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RESULTS OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY IN THE 5TH ROUND – EVALUATION OF QUALITY OF LIFE   (PART 1)[2]

Summary. The article presents empirical results of the 5th round of a sociological research carried out in 2010 as a part of an international project European Social Survey. The results refer to the inhabitants of the Slovak Republic. Particularly, it focuses on subjective evaluation of quality of life by expressing the rate of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with social life (satisfaction with the state of democracy, economy, education, health services and with the government of the Slovak Republic).

The primary aim of the contribution is to provide technical public with empirical research of social-scientific character with an intention to 'optimize' technique and human science and to contribute to the synthesis of sciences.

Keywords. European Social Research, quality of life, social sphere.

WYNIKI EUROPEJSKIEGO SONDAŻU SPOŁECZNEGO NA PODSTAWIE PIĄTEJ EDYCJI – OCENA JAKOŚCI ŻYCIA NA SŁOWACJI (CZĘŚĆ 1)

Streszczenie. Artykuł przedstawia empiryczne wyniki 5. edycji badań socjologicznych przeprowadzonych w latach 2009-2010 w ramach międzynarodowego projektu: Europejski sondaż społeczny dotyczący mieszkańców Republiki Słowackiej. Konkretnie poświęca uwagę subiektywnej ocenie jakości życia poprzez wyrażenie stopnia zadowolenia / niezadowolenia z życia społecznego (zadowolenie ze stanu demokracji, ekonomii, edukacji, opieki zdrowotnej oraz działania rządu Republiki Słowackiej).

Głównym celem artykułu jest udostępnienie środowiskom technicznym empirycznych wyników o charakterze naukowo-społecznym w celu „zoptymalizowania" techniki i humanistyki oraz przyczynienia się do syntezy nauk.

Słowa kluczowe. Europejskie badania socjologiczne, jakość życia, strefa społeczna.

1. INTRODUCTION

At present time, under the influence of changes in Middle and Eastern Europe which have distinctively affected the social development in Slovakia, is a frequently discussed topic the question of quality of life, welfare, health and satisfaction of individuals, i.e. good life and

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[2] The article is an outcome of the 5th round of an international all-European project ESS (European Social Survey) carried out in 2008-2010 referring to research data of the Slovak Republic,

good society.

An all-European project, European Social Survey (ESS), deals with these issues. The project does research into all-society aspects of life in the countries involved in the research. The research lasted ten years (2001-2010) and was carried out every two years in five research rounds. The possibility to study development trends in a social sphere within the project of ESS is based on meeting two elementary requirements: repeated measurements and intercultural comparisons. Slovakia took part in the second and third round of the project. The country met strictly checked criteria set by the organizers and empirical research on a representative sample[3] was carried out.

The contribution presents research findings of the fifth round of the ESS project and it informs on how Slovaks perceived and evaluated the selected indices of the quality of life, i.e. how they evaluated life satisfaction in the social and private sphere at the time the research was carried out (2010).

The primary aim of the contribution is to provide technical public with empirical findings of social-scientific character with an intention to 'optimize' technique and humanities, to dismantle long-lasting mutual isolation and to contribute to a necessary synthesis of both types of sciences[4].

2. METHODS

One of the ways how to measure subjective indices of the quality of life is to monitor subjective satisfaction with the quality of everyday life. In analyses, we focus on the mediate evaluation of the indices, i.e. through respondents' scores.

Within subjective indices of quality of life (taking into account the methods used by USS) we focused on the research into the satisfaction with the quality of life in two spheres of everyday life – in the social and the private sphere. Particularly, we monitored the extent of satisfaction with conditions applied in selected spheres of the social life (economy, politics, democracy, education, health care).

Our aim was to find out the extent of importance of the presently evaluated question on quality of life as well as to observe the overall rate of satisfaction/dissatisfaction. We also studied a mutual relationship of the examined indices of quality of life.

Indices of social satisfaction were determined by six questions used in methods (five questions focused on social satisfaction).

