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A YOUTH ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS OF UKRAINE IN EUROPEAN CONTEXTS

The article presents a comparative analysis of the satisfaction of Ukrainian and European youth with the institutions of power and the key processes taking place in socio-political contexts. For comparison, we used the seventh wave of the European social survey (ESS) – the calculations were made directly by the author from the data array, as well as data from a personal questionnaire survey conducted among Ukrainian youth.

Comparison of the above-mentioned indicators is interesting not only for the scientists because with the gradual entry of Ukraine into the European community, it is very important to know the key differences with regard to socially important institutions among the young population of Ukraine and the EU.

In addition to key differences, comparative analysis can help understand the situation as a whole, as well as draw attention to the gaps in those social institutions, which the respondents are most unsatisfied with.

The trust in the parliament among Ukrainian young people is very low, and among the European respondents the most could not definitely determine, so they put the neutral marks. Practically the mirror advantage of the EU concerning the satisfied and completely satisfied with the state of education (42.8% in the EU against 16.6% in Ukraine) and the dissatisfied and the entirely dissatisfied with the state of education in the country (35.0% in Ukraine against 12.9% in the EU) affirms high requirements of young Ukrainians to the institution of education.

Keywords: youth, trust, satisfaction, education, socio-political institutes.

The youth attitude to social and state institutions as well as to the tendencies of social development in general is one of the most actual in the sociological science directions of the present time research. The dynamics research of youth attitude to social processes and confidence in political institutions is basic for forecasting the social development. Nevertheless, in our opinion, the study of youth attitude to the aspects of social life where they are not only its average subject and representative of corresponding age and social strata but also directly curious consumer of a certain social product needs today a special attention of scientists. First of all, the state system of professional education should be referred to these aspects. In spite of the availability of many investigations, first and foremost in the educational branch, concerning mainly the problem of the formation of student youth social competencies, we may today ascertain the lack of sufficient number of professional sociological accounts and recommendations in wider foreshortenings of the social development tendencies of Ukraine.

The analysis of the latest investigations

Among the latest investigations concerning youth moods we should mention the GFK accounts “Youth of Ukraine – 2015” and “Values of Ukrainian youth”: the results of the representative sociological research of the youth situation; “Values of the Ukrainian youth” are made to order of the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Ukraine¹. There is also a number of investigations concerning just the student youth: “higher education in Ukraine: students’ public opinion”², “A social and economic picture of students: inquiry results”³

¹ «Цінності української молоді» (2016). *Центр незалежних соціологічних досліджень «Омега»*. <<http://omega-research.com.ua/cinnosti-ukrainskoi-molodi-2016-novi/>>.

² «Вища освіта в Україні: громадська думка студентів» (2015). *Фонд «Демократичні ініціативи» ім. Лька Кучеріва, фірма «Юкрейніансоціолоджі сервіс»*. <<http://dif.org.ua/article/vishcha-osvita-v-ukraini-gromadska-dumka-studentiv>>.

³ Жерьобкіна, Т., Куделя, М. та ін. (2016). Соціально-економічний портрет студентів: результати опитування. *CEDOS*. <<https://cedos.org.ua/uk/osvita/sotsialno-ekonomichnyi-portret-studentiv-rezultaty-opytuvannia>>.

The aim of the article is the comparative analysis of Ukrainian and European young people's satisfaction with basic categories of social and political life. Our work deals with the data of the following five indices:

1. Trust in the country's parliament. 2. How to be satisfied with life as a whole. 3. How to be satisfied with the national government. 4. How to be satisfied with the way democracy works in the country. 5. How to be satisfied with the country's education.

For the analysis we used the ESS seventh wave data and our own questioning data carried out in November 2016 among young people of the age cohort chosen from the ESS data life (n=320). The questions and the scale of answers in the questionnaire were exactly the ones used in the ESS survey. For more convenient interpretation in the charts with answers we use the five-grade scale side by side with the eleven-grade one, where every grade has a certain statement.

