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The Production of Neoliberal Subjectivity in an Argentine Public University

by

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Translated by

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Argentina's public university system has shifted from the indelible reformist tradition of 1918, with its emancipatory and Latin American perspective, to a commodified education in line with the global logic introducing neoliberal rationality and the neoliberal subject into the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo. A review of recent reforms and a description of the university's institutional measures is followed by possible lines of resistance, combining ideas from the 1918 reformist movement and the current Argentine feminist movement.

La universidad pública argentina está sufriendo una conversión de la tradición de indeleble marca reformista desde 1918 (de horizonte emancipatorio y latinoamericano) a una educación mercantilizada según la lógica global de la racionalidad neoliberal y del sujeto neoliberal, visible en la Universidad Nacional de Cuyo. Repaso reformas nacionales recientes, y describo las disposiciones institucionales de la universidad para llegar a una discusión sobre coordenadas posibles de resistencia entrecruzando ideas del movimiento reformista de 1918 y el actual movimiento feminista argentino.

Keywords: *Neoliberal subjectivity, Argentine education, Public university, Entrepreneurs, Universidad Nacional de Cuyo*

The purpose of this article is to show how neoliberal rationality appeared in an Argentine public university—the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo (UNCuyo)—in accordance with the new criteria of public administration or business management and the emergence of neoliberal subjectivity. In the course of the modernization of the state between 2015 and 2019, conceptions of education and forms of subjectivization were threatened by the material conditions of existence in the educational and scientific system and the reconfigurations of teacher training (Feldfeber et al., 2018), the defunding of Argentine scientific agencies,¹ the erosion of their role,² and the thrust of new legislation. In this context, UNCuyo was reshaped in accordance with the international guidelines established for higher education (Brown, 2015). National and university documents shed light on their intertextuality (Bisaillon, 2012)—their relationship and interdependence—and how the intertextual hierarchy operated (Smith, 2006).

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In light of its recent centennial and in keeping with the premises of the 1918 University Reform, which reflected the revolutionary stance of Argentine youth opposed to the divine right of university professors and the dogmatism of teaching methods (Federación Universitaria de Córdoba, 1918), I will describe and analyze the reintroduction and entrenchment of neoliberal logic in Argentine public education since 2015 as a danger to university autonomy. My examination of various national documents (the 2016–2021 Strategic National Plan, Entrepreneurial Capital Support Law 27.349, and the National System of Academic Recognition) and the institutional guidelines of the UNCuyo (the *Emprende U* competition and training programs aimed at faculty from various colleges and high schools) provides an illustrative case of how they are applied to higher education. I will highlight counterreform elements and trends that basically attack university autonomy (Tatián, 2018) such as the subjection to global criteria of quantitative and standardized evaluation in accordance with a market-based internationalization (Perrotta, 2018) and the inclusion of new public administration formulas (Ros and Wlosko, 2017). My major emphasis will be on the business logic within the university that is designed to shape subjectivities as entrepreneurs of the self—moving from a humanistic model, which shapes citizens, to a model of *homo oeconomicus*, which forms human capital. These shifts foster voluntary servitude (Lordon, 2015) and the uberization of the university (Hall, 2016).

THE 2010–2019 EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

In many international treaties and national laws, education is considered a fundamental human right. Accordingly, Argentina's public university system is one of the country's most valuable assets (Roig, 2001) for its strong reformist tradition of knowledge committed to the emancipation of Latin American peoples and as an advocate of scientific autonomy (Federación Universitaria de Córdoba, 1918; Tatián, 2018). Under the liberal-technocratic project (Roig, 2001), this understanding comes into conflict with educational reform processes including science and technology policies initiated 30 years ago. At the university level these tensions increased under the *Cambiamos* administration³ with Mauricio Macri as president through reforms at various levels of the educational system between 2015 and 2019.

