

DISCUSSION

History and Numerology. Polish Historiography after 1989 and an Outlook for the Future

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Abstract: The article comments on main trends in Polish historiography of the last 30 or so years. The author verifies predictions concerning said trends that had been made in the first years of the new millennium, to conclude that they proved too optimistic in some respects. Problems such as political instrumentalization of history loom large over Polish historiography and may distort its future development. Furthermore, the simplistic understanding of parametrization manifested by the last (2022) evaluation of academic institutions, further reduces freedom of research while it does nothing to eliminate political pressures on historians. In essence, the policy of science pursued by the Polish state does very little to support original research.

Keywords: parametrization of science; Polish historiography; politics of history; Holocaust research

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Poland's academic policy concerning history is for me a personal matter not just because it affects me directly, like all other Polish historians. When the Polish People's Republic (PRL) was falling apart, I was finishing elementary school and for the first time became seriously interested in history. At that time, I was reading texts by historians setting the research standards in our discipline in the previous fifty years, the real luminaries of the PRL historiography. Luckily for me, I was able to meet some of them personally, take an exam in their class, talk to them, and especially listen. These memories have not faded with time but have become more and more important to me. People such as Jerzy Jedlicki, Karol Modzelewski, Maria Janion, Jerzy Tomaszewski, Antoni Mączak, or Anna Żarnowska have "grown" with time and I cannot see too many candidates able to replace them today. This impression certainly has to do with the fact that the period after 1989 spans my whole professional life. It is difficult to keep the distance necessary for unbiased assessment.

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Narratives unbound?

The lack of temporal distance, however, can be compensated with other circumstances. Over ten years ago I had an opportunity to work on an extensive questionnaire on the state of Polish historical science after 1989 (in comparison to historiographies of five other countries of Central and Eastern Europe). At the turn of the century, Central European University, at that time in Budapest, now in Vienna, was working on an ambitious project, whose very delayed results were published in 2007.² The project's title (*Narratives Unbound*) suggested that a distinctive feature of post-communism in history was freedom, previously kept in check. I am no longer certain that the Budapest initiators of this project still share this opinion today. Maybe nowadays, with hindsight, they would tend to be more careful using the word "unbound" when referring to recent years? In any case – going back to Polish historiography – the experience gained then perhaps helps me to make more balanced assessments, based not only on my current beliefs and recent impressions, but also on the analytical work done in the past.

Reading the report again after many years evoked a great deal of pessimism. Over ten years ago as a starting point I adopted the thesis that appears at the start of this text. Polish historiography in the PRL period abounded in outstanding figures and important works, some of them also significant in the international community. The title of the respective chapter of *Narratives Unbound* ("From the Splendid Past into the Unknown Future") was full of doubt whether the generation of historians whose professional activity culminated in the 1960s and 1970s had raised their successors who would be ready to take a comparable position. As we can see, the passage of time did not manage to dispel the doubt.

When writing about structural features of the discipline in Poland, I pointed out rather weak professional mobility, methodological conservatism, lack of comparative historical studies, and reluctance to engage in critical discussions in which the leading role would belong to professional historians. Among the advantages I included the invigoration of the community caused by a recent controversy surrounding the book by Jan Tomasz Gross on a pogrom in the town of Jedwabne (where in the summer of 1941 Polish residents murdered

2 MACIEJ GÓRNY, From the Splendid Past into the Unknown Future. Historical Studies in Poland after 1989, in: *Narratives unbound. Historical studies in post-communist Eastern Europe*, eds. S. Antohi, B. Trencsényi, P. Apor, Budapest 2007, pp. 101–172.

their Jewish neighbours)³, a recurring debate on the political instrumentalization of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), and above all a dozen or so promising research projects. The latter included e.g. the successful efforts to continue the research of social history, a strong aspect of the PRL historiography, history of intellectuals and history of ideas, a successful transfer of Ernest Gellner's theory to the Polish context in a new work by Tomasz Kizwalter, or the pioneer (even from the international perspective) research by Jacek Banaszekiewicz combining semiotics and medieval studies.⁴

Besides those important, although quite specialised, research programmes, I emphasised the revolutionary role and dynamic developments of whole directions of research. Among these burgeoning subdisciplines was the history of Polish-Jewish, Polish-German, and Polish-Ukrainian relations (I considered the Institute of Central and Eastern Europe in Lublin, headed by an excellent medievalist Jerzy Kłoczowski to be a very promising institution of regional studies), and above all an almost completely new discipline of contemporary history, focusing on the history of PRL and including many aspects of the country's political, cultural, and social life.

