

## **SATISFACTION WITH FAMILY LIFE IN THE TRANSFORMATION CONDITIONS OF SERBIAN SOCIETY**

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**Abstract.** *This research is rather specific, due to the fact it is a part of a broader project entitled Young Family at the Threshold of 21<sup>st</sup> Century, which is simultaneously being carried out by Moscow State Social University, with the identical survey questionnaire used. Comparative results will be the topic of a separate study. In this paper, we studied the most important characteristics of the way of life of young families in eleven towns of Central Serbia, in the conditions of the transformation of Serbian society, and then we considered how much marital partners were satisfied with their family life, and also what determined such satisfaction. The highest correlation is shown in the interrelation between material welfare, property and conditions of living, as indicators of social-economic condition, and satisfaction with family life, as a social-psychological category. Results have shown that in the omnipresent pauperization the family survives though pressured by the need for survival; it becomes closed in its necessary and imposed dependence, becomes idealized as the supreme value, and satisfaction with family life grows with the family's ability to satisfy existential needs.*

**Key words:** *satisfaction with family life, social changes, pauperization.*

### CHARACTERISTICS OF SERBIAN SOCIETY AND FAMILY TRANSFORMATION PROCESS PRECONDITIONS FOR TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

In the overall globalization process, there is a tendency to establish: a system of modern market economy, free entrepreneurship, the rule of law and democracy reached in elections, social justice - along with dynamic social growth. This road, defined as "the major social change" or "transition process" is being taken with varying pace and success by the countries of Central and Southeast Europe. In fact, the countries of Central Europe (the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia) have by far better starting position, including well developed institutions, the rule of law, efficient public service, effi-

cient protection of property rights, all of which satisfy most criteria for major influx of foreign investment. Hence their quicker development, along with the significant transfer of modern technologies and know-how. These countries have progressed the most in the economic transformation process and in market economy development, which enabled them to reach a high level of economic and political stability.

The countries of Southeast Europe (Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro) follow up on the road of social change slowly and less successfully, since their dispositions were constituted on the borderlines of mainstream civilization currents. Actually, "the line which distinguishes between successful and unsuccessful transition countries" can be found in the fact that these countries are separated into "the zones of the influence of European West on one hand and the Ottoman Empire on the other..." (Stojković, 2003: 9). The influence of Western civilization encourages political democracy, legal security, economic motivation, so that social transformation can be carried out more efficiently, without major shocks. Southeast European countries are yet to learn the basic tenets of democracy and market economy, which is a rather difficult task to achieve in the environment of political instability, legal insecurity, economic uncertainty, with modest growth of market institutions and impeded implementation of market reforms. Thus it is more painful for these countries to face the inevitable side effects of transition (insecurity, pauperization, unemployment). All these are indeed reasons why the Southeast European region is not attractive enough for foreign investment, a claim well supported by the following data on "direct foreign investment influx": in 2002 \$ 14.600 million were allocated to Central Europe, and \$ 4.100 million to Southeast Europe, out of which Serbia and Montenegro received only \$ 500 million (Božić, 2003: 191).

#### "REVERSE TRANSITION" OF SERBIAN SOCIETY

Serbia is walking along the road of major social changes with serious problems and resistance, belated, economically undeveloped, technologically backward, and in many elements not independent. Production, consumption, technology, investment, export, and human resources are not harmonized enough to readily accept the challenges set up by the transformation of one economic and social situation, system of institutions and values into the other, almost totally opposite, system of relations and social values. This is why Serbian society is an example of "postponed transition" or even "reverse transition" (Blagojević, 2002: 25).

Contrary to ex-socialist societies of Central and Southeast Europe, Serbian society is today characterized by an atypical transition process. It is atypical because it is conditioned by major historical quakes, which could be labeled: "the migration wave", "the inflation wave", "the wave of sanctions", and "the ethnic rift". Most of these devastating waves have been of "long duration" (Milić, 1995: 137). If we hereby keep in mind the overall milieu of events: many years of social crisis, the civil war, sanctions, inflation, bombardment, it is obvious that the new millennium for Serbia begins in the chaos of social events, with a drastic decrease in standard of living for most of the population, and with a plunge into disaster of institutional and value systems.

Serbian society in post-socialist transition is marked by four basic transformation processes: 1. the privatization process, i.e. the transformation of companies until recently in state-'social' property; 2. the opening up of new private companies and the explosive growth of entrepreneurship; 3. the rapid growth of grey economy and non-legal work; 4. the major redistribution of economic power, after which a new power structure of post-socialist tycoons has been created, as opposed to the overwhelmingly pauperized work-active population (Bolčić, 1995: 21-22). Such processes are occurring in the still tense situation in which politics and economy are intertwined on one hand, and where society becomes increasingly nationalized, on the other. This is certainly not the way to secure systemic preconditions necessary for gaining funds for development and production out of direct foreign investment and the mobilization of internal resources. The dominant model of Serbian society's transition is labeled by some analysts "technocratic and etatist", whereby it is practically equated with injustice, growth of privileges and corruption, all sorts of plunder and deception. This is why such authors believe it would be more accurate to talk about this process as transition recession - stagnation. A very illustrative example of blurred transition is, for instance, that of real earnings which have been constantly rising: from the average 95 DEM in 2000 they rose to 270 DEM in 2002 (Đukić, 2002). However, should we compare other parameters of social growth, for instance industry growth and export – the overall impression would be much more different, since production and export are a far cry from dynamic growth.

In terms of demands imposed by the world, global economic, political and social flows, Serbian society is searching for mechanisms of unavoidable transformation, at the same time expressing serious helplessness in providing at least minimal economic and social security for creating a better life for its citizens. Temporary solutions, with no long-term conception or strategy, postpone more thorough activities towards a better quality of life. Pauperized individuals and their families are resorting to what they have left, without a secure present, and without any vision of tomorrow. They nearly vegetate, reducing their needs to a minimum. An indicator of the dramatic overall standard decrease for most Serbian population is seen in the data on consumer basket: in November 2003, the average net earning was 12,254.00 dinars; the family of four needed 12,605.00 dinars for the consumer basket ([www.rpkombor.co.yu](http://www.rpkombor.co.yu)). According to the most recent data issued by the Serbian Statistics Bureau, the average net earnings were 12,078.00 dinars ([www.statserb.gov.yu](http://www.statserb.gov.yu)), which means that, if we assume that the consumer basket has not become more expensive since October last year, which is very unlikely, the family of four needs to give up some more products from the basket necessary for mere survival.

When projecting total social changes, the unavoidable issue is the condition of economy, and its unfavourable and negative tendencies are as follows: 1. production which is not functioning, reduction of national resources and weakening of the economic power and resources with very low work productivity and total uncompetitiveness in relation to global economy; 2. capital market not functioning - public and private capital are transferred to a handful of tycoons, outside financial institutions, where uncontrolled capital market is operational; 3. goods market not functioning, followed by monopolies and laws of grey economy, where consumers are totally unprotected; 4. labour market not existing or functioning, due to constant needs to cut down on labour force, with increased unemployment (Table 1), financial insecurity, and 'black', 'illegal' employment, where workers are not reported to taxation and security agencies; 5. significant impoverishment of all material resources (Milosavljević, 1998: 2-3).

Table 1. Unemployed persons

Year	Serbia	Central Serbia
	total	
1991	522.932	363.005
2000	731.320	499.886
2001	780.541	533.705
2002	904.494	629.403

Source: Serbia Statistics Yearly, 2002

Dilapidated economy, the basis of all negative and regressive flows in other spheres of social life, gives birth to mechanisms slowing down social transformation. A special significance is given to social contradictions, seen in the disturbances of the basic social structure, where the numbers of poor are increasing, and the middle class is slowly vanishing, pressured by the new economic elite at the top of the pyramid, the elite that used the crisis and collapse to reach high social and economic positions. Criminalization of society, followed by a distorted system of values, causes confusion when one wants to decide how and which way to go further.

#### THE FAMILY AS EXPOSED TO SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The breakdown of the institutional system, the seeming functioning of what is left, is fully pushing the individual and the family to the most exposed venues of social events, causing them to face existential insecurity and poverty, modest options for survival, and no chances at all for better conditions of living. Hence the "feeling of insecurity" as the dominant mood of Serbian population. On one hand, cleft between security and freedom are those favouring the traditional type of political culture and the previous regime. Not ready for changes, these people are dominant in numbers, the less educated, unqualified, older, housewives, retired persons, national minorities. They address their expectations to the state as the institution to guarantee them the same type of security they used to have. On the other hand are the bearers of cultural changes, people turned to the future, willing to take risks - the more educated, more qualified, younger, and fewer in numbers. They find the concept according to which the individual is the source of security more attractive (Mihailović, 1998: 407). This polarization can explain why various types of "pressure" of the international community, aimed at Serbia's codifying the laws of the democratic world and changing the local situation by spreading a liberal ideology, have not been embraced as one might have expected. It is an open issue how much this distrustful people, still afraid of everything coming from the outside, and also loyal to traditionalism and authoritarian consciousness (Gredelj, 1994: 198), is at all ready to accept the challenges of a democratic transformation. Its consciousness is narrowed down to a mere struggle for subsistence: how to provide at least minimal economic and social security - how to survive?

