

POLISH MEDIA ABOUT ACT 2.0 (THE CONSTITUTION FOR SCIENCE)

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ABSTRACT:

The article fits in with research on discursive determinants of the condition of the university and focuses on the analysis of media messages about the main assumptions of Act 2.0 (the Constitution for Science). It is considered an important stage of systemic changes in Polish science and higher education system thirty years after the beginning of the political transformation and fifteen years after accession to the European Union. The first part of the article deals with presenting the conditions of the modernisation of the higher education system in the context of external and internal factors of the transformation. The second part discusses the specificity of media messages characterising the Polish act. The way of reporting about changes resulting from the act outlined by the media is to be one of the determinants of social perception of positive changes occurring in the area of higher education. This is demonstrated by the subject matter, the genre of the statements, contextual conditions: time, place, the current socio-political situation, vocabulary and collocations.

KEY WORDS:

communication, European Union, higher education system, media, systemic transformation

Introduction

Being at the top of academic systems, contemporary universities have become central social institutions.¹ In practice, this 'new' role of the university means the ability to forecast, anticipate and shape changes in all spheres of social life, as well as to meet social needs. Paradoxically, it has led universities to increasing the importance of their economic dimension. Moreover, what has been going on inside the academy so far has become interesting for a wider audience in connection with the above-mentioned fact. As experts note, "*the way universities function has ceased to be a matter solely of the academic community, and has become an important social issue, and their problems are constantly present in the mainstream media*".² The transformation of higher education, i.e. the process of introducing changes, which has been ongoing for several decades, has altered

¹ MIKOŁAJCZYK, H.: Intellectual Tradition of the University in the Face of Current Challenges. In *European Journal of Transformation Studies*, 2016, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 63.

² ANTONOWICZ, D.: *Między siłą globalnych procesów a lokalną tradycją. Polskie szkolnictwo wyższe w dobie przemian*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2015, p. 7-8.

the functions of the university.³ Mass higher education has become a global phenomenon,⁴ and its effects are enormous: the significantly increased share of diverse populations among college students; increase in private higher education; diversification of academic institutions and systems; and the general lowering of academic standards in many countries.⁵ However, the historical perspective shows that the process of reforming higher education has not always been as intensive as it is today. Historians date the emergence of the modern university to the end of the 18th century and the start of the 19th century. The model of the modern (liberal) university, affecting the countries of continental Europe, was created in the 19th century in Germany and was first implemented at Berlin University founded by Wilhelm Humboldt. The aim of the liberal university was to develop science. This fact defined all other goals and tasks. The education was to be the result of the co-participation of professors and students in scientific research. This was accompanied by a hierarchical organisational structure, with the department as the basic organisational unit headed by a Professor. In the 1920s and 1930s, as a result of the increasing democratisation and industrialisation of European societies, a large wave of youth, on the large part poorly prepared for studies, flowed into universities, and at the same time social pressure for a significant extension of university vocational training increased. These phenomena undermined the possibilities of further education of students according to the principle of the liberal university. Under the influence of changes in financing rules and social expectations, universities began to show a tendency to evolve towards a market model characteristic of American universities.⁶ This phenomenon intensified in the nineties and has continued to this day. This does not mean that there is agreement as to what university should be like. Among the currently discussed concepts of the university⁷ we find its various varieties, among others: “entrepreneurial university” defined as an economically self-sufficient innovation centre; “corporate” or “capitalist” university as an institution of public life established for the public good or university as a space for meta-social debate. The idea of a traditional university and the idea of an entrepreneurial university are considered ideal types at the ends of the imaginary continuum of university evolution.⁸

Interest in higher education in Europe arose in connection with the adoption of the “Europe 2020” strategy.⁹ The attainment of the goals of this strategy, focusing on “smart”, “sustainable” and “inclusive” growth, was to result from more effective investment in education, research and innovation. One of the key goals was to significantly increase the number of young people with higher education (at least 40% of people between 30 and 34 years of age by 2020). This goal was achieved in April 2019. Giving higher education an important role in building a political and economic Europe based on knowledge¹⁰ has intensified the processes of reforming higher education in the last decade. However, education is still the domain of the Member States. In line with the subsidiarity principle, higher education policies are defined at the level of individual Member States. The European Union therefore plays primarily a supporting and coordinating role. The main objectives of the Union’s action in the field of higher education include promoting student and teaching staff mobility, supporting mutual recognition of diplomas and periods of study, promoting cooperation between higher education institutions and the development of (university) distance education.

