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THE MAIN CONTROVERSIES OVER THE MODERNISATION PROCESS OF THE UKRAINIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF GLOBALIZATION

GLÓWNE KONTROWERSJE PROCESU MODERNIZACJI SYSTEMU SZKOLNICTWA WYŻSZEGO NA UKRAINIE W ASPEKCIE GLOBALIZACJI

Abstract: The most significant process of the modern civilization advancement is globalization. The crucial tendencies of the world educational system development aim at strengthening the main role of knowledge as a component of employee workshop, often much more precious than the material part, originating from the employer. In 1991, due to globalization processes, Ukraine abandoned the Soviet higher education model, following the international scenario of the higher education development. In the last few years some propositions for reforms of the above system have appeared. The Draft Law on Higher Education approved in December 2012 has made the situation less clear. Currently, the provisional Government of Ukraine declares an intention to tackle the situation properly. It seems necessary to conduct further work on the basis of certain fundamental assumptions and the experiences of countries trying to achieve the mentioned objectives in similar conditions, like Poland or the Czech Republic, etc. In all these countries there is a need for change in order to abandon huge hierarchic and administrative structures by organizing small, self-controlling as well as adaptive structures, and to rethink not only teaching methods but the whole legal environment and organizational principles.

Keywords: modernization process of higher education, globalization

Structures change and social consequence of globalization

The most significant process of the modern civilization advancement is globalization. It is a consequence of the quick development of global economic processes, expansion of universal cultural activities, exchange of services, commodities and information on a large scale. It creates and intensifies both global and regional integration processes. The evolution of the Internet, innovation in digital technologies and mobile devices provide all citizens with a necessary level of competence tools for responding to new challenges of integration by connecting with everyone worldwide. These tools, commonly referred to as ICT (*Information and Communication Technology*) tools, have a huge potential to transform all spheres of human life activities and are strategically important for state interest branches, as economy, science and education. Therefore, in today's society, information and its secure

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collection, distribution, use and manipulation become a priority. Information treated as a specific commodity becomes equivalent to or even more valuable than material goods. The information society can be defined as a society in which information is a key element of socio-economic activities and changes [1]. The main aim of such a society is to gain competitive advantage internationally, through information technology (*IT*) in a creative and productive way. The global economy increasingly relies on digitalised knowledge, information and communication. The result is a progressive standardisation of economic, political, and cultural activity. It can be said that the one who passes a standard gains the most. Billions of people in many countries are still deprived of these commodities and their access to IT must be secured [2]. According to Sanou: “access to the internet is available to 39 percent of the world’s population” [2]. Economic inequality between countries, their establishments, groups of citizens in terms of access to, use of information and communication technologies is referred to as the digital divide. It seems to be one of the most important issues of contemporary (not only poor) societies and a growing social problem [2].

A few years after World War II the announcement of the education benefits for veterans [3] on the labour market there appeared a previously unlisted number of well educated professionals. This has led to a sharp increase in the competitiveness of enterprises, which drew attention of managers to worker knowledge as one of the most important resources of the company. It has become a leaven of the new global economy revolution - revolution economy of knowledge. The concept of “the society of knowledge” was introduced by Peter F. Drucker [4]. It denotes a society in which knowledge and information has become a production resource that represents new competitive advantages in relation to the environment, and at the same time providing a growing level of efficiency into the rapidly changing environment variation. According to Amartya K. Sen’s [5] profound expression, it is “the society of freedom through capabilities” with its multiformity and potentials. Sen argues that the economic development entails a collection of linked freedoms as political freedoms with transparency in relations among people, freedom of opportunity, including freedom to access credit; and economic protection from abject poverty. Many authors, like Castelfranchi [6], emphasize the difference between knowledge society and information society. A knowledge society differs from an information society in that the former serves to transform information into resources that allow the society to take effective action, while the latter only creates and disseminates the raw data. In a knowledge society each employee brings to the company a major component of their workshop, which is knowledge. It is a major component of employee workshop, often much more precious than this material part, originating from the employer. This part of the workshop an employee arranges for himself (*eg* using IT tools) and takes with him when he changes jobs. It has been expressed by Drucker [7] that in the economies of developed countries the big holders have begun to leave managerial chairs in corporations began, giving way to eminent specialists. Also, the public opinion is focused on them. The society cannot be separated from the knowledge individuals who produce its history and future, its organization and institutions. The UNESCO World Report addresses the definition, content and future of knowledge societies [8]. There have been established four principles that are essential for a development of an equitable knowledge society:

