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Ways of Life in the Late Modernity

Helena Kubátová et al.

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Over the course of the final work on the monograph, Prof. Miloslav Petrusek suddenly passed away. He was not only one of the authors of the monograph but also an inspiring, charismatic, highly educated and refined man, a sociologist who contributed significantly to the reconstruction and development of Czech sociology after 1989. We consider it an honour that we had the opportunity to cooperate with such a distinguished person.

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Introduction

The aim of this monograph is to show the contexts in which ways of life are conducted in late modernity, the dimensions of life in late modernity we can identify and how we can describe and understand them. The fundamental starting point of the monograph is the thesis that late modernity is characterized, amongst other factors, by a large number of life forms and a plurality of ways of life. For this reason, it is impossible to provide an exhaustive list of all the possible contexts, dimensions and forms.

The monograph is introduced with a chapter entitled *Ways of Life in Late Modernity*, in which the author attempts to define the concepts of way of life, lifestyle and life architecture, to outline different theoretical approaches to understanding way of life, and to define certain characteristics of late modern ways of life. One of the partial conclusions of this chapter is that the terms “way of life” and “lifestyle” do not relate to the a priori defined content of the concept, and therefore both terms appear in the monograph, with their content being defined by the author of each chapter.

The monograph is further divided into three parts. In the part *Contexts of Ways of Life*, we focus on certain late modern features of social reality which condition, determine and influence ways of life in late modernity and place them within normative frameworks and patterns. Contexts may also be seen as tools for shaping ways of life, as factors intervening in the shaping of ways of life. At the same time, however, they can be seen as manifestations of ways of life in late modernity. We are concerned, for example, with the context of religion in late modern society, the context of health and healthy lifestyle, the impacts of pharmaceutical innovations on way of life, but also with pornography as a component of sociocultural changes in ways of life in late modernity.

We assume that in late modernity, contexts cannot be viewed as explicit determinants and norms; e.g. sexuality or health are no longer considered natural facts and an unchanging state of affairs. As Anthony Giddens writes, sexuality has become a source for the development of diverse lifestyles, since it has become a meeting point between our bodies, identity and social norms (Giddens 1992).

In the part *The Meaning of Life and Consumption*, we deal with two important characteristics of late modernity: the focus on consumption and the search for the meaning of life. We are concerned with the possibilities for the development of the spiritual component of the personality and the issue of meaningfulness of life in late modern society, and with the influence of marketing communication on way of life and an analysis of the phenomenon of death through necromarketing and necrotainment.

In the part *Dimensions of Ways of Life*, we focus on certain areas of everyday life in late modernity (family, leisure time, space). In the area of family, we analyse the phenomenon of fatherhood in late modernity, unmarried cohabitation as one of the late modern forms of family, and changes in family lifestyle. In the area of leisure time, we treat the phenomenon of holiday as a component of lifestyle. The conclusion of this part is devoted to an analysis of ways of life in socially excluded city districts.

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15 Holidays as an Element of Lifestyle⁹⁷

The second half of the 20th century can be viewed as a period in which the mass expansion of tourism became a typical characteristic of western cultures. This rapid boom was caused by a rise in the standard of living, the lengthening of paid holidays (the shortening of the average annual working time in general) and the rapid development of transportation technologies, resulting in continuous improvement in the quality of transportation (e.g. in speed, comfort and availability) (see Cohen 1984).

It was not merely the growth of the real incomes of the general population which contributed, however, to the mass development of tourism. New social dispositions and social aspirations have also played a role along with the changing mentality of consumer society, which has influenced tourism and in many ways also helped create it.⁹⁸ In many ways, consumer culture, formed in the post-war period, has drawn from the values which embody the ideal of the modern holiday: an emphasis on individual choice, satisfying desires, entertainment, comfort, physical beauty and youth. Holidays, as an essential element of life for a broad spectrum of people and the typical way it was experienced during the 1950s and 1960s, facilitated the penetration of new models of consumption, characterised by greater carelessness and hedonism, into everyday life as well. The tourist became a consumer par excellence and consumer society, whose fixed contours in the 1970s and 1980s are undeniable, began to exploit the connection between images and symbols of tourism and the “holiday image” in advertising strategies and apply them to other areas of consumption as well.⁹⁹ Advertising has tried to impose the following message on the consumer: buy this product and you will feel as if on holiday everyday (Berghoff 2002).

⁹⁷ This chapter is a result of the grant project: VEGA no. 1/1132/11 Changes in Lifestyle in Contemporary Slovak Society.

⁹⁸ In the initial chapter of this book, Helena Kubátová aptly summarises these processes regarding the characteristics of lifestyle in late (second, reflexive) modernism.

⁹⁹ For example, products from the cosmetic, fashion, beverage and many other industries are associated with the holiday image in advertisements and are captured on exotic beaches. Similarly, cars are driven on empty roads in picturesque landscapes, on cliffs or directly on the coast.

Everyday life is increasingly becoming characterised by the search for impressions, perceptions and experiences, which transcend it as far as possible.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, the assertion that the tourist has become the embodiment and metaphor of the modern world, as authors concerned with the phenomenon of tourism in contemporary society write, is fitting. Zygmunt Bauman, in his description of everyday life, deliberates, for example, on the so-called tourist syndrome. He refers to certain aspects of the tourist experience, e.g. the awareness of his/her temporary stay in a particular place or the absence of a feeling of belonging to that place, which is becoming the existential experience of humans in general. He/she alternates between work obligations and private ones, temporary residences and homes without any intention of settling anywhere. These loose bonds and living for the moment are general characteristics of the modern life and, according to Bauman, are the distinguishing marks of the tourist syndrome.¹⁰¹

It would seem that there is a phenomenon which might be called the dissolution of the tourist and the specificity of tourism in today's world. In this regard, John Urry describes it as the de-differentiation between tourism and other areas of life (Urry 2002).¹⁰² In recent years, tourism, as a previously distinct and clearly identifiable area of social activity occurring at a given time and place, has been increasingly merging with other social activities (shopping, attending media, sports and cultural events, etc.) to such an extent that many people are becoming tourists for most of their waking lives (Sharpley 1996).