However, the directions of the transformation of European universities clearly indicate the tendency of the university to adapt to changing social and economic conditions, which is manifested in the pursuit of the practical use of scientific research. The effects of this change are to be, for instance, transfer of research

results to the economy, cooperation of universities with the business world,¹¹ and also drawing attention to issues such as the role of the university in the co-creation of values.¹² In this context, an aspiration to transform European universities into third generation universities appears. A core activity of such a university is basic research, that is, research that itself has no practical application, but provides the basis for further research and its application. The accent is, however, on inter- and transdisciplinary frameworks, i.e. moving away from a rigid division of sciences, which is to be conducive to creativity. It is characterised by increased contacts with the public, including the business world, private companies, corporations and other research and educational establishments. Considerable emphasis is placed on entrepreneurship, i.e. the effective use of knowledge.¹³ The marketisation of higher education is connected with the growing impact of market competition on academic life, which in turn leads to treating students as consumers instead of transforming them into scholars and critical thinkers.¹⁴ This generates a strong emphasis on competitiveness among institutions, aggressive acquisition and retention of consumers (students) and their satisfaction.¹⁵ In addition, it is noticeable that various aspects of the operation of universities have become the subject of detailed and meticulous comparison, collation and evaluation by influential international analytical centres.¹⁶

Transformations of higher education proceed differently in individual EU countries and pose different challenges on the path to the same goal. Central and Eastern European countries with similar ‘historical’ experiences face a difficult challenge of ‘catching up’ with the best European universities, while the goal set by the European Union concerns competition with the world’s best academic centres. The transformation of Polish higher education (Higher Education System) is a good case study showing two parallel processes that determine the shape of the reform. These are (1) the internal modernisation pressure closely related to the construction of a liberal economic regime; and (2) Europeanisation manifesting itself in the need to adapt to the accession requirements and later to implement the objectives of the European Union’s development strategies.¹⁷

The reform of higher education in Poland is still in progress.¹⁸ In 2018, the implementation of Jarosław Gowin’s reform, the so-called Act 2.0, began. Paradoxically, society performs a ‘passive’ function in this process. As a potential recipient of the ‘success of the modernisation of the university’, it extremely rarely participates in making decisions on its transformation (goals, course, effects). The applied models of stakeholder inclusion at most concern academic staff and in some cases the market (entrepreneurs) as recipients of both ‘knowledge’ and ‘employees’ (university graduates). Unidirectional communication from the reformers (the government) to society is traditionally done primarily through the media. The content analysis of messages explains what arguments and justifications for the goals of the modernisation of the higher education system in Poland, its course and the expected effects reach society.

The article fits in with research on discursive determinants of the condition of the university and focuses on the analysis of media messages about the main assumptions of Act 2.0 (the Constitution for Science). As has been mentioned above, it is considered an important stage of systemic changes in Polish science and higher education thirty years after the beginning of the political transformation and fifteen years after accession to the European Union. The following text thus comments on basic information on the reasons, course and essence of Act 2.0. We also discuss the specificity of media messages characterising the Polish act, presuming that the

3 KWIEK, M.: Reforma szkolnictwa wyższego w Polsce i jej wyzwania. Jak stopniowa dehermetyzacja systemu prowadzi do jego stratyfikacji. In *Nauka i Szkolnictwo Wyższe*, 2017, Vol. 50, No. 2, p. 9-38.

4 MODRZEJEWSKI, A., GÓRZNA, S.: The Universalistic Concept of Science in the Philosophical and Theological Doctrine of Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II. In *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 2012, Vol. 8, No. 4, p. 137.

5 See: ALTBACH, Ph. G., REISBERG, L., RUMBLEY, L. E.: *Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution. A Report Prepared for the UNESCO 2009 World Conference on Higher Education*. Paris: UNESCO, 2009.

6 WNUK-LIPIŃSKA, E.: Kryzys uniwersytetu jako instytucji edukacyjnej w krajach Europy Zachodniej. In *Nauka i Szkolnictwo Wyższe*, 1997, Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 15.

7 BARNETT, R.: *Imagining the University*. London, New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 3-4.

8 BOCZKOWSKI, A.: Uniwersytet a kształcenie masowe. Od idei uniwersytetu do ideologii kształcenia na poziomie wyższym. In *Przegląd Socjologiczny*, 2014, Vol. 63, No. 3, p. 34.

9 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION: *EUROPE 2020: A Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth*. [online]. [2019-10-10]. Available at: <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52010DC2020>>.

10 MROZOWSKA, S.: Szkolnictwo wyższe w realizacji celów strategii Unii Europejskiej „Europa 2020”. In MROZOWSKA, S., PENKOWSKA, G., (eds.): *Uniwersytet jutra*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo LIBRON, 2015, p. 11.

