

# The meaning of academic profession in light of the genuine mission of academic citizens

Sanja Petkovska

## Abstract

*The main goal of this paper is to examine the power of the notion of academic citizenship to become a widely spread, accepted, and well-grounded concept useful for better and more progressive higher education policy solutions at a global level. I claim that the chances this might occur depend on the implementation of notions of transdisciplinarity and post-nationality into its future theoretical conceptualisations. Furthermore, I recognize the quality of transcending the given infrastructural boundaries as crucial for tertiary education and deal with the distinctiveness of the academic profession which could serve as its organizing principle. The approach from which I observe academic citizenship is geopolitical positionality and I argue the concept might be useful in finding better solutions for transnationally mobile scholars. Key principles of academic citizenship are a sense of belonging to the profession, openness followed by solidarity, freedom and unconditionality of endeavours. While minimal requirements for academic citizenship status are related to formal recognition, the additional qualities are gradually added up. One of the layers of belonging to the academic community is collegiality. In the final part, this article examines the potential of academia to fight back for the values and qualities inscribed into the role of academics.*

*Keywords: academic citizenship; epistemic injustice; knowledge production; post-nationality; transdisciplinarity*

---

*Received 31 December 2022; revised version received 11 February 2023; accepted 7 May 2023. Corresponding author: Sanja Petkovska, Institute of Criminological and Sociological Research, Belgrade ([sanja.petkovska@iksi.ac.rs](mailto:sanja.petkovska@iksi.ac.rs)).*

---

## Introduction

The main goal of this paper is to examine the power of the notion of *academic citizenship* to become a widely spread, accepted, and well-grounded concept. I claim that the chances this might occur are dependent upon the inclusion and implementation of two other notions important for the social sciences and the humanities—*transdisciplinarity* and *post-nationality*—into the future theoretical

conceptualisations of academic citizenship.<sup>1</sup> When writing about academic endeavours, it seems it is often overlooked that despite of the embeddedness of the producers of academic knowledge in certain national systems, knowledge production had always tended to exceed the boundaries of concrete higher education (HE) systems and their institutional limitations—such as a disciplinary division(s) of labour and its placement under the regulations of specific nation states and its governing policies. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when many policy concepts such as knowledge society and the Europeanization of HE emerged on the continent, it became obvious that globalisation and internationalisation of the HE systems around the world are deeply dependent on given national policies. The notion of academic citizenship might help overcome the challenges arising from the growing complexity in the knowledge sectors of countries across the globe.

Therefore, I argue that academic activities are distinctive and mutually connected across the globe by the constant tendency to expand both nationally and globally. This expansion causes many fears about knowledge systems (both educational and research) becoming alike in every country of the world, resulting in national characteristics being erased. Thus, on a national level, policies advocating internationalisation faced opposition from the side of national ministries. However, drawing in Francis Bacon we are reminded that ‘collaboration of the scientists is most important for scientific progress, which is for the sake of societal benefit’ (Hadorn et al., 2008, p. 21). Despite working in different contexts and being determined by different knowledge production infrastructures, there are principles which still connect academics all around the world above the divisions based on any particularity, which tells us all academics have much more in common than any other professional group. This imagined habitus, shared mission and vision of HE is the basis for the shared, global *academic culture* grounded in the notion of *academic citizenship* (meaning the status) which could serve as a new organizing principle for the universities of contemporary times.

Despite academic citizenship being a concept resonating with a wide international scope, at the same time it necessarily depends on the positions or locations from which it is approached, including the design of the infrastructures for knowledge dissemination and distribution. The *geopolitical positionality* framing the context from which I am coming is a background explanation about the

---

<sup>1</sup> ‘Transdisciplinary orientations in research, education and institutions try to overcome the mismatch between knowledge production in academia and knowledge request for solving societal problems’ (Hoffmann-Riem et al., 2008, p. 3; Tambini, 2001).