The analysis of tourism or travelling for relaxation has become a fascinating area of research in a society focused on consumption, and among other reasons, because a holiday is a consumptive situation par excellence, which should be the highlight in the life-cycle of any respectable consumer. It is an escape from everyday life, and because of that, is a symbol of "the good life", which has thus become a means of expressing one's identity (Therkelsen, Gram 2008).

A holiday can be characterised as the longest continuous block of free time which most employed people have at their disposal within the annual rhythm

¹⁰⁰ In the 1st chapter of this book, Miloslav Petrušek, building on Sorokin and his concept of the sensate form of culture, which is typical of the 20th century, also writes about the role which senses play in our late modernist world.

¹⁰¹ Bauman mentions the tourist syndrome in an interview with A. Franklin (see Franklin 2003, pp. 7–8).

¹⁰² Urry (1995) describes the unprecedented boom in restaurants, whose numbers more than doubled between 1960 and 1980 in the USA alone, as an example of this process. Going out to a restaurant for dinner was not considered commonplace 30 years ago and was limited only to the holiday period.

of work and leisure. It provides a specific opportunity for time-consuming activities as well and is usually characterised as “a temporary change in lifestyle or at least some of its terms, conditions, and components” (Duffková, Urban, Dubský 2008: 155). Given the political constraints of travelling abroad, which were typical of Czechoslovakian society up until 1990, it is justified to assume that travelling on holiday has undergone the greatest changes in leisure activities over the last twenty years.

Let us now briefly examine whether the previous claims about the increasing importance of holidays as a component of lifestyle also applies to the contemporary Slovak population.

Based on data from the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, which records trips registered by travel agencies, the number of Slovak tourists who travel abroad more than tripled from 1992 to 2008 and the total number of days spent on holiday increased by more than five times over that same period. The increase in the total number of days spent on holiday is due to the increase in the amount of time spent on a single trip and also, particularly after 2000, a rise in interest in shorter recreational stays, representing a second holiday (Sekulová 2010).

In spite of this, it cannot be stated that going on holiday has become a universal phenomenon in Slovakia. In the ISSP research on Leisure and Sport, approximately one-third (35.3%) of the respondents indicated that over the previous twelve months they had not spent even one night away from home on holiday or visiting relatives or friends (for the purpose of recreation, a weekend at a cottage or to relax) and another 19.1% of the respondents indicated that they had spent 1–5 nights away from home on holiday. This basically means that more than half of the population did not take part in a classic holiday lasting at least a week.¹⁰³ Taking a closer look (Table 1), it is apparent that the number of “homebodies” continually rises with age, and that older people, to a greater extent, maintain their habits from the time when travelling on holiday was not nearly as automatic and widespread as it is today. For a number of the pensioners, both their financial situation and health reasons are undeniable barriers to travelling. The habit of going or not going on holiday is, however, a more deeply rooted aspect of one’s lifestyle, connected to a certain environment, and is generationally contingent on customs and cultural patterns. Prior to 1990, it was primarily members of the urban population, who had higher incomes, who travelled on holiday (Sekulová 2010). The persistence of such cultural habits is evidenced in the

¹⁰³ In the same research, 12.2% of the respondents stated that over the previous 12 months they had not taken even one day of leave (*Volný čas a šport* 2009).

fact that a higher percent of respondents who had not spent even one night away from home in the previous twelve months can be found in smaller towns of up to 10,000 inhabitants. In all three sizes of towns up to 10,000 inhabitants, such respondents made up more than 40%, while in larger towns their share was only a quarter to a third (from 23.7% in towns with 10,001 to 20,000 inhabitants to 34.9% in towns with 20,001 to 50,000 inhabitants). The most significant differentiating criterion for going on holiday, however, has been shown to be education. The results indicate that the higher the education level, the lower the share of those who did not spend even one night away from home on holiday over the previous twelve months. This applies to more than half of the respondents with only a primary education and less than one-fifth of the people with a university education.

Table 1 Number of nights away from home for holidays in last 12 months

		Q7a Number of nights away from home for holidays						
		I was not away	1–5 nights	6–10 nights	11–20 nights	21–30 night	More than 30 nights	Cannot choose + No answer
N = 1138 respondents								
Whole sample		35.3	19.1	16.4	13.3	3.8	10.4	1.5
SEX	Male	32.7	20.9	15.1	12.4	4.4	12.3	2.1
	Female	37.7	17.5	17.7	14.2	3.3	8.8	1.0
AGE	18–24 years	24.1	15.3	15.8	20.5	3.4	20.2	0.8
	25–34	22.9	21.9	21.9	14.6	2.5	15.2	1.0
	35–44	28.6	19.7	22.1	15.1	6.1	7.6	0.9
	45–54	33.2	23.3	13.6	12.4	6.6	8.2	2.5
	55–64	43.4	17.0	15.9	11.9	2.6	7.1	2.1
	65 and older	64.7	14.7	7.0	6.1	1.4	4.2	1.9
EDUCATION	Primary	51.6	14.6	9.0	10.7	1.6	11.6	1.0
	Secondary W/o A levels	41.4	20.2	16.6	11.5	2.9	6.0	1.4
	Complete Secondary	23.7	21.6	19.8	15.9	5.0	11.9	2.1
	University	18.7	18.0	21.9	16.3	7.6	16.4	1.1

SIZE OF TOWN	Up to 1000 inhabit.	43.0	20.6	14.6	11.9	1.9	7.8	0.2
	2001–5000	40.1	18.8	18.7	12.3	1.5	3.7	4.8
	5001–10 000	41.7	15.2	19.4	11.7	7.3	4.8	
	10 001–20 000	23.7	19.2	25.4	13.9	3.4	9.9	4.5
	20 001–50 000	34.9	22.1	15.8	12.8	4.6	9.5	0.4
	50 001–100 000	27.8	19.7	14.9	9.4	5.6	21.5	1.1
	100 001 and more	25.0	13.3	12.4	22.6	7.4	18.2	1.1

Source: ISSP Slovensko 2008.

