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The Relativisation of University. Deliberations on Academic Freedom of Expression in Light of the Reform of Science and Higher Education

Rozważania prezentowane w niniejszym artykule koncentrują się wokół wolności słowa na uniwersytecie, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem pytania: kto i na podstawie jakich kryteriów może wyznaczać jej granice? Stawiam tezę, że targany gębokimi reformami uniwersytet jest instytucją niezdolną do ustanawiania uniwersalnych oraz możliwych do przestrzegania w komunikacyjnej praktyce granic wypowiedzi. Przyczyn owego stanu upatruję w zjawisku relatywizacji akademickiej kultury, prowadzącym do równoprawności heterogenicznych znaczeń uniwersytetu. Charakterystykę wskazanego zjawiska osadzam w kontekście współczesnej reformy sektora nauki i szkolnictwa wyższego, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem zmian dokonujących się w kulturze organizacyjnej uczelni, w etosie nauki oraz dezinstytucjonalizacji akademickich programów działania.

Słowa kluczowe: uniwersytet, wolność akademicka, relatywizacja, kultura akademicka, reforma nauki i szkolnictwa wyższego

Between the condition of the university and academic freedom of expression.

In search of the problem field

The possibility to freely express one's thoughts is one of the key freedoms of man. It shows respect for her/his dignity, rationality, and also the right to self-determination¹. From the aspect of an individual, it constitutes the grounds for individual development, conditioned by consciously experiencing one's existence, effectively communicating and satisfying one's cognitive needs. From a collective aspect, it constitutes the foundation of a democratic system, ensuring citizens the possibility to: 1) Shape one's worldview based on diverse sources of data and information; 2) Deliberate, control, and criticise the actions of people in power; 3) Actively and lawfully work towards implementing one's ideas and initiatives; and 4) Confront individual worldviews with opinions, convictions, and behaviours that are different from their own, yet that contribute to the diversity of a pluralistic society². Apart from the legal regulations³ limiting it, issues that are of economic, normative, and personality nature are also not without significance. Inadequate funding, lack of access to people and institutions transmitting content, and also respecting such regulators of social life as customs, morality or religion may effectively complicate the practical fulfilment of the discussed right. As submitted by Jacek Janusz Mrozek, the "sense of freedom of expression is not in it preventing it from coming up against any resistance, but for this resistance to be as gentle as possible."⁴ The right to openly express one's views and opinions sometimes collides with other rights that a person is entitled to and, as such, may be a source of numerous conflicts and controversies.

¹ It is worth noting that an individual's attachment to their rights and their individualism is characteristic of the Western culture, referring to the liberal way of looking at the world (see A. Heywood, *Ideologie polityczne*, tłum. M. Habura, N. Orłowska, D. Stasiak, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2007). Therefore, it can be concluded that deliberations on human freedoms are not universal in nature. Freedom is not understood as a basic principle organizing human life in all political systems and across all cultural contexts. More about this can also be found in: W. Waclawczyk, *Wolność słowa. Wybrane zagadnienia*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2009.

² E.g., J. J. Mrozek, *Wolność słowa. Wymiar prawny. Skrypt akademicki*, Polskie Towarzystwo Polityki Zagranicznej, Częstochowa 2018; A. Biłgorajski, *Granice wolności wypowiedzi czy wolność wypowiedzi ponad granicami? Kilka uwag na temat zakresu wolności wypowiedzi w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, [in:] *Wolność wypowiedzi i jej granice. Analiza wybranych zagadnień*, (ed.) A. Biłgorajski, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2014, pp. 11-36; L. Jaworski, *Wolność prasy i innych środków społecznego przekazu jako zasada ustrojowa Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, „Zarządzanie Mediami”, 2014, 2, pp. 1-16.

³ A detailed characterization of the legal restrictions of freedom of expression can be found in the following papers: A. Biłgorajski, dz. cyt.; J. J. Mrozek, dz. cyt.

⁴ J. J. Mrozek, dz. cyt., p. 160.

In the meaning of the subtleties presented hereinabove, certain social groups seem to be privileged. The intellectual and competence capital held by them fosters a sensitivity to words in the public space, keeping in mind its “key significance in shaping the collective consciousness of society and fundamental state institutions, reproducing the arbitrariness of the state (media, schools, parliament, and so on and so forth.)”⁵. The authority of scholars – who are the main players in the undertaken discussion – obliges them to maintain the “correctness of thinking in a two-fold sense, both logical and ethical”⁶. Caring for the truthfulness of proclaimed views goes hand in hand with attention to the language, the style and the form of expression⁷. According to Michał Heller, certain “rules of reason” are not without significance, which are evidence of an organised thinking leading to the truth and to a certainty of the advanced views⁸.

However, as indicated by experience, the very execution of academic freedom of expression is sometimes controversial⁹. The diagnoses and interpretations made public by scientists arouse extreme emotions, stimulating the need to protect the particular interests of socially excluded groups. Statements according to which “science is not a view”¹⁰, and pronouncements made *ex cathedra*, legitimised by intersubjective procedures of certifying knowledge¹¹, are voiced in the shade of the initiated disciplinary procedures and “commissions for matters of freedom at university”¹². The rights held by academics to: 1) Actively participate in public life; 2) Exercise the freedom of teaching; and 3) The selection of the subject of research,

⁵ L. M. Nijakowski, *Elity w perspektywie socjologicznej analizy dyskursu*, [in:] *Dyskurs elit symbolicznych. Próba diagnozy*, (eds.) M. Czyżewski, K. Franczak, M. Nowicka, J. Stachowiak, Wydawnictwo Akademickie SEDNO, Warszawa 2014, pp. 61-91.

⁶ J. Goćkowski, *Autorytet w nauce*, [in:] *Filozofia a nauka. Zarys encyklopedyczny*, (eds.) Z. Cackowski, J. Kmita, K. Szaniawski, P. Smoczyński, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Warszawa-Wrocław-Kraków-Gdańsk-Łódź 1987, pp. 41-47.

