

THE DETERMINANTS OF LIFE SATISFACTION  
IN  
POST-SOVIET AZERBAIJAN

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

HİLAL GALİP

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN  
THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

SEPTEMBER 2007

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

---

Prof. Dr. Sencer Ayata  
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of  
Master of Science.

---

Doç. Dr. Sibel Kalaycıođlu  
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully  
adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

---

Dr. Adnan Akçay  
Supervisor

**Examining Committee Members**

Prof. Dr. Yusuf Ziya Özcan (METU,SOC) \_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Adnan Akçay (METU,SOC) \_\_\_\_\_

Doç. Dr. Ömer Demir (TÜİK) \_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.**

Name, Last name : Hilal Galip

Signature :

## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE DETERMINANTS OF LIFE SATISFACTION IN POST-SOVIET AZERBAIJAN**

Galip, Hilal

MSc., Department of Sociology

Supervisor: Dr. Adnan Akçay

September 2007, 99 pages

The study aims to investigate main determinants of life satisfaction in newly independent country, Azerbaijan. Taking into consideration of local and cultural characteristics of the region, this research will give the opportunity for making cross-cultural analysis to understand subjective well-being of people living in the country in transition. Moreover, it provides deeper interpretation of daily experiences of people in different fields of life compared to Soviet period. In the survey, 1030 households were selected according to multistage cluster sampling and face to face interviews were conducted with those families. In addition, fifty in-depth interviews were applied to people who are coming from different social backgrounds. All macro societal changes influences subjective well-being of the Azerbaijani people and the further analysis of data will help to taking picture of the society and individuals in a closer perspective. Within this framework, this paper attempts to figure out the quality of life in Azerbaijan from the eyes of Azerbaijani people.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, Life Satisfaction, Subjective Well-being, Quality of Life

## ÖZ

### SOVYET SONRASI AZERBAYCAN'DA YAŞAMDAN MEMNUNİYETİN BELİRLEYİCİLERİ

Galip, Hilal

Yüksek Lisans, Sosyoloji Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Dr. Adnan Akçay

Eylül 2007, 99 sayfa

Bu çalışmanın amacı bağımsızlık sonrası Azerbaycan'da yaşayan insanların yaşamlarından memnuniyetlerinin belirleyicini açıklamaya çalışmaktır. Ülkenin içinde bulunduğu bölgenin yerel ve kültürel özellikleri dikkate alındığında, bu araştırmanın kültürler arası karşılaştırma analizi yaparak Sovyet sonrası geçiş ülkesinde öznel iyi olma durumunu anlamak için oldukça faydalı olacağı düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca bu çalışma Azerbaycan'da yaşayan insanların hayatlarının farklı alanlarındaki günlük hayat tecrübelerini Sovyet dönemi ile kıyaslayarak daha derinlikli bir anlama ve yorumlama amacı gütmektedir. Araştırma için çok aşamalı tabakalı rastgele örnekleme tekniği kullanılarak oluşturulan örneklem çerçevesinde 1030 hane ile yüz yüze görüşme tekniği uygulanarak anket çalışması yapılmıştır. Buna ek olarak farklı sosyal geçmişlere sahip 50 kişi ile derinlemesine mülakatlar yapılmıştır. Geçiş döneminde yaşanan hızlı toplumsal değişimler Azerbaycan'da yaşayan insanların öznel iyi olma hallerini oldukça etkilemektedir ve bu bağlamda toplanan verinin ileri düzeyde analizi bireylerin ve toplumun bu süreçte daha yakından resimlerini çekmeye olanak verecektir. Bu çerçevede bu çalışma Azerbaycan'daki yaşam kalitesini orada yaşayan insanların gözüyle anlamaya çalışacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Azerbaycan, Yaşamdan Memnuniyet, Öznel İyi Olma, Yaşam Kalitesi

Sevgili Anneme ve Dayıma

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Adnan Akçay for his guidance, advice, criticism, encouragements and insight throughout the research. I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Sencer Ayata, whose encouragement always motivated me and helped me to have the confidence in my academic studies. I owe a lot to Prof. Dr. Yusuf Ziya Özcan, without his support I have never met with Statistics and my achievement in my undergraduate study would not be possible.

I would also like to thank Prof. Dr. Ayşe Ayata, who is the coordinator of the project entitled “Quality of Life in Eurasia: The Cases of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan” coordinated by Middle East Technical University Center for Black Sea and Central Asia (KORA), and Yrd. Doç. Dr. Ayça Ergun without their support this study would not come out.

I would like to thank you Ms. Leila Aliyeva and Ms. Meryem Oruclu who are the directors of “The Center for National and International Studies (CNIS), Azerbaijan”, for their great effort to implement the project. I sincerely appreciate the time and effort that Rahib, Aqil, Sabina, Yashar, and Leila spent during the fieldwork. I appreciate Prof. Dr. Selahattin Halilov’s and Yrd. Doç. Dr. Ebulfez Suleymanov’s valuable comments on my research in Azerbaijan.

In addition, huge thanks to my husband İsmail Galip for being incredibly understanding, supportive, and most of all, patient. I would like to thank you my dear colleague; Gökhan Kaya for his invaluable emotional support. I would like to thank you my dear friend, Figen Uzar, for her willingness to assist. Lastly, many thanks to my dear family, whose emotional support and encouragement was always with me during the whole process.

This study was supported by the The Scientific and Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK), Grant no: SOBAG-104K106.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |      |
|---|------|
| PLAGIARISM.....   | iii  |
| ABSTRACT.....   | iv   |
| ÖZ.....   | v    |
| DEDICATION.....   | vi   |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....   | vii  |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS.....  | viii |
| LIST OF TABLES.....   | ix   |
| LIST OF FIGURES.....  | x    |
| CHAPTER   |      |
| 1. INTRODUCTION.....  | 1    |
| 2. 2. SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AND LIFE SATISFACTION.....                            | 8    |
| 2.1. Introduction.....  | 8    |
| 2.2. Quality of Life: Main Approaches, Conceptualizations<br>and Definitions..... | 10   |
| 2.2.1. Definition of ‘Quality of Life’ .....                                      | 10   |
| 2.2.2. The Conceptualization of Quality of Life: Approaches<br>and Theories.....  | 11   |
| 2.2.3. Veenhoven’s Understanding of Quality of Life.....                          | 14   |
| 2.2.4. Basic Needs Approach.....  | 15   |
| 2.2.5. Capability Approach.....   | 17   |
| 2.3. Subjective Well-being.....   | 18   |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 2.3.1. Life Satisfaction.....  | 19 |
| 2.3.2. Factors Influencing Life Satisfaction.....  | 20 |
| 2.3.3. Income and Life Satisfaction.....   | 23 |
| 3. THE MEASUREMENT OF LIFE SATISFACTION.....   | 28 |
| 3.1 Introduction.....  | 28 |
| 3.2 The Measurement of QOL.....  | 28 |
| 3.3 The Measurement of Subjective Wellbeing.....   | 31 |
| 3.4. The Measurement of Life Satisfaction.....   | 33 |
| 4. AZERBAIJAN: COUNTRY PROFILE.....  | 37 |
| 4.1. Introduction.....   | 37 |
| 4.2. Economic and Social Transformation.....   | 37 |
| 4.3. Political Transformation.....   | 40 |
| 5. THE FIELD RESEARCH IN AZERBAIJAN .....  | 44 |
| 5.1. The Brief Story of the Field Research....   | 44 |
| 5.2. Sample Design.....  | 44 |
| 5.2.1. The Selection of the Zones According to<br>Their Socioeconomic Status.....                            | 45 |
| 5.2.2. The Selection of Regions within<br>These Economic Zones.....  | 46 |
| 5.2.3. The Selection of Residential Areas within<br>These Regions.....                                       | 46 |
| 5.2.4. The Selection of Households with Quota System Based on<br>Age Groups, Gender, Type of Settlement..... | 46 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 5.2.5. Basic Characteristics of the Sample.....  | 47 |
| 5.3. Performing the Survey.....  | 49 |
| 5.3.1. Questionnaire Design.....   | 49 |
| 5.3.2. Translation of the Questionnaire.....   | 50 |
| 5.4. Fieldwork.....  | 51 |
| 5.4.1. Pilot Study.....  | 51 |
| 5.4.2. Fieldwork.....  | 51 |
| 5.4.3. Data Entry.....   | 52 |
| 5.4.4. In-Depth Interviews .....   | 52 |
| 6. THE DETERMINANTS OF LIFE SATISFACTION IN AZERBAIJAN.....                              | 53 |
| 6.1. Introduction.....   | 53 |
| 6.2. Life Satisfaction in Azerbaijan.....  | 54 |
| 6.2.1. Life Satisfaction in Other Post-Soviet Countries .....                            | 55 |
| 6.3. Basic Socio-Demographic Factors Influencing<br>Life Satisfaction in Azerbaijan..... | 57 |
| 6.3.1. Age vs. Life Satisfaction.....  | 57 |
| 6.3.2. Gender vs. Life Satisfaction.....   | 58 |
| 6.3.3. Type of Settlement vs. Life Satisfaction.....                                     | 59 |
| 6.3.4. Education vs. Life Satisfaction.....  | 60 |
| 6.3.5. Household Income vs. Life Satisfaction.....                                       | 64 |
| 6.3.5.1. The Living Standards of the Azerbaijani People.....                             | 66 |
| 6.3.5.2. Having and Necessities of Azerbaijani People .....                              | 70 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 6.3.5.3. Satisfaction with Living Standards vs. Life Satisfaction ..... | 72 |
| 6.3.6. Employment vs. Life Satisfaction.....                            | 77 |
| 6.4. Life Satisfaction and Quality of Society in Azerbaijan.....        | 80 |
| 6.4.1. Life Satisfaction vs. Political Participation.....               | 81 |
| 6.4.2. Life Satisfaction and Sense of Belongingness.....                | 83 |
| 7. CONCLUSION.....  | 88 |
| REFERENCES.....   | 91 |
| APPENDICES.....   | 96 |
| A. EUROMODULE INFORMATION.....  | 96 |
| B. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....                                    | 98 |

## LIST OF TABLES

### TABLES

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Table 2.1 Zapf's Typology of Welfare Positions.....   | 13 |
| Table 2.2 Veenhoven's Four Qualities of Life Typology.....  | 14 |
| Table 2.3 Use of Different Indicators from Allardt's Having, Loving, Being Approach.....                  | 17 |
| Table 2.4 The Three Most Important Self-Reported Factors Contributing to Quality of Life, by Country..... | 22 |
| Table 3.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Objective Indicators.....                                       | 30 |
| Table 3.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Subjective Indicators.....                                      | 32 |
| Table 3.3 Some Currently Used Questions on Life Satisfaction.....   | 34 |
| Table 5.1 The Regions within the Socio-Economic Zones in the Sample.....                                  | 46 |
| Table 5.2 The Sample Size of the Regions.....   | 47 |
| Table 6.1 Overall Life Satisfaction in European Countries.....  | 55 |
| Table 6.2 Overall Life Satisfaction in Post-Soviet Countries.....   | 56 |
| Table 6.3 Overall Life Satisfaction According to Regions.....   | 60 |
| Table 6.4 The Number of Rooms in the House.....   | 67 |
| Table 6.5 Ownership Status of the House.....  | 68 |
| Table 6.6 The Properties of the Infrastructure of the Houses.....   | 69 |
| Table 6.7 The Frequency Distribution of Necessities and Having.....                                       | 71 |
| Table 6.8 Jobs of the Respondents and Their Life Satisfaction.....  | 80 |
| Table 6.9 Anomie Index.....   | 86 |

## LIST OF FIGURES

### FIGURES

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Figure 2.1 The Life Satisfaction and GDP of Countries.....  | 26 |
| Figure 5.1 The Age of the Respondents.....  | 48 |
| Figure 6.1 Overall Life Satisfaction of the Respondents.....                                      | 54 |
| Figure 6.2 Overall Life Satisfaction of the Respondents<br>According to Different Age Groups..... | 58 |
| Figure 6.3 Life Satisfaction In Relation to the<br>Educational Level of the Respondents.....      | 64 |
| Figure 6.4 The Average Life Satisfaction According to Household Income of the<br>Respondents..... | 66 |
| Figure 6.5 Life Satisfaction According to People’s Necessities and Havings.....                   | 72 |
| Figure 6.6 The Average Satisfaction with Living Standards<br>Today and in Soviet Times.....       | 75 |
| Figure 6.7 Trust in people.....   | 85 |

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the former Soviet countries have had to face the challenges of a new economic, political and social order. The transition process has been far from smooth for these societies and they are still dealing with the burdens that such a transition brings. After the collapse of the USSR, many people believed that they had gained power over their future because capitalism and its promoted political order, 'democracy', in theory promised people their own liberty, own identity, and the freedom to choose the direction of their lives. The doors of the world market were opened to these countries and the people of the former Soviet Union were introduced to the enchanting and aesthetically appealing goods and services that are seen to come with capitalist order. After sixteen years, there is now deep disappointment among the people because of the uncertainty and insecurity resulting from incomplete and inadequate transition. The nations are still in transition and it is unknown when this process will end. To explain the transition dilemma, Matutinovic asked the following questions:

- i) Is this process going to be a permanent one (i.e. transformation), since developed democracies are in transformation themselves to post-industrial society and possibly towards sustainable society, leaving transition countries always one or two steps behind?
- ii) Is the direction in which transition countries are presently moving-i.e. towards mass consumption, free market society- the right one, since this has so far mainly contributed to the present global environmental problems, or should they direct their overall resources to reaching a more sustainable society, drawing also on their positive experiences gained in the past 50 years? (2004, p.114)

These countries are still dealing with the establishment of a new social order after the collapse of the old social structure. These structural changes have unearthed an

economic depression which is evident in a sharp decrease in GDP, hyperinflation, an increase in poverty and unemployment. Moreover, the decline in state spending has resulted in the loss of many welfare benefits (Abbott and Sapsford, 2006, p.252). In addition to this, the redistribution of property has not been carried out using fair mechanisms. This has led to extensive social stratification based on private property ownership. As Dahrendorf (1990) argued, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union was ‘the hour of the lawyers’ to institutionalize the rule of law in the new order. This element of the transition process that of promoting and implementing the rule of law and notions of accountability has proved to be problematic. Corruption and bribery are ever-present in every sphere of these societies.

