

ABSTRACTS

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Abstracts – Knowledge, information and networks

Knowledge and Networks: production and appropriation of science and technology

Maíra Baumgarten e Ivan da Costa Marques

The changes that accompany the formation of increasingly globalized collectives and the concomitant development of information and communication technologies are strategic elements in the transformation of these collectives' conditions to produce knowledge and information. Due to the importance given to the networks of knowledge production, dissemination and appropriation, it has become strategic to consider those networks, as well as the possibilities and implications that they bring to the forms of economic, social and cultural life, especially to the possibilities of interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and sectorial activities. The purpose here is to present a series of debates on this subject, which refers to the relationship between the production of science, technology, innovation and living conditions, and the need for an extension of the social debate on technoscience, its construction, uses, and the possibilities for the inclusion of new actors in this debate.

Keywords: science and technology, networks, science production, appropriation of science and technology.

Creativity, communication and knowledge production

Arnaud Sales

Knowledge production is a key element of the dynamics of contemporary societies that until now have been based on uneven levels of scientific and professional knowledge. The aim of this work is to understand, from a sociological point of view, the various aspects of the relationship between creativity, communication and knowledge production, starting from the following questions: What is the role of communication in the elaboration of discoveries or intellectual advances? What is the role of individuals and networks in these advances? And finally, what are the characteristics, especially the communicational ones, of the

more creative institutions? The text is based on the works of Philippe Breton (communication and the status of knowledge), Randal Collins (network creativity), Rogers Hollingsworth (cognitive complexity, institutional diversity, quality of the research environment in terms of scientific exchange and discussion). These questions are not restricted to a strictly academic debate. They are also directly related to the practices of research environments, professors-researchers and students of master's and doctor's degree.

Keywords: creativity, communication, knowledge production, discovery, networks, cognitive complexity, quality of the research environment.

The Lure of Plant Genetic Engineering for Colombian Scientists

Christina Holmes

Biotechnology and plant genetic engineering hold strong appeal in Colombia, due to the technology's potential to enable participation in the new knowledge economy and as a way of harnessing the country's great biodiversity. However, genetic engineering technology and its related knowledge production are dominated by northern interests and resources. Colombian scientists employing genetic engineering must work within this context. Nonetheless, many to hope that their research projects will benefit Colombia. This technology is therefore negotiated between optimism for future potential and the constraints of the global conditions in which it takes place.

Keywords: Biotechnology, genetic engineering and technology

No patent, no generic: pharmaceutical access and the politics of the copy

Cori Haydem

Drawing on ethnographic research in Mexico and Argentina, this essay addresses the promise, limits, and specificities of the generic pharmaceutical as a legal, technical, and political artifact. Attending to the complex commercial semiotics

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of “similarity” in Mexico, and to the powerful figure of the domestic *copia* in Argentina, I argue that at stake with the rise and expansion of markets for generic drugs is not simply a David and Goliath relationship between the (cheaper, accessible, democratizing) generic and the (expensive) patented original. Also central to a politics of the generic is the shifting line between the licit and the illicit copy. The essay thus poses the question, what are the implications of configuring a political language of “access” around the terms of intellectual property itself?

Keywords: patents, generics, politics of the copy.

Day-to-day routine of the *Manguinhos* Institute

Henrique Luiz Cukierman and Márcia de Oliveira Teixeira

This article examines the routine of the *Manguinhos* Institute during the first decades of the 20th Century, emphasizing the relationships of work inside the laboratories. This routine reveals that, despite the small size of its technical-scientific staff, the institute’s extraordinary productivity resulted from its diversity of activities. They were professionals endowed with exceptional flexibility both in action and in the selection of the object of study. To put it simply, the scientist of *Manguinhos* did everything. One hypothesis about such flexibility is related to the comprehension of the local science as part of the local cultural practices. Following the path opened by the concept of cordial man, as defined by Sergio Buarque de Holanda in his book *Raízes do Brasil* (Roots of Brazil), this work wonders if there was in *Manguinhos* the science that follows him, i.e., the cordial science. The text presents some possible answers drawn from the analysis of the relationships established between the scientists and their ‘subordinates’, the research assistants, in which the rigor and formalism of scientific laboratory practices coexisted with typically Brazilian patriarchal relationships.

