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"Hard" vs. "Soft" Managerialism: How to Reform Universities and Let Them Remain Universities

„Twardy" a „miękki" menedżeryzm. Jak reformować uniwersytety i pozwolić im pozostać uniwersytetami

Abstract

The transformation of academic institutions inspired by the ideas of New Public Management introduces a new paradigm of university governance. The essence of the new university model is the transfer of corporate authority structures and managerial practices to the academic institutional environment. Such an approach to university reform refers to the concept of "hard" managerialism. If universities accept the imposed new managerial rules of the game, they strengthen a system based on a logic that departs from traditional academic norms. However, universities can try to maintain their traditional institutions rooted in the academic institutional logic, which requires an alternative approach falling within the concept of "soft" managerialism. The article shows that collegiality and managerialism do not have to be contradictory. These two seemingly conflicting ideas can co-exist in a "soft" version of managerialism, taking on a more humanised or neo-collegial form. This requires a redefinition of university governance structures while maintaining traditional academic norms and values. The article uses critical literature analysis as a research method.

Streszczenie

Transformacja instytucji akademickich inspirowana ideą *new public management* wprowadza nowy paradygmat zarządzania uczelnią. Istotą nowego modelu uczelni jest przeniesienie korporacyjnych struktur władzy i praktyk menedżerskich do akademickiego środowiska instytucjonalnego. Takie podejście do reformy uniwersyteckiej nawiązuje do koncepcji „twardego" menedżeryzmu. Jeśli władze uczelni akceptują narzucone nowe, menedżerskie reguły gry, wzmacniają system oparty na logice odbiegającej od tradycyjnych akademickich norm. Jednak mogą też próbować utrzymać instytucje zakorzenione w akademickiej logice instytucjonalnej, co wymaga alternatywnego podejścia mieszczącego się w koncepcji „miękkiego" menedżeryzmu. W artykule pokazano, że kolegialność i menedżeryzm nie muszą oznaczać wykluczających się przeciwieństw. Te dwie pozornie sprzeczne idee mogą współistnieć w postaci „miękkiej" wersji menedżeryzmu, w jego zhumanizowanej lub neokolegialnej formie. Wymaga to przedefiniowania struktur zarządzania uczelnią przy jednoczesnym zachowaniu tradycyjnych norm i wartości akademickich. Autor artykułu zastosował metodę badawczą krytycznej analizy literatury.

Introduction

Higher education sector (HES) reforms embedded in the neoliberal rhetoric of the New Public Management (NPM) approach can lead to the emergence of new power structures in universities. Empirical evidence indicates that the responses of academic institutions to NPM reforms are more differentiated than isomorphic compliance to policy pressures [**Canhilal et al., 2016**: 170]. Reforms can motivate resistance in academia if they challenge prevailing beliefs and institutional identity. Academic leaders often have values and preferences different from those of policymakers [**Boer, Huisman, 2019**: 11]. They are not passive recipients of new ideas but actively translate them into organisational solutions accepted in the academic environment [**Donina, Hasanefendic, 2018**: 3]. Universities operate as organisations with an enormous scope of autonomy and rational tools for managing their resources and controlling professional staff [**Bleiklie et al., 2017**: 304]. Thus universities can respond to environmental changes in line with their interests without rejecting traditional norms [**Bleiklie et al., 2017**: 314]. Even radical reform attempts do not have to produce changes consistent with the reform assumptions but may result in adapting the reform to the institutional foundations of the university [**Manssen, 2017**: 293–294]. As **Boer et al.** [**2005**: 98] write, "policy shapes implementation *and*, at the same time, implementation shapes policy".

Reforms address not only issues related to the effectiveness of university governance, but also key questions about the values, norms and beliefs that form the foundations of the academic system. A university's reaction to reform pressure can be described by two opposing theoretical perspectives: institutional isomorphism and path dependency [**Urbanek, 2020**]. As the result of isomorphic pressure, "the new paradigm begins to displace the old paradigm, which causes enormous institutional tensions associated with the need to gradually redefine academic organisational culture from more collegiate to more managerial" [**Kwiek, 2017**: 12]. The new managerial institutional logic replaces the previous academic logic. It is also possible for two competing logics to co-exist or find hybrid solutions containing elements of each of them. The university may also react by adapting pragmatically to the new shape of the institutional environment by selectively implementing those elements that fit into historically shaped cultural values. This means that new practices are then accepted and institutionalised. But this results in institutional pluralism, and academics in hybrid organisations are faced with two competing sets of values and beliefs [**Glynn, 2000**]. They are caught between two conflicting systems of meaning, normative academic guidelines and managerial requirements [**Shams, 2019**: 620].