The reforms necessary for the development of a democratic state have not been realized in many post-Soviet countries, especially the ones in Central Asia and the Caucasus region, such as Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan. These countries’ ruling elite have maintained their power and therefore their monopolistic control over natural resources and wealth in general. Clan-based politics proves to be a difficult obstacle in the democratization process of these nations and the existing political system may be seen to foster nepotism and corruption.

In light of these persistent patronage networks and their inherent corruption, the social cost of transformation has been experienced by the people in their everyday lives. Sztompka argues that the people in these countries live with a cultural trauma, which is defined as living in a society where there has been a breakdown of social trust and a loss of a sense of agency (2000, p.450). People have now internalized the norms and values of the new social order and have become used to living with uncertainties and risks in their daily lives.

Azerbaijan, the largest country in the Southern Caucasus region, is rich in oil and natural gas resources. Similar to other post-Soviet countries, Azerbaijan is

experiencing a simultaneous social, economic and political transition period which is ultimately characterized by uncertainty. The country struggles with problems such as unemployment, bribery, corruption and the problems associated with structural adjustment policies. A decrease in production, in line with the dissolution of the Soviet internal market and the breakdown of economic ties with other Soviet successor states have drastically decreased the quality of life in the country. This can be seen to have resulted in a feeling of nostalgia for the previous political and economic order, which is often associated with greater income and job security, social security policies and the provision of services by a welfare state.

For a long time, The International Society for Quality of Life Studies (ISQOLS) used the standard of living concept, which is defined as:

a measurement of the quantity and quality of goods and services available to people, like the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, the number of doctors per thousand people, the percentage of GDP spent on health and education, or the number of television sets and telephones per household (Andre et al., 2001, p. 2).

This concept focuses heavily on the economic domain of life as the main gauge of a community's well-being, which discounts the importance of other domains of life, namely health, freedom, education, environment, safety, happiness, and life satisfaction (Hajiran, 2006, p.31).

Many scholars have defined the quality of life as subjective well-being or overall well-being (Allardt, 1993; Sirgy et al., 2006; Yetim, 2001). At this point, the notion of well-being must be focused upon: it does not only denote living conditions but also "control over resources across the full spectrum of life domains and the ways in which people respond to and feel about their lives in those domains" (Hajiran, 2006, p.35). According to Veenhoven, life satisfaction is "the degree to which a person evaluates

the overall quality of his/her life as-a-whole” (1996, p.6). In line with these ideas, the life satisfaction ratings given by Azerbaijani people of different social backgrounds regarding their life in general may be seen to shed light on the status of the quality of life in the country.

This study aims to investigate the main determinants of life satisfaction according to ‘ordinary’ people living in the newly independent post-Soviet Azerbaijan. In a broader sense, this study attempts to understand how people evaluate the transition of society by analyzing their personal life satisfaction. The study is based on the argument that a true reading of the factors explaining the life satisfaction of Azerbaijani people provides a more profound interpretation of people’s everyday life experiences in different domains of their life compared to Soviet period. The study will explore how life satisfaction forms among people of different social groups, differentiated by class, age, gender, education and income group. The main approach in the study is to integrate the objective determinants of quality of life in the fields of income, education, housing, and employment with subjective social indicators such as life satisfaction, life happiness and generalized trust. Taking into account the macro-societal changes that influence the life satisfaction of the Azerbaijani people and further analysis of data will help in painting a picture of the society and the individuals in a more realistic fashion.

Taking into consideration the local and cultural characteristics of the region, this research opens up further opportunities for cross-cultural analyses whereby concepts of transition and their consequences for populations’ well-being may be analyzed in a more general sense. Although many quality of life and subjective well-being studies have been published in many countries, including Eastern European ones, there are relatively few studies that focus on the countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus region. In order to understand the dynamics of change in post-Soviet countries in a

comprehensive way, the study of the quality of life in these countries is very important.

A lack of data on social indicators is a notorious obstacle one faces when analyzing post-Soviet transitional countries and indeed transitions in general. Access to objective data is very limited and is further exacerbated by the inadequate national statistics. In this respect, using subjective indicators as a tool to measure well-being in these countries certainly have its advantages. Reliance on individuals' responses to measure greater concepts of welfare, arguably, allows for the researcher's true monitoring of the society.

The following chapter will focus on conceptions of 'quality of life' and 'life satisfaction' in particular. The main purpose of this chapter is to give the theoretical framework for the study. The chapter aims to define quality of life and review the main approaches and conceptions by referring to the existing literature on the subject with a special emphasis on Veenhoven's (1996) understanding of quality of life. The second part of the chapter will be devoted to a discussion of life satisfaction as a strong indicator for measuring subjective well-being. How subjective well-being is discussed in the literature will be focused upon and then the meaning of life satisfaction will be discussed. This chapter ends by questioning the relationship between income and life satisfaction in order to shed light on the argument that income is the most important variable in explaining the life satisfaction of people in developing countries.

Chapter III will go further into the discussion on life satisfaction with a special emphasis on its measurement. After outlining general issues associated with measurement of the quality of life, some basic concerns pertaining to the measurement of subjective well-being in general and life satisfaction in particular will be discussed.

The common methods used to measure life satisfaction and the problems with its measurement will also be touched upon in this chapter.

Chapter IV will discuss the threefold transformation of Azerbaijan in economic, social and political terms will be discussed. This chapter will provide appropriate background information on Azerbaijan and thus set the context in which survey data will be superimposed. This approach aims at gauging well-being in Azerbaijan in a true and holistic manner.

Chapter V will be concerned with methodology. In the survey, 1030 households were selected according to a multistage stratified random sampling method and face to face interviews were conducted with these families. In addition, fifty in-depth interviews were conducted with people coming from different social backgrounds. In the first part of the chapter necessary information about the field survey conducted in Azerbaijan will be given. The next section will focus on the sample selection procedure and the basic characteristics of the sample. The following part will discuss the issues related to the application of the field survey. As well as giving a detailed explanation of the questionnaire and what was done to finalize the survey, brief information about the in-depth interviews will be provided.

Before discussing the factors that explain the life satisfaction of the Azerbaijani people, in Chapter VI, the research question of the study will be tested and the survey outcomes will be discussed within the framework of understanding 'life satisfaction'. In order to realize this, the Azerbaijani people's life satisfaction will be placed in a wider context and will be discussed through a comparison with data collected from European countries as well as other post-Soviet countries. Following this comparison, the basic socio-demographic factors influencing life satisfaction in Azerbaijan will be analyzed by using survey data. These factors will be age, gender, type of settlement, education, household income and employment status. In addition, the relationship

between 'life satisfaction' of the people and the quality of Azerbaijani society will be discussed. Analysis of this relationship will be carried out in order to gauge the extent to which people's integration into a transitional society full of risks and uncertainties impacts upon those people's perceptions of their daily lives. Within this context, the political participation of the Azerbaijani people and their sense of belonging will be the issue of focus.

To conclude, the general picture in Azerbaijan will be looked at. Analysis of the current picture of Azerbaijani society based on people's daily life experiences and approaches to life will be carried out and placed within broader Post-Soviet context.

**CHAPTER II**  
**SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING**  
**AND**  
**LIFE SATISFACTION**

**2.1. Introduction**

To have a better life is the basic motive of human beings and the very essence of the state is to provide the necessities for the realization of a better life for its citizens. Not only individuals but also societies have been shaping their ways of life according to the principles of social progress, for the sake of leading a happy, healthy and wealthy life. People often discuss what aspect of life should be given priority while evaluating it. Some people think that having a sufficient amount of money is the only condition for having a happier and healthier life; on the other hand, some argue that without good health one cannot have a good life. Furthermore, people very frequently ask one another the common question: “How are you?” to get information about others’ wellbeing, which is embedded in everyday social relationships and exchanges. At the societal level, the measurement of the citizens’ welfare has become a major focus in advanced countries and since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century both governmental and non-governmental organizations have started to use social indicators to measure the welfare of the people, not only within the boundaries of their own countries, but also in a global context. Ideas of social progress were associated with increased standards of living, while the economic development of societies was seen as the only way to realize this goal. In other words, the improvement of macroeconomic indicators was seen as the guarantee of both individual and societal welfare. However, since the 1970s, a new understanding of social progress has been recognized that considers both quantitative and qualitative aspects of development. In this new approach, the well-being of any individual is not only determined by his/her income and material welfare but also his/her subjective evaluations about the society that he/she lives in, his/her satisfaction with various domains of life and life in general. Since then, using social

indicators has become a convention and it has significantly influenced the very conception of welfare. Although the Human Development Index (HDI)<sup>1</sup> has become one of the gauges of welfare in societies, it does not cover all aspects of well-being such as health, psychological distress, quality of environment and others. To complement it, Quality of Life (QOL) measurements have come to be used by social scientists and policy makers since the 1960s. With time, the QOL concept has also started to replace the concept of welfare, especially in European countries. In the beginning, the QOL measures focused on objective social indicators such as level of education, total household income and type of accommodation. It has been realized, however, that these Quality of Life measurements can not encompass the whole picture and adding variables about the subjective well-being of people (happiness, satisfaction with life, etc) is indispensable to our understanding of the basic determinants of the quality of life in a much more comprehensive way. Thus, both objective and subjective social indicators are now widely used to understand the well-being of people in any given society.

Within this introductory outline, this chapter aims to conceptualize life satisfaction as one of the most significant subjective social indicators in measuring the quality of life. In the first part of the chapter, the main approaches on the quality of life will be summarized and discussed. The second part will be devoted to subjective well-being in terms of both how it is conceived and its use in quality of life indexes. Lastly, the very meaning of life satisfaction, as stipulated in the literature, will be discussed related to quality of life concepts in order to explain the main approach used in this study.

---

<sup>1</sup> HDI is composed of three indicators: life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate (carrying two-thirds weight) and combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrollment ratio (carrying one-third weight), and GDP per capita at PPP in U.S.D.

## **2.2. Quality of Life: Main Approaches, Conceptualizations and Definitions**

### **2.2.1. Definition of ‘Quality of Life’**

In the last fifty years, ‘quality of life’ has become a crucial concept and come to be used by a several disciplines in social sciences like economics, sociology, psychology and political science. In a broader sense quality of life can be defined as the level of wellbeing of the people in any given society in all domains of their lives. Covering the material and non-material, objective and subjective, individual and social dimensions of welfare, this definition is based on a multi-level approach to quality of life. To give a standardized definition for quality of life is a very difficult task due to its interdisciplinary usage and its multi-dimensional nature. In other words, each subdiscipline of the social sciences implements its own way of understanding to conceptualize the quality of life and this makes selection of the most appropriate definition for any research on the quality of life much more complex. In addition to this, there is a vast amount of research in related literature in which various definitions and measures are used making the concept appear ambiguous at times.

Although ‘quality of life’ is seen as a new and different concept, the very meaning of it has its roots in many social science studies. In those studies, the concept can easily refer to ‘welfare’, ‘wellbeing’, ‘life satisfaction’, and ‘happiness’. In the literature, welfare is the concept most frequently used instead of QOL. In the OECD’s Social Indicators Report (2006), while the well-being of communities was evaluated under the concept of social welfare, the well-being of countries and supranational unions was analyzed with reference to the concept of societal welfare. Even as psychologists have preferred to use ‘life satisfaction’ and ‘happiness in life’ in order to interpret people’s quality of life, economists have focused on the concept of ‘utility’ which basically refers to the measurement of the satisfaction that people obtain from goods or services. In this sense, it should be noted here that how the concept is used depends on the researcher’s discipline.

### **2.2.2 The Conceptualization of Quality of Life: Approaches and Theories**

In this section, the QOL concept will be analyzed in a more detailed way and the conceptual framework will be provided for the study. As discussed before, there are many different approaches in the literature and to choose one approach would not be sufficient to give a complete picture of the QOL in this study.

Schuessler and Fisher (1985) argue that the classification of QOL theories and approaches is pointless because all approaches are intertwined and dependent on each other. Many scholars argue that quality of life researchers should be independent of all approaches and according to his/her case study the researcher should develop a quality of life index which is appropriate to his/her case. In line with this, the approaches used in this study will be summarized in the following way; (1) Individual vs. Transcendental Approaches; (2) Welfare Conceptualizations; (3) The Basic Needs Approach; and (4) The Capability Approach.

As a starting point, according to Schuessler and Fisher (1985) the quality of life refers to the level of satisfaction of people with different domains of life; satisfaction with urban life, satisfaction with job, satisfaction with family and more. They emphasize in their study the significance of this concept for the formation of public policies.

