**ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** The purpose of this article is to show changes in the understanding of academic autonomy and the manifestations of its erosion, by appropriating this value to legitimise the increase in managerial autonomy, discrediting the value of community autonomy and increasingly restricting individual academic autonomy.

**Methodology:** The article is based on a critical analysis of the literature dealing with the reality of the functioning of autonomy in higher education institutions and materials related to the implementation of contemporary higher education reforms - mainly in Poland.

**Findings:** Changes in the perception of autonomy, threats to institutional and individual auton­omy resulting from the uncritical subordination of transformations of higher education to the new public management concept as well as institutional isomorphism are presented.

**Value Added:** Attention has also been paid to ignoring the critical discourse on the consequences of too-one-sided transformation of higher education institutions, losing key values, whose carrier is community and individual autonomy – both academic teachers, for whom it is a necessary condition for the development of didactic and scientific creativity, as well as students who only in a situation of feeling are able to take responsibility for their own development.

**Recommendations:** Individual autonomy and participatory management, which determine creative activity and academic entrepreneurship, should be a particular concern for university managers. It is necessary to undertake research on the autonomy of students as members of the academic community.