11 MAKIELA, Z. J.: Model uniwersytetu trzeciej generacji XXI wieku – przedsiębiorczy, innowacyjny uniwersytet. In *Folia Oeconomica Cracoviensia*, 2017, Vol. 58, p. 35-36.

12 DZIEWANOWSKA, K.: Value Co-creation Styles in Higher Education and Their Consequences. The Case of Poland. In *Research and Occasional Papers Series: CSHE.10.18*. [online]. [2019-10-20]. Available at: <<https://cshe.berkeley.edu/publications/value-co-creation-styles-higher-education-and-their-consequences-case-poland-katarzyna>>.

13 See: WISSEMA, J. G.: *Uniwersytet Trzeciej Generacji. Uczelnia XXI wieku*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Zante, 2009.

14 MOLESWORTH, M., NIXON, E., SCULLION, R.: Having, Being and Higher Education: The Marketisation of the University and the Transformation of the Student into Consumer. In *Teaching in Higher Education*, 2009, Vol. 14, No. 3, p. 277-287.

15 DIAZ-MENDEZ, M., GUMMESON, E.: Value Co-creation and University Teaching Quality. In *Journal of Service Management*, 2012, Vol. 23, No. 4, p. 571-592.

16 See, for example: KWIEK, M.: *Transformacje uniwersytetu. Zmiany instytucjonalne i ewolucje polityki edukacyjnej w Europie*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2010.

17 DAKOWSKA, D.: Between Competition Imperative and Europeanisation: The Case of Higher Education Reform in Poland. In *Higher Education*, 2015, Vol. 69, No. 1, p. 129; See also: KWIEK, M.: *Uniwersytet w dobie przemian. Instytucje i kadra akademicka w warunkach rosnącej konkurencji*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2015.

18 For the media discourse on the higher education system reform in 2011 – 2014, see: OSTROWICKA, H. et al.: *Dyskusyjny obraz szkolnictwa wyższego w Polsce 2011 – 2014*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2019.

way of reporting about changes resulting from the act outlined by the media is to be one of the determinants of social perception of positive changes occurring in the area of higher education. This is demonstrated by the subject matter, the genre of the statements, contextual conditions: time, place, the current socio-political situation, vocabulary and collocations.

Act 2.0 (the Constitution for Science)

After the fall of the communist regime, the Polish higher education system experienced a transformation that in many respects was similar to the one that the countries of the region underwent.¹⁹ This process was determined by the rapid increase in the number of students resulting from the baby boom combined with the amplification of educational aspirations and the liberal policy of the state in increasing the availability of higher education, both financed from public and private funds. This period was characterised above all by a strong focus of academic teachers on mass teaching activity, often connected with multi-jobbing. The necessity of pro-quality turn in research and higher education gained a strong position in the discourse of the academic environment.²⁰ Both top-down transnational processes (aiming at the convergence of national higher education systems) and bottom-up (aiming at divergence) deeply rooted organisational models based on academic myths and university tradition, which for decades had a significant impact on the functioning of Polish universities are considered the main factors affecting the pace, shape and effect of reforming the higher education system. The clash of these two orders became an integral part of the transformation process.²¹ In addition, there was a public confrontation of national versions of global paradigms of thinking about the ideal functioning of the university (management and financing) and the social and economic role of higher education, which started in the years 2008 – 2010, when, on the one hand, the so-called environment reform project was conceived and, on the other, a reform project based on global assumptions, resting primarily on the reform experience of the OECD area was set up.²²

The Polish higher education system reform functioning under the names Act 2.0 and the Constitution for Science was prepared by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education as the first pillar of the latest strategy for modernising the Polish system of higher education.²³ The proposal of changes and the reform consisting of three pillars was to guarantee the improvement of the condition of Polish universities and to accelerate the development of Polish science. The strategy is based on three basic pillars: the Constitution for Science, which is to bring about systemic changes in higher education, Innovations for the Economy, in which commercialisation of research and partnership with business are combined, and Science for You – the programme of the social responsibility of science.

The Constitution for Science²⁴ was presented by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education as a proposal solving the following problems of the higher education system: (1) faulty organisation and systemic principles restricting effective management; (2) the structures of the higher education system maladjusted to social and economic challenges; (3) the limited financial autonomy of universities; (4) the unsatisfactory quality of education at universities; (5) the low effectiveness of doctoral students' education; (6) the system of degrees and titles that inhibits scientists' pursuit of scientific excellence and interdisciplinary research; (7) the insufficient level of significance of results of scientific research carried out in Poland in world science.²⁵

19 DOBBINS, M., KNILL, C.: Higher Education Policies in Central and Eastern Europe: Convergence Towards a Common Model? In *Governance*, 2009, Vol. 22, No. 3, p. 397-430.

