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The university: a commune of citizens

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Introduction

The first stage of this reflection on the academic practice, management and decision-making of the Salesian Polytechnic University, followed in the steps of Elinor Ostrom and her approach to how institutions use the *commons* over the long term, and it led to the publication of the book *The University: as a common pool resource* (Solórzano, 2018). Now, in the university itself requests are emerging for the creation of an institutional context that ensures these practices, rooted in community values capable of generating a model of communal management.

This article revisits analytically these requests, and deepens the option and experience gained by a university intended as a common pool resource. It enters into dialogue with other contributions,

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principally the one by Laval and Dardot (2015) for whom *the common* is born not out of the property right over something, but out of the exercise of deliberation over the use and management of the *commons*. At the same time, it traces back reflections on the Andean way of thinking on the commune (Patzi, 2009; Pilataxi, 2014) and its decision-making logic. Referring to these bibliographic contributions does not imply either a reduction or entrapment of life and, instead, embeds practical experience within abstract concepts. On the contrary, these approaches were particularly significant because they enrich the experience by widening its meanings while also avoiding the impasses to which the dichotomies *State/market* or *common good/private interest* inevitably lead.

We tried to enrich conceptually our experience and practice through the exploration of alternative ways that articulate critically those realities; show they are constitutive of individual and collective existences; and place in the centre the community of citizens who take decision on common pool resources (Delgado, 2017). Andean indigenous authors from Bolivia and Ecuador –such as Patzi and Pilataxi respectively– undoubtedly contribute to deepen the reflection on inter-culturality, and overcome the locking of “the Andean” within a discourse on the culture of “the other” that, ultimately, is irrelevant in imagining new frameworks for a co-existence and a normative that go beyond bureaucratic reasons. In this way, the Andean does not exist only to be discussed conceptually, but also to be put in practice in the life of our institutions, and thus make itself present in its norms and rules of actions.

This contribution starts in our previous acknowledgment that the university is a community organization of collective action, where its members deploy the dual and complementary role of consumers as well as providers of common pool resources. From here, they reach a point at which they can re-signify the university as an

Andean community when it comes to the management and organization of power around resources. The article starts from the recognition of the resources that the university-commune aims to protect and develop, namely natural resources, knowledge, collaboration, and the goods and potential that the internet web provides for decision-taking. Then, it highlights the values of a communal democracy based upon collaborative relationships, service, and the primacy of collective interests over private ones.

Finally, this article defines the specific profile of the communal system versus the institutional one that also rules university life. The university is based upon collaboration and consensus. At the same time, it collectively produces and supports common goods, for example, shared knowledge and different professions. The university-commune promotes self-governance and autonomy while the university-institution responds and reacts to the external legal context.

The academy is aware of the way in which new values and management and production systems take hold of activities, behaviours and minds. The university's mission is to mould citizens with professional capacities, able to relate and develop themselves in a society marked by self-improvement. To such requisites from citizens, it corresponds a university of "competence that is not born within each student as a natural product of their brain but as the effect of a deliberate policy" (Laval & Dardot, 2015, p. 16).

This approach to the Salesian Polytechnic University (from here onward 'university' or simply UPS) framed as a *common pool resource*, aims to apply deliberately over time, successful models of management for the common usage of natural goods, but also to consider those that emerge from democratic struggles and social movements for a participative democracy and not only a representative one. The rescue of *the common* prioritizes the citizen/community bond before the bond with the State. This perspective emphasizes

collective deliberation as the original mark of citizenship as well as the foundational practice of political exercise over the citizenship claim based upon some kind of privilege or property. Members of the commune take decisions about common pool resources based upon the premise of their “equity in taking part”, as Laval and Dardot mention (2015, p. 270).

Faced with the growing collective consciousness of the limits of natural resources and its exploitation as a property in permanent extension of control, which establishes egoism as a strategy of success, the university discovers a new form of collective life that proposes *cooperation* as a strategy. Being mindful of Hardin and his “tragedy of the *commons*” contributes elements to strengthen the proposal of collective success based upon *cooperation*, so as not to become a prisoner of one’s own interest (Laval & Dardot, 2015). In UPS these actions respond to a spirit that is expressed in official documents on strategies, management methodology, models of systems of learning and others that respond to an alternative progressive gaze built upon and from praxis, without falling into the temptation of planning the future according to abstract paradigms. We define this attitude as the “spirit of the commune”.

The examination of the culture around the use of ‘the common’ as an effective principle of transformation, presupposes an a priori practice and exercise of communal design, even an historical projection, regardless of the limits of the genre in question, and one that it is necessary to assume. Such an exercise is completely free and does not compromise in any way those who commit to it. Nothing guarantees that the historical transformation will correspond to the patterns that we are highlighting here, or to the problems and possibilities hereby considered. The experimentation of new practices and their evaluation will mark the path to follow, one step at a time.

This suggestion does not constitute a finished whole, even less a coherent programme. To lay out the principle of the common is one thing, to imagine a policy of the common for a university is another. In presenting the topic, we are reminded of John Keybe's statement: "the difficulty does not lay in new ideas, but in escaping the old ones" (quoted by David Bollier in Hess & Ostrom, 2016, p. 51).

The re-birth of *the common*

Nowadays the idea of the community as a bearer of ethical and emancipatory meanings is resurging with a renewed strength, to the point that many voices from different spaces of reflections talk of "the return of the common" (Torres Carrillo, 2013). However, from a more specific point of view, our call for *the common* implies going beyond idealizations or sublimations of the idea of the community, while also expressing the option of not addressing the political within the framework of the State and its legality: "In reality, if the common has become so important nowadays it is because it revokes brutally the beliefs and the progressive hopes invested in the State" (Laval & Dardot, 2015, p. 19). The state of affairs of *Socialismo Siglo XXI*³ (XXI Century Socialism) as a democratic proposal for Latin American countries has not managed to triumph over the speculative capitalist market, but our perspectives about going beyond capitalism and the State propose realistic forms of communal engagement.