First of all, individual vs. transcendental approaches to the QOL are based on the basic duality of modern sociology, which is the individual versus society. This duality is of particular significance within the modernization paradigm. While some philosophers emphasize the priority of the individual over the society, some argued that society has a privileged status over the individual. In this context, Gerson (1976) emphasized that this mainstream idea is very significant for understanding approaches to 'quality of life' because it contributes to the formation of this classification. Individual approaches to QOL focus on meeting human needs and desires and they argue that the social order is necessary only for guaranteeing the individual's security.

On the contrary, transcendental approaches are based on the idea that the interests of the whole society are much more significant than an individual's desires. Individuals should devote themselves to the social order. In this respect, the quality of life of any individual can be measured with regard to the utility of the person for his society and his level of satisfaction from life (ibid., p.795). He argues that both individual and transcendental approaches should be integrated in order to get a complete conceptualization of QOL. This kind of an approach considers the interests of both individual and society. The dialectical relationship between individual and society should be embedded in the approach.

Secondly, theories on welfare help to understand the basic requirements for a better life in societies. It is not possible to summarize the history of welfare discussions in this chapter, but some of them will be discussed to explicate the conceptual framework of the study. According to Bognar (2005), welfare theories can be classified in two main groups: subjective and objective welfare. If a person has a positive attitude towards someone, it would be possible to talk about a high level of subjective welfare. Definitions and measurement techniques of subjective welfare differ according to the status of 'pleasure', 'happiness', 'satisfaction', 'desire', and 'preference'. On the other hand, objective welfare does not focus on people's attitudes and behaviors; rather it puts the established rules and norms over the individuals. It helps to determine the goods and norms which are related to the improvement of life and increased living standards. In his study, Bognar lists three significant welfare approaches which are 'preference satisfaction', 'objective accounts' and 'hedonist theories' (2005, p. 564). First of all, preference satisfaction theory maintains that if a person wants something, that thing is good for the person. Thus, living according to preferences and acquiring wishes is better for increasing the quality of life. In other words, to choose something and get it directly affects the subjective well-being of the people. Preference satisfaction theory has two sub-approaches: (1) actual preference satisfaction theory and (2) informed preference satisfaction theory. The welfare of the

individual is solely dependent on a life in which she/he gets all the things she wants and does whatever she/he wants to do. In other words, human welfare is realized if people's desires and wishes are met. However many scholars oppose this idea with the argument that people are not consistently capable of making the correct decisions regarding what is good for their lives. In order to overcome this problem people should agree on what is common good for all and the basic necessities which are good for everybody should be determined. In this framework, informed preference theory claims that what is good for the person is to live according to informed preferences and minimum requirements (ibid., p.568). Lastly, hedonist theories argue that the welfare of people is defined by how much pleasure they get from their lives, to what degree they are satisfied with and happy in their lives (ibid., p.572).

Besides these socio-psychological approaches in the literature, Zapf's (1984, cited in Noll, 2002) understanding of welfare has contributed to a new approach in QOL studies. For the first time, he tried to integrate both objective living conditions (living standards, working conditions, health and so on) and the subjective evaluations of people (happiness with life, life satisfaction etc) within his measurement of quality of life (See Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Zapf's Typology of Welfare Positions

| Objective living conditions | Subjective well-being |             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
|                             | Good                  | Bad         |
| Good                        | Well-being            | Dissonance  |
| Bad                         | Adaptation            | Deprivation |

Source: Noll, 2002, p.51

According to Zapf (1984, cited in Noll, 2002), the well-being of people is only guaranteed to be positive when objective living conditions and subjective well-being

of people are in a good position. In other words, having good material standards of living is not enough for people's well-being when they are not satisfied with their lives. Sometimes people can survive within poor living standards and in spite of it they can be happy. Zapf argues that these people's integration into their society is very significant in understanding their well-being. If people suffer from bad conditions with regard to both objective and subjective welfare, they feel deprived (Noll, 2002, pp. 51-52).

### 2.2.2.1. Veenhoven's Understanding of Quality of Life

Veenhoven (2000) criticized Zapf's welfare typology because of its inadequacy in explaining 'quality of life'. He is particularly critical of Zapf's use of vague concepts like objective vs. subjective that he views as insufficient. His approach to QOL is summarized in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Veenhoven's Four Qualities of Life Typology

|                     | Outer qualities            | Inner qualities            |
|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Life chances</b> | Liveability of environment | Life-ability of the person |
| <b>Life results</b> | Utility of life            | Appreciation of life       |

Source: Veenhoven, 2002, p.6

In this table, 'life chances' refers to the opportunities for a 'better life' that are open to a person. In his typology, 'life results' refers to every kind of outcome in a person's life. Additionally, while the inner qualities of a person are related with the skills and abilities that s/he has, outer qualities basically refers to the quality of a person's environment.

In this respect, the first cell of the table explains the characteristics of the environment where people live and the opportunities that are provided to them. In other words, liveability of the environment in which one lives is seen to govern certain outcomes and is in turn improved with good material standards of living and good life opportunities. He argues that people's well-being is dependent on the '*quality of society*' which is seen to secure material well-being and social equality. If the material living conditions are good and people obtain efficient outcomes Veenhoven (2002) argues that this indicates the degree of their 'utility of life'. To him, virtuous living is the strongest indicator of utility of life. Furthermore, he focuses on individual capabilities and skills in terms of 'quality of life' and he argues that "life-ability" of people is crucial to living a better life. Most of the time, people have personal evaluations regarding their lives. They are happy or unhappy, satisfied or unsatisfied with their lives. The last cell explains people's ideas and feelings about their lives. In other words, it helps to understand subjective well-being. Appreciation of life is understood by the degree of satisfaction with life. Life satisfaction is the most commonly used indicator for measuring the appreciation of life.

### **2.2.3. Basic Needs Approach**

Certain basic needs, such as water, food, shelter, and love, must be met to ensure human beings survival. A well-known philosopher, Maslow (1962), list a range of needs according to their priority which are indispensable for proper human life. He classifies these needs under five groups which are (1) Physiological, (2) Safety, (3) Belonging and love, (4) Esteem, (5) Self Actualization. According to Maslow these various needs constitute a hierarchy in the sense that people have to meet their most important needs to survive. In his country-wide quality of life study, Hagerty (1999) and uses Maslow's model in order to understand the patterns of development in countries. He groups social indicators according to the five categories of needs. Daily calories available per person and GDP per person are the indicators of physiological well-being of people in a country. He uses the percentages of divorce and infant

mortality rate for the category of belonging and love. The other indicators used in his study are political rights, women's labor market participation, literacy rates and levels of schooling, life expectancy, safety from murder and safety from war (Hagerty, 1999, p.253). He maintains that there is a significant relationship between the needs of countries and the needs of individuals. That is to say, the well-being of the people in a country is mainly determined through the meeting of the basic needs of its citizens. He further observes that focusing on one domain of needs positively influences other domains as far as the development of countries is concerned, in contrast to the individual level.

Another significant theory that can be categorized under the basic needs approach is Allardt's (1993) conception of QOL. His approach is based on the satisfaction of human needs and he classifies these needs under three subcategories: (1) Having, (2) Being, and (3) Loving. First, *having* refers to all kinds of material possessions that a person has. These are economic resources, housing conditions, employment, working conditions, health and education. It can be argued that *having needs* are directly related with the living standards of the people. Secondly, the *loving needs* of people are based on relationships with other people in the society, that is, people's socialization. To illustrate this point, Allardt (1993) argues that people's memberships to non-governmental associations or local organizations influence their well-being incredibly. Lastly, Allardt describes *being needs* as the needs which are crucial for an individual's integration into society and nature (1993, p.90).

According to Allardt (1993), the "being" component explains the meaning of an individual's life. To put it more clearly, a person's voluntary participation in the decision-making processes related to his community life, work life, private life and other fields of life make him more committed to the society that he lives in and this has an enormous effect on his quality of life (ibid., p.94). Allardt's model of quality of life is summarized in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Use of Different Indicators from Allardt's Having, Loving, Being Approach

|               | Objective indicators  | Subjective indicators   |
|---------------|---|---|
| <b>Having</b> | 1. Objective measures of the level of living and environmental conditions | 4. Subjective feelings of dissatisfaction/satisfaction with living conditions |
| <b>Loving</b> | 2. Objective measures of relationships to other people                    | 5. Unhappiness/ happiness – subjective feelings about social relations        |
| <b>Being</b>  | 3. Objective measures of relationships to society and nature              | 6. Subjective feelings of alienation/ personal growth                         |

Source: Allardt, 1993, p.93

To sum up, the basic needs approach stresses the significance of the satisfaction of human needs for improving the quality of life of people in general.

#### 2.2.4 Capability Approach

After the 1990s the human development paradigm gained importance in many debates on welfare and it can be said that the capability approach to human development has provided the main conceptual tools for such discussions. In many studies on social policy issues the capability approach is the one most referred to while explaining the mechanisms of development and well-being. Basically, the approach has focused on the individual's abilities to actualize his desires in his daily life, namely, what people are able to do and what determines their level of quality of life. Although at first glance the capability approach is a more individualistic understanding of well-being, it has been used to understand the well-being of both individuals and communities. The most prominent figures of this approach are Sen and Nussbaum (1993). Both scholars argue that the well-being of the individual is totally dependent on the balance between the *means* and *ends* in his/her life.

Perhaps the most primitive notion in this approach concerns ‘functionings’. *Functionings* represent parts of the state of a person –in particular the various things that he or she manages to do or to be in leading a life. The *capability* of a person reflects the alternative combinations of functionings the person can achieve, and from which he or she can choose one collection. The approach is based on a view of living as a combination of various ‘doings and beings’, with quality of life to be assessed in terms of the capability to achieve valuable functionings (Sen, 1993, p.31).

### 2.3. Subjective Well-being

Whoa-oo-oo! I feel good, I knew that I would, now  
I feel good, I knew that I would, now  
So good, so good, I got you  
James Brown

Any researcher can easily understand the objective welfare of people by making simple observations. For instance, if a person has a luxury house, stylish clothes, and expensive beverages in her mini-bar the researcher would most probably report that her well-being is very high. The question is why she seems to be miserable despite having higher material standards of living. She does not think that she is satisfied with her life and she is not happy with it. Thus there is no direct cause-effect relationship between the objective well-being (OWB) and subjective well-being (SWB) of people. In general it can be said that SWB is based on people’s evaluation of all the spheres of their lives. It is their personal, psychological response to their quality of life. In contrast to objective indicators (GNP per capita, the amount of monthly income, the number of rooms in the house etc.), to understand the level of SWB, people are asked about their opinions on their lives directly. If a respondent in the survey says “I feel good”, it refers to his level of subjective well-being. At first sight, these evaluations seem to be very vague and hypothetical. For instance, happiness is a very relative and multi-dimensional concept in human life and it is very difficult to measure. Therefore, to ask people about their happiness is the best way to understand their well-being.

Diener and Oishi (2000) also argue that this is the only democratic way of measuring people's QOL - with their own judgments rather than taking QOL experts' ideas.

### **2.3.1. Life Satisfaction**

In the quality of life literature, subjective well-being is defined and measured by two significant concepts: life satisfaction and life happiness. Both concepts are also used as social indicators in quality of life studies. Although it is very difficult to draw clear-cut boundaries between these two concepts, it can be argued that both have their own peculiarities in terms of understanding SWB. It is very difficult to discuss the concept of happiness within the context of this study. Having both philosophical and psychological definitions, happiness is a very complex issue to give a proper definition of. Sirgy and Cornwell argue that happiness is an affective construct because people's answers are based on their emotional reflections on the events in their lives (2001: p.131).

Basically, life satisfaction, as opposed to happiness, is driven by cognitive processes. Rather than emotions and effects, people's rational assessments of their way of life help to understand what it is. Within this context, it helps the researcher to interpret the living conditions of the respondents by directly applying their own judgments.

According to Veenhoven (1996), life satisfaction should be used for four main purposes. First of all, life satisfaction is the strongest tool to measure the apparent quality of life of any given society. Many scholars support the view that this is the best way to measure quality of life of the people in any country (Sirgy (2006), Delhey (2004), Diener (1997)). Although it seems to be too subjective, people's evaluations of their living conditions are in accordance with the objective measurement of the quality of life in a country. It can easily be observed that average life satisfaction scores are higher in advanced countries than in countries that have poor living conditions. Secondly, measuring life satisfaction through panel studies helps to monitor the

countries' social progress. In relation to this, thirdly, it contributes to policy-making processes through comparing people's satisfaction with the new agendas and reforms. Lastly, studying life satisfaction is useful for understanding the basis of 'good life' and 'good society'.

In QOL studies, the respondents are asked about several aspects of subjective well-being. To understand the life satisfaction of people, the research considers two basic levels of measurement. The first level is the satisfaction with a specific domain such as income, education, accommodation, health, neighborhood, and environment. The second level is based on the overall assessment of people's lives that is life satisfaction in general. It can be argued that satisfaction with one specific domain has serious impact on satisfaction with life in general. Viewing this as a reciprocal relationship is logically sound. That is to say, life satisfaction in general may influence the satisfaction with a given domain of life. However it should be noted here that overall life satisfaction is greater than the sum of its parts.<sup>2</sup>

### **2.3.2. Factors Influencing Life Satisfaction**

To obtain a well-designed theoretical model to conceptualize SWB, the variables determining it should be understood in depth by the researcher. Moreover, it should be kept in mind that the concept may refer to both an individual and a societal level of measurement at the same time. Cummins and Cahill (in Bramston et al., 2002) proposed a model to define subjective well-being and in their analysis there are three levels of determinants of SWB. The first-order determinants are individual-based variables like personality traits; the second-order determinants are based on conscious cognitive schemata which include variables like control, self-esteem and optimism; the third-order factors are related to socio-environmental factors (Bramston et al., 2002, p. 267). Before elaborating on these levels, it should be reinforced here that

---

<sup>2</sup> The further discussion of measurement of life satisfaction by using domain satisfactions will be made in Chapter III.

quality of life is a concept which is not only based on people's material possessions but is also defined by subjective determinants, such as people's emotions, mood, happiness, and social roles and so on.

