

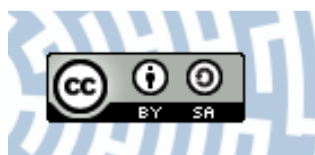


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Chapter 1

Theoretical and methodological basis of the research

URSZULA SWADŹBA

1.1 Economic awareness – definitional problems

What is the subject of the research that served as material for this publication is economic awareness. This very concept itself is embedded in a broader category of the so called social awareness. Defining this concept is usually difficult because one deals with multiple ways of understanding the concept of awareness. Latin may be helpful in shedding some light on the term of awareness – Latin *conscientia* is derived from *con* – “with” and *scientia* – “knowledge.” Accordingly, it signifies knowledge about something, the state of being aware of something, being conscious about something (DUBISZ, 2003, t. 3, 1595). Psychologists define awareness as the highest level of mental development characteristic of the human inner subjective state of realizing something, a state of vigil (REBER, 2000: 740). The notion of social awareness has been discussed by a number of researchers. Initially, the term was found applicable in dialectical materialism. In this system, social awareness is a philosophical category opposed to the social state and means the total mental sum of all the people who formed the community. Social awareness in this system refers to social being, which is being, in a general sense, a part of a superstructure. The concept of social awareness was used to define and discuss class awareness and devalue the false awareness of the bourgeoisie (MC LENAN, 1971).

In the field of sociology the issue of social awareness was developed by Emile Durkheim (SZCZEPAŃSKI, 1969: 316). In this context, a classically conceptualized society is not only a complex of interacting individuals, it is a reality of a higher order, an entity encompassing other, equipped with specific features. In his work, Durkheim put forward the concept of collective awareness, which he described as follows: “The set of beliefs and sentiments common for categories of average members of a given society that creates a defined system, which lives its own life; it can be called a common awareness. [...] This is something other than the individual consciousness, although realized only through the individual.”

(DURKHEIM, 1999: 104–105). Durkheim's collective consciousness operates in every society, it is an independent element of the cultural system and is realized through individual consciousness (RITZER, 2004: 136). Classic sociology pointed out the most important elements that exist in the minds of the people and which were then used in the definition of social awareness.

The modern definition of social awareness is an “interrelated and integrated content of the totality of the spiritual life, values, ideas, attitudes and beliefs characteristic of a given community, social group or society as a whole.” (OLECHNICKI, ZAŁĘCKI 2002: 215). Awareness defined in such a way concerns an already defined, rather narrow and specific area. Hence, class consciousness, as well as the categories of historical, group, professional, corporate, and national awareness(es) are by necessity defined and researched. Of these particularly the latter was subject to many sociological studies, due to the fact that it refers to a group that is very clearly distinguishable from other groups.

Economic awareness usually, as the adjective suggests, refers to the economy. In most cases when one encounters the term its definition is not presented, however, the concept is still being employed thus allowing empirical research. In Poland, research on economic awareness was, in fact, already conducted once after the demise of real socialism in the 80s but the systematic empirical research was only possible with the onset of transformation (KORALEWICZ, ZIÓLKOWSKI, 1990, GARDAWSKI, 1992). This research was conducted amongst representatives of one occupation only – the laborer. At a later stage the sample examined was expanded to include industry workers. The scope of the research tackled problems people were most concerned with those days. For example, it included the very acceptance of the market economy, support for actions stemming from maximizing profitability, such as dismissing unnecessary workers or liquidation of ineffective companies, acceptance of unemployment as a social phenomenon, or attitude towards foreign capital (GARDAWSKI, GILEJKO, 1997, GARDAWSKI, 2009: 246). The scope of analyzed variables connected with economic awareness was chiefly concerned with the evaluation of the then-present economic situation and its clear aim was to get to know the extent to which certain social categories of Poles accept them.

