

The Changing Face of Higher Education

*Is There an International Crisis
in the Humanities?*

Edited by
Dennis A. Ahlburg

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The humanities in Mexico

No crisis, but no shining future either

ROBERTO BREÑA

Introduction

The term 'crisis' has been used and abused in the humanities and the social sciences for a very long time. In some fields, history for example, it has been used so much throughout the twentieth century that we no longer know what it means when we read that the discipline is going through a 'crisis'. A couple of clarifications are in order when the main topic is the purported crisis that the humanities are going through in the Western world. The first one is to establish a distinction between the humanities and the social sciences. Without the intention of putting an end to a discussion that has been going on for decades or saying the last word regarding classifications that in any case are always, *volens volens*, arbitrary, I contend that the social sciences that could be considered the matrixes of almost all the others are the following six: sociology, anthropology, law, economics, psychology and political science.

Needless to add that many other areas, branches or sub-disciplines could be included in this list (among them, public administration, communication sciences and social geography).¹ The main reason for talking of a 'crisis' within the social sciences at different stages of their development has had to do with situations that in one way or another represent an epistemological problem that implies or should imply considerable changes in the discipline in question or at least in some important aspects of it. However, since the end of the Second World War, crises in the social sciences seem to come up more than anything else because the world is going through so many social transformations at such a fast pace. No social science seems to be able to keep up with them (this explains, among many other things, the appearance and development of new disciplines; ecology, urbanism and criminology are good examples).

With the humanities, the story is different. Many academic and non-academic classifications consider that history, literature and philosophy are the core humanities. This is due largely to a longevity that dates back to

ancient Greece. However, all the areas related with education, many related with the arts, some related with geography and also the study of languages could be included within the humanities without much hesitation. In any case, the 'crisis' that supposedly the humanities have been suffering in the Western world for many decades has to do, more than anything else, with the capitalist values that predominate in contemporary societies and that, needless to add, will keep on predominating. In this case, the crisis in question has nothing to do with an epistemological problem, but with the fundamental inadequacy that exists between a perspective on life that gives an important place and an important role to the humanities and the type of life that capitalist societies privilege. This inadequacy defines the crisis that is alluded to when writers, academics or journalists talk about the 'crisis of the humanities'. As long as capitalist values keep determining the way contemporary societies function and capitalism keeps fostering a perspective on life that assures the development of these societies, there will be no end to the 'crisis' of the humanities in this general sense. In other words, we do not say much about the humanities when we affirm or decry a 'crisis' of this type (it does not make much difference if we only consider the 'core' disciplines or include other areas of study).

Few social scientists and no practitioner of a humanist discipline will deny the significance of the humanities not only for the academic world, but also for society in general, for life *tout court* (or, at least, for the kind of life that many people within capitalist societies want to live, at least partially).²

In any case, the significance of the humanities can only be felt and assessed subjectively and, therefore, there is no point to keep insisting on the humanities as "the key to salvation" (Pani, 2015: 1342) or something similar, as some defenders of the humanities often do. If the humanities play a decreasing role in contemporary societies it is because modern societies can dispense with them without much ado. It is mainly us, teachers and professors of the humanities and the social sciences, the ones who can transmit to the new generations the perspective on humankind, society and life that is implicit in the humanities (more so, in my view, in the case of the 'core disciplines'). Anyone who has read history, literature or philosophy is able to perceive the intrinsic value of the humanities almost immediately. We do not need to be lectured on the 'utmost relevance' or the 'irreplaceable role' of the humanities in today's world.

There is another purported crisis of the humanities in what I would call a *limited* sense. Contrary to the one mentioned above, this one is measurable: university enrolment in the humanities. In this chapter, I interpret 'crisis' in the same way as Brighouse and Arbelaez, and Withers: a significant departure from the norm. This does not imply that the norm signifies a strong position of the humanities within Mexican universities. Before delving into this issue in the case of Mexico, in the next section I will present an overview of some of the most important challenges that higher education is facing in this country.