- Cultural diversity
- Equal access to education

- Universal access to information (in the public domain)
- Freedom of expression

However, they also acknowledge that the digital divide is an obstacle to the achievement of genuine knowledge societies. Reducing these barriers requires many administrative actions (sometimes obvious), for example ensuring a universal and free access to the Internet and broadband applications with the greatest capacity and highest speed. But the elimination of these barriers seems to be the main task of the education system. The crucial tendencies of the world educational system development have appeared to be the strengthening of the main role of knowledge, formation a systematic approach the analysis of technical and social situations, the strategic thinking of student integration and training their professional mobility, and the fostering of the humanistic idea of democracy. The role of high education and collaboration in this sphere is acknowledged as primary.

The global education processes

In the world discourse of education the global processes have theory and practice. The initiative launched by “The American Forum for Global Education Development” and under the guidance of UNESCO’s International Conference “Bridges to the Future” in April 1995 in New York defined the role and main directions of the development of global education in the 21st Century. This initiative was regarded as one of the most important assumptions of modern pedagogy and practical training. In 2001 the Council of Europe started the Global Education Network Europe (*GENE*) initiative in order to develop and support the theory and practical training of the global education processes on the Continent. The network includes the representatives of national government agencies, scientists, nongovernmental organizations and other national bodies responsible for support, funding and policy-making in the field of global education from 21 European countries. Poland actively participates in this initiative. In 2010 has been a report on global education in Poland was published [9]. Neighbouring Ukraine remains an important Polish partner also in this area.

Higher education and its interconnections with research and innovation plays a crucial role in individual and social development. The formation of the European higher education area, rapprochement of its aims and models have become an adequate response to the growing school competition on a global scale. The creation of jobs, economic growth, and prosperity is possible thanks to highly qualified human capital and a sacrifice of many people. We have to be aware that it does not happen through some kind of automatic process. Countries that for different reasons do not take part in integration processes of the world and regional community cannot use their advantages and lag behind the transformations of the civilization and substantially become backward in their socio-economic and cultural development. This is particularly important for post-Communist countries, like Poland and Ukraine, changing their economic and political systems oriented towards integrating with market relations and more perceptible democratization.

In June 1999, 29 European Ministers of Education convened in the Bologna declaration [10], the main guiding document of the so-called **Bologna process**. The Conference and the Declaration are the key documents of a new stage in the process of converging different European educational systems. Poland has signed in the process of the implementation of this agreement. It proposed a European Higher Education Area (*EHEA*)

in which students and graduates could move freely between countries, using prior qualifications in one country as acceptable entry requirements for further study in another. It was found that: “creation of the all-European educational space with the purpose of increase of mobility of the citizens in the market of employment and amplification competitive of ability of the European higher education”. Let us notice that the Bologna Process does not aim to simply harmonise national educational systems but rather to provide tools to connect them. The Bologna process “...is not a path towards the ‘standardisation’ or ‘uniformisation’ of European higher education. The fundamental principles of autonomy and diversity are respected” [10]. However, the challenges higher education is facing are similar across the EU and there are clear advantages in working together. The plan to improve transparency between higher education systems, facilitate the recognition of degrees and academic qualifications and exchanges between institutions is based on simple objectives which governments and institutions of 46 countries are currently implementing. In the European Union the Department of Education and European Culture Commission (EAC) plays a dominant role in the effective implementation of these initiatives. In 2005 Ukraine joined the Bologna Process.

