Throughout this book, I have shown that the tendency has been for universities to rhetoricly and, to a lesser extent, practically engage in increasing both accountability practices and research. The declaration of sound mission statements integrating ideas on entrepreneurship and innovation with local terms is one of the clearest expressions of the formal commitment of administrators to make public and periodically evaluate their university’s goals. This worldwide model, whose inspiration is preceded by the increased accountability practices of the United States (Krücken and Meier, 2006; Ramirez and Tiplic, 2013), has not only affected the prevalent discourses on the university. It has probably also influenced changes in university life in demand-absorbing universities, and seems to be embodied by unique cases of universities with an entrepreneurial character. The public sector, although less prone to new practices, has taken some steps toward further rationalization that leave behind traditional mechanisms of monitoring that strongly relied on the autonomy of the professoriate. The nation-wide Colombian compensation system and the Chilean performance-based funding of universities, both based on indicators of scientific activities, have institutionalized much of these control mechanisms. This global process seems to influence, but not to dramatically change, the organization of traditional Latin American universities. Although with exceptions, the internal and public accountability toward excellence appears not to completely replace its path-dependent role as a social and political institution that permits social mobility and political engagement.

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In this chapter, I analyze in more detail the role of global influences in changing common local views about university research through the introduction of accountability practices and emphasizing applied research. With this aim, I focus on four common assumptions about the governance of university research that I encountered during my visits, and contrast them (directly underneath) with the alternative view that had previously prevailed in the region. The new understandings found in universities in Chile and Colombia differ from local, traditional understandings related to the Latin American tradition. The underlying view of the university that each position sustains also determines wider discussions on science and higher education policy.

1. Universities are enterprises that should contribute to economic growth.
1. University research should contribute to social development and equality.
2. Universities are enterprises that should fund their own research.
2. Governments ought to fund university research.
3. Academics are entrepreneurs and increase their productivity when rewarded by bonuses.
3. Scholars are autonomous and engage in research activities due to endogenous motives.
4. All higher education centers should become research universities.
4. Scientific inquiry occurs mainly in state-supported universities.

Prevailing and new assumptions of the university, I argue in this book, are the expression of the influence of broader global and regional models of the university. Global models have been favored by universalizing identities that rely on instrumental rationalization of education and higher education (Maroy, 2008b; Kamens, 2012). However, the studied context shows that new identities beyond nationhood include regional features, and that these influence higher education through the perseverance of the Latin American model. The cultural influence of this local view of organization offers resistance to the implementation of new control mechanisms and the prioritizing of applied research in the national agenda. The process is far from being smooth, as the review of Chile and Colombia shows that global and local models for social organization do not always harmonize with each other. Nor do the displayed features of these new models necessarily correspond with practice, as world society theory proposes (Drori, Meyer, Ramirez, and Schofer, 2003; Krücken, 2003). The discourse in favor of more efficiency and innovation results in practices that are often not implemented. In this vein, throughout this chapter, I argue that common assumptions about university research are frequently separated from everyday academic life.