

Corvinus University of Budapest PhD Program in Sociology

COLLECTION OF THESES

of

Veroszta Zsuzsanna's

Higher education values – from the aspect of university students

Reveal of university student value structures concerning the mission of higher education

Ph.D. dissertation

Supervisor:

Hrubos Ildikó

professor emerita

Budapest, 2010

Institute of Sociology and Social Policy

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I. Research history and justification of the topic

1.1. Aim of research

During the research we focused on the values, more precisely within this wide and rich theoretical backgrounded topic on the higher education values. We observe the values through the special eyes of university students, examining the transformation of value structures and relative weight in our higher education that became mass education. University - nowadays we use this idea extended for referring to higher education is one of the oldest and most value-filled institute in the world (Scott, 1995). Its operation, function and therefore its values are shaped by the historical combination of stability and change. Besides and paralel to the theoretical reveal of university - higher education - values of the European medium, this dissertation gives answers the major questions of modern higher education value-theories on university student valuecontents and their structure. The main research aim remains the same: shaping a relevant picture on the higher education values by combining its roots with theoretical ideas and the very declarations of university students, positioning the university students in the medium of modern theories converning the values and mission and future of higher education.

1.2. Theroretical and research history

During the historical-theoretical catch of higher education values and the examination its student representation we organised our work around several syllabus centers. We draft the social scientific history of our research by listing these centers as follows.

Value-relation of the diversification of higher education

Although differentiation and diversification – as immanent characteristics of higher education systems - has always featured the processes of higher education, the differentiation of modern institure systems became central phenomenon paralel to the expansion and mass education (Hrubos, 2002). However the European reform started in 1999 acted to the direction of homogenisation and standardization concerning the educational structure by harmonizing the higher education systems, on institutional level it strenghtened the differentiational processes (Hrubos, 2009). Differentiation also characterizes the institutional aims, values and missions as well. In the variety of university operation several institutes live side by side: the traditional, "inflexible" universities sticking to thousand-year-old visions with valuse-saving mission, institutes looking at their own operation as a kind of service next to those with pozitivist, profitoriented style, or with the self-reading dominated by functionalism, where the institute's task is to fulfill a special role within a system (Marga, 2009). Diversity offers the university students the variety of possibilities among which they can select according to their motivations, values, social or life status, interests (Hrubos, 2009; Veroszta, 2009a). Examining the student projection of the diversity of higher education values we relied on the basis thesis of Schwartz's value-theory (2003). According to this the basis of the creation of value-types are formed by the patterns of the difference between single persons who assign different relative importance to the same values. In his theory identifying universal value-types Schwartz besides the reveal of the components of the value system wanted to catch how people can be classified into groups upon the differences between their value priorities. The significant strata of internationally executed general student value researches are also connected to the theory of Schwartz according to which the different groups also show variety according to their value preferences. Examining the connection between university student values and education Verkasalo, Daun & Niit (1994) identified stronger influence of the specialized studies on the student value priorities than that of int he case of differences between countries. Also analysing the value set of the students of single educational areas, in one of his researches published in 2003 Myyry confirmed the connection between the differentiated educational background and student values extending the value-model of Schwartz.

Dominance of practical values

From the analysis of the interpretations of modern mass university the picture of a less normative institute is unfolded that is more practical than the traditional elit-university. Int he interpretation of knowledgebased society's higher education we rely on Scott's (204) thesis, which draws negative and positive point of views as well during the reinterpretation of traditional university values lost, or overwritten by becoming mass education. In negative interpretation from the aspect of the autonomy and idealized myth of academical freedom we may see the modern mass university as an institute wih lack of values which institute is not able to create an own set of values because of its own social dependence, and cannot become the independent critic of the society either. From a positive aspect, the processes of a knowledgebaseg society's university cannot be reduced only to the practical conformation. This approach underlines the changes made in the value structures of the universities by the dependeces. Besides the traditional scientific, cultural, moral and organisational values represented by it, the institute became the carrier of important tool-values by its role played in the modern knowledge society. According to Scott's interpretation the coming to the front of the servicing and problem solving roles at the expense of the traditional university values (critical approach, etical direction and institutional autonomy) are not practically negative processes. Reviewing the higher educational challenges of a knowledge based society mainly the doninance of practical values on academical aspects are in the focus of attention. According to the humanist tradition the university should serve the individual development and universal knowledge by its high quality education and research activity. In the present kontext it suggests the problem of economical expectations against education, that is more or less represented by the dualism – the formation of stress of theoretical and practical education - going through the history of higher education (Lay, 2004). In the background of the dominance of practical values Teichler (2003b) identified those – mostly labour market relevant – trends that focused in the instrumental and innovative elements of knowledge against the reflexive function in the spirit of effectiveness and technical development.

