International Education Studies; Vol. 9, No. 2; 2016
ISSN 1913-9020 E-ISSN 1913-9039
Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education

Clash inside the Academy: The Market and the Strife for the Democratic Values of the Western University

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Received: July 3, 2015 Accepted: August 14, 2015 Online Published: January 25, 2016

doi:10.5539/ies.v9n2p32 URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ies.v9n2p32

Abstract

The growing popularity of the corporate university model raises the question of whether the market principles are suitable for planning the policy of a key enterprise like the university without weakening its capacity of pursuing critical knowledge and teaching for democracy. Does the inclusion of the free market imperatives in the functioning of the university improve its overall quality? Is there a clash between the values of the university and those of the market? What is really at stake for democratic societies? This paper addresses these questions through a conflict perspective on neoliberalism as the orthodoxy of state planning and the implications of this operational model on the core values of the Western university. The paper also takes a historical approach on state intervention to explain the political circumstances that accompanied this orientation to public policy and to offer perspective on the relevance of the state to liberal democratic society.

Keywords: academic freedom, institutional autonomy, conflict theory, neoliberalism, democratic spaces

1. Introduction

When Trudie Kibbe Reed, the president of Philander Smith College in Arkansas, was asked about the dismissal of a tenured professor, she justified her decision by saying, “As a leader, just like all other CEOs, my authority cannot be challenged” (Finkin & Post, 2009, p. 231). On the face of it, the anecdote exemplifies how the corporate market wave is sweeping over the academy and replacing its language of education by mechanistic discourse of corporate culture that sees college and university presidents as CEOs. Woodhouse (2008) observes that the trends toward marketization filter down into the day-to-day life of the academy in other ways, so today professors and subject-based disciplines are resources units, students are customers, curricula are program packages, and graduates are products. Wilson (2008) suggests that the best metaphor to describe this model of the university can be the “Wal-Mart university” (p. 197). This operational model signals a paradigm shift in the idea of university as seats of learning and the inheritors of a tradition of reason spanning over two thousand years.

However, there is more to the picture than meets the eye. The real dangers of bringing the free market to the university transcend expunging its terminology. The real dangers lie in hollowing out the academy of values situated at the core of its mission as free enquiry and impartial pursuit of knowledge, and stripping them down to a core of market principles and functions aimed at satisfying student and employers’ demands and maximizing the profit of private corporations (Deem, 2008). Using the conflict theory as its foundation, this paper argues that the intrusions of the market principles in the operation of the university undermine its central values of academic freedom and institutional autonomy and weaken its capacity to fulfil its mission of pursuing critical knowledge and educating for democracy.

This argument emanates from a belief that the functioning of the capitalist market may not be compatible with the functioning of the university (Marginson, 2014). Nonetheless, the market model is often portrayed as the only antidote to the ills of higher education: a position encapsulated in the TINA syndrome, an acronym of the former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s famous phrase ‘There is No Alternative’. This determinist position coincided with the ascendancy of neoliberalism as the ideological font of regulating public policy premised on unfettered market mechanisms as the basis of growth in realms that traditionally remained beyond the pale of the market as higher education on claims of less cumbersome bureaucracy and greater efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and accountability in the management of public assets and services. Today, as Harvey (2006)

notes, neoliberalist principles are spreading emphatically in public life, whereas the state is withdrawing from it which marks a setback for generations of social democratic class struggle in these arenas. But substantiation of this argument requires a discussion of the ideology that inspired this phenomenon.

Therefore, the paper begins by discussing the conflict theory as preamble to its main discussion of neoliberalism. A special focus will be given to the marketization of higher education that was introduced through the ideological shift to neoliberalism as the new orthodoxy of state planning in the late 1970s. The second section outlines the contradictions between the market values and the university values with special focus on how the market methods weaken the freedom and the independence of the university. The third section explores the intersection between the mission and values of the academy and democracy. The paper concludes that many of the problems with academic freedom stem from the encroachments of the market in higher education. It also concludes that democratic societies require free universities, and free universities require protection from the influence of extraneous powers like the market.