In the third section, I will show some figures on the enrolment in the humanities and add a series of comments in order to find out in what sense the enrolment issue may enable us (or not) to talk of a 'crisis' of the humanities in Mexico. I may advance that, as always, the figures per se are much less revealing if they are not accompanied by other figures and observations that help us put the former numbers and percentages in perspective. The last section, titled 'Final remarks', will be brief. Even if the humanities are 'condemned' to live in permanent crisis in contemporary societies (i.e. no crisis in real terms), the enrolment issue should be distinguished from this general 'crisis'. At the same time, this alleged second crisis of the humanities should not only be quantitatively measured, but assessed in order to find out if in this limited sense we can talk of a real crisis. Advancing my final remarks, I may add that this last section will allude to the notions contained in the title of this chapter. The humanities in Mexico do not seem to be living a crisis, but their future, *as in the rest of the world*, does not look very bright either.

Higher education in Mexico

The first fact that should be noted about higher education in Mexico is the rapid increase in the number of university students that Mexico has witnessed in the last 50 years. During the period 1970–1990 and centring our attention in the social sciences, the public system of the *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana* (UAM) was created in Mexico City and the *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales* (FLACSO) opened its Mexican facilities. Besides, the *Colegio de Michoacán* (COLMICH), the *Colegio de Sonora* (COLSON), the *Colegio de la Frontera Norte* (COLEF) and the *Colegio de Jalisco* (COLJAL) were created, along with several other universities outside of Mexico City (Puga, 2017: 3).

Mexico's university population grew from 247,637 students in 1970 to 3,762,679 in 2017 (SEP, 2017: 10). Figures impressive as these are important, no doubt, but quantitative growth by itself may be deceiving regarding an aspect that has been noted and criticized by many Mexican experts on education: a very high percentage of the universities that have been created in the last decades to meet an ever-growing demand lack the quality controls that could guarantee a certain correlation between quantity and quality. This is only one of the main problems that Mexican higher education is facing at present, concentration or centralization is another big issue.

The efforts to reduce the centralization of education in Mexico City has succeeded in the last decades, however, the inequalities between the capital city and the rest of the country regarding many educational aspects is still enormous. For example, while the percentage of youngsters (between 18 and 22 years old) studying at an institution of higher education in Mexico City is 70 per cent, in states like Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca, this percentage is lower than 20 per cent. The national percentage of enrolment at the BA level for the year 2016 is 32.1 per cent (SEP, 2017: 41, 57, 65 and 81).

A matter related to the quality issue mentioned above that endangers attaining a good higher education in Mexico is the fact that private universities are increasing their number at a much faster pace than public ones and, as mentioned, the quality control that the Ministry of Education can exercise over them is, very often, minimal. It should be added, however, as Cristina Puga has noted, that a handful of private universities like the *Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey* (ITESM), the *Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México* (ITAM) and the *Universidad Iberoamericana* (IBERO) have been able to create a serious academic tradition in some social sciences (Puga, 2017: 6).

In this regard, it should be added that although more than two-thirds of the universities of the country are private, more than 2,500,000 of the 3,762,679 university students in Mexico are in public institutions. The dilemma that the country is facing regarding this topic has to do mainly with social inequality. There is a limit to the growth of private institutions due to the capabilities of the economy of Mexico and to the social inequality that characterize the country. In this context, only public scholarships can assure that the social origin of a student will not determine her/his educational and therefore professional destiny. Evidently, there is a limit to the number of scholarships that the Mexican government can award. To give an idea of the size of this effort, one figure may suffice: in a single year (2012), the number of public scholarships awarded by the Ministry of Education was 813,000 (Tuirán, 2012).

The importance of this issue in a Latin American society like Mexico is evident. As Thomas Piketty has outlined in his acclaimed book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, the history of the Western world during the last two centuries has shown that the principal force towards economic convergence (or socio-economic equality among the members of a given society) is the diffusion of knowledge. This diffusion "depends in large part on educational policies, access to training and to the acquisition of appropriate skills" (Piketty, 2017: 30). In this regard, it may be added that considering the *Informe sobre Educación Superior en Iberoamérica 2011* and comparing it with the 2016 edition of this same report, Mexico has made considerable progress in the last five years (Brunner and Miranda, 2016). However, the country is still one of the most unequal societies in Latin America; more importantly, some of the latest works on this topic show that inequality is not only not diminishing, but keeps on growing (Esquivel, 2015).

