



Provided by the author(s) and University College Dublin Library in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite the published version when available.

<b>Title</b>	The Bolivarian University of Venezuela: A radical alternative in the global field of higher education?
<b>Authors(s)</b>	Ivancheva, Mariya P.
<b>Publication date</b>	2013
<b>Publication information</b>	Learning and Teaching, 6 (1): 3-25
<b>Publisher</b>	Berghahn Journals
<b>Item record/more information</b>	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10197/7237">http://hdl.handle.net/10197/7237</a>
<b>Publisher's version (DOI)</b>	10.3167/latiss.2013.060102

Downloaded 2022-01-27T10:54:24Z

The UCD community has made this article openly available. Please share how this access benefits you. Your story matters! (@ucd\_oa)



© Some rights reserved. For more information, please see the item record link above.

# The Bolivarian University of Venezuela

## A radical alternative in the global field of higher education?

MARIYA IVANCHEVA

---

---

◆

### ABSTRACT

This article discusses paradoxes in the emergent global field of higher education as reflected in an alternative model of the university – the Bolivarian University of Venezuela (UBV) and the related higher education policy, Misión Sucre. With its credo in the applied social sciences, its commitment to popular pedagogy and its dependence on extensive fieldwork with communities, UBV offers an alternative model of science and research at the service of society. Drawing on my ongoing research on this university (since 2008), I present the difficulties which the homogenising standards of a global field of higher education pose to a rapidly developing mass public university in a semi-peripheral country. I focus on the difficulty of developing evaluation procedures for UBV as this exposes contradictions which are both unique to this new university model and common for a world system of higher education.

### KEYWORDS

alternative model of higher education, evaluation, university reform, Venezuela

---

---

◆

## Introduction

Up to now the universities have been the secular refuge of mediocrity, the salary of ignorance, the safe hospital for all intellectual invalids and – what is even worse – the place where ill forms of tyranny and insensibility found the chairs where they could be taught. The universities have thus become faithful mirrors of these decadent societies which offer the sad sight of a senile immobility. That is why science, facing these closed and shuttered houses, remains silent or mutilated and grotesque, merely serves bureaucracy (Córdoba Manifesto [1918] 1968: 83).



The term 'Global University' is a title used for self-promotion by a large number of institutions of higher learning around the world. Since the Middle Ages, higher education has always involved the cultural and linguistic circulation of elites (Cobban 1975). What the twentieth century brought to higher education under the label of 'globalisation' was not just internationalisation. More seriously, different university models of administration, financing and organisation – Medieval and Jesuitical, Napoleonic, Humboldtian, and the Anglo-American 'research university' – were all gradually 'harmonised'. Over the last decades, U.S. models of excellence have been largely unchallenged, despite their own deficiencies (see, for example, Aguillo et al. 2010; Hotson 2011). A kind of global consensus was created around four standards set by the U.S. private multidisciplinary universities: intensifying flows and concentrations of knowledge, the global role of English language, the ability of the U.S. universities to act as student and faculty 'attractors', and international reputations for research quality and productivity (Marginson 2007a). Through the European Research Area of the Lisbon Strategy (2000) and the European Space for Higher Education within the Bologna process (1999), the member states of the European Union mimicked the core values and principles of the U.S. research universities. Trying to outplay the latter in the competition for a 'knowledge economy', European public universities produced rather problematic reforms which have then been smoothly diffused around the continent and the world (Zgaga 2006). Turning their backs on crisis-struck national constituencies, university administrations introduced fees, curtailed stipends, deprofessionalised a number of academic careers, and instrumentalised the curriculum to serve short-term vocational career tracks, merging or erasing 'unprofitable' departments and disciplines (Jensen and Walker 2007).

World ranking systems, based on a quantified understanding of 'quality' through academic peer-review and citation indices (Baty 2011), greatly contributed to the casting of most forms of higher learning in the same mould. As former Minister of Higher Education Valerie Pecresse reasoned in her proposals for the French system of *Grandes écoles*, '[T]he world model is a university. If you have a ranking, you rank universities' (Guttenplan 2011). National university evaluation mechanisms and academic policies increasingly rely upon performance rankings as the preferred holistic form of assessment of top universities (Marginson 2007b: 6). This process has fostered a wave of competition, marketisation and privatisation of higher education (Hotson 2011). Today, it is ironic that around the world, as a result of this re-



form, the expression 'public university' sounds like a contradiction in terms (Holmwood 2011). The reform had impact not only on the governance and financial structures, but also on content-related aspects of higher education. The old dialectic relation between research and teaching (*disciplina* and *doctrina*) has been broken. Research publications and glossy research grant applications have been prioritised over teaching. Practical application of knowledge has been limited to policy-making and the interplay of the academy and industry (Larkham 1998; Ricken 2007). Academic freedom and university autonomy have been 'reconquered' from the state, only to be transferred to an extended university bureaucracy that is no longer accountable to academics, but to students, industries and further 'clients' (Wright and Rabo 2010). And while some research universities have initiated programmes of community engagement (Weerts and Sandman 2010), the long-standing stratification between 'pure' research and applied knowledge has remained unchallenged. Rankings have merged the logic of distinction on a national and a global scale. Accumulating funding, research-intensive top-ranking universities have attracted not just researchers but also undergraduates. The new world-class elites, educated in globally significant institutions designed to introduce 'universal', 'globally applicable' (not to be confused with 'locally applied') knowledge, reinforce the stratification that the post-war, mass universities resisted (Frank and Meyer 2007; Ricken 2007).

In many countries outside the liberal democracies, reforms have invariably followed the conventions of the U.S. model and its surrogates. Promoted by developmental agencies and international organisations like the World Bank (e.g. OECD 1997; World Bank 2000), this unbreakable convention has been internalised in numerous nation-level policies in Asia, Africa and the former Socialist Bloc. Socialist countries as China or Vietnam have adopted many neoliberal reforms, suggested by the World Bank (see e.g. Brandenburg and Zhu 2007; Dang 2009). By commissioning the leading Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) system, the Chinese state has played a significant role in the global stratification. Other countries in the Global South such as Malaysia, Singapore and India, have claimed regional excellence in creating 'world-class' universities (Salmi 2009). A number of English and American universities have now branched out throughout the Arab world, with the new campus of the New York University in Dubai as a prime example. In this conjuncture, academic research on higher education has mostly focused on the neoliberalisation of university governance and audit of success and profitability in the academy (see, for example, Strathern 2000;