Other research on economic awareness also oscillated around the Polish society's acceptance of and adjustment to the conditions of market economy. The analyzed problems were as follows: various aspects of the economy functioning, the pace and direction of the economy's development, the rate of budget deficit, the economic impact of state and social justice, the role companies play in country development, the source of state and borough incomes, corporate social responsibility, consumer behavior, motivation for own business activity and the legitimization of the socio-economic system in a post-crisis period (KOLARSKA-BOBIŃSKA 2004, GIZA-POLESZCZUK, MARODY, RYCHARD 2000, MARODY 2007, ZAGÓRSKI, STRZESZEWSKI, 2000, ZAGÓRSKI 2009, KOŹMIŃSKI, ZAGÓRSKI 2011,

ZAGÓRSKI, KOŹMIŃSKI, MORAWSKI, PIOTROWSKA, RAE, STRUMIŃSKA-KUTRA 2015). The analysis of the society's economic awareness also covered the perceptions and image of business, which included not only the opinions on private businesses but also on their owners. Therefore, the spectrum of the tackled problems was very broad. The objective economic situation indicated in which direction the research on economic awareness will be undertaken, yet it showed little interest in defining and operationalizing the very concept.

Grażyna Krzyminiewska has attempted to define a very similar concept by exploring the economic culture of rural youth and its importance for the socio-economic development of rural areas (KRZYMINIEWSKA, 2010). For the needs of her research she defined the economic culture as consisting of: economic socialization, attitude towards money and saving, consumption, economic aspirations, assessment of social reality, value system, abilities, economic knowledge, attitude towards work and entrepreneurship (KRZYMINIEWSKA, 2010: 23). Because the author did her research among secondary school students, socialization was a very important contributing factor. Consequently, the author claims that socialization is essential in shaping human personality, as the value system thus created affects the assessment of social reality. It is through socialization that a young person creates one's own economic knowledge, which allows one to navigate the market economy (KRZYMINIEWSKA 2010: 24). In her later works, the author performs theoretical analyses of the economic culture, its components and usefulness in empirical research (KRZYMINIEWSKA, 2013: 31–73). While discussing the components of economic culture she points out their interrelatedness. The concept of economic awareness is kin to or even blurs with other concepts, such as economic mentality and economic culture. The author deals with this issue by explaining the relationships between them. "Both mentality and economic awareness without being identical concepts refer to the system of rules that are components of the culture that an entity (community) considers in the processing of information in society; these rules are the result of a broad social context in which the individual and the collective work. This means that economic culture is the superior term to which mentality and economic awareness refer, even if not in a direct way" (KRZYMINIEWSKA, 2010: 23).

Economic awareness is one of the elements of economic culture and our research is aligned with this understanding of the two. For the needs of the research, our own definition was espoused to test the younger generation, particularly students. This definition had to include components indicative of the economic attitudes of the younger generation, however, in fact, this social group as a whole has scarce work experience, while simultaneously usually shows high aspirations and a desire to succeed. Therefore, economic awareness of the younger generation, as we treated it, is to be understood as follows: It is a person's way of thinking and attitude to economic reality. To fully understand one's economic awareness the interview should cover such areas as: economic knowledge, value

system and economic aspirations, work and entrepreneurship, attitude towards wealth and poverty, attitude towards money and thriftiness, and consumption. Accordingly, we came up with a graphical model of economic awareness (see below).

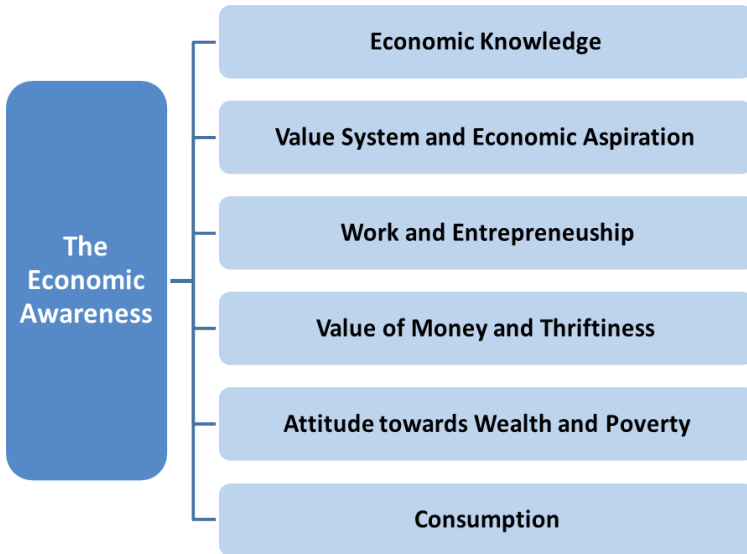


Figure 1.1. Model of economic awareness

SOURCE: Own.