Therefore, a dilemma can be identified that the universities face, subject to pressure from the state, which tries to force the adoption of a new institutional model. If they accept the new institutional rules of the game, they strengthen a system based on a logic that departs from traditional academic norms. However, if universities seeking to maintain their traditional institutions rooted in the academic institutional logic, fail to adopt these rules, they risk reducing public funding and losing students and sponsors in an increasingly competitive and globalised academic institutional environment. Thus, the dilemma boils down to choosing between the two alternative ideas "at opposite ends of the same continuum" [**Urbanek, 2020**: 110]: the corporate university model and the Humboldt university model. The first option is related to the university's transformation according to the "hard" managerialism path. The choice of the second option, which falls within the concept of "soft" managerialism, means that the critical elements of the academic institutional logic are preserved in the reformed university.

This article aims to discuss these two alternative paths of university reform, defined as "hard" and "soft" managerialism. The first path is a radical transformation of academic institutions. Universities "have gone from one extreme to another – almost total [academics'] involvement in decision-making under the old collegial system, to almost no involvement under the new managerialist approach" [**Burnes et al., 2014**: 915]. The university is transformed into a "corporatised university [...] defined as an institution that is characterised by processes, decisional criteria, expectations, organisational culture, and operating practices that are taken from, and have their origins in, the modern business corporation" [**Steck, 2003**: 74]. The essence of the latter is the

possibility of the co-existence of two contradictory ideas: "Humboldt university" and "corporate university". This takes the form of a "soft" version of managerialism in humanised or neo-collegial form.

The research question addressed in this study is how to redefine university governance structures and methods while maintaining traditional academic norms and values. The contribution of this paper is two-fold. First, I argue for the need to point out the significance of collegiality for efficient university governance, which should balance the management responsibility of academic leaders and the participation of academics in decision-making. Second, referring to the neo-institutional theoretical perspective, I suggest that combining these alternative approaches results in an institutional equilibrium. This means that informal institutions based on traditional academic values do not block new managerial practices and structures but strengthen patterns of behaviour imposed by formal norms, giving them an academic credibility certificate.

The paper is organised as follows: the introduction is followed by two sections based on a literature review that examines the ideas of "hard" and "soft" managerialism. The last two sections present a discussion and conclusions. The article uses critical literature analysis as a research method.

"Hard" managerialism

The thesis that universities are unable or unwilling to respond appropriately to a changing external environment is the standard argument that justifies the need to reform higher education systems in line with the ideas of "hard" managerialism [**Maassen, Olsen, 2007**: 7]. Developing this argument, it can be stated that "European universities [...] through a deadly combination of political incompetence, ideological blindness, economic stupidity, and academic arrogance have ceased to be a living institutional order" [**Nybom, 2003**: 150]. The essence of expectations towards a new, reformed university model was expressed in the following opinion: "We need a new model – we need something which can demonstrate to countries where university models still hark back to the days of Humboldt, that today there are additional ways of doing things" [**Maassen, Olsen, 2007**: 6]. One can perhaps agree with the statement formulated by Guy **Neave** [**2003**: 30] that these changes "outflanked and enveloped" the Humboldt university model. Criticism of this model comes from both institutions responsible for government policies and people representing academia.

The concepts behind the idea of the Humboldt university – academic autonomy and freedom, knowledge as an independent goal, "republic of scholars", and collegiality – begin to be perceived as relics of a bygone era, symbols of backwardness, and barriers preventing universities from developing and introducing expected academic standards. Such attitudes and views make it difficult to achieve academic excellence goals. "The label Ivory Tower has gradually, nowadays become one of the most frequently used degrading metaphors for the supposed societal and even cultural irrelevance of the Humboldtian University" [**Nybom, 2007**: 62]. Citing the ideas of Humboldt – the "father of the research university" – is seen as a "gesture of conservatism" and as an example of academia taking measures to protect its corporate interests [**Neave, 2003**: 26–27].

The alternative vision of the reformed university is a direct reference to the concept of the "corporate university" under which "European universities have to become more like private enterprises operating in competitive markets" [**Maassen, Olsen, 2007**: 13]. Recalling the classic model of Burton **Clark's** "triangle of influence" [**1983**], a shift is proposed from state coordination and coordination based on academic oligarchy to market coordination. The university should submit to the strict rules of the free market. A look at the reforms taking place in Europe reveals that managers can be considered the winners of government policymaking because their position in university governance structures is strengthened, while academics are the losers in the process because collegial bodies play a limited role in decision making [**Gornitzka et al., 2005**: 54]. The higher education sector reforms embedded in the neoliberal rhetoric of New Public Management are in line with such a vision of the university.

Reforms aimed at making universities more market-oriented mean the need to change the underlying institutional academic logic. The new paradigm in university management aims to strengthen "the position of the

university as a corporate actor" [**Bleiklie, 2017**: 310]. The market-oriented and commercial transformation of universities creates a new managerial institutional logic in the academic environment. It is based on a strong role for academic leaders, the hierarchical structures of university authorities, and an emphasis on efficiency, standardisation, and accountability. Rectors have become more similar to powerful chief executives, and academic collegial forms of control have been significantly reduced [**Burnes et al., 2014**: 908].

