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## PERSPECTIVES OF DEVELOPMENT OF UKRAINE'S SITUATION IN PERCEPTION OF UKRAINIAN AND POLISH STUDENTS: THE FACTOR DETERMINANCE

У статті представлено деякі результати українсько-польського дослідження проблем життєдіяльності сучасної студентської молоді. Акцентовано увагу на сприйнятті українськими та польськими студентами перспектив розвитку ситуації, що склалася в Україні. Застосовано соціокультурний підхід до аналізу феномену сприйняття. Виокремлено чотири групи студентів за характером їхнього сприйняття майбутнього України: «абсолютні оптимісти», «помірковані оптимісти», «абсолютні песимісти» та «помірковані песимісти». Проаналізовано об'єктивні та суб'єктивні характеристики українських та польських студентів, які належать до цих груп. Визначено чинники, що зумовлюють ту чи іншу позицію респондентів щодо «українського питання». Акцентовано увагу на таких із них, як матеріальне становище студентів, їхні політико-ідеологічні уподобання, потенційна протестна активність, соціокультурні, економічні та політичні характеристики країни проживання. Зроблено висновок, що більш високий рівень оптимізму українського студентства зумовлений його суб'єктивним досвідом, патріотичними почуттями, громадянською позицією, прагненням відстояти свободу та незалежність своєї країни.

**Ключові слова:** перспективи розвитку ситуації в Україні, сприйняття, студентська молодь, чинники сприйняття майбутнього України.

В статье представлены некоторые результаты украинско-польского исследования проблем жизнедеятельности современной студенческой молодежи. Акцентируется внимание на восприятии украинскими и польскими студентами перспектив развития ситуации, сложившейся в Украине. Использован социокультурный подход к анализу феномена восприятия. Выделены четыре группы студентов в зависимости от характера их восприятия будущего Украины: «абсолютные оптимисты», «умеренные оптимисты», «абсолютные пессимисты» и «умеренные пессимисты». Проанализированы объективные и субъективные характеристики студентов, вошедших в эти группы. Определены факторы, обуславливающие ту или иную позицию респондентов по «украинскому вопросу». Акцентируется внимание на таких из них, как материальное положение студентов, их политико-идеологические предпочтения, потенциальная протестная активность, социокультурные, экономические и политические характеристики страны проживания. Сделан вывод о том что более высокий уровень оптимизма украинских студентов обусловлен их субъективным опытом, патриотическими чувствами, гражданской позицией, стремлением отстоять свободу и независимость своей страны.

**Ключевые слова:** перспективы развития ситуации в Украине, восприятие, студенческая молодёжь, факторы восприятия будущего Украины

The article presents some results of the Ukrainian-Polish study of life problems of modern student youth. Attention is focused on the Ukrainian and Polish students'

perception of the prospects for the development of the situation in Ukraine. A sociocultural approach to the analysis of the phenomenon of perception was used. Four groups of students are singled out, depending on the nature of their perception of the future of Ukraine: "absolute optimists", "moderate optimists", "absolute pessimists" and "moderate pessimists." Objective and subjective characteristics of students who have been included in these groups are analyzed. The factors determining the position of respondents on the "Ukrainian question" are defined. Attention is focused on such of them as the financial situation, political and ideological preferences of students, their potential protest activities, socio-cultural, economic and political characteristics of the country of residence. The conclusion that the higher level of optimism of Ukrainian students is due to their subjective experience, patriotic feelings, civic attitude, aspiration to defend the freedom and independence of their country is made.

**Keywords:** prospects of development of the situation in Ukraine, perception, student's youth, factors of perception of the future of Ukraine

The events of recent years in Ukraine attract the close attention of European and world public, political elites and ordinary citizens of many countries of the world. Experts, including sociologists, analyze the reasons for the revolution of dignity, for the military conflict in the east of our country, the prospects for its solution, and in general the prospects for Ukraine's as independent state future. All these questions worry not only Ukrainians, but also residents of neighboring countries, especially those who in the recent past belonged to the so-called socialist camp, in particular the Poles.

A comparative analysis of the perception of the prospects for the development of the situation in our country by Ukrainian and Polish students is undoubtedly interesting for researchers: their own destiny's development depends largely on according to what scenario the situation in Ukraine will develop, – and, respectively, – whether they will be able to self-actualize in their native country.

