

Corvinus University of Budapest  
Faculty of Business Administration

---

CLP 3/2015

The European Patterns of "Homo  
Academicus"  
and The Chances of Its Evolution In  
Current Hungarian Higher Education

by

Dániel Deák

**CORVINUS LAW PAPERS**

ISSN 2416-0415

## Corvinus Law Papers

CLP – 3/2015

The primary purpose of the Corvinus Law Papers (CLP) is to publish the results of research projects performed by those connected to the Department of Business Law as research reports, working papers, essays and academic papers. The CLP also publishes supplementary texts to be used for practical and theoretical training of students.

### Editor-in-chief:

Dániel Deák (Professor of Law, Corvinus University of Budapest, Faculty of Business Administration, Department of Business Law)

Contact: [daniel.deak@uni-corvinus.hu](mailto:daniel.deak@uni-corvinus.hu)

### Editor:

Dániel Bán (Senior Lecturer, Corvinus University of Budapest, Faculty of Business Administration, Department of Business Law)

Contact: [daniel.ban@uni-corvinus.hu](mailto:daniel.ban@uni-corvinus.hu)

### Address of the Editorial Board:

Corvinus Law Papers – Editorial Board  
H-1093 Budapest, Fővám tér 8. II/240., 242.1

### Publisher:

Corvinus University of Budapest  
Faculty of Business Administration  
H-1093 Budapest, Fővám tér 8.

### Responsible for the edition:

Dániel Deák, Professor of Law

ISSN 2416-0415

The European Patterns of "Homo Academicus"  
and The Chances of Its Evolution In Current Hungarian Higher Education

*Dániel Deák*

*Corvinus University of Budapest, Department of Business Law*

*e-mail: daniel.deak@uni-corvinus.hu*

ABSTRACT

In the recent four or five years, there have been abrupt and radical changes in the governance of Hungarian higher education. It can then be interesting to assess the state of "homo academicus" as it looks currently in Hungary. The notion of "homo academicus" is obvious: it concerns participants in the system of a country's higher education. The paper as follows still comes back to the definition of "homo academicus" by referring first to it as occupation, or rather as a profession that can be interpreted in terms of sociology. Secondly, some historic patterns can also be mobilised, based on the assumption that university is a very European institutions that is even rooted in the tradition of the Middle Ages.

The elbow-room of seeking for identity and the role to be filled by academics are limited by the effective system of the governance of higher education. It is a key to the chances of academics of meeting the historically corroborated professional standards that they exercise academic freedom. As it cannot be done individually, but in cooperation (through a collegial system), academic freedom is always combined with collective action. The field where this freedom can be exercised can be specified through university autonomy, the lack of which makes a serious barrier to the full development of a character of "homo academicus". This is now the case in Hungary, the paper suggests.

The paper seeks to gain deeper understanding of the character of academics, their vocation and professional roles, and the governance of higher education, serving as the environment for academic activity, by creating a conceptual framework. The paper is established on the results of sociological research and the experience of legal management, although it remains to be of theoretical nature. It criticises the current Hungarian situation of the governance of higher education, arguing for the reconstruction of university autonomy and financial stability. It also emphasises the importance of predictable regulations.

KEY TERMS

They are as follows: vocation of academics – historic patterns of academic behaviour – professional autonomy – structure and logic of academic institutions – academic knowledge, serving leadership – crisis of science – governance of higher education – academic freedom – university autonomy – illiberal democracy – market opportunism – bureaucratic coordination – career opportunities of academics

## I. Approaching the idea of "homo academicus"

The study of academia is an intricate subject because those are examined – the academics – whose very function is to seek for truth. In this respect, it is not interesting of what conclusions can be drawn from research, but what happens to the researcher. The question is therefore not of what is to know about, but of how to get knowledge about what is known.

It would be naive to think about that social practice could purely be analysed from an isolated point of view, by instrumental rationality, free of value-judgment. Society means grouping and integration, the functioning of which is based on some empathy, or even compassion and solidarity, and on the assumption of equality, even if at a level of high abstraction. Social practice is established on patterns of integration, like redistribution, self-regulation and reciprocity. Upon the operation of these patterns, social structures are developed in line with the distribution of capital and power that are theorised in the process of social production. It is not enough to hold a position in society. It is also necessary to justify it. Then, physical place transforms itself into social space.

People are able to become part of social integration because they share with each other ideas of what they think about the reality that surrounds their lives. Official structures are complemented by personal commitments and explanations. Social events are not simply caused, but happenings are also imputed to different values of verification. Integration can be ensured by the balance to be achieved between systems and their environment.

Higher education is one of the above-mentioned subsystems. It can be expected to work properly if it is able to organise itself according to their own values. The academic activity is frequently influenced, or even distorted from outside. In particular, politics can be dangerous because it threatens impartiality, required for research. Further, the impact of economy on the sphere of academia can also be problematic if it makes scholars opportunistic. Academics may thus be subject to the dangers of ideological prejudices or they can be oriented towards profit-seeking. In both cases, they may lose their ability to be unbiased and critical against the reality they experience. Autonomy means freedom from all influences that can depart scholarly decisions from the only ambition of seeking for truth.

The values that legitimise academic work cannot be formed in a monological way, but through discourse, discussions and agreements. Academic autonomy is not given to individuals, but to the groups of academics. University autonomy suggests independence, which is, however, not preserved for individuals. The idea of independence is combined with collectivity, i.e., with communities in action. There is no academic activity without university autonomy. This is a conclusion that can be taken for granted, and has been shared since decades by international agencies and professional bodies all over the world.<sup>1</sup>

## II. Patterns of academic profession

### 1. The metaphysics of academic knowledge

Charles Péguy is quoted by Pierre Bourdieu that “Historians don’t want to write a history of historians. ... They don’t want to be part of the historic order. It’s as if doctors didn’t want to fall

---

<sup>1</sup> “The universities and other institutions are expected to create knowledge; to improve equity; and to respond to student needs – and to do so more efficiently. They are increasingly competing for students, research funds and academic staff – both with the private sector and internationally. In this more complex environment direct management by governments is no longer appropriate.” Chapter 3: “Changing patters of governance in higher education“, in: *Education policy analysis*, OECD, Paris, 2003, p. 60.

ill and die."<sup>2</sup> This is to follow Emile Durkheim: "It is history which is the true unconscious."<sup>3</sup> The practice of historians may also be true for academics who are not willing to do research on what is academic activity itself. The study of academic activity appears to be vivisection.

Bourdieu has the idea that "homo academicus" is the supreme classifier among classifiers. This is because to understand the character of "homo academicus" also means to grasp the subject of cognition. The inclusion of the subject of cognition in the process of cognition entails the problem that biased considerations cannot be excluded. As Bourdieu puts it, the partial and partisan views of the agents engaged in the game are part of the objective truth of this game.<sup>4</sup> Hans Jonas plainly asserts that "life can only be known by life".<sup>5</sup>

It can hardly be possible to distinguish between practical and scholarly knowledge because there are obstacles caused by excessive proximity. In these circumstances, the difference between the positions of insiders and outsiders is blurred. The researcher needs to transcend the alternatives of the objectivist vision of objective classification, and the subjectivist, or better, perspectivist vision.<sup>6</sup> Even if knowledge is obtained, it must be communicated through reification, which is a further source of distorted knowledge.

In the process of cognition, the structures to be perceived are to be internalised. As the subject and agent of cognition influence each other, reflection must be developed in study that opens room for reflexive sociology.<sup>7</sup> Ignoring these difficulties of cognition would result in partial insight that leads to a naively finalist view of history.<sup>8</sup>

A university may be considered as a space of living for those who are the friends of wisdom. Exploring it, academics are expected to distribute a wide variety of material justice, giving help to their students with gaining access to utilities. A university can also be considered as an institution, which does not only counsel students in material justice, but which also provides them with the good method of finding their own ways and means inside and outside the university. Then, students do not receive complete knowledge, although they are assisted in developing their own skills in answering the questions they meet.

---

<sup>2</sup> Charles Péguy, *L'Argent*, Gallimard, Paris, 1932; Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo academicus* (translated by Peter Collier), Stanford University Press, Stanford, CAL, 1988, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Emile Durkheim, "The evolution and the role of secondary education in France"; in: *Education and sociology* (transl. by Sherwood D. Fox), Free Press, New York, 1956, pp. 152-153; Bourdieu, *Homo academicus*, op.cit. p. xi.

<sup>4</sup> See: "... although they are never more than particular angles of vision, taken from points of view which the objectivist analysis situs constitutes as such, the partial and partisan views of the agents engaged in the game, and the individual or collective struggles through which they aim to impose these views, are part of the objective truth of this game, playing an active part in sustaining or transforming it, within the limits set by the objective constraints." Bourdieu, *Homo academicus*, loc.cit. p. xiv.

<sup>5</sup> Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of life*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1966, p. 91.

<sup>6</sup> "We cannot in fact dissociate the intention to establish the structure of the university field, a space with several dimensions, constructed on the basis of the whole set of the powers which can prove effective at any particular moment in competitive struggles, from the intention to describe the logic of the struggles which derive their principle from this structure and aim to preserve or transform it by redefining the hierarchy of powers (and therefore of criteria)." Bourdieu, loc.cit. p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> See: "... for the researcher anxious to know what he is doing, the code changes from an instrument of analysis to an object of analysis: the objectified product of the work of codification becomes, under his self-reflexive gaze, the immediately readable trace of the operation of construction of the object ..." Bourdieu, *Homo academicus*, loc.cit. pp. 7-8.

<sup>8</sup> Bourdieu, op.cit. pp. 2-3.

As noticed by Kant,<sup>9</sup> philosophy belongs to the lower faculties, in contrast to theology, law and medicine, the higher faculties. The latter rely still on the former to the extent that the function of philosophy is to seek for objective truth, which is a preliminary condition for getting access to the utilities that can in turn be gained from the study of higher faculties. This is the optimism of the era of enlightenment that cannot necessarily be shared currently, although the values represented by Kant are to be persevered.<sup>10</sup>

For Max Weber, the point to deal with sciences is that academics specialise themselves in a discipline.<sup>11</sup> Scientific activity cannot be isolated from the assumption of progress, which provides scholars with a horizon in their operation. This is what distinguishes sciences from the arts because, in the context of the latter, progress is a concept that cannot be interpreted.<sup>12</sup> Scholarly activity should be independent of outward influences, whether arising from God or from the political power. It should be solely based on the scholar's calculation of technical nature.<sup>13</sup> As the hard core of the vocation of scholars is independence in reflections and calculations, sovereignty in decisions is indispensable. Individual sovereignty should then be complemented by institutional autonomy, otherwise the individual freedom of scholars would run into vacuum.