Additional representative research has reached similar conclusions. According to data by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, in 2004 to 2008 the share of holiday goers stabilised to approximately forty percent of the population above 15 years of age. According to research by the Institute of Tourism, people who did not go on holiday (i.e. did not spend four or more days outside of their permanent residence) made up from 62.5% in 1995 to 55.5% in 2004. It is therefore possible to claim that over a period of one decade (1995–2004) there was a noticeable overall increase (by seven percent) in the interest of the Slovak population in holidays, and over that same period the share of holidays abroad increased by 11 percent among those who went on holiday. This indicates that the population increased its focus on rest, relaxation and exploring new countries (Sekulová 2010). It nevertheless cannot be claimed that the habit of going on holiday at present applies to the majority of the population. In addition to the actual economic situation (as documented for example by the decline in interest in holidays at the end of the 1990s), socio-demographic variables, such as education, age and the size of the respondent's town, as well as the Slovak population's changes in lifestyle, also determine the interest in leisure travelling.

The answer to the question as to whether the change in the lifestyle of Slovaks is comparable to their counterparts in other European countries and whether they significantly differ in their holiday habits can be determined from the latest international comparative research data. I would now like to present a table from *Europeans and Tourism – Autumn 2009* research conducted in European Union countries by the Gallup Organisation (Flash Eurobarometer 281 – The Gallup Organisation).

Table 2: Holidays and short private trips in 2009

Question Q1: Have you been on holiday or a short private trip, i.e. one where you have stayed at least one night away from home (with the exception of business trips), in 2009?

Answers: 1. % Yes, I have gone on holiday or a short private trip in 2009 and I am not planning another holiday or short private trip in 2009; 2. % Yes, I have gone on holiday or a short private trip in 2009 and I am still planning another in 2009; 3. % No, but I am planning a holiday or short private trip in 2009; 4. % No, in 2009 I will not go on holiday.

	No. of resp.	1	2	3	4
EU27	23606	35	21.8	5.5	37.1
Belgium	1000	40.7	10.6	4.5	41.3
Bulgaria	1005	25.5	9.3	3.6	61
Czech Republic	1003	43.6	11.5	3.7	40.7
Denmark	1001	40.9	42	3.1	13.8
Germany	1009	35	28.6	6.6	29.9
Estonia	512	42.4	12.6	6.1	37
Greece	1001	39.7	21.6	5.4	32.7
Spain	1005	33.7	14.7	6	45.4
France	1000	38	24.4	4.2	33.3
Ireland	1000	39.7	36.9	4.4	18.8
Italy	1005	35.8	8.3	4.4	49.8
Cyprus	500	52.5	14.5	6	26.7
Latvia	500	28	10.9	4.9	55.6
Lithuania	500	32.3	15.8	5.2	44.5
Luxembourg	511	36.9	41.1	4.8	17.2
Hungary	1007	29	12.2	5	53.3
Malta	505	24.2	8.5	4.5	60.8
Holland	1001	50.3	23.3	5.9	19.7
Austria	1000	36.7	31.1	6.5	25.3
Poland	1013	30.4	19.2	5.8	44.2
Portugal	1001	34.2	9.9	4.4	51.1
Romania	1010	24.2	16	4.5	54
Slovenia	501	35.8	34.5	4.8	24.8
Slovakia	1014	29.5	8.4	3.7	57.9

Finland	1001	35.6	48.8	3.1	11.7
Sweden	1001	46.1	34.9	3.7	14.9
Great Britain	1000	31.3	34.9	8	25.1

Source: Europeans and Tourism – Autumn 2009 (Flash Eurobarometer 281 – The Gallup Organisation).

The fourth possibility, i.e. those who did not go on holiday at all in 2009, will be discussed first. The largest proportion of respondents who stayed home came from Bulgaria, Malta and Slovakia (approximately six out of every ten respondents). Concerning Slovakia, it confirms a quite stable trend, i.e. the position of the country, which in this index regularly places at the tail end of European countries. This was found in previous comparative research as well, for example, the aforementioned ISSP module on Leisure and Sport, which took place in 34 countries. The largest share of respondents who declared that they had not spent any nights away from home over the previous 12 months due to a holiday came from Poland, Latvia and Slovakia. In contrast, the fewest number of people who remained at home the entire year, according to the research *Europeans and Tourism – Autumn 2009*, can be found in Northern EU member countries (in Finland, Denmark, Sweden), followed by residents of Luxembourg and the Netherlands. In those countries, it is less than one-fifth of the population (from 11.7% of Finns up to 19.7% of the Dutch). In comparison with neighbouring countries, Slovaks appear to be most tied to their homes. In this regard, Hungarians are the closest, where more than half of the population (53.3%) did not go on holiday in 2009. In that same year, 44.2% of the Polish population did not go on holiday while in the Czech Republic the proportion of respondents who went on holiday compared to those who did not is six to four, which is the opposite of the Slovak population. The most frequent travellers among the post-communist countries was shown to be the Slovenians, whose share of non-holiday goers is one-quarter, which is significantly below the average for EU member countries (37.1%). Slovenians almost exactly match the Austrians in this indicator, which shows that countries with a close history and culture often correspond in their travel habits as well.