Shore 2008; Edufactory Web Journal 2010; Wright and Rabo 2010). The new changes have caused sustained moral panic and mass mobilisation. Faculty members have used bureaucratic and media channels to resist reforms (Shore and Wright 2000) or at times have joined students in street protests and campus sit-ins (Labi 2010). Since 2006 the reforms have produced substantial waves of student unrest against the Bologna process in Europe (Bacevic 2010; Dokuzovic and Freudmann 2010; Gaston 2010) and further contention in the rest of the world (see, for example, Carmona and Slachevsky 2010; Oxlund 2010). Academic and public critique of the new reforms was constructed against a 'golden age' of the public university which perhaps 'never existed – or existed only to the benefit of certain categories of men' (Wright and Rabo 2010: 9). Yet, even the most visible student campaigns in the U.K. (2010) and Chile (2011) have hardly put forward any proposals for alternative institutional organising, curriculum and evaluation. They have mostly taken for granted the internal hierarchies between institutions at local and global levels, and have just tried to block reforms and financial pressures. A second deep crisis has struck the academic imagination, and its capacity to foresee the university's contribution to processes of wider social change has become impotent.

Against this background, this paper aims to outline an existing alternative higher education model that can be found in the Latin American public universities and in the new reforms of higher education in Venezuela. Showing its critical potentials, I also address some internal contradictions and potential risks that this model is exposed to as an institution in a broader global field of higher education (Marginson 2008). To do this, I discuss some findings from my 18-month dissertation field research in Caracas-Venezuela between 2008 and 2011. During the study I explored the roots and routes of a field of left-leaning academic intellectuals in socialist Venezuela: their trajectories from permanent opposition into decision-making power in the higher education reform of the centralised nation-state. Through participant observation and historical inquiry, I explored and historicised the social agency behind the reform of higher education and the formation and transformation of its vanguard institution: the Bolivarian University of Venezuela (UBV). Through semi-structured interviews and observation of the work of actors engaged in the project of UBV – academic intellectuals and high-ranking administrators – I examined the vision of an alternative university education: how it was generated, negotiated and implemented on a day-to-day manner in reference to both national and global standards. Here I concentrate on two

of the key questions of my study: how an alternative, inclusive and mass project of social change can be implemented in the locus and by the agents of a traditional and exclusive institution such as the university; what are the difficulties, contradictions and advancements in the attempts to articulate alternative standards for quality-and-equality in higher education all at once.

## **Latin American public universities as an alternative: UBV and Misión Sucre**

The Latin American public university has kept its position as an *alternative* model of higher education (Torres and Schugurensky 2002). This has been achieved through waves of contention and bloody clashes. Latin American higher education was transported from early modern Europe and implanted in the New World. Locally trained elites fought for independence only to become the new feudal landlords. Preserving the striving for quality and organisational excellence, the universities in Latin America have become a true arena of political, economic and social struggles (see, for example, Ordorika 2003; Lopéz 2007). This has to do with the peculiar role of academic intellectuals in nation-state building (Castañeda 1993). It can also be traced to the famous Córdoba reform of 1918, when students campaigned for the establishment of a number of first principles of university education in Latin America: free access to higher education (at that time it was valid for white men only); co-governance shared between students, faculty and administration; the university's financial and administrative autonomy from the state; and the additional dimension to *doctrina* and *disciplina* – the so-called extension (*extensión*) of applied knowledge to communities beyond the university (Torres and Schugurensky 2002: 576). South America also generated alternative pedagogies – the practice of liberation theology and the emancipatory pedagogy of Paulo Freire.

In the 1970s the elite access model of higher education (under 15 per cent) was replaced with mass access to universities (over 30 percent), but in the 1980s the process of massification was put on hold. The debt crisis affected even the most stable economies in the subcontinent. Deep political and economic crises, enormous external pressure, and a lack of local political will, made most governments sign the Washington agreements with the International Monetary Fund. Increased dependency on the neoliberal order led to a severe crisis in education and the rest of the public sector. The reforms were expressed as 'adjustments', namely the elimination of the

control of prices of goods and services, restrictions concerning wage levels and the extreme reduction of the budgets of public services including higher education (Lander 1996; Stephany 2006). In the subcontinent Chile suffered the most drastic market-oriented reforms with the privatisation of higher education through a voucher system (Torche 2005). In Venezuela the government tried to introduce an entry exam, university fees and ultimately the privatisation of the university sector. The university community struck back: left-leaning members of the university community (*universitarios*) joined in the notorious riots *el Caracazo* in February 1989 when the agreement with IMF was signed (Lopéz 2007). The riots were suppressed violently (Coronil and Skurski 1991). In this conjuncture, Hugo Chávez appeared publicly in 1992 heading a military rebellion (Gott 2005).

These processes were paralleled by waves of student contention in the Venezuelan traditional autonomous universities. A key event in this respect was the so-called Academic Renovation (*Renovación Académica* 1968–1970). In the Academic Renovation and in subsequent waves of student contention in the 1980s and 1990s, Venezuelan students were influenced by anti-imperialist movements in the developing world, but drew symbolically mostly on the 1918 Córdoba Reform and May 1968 in France. In the spirit of Córdoba, and unlike that of May 1968 in France, Venezuelan students centred their struggle on the university. They believed in mass-oriented public education that should be negotiated through the input of students and professors alike and dedicated to the solution of urgent social problems. Despite the brutal police repression, the University Renovation achieved the status ‘autonomous’ for the traditional universities. The victory was short-lived: the University Law (1970) not only granted university autonomy, but created a parallel strand of centrally controlled ‘experimental universities’. Still, alternative political life and culture thrived on the campuses of the autonomous universities, which remained key movement actors (Lopéz 2007).

This story turned upside down after 1998 and the structural changes that overtook the country during the Bolivarian Revolution. After the electoral victory of Hugo Chávez in 1998 on behalf of a broad centre-left coalition, the new President entertained the idea of establishing a new public university (D’Amarío 2009). Initially no new universities were in planning: the Ministry of Higher Education wished to reform and to decentralise the old existing institutions of higher learning. The attempts of the government to introduce such reforms with no coercion in 1999–2003 were met with extreme resistance by opposition forces within the established universities (Sánchez 2011).

