The management perspective of having sound academia, including improving the status of academic freedom: The Global South as a study.

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الملخص:

من وجهة نظر إدارية، كان تعزيز الحرية الأكاديمية على النمط الغربي أمرًا صعبًا حيث كانت الجامعات في الجنوب العالمي تكافح لضمان الحرية الأكاديمية وطرق ضمانها على مستوى الإدارة العليا. المشكلة التي تتناولها هذه الدراسة هي تأثير التغيير السياسي، أداريا، على الإدارة العليا إلى المتوسطة في الأوساط الأكاديمية، وعلى الحرية الأكاديمية. لقد كان وواجه العديد من الأكاديميين مضايقات منهجية كنتيجة مباشرة لسيطرة المتطرفين الدينيين والسياسيين على معظم المناصب الحكومية المتكاملة العالم الجنوبي المليء بالتوترات السياسية. تعكس أسئلة البحث الطرق التي يمكن من خلالها لسياسات إدارة الجامعات أن تؤثر على الحرية الأكاديمية وتنفيذ السياسات لضمانها.

Abstract

From a management perspective, furthering a [1]Western style academic freedom has been challenging as universities in the Global South have been struggling to ensure academic freedom and ways to guarantee it on the upper management level. The problem addressed in this study is the impact of political change on the upper to mid-level management of academia but more specifically academic freedom. Many academics have faced systemic harassments as a direct result of religious

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[1] The use of the term 'Western' here is to refer to academic freedom as institutionally defined in the form of a geographic university as supposed to the idea of academic freedom itself, which is an ancient concept and refers to any learning venue or setting. For instance, academic freedom was raised and widely respected when the mosque served as an educational institute in the Global South.

and political radicals taking over most of the integral governmental posts in the country. The research questions reflect ways in which the management policies of universities can impact academic freedom and implement policies to ensure it.

Definitions

Academic freedom: The ability to research, publish, and discuss concepts and subjects without interference or control from political or religious influence (Areen, 2009).

Freedom of the press: The idea of being able to articulate and publish concepts or issues in the established media (Weber, 2010).

Freedom of expression: Ability to freely express different points of view without prejudice, in any available venues (Areen, 2009; Margesson, 2011).

Academic community (academia): University professors, academic researchers and intellectuals (Husain, 2010).

   Academic leadership: University management and faculty leaders, chairs, management policy makers, and academic researcher centers' managers (Husain, 2010).

Background

   The simple meaning of management is defined as the process of directing policies and instructions and guiding the various events of the people involved to achieve the objectives of an organization (UN, 2011). Another simple definition of academic freedom is that it is the belief that freedom to enquiry by faculty members and students is essential to the mission of the notion itself (Calhoun, 2009). Another more relevant definition is that scholars should have the freedom to teach and explore ideas without being targeted for repression, job loss and imprisonment (Quinn & Levine, 2014). The term was also defined by

1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and tenure, produced and authored by American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and also by the association of American Colleges and Universities as "teachers and students must always remain free to inquire..". A famous quote borrowed from Chief Justice Earl Warrren (AAUP, 2009). Another definition comes from Academics For Academic Freedom (AFAF), which states that Academic Freedom has two main principles: "One, that academics, both inside and outside the classroom, have unrestricted liberty to question and test received wisdom and to put forward controversial and unpopular opinions, whether or not these are deemed offensive; Two, that academic institutions have no right to curb the exercise of this freedom by members of their staff, or to use it as grounds for disciplinary action or dismissal" (AAUP, 2009). The latter definition here is more relevant to the topic of this study and reflects the context.

Freedom in its general definition is the most talked about focus when referencing a societal or political conflict or change (Margesson, 2011). Since the Second World War, this has become more prevalent and a discussion point in the post-colonized world or the colonies than that of current Western societies. This is due to the fact that western nations had already dealt with these conflicting issues and come to a somewhat of understanding of how to handle them. Although some would argue that this has come a full circle and the situation is not as thought to be. Arab history has had defining moments of the concept during its diverse existence through both peace and war times. Many credit events of conflicting yet democratic dialogues occurring between 800 and 1100 AD to an atmosphere of an unpolluted freedom of thought; most notably when Muslim intellectuals started to question religious taboos such as

the creation of the Quran (Turbanti-Memmi, 2011). Historians associated the decay of scientific superiority in Islamic civilization to the introduction of restrictions on academia and theological research around (1058–1111): '*Ijtihad*' by the political powers (Chaney, 2016; Tyson, 2007). It is not certain that the concept of academic freedom is vitally important to a civilization's continuous prominence, as the notion of their rise and fall is understood as part of a situational lifecycle that adheres to other many contributing parameters and not to one specific criterion (Weber, 2010).

