

## The Autonomy of High Schools and Its Importance for Lifelong Education in Albania: A Comparative Analysis

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### Abstract

Changes in the higher education system in Albania based on the requirements of the Bologna Process and European qualification for determining criteria of the workers. The Bologna process which began in 1999 with the signing of the Bologna declaration has led to the development of the European Higher Education Area combining respect for the diversity of programs, institutions and educational traditions in specific countries. As results of these process Albanian universities have introduced the following, training at three levels (licentiates, Master's and PhD). Through this paper we shall try to show what the tools are needed to achieve autonomy and put in the efficiency for our university system to serve a quality education and increase the academic quality of higher education institutions themselves.

**KEYWORDS** : autonomy, training, competitive, efficiency, propaganda academic quality

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### 1. University autonomy and academic freedom

Autonomy although never explicitly stated, has been a central theme in the debate on the reform of universities over the centuries. It was perceived as a key element that will allow the transformation of the institution in ensuring freedom of research and teaching. Institutional autonomy of the university is a fundamental value. It should be noted that autonomy is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to ensure the autonomy of academic freedom in the broadest sense by (Stichweh, 1994) these means:

- The ability to take independent decisions within the limits of institutional commitment
- Establishment of a system of values and the determination of the forms of capital and structuring will allow scientists to advance research in the relevant fields.
- Establishment of criteria such as access to institutions at the level of scientists and students

Autonomy, when exercised with a sense of responsibility and accountability will inevitably lead to perfection: a) in terms of academic, b) in government c) financial management institutions. If it will not be expressed in the following three basic pillars, we can then safely conclude, that autonomy is misused.

Academic autonomy is the freedom to decide on academic matters as curriculum, teaching materials and pedagogy, student assessment techniques, etc. (Indian University 1993; 1998).

Administrative autonomy to the institution's freedom to manage its own affairs in connection with the administration. This is the freedom to manage affairs in such a way

that it stimulate and encourage initiative and development of individuals working in institutions and in this way the institution itself.

Financial autonomy is the freedom to use the institution for financial resources available to him .He must do it in a way to measure taking into account its priorities. Autonomy and accountability are two sides of the same coin

What are the reasons of institutional autonomy?

These last two decades, we hear more about the institutional autonomy of higher schools. Referring to this experience different western countries have shown that the best operations have proved successful in other levels of management. There are several reasons why the issues of academic freedom and university autonomy have reappeared on the agenda in recent years.

1. The fall of dictatorships and authoritarian regimes in the former communist countries of the former Soviet Union and in Eastern European countries where our country is, are so included here.
2. Development, and undoubtedly influence the in world leading to the creation of large firms especially multinationals
3. Developing faster and more technology thanks to new communication tools
4. Distance education and, consequently creating de fact or law universities in 'virtual' activities, and whose connections which extend into more countries and are almost universal. They escape from state control by remaining virtual.

## **2. The value of autonomy of higher education for lifelong education (comparative perspective)**

Forms of education in European universities are different. The work of education can be centralized (within faculties) or decentralized (within departments or high school)

Today in Europe we operate and many centers of education do as a form of interaction between universities and businesses. Globalization and development of information technologies and the trend for a closer cooperation between European universities in the field of education has become priority need for giving autonomy to public institutions. (Bexhet,2003) .In our country, this past decade has seen a collaboration of public and private universities with counterpart universities which enable the exchange of experiences in the areas where they are of interest. This has brought a qualitative increase in the context not only for improving the curriculum, but also in the training of academic staff what is reflected in the improvement of the quality of teaching and scientific research.( Sina ,2003)

EUCEN network (European network of university education) is a network which was created to promote methods in the field of education. In this network of 163 universities from 33 collaborating European countries being a member with full rights, but there are universities that are outside the framework of the European Union. Part of this network is the University of Vlore . (With the hope that other universities also be part of the system as quickly).

The objectives of this network are to promote, develop and support the education all policies of European universities, the establishment of high standards of quality teaching and provision of funds for a high level of education, encouraging the inclusion of best practices and innovations in the field education, creation of conditions for the exchange of experiences and information, as well as cooperate between the members and the most

important European institutions. It should also be noted that this organization has influenced European policy development in the field of education at the university level. One of the significant points of life through education is the involvement of American universities suggest that adolescents are addressed. Offers in the field of education for young people entered the American university in the late 19th century. Today they operate under the banner "Advanced Universities" which represent a strong combination of structural standpoint in many colleges. Is another form of independent study program (individual studies). They work with adolescents to be better informed with higher education. Is another form of open universities (the organization of free themes). This means organizing free hours with certain themes giving young people the opportunity to come and be part of these beautiful experiences in order to be able to evaluate and determine directions simultaneously and in the university they want to attend. In our country this practice has begun to apply these last 5-6 years, especially in public universities not allowing young people to inform the branch that they will choose. This is seen as an innovation in our country which affects the process except for the youth media which plays a very big role in promoting the values that carry these schools and that will be a window for the information to you. Another form of training is the cyclical program which consists of a combination of theoretical knowledge in higher education with professional experience, for example in the implementation of technology at Massachusetts Institute. When we say professional experiences, we mean the application of this knowledge in practice.