The creation of UBV and its *aldeas* signalled a decisive split within the public system of higher education within a specific historical conjuncture. The new university was eventually founded in 2003, a year after an attempted *coup d'état*. The coup was staged by the Venezuelan Federation of the Chambers of Commerce (FEDECAMARAS), supported by the opposition and mainstream media, and funded by the U.S. through developmental agencies (Golinger 2006). This coup was not just against the democratically elected President: the Venezuelan rich, predominantly white, and pro-American elite negated the will of the majority of their compatriots. This became even more obvious during the general strike of the petrol industry later in 2002. Around 20,000 highly trained workers in the national company Petrol of Venezuela (PDVSA) walked out, sabotaging Chávez's government. Despite the success of lower-level technicians to galvanise the production process (Vessuri et al. 2005), the country went through an irreconcilable internal polarisation. At this point, intellectuals from different tendencies in *zuelan* left, who were initially sceptical about the new President, recognised their own values in the anti-imperialist rhetoric and progressive policies of Chávez's 'Socialism of the twenty-first century'. Intellectuals got involved in a long envisaged project of massification and decentralisation of higher education. Ironically at the traditional universities the autonomy gained by the Left was used by the anti-Chávez opposition to resist reform. An alternative project of higher education could only be framed as 'experimental'.

The establishment of the Bolivarian University had more than a strategic significance. Accommodated in the emptied building of the Venezuelan state-owned petrol company (Petróleos de Venezuela S.A. PDVSA) in Caracas, UBV's main campus became a symbol of the Bolivarian Revolution or 'process' – the name given by Chávez to the socialist regime. It was to address three urgent needs at once: to create new loyal educated cadres, finally to universalise access to higher education and to thoroughly reform the system. It was to decolonise the control over knowledge production in the oil-rich state. The creation of UBV was soon followed by the establishment of the higher education policy Misión Sucre. Together with the literacy campaign Misión Robinson, and the secondary or vocation training Misión Ribas I and II, Misión Sucre was part of an education-for-all programme. It was developed upon the realisation that the initial nuclei of UBV in Caracas and four other big Venezuelan cities did not meet the demand for 470,000 places registered through a census in September 2003. Misión Sucre allowed all these students to attend university programmes at the central campuses or



at any of the 1,800 decentralised university classrooms (*aldeas universitarias*). When graduating, they were granted a degree from UBV or a few other experimental universities. The *aldeas* covered the vast demand and decentralised the university programmes beyond the northern coastal region. Initially developed by the Office for Planning and Budgeting of the University Sector OPSU (Fuenmayor Toro 2004), the *aldeas* were hosted in a number of unique locations: night-sessions at schools and kindergartens, teachers' private homes, churches, main squares of villages, playgrounds and community houses all became arenas of higher learning. By August 2011, 165,000 students graduated from the two-year technical or four-year BA degrees offered by UBV (ARV 2011).

### Qualifying quantity: on how UBV and Misión Sucre work

With its values and organisation structure, UBV is not susceptible to traditional research evaluation mechanisms. Contrary to the convention of rankings, a model such as UBV prioritises teaching over research and applied knowledge over publication and fund-raising. This does not mean that UBV and Misión Sucre were designed without regard to quality standards, just that the definition of quality, as outlined in the 2006 evaluation policy of the government, was based on different terms – those of equality and pertinence: '[Q]uality is defined in reference to education as the grade in which the envisioned aims and proposals have been achieved, taking into account the resources employed, the mechanisms used to promote equality, and the relevance (*pertinencia*) of academic labor in respect to the national, regional, state, municipal, and international context' (MES 2006: 23). Quality here is related to the degree to which the institutional performance (*desepeño*) and policy implementation (*concreción*) help the development of Venezuela (MES 2006: 9). Teaching, research, and extension should all solve social problems of communities through socially applicable knowledge with relevance to the Venezuelan citizens.

In many other socialist experiments people without high-school diplomas have been allowed into higher education (see Connelly 2000; Fitzpatrick [1979] 2002). At UBV, however, there is no reverse discrimination, ideological manipulation or coercion in the entry procedures. A high-school diploma or its Misión Ribas equivalent is a minimum requirement for entry. Students then go through the so-called Program for University Initiation: an introductory course where gaps in their entry knowledge are addressed. This programme



offers three mandatory units: Language and Communication (100 academic hours), Mathematics (100 academic hours), and a class on Venezuela in the Global Context (36 academic hours). In this way freshly graduated high-school students and adult learners who have been out of education for a while can enter the realm of higher education smoothly. This programme is not graded: it is based on a qualitative, progressive and collective assessment of students' capacities, which faculty and students are involved in discussing. Even if some students might be encouraged to repeat the introductory classes, no one is failed. Results are discussed collectively (MES 2004: 6–7). Regular classes at UBV programmes are graded based on the traditional system of grading in Venezuela. Students make presentations in classes, have to present a midterm and final essay or take exams. They present in written form and defend before their supervisors the results of a team-work research project. A key term for the university is *acompañamiento* – professors do not 'teach' or 'guide' but accompany students and communities.

UBV has promised integration on two levels – economic, through giving its students access to the labour market, and social by opening the doors of the university to the wider communities. It was aimed to present both a quick-fix solution to whole generations of poor people previously systematically excluded from university education and a decisive shift from the traditional universities. Firstly, by its very design the new model opposed the old disciplinary and administrative departmentalisation typical of multi-disciplinary universities engaged in the production of modern Western science (UBV 2003). The subjects taught are all intimately related to the envisaged structural transformation of the country. Legal studies, media and communication studies, and environmental policy were the three courses offered initially. They aimed to reform the legal provisions of the neoliberal state, media communication, and address the new challenges of pollution and global warming. These were followed by social management, integral health, education, politics and government, architecture and informatics. The intention was that the new practitioners would reorient Venezuela's legal, political and economic structure and territorial division into a more self-dependent and decentralised model of development.

Secondly, the curriculum was significantly transformed. All classes rotated around an extensive fieldwork project (*proyecto*). This entailed students doing social work and applying their knowledge in practice with marginalised urban and remote rural communities. Based on the very location where intervention was needed, the education experiences at *aldeas universitarias* op-

posed the convention that science should happen in blissful solitude and education happens in a vertical exchange between a master and a disciple. Instead, the structural disparities between student and faculty experiences and resources in the urban campuses and the remote rural centres could only be significant from the very beginning. UBV campuses in urban settings are supplied with contemporary technologies such as laptops, PowerPoint projectors, libraries and IT services with open code software. They are exposed to the intellectual life in the big cities and to a high number of online and offline sources of information, academic debate and activist practice. At the same time, organising the outings of students and professors from the city to work in a *barrio* community that is unknown to them is a challenge for communitarian work, which students in rural areas, who come from the communities they work with, do not face. As UBV Rector Yadira Córdova insisted in our interview: ‘Material resources are abundant in urban settings, but the best fieldwork experiences with communities happen out of the big cities. We need to equalise this division in both dimensions, not just one’. Professors in Caracas were also humbled by the experiences of their colleagues in remote areas. Roza, a professor in Politics recalled a field trip during a discussion between professors at the School for Social Sciences at UBV: ‘I started from the capital with all my arrogance of a Caracas citizen (*caraqueña*) armed with a laptop and audiovisual materials in a suitcase. I went in a boat, and waited for the tide so I could reach the *aldea*’. The *aldea* was a shack: students gathered before it, under the trees. It had no electricity, no running water, not even a toilet. ‘I left the suitcase on the ground and I said to the professor: “I came here to teach you, but now I think you must teach me”’.

