University Autonomy as a Sociocultural Concept

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The relevance of the study is determined by the needs of practice, first of all: the change of the place and role of universities in the life of society, the intensification of international cultural and academic relations, unfolding in a modern globalized and informative society. Globalization and the information revolution intensify the cultural-developmental and cultural-educational mission of universities. While remaining the centers of science and education, universities are increasingly promoting the knowledge of peoples and cultures, their understanding, convergence, and the establishment of constructive intercultural dialogue.

The author notes that the modern university is gradually established as a cultural center of the region, the state as a whole, the international community, interstate cultural discourse. Fundamental significance for the traditional culture of the university involves institutional autonomy and principle of creativity; the postulate of forming the academic community and the principle of self-government; the nature of the university mission; ethical values; the principle of service to society.

The author emphasizes that autonomy plays an important role in the culture of higher education. The more important the university attaches to its traditions and position, the more important it becomes its own institutional culture. The level of development and respect for it becomes a sign of its identity and authority, as well as the degree of maturity of its academic community. The author concludes that the fundamental significance for the traditional culture of the university is: institutional autonomy and the principle of creativity; the postulate of the formation of the academic community and the principle of self-government; the nature of the mission of the university; ethical values; the principle of service to society. It is proved that university autonomy is deeply rooted in its traditions. But the need for autonomy arises from the principle of creativity, which underlies the activities of each university. The problem of the implementation and spread of university autonomy did not pass Ukraine's higher education, especially today during the reform of education in Ukraine.

Keywords: higher education; university autonomy; sociolultural concept; constructs; principles.

Introduction

An active offensive of market pragmatism should change the morphological structure of the university and the mechanism of its functioning. We must have a new form as a symbiosis of academic tradition and market commercialization. Such a modification of this vital for the world community of a social institution appears to us as an autonomous university.

The concept of "university autonomy" has never been clearly defined and outlined concepts. It belongs to "fluid constructs", the content of which changes from time to time, from country to country, depends on a complex historical circumstances, and cultural features, socio-economic, political and many other factors, etc. The level of attention to the university autonomy is determined by the general sociocultural situation of the university life.

We find the definition of the university autonomy in many current authoritative documents of the world educational community. This is primarily the "Magna Charta Universitatum", which states that "a university is an independent institution within societies with a diverse

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organization that results from differences in geographical and historical heritage. It creates, studies, evaluates and conveys culture through research and learning.

To meet the needs of the world, its research and teaching activities must be morally and intellectually independent of any political and economic power".

This is, however, a rather abstract formulation that emphasizes the need for the moral and intellectual independence of universities, but does not contain and can not contain an exhaustive definition of the content and forms of the university autonomy, since the latter are not universal, but are the result of specific historical circumstances, social and political conditions, and therefore can not be separated from certain sociocultural contexts and national traditions, in the end, from the dominant mentality of society and its scientific ethos.

Goals of article

The aim of our study is to clarify the university autonomy as a sociocultural concept, to describe the historical conditions of its development and to define its maim features.

Materials and Methods
Theoretical foundations of the study

For our study we have used such method as historical analogies, analysis, abstraction and concretization, induction and deduction, comparison, generalization, systematization and interpretation of facts.

University autonomy is not objectively set, universal format, which needs to be cleared from layers, inaccuracies; we should maximally clarify its content, parameters and requirements and consolidate all this legally. The case is much more complicated, because in each specific case, in one or another era, in one or another territory, the character and level, completeness of university autonomy is always the result of the struggle, the competition of universities and authorities, the outcome of talks between politicians and intellectuals, government structures and academic circles. Therefore, it is a criterion for the maturity and civilization of both society and universities themselves, the real state of which may lead to a simplistic, even distorted understanding and interpretation of autonomy, or simply reject it as an idea.

For implementing the university autonomy it is necessary to form its complex image in the minds of specialists and public circles, to determine what concrete it is necessary to understand, understand and realise what is possible and what can not be expected from it, to achieve a certain conceptual consensus, that is to form what can be called a corresponding social construct.

