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## **PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF POLISH SOCIAL WORKERS**

Referring to the professionalization of social work it is worth to add that, firstly in our Polish conditions, similarly to other countries, social work develops as an element of social policy of the countries fulfilling a more or less expanded doctrine of a welfare state. The transformations in social care systems and dominance of state sector in the implementation of assumptions of social policy influence e.g. the growing social demand for professionals, who deal with the activities supporting various categories of individuals succumbing to exclusion. Analyzing the evolution of the profession of a social worker in Poland within the last two decades there may be observed several tendencies meaningful for forming the professional identity.

Process of creating professional identity is complex through its engagement in multidimensional activity and multicontextual functioning in the profession. The main space for this process is related to professional education. It is worthy to say, that there is a noticeable dynamic development of schools of social work, both in the private and state education sector, resulting first of all from the increasing social demand for various specialists in social work (consultants, career advisers, therapists, supervisors, specialists in nursing care and specialists in social work with a child, family assistants, specialists in social work with elderly people, animators of social work and culture etc.). Currently, there are 81 institutions of higher education in Poland, all of which prepare for the profession of social workers<sup>1</sup>. Obviously, apart from the positive aspects connected with facilitating obtaining higher education by the social workers, it also carries some threats of lowering the education standards, particularly in the institutions of higher education which do not hire the suitable number of independent scientific workers who are not well-known in the circle of researchers dealing with social work and other academics, who are not adequately competent in the area of social work.

The author's intention is to analyze some aspects of professionalization of social work in Poland which are important in constituting spaces for professional identity of social workers.

**KEY WORDS:** professional identity of social work, professional education

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<sup>1</sup>The data from the report developed by Professor Barbara Kromolicka from Szczecin University, presented at the XVIII Convention of Polish Association of Schools of Social Work (PSSPS), 9-10<sup>th</sup> of October 2008, Rzeszów.