

Freedom of science in the semi-periphery vs pandemic

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1. Sociology of foetuses

A professor in the sociology of the family at one Polish university often resorted to ideological digressions related to contraception, abortion and heteronormativity in classes, which relations to the subject and the syllabus were limited (Leszczyński 2020c). She brought plastic foetal models at various stages of development (Leszczyński 2020c; Miech 2020), claiming that hormonal contraception is abortion, that it is murder for whatever reason done (Hartman 2020), and is therefore antisocial (Leszczyński 2020a, c; Miech 2020). She also expressed discriminatory views of LGBT people, presenting an ultra-conservative ideology of “gender ideology”, the latter being compared to communism (Leszczyński 2020a), which – according to the lecturer – was supposed to have pejorative overtones (Miech 2020). In her classes, “she went beyond theories and unilaterally violated the programme content[,] referring to contraception and abortion as medical phenomena[,] and compared nurseries to concentration camps” (Bamid Undams 2020).

More importantly, however, she presented all of this information not as an illustration of someone else’s or her own views (Leszczyński 2020c), but as normative statements (Leszczyński 2020a), which in the university context could be interpreted as scientific views, even though the information presented was not supported by any research (Leszczyński 2020c). Indeed, they were contrary not only to scientific knowledge (Gowin: *Wpiszemy...*, 2020; Leszczyński 2020c), but even to logic (Miech 2020). The lecturer suggested, for example, that “if a woman uses an intrauterine device, the child may be born with an ingrown insertion into the head” (Leszczyński 2020c). This surprised the students who knew from other sociological classes differ-

ent definitions of gender, definitions of family other than the ideologically correct traditional one, and other positions on hetero-normativity (Miech 2020).

The lecturer's college colleague states that "closing discussion to options presenting different views is a fact in her case! Religious propaganda in academic classes too!" (Bamid Undams 2020). According to this – remarkably liberal, as can be seen – commentator, the lecturer "has the right to do so" (ibidem), "but only as a commentary to the theory" (ibidem), and not as the view of a scholar, but rather a pseudo-scientist defining "objective family studies" (ibidem). In this context, a discussion could be taken with the lecturer about family definitions based on social, cultural, biological, legal and sacral criteria, provided that the lecturer "will be intellectually open and honest in applying the rules of logic" (ibidem).

There was no such openness, however. The lecturer not only imposed her conservative views on students, but even repressed them with "negative assessments if they disagreed with the private views of their lecturer" (Bamid Undams 2020). Even worse, she also showed discrimination against religion if different than Catholic (Leszczyński 2020a), (which she herself described as "promoting radical Catholicism" – Leszczyński 2020c), non-hetero-normativity or upbringing in a single-parent family (Miech 2020). Her college colleague pointed out to her that "she misses the scholar's ethos and becomes a fundamentalist, preferring ideology over discourse and understanding of cultural differences in axiological systems" (Bamid Undams 2020). However, according to the lecturer, the truth is "only one and there is only one true religion and moral interpretation. The rest are ethical rubbish, unworthy of respect and discussion" (ibidem). Therefore, it is difficult to disagree with the view that the lecturer's lack of sensitivity to various ideological options and her stigmatisation of them instead of discussing them discredits every scientist and teacher (ibidem).

2. Discrimination

In December 2018, a group of students filed a complaint against the lecturer (Gowin: *Wpiszemy...*, 2020; Leszczyński 2020a), noting her inappropriate behaviour (Miech 2020). In January 2019, the rector referred the matter to the disciplinary ombudsman, who – after completing the proceedings – referred the application to the

university disciplinary commission (Leszczyński 2020a). “The ombudsman considered that the lecturer should be punished” (ibidem) for, amongst other things, formulating statements based on her own evaluative beliefs, imposing these on students, “showing a lack of tolerance towards social groups and people with a different worldviews, marked at least by resistance to them, in particular by making homophobic statements, expressing religious discrimination [and] being critical of women’s life choices” (Gowin: *Wpiszemy...*, 2020; Leszczyński 2020a) regarding termination of pregnancy.

