



THE REFORM OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS AN ELEMENT INTRODUCING A NEW CONCEPT OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to present the results of the analysis of the impact of the “healing” process of the European higher education system on the management of public universities in Poland. By analysing the process of reforming higher education lasting since 2010, the author will try to answer whether the centrally imposed process of change allowed the universities to get closer to the assumptions worked out in the new public management doctrine.

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INTRODUCTION

If it can be said that the crisis brings any positives, then these include changes usually following thereafter. The Greek *krisis*, from which the word crisis is derived, means the need to make choices under time pressure to avoid negative consequences. According to the dictionary definition, the crisis means a breakthrough period (Drabik, 2009, p. 518). The natural consequence of the crisis is an attempt to overcome the decline. The largest global economic breakdowns – the Great Depression (1929–33), the Oil Crisis (1973) and the financial crisis in 2007 – were characterised by a more or less successful attempt of corrective actions. The rapid deterioration of the economy forces global leaders to redefine the goals and instruments with which they intend to achieve them.

Interesting is the view that the crisis is an impulse for the development of the global economy through the need to seek new solutions (Kołodko, 2010, p. 335).

The aim of the article is to present the results of the analysis of the impact of the “healing” process of the European higher education system on the management of public universities in Poland. By analysing the process of reforming higher education lasting since 2010, the author will try to answer whether the centrally imposed process of change allowed the universities to get closer to the assumptions worked out in the new public management doctrine.

THE CHALLENGES OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE

The crisis that began in the high-risk mortgage loan market in the United States in 2007 also affected Europe and had a significant impact on the shape of the Europe 2020 strategy announced on 3 March 2010. The new strategy for the European Economic Area has been based on three mutually complementary priority areas (COM, [2010], 2020 final version):

- Smart growth,
- Sustainable growth,
- Inclusive growth.

Smart growth, in its assumptions, should be based on knowledge and innovation. For both factors to become the driving forces of the European economy, it is necessary to improve the quality of education, the results of research and development activity and support the transfer of innovation and knowledge to the economy. In addition, the challenges posed by the European higher education system are intensified by the phenomena of globalisation and technological progress. Forecasts regarding the demand of the European economy for highly qualified employees determine the increase of the percentage of the said employees to 35% in 2020 in relation to the total number of employees. The competencies of a general nature as well as creativity and flexibility supported by solid knowledge in a chosen field of science or art will be necessary for functioning in the future economic reality (COM [2010], 682 final version). An analysis of the state of the European higher education system has shown that European institutions are not making the most of their potential. Europe ceased to be a leader in the race for knowledge and talents, giving way to North America and Japan. The proof is in the statistics of the percentage of researchers to the total labour force. In the European Union this rate is 6 out of 100 and is lower than the rates achieved in Japan and the United States by, respectively, 5 and 3 researchers per 100 employees in total (COM [2013], 499 final).

In 2011, the European Commission, recognising the need for changes in higher education in Europe took the initiative under the name *Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernisation of Europe’s higher education systems* (COM [2011] 567 final), which two years later was transformed into a strategy under the name *European higher education in the world* (COM [2013] 499 final). Both documents highlight the rapid increase in the number of students and their geographical structure – the estimated number of students in 2030 will be 414 million, with 99 million students in 2010 (COM [2013] 499 final). It is also important that the greatest growth dynamics of the number of

people wishing to gain higher education is forecasted in China, India and Brazil. It is the growing competitiveness of emerging markets (Asia and Latin America) that has accelerated the inevitable process of reform of the European higher education area.

According to the authors of the European Commission's communication, the decisive factor in reducing the competitiveness of the sector is the insufficient level of expenditure on financing higher education. Investments in higher education in Europe amount to an average of 1.3% of GDP, while in Japan they reach 1.5% of GDP, and in the US this figure increases to 2.7% of GDP. It is worth noting that higher education in the United States is only in 10% financed centrally by the federal government. The rest of revenues is the own income of units (Abramowicz, 2012).