Sciences are not interpreted with Max Weber as if they were free of value-judgments. Neither are they supposed to be neutral. The point to to scholarly activity and vocation is innovation, different from practical utilities.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. Professional autonomy

From a sociological perspective, occupation means the pursuit of a profession, that is, integration into bureaucratically organised social mechanisms.<sup>15</sup> Being a member of a profession means independence in the Western part of the world after the French revolution, that is,

---

<sup>9</sup> „Also wird die philosophische Fakultät darum, weil sie für die Wahrheit der Lehren, die sie aufnehmen oder auch nur einräumen soll, stehen muß, insofern als frei und nur unter der Gesetzgebung der Vernunft, nicht der Regierung stehend gedacht werden müssen. Auf einer Universität muß aber auch ein solches Departement gestiftet, d. h. es muß eine philosophische Fakultät sein. In Anbetracht der drei oberen dient sie dazu, sie zu kontrollieren und ihnen eben dadurch nützlich zu werden, weil auf Wahrheit, (der wesentlichen und ersten Bedingung der Gelehrsamkeit überhaupt,) alles ankommt; die Nützlichkeit aber, welche die oberen Fakultäten zum Zweck der Regierung versprechen, nur ein Moment von zweitem Rang ist.“ Erster Abschnitt. Der Streit der philosophischen Facultät mit der theologischen; I. Vom Verhältnisse der Facultäten; Zweiter Abschnitt. Begriff und Eintheilung der unteren Facultät, Absatz 1 und 2. I. Kant, Streit der Fakultäten (1798) *Immanuel Kants Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 7, Ausgabe Hartenstein, Leipzig, 1868.

<sup>10</sup> As the world of academia is being changed, the university does not necessarily represent longer an institution that promotes the values of instrumental rationality, progress, and individual capacity of performance and development. John W. Meyer, Evan Schofer, “The University in Europe and the World: Twentieth Century Expansion“, in: Krücken, Kosmützky u. a. (Hrsg.) *Towards a Multiversity?* Transcript-Verlag, Bielefeld, 2007, S. 45–62; Georg Krücken, “Denkanstöße; Die Universität – ein rationaler Mythos?“, *Beiträge zur Hochschulforschung*, 35. Jahrgang, 4/2013, p. 86.

<sup>11</sup> Max Weber, „Wissenschaft als Beruf“, *Max Weber Schriften, 1894 – 1922*; Ausgewählt und herausgegeben von Dirk Kaesler, Kröner, Stuttgart, 2002, p. 482.

<sup>12</sup> „Jeder von uns ... in der Wissenschaft weiß, dass das, was er gearbeitet hat, in 10, 20, 50 Jahren veraltet ist. Das ist das Schicksal, ja: das ist der Sinn der Arbeit der Wissenschaft, dem sie, in ganz spezifischem Sinne gegenüber allen anderen Kulturelementen, für die es sonst noch gilt, unterworfen und hingegeben ist: jede wissenschaftliche »Erfüllung« bedeutet neue »Fragen« und will »überboten« werden und veralten. Damit hat sich jeder abzufinden, der der Wissenschaft dienen will.“ Ibid. pp. 486-487.

<sup>13</sup> „Die zunehmende Intellektualisierung und Rationalisierung bedeutet also nicht eine zunehmende allgemeine Kenntnis der Lebensbedingungen, unter denen man steht. Sondern sie bedeutet etwas anderes: das Wissen davon oder den Glauben daran: dass man, wenn man nur wollte, es jederzeit erfahren könnte, dass es also prinzipiell keine geheimnisvollen unberechenbaren Mächte gebe, die da hineinspielen, dass man vielmehr alle Dinge – im Prinzip – durch Berechnen beherrschen könne.“ Ibid. p. 488.

<sup>14</sup> Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht: „Die Aufgabe der Geisteswissenschaften heute“, in: *Präsenz*, Suhrkamp, Berlin 2012, S. 153–154.

liberation from the hierarchies of feudalism. While being regulated, a modern profession lacks the strict rules of guilds that precluded competition.

Professional activity is yet part of the professional practice, which is presupposed by comprehensive regulation. The major components of the professional practice are relevant knowledge, competence in problem solving, and understanding the social environment of a profession and the professional spirit. Normally, the rules of a profession do not come from the outside world, but they are the product of practicing the profession itself. A profession cannot be recognised by what a professional does, but rather by the way, in which a professional takes part in the practice of his or her profession.<sup>16</sup>

A profession is constrained by its own rules, but it also enjoys autonomy in determining how its representatives subject themselves to those rules, and how they interpret the profession itself. There has been a dense net of professional rules, by which individual autonomies are constrained within the profession. Following the rules of a profession means limits, indeed. These rules, however, cannot be considered as instructions. Instead, they are standards that are the posts of guidance rather than strict regulations. Being part of a profession means boundaries, while it also suggests an elbow-room for its members who establish their career independently.<sup>17</sup>

Knowledge and sciences are described by Talcott Parsons in terms of a system of institutionalised professional roles. It is a component of modern institutional patterns that “Professional authority, like other elements of the professional pattern, is characterized by ‘specificity of function.’ The technical competence which is one of the principal defining characteristics of the professional status and role is always limited to a particular ‘field’ of knowledge and skill.”<sup>18</sup> Other explanations of institutional justification can rely on the circumstances that are relevant both out of the scope of contractual relationships (or, e.g., kinship) and in respect of holding administrative office: “The degree of differentiation of these specific spheres of authority and obligation from the more diffuse types of social relation – like those of kinship and generalized loyalty to ‘leaders’ – which we enjoy is most unusual in human societies, and calls for highly specific explanation.”<sup>19</sup>

Professions can be identified in the context of the social structure by referring to the distinctive components that approach a kind of disinterestedness, in contrast to the business behaviour, driven by the motive of seeking for profit: “While there is a variety of reasons why disinterestedness is of great functional significance to the modern professions, there is equally impressive evidence for the role of rationality, functional specificity and universalism.”<sup>20</sup> The importance of universalism can be highlighted as follows: “Where technical competence, the technical impartiality of the administration of an office and the like are of primary functional importance, it is essential that particularistic considerations should not enter into the bases of

---

<sup>15</sup> Asa Kasher, “Professional ethics and collective professional autonomy: A conceptual analysis“, *Ethical Perspectives*, Vol. 11, No. 1/2005, p. 67.

<sup>16</sup> Kasher, op.cit. pp. 73-75.

<sup>17</sup> Kasher, op.cit. p. 94. Furthermore, professionalisation can be determined “as a process that can be analyzed using the so-called escalator model: first a school is established, then an association, then examinations, then licensing, then an ethics code, and finally the occupation arrives at its destination. Others place more emphasis on autonomy, expertise, a body of knowledge as defining concepts of professionals.” Jim Allen, Rolf van der Veld (Eds.), *The Flexible professional in the knowledge society: General results of the REFLEX project*, Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market Maastricht, October 2007, p. xi; Harald Schomburg, Chapter 2: “The professional work of graduates“, in Allen, Rolf van der Veld (Eds.), *The Flexible Professional in the Knowledge*, op.cit. pp. 57-58.

<sup>18</sup> Talcott Parsons, “The professions and social structure“, *Social Forces*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (May1939); p. 460.

<sup>19</sup> Talcott Parsons, “The professions and social structure“, loc.cit. p. 461.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 463.

judgment too much. The institutional insulation from social structures where particularism is dominant is one way in which this can be accomplished.“<sup>21</sup>

It can be drawn from the analysis of Parsons that the operation of society cannot be sufficiently explained by referring to the simple motive of “homo oeconomicus“, that is, to making money and being egoistic. A social structure is always much more complicated, in particular at the modern times where rational calculations go beyond traditionalism. This is also true for the business conduct. The functions that corroborate the mechanisms of social production are crucial. In this respect, it is useful to try to gain more understanding of how professions operate, based on their standards. Here, the character of “homo academicus“ is obviously relevant, the functional specificity of which is to create and disseminate specialised knowledge.

Following Parsons, Eliot Freidson asserts that a profession is the carrier of the relevant knowledge that has been developed in a society.<sup>22</sup> Role-specific knowledge can be ascertained not only as the body of professions, but it can also be considered as a means of enforcing the claims for acquiring social positions. Professions are, in other words, the institutionalised instruments of formal knowledge, which suggests more than special or even specialised knowledge. It is a barrier to the profession’s integrity. The professional spirit can be identified through the acknowledgment of formal knowledge, relevant to a particular profession. A profession is more than simply an occupation, because, in addition to practitioners, one can find university professors as well who supervise the process of producing formal knowledge. Even professional knowledge can be depreciated down to the level of applied knowledge, which is why only the academics and scholars possess the pure knowledge relevant to the profession.<sup>23</sup>

The pursuit of a profession must be put in a social context, so that none remains simply a matter of technical rationality, or a positivist epistemology of practice. An alternative for the mere use by professionals of technical rationality is the reflective one. Reflection goes beyond what is routine and rigour in the practitioner’s everyday life, suggesting orientation towards what is relevant to the social environment, towards the praxis of a profession, and towards the personal commitments of practitioners. The reflective rationality of practitioners consists of the moments of “refection-in-action” and “reflection-on-action”.<sup>24</sup>

In the context of distinguishing between technical and reflective rationality, a learning system model can be compared to classical models for the diffusion of innovation. In the non-classical case, the unit of innovation is a functional system, rather than a pattern of diffusion, based on the centre-periphery relationship. Message is evolving rather than stable. The scope of diffusion is limited by infrastructure technology rather than by the capacity of resource and energy. Feedback loops do not move from secondary to property centres, but they operate locally and universally throughout the systems network.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. 463.

<sup>22</sup> E. Freidson, “Knowledge and the practice of sociology“, *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 1, No. 4/1986, p. 685.

<sup>23</sup> Freidson, op.cit. pp. 689-690.

<sup>24</sup> Reflection-in-action involves using analysis of observation, listening or touch our "feel" to problem solve. It therefore sounds a lot like clinical reasoning where the problem solving leads to a change in the practitioner’s view of self, values and beliefs. Its focus is on gaining a new perspective, rather than just solving the problem. Reflection-on-action happens at some time after the situation has occurred. According to Donald Schön: “We reflect on action, thinking back on what we have done in order to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome”. D. Schon, *The reflective practitioner; How professionals think in action*, Temple Smith, London, 1983, p. 26.

<sup>25</sup> Mark K. Smith, *Donald Schön: learning, reflection and change*, INFED, YMCA George Williams College ([www.infed.org/thinkers/et-schon.htm](http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-schon.htm), 2001, retrieved on 8 December 2014).



