Typological Features of the German University

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Abstract: This article discusses the typological features of the German universities, previously identified in the analyzed historical factors that influenced their formation. History of the development of universities in Germany has more than six centuries. On the basis of the research the author has come to the conclusion that the German university is characterized by a privileged position in society, classless character of education, has such features as internationalism, elitist orientation, rebellious spirit and university freedom of the lecturers and students. Most of the analyzed features are currently characteristic of the German universities.

Key words: University - University freedom - The privileged nature - Studentship - Internationalization

INTRODUCTION

For more than two centuries everything connected with the history of the establishment and existence of universities, is placed in the center of constant debate. The ways of development of universities were analyzed already in the past century in the works of such prominent scholars as K. Jaspers, K. Ortega y Gasset, D. Carroll, Pelican [1-4]. Such a huge interest into the activity of universities is stipulated especially by the fact that they are directly connected with all intellectual life of a society. The university is exactly a place of education and training of bright individuals, "the place that is connected with the subsequent life of people who have the most noticeable impact on the spiritual landscape of our time" [5].

The development of the modern university is not at the stop, because the life itself does not stand still. University as the pinnacle of higher education system begins to take a leading role in society. So lately the countries and governments have a great concern about university rankings reflecting an overall recognition that universities play a key role and the economic growth and the country's competitiveness in the global arena is dependent on the knowledge [6].

Thus, in the past decade the term "world-class university" came into use [6] and many scientists are working on identification of some of its basic characteristics [7-9].

In the German and Russian linguacultures the formation of university happened differently, and its establishment and development were smooth, most likely we can talk about some cyclicality in their development. For the first time the German universities appeared in Germany in the XIV century. During more than six centuries of development the German university gained the peculiar typological features:

Privileged Position in Society: In the Middle Ages the university enjoyed full autonomy and under the auspices of the pope and the emperor existed as a state within a state, with a lot of benefits and privileges for members of the university corporation. In 1158, Emperor Frederick Barbarossa issued a decree that allowed moving freely in European countries, i.e. it was a kind of safe-conduct, as students could change the place of study many times at their discretion.

In the Middle Ages the German universities had both scientific and economic privileges. The most important privilege of the university as an educational center was the right of promotion, i.e. the opportunity after the appropriate tests to give its members a license to teach anywhere and award the academic degrees of the bachelor, master or doctor.

In the Middle Ages the most valuable privilege was, for example, exemption from all kinds of levies, duties, qualification requirements, etc. The privilege that
protected the property interests of the members of the university corporation was the favorable rate on accommodations in the city established for them annually and the right of students and masters take any vacant house in the city for the appropriate fee [10]. In the future the economic benefits were extended.

The privilege rights further played a significant role in the popularity of universities. For example, we can note the noble, privileged nature of the University of Gottingen in the era of the Reformation. Patronage of the English royal court and training of Crown Princes here, privileges and high ranks owned by the university professors, helped to attract nobility students and even the titled nobility from across Europe [11].

Speaking on the current status of universities, it should be noted that students in Germany currently have a number of privileges. These are the privileges of the social, economic, cultural and medical nature when, for example, the students officially registered as the listeners, are insured under the subsidized rates from accident, sickness and the need for medical care. The system of benefits is rather developed. In many cities, the students do not pay for public transportation and have discounts at museums, theaters and other cultural venues. The students have free access to all kinds of libraries as well. Learning takes place not only on the basis of textbooks, but also on the basis of lectures and books containing the latest scientific knowledge, that has the most positive impact on the quality of the acquired knowledge. The greatest privilege of the German students has been the right to receive a free university education. But, unfortunately, now that privilege is forfeiting and education in Germany is becoming chargeable.

**Classless Nature of Study:** Still in the beginning of its development, when special school were established close to the monastery ones and were not related solely to the interests of the local parish, monastery, or the city, they opened access to knowledge for people of all ranks, ages, nationalities and lands. An adult could sit near the 12-year old boy, for example. Such person was a humanist Rudolf Agricola, who went to university being 45 years old. The university was opened to all social classes, represented itself a kind of "vertical unification" being outside the scope of any caste.

Medieval studentship was dramatically different from the modern on in terms of age and origin. The vast majority of medieval students belonged to the poorer classes. The medieval university was originally "popular" in the sense that the children of farmers and artisans through the system of privileges (in the form of lower prices for tuition and free housing) became the students, taking the burden of severest obligations inevitable on this thorny path [12]. Near the sons of peasants and townspeople there were children of the princes and dukes, especially the younger ones, intended for high church office. The highly variegated ethnic composition of students also was attached to this.

There were periods when there was an increase in the number of university students of a particular class, such as the clergy or the townspeople. For example, during the Reformation, when the clergy lost its importance as a ruling class in the Protestant lands, and the importance of urban class was also drastically reduced, the social upheaval led to the fact that a dominant position in society was taken by nobility. These events, of course, affected the universities, the social composition of students.

The age of Enlightenment transformed the life of the German universities and again established their classless character. This was particularly noticeable in the fact how the popularity and availability of university education was increased for people of all classes and statuses from the Count of the Holy Roman Empire to a simple burgher.

Nevertheless, the doors of the German universities up to this day are opened to the representatives of different classes. Currently, the universities in Germany are enrolling young people of 18-21 years old who graduate being approximately 22-27 years old.

