

University, Market Ideology and Disciplines of Culture

Summary

The article provides an analysis of certain global tendencies in the field of higher education – a strong shift toward marketization, commercialization of university research and studies, the rise of global consumerist ethos and its impact upon the changes of Lithuanian universities after the reestablishment of independence. The author argues that these processes are closely associated with the impact of neoliberalism on many sectors of contemporary society worldwide. Because of the pressure of neoliberal agenda, the university shifted from one of the essential instruments of national state towards a more ambiguous position of a market object abandoning its concept of common good and in favour of offering services for sale for private sector. It is admitted that there are still significant differences in various continents and countries as far as university's integration in the economic market is concerned: in USA private funding has historically had a closer ties with the universities, meanwhile in many European countries state funding prevailed. And yet, despite of variety of local differences in national funding schemes and influence of the national state policies the integration of higher university and the market is more and more pronounced. The author illustrates his thesis basing his insights on many examples from various continents and countries indicating that

the reign of neoliberalism has produced a strong impact upon local national policies of higher education.

With the rise of modern university and as an outcome of Humboldtian reforms a new model of research university has had its consequences on the role of humanities and their place in the contemporary university: despite attempts of some scholarly humanist disciplines to adopt scientific methods and aspire to become “scientific”, humanities failed to secure their place in the structure of contemporary university and thus their assemblage of disciplines became “usual suspects” and they have to prove their importance in order to secure a shrinking space in the curriculum and institutional structure of contemporary university. The author notes that break-throughs in present scientific disciplines had a paradoxical impact upon humanities and disciplines of culture: though new research and study programs on natural or hard sciences are proliferating, those disciplines that should prove reflection upon sciences and scientific research and technologies are forced to shrink as their departments and programs are constantly attacked or even closed.

The author argues that Lithuanian universities are hastily following the global trends in attempting to commercialize knowledge, research and commodifying

university studies without a proper examination of its consequences to the national culture and society. It is argued that humanities and disciplines that study culture in Lithuania are under pressure from these tendencies of commercialization and

commodification and despite of the fact that they represent a global tendency a local critical discourse should nevertheless be developed in Lithuania in order have some resistant against the tendencies shaped by global neoliberalism and its local avatars.

Keywords: Universities, neoliberalism, globalization, market, commercialization of higher education.

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