

Ludmila Sokuryanska\*  
Svitlana Shchudlo\*\*

## YOUTH OF THE UKRAINIAN BORDERLAND IN THE TRANSITION TO THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY: VALUES, EDUCATIONAL PLANS, VISIONS OF LIFE SUCCESS

### Introduction

The educational boom that swept the post-socialist and post-Soviet countries in the first 15 years of the new millennium was caused both by global and local factors. There were objective and subjective reasons for it that lead to both positive and negative consequences. Among the global factors, the authors concentrate primarily on the transition to the knowledge society, in the context of which the social and individual need for cultural and, in particular, educational capital is actualized, and professional knowledge and competence become the most important condition for the self-realization of the individual. In order to meet the challenges of the knowledge society, modern man must constantly replenish his baggage of knowledge by appealing to the system of continuous education. The objective social need for a high level of personal education in the transition to the knowledge society is determined by the high technical and technological level of modern industry and other spheres of social activity, their computerization and 'digitization'.

In these conditions, young people's striving for education is fairly rational. Today, higher education is very popular. As the results of the survey performed for this study show, more than 70% of secondary school graduates in Ukraine plan to enter university, and they have realistic chances of realizing their plans: from 1991 to 2008, the number of universities in Ukraine increased by more than twice from 149 to 353. But in recent years their

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\***Ludmila Sokuryanska** – Ph. D. in sociology, Full Professor, V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University; research interests: the sociology of youth, sociology of education, axiology; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4097-9520>; e-mail: [sokuryanska@karazin.ua](mailto:sokuryanska@karazin.ua)

\*\***Svitlana Shchudlo** – Ph. D. in sociology, Full Professor, Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University, Ukraine; scientific interests: the sociology of youth and education, quality of education; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5038-5290>; e-mail: [svitlana.shchudlo@gmail.com](mailto:svitlana.shchudlo@gmail.com)

number has been gradually decreasing, and there were 325 Universities in 2014 (Shchudlo 2014, p. 66).

The problematic issue is the contradiction between the need of Ukrainian society for truly educated citizens, able to help society overcome the actual crisis, and the real capabilities of educated youth to use their educational potential for the benefit of their country. In this publication, the authors attempt to determine the ways of solving this problem by analyzing the factors that define it. For this purpose, the authors focus both on theoretical approaches to solving this problem, and on those empirical data that allow revealing how this problem manifests itself in Ukrainian society compared to its neighbors – Poland and Hungary.

### **Theoretical and empirical research background**

The results of studying life problems of Central and Eastern European teenage youth, which are presented in this publication, rely on certain theoretical background. The analysis is built on three modern sociological discourses: educational, values and adolescents.

Based on the first discourse, the authors focused on the concept of ‘knowledge society’. P. Drucker, whose name is associated with the scientific use of the term ‘knowledge society’, emphasizes the sociocultural role of knowledge and sees it as a strategic resource for the creation of a new society (Drucker 1993).

The choice of the second theoretical focus resulted from one of the objectives of the study: to discover the place of education in the value hierarchy among schoolchildren in the Central and Eastern European borderlands.

It needs to be emphasized that value orientations of youth, including adolescents, have long been the focus of sociological attention (Golovakha 1988). Numerous theoretical and empirical studies testify to the fact that value preferences of the younger generation, which are frequently perceived as peripheral and subcultural ones, have in the last decades dominated in society, predetermining the behavior of its members. Among others, Karl Mannheim, Jose Ortega y Gasset, the contemporary American sociologist Ronald F. Inglehart, authors of this article, and many other scientists wrote about this (see, for example: (Inglehart 1971; Inglehart 1990). Thus, a kind of ‘future leap’ is made in this article by studying value orientations of youth.

In the article, the authors attempt to answer the question about a certain European value unity (and, for Ukraine, rapprochement), at least on the level of youth’s value consciousness in the circumstances of close proximity to representatives of another culture, and, therefore,

a different value system.

The authors emphasize that they analyzed value orientations of the borderland youth, following Rokeach's well-known value typology (developed later by Scheler) (Scheler 1931). According to this typology, values can be divided into terminal, which are values-goals, and instrumental, which are values-means. At the same time, the authors consider values to be the concepts of individual (or social group) life preferences reflecting the ability to comprehend the surrounding reality, to form attitudes towards it, as well as create emotional (affective) conditions and volitional intentions. All the aspects mentioned above become the main motivators of the behavior and activity of different social subjects (Sokuryanska 2006, p. 117).

