



Higher Education as a Public Heritage: Prospects for the Centenary of the Cordoba Reform


Educação Superior como bem Público: Perspectivas para o Centenário da Reforma de Córdoba

Educación Superior como bien Público: Perspectivas para el Centenario de la Reforma de Córdoba

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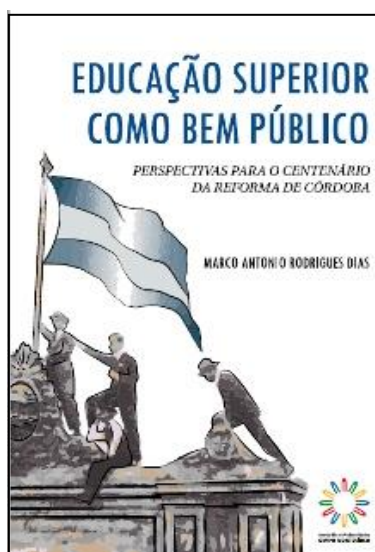
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This text is a critical review of the work of Marco Antonio Rodrigues entitled Higher Education as a public good, which evidences the current course of higher education in the world. In this work the author builds a nostalgic critique of current higher education and its mercantile aspects, recalling the humanist and libertarian concepts contained in the Córdoba Treaty of 1918, and the World Conference on Higher Education in 1998. This analysis was constructed for the celebration of the 25 years of creation of the AUGM¹ in September 2016, to which the author was invited to write scoring projections for the future of higher education as a public good analyzing the positive and negative aspects of the past.

The introductory chapter addresses individualistic education and administrative management that has become naturalized in the teaching process, to the detriment of an education to and from society, with respect to cultural individuality. Bringing in as a reality in the last century, the evolution of the single thought, theme of chapter 1, that addresses how international structures influenced the creation of standards of method and quality in higher education. Chapter 2, entitled “Evolutions in International Organizations”, deals with the ideas propagated by John Williamson during the Washington Consensus, such as educational openness to the market and the need for 'less evolved' countries to follow the models of economically developed countries as a way of ascension.

This theme is highlighted in Chapter 3, which deals with the imposition of the educational system of the United States of America, as a backdrop that has shown an increase in students' indebtedness, an increase in the value of schooling five times more than inflation since 1983, and the fall quality of education. The process of educational financing and European aid to peripheral countries is dealt with in chapter 4, which generated a process of rethinking higher education, the theme of chapter 5, in the neoliberal context of commodification, discussed in chapter 6. These impositions regarding the concept of education, built in the last century by the students of Córdoba, revived in Bologna and destroyed in the Washington Consensus, deal with cultural impositions, it is at this point that Dias (2017) criticizes the purchase of ready-made models from other cultural realities that crush the concept of education as a public good.

For Dias (2017) Brazil, in 2014 managed to reduce the stigma of elitism of public universities, by means of public policies that took into account the reality of the country, actions that did not impede the profitability of the particular university systems mentioned in chapter 7. Chapter 8, entitled 'Interconnected Processes', deals with the process rationalized by institutions and various companies, in constant participation with the governments that managed to influence the operations of teaching through pressure and influences. Higher education as a service and external political influences, mark chapters 9 through 12. Dias (2017) reports on UNESCO's concerns with quality public education.

Chapter 13 is devoted to the Bologna process created in 1999, preceded by the Sorbonne Declaration in 1998. The inability of universities to integrate social reality and their

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needs is explored in Chapter 15, which deals with Massive Open Online Courses - MOOCs. Higher education as a 'global' public good, reaffirms the imposition of international mechanisms in higher education in countries sentenced as less developed by the insertion of the term 'global' within UNESCO in 2015, quoted by the author in chapters 16 and 17. An "ideological manipulation" (DIAS, 2017, p. 105), which is discussed by the author in chapter 18 when citing the Córdoba Treaty, and in chapter 19 when dealing with the update of the 1998 declaration. The need for reforms in educational systems, through missions that enable education for the integral and social being dealt with in chapter 20, reached the concept of autonomy discussed in chapter 21 on the freedom exercised by the institution in acts of research and teaching, and in self-management, reforms analyzed in the chapters 22 to 23, seeking relevance in higher education and the education of professionals committed to social change.

It concludes in chapter 24 in a critical analysis of the judgment that is made, of being the virtue of knowledge, when quoting a survey of the "China Daily" newspaper (DIAS, 2017, p.133) that revealed that honesty is a variable contrary to the level to know.

According to the author, to Dias (2017), the teaching process evidences the vision of education as marketable, which disintegrates the human and social factor of education, taking it to the competitive level, a reflection of modern societies. Citing the French revolution and the ideals of freedom of expression and the desire to promote reforms in society that would make it a more equal place in opportunities, the author highlights a moment of obscurantism, a mark of the 20th and 21st centuries. The idea of the author is related to the movements of the economy of capital, the progress begun in the century of lights with the enlightenment that culminated in the French revolution was based on technological progress to generate jobs and reduce social differences. Among the acquired rights, such as education, at the end of the twentieth century, two centuries after the victory of reason for liberty, equality and fraternity, global economies marked by economic power continue progress through the capitalization of the world, to which education does not different from other areas of social rights is marked by the commodification of knowledge, states becoming less responsible, delegating to the private sectors the organization of methods that establish themselves for equality.