Universities' achievements measured by the number of graduates, scientific productivity (e.g., publications or citations), or the commercialisation of research results (e.g., number of patents) can be translated into an award or financial sanction. It is expected that the pursuit of potential profits and the fear of possible losses will force universities to ensure high quality and efficiency in delivering academic services.

Several critical elements of the reforms that create academic governance can be identified. They all require the "recalibration" [**Boer, File, 2011**: 159] of university power structures. The most significant proposed changes include strengthening the role of academic leaders, the professionalisation of management, limiting the role of academic collegial bodies, and involving external stakeholders in university management.

The university's transformation may take place according to two paths, determining a different scale of the changes: "hard" and "soft" managerialism. The first path involves a radical reform of the higher education system by introducing university management systems that will fully conform to the model of "corporate rationality" [**Trow, 1994**: 11]. Universities should be transformed into organisations similar enough to commercial enterprises to be assessed and managed similarly. The university management system should solve the problem of leadership weakness, the essence of which is to transfer the responsibility for managing the university to the level of its central authorities. Burton Clark describes it as a "strengthened steering core" [**Clark, 1998**]. As a result of these changes, the university's internal integration deepens, and the university is transformed from a loosely coupled organisation into a complete, tightly coupled organisation [**Maassen, 2019**: 293].

There is also a change in expectations regarding the roles played by academic leaders and their competencies [**Musselin, 2006**: 69]. The managerial skills related to organisational and administrative functions are as essential as an academic authority [**Weber, 2006**: 72]. An internal academic hierarchy based on scientific reputation is replaced by an institutional hierarchy based on the personal reputation of a dynamic and successful leader with leadership skills [**Bleiklie, 2004**: 204]. The leader should assess the situation comprehensively, react quickly, make difficult decisions, and initiate decisive actions without resorting to traditional, collegial procedures for building academic consensus [**Boer, Goedegebuure, 2003**: 215]. Combining two sources of competencies – academic and managerial – necessary for the effective management of universities requires the ability to communicate between scientists and professional managers [**Kogan, 2007**: 164]. As Peter **Scott** [**1995**: 64] put it, the latter is more willing to support leaders as opposed to officials, who instinctively recognise the innate authority of scientists.

A change in the method of appointing academic leaders is also a remedy for the weakness of university leadership. The traditional model where the rector is elected by representatives of academics, administrative staff, and students is being questioned. Its essence is "election theatre" and gaining a majority in the elections comes at the cost of many compromises and populist promises. A rector who is elected in this way is too dependent on the university's academic community. Alternative modes involve leaders being appointed, elected based on a competition, elected, but by another, non-academic electoral body. Changes in the criteria for electing or appointing leaders are also necessary. Instead of procedural criteria (the previous rector was from the Faculty of Physics, now it is the turn for the rector from the Faculty of Law), meritocratic criteria should play a decisive role (we need a rector who is a visionary and a strong leader who will present a bold program of university development). New procedures for appointing a rector change his/her status from "rector-representative" to "rector-manager" [**Antonowicz, 2019**: 28]. Rectors no longer think of themselves as *primus inter pares* or acting through consensual leadership but are beginning to see themselves in roles similar to those of CEOs running corporations with multi-million budgets [**Boer, Goedegebuure, 2003**: 215].

Excessive democratisation of the university system is an important cause of the dysfunctionality of academic governance. The broad powers of academic collegial bodies – university senates and faculty councils – is the essence of a university management concept known as "representative democracy" [**Olsen, 2007**: 32]. Two groups of institutions within the academic governance system significantly impact these processes. The first is based on regulations that determine the shape of managerial self-governance. The second refers to informal norms that determine academic self-governance. Academics and representatives of other professional groups and students play a crucial role in decision making at universities and in organisational units. Each group can elect its representatives to collegial bodies with decision-making powers. Collegiality makes it possible to reflect the diversity of views and priorities presented at the university.

However, academic democracy may also reduce the effectiveness of academic collegial bodies. Decision making occurs formally through voting, but informal negotiations, compromises, and permanent and ad hoc coalitions allow various groups to defend their interests and play an important role. Extensive consultations and debates, and the constant search and building of an internal consensus may hinder implementing tasks facing these bodies [**Duderstadt, 2004**: 143]. There will likely be conflicts of interest between groups of scientists who represent various scientific disciplines and various generations, between academics, administrative staff, students, and different organisational units of universities. Meetings of collegial bodies are often full of discussions about problems of minor importance, manipulation, demagogic arguments, and informal pressure from people interested in pushing their ideas onto less active members. Senior scientists have the dominant voice. An essential feature of collegial decision-making bodies is the lack of flexibility and the ability to react quickly to changes in the market environment.