The model of the country created under Macri rejected any notion of an emancipatory perspective in economic terms, subordinating it to the international credit bodies with a consequent loss of sovereignty, retreat of industry, and increase in financial speculation. In addition, there was a concerted effort to establish precarity as policy through the destruction of guarantees and systems of citizen safeguards (Lorey, 2018), initiating micro-policies of business management of subjectivities (Flores, 2017).⁴ These objectives were partially realized in the area of education, where features less developed by Menemist neoliberalism in the 1990s were reintroduced and explicitly expanded. The educational reforms that I detail below, along with the defunding of the national scientific and educational system, from which higher education was not exempt (Feldfeber et al., 2018), triggered resistance by the educational community

through demonstrations and strikes. I will analyze the guidelines of the 2016–2021 Strategic National Plan (a national policy governing all levels, jurisdictions, and modes of education), the National System of Academic Recognition (created in 2016 and aimed at higher education as a voluntary system of agreements among institutions), and Law 27.349 on entrepreneurial capital support (enacted in 2017 and establishing educational reforms based on Production Ministry priorities)—all reforms that helped spark the educational community’s resistance.

The 2017 visit to Argentina by the World Bank president, Jim Yong Kim, the first in 25 years, provides an opportunity to describe how three aspects of the neoliberal educational model (Laval, 2004) permeated the country’s public policies: how education was reconfigured as capitalism at the service of competition, how the education market was organized, and how the rationales of business management penetrated the institutions. The educational reforms we currently see in Argentina occurred in the framework of the mutation of capitalism that began in the 1980s and intensified largely because of technological advances. Economies were financialized, and there were changes in production following the Toyota model, with an ensuing reshaping of the division of labor and the composition of the working class and its struggles. The arrangement of capitalism in terms of platforms as the dominant model of production (Srnicek, 2018) changed the relationship between education, the economy, and labor; global competition among economies was on the rise, and knowledge had become a key factor in the production and sale of goods and services.

In educational matters, the Cambiemos administration adapted to the guidelines dictated by the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The World Development Report 2018 states that “to compete in the economy of the future, workers need strong basic skills and foundations for adaptability, creativity, and lifelong learning” (World Bank Group, 2018: xii) and to that end recommends measuring learning levels on the basis of “globally benchmarked student evaluations” (18) such as the OECD’s Program for International Student Assessment model, the development of policies based on this evidence, and the building of coalitions of actors (internal and external) to benefit the educational system (including having countries solicit financial assistance for evaluation using these models). In its turn, the OECD (2017: 53) put forth the following analysis and critique in a multidimensional economic survey on Argentina:

International experience with workplace training and engagement of employers in the design and delivery of the training has been promising. Giving employers a more central role, both in the design of courses and in the delivery of workplace training, would be a useful strategy. Tertiary education is also biased toward social science and humanities, producing few graduates in science, technology, engineering or mathematics.

Along this line, the 2016–2021 Strategic National Plan, one of the guiding documents in educational matters at all levels, exhibits an expansion of the international evaluation guidelines and, more important, an accommodation of the Argentine educational system to the current global scene. This plan establishes continual learning as an essential concept for the new flexible

worker in the face of uncertainty and job loss (Yong Kim, lecture at the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation on jobs of the future).⁵ It highlights the useful and technical knowledge reflected in the second core element of the plan, strengthening professional technical education at the secondary technical, tertiary technical, and professional training levels for a better “coordination with the world of work” (Ministerio de Educación, 2016a: 13). It also opens up the prospect of diversified funding, advanced in the fourth core element of the plan, through the pursuit of coordination with the productive and private sectors and organizations (21–22).

The need for a new type of coordination between the ministries of production and education with the entrepreneur as the symbol of the transformation is understood in terms of reconfiguring the relationship between education and labor. The law on entrepreneurial capital support seeks not only the “development of enterprises” for local development (a realm pertaining exclusively to the Ministry of Production) but—more important—making the entrepreneur of the self the prescribed model of subjectivity. In Article 66 it states that the Department of Small and Medium-Sized Entrepreneurs “will coordinate with the Ministry of Education and Sports, in agreement with the Federal Education Council, the inclusion of content in curricular designs at the various levels and categories that promote entrepreneurial culture.” This is not just a matter of subordinating the educational system to the productive system but one of installing and arguing at all levels of the system the concept of the individual no longer as a citizen (with rights and obligations in democratic life) but as an entrepreneur (possessing human capital through investment and development of expertise, knowledge, and skills that may produce positive returns) not merely in matters of employment but in all areas of life (political, emotional, and social).