For example, the University of Durres has recent years taught the practice of students in the field of tourism management develops in this city that businesses thanks to a collaboration between the university and the operators themselves which brings private information of these new businesses with employees and their preparedness will work the way in this field.

Such has been the experience of the collaborative university in the field of tourism (Vlore and Shkoder). From the above cases it is clear that the main purpose of higher education in Europe and the USA is a lifelong education. One of the reasons for a very quality education in higher education in our country is centralization, which is manifested by the fact that the Ministry of Education acts as an employer who possesses the right of ownership and control over it. This situation is not seen in the USA where schools also financed by public funds. This is considered as a manifestation of socialist totalitarianism where our country was part of the system. As stated Andrezey Walicki: modernization of universities "from above" is an impossible thing for Oxford and Cambridge.

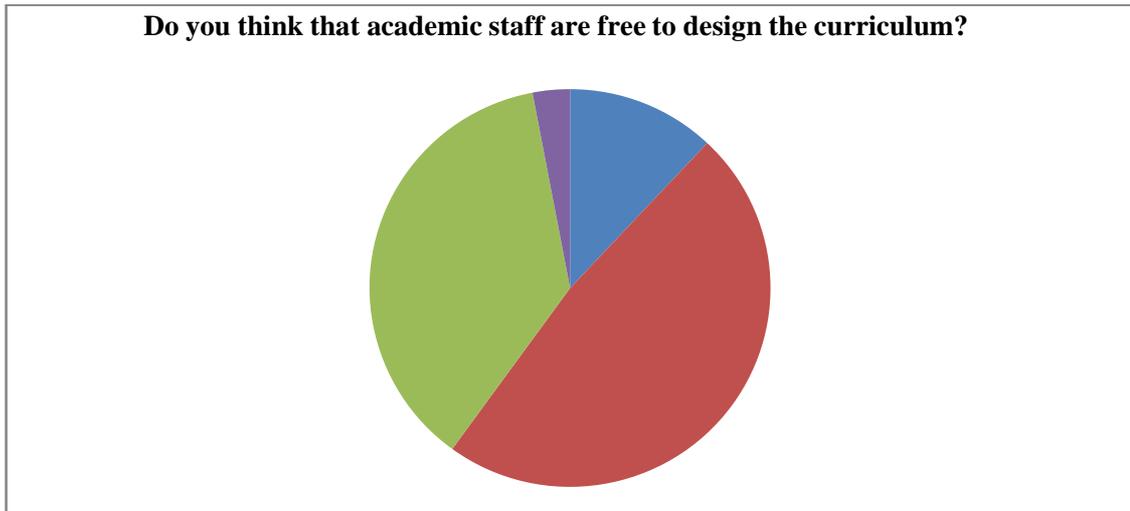
### **3. The autonomy of educational institutions in our country (comparative analysis with other countries)**

Education in Albania is one of the main functions of universities to achieve their goal of working to provide benefits in this country. The traditional model of education in universities includes Stationary education in line with the directives of education to be coherent. In some cases they are supplemented by post-graduate studies. We must admit that our curricula are not fully completed by the subjects and the information vacuum level is not taken into bachelor completed the postgraduate level, what turns a financial cost to themselves student and for the labor market.(Dewey 2003) The reason is that the structural organization in most of the universities in our country does not offer

opportunities for research in the education at market. Studies such as EMI have become an important part of the modernization of the system of management education centers operating in European universities. However, the distributed structures of education in high schools (which are managed at faculty level) do not allow carrying out actions in structures. This situation is the result of measures too rigid and inflexibly applied in our educational system. The consequences of this differentiation can be seen clearly while we study and compare the development of education in Albania and foreign universities before and after 90. On the one hand was a rapid increase in participation in various forms of education and on the other had few developments in the field of education which depended by central policies. Following the treatment of our subject we will consider the University of Glamorgan in 2006. Here was a small college in Wells (about 2000 students who trained in accordance with the old forms of education) which attracted more than 20,000 students in various trainings over 8 years. Non-traditional training method was implemented and non-synchronized with the old methods. Funds for the development of the content of curricula that were badly needed for distance education and for the organization and involvement in the learning process were provided by the European Community. The ability to increase the quality of areas in education for a large number of people carried out a fairly efficient strategy that is based on sound market knowledge and education. The gap caused by the absence of a systematic study of the Albanian education market can be filled in part by the results of research conducted within projects funded by the European Social Fund.

Search in this area is conducted to determine the number of individuals who are interested in training as a need of the stakeholders in the education process, as well as the structure of the group of experts in this field that are cognitive of it.

Thus the educational market we have been focusing more on include schools which were seen as an opportunity for the adoption of lifelong education programs. The parameters were expressed in the form of a list of required staff, equipment and investments. Unfortunately, the universities of organizational standpoint are usually not ready for this kind of activity. The structure of public schools in our country does not allow monitoring of the economic situation and in particular the labor market. We are studying about autonomy from state institutions from the financial perspective, curricula, and mode of assessment of students. We have designed graphics with responses received from academic staff and then make an appropriate analysis of the situation.