It is clear that social transformation processes have dramatically jeopardized the family, the important primary human community and social institution, exposing it to the consequences of long-term regressive trends. Pressured by negative economic effects, most families are getting significantly impoverished, and the narrowed social and institutional framework does not allow the satisfaction of even the most basic family needs. Numerous

long-term problems coerced many into living together, so that long-overcome family life models are being revived. The family bears the burden of education, support, and care for its members in the insecure environment, thus taking up a heavy burden. Almost all social aid mechanisms have failed, since social institutions fail to adequately harmonize social policy conceptions with growing dangers to survival. Constant decrease in the quality of life does not offer necessary conditions for starting up new family cycles. Prolonged education of the young and unemployment result in extended years of reliance on parents and life in the same house, which postpones their decision to start their own families. Accurate facts, based on demographic data, show that the Serbian family, beginning from early eighties all the way to the present date, has been in a specific transition cycle, with the following change indicators: "a. the probability of remarrying is decreased; b. the number of post-marital cohabitations is increased; c. total fertility after the age of 30 is increased; d. there are more families with one parent and there is a growing number of women as victims of poverty" (Milić, 2001: 316). It is obvious that transition changes impose family transformations and inevitably cause changes in the family habitus. For instance, this weakened socializing role of the parents can largely be explained as a consequence of their being burdened with pressing existential issues, due to which parents do not have enough time for their children, and so risk that the socialization process be taken over by the media, peers, or the street.

Family relations, structure, and functions, burdened by the negative consequences of social transformation, experience moments of crisis, since all negative events produce "a high degree of traumatization of individuals and families". Still, the family shows exceptional vitality, which can be explained by its "internal ambivalence"(Milić, 1995: 160). More precisely, if the family is sensitive to all turmoils shaking global society, and also to the changes in the cycle of family growth, it still displays a remarkable ability to survive precisely in such catastrophic conditions, by activating some mechanisms that had been suppressed, only to emerge in the crisis as important family integration factors. However, survival under pressure does not entail the advancement of the family. It is clear that the healthy family can only mature in the conditions of overall social advancement and growth.

The huge price of negative consequences of social transformations is paid by women. Much empirical research on the influence of transition on women in eastern European countries has revealed that reforms have contributed to the deterioration of their economic and social position (UNESCO: <http://eurochild.gla.ac.uk>). Market economy discourse views women as less reliable and more expensive labour force than men so that, for example, it does not acknowledge nor guarantee to cover the expenses of maternity leave, which further means that women, if they want to have children, must return to privacy and potential isolation and submission. One should keep in mind the fact that in Serbia population policy is not properly financed, which makes room for another trademark of transformation process: low birth rates, decreased fertility, entering marriage late, brain drain, and, on the other hand, no thought-out, economically and socially supported measures to stop such tendencies and create preconditions for citizens to have as many children as they desire. Reproductive circumstances are further hindered by the lack or insufficiency of appropriate population policy. The burden of family survival, in such overall social turmoil conditions, is largely borne by the woman, who takes care of children, old and sick family members, who also daily does the housework, and is all the time under stress trying to harmonize the public and the private. With major effort, she manages to reor-

ganize family life, so that the protection of privacy, as M. Blagojević claims is "the women's strategy" (1995:206). What this indeed means is a voluntary, active sacrifice, whose purpose is to preserve the family oasis and survive until better times come.

It would be necessary to stop here and point to another antinomy of the social transformation process: violence over women is significantly increasing. Within the family, almost every second woman has experienced some sort of psychological violence, while every third woman is exposed to physical violence (Ristanović: 2002). According to the data of the Autonomous Women's Centre in the period January - November 2003, 31 women in Serbia were murdered by their husbands or partners (web: [www.womenngo.org.yu](http://www.womenngo.org.yu)). This dramatic situation can be explained by the shaken or lost positions of men, in both public and private domains. The fulcrum of family support is of necessity transferred to the woman, to her work, and her abilities to find the right way in poverty. Violence is not primarily a private problem, a conflict of spouses who are equally responsible for it, or something that the family itself chooses. Rather, it is an indicator of the lack of readiness of a society to recognize the problem and appropriately tackle it. The report of the World Bank for Reconstruction and Development relates the rate of social development with the rate of achieved solution to these problems. In fact, "societies tolerating the marginalization of women pay the high price of slow development" (Blagojević, 2002: 35).

Nevertheless, there have been some positive steps. Significant changes have occurred in Serbia in the domain of observing these, until recently, socially invisible problems. In the period 2000 - 2002 there were general political transformations aimed at harmonization with EU criteria. Consequently, some laws were changed. Moreover, there were institutional changes and implementations of educational programs (OSCE, 2003). This is indeed a significant step towards implementing the goals Serbia has set before itself on the road of defining more liberal social life patterns.

#### STATISTICAL VIEW OF FAMILY CHANGES

To understand family changes in Serbian transition, it is necessary to have in mind some data from demographic statistics. Unfavourable social conditions reflect on trends typical of the family: in times of social crisis, family members start clinging to one another, whereas when economic stabilization period comes, the number of divorces increases rapidly. Early eighties were characterized by an increase in the numbers of divorced, where every seventh marriage ended in divorce (Table 2). Just before the war, in early nineties, the outcome of every sixth marriage was divorce: 435 marriages ended after less than a year, while significantly more divorces took place, for instance, after five to nine years (1672), or after fifteen years of living together (1900). Furthermore, the number of newly-formed marriages is dropping, and almost every fifth or sixth one ends in divorce. Most susceptible to divorce are childless marriages. Statistical data from the most recent population census show that divorce was the result of 3.616 childless marriages, 2.532 marriages with one child, 1.917 marriages with two children, and 455 marriages with three or more children. The rate of divorced marriages was 24.2% ([www.politika.co.yu](http://www.politika.co.yu)).

Divorces are less common in rural areas (23.437 divorced men and 24.806 divorced women) than in urban environment (41.656 divorced men and 87.474 divorced women), which means that in cities there are almost twice as many women divorced, as compared

with men, which further points to the conclusion that women enter a second marriage more rarely. The average age of divorcees is 36 for women, and around 40 for men.

Research shows that since the seventies and eighties the age for young people to enter marriage has increased. On average, men in central Serbia enter their first marriage at the age of 28.4, and women get married at 24.9 years of age. In the nineties, this average value increased for approximately two years in both sexes ([www.politika.co.yu](http://www.politika.co.yu)). An interesting piece of information deals with those who never enter marriage – at least one third (Blic Daily, 3 February 2003), which can be explained as a consequence of general unfavourable conditions of living (impossibility of getting employment or one's own flat), but also as a consequence of a changed view of matrimonial and family life model, no longer a choice that must be made.

Long-term decrease of population growth rates in central Serbia (Table 2) is a result of low birth rates and high death rates (due to intensive aging of the population). The rate of population growth was 3.6 in 1.000 citizens in 1981, and it significantly dropped from that time on, so that in 2001 it was negative (-2.1). This trend has continued. According to the most recent data of the Republic Statistics Bureau, the rate is currently -2.7.

In central Serbia the falling tendency of population growth is continuing: births are given at ever older years of age; one third of the marriages are childless; there are on average of 0.9 children per married couple; and every fourth child is born outside wedlock ([www.burek.co.yu](http://www.burek.co.yu)). This process is to be related to urbanization, industrialization, changes in the system of values and family relations, and, certainly, deterioration of the position of women, in the environment in which there are no appropriate mechanisms for monitoring family needs during accelerated transformation.

Table 2. Population growth, marriages entered and divorced

Year	Central Serbia		
	population growth	marriages started	marriages divorced
1981	20775	42021	6206
1991	4920	33698	5459
2001	-12207	30318	5566

Source: Serbian Statistics Yearly, 2002

## RESEARCH ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### Topic and Aim of the Research

The topic of the research is satisfaction with family life of young families during the transformation of Serbian society. For the purpose of this research, young families are defined as communities with children up to ten years of age, and satisfaction is defined as a social-psychological category and an indicator of the family's ability to satisfy the needs of its members.

The basic aim of this research is to obtain knowledge of the characteristics of young families in Serbia, and then to determine how much spouses are satisfied with their family life, and also what determines this satisfaction.

### Method

This research is specific due to the fact it is a part of a broader project entitled Young Family at the Threshold of 21st Century, which is simultaneously being carried out by Moscow State Social University, using the same criteria for choosing the sample and the identical survey questionnaire for collecting data. Comparative data and analyses will be reported in a separate, joint study.

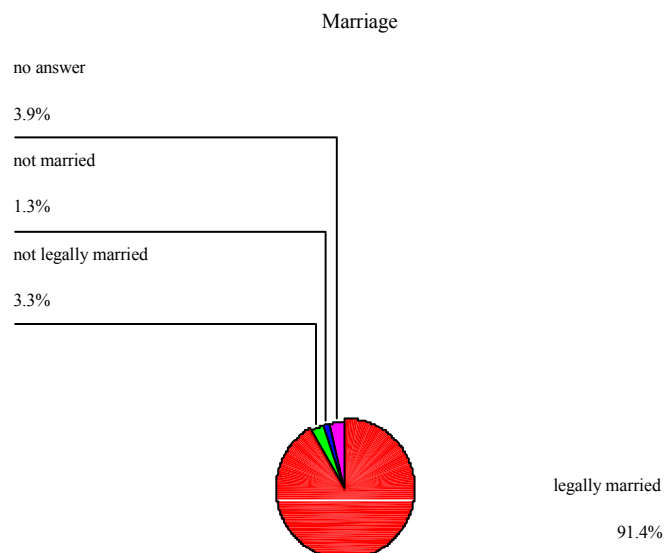
The survey research was carried out in October and November 2003 in eleven Serbian towns (Niš, Vranje, Kragujevac, Surdulica, Svrlijig, Aleksinac, Knjaževac, Vladičin Han, Užice, Prijepolje, and Leskovac). To collect data, we used a survey questionnaire with 159 questions. The questions in the questionnaire were grouped together, and multiple-choice answers were mostly offered. The first group of questions pertains to the general data on subjects and their families; the second group of questions deals with social-economic status; the third one – with the family's spare time, its system of values, expectations, etc., and the fourth group of questions studies satisfaction with family life.