2. Conflict, Class Power, and the Neoliberal Project

It is argued that neoliberalism was from the very beginning a project to restore class power through the concentration of wealth in the hands of the richest strata of society (Duménil & Lévy, 2004). It is also argued that when the income of one per cent of the population started to soar suddenly in the mid-1980s and continued apace to reach fifteen per cent by the turn of century in a country like the United States, a relatively advanced model of the neoliberalization, one cannot help but explore the question of whether or not the shift to neoliberalist policies and the class forces assembled behind them were responsible for forging this quantitative leap (Harvey, 2006). This paper uses the conflict theory to examine this argument.

Conflict theory emphasizes socioeconomic classes. It is based to some extent on the writings of the Karl Marx, which is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that Marxist theorists see the social and economic relationships in the production process as windows to understand the political activities and the larger patterns of social organisation (Knutilla, 2003). According to Marx, capitalist society is fractured into two major classes: the proletariat (the ruled working class) and the bourgeoisie (the ruling capitalist class); the latter controls and exploits the former until the proletariat eventually revolt to redress injustice (Ball & Peters, 2005). For Marx, as can be discerned from the previous discussion, power has an economic texture grounded in the relationships between and among social classes.

Conflict theory begins with the assumption that the society is rigged by "the *power elite* [who are] in positions to make decisions having major consequences" (Mills, 1956, pp. 3-4). That is, society is ruled by the power elite who occupy pivotal positions enabling them to solidify their status by designing laws and policies aimed at sustaining their power. But this conceptualization should not be interpreted as the power elite are solely limited to politicians who can design laws for their constituencies. Dyck (2003) notes that in this approach, the capitalist elite (bourgeoisie) controls the political elite who in turn uses the state to consolidate the bourgeoisie domination. Dyck adds that conflict theorists think the state should be the sole provider of social capital such as education and health care; however, the state pursues to create a business climate in which capitalists can maximize their gains, in what is called "accumulation function" (p. 14). This harks back to Marx who also claims that "the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" (Marx & Engels, 2002, p. 221). Harvey (2005) subscribes to this claim, which, according to his analysis of neoliberalism, is a major aspect of neoliberal policies that aim at harnessing the state to ensure its laws and policies optimize the conditions for capital accumulation. We will discuss this argument further in the section about neoliberalism.

2.1 Neoliberalism: History and Implications

Neoliberalism was the brainchild of the Mont Pèlerin Society, a transnational meta-discourse community established by Friedrich Hayek who sought to redefine capital liberalism by reverting to a more deregulated market (Olssen, 2010). The Mont Pèlerin Society included academic economists, historians, and philosophers who disapproved the ideological revisions to liberal capitalism that resulted in a shift to Keynesianism as the economic orthodoxy of public policy development of the welfare state structured in most of the Western hemisphere after the Second World War (Dieter & Neuhoffer, 2006; Thorsen & Lie, 2006). Hayek was deeply opposed to state interventionist theories, especially Keynesian economics, which, according to Hayek (1944), jeopardized central values to human civilization as freedom. Conversely, Hayek (1973) argued, the market can set free the creative and entrepreneurial spirit in individuals and thereby can lead to a greater individual freedom and a more efficient allocation of resources. Hayek also argued that the battle of ideas against these theories was key, and that it would take more than a generation to win that battle (Hayek, 1960). This argument warrants a further discussion of neoliberalism to understand what is really at stake.

Neoliberalism is a highly contested notion. Generally, neoliberalism is a theory of political economy that supposes "human well-being can be achieved through liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade" (Harvey, 2005, p. 2), and through minimizing state intervention in public life to the legislation and enforcement of law and policies aimed at eliminating obstacles to capital's profitability, investment, and market. These include: creating and preserving an institutional framework appropriate to such practices; ensuring the market exists in all areas including education, health, and security (Olssen, 2010); deregulating business, including privatising of public enterprises; reducing taxes and budget; removing protectionist policies and hurdles to financial and foreign exchanges (Chorev, 2010; Kuhen, 2006).

