

Review article

**MODERN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION -
BETWEEN CORPORATE AND PARTICIPATIVE
MANAGEMENT – CONTRADICTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES**

UDC 378.147:005.21; 378.014.3; 37.018.48

Ljubiša Mitrović^{1*}, Danijela Zdravković²

¹Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš, Serbia

²Pedagogical Faculty in Vranje, University of Niš, Serbia

Abstract. *We live in a global age of “modernity out of joint and instrumental rationality” (J. Habermas), in which the neoliberal logic of development is imposed as the dominant way of rationalization in all activities (from the economy to education and culture). This is where we are faced with the phenomenon of the rise of academic capitalism in the management of universities. The spirit of corporate logic suppresses not only the statist way of managing universities, but also any other form of autonomous associative participatory development of universities as a cognitive-educational, rational and humane community of homo academicus. This paper explores the scope of different models of education management, with a special focus on the modern university and its development contradictions. The author culminates this paper with an invocation - that if the university is to become the key cognitive and developmental capital, a factor in the development of self-awareness and a treasurer of identity culture, and a participant in the humanistic-emancipatory processes of the democratic development of society and humanity, it must avoid the traps of both statist and corporate management. In other words, the modernization process of the university management system must follow the principles of a rational, humane and participative community, whose supreme values are: the creative search for truth, the development of an autonomous critical personality, lifelong learning, patriotism and philanthropy. Achieving these goals requires the preservation and development of the university's autonomy, because it is a prerequisite for its development as a creative and critical institution in the service of truth, people and humanity. Meeting these goals requires the preservation and development of the university's autonomy, because it is a prerequisite for its development as a creative and critical institution in the service of truth, people and humanity.*

Key words: *University, management models in education, academic capitalism, participatory management, lifelong learning and community, sustainable development*

Received December 15, 2022/Accepted March 13, 2023

Corresponding author: Danijela Zdravković

Pedagogical Faculty in Vranje, University of Niš, Partizanska 14, 17 500 Vranje, Serbia

Phone: +381 17 422 962 • E-mail: danijelavranje@gmail.com

*Professor Emeritus

1. INTRODUCTION: THE CRISIS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE THAT HAS BEGUN

“The future of our universities, if they are given a chance, rests on the renewal of their original spirit... In order to understand the idea of university and the institutions that arise from it, one should first consider the spiritual life in general that carries it, and, above all, the essence of science. The university is a community of scholars and students engaged in the task of seeking truth” (Jaspers, 2003, p. 13).

“We live in an age of initiatives, critical re-examinations, adventures... The lack of thinking about university is spectacular and even scandalous... University is being destroyed both from above and from below... University that makes great effort to maintain its old unity is doomed to die. The moment has come to expose ourselves to danger and look for new solutions!” (Touraine, 1980, p. 146-151).

“For modern nations, which have founded themselves on reason in its various uses more than did any nations in the past, a crisis in the university, the home of reason, is perhaps the profoundest crisis they face“ (Bloom, 1990, p. 23).

“University is now one of the last refugees of creative and critical thinking. Therefore, this free space must be preserved at all costs” (Ziegler, 2017, p. 317).

We live in an age of parentheses, changing epochs, when numerous activities, spheres of society, institutions and values are in the process of crisis, re-examination, revaluation and transition. Humanity is indeed at a great crossroads: between the “shock of the past” and the “shock of the future.” Modern university as a community of Homo Academicus is also faced with these challenges.

As an elite institution with a prestigious educational, cognitive and cultural capital and a refined sensibility for the ages that change and bring megatrends, as “arrows of time” and direction indicators, university and its scholars (at least the most creative ones), as pioneers, use their critical research to discover new paradigms, new scientific ideas - pointing to alternative ways and solutions to overcome the current crisis that has affected both contemporary society and university.

It is precisely the aforementioned mottos (by Jaspers, Touraine, Bloom and Ziegler) that show the essential idea of university, its crisis, but also the utopian hope - based on the principle – “if there is a problem, there is also a solution”, or if there is awareness of the crisis, there are those looking for possible solutions!