Limiting the role of collegiate bodies favouring the new governing body – the university council, which is the equivalent of the corporate supervisory board or board of directors – is the remedy for the low effectiveness of academic representative democracy. The mandate of the senate is changed by giving the body opinion-making and advisory responsibilities. The formation of the university council cannot be treated as the culmination of managerial reforms of university governance. How the council fits into the institutional structure of the authorities depends on the development of a model of "good practices" for the functioning of this body, which cannot be subject to only normative codification but should also result from the pressure resulting from the influence of informal institutions. The set of "good practices" developed in this way should give unequivocal answers to several questions about how to fulfil the tasks [**Boer, File, 2011**: 160]:

- By what criteria should the council members be elected? Should they represent external and internal stakeholders or be appointed due to their expertise? What should be the size of the council?
- Who should elect and remove council members: minister, external stakeholders, or academia?
- Should the powers of the council include monitoring and controlling or advising and supporting the strategic management of the university?
- Should the councils carry out their tasks based on the "steer or control from a distance" principle or should they be more directly involved?
- Are the members of the council primarily the guardians of the interests of the ministry, society, or business, or are they effective advocates and guardians of the university's interests?

Greater involvement of external stakeholders in university management is the third pillar of reforms related to power structures. The model of a university managed according to the formula of academic representative democracy was anchored in the vision of a university as an organisation whose activities should be managed internally, without any direct external involvement [**Olsen, 2007**: 29–30]. Real life verifies this view and shows that academic communities should develop direct links with society and that universities themselves should listen to the needs and requirements formulated by external stakeholders. Universities must be part of the real world, which means a departure from the *Ivory Tower* concept, by strengthening the universities' external orientation and their links with society [**Boer, Stensaker, 2007**: 108; **Boer, Fila, 2009**: 14]. The operationalisation of this change in the structures of power takes place by defining the composition of the university council, which should include both external and internal stakeholders.

"Soft" managerialism

There is an alternative path to hard managerialism in reforming university governance. The terms most frequently used in the literature include soft managerialism [**Trow, 1993**] and neo-collegiality[1] [**Bacon, 2014**]. These are not the same concepts, but they contain many common elements [**Deem, 1998**: 53]. Supporters of these concepts emphasise that many of the changes introduced to higher education by NPM reforms are logically justified in the face of the processes taking place in the economic, social, and political environment. In the context of academic governance, preserving elements of academic self-governance and a collegial decision-making model are of key importance in reform activities. Effective university management must also take into account academic norms and traditions [**Trow, 1993**: 2] and guarantee a place for some forms of collegiality, in particular, in issues related to strictly academic areas [**Marini, Reale, 2015**: 125]. As **Burnes et al.** [**2014**: 908] wrote: "[hard managerialism] can be dysfunctional not only for staff but also for senior managers. The latter may now have a free hand to make decisions, but without the willing co-operation of staff, the implementation of these decisions becomes much more difficult." Excluding staff "may lead to poor decision-making, slow and unsuccessful change, and demotivating staff" [**Burnes et al., 2014**: 915]. In this context, collegiality is treated as an evergreen force that does not disappear in the clash with managerialism but should be redefined [**Marini, Reale, 2015**: 2]. "It conditions leadership and governance [...] and operates as a behavioural norm through which personal and professional relationships are conducted. In other words, a collegial organisation is one for which collegiality leaves an imprint in every cell and fibre" [**Jarvis, 2021**: 2].

Soft managerialism means combining hierarchical control instruments with informal control conducted through social relations [**Bleiklie et al., 2017**: 309], combining collegiality and managerialism, i.e., scientists and administrators [**Dearlove, 2002**: 269], and combining central decision-making with local involvement and control over the change process [**Burnes et al., 2014**: 920]. This was emphasised by Burton **Clark** [**1998**] when he wrote that one of the conditions for the successful transformation of an academic institution defined by the term "entrepreneurial university" is to stimulate the core of academic activity. This requires the academic staff's acceptance of the changes. The transformation of universities "does not happen because a solitary entrepreneur captures the power and runs everything from the top-down [...]. Rather transformation occurs when a number of individuals come together in university basic units and across a university over a number of years to change, by means of organised initiative, how the institution is structured and oriented. Collective entrepreneurial action at these levels is at the heart of the transformation phenomenon" [**Clark, 1998**: 4]. In other words, entrepreneurial universities are characterised by collegial entrepreneurship [**Clark, 2004**: 85]. This does not mean, of course, that the roles played by academics in government structures do not change, but this change should not automatically lead to the weakening of traditional academic norms and values [**Boer et al., 1998**: 161–162; **Teichler et al., 2013**: 17].

