Chapter 3

Socioeconomic Situation and Satisfaction in the Family Life

Abstract In this chapter, the attention is paid to two fields which are linked with family lifestyle. The first one concerns socioeconomic situations in a family and shows that the economic side of family functioning is actually very essential these days. The importance of family economic situation is affirmed also in the results of our international survey. We asked what was the main family income, experience with unemployment and whether our respondents had possibility to save some money. Furthermore, we were interested in expenditure items and in evaluation of an overall standard of living by respondents. The Germans and then Czechs evaluated it as the best, the worst was found in families in Latvia. The second part monitors life satisfaction as a subjective feeling of well-being and is understood as a part of quality of life. To the question “How do you imagine a satisfied family?”, the most frequent response was—harmonic coexistence without conflicts, well-being, good health of all family members and material security. For the question “What do you lack to your satisfaction?” respondents stated—financial security and lack of free time for the family. However, there were specific differences among individual surveyed countries.

Keywords Family • Economic function • Social support • Education • Employment • Housing • Diet • Satisfaction

3.1 Characteristics of the Socioeconomic Situation of Families

Among other things, family also has an economic function. This means that family members are involved in productive and non-productive sphere during the performance of their job, but also that family as a whole becomes an important consumer the current market depends on. Furthermore, within a family system, a number of decisions are made regarding the use of material and financial means, investments and expenses.

According to economists, family members behave like consumers, comparing their income to others and determining their own consumption on this basis. The insatiable market, however, increases their consumption via advertising, forcing them

to buy luxury goods presented by VIP celebrities and offering loans to families so that they are able to buy these goods. This means a large portion of households is experiencing financial problems that are difficult to solve. The debt of Czech households to banks and financial institutions has in the present exceeded one trillion Czech crowns.

The present study also noted that the level of material consumption determines the quality of life. Family's material situation represents the quantitative dimension of lifestyle. It is the economic situation of a family that establishes the objective factors of lifestyle. The economic situation determines both work and spare time activities.

Work activities are crucial. Work functions as a basic means of self-fulfilment, provides the most opportunities to experience success and is a source of a family's financial security. In an absence of this function, there is hardship, a decrease in living standard and quality of life, and a negative impact on lifestyle (Kraus et al. 2015).

In the present, however, it is possible and increasingly frequent that work damages family life. The last study values, attitudes, behaviour in the European Social Survey project performed by the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences shows that 80% of Czech males and 61% of females sometimes feel exhausted after work to such a degree they can no longer do what they would like to at home. Exhaustion and worries related to work that need to be addressed, not enough time for the family together with a permanent fear of losing the job—that is how a third of economically active citizens perceive the influence of employment on their family lives. Furthermore, almost 64% of men and 66% of women deal with work problems at home in their spare time. On the other hand, 33% of men and 35% of women sometimes find it hard to concentrate on work because of family obligations. Coordinating work and family life seems increasingly difficult.

The economic function of family impacts already its founding. According to experts from the Czech Statistical Office, behaviour of the current young generation is influenced both by the changing values of contemporary society, and more importantly, by the current economic situation. The low share of employed people aged 25 and younger points, among other things, at an insufficient coordination of studies and work.

Starting a family requires a certain basic income. Especially among young people, however, there has been a marked decrease in real earnings in the past years. Founding a family and having a child leads to a significant decrease in the household's income, especially if the man works and the woman is on maternity leave. However, single parents are the most imperilled group. In their case, low household income is combined with a limited option of part-time jobs. This means that the worsened situation at job market together with the expected provision of income by one family member only creates less than ideal conditions to start a family. Another consequence of the socioeconomic situation is that in some cases, highly qualified women focus on career instead of having a child, causing natality to be dependent on groups with a lower (low) socioeconomic status.

Table 3.1 Standard of living in households

	Czech Republic	Poland	Hungary	Slovakia
Very good	4	12	0	2
Good	32	29	13	21
Neither good nor bad	42	45	46	50
Bad	17	8	30	20
Very bad	5	6	9	6
Does not know	0	0	2	1

In this respect, the social policy in a given society seems important. Even though the conceptions in individual surveyed countries differ, especially in terms of content, the general goal of social policy is to provide pre-emptive arrangements and to resolve existing dangerous and inappropriate living conditions and situations of disadvantaged social groups.