The rise of technology of the third, fourth, and fifth civilization waves led to the globalization of education, science has become a new international production force, information technology has networked the world, and cybernetics paved the way for robotics and artificial intelligence. Biotechnology revolution opened the gates to planetary ecology and bioethics, i.e., for man and humanity to be the essence and center of the “Society 5.0” concept. However, this progress of science and society is simultaneously accompanied by the emergence of new forms of pathology that have negative consequences for the sustainable development of humanity and the emancipation of the individual.

This paper discusses some contradictory tendencies and aspects in the system of higher education development: nowadays embodied in the split between education and upbringing, the marginalization of social and humanistic sciences, the rise of academic capitalism, with special reference to the dependent modernization processes, colonization of science and comprador management in post-socialist societies in transition. As an indicator of the need for a radical change in the concept and strategy of development and

management in these societies, we especially promote the need for critical research, the transformation of the main functions of modern university and creating a new unity between science and education, education and educational - humanistic goals of personality development, as well as the affirmation of the participatory management model of university as a community of Homo Academicus.

The current instrumental rationalization at universities is there for the benefit of corporate capital, which tends to colonize all functions, i.e., to subordination of all functions and areas at faculties and universities and leads to a technocratic management model and the expansion of realized/alienated power in these institutions. At the same time, it is forgotten that science and research are not looking for managers and tutors of the truth, but for the autonomy as a prerequisite for the creative work of scientists as “producers of knowledge” and the development of critical emancipatory consciousness, as a prerequisite for the development of a healthy and responsible personality, a protagonist of civic dignity and responsible social struggle - that the world will be a better, fairer place for all citizens and peoples of the world. Exactly as Socrates and other scholars taught: all knowledge is worthless if it does not serve to make a person better!

It is time that the future of new generations, of man and humanity, is shaped by Archimedes (with their scientific discoveries), and not by Alexander (with the military conquests); or the new technocratic hyperclass, i.e., the plutocratic elite of money, which wants to rule the world according to profit, its own interest and the neo-totalitarian project of the new Orwellian.

2. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF UNIVERSITY HISTORY

If we take a brief look at the evolution of the idea and practice of University from the Middle Ages to modern times, **four stages** can be observed in its spiritual development, institutional status and order, and key features of its functions and identity (Mitrović, 2012, pp. 57-104). The main stages and possible periodization of the evolution of university and its function are as follows: Stage 1 - a stage of the early differentiation of university as a temple of science, which was still under the strong influence of the church and the theological and religious discourse. Such universities were founded in Western and Northern Europe (Bologna, Uppsala...). They were under strong pressure from the church but also from the state, while both institutions secured the power of the feudal class; Stage 2 lasted from the Renaissance to the new century and civil revolutions, which led to the political and spiritual emancipation of the population. This is when the separation of church and state, and of education and church institutions emerged as a legacy. In such a context, the enlightening mission of universities is on the rise, universities gain their self-governing autonomy, which is reflected both in the independence of their scientific and educational activities and in their management. This encouraged the rise of science (especially natural and technical sciences) but also critical thinking and the emancipatory mission of university as an institution in society (in developing a critical public). However, even as such, university had relative autonomy because, due to strong ideologization and funding methods (dependence on the state), it more or less served to reproduce the class relations of capitalism. Stage 3 is the stage that arose with socialist revolutions and one-party systems. That is, from the October Revolution to 1989, i.e., until the implosion of socialism as the political system. In this period, the ideologization and statist influence on the management

of university continued. However, secularization (the separation of church and state, but also education and schooling from the church), as well as an open process of democratization of education have enabled not only the literacy of significant portion of the population, but also the social and spatial mobility of citizens from the lower strata of the working class - the peasantry, towards the middle classes and cities and urban culture. In this epoch, we also have the beginnings of the self-governing model of university management as a liberal-democratic and participatory form in socialist Yugoslavia; Stage 4 of the development of university education is related to the modern neoliberal era of capitalism, which is characterized by strong internal differentiation and specialization of universities (into natural sciences and medical sciences, engineering and technical, philological, social sciences and humanities, art sciences and physical education...) (Jaspers, 2003; Dimić, 2013). In this era of neoliberal ideology and the expansion of the absolutization of the power of capital and the dominant influence of transnational corporations, we are faced with the emergence of the globalization of education, the internationalization of the achievements of science, with new technology projects and the “knowledge society” of the future.

