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Constructing quality education through quality citizenship: challenges for Ukraine between post-Soviet and Bologna process bureaucratic elitism

Abstract. This paper, from a political science perspective, compares some key features of Anglo-American, Bologna Process, and post-Soviet secondary and higher educational systems. The central argument is that quality citizenship is necessary for quality education. The former is understood as political freedom combined with equitable access for and inclusion of youths from all social backgrounds, in both the «horizontal» and «vertical» dimensions of education. Quality citizenship also improves the governance of educational institutions.

Keywords: Citizenship; Educational Quality; Ethical Liberalism; Dignified Profession; University Governance

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Конструювання якісної освіти через розбудову якісного громадянського суспільства:

виклики Україні в контексті пострадянської та болонської бюрократичної елітарності

Анотація. У статті з точки зору політології співставлено деякі ключові особливості англо-американської, болонської та пострадянської систем середньої і вищої освіти. Основним аргументом є те, що якісне громадянське суспільство потрібне для доброї системи освіти. Під першим слід розуміти політичну свободу зі справедливим доступом та залученням молоді всіх соціальних верств як до «горизонтального», так і до «вертикального» вимірів освіти. Якісне громадянство також покращує управління навчальними закладами.

Ключові слова: громадянство; якість освіти; етичний лібералізм; гідна професія; управління університетом.

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Построение качественного образования на основе качественного гражданства:

задачи перед Украиной в контексте постсоветской и болонской бюрократической элитарности

Аннотация. В статье с точки зрения политологии сравниваются некоторые ключевые особенности англо-американской, болонской и постсоветской систем среднего и высшего образования. Основным аргументом является то, что качественное гражданство необходимо для качественного образования. Под первым следует понимать как политическую свободу в сочетании со справедливым доступом и привлечением молодежи из всех социальных слоев к «горизонтальной» и «вертикальной» плоскостям образования. Качественное гражданство также улучшает управление образовательных учреждений.

Ключевые слова: гражданство; качество образования; этический либерализм; достойная профессия; управление университетом.

Introduction. Ukrainian citizens should be congratulated on their newly-won democracy, for this is the key public good on which all other goods depend. This characteristic was eloquently described in 1835 by Alexis de Tocqueville in his classic work, *Democracy in America*, in which he attributed America's civic stability and economic vigour to its political freedoms. He asserted that when naturally intelligent people acquire civil rights these people are able to solve problems as they arise; and, significantly for the present narrative, that governmental oversight is not particularly desirable or even necessary in this. Writing in the same vein, Amartya Sen, winner of the Nobel Prize in economics in 1998, named his main work *Development as Freedom*. The title speaks for itself – rationalism, merit, rule of law, equality before the law, and other things that we associate with development can all be reduced to one formula, namely political freedom. This is a more sociological than economic or technological view of development.

Brief Literature Review. To the different issues of political and social freedoms preservation and the role of education in this process were opened up in the works of such thinkers and researchers as Clifford, G. J. (1975, 1986, 1988), Wittman, D. (1989), Stiglitz, J. (1989, 2002), North, D. (1990), Thompson, T. (1995), Sen, A. (1999), Holcombe, R. (2002), Scherer, M. (2002), Manzer, R. (2003), Wolfe, D. (2005), Witt, H. (2006), Zgaga, P. (2006), Adelman, C. (2009), Furco, A. (2010), Harris VanKeuren, C. (2011), Atlee, T. (2012) and others.

Purpose. Against this background, the topic of this paper is world trends in education, culminating in Europe with the Bologna Process for which Ukraine has signed. Here it should be noted that a preoccupation with the technical aspects of Bolo-

gna accreditation and quality assurance misses more important topics such as the cultural foundations and social philosophies of educational systems design, therefore the present paper speaks about education in a cross-sectional sense and does so from the standpoint not of pedagogy but political science. It follows that if we wish to reconfigure educational institutions, then we also need to reconfigure the social values and related organizational practices that support these institutions.