Experts who observe trends in tourism have pointed out that there has been a rise in recent years in the number of people who do not go on one classic holiday during the summer, but spend their holiday on several trips. It will be therefore interesting to examine response 2 in Table 2 which depicts those respondents who went on holiday or a short private trip but still had another trip planned in 2009. It can be gathered from this table that more than

eight percent of the population in Slovakia follow this trend. In comparison with other European countries, Slovaks once again received the lowest values, together with Italy, Malta and Bulgaria. In these countries the share of people who travel on holiday more than once does not make up even ten percent. The most avid holidaymakers in this respect are the Finns (48.8%), Danes (42%) and Luxembourgers (41.1%), followed by the Irish, British, Swedes, Slovenians and Austrians, where the share of the population which spent more than one night away from home reached a value above thirty percent.

In the research *Voľný čas a dovolenkové správanie na Slovensku* [Leisure and holiday behaviour in Slovakia] we asked respondents several questions regarding how they spent their holidays. We were interested in who they spent their holiday with in 2009 (Table 3). Three out of ten respondents indicated that they spent their holiday with their entire family, while a quarter of those asked travelled with their spouse or partner. An equal share of respondents (one-quarter) went on holiday with friends in 2009. Therefore, it can be stated that a typical Slovak holidaymaker spends his/her holiday with family or friends, and only rarely alone (only 3.1% of the respondents indicated the last possibility). Holidays therefore appear to be social or collective events for Slovak citizens. An analysis of the responses, based on the main socio-demographic characteristics, confirmed the general expectations that: 1) young people up to 25 years of age spend their holidays with friends more often than older groups; 2) the age group of 36–50 years of age significantly more often spends their holiday with the entire family; 3) who people spend their holiday with is not statistically dependent on sex, education, income, size of the home town or region.

Table 3: Who did you spend your holiday with in 2009? Multiple answers are possible.

	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency in %
1. alone	15	3.1
2. with the whole family	139	29.0
3. only with spouse, partner	120	25.1
4. only with children	22	4.6
5. with other relatives	36	7.5
6. with friends	115	24.0
7. did not go on holiday	105	21.9
99. did not respond	3	0.6

Source: Ústav vedy a výskumu UMB & SÚ SAV, 2010: *Voľný čas a dovolenkové správanie na Slovensku*.

Slovak holidaymakers chose the sea (27.6%) and mountains (24.4%) most often, followed by stays in the countryside (17.1%), urban tourism (15.7%) and stays by a body of water, such as lakes and ponds (14.2%) for their holidays in 2009 (Table 4). A holiday by the sea was a considerably more frequent affair for respondents with a university education and for those who indicated the highest net personal monthly income (i.e. more than 1000 EUR).¹⁰⁴ Stays in the mountains in 2009 were significantly more often represented by respondents from Bratislava and again by respondents with the highest net personal monthly income. The share of respondents who spent a holiday by the sea, in the mountains or in an urban environment in 2009 rises with a higher education level, while no correlation of stays to educational level appears in the countryside or near bodies of water, such as lakes and ponds.

¹⁰⁴ The research *Voľný čas a dovolenkové správanie na Slovensku [Leisure and holiday behaviour in Slovakia]* did not distinguish between a domestic holiday or a holiday abroad. Based on research data from the Institute of Tourism, we know that recreational stays by the sea have been the most popular form of holiday for Slovak citizens since the beginning of the 1990s, with a striking tendency for a rise in interest in stays by the sea. While in 1995 stays by the sea made up 44.4% of all trips abroad, within a decade, up until 2004, their share grew to 61.8%. According to data by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, interest in stays by the sea has grown even in recent years, and in 2008 this form of holiday made up nearly 80% of all long-term holiday trips abroad arranged by travel agencies. Regarding holidays in Slovakia, holidaymakers mostly show a preference for stays in the mountains (36.3% of domestic trips in 2004, with a rise in interest in this type of holiday since 2005). The second most frequent holiday destination in Slovakia is by a body of water, lakes or swimming pools, which made up 21.7% of the domestic stays in 2004. The interest in this type of holiday has declined, however, since the mid-1990s (Sekulová 2010, pp. 514–517).

Table 4: Where / in what location did you spend your holiday in 2009?
Multiple answers are possible!

	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency in %
1. by the sea	132	27.6
2. stay by a body of water (lakes, ponds)	68	14.2
3. in the mountains	117	24.4
4. in the countryside	82	17.1
5. in a town	75	15.7
6. other, specify (home, in the garden; festival; cottage, in the countryside; England; Israel; spa in Štúrova; at a spa; Lourdes; rafting; sightseeing holiday; sightseeing; sightseeing trip; pilgrimage site; amusement parks; at friends')	50	10.4
7. I did not go on holiday	105	21.9
99. did not answer	5	1.0

Source: Ústav vedy a výskumu UMB & SÚ SAV, 2010: *Voľný čas a dovolenkové správanie na Slovensku*.

This question and the previous one included “I did not go on holiday” as one possible answer, which once again confirmed what was stated earlier related to other research, that the share of non-holiday-going respondents is more significant in smaller towns (in this case up to 5,000 inhabitants). In terms of income, it is not surprising that the share of non-holidaymakers is highest in the group with the lowest net personal monthly income (up to 330 EUR). More notable is the fact that an almost equal share of non-holidaymakers (approximately a third of the respondents in our research) was found in the second highest income category, respondents with a net personal monthly income of 700–1000 EUR, in 2009. In this case, it concerns those who cannot go on holiday since, due to responsibilities at work or perhaps due to multiple jobs as well, they “do not have time”. Among those who indicated that they did not go on holiday in 2009, respondents with a primary level of education and with a secondary education without leaving exams were represented considerably more often as well. Going on holiday appears to be an activity which is, to a greater extent, part of the lifestyle of the more educated respondents from towns with a population of more than 5,000, residents of the Bratislava region and people with a net personal monthly income higher than 1,000 EUR.