The modernisation process of the Ukrainian higher education system

After the break down of the USSR, Ukraine abandoned the Soviet model of international cooperation in higher education, framed by the foreign policy of the superpower country. When in 1991 Ukraine declared its independence, it launched a process of a long-term social, economic and political change inside. With the opening of borders the country has been following the international scenario in the higher education development due to global processes in international higher education (especially regarding UNESCO’s directions). The declared geopolitical priorities were defined as follows: return to the European civilization domain, membership in the European Union and Euro-Atlantic political and social structures, reinforcing strategic partnership with the USA, development and consolidation of friendly relations with neighbouring states, like Poland. Unfortunately, European integration, slow and beset by contradictions, is not going smoothly. New barriers are being created with disputes warmed up and conflicts provoked. The European choice is strategic for Ukraine but the maintenance of equitable and mutually beneficial economic, societal and cultural relations with Russia is also important. According to most of sociological research data, including such authoritative organization as the Razumkov Ukrainian Center for Economic and Political Research, the number of supporters of Ukraine’s European integration in recent years has not decreased below 55%. The European choice of Ukraine is due to its historical development, political and economic interests and social factors. On the other hand, about 1.5 million citizens of Ukraine are present in the Russian labour market and the society [11]. It should be noted that the starting point for the transformation in high education was the historical “traditional Soviet model” and this fact has a huge impact on the nature of the modifications. The situation had changed when Ukraine signed the Bologna Declaration. After this official announcement of the intention to become a part of the European higher education area, the integration processes have gained speed. The current socio-economic situation of Ukraine induces a demand for skills shaped by the following major challenges [12]:

- **demography** - the population fell (*eg* to 180,000 from 2008 to 2009). There is ongoing ageing and an outflow of skilled workers from enterprises due to retirement, making necessary replacement with younger workers;
- **long-term unemployment** - the national average in Ukraine at the end of 2008 showed 10 unemployed per vacancy, many of whom required retraining or skills upgrading;
- **migration** - in 2009 migration was 0.3 per 1,000 people and despite an extensive demand on the national labour market, a fair number of skilled workers sought jobs abroad for various social reasons.

There are practically no regional differences between ethnic groups. The presence of all streams of new practices in the field of higher education above mentioned caused a kind of inconsistency. For example, some of the main objectives outlined in the Bologna Declaration established a system of credits, so-called European Credit Transfer System (*ECTS*) and promoted mobility “by overcoming legal recognition and administrative obstacles”. *ECTS* is a credit system first introduced in Europe in 1989 within the educational exchange programme Erasmus. According to many Ukrainian authors [13]: “it is logical to presume that internationalisation of national higher education is instrumental in making the system responsive to the needs of time”. Citizens from some non-EU countries are required to hold a visa when travelling to the Schengen Area. This is the reason for many mundane troubles in cooperation [14]. It is difficult to implement a wide programme of cooperation in quality assurance, mobility and scientific exchange etc., in the realities of visas to the EU for Ukrainian citizens. The Eastern Partnership (*EaP*) was initiated by Poland in co-operation with Sweden. This initiative intended to reduce (*inter alia*) a certain type of barriers associated with mobility and travel agreements between the EU and its eastern neighbors, six post-Soviet states including Ukraine, but its removal seems to be distant.