The state, as can be noticed from this definition, is a central theme in neoliberalism. Dale and Robertson (2009) point out that for neoliberals the state is necessary to remove controls from the market. For Foucault (2008), this is antithetical to the laissez-faire maxim of classical liberalism, which was mainly aimed at "the rationalization of the exercise of government" (p. 3018). In the same vein, Gill (cited in Dale & Robertson, 2009, p. 112) extrapolates that unlike classical liberalism, neoliberalism was not driven by a comprehensive opposition to all state activity; rather it worked through the state to push the market into public life, in a process that Gill calls the "constitutionalization of the neoliberal". In the same vein, Hyslop-Marginson and Leonardo (2012) agree that "the most characteristic feature of neoliberalism is the systematic application of state authority, in a variety of antidemocratic policies and practices, to impose market imperatives on public policy development" (p. 3). Harvey (2006) thinks that this neoliberal trend is a huge contradiction to the promised freedom of the market, because it may force public institutions to use methods that might not be in the best interest of the people served by these institutions. Higher education can be a good barometer to examine this argument. A useful question arises from this discussion is how free and efficient this sphere can be when the market mechanisms are pushed into its functioning.

When transposed to higher education, "the market can replace the democratic state as the primary producer of cultural logic and value" (Lynch, 2006, p. 4). The university must make innovative adjustments to diffuse obstacles that hinder the inclusion of market principles in its operations (Hyslop-Margison & Leonard, 2012). Education is quintessentially a private good; tuition fees must be offloaded on the consumer (students), education is a "consumable service that can be shopped for measuring cost against quality … [which] can be improved the way business people attempt to improve business—by squeezing more productivity out of the labor force while imposing cost-cutting and efficiency measures" (Saltman, 2014, p. xxii).

Perhaps the diffusion of obstacles placed before the market is particularly important for higher education. The question is who decides these obstacles, and what influence such a step can have on the capacity of this enterprise to serve the society that supports it. In the neoliberal doctrine, liberty and freedom are measured against how much hindrance that institutional factors and regulations cause to the creation of a good business climate; constraints to the freedom of the market are deemed undemocratic (Thorsen & Lie, 2006). As Hyslop-Marginson and Leonardo (2012) observe, the implication here is that "freedom and democracy are generally reduced by neoliberalism to libertarian discursive mechanisms that permit financiers and the ruling elite to operate in ways that undercut the general welfare of society" (p. 3). Harvey (2006) contends that the real problem here lies in the conflation between freedom and democracy as a political practice and the freedom of the market rather than with the freedom of individuals. For higher education, the freedom to teach and research independently could be only acceptable within this context to the extent that they do not interfere with market logic and the corporate authority, otherwise, they are undemocratic, and thus must be removed or curtailed.

Deregulation of the marketplace (and public institutions in general) is inherent to the discourse of neoliberalism and its precursor: classic liberalism. It is democratic; it is humane; it is crucial. However, there is skepticism about the adequacy of these views. It is also argued that despite the central role that Keynesian economics gave to the state in planning public policy, the social democratic state structured from this regime after the Second World War had not only managed to rescue liberal capitalism from the Great Depression of 1929, but also to achieve important gains (Dieter & Neuhoffer, 2006). Then, are all state controls bad?

The neoliberal hegemony in policy has portrayed erstwhile state regulations as the antithesis of democracy. In a rebuttal to this argument, Olssen (2009) contends that this is not a valid comparison, because the liberal notions of 'self-regulating market' and 'laissez-faire' (let it be) assume the actors involved in the market processes possess moral constraints that would make them correct themselves when things go wrong. The reality is, Olssen adds, "one could only 'let be' if nature determined a satisfactory and harmonious outcome" (p. 2). Hobhouse (1911), one of the oldest polemicist of the laissez-faire, also makes this point that nature does not provide a natural tendency to self-regulation and/or self-correction mechanisms; hence, some control is required.