Closely related with the last issue is another of the biggest problems of Mexican higher education: drop out. According to a 2004 study, of each 100 students that start a BA in Mexico, about 55 finish all the courses in five years, only 20 get a degree and of those, only two get it before they are 25 years old (Jaimes Rodríguez *et al.*, 2015: 11). The fact that 25 out of each 100 students abandon the university in the first semester suggests that very often students did not get the tools they needed to study at the university level in their earlier

schooling and also that students are plagued by economic need, especially if they opted for a private university.³ The humanities and the behavioural sciences have the lowest completion rate of the seven disciplinary areas considered by COMEPO (Bonilla Marín, 2015: 56).

The humanities in Mexican universities

The first issue that contributes to the diverse and to what may appear as contradictory figures regarding the humanities in Mexico has to do with a fact already mentioned: what could be considered the three humanistic disciplines *par excellence* (history, literature and philosophy) are seldom considered by themselves. In the case of Mexico, in the statistics of the *National Association of Universities and Institutes of Higher Education* (ANUIES) the humanities and the arts are part of the same category. In the case of the *Ministry of Education*, humanities are considered along with Education and its numerous branches. Lastly, the *National Council of Science and Technology* (CONACyT) and the *Mexican Council of Graduate Studies* (COMEPO) put the humanities and the behavioural sciences in the same category.⁴

In order to unify these criteria, a new classification has been put in place. This effort is called *Mexican Classification of Programs of Study by Fields of Academic Education* (CMPE). The first meeting of this group of experts from different academic fields took place in 2011 and the second in 2016. In the resulting classification (and limiting ourselves to the areas of interest in this book), Education became broad field number 1; Arts and humanities became broad field number 2; Social sciences, administration and law constitute broad field number 3 (INEGI, 2016: 8). In the new classification that should become the guiding criteria regarding the classification of academic disciplines in higher education in Mexico, broad field number 2 is divided into the arts and the humanities. The arts are distributed into seven specific fields. The humanities, the area that is relevant for us here, are divided into six: theology; languages; literature and linguistics; history; archeology; and philosophy and ethics.

In this case, humanities include not only the three 'traditional' or 'long-standing' humanities (history, literature and philosophy) but also several others that should come as no surprise (theology, languages, linguistics, archeology and ethics).⁵ However, there are some disciplines that are explicitly excluded from the humanities because they are included in other broad fields; for example, economic history, philosophy of education, political philosophy and human geography.

The aforementioned broad fields and exclusions touch on what may be the central issue of any classification of the humanities and, therefore, of the conclusions that we may reach when we use them. Some categorizations will be too inclusive and some will be too exclusive. For example, should economic historians and political philosophers be excluded from the humanities? The 2016 CMPE does exactly that. *Mutatis mutandis*, but this happens with

every classification of the humanities, education, the arts and the social sciences that is used at present throughout the world. To that extent, we should be cautious regarding any possible conclusion regarding what are often called 'the humanities' (as if everybody knew with clarity which are the disciplines included in the expression), its alleged declining enrolment in the Western world and, therefore, its purported crisis in a limited sense.

Judging from the data I was able to find, it is not possible to talk of a 'crisis' of the humanities in Mexico if we consider university enrolment. Using data from the ANUIES, Guadalupe Escamilla gives the following percentages of BA enrolment in education and the humanities in Mexico.

With the application of the first classification of the CMPE, in 2013 the figure for education is 8.2 per cent and 4.7 per cent for the arts and the humanities; i.e. a total of 12.9 per cent (Escamilla, 2014: 90). These figures signify continued slow growth of enrolment and share in these fields.