Which of these general assessments stood the test of time and which of my ideas of future trends differed from reality? Social history of Poland is doing averagely well and in its most recent and most interesting manifestations still refers to the post-war heritage.⁵ The case is similar with intellectual history, which in the meantime grew by an excellent synthesis by three authors.⁶ History of PRL seems to still be the most dynamically growing section of research and people like Jerzy Kochanowski or Marcin Zaremba became

3 JAN TOMASZ GROSS, *Sąsiedzi. Historia zagłady żydowskiego miasteczka*, Sejny 2000; PIOTR FORECKI, *Od Shoah do Strachu. Spory o polsko-żydowską przeszłość i pamięć w debatach publicznych*, Poznań 2010; PAWEŁ MACHCEWICZ, KRZYSZTOF PERSAK (eds.), *Wokół Jedwabnego*, vols. I–II, Warszawa 2002.

4 TOMASZ KIZWALTER, *O nowoczesności narodu. Przypadek polski*, Warszawa 1999; JACEK BANASZKIEWICZ, *Polskie dzieje bajeczne Mistrza Wincentego Kadłubka*, Wrocław 1998, and many other ones.

5 I am referring to the book series *Metamorfozy społeczne* and a book by PIOTR CICHORACKI, JOANNA DUFRAT, JANUSZ MIERZWA, *Oblicza buntu społecznego w II Rzeczypospolitej doby Wielkiego Kryzysu (1930–1935)*, Kraków 2019.

6 MACIEJ JANOWSKI, *Narodziny inteligencji (1750–1831)*, Warszawa 2008; JERZY JEDLIČKI, *Błędne koło (1832–1864)*, Warszawa 2008; MAGDALENA MICIŃSKA, *Inteligencja na rozdrożach (1864–1918)*, Warszawa 2008. The second edition of this fundamental work is being currently prepared.

the leading representatives of the discipline⁷, although the government-subsidised, sloppily published in large quantities, and uninspiring production of IPN still outnumbers the interesting approaches. But all these trends are developing. It seems that the fate of research of bilateral relations, very active in the 1990s, went the other way. The energy accompanying the examination of Polish-Ukrainian and even Polish-German subjects seems to have worn off, which is most evident in the cognitive reductionism and politicisation. Considering how long and rich each of these bilateral histories is, crimes against Polish people seem to take disproportionately much space in Polish public discourse and historiography of the recent years. The crisis of the bilateral histories seems to be behind the 2018 decision to close the Institute of Central and Eastern Europe and replace it with the Institute of Central Europe. In theory, the new institution is supposed to provide the government with political expertise on the region and intellectual support for the Polish foreign policy. I have my doubts about how effective the institute is in these assignments, but as I am not a specialist, I will leave them aside. What is unquestionable is the fact that this decision caused a tangible loss to Polish historiography.

Compared to other bilateral histories, the research of history of Polish Jews seems to be a field which has been consistently and evenly developing. On the map of relevant institutions next to organisations with long history (Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw) new centres emerge (*Polin* Museum in Warsaw, which apart from having a very interesting exhibition carries out research and educational activities, gathering quite a large community). Specialisation also takes place, as is evident in the Polish research on the Holocaust. If I were to point out today one trend best proving the intellectual maturity of Polish historiography, an achievement that fellow historians from neighbouring countries talk about with admiration and envy, it would be the Holocaust research. We should note, however, that this work is usually done outside of the historical institutions in the strict sense of the term. For example, the Polish Centre for Holocaust Research is a part of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IFiS PAN). So far, this is where the most extensive work on the fates of Jews in individual districts of the occupied Poland has been prepared.⁸

7 JERZY KOCHANOWSKI, *Rewolucja międzypaździernikowa. Polska 1956–1957*, Kraków 2017; IDEM, „*Wolne miasto*” *Zakopane 1956–1970*, Kraków 2019; MARCIN ZAREMBA, *Wielka trwoga. Polska 1944–1947. Ludowa reakcja na kryzys*, Kraków 2012.