Hobhouse, argues that the state-economy relationship should not be conceptualized as do 'nothing' or 'interfere', rather it should be conceptualized as the control that impedes creativity and freedom vis-a-vis the controls that facilitate them.

The neoliberal discourse has always portrayed state regulations and welfare state practices in a context of conspiracy theory to thwart individual liberty and human well-being. But to little avail of this theory, history decrees otherwise. Polanyi (1957) observes that the shifts from liberal solutions to state solutions that occurred in England, Germany, and France since the 1860s were not a result of ideological convictions on the part of those who engaged in the process. Instead, these collectivist solutions were a consequence to the failings of the market. Shonfield (1965) adds, that interventionist policies provided guidelines to social services, education, and employment because the market proved to be "a poor guide to the best means of satisfying the real wishes of consumers" (pp. 226-227).

Neoliberal rhetoric appeals to individual liberty and freedom. This strategy has proved very effective, because it resonates with the Western tradition where these values are prized and valued. But what sort of freedom is envisioned here for the university? The cultural critic Matthew Arnold (cited in Harvey, 2005) long ago said, "Freedom is a very good horse to ride, but to ride somewhere" (p. 6). To what destination the university is expected to ride the horse of freedom given to it by the market?

The next section discusses the effects of marketizing the university on its values of academic freedom and autonomy.

3. Free University, Free Market: Clash of Values

Universities today face a stark choice. They can commit to the market imperatives and become engines for transmitting skills and technology for private corporations, or they can adhere to their independence and determine for themselves the values they wish to embody. Unfortunately, this eventuality seems inevitable. Woodhouse (2009) argues that the opposition between the market and the university emanates from their distinct logics of value. Let us get back to basics and think of the purpose university.

Schafer (2008) sums up, "universities are places where scholars pursue knowledge for its own sake" (p. 52). One way of interpreting this egalitarian conception is that the university functions of teaching and research are primarily driven by curiosity regardless of the monetary value of the results produced in the process. Schafer adds that "the intellectual vitality of universities derives from the fact that scholars are … beholden to no one … [and] the knowledge gained by university research is then freely disseminated to colleagues, students, and the wider community" (p. 52). Woodhouse (2009) subscribes to this view and adds that this perspective is only possible "where the freedom to pursue knowledge critically is sustained by an institutional autonomy guaranteeing the university's independence from powerful social forces, including the governments and the market" (p. 37). Marginson (2014) explains that the logic of the university centres on the notion that knowledge is "none-rivalous and none-exclusible" (p. 59). In other words, knowledge sought freely and autonomously is a reward that does not lose its value or amount in circulation or in being held by many people, rather, its value increases when distributed freely across society.

On the other hand, the market logic of value is predominantly financial. The chief goal of education is producing relevant knowledge and research that can make money for private individuals and companies (McMurtry, 1998). Woodhouse (2009) notes that "the goals of pursuing knowledge and maximizing private profit contradict one another because sharing knowledge with others is incompatible with accumulating money for oneself" (p 22). Therefore, it is a fundamental error to identify the goal of education with that of the market where "private profit is acquired by a structure of acquisition that excludes other from its appropriation" (McMurtry, 1991, p. 38). In fact, the logic of the market is not only financial; it is not inclusive. Those who seek knowledge but lack the money are not permitted access that knowledge or to share in its accumulation.

The market principles can be useful for planning of the state, but they may not be suitable for planning education. Newson (1992) explains this oppositional character between the two by saying, "The principles that benefit the markets undermine the objectives of education and conversely, education that achieves its intended purposes cannot serve well as a marketable commodity" (p. 234).