The development initiatives formulate the most important challenges facing the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which include (COM, [2011], 567 final version):

- Raising the level of education, so that the number of graduates and researchers responds to the needs of Europe;
- Improving the quality and suitability of higher education;
- Improving the management and financing;
- Linking higher education, scientific research and business in activities for excellence and regional development;
- Increasing the quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation.

The action plan for the development of the higher education sector also presents numerous instruments that will make it possible to achieve the assumed results. The increase in the percentage of people with higher education is to be achieved, primarily through reaching the widest possible spectrum of social groups with the educational offer.

For this purpose, it will be necessary to introduce mechanisms for recognising education acquired outside the formal education system. Improving the quality of education and higher usefulness of acquired knowledge in professional life is primarily the adjustment of curricula to the current and new needs of the labour market, implemented with the help of employers and labour market institutions. In addition, monitoring the fate of graduates, which is to ensure the preparation of appropriate career paths.

In the education modernisation plan, the use of information and communication technologies to raise the standards and educational opportunities as well as to conduct scientific research will play an important role. The next two areas of intervention are closely related. The European Commission pointed to the need to increase the financing of academic institutions, but at the same time indicated the need to diversify the sources of financing (which is to be achieved by reducing the limitations in generating university revenues). The natural way to diversify the universities' revenues is to use the so-called "knowledge triangle". Universities, acting in partnership with entrepreneurs, perform research for the industry, introduce innovative solutions, thanks to which they have the chance to obtain external financing as well as to commercialise the generated knowledge. Due to the challenges facing educational institutions, more flexible university management systems based on professional staff will also be necessary (COM, [2011], 567 final version).

The last area concerns the broadly understood internationalisation of education. Detailed solutions regarding this issue are presented in the strategy *European higher*

education in the world. The internationalisation of the higher education sector is perceived mainly through the mobility of students and didactic and academic staff.

The Old Continent still remains the leader in terms of the number of people arriving to acquire an academic degree (37.8%), however, the dynamics of this distribution indicates a strong threat from the United States (21.7%) and China (7% with the highest percentage of students opting for international studies) (European Commission, 2012). In order to remain competitive, Europe must take action to positively influence the attractiveness of the European higher education area. The strategy highlights three key categories of intervention (COM [2013] 499 final):

- the mobility of students and employees on an international scale;
- the international dimension and improvement of education curricula and digital education;
- strategic cooperation, partnerships and capacity building.

The first of the components of the strategy of internationalisation of higher education in Europe is to be implemented by continuing international exchange programs and supporting the reliable and formal recognition of competences acquired abroad. In terms of the second area, the need for further global adaptation of national curricula and the possibility of immobile students (80-90% of all students) to enjoy the benefits of international curricula was indicated. As with the developmental challenges of higher education, an important role has been attributed to new technology and to the Internet that has revolutionised teaching opportunities. This is primarily about OER, that is open educational resources, and mass *on-line* courses. Strategic cooperation and capacity building is to consist mainly of ensuring coherence between international strategies and EU policies, implementation of joint and double degrees as well as activities conducive to the establishment of international partnerships and innovation-oriented alliances (COM [2013] 499 final).

The new challenges presented to universities and the need to compete on global markets have led to the need to search for new solutions not only in study programs, educational offers, but also in financing the basic university's principal activities, or creating its mission and strategy. In order to increase the efficiency of resource management, the legislators adopted a model of gradual "freeing" of the university's activities from under the central government. The acquired decision-making autonomy forced universities to search for more effective management methods. The *New Public Management* seems to be a compromise between the boundaries of the decision-making freedom set by the legislator and the universities' need to compete on global markets.

NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

The concept of *New Public Management* aims at replacing bureaucratic procedures with more effective mechanisms of delivering goods and services and increasing the level of performed tasks (Kelly, 1998, p. 201). To achieve the above assumptions, the New Public Management (NPM) transfers management methods and techniques known from the private sector to the public administration and includes non-profit institutions in co-deciding on the implementation of public tasks (Osborne, Geabler, 1994, pp. 470-478).