8 BARBARA ENGELKING, JAN GRABOWSKI (eds.), *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*, vols. I–II, Warszawa 2018. Individual districts were described by

Fewest changes can be seen in the range of issues most often discussed publicly. The Jedwabne debate evolved smoothly into other arguments about Polish co-responsibility for the Holocaust. One of their last instances was the criminalisation of the alleged offence against the dignity of the nation. A draft law of 26th January 2018 proposed to introduce a new type of crime consisting of ascribing responsibility for the Nazi crimes committed by the Third Reich to Poles or the Polish State. Such a crime was described in article 55a.1 of the Criminal Code. It made public and unfounded accusations of participation in the Nazi crimes or other crimes against humanity to the Polish nation or the Polish state prosecutable. An attempt at censorship on the international level failed under the international pressure, but it did not put the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (the Law and Justice, or PiS) party off other attempts to penalise historians. Meanwhile, the task of gathering evidence against historians is assigned to academic institutions taken over by PiS. The employees of the Pilecki Institute, a newly founded and generously subsidised successor of the research and popularisation departments of IPN, carried out archival research to find mistakes or falsifications in those academic texts that were not to the government's liking. Recently a group of researchers associated with IFiS PAN had to face an accusation of alleged slander. The accusation was made by a distant relative of a village mayor whose activities during the Second World War had been described by the researchers as ambiguous. He helped Jews to hide but also probably robbed and maybe even killed some of them. The plaintiff, an older lady, was generously supported by an ultra-rightist organisation, which used public funds. In February 2021 Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski, the main authors of the historical publication in question, were found guilty of slander and were required to apologise to the relatives of the slandered person. But no financial compensation was ordered. What is most important (at least from the point of view of this subject) was that the jury refused to acknowledge that "national pride" is a personal right subject to protection. The court of appeals issued a verdict amounting to a principle (which should be obvious to most historians) that the freedom of academic research is more important than an exaggerated sense of dignity of a plaintiff. So even though the government is trying to change that, Polish historians do not end up in prison for unpatriotic approach, which sadly happens to their colleagues in Belarus and Russia.

Tomasz Frydel, Jan Grabowski, Dariusz Libionka, Karolina Panz, Alina Skibińska, Dagmara Świątek-Niewińska, Anna Zapalec, Jean-Charles Szurek.

It is similarly hard to expect an end of the controversy around the politicisation of IPN (it seems to me that perhaps the institution will sooner be dissolved). Even if the loudest political debates died down, the glaring disparity in financing IPN and the rest of Polish science (in 2020 the IPN budget was four times the central budget of the Polish Academy of Sciences) is enough to spoil the mood. Moreover, it seems that the problem will escalate with more and more institutions enthusiastically founded by the state and representing the interests of different cliques within the government. The largest of these, the Pilecki Institute, focusing on the World War II research and commemorating Poles who saved Jews, has a budget that regular research organisations can only dream of. Apart from the financial means, the government funds the seat of its Berlin branch in Pariser Platz, near the Brandenburg Gate. The Polish House of Deputies with the votes of the ruling coalition assigned money for opening other branches of the institute in New York City and Tel-Aviv, places with relatively high rents. The godmother of this institution and her current director is an ex- deputy minister of culture, Magdalena Gawin. But even for those not privy to the factional conflicts in the ruling party, it is obvious that other PiS cliques have their own academic ambitions which in turn lead to new generously subsidised institutions active in the field of historical politics. One of the recent creations (creatures?) is Instytut De Republica. Its statutory task is popularisation of Polish science abroad by financing the publishing of selected authors in other countries and organising conferences and other academic events. The institute was founded by the decision of Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki. The Minister of Education and Science, Przemysław Czarnek, representing the most conservative wing of the party, makes regular attempts to reorganise the whole Polish Academy of Sciences or to create a new body which would copy it. To sum it up, my former fears about the politicisation of IPN were not only founded but turned out to be too conservative. The reality far outgrew them.

