimonies of life of the author, takes up elements of previous documents, some of them published in specialized magazines, but with the addition of new elements from a changing reality. A previous version served as a basis for a magisterial conference in Montevideo during the commemorations of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Associations of Universities Group of Montevideo –AUGM-, 09 March, 2016. In April 2017, the Council of rectors of the AUGM decided, during a meeting in La Plata, Argentina, to consider this document as a contribution of the association to the debates on the commemoration of the Centenary of the Cordoba Reform.

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## INTRODUCTION

When organizing a symposium for the commemorations to the 25th anniversary of creation of the Association of Universities Group of Montevideo -AUGM- in the Universidad de la República in Montevideo, on September, 3, 2016<sup>1</sup>, its leaders decided to look to the future. Therefore, a debate was foreseen on the prospects of a regional conference on higher education in Latin America. That could be held in 2018, twenty years after the World Conference on Higher Education - CMES- (1998) and one hundred years after the Declaration of the Cordoba Reform (1918).

Also, in doing so, they reminded Octavio Paz for whom "the discovery of the future inevitably involves the reconquest of the past" (Cetto, 1996, pg. 41). They decided then to ask someone, since longtime "out of the circuit" to bring some reflections on "higher education as a public good". They assumed that the projection of the future should be done, but considering the positive and negative lessons of the past<sup>2</sup>.

It is evident that the departure point must be the present. As far as the present situation of the world, particularly of higher education is concerned, one Latin America expert, Carmen Garcia Guadilla, in three lines, has clearly defined the situation by pointing out that today, "... **higher education feel harassed by commercial forces of such a nature that they are destabilizing the public good nature that until now was inherent in education**" (Garcia Guadilla, Carmen, edit 2003, pg. 9).

Manifestations of student representatives tend always to go in the same direction as Guadilla. In 1996, in UNESCO, during the preparations for the WCHE of 1998, we asked a student from India, based in California, United States, Sumita Vasudeva at this time member of the board of AIESEC – International Association of Students in Economic and Commercial Sciences- to prepare a document on the student's view on higher education, based on the positions of student associations. Sumita Vasudeva, based in documents elaborated by student international associations, declared that students were disappointed with what was then offered by higher education, stressing that they are not sensitized "about the links between education and how to play a role in society". Consequently, Sumita Vasudeva said,

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<sup>1</sup> Symposium on the "25 years of the Association of Universities of Group of Montevideo (AUGM) – Una Mirada hacia el Futuro de la Educación Superior" held in Montevideo, in the amphitheatre of the Rectorship of Universidad de la República.

<sup>2</sup> - The task was not simple. The document the author produced is not a traditional academic work. This is a position document. It contains information on facts, necessarily accompanied by a subjective interpretation. It does not represent the position of any of the organizations with which the author have had working relationships, not necessarily the views of the organizers of the seminar commemorating the 25th anniversary of the AUGM.

"too much importance is given to the individual objectives and disinterest is stimulated in the evolution of society"<sup>3</sup> .

The observation of the Indian student remains valid and, we must recognize, it is hard to be optimistic when we see, helplessly, the transformation of education into a commodity and the use of the State to strengthen the promotion of anti-social policies with reduction or elimination of funds for education and with stimulation and financial support to companies that only aim at individual profit. Furthermore, these policies push public institutions to be more interested in commerce than with the formation of worthy and socially conscious citizens.

The political and social context of Latin America and Caribbean, as elsewhere in the universe, does not favor the production of an optimistic view of the reality of the modern world. **Respect for democratic principles and the opinions of the citizens are not taken into due consideration.**

When I was preparing my departure to Montevideo, to attend the Seminar on 25 years of the AUGM, I reviewed the text used, in September 2003, to deliver, at the Technical University of Catalonia in Barcelona, the Aula Magna of all Catalan universities, at the opening of the academic year 2003-2004<sup>4</sup>. **We were living a time of obscurantism**, was my conclusion. I confess, thirteen years later (2016), that little I would have to add to what I said on that occasion. The new generations should not come to us, the elders, to ask us to tell them what to do. Rather they should question us about the mistakes we have made.

In 2003, I started the Aula Magna saying:

"Historians designate the eighteenth century as "Le Siècle des Lumières", "The Enlightenment century", due to the occurrence of a movement of ideas which was able to bring together philosophers, historians and writers from Europe, especially France, and which was also able to influence "enlightened despots" as Catherine II of Russia and Frederick II of Prussia, but also, and, in particular, the ideologues of the French Revolution. Diderot, D'Alembert, Voltaire and Rousseau have their names linked to this movement characterized by confidence in the progress of reason and science to eliminate ignorance and superstition. The Century of the

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<sup>3</sup> - Sumita Vasudeva affirmed : "Students in Economics and Commerce use to focus on narrow management theories and in financial methods, while students in Law are lost in the complexities of judicial proceedings. In turn, students in Engineering and Science are concerned only with what can be tested quantitatively. **Few institutions make available to students a fully integrated formation covering at the same time, a specialization in a series of disciplines and in a broader vision of international issues and responsibilities**". (Vasudeva, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> The text, in the original, in Spanish and also in the Catalan version;, was the subject of a publication by the Technical University of Catalonia –Universidad Politècnica de Catalunya- and can be found on the site of "ResearchGate" (Marco Dias) or in [www.mardias.net](http://www.mardias.net), electronic book no. 2 doc. no. 5 "Espacios de Solidariedad in Tiempos de Oscurantismo" . The title of this presentation was taken from an interview published by "Jornal da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul" in 2002 - no. 51, pp. 8 and 9 and later published as a book chapter by Editora da UFRGS "Entrevistas", pp. 558-572 (2004) - "Estamos vivendo um periodo de obscurantismo". The interview to the journalists Clóvis R. Otte and Arlete de Oliveira Kempf is also found in [www.mardias.net](http://www.mardias.net) in electronic book no. 10, doc. no.13.

lights- The Enlightenment - also stands out for the movement in defense of freedom of expression and the will to promote reform.

In addition, I said:

"There is no need to be a prophet to know how future historians will define the end of the twentieth century, and especially the beginning of the XXI Century. It is a time of obscurantism, where disturbing facts are presented as if they were the result of a natural order. Democracy is confused with the arbitrary power of strong countries, some of them with leaders selected through absolutely manipulated processes. Concepts such as freedom and democracy are utilized in favor of unilateral repressive actions, in opposition to most of the member states of the United Nations. The principle of preventive war, based on ambiguity, misinformation and lies, is imposed on the international community. Instead of defending the freedom of opinion and expression is the dominant single thinking ('la pensée unique' in French) that is promoted in all fields, with the shameless use of censorship. "Never, the phrase "Who is not with me is against me" was so often used in international relations.

"In 1989, during a conference of three institutions based in the capital of the United States: Fund International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the US Treasury organized in Washington by the Institute for International Economics, **the English economist John Williamson forged the principles of the Washington Consensus: privatization, economic liberalization, deregulation and control of inflation and of the public deficit**, without worrying about social justice and employment issues. It is announced from there, that trade would bring prosperity for all, but developing countries that believe in this dogma, impoverish and are excluded from the mechanisms of decision-making and receive no compensation for the opening of their economies. Industrialized countries, in turn, strengthen their protectionist policies and, in addition, reduce investment in cooperation projects".

No comments! I have nothing to add to this introduction, the terms of which are always valid. Everything said before it is all the more true in 2016 than in 2003. **It is a time of obscurantism.** The Washington Consensus destroys economies, but still remains being imposed to all continents, theoretically democratic governments are subject to market rules and transform education into profitable businesses by abandoning their social meaning. Power, in many countries, is controlled by minorities, that trough the utilization of various means, dominate political life.

## 1- PREVAILING THINKING – LA PENSÉE UNIQUE

The prevailing thinking became consolidated in recent decades, particularly since the beginning of this century. Internationally, those who dominate political life and control the formation of public opinion have achieved, effectively to impose a return to "diffusionism" and the implementation of modernization theories.

In the 50s and 60s, the larger Western countries, especially the United States, sent to developing countries hundreds or thousands of experts, the "diffusionists", charged with modernizing "backward" countries and provoking and stimulating changes in their institutions and in the behavior of its inhabitants.

People were called upon to abandon their traditions and accept the market values according to the Western model. They were also asked to modify their urban, political and social relations and were invited to adopt a model of democracy based on the copy of the English bilateral system, leaving aside all local government tradition. However, this phenomenon has also developed within countries or states in Europe, where, in several parts, authorities tried to establish a mono-ethnic and mono-cultural state, with the abandonment of local languages and customs and, systematically, placing the market as the main regulatory element in societies.

The modernization theory is based on a Western ethnocentric presupposition, that considers should be universal the forms of organization of society, without taking into account, the cultural diversity, the historical development of the population, the variety in the conduct of social structures. Logically, this theory considers that the only valid model for a quality university is this one developed by large Western institutions.

This ideology permeates all media and even in international organizations that continue to support, in theory, a humanistic vision and the construction of multicultural societies, but, in practice, contradictorily, take opposite positions, abandoning any and all critical view. They accept that the commercialization invades everything. They adopt a passive position and accept as natural, measures that bring the market forces to control society, including education.

It should also be noted that this return to 'diffusionism' takes place in a completely different situation from that of the fifties and sixties. We live now in a period of consolidation of the globalization, whose institutionalization -it may be said- was elaborated in 1989, in the framework of the Washington Consensus. Globalization is presented as a process aimed at facilitating the mobility of people, goods and services, and ideas. The notion of the State weakens and interdependence is strengthened. Globalization in the economic field - the most visibly- operates with three very clear elements, according to several analysts say:

- **A worldwide unification of the market**, with the adoption of a single institutional framework -the liberal- and a uniform model of production and distribution of goods and services;
- **The development of global companies** competing on a global scale in the design, production and distribution of its products and services;
- **An international division of labor** in which, under a single, rigid and monopolistic institutional framework, **the dominant poles are located in countries** that control knowledge and services. They tend to have the monopoly of the creation, the others remain condemned to imitation and dependence.

Globalization affects all life sectors of society and it works like a big market. In order to complete the model, a single society model is deployed everywhere.

The neo liberalism, mentioned above, provides, for its part, a framework defined by US university researcher Wendy Brown (2015, pg. 28), for whom:

“Neoliberalism is most commonly understood as enacting an ensemble of economic policies in accord with its root principle of affirming free markets. These include deregulation of industries and capital flows; radical reduction in welfare state provisions and protections for the vulnerable; privatized and outsourced public goods, ranging from education, parks, postal services, roads, and social welfare to prisons and militaries; replacement of progressive with regressive tax and tariff schemes; the end of wealth redistribution as an economic or social political policy; the conversion of every human need or desire into a profitable enterprise, from college admissions preparation to human organ transplants, from baby adoptions to pollution rights, from avoiding lines to securing legroom on an airplane; and, most recently the financialization of everything and the increasing dominance of finance capital over productive capital in the dynamics of the economy and everyday life”.

## 2-EVOLUTION INSIDE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The World Bank, followed by organizations such as the OECD-Organization for economic cooperation and development, IMF-International Monetary Fund-and, later, the European Commission and the WTO-World Trade Organization- was the principal agent in promoting adaptation of higher education to the principles of the Washington Consensus and therefore stood to defend:

- The reduction of the amount of investment in higher education;
- The stimulus to private education, considered an instrument to achieve equity;
- The acceptance of the principle that higher education should be considered as a commercial object;
- The regulation of educational systems in accordance with principles consolidated later in the WTO – World Trade Organization.

OECD, in turn, tried and succeeded, for some time in the first years of this century, to be considered as the international leader in education. The message of this organization for developing countries is clear and can thus be interpreted in the current context:

- Countries that have not solved the problem of basic and secondary education should not make investments in higher education;
- The solution to these countries resides in the implementation of strategies that lead them to seek overseas educational solutions to their problems;
- Developing countries should take advantage of the higher education offered by foreign suppliers and, in this case, the guidelines for trans-border quality education produced by the OECD and used by some UNESCO staff make it easy to identify providers with high quality.

In all this, it is implied that developing countries should buy educational products in countries such as UK, Australia, USA, Canada, France and others. The recommendation to follow this strategy became evident in the arguments presented to UNESCO by the Secretary General of the OECD, Ángel Gurría, on 19.10.2007:

"I would still like to caution against letting investment in higher education run ahead of investment in elementary and secondary schools. Higher education is expensive. In OECD countries, a place in tertiary education can be up to 25 times as expensive as in primary education. Countries at stages of development Earlier Should take care of basics before investing heavily in higher education. Good Reasons for the Millennium Development Goals call for universal and equal access to primary and secondary education for boys and girls. Where primary education for all has not yet become a

reality, it may, on balance, be less expensive and more efficient to focus on this area, given the resources at hand. Students moving on to higher education can have a range of choices and they may also want to take advantage of higher education Offered by outside providers. All of this might be accomplished as part of development strategies. The Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross Border Higher Education, developed by UNESCO and OECD, make it easier to identify high quality providers on an international level" (Gurria, 2007, pg. 3)..

### 3- IMPOSITION OF A MODEL

The American university model gradually became the dominant model worldwide. In Brazil, for example, this tendency, present in the university reform of 1968, was consolidated with the law 5540/69. Presently, with the Bologna Process, it is practically the whole of Europe that submits itself to concepts coming from United States. However, accepting this as a unique model and as an ideal becomes unrealistic when one analyzes real-life data.

That's what made the English weekly Journal "The Economist" that, in its edition of 01.02.2012, on pgs. 49-50, published an article with the title "Higher Education isn't what it used to be". In present times, even for the United States, this system cannot be considered good. Moreover, according to what Wendy Brown (2015, Chapter 6, pg. 175) emphasizes, "broadly accessible and affordable higher education is one of the great casualties of neoliberalism's ascendance in the Euro-Atlantic world".

The researcher refers to a phenomenon that occurs throughout the West, but her analysis is mainly based on the US system, that, by debilitating the liberal arts curriculum, turned education into product and students into clients or customers. The Economist cited above shows that, although the institutions of the United States continues to occupy more than half of the top 100 places in international rankings, the whole system faces serious problems and universities of the United States cannot - We add - be considered as a model to follow.

Concerns arise from several elements:

- Increase in the value of fees five times higher regarding the inflation levels since 1983;
- Student debt doubled in the last 15 years. Those who concluded their program in 2011 left the university with an average debt of 26 thousand dollars;
- An important decrease of quality of students and graduates.

In addition, the dominant concept on the universities in the US always implied the idea that the university goes towards the community, with the intention of extending their teaching and research background and the culture foundations the university considers itself possess. The community, according to this concept, was an object and had to act passively in the process, being only a receiver of another pole, exogenous and of higher quality. The approach of community by the higher education institutions was the result of an elitist position, in which the community was considered an inferior element. The university, with its elites, their wise men and women, its sophisticated culture, would transfer to the community all of his wisdom. This position was not innocent. It was ideological and this is the original sin of the model as of many cooperation projects between rich countries and the others.

## 4--SOLIDARY COOPERATION

In 2005, rich countries had committed themselves to spend 0.7 percent of their GDP in international development aid programs and projects, but they came to the beginning of the twenty-first century with an average of 0.25 percent. It is estimated that, with a discount of ghosts funds used in/and for the rich countries and their consultants, aid in relation to the G-7 - United Kingdom, France, USA, Germany, Canada and Japan - is reduced to 0.07%. In addition, one must know, a large part of the funds for cooperation consists of loans and not grants or subsidies.

Reflections on international cooperation on university issues led UNESCO to launch, in 1991, the UNITWIN / UNESCO Chairs program, whose aim was to foster networking between higher education institutions at the intraregional, regional and sub regional levels, with the purpose of promoting institutional development and the distribution of resources and facilitating the exchange of expertise and data on experience such as these related to staff and students.

The traditional concept of cooperation, according to Jorge Brovetto, former dean of the University of the Republic in Montevideo and former Minister of Education and Culture of Uruguay, characterized by the fact that "who gets the cooperation has the problem and whoever manages the program has the solution and the resources to implement them" (Brovetto, 1996).

The UNITWIN program, by contrast, was based on the spirit of university solidarity, indispensable to achieve the advancement of a process that would lead to establishing strong and lasting ties between higher scientific and educational institutions worldwide. At the academic level, it encouraged the promotion and strengthening of innovative and interdisciplinary training and research programs that have a direct impact on sustainable human development.

The UNITWIN program aimed to respond to the need these establishments have to open their borders and escape their isolation. No institution today can live in isolation and imagine that it alone can cover all fields of knowledge satisfactorily. In February 1993, there were 70 chairs and 20 networks supported by the UNITWIN Program. By February 1996, these numbers had risen to 214 and 46, respectively.