20 GÓRNIAK, J.: "Ustawa 2.0" partycypacyjny model istotnej zmiany regulacyjnej. In *Nauka i Szkolnictwo Wyższe*, 2017, Vol. 50, No. 2, p. 130.

21 ANTONOWICZ, D.: *Między siłą globalnych procesów a lokalną tradycją. Polskie szkolnictwo wyższe w dobie przemian*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2015, p. 13-14.

22 KWIEK, M.: Ustawa 2.0 a mierzalność i porównywalność osiągnięć naukowych. In *Nauka*, 2018, No. 1, p. 67. [online]. [2019-11-29]. Available at: <<http://cpp.amu.edu.pl/pl/ustawa-2-0-a-mierzalnosc-i-porownywalnosc-osiagnienc-naukowych-analiza-prof-marka-kwicka-nauka-12018-exceptionally-in-polish-only/>>.

23 MINISTERSTWO NAUKI I SZKOLNICTWA WYŻSZEGO: *Konstytucja dla Nauki*. [online]. [2019-11-25]. Available at: <<https://konstytucjadlanauki.gov.pl/>>.

24 MINISTERSTWO NAUKI I SZKOLNICTWA WYŻSZEGO: *Przewodnik po systemie szkolnictwa wyższego i nauki*. Warszawa: Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego, 2019.

25 MINISTERSTWO NAUKI I SZKOLNICTWA WYŻSZEGO: *Prawo o szkolnictwie wyższym i nauce*. [online]. [2019-11-

Work on the document lasted from February 2016 to September 2017. The academic and scientific environment was invited to co-create the reform. This element of the act creation model was indicated by the Ministry as very significant and testifying to its participatory dimension: "While working on the act, we held the largest social consultations in the history of Poland after 1989. Over 2.5 years of meetings and analyses with the participation of thousands of representatives of the academic community have been noticed and appreciated abroad. The European Commission has held up the mode of our work as a model for implementing systemic reforms."²⁶ The implementation of the postulate of participation²⁷ was, among others, a series of nine programme conferences as part of the so-called National Congress of Science (October 2016 – June 2017), a summary congress at which the first version of the draft Constitution for Science was presented along with the process of consultation of the first variant of the act. In addition, communication between the ministry and the academic community and its surroundings took place through meetings of the Conference of Rectors of Polish Universities, the Main Council of Science and Higher Education, the Council of Young Scholars, the Scientific Policy Committee, the Council of the National Congress of Science and other bodies with a more or less formal status. The website of the National Congress of Science was launched.²⁸ Experts point to the positive side of this model, among others because it is considered to be a solution infrequently applied in Poland.²⁹ The new act is treated as a comprehensive attempt to modernise the most important processes connected with the financing and management of higher education and science. Over 80 government amendments were introduced to both drafts – the Act on Higher Education and Science and Regulations introducing the Act on Higher Education and Science. In total, 233 deputies³⁰ voted for the adoption of the amended Act, 195 were against it and 1 person abstained. In turn, 236 deputies voted for the adoption of the regulations introducing Act 2.0, 195 were against and 2 abstained.

Reform 2.0 in Polish Media

Act 2.0 on higher education and science was signed by the President of the Republic of Poland in July 2018 and came into force on 1st October 2018. The research covered the period from 1st October 2018 to 30th July 2019, i.e. a year after it was granted the status of validity in higher education. The period covered by the study became of key importance in terms of changes introduced at universities in Poland and in the entire science sector, because the regulations indicated here replaced four documents in force earlier on: the Act on Higher Education, the Act on the Principles of Financing Science, the Act on Academic Degrees and Titles, as well as the Student Loans Act. Quantitative research, corpus analysis (boiling down to the selection of the most common phrases characterising the Act) and, alternatively, content analysis, comparative analysis of statistical data and secondary research results were used in the considerations.

The quantitative analysis of the material was made by means of the Inforia tool thanks to cooperation with Press Service Monitoring Mediów, monitoring the release of 1,100 press titles, 5 million Internet sources (including social media) and 100 radio and television stations in Poland and abroad. The phrase "Constitution for Science" was selected for the research due to its representativeness in the media, which was not noted in the case of its colloquial paraphrases (Act 2.0, the Gowin Act, the Gowin Reform). In the analysed period, 10,646 messages were recorded in Poland in which the phrase "Constitution for Science" appeared, of which 70% were pieces of information on social media (7,410 including comments containing keywords), 23% publications on websites (mainly on government websites, on news portals and public media – 2,462), 4% in the press (465 texts), 2% on the radio (160), 1% on television (149). This data is presented in Figure 1.

25]. Available at: <<https://konstytucjadlanauki.gov.pl/>>.

