Dimensions of the Universities Third Mission from the University Teachers and Students Perspective[*]

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The new roles of universities result in the expansion of traditional missions (teaching and research) in the direction of institutionalization and strengthening of the third mission and connecting the university with the community. Accordingly, the aim of the paper is to examine the perceptions of university teachers and students about different university missions, with special reference to the civic dimension, which is less studied in relation to the economic dimension of the third mission. The research included a total of 1 048 respondents, including 582 students and 466 teachers of the University of Novi Sad, and used the Questionnaire on the civic mission of the university and education for sustainable development. The obtained results indicate that there are more similarities between teachers and students than there are differences in the perception of the importance of different university missions. When it comes to differences, teachers attach more importance to the role of the university in promoting civic advocacy, while students attach more importance to the role of previous levels of education.

Key words*: civic engagement, third mission, teaching, research, university.*

INTRODUCTION

The system of higher education is currently in a period of transition to a modern and socially responsible university. While teaching and scientific research are traditionally viewed as basic academic activities, increasing importance is being attached to 'the third mission of the university'. The third mission of the university concerns the role of the university outside of teaching and research (Jongb-

loed, Enders, and Salerno, 2008); within this mission, the difference between its economic and social dimension is underlined (Schoen, 2006). Since its inception, universities have played an important economic, social and cultural role, had the function of generators of economic development, migratory movements and represented the centres of socio-cultural life of the community (Laredo, 2007). In that sense, the need for universities to connect with the economy and public policies has always existed and has been the initiator of university reforms in the history of modern Europe. Today, the activities of the university's third mission strengthen the impact of science in society within the framework of technology transfer, lifelong learning, and social engagement of the members of the academic community. In this context, the third mission is seen from the perspective of its contribution to the development of different types of capital: organizational, human, and social capital (Secundo, Pérez, Martinaitis, and Leitner, 2017). However, it is important to note that universities of both developed and developing countries find it difficult to design and implement appropriate incentives which encourage university teachers to engage in both the social and commercial domains (Compagnucci and Spigarelli, 2020; De La Torre, Pérez-Esparrells, and Casani, 2018).

Accordingly, the current tendencies of educational policies within the European Higher Education Area indicate the growing importance of guidance towards the social responsibility of universities and the social dimension of higher education. These issues were additionally actualized during the last three ministerial conferences within the Bologna Process (in Yerevan in 2015, Paris in 2018 and Rome in 2020). The conclusion of the conferences indicates, among other things, that Europe is currently facing societal challenges from unemployment and social inequality, through the migrant crisis and growing political polarization, radicalization and violent extremism, and that higher education should play a key role in providing solutions to these problems (European Higher Education Area, 2018). Efforts and support for higher education will, in the upcoming period, go in the direction of connecting with society and the community in order to offer solutions to issues such as global peace, democratic values, and freedom of information, health and well-being. The ministerial conference in Rome - Rome Ministerial Communiqué (European Higher Education Area, 2020) highlighted the importance of socially inclusive higher education. Principles which strengthen the broadened understanding of the social dimension were adopted, while the commitment to their implementation in higher education systems was emphasized. For these reasons, the third mission of the university needs to be (re)conceptualized as a program of democratization, inclusion, engagement and social responsibility (Lungulov and Kišjuhas, 2021).

However, it is important to note that some authors also point to the occurrence of overburdening university missions, which leads to the fact that modern universities are characterized by confusion of missions (Jongbloed et al., 2008). The fact of the matter is that universities today are distancing from the concept of the academic community whose actions are judged only by scientists. As a result, universities are becoming increasingly responsible for solving social problems, which leads to interaction with many representatives from the non-academic community. This raises the question of whether a multi-layered conception will create institutions that have balanced functions or whether it will lead to fragmentation

and loss of identity (Shore, 2010). The lack of an unambiguous definition of the third mission of the university makes this issue even more complex.

The lack of a harmonized approach as to whether the third mission of the university should be a separate mission or should permeate both teaching and research poses another challenge. It is not uncommon that the third mission of the university is identified with the commercial orientation, with the development of the entrepreneurial university. Although there are certain characteristics that link the economic and civic dimensions, such as the emphasis on connecting the university and the environment, the focus on the learner and the focus on experiential learning (Bosanac, 2021), the third mission of the university should not be limited to the market orientation of the university. Hence the need for studying and exploring the less understood second dimensions of the third mission of the university – civic or social dimension within which some authors (Bringle and Hatcher, 2002; *Ćulum and Ledić, 2010*) advocate the introduction of a model of community learning (academic service-learning), which on a practical level encourages a collaborative relationship between university teachers, students and the local community.

