

THE QUALITY OF LIFE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF REGIONS IN SLOVAKIA

The quality of life has its connection to a particular geographical location, a region that provides a certain level of living or satisfaction to its inhabitants. It integrates economically, socially, demographically and touches on health, education and infrastructure of the place. This article compares the development of quality of life of selected statistical indicators according to regions of Slovakia. It points out some persistent disparities as well as the changes that the Slovak Republic and its individual regions experienced in the years 2001 to 2018.

Keywords: measuring the quality of life; indicators; regions of the Slovak Republic
Introduction. Quality of life is a concept that needs to be viewed multidimensionally. It is addressed by experts in economics, psychology, sociology, political science, theology, medicine, demography or geography. Every discipline has its own definition and image of quality of life. Under the quality of life, Murgaš [2007] sees human life as knowledge that well-being understood by today's world (wealth, prosperity) does not in itself bring satisfaction to human needs. After satisfying basic needs such as food, housing, clothing, there are intangible needs that are not measurable by economic parameters. According to the authors Gajdoš and Ručinský [2010], there are quite often no clear objectives of research in issue of quality of life. When the objectives are defined, there are usually stated clarifications (characteristics) of the social situation, a comparison of satisfaction levels in different layers and parts of society, a comparison of the degree of satisfaction in spatial differentiation, or a partial comparison on a reduced number of dimensions, an overall level of individual welfare. In the following, the objectives are respected by the value orientations of the population where, according to EU27 [Eurobarometer 27, 2009], respect for human life (44%), peace (42%) and human rights (40%) were the most important values.

Several experts deal with the question of how to measure the quality of life most accurately and devote their research to detecting the causes of the development of the area. According to many authors, the quality of life affects subjective well-being at the level of the individual, which can be measured through a certain standard of living given the access of the population to services or goods. It is difficult to measure other elements of quality of life such as happiness, health, joy, well-being, sufficient education, personality and culture, openness to new facts, enough friends, support from others, etc.

Similarly, Pullmann et al. [2007, in Rajčák 2012] also examine quality of life, where the term quality of life is a complex concept that is influenced by many diverse factors. In terms of content, it is defined and interpreted in different ways, depending on the dual quality of life (objective and subjective quality of life), vocational focus, or the quality of life, value system.

The quality of life can also be conditioned by the life space of the individual as Murgaš [2009] points out to the essence of geographic interest in the quality of life. The spatial dimension, Veenhoven's first matrix, is displayed in Table 1 the suitability of the environment for life.

Tab.1 Veenhoven's matrix of environmental suitability for life

	external quality of life	
internal quality of life	(spatial dimension)	(
personal dimension)		
life chances	the suitability of the environment for life	personal viability
life opportunities	(liveability)	
(viability)		
result of life	usefulness of life	understanding
of one's life		
life form		

Source: own processing according to Murgaš [2009]

Methodology. The appropriateness of the economic, environmental, social, demographic, health and education and research fields were assessed. A total of 6 areas with 22 indicators were chosen to compare the suitability of the living environment. The indicators were: The Indicators of the economic environment: Regional gross domestic product per capita (at current prices) and PPS, Unemployment rate, Average wage, Direct foreign investment per capita. The environmental indicators: Sulfur dioxide, Nitrogen oxide, Carbon monoxide, The separated collected components of dangerous municipal waste. The demographic indicators: Total growth of population, Ageing index, Divorce index, Abortion index. The social environment indicators: Inequality of income distribution: Gini coefficient, At-risk-of -powerty rate, Criminal offenses per 1000 inhabitants. The healthcare environment indicators: Average percentage of incapacity for work, Fast medical help, Polyclinics.

The educational environment indicators: Rate of population with tertiary education, Current R&D expenditure, Employees of R&D

The individual indicators were evaluated by comparative analysis. Each indicator for individual regions was given a point value, which expressed the order of the region within Slovakia. The average of the values and the weighting according to the degree of importance, was determined by the coefficient in the range of 0-100

points. The weighted arithmetic mean was used to calculate the resulting quality of life, calculated from the values of partial indicators of economic, demographic, environmental, health, social and educational environments.

Comparison of quality of life by regions of Slovakia

For the purpose of this paper, exact indicators were chosen to measure the suitability of the environment for life and thus to determine the objective aspect of quality of life. The measurement was at NUTS 1 level (Slovak Republic) and NUTS 3 level (Regions of the Slovak Republic). The years 2001 and 2018 were chosen over a period of time. However, for some indicators, there was the absence of data for 2018, so some values were reported for 2016 or 2017.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) data were available for 2012 and the share of the population with tertiary education in individual regions of Slovakia was available for year 2011. The data used were from the official statistical data of the Slovak Statistical Office, the Labour Office of Social Affairs and the National Bank of Slovakia.

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