Results

Under the construction, we understand the subjective way of interpreting a particular phenomenon, a special mental scheme, constructed by a person on his own practical and intellectual experience, through which he perceives the social environment and builds his behavior. The construct is subjectively perceived as an obvious idea that reflects the real natural state of things when it belongs to a certain culture and a certain society, is created under their direct or indirect influence. Construct, which covers the mass consciousness and begins to live onindividual life, becomes a social construct.

The social construct is the basis of the social construction of real social connections and institutions, the certain practices, which subordinate the role behavior of people. Thus, implementing university autonomy is not only a matter of lawmaking, but also a complex task of social design, clarification of the content and features of the existing social structure and determining the ways of its development and improvement.

Consequently, the process of creating the European higher education area and the parallel formation of the European Research Area have one single dimension: they provide a redefinition of the role, mission, tasks and responsibilities of the university institute in European societies and economies that undergo rapid changes, turning them into more marketable and knowledgeable. Education and science are undergoing an essential transformation today, so the university institute is unlikely to be able to avoid the process of substantially transforming its functioning, which is partly planned, and partially disruptive.

These two parallel processes in some countries have gone a long way, they are actively promoted throughout Europe, in particular in the Central-East and the Balkans. If the effect of the creation of the European research area is limited mainly to recipients of research grants provided by the European Union, then the Bologna process may affect the reform of national higher education systems in more than 40 countries - both EU members and membership candidates in other countries - reaching up to Caucasus.

Given that official Bologna documents usually emphasize in this context the "diversity" of the countries and institutions involved, the process itself, taking into account the geographical, economic and political composition of its participants, faces a colossal challenge: how to keep the same pace of change in all the countries involved. Bearing in mind the experience of social and economic transformations in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans, it will be very difficult to preserve the unity of the process progress in different regions. Most likely, in the coming years, the Bologna process will go through different trajectories, and therefore it will have to be complemented by separate descriptions of the most necessary reforms and the various challenges faced by different countries and, most importantly, by separate lists of policy recommendations for groups of countries that implement reforms at different speeds, unless these reforms turn out to be mere theoretical exercises for many of them.

Consequently, the problem of reforming in some groups of countries will be different: almost all transition countries are experiencing the problems that most of the European Union members have experienced in the 1970s, such as the massification of higher education with a rapid increase in the number of students and low correlation between skills and competences, which is acquired in the educational sector, and the needs of the labor market.

The current problems also include the lack of scientific and innovation activities in the sectors that are crucial for

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the emergence of cognitive societies; the insignificant impact of globalization factors on educational policy; a very high unemployment rate (sometimes up to 60% or even more) in some transition countries; lack of intent to preserve the European social model, since European social welfare never existed in most of these countries, etc.

The economic justification of the whole set of European policy transformations in the fields of higher education, science and innovation, was recently summarized in the program "Education and Training 2010". In a paper entitled "Expanding Participation and the European Union: Direct Action – Indirect Politics?", Pat Davies states that "the European Union comes from the idea of the economic alliance that originally developed around the coal and steel industries ... despite the fact that the modern European Union is very different from its predecessor, economic growth and competitiveness remain in the heart of the EU project, albeit in a different economic context - in the context of globalization and cognitive society, not post-war reconstruction" (Davies, 2003, p. 99). During this time, the thought that a certain European scientific and educational space can be in the very core of the European project and can directly contribute to growth, competitiveness and employment has changed and markedly accelerated (appealing to the "White Paper" of Jacques Delors).

For the university, these changes must materialize in a morphological and functional dimension and bring it to such a state as autonomy. Therefore, the problem of the expansion of university autonomy now extends beyond purely professional discussion and becomes the subject of wide-ranging and public discussion, since it interests a huge number of people who provide and receive higher education relate to the functioning of society as a whole, its quality, prospects for its development, etc.

Since the 90s of the XX century, the question of university autonomy has been not only actively discussed, but it also determines a number of reforms in the countries of Western Europe, which are enshrined in many legislative acts, including some constitutions. Actualization of this issue at the present stage of society's development is not accidental. In the end of XX century, classical universities were in new realities, which made them think about strategies for further existence and development.