Freidson describes the status of an academic by being engaged in teaching and doing research. He argues that the two roles are inseparable from each other. Research can hardly give existential independence as there are no clients from whom it would be possible to earn. The publication of papers gives, however, prestige and the possibility to exercise influence on the whole profession. Professors earn regularly and have clients, that is, the students, but, they do not enjoy as much prestige as scholars.<sup>26</sup> One can add to the observations of Freidson that, in the world of academia, the historical model of clerical intellectuals has been valid to date who teach and do research at the same time, and who can do that because, being under the auspices of the (Catholic) Church, enjoy freedom from feudal powers.<sup>27</sup>

Importantly, a profession can be described not only by the roles to be filled by the members of the profession, but also by the interests they have in obtaining various positions in professional organisations, and by the identity to be developed in relation to the position held. From a perspective of functionalism, a profession means the creation and dissemination through professional roles of formal knowledge, and, from a perspective of organisational positions, the identity authentically represented by the competent professional bodies.<sup>28</sup>

As learning systems have been explored, in which knowledge is not diffused hierarchically, but depending on, how a system can contribute to corroborating mechanisms that are able to maintain relative integrity and to draw sustenance within the system against extreme environmental fluctuation, changes in the nature of academic work can also be highlighted. The academia can also operate as a functional subsystem, neutralising environmental fluctuation. Communities of academics organise themselves through implementing projects, and achieving coherence in the values that are developed in an effective system where the knowledge that has been diffused is relevant.

### 3. Professionalisation of business

Paradoxically, academic bodies are at the end of a series of professions that have preserved some spirit of guilds. They desperately need autonomy, and guilds are established on the principle of self-governance, indeed. It can also happen that academics are not happy either if liberated from out-of-economic coercion, but they are subject at the same time to the laws of narrow-minded instrumental rationality and the laws of market opportunism. Holding liberal professions, e.g., doctors or lawyers can become independent on the market. This may still be too much liberal for scholars.

They can liberate themselves from the ties of politics and ideology by vindicating themselves the role of jongleurs, effective since the Middle Ages. They cannot liberate themselves if they are subject to the self-regulating market, however. While seceding from the hierarchies of the non-academic world, they have been successful in bringing over to modernity the spirit of

---

<sup>26</sup> Freidson, op.cit. p. 692.

<sup>27</sup> The definition of what it means to be an academic has been greatly broadened. “Science as a ‘Vocation’ clearly looks different at the beginning of the 21st century as compared to Weber’s seminal description. Georg Krücken, Albrecht Blümel, Katharina Kloke, “The Managerial turn in higher education? On the interplay of organizational and occupational change in German Academia“, *Minerva*, Vol. 51, 2013, p. 437. Concerning Germany, “the first assumption is that the development of management capacities goes hand in hand with the more intensive recruitment of specialised management staff and thus with a growth in non-academic staff. The second assumption is related to the staff hired in the process of the managerial turn. One can assume that the managerial turn in higher education is accompanied by strong recruitment of people from the private sector. It is assumed that middle managers have strong ambitions to increase their amount of control, particularly vis-a`-vis academics.“ Ibid. p. 419.

<sup>28</sup> Freidson, op.cit. p. 698.

jongleurs from the Middle Ages, a set of values, which are of pre-capitalist origin, but which have been effective even to date.

Holding professions is different from merely holding market-based positions. Even under free-trade capitalism, professional decisions must go beyond the consideration of seeking for profit. Society is more complicated, being filled by specific functions to be exercised by the particular groups of professions or other civil organisations. Despite the trends of commercialisation, unification and globalisation, academics have preserved to date relative independence that is even greater than the authority that can be exercised in other professions. This development envisages conflicts between the academic sphere and the market economy.

Business management provides an interesting example for that it is not always easy to develop a branch of activity into a profession. The idea of management as a profession is plainly manifested in the proposed Hippocratic oath of managers.<sup>29</sup> Business management must not remain unregulated. Business activities must not be motivated merely by seeking for profit. They should be ennobled, and developed within the frames of a profession, or even a vocation. Louis Brandeis realised already in 1912<sup>30</sup> that the scope of recognised professions was being broadened (see in that respect, for example, the profession of engineers). Although we have been experiencing the time when capital is concentrated in the process of production, property is dispersed in terms of a large number of shareholders, and capital is built in the administrative system of the monopolised power of special knowledge, the process in which business management is converted into a profession has not yet been completed.

The formalisation of special skills and knowledge has not yet reached a level necessary for the creation of business management as a profession. The theory of corporate finance, for example, has already been developed, but this discipline has not been able sufficiently to reflect the requirements arising from the social environment of corporate functioning. While elaborating sophisticated methods of measuring risks, profits, costs and benefits, the theory of corporate finance has forgotten about the fact that business decisions cannot be made in a socially empty place, devoid of human deliberations that can hardly be directly converted into econometric formulae.

The opportunity cost of decisions must be interpreted not only as a matter incurring financial costs. It is also important to understand that business decisions place on the participants of markets social burdens as well. A profession can be located in a sphere where special knowledge is used, in the process of which those who pursue a profession leave the realm of mere egoism and cease to be bound to categories that can be measured according to the laws of the market only. Whether someone is successful depends not only on the fact whether the decision-maker himself or herself is better off or not. It is also important that all parties involved in the bargain must be better off. It is superior to go beyond mere egoism than being bound to individual strategies because building up personal connections and gaining better understanding of others can enhance the benefits of each social player.

The compensation paid for the professional performance must not directly depend on how successful the professional proxy was in the matter, in which he or she assisted his or her principal. If such a direct link existed, the matter of reward would be exaggerated, although financial compensation for the professional work performed is in fact accidental to the assessment of this performance. The real success should be more durable and comprehensive than it could be

---

<sup>29</sup> Rakesh Khurana, Nitin Nohria, "It's time to make management a true profession" *Harvard Business Review*, October 2008, pp. 72–73.

<sup>30</sup> L.D. Brandeis, "Business – as a profession (An address delivered at Brown University Commencement Day, 1912)", *System*, October 1912.

expressed from time to time in terms of financial compensation. It is a matter of balance to be achieved between humans that cannot be merely subject to quantitative measurement, as what is reached is also a matter of agreement that cannot be simply expressed in monetary terms.

Indeed, in the business life, profit is a principle of generating success by and large. One has to acknowledge as well that sustaining permanent losses is clearly a failure. Large profits, however, do not necessarily mean that one is successful. It is thus quite easy to describe whether someone is successful in the business life in negative terms. Nevertheless, once it is required to use positive terms and suggest what it does mean to be successful, it is not enough to refer to the categories of profitability and efficiency. To be successful means a type of harmony one can achieve with others in particular social conditions. This is a kind of complexity that cannot be described simply by econometric categories. Brandeis contends that “‘Big business’ will (...) mean business big not in bulk or power, but great in service and grand in manner. ‘Big business’ will mean professionalised business, as distinguished from the occupation of petty trafficking or mere moneymaking.”<sup>31</sup>

A profession, representing more than simply carrying on commercial activities, implies a double nature that consists of both instrumental rationality and a way of thinking open to transcendent values. Upon the assessment of the possibility of conversion from the simple business management into profession, it is important to criticise instrumental rationality. Sumantra Ghoshal describes it by the overestimated use of explanation based on causal effects, by conducting research while getting lost in details and by the destructive mentality driven by mistrust and the blind faith in seeking for the mere financial interests.<sup>32</sup> It is pure negativity just to take cognisance of bounded rationality and the possible reduction of costs. It is then naive just to believe that there are exact scientific methods in doing in-depth analysis of the right economic conduct.

Those who are not aware of the organised complexity appearing in a society are able to practice only the pretence of sciences. There are strict limits on the knowledge about society and on the institutional interference of the state with social processes, Hayek argues (Hayek 1974).<sup>33</sup> He contends that “The recognition of the insuperable limits to his knowledge ought indeed to teach the student of society a lesson of humility which should guard him against becoming an accomplice in men’s fatal striving to control society – a striving which makes him not only a tyrant over his fellows, but which may well make him the destroyer of a civilization which no brain has designed but which has grown from the free efforts of millions of individuals.”

The above words of Hayek do not only constitute warning for economists, but also for academics. Academics may be aware of the limits on the knowledge that is applied to conquer what is unknown. Scholars may not only refer to the limits on the market performance, but also to those on human cognition. Seeking for the correspondence of knowledge to the real world may then be replaced by theories that can be legitimised because they are formulated in a way that they manifest themselves as plausible and authentic.

#### 4. Contradictory attributes of academic behaviour, conflicts with stakeholders, combination of independence and cooperation

One has to acknowledge “that the ideal of academic freedom and predominantly collegial coordination was upheld, but that the academic profession has come under enormous pressures

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ghoshal, “Bad management theories are destroying good management practices“, *Academy of Management, Learning & Education*, Vol. 4, No. 1/2005, p. 76.

<sup>33</sup> Friedrich A. Hayek, “The pretence of knowledge“, *Lecture to the memory of Alfred Nobel*, 11 December 1974.

potentially endangering the survival of the core identity of academics and universities.<sup>34</sup> At the era of massification (the institutions of higher education go through the process of bringing their performance to a mass audience), internationalisation and digitalisation, it is thus all the more difficult to maintain in the current world of academia the very values that legitimise academic activity.<sup>35</sup>

Academic institutions have become dual in their organisation where institutions of management have been built, in parallel to each other: “Altogether, the dominant descriptions depict university organisation as dual: the collegium (an ascription which often occluded the great power of the ordinarius) and the hierarchy/bureaucracy which constitute the Janus face of university organisation. The changing tasks of higher education have led to changes in internal power relationships.”<sup>36</sup> It is still noteworthy that “In continental Europe decentralisation has reduced formalistic central power in favour of market behaviour and normative control through evaluation.”<sup>37</sup>

Academic activities are more and more diverse: “It is probably an oversimplification to say that in the past academic tasks meant two main tasks: teaching and research.”<sup>38</sup> There is evolution in the contents of tasks during career trajectories: “experimentations are generally achieved by doctoral students and post-docs under the supervision of the maîtres de conférences (tenured assistants/ associate professors), while the professors raise funds, develop contacts, write project proposals. Thus, the seniors are less and less in contact with concrete scientific work.”<sup>39</sup>

It is a challenge to academics that they have to meet increased controls over academic activities: “The university is no longer a place welcoming and sheltering academic activities, it has more and more taken over the role of an employer. The affiliation (or sentiment of affiliation) to one’s institution is progressively transformed into work relationships.”<sup>40</sup> In the above depicted

---

<sup>34</sup> Maurice Kogan, Ulrich Teichler, Chapter 1: “Key challenges to the academic profession and its interface with management: Some introductory thoughts”; in: Maurice Kogan, Ulrich Teichler (Eds.), *Key challenges to the academic profession; Werkstattberichte*, INCHER, Kassel, 2007, p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> “Whereas the highest goal of the traditional academy was to create fundamental knowledge, what has been described as the ‘scholarship of discovery’, the new emphasis of the knowledge society is on useful knowledge or the ‘scholarship of application’.” Maurice Kogan, Ulrich Teichler, Chapter 1: “Key challenges to the academic profession and its interface with management: Some introductory thoughts”, loc.cit. p. 10; John Brennan, Chapter 2: “The academic profession and increasing expectations of relevance”; in: Maurice Kogan, Ulrich Teichler (Eds.), *Key challenges to the academic profession*, op.cit. p. 19. Further, many factors constituting the crisis “are linked to the massification of higher education (and of the academic profession as a consequence) and to the critical perceptions on science: on the one side, scientific progress can be depicted as dangerous, on the other scientific results are open to controversy by public opinion, while at the same time the access to knowledge has increased and is shared by more people than before, thus weakening the status of the scientists. Both processes transform the situation of the academic profession in our societies: holding an academic position is no longer rare.” Christine Musselin, Chapter 12: “Transformation of academic work: Facts and analysis”, Maurice Kogan, Ulrich Teichler (Eds.), *Key challenges to the academic profession*, op.cit. p. 175.