The basic results.

How to be satisfied with life as a whole.

The index of being satisfied with life as a whole has long been used in science in the complex measuring of a country, and it is not a less important index than, for example, indices of the gross domestic product level. Personality's being or not being satisfied with life as a whole always depends on the surroundings in which personality is both on the microlevel (a family) and on the macrolevel (a country). Different world scientists periodically publish reports with the rating of countries, disposed depending on citizens' perceiving their own life satisfaction, and in this list Ukraine is located far behind from all the civilized world – according to the data given in the WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT 2016 our country takes the 123rd place¹. The individual theme for discussion is youth's satisfaction with life as a whole where only separate researches exist, even in world science². Comparing the ESS inquiry data with our own survey, we can state the following:

The largest number of respondents from Ukraine and the EU countries proved to be “sooner satisfied” with their life as a whole, at which 41% and 64% correspondingly pointed out. Every tenth respondent proved to be completely satisfied with life: 10 among Ukrainians and 12% among European young people. It is quite natural that the EU youth have more optimistic views. Thus, the respondents among the Ukrainian youth, being not satisfied with their life, are twice as many as the respondents from Europe who gave the same answers (8% and 3% correspondingly). Almost the same number of respondents proved to be entirely dissatisfied: 1% among the Ukrainians and 0.5% among the youth of the EU countries (see Chart 1).

Chart 1

Satisfaction with life as a whole, %					
11-grade scale	EU	UA	5-grade scale	EU	UA
entirely dissatisfied	0.5	1	entirely dissatisfied	0.5	1
1	0.3	2	sooner dissatisfied	3.8	8.4
2	1.4	1.5			
3	2	4.9			
4	2.8	7.3	partly satisfied, partly dissatisfied	18.3	38.6
5	7.4	13.7			
6	8.1	17.6			
7	19.3	19.5	sooner dissatisfied	64.6	41.9
8	27.9	15.1			
9	17.3	7.3	completely satisfied	12.9	10.2
completely satisfied	12.9	10.2			

¹ Helliwell, J. (2016). World happiness report. <http://worldhappinessreport/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/03/hr-VI_web.pdf>.

² Proctor, C. (2003). Youth life satisfaction: A Review of the Literature Carmel L. *Proctor research gate*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225529883_Youth_Life_Satisfaction_A_Review_of_the-Literature>.

The number of the answers of the respondents from Ukraine, who were taken to the cohort of those ones whose grades were interpreted as “partly satisfied, partly dissatisfied” with their own life (the respondents’ grades were 4, 5, 6 according to the 11-grade scale) exceeds the number of the European youth’s answers twice: 38% among the Ukrainians and 18% among the Europeans.

If we consider the respondents grades according to the 11-grade scale, we can see that the number of the Ukrainian young people, who estimated their own life from 0 to 5 grades, twice exceeds the number of the European youth (Chart 1).

How to be satisfied with the national government. The index of being satisfied with the national government is one of the key ones in estimating the home policy of a country. In comparing the answers of the youth of Ukraine and the EU countries a great difference of the grades was expected enough (Chart 2). The entirely dissatisfied with the national government of their country proved to be less than every 10th respondent from the EU countries (8%), while the dissatisfied young Ukrainians with their government proved to be above twice – every fifth citizen (21%). The number of the respondents from Ukraine, who pointed out at dissatisfaction with their government, makes 51%, and they form 26% among the European youth. The polled people, who could not definitely estimate their satisfaction with the national government (the assessment is 4,5 and 6 grades according to the 11-grade scale) make almost half the respondents from the EU countries (45%) and almost a quarter from Ukraine (23%). That is, greater uncertainty is inherent in the European youth in this matter and therefore they give more neutral grades (Chart 2). The satisfied youth from the EU with their national governments turned out to be six times more than the young respondents from Ukraine (19% and 3% respectively). The completely satisfied youth with their government form less than 1 per cent. The difference between the EU countries and Ukraine is not statistically significant.