The survey encompassed 152 families. During the choice of the sample, the following criteria were borne in mind: 1. participation of subjects of varying social-economic situations; 2. participation of subjects of both sexes; 3. families were with children whose age did not exceed ten.

### BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

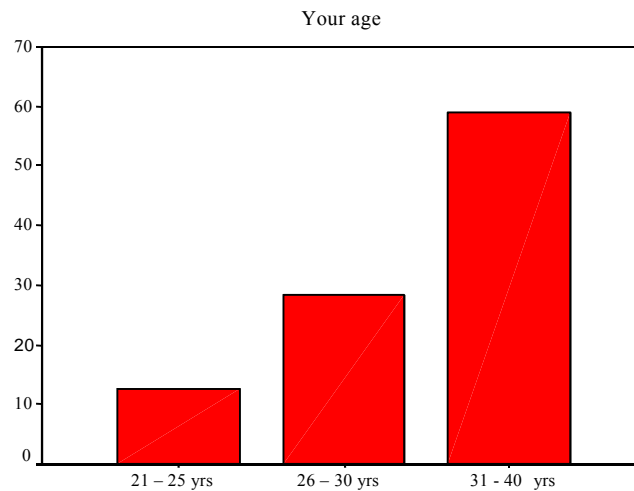
#### Individual and Social-Economic Characteristics

The sample included 63.8% women and 36.2% men. They mostly lived in legal marriages (91.4%).

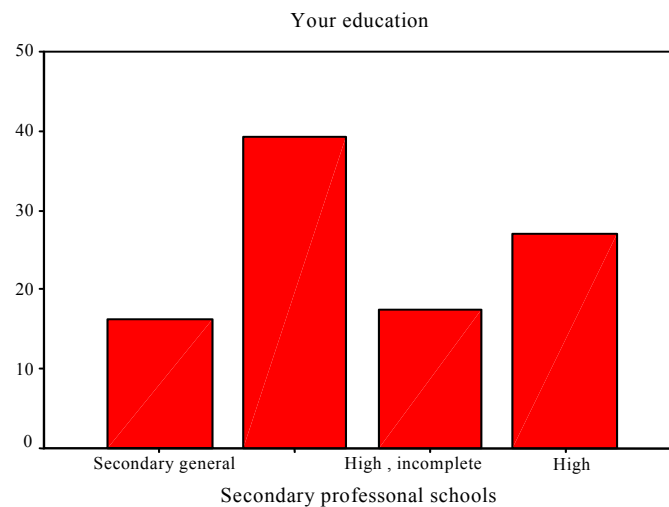


In terms of age, the subjects between 31 and 40 years prevail (58.6%).



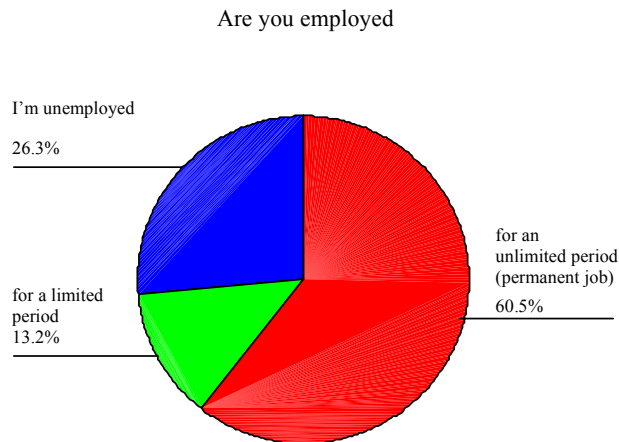


According to qualifications, most subjects had secondary school degrees, and then followed the highly educated (around a third of the population studied).



As for the social-economic structure of the sample, based on employment data we obtained, the most subjects were employed for a limited period of time. Additionally, almost a third of the sample was made up of unemployed individuals.

Among the employed, the most common are clerks with appropriate qualifications, then follow workers in the domains of services, industry, traffic, merchants, and finally – engineers and technicians. Half of the studied population thinks that their job corresponds to their education, but not their specialty or qualifications. When the job of the spouse is concerned, the situation is similar.



Material welfare of the families was primarily studied by means of the source of their income. Income was defined as: salary, pension, financial aid and children's allowance, other financial assistance, aid of relatives, scholarships and other sources; and the options offered were: the only, the main, the additional source of income, and the source I have no use of. Results show that in the tested families salary was most commonly the only, or the main source of income (47.4% – the only one, 40.8% the main one). Pension is the only source of income for 2.0% of the sample and the main source in 3.3%, while for 17.8% of the cases it is an additional source of income, and finally 19.7% find no use of it. Children's allowance is said to be the additional source of income for 13.8% of the subjects, while 19.7% claimed there was no use of this income at all (Table 3).

Table 3. What are the sources of income in your family?

Source	The only source	The main source	An additional source	Source that has no use
Salary	47.4%	40.8%	2.6%	4.6%
Pension	2.0%	3.3%	17.8%	19.7%
Financial aid and child allowance	0.7%	3.3%	13.8%	22.4%
Other financial aid	0.7%	2.0%	2.6%	22.4%
Aid of relatives	0.7%	3.9%	14.5%	19.1%
Scholarship	2.0%	0.7%	23.7%	26.3%

Insight in the distribution of family income has been made available by answers to issues such as what share of income one's family spent on: food, goods for every-day use, goods for long-term use, travel expenses, bills, spare time, education, medical services, needs of living, or other. It was noted that two thirds of the tested individuals spent most of the income on food, while significantly less money is spent on goods for every-day use. Little is spent on goods aimed at long-term use (71.7%), and sometimes nothing at all is spent on this (20.4%). For paying communal expenses (tax, heating, electricity, phone bills), a quarter of the families spend most of their total income, and 38.2% spend a half of their income.

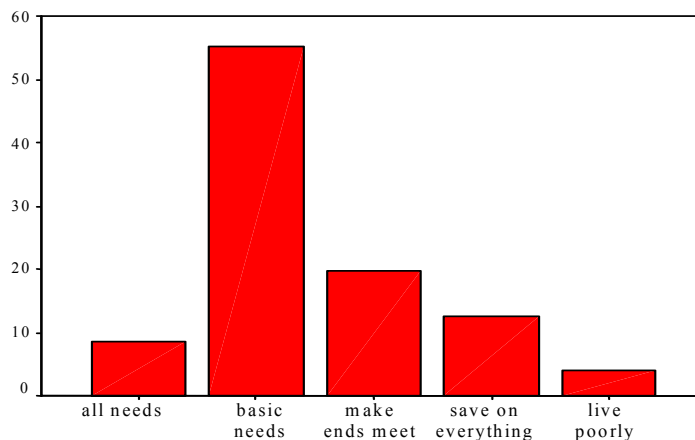
In general, families put aside few resources for their spare time (55.3%), or even no resources at all (38.2%). The situation is similar in terms of education. In fact, only 3.5% of the subjects use most of their income for these purposes. For medical services little (63.2%), or nothing at all (28.9%) is spent (Table 4).

Table 4. How much of income does your family spend on:

Family income distribution	All	Most	Half	Little	Nothing
Food	2.0%	63.2%	21.7%	13.2%	–
Goods for every-day use	0.7%	24.3%	11.8%	60.5%	0.7%
Goods for long-term use	–	2.6%	2.6%	71.7%	20.4%
Travel expenses	–	3.3%	3.3%	48.7%	41.4%
Communal bills (tax, heating, electricity, phone)	1.3%	25.0%	38.2%	30.9%	3.3%
Spare time	–	1.3%	2.6%	55.3%	38.2%
Education	–	3.3%	5.9%	48.0%	28.9%
Medical services	1.3%	2.0%	1.3%	63.2%	28.9%
Needs of living	13.8%	28.3%	4.6%	41.4%	5.9%

Half of studied families live with financial resources which satisfy the most basic needs of living, with no luxuries. Only 8.6% of the families have the position which enables them to satisfy all needs.

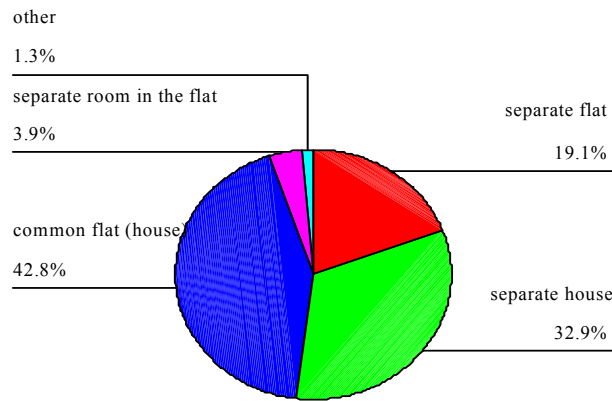
Which of the statements below most accurately depicts your financial situation?



Most of the families are of good situation in terms of property: 69.7% have their own house or flat, 76.3% own a car, 33.6% a garage, 11.2% a vacation house, 84.2% audio systems, 36.2% a computer, and 23.7% a satellite dish.

As for circumstances related to place where the family lives, one of the most important indicators of social and economic status, according to the frequency of answers we conclude that over a half of the studied population lives in a separate flat / house, with their families.