Finally, the third theoretical focus of this research is related to the phenomenon of adolescence. The discovery of this phenomenon is attributed to the American psychologist Granville Stanley Hall (Hall 1904). According to the scientist's point of view, the adolescent period is accompanied by the spiritual restructuring of the emerging (socializing) personality (Inglehart 1997, pp. 71-72). The authors believe that restructuring manifests itself not only in the internalization of cultural norms and values that dominate on the macro- and micro-social levels, but also in the introduction of new axiophenomena into society, which is especially characteristic of modern, so rapidly changing societies. The environment of adolescents, the social context in which they live play an important role in this process. In this regard, the authors emphasize that many researchers, for example, K. Griffin, pay particular attention to the formation of the context of adolescence. According to Griffin, it is a basic phenomenon both in designing youth identity and in constructing 'youth, including adolescence, as a social problem' (Griffin 1999). Adolescence is particularly important for this research, because it is in its course that authors nest their attempt to determine how the socio-cultural context of the borderland influences the formation of adolescents' personality, their value world, including the attitude toward education. It should be noted in this context that the borderland as a space of intensive interaction between cultures and peoples is studied quite actively by representatives of the humanities and various social sciences (see: Inglehart 2003; Inglehart 2004; Inglehart 2012). Attention is paid in particular to the processes of cultural transmission in the conditions of this space and their influence on the formation of a value-based, ambivalent personality.

The empirical basis of this article are the results of the international sociological project entitled 'Youth at the frontiers of Central and Eastern Europe'. The authors of this article were responsible for coordinating the project in the territory of Ukraine. This survey is the second stage of the

project conducted among schoolchildren of the borderland regions of Central and Eastern Europe (the first phase was carried out in 2013 in two young Ukrainian-Polish borderland cities Przemyśl and Drohobych). The survey was conducted between May and June 2015 in the form of questionnaires among graduates of urban and rural secondary schools. The instrumentation of the 2013 phase (the author of the idea is dr. P. Długosz, Rzeszów University, Poland) was adopted as the basis and was supplemented with questions that were of scientific interest to the new project coordinators from Poland, Ukraine, and Hungary.

The goal of the empirical analysis in this study was to explicate the similarities and differences between life plans (particularly educational plans) and value orientations of Ukrainian, Polish, and Hungarian youth. The hypothesis of this paper was that there is a connection between residing in some Ukrainian borderland regions (Western and Eastern) and the shift in value consciousness to the value patterns typical of the neighboring countries. Thus, in the western borderland of Ukraine, adolescents are influenced by European values, which is important for realizing euro-integration aspirations of Ukrainian society, while, in the Eastern region, teenagers are influenced by the people who are nostalgic for the Soviet value system.

The survey was carried out with the use of the auditorium questionnaire technique. The sample was of the quota character. In this case, the authors attempted to maintain the quotas regarding the school time and place of residence. The research was conducted on the following number of youth: Kharkiv – 428 pers., Drohobych – 392 pers., Uzhhorod – 400 pers., Przemyśl – 413 pers., Rzeszów – 294 pers., Zielona Góra – 336 pers., Nyiregyhaza – 359 persons. Surveys at the borderlands were conducted by sociologists from Rzeszów and Zielona Góra Universities (Poland), Kharkiv, Drohobych and Uzhhorod Universities (Ukraine), the University of Debrecen (Hungary). The research coordinators were: in Kharkiv – prof. L. Sokuryanska, in Drohobych – prof. S. Shchudlo, in Uzhhorod – dr. N. Varha, in Rzeszów – dr. N. Kotarski, Przemyśl – dr. P. Długosz, in Zielona Góra – dr. A. Urbaniak, in Nyiregyhaza – dr. K. Kovach (see more: Długosz 2016).

### **Education in the hierarchy of adolescents' values**

To answer the question about the reasons for the educational boom typical for many European countries, including the post-Soviet countries, the authors analyzed the place of education in the hierarchy of terminal values among school graduates of the Central and Eastern European borderlands. The terminal values of schoolchildren were examined through the prism of students' answers to the questions about their life plans. The questionnaire

required that pupils determine the degree of importance of a number of values on a four-point scale (Very Important – Important – Slightly Important – Not Important). Table 1 shows the share of respondents who chose the answer “Very Important” (see Table 1).

