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Social work education in the post-socialist and post-modern era: the case of Ukraine

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During the last decade there have been significant changes in social work observed in many post-socialist and post-Soviet countries (Ukraine, Russia, Lithuania, Georgia etc.). The aim of this chapter is to introduce the international social work community to the context of social work developments in transition countries. The specific focus will be on Ukraine as a post-socialist country where social work as a professional project as well as social work education have been established quite recently.

Specific consideration is given to the existing post-socialist society's body of social work knowledge as the key feature of the social work professional project (Weiss-Gal & Welbourne 2008) and social work education. The interplay between political context, public values, social work teacher professionalism and professional practice development is considered.

The first social work training programs in Ukraine (as well as in some other post-socialist countries) were introduced at the beginning of the 1990s. At that time in the state which had just seceded from the USSR and announced its independence, there was a simultaneous process of social services development, social work emerging as an academic discipline, and formation of civic society institutes – in other words, all those things which did not exist during the socialist time. The background for all these social-political changes was chaotic organisation of market relations and rapid social stratification.

The history of social work education in Ukraine is both interesting and challenging at the same time (Bridge 2002; Ramon 2000; Semigina et al. 2005). In Ukraine social work as an academic discipline was officially established in spring 1991. The first professional school of social work in Ukraine was founded in 1993 with the support of the European Tempus British-Portugal project where outstanding British educators Shulamit Ramon, Steven Shardlow, David Brandon and others were engaged and the school became the part of the national university Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. The first master's degree program based on a generalist approach to social work and European values was launched in 1995.

The first bachelor programs in social work in Dnipropetrovsk, Chernigiv, Uzhgorod, Lviv and other Ukrainian cities were developed within the frames of European and Canadian projects. Experts and academics from various countries were eager to share with Ukraine the first-hand developments in social work, while every local university had been

developing its own program of training of social workers which had been mirroring both a position of international project experts as well as the specific context and content of the University and the faculty within which the courses were to be housed. In some universities the accent in training was made on legal direction, the others made it on a sociological one, and some others on psychological or management ones. Thus, diversity was a key feature of introducing social work as an academic discipline in Ukraine.

Currently in Ukraine the social work specialty is delivered in nearly 50 educational establishments of different types and forms of ownership (Semigina et al. 2005). The social work degree programs have found their place at different faculties such as psychology, sociology, social management and others.

This chapter presents the results of the study on social work education development in the process of structural changes in Ukraine with regard to establishment of social work as a 'professional project' (Larson 1977). This chapter briefly establishes the context in which these changes are taking place and outlines the new arrangements. It indicates some of the complex factors that are shaping Ukrainian social work and discusses the significance of these changes with regard to post-socialist transformations in the country.

Theoretical background and methodology

The chapter is based on the idea of professional project which is developed in the sociology of professions and is based on Weber's concept of society as a scene where social groups compete for economic, social and political rewards, and the group creates the project. Supported and explained by Freidson (1970) and Larson (1977), the idea of professional project has been developed as a strategy.

Researchers claim that the social work profession is a modern profession (Weiss-Gal & Welbourne 2008; McDonald 2006). Social work education as well as social work academics are significant components of this project. It is mainly by their efforts that elements of the professional project are created as professional associations, ethical codes, academic journals, and the system of continuing professional education. With regard to the nature and status of teaching as a profession, there is, according to Larson (1977), agreement that professions are characterised by a combination of the following general dimensions: a body of knowledge and techniques professionals apply in their work; training to master such knowledge and skills; a service orientation; distinctive ethics, which justify the privilege of self-regulation that society grants them; and an implicit comparison with other occupations, which highlights their autonomy and prestige.

For the general overview of social work in Ukraine made in this chapter, there have been the indicators used identified by Weiss-Gal and Welbourne (2008) in the study of social work professionalisation. Based on the above, the indicators suggested for social work professionalisation study include: (1) public recognition of professional status; (2) professional monopoly over specific types of work; (3) professional autonomy of action; (4) possession of a distinctive knowledge base; (5) professional education regulated by members of the profession; (6) an effective professional organisation; (7) codified ethical standards; and (8) prestige and remuneration reflecting professional standing. These approaches to the core of social work professionalisation are completed with the important concept of social work professional ideology (Evetts 2003). This includes the professional

values and beliefs motivate people to act, but it goes beyond that – being incorporated into relations and discourses about social problems and the ways to tackle them (Souflée 1993).