<sup>36</sup> Maurice Kogan, Ulrich Teichler, Chapter 1: “Key challenges to the academic profession and its interface with management: Some introductory thoughts”, loc.cit. p. 13.

<sup>37</sup> Maurice Kogan, Ulrich Teichler, Chapter 1: “Key challenges to the academic profession and its interface with management: Some introductory thoughts”, loc.cit. p. 14.

<sup>38</sup> Christine Musselin, Chapter 12: “Transformation of academic work: Facts and analysis”, Maurice Kogan, Ulrich Teichler (Eds.), *Key challenges to the academic profession*, op.cit. p. 176. “Writing proposals, developing contracts, elaborating e-learning programmes, being engaged in technology transfers, etc. are part of the tasks achieved by faculty members nowadays and they are no longer considered as peripheral, not compelling and secondary, but recognised as important aspects of academic work.” Ibid. p. 177.

<sup>39</sup> Christine Musselin, Chapter 12: “Transformation of academic work: Facts and analysis”, loc.cit. p. 178.

<sup>40</sup> Christine Musselin, Chapter 12: “Transformation of academic work: Facts and analysis”, loc.cit. p. 180. To the extent that academic activity is subject to industrialisation, it is all the more difficult to preserve the academic character: “Although higher education, in many countries, remained a craft activity even after massification, this is progressively

conditions, there appears to be less room for innovation, and it is all the less possible for academics to enjoy sovereignty in their decisions.<sup>41</sup>

Academics are not only expected to transform standards, but they are also the subject of creating cultural values. Although they cannot avoid being addressed by regulations applicable to bodies of professionals, they enjoy more individual freedom than acknowledged as normal in other professions. Genuine research – part of the work of academics – can hardly be the subject of planning, regulation and administration because it is quite normal while doing research that unexpected results of the work of research will appear. The spirit of academic life is very special because of the special roles to be filled by academics. The scholarly work is less able to tolerate discipline than the case may be with other professions.

An academic may be considered as a good citizen who is willing to respect the rules of fair play. He or she has still preserved something from a world of jongleurs, a character who remains out of the scope of bourgeois regulations. In the Western tradition, academics are clerical intellectuals, proud of their independence, but willing to accept a set of the rules of game to be followed at the university (being subject to an academic system of promotion, disciplines, curricula, etc.). Yet, to be an academic also suggests that his or her activity cannot be subsumed under the scope of bureaucratic regulations. In this respect, a typical academic is provided with at least two attributes that contradict each other.

Academics are part of a formalised system of academic life, they cannot be considered to be academics, however, unless they also enjoy independence both in education and research to an extent that is more than accepted in other professions. The academic behaviour is formal and informal at the same time, reflecting the respect of regulations and exercising independence simultaneously. To fill this role, important decisions are to be taken in a sovereign way. Decisions will then only become autonomous if supported by the university autonomy.<sup>42</sup>

It is also part of the character of a typical academic that although they exercise individual freedom, they do not do their work individually, separated from each other. Education and doing research suggest cooperation. The academic values will only be developed upon lively discussions both with colleagues and students. The necessary combination of freedom and cooperation triggers the requirement of university autonomy. The identity of academics can only be formulated through actions carried on together. The collective nature of academic activity has been more manifest in the current world of globalisation and digitalisation.

---

changing. Even if still far from an industrial activity, some features of industrialisation can be observed, if one defines it as the passage from craft production of ad-hoc products to the production of mass products through organised production processes through three mechanisms: specialisation of tasks, rationalisation and normalisation.“ Ibid. p. 182.

<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, due to blurring of the boundaries within the spheres of academia, the state and the market, there is the adoption by a number of countries of the so-called foresight policies. Foresight is “a process for bringing together scientists, industrialists, government officials and others to identify the areas of strategic research and the emerging technologies likely to yield the greatest economic and social benefits.”; “The process thus entails a reconciliation between ‘science-push’ and ‘market-pull’ models of the science-technology relationship.“ Mary Henkel, Chapter 13: “Shifting boundaries and the academic profession“, Maurice Kogan, Ulrich Teichler (Eds.), Key challenges to the academic profession, op.cit. pp. 192-193.

<sup>42</sup> “Five more or less distinct types of profession are distinguished, namely business and social science experts (e.g. psychologists, business professionals; 29% of working graduates), science and technology experts (e.g. engineers; 20%), semi-professionals (e.g. teachers and nurses; 20%), classical professions (e.g. medical doctors; 9%), and managers (8%). Only around 13% of all graduates were non-professionals (e.g. clerks).“ Jim Allen, Rolf van der Veld (Eds.), The flexible professional in the knowledge society, op.cit. p. xii; Harald Schomburg, Chapter 2: “The professional work of graduates“, im Allen, Rolf van der Veld (Eds.), The flexible professional in the knowledge society, op.cit. p. 63.

Where autonomy is exercised, conflicts between the university and its social environment is inevitable. This is quite normal not only in the modern system of representative democracy, but even this was also the case already at the university of the Middle Ages. As academics enjoy elbowroom, conflicts between them and other stakeholders can frequently occur. The latter cannot only consist of the representatives of the church or the state that own an institution of higher education, but also of the agents of companies as possible sponsors that bring forward their considerations that are formulated from a business perspective, very different from that of academe.

## 5. Historic patterns

It may be important not only to involve professional standards in business decisions, but also to try to benefit from the lesson to be drawn from the so-called liberal arts. The pursuit of the Seven Free Arts suggests more than mere professional recognition, as they negotiate originally universal values, not subject to necessities.<sup>43</sup> Becoming a professional suggests a possibility of leaving the world of mere pragmatism.

In a modern society, professions mean independence, being present in the market of the services they supply. They make use of their specialised knowledge and are paid for the application of this knowledge to business matters. Due to their presence in the market economy, professionals are able to provide their services independently of systemic state intervention, still in competition with each other. On the contrary, in a pre-capitalist society, professionals are part of the historically determined systems of personal dependences that are organised by non-economic institutions like the state or the magistrates of guilds. Despite their subordination to non-economic factors, professionals are not necessarily precluded from exercising their vocation, while working as the masters of the work assigned to them. Necessity may be combined with the personal elevation of professional activities to the higher level of a vocation.

Professionals may always aspire to become the masters of their work. To do that, it is not enough for them just to establish financial independence. They also need spiritual and moral freedom, getting rid of the narrow-minded perspective of merely looking for profit. To that end, they must develop and preserve the inherent logic and integrity of their profession, no matter if they are successful in the real life.

The historic patterns of the Western-type educated professionals are the intellectuals emerging in Europe in the Middle Ages. One of the early examples that may encourage modern professionals comes from the Cluniac movement. The monks of Cluny, and later a European-wide network of Benedictine monasteries, introduced new standards for the monastic life, consisting not only of the programme of spiritual and moral purification, but also of the idea that there could be different ways of approaching the only God. The reforms of Cluny operating in the 12th century were completed by the autonomy movements of local communities, organised in the 13th century against the feudal lords.

City states of Northern Italy and Germany were developed as the islands of freedom in the sea of feudalism (“die städtische Luft macht frei”). Urban life suggested a matter of locality, compared to the comprehensive territorial jurisdiction of the feudal lords. The enhancement of the logic of locality in organising professional life was helpful in avoiding the alienation effect of higher powers, and developing mutual insight and the respect of one’s neighbour. Thus, the supply

---

<sup>43</sup> Otto Willmann, “The seven liberal arts“, in: *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1907 (retrieved on 9 February 2009 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01760a.htm>).

of professional services required personal performance and devotion, underlying the technicalities of carrying on professional activities.

The city provided room for the universities founded already in 13th century. Their staff was recruited from the clerical intellectuals, being simultaneously engaged in teaching and doing research. In fact, they were widely subject to professional regulations. They were, for example, obliged to respect the different rules of conducting discussions on different matters. On the other hand, they benefited from their privileges to obtain independence they found in the shadow of the permanent conflicts, which were prevalent between feudal lords and the Catholic Church. Being clericals, they were, by definition, approximate to spirituality. At the same time, they represented a link to the created world by developing professional rules. One can admire the harmony they could form between spirituality and the immanent world.

The clerical intellectuals were not far from the group of the “jongleurs” (troubadours, “ioculatori”) who were also successful in seceding from the official hierarchies of the feudal society. While maintaining their roots to spirituality, they were integral parts of the every-day life. They enjoyed freedom paradoxically due to the fact that they appeared in the guise of clowns and, as such, they were not recognised as full members of the official society.

One of the famous examples for the scene of their presence is the “Roman de la Rose”, ascribed to Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, a work of the early 15th century, providing the combination of allegories and high sensuality even up to eroticism. The puzzling mixture of spirituality and physical desires is exemplified in the triptych of Melun as well. In this painting, Jean Fouquet shows the model of chastity and devotion, appearing in the person of Virgin Mary. In the portrait of the Madonna, one can recognise, however, Agnes Sorel, a mistress of King Charles VII, suggesting another source of attraction as well.

The model of jongleurs can be attractive for scholars even to date. They need not only be the men of judgments, but they may also develop intimate relationship with the higher values of loyalty, honesty and human dignity (as we know good examples for that from Francois Villon). It is a point of orientation for academics as well to try to go beyond the border of simple instrumentalism, and substantiate their business with deeper understanding and moral considerations.

Modern professionals can learn both from jongleurs and clerical intellectuals. They have to appreciate that the freedom these ancestors acquired was used in order to create works that could reflect a complete picture of life, including both immanent and transcendent values. Of course, not only positive, but also negative models exist. For example, an artist like Walter of Stolzing, a hero of Richard Wagner in the opera of “Meistersinger”, cannot get rid of a negative alter ego, represented by Beckmesser. People like Beckmesser may flout the professional rules, desperately missing the complexity of life.