If we consider the graduate level and take as our parameter the university that is by far the biggest and most important in Mexico (*Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* or UNAM) we confirm the impossibility of talking of a 'crisis' of the humanities regarding enrolment. In this case, the area is called 'Arts and Humanities', and the 15 disciplines included are: architecture; art and design; library science; industrial design; Mesoamerican studies; philosophy; philosophy of science; teaching in higher education; history; art history; literature; linguistics; music; pedagogy; and urbanism.

Considering the Ph.D. level exclusively, Figure 8.1 shows the increase in the percentage of Mexican Ph.D.s in the humanities, arts and social sciences during the period 2007–2012 (2012 is the final year included in the last quantitative report on graduate studies published by UNAM, 2015: 129).

If we consider the number of Ph.D.s in the fields of education, the humanities and the social sciences from 2002 to 2012, either exclusively at UNAM or nationwide, we see a steady increase in the total numbers. At the same time, we can perceive a decrease in the percentage of Ph.D.s graduated at UNAM in these areas relative to other Mexican universities. This has to do mostly with the proliferation of Ph.D. programmes in private universities. In this regard, there is a figure that may be helpful: 66 per cent of the graduate programmes in Mexico are concentrated in either the social

Table 8.1 Percent of undergraduates in education and humanities

Year	Percentage
1980	2.5
1990	3.1
2000	4.2
2003	5.2

Source: Escamilla, 2014: 86.

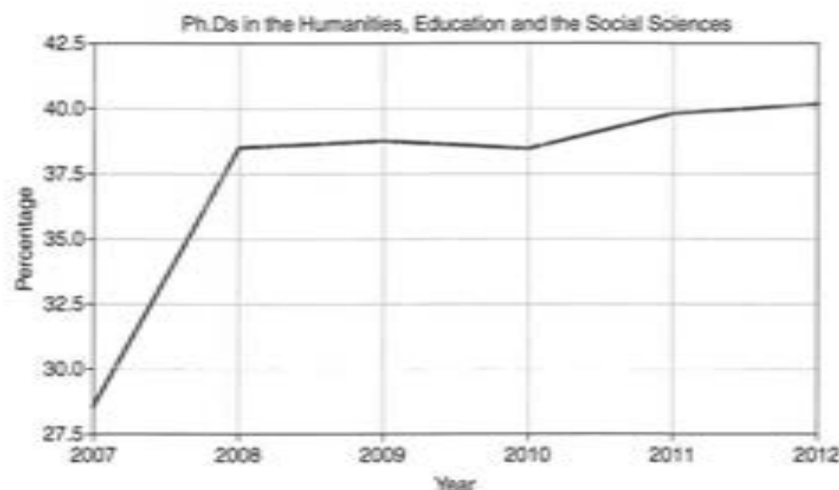


Figure 8.1 Ph.D.s in the humanities, education and social sciences

Notes: Redrawn from UNAM, 2015: 129.

sciences (41.7 per cent) or the humanities and behavioural sciences (24.3 per cent) (Bonilla Marín, 2015: 56).⁶

At the same time, however, the field of the humanities and behavioural sciences is the one in which the research ranking of academics is the lowest. If we consider the categories of the *National System of Researchers* (SNI) of the aforementioned *National Council of Science and Technology* (CONACyT), it turns out that almost 70 per cent of the professors that teach at the university level in Mexico in the humanities and behavioural sciences do not have a research ranking under this system. This system includes all the most qualified and most productive academics in the country in all the disciplines (exact or 'hard' sciences, social sciences and the humanities). However, it must be understood that this ranking is based on 'productivity', 'relevance' and metrics rooted in the 'hard' sciences such as publishing and patents. As Pani has noted (2015: 1340), quantity is emphasized over quality, frequency over depth, and facts over abstract knowledge. This ranking system has reinforced the image of the humanities as 'second-class' because the equivalent figure is 10 per cent for chemistry and biology, and around 24 per cent for physical sciences, mathematics and sciences of the earth (Bonilla Marín, 2015).