According to its conception, at the time of its creation, the program would have two basic elements: UNESCO Chairs, with a vocation to become a center of excellence, and networks. Each chair should be a focal point or become part of a network<sup>5</sup>. Inside UNESCO, the

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<sup>5</sup> In March 2007, the UNESCO secretariat submitted a document (176 EX / 10) to the Executive Board of that organization containing new strategic guidelines for the UNITWIN program. Among the "new" lines for the renewal of the program was the need to involve all sectors of UNESCO in UNITWIN. One must note that this

program would have to count on the participation of the different programs of the organization: education, science and technology, communications, culture, social sciences. In 1998, at the moment of the World Conference on Higher Education, organized by UNESCO in Paris, there were more than 300 chairs and about 50 networks.

Underpinning this initiative was the conviction that the creation of joint research and graduate programs at the doctoral level could be a way to be prioritized by the public policies of internationalization of higher education. Measures such as this would prevent the brain drain and collaborate for the joint transfer of knowledge between institutions and between countries and regions.

Frequently, experts and responsible for public cooperation policies wonder about what to do to avoid competencies exodus, and consequently the plundering of brains. The Association of European Universities in 2010 analyzed the concrete situation of academic exchanges between Europe and Africa, announcing that the intention was to find formulas that could be used to reverse the current situation.

There is no doubt that this situation is dramatic. Estimate was, on 2010, that, at the world level, researches formed in Africa were only 2.3%. This is less than the percentage of one unique European country, the United Kingdom. This was provoked by the fact that most elements formed leave their own country or do not return, when they complete courses abroad. Researchers, doctors, engineers, teachers, senior managers always seek to find places where they can have better opportunities for jobs, with decent wages and good living conditions for them and their families. This affects Africa, but also Latin America and other developing or less developed regions.

The figures raised by the EUA are clear. Surveys made in the Catholic University of Louvain, for example, show that 67% of Cape Verde's skilled workforce are abroad, as are 63% in Gambia and 53% in Sierra Lion. The average observed in 10 African countries is higher than 40%. The problems are aggravated by the reduction of public investments in the area of higher education and research, the finding that working conditions are not good (lack of laboratories, for example), wages are far below of what good researchers can find in Europe (ten to twenty times lower). The stimulus to brain drain then becomes very strong.

The countries or regions that most benefit from the brain drain are Europe where 48.3% of African graduates live, the United States with 31.8%, Canada with 12.4% and Australia with 6.8%. Africa has only 169 researchers per 1 million inhabitants compared to 742 in Asia, 2,728 in the European Union and 4,654 in North America. Between 1990 and 2000, in West Africa, emigration of graduates in higher education increased from 123 per cent to 53 per cent for unqualified personnel. There is therefore an acceleration of immigration of highly qualified personnel to the OECD countries, which account for about 90% of highly skilled immigrants in the world. There was an increase of around 800,000 per year between 1990 and 2000.

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was already an essential element in designing the program since its creation. A second proposal was to transform centers of excellence into poles of excellence...

The European Union does not hide that “generous” funding to programs such as "Erasmus Mundus" have as one of their main objectives to recruit the best brains from other parts of the universe. To this end, it stimulates something that would in principle be positive, that is, the creation of joint doctorates, accompanied by ambitious scholarship programs. But to the extent that the real aim of Erasmus Mundus, according to Sarah Piovezan in an article published in the supplement “Économie” of Le Monde on 29 January 2008, is explicitly to recruit the best foreign brains, in the end, more "cooperation" may mean more stimuli to the brain drain.

A first conclusion appears in view of this reality. The bilateral cooperation programs, we could say the multilateral too, should provide for the creation of conditions that would allow researchers to return to their countries and develop a work in satisfactory conditions. There are few programs, rare are the laboratories that do it, strengthening institutions, universities and laboratories in the receiving countries of cooperation.

There are programs that provide for such cooperation. It seems to be the case of one at the University of Uppsala in Sweden (International Science Program - ISP) that gives priority not to isolated individuals, but to units, particularly African university departments. The program works in the field of chemistry, physics and mathematics. In the period 2003-2008, the ISP program was implemented in 12 countries, including 10 in sub-Saharan Africa, and propitiated the obtainment of 138 doctorates and 600 master's degrees with a brain drain limited to 5%.

It should be noted that finding the same situation in the eighties, UNESCO decided to change strategy concerning this issue. Rather than to continue making studies on the subject that always led to conclusions known from the beginning, it was considered that it would be more appropriate to focus efforts on a more positive attitude, strengthening the capacity building, in developing countries. This was one of the starting points for the reflection that led to the establishment of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs program, whose origins were mentioned above.

The evil tendencies were reinforced with the development of new technologies. Institutions in developed countries export complete programs on the Internet, mostly in English, in many cases, with no link to the needs of recipient countries. Instead of using new technologies for a better distribution of knowledge, this “transference” is, in fact, a new and effective modality of imposition of models, thus forming a new form of neocolonialism.

In Europe, there are those who think that the requirement pushing African scholars to perform stages in their countries of origin and that when elaborating some research work as part of their academic program, should work on issues related to their country of origin, could help to mitigate the effect of the brain drain. An example of alienation, always highlighted in cases of this nature, was the option given to African students from small countries to do PhD in atomic energy in European universities. They become naturally candidates to emigration.

A correct policy was adopted by China that decided to improve the equipment of the laboratories of its institutions and ensure better working conditions for their national experts.

At the same time, when sending students abroad, sought to ensure that they should have adequate working conditions at the time of their return.

Sending and financing students to go abroad without guaranteeing them good conditions in return is, on the part of the developing countries, an attitude of suicide. They will give to rich countries the possibility of free recruitment of the best brains, already in advanced training, from developing countries. Intake devices, as well as adapted research infrastructures and better career prospects, may prove more useful than restrictive measures that hamper the freedoms of students and researchers.

The EUA document also suggests an integration of mobility within collaborative actions in the form of providing joint degrees (as in some sandwich programs at the second cycle level) and mobility periods devoted to the elaboration of a written dissertation and traineeships in enterprises. It is also possible "to integrate this set of measures to resume contact with the scientific diaspora and develop a lasting cooperation."

Trying to be more concrete, the authors of the White Paper in its final stage propose measures such as:

- stimulative devices such as improvement of research infrastructure and of recruitment conditions of researchers and students;
- mobility programs and cooperation with the effect of reducing the risk of brain drain;
- Measures to enable active participation of the scientific diaspora in higher education, as are examples of the stimulative devices to the return of expatriate researchers.

All this explains why, during the discussions that preceded the drafting and adoption of the Paris Declaration of 1998, it was considered that no higher education institution can today live alone. The progress of knowledge is so fast so alone, no institution can survive. All have something to learn from their peers.

On the conceptual basis, anything is new in this area. In addition, it is obvious that that all projects of cooperation, cooperation, in particular with developing countries, should result in a mutual benefit. The importance of sharing knowledge and expertise at the international level should guide relations between institutions of higher education in developed countries, developing countries, and should particularly benefit the least developed.

Always from the standpoint of considering higher education as a public good, participants in the World Conference on Higher Education in 1998 encouraged the ratification and implementation of the normative instruments for the recognition of studies and diplomas, condemned the brain drain and suggested that international cooperation schemes should be based on long-term relations between South and North establishments, as well as between South-South institutions.

## 5- RETHINKING EDUCATION

A striking example of developments, in international organizations, of the treatment of the issue of higher education as a public good, was given by the publication in Paris, in 2015, within UNESCO, of a document - "Rethinking Education - Towards a common global good?"- that would aim to update the reflections of the Faure Report ("Learning to be", 1972) and the Delors Report ("The treasure within", 1996). In fact, by subterfuge, this document searches to eliminate the concept of "public good" applied to education and higher education.

Globally, there were always two ways of conceiving a university or, as they prefer some analysts, there are two main rationales underlying the action of the institutions, which can be treated as:

- **A public service** provided mainly by governments, but that can also be provided by other institutions within the framework of the **concession** systems, **delegation or authorization**. This was the conception that prevailed during the World Conference on Higher Education in Paris in 1998;
- -Enterprises or **companies organized to sell products** to those who can afford them. Students, in this case, are seen as clients. This is the Anglo - Saxon model that many seek to spread worldwide.

**Public service**, called to make operational public goods, is based on three principles:

- **Equality:** everyone has the right to public service without discrimination. With regard to higher education, the concept is clearly defined both in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in the Declaration of the World Conference on Higher Education, in 1998, in Paris;
- **Continuity or permanence:** the public service must respond, permanently, without interruption, to the needs of all citizens
- **Adaptability and flexibility:** the public service must adapt to the evolution of society<sup>6</sup>.

The concepts of public service (mission) and public sector (status) are often confused. It is an enormous error. The concept of public good does not eliminate the possibility of concession, delegation or authorization, even for the benefit of private companies, but implies that these called upon to implement the public service are subject to rules that favor the collective interest. It also requires the existence of mechanisms that foresee charges or obligations

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<sup>6</sup> - A comprehensive analysis of these characteristics of public service is found in "Le management dans les organisations publiques" - Annie Bartoli, Dunod, 2ème édition - 1995-2007.

("cahier de charges" in French) to be respected by service providers, the control performed by the legitimate authorities, democratically elected.

Until then, the United Nations system, particularly UNESCO, has always considered education as a human right for each and every one, in essence, a public good, taking as reference the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that was adopted by the Resolution 217 A (III) of the General Assembly of United Nations in December, 10<sup>th</sup> 1948:

Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and **higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit** (Article 26)<sup>7</sup>.

This device is reinforced by Article 13 paragraph 1 of the International Covenant on Economics, Social and Cultural, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1966 and ratified by many countries, including Brazil on 24/01/1992. This normative instrument entered in force on 3th January 1976.

It says:

- (a) Primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all;
- (b) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education;
- (c) **Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education**

These are the positions anchored in the Universal Declaration of human Rights, all considered fundamental in the United Nations system since its creation that powerful forces seeks to destroy these days.

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<sup>7</sup> -As we shall see, education should be considered a public good, being dispensable any adjective that only has the effect of reducing the impact and scope of this principle. Even Jacques Delors, seeking a reconciliation with the positions of the European Union, in the introduction to "Learning: the treasure within" (1996) states that education is a "collective good that should be accessible to all and may not be subject to a simple market regulation".

## 6-THE NEOLIBERAL CONTEXT OF COMMODIFICATION

How all this occurs in real life?

In the case of higher education, it became a dogma in international organizations, in the media and among many public authorities in all continents to say that public higher education leads to injustice because it benefits the rich over the poor. This serves as an argument for the defense of commercialization and privatization. This is a simplification almost always based on false data.

**Take the case of Brazil.** In the eighties and nineties, studies in several Brazilian universities showed that these analyzes were at least partial. An example: In June 1999, "O Estado de São Paulo" published a report by Simone Biehlar Mateos and Rose Mary de Souza, showing that more than half (52.9%) of students at one of the best universities in Latin America, the University of Campinas -Unicamp - who were admitted in the university in (1999) came from lower middle class, 23% came from families with a monthly income of up to ten minimum wages and 30% of families with incomes between 21 and 30 salaries. Only 15% of new Unicamp students this year (1999) came from upper - class families, i.e., with monthly income higher than 40 salaries.

The social inclusion inside Brazilian public universities improved considerably between 2010 and 2014, as a result of the adoption by the Brazilian government of the quota policy for the benefit of minorities and of other social inclusion policies. In confirmation of this statement, on August 18, 2016, again the newspaper "O Estado de Sao Paulo" published an article by Ligia Formenti, Isabela Palhares and Victor Vieira, with the title of "two in three students in federal universities are in classes D and E".

The journalists from São Paulo based their article on investigations produced by ANDIFES - National Association of Directors of Federal Institutions of Higher Education-. According to ANDIFES, "the number has increased in four years, lowering the proportion of students with incomes above ten minimum wages". The work also indicated that two-thirds of students (66.19%) come from families whose income does not exceed 1.5 per capita minimum wage (RS 1320). In 2010, they were 44%. "The myth that the federal university is for the elite is being destroyed", summarized in "O Estado de São Paulo" the president of Andifes, Angela Paiva Cruz, who added: "It is necessary to strengthen policies to continue the democratization of access and, especially, guarantees assistance to students".

It is a positive thing there is no doubt. Brazilian public higher education institutions promote social inclusion. **But this is a part of reality.** Sometime ago, a well-know Brazilian expert, Valdemar Sguissardi prepared, at the request of the SESU – the Secretariat for Higher Education in the Ministry of Higher Education of Brazil- a diagnosis of the situation of Brazilian higher education (2014, Sguissardi). The data presented are amazing. The fact the document, so far (December, 2016), has not been disclosed is incomprehensible. And

observing the changes in Brazilian political life in 2016, the expectation is that this document, in the end, will stay abandoned by those who hold political power in Brazil.

Although the National Plan of Education of Brazil (2001-2010) announced the intention of reaching a net rate of 30% of undergraduate enrollment by 2012, Brazil only surpassed half that rate (15, 3%). The new PNE- Plano Nacional de Educação- sets a target of 33% for the 2014-2024 decade.

In 2012, undergraduate enrollment (including distance education), totaling 7.037.688, thus distributed as follows: 26.9% in public IES (“instituições de ensino superior”) and 73.1% in private. Other data revealing what is the commercialization of higher education in Brazil appears in the document very clearly. According to Sguissardi, based in informations disseminated by InfoMoney, on March, 28, 2014, from March 2012 to March 2014, while the total number of companies BM & Bovespa has had 23% of devaluation of their shares, Kroton Educacional has had about 300% of valuation and Estácio Participações, about 250% (Sguissardi, 2014, pg. 8).

Based on the data presented by Sguissardi, it can be seen that today, in 2016, in Brazil, probably more than 80% of higher education institutions are organized to have benefits, are trademarks, have as owners powerful groups, domestic and foreign, and even a division of the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation. They are governed by the laws of commerce, and control enrollments of the majority of students in the country.

To complete this "devastating" scenario, the Brazilian press reported in early August 2016, that Kroton and Estácio decided to merge, consolidating its position as the country's largest education group, one of the largest in the world, with about 1 million five hundred thousand students (one million and some from Kroton and about 500,000 from Estácio). The operation consists of the sum of around 5.5 billion reais. The merger (in December 2016) still was requiring approval by CADE (Administrative Council for Economic Defense). Few believed, at this moment, it could be suspended. However, even if this is done, the attempt of merging shows how the commercialization and monopolization became the rule in higher education institutions in countries such as Brazil. There remains, then, the question: What kind of training are receiving millions of Brazilian university students? What kind of citizen is being formed in the vast majority of universities in this country?

The false argument of non-inclusion in public universities leads the supporters of the idea of applying the Washington Consensus into education to defend the privatization of higher education.

In 2016, the Brazilian government, in power since the dismissal of President Dilma Rouseff, has launched measures in view of reforming high school. The Brazilian Executive proposed to the congress changes in the modifying the constitutional provisions that oblige the government to spend in education, 10% of their income. The proposal got the support of analysts such as Cláudio Moura Castro and John Baptista de Oliveira. Many education experts however believe that these measures of Neoliberal nature mean a step backwards for

education. What seems certain is that Brazil will invest proportionally fewer resources for education and for research.

With regard to changes in high school, it is certain that the proposals of the current Brazilian government (December 2016) show similarities to the failed reform of the military, in 1971, when the dictatorial rulers decided to strengthen the work force satisfying the requirements of the Brazilian industry at the time. For many, the concentration of the programs with the abolition of compulsory subjects like Sociology, Philosophy, Arts and Physical Education and making optional disciplines like Spanish eliminate the possibility for students from poor layers to acquire a wide knowledge. Their training will be weakened and they will not have access to a greater personal development and a critical capacity that should serve to blossom them in the world today.

On the other side of the social organization, students of the richest layers with access to private secondary schools will have access to a much more diverse training. For public schools, there will be fewer teachers. The compulsory disciplines will be only Portuguese, English and Mathematic. The freedom of choice that some senators indicated to exist in the project is a mirage.

Independently of these substantive considerations, the methodology used by the government was authoritarian. The measures proposed to the Congress to be adopted in an expeditious manner without broad consultations with institutions and experts in the field. To complete the authoritarianism, it is observed that the repression in Brazil again became violent with relation to those who oppose government proposals. In 19 October 2016, the Ministry of Education of Brazil sent a note to the education federal institutions, asking the rectors and directors to identify students who participated in the movement of occupation of educational buildings.

The current Brazilian political leaders (December 2016) seems to ignore the results of several studies carried out in particular by the UNDP – United Nations Development Programme – according to which the participation of all segments of society is a basic condition for the proper implementation of social development programs. A broad framework of participation in turn is only possible to exist in a context of political, social and economic freedom.

On the other hand, to attribute to workers, employees and servants in general, the responsibility for the economic crisis provoked in fact by the adoption of a neoliberal policy, whose results everywhere are precariousness and insecurity, cannot be the fairer neither the most democratic statement. In addition, education cannot be seen only as an instrument for the training of cheap labor for the so-called producing classes. These measures adopted in many developed countries constitute a framework that could be fatal to the claim of those who wish education, and in particular higher education, to exercise in developing countries a decisive influence on the construction of a more just society in an independent nation.