Without waiting for the commission’s verdict, the lecturer decided to terminate her employment contract with the university (Miech 2020), which can be interpreted as considering the allegations justified. Despite this, the lecturer stated that “she quit her job in protest against disciplinary proceedings” (Leszczyński 2020a), so it can be thought that “she pretends to be repressed and seeks manipulation of the law and support from adherents of the fundamentalist model of the confessional community” (Bamid Undams 2020). On this basis, “unreliable journalism” (ibidem), using a one-sided account and “false arguments” (ibidem), “manipulating the image of teaching practices” (ibidem) of the lecturer “preaching fundamentalist Catholic views, with total intolerance to other religious and conciliatory denominations views for years” (ibidem), accused the university of repressing the lecturer “for her teaching students in classes in the sociology of the family” (ibidem). This repression was to be based on attacking “Catholic teaching about the family” (ibidem). In this context, the government television, misnamed public, broadcasted unreliable material which “totally manipulated the matter” (Leszczyński 2020a), descending to the level of “ideological bubbles produced by Catholic fundamentalists” (Bamid Undams 2020). Interestingly, “the advocate of Catholic social ethics uses [...] untruths and manipulates the facts” (Bamid Undams 2020), which for some reason surprises her university colleague, the more so that the lecturer slanders “her students and the university where [...] she worked, gaining a tolerant milieu and friendly partners over the years” (ibidem).

It is not surprising in this context that the lecturer’s case “upset politicians of the ruling right, who considered it an example of censorship introduced at universi-

ties by the dominant left” (Leszczyński 2020a), the latter being categorised as – as results from the above – all views left of the far right. It was not surprising therefore that this position was supported by the local bishop.

To the surprise of the scientific community, the Minister of Science and Higher Education got involved in the matter, considering that the students’ complaint poses a threat to the freedom of scientific research (Gowin: *Wpiszemy...*, 2020; Miech 2020), and even that “universities are increasingly cases of restricting academic freedom” (Szewioła 2020). In this context, the minister stated that “we are dealing with growing ideological aggression” (Słowik 2020). The minister did not remind people, however, that the concept of *ideological aggression* originates from the documents of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Polish United Workers’ Party (PZPR), conceptually referring to the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* (Rykiel 2006).

The minister said: “We will not allow extremely ideologised environments to censor” (Leszczyński 2020a), apparently not understanding the concept of ideologisation or censorship. The latter presumption would be an interpretation favourable morally, but unfavourable intellectually for the minister. Emphasizing that “the fundamental value that must be respected in the world of science is freedom” (Leszczyński 2020a), the minister stated that he was “[p]articularly appalled [...] by scandalous accusations” (ibidem) against the lecturer who – as indicated above – imposed on students a worldview that is a manifestation of intolerance if not discrimination. Such behaviour was considered by the minister “to express the view fully coincident with the Polish Constitution” (ibidem). Declaring his will to uphold freedom, the minister announced an amendment to the act on higher education prepared under his leadership (Gowin: *Wpiszemy...*, 2020; Leszczyński 2020a). This amendment would consist of entering the freedom to “express views and conduct scientific research” (Leszczyński 2020a).

The minister indicated three – in his opinion – necessary amendments to the act. The first would be the clause of the freedom to express views and the freedom to conduct scientific research (Gowin: *Wpiszemy...*, 2020; Płuciennik 2020b). Secondly, rectors are to be obliged to monitor and comply with the principle of freedom understood in this way, and sanctions will be imposed on rectors who fail to comply with

these obligations (*Gowin: Wpiszemy...*, 2020). Thirdly – *in accordance with the principle of university autonomy – the Ministry will introduce a new body [italics ZR] – a commission that will investigate violations of the freedom of lectures and scientific research (ibidem). Four out of nine committee members will be appointed by the minister (MNiSW...*, 2020).

