

“Life chances” in the self-esteems of contemporary studentship: from the concept actualizing to the phenomenon measure

In the prevailing economic crisis, the transformation processes in the Ukrainian society take on a new "crisis" level in which a special significance of “uncertainty” and “risk” grows sheerly (W. Beck, A. Giddens, J. Zubok). Given the nature of social reality (macro)contexts, the researchers (P. Sztompka, M. Archer, V. Yadov) pay attention to an unspecified vector of social development. In this respect, activities of actors, who perceive and consider the social reality as a field of "life chances" implementation, are take on value. Under these conditions, social actors “subjectness” is a key factor in life strategies construction, so the category of "chances" is actualized.

In the framework of social reality (macro)contexts, contemporary studentship provides a particular significance due to a multitude of social roles "try on", acting as a subject of transformation processes (L. Sokuryanskaya, J. Zubok, I. Solomina), as a socio-cultural community, as future intellectuals potential, etc.

In foreign sociological discourse, "life chances" are researched within class approach, especially in the study of social mobility, when the “closed social structure” reduces the possibilities (chances) to promote. It is about an access to education, health, material rewards and status mobility. A. Giddens notes that life chances exert influence of essential class on our lives, but it does not determine life completely. The class division does not bind people to certain social positions in perpetuity, as stipulated by the previous system of stratification. Thus, the author underlines the significance of an achievement component of "life chances" as a category of the open stratification systems context.

According to our view, the ideas of W. Beck and R. Darendorf affect heuristic transformation of the nature of social inequality (as the basis of differentiation stratification and, consequently, the "life chances") and shift the focus of their research to Ukrainian sociological discourse. As it was mentioned, for instance, by A. Golikov "the institutionalized inequality becomes (or appears, in the case of so-called "new inequality") in routinely emerging and activist confirming (including legitimizing) interaction schemes [5, p. 54]. Thus, the author emphasizes the new quality of social inequalities in terms of social and cultural transformation in (post)soviet Ukrainian space and the need for adequate methodological study of the “new social inequalities”.

With this shift in society structuring it is not surprising that the thesis of postmodernism becomes urgent. It asserts replacement of "social structural categories (such as a class, gender, race and nation/ethnic group) for the categories of cultural institutionalized life styles" [3, p. 56]. This point is shared by O.Kutsenko, who notes that the basis of new social inequalities are the differences in the lifestyles, values, education which determine life chances" [4, p. 29].

The category "life chances" is heuristic in terms of the synthesis of macro and microsociological analysis, combines the influence of structures and the level of actor's individual action. Highlighting the experience of the "life chances" concept, we have worked out our own definition of the latter as *a set of possibilities (economic, cultural, social, political, legal, in particular), and the individual abilities, the realization of which by an individual and/or social group contributes to the achievement of life success /failure.*

Let's analyze the correlation between factors of students' self-esteems for life success and their level of academic achievement (table 1). The practice of successful studing in University determines the life chances of contemporary Ukrainian students, accumulates potential opportunities for business and professional competency development, the increment of intelligence, etc.

Based on the data from table 1, we observe the inverse dependence between the level of self-importance of the “influential friends, relatives” and “capital and property” indicators as factors of successful life and academic achievement effectiveness levels. Consequently, there are higher levels of students' academic success due to the less weight of these indicators (for example, only 35% of students with "excellent" continuous assessment indicated the importance of the “influential friends”, unlike

50% with the students who demonstrate “satisfactory” marks). Students with lower academic success are more likely to pin their hopes on objective factors. This fact signifies a lower level of “subjectness” of this student group (under “subjectness” we mean an essential quality of an actor (individual or a group), primarily manifested in social and creative activities). It should be pointed out that it goes only about some tendencies due to the underverification of obtained data distributions.

Table 1
The dependence between the relevant factors of students’ successful life and the level of academic achievement (in %)

	Only on “S”	On “4” and “S”	On “4”	On “4” and “3”	On “3”
Influential friends	35	35	43	48	0
Intellect	74	71	67	56	1
Luck	36	36	35	33	6
Professional level	49	44	38	33	9
Using of all means of goal achievement	19	23	27	33	9
“Business grip”	40	35	31	29	7
Capital, property	25	26	26	31	0
Appearance	5	5	6	6	

The direct correlation is observed with “intelligence”, “professional level”, “business grip” on the one hand, and the level of academic achievement, on the other. Thus, higher the level of academic achievement of students is, the more they appreciate the relevance of presented indicators. We refer these indicators to the subjective and practical factors conditioning “life chances”.

No connection has been observed concerning the level of academic performance and “luck” as a factor of successful life. As a result, the level of this alternative was equal to 36% among the students with the best and the worst academic results/performance. We interpret this situation as an indicator of hope to external circumstances, a lack of students’ confidence in their own chances, a partial reluctance to assume responsibility for their own life success/failure.

Working out the totals further research should be provided on the features of the “luck” factor and its relevance among contemporary Ukrainian students (due to the absence of the connection observed). This tendency can be interpreted in two ways: as a lack of students’ confidence in pursuing their own “life chances” and as a way to actualize the use of the “chance” concept in the context of contemporary Ukrainian realities.

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