## 7- THE DIFFICULT ISSUE OF FUNDING

It is evident that it is not possible to analyze democratization in higher education, without bringing to the debate issues on the financing of education and in particular higher education. This was the most difficult issue of the World Conference on Higher Education Unesco organized in Paris, in 1998. This was provoked by the observation that everywhere in the world, since several decades, a complicated equation is present in the analysis concerning higher education. The total number of students, teachers, and administrators increased exponentially and resources, particularly financial, at the same time, were reduced in a frightening extent.

**Restrict access to higher education is a trap for developing countries.** Those who advocate the introduction of fees in higher education system run by a diagnosis, which, in some places, may be correct. The poor pay for the rich, Rich have more access to quality education, free or not this is not the question, the poor have to pay for a low-level education, as it occurs today in England.

The problem is more complex than want to believe some weekend or pool border analysts. The fees system is, in many cases, the easy solution for unimaginative administrators or international officials who send their children to expensive schools and then have the costs reimbursed by their organizations. In some countries, the adoption of fees provoked more exclusion; some even mention a “real social apartheid”. Researchers in the London Institute of Education found adverse social effects of these policies in countries like United States and United Kingdom.

The correction of the system through measures such as grants, student loans and other, as advocated by the financial institutions are also not simple. Even in democratic countries, often the beneficiaries are those who don't need help or assistance. Political contacts are more useful than deprivation of resources. One should not forget also that many students living in remote areas don't have access to information about scholarships or student loans. Moreover, the cost of the operation, including system administration, is not always justifiable. Several authors, such as Luiz Antonio Cunha, estimate that the adoption of fees may represent only an increase of 5% to 10% in the budget of the institutions.

The late Armando Mendes, an economist and Brazilian educator, analyzed the tax solution that could be attempted and, in conclusion, defended that in countries like Brazil, it would be necessary:

- Ensure access to the poorest;
- Expand the sources of funding of universities;
- Integrate the families of the richest in the effort to the increase of resources allocated to education (through the tax income mechanism).

The reflections of Armando Mendes coincide with those made in UNESCO in the eighties and early nineties (see "The role of higher education in society: quality and pertinence" News Papers on Higher Education- Meetings- No. 1 UNESCO- Paris 1991) and were later confirmed by research analysts of the Institute of Education, University of London, who, early in this century, said:

**“As research in the United States clearly demonstrates, student loans have a negative/disincentive impact on the participation of low-income groups** because of concomitant student debt, but a neutral one on mid- to high-income groups. By contrast, grants have a positive outcome on the enrolment of low-income groups, and a neutral outcome for mid- to high-income groups. And **tuition fees have a disincentive effect on the poor and middle-income students but no impact on high-income students** (St John, 1990; McPherson and Shapiro, 1991; St John and Starkey, 1995, quoted by Claire Callender (Hayrton, Annetee and Pczuska, Anna, 2004).

Fiscal measures with charges made directly in the income tax return of those who study or have children studying in public free of cost universities are undoubtedly a track that should be explored especially in a country like Brazil, where it is said, an amount equivalent to the national GDP is beyond the reach of the government fiscal authorities, constituting a tax evasion rate reached in few countries of the world. In a country that pays per month billions of debt interest for the public debt and allows a tax evasion of this nature, it seems difficult to justify to look for the solution of education funding problem, through charges in students.

Along the same line of using fiscal resources, two suggestions deserve a cold and objective examination:

- Proposal of Professor Rodolfo Pinto da Luz, a former university rector, presented to the World Conference on Higher Education – WCHE- in 1998- According to this, an amount coming from tax percentages should permanently be attributed to higher education.
- Proposal of Andes -the national union of university teachers in Brazil- which, in its Congress of Fortaleza in 1999, according to its former President Renato de Oliveira, suggested the creation of taxes on hard economic sectors (oil, energy, communication etc) to develop a fund that would ensure the development of higher education and research.

Many economists focus the debate on the differences between private and social rates of return ("social and private rates of return") by comparing the earning of individuals with the benefits the society receives with the investment made in the various levels of education. Through analysis, in which false arguments multiply, argue that income to society is more important when applied in primary education. Using a very slight shortcut, they conclude that developing countries should not consider higher education as a priority and, on the contrary, they should eliminate or reduce or at least not give priority to spend resources in this level of education.

Peter Atherton, a Canadian teacher died prematurely (Brock University), remembered that this method of analysis treats the economic cost of education as an investment and compares it with the economic advantages. The personal rate of return (higher benefits for life) expresses the result of income of the individual in his own education (rights, materials and years of sacrifice etc). A social rate of return reveals the result of the total investment in education (public spending for education programs in the form of diverse grants). The methodology is similar to that used to estimate the current value of an amount that an individual will receive later as a result of previous investments.

Needless to say, one of the promoters of this type of analysis in the recent past, was Mr. Psacharopoulos, longtime a senior official of the World Bank. However, in one of his earliest works, he recognized that this method of analysis "does not reflect necessarily the future experience of today's graduates and is even more unlikely to translate accurately the experience of graduates who will face the labor market within several years, simply because they have taken today this or that decision on investment" (Atherton, 1986).

Other analysts would appreciate that universities start to be managed as companies. It is true that universities can or should take effective management methods and that should take care of the training of qualified personnel in administration. However, a company is an organism, said Borrero Cabal, a Jesuit educator, a Colombian expert in university management who also already died. During the preparatory meetings for the World Conference on Higher Education,, in 1998, Borrero Cabal, always insisted in the fact that an enterprise is an organic unity with general and own goals. Having a visible, stable, effective organization, accentuated Borrero Cabal, it is essential for higher education institutions, but one cannot forget that they are aimed at a collective order and should serve the development of education, culture and science and cannot be compared to commercial organizations (Borrero Cabal, 1995, pgs 43, 187, 213, 214).

In concrete terms, a university must distinguish between units focused in finance and economy and its main functions that are educational in nature and aimed at training, research, services that cannot always, as in capitalist enterprises, aim to efficiency seen as synonym for financial gain. They must keep their critical capacity, should serve the community, should cooperate with the development of the society as a whole, should encourage access and mobility and not just, as in business, promote the interests of its owners, shareholders and eventually in producing some benefits to their employees.

However, many become excited by this prospect and inflated by experts from international organizations seek in foreign models, disconnected from their reality the solution to their problems.

In 1998, English universities began to charge tuition and transform grants into loans. At the same time, the government reduced its credits for research and for training. The implications of these decisions are important. For meeting their needs, the universities are forced to focus their efforts on commercial activities and consolidate a philosophy which aims to more profit instead to the development of knowledge or expansion of culture. Newspapers as The Economist frequently analyze the situation of these institutions. This was done in November,

11<sup>th</sup>, 200 and in particular in November, 145, 2002, with a detailed article on the ruins of the English universities.

In summer 1999, the British newspapers published a series of facts relating distortions of the English system. It would be long to mention all of them. Let us confine ourselves to the edition of July 26, 1999 of the "Sunday Times", when this newspaper called attention to the fact that "universities raise cash by selling honorary degrees." The Journalist was informed, in detail, that "universities are awarding honorary degrees to wealthy people in return for cash" and that "business men can buy a doctorate for only 10 thousand pounds". The newspaper explained that his attention was aroused by the fact that, in England, in recent times, it was noted an increase in granting honorary titles. In 1999, the journalists found, they were over a thousand each year, benefiting in particular the representatives of industries. Even the multidentenary and prestigious Oxford University acted this way. But, the price, of course, was much more expensive: 250,000 pounds. To survive, with the reduction of public funding for higher education, universities should produce resources. The instruments have little importance. What matters is the result.

Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to insist on the fundamental as did the WCHE 1998. Education at all levels is a right for all.

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## 08- INTERCONNECTED PROCESSES

To impose the prevailing thinking, the resumption of modernization theory of the fifties and sixties and the commercialization of education, several processes are developed internationally. Seemingly independent, they are all interconnected, aiming at the same purpose: the dismantling of the state and privatization in all sectors related to public services<sup>8</sup>. Its promoters have the support of governments from various regions, including Latin America, but, above all, from European institutions, particularly large companies.

They are sophisticated methods, as it can be seen through a brief look at some of them. In practical terms, legislation is put into effect, trying to be universal and taking control over an essential element of national sovereignty. The situation then can be considered worrisome due to the existence in Europe, since 1983, of an institution known as **European Round Table**<sup>9</sup>.

**The ERT** has become the generator of ideas not only to the governments of Europe, but, through a process of 'cooperation', to rulers around the world. It gathers around 50 among the largest European companies and acts as a pressure group on the European Commission, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. This organization was able to infiltrate and influence international organizations. In 1998, representatives of ERT were very active on the occasion of the Palermo conference preparatory to the UNESCO's World Conference on Higher Education in 1998.

Acting efficiently, ERT has a system of ideas, a concept of society and a lot of money. It operates in a regional and global framework, while those who defend public education systems often operate primarily at the national and sometimes regional. And without money ... or with little money.

This type of pressure group acts doing what the thinker of Costa Rica, Gabriel Macaya, defined as the union of opposing concepts, using language formulas of "newspeak" as "war is peace" or "peace is war", "death is life", "love is hate," "loyalty is betrayal", etc. Using this methodology, its members deal with issues such as sustainable development, globalization with a human face, interdisciplinary career, sufficient resources, forecast future, private university and, in particular, act using politically correct words, but with double meaning.

And, in particular, they use words with double meaning and politically correct concepts:

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<sup>8</sup> These questions were examined in a series of documents included in [www.mardias.net](http://www.mardias.net). Two documents are available on ResearchGate (Marco Dias). These are: 1. "The inter-university cooperation in standardizing time of globalization" - Chapter I of the book "Latin American Forum on Higher Education" Pixel - São Carlos, Brazil, 2015, pp. 33-66. The forum was held in UNILA – Federal University of Latin American Integration, in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, on 17 and 18 November 2014; 2- "Siglo del Conocimiento y el desafío para la educación Top" - Network Encuentro Universitarias y Consejos Rectores of Latin America and the Caribbean El 23 y 24 de septiembre de 2015- San Miguel de Allende- Guanajuato, Mexico. This second text is also on the web site of UNESCO-IESALC, Caracas.

<sup>9</sup> - The ERT -European Round Table - promotes a widespread privatization. ERT has strong links with several institutions and associations of higher education in Europa.

- Mobility;
- Harmonization;
- Better quality;
- Cooperation.

The ERT manages to co-opt international officials and also university associations. An institution that has deep ties with the leaders of the ERT is the Association of European universities -AUE-, which today brings together 850 universities in 47 countries, has a number of officials much higher than equivalent institutions and receives resources from various sources, allowing this organization to transform itself into a powerful pressure group, organizing studies, developing benchmarking actions and thematic conferences. Also it plays an important role in the Bologna Process.

In a speech in Madrid, during a session of an -International Conference "University, Science and Research: Resistances and Alternatives in Europe" – Madrid, Spain, on January, 31 and February, 1, 2014, organized by the network "Transform Europe", a French researcher, Dominique Drouin, mentioned IPE - Institutional Programme of Evaluation- that is associated with several European universities. The IPE has already made more than 300 evaluations worldwide. Reviewers generally are Anglophones, perfectly framed in the ERT-OECD AUE system. They use as instrument, a 2003 document, the "European Standard Guidelines" following the same parameters of the document on accreditation of cross-border institutions developed by the OECD with the collaboration of some UNESCO's staff.

The interconnected processes are as follows:

- **Implementation of the GATS** – General Agreement on Trade in Services of the WTO – that transforms education, particularly higher education and distance education, into commodities **and elaboration of TISA-** Agreement on Trade in Services<sup>10</sup>, whose definition of basis were concluded in Geneva at the end of 2016. This agreement will be more restrictive than the GATS.

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<sup>10</sup> From an analysis, in 2002, at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, university associations in Latin America have mobilized against the implementation of GATS in education. In Brazil, the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso was requested to take a position. The government's response was that the WTO was not a threat to Brazil. **The government was right. The threat was not the WTO. The threat was the Brazilian government itself.** In December 1996, Congress passed the Lei de Diretrizes e Bases para a Educação Nacional - Law of guidelines and bases for national education-, **considering education as a public service.** On August 19, 1997, through a decree, the Brazilian government recognized the possibility of considering higher education institutions as commercial services, object of financial gain. The result was immediate. In 1999, 48% of higher education institutions in Brazil were already privatized and their nature was defined as commercial entities working with the purposes of profit, against 34.5% were private non-profit institutions. Only 17.5% remained linked to the public system.

- Establishing an **international accreditation system**;
- **Review of the conventions on the recognition of studies and diplomas in higher education. Many experts and officials make pressure to utilize the Lisbon Convention of 1997 as the exclusive or at least the main basis**;
- **The Bologna Process**<sup>11</sup>, useful for standardization of procedures in Europe, but that can also become an instrument of domination when implemented in developing regions such as Africa and Latin America;
- Systems of university classification – **Rankings**- based on criteria that fit, especially, the models of countries that dominate the economy, finance, international politics, especially the Anglo-Saxons<sup>12</sup>;
- Uncontrolled development of **MOOCs** - Massive Open Online Courses.

What's serious or problematic in these issues?

A logic of economic and financial nature, whose criteria are essentially mercantilist opposes to the concept of public service based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is what dominates today in the European institutions, which encourages the deregulation of everything and the creation of independent or autonomous administrative authorities in the State.

When analyzing how international cooperation on development issues functions, particularly in the field of education, this becomes clearer. For a long time, there was talk on the "help" as an instrument of cooperation. It turned out then because aid often enjoyed much more the donors than the receiving countries. Then, the new word used was "assistance", but soon experience has shown that assistance based, for example, in diffusionist theories did not respect cultural diversity, neither the interests of those it is should benefit .

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<sup>11</sup> -The meaning of the Bologna process is a recurring theme in recent documents in [www.mardias.net](http://www.mardias.net). Special emphasis is given to the joint publication of Alex Fiúza de Mello and Marco Antonio Rodrigues Dias, published in the journal "Educação & Sociedade" Volume 32, April-June 2011-number 115, pp. 413-436- "Os reflexos de Bolonha e a América Latina: problemas e desafios". The text is found in Researchgate (Marco Dias), and in [www.mardias.net](http://www.mardias.net), vol 15, no. 7 and also in [www.cedes.unicamp.br](http://www.cedes.unicamp.br). Alex Fiúza Mello, meanwhile, he has published, in 2011, with the Editora of University of Brasilia - UnB- the book "Globalização, Sociedade do conhecimento e educação superior- Os sinais de Bolonha e os desafios do Brasil e da América Latina", in which he analyzes the subject in depth.

<sup>12</sup> The fourteenth edition of the Shanghai Ranking was released on August 15, 2016. The top ten universities, unsurprisingly, were: Harvard University, Stanford University, University of Berkeley in California Institute of Technology Massachusetts (MIT), Princeton University, Oxford University, Oxford Institute of Technology, California Institute of Technology, Columbia University, University of Chicago. Editor's note: When this book was ready, the results of the 15<sup>th</sup> edition were published on August, 16<sup>th</sup> 2017. The ten first were: Harvard, Stnford, Cambridge, MIT, Berkeley, Princeton, Oxford, Columbia, California Institue of Technology, Chicago.

## 9 - GATS-GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TRADE IN SERVICES

The General Agreement on Trade in Services -GATS- was adopted in 1994 and is applied since 1995 under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO-WTO). For this organization, higher education, rather than a right, stipulated by the law of the Member States, is redefined as a product - and in fact that is what it becomes quickly and is transformed into a commercial service which is purchased and sold by any international supplier.

To the extent that trade defines the dominant criterion of educational policies, education will no longer be for everyone. It will be for those who can afford it. Local culture will not be respected, nor will priority be given to national and regional needs. There will be no restriction of any kind for receipt or execution of unopened packages, which do not take into account local cultural characteristics. The definition of educational policies will be conceived abroad and will not be defined in a framework of sovereignty by societies through democratically elected governments, but by the trade mechanisms, which will reduce even further the already weakened sovereignty of many developing countries<sup>13</sup>.

In 1999, the WTO secretariat, unilaterally, defined services that, in their understanding, would be covered by the GATS, including education (Introduction to the GATS - October 1999).

The list is extensive and reaches all sectors of the life of a nation, encompassing everything that is normally included between government actions, except for the Armed Forces and Police.