If we turn to how attracted are Mexican youngsters by the humanities when it comes to choosing a BA, the humanities are not among the most demanded, but neither are they among the least demanded (IMCO, 2014: 14). More importantly, of the ten BAs with the lowest unemployment in Mexico, half of them have to do with the humanities if we understand them in the extended connotation that is used predominantly in Mexico and around the

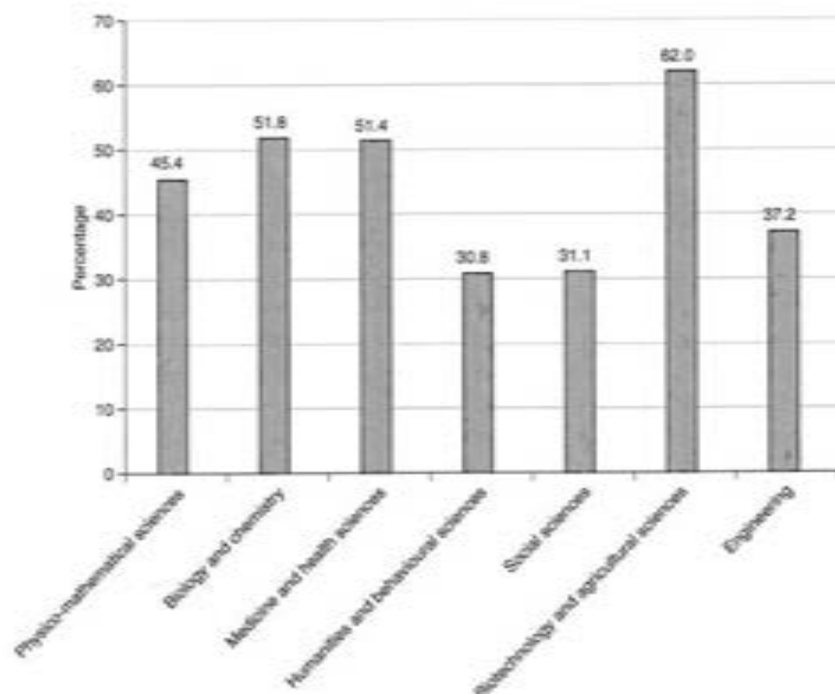


Figure 8.2 Percentage of faculty with research status by field

Notes: Redrawn from Bonilla Marín, 2015: 104.

world (four of these BAs have to do with education and one with music and performing arts). Of the ten BAs with the highest unemployment in the country, only one of them is related to education (however, four social sciences appear on this list: economics, political science, sociology and anthropology) (IMCO, 2014: 18).

In its 2017 statistics, the Mexican Ministry of Labour divides BAs into ten different areas of study. One of the charts includes the monthly salary earned by anyone who studied a BA in each one of these ten areas. As might be expected, the three with the worst salaries are arts, humanities and, in the last place, education (STPS, 2017; the amounts are in Mexican pesos). The relatively low salaries help explain why demand for the humanities is not stronger than it is.

Although Mexico has made considerable progress in the last couple of decades to fill the gender gap, the country has a long way to go regarding educational opportunities for women. In the 2016 *UNESCO Atlas of Gender Inequality for Education*, regarding the share of women enrolled in tertiary education (more specifically, gross enrolment ratio⁷), Mexico has one of the worst percentages in Latin America (30 per cent; the only cases that are worse