relevance of undertaken positions regarding academic citizenship in this paper.<sup>2</sup> Coming from a *postsocialist context* and a country which has disappeared from the scene of global history, Yugoslavia influenced my views and understandings of academic citizenship peculiarities including curiosity about its potential role in mobilizing the progressive powers of HE. After the dissolution of the federation and severe isolation of Serbia (where I was born), knowledge production of this post-conflict society faced big challenges in attempting to operate in the context of a damaged and often unfriendly atmosphere among countries of South-Eastern Europe and towards them. In these turbulent times, academia provided a free space from which it has been easier to reflect on the historical events and the hardship of the social reality often painted with hatred and violence. The transformations that occurred with the dissolution of the Yugoslav Republic and the processes of transition of post-Yugoslav countries did not seem to significantly help the expected growth of local knowledge production. The implementation of the Bologna Process has further complicated the situation and, overall, it did not help the region to overcome the epistemic injustices and the position of disadvantaged knowledge production and dissemination localities, despite all the policy and legislative changes made to facilitate this transformation. Therefore, as probably is the case in most of the peripheral localities in former socialist worlds, former Third World and contemporary Global South scholars seek common ground to reconnect and cooperate freely while travelling the continent and the world, and I argue that such a common ground on a global level could be significantly strengthened by academic citizenship and its wider usage and advocacy in policy adoption processes.

The main task of offering just one potential vision of academic citizenship I intend to pursue here will be executed in a few consequential steps. Firstly, I will present my definition of the notion of academic citizenship. Secondly, I proceed by its operationalization<sup>3</sup> through three key pillar terms of importance for me—such as 1) a sense of *belonging*, or *attachment* to the academic community which implies *openness*, 2) *solidarity* and *professional consciousness* implying the acceptance of some of the rules and inheritances typical for the institutions of higher learning since the Middle Ages, and 3) *freedom of not only thought but also movement*—a pillar grounded in the philosophy of French poststructuralist philosopher Jacques Derrida and his thoughts on (imagined, ideal) *unconditionality* of academic labour

---

<sup>2</sup> Geopolitical positionality refers to complex and overlapping social, political, territorial, and other external determinants which are framing identities and subjectivities of scholars who are mobile and move across the countries, continents, cultures, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Clarification of what its implementation means in practice.

and academic professions.<sup>4</sup> Finally, in the concluding section, I state that the most important qualities of the academic profession cannot be adequately met nor secured by the conventional policymaking processes by which all academics will be included in a global community of scholars by being assigned the status of academic citizenship. What is needed is also to enforce deep cosmopolitan tendencies empowered by a global reflective academic culture grounded in shared values of equality and solidarity of the individual actors investing effort into its preservation.

### **What academic citizenship is; What it could be in the future**

As previously mentioned, the key defining features of the concept of academic citizenship presented here are principles of *post-nationality* and *transdisciplinarity*, while (a sense of) *belonging*, *solidarity*, *freedom of movement*, and *thought* are its key dimensions. Despite the growing interconnectedness of the global HE systems broadly debated in HE literature, it still somehow appears that if we plan to operate in a contemporary world shaped by a modern, national understanding of citizenship, we need a common culture to connect our understanding of academic labour efforts, that is, our status as an academic citizen—which does not mean only goals and obligations, but also a set of human and professional rights exceeding the national state legislatures. This dual nature of citizenship (between national and international, formal and informal) remains contradictory only on the surface. Being a scholar has always been only partially conditioned by the formal aspect of being associated with a certain institution existing in the framework of the national HE system. It seems this contradiction is a constitutional part of the identity and mission of every scholar working in the academia of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The activities that need to be undertaken by scholars require both distance and isolation from the local, social, and political context. While that which has been produced by scholars away from society might have a strong *post-festum* impact on its advancements and transformations. A *formal belonging to the community of scholars* is quite a basic and reduced view of what academic citizenship is, while far more important is the *contribution* to the existing body of knowledge which enforces the subjective sense of belonging and shared mission with fellow scholars. Once someone gets infected by this broader sense of being a *researcher* and a *scientist*, it becomes difficult to

---

<sup>4</sup> The sense of belonging, solidarity and freedom I understand as the most precious qualities of academic citizenship. In my understanding, above all, these qualities are seen as much more than a mere formal association to a higher education institution, as including a deep identification with the role of a scholar accompanied by deep intrinsic motivation to enlarge the body of knowledge.

restrain the motivation and personal drive. This deep drive for scientific research can hardly remain limited to the pure reproduction of the given social system. It gives those pursuing an academic career a sense of mission related to pushing the limits of knowledge production and human imagination further.

