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Nuevos actores en un viejo escenario : la profesionalización de la gestión de la calidad académica en Chile, 1990-2015

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Propositions

Judith Scharager

1. The coup d'état in 1973 was a turning point in Chilean history and in its higher education. Chile's economic system underwent a modernisation that, at the same time, was also innovative. At the level of higher education was bias that favoured the market and understanding education as a consumer good.

2. In the last three decades, there has been a poorly regulated expansion and diversification of the higher education on offer. However, this increase has not gone hand in hand with the equivalent improvement in quality. As a result, a quality assurance system has been established.

3. Quality assurance systems have favoured the establishing of a culture of self-evaluation and advances in management. However, at the same time, they have contributed to the establishment of an increasing level of bureaucracy regarding how quality assurance is managed, with the ultimate goal being obtaining accreditation.

4. Since their very creation, quality assurance units have had no clearly defined fields of action, nor has the scope of their authority been described. As a result, their role within the university structure has been defined as they go along.

5. Administrative management practices have been established within the traditional structures and cultures of universities, weakening internal and external boundaries in institutions.

6. There is no clear definition of the role of quality administrators in university education and there are no prior models that serve as references to identify with.

7. In Chile, the predominance of women in quality management positions can be explained by the slower rate at which they pursue their academic careers and their reduced access to higher-level positions. This is due to the incompatibility of employment with their other roles in society, namely as mothers.

8. To a great extent, on an academic administrators' level, one's work identity is defined by what one is not (non-academics). The hierarchical nature of universities allows academics to impose their 'classification' on other groups of employees within the university.

9. Quality assurance units have come to acquire a role as facilitators and consultants. This has made it easier to make a connection between academic's individual achievements - expressed through productivity indicators - and the university's institutional achievements, with the aim of showing accountability.

10. Two factors have favoured a balance between quality and accreditation. First is the association of accreditation with economic incentives for universities and second is the commercialization of education. The latter is subject to the fluctuation between offer and demand and the battle for students in order to obtain resources and prestige.