The concepts of soft managerialism and neo-collegiality refer to the idea of shared governance [**Shattock, 2002**; **Birnbaum, 2004**; **Taylor, 2013**]. The difference between them is that shared governance emphasises the normative foundations that determine the desired balance of power. Ian **Austin** and **Glen Jones** [**2016**: 138] describe it as a "tripartite arrangement among three major stakeholders – governing boards, administration, and faculty." In contrast, soft managerialism and neo-collegiality focus on real relationships between different actors involved in decision-making [**Veiga et al., 2015**: 412]. These ideas are based on the belief that "academic governance is far too important to be left entirely in the hands of professors or entirely in the hands of boards of trustees. The enterprise requires the participation of both [**Birnbaum, 2004**: 17]." Lewis **Elton** [**2008**: 232] uses the concept of "concordat" between university authorities and academia, which may benefit their mutual relations. **Michael Shattock** [**2002**: 243] makes a similar statement: "[Academic] institutions work best when governance is seen as a partnership between the corporate and the collegial approaches, and

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[1]   The use of the prefix "neo-" indicates that the essence of this concept is not "nostalgic hankering for the old days" [**Bacon, 2014**: 14]. Other terms are also used in the literature, such as renewed collegiality [**Rowland, 2008**: 357], updated collegiality [**Middlehurst, 2013**: 291], collegial rejuvenation [**Tapper, Palfreyman, 2010**: 158].

where a sense of common purpose informs the balance of the relationship." In this context, neo-collegiality means that the centralised, command-and-control type of organisation driven by top-down decision-making is replaced by less bureaucratic, flatter and more flexible organisations that seek to involve and empower staff [**Burnes et al., 2014**: 914]. It "represents the interface and connection between leaders and those who are led" [**Kligyte, Barrie, 2014**: 158].

Such views denote a reference to hard governance and soft governance. Hard governance, also referred to by Robert **Birnbaum** [**2004**: 10] as "rational governance," includes a set of hierarchical structures, regulations, and sanction systems that define the power relations in the organisation, impose the application of specific processes, and oblige compliance with established rules and procedures. However, no legal system, even one supported by sanctions, allows for complete control over the processes taking place in the organisation. Therefore, rational governance is a necessary but insufficient condition to ensure the effective functioning of the organisation. A complementary system reaching out to informal institutions is essential. This was highlighted in a report prepared in Britain by the Hampel Commission [**Hampel Report, 1998**: 7]: "People, teamwork, leadership, enterprise, experience and skills are what really produce prosperity. There is no single formula to weld these together, and it is dangerous to encourage the belief that rules and regulations about structure will deliver success."

Soft governance, also known as "interactive governance," is a complementary factor that includes non-hierarchical social relations and connections in the organisation, helping to coordinate, develop, and maintain individual and group norms [**Birnbaum, 2004**: 10]. The essence of this system is the search for a justification of the choices made in ethical norms and cultural values. For universities, the foundation of interactive governance is the academic ethos, a set of principles rooted in academic values, which constitute guidelines for university authorities and members of the academic community. The importance of interactive governance is strongly emphasised by Robert **Birnbaum** [**2004**: 11]: "Hard governance proposals almost always sound reasonable and self-evident. But when they conflict with soft governance, they inevitably fail. Soft governance rules!"

An essential feature of the presented concepts is that there is no single pattern to describe the relations between the individual participants in university decision-making. The solutions applied in practice are characterised by diversity and flexibility and the ability of individual academic institutions to adopt solutions that best suit their nature and needs [**Lapworth, 2004**: 312]. Regardless of the form of participation adopted, each model emphasises that academics should be both makers and shapers of university management policy [**Newton, 2002**: 208]. This idea is further developed by Robin **Middlehurst** [**1999**: 326–327]: "The function of leadership is to assist the institution [and particular parts of the institution] to identify and evaluate emerging realities, to assess the options available and to prepare strategies for moving towards one or more scenarios. [...] The kind of leadership called for is beyond the scope of one individual, however visionary; it requires the creative and expert input of many individuals both to identify future directions and to take forward the organisational transformation that will be necessary. [...] Relying solely on the ideas of senior management teams or other levels of the university hierarchy is not likely to be the best way forward."

Soft managerialism offers a wide range of measures by which it is possible to increase the involvement of university employees in decision-making. It defines the conditions that must be met for this management model to fulfil its tasks. One of the critical issues is trust. Just as it is impossible to codify the institutions that make up soft governance normatively, it would be equally difficult to precisely define the scope of academics' neo-collegial prerogatives. One of the essential features of the described institutional solutions is the mutual trust of all parties involved, not the strict, formal delimitation of rights and obligations [**Taylor, 2013**: 87; **Birnbaum, 2004**: 15]. Trust is an essential component of university governance structures; it encourages openness and shared debates, strengthens the legitimacy of academic leaders, and creates social bonds. **Knight and Trowler** [**2000**, 78] use the term "interactional leadership" or "directed collegiality." The role of academic leaders is to "establish a climate of negotiation based on trust oriented to as well as growing from a developing understanding of the shape of departmental goals" [**Knight, Trowler, 2000**: 79]. One of the main consequences

of trust in an organisation is that decisions made are more often accepted, and subordinates are more likely to recognise the moral authority of those in power without formal rules and the need to receive rewards or the threat of punishment. According to Kevin **Williams** [**1989**: 80], "the moral character of an exercise of authority is based on the presence of consent on the part of those subject to its jurisdiction. [...] Where consent is not made a condition of authority, then we are not speaking of moral authority, but of the exercise of power, or purely formal or legal authority." Such acceptance of, or consenting to, leaders is not given forever and does not apply in all circumstances, but "it needs constant ratification" [**Hellawell, Hancock, 2001**: 190–191].