Classical Universities (in particular, Warsaw, Kharkiv) are the product of the emergence of the industrial society, an era in which the nation-state was formed. They created universities as the institutions that solved three main tasks: 1) training staff for public administration; 2) personnel training for industrial production; 3) ensuring national and cultural identity of the population, preserving and translating national cultural codes. For a long time, universities have been adapting to the world, in which the nation-states were the main subjects, and industrial models dominated the economy, and finally, ideally adapted to these circumstances, feeling comfortable. The transformation of higher education from elite to mass caused the rapid increase of the number of universities, and students' competition in both the domestic and international markets of educational services.

Over the past twenty years, the rapid growth of the student population has taken place: if 1990 is taken as 100 %, in 1996, growth was around 244 % in Portugal, 181 % in the United Kingdom, 150 % in Ireland, 141 % in Sweden, 130 % in Finland, 120 % in Austria, 121 % in Denmark and 110 % in the Netherlands (1999). In Central Europe, the recruitment also increased rapidly: the total number of students aged 18-22 between 1989 and 1997 grew from 12.7 % to 17.3 % in the Czech Republic, from 13.9 % to 23.8 % - in Hungary, from 11.6 % to 20.6 % in Poland and from 13.2 % to 17.6 % in Slovakia (Berryman, 2000).

Thus, in the EU-15 and in the European transition countries, the number of students has increased; at the same time, the amount of private funding for higher education has increased. However, given the long-term demographic trends and the aging of society in both parts of Europe, the saturation limit is not so far. This, in turn, made the society more flexible and responsive to the needs of labor markets, to rebuild the educational process in accordance with the demands and ideas of the students expected by these labor markets. Universities faced a tendency to reduce public funding and the need to diversify sources of funds.

The result of the emergence of a "knowledge-based economy" was that business, the private sector become an active customer and consumer of research, as well as relevant personnel, offer universities specific research and training programs.

And this happens on the background of the emergence of so-called "new providers" of scientific and educational services. All this prompts universities to find and work out new formats of their activities and makes them consider autonomy not only as an important cultural symbol of the university identity, but also as an instrument for the practical solution of various tasks of adaptation to new realities and further development. In fact, it is a question of changing the paradigm of the functioning of universities as the basic institutions of the "knowledge society", that is, on the problem of general sociological significance.

Autonomy plays an important role in the culture of higher education. The concept of university culture encompasses some of the rules, instructions and rights enshrined in legal documents, administrative decrees or orders, and unwritten rules of behaviour, individual and collective, derived from traditions based on precedents and previous achievements, recognized and adhered depending on the spirit and ethos of the university. The more important role the university attaches to its traditions and position, the more important its own institutional culture becomes. The level of development and respect for it becomes a sign of its identity and authority, as well as the degree of maturity of its academic community. Fundamental significance for the traditional culture of the university involves: institutional autonomy and principle of creativity; the postulate of forming the academic community and the principle of self-government; the nature of the university mission; ethical values; the principle of service to society.

University autonomy is deeply rooted in its traditions. But the need for autonomy arises from the principle of creativity, which underlies the activities of each university. The problem of implementing and spreading university autonomy did not pass Ukraine's higher education. Recently, this issue is beginning to be discussed quite actively in Ukraine. The leaders of a number of national universities have taken practical steps on the legal regulation of

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autonomy and the organization of an appropriate experiment.

Attempts to determine the optimal model of university autonomy revealed a number of problems of a methodological nature and showed that implementing autonomy can not be solved only by law-making or purely administrative levers. Observations and some empirical evidence suggest that a number of simplified and impoverished social constructs of university autonomy work in Ukrainian society (including university circles).

The leadership of universities often reduces its content to the issues of expanding the financial independence of higher educational institutions, some increase their rights in determining the content of curricula, solving certain formal problems of staffing, awarding degrees, etc. In fact, everything is reduced to a certain release from excessively tight state care, which, in the opinion of the carriers of such a construct, in itself will positively affect the quality of training specialists and the results of scientific research. At the core of this there is the presumption of the moral and intellectual infallibility of universities, which need to add their own freedom and which already have everything they need to manage it best.