Besides this, important considerations are given in the chapter to the impact of international actors on development of national approaches to organisation of social workers' training and to the content of academic programs. At the same time, complex interactions are addressed between global and local levels of standardisation of social workers' training systems based on non-linear processes of glocalisation (an incorporation of the local and global) observed in post-socialist countries (Buzarovski 2001), and contextual effects which determine professionals' behaviour and mediate global imperatives (Burbank 1994). Thus, special attention was paid to different types of context that influence social work as a professional project in Ukraine.

The chapter is based on the analysis made in consultations with the local social work academics and educators during the meetings, professional round table discussions, and reflections from our own experience of creating the first social work program in Ukraine. It is well grounded on empirical literature on social work education in the country and review of relevant legal documents.

Societal conditions and political context

From 1991 Ukraine was undergoing a transition from centrally planned economy to a market-oriented one. It was the time when the country was experiencing the system crisis: numerous political, economic, social and cultural problems were intensified and suddenly became urgent. Break-up of the Soviet Union and the following collapse of the state economy resulted in shortages of goods and food, and triggered such social problems as unemployment, emigration, homelessness and poverty. Major political and social changes were accompanied in Ukraine, as well as in Russia and some other post-socialist countries, by dramatic growth of juvenile delinquency, drug and alcohol misuse, mental health issues and HIV/AIDS epidemics.

Interdependent difficulties and problems accumulated and aggravated with time, leading to increased numbers of people in need of social protection and support. Economic decline and increasing poverty led to greater inflows of those seeking residential care. The problems with social services and social exclusion were further exacerbated by scarcity of public resources and the fragmented character of administrative, managerial and financial means.

The political, economic and social development of Ukraine as well as other post-Soviet countries shows that a certain continuum of political regimes emerged after the collapse of the USSR. Some countries (Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania) were oriented on integration with the European Union and implementation of democratic values, while others (like Russia, Uzbekistan and others) preserved the authoritarian political system. Ukraine is somewhere in the middle of this spectrum.

In 20 years of independence of Ukraine, the local political, economic and social context that has significant impact on social work and social work education can be characterised by:

- elitism in political and social life (the Constitution adopted in 1997 proclaims Ukraine a welfare state; however, standards of living are very low, the socialist-style system of privileges for elite groups was preserved)

- lack of cohesion of political actions (reforms of welfare services and higher education were announced and adopted by laws, but they were not implemented)
- social stratification (the current situation features high levels of economic inequality, poor remuneration of those employed by public services, including social workers, necessity to pay out of pocket for the services that are officially free of charge – medicine and education)
- ambivalent combination of state paternalism (with intention of state to regulate all areas of society) and neoliberalisation, including expanding of transnational corporation activities
- ambivalent and limited influence of international norms and actors (major international conventions were adopted in Ukraine, e.g. Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, but they have not been implemented; international organisations provide huge financial support to the Ukrainian Government; however, they have minimal impact on political traditions in a country with deeply rooted corruption and non-transparency)
- socialist political rhetoric (power in country belongs to rich elite groups using populist proclamations of helping the poor; provision of social guarantees and social equality, while political actions are intended to support the position of rich groups and not the development of welfare programs).

Since 2010, the democratic values and civic society development in Ukraine are shutting down. The regression tendency of the last few years evidences further conservation of the bureaucracy system and authoritarian management in many areas, including medicine, education, and social work. The Ukrainian political situation has turned to become similar to Latin-American capitalism – oligarchic and dependent on patronage from the upper class (Montaño 2012).

While huge social problems demand the development of social work and social work education, the societal and political context has been a challenge for such a development.

Social services (institutional) context

McDonald (2006) stresses the institutional context which presents challenges for social work practice and education, which is also relevant for the Ukrainian context. The specific situation of Ukraine is that the social work development was not started from a 'zero' point. Ukraine, as well as other countries (Russia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania and others) inherited from the USSR the network of social institutions where there were no social workers and which were established based on the ideological perspective of social pathology. The prevailing general approach to addressing social issues was inherited too, with the understanding that they should be addressed similarly to medical issues or to those issues which the social control approach should be applied to.

During the Soviet times the system of social support was farmed out to bureaucrats. Existing social issues either were not addressed at all, or were ignored on ideological grounds. The public system of social welfare, created in the situation of lack of any charitable organisations, was characterised by extremely restricted social support with minimum social guarantees (Semigina et al. 2005).