⁷ The following authors also discuss the style and form of academic statements: S. Gajda, *Styl naukowy*, [in:] *Encyklopedia kultury polskiej XX wieku*, (ed.) J. Bartmiński, Instytut Filologii Polskiej UMCS, Wrocław-Lublin 1993; J. Maćkiewicz, *Jak dobrze pisać? Od myśli do tekstu*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2010.

⁸ M. Heller, *Moralność myślenia*, Copernicus Center Press, Kraków 2015.

⁹ Discussions on this topic of (not) compromising the principle of academic freedom of expression usually concern issues of race, sex/gender, and sexual minorities.

¹⁰ P. Szewiōta, *Odpowiedzialność dyscyplinarna nauczycieli akademickich. Wolność słowa na uczelniach ma się dobrze. Formalnie*, „Gazeta Prawna”.pl, <https://tiny.pl/7jhwtd> [access: 20.06.2020].

¹¹ See E. Bińczyk, *Świadectwo i autorytet*, [in:] *Przewodnik po epistemologii*, (ed.) R. Ziemińska, Wydawnictwo WAM, Kraków 2013, pp. 311-343; J. Boruszewski, *Dostępność wiedzy naukowej a jej intersubiektywna komunikowalność*, [in:] *Komunikacja naukowa w humanistyce*, (ed.) E. Kulczycki, Wydawnictwo Naukowe IF UAM, Poznań 2017, pp. 265-283.

¹² This relates to the draft amendment to the Science 2.0 Act, governing the protection of freedom in the science and higher education sector. A Committee has been appointed on the grounds thereof that decides on matters of controversy relating to freedom of expression in Polish universities.

are sometimes confronted with the principle of political correctness¹³, and the issue of the accountability of a university for building relations with the community underlies the commonly advocated concept of the autonomy of a university¹⁴.

Thus, one cannot but agree with Jerzy Bralczyk¹⁵, that the intensified interest in the matter may be a symptom of certain problems and difficulties that directly relate to the matter. The doubts and dilemmas focusing around the condition of the contemporary university, the role of its representatives in the public domain, the function of scientific knowledge in the process of explaining and describing the world and, what follows, a currently binding definition of truth as a normative regulator of verbalisations, all inevitably fit into the deliberations on academic freedom of expression. Indeed, they cannot be unequivocally settled. This is because it is entangled in the pluralism of disparate ratings of the science and higher education sector, reflecting culturally construed *extra muros* needs of the world. The fine line between a university and its milieu becomes hazy due to two processes experienced today: the scientisation of society, and the socialisation of science.

The *scientisation of society*, understood by Peter Weingart¹⁶ as drawing the university out from social isolation, results in the transfer of the products of scientific practice into diverse contexts of social life. This is what underpins prominent representatives of the world of science taking on the role of media experts; complex theories are presented in a way that is understandable for everyone, and scientific projects often lead to the formulation of practical guidelines that enhance the effectiveness of human actions. The *socialisation of science*, in turn, results from the economisation, politicisation, and mediatisation of the contemporary university.

¹³ For example: A. Szahaj, *E pluribus unum? Dylematy wielokulturowości i politycznej poprawności*, Universitas, Kraków 2004; M. Rojek, *Poprawność polityczna wobec systemu oświaty – wybrane przykłady i konsekwencje*, „Forum Oświatowe”, 2012, 24/2 (47), pp. 33-47; A. Leśniak, *Political Correctness, czyli o etycznej wrażliwości języka*, „Studia Ekonomiczne. Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Katowicach”, 2017, 313, pp. 147-160.

¹⁴ See Z. Melosik, *Uniwersytet i przemiany kultury współczesnej*, [in:] *Edukacja. Społeczne konstruowanie idei i rzeczywistości*, (ed.) M. Cylkowska-Nowak, WOLUMIN, Poznań 2000, pp. 201-209; Z. Melosik, *Uniwersytet i społeczeństwo. Dyskursy wolności wiedzy i władzy*, Impuls, Kraków 2009; A. Szostek, *Autonomia uczelni a odpowiedzialność wobec społeczeństwa*, [in:] *Autonomia uczelni i środowiska akademickiego – odpowiedzialność i etos akademicki*, Instytut Problemów Współczesnej Cywilizacji, Warszawa 2017, pp. 21-29; P. Sztompka, *Autonomia: Fundament kultury akademickiej*, [in:] *Autonomia uczelni i środowiska akademickiego – odpowiedzialność i etos akademicki*, Instytut Problemów Współczesnej Cywilizacji, Warszawa 2017, pp. 29-35; J. Spychalska-Stasiak, E. Okońska, *Uniwersytet i jego relacje z otoczeniem. Analiza dyskursu akademickiego „Przegląd Socjologiczny”*, (article under review); P. Sztompka, *Misja uniwersytetu dzisiaj*, [in:] *Uniwersytet XXI wieku, Między uniwersytetem Humboldta a uniwersytetem badawczym*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2019, pp. 23-33.

¹⁵ J. Bralczyk, „Autonomia”, „samorządność”, „niezależność”, w języku polskim, [in:] *Autonomia uczelni i środowiska akademickiego – odpowiedzialność i etos akademicki*, Instytut Problemów Współczesnej Cywilizacji, Warszawa 2017, pp. 15-21.

¹⁶ P. Weingart, *Die Stunde der Wahrheit? Zum Verhältnis der Wissenschaft zu Politik, Wirtschaft und Medien in der Wissensgesellschaft*, Weilerswist 2005.