3 **Translator's Note** – *Socialismo Siglo XXI* indicates the political/ideological proposal put forward by South American thinkers and head of States, such as the former Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa or the current Bolivian President Evo Morales. While this will be obvious to those readers/scholars who know Latin American politics/political studies, it may not be so to all readers. Because of its strong political and theoretical statement, and the fact that this is how it is known to scholars of Latin American politics, we have left it here its original Spanish title.

The great advantage of the current revival of *the common* as a motivating factor of academy “is that it offers ways out of the established paths that are dependent upon existing practices, when the respective forms of thinking do not produce effective solutions” (Hess & Ostrom, 2016, p. 65). *The common* has become the effective principle that has produced original forms of actions and discourses and its strength and efficacy are not the consequence of a reaction to capitalism or statism. It simply is thinking and acting from different political forms rooted within cooperation and self-governance. As Laval and Dardot (2015) write: “commune is the name of a political formation, that of local self-governance” (p. 24).

The increasing interest in the *commons* is achieving new levels, which is a signal that it satisfies some basic needs of academic practice. This allows the articulation of a new body of values around the organization of universities and the debates on public policies. It contributes to put a name to this revival of *the common* by proposing a new terminological landscape where terms such as collaborative learning, co-working, undertaking, cluster, group evaluation, shared knowledge, educational innovation, common knowledge, open knowledge, web, good of common use, and the likes, make their appearance, as much as shared electronic tools contribute to reaffirm control over common pool resources.

Topics that are global in nature, are also lived locally; to these, citizens may provide common solutions. In relation to them, the university behave as a collective that contributes to the production of efficient alternatives sustainable in the long term as common pool resources, and whose academic practices can be laid out in four symbiotic nuclei described below. These are: to protect Nature’s good; to ensure widespread of knowledge; to overcome market competitiveness, and finally to assume knowledge as a platform of decision-making on the common.

Protecting Nature's goods

The challenges in the use of the *commons* relating to life and nature represents a school of thoughts capable of provoking and inspiring modes of social organization of life with creative autonomy and that favours the university undertaking and acting independently from the official curriculum and planning. In UPS, natural *commons* are not a part of a manifesto, an ideology or the expression of a trend. Instead, they are a flexible framework that articulates the rich productivity of research groups and the creativity of teachers and students collectives that investigate, propose and agree on commitments that lead university cohabitation.

The UPS considers the environmental issue beyond the need to protect it for human survival, that is to say, from a perspective to transform the indefinite expansion of the development paradigm through the use of natural resources as if they were unlimited. The UPS academy takes steps towards laying the foundation of an economy rooted in cooperation among the agents of the market. As Laval and Dardot (2015) write, "This is less about protecting fundamental goods for human survival than to transform deeply economy and society by inverting the system of norms" (p. 17). The world will not be protected by the setting up of a kind of reserve of "common natural resources (land, water, air, woods, etc.)" that will be miraculously preserved from the indefinite expansion of capitalism; but [it could be protected] by citizens movements that interact and decide on concrete aims and actions for common interests.

Within the limits of its scale and context, academic practice looks with some reservation and precaution to two current themes that shrink the space where decision-making on the common takes place in order to face the scarcity of resources and the global risk that threatens life. The first theme responds to the position of the German philosopher Ulrich Beck (2008), for whom the threatens to

life imply reduction in local democracies in favour of global control of decision-making on behalf of the world and according to global interests. The second theme is, in a context of environmental crisis, a society that delegates decisions to *experts*, as has frequently happened in academic topics relating to economy, politics and development. We know very well that in the majority of cases, instead of being a resource to the service of collective decisions, the *expert judgement* ends up replacing or overshadowing community discernment and deliberation around the use of the *commons*.

Ensure the universal wide-spreading of knowledge

In the university we promote and practice academic innovations that bring in new forms of contemplating knowledge as a shared resource, a complex ecosystem made up of *common resources* that are growing constantly and are potentially unlimited since they are not subjected to the rule of scarcity. In fact, “while natural resources are scarce resources, at the same time not mutually exclusive or rival, the *commons* of knowledge are non-rival resources whose utilization by some not only does not decrease the share of the others, but in fact it tends to increase it” (Laval & Dador, 2015, p. 184). Such acknowledgement does not imply an artificial rarefication of the research and academic environment caused by the so-called property rights, patents, access rights, etc. Instead, and as a way of defending the major university resource, it is imperative to learn to share knowledge as a common resource with a value that increases proportionally to its communication. Since “the more one shares useful knowledge, the more people populate the web or the knowledge community, and the more value such knowledge acquires. This feature is well acknowledged in the familiar expression “the madder we are, the more we shall laugh” (Laval & Dador, 2015, p. 51).

We conceive of knowledge as linked to comprehensions and creations of all sorts, and in the widest meaning of the term:

Knowledge (...) refers to any type of understanding achieved through experience or study, be it indigenous, scientific, erudite, or non-academic. It also includes creative works, such as music and visual and theatre arts. (Hess & Ostrom, 2016, p. 33)

Knowledge is not only that which is articulated in the form of notions, concepts, theories and paradigms, but also those forms of thinking that we define as *methodologies*. As forms of thinking, methods are as crucial as conceptual constellations. Frequently, we witness the failure of those transformations secured in conceptual changes but that do not provide any path –a *method*– that might orient thinking and decision-making.