The family lives in:

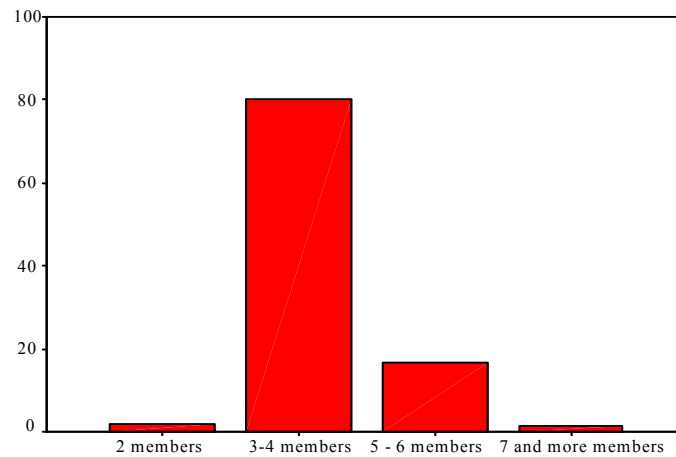


While assessing average conditions of living of the family, most subjects believe their conditions are good, whereas only 3.3% think their conditions are bad rather than good.

### The Family and Children

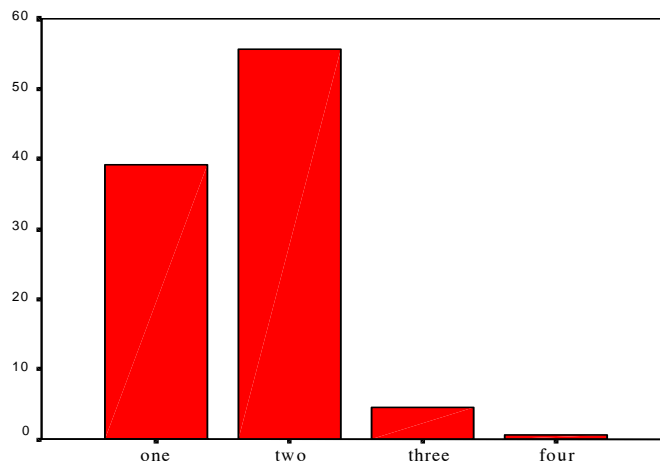
Most families have three or four members (80.3%). Half of the studied families have two supported individuals, whereas 26.3% support three persons.

How many members are there in your family?



Almost two thirds of the subjects have two children, while more than a third of participants have only one child.

How many children have you got at the moment?

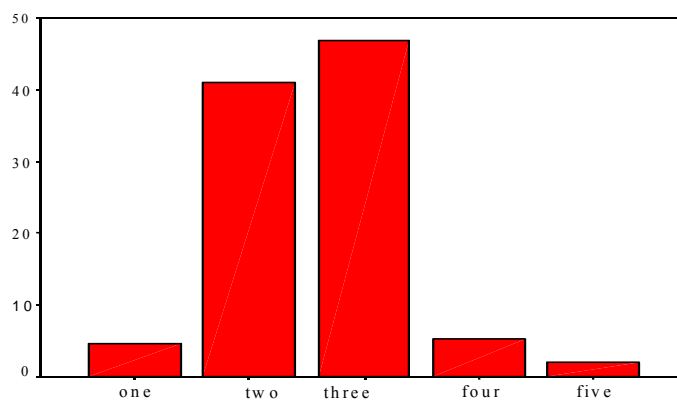


Parents believe themselves fully ready to raise children (73.7%), while some are mostly ready for this (19.7%); however, there are some claiming they are only partly ready (4.6%), or even not ready at all (2.0%). Active participation in the upbringing of children is seen by the subjects as mostly possible (45.4%), or fully possible (28.3%); however, a fourth of the population studied thinks it is possible only up to a point or even impossible to actively bring up children. That family upbringing has a high influence on society is believed by the vast majority of subjects (86.2%). In current financial conditions free activities of children are reduced to a minimum, so that few of them attend courses, private classes, or sections: these include sport sections (11.8%), foreign language courses (8.6%), computer courses (5.9%).

As for their children's future education, parents mostly want their children to receive higher education, which also entails full-fledged university education (85.5%).

If there were all necessary conditions, almost a half of the families questioned would like to have three children.

How many children (including those you already have) would you like to have?



Therefore, the desire to have offspring is present, but there are not all necessary conditions for young families to have as many children as they want. The most frequent reasons preventing the desire for more children to be fulfilled are financial and material problems (61.2%), fear for the children's future (38.8%), health condition of the spouse (34.2%). Nine point two percent of the subjects state that they are not morally or psychologically ready to have as many children as they would like, while 3.3% claim that children could hinder their personal life, professional and intellectual maturation, and career.

### Family and Spare Time

The quality of spare time of family members has been studied via the following criteria: being active in sport, music, arts, tourism in the country. Then, as indicators, there were used: travelling to other countries, going to the theatre, museum, cinema, bars and restaurants, clubs, churches, meeting with friends, watching TV and video, reading, working on one's car or motorcycle, having a rest with no special interest. Subjects were offered the following answers: always, depends, never – because we have no financial resources, and never – because we are not interested. Results in Table 5 show that for active use of one's spare time there is usually either not enough interest, or not enough time and financial preconditions. Hence, families studied mostly spend their free time keeping friends, constantly watching TV and video, or resting and sleeping.

Table 5. The use of spare time

Spare time activities	always	enough	depends	no financial resources	no time	not interested
active in sports	15.3%	25.5%	11.2%	1.9%	22.5%	13.6%
go to the theatre	5.9%	17.1%	25.8%	12.5%	26.2%	12.5%
visit museums	3.7%	8.0%	24.1%	9.3%	24.9%	29.9%
go to the cinema	7.7%	22.2%	36.5%	8.4%	17.6%	7.7%
go to restaurants	5.1%	19.1%	33.2%	20.0%	5.3%	17.4%
play music	10.3%	15.1%	12.3%	2.0%	9.2%	51.1%
practice art	9.8%	5.6%	10.1%	2.7%	11.0%	60.9%
tourism in the country	6.3%	14.8%	22.9%	32.3%	7.0%	16.8%
travel abroad	2.9%	12.2%	12.9%	62.4%	5.6%	4.0%
meet friends	39.0%	43.5%	11.1%	2.3%	2.1%	1.9%
go clubbing	2.9%	12.6%	17.1%	11.5%	20.2%	35.7%
go to church	10.5%	39.7%	36.3%	–	2.4%	11.1%
watch TV	59.9%	27.7%	8.4%	0.4%	1.5%	2.1%
read	33.5%	29.6%	18.3%	1.1%	8.8%	8.6%
work on their cars	17.0%	11.8%	11.8%	5.2%	1.8%	52.5%
sleep, have rest	8.5%	44.3%	30.3%	0.9%	12.2%	–

### Family and Value System

Subjects were offered a list of values, and their task was to assess what was important for them personally. The most importance is given to the family (88.2%), to love of a close person and readiness to help him or her (69.7%), love of the partner (61.2%); then follow: freedom (56.6%), honesty and righteousness (49.3%), material welfare (46.7%), independence (42.1%), keeping friends (40.1%), a healthy way of life (40.1%), the ability

to accommodate to life (40.1%), favourite job (32.9%), sex (32.9%), relationship with other people (32.2%), education (31.6%), rule of law (30.9%), humanism (28.9%), abiding by laws (26.3%), profession and career (24.3%), flexibility in terms of social, ethic, moral norms in order for goals to be reached (23.0%), belief in God (20.4%), creativity (17.8%), and, at the end of the value system table, patriotism (8.6%). The system of values was up to a point modified in relation to the sex of the subjects (Table 6). However, it is obvious that spouses find values towards the top of the table equally important, which is indeed a precondition of family living together in accord.

Table 6. System of values and sex

Value system			
women		men	
family	90.6%	family	85.5%
love of a close person	70.1%	love of a close person	70.4%
freedom	60.8%	love of man/woman	67.3%
love of man/woman	57.7%	freedom	50.0%
honesty and chastity	53.6%	material welfare	49.1%
material welfare	45.8%	ability to accommodate to life	45.3%
keeping friends	43.3%	sex	44.4%
independence	43.3%	honesty and chastity	41.8%
healthy way of life	42.3%	independence	40.7%
ability to accommodate to life	39.4%	healthy way of life	37.7%
favourite job	36.8%	relations with people	35.2%
education	34.7%	keeping friends	34.5%
relations with people	30.9%	rule of law	30.9%
rule of law	30.9%	humanism	30.9%
abiding laws	28.9%	education	27.8%
humanism	27.8%	favourite job	27.3%
sex	27.1%	flexibility for achieving goals	23.6%
profession, career	26.0%	abiding laws	21.8%
belief in God	24.0%	profession, career	21.8%
flexibility for achieving goals	23.2%	creativity	20.0%
creativity	16.7%	belief in God	14.5%
patriotism	6.2%	patriotism	13.0%

### Positions of Subjects

How much subjects have an active position regarding processes occurring in society and state problems was inferred by means of their opting for one of the following positions: 1. I don't consider this trait relevant to myself, 2. I usually don't have the courage to take such an action, but I deeply respect people who are capable of something of the kind, 3. I have this trait, but I do not express it all the time; 4. this is one of the most important principles of my position under any circumstances. The most frequent positions were: I have this trait, but I do not always express it (30.9%), and I do not think this trait is very important for myself (41.4%).

As for active reactions to disobeying laws and social norms, subjects mainly group around two positions: I have this trait, but I do not always express it (40.1%), and I do not find this trait important for myself (23.7%).