As a result, freedom can become chaos where the rule of law or societal norms that govern behavior become elastic with daily political situations (Kish, 2010). Since freedom is to have the right to express views freely, it becomes a challenge when those rights are also extended to radical forums, and then suppressed when those parties take political control. This cannot be underestimated. The vulnerability of freedoms as in the academic domain can easily render those freedoms illusory… The potential for misuse constitutes a serious risk, particularly for states in the Global South in a time of traumatic political and cultural change (Zoubir, 2011).

The specific problem driving this study is the impact of political change on the upper to mid-level management of academia and academic freedom. Through interviews with a sample of management policy makers, professors, and faculty leaders, information was gathered to understand what it would take to establish a profound appreciation of academic freedom and what is needed to encourage a more open society during the ongoing political change.

Research Questions

1. What is the state of academia during the ongoing political and administrative changes? What is Impact on Policy?
2. What do you think the political change impact on academic freedom is?
3. What do you think universities can do, managerially, to counter the limits imposed on academic freedom?

Conceptual Framework

The primary theoretical groundwork for this research is the politicized premise of organizational culture theory and societal culture and the disconnect between the types of institutional change that would be necessary for academic freedom to exist and the culture outside of the university (Dauber, Fink & Yolles, 2012). The culture outside the walls of academia often cherishes values antithetical to free inquiry and the questioning of norms. The concept of organizational culture has a deep connection and affiliation with culture theory. There have been studies about this approach by Brodbeck , Chhokar, and House (2007); Hofstede (1980); Denison, Haaland, and Goelzer (2004); Hatch (1993); Hofstede et al. (1990); Alvesson (2002); and House, Dorfman, Hanges, Javidan, and Gupta (2004). Their important work has deciphered decipher complex relationships between organizations' values and social environment values. This relates very much to universities sets of cultural values of freedom of inquiry and that of its own societal ecosystem that tends to disagree, sometimes violently.

This theory explains a process of working through various opposing positions similar to that of the dialectical theory which is based on the notion

of having a dialogue between two or more people carrying dissimilar opinions, who wish to establish the truth of the subject by reasoning and arguments (Neuhouser, 2000). Peaceful change could be done if it was managed effectively. A platform of understanding and trust is required for that to happen.

Also, after examining the research and reconsidering the materials available for my topic, I had to search for a pattern or a critical path connecting political change to academic freedom. I used my knowledge of strategic management tools such as the concept of Critical Path (CP) to illuminate the entangled relationship between academic institutions, academic freedom and state politics, in general, but more so during a political transitional period. Since the organizational culture theory and organization theory is essentially about the related environments with different constructs of hypotheses and political and societal norms, I conducted this review as such.

An overview of a typical university in the Global South

To better understand the concept of academic freedom within the university system, we must first understand the structure in which these institutions operate. Universities in the global South are all public institutions, with very few private colleges, and therefore professors can be described as public servants. Universities are part of the organizational structure of the ministry of higher education. The president of the university is usually handpicked by the minister of higher education or the prime minister of the country himself. Since education is a right in the global South and therefore free and, due to cultural references, most secondary school graduates end up in universities, budgeting for these institutions is also public and comes

directly from the ministry through the budgeting allocation at ministry of finance, hence the lack of independence and autonomy. The faculties are spread in an old fashion format that many universities around the world had done away with. For instance, the faculty of Economics includes economics studies, business studies, management studies and political science.

The global South experience has been somewhat different from those in Eastern European states as there was more interference in one faculty but completely unnoticed in others. This, to some extent, was due to lack of cohesive ideological and demagogic platform. Academic freedom has not been an issue for professors engaging in research in the science faculties, as there were no known incidents of interfering with such by the ministry of health, for instance. That said, the universities and colleges have 'unofficially' sanctioned and/or dismissed professors during and after almost every political change in the global South. Public critique of areas directly related to the professor's area of expertise including quality of education, materials, quality of professors, pay and curricula depend a lot on personal experience, characteristics of particular departments or faculties and the seriousness of the criticism. There has not been any reported cases of anyone losing their job because of criticism of the system nor has there been any recorded systematic approach to handling these specific issues, unlike the case with criticizing the political system (Dewey, Boydston, & Hook, 2008).

