Market-oriented approaches to higher education in the 1390s

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A r t i c l e   I n f o

A B S T R A C T

The marketization of higher education is a set of structures, procedures, and practices that make the university system more and more subject to the requirements of the market. In this article, in the beginning, we tried to describe the dimensions of this marketization and show at what levels it operates. An important level of marketization practices includes theoretical and academic justifications, which we mentioned as market-oriented approaches. In this article, we classified these theoretical practices to justify marketization in Iranian universities in the framework of several specific approaches: 1) indigenous Islamism, 2) Radical market orientation, 3) Developmental market orientation, and 4) Expedients market orientation. We traced these approaches in the works of leading academic figures and showed that although the place of the first three approaches is in the university, in a part of the fourth approach there is a mediator through which these academic approaches reach the structure of administrative institution (government) and legislating institution (Parliament) has an effect. This mediator has been filled by those whom we mentioned as "bureaucratic Agents". We tried to explain the effect of this mediator through the review of some policy-making texts. In this article, we have used documentary and meta-analysis methods. We have tried to show to what extent market-oriented approaches are rooted and widespread among expert opinions, academic research and analysis, and common beliefs and opinions in Iranian universities.

Keywords: *Marketization of university, market-orientation, market-oriented approaches, Bureaucratic agent, Entrepreneurship university, higher education policy.*

Introduction

Three essential forces can be mentioned that the university has been in the middle of its struggle: the state, the market, and the family. Despite the overlapping of these territories, at least on an analytical level, certain boundaries can be considered for each of these. Here, there is a fundamental mechanism that has found a fundamental role in redefining their relationship: marketization. It may seem that marketization is an economic process that tries to increase efficiency (Madan-dar arani; Sarkar arani 2017), but it is not only limited to the external role of policymakers, but also the function and nature of various relationships of the university with itself and its environment, or in other words, " It is important to understand that marketization is as much a political/ideological process as an economic phenomenon." (Molesworth et al., 2011: 2). the marketization of universities is not possible without the existence of a level of marketization of society and state.

Marketization has general procedures and based on summarizing a wide range of findings in this field, we have identified three basic ones: a) making the university environment more competitive, b) directing the university c) reshaping the university. These three procedures themselves are made up of practices within which exists theoretical ones. theoretical practices that create scientific and pseudo-scientific justifications and arguments for marketization.

The theoretical practices, especially in Iranian universities, which have argued for marketization have not only directly justified it. as we showed in the article, sometimes by ignoring it - for example, hiding it behind abstract concepts such as instrumentalism - or underestimating its consequences - for example, by saying that we are faced with a partial process - or even confusing it with the best way of development has practically adopted a market-oriented approach.

Methodology

The documentary method has been used in this article, but beyond that, we have tried to provide a meta-analysis of a significant part of key analyses that have commented on the relationship between the university and the market in the 1390s. On the other hand, in the last part, we have discussed some documents in which political analyzes are presented about the current situation and the near future of the university.

Findings

First, we gave a formulation of the form of operation of a structure or mechanism - here, marketization - by separating it into procedures and practices. Then we tried to explore these two in various aspects of Iranian universities. At this level, we identified three main procedures: a) making the university environment more competitive b) directing the university c) reshaping the university. we showed that each of these procedures includes the practices that we tried to identify in Iranian universities. We have summarized them in the table below.

Table 1

Procedures and practices of marketization

mechanism	procedures		practices
marketization	making the university environment more competitive		1) Parallel forms of educational services
			2) Modularization of education in parallel educational institutions
	directing the university		1) Finance-oriented approach (pressure on university budgets and on families)
			2) Temporalization of the academic workforce
			3) Discrediting university education
	reshaping the university	the goals of the university	1) Hegemonization of market-oriented approaches
			2) Market-oriented shaping of upstream documents
		The relationship between the university and its environment	1) Monetization
			2) Establishing an entrepreneurial university or forcing the university to become one
			3) Transforming the university into an Economic Enterprise

	University and student relationship	1) Turning students into consumers and customers
		2) Turning the educational process into a form of student investment on itself
	University campus	1) Selling the physical space of the university in order to generate income
		2) Lowering the quality of student welfare and monetizing the possibility of accessing good welfare quality

Then, based on this, we discussed the theoretical practices that, either positively or negatively, are involved in justifying the mechanism of marketization. We have called them market-oriented approaches and in this article, we identified four main types of that: 1) indigenous Islam, 2) Radical market orientation, 3) Developmentalist market orientation, and 4) expedientist market orientation. each of these approaches We verified by analyzing the texts and speeches of those who can be called their representatives. The first three are mostly located in the university, but we located the last one somewhere between the university and state and legislative institutions (Majlis). Each of these approaches has a specific approach to marketization, and some of their representatives seem to be opposed to marketization, but we have shown that this opposition is not only formal and ambiguous, but it leads to the stabilization of the foundations of marketization. The last approach, i.e. expedientist market orientation, is adopted by what we call "bureaucratic Agents". Some representatives of other approaches may fill this structural position, but at the same time, in the position of, for example, a university professor, they may have an approach contrary to the expedientistal market orientation. This position is important because it has the role of interpreter/translator of the knowledge produced in the university for statesmen and legislators.

We have shown that indigenous Islam practically even when it points to the marketization of the university and opposes it, since it only seeks the realization of the religious university in its view and does not have a clear understanding of the economic processes of higher education, in the end, it is forced to accept the requirements which the market-orientation put it in front of him. On the other hand, since it considers itself a part of the Islamic government, it is naturally placed in the position of "bureaucratic Agent". (See Afrough, 2016 and Bagheri, 2017)

We also showed that due to their special interest in development and facing the conditions of underdevelopment in Iran, Developmentalist approaches naturally tend towards concepts that are market-oriented, such as efficiency. Although these show more resistance, we showed that in their texts, they practically do not draw any boundaries between marketization and the immanent and non-market development of the university. (See Yamani Dozi Sorkhabi et al, 2020).

How takes the radical market-oriented approach is seeking a complete reshaping of the university in favor of forms that specifically meet the needs and requirements of the market, whether in the form of an entrepreneurial university (cf. Mehdi et al, 2020) or the form of an elite university (cf. Mardiha and Paknia, 2017).

Conclusion

This article sought to show that, contrary to the dominant ideas in the minds of academicians and government officials, the marketization of Iranian universities has progressed to the point where it is taking away the independence and freedom of the university. Here, it is necessary to point out that Islamism which governs administrative institutions actually works hand in hand with this market orientation and consistently reinforces each other. This article sought to show the rootedness of market-oriented structures and practices, as well as the spread of market-oriented approaches and ideas in the university, state, and parliament in Iran.

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