Regarding the second aspect of the neoliberal education model, the formation of an educational market, higher education is farther along and most fully exemplifies its implementation. In 2018, the centennial of the university reform, Córdoba was the seat of the Third Regional Conference of Higher Education. There the conflicts over models of country, education, and internationalization were evident in the student demonstrations, the booping of the minister of education, Alejandro Finocchiaro, and the teachers’ union’s declarations upholding higher education as a social public good and human right in opposition to the appropriation of the event by the government (IEC-CONADU, 2017). The official position of the government’s professional and utilitarian project was countered with the values of a scientific, humanist, and secular university (Tatián, 2018). One of the central themes was that of higher education and the internationalization and regional integration of Latin America and the Caribbean, reflected in a national event four months earlier, Argentina’s first international higher education fair. It was no coincidence that one of the principal authorities on the conference’s executive committee, Daniel Pizzi, dean of UNCuyo and president of the international affairs committee of the Consejo Interuniversitario Nacional (National Interuniversity Council—CIN), was the host in Mendoza.

The fair made clear that the creation of an education market meant the uniformity of modalities and content enabled by internationalization. UNCuyo

can serve as a model of the shift from a Latin Americanist internationalization to a hegemonic or market-based one (Perrotta, 2018). Two of the three levels of internationalization that Perrotta mentions—the meso-level, which guides institutional university policy toward international performance (to obtain better positions in the systems of classification of universities and attract funding and student mobility), and the macro level, linking the internationalized university and scientific policies with the country's foreign policy—were apparent at the event. President Macri's oft-repeated phrase "inserting Argentina into the world" called attention to the macro orientation. Mónica Marquina, secretary for university policy in the Ministry of Education, pointed out that with the creation of the Sistema Nacional de Reconocimiento Académico (National System of Academic Recognition—SNRA) through Resolution 1870/16 "they did not seek to shorten degree programs or standardize training pathways"—emphasizing the differences from the European model (typified in the Plan Bolonia⁶ and the European system of transfer and accumulation of credits). Why did she offer this clarification? The SNRA conforms to the "current international experiences" (Ministerio de Educación, 2016b: 3) consistent with World Bank and OECD guidelines. It uses the credit system as a model, but its name has been changed—according to the secretary because of the numerous critiques of the Bolonia process—and the measurement unit is called the *reconocimiento de trayecto formativo* (recognition of training pathway—RTF) (Ministerio de Educación, 2016b: Article 7). Under Macri's education policy (to which 84 private and public universities subscribed, among them UNCuyo), the value of the RTF is similar to that of the European model, 27–30 hours, and an academic year has 60 RTF. This measure, applied not only to the first group of the degree family (engineering, architecture, and computer science) but to the full phase, will surely facilitate national mobility and the recognition of the various kinds of training nationwide.

Aside from the benefits for students, the national policy follows the guidelines of the OECD (2017: 53), which points to the Argentine focus on social sciences and humanities as producing few graduates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The utilitarian criterion is evident in one of the objectives of higher education in the Plan Maestr@: "to promote and encourage the revision of the various dimensions that form the curricula, tending toward the reduction of the academic length of degree programs so that the requirements in terms of timelines and content can be standardized among institutions as well as regionally and internationally" (Ministerio de Educación, 2017: 36). This document contradicts the above-quoted statement by the secretary and was later shelved because of the assault launched on it by the educational community through declarations, demonstrations, and critiques. What will happen to the social sciences and humanities and humanist education in general, which in the U.S. and European cases are becoming the target of disparagement and calls for excellence (Université Libre de Bruxelles, 2014) at the level of higher education (Brown, 2015; Hall, 2016)?

Another indication of the hegemonic or market-based internationalization at the higher education fair was the presence of Quacquarelli Symonds, a company that conducts academic rankings of universities (with bibliometric criteria) worldwide, and the presentation by Jos Beelen, one of the principal invitees,

promoting “internationalization at home”—in other words, the internationalization of curricula that is less expensive and more effective than the internationalization of students. Through these two points we can see how UNCuyo and the national government converge in the intent and implementation of policies for the incorporation of education into the global higher education market: standardization, priority for technico-utilitarian knowledge over academic content, and ranking according to classification systems foreign to our situation.