In June 2013, the Centre for the Research of Public Opinion (CVVM) examined how parents assessed material living conditions in household (Červenka 2013). In the same period, a similar survey was conducted in Poland, Hungary and Slovakia. At first, the respondents (in the Czech survey, 1023 respondents selected using quota sampling) answered the question about *what they think about the current economic situation of their country*. In case of Poland, where the evaluation returned the most positive results, the share of negative assessments was just under a half (47%), while one in seven (14%) Polacks gave a very positive assessment. Hungary placed send, with economic situation considered good by 6% and bad by 55% of participants. The results in the Czech Republic and Slovakia were very similar, as the share of positive assessments was comparable to Hungary, while the share of negative evaluations reached two-thirds.

However, for the purposes of the present study, it is more relevant how respondents evaluated the living conditions (standard of living) of their families. This is shown in the following Table 3.1.

The table shows that the respondents in Poland and Czechia evaluated their living standard positively more often than negatively, while the Polish expressed positive opinions even more frequently (in 41% of cases) than the Czechs (36% of respondents). In Slovakia, negative evaluation (26%) was slightly more frequent than a positive one (23%), and there was a decisively highest share of the neutral assessment “Neither good nor bad”. The least positive view of living conditions in households was held by Hungarians, among whom only 13% provided positive answers, while 39% of respondents selected a negative answer.

When the respondents expressed their views on their future situation in this regard, the answers were overwhelmingly negative, except for Poland, where the share of positive and negative answers was identical, and 67% (the biggest share out of all surveyed countries) did not expect any changes, which can be perceived as a de facto positive view, given the relatively favourable current circumstances. Unflatteringly for the Czech Republic, its respondents were the most sceptical ones. Almost 40%

Table 3.2 The main income of the family

The main income of our family is						
	Czechia	Latvia	Germany	Poland	Slovakia	Ukraine
Income from employment	96.5	86.6	82.4	96	88.5	91.1
Income from social welfare	2.1	7	10.3	1.6	5	3
Other income	1.4	6.5	7.4	2.4	5	5.9
Sum	100	100.1	100.1	100	98.5	100

(the most out of all surveyed countries) expected a decrease in the quality of living conditions, while only 10% (the least out of all countries) were optimistic regarding the future in this area.

The following part presents the results of this research in comparison to other included countries. The first question concerned *the main family income*. The distinct categories of income from employment, income from welfare, and other income were established. The following Table 3.2 provides the results.

The table shows that extra employment income primarily concerned Germany, where more than 10% of families stated they are dependent on welfare, and more than 7% of families declared another form of income. In Latvia, the situation was similar (more than 13% in total). In this respect, the best situation is in the Czech Republic and Poland, where it only concerns roughly 4% of families. Clearly, there is some correspondence with the level of unemployment.

The following question in the survey enquired about *the experience of unemployment* in a family (in case of one of its members). Accordingly, this data is not necessarily related directly to the previous figures, since they examined the experience of unemployment, which might have taken place many years ago. The following Table 3.3 provides a full overview.

It is apparent that the greatest share of respondents who never experienced unemployment was found in Slovakia, followed by Latvia. In the remaining countries, the situation was similar and the share included about a half of the population.

Households' economic situation is further clarified by the provided data about the responses to the question *whether a family receives any governmental social support or welfare* (Table 3.4).

Table 3.3 Experience with family unemployment

I have experience with unemployment						
	Czechia	Latvia	Germany	Poland	Slovakia	Ukraine
Yes	47.5	55.9	48.1	48.4	62.6	46.6
No	52.5	44.1	51.9	51.6	37.4	53.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 3.4 Governmental social support or welfare for a family

As a family, we are receiving social welfare of some sort						
	Czechia	Latvia	Germany	Poland	Slovakia	Ukraine
Yes	16.8	26.3	19.7	5.6	26.7	16.4
No	83.2	73.7	80.3	94.4	73.3	83.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Once again, the greatest percentage of positive answers was provided in Slovakia and Latvia (i.e. this is related to the aforementioned experience of unemployment), and to a lesser extent, in Germany. However, this question also covers receiving any kind of welfare (including parental allowance, etc.) by the family, which supplements its income. It is possible to assume this is related to welfare systems of individual countries. In such a case, the most complex situation is in Poland, where only 5.6% of families declared the entitlement to some sort of social welfare.