Respondents to the research *Voľný čas a dovolenkové správanie na Slovensku* [*Leisure and holiday behaviour in Slovakia*] most often spent their holidays

on rest and relaxation (52.2%), exploring natural beauties and attractions (25.3%), hiking (23.2%) and exploring historical and cultural monuments (20.9%) in 2009.¹⁰⁵ Regarding sex and age, there are no major differences, except understandably for the lower frequency of sports activity during the holidays for respondents in the oldest age category (51 years and older) and a higher share of respondents in the 26–35 year old age category which spent them visiting historical and cultural monuments (31.6%). In contrast to sex and age, education and the size of town appear to be the primary differentiating factors on how holidays are spent. The share of respondents with a university education which spend its holidays on sports, cultural or sightseeing activities is significantly higher than the share of respondents with a primary or secondary level of education. The percentage of respondents from towns with a population above 100,000 and residents of the Bratislava region who spent their holidays on rest and relaxation, exploring natural beauties and attractions, hiking and sightseeing (sports activities for residents of the Bratislava region as well) is significantly higher than for inhabitants of other sized towns or other regions. It seems that these respondents spend their holiday on diverse and multifaceted activities, including a new trend with an emphasis on adventure tourism. A portion of them most likely took several holidays during the year with a different focus and nature.

The notable differentiating role of education (and partially the larger city environment) can be attributed to the sociological concept of cultural capital by Pierre Bourdieu (1998), which explains the distinctions (differences) between individuals' patterns of behaviour through acquired knowledge, education and culture, which primarily depends on the type of socialization and schooling one receives. Net personal monthly income does not act as a significant differentiating variable as the only aspect which is worth noting is the significantly higher share of respondents in the income category of more than 1,000 EUR who spend their holiday on rest and relaxation and sports as well. However, respondents in this highest income category (in this research) do not demonstrate on average a greater interest in exploring natural beauties and attractions, hiking or visiting historical and cultural monuments, i.e. activities which can be considered connected to cultural capital. Since the sample for the research *Voľný čas a dovolenkové správanie na Slovensku [Leisure and holiday behaviour in Slovakia]* is not completely representative, I shall not draw any conclusions here about the patterns of certain status inconsistencies (a weak correlation between education and income) which has persisted in the

¹⁰⁵ For this question as well as for the previous one, respondents had the possibility to indicate more than choice.

Slovak society since prior to 1989, even though an analysis of the responses to the question mapping how holidays were spent in 2009 would tempt one to do so.

I was also interested in who or what had the biggest influence on choosing holidays. Respondents had the possibility to freely respond to this question. I analysed the responses and combined them into several main categories. Slovak holidays are clearly most influenced by their financial situation with four out of every ten respondents (41.8%) reporting this fact. This is followed by factors which an approximately equal number of respondents indicated: destination, location or environment (17.5%), spouse, partner or friend (17.1%), family, children (16.1%) and affordability of the holiday, advantageous price offer (15.4%). In line with findings from foreign literature, the results confirmed that women have a bigger influence on the decision about the type of holiday in family and partner relationships, since men in markedly greater numbers indicated their wives, partners or girlfriends as an important factor in choosing a holiday than women marked men. Women, on the other hand, indicated family and children as important factors which influence the decisions about holidays. The importance of destination, location or environment is more important for younger respondents, and its importance decreases with age (26.8% of respondents in the 18–25 year old category marked it as an important influence in choosing a holiday, but only 8.5% of the respondents 51 years old and older marked it). The results are similar for the friends and acquaintances factor as well (from 16.5% for the youngest to 2.8% for the oldest category of respondents).

One's financial situation, or money in general, is a factor which all levels of education indicate as the most important factor in choosing a holiday. While for respondents with a primary level of education and both types of secondary education this is a highly dominant factor, 15 to 19 percentage points fewer university educated respondents indicated it as a significant influence, and despite its importance for them, not even other factors, particularly destination, location or environment, influence of family and children and price or affordability of the holiday, fall far behind it. This suggests that university educated respondents choose holidays based on more diverse criteria, which apart from being more financially secure, their cultural capital (knowledge, insight and the more varied experiences which they dispose of) enables them to do more in comparison with respondents with a lower level of education. Respondents living in towns with a population above 100,000 and in the Bratislava region noted the price of the stay, or value of the offer, considerably less often. At the same time, friends and acquaintances are more important for

the same group of respondents in choosing a holiday. Net personal monthly income was not found to be a significant factor which would influence the choice of holiday, with the exception of the “spouse, partner, friend” factor, which occurs significantly more often for the respondents with an income of 700–1000 EUR, while the “friend, acquaintance” factor did not play a role in choosing a holiday for respondents with a net personal monthly income above 1,000 EUR.

Respondents up to 25 years of age prefer to spend their holidays on shorter but more frequent holidays during the year to a greater extent than other age groups, while respondents with a primary or secondary level of education (without leaving exams) less commonly have a preference for two approximately equally long holidays throughout the year than respondents with a higher level of education (Table 5). The results indicate that with a rise in the educational level, the number of those who prefer one long holiday a year decreases. In contrast, the share of respondents which has a preference for two approximately equally long holidays during a year increases. As far as regions are concerned, respondents from the Košice and Prešov regions are the only ones for whom the preferences of one long holiday during the year is the most frequent response. In contrast, respondents in other regions favour this possibility the least. The interest in taking two holidays during the year rises with the level of net personal monthly income with the difference not being dramatic, however.