In establishing, redefining, and distributing its (post)modern “dignity and distinction”¹⁷, the voices of academia align with the opinions of journalists, representatives of the labour market, and representatives of educational and scientific policies¹⁸. Changes in the scope of funding have given recognition to the role of external stakeholders in the process of establishing the mission of a university that is appropriate and fitting to contemporary times. The dogma of the practical utility of scientific and didactic actions has made it “an enterprise whose aim is to efficiently produce practical knowledge and graduates (*human capital*), who could easily be used in economic practice”¹⁹. Regardless, however, of whether we are advocates of the theses on the progressive crisis of the university or proponents of a long-awaited change, the fact is that the phenomenon of the “transformation of the university” that was initiated more or less twenty years ago²⁰ has radically transformed its modern face²¹. The transformation process of the “academic ivory tower” into

¹⁷ K. Twardowski, *O dostojności uniwersytetu*, <https://tiny.pl/7jh3f>. [access: 20.06.2020].

¹⁸ The reform of science and higher education in light of the ongoing debate surrounding it is also discussed in: M. Kwiek, *Transformacje uniwersytetu. Zmiany instytucjonalne i ewolucje polityki edukacyjnej w Europie*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2010; M. Kwiek, *Co to znaczy atrakcyjny uniwersytet? Różne konsekwencje transformacji instytucjonalnych dla różnych interesariuszy*, [in:] *Wolność, równość, uniwersytet*, (eds.) C. Kościelniak, J. Makowski, Instytut Obywatelski, Warszawa 2011, pp. 73-110; J. Kostkiewicz, A. Domagała-Kręciach, M. J. Szymański (eds.), *Szkoła wyższa w toku zmian. Debata wokół ustawy z dnia 18 marca 2011 roku*, Impuls, Kraków 2011a; A. Dziedzic-Foltyń, *Reforma szkolnictwa wyższego w Polsce w debacie publicznej. Bilans dyskusji o uniwersytetach (1990-2015)*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2017; Ł. Stankiewicz, *Wizje uniwersytetu w Polskiej debacie publicznej 2007-2009*, Impuls, Kraków 2018; H. Ostrowicka, J. Sychalska-Stasiak, Ł. Stankiewicz, D. Chomik, T. Falkowski, A. Rzyńska, *Dyskursywny obraz reformy szkolnictwa wyższego w Polsce 2011-2014*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2019; J. Sychalska-Stasiak, H. Ostrowicka, *Academic Discourse: Formations of Knowledge about the Reform*, [in:] H. Ostrowicka, J. Sychalska-Stasiak, Ł. Stankiewicz, *Dispositif of the University Reform. Higher Education Policy Discourse in Poland*, Routledge, London and New York 2020, pp. 24-59.

¹⁹ Z. Melosik, *Uniwersytet i przemiany kultury współczesnej*, p. 206.

²⁰ E.g., M. Bauer, B. Askling, S. G. Marton and F. Marton, *Transforming Universities: Changing Patterns of Governance, Structure and Learning in Swedish Higher Education*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London 1992; S. Slaughter, G. Roades, *Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1997; M. Czerepaniak-Walczak, ed. *Fabryka dyplomów czy Universitas? O „nadwiślańskiej” wersji przemian w edukacji akademickiej*, Impuls, Kraków 2013; J. Kostkiewicz, A. Domagała-Kręciach, M. J. Szymański (eds.), *Szkoła wyższa w toku zmian. Diagnozy i konstatacje*, Impuls, Kraków 2011b; Z. Drozdowicz, *Korporacyjny i świątynny typ kultury akademickiej*, [in:] *Uniwersytet XXI wieku. Między uniwersytetem Humboldta a uniwersytetem badawczym*, (eds.) J. M. Brzeziński, T. Wallas, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2019, pp. 65-79; J. M. Brzeziński, *Uniwersytet: między tradycją i wyzwaniem przyszłości*, [in:] *Uniwersytet XXI wieku. Między uniwersytetem Humboldta a uniwersytetem badawczym*, (eds.) J. M. Brzeziński, T. Wallas, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2019, pp. 79-91.

²¹ It is worth noting that the concept of the “modern university” was shaped in a non-uniform manner. In its establishment, one cannot fail to take into account the views of the British cardinal John Henry Newman. German philosophers like Immanuel Kant, Karl Jaspers, and Wilhelm von Humboldt, and eminent representatives of Polish science, developed at the beginning of the 20th century (Kazimierz Twardowski, Stanisław Ossowski, Florian Znaniecki, Tadeusz Czeżowski, and many others). The idea of the university proposed by Wilhelm von Humboldt was accept-

a “production university” has been accompanied by an organisational, axiological, and normative revolution. The introduction of a managerial-corporate management model with a complex bureaucratic infrastructure, and accounting and clearance system has implemented new values into the tissue of academic culture, radically derogating from the Humboldtian academic ethos²². Slogans of the selfless generation of knowledge for the common good, building a community of teachers and students, kinship to the truth, and the absolute preservation of autonomy clashed with the requirement of pragmatic utility. The need to become selflessly involved in the affairs of the university, mutual trust, and comfortable conditions of scientific creation became the subject of top-down regulations and management control. The disciplining mechanisms of an audit culture²³ forced scholars into a rhythm of publication conditioned by the deadlines of subsequent performance evaluations, and the quality of the teaching on the highest level is controlled by external expert bodies and students. Unconventional and eccentric professors take on the role of “scientific worker(s), member(s) of corporations of scientific communities”²⁴, and the students following in their footsteps have become clients consuming from the supermarket of academically produced knowledge²⁵.

ed in modern times as the foundation of a “traditional” way of thinking about the university and, as such, constitutes a point of reference for the characteristics of a university in present times. More about this topic can be found in: A. Kobylarek, *Uniwersytet. Zarys idei podstawowej*, „Nauka i Szkolnictwo Wyższe”, 2002, 1, pp. 90-100; D. Antonowicz, *Uniwersytet: od korporacji do instytucji*, „Zagadnienia Naukoznawstwa”, 2002, 4, pp. 513-537; D. Antonowicz, *Problem interdyscyplinarności na przykładzie rozwoju oraz instytucjonalizacji badań nad szkolnictwem wyższym*, [in:] *Interdyscyplinarnie o interdyscyplinarności. Między ideą a praktyką*, (eds.) A. Chmielewski, M. Dudzikowa, A. Grobler, Impuls, Kraków 2013, pp. 311-337; J. Górniewicz, P. Piotrowski, *Uniwersytet jako źródło wartości kultury. Szkice humanistyczno-filozoficzne*, Pracownia Wydawnicza ElSet Warszawa-Olsztyn 2014; R. Nowakowska-Siuta, *Romantyczny i pragmatyczny. Idea niemieckiego uniwersytetu neohumanistycznego i jej społeczne rekonstrukcje*, Wydawnictwo ChAT, Warszawa 2018.