The theory most frequently referred to for understanding people's subjective well-being is "set-point theory" which was established by psychologists (Brickman and Campbell, 1971; Costa and McCrae, 1980; Headey and Wearing, 1989, in Headey, 2006). The theory assumes that each person has his own set-point which is based on his genetics and personality traits. During their existence people experience many different life events, both positive and negative such as the loss of a job, falling in love, or a traffic accident. Each event may be seen to have a considerable effect on person's feelings about life. Set-point theory underlines the fact that people adapt easily to unexpected circumstances and they show a high tendency to turn back their set points. This phenomenon is known as 'hedonic adaptation'.

In this respect, Cummins and Cahill's theoretical model is very useful in order to understand subjective well-being at both the individual and societal level. Bramston et al. (2002) supports this approach arguing that the model is successful in integrating people's emotions and moods into the analysis based on long term evaluation of personal characteristics and socio-economic indicators which have been neglected by previous models. Although Diener, Sandvik and Pavot (1991) argue that the judgment of well-being is influenced strongly by intense positive emotions, Bramston et al. indicated in his study that measuring subjective well-being is mostly dependent on monitoring people's emotional changes regularly (Bramston et al., 2002, p. 269).

Psychological distress and personality traits are beyond the scope of this thesis, and thus only socio-environmental factors determining people's subjective well-being will be focused upon. Each individual has an idea about what influences people's happiness. Being married, having a good family, a good salary, a peaceful work

environment and issues related to aging are common necessities to live a long and happy life for most people. In the sociological sense, the subjective well-being of people is influenced by basic socio-demographic variables: age, education, marital status, family environment, employment status, and income. There are many case studies which investigate the relationships between the life satisfaction of people and these socio-demographic variables. In many societies there is a negative correlation between people's ages and their subjective well-being. Although successful aging programs have started recently, it may be seen that most people are not ready to face the problems of aging. On the other hand, a peaceful family and work environment has positive influence on people's judgments about life. In developing countries in particular, the role of good family relations is one of the most significant determinants of the subjective well-being of the people. In his report, Delhey (2004) summarizes the main drivers of life satisfaction in the developing countries within the EU (See Table 2.4).

Table 2.4: The Three Most Important Self-Reported Factors Contributing to Quality of Life, by Country

| Country        | Most important | Second most important | Third most important |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Bulgaria       | health         | income                | job                  |
| Turkey         | health         | income                | job                  |
| Czech Republic | health         | income                | family               |
| Lithuania      | health         | income                | family               |
| Cyprus         | health         | family                | income               |
| Poland         | health         | family                | income               |
| Romania        | health         | family                | income               |
| Slovenia       | health         | family                | income               |
| Hungary        | family         | health                | nice home            |

*Question: In your opinion, which three factors contribute most to your current quality of life?*

Source: CCEB, EB 52.1.Delhey, 2004, p.39

Another socio-economic variable that helps to comprehend subjective well-being is the level of education. It can be argued that the relationship between people's level of education and their subjective well-being is curvilinear in many societies. As educational level increases, people's satisfaction with their life after a certain level starts to decrease. The most important reason for this is dissatisfaction with income levels in relation to levels of education. For instance, although being a teacher requires advanced education, teachers' salaries may not meet individuals' requirements or expectations.

After examining basic socio-demographic variables, it should be mentioned that quality of society is another dimension for understanding SWB. In general terms, it refers to all kinds of services, opportunities, living conditions, and *outer chances*, independent of the individual. Societal quality is defined as: "the extent to which citizens are able to participate in the social and economic life of their communities under conditions which enhance their well-being and individual potential" (Beck et al. in Phillips, 2006, p.182). In similar terms, Veenhoven's (2000) concept of 'liveability' is very useful for comprehending the subjective well-being of the people in this study. He proposes this term to link the quality of societies and quality in societies. That is to say, while quality in societies is related with the quality of life of the individuals in any society, the quality of societies is conceived of as a holistic entity. He argues that liveability is the most significant aspect of the quality of societies because it is the bridge between quality in societies and quality of societies. Thus, it is defined according to the degree to which a nation's provisions and requirements fit the needs and capacities of its citizens (ibid., p. 7).

### **2.3.3 Income and Life Satisfaction**

The relationship between income and subjective well-being is discussed extensively by many scholars in the literature. If it is taken into account that all spheres of peoples' lives are commoditized, one may claim that people cannot live without

money. One may also claim that having enough money is the only condition for a happy and longer life. On the other hand, the opposing line of thought is also popular among people, many of whom believe that money can not provide happiness. In the last century, this has become a significant research question especially for the economists. They have tried to understand the relationship between the subjective well-being of the citizens of a country and their income. There are many social and economic indicators like GNP per capita, GDP per capita, purchasing power parity index, household income, life satisfaction scores, and life happiness scores which have been used. In their study, Seghieri et al. (2006) question this relationship and propose four major theories that could indicate why economic variables are not sufficient to explain happiness or subjective well-being: relative theory, absolute theory, adaptation theory and aspiration theory.

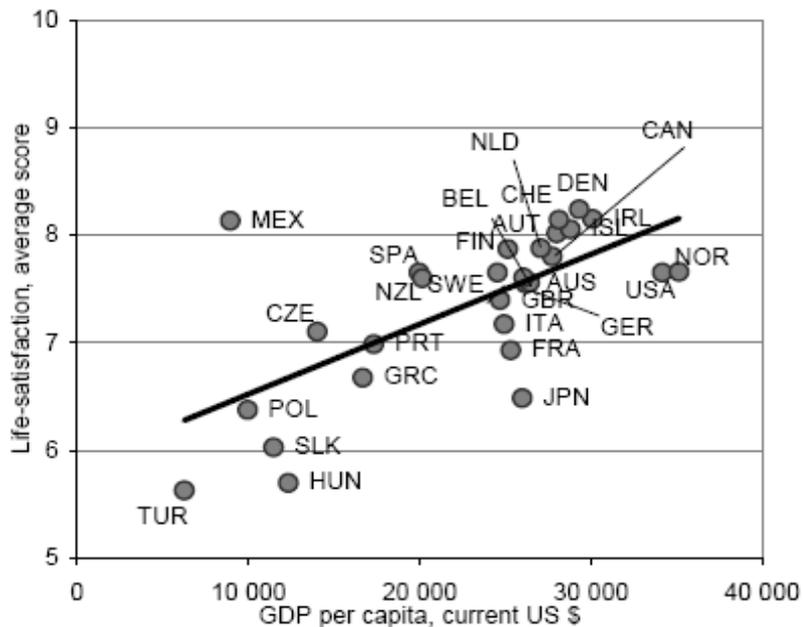
According to ‘relative theory’, which was introduced by Easterlin (2001), happiness is relative because people make a comparison between themselves and their neighbors. Using social comparison theory, he argues that SWB is positively but weakly correlated with income and negatively correlated with individual material aspirations. In his research, he asked people: “Imagine your income increases substantially while everyone else’s stays the same – would you feel better off?” Most of the people answered “yes”. In this experiment, the respondents were also asked about the reverse of that situation: “Think about a situation in which your real income stays the same, but everyone else’s increases substantially – then how would you feel?” This time they said that they would feel worse although their real income has not changed at all (Easterlin, 2001, p.13). This research shows that the relative deprivation of people is the basic determinant of their subjective well-being.

Easterlin (2001) emphasizes that an increase in income does not necessarily lead to a dramatic increase in the well-being of people from both higher and lower income groups. Since it generates equivalent increase in material aspirations, people adapt to

their new level of income and living standards in a short time. Thus the negative effect of the latter on SWB may be seen to undermine the positive effect of the former. As a result, it can be argued that the level of income should be optimized rather than maximized. In other words, getting the right amount of income would be the best solution for people as this is the real challenge in terms of understanding the relationship between money and happiness, particularly in advanced countries. He stresses that whether the unit of analysis is the individual, a given income group, or a country, the life cycle should be considered.

But what happens to happiness as income goes up over the life cycle – does happiness go up too? The answer is no; on average, there is no change. Consider, for example, Americans born in the 1940s. Between the years 1972 and 2000, as their average age increased from about 26 to 54 years, their average income per person – adjusted for the change in the price of goods and services – more than doubled, increasing by 116 percent. Yet, their reported happiness in the year 2000 was no different from that 28 years earlier. They had a lot more money and a considerably higher standard of living at the later date, but this did not make them feel any happier (ibid., pp.11-12).

Venhoveen's (2000) approach is based on the idea that there is a linear positive correlation between income and subjective well-being. Since people with higher income meet their needs properly, they may be much happier than the people with lower income. However, when people's basic needs are satisfied, the influence of income on happiness starts to decrease. Thus both approaches argue that income is still a significant variable for understanding and measuring subjective well-being in poorly developed and developing countries. Because the majority of the population in those countries suffers from unemployment and inadequate income, people's subjective well-being is mostly described using main economic indicators such as GDP, PPP and household income. It is worth noting that their material aspirations have great influence on their subjective quality of life.



Source: Boarini, et al., 2006, p. 34

Figure 2.1: The Life Satisfaction and GDP of Countries

In their study, Brickman and Campbell (1971) emphasize that people have a tendency to adapt to their level of income, and thus their living standards. Although substantial increases in income have a positive influence on well-being, people modify their aspirations according to this increase and they begin to adapt to this new level. This discussion points out human beings considerable adaptive ability in the face of both good and bad events. Argyle's (1994) taxonomy on subjective well-being and objective living conditions shows that there is a group of people who are satisfied with their lives and happy with their lives even though they have poor material living conditions. He calls this group who adapt to their level of subsistence the 'happy poor'.

Lastly, Michalos (1985) states that people's satisfaction with life is dependent mostly on the actualization of their desires. He claims that the satisfaction of people's desires

plays the greatest role in their perceptions about life and the expressions of their feelings.

Having given the main approaches in the discussion of the relationship between income and subjective well-being, it would be useful to refer to Phillips in order to summarize the main points of argument in the relevant literature:

- (1) Increases in national wealth in developed countries over the past 50 years have not led to any increases in SWB.
- (2) It is probable, though, that SWB in poorer nations has increased as they have got richer.
- (3) People who strongly desire wealth and money are more unhappy than people who do not.
- (4) Within-nation differences in wealth show a positive correlation with happiness (Diener and Oishi, 2000) but only a small one (Diener and Biswas-Diener, 2002)
- (5) People's SWB will not necessarily increase if they get richer at the same rate as their peers but may well do so if they get richer faster than their peers. They will certainly be likely to suffer a reduction in their SWB if their peers get richer and they do not (2006, p.45).

To conclude, it can be said that the relationship between money and happiness is a complex issue to grasp. It is composed of both inner psychological processes and outer socio-economic dimensions.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **THE MEASUREMENT OF LIFE SATISFACTION**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

Life satisfaction is a very difficult concept to construct a framework of analysis for and to measure without bias. In other words, understanding life satisfaction requires an in-depth study of people's inner feelings and outer chances, which in turn presents significant problems when trying to undertake its accurate measurement. The relevant literature on its definition was discussed in the second chapter. This chapter will be devoted to the discussion of issues regarding the measurement of life satisfaction by a review of the debates in the field. It will firstly focus on the main conventions and methodologies for measuring quality of life in general. The second part of the chapter will be based on methods of measuring subjective well-being in general and life satisfaction in particular. The last part of the chapter will be devoted to further understanding the measurement problematic of life satisfaction through a discussion of validity and reliability issues.

#### **3.2. The Measurement of QOL**

To monitor welfare programs in European countries, many nationwide social surveys have been carried out since the 1970s. Many political parties, research units and governmental organizations have collected data on various areas such as income, education, housing, health, environment and crime. The conceptual context of welfare has changed and new standards of living have been introduced to the life of the ordinary European citizen. Besides money-based economic indicators, researchers started to use social indicators which help to explain rights and freedoms, political participation, anomie and alienation, social capital and cultural capital. Furthermore, many changes which were made in the EU's agenda have influenced the measurement of the people's well-being. It is in this context, that the social indicators movement will be introduced.

*The Social Indicators Movement* emerged as a reaction to the perceived inefficiency of economic indicators which had been used as the main factors analyzing the progress of societies. It was believed that economic indices alone could not reflect the social reality in a comprehensive manner. For example, although GNP per capita gives a rough idea about people's standards of living, it is not able to explain the 'relative deprivation' of the people when evaluating their material well-being. Hence, researchers from many fields of social sciences have contributed to the establishment of an index of QOL which covers not only economic indicators but also its social and psychological measurements. Thus the social indicators movement contributed to the formulation of a new understanding of welfare, shifting the focus of analysis from economic terms to social ones. In other words, in addition to counting the number of rooms in the respondent's house, his/her relationships with his close friends and neighbors also started to be considered in the measurement of his/her well-being.