The origin of the NPM dates back to the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, although the very concept of management in administration has evolved over many decades. The beginnings of formulating the tasks faced by the administration in the theory of management are the works of Max Weber, while the NPM is the next step in the evolution of the approach to management of administration. As presented by H. Izdebski, several stages of the development of this philosophy can be distinguished (Izdebski, 2007, p. 8):

- old public administration (OPA);
- public management (PM);
- new public management (NPM);
- public governance (PG).

By perceiving the development of administration management as a process, it can be assumed that the NPM is the direct successor of public management. Depending on the direction of public management development, four models can be distinguished (Hausner, 2002):

- market government;
- participative government;
- flexible government;
- deregulated government.

The New Public Management is a proper development of the concept of market governance. As can be seen, the *New Public Management* is not the final form of administration management development, which should strive to involve society in making decisions on the allocation of funds and the production of public goods and services.

For further analysis, it is necessary to know the features that the NPM model should be characterised with. The multiplicity of classifications and the criteria by which a new approach to administration management is defined makes it difficult to clearly define the NPM pattern. At the very beginning, it should be noted that the NPM manifests itself in four main areas – administration, business management, policy conducting and implementation as well as human resources management. Depending on the aspect that is dominant, different characteristics of the concept of new public management are presented (Opolski, Modzelewski, 2004).

The New Public Management according to Ch. Hood consists of seven basic elements (Hood, 1999 after: Czarnecki, 2011, p. 23):

- professional management in the public sector (strengthening of managerial powers);
- specifying standards and indicators for measuring the effectiveness (clearly defined and measurable objectives);
- control of results (allocation of funds and rewards determine the results);
- division of institutions (independence, financial autonomy);
- promoting competitiveness (fixed-term contracts, tenders, market mechanisms);
- use of concepts, management techniques from the private sector;
- expenditure rationalisation / expenditure reduction, budget discipline;

Based on the above elements J. Supernat (2004, pp.469-490) formulated guidelines for the model of administration operating according to the NPM principles:

- Public administration should be oriented first at achieving results, and only then at operational processes.
- When providing goods and rendering services, the administration must use market competition mechanisms;
- Orientation of administration on consumers;
- Administration should focus on ensuring the availability of certain goods, not necessarily producing them by itself;
- Public administration should be deregulated;
- Departure from the hierarchy for team work and the liberation of the initiative and creativity of employees;
- The administration must make better use of its resources (human resources and material) delivering higher quality at a lower cost;
- The organisational culture of public administration should be characterised by flexibility, innovation, problem solving and entrepreneurship;
- Public administration should, as a rule, be apolitical;
- Additional roles for managers in the administration:
 - an architect of consensus,
 - a promoter of local affairs,
 - an interpreter of local values,
 - a model of ethical behaviour,
 - a co-executor of local authority.

Summing up the presented NPM characteristics, it can be noticed that the main emphasis in this management concept was placed on the application of the “3xE” principle – economy, efficiency and effectiveness. This goal is to be achieved by redefining the objectives of administration units, applying market solutions in the field of organisational structures, allocation of resources and other areas of the functioning of the administration, as well as changing the culture of organisation and mentality of administration employees (all levels) (Zawicki, 2002, pp. 78-79).

The last element of the description of the New Public Management concept is the presentation of critical voices about the effectiveness of methods, the correctness of the assumptions adopted in the concept and the possible negative consequences of the NPM concept. The main postulate of the critics of the NPM is the difference of administration from entities operating in the market reality. The specificity of administration, the purpose of its existence and the network of dependencies mean that the adoption of economic measures is insufficient and does not reflect the full picture of the usefulness of the administration’s activities. An important disadvantage of the NPM is also the fear of disproportion between citizens in access to public services. The deconcentration of service provision may result in significant differences in the public service standard depending on the place where it is provided. Another “charge” made against the NPM is the lack of effective cost reduction in administration. Threats posed by corrupt officials, artificially inflated costs by employees or high costs of entities operating within outsourcing (these are entities conducting business activity aimed at generating profits), do not allow for a reliable analysis of the effectiveness of undertaken activities. The last

negative element of the NPM indicated is the relationship between the citizen and the state. As far as citizens are concerned, treating them exclusively as consumers of public goods and services can form a demanding attitude in citizens without reflecting on the common good and joint responsibility.