²² I. Zakowicz, *Idea uniwersytetu Wilhelma von Humboldta – kontynuacja czy zmierzch?*, „Ogrody Nauk i Sztuk”, 2012, 2, pp. 62-74; I. Zakowicz, *Uniwersytet – przedsiębiorstwo produkcyjno-usługowe, student – klient supermarketu? Czyli szkolnictwo wyższe w procesie zmian*, [in:] *Fabryka dyplomów czy Universitas? O „nadwiślańskiej” wersji przemian w edukacji akademickiej*, (ed.) M. Czerepaniak-Walczak, Kraków 2013, pp. 131-150; J. Górniewicz, P. Piotrowski, *Uniwersytet jako źródło Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls wartości kultury*; R. Nowakowska-Siuta, *Romantyczny i pragmatyczny*.

²³ See C. Shore, S. Wright, *Audit Culture Revisited. Rankings, Ratings, and the Reassembling of Society*, “Current Anthropology”, 2015, 3 (56), pp. 421-444; C. Shore, S. Wright, *Governing by Numbers: Audit Culture, Rankings and the New World Order*, “Social Anthropology”, 2015, February, pp. 22-28; E. Kulczycki, *Punktoza jako strategia w grze parametrycznej w Polsce*, „Nauka i Szkolnictwo Wyższe”, 2017, 1 (49), pp. 63-79; H. Ostrowicka, J. Spychalska-Stasiak, *Uodpowiedzialnianie akademii – formacje wiedzy i władza parametryzacji w dyskursie akademickim*, „Nauka i Szkolnictwo Wyższe”, 2017, 1 (49), pp. 105-131.

²⁴ J. Górniewicz, P. Piotrowski, *Uniwersytet jako źródło wartości kultury*, p. 203.

²⁵ More about the situation of contemporary students can be found in: D. Pauluk, *Student na współczesnym uniwersytecie. Ideaty i codzienność*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls, Kraków 2010; D. Pauluk, *Współczesny uniwersytet w potocznych doświadczeniach studentów*, „Teraźniejszość Człowiek Edukacja”, 2016, vol. 19, 3 (75), pp. 183-196; J. Szafran, *O merkantylizacji szkolnictwa wyższego uwag kilka*, [in:] *Edukacja, uniwersytet, oświata dorosłych. Studia z pedagogiki ofiarowane Profesorom*

According to Łukasz Sułkowski, the above-signalled indicators of reform can be implemented at least in five different ways²⁶. "However, in many developing countries and emerging markets, including in Poland, the shift away from the public monopoly into the sphere of creating higher education institutions and legal changes have led to the transformation of universities, which are functioning on the basis of hybrid solutions". Hybridisation, in turn, as one of the possible variants of adaptation, entails using indirect solutions, and integrating the properties of disparate models and cultures into one structure. The implementation of such a manner of reform into the Polish sector of science and higher education has undoubtedly spread out in time the necessity of adapting to the radical and profound changes. However, in the formal and identity aspect, this has contributed to reinforcing many dilemmas and doubts reflected in the publicly expressed question of: *What it means to be a person of academia today?*²⁷.

Functioning on the point of qualitatively different albeit equal normative and cognitive orders has weakened the concept of an "academic centre", as a guardian of a responsible formation of the identity of professional scholars. The deinstitutionalisation of academic action programmes (see Chapter 3) has extended the hitherto scope of academic freedoms, shifting onto scholars the necessity of independently providing an answer to the questions of: "Who am I within my role of a professional scholar and didactic?"; "What does this professional allocation oblige me to do and where does it limit me?"; and, at the same time, "What areas of reflective self-fulfilment does it create?"²⁸. Certainty, as a principle of academic (self) creation, has become subordinated to the phenomenon of the relativisation of academic culture, the ambivalence and decentration of which projects identities set on otherness and differences²⁹. Therefore, attaining knowledge and an academic "self" occurs in different ways, which can paradoxically be a source of weakness of academic culture³⁰. Functioning in axiologically and normatively separated en-

wi Kazimierzowi Przyszczypkowskiemu, (ed.) W. Ambroziak, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2014, pp. 251-263; J. Szychalska-Stasiak, *Universitas studiorum? Analiza formacji wiedzy na temat relacji nauczyciel akademicki – student*, [in:] H. Ostrowicka, J. Szychalska-Stasiak, Ł. Stankiewicz, D. Chomik, T. Falkowski, A. Rzycka (eds.), *Dyskursywny obraz reformy szkolnictwa wyższego w Polsce 2011-2014*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2019, pp. 109-127.

²⁶ This refers to repression, adaptation, hybridisation, superficiality, and regression. More on this can be found in: Ł. Sułkowski, *Kultura akademicka. Koniec utopii?*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2016, pp. 29-30.

²⁷ J. Brzeziński, *Co to znaczy dzisiaj być człowiekiem uniwersytetu?*, „Nauka”, 2000, 4, pp. 85-101.