The profile of the people who joined the new universities as faculty members was hardly that of academically oriented researchers. With a few exceptions, the UBV professors I interviewed were first-generation entrants to higher education, and had often been directed towards a professional career track: chemical engineers, school pedagogues, social workers and lawyers were among the most often encountered profiles of UBV academic staff. As an example, Carolina, a professor in Local Governance, entered the department of social work at the Central University of Venezuela (UCV), but was also training to be a secondary teacher at the Pedagogic Institute of Caracas (UPEL). In our interview she told me ‘As a person coming from a family in the *barrio* of Coche, a daughter of a secretary and a driver, I was rather the lucky exception. We, students from the lower classes (*clases humildes*) were



never at the same level as those from the middle class that entered university. They had books at home, we did not. University professors took their level as a starting point, and offered no guidance (*acompañamiento*) to us'. Samanta from the Department of Politics, and ten years Carolina's senior, was also among those students from working-class backgrounds at UCV. Yet, her path afterwards was hardly an even one. As she told me when we met for an interview: 'I was accepted to do Psychology, which is usually difficult to get in. There you choose a career track or specialisation in the last year. I was really interested in social psychology, but decided to enter human resource management. I hated it! But it made for a living. Besides, an academic career was impossible for a person like me'. In our interview, Samanta detailed her convoluted career path – shifting jobs in human resource management, and as an instructor in safety at work in factories in the East of Venezuela. Both Samanta and Carolina landed an academic position once UBV was formed. Nowadays, according to their colleagues, both are among the most excellent research and teaching staff at UBV. For both women UBV's primary mission was to provide guidance and support. As Carolina put it: 'At UBV we stand the chance to make up for the injustice and inequality, which students like me encounter at the traditional universities. It is an education that aims to be equitable'.

Due to the low number of cadres trained at a post-graduate level in Venezuela, UBV could not hire only top-rated research faculty. Instead UBV and Misión Sucre offered teachers training on the job. Just a few professors had an MA or PhD qualification, but all professors had to have *licencia*, the equivalent of a Bachelors' degree. This is common for universities in Venezuela where many assistant professors are in the process of finishing a Masters thesis. While teaching, UBV faculty members were encouraged to take two further qualifications: a postgraduate degree, and a teachers' training course. Unlike in other Venezuelan universities, the process of job application (*concurso de oposición*) happens in three stages. Except for the traditional formal submission of credentials (including a defended Masters or PhD thesis), and an interview with a selected jury, the faculty at UBV also needed to undergo an 'awareness raising' programme (*sensibilización*). In the process of *sensibilización* each year a cohort of university professors from all around the country gather to discuss some methodological, epistemological, and pedagogical issues related to their work, and to reflect on the mission and vision of the university. They defend a critical essay (*informe crítico*) based on their reflections about the texts, lectures and group work carried out during these

days and their overall practice. The essay and their credentials are examined by a jury from inside and outside the university.

UBV was initially embraced by education scholars on the left as a ‘revolutionary university’ (Castellano 2004), an ‘icon’ of the Venezuelan Higher Education For All and a real alternative to the hegemony of the market values and commodification of higher education (Muhr and Verger 2006). Conservative observers alleged that the university was created after the image of Chávez (Reel 2006), ‘dominated by political ideologies’ (Garcia-Guadilla 2006), and was ‘trivializing higher education’ (Bozo de Carmona et al. 2009). Some voices from within the system have also noted the somewhat shaky epistemic grounds of knowledge produced at UBV. Remaining on the left, ideologically speaking, orthodox Marxism and classical political economy at times came into conflict with the post-Marxist, post-structuralist, post-modern, post-colonialist, constructivist and reflexive trends of contemporary humanities and social sciences, which were more dominant in the initial curriculum (D’Amarío 2009: 227–228). Still, even the critical accounts recognised that a university such as UBV centred in the Global South and challenging the epistemic hegemony of the North showed that ‘Other paths are possible’ (Bozo de Carmona et al. 2009: 50). This model was seen as a cornerstone of a multi-polar international system that Venezuela could diffuse globally (Muhr and Verger 2006).

### Quantifying quality: does UBV work?

UBV and its *aldeas* stand no chance of competing in academic rankings against the multidisciplinary public universities let alone the Anglo-American, private, research-intensive ones. The indicators of quality of the two most respected university rankings – the Chinese Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) and the Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE) – have core values that do not correspond to those of UBV and of public universities in Latin America. In the ARWU quality equals the number of alumni and staff winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals, the number of highly cited researchers selected by Thomson Scientific, the number of articles published in *Nature* and *Science*, and of those indexed in the Science Citation Index – Expanded and the Social Sciences Citation Index, and per capita performance with respect to the size of an institution (ARWU 2011). The *Times Higher Education* ranking has more qualitative indicators based on a large reputational survey of anonymous respondents on the research



environment, faculty/student ratio, citations, industry innovation and international members (THE 2012).

The attempts to evaluate UBV with traditional measures (Bozo de Carmona et al. 2009; Parra-Sandoval et al. 2010) showed that a mass teaching and extension-oriented university like UBV cannot be a leader in either of these categories. UBV was founded to present quality through equality and social pertinence (UBV 2003; MES 2006). It was designed together with Misión Sucre to fill in the gap of systematic exclusion and to introduce higher education placements to a majority of the Venezuelan population. Under these circumstances, the quality of the professor does not depend on their credentials and research output but on a number of capacities difficult to quantify: the ability to transcend their power position; the understanding of cultural codes of human beings living in conditions of misery; the experience and capacity of being a good community organiser. The ratio between professors and students matters only as much as professors are able to engage the group in collective community organising in marginalised areas. Learning and teaching can be assessed not by their research output and recognition by prestigious awards of merit, but through their effective and efficient social work with communities. The language of any work and publications would be Spanish or perhaps an indigenous language, and should be written in a popular and comprehensible style without high-brow academic jargon. The publications would only matter as much as community problems and their solutions receive reflection and a viable solution, achieved in deliberation between students and the community. These publications can accumulate visibility in popular (not necessarily indexed) journals.