On the other hand, ruling individuals may avoid political responsibility for actions (or their lack) in the public sphere by shifting the burden to autonomously operating administration units (Ochnio, 2012).

THE REFORM OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN POLAND

The consequence of signing in 1999 the Bologna Declaration by ministers responsible for higher education in 29 Member States of the European Union was the initiation of the implementation of the Bologna Process. The idea of the Process was to open a coherent concept of education in the course of 10 years, the so-called European Higher Education Area. In 2005, Poland, as one of the signatories of the Declaration, carried out the legislative process of the new act – *Law on Higher Education*. Gradually introduced changes meant that in 2010 the Polish higher education system has become an element of the European Higher Education Area.

The EHEA understood in a wider context has become a component of a wider process – building a Europe of Knowledge (Kraśniewski, 2007, pp. 63–65). The next stage in the development¹ of the EHEA idea was its evolution and improvements that give it its global character. The defined challenges and the developed guidelines have made all the participants in the Bologna Process obliged to modernise the national higher education systems. In Poland, this adjustment took the form of another reform. The scope of the reform includes a change in the educational system – a reform carried out in the form of six acts passed by the Sejm on 18.03.2011, a change to the legal regulations concerning higher education, i.e. an amendment to the acts: The Law on Higher Education and the act on academic degrees and titles and the announcement of more than fifty regulations accompanying the acts and development of a strategy for the development of Polish science and higher education in a few years perspective. The first package of acts has been in force since the academic year 2011/12, while the second package of regulations became effective in the next academic year. (Ministry of Science and Higher Education [MNiSW], 2012).

The effect of the reform is to implement the slogan “5x5”, that is five Polish universities in the first hundred European rankings within five years. To achieve this goal, five features have been selected, which should characterise the university. These are: autonomy and creativity, openness to the world, entrepreneurship and practice, ethics and transparency as well as aspiration policy.

The reform is to contribute to ensuring: to Polish students – the highest quality education, to the scholars – the conditions for participation in the largest international research projects, and to universities – the possibility of continuous development (Main

¹ In this case, development activities are aimed at mitigating the effects of the decline of the European system's competitiveness towards identical systems in Asia and Latin America.

Council of Science and Higher Education or the Polish Rectors Foundation [KRASP], 2010a).

In subsequent years, the *Law on Higher Education* has been amended several times, mainly to improve legislative errors, but also by introducing new solutions to the functioning of the university, including adjustments postulated by academic circles. In its current form, the Law on Higher Education has been in operation since September 2014 (Journal of Laws of 2014, item 1198), although numerous environments (e.g. the Main Council of Science and Higher Education or the Polish Rectors Foundation) call for deregulation of the higher education sector, which would be reflected in another amendment to the act.

The reform carried out in 2010–2014 was to focus primarily on four issues (Main Council of Science and Higher Education or the Polish Rectors Foundation [KRASP], 2010b):

- developing an effective model of higher education management;
- program autonomy and the quality of education;
- dynamic career model;
- increasing the entitlements of students and PhD students.

The issues of governance of the higher education system and some issues related to the quality of education and the autonomy of the university have a significant relationship with the NPM issues, while the other two areas of the reform have a much smaller impact on the implementation of the new management model. In the further part of the article only changes that directly or indirectly affect the sphere of university management will be presented. Below is a catalogue of the most important, from the point of view of this analysis, statutory provisions reforming the law on higher education:²

- introduction of pro-quality financing;
- introduction of mechanisms for selecting the National Leading Research Centres;
- increasing the rector's competences;
- two alternative procedures for appointing a rector, vice-rectors, heads of the basic university organisational unit and their deputies;
- limitation of sitting in the senate of a university and a convention up to no more than two consecutive terms;
- changes in the rules of the financial management of the university;
- abolishing the requirement to approve statutes of universities and rules of studies by the minister;
- allowing consolidation of basic university's organisational units, while maintaining academic and teaching qualifications;
- defining the duties and competences for the university's research and teaching staff;
- clarifying the employment relationship between the university and an academic teacher;