Table 1

Terminal values among schoolchildren (the table shows the share of respondents who chose “Very Important”, %

	Kharkiv (Uk)	Uzhhorod (Uk)	Drohobych (Uk)	Zielona Góra (PL)	Rzeszów (PL)	Przemysł (PL)	Nyíregyháza (Hq)
	N=428	N=400	N=392	N=336	N=294	N=413	N=336
Completing higher education	65.1	59.0	60.5	35.3	26.2	38.4	61.1
A happy family	83.5	78.2	83.2	73.6	68.7	68.3	83.8
Creating their own business	33.9	30.1	21.4	15.7	9.5	12.2	21.6
Fun and entertainment	29.4	24.5	17.9	23.1	23.1	17.5	18.4
Development of their abilities, self-realization	65.0	49.7	60.7	52.3	43.9	38.5	60.9
Quiet life, no worries, no trouble	44.7	49.7	43.9	38.0	44.2	32.3	44.3
Accumulation of wealth, high income	32.1	28.7	19.1	40.7	34.4	35.9	19.3
Gaining respect among people	47.7	49.7	44.1	42.0	46.6	44.3	44.7
Interesting, creative work	53.8	42.8	45.2	64.4	74.5	62.9	45.4
Living in accordance with religious beliefs	14.1	26.9	32.2	13.2	24.1	23.1	32.6
Personal freedom, independence in judgments and actions	51.2	48.8	55.1	45.0	37.8	44.7	55.7
Helping other people	35.8	40.8	40.1	27.2	23.1	24.1	40.4
Friends	69.0	64.0	62.8	55.6	47.6	49.6	63.4
Achievement of a high position in society	36.5	35.7	27.3	30.1	32.0	26.9	27.5
Holding power	19.7	17.0	8.7	7.5	12.6	7.3	8.7

Source: own work.

The analysis starts with the discussion of the hierarchy of terminal values among the interviewed adolescents. To begin with, a comparative analysis of the information presented in Table 1 reveals the differences (sometimes very significant) between the value orientations of Ukrainian, on the one hand, Polish and Hungarian schoolchildren, on the other hand. Obviously, there are some differences in the axiodiscourse of schoolchildren from Kharkiv, Drohobych and Uzhhorod, urban and rural youth. The differences manifest themselves in a greater importance of such values as *interesting, creative work and wealth, high income* for the graduates of Kharkiv school. Unlike the pupils from the Kharkiv region, the students from Drohobych and Uzhhorod are more oriented on the *realization of religious commandments and helping other people*. Nevertheless, the data obtained testify to the fact that there is no categorical, insurmountable value divide in Ukrainian society (at least, in the youth environment), which some Ukrainian and foreign politicians like to point out. This gives hope for the possibility of a value consensus in the country.

Comparing value preferences of Ukrainian, Polish and Hungarian schoolchildren, the authors were again convinced that such values as the *family* (whatever scientists say, in particular, sociologists, about its crisis, transformation, etc.) have an enduring significance, including the level of youth consciousness. At the same time, Polish schoolchildren also appreciate *interesting, creative work* (for Rzeszów schoolchildren, it is even slightly more important than the family). The family ranked first in all respondent groups, except for the schoolchildren from Rzeszów: in the hierarchy of value orientations, the family occupies the 2<sup>nd</sup> position. In all the three countries, friends were among the leading three values (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> place). This is not surprising, because friends and communication with them has always been one of the most important values of youth consciousness. Disturbed only by the fact that today (as evidenced by numerous studies, including those conducted by the authors) virtual communication increasingly displaces the real one. This, in the authors' opinion, may have a significant (unfortunately, negative) impact on the socialization of adolescent youth (The authors plan to analyze this situation in future publications.).

The next stage of the article is the analysis of the hierarchy of value orientations among adolescent youth in the border regions of Central and Eastern Europe.