Another quite common construct of university autonomy is based on the presumption of university corruptions and interprets it as enhancing the uncontrollability of university leadership, a condition for all kinds of abuse, corporate selfishness, and the transformation of universities into rectory estates.

However, if we move the problem of the social construction of university autonomy into the sociological reflection sphere, then immediately the limitations of such interpretations become obvious, and above all the fact that the question of university autonomy, and therefore the creation of its social construct, lies not in the plane of interaction between universities and the state, but in the plane of universities' functioning as social institutions, whose the autonomy can not but interact with the specifics of all internal and external contexts of their activity, of its entire sociocultural field.

This causes fundamentally different perceptions of university activities and to see, according to V. Bakirov, that autonomy entails an extremely serious review of almost all the basic parameters of university activities, in particular, such changes are necessary (2008):

• establishing a fundamentally different balance of freedom and responsibility of universities. The latter should be under greater public control and be able to respond to problems through the influence of public organizations, mass media, business, employers, and stakeholders;

• university activities should become as transparent and open as possible;

• universities should be prepared to ensure that financial independence from the state will increase their dependence on other sources of funding and create risks of falling into another dependency system;

• it should be clearly understood that university autonomy is the autonomy of universities, and not of their leaders; it is not limited to the extension of the powers and competence of the latter to the passive behaviour of professors and staff. Consequently, the strengthening of university autonomy necessarily involves significant, even

radical strengthening of internal university democracy, control over leadership by collegiate bodies of university self-government;

• a fundamental change in the role of supervisory boards that cease to be decorative superstructures of the university architectonics, but transform into authoritative and authoritative structures for determining the strategic directions of university activity and control over administration, representing the interests of not only the state but society as well including local communities. Autonomy does not make universities free from society, from the necessity to satisfy its needs in the training of personnel and the production of scientific knowledge and the creation of new technologies, as well as in maintaining cultural level, meeting the cultural needs of local communities and the immediate social environment. That is, the mechanisms of interaction between universities and local communities should be created and used;

• the acquisition of student self-government fundamentally different meaning. The students' voice should be heard and taken into account in many aspects of the organization of educational work and their training;

• ensuring the active work of professional associations (associations of universities, scientific societies, unions, etc.) capable of protecting the interests of universities, lobbying these interests in legislative and executive bodies;

• development of a reliable and accountable system of public independent control and quality assurance monitoring, which should be conducted at the universities that claim to be autonomous.

The full implementation of university autonomy involves reorganizing all the basic parameters of university activity, up to teaching methods and the educational work format, not to mention the fundamentals of scientific research organization. Of course, all this will require a profound institutional university restructuring, the creation of new structures, the revision of traditional budgets, the training and involvement of specialists that they have not yet used (business managers, social communication specialists, public relations etc). The implementing university autonomy is also impossible without a radical change in the values and norms, the role expectations of professors, scholars and students, without profound changes in the cultural code of universities, to which not every Ukrainian university is ready.

Finally, university autonomy is impossible in the absence of a more or less developed civil society, which, should feed the intellectual energy of universities as important elements of it.

Now it has to be stated that even the university elite does not have a more or less clear and consistent idea of university autonomy, does not fully understand its meaning and necessity, is not ready for active competitions for it. University management often knows consciously or subconsciously the threats and risks of autonomy, which requires a very different level of social responsibility of universities, greater openness and transparency of their activities, a higher level of internal university democracy, a slightly different corporate culture. It should be noted that Ukrainian universities are a very young phenomenon. In the Soviet era, the majority of them had the status of narrow-profile higher education institutions – institutions that

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usually operated on the other basis than classical universities, did not know purely university values and had no proper mentality, worked for certain segments of the planned labor market and centralized production.

The massive renaming of institutes to universities took place in a hurry and spontaneous way, without taking into account the real state of scientific and educational work, intellectual and personnel potential, without taking into account the objective criteria of the univeristy status.