Table 5 Frequency of Holidays – Preferences when choosing holidays according to the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

		How frequent holidays do you prefer? I like... (q25)				
		Shorter more freq. holidays during year	One long holiday a year	Two approx. equal holidays during a year	Other answers	No answer
N = 479 respondents						
Whole sample		34.4	28.4	30.3	5.4	1.5
SEX	Male	35.4	31.0	26.1	6.2	1.3
	Female	33.6	26.1	34.0	4.7	1.6
AGE	18–25 years	42.3	23.7	29.9	3.1	1.0
	26–35	32.6	27.4	34.7	5.3	
	36–50	32.0	29.3	32.0	5.0	1.7
	51 and older	33.0	32.1	23.6	8.5	2.8

EDUCATION	Basic + Second. w/o A levels	34.3	34.3	21.7	7.8	1.8
	Complete Secondary	34.3	26.2	33.8	3.8	1.9
	University	35.0	23.3	36.9	4.9	
SIZE OF TOWN	Up to 1000 inhabit.	48.1	24.1	16.7	9.3	1.9
	1001–2000	31.1	23.0	29.5	13.1	3.3
	2001–5 000	44.9	24.5	18.4	6.1	6.1
	5 001–20 000	29.7	37.5	31.3	1.6	
	20 001–50 000	26.7	32.0	37.3	4.0	
	50 001–100 000	36.2	27.6	32.4	2.9	1.0
	more than 100 000 inhabit.	29.6	28.2	38.0	4.2	
REGION	Bratislava	33.7	25.6	37.2	3.5	
	Trnava + Trenčín + Nitra	36.0	25.8	27.0	10.1	1.1
	Žilina	22.8	21.6	36.5	5.4	2.7
	Banská Bystrica	37.3	26.1	29.1	5.2	2.2
	Košice + Prešov	30.2	41.7	24.0	3.1	1.0
Net personal monthly income	Up to 330 EUR	36.9	28.8	26.1	5.4	2.7
	330–500 EUR	34.8	27.5	29.7	5.8	2.2
	500–700 EUR	32.8	28.7	31.1	6.6	0.8
	700–1000 EUR	27.7	27.7	36.2	8.5	
	more than 1000 EUR	34.4	28.1	37.5		
	Did not respond/refused to indicate	41.4	31.0	27.6		

Source: Ústav vedy a výskumu UMB & SÚ SAV, 2010: *Voľný čas a dovolenkové správanie na Slovensku*.

Respondents in the research *Voľný čas a dovolenkové správanie na Slovensku* [*Leisure and holiday behaviour in Slovakia*] most frequently spent 6 to 10 days on their longest continuous holiday in 2009 (34.9% of respondents chose the response in this time frame); approximately a quarter of respondents (24.6%) marked the response “11 to 15 days”. Less than a tenth of the respondents (8.8%) spent their holiday in a continuous block of time longer than 15 days and 18% of them declared that they did not have a holiday. Neither sex nor age nor education had a major influence on the length of the holiday. Respondents from towns with a population of more than 100,000 and inhabitants of the Bratislava region (i.e. primarily citizens from Bratislava) declared that in 2009 they “did not have a holiday” or that “their longest continuous holiday lasted from 1 to 5 days” significantly less frequently than inhabitants of other towns. Respondents with the highest net personal monthly income (more than 1,000

EUR) took holidays from 11 to 15 days in 2009 considerably more often than other income groups (Table 6).

Table 6: How long did your longest continuous holiday last in 2009? (sorted by the size of the town and net personal monthly income):

n = 479 respondents		How long did your longest continuous holiday last in 2009? (q26)						
		1–5 days	6–10 days	11–15 days	more than 15 days	did not go on holiday	did not answer	TOTAL
WHOLE SAMPLE								
SIZE OF TOWN	up to 1 000 inhabitants	13.0	42.6	20.4	5.6	18.5	0.0	100.0
	1 001–2 000	19.7	27.9	21.3	4.9	26.2	0.0	100.0
	2 001–5 000	22.4	34.7	12.2	4.1	24.5	2.0	100.0
	5 001–20 000	9.4	26.6	37.5	9.4	17.2	0.0	100.0
	20 001–50 000	13.3	36.0	17.3	9.3	24.0	0.0	100.0
	50 001–100 000	15.2	33.3	26.7	11.4	13.3	0.0	100.0
	more than 100 000	4.2	43.7	32.4	12.7	7.0	0.0	100.0
Net personal monthly income	up to 330 EUR	15.3	34.2	13.5	9.9	26.1	0.9	100.0
	331–500 EUR	20.3	29.0	27.5	9.4	13.8	0.0	100.0
	501–700 EUR	8.2	40.2	27.0	8.2	16.4	0.0	100.0
	701–1000 EUR	10.6	34.0	23.4	8.5	23.4	0.0	100.0
	more than 1 000 EUR	6.3	34.4	46.9	3.1	9.4	0.0	100.0
	did not respond/refused to indicate	10.3	44.8	20.7	10.3	13.8	0.0	100.0

Source: Ústav vedy a výskumu UMB & SÚ SAV, 2010: *Voľný čas a dovolenkové správanie na Slovensku*.

More than half of all respondents (55.5%) usually arrange their holidays individually, a quarter of respondents (24.2%) arrange them partially alone and partially through a travel agency, and only 12.3% of respondents rely exclusively on travel agencies. In Slovakia, travelling through a travel agency is considered a financially more demanding way to arrange a holiday. Up to 31.3% of respondents with the highest net personal monthly income (more than 1,000 EUR) declare that they usually travel on holiday through travel agencies, which is significantly more than in the other categories of respondents with lower net personal monthly incomes.

Respondents to the research *Voľný čas a dovolenkové správanie na Slovensku* [*Leisure and holiday behaviour in Slovakia*] were asked to consider whether their holiday habits had changed over the past five years (Table 7). Based

on the responses, it cannot be claimed that there has been a shift in holiday habits regarding the length of time spent on holiday. The largest number of respondents (36.3%) declared that compared to the period five years earlier, they now spent their holiday relaxing approximately the same number of days as before. Of more interest is the fact that an approximately equal number of respondents declared that they now spent more days of holiday relaxing than before (22.1%) and that they also now spent fewer days of holiday relaxing than before (21.9 %).¹⁰⁶

Which category of respondents registers the greatest change in holiday habits over recent years? Respondents in the highest income category (with a net personal monthly income of more than 1,000 EUR) spent significantly more days on holiday than before. In contrast, respondents in the second highest income category (with a net personal monthly income of 700–1,000 EUR), indicated a decline in the number of days spent on holiday more often than average. Once again, this signifies that maintaining an average or slightly above-average income in Slovakia is often possible only at the expense of one's personal free time or holidays.