² The process of reforming the act – *Law on Higher Education* of 27 July 2005 (Journal of Laws of 2005, No. 164, item 1365) was based on numerous acts and regulations. The legal acts that brought the greatest changes in the said act were two acts amending the act – Law on Higher Education and some other acts: the act of 18.03.2011. (Journal of Laws 2011, No. 84, item 455) and the act of 11 July 2014 (Journal of Laws of 2014, item 1198).

- competitions for the positions of academic teachers;
- limiting periods of employment at assistant professor and adjunct professor positions;
- restriction of nepotism;
- clarifying the issue of holding numerous university positions by the university's research and teaching staff;
- evaluation of academic teachers;
- introduction of the National Qualifications Framework;
- introduction of an internal quality assurance system;
- monitoring the fate of graduates;
- the possibility of education with the participation of the employer as well as education at its own request;
- introduction of joint diplomas;
- creation of the POL-on information system;
- confirmation of qualifications acquired outside the formal education system;
- change of regulations regarding the creation and functioning of university companies;
- regulation of copyright.

In accordance with the reform assumptions and programming documents prepared by the European Commission, changes in the higher education sector focus on several main areas – adapting the sector to the needs of the economy, the internationalisation of the sector, and making the academic career models more dynamic.

THE IMPACT OF HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM ON NEW STANDARDS OF MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

Already at the beginning of the analysis, it can be noticed that the reform of higher education is a classic example of an imposed change. Assuming that the imposed change is a modification designed and submitted for implementation by an external authority (Czermiński, et al., 2002, p. 471) (in this case the Ministry of Science and Higher Education), the appropriateness of introducing a given change will not be considered. The effectiveness of adopting guidelines on the basis of individual institutions also remains outside the framework of analysis, because even incorrect implementation of the change does not affect the assumed direction of modification.

The summary of provisions of the reform along with the corresponding New Public Management guidelines is presented below. The table has been developed in such a way that appropriate NPM characteristics have been assigned to individual provisions of the reform. The last column of the table explains how statutory changes implement the guidelines for the concept of new public management.

Table 1: Higher education reform and NPM

No.	Area of reform	Area of NPM	The manner of implementing the NPM assumptions
1.	introduction of pro-quality financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus on results 	The pro-quality financing system forces universities to modernise their methods and constantly improve their results.
2.	introduction of mechanisms for selecting the National Leading Research Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus on results 	
3.	increasing the rector's competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the professionalisation of management • independence of institutions 	Increasing the flexibility of using funds allows to increase efficiency
4.	two alternative procedures for the appointment of the university's single-person bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the professionalisation of management 	Thanks to the competition modes, universities gain the possibility of being managed by professional staff.
5.	limitation of sitting in the senate of the university and the convention for no more than two consecutive terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no reference 	n/a
6.	changes in the rules of the university's financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus on results • promoting competitiveness 	The change has a significant impact on the university management – the departure from the historical budget in favour of the allocation of subsidy algorithms results in the need to implement indicators and management rationalisation.
7.	allowing consolidation of basic university organisational units, while maintaining academic and teaching powers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the independence of institutions 	The transfer of powers from the ministry to the university strengthens its autonomy, however, the scope of this change does not significantly affect the processes related to the management of the institution.
8.	defining duties and competences for university's research and teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus on results 	The normalisation of the employment relationship, periods of employment and employee duties allow the management to effectively manage human resources at the university. Thanks to the competition procedures, universities have a chance to
9.	clarifying the employment relationship between the university and the academic teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting competitiveness 	