1.2 Elements of economic awareness

1.2.1 Knowledge of economy

Every human, being a participant in social life must have economic knowledge. It is necessary for the daily operation and management of their or family money. Any decision to purchase, even everyday products, or a decision to increase household investment requires knowledge of the prices of a given product, its quality, and its manufacturer. Also, leaving the house and using various services (catering, hotel, tourism, transport) also requires knowledge of the economy to order to find the right service and not overpay. Therefore, everyday decisions and micro decisions have economic effects. As a rule, one accumulates this knowledge through daily socialization. A bigger problem, however, arises when one needs to use banking services (accounts, loans, deposits, bonds) and financial accounts (PIT), in these instances everyday knowledge often proves insufficient. Although these problems concern most people, not everyone has the

knowledge and competence to move with confidence in the world of economic terms. This is especially due to the fact that banks are constantly changing investment conditions. An even more difficult problem is the very orientation in the emerging economic problems including the global economic crisis, the scale of globalization, the role of corporations, and economic inequality (SAMUELSON, NORDHAUS, 2004; PODPORA, 2013).

Economic science proves really necessary, not only in order to function in daily life, but also to understand the problems of the contemporary world. The younger generation, especially students who will one day constitute the elite of the society, should have such knowledge. Economic knowledge affects one's decisions on work, entrepreneurial and activation behavior. It is also one of the crucial elements of a knowledge-based economy. This type of knowledge testifies to overall competence of a given civilization, and its lack may have an individual excluded from social life.

1.2.2 The system of values and economic aspirations

The issue of values is tackled by many teachings and but also numerous mundane, everyday truisms. Apart from the social sciences such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, pedagogy, ethnology, economics, the notion of value can also be found in mathematics and natural sciences, including logic and physics. In sociology two classical definitions of the term have been proposed by Clyde Kluckhohn and Franz Adler (ADLER, 1962, KLUCKHOHN, 1972). Still, they proved not suitable and of limited applicability to our research. Accordingly, we adopted broader definitions that were formulated by Polish authors: The word value "should include the following designations: 1. Subject respected or desired tangible or intangible goods; 2. Pattern or model for directing actions and behaviors of people; 3. Manifestation in relation of a subject to an object, which is an expression of its evaluation; 4. The criterion for assessing everything that can be evaluated from different points of view, e.g. scientific, utilitarian, ethical, aesthetic, praxeological, permitting the making of certain choices (SZTUMSKI, SZTUMSKA 2002: 16). Economic values (material) would also fit under this definition.

The problem is that some values are general and essential in nature (e.g. material values) whereas the others are less tangible and essential (e.g. the value of good food). Accordingly, one needs to distinguish between them, and the notion of a system of values comes in handy. The system of values is a set of values including the general values acquired during the process of socialization in a particular social system and in specific historical conditions. In addition to the general values that are of the autotelic system, the system includes instrumental values that make it possible to implement general values (SWADŹBA, 2012: 37).

This is particularly important for economic value. It can be a goal in itself (accumulation of wealth), but it can be also of instrumental character (possessing money to support the arts). This definition also points out that the values, including economic values, have been shaped in specific socio-economic conditions. In the case of our analysis of the four Visegrad countries it is important to be aware of the different historical experience before 1945, as well as the common heritage of real socialism. An important role in analyzing the system of values is the theory formulated by Ronald Inglehart (INGLEHART, 1977, INGLEHART et al. (Eds.), 2004). Inglehart started from and developed Abraham Maslow's theory of needs. According to this theory, human needs are hierarchical. The most important ones are the physiological needs, especially in conditions of limited possibilities. Next is the need for physical security, which is almost as important as the previous one. Only after satisfying these basic needs, will an individual strive for the fulfillment of other, intangible needs. According to the theory developed by R. Inglehart, the conclusion is as follows: with progressive economic prosperity comes a transition from materialistic values (ensuring safety and survival) to post-materialist values (emphasizing the need for self-expression and quality of life). This concept shows how the value system in each country is changing, what place is occupied by economic values and what the differences between countries are (SWADŹBA, 2013, SWADŹBA, 2014).