Five odd elements can be seen in the minister's action. Firstly, the minister, who verbally recalls his attachment to the autonomy of universities, interferes in the individual case of one of the universities without the request of either party of the dispute. Secondly, the minister – based on this individual case – announces legislative changes in his own act on freedom of scientific research (Miech 2020; Szewiła 2020), which is a clear corruption of law (Szewiła 2020). Thirdly, referring to the principle of autonomy, the minister interferes with this very autonomy (ibidem). Fourthly, under the slogan of defending the freedom of scientific research, the minister is trying to limit this freedom (Miech 2020) by equating the right to proclaim nonsense at the university with the right to freedom of research. Fifthly, as it results from the above, the minister either does not know or does not understand the provisions of the constitution. It is no wonder then, that the rectors, when expressing their opinion on the amendment to the bill proposed by the minister, stated that “[u]niversities cannot be a forum for dilettantes pretending to be experts in a given field” (Kwiatkowska, Słowik, 2020).

3. Freedom of science vs freedom of speech

The freedom of science, also called academic freedom, “embraces freedom in research, learning, teaching and publication. All of these activities should be dedicated to identifying the truth and learning about the truth” (Fink 2019: 1). However, this is not as easy as it may seem. Theoretically, science adopts the classical definition of truth (*veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus*) or dialectical definition (i.e. classical one, historically and culturally specific), but in practice the conventional definition is adopted, in which the truth of the theorem is assessed on the basis of general (even though not universal) agreement.

The discussion of the freedom of science should now include the ethical aspects of this freedom, protection of individual human rights, conflicts of interest, political pressures, the emergence of fake news and creation of “alternative facts” disseminated especially through social networks (Fink 2019: 17). The relationship between “academic freedom and employment (academic tenure)” cannot be overlooked, either (ibidem). In this context, therefore, freedom of science also includes the traditional autonomy of universities. However, the question of the relationship between the freedom of research and freedom of expression with the responsibility for the latter remains open, as discussed below.

In this context, it is difficult to conclude that the students’ complaint against the lecturer indicated above constitutes a threat to the freedom of scientific research, since it is only the exercise of rights. Freedom of speech is in fact subordinated to the freedom of research (cf. Miech 2020). It was even argued that there is no freedom of speech (Fish 1994) – at least in a normative sense, because freedom of opinion and preaching is always limited – legally or socially, the principle of politeness being an example (Płuciennik 2020b).

In this context, freedom of speech is not that a lecturer has the right to say anything (Szymanek 2020), and universities can preach any view (Szewioła 2020). Academic freedom is not “the right to tell lies and nonsense without any resistance from the academic community and the universities themselves. Academic freedom is the freedom of research and scientific expression, and presentation of opinions (including political), as well as the right of professors, deans and rectors to be free to ensure that the university rooms are not used for unworthy purposes, and for that nobody [...] could imagine that since science is free, everyone has the right to enter the university and say anything. [...] Universities are free to manage their resources and their space. To be part of it, one must meet certain criteria of rationality, competence and culture” (Hartman 2020). Of course, it is easy to indicate that *lies* and *nonsense* are generally inter-subjective categories, i.e. historically and culturally conditioned, but it cannot be denied that – despite these reservations – at least some of them can be considered objective categories, e.g. the argument that the use of an insertion of intrauterine device causes the birth of a child with an ingrown insertion into the head.

Therefore, one can agree that what should be happening at universities should be within the limits of scientific discussion, which means that the lecturer cannot *ex cathedra* make judgments that are clearly incompatible with scientific knowledge, e.g. the view that the Earth rests on the shells of four turtles (Miech 2020). University lecturers have “obligations arising from the very ethos of science and the university. The lecturer is to convey to students only those statements that have been accepted by science, or may not have obtained such acceptance yet, but are candidates to receive it” (Szymanek 2020).

The lecturer may, of course, “present statements that are more or less controversial, but in no case is he allowed to present controversial statements as proven and uncontested, or proved and uncontested as controversial” (Szymanek 2020). Even if it can be argued that in science there are no theorems and, especially statements, which are undisputed, since they are all inter-subjective, it is easier to find statements which are manifestly false as in the case of the abovementioned intrauterine device. The lecturer presenting such statements “lies to students. The student must know whether a given view is generally accepted in a given discipline, or [...] it is the opinion of a lecturer who [-] maybe [-] is an outstanding scientist, but this opinion is not shared by all his colleagues” (ibidem).