The universal widespread of knowledge marks and conditions the option for a specific profile of studentship as much as the university recruitment policy, so much so that the production of a universal common implies the non-selectivity of students in its strictest sense. That is to say, –according to its possibilities and available resources– the university community must give access to anyone who wishes to attend it, and welcome them as they are, in their real and particular conditions (cognitive, class, economic, diversity conditions, etc.).

Non-selectivity has a higher status than practices of inclusion, because we know that highly selective universities can afford the luxury of being inclusive and grant a place to students with disabilities, or ethnic minorities. The university-commune, on the contrary, is inclusive because it is not selective, and it implies the capacity of the common to support, and guarantee quality itineraries to make knowledge accessible to all.

Non-selectivity is opposed to Access based upon meritocracy, because the latter excludes, feeds competitiveness and perpetuates social inequalities. Salesian Universities Institutions (IUS) have linked their preferential option for poor and marginal youth with the option for non-selectivity. The extent of such an option is reflec-

ted in their statement that students admitted in whatever level they might be, represents their preferential epistemological and pedagogical options, as well as their preferential option as far as administrative and collective financial commitments go, in order to guarantee the sustainability of open access.

Exit market competitiveness

The tragedy of competitiveness as an engine of growth is well expressed in Hardin's famous statement (1968), quoted by Hess and Ostrom (2016):

Ruin is the destiny of all men who pursuit each their own interest in a society that believes in the freedom of common resources. Freedom in common resources presupposes the ruin of everybody. It is one of the most cited and influential articles in Social Sciences, and it is still taught in a good number of university courses across the world. (p. 35)

The long battle of common sense is in not identifying others' interests as contrary to mine, and hence seeing him (the other) as someone with whom I ought to share, and instead aims to use goods with equity and efficiency in order to save their sustainability.

Educate in collaboration is the task that one learns in practice, to opt out of competitiveness requires a university of *collaborative learning* based upon the idea of being part of an ensemble of the commons. Competitiveness is not born out of a cerebral configuration, nor is it an inevitable consequence of human nature: it is the social production created by a political system centred upon accumulation and selfishness. Giving up competitiveness as a driving force of academia, one that is being replicated in professional activity and is perfected in the market, requires the application of policies for the *commons* within the university.

When members of the university community behave as consumers of a *common pool resource*, question and refuse the politics

of successful individualism and of university social scale. That is to say, they become the source of collective actions in relation to the few and limited means through which it is possible “to contain the dominant economic logic, support non-mercantile life space, keep institutions dependent upon principles other than profit, correct or smooth the effects of the «law of world competitiveness»” (Laval & Dardot, 2015, p. 18).

Above, we mentioned the importance of methods; here we reaffirm their importance in guaranteeing non-competitive forms of thinking. Market logic knows well the importance of methods. Each competitive innovation comes immediately with a methodological kit of ample standing, applicable to both affecting public policies and to spreading, promotion and stimulation consumption.

For a university that is based upon the concept of the *commons*, it is difficult to compete with the speed of a market based upon competitiveness to produce methods and itineraries of action. The creative speed, the wide range of application and the feeling of security that market methods generate are notably different from those of collaborative proposals, since in the latter the common must be made explicit each time. The concepts and options of the *commons* generate unexpected agreements, paths and itineraries of actions based to a large extent upon uncertainty and a different temporality than the one of competitiveness. Doubtless, and largely, the proposal to transform the university according to the principles of the *commons* is defined by the ability to imagine different methodological and normative itineraries born out of a necessary uncertainty, and equipped with a transient character, adjusting always to fit the decisions taken.

The Internet: a common good and decision-making context on the commons

The Internet, with all its resources, has become a decisive space for the construction of shared knowledge, above all for the growing political participation and mobilization (Martín, 2013), especially for young people (Reguillo, 2017). *Techno-politics* is a key concept, one that, under its umbrella, gathers topics of citizen participation, cyber-activism, web mobilization, etc. Students' mobilizations and their collective actions, throughout Latin America, highlight its impact. We can also see that social media exercises a huge influence in creating and unveiling realities, through *fake news*, to the extent that it has become a defining pillars in political elections and public opinion. Hence, for new social movements and for citizens alike, social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc.) have become also the street, the territory where meanings and decisions are disputed. Numerous are the free tools (e.g. free *softwares*) used by local governments and the new social movements that generate new and increasingly more horizontal forms of collective actions, gathered under the name of direct participation, collective intelligence, web democracy, etc.

Citizens' freedom has been marked and ruled by the State in many of its multiple political choices. The flag of freedom has motivated hundreds of actions in the history of universities. For universities, the internet is one fields where freedom could be exercised and one to care for the *commons*. As Hess and Ostrom write:

Without any doubt, there are many more gaps and shortfalls, yet now we can only say that such tasks are highlighted, and that the challenge is for future scholars. (Hess & Ostrom, 2016, p. 12)

The capacity of the University to set in motion collective actions in the use, design and progress in exercising freedom that is independent from State tutelage, shows the need for new forms of self-gover-

nance. Self-governance defined not as a mode of production of appropriate solutions, but as an instance that generates a permanent project.

The form of freedom that one experiences in the Internet must be understood as a common used by an individual, a small or large group, and the entire world. The university fulfils its call to serve when it acts with creativity in order to develop a free resource available to everybody. Furthermore, the internet is a resource that opens up and links the local community to other trajectories, enriching its experience in relation to others.

