

Clark Kerr'S View of Pluralistic Giant Universities

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Abstract: Clark Kerr, a famous contemporary American educator, put forward the concept of diversified giant universities by investigating and analyzing the development course and present situation of American higher education. This paper analyzes the connotation of the pluralistic view of giant universities from the perspective of the diversification of university organizational structure, functions, management models and the huge scale of universities. Clark Kerr theoretically defined the pluralistic mega-university, facing theoretical difficulties, but still opened up a new stage in the development history of university view. It is of practical significance to interpret Kerr's view of pluralistic giant universities for the development of today's universities.

Keywords: Multi-Giant University View; Clark Kerr; University View

1. Introduction

Clark Kerr (1911-2003) is a famous contemporary American higher educator. In the 1950s, he served as the president of the University of California, Berkeley and multi-campus, and in the late 1960s and early 1970s, he served as the chairman of the Carnegie Higher Education Committee. These valuable experience in higher education management and his accumulated rich theoretical knowledge have made outstanding contributions to the development of contemporary American higher education and even the reform of higher education in the world. As the essence of his thoughts on higher education, Kerr's exposition on the concept of pluralistic giant universities is rich in content and unique in viewpoint, which greatly promotes the popularization and diversified development of American higher education. Therefore, he is also called the architect of contemporary higher education transformation.^[1]Kerr's view of pluralistic giant universities enriches and perfects the university concept, and provides useful reference for the development of higher education in the United States and even the world.

2. The Connotation Analysis of the Pluralistic View of Giant Universities

Kerr not only redefined the concept of modern university, but also built a rich and profound theoretical system of modern university around this concept, and put forward his diversified view of giant university. Its rich connotation can be summarized in four aspects: the diversification of university organizational structure, the diversification of university functions, the diversification of university management mode and the huge scale of universities.

2.1 Diversification of University Organizational Structure

Traditional university is an "organism" with only one soul, a community composed of teachers and students with common interests. Part and whole of the university are closely linked and follow the only principle. However, the diversified mega-university has several souls, and its members are not limited to traditional teachers and students, but also include administrators and many "non-teachers" researchers and other communities. These communities are all legal members of the university, and their values, development direction, interest pursuit and living conditions are all regarded as the "original ecological environment" of the university, which always affects the survival and development of the university. The interests of these communities are different and even contradictory, but "as an institution, although it is not consistent internally, it has always produced benefits." Although tortured by change, it maintains a stable freedom. Although it doesn't even have a soul that can be considered as its own, its members are dedicated to the truth."^[2] Organizations include not only colleges and academies, but also research centers, promotion stations and exchange program centers. In this complex organizational structure, the relationship between the various parts is loose. "Many parts can be added or canceled, but they have little impact on the whole, or even are ignored, or will not suffer any losses."^[2].

2.2 The Diversification of University Functions

From the function of university, both Newman's "ideal of university" and flexner's "view of modern university" focus on the single function of university, such as the former emphasizing teaching and the latter attaching importance to scientific research; Diversified

mega-universities, on the other hand, do not focus on any single function.^[3]Kerr thinks: "The present university is a diversified university in a pluralistic society. It does not stick to a function it likes, but changes with the change of time and place. Only idealists will seek the only answer to the exclusion of others, while pragmatists will see what is most effective. Universities have many functions, and the functions will continue to increase."^[2]In the *Great Transformation of American Higher Education: 1960-1980*, Kerr classified the functions of universities into production functions, consumption functions and citizen functions. Universities play an important role in the above three functions. In addition, unlike the previous emphasis on the teaching or scientific research functions of universities, Kerr put the social service functions of universities in an important position. He believes that universities are knowledge industries and the core of a society. He pointed out, "Today, knowledge is the core of society. More and more people and more and more institutions have never needed or even demanded knowledge. As producers, wholesalers and retailers of knowledge, universities will inevitably provide services to the society."^[2]

2.3 The Diversification of University Management Model

From the perspective of university management, the diversified mega-university is different from the Bologna University model managed by students and the Paris University model managed by teachers, but a diversified management model in which students, teachers, government, administrative departments and other institutions compete for university management power.^[4]As Kerr himself said, a diversified mega-university is "similar to a government system, such as a city or a city-state: the city-state of a diversified mega-university." It may not be unified, but it must be managed-it is not a guild as it used to be, but a complex entity with fine power distribution. There are a number of competitors for this power."^[2]

In this multi-management mode, students' choice plays a guiding role in curriculum reform; Students' choice and evaluation of teachers determines the future development of university teachers. However, with the continuous improvement of university institutions, the role of students in university management is getting weaker and weaker. On the contrary, the role of teachers in university management is rising, especially in the United States, where "professors run schools" has become a major feature of university management, and professors have great power in universities. As Kerr pointed out: "In universities in the United States and Commonwealth countries, professors have gained the right to enroll students, set courses, take exams and award degrees sooner or later. The control and influence of teachers in these fields is very necessary to carry out normal academic activities."^[2]In addition to the influence of professors and students, universities in various countries are controlled by government power to varying degrees. Needless to say, France, Germany, Britain and Russia, even the United States, which has always advocated autonomy and decentralization, can't get rid of the interference from government power, and the university board, state treasury, governor and state legislature have more and more influence on American universities.^[5]In addition, universities also have relations with various formal and informal institutions and groups in society, and the relations between universities and society are not only close but also extensive. At the same time, independent specialized administrative institutions have emerged in the internal organizational structure of universities, and they have become a remarkable feature of universities.