Outreach services were launched in Ukraine in the 1990s. A network of territorial centres to provide day and home care to the elderly and disabled with no families were set

up in every territorial district of Ukraine, although even now they still offer only a limited range of services provided to few categories of the eligible population.

In 1991 the first public social services for youth were organised to ensure positive socialisation of young people. These social services target disabled children, young families having problems, and preventing diseases in youth communities. The number of staff is insufficient, and in most cases they have small public financing which creates difficulties in running full-fledged programs aimed at social adaptation and rehabilitation of socially vulnerable groups of children and families.

Development of NGOs' activities offering social services and self-help groups (organisations of clubs and day centres for handicapped children and their parents, people with mental health problems, drug users and their families, and the HIV-positive) provides evidence for possible future changes while some new social work concepts have been introduced into the context (like foster care, family conferences etc.) and are legally bounded.

Despite existing innovative social services, the public social services system definitely requires further organisational, legal and personnel development. Major challenges that the public system of social services experiences are: its fragmentary structure, predominantly in-patient arrangement and little continuity in providing services to specific groups of clients. Still relevant is the actual reforming of social care that will address the issue of de-institutionalisation and introduction of community-based models of social care (Semi-gina et al. 2005). New methods of social work are often adopted through international cooperation and are supported by international donors. Usually, these changes are rooted in systemic models of social work, and in many cases they are not consolidated to make sustainable modification of practice. Institutional conditions, especially in public services, limit the initiative of employees of social services, as they have to perform mainly functional duties following a paternalist scheme of thought and action.

So, starting from the 1990s, the structural development of social services in Ukraine took place. However, these services are still far from the non-discriminatory ideology of modern professional social work and predominantly have personnel without social work education; moreover, they do not see the need for such personnel.

Professional context confronting the development of social work education

As a specialty, social work was approved by the Presidential Decree and by the relevant law of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in 1997. In 2004 social work was included into the current Ukrainian Occupations Classification, and since then it is an officially accredited profession in the country.

The important features of social work as a profession in Ukraine that influence the scope and the quality of social work education are:

- absence of licensing/registration for social workers or social services (in Lithuania and Estonia such procedures were introduced, while in Georgia they were only adopted, but not really implemented into practice)
- deficit of professional boundaries identification
- title of social worker may be granted to anyone working at social services; people without training may call themselves social workers
- the public's lack of knowledge of the functions of social workers.

- Despite the legal demand for managers of social services to have a social work education, the reality is far from this expectation (meetings in September 2013 with more than 50 managers of all public services from one of the Ukrainian regions revealed that none of them had education in social work and discussions uncovered lack of basic social work knowledge).

At the same time, most social workers – graduates of higher educational institutions – do not work in the profession due to low salaries, low status of social workers, poor working conditions and very few promotional opportunities. The status of social workers is considered to be lower than health care professionals such as nurses, physicians, psychologists and psychiatrists.

Iarskaia-Smirnova and Romanov (2013), while describing the Russian social services sector, stressed the persistence of the monopoly position of organisations providing public services and the limited possibilities of NGOs for creating a competitive environment, a lack of standardisation and standard regulation in this field, and a weak knowledge base concerning methods of working with clients. Similar context can be observed in Ukraine. The contemporary situation in Ukrainian social work demonstrates a lack of professional standards and training, lack of professional monopoly over specific types of work and lack of possession of a distinctive knowledge base, whereas these indicators are amongst the key ones (Weiss-Gal & Welbourne 2008) for social work professionalisation. These services do not build up a proper demand for educated social workers and do not cooperate with universities in training or retraining social workers.

An important challenge for the social work practice and education is the impact of international projects implemented in the country, which has a double effect. From one point, the impact can be considered to be extremely progressive and important in terms of professional developments and exchanges of ideas and practices. From the other perspective, a lot of paraprofessionals appeared because of short-term trainings the specialists had within the training programs (Semigina 2008). Those services that were the international projects' outcomes do not usually require any people with social work education. Both the state and the international structures supporting developments in the field of social work do not have any request for educated social workers. This creates challenges for the social work professional project formation in Ukraine, where, according to Freidson (1970) and Larson (1977), professionally trained social workers are starting to fight for control over the profession.