It is another important source of erudition for modern professionals to benefit from the rational way of thinking that has been developed at the point of shifting from Platonic idealism to Aristotelian rationality. The production and exchange of commodities reached a level of development in the 13th century when it was no longer possible to reconcile the poetic form of idealism inherited from the Neo-Platonic and Patristic tradition with the emerging realities of a more robust economy. The space for physical life and business was extended dramatically.

It was then necessary to combine the Christian faith with the experience of the new way of life. Thomas Aquinas and his comrades rediscovered Aristotle and benefited from the balance, introduced in his works, between transcendent and immanent values. Aristotle had the idea that the

substance of things is hidden in the things themselves, which can be explored, provided that affection, reason and experience are mobilised and brought into harmony with each other. This way, beliefs fell under the control of logic and experience. In fact, there should be a link even for modern professionals between spiritual values and the rapid developments of material life.

It is crucial for professionals to rely on rationality, or, rather on instrumental rationality. Rationality, however, must not be separated from humility. One must see that there are constraints on cognition and social design. The European way of rational thinking has traditionally emerged from coping with the question of Job raised in the Middle Ages concerning the consequences of the commitment of sins. From a Gnostic perspective, good and evil can be distinguished from each other on the grounds that salvation cannot be reached and purity and chastity cannot be preserved unless everything that belongs to the physical world is absent from our life. Souls cannot be saved unless they are departed from the body. This kind of Docetism cannot be reconciled with the physical experience of modern life. Even the Catholic Church has found it as heretic that the intercourse with what is corporeal would absolutely lead to vices.

The campaign against the Cathar heresy was introduced by the Mendicant fathers in the 13th century. The Franciscan answer to the question concerning the relationship between the commitment of sins and the physical world is that this world created by God is brave, and the Christians are invited to admire and enjoy the ample gifts of this world. They have to show, however, affection to the creatures of this world. In particular, they have to show compassion with those who are needy. The Dominicans have successfully proved that the reason given by God can be brought into harmony both with affections and senses. Francesco of Assisi discovered in his "Cantico di frate sole" the beauties of nature surrounding our life and suggested that by way of entertaining affection, it was possible to get into an intimate relationship with the objects of nature. Further, Thomas Aquinas was eminent in finding a language in his poem "Pange lingua gloriosi corporis mysterium", in which reason and religious faith could complement each other in an amazing harmony.

The metaphors introduced in these poems can be encouraging for intellectuals even today and can help professionals in not losing themselves to the mere problems of narrow-minded rationality, ideologies and the simple motivation of seeking profit. The miracles of nature can be explored by the professionals who may invoke the spirit of Saint Francis, while the beauties of reasoning, as shown by Saint Thomas, can also be helpful to the professionals of our time.

Since Bernard of Chartres, it is known that intellectuals cannot survive without their ancestors. One can thus be potent in solving current problems just because of "standing on the shoulders of giants". Indeed, no profession can be pursued successfully unless professional methods are put in the context of the professional spirit that can arise from traditions. Professional problems must not be reduced to technicalities. Real answers cannot be given to real-life problems unless a professional takes the historical context into account. Traditions of course show us various trends that must be observed, but at the same time they also reveal freedom. This is because a professional may choose the components of the relevant tradition that can be useful in solving the current problem.

### III. Recent centralisation of political life and the governance of higher education in Hungary

#### 1. Illiberal democracy in current Hungary

One cannot take it out of consideration, under what political conditions the chances of academics can be realised currently in Hungary of achieving the high standards of "homo



academicus“, as interpreted in the European tradition. Ambitions may be significantly limited by the recent announcement in this country of the so-called illiberal democracy. The Hungarian Prime Minister plainly announced on 26 July 2014 in Băile Tuşnad, Romania, that the current Hungarian state relies on illiberal democracy.

Political liberalism (the dominance of the various manifestations of political freedom, e.g., through competing political parties, freedom of conscience, demonstration and association, etc.) has been declared by the Prime Minister to be in structural crisis. The profound cause of the crisis is the unnatural alliance of democracy and liberalism. This contradiction, which has by now become completely apparent, endangers the very foundations of democracy, he argues.

According to Alain de Benoist, ”The touchstone is no longer the sovereignty of the people but the sovereignty of the individual, defined by the ultimate possibility to cancel, if necessary, collective power. It follows, step by step, that the promotion of democratic rights leads to the incapacitation of a democratic politics.”<sup>44</sup> The triumph of the economy over politics is interpreted by liberals as the victory of liberty, while it amounts to a dispossession of the self because it translates into the inability for collectives to take control over their destiny, Alain de Benoist argues. In short, trapped between economics and morality, the ideology of the marketplace and the ideology of human rights, contemporary democracy is less and less democratic because it is less and less political. Thus, Alain de Benoist claims that liberalism and politics become in contradiction, or even in an antagonistic relationship with each other.

Alain de Benoist contends that, originally, a corollary to corporate governance tends on an international scale to transform governments into organisms of management based on economic methods and to degrade them to the level of instruments subordinated to economic and, in particular, financial imperatives. He thinks that social democracy involves “buying the people” with material advantages and a social security that grows from election to election, finding its legitimacy in this capacity to distribute goods. It is an “insurance” regime, but it is also suicidal because public power cannot respond indefinitely to the permanent increase of quantitative demands, he concludes. For these reasons, the Hungarian government of Prime Minister Orbán has replaced the welfare state by a workfare-based state, introducing a large system of communal work organised by administrative means and putting a large number of low qualification into the system of cooperation with big international corporations attracted, or even selected by the Hungarian government.

Due to the deviation from the patterns of political liberalism, the rational state has become in Hungary in crisis. As a consequence of the operation of the Orbán-regime, law has been subject to politics, continuity in law has been broken by political intervention. The subject of constitution is not the individual, but the nation that is organised politically. Fundamental rights are subordinated to the attributes declared by political means. Legal form has been superseded by the enforcement by the state of material justice. Due to state activism, casuistics in law and regulatory capture have been prevalent. The long-term interests in the good performance of large community institutions (like the systems of public health, education or public transport) have been subject to the short-term and short-minded considerations of politics and ideologies. Under such circumstances, the values arising from the European heritage of humanism – like cooperation, public trust or solidarity – have been subject to rude material values and egoism.

The real alternative to the rational operation of the state has not been conservatism and reliance on the organic development of social institutions, but arbitrariness in political decisions and

---

<sup>44</sup> Alain de Benoist, “The Current Crisis of Democracy“, *Telos*, Vol. 156, Fall 2011, p. 6.

political voluntarism. The new Hungarian state has been successful in stopping the process of increasing social needs. The workfare-based state has set aside the policy of coordination and agreements with the political minority, however.<sup>45</sup>

## 2. Changes in the system of state control of Hungarian higher education

It is a major trend throughout the world that the performance of higher education is criticised. In Hungary, this criticism has been sharply increased since 2010 when the second Orbán-government entered into office. The atmosphere towards the Hungarian higher education has been quite hostile. Rumours spread over that the Hungarian higher education is hyper-proliferative. It has then been easy to justify the drastic reduction in public resources, following criticism. The idea is apparently not accepted currently in Hungary that investment in higher education would be of strategic importance for the country.

In October 2014, a paper of strategic development was adopted by the government. It is to follow a series of earlier concept notes. There was an earlier paper from May 2013 that was subject to public discussion and agreements with a broad round table of higher education. Although it was widely accepted, the government did not discuss it on its merits. Now we have got a new concept paper, very different from the earlier one, that has not been submitted preliminarily to public discussion at all.

The government is busy with such documents despite the fact that a radically new law on higher education is in effect since September 2012. Thus, strategic questions are raised while we have got a piece of effective legislation. Besides, this law is just a framework that is to be implemented at some points by decrees.

The components of the May 2013 concept note are the following:

- classification of the institutions of higher education;
- central determination of academic specialisations;
- determination of the public subsidies to be spent on higher education, depending on the students' decision where to apply;
- determination of the public system of quality assurance in higher education;
- determination of the system of public spending on the state-owned institutions of higher education on a normative basis (through funding formulae); and
- delegation of chancellors appointed by the government to the state-owned institutions of higher education.

The major parts of the October 2014 concept note are as follows:

- formation of the conditions for cooperation and competition among the institutions of higher education;
- central adjustment of the system of academic specialisations to the needs of the branches of national economy;
- application of incentives for reaching high quality and excellence in higher education;
- furtherance of higher education in contributing to innovation with a view to strengthening links between higher education and business; and

---

<sup>45</sup> To describe political liberalism, Fareed Zakaria refers to constitutional liberalism, a term that connects two ideas. First it relies on individual liberty. Secondly, the rights arising from this liberty are secured by the mechanisms of the rule of law. Therefore, liberalism appears as constitutional one (F. Zakaria, "The rise of illiberal democracy", *Foreign Affairs*, November-December 1997, Vol. 76, No. 6, p. 26). Constitutional liberalism is about the limitation of power, illiberal democracy is about its accumulation. Here, democracy may easily turn into the tyranny of majority (p. 30). In constitutional liberalism, the independence of the university system from the central state apparatus is crucial (p. 31).

- overhaul of the system of finance and governance of the institutions of higher education.

The May 2013 paper can also be critiqued, in particular because of the idea that chancellors should be appointed by the government. Still it implied two components of the governance of higher education that enhanced the independence of institutions. That is, they are as follows:

- determination of the public subsidies to be spent on higher education, depending on the students' decision where to apply; and
- determination of the system of public spending on the state-owned institutions of higher education on a normative basis.

These components of the governance of higher education are missing in the October 2014 paper. The matter of quality assurance appears in the new paper with much emphasis. The problem is not mentioned, however, of how to ensure the independence of the institutions of quality assurance. The subsequent concepts on the governance of higher education<sup>46</sup> can be illustrated in a comprehensive table below.

Components of governance	2013 paper	2014 paper
- Classification of institutions	Yes	Yes
- Determination of academic specialisations	Yes	Yes
- Determination of public subsidies, depending on student decisions	Yes	No
- Determination of quality assurance	Yes	Yes
- Determination of public spending on a normative basis	Yes	No
- Delegation of chancellors	Yes	Yes

There are significant insufficiencies in both concept notes. In particular, none of them mentions about how student can enter the sphere of higher education. It comes from the effective law that they can apply to public scholarship, and those who do not obtain scholarship are obliged to pay reimbursement of the cost of education. Students are supported by the facilities of public student credit. Tuition fee is excluded from the state-owned institutions of higher education.