But the clash of values is just like all sorts of conflict, when two sets of values collide, one trumps the other. In the neoliberal moment of today and the market holding the high cards, it might seem inconceivable that the university and its values can emerge unscathed. Notwithstanding how demoralising this opinion can be, it is important to remember that attempts to subdue the university are not new. Each period carried a fresh wave of challenges to the academy. The *stadium* that took shape in medieval Europe was not less threatened by the

imperium and *sacerdotium*, the great powers of that age; nor was it less threatened later by the national state (Perkin, 2007). Scholars always strove to keep alive the freedom of inquiry and autonomy that helped the Western university continue to function as a bastion of enlightenment for centuries.

The next section discusses the aspects upon which academic freedom and autonomy rest, and how these aspects are attacked to remove barriers to the value system of the market.

3.1 Handling the Hurdle

Refusal to acknowledge the opposing value system of the university is explicit. In Canada, for example, the Canadian Corporate-Higher Education Forum (CHEF) reiterates the call for the diffusion of any barriers to strong corporate-university linkages. The CHEF was formed in 1983 with a membership comprising university presidents and corporate CEOs to discuss issues of broad societal issues. An early example of the CHEF stance toward freedom and self-governance of the university was clearly articulated by Judith Maxwell and Stephanie Currie, private sector economists who were commissioned by the forum to identify areas of corporate-university cooperation to increase Canada's economic competitiveness internationally. Their book, *Partnership for Growth* in 1984, advised where exactly the forum should invest and steer resources.

Maxwell and Curry (1984) saw great potential for the market in the university and recommended that to achieve this potential, the university should be attuned to the needs of the market. Maxwell and Currie advised that this can achieve excellence and ensure the technology and skills created in the university are accessible for the Canadian industry which needs these resources to stay competitive in post-industrial era. According to Maxwell and Curry (1984), the university curriculum and research should be aimed at serving the market by generating technology ready for use by private corporations, and education should be limited to receiving training in the skills that add value through the application of scientific and market knowledge.

The most disturbing aspect in this assessment is the part about the cultural differences of the university. For Maxwell and Curry (1984), these cultural differences are hurdles that must be overcome for greater cooperation between universities and businesses. Moreover, it is the university who should adjust for the market, not vice versa. Maxwell and Curry contend that the freedoms to select instructional content, management of research, and communication of knowledge are at odds with principles of profitability and efficiency that determine value in the market, and thus, they must be discarded. This thesis has serious implications for the universities and the societies supporting them.

The model described here marks a seismic shift in the life of the academy in two ways. First, it changes the egalitarian nature of the university. Second, it subordinates the university to the overriding market principle of monetary gain. Simply, this regime leaves no place for fundamental values for academic life as academic freedom, the safeguard of the autonomy to teach, research, articulate theories, and espouse views without restriction by prescribed doctrine or institutional censorship (Shills, 1991; Hogan & Trotter, 2013; Turk, 2008; Woodhouse, 2001).

Academic freedom derives its importance from the fact that it offers secure opportunities to base teaching and research on a critical pursuit of knowledge rather than prejudice or dogma. By so doing, Woodhouse (2009) observes, professors challenge students' monolithic beliefs by exposing them to counter-argument and by opening debate about the adequacy of contesting ideas, and this gives the opportunity to think of issues in transformative ways that can ultimately help students grow intellectually in self-understanding and understanding of the world. Cohen (2008) believes that the infringement of the freedom to contest and scrutinize various standpoints weakens the integrity of the university as it can result in flawed research. In this sense, academic freedom is central to the purpose of the university, because it helps professors fulfil their scholarly obligation of creating and disseminating knowledge in an unbiased way that sustains public trust in the university. Simultaneously, it helps students establish the habit and capacity to pursue knowledge critically.