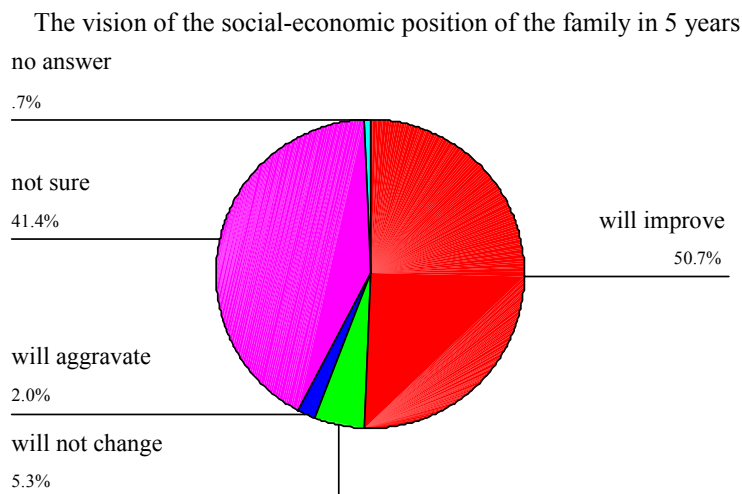
Asked how ready they are to help, spend time and energy to aid a man, to find the truth, more than half of the population claim this is one of the main principles of their position under any circumstances (58.6%), and also they have this trait, but do not always manifest it (34.2%).

The distribution of answers to the question on difficulties they have gone through in their lives shows that the whole population questioned suffers from financial difficulties (71.1%), and then follow: impossibility to carry out life plans (53.9%), lack of time for self-education and professional improvement (32.9%), bad condition of health care services (21.7%), negligence of managers at work, as compared with the abilities of employees (21.1%), hard work conditions (19.7%), difficulties related to the job in the particular staff (15.1%), lack of time for rational household management (14.5%), and lack of time for child raising (13.8%).

When asked whether they were attending advanced training to improve their professional skills, 41.4% of the subjects answered they were. Motives for education are wish for professional education, development of one's career, and cultural-spiritual maturation. More than a half of the population studied is not taking advanced training (58.6%), most often due to the lack of time, for they are immersed into family matters (20.4%), or forced to work a lot (16.4%); the remaining group believes their current knowledge is sufficient, and that additional professional training would not bring them any tangible benefits.

Whether, and in what way, social-economic circumstances in the country influenced psychological climate in the family could be analyzed via most frequent choices from the list of following positions: 1. relations have become more trusting, the family has united when confronted with external problems; 2. today's social-economic condition is a pretext for discord and scandals, 3. other. Overwhelming majority of subjects (74.3%) holds that social-economic condition in the country influences psychological climate in their own family, where 31.6% consider this influence positive, because the family has become stronger, while 41.4% think it negative, because it causes discord and scandals in the family.

As for the subjects' vision of the next five years, when asked how would, in their opinion, social and economic position of the family change – a half answered this would





be for the better. However, the percentage of those not sure if there will be any changes, and those not sure what direction the changes will take, is not neglectable, either.

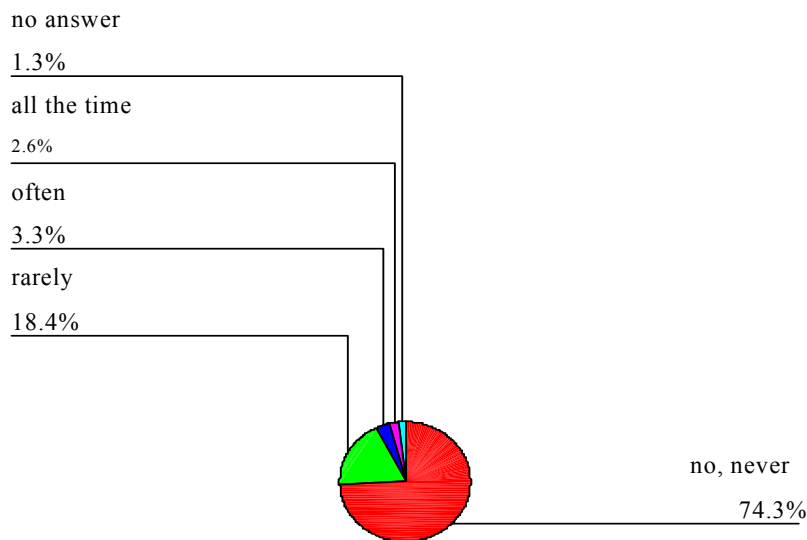
In the survey questionnaire two open-ended questions were given, whose aim was to get an answer to what the subjects viewed as conditions for providing welfare to their family in 21st century, and what the state should do in order for their ideas of family welfare to come true. A half of the tested population believes that for the welfare of their family, better financial condition is crucial. This is followed by a better job, conditions of work, and income (23.7%), harmonious family life (8.6%), appropriate importance given to one's knowledge and work (5.3%), solving the housing problem (4.6%), better organization of healthcare and social services (3.3%), and better schooling conditions (0.7%).

What the state should do so that subjects' ideas on family well being could become true is seen through the most frequent answers: a quarter of the population thinks the state should make available better job positions and higher salaries; 23.0% expect that legal and democratic state should function, and 20.4% want social and economic problems to be the state's priority; 6.6% expect affordable credits and other privileges, while 5.9% demand a more appropriate system to appreciate work and education; investment in agriculture as a boost to family welfare is the choice of 2.6% subjects, while accession to the EU is the option of 2.0%, and the fight against crime of 1.3% of the subjects.

### Satisfaction with Family Life

Particular attention has been paid to the data related to the satisfaction with family life. Thinking of divorce is an aspect which can help analyze this satisfaction.

Does the thought of divorce occur to you



The data clearly show that most subjects never even think of divorce. However, the question how far they are satisfied with their family life reveals some new answers and

provides room for us to pinpoint some new information: more than a half of the studied population (52.0%) chose the option "I like my family life very much", 38.8% chose "I more like it than dislike it", and 9.3% stated they were not satisfied with their family life. It is possible to expect that a high percentage of those dissatisfied with their family life who currently do not consider divorce an option will one day still decide to divorce.

We wanted to find out how much emotional and psychological circumstances in the family and family conditions of living allowed subjects to be physically in shape, to relax, to reach an emotional balance, and to intellectually and spiritually mature. The following options were offered: 1. fully satisfy, 2. satisfy up to a point, 3. do not allow, 4. on the contrary, hinder and impoverish, and 5. not sure. The distribution of answers shows that emotional-psychological circumstances in the family and conditions of living in 21.1% of the cases do not stand as a hindrance and thus allow subjects to fully keep the same physical condition, to calm down and relax (23.0%), to establish an emotional balance (34.2%), and to intellectually and spiritually mature in 24.5%. Over 50.0% percent of the subjects stated that emotional-psychological circumstances up to a point allowed them to stay physically in shape, to calm down and relax, establish emotional balance, achieve intellectual and spiritual maturation.

Results testify that subjects are overwhelmingly satisfied with their relationship with the spouse (71.1%), children (97.4%), and relatives - spouse's parents. Most of the studied population is satisfied with the number of children (70.2%), and with their sexual life (84.9%). Two thirds of our subjects are satisfied with their work and social position, and the same percentage is dissatisfied with their family's financial condition. Almost a half of the tested population is dissatisfied with the way they spend their spare time.

#### SATISFACTION WITH FAMILY LIFE: INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS (RESULTS AND ANALYSES)

This research was initiated upon a supposition that there were significant differences in satisfaction with family life depending on individual and social-economic characteristics of spouses' position.

The first level of analysis pertains to research results, which are grouped in two observed relations: 1. Individual characteristics and satisfaction with family life; 2. Social-economical characteristics and satisfaction with family life.

### **1. Individual Characteristics and Satisfaction with Family Life**

#### *1.1. Sex and Satisfaction with Family Life*

As expected, there are differences in satisfaction with family life depending on sex as an indicator of individual characteristics (Table 5). With respect to the entire population of women tested, 89.7% are satisfied with their family life (seen in two most frequent answers: I like my family life very much, and I like my family life rather than not like it). Hence the data that a high percentage of women never considers divorce (Table 6).

With respect to the total number of male participants, 92.7% are satisfied with their family life, where the dominant statement is I like my family life very much (Table 7). The vast majority of men never think of divorce (Table 8).

Table 7. Satisfaction with family life and sex

Satisfaction with Family Life	Sex	
	Woman	Man
I like my family life very much	46.4%	61.8%
I like my family life rather than not	43.3%	30.9%
I can hardly say I like my family life	6.2%	7.3%
I dislike it, rather than like it	3.1%	–
I don't like my family life at all	1.0%	–

Table 8. Divorce considerations and sex

Do you consider divorce	Sex	
	Woman	Man
No, never	71.6%	81.8%
Rarely	21.1%	14.5%
Often	5.3%	–
All the time	2.1%	3.6%

Therefore, if results are related to the total number of women, or men, men seem to be more satisfied with family life. This finding is not surprising, since women indeed bear the main burden of family life, very often balancing between having and not having, engaging in the family so as to make up for the absence of the spouse and the lack of social care. The number of women satisfied with their family life, is, however, surprising. The explanation should be sought in the fact we have already mentioned that during social crisis the family gathers around the woman, who is very powerful in the private domain. This very power can be a factor of her satisfaction.

Men are more satisfied with their relation with their wives than the other way round (Table 9). It is interesting to note that there is not a single person in the male population dissatisfied with his relationship with the spouse. Men are also more satisfied with their relationship with the spouse's parents (54.5%) (Table 10). These data point to the remnants of traditional views, according to which the one who takes care of his or her son-in-law can expect his or her daughter to be better treated in her own family. It is obvious that in the tested families sons-in-law have a privileged position. On the other hand, again in accordance with the traditional behaviour model, the woman-newcomer is expected to work, give birth, obey, and it is on her to choose how satisfied she will be with such a position.