Table 7: Change in holiday habits in the past 5 years (sorted by net personal monthly income).

n = 479 respondents		Please consider how your holiday habits have changed in approximately the past 5 years. In comparison to 5 years ago, I now spend... (q28)						
		more days of my holiday relaxing than before	the same number of days of my holiday relaxing than before	fewer days of my holiday relaxing than before	inapplicable – 5 years ago I was not yet employed	other	did not answer	TOTAL
WHOLE SAMPLE								
Net personal monthly income	up to 330 EUR	25.2	23.4	20.7	19.8	9.0	1.8	100.0
	330–500 EUR	19.6	37.7	22.5	15.9	3.6	0.7	100.0
	501–700 EUR	19.7	46.7	22.1	9.8	1.6	0.0	100.0
	701–1000 EUR	17.0	38.3	31.9	10.6	2.1	0.0	100.0
	more than 1000 EUR	37.5	34.4	15.6	12.5	0.0	0.0	100.0
	did not respond/ refused to indicate	24.1	34.5	13.8	17.2	10.3	0.0	100.0

Source: Ústav vedy a výskumu UMB & SÚ SAV, 2010: Voľný čas a dovolenkové správanie na Slovensku.

¹⁰⁶ This question was irrelevant for 14.6 % of the respondents, since 5 years earlier they had not yet been employed.

This is also confirmed by the last question in the research, where a question was asked concerning the level of satisfaction respondents have in spending a) their leisure time outside of holiday and b) their holidays, and the reasons for their satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Respondents in the income group of 701–1,000 EUR expressed the least satisfaction as to how they spent their free time outside of holidays (Table 8). Regarding the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction on how holidays are spent (Table 9), although the values in this income group (i.e. 701–1,000 EUR) do not differ all that much from the average for the entire pool, the reason for their satisfaction on how they spent holidays is largely represented by relaxation and rest from work, which may indicate that this income group, in comparison with others, has a greater workload and to a greater extent considers a holiday an opportunity to escape from work. Altogether, approximately three-quarters of the respondents expressed satisfaction with how they spent their free time and holidays. In the case of holidays, the level of satisfaction is higher in comparison with how they spend their leisure time outside of their holidays.

Table 8: Overall satisfaction on how leisure time outside of my holidays is spent (sorted by net personal monthly income).

n = 479 respondents		Please indicate to what extent you are content, in general, with how you spend your – leisure time outside of your holidays. (q30a)					TOTAL
		content	mostly content	mostly discontented	discontented	did not answer	
WHOLE SAMPLE		29.4	45.5	20.3	4.6		
Net personal monthly income	up to 330 EUR	32.4	45.9	17.1	3.6	0.9	100.0
	331–500 EUR	24.6	47.1	23.2	5.1	0.0	100.0
	501–700 EUR	32.0	44.3	20.5	3.3	0.0	100.0
	701–1000 EUR	17.0	46.8	25.5	10.6	0.0	100.0
	more than 1000 EUR	43.8	40.6	12.5	3.1	0.0	100.0
	did not respond / refused to indicate	34.5	44.8	17.2	3.4	0.0	100.0

Source: Ústav vedy a výskumu UMB & SÚ SAV, 2010: Voľný čas a dovolenkové správanie na Slovensku.

Table 9: Overall satisfaction on how holidays are spent (sorted by net personal monthly income).

		Please indicate to what extent you are content, in general, with how you spend your – holiday. (q30b)					TOTAL
		content	mostly content	mostly discontented	discontented	did not answer	
n = 479 respondents							
WHOLE SAMPLE		46.3					
Net personal monthly income	up to 330 EUR	42.3	23.4	19.8	13.5	0.9	100.0
	331 – 500 EUR	46.4	27.5	18.1	8.0	0.0	100.0
	501 – 700 EUR	43.4	32.8	16.4	7.4	0.0	100.0
	701 – 1000 EUR	42.6	29.8	17.0	10.6	0.0	100.0
	more than 1 000 EUR	68.8	18.8	6.3	6.3	0.0	100.0
	did not respond / refused to indicate	55.2	31.0	10.3	0.0	3.4	100.0

Source: Ústav vedy a výskumu UMB & SÚ SAV, 2010: Voľný čas a dovolenkové správanie na Slovensku.

It is apparent that leisure is in all probability a rare and uncommon issue for a portion of the Slovak population. In order to conclude this section, let us consequently take a look at the extent people in Slovakia are content with the amount of free time they have available, insofar as the value of free time is significant for them. Data from the ISSP research can provide at least a partial answer to this question. At the same time, it would be interesting to compare the data from Slovakia with data from other countries.

Let us look at how the citizens of Slovakia responded to the following question included in the ISSP research module on Leisure and Sport.

Table 10: Change in the amount of time spent on selected activities
Imagine that you could change your lifestyle and spend more time on some activities and less on others. Which activities from the following list would you spend more time on, less time on and the same amount of time on as now? (A7)

- 1 = much more time
- 2 = a bit more time
- 3 = same time as now
- 4 = a bit less time
- 5 = much less time
- 9 = undecided
- 0 = did not answer

	1	2	3	4	5	9	0	TOTAL
A. Paid work	13.1	16.1	35.7	12.9	8.4	7.2	6.6	100.0
B. Housework	3.6	16.3	58.8	15.4	5.1	0.3	0.4	100.0
C. One's own family	17.1	30.6	46.5	3.1	0.5	1.1	1.1	100.0
D. Leisure activities	11.0	38.8	41.9	5.0	1.5	1.2	0.6	100.0

Source: ISSP Slovensko 2008.