In the most general sense, *membership* and *formal recognition* are the most important, minimal formal aspects of acceptance in the academic community. And the preliminary initiation into this world occurs through the act of obtaining a graduate and postgraduate academic degree. Therefore, in the broadest sense of the term, everyone holding any kind of academic degree is associated with the academic community and is expected to exercise and represent its core values, despite not necessarily having developed a deep sense of belonging and willingness to contribute to its higher and broader missions. Despite the overall inclusive model of the HE community or HE citizenship status, the social mechanisms of division, or inclusion and exclusion operating within the general concept of citizenship are expected to operate in the context of the academic communities as well, since academia has always been seen by the outside world as ‘increasingly selective and segmented’ (Le Feuvre et al., 2020). After going through some of the characteristics assigned to the concept of academic citizenship at a basic level, it makes sense to represent the membership in academic community through the layers of gradation—where many of the various conceptions of it could be seen as an upgrade of the intensity added to these shared, basic features. There seems to be no membership in academic community which is not graded on a scale or degree of belonging to the academic community and is in some sense at a certain point taken for granted. For example, all the national and international dimensions of academic status could be seen through this scheme. Even when formally assigned, membership in the academic community doesn’t seem to be at the same time secured or guaranteed, and it still must be perpetually enforced and renewed through new efforts. Therefore, instead of speaking of insiders and outsiders in the academic community, parallel to debates on being excluded from a national state despite living in one by a sense of incomplete citizenship status and rights, we could rather observe academic citizenship as a much more dynamic term, through the lenses of intensities, or degrees of belonging to any academic community.

Undoubtedly, among the most prominent features of academic citizenship besides membership, are the qualities of recognition and (a sense of) belonging (Sümer, 2020, p. 2). All these features are also determined by a type of formal association to the academic institution, particularly if it is on a temporary or permanent—tenured—basis. I have previously mentioned academic degrees as an element of distinction, and some authors consider the concept of academic citizenship equally applicable to students (Macfarlane, 2007, p. 261). The authors

having such considerations don't clarify whether they consider only undergraduate or postgraduate students (or both); but this significantly enlarges the proportion of the global population belonging to academia, especially because the dropout rate is not small and many of the students enrolled into the academic institutions never obtain any kind of academic degree. This doesn't exclude them as a purveyor of the most important academic missions in the future, since they might continue working in faculty administration or as bureaucrats at ministries of education and sciences, or somewhere else.

The gradual scale of belonging to academia could then be visualised in the form of circles, starting with all students enrolled at any kind of HE institution now or in the past, proceeding with those who have obtained academic degrees and never formally got assigned to academic institutions in terms of obtaining professorships or a research position, ending with temporary associated academic staff such as postdoctoral researchers, and permanently employed staff holding tenured positions and positions of academic seniority. There is no single entrance ticket which guarantees further advancements, while the layers of association to the academic community—according to complex organisational principles and structures—are of different intensity. Moreover, even those contributing to the community without performing the formal scholarship activities can be honoured with a doctorate.

Thus, it seems the crucial defining features, aside from the formal initiation, are the continued academic efforts invested into renewing the status of active academic citizens and a renewed sense of belonging and professional consciousness. The core of the academic community is defined by not only a sense of belonging but also collegiality among academics (Macfarlane, 2006). This experience of participation in activities while forming the collaborative relations of knowledge production counts for the third mission of academies—since it could exceed the expected workload defined by the duties associated with their concrete positions. However, I argue that for a member of the academic community to which full academic citizenship could be assigned only people with at least the status of a student enrolled on a PhD program of an accredited academic institution count since that is the line of distinction securing the somewhat standardized contribution to the enlargement and growth of knowledge to a specific thematic and disciplinary field.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> The formal enrolment into a doctoral program could be considered as a minimal, basic, and primary condition for being accepted and recognized as an academic citizen on a global level, and thus as a professional expected to understand its traditional mission.