Another indicator of professionalisation – an effective professional organisation – is underestimated in Ukraine where such a professional association could play a leading role in developing social work nationwide. Currently there is a number of professional associations in the country with limited membership and leaders without social work education; none of them have real power to change the situation and to lobby social work professional development or influence what is taught in universities.

The professional values of social work are not promoted among workers of Ukrainian social services. In 2005, the Code of Ethics for social workers was adopted in Ukraine by the Order of Ministry of Youth, Family and Sport Affairs. This code is not based on the latest 'Ethics of Social Work – Principles and Standards' (approved by IASSW and IFSW in 2004) and is not embedded in day-to-day practice of social workers. Moreover, there are no state sanctions for violations of the Ukrainian Code of Ethics for social workers.

The professional ideology of social work in Ukraine, as in many transitioning countries, is heterogeneous. On the one hand, Soviet-style welfare programs (preserved to some

extent) keep the tradition of state paternalism, pro-medical approaches to practice and focus on 'helping relations'. Social workers develop public services, and clients expect that it is the social worker's responsibility to solve problems; the client is often in the passive role of a recipient and at times sees themselves as a victim of social circumstances.

At the same time, neoliberal context and its individualist perception of social problems, enhanced by post-modernist views strengthening reflexivity and reciprocity in social relations, lays a new foundation of 'social work as a service'. This is a consumerist approach that may in the future be the norm in Ukraine. According to Otto and Schaarschuch (1999), this concept refers to a client as a highly individualised person who exercises choice according to her/his individual preferences. In Ukraine, as in many transitioning countries, the tendency pointed out by Noble (2004, 291) for Western countries is evident: 'Social work is increasingly allowing the market to dominate its agenda by accepting that consumerism is the key paradigm in welfare reform'. The only difference is that welfare reforms were not introduced in a systemic way, which created more fragmentation in the domain of social services.

Thus, the professional context of social work in Ukraine is rather challenging. Staff of the social services are predominantly not educated social workers, there is a limited public recognition of the profession and lack of professional monopoly. Professional practice is highly discrepant and contradictory; it sets ambivalent demands for social work education.

Broad academic context of social worker training

In the early 2000s, in Ukraine reform was announced of the highly centralised and over-regulated education system inherited from the Soviet time. It was expected that the country should introduce the three cycles of the education system (bachelor, master and PhD) according to the requirements of the Bologna Declaration (1999). A broader understanding of the Bologna process principles and their adoption by Ukraine raises the issue of the commonality of the social work curriculum across national borders; promotion of mobility for students, teachers and researchers; and promotion of cooperation in quality assurance (the items stressed by Labonte-Roset 2004). The latter are included into the objectives set by the European Ministers' Group to be reached in order to achieve greater compatibility and comparability of the educational systems. However, though officially modernising the education system according to the Bologna Declaration, the Ukraine education system has not been transformed yet.

At present in Ukraine, according to Semigina et al. (2005), the system of training for social professions (social workers, social pedagogical staff and other professionals in the country) has four accreditation levels: (1) pre-professional training (vocational schools, lyceums); (2) professional training (colleges, technical schools); (3) graduate studies (universities, institutes); (4) postgraduate studies (universities, institutes of postgraduate studies, courses of advanced training).

There are two other levels in the Ukrainian education structure: (1) postgraduate or pre-doctorate studies (training that results in a scientific degree of a candidate of sciences, that is, an intermediate position between the master's and doctorate degree at US universities; this degree is generally required to teach at the university level and to engage in scientific research); (2) doctorate studies (training that results in an academic degree of a

Doctor of Sciences which is equivalent to the Doctor of Philosophy degree at US universities).

In brief, degrees currently granted within the Ukrainian system of higher education are the following:

- Specialist Diploma level – refers to the normal university degree, five years of study
- Master Diploma level – refers to the normal university degree, one or two years of study (depending on previous qualification obtained)
- Candidate of Sciences (Candidate Nauk) level – refers to the postgraduate/aspirantura or pre-doctorate studies, 2–3 years of study. In EU terms it may be qualified equal to PhD
- Doctor of Sciences (Doctor Nauk) – refers to the highest doctorate conferred in Ukraine (Doctoral Studies).