Reconsideration of social responsibility

When higher education became mass education, this fact brought the resolvation of closed, elite-like education characteristic. The period of Western-european economical boom also meant quality changes as well besides the quantity relations of number-expansion. This is also shown by the improved attention towards the access that saw the strengthening of meritocratic trends in the widening of educational possibilities. In this theoretical medium the wider social distribution of educational possibilities became the tool of fight against social inequality and also a basic characteristic of the modern societies (Koucký – Bartušek – Kovařovic, 2009). However the mith of meritocraty was systematically

finished by the educational theoretics from the 60s-70s (Bourdieu -Passeron, 1977; Coleman, 1991; Boudon, 1974; Bernstein, 1975; Ferge, 1976) the question of access and equality stuck together to the conversations about the values of higher education. This tematisation can be seen partial on one hand, and dissonant on the other hand. From this latter point of view we can see the value set of the modern higher education composed by values being in controversial relation and with changing dominancy, like the idea of equality brought from the public education, effectiveness stepping to the front with the altered socialeconomical situation (Hrubos, 2009a). The partial tematisation of the social responsibility of higher education is shown by the great dissonance between the theoretical attitudes in international documents and the direct steps made towards their practical execution. The issues of social responsibility and access have received stronger and stronger stress in the Bologna process mostly because student pressure since 2000. Scott (2009) sees the source of the stronger and stronger social responsibility of higher education mostly in the constant participational aspiration of wide social groups, that is connected to the highly qualified manpower need of the knowledge economy. Although universities have apparently operated as social institutions long before the phase of mass education, the demand for social responsibility shows significant appreciation and rearrangement. Modern higher education institutions are active shapers of society, creators of social and cultural values, and even the potential economic engines of both national and international

level. The borderline between society and university is nowadays a so interwoven relationship, that separation is almost impossible, which urges a new understanding of the social responsibility of higher education.

The place of mobility in the value structure of higher education

The facilitation of mobility is one of the key elements of the Bologna objectives for which handling individual, institutional and European aspects all play. Besides the importance of structural mobility it is a key element of the Bologna process as relevant indicator, concept, where the hard grip, measurable progress the essential measure of progress (Hrubos, 2005). Although the result expected from the improvement of mobility is undoubtedly the creation of the condition of the flexible European working conditions, the knowledge-building return of mobility (Teichler, 2003), and on a larger scale the improvement of the competitive position of European higher education, in this dissertation we devote special attention of the hierarchical nature of mobility. Internationalism and transnationalism are essentially the only academic values that fit together with the modern global trends. The idea of internationalism through the promotion of cultural diversity, tolerance and understanding connects to the service of social, even universal development, which may prove to be unique instrument because of the dual situation of the university resulted from its transnational history and socially embedded status (Lay, 2004). Meanwhile in the postmodern theories of becoming mass education the visions of multiculturism appear (Kiss, 1999; V. Pók, 2002). In spite of all these moral aspects, the international mobility of students still getting more and more hierarchical and elitist nature, which is clearly visible in the student reception of mobility programs and goals (Kozma, 2008).