To satisfy this interest, we turned to the results of the Ukrainian-Polish study conducted under the scientific supervision of this publication's author and the director of the Institute of Sociology of the Zelena Gura University (Poland), Professor M. Zelinskaya, by the sociologist students of the V.N. Karazin Kharkov National University and the University of Zelena Gura.

417 students in the University of Zelena Gura and 797 students of the universities of Ukraine: V.N. Karazin Kharkov National University, Lesya Ukrainka Eastern-European National University (Lutsk), Lutsk National Technical University took part in this research. The research was conducted by the survey method on spring 2015 (April-May). The Polish phase of the research was preceded by few months of conceptual preparation stage. The research tool was subjected to several language tests in order to meet the condition of methodological equivalence.

Third-year undergraduate students (in Poland) and the fourth (in Ukraine) were selected for the poll. This method of selection allows authors to make conclusions with an error of +/- 4%, and the level of

reliability is 95%. The sample included such socio-demographic characteristics as gender, place of residence, and level of prosperity.

The purpose of this article is to identify the factors that determine the perception by Ukrainian and Polish students of the actual situation and the prospects for its development in our country.

Realizing this goal, we first of all turn to the analysis of one of the basic concepts of this publication – "perception". It should be emphasized that this concept belongs, first of all, to psychological science, where it is defined as "the integral reflection of objects, situations and events arising from the direct action of physical stimuli on the receptor surfaces of sensory organs" [1, p. 66]

In sociology, as in social psychology also, the term "social perception" is more often used. It is used "not only to denote the phenomena of social conditioning of perception. With its help were marked processes, in which people understand and appreciate social objects - themselves, other people, social groups and communities" [2, p. 20], and, we should add - social phenomena and processes.

P. Berger and T. Luckmann analyze the social nature of perception, its role in social interaction, using the constructivist approach to describing and sociological explanation of social perception [2, p. 52-60].

Substantially expanded the problem of perception in sociology P. Bourdieu, considering categories and schemes of social perception in the context of analysis of social space processes [3, p. 181-208].

A detailed analysis of the sociological discourse of perception is not the task of our article. We emphasize that in its context we address the socio-cultural interpretation of the phenomenon of interest, which is widely represented in the works of Yu. G. Soroki (see, for example: [4,5,6]).

"... A modern man," she writes, "encounters perceptions that differ not only in the structural characteristics of the position in which they are implemented. ... We are also meet with perceptions that are grounded in various normative and

value systems, the intransigence of which often leads to misunderstanding and conflicts. In other words, we should say about the *differences of cultures*, the meanings and symbols of which mediate the perception of events and objects of reality by individuals "[4, p. 45].

So, basing on the socio-cultural understanding of the phenomenon of perception, we will analyze the attitude of Ukrainian and Polish students to the current situation in Ukraine and possible options for its further development. As we said before, в ходе исследования, we have attempted to identify factors that contribute to a particular position of our respondents with regard to the "Ukrainian question". The position of students is most clearly revealed in their responses on the question about the most likely scenario of Ukrainian situation development in the near future, because they, as we believe, reflect not only the assessment of the prospects of the situation in the country resolving, but also its actual state.

Six of these scenarios were presented in our study questionnaire:

- the first – «Ukraine allows the autonomy of the territories, which are now controlled by separatists, but will gain control over them»;
- the second – «Ukraine returns the control over the eastern territory of the country, but the Crimea will remain outside»;
- the third – «Ukraine finally loses the territory controlled by separatists, but the rest of Ukraine will retain independence»;
- the fourth – «Ukraine regains all the lost territories»;
- the fifth – «Ukraine loses control over several areas, but will retain its independence from Russia in limited boundaries»;
- the sixth – «Russia is likely to subdue the whole Ukraine».