---

<sup>46</sup> It is useful to distinguish between the governance and management of the institutions of higher education: "As far as higher education is concerned, governance focuses on the rules and mechanisms by which various stakeholders influence decisions, how they are held accountable, and to whom. In the context of higher education, governance refers to the formal and informal exercise of authority under laws, policies and rules that articulate the rights and responsibilities of various actors, including the rules by which they interact. ... Management, on the other hand, refers to the implementation of a set of objectives pursued by a higher education institution on the basis of established rules." *Higher Education Governance in Europe; Policies, structures, funding and academic staff*, Eurydice, Brussels, 2008, p. 12. Furthermore, "Governance encompasses the structures, relationships and processes through which, at both, national and institutional levels, policies for tertiary education are developed, implemented and reviewed. Governance comprises a complex web including the legislative framework, the characteristics of the institutions and how they relate to the whole system, how money is allocated to institutions and how they are accountable for the way it is spent, as well as less formal structures and relationships which steer and influence behaviour." Fabric Hénard, Alexander Mitterle, *Governance and quality guidelines in higher education; A review of government arrangements and quality assurance guidelines*, OECD, Paris, 2008, p. 26. The separation from the term of governance of management takes place in a way that is somewhat different from the above approach, as follows: "Institutional leadership refers to the strategic direction, management refers to the monitoring of institutional accountability and effectiveness and administration refers to the implementation of procedures." In this context, institutional leadership, management and administration can be considered as components of governance. Ibid. p. 27.

Furthermore, none of the concept notes mentions about how the self-government of students should be reformed, meeting the challenges that arise from the crisis of the current student organisations that has lost their prestige due to abuses and scandals that have been conspicuous in the recent months.

### 3. Market opportunism and bureaucratic coordination in the current Hungarian governance of higher education

Due to recent changes in the governance of higher education, the Hungarian institutions of higher education may currently be subordinated both to political will and economic considerations. Markets can impose on the institutions of higher education standards that can only be interpreted within the narrow concept of economic efficiency. An example for subordination of this type is that foundational research may be ignored or neglected. Another example for this is that branches of industry may give orders for education in a scope of specialisations, which appear to be prosperous in the short term, but which may lose their significance in the long term.

The current Hungarian governance of higher education is fraught with the inner contradiction that the policy guidelines of the higher education that are promised to be of strategic nature present themselves as those complying with the expectations of market economy, but market decisions are in fact on the periphery of the operation of the institutions of higher education. Indeed, the institutions of higher education seek to involve subsidies that can be gained from the economy, first of all because the state is not willing to increase public spending on higher education. These considerations miss, however, the major customer of the market of higher economy, that is, the student who, or whose parents, would be able and willing to pay for education.

The preferences of students are taken out of consideration because the government accurately determines academic specialisations and exactly sets the level of state subsidies to be spent on these specialisations, independent of the students' decisions. The evaluation and remuneration of the institutions of higher education are not dependent on student decisions. The offers made by companies to universities for research are in practice on the periphery of the budget of the institutions of higher education. Are there specific industries to make offers for education in specific academic specialisations, the complex relationship between the academic institutions and the branches of national economy is neglected. The assumption of a direct link between the two subsystems of society proves to be voluntarism.

Noam Chomsky criticised the process of corporatisation of North American higher education. He envisions a world of higher education where the prefabricated knowledge driven by narrow-minded instrumental rationality is filled into the head of students. The discipline of students does not provide real benefit, however: "One image of education was that it should be like a vessel that is filled with, say, water. That's what we call these days 'teaching to test': you pour water into the vessel and then the vessel returns the water. But it's a pretty leaky vessel, as all of us who went through school experienced..."<sup>47</sup> There would be an alternative to this, not yet realised, in a world where students are facilitated by no more than just a kind of safety cable: "The other model was described as laying out a string along which the student progresses in his or her own way under his or her own initiative, maybe moving the string, maybe deciding to go somewhere else, maybe raising questions."<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Noam Chomsky, "Thinking like corporations is harming American universities", *Alternet*, October 8, 2014 (<http://www.alternet.org/print/education/chomsky-thinking-corporations-harming-american-universities>).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

In addition to the schematisation of education, it is another adverse consequence of corporatisation that human resources have been exploited at many points in the sphere of higher education. It is a problem in particular with non-tenured lecturers who can be invited to drop classes from time to time, but who cannot enjoy safety labour as civil servants. Under such circumstances, the students cannot rely on tutors with sound existential background. Chomsky describes the development of the so-called precariat at the American universities: "... another technique of indoctrination is to cut back faculty-student contact: large classes, temporary teachers who are overburdened, who can barely survive on an adjunct salary. And since you don't have any job security, you can't build up a career, you can't move on and get more. These are all techniques of discipline, indoctrination, and control."<sup>49</sup> This phenomenon is unfortunately also true for the Hungarian institutions of higher education.

The current Hungarian governance of higher education does not provide institutional guarantees for the independence of universities. In a democratic political system, checks and balances can only be developed where civil and professional organisations play important role. University autonomy is part of the network of such organisations. Currently, the rational operation of the state is in crisis in Hungary. Therefore, the institutional guarantees of democracy have been weakened. The basis of decisions to operate public institutions has been constituted by loyalty to senior officials rather than by professional skills and reflections. Centralisation of political power cannot be stopped. Higher education is one of the victims of these developments.

Leaders of higher education are tempted to follow the logic as described by Martin Heidegger at the time he was appointed as the "rector magnificus" at the Freiburg university in 1933. According to him,<sup>50</sup> knowledge is not valuable taken by itself. It should therefore be subject to the power organised inevitably through hierarchies. He asserts that the term of university autonomy is empty and meaningless. Knowledge – subject to destiny – is not the product of culture, but barely a means of power to change realities. Upon implementing projects, one has to assume the risk of non-awareness. Outer guidance to manage knowledge is then needed.

The academic sphere cannot be independent from the intervention of politics either. Clearly setting targets seem to be more important than rational calculations or speculations, taken by themselves. For this, it is necessary to have charismatic leaders. Academics – based on imperfect knowledge – should be ready to serve these leaders. Academic freedom is mere negativism, it only suggests carelessness, caprice and arbitrariness of intentions and predispositions, forbearance from actions, Heidegger argues. One can only hope that the future of Hungarian higher education will not be explicable by the logic of Heidegger.

In the recent public paper of strategic development, the idea is corroborated that academic autonomy of the institutions of higher education is to be separated from economic and

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> „Eine geistige Welt allein verbürgt dem Volke die Größe. Denn sie zwingt dazu, daß die ständige Entscheidung zwischen dem Willen zur Größe und dem Gewährenlassen des Verfalls das Schrittgesezt wird für den Marsch, den unser Volk in seine künftigen Geschichte angetreten hat. Wollen wir dieses Wesen der Wissenschaft, denn muß die Lehrerschaft der Universität wirklich vorrücken in den äußersten Posten der Gefahr der ständigen Weltungewißheit. Hält sie dort stand, d.h. erwächst ihr von dort – in der wesentlichen Nähe der Bedrängnis aller Dinge – das gemeinsame Fragen und gemeinschaftlich gestimmte Sagen, dann wird sie stark zur Führerschaft. ... Aus der Entschlossenheit der deutschen Studentenschaft, dem deutschen Schicksal in seiner äußersten Not standzuhalten, kommt ein Wille zum Wesen der Universität. Dieser Wille ist ein wahrer Wille, sofern die deutsche Studentenschaft durch das neue Studentenrecht sich selbst unter das Gesetz ihres Wesens stellt und damit dieses Wesen allererst umgrenzt. Sich selbst das Gesetz geben, ist höchste Freiheit. Die ‚vielbesungene akademische Freiheit‘ wird aus der deutschen Universität verstoßen; denn diese Freiheit war unrecht, weil nur verneinend.“ Martin Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität; Rektoratsrede vom 27. Mai 1933*, Verlag Herder GmbH, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1934; S. 5 - 22.

organisational autonomy. Academic freedom to be exercised by elected leaders of state-owned institutions of higher education is restricted by the chancellor appointed by the government to enforce the interests of the owner of public universities. This idea of governance means artificial distinction between the various manifestations of the very same institution of autonomy. To be worse, no guidance has been invented either as to the way, in which cooperation can be implemented between the academic management and the delegated chancellor. It is recommended only that both the rector and the chancellor will have the chance to send individuals to the university senate.

The academic management and the chancellor will be brought together at the highest level of hierarchy, that is, at the senate. Such combination does not occur, however, at the level of working entities, the real carriers of university autonomy. The academic activity could be carried on in the real life through communities working on the various projects of education and research. They can frequently be developed due to engagement in projects, not relying on the regular budget of the institution, subsidised by the state, but on the budget obtained from the market through competition. Upon the implementation of projects, the subsidised entities may also have the right to conclude contacts of cooperation with third parties and hire associates. The lack of autonomy in Hungary at this level seems to constitute a major barrier to the effective operation of such working communities.

#### 4. Internationally recognised standards of the governance of higher education

The various industries, including higher education, should contribute in Europe to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.<sup>51</sup> It is relevant from the quoted Commission communications to higher education that one of the three priorities is to develop knowledge-based society, and another component of these requirements can be described by inclusive social practices. It is a key to supporting intelligent growth that higher education is highlighted. Furthermore, higher education is not only expected to provide quality, but also to promote social mobility with view to approaching the idea of inclusiveness.<sup>52</sup>

The European values applicable to higher education can specifically be derived from the principles as declared at Bologna in 1988 in the declaration of “Magna Charta Universitatum“. They are: unity of education and research, independence of universities against the state, academic freedom and humanity. Interestingly, the current Hungarian law on higher education does not even mention about any of these principles. The academic freedom is the only exception that appears in effective Hungarian laws as a matter of independence that can be exercised concerning the

---

<sup>51</sup> Commission communication [COM(2010) 2020 final of 3 March 2010] on Europe 2020; A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth; Commission communication [COM(2014) 130 final of 19 March 2014] on taking stock of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

<sup>52</sup> “European higher education used to be known for its very diverse national systems. Now, it is characterised by the Bologna Process, the process that established the European Higher Education Area. This has led to an increase in programmes taught in English, to internationally recognisable higher education structures and to transparent quality assurance measures. The European Higher Education Area should in fact be identifiable by its transparency, by its comparable degrees organised in a three-cycle structure, by its cooperation in quality assurance and by its mutual recognition of degrees. This in order to allow unhampered mobility to students, graduates and higher education staff.“ *Higher education in Europe from ECpedia* (<http://ecahe.eu/w/index.php/Europe>; accessed on 12 December 2014). It is noteworthy that “the contemporary university was born of the nation state, not of medieval civilisation, and it was only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, following the establishment of clear national economic interests, that universities acquired their identification with science and technology.“ Jürgen Enders, “Higher education, internationalisation, and the nation-state: Recent developments and challenges to governance theory“, *Higher Education*, Vol. 47, 2004, pp. 364-365.

questions relating to the subject and contents of teaching and research activities.<sup>53</sup> Humanism is replaced by the requirement that the Hungarian institutions of higher education should contribute to the development of the Hungarian nation as a politically organised community.