Ukrainian higher education is either state funded or private. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine sets standards for higher education, organizes and conducts licensing and accreditation processes, monitors educational processes, develops qualifications, etc. Numerous laws which regulate the functioning of the Ukrainian High Education system will be potentially amended. Up to now, there are four qualification levels in HE: junior specialist, Bachelor, specialist and Master [15]. The Bachelor Degree (4 years) and the Master Degree (5-6th year) are introduced in accordance with two (of tree) basic cycles of the Bologna process - Bachelor and Master, which have been adopted now by every participating country. Historically, the Specialist's Degree (usually 5 years) is still also granted; it was the degree awarded by universities in the Soviet times. Higher education graduates are granted state diplomas. The Diploma is the state-recognised document which serves as both an educational certificate and a professional licence, confirming the attainment of the appropriate higher educational level and qualification of a certain educational-proficiency level (an academic degree in a field of study and speciality) [15]. The structure of the Ukrainian HE system is shown in Figure 1.

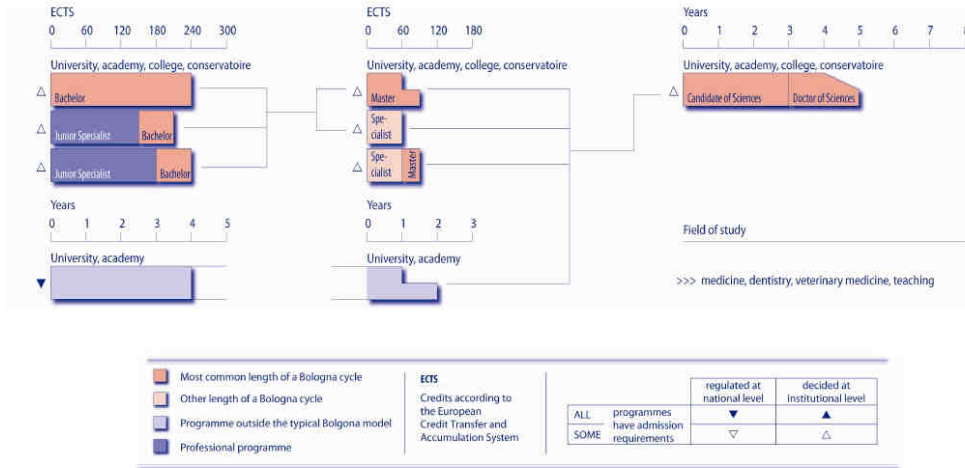


Fig. 1. The higher education system in Ukraine. Source: “Focus on higher Education in Europe 2010 - The impact of the Bologna Process” (Eurydice, 2010)

Recently, a proposal for a reform of the above system has appeared. It is based on a theoretical reflection, oriented towards the needs to absorb local cultural experience, which should lead to the reorganization of social life [16]. The basis of transformation should be a widespread change of people's mentality. According to many Ukrainian authors [17]: “The prime value is to get education within the limits of new systems of the values admissible for the majority of people”². As Andrushchenko [18] notes, the implementation of the conceptual bases of the euro-integration process in science and education in Ukraine is required: improve a two-tier structure of higher education; adopt the clarified and understandable gradation of diplomas, degrees and qualifications; use a single system of credit units and diploma supplement; take into account the European practice of accreditation and quality control of education; support and promote the European quality standards; abolish barriers in expanding mobility of students, teachers and researches; introduce modern approaches to integration of higher education and science in the master and post-graduates’ training; further provide autonomy and self government in the system of higher education and science.

Since 2010 the draft Law of Ukraine on Higher Education has been under review by the Cabinet of Ministries and Parliament Committee on Science and Education. In the declarations, the proposed amendments to the HE Law were designed to the key developments of the Bologna Process such as implementing a three-cycle system, granting greater autonomy to universities, granting more rights to students’ self-governance, improving the legal basis for independent external assessments etc. Intentionally, the new law was supposed to lead not only to strengthen the development, but also to accelerate its post-Soviet demise. However, there were objections to the above Law from some university professors and student organizations [19]. In October 2012 the elections to the Ukrainian parliament strengthened opposition forces and, unfortunately, we have witnessed political