Understanding the value system is very important because it determines life aspirations. Sociologists treat aspirations as determined by the goals and hierarchies of values, an individual tends to strive for socially approved goals, which in turn allows a subjective sense of achievement and positive change within the accepted range of values that appear within and shape the course of social life (LALAK, PILCH, 1999: 24). Aspirations depend on self-recognition, self-esteem and self-determination of a given individual, but also on their social situation. If an individual accurately determines their social role, they will also be able to define their aspirations. It is worth noting that aspirations are long-term pursuits and goals the individual seeks to achieve, e.g. starting a family, acquiring a specific position or profession. Aspirations are therefore pursuits of an individual, motivated by a possibility of their realization. Sociologists focus on objects of aspirations. Economic aspirations may affect future material conditions of living determined specifically by wages, standard of living, accumulated goods, purchasing a house or an apartment, the brand of a car (ZAWADA, 2013). Fulfillment of material aspirations is most often associated with getting a properly paid employment and gaining financial independence from parents. Self-confidence in this area is linked with professional aspirations. Implementation of one's plans, hard work and setting new challenges for oneself are factors determining life success and the fulfillment of aspirations.

1.2.3 Work and entrepreneurship

Work and the society's attitude towards work are crucial elements of economic success. The notion of work has been a source studied by scholars of many fields such as praxeology, economics, philosophy and Catholic social teaching. The sociological definition of work draws attention to the social aspects, such as aspirations, attitudes, structure and culture of particular groups. What is an important element is the integration of a group while working, resulting in specific professional roles, transferred to another plane of social life: "Work is a social activity, professional and non-professional, focused on meeting the needs of people. In the course of performing their work, individuals coordinate their behavior and come together in cooperation. Through the process of working, the structure of the group is created and integration process starts. In connection with doing the work, the group members develop values and standards" (SWADŹBA, 2001: 22). Work in this sense would have a functional character and this understanding applies to both professional and non-professional work. The subjective factor at work is very important, because what constitutes a job for someone, it does not for another. In relation to work different assessments can be formulated, of which three types can be distinguished: utilitarian, emotional (aesthetic or moral) and hedonistic (PSZCZOŁOWSKI, 1966: 7–10). In the case of the first type, the usefulness of work is emphasized. Work generally provides wealth for societies as due to work people make money for their livelihood and this fosters positive work evaluations. Positive evaluation will involve work giving satisfaction and pleasure (hedonistic evaluation), but may also pertain to its moral values. People who work are perceived in a more positive way than the unemployed. Negative assessment often concerns hard work, giving displeasure and dissatisfaction.

Sociological studies on work often focus on its value. Work is usually a positive value due to its existential aspects, but also thanks to its role in self-realization and the fulfillment of one's creative needs. The analysis of the results of the research on the value of work, set among other values, in the three Visegrad countries – Poland, The Czech Republic and Slovakia, revealed both similarities and differences (SWADŹBA, 2014). The similarity lies in crystallizing the value of family and work at the top of the value system. These two constitute the axiological axis of the system in the three analyzed societies. Work takes the second most important place in the system of the three national communities. The difference is shown in ascribing greater meaning to work as an existential value by Slovak and Polish societies compared to Czech society. In turn, the Polish society attaches lower significance to free time (ludic value) than the Czechs and Slovaks do. This means that the Czech society – the wealthiest in this group of countries – attaches greater importance to the post-materialist values, while the Polish society to the more materialistic ones (SWADŹBA, 2014: 107).