Conclusions

The university's interpretation of the *commons* (the environment, knowledge, collaborative practices, the internet) will result in innovative actions for a return to *the common* as a new way to lay out common interests. This is not an exclusive certainty but an assertion that in human relationships there is more than privacy and Statism. Each of these goods constitutes a key problematic nucleus with the potential to go beyond capitalism, in so far as producing collective norms and agreements on the management and generation of knowledge of the *commons*, the universities participate as members of a co-responsible academic community. Indeed, it is time to develop new perspectives on what lays beyond capitalism, to imagine the conditions and possible forms of collective behaviour, to extract key principles that give direction to active campaigns, to link isolated practices with the form that a new general institutions of societies could take (Laval & Dardot, 2015, p. 20).

Citizens' organization for the management of the Commons

To a great extent, the management of the *commons* revolves around what Hardin considers to be "the tragedy of the *commons*".

The dichotomy the West has established in the economy as opposed and exclusive systems has led to the development of opposite and dualistic confrontational theories, such as: capital/labour, private/public, freedom/control, individual property/common. However, it has also generated reflections that try to avoid these dichotomies by including synergies, for example, spontaneous order, conflict resolutions, collaboration, informality, rules, and self-governance. This reconceptualization of the common represents a methodological challenge that pushes towards the commune as a social construction that manages successfully the *commons*.

According to Ostrom, the management of the *commons* determines the evolution of institutions of collective actions, and requires an active community with correctly applied norms. These are not *given* social realities but ones that are created by people who dare challenge Hardin's initial assumptions. Trusting people's capacity to change the system must include the *commons*, and changing the way we consider public and private goods.

People behave as an organized collective and as citizens of a society:

This opens up the way to new configurations in which it is not necessary (nor real) the state/market dichotomy (...) in this framework, social organizations of shared resources, organizational learning, individuals' fallibility, commitment or reciprocity, as well as the capacity of self-management, gain prominence. (Delgado, 2017, p. 158)

Within the new social configurations that respond to the required organization to manage common resources, is the commune –whose etymology lies in the word *common*, which gives directions to a type of benefits and exchanges that relate to reciprocity and co-responsibility. The commune teaches us to distinguish *the common* from its false appearances. *The common*, at least in its meaning as an obligation that everybody imposes upon themselves, “can neither be

postulated as an original state to be restored, nor be considered as an immediate given in the production process, or be imposed from outside or above” (Laval & Dardot, 2015, p. 105). In the commune, it is shared resources; organizational learning; individuals’ creativity; commitment or reciprocity; and the capacity of self-management to become advocates for change.

The Commune: Management of the Commons

Ostrom (2009) takes the subject to the Nobel Prize, and the management of the *commons* becomes tangible through multiple forms of organizations of common interests for a section of citizens. The citizenry, a collective that shares a territory and common interests, becomes the advocate of its own resources overcoming the proposals of privatization or Statism.

This form of social life called commune, that served humanity for centuries, is emerging in several organization models. Hence, the interest to reduce the costs of food has led to the development of multiple forms of neighbourhood organizations. The mere dynamic of discovering and reaching agreement around common interests generates a diversity of community groups that reactivate the management of reality as a common pool resource. From urban spaces to knowledge, the economy of the *commons* provides answers to current problems through communal models.

The commune has developed an economic model that ensures the sustainability of common property resources and, obviously, of those resources that without been subjected to the property regime, are still considered common pool resources. Relationships of exchange, reciprocity and redistribution mark the key elements of a commune that has the capacity to develop, within a market society, with citizen organizations that respond to personal interests by managing them through a commune model.

Although studies of the commune have focussed mainly on Andean peoples, and been led by an interest to describe only, it is no less true that such knowledge represents a positive contribution to models of collective management of the *commons*. Sánchez Parga (2009), writes of groups where:

(...) participation and sharing become a fundamental norming principle of all types of behaviour and of the social in general, and where collective personality incorporates individual personalities. In this sense, more than a social organization, the commune is a model of sociality. (p. 16)

Conceptualizing the UPS as a *common pool resource* means that the collective that constitutes it will develop a commune-type management model as discussed below.

The Commune: a change towards collaboration

Elinor Ostrom's work, among others, show that a group of people with different interests can manage successfully the sustainability of a common pool resource. This provides certainty that Hardin's tragedy (1968) might not take place and instead we might reach a new place where dichotomy is not the starting point. As Delgado writes:

Such a change goes hand in hand with the belief that individuals can change by themselves an initial situation and its consequences. From each course of action, one gets learnings, through trial and error, that are cumulative and that will help face better the next course of action. (Delgado, 2017, p. 121)

Change brings new strategies to groups of people who are consumers and providers of a common pool resource. The change in the use of the goods brings new forms of behaviour, shifting from a behaviour based upon a dichotomous comprehension of the economy to organic and communal behaviours of the group that organizes

itself in order to use collectively a given common good. In order for individuals to value and be able to face the change, “their capacity of adaptation, participation and creation is important. It will need to develop said capacities, and found ways to measure or acknowledge them” (Delgado, 2017, p. 124).

In this way, the commune in its form of social organization that manages a common pool resource includes changes to overcome the dualist view of the market and the State. Among others, we highlight the following changes:

- Individuals will shift from a state of no-rules to having a body of rules
- People will appreciate the benefits obtained
- It will be possible to regulate costs
- The evaluation of shared norms, the opportunities or processes of institutional change, and measurement of net benefits that respond to an alternative body of rules
- Institutional change also implies knowing and going down the process of collective choices
- Understanding how people participate
- Determine how changes are going to be evaluated
- Measure the costs and benefits of keeping the rules according to the *status quo* or according to the proposed change
- Continue searching for new *structures* of widespread (not general) validity that are movable, flexible and changing (Delgado, 2017, pp. 124 y 162)

Changes in people teach them to distinguish the common from its false appearance, and creates the condition for self-management in a new social environment that improves the relationships created by the market/state dichotomy.