Paradoxically, the effectiveness of collegial decision-making depends on the strong leadership of academic leaders. Scientists are professionals, very committed people, loyal to the university and faculty, discipline, students, research, and teaching programmes. This creates an intellectual potential that can be put to good use but that they sometimes abuse. The previous section of the article presented the shortcomings of collegial decision-making subjected to uninhibited discussion, demagogic argumentation, ceremonial and oratorical speeches, and erudite show-offs, often unrelated to the topics discussed, with non-substantive voices directing attention to issues of minor importance. The role of a true and effective leader is to prepare the meeting agenda, synthetically indicate the issues that will be dealt with, skilfully conduct meetings, maintain their discipline and time frame, close speeches that do not bring any valuable content to the subject of the meeting, choose the right moment to sum up the discussion, and finalise it in the form of voting. **Hogan et al.** [**1994**: 493] write about the importance of the skilful performance of the leadership function: "Leadership involves persuading other people to set aside for a period of time their individual concerns and to pursue a common goal that is important for the responsibilities and welfare of a group. [...] Leadership is persuasion, not domination; persons who can require others to do their bidding because of their power are not leaders. Leadership only occurs when others willingly adopt, for a period of time, the goals of a group as their own. Thus, leadership concerns building cohesive and goal-oriented teams; there is a causal and definitional link between leadership and team performance." Such leadership is an integral part of neo-collegiality and not its opposite.

The essence of collegiality is the search for consensus. There may, of course, be situations where it will not be possible to find a compromise that would be acceptable to all parties. Majority voting can lead to conflicts and deepen existing divisions. The role of a strong leader with authority in the academic community is to make decisions in such cases. Even in the absence of consensus, the legitimacy of these decisions may be the mere fact that they were taken after a long process of consultation and discussion [**Hellawell, Hancock, 2001**: 191]. Maintaining a balance between participation, the openness and transparency of debates, and effective management is crucial. This particular role of academic leaders can be justified by the fact that academic freedom and the independence of scientists sometimes have to clash with the requirements of accountability. The people who hold managerial positions at a university are legally responsible for the decisions. Bad decisions can result in sanctions ranging from financial sanctions to job loss. It would be practically impossible to assign the same responsibility for decisions to members of collegial bodies.

One of the arguments that undermine the effectiveness of collegiality is the low interest of academics in becoming actively involved in the work of collegial bodies. Collegiality should be seen as employees' right to co-decide on university and faculty matters, not an obligation. Participation in these bodies must result from the employee's personal belief that they want to engage in real debates on issues related to the functioning of the academic community. A lack of motivation to participate in time-consuming, collegial decision-making may cause the idea of collegiality to be undermined. This will not be due to alternative managerial procedures but to the lack of commitment among those whose participation is necessary for collegiality to work [**Sahlin, Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2016**: 9]. The lack of an academic's involvement cannot be replaced by "contrived collegiality," when principals use administrative procedures to evoke an air of collegiality without the requisite spontaneity and commitment [**Wang, 2015**: 921].

Changes in the procedures for appointing collegial bodies members are another critical aspect of neo-collegiality. For example, the rule that all faculty professors are ex officio faculty council members should be

replaced with an individual declaration of readiness to undertake such duties. At the same time, "the intellectual leadership behaviours of senior academics" [**Uslu, Welch, 2016**: 573] and the attitudes displayed by professors who have unquestionable authority in their communities, play a key role in promoting the idea of collegiality. **Tight** [**2002**] identified leadership behaviours expected from professors as leading in research and teaching, keeping up standards of scholarship, being a role model, helping their colleagues' development, bringing funds and grants, "affecting universities' directions," representing their disciplines and institutions, and including social discussions. Bruce **Macfarlane** [**2005**: 309–310] points out that "there is a long and rich tradition of faculty embracing their citizenship responsibilities as an integral part of their academic identity serving a variety of communities." In this respect, "the responsibility for ensuring that academic citizenship survives lies squarely with the senior professoriate" who should "play a vital role in acting as role models." In so doing, "they need to model the commitment to service if the importance of academic citizenship is to survive."

The appointment rules are also relevant for other groups of employees. Participation in collegial bodies should not result from an order given by a superior (rector, dean, director of the institute, head of the department); it must be the employee's autonomous decision. The composition of the collegial bodies should therefore follow flexible rules, be adapted to the level of management, the specific features of the unit, and the level of employees' interest in participating in these processes. In the case of the university level, these rules must be characterised by a significant degree of formalisation, resulting mainly from legislative conditions. At lower levels of university governance, rules can be introduced due to collegial decisions by interested parties.