Scientific research in the representation of academic values

To create our terminology of academic values, we executed historical analysis of the main principles of Magna Charta Universitatum which is based on classic academic traditions. The roots reach back to the medieval university, the humanist traditions and the modern German and French universities. Within this context we interpreted the crucial role of scientific research, of which origins can be found on the XVIII. century Göttingen university that is linked to the beginnings of the German neohumanism and was like a special type of research university in terms the lecturers' main task was research, and students' preparation for research work and profession (Békés, 2001). Although the prototype of research university is Göttingen University attaching the name of Alexander von Humboldt, university and research are inextricably intertwined in the Berlin university model of his brother, Wilhelm von Humboldt (Humboldt, 1985). The unit of education and research as a fundamental value describing the classical German university constitutes fundamental dimension of the academic idea completed by the accentuation of the special relationship between teachers and students based on reciprocity (Jaspers, 1990). In this context, the neohumanist idea related to the idea of university threw out the utilitarian attitude towards the academic studies. The combination of education and research became unworkable with the intensification of the university's mass character, injured the collegial and collaborative relationship of students and teachers that meant the key of intellectual and spiritual development provided by the university (Szostek, 2004). Comparing to the Weberian measure of the scientific carrier (Weber 1995) the urgent need for social adaptation of the academic sector had lost its innocence (Barblan, 2007), or even greater loss is the termination of that critical factor that was exposed towards each other by education and research in Humboldtian university, legitiming the other sphere in the same time (Lay, 2004). However the trend towards mass higher education show that scientific research as a value and task undertaken are still inextricably linked to the individual segments of higher education, as not a pervasive motivation but as a stable representative of traditional academic values. This is also shown by the institutional efforts – research-university concepts - organised around research as a mission.

Transformation of the concept of elite education

Due to the mass nature, the previously elitist, closed educational system had to face the influx of student groups that changed both quantitatively and qualitatively. In the terms of knowledge, social status, motivation and needs, the students of higher education form more heterogeneous

group than the students involved in the former elite education. Mass educations and the quality problems arising from it have become a main paradigm of higher education researches of the second half of XX. century which paradigm was inspected by several theoretical and empirical works. Significant part of these works focuses on the negative teacher-student consequences of mass education (pl. Readings, 1995; Altbach, 2002; Ritzer, 1988, Karnoouh, 2000). The academic sphere watching the mass education with scepticism sees the general decline of intellectual culture in the decrease of the role of knowledge without tangible benefits, and int he fore of market mechanisms. While in the Heideggerian spirit (Heidegger, 1993) self-management, selfdeclaration, self-conciousness being the tasks of (German) university stood in the center as the charisma of special spirit, in the middle of XX. Century the main trend on university is the mass production, mass education nature pervading education. The ethos of academic medium permeated by humanist traditions is the high quality education serving the universal knowledge and personal fulfillment. While the graduates of medieval universities were prepared for church or state service, humanist university created the idea of pure knowledge together with renaissance. The duality of theoretical and practical education reaching back to the ancient Greek schools embodies in dichotomies such as rhetoric and philosophy, practice and theory, utility and personal development. In this era of mass education academic education balancing in this duality is moved towards the more practical regions of education by outer expectations which meets the university students' needs as well. In this respect higher education can be interpreted as an investment that should produce labour market returns. Students in this respect enter the higher education as consumers, which higher education provides practical training in facts, but their relationships cannot be interpreted in the absence of theoretical background. Even the social environment surrounding higher education has also changed. In the knowledge-based society the values of university are in much more direct relationship with the value set of the society, the legislative power of university reduced (Scott, 1995). All these processes require the reconsideration of elite education. While the critical distance from the society is the feature of elite university that provide next generation of the political and state elite, mass universities are not able to develop this critical independency, they are more involved int he society, so their value structure is more fluid than that of the elite universities (Scott, 2004). These living social connection and reaction skills are the heritage of mass universities, but they were necessarily associated with the termination of the traditional framework, and "ivory tower" nature of elite education. In the interpretation of transformations besides the identification of value-relations of mass education (Scott 2004) efforts were made for the re-interpretation of the elite education as well. These theories emphasize that the borderline offered by the mass higher education is no longer the fact of entering the university, but the distribution – from the students' aspect: choice, positioning – among the levels and educational areas within the system. Therefore the limited nature of access remains the same on a higher level, or in an other sphere (Koucký – Bartušek – Kovařovic, 2009).