Keywords: *Manguinhos*, cordial science, laboratory studies

Technoscience, democracy, and ethical challenges of biotechnology in Brazil

Cristiane Amaro da Silveira and Jalcione Almeida

The increasing questioning of the evolutionist ideas and the great narratives, the classics that served as support to the studies in the field of social sciences, has led to many different reactions within the academic context. Even though the post-modern trends and theories of the end of history have a right to be in this set of possibilities, no less influential are the proposals for revising the reality in which we live from the point of view of the modern project and its radicalization. It is within this project that Anthony Giddens proposes the prospect of a new ontological security pact, which will be built in a world of abstract systems that need to be reinserted in global dimensions. Discussions concerning new biotechnologies, both worldwide and in Brazil, reveal interesting characteristics of this new moment of human history. The access points that result from the fear of famine and environmental concerns, in this case, do more than reduce the reliability of the expert knowledge; they bring about the reorganization of ethical, social and political implications quite distinct from the "heuristic of fear" proposed by the philosopher Hans Jonas. How do such reorganizations point to new trends in the process of technology management in the light of the recent controversy surrounding the new biotechnologies in Brazil? This is the question that this article intends to discuss.

Keywords: biotechnology, biosafety, social risk construction, environmental ethics, democracy

Social capital and the privatization of knowledge

Renato P. Saul

This work examines the intellectual movement that dominated the scientific thought in the social sciences from the 1960s onwards, and its connection with the changes in the world's economic and political relations since then, emphasizing the United States. Two of the most significant manifestations of this movement are found in questions related to the identification of an institutional crisis in American democracy and the need for a process to re-evaluate the role of sociology, both from the institutional point of view, and as a tool to explain the social reality of the country and the world. The reorganization of America's economic power, as a

result of the technological development and the globalization process, provides the background for the political crisis in the United States. When it becomes evident that the foundations of the American democracy are threatened by changes in its internal structure and behavior, it is possible to detect the development of a considerable amount of research and studies dealing with different perspectives of the large corporations' activities. As a counterpoint to the apparent deterioration of the internal political community, this effort intends to identify the commitments of the business circuit with the civic behavior and democracy, whether in the assertion of ethics in business, or in the perspective of the development of a social policy more compatible with the corporate strategies. It is in this context that the concept of social capital becomes the main articulator of political and theoretical disputes on the subject of the economic development and the changes verified in the industrial sector resulting from the expansion of new technologies and their effects regarding the need for a redimensioning of the intellectual property right.

Keywords: Sociological theory, corporation, technological revolution, social capital, intellectual property.

ARTIGOS

ARTICLES

(Re)thinking culture and education within the work context: trends, perspectives and possibilities of articulation

Leonor Maria de Lima Torres

Contrary to the latest trends, which insist on establishing linear and unidirectional relationships between the problematics of culture and workplace education, this work proposes an inverted reasoning based on the discussion of mutual imbrications between these two fields of knowledge, namely, the problematization of the multiple education forms and procedures with reference to the cultural and symbolic specificities of the organizations of work. To illustrate the relevance of this proposal, the author employs a set of empirical data collected in one of the six case studies developed as part of a transnational research project, subjecting this empirical *corpus* to an interpretative analysis and a confrontation with his own theoretical assumptions.

Keywords: organizational culture, symbolic approaches, professional education, workplace education, experiential education, sociology of organizations.

Industrial restructuring, unemployment and self-management: the cooperatives in the Sinos Valley.