- The list of services, according to the WTO, covers:

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<sup>13</sup> - On this occasion, university associations located in Europe and North America, in particular the International Association of Universities, and also in Latin America, reacted strongly against the attempts by the WTO. The first organizations published a manifesto proclaiming: - **"The mission of higher education is to contribute to the development and improvement of society as a whole, ie: to educate and train capable highly skilled graduates to meet the needs of all aspects of human activity; to promote, generate and disseminate knowledge through research; to interpret, preserve and promote the cultures in a framework of pluralism and cultural diversity; to offer learning opportunities throughout life; to contribute to the development and improvement of education at all levels; to protect and promote civil society, forming young people in accordance with the values on which democratic civil society is based and provide critical and independent perspectives in the discussion of strategic options and in strengthening the humanistic perspectives."** For these associations, rather than measures such as those proposed by the WTO, governments should encourage international cooperation programs, including those relating to the implementation of policy instruments on the recognition of studies and diplomas (Joint Declaration on Higher Education and the GATS, available in [www.auc.ca](http://www.auc.ca)). In turn, representatives of iberoamerican universities associations (Latin America + Portugal and Spain), in April 27, 2002, in Porto Alegre, adopted a statement saying that "Latin American academics, reaffirming the commitments made by governments and the international academic community in October 1998 in Paris at the World Conference on higher education, consider higher education as a public good, alert the university community and society in general about the disastrous consequences of such procedures and require the governments of their respective countries to refuse to sign any commitment in this area under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the WTO".

- Administrative services to enterprises, including professional and computer services;
- Communications;
- Construction and engineering;
- Distribution;
- Education;
- Environment;
- Finance including Insurance and Banking;
- Health and social services;
- Tourism and Travel;
- Recreational, Cultural and Sporting Services;
- Transport
- Other services not included in the list indicated above.

It's worth noting the subtlety (or lack of) of the WTO civil servants. They included in this list almost everything under the responsibility of governments in a system considered democratic. But on reaching the end of the list of eleven elements, they did not want to be exposed to new facts that the dynamics of changes in society could trigger and added a twelfth element: "other services not included in the list indicated above", i.e. any other new service that the society comes to develop...

It is clear, too, that much of that in this document refers to education, in particular, today, to the distance or virtual learning, shall also apply to other services. This is what happens with communication as has insistently pointed out the Brazilian researcher Venício Arthur de Lima, who, in a article published in "Carta Maior" of 19.09.2016, analyzing distortions of communication policies in Brazil, showed how the rules, not even today regulated, of article 223 of the Constitution of 1988 (and also of §5 of Article 220), stating that the licenses and renewals of concessions to the (public) broadcasting service must observe the principle of "complementarity of systems private, public and State" (De Lima, 2016, pg. 1 and 2).

Professor de Lima adds that the organization of mass media in Brazil.

"is allowing not only the maintenance of the flagrant imbalance between social communication systems with excessive dominance of the private system, as it has also prevented the consolidation of a public independent system, as it occurs in countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, France and the United States, where it offers an alternative to State and private systems and, above all, contributes to building the plurality and the diversity necessary for the formation of a democratic opinion" (De lima, 2016, pg. 2).

In his analysis, Professor De Lima brings to consideration of readers a series of points that apply to communication, but also to education and other public services. He says:

1-the great neo-liberal turn was accompanied by a deliberate strategy of education and formation of public opinion. "Founding fathers" as Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman have drawn attention to the fundamental importance of the "battle of ideas" in formal education (especially in the teaching of Economics in high school and at the universities) and in the spread of neoliberal Vulgate through the media (De Lima, 2016, pg. 5);

2-is part of this strategy the creation, throughout the world, of 'think tanks' to promote and defend the neoliberalism, financed by powerful business groups (De Lima, 2016, pg. 5);

3-This deliberate strategy of education and training of the public turned out to cause "a twist on social criticism". As remember Dardot and Laval (p. 209 and 206)<sup>14</sup> "Until the years 70, unemployment, social inequalities, inflation and alienation were social diseases attributed to capitalism; from the years 90, the same evils were systematically allocated to the State. Capitalism is no longer the problem and became the universal solution ". (...) "This huge wave (...) manufactured a consensus, if not of the whole population, at least of the elites who have the monopoly of the word public, and allowed that those who still dared to oppose to be stigmatized as archaic (De Lima, 2016, pg. 5)";<sup>1</sup>, the big three national reference papers – Estadão, Folha de São Paulo and O Globo, and some important regional dailies like the Correio Braziliense and Zero Hora, of Porto Alegre, and still the Veja magazine and the television channels and radio Globo group-form today a political-ideological compact in defence of the fundamentals of the economic model called neoliberal: privatization, outsourcing, flexibility of labor laws and deregulation of capital movements. Also fight in unison the main public policies of the Government, such as the Bolsa Família, the national human rights Plan, quotas in universities and foreign policy. They became as well substitute for a big conservative political party and central protagonists in the political-electoral scene;

5-the destruction of the experience of implementing the project of public communication of the Communication Brazil Company (EBC), which has been carried out by the current Government<sup>15</sup>, is one of the most eloquent examples of this historical distortion".

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<sup>14</sup> - See Dardot, Pierre and Laval, Christian – “A nova razão do mundo- Ensaio sobre a sociedade neoliberal- São Paulo, Boitempo, 2016.

<sup>15</sup> - Michel Temer government that, from the beginning, made it clear his interest in not continuing the measures which Governments Lula and Dilma Rouseff, aimed to apply to strengthen the public system of higher education, ensuring, for example, more democratization in the access to this level of education.

## 10- TISA – A GLOBAL COUP D’ETAT

We mentioned earlier that several processes, underway in academia today, aim the control of education trade worldwide<sup>16</sup>. At present (2016), special attention should be paid to the discussions a little more than 50 countries were developing in Geneva, at the headquarters of the Embassy of Australia, trying to finalize the formulation and approval of a new Treaty - the TISA – Trade in Services Agreement-. **TISA is a vicious clone of the GATS.**

Occasionally, especially by the action of Wiki Leaks, new information on the subject is published. Therefore, it became know that the United States government (Mr. Obama), on the issue of commercial services, pushed to put an end to all local obligations. As part of TISA, countries should renounce to any legislation requiring local presence, binding contracts related to local employment, technology transfer, research and development efforts on the site with the use of national industrial products. The proposed provisions restrict the ability of the poorest countries to use the same paths that many developed countries have adopted and continue to use, say the authors of a note of explanation distributed in May 2016 by WikiLeaks.

Despite the secrecy adopted, the main points are known. **Decisions on privatizations are irreversible. No country can go back on its commitments regarding the liberalization of services. One of the most important principles returning to the scene is that of national treatment, according to which everything that is given to an institution must be given to other domestic or foreign. This means, for example, that subsidies for public universities will be extended to domestic and foreign private universities. This means the death of public education.**

Among the countries participating in these discussions at the Embassy of Australia, **since the beginning, six were from Latin America (Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru)**. The others are the 28 European Union plus Australia, Canada, South Korea, United States, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Liechtenstein, Norway, New Zealand, Pakistan, Switzerland, Turkey, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Uruguay announced its refusal to participate in discussions. Brazil, immediately after the initial dismissal of Dilma Rouseff, was quietly sitting at the negotiating table with the Americans, Europeans and Australians...

The TISA seeks to minimize the barriers that prevent companies from one country to perform activities in other countries or regions. What barriers? It may be national quotas, reserved markets dedicated to domestic products or services, protective rules of national companies etc.

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<sup>16</sup> - See: a) [www.mardias.net](http://www.mardias.net) - vol. 15, no. 1- "Quién creó este monstruo? – Educación y Globalización: sus relaciones con la sociedad". RIES - Mexico, vol. 1, no. 2- 2010; b) "Siglo del conocimiento y el desafío para la educación superior", opening conference of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of University Networks & Rectors Councils of Latin America and the Caribbean " - 23.09.2015- San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, The text can be found on the IESALC website or in Researchgate- "contributions of Marco Dias".

The TISA will be more rigid than the GATS. Currently, in principle, a Member State of the WTO must specify which are sectors in which it agreed to liberalize their functioning. These compose the **“positive” lists**. **The TISA reverses the situation**, creating **“negative” lists**. Only sectors explicitly mentioned in the agreements will not be liberalized. This could avoid calling attention to the issue in discussions through the media, social networks, academic institutions, parliaments.

In practice, this means that if the agreement is adopted, **all sectors of the economy, including education, health, energy, tourism, welfare and all others will be covered by this normative instrument**. Governments will then be threatened with actions in specific courts established for this purpose and may be accused of favoring, for example, local companies. In the case of education, the ghost appears again, according to which, if a state funds universities in the public sector, it may be prosecuted, if the same resources are not applied to private companies, national or foreign.

Another staggering point of the draft TISA establishes that a clause will work according to which the level of regulation in each country will take into account the date of accession to the agreement. Thus, the country that signs TISA - several Latin Americans are willing to do so - will not be able to go back. In terms of sovereignty, this means that nothing will serve the citizens of a country to elect a government with different choices from those who signed the agreement. Decisions cannot be changed. The agreement also limits the ability of sovereign states to adopt new laws in areas such as worker safety, the environment, consumer protection and obligations of a universal service.

In Uruguay, on April 8, 2015, Jorge Brovetto<sup>17</sup> sent a note to the AUGM and to a number of academic leaders from around the world, stating that "in practical terms, the real meaning of the agreement is to transform education into a market commodity, subject to the provisions, regulations, controls and sanctions in international commercialization, similar to any other trade of service or merchandise."

For Brovetto, “for any reason, educational services could be included in the negotiations under TISA, since the proposals contained in this agreement do not correspond to the status of a public good such as Education”.

On 8 September 2015, the Uruguayan press has spread the information that the President Tabaré Vasquez ordered the Chancellor of his government to withdraw Uruguay from discussions on the TISA, considered unacceptable to his country.

This is an important decision of President Tabaré Vasquez. Why? We insist on this point. The agreement is undemocratic and harms the sovereignty of countries. In a democratic country, where there are free elections, if a government makes decisions in these areas, the new

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<sup>17</sup> - Former rector of Universidad de la República in Montevideo, Uruguay; former executive secretary of the Association of Universities Group of Montevideo; former Minister of Education and Culture of Uruguay and former President of the Broad Front (Frente Amplio), which coordinates the political parties supporting the governments of Tabaré Vasquez and Jose Mujica.

government elected by the people to change the public policies will not have the right of changing anything. Uruguay did not accept this imposition. Uruguay may be small, but it has great courage to face the powerful.

What was prepared at the headquarters of the Delegation of Australia, in Geneva, will result, if approved, in a world 'coup d'état'. It is a statement of "global impeachment", affecting all governments leaders of all countries. TISA transforms in puppets the governments of most countries. It ridicules voters of democratic countries. It formalizes an international tyranny. All this is unacceptable.

An important fact in this issue was the position of France which by its President François Hollande, decided to veto, in September 2016, the continuation of discussions on a free trade agreement between the US and European Union. The proposal only benefits large companies from the US, underpinned the French president. If there was logic in this decision, France should be called to also report TISA negotiations, preventing the European Union to approve the project elaborated in Geneva. Until the end of 2016, the French government did not do anything.

The Trump US election and the announcement of its anti-globalization protectionist policies could lead analysts to think that the GATS as TISA could be condemned. A full mistake! Although initially Mr. Trump can create problems for organizations such as the WTO and suspend some multilateral agreements related to trade, he, like all presidents of the United States, intends to defend against all the economic and financial interests of the United States.

There is a precedent. When, in the early 2000s, angered by the reaction of developing countries that required the application of the rule that, in the WTO, each country would have one vote, thus preventing the manipulation of a small number of integrated countries by the United States, Canada, Japan and European Union, the United States began to encourage bilateral agreements or to sign conventions with a small group of countries more easily dominated. We should not be deluded with the possibility of changes in this field.

## 11- INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION SYSTEM

**Another element** of this interconnected process is the attempt of **implementing an international system of accreditation for transnational institutions** (for cross-border higher education), whose principles some experts try to convey to the entire higher education system. Some time ago, the OECD was the leading institution in the production of a guidelines document for the transnational accreditation, considered at the time as the first step towards the establishment of an international system of accreditation (Van Ginkel and Rodrigues Dias, -2006).

Between 2004 and 2005, the UNESCO Secretariat organized three meetings of experts in order to compile guidelines for the provision of cross - border higher education services. During the General Conference of UNESCO (2005), member states acknowledged the existence of a document on "guidelines for quality assurance in cross-border higher education", but this was not adopted neither approved by UNESCO. The General Conference merely noted, on 19 October 2005, that "the Director General planned to publish the guidelines as a document of the Secretariat" (Resolution no. 17, Commission II, General Conference of UNESCO, October, 19, 2005).

Later, in December 2005, the OECD officially adopted the aforementioned document without opposing any restriction. It sets out clearly the views of authors on the situation of higher education **in a period of transnational education, and also describes how the importance of cross - border higher education has increased considerably since the 1980s**. During this period, OECD and some UNESCO officials were trying to prove that the subject was of interest to developing countries, as its implementation would guarantee them access to quality services.

The reality was more complex. Adopting the principles of the GATS relating to higher education, no country could refuse to recognize diplomas from other countries, because it would mean setting limits for trade in services. The solution would then be to create an international accreditation system to define what is the quality of institutions whose diplomas should be recognized. The strategy to implement the idea was to assign to UNESCO the function of becoming an accrediting agency, but an internal opposition within the organization, accompanied by a reaction of the idea by several countries killed the idea.

The situation became complicated and several scenarios were then discussed on the action to be taken with respect to the initiative:

- outright rejection;
- Preparation of a draft declaration to be used in the organization of intergovernmental meetings;
- Adoption of a hybrid legal text, or undefined;

- Acceptance of a document that would be considered as serving to express the opinion of those who drafted and could possibly serve as a working tool for future reflections.

It was around the latter option that the Japanese director-general, the diplomat Matsuura, deftly forced an agreement. Since then, from that moment, the document was presented as approved by UNESCO, that is, by decision of governing bodies of the General Conference and the Executive Council, a fact that did not correspond to the truth. It was a cynical manipulation. Sin then also (2005), the organizations dealing with quality assurance and with accreditation were then called to apply the principles contained in the internationally existing documents on cross-border education, particularly these elaborated in the framework of CEPES (UNESCO) and of the Council of Europe.

Similarly, in view of the academic recognition, recommendations were made to use the good practices included in the recommendation on criteria and procedures for evaluation of foreign titles, also under the responsibility of UNESCO and of the Council of Europe.

The document, drawn up in reality within the OECD, in its final version, has become, in many ways, "politically correct". This is what happens, for example, when it mentions the need to respect cultural diversity. However:

- **The notion of relevance is rarely mentioned.** The International Association of Universities -AIU- and 35 other associations of universities launched an alternative document on the same subject, with emphasis on the question of the relevance and this document was simply ignored;
- **The document is euro-centric.** Accreditation agencies and centers on the recognition of studies and diplomas are invited to apply principles that were produced in the Council of Europe and CEPES (European Centre for Higher Education)<sup>18</sup>, in particular the European Code of Good Practices of transnational cross-border education. It should be noted that, according to tradition, for UNESCO, Europe includes the United States, Canada and Israel (and for this purpose, Australia);
- **The same procedure should** be adopted with respect to institutions considered providers of transnational education programs.

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<sup>18</sup> The CEPES- European Center for Higher Education in Europe- was one UNESCO's unity, specialized in issues related to higher education in Europe. It was created in 1972 and was closed in 2009 when the Japanese Matsuura was the director general of UNESCO and a civil servant, holder of a French passport, was the director of the Division of Higher Education. Since September 2003, CEPES was consultative member of the accompaniment of Bologna Process and obtained extra budgetary funds from the European Commission and from Japan. It was considered a privileged partner of institutions such as the European Commission and the Association of European Universities. Rumors in UNESCO indicated that Mr. Matsuura also wanted to close the IESALC - Institute of Higher Education for Latin America and Caribbean in Caracas-, but failed for lack of political support in Latin America for this decision. On the other hand, it is clear that it was difficult to justify the existence of a UNESCO center in Bucharest, developing actions in line of these undertaken by the Council of Europe and OECD and studies equivalent to those provided by the Association of European universities.

With regard to the objectives of this document, all doubts disappeared with the statements made on the subject by the Secretary General of the OECD during the General Conference of UNESCO in October 2005, as mentioned above.

What some experts try to establish with this document is a system of equivalence rather than of recognition. The European system, in this case, would become the basis for the ongoing reforms in the conventions on the recognition of studies and diplomas in different regions of the world. This includes the adaptation of the functioning to the committees on the application of the conventions in all regions of the world.

This operation, this process can lead to the universal adoption of the European model, which, in reality, is an adaptation of the US system, with the abolition of the regional perspective that was intended to develop until recently. In practice, rather than sign agreements on the recognition of studies, what is sought is equivalence **with the United States model, with the imposition of a prevailing thinking, generator also of a unique international identity.**

Instead of all this, what would be necessary in regions such as Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia would be to establish criteria and parameters to identify the contribution of higher education to relevance, to the creation and development of a better, fairer, and more egalitarian society.