When it comes to the Republic of Serbia, the economic changes inevitably reflected changes in the way the university functions. Thus, the economic transition of society and the transformation of the university can be seen as two intertwined processes. The changes resulting from the economic transition, which started late in Serbia compared to other European countries (only in the first decade of this century), refer to liberalization, deregulation, privatization of many state-owned companies, and significant (although not complete) reduction of the state's role in the econo-

my (Branković, 2021). The changes at the universities in Serbia can be seen as part of the *discursive* alignment with the European higher education, rather than coming from interested parties with the legitimacy and power to require these changes (Spasojević, Kleut, and Branković, 2012). In addition, it is noted that in Serbia, the agents of civic mission are not universities, but individuals whose actions take place outside the institutional framework. Regarding third mission activities of universities in Serbia, one can notice their greater market orientation, and greater investment in the dimensions of entrepreneurship and innovation, compared to the social dimension (Lungulov and Kišjuhas, 2021).

Starting from the aforementioned reforms in the field of higher education that are happening throughout Europe, but also from the strategic document *Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Serbia until 2030* (2021), which states that Serbia lacks the third mission of higher education, approaches to the third mission of the university will be considered, from the point of view of university teachers, teaching and research assistants and students as subjects of public action and implementers of the civic dimension of the third mission of the university.

AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the research was to examine the perception of university teachers, teaching and research assistants and students about different university missions, with focus on the third mission of the university in Serbia, as well as to compare the results obtained in Croatia and Serbia. The goal was concretized on the following tasks: 1) to examine the readiness of university teachers and assistants for changes in teaching and research; 2) determine the order of importance that

respondents attach to different university missions; 3) examine the attitudes of respondents according to the importance of cooperation with various representatives from the environment; 4) examine the attitudes of respondents regarding different educational goals; 5) examine the attitudes of respondents towards the importance of various social factors in promoting the civic dimension of the third mission of the university; 6) examine the attitudes of respondents towards the promotion of civic advocacy through academic activities.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and procedure

According to the official data provided by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (Republički zavod za statistiku Republike Srbije, 2019), there are 2 561 university teachers and assistants employed at the University of Novi Sad, and 39 444 students are currently enrolled at bachelor and master studies at this university. The research sample was non-probabilistic and included 1 048 respondents. The subsamples of the research consisted of 466 teachers and assistants and 582 students of the University of Novi Sad. Based on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, it was concluded that all representative groups of university teachers and assistants were included; teachers at all academic levels, different ages and different lengths of work experience in teaching at the university. Students of different academic achievement, years and levels of study were also included. There were 280 female teachers (60.6%) and 182 male teachers (39.4%) participating in the research, as well as 310 female students (53.3%) and 261 male students. The average age of teachers was 42.54 years (SD = 11.11), in the range between 23 and 69 years, and the average age of students was 21.94 years (SD = 2.44), in the range from 19 to 39 years.

Table 1

Sample structure by faculties of the University of Novi Sad

Faculty	Teachers		Students	
	N	%	N	%
Academy of Arts in Novi Sad	12	2.56	5	0.85
Faculty of Economy in Subotica	20	4.29	175	30.06
Faculty of Technical Sciences in Novi Sad	48	10.31	254	43.65
Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad	104	22.32	78	13.41
Faculty of Sport and Physical Education	24	5.15	40	6.88
Faculty of Sciences	54	11.59	17	2.92
Faculty of Agriculture in Novi Sad	44	9.44	2	0.34
Faculty of Technology in Novi Sad	13	2.79	1	0.17
Faculty of Law in Novi Sad	13	2.79	8	1.37
Faculty of Education in Sombor	35	7.51	/	/
Technical Faculty in Zrenjanin	37	7.94	/	/
Faculty of Civil Engineering	8	1.72	1	0.17
Teacher Training Faculty	22	4.72	/	/
Faculty of Medicine	32	6.87	1	0.17
Total	466	100%	582	100%

Data collection was carried out during the period March – June 2019. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the research; they were instructed to complete the questionnaire; it was anonymous and prepared both in printed and electronic form. At the same time, data collection on the sub-sample of students was mostly realized using the classical Paper-and-pencil interviewing approach, since a smaller number of respondents from this sub-sample responded to the online questionnaire. The respondents also received information that the results would be used exclusively for scientific research purposes.