Let us now try to compare the distribution of answers from respondents from different countries who answered the question with the possibility “much more time” or “a little more time”. For comparison, I have included the responses regarding the amount of time spent on leisure activities and regarding the amount of time spent doing paid work.

I expected that most of the respondents in the countries researched would claim that they would like to spend more time on leisure activities and less time on paid work. Although this hypothesis was confirmed, there are noticeable differences between the countries.

Table 11: Change in the amount of time spent on leisure activities

	Much more time (1) %	A bit more time (2) %	1 + 2 %
Austria	11.1	38.3	49.4
Czech Rep.	16.7	42.2	58.9
Finland	19.7	45.3	65.0
France	28.7	45.1	73.8
Germany	13.1	39.0	52.1
Hungary	18.3	40.0	58.3
Latvia	20.0	41.7	61.7
Norway	15.6	50.8	66.4
Poland	12.5	32.7	45.2
Sweden	21.6	43.1	64.7
Great Britain	20.5	45.3	65.8
Switzerland	11.0	37.8	48.8
Slovakia	11.2	39.5	50.7

Source: ISSP Leisure time and Sports 2007–2008.

Table 12: Change in the amount of time spent on paid work

	Much more	A bit more	1 + 2 %
	time (1) %	time (2) %	
Austria	5.2	19.7	24.9
Czech Rep.	6.5	8.6	15.1
Finland	4.4	9.8	14.2
France	2.1	6.7	8.8
Germany	14.9	17.9	32.8
Hungary	9.8	14.5	24.3
Latvia	5.4	9.1	14.5
Norway	3.5	11.5	15.0
Poland	4.2	10.2	14.4
Sweden	2.6	5.7	8.3
Great Britain	6.9	10.4	17.3
Switzerland	2.7	13.7	16.4
Slovakia	15.2	18.7	33.9

Source: ISSP Leisure time and Sports 2007–2008.

It is apparent that Slovakia is located at the end of the lists of the countries in both cases. Slovaks, along with Poles, Austrians and the Swiss, rank amongst countries whose inhabitants least preferred the possibility of spending more of their time on leisure activities. In contrast, the highest share of respondents who wish to spend more time doing paid work can be found among the Slovak population with a similar share only found in Germany. In both countries, it equates to a third of respondents, while in the remaining countries the share of respondents who expressed a desire to spend more time on paid work is less than one-quarter; in the case of France and Sweden, it is less than 10 %.

On the basis of the data presented, it can be concluded that with the greater amount of free time which the Slovak population has available, they express, on average, a greater level of satisfaction than the population of the other countries researched, with the exception of Austria, Poland and Switzerland. Conversely, if they could change their lifestyle, in comparison with respondents from other countries, Slovaks and Germans would want to spend more time on paid work (in the German and Slovak samples, up to a third of the respondents expressed this, while in the remaining countries it is less than a quarter of the respondents). The high value attributed to paid work (using the comparative perspective) may be a result of the fact that in Slovakia there is still quite a high level of unemployment. For a significant portion of the

population, having paid work is not something which is guaranteed or long-term, or ensures that family accounts will be paid without any problems.¹⁰⁷ Another reason for the high proclaimed willingness to work may be the high proportion of the rural population in the settlement structure in the Slovak Republic, despite the fact that the differences in the lifestyle in the urban and rural populations are blurring, particularly in smaller towns. In addition, for the older generation spending the day doing productive activities as opposed to “idleness” continues to be the norm. “Idleness” is only widely accepted in the evening by passively following the media, particularly watching television.

Since I do not have relevant data from previous decades at my disposal, I can only pose the hypothesis that in Slovakia, compared with earlier periods, there are greater preferences for leisure and holiday activities, which are gradually becoming important co-defining factors of one's socio-economic position and an important lifestyle factor. In comparison with most societies (particularly in countries in Western Europe) this shift is, however, slower in Slovakia. Half of the Slovak population does not spend holidays away from home. The focus on manual and other work activities, both paid and unpaid, still remains a relevant feature of leisure activities (see Chorvát 2010). This is partially a matter of enduring cultural models from the previous era. The previously mentioned structural socio-economic factors (the presence of long-term unemployment, which appears to be a more permanent phenomenon) undoubtedly plays an important role here as well. Despite still being less important in Slovakia compared to the previous two, the third factor may be the currently commonly mentioned idea found in Western literature concerning the erosion of the border between the sphere of work and the sphere of leisure, which is a result of such trends as: the flexibilization of work, de-standardization of the labour market, working from home and the professionalization of standards related to leisure activities (Beck 2004; Rojek 2000). In conclusion, we finally return to the foundation mentioned in the introduction to this article, which is the framework of a consuming society, where changes in the structure of leisure and lifestyle in general take place. The preference for a consumer lifestyle among a significant proportion of the population and the growth in their consumer demands, which are additionally saturated by the past experience of the older and middle-aged generations in post-communist societies by the shortage economy, create ever-increasing pressure on activities ensuring, when possible, an increase in income. The result is a noticeable trend in the

¹⁰⁷ The fact that the Slovak Republic has the highest share of long-term unemployed in the European Union (the share among the unemployed is more than half) is an often cited argument in economic publications.

widening of differences (in Slovakia quite strongly determined by the region) between two segments of the population one, thanks to whose considerable workload, which is financially better off, yet suffers a lack of free time, and the other segment, which because of difficulties finding a more permanent paid job¹⁰⁸ despite having a great deal of free time is incapable of using its leisure time in constructive ways because of limited resources (not only economic, but often because of the lower level of cultural capital).

¹⁰⁸ E.g. by virtue of their unsatisfactory qualifications, living in marginalized areas or being (in terms of employment) in an unfavorable stage of the life-cycle – a woman following maternity leave or a person pre-retirement, etc.

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