The logic of capital, which says that the world is governed by supply and demand, and the greater the demand, the greater the supply, the lower the costs, coordinates a process of expansion of opportunities, which, however, are governed by ambitious people who use the manipulation of data to offer themselves the best positions, guide to misleading results that create inequalities and thrive preconceptions of what governs ideals initially proposed. The power taken again by the interests of the nation, not the creation of a full society, directs the organizational models, among them the institutions of higher education, offering the knowledge of national interest, where society is prevented from participating, not by force, but through ignorance. We would thus have the imputation of a single thought, which occurred after World War II when the United States began a process of opening markets. There was a need for a single language, and with it the nations also received the values and the way of life, this example portrays the hegemony of culture, a factor of world order.

Europe, even with its strong cultural tradition has not escaped this process, in young countries like Brazil it is possible to see the absorption of the cultures coming from this globalization, often denying its own.

This unique thought penetrates as common sense even in institutions whose goal is the emancipation of the cultural diversity of nations, considered as the only valid and respected model, including for higher education, the model of the great western institutions, fostering the image of an evolved society. This economic hegemony brings with it, the idea of considering the centers of economic power as models to be followed. Citing the use of the North American model of higher education in Brazil and the inconsistencies in the programs of aid to higher education in the countries of the southern block, from the countries of the northern block, important notes emerge for the development of working conditions and research. The criticism arises from the liberation of society, citizens who understand mechanical systems and market processes, but not from management, leadership and ethics, who do not recognize the regional, national and global social environment and run the risk of creating products and services with high technological performance but forgetting human issues. The evaluation ranking itself generates a Eurocentric model of quality standard, in which Dias (2017, p.95) mentions that "quality and pertinence do not exist without each other".

For us who do not participate in this human and social development, it would not be more interesting to turn our eyes to the interior and to know and value our characteristics, perhaps the mistake was precisely to deny our evidence for an image that we do not recognize. When citing AUGM positioning before UNESCO's idea of using and highlighting that she considers education as a public good, in the form of the values already mentioned by UNESCO in 1995. What brings us to discuss Córdoba in its centennial (1918-2018), and the events that followed about higher education demonstrate and need to always rethink education, in pertinence, improvement in content quality and management to consolidate itself with social changes, and internationalization, to narrow the gap between nations, thus the current debates are aimed at discussing reform of teaching, accreditation, links to the world of work, not limiting itself to the interests of companies, student participation in university management, democratization, access, autonomy of research focused on issues of society.

The centenary of Córdoba reminds us of our interest and responsibility in the participation of these decisions, and only then can we develop the citizen into a cultured man, whereas the university will be evaluated not according to the standards of other nations, but with what the society expects of it, the only means to development. It is through the university, according to the author, that we can break the colonialist ties and rise as a cultured nation, through the formation of a professional committed to social change, building a society for the people, turning their efforts to the collective. In order to eliminate the lack of humanism with which certain sciences are taught, and the isolation of the sciences in relation to applied social sciences.

Among the acquired rights, such as education, at the end of the twentieth century, two centuries after the victory of reason for liberty, equality and fraternity, global economies marked by economic power continue progress through the capitalization of the world, to which education not different from other areas of social rights is marked by the commodification of knowledge, states becoming less responsible, delegating to the private sectors the organization of methods that establish themselves for equality. This is the picture of neoliberalism of the 21st century, which points to a neocolonialism. Not having options to remain in the market other than accepting, the countries of the South block are unable to keep pace.

The university as holder of the sovereignty of knowledge, being elitist and using as cultural value the value of the elites, when approaching the communities and transferring the knowledge would end up demoralizing the popular knowledge and its cultures, generating the hegemony of knowledge and culture under the perspective of economic power, marking an ideological position, the sin of the chosen university model. This process was consolidated in Brazil by Law Nr. 5.540, which sets standards for the organization and functioning of higher education, currently with repeals, and in Europe for the Bologna process of the 21st century. Despite the changes in the educational process of higher education, aiming for greater inclusion, opening to markets in the generation of courses and university amplitude, all attributes and improvements have as background the process of commodification. Under these terms, we cannot deny the inconsistency in allowing a sabotage of the humanization of higher education, making it merely the object of commercialization, without considering the concepts embedded in the educational process.

This work is of fundamental importance for understanding the emergence of higher education processes, the struggle for students' change and the need for education with cultural respect. To teachers of all school years in Brazil, it assists in the understanding of our schooling and the external and internal political influences in the pedagogical actions in force. It is an important reflection on the autonomy of education. Marco Antonio Dias was born in Rio de Janeiro, graduated in law from the Federal University of Minas Gerais - UFMG in 1964, with extensive participation in politics and national education and in front of many organs of relevance to the subject, among them UNESCO, and with extensive collaboration in the country's educational vehicles, also honored and decorated throughout the world. The present work was carried out with the support of the Coordination of Improvement of Higher Education Personnel - Brazil (CAPES) - Financing Code 001.

Reference

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