As for genuine, classical universities, a significant part of them, a product of the Soviet era, arose in the 1920-30s and, of course, did not have the genetic memory of autonomous existence, certain, albeit very limited features of which from time to time appeared during the pre-revolutionary times, from the beginning of the XIX century, especially the first half of it, when the first universities of the Russian Empire began to be created. In our area, there were no slogans such as "what is good for Cambridge, that is good for Britain", or mottos like those that adorn the gate of the University of Padua: "University freedom is the freedom of the city!"

Autonomy of universities is not liked by state officials who try to manage all processes almost alone, because they are afraid to lose control over the process of social development. In the history of higher education in many countries, we can find many examples of subordination of universities to political power or attempts to achieve such a situation.

This entails the loss of "independence" by universities, which is supported by concrete examples. Let's turn to the materials of the international academic conference devoted to university autonomy, held in December 2006 in Warsaw, and consider the approaches of Polish legislation to the institutional model of autonomy of the university. Each law defines such a model, but it can do it differently. Not going into the details, let us note that it can be said about the fundamental distinction between two models: the one in which the university is "more state" and the alternative, in which the university is "more public" (2008, p. 91 – 92). The question of the structural model of the university is a central problem in the field of higher education, and the further legislative regulation depends on the way of its solution.

In Poland, the principle of university autonomy is prescribed, as is known, in the Constitution, although its limits are established by the ordinary law. This, however, means that the model of a university, which is in fact completely devoid of autonomy, would be unconstitutional and should be challenged. "From our reflections it follows - writes Jerzy Voznitsky - that the limits of institutional autonomy are an indicator that distinguishes between two fundamentally different models of the university. It testifies to the fundamental nature of the notion of autonomy for higher education. In this sense, autonomy, of course, is a fundamental category, and not just an idea" (2008, p. 93).

Thus, the university as a unique social institution, which performs an important function of self-reproduction of society, is rapidly modernized under the influence of internal and external factors. As Peter Scott recently said, "the transition is not only in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe; all higher education is carrying out the transition now" (Scott, 2002, p. 151).

Despite the fact that the trajectories of the emergence (or creation) of the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area were separate, in recent years they have clearly merged together. In the most general terms, there are three different trajectories: interinstitutional, intergovernmental and supranational. Initially signed in Bologna in 1988 by the rectors of European universities "Magna Charta Universitarum" (the Great Charter of Universities) laid the foundations for an interinstitutional trajectory of the higher educational integration. It was continued by the congresses of European higher educational institutions held in Salamanca in 2001 and Graz in 2003.

Another fundamental distinction between the changes in higher education systems in Western and Central-Eastern Europe was defined by Harry de Boer and Leo Goedegebuure as the distinction between "evolution" and "revolution". In addition to the pace of change itself, the distinction lay between faith and complete loss of faith in the role of the state in social transformations and deeper faith and practical reliance on market mechanisms of coordination (De Boer, Goedegebuure, 2003).

In the light of the current market and social situation, it is difficult to clearly predict the effect of European innovations on the state of the educational sphere in Ukraine. Here one should focus on human resources policy, European personality thinking and on the development of the culture of society as a whole, in particular through unobtrusive information propaganda of cultural and ethical values of European origin and purpose. That is, we lack the progressively-minded, skilled, culturally-educated teachers and university educators. And the matter here is not only in the lack of financing of the educational sphere. In humans, there is not only a material but also a moral and spiritual stimulus. The work of educators and teachers requires tremendous dedication. And not everybody is capable of this everyday feat, especially in the absence of a financial incentive. The same applies to the scientific sphere.

At the highest level, it is necessary to develop a new paradigm for the development of the Ukrainian state as a whole and education as its foundation and heritage. As long as Ukraine is strong due to its natural and human resources, cultural, scientific, educational and defense potential, it will have an impact and a decent position in the world community. To date, there are three main trends in the reform of education in Ukraine: the globalization of education in the context of the "information boom"; integration into the world educational process; modernization of education – some elements of Western models based on the national system of Ukraine.