Instrument

For the purposes of this research, the *Questionnaire on the civic mission of the university and education for sustainable development* was used with the previously obtained permission and consent of the authors of the original instrument, which was constructed as part of a research project entitled *University and the external environment in the context of European integration processes* (Ćulum and Ledić, 2011). The questionnaire was translated into Serbian and partially modified and adapted to the needs of this research, which, in addition to university teachers, also included students.

The instrument for university teachers and assistants contained seventy-two items grouped into nine subscales: 1) readiness for change in teaching and research, 2) understanding the mission of universities in soci-

ety, 3) cooperation of universities with the environment, 4) importance of educational goals, 5) civic advocacy and action for the common good, 6) the role of various social factors in encouraging civic advocacy, 7) the role of university teachers in promoting civic advocacy in the community, 8) opportunities to promote civic advocacy through academic activities and 9) motivation to introduce civic mission in teaching and research work. The questionnaire for students was modified to contain thirty-nine items, as the parts related to everyday work in teaching and research were omitted, as well as the parts related to the motivation for introducing a civic mission in teaching and research work. For each of the items, a value was examined on a five-point Likert-type scale, from 1 = strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree.

RESULTS

Readiness for change in teaching and research

In order to reduce the data within the *subscale Readiness for change in teaching and research*, which included 21 items, and check its latent structure, an exploratory factor analysis was performed using the principal components method and given Oblique Promax Rotation. Guttman-Kaiser criterion suggested the existence of five factors that explained 55.77% of the variance of the questionnaire (Table 2). Critical eigenvalue cut-off value was 1.0.

Table 2
Total variance of the subscale Readiness for change and the results of Guttman-Kaiser criterion

Factor no.	Eigenvalues	% of variance explained	Cumulative % of variance explained
1.	3.63	20.17	20.17
2.	2.37	13.14	33.31
3.	1.73	9.60	42.91
4.	1.21	6.71	49.62
5.	1.11	6.15	55.77
6.	0.97		

Based on the determined high cross-saturations, the items 7,17 and 19 were excluded. Five factors were singled out by inspecting the assembly matrix (Table 3). The items grouping in the first factor are related to the proactivity of teachers in introducing change and the initiative for introducing change in teaching, as well as independence in their implementation. The second factor includes items related to the introduction of change that are externally motivated, at the request of the faculty management, colleagues, as well as when there is a financial incentive. The third factor groups the items related to cooperation with colleagues, willingness to help colleagues, but also to ask for help from them and to respect their opinion. The fourth factor refers to the preference for routine at work, i.e. the approach that includes isolation in work and the tendency to use procedures that have already been used. The fifth factor can be interpreted in terms of the readiness for change, based on the initiative of others. All identified factors have low inter-correlations (from -0.092 to -0.294), which indicates that they measure different constructs, i.e. different types of readiness and motivation for change.

Table 3

Factor Matrix with Loadings on Five Factors of the subscale Readiness for change

	I	II	III	IV	V
I introduce new ideas and approaches before other colleagues	0.705				
I like to experiment with newly recognized approaches in my work	0.703				
I continuously monitor and often apply new trends in the field of teaching	0.647				
I make changes in my work even when there is little chance of success	0.638				
I continuously monitor and regularly apply new research trends in my academic discipline	0.599				
I am willing to make changes in teaching	0.567				
I introduce changes in my work only when the management of the faculty requests it from me		0.693			
Only the positive results of the practice of my colleagues encourage me to make changes		0.673			
I introduce changes in my work only if I have financial benefits from them		0.659			
I find ideas and new proposals for work exclusively in the experiences of colleagues from abroad		0.581			
I am willing to seek help and advice from my colleagues			0.808		
I am willing to help my colleagues			0.729		
Colleagues respect me and appreciate my opinion			0.579		
I prefer independent work in isolated conditions				0.782	
I think that one should be very careful when introducing changes in everyday work				0.672	
I am a person who likes to have their own routine and it is difficult to change				0.615	
I communicate and collaborate with a very narrow circle of colleagues in my work environment					0.772
I am not initiating changes, but I will gladly join the successful initiative					0.708

In order to examine the readiness of university teachers and assistants for changes in teaching and research, arith- metic means and standard deviations were determined for each of the obtained fac- tors (Table 4).