26 *Co zrobiliśmy przez 4 lata w MNiSW?* [online]. [2019-11-25]. Available at: <<https://konstytucjadlanauki.gov.pl/co-zrobilismy-przez-4-lata-w-mnisw/>>.

27 DZIEDZICZAK-FOLTYN, A.: Konsultatywność w projektowaniu reformy szkolnictwa wyższego w Polsce na przykładzie Ustawy 2.0. In *Nauka i Szkolnictwo Wyższe*, 2018, Vol. 51, No. 1, p. 199-2017.

28 *NKN FORUM*. [online]. [2019-11-29]. Available at: <<https://nkn.gov.pl/>>.

29 GÓRNIAK, J.: "Ustawa 2.0" partycypacyjny model istotnej zmiany regulacyjnej. In *Nauka i Szkolnictwo Wyższe*, 2017, Vol. 50, No. 2, p. 134-135.

30 Remark by authors: There are 460 deputies sit in the Sejm of the Republic of Poland.

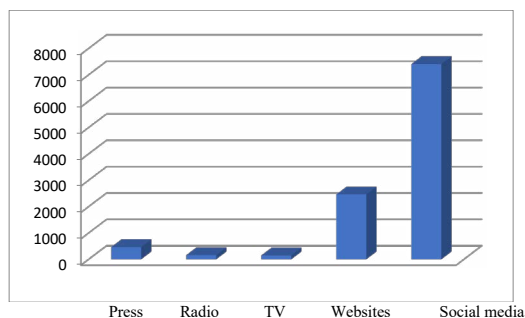


Figure 1: The phrase "Constitution for Science" in all media in terms of the number of messages. Data for the period from 1st October 2018 to 31st October 2019

Source: Database Inforia Press Service Monitoring Mediów. [online]. [2019-11-29]. Available at: <<https://app.inforia.pl/dashboard?portalId=6897>>.

Due to the framework and purpose of the article the study of the number of messages was limited to the analysis of messages published in traditional media (press, radio, television) and websites excluding social media, the analysis of which will be presented in the next article in connection with the amendment to "the Constitution for Science" planned for next year. The research revealed that publications pertaining to Act 2.0 appeared much more often in national media (58.83% of information) than regional media (41.17%), as stated in Figure 2 and Figure 3. Taking into account the location, the largest number of messages was recorded in voivodships in which universities had been granted research status obtained thanks to the highest scientific categories and the right to confer the degree of habilitated doctor.³¹ These were the Jagiellonian University and the AGH University of Science and Technology in Kraków (Małopolskie voivodship – 136 messages), the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (Kujawsko-pomorskie voivodship – 150 messages), the Silesian University of Technology (Śląskie voivodship – 127 messages).³² The lack of Mazowieckie voivodship (the University of Warsaw and the Warsaw University of Technology have the status of research universities) in the top three is noticeable here, which results from the operation of nationwide media in this area.³³

Number of media messages in regional media

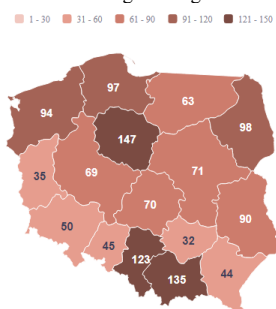


Figure 2: The number of media messages by Polish voivodships

Source: Database Inforia Press Service Monitoring Mediów. [online]. [2019-11-29]. Available at: <<https://app.inforia.pl/dashboard?portalId=6897>>.

31 Remark by authors: Research universities were selected on the basis of the result of the competition "Initiative of Excellence – Research University" (IDUB) in accordance with art. 305 paragraph 2 of the Act of 3rd July 2018.

32 Remark by authors: The number of students studying at these universities: the Jagiellonian University – 40,905, the AGH University of Science and Technology in Kraków – 28,653, the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń – 24,469, the Silesian University of Technology – 21,366. The data comes from the CSO Report on Universities and Their Finances in 2016, Warszawa 2017. Source: *Higher Education Institutions and Their Finances in 2016*. [online]. [2019-11-25]. Available at: <https://stat.gov.pl/files/gfx/portalinformacyjny/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5488/2/13/1/szkoly_wyzsze_i_ich_finanse_w_2016_r.pdf>.

33 Remark by authors: Research universities in Poland are also the Gdańsk University of Technology, the Medical University of Gdańsk (Pomorskie voivodship – 100 messages in the studied material), the University of Wrocław, the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Wielkopolskie voivodship – 73 messages).