Referring to the assessments from *Narratives Unbound* after many years, despite political debates about history and fears caused by the institutional politics of PiS, one can get an impression that the development was quite harmonious in the long run. The historiographic legacy grows gradually and that is why it is possible to predict with a large dose of probability which research trends are going to flourish in the upcoming years and which will slowly wilt. The lack of knowledge by the author of these words is expressed in leaving out many important fields such as oral history or memory research, but the general trends seem to be stable. Establishing new institutions that take away finances from the budget for science should not fundamentally change these trends.

Parametrisation our way

But won't it? An overview of the most recent historical research over a decade ago could disregard financing and organisation of science. But today such selective blindness would be an unforgivable neglect. Parametrisation and the grant system entered the territory of Polish historiography with energy equal to that typical for politics. I expect their effects on research to be potentially deeper than the effects of political changes. One of the crucial results of parametrisation of the humanities is the system of rating of academic organisations, whose Polish version alone deserves the interest of historians of science.

It is not my intention to complain about the necessity to participate in the constant race of projects. I can see that it is not a Polish invention but just one of many elements of *convergence*, or catching up with the more developed countries. The reservations that I nevertheless voice are based on experience which is valuable due to its diversity. I have managed Polish and foreign grant projects and participated in them. I have been a member (of course not at the same time) of teams of experts evaluating Polish and European projects. I have also managed an academic institution whose existence depends on receiving such grants and especially on the parametric evaluation which determines the level of direct subsidisation by the state. All this experience makes me acknowledge that all these relatively new principles of science funding are the primary factor which in the recent years has been changing the shape of historiography. This in turn makes them the most important indicators about its future while casting a shadow on its social role.

Ten or so years ago it might have seemed that the only threat to history was politics. That had been the case, on a larger scale, before 1989. And, as evident in the fate of the Central European University or even the Institute of Central and Eastern Europe, it still happens. But, as experience of historians with censorship shows,⁹ in the past the instrumentalization of history was a kind of game between two partners of unequal but established status. The government, usually representing a uniform stance, confronted science, always expecting it to obey and sometimes to bow down. It had its methods of applying pressure, which were difficult to defy. But these methods were simple, and their use left traces which were easy to recognise. Today, the status of an academic institution seems to lose stability with the gradual change of

9 ZBIGNIEW ROMEK, *Cenzura a nauka historyczna w Polsce 1944–1970*, Warszawa 2010, and especially a collection of interviews with historians about their experience with censorship in PRL: ZBIGNIEW ROMEK (ed.), *Cenzura w PRL. Relacje historyków*, Warszawa 2000.

the funding system. With financing through projects, the institutions of historical science become gradually charged with logic typical for expert assessment. Tradition, historian's skills, researcher's authority, or continuation are no longer values in this frame of reference. What counts is mainly innovation.

One can ask: why is it wrong? The problem is that the innovation expected in competition procedures is not the same as the innovation in historical research. Both work on different levels. I have serious doubts as to whether Witold Kula, perhaps the best Polish historian, would turn out to be an innovative historian in the competition sense of the term. Did he design the tools with which he obtained materials for his analyses in history of economy in a creative way? Did he include representatives of other disciplines in his research team? Not necessarily. His innovation was manifested not at the stage of collecting materials, but during their analysis. It is quite possible that today a team of experts, having good intentions but following strict criteria, would reject his project.

The impairment of research institutions not just by direct political interference but primarily by the new method of funding science, can, in my opinion, have far-reaching consequences for the future of Polish historiography. As the budget that is not subject to the requirements of academic competitions is shrinking, so is the refugium that used to consist of institutes of history at universities and the Academy of Sciences. This is certainly also a manifestation of the growing need for control on the part of the government and the traditional distrust of intellectuals, whose jobs consist of who knows what.

This structural change must affect the present and future research. Of course, no science policy will prevent great work from being published. But its effect on forming and maintaining research teams or schools can be significant. What should we expect? On one hand, the funding system naturally prefers short-term projects, designed to last a few years at the most and ending with a measurable result. On the other hand, it encourages repeating tested methods, and hence derivation. But it is more and more difficult for the projects building on previous research to find their place in the system. Logically, they find it especially difficult to meet the key condition of innovation. Of course, ways of funding this kind of research still exist and will exist in the future, but they will be an exception rather than the norm. The area of politicised history, however, will very probably thrive as it will be able to use alternative sources of funding because of its political involvement.