So far I have mentioned and briefly described how two of the three features of neoliberal education permeate Argentine national and university education policies. Lastly, I would like to focus on the third: how the logic of business management penetrates educational institutions as a means of subjectivization. If, as previously stated, education must adapt to changes in the organization of labor in the new capitalism, workers are expected to create the figure of the entrepreneur of the self and implement it within the student body and the teaching and administrative staffs of educational units. This is an objective achieved through a series of management and control technologies (constant quantitative evaluation, coaching, training) for creating subjectivities (Laval and Dardot, 2013). Along with the two features described above, it increases the risk of uberization of the university—the introduction of a new form of organization of the university’s task according to the model of subjectivization of the economy common in the capitalism of platforms (Hall, 2016).

In the 2016–2021 Strategic National Plan, the rationales of business management have penetrated the educational realm. In one of its three core elements, consistent with the first recommendation of the World Bank Group (2018), “evaluation and information placed at the service of the school” (Ministerio de Educación, 2016a: 6) within a culture of data is proposed. Among the criteria it mentions effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency of programs, projects, and indicators (according to the second World Bank empiricist recommendation, evidence). Effectiveness worship is not new in educational discourse: it dates back to the processes that took place in U.S. education at the beginning of the twentieth century (McLaren, 2005). According to this worldview, transmitted to most countries in the 1960s and 1970s by organizations such as the OECD (with international educational indicators and the comparative studies on student competence better known as the Program for International Student Assessment), effectiveness—as in any firm—can be measured quantitatively through standardized and reproducible methods and devices for better assessment and control of teachers and students.

This array of instruments for measurement, tracking, and control as the crux of the evaluation culture since the 1990s in Argentina came necessarily coupled with a bureaucratization of pedagogy (Laval, 2004) produced and reproduced as a market through the intervention of national and international entities. In the national arena between 2015 and 2017, although budgetary items in areas such as Conectar Igualdad and in infrastructure and teacher training were defunded and underutilized, the Ministry of Education’s budget for information and evaluation of educational quality was increased (Feldfeber et al., 2018). Likewise, the managerial worldview of education, which introduced the cost/benefit ratio and quantitative measures, is responsible for causing school clo-

asures and cancellations of unprofitable courses and degree programs in Buenos Aires and in the province of Mendoza (where UNCuyo is located). Both jurisdictions were also governed by the Cambiemos alliance. Moreover, these policies tend to erode the model of producing citizens with humanist values (Laval, 2004) in favor of producing the entrepreneur or micro-entrepreneur of the self (Hall, 2016), following the *homo oeconomicus* model (Foucault, 2016). Teacher training is therefore permeated by the business spirit. An example of this change is the *universidad de formación docente* (teacher training university), where the priority is professionalization using criteria such as innovation and the “ability to adapt to changing situations in the knowledge society” (Law 6053/2018).

This very brief and partial examination of the evidence for change in educational matters in various jurisdictions of the state will allow us to analyze in detail the case of UNCuyo.

ENTERPRISING CITIZENRY IN UNCUYO?

UNCuyo (2012: 2–3) undertook education as “a free public asset, as a human right and obligation of the state,” in keeping with the Declaration of the Regional Conference of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2008. The vision of its 2021 Strategic Plan (approved in 2012) includes “achievement of the common good,” and three principal objectives for 2021 are highlighted (with different strategies for each): (1) “the comprehensive development of the community, the common good, and full citizenship” (2012: 3) in relation to national and provincial needs and plans; (2) responding to “the demand for higher education” (2012: 4) that is free, inclusive, of good quality, and aimed at “comprehensive training with excellence”; and (3) “innovation in political, institutional, academic, administrative, informational and communicational management” (2012: 5)—all considerations related to the modernization carried out by the state, also explicit in the plan. This may seem an anachronism, since the plan predated the national-level reforms, but it was visionary according to international criteria. It conformed to the intertextual hierarchy for which UNESCO’s declarations and its world higher education conferences of 1998 and 2009 functioned as frameworks for university policy. For this reason, today we see the commonality and the parallels between national policy and the updated university policy: the leading role of UNCuyo in organizing the international higher education fair in Argentina and the criteria of quantification and transparency in the monitoring of objectives of the university’s strategic plan.