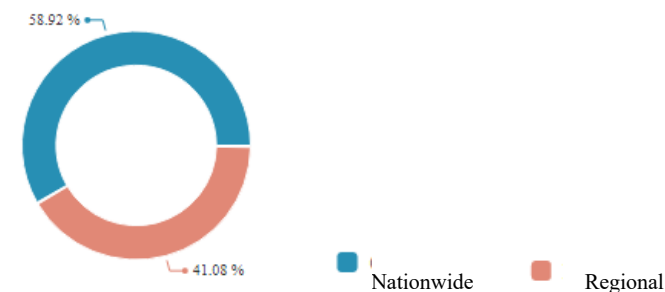


Figure 3: The number of pieces of information in national and regional media

Source: Database Inforia Press Service Monitoring Mediów. [online]. [2019-11-29]. Available at: <<https://app.inforia.pl/dashboard?portalId=6897>>.

In terms of topics, the largest number of information items, as many as 2,400, appeared in general information media, including the most on government websites (the website of the Republic of Poland *gov.pl* – 109 pieces of information, *http://naukawpolsce.pap.pl/* – 104 information items) and educational portals – 317). The specificity of their content will be analysed in a separate article. A similar relationship can also be seen in traditional media, which primarily inform about the shape of Act 2.0, emphasising social, political and economic changes it introduces in higher education and science. Public broadcasting stations were the most active here – *Polish Radio 24* (39 broadcasts) and *Polish Radio Program 1* (20), followed by nationwide newspapers *Rzeczpospolita* (33 articles), *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna* (30) and TV news channels *TVP Info* (23) and *TVN24* (18). Most messages (88%) have a neutral or positive (34%) tone, which is distributed proportionally in various media, indicating the intended effect of the positive presentation of changes in one-way communication. It should be noted, however, that the press, being one of the oldest mass media, is a medium where the percentage of positive, negative and neutral overtones is distributed most proportionally (191 messages with neutral overtones, 187 with positive overtones and 87 negatively marked).

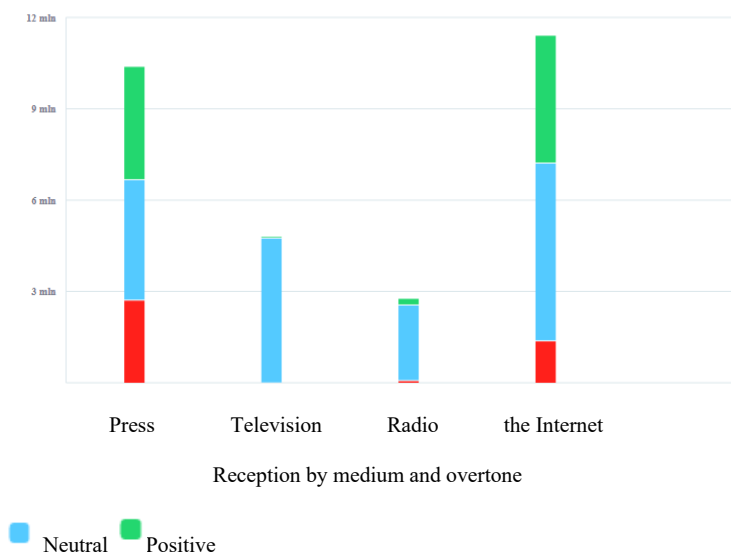


Figure 4: The number of messages according to medium and overtones in all media

Source: Database Inforia Press Service Monitoring Mediów. [online]. [2019-11-29]. Available at: <<https://app.inforia.pl/dashboard?portalId=6897>>.

The analysis of news content in *Rzeczpospolita* – the most opinion-forming nationwide daily in Poland in 2018,³⁴ annual sales of which according to the data of the Press Distribution Control Association currently amounts to 12,903,864 copies,³⁵ showed a definite prevalence of texts marked positively (12 out of 33) and neutrally (16 out of 33) among which journalistic articles or forms similar to this genre dominated in defining indexes. In line with the economic and legal profile of the newspaper, experts' comments, and interviews with representatives of state authorities representing the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and representatives of academic authorities (rectors and deans of public universities) ranked second. These statements, as in the case of other media messages analysed here, most often appeared at key moments for the academic community: at the beginning and end of the academic year or at the turn of semesters of academic education. These messages emphasised the advantages of the "Constitution for Science" boiling down to presenting the benefits resulting from the Act in the field of: creating a prosperous society and modern domestic economy, increasing the autonomy of Polish universities, supporting cooperation between universities and business, pro-quality university operation related to the prestige of publications and compliance with ethical principles³⁶ and raising the level of Polish science, increasing its impact on global science, improving the quality of scientific research, changing the method of evaluation and making university funding dependent on its results, and changing the methods of financing students and doctoral students (scholarships, loans) while ensuring quality of education, excluding education on a mass scale. Among critical voices there were above all comments and articles similar in form to a journalistic format, in which the transformation of universities based on the principles applied in corporation management, the dependence of functioning of Polish universities on international rankings, the way of conducting evaluation on the basis of a scoring system, and depreciation of humanistic studies were opposed to. Critical statements also concerned the method of evaluating scientific publications which is specified in the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education to the "Constitution for Science".