Other questions examined what the largest expenses in household are associated with (it was possible to give more answers). We tried to process all responses using the coding method, in the sense of examining, comparing and categorizing responses to an open question. On the basis of a repeated examination of the material, typical responses were identified, and the remaining ones were divided into prepared categories (types) on the basis of semantic similarity. Following this, the frequency of occurrence of individual types of answers was recorded statistically.

In total, nine types of answers regarding the largest expenses in a household were established. These were: housing, transportation, food, personal consumption, travel, education, spare time activities, savings, loans. However, some of them appeared insignificant in comparison to others due to their occurrence, namely travel, which was mentioned by 2–7% of respondents (most often in Germany—7.1%), expenses related to spare time activities (2–6%), savings/insurance and paying back loans, which, rather logically, did not constitute a significant expense item for a huge majority and it was given by 2–5% of households.

Transportation expenses are worth mentioning separately. While in general, they do not rank among critical expense items, there are rather big differences between surveyed countries. In Ukraine, Latvia and Slovakia, this expense item was only given by roughly 10%; however, in Poland and Czechia, it was ca 18%, and in Germany, it was important for 21.4% of families. By far the most frequently, housing was mentioned as the most expensive area (see the following Table 3.5).

Most frequently, this was the case in Czech and German households, as it was indicated by over 80% of respondents. In these countries, housing is the most expensive. They were followed by Slovakia, then by Latvia and Poland with some distance, and finally, in Ukraine, this item only concerned just under 25% of respondents.

Food costs constituted the second-largest item. The situation is illustrated by the following Table 3.6.

Table 3.5 Housing as the most expensive item

In our family, HOUSING constitutes the greatest expense item						
	Czechia	Latvia	Germany	Poland	Slovakia	Ukraine
Yes	81	51.3	80.4	46.6	75.5	24.1
No	19	48.7	19.6	53.4	24.5	75.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 3.6 Food as the most expensive item

In our family, FOOD constitutes the greatest expense item						
	Czechia	Latvia	Germany	Poland	Slovakia	Ukraine
Yes	67.8	58.4	23.2	30.5	75.5	17.9
No	32.2	41.6	76.8	69.5	24.5	82.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Food was the greatest expense item for the respondents in Slovakia and Czechia, which suggests there were the most expensive groceries. In Latvia, this item was considered crucial by a smaller percentage, with an even smaller percentage in Poland. In Germany and especially Ukraine, these expenses only appeared essential for less than one-quarter or one-fifth of families, respectively. Possibly, this was related not only to the cost of groceries, but also to the consumption of food in individual households.

This study also examined family expenses related to education in individual countries. They are shown in the following Table 3.7.

The provided table shows this item was primarily considered important in Ukraine and Latvia, followed by Slovakia. The data for the remaining countries is similar, with the least share of families who stated education-related expenses were important in Poland. These expenses are undoubtedly related to whether education is free in a given country, how many private schools are there, whether there is a tuition fee and at which schools, etc. Of course, the data was also influenced by the number of children attending higher education, which is associated with higher financial demands.

The socioeconomic situation of households can also be judged by *whether a family is able to save some earned money*, i.e. if it is able to generate a financial reserve (Table 3.8).

Table 3.7 Education as the most expensive item

In our family, EDUCATION constitutes the greatest expense item						
	Czechia	Latvia	Germany	Poland	Slovakia	Ukraine
Yes	9.4	22.6	8.9	5.9	19.9	29
No	90.6	77.4	91.1	94.1	80.1	71
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 3.8 Ability to generate a financial reserve

We are able to save some of our monthly income						
	Czechia	Latvia	Germany	Poland	Slovakia	Ukraine
Yes	60.9	30.1	51.3	44	54.4	72.6
No	39.1	69.9	48.7	56	45.6	27.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

In this respect, the most problematic situation existed in Latvia, where only under a third of households was able to save some of their income. In Poland, it was a little over 40%. In other countries (Czechia, Slovakia, Germany), there was a similar share, specifically over a half of families. Interestingly, Ukraine had the highest share of such families. There may be two explanations for these differences. Firstly, it is certainly related to income (whether the family has anything left); secondly, it is important how much one plans for the future. The resulting figures are more or less in line with some other studies, which, e.g. show that in Czechia, for two-thirds of respondents who state they able to save some money, the respective amount does not exceed 1000 CZK.