**Fig 1**

Not at all 12%

Less 48%

Sufficient 37%

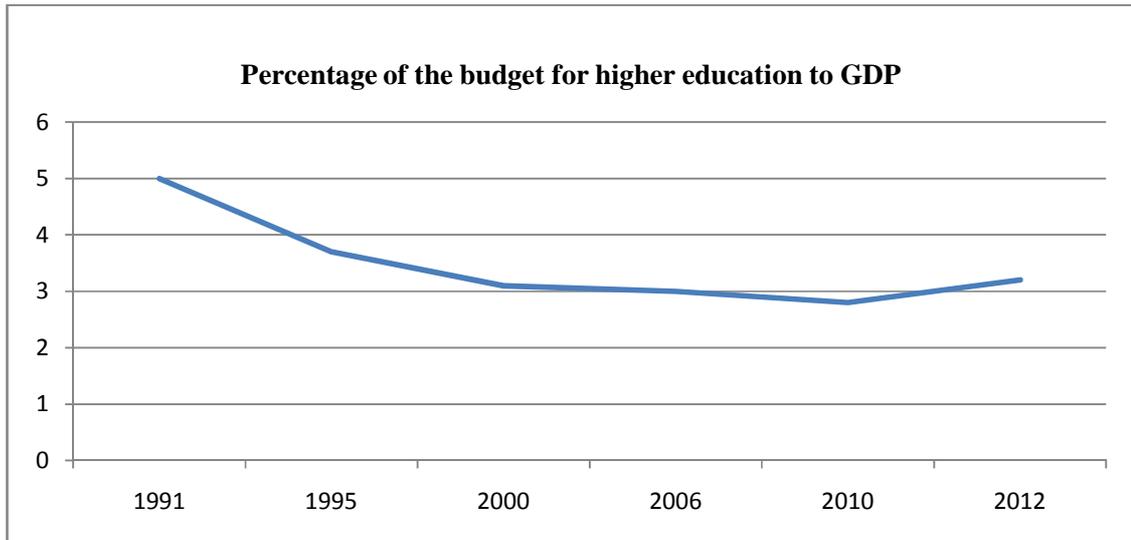
3% more

Fig (1) we see that the academic staff are not yet strongly free in the way they build curricula but they need to work more in public institutions and also in the private space to be more created in the curricula staff.

#### **4. University budget and their structuring**

The results of the analysis of the total budget of many universities in our country show that about 70% of university income funds provided by state funds and the rest from secondary to university itself. Until 90 years the entire education system in our country has been funded by the government. At that time the state allocate a good part of the budget for education in all respects whether for academic qualification, etc. for technical respects. But after 90 years as well as in the education sector we have been affected by the transition of power what was reflected across these 23 years. We have created a lot of problems that still have not received needed monies.

Our budget is very low education and for the field of research but also in the range of qualifications of teaching staff. From year to year the budget was made available for disposition education has been growing, but not enough to cover all the needs in the system itself. The data of last 10 years shows that there has been an increase in funding for education from 6 billion in 2006 to 9.2 billion in 2009. But I see how education takes percent of GDP from 1991 until 2012 .See his graphical representation.



**Fig 2**

Fig (2), we see that the budget for education as the percentage of GDP is smaller compared with the OECD countries. As compared with regional countries Albania is always about 2% less. However, as regards the management and governance of universities it is planned for the government to be the main of financial management and thus realizing the continued control of their own to be constantly informed about the new funding scheme. The government manages the funds for education. But in the future, more needs to be collected privately from the students themselves. That scheme should certainly improve some elements:

1. Accreditation of universities, public or private candidates providing opportunities for students to make a choice as well for their education
  2. The scheme should encourage free competition but the ministry will be the main regulator for setting quotas and tariffs to study. Students can then choose themselves where they want to study.
  3. Determination of the number of students benefiting from these quotas would not be what object will bring and social effects as the number of students that will be supported by this draft will be less than the total number of those who will be accepted.
- We need to promote equality in higher education, encouraging each student to study where they desire to study.

### **5. Conclusions and recommendations**

From the above mentioned our educational system requires deep reform for allocation of funds.

- a. Development of scientific research as one of the priority directions in university development;
- b. Quality of curriculum implementation of programs of study to meet the challenges of the market.
- c. Autonomy of universities would affect the growth of funds for scientific research.

d. Giving priority to vocational education and its adaptation to the requirements that are presently not only in the domestic market but also in the regional

Clark Kerr, the legendary architect of California's university system, wrote:

We are just now perceiving that the university's invisible product, knowledge, may be the most powerful single element in our culture, affecting the rise and fall of professions and even of social classes, or regions, and even of nations."

He wrote that in 1963. It appears that it is even truer in 2013

**Short references in the text**

Bexhet (2003) ; Dewey ( 2003); Sina (2003)

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