1.3. Structure of dissertation

In the first phase of our examination towards the student reflection of the higher educational values we carried out the exploration of historical background of relevant value-aspects (Chapter II).

The historical – from the antiquity to the mass education - analysis of transformation of higher educational values was followed by the summarizing description of modern higher educational value-theories, grounding the main hypotheses of our student value examinations (Chapter III.).

Int he third phase of our work in theoretical context we examine the higher educational value-dimensions created by the three basic documents – the Magna Carta Universitatum (1988), The UNESCO Worlds Declaration on Higher Education (1998) and the Bologna Declatarion (1999) – of the higher education of the end of XX. century. We reveal the historical and conceptual details underlying the academical, practical and social responsibility-oriented values, mobilizing the relevant higher education theoretical theories (Chapter IV.).

The empirical part of the dissertation start sin Chapter V. We identified the student values analysing the Bologna-relevant documents of the higher education's biggest European student organisation (European Students' Union - ESU) and examining the time profile of thematization and dominancy connected to that.

The hypotheses of the quantitative examinantion phase and their justification can be found in Chapter VI.

Following the examining route designed by the hypotheses during the analysis of student survey datum we carried out the exploration of theoretical value dimensions, the confirmation and reconsideration of modern higher educational value theories, and the value-based selection and characterisation of students (Chapter VII).

The conclusions produced by the theoretical and empirical phases of our work were collected together in the summarizing chapter (Chapter VIII), revealing the possible further research directions of the topic.

II. Applied methods

During the comprehensive examination of higher education-related value sets of academic students – apparently in addition to the process of the relevant literature – I carried out two bigger, exploratory empirical works.

2.1. Document analysis

As there was no student directed survey-type general value examination in the subject within the relation scope of the European educational system, in the first stage of the identification of student values we turned to the Bologna-relevant written materials, documents issued by the European Students' Union in which we assumed the crystallization of the values. During the document-analysis we wanted to identify the value-aspects, in particular the development of their trends over time. The range of documents processed covered the three following types of publicly available written materials published by ESU since the beginning of the Bologna Process: declarations, reports and analysis.

2.2. Statistical data analysis

For the targeted examination of the students' value set related to higher education we compiled a five-stage nine-value-variable Likert-scale, which was derived from the three higher educational value-dimension – academical, practical, social responsibility-dominant – identified in the theoretical stage of the dissertation. Each value composed in the nine

value variables represented the main values of single relevant documents of higher education. According to this we created the three variables of academic value-dimension upon the central values composed in the Magna Charta Universitatum (1988), the practical value-dimension upon the central values composed in the Bologna Declaration (1999), and the social responsibility dimension upon the central values composed in the UNESCO Decree (World Declaration, 1998). The question block containing nine value-variables joined to the questionnaire of Educatio Nonprofit Ltd.'s student survey as omnibus questions. The questionnaire survey was executed in May-June 2009 under the title of "Graduate Carrier Monitoring System – Student Motivation Examination".

The study population was formed by the full time students of state recognised higher educational institutes. During sampling researchers used proportional quota sampling according to educational area/faculty, volume, gender on single faculties. Sample volume included 7835 persons. Data collection method was a standard questionnaire-based survey based on quota sampling. At the interpretation of datum we had to take into consideration that the collection of sample was not executed by probability sampling so the results of the statistical processes can be used carefully for the population.

During the dataprocessing we had to adapt the consequences risen from the omnibus-nature of the research, especially to that we had the chance to ask special questions fitting to the subject of our research only in the case of value-variables attached to the questionnaire with own research purposes. In case of the educational, institutional, socio-demographic background variables of the empirical study we had to adapt the overal questions of the survey. We created and selected by the transformation of datum the explanatory variable set necessary for the verification of our hypotheses based on these.