Despite it is a significant contribution to attaining a system of measurement of welfare, in time, it was argued that the social indicators movement could not offer adequate techniques to track the development of the welfare regimes. The basic reason behind this argument is that this approach uses mainly objective social indicators such as frequencies of illnesses, the level of environmental pollution, the occurrence of crimes and the numbers of schools. Psychologists especially argue that people's well-being cannot be measured without taking their feelings, depressions, and evaluations into account. Thus they developed new instruments which include subjective indicators like life satisfaction, and happiness.

Over time a new debate has emerged on the integration of objective and subjective indicators for the monitoring the welfare of societies. Both types of indicators have advantages and disadvantages in terms of using such a complete QOL index. Diener and Suh (1997) indicate several advantages and disadvantages of using objective and subjective indicators (See Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Advantages and Disadvantages of Objective Indicators

| Objective indicators                     |   |
|--|---|
| Advantages                               | Disadvantages                                     |
| Objectivity                              | Fallible  |
| Reflecting normative ideals of a society | Measurement problems                              |
| Comparability                            | availability                                      |
| Level of analysis                        | Selection of variables in an ad hoc fashion       |
|  | Do not reflect people's experience of well-being. |

First of all, *objectivity* is the most significant characteristic of the objective indicators in terms of their potential for quantifying social observation with minimal error in measurement. That is to say, they would aid in ensuring the high-quality and precise estimation of the QOL in any society. On the other hand, it is very difficult to collect reliable and valid data in all societies. For instance, household income is the most significant objective indicator for forming an idea about the well-being of the people. More often than not, it is a very difficult task to collect reliable data on this variable because people hesitate to give information about their total income. Although it is a continuous variable, the researcher may face problems when using this variable. This is the fallible side of objective indicators.

Secondly, there are some normative ideals in a society that every individual agrees on. Thus, without taking the different evaluations of individuals into consideration, the researcher may use and develop objective indicators to measure the level of quality of life in the society. Furthermore, objective indicators are very efficient when performing both country-based and cross-cultural analyses. It should be noted here

that although nationwide surveys have become widespread, many underdeveloped countries carry out cross-sectional surveys. For instance, many countries are still absent from the 'World Values Survey' databank. In this field, panel studies give the researcher a great opportunity to keep track of improvements.

Thirdly, the selection of the variables in an ad hoc fashion is one of the significant weaknesses of objective indicators. Although there are many scales and indexes of QOL available in the literature, many researchers try to form their own indexes depending upon their case studies and their focus of interest. Furthermore, their own conception of well-being has considerable impact on the types of variables that they use in their studies. Thus, the objectivity aspect of these indicators is negatively affected by the researcher's attitude towards the subject.

Lastly, measuring the QOL of people using only objective indicators is inadequate because of the fact that people's feelings and perceptions about their lives are ignored. To elaborate on this topic, the next section of this chapter will focus on the issues related with subjective indicators and measuring subjective well-being.

### **3.3. Measurement of Subjective Well-being**

Since subjective well-being has become an indispensable part of conceptions regarding the overall well-being of people, many QOL researchers have indeed begun to use subjective indicators. Although the predominant means of understanding welfare is based on the Scandinavian approach which mainly refers to objective indicators, American psychologists have indicated the status of the subjective indicators in the assessment of QOL. The data on subjective indicators is basically dependent on the respondents' evaluations and interpretations about their lives.

Table 3.2: Advantages and Disadvantages of Subjective Indicators

| <b>Subjective indicators</b>          |                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Advantages</b>                     | <b>Disadvantages</b>              |
| Measuring the experiences             | Validity and reliability          |
| Easier to modify for further research | Conjectural                       |
| Easy to compare                       | Influenced by current life events |
|                                       | People adapt to their environment |

In his study, Erikson (1993) uses ‘descriptive’ and ‘evaluative’ terms in order to show the difference between objective and subjective indicators respectively. He argues that objective indicators are descriptive in the sense that they focus on resources and conditions. On the other hand, subjective indicators are evaluative because they are dependent on the assessments of the respondents. For instance, in any questionnaire in a QOL study, the most typical objective data regarding the respondent’s education is collected by directly asking the question ‘How many years in total did you attend school?’ Following this question the researcher may want to get information on whether the respondent is satisfied with this education or not. Thus, he also has a chance to get data on education by using an evaluative variable in his study. It is significant to underline the fact that for some variables, there is no clear cut difference between the two types of indicators. According to Erikson some objective indicators may also include aspects of evaluation. For example, when people evaluate their education they also evaluate the education system in their country (1993, p.68).

Similar to objective indicators, subjective ones have both advantages and disadvantages when used in the QOL indexes. Subjective indicators help one to understand the very meaning of objective indicators, thus a researcher has a chance to analyze the overall condition by using both indicators interactively (ibid., p.71). If a subjective indicator is found to be inefficient in the research, the researcher also has

the chance to modify it in his future studies. That is to say, the measurement of subjective indicators is flexible enough to interpret the well-being of people. Furthermore, another advantage of the subjective indicators used in QOL research is their comparability across nations. For instance, World Values Survey uses standard questions for all countries to measure life satisfaction, and this helps to realize a comparative analysis based on the evaluations of the people living in each country.

The use of subjective indicators in QOL research has also been criticized. The most apparent disadvantage of these indicators, as has been noted, is related to problems of true measurement. It is easy to observe that the reliability of these indicators is not as high as the objective ones because they are totally dependent on people's answers. The situation is the same regarding the validity of the indicators. In order to solve this problem, more advanced measurement techniques should be used in QOL research. In addition to this, it is not always easy to compare people's ideas on the same subject. Although the conditions may be equal for two people, they may have different opinions on an issue. In addition, subjective indicators are very sensitive to temporal changes in people's moods. It is possible to get two conflicting responses in a day from the same person. In other words, people's subjective well-being is considerably affected by their relationship with other people. Also, it is significant to consider the fact that people have a high tendency to adapt to all kinds of situations. Hence, understanding the unhappy rich should not be too hard.

### **3.4. Measurement of Life Satisfaction**

Questions about life satisfaction are usually asked directly to respondents in QOL surveys. The most common question is 'Considering your life as a whole, how satisfied would you say you are nowadays?' This is an eleven-point scale question and the responses vary between "not at all satisfied" (0) and "extremely satisfied" (10). Table 3.3 summarizes the types of questions that are used in the QOL surveys.

Table 3.3: Some Currently Used Questions on Life Satisfaction

---

*Single questions*

- Taking everything into account, how happy would you say you are: very happy, quite happy, not very happy, not at all happy? (item used in the World Value Studies, see a.o. Harding, 1986)
- How satisfied are you with the life you lead? Very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, not at all satisfied? (standard item in Eurobarometer surveys, see a.o. Inglehart, 1990)
- Here is a picture of a ladder. Suppose the top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder the worst possible life. Where on the ladder do you feel you personally stand at the present time? (0-10 rating scale using a picture of a ladder) (Cantril's, 1965, present life ladder rating)
- How do you feel about your life-as-a-whole? Delighted, pleased, mostly satisfying, mixed, mostly dissatisfying, unhappy, terrible? (Andrews and Withey's, 1976, Delighted-Terrible scale)

*Multiple questions*

- Two identical questions asked twice. Rated on 1-7 Delight-Terrible scale (see above) -How do you feel about your life-as-a-whole? (asked at beginning of interview) -How do you feel about your life-as-a-whole? (same question asked again at end of interview) (Andrews and Withey's, 1976, Life 3)
- Five questions, rated on a 1-7 scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. -In most ways my life is close to ideal. -The conditions of my life are excellent. -I am satisfied with my life. -So far I have gotten the important things I want in life. -If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing. (Diener's, 1985 Satisfaction With Life Scale SWLS)

---

Source: (Veenhoven, 1996, p.27)

The use of single direct questions may prove problematic. Instead of these direct questions, subjective well-being should be measured by means of a well-designed scale. In his study, Veenhoven (1996) answers these criticisms, especially those related to the imperfection of this measurement technique with regard to the aspects of reliability and validity. In general, the reliability of an indicator can be defined as its overall quality, that is, its consistency and its ability to give the same results in repeated measurements. Test-retest correlations of the questions start to decrease when the satisfaction questions are asked again in the following hours (Kahneman and

Krueger, 2006, p. 7). Additionally, Veenhoven (1996) argues that people do not trust the validity of this question because they claim that the question does not refer to how much the respondents enjoy life, but rather, it reflects normative ideals. In other words, they argue that people have no clear idea about their satisfaction with life. They answer the questions considering only how satisfied they should be with life according to social expectations. However, Veenhoven (1996) states that this is not true since in many surveys people do not select the “don’t know” category and they have their own interpretations about life. For instance, that people enjoying higher living standards should report higher life satisfaction is a totally wrong assumption. Although this is true for many people, some people’s response may not be in line with this logic. Furthermore, although deficiencies of validity result from people’s desire as instinct to provide socially acceptable answers, this negative effect can be reduced through the use of larger sample sizes. In addition to the respondents’ bias, the interviewer and the sequencing of questions are other significant factors influencing low reliability and validity.

Although the measurement of life satisfaction entails some problems, the question of overall life satisfaction is used in many international surveys and it contributes considerably to cross-cultural comparisons of well-being. It is necessary to note here that the validity of this question in this kind of analysis is very high. On the other hand, there are also criticisms related to the cross-cultural comparison of averages of life satisfaction of the people in different countries. First of all, the issue most emphasized is that life satisfaction is a very western-oriented concept and it may not be logical to try to understand the well-being of people in countries other than those in the west. As a case in point, people who are living in collectivistic cultures may hesitate to introduce themselves as very satisfied, as this refers to a person’s willingness to present himself as a personage. Thus it can be argued that the life satisfaction scores would be lower in non-western societies for this reason. Furthermore, Veenhoven (1996) argues that in the descriptive analysis of the life

satisfaction variable in both western and non-western societies there is no significant difference between the categories of 'don't know' and 'no answer'. Secondly, life satisfaction and happiness may not have the same connotation in every language. Therefore, these questions should be translated carefully. The last difficulty in the cross-cultural life satisfaction of countries is the desirability bias. People living in happier and advanced countries tend to show themselves as happy (ibid., 1996, p. 10).

An attempt was made in this chapter to underline some important issues related to the measurement of quality of life in general and life satisfaction in particular. It was argued that using both objective and subjective indicators in an interactive way is the soundest and the only way of understanding the quality of life. Additionally, it is essential to emphasize that people's assessments of their lives should not be ignored and that it would not be possible to be a society engineer without taking their opinions into account. Before introducing the field study, the following chapter will try to explain Azerbaijan as a nation in transit in general terms.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **AZERBAIJAN: COUNTRY PROFILE**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

Being an oil-rich country, Azerbaijan is the largest country in the Caucasus region, both in terms of its population and the area of its land. According to population estimates, 8,120,147 live in the country today (CIA World Fact Book, 2007). After seventy years of the Soviet Rule, the Azerbaijani people gained their independence in October 1991. During the first years of independence, the nation faced the Nagorno-Karabag Conflict and many Azerbaijani people started to suffer from the war with Armenia. The most critical problem facing the Azerbaijani nation-state is securing sovereignty in the territories that belong to the country. Presently, about 15 % of the Azerbaijani territory was occupied by Armenians and the government faced the problem of the settlement of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and their well-being.

#### **4.2. Economic and Social Transformation**

The national economy is basically dependent on oil production and its marketing. Around 80 % of the foreign investment is related to the oil industry and nearly half of the national income is based on oil-related revenues (Bayulgen, 2003, p.209). Only a small amount of the oil demand of the world is supplied by the oil reserves of the country. According to The British Petroleum Statistical Review, Azerbaijan's reserves stand at 7 billion barrels, around 0.7 % of the world's total oil supply (ibid, p.210). However, this is very significant for the development of Azerbaijani society. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline Project will incredibly contribute to the national income and according to the estimates of International Crisis Group; the GNP will double by 2010 (ICG, 2004). The economy of Azerbaijan is still in the stage of transition to market economy and it can be said that it is very much dependent on the state. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan lost its control over the oil & oil products markets and the war with Armenia led to a decrease in production. These

economic losses resulted in a sharp increase in inflation rates. By the end of the 1990s, foreign capital entered the country in the oil and natural gas sector, and in line with this, the service and construction sector has started to grow in the country. Besides the oil reserves and the service sector, the agriculture is the third significant field in the national economy. It has also been changing in line with free market regulations. Land reform was one of these regulations and arable land was distributed among petty commodity producers. It should be noted here that 40 % of Azerbaijani people are employed in agriculture.

The economic transformation of the country has been very difficult. The entry of foreign capital has influenced many sectors dramatically. However, at the very beginning there had been several problems in Azerbaijan's economic relations with other countries. First of all, the country did not have any modern technology; the outdated Soviet technology was used. There was a lack of subsidies and capital. In addition to this, there were no qualified managers and there was no workforce to put free market policies into practice (İskender, 2004, p.28). Moreover, the country lacked sufficient communication and transportation infrastructure. The most significant problem was the lack of the rules and regulations regarding free market economy (ibid., p.29).