All questions applied numerical bipolar scale from 0 (absolute dissatisfaction) to 10 (absolute satisfaction), which means that values 0-4 expressed a negative rate of evaluation with corresponding features, values 6-10 expressed a positive rate of the evaluation. Numerical value 5 expressed average evaluation, which means that the respondent did not express the rate of evaluation (in the sense of bipolar evaluation).

The overall index (average middle values) of the rate of social satisfaction (considering all five items of social satisfaction) expressed the rate of satisfaction with the state of the society.

Considering the continuous scale type, the results were checked by parametric tests of significance on the level of importance $p \leq 0.05$. Presented data refer to the number of respondents responding to relevant items (valid percent).

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[3] Research sample of Slovaks in the 2nd round N=1512,3rd round N=1766,4th round N=1810,5th round N=1856,
[4] It has been done so for the third time pursuant to resolution approved by participants of the 8th International Scientific-technological Conference "Optimization of mechanical systems and equipment" hold in October 13th-16th 2009 in The High Tatras.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Satisfaction with the state of the society

In analyses we concentrate on five items evaluating social sphere in five areas: state of economy (E), government (G), democracy (D), education (E) and health services (HS).

As far as statistic characteristic is concerned, the first thing to focus on was to find out the middle value and the rate of variability of the scores of the studied indices. Table 1 shows the average (M), standard deviation (SD) and number of respondents (N).

Table 1

Satisfaction with the state of the society

	M	SD	N
How are you satisfied with the present state of economy in Slovakia?	3,55	2,08	1801
How are you satisfied with the work of the Slovak government?	3,56	2,22	1790
How are you satisfied with the way democracy works in Slovakia?	4,05	2,15	1795
How are you satisfied with the state of education in Slovakia?	5,06	2,22	1755
What do you think about the health services in Slovakia?	3,76	2,38	1842

In table one we can see that the average of respondents' scores referring to the four items (E,G,D,HC) spreads in the negative part of the scale (between points 3,5, and 4).

The item evaluating education (E) in Slovakia is in the middle of the responding scale (5). Respondents expressed rather dissatisfaction with the state of economy, government, health services and democracy in Slovakia (in ascending order). Most negatively evaluated are the following areas: economy and government (almost identical rate of dissatisfaction).

Since middle values obscure important information about the inner structure of questions and values of standard deviations show that responses are not concentrated closely round the centre but they are spread on the scale (flat surface shaped like polygon), we will present a more detailed structure of respondents' score to the items.

Results of frequency analysis confirmed that the shape of number distribution in individual items is not identical, i.e. the number distribution is not in the same range. Results are illustrated in figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

A certain rate of dissatisfaction with economy was expressed by two thirds of respondents (66.2%). On the other hand, a certain rate of satisfaction (points 6-10) was expressed by 16.8% of respondents. Most frequently chosen points were 3, 4 and 5 (16 – 18% per point). Absolute dissatisfaction (point 0) was expressed by 8.7% respondents and absolute satisfaction (point 10) confirmed 0.3% of respondents.
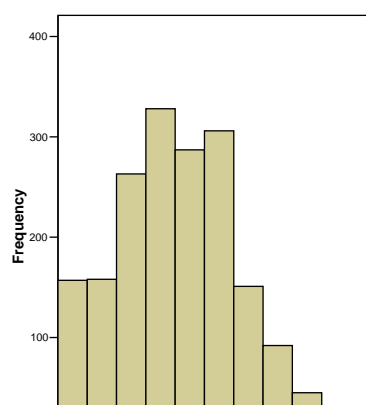