10.	competitions for the positions of academic teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting competitiveness 	win the best (often cheaper) employees.
11.	limitation of periods of employment in assistant professor and adjunct professor positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting competitiveness • focus on results 	
12.	limitation of nepotism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting competitiveness 	
13.	clarifying the issue of holding numerous positions by the university's research and teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no reference 	n/a
14.	evaluation of academic teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • control of results 	The introduction of assessments of academic teachers provides the management with tools for human resource management. In addition, it is motivating and triggers the initiative at employees.
15.	introduction of the National Qualifications Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of results • Promoting competitiveness 	Establishing the qualifications framework has set a clear framework for competition in the educational services sector. The tool for comparing university offers forces them to increase their attractiveness towards market rivals.
16.	introduction of an internal quality assurance system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of results 	Ensuring the measurement of the quality of services provided is an important element in the policy of moving away from the procedural approach to focusing on results.
17.	monitoring the fate of graduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of results • Promoting competitiveness 	Monitoring allows to assess the quality of education and increase the attractiveness of the educational offer (better adaptation to the needs of the labour market).
18.	the possibility of education with the participation of the employer as well as education at its own request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting competitiveness 	Involve labour market institutions in developing educational programs results in better adjustment to market realities and is an element of co-participation of the environment in the provision of services.

19.	abolition of the requirement to approve the statutes of universities and the rules of studies by the minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independence of institutions 	See point 7
20.	introduction of joint diplomas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reference 	n/a
21.	creation of the POL-on information system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reference 	n/a
22.	confirmation of qualifications acquired outside the formal education system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reference 	n/a
23.	change in regulations regarding the creation and functioning of university companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting competitiveness • Focus on results 	The change allows for the diversification of sources of university's revenues. The commercialisation of knowledge also allows to assess the effectiveness of R&D activities undertaken
24.	regulation of copyright issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reference 	n/a

Source: own elaboration.

The reform of higher education to the greatest extent fulfils the postulate of NPM in the area of focus on results. Moving away from the process to consequential thinking at the university is to facilitate 11 provisions of the reform, which is nearly half of the analysed changes.

It should be noted, however, that on the basis of academic institutions, one should distinguish at least two groups of indicators whose achievement the university is interested in. The first group are indicators that can be directly proportionally translated into revenues (resulting from the algorithmisation of subsidies and/or from the commercial use of research results), or translated into savings (change in the ranking of researchers after the periods set to achieve the academic degree). The second set consists of indicators (results) that do not translate directly into revenues. Achieving the desired results in this group allows better adjustment of the educational offer to the needs of the labour market, improving the quality of education and university staff. Eight changes positively affect the promotion of market activities and competitive behaviour. As in the case of indications regarding focus on results, obtaining a competitive advantage in a university is possible in a very broad, directly unrelated spectrum of issues. Next are NPM areas related to the professionalisation of university management and increasing its autonomy (two indications). Increasing the rights of individuals and admitting the competition modes of selection of the management staff is a model example of the concept of the NPM concept. One-fourth of the analysed provisions do not directly affect the implementation of the New Public Management concept in an educa-

tional institution. A large representation of negative indications confirms the claim that improving the quality of university management is just one of the reasons for undertaking the system modernisation activities.

The previous considerations concerned positive aspects of the implementation of the reform and its impact on the implementation of the NPM principles to the university. However, it is impossible to address the issue without presenting negative effects or unsuccessful implementation of assumptions on the basis of educational institutions. The objections raised against the reform formulated by the academic circles to a large extent are a manifestation of environmental concerns about the direction of changes in higher education. Opponents of the reform emphasise the traditional mission and values presented by universities. In their opinion, universities in the pursuit of utilitarianism lose their basic mission of educating society. Competition in obtaining research grants, competition for subsidies for basic activities, competition for positions – all of these may lead to the escalation of conflict between individual centres. Another concern is the need to change the current model of a researcher – the need to fight for financial resources and related reporting can significantly reduce the amount of time devoted to conducting scientific research, and thus have a negative impact on their quality. As an undesirable effect of reforms, there is also mentioned the progressive specialisation among academic teachers for: administrators, educators, managers and researchers, although in this case the specialisation, while ensuring the adequate representation of each group, can positively influence the level of didactics as well as the quality of conducted research. Another disadvantage of the reform is the lack of consistency in the implementation of certain activities. An example of this lack may be the election of the rector and the way of concluding contracts with academic teachers. From the point of view of the NPM assumptions, the professionalisation of management and better use of resources (in this case human resources), leaving two alternative paths of the rector's selection (competition and traditional through elections) and the inability to abolish employment based on the appointment for the majority of research and teaching staff at the university, constitute a negation of the concept. The NPM assumption is also the gradual withdrawal of the state from the activities of the higher education sector. Meanwhile, through the reform, new central institutions were created (the Polish Accreditation Commission, the National Centre for Research and Development, the National Science Centre) *de facto* dependent on the ministry, acting as an intermediary in the allocation of budgetary resources. The last objection to the reform concerns the issue of the use of copyright by universities. Article 86g of the Law on Higher Education gives universities the right of pre-emption to obtain the results of scientific research or development work obtained by the university's employees, students and PhD students. This is a provision, which in practice blocks the possibility of publishing research papers in renowned foreign journals. Foreign scientific publications require an exclusive license, and it is impossible to meet these rights by the university.