Table 4
Descriptive statistics of factors within the subscale Readiness for change

	AS	SD
Being proactive in introducing changes	3.83	0.56
Being externally motivated to introduce changes	2.33	0.66
Cooperation with colleagues	4.25	0.52
Preference for a routine	2.63	0.79
Readiness for change when initiated by someone else	2.93	0.98

Collaboration with colleagues and proactivity in introducing changes are the factors with the highest scores, which indicates that the integration of the third mission of the university in practice can be an adequate approach only if initiatives are developed through cooperation with col- leagues and if teachers show a desire for personal proactivity. On the other hand, readiness for change but at the initiative of others, preference for routine, as well as externally motivated introduction of changes have significantly lower scores, which indicates that the introduction of changes that are externally "imposed" by teachers is much more challenging.

Perceptions of different university missions

Within the examination of the impor- tance of different university missions, it was determined that both groups of re- spondents believe that the most import- ant mission of the university is to educate students for the chosen profession. In ad- dition, the education of socially respon- sible and active citizens who will act for the public good is the second most valued mission of the university. In this sense, the results obtained show that the civic dimen- sion represents a more valued dimension of the third mission of the university even compared to research as the second tradi- tional mission of the university (Table 5). The research activity of the university thus represents the third mission in importance for the respondents, while the economic dimension of the third mission of the uni- versity represents the least valued dimen- sion. However, it is important to point out that although it is the least valued, the eco- nomic dimension also received high aver- age values (AS = 3.95), when it comes to teachers and assistants, while for students the value is slightly lower (AS = 3.84).

In order to determine the differences between teachers' and students' percep- tions of different university missions, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANO- VA) was conducted. Model at the multi- variate level was statistically significant $(F(4.1039) = 7.103, p = 0.000)$. At the uni- variate level statistically significant differ- ences between these groups were found in the perception of the excellence in the scientific research $(F(1.1042) = 21.014, p = 0.000)$, perception of student education for the chosen profession $(F(1.1042) = 10.656, p = 0.001)$ and perception of the university to educate socially responsive and active citizens $(F(1.1042) = 6.846, p = 0.009)$. Teachers had higher scores regard- ing these universities' missions compared to students.

Table 5

Descriptive statistics – Perceptions of different university missions

	Students		Teachers		F	p
The main mission of the university is ...	AS	SD	AS	SD		
... excellence in the scientific research	3.85	0.84	4.11	0.98	21.014	0.000
... to contribute to the economic growth and development of the society	3.84	0.90	3.95	1.02	3.579	0.059
... to educate students for the chosen profession	4.41	0.81	4.59	0.70	10.656	0.001
... for the university to educate socially responsive and active citizens who will act in the interest of the common good of society	4.13	0.96	4.51	0.76	6.846	0.009

Both university teachers and students highly value both traditional missions (teaching and research), as well as both dimensions of the third mission of the university (economic and civic dimension).

Cooperation of the university with representatives from the external environment

In order to prevent overburdening university missions, it is necessary to identify the levels of their differentiation (Jongbloed et al., 2008) and in this context, data on which representatives of the wider community, teachers and students have the greatest interest in cooperating with is important. The data indicate that each of the items was estimated to be slightly above average, but significant differences were found. Cooperation with associations in designing programs and social actions in the local community is the most valued item by respondents from both subsamples (Table 6).

When determining the differences between teachers' and students' perceptions of cooperation between the university and representatives from the external environment, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. The model was statistically significant at the multivariate level ($F(3.1042) = 14.777$, $p = 0.000$). However, at the univariate level statistically significant differences were detected only in the case of perception of cooperation with associations in designing programs and social actions in the local community ($F(1.1044) = 33.657$, $p = 0.000$), where students had higher scores compared to teachers. When it comes to the other two aspects of cooperation, there were no statistically significant differences between students and teachers.

Table 6

Descriptive statistics – Cooperation of the university with representatives from the external environment

	Students		Teachers		F	p
	AS	SD	AS	SD		
Solving problems defined by local/regional governments	3.33	1.12	3.23	0.97	2.331	0.127
The needs of the economy in the local community	3.54	1.02	3.57	0.97	0.147	0.701
Cooperation with associations in designing programs and social actions in the local community	4.13	0.84	3.82	0.88	33.657	0.000

Perceptions of different educational goals

Within the assessment of perceptions about different university missions, there was a significant group of claims that refer to the importance attached to certain educational goals, which are also related to different university missions. When it comes to the importance that respondents attach to different goals of education, the fact that both university teachers and assistants attach the least importance to goals related to the social dimension of the third mission was unexpected (Table 7).