In spite of these problems in structural transformation, the growth of the national economy today is very good. According to the CIA World Fact Book, the GDP real growth rate is 32.5 % for the 2006; the same rate is 24.4 % in 2005. In addition to this, in the year of 2005, GDP per capita is 7.300 USD. The share of the private sector in the GDP is 79 % and 59 % of agricultural products are produced by the private sector. However, according to Rasizade, the national economy has serious weaknesses that lead to its degradation (2003, p.192). In the first place, since property rights are not secured, different forms of property operate under different rules. Secondly, there have been serious problems with free prices and free competition. The autonomous

economic activities are insufficient and both the natural and regular prices are not free market prices (Rasizade, 2004, p.136). They are determined by the government and the government has a monopoly that prevents the institutionalization of free market economy. In consequence, bribery and corruption in all levels of economic activities impede the economic development in the country. Foreign companies have to pay bribes in order to continue their economic activities in the country.

Although Azerbaijan has rich fossil based energy reserves and sufficient agricultural land, poverty is the most serious social problem in the country. The majority of people are below the poverty line and income inequality is embedded in everyday life. According to the statistics of the “State Poverty Reduction and Economic Development” report of UNDP, the people living under the poverty line make up 44.7 % of the whole population in 2005. On the other hand, 9,6 % of Azerbaijanis survive under the absolute poverty line (Rasizade, 2003, p.194). The high level of corruption and bribery make the situation worse and Azerbaijani people are now suffering from unemployment, low salaries, poor health and educational services. To add to all this, the shadow economy has been growing and tax evasion has become widespread. This socio-economic environment fosters the increasing crime rates and prostitution.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the economic activities of the country have been reduced and this has deepened the issue of poverty in the country. In addition to this, the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict has dramatically influenced the subsidies of many families. There are nearly 700.000 IDPs living in the country now and 75 % of them survive under the poverty line (UNDP, 2005). The settlement problem and the difficulties in subsistence affect their access to educational and health services. These people have a serious problem with integration into the urban community, especially in Baku. The bad living conditions and the ongoing unemployment problem lead many young people from IDP families to criminal activities.

### **4.3. Political Transformation**

Comprehending the social and political background of Azerbaijan is vital in fully grasping the political transition of the country. This short part will cover some turning points in the national history of Azerbaijan. First of all the years between 1918 and 1920 will be analyzed because of their impact on the establishment of an ‘independent nation’ which had been under the rule of the Czarist Russian Empire for a long time. During the years of Russian rule, ideas about an independent nation began to grow among the national elite. They especially focused on the role of education and the formation of a literary language. At that time, the Russian Empire recognized all people living in the region as Muslim Tatars and the main political aim of the national elite was to legalize their identity as ‘Azerbaijani Turks’ (Suleymanov, 2006, p.116). The main characteristics of this national movement can be understood from the motto “Turkify, Islamize and Modernize” (Ergun, 1998, p.31). Today this nationalist discourse is still discernible in Azerbaijani politics, because the main oppositional party, New Musavat Party, continues to use this slogan to realize the unification of the society. Increasing reactions against Armenians on the one hand and deeper conflicts with the Russian Empire on the other helped to make Musavat’s nationalist ideology widely accepted among the people. Under the leadership of Mehmet Emin Resulzade and İsmail Gaspirali, Musavat became the strongest political group in 1917 and after the October Revolution, the country refused to be a part of the Soviet political regime with the support of the Ottoman Empire.

However, two years of independence resulted in the recognition of Soviet power and Azerbaijan became one of the republics of the Soviet Union in 1920, the year that seventy years of Soviet rule in the country has started. In line with the nationalist tendencies in Azerbaijan, the ‘nativization’ policy that refers to the appointment of national leaders to the national communist parties was adopted by the Soviet government. Although nationalists tried to gain the right to use their native language, Russian was the only valid language in all fields of life such as science, history,

literature, and daily communication. The politics of assimilation continued during Stalin's period and the oppression of nationalist intellectuals and enforced population movements between the countries carried it even further. Soviet policies became more moderate during Khrushchev's government and he tried to eliminate the harsh political practices of Stalin. This *de-Stalinization* project encouraged the bilingual education system in the country and provided some degree of liberty that helped the revival of the nationalist movements. In later years, Heidar Aliiev became the political leader of the country as the first secretary of the Communist Party. During these years, Azerbaijan's industrialization, which depended solely on oil production, accelerated and in parallel with this the urbanization process of the country also improved (ibid, p.32). The Soviet Union was also experiencing a reformation movement that was based on Gorbachev's well-known policies of *perestroika* (economic restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness). It can be said that the national independence movement gained momentum after this period, because Lenin's 'self-determination' principle began to be discussed once again.

After that time, two prominent political figures, Heidar Aliiev and Ebulfez Elçibey, had a strong influence on the fate of Azerbaijan as a nation. There was significant opposition between Aliiev, the leader of the Communist Party, and Elçibey, who represented the intellectuals' social movement. However, it can be said that the nationalist project brought all the different ideologies together for the sake of sovereignty. In this pre-independence period, 'Azerbaijan Popular Front Movement' became the salvation party for the people and from 1989 the party declared that they demanded sovereignty in the fields of politics, economy and culture. There was a significant question in people's minds about what was the best alternative to the socialist system for their country. The idea of nationalization, that is to say the realization of independence and legalization of national identity, became an alternative to the socialist project in Azerbaijan which also promoted the democratization of the country. As stressed earlier, the national independence

movement included different ideologies such as Isa Kamber's (Musavat) and Etibar Memmedov's (National Independence Party) initiatives. The coalition of these political leaders with the united support of the people for the sake of national sovereignty took place after *Yirmi Janvar event*. 20<sup>th</sup> of January 1990 was a terrible day for the Azerbaijani people because their attempt to overthrow Soviet rule resulted in many injuries and deaths. After a while, Azerbaijan became an independent state under the rule of Ebulfez Elçibey. His government did not last long because of the problems within the newly established state and Heidar Aliev took over the government. Some opposition groups in Azerbaijan still follow Elçibey's political doctrine. Although Heidar Aliev died in 2003, his son İlham Aliev and his family have been in power since then.

After giving a brief political history of Azerbaijan, the current state of democratization in the country needs addressing. Recently, on November 6th 2006, new parliamentary elections were held in Azerbaijan, and this leads many scholars and international observers to reassess and criticize the very conditions of democracy in the country. Although the report of Freedom House was published in 2004, it deals with many crucial issues related with the evolution of democracy and many of the points it makes would most probably have remained the same had it been published in 2006, especially those on the subject of "free and fair elections". In this part, the summary of the Freedom House Report of 2004 will be given by touching upon the basic issues that help one understand the culture of democracy in the country. This will be done with regard to two main aspects: electoral process and civil society.

Firstly, if one looks more closely at the ratings of the electoral process in the report, after three years of stability at the rate of 5.75, in 2004 the rate increases to 6.00. Keeping in mind that towards the rate 7.00 things get worse for the country, this rate would become 6.50 for the year of 2006 considering the last elections. The most notable indicator of this deterioration is the state's attitude towards opposition parties

before and during the elections. The ruling elite of Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev and his relatives intimidate the alternative voices within the boundaries to conserve and perpetuate their position in the state. Democracy principally requires the competition of different ideas for the sake of the best government that carries all the demands of public to state. However, this has not been realized in Azerbaijan due to the intense pressure the state puts on the opposition's campaigns.

Secondly, the ruling elite is a big obstacle in the way of the development of a civil society in the country. According to the report, there is a slight improvement so far as in the development of civil society and it is still under the tight control of the government. The number of the activities of international NGOs in the country has been increasing and a number of useful projects have been carried out. The problem is that the participation of local people in such projects is quite limited and all these projects are in the hands of professionals, in other words the spirit of voluntarism and participation could not be promoted. Furthermore, there are serious problems with the media in the country. There is no independent media in the country; especially there is no freedom of the television press. All television channels are under the state control.

This brief chapter focused on country information of Azerbaijan in order to give background information just before giving detailed explanation about the field work. The following chapters will concentrate on the analysis of the research question of this study.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **THE FIELD RESEARCH IN AZERBAIJAN**

#### **5.1. The Brief Story of the Field Research**

The survey was conducted in Azerbaijan in June, 2006<sup>3</sup>. In the survey, 1030 households were selected using multi-stage stratified random sampling. In addition, fifty in-depth interviews were conducted with people from diverse social backgrounds. The main approach in the survey is to integrate the objective determinants of the quality of life in the fields of education, health, housing and employment with subjective social indicators such as life satisfaction, life happiness and generalized trust.

#### **5.2. Sample Design**

To provide an accurate cross-section of the Azerbaijani people, the sample size is determined by considering the official population size of Azerbaijan and in this case the sample size is comprised of 1000 households. The unit of analysis in the study is the household. For the application of a pilot study an additional 33 households were added to the total sample size. Thus there are 1033 respondents in total who were interviewed for the field survey. To select the sample for research, multistage stratified random sampling design was used. This design was applied in four stages and these stages can be summarized as follows: First the country was divided into official zones with regard to socioeconomic status. Then, within each economic zone, certain regions were selected as a second stage of the sampling procedure. In the next

---

<sup>3</sup> The field research was conducted as a part of the project entitled "The Quality of Life in Eurasia: The Cases of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan", for which I worked as a research assistant from 2005 to 2007. The project was supported by "The Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK)" and "Middle East Technical University Research Projects Fund", with full authorization and responsibility given for the research in Azerbaijan. This project was an extension of the EUROMODULE project, and The Center for Black Sea and Central Asia at METU proposed to carry out this survey in Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan with the support of The Scientific Council of Turkey.

stage, residential areas within the regions were selected. To select the respondents for the final stage, age and gender quotas were applied. It should be noted that the national representative percentages of urban and rural populations in the residential areas were considered during the selection process.

The sampling design is based on four stages, namely:

2. The selection of the zones according to the socioeconomic status
3. The selection of regions within these economic zones
4. The selection of residential areas within these regions
5. The final selection of households according to the system based on age groups, gender, urban/rural classification

#### **5.2.1. The Selection of the Zones According to Their Socioeconomic Status**

Officially, the territory of Azerbaijan is divided into ten economic zones. These zones are: Bakı-Abşeron, Naxçivani Kür-Araz, Dağlıq Qarabağ, Lenkeran-Astara, Quba-Xaçmaz, Şamaxı-İsmayilli, Genje-Qazax, Kelbejer-Qubadlı and Şeki-Zaqatala. It should be pointed out here that the sample did not cover all available zones because of practical difficulties carrying out such fieldwork. One difficulty was that the territories of two zones, which are Dağlıq Qarabağ and Kelbejer-Qubadlı, are occupied by Armenians thus proving a serious obstacle for the fieldwork. Another problem was that economic activity is not available in the Şamaxı-İsmayilli zone and its potential to represent the society is too weak, so this zone was also omitted from the list. The Şeki-Zaqatala zone, which has many characteristics in common with this zone, is more applicable for use in this research in its stead. Thus, seven socioeconomic clusters were selected for the sampling design. (See Table 5.2)

### 5.2.2. The Selection of the Regions within the Economic Zones

In this stage, the regions were selected randomly and the list of the regions is as follows:

Table 5.1: The Regions within the Socio-Economic Zones in the Sample

| Socio-Economic Zones | City/Rayon   | The Number of Households | City/Rayon | The Number of Households | City/Rayon | The Number of Households | Total |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Bakı-Abşeron         | Bakı         | 250                      | Sumgayıt   | 50                       | -          | -                        | 300   |
| Naxçıvan MR          | Naxçıvan     | 100                      | Şerur      | -                        | -          | -                        | 100   |
| Kür-Araz             | Ali-Bayramli | 50                       | Neftçala   | 50                       | -          | -                        | 150   |
| Lenkeran-Astara      | Lenkeran     | 75                       | Astara     | 75                       | -          | -                        | 150   |
| Quba-Xaçmaz          | Quba         | 50                       | Deveçi     | 50                       | -          | -                        | 100   |
| Genje-Qazax          | Genje        | 50                       | Xanlar     | 50                       | -          | -                        | 100   |
| Şeki-Zaqatala        | Qax          | 50                       | Oğuz       | 50                       | Qebele     | 50                       | 150   |
| Total                |              | 625                      |            | 325                      |            | 50                       | 1.000 |

### 5.2.3. The Selection of Type of Settlement within the Regions

The residential areas were selected according to socioeconomic characteristics and type of settlement, urban or rural. Random selection techniques were used in this stage.

### 5.2.4. The Selection of Households using the Quota System Based on Age Group, Gender, and Type of Settlement

According to population estimates for the year 2007, the sex ratio of Azerbaijan's population is 0.968 male(s)/female (CIA World Fact Book, 2007). Furthermore, 51 % of the people live in cities, whereas remaining % 49 of the population living in rural residential areas. The gender quota and the type of settlement (urban/rural) quota for

the sample were applied with these demographic facts taken into consideration. Moreover, the age quota allows the researcher to conduct questionnaires with people from different age groups, which enables him/her to gain access to a diverse array of experiences of Azerbaijan's post-Soviet transition period.

Table 5.2: The Sample Size of the Regions

| <b>Region</b> | <b>Number</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Bakü          | 265           | 25,7              |
| Sumgayit      | 50            | 4,8               |
| Ali Bayramli  | 50            | 4,8               |
| Neftçala      | 50            | 4,8               |
| Kaçmaz        | 50            | 4,8               |
| Deveci        | 50            | 4,8               |
| Lenkeran      | 80            | 7,7               |
| Astara        | 70            | 6,8               |
| Hanlar        | 50            | 4,8               |
| Gence         | 50            | 4,8               |
| Qax           | 57            | 5,5               |
| Nahcivan      | 100           | 9,7               |
| Oguz          | 56            | 5,4               |
| Qebele        | 55            | 5,3               |
| Toplam        | 1033          | 100,0             |

### **5.2.5. Basic Characteristics of the Sample**

The sample represents 0.12 % of the total population. Most of the questionnaires were conducted in Baku, the capital city of Azerbaijan. The city is the heart of the country not only in political and economic terms, but also because a considerable percentage of the Azerbaijani people live there (nearly two million people). In addition to this, 4,3 % of the sample is composed of internally displaced people (IDP) most of whom live in Baku.