## 12-RECOGNITION AND EQUIVALENCE OF DIPLOMAS

With all these data, it is not difficult to understand why the renewal and reform of the conventions on recognition of studies and diplomas of higher education promoted by UNESCO can become one additional element of this set utilized by some experts and institutions to try to impose the prevailing thinking and enforce the principles of neoliberalism in educational systems.

Here a historical review of this process is needed<sup>19</sup>. Several activities to achieve equivalence of studies considered essential for the success of international inter-university cooperation were executed during the first period of existence of UNESCO in the forties. At this time, the regional dimension was used as an efficiency tool.

The regional dimension was considered an element of coordination between the national and international levels, since it refers to a reality characterized by common cultural elements. UNESCO then considered that, in a first stage, it would be premature to adopt a global international normative instrument on this area. Only when conventions were elaborated in all regions and agreements established for the joint implementation of these normative instruments, the time for a world convention could be considered convenient by Member States.

Since 1974, UNESCO has adopted the following conventions on the recognition of studies, qualifications and diplomas of higher education:

1974-Latin America and the Caribbean;

1976 – Arab States and European States bordering the Mediterranean.

1978 – Arab States;

1979-Europe;

1981-Africa;

1983: Asia-Pacific.

The regional conventions were legitimated by this kind of cooperation instruments, in which:

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<sup>19</sup> Detailed analysis of this issue was prepared for the Regional Conference on Higher Education in Cartagena de Indias in 2008 and published as chapter of the book "La educación superior en América Latina y el Caribe: diez años después de la Conferencia Mundial de 1998 (Carlos Tünnerman, editor) - Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (Colombia) and IESALC), 2008 – Chapter VII – Marco Antonio Rodrigues Dias: La internacionalización y la cooperación interuniversitaria en la sociedad del conocimiento"- pp 313-366.

- The perceived notion of equivalence was discarded from the point of view of a perfect correlation content, duration and quality of students. The concept of equivalence, considered impossible given the diversity of systems, was replaced by recognition;
- The need to take into consideration the diplomas was established, but also the knowledge and experience of life, particularly in the world of work;
- Emphasis was given to the need of understanding and friendship among nations and a clear position was taken against discrimination and in favor of human rights;
- The idea of alternation between work and study was highlighted and references were made to the stages of study instead of cycles.
- The promotion of lifelong education, the democratization of education, policy development, taking into account technological progress, social change and cultural contexts were identified as necessary.

After promoting the adoption of conventions in all regions and stimulating cooperation between the various committees for the implementation of the conventions, UNESCO worked in view of elaborating a World Convention project, but its Member States considered once again that the initiative was premature. However, instead of indefinitely block the process towards a world convention and following suggestions of the UNESCO's Higher Education Division, **these** Member States considered that the most appropriate and timely would be an international recommendation on the recognition of studies and diplomas in higher education.

This should be a non binding nor mandatory instrument that should establish principles for agreements between regions, promote the creation of a theoretical framework for bilateral agreements, which, in turn, would be used later for the development of a global agreement. This recommendation was adopted in November 1993 by the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris.

A detailed analysis of the text of the recommendation indicates that its principles are consistent with those that were adopted later, in 1998, by the World Conference on Higher Education. As example, the following elements can be mentioned:

- **Education at all levels is regarded as a human right**, access to knowledge should be universal and education must be provided for each individual. Respect for cultural diversity is crucial. Unique models are unacceptable;
- Emphasis is given to the importance of **the contribution of higher education to sustainable development**;

- **Participants in cooperation projects must be considered equal and the international dimension must be preserved;**
- **Assessment is taken as needed.** Taking into consideration the diversity of institutions, this principle applies to all academic institutions, including open universities.

The recommendation anticipated issues that today, in times of globalization, proved to be crucial, such as the recognition of certificates, where it is not possible to grant a broader right in another country than what is valid in the State granting the title. In addition, one should take into account the results of the experience of the world of work as also the partial studies.

From a practical point of view, what lacked in the recommendation was the creation of a committee in charge of its implementation. This committee should have representatives from all regions and of course of the universities, through their associations. Since universities in many parts are autonomous, they cannot fail to participate in such decisions. A logical measure to be applied would be to include university associations as members of committees with voting rights on all committees of the existing conventions, as well as of those who would be created from the new possible world convention.

The way the regional committees operate and the absence of a committee for the recommendation are, without no doubt, one of the weakest points in the implementation of these normative instruments. The committees are statutorily responsible for their implementation and in principle should meet every two years, which occasionally occurs. Committees conventions and a possible international committee for the implementation of the recommendation, could have also as mission to examine all aspects related to the recognition of titles, including the implications of the action of suppliers operating in cross-border education.

The 1993 recommendation set up a policy framework and defined principles for the provision of higher education in all its forms and in all regions. It may be noted that in its article 16, the norm-setting instrument of 1997 on the status of teachers of higher education already suggested that the Recommendation on the recognition of degrees and diplomas should be used "in order to validate titles and credentials issued in other states".

**However this legal instrument was practically abandoned.** It is not used as a guide for cooperation activities neither is considered as the main document in the work of revision of the regional conventions. The same seems to occur during the the preparation of the new global Convention project, an objective the Direction general of UNESCO resumed following decisions taken by Member States during its General Conference in 2013.

What is the evolution of the current status of the conventions on the recognition?

In 1997, some years after the adoption of **an international instrument**, the recommendation of 1993, a new European Convention was adopted in Lisbon, under the joint auspices of UNESCO and the Council of Europe. This new instrument, **regional by its nature**, would have had as objective to give a concrete response to changes induced by political

developments in the former countries of Eastern Europe in the late 20th century. One must remind once again that for UNESCO Europe means also United States, Canada, Israel and, today, for this Lisbon Convention, Australia.

Currently (2016), several measures were taken to renew and update the regional conventions adopted between 1974 and 1983, within the framework of UNESCO. The model became the Lisbon Convention (1997), adopted under the auspices of UNESCO and of the Council of Europe. The Lisbon Convention is called inside UNESCO the “first convention of second generation”. And it is used also as the main reference to reach a world convention on recognition of studies and diplomas in higher education.

A question must be raised: Is it legitimate to give priority to the vision of one region, precisely that covering the richest countries, aiming to establishing principles that should be applied to all countries in all regions? Another question should be examined: why don't turn into convention the 1993 Recommendation in order to ensure that the needs of all regions will be taken into account, as well the need to meet further developments of systems over the past few decades?

In December 2016, information was circulating, according to which that some of those involved in drafting a global convention, whether within the secretariat or in delegations of member states, became aware of the importance of drawing inspiration from the 1993 recommendation. In principle, this represents a positive development, but there is also a new question to be asked. Is this provoked by a decision to reflect the interests of all countries and regions, as some staff members desire, or the intention that will prevail will be to repeat the procedure used in drawing up the OECD document on the accreditation of cross-border institutions? In other words, is the intention to make the project politically correct, keeping , at the same time, the elements that will allow the Lisbon convention signatories to control the whole process, consolidating the prevailing thinking (“la pensée unique”) and domination of some countries over others?

It should be stressed that the real participation of all Member States of UNESCO, of all regions, as well as of several "partners", will be more legitimate than that of a small group of experts, ideologically committed to neoliberal ideology, in defining what quality is all over the world.

It seems clear that the dominant trend is oriented towards the installation of a system where what is sought is the equivalence with the European and American systems and not the recognition of institutions which are considered as equals and situated at the same level. We live maybe a period of consolidation of a process of Europeanization/North Americanization of all national systems of higher education.

In the past and until the late 80s, the great obstacle to these agreements was represented by some countries, like the Soviet Union, that wanted to establish equivalences. In other words, they tried to only recognize programs that could be considered as equal as their own programs. **Are we going to a solution where what is sought is the equivalence to United States and Europe systems and not the recognition or validation?** Once again: Are we

living the consolidation of a process of Europeanization/Americanization of national higher education systems. An important task at this moment for universities, associations and specialists is to analyze the work in progress in this field.

### 13- BOLOGNA PROCESS

Another process in progress, with a direct impact on the institutions and programs of cooperation plans, is the Bologna one<sup>20</sup>, which seeks to reform the higher education systems in European countries in a coherent manner, while at the same time consolidates the implementation of single more competitive European system.

Surprisingly, European universities have been led docilely by a process decided outside their walls. In 2012, a process of evaluation showed that all countries in the region of Europe already were participating in this process. In this same context, these countries put in execution mechanisms for quality assurance and for encouraging mobility. Many of those who are involved in this process consider that its implementation can be considered today as a great success<sup>21</sup>. However, it seems clear that the real objectives of the process were never presented in a transparent neither were the object of democratic and participative decisions.

The Bologna process has, in principle, the following objectives:

- To Adopt a model that allows the easy reading of the components of each national system and the comparison of the different European systems of higher education, implementing a structure based on two cycles: first and higher circles (undergraduate and graduate) or, in practice, a three-cycle system, covering undergraduate, master and doctoral degrees.
- To facilitate the mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff, establish a system of credits acquired through traditional courses or active life and stimulate learning throughout life;
- To establish a system of credits acquired through traditional courses or as a result of active life;
- To encourage lifelong learning;
- To promote the Europe dimension in higher education<sup>22</sup> and organize and stimulate European cooperation in the field of quality assurance.

A fundamental concept of this process, which is not analyzed in all its length, is given by skills or competencies<sup>23</sup>. These are linked to the idea of comparison and equivalence between

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<sup>20</sup> The Bologna Declaration (June 1999), preceded by the Sorbonne Declaration of May 25, 1998, initially was just a political statement. It gave birth to the Bologna process. Certain aspects of this process were analysed by Alex Fiuza Mello and Marco Antonio Rodrigues Dias (2011).

<sup>21</sup> -See Nathalie Brafman- "Le processus de Bologne treize ans après sa signature"- Le Monde, Paris,3.5.2012.

<sup>22</sup> -The European dimension can be interpreted as being the answer to the needs of the European continent, in such fields as training of high-level personnel and ability to obtain a job ("employability"). On the other hand, it is important to note that it is rare to find in this document references to the need to develop a Europe of citizens, based on humanistic principles and tolerance.

<sup>23</sup> -See Angulo, J.F. (2008).

the studies and the importance of “employability” and of the labor market. The goal is to achieve the homogenization of titles, certificates and diplomas, whose professional competence should be standardized and evaluated in accordance with procedures similar to that faced in all parts. Competencies, in this case, do not include what is suggested by the Delors Report (1996), which stressed its importance for citizenship. In practice, relate mainly to the current labour market. A bet is made at a university that has its roots in the business world<sup>24</sup>.

There are times when we are tempted to say that history repeats itself. Looking at what the Europeans, within the framework of the Bologna Process, try to make with the definition of standardized skills, how not to remember what happened in Brazil in the seventies, during the implementation of the 1968 university reform?

The reform sought to rationalize the Brazilian university system adopting pragmatic formulas derived from the American model. So far nothing new! Darcy Ribeiro had done the same when he created the innovative model of the University of Brasilia in the early sixties. Many of the measures adopted were part of the claims of Brazilian university students, in particular the National Union of Students. The important thing, yes, was the content. Darcy Ribeiro, for example, wanted to use the University of Brasilia to form critical citizens. The Brazilian military, in contrast, wanted to train young people adapted to the dependent model that was imposed to Brazil in the seventies. For this, a Ministry of Education-USAID committee (MEC-Usaid) was established aiming to define the course programs. Significantly, most of its members were made up of North Americans, the few Brazilians included in the group were known for their submission to the model that the dictatorship wanted to impose.

To train competent professionals is not the same as to train through skills training. Who gets a university degree must be competent, that is obvious. He needs to have technical knowledge, but he must also be responsible. He has to be aware of his role in the society and not simply an instrument for the production of wealth of big business. And besides, train someone to a labor market that can months later not be the same, may represent for individuals to get into a permanent state of insecurity, due to the lack of up-to-date training.

The partnership, announced target in the past by European countries is transformed into fierce competition for the sale of educational products, mainly through internet. This reality causes a permanent tension between the two conceptions of education already mentioned above: the one that insists on accompanying the traditional objectives of education –preparing citizens, and using education as instrument for social promotion - and another, on the contrary, stimulating competition in view of the sale of educational products From this perspective, to form competent professionals is not the same as to form through competencies.

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<sup>24</sup> -What many criticize in the Bologna process is the existence of a hidden agenda. Behind actions presented as serving cooperation, one can find elements that can lead to the transformation of universities into powerful instruments for the construction of a Europe of big business and not a Europe of citizens. The Attali Report of May 5, 1998, provided a basis for the Declaration of Sorbonne and also for the whole of the Bologna process, which now guides higher education across Europe and also several other countries in the world orienting them to adopt a liberal policy, where what predominate are market forces

Solidarity, cooperation and partnership for development, goals announced by European countries in the past, turn into a fierce competition for the sale of educational products, mainly via Internet. This reality raises a permanent tension between the two conceptions of education mentioned above: one which insists on adapting itself to the traditional objectives of education, mainly to form citizens and to use education as an instrument of social promotion, and the other, on the contrary that, by stimulating competition, aims to promote primarily the sale of educational products<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> -See, for this purpose, Kent Serna (1995) and Berit Olsson (1995).

## 14- RANKINGS - THE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS

An important element, since 2003, in the set of processes that result in the consolidation of the prevailing thinking is, since 2003, the academic rankings, which have the presumption of classifying universities worldwide, using criteria that are based on Anglo-Saxon models. They were transformed into a very lucrative industry. The indicators defined by the existing classification systems become rules intended to show where there is quality in higher education.

Today, they have direct implications on public policy<sup>26</sup>. The Netherlands and Denmark, for example, facilitate the immigration of students from the universities that have obtained the first 300 places in the rankings. Russia recently seems to have allocated nine billion rubles (218 million Euros) to boost its universities to have good grades in the ranking and encourages the development of partnerships with universities considered to be the best. Australian universities hire specialists to optimize their profiles. To counteract this influence, Europeans have decided to create their own rankings, the U-Multirank.

The XIV edition of the Ranking of Shanghai was launched on 15 August 2016. The first ten universities, not surprisingly, were: Harvard University, Stanford University, University of California (Berkeley), University of Cambridge, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Princeton University, Oxford University, California Institute of Technology, Columbia University and the University of Chicago.

When analyzing a previous version of the ranking of Shanghai (2013), French newspapers, in particular *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*, in the editions of 16 August 2013, commented that United States, once again, was dominant. The newspaper noted also that Chinese institutions started to appear strongly. In 2003, only 16 universities in China, with the inclusion of Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao institutions, had arisen among the 500 best universities in the world. In 2013, they already were 42, five of which are in the top 200. For a comparison, according to the French newspaper, the Argentina had one university in this position, Mexico, also one and Brazil, five. United States institutions followed dominating these rankings in ulterior versions.

The selection of rankings, particular this of Shanghai, emphasizes academic research, without regard to the quality of education. It lists those who, among the teachers of each institution, won Nobel prizes or Fields (20% of the grade) as well as the level of alumni (10 percent). Gives priority to life sciences, to publications in two English-

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<sup>26</sup> -In 2013, between 17 and 21 May, the section in charge of dealing with higher education issues at UNESCO, organized a meeting on the classification (ranking) of higher education institutions, attended by over 250 participants from 70 countries. In a text presenting the meeting, the Secretariat of UNESCO explained synthetically: 'First used as an information tool aimed at satisfying public demand for transparency, international university rankings have come to be regarded as measure of quality, and spurred intense competition between establishments. In a globalized world, where higher education has become a major exporting industry and where student mobility is increasing exponentially they have been transformed into policy instruments that influence the decisions of institution, academic staff, researchers and policy makers' (UNESCO, 2011).

language scientific journals, Nature and Science (20percent), to the quotes of these items (20%) and to the number of researchers cited in scientific papers over the last five years (20%).

On the other hand, there is little interest in the social sciences and Humanities with the exception of the Economy<sup>27</sup>. The examination of this question revealed once again that, for higher education institutions in developing countries, it is important to:

- check the levels of implementation of the principles which constitute the mission of each institution;
- measure how universities work to improve society, to construct a citizenship, to promote integration between the different regions of the country and of different Nations on a continent; to measure how the actions of these institutions are working for peace and understanding, to achieve the ideal of globally living together.