The domain in which the great change can be observed up close are the procedures of rating academic units. In Poland the assessment has been carried out several times since 1989, and each time the rules were different. The first evaluation took place directly after the transformation of the political system

and was based on expert assessment. In the subsequent ones in 1999, 2003, 2006, and 2010 the details of assigning points for individual parts of the evaluation changed not only from assessment to assessment but also during one procedure, which means that the rules changed during the game. Starting with the 2013 assessment, the organisation responsible for the evaluation of research units was no longer the State Committee for Scientific Research, an institution both professional and political, but the Ministry of Science and University Education (now Ministry of Education and Science). The only aspect of the assessment not subject to a fundamental reform has been the combination (in varying proportions) of the evaluation of academic work and its financial and social effects. The rest is fluid and with time has become more and more difficult to capture.

After the 2017 assessment was completed, the minister of science and university education Jarosław Gowin started to work on a comprehensive reform of science. Unlike most government and ruling party's initiatives, this act, called Constitution for Science, had undergone actual extensive consultations in the academic community.¹⁰ Groups of experts also had direct influence on determining the assessment tools, such as lists of indexed journals or academic publishers recognised by the assessment procedure. The aim of the reform was to increase the prestige of Polish universities and research institutes. Minister Gowin himself did not hide the ambition to significantly raise the position of Polish universities in the Shanghai ranking and increase the number of Polish winners of competitions organised with EU funding.¹¹

The premises of Gowin's reform were thus no different than the ideas behind any assessment of science in most democratic countries. The preamble to the guidelines for scientists prepared by the ministry explains them even too clearly and assumes a paternalistic tone:

For some time now, academic employees in the whole world have been subject to an increasing pressure to publish in scientific journals which are visible in the international academic circulation, mainly due to their place on the Scopus or Web of Science lists. It is one of the effects of a long-term change taking place in the sector of university education and science. During the period when the university system was perceived to be of high quality and

10 *Dziennik Ustaw 2018*, Item 1668, <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=W-DU20180001668> [11. 4. 2022].

11 Gowin o spadku polskich uczelni w rankingach: potrzebne zmiany systemowe, *Nauka w Polsce*, 19. 8. 2016, <https://naukawpolsce.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C410882%2Cgowin-o-spadku-polskich-uczelni-w-rankingach-potrebne-zmiany-systemowe.html> [11. 4. 2022].

a doctorate was not necessary to become a university professor (at least in the countries of the West) there were no vital reasons for carrying out assessment and individual evaluation. It was a different world, a world of peaceful development of academic work, lower mobility, a world where oral communication played the same role that is now played in education and scientific research by the Internet. Generally speaking, in this other world, which we had known earlier, it was assumed that anyone who had been employed by a university was certainly better educated than the rest of the society and thus the results of their work were automatically considered to be innovative or at least of very high quality. A lot has changed since then. Dynamically growing educational ambitions, clearly noticeable also in Poland, caused a need for development of the university sector, including increasing the number of its employees and a significant expansion of the technical infrastructure. Fulfilling these ambitions would be impossible without all that.¹²

The reform authors' reflections on history, even if they seem infantile, have served to justify the newest, recently completed assessment of Polish academic units. Its distinctive feature became the most advanced automatization so far. The element of expert assessment has been marginalised and the main role was played by databases and an algorithm (called, not without irony, an optimisation algorithm) using these databases and automatically selecting the best possible elements to assess. The second change, equally significant and affecting the results, was the method in which the assessed academic texts were selected. During previous evaluations, despite the constant changes, an unwritten rule of collective representation remained in place. Since entire institutes were assessed, the work of their employees was evaluated jointly. One person who published a lot or especially well was able to "even out" the shortages of their less efficient colleagues. But this time each employee was assigned a very limited number of slots which they could fill with their published work.