From the perspective of socioeconomic evaluation, an *assessment of a general standard of living* was crucial. The opinions of respondents from individual countries are shown in the following Table 3.9.

It is apparent the best situation is in Germany (as it was to be expected), where 47.5% of households consider their standard of living as rather good or very good and only 10.3% as rather bad or very bad. In contrast, the greatest share of families who considered their living standard bad appeared in Latvia (19.6%). In other countries, the percentage of negative assessments was similar to one another. In the number of positive evaluations, Germany was followed, with some distance, by Poland (34.9%), Czechia (31.8%) and Ukraine (31.1%). The smallest amount of household reporting a rather good or very good standard of living was in Slovakia and Latvia.

Here, however, it should be noted there is a large variance in this assessment. The two countries mentioned last, together with Ukraine, clearly included the most people who considered their situation average. Overall, the distribution of households in

Table 3.9 Evaluation of a living standard in families

Overall, I rate our standard of living						
	Czechia	Latvia	Germany	Poland	Slovakia	Ukraine
Very bad	1.7	3.8	2.6	0	1.4	0.5
Rather bad	9.8	15.9	7.7	10.3	8.4	7.2
Average	56.7	63.6	42.2	54.8	67.2	61.2
Rather good	26.7	15.9	38.5	32.5	19.5	26.3
Very good	5.1	0.8	9	2.4	3.5	4.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

these countries indicates the lowest differentiation (towards poverty in Latvia, while in Ukraine, on the hand, the share of people considering their situation rather bad or very bad was the lowest out of all included countries). Clearly, German households manifested the greatest differentiation, as there was the smallest number of families considering their situation average, and the scissors of inequality were most open there, with almost a half of the families assessing their situation as rather good or very good, as already mentioned.

3.2 Satisfaction in Family Life

Life satisfaction is a topic that has recently been examined by a growing number of researchers from various fields. Furthermore, the interest in this issue has been growing in the past years. This has been thought to stem from a certain departure from both problems of adaptation and survival, and from purely material values. Some role has likely also been played by the growing individualism, which has due to its inherent focus on an individual led to a development of knowledge regarding individual well-being and, in relation to this, to an increased emphasis on an improvement of individual quality of life (Marklová 2007; Křivohlavý 2001). A search for a clear definition of the term “life satisfaction” has proved highly difficult. Frequently, the concepts like life satisfaction, subjective well-being and quality of life have been confused. However, there is an agreement that cognitive (evaluative) and affective components of all areas of life (e.g. health, psychological stability, social relations, etc.) can contribute to life satisfaction (Fahrenberg et al. 2001).

E. Diener, who invented one of the most widely used scales measuring life satisfaction (Diener et al. 1985), considers the notion of life satisfaction one of the components of subjective well-being. Besides life satisfaction, which he considers a cognitive (evaluative) constituent of subjective well-being, Diener also includes pleasant emotions as another component.

W. Wilson was one of the first authors who focused on individual well-being and life satisfaction, and he published its correlates already in 1967. According to him, a happy and satisfied person is young, rich, well-educated, well-paid, extroverted, optimistic, free of significant worries, religious and married. Furthermore, such people have great confidence in themselves, a good work ethic and adequate aspirations. There is no proved connection of satisfaction to gender or to a level of mental abilities (Marklová 2007).

However, in the past four decades, there has been a remarkable increase in the volume of research dedicated to identifying and better describing factors that influence life satisfaction and subjective well-being. Binarová (2008) describes four factors that have been proved in various studies: (1) demographic factors—income, age, gender, marriage and family; (2) behavioural factors—social contact, activities, life events; (3) personality factors—self-respect, temperament, intelligence; (4) biological factors (health).