What's the point, for example, for a university like the one the former President of Brazil, Lula, created at the end of his Government, to stimulate cooperation with Africa to have Nobel Laureates or Fields among its teachers? What utility for an institution like this one to count the number of publications of his teachers in specialized Anglo-Saxon journals?<sup>28</sup>

In the closing session of the meeting UNESCO organized on this subject in 2011, someone mentioned Ernest L. Boyer<sup>29</sup>. Lucidly, the North American academic has made a comment that could serve as a reflection for all those interested in the subject of quality and relevance in higher education institutions

"We need a climate in Colleges and Universities which are less imitative, taking pride in their uniqueness. It's time to end the practice suffocating in colleges and Universities which measure

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<sup>27</sup> - Criticized, but accepted, the rankings, according to some experts, should be replaced by actions of 'benchmarking'. In other words, priority should be given to the comparison between the different systems. To complete this scenario, during the UNESCO meeting on this subject in 2013, reference was also made to the need for evaluating equally the rankings. A European institution announced that it would immediately begin to implement a system that could adopt criteria and methods that it, by its own initiative, has set to make this action successful. It's the old story of putting the fox into the henhouse.

<sup>28</sup> - In its edition of April 26, 2012, The Chronicle of Higher Education, through an article entitled "In Brazil, the conference on internationalizations debates its dangers", reported what happened at the II Congress of the Americas, which was held in Rio de Janeiro, when they discussed issues of inter-university cooperation and the meaning of the ranking system. One of the most intense moment of the meeting came when Sonia Laus, international relations specialist in Santa Catarina, in Southern Brazil, under enthusiastic applause of the majority of the participants, said: "We don't want all universities to be all the same – we don't want to be like them. What we want are good partnerships. We want our students to go to the best universities, but those are not necessarily the ones at the top of the rankings. For us, rankings aren't important. Forming partnership with universities that have something in common with us is what matters".

<sup>29</sup> - Ernest L. Boyer was president of the State University of New York and the Carnegie Foundation. He received 92 honorary degrees from universities and colleges in the United States.

themselves far too frequently by external status rather than by values determined by their own distinctive mission ".

It was a beautiful conclusion to the meeting. Ironically, those who in the last fifteen years, have done everything to cause forgetfulness of the conclusions of the World Conference on Higher Education (1998), just recognized, directly or indirectly, that **quality and relevance cannot exist one without the other**, and that systems of evaluation and accreditation must have as a criterion not the models that have nothing to do with the reality of institutions, but positively they have to verify how the action of the institutions of higher education are consistent with the missions they gave themselves in a free and autonomous way.

## 15- MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES (MOOC)

In recent times, what draws attention are the "MOOC - Massive open online courses". In early September 2016, Coursera, one among the biggest MOOC in the United States, signed agreement with OREAL for training top level officials of the company worldwide. The idea is to use this program to various companies around the world.

In its edition of July 20, 2013, The Economist, London, says that since the launch, at the beginning of 2012, of Udacity and Coursera two start-ups in Vale Silicon that offer free education through MOOC, the ivory towers of academia were shaken in their foundations. In addition to offering online courses for their students (who generally pay fees), universities feel obliged to join the revolution of the MOOC to avoid being decapitated by her.

The Economist stresses that "EDX", a MOOC provider, officially non-profit, founded in May 2012, from Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) raised 60 million dollars of internal capital and now became a network (consortium) of 28 of 28 institutions. The English weekly reported that also "Future-Learn", a consortium of 21 English universities, an Irish and an Australian, associated with other educational organizations, was ready to start offering a MOOC in late 2013. "Coursera", in turn, by the end of 2013, had more than four million students<sup>30</sup>.

The British newspaper notes also that -and this is a key point - the MOOC can be free, but those who are behind them in the United States believe that they will have a lot of profit opportunities. Another MOOC provider -Alison- is generating a lot of money by selling advertising on its web page.

The French newspaper, Le Monde, also addressed the issue in its issue of May 30, 2013, with a provocative article: "All graduates of Harvard, is the ghost of MOOC". The French newspaper asks whether it is fashion or a real revolution. "Make available knowledge online is nothing revolutionary. MIT started to do it 15 years ago", says the newspaper. But, "Le Monde" adds "today things are different, the existence and the utilization of supports of dissemination became easier due to the tablets, web-TV, smartphones, all instruments that facilitate the utilization of technology and the organization of networks".

The Economist and Le Monde surely are right. And it is clear -let's go back to the provocative title of "Le Monde"- that if this works, these institutions will constitute an additional element for the consolidation of a unique and homogeneous education model. Things are not simple,

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<sup>30</sup> - The French newspaper "Le Figaro", in its issue of October 2, 2013, reports that, with a delay of two years in relation to prestigious universities such as Stanford, MIT and Harvard, France also launched itself in an initiative that may be transformed into an important contribution for higher education. He added that the minister of higher education, Geneviève Fioraso, was ready to announce the creation of a national platform that would contain in a first stage around twenty courses new generation available from January 2015. However, the newspaper reports that some groups in the United States are prophesying the death of the traditional classes, but they say that only 10% of those enrolled in MOOC will obtain a certificate. On the same day, in its evening edition, Le Monde published an article by Nathalie Brafman, announcing that the French university moves from the amphitheater to online courses.

because it is already used to put online courses alone will not solve the basic problems of training, but if providers of MOOCs manage to make agreements with universities in developing countries and are able to organize, on a massive scale, good reception of interactive courses, conditions will be created to have before us not only a **powerful training instrument, but also of cultural dominance. Neocolonialism may be stronger than ever.** The experts in public policies will find here an additional element of reflection.

## 16 - GLOBAL PUBLIC GOOD?

Since the beginning of this century, the World Bank added the adjective “global” to the term "education, a public good”, and, at the same time, tried to force education - particularly higher education - to adopt rigid and embarrassing quality requirements, that, in fact, are adequate only to an exclusive limited group of countries<sup>31</sup>.

An unwary reader might think that global public good means that this level of education should be considered a public good in all parties. None of this. The inclusion of the adjective "global" means, in fact, that the global public good will be taking place in a small group of countries that happen to be regarded as a quality model that must be emulated worldwide.

In other words, to avail this addition of the adjective 'global', quality is no longer linked to the relevance, i.e., to the social, political and cultural reality of higher education institutions or to their specific missions established by these institutions together with their societies. Quality becomes contingent on the appropriate response to be given to market demands rather than to what society requires.

Let us make a cut, and see what happened in Paris in 2003, when at the end of a conference convened to review the results of the World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE) 1998, participants were surprised by the inclusion in the final report, of a reference to a global public good as if this "new" concept had been accepted by the participants of the meeting. The strong reaction from the Latin American representatives at the meeting, led by figures such as the Executive Secretary of the AUGM, Rafael Guarga, and the rector of Federal University of Minas Gerais -UFMG later director of IESALC, Ana Lúcia Gazzola, was then verified. At great expense, they have managed to extract from the final report, the element of the text of the report that participants were not allowed to discuss when it was introduced (2009, Guarga).

The document "Rethinking Education - Towards a global common good?", published in Paris in 2015, argues that the notion of "public good" in education should not be maintained. The authors of the document argue that this concept cannot achieve unanimity, and also because he would proceed from an individualist position. These are not arguments. They are sophisms. The document supports, in practice, the idea that everybody must to be adapted to a reality in which the principles of commercialization of education predominate. .

They play with the analysis that, long ago, turned out to be wrong. Public goods are linked to public and state policies, it is correct. This does not justify the implementation of an alleged misunderstanding, according to which public goods are those offered exclusively by the public system. As education and other services are provided by the government, but also, in many places, by companies or individuals, the notion of public good should, they seem to

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<sup>31</sup>- It is true that the UNDP – The United Nations Development Programme- in 1969, had already resorted to the idea of global public goods, but the meaning was not the same as the World Bank documents. See Global public goods: international cooperation in the 21th Century "(1969-UNDP).

conclude. They forget about the traditional figures, in administrative law, of concession, delegation and authorization, already mentioned.

According to the newspaper "Le Monde" of June 4, 2002<sup>32</sup>, services of general interest designate commercial activities or not, which are considered of public interest by public authorities and therefore are subject to public service obligations. The public interest refers, in this case, to activities of commercial services that, to fulfill tasks of general interest, are submitted by member states of the European Union, to specific public service obligations. This is particularly the case of transport, energy and communication.

It was with this perception that, in the European Union, economists have launched for some time, the idea of common goods that regardless of their public or private origin, are characterized as essential to the implementation of fundamental rights of everybody<sup>33</sup>. The starting point of this analysis is also a sophism. The good is public by its nature and not as the result of the characteristics of those who are called or authorized to implement them.

Fast forward a little on this subject. The common goods would be hybrid, neither entirely private, neither exclusively public. It's a smart formula, allowing to place on the same level, the responsibility of the government and of private companies, acting with their own rules, their "codes of ethics" where the most difficult, sometimes, is just to find ethics...

The authors of the document "Rethinking Education - Towards a global common good?" borrowed from liberal economists the notion of the common good and stick to it, following the example of the World Bank adding the "global" adjective.

All this has led some European countries, including France, to seek to adopt a balanced position, urging the European Union to formulate guidelines to the economic services of general interest. They thought to include here education, which is unacceptable, because education should never be seen as a commercial activity. European Union clearly adopted a policy of lesser evil. But we draw attention, bigger or smaller is always an evil...

Eliminating the notion of public good cannot be considered innocent, and even less when the adjective "global" is added. The purpose of this inclusion is that a certain conception of the public good, which coincidentally is dominant in industrialized Anglo-Saxon countries, is accepted throughout the world. The global does not mean opening itself represents narrowness and serves to justify neocolonial positions and attitudes.

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<sup>32</sup> - Le Monde (04-06-2002) - a) Services Publics: La France peut-elle tenir tête à Bruxelles ?; b) L'avenir des services publics reste Bruxelles avec casus belli; c) Principes.

<sup>33</sup> - See Claire Guéulud- " Le climat, bien public ou bien commun? "- Le Monde 13 novembre 2015, p. 7 of "Idées".

## 17- IDEOLOGICAL MANIPULATION

More than a problem of language, we face here an ideological manipulation. We are dealing with professionals. They are not “amateurs” (“fans”). They know where they want to go. The notion of public good must be eliminated, according to this trend, because it requires the safeguard of collective interests.

Although they claim to be favorable to education for all, the “professionals” put the ground postulates that make up the DNA of the Constitution of UNESCO, which - it is necessary to insist- has always taken into account the ability to adapt education to the evolution of society. Public common good may be a clever formula, but misleading. There is no need to use a new formulation, which, in addition to be ambiguous, serves to consolidate the commercialization of education and the consolidation of one the single dominant thinking.

Does the invisible hand of 2003 remained present in this decade that began in 2010? What is the difference between "global public good" of the World Bank in 2003 and "global common good" of this 2015 document?

On the opposite side, academics and government organizations in Latin America gathered in 2014 a forum of higher education in this region and they renewed the position that higher education is "a public good". They also noted that "higher education is a universal human right, a social necessity and a duty of the state. This is the conviction and the basis for the strategic role to be taken in the process of sustainable, sovereign and cooperative development of countries of the region"<sup>34</sup>.

Upholding the principle that education is a public good is tradition in Latin America and the Caribbean and is also part of the DNA of the Association of Universities Montevideo Group. In early 1995, UNESCO launched a document on university policies on a global scale - "Policy paper for change and development in higher education"- which reinforced the view of higher education as a public good. The member institutions of the AUGM actively participated in the discussions during the preparation of this document and were active in its dissemination, which included debates in the parliament of Uruguay on June 19, 1995 (University of the Republic and AUGM) and, shortly after that, participating in large number in a debate sponsored by the ANDIFES in the Senate of Brasilia, on September 5, 1995.

Later, a compact group of rectors of AUGM invested time and energy in participating in the preparation of the World Conference on Higher Education (1998). One of its components, the University of the Republic in Montevideo, has even sent to UNESCO a previous document

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<sup>34</sup> -- "Fórum latinoamericano de educação superior" - Pixel Editor - 2015- 17 and 18 November 2014 - Page 13 in Portuguese, page 29 in Spanish (OEI and SESU- MEC- Brazil)

taking positions on the issues that were to be discussed at this event, requesting that when the declaration would be adopted, it should strongly emphasize the public nature of higher education well.

This position was strengthened with the participation of Jorge Brovetto (former rector of the University of the Republic in Uruguay and former executive secretary of the AUGM) , and Gabriel Macaya, former rector of the University of Costa Rica, as advisors representing Latin America, at the meetings of the drafting group of the World Declaration for the WCHE (1998).

The enthusiastic mobilization had begun during the debates on the regional conference held in Havana, Cuba, in 1996. On all these occasions, AUGM members appeared confronting all those who wanted to treat education and particularly higher education as a commodity under the supervision and control of financial institutions and, at present, under the GATS, in the framework of WTO. Today, the AUGM, under the leadership of Alvaro Maya, keeps the same position established 25 years ago with Jorge Brovetto and latter with Rafael Guarga.

## 18- CENTENARY OF CORDOBA

In 2018, will take place the celebration of the one hundred years of Córdoba reform movement, which began in Argentina, has influenced the whole Latin America and gained worldwide repercussions. On other occasions, I have had the opportunity to draw attention to the importance of the movement of 1918<sup>35</sup>.

Córdoba has shown how important it is to organize and systematize a set of principles that become benchmarks for actions and can be used as indicators to improve systems. It represented the answer to an era. Argentina was an agricultural society. The incipient industrialization, the active participation of immigrants who came from Europe with new ideas as a result of the changes resulting from the Great War, the emergence of middle classes who wanted to take a larger role in society space, compounded a present that obviously is not the same today.

Given that higher education is a public good, it needs to achieve its objectives, to adapt itself to changing realities. Cordoba has established the basic elements of action for the defense of academic freedom and university autonomy, one of the principles that facilitated the unity of academic forces and the fight against dictatorships that, particularly in the 60s and 70s, dominated the continent with the sacrifice of freedoms and human dignity of generations of Latin Americans.

We have a debt to Córdoba 1.918, which includes:

- Consolidation of the idea of **autonomy**, which implied the right of the University community to select their leaders and teachers and organize programs of study, regardless of the Government or other entities;
- Emphasis on integral formation of the human being, emphasizing that students should be treated as adults, as subjects and not as objects of their destinies. For this, Cordoba's leaders defended the "co-government";
- Need for educational institutions maintain links with society, treat problems of society and find in society the main justification of its existence;

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<sup>35</sup> - See: a) [www.mardiasnet](http://www.mardiasnet) – Electronic book no. 14, doc. No. 12 "Desafíos de la educación superior a la luz de la reforma de Córdoba" - Córdoba, Argentina, June 2008.; b) [www.mardias.net](http://www.mardias.net) – electronic book .1- doc. 16 'De Córdoba (1918) a Paris (1998), los desafíos de la educación superior" - Córdoba, Argentina, 1998; c) [www.mardias.net](http://www.mardias.net) – electronic book no. 14, doc. 14 - "Impactos de la CRES y de la CMES 1998 en América Latina y Caribe (2008); d) Integración y Conocimiento, revista del Núcleo de Estudios e Investigaciones en Educación Superior del Mercosur – ISSN- 2347-0658, no. 5, vol. 2, año 2016- págs. 24 a 34.

- Need to transfer to society, through the University extension, the knowledge that higher education institutions have or produce.
- Scientific modernization, with changes in programmes and curricula, as well as the refusal of dogmatic positions;
- Democratization, with the concept of gratuitousness considered as a tool to expand access to universities;
- Anticipation of integration movements in the region.

**Many of these issues are current. Others, such as the need to adapt to changes in society require in-depth reflection on its implications on the current reality.** It is vital to emphasize the public nature of good education, which, by their nature, should be furnished in the benefit of all. **Education, according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is one of these public goods that are provided as a public service, regardless of the provider institution.**

If providers do not act according to these principles, the responsibility is of governments that do not fulfill their functions and are conniving with the lack of accountability of providers. A strong position on this issue is essential. Would it be acceptable that instead of families or representatives of citizens in governments, when these are democratic, would be multinational or foreign governments which would be called to define what kind of education we want for our children?

In today's world, it is necessary to have a conceptual framework adopted by consensus, to define the principles for higher education policy and this must be based on a new concept of globalization, which can no longer be defined by organizations such as the World Bank the IMF and the WTO, which do not necessarily take into account the interests of society.

The centenary of Córdoba gives the Latin American academic world the opportunity to update this framework. A base exists. Some elements are found in the Declaration of Córdoba (1918). Today, a key reference in universal terms is the declaration of the WCHE (1998), which will be reinforced, with regard to Latin America, with the declaration of CRES - Regional Conference on Higher Education (2008) in Cartagena das Indias.

## 19- UPDATING THE DECLARATION OF 1998

In 2015, in Brazil and China, I was questioned about what items should be examined for a possible update of the 1998 Declaration, the starting point being the acceptance that this is still a reference with respect to the basic principles of the relationship between higher education and society<sup>36</sup> [34] .

To keep higher education as a public good, the World Conference on Higher Education of UNESCO in 1998, followed by the Regional Conference on Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (2008) in Cartagena de Indias and the Second World Conference (2009) established three essential points:

- The Pertinence;
- The Improvement of quality of content and of management;
- The Internationalization considered essential to reduce the differences between countries.