When I am writing these words, the results of the assessment of the 2017–2021 period are not yet known. We also cannot tell whether the academic units potentially dissatisfied with the assessment will appeal the decision of the ministry and if their next step will be to go to court. But we already know that the technocratic rhetoric does not fully match the reality. Consultations and meetings of the people responsible for carrying out the assessment in individual units were full of complaints about the faulty computer system, which was the

12 MINISTERSTWO NAUKI I SZKOLNICTWA WYŻSZEGO, *Ewaluacja jakości działalności naukowej – przewodnik*, Warszawa 2018, p. 5.

main “motor” of the whole procedure. The collaboration of a few different databases, between which gigantic amount of information was supposed to flow, left much to be desired. The settings of programmes, insufficiently adapted to the specifics of individual disciplines, duplicated the writing errors, which had to be corrected many times over. Each data migration ended with some of the data being lost. The confusion caused by the problems with digital infrastructure was further augmented by the ministry, which issued contradictory instructions and changed the parameters of the assessment. A typical example of the chaos accompanying the assessment was the decision to introduce mandatory registration of academic employees in the ORCID database. It was rescinded after a few weeks, during the assessment, apparently after it had become clear that it was impossible for everyone to comply. Of course, the responsibility for completing the lost data or introducing the changes fell on the representatives of the assessed organisations.

The process of parametric evaluation, even though it was not well designed and was carried out in a chaotic style, would not have been as demoralising if it had not been for its political aspect. Jarosław Gowin, the author of the science reform project and the original concept of the assessment resigned from the post of the minister of science after a few years and in the course of factional fights left the government with a small group of his associates. Initially his successors continued the work he had started, but in the autumn of 2020 the ministry was taken over by the former voivode of Lublin, a younger generation PiS activist, known for his involvement in the “fight against the LGBT ideology” (i.e. homophobia), Przemysław Czarnek. His nomination started a new stage of the parametric assessment, where technocratic elements are combined with a personal sense of a mission and the fight for interests of political circles close to the minister. Czarnek granted himself a personal control over the results of the parametric assessment by obtaining a right to determine the dividing line between the individual categories of institutions. Which means that he will be the one to decide where the line between institutes of categories A+, A, B+, B, and C is going to be. It is not the only tool used by the ministry management to gain the influence on the assessment results.

Polish scientists were even more outraged by the repeated changes made by the minister to the list of indexed journals. It is a few-thousand-pages long list of journals from different disciplines with assigned impact factors, originally based on the opinions of a group of Polish experts. Since the beginning of the work on the assessment, the case of journals and publishing houses was rife with conflicts and suspicions of dishonest promotion of some of them. A process like this was bound to happen with certain controversies. But Minister Czarnek moved the debate to a whole new level, introducing significant

changes to the list without any consultation. The common denominator were the unexpected and unfounded advancements of journals not indexed in the Scopus or the Web of Science, and instead representing the circles close to Przemysław Czarnek: Roman Catholic and conservative. The interference largely affected theological, legal, and historical journals. Enormous changes were made to the position of such titles as: *The Person and the Challenges. The Journal of Theology, Education, Canon Law and Social Studies Inspired by Pope John Paul, Fides, Ratio et Patria. Studia Toruńskie, Zeszyty Formacji Katechetów, Ethos. Kwartalnik Jana Pawła II KUL, Archiwa Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne, Biuletyn Stowarzyszenia Absolwentów i Przyjaciół Wydziału Prawa Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Przegląd Sejmowy* or *Probacja* (a journal of the Polish Ministry of Justice). The minister decided matter-of-factly to increase the impact factor of many historical journals including *Kwartalnik Historyczny* and *Przegląd Historyczny*. Currently, a text published in each of these journals has 100 points, which is higher than the value of an article in *Historische Zeitschrift* (70 pts.) and still has half of the value of the articles in the *American Historical Review* or *Past & Present*. A Committee for Assessment of Science, an expert body established to determine the list of indexed journals, made a formal protest against these changes, but it did not affect the position of Minister Czarnek in any way¹³. Moreover, shortly before the end of the reporting period, he made one more round of changes, again increasing the impact factor of Polish legal and theological journals of low academic significance.