Ordinance 75 of the Board of Governors (UNCuyo, 2016c) adopted the curricular approach based on competences and defined academic credit as a unit equivalent to 32 hours. In addition, it offered to grant a *certificado complemento al título* (complementary degree certificate) to recognize extracurricular activities and promoted English as a second language. The academic department of UNCuyo affirmed at the fair that “the competency approach is linked to an instrumentalist concept but is not the view of UNCuyo” (presentation to the Competencies and Credits panel, March 1, 2018). To a large degree, the bases of

the reforms carried out by UNCuyo support this view. I have pointed to the antimarket view of education reflected in the 2008 regional conference, which UNCuyo endorses. It defines “competence” in Ordinance 75 as “knowledge and intellectual abilities (systematic acquisition of theories, classifications, concepts); capacities and skills (training in applied methodological procedures, related to scientific material or the professional realm: organize, apply, handle, design, plan) and attitudes and values (responsibility, autonomy, initiative, commitment to the task)” (UNCuyo, 2016c: 6). Up to this point it seems that this understanding of competence is in accord with the academic secretary’s view in that it entails abilities that are completely different from those advanced by both the World Bank president and the Plan Maestr@ draft or the entrepreneurial capital support law.

In the labor world the idea of competition would displace or replace that of qualification and its relation to rights and guarantees upheld by the state—especially through the educational system and legitimate evaluation it enjoyed—based on an approximate scale of remuneration. Qualification therefore referred to the workers’ collective dimension. The current trend, in the midst of the breakdown of the salaried society and the placement of competition at the heart of productivity, points toward individualization. Competition becomes a monitoring and employability device established through constant evaluation, no longer reflecting the state educational system’s humanist model but adapted to business criteria and to the market as the arbiter of individual professional values (Laval, 2004). The unequal relation between worker and employer intensifies through the precarization of collective settings crystallized in cuts to the education budget and is geared toward a dematerialization that designates the worker as a service vendor. Furthermore, as work becomes more precarious, people submit themselves to becoming a labor force in every dimension of their lives, thus producing and reproducing precarious subjectivities and social relations. In other words, precarity governs their behavior (Lorey, 2018; Cano, 2018).

Among the recent UNCuyo institutional initiatives, the *Emprende U* competition is an example of how the university tends to operate as a mechanism for the normalization of neoliberal subjects (Laval and Dardot, 2013), the creation of human capital (Brown, 2015) and micro-entrepreneurs of the self (Hall, 2016), and introduces changes in the university academic culture—specifically, how the contest contributes to promoting models of subjectivization in the student body. According to its webpage, UNCuyo’s Area of Entrepreneurial Development intends “to promote the growth of enterprises” and to provide “training and awareness-raising for students in the various educational levels to encourage entrepreneurship” (UNCuyo, n.d. b). In order to achieve these objectives, it has pursued the Entrepreneurial University Program since 2014 and, in this connection, launched the *Emprende U* competition in 2015, with three categories—best invention, innovative project, and university entrepreneur, corresponding to the primary, secondary, and university levels, respectively. In its 2017 version the competition was able to establish an auspicious link with Jump Chile of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, a university that since 1955—through an agreement with the University of Chicago—has been the home of the Chicago Boys and a powerhouse of neoliberalism (Donoso and Dragnic, 2015).

On its webpage Jump Chile identifies itself as “an academy of acceleration that transforms ideas into business models, in which we seek to create a new generation of entrepreneurs that can be agents of change and transform local problems into opportunities with global impact.” It trains the various groups of students (undergraduate and postgraduate) that participate in the national competition in “empathy with clients and consumers,” “validation of the business model,” and “minimum viable product and first sales.” I mention these stages to show that their explicit focus concurs with the UNCuyo proposal.