The ways out of today's crisis can be as follows:

• increase funding for education and science; motivate the learning and training of highly qualified specialists not only in the field of economics and law, but also in various branches of industry, science and culture, in order to solve the problem of education, especially in the pedagogical field (in other words, people should want to get knowledge, love their business – this is high degree of motivation);

• in parallel with the first paragraph, and for the implementation of the second one, as stated above, it is necessary to provide unobtrusive propaganda of cultural and ethical values and the usefulness of education wages in media and in the global network;

• the reform of education in Ukraine should not radically break the traditions of native education;

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Conclusions

Since the university's transformation does not take place in an independent movement, but conquered by the formation of a new economy, a new sociality of citizens of the United Europe and new administrative structures, it has a number of risks, namely:

1. Principles that in the past have left no doubt about the legitimacy of the central role of universities are no longer universally accepted, or even denied as obsolete or even rejected by history. There is a temptation to suspect that this increasingly marked absence of institutional consolidation is reflected in the transformation of the intellectual atmosphere that characterizes academic activity.

2. The idea of a university as an institution that creates, studies, assesses and conveys the culture to the next generations through research and tradition, finds few supporters among the creators of a common European scientific and educational space: today, in discussions about the role of the university in society and economy, the focus is more on technical knowledge rather than humanistic culture, as evidenced by the tendencies of recent years in the discourse of societies based on knowledge.

3. There are many aspects that make the Bologna process relatively uninteresting. Let's just recall GATS talks that can cover education services (supported by the European Commission, not a single EU member state) and the role of "boundless" or transnational education; formation of private and profitable sectors in higher education; the increasing role of market forces in higher education and the importance of a market paradigm (in particular neoliberal) in the views on higher education; reduction of state financing of higher education and research activity in higher educational institutions; as well as the difference in the problems of higher education faced by the old members of the EU-15, the new members of the EU and the post-communist transition countries in general.

4. Bologna documents are important for relatively similar higher education and science systems with rather similar challenges and challenges for the future. Despite the numerous reminders of the "diversity" of systems, the language and cultural differences between them at different stages of the implementation of the process in different countries today make it very difficult to read the Bologna documents as equally relevant for the old EU and post-communist transition countries (eg. Germany or France on the one hand and Albania, Macedonia and Russia - on the other).

Taking into account the tendencies of the last decade, the "Great Charter of Universities" looks like a monument of the past. In the context of the development of a united European research area, it is difficult to find in contemporary discussions about "Europe of Knowledge" something more than the generally accepted gestures of courtesy in addressing the idea of a university as an institution whose "constant duty is to achieve universal knowledge" and which acts as a guardian European humanistic tradition". Instead, as Jean-François Lyotard argued, more than two decades ago, "knowledge is produced and will be produced in order to sell it; it is consumed and consumed in order to turn back into production: in both cases, the the exchange is one goal" (Lyotard, Jean–Francois, 1984, p. 4).

5. Universities, as active creators and developers of public relations, are struggling today as Europe tries to combine high competitiveness and social cohesion in an increasingly globalized world while in the process of moving to a "knowledge society". This means that not only intellectual but also socio-economic inequality is formed between rich in knowledge and poor knowledge of subjects of historical action. Intellectual inequality at the next stage of self-deployment of the world community into a holistic system will be the driving force behind social development and will acquire extraordinary acuteness, in which universities should become a trump card.

Thus, the first glance suggests a combination of Bologna and globalization processes on a regional scale, especially in the future, while the second suggests that Bologna is an attempt to strengthen national education systems against the forces of globalization and to stay away from its all sorts of excesses in the field of higher education, and especially the longest to stay away from the processes of privatization, commercialization and "consolidation" of higher education and science, etc. The Bologna process is, of course, controversial, and these two leitmotifs are very intertwined in his documents. It can be found here as a "protectionist" leitmotif for Europe (especially in its appeals for education as "public good" and "public duty", which mainly means a call for increased state funding from the national states in the future) and "expansionist", a leitmotif of attracting foreign students and researchers in a global talent competition.

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