As for demographic factors, there has been proved a two-way connection between marriage and life satisfaction. This means that happy and content people have a higher probability of entering marriage. According to numerous authors (Rybářová 2009), however, life with a partner or in marriage only has a positive correlation to individual well-being only if both partners are happy with the relationship. If they are not happy, the degree of subjective wellbeing rather tends to decrease. Regarding age, older papers argue repeatedly that young people are happier than old ones. Recently, however, some evidence has surfaced showing that age does not influence life satisfaction, or that there is in fact a positive correlation between age and satisfaction (Binarová 2008).

Personality is one of the strongest determinants of satisfaction with life. It has been proved that satisfaction with oneself showed the highest correlation with life satisfaction out of all possible variables. Interestingly, it has also been discovered that self-respect tends to decrease in unhappy people (Binarová 2008).

Regarding biological factors, it is widely assumed that health functions as an important determinant. While subjective health shows a high correlation, the correlation of objective health and life satisfaction is rather low (Diener et al. 2002). This might be explained by the fact that in referring to one's subjective health, a person also transmits his or her emotional state. Furthermore, the effect of health is dependent on the individual perception of a situation. In case of serious medical issues, the decrease in satisfaction follows due to the impossibility to fulfil important goals. However, if a disease is not serious, the person adapts and the satisfaction may remain unchanged.

Approaches focused on examining the abovementioned factors, which influence to a larger or smaller degree the level of life satisfaction, are mutually complementary. The experts have increasingly been expressing support for the hypothesis that different strategies work differently for different people. Thus, it is unnecessary to search for a universal cause of satisfaction. It is assumed that the correct solution is to focus on mutual interactions of the influence of culture, personality, aims and environment (Marklová 2007).

Despite some differences in definitions, most conceptions of life satisfaction, happiness and subjective well-being share the emphasis on the subjectivity of assessment—people are satisfied if they feel that way or if they say they feel that way. Subjective well-being is frequently perceived as an aspect of quality of life (Kebza and Šolcová 2003). The present paper also employs this notion of happiness and life satisfaction. Life satisfaction/happiness is considered a subjective category—people are happy and satisfied if they say they are.

In this respect, there are remarkable results available in the survey of Tuček, Kuchařová and other co-authors from the Institute of Sociology at the Czech Academy of Sciences (2001). The question “*What is important for happy family life?*” yielded the following responses (1496). The order of conditions for happy family life according to average rating (five-point scale: 5 = most important, 1 = least important):

Order—Average

1. Good medical condition of all family members 4.4
2. Permanent emotional relationship of partners 4.3
3. Faithfulness 4.2
4. Tolerance and appreciation 4.1
5. Possibility of having children 3.9
- ...
18. Division of household labour 3.2
19. Understanding regarding views on employment 3.1
20. Possibility of attending to one's own friends and interests 3.0
21. Agreement in opinions on public events 2.6
22. Same religious belief 2.2.

Most items from the list were considered important, but still, the views were differentiated. Average ratings had almost no connection to marital status. This means, e.g. that single people placed greater emphasis on the "possibility of attending to one's own friends and interests", divorced ones put lesser stress on "permanent emotional relationship of partners", but considered "tolerance" important, and married ascribed greater importance to items related to children. The differences in mean among the noted subgroups were statistically significant; however, they only included several items; thus, there was not a significant shift in an overall perception on the requirements of happy marriage connected to marital status.

The degree of satisfaction as to the fulfilment of the abovementioned conditions of happy marriage was examined by the following question: "What are married people satisfied with?" The following overview shows the matters in family life people were most and least satisfied with (sorted according to average rating; five-point scale: 5 = most important, 1 = least important):

Order—Average

1. Possibility of having children 4.2
2. Faithfulness 3.9
3. Living separately from parents 3.9
4. Permanent emotional relationship with a partner 3.8
5. Sexual understanding 3.7
- ...
18. Opinions on public events 3.2
19. Possibility of attending to one's own friends and interests 3.1
20. Sufficient amount of money, good material conditions 3.1
21. Division of household labour 3.0
22. Overall climate in society 2.9.

Similarly, to the previous question regarding condition of happy family life, there was also a prevalent satisfaction with individual areas of family life. A differentiation of opinions only appeared in the category "most satisfied". 22% of respondents did not provide any area they were completely satisfied with (the grade 5). When the respondents reported the highest degree of satisfaction for 1–3 items, they most often

included statements of facts (“I have children”, “Good medical condition”, “Separate living”) as well as the quality of relationship (“Permanent emotional relationship”, “Faithfulness”, “Sexual understanding”).