Yet, once the new university with its *aldeas* was set in motion, certain pressures emerged that made it accept the mechanisms of evaluation created against its own principles. The new universities, established by the government, tried to bridge the gap between mass institutions offering applicable vocational training which centred on 'equity', and elite universities focusing on 'universally applicable knowledge' and 'excellence' (Marginson 2008). Yet, the stratification of educational experience remained. It has been predetermined by the overall profile of the education system of Venezuela, which the university reform could not properly address but rather reflected. The opening of higher education opportunities happened without a respective reform in the secondary school system, which still remains stratified between private and public high schools. Students who come from the public track do not enter higher education in the same level and position as students from the

private high schools. Together with the overall stratification of higher education between old/traditional and new/'Bolivarian' universities, this phenomenon deepens disparities on class lines instead of bridging them. This is recognised even by professors of UBV or officials in the Ministry who still enrol their own children predominantly at private high schools and traditional universities.

Created in the true hope of integrating all the people of Venezuela, UBV and Misión Sucre soon started suffering at an institutional level from the same stratification that the government tried to abolish through education-for-all. Until 2010 the majority of degree programmes of UBV and Misión Sucre were not accredited by the Office for Planning and Budgeting of the University Sector (OPSU): an institution that was alleged to be dominated by supporters of the opposition (Colomine 2009). UBV and *aldea* graduates were not admitted to post-graduate courses at the traditional universities, nor were they able to find jobs in a labour market dominated by the middle and upper classes. The government struck back. The control of OPSU was taken over by the Minister of Higher Education. The state administration expanded creating a few new job opportunities, but these did not suffice to meet the demand of the hundreds of thousands of new graduates. As Carlos Alzualde, the head of the Committee of Graduate Studies and Technological Innovation at the Ministry of Higher Education told me in our interview, despite the pleas of the Ministry: 'Even state-owned companies as PDVSA often prefer graduates of traditional public and private universities to the students coming from UBV and Misión Sucre'. UBV started its own MA and PhD programmes. To do that, they had to engage in a further contestation. Their own faculty – people from all ages who had BA degrees before joining UBV – had to get the credentials and academic attestation not just as good community organisers and teachers, but as proper researchers.

Beyond the internal job application process, a way to get that was through the so-called Program for the Promotion of Researchers (PPI). PPI was adopted in 1990 as a national mechanism for the promotion of research excellence. It was designed and executed by the National Observatory of Science, Technology, and Innovation (ONCTI) with the aim to promote nationally conducted research, and to aid young researchers through a financial incentive. A committee of academic peer-reviewers ranked academics on six levels: Candidate, Researcher Level I–IV and Emeritus. These were distributed in six areas of knowledge: physics, chemistry, mathematics; engineering, technology and earth sciences; environmental and agricultural sciences; biology



and health sciences; social sciences; and humanities and education (ONCTI 2009: 11). Researchers received one to four ‘minimum salaries’ as a monthly complement (Pericchi 1996). To apply scholars showed a finished degree, research work, conference presentations and publications in the Science Citation Index journals.

In the initial years of the Bolivarian government, PPI was slightly reformed. In 2001–2002 two requirements for candidates were dropped: the maximum age (35) and the minimum academic qualification (PhD). A new category – ‘contribution to the formation of human talent’ – was introduced. Further citation indices other than the Science Citation Index were now taken into account: Biosis, MedLine/Pub-Med, Mathematical Review Cover to Cover, Compedex, Scielo Internacional Clase, and Catálogo de Latindex y Evaluación de Mérito FONACIT 2007 (ONCTI 2009: 6, 14). Thus, the government allowed people from outside the academy to become accredited academic cadres. The increase in the number of Candidates and Level I Researchers after 2003 was significant (ONCTI 2009: 6, 13) and so was that of registered scholars in the areas of social sciences and humanities (ONCTI 2009: 12). Yet, the struggle to allow a larger pool of candidates to be eligible to become promoted through the PPI was not sufficient to upgrade the credentials of professors at the Bolivarian institutions to meet the traditional requirements. Scholars at the traditional universities still had better and more credentials and publications according to the standards of the global field of higher education and the national agencies granting accreditation (Bozo de Carmona et al. 2009). Researchers at the alternative universities negated these as distinctions of the pro-market ‘bourgeois’ system. They refused to assess UBV as it is ‘in the process of making’, as is the ‘Bolivarian Revolution’. But the existence of UBV outside and against the currently recognised evaluation mechanisms was not sustainable unless an alternative evaluation system was developed by and for UBV and Misión Sucre.

The PPI report from 2009, the final year of its existence, already signalled changes of the agenda of the Venezuelan state. PPI was seen as insufficient to evaluate the social pertinence of the scholarship carried out in Venezuela. The PPI vision of a researcher had remained that of a sole individual working in isolation, instead of the research collective (ONCTI 2009: 20). In 2011 the new Program of Stimulation of Researchers (PEI) was introduced. It presented a qualitatively new attitude to academic credentials, evaluation and ranking. It was also the first sign of a changing strategy in the realm of higher education – moving from two parallel to one single reformed system



of higher education. Without scratching out the credentials and publication list, a number of new requirements were presented. In PEI, scholarship was assessed according to its 'innovation' and 'contribution to the satisfaction of the needs of Venezuelan population'. The publications were now counted not only because they were indexed or cited – their content was to be closely examined as well (ONCTI 2011: 1). This qualitative assessment enabled national publications to be given similar priority to international ones. Peer-review was extended to books and book chapters. Thesis supervision on all levels, industrial research, introduction classes, and other forms of applied knowledge were to be considered as a form of academic merit within the PEI (ONCTI 2011: 2). Researchers were divided not in a linear, but in a nominal manner in two categories of 'Innovator' (A-B) and three of 'Researcher' (A-B-C). Only the researchers' categories require a university diploma and only two of them require a graduate degree – Researchers B and C. The rest require that the researcher is a participant in a research project (ONCTI 2011: 4–6).

PEI has sparked critique by conservative scholars. Harvard-trained physicist Ismardo Bonalde (2010, 2011) claimed that the previous programme PPI was a symbol of 'recognition' and 'prestige' and did not exclude certain scholars, 'as we are made to believe' (Bonalde 2010). For him PPI was the only viable mechanism for inclusion and 'global visibility' of Venezuelan research by international scholars (Bonalde 2010). He declared that in 2003 the criteria for enrolment in the programme were significantly reduced, and that 'real' contribution to the academic productivity of the country has been done mostly by the pre-2003 subscribers. Bonalde claimed that an academic article was the true manifestation of the results and conclusions of research; peer-reviewed publication in indexed journal was not a luxury requirement but an essential part of 'the universality of science' (Bonalde 2010). In this profoundly normative view, the supervision of the global, that is the Western scholarly community, is the only exponent of quality research. Venezuelan scholars arguably exhibit practices of 'self-colonizing' (Kiossev 1999): the internalised belief of people in peripheral regions in their inferiority to 'the West'.