²⁸ J. Szychalska-Stasiak, *Tracing the Trauma Discourse in the Methodological Self-knowledge of Pedagogy*, "Culture Society Education", 2017, 2 (12), pp. 217-243.

²⁹ K. Rubacha, *Nowe kategorie pojęciowe współczesnej teorii wychowania*, [in:] *Pedagogika. Podręcznik akademicki*, (eds.) Z. Kwieciński, B. Śliwerski, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2007, vol. II, pp. 59-68; P. Berger, A. Zijderveld, *Pochwała wątpliwości. Jak mieć przekonania i nie stać się fanatykiem*, tłum. S. Baranowski, Vis-a-Vis Etiuda, Kraków 2015.

³⁰ See Ł. Sułkowski, *Kultura akademicka*, pp. 173-176.

claves, which are fundamentally inconsistent in terms of the organisational premises and the mission of the academy destroys the core of academic culture to date, compromising the attitude of personal involvement in the good reputation of the higher education institution, the need for loyalty towards its members, and retaining a sense of academic community. On the other hand, however, the fragmentation being characterised is conducive to non-standard actions, rationally adjusted to the requirements of contemporaneity, and cognitively stimulating. The experience of diversity, therefore, problematises the issue of academic freedoms, and it does so on all the levels of its occurrence³¹. On the *professional* and *individual* levels, “freedom in the scope of searching for and understanding the truth, deepening the object of one’s interests, creatively searching for various possibilities and problem solving, as well as communicating the findings to other people”³² is enmeshed in the necessity of making choices between paradigmatically differentiated schools of thinking, research strategies, rules for drawing up research reports, and presenting and publishing the obtained effects in a diverse (ideologically, epistemologically, and methodologically) environment of scholars. On the *institutional* level, it is the role “of institutions of higher education, by way of indicating a responsibility on their part to provide the appropriate support for academic activities required to enable academic freedom” that is emphasised³³. On the *social* level, the environmentally crafted (or imposed) concepts of “academic freedom to” and “academic freedom from” are examined from the point of view of the current social needs.

In the question of: “Who and based on what criteria should set the limits of academic freedoms?”³⁴ the problematic condition of a contemporary university, which is rocked by reform, comes to the fore. In the presented article, I therefore proceed from the assumption that the difficulties experienced today with regard to the adequate implementation of the right to making academic comments and interpretations of events result from the relativisation of academic culture.

I have set the characteristics of the identified phenomenon in the context of the contemporary reform of the science and higher education sector, with special reference to the changes taking place in university organisational culture, in the ethos of science, and the deinstitutionalisation of academic action programmes.

³¹ M. Tight, *So What is Academic Freedom*, [in:] *Academic Freedom and Responsibility*, (ed.) M. Tight, SRHE & OU Press, Buckingham, UK, 1988.

³² Z. Melosik, *Wolność akademicka. Konteksty i rekonstrukcje*, „Rocznik Lubuski”, 2015, 2 (41), p. 15.

³³ G. Akerlind, C. Cayrooz, *Understanding Academic Freedom: The views of social scientists*, “Higher Education Research & Development”, 2003, 3 (22), p. 328.

³⁴ Z. Melosik, *Uniwersytet i przemiany kultury współczesnej*, p. 207.

The reform of the sector of science and higher education in Poland

Looking back, it is difficult not to get the impression that the representatives of higher education institutions were bonded by a sense of cognitive and normative consensus with regard to the conviction of what a university should be like. Despite the obvious³⁵ differences described in literature on the subject between the medieval corporation and the modern institution, an element distinguishing the world of academia from the remaining areas of social life was the concept of cultivating culture by creating (carrying out research) and transmitting (the education process) knowledge³⁶. Its axiological underpinnings were set by the concept of truth classically understood, and maintaining "conformity of thoughts with reality"³⁷ was facilitated by a theoretical and methodological set of instruments that were developed over the ages along with the progressive professionalisation of the scholar-researcher profession³⁸. Upholding the principles of objectivity, reliability, and validity of cognition corresponded with the ethos of academic learning³⁹. Its constitutive norms and values, such as universalism, communality, disinterestedness, and organised scepticism made science a domain of creative self-realisation where the individual epistemic motivation became intertwined with the *extra muros* needs of the world. The issue of academic freedoms was regulated within informal contacts contributing to the phenomenon of a trust-based culture⁴⁰. Remaining in relations focused on the generation, control, and selection of knowledge facilitated the formation of a university community. The fact that it remained outside the main stream of external interest gave the university the form of a self-regulating institution "acting on the basis of rational principles, for the common good, in order to seek the truth and knowledge"⁴¹. Its functioning in a spirit of tradition for a period of almost 800 years evoked admiration and respect.

³⁵ Resulting from the different place and time of existence of the university.

³⁶ See A. Kobylarek, *Uniwersytet. Zarys idei podstawowej*; D. Antonowicz, *Uniwersytet. Od korporacji do instytucji*; J. Górniewicz, P. Piotrowski, *Uniwersytet jako źródło wartości kultury*; Ł. Sułkowski, *Kultura akademicka*.

³⁷ A. Grobler, *Prawda, jej namiastki i paradoksy z nimi związane*, [in:] *Przewodnik po epistemologii*, (ed.) R. Ziemińska, Wydawnictwo WAM, Kraków 2013, p. 22.

³⁸ S. Amsterdamski, *Nauka*, [in:] *Encyklopedia socjologii*, vol. 2, (eds.) Z. Bokszański, K. Górlach, T. Krauze, W. Kwaśniewicz, E. Mokrzycki, J. Mucha, A. Piotrowski, T. Sozański, A. Sułek, J. Szmatka, W. Winclawski, Oficyna Naukowa, Warszawa 1999, pp. 296-301.