Results. The main argument of this paper is that in order to have a good educational system a country needs a high quality of citizenship. The OECD concurs by stating that «Few countries can afford to rely only on families rich in wealth and/or human capital to provide society with high[ly] educated individuals», and by recommending that quality education should be extended to the less-privileged categories of people if these countries are to prosper [1]. This speaks to the issue of «horizontal citizenship», which comprises the standard political freedoms of speech, assembly, voting, and due legal and constitutional process, along with a basic economic standard of living. To this should be added what in North America is currently accented as «inclusion». This is a sociological and psychological concept that pertains to citizenship in its «vertical» dimension. Inclusion and vertical citizenship signify the self-esteem of the individual, his or her acceptance and the comfort level within the broader society, and the motivation to realize her or his full potential regardless of social category.

In relation to this, Sen writes that «the twentieth century has established democratic and participatory governance as the preeminent model of political organization». [2]. Correspondingly, small business-people and skilled personnel have

become crucial for countries' economies; for example, in the United States and Western Europe small businesses produce over half of the GDP and conduct large volumes of international trade directly with their foreign counterparts. Not elites but technicians, artists, academics, and students now show the «face» of their country abroad. Through their international contacts and exchanges of ideas, these active people increasingly drive their national economies, science, and culture. At the same time, Taylorist principles of tight labour discipline and institutional controls, characteristic of mass production in large factories, are receding, while state paternalism in the most economically successful countries is also receding.

Therefore, it is important to understand that the most successful countries and educational systems will be those that are the most civically inclusive and best encourage the initiative and creativity of ever smaller and smaller social units, down to the level of individuals. In this regard the historical trend towards democratization that we witness has two main driving forces. The first is political, occurring when people take up arms and gain the franchise from their authoritarian rulers; this might be called the «civic route» to democracy, as notably occurred in the American Revolution. The second motivating force for democracy is the so-called technological imperative – modern technology is increasingly complex and economies are increasingly knowledge-driven, and require workers of a new type who must have autonomy in order to create. The two routes for democracy are found together, but they are conceptually distinct and are expressed through quite different views of human nature and different cultural and organizational foundations of educational systems.

It is in Britain that democracy and the dignity of the individual achieved the earliest and highest expression. The British political culture then spread to the New World of the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand [3]. Parallel with the pre-eminently political route to democracy within its host countries, Anglo-American education became a distinct or «classic» type, whose main features are worth sketching. It can be observed that all the Anglo-American countries of the New World were frontier societies at the time of their casting; these societies began their existence as highly free from state and bureaucratic controls; they were rural, egalitarian and communitarian, and radically democratic. The earliest educational communities grew up around rural and small-town religious parishes, therefore schools, their internal processes, and knowledge itself belonged to the local people. Being originally religiously- and civically-based, education in the New World had a large humanitarian component. The United States developed into a large industrial and technological power, but the basic spirit that animates American and New World education is of a pre-industrial and humanitarian design [4]. That is, somewhat paradoxically, a liberal educational design with a large humanitarian pedagogical content and local control served technological and economic development well.

The United States was the first country to achieve universal rural elementary education; the American educational system then evolved upward to universal secondary education, and then to the world's first «mass» university system. Canada was the second, followed by Australia and New Zealand. Mass higher education is now a strong trend around the world. Other countries that have reached very high levels of access to university education are Finland, South Korea, Singapore, West European countries, Russia, and Ukraine, with rapid growth in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan; but it should be noted that in some of these countries educational expansion is driven less by ethical liberalism and a discourse of human rights, and even more by the technological imperative and pragmatic need to be economically competitive. Education in many of these latter countries is both social class-specific and social class-defining; that is, rural or working-class children obtain an ordinary and shorter education, while upper-class children obtain longer high-quality education, and the social structure is rigid. In other words, horizontal education is well developed, but vertical is less so.

Upon achievement of horizontal citizenship and extensive educational provision in the Anglo-American countries, a shift in recent decades occurred towards «inclusive citizenship» and «inclusive education». The aspiration is that learners of all social categories should feel comfortable in their schools, and there is

a re-emphasis on a more active engagement of the pupil and student. Under this person-centred approach, it is assumed that it is not teachers but students who construct meaning. The distinction in classroom practice might be ambiguous, but the clear intention is that students should be respected as citizens and should be empowered in the sociological and psychological dimensions of education. In all of this, incidentally, democratic, broadly-based education produces academic excellence – firstly, because a larger pool of raw talent increases the total supply of knowledge, and secondly, because pressure from regional institutions increases competition within the top urban universities. In a colourful phrase, «educational expansion creates intelligence» [5], and the often-positing dichotomy of «equity versus excellence» is false [6]. This justifies efforts to improve citizenship and education horizontally and vertically from the standpoint of both ethical liberalism and the imperative of economic efficiency.