The context of the commune

To investigate the etymology of the word *commune* yields interesting results. Firstly, its immediate association with the term *community*. From a bio-political perspective, philosopher Roberto Esposito (2003) draws on the Latin origin of the term in a way that is relevant to the aim of this chapter. In fact, the term *community* articulates two words: *cum* ('with') and *munus*, the latter being a complex term that refers to 'trade', 'function', 'gift', 'obligation', and 'debt' (Espósito, 2003, p. 32). Hence, it refers to a link among individuals, established by mutual obligations or collective debts owed by those who have received a gift from someone else, a gift that generates shared and reciprocal obligations and retributions. In this way, the community places itself within a framework of reciprocity that establishes rules of mutual doing, giving, and receiving that places emphasis on the foundational nature of the community's political and economic issues, in a way that recalls the original meaning of the term *munus*, i.e. "currency".

Esposito directs our attention in two helpful directions. In the first place, the bond is not within a framework of agreements on abstract values or essential identities that have been shaped prior to the shaping of individuals, but within the circuit of doing, giving, and receiving. Secondly, this philosopher wants to alert us to the fact that the community does not define nor is it called to completely cover the individuals' need of self-realization, so much so that in some cases a community can be lethal for individuals. For this reason, the reverse of community is the *in-munity* (*in-munidad*), through several arrangements through which the community protects individuals and allows individual differences, smoothing or suspending obligations to allow life to take place (Espósito, 2005). Our proposal aims at a university that as an academic community also allows for individuals' wishes and interests, but within the framework of reciprocity

and of what it is possible for the common and the sustainability of its resources.

Development and its historical formations approach this from a different perspective. In Andean societies, the *commune* takes indigenous peoples as its reference point. However, the conceptual richness of the term goes back to the low middle age and the establishment of Castilian councils and its numerous quarrels to defend their territories known as communal territories, which “allows to understand the dynamic of social battle that crosses the feudal formation at the beginning of the transitional processes” (Luchía, 2011, p. 1). Closer to us, the term *commune* joins the Paris Commune (1871) and indicates the political process self-managed by people. It refers to the group of people interested in managing resources they felt entitled to because of their residency in a particular territory, and against the aristocracy who felt entitled to the same resources by birth.

In the era of postmodernity, *community* adds to its historical baggage the search for innovations in the management of commons. At the same time, the context of common pool resources becomes wider, so that knowledge and the contexts related to knowledge production have replaced Castilian councils as the main communal territories.

Yet, the postmodern *commune* continues to identify itself with characteristics that mark its management practice: reciprocity and redistribution, which means that every member of the commune receives (something) and at the same time responds by fulfilling the demands of the communal organization.

The basics of the commune revolve around the *management of resources* and the *organization of power*. At the core of communal interests lies economic and political management, as happens in representative democracy and State socialism, but with the difference

that the rationale leading the commune is “not a logic of profit but of service” (Patzí, 2009, p. 176). Through this rationale, consumers’ collective ownership of resources and their private management and use come together. So, in the ownership of resources, the communal system is antagonistic to the liberal one, while it is also flexible, even compatible –without altering its guiding rationale– as far as the benefits gaining is concerned.

However, in the organization of power, the political management is not compatible with a representative democracy nor with the power of State socialism, since in the commune, people *decision-taking power* is exercised by the group of people that make up the commune and who organize themselves in “Assemblies, Committees, Councils, etc. This is why its representative can be withdrawn at any time if they do not represent or do not manifest the decision of the collectivity” (Patzí, 2009, p. 175). Unlike the voluntary representation of liberal politics, the commune exercises the *obligation and rotation* of communal representation, so that any *comunero* (member of the commune) is obliged to fulfil such service to the community.

The model of political management of the commune determines that collective interests mark the economic management of the *commons*, which, according to Ostrom, is a determining factor in the success of those institutions that manage the commons. Patzi (2009) provides a detailed description of this commune model that differs from liberal democracy, and explains the difference in results in the service and benefits that the commons provide to citizens:

In communities, power is assigned to authorities and not acquired (...) Power is not acquired because of the faculties concentrated in one individual, as it is the case in liberal democracy. In this case, in general terms *communal democracy* means that the elected representatives (...) are not elected to express their own deliberation and decision, but to manifest the deliberation and decision of the group they represent. In this sense, *communal power* should not be mis-

taken for direct democracy like the participation of all citizens in every decision, or like a meeting without representation. (p. 177)

Communal democracy is not a democracy that delegates personal responsibility to an elected person. In the *commons*, tasks are assigned, but its members do not delegate their personal responsibility that is always impossible to delegate and it is assumed by the *comunero* as an individual person. The consequence of the non-delegation of responsibility has generated a *culture of consensus* as far as taking decisions is concerned.

Values of the collective management of goods

The return of *the Common* lays out actions that help find ways to contribute to citizenry and democracy, both meant as products perfectible through models of management of the *commons*, thus opening new possibilities for new forms of democracy and citizenry.

Marx's contributions to the values of the commune are well-known, values that are not related to the concept of "the good life", harmony with nature or social bond for which a moral treatise would suffice, except for fights against capitalism and for the defence of the *commons*. These are not abstract values validated by "solidarity", but values that come out of reciprocal actions and that define the model of society. They are values aim to "organize immanent social forces by providing them with an associative strength in accord with its nature" (Laval & Dardot, 2015, p. 85). Without denying those contributions that transform commune values into a state politics, it is necessary to reclaim the commune as a citizens' organization and not a state one, and re-think its values in response to new historical circumstances of groups of citizens who are immersed within the neoliberal society, but who are rediscovering the values of the commune from the ideological spaces of post-communism.