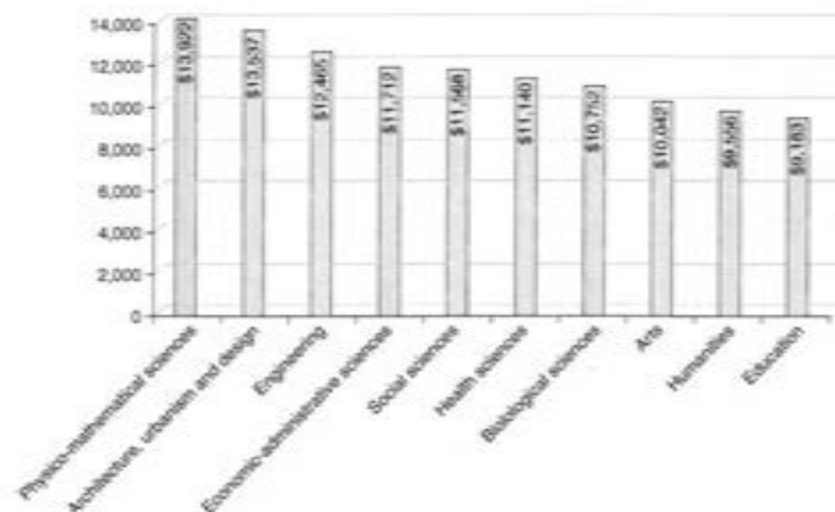


Figure 8.3 Monthly salaries by field

Notes: Redrawn from STPS, 2017.

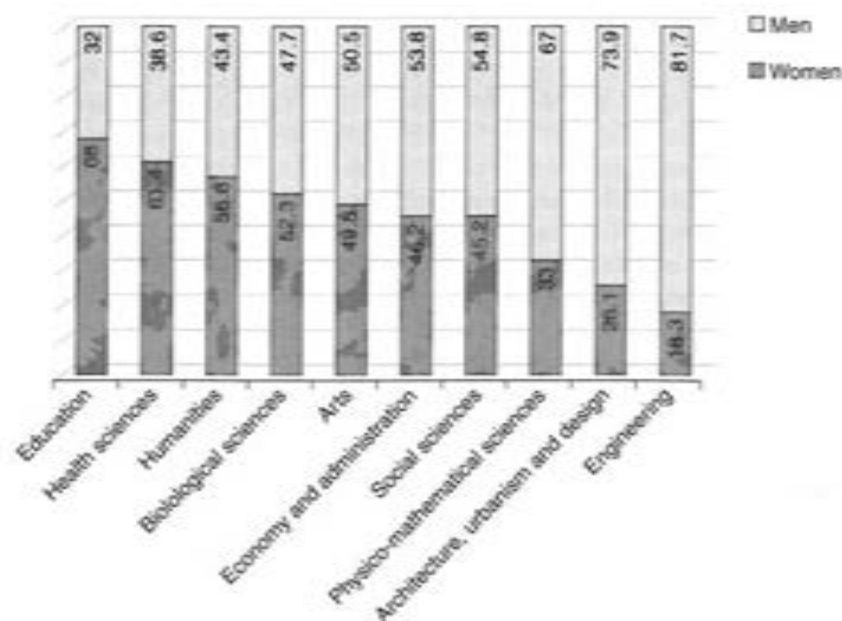


Figure 8.4 Gender composition by field

Notes: Redrawn from STPS, 2017.

and that are included in the UNESCO Atlas are a couple of countries in Central America). The share of female graduates from bachelor's programmes (53 per cent) is low when compared with the rest of the region (only Chile has the same percentage). Lastly, when it comes to the share of women among the total of researchers in each country, Mexico has the lowest percentage (33 per cent), along with Chile (UNESCO, 2016).

The preceding data should be contrasted with other figures when it comes to the humanities and employment. Very recent data of the Ministry of Labour (STPS) show that the humanities and education are two fields in which more than half of the employed professionals are women (STPS, 2017). Not only that, two of the three BAs with the highest percentage of employed professional women in the country belong to the area of education. Regarding this issue from a wider perspective, of the ten areas in which the Ministry of Labour divides the BAs, education is in first place when it comes to women employed and the humanities are in third (STPS, 2017).

When we turn to international data, according to UNESCO the percentage of bachelor's degrees obtained in the humanities in Latin America between 1996 and 2012 has not diminished, but in fact has increased from 4.24 per cent to 6.45 per cent (in the same period, the social sciences went from 51.77 per cent to 55.84 per cent) (UNESCO, 2014).