Jacob Carlos Lima

This article intends to analyze a situation typical of the increasing structure of work cooperatives that act as outsourcing companies: the organization of cooperatives by workers' unions as a reaction to the unemployment that followed the industrial restructuring of the footwear sector. This research examines five of nine cooperatives that work for large local industries in the municipalities of Novo Hamburgo and Parobé, in the Sinos Valley, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. The aim is to analyze the industry's restructuring process, its consequences in terms of unemployment, the unions' role in the organization and support of cooperatives, and the workers' perception of the self-management, their situation as owners-managers-workers, as opposed to their previous experiences as employees.

Keywords: work cooperatives, associative work, industrial restructuring.

INTERFACES

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The media and the declining trust in politics

Luis Felipe Miguel

For a few decades, there has been a general crisis of confidence in the political elites, both in old and new democracies. This article discusses three possible explanations for the phenomenon: it is due to the cynicism of the citizens of today (the elites are as good as they were before, but the public does not believe it); the increase of the critical perception (the elites were as bad as they are now, but the public did not perceive it); or an actual decline in the quality of the political class. In all three explanations, the mass media plays a key role.

Keywords: political legitimacy, political elites, media and politics.

The construction of epistemologically based socio-educational objects

Carlos E. Massé Narváez

The article questions why, in Mexico (independent of the fact that this problem also occurs in other Latin American latitudes), the so-called “educational research” (ER) has uncritically adopted the educational theory and/or the classical pedagogical theory. This work maintains that the proposed perspective of an “experimental” basis cannot presume to possess the knowledge tools for educational research, or state that this paradigm is the right one. For this reason, the text presents a brief exercise of problematization of some of the multiple dimensions that include, or could include, something like the *field of education*. Subsequently, the paper outlines a proposal that deals with the construction of knowledge in this field at its key points of articulation, which include the questioning and control of the explanatory element of the general educational and social theories, to emphasize the need for a critical use of these theories, and a critical use of the *ideological* factors, the “*experiential*,” as predetermining factors, *often a priori*.

Keywords: theory, epistemology, educational research, knowledge, ideology, transdisciplinarity.

RESENHAS

BOOK REVIEW

The conjunction of sustainability, consumption and social actors

Aloísio Ruscheinsky

The text analyses the connections between sustainability and consumption, while at the same time it questions if this field produces social actors. Analyses of the international situation reveal an increase in social inequality, in the strength of free trade, in the dependency of poor countries, in the differentiated consumption, and in environmental degradation. Such issues confirm that the unsustainability is an expanding process. In examining a reference publication on consumer society, as well as the search for alternatives, it remains to know how the seed of the politicization of consumption will develop to produce effective alternatives to the

degradation and destruction of natural resources. The analysis of consumption cannot ignore the dialectical perspective, including the conjunction and explaining of the mutual influence between production and consumption, between consumption and citizenship, between individual and social dimension, between social forces and conflicts, and between economic sustainability and socio-environmental sustainability.

Keywords: sustainability, consumer society, social actor, interpretation, environmental rationality

The hacker work ethic: breaking out of the iron cage?

Daniel Gustavo Mocelin

The text presents a review of the book *The hacker ethic and the spirit of the information age*, written by Finnish philosopher Pekka Himanen, with foreword by Linus Torvalds and afterword by Manuel Castells, originally published in 2001. The author follows the method of analysis developed by Weber in his classic work of sociology, *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*, to investigate the hackers' work ethic. Himanen states that the hackers, rather than have different values from those of the Protestants, represent an opposition to the morals of the industrial age in several ways. According to the philosopher, his work approaches a social fact of general nature that questions the Protestant work ethic that for a long time has been guiding the lives of individuals and still exerts a powerful influence on people. The radical nature of hackerism consists in proposing an alternative spirit for the network society, a spirit that will eventually question the Protestant ethic. Himanen's text represents essential material for sociologists and other scholars interested in interpreting the current social reality, especially when the discussion is about work related issues.

Keywords: work ethic, information society, hacker.