Table 7
Descriptive statistics – Perceptions of different educational goals

Educational goals	Students		Teachers		F	p
	AS	SD	AS	SD		
Providing knowledge and skills relevant to the labour market	4.38	0.77	4.53	0.69	9.493	0.002
Developing the ability to learn and think critically	4.61	0.63	4.82	0.45	32.879	0.000
Encouraging the analysis of current social problems	4.20	0.82	4.21	0.86	0.011	0.915
Developing motivation to acquire knowledge and skills for solving problems in the local community	4.10	0.87	4.07	0.90	0.354	0.552
Developing the motivation and skills needed to act for the common good	4.22	0.79	4.38	0.73	11.315	0.001
Acquiring basic general knowledge of a scientific discipline	4.37	0.73	4.64	0.56	41.597	0.000
Developing the ability of independent learning for all future social and work roles that await them	4.42	0.74	4.64	0.59	24.945	0.000
Training for immediate efficient work in the chosen profession	4.51	0.67	4.65	0.59	11.439	0.001
Training for scientific research	4.44	0.74	4.51	0.68	1.930	0.165
Training for efficient team work	4.53	0.72	4.44	0.79	4.784	0.029

Additionally, although encouraging the analysis of current social problems, developing motivation to acquire knowledge and skills to solve problems in the local community, developing motivation and skills needed to act for the common good represent highly valued goals, the items related to these goals had the lowest average values by respondents from both subsamples.

The highest value from the respondents from both subsamples was given to the goal related to the development of learning skills and critical thinking. This was followed by a goal that included training for direct and efficient work in the chosen profession. It is interesting to note that even the goal of providing knowledge and skills relevant to the labour market received a higher score compared to the goals related to the social / civic dimension of the third mission of the university.

Regarding the differences between teachers' and students' perceptions of different educational goals, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. The model was statistically significant at the multivariate level (F(10.1017) = 10.084, p = 0.000). At the univariate level statistically significant differences between these groups were found in seven out of ten educational goals (Table 7). The differences were not found only in the cases of perception of 1) encouraging the

analysis of current social problems, 2) developing motivation to acquire knowledge and skills for solving problems in the local community and 3) training for scientific research. Teachers had higher scores compared to students at almost all the mentioned educational goals where differences were found, except for the training for efficient teamwork where students had higher scores compared to teachers.

The importance of social factors in encouraging civic advocacy and action for active citizenship

Given that the civic dimension of the third mission of the university in the academic community in the Republic of Serbia is still insufficiently studied, it is important to examine the role of the university in encouraging civic advocacy. The results of this research show that, when it comes to the role of various social factors in encouraging civic advocacy, respondents from both subsamples cite the role of the media in the first place. After the media, the role of institutions of previous levels of formal education stands out among students, and the role of universities among university teachers and assistants (Table 8).

Table 8
Descriptive statistics – The importance of social factors in encouraging civic advocacy and action for active citizenship

	Students		Teachers		F	p
	AS	SD	AS	SD		
Family education	3.18	1.08	2.69	0.99	55.793	0.000
Lower levels of education	3.59	1.12	3.05	1.12	62.037	0.000
The role of the university	3.56	0.94	3.85	0.87	26.126	0.000
The role of the media	3.85	1.04	4.23	0.80	40.911	0.000
Not necessary	2.04	1.04	1.82	0.96	12.223	0.000

Overall, the respondents from both subsamples highly valued items related to the importance of encouraging civic advocacy in the formal education process, although they did not attach the same importance to different levels of education.

In order to determine the differences between teachers' and students' perceptions of the importance of social factors in encouraging civic advocacy and action for active citizenship, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. The model was statistically significant at the multivariate level (F(5.1040) = 26.851, p = 0.000). At the univariate level statistically significant differences between these groups were found in the case of all social factors (Table 8). Students perceived family education and lower level of education as more important compared to teachers, as well as that it was not necessary to encourage civic advocacy and action for active citizenship. On the other hand, teachers believed that role of the university and media was more important when it comes to encouraging *civic advocacy*.

Promoting civic advocacy through academic activities

The next group of questions referred to the importance of promoting the civic dimension of the third mission of the

university through academic activities. Most universities around the world fulfil their civic mission through volunteer, short-term and occasional activities (for example, Researchers' Night). In our research, respondents from both subsamples attached the least value to the item stating that teaching should not be burdened by encouraging student commitment in the community (Table 9). Consequently, the highest value was given to the item that it is equally important to educate students to be socially responsible and active citizens, as well as to teach them the basics of a scientific discipline. Thus, the respondents from both subsamples attached importance to encouraging civic advocacy of students through academic activities.