The idea of lifelong and continual training starts with the initial educational stage in preparation for professional training. As places to acquire expertise the program uses not only traditional educational institutions but also companies—organizations authorized to evaluate and shape human capital that can measure the effectiveness of individual performance on the basis of the investments made by their associates or partners. The company becomes another legitimate educational institution able to intervene in the initial training. It must have a pedagogy of labor, ability to resolve problems when faced with uncertainty, and efficiency in personal and group communication. Just as the company becomes a learning space, the educational institutions open up to interaction with other organizations that contribute to continual learning (family, third-sector organizations, companies), consistent with the World Bank’s third recommendation (the building of coalitions with other actors). In this connection, UNCuyo offers “Training of Trainers” for elementary and secondary school teachers (2019a) and at the university undergraduate level (2019b), and “Entrepreneurship with Impact” seeks to “spread the entrepreneurial culture” and “raise awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship as a tool for transformation and creation of self-employment” (2016a).

Associated with the idea of lifelong training is the expression “learning throughout life,” with utilitarian, instrumental overtones involving personal interest and productive effectiveness and the ability to demonstrate how to learn. The aim is for the individual to engage in autonomous, lifelong self-training. This is a special definition of “autonomy” (in direct opposition to the reformist university legacy) in that it refers not to the ability to determine one’s own norms through the exercise of free critical thinking about oneself and the world but rather to an internalization of a heteronomy, entrepreneur of the self, governed by the logic of competition and efficiency, that is clearly alienating.

Obviously, this leaves out the contents or knowledge of the humanities, artistic expression, and some of the social sciences. Learning throughout life therefore aims at the acquisition of marketable expertise geared toward the subject’s adaptation to the labor market. As one of the main speakers at the higher education fair, José Manuel Ríos Ariza (Universidad de Málaga), noted, lifelong training also involves a change in the way we conceive of the world and of work itself. In the face of increasing uncertainty and unemployment, the expert recommended envisaging the future in order to adapt to it through tools for self-training: “We are training not workers but capable people who can work and who will have to live in a complex and uncertain world” (presentation to the panel “Internationalization at Home,” March 2, 2018). Here the figure of the wage-earner tends to disappear in favor of the independent, flexible worker. Risk therefore appears as a crucial element in organizing the world: we

live in a “risk society” (Laval and Dardot, 2013), an ontological dimension that refers to an individualization of the risk not assumed by collective entities as it was in the phase of the social state. Ríos Ariza’s statement can be understood in this context: what he is talking about is not workers (a notion that implies a collective dimension) but persons who can work.

Education takes on a central role as defensive learning, living in the face of constant uncertainty, and proactive in terms of individual solutions for continual improvement. Responsibility falls fully on the individual and tends to dismantle the collective settings maintained by educational institutions and the guarantees and shared values that have buttressed them over the centuries. Am I establishing a causal and direct relation between the competitive approach adopted by UNCuyo and the objectives of a specific program of the university that lie outside any curriculum or educational level? No, but I do point out that they are convergent. Establishing a model of commodified internationalization (focused on the concepts of competition and credits, which promote English as a second language and foster the issuance of certifications that are supplemental to the degree) allows the pursuit of contests such as *Emprende U*, with competency development objectives that are closer to managerialism than to the humanist values associated with the reformist tradition of the Argentine university.

The *Emprende U* proposal not only updates tentative responses to the questions for whom and why one does research but also what subjects make up the university and precisely how one’s personal and professional lives are intertwined in the practice of “entrepreneurial development as a tool of transformation and generation of self-employment” (UNCuyo, n.d. b). The case of *Emprende U* clearly illustrates the tendency toward rationalization of desire (Laval and Dardot, 2013): self-realization based on constant competition. Rationalization of desire in neoliberal discourse seeks to internalize the idea in individuals that each one is/functions as his or her own entrepreneur of the self. It signifies the integration of personal and professional life on the basis of individual decisions that aim to improve performance—to internalize and normalizes self-precarization (Lorey, 2018).