Therefore, from a temple of reason, enlightenment and humanistic-emancipatory values, university is increasingly turning into an extended arm of corporate capital and a workshop of speculators whose emergence is dictated by the market. This logic of academic capitalism becomes increasingly predominant in post-socialist transition countries where the contents, educational profiles and functions of faculties and universities are increasingly subordinated to the market and profit, from which numerous forms of academic pathology arise, including education, scientific-pedagogical and cultural practices, personality development models and value systems of mass consumer society, nepotism and political correctness. Such societies are faced with numerous problems in terms of their national cultural identity, underdeveloped authoritarian controlled democracy, underdevelopment and dependent modernization. Therefore, they have many characteristics of societies dependent on peripheral capitalism.

3. CONTROVERSIES SURROUNDING THE DIRECTION OF DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN UNIVERSITY AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF ITS MANAGEMENT FUNCTION (BETWEEN STATIST, CORPORATE AND PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT MODELS)

As a result of the expansion of neoliberal ideology in modern society, there is the concept of modernization as a type of instrumental rationalization and development that becomes increasingly predominant. Hence, Levingston defines modern society as a “society of means without goals”, and Habermas writes about the phenomenon of “instrumental mind and modernity out of joint”. Therefore, this context also refers to the rationalization of the education management system under the conditions of neoliberal asymmetric globalization and academic capitalism in transition countries. Unfortunately, in these societies, rationalization in the field of higher education is reduced to numerous forms of restriction of autonomy in the educational practice and scientific work, as well as participatory democracy.

There is increasing pressure from the forces of capital relations (from transnational companies to transitional nomenclature in the countries that uncritically follow neoliberal ideology) and effect on the deformation of the key functions of universities, especially scientific-educational, cultural-pedagogical and critical-emancipatory. The gluttony of mega-capital forces is unlimited. In the era of liberalization of society, the gluttony affects all its aspects: the economy, education, culture, politics and the media. Therefore,

it is necessary to critically study these processes in order to search for optimum solutions that would serve the development of society, but also the preservation of national cultural identity and fight for emancipation by the new generations.

It is certain that under the conditions of the emerging academic capitalism, *managerialization*, as a form of rationalization, on account of the efficiency of university operations, has its rationale, justification, but it must refer only to those functions that would not violate the autonomy of scientific and instruction activities of the university. Otherwise, managerialization can have a negative, pathological-deforming role, especially in the countries of peripheral capitalism, such as the transition countries in the Balkans, where dependent modernization happens, as a new form of original capital accumulation.

The major functions of the university are: a) instruction; b) science and research; c) educational and cultural/socialization. As we have already pointed out, from a historical point of view, the first universities were founded in the late Middle Ages and the dawn of capitalism. The civil revolution, separating education from theology, schooling from the church, paved the way for the secularization process, i.e., spreading the scientific spirit both in the field of research and in the field of education. The next wave is related to the democratization of the education system, strengthening the process of social equality in education, but also the development of the self-governing autonomy of university, its emancipation from state/statist dirigisme. Finally, at the end of the 20th century, with the implosion of one-party socialism, there was a wave of de-ideologization and the spread of theoretical pluralism in science and education. Today, new generations are being educated in an open system of education and the autonomy of science. Hence, it is more increasingly being called as an open “knowledge society” (Milisavljević, Kulić, 2021). However, it is still more of an ideological projection than a reality, because numerous studies show that two-thirds of modern humanity still lives in pre-modern societies and authoritarian regimes. Humanity will need the efforts of numerous new generations to realize an open society of knowledge, global social justice and world peace.