### **Academic citizenship in practice: The neoliberal drive for competition vs. the ideals of academic collegiality**

In ancient times, when the institutional foundations of scientific scholarship were rare and non-systematic while the academic procedures have not been put into the policy frameworks of governing, the individual professional drive has been a crucial professional factor of success, rather than any kind of official membership in some university association. Particularly, this has been the case by the end of the Middle Ages when the universities were not exclusive centres of knowledge production and numerous independent scholars decentred and transformed the basis of modern knowledge production. Within the processes of growth, specialisation and differentiation of the academic sectors during modern times, we have witnessed the phenomenon of contested sense and limited opportunity to affiliate with academic institutions despite possession of degrees—causing a large proportion of the academic population to become the academic outsiders or reserve army of academic labourers—as a phenomenon happening for the first time in late modernity, and becoming a symbol of contemporary post-capitalist knowledge economies. In contemporary times, the subjects involved in knowledge production systems are growing, while many of them are unfamiliar with the academic habitus and incapable of understanding the role of academics otherwise than in a minimal and reduced sense of a word. The promise of full, complete academic citizenship (meaning: academic citizenship which includes the sense of belonging to the academic community grounded in the internalised drive for knowledge production based on the pursuit of full professional consciousness) comes with the risk of being trapped on the margins of the scientific community which is best to be described with the term *‘probationary academic citizenship [emphasis added]’* achievable only under a condition of a ‘fulfilled’ circles of ‘fulfilments’ requested to get closer to the full membership (Le Feuvre et al., 2020, p. 68). While sometimes taken for a distinction and honour, the contemporary academic experience does not easily translate to the smooth adaption seen in other professional sectors, and to a certain level, is understood more as a kind of social stigma than an upgrade facilitator of the professional success. On the other hand, the expected conventions of collegiality surrounding the academic sector and the troubles the academic workforce is facing in the contemporary global markets have still not produced many attempts to form unions and self-organisation of academic collectives. That is why academic citizenship providing the scholars with a status which is not only nationally grounded and building the sense of translational and transdisciplinary community matters even more.

Nonetheless, a career of a successful, well-integrated and self-satisfied academic is rarely visible to the general public, lacking in forms of representation in popular culture. What does it mean to be a university lecturer or researcher and how these professions function is mostly unknown to the outside-of-academia-world and contemporary everyday life. In contrast to modern times, where they seem to have been more visible in on-going public debates. Nowadays, the academic roles have often not been described nor popularised through literary and cultural artefacts, or even if they are, it usually is not in a way which would make the life of the academic profession more approachable and comprehensible to the general public. The same is valid for academic institutions and the higher education system itself—hardly a popular representation of it exists in the public and people outside of academia cannot easily get familiar with the HE institutions and their missions. Compared to a state belonging which is visible and present, while only a relatively small population is excluded from (a national) citizenship; belonging to the academic community is less visible to the general public and surrounded by mystery for the outside world despite academic institutions existing everywhere and the fact that a big part of the population attends those institutions since the global expansion of HE occurred—particularly in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

If openness and solidarity as the root frameworks and the core principles of academic citizenship then their reflexive role in the community accounts for the crucial content of the third mission of HE institutions, internationalism and cosmopolitanism. In the geopolitical context, the specific HE institutions are capitalised through ranking grades and knowledge production lists, therefore they shape the maps of the global HE power imbalance and misdistribution of the knowledge production capacities. This practice of ranking grounded in the value for profit and the motive of academic competitiveness became more visible and representative than the image of cooperation and advocacy for a common culture. In a certain sense, this reflects the weakening motive of solidarity pursued through horizontal networking which has always confronted the hierarchical tendencies of organizing infrastructures of HE institutions. The international aspects of belonging to academia mostly remained reduced to the topic of international mobility, which does not portray the complete global mission ascribed to the academic world. In other words, the traditionally framed infrastructures of the internal, national labour division of HE obstructs non-formal, horizontal communication and interconnectedness of staff within higher education institutions. Collegiality—grounded and inspired by the solidarity expected from subjects belonging to academia—has been increasingly challenged from many sides, and according to many authors, intellectual labour is becoming an increasingly isolated experience (Macfarlane, 2006). The academic job ceased to be a stable and predictable source

of income and in most cases causes a high level of financial insecurity and instability in the lifetime for those who have opted for the academic professional choice.