“The scandal is that the lecturer presents his ideology, e.g. the teachings of the leaders of the cult he confesses, as scientific knowledge. This is a mere abuse” (ibidem) of the position taken by the lecturer to indoctrinate persons being subordinated to him. If, therefore, the lecturer claims that the foetus is a human person, without indicating that this is the lecturer’s private view, which is not considered by science (Szymanek 2020), such lecturer is embezzling the university ethos also because “he does not perform his [...] obligations arising from the employment contract, lecturing things not belonging to the discipline” (ibidem). At the university, there can only be room for scientific truth – falsifiable and subjected to procedures (Płuciennik 2020b), different in different disciplines and obtained by different methods, but scientific. Science is not an exchange of views (Płuciennik 2020b; Szewiła 2020), even though it is based on an exchange of views, the content presented at the university cannot be, therefore, unrestricted (Szewiła 2020).

“Academic freedom cannot be decreed nor can it be guarded by any supervisor” (Hartman 2020). The freedom of the academic community is “a matter of its own culture and morale, not laws and offices” (ibidem). Although the culture and morale of the academic community may go astray, it is not certain that the state supervisor is by definition free from such temptations. This is not difficult, especially with specific human resources policy, but more in supervisory than in academic areas, which is clearly visible nowadays.

As part of the freedom of speech, so appreciated by the minister, “a Polish university, occupying 18,247th place within 20,745 universities from around the world in the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas ranking of Madrid, sued a professor who wrote that such universities should not exist at all, because the education they offer is ‘shameless shit’” (Hartman 2020). The court punished the defendant by forcing payment of “horrendously high compensation” (ibidem), which observers considered was “probably the most serious attack on freedom of speech and the most scandalous case of repression against a person acting in the public interest that knows the history of academic life” (ibidem) of post-transformation Poland. The Minister of Science, who values freedom of speech, did not comment on this matter.

4. Freedom by limiting

The amendments to the Act on Higher Education proposed by the minister are intended, on the one hand, to consolidate the building of new rituals transferred from corporate culture in universities and, on the other, to limit the freedom of rectors (Szewioła 2020) in deciding what lectures and meetings may take place at – formally autonomous – universities (Leszczyński 2020c). People dissatisfied with the rector’s cancellation of a meeting with supporters of the flatness of the Earth (Płuciennik 2020a), radical anti-abortionists (Płuciennik, Rakowska-Trela, 2020), climate deniers, eco-fascists (Płuciennik 2020b) or with the far-right politicians will be able to appeal to the commission appointed by the minister (Leszczyński 2020c), which – supposedly for the sake of freedom of speech (Miech 2020) – will decide whether students rightly recognize that the lecturer does not read lectures, but “rather tries to sell his ideological views and makes statements that have no basis in scientific

knowledge” (ibidem). Therefore, the special committee of the minister will know better than the academic community what the limits of freedom of scientific research are, even though it is not known on what basis the commission would make such substantive assessments (Szewioła 2020). An external commission would therefore be a constraint on academic freedom (ibid). Rectors will have a duty to protect freedom of opinions – including of those accused of homophobia (Płuciennik 2020b). “Because without the whip, [academic] freedom cannot be introduced” (Hartman 2020).

Therefore, after these legislative changes, there will be a contradiction between the text of the doctoral vow, which promises to conduct scientific research “to discover and disseminate the truth” (Płuciennik 2020b), and the provisions of the act, which promotes the freedom to express views. Admittedly, only the freedom to express views will allow us to reach the truth, provided that it is supplemented with the necessity of bearing responsibility for the views expressed. However, it is hard to resist the impression that the forthcoming amendment to the act confuses the exchange of views with imposing them, and the responsibility for the views expressed is understood as it was in the case of Giordano Bruno.