At the same time, the introduction of PEI is an alarm for the scholarly community within UBV and Misión Sucre. While it is celebrated that PEI provides a 'certification' of types of knowledge produced outside the academy, it also leaves a number of questions which need to be solved over the coming years. Is the new evaluation policy going to allow for a reform of the overall



criteria of evaluation and experiences of higher education in Venezuela, or is it just going to be responsible for a laissez-faire policy on academic production? Can UBV, a new university still striving to gain its own identity, be expected to beat traditional universities on all three fronts – research, teaching and extension? How would a successful evaluation mechanism avoid the trap of assessing the academic production: if quantity of publications, citations, and journal impact are not the only valid criteria, still, how does one assess equality, and pertinence to local communities? How, if not through research publications, could the experiences of students from the field be systematised and disseminated as practices of excellence?

## Coda

The Venezuelan model of higher education presented by UBV and Misión Sucre is not insured against failure. Unlike other socialist countries, in Venezuela former elites have not lost their control over the field of knowledge production. As academic excellence is still determined by the traditional universities – nowadays concentrated on the regional and world ranking systems – the government has little choice but to accredit degree programmes and have their faculty members recognised as full-fledged academics. To this end, they have gradually started to work for the evaluation and institutionalisation of UBV as a traditional university. Trying both to negate traditional academic distinctions, and live up to their requirements, the socialist government runs the risk of subverting the principles of its own bottom-up ‘Revolution’. Decentralisation, extension and the academic autonomy within UBV and Misión Sucre are fading away. A centrally controlled, means-to-ends, vertically structured model of a university is inherent in the new Regulation of UBV (UBV 2009), and in the Alma Mater policy (MPPES 2009) (see discussion in Parra-Sandoval et al. 2010).

UBV is not just a *sui generis* phenomenon: it is a result of particular geopolitical positioning, and socio-historical processes in an oil-rich country in the semi-periphery of the world system. Set in the wider context of the Latin American public universities, and against the homogenising standards of the global field of higher education, UBV has also drawn on traditions in other progressive experiments in the field of higher education both in liberal democracies and experiments of socialist governance. While further comparative research is in order, the present text is a first attempt to outline a present alternative working against the grain of the global field of higher

education. I argue that while academic literature on the higher education reforms remains fixed only on the misfortunes of the present condition of neoliberalism, it loses chances to account for alternatives, past and present. In this sense, further systematisation of present alternative models should go hand in hand with redemptive historical work on organisational and curricular experience.

Contradictions and difficulties notwithstanding, the Venezuelan case is telling on many levels. While the regulatory power of the nation-state has decreased with the Washington consensus, the Bolivarian government has been one of the few in the world who dared to oppose the core hegemonic values of the global field of higher education. Peculiar and quixotic, contradictory and potentially errant, its struggles show that there is space for resistance against the elite-driven model of higher education, supported by increasing number of governments, private actors and international organisations even in ‘socialist’ countries as China. UBV shows that we should dare to imagine and struggle for other ways ahead in higher education.

## Acknowledgements

This article presents the results of fieldwork, funded by the Marie Curie and Wenner Gren Dissertation Fellowships, and sponsored by the Venezuelan Institute of Scientific Research (IVIC). An earlier and shorter version of the text appeared in the Bulgarian cultural weekly *Kultura* in September 2011. I would like to thank my supervisor Alexandra Kowalski for her editions and encouragement and Tom Rooney, Neda Deneva and three anonymous reviewers for their critical yet supportive comments. I dedicate the paper to faculty and students at UBV, my family and fellow activists at Social Center ‘Xaspel’ in Sofia for the inspiration and shared belief that another world is possible.

---

**Mariya Ivancheva** holds a BA degree in Philosophy (University of Sofia), an MA in European social theory from University College London and an MA and PHD in Sociology and Social Anthropology from the Central European University in Budapest. She is currently a Junior Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) in Vienna. Since 2008 she has done extensive field research in Venezuela, with a principal field site the Bolivarian University in Caracas. This fieldwork has been sponsored by the Marie Curie Doctoral School for Social Anthro-



pology, and the Wenner Gren Foundation. Mariya's main research interests are in the fields of anthropology of the state, social movement studies, theories of intellectuals and elites, educational utopias and alternative models of development and social change.

Contact: mariya.ivancheva@gmail.com

---

## References

- Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) (2011) <<http://www.arwu.org/about/ARWU.jsp>> (accessed 2 June 2013).
- Agencia Venezolana de Noticias (ARV) (2011) 'Misión Sucre cerrará el año con 165.000 egresados' <<http://www.aporrea.org/misiones/n186333.html>> (accessed 4 May 2013).
- Aguillo, I.F., Bar-Illan, J., Levene, M.J. and Ortega, L. (2010) 'Comparing university rankings', *Scientometrics* 85, no. 1: 243–256.
- Bacevic, J. (2010) 'Masters or servants? Power and discourse in Serbian Higher Education Reform', *Social Anthropology* 18, no. 1: 43–56.
- Baty, P. (2011) 'Sharp tools: use with care!' <<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=416221>> (accessed 2 May 2013).
- Bonalde, I. (2010) 'El PPI y la ciencia en Venezuela' <<http://noticias.universia.edu.ve/ciencia-nn-tt/noticia/2010/11/22/748676/ppi-ciencia-venezuela.html>> (accessed 1 June 2013).
- Bonalde, I. (2011) 'El PPI y PEI: dos filosofías sobre la actividad científica en Venezuela' <<http://www.codigovenezuela.com/2011/02/ciencia/humano/ppi-y-pei-dos-filosofias-sobre-la-actividad-cientifica-en-venezuela>> (accessed 1 June 2013).
- Bozo de Carmona, A.J., Parra-Sandoval, M.C., Inciarte González, A. and Bohórquez, A. (2009) 'Innovative public policy to link science with development: Bolivarian University of Venezuela (UBV)', in H. Eggins (ed.) *Selected Papers on Sharing Research Agendas on Knowledge Systems*, Paris: UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge, 38–52.
- Brandenburg, U. and Zhu, J. (2007) 'Higher Education in China in the light of massification and demographic change' <[www.che.de/downloads/Higher\\_Education\\_in\\_China\\_AP97.pdf](http://www.che.de/downloads/Higher_Education_in_China_AP97.pdf)> (accessed 1 June 2013).
- Carmona M. and Slachevsky, N. (2010) 'The double crisis of the Chilean university', *Edufactory Web Journal*, no. 0: 90–95.
- Castañeda, J. (1993) 'The intellectual and the state in Latin America', [https://www.myuu.nl/http://omega.library.uu.nl/seal/omegasearch.php?applid=omegaresult&fg=omega&lan=nl&searchfield1\\_name=CREATOR\\_PERSON\\_FULL&searchfield1\\_](https://www.myuu.nl/http://omega.library.uu.nl/seal/omegasearch.php?applid=omegaresult&fg=omega&lan=nl&searchfield1_name=CREATOR_PERSON_FULL&searchfield1_)