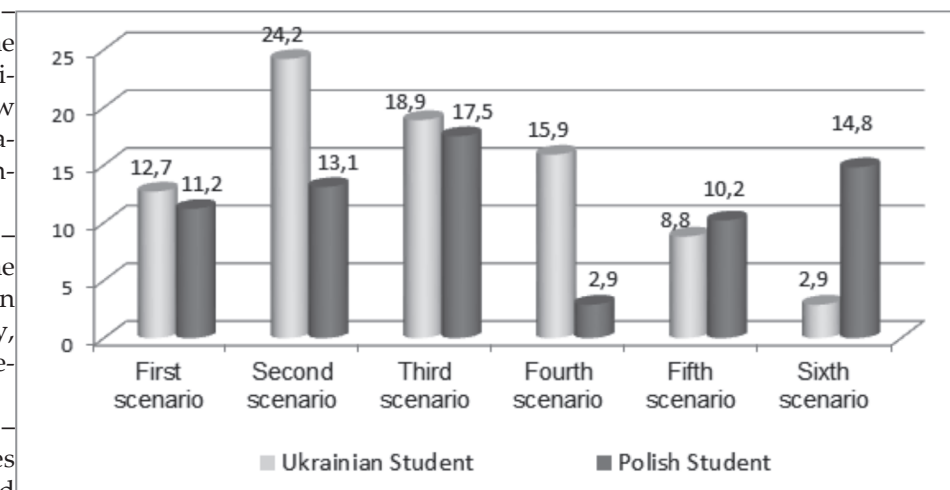
As evidenced by our findings, the first scenario is considered the most realistic by 12,7% of the students surveyed in Ukraine and 11,2% of our Polish respondents; the second – by 24,2% and 13,1%, respectively; the third – by 18,9 % and 17,5 %, respectively; the fourth – 15,9 % and 2,9%, respectively; the fifth – by 8,8 % and 10,2 %, respectively; the sixth – by 2,9% and 14,8%, respectively. 16,6% of Ukrainian students and 30,3 % of their Polish "colleagues" could not give a definite an-

swer to this question (see. Fig. 4). The latter is quite natural, as the Polish students are not included directly in the situation, which possible development they were asked to identify.

As the answers to this question were alternatives, we decided to select in both groups of respondents six subgroups that differ in their perception to the events in Ukraine, and place them on the "optimism-pessimism" axis.

We have nominated the "absolute optimists" the subgroup of students (in both arrays), who believe that Ukraine will regain all the lost territories (fourth scenario). We have named two subgroups the "moderate optimists" as they have chosen the second and fifth scenario of change in Ukraine. The "Absolutely pessimistic" was called a subgroup of students who believe that Ukraine will be conquered by Russia (sixth scenario), and those supporting the first and the third scenarios were called the "moderate pessimists". Thus, in each array, we have identified three subgroups of students, perceiving Ukraine's future in an optimistic and pessimistic way.

It turned out, that there are more "optimists" among Ukrainian students (almost 49%) and more



Source: authors' own work.

Figure 1. Perception of Ukrainian and Polish students of the perspectives of development of Ukraine (in %)

"pessimists" among the Polish (43,5%). Accordingly, the cumulative percentage of "pessimists" among Ukrainian students amounted to 34%, and "optimists" among Polish students – 26,2%.

As it was shown by the correlation analysis, the results of which are presented below, a higher level of optimism of Ukrainian students in their perception of the future of their country is linked to their patriotism, willingness to defend the independence and integrity of their homeland, its freedom.

Let us turn to a more detailed analysis of certain objective and subjective characteristics of selected respondents groups.

As Ukrainian and Polish versions of our research tools (the "Student's Questionnaire") were

Table 1

The financial condition of students, imaging further events in Ukraine differently  
(% to respondents)