Our research primarily aimed to map the structuring of higher education-related student values. For controlling our hypotheses we mainly used the explanatory model of variance analysis, during which we compare students' arrangements based on single value-dimensions (as dependent variables) according to the development of different higher educational background variables (independent or explanatory variables). The criterion of the proof of hypotheses in this case is the significant presence of the revealed differences towards the expected direction. The criterion of verification is the significance level received by the application of F-test based on the comparison of variance (0.05). Int he third stage of data processing we used cluster analysis for the classification of student value-groups. During the exploration of the higher education and socio-democratic background of student valuegroups the basis of interpretation was the highlight of typical overrepresentations. For determining these, we relied on the results of the crosstable analysis and on the indicator showing the intensity of deviation of cell-averages of the χ^2 probe's adjusted standardized residuals.

III. Findings

3.1. The diversification of higher education is also evident in student value structures

The results of our survey show that the diversity of the higher education system is projected at the level of students and values related to higher education. After the capture of the value-based student groups we revealed the underlying educational, institutional, socio-demographic specificities, verifying the structural differences behind the value sets of students, according to which the certain student value-groups can be described with different and colorful educational and social backgrounds.

3.2. Practical values pervade the whole student value set relating higher education, on high level and it is less specificable.

During the control of large scale role of practical values in the students' value set, on the development of students' value we found the traces of a trend determining the value set of mass education, parallel to the European reform-processes, providing that related to the background variables we find the general, less segmented distribution of these "practical" values. According to the conclusion of the examination of practical value-dimensions and its certain value variables, the over-representation of practical values regarding the applied institutional and

educational background variables showed less tendentious view, that refers to the general prevalence of these values. Examining the occupied role and place in the students' value set of the practical values determining the European higher education reform-processes we find high values especially related to the labour market aspect of the qualification, and the education's flexibility. Observing the practical values in the context of nine value-categories in addition to the average over-assessment, low standard deviation suggests the higher education density of practical value.

3.3. Within the Bologna Process the representation of social responsibility of higher education was undertaken dominantly by sudent organisations.

In the student assessment of higher education value-variables the aspects of social responsibility regulary produced the lowest averages, and among the value-groups created as the result of student survey, only the ones with detrimental educational-socio-demographical background showed some sensitivity towards the social aspects of higher education. The social lack of interest characterising the students has no trace in the mission of international student organisations. Moreover, based upon the analysis of Bologna-relevant documents of the student organisation of European higher education (Eurpean Students' Union – ESU) we can declare that the student organisation's opinion on the social aspects is consistent and clear: higher education is considered to be one of the

public services, and equally accessible for everyone. Students' opinions are clear int hat respect that the equality of opportunities, the educational decisions made by individual choices not by social constraints are supportable and fundamental rights both at the inlet and inside of the system. Examining the development in time of the equality of opportunities and fairness – comprehensively: social aspects – we experience constant presence and strong amplification. The dominancy of the aspects of social responsibility can be evinced in details from the documents of the student organisation. It appears that the strong representation of these factors, and the main critics of the implementation both can be connected to the student organisations in the creation of European Higher Education Area.

3.4. The value of international student mobility show strong hierarchical nature.

The ESU's gradually deeper involvment into the Bologna Process (which is on organisational level most significantly visible in the membership in E4¹ and the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG)) went

¹ E4s: intermediate organisations fulfilling leading role int he control of Bologna Process. E4 (members are European University Association - EUA, the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education - EURASHE, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education – ENQA and ESU) includes four European level organisations. The group was formalised by the Ministers of Education in 2007 London Declaration with the name E4, but the four organisations have been working together since the preparation of 2005 Bergen Meeting in several issues of European higher education.

together with the articulation of student need for international mobility. However, from the aspects of educational mobility the student organisation consistently stresses the equality of opportunities, pointing out that mobility only can be interpreted as a right for everyone. The aim on intenational level is to prevent mobility from becoming the channel of student elite education. Students' principles are so concrete on this area, that the initiatives based upon them have great role int hat the 2009 Notice of Leuven aimes to reach the 20% student mobility rate by 2020, the end of the second decade of the Bologna Process. Students point out that this is not only about the increaseof volumen: without financial support, creation of financial funds mobility affects towards social selection instead of the increase of openness. The hierarchical nature of mobility challenged by student organisation are confirmed by the results of national survey of student values. While in the case of practival value-variables of flexible education system and qualification useful in the labour market we can accept that these two practical values are common characteristics of the studentsof mass higher education, international mobility does not fit this profile. This variable as independent value factor, showed structuring, or even hierarchical nature regarding both the institutional and educational background. This nature is confirmed by the stronger binding of international mobility to the value-based student groups showing elite characteristics.