The WCHE 1998 was preceded by a long preparation, with a growing mobilization around the world, when it became clear to all members of the academic community, governments, analysts of education systems, that the basic purposes of higher education systems should be related to four main objectives:

- Development of new knowledge (the research function);
- Education and training of highly qualified personnel (functions of teaching);
- Provision of services to society, especially through its contribution to sustainable development and amelioration of society;
- The exercise of ethics function that implies the development of social criticism favoring comprehensive training and the preparing of responsible citizens, capable of taking initiatives and able to work together to build a better society.

Now with the stimulation of the commercialization of education, a silence is made on the declaration of the WCHE of 1998 and of basic documents of this conference, as it is example the text of the speeches of the closing session of the CMES, by Celine Saint Pierre, Canada, a classic document. The author is a woman of vision. She was able to, analyzing what was discussed in the WCHE, predict much of what came later, including with respect to the commercialization of education. On the other side, the responsible for this silence, seek to

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<sup>36</sup> - See Annex- Summary of the World Declaration on Higher Education adopted by the WCHE in Paris, in 1998, and ratified by the WCHE also in Paris, in 2009.

consolidate the development of international education market and the leading position of a small group of countries.

The declaration, adopted almost 20 years ago, today is still valid. It is essential to renew and strengthen the public goods nature of higher education. Discussions on systems of higher education today focus on issues such as:

- The need for reform;
- Importance of accreditation and evaluation tools;
- Strengthening ties with the world of work;
- Importance of having the student as the center of the whole strategy of the institutions of higher education;
- Democratization, access, funding, autonomy, and research focused on solving the problems of society;
- Development of massive open online courses, the MOOCs - Massive open online courses;
- Methodologies and criteria utilized for national and international university ranking (rankings).

The Centenary of Córdoba gives the opportunity for a coherent manifestation of the Latin-American academic community on these subjects.

## 20- DEFINITION OF MISSIONS

In 1998, the academic community and Member States of UNESCO recommended that institutions of higher education define or redefine their missions together with society and considered cooperation, partnership, as one of its missions. The definition of missions can allow the universities to prepare students "to live up to its time", as proposed by the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset (1999, pg. 63). And will also give to the institutions and systems tools to avoid the mistake of trying to copy models, which, as said the Spanish thinker, were responsible for creating the average European "uncultivated" man without education: the new barbaric, backward in terms of time, archaic, primitive. They have no vital system of ideas about the world and the man corresponding to its time".

This is a point that has so far not received the attention of the academic community, but is essential when one thinks in updating the recommendations of the Declaration of 1998. If missions are defined by the academic community, with the participation of parliaments, governments, civil society, higher education institutions will have a powerful tool to guide their action.

**An assessment will be made by comparing not what makes a university in a developing country with the action of an American or British, or Australian institution, for example, but with what the society expects of it.** The standards will not be instruments of domination or submission, nor promote the adoption of practices that may eventually be good for the countries of origin but have nothing to do with the cultural and social realities of the countries wishing to reform their systems pushing them to respond to the interests of their societies. And there again, the reflection on the public system is essential. **Education is not a commodity. Education is a public service.**

It is in Article 5 of the document "Framework priority for change and the development of higher education action" adopted by the WCHE of 1998, that the participants of the WCHE decided that each institution of higher education should define their mission in accordance with the present and future needs of society", a proposal to be taken into account without forgetting, according to the 1998 Conference that

“relevant higher education and quality is essential for a country or region to attain the required level of economic and social sustainable and rational development from the point of view of the environment, cultural creativity nourished by a greater knowledge and understanding of cultural heritage, a higher level of life and peace and internal and international harmony, founded on human rights, democracy , tolerance and mutual respect”.

In establishing their missions, institutions of higher education must, of course, take into account objectives that are common to all institutions of this nature. It is the case of international education that aims to get a better understanding between individuals and peoples; the growing respect for ideas, cultures, customs and traditions of others; to promote "living together", between nations, between individuals within each country; to promote justice and equity and defend peace. As a result, higher education must promote freedom,

respect for human rights and dignity of people as individuals or as members of their community, especially minorities. At present, it must also take into account the Millennium Development Goals launched and updated by the United Nations.

Finally, higher education institutions must have as one also essential objective **the formation of a conscious citizen**, who will fight, by all means, in favor of an inclusive development that does not exclude any category of person and seeks to build a more just society. To achieve this, the institutions must respond to the needs of societies to which they are linked.

## 21-AUTONOMY AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

These missions must also take into account the notion of academic freedom, as expressed in the recommendation concerning the status of teachers in higher education adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in November 1997 and it is so little known in the academy developing countries.

Then we come to the delicate question of autonomy, which also needs to be subject to a deepening. In many constitutions and in many of the laws relating to higher education, autonomy is mentioned as one of the essential characteristics of the higher education systems. But in the reality of the facts, in how many countries autonomy is truly a reality?

The idea of autonomy involves several elements: **freedom of inquiry, freedom of education, the power of self-management**. Since the middle Ages to the present day, freedom and autonomy are part of the concept of university. Universities and institutions of higher education in general, must take their destiny in their hands, organize their management, manage their resources, be free, search and organize educational institutions.

Autonomy should be designed to complement social responsibility. **The confusion between autonomy and sovereignty can have negative effects on academic life**. In his memoir "Le monde d'hier- souvenirs d'un européen" written at least partially in Brazil shortly before his death in Petropolis, in 1942, Stefan Zweig tells what the SS did in favour of National Socialism, with the dispersal of meetings using shock batons ("cassetetes"), attacking their opponents during night, threatening and beating. Student associations also have done so in Austria, on behalf of German Nazis, establishing terror without previous examples, with violence and under academic immunity.

**For many in Latin America, autonomy has become a myth**. Even the military dictatorships and conservative governments say they want to respect it. In practice, they do not, but it should be added that democratic governments, in recent history, are not enthusiastic about real autonomy, as they see the deal only **as a tool to get rid of financial responsibilities with respect to higher education**. And this attitude is verified not only in Latin America. In the 80s, the OECD countries discussed the best way to manage universities over a period of zero growth. But none among the participants of the meetings of the OECD, where the issue was discussed, dared to investigate the reasons for this poor budgetary situation of higher education institutions. In the OECD, nobody was seen questioning why zero growth in education, while they watched, in many countries, the growth of funds invested in the purchase of weapons.

Speaking of autonomy in countries that agree to be submitted to the rules imposed from the outside in finance university means to "cover the sun with a sieve". In Brazil, in the 80s, the Minister of Education Murilio Hingel felt compelled to ask a representative of an international organization to retire from his office. The international civil servant wanted to impose changes in Brazil's legal system for public institutions. Unfortunately, it is rare to observe an authority of a developing country act this way.

The problem of autonomy is universal. See the French case<sup>37</sup>. Experts know that it is almost impossible to find a country where freedom of thought in universities is as great as it is in France. However, talk of administrative autonomy in French universities is a joke of much bad taste. I was, during many years, member of the university councils of two universities in the Paris region. How long did we, the members of these councils, composed of personalities generally getting higher wages, spend to discuss, for example, a request to the Minister of Education for a secretarial position, or to the Minister of finance for any position in the administration of the institutions?

Autonomy and academic freedom must be present in an eventual new declaration of Córdoba in 2018, in the date of the Centenary of the reform.

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<sup>37</sup> - Laurent Schwartz, in a 1987 report addressed to the National Evaluation Committee created by the Mitterand government, entitled "Où va l'université?", published by Gallimard, declared in a very realistic way: - "Everyone talks of autonomy, but nothing is really done, because universities do not have financial autonomy, or even management autonomy. It is essential that they acquire it, at least gradually, with only a posteriori control, and that is not the case in practice. The programs must be diversified, student and teachers recruitment must also be diversified. Autonomy in our "hypercentralised" country can only be gradual, it will only succeed if implemented in stages, with trials and errors. Autonomy implies responsibility, a strong administration in universities (which is difficult with current university councils) and numerous evaluations accompanied by positive or negative sanctions. The national and international competition is the best regulator of the autonomy".

## 22- SUCCESS OF A REACTION

We resume the thread to signal that the definition or redefinition of missions should provoke a lot of debate within the institutions. Even in Paris + 5 conference at UNESCO in 2003, and also in the WCHE in 2009, participants did not address this issue, which, however, is crucial. If the academic world was able to apply this pattern, halfway it would be made to change current trends, oriented towards the abandonment of the concept of education as a public good

Those who have doubts about this, must look to what happened in 2009 when, 11 years after the WCHE 1998, again a World Conference was held in Paris to deal with higher education. But 2009 had little in common with 1998. Following the example of what happened to the WCHE in 1998, regional conferences were convened. As in 1998, the first was held in Latin America, this time in Cartagena das Indias, in 2008, and, as in Havana, in 1996, with a large mobilization in all countries of the region.

But the similarities stopped there. In Cartagena de Índias, in 2008, an international official warned that 2009 would not be like 1998. Delighted with the outcome of the conference, listeners did not understand what this meant. They have done so in Paris in July 2009, when reaching the site of the 2<sup>nd</sup> WCHE, they realized that the results of Cartagena de India had not been properly used.

It was clear the intention of coming back to the concept of higher education as a global public good, peeling off, as observed the Secretary General of the AUGM, Rafael Guarga, "all attributes of 'relevance' in relation to a particular society, remaining only the attribute 'quality' as the only possibly controllable attribute by nation states and that is where the World Bank proposes to adopt an equally comprehensive approach of 'quality', following a criteria that, in the framework of the WCHE 2009, it was proposed to take from a OECD document (2005) (this is not a document of UNESCO) entitled "**Guidelines for quality and cross-border provision of higher education**" (Guarga, 2009, pg. 5).

They were representatives of the academic communities of Latin America, particularly those from the Group of Montevideo and ministers as Juan Carlos Tedesco, of Argentina, or delegates as Paulo Speller, of Brazil, who opposed these maneuvers and managed to impose that, from the beginning, the Declaration of 2009, clearly stated that participants ratified the principles of the Declaration of the 1998 WCHE. They were also successful in incorporating the idea of pertinence as a fundamental attribute of higher education and also in eliminating any support to the implementation of global quality guidelines or classifications which could lead to countries in all regions of the world to adopt models outside their social and cultural realities. Possible support to document quality guidelines developed in the OECD thus was rejected.

In addition, Latin American representatives failed to admit the inclusion in the final statement of a formal rejection of the principles of the GATS. United States and Romania vetoed the inclusion of any reference to this subject. Pakistan, in turn, opposed the mention of the importance of the role that has to be attributed to students in the management of higher

education institutions<sup>38</sup>. Anyway, the mere fact of being able to avoid a last minute maneuver for inclusion in the text of elements opposed to what the participants had approved and of having obtained the ratification of 1998 principles was clearly a great victory.

Until when will be possible to maintain this is the issue that is pending. Those who advocate for the burial of the idea of education as a public good are powerful, are persistent, have tools at their disposal to manipulate people and organizations that are not able to maintain respect for the interests of the populations of their countries and prefer to submit themselves to the power of these who have money and political power.

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<sup>38</sup> In 1998, two Asian countries, Japan and South Korea also opposed the inclusion of the role of students in the management of higher education, but were subjected to the decision of almost all Member States UNESCO.

## 23- ECONOMISTS FOR DOING WHAT?

Approaching the conclusions of these reflections and using symbols of modern times, I insist on the idea that those responsible for university policies or management of universities need to use a reliable GPS, defining clearly where they want to go.

It is necessary to think on the “necessary University” mentioned by Darcy Ribeiro and contextualize the situation in Latin America that, historically, has always been dominated by elites who, so far, don’t have been able to free themselves from the colonial tradition. Incidentally, it is always useful to remember Salvador Allende, speaking at the University of Guadalajara, Mexico, in December 1972, a few months before being driven to suicide, he stressed the need for preparing in universities "a professional committed to social change".

Earlier, this document mentioned the beginning of this document and we have mentioned the suggestion of a student from India, Sumita Vasudeva, who criticized the fact that students in engineering were interested only to what can be tested in quantitative terms and students in law who are lost in the tangle of legal proceedings, while the future economists focused their efforts in narrow and limited financial theories and methods.

Allende, in Guadalajara, mentions what the universities should do for stimulating the graduates in Architecture, Medicine and Education to act socially. In view of what has happened in the world in recent decades with the implementation of an exclusionary globalization, I believe Allende, like the students in 1998, would also mention the training of economists.

When he took office in the presidency of Brazil, Itamar Franco, coming from the State of Minas Gerais, another illustrious man from the same region, Herbert de Souza, known as Betinho, a sociologist, gave advice to his countryman: "Before taking decisions on what to do in the country, call all economists, shut down all in a great hall, leave them there until all decisions are taken and implemented”.

Betinho’s proposal was ironic. But it was revealing a belief that developed in Brazil over the last decades, especially after the advent of the military regime, but pursuing during the period of redemocratization that the ministers of finance became the dominant link in all governments, those in whose offices are actually decided the fate of the country and its relations with the outside world. The French philosopher Bourdieu spoke of the right hand and left hand of the state, even in leftist and socialist governments. In Brazil, everybody knows, economists became the right hand of the state.

Since the financial crisis of 2008, in various parts of the world, mainly in Europe and particularly in France, students, specialists in economics, social science, education, several associations have discussed this issue. Common elements in these demonstrations show that in training programs for economists, there is always:

- Lack of critical vision;

- Concentration of the program in an insufficient part of economic discipline;
- Isolation with respect to all the social sciences.

Priority is given to the neoclassical school that leads to neoliberalism, not being properly treated issues related to ecological economic regulation, 'postkeynesian' economy etc. In Latin America, it is clear that, for several decades, economics studies are guided primarily towards neoliberal economy based on rigid mathematical models, copying and adopting the model of Anglo-Saxon countries. It should be asked whether, in economics and business schools, the famous MBA, people are being trained to have, at the same time, the ability to develop theoretical models, to produce sophisticated calculations, being able, at the same time, to be aware that they are organizing the social life of human beings.

**Armando Mendes defended the thesis that "the formation of the economist must be comprehensive and sufficiently complete to enable him/her, in the future, to make a mature choice between different paths. The essential, said Mendes, "is to instill in the economist in stoning, the rare ability to think the world objectively and act on this effectively. To make this happen, it is necessary that the economist get a solid theoretical, historical and instrumental founding. It is important for him to accept a methodological pluralism, with the renunciation of dogma and the admission of contradictory. The economist should always be aware of the interrelationships linking economic phenomena to the social whole to which they belong. And finally, they must study Latin America and the international reality" (Mendes, 2001).**

To address this type of matter, an international-Bernard Marris UNESCO Chair- was created on Economy Society, with the aim of opening the action of professionals in this field to the great questions of modernity. This means to study and analyze financial instability; food safety; climate warming; immigration; terrorism; religious or ideological fanaticism; need for tolerance and "coexistence" (living together); unemployment; work; economics of education. Diversify training with the participation of all schools of thought, giving more space to qualitative than to quantitative methods; appreciation of the contribution of the social sciences is also necessary. It is expected that Latin American institutions will participate in the network that is being formed around this chair.

However, then, we face another kind of issue. To what extent the fact of receiving such training, based on humanitarian approaches, students - working in the professional world, facing real life, placed in front of the contradictions of the world, subject to social financial organization, policy, and observing that what counts is profit, gain, exploitation - can act with critical and independent spirit?

My generation, of course, has no answer to this question.

## 24- IN CONCLUSION

Often, in texts of political analysis, comments are made assuming that knowledge is always set to action that virtue comes automatically from knowledge. This may perhaps correspond to the philosophy of Socrates and Plato, but, even in antiquity, Aristotle advanced, showing that reality is different.

A recent report published by the Normal University of Shanghai, in 2015, based on 9.569 interviews with young people from 14-35 years in 10 Chinese cities, including Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, shows that **the higher the level of education people are less honest**. It is hard to imagine what the reaction of the Greek philosophers, Plato in particular would be, if informed of the outcome of this investigation. Plato defended the thesis that the philosophers are those who should had to govern, because they combine knowledge and political power. According to Plato, only those who know the idea may well implement enacting good laws and establishing justice<sup>39</sup>.

The result of this research is opposed to the general opinion that the more educated people are, the most incorruptible, said in the editorial of June 8, 2016 the newspaper "China Daily"<sup>40</sup>. According to the newspaper,

"in absolute terms, is not that more educated people are less honest. When our graduates enter the world of work, they will soon come into contact with those who benefit from dishonesty and so are less confident and willing to remain honest. Some people, especially the most influential, set a bad example, when talking about the importance of honesty, but being dishonest in secret. This discrepancy between words and actions also occurs on campus, negatively affecting the values students. For example, some students from privileged strata of society are given more opportunities than are conducive to those who have better academic performance.

"It is a disgrace to society the fact that those with more schooling are the most dishonest. To change a reality so absurd", says the Chinese newspaper," the whole society should change the practice of saying one thing and doing another."