In regard to citizenship, Anglo-American society is strongly influenced by a classic short piece written in 1689 by an Englishman John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. Locke argued that people are intelligent, can recognize their own interests and the interests of others through civil discourse, and are more inclined to do good than evil. This philosophy is favourable to the development of mutual trust in society and what is called «social capital», which in turn operates within «epistemic communities» (communities of people with similar values and interests).

The way social capital and epistemic communities operate can be illustrated by the self-governance of North American secondary schools, as well as public and private universities. According to the Constitutions of these countries education is a provincial jurisdiction. But at the municipal level, ministries of education are not involved in the daily operation of schools; and at the university level ministries are not involved in matters of curriculum, personnel, and quality assurance. The hiring and oversight of teachers is done by local school boards attached to municipal governments. In universities, personnel and administrative matters are left to academic departments and faculty members, under the general jurisdiction of university boards of governors whose members were traditionally former academics themselves. Academic freedom in universities is sacred and cannot be touched by government. Further, faculty members are both instructors and researchers – many are of world renown and a few are Nobel Prize winners. The absurdity of having ministries of education and state bureaucrats prescribing to Nobel Prize winners what and how to teach is obvious, and in any case ministries of education neither have nor desire a voice in matters of curriculum.

Thus, Anglo-American secondary school teachers (usually having strong unions) and university faculty (with high social status) constitute what is called a «dignified profession». The status of a dignified profession connotes a good salary, legal employment protection, public respect for its expertise, and expectation for merit-based career advancement; these conditions in turn raise the teachers' commitments to their self-improvement [7]. Through consultations with university boards of governors, provincial ministries of education can set broad priorities and allocate major capital expenditures; but the internal good use of these expenditures is entrusted almost entirely to the university communities themselves [8]. This method of governance operates well because a university is transparent both from the outside and inside, and because incumbents care about their professional reputations. An important point in this regard is that municipal secondary school communities and university communities can exist viably if they are located within a wider (macro) system of the rule of law and that under this rule the basic goodness and intelligence of people can come to the fore, as Locke, Tocqueville, and Sen prescribe.

The existence of an autonomous university community is desirable in itself, Sen would say, because from an ethical liberal standpoint this increases human freedoms and capabilities; but autonomy is also necessary for scientific and economic progress from the pragmatic standpoint of the technological imperative. In order to gather and produce knowledge, universities need the freedom to be «engaged» with their local, national, and international environments [9] and to be open to spontaneous ideas from any source. State bureaucracies are

of little use here and can even be harmful, because they cannot «codify» and accredit new knowledge as quickly as it is produced [10]. Therefore, even authoritarian countries are finding that they must offer universities more autonomy.

Turning now to the Bologna Process, it may be noted that this project is an outgrowth of economic neo-liberalism, which is a new ideological trend worldwide. The European Higher Education Area has actively embraced this ideology and is accordingly trying to configure its educational institutions to be more «accountable» to the economy and governments through more emphasis on accreditations and bureaucratic quality controls. However, many educational theorists argue, probably correctly, that economic neo-liberalism represents a threat to traditional notions of Anglo-American and West European secondary and university education. Here it is important to understand that the Bologna Process was not an initiative of faculty or even educational administrators, but was a state-political instrument intended to raise the competitiveness of the European economy relative to the economy of the USA. That is, the foundation of Bologna is not a civic social philosophy, but simply a pragmatic instrument intended to improve the efficiency of the European labour market within a more-or-less frozen social class structure.

It was only as an afterthought, in the face of student protests, that the so-called social dimension and student-centred learning were added to the Bologna Process. If properly (not bureaucratically) understood, these two things could be positive for education in Ukraine. The social dimension is concerned to provide better horizontal citizenship through broader access to quality education to more categories of the population, while student-centred learning could imply more respect for the individual student, thus improving vertical citizenship and increasing active learning. In Ukraine, the priority population categories for affirmative action should be the historically and structurally marginalized rural and working-class Ukrainians, Tatars, and Roma. It should be emphasized that in Western countries the government's failure to provide parity of educational opportunities constitutes systemic discrimination, which is justifiable under the laws and constitutions; but in the post-socialist countries poor categories of the population have been left behind because of a weak sense of common citizenship.