Fig. 1. Satisfaction with the present state of economy

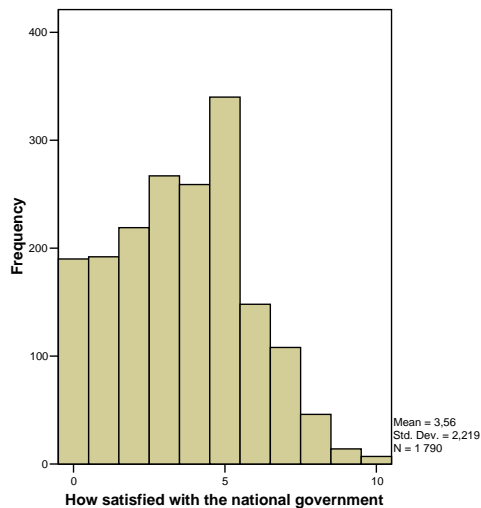Rys. 1. Zadowolenie ze stanu ekonomii

Fig. 2. Satisfaction with the Slovak
Government
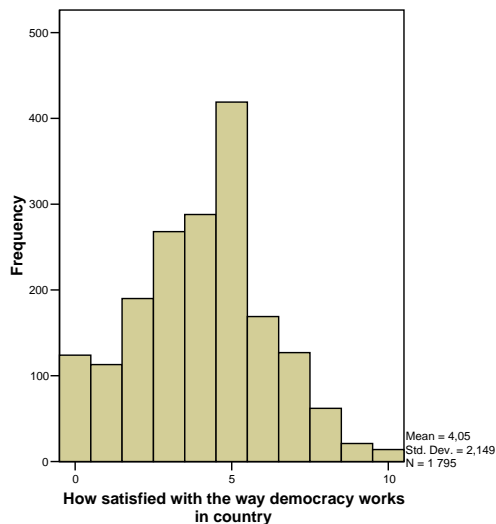Rys. 2. Zadowolenie z działalności
rządu Republiki Słowackiej

Fig. 3. Satisfaction with the was democracy
works in Slovakia
Rys. 3. Zadowolenie z działania demokracji

Despite the fact that most frequently selected answer was at the level of point 5 – average satisfaction (19%), 63% of respondents expressed a certain rate of dissatisfaction with the Slovak government. A certain rate of satisfaction was confirmed by only one fifth of respondents. Absolute dissatisfaction expressed 8.7% of respondents and absolute satisfaction 0.3%.

More than a half of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with democracy (54.8%). A certain rate of satisfaction confirmed one fifth of respondents (22%). Most frequently selected answers were answers on the level of point 5 – average satisfaction (23.3%). Absolute dissatisfaction scored 6.9% and absolute satisfaction 0.8% of respondents.
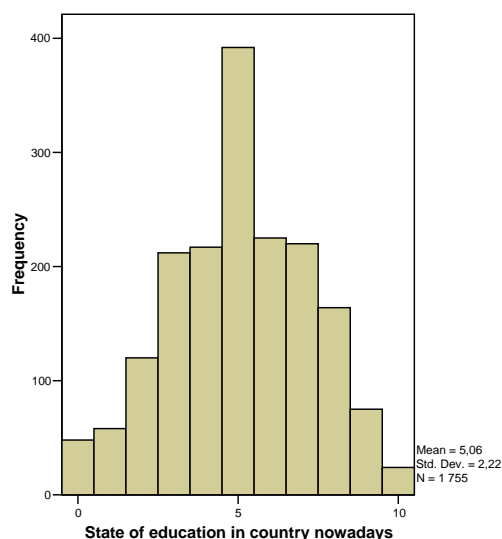

Fig. 4. Satisfaction with the state of
education in Slovakia
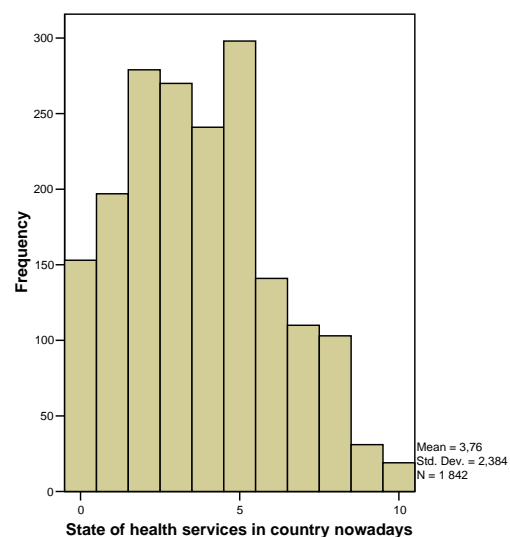Rys. 4. Zadowolenie ze stanu edukacji