The concept of academic freedom, once again, got entangled with another. This time around it was institutional independence and freedom of assembly. It is logical to keep these concepts within a basket of educational or institutional autonomy but, still, not the exact concern. It is also understandable to see these concepts being used interchangeably during political upheaval. Although

universities inadvertently and occasionally relished sporadic autonomy over the years, this was always fragile and provisional and lacked solid cultural or institutional backing. Moreover, universities had always been the main stage for political spurs of Socialist, Marxists and the resultant divergence of opinion led, in many instances, to bloody conflicts or the arrests of students and educators. (Shillington, 2005).

When it comes to curriculum and contents and fields taught in the classroom, the global South has had a limited history. This was mainly due to the absence of a boundary-pushing national dialogue over the concept of academic freedom and its impact on social and administrative branches of society. Although there were an abundant number of reasons for universities to ask for more freedoms, the idea of academic freedom was relegated to a bourgeois level of importance, and deemed gratuitous in comparison with a solid education system. Many have called for such concepts and called for an awareness campaign, but those were either ignored or placed in the 'trouble makers' category (Shillington, 2005).

Having discussed the lack of clarity, one cannot make a clear distinction between academic freedom and its political conditions or societal norms. Academic freedom cannot be asserted by a decree but needs a democratic and free environment that supports it. Academic freedom sits on the pillars of freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and value for human rights. Universities cannot continue to live in a bubble, and ignore or pretend to defy the wider society they exist in. Societal and cultural norms are to be considered and disentangled when reviewing or surveying academic freedom conditions (Husain, 2010).

Another loose and undefined issue of academic freedom relates to

university professors' tenure and shared governance, which was always a unique case. University professors, under normal circumstances, enjoy a tenure system where job security is guaranteed, and professors are there for life. However, a university professor can lose his position and have his/her salary suspended without an official decree or a legal memo. Several professors and lecturers had their salaries halted and verbally told to not come to work. This situation was unique in the sense that these professors had no legal base to stand on other than the records of their bank statement, which shows no deposits made. They were left in a loop of intended bureaucracy.

Also, it is important to note that shared governance exists at the departmental level. The power of the departmental level was crucial to employment, advancement, research and teaching schedules.. etc. However, the extent of this influence was minimal and sometimes manipulated due to cultural influences.

Research Method

This paper is using the global South as a case study of academic freedom in a [1]non-Western context, and the method of data collection is primarily through interviews. Also, due to the nature of the study, the author had found it suitable to venture and engage in some historical data collection. I have referenced but still refrained from deeply going into details of early Islamic experiences, as in the battle of the Rationalists against Traditionalists (Agostinone, 2013). This was due to many reasons including inquiry fairness, as I didn't want to risk confusing the topic with the heavy load of historical or religious attributes. I have collected data through interviews for a previous paper that focused on academic freedom from a managerial prospective. Here

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[1] The non-Western context is highlighted here to illuminate the fact that academic freedom in the developed world or under democratic states means differently than that in western societies.

I am using the portion that is more relevant to this study. I touched base with the participants and managed to interview them again or confirm their responses. The interviews were with a selected group of 14 participants. Selection criteria were related to their work experience and to their professional relation to the subject matter. The sample population was divided into three categories: professors (10 Participants), department chairs (2 Participants) and managers and policy makers (2 Participant) (Rihoux, 2006).

To ensure ethical and confidential best practices in the study, I maintained the anonymity of the interviewees and listed them as P1, P2, P3 and so on. I was careful to put the interviewees at ease by assuring anonymity to make them feel comfortable about having their answers written down in notes without any reference to them by using my own coding system (Creswell, 2014, 2017).

Results

All the participants had at least 10 years of experience in academia. Additionally, 12 of the study's participants were males and two were females (See Table 1). About 50% of the asked refused to participate in the study. Although there were only two females who chose to participate in the study, these two were representative of the number of the females in the study population. This means that 14% of the research population was female, which is a respectable figure.