Studying the differences in the axiodiscourse of the surveyed adolescents, the authors focused on such values as *completing higher education* (this value is more significant for Ukrainian and Hungarian schoolchildren – 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> positions; the schoolchildren interviewed in Przemyśl and Zielona

Góra placed it on the 9<sup>th</sup>, and in Rzeszów on the 10<sup>th</sup> position) and *interesting, creative work* (in Poland, the importance of this value is the highest: 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> rank positions); in Ukraine, slightly lower: Kharkiv – 5<sup>th</sup>, Drohobych – 6<sup>th</sup>, Uzhhorod – 8<sup>th</sup> rank positions.

How can the discovered discrepancies in the value consciousness among schoolchildren in these three European countries, in particular in their relation to the value of higher education, be explained? It seems that the higher importance of tertiary education among Ukrainian schoolchildren can be explained with several reasons, connected primarily with the socioeconomic and political situation in Ukraine. Higher education is valued there. According to the study, 89.3% of Kharkiv schoolchildren planned to enter university; in Drohobych, 82.1%; and, in Uzhhorod, 80.2%.

From the authors' point of view, there are five reasons explaining aspirations of Ukrainian schoolchildren to continue their education at university.

Firstly, there is the prolonged economic crisis that caused significant changes in the labor market. It does not allow school graduates and their parents to hope that they will be able to find employment after completing only secondary education. Obviously, finding a job may be difficult even after having completed higher education, but entering university postpones employment decisions for 5-6 years. Additionally, students receive scholarships (albeit very small and barely covering pocket expenses, a scholarship is a kind of material help to the family). Many parents treat studies as a wait-out period in their children's life: they think that the child will be busy with academic work for 5-6 years, will receive a scholarship if he/she is a good student, and there is a chance that in the meantime the labour market will change, so their child will find a good job after graduation.

Secondly, as evidenced by the results of numerous studies conducted by the authors among Ukrainian students (Sokuryanska 2006; Arbenina 2012), a high importance of education is due to the aspirations of possible students and, most importantly, of their parents (especially those with a low educational level) to improve their children's social status.

Thirdly, in the context of military operations in Ukraine, the significance of the postponement of military service for university students, being far from the military conflict zone, should not be overlooked as another reason.

Fourthly, according to the previous research conducted by the authors, some school graduates (however, not a very large share) are aware that contemporary employers take into account, first of all, the job seeker's knowledge and professional competence, which one can gain primarily at university.

Another reason may be the fact that for some schoolchildren higher education is the most important terminal value (self-worth), through which

they will be able to self-fulfill. It is not incidental that such a postmodernist value as *the development of one's abilities, self-realization* ranks so high in the hierarchy of values among Ukrainian schoolchildren: it occupies the 3<sup>rd</sup> place in Drohobych, 4<sup>th</sup> in Kharkiv, and 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> in Uzhhorod. It should be noted that this value (self-realization) is fairly important for Polish pupils, however, they seem to think about self-realization not only and not so much through higher education, as through other factors.

The next stage of the article is the analysis of the instrumental values among the interviewed schoolchildren, i.e. means-values, with the help of which, in particular, terminal values (goal-values) are realized.

For this analysis, the authors used respondents' answers to the question about the factors of successful employment after graduation, which may be considered as factors of professional and, more broadly, life success. In this context, the authors noted that schoolchildren from the three involved countries, expressing their attitude towards certain judgments about their own lives, first of all mentioned their desire to achieve life success. At the same time, they unanimously expressed the opinion that hard work leads to achieving all they want and that they do not need help from outside to succeed. The survey required that pupils evaluate the significance of employment after graduation for each of the listed factors on a four-point scale. Table 3 includes only the answers of those respondents who chose the option "certainly yes", i.e. they entirely agreed with the significance of a particular factor.



Table 2

The opinion of schoolchildren on the factors of successful employment after graduation  
(the table includes the answers "certainly yes")