This stands in stark contrast to the market principle of profitability, which (as discussed earlier) translates into the knowledge, and skills of most worth are the ones should be taught. Monetized reasoning like this has serious ramifications for the academy. First is the marginalization of academics: it is outsiders who decide the course syllabi, reading lists, and sometimes even the points of view. This is particularly the case when research is funded by external bodies as private corporations. Universities deviate from its essential mission of pursuing the interests of the whole society to pursuing the interests of stockholders. Second, which has a profound relevance to the purpose of the university, is the reduction of the academy into a training centre graduating human capital with technical skills that add value to the market. The real danger of this logic of value, Woodhouse (2009) notes,

> "[It ignores] understanding, … rather, regards all learning as a matter of acquiring skills in isolation from the academic discipline in which they are used. The goal of learning 'to think critically and act logically' … [becomes] 'to evaluate situations, solve problems and make decisions' in ways that are useful to future employers but that do little to enhance the critical thought of students." (p. 26)

Barrow (1990) agrees that problem-solving of this kind equates to acquiring skills or exercises that can be mastered and improved by practice, rather being constituents of broader understanding based in various disciplines of thought. Woodhouse (2001) argues that "academic skills decoupled from any disciplinary base, are really nothing different from skills management" (p. 111). It is doubtful that the market model can accommodate for deep structural aspects of education when its logic derives from a belief that the goal of all human activity is to maximize profit.

3.2 Why Tenure?

University professors are in a position where they need to take intellectual risks and tackle controversial issues that might differ from the dominant discipline. Hogan and Trotter (2013) explain that tenure was necessary to protect scholars from societal and institutional retributions when their views defy accepted norms. Deem (2008) observes that tendencies to replace tenured faculty by contingent faculty (adjuncts, part-time, and non-tenure track) and powerful accountable administrators were intensified in 1980s with the rise of *new managerialism*, an ideological approach to management characterised by cuts in public expenditure and the introduction of quasi-markets to public services—a phenomenon usually referred to today as *casualization* (Seth, 2004). Aby (2007) believes that academic freedom rests on tenure, which makes the casualization of university teaching a great danger to academic freedom, because it replaces tenured faculty by vulnerable ones whose guarantee of academic freedom is tenuous. Aby (2007) adds, "Precarious appointments like these make academic freedom more a wish than a reality" (p. 12). However, there are other pernicious consequences to the profession.

Wilson (2009) argues that replacing tenured faculty by adjuncts lowers labour costs at the expense of academic standards and the intellectual quality, because these professors lack the job security of tenured faculty that enables them to take intellectual risks without putting their jobs at the mercy of administrative vagaries. The slipperiness of this particular attack on academic freedom is that it comes under the guise of appealing terms as efficiency, accountability, and imbalanced freedoms; whereas the reality is, it is aimed at cutting budgets and suppressing internal dissent.

Tenure hence maintains the quality of education, preserving at the same time the freedom necessary for pursuing critical knowledge and for consolidating democracy. Freedom, argues Barber (2003), is what makes the university better equipped for performing its civic mission of turning out good citizens of free communities. Important questions arise from this discussion is about the parallel between academic freedom and democracy and about the manner in which the university provides the environment for the two to thrive and to contribute to the betterment of democratic societies. Answering these questions is the theme of the next section.

4. Academic Freedom and Democracy

The university was always a haven for dissenting voices. In medieval Europe, university workers resisted external interference through *cessatio*, a form medieval strike (Hayhoe, 2001). How much the university contributed to engendering a tradition for democracy in Europe is quite debateable, but there is agreement that academia always cherished a tradition of freedom and self-rule (Altbach, 1998). According to Wilson (2009), free universities are crucial for democratic societies; this derives from the fact that universities enjoy many protections of free speech.