Finally, in order to determine the differences between teachers' and students' perceptions regarding the promotion of civic advocacy through academic activities, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. Model at the multivariate level was statistically significant (F(5.1038) = 12.602, p = 0.000). At the univariate level statistically significant differences between these groups were found in three out of five aspects of promotion: 1) the values of civic commitment and active citizenship should be exclusively promoted through projects in student organizations (F(1.1042) = 36.629, p = 0.000), 2) teaching should not be burdened by encouraging student commitment in the community (F(1.1042) = 15.566, p = 0.000), and 3) the civic commitment of the students can be the content of an elective, but not a compulsory subject (F(1.1042) = 32.748, p = 0.000). Students had higher scores on all three aspects compared to teachers.

Table 9
Descriptive statistics – Promoting civic advocacy through academic activities

	Students		Teachers		F	p
	AS	SD	AS	SD		
It is equally important to educate students to be socially responsible and active citizens, as well as to teach them the basics of a scientific discipline	4.08	0.96	3.99	1.05	2.076	0.150
The values of civic commitment and active citizenship should be exclusively promoted through projects in student organizations	3.28	0.96	2.91	1.04	36.629	0.000
Teaching should not be burdened by encouraging student commitment in the community	2.92	1.09	2.66	1.02	15.566	0.000
The civic commitment of the students should be promoted through regular educational programs	3.67	0.91	3.63	0.93	0.488	0.485
The civic commitment of the students can be the content of an elective, but not a compulsory subject	3.70	1.10	3.30	1.10	32.748	0.000

DISCUSSION

In this paper, the perceptions of teachers and students of the University of Novi Sad about the third mission of the university were examined. The questionnaire on the civic mission of the university and education for sustainable development was used in the research (Ćulum and Ledić, 2011). The significance of this research is that, in addition to teachers, students were also included in order to gain insight into how they, as members of the academic community, perceive different university missions with special reference to the

civic dimension of the third mission. Taking into account the wider context of the universities' third mission development in Serbia, this created an opportunity for comparing the perceptions of teachers and assistants from the Republic of Croatia (Ćulum and Ledić, 2011) with the perceptions from Serbia ten years later, as well as to compare the perception of the third mission between university teachers and students.

Based on the obtained data, and regarding different university missions, there are certain similarities in the perceptions of respondents from both subsamples. Although there are statistically significant differences between students and teachers in the assessment of educating students for the chosen profession, where teachers achieve statistically significant scores, both subsamples estimate that teaching activity (as its oldest mission, since the creation of the university in the Middle Ages) still represents the most important and crucial mission.

Furthermore, although there are statistically significant differences between students and teachers in the assessment of educating responsible and active citizens who will act for the public good, where teachers achieve statistically significant scores, the respondents from both subsamples highly value the civic dimension of the university's third mission (the importance of which is ranked in the second place). In that sense, the question arises whether the strongly positive attitude towards the civic mission is a sincere faith in the responsibility of its vocation and the purpose of the university for the education of socially responsible and active citizens or a likeable rhetoric, at a time when the academic community has "a bad name" (Ćulum and Ledić, 2011: 78).

The mission related to *research activity* ranked third in importance. Formally, research became an integral part of the university in 1809 when the Humboldt model of universities emerged and served as a model for universities around the world. While Humboldt's model of the university legitimizes the distance of the university from the outside world (Bodroški Spariosu, 2015a, 2017), the question of its sustainability in modern conditions is raised in papers (Wissema, 2008). However, some research shows that Humboldt's idea of the university is still present in universities, but that it is more important for teachers than students, as students are more inclined to view the university as a place that will provide them with professional knowledge for easier employment (Pritchard, 2004 as cited in Jurčević, 2019: 83).

It is important to note that, although the economic dimension of the third mission of the university is perceived as the least significant by the members of the academic community, its average values are still high. Its growing importance in education policy is confirmed by the number of authors studying the economic dimension, as well as the fact that many studies on the third mission of the university, both theoretical and empirical, focus on the study and development of entrepreneurship (Etzkowitz, 2003; Guenther and Wagner, 2008; Pejanović, 2019; Tatarski, 2021) which is often conflated with the third mission of the university.