While 53 % of the respondents live in urban areas, 47 % of the people represent the rural population of the country. The distribution of the respondents according to region and settlement is in keeping with the official national statistics. In 2003 the

urban population was 51 % and rural population was 49 % of the total population (UNESCAP, 2004). Both Azerbaijani women and Azerbaijani men are represented equally in the survey. In addition, the respondents in the survey are selected from different age groups. Although population of the young people in the country is remarkably high, the field survey considers the opinions and assessments of all age groups (See Figure 5.1). Since the unit of analysis in this survey is the household, average household size (4.6) is significant in terms of understanding the characteristics of the sample. There is a slight difference between the average household size in rural areas (4.42) and the average household size in urban areas (4.8) due to internal migration.

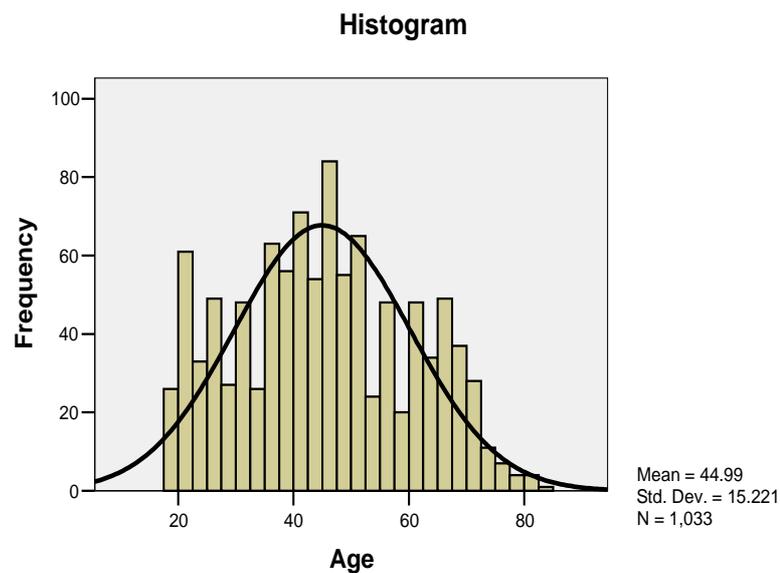


Figure 5.1: The Age of the Respondents

### **5.3. Performing the Survey**

#### **5.3.1. Questionnaire Design**

The EUROMODULE Questionnaire<sup>4</sup> was used in the study with reference to the survey conducted in Turkey in 2001. However, some important changes were made in the formats of the questions and the questionnaire in order to adjust to the country-specific conditions.

Some parts of the questionnaire were adjusted according to the field experience in Turkey. It should be noted that the most significant change was made on the question which tries to pinpoint the differentiation between the subjective expectations of the people and the actualization of these expectations. The question is based on two scales that consist of twenty items. These two separate tables were merged into one table and the value categories of the items in the latter scale were modified (Please see Question 9.1). There are two scales in the original questionnaire which are constructed in order to measure the individual's quality of life; each item in both scales had three answer categories. However, in the questionnaire given in this study, the number of answer categories of the items in the second scale was reduced to two, in order to obtain more reliable answers. Another significant modification was made to the scale of 'quality of society'. One more item was added to the scale and that is the equality of opportunity without reference to origin of place. The last important modification that should be underlined here was made to the question related to monitoring the living conditions of individuals.

---

<sup>4</sup> The main part of the questionnaire is based on questions that measure both objective and subjective wellbeing indicators. The questionnaire is composed of both a common part in which all questions are obligatory for every participant given the survey – which is called the 'core part'- and an optional section that includes questions on country specific indicators. The questions that were excluded from the questionnaire can be listed under the following headings: (1) Comparison of household's present financial status to that of one year ago; (2) Attaching importance to job; (3) Attaching importance to leisure time; (4) Psychological wellbeing; (5) Conflict between different social groups; (6) Anomie; (7) Satisfaction with social security; (8) Social exclusion and integration

As a further departure from the original questionnaire, the last two items were omitted for the purposed of this survey. These sub-questions are the living conditions of the people in comparison to those of the people in the close environment and the living conditions of the people in comparison to those of their neighbors.

### **5.3.2. Translation of the Questionnaire**

A common problem in quality of life studies is accurate and appropriate translation of the questions into local languages. Many scholars argue that there may be some mistakes made while translating the questions and this has a serious effect on the validity of the values obtained (Moore et al., 2005, p.292). To minimize these possible translation problems, each question was discussed at length and to reproduce the exact meaning of the questions, the field experience in Turkey was taken into consideration during the translation of the questions from English to Azerbaijani. This translation process is done carefully to ensure that the wording of the questions captured the meaning embodied by the original English version (ibid., p. 292). In addition to this, the pilot study was helpful in terms of finalizing the draft questionnaire before the fieldwork got underway (Please see Appendix II and Appendix III for the questionnaires in Azerbaijani and in English).

## **5.4. Fieldwork**

### **5.4.1. Pilot study**

The first pilot study was conducted in January 2006. 15 interviews were conducted with people from randomly chosen households in different regions of Baku. Some additional interviews were also carried out in Sumgayit, which is a significant industrial town close to the capital city. This pilot study helped to understand the problems with the questions which were translated from English to everyday Azerbaijani, and ensure that everybody could easily understand the questions. Furthermore, an attempt was made to analyze the availability of the effect of the

question order for some indicators (life happiness, life satisfaction, etc). The second pilot study was carried out after the interviewers were employed. For the purposes of working in a safe and healthy environment, official permission was given to each interviewer. The fieldwork team was trained on the issues of applying quota sampling in the regions they were responsible for and how to ask questions without affecting the respondents. Their first ten questionnaires were used for the purpose of a last check and this second pilot study became very significant for the study in general. After the first ten questionnaires of each interviewer were examined, there was a meeting on the subject of this pilot study and during this meeting many problems that had been faced in the field were discussed. Three problems emerged during the fieldwork of the pilot study. First of all, most of the interviewers misunderstood the answer categories for the question about household ownership. People thought that the person who holds the rights of property to the house is the only owner of that house. To illustrate, if the deed belonged to someone's father, they chose the category "the house belongs to close relatives". It can be argued that in the aftermath of the Soviet Union, the ownership of private property has become a real problem for the people and that in everyday life there are still problems about the legal rights and regulations for the ownership of private property. Secondly, many interviewers had a problem with the open-ended question on the occupation of the person who contributes most to the household income. Although they correctly answered the question concerning the places where the members of the household work and what their jobs are, they did not report what their relationship with the head of the household was and who they were. Lastly, answers to the question about the necessities of a good life were deemed inadequate. After this meeting, the identified mistakes were corrected and some interviews were cancelled.

#### **5.4.2. Fieldwork**

The fieldwork team began the survey in Baku and after completing the interviews in this region, moved on to other regions. In each region, some of the local people

participated in the team and helped them communicate with the local respondents. For training them, an interviewer guide was used (Please see Appendix V).

#### **5.4.3. Data Entry**

During this fieldwork SPSS 13.0 (Statistical Package Program for Social Scientists) was used to enter data into the computer. Three interviewers were assigned to perform this task, and were trained on how to use SPSS. At the end of each day, the interviewers entered the data into the computer after checking for possible mistakes in the questionnaires. The data was cleaned after this data entry process.

#### **5.4.3. In-depth Interviews**

To explore what Azerbaijani people think about their quality of life, in-depth interviews were conducted. This provided the opportunity to understand the way people view their society, what they think about their future, and finally how they compare their current lives with Soviet times. In order to get more information, people from outside the sample of survey respondents were interviewed. Fifty people in total were chosen from Baku and other regions of the country according to their socio-economic status, occupational groups, age and gender. All interviews were recorded with a tape-recorder and were encoded.

**CHAPTER VI**  
**THE DETERMINANTS OF LIFE SATISFACTION**  
**IN**  
**AZERBAIJAN**

**6.1. Introduction**

In order to understand life satisfaction in a post-Soviet country, one should consider the great transformation that people have experienced in all domains of their lives in these societies. People's everyday lives have been rearranged by the new rules and regulations of the capitalist economic and political order. It should be pointed out that the patterns of change and continuity determine people's evaluations of their life in general. During the Soviet regime, although there was a considerable degree of economic development which was reflected in better living conditions for all citizens, there was also a serious gap between the quality of life in the Soviet countries and the quality of life in developed capitalist countries, because of the lack of political freedom and personal consumption choices (Matutinovic, 2004, p.98). Today this gap is deepening for post-Soviet Central Asian and Caucasian countries because there are not only problems with democratic consolidation but also the majority of the people suffer from bad living conditions.

As mentioned before, this study is aimed at investigating what contributes to life satisfaction in a newly independent Azerbaijan. With that in mind, this chapter will discuss what determines the life satisfaction of ordinary Azerbaijani people by analyzing the survey data. For the purpose of this discussion, the chapter has been divided into three parts. In the first part, the current status of the subjective wellbeing of people living in Azerbaijan will be described by comparing it with the levels of satisfaction of the people living in other post-Soviet societies. In the second part, how people's evaluations are influenced by basic socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, and educational level will be examined. The question of whether the

spreading of materialistic norms and values in post-communist countries, in line with the institutionalization of a free market economy, may be the reason for the low level of life satisfaction in Azerbaijan will be considered. Finally, the chapter will focus on the relationship between the quality of a society and people's satisfaction with life in general. In other words, how 'external chances' and 'qualities' affect individuals' well-being will be the main theme of this chapter.

**6.2. Life Satisfaction in Azerbaijan**

In this study, the respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with their lives using a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning very dissatisfied and 10 very satisfied). The average overall life satisfaction rating for Azerbaijan was found to be 3.65 out of 10. As Figure 6.1 indicates, nearly 82 % of Azerbaijani people are dissatisfied with their lives. In other words, most of the respondents stated that they are uneasy with their quality of life in general and unhappy with their lives in particular.

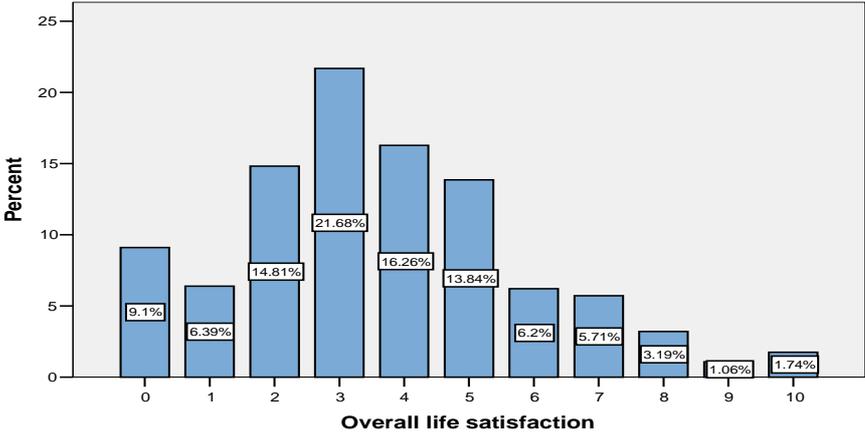


Figure 6.1: Overall Life Satisfaction of the Respondents

Only 18 % of the people evaluated their living conditions positively and stated that they were satisfied with their lives. This rate is too low when compared to other countries which are at a similar level of development. Table 6.1 indicates the means of life satisfaction in other countries including both advanced and developing ones.

Table 6.1: Overall Life Satisfaction in European Countries

| Countries      | Average Level of Life Satisfaction |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Denmark        | 8.4                                |
| Finland        | 8                                  |
| Sweden         | 7.8                                |
| Austria        | 7.7                                |
| Luxembourg     | 7.7                                |
| Ireland        | 7.7                                |
| Netherlands    | 7.5                                |
| Spain          | 7.5                                |
| Belgium        | 7.4                                |
| United Kingdom | 7.3                                |
| Malta          | 7.3                                |
| Germany        | 7.2                                |
| Italy          | 7.2                                |
| Cyprus         | 7.2                                |
| France         | 6.9                                |
| Greece         | 6.8                                |
| Portugal       | 6                                  |
| Turkey         | 5.6                                |

Source: Böhnke, 2005, p. 14

### 6.2.1. Life Satisfaction in Other Post-Soviet Countries

When life satisfaction in Azerbaijan is compared with other post-Soviet countries, the rate of Azerbaijan (3.65) is low. Based on these figures it may be inferred that most of the people in Azerbaijan are not satisfied with their lives at all. It can be argued that since the political and economic transformation in eastern-European countries is faster and better than other post-Soviet countries, the citizens are much more satisfied with their lives. Especially after becoming members of the EU, the quality of life in many of these countries increased rapidly.