SUMMARY

Among the challenges of the 21st century for the global economy, the first place is taken by the globalisation and technological progress. Knowledge and strategies based on its use are becoming more and more important in the process of competing. In the light of the above changes, higher expectations are placed on the institutions that create the education system. The economy expects better educated staff and new innovative solutions that will allow to produce more, cheaper and faster. The new role of the higher education system in the economy has created pressure to modernise the academic environment. An environment that, by its very nature, is very reluctant to make any changes (Cf. Sikorski, 2008, pp.39-48). The cross-European tendencies and the inability to carry out changes within the system led to an imposed change – the reform of higher education. The change, carried out in several stages, was aimed, among other things, at modernising the management of public universities that were losing competition with private entities as well as with foreign rivals.

One of the concepts of administrative restructuring is the so-called *New Public Management*, which postulates the introduction of market solutions for managing public institutions. This article analyses the presence of NPM assumptions in statutory amendments.

The reform of higher education started in 2010 significantly contributes to the implementation of assumptions of the New Public Management concept in educational institutions. The statutory changes guide universities to the path of development based on market competition in a competitive environment. The need to gain competitive advantage has become an important element of the strategy of universities. Thanks to the reform, the orientation on results displaces the non-reflective focus on the implementation of procedures from the mentality of the management. The step to ensure the proper implementation of the market strategy is, in accordance with the reform assumptions, the professionalisation of management and increasing the autonomy of universities. The results of the analysis show that these two elements of the NPM assumptions are the worst represented area of the reform's concept. The insufficient representation of solutions stimulating professional management and increasing the autonomy of universities in terms of the most important strategic decisions causes that the introduced NPM model to Polish universities seems to be defective and ineffective. A separate problem is the resistance of the environment before the introduction of changes and the extended period of adaptation of changes in the Polish universities. The different specificity of universities means that some of the changes are impossible to implement in small universities with narrow specialisation.

Summing up the deficiencies noted in the reform, it should be noted that the university management staff, recognising the need to modernise their units, are increasingly taking advantage of the achievements of management theory. In addition to the described *New Public Management*, other concepts and market management methods gain in popularity with universities. Examples of an innovative approach to university management are:

- SEM (*Strategic Enrolment Management*) is a complex, comprehensive management process at the strategic level, aimed at achieving and maintaining the optimal number of students admitted to the university, studying there and obtaining di-

plomas. The optimal number should be defined in accordance with the mission of the university in close cooperation and involvement of the entire institution (including academic staff)” (Pietrucha, 2014);

- *Process benchmarking* – understood as a management instrument that is used to constantly compare own solutions with the best practices inside or outside the company in order to creatively adapt them to achieve the set goals (Szydełko et al., 2013, p. 106).

Looking at the development of new concepts of university management (as well as the increased level of their acceptance in the academic environment), one can hope that the growing awareness of staff managing higher education institutions, on the one hand, and sound state policy, on the other hand, will translate into better ranking positions of Polish universities in Europe.

REFERENCE

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