Moreover, and noting the changes in faculty working conditions, we can also analyze cases that illustrate the recent appearance of management strategies in different colleges and even within UNCuyo’s health care plan. Changes in the organization of work especially affect teaching, which is tending toward digitalization involving the features of cognitive work (Berardi, 2015). Salient cases are several courses aimed at teachers and the general public. The 2016 course “Neurohappiness: Holistic Coaching to Achieve Well-being” in the School of Philosophy and Arts was offered as “a discipline that fosters the personal and communicational expertise of the participants, helping them to reflect on the behaviors that scuttle or hinder their performance” (UNCuyo, 2016b). In 2017 the School of Economic Science offered a course on “Coaching Teams,” and there was a similar one in the University Technological Institute (ITU), the content of which was described as “Coaching, Active Listening, Events and Interpretations, Comfort Zone, Planning Your Personal Life: Personal Mission-Objectives-Goals and Activities. From the Individual Plan to the Team Plan. Commitment, Leadership, Managing ‘the Other’” (UNCuyo, 2017). Specifically for teachers, there were courses for “Training of Trainers in Expertise for Undergraduate Technical

Professional Education” at the University Technological Institute (ITU) and in the university’s Department of Medical and Social Assistance. UNCuyo’s health care plan offers workshops in education for health (“Stress, Anxiety and Managing Emotions”) focused on the “management” of emotions, which includes as a benefit an “improved workspace climate” through cognitive-emotional control and creative solutions to problems (UNCuyo, n.d. a).

What do all these apparently uncoordinated courses have in common? That the worldview of the new public management is slowly penetrating, just as is happening at the national level with the process of nationalization and federalization of the pedagogy of leadership and entrepreneurship (Feldfeber et al., 2018) in teacher training. In all of these cases, the techniques tend to make the individual responsible for failures. In the framework of neoliberal rationality, if this type of process “reduces the meaning of freedom and autonomy to unimpeded market behavior” (Brown, 2015: 179), then it is necessary to enroll the teaching profession in the transformation of labor (Berardi, 2003; Terranova, 2004; Wacjman, 2017; Lorey, 2018)—in the current enterprises of control and mutation of capitalism. Franco Berardi has dealt with studying the conditions of cognitive work on the Internet; I would include teaching. He describes this work as value production but more abstract and less interchangeable, with hazy boundaries. The info-worker acquires a power, that of organizing his or her time and relations. He or she can move about with greater freedom but experiences this flexibilization as a reticular dependency no longer subject to a boss or a visible face but rather with a command function that is transversalized and deterritorialized. The cellular phone condenses and crystallizes the ability to develop, coordinate, and recombine the elements of production anywhere and in real time. Panic and depression appear then as social symptoms of emotional and cognitive stress caused by the flexibilization of work patterns related to digital technologies and the intensification of work they produce (Wacjman, 2017; Lorey, 2018).

In Argentine, Brazilian, and Mexican universities a more visible situation regarding the nature of intellectual production was identified: increased competition among peers, hyperproductivity measured in quantitative terms, bureaucratization and industrialization of research, the continual pursuit of grants for research, and tensions around the conduct of relevant research (Pérez Mora and Naidorf, 2015). In Argentine public universities, the subjective consequences for faculty and researchers were being overwhelmed, lacking down time, and loss of meaning of the work (Ros and Wlosko, 2017).

In sum, the academic institution, specifically at the university level, seems to be founded not only the emancipation of peoples and equity in knowledge but also on the objectives of the new world of production, adopting its criteria: effectiveness, quality, leadership, and managing of emotions, to name a few of the concepts that have a strong political quality. Management jargon has entered public universities: pedagogy becomes “management,” the teacher is now a “manager,” and the guidelines gaining ground are collaboration, the development of expertise, and innovation. Naturally, incorporation of this terminology begins to embed new objectives in the various educational subjects and contributes to forming other identities connected less to democratic citizenship than to the entrepreneur and to competitive human capital in the global market.

CONCLUSIONS

I have sought to understand how the UNCuyo has been reconfigured in accordance with international guidelines for higher education (Brown, 2015). Analysis of university and national documents has shed light on the way the intertextual hierarchy has been operating—heterogeneously in educational policies at different levels and disparately in national and provincial jurisdictions but always using guidelines consistent with the transformations of capitalism that consider education a value producer, a market, and reconfigure subjectivities in keeping with the dynamic of neoliberal rationality.