Therefore, after the announced legislative changes, the university will change into Hyde Park’s Speakers’ Corner (Miech 2020), where everyone has the right to speak any nonsense, and to preach ideology instead of providing scientific knowledge. This is part of a wider phenomenon called “the mobilisation of primitivism and stupidity” (Baczyński 2020), which can even be considered a “devastating attack on knowledge and competence-based elites” (Wilk 2020: 14). As pointed out, “people from the [political] nomination took care of culture, who do not know it at all. Their competences are null [...]. In this way, these losers compensate for their own complexes” (Wróblewski 2020: 89). And the fact that science and higher education is not included in culture in the division of ministerial competences, not only does not weaken the accuracy of this observation, it even strengthens it.

It is not surprising that the minister’s nervous legislative activities are moving in the direction set for some time by the ultra-Catholic Institute for Legal Culture *Ordo Iuris* (Hartman 2020; Leszczyński 2020c; Płuciennik 2020b), whose views, if not actions, were close to the minister (Hartman 2020). This was demonstrated by the well

known minister's statements, as well as activities in the evaluation of publications and journals worthy of ministerial support. Interestingly, "the draft amendments to the act – almost exactly in line with what the minister announced" (Leszczyński 2020a) – is to be found on the Ordo Iuris website (cf. Płuciennik 2020b). It is hard to resist the impression that "the purpose of these machinations is to ensure the possibility of proclaiming at universities well-known arguments of Christian fundamentalists, for example [...] that homosexuality is a dangerous disease or that Jews were doing well in [Nazi] ghettos" (Hartman 2020).

"The extensive justification prepared by lawyers from Ordo Iuris is also very interesting" (Leszczyński 2020a). They write that the regulations are aimed at "creating a mechanism ensuring better protection of freedom of expression at Polish universities" (ibidem), where they were supposed to be limited "in the last ten years" (ibidem). The amendment to the act also recommends universities to "respect state axiology" (ibidem), a concept unknown in Polish law. It is about the "cultural Christian heritage", which – according to Ordo Iuris – is the "foundation of the entire legal system" (ibidem). This is to say that "Christian values" would be legally protected and "disseminated" by universities, despite the fact that Poland is a secular state (Leszczyński 2020a). To sum up, it should be stated that the minister, "clearly inspired by the project of the extreme-right" (ibidem), wants to deprive universities of the right to decide what is admissible at the university and what goes beyond science and breaks its rules (ibidem). Therefore, it is difficult to disagree with the opinion that the amendment to the act being prepared is there to muzzle scientists (Płuciennik 2020b), while the Minister of Science and Higher Education is a fire-fighter arsonist "who raises the alarm after damage, which he caused" (Temkin ..., 2020).

The system of promoting freedom by restricting it would not, however, be closed if the minister did not have the support of the president. The latter, not having the power to assess the academic achievements of individual scholars, signs their professorships. Recently, however, it turned out that the president has delayed signing the professorship of a scientist whom he dislikes for political reasons for two years, and another for over a year (*Zacięte pióro...*, 2020). The president's office said of the latter case that "the president has no deadlines" (ibidem), while world-renowned

scientists, who expressed readiness to present an assessment of the scientific achievements of one of the aforementioned scientists, were told that the president “would not use their assessment, because he has legal and ethical doubts about the impartiality of the reviewers” (Leszczyński 2020b).

5. Strategies for limiting freedom

The above-mentioned Ordo Iuris is not simply an organisation promoting its conservative views, but rather trying to bring about “such changes in secular Polish law that it reflects the restrictively [...] interpreted principles of the Christian religion” (Nowak, Ambroziak, 2020). This would be aimed at a “cultural and religious counterrevolution in Poland” (*Kontrrewolucja...*, 2020) by excluding other views, including those accepted in science. These activities, which are part of the pan-European project of right-wing Christian fundamentalists (Nowak, Ambroziak, 2020), are subject to a well-thought-out strategy in the ideological struggle for “restoring the natural order coherent to natural law” (ibidem), however in so far as it is “natural”, being based on religious precepts. This is “the vision of religious extremists urging European societies to reject human rights in sexuality and reproduction” (ibidem). In this “order”, there is no place for either non-heteronormative people or women’s reproductive freedom (ibidem). The actions of Ordo Iuris are directed against: (1) divorces, (2) sex education, (3) abortion, contraception and *in vitro* fertilisation, and (4) the rights of non-heterosexual persons (Nowak, Ambroziak, 2020).