Table 1. *Gender, age, and occupation of participants*

Participant	Gender	Occupation
1	Female	Professor
2	Female	Professor
3	Male	Professor
4	Male	Manager

5	Male	Chair
6	Male	Chair
7	Male	Professor
8	Male	Professor
9	Male	Professor
10	Male	Professor
11	Male	Professor
12	Male	Professor
13	Male	Manager
14	Male	Professor

Research Question 1:

What is the state of academia during the ongoing political and administrative changes? What is Impact on Policy? On this question, participants 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 described the situation from their own experiences. For instance, Participant 9 said, "We have been waiting for this change for a long time and now we can taste freedom and have our share of power." I had to pause at this response and ask few other questions and from that I gathered that this participant is a member of political group that has taking leadership at the ministry of education and universities. Most of the other participants were consistent in their response and had a general pessimistic view and anxious responses. For example, Participant 3 said, "I just heard that a renowned female professor was dragged out of the lecture hall when she refused to leave the hall…we are experiencing Eastern European tactics allover again.." Participant 10 made another point that is related to the aftermath of the initial change when he indicated that this "change has been so far counterproductive to academic purpose let alone the freedom of it…Militias roam the university halls demanding and forcing management to appoint their friends and sign

contracts…We are losing the desire to educate" Another participant accentuated that this was not their change, the people of the South that is, not their choosing; therefore, it is an intellectual and political occupation. The participant added: "This was brought on by outsiders who have no connection to this society… from above." Participant 13 noted the importance of realizing what is going on now by saying, "Time is running out on us to do something, soon enough this would be the norm and we will be casted out if we resist"

Most participants but especially participants 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 13 and 14 entertained this question quite passionately. Each participant had described a situation at their department or faculty where things have been affected as a direct result of the politic change was introduced and the problems that came with each of these incidents.

Research Question 2:

What do you think the political change impact on academic freedom is? On the question of political changes that may embrace or asphyxiate the values of academic freedom, I was taking aback by the sense of gloomy prospect. The sense of despair was overwhelmingly unpleasant and definitely calls for an institutional action. Most participants expressed uncertainty about the future of academia in general and cited that the quality of education and its merits have deteriorated, and since "education was first to suffer amongst other things, one can only guess what the eventual situation would be like." 10 participants voiced an unenthusiastic outlook on altogether. For instance, Participant 4 said, "what we saw so far from the de facto rulers of the South today is just an emboldened radical view that is counterproductive to education and free society such as separate universities for men and women

etc…the religious and their militia offshoot's belief that this country is supposed to embrace their understanding of religion and use it to accumulate wealth will not allow for education to be independent and will not accept other theories or studies...and the new revolutionaries have shown little acceptance of other views." Participant 1 added, "There is no evidence of any commitment to freedoms in general with the new rulers; in fact, I see things getting worse than before as they [the new de facto rulers] seem to act with impunity and support from western powers." Some participants mentioned the need for a cultural revolution that will embrace the concept of academic freedom as it should be. Participant 5 said, "if my understanding of academic freedom is the ability to research anything you wish, then we need to uproot our cultural backwardness; a cultural revolution is what I mean." Participant 2 said, "We need to change how we think, how we analyze, how we view religion, politics, democracy, philosophy and specially history..we are prisoners of our own demise…we are a culture of submission to a truth that is already known, in the air or the sky, and no need to search too much for it….we need to encourage critical thinking and not subdued it or shame it, or even worse kill it." Participant 9 said, "Intellectuals in this country need to associate and create a political entity that would stand behind them, they need to assemble and become activists"

What was distilled from participants in relation to this question, which in essence was a continuation of the previous one, and part of the open-ended format the research employed, is that there is a reluctance to give this power to the government. This was one of the most interesting answers I got from the participants. On one hand, they admitted that the new so-called political leadership should push for further improvements, on the other hand, they

doubt it would. Participant 5 said, "western powers that have been killing us with liberal values and representative democracy values for so long are now creating hurdles for us.." Participant referenced France's and UK's economic interests being a priority before anything. Also, participant 7 said, that these powers are the ones responsible for keeping the Global South real unpleasant news out of the mainstream media.