**The International Character of the University:** International features were represented even in the medieval universities in the fact that one educational institution could include the Italians, French, Spaniards and Germans. The language barrier did not arise, because all the students knew the Latin language. Even the name of a medieval university «Studium generale» had international character. The science taught in this academic institution, by virtue of one of the sanctions of the universal authorities (mostly the pope) had a recognized authority and scientific degrees issued by this educational institution, had the All-European importance. [13].

A good example is the University of Gottingen, where after a decade of continuous war and the signing of universal peace in 1802, the students flocked from all over Germany. Alexander Turgenev thought about the Bavarian prince who stayed there. The university had a lot of Danes, Swedes, and Hungarians, also the students...
from the English land came here. The visiting French enjoyed the honor, they included the sons of well-known figures of the revolution. From the territory of the Russian Empire the university was filled primarily by the Livonian and Courland barons [11].

For the first time the German universities played a major role in the development of culture and society, all their further development was associated not only with the economic, political and cultural changes, but also with their international character. Formation and functioning of the universities, both at the initial stage and subsequently helped to overcome national boundaries, linking together religion, science and art. As the first universities in Germany and European universities in general, they contributed to the emergence of international scientific class that lived under its own laws and constantly contacted with each other, in spite of the distance and national boundaries. Internationalization facilitated the free movement of teachers and students, the development of academic thought. This situation prevailed until the XX century.

After the World War II, the international feature of the German universities had undergone some changes. While the FRG universities were increasingly turning towards the developed Western countries, the international cooperation and mobility of teachers (Lehrenden) and students (Studierenden) in the GDR were limited by the socialist countries.

In the 80-ies of XX century in Europe a special program (ERASMUS-Förderprogramm) was created that contributed to the development of university cooperation and student exchange. And although the aim to send 10% of students to learn during the certain time in other European countries was not quite satisfied, yet no one can doubt its success [14].

In many universities in Germany internationalization has become the central area of activity and policy. Increasingly it comes to internationalization of educational material, the creation of educational programs with universities of other countries, the possibility of students to receive two diplomas. Internationalization of education to a considerable degree both in Germany and in Europe will contribute to the Bologna agreement (Bologna-Erklärung). The main idea of the Bologna process is the establishment in Europe of an open system of higher education that would help to preserve the cultural heritage of different countries, as well as establish a common space of teaching and learning, where the students and teachers will be able to move freely and have a closer cultural cooperation.

**Elitist Orientation of the University:** Initially, all education was elitist. Since the moment of its establishment as a social institution education has been the mechanism of class formation. As long as the social processes taking place in society, have not resulted in masses of people in university, higher education have remained its most important task - to form the intellectual elite of society. It should be said that the intellectual and social elites basically coincided with each other [15].

**Rebellious Spirit of the University:** Even the first universities established independently, without the intervention of the ecclesiastical and secular authorities often turned into centers of dissemination of free and heretical ideas related to urban culture and burgher opposition to the feudal system and the Catholic Church.

**University Liberties of Teachers and Students:** Students in Germany still retained the ancient status of independent and responsible people who choose their academic subjects according to their own interest and can make their curriculum, in accordance with the general requirements for students in the program. The students could always, as they can now, quite freely move from university to university in all German-speaking cities, and within each university they are free to choose one of several teachers who read the same subject. They may also more or less randomly sing up for the lectures and seminars, choose the time of internships and practical trainings.

It should be noted, however, that the aforementioned freedom of the students have become the integral part of the educational process from the moment of establishment of Humboldt University that you cannot say about the first medieval universities, where the whole system of education was subject to rigorous external order. Not only the academic year, but every university day was scrupulously delimited. The slightest deviation from the planned order was punishable by fines. The special university commission fixed the certain period of time even for reading books. Often the medieval universities have resorted to spying for professors, attracting students to do this.

Freedom of students is also the fact that outside the university, they are not subject to control, unless they break the law. Students’ behavior was always determined by the student code of honor that survives to the present day. It should be noted that the German students still retain a sense of corporate citizenship, as well as the related idea of the behavior of the student.
As for the freedom of teachers, i.e. academic freedom (Lehrfreiheit), it should be noted that it remained in Germany not all the time. In the Middle Ages, for example, there was an intolerant attitude of the majority to deviating opinions, which is why the supporters of such other opinions often had to leave the university. The church intervened in the learning process, not allowing deviating from the religious beliefs. Until the XVII century the academic freedom was limited primarily by the theological considerations, the opinions that contradict religious doctrines were usually rejected as heretical ones.

At the end of XVIII century, the academic freedom was evident in all the German universities, where the teachers could "freely teach the most radical consequences of materialist metaphysics, wildest speculation on the basis of the Darwin's theory of evolution - and equally the most radical theories of papal infallibility" [16].

In the XVIII-XIX centuries the German universities enjoyed increasing academic freedom, "because the recognition of experimental methods in science was becoming more common, and control of the organizations from religious denominations was becoming less strict" [17].

In times of political and religious conflicts, the authorities often allowed to intervene in the process of teaching, trying to impose its view in this matter that the universities always perceived as an attack on the shrine. But, nevertheless, the right of self-selection and knowledge provision has been remained by the teachers in Germany until now.

In conclusion, it should be noted that almost all of the selected typological features are presented in the German universities today. Development of society helps to determine the fundamental functions of the universities and therefore the most debated issue today is the reform of the German high school that may affect the forming essence of the German universities, namely the academic freedom of staff and students.

The way to the establishment of the modern German university was difficult. In the course of its development it has gained the peculiar typological features. The time will show in what direction it will be developed further and whether these features will be saved or not. But do not forget that, determining the direction of the university in desired any manner, we can't discard those traditions that are rooted in the distant past [4].

REFERENCES