

they are joined by security, conformity, and conservation. This reinforces the contradictory nature of the categorical and dimensional value models.

## CONCLUSION

This study was designed to track changes in the importance and hierarchy of fundamental individual values among Bulgarian students aged 18-29 on the basis of the Schwartz Value Survey. Students were surveyed in 1995, 2005, and 2015 during three different phases of the historic transition to democracy in the country after the fall of communism in 1989. Youths of this age are of particular interest as a target group insofar as examining the period of emerging adulthood reveals the complex initiation of young people into the adult world as well as the psychological mechanisms of their adaptation within the macro-social framework.

The mathematical and statistical analysis we have conducted shows that, from a long-term perspective, both individually and collectively oriented value categories, dimensions, and interests have grown in the direction anticipated. Stated otherwise, the new student generations, in comparison with their predecessors, appreciate both individual and collective values to a greater extent. This can be viewed as a step towards overcoming the crisis of values in society that is consistent with global trends in value change and accords with the life strategies of emerging adults. In addition, the study indicates that collective interests have grown more intensively, coming to take precedence over individual interests in 2015. This is due primarily to conformity and conservation. This finding is likely a compensatory response to a lack of commonly shared social values in the difficult and uncertain conditions of life in Bulgaria.

However, a closer look at the data concerning value priorities reveals that students today prefer goals related to personal well-being (self-direction, achievement, and hedonism) and to the welfare of those within their inner circles (security, conformity, and benevo-

lence), rather than goals related to the welfare of society and nature (universalism). The ambivalent motivational complex of individual and collective perceptions formed at the level of the categorical and dimensional organization of the value system most probably reflects contradictory processes in a society in transition that is marked by an apparently increasing social distance from the modern civic ideal.

In summary, one may say that in spite of the aggravated anticipation of democratic principles, which are still new to Bulgarian society, emerging adults, particularly 18-29 year-old students, comprise the great hope of the Bulgarian people in their effort to attain national unity and prosperity by building political, economic, and cultural elites of professionals with new moral and personal characteristics.

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