One of the disadvantages of collegiality in the traditional meaning of the term is the dominant role of professors. Neo-collegiality also provides an essential place in decision-making for younger academics, representatives of the administration, and students. The problem of powers remains to be solved. Paradoxically, this is a problem that concerns students as well as administrative staff and professors who traditionally play a leading role in collegial bodies. Being an undisputed authority in their scientific discipline does not necessarily mean that professors are knowledgeable on issues connected with university financing, personnel policy, and strategic management, or that they are familiar with academic election procedures. Therefore, conscious participation in collegial decision-making requires essential competencies on issues that will be the subject of deliberations and decisions. Suppose involvement in the work of collective bodies results from an employee's decision and not an appointment resulting from belonging to a specific professional group. In that case, it can be assumed that such a person is interested in acquiring the knowledge necessary to perform tasks consciously.

The flexibility of collegial solutions also refers to how collegial bodies function. One can imagine a situation where different academic units of the same university create their own "academic, legislative paths" or collegial bodies that are best suited to the faculty's specificity, traditions, size, employment structure, and scientific disciplines represented in it. Examples include ethics committees or strategic advisory boards that act as independent bodies in relation to the obligatory bodies. This refers to the concept of shadow organising – informal organising that is not part of formal governance arrangements [**Gherardi et al., 2017**]. The establishment of strategic advisory boards may be a reaction to reducing collegial bodies' influence in decision-making, and thus the "way to reintroduce a collegial element in a more rationalised and formalised organisation. As such, strategic advisory boards share an important characteristic with traditional collegial bodies and councils: they may add legitimacy to decisions or decision-making processes" [**Stensaker et al., 2021**: 3]. They "can be seen as a form of shadow governance in universities" [**Stensaker et al., 2021**: 4]. Another example is the idea of a "civic budget," in which faculty staff can democratically vote to allocate a certain amount of funds. The regulatory framework outlined by the law and the university statute should be the only limitation. Institutional solutions created and tested in this way can be the basis for developing a catalogue of "good collegial practices," which could become a model for other university units.

Due to the nature and schedule of matters handled within collegial decision-making structures, one can distinguish between decisions that are the subject of routine, repeatable procedures and those that cannot be included in the calendar of meetings of collegial bodies. The first group includes, for example, debates related

to the adoption of the strategy. Their frequency will depend on the time horizon adopted to create the entity's long-term strategic plans. The annual mode of proceeding should be used when adopting financial plans, accepting a report on the faculty's activities, and evaluating the dean's work. Collegiality on demand is an attractive institutional solution from the second group [**Bacon, 2014**: 21]. The frequency of its application cannot be programmed. This term refers to procedures whereby academic units (for example, departments within a faculty or faculties within a university) or groups of employees (for example, young academics) could submit petitions obliging university authorities to conduct public consultations on specific matters. The way to proceed with such issues and make binding decisions remains an open question.

Increasing employee involvement in decision-making requires greater transparency in the operation of universities. In a well-managed organisation, there must be effective mechanisms of information transfer between administrative and academic structures [**Dooley, 2007**: 23]. Information on issues that will be the subject of discussions in the various collegial bodies should be made available to interested parties. This applies to the proposed and finally adopted solutions (e.g., the principles of allocating funds between organisational units, employee evaluation systems, and remuneration and bonuses) and the effects of applying these solutions. Of course, transparency understood in this way does not mean publishing all information about the academic community. Only employees of a specific faculty or university should have access to them.

Discussion

The transformation of academic institutions fits into the broad context of globalisation and public sector management reforms inspired by the ideas of NPM. The essence of the new university model is the transfer of corporate authority structures and managerial practices to the academic institutional environment. Discussions on the directions of university reform and its effects inevitably lead to the formulation of two seemingly contradictory opinions. On the one hand, there are voices about how the application of managerial institutional logic leads to the "temple of science" being desecrated. On the other hand, there are arguments that a conservative, inefficient and poorly managed academic institution – one that is looking nostalgically to the past – could benefit by reaching for fresh, inspiring ideas coming from the socio-economic environment, including business partners and models in the global academic market. Therefore, references to "Humboldt's ideas" can be either used as a source of moral and intellectual legitimacy for academic institutions or dismissed as an antiquated and harmful institutional legacy that hinders the necessary market-oriented and managerial restructuring of the higher education system.