At the same time, most post-socialist ministries of education have greatly underestimated the depth of the cultural change that is needed in order to implement the Bologna educational design, and have generally interpreted the Bologna requirements as comparatively simple bureaucratic adjustments. However, if faculties are not able to implement the instructions coming from above, or do not desire to do so, the instructions will fail; therefore, for better policymaking and implementation, the faculty and its concerns must be at the centre of educational reform. The main difficulty in this regard is that the status of Soviet and post-Soviet faculty is the diametrical opposite of the dignified faculty in North America and the European Higher Education Area, because the Soviet educational system was characterized by the extreme proletarianisation of faculty (with heavy workloads, low salaries, little creative freedom, and high number of prescribed courses). One consequence of this is that Soviet faculty had little time for research and for creating new knowledge and, therefore, simply passed on conservatism from one generation to another, which was convenient to the political regime. Another consequence is that salaries were and remain calibrated to the number of courses taught, therefore faculty have a disincentive to conduct research and innovation. The same overloaded faculty also have little time for implementing pedagogical details of the Bologna framework. There-

fore, the key to reform is not administrative pressure from above, but the willing participation of empowered faculty members and departments.

As for Soviet education, Ukraine's inheritance is very unfortunate, both ideologically and in structural design, because this inheritance follows from the inherent political needs of imperialism. All Moscow regimes were primarily concerned with the control of territories and populations, and not with civic development. A system of carefully guarded ignorance packaged as the «friendship of nations» was employed by the Kremlin so that the subordinate republics would be unaware of their own histories and of how other countries live lest these republics should separate, as indeed occurred with a number of non-Russian territories in 1918 and 1991. Thus, the imperial Soviet and colonial Yanukovych regimes were by inherent structure and long tradition anti-democratic, anti-national, and, in the social and humanitarian disciplines, anti-intellectual. These regimes fetishised technical and natural science education, but feared independent civic initiatives and distrusted human nature. This distrust was compounded by the conflict and conspiratorial worldviews of Marxism and Bolshevism. A corollary of Moscow rule was the implementation of numerous bureaucratic checks and controls over people and organizations, which have no use in conditions of national independence but still often remain in place out of habit. Soviet values and institutional practices are not suitable for a socially just and intellectually dynamic educational design.

Summing up, Anglo-American education has powerful advantages. This education assumes the autonomy of educational communities and accords to teachers and university faculty the status of a dignified profession. Educational communities serve as competent guardians of the public interest and relieve educational ministries of the tasks of micro-management. At the same time, Anglo-American educational institutions are adaptable and produce or absorb new innovations quickly.

The positive features of the Bologna Process are that it provides useful guidelines for quality assurance and accreditation, and that, in theory at least, it foresees a social dimension and student-centred learning according to the Anglo-American model, which could improve horizontal and vertical citizenship and ultimately quality of education. However, economic neo-liberalism and the Bologna Process share some negative features with Soviet practices. As with the Soviet system, the Bologna agenda is driven more by the technological imperative, a bureaucratic logic, and bureaucratic elitism than by an ethical liberalism of the Anglo-American tradition. The danger for Ukraine is that a misunderstanding of the Bologna Process may not improve the social dimension and student-centred learning, but may simply legitimize unnecessary bureaucratic controls inherited from the Soviet era [11], thereby taking Ukraine's education farther away from the intended aims of the Bologna Process and farther still from community-owned and professionally dignified Anglo-American education. Instead, Ukraine should democratise the internal functioning of educational institutions, and should finance education equally for all categories of the population.

Conclusion. Hence, appropriate social values and philosophical foundations support a high-quality citizenship, which in turn produces a democratic system of education which is person-regarding in its horizontal and vertical dimensions. Such an educational system can achieve high academic performance, sound institutional governance, and be adaptable to the current economic and social trends in the world. High-quality citizenship is desirable in ethical liberal terms and improves the practical functioning of educational institutions.

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