According to UNESCO data, in Mexico the percentage of enrolment in the arts and the humanities in tertiary education went from 3.3 per cent in 1999 to 4.5 per cent in 2014 (UNESCO, 2014). Finally, using data from UNESCO, of the total of students graduating in tertiary education in 22 different countries, 4 per cent of the students that graduated in Mexico in 2005 did so in one of the humanities (as mentioned, this percentage rose to 4.5 ten years later). The Mexican percentage can be considered high in the Latin American context, but it is low if we contrast it with countries like Japan (15.5 per cent), United Kingdom (15.4 per cent), Italy (14.7 per cent), the United States (13.2 per cent), France (12.1 per cent) and Germany (10.5 per cent) (Moreno Bird and Ruiz-Napoles, 2010: 23).

Table 8.2 Distribution of bachelor's degrees by field, Latin America (per cent)

	1996	2012
Social Sciences	51.77	55.84
Engineering and Technology	23.16	14.00
Medical Sciences	14.04	15.33
Humanities	4.24	6.45
Natural and Exact Sciences	2.87	5.66
Agricultural Sciences	3.92	2.50
Unassigned	0.00	0.21

Source: UNESCO, 2014.

Final remarks

After having reviewed the data presented in this chapter, it may sound strange that so many Mexican youngsters want to study a BA in the humanities or in closely related areas (arts and education). In the end, this fact could only sound strange to those who do not see much value in the humanities or who think that studying philosophy, history or literature is a waste of time. That so many people in contemporary societies think this way is what I referred to as the purported 'crisis' of the humanities in the capitalist world of today (i.e. crisis in a general sense). I also noted that the situation cannot be considered a 'crisis'; instead, I would call it 'a fact of life' in capitalist societies. A fact that evinces the essential contradiction between the values that sustain the workings of any capitalist society and the values behind the humanities and their way of approaching life. The Mexican case is just another example of this contradiction. One that, in my view, has worrisome aspects, but not because philosophy, history and literature have any 'Olympian' nature or anything resembling that, but because if some tendencies that prevail nowadays in the Mexican academic system persist, many Mexican youngsters with a humanistic vocation may end up giving up the study of the humanities, a point noted by other authors in this volume.

What I have in mind, more than anything else, is the most important institution in Mexico responsible for the academic development of the country at the university level: the National Council for Science and Technology or CONACyT. More specifically, I am referring to a fundamental part of CONACyT: the National System of Researchers (*Sistema Nacional de Investigadores* in Spanish). In what sense is CONACyT contributing to a diminishing role of the humanities in the Mexican academic landscape and, therefore, in Mexican society as a whole? The answer lies in what I have described earlier in relation to the research evaluation system. As Érika Pani has already clearly stated:

Although its evaluations are based on peer assessment, CONACyT's focus on productivity and its reliance on a set numerical criteria for measuring relevance, largely inspired by the evaluation mechanisms of the 'hard' sciences, privilege publishing and patent registration over teaching, quantity over quality, frequency and novelty over depth, and facts over abstract knowledge – in short, science and technology over the human and social disciplines.

(Pani, 2015: 1340)

Two points seem to me important in this regard. The first one is that the future of the humanities in Mexico will not be determined exclusively by CONACyT and its policies. Having said that, it will surely play a fundamental role in the Mexican academic realm. The second point is that, as I stated in a

brief article that I wrote on the social sciences and the humanities in Mexico a couple of years ago, it is too easy for academics to make CONACyT responsible for many of the ailments of the Mexican academic system. However, many of us contribute directly or indirectly to those ailments with some of our decisions, actions and omissions (Breña, 2016: 32).⁸

If we cannot talk of a crisis of the humanities in the Western world because for many decades we have lived in a world in which the humanities are more or less perfunctory and if there is no crisis in terms of enrolment in Mexican universities, why is it that so many authors, philosophers and academics have been talking of a 'crisis' of the humanities for so long and with such vehemence? Is it possible that George Steiner, Martha Nussbaum, and lately Nuccio Ordine, among many others, have missed the mark? Of course not, but the three of them are humanists and humanists will inevitably see 'crisis' at almost every turn in contemporary capitalist societies and, more specifically, in the educational policies that the governments of these societies apply and very probably will keep on applying, especially in higher education.