Given the interest, within UPS, to develop elements of co-habitation that facilitate its management as a *common pool resource*, what is important is what Max Weber called ‘ideals-type’, that help build intelligible models capable of producing the changes highlighted in the section above. For this, we present those values that the citizenry within Andean commune has identified, and that are replicable in the use of the *commons*. These are values related not only to the ‘good life’, with nature or with social bonds, as in this case it would be enough to mention about how to manage the *commons*. The values we propose are the following ones:

- **Sustainable Management:** the attainment of individual interests is the strength of the commune, and this can only be achieved if the *commons*, are ecologically and economically sustainable. The management of a *common* must ensure its development without affecting its sustainability. This is the outcome of Ostrom’s research to refute Hardin’s thesis that individual selfishness will end up destroying the *commons* because of the desire for individual benefits and the ignorance of the need for equity in order to respond to the interests of everybody.
- **Managing consensus:** The exercise of power is justified by the need to achieve the satisfaction of everybody’s shared interests, where balance is a norm of communal harmony. However, consensus does not require unanimity in specific decisions, but it does require it when determining the collective aim. Consensus “...bets, on one hand, on the capacity of the group to invent the terms of the problem that it tries to solve, and on the other hand, [it bets] on the multiplicity of options that we ought to discover in order to achieve that aim” (Vercaulere, Crabbe & Müller, 2010, p. 72). Consensus implies the collective acknowledgement that everybody shares in the decision without the decision necessarily reflecting the totality of individual viewpoints or the viewpoints of the groups involved.

- **A management that shares the benefits:** This is a management model that is not accumulative but rather distributive. In the commune, like in other models of social organization, growth produces an increase of the common that may be bigger than the initial needs of the members of the commune. These special benefits are not accumulated but redistributed among its members. The communal structure does not justify the accumulation of the *commons* but the personal benefit of the members of the commune.
- **Managing collective action:** Achievements are possible when efforts are produced through collective voluntary action. Collective action may not necessarily be egalitarian but it is reciprocal (Hess & Ostrom, 2016).
- **Managing self-governance:** *Commons* require a solid collective action and a self-governance mechanism. In order for the governance system of a resource to adapt and resist the passing of time, it must offer information, deal with conflicts, ensure the fulfilment of norms, provide infrastructure and be prepared for change (Hess & Ostrom, 2016).
- **Managing reciprocity:** The management of reciprocity is not only a responsible retribution, as happens in the capitalist economic system. But it assumes an egalitarian way as at the same time surveillance of the collective that conforms the commune. Such management strengthens knowledge through reciprocal exchanges that feeds into the continuous growth of the group (Pilataxi, 2014).
- **Management of the economic model of non-mercantile exchange:** The commune favours the exchange of shared interests whereby its members exercise personal freedom and autonomy over goods of individual use. The exchange among *comuneros* (members of the commune) is marked by the spirit

of the use value of the commune rather than the mercantile value of the market.

- **Organized management of society:** In the commune there is always a collective subject present in the individual discourse and that strengthens its identity and collective consciousness. Such sociability requires an organization that can represent the other and identify the individual. Individualism, meant as a way of being a citizen, is contrary to the commune that, instead, requires the organizational dimension as a constitutive element of its existence. The *comunero* has a personal identification with the communal that allows them to keep the communal bonds beyond their physical participation.
- **Management of voluntary participation:** In this perspective, a shared *common* of resources and goods is the starting condition of a living community that is first a moral community. Elinor Ostrom (2009) shows that communes require voluntary participation. While a liberal society may consider it a utopia, such voluntary participation is a pragmatic reality that responds to the plurality of forms of the commune and its activities. The communal value exercises a profound attraction when it comes to proposals of a collective management of knowledge resources.

Rules of the Commune

Voluntary participation presupposes established social bonds, and calls for strong and clear norms of reciprocity:

It is about organizing the commune according to the management and legal principles that provide a real power, a just retribution, and the acknowledgement of all those who participate in the work of the commune. (Laval & Dardot, 2015, p. 105)

The collective organization of the commune is rooted within its capacity to rule its members' collective labour and participation. Har-

din never considered this situation, and so he believed that the only way of ruling could come from individual appropriation or from the nationalization of the *commons*. The main contribution of the communes is to highlight collective organization, “in other words, to understand that the *commons* had the peculiarity of being the object of self-organized collective ruling” (Laval & Dardot, 2015, p. 169).

To summarize, the *commons* are institutions that allow for a common management according to rules of different levels that have been established by the users themselves. In society, there exists collective forms of agreement and cooperation that cannot be reduced to market or state guidelines. Ostrom, quoted by Laval and Dardot (2015) understand the institution of the *commons* as:

(...) a body of rules really applied by a group of individuals in order to organize repetitive activities that affect such individuals, and sometimes also others (...) such practical rules, or de facto *rules*, often are different from formal rules dictated by the State or the administration, or even inscribed in an earlier book of rules. They represent what people actually do. They are the ones participants actually use and put in practice through individual or collective actions. (p. 9)

Rule must have clearly defined boundaries and adapt well to local conditions. The individuals for whom the rules are designed, must participate regularly in modifying such rules. The members' self-surveillance is decided collectively, as is the punishment system for disobediences. It must also take into account the fact that the system of norms must include conflict resolution.

The commune rules aim to achieve a degree of autonomy and self-governance that make it sustainable in time. Delgado (2017) highlights the criteria, that according to Elinor Ostrom, make self-governance and the sustainability of common pool resources, collectively managed, possible. The eight criteria are as follow:

1. Clearly delimited boundaries
2. A degree of coherence between the rules of appropriation and provision, and local conditions
3. Arrangements for collective elections
4. Supervision
5. Gradual Penalties
6. Mechanisms for conflict resolution
7. Basic acknowledgement of entitlement to organize
8. Embedded entities (p. 181).

