

THE TENSION BETWEEN MARKETISATION AND ACADEMISATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ALBANIA

Erjona Canaj ¹, Sokol Bana ²

¹Department of Public Law, Faculty of Law, European University of Tirana
Email: erjona.canaj@uet.edu.al

²Department of Law, Faculty of Human Sciences, University 'Ismail Qemali' Vlore
Email: sokolbana@yahoo.it

Abstract

Higher education in Albania, as in most other European countries, has undergone a series of reforms. The Bologna process has increased the focus on employability and the quality assurance process for ensuring that educational goals are met. Yet, at the same time, higher education is envisioned as helping students to develop an entrepreneurial mindset and collaborate with society. To do this, increasing demands are placed on making education more 'scientific' through linking instruction to research. Higher education is supposed to enhance its scientific expertise, while at the same time responding to market pressure and consumer demands. Contemporary changes in higher education in Albania are characterised by two educational discourses: marketisation and academisation. Demands to meet market requirements, as well as to make education more scientific, have created tensions between and within institutional cultures. Using interviews with some heads of departments, it has been investigated how tensions between marketisation and academisation were handled in discipline-oriented and professional-oriented departments. It has been found that the heads of discipline-oriented departments experienced marketisation as a threat to the university trademark, because it was seen to challenge academic autonomy. On the other hand, heads of professional-oriented departments felt that academisation was the main issue to be dealt with, as it shifted focus from practical skills towards academic meritocracy. Consequently, it is not possible to discuss these changes without considering that conditions differ substantially across the university. Responses to these changes can be countered by culturally sensitive strategies, rather than by adopting a 'one size fits all' approach.

Keywords: *higher education, marketisation, academisation etc.*