Regarding the representation of individual items, the situation was similar for negative answers (22% of respondents did not provide any items, more than 40% gave 1–3 items); however, it was necessary to merge the two lowest grades. When a respondent provided 1–3 items, the dissatisfaction was, besides the “climate in society”, related to the evaluation of material conditions (“lack of money”). A great part of dissatisfaction was associated with the “possibility of attending to one’s own friends and interests” and the “division of household labour”.

The functioning of family is undoubtedly characterized by the division of roles. In the quoted survey, it was proved it is essential that the division of household labour is one of the areas people are least satisfied with. It is necessary to emphasize that for most people, the division of household labour is not an important precondition of a happy marriage. In this relation, it may be noted that women tend to be less satisfied with their lives. Coping with both job and family obligations often impacts negatively the regeneration of their own vitality. While they may have dealt with this eventually, it influences their dissatisfaction.

The present paper also examined what is important for satisfaction in family life, using simple questions. While this may seem a crude research tool at first glance, the results of discussions and long-term research show that even a simple question (or questions) can meaningfully record satisfaction, and the declared satisfaction with life can then be placed in relation to demographic and social factors (Hamplová 2004, 13).

There were two questions: “How do you imagine a happy family?” and “What would you need to be satisfied with your family life?” Given the question were again open, we followed the same course, i.e. we monitored the most frequent requirements for a happy family (it was possible to give more answers). We tried to process all answers using the method of coding; subsequently, we searched for typical answers and grouped all other items into prepared categories (types) according to similarity of content. Finally, the frequency of each type of answer was recorded statistically.

The following *factors of satisfaction* were established: health, good living conditions, material security, employment, option to spend spare time together, harmonious atmosphere in family (free of conflicts and stress), wholeness of family, successful and problem-free children.

Given the frequency of answers for individual established types, the present study focused primarily on the most common ones: harmonious atmosphere, relation in family, material/financial security and health. These factors ranked among the most frequent responses in all countries.

The greatest concordance occurred in case of the item *harmonious cohabitation free of conflict, general well-being*. This answer ranked most frequent in Ukraine and Germany was one of the most important factors in Slovakia; in the Czech Republic, it was somewhat less frequent, and the share was lowest in Poland (even there,

Table 3.10 Image of a happy family—emotional atmosphere

How do you imagine a happy family? HARMONIOUS RELATIONS, FREE OF ARGUMENTS AND CONFLICTS, EMOTIONAL ATMOSPHERE (FREE OF STRESS AND WORRIES; HAPPINESS, JOY, LIFE WELL-BEING, FRIENDSHIP)						
	Czechia	Latvia	Germany	Poland	Slovakia	Ukraine
Yes	36.5	30.6	43.8	24.3	45.9	36.5
No	63.5	69.4	56.3	75.7	54.1	63.5
Sum	100	100	100	100	100	100

however, it ranked second behind *health*). In responses to this question, there were comparatively smallest differences between individual counties. The following Table 3.10 shows the specific percentages:

Beyond doubt, *health* of family members was of great importance for satisfaction of a family. Here, however, there were manifest differences between individual countries. This aspect of satisfaction was most important in the Czech Republic, where, as in Poland, it was selected most frequently. It ranked second in Ukraine, third in Slovakia, and it was least prominent in Germany. It is difficult to explain why this factor was neglected in Germany and ranked behind the need to engage in spare time, holidays and shared interests together. It is possible that some respondents (across individual countries) considered this factor a necessary condition of satisfaction with life. The following Table 3.11 provides specific figures.

The most frequent factors also included *material and financial security*, the share was, however, highly differentiated. It was considered most important in Slovakia and placed second in Czechia. In Germany, Poland, Latvia and Ukraine, it only ranked second. The importance of this factor was certainly related to value systems: the lifestyle of families, the importance of material possessions, the degree of consumerism in family lifestyle. The resulting representation is shown in the following Table 3.12.