The results of such an assessment of Polish academic organisations are not yet known and it is difficult to predict to what extent they will affect the level of funding of individual institutions. But the whole process, in theory based on the objectivity of the rating indices, most certainly can no longer be given the benefit of the doubt. If the minister of science and education does not hesitate to interfere with the process of a (theoretically) merit-based evaluation, indirectly improving the results of institutions favoured by him, what can stop him from ignoring the dependence between the assessment results and the amount of funding? The mere fact that such questions can arise suggests what the long-term effects of such an assessment of academic institutions can be. Isn't it going to discredit all the future attempts to make the assessment and parametrisation objective? On April Fools' Day one of the email jokes I received

13 KATARZYNA LECHOWICZ-DYL, SZYMON ZDZIEBŁOWSKI, KEN: w wykazie czasopism punktowanych 73 niekonsultowane pozycje, 237 niekonsultowanych zmian punktacji, *Nauka w Polsce*, 12. 2. 2021, <https://naukawpolsce.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C86310%2Cken-w-wykazie-czasopism-punktowanych-73-niekonsultowane-pozycje-237> [1.04.2022].

was the information that Minister Czarnek made the decisions to put on the list of indexed journals such periodicals as *Sister Mary's Recipes* (100 pts.), *TV Week* (140 pts.), or *Exorcist* (200 pts.). I suspect that among those who had read the joke were some who, after laughing, checked the newest announcements by the Ministry of Science and Education. Just in case.

Conclusion

The picture of the nearest future of Polish historiography that this cursory analysis brings is, admittedly, not too optimistic. It is a future that makes me apprehensive. The obstacles hindering the work of the best Polish researchers in the communist period, instead of remaining in the past, are returning with the science policy of the current government. Changes on the institutional map of Polish historiography will inevitably lead to the limited funding of the research that is not politically useful. Even now government's subsidies for IPN or the Pilecki Institute are disproportionately large compared to the insufficient funding of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Meanwhile, the government becomes bolder and new institutions with historical profiles, unclear competencies, and large budgets keep appearing on the horizon.

The advancing (again) politicisation of historiography is abundant with absurd stories, especially regarding the indexed journals. This is definitely a serious problem, which should not be neglected. Even if some decisions of the Polish ministry seem funny, their effects may turn out to be dangerous for science. The colourful personality of Minister Czarnek draws the attention away from deeper problems, shared by Polish humanities with the humanities of the neighbouring countries. The ideology of the parametrisation of science, in Poland expressed most explicitly in the words of the former minister Jarosław Gowin, is completely foreign to humanities. Assuming that it is impossible to evaluate a large number of scientists and institutions in any other way, it applies to them a number of metrics borrowed from other disciplines. These metrics are most often of formal character, relating the scientific value to the language of the publication, publisher's prestige, or the number of citations of the journal. Even a perfunctory observation leads to the conclusion that Polish legislation treats all these categories without further consideration. The selection and point value assigned to foreign, but not English, journals and publishers, are enough to conclude that they are completely random. Meanwhile, the current leadership of the ministry of science instead of correcting old mistakes, makes new ones with joyful abandonment. It is indeed difficult to be optimistic about the future.

And what is the future that I would like to see for Polish historiography and the science policy? The answer to this question leads back to the tradition of our discipline. In the debates that took place in the period of the Constitution for Science sponsored by Gowin about the ministry's *List of publishers of peer-reviewed scientific monographs* the term "inherited prestige" often appeared. The term was understood (by the officials, while scientometrics had quite the opposite opinion¹⁴) to be an elementary metric of a publication's value. I do believe that a certain, differently captured, kind of "inherited prestige" should be the aim of historical research. This is the prestige that prominent Polish historians, mentioned at the beginning of this article, had. Their intellectual legacy should live in a greater measure in today's historiography. I do not think that this proposition contradicts the need for originality. Continuation of valuable but recently somewhat neglected Polish economic history, creative development of history of ideas, questions of identity in the Middle Ages, social history (including quantitative research, so popular in the 1970s), or history of science are the areas in which many greats can be followed in search of new ideas, subjects, or interpretations.

This is not a manifesto of a self-centred history of Poland. The acceptance of the still new national tradition of our trade as the starting point for future research does not cancel out the need for contact with new historiographic trends in the world or more daring ventures beyond the subjects connected to Polish territory and language. Both these needs were recognised by the best historians in the past. We need to provide a fitting place for their intellectual heritage. Not only in the memories of the past mentors but as a living legacy.

14 MICHAŁ KOKOWSKI, Podstawowe zastrzeżenia wobec projektu i uchwalonej Ustawy 2.0 vel Konstytucji dla nauki, *Studia Historiae Scientiarum* 17/2018, pp. 453–476.

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