³⁹ R. Merton, *Nauka i demokratyczny ład*, [in:] R. Merton, *Teoria socjologiczna i struktura społeczna*, tłum. E. Morawska, J. Werenstein, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2002; M. Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*, Sage, London 1998; J. Bieliński, A. Tomczyńska, *Etos nauki we współczesnej Polsce*, „Nauka i Szkolnictwo Wyższe”, 2019, 1-2 (53-54), pp. 220-250.

⁴⁰ See Ł. Sułkowski, *Kultura akademicka*.

⁴¹ Z. Melosik, *Wolność akademicka*, p. 20.

Doubts relating to the rightness of its traditional form arose with the breakthrough condition of the last century. Marek Kwiek points this out, writing: "The transformation processes that the university is subjected to today are no different from the transformation processes that the external world, where the university functions, is subjected to"⁴². The confrontation of the hitherto assumptions of this institution with demographic, economic, and civilisational problems exhausted the formula of its harmonious development in favour of the implementation of radical, profound, and dynamically progressing changes. They are directly underpinned by such phenomena as the "arrival of globalisation, the acceleration of processes of European integration, and the shift from an industrial society (and non-knowledge based services) to post-industrial, global, and knowledge-based societies"⁴³.

In a local context, the transformation of the university began with the draft of the *Act amending the Act: The Law on Academic Degrees and Title and Degrees and Title in the Arts and on the Amendment of Certain Other Acts*, which was approved on 18th March 2011 and prepared by the then Minister of Science and Higher Education, Barbara Kudrycka. This proposal was connected with the execution of a liberal vision of a university that in practice meant the "rationalisation of the sources of income, and the economisation, formalisation, and bureaucratisation of activities, the development of administrative structures, as well as the execution of the mission of an entrepreneurial university"⁴⁴. Nine years later, the new Minister of Science and Higher Education, Jarosław Gowin, introduced another reform, called the *Science 2.0 Act* or the *Constitution for Science*. The direction for changes that he proposed deepened the assumptions of the previous Act by precisely determining new funding algorithms (the introduction of a breakdown into: research universities, teaching universities, and teaching and research universities), introducing a series of significant changes into the current academia career path and the education of PhD students, as well as broadening the autonomy of university chancellors⁴⁵.

The cycle of irregular and, by assumption, endless reforms has resulted in the implementation of a model of an entrepreneurial university into academic practice. Its specific feature is an orientation to the needs of external stakeholders and effective cooperation between the university, the labour market, and business. The bureaucratised and subjected to external control vision of the university became an important element in the economic chain, supplying workers to the knowl-

⁴² M. Kwiek, *Transformacje uniwersytetu*, p. 22.

⁴³ Tamże, p. 30.

⁴⁴ Ł. Sułkowski, *Kultura uniwersytetu*, p. 33.

⁴⁵ See J. Górniak, *Ustawa 2.0: partycypacyjny model istotnej zmiany regulacyjnej*, „Nauka i Szkolnictwo Wyższe”, 2017, 2 (50), pp. 129-146; M. Żylicz, *Uniwersytet badawczy – szanse i zagrożenia*, [in:] *Uniwersytet XXI wieku. Między uniwersytetem Humboldta a uniwersytetem badawczym*, (eds.) J. M. Brzeziński, T. Wallas, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2019, pp. 33-49.

edge-based economy. The provision of a narrow specialised education for tech-nostarters, along with the generation of practically useful knowledge (*mode 2*)⁴⁶, belong to the basic tasks of the representatives of higher education institutions. The hitherto concept of a university community has been adjusted to fit into the cogs of a culture of quality, which obliges to transparency, accountability, and efficiency of activity. External motivational mechanisms along with an extensive parametric and didactic appraisal apparatus have divided employees into scientific and teaching, and exclusively teaching staff. Competitiveness has become the new survival strategy for academia, and the pressure on the quality of scientific works has objectivised endeavours to get promoted or to extend one's employment. Relations inside the university are subject to formalisation, and ethical and duty-based dilemmas are resolved based on rules, regulations, and procedures. The 'post-industrial science' set on entrepreneurship has redefined the foundations of ethos. Its proprietary, local, authoritarian, commercial, and expert character corresponds to the concepts of modern scientific policies and market needs⁴⁷. The actions of scientific experts are directed towards resolving specific practical problems commissioned by external institutions seeking to gain effective and beneficial solutions. The attachment to the metaphor of a systematically enriched edifice of knowledge is giving way to individual results-oriented pressure. Acquiring 'discoverer status' constitutes the direct basis of scientific prestige and the awards and privileges stemming therefrom.

The indicators of the reform of science and higher education characterised above, albeit fragmentary, allow three fundamental "shift axes" to be identified that have changed the hitherto face of academic culture. The first of them is the modification of the organisational culture of the university, connected with the shift from *a trust-based academic culture* to *a control-based culture*. Functioning in the context of top-down imposed codes, rules, and regulations has made the science enthusiasts to date into "member(s) of corporations of communities of scholars, who document their achievements, build their own knowledge capital, and develop the ability to acquire it"⁴⁸. The concept of spontaneous cognitive development has become intertwined with the necessity to consciously plan one's career, heading towards the fulfilment of externally established requirements and expectations. The introduction of new regulators of academic practice has, in turn, triggered the

⁴⁶ See T. Becher, P. R. Trowler, *Academic Tribes and Territories. Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Disciplines*, Open University Press, Buckingham 2001; D. Burawski (ed.), *Uniwersytet trzeciej generacji. Stan i perspektywy rozwoju*, Europejskie Centrum Wspierania Przedsiębiorczości, Poznań 2013.

⁴⁷ See J. Ziman, *Postacademic Science: Constructing Knowledge with Networks and Norms*, „Science Studies”, 1996, 9 (1), pp. 67-80; J. Ziman, *Real Science. What it is and what it means?*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2000.