Chart 2

Satisfaction with the national government, %					
11-grade scale	EU	UA	5-grade scale	EU	UA
entirely dissatisfied	8.00	21.80	entirely dissatisfied	8.00	21.80
1	4.90	11.70	dissatisfied	26.10	51.50
2	9.20	18.40			
3	12.00	21.40			
4	13.50	6.30	partly satisfied, partly dissatisfied	45.80	23.80
5	18.10	13.60			
6	14.10	3.40			
7	12.20	2.40	satisfied	19.50	2.90
8	6.00	0.50			
9	1.20	0.00			
completely satisfied	0.60	0.50	completely satisfied	0.60	0.50

How to be satisfied with the way democracy works in the country. According to the Institute of Sociology monitoring, the overwhelming majority of respondents declares that that they are not satisfied with the fact how democracy develops in Ukraine, though 69% of the polled people agree that just democracy is the best political regime for the country. Professor O. Shulha in good time observed: “In spite of the fact that the conscious active minority of Ukrainian citizens secured the preconditions for qualitative reforms in the field of democracy, it did not disturb the passive majority very much”. We can interpret low indices of satisfaction with the way democracy works in the country owing to the fact that democracy is, first of all, the power of people (demos), and, as it was mentioned above, the passive majority is not ready to be a valuable subject of democratic processes. This can also partly be extrapolated to the Ukrainian youth. But democraticness can be called “governance” which was associated with the transparent process of taking decisions with attracting all the members of a community¹. The facts of using the principles of effective governance namely frankness and transparency in taking decisions by the organs of the state

¹ Про врядування. Ресурсний центр ГУПТ. <http://coop.governance.org.ua/?page_id=5>.

power and local self-government, accountability to the community (which is a source of power) and attracting citizens to the process of taking decisions affirm democraticness of the process of governing in the state¹ (the dramatic effect of the situation is strengthened by the fact that Ukraine should simultaneously solve the complicated tasks: to overcome a lot of negative consequences of the authoritarian past, building up democracy, and at the same time to solve social and economic problems², but the hereditary from the Soviet times lack of responsibility sensation in citizens for the state of affairs in the country is a norm).

Analyzing the quantitative data, the difference in the answers concerning satisfaction with the democratic processes between the youth of Ukraine and the EU countries is too great. The respondents from the EU countries, who expressed categorical dissatisfaction with the way democracy works, proved to be less than 5%, and those ones, who pointed out to dissatisfaction – 16%. Among the Ukrainian respondents these indices made 14% and 48% correspondingly, that is the majority of polled young people in either case pointed out to dissatisfaction with the way how democracy works in Ukraine. The difference in the answers of those people, who indicated that they were satisfied with the way democracy work, is egregious: 36% among the Europeans and only 2.4% among Ukrainians.

Chart 3

Satisfaction with the way democracy works in the country, %					
11-grade scale	EU	UA	5-grade scale	EU	UA
entirely dissatisfied			entirely dissatisfied	4.3	14.6
1	2.6	16.15	dissatisfied	16.4	48.0
2	5.2	18.9			
3	8.6	12.6			
4	9.9	15.0	partly satisfied, partly dissatisfied	39.2	32.9
5	16.7	15.0			
6	12.6	3.9			
7	15.5	1.9	satisfied	36.2	2.4
8	14.6	0.0			
9	6.0	0.5			
completely satisfied	4.0	1.0	completely satisfied	4.0	1.0

The state of education in the country nowadays. The level of education influences the efficiency of new generation social integrity, its readiness for independent life and successful activity in the modern world. But it will be no news for anybody that the main problem for Ukrainian education remains its quality. According to the results of the sociological investigation “Higher education in Ukraine: students’ public opinion” the majority of the polled assessed the quality of higher education as 2.8 grades out of 5 (comparing with the investigation in 2011, this assessment was 3.5 grades)³.

