



The Politics of Academic Autonomy in Latin America (Public Intellectuals and the Sociology of Knowledge)

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Academic autonomy has been a dominant issue among Latin American social studies, given that the production of knowledge in the region has been mostly suspected for its lack of originality and the replication of Euro-American models. Politicization within the higher education system and recurrent military interventions in universities have been considered the main structural causes for this heteronomy and, thus, the main obstacles for 'scientific' achievements. This groundbreaking book analyses the struggle for academic autonomy taking into account the relevant differences between the itinerary of social and natural sciences, the connection of institutionalization and prestige-building, professionalization and engagement. From the perspective of the periphery, academic dependence is not merely a vertical bond that ties active producers and passive reproducers. Even though knowledge produced in peripheral communities has low rates of circulation within the international academic system, this doesn't imply that their production is - or always has been - the result of a massive import of foreign concepts and resources. This book intends to show that the main differences between mainstream academies and peripheral circuits are not precisely in the lack of indigenous thinking, but in the historical structure of academic autonomy, which changes according to a set of factors -mainly the role of the state in the higher education system. This historical structure explains the particular features of the process of professionalization in Latin American scientific fields.

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