Table 9. Satisfaction concerning the relation with the spouse and sex

Satisfaction concerning the relation with the spouse	Sex	
	Woman	Man
Satisfied	64.6%	83.6%
Satisfied rather than not	22.9%	12.7%
Hard to say	7.3%	2.6%
Rather dissatisfied	3.1%	–
Dissatisfied	2.1%	–

Table 10. Satisfaction with the relation with the spouse's parents and sex

Satisfaction concerning relation with the spouse's parents	Sex	
	Woman	Man
Satisfied	37.6%	54.5%
Satisfied rather than not	32.3%	32.7%
Hard to say	12.9%	9.1%
Rather dissatisfied	10.8%	1.8%
Dissatisfied	6.5%	1.8%

Men are less satisfied with the number of children than women, which is especially visible in satisfaction frequency (Table 11).

Table 11. Satisfaction with the number of children and sex

Satisfaction with number of children	Sex	
	Woman	Man
Satisfied	70.8%	50.9%
More yes than no	6.3%	7.3%
Hard to say	2.1%	7.3%
More no than yes	5.2%	3.6%
Dissatisfied	15.6%	30.9%

A more prominent satisfaction of women with the existing number of children should be interpreted with the help of the fact that it is the woman who still carries the burden of parenthood, since fatherhood is still largely seen as the man working and earning money outside home. Although the law allows the father to use maternity leave too, the percentage of men actually using this right is neglectable. This being so, due to giving birth and child raising, women are detached from public life for a shorter or longer period, and they are thus less desirable labour force. One of the most secure ways to protect herself from this is for the woman to have fewer children, or no children at all. As we see, most men are dissatisfied with this kind of choice, which is mostly made by the woman.

Spouses are evenly dissatisfied with their spare time, but, when satisfaction is concerned - men are a bit more frequent (Table 12). This is reasonable, since women, burdened with family and the household, mostly do not have enough spare time, or, if they do, they are too tired to use this spare time productively.

Table 12. (Dis)satisfaction with spare time and sex

Satisfaction with spare time	Sex	
	Woman	Man
Satisfied	15.5%	20.4%
Satisfied rather than not	17.5%	20.4%
Hard to say	16.5%	14.8%
Rather dissatisfied	25.8%	20.4%
Dissatisfied	24.7%	24.1%

Dissatisfaction is also pronounced in terms of the spouses' job: men are less satisfied (Table 13). Explanation could be found in the fact that in economic stagnation conditions low wages, or even the total lack of guaranteed income, are more of a loss than a gain for

the family, since the absence of the woman from the private sphere is rather difficult to make up for.

Table 13. (Dis)satisfaction with the spouse's job and sex

Satisfaction with the spouse's job	Sex	
	Woman	Man
Satisfied	27.5%	31.3%
Satisfied rather than not	30.8%	14.6%
Hard to say	17.6%	4.2%
Rather dissatisfied	11.0%	8.3%
Dissatisfied	13.2%	41.7%

A half of the male population is mostly satisfied with their social position (satisfied and more satisfied than dissatisfied). However, one should bear in mind that over a quarter of them express dissatisfaction, which clearly points that men are less satisfied with their social position than women (Table 14).

Table 14. (Dis)satisfaction with social position and sex

Satisfaction with social position	Sex	
	Woman	Man
Satisfied	38.1%	30.9%
Satisfied rather than not	28.9%	14.5%
Hard to say	14.4%	21.8%
Rather dissatisfied	9.3%	7.3%
Dissatisfied	9.3%	25.5%

This dissatisfaction should be viewed in the context of financial condition, and also in terms of the importance men ascribe to their social position.

### *1.2. Education and Satisfaction with Family Life*

Education as an indicator of individual characteristics is significantly related to the satisfaction with one's family life, primarily through the assessment of financial condition. Highly educated subjects are the most satisfied with their financial condition. Dissatisfaction is evenly distributed in the remaining groups.

Table 15. Satisfaction with financial condition and education of subjects

Satisfaction with financial condition	Education			
	Secondary general	Secondary professional	Incomplete High	High
Satisfied	4.5%	17.2%	11.5%	27.5%
Satisfied rather than not	22.7%	29.3%	15.4%	27.5%
Hard to say	27.3%	15.5%	26.9%	12.5%
Rather dissatisfied	18.2%	22.4%	19.2%	15.0%
Dissatisfied	27.3%	15.5%	26.9%	17.5%

In all educational categories dissatisfaction with spare time is pronounced. This usually means their lack of free time, since mere survival wants additional work, and, at the same time, the lack of money does not allow any time left to be appropriately spent. Hence spare time, if any, usually boils down to being idle.

All educational groups are satisfied with their own job, and, when the spouse's job is concerned the tendency is obvious that the higher the education the lower the dissatisfaction (Table 16).

Table 16. Satisfaction with the spouse's job and education

Satisfaction with the spouse's job	Education			
	Secondary general	Secondary professional	Incomplete High	High
Satisfied	13.0%	26.4%	22.7%	44.7%
Satisfied rather than not	17.4%	28.3%	22.7%	26.3%
Hard to say	13.0%	7.5%	31.8%	10.5%
Rather dissatisfied	8.7%	13.2%	–	13.2%
Dissatisfied	47.8%	24.5%	22.7%	5.3%

Satisfaction with social position increases with the educational level (Table 17).

Table 17. Satisfaction with social position and education

Satisfaction with social position	Education			
	Secondary general	Secondary professional	Incomplete High	High
Satisfied	25.0%	31.0%	38.5%	47.5%
Satisfied rather than not	29.2%	20.7%	26.9%	20.0%
Hard to say	8.3%	20.7%	23.1%	12.5%
Rather dissatisfied	8.3%	6.9%	7.7%	12.5%
Dissatisfied	29.2%	20.7%	3.8%	7.5%

As for satisfaction with the number of children as related to educational structure, one should first notice that differences are not major. However, a more prominent satisfaction with the number of children was expressed by our subjects with completed secondary education (having in mind the options: satisfied and satisfied rather than not). This generation is likely to have as many children as once desired, which is not the case in the highly educated. Extended education, desire for professional advancement, role conflicts and the like are indeed obstacles to having more children – thus this category is less satisfied with the actual number of children (Table 18).

Table 18. Satisfaction with the number of children and education

Satisfaction with the number of children	Education			
	Secondary general	Secondary professional	Incomplete High	High
Satisfied	62.5%	65.5%	61.5%	61.5%
Satisfied rather than not	16.7%	5.2%	3.8%	5.1%
Hard to say	–	5.2%	3.8%	5.1%
Rather dissatisfied	–	1.7%	3.8%	10.3%
Dissatisfied	20.8%	22.4%	26.9%	17.9%

### 1.3. Age and Satisfaction with Family Life

As an indicator of individual characteristics, age is highly related to satisfaction with family life (Table 19). All age categories are highly satisfied with their family life, but the youngest subject find their family life the most attractive. Older generations more frequently offered the answer "I like it rather than not", which means they are more reserved when assessing all the traits of living together. Although they are very satisfied overall, the oldest subjects are partly dissatisfied, too, and there are even those who do not like their family life at all.

Table 19. Satisfaction with family life and age

Satisfaction with family life	Age		
	21 – 25 yrs	26 – 30 yrs	31 – 40yrs
I like my family life very much	57.9%	51.2%	50.6%
I like it rather than not	31.6%	46.5%	37.1%
I hardly like it	10.5%	–	9.0%
I dislike it rather than not	–	2.3%	2.2%
I don't like my family life at all	–	–	1.1%

All age categories are mostly satisfied with how many children they have (Table 20). However, the most satisfied are the oldest, which can largely be correlated to family planning which in their case has already come true, or with their reconciliation with actual circumstances, which might not have been in accordance with all their wishes and plans.

Table 20. (Dis)satisfaction with the number of children and age

Satisfaction with number of children	Age		
	21 – 25 yrs	26 – 30 yrs	31 – 40yrs
Satisfied	63.2%	60.5%	64.8%
Satisfied, rather than not	5.3%	4.7%	8.0%
Hard to say	–	7.0%	3.4%
Rather dissatisfied	10.5%	4.7%	3.4%
Dissatisfied	21.1%	23.3%	20.5%

As to the youngest, their more prevalent dissatisfaction (dissatisfied and dissatisfied rather than not) is most probably the consequence of their inability to have more children, due to existential problems, educating the children, etc. Such dissatisfaction leaves room for some hope, since the end of such unfavourable circumstances can mark the beginning of the period where these people will be able to have more offspring.

Satisfaction concerning the relation with the spouse drops with age, although all age groups are largely satisfied (Table 21). Certain dissatisfaction does occur in the older groups, whereas in the younger groups not a single instance of dissatisfaction was noted.

Table 21. Satisfaction with the relation with spouse and age

Satisfaction with spouse relation	Age		
	21 – 25 yrs	26 – 30 yrs	31 – 40yrs
Satisfied	78.9%	67.4%	71.6%
Satisfied, rather than not	21.1%	30.2%	13.6%
Hard to say	–	2.3%	9.1%
Rather dissatisfied	–	–	3.4%
Dissatisfied	–	–	2.3%

Older subjects are satisfied with the spouse's relatives and parents (Table 22). The most dissatisfaction is shown in the 21 – 25 age group, which could be interpreted as their more prevalent need for independence. Due to the fact that most young families live with their parents in a single household, it would be unrealistic to expect that everything goes on smoothly all the time. The least dissatisfaction with the spouse's parents is expressed by the middle-age generation, which is probably the result of well-trodden and accepted relations, causing higher satisfaction with current social environment.