The representation of the aforementioned established factors was scarce and mostly did not exceed 10%. Employment was most frequently mentioned in Czechia and Slovakia (11.7% in both cases). Other factors worth noting were the aforementioned requirement for spending spare time together and shared interests which was stated in Germany in 34.4% of cases and appeared rather significant in the Czech Republic as well (22.7%). Furthermore, wholeness of family seemed relatively important for a happy life. In Poland, it was mentioned in 16.5% of cases,

Table 3.11 Image of a happy family—health

How do you imagine a happy family? HEALTH						
	Czechia	Latvia	Germany	Poland	Slovakia	Ukraine
Yes	51.2	37.3	18.8	39.8	33.8	28.6
No	48.8	62.7	81.3	60.2	66.2	71.4
Sum	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 3.12 Image of a happy family—material and financial security

How do you imagine a happy family? MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL SECURITY, FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND WITHOUT DEBTS AND MORTGAGES						
	Czechia	Latvia	Germany	Poland	Slovakia	Ukraine
Yes	43.4	24.6	28.1	22.3	58.6	19
No	56.6	75.4	71.9	77.7	41.4	81
Sum	100	100	100	100	100	100

in Ukraine in 15.9% of cases, in Germany in 12.5% of cases, and in Czechia and Slovakia in 8.9% of cases.

In summary, it is possible to say the present results correspond to the above-mentioned survey, where medical condition and relations (tolerance, faithfulness) in family also ranked among the most important factors. In the 12 years since that survey, there has been a large shift in the importance of material and financial security. This is probably related to an increased prominence of consumerist lifestyle and to the growing differentiation of society.

In responses to the question “What would you need to be satisfied?”, *material and financial security* was again prevalent, together with time to spend some moments with family. In both cases, there were some differences. The following Table 3.13 summarizes answers with regard to material and financial satisfaction.

The table shows this aspect is most problematic in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. This is followed by Germany and Ukraine, but the differences between the remaining countries are negligible. This distribution essentially mimics the answers regarding the most important factor of family happiness (see the previous table). It appears this is caused by a huge focus on consumerist lifestyle, because of which material and financial security is considered essential in these countries. The results probably do not stem from generally worse material conditions.

As for the *lack of time to spend with family*, the results were again not distributed evenly (see the following Table 3.14).

Among the respondents, the Germans felt most often (in more than 50% of cases) they needed more time to spend with their families; thus, this factor appears crucial. This showed an effort and interest to achieve greater cohesiveness and improve the functioning of families. The Czech Republic and Poland followed with some

Table 3.13 Material and financial needs to be satisfied with a family life

What would you need to be satisfied with your family life? MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL SECURITY, FINANCIAL RESERVES FOR RETIREMENT						
	Czechia	Latvia	Germany	Poland	Slovakia	Ukraine
Yes	37.4	23.8	28.6	20.5	40.7	26.9
No	62.6	76.2	71.4	79.5	59.3	73.1
Sum	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 3.14 Time spent together as a need to be satisfied with a family life

What would you need to be satisfied with your family life? MORE TIME, SPARE TIME SPENT TOGETHER (HOBBIES, INTERESTS, MORE HOLIDAYS, CULTURE ...)						
	Czechia	Latvia	Germany	Poland	Slovakia	Ukraine
Yes	25.2	21.7	55.1	30.7	19.8	19.2
No	74.8	78.3	44.9	69.3	80.2	80.8
Sum	100	100	100	100	100	100

distance. According to some studies, men are more sensitive to a lack of spare time, which consequently impacts family relations and increases the number of conflicts.

As for the remaining factors, no large percentage was recorded, except for wholeness of family in Poland, where 20.5% of families felt they needed it to be satisfied. It appears families in Poland are more sensitive to splits. Harmonious relations were most often lacking in Slovak families (15.7%).

The present chapter concludes with results from cases when respondents stated they did not miss anything to be satisfied. The greatest share of positive answers was recorded in Ukraine (31.4%) and Poland (26.9%). Interestingly, the smallest share of such answers was collected in Germany, where only 12.2% of families stated they did not need anything else to be satisfied. This can certainly be related to the requirements and specifics we demand in a “happy family”. Overall, it has to be noted that the presented results have to be considered in the context of culture and comprehensive social and economic conditions in a given society.

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