I close this chapter with a very concrete example that has nothing to do with the Mexican scenario, but that gives an idea on the level of subjectivity and 'malleability' of the main issue under discussion in this chapter and in this book, even among humanists that are very critical of the present situation of the humanities (in the world in general and in their respective countries in particular). The aforementioned Italian professor of literature, Nuccio Ordine, author of a couple of international best-sellers that show with brief selections of the classics the importance and value of the humanities for living in today's world, considers South Korea one of the best examples of how a contemporary society takes the humanities seriously and fosters them (Ordine, 2017).⁹ Almost exactly a year before Ordine's very positive statements about Korea and the humanities were published in a Spanish newspaper, an article titled 'Crisis of the Humanities: How Do the Humanities Stand?' appeared in the *University of Seoul Times*. In it, among many other pessimistic assessments on the situation of the humanities in Korea, we can read:

Many surveys in Korean media and the Internet show that the humanities are viewed more negatively than ever. And the government increasingly disregards humanities education in its policies and budgets.... In Korea today, many people consider the humanities to be a dying field.
(UOS Times, 2016)¹⁰

Ahlburg and Roberts in this volume note a similar situation in the US.

From the perspective of any contemporary humanist, the humanities are and will be in crisis; nothing but a radical transformation of the values that make capitalist societies go round could stop this from happening. In other words, this general 'crisis' will go on indefinitely. From the standpoint of the enrolment in Mexican universities (and, as far as I can tell, in many

universities of other countries), the humanities are not in crisis in the sense of a significant change from the historical status quo. In my view, this purported crisis will be more of an impending rather than an actual one as long as the teachers and professors in the humanities, the arts, education, languages and several social sciences in schools, colleges and universities in Mexico are capable of transmitting to their students the precious, priceless and essentially ineffable gift that the humanities contain and represent.

Notes

1. The Mexican Council of Social Sciences (COMECOSO) considers as social sciences the following 11 disciplines: public administration, anthropology, political science, communication sciences, demography, economics, geography, history, social psychology, international relations and sociology.
2. A life that, by the way, does not necessarily imply a zero-sum game between capitalist values and humanistic values, as some of the defenders of the humanities suggest and notwithstanding the abyss that, no doubt, very often exists between them.
3. In several fields (not the humanities and many social sciences) and sometimes for no good reason, private universities have the reputation of being much better. The proliferation of private universities helps explain an apparent accessibility that often reveals to be too demanding in economic terms for the family and the student in question.
4. For a recent qualitative assessment of the humanities and the social sciences in Mexico, see *Hacia dónde va la ciencia en México (Humanidades y ciencias sociales)*, Soledad Loera and Alicia Mayer coords (México: CONACyT/AMC/OCC, 2015).
5. The addition of the last discipline, ethics, and its separation from philosophy has to do with the outstanding development of the former in fields like biology and genetics; today, bioethics is as much a part of biology as of philosophy.
6. As several experts have noted, several of the "neglected" disciplinary areas are crucial for the economic development of Mexico. This is another way of posing a very important and very difficult question: does the socio-economic development that countries like Mexico require need the amount of social scientists that its university system educates? We know the humanistic response, but it does not invalidate the substance of the question.
7. That is, the number of female students enrolled in tertiary education expressed as a percentage of the female population in the five-year age group starting from the official secondary school graduation age.
8. As I also mentioned in this article, for many reasons that are not difficult to find out, to construct reliable mechanisms of quality evaluation in the humanities and the social sciences is surely a very difficult enterprise. However, some recent changes in CONACyT's evaluation processes suggest efforts in this direction.
9. See also Nuccio Ordine, *Clásicos para la vida* (Barcelona: Acantilado, 2017), p. 29. After reading the English version of the article cited by Ordine to support his assessment on Korea and the humanities ("Humanities Promotion Policy in Korea" by Ki Dong Song and Eunjong Ra, *Diogenes*, vol. 60(1), 2014, pp. 105-114), it seems to me there is a significant distance between the classical notion that Ordine has of the humanities and the one of the authors of the article in question, both members of the Ministry of Education of Korea.
10. At present, the percentage of Korean students enrolled in the humanities oscillate around 12 per cent.

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