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EMPLOYABILITY
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**TUNING UNIVERSITIES
& ENTERPRISES**

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Panel IV - Co-Operation University/ Enterprises

José Pedro Amorim

Research Assistant, Faculty of Education and Psychology Catholic University of Portugal

This summary can assume a more erratic character, because it reports papers delivered just a moment ago and, therefore, still kept on the listeners' memories due to a recessive effect.

First of all, it is important to clarify that the university-enterprise relationship cannot be understood despite, or without, the learners. So, we face a triad and the canon formula (the so called *university-enterprise relationship*) excludes what is probably its most significant part: the human being¹, learner to the point of being undeterminable the limits of educability and perfectibility². He bears the "expectations" (gradually more and more demanding?) of carrying countless knowledge (behavioral, emotional and cognitive knowledge, that is, know how to do, know how to be and know how to know) (cf. Caroline Staedtler) and, above all, having (and having had) the ability to learn how to learn. As Richard Sennett puts it, the "talent searcher [...] is less interested in what you already know, more in how much you might be able to learn" (2007, p. 106). These "expectations" (the inverted commas indicate how softly the question is raised) mean that the individual is "guilty" for his/her bad choices in terms of training and is responsible for the job he/she does not get or does not keep ... they also mean that there are numerous lives transformed into biographical "dissolutions" of systemic contradictions³.

If the formula "university-enterprise relationship" fails by omission, it is also reductionist in both elements of the binomial. On the one hand, it does not seem reasonable to confer upon universities (all higher education institutions [HEI], to be more precise) the one and only responsibility for the fragilities in the learners' formal qualification. Prior to the universities, there is a long path of school and preschool that cannot be hidden. The osmosis with "the world outside" must start at the very beginning. Consequently, instead of University we would like to call it school. The absence of proficiency in English (cf. Oscar Cubillo), for instance, cannot be charged solely to the HEI. This problem starts at pre-elementary level. In fact, this problem goes beyond the boundaries of formal education. The formula is reductionist, on the other hand, because it privatises the entire non-academic world. Apart from the firms, it is important to establish (and reinforce) the contacts with public and third sector organisations.

Divergence was a pertinent idiosyncrasy in this panel (still the rapporteur's point of view!) and it emerged in the discussion regarding learning how to be an entrepreneur. As far as Caroline Staedtler is concerned, this mission belongs to education. Belmiro de Azevedo, on the other hand, believes that all entrepreneurs undergo a learning process beforehand. Regarding this particular aspect, we ask for, together with António Nóvoa, redoubled attention towards the risk of "overflow of education", whether it is oriented to the promotion of entrepreneurship, the preservation of the environment, road safety, health, sexuality, citizenship, etc. (Nóvoa, 2005, 2006). Moreover, there is a simultaneous risk: the risk of mask social problems as educative

¹ It is not my intention whatsoever to diminish the human dimension of the enterprises and the universities.

² Montaigne used to say: "the more our soul is filled, the larger it becomes" (1588/1993, p. 8).

³ Reference to Beck, when he says: "how one lives becomes the biographical solution of systemic contradictions" (Beck, 1992, p. 137).

problems⁴ (Azevedo, 2002). The role of education is (should be) to help thinking without entering, by the way, the hyper-specialisation path (cf. Morin, 2002). According to Ortega y Gasset, that is one of the most serious contributions of the triumph of mediocrity, giving the fact that the specialist, the "learned ignoramus", will face all issues he/she ignores not as an ignorant, but with the petulance of someone who is wise in his/her special issue (Ortega y Gasset, n.d., p. 114).

In fact, everybody is aware of the failure to apply the economical utilitarianism to education. It represents, for example, the preparation for non-existing jobs, jobs which reconfigure themselves, but above all that — the oblivion of two fundamental dimensions in education: personal and cultural development, on the one hand, and social and civic development, on the other hand (cf., for instance, Carneiro, 2004).

Bearing in mind the lack of communication between each and every part of the triad (learners, training and education and employment market) — a crucial aspect which only gets better when the advantages of proximity, the concerted action, come to light —, we highlight the dual apprenticeship as a potential contribute to solve the problem. Not all the knowledge can be acquired within the school walls (cf. Belmiro de Azevedo). As Agostinho da Silva stated, in "education, our goal is not the opening of more schools: our aim is to transform them into non-schools, to make disappear the walls that separate them from life and to let life enter the schools as in a Douro flood, the waters of the vehement river enter through the doors, pull over windows, and, if necessary, throw walls down; on the other hand, much of what happens in school must come to the common life, dropping the scenery where only the biologist uses the microscope, only the astronomer uses the telescope or only the wise book card writer has access to the book" (Silva, 1971[?]/2003, p. 210).

School has contributed largely to (often) retrench creativity, critical spirit, questioning, but are companies and other organisations horizontal in terms of "entrepreneurship", in other words, in terms of decision making, creativity and initiative? Can anybody "challenge the system" (cf. Belmiro de Azevedo)? Or is this status reserved to those who live comfortably in the hierarchies' exiguous crests? If we think about Nietzsche's three metamorphoses of the spirit (camel, lion and child), both schools and firms have been focused on helping each one to become a child (at most, the superman!), to create, to start a revolution, to innovate... to learn more and to put that knowledge into practice? To sum up, do they have guaranteed equity, equality of opportunities and success in job and training?

The problem is located, first of all, in the lack of jobs. Afterwards, it is situated in the fragile articulation between the jobs and the production of qualifications — and, at last, in training. Let's move on step by step. There are no quality jobs for everybody. A gradually minor majority is in charge of production. The order is to consume. The act of producing is led to the machines and to people, as few as possible — and badly paid as possible, too. (What we have written here seems to be even valid for the immaterial work.) There is a reason why the speech about employability and entrepreneurship becomes stronger every time jobs are "lost", but also when graduations doesn't "guarantee" and when age is always a disadvantage (whether it is too

⁴ School is not omnipotent (nor even omniscient, omnipresent, or omninothing)!

much or too less!)⁵. Hannah Arendt believed that what "we are confronted with is the prospect of a society of laborers without labor, that is, without the only activity left to them" (Arendt, 1958/2001, p. 16). Half a century later, this statement keeps its pertinence. We can even strike out, with a high level of certainty, the fragment "the prospect of".

Does the darkness in this picture exhort to inactivity, to the lack of hope? Quite the opposite. It is necessary to create bridges between people, institutions: biunivocal, complete bridges⁶. The Other is a possibility of solutions and not an inevitability of problems⁷. I repeat the reference to António Sérgio, although I am aware of the risk of turning this report into a cento, to remind "what matters the most in a future Society": "to provide everybody an intimate life of creation, even if it is humble and tight" (1929, p. 247). At least for one reason (and it will certainly be for many more reasons!), let's not forget that the magnitude of "our elite" depends inextricably upon the wideness of the "environment" where it is "recruited" (Sérgio, 1932, p. 376).

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⁵ "Some people say, with some poisonous intention, that the protagonism given to employability is contemporary with the employment rarefaction — the less the jobs, especially quality jobs, the more people talk about employability!" (Imaginário, 2003, p. 13)

⁶ "Bridges are useless unless they span the whole distance between the shores", Bauman said (2006, p. 49).

⁷ As Leonardo Coimbra defended, "man is not something useless in an already complete world, but rather the workman of a world that remains to be made".

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