Comparing the answers of the respondents from Ukraine and the EU countries, we ascertain that the number of the partly dissatisfied and completely dissatisfied with the state of education in the country nowadays is the largest just in Ukraine – three times more, in comparison with the answers of the EU countries respondents: 35% and 12% respectively who are not satisfied, and 6% and 2% correspondingly who expressed categorical dissatisfaction with education (Chart 4). The respondents who estimated the state of education in their countries as 4, 5, 6 grades, according to our scale, are *uncertain* – “both satisfied and dissatisfied” – there is almost no difference between them: 38% in the EU countries and 40% in Ukraine.

¹ Про врядування. Ресурсний центр ГУРТ. <http://coop.governance.org.ua/?page_id=5>.

² Латигіна, Н.А. (2008). Українська демократія сьогодні: спроби і помилки. *Гуманітарний вісник Запорізької державної інженерної академії*, вип. 34.

³ «Вища освіта в Україні: громадська думка студентів» (2015). Фонд «Демократичні ініціативи» ім. Лька Кучеріва, фірма «Юкрейніансоціолоджі сервіс». <<http://dif.org.ua/article/vishcha-osvita-v-ukraini-gromadska-dumka-studentiv>>.

Satisfaction with education in the country, %					
11-grade scale	EU	UA	5-grade scale	EU	UA
entirely dissatisfied	2.1	6.3	entirely dissatisfied	2.1	6.3
1	1.7	10.7	dissatisfied	12.9	35.0
2	4.3	7.8			
3	6.9	16.5			
4	10.3	13.1	partly satisfied, partly dissatisfied	38.0	40.3
5	13.8	18.0			
6	13.9	9.2			
7	18.4	10.2	satisfied	42.8	16.6
8	15.6	4.9			
9	8.4	1.5			
completely satisfied	4.2	1.9	completely satisfied	4.2	1.9

The satisfied with the level of education in the country among the Europeans proved to be 42% and the completely satisfied – 4 per cent. Among the Ukrainian youth the indices are considerably less: 16% of those who are satisfied, and the completely satisfied make less than 2 per cent. The low indices of satisfaction with the state of education by our people can be explained by many faults which are intrinsic to the educational surroundings: the material and technical basis condition (especially in provincial higher schools); the discrepancy between the education structure and the labour market needs; the low students' cultural level, their disinterest in qualitative education; the low quality of teaching and presence of plagiarism. All this cannot compete with the European education, where it is even very difficult to make a contract for university studies. According to the Democratic Initiative Fund inquiry, the absolute majority of students – 87% – considers the problem of improving higher education to be important, 36% of them refer this social task to urgent ones.

The national system of higher education of Ukraine, that started its formation since 1991, inherited a lot of features characteristic of the Soviet system of education, but at the same time it should be admitted that the mentioned national system is a reflection of its own evolution at this period. Of course, the voting for the Laws of Ukraine “On Education” (1996, 2017), “On Higher Education” (2002, 2014) and Ukraine's joining the Bologna Process (2005)¹ made a considerable influence on the system of higher education of Ukraine. The substantial hesitations (from the frank striving for imitation and the elementary attaching), typical of the state educational policy, were the reason of changes in the attitude to the integration with the European space of higher education². From 2010 till 2014 a good few of right pro-European slogans were proclaimed and the necessity of essential changes in the field of higher education was declared, but at the same period hindering the voting for a new legislation concerning higher education, further centralization in managing this branch and bureaucracy of many processes in higher school were observed. At this period we can bravely certify the lack of practical steps in reforming higher education and effective struggle with negative phenomena in the educational sphere. Moreover, the mass protests and revolutionally events of 2013-2014 were, to a great extent, caused by the disorder in the system of education. In March 2014 the direction of the educational policy development of Ukraine reoriented itself towards the European direction. The determinant features of the new orientation in the system of education became the refusal of out-of-date and harm normative acts, the changes in the system of accreditation and licensing as well as the change of the way of thinking from declarativeness to a concrete activity, from non-publicity to frankness, from centralization to autonomy.