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine preserves its highly bureaucratic role in regulating all aspects of education. For example, postgraduate or pre-doctorate and doctorate studies offered at universities, institutes and research organisations should have the special authorisation of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. The degrees are granted following the presentation of a thesis to the specialised scientific committee, which is then reviewed in terms of content and procedural steps by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. At the same time, the ministry does not care about the international educational standards; for instance, the Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training (Sewpaul & Jones 2004). Universities have no autonomy and proper rights (for the selection of students into the program, to shape the program curricula including fieldwork and so on). The same situation can be observed in Russia (Iarskaia-Smirnova & Romanov 2013), while in other countries, e.g. Estonia (Raudava 2013), Lithuania (Vaananen et al. 2009), and Georgia (Shatberashvili 2012), the role of the governmental bodies in the higher education of social workers became more modest, and professional communities play quite an active role in the educational process.

To sum up, it is worth noting that Ukraine has an outdated system of degrees (not incorporated into new European reality) and the professional community has no influence on setting academic requirement for social worker training, as all standards and regulations are set up by the governmental bodies.

Specific social work education academic context

At the very beginning of social work introduction as an academic discipline in Ukraine, in the context of different Western projects, modern standards were brought and shared from the UK, Canada, Belgium, US, and Germany. However, the localisation process has affected the adoption of knowledge and values within the Ukrainian context. Reviews of Ukrainian textbooks and academic programs, results of research and discussions with academics demonstrate that social work education in Ukraine follows the tradition of those countries where the social work knowledge base consists of a combination of ‘imported’ knowledge (much of it developed in the US, Canada and the UK), and ‘indigenous’ knowledge that has been developed in the country itself (Weiss-Gal & Welbourne 2008). This ‘indigenous’ knowledge mainly refers to Soviet types of thinking, with the concepts of pathology, social control and positivism as the core vision of professional activities. Thus,

most totalitarian ideas found their space within the approaches to the educational content. Populism and paternalism are the core ideas underpinning social work practice, facilitated much by positivism – the highly promoted basis for the vision and for the research evidence. It is supported by the view that social work is a highly utilitarian and pragmatic practice. This approach reduced ‘theoretical knowledge’ to an instrumental understanding of a situation or instrumental knowledge for action (Montaño 2012). Universal social change theories on which social work was founded (Noble 2004) are in many cases ignored or only briefly reviewed in the academic course ‘Social Work Theories’, but are not used in the courses in social work with different types of clients. The School of Social Work of the national university Kyiv-Mohyla Academy is one of the few Ukrainian faculties which incorporated the social change theories into its curriculum courses. Its lecturers used the frames of international projects and professional exchanges to get trained on the core social change theories as well as on the best practices mirroring them.

At the same time, students and professors may gain modern knowledge of social work theory and practice from local and translated textbooks, professional journals and communication. The key documents of the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers were translated and published in Ukrainian: *International definition of social work* (Semigina & Bryzhovata 2002), *Ethics of social work* (Ischuk 2008), the ‘Global standards for social work education and training’ (Yakovlyev 2010); and ‘The global agenda for social work and social development commitment to action’ (Semigina & Boyko 2012). Attempts are made to internationalise the existing curriculum via introducing different guests and optional courses with the updates on social work internationally (Boyko 2011; Kabachenko & Boyko 2011; and others).

The academic programs are overloaded with general courses of sociology, philosophy, history and languages introduced by the Ministry of Science and Education as mandatory, while the share of field placements is modest, being at some universities 5% of all academic time.

The existing system of higher education standards in Ukraine consists of a range of standards including the state and the branch ones as well as the special ones for higher education institutions. Before 2011 each Ukrainian university engaging in social work training was quite free to introduce different approaches to training, to identify a range of knowledge necessary for a social worker to have their own interpretations of social worker’s competencies, and relevant formation of curriculums. In 2011, the branch standards for social work started to be developed; however, they have not been officially adopted yet. No service users or social work practitioners are invited or included into the Ministry Working Group on developing the branch standards for social work education in Ukraine. The indicative and disturbing fact is that, out of nearly 40 members of this group, only two persons have a master’s degree in social work.

Underlying this inconsistent development is the profile of social work educators. We support the thesis of Kornbeck (2007) that the education profiles constitute a very valuable type of evidence which ‘points to important aspects determining the identity and status of the discipline within academia, and of the profession – evidence of the ways in which social work knowledge is perceived in the national contexts’ (98). Social work educators constitute a powerful factor that localises the international standards.

Before 1995 the only training for social work educators was provided via special courses, usually within the frames of international projects, and significant numbers of people came to social work education having education and professional backgrounds in

other specialties, sometimes not related to social work. This had an impact on the content and quality of the knowledge delivered by them to the students.