The transformation of Argentine higher education in the new capitalism has been partially blocked by a tradition defending public education and, at the university level, deeply influenced by the 1918 reforms. In UNCuyo, the legacy of autonomy legacy is threatened by the changes cited. Observation of the changes at levels below the university has allowed the identification of continuities and common resistance to these changes. It has enabled me to present the challenges that the current reforms introduce into university subjectivities manifested in teachers' working conditions and in the meaning of education for students. With regard to the faculty, I have described some of the transformations of their tasks. With regard to the students, I have examined the *Emprende U*'s promotion of their participation in the acquisition of expertise as part of a process of continual training.

I have described how neoliberal logic is gradually changing university logic in a counterreformist sense (Tatián, 2017)—placing in check the institutional autonomy of the university and the autonomy of university subjects. In national legislation I have found indications of counterreform in the conceptions of education (as not a right but a commodity), of goals (not for popular sovereignty and emancipation but for competitiveness), its underlying principles (secularized dogmatism and commercial logic in advancing "libertarian" ideas), and its subjects (not citizens with collective identities but isolated individuals).

The political imaginaries of two collective movements with a common goal, emancipation, can be useful in considering the unprecedented challenges that the current situation imposes on education. The dialogue between the ideas of the 1918 university reformism and the current Argentine feminist movement (each with its shortcomings and strengths) has the creative potential for individual and collective action if the shared focal points are rebellion, freedom, and affect, the protagonists inherent in educational processes.

Today's Argentine feminist movement could contribute to transforming what was a problem for the reformists a century ago: imperialism and dependency operating on countries and social classes to reproduce subalternity. With somewhat less clarity it was noted then that, because of the rationalist tendency of the sciences, this subalternity emerged from affect, but it was less clear where to go from there. (This point is important because neoliberalism did understand it, modifying our ways of being, acting, and relating to others.) Herein lies the contribution of contemporary feminism, which seeks to build a social web (neither hierarchical, patriarchal, nor capitalist) acknowledging the centrality of affect and desire in constructing worlds that are possible, not denying precarity but inhabiting it (flores, 2017; Cano, 2018; Lorey, 2018).

Reflecting on the contributions of self-precarization (Cano, 2018) and voluntary servitude (Lordon, 2015) to the fragmentation of social ties calls for a review of our practices as teachers and researchers (Université Libre de Bruxelles, 2014) and a reconsideration of the primacy of quantitative criteria in daily life. Inhabiting precarity implies assuming the collective dimension of governmentality (Lorey, 2018), starting something new by occupying it as a common experience and attempting to avoid self-precaritization. This entails experiencing “other ways of life without a blueprint but with a history” (flores, 2017: 19) by renewing discussion with students on objectives, demands, and organization of courses, on knowledge production based on their experiences; collectivizing situations of stress, depression, and overwork due to the imperative of being connected 24/7; reinventing the logics of unions and guilds with creative forms of protest; disregarding the standardized systems of academic classification and publishing in open access; learning programming in order to understand and hack academic systems of tracking and control; coordinating research with undergraduate faculty in order to facilitate the construction of knowledge and skills in students for their autonomous development in relation to the community and collective organizations they participate in; promoting long-range research to avoid the reduction of time for research and writing; publication in nonacademic media; and working with administrative staff to limit the administrative tasks of faculty and researchers.

NOTES

1. The Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, the Instituto Nacional de Tecnología, the Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria, and the Comisión Nacional de Energía Atómica.

2. By eliminating the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Productive Innovation and relocating it as a department within the Ministry of Education.

3. Formed in 2015 by the Coalición Cívica Afirmación para una República Igualitaria, Propuesta Republicana, and the Unión Cívica Radical, it contained features of openness and primary export at the economic level and was conservative in civil and social rights and neoliberal in terms of transformation of the state.

4. The author uses lower-case letters in her name.

5. The full presentation can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uw_sslo2x6k&t=252s (accessed April 20, 2019).

6. The European university reform conducted since 1998, which led to a process of curricular reforms in order to standardize degrees, promote student mobility, implement new teaching methodologies, “diversify” funding, and standardize the qualifications for lifelong learning.

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