The modernisation agenda for higher education fixes key priorities.<sup>54</sup> The European Commission has the following highlights on how to develop European higher education:

- increasing the number of higher education graduates;
- improving the quality of teaching;
- strengthening the knowledge triangle, linking education, research and innovation; and
- creating effective governance and funding mechanisms.

The highlights of the current projects to be run by the European University Association, as advertised in 2014, are as follows:<sup>55</sup>

- learning and teaching;
- research and innovation;
- internationalisation;
- quality assurance; and
- good governance, autonomy and effective funding.

It has been apparent already in 2008 that to ensure the financial sustainability of the higher education sector, some common objectives must be set.<sup>56</sup> These include:

- increasing public funding for higher education;
- granting more autonomy to institutions for managing financial resources;
- establishing direct links between results and the amount of public funding allocated; and
- encouraging the diversification of funding sources as well as the creation of partnerships with research institutes, businesses, and regional authorities.

As a European scale is much more efficient than a national one, and because the national organisation and finance have become a weak link in Europe's knowledge investment activity

---

<sup>53</sup> "The concept of autonomy is concerned with the relationships of the university to the Government. This applies to public universities first and foremost. Autonomy is understood very differently across European countries because of differences in the culture and history. These differences pertain in particular to the "Continental" university, inspired by Humboldt (and to a degree also by the Napoleonic tradition), the Anglo Saxon university, with the imprint of Cardinal Newman and the Central and Eastern European university which has recently emerged after the demise of the USSR. In Germany and France, autonomy is traditionally concentrated on the notion of "academic freedom" understood to mean that the professors of the universities choose their own leadership and decide themselves on the design of the degree program and the research content, within location and staffing arrangements and funding decided by the Government, without much control in financing or staffing or physical investments. In the UK in contrast autonomy is the ability of institutions to function independently from the Government (in terms of raising and managing their own funds, etc. and in terms of the freedom to choose the content of education and research), while the concept of academic freedom is no longer a matter of the interpretation of the Senate, but for the appointed leadership of the university." Cecil Hoareau, Jo Ritzen, Gabriele Marconi, *The state of university policy for progress in Europe*; Technical report, Empower European Universities, Bunde, NED, December 2012, p. 19.

<sup>54</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions; Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems, COM/2011/0567 final.

<sup>55</sup> It is noteworthy that "traditional funding patterns for higher education and research are changing across Europe, as a response to societal and economic developments. ... Since 2008, the economic situation of many European countries has significantly deteriorated, and authorities are often expecting more outputs with less money. Apart from steering universities through funding modalities, many systems engage in some degree of restructuring the higher education system in order to rationalise costs, increase visibility and altogether boost international competition." Thomas Estermann, Enora Bennetot Pruvot, Anna-Lena Claeys-Kulik, *Designing strategies for efficient funding of higher education in Europe*, DEFINE interim report, European University Association, Brussels, 2013, p. 4.

<sup>56</sup> Eurydice report, op.cit. p. 7.

(through higher education, research and innovation), it is important for the European institutions of higher education to make a shift, turning from national into European.<sup>57</sup>

In the international landscape of the governance of higher education, one can distinguish “between two opposing systems: the —State control model found mostly in continental Europe and the —State supervising model based on Anglo- Saxon tradition. The former is characterised by strong state regulation and an influential academic oligarchy, while the latter shows a lessening of state influence (to provide the overall framework only ) and interference due to failing expectations, while the steering power of intermediate organisational actors (such as deans, rectors, boards of trustees) increases.”<sup>58</sup>

Various models of governance can be distinguished from each other as follows:<sup>59</sup>

- “faculty governance sees the power on the side of the academic staff and is based on expansive governing powers distributed towards collegial senates or strong influence of academics on governing boards“;
- “corporate governance is prevalent in universities, mostly consisting of smaller boards of governors or trustees, as well as chief executive officers with financial and managerial responsibilities“;
- “trustee governance differs from other governance types in that it is explicitly based on trust in a governing board“;
- “stakeholder governance is based on the identification of interest groups which should be involved in university governance to secure a balanced system where all important interests are voiced“;
- “amalgam models of governance combine the four mentioned models and no clear pattern is visible“.

Arguably, university autonomy emerges where much stress is laid on faculty governance. It can be restricted either by corporatisation or by the stakeholders of political rather than economic interests. Efficiency in governance can be enhanced where immediate bodies (trustees, puffer organisations, etc.) are included in governance. Actors of governance are adjusted to these models of control.<sup>60</sup>

## 5. Deviation from international standards in Hungary

In Hungary, the amendments negotiated in the fourth amendment to the constitution (that took into effect on 1 January 2012) upset the delicate balance between the legitimate scope of state intervention that flows from public financing and the guarantees of institutional autonomy that are

---

<sup>57</sup> “Member States should transfer a large part of the public funding of fundamental, basic and applied research from their National Research Councils to the European Research Council. Research excellence is heavily dependent on scale: the European scale is a much more efficient scale for selecting the best research proposals, for reducing the costs in evaluating proposals and ultimately for enabling high quality research specialisation.“ Jo Ritzen, Luc Soete, *Research, higher education and innovation: Redesigning European governance in a period of crisis*, Policy paper No. 49, Notre Europe, Maastricht, November 2011, p. 42.

<sup>58</sup> Fabric Hénard, Alexander Mitterle, op.cit. p. 28.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. pp. 30-31.

<sup>60</sup> They can be enumerated as follows:

- “the academic oligarchy built out of the academic heartland and visible in faculty boards, senates and stakeholders on governing boards“;
  - “the intermediary organisational actors (governing boards, supervisory boards, vice- chancellors, presidents, chiefs executive officers (CEO), which started becoming more influential in the 1980s due to changes in the system“;
  - “the State actors, visible as ministerial administrators from higher education, finance, government advisory boards and the Minister/secretary“.
- Ibid. p. 31.



necessary for universities to function properly.<sup>61</sup> The current Hungarian policy of higher education potentially risks the individual rights protected under the auspices of autonomy, like freedom of thought, expression, arts and sciences as well as the right to education (in conformity with one's convictions) as enshrined in Articles 9 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 2 of Protocol No. 1, Articles 10, 11, 13 and 14 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Articles 18 and 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.<sup>62</sup>

In Hungary, the number of graduates on average is far from reaching the European number of graduates on average, and even Hungary does not have a plan for catch-up.<sup>63</sup> Further, improving the quality of teaching would require independence of the higher educational accreditation system. This is exactly not the case in Hungary where the full status with membership rights of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee in ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), the appropriate European organisation for quality assurance in higher education was on 17 January 2014 suspended until a review to be conducted by November 2015 for the lack of a budget and decision-making mechanism that would be independent from the government.

---

<sup>61</sup> "Hungary has reduced the allocation of state-funded places by 40 per cent since 2008, according to the Center for International Higher Education Studies at Corvinus University in Budapest. Activists say there are now fewer academic staff and larger class sizes, with campuses closed for several weeks in winter. In a letter by the Network of University Lecturers published last month in the *Budapest Beacon*, academics complained about the unfair advantages given to private education providers close to the ruling Fidesz party, which are expanding as state provision contracts. There are also concerns about Hungary's student support policies, which require graduates to remain in the country for twice the length of their studies or face repaying their grants with interest – a policy seemingly at odds with the EU's commitment to free movement of labour. Erin Saltman, who has just completed a PhD in Hungarian politics at University College London, said that there was much unease about Fidesz's handling of higher education. Universities faced a "strict limit" on autonomy, and there was concern about how funding for research was being distributed, she said." Jack Grove, "Viktor Orbán's 'butler' will not serve in EU education role", *Times Higher Education*, 9 October 2014 (<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/viktor-orbns-butler-will-not-serve-in-eu-education-role/2016211.article>; accessed on 12 December 2014); Paul Hockenos, "A scholar is back home and defiant in Hungary", *New York Times*, 8 December 2013 ([http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/09/world/europe/a-scholar-is-back-home-and-defiant-in-hungary.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0&pagewanted=print](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/09/world/europe/a-scholar-is-back-home-and-defiant-in-hungary.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0&pagewanted=print); accessed on 29 December 2014).

<sup>62</sup> *Amicus brief for the Venice Commission on the fourth amendment to the fundamental law of Hungary*; Authors: Miklós Bánkúti, Tamás Dombos, Gábor Halmai, András Hanák, Zsolt Körtvélyesi, Balázs Majtényi, László András Pap, Eszter Polgári, Orsolya Salát, Kim Lane Scheppele, Péter Sólyom, Renáta Uitz; Edited by: Professor Gábor Halmai, Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, Budapest, and Princeton University, Professor Kim Lane Scheppele, Princeton University; April, 2013 (Hungarian translation in: *Fundamentum*, XVII. 2013/3.), p. 38. *Fundamentum*, p. 17. The representative of the Council of Europe notes that, while "institutional autonomy is a key element in the Bologna Process," the goal should not be "to maximize autonomy, but to establish a proper balance with accountability to society. To find out how far a university enjoys autonomy in relation to the state, and whether the relationship departs from a proper balance of interests, we have to look at all dimensions of the state-institution relationship". Per Nyborg, Chairman, Committee for Higher Education and Research, Council of Europe, *Institutional autonomy. Relations between state authorities and higher education institutions, 2002*, p. 4. Available at [http://www.see-educoop.net/education\\_in/pdf/bologna-institut-autonom-oth-enl-t02.pdf](http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/bologna-institut-autonom-oth-enl-t02.pdf) (last visited on 29 March 2013).

<sup>63</sup> Under Table A1.3a on the percentage of adults who have attained tertiary education, by type of programme and age group (2012), in the age group of 25 to 64, the percentage figure of Hungary is 22, while the OECD average is 32%, and the EU 21 average is 30%. *Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators*, p. 44, OECD Publishing, Paris, September 2014. Under Chart B2.2 on expenditure on tertiary education as a percentage of GDP (2011; p. 224.), the OECD average is 1.5%, while the figure of Hungary is 1% (only consisting of public expenditure because private expenditure is so negligible that it could not be measured). Since that time, public spending has dramatically fallen even from this low basis. The public expenditure on Hungarian higher education has fallen by approximately one-third in a period of 2010 to 2014. József Berács, Ildikó Hrubos, Gergely Kovács, József Temesi, *Magyar felsőoktatás 2013: Stratégiai helyzetértékelés* (Hungarian higher education 2013; Strategic assessment of the situation), International Centre of the Research on Higher Education, Corvinus University of Budapest, January 2014, p. 12. The total public spending on higher education was in 2010 204.3 billion HUF, in 2011 190.4 billion HUF, in 2012 182.2 billion HUF, and in 2013 155.8 billion HUF. Table 4, p. 13. The total funding on higher education has fallen in Hungary in a period of 2008 to 2013 by 35%. Bigger decrease can only be found in Greece (by 40%). Graph 6, p. 14.