Current requirements for social work education in the higher educational settings require the social work academic to have a relevant higher academic degree on the subject they deliver to students. Because of the lack of the third cycle of education (PhD programs) in social work in Ukraine, it does not seem realistic to meet such a requirement. To meet the general state standards in the country, social work faculties have to include lecturers of allied specialties with academic degrees but without any practice experience in social work. In most cases they deliver training to the students based on theoretical knowledge they have. Lack of relevant practice experience amongst social work academics seems to be critical as social work is essentially an applied discipline. This lack of trained social work academics and professionals teaching in the programs leads to fragmentation of the social work body of knowledge in the country and creates obstacles for its professionalisation (Boyko & Kabachenko 2011).

However, there is a strong belief amongst Ukrainian academics that introduction of the third level of education in social work in Ukraine will assist changing the current situation, where social work as a relatively new profession and academic discipline in Ukraine has a marginalised status – neither acknowledged as a separate field of education nor having completed the three cycle education. Because of this, those academics making attempts to advance their academic degree and to pass the third cycle of social work education (by studying for the PhD) have to find the space for their dissertation thesis within other fields of education such as Pedagogy, Sociology, Psychology. These disciplines integrate social work and create at its base ‘new specialties’.

The first attempt made in Ukraine on introducing the third cycle of education in social work has been the first pilot project on introducing the first PhD in Social Work and Social Policy Program implemented at the School of Social Work at the national university Kyiv-Mohyla Academy in 2009–11, within the EU Tempus Project (Kabachenko, Savchuk & Boyko 2011). However, this program is still not recognised by the governmental bodies.

It is professed that, since the 1990s, there has been a process of ‘academisation’ in Europe (Otto & Schaarschuch 1999; Staub-Bernasconi 2009) which mainly refers to social work strengthening as an independent academic discipline. This process is being stimulated, in the first instance, by acknowledging social work as an independent professional area of activity which, in turn, needs its own research and academic centres, theoretical and practical approaches to conducting research, as well as the development of evidence-based social work practice. However, in Ukraine these issues so far have not been discussed amongst academics, lecturers and practitioners who are working in the social work education sector (Boyko & Kabachenko 2011).

One of the core challenges to social work education in Ukraine is its unclear mission and purpose. Should it prepare staff for current social services that actually do not need educated social workers with modern knowledge, or work to develop the professional project ahead of practice and then change this system?

The above vignette of social work education developments in Ukraine might be connected with many of the debates which have been identified globally. The issues raised are similar to those analysed internationally (Weiss-Gal & Welbourne 2008; Staub-Bernasconi 2009; Hugman 2010), i.e. the professionalisation of social work; contextualisation of social work knowledge, skills and values; differential access to resources and influence; and who plays what role in developing social work education.

Conclusions

Professionalisation of social work has not been completed yet in Ukraine, as there is a gap between the education and training and practice application. Social work as a profession and as a discipline has been introduced in the country, but it does not yet possess the whole range of specific features of the professional project. It is being trapped by ambivalent tendencies of preserving old paternalistic welfare traditions, strengthening of neoliberal societal conditions, and post-modern multifaceted paradigms of a 'new' social work practice.

The lack of the third cycle of education in social work in the country results in the lack of academics and researchers capable to conduct studies in social work, to create and to develop social work research centres and communities, and to educate and promote evidence-based practice. This, in turn, hampers the social work professionalisation and has a negative impact on social work education as the content and the requirements of social workers' competences have been permanently diluted by the significant impact of pedagogy, psychology and sociology.

The professional community is not commissioned to establish standards. Instead, this role is played by professional bureaucrats from relevant ministries. Policy decision-makers do not have the relevant education and experience, and do not share (in most cases they are even not aware of) social work values and professional requirements. Thus, such indicators of professionalisation like professional autonomy of action and professional education regulated by members of the profession are under threat. Thus, the system of social workers' education and training in the country does not seem to be corresponding to the Global Standards.

The international cooperation in social work education development in Ukraine was a useful catalyst in the initial stage; however, the paternalist scheme of thoughts and actions have gradually been substituted by a democratic egalitarian perspective 'imported' to the country in the 1990s.

Lessons from Ukraine (and their comparison to other post-socialist countries) might be interesting for those considering the contextualised behaviour of professionals and impact of political factors on social work education development.

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