The strategy of Ordo Iuris, but also organisations and people with similar ideology, includes: (1) a reversal strategy, (2) a takeover strategy, (3) a slandering strategy, (4) a legitimacy strategy, (5) a language manipulation strategy, (6) a manipulation of law strategy, (7) lawsuits with a chilling effect, and (8) promotion of the conscience clause.

The reversal strategy is to use the opponent’s tools against him, depriving the opponent of the victim status and granting it himself or herself. An example is the statement that (1) non-heteronormative people are not discriminated against, (2) sex education is a “sexualisation of children”, (3) believing Christians are victims of the

cultural revolution, and (4) legal prevention of domestic violence is unwarranted state interference into family relations (Nowak, Ambroziak, 2020).

The takeover strategy is about taking over the language of human rights so that conservative demands are defined as “rights”. An important element of the strategy is a “colonisation of human rights”, i.e. “stylistic formation of religiously inspired opinions on sexuality and parenthood so that they resemble the classic language of human rights” (Nowak, Ambroziak, 2020). “The right of fathers to prevent their children from being aborted” (ibidem) is one example.

The slandering strategy involves insulting opponents, including institutions that do not favour conservative views. The language of constant accusation of aggression is being introduced into public debate while substantive debate is avoided. Repeating these allegations consists in forcing one’s own message without entering into dialogue (Nowak, Ambroziak, 2020).

The legitimacy strategy is that a person or organisation acquires the status of recognized debater. It consists in “building the image of a specialist and professional organisation which, through membership in universally recognized forums, legitimises its own voice in the debate” (Nowak, Ambroziak, 2020). Applying for international institutional accreditation is one element of this strategy (ibidem).

The language manipulation strategy consists of (cf. Nowak, Ambroziak, 2020):

- (1) avoiding neutral terms and replacing them with your own; e.g. the terms “unborn child” or “conceived child” are introduced instead of the terms *embryo* and *foetus*; “murder” – instead of *abortion*; “eugenics” – instead of *in vitro* fertilisation;
- (2) introducing into the language of discussion and jurisdiction expressions suggesting the lack of objection, e.g. “undoubtedly”, “obviously”, “as is well known”, etc.;
- (3) the use of strongly evaluative terms and antinomies, e.g. “morality – immorality”, “values – anti-values”;
- (4) presenting unconfirmed information and denying empirically confirmed facts and evidence, e.g. “the post-abortion syndrome” or combining homosexuality with paedophilia.

The manipulation of law strategy consists of presenting legal analysis of the issue selectively or in violation of the principles of legal interpretation in order to distort the understanding of concepts (Nowak, Ambroziak, 2020), e.g. discrimination and freedom of speech and research.

The lawsuits with a chilling effect consist of intimidating an opponent with the suggestion that (s)he may lose the trial – with painful consequences – for the alleged violation of the applicant's personal rights or other, even imaginary, rights. In the case of Ordo Iuris, the freezing effect is even more effective because this organisation has close connections, at least ideologically, with the current power camp (cf. Nowak, Ambroziak, 2020).

The extensively interpreted conscience clause, promoted by Ordo Iuris and willingly supported by the current ruling camp, aims to legally protect ideologically motivated conservative behaviour while discrediting liberal rights. This law is most widely used to refuse (1) performing legal abortions by doctors, (2) selling contraceptives by pharmacists, and (3) by printers for printing ideologically neutral materials signed by organisations not ideologically suited to the printers. As a result, freedom of conscience and economic freedom obtain legal primacy over the constitutional principle of non-discrimination (Nowak, Ambroziak, 2020).

6. Coronavirus of science

At the end of 2019, the Covid-19 epidemic broke out in China, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, which in the beginning of 2020 took the form of a pandemic. In Poland, it has shown that extreme centralisation not only does not eliminate impossibilism of power, but even strengthens it, and that for common effective remote work, an efficient ICT network is needed, rather than megalomaniac investments in destroying the natural environment.