It is unusual to find a mission statement of any institution of higher education that directly refers to any democratic mandates. However, from time to time, this mandate needs to be visited, explicated, and declared to reconfirm the role of higher education, especially the university, as a democratic space. First, we need to know if there is democratic mandate for education in the first place. In Amy Gutmann's famous book "*Democratic Education*", the author's thoughts coalesce around the democratic purpose of primary and secondary education. Overall, Gutmann (1987) forcibly demonstrates in this book that the ideas of liberal education and democracy go hand in hand. That is, liberal education offers the opportunity to achieve the democratic purpose of education, which is the formation of what Gutmann calls "the democratic character" (p. 51). Gutmann adds that this democratic character involves

> "the development of capacities for criticism, rational argument, by being taught how to think logically, to argue coherently and fairly, … and to learn not only to behave in accordance with authority but to

think critically about if … [children] are to live up to the democratic ideal of sharing political sovereignty. ” (pp. 50-51)

The university, the chief pillar of higher education, has a related but different democratic purpose. Gutmann (1987) argues that the university is less about character formation; "although learning how to think carefully and critically about political problems, to articulate one's views and to defend them before people with whom one disagree is a form of moral education … for which universities are well suited" (p. 173). Fallis (2005) points out that the university continues the process of building democratic character, but the fundamental democratic purpose of the university is "the protection against the democratic tyranny of ideas. Control of the creation of ideas—whether by a majority or a minority—subverts democracy" (p. 19). The university hence serve democracy by being the space that gives the opportunity to grow intellectually and by being the sanctuary where views, even unorthodox ones, are judged by their intellectual merit without the fear of oppression, censure, or even subversion.

Hyslop-Margison and Leonard (2012) argue that what distinguishes democratic societies is the existence of public discursive spaces like the university. Habermas (1996) calls these discursive places the *life world*. For Habermas, the life world refers to the human experiences, spaces, and interactions that create spaces for meaningful democratic discussions. Habermas suggests that neoliberalism has caused destruction of the life world. Hyslop-Margison and Leonard believe that neoliberalist, market-driven policies threaten the historically democratic core values of higher education through the marginalization of subjects that afford students-as-developing-citizens the knowledge and the opportunity of exposure to liberal arts and engaging in critical discussions. Hyslop-Margison and Leonard add that the slashing of humanities from university curriculum exemplifies how critical forums are being undermined so that no space remains in society where unjust economic arrangements can be discussed freely. In fact, no one can credibly ignore the incontrovertible evidence of the increasing attack on humanities, a phenomenon, according to Nussbaum (2010), is causing a democratic crisis in modern education.

5. Conclusion

This paper has outlined the threats associated with subordinating of the universities to the imperatives of the market. Special focus was given to the ascendance of neoliberalism as the state administration orthodoxy and the implications of the emphasis this ideology places on the application of the market principles in the operation of a key institution like the university. The paper also discussed the fundamental differences between the value systems of the market on one hand and the university on the other. Following on, the text shined a light on the association between the intrinsic values of the university to democracy.

In conclusion, the neoliberal moment poses tremendous intellectual challenges to the academy. There is an urge for the university to protect its independence from the market or any other forces that want their ideological or commercial views to supersede professional standards in academic policy-making. The university can only serve the public when it is open to the widest of viewpoints and perspectives. Education that stifles counter-arguments is not worthy of the name 'knowledge'; it is tantamount to indoctrination. History has shown that indoctrinated societies lose sight of the structural flaws in the system. The Soviet Union is an exemplary of how blind beliefs in mythical justice and capacity to abolish all the problems of humanity led to an absolutist regime in times everyone thought absolutism had become a relic of the past. Similarly, well-intended claims by the market advocates of more efficient use of the academy for human wellbeing need to be exposed to rigorous examination to ensure their applications do not lead to the opposite.

Universities offer a free space where people learn to think for themselves without the fear of censure or coercion. They are also places where thought are tested. The suppression of the distinct freedom of academics undermines the freedom of the whole society since it weakens the ability to think of reality in a critical manner. Free and autonomous universities are necessary to democracy. But as this paper shows, free universities require protection from the influence of external influences and a sincere commitment to accommodating opposing views. To infringe upon these values is to infringe upon them at our peril.

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