These two contradictory visions of university are visible in debates on university transformation directions and their implications for different aspects of academic and university governance. Sztompka describes the university as a cultural institution and uses the term "the clash of two cultures" – academic and corporate [**Sztompka, 2015**: 17]. Both types of culture imply hierarchical relationships, but their sources are different. In academic culture, the hierarchy is based on meritocratic criteria coming from scientific authority. The corporate culture hierarchy is a formal one and based on bureaucratic norms, which determine the ladder of positions in the organisation. A successful transformation of academic institutions from a "loosely coupled" system to a "more tightly coupled" one requires these two sources of hierarchy [**Maassen, Stensaker, 2019**]. The creation of an internal hierarchy is seen as an implication of the process of concentrating power at the institutional level [**Antonowicz et al., 2020**: 9–10]. It results in the possibility of conducting the university's own institutional policy in an organisation with a strong collegial tradition, which "represents an important interface between leaders and those who are led" [**Kligyte, Barrie, 2014**: 157].

Managerial reforms in higher education are changing the backbone of the system on which university governance is embedded. Such an approach provides a unique type of moral purpose to academic institutions: "Efficiency and effectiveness are prioritized at the expense of more broadly based moral and social values" [**Lynch, Grummell, 2018**: 197]. This disrupts the institutional fabric of academic governance and raises a key question

about the impact of these changes on the stability and effectiveness of the reformed system. Referring to the neo-institutional research perspective, it can be stated that the success of reforms depends on reaching a new institutional equilibrium. First, this means that, based on traditional academic and cultural values, informal institutions should not block new institutional solutions but strengthen the rules and patterns of behaviour imposed by formal norms, giving them academic credibility. Second, the network of new institutions introduced into the system should be characterised by institutional complementarity and coherence, meaning that they complement and strengthen each other.

Meeting these two conditions requires a compromise between supporters of the Humboldt university model and those who believe that the future of academia is tied to the vision of a corporate university. Such a compromise means a university that maintains the integrity of the traditional academic value system while being open to external conclusions, requirements, and expectations. The reformed university should be able to quickly and flexibly adapt to the dynamically changing external environment, while at the same time being an autonomous and intellectually creative institution as well as a place for reflection and deliberation on the legitimacy of changes. Such a university can maintain a balance between the role of guardian of knowledge and the requirements of functioning on the public goods market, which is primarily interested in the tangible benefits that this knowledge can bring to society and the economy.

The essence of each compromise is accepting some of the proposals formulated by each side of the discourse. To paraphrase Karl Popper[2], this would require redesigning the "fortresses" manned by a brave crew of eminent professionals and authorities in their fields. The university, the "academic fortress," is one of the oldest social institutions in Western civilisation. It includes an integrated system of formal and informal institutions that define the constraints that shape the "rules of the game" that guide the behaviour of actors – organisations and individuals – who are "game participants." According to the logic of external reform pressure, transforming the university requires replacing or modifying traditional constraints (institutions) that refer to academic institutional logic by applying market and managerial constraints. There is a redefinition of formal institutions resulting from the imposition of legislative rules of the corporate model of university management. It also entails a change in the role played by traditional academic institutions, including in particular the collegiality of decision-making and academic freedom. These two constitute the foundation of academic institutional logic.

Conclusions

The article aims to outline a path of university governance transformation based on a compromise between a radical, "hard" managerialist approach and a traditional one. The study refers to the Humboldt university model, which stems from the concept of "soft" managerialism. This concept makes it possible to combine the belief that a university needs to reform with the belief that the effectiveness of decisions made by a strong academic leader is determined not only by their "voice power" but also by "voice quality." The latter depends mainly on verifying decisions as part of academic collegial procedures, and demonstrating the critical role that collegial bodies should play in decision-making. Whether these bodies effectively fulfil this kind of task depends on adopting the path of transformation that refers to the idea of "neo-collegiality." Therefore, the reform should result in an effective and efficient organisation, but at the same time it should maintain a balance between management responsibility and academic participation, which means that the relationship between collegiality and hierarchical power structures is finely balanced. While retaining the value of institutional rationality, "such a university will remain for those outside and for those inside a legitimate version of the academic institution" [**Morphew, Huisman, 2002**: 496].

The institutional transformation of universities along the soft managerial path means a "fair balance" [**Kwiek, 2012**: 9]. The academic community is not deprived of its traditional voice in governance, and "universities are

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[2]   "Institutions are like fortresses. They must be well designed and properly manned" [**Popper, 2002**: 60].

still substantially different in their operations from the business sector, being somehow, although not necessarily in a traditional manner, 'unique' or 'specific' organisations" [**Kwiek, 2012**: 9]. Soft managerialism also poses a new challenge for institutional leadership. This challenge ensures a more realistic balance between leadership responsibility and giving voice to the academic community [**Kogan, Hanney, 2000**: 195].

In summary, creating a university management system that combines a managerial approach characterised by decision-making and speed of action with effective academic participation is not easy. Still, it is not an impossible mission. It requires effective synergy between the academic and corporate sides of the university [**Marginson, 2002**: 243]. It can be compared to a *marriage de raison*, not a *marriage de passion* [**Boer, Goedegebuure, 2003**: 216].

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