⁴⁸ J. Górniewicz, P. Piotrowski, *Uniwersytet jako źródło wartości kultury*, p. 203.

phenomenon of the deinstitutionalisation of academic action programmes, which I pointed out in Chapter 3. The second axis, exposing the transformations in the scope of forging relations with stakeholders, is characterised by the shift from the *university as a self-regulatory institution* to the *university remaining at the service of the market*. Giving due credit to the role of businessmen, entrepreneurs, and the representatives of the labour market in establishing the place of the university in contemporary society has redefined the axiological underpinnings of the ethos of science. Seeking the truth and an objective reflection of the world coexists with the need for practical research, generating strictly applicational knowledge, adjusted to a narrow problem context. The principle of the pragmatic utility of scientific cognizance has modified the ways of funding higher education institutions to date, giving the knowledge generated therein a commercial value, and enabling the building of a competitive advantage on the market⁴⁹. The third axis is co-created by transformations in the scope of the significance of the university for the people working within it. The experience of reform has triggered the need to publicly comment on the affairs of the university. The voices of academics have joined in the public debate on the condition of the sector of science and higher education. The visions and evaluations shaped thereon are not uniform. The nostalgic recall of academic tradition coexists with praise of the third-generation university⁵⁰, set on effectively combining teaching and scientific work with market expectations. The shift from the *traditional concept of Universitas* to the *model of an entrepreneurial university* experienced by academia has given rise to the problematisation of the meaning of the university, resulting from the plethora of generated concepts relating thereto. Their academic evaluation is also far from uniform. While for some representatives of science, the replacement of the current “temple of knowledge”, “diploma factory” is proof of the fall and the “beggarisation of the university and depreciation of fields of study in humanities”⁵¹, others perceive the entrepreneurship of the university as an opportunity for the long-awaited change of an ossified system of education at the highest level.

I consider the shifts characterised above, concerning the organisational, normative, and ideological order of university culture to be the reason behind the relativisation of academic culture, to which I draw attention in the next part of the article.

⁴⁹ D. Antonowicz, *Problem interdyscyplinarności*.

⁵⁰ See D. Burawski, *Uniwersytet trzeciej generacji*; J. Spychalska-Stasiak, E. Okońska, *Uniwersytet i jego relacje z otoczeniem*.

⁵¹ A. Kobylarek, *Osiągnięcie konsensusu interesariuszy edukacji akademickiej. O społecznej misji uniwersytetu*, [in:] *Fabryka dyplomów czy Universitas? O „nadwiślańskiej” wersji przemian w edukacji akademickiej*, (ed.) M. Czerepaniak-Walczak, Impuls, Kraków 2013, p. 120.

The relativisation of academic culture as an effect of the reform of science and higher education

The radicality and the profundity of the changes introduced at the university has *relativised academic culture*, leading to its absolute condition being challenged⁵². This is because one of the effects of the discussed reform is the *deinstitutionalisation of academic modes of operation*, which, according to the interpretation of Arnold Gehlen⁵³, should be understood as imposing the burden of reflective control the hitherto intuitive behaviours of scholars.

According to the German philosopher, human collectives regulate the behaviours of their members on two basic plans:

- *The first*, giving individuals the possibility of making choices, and
- *the second*, obliging them to automatically carry out the tasks foreseen in institutional action programmes.

While “behaviours associated with the second plan can be executed automatically, almost unreflectively”, implementing the assumptions of the first plan requires thought and consideration: “Should I act in this or in another way?”⁵⁴ Deinstitutionalisation, as the opposite of institutional programmes, is associated with moving from the second to the first plan of action. This, therefore, means that behaviours executed automatically and intuitively are subject to significant problematisation. Hence, the things that were considered as close and obvious suddenly become distant and demanding. The necessity of continuously considering one’s behaviour is, therefore, a way of finding certainty in conditions of an irreducible diversity. The experience of the relativisation of the hitherto fundamental norms and values entangles a person in dialectic feelings. After all, “relativisation, which was initially perceived as a weight off the mind, has now itself become a burden. A person looks back with nostalgia towards the lost absolute truths of his/her past, possibly searching for new such truths. The liberation that man now looks for is a liberation from the burden of relativity and the plurality of choices that contemporaneity carries with it”⁵⁵.

Exemplifying the relevance of the above concept to the description of the situation of today’s university, we can go as far as to say that the functioning of the representatives of a traditional university was regulated by way of action programmes that were taken for granted. Their universal meaning resulted from internalised values, constituting the phenomenon of the ethos of science and the foundations for a respect for the truth. The execution of the concept of “*gaudium veritatis*: a self-

⁵² Cited after P. Berger, A. Zijderveld, *Pochwała niepewności*, p. 39.

⁵³ Tamże, pp. 26-36.

⁵⁴ Tamże, p. 28.

⁵⁵ Tamże, p. 54

less joy provided by aiming at and approaching the truth⁵⁶ required a respect for the highest moral and ethical standards making up the foundations of the ethos of the scholar⁵⁷. Therefore, “the freedom of learning and teaching, the freedom of conducting research and communication in the scope of freely distributing its results and outcomes⁵⁸ provided the basis for scientific development, intellectual integrity, and customs and morality of the scholarly community. Its accepted limitation was a “respect for the standards of truth, adequacy, reason, and theory⁵⁹. The academic selection of topics and individuals speaking at (or on behalf) of the university was performed on the basis of the standard of academic excellence, which prevented the anarchy and mediocrity of scientific thinking.