	Charków (Uk)	Użhorod (Uk)	Drohobycz (Uk)	Zielona Góra (PL)	Rzeszów (PL)	Przemysł (PL)	Nyiregyháza (Wng)
Knowing people, being favoured by parents, relatives, friends	31.2	27.3	18.2	49.3	49.0	52.6	48.7
High level of professional knowledge, skills, and abilities	61.3	46.2	66.0	42.2	42.5	46.4	51.5
University diploma	49.8	45.4	49.2	66.7	31.3	36.6	43.7
Initiative and entrepreneurship	49.5	32.2	32.9	23.9	11.2	21.6	26.7
Parents' material condition	25.4	28.2	13.7	19.2	18.7	17.1	15.3
Chosen profession	48.0	39.7	37.6	32.3	28.2	25.8	27.0
Diligence, hard work	57.3	49.6	54.3	36.1	28.9	27.5	46.2
Place of residence	20.7	23.4	15.4	22.2	13.6	25.7	20.1
Being tricky, cleverness	34.0	27.9	27.6	16.7	14.3	14.3	36.5
Lucky coincidence, luck	25.0	29.3	17.4	17.1	8.8	13.7	27.3
Social origin	13.2	20.2	10.1	10.6	5.1	10.0	21.2
Appearance, attractiveness	22.7	22.9	12.7	17.3	13.6	10.7	48.2
Political views	10.4	9.0	4.9	3.9	5.1	4.9	13.6
The prestige of the school that they had finished	29.5	27.1	19.5	17.1	18.7	17.5	26.2
Knowledge of foreign languages	56.5	50.9	49.5	59.1	55.1	56.9	71.6

Source: own work.

Analyzing the data, presented in Table 2, the authors, like in the case of terminal values, discovered similarities and differences between value preferences of Ukrainian schoolchildren and the axiodiscourse of schoolchildren in Poland and Hungary. In the case of Kharkiv and Drohobych schoolchildren, the value of *the high level of professional knowledge and skills* ranked first (in Uzhhorod this value takes 3<sup>rd</sup> position), *diligence* second (in Drohobych,

Kharkiv and Uzhorod), and *knowledge of foreign languages* third (in Drohobych and Kharkiv) in the hierarchy of factors of successful employment. In the case of Polish and Hungarian schoolchildren, the most important are: *the knowledge of a foreign language* (it ranked first in both countries), *knowing people, being favored by relatives, friends* (2<sup>nd</sup> place in Poland, the 3<sup>rd</sup> in Hungary), *a high level of professional knowledge and skills* (3<sup>rd</sup> place in Poland and 2<sup>nd</sup> place in Hungary). The greatest discrepancies in the estimates of the factors of successful employment (instrumental values) between Ukrainian schoolchildren, on the one hand, and Polish and Hungarian, on the other hand, were found in relation to the value of *knowing people, being favored by parents, relatives*. Polish and Hungarian schoolchildren attach more importance to this value than Ukrainian schoolchildren.

Some differences between groups were noticed in the case of such values as *initiative and entrepreneurship*. In this case, the situation is reversed: a higher level of orientation on this instrumental value is characteristic for Ukrainian schoolchildren. When it comes to *appearance, attractiveness*, schoolchildren from Przemyśl and Drohobych and most Hungarian schoolchildren appreciate this as a factor of life success most frequently. The only instrumental value, about which all schoolchildren are unanimous are political views (this value ranked 15<sup>th</sup>, last, in all countries). The authors hope that the respondents will hold this belief through their whole life.

Thus, the high importance of higher education for the schoolchildren interviewed in Ukraine was confirmed in their attitude towards instrumental values, in particular, in the high appreciation of professional knowledge and skills as the most important factor of professional and overall life success.

The attitude of the surveyed adolescents towards education, primarily tertiary education, as the most important terminal value was reflected in their life plans (Table 3).

Table 3

Pupils' plans after graduation (the table shows the share of respondents who chose "very important", %)

	Kharkiv (Uk)	Uzhhorod (Uk)	Drohobych (Uk)	Zielona Góra (PL)	Rzeszów (PL)	Przemysł (PL)	Nyiregyhaza (Hg)
Continue education	70.3	74.9	62.0	43.7	32.5	48.0	63.2
Will work	2.7	2.1	10.7	15.7	28.3	14.0	10.0
Will work and study at the same time	24.6	19.5	19.7	33.5	25.4	27.5	20.9
Will stay at home	2.4	3.3	4.1	0.4	0	1.3	0.6
Undecided yet	0	0.3	3.6	6.7	13.4	9.2	5.3

Source: own work.