Entrepreneurship is a great driving force of economic development. The development of entrepreneurship is understood as encouragement for initiative and creation of conditions for running a business and contributing to the increase in the level of economic development (DRUCKER, 1992). Working for oneself as well as running a business are not fully utilized as a way of boosting economic growth and creating new jobs. Individual activity and entrepreneurship, i.e. business activity of individuals, may allow one to check the suitability of new services and contribute to economic development (KOZEK, 2004: 133–165). The classical theory of entrepreneurship was developed and perpetuated in literature by Joseph Schumpeter, who saw the entrepreneur as a person characterized by the creative activity of developing new concepts (SCHUMPETER, 1962). Within such a framework, change and the ability to adapt are the natural attributes of an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship is connected directly with the entrepreneur who in a creative and innovative way solves new problems and skillfully uses emerging opportunities and occasions and flexibly adapts to new conditions. Entrepreneurship can also be understood as the ability to create a business, carrying out actions towards its development, through the organization, management and introduction of new technologies. In this case, such features as: a strong ability to anticipate, moderate risk tolerance, flexibility, creativity, independence, ability to solve problems, the need for achievement, leadership, and ability to work hard are essential (PIECUCH, 2010: 39). This understanding of entrepreneurship encompasses also any actions aimed at elevating one's standard in life, such as raising one's qualifications, migration for work in the country and abroad (permanent and seasonal), and any other activity undertaken in order to get a better job.

Sociological studies conducted in Poland show that among all the respondents there is a common belief that the current conditions for doing business are good (STRZESZEWSKI, 2010). Such an opinion prevails over the contrary opinion. The studies have also shown that nearly half of the respondents claim to have a predisposition to work on their own as entrepreneurs (STRZESZEWSKI, 2010) These results provide a good omen for the development of entrepreneurship. Other relatively recent studies suggest that it is mainly young people who think of running their own company, regardless of gender (approx. 38% of the respondents under 30 years of age) (SWADŹBA, CEKIERA, 2015). The positive assessment of one's suitability for running a business is in most cases related to a higher level of education.

1.2.4 The value of money and thriftiness

Money, although associated with human economic activity, also has social significance. Economists consider money as a medium of economic exchange

governed by denominated prices and values ascribed to all commodities. As the currency circulates anonymously between people and countries, it facilitates trade. In other words, it constitutes a tangible or intangible measure that can be exchanged for goods or services. It is a legally defined means of payment that can reflect, store and transmit the value ascribed to the real social product. In addition to that, certain attitudes and emotions are connected with money, which has been widely discussed in classic sociology (SIMMEL, 1997: 210). For some people money is a positive phenomenon, its abundance an indicator of a happy life, success and social prestige. On the other hand, others treat money in negative terms, seeing it as the root of all evil. Such differences in attitudes towards money affect many patterns of human behaviors, such as effort undertaken in order to get money, efficiency of work, willingness to donate for charity, willingness to save or to borrow, conscientious paying of taxes, breaching ethical standards in relation to the collection of money, to name a few (TYSZKA, ZALEŚKIEWICZ, 2004: 180). A number of studies have been conducted on the attitudes towards money. According to some of these, attitudes to money are comprised of three main elements: 1) The emotional element: money is interpreted as something either good or bad, 2) The cognitive element: people perceive the link between money and their success, and enjoyment of respect and freedom, 3) The behavioral element; people often feel the need to plan expenditures (TANG, GILBERT, 1995).

The latter approach is particularly important, as it is associated with thriftiness. Thriftiness can be considered a complex behavior, not a single act. It can be explained by economic variables, because it includes both the perception of future needs, as well as creating a certain insurance for the future (WARNERYD, 2004). Caution in spending money and thriftiness characterize individuals who carefully plan their financial future and control their financial situation. Sociological studies show that opinions on the issue of thriftiness are to a great extent determined by the living conditions of the respondents. Those who are less wealthy and know that they have shortcomings in meeting current needs are less likely to save than more wealthy respondents (BADORA, 2012). Also, younger respondents, having a longer life expectancy in front of them, more often see a purpose in saving than the older respondents do. Similarly, in the case of loans – it is the younger respondents who are more often likely to see and determine their profitability.

1.2.5 Attitudes to poverty and wealth

Attitudes towards poverty and wealth are closely related to attitudes towards money. Poverty and wealth have always intrigued people: wealth as a matter of dreams and desires, poverty as a state of affairs one would like to avoid. Wealth

is a visible sign of success, while poverty – a sign of failure. The existence of inequalities between individuals and groups is both an economic, and a social problem. This is related to the issue of justice, which is an ethical notion. Economists believe that the demand for equality is impossible to satisfy if economic growth is allowed (LANDES, 2005). Income differences are a natural feature and product of market economy. The only problem is whether these differences are socially acceptable and what attitude towards poverty and wealth predominates in a given society. Consequently, the question arises how to reap the benefits of the spendings of the rich for the benefit of the poor and to what extent the poor can be considered culpable as opposed to being victims of systemic inequality.