Modern university is at the crossroads between the remnants of the statist model of government, the corporate techno-managerial and participative model. The rise of the neoliberal ideology, the management development model, led to the spread of instrumental rationality to numerous spheres of society, including the university. Subordinating all university functions (educational, scientific research, cultural identity and emancipatory) would have devastating consequences not only on personality development but also on the social development and progress of humanity. We have already experienced numerous dangerous consequences of the so-called *Bologna reform*: disciplinary chaos, fragmentation of scientific systems, split between education and upbringing role, marginalization of social and humanistic sciences, numerous forms of fragmentation and disintegration of the modern university (Mitrović, 2022, pp. 39-86).

Critical reflections on the modern roles of universities can be found in the studies conducted by sociologists and philosophers of education both worldwide and in our country. They show the importance of differentiation and specialization in the scientific and education system, but also the need to build multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary syntheses and practices of integrated studies. In the era of globalization of education, but also of the networking of the global society, we are faced with the phenomenon of increasing mobility of students, who constitute a large percentage of global migration. Today, there are over three million students studying outside their home countries. The largest student populations in the diaspora are Chinese, Mexican and Indian. Every year,

China sends out 400,000 high school graduates (with scholarships) all over the world in an organized manner to the most prestigious colleges for further education and training. This is a sign of the maturity of the governments in these countries - who know that investing in human resources, as a form of educational and cognitive capital, is a comparative advantage par excellence that affects the development and future progress of these societies.

When discussing the main topic of this scientific conference, it is necessary to specify the areas or aspects of educational and scientific activity which can undergo modernization reforms by strengthening the process of university management, and in which it would be disastrous. Therefore, we emphasize our plea for the democratization of the university management system - both in relation to the state and the forces of mega-capital. We advocate for the *participatory model*, with high autonomy of basic functions (educational and scientific), while management should be introduced only in the technical departments and economic-financial operations. Such a practice of separating the functions of the rector-manager (dean manager) from the rector as the personification of scientific and pedagogical authority can be found in developed colleges and universities in the West¹. Therefore, this separation of functions is justified.

However, the absolutization of the phenomenon of managerialism in education can also have negative consequences and be the extended hand of the state or the forces of capital to regulate relations and influence processes for which they are not competent. In this sense, negative consequences are already visible in private universities, which are springing up like mushrooms after a rain in transition countries, but also at state universities that are under strong party patronage of the so-called *eternal* deans and rectors, who after such "longevity" lose touch with reality of the responsible calling of teachers and scientists.

Just as there is no productive parliamentary multi-party democracy without a clear division and control of power (Montesquieu), there is no new university without a clear demarcation of main functions and building of harmony/unity on the principles of participatory democracy and professional competence in scientific research and the education process.

Finally, any form of entrapment and subjugation of university is harmful to its main functions, its mission and calling in contemporary society. Therefore, it must remain the first and last refuge of freedom and resistance - to any form of totalitarianism and conservatism, and it should be in the service of healthy personality development, process affirmation, democratization of society, sustainable development, human emancipation and peace in the modern world (Cigler, 2017).

4. CONCLUSION

The modernization process of the university management system must follow the principles of a rational, humane and participative community, whose supreme values are: the creative search for truth, the development of an autonomous critical personality,

¹ In our literature and journalism, there are controversial views on the participatory model. There are authors who stigmatize it as the return of self-management at the faculties. It should be noted that in the conditions of transition and expansion of academic capitalism, the essence of the problem is more complex. Because, as long as there is no rule of law, there are dangers that the so-called state interest is realized by the party interest. In any case, the answer to both the statist regulation of university management and the negative impacts of emphasized privatization in the conditions of academic capitalism is the preservation and development of the participatory model of university management as the highest national good. See: polemical writings Miloš Ković and Zoran Avramović on some aspects of this problem, published in the Views column, in *Politica* dated 2/26/2019.

lifelong learning, patriotism and philanthropy. Achieving these goals requires the preservation and development of the university's autonomy, because it is a prerequisite for its development as a creative and critical institution in the service of truth, people and humanity. Meeting these goals requires the preservation and development of the university's autonomy, because it is a prerequisite for its development as a creative and critical institution in the service of truth, people and humanity.