As it can be noticed, the orientation of Ukrainian and Hungarian teenagers on continuing education after graduation is much higher than that of their Polish peers. When it comes to the decision to go to work after school, the situation is reversed: this desire was expressed primarily by Polish schoolchildren. A possible explanation for this may be the fact that, according to the data, a significant proportion of Polish teenagers (38%) were employed on the basis of employment contracts (and were paid for their work) already in school time, (only 6% of the pupils in Kharkov had such jobs); and 46% in Zielona Góra and 38% in Rzeszów worked unofficially (without a contract) (in Kharkov – 38%). 41% of the respondents in Kharkov had no work experience, 18% in Zielona Góra, and 14% in Rzeszów. Perhaps the Polish respondents, decided to work after finishing school, did not want to lose the jobs they already had and thanks to which they could feel economically more independent. It is no coincidence that, expressing their attitude towards employment, Polish schoolchildren noted that people work primarily to receive money that helps meet their needs (60% in Zielona Góra and Rzeszów, 38% in Kharkov, 44% in Uzhhorod, 52% in Drohobych, 59% in Peremish, and 50% in Nyiregyhaza). What is also important in the context of the topic of this article, the decision of Polish teenagers to work after graduation may, in the authors' opinion, be caused by their desire to earn money for their further education. It is no coincidence that the number of

those who would like to study and work at the same time is so high among Polish schoolchildren.

Where did the surveyed Ukrainian schoolchildren plan to continue their education? Answering this question, the authors turn to the data presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Types of educational institutions at which the graduates of Ukrainian schools plan to continue their education, %

	Kharkiv (Uk)	Uzhhorod (Uk)	Drohobych (Uk)
Higher education establishment (university, institute, etc.)	89.3	80.2	82.1
College	7.2	10.2	10.2
Vocational school	3.0	7.9	6.1
Other	0.5	1.7	1.6

*Source:* own work.

Thus, the above described trend continues to develop: almost 90% of school graduates in Kharkov, more than 82% in Drohobych, and more than 80% in Uzhhorod planned to enter university. The popularity of colleges, technical schools and especially vocational schools is much lower (particularly among schoolchildren in Kharkov).

In this context, the authors emphasize that schoolchildren's ambitions related to social status (in particular, their orientation on higher education) are largely conditioned by the attitudes of their parents. As the research revealed, the desire to obtain higher education is characteristic not only for the adolescents whose parents have a high educational status, but also for those whose parents have not completed even secondary education. At the same time, according to the results of this research, as well as the authors' previous studies, most families in which parents have a low educational level are the poorest families. The desire of such parents to give their children higher education is determined, among other things, by the desire to raise their children's social and, above all, economic status (Table 5).

Table 5

Schoolchildren's chances of getting higher education compared to the generations of parents, %

	Kharkiv (Uk)	Uzhhorod (Uk)	Drohobych (Uk)	Zielona Góra (PL)	Rzeszów (PL)	Przemysł (PL)	Nyiregyhaza (Hg)
Higher	50.0	50.4	65.5	66.5	61.3	71.4	52.7
The same	30.0	30.5	20.5	23.9	23.7	17.2	22.5
Lower	16.0	15.1	8.7	6.6	7.3	6.6	20.0
Difficult to say	4.0	4.1	5.4	3.0	7.7	4.8	4.8

Source: own work.

Comparing their chances of completing higher education with the chances that their parents had, Ukrainian schoolchildren considered them lower (especially in Kharkov and Uzhhorod) than their Polish peers. The largest share of Hungarian schoolchildren (20%) (if compared to Ukrainian and Polish) noted that their chances of completing higher education are lower than those of their parents' generation.

Estimating the chances of fulfilling their life plans in general, majority of respondents in all the three countries consider these chances to be very high (in Zielona Góra, average). The authors hope that the new generation of Ukrainian, Polish and Hungarian youth will realize their value orientations. will achieve the desired plans, and that members of older generations will have no reason to call the contemporary youth a lost generation.

## Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the so far obtained data, the authors can draw interesting conclusions.

The first conclusion is, alas, pessimistic. The analysis of the educational plans of the respondents, their attitudes towards higher education as a vital value, convinced the authors that the educational boom (at least, in Ukraine) is continuing. This, as it was emphasized above, has several explanations. Nevertheless, whatever the motivations of Ukrainian graduates for pursuing higher education, studies conducted among students of post-Soviet universities show that with each academic course their motivation for gaining knowledge, and, in many cases, university diploma approach

zero. This tendency puts into question Ukraine's chances to raise its citizens' level of education, as there is a risk of a significant decrease in the level of professional competence among Ukrainian higher school graduates (an issue which many employers are already facing). But this is not the only problem. These risks, accompanied by the 'overproduction' of graduates due to the mass-scale popularity of higher education and by the increasing shortage of skilled manual workers in various industries, can lead (and already have) to serious economic and intellectual losses: many young Ukrainians who cannot realize themselves at home, including the professional sphere, leave the country.