Research Question 3:

What do you think universities can do, managerially, to counter the limits imposed on academic freedom? On the subject of the difference between the two concepts, several participants noted that the response should be or is different. For example: Participant 8 said, "society is a conservative one that may handle unlimited freedom of research but may feel different about freedom of expression.." This was an interesting analysis. It seems that the participant id refereeing to research is for the educated liberals and therefore may not be widely discussed or that the world of intellectuals is a closed one. This participant added that there are "there has to be consideration for societal values, religion and traditions." This sentiment was also echoed by several of the participants. Participant 5 said, "boundaries should be respected but also a signed agreement within the academia can be useful." However, some participants chose to define societal restrictions on academic freedom as an oxymoronic notion. For example: Participant 11 said, "to limit academic freedom is to decimate the sprit and mission of education and those who call for this do not actually understand the value of free academia." Participant 7 took a different turn and initiated a dialogue over how new the limits are and that universities did enjoy academic freedom before but never had a name for

it. He said, "we are now [after 2011 events] told what to teach and what to take out from history, political discourse and religion studies courses by the new political demagogues in the Global South." Participant 8 noted a point that wasn't mentioned before, he stated, "We are not a controversial society, we do not have ethical or societal issues that divide us.. we are a homogenous culture with no ethnic, religious or cast differences that require national dialogue.."

Few participants noted the difference between academic freedom and freedom of expression and evaded the significance in splitting the two. Others spoke about the interrelationship between the two and that academic freedom can't flourish in a society that has no freedom of expression or the press. Most participants were not very open to the idea of complete freedom of inquiry and research as it can be used to insult culture, religion or national character. Also, they warned that freedom of expression should also be curtailed during political instability as radical factions can use it as a vehicle to their means. Some also saw the dilemma here, as freedom of expression is the way to having a democratic society. Overall, participants were in agreement over the impact of societal culture on educational institutions and vice versa.

The following table is a summary of the main concepts that were coalesced from the responses to each question to determine commonality in their expressions (See Table 2).

Table 2. *Percentage of the participants' answers to core concepts*

Number	Question	Answer	Percentage
Q1	What is the state of academia during the ongoing political and administrative changes? What is Impact on Policy?	Not very encouraging. It has gotten worse	85%

| Q2 | What do you think the political change impact on academic freedom is? | Not improving and not likely to improve | 65% |
| Q3 | What do you think universities can do, managerially, to counter the limits imposed on academic freedom? | Yes and may backfire | 85% |

Interpretation of the Findings

As part of organizing the results into a meaningful format, I have organized the participants' answers into themes I found to be focal to this study. There were many underlying reflections that if unprovoked will just pass without consideration. These themes were 1) academic freedom and a political change, 2) academic freedom and radicalism and the impact on managerial policies at the universities. These themes are focused on the institution, the society, the politics, and the fear of the untrusted outsider.

Theme 1: Academic Freedom and The Political/administrative change

The universities and the status of academic freedom and wellbeing of educators will continue to suffer at every instance of violence between the fighting factions and their supporting European sponsors. It will be a long time before the political situation stabilizes one way or another and the state of academia will continue to reflect that. This is the central theme of what most participants identified. It was clear to sense the gloomy outlook they see for the future of this political conflict (Cohen, 2010).

Theme 2: Academic Freedom and radicalism

The second theme was the concerns about the impact of "too much" freedom. The sense that all societies have their political, religious and societal restrictions in the Global South. The fear that these intervening European

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countries will continue to intervene and use academic freedom and other freedoms as a ploy to advance their agendas in the region (Johansen, 2007).

Also, the participants noted the political agitation and provocation brought on by the religious groups, who tends to use democracy as a cover to take over once they are in power. Participants referenced examples such as the PIS government in Poland and in Turkey. The other negative impact from the problems related to misuse of freedoms is the descending support from the intellectual community as they see universities as bubs for radicalism and as a result they stay away. Academic freedom encompasses educational cultural ideals; therefore, protecting from becoming its own nightmare is important.

Conclusion

In the opinion of the researcher, it is quite clear from this study that the status of academia is still needs work and the first victims are faculty members and students. The bigger victim is the overall society that was longing for a better and freer societal environment. The findings of this study have unraveled collective anxiety amongst the participants of this study over the future of the society.

The purpose of the study was to document the observations of a sample of the Global south university professors and faculty managers in reference to their views on the changes to the academic community during the political change. The research questions identified the still long road academics have ahead of them to establish a desired condition. The study has found that there was a disconnect between the societal culture and the educational institution culture and vice versa. This problem makes it hard for academics to influence the political element of society to make better decisions and to be part of a

dynamic culture that values progress and advancement. On the other hand, it leaves the educational institutions in an idle state without societal pressure to be involved or provide their share into the betterment of citizens.

The study found that impact on academia by the political and administrative changes were very eventful and contrary to what was expected. Those change had not showed any interest in promoting any forms of managerial policies that encourage and support freedoms. In fact, it operates to hinder any gesture to promote positive policies or create ones.

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