Conclusions

- *The common* is not only a part of human economic history; nowadays it represents an alternative to the private/public dichotomy. Taking into consideration the idea that some resources can be managed, the *commons* do not represent an ideological post-communist statement that opposes either the current accumulative neo-capitalism or an interventionist state unable to effectively manage public services.
- The commune is a successful model of organization to manage the *commons*. The identification of common goods such as knowledge, the internet, or the air, does not limit the application of values shaped around rural production (agriculture and livestock) and the use of communal lands.
- The different organizations of citizens that come together to collectively manage a common that they consider as a common pool resource, necessarily will have to be made up of volunteers who accept the established norms.

The university, a commune of collaborative apprenticeship

Both the current state of affairs of research and debates over the practice of managing the *commons*, and the view of the commu-

ne as a flexible model that can be applied to several resources that the users consider of shared common, invite the application of this model to the UPS, provided it is considered as a shared common resources by the university community.

It is evident that such a way of thinking, the university as a commune, is the product of UPS activities that respond to *collaborative learning* and its understanding as a *common*. Such academic practices carry with them attitudes and values that are traditionally associated to the commune. Within this comparison, we can understand the innovations in the university management that contribute to manifest new forms of organization that “emerge from below, are participative, and person-centred” (Hess & Ostrom, 2016, p.11).

The university managed as a common pool resource faces the challenge of understanding knowledge as a common, and design social behaviours motivated by cooperation rather than selfishness. Or better, consider *the common* rather than the private or the state. From the viewpoint of the collective management, the university offers the conditions that a participative not only representative democracy requires.

In an ecosystem called university, it is possible to achieve collaborative learning based upon collective action and self-governance. The collaborative citizen is shaped within the universities specific groups in so far as they consider relevant university management as a shared common resource of the academic community. The shared practice of *the common* develops rules to protect everybody right of use, and uses the collaborative strength of the citizen-student. In this perspective, the university-commune shapes a social academic movement “equipped with three dimensions: the scientific, the normative, and the mobilizing ones” (Laval & Dardot, 2015, p.119).

The management of the university as a common pool resource allows the creation of a university culture shaped by communal

practices and values. The culture of the commune is a suitable context that at this current time ensures that knowledge and culture, as much as those elements constitutive of life, are not subjected to a new type of “accumulative property marked by intellectual property” –which allows for a shift from priority of production to the priority of patents. The latter gives rise to a new form of property, that we could call “knowledge economy”, which accelerates the construction of the social pyramid at global and local levels. The culture of the university-commune is the realm of shared knowledge development, born out of collaboration rather than competitiveness.

To talk of the *university-commune* means to talk of citizens as users of a common called the university. The shared interests of these citizens that identify and give coherence to the university-commune.

The University as Producers of Commons

It is normal that university students think of the university from the viewpoint of gaining a professional title, and as such, they try to appropriate the knowledge to meet their aim. However, any company or institute of service performs a similar task. The main difference lies in that, in our (university) context, knowledge is shared, generated both by the group as well as by individual commitment. This challenges the accepted premises of professionalism, and trusts in people’s ability to think of the university as a producer of *commons* –not only professions– as its new starting point. In this way, public acknowledgement of the quality of university professional education is a common that commits future generations.

The building of a profession starts from the premise that the participant cannot attain such an aim on their own and hence require a specific context called the University. Why is it that some efforts to create a profession succeed and others fail? The answer has to do

with the individual person's capacities. On the contrary, the university that produces *commons* stimulates the creation of a profession and its social realities from the perspective of collective action and collaborative learning that stimulate individual's capacity to solve problems.

The university is a space where the *commons* gains prominence, and takes distance from the notion of property. It is the place where *the common* can be exercised; in Lafuente's (2007) words: "the *commons* sustain and are sustained by human collectives" (p.2). In the university, there are the strategic conditions that allow the full exercise of citizenship in order to produce commons, such as knowledge, the ethics of values, sharing, and the circulation of such goods under the rules of the gift economy. The university allows its members the full exercise of knowledge that is neither private nor public, but is a *common*.

University management produces a type of social thought about the production of *commons* that is claimed as autonomous from the market, not so much to deny it but to transform it from within. The university person who appropriates and provides the common pool resource, manifests their social organization neither as an ideology nor as a fashion but as a collaborative learning framework that brings together individual and collective potentials in order to satisfy the needs that emerge from problem-solving. The production of goods to be used collectively makes up a cooperating ecosystem that creates results and offers tools for the control of the system.

Communal systems applied to the UPS

Communal systems are not fragmented systems, that is to say, they do not separate the economic from the political realms since they work as a whole. In UPS, this is not only a product of theoretical analysis; in fact, it is an empirical reality. This means that the econo-

mic management is organized according to the relations of production of the university *commons*, as a community.

The theory of the *communal system* attempts to redefine the logic behind the close relationship between the economic and the political, that is to say, everybody is involved within the *communal Company/business*: “ So that each member is obliged to do collective labours and carry out public services” (Patzí, 2009, p.187). In the university/commune, this means that the group exercises its full sovereignty, thus avoiding any chance that economic, political and cultural benefit might be appropriated by the elite. This is why the university-commune carries with it an alternative social project alternative to the representative democracy liberal one.