The level of the accuracy of arguments in favour of the Act resulting from the specificity of the medium, visible in the press, was not reflected in television materials regarding current socio-political events (the provisions of the Act were referred to in reports from press conferences of government representatives, expert interviews and commentaries, and journalistic programmes in which politicians participated). As far as number of messages and opinion-forming criterion are concerned, two news television stations: *TVP Info* – a public television channel and *TVN 24* – a commercial channel opposed to the ruling party ranked first among television programmes. Messages valuing Act 2.0 as introducing an increase in spending on science and salaries for researchers, promoting innovation serving economic growth and improving the well-being of society, increasing the autonomy of universities, enabling achieving scientific successes and obtaining high places in international university rankings, supporting universities with the largest achievements in the field of research and implementation, opening the way for development for young scientists³⁷ and protection of student rights predominated in *TVP Info*. In *TVN 24* the "Constitution for Science" was mentioned in connection with the introduction of separate normative acts (the Usury Act, the Act on the Quality of Earnings). The provisions of Act 2.0 were most often cited in connection with the ban on fulfilling managerial functions at universities by persons who in the years 1944 to 1990 worked in state security bodies (Article 32, paragraph 2 of the Act on Higher Education and Science of 20th July 2018) and the need to renew the elite in the country, emphasised by the Minister of Science and Higher Education and Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, which was to serve its development.

34 Remark by authors: *Raport IMM: Najbardziej opiniotwórcze media 2018 roku*. [online]. [2019-11-25]. Available at: <<https://www.imm.com.pl/imm-najbardziej-opiniotworcze-media-2018-roku/>>. Opinion-forming of a given medium is presented in the report on the basis of the number of citations from this medium appearing in other media, with the exception of news agencies and reprints. The Institute of Media Monitoring monitors over 1,000 press titles, almost 150 RTV stations and Polish Internet resources together with social media.

35 *Report Rzeczpospolita*. [online]. [2019-11-25]. Available at: <<https://prasaplus.pl/titlesReports/titleReport/7076/11/8>>.

36 *Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education Regarding the Preparation of Lists of Scientific 35 Monographs and Scientific Journals and Reviewed Materials from International Conferences No. 2152*, from 7th November 2018. [online]. [2019-11-25]. Available at: <<http://www.dziennikustaw.gov.pl/DU/2018/2152>>.

37 Remark by authors: The term "young scientist" used in the media refers to a group which is varied in terms of the education level and age. It is often not equivalent to the statutory definition of a young scientist as a person starting a scientific career. See: RYLKO-KURPIEWSKA, A., LOSIEWICZ, M.: Naukowa młodość i dojrzałość – perspektywy medialne i pozamedialne. In *Media Biznes Kultura*, 2017, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 29.

In comparison to television and press content, radio messages presented much more information about the "Constitution for Science" which resulted from the choice of genres: a debate, journalistic broadcasts, conversations (more rarely reporter accounts), which made it possible to confront positions and make the discourse more detailed. Among participants, in addition to representatives of government and academic authorities, experts, politicians and journalists, there were also representatives of academic circles: scientists, doctoral students, students and trade union representatives. The time context was most often the moment when the Act was introduced, which coincides with the start of the academic year, and the organisation of various types of conferences, among which the most important were: the Conference of Rectors of Universities, the Extraordinary Congress of Polish Humanities, the Conference of Polish Universities in the World Perspective and Congress 590 which is one of the most important economic events in Poland. The radio broadcasts stressed the evolutionary, as planned until 2026, nature of the changes introduced by Act 2.0. The Constitution for Science was positively evaluated for granting greater autonomy to Polish universities, supporting international cooperation, improving positions in international rankings, raising the level of scientific research, supporting innovation in science and the relationship between science and business, involving business and economic environments in the decision-making process at the university, changes in the model of obtaining degrees, among others by abolishing the need for researchers to obtain habilitation, supporting regional universities thanks to the possibility of forming federations, introducing a new education model excluding mass scale studies, strengthening practical education, simplifying the funding rules for universities and increasing expenditure on science, protecting student rights through changes in the provisions of contracts with the university. On the other hand, controversy arose over the provisions of the Act which introduce the possibility of changing the organisational structure of the university assuming the strengthening of the rector's position, introducing a new body in the structure, that is the university council, the disregard for the specificity of the humanities and social sciences while strengthening the possibilities of developing research in formal, natural and engineering sciences, allocating funds for science (in the amount of 3 billion PLN) in state bonds for investments in infrastructure and development, as well as lifelong employment of judges of the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court and the Supreme Administrative Court at universities. This provision has been questioned by President Andrzej Duda and will probably be changed.