REFERENCES

- Basta, D. (2020). *Varia ili Filozofski svagdani*. Beograd: Dosije studio.
- Blum, A. (1990). *Sumrak američkog uma*. Beograd: Prosveta.
- Cigler, Ž. (2017). *Promeni svet! Zašto moramo da srušimo nehumani svetski poredak*. Beograd: Laguna.
- Dimić, Z. (2013). *Rađanje ideje univerziteta*. Sremski Karlovci, Novi Sad: Izdavačka knjižarnica Zorana Stojanovića.
- Dimić, Z. (2017). *Politike obrazovanja: od paideje do bildunga*. Beograd: Karpos.
- Jaspers, K. (2003). *Ideja univerziteta*. Beograd: Plato.
- Kulić, M. (2021). Filozofija, znanje i društvo znanja. U Marković, J. (Ur.) *Društvo znanja i proces transformacije filozofskih, društveno-humanističkih nauka* (str. 43-62). Pale: Filozofski fakultet.
- Milislavljević, V. Ž. (2021). Neznanje u društvu znanja od Mergera do Hajeka i dalje. U Marković, J. (Ur.) *Društvo znanja i proces transformacije filozofskih, društveno-humanističkih nauka* (str. 11-42). Pale: Filozofski fakultet.
- Mitrović, Lj. (2012). *Univerzitet i društvene promene (Sociološki ogledi)*. Vranje: Učiteljski fakultet u Vranju.
- Mitrović, Lj. (2022). *Društveno humanističke nauke danas: između krize, marginalizacije i obnove, Sociološke marginalije na savremene teme* (Knjiga 2). Novi Sad: Prometej.
- Turen, A. (1980). *Postindustrijsko društvo*. Zagreb: Globus.

SAVREMENO UNIVERZITETSKO OBRAZOVANJE – IZMEĐU KORPORATIVNOG I PARTICIPATIVNOG MENADŽMENTA – KONTRADIKCIJE I PERSPEKTIVE

Živimo u globalnom dobu „modernosti iz zajedničke i instrumentalne racionalnosti“ (J. Habermas), u kome se neoliberalna logika razvoja nameće kao dominantan način racionalizacije u svim delatnostima (od privrede do obrazovanja i kulture). Tu smo suočeni sa fenomenom uspona akademskog kapitalizma u menadžmentu univerziteta. Duh korporativne logike potiskuje ne samo etastički način upravljanja univerzitetima već i svaki drugi oblik autonomnog asocijativnog participativnog razvoja univerziteta kao kognitivno-obrazovne, racionalne i humane zajednice homo academicusa. Ovaj rad istražuje domete različitih modela upravljanja obrazovanjem, sa posebnim osvrtom na savremeni univerzitet i njegove razvojne kontradikcije. Autor kulminira ovaj rad pozivom da univerzitet, ukoliko želi da postane ključni kognitivni i razvojni kapital, činilac razvoja samosvesti i blagajnik identitetske kulture, učesnik u humanističko-emanipatorskim procesima demokratskog razvoja društva i čovečanstva, mora da izbegne zamke i etastičkog i korporativnog upravljanja. Drugim rečima, proces modernizacije sistema menadžmenta univerziteta mora da sledi principe racionalne, humane i participativne zajednice, čije su vrhunske vrednosti: kreativna potraga za istinom, razvoj autonomne kritičke ličnosti, doživotno učenje, patriotizam i filantropija. Ostvarivanje ovih ciljeva zahteva očuvanje i razvoj autonomije univerziteta, jer je to preduslov za njegov razvoj kao kreativne i kritičke institucije u službi istine, ljudi i čovečanstva. Ostvarenje ovih ciljeva zahteva očuvanje i razvoj autonomije univerziteta, jer je to preduslov za njegov razvoj kao kreativne i kritičke institucije u službi istine, ljudi i čovečanstva.

Ključne reči: *Univerzitet, modeli upravljanja u obrazovanju, uspon akademskog kapitalizma, participativno upravljanje, životno učenje i zajednica, održivi razvoj čovečanstva*