- value = Castaneda, J. G. & stem1\_value = word & backapplied = omegaadvsearch & save = query\_advanced *World Policy Journal* 10, no. 3: 81–89.
- Castellano, M.E. (2004) 'A revolutionary university' (an interview with J. Podur) <<http://www.zcommunications.org/revolutionary-university-by-maria-ejilda-castellano>> (accessed 4 June 2013).
- Cobban, A.B. (1975) *The Medieval Universities: Their Development and Organization*, London: Methuen.
- Colomine, L. (2009) 'OPSU discrimina a la UBV en distribución presupuestaria' <<http://www.aporrea.org/educacion/a76932.html>> (accessed 4 June 2013).
- Connelly, J. (2000) *Captive University: The Sovietization of East German, Czech and Polish Higher Education, 1945–1956*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Córdoba Manifesto, [1918] (1968) 'Student power in Latin America: the Córdoba Manifesto', *Minerva* 7, nos. 1–2, 82–87.
- Coronil, F. and Skurski, J. (1991) 'Dismembering and remembering the nation: the semantics of political violence in Venezuela', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 33, no. 2: 288–337.
- D'Amario, D. (2009) 'Cuestiones de la inclusión educativa: A propósito de la UBV y Misión Sucre', *Revista Venezolana de Economía y Ciencias Sociales* 15, no. 1: 225–253.
- Dang, Q.A. (2009) 'Recent higher education reforms in Vietnam: the role of the World Bank', <[http://edu.au.dk/fileadmin/www.dpu.dk/forskning/forskningsprogrammer/epoke/workingpapers/om-dpu\\_institutter\\_institut-for-paedagogik\\_20101206081911\\_wp-13-ny-nov.pdf](http://edu.au.dk/fileadmin/www.dpu.dk/forskning/forskningsprogrammer/epoke/workingpapers/om-dpu_institutter_institut-for-paedagogik_20101206081911_wp-13-ny-nov.pdf)> (accessed 5 May 2013).
- Dokuzovic, L. and Freudmann, E. (2010) 'Squatting the crisis: on the current protests in education and perspectives on radical change', *Edufactory Web Journal*, no. 0: 119–126.
- Edufactory Web Journal* (2010) 'Special issue: the double crisis: living on the borders', no. 0.
- Fitzpatrick, S. [1979] (2002) *Education and Upward Mobility in the Soviet Union 1921–1934*, London and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Frank, D.J. and Meyer, J.W. (2007) 'University expansion and the knowledge society', *Theory and Society* 36: 287–311.
- Fuenmayor Toro, L. (2004) 'La aldea universitaria bolivariana' <<http://www.paginadigital.com.ar/articulos/2004/2004cuart/educacion/e1422610-4.asp>> (accessed 2 May 2013).
- García-Guadilla, C. (2006) 'Educación Superior en Iberoamérica Informe de Venezuela' <[http://www.cendes-ucv.edu.ve/doc/informe\\_vzla\\_sept2008.pdf](http://www.cendes-ucv.edu.ve/doc/informe_vzla_sept2008.pdf)> (accessed 4 June 2013).
- Gaston, P. (2010), *The Challenge of Bologna: What United States Higher Education Has to Learn from Europe, and Why It Matters That We Learn It*, Sterling: Stylus Publishing.

- Golinger, E. (2006) *The Chávez Code: Cracking US Intervention in Venezuela*, New York: Pluto Press.
- Gott, R. (2005) *Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution*, London and New York: Verso.
- Guttenplan, D.D. (2011) 'France reinvesting in universities, Education Minister says' (interview with V. Péresse) < <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/23/education/23iht-educlede.html> > (accessed 23 May 2013).
- Holmwood, J. (2011) *A Manifesto for the Public University*, London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Hotson, H. (2011) 'Don't look to the Ivy League', *London Review of Books* 33, no. 10: 20–22.
- Jensen, K. and Walker, S. (2007) *Education, Democracy and Discourse*, London: Continuum.
- Kiossev, A. (1999) 'Notes on self-colonising cultures', in B. Pejic and D. Elliott (eds) *Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe*, Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 114–118.
- Labi, A. (2010) 'As cuts hit European higher education hard, students and professors take to the streets' < <http://chronicle.com/article/As-Cuts-Hit-European-Higher/125664/> > (accessed 4 May 2013).
- Lander, E. (1996) 'The impact of neoliberal adjustment in Venezuela, 1989–1993', (trans.) L.A. Fierro, *Latin American Perspectives* 23, no. 3: 50–73.
- Larkham, P. (1998) 'The UK Research Assessment Exercise: a personal view from underneath, looking up', *Planning Practice and Research* 13, no. 1: 13–17.
- López, R.A. (2007) *Movimiento estudiantil de LUZ y proceso político Venezolano 1958–1989*, Maracaibo: Universidad del Zulia, Ediciones del Vice Rectorado Académico.
- Marginson, S. (2007a) 'Global flows and global field: a theoretical framing of worldwide relations of power in higher education' < [www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/people/staff\\_pages/Marginson/ASHE%202007%20PRESENT%20global%20field%20and%20flows.pdf](http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/people/staff_pages/Marginson/ASHE%202007%20PRESENT%20global%20field%20and%20flows.pdf) > (accessed 4 May 2013).
- Marginson, S. (2007b) 'Global university rankings: where to from there?' < [http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/people/marginson\\_docs/APAIE\\_090307\\_Marginson.pdf](http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/people/marginson_docs/APAIE_090307_Marginson.pdf) > (accessed 4 May 2013).
- Marginson, S. (2008) 'Global field and global imagining: Bourdieu and worldwide higher education' < <http://www.gobiernoenlinea.ve/miscelaneas/Misiónsucre.pdf> > (accessed 4 June 2013).
- Ministerio de Educación Superior (MES) (2004) '*Informe de gestión Mision Sucre 2004*' < [http://www.gerenciasocial.gob.ve/bsocial/bs\\_03/bs\\_03\\_pdf\\_point/jueves/sucre.pdf](http://www.gerenciasocial.gob.ve/bsocial/bs_03/bs_03_pdf_point/jueves/sucre.pdf) > (accessed 3 June 2013).
- Ministerio de Educación Superior (MES) (2006) '*Programa Nacional de evaluación y acreditación de instituciones de educación superior (PRONEAIES)*' < <http://apps.ucab.edu.ve/nap/recursos/programa.pdf> > (accessed 3 June 2013).

- Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación Superior (MPPES) (2009) '*Misión Alma Mater*' <[http://blogs.unellez.edu.ve/guidoac/files/2010/11/pdf21-12-2009\\_07\\_30\\_40.pdf](http://blogs.unellez.edu.ve/guidoac/files/2010/11/pdf21-12-2009_07_30_40.pdf)> (accessed 9 June 2013).
- Muhr, T. and Verger, A. (2006) 'Venezuela: higher education for all' <<http://www.jceps.com/?pageID=articleandarticleID=63>> (accessed 1 June 2013).
- Observatorio Nacional de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación (ONCTI) (2009) '*Programa de Promoción del Investigador - PPI, Serie de Tiempo 1990-2009*' <[http://www.oncti.gov.ve/oncti/index.php?option=com\\_phocadownloadandview=categoryanddownload=69:programa-de-promocion-del-investigador-ppi-serie-tiempo-1990-2009andid=8:estadisticaandItemid=56](http://www.oncti.gov.ve/oncti/index.php?option=com_phocadownloadandview=categoryanddownload=69:programa-de-promocion-del-investigador-ppi-serie-tiempo-1990-2009andid=8:estadisticaandItemid=56)> (accessed 2 June 2013).
- Observatorio Nacional de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación (ONCTI) (2011) '*PEI Criterios de evaluación convocatoria 2011*' <[http://www.oncti.gov.ve/oncti/index.php?option=com\\_phocadownloadandview=categoryanddownload=71:criterios-de-evaluacin-convocatoria-2011andid=11:documentos](http://www.oncti.gov.ve/oncti/index.php?option=com_phocadownloadandview=categoryanddownload=71:criterios-de-evaluacin-convocatoria-2011andid=11:documentos)> (accessed 3 June 2013).
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (1997) *Education Policy Analysis*, London: OECD.
- Ordorika, I. (2003) *Power and Politics in University Governance: Organization and Change at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico*, New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Oxlund, B. (2010) 'Responding to university reform in South Africa: student activism at the University of Limpopo', *Social Anthropology* 18, no. 1: 30-43.
- Parra-Sandoval, M.C., Bozo de Cramona, A.J., Inciarte González, A. and Bohórquez, A. (2010) *University: The Last Call?* Maracaibo: Ediciones Astro Data.
- Pericchi, L.R. (1996) 'The Effect of PPI in Venezuela', *Interciencia* 21, no. 2: 94-97.
- Reel, M. (2006) 'Chávez educates masses at a university in his image' <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/24/AR2006052402444.html>> (accessed 5 June 2013).
- Ricken, N. (2007) 'The Deliberate University: remarks on the 'Idea of the University' from a perspective of knowledge', *Studies in the Philosophy of Education* 26: 481-498.
- Salmi, J. (2009) *The Challenge of Establishing World-Class Universities* <<http://portal.unesco.org/education/es/files/55825/12017990845Salmi.pdf/Salmi.pdf>> (accessed 6 June 2013).
- Sánchez, S. (2011) 'Introduction', *La Transformación Universitaria*, Caracas: Imprenta Municipal.
- Shore, C. (2008) 'Audit culture and illiberal governance: universities and the politics of accountability', *Anthropological Theory* 8, no. 3: 278-299.
- Shore, C. and Wright, S. (2000) 'Coercive accountability: the rise of audit culture in higher education', in M. Strathern (ed.) *Audit Cultures: Anthropological Studies in Accountability, Ethics and the Academy*, London: Routledge, 57-89.
- Stephany, K. (2006) *Políticas de ajuste y protesta popular en Venezuela 1989 y 1996*, Caracas: FACES y Vicerrectorado Académico, UCV.

- Strathern, M. (ed.) (2000) *Audit Cultures: Anthropological Studies in Accountability, Ethics and the Academy*, London: Routledge.
- Times Higher Education (THE) (2012) 'World university rankings: the essential elements in our world-leading formula' <<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2012-13/world-ranking/methodology>> (accessed 3 June 2013).
- Torche, F. (2005) 'Unequal but fluid: social mobility in Chile in comparative perspective', *American Sociological Review* 70, no. 3: 422–450.
- Torres, C.A. and Schugurensky, D. (2002) 'The political economy of higher education in the era of neoliberal globalization: Latin America in comparative perspective', *Higher Education* 43: 429–455.
- Universidad Bolivariana de Venezuela (UBV) (2003) 'Documento Rector' <[http://www.mppeu.gob.ve/documentos/descarga/rector\\_ubv.pdf](http://www.mppeu.gob.ve/documentos/descarga/rector_ubv.pdf)> (accessed 3 June 2013).
- Universidad Bolivariana de Venezuela (UBV) (2009) 'Reglamento', *Gaceta Oficial* 39: 116.
- Vessuri, H.M.C., Canino, M.V. and Sanchez-Rose, I. (2005) 'La ase de Conocimiento de la industria petrolera en Venezuela y la dinamica del publico-privado', *Redes* 11, no. 22: 17–49.
- Weerts, D.J. and Sandmann, L.R. (2010) 'Community engagement and boundary-spanning roles at research universities', *The Journal of Higher Education* 81, no. 6: 632–657.
- World Bank (2000) *Higher Education in the Developing Countries* <[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTAFRREGTOPTEIA/Resources/Peril\\_and\\_Promise.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTAFRREGTOPTEIA/Resources/Peril_and_Promise.pdf)> (accessed 4 May 2013)
- Wright, S. and Rabo, A. (2010) 'Introduction: anthropologies of university reform', *Social Anthropology* 18, no. 1: 1–14.
- Zgaga, P. (2006) 'Looking out: the Bologna Process in a global setting' <[http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/WGR2007/Bologna\\_Process\\_in\\_global\\_setting\\_finalreport.pdf](http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/WGR2007/Bologna_Process_in_global_setting_finalreport.pdf)> (accessed 5 May 2013).