3.5. The academic values in the student value set of mass higher education are concentrated around the scientific research.

We derived the value dimension representing classical university values from the central value set of Magna Charta Universitatum articulating the voice of the academic sphere. However, we found that the reflection of these values from the students of mass higher educationcan be dominantly justified for of scientific research. This refers to the fact that among traditional academic values we are able to identify a student value group having a well specificable background along this factor. This is also suggested by the fact that among the traditional academic values this is the one along which we can identify a student value-group with clearly specificable background, and by the result according to which examining the academic value set of classical science faculty students the over-assessment of the importance of scientific research can de seen as delimiting factor. Examining the "peel off" of the scientific research from the two other academic values (which are independence from the political power and the cooperation between students and teachers) upon the examination of the correlation matrix of researched value-variables relation we found that this variable is not only stands out from academic values, but from the whole higher educational value set by its different development, while related to the relevant educationinstitutional background-variables it has high explanatory power. The epirical examination data supported our hypothesis that in student value

structure academic values are represented by scientific research. In this context thre relevant indicator of research as the borderline of traditional academic values can be identified, which points out towards the researc university concepst orienting ourselves both in the history of higher education (Békés, 2001) and in its present trends (Hrubos, 2006).

3.6. In the upper segment of mass higher education a new value-structure of elite education can be shown.

During the value-analysis of mass higher educaton the theories of modern higher education suppose on one hand a new higher educational value set brought to life by the mass education, and on the other hand, a re-interpreted elite image beyond the sceptical point of view related to the elite-education phase. The results of student value examination phase focusing on the elite-values of the mass higher education support both theses. On one hand it is proven that the modern mass higher education also has an elite group with separable value-structure and education-institutional background. On the other hand it is clearly visible that this elite regarding its values is not related to the "classical, traditional" elite-concept according to academic measures. In the mass higher education the student educational elite basedon the shortage of acces is dominantly characterized by practical value-orientation, and concerning its higher education breakdown it is strongly connected to the university – but not classical academic - sphere. Main outcome of the test results is that they underline that although the student value set of the mass higher education is truly different from the characteristics of the traditional elite training, this difference does not neccessarily and exclusively mean the loss of something. Beyond the re-production of the elite in academic means, higher education also produces the economical and political elite layer of the society, and the elite-student value set also develops according to this. In case of this student group we suppose a special value-structure typical for the elite-segment of modern mass higher education. We could form a plastic image of the group-characteristics of students of elite training upon the typical over-representation of educational and socio-demographical background variables.

3.7. New research directions

During our works we wanted to reveal the student value set related to the higher education in the context of both international organisational values and concrete student opinions. This purpose obviously cannot be overall and cannot create a detailed explanatory model either. However the impossibility of the exploration of the whole value-spectrum and both the beauties and difficulties of value-researche can enrich the researche results by the introduction of value-variables relying on new, other theoretical basis.

The reveal of the connections between the higher eucation-related student values and the other elements of the value-set also remained open. This means the analysis of how higher educational values get into the individuals' value set and how they found their places within with more or less significancy.

Maybe the most attractive researcher's challenge can be the reveal of the weight and connection of the factors forming the student value-set with the creation of an explanatory model covering social and institutional determinations.

However the new theories of higher education also attract the need for the examination of students' value structures. Particular attention could be paid to the institutional missions' projection in the students' values, or the connection between the institutional self-identification and students' values.

Another possible subject of research could be the examination of the values of further stakeholders (employers, government) and institutional management media besides the students' value-structures compared to them.

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