While struggling for a secure academic position, academics devote time and energy to many efforts of which many might never get recognized, just for a chance to remain associated with their profession. Rather than seeing each other from a shared perspective of academic citizenship, for example, this experience of struggle for recognition did not lead to much organisational engagement having for its goal the improvement of the conditions for knowledge production type of labour. The emergence of academic consciousness preventing any kind of *othering* of those from other nations, other departments, other faculties in the context of academic institutions worldwide, and so on, is possibly crucial at this moment. The 'true academic consciousness' is supposed to always be related to a critical pursuit of answers about the principles of the natural and social world, therefore, being open, emphatic, and reflexive (Bizzell, 1992). Thus, operating in an atmosphere of solidarity and empathy towards co-workers; including the ideal of epistemic justice as the highest motive in establishing academic social relations and academic endeavours seem to be the most important quality of academic labour.

It is not an accident that the classical sociologist Max Weber in his vocational lectures included science and politics as vocations, since those are the two main axes of communal life with a role to discuss, formulate, exercise, and evaluate the basic principles under which social life happens. In his paper, Weber (2004) has put the two higher education systems, German and American, into a comparative perspective. The comparative methodology becomes important for HE studies in times of globalisation because it enables us to recognize the common features of professional paths in different national systems and share experiences and challenges among the academics positioned in both the Global North and Global South. Not many of the existing publications about academic citizenship include the experiences coming from the contexts of non-Western HE systems marginalised in the global knowledge production chart; therefore, their inclusion became a matter of combating what British philosopher Miranda Ficker recognized as epistemic injustice of the global world (Fricker, 2009). The concept of epistemic justice in different contexts became one of the most prominent terms applied to the problem of inequalities of knowledge production capacities, following the globalisation of the governance power infrastructures and the emergence of the global academic market. A struggle against 'distributive unfairness in respect of epistemic goods such as information or education' (Fricker, 2009, pp. 1–2) became one of the crucial missions of contemporary HE systems.

Likely the most influential opposition towards the epistemic misbalances and pursuit of justice within the global system of knowledge production applied to the context of the Eastern and post-Soviet world was given by Madina Tlostanova, a Professor of Postcolonial Feminisms at Linköping University, Sweden. Particularly, her article titled 'Can the post-Soviet Think? On coloniality of knowledge, external imperial and double colonial difference' (Tlostanova, 2015) appears appealing. The results of her joint academic efforts (see Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2012), with Walter Mignolo, an Argentinian semiotician, are important in this sense as well. Relevant in this instance is also the similar concept of academic imperialism popularized by Malaysian sociologist Syed Hussein Alatas, that also refers to the unevenness between the centre and the periphery of knowledge production centres, and the need for empowerment of communities contributing less to overall knowledge growth on a global level and understood as inferior (cf. Alatas, 2000; de Santos, 2014; Fricker, 2009). The scholars contributing less to knowledge production growth in this context might be described as second-class academics or second-level academic citizens. The level to which the habits and conventions from the academia of the Global North became the standards of academic achievements worldwide is surprising since for many of them they are barely achievable. The experiences of academic underperformance, frustration, exclusion and marginalisation will probably be the ones surrounding the future debates on academic citizenship to a much higher level. Those working in or coming from the institutions of poor, small, or in any other way disadvantaged countries, are now expected to catch-up and to perform as if they were living, have been educated and had the opportunity and financial capacity to travel and experience the professional life as those in the most developed countries of the world. The pressure to appear as coping has become an integral part of academic habitus, therefore, admitting failure is counterproductive and self-undermining. The contemporary trends towards the *decolonisation* of HE policies on a global level enforced by the prominent strategies for overcoming the difficulties arising from inequalities attributed to differently positioned HE systems, institutions and individual scholars are yet to show their powers and results in terms of surprises on the maps of global research productivity and growth.

### **Could the academics of the world unite and solidarity strike back in?**

Despite all the tendencies to narrow down the concept and meaning of academic citizenship and perpetuate the practices which reproduce the mechanisms of epistemic injustices, we naturally might question the power of academics to strike

back and re-evoke the values and meanings inscribed into their vocational mission. Among the most radical, and at the same time, idealistic ideas about academia and the social roles of the university are those which came from the French philosopher Jacques Derrida who understood the university as an institution standing above all the determinations restraining it—or in other words, as unconditioned, not determined by anything else but its mission to emancipate the masses and make them capable of using their rational capacities. The common, global determinants shaping the behaviour of knowledge-producing agents on a general level are, in other words, no longer valid when we talk about the university today. Derrida understood the university as the counterinstitution which to a certain level always bears metaphysical significance and is consisted of an idea of freedom typical for the humanities—particularly for philosophy—always present in the scholarly world (Morgan Wortham, 2007). In Derridean philosophy, metaphysics implies an open relation towards the ‘other’ who naturally inspires reflection which is never purely descriptive and useless in terms of concrete social relations (Terdiman, 2007; Wortham, 2007).