Table 22. Satisfaction with the spouse's parents and age

Satisfaction with the spouse's parents	Age		
	21 – 25 yrs	26 – 30 yrs	31 – 40yrs
Satisfied	31.6%	52.4%	41.9%
Satisfied, rather than not	21.1%	33.3%	34.9%
Hard to say	10.5%	7.1%	14.0%
Rather dissatisfied	15.8%	7.1%	5.8%
Dissatisfied	21.1%	–	3.5%

The highest percentage of satisfaction with material welfare is seen in the youngest category (Table 23), which can be explained with the traditional closeness of children and parents, which does not end even after children have created their own families. More suggestive are the data on dissatisfaction with financial condition: almost a half of the oldest generation is mostly dissatisfied.

Table 23. Satisfaction with financial condition and age

Satisfaction with financial condition	Age		
	21 – 25 yrs	26 – 30 yrs	31 – 40yrs
Satisfied	21.1%	19.5%	14.6%
Satisfied, rather than not	31.6%	31.7%	21.3%
Hard to say	21.1%	14.6%	19.1%
Rather dissatisfied	–	19.5%	23.6%
Dissatisfied	26.3%	14.6%	21.3%

Satisfaction with social position drops with age, so that the oldest age group (31 – 40 years) is the least satisfied – and this is exactly the age group that should by and large be plucking the fruits of their own work and social engagement. It is obviously not the case, since expectations shatter in times of social turbulences, modest needs, and inability to pull through one's personal plans (Table 24).

Table 24. Satisfaction with social position and age

Satisfaction with social position	Age		
	21 – 25 yrs	26 – 30 yrs	31 – 40yrs
Satisfied	47.4%	41.9%	30.3%
Satisfied, rather than not	26.3%	23.3%	22.5%
Hard to say	15.8%	14.0%	19.1%
Rather dissatisfied	–	11.6%	9.0%
Dissatisfied	10.5%	9.3%	19.1%



Satisfaction with the way one's spare time is used increases with age, so that the youngest have expressed the highest dissatisfaction with the way they spend their free time. The most satisfied are the subjects from the age group 31 – 40 years (Table 25). If we get back to the data from previous analysis, testifying that most of the population spends their spare time passively, watching TV, the video, or sleeping, it is clear that these habits on one hand, and the lack of money and motives on the other, determine both satisfaction and expectations related to spare time.

Table 25. Satisfaction with the use of spare time and age

Satisfaction with the use of spare time	Age		
	21 – 25 yrs	26 – 30 yrs	31 – 40yrs
Satisfied	10.5%	11.6%	21.6%
Satisfied, rather than not	21.1%	20.9%	15.9%
Hard to say	10.5%	23.3%	13.6%
Rather dissatisfied	21.1%	23.3%	25.0%
Dissatisfied	36.8%	20.9%	23.9%

At the end of this analysis of the interrelation between satisfaction with family life and individual characteristics, we need to make a short pause, since dissatisfaction so pronounced wants an additional explanation. How come that in the times of social insecurity, lack of basic resources for living, and impossibility to plan virtually anything, there is such a high satisfaction with family life? In particular, how come that so high a percentage of women is satisfied with their family life and their spouse, so that they do not even think of divorce? The answer to these questions could be found in the fact that this research was indeed carried out in 11 towns, but, apart from Niš and Kragujevac, all of them were small urban settlements, where the traditional family model is still very much alive. Dedication of family members to one another, solidarity, and tolerance, along with the acceptance of the fact that living together means good and bad things alike, are some of the reasons that help the family hold out even under the strong pressure imposed by the need to survive. Naturally, one should not forget that the reported satisfaction with family life is most often a result of circumstances the respondents are forced to live under.

In the turbulent social situation, unsuitable for normal living, mechanisms are activated that help the community survive. The woman is given the decisive role in creating a survival strategy. On the other hand: the woman has no opportunity to choose between the private and the public – her natural choice is the family; in the family, many women suffer molestation – but stay with their spouses. In addition, the huge majority of women respondents are satisfied with their family life. One should hereby again strongly criticize the traditional value system which binds the woman to the private domain, asking from her to be more responsible than the man for the events in the family. This is why the woman is satisfied if she manages to keep the family together.

## 2. Social-Economic Characteristics and Satisfaction with Family Life

### 2.1. Employment and Satisfaction with Family Life

By analyzing social-economic characteristics, one notices significant differences in relation to satisfaction with family life in the broader sense. More precisely, the general

statement whether or not they are satisfied with their family life reveals no differences among subjects, since both the employed and the unemployed in vast percentage express satisfaction with their family life, whereby the employed are more satisfied (in over 90% of the situations the employed opt for the answers "I like my family life very much" or "I like my family life rather than not"). The unemployed express more prominent dissatisfaction than the employed, which one might expect, since unemployment entails more striking existential problems, further causing mutual intolerance between the spouses (Table 26).

Table 26. Employment and satisfaction with family life

Satisfaction with family life	Employment		
	For a limited time period	For an indefinite time period (permanent jobs)	I am not employed
I like it very much	54.3%	40.0%	52.2%
I like it rather than not	38.0%	55.0%	32.5%
Hard to say	5.4%	5.0%	10.0%
I rather dislike it	2.2%	–	2.5%
I don't like it at all	–	–	2.5%

Subjects with permanent jobs are the most satisfied with their social position, which is logical, since when compared with the unemployed and those employed for a limited time period only, they have a more certain job, salary, status (Table 27). The satisfaction with social position is thus directly related to material welfare: the worse the financial condition, the lower the satisfaction with social position.

Table 27. Employment and satisfaction with social position

Satisfaction with social position	Employment		
	For a limited time period	For an indefinite time period (permanent jobs)	I am not employed
I like it very much	39.1%	20.0%	35.5%
I like it rather than not	22.8%	30.0%	22.5%
Hard to say	15.2%	20.0%	17.1%
I rather dislike it	5.4%	30.0%	5.0%
I don't like it at all	17.4%	–	15.1%

Those with permanent jobs are more satisfied with their jobs as compared with those employed for a limited time period only. This finding can be explained with the fact that limited-period employees are usually hired for jobs not corresponding to their education and qualifications, which provokes their more conspicuous dissatisfaction with the temporary job position (Table 28).

Table 28. Employment and satisfaction with the job

Satisfaction with the job	Employment	
	For a limited time	Permanent
Satisfied	43.5%	15.8%
Satisfied rather than not	26.1%	36.8%
Hard to say	12.0%	10.5%
Dissatisfied	18.5%	36.8%

## 2.2. Financial situation and satisfaction with family life

Financial situation and satisfaction with family life are significantly correlated. The better the financial condition, the higher the satisfaction with family life. "I like my family life very much" is the statement of 92.3% of the subjects whose financial resources are sufficient to cover all needs (Table 29). In this category there is not a single instance of dissatisfaction. A higher frequency of dissatisfaction answers is seen in those subjects whose resources cover only the most basic needs, those who make ends meet, who save on everything, or who live in poverty. Living together in a family offers more pleasure if financial situation is better, if one does not struggle for mere survival.

Table 29. Financial situation and satisfaction with family life

Satisfaction with family life	Financial situation				
	Resources cover all needs	Resources cover basic needs	We make ends meet	We save on everything	Catastrophe, we live in poverty
I like it very much	92.3%	52.4%	46.7%	47.4%	–
I like it rather than not	7.7%	45.2%	33.3%	31.6%	66.7%
Hard to say	–	1.2%	16.7%	15.8%	16.7%
I rather dislike it	–	1.2%	–	5.3%	16.7%
I don't like it at all	–	–	3.3%	–	–

Satisfaction concerning the relation with the spouse is directly related to financial circumstances in the family: if the resources available are enough to cover all needs, satisfaction rate is 100% (satisfied, and satisfied rather than not). Dissatisfaction options are more prevalent in subjects saving on everything, or those whose financial resources are catastrophic, and who thus live in poverty (Table 30).

Table 30. Financial situation and satisfaction with the relationship with the spouse

Satisfaction with relationship with the spouse	Financial situation				
	Resources cover all needs	Resources cover basic needs	We make ends meet	We save on everything	Catastrophe, we live in poverty
Satisfied	92.3%	71.1%	76.7%	52.6%	66.7%
Satisfied rather than not	7.7%	24.1%	13.3%	21.1%	–
Hard to say	–	2.4%	3.3%	21.1%	33.3%
Rather dissatisfied	–	2.4%	–	5.3	–

Irrespective of the social and economic position, families would like to have two or three children.

As one may guess, the housing situation significantly reflects on satisfaction with family life. Subjects who live in a separate flat or house are mostly favouring the option "I like my family life very much". The number of those who live in a shared flat with parents and have the same position is twice lower (Table 31).

Table 31. Place of residence and satisfaction with family life

Satisfaction with family life	You live in:			
	a separate flat	a separate house	a shared flat / house	a separate room in the flat / house
I like it very much	62.1%	70.0%	36.9%	16.7%
I rather like it	27.6%	24.0%	50.8%	83.3%
Hard to say	3.4%	2.0%	12.3%	–
I rather dislike it	3.4%	4.0%	–	–
I don't like it at all	3.4%	–	–	–

Interestingly, among members of extended families there were no people who explicitly stated they were dissatisfied with family life. Reasons for this should be sought in the fact that the broader household still provides some guaranteed solutions to common problems in emergency situations: common expenses, common meals, taking care of children, etc.

### 2.3. Views on the Future and Satisfaction with Family Life

Financial situation in the family has an effect on the statement what the family's social-economic situation will be in five years. The better the present situation the more optimistic the statement. Where resources cover all needs, expectations go in the improvement direction. More pronounced insecurity and pessimism are expressed by those saving on everything and those living in poverty (Table 32).