A modern-day university, entrenched by numerous regulations and procedures, is becoming a place of conscious planning of one’s professional career. The people working within it have been surrounded by “a series of limitations, seemingly trivial necessities, and overt coercion⁶⁰ that objectify their achievements and progress in professional development. The extensive bureaucratic machinery requires “preparing applications, lists, questionnaires, reports, and statements explaining why the last lecture for exhausted students was shortened by 20 minutes, accompanied by confessions on the benefits drawn from the last conference, etc.”⁶¹. The gathered documentation becomes a major testimony of building one’s personal development based on genuine evidence. The recommended methods of acquiring knowledge have been subject to pluralisation, which is particularly evident in the social sciences and humanities. The experience of an “anti-positivistic breakthrough” has provided the possibility of building the identity of scholars based on paradigmatically differentiated schools of thinking and the research strategies recommended within them⁶². Consciously overcoming the dilemma of: *big data* or *searching for the essence of reality* is crucial as it either facilitates or impedes access to external funding in the form of sci-

⁵⁶ M. Rembierz, *Uniwersytet – wolność – bezinteresowność. Tradycyjny etos i współczesne przemiany tożsamości uniwersytetu*, „Pedagogika Szkoły Wyższej”, 2015, 2, p. 42.

⁵⁷ P. Kisiel, *Ethos nauki i uczonego w świetle koncepcji nauki J. Goćkowskiego*, „Zagadnienia Naukoznawstwa”, 2011, 2 (188), pp. 203-215.

⁵⁸ Z. Melosik, *Wolność akademicka*, p. 17.

⁵⁹ Tamże, p. 18.

⁶⁰ M. Kruszelnicki, *Uniwersytet jako wspólnota audytowanych*, [in:] *Przeszkody dla rozwoju humanistyki w szkołach wyższych (z pedagogiką w tle). W perspektywie troski o uniwersytet, kulturę humanistyczną i podręczniki*, (eds.) M. Jaworska-Witkowska, L. Witkowski, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2011, p. 180.

⁶¹ Tamże, p. 180.

⁶² A more extensive description of the paradigms of social sciences can also be found in: G. Burrell, G. Morgan, *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis. Elements of the Sociology of Corporate Life*, Ashgate, Burlington 1979; Crotty, *The Foundation of Social Research*, 1998; L. Cohen, L. Manion, K. Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*, 8th edition, Routledge, London and New York 2018, p. 3-31; J. W. Creswell, *Research Design. Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*, Sage Publications Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington 2014.

entific grants and scholarships. The postmodernist criticism of such values as: "truth", "reason", "rationality", and "objectivity" has reformulated the meaning of academic freedom: "its task is to create the conditions to freely approach the truth – no longer the absolute and unquestionable truth, but a "modest", and sometimes "our very own" truth, but one that is always pluralistic"⁶³. Scientific knowledge is, therefore, one of the possible interpretations of the social world, built on always fragmentary assumptions that are selected in view of their particular values. The question of who and on what conditions should determine the limits of academic freedom remains, therefore, permanently open. The reason for this is that the university, stripped of its previous meta-narratives, has no powers to establish its universal interpretation.

Summary

The certainty in relation to the manner of implementation of the academic game was drawn from the consistency of the commonly accepted model of university culture. Breaching the clause of its uniqueness and exceptionality, along with the introduction of alternative patterns of academic behaviour, has brought about the phenomenon of the *relativisation of the university*, understood as the necessity to function at the intersection between heterogeneous and equal organisational, normative, and ideological orders. Oscillating between the "formalism, countability, and precision of the culture of control and openness, autonomy, and the freedom of a trust-based culture"⁶⁴ has shaped the area of academic life that was experienced daily, where the distinct colours of black and white have come to form darker and lighter shades of grey. Attitudes of vehement opposition and declared reluctance come into contact with acceptance or passive acquiescence of the direction of changes being implemented. Deepened humanist reflection competes in the parametric race for access to external funding, and scholars doing basic research are cooperating with academic experts⁶⁵. The senses and meanings shaped as a result of heterogeneous experiences are circulating within academic culture, being are simultaneously subject to the phenomenon of cognitive contamination. The possibility of exerting an influence on the way of thinking presented by others makes "it increasingly difficult for people assess the convictions and values of others as perverse, crazy, and vile. Slowly but surely, one cannot help but think that these people have a hidden agenda. As a result of such thoughts, the assessment of reality that was previously taken for granted starts to waiver"⁶⁶.

⁶³ Z. Melosik, *Kultura akademicka*, p. 26.

⁶⁴ Ł. Sułkowski, p. 29.

⁶⁵ D. Chomik, H. Ostrowicka, *The Status Quo, Imponderables of Change, and Evaluation: Between Higher Education Policy and Academic Discourse*, „Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung”, 2019, 1 (20), art. 11, <https://tiny.pl/7jx8r>.

⁶⁶ P. Berger, A. Zijderfeld, *Pochwała niepewności*, p. 25.

Thus, the concepts of freedom functioning at university stem from a heterogeneous space of senses and meanings attributed thereto, factoring in both the paradigmatic origin of the research biography, the interpretations developed by the milieu, and top-down imposed changes. The positions of the universities, chancellors, and the minister of science and higher education are announced "always in relation to a difference". The thing that gives some people sufficient conditions for the freedom of thinking, restricts and fetters others. In the search for the answer to the question of the limits of the freedom of expression at university, there is but one answer.

If thinking is a natural complement of freedom⁶⁷, and "all good and all evil come from the thoughts"⁶⁸, then the only regulator of the communication practice is considering: what, how, and why I want to communicate things to others. And since "it is thought that changes the world – from a morally neutral one to one permeated by values"⁶⁹, it is important not to overlook the perspectives of the other in the undertaken process of self-reflection.

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⁶⁷ See M. Heller, *Moralność myślenia*; H. Siegel, *Myślenie krytyczne i indoktrynacja*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz 2019, pp. 98-111.

⁶⁸ M. Heller, *Moralność myślenia*, p. 9.

⁶⁹ Tamże.

- Biłgorajski A., *Granice wolności wypowiedzi czy wolność wypowiedzi ponad granicami? Kilka uwag na temat zakresu wolności wypowiedzi w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, [in:] *Wolność wypowiedzi i jej granice. Analiza wybranych zagadnień*, (ed.) A. Biłgorajski, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2014.
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