
FOCUS

Fernanda Beigel y Hanan Sabea, coordinators (2014)

**Dependencia académica y profesionalización en el Sur.
Perspectivas desde la periferia**

Mendoza: Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, South-South Exchange Programme for Research on the History of Development, 214 p.

Reviewed by Edgar Góngora Jaramillo
RIMAC-CONACYT, Mexico

At both national and international levels, the division of labor hierarchizes nations, whereas the production, application, transfer, and diffusion of scientific knowledge reproduce this condition. Therefore, knowledge centers and peripheries align themselves with the behavior of the international division of labor. Contemporarily, the concepts of center and periphery are subject to debate in politics and in the academy. Some experts advocate that they are no longer valid, since globalization has radically changed the world, while others argue that globalization has not erased these categories –rather, there are now core enclaves within peripheries and peripheries within centers. Using the notion of North to indicate centers and of South to appoint peripheries is one way to address this debate. Rather than just a name shift, this is a redefinition in response to the current conditions of the global order.

The book *Dependencia académica y profesionalización en el Sur*, organized by Fernanda Beigel (Argentina) and Hanan Sabea (Egypt), offers a wide range of studies discussing the logics of organization of

scientific work in different regions of the South. It is the result of an international seminar held in 2010, which addressed issues such as unequal dissemination of knowledge, roles of national states in the development of higher education and scientific research, the influence of Northern sponsorship of research carried out in the South, and the possibilities of building international social sciences that are not limited by dominant subjects.

The book comprises 18 researchers from Argentina, Singapore, Mexico, Chile, Kenya, Brazil, Nigeria, India, and Egypt. They address four major themes: (1) theoretical debates on internationalization and academic dependence; (2) academic autonomy from a historical perspective; (3) professionalization in the periphery (South); and (4) models of national and international higher education.

In the first section, the authors reflect on the categories necessary to conduct theoretical debates on academic dependency. Syed Farid Alatas argues that the concept of “intellectual imperialism”

is a good start towards understanding academic dependence (p. 33). Based on this, he analyzes the production of Philippine sociologist José Risal vis-à-vis the international circuits of sociological research legitimization. In turn, Hebe Vessuri assumes that what is called globalization is, in general, a “successful internationalization of a particular localism”, so that the globalized localisms in social sciences are expressed in the ability to establish conditions of scientificity, competence, relevance, and classification everywhere (p. 45). Finally, Sujata Patel analyzes the contributions to sociology derived from the concept of “captive minds” in India and Africa, and describes the reasons why studies such as those carried out by Indian researcher Mukerji and African researcher Akiwowo have been neglected in the field of sociology at the international level (p. 55).

The second section comprises four articles addressing the issues of professionalization and hindrance of university autonomy in the South by means of socio-historical analyses. Diego Pereyra reconstructs the history of a research study—carried out in 1950 in 18 Latin-American countries—dedicated to the understanding of the characteristics and potential of the emerging middle class in the region, with the ultimate aim to analyze its effects in national development strategies. Anabella Abarzúa and Natalia Rizzo reflect on the consequences of technical assistance from international organizations for the formation of state cadres in Chile between 1950 and 1970, analyzing how initial approaches have been transformed over the years by the identification of local needs

in public administration. Nicolás Gómez reviews Chilean sociologists’ strategies during the 1990s to legitimize their professional activities via their inclusion in disciplinary circuits, both nationally and internationally. Sylvie Didou shows how she looks into Mexico’s different scenarios of change with respect to the contemporary internationalization of higher education and scientific research. She offers insightful arguments for a new understanding of scientific migration in peripheral countries.

The third section is centered around knowledge production experiences and the relationships of international academic dependency. Adriana Gómez uses the concept of “decoloniality” to describe how academic dependency remains an obstacle to both researching and building solutions for socio-environmental issues and conflicts (p. 115). Víctor Algañaraz and Fabiana Bekerman analyze how the allocation of economic resources by international organizations affects the way in which scientific priorities are established in a peripheral country. Ayokunle Olumuyiwa explores the dynamics of internal (national) prestige of Nigerian scientists through the inclusion of their publications in “international circuits” of scientific validation (p. 144). Finally, Pablo Kreimer questions the “internationalization” of knowledge with its effectiveness in solving local problems.

In the fourth and final section, Marcela Mollis proposes a model that integrates notions such as global-universal and local-particular for a comparison of national education systems aiming to construct

adequate educational models for countries in the South. Susan Mbula reviews Kenya's educational system and discloses the structural consequences of adjustment programs induced by international organizations. Márcia Lima explores the changes in planning and regulation of Brazilian higher education, focusing on affirmative action's seeking to expand and diversify educational opportunities, which have resulted in the strengthening of educational capabilities.

In each of the articles of the book, authors analyze their subjects from realistic approaches that take notice of the knowledge production in the South and set them against the established, scientifically dominant circuits from the North. They draw important conclusions with regard to the relations based on hegemony, asymmetry, and dependence.

As a whole, the topics covered in this book portray a global scenario in which issues related to the international division of scientific work and higher education are clearly identified: the hierarchy of topics and approaches of scientific research at the international level; the rationality underlying the allocation of financial resources for research and professionalization; the ways in which the local knowledge production of the South and the local production of the North are concealed and defined as universal; the logics of international research networks; the scientific migrations, etc. Furthermore, these topics can be seen as part of renewed research agendas in the South that should also draw attention in the North.

Academic Dependency allows us to further think about similar, ongoing problems in different countries of the "scientific periphery", insofar as it opens interesting research lines in which Southern science and higher education are placed within the global context of professionalization and knowledge production. However, it would have been desirable to cast more light onto the dynamics of international competence and asymmetric collaboration for scientific areas defined as strategic worldwide. This book introduces the reader to experiences and reflections on academic dependency, fundamentally in the social sciences. This is important and necessary, but still insufficient for a complete picture of the South's academic dependency within the contemporary landscape of sciences.

Beyond that limitation, *Academic Dependency* allows the Southern reader to recognize themselves in their own scientific and educational context, as well as to understand the complex relationships within the so-called internationalization of higher education and scientific research. These are fundamental learnings to challenge academic dependency. To Northern readers, the book provides alternative pathways to schemes based on the naturalization of intellectual colonialism and the belief that science is made in the North and replicated in the South. In short, reading this book is highly recommended for all those who work to make scientific knowledge and higher education authentic social values of our time and historical circumstances.