INTRODUCTION

The research *Youth in the Borderlands of Central-East Europe* is an attempt to answer the question concerning functioning of youth in peripheral locations, which impose limits connected with their life chances.

Youth as a sociological category are located in the margin of social structure (Giddens, 2001) and have just begun the process of entering adulthood, which in conditions of social risk is longer (Beck, 1992). The period of attending schools is extending, more and more youth take up studies and upon graduating they still want to continue their education. The period of looking for a job after finishing formal education is extending as well. Job becomes unsteady, earnings are low, hence youth are more and more often called *precariat* (Standing, 2011). The age of getting married and giving birth to a first child is shifting as well. Youth more often choose living alone, and if they decide to enter a formal relationship, they enter it after graduating from a university and finding a job. In general, the situation of youth is becoming more difficult and it is stressed that the young generation will not have a better life standard in comparison with their parents, as it used to be so far (Stiglitz, 2012).

Such are current trends and the results of globalization. The standing of the young generation in borderlands where negative effects of globalization in the form of increasing inequalities may be far more harmful to youth (Długosz, 2016) sparks interest connected with the aforementioned phenomena. Borderlands are treated as peripheries located far from their centres. They are usually developed to a lesser extent in socio-economic terms, unemployment is higher, infrastructure is worse, income lower and emigration higher. The aforementioned unfavorable conditions for development may to a great extent generate anomie (Merton, 1968) and have impact on life strategies taken by youth in borderlands. In other words, by paying attention to different aspects of functioning of youth in borderlands makes the research focused on the “borderland effect” or rather “borderlands effects”. This effect consists in the fact that specific conditions in which societies from borderlands function (culture contact, diffusion, proximity of the border and making use of it) shape social personalities which are different from the ones of individuals inhabiting different areas of a given country.

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It is assumed that a borderland is an area, a territory located near the border or far from the center, in which socio-cultural contacts between two or more nations or ethnic groups take place. As a result of these contacts, shaping of a new man and his culture (cultures) in terms of norms, values, attitudes, economic activities, migrations (Sadowski, 1995, p.13).

While analyzing the society functioning in borderlands, one should bear in mind two issues. First of all, the phenomena in borderlands are specific and autonomous in comparison to the processes taking place in centres of bordering societies. In such a situation a borderland is treated as a clearly separate quality, and the reasons for processes which take place there may be - and should be – placed within the borderland. Secondly, borderlands are mainly or to a great extent parts of more extensive wholes and even though their certain individuality and the fact that different processes take place there is not negated, the fundamental reasons are located outside the borderland. Nonetheless, these paradigms shall not be treated in terms of competition, but complementarity (Babiński, 1997, p.51).

The articles presented in the following issue of “Youth in Central and Eastern Europe. Sociological Studies” derive from research initiated by Piotr Długosz who is also the author of methodological concept for the research. On the basis of the previous research conducted with Svetlana Szczudło in Polish-Ukrainian and Ukrainian-Polish borderlands in 2012 (which were in a sense the pilot of the project) more extensive research was carried out in other borderlands in Poland, Ukraine and Hungary in 2015. The main aim of the project was to compare youth’s daily lives in borderlands (Zielińska, 2003) and determine to what extent youth on both sides of the border are similar in terms of functioning in a similar socialising space and to what extent their values, aspirations, attitudes, identity, lifestyle are different in terms of socio-cultural factors of the inhabited country.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all the participants of the research for engaging in the project with hope to broaden knowledge about youth living in different parts of the borderland. In the conditions of shortages in resources which might be used to develop these areas, youth may be the only factor which gives real chances to develop these areas. Thanks to innovativeness, dynamics, aiming at changes (Mannheim, 2011) they are the driving force which can be used for modernisation and integration of this area with other regions by the society.

What are the youth living in the researched borderlands like, what are their lives like, what are the problems they have to deal with, do they in majority become homogenized because of globalization or to what extent their strategies are differentiated by the type of a borderland – these are the questions to which the authors of the articles presented in the following issue would like to find answers to.
The conducted research was initiated by the author of the following article. The research was carried out in 2015 in the western borderland in Zielona Góra and Słubice – a border town in the Lubuskie voivodeship. Youth from Racibórz in the Silesian voivodeship in the southern borderland, located on the border with Czech Republic also underwent the research. Other borderlands are located in the area of Podkarpacie voivodeship. The southern borderland on the border with Slovakia is represented by youth from Krosno, Rymanów, Dukla. Rzeszów – the capital city of Podkarpacie voivodeship where approximately two thousand students from Ukraine study is also included in the research. The research covers the whole eastern borderland which is in the area of Podkarpacie voivodeship as well. All the schools from Lubaczów to Przemyśl, Ustrzyki Dolne, Lesko and Sanok were surveyed. On the other side of the border in the Polish-Ukrainian borderland, youth in Drohobych and its vicinities which belong to the Lviv Oblast underwent the research as well. The survey was also conducted in Uzhhorod, which is the capital city of the Zakarpattia Oblast. The city is located in the Ukrainian-Slovak and the Ukrainian-Hungarian borderland. The research was also conducted in Kharkiv, the capital city of Kharkiv Oblast in the Ukrainian-Russian borderland. The last place where the survey was conducted is Nyíregyháza – a city with comitatus rights in the North-East part of Hungary, the capital city of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg comitatus. It is located in the Slovak-Ukrainian-Romanian borderland.

Finally, it is necessary to mention particular contributors to the project. The manager of the whole project and the initiator of the research was Piotr Długosz. The research of the eastern borderland was conducted by Piotr Długosz in the East European State Higher School in Przemyśl. Hubert Kotarski from the University of Rzeszów, who conducted the research in the Polish-Slovak borderland and Rzeszów joined the research. Thanks to the funds from the University of Rzeszów the surveys for Drohobych were printed and the data from the questionnaires from Drohobych, Uzhhorod and Nyíregyháza was obtained. In the West Borderland in Zielona Góra the research was carried out by Joanna Róg-Ilnicka and Agnieszka Urbaniak. The survey in Słubice was conducted by Beata Halicka and Magdalena Abraham-Defenbach from the Polish-German Research Institute of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder). The research in Racibórz was carried out by Jan Róg from State Higher School of Vocational Education in Racibórz. The field work in Drohobych was led by Svetlana Szczudło from Pedagogical University. The research in Uzhhorod was carried out by Natalia Varha from the Uzhhorod National University. The survey in Hungary was conducted by Klara Kowacz from the University of Debrecen. The research in Kharkiv was carried out by Ludmila Sokuriańska from the National University in Kharkiv.
BIBLIOGRAPHY