It can be concluded that university teachers, assistants and students have a strong awareness of the importance of different roles and functions of a modern university. Accordingly, the increasing use of the term *multiversity* (Kerr as cited in Ćulum and Ledić, 2010) suggests giving equal importance to teaching, research and community action, and in practice points to current aspirations to expand university roles and functions.

Regarding university cooperation with the external environment, the results show statistically significant differences between teachers and students in case of cooperation with civic associations when designing programs and social actions in the local community (where students achieve higher scores than teachers). These results are completely in line with the data obtained in the research in Croatia (Ćulum and Ledić, 2011). Both in Croatia and Serbia, the representatives of the academic community value the cooperation of universities with civic associations in designing programs and social activities in the local community the highest, followed by the cooperation of universities with the needs of the economy in the local community. The respondents in both countries considered solving the problems defined by local self-government bodies to be the least important. Consequently, Ćulum and Ledić (2011) point out that the low assessment of the importance of investing university potentials in solving needs and problems defined at the level of local authorities is worryingly low. Additionally, the authors point out that this attitude can be a strong inhibitor of the integration of the civic mission in universities. This is the reason why there is a need to develop an understanding of the determinants that affect the cooperation of university teachers with the representatives of the local community, as well as the satisfaction of university teachers with this relationship.

When it comes to the dimensions of perception of different educational goals, they are related to the perception of the university mission, educational policy, as well as personal attitudes about the importance of certain knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that need to be passed on to younger colleagues (Ćulum and Ledić, 2011). The lowest values for educational goals related to the social/civic dimension

of the third mission, regardless of the average values above 4.0, indicated that even though the respondents formally believe that the education of socially responsible citizens is more important than research and economic activities, when it comes to goals of education, they give priority to all other goals. In this sense, the main reasons for strengthening the civic mission of universities today is seen in the current problems of society to which universities have become insufficiently sensitive, in market orientation that distances universities from their public role, in criticism of academic knowledge as a consequence of narrow specialization, education for active citizenship and a low level of civic commitment of citizens (Ćulum and Ledić, 2010).

When assessing the importance of various social factors in promoting the civic dimension, our research showed statistically significant differences between teachers and students: students perceived family education and lower level of education as more important compared to teachers, as well as that it was not necessary to encourage civic advocacy and action for active citizenship. On the other hand, teachers believed that role of the university and media was more important when it comes to encouraging *civic advocacy*. Similar results were obtained in the research by Ćulum and Ledić (2011) in Croatia, where teachers estimated that the media played the most important role in encouraging civil advocacy and action for the common good. The authors emphasized that in this context, a critical approach to modern media is important, which, in search of attractive and sensational news, neglected their role as carriers of information on significant social problems, as well as the role of critics of the current government. On the other hand, Bežovan and Zrinščak (2007) put in the forefront the need to introduce topics related to the development of civil

society as part of regular educational programs as a recommendation for the development of civil society in the Republic of Croatia. It is important to emphasize that the university teachers and assistants in our research attach great importance in the promotion of the civic dimension to the universities themselves, while the students believe that the institutions of previous levels of formal education are of the greatest importance.

Although there are statistically significant differences between students and teachers (where students achieve higher scores), respondents' views regarding promotion of civic advocacy through academic activities indicate that both subsamples attach the lowest value to the statement that teaching should not be burdened by encouraging student advocacy in the community. Accordingly, both groups of respondents believe that it is equally important to educate students to be socially responsible and active citizens, but also to teach them the basics of the scientific discipline. Based on the obtained results, it can be concluded that the respondents attach importance to encouraging civic advocacy of students through academic activities. The authors Ćulum and Ledić (2011) cite examples of the possibility of universities to carry out community advocacy activities within more complex collaborative activities with the representatives of local community, whether compulsory or elective, or even establishing new study programs aimed at encouraging student advocacy and guidance and education of socially sensitive, responsible and active citizens. The results of the survey of teachers' perceptions of students' interest in elective courses on civil society indicate that the majority of answers is related to student interest, i.e. 48.1%, and secondarily to average interest of 29.6% (Bežovan, Ledić, and Zrinščak, 2011). It was also stated that the number of subjects dealing with this topic is increasing primarily at the faculties of economics, as well as in the field of sociology, and that teachers of the younger generation are most often the bearers of these initiatives (Bežovan, Ledić, and Zrinščak, 2011). Hence, it can be concluded that the offer of elective courses on civil society is a good way to build academic approaches to work-oriented work in student organizations.