² Auto-translation from the Russian language

rivalry in this area. In the opinion of many universities: “The new government's policy on higher education remains very unclear” and “the minister is using every possible opportunity to discredit the Draft Law on Higher Education, as well as to oppose European integration in general” [20] etc., in spite the fact that the parliamentary opposition and the working group project of the new law have a common conceptual basis. The Draft Law on Higher Education approved in December 2012 has made the situation less clear. The pragmatics of its implementation has not closed the discussion; on the contrary it has developed its new threads. There are extreme differences of opinion, for example: “the principles of university autonomy, embedded in the document, go against the minister’s attempts to control the administration of higher education institutions - which would in turn prevent any improvement in their academic quality and competitiveness” [20]. Currently, the provisional Government of Ukraine declares an intention to tackle the situation properly.

For these reasons it seems to be required to conduct further work on the basis of certain fundamental assumptions and the experiences of countries, like Poland or the Czech Republic, trying to achieve the mentioned objectives in similar conditions.

The growing need for rethinking of the modernisation process

Knowing that if we were to regain the efficacy of HE system, it would take radical rethinking of basic assumptions, beginning with the priorities. Considering, in the mentioned previously monograph, the problem of forming (defining the role of) a New Teacher for the United Europe Andrushchenko wrote: “The teaching profession - is one of the pillars on which the structure of world civilization rests”. And he further notes that developing the competence approach to building a new teacher as a person with self-consciousness, Ukrainian and citizens of Europe, and the world, in every possible way should be entirely relevant in the Ukrainian pedagogical tradition. In Eastern Europe the civil status and prestige of the teaching profession is losing its social importance. It is stated that in spite of certain peculiarities in some countries the total trend in Europe is to reduce the status of the teaching profession [21]. Both in Ukraine and Poland the problem is very serious.

Changes to the role, functions and status of the teacher (including academic teacher) must be reflected in getting an real effect from the legislation. The teacher of the Knowledge Society should be a specialist in his field, have proficiency in the use of IT tools (with of course a good pedagogical training and the proprieties rules). It is important to emphasize that the professional identity of new teachers is not constructed around teaching but rather around their discipline of specialization. Radically, new insights, an ability to engage in lifelong learning, the form of experience, effectiveness, societal competence and the pedagogical skills are special personal qualities for the creation of knowledge. Authoring systems, instant messengers, presentation slide making software and other tools used for distance learning dissociate the teacher from a particular place to work. As a consequence, his professional position, improvement and assessment should be strongly associated with such institution as university, higher education institution, scientific institute or institute of industrial research and development etc. The teacher legitimacy somewhere “between local administrations and trade unions” (as it currently takes place in Poland) seems to be a limited and archaic solution. Similarly, there is a very archaic attitude

to attempts of top-down and uniform governing or controlling higher education and general education manually by government administration, as manifested by any over-regulation and a very large number of amendments to legal articles. Since 2011 there have been more than 100 regulations and about 40 project changes of the Act of March 18, 2011, amending the law on HE in Poland [22]. They are executed under the pretext of setting uniform standards, consulting the public or scientific community, transparency and objectivity of evaluation and certification by an independent certifier, etc. Indeed, in case of bureaucratic burdens overdosing, it might hinder future progress by losing societal energy, initiatives and innovations. Therefore, at the current stage, Ukraine should not uncritically duplicate all Polish solutions for these matters. The quality control of education and practice of accreditation should result from real competition and review on the labour market and not from administrative actions. This requires extensive autonomy of higher education institutions, which is based on their financial independence. Obviously this does not mean the full commercialization, but diversification of public funding depending on the type of research activities and form of teaching. Differences between exact science, natural sciences, social sciences, technology and humanities are evident, and rarely included in the laws and regulations concerning HE. The legal basis needs to be changed and verification procedures need to be simpler, clearer and have to comply with branches of science. The principles of universities' autonomy [23] beside attempts to reshape Ukrainians' historical memory of Russia [24] seem to be the main subject of a dispute in Ukraine.