Table 32. Financial situation and the vision of the future

Social and economic position in 5yrs	Financial situation				
	Resources cover all needs	Resources cover basic needs	We make ends meet	We save on everything	Catastrophe, we live in poverty
Will improve	53.8%	53.6%	51.7%	42.1%	33.3%
Will not change	15.4%	6.0%	3.4%	–	–
Will aggravate	–	1.2%	–	–	33.3%
Not sure	30.8%	39.3%	44.8%	57.9%	33.3%

Personal and family future is least clearly seen by those employed for a limited time period. More precisely, two thirds of this population are not sure how the social-economic situation of their family will change in five years. This is easy to understand, their social status being so uncertain. It is interesting that the most optimism is reported by the unemployed, who believe they will improve their own and their family's social and economic condition. They are awaiting employment and hoping for the better, and therefore more easily bear the troubles of being unemployed (Table 33).

Table 33. Employment and the vision of the future

Social-economic condition in 5 years	Employment		
	For a limited time period	Permanent	Not employed
Will improve	47.3%	40.0%	65.0%
Will not change	7.7%	–	2.5%
Will aggravate	2.2%	–	2.5%
Not sure	42.9%	60.0%	30.0%

In the opinion of 50.0% of the subjects, family welfare in the new millennium would be made available by a better financial situation; for 23.7% a better job and work conditions would secure welfare. The following have also been pinpointed as prerequisites of family welfare: appropriate value ascribed to knowledge and work, solving housing problems, better operation of health care and social services and better schooling conditions.

In order to live in a satisfactory family, subjects expect that the state give them: better job positions and higher salaries (25.0%), the rule of law and democracy in the country (23.0%), solution to social and economic problems (20.4%), and also affordable credits, appropriate value ascribed to work and education, investment in agriculture, eradication of crime, and accession to the EU.

#### BASIC DETERMINANTS OF SATISFACTION WITH FAMILY LIFE

The second layer of our analysis pertains only to those relations where very high levels of statistically significant differences are seen. On this basis, we can further the analysis offered above, in order to reveal family life satisfaction determinants.

The following relations showed statistical significance: 1/ age and relationship with relatives (chi 0.003); 2/ sex and the spouse's job (chi 0.001); 3/ average conditions and satisfaction with family life (chi 0.000); 4/ financial situation and satisfaction with family life (chi 0.001); and 5/ financial situation and satisfaction with social position (chi 0.000).

#### Social – Economic Determinants

Data analysis pointed to the strongest correlation between financial situation, property owned, average conditions of living, as indicators of social and economic conditions on one hand, and satisfaction with family life as a social and psychological category on the other.

Subjects with enough resources to cover all needs by and large express satisfaction with their family life; on the other hand, there is a decreasing satisfaction trend with the lack of resources (Table 27).

Having a countryside vacation house, a garage, even a satellite dish, or other indicators of a better situation in terms of property, directly correlates to the satisfaction with family life. The data show that families living in their own flat or house see their living conditions as better, and they express by far more satisfaction with their family life than families living in shared flats or houses.

Satisfaction with family life, determined by the family's social and economic circumstances, shows that everyday life in the family is directed at satisfying basic existential

needs. If family members are successful in this venture, their satisfaction rises. Family welfare and pleasure are related, and most often come down to financial situation.

### **Individual Determinants**

Faced with external problems, the family unites. It is important to preserve the spirit of being together, to persevere and survive in difficult transition times, times of uncertainty and risk. Individual needs, ambitions, and demands are suppressed, for in such survival conditions it is not appropriate to search for pleasure sources in some more sophisticated family life domains.

Individual trait indicators (sex, age, and education) influence satisfaction with relations (with the spouse, parents, or relatives), but statistically do not strongly influence satisfaction with the financial situation, family life, or social position. These data clearly suggest that individual need levels remain in the private domain, as if staggering in family and other indispensable social relations with parents and relatives, since social crisis conditions require these networks to become stronger again, for purposes of mere survival strategy.

### **CONCLUSION**

Demographic statistics shows that under the influence of major social changes, the family transformation process in Central Serbia is halted:

- The number of new marriages is dropping, and every fifth or sixth one ends in divorce;
- The age limit for entering marriage is moved further;
- Numbers of those never getting married increase;
- Birth rate reduction tendency continues;
- Births are more often delayed until older age;
- The number of childless marriages increases;
- The number of single-parent families and extramarital children rises.

The family has become the venue of mere survival, pressured by poverty, unemployment, lack of strong institutions, and chaos of new value positions and behaviour models. Social crisis strikes the family in almost all aspects, and demands of the family to do what institutions cannot. Relationships with relatives are thus renewed, including old models of all the family in the house taking care of children and the old. The major burden of this renewal needs to be borne by the woman. The family becomes idealized, family ties grow stronger, strong values become revived, and in the personal value system, family is given top priority.

Transition crisis is building mechanisms to survive through retraditionalization of the family. The family will not and cannot leave its members without basic existential needs satisfied. It seems that the importance of the family and satisfaction with family life increase exactly due to such reasons. In times of great social changes, there can hardly be any other institution which could provide such security.

Basic results obtained by statistical crossing of individual and social-economic traits of tested families with family life satisfaction show:

- High satisfaction with family life is expressed by both women and men, whereby they do not consider divorce as an option;
- As compared with women, men are more satisfied with their family life, relationship with spouses and their parents; they are however dissatisfied with the number of children and their own social position;
- Spouses are highly dissatisfied with their spare time;
- The higher the education level the higher the satisfaction with financial situation, social position, the spouse's job; however, the higher is the dissatisfaction with the number of children, too;
- All age groups state they are highly satisfied with their family life; the youngest are the most satisfied;
- Along with age, there is a rising satisfaction with the number of children, relations with relatives and spouse's parents, the way free time is organized; however, with age, there increases dissatisfaction with financial and social position, and dissatisfaction with the relationship with the spouse;
- As compared with the unemployed, the employed are more satisfied with their family life;
- Limited time period employees are more dissatisfied with their social position and job in comparison with those with permanent employment;
- The better the financial situation, the more pronounced is the satisfaction with family life and spousal relationship, and also the more optimistic is the vision of the family's future
- Irrespective of their social and economic position, families would like to have two or three children;
- A better housing situation increases satisfaction with family life;
- The unemployed have the highest expectations;
- Help of the state is primarily seen as opening up new vacancies and providing higher wages;
- In the new millennium, family welfare could be achieved by improving the family's financial situation.

This research has shown that most families live in extraordinary and poor living conditions, with no real choice between numerous options. Accordingly, the following conclusion reads: satisfaction with family life is not a result of strengthening the family on firm grounds, but rather a consequence of the fact family members are increasingly referred to one another and inevitably interdependent.

Arguments for such a conclusion should be looked for in objective unfavourable circumstances families live in on one hand, and in the subjective weakness of subjects to face the realistic image of their family life on the other. A half of the families tested live with such financial resources that they can barely cover the most basic needs, so that no luxuries at all are available. Only about ten percent of the families can satisfy all their needs with the income they have. In such a context, family welfare and satisfaction with family life are largely related to financial situation and the family's success in satisfying existential needs only. Satisfaction with family life and the spouse is the most visible in families with no financial problems. Dissatisfaction increases as financial situation worsens, so that the most dissatisfied are the ones who barely make ends meet and those who

save on everything. Pressured by such problems, families become closed, they start relying on what they have and can do on their own. In omnipresent pauperization and insecurity, it is indeed a success to merely survive and stay together, so that other problems are suppressed, and other issues are not seen as relevant. Hence reasons to be satisfied in the lesser jeopardized families. However, one should expect that the overall improvement of the situation in society and increase in standard of living should open up the way to some new needs, expectations, requirements for different, better family relations. At that moment, the mechanism of being satisfied with little will surely give way to something else. It is an open issue whether assessments on satisfaction with the spouse and family life given above will then remain unchanged.

On the other hand, so high a level of satisfaction with family life can also be a consequence of insincerity of the subjects, for it must be very hard to admit that one has chosen the wrong spouse, or that one has organized one's family life unsuccessfully. Here one should also keep in mind the research covered relatively young subjects and young families, where illusions are still a powerful tool for survival until better times arrive.

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## ZADOVOLJSTVO PORODIČNIM ŽIVOTOM U USLOVIMA TRANSFORMACIJE SRPSKOG DRUŠTVA

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*Specifičnost ovog istraživanja uslovljena je činjenicom da se ono uklapa u jedan širi projekat pod nazivom Mlada porodica na pragu XXI veka, koji paralelno, sa identičnim anketnim upitnikom, realizuje Moskovski državni socijalni univerzitet u Moskvi. Komparativni rezultati biće predmet analize posebne studije. U ovom radu smo istraživali najbitnije karakteristike načina života mladih porodica u jedanaest gradova Centralne Srbije, u uslovima transformacije srpskog društva, a potom smo utvrđivali u kolikoj meri su bračni partneri zadovoljni svojim porodičnim životom, i čime je determinisano to zadovoljstvo. Najveći stepen korelacije pokazuje povezanost materijalnog stanja, imovnog statusa i uslova stanovanja, kao indikatora socijalno-ekonomskog stanja, sa zadovoljstvom porodičnim životom, kao socijalno-psihološkom kategorijom. Rezultati su pokazali da porodica u sveopštem osiromašenju opstaje pod pritiskom potrebe za preživljavanjem; ona se u nužnoj i nametnutoj zavisnosti zatvara, idealizuje kao vrhunska vrednost, a zadovoljstvo porodičnim životom raste sa njenim mogućnostima da zadovolji egzistencijalne potrebe.*

**Ključne reči:** *zadovoljstvo porodičnim životom, društvene promene, osiromašenje.*