The family financial condition	The students' ideas of further development of Ukraine															
	The first scenario		The second scenario		The third scenario		The fourth scenario		The fifth scenario		The sixth scenario		It is hard to answer		Total	
	Ukraine	Poland	Ukraine	Poland	Ukraine	Poland	Ukraine	Poland	Ukraine	Poland	Ukraine	Poland	Ukraine	Poland	Ukraine	Poland
Money is not enough even for the most essential products	3,3	11,4	0,6	5,7	1,5	2,8	3,3	-	5,0	4,9	9,5	-	1,7	1,6	2,4	3,5
All salary is spent on food and the necessary inexpensive things purchasing	16,5	6,8	11,6	9,5	24,1	9,9	11,8	8,4	21,7	4,9	42,9	11,7	25,6	6,6	18,7	8,2
In general, there is enough money, but the purchasing of durable goods (a TV, a refrigerator) is difficult	29,7	25,0	43,6	35,8	28,6	38,0	37,8	33,3	30,0	41,5	28,6	41,6	35,0	41,0	35,0	38,0
Live in prosperity, but are unable to get some expensive items (a car or apartment)	49,5	43,2	38,4	39,6	38,3	38,0	39,5	33,3	38,3	31,7	9,5	31,7	32,6	41,0	38,1	38,0
Are able to get almost anything wanted	1,0	13,6	5,8	9,4	7,5	11,3	7,6	25,0	5,0	17,0	9,5	15,0	5,1	9,8	5,8	12,3
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: authors' own work

somewhat different, we have carried out the analysis for each array separately. The only exceptions are some issues on which example it was possible to make a comparison. These are the financial situation of students in selected groups, their political and ideological preferences, social and territorial identification. These are issues we will begin our analysis from.

Speaking of such an objective characterization of the analyzed groups as the respondents financial situation, it turned out (see Table 1), that among students prospecting scenario of Ukrainian development pessimistically, there is more pauper (those to whom money is not enough even for

the most necessary products) and poor (in whose family the entire salary is spent on the purchasing of food and needed inexpensive items) than in the "optimists" groups. The most striking example is a group of Ukrainian "absolute pessimists", among which more than half (52,4%) present low-income layers of the population.

This link between the financial situation and perception of Ukraine's future can be explained by a higher level of optimism among people wealthy enough in comparison with the poor. With regard to the subjective characteristics such as students' political and ideological preferences, the correlation analysis confirmed one of the hypothesis of



Table 2

**The political and ideological preferences of Ukrainian and Polish students, who are imagining development of Ukraine differently (% to respondents)**

The political and ideological trends	The students' ideas of further development of Ukraine															
	The first scenario		The second scenario		The third scenario		The fourth scenario		The fifth scenario		The sixth scenario		It is hard to answer		Total	
	Ukraine	Poland	Ukraine	Poland	Ukraine	Poland	Ukraine	Poland	Ukraine	Poland	Ukraine	Poland	Ukraine	Poland	Ukraine	Poland
Communist	1,1	2,2	-	-	3,1	-	2,5	-	8,6	-	15,0	-	5,2	-	3,1	0,2
Socialist	4,3	2,2	1,7	3,8	3,1	2,8	3,4	16,7	5,2	2,4	-	8,3	7,8	0,8	3,8	2,2
Social-democratic	12,9	-	17,4	11,3	11,5	12,5	13,4	16,7	8,6	9,8	15,0	11,7	12,1	4,1	13,4	7,7
Liberal	18,3	17,8	16,3	26,4	26,0	23,6	11,8	33,3	8,6	9,8	10,0	21,7	6,9	9,9	15,2	16,3
National-democratic	28,0	26,7	21,5	17,0	22,9	15,3	30,3	16,7	19,0	22,0	-	16,7	8,6	14,0	4,2	18,1
Ecological	11,8	6,7	9,9	3,8	6,9	4,2	5,0	8,3	1,7	2,4	5,0	-	8,6	4,1	7,8	6,2
Radical nationalist	5,4	-	5,8	-	3,1	1,4	5,0	-	1,7	-	5,0	21,7	2,6	0,8	4,3	0,5
Christian democratic	6,5	20,0	12,2	13,2	5,2	16,6	12,6	-	6,9	19,5	15,0	3,2	6,9	18,2	9,0	17,6
Other (which concretely)	1,0	4,4	1,2	3,8	5,2	1,4	1,7	-	13,8	4,9	5,0	16,7	6,0	3,5	3,9	3,2
It is hard to answer	10,7	20,0	14,0	20,7	13,0	22,2	14,3	8,3	25,9	29,2	30,0		35,3	44,6	18,3	22,0
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: authors' own work.

our study on the relationship between a pessimistic perception of the future of Ukraine and the leftist views of the respondents. Thus, among the Ukrainian "absolute pessimists" those who profess communist ideology are met 6 times more than among the "absolute optimists" (15% vs. 2,5%) (see Table 2).