Is this terrible reality applies only to China?

In reality, especially when taking into account the political world, there is, today, everywhere, distrust on the graduates of higher education, I believe that, in Latin America, the phenomenon is not unique in Brazil.

In addition, Latin America lives difficult and contradictory moments. In domestic politics, conservative forces take or retake power apparently using legal processes. On an international point of view, many do not realize that **the integration of the countries of the region is a must**. I'm not called to deepen discussions on what to do in the future in this domain. The

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<sup>39</sup> See Platon, 2016.- Original in Spanish "Aprender a pensar".

<sup>40</sup> - China Daily (2015) -

issue would require hours and hours of debates and also according to the program of the seminar commemorating the 25th anniversary of the AUGM, a special round table on this subject was organized.

My generation was distinguished by the presence of young leaders who thought they could change the world, building in our region, a better and fairer society. About 40, 50 years later, some remain loyal to democratic and humanists principles. They do not represent the majority. Others, over time, well installed, became accommodated. In the present days, several former radical student leaders are present in important positions in governments of the region. Many of them have evolved, better said they “involved” and went on to promote policies of submission to international financial world and, internally, social exclusion. Regional integration is necessary for the construction of a more just society, but what to do?

Deodoro Roca, leader of the movement for the reform of Cordoba, questioned in 1936 in the success of his work, he regretted that the university reform of Cordoba had not changed the spirit of the University nor changed society"(Rossato, 1998, pg. 94). Surprisingly, Deodoro Roca lamented that "the reform of Cordoba had only served to put together the republics of Latin America".

How great and fantastic was really the impact of Córdoba throughout Latin America! In my view, Deodoro Roca made an incredible mistake. What a nobler goal, more necessary, could have a new declaration of Cordoba in 2018, if it can achieve, today, following the example of what happened in 1918, to make closer the countries of Latin America and to consolidate the efforts of those seeking to create a true spirit of integration in the region?

In the sixties, under the leadership of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean -CEPAL- the idea of economic integration, promoting the industrialization of the region, was an idea force throughout the continent. The reflections made in this framework were responsible for a series of initiatives such as the LAFTA - Latin American Association of Commerce (1960), the Common Market Central American -MCCA- (1960), the Andean Pact and the Caribbean Community (1973).

In the eighties, the region suffered from the crisis of external debt and the political domain that has been deployed in the economy and politics, by direct or indirect proponents of the Washington consensus, meant a return to the acceptance by latinoamericans of the situation of being dominated. Neoliberalism, for many, was fatal for the integration of Latin America. I think initiatives such as MERCOSUR and the South American Community of Nations aimed to neutralize this situation, but, in recent times, the pressure on Latin American countries to open up even more - as if this was possible- their economies, especially in relation to services, the larger engine, today, of the world economy, undermined the efforts and put at risk of liquidation initiatives such as MERCOSUR.

To find a solution and give space to Latin Americans in the globalized world, since the beginning of the 90s, there is an enormous debate about the possibilities of hemispheric integration that would include the United States, but also Canada. The integration with Europe

is also discussed, an inter-regional integration<sup>41</sup>. I'm not an expert on the subject. Of course, they are important initiatives, but all this will come to nothing if Latin American countries still insist in giving their backs to each other. If they don't agree on basic subjects, if they don't act together, they will remain dependent and, in the context of the current globalization, will never be able to build a more just society. They will be doomed to remain imitating, copying, without the ability to create and be independent.

The debate continues. My task was not easy. Those who, according to the seminar program of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of AUGM, were called to debate the prospects for Cordoba 2018, have received a much more difficult task than mine. I am convinced that one day, **the regional integration will take place and that higher education institutions will form citizens with a social conscience. We will not be there the members of my generation. But changes will come.** It is a matter of survival for the peoples of the region.

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<sup>41</sup> - Philippe Lombaerde, Sigeru Kochio and José Briceño Ruiz (2008).

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## ANNEX

### SUMMARY OF THE WORLD DECLARATION ON HIGHER EDUCATION -1998 -

1. In accordance with paragraph 1 of Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, access to higher education must be equal for all on the basis of merit. Therefore, access to higher education can not admit any discrimination based on race, sex, language, religion or economic, cultural or social considerations, or physical disabilities.
2. We must preserve, strengthen and further promote the fundamental missions of higher education systems (namely, educating, training, conducting research and, in particular, contribute to sustainable development and improvement of society as a whole) especially to train highly qualified graduates and responsible citizens and to provide an open space for higher learning and learning throughout life. In addition, higher education is unprecedented role in today's society, as an essential component of cultural, social, economic and political development and as a key to strengthening endogenous capacity building, consolidation of human rights, sustainable development, democracy and peace, in a context of justice. Higher education must ensure prevailing values and ideals of the culture of peace.
3. The higher education institutions, their staff and students should preserve and develop their crucial functions, all its activities to the demands of ethics and scientific and intellectual rigor. They should also enhance their critical functions and forecasting, through continuous analysis of new, economic, cultural and political trends, thus playing center functions forecasting, warning and prevention. They should for it enjoy full academic freedom and autonomy, while being fully accountable to society and accountable.
4. The relevance of higher education should be assessed in terms of the fit between what society expects of institutions and what they do. To do this, institutions and systems, particularly in their relations even closer to the world of work, should base their long-term orientations on societal aims and needs, including respect for cultures and environmental protection. Promoting entrepreneurship and skills and initiatives has become one of the major concerns of higher education. It should pay particular attention to the roles of higher education to serve society education, and more specifically to activities aimed at eliminating poverty, intolerance, violence, illiteracy, hunger, environmental degradation and disease , and efforts aimed at promoting peace, through an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach.
5. Higher education is part of a unique system that starts with education for early childhood and primary education and continues throughout life. The contribution of higher education to the development of the whole education system and the reordering of its links with other education levels of education, and more specifically with secondary education must be a priority. Secondary education should not only prepare for higher

education and facilitating access to it, but also offer broad training and prepare students for active life.

6. Diversifying higher education models and methods and criteria is essential both to meet demand and to give students the foundation and rigorous training required to enter the twenty-first century. The Learners must have an optimal range of educational opportunities and the acquisition of knowledge and skills must be made from the point of view of education throughout life, which means that you can enter the system and out of it easily.
7. The quality of higher education is a multidimensional concept, which should embrace all its functions and activities: teaching and academic programs, research and scholarship, staffing, students, infrastructure and academic environment. It must be paid special attention to the advancement of knowledge through research. Higher education institutions from all regions must undergo internal and external evaluations conducted transparently, conducted openly by independent experts. However, it must give due attention to specific institutional, national and regional contexts in order to take into account diversity and to avoid uniformity. the need for a new vision and a new model of higher education, which should be student-centered perceived. To achieve this objective, we must rethink the curriculum, not content with the simple cognitive mastery of disciplines and include the acquisition of skills, competencies and communication skills, creative and critical analysis, independent thinking and work team in multicultural contexts.
8. An essential element for higher education institutions is a vigorous policy of staff training. They should establish clear guidelines for teachers of higher education, in order to update and improve their skills, with stimulus for constant innovation in curriculum and methods of teaching and learning, providing assurance professionals and appropriate financial conditions, and also ensuring speedy excellence in research and teaching, with measures that are reflected in the relevant provisions of the Recommendation concerning the status of teachers in higher education adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in November 1997.
9. Those responsible for decision-making at national and institutional levels should place students and their needs at the center of their concerns, and consider them essential participants and actors responsible for the process of renewal of higher education. We must develop counseling services in cooperation with student organizations in order to take into account the needs of ever more diversified categories of learners. Students who drop out should have suitable to return to higher education if convenient and at the moment they see fit opportunities. Institutions of higher education should train students to become well informed and deeply motivated citizens, provided with a can think critically analyze problems and find solutions to those problems of society, apply them and take responsibility social.
10. We must take or strengthen measures to obtain the participation of women in higher education, particularly at the level of decision-making and in all disciplines in which they are underrepresented. More efforts are required to eliminate all gender stereotyping in higher education. Remove barriers and improve access of women to higher education remains an urgent priority in the renewal process of systems and institutions.

11. We must fully utilize the potential of new information and communications technology for the renewal of higher education through the expansion and diversification of the transmission of knowledge, and putting the knowledge and information available to a larger audience large. It is to be achieved equal access to them through international cooperation and support to countries that lack the capacity to acquire such tools. Adapting these technologies to national, regional and local needs and securing technical, educational, management and institutional systems to sustain them should be a priority.
12. Higher education should be considered a public service. While diversified sources of private and public funding are required, the public support for higher education and research remains essential to ensure that the educational and social missions are met in a balanced manner. In higher education, management and funding must be instruments for improving the quality and relevance. This requires capacity building and the development of appropriate strategies for planning and policy analysis, based on partnerships between higher education institutions and relevant authorities. Institutions must have autonomy in their internal affairs, but are accountable to society so clear and transparent.
13. The international dimension of higher education is an intrinsic element of its quality. Networking, which has proven to be one of the main means of current action, must be founded on mutual aid, solidarity and equality among partners. We must curb the "brain drain" as it continues to deprive the developing countries and countries in transition from high - level professionals necessary to accelerate their socio - economic progress. It has given priority to training programs in developing countries, in centers of excellence forming regional and international networks, with courses in specialized and intensive study abroad short - lived. 14. They have ratified and implemented regional and international legal instruments recognition of studies and diplomas, including those relating to the approval of knowledge, skills and abilities of graduates, in order to allow students to change course more easily and increase mobility within national systems and between them.
15. Close partnership between all stakeholders -responsible national policies and institutional, governments and parliaments, the media, teaching and related staff, researchers, students and families, the workplace and the community groups is essential if He wants to launch a reform movement and deep education of higher education.

## THE AUTHOR

**MARCO ANTONIO RODRIGUES DIAS**, international consultant in the field of higher education, was born in Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, on 17/12/1938. He lives in Paris since October 1981. Married with the economist and urban planner Sonia Telles Horta Rodrigues Dias has 3 children (Paulo Henrique, Rachel and Elisa) living in Geneva, London and Paris and seven grandchildren (Matthieu, Marco, Raphael, Louis, Alexandre, Ilana and Mia).

He was **director of the UNESCO Higher Education Division (Paris)** from October 1981 to February 1999, when he retired.

In this role,

- He represented UNESCO at the Council of the United Nations University (Tokyo), 1983-1991;

- Coordinated the preparation of various background documents, including the "Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education" (1995);

- Coordinated the preparation and was responsible for the launch and the implementation during the first years of the UNITWIN-UNESCO Chairs Programme, which in 1999 already had more than 400 projects (UNESCO Chairs and inter-university cooperation networks);

- He was the main coordinator of the World Conference on Higher Education (1998), which brought together more than four thousand participants (more than 180 countries, about 130 ministers heading national delegations, hundreds of NGOs);

- He represented UNESCO, during the eighties, as a member of various university boards, including the University for Peace (Costa Rica), University of Paris XIII Villetaneuse and University of Paris VII.

He was special adviser of the rector of the UN University from 2000 to 2009 and representative of UNU with UNESCO and head of UNU's office in Paris from January 2006 to June 2009;

In 1999, he received from the French government the Légion d'honneur and in 1993 he was awarded by the Brazilian government (Itamar Franco and Murílio Hingel) with the Educational Merit. In 2003, he received the Medal of Honor of the Federal University of Minas Gerais reserved for former students of this university who have stood out for their contribution to society. In 2005, he received the title of doctor honoris causa from the "Universidad del Noroeste de la Provincia de Buenos Aires", in Argentina and in 2009, of the Federal University of Mato Grosso. He received special medals and awards from various universities, including the University of Brno, Czechoslovakia (Diploma and silver medal –

vir illustrissimus), University of Salta (Argentina), Federal University of Pará (Brazil), Autonomous University Gabriel René (Bolivia).

After retiring from UNESCO (February 1999), participated in meetings, gave lectures, collaborated in the development of projects in the most varied places and countries: Argentina (Buenos Aires, Lucan, La Plata, Salta, Mar del Plata, Paraná Entre Rios, Santa Fe, Corrientes / Resistance, Junín), Bolivia (Cochabamba, Santa Cruz de La Sierra and La Paz), Brazil (Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Campinas, São Carlos, Belo Horizonte, Brasília, Belem, Salvador, Manaus, Porto Allegre, Petropolis, Cuiaba, Rondônia, Goiania, Curitiba, Fortaleza, Florianópolis, Redemption in Ceará), Chile (Santiago, Talca), China (Hangzhou, Shanghai, Macau), Colombia (Bogota, Barranquilla and Cartagena de Indias), Costa Rica (San José), Cuba (Havana) Spain (Barradoz, Mérida, Salamanca, Caceres, Bilbao, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Madrid, Granada, Sevilla, Cordoba, Benecassim, Barcelona, Gijón, A Coruña, Cádiz, Jaramilla Vera, Huelva, Platja del Aro), United States (Cincinnati and Tucson in Arizona), Finland (Tampere, Helsinki and Hämeenlinna), France (Paris, Strasbourg, Versailles, Poitiers, Dijon), Italy (Rome and Bari) Kenya (Nairobi), Mexico (Guadalajara, Monterrey, Tlaxcala, La Paz in Baja California Sur, Tijuana and Mexico City), Peru (Lima), Puerto Rico (San Juan), Uruguay (Montevideo), Venezuela (Caracas), Mauritius (Port Saint Louis).

In 1993 and in 1997, he participated as a speaker at the opening ceremonies of the academic year at the University of Utrecht (Netherlands), developing in 1993, the theme "What university for what society?" In November 1995, was responsible for opening of the academic year in associated centers of UNED (Distance Education National University) in Seville and Cordoba. In 2001, he was responsible for the inaugural class of the National University of La Plata in Argentina. In the second half of 2002, he was responsible for the inaugural lecture and opening activities at the Federal University of Mato Grosso; In October 2003, he was responsible, in Barcelona, of the opening of the academic year of all the universities of Catalonia, Spain, ("Espacios de solidaridad in tiempos de obscurantismo"). In March 2004, he was responsible for the inaugural lecture at the University of Costa Rica. In 2011, it was responsible for the start of the third quarter period of Unilab activities in Redenção, Ceará, Brazil.

Graduated in Law from Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (1964), completed previously, a full course of Philosophy (three years) by the St. Joseph Seminary in Rio de Janeiro (1958). Holds a third degree cycle of the French Institute of Press at the University of Paris (1968). Is the author of several articles, book chapters, papers in communication, education, and politics published in several languages, in several continents. Available in [www.mardias.net](http://www.mardias.net)

In 1992, the PUC-MG released his book "The Fact and the version of the Fact - A journalist in the sixties." In 2002, the CRUE -Conference de los Rectores Españoles- Universities and the University Foundation for international cooperation published "Perspectivas de la Educación Superior en el Siglo XXI". He was the coordinator of the publication and lead author. In 2002, the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) published the book "University a place out of power," He was one of three authors. In 2013, the University of

Brasília, in the framework of the commemorations of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, published his book “UnB e Comunicação nos anos 1970- Acordo tácito, repressão e credibilidade acadêmica”

In 1963, he joined the office of the Minister of Education Paulo de Tarso Santos, as a parliamentary assistant for parliamentary subjects, integrating a team composed, among others, by the educator Paulo Freire, Herbert de Souza (Betinho), Luis Alberto Gomes de Souza etc.

In the 70s, he was member for several periods, of the board of directors of the Brazilian Association of Educational Technology –Associação Brasileira de Tecnologia Educacional-, and a member of the organization's Educational Technology Journal editorial board. He was a member from 1977 to 1983 of the "board of trustees" of the International Institute of Communication based in London. He was also a member of the board CAERENAD, an international network of distance higher education institutions based in Quebec, Canada.

He was a professor (March 1970 to September 1981), head of the Department of Communications (1970-1972), extension dean (1972-1976, vice-rector (1976-1980) at UnB- the University of Brasília-. Is presently a retired professor at UNB.

He was member of several examining boards (juris de teses) in Europe and of various examining boards for selection of professors in Brazilian universities. He is a member of the editorial board of several specialized publications in education, communication and political sciences in several countries.

During the sixties, he was a **journalist in Minas Gerais and São Paulo**, and was even director of Folha de Minas (1963) and director of Radio Jornal de Minas (October 1968 to March 1970), editor secretary (editor) of “Última Hora” in São Paulo (1965), reporter and newspaper political editor in Belo Horizonte (O Diário, Última Hora, Correio de Minas). Collaborated with the weekly "Binômio" (Minas Gerais) and "Brazil Urgent" (São Paulo), he was editor-in-chief of the bimonthly newspaper "Ação Popular" (1962) and editor of the newspaper "Tribuna Universitária" (1961-1962), organ of the Central Directory of Students of the University of Minas Gerais (later the Federal University of Minas Gerais).