3. Evaluation and Thinking on the View of Pluralistic Giant Universities

Kerr opened a new stage in the history of the development of university view, enriched the theory of American higher education after World War II, influenced the development of American educational reform, set an example for diversified universities in the United States, and made "diversification, high quality, popularization and planning" a unified program of American higher education.

3.1 Theoretically Defined the Diversified Mega-Universities

Although the history of universities is long and heavy, and the understanding of universities is ancient and complicated, its development has gone through three main stages: Newman's view of universities, flexner's view of modern universities and Kerr's view of diversified giant universities. From Newman's publication of "The Ideal of University" in 1852 to Kerr's publication of "The Function of University" in 1963, the characteristics of universities have changed greatly, although there is only a hundred years. The connotation of university is constantly enriched, and the functions of university are constantly expanding. In Newman's time, university was mainly a teaching institution to spread universal knowledge, but in Kerr's time, university became a multi-functional service institution integrating teaching, scientific research and service. Kerr invented the word Multiversity when he couldn't fully express the meaning of University with university. Mr. Jin Yaoji thinks: "Kerr's word Multiversity is really a stroke of genius, because it really symbolizes the character of contemporary universities."^[6]It makes seemingly contradictory communities, purposes, interests, functions and activities coexist under the name of a "diversified giant university", which not only conducts teaching and research, but also does not neglect services; Achieving

equality and promoting Excellence; It not only adapted to the diversified needs of a diversified society for universities, but also met the needs of American society and academic circles to re-understand modern universities at that time, and clearly demonstrated a new concept of universities.

3.2 Theoretical Dilemma Faced by Multivariate Mega Universities

The pluralistic view of giant universities is in a vague state between "university concept" and "university ideal", which is its own theoretical dilemma.^[7] However, Kerr's higher education thought is too pragmatic, which makes the "diversified view of giant universities" inevitably questioned and criticized in reality. However, it is precisely these theoretical and practical dilemmas that make Kerr's view of diversified giant universities have the vitality of repeated discussions and provide room for continuous improvement. Looking forward to the future of diversified mega-universities, Kerr believes that the development of diversified mega-universities will face many "difficult choices". For example, they should carefully deal with the influence of the political environment on universities, devote themselves to protecting the core position of universities in society and guard against marginalization; We should devote ourselves to making selective academic decisions based on merits rather than political opinions; It is necessary to maintain the academic freedom of the university and protect its external facilities under the circumstances that external forces are constantly introducing people and the power of the university is weakening; In addition, universities should pursue long-term academic interests instead of seeking political opportunities for survival year after year. In this way, the "diversity" in a diversified giant university may be squeezed out, because it is too easy to lead to low-quality activities outside the university. It can be seen that there are still many uncertainties and difficulties in the future of diversified giant universities, and there is still a long way to go.

3.3 Opened Up a New Stage in the History of the Development of University View.

The development of university view has experienced Newman's traditional university view and flexner's modern university view, and the third is Kerr's diversified giant university view. The pluralism of the diversified giant university and other characteristics in line with the development trend of the pluralism of the American society after World War II, so it can respond to the great influence of the federal program since World War II on it, and keep in line with the surrounding social environment, to become the core force to promote the industrialization of the United States, greatly contributing to the growth of productive forces and the improvement of the standard of living of the people, and greatly demonstrated that it is in the preservation and dissemination of the truth, the exploration of new knowledge, and the promotion of advanced civilization of the unparalleled nature of the.^[8] The concept of diversified mega-universities has its profound historical foundation and complex realistic factors, which is the result of Kerr's in-depth investigation and analysis of the history and present situation of universities and his constant reflection on the reality and internal institutions of American universities since World War II. It clearly shows a new type of university, that is, the "diversified giant university", which includes several communities, several souls, several goals, several power centers and several functions, serves several customers, and is characterized by diversity, complexity, heterogeneity, diversity, adaptability and flexibility. It is a university that can be more integrated into modern complex society, and it is an accurate description of the image of contemporary universities, meeting the needs of American society and academic circles to re-understand modern universities at that time. It can be said that Kerr's view of diversified giant universities has opened up a new stage in the history of the development of university views.

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