Income differences tend to have positive and negative effects (TUSIŃSKA, 2013: 97–116). What can be considered negative is that efforts to reduce income inequalities can weaken incentives for work and saving. High rates of taxation contribute to the development of the shadow economy. Individuals with higher earnings will be less inclined to develop their business activities, which results in a decline in employment. Differentiation between the rich and the poor based on material situation leads to social conflicts. In turn, the fact that highly educated workers are generally paid better than the low-qualified labor force could be considered a positive effect of this inequality. This consequently motivates individuals to get education and to develop. Entrepreneurial people given the possibility of high earnings will be more willing to venture and invest, which stimulates economic development.

Attitudes towards the rich and the poor are full of contradictions. On the one hand, enterprising people who can make money are admired; on the other hand, they are envied. Considering the ambivalent social attitude towards wealth, a great majority of the respondents do not perceive it as a purpose worth pursuing. Hence, also the attitudes towards the rich are full of ambiguity (BUKOWSKI, 2003: 183). Among the reasons why the rich are widely respected, individual achievements are listed first. Despite that, rich people as such do not enjoy social recognition because the respondents believe that they are people who exalt themselves (BUKOWSKI, 2003: 182). The binary vision of wealth is based on the belief that the wealth of some contributes to the poverty of others. The poor in some societies differ in terms of the living conditions from the poor in another society (RAWLS, ZWARTHOED, 2012). In rich societies, it is painful to admit that increasing prosperity is surrounded by spreading poverty. There exist two basic positions in terms of people's understanding of the reasons for which some are poor. The first refers to the rights and obligations of individuals, and states that the people themselves are responsible for their fate, and if you are poor, then it is at your own request. The second states that the causes of poverty are external and should be sought in macro-system structure and its functioning (WILSON, 1991).

1.2.6 Consumption

Consumption is defined as the process of meeting needs of a primary as well as of a higher order that appeared along with the development of market exchange. The concept of consumption comes from the Latin *consumptio*, which means “consumption, destruction”. This Latin meaning shows consumption as wearing irreversibly something that will not come back (DUBISZ, 2003: 219). The analysis of consumption primarily concerns economists, for whom it constitutes a stage in the process of economy and relies on the absorption or wear of goods and services to meet the needs. Sociologists also consider consumption an important social process. Consumption is a process consisting of actions and human behavior aimed at meeting needs directly and indirectly. Accordingly, one can discuss consumption as consumer behavior of individuals and groups, involving the awareness and assessment of their needs, recognition of the weight and the decisions of their satisfaction, handling of the acquired funds and their consumption. In this case, consumption is also called consumer behavior in the market, not only in the household (SZCZEPAŃSKI, 1981: 133). In terms of this process one should also take into account the consumer’s social status, the determinants of psychological and sociological positions, lifestyle and social standing.

Consumption is also affected by the value system acquired during primary and secondary socialization. The high position of material values in the Western values hierarchy indicates the dominance of consumption in the lifestyle typical of the Occident civilization. The consumer in a consumer society cannot experience boredom (BAUMAN, 2006). There is a new consumer morality based on hedonism and individualism. Consumers are largely focused on pursuing the experience of pleasure and seeking pleasure in life. The motto of the consumer is that buying expensive things brings experiencing unspeakable happiness, thus expensive consumption is good consumption (BYŁOK, 2013). Consumers in developed societies commonly use credit cards when shopping, so they can make purchases without thinking about debt.

Sociological studies conducted in Poland, a member of the V4 group, show that the country’s post-Communist society is not consumerist. This is due, in part, to the fact that it is still a developing society. Consumers often shop on a budget and are inclined to buy only what they need, and buy it infrequently (WĄDOŁOWSKA, 2011). Therefore, certain distinct types of consumers can be listed: Type 1: Traditional; Type 2: Transformational; Type 3: Consumer; Type 4: Consumerist (SWADŹBA, 2011: 178). The situation changes with the natural shift of generations. The young generation of today, aged 18 to 29 years is the first generation subject to such a strong influence of the ideology of consumption. Young Poles are active consumers who treat money largely as a means to an end, which is a colorful life. Their style of consumption can be considered

more spontaneous and less snooty than the style of the elderly. This attitude is manifested, among others, in the fact that they like to satisfy their cravings, and that shopping itself pleases them. For this age group money is less a determinant of prestige than for elderly (FAŁĘCKA, 2013).