Despite many different conceptualisations of academic citizenship that describe the third, social mission of the academic profession, probably its best formulation is never reducible to the specific content, epistemology, approach, discipline, nation or any limiting and closed concept. The civil mission or social role of the academic profession, no matter to which discipline or country of the world we refer, is to be a place where the most vital debates concerning humanity and communal life occur, including the conditions under which they function and reproduce themselves. In the ‘Humboldtian sense of the word’ (Nybom, 2003), those providing the funds to the university—at certain points of time it has been exclusively the state—should not condition nor restrain it, but rather secure and enable its freedom to pursue more robust knowledge about the conditions of social and political life. Not only the funding bodies should provide the conditions for independent work and international mobility for academic citizens, but also it is expected that academia itself should secure an equal chance of access for everyone, and a relevance of the findings it produces for actual social, academic and professional needs. All of these are and should remain the highest values attached to the notion of academic citizenship on the same level as they should serve as the highest priorities of the policy-making processes.

Genuine and open mobility schemes framed in principles of post-national and transnational policies became highly contested qualities of academic life in the learning communities which remain fully determined by the existing interstate structures and policy limitations. If we are discussing academic citizenship as a status which should guarantee recognition to knowledge production and distribution

labourers, maybe we should consider introducing the practice of academic diplomacy or academic passport as well. If contemporary governance stakeholders on a global level are serious about the global aspect of knowledge production based on freely practised mobility and its utmost importance for the development and growth of peripheral countries, why do academics still have to go through the exhausting visa procedures—if their profession is widely recognized and its services contribute to broader, universal goals which have unquestionable value for the humanity? Why is there already no transnational body operating, ready to recognize scholarly efforts and contributions to support and empower knowledge production and remove the constraints for its radical growth outside of the Anglo-Saxon institutions mostly placed in a Global North? Why is there still no international academic body recognizing the topics of transnational importance and providing the global infrastructure for knowledge production simplifying and facilitating the mobility and research on transnational topics? These are just some of the raising questions surrounding the open debate on academic citizenship which cannot be discussed nor debated on any different but a transnational or international level. Therefore, we are yet to see if the more powerful instances operating beyond the limits of national, HE systems will appear to advocate for the importance and value of academic labour while securing basics working rights for researchers.

## **Conclusion**

In this essay, my goal was to revive the times when the academic profession had born the highest social and political relevance. In the meantime, it seems that academia faced not only the dramatic relativization of its significance but also remained ambiguous and divided between the natural need for cooperation in the process of knowledge production and the drive for competition in a global academic market. In between, being an academic became an almost unpopular and odd profession in the eyes of the wider society—mostly because for society at wide, it is hard to comprehend the drive moving academics to further struggle and investigate despite profit not being secured. Regardless of the declining value of academic efforts, this situation did not mobilise some kind of powerful and effective mechanisms for association and agitation yet, at least not to the extent it did at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The concept of academic citizenship appears as a powerful conceptual tool with the potential to unite the progressive efforts in continuing the investments into forces of rational critical thinking in the past two centuries of modern history. This concept relies on the ideas of how to improve the relevance and significance of the

academic efforts inherited from the Enlightenment and on a continual struggle for their social and political relevance. Engaging in such endeavours is called upon, and supposedly, would have a much stronger relevance, in the case the consequent higher education and research policies would be conceptually following the principles of trans-disciplinarity and post-nationality. These principles have not been employed nor exploited in the global policy-making processes, but they could give a completely new meaning to the concept of academic citizenship understood as a secured and recognized status worldwide. This status will be grounded in a sense of a genuine belonging to the academic profession, solidarity among knowledge labourers securing the atmosphere of freedom and shared success of knowledge production efforts; and freedom in a dialectical sense of a word, meaning both the achievement to be measured by metaphysical, not only economic criteria. Only HE policies that are grounded in the specific understanding of academic citizenship which is progressive and emancipatory for the academic workers and secure the status of citizens of a global knowledge production system can significantly change their image in the eyes of the rest of society and wider public.