The second conclusion is more optimistic. The undertaken in this article comparative analysis of value orientations among school graduates of the Central and Eastern European borderlands revealed both differences and similarities between their value discourse, which should, in the authors' opinion, be viewed as absolutely normal. On Ukraine's path to Europe, the values of its citizens will change, hopefully, without losing their cultural authenticity. As for Ukrainian adolescents, representing the eastern and western borderlands of the country, their value orientations can hardly be a confirmation of Huntington's well-known thesis about the civilizational fault that divides Ukraine into western and eastern parts which in the opinion of some local and foreign politicians will never converge. Ukrainian youth is diverse, also in value terms. However, as the study showed, there are more similarities than differences regarding the value orientations of young people in different regions of the country. It can be hoped that this will serve as a fundament for a value consensus in Ukrainian society, but not for its value uniformity, since the latter cannot contribute either to social or personal development. As the results of the previous studies conducted by the authors among students and school youth revealed, the ambivalence of value consciousness (manifested in the simultaneous presence of alternative axiophenomena and of values representing different cultures) makes the personality more active, willing to initiate and innovate (Sokuryanska 2006, pp. 543-544). It is such personalities that Ukrainian society needs today.

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Ludmila Sokuryanska  
Svitlana Shchudlo

### YOUTH OF THE UKRAINIAN BORDERLAND IN THE TRANSITION TO THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY: VALUES, EDUCATIONAL PLANS, VISIONS OF LIFE SUCCESS

**Keywords:** education, values, educational plans, youth, borderland, the knowledge society.

The aim of the study is to provide a comparative analysis of educational plans and values of young people in the Central and Eastern European Borderlands. The authors pay particular attention to the role of education in creating life strategies among secondary school graduates of Ukraine, Poland and Hungary.

The empirical basis of the analysis was created based on the results of the international sociological project "Youth in the Borderlines of Central and Eastern Europe". The field research was conducted between April and June 2015, and included secondary school graduates from the borderlands of Ukraine, Poland and Hungary.

The obtained results facilitated understanding the peculiarities of modern youth as a socio-demographic group and enriched the theoretical knowledge in the field of the sociology of youth. The results can be a basis for shaping educational policy both in particular states and in the whole European Community.

Ludmila Sokuryanska  
Svitlana Shchudlo

### MŁODZIEŻ UKRAIŃSKIEGO POGRANICZA W OKRESIE PRZEJŚCIA DO SPOŁECZEŃSTWA WIEDZY: WARTOŚCI, PLANY EDUKACYJNE, WIZJE SUKCESU ŻYCIOWEGO

**Słowa kluczowe:** edukacja, wartości, plany edukacyjne, młodzież, pogranicze, społeczeństwo wiedzy.

Celem artykułu jest zaprezentowanie analiz porównawczych dotyczących planów edukacyjnych oraz wartości młodych ludzi zamieszkujących pogranicza w Środkowej i Wschodniej Europie. Autorki szczególną uwagę poświęcają roli edukacji w kształtowaniu strategii życiowych absolwentów szkół średnich na Ukrainie, w Polsce oraz na Węgrzech.

Podstawę empiryczną prezentowanych analiz stanowią wyniki międzynarodowego projektu socjologicznego *Młodzież na pograniczach Centralnej i Wschodniej Europy*. Etap



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badań terenowych zrealizowano od kwietnia do czerwca 2015 roku wśród absolwentów szkół średnich na pograniczach na Ukrainie, w Polsce oraz na Węgrzech.

Uzyskane wyniki przyczyniły się do lepszego zrozumienia specyfiki współczesnej młodzieży jako grupy socjo-demograficznej. Wzbogaciły one również wiedzę teoretyczną w ramach socjologii młodzieży. Wyniki mogą być podstawą do kształtowania polityki edukacyjnej zarówno dla poszczególnych państw, jak również dla całej wspólnoty europejskiej.