In respect that our analysis of the received data is so far preliminary, we will in the future analyze the link between optimistic / pessimistic students' perception of the situation in Ukraine and their political and ideological preferences in more depth.

Analyzing the relation between the socio-territorial identity and perception of students the future of Ukraine, we found that the Ukrainian students, which are characterized by a higher level of civic, ethnic and European identity, have a higher level of optimism in the assessments of the country development prospects. Among the Ukrainian students who identify themselves with the Soviet human, "pessimistic" (especially "absolute pessimists") are relatively more frequent.

As for the Polish students, those who are showing the highest level of civil identification, in their perception of the future of Ukraine demonstrated the highest level of pessimism. In our view, this can be explained by the fact that Polish students regard the pessimistic scenario of events in Ukraine the serious threat to their own coun-

try, especially a scenario in which Ukraine is conquered by Russia. Polish students-"optimists" believe that to prevent the most pessimistic options for the future of Ukraine the international community should carry out a more serious financial support of Ukraine and provide a more effective pressure on Russia to strengthen economic sanctions against the country. At the same time Polish students-"pessimists", on the one hand, frequently articulate the need for the Ukrainian army rearmament and selling it military equipment, on the other – they say that it is not necessary to intervene in the determination of the Ukrainian borders or that economic sanctions against Russia could be eased.

Now let us turn to a more detailed analysis of certain characteristics of the Ukrainian students – the "optimists" and "pessimists". It is quite logical that the vast majority of "optimists" (90%) are proud that they are citizens of Ukraine. They perceive it as their homeland, are eager to work for its benefit, associated with it their fate, deeply respect the state symbols of Ukraine and are ready to defend it in case of threat to its sovereignty and integrity. Among the "pessimists" such attitude towards Ukraine characterizes less than the half of the respondents.

In this context, we should emphasize that among Ukrainian students who wish to obtain citizenship of another country (in the whole sample this group comes to 27.5%), 44.4% supported the

optimistic scenarios for the development of Ukraine, 38.7% – the pessimistic scenarios, 16.9% could not give a definite answer. Among those who do not want to change his citizenship (this group amounted to 50.5%), there were 53.7% of “optimists”, 31.1% of “pessimists” and 15.2% of undecided. It should be emphasized that there is almost 2.5 times more of those who would like to obtain citizenship of another country among the “pessimists”, than among the “optimists” (about 72% and 30%, respectively).

Responding to a question about how to stay in the border region impact on civil and patriotic feelings of the people, student-“optimists” often talked about how it enhances their patriotic sentiments, student-“pessimists” were closer to a neutral assessment of this factor.

It is interesting to analyze the relationship between the potential protest activity of Ukrainian students and their perception of the future of their country. As evidenced by the materials of our study, optimism is more inherent to students with the highest level of protest activity (“actively protested against the actions of the authorities would be causing the disturbance, even if it threatens their own security”) (one third). Among those who said that “rallies, demonstrations and pickets increase tension in society and nothing really changes”, it is more people with a higher level of pessimism.

Thus, our analysis revealed the differences, sometimes quite substantial, in the estimates by Ukrainian and Polish students of different sce-

narios of the situation development in Ukraine. It is conditioned by both objective and subjective factors, including, current political and economic situation in these countries.

As evidenced by the materials of our study, Ukrainian students have a higher level of optimism in perception of the prospects of the situation development in Ukraine, than their Polish peers do. This optimism is fed primarily by their subjective experience, patriotism, civil attitude of the Ukrainian studentship, the desire to defend the freedom and independence of the country. Pessimism of the Ukrainian students in perception of Ukraine’s future stems from factors such as the Left (especially the Communist) attitudes and Soviet identity of some of them, the negative attitude to the protest actions, etc. The predominance of pessimism in Polish students perception about the Ukraine’s future can be explained by possibly more realism of the “view from outside”, as sure as the awareness of threats to Poland itself in case of realization of negative scenarios to resolve the situation in Ukraine.

It seems that our research is not only answering many questions of interest to the authors, but also actualizes the new research challenges that we face in the course of further cooperation between sociologists of V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University and the University of Zielona Gora, between sociological communities of our country also.

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