The commune collective, called University Commune, appropriates the common goods produced, but it is also the provider of the goods that the university needs for its long-term sustainability and institutional development. This breaks the dichotomy of teacher/student, authority/officer, and employer/employee, in order to solve the dilemma between individual and collective interests, and becomes operational through the *communal system*. As Patzí (2009) writes:

In the communal system, there exists the perfect combination of collective and individual interests. Because the individual is the owners of their own goods, labour, and decisions. They also obey to the rules of the group since they themselves participate in the decision-making. This model of society is not exclusive. (p. 196)

The politics of university management must respond to the economy of the academic university and combine and find consensus between the interests of the users of economic resources (academics, administrative and service staff), and the providers of such resources (students). The application of the *communal system* can replace the capitalist economic criteria that tends to generate confrontations within the defence of private or individual interests.

The management of the university as a common that produces the *commons*, creates the conditions to shift, within the university, from a representative democracy to the *communal democracy*, as defined above. The *social project* of the university/commune is built together, in individual and collective ways in so far as it tried to incorporate the interests of the community external to the university-commune. University pluralism and its opening to inter-communication create the style of the communal system.

Collaboration and consensus

Interdisciplinary research groups, working on crosscutting topics relevant to several teaching programmes, and the building of the startUPS groups, are only some of the activities that take place within UPS and that spread around optimism due to the positive results obtained through collaboration and consensus. Both academics and students acknowledge that top down solutions are not the only or the best or even the most efficient way to solve the problems faced by those who use the university as a common pool resource.

When the university-commune proposes collaboration and consensus as tools for collaborative learning, it is not referring to any individual moral attitude (which should not be excluded either), but it aims to establish social contracts among members who participate in a university activity and that obliges them “to fulfil unequivocally the initial agreements and cooperative strategies that they themselves have formulated” (Lara, 2002, p. 265). Ostrom suggests that it is possible to reach a more realistic evaluation of human potentials and limitations when the “the interest of those who negotiated the contract will lead them to supervise each other and report any offence, so as to obey the contract” (Ostrom, 2000, p. 45).

It is not unusual to hear in academic contexts of crosscutting research in science, and to find curricula marked by transdis-

ciplinarity. We are becoming increasingly aware that everything is interconnected, with no separation. Interconnectivity ‘works with’ cooperation, and connects the university-commune to a world beyond selfishness and hierarchy, beyond power and appropriation. It is possible to achieve the ethos of a collaborative non-competitive citizen within the university-commune where such a culture cannot be taught because it is breathed in. To be a member and user of the shared common resource called university-commune, calls for a basic social ethic, morally bonding. As Hess and Ostrom (2016) write: “When it comes to producing new *commons*, becoming aware of our universal interconnectivity can be something of significant relevance” (p.17). Everything is connected. Collaboration and consensus are tools for interconnectivity, they invite us to go beyond the avarice of accumulation and egoism, beyond hierarchies and separation.

This collective acting of the university commune produces, reproduces and transforms the conditions of capitalist society and it values its resources in a different way. *The common* is at the same time the totality of the conditions and results of the university/commune activity.

Self-governance in the UPS

The university-commune described so far does not replace the functionality of the university-institution –that is the structure through which the university community relates to the external world and to the legal institutions of society. Such university-institution demands self-governance and this is what the higher education laws manifest.

The collective self-governance of the university-commune focuses on collective actions for the production of the *commons*. For this, it is necessary that the group of individuals find mechanisms of self-organization (as is the case for the research groups, teachers’ clusters, ASU groups, etc.). Since there are different groups within

the university-commune, there are also different centres of self-governance that produce a *polycentrism* of small groups, connected around shared interests (Delgado, 2017).

Such a nuanced idea of self-governance benefits the management of the production of *commons* because it highlights the key role of power decentralization and the ability to act spontaneously. Governance reduces the social costs of *polycentrism* and coordinates the desires of the groups within the management of the whole as *the common*.

In the university there exist several instances where decisions are taken in relation to academia and to institutional politics. It is desirable that individuals and groups, users and providers, be autonomous and acknowledge the validity of the institution, but also “it is necessary to find criteria that identify, evaluate and tie up forms of self-governance” (Delgado, 2017, p. 175). Self-governance here means to have autonomy to design norms that guide collective action in order to produce common good. It also means the unity of the university/commune governance through criteria of trust, reciprocity, and social capital, as well as results, indicators and performance.

In the *polycentric* university-commune, governance extends in a decentralized way through the social media of the autonomous groups. These new forms of non-hierarchical governance require a new conceptual framework that facilitates the ruling of the common use. These networks of governance are characterized by “connection, multiplicity, non-linearity, self-organization, collaboration and decentralization” (Delgado, 2017, p. 191).

Key elements of governance are the links among the points that facilitate the communication between the members of the university-commune. Rather than the position one has in the structure of the university/institution, here what is important is the dynamism of the network that unites and strengthens the awareness of the common.

Self-governance and governance are possible within the institutional framework that believes in the capacity of the specific individuals that conform the institution to solve collective problems. It is within this trusted institutional framework that it is possible to combine models of management with the capacity to provide solutions from within. For this reason, the university-commune is a theoretical-practical process that includes new forms of problems solving and pooling knowledge and potentialities.

Conclusions

- Intellectual innovation and productivity depend upon the strengthening of the rules and norms that ensure freedom of knowledge circulation and its growth through the pooling of results (Laval & Dardot, 2015).
- Emphasis on creativity, to change the initial premises and increase trust in individuals to discount the “university/group” dichotomy.
- The self-governance of the university-commune identifies these principles: 1) existence of clearly defined boundaries; 2) rules about usage are flexible around users’ needs and people affected can modify them; 3) it has a system of self-surveillance of members and penalties; 4) it has mechanisms of conflict-resolution; 5) the structure of the poly-centres is embedded within the university-commune (Ostrom, 2000).
- Governance (be it economic or political) explores possibilities within the polycentric model. Decentralization breaks from the “authority/employee” dichotomy.

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