The analysis of messages appearing in the press, on the radio and television shows a different level of details and selection of arguments in presenting the reform of the higher education system, which results from the adaptation of the specifics of the statement to particular target groups. Press releases are addressed to people interested in the changes introduced by the Constitution for Science. The language of the argument, the choice of actors and presented positions are adapted to the recipient aware of the need to introduce changes in the field of science and higher education (scientists, entrepreneurs, employees of state offices and institutions).³⁸ The texts published in the country's most opinion-forming daily newspaper present above all a good forecast of changes to take place at Polish universities, contributing to improving the functioning of universities as organisations, meeting social and economic challenges, and improving the quality of science and education.

The positive effects of Act 2.0 in reference to the systemic change of Polish science and higher education were also demonstrated in television messages – the medium recognised by Poles in 2019 as the main source of information about events in the country and around the world.³⁹ Economic and social benefits were outlined mainly by public television, in which the statements of Jarosław Gowin – the Minister of Science and Higher Education, the creator of the Act – were most often presented. The positive effects of the transformation are presented here in brief and in the form of summaries, which result both from the desire to reach the general public and the specificity of the medium received with the recipient's low involvement. This regularity cannot be seen on the radio, which is characterised by the greatest diversity of participants, the choice of genres that enable the presentation of many positions while making the argumentation and the resulting summaries more

38 *Report Rzeczpospolita*. [online]. [2019-11-25]. Available at: <<https://prasaplus.pl/titlesReports/titleReport/7076/11/8>>.

39 Remark by authors: According to 58% of Poles. Cf. CBOS, The Credibility of the Media. The study was conducted by means of computer-assisted face-to-face interviews (CAPI) on 4th – 11th April 2019 on a representative sample of 1,064 adult residents of Poland. See: *Wiarygodność Mediów*. [online]. [2019-11-25]. Available at: <https://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2019/K_070_19.PDF>.

detailed. However, this diversity does not mean the presentation of critical opinions, which in the examined materials from public radio stations constituted only 2%. Clearly, the aim of such a selection of opinions on the reform was to involve in the discussion a wide group of participants who, by emphasising the value of the provisions of the Act in the context of improving the quality of scientific research and education, supporting innovation in science and cooperation with entrepreneurs, were supposed to influence the social perception of the positive effects of the reform for knowledge-based economic development.

The name “Constitution for Science” (referring to the Act on Higher Education and Science of 20th July 2018) served the same purpose, pointing to the breakthrough nature of the changes (the constitution is a collection of the most important laws in the state), causal dependence and usefulness for the world of science. In order to popularise its regulations, make the name of the act more suggestive and create positive ideas about the reform, this name functioned in the press (and on government websites) written in capital letters, which is unusual for the names of legal acts (the spelling Constitution for science would be correct). A similar function was also indicated by the representativeness of this phrase in relation to other, less valuing terms (Act 2.0, the Gowin Reform, the Gowin Act).

Discussion and Conclusions

Thirty years after the start of the political transformation and fifteen years after accession to the European Union, Poland continues to follow its path towards an open and globally competitive economy. The higher education system is an important factor of knowledge creation, development and innovation in this process. Despite many attempts in the past which were aimed at transforming and modernising the higher education system in Poland, the effects of these reforms were considered unsatisfactory.

The latest attempt to reform education is related to Act 2.0. Discussion on the reform, especially in the academic environment, has been heated and wide-ranging. One of the reasons for this situation is the scale of the reform. It encompasses, among others: a new university management model, issues of expanding university autonomy, the introduction of new academic career paths and a doctoral education model. Bearing in mind the experience of the implementation of previous reforms, the Ministry of Higher Education in this case paid a lot of attention to social communication.

The effects of this attention can also be found in media coverage, which repeatedly referred to information provided on government websites. Interest in the issue was well illustrated by both the large number of media messages, their range (mainly nationwide), and the choice of individual media adapted to different groups of recipients to whom analogous content was addressed although it differed in terms of the genre, the level of details and reception criteria. The main feature of communication in traditional media was the presentation of ready assessments and effects of the reform from the moment of its implementation, which was to contribute to its positive evaluation.

The key conclusion of the study is that traditional media positively or neutrally assessed the changes introduced by the Act (it is important that both actors representing the ruling party, its supporters and opponents spoke positively about its shape in the media). The specificity of these opinions results here from the awareness of the introduced changes and the desire to popularise them not only in the academic environment but also in society in general.

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