It is important to note that this research was conducted while keeping in mind the so-called *bottom-up* approach (Spasenović, 2019) which, in formulating a certain educational policy implies changes that flow from the bottom to the top. This approach is important in the field of higher education, as it reduces the possibility of decisions regarding change being made at the highest level without a prior broader dialogue with academia. It means that a top-down approach cannot have a big impact if decisions are not developed in cooperation with the academic community (Rončević and Rafajac, 2010). Accordingly, it is important to emphasize that the successful integration requires synergy of both approaches, both *the top-down* and *bottom-up* approach *(Ćulum and Ledić, 2011).*

CONCLUSION

The general conclusion is that international initiatives are being developed today in the direction of promoting the third mission of the university. This is evidenced by current European higher education policies, which are increasingly aimed at supporting higher education institutions for greater social responsibility and engagement, with the goal of making the whole society more cohesive and inclusive. Such goals can be achieved through the strengthening of civic engagement,

democratization and ethical awareness, as well as through ensuring equal access to higher education (European Higher Education Area, 2018). Investments in higher education in the coming period will be directed towards the transition to sustainable and resilient societies and economies (European Higher Education Area, 2020).

When it comes to such initiatives in our country, the conclusion of the comparative analysis in this study is that they are more represented in the Republic of Croatia than in the Republic of Serbia. This is evidenced by the results of national research which indicate that on the international ranking lists of universities Serbian universities are rated worse in the field of the third mission, cooperation with the community and economy, as well as knowledge transfer, and in relation to the dimensions of teaching and research (Bodroški Spariosu, 2015b; Lungulov, Milutinović, and Trivunović, 2021). However, a comparison of the results of the research conducted in Serbia with the data obtained in Croatia (Ćulum and Ledić, 2011) shows that there are certain similarities in the perceptions of university teachers and assistants about university missions. It is important to note that the results indicate lower scores regarding the civic dimension of the third mission of universities in both countries: the results obtained on both subsamples of respondents in Serbia, as well as in the survey of university teachers in Croatia ten years earlier (Ćulum and Ledić, 2011) indicated a low level of trust of the representatives of the academic community when it comes to cooperation with the representatives of local self-government.

As members of the academia represent only a part of the subjects involved in the development of the third mission of the university, perceptions by the representatives of the external / non-academic com-munity would also be important in order to gain full insight into potential scenarios for the future realization of the third mission. Therefore, the reasons behind the expressed distrust of university teachers and assistants, as well as proposals by the representatives of both academic and local communities are a suggestion for future research, in order to develop collaborative ties. It would be desirable to conduct qualitative interviews with university teachers and assistants in the further research, in order to supplement the obtained data in more detail with their explanations of the ways in which they perceive the third mission of the university. Given the limitations of the research conducted to the possibility of socially desirable response and its basis solely on the perceptions of teachers, assistants and students about different university missions, it is believed that the data could bring significant implications for education policy, i.e. for national and institutional standards and regulations in the field of development of the third mission of the university.

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Sažetak

DIMENZIJE TREĆE MISIJE SVEUČILIŠTA IZ PERSPEKTIVE SVEUČILIŠNIH NASTAVNIKA I STUDENATA

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　　Nove uloge sveučilišta rezultiraju proširenjem tradicionalnih misija (nastave i istraživanja) u pravcu institucionalizacije i jačanja treće misije i povezivanja sveučilišta s društvenom zajednicom. U skladu s tim, cilj rada je ispitati percepcije sveučilišnih nastavnika i studenata o različitim misijama sveučilišta, s posebnim osvrtom na civilnu dimenziju koja je manje proučavana u odnosu na ekonomsku dimenziju treće misije. Istraživanje je obuhvatilo ukupno 1 048 ispitanika, od kojih 582 studenta i 466 nastavnika Sveučilišta u Novom Sadu i korišten je Upitnik o civilnoj misiji sveučilišta i obrazovanju za održivi razvoj. Dobiveni rezultati ukazuju da između nastavnika i studenata ima više sličnosti nego razlika u percepciji značaja različitih misija sveučilišta. Kada je riječ o razlikama, nastavnici pridaju veći značaj ulozi sveučilišta prilikom promocije civilnog zalaganja, dok studenti veći značaj pridaju ulozi prethodnih razina obrazovanja.

　　Ključne riječi: civilno zalaganje, istraživanje, nastava, sveučilište, treća misija.