¹ Закон про вищу освіту 2014 (Верховна Рада України). Офіційний веб-сайт Верховної Ради України. <<http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1556-18>>.

² Євроінтеграційний поступ системи вищої освіти України: нові можливості чи нові проблеми? (2009). Віче. <<http://www.viche.info/journal/1594/>>.

Trust in the country's parliament. According to the survey, carried out by the Democracy Initiatives Fund by the end of 2016, the balance of trust in the government among the Ukrainian population makes 55%. But during the last three years the complete distrust level increased from 28% to 36% (through it should be mentioned that in 2015 the number of respondents, who distrusted the government, formed 40%) among the adult population of Ukraine in general.

Chart 5

Trust in the country's parliament, %					
11-grade scale	EU	UA	5-grade scale	EU	UA
I don't trust at all	8.8	37.9	I don't trust at all	8.8	37.9
1	4.3	17.0	I don't trust	21.4	43.7
2	7.2	14.1			
3	9.9	12.6			
4	10.8	8.7	both I trust and don't trust	42.1	16.0
5	17.5	6.8			
6	13.8	0.5			
7	14.1	1.9	I trust	25.9	1.9
8	8.9	0.0			
9	2.9	0.0			
I trust completely	1.8	0.5	I trust completely	1.8	0.5

Concerning the issue of the youth's trust in the country's parliament, the results of our research showed the following (Chart 5). The high indices of just the Ukrainian youth's distrust in the parliament are sufficiently expected – 43% do not trust in it and 37% do not trust in it at all, while among the European youth these indices make 21% and 8% respectively. However, to our mind, one should pay attention to the *index of uncertainty* – 42% of the polled Europeans expressed both trust and distrust, while there were 16% among the Ukrainian young people. A quarter of the respondents from the EU countries (25%) trust in their own parliament, and only 2 per cent – from Ukraine. The difference between the respondents from Ukraine and the EU countries, who expressed complete trust in the country's parliament, is not statistically significant.

Conclusions

1. The indices, characterizing satisfaction or dissatisfaction with life as a whole both in Ukraine and in the EU, are practically analogical, which affirm the constancy of the number of the representatives of marginality (perhaps, the marginal character of perceiving life) both in the EU (0.5% of the entirely dissatisfied and 12.9% of the completely satisfied) and in Ukraine (1% of the entirely dissatisfied and 10.2% of the completely satisfied). The one-and-a-half advantage of the EU concerning the sooner satisfied and the double advantage of Ukraine concerning the sooner dissatisfied look quite natural (taking into account the standard of living and opportunities).

2. 73.3% of the entirely dissatisfied and the dissatisfied with the national government in Ukraine and, in fact, the same 72% of the dissatisfied and the sooner dissatisfied in the EU affirm both critical attitude and impartiality of the young respondents.

3. In fact, the mirror advantage of the EU concerning the satisfied and completely satisfied with the state of education (42.8% in the EU against 16.6% in Ukraine) and the dissatisfied and the entirely dissatisfied with the state of education in the country (35.0% in Ukraine against 12.9% in the EU) affirms high requirements of young Ukrainians to the institution of education.

4. The critically high level of distrust in the country's parliament among the youth of Ukraine (37.9% do not trust at all and 43.7% do not trust) has no sense to compare the EU and Ukraine according to this index.

Summing up, we will point out that at this stage our country is not ready for a valuable integration with the European association, but the critical attitude of the respondents in assessing the institutions affirms some level of the formation of conceptions concerning the fact what our country should be to meet the criteria of a democratic European power.

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