Fig. 5. Satisfaction with the state of
health services in Slovakia
Rys. 5. Zadowolenie ze stanu opieki
zdrowotnej

37.3% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the state of education in Slovakia. 38.9% of respondents confirmed satisfaction. It means that bipolar evaluation (positively and negatively orientated) was expressed in the mentioned item in almost the same rate. Most frequently chosen answer was at the level of point 5 – average satisfaction (22.3%) of respondents. Extremely bad state of education confirmed 2.7% of respondents. On the other hand, a good state was stated by 1.4%.

61.9% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction while on the other hand, 38.9% expressed satisfaction. Most frequently selected answers were at the level of point five – average satisfaction (16.2%). An extremely bad state in the sphere of health services confirmed 8.3% of respondents and an extremely good state was marked by 1% of respondents.

In general, we can state that in the case of satisfaction evaluation with economy, politics (government), democracy and health services it was found out that the number distribution deviates to the left towards the negative pole of the scale, where dominates dissatisfaction rather than satisfaction with the stated spheres of social life. The highest rate of dissatisfaction was expressed by respondents with the state of economy. In the case of evaluating the state of education we can observe standard number distribution. The number of satisfied and dissatisfied respondents with the state of education was nearly identical, with a slight predominance of satisfaction. It means that the shape of the number distribution is more significantly deviated to the right, towards the positive pole of the scale. Ambivalence of responses has in almost all items similar frequencies (around one fifth of respondents chose point five on the scale). Extremely negative evaluation, i.e. the highest rate of dissatisfaction (8.7%) the respondents expressed with the state of economy and government, which confirms mutual connection between the two spheres. They are followed by health services (extremely bad state was confirmed by 8.3% of respondents), democracy (6.9%) and education (2.7%).

3.2. Mutual relationship between studied indices of the quality of life (social sphere)

In further analyses, results of correlation carried out between individual items were added to the general characteristic of indices of social satisfaction.

Correlation of indices of social satisfaction (N=1652) ranged from 0.273 to 0.566. The lowest correlation was observed between indices of 'satisfaction with government' and 'satisfaction with health services'. The highest correlation was found between indices of 'satisfaction with government' and 'satisfaction with democracy'. It confirms immediate connection between the work of the government and application of democratic principles in the country.

Overall average of respondents' responses to all items is shifted towards the negative pole of the scale with slight dissatisfaction (M=4.03) with minimum of 3.57 and maximum 5.07. Analyses of result distribution showed existing differences in social satisfaction of respondents, which are statistically significant (F=221.6; p<0.0001).

Factor analyses confirmed existence of one factor which explained 52.6% of scores (Eigenvalues 2.63). Tests of reliability confirmed high percentage of reliability of the responses (Cronbach Alpha 0.774).

4. CONCLUSION

AS far as Slovaks are concerned, analyses which were carried out confirmed a significant role of the indices of social life satisfaction in evaluating quality of life.

During the research period, Slovaks expressed rather dissatisfaction with the state of the society in four spheres – economy, politics, democracy and health care. The lowest rate of

satisfaction was observed with the state of economy. A sphere which was confirmed slight satisfaction was education.

Overall rate of social satisfaction resulting from evaluation of all studied items is set in the negative pole of the scale (point 4) and expresses general dissatisfaction of respondents with the state of the Slovak society.

Analyses of mutual relationships inside of individual items of quality of life in the social sphere confirmed high correlation relationship especially between indices of satisfaction with government's work and democracy. It can be assumed that Slovaks in social (political) sphere perceive close connection between satisfaction with the work of government and obeying democratic principles.

Based on the results, it is clear that Slovaks considerably reflect social expectations and standards which subject to a constant development. At present, changes in economical sphere represent factors of negative evaluation of the quality of life.

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