This is also the case with huge hierarchic and administrative structures that resemble knowledge corporations. The National Qualification Framework System (so-called KRK [25] - the equivalent of the European Qualification Framework), implemented recently in Poland, sparked a lot of controversy in the scientific community [26, 27] and is generally evaluated as more onerous, not efficient and not providing for innovation [28]. Another example, a body of legal provisions connected with intellectual property rights and innovation motivating researchers has not been finalized in Poland for unclear reasons [29]. There is a momentum for change now by organizing small, self-controlling and adaptive structures that should be taken advantage of. By analogy to the computer programming progress, task oriented objects should replace global and local procedures.

Historically, a computer program has been viewed as a logical procedure that takes input data, processes it, and produces output data. The *structured programming* challenge was seen as how to write the logic, more than how to define the data. An object, in a simplified way, is a specific data structure linked to some procedures directed at achieving a defined target. An object-oriented system integrates code and data using the concept of an "object". Object-oriented programming is a programming language model organized around hierarchy of objects and manipulating these objects with associated methods rather than procedures, and data rather than logic. Classes of objects are created in hierarchies, and inheritance letting the structure and methods in one class pass down the hierarchy. Then there is hierarchy within objects related to the inheritance structure and methods. Objects correspond to things found in the real world. Every object in the system could be treated as a model of an abstract "contractor" that can do the task, describe and change its status and communicate with other objects in the system without revealing the implemented features. Note that in a such similar structure, as opposed to typical administrative standardization, master-disciple relationships could be preserved. Practical decommissioning of vocational education in Poland as a result of unconsidered administrative actions or a discrepancy

between scientific findings and political action, and an increase in the distance between the expectations of employers, and the competence of graduates is a consequence of the decline of this type of relationship. The models of vocational education (so-called “dual system”) in Germany and Switzerland [30] or the new Draft Law in Poland [31] are attempts to reduce these negative effects. It can be concluded, quoting many authors [32], that: “Rethinking teaching for the Knowledge Society” should be made. Let us note: we should made rethinking not only teaching methods but the whole legal environment and organizational principles. Such an attitude is needed if the European project is to move forward.

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GŁÓWNE KONTROWERSJE PROCESU MODERNIZACJI SYSTEMU SZKOLNICTWA WYŻSZEGO NA UKRAINIE W ASPEKTCIE GLOBALIZACJI

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Abstrakt: Globalizacja jest najbardziej znaczącym procesem w rozwoju współczesnej cywilizacji. Znalazło to odzwierciedlenie w głównych tendencjach rozwoju globalnego systemu edukacji, polegających na wzmocnieniu roli wiedzy jako zasadniczego składnika warsztatu pracy, często dużo cenniejszego niż część materiałowa, pochodząca od pracodawcy. W 1991 roku Ukraina porzuciła sowiecki model szkolnictwa wyższego, orientując się na progresywne, międzynarodowe rozwiązania. Projekty prawnych rozwiązań przyjęte w grudniu 2012 roku wywołały na Ukrainie wiele kontrowersji. Obecnie rząd tymczasowy zadeklarował uporządkowanie sytuacji w kierunku wdrożenia proeuropejskich standardów. Wzorowanie się na rozwiązaniach przyjętych w innych postsowieckich krajach, takich jak Polska lub Republika Czeska, może przynieść oczekiwane efekty, ale nie powinno być bezkrytyczne. Niektóre przyjęte w tych krajach biurokratyczne rozwiązania mogą bowiem zahamować procesy prorozwojowe i innowacyjne. Wymaga to ponownego przewartościowania i fundamentalnego przemyślenia nie tylko metod nauczania, ale i rozwiązań prawno-organizacyjnych przyjętych przy modernizacji szkolnictwa wyższego, prowadzących do porzucenia rozbudowanych administracyjnych struktur na rzecz stworzenia małych, adaptatywnych, samodzielnie zarządzanych organizacji.

Słowa kluczowe: proces modernizacji szkolnictwa wyższego, globalizacja