Hungary is also far from meeting the standards of effective governance and funding due to the revocation of organisational and economic autonomy, the appointment by the government of chancellors to the universities with veto rights to be exercised against the elected leaders of universities, and for lack of normative methods of finance. Notably, the institutions of higher education are not dependent on the decisions of the students where to enter, but on those of the government that centrally allocates resources top down from time to time, without clear principles. Furthermore, it is also noteworthy that Hungary is also far below the European average in mobility in respect of students and professors.<sup>64</sup>

To conclude, the Hungarian system of higher education has suffered a lot from the dramatic decrease in public resources, it is separated from the students' interests and decisions, it lacks on independent institutions of quality assurance, and it is subordinated to chancellors appointed by the government.

It is worthy contrasting the effective situation of the Hungarian institutions of higher education with the principles as declared by the civil organisations called HAT ("Hálózat a Tanszabadságért" – Network for the Freedom of Education), OHa ("Oktatói Hálózat" – Network of Academics), and HaHa ("Hallgatói Hálózat" – Student Network) in the end of 2012. The highlights of the claims of educational networks are as follows:

- sector-neutrality and subsidiarity;
- stability and quality assurance in finance;
- autonomy and accountability;
- equity;
- independence in quality assessment;
- openness and awareness in educational policy;
- strategic way of thinking in development policy;
- full respect of rights in legislating education;
- ideological neutrality; and
- high level of appreciation and professional training of educators.

Protests were also made later on against the higher education policy of the Hungarian government.<sup>65</sup>

The term of sector-neutrality concerns the claim that the selected institutions of higher education owned by historic churches should be subject to the same standards. This is not the case

---

<sup>64</sup> Under Chart C4.4 on student mobility in tertiary education (2012), the OECD average of the proportion of international students is 8%, while the Hungarian figure is less than 5%. Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators, p. 349.

<sup>65</sup> "Instead of solving the crisis of higher education by compensating for recent budget cuts, the Hungarian Government seems to introduce direct control of universities. OHa (University Lecturers' Network) and HaHa (Students' Network) say that the newly announced higher education strategy attests to antidemocratic tendencies both in its content and in the way of its introduction. ... An effective reform in higher education should be based on international experience, a wide range of surveys and impact studies, and on a broad consensus between the affected individuals' and political actors', and it should also provide the institutions and future students enough time to adapt to the changes." Oktatói Hálózat, *Protest against the Hungarian Government's new higher education strategy*, done at Budapest on 26 September 2013 (<http://oktatoihalozat.hu/protest-against-the-hungarian-governments-new-higher-education-strategy/>; accessed on 29 December 2014); "The Hungarian government failed to elaborate a well-founded and legally accepted strategy for higher education, and the distribution of authorities and responsibilities in the management of higher education is opaque. The government arbitrarily allocates resources and provides undue advantages to loyal institutions. ... The Hungarian government devaluates knowledge and professional expertise both in words and in deeds, it takes decisions without wide consultations with experts, and excluding the public. Europe must be aware that the Hungarian government is consciously, deliberately and systematically moving away from European values and the declared goals of the EU." Hungarian Network of Academics (Oktatói Hálózat), *Public statement of the Hungarian Network of Academics to José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission*, done at Budapest on 11 September 2014 (<http://oktatoihalozat.hu/public-statement-of-the-hungarian-network-of-academics-to-jose-manuel-barroso-president-of-the-european-commission/>; accessed on 29 December 2014).

currently. For example, in order to show excellency in academic activity, the Péter Pázmány Catholic University is not requested to show the same figures of performance (qualification of lecturers, citation indices, etc.). Instead, it is sufficient for them to rely on the embeddedness into the international network of higher educations, which is available for them, given the global network of Catholic institutions, including Catholic universities. Further on, the claim of subsidiarity is in particular important in the system of public education, which has been highly centralised in Hungary. It cannot be reconciled, however, with the appointment of chancellors to universities either.

The term of equity as raised by the networks of education refers to the blindness of the current Hungarian system of higher education to the problem of social mobility. As the services of higher education are available in a limited way, public spending should be completed by the resources given by businesses and, in particular, by the families of students. The state can provide the facilities of student credit. It is also the case in Hungary (it is another question, not discussed here, under what conditions student credit is available, and how effective and efficient the public credit offers are). The Hungarian students whose studies have been subsidised by the state are also required to serve in Hungary, following their graduation. This may be a serious obstacle to mobility (not to mention about how these contracts can be forced).

The government determines the numbers of students who can be admitted in various academic specialisations with public scholarship. The rest of students have to reimburse the institutions of higher education for the cost of their studies. This is a system of “*numerus clausus*“. An alternative to this would be to require tuition fees. It is the advantage of it that the students are not treated discriminately, depending on whether they have to pay the reimbursement of costs or not. Notably, the institutions of higher education are not necessarily free to admit even for those students who are willing to pay the reimbursement of costs. The resources are currently allocated top down, neglecting both the students’ interests and the institutions’ plans. In these circumstances, students are separated from their schools by administrative means, and the student admission only depends on government decisions. Although mentor programmes are advertised, there is no developed system of the care of talents who are socially handicapped.

To describe the conditions of doing academic work, there is a series of questions that must be answered. First, the existential conditions of daily work can be addressed. Academics belong to the the social groups that are paid in the worst way in current Hungary. They cannot enjoy legally guaranteed career opportunities either. As they are not able to finance their every-day life, they have to look for second jobs and other opportunities of assignment out of the institutions of higher education. This way, they cannot avoid suffering from conflict-of-interest cases.

University autonomy would be a preliminary condition for achieving a sufficient level of academic performance. The elected leaders of the institutions of higher education are expected to enjoy legitimacy, and to be transparent in working. They should be able to adapt themselves to changes of the outward world, and to treat conflicts if necessary. Good communication is also necessary.

University democracy can contribute to the improvement of the quality of academic work directly. Decision-making should not only be professionally well-established, but decisions have to comply clearly with ethical standards. Students should also be improved to learn democracy. It is crucial that scholars need not only look for individual deals and agreements, but they could find the ways and means of developing solidarity, and represent academic values on a collective basis. Politics – integral part of life – should not be excluded from the academic space. One must not forget about that the genuine academic knowledge is always critical. Discussions and conflict-solving are thus indispensable means of carrying on academic work.

The conditions for autonomous and democratic decisions have been continuously deteriorated in Hungary in the recent four or five years. The mechanisms of solidarity have also been weakened in a dramatic way. This is because trust in public institutions has been decreased almost to zero due to the most serious reduction in financial resources, to the systematic and comprehensive political intervention into academic life, and to extremely high centralisation of the governance of higher education.

The full meaning of university autonomy can only be obtained in a European context in the light of the principles as enshrined in the Magna Charta Universitatum. University should be apt to be a space for the creation and distribution of cultural values. Reconsidering the idea of Humboldt on “Bildung“, academics are not only expected to be engaged in special training. They have to rise above the level of professional standards as well, radiating the ethics of the responsible use of knowledge. Academic values cannot be ordered. They can only be developed bottom up, slowly through working communities and workshops, in a period of problem-solving and discussion. These values cannot be determined from outside. Without university autonomy, the process of teaching, learning and working together will inadvertently be stuck.

The term of university autonomy is only meaningful in line with academic performance, which is still not guaranteed merely by university autonomy. Autonomy can be used and abused. The latter must not justify an attempt, however, to take it away. Although university autonomy cannot be considered as an independent constitutional value, it cannot be exercised without university autonomy.

The Hungarian institutions of higher education are different from each other. Autonomy can be important in particular for the big universities that aspire to be competitive in the international arena. It is still important to invest in general in higher education, a pledge for a country’s future. The main responsibility has to be assumed for this by the state, even if resources from the market must also be involved.

Disfunction of university autonomy has been amply experienced in the two recent decades in Hungary. This does not still justify the withdrawal of autonomy. Interference with the autonomous operation of universities may be alluring for the government. It should still be harmful, because it may reduce the chances of self-regulation and, this way, those of the high quality of academic performance.

The management of the institutions of higher education is a close system that reveals integrity if it works well. This integrity cannot be achieved from outside. The likely option for the intervention is to spoil operation. It is necessary to seek for a balance between the institution of higher education and its stakeholders, including the state as the regulator responsible for academic quality and the possible owner of the institution (in case of state-owned universities).

#### IV. Some lessons to be learned from the study of “homo academicus“

“Homo academicus“ is established on a particular ethos that can be described by referring to rational calculations and freedom. The function of philosophy (a lower faculty) is to seek for objective truth, which is a preliminary condition for getting access to the utilities that can in turn be gained from the study of higher faculties. Research means to decode reality, through which codes can become the object of research from a mere instrument of research. The object of analysis may transfer itself into the categories of perception, which start in turn living independently from the objective reality. Despite these complexities, the university should continue to promote the values of instrumental rationality, progress, and individual capacity of performance and development.

Some concluding remarks on university autonomy can be summarised as follows:

- although university autonomy seems to be an independent value, it can only be interpreted in line with quality performance that cannot still be expected without autonomy;
- even if university autonomy is not a subject of constitutional protection, it is a condition for the exercise of academic freedom, directly covered by a constitutional charter; and
- the abuse of organisational autonomy cannot be precluded, it is still indispensable to take the risk of tolerating subsidiarity and self-governance in the hope of really good performance that can be hoped in the long run.

One must not take out of consideration that the status and ethos of “homo academicus“ have been in crisis. In a time period of internationalisation, mass production and digitalisation, academic activity is not a matter of artefacts longer. Groups of scholars, tutors and students emerge in a world where modules have been developed to growingly compare the products of academic activity with each other. Although these changes convert the academic performance more standardised and measurable, they may also make the style of academic work mechanical, pushing out ingenuity and imagination. Academic activity has been brought closer to the economic standards of efficiency and transparency.

Social stakeholders and politicians are all the more critical against the academic performance. This is also true for Hungary. The situation of this country is still unique. The Hungarian institutions of higher education have been inadvertently reduced in size, and they are also subject to unstable and unpredictable governance of higher education. Some times they have to look at the ministry of human resources as if it were like the castle in the novel of Franz Kafka: it is not clear what the lord of the castle will decide, and how and why decisions will be taken there.

Under these circumstances, Hungary is currently far from hosting an ideal of “homo academicus“ in real life. One can hardly expect that a large number of Hungarian scholars could transcend the type of Beckmesser, a mere bureaucrat, and transform themselves into a character that would be confident in exercising the freedom of arts and sciences. A representative of “homo academicus“ seems currently in Hungary to be far from being able even to meet the criteria of exercising professional autonomy, making effective use of technical competence and distributing relevant knowledge. He or she can thus hardly commit himself or herself to the spirit and ethos of “homo academicus“, and turn his or her profession into genuine vocation.