

# Academic freedom 2023 - out of the crisis?

13 July 2023



00:46:36 Simon Marginson: It's time to start preparing your questions and statements in response to Liviu's presentation. Come forward in the Chat and join the Q&A discussion!

00:49:35 Tugay Durak: Thanks for the presentation. I'd ask whether academic freedom can be separate from broader political freedom and freedom of speech.

00:51:05 Charlotte Mafumbo: Many thanks for the presentation. It resonates a lot with what we are processing as academic freedom in Uganda at the premier University Makerere University. Here the debate is on who is the duty bearer or rights bearer in academic freedom? If academic freedom is a human right.

00:53:58 Ronald Barnett: I'd be fascinated to hear Dr Matei's own concept(ionalisation) of academic freedom? In particular, what - if anything - is there in the concept that we should retain?

00:56:18 Terence Karran: With respect to the difference between academic freedom and freedom of speech. Academic freedom is a narrow professional freedom granted to a few individuals within universities, selected for their exceptional subject knowledge and professional competence, acting within the confines of the academic community and university campus to perform two functions. First, to truthfully communicate peer validated factual statements and knowledgeable opinions on subjects in which they have accredited and formally certificated expertise, to a group of students (who are chosen to participate in university studies on the basis of academic criteria), in order to educate them. Second, to undertake research to create new knowledge, freely disseminated to their students, and peer reviewed, critiqued and discussed by the wider academic community, and the world beyond. While comments made in respect to fulfilling these functions are made by individuals, they are made with the entire rational-legal and moral authority of the academic profession, backed by (and constrained within) the corpus of existing knowledge in different subject domains.

By contrast, freedom of speech is a wide generic freedom granted to all, to express their opinions and beliefs (which are neither peer-reviewed nor necessarily true) in any public environment, by whatever method they deem appropriate, on any subject that they may choose, to all other people, but not necessarily for any particular formal purpose or explicit function. Such speech could, for example, be deliberately untrue and expressed for the

purposes of either amusing the audience (as when a stand-up comedian fabricates a funny story) or provoking the audience (as when a newspaper spreads false information). Any comments used by a comic seeking to amuse his/her audience, would not (unlike those statements uttered by an academic) have to be true, or to have been subjected to peer review. Moreover, unlike academic statements, such comments have no guarantee of veracity or authenticity and are purely individual in nature and basis.

00:58:21 Carlos Azevedo: Thanks for this thought-provoking presentation. I'd like to know Matei's opinion about the relation between AF and specific ways of managing universities that mirror the market. For instance, if academics are incentivised to pursue/abandon research based on potential REF outcomes, where is their AF?

00:59:11 Carlos Azevedo: I'm thinking specifically of the UK context.

00:59:19 Nika Verna: Thank you for the presentation. I am a student at Florida Gulf Coast University and what we are seeing happen in Florida is worrying. This webinar is on point because academic freedom is being infringed upon in Florida with book banning and the governor of FL appointing University presidents. Great presentation!

01:09:54 CGHE Webinars: Thank you for joining us today. A recording of this session will be posted on the CGHE site:  
<https://www.researchcghe.org/events/cghe-seminar/academic-freedom-2023-out-of-the-crisis/>

Our next webinar, Russian Universities in turbulent times: What we can learn from the History of their internationalization? will take place on Tuesday from 2pm (UK). You can register here:

<https://www.researchcghe.org/events/cghe-seminar/russian-universities-in-turbulent-times-what-we-can-learn-from-the-history-of-their-internationalization/>

01:16:21 jorge gibert: This is an excellent piece of work about the problema from a arguing angle: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=4293889](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4293889)

01:18:52 Terence Karran: Very interesting session - but could have been much longer!