### **Acknowledgements**

This paper represents the results of the author's engagement in accordance with the Working Plan and Program of the Institute of Criminological and Sociological Research for 2023 (based on the contract No. 451-03-47/2023-01) with Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia.

### **Author biography**

*Dr Sanja Petkovska* obtained a PhD degree in Cultural Studies from the Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Belgrade and previous academic degrees in Sociology and Adult Education from the Faculty of Philosophy at the same university. She works at the Institute of Criminological and Sociological Research in Belgrade, Serbia as a Research Fellow and her research revolves around critical social theory, human-animal relations, studies of tertiary education, knowledge production, cultural studies, violence, and public policy.

## References

- Alatas, S. H. (2000). Intellectual imperialism: Definition, traits, and problems. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 28(1), 23–45. <https://doi.org/10.1163/030382400X00154>
- Bizzell, P. (1992). *Academic discourse and critical consciousness*. University of Pittsburgh Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt7zwb7k>
- Fricker, M. (2009). *Epistemic injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing* (1st ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Hadorn, G. H., Biber-Klemm, S., Grossenbacher-Mansuy, W., Hoffmann-Riem, H., Joye, D., Pohl, C., Wiesmann, U., & Zemp, E. (2008). The emergence of transdisciplinarity as a form of research. In G. H. Hadorn, H. Hoffmann-Riem, S. Biber-Klemm, W. Grossenbacher-Mansuy, D. Joye, C. Pohl, U. Wiesmann, & E. Zemp (Eds.), *Handbook of transdisciplinary research* (pp. 19–39). Springer Netherlands. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6699-3\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6699-3_2)
- Hoffmann-Riem, H., Biber-Klemm, S., Grossenbacher-Mansuy, W., Hadorn, G. H., Joye, D., Pohl, C., Wiesmann, U., & Zemp, E. (2008). The idea of the Handbook. In G. H. Hadorn, H. Hoffmann-Riem, S. Biber-Klemm, W. Grossenbacher-Mansuy, D. Joye, C. Pohl, U. Wiesmann, & E. Zemp (Eds.), *Handbook of transdisciplinary research* (pp. 3–17). Springer Netherlands. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6699-3\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6699-3_1)
- Le Feuvre, N., Bataille, P., & Sautier, M. (2020). Probationary or second-class citizens? Postdoctoral experiences in the Swiss context. In S. Sümer (Ed.), *Gendered academic citizenship: Issues and experiences* (pp. 65–101). Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-52600-9\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-52600-9_3)
- Macfarlane, B. (2006). *The academic citizen: The virtue of service in university life* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Macfarlane, B. (2007). Defining and rewarding academic citizenship: The Implications for university promotions policy. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 29(3), 261–273. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600800701457863>
- Morgan Wortham, S. (2007). *Counter-institutions: Jacques Derrida and the question of the university* (1st ed.). Fordham University Press.
- Nybom, T. (2003). The Humboldt legacy: Reflections on the past, present, and future of the European university. *Higher Education Policy*, 16(2), 141–159. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.hep.8300013>

- Santos, B. de S. (2014). *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against epistemicide* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Sümer, S. (Ed.) (2020). *Gendered academic citizenship: Issues and experiences* (1st ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tambini, D. (2001). Post-national citizenship. *Ethnic and racial studies*, 24(2), 195–217. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870020023418>
- Terdiman, R. (2007). Determining the undetermined: Derrida’s “University without Condition.” *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 40(3), 425–441. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ecs.2007.0032>
- Tlostanova, M. V., & Mignolo, W. D. (2012). *Learning to unlearn: Decolonial reflections from Eurasia and the Americas*. Ohio State University Press.
- Tlostanova, M. (2015). Can the post-Soviet think? On coloniality of knowledge, external imperial and double colonial difference. *Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics*, 1(2), pp. 38–58. <https://doi.org/10.17356/ieejsp.v1i2.38>
- Weber, M. (2004). *The vocation lectures* (D. Owen & T. B. Strong, Eds.; R. Livingstone, Trans.). Hackett Publishing Company.