It turned out that the current model of social relations had come to an end, after which far-reaching changes could be expected. In this context, the Polish Minister of Science and Higher Education has shown attachment to constitutional changes as a method of regulating emerging challenges. Taking advantage of his experience with the parliamentary act called affectively the Constitution for Science (cf. Rykiel

2019), the minister, also being deputy prime minister, proposed to break the impasse – consisting in the prospect of holding presidential elections during the pandemic escalation – by amending Poland’s constitution (Kompa 2020). Because he did not find support for his proposal even in his own government, he resigned (*Jarosław ...*, 2020), which the scientific community acknowledged with relief (Kompa 2020) – probably prematurely, because the minister left, but his “Constitution for Science” remained.

It is claimed (Kompa 2020) that the minister should have resigned long ago – not because of his lack of support for his current draft amendment to the constitution, but because of the systemic marginalisation of Polish science with his “Constitution for Science”, which ignored the opinions of the scientific environment and, indeed, conflicted with it (cf. Kompa 2020). Before his resignation, the minister proposed – instead of money – treasury bonds to the best universities (Dąbkowski 2020), wishing “more money for Polish science, unfettered working conditions [and] better understanding in society” (*Gowin: Życze ...*, 2020). Therefore, it is difficult not to share the opinion that among many “exams in political ethics in the last five years”, the minister “failed all of them” (Kompa 2020).

The coronavirus acts in two perspectives: directly it “is deadly dangerous to the infected” (Bendyk 2020), while by “its allies – useful idiots without imagination – it breaks down entire societies” (*ibidem*). For the last three decades, the message of the need to compete globally has dominated. As a result, “an evaluation obsession to measure everything that was possible came [...] on the border of the grotesque”. However, the world we knew ended within a month (*Nasz świat ...*, 2020). “There will be no return to the old model of life” (*ibidem*). It is doubtful if the culture of the “unbearable race” (Żakowski 2020: 25), “rush, immediate reward, increasingly shorter horizons of thinking, doing everything in time” (*ibidem*), numerically measurable results and immediate results (*ibidem*) could survive.

The crisis we are experiencing because of the coronavirus is structural. This suggests that there should be no return to such a structure of the economy (Bendyk 2020), but also management, as before the crisis. Maybe it will be time to liquidate the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in its current form, or even for a far-reaching change in the way to select legislative authorities.

At present, however, there is little indication that after the expiry of the coronavirus pandemic the attitude of the Polish state to science will change for the better. Rather, it is possible to anticipate further underfinancing of science, bureaucratisation of its management and resolution of complex scientific issues with simple political, ideologically motivated, decisions, which would be part of the further strengthening of the central executive (Rydlewski 2020). After the ideological public debate on the 1050th anniversary of the alleged baptism of Poland, the Sejm, on 22 February 2019, by voting by a majority of 279 out of 460 votes, said that “baptism and the beginnings of the Polish statehood could not be separated” (Urbańczyk 2020) and, to commemorate the “baptism of Poland”, the event dates to 14 April 966. Although there are no documents from the period confirming the very fact of this baptism, later documents give the date of the event under consideration between 996 and 998, nothing is known about the time of year of the event, the name *Poland* appeared several dozen years later, “the conversion of the prince and his immediate surroundings did not initiate widespread changes in the religious sphere” (Urbańczyk 2020: 61), because the prince “could not or did not want to launch an effective Christianisation” (Urbańczyk 2020: 62) and he himself inherited his own territorial state – and maybe even a personal Christianity – after his ancestors. All of this is irrelevant to politicians who are building the ideological national myth, to which science is not only unnecessary, but even disturbs this endeavour. Subsequently, it can be expected that the hour of the alleged “baptism of Poland” will be determined, e.g. by a Presidential ordinance.

It cannot be excluded that “the reality after the epidemic will become even more violent in the long run” (*Nasz świat ...*, 2020). The gap between the core and the semi-periphery will deepen, which will be severe for Poland, including Polish science, both of whom are marginalised by the current ruling team.

7. References

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Wpłynęło/received 14.05.2020; poprawiono/revised 18.05.2020