1.3 The hypothesis

The theoretical assumptions of individual elements of economic awareness have been sketched above. What will be the subject of our research is the economic awareness of the younger generation of the V4 countries, namely of the university students. On the basis of the accumulated theoretical knowledge, reported test results and their sociological overviews allow formulating a hypothesis that will be verified in the course of the research.

1. We assume that young people have moderate economic knowledge. Sometimes they do not understand basic economic concepts, however they have a sound economic knowledge concerning everyday life.
2. We assume that students obtain financial resources supporting them from their parents. Still, most of them work, some casually during the academic year, or during the holidays at home or abroad. The money earned from this work is treated as an additional source of income.
3. We assume that for the younger generation work is an important value. Unemployment is not accepted. Work has value, not just existential, but also perceived in terms of creativity and self-realization.
4. We assume that the young generation is characterized by activity and entrepreneurship. Success in life is defined by young people as material stabilization, a good job and a happy family. In their life plans, self-employment and starting their own businesses are taken into account.
5. We assume that among the younger generation there is a lack of acceptance for large differences in terms of individuals' wealth. Wealth and social inequalities as such are accepted, because they contribute to economic growth.
6. We assume that young people have an ambivalent attitude to money. On the one hand, they think there are more important things than wealth, but on the other hand they attach considerable importance to money; they need it to have a pleasant leisure time. They acknowledge, however, that there is a purpose in saving.
7. We assume that young people are active consumers. They like to satisfy their cravings, and shopping pleases them. When making purchases, greater consideration is given to the quality than to brand and price. Consumption, however, is not the only value for them.

1.4 Methodological basis of the research

To verify the hypotheses of the above, sociological research was conducted in 2015 and 2016. Firstly, a common questionnaire survey was prepared in English and then translated into national languages. A pilot study was conducted in Poland and a questionnaire was adjusted based on the results of this research.

In every country groups of students were selected to take part in the research using an auditor survey technique during the months from April to June 2015. The research was based on first and second level/cycle students from four distinct fields of studies:

1. Economics and management,
2. Technical, sciences or medical,
3. Social studies,
4. Humanities.

The research was conducted in four V4 countries – Katowice, Poland (University of Economics in Katowice, University of Silesia in Katowice and Silesian University of Technology), Olomouc and Ostrava, Czech Republic (Palacky University in Olomouc, University of Ostrava and Technical University of Ostrava), Nitra, Slovakia (Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra and Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra), Godollo, Hungary (Szent Istvan University in Godollo). The surveys were conducted by employees, financed from the grant and also by the employees of The Department of Sociology of Ostrava University in the Czech Republic. In Poland 413 surveys were conducted and 400 of them were directed for further analysis, in Slovakia – 396 (387 of them were directed for further analysis), in Hungary – 375 (368 of them directed for further analysis). In the Czech Republic in the first stage of research 349 surveys were conducted by the employees of The Department of Sociology of Olomouc University, but some were incomplete. A number of employees decided not to do any further analysis of this material and gave up on writing any chapters for this book, 90 surveys were conducted in October and November 2016 by the employees of The Department of Sociology of University in Ostrava. In the Czech Republic 400 surveys were directed for further analysis. On the whole, 1555 surveys from four V4 countries were conducted and directed for further analysis.

The collected empirical material was encoded and statistically analyzed using the SPSS program. Four statistical bases have emerged for further analysis: Polish, Czech, Slovakian and Hungarian. The coordinator of this project divided the topics so that each of the authors analyzed the one that interested them. Each author personally made their own calculations and analysis of the parts of the research they were responsible for. These will be presented in the tables or graphs (in percentage data) along with the correlations with

chi-square and Cramer's V. Each of the authors had the task of elaborating on their topic cross-sectionally, taking into account similarities and national differences. In the summary, the authors attempted at a synthetic discussion of the results of their analyses. The results of this work are presented in the chapters that follow.