Table 6.2: Overall Life Satisfaction in post-Soviet Countries

| Countries       | Average Level of Life Satisfaction |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Slovenia        | 7                                  |
| Czech Republic  | 6.5                                |
| Romania         | 6.2                                |
| Poland          | 6.2                                |
| Hungary         | 5.9                                |
| Estonia         | 5.9                                |
| Slovakia        | 5.7                                |
| Latvia          | 5.5                                |
| Lithuania       | 5.4                                |
| <b>Bulgaria</b> | 4.5                                |

Source: Böhnke, 2005, p. 14

According to Delhey (2004), the main indicators influencing the individuals' evaluation of their general life satisfaction is their satisfaction with their material circumstances and their actual material situation with regard to employment status, work satisfaction, general trust, governance, personal control, age, family life, health and social life.

Given the limited information on the social indicators of the subjective wellbeing of people living in other countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus such as Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Armenia and Georgia, valid comparisons are unable to be made. The only country for which there is some information in the literature is based on the study held by Namazie and Sanfey in Kyrgyzstan in 2001. The main concern in this study is the underlying factors behind the low level of life satisfaction of Kyrgyz people during the first years of transition. Similar to previous studies on Eastern European countries, the main determinant of life satisfaction used is personal income. They argue that the economic well-being of people is the basic cause of people's happiness in the context of countries at subsistence level (2001, p.12). Furthermore, according to the results of the "2006 Quality of Life Survey" in Kyrgyzstan, the average level of life satisfaction of the people is 5.06, which is quite high in comparison to Azerbaijan. This can be

interpreted as follows: although Azerbaijan's performance is better in economic terms, the relatively successful implementation of democratic reforms in Kyrgyzstan has reflected positively on certain life satisfaction indicators in the country. This stands as proof of the argument that although after the collapse of the Soviet Union living conditions have deteriorated, people are happy with the freedom of speech and the spreading of democratic values in their daily lives.

### **6.3. Basic Socio-Demographic Factors Influencing Life Satisfaction in Azerbaijan**

In order to understand the factors underlying this low level of life satisfaction in Azerbaijan, the basic socio-demographic characteristics of the people are taken into consideration in this part. This initial analysis will shed light on how life satisfaction varies across age, gender, education, income and occupational differences.

#### **6.3.1 Age and Life Satisfaction**

In general there is a negative correlation between people's ages and their life satisfaction. It may be seen that getting older has a negative influence on people's psychology. It must be taken account that people in Azerbaijan have experienced great social transformation in their lives. In this context, the age of the respondent has a significant effect on his/her evaluation of life. In order to guess the variations between the interpretations of different age groups, plotting the means of the two variables (age and life satisfaction) proves useful. (Please see Figure 6.2). It is interesting to note that the oldest people in the survey are satisfied with their lives to the highest degree which is 4.4 and above the average mean of the sample. Although people who have spent most of the years of their lives during the Soviet times have nostalgia about "the good old days", it can be argued that

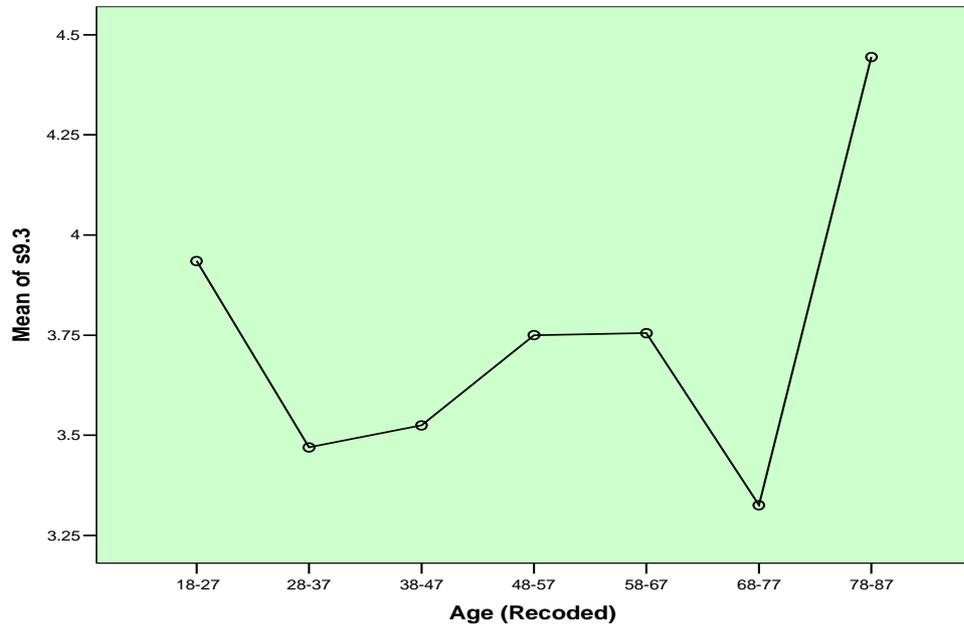


Figure 6.2: Overall Life Satisfaction of the Respondents According to Different Age Groups

older people in the country have found it harder to cope with the changes brought by transition, perhaps because they have lost their socio-economic status and have little hope of improving it.

### 6.3.2 Gender and Life Satisfaction

In the survey both men and women are equally represented. According to the results of the survey, the life satisfaction of the people is independent of the gender of the respondent. While the average life satisfaction of men is 3.68, this mean is 3.62 for women. This is a notable result, since gender equality has deteriorated in all areas of life and the old patriarchal values have reappeared since the collapse of the Soviet egalitarian system. In the survey the Azerbaijani people were asked to what degree the equality of women and men is realized in their country. 65.4 % of the people stated

that they have no problem with equality of men and women in their society. The average life satisfaction of women who said that equality of men and women is fully realized in the society is 4.33. On the other hand, women who oppose this argument evaluated their life negatively and their average level of life satisfaction is 2.63. In brief it can be argued that the relative deprivation of people because of poor living standards is the main reason for their lower life satisfaction and the gender of the respondent is not a clarifying factor for explaining life satisfaction in the case of Azerbaijan.

### **6.3.3 Type of Settlement and Life Satisfaction**

The type of settlement the people live in affects their life satisfaction significantly in Azerbaijan. There is a slight difference between the average levels of people's satisfaction with their lives in relation to where they live. The average life satisfaction of people who live in rural areas is 3.48; whereas Azerbaijanis who live in urban areas are more satisfied with their lives (3.81). It can be observed that because of the inadequacy of infrastructure facilities and social services and the unemployment there has been a migration of labor from rural areas to the capital. Table 4.3 indicates the averages of people's life satisfaction according to the type of settlement. This table adequately summarizes the uneven regional development of the country because Azerbaijani people living in less-developed rural areas like Qaradag, Xatayi, and Nesimi are not satisfied with their lives. On the other hand, the people living in developed regions, especially in Baku, stated that they are very satisfied with their lives. For instance, Nerimanov, Sebail and Balaxan can be called the central business districts of Baku and the quality of life is very high in these living areas, as opposed to Ezizbeyov which is the poorest quarter of Baku. Furthermore, Sumgayit is an exceptional case because of its unique position. Although it is one of Azerbaijan's significant industrial towns and is 30 kilometers away from Baku, the quality of life in this town is relatively poor. The town has become much polluted since Soviet times because of the oil industry wastes. 72 % of the respondents living in the town

complained about the quality of the drinking water and % 46 of them stated that there is serious weather pollution in the environment.

Table 6.3: Overall Life Satisfaction According to Regions

|              | <b>N</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
|--------------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Ezizbeyov    | 12       | 2.50        | 1.883                 |
| Sabuncu      | 26       | 4.58        | 1.880                 |
| Yasamal      | 21       | 5.10        | 2.322                 |
| Bineqedi     | 16       | 4.81        | 2.007                 |
| Nerimanov    | 26       | 6.12        | 1.479                 |
| Qaradag      | 11       | 1.00        | 1.342                 |
| Nizami       | 19       | 3.21        | 1.619                 |
| Nesimi       | 10       | 1.40        | 1.713                 |
| Xatayi       | 13       | 1.15        | 1.819                 |
| Surahani     | 37       | 2.65        | 1.798                 |
| Sebail       | 24       | 6.21        | 1.641                 |
| Balaxan      | 50       | 6.12        | 2.700                 |
| Sumqayit     | 50       | 4.46        | 2.121                 |
| Ali Bayramli | 50       | 3.84        | 1.963                 |
| Neftcala     | 50       | 3.70        | 1.594                 |
| Deveci       | 49       | 2.73        | 1.319                 |
| Kacmaz       | 51       | 3.24        | 1.570                 |
| Lenkeran     | 80       | 3.84        | 2.721                 |
| Astara       | 70       | 2.67        | 2.351                 |
| Hanlar       | 50       | 3.32        | 1.801                 |
| Gence        | 50       | 4.50        | 2.092                 |
| Qax          | 57       | 4.30        | 1.742                 |
| Nahcivan     | 100      | 2.53        | 1.314                 |
| Oguz         | 56       | 2.71        | 1.895                 |
| Qebele       | 55       | 3.47        | 1.844                 |
| Total        | 1033     | 3.65        | 2.242                 |

#### 6.3.4 Education and Life Satisfaction

The other significant factor explaining the life satisfaction of Azerbaijani people is their level of education, which is seen as a guarantee for survival in this transitory society. It can be easily observed that the society could not maintain the level of

education that the people gained in Soviet times. The enrollment rates have been decreasing, especially among girls. Although The Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan guarantees the right for free primary and secondary compulsory education for all citizens of the country<sup>5</sup>, in both state and private educational institutions, the country has experienced a considerable degree of degradation in education since the collapse of the Soviet Union. It should be noted here that after the dissolution, education has started to lose its nation-wide significance and the Azerbaijani government has not allocated sufficient resources to education in the country. The most serious problem which leads to education devolution in the country is the corruption in the educational system. Although education is a free service for all citizens, the informal collection of money from the pupils has reduced the quality of education and caused the relationship between teachers and students to degenerate. To summarize, in the new system, education has become a class-based service dependent on the market dynamics, rather than a universal one.

The survey data revealed that 91.5 % of Azerbaijani people are not satisfied with the quality of education in their country. One of the interviewees stated:

“There was no bribery in the school in Soviet times, even if there was, it was secret. Now, in order to attend the courses, children pay so much. Even if they pass exams, they again give money to the teachers. The Minister of Education announces on television that the books are free of charge. However, in schools we pay for the books. Everything costs. Since I cannot afford, my children do not want to go to the school. In Soviet times, when there was such a problem with the directory of the school, you could complain about them to Moscow. It is true that our society is developing. There are now computers in the schools. However, the quality of teaching is decreasing. Teachers’ level of subsistence is very bad with their inadequate salaries. They just care about the money which they take from the students” (Man, 40 years old, Genje).

---

<sup>5</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Section 2, Chapter 3, Article 42.

Another interviewee complained about the low quality of education in the schools:

“The quality of teaching was good in Soviet times. I don’t know why but teachers were refraining from taking bribe. There was strong law at that time. Now teachers are unqualified. They do not hesitate to take money. I don’t know why they behave like this because of weak legitimacy of the state. I do not like our education system now. For instance, my child is very successful at school but I do not appreciate his high grades. If I were his teacher, his grade would be 3 instead of 5. I am not satisfied as his parent”. (Woman, 43 years old, Ali Bayramli)

According to one parent;

“...the schools are like markets because of the teachers. They have no motivation and enthusiasm toward teaching. When he came back home after school my child said that our teacher comes to class whenever he wants. When he comes he leaves us to play outside. Since the teachers’ salaries were high during Soviet times they had enthusiasm toward teaching. They felt responsibility. They earn money by giving private courses to children of rich families.” (Man, 51 years old, Baku).

As can be understood from people’s opinions, the most critical issue for the quality of education in the country is the existence of corruption at all levels of education. The young generations of Azerbaijanis learn and internalize certain norms and values of the culture of corruption during their education.

Another significant problem of the educational system in Azerbaijan is the inconsistency between the education curriculum and the demands of the national market for the workforce (Rasizade, 2004, p. 346). In other words, according to the permanently changing demands of the capitalist economy, the society needs both high-skilled and semi-skilled workers in order to attain the necessary economic growth. It can be said that many jobs of Soviet times have lost their prestige and the curriculum of the old educational system does not meet the requirements of this new order. In this sense, education is still the main tool for social mobility especially for the children of the poor families if they have a tendency toward new prestigious jobs such as computer engineering, electronic engineer, business administration etc. People

do not trust the education system and its benefits for them although it is the only tool for mobility in their society. Many of them argue that having a diploma is not as important as having a close relative in a good position in the government. The culture of corruption legitimizes nepotism and clientalism in the society and instead of equal opportunities for all; people are face to face with the rules of the new system that privileges the ones who have strong networks. The respondents are also uneasy with this problem because they argue that even if they complete a high level of education, this does not guarantee their employment. During Soviet times, the educational system was planned for all countries by the capital and the Azerbaijani people suffered the insufficient curriculum in order to use their skills and resources effectively. One of the professors of the “Azerbaijan State Technical University” stated:

“When I was going to secondary school, we had a course on using the cradle in the winter. However, there is no snow during the winter in Sumgayit. I had never used it before. If we have no snow, why do we have to learn and pass this course? Now we are independent. We can have our own curriculum which is suitable to our needs” (Man, 58 years old, Sumgayit)

Within this context, the survey results support the idea that the educational level of the people has a positive influence on their subjective well-being. That is to say, when education level of the people increases, their life satisfaction also increases. For instance, the mean of the life satisfaction of the people belonging to the least educated group of the sample is 2.77. On the other hand, this rate is 4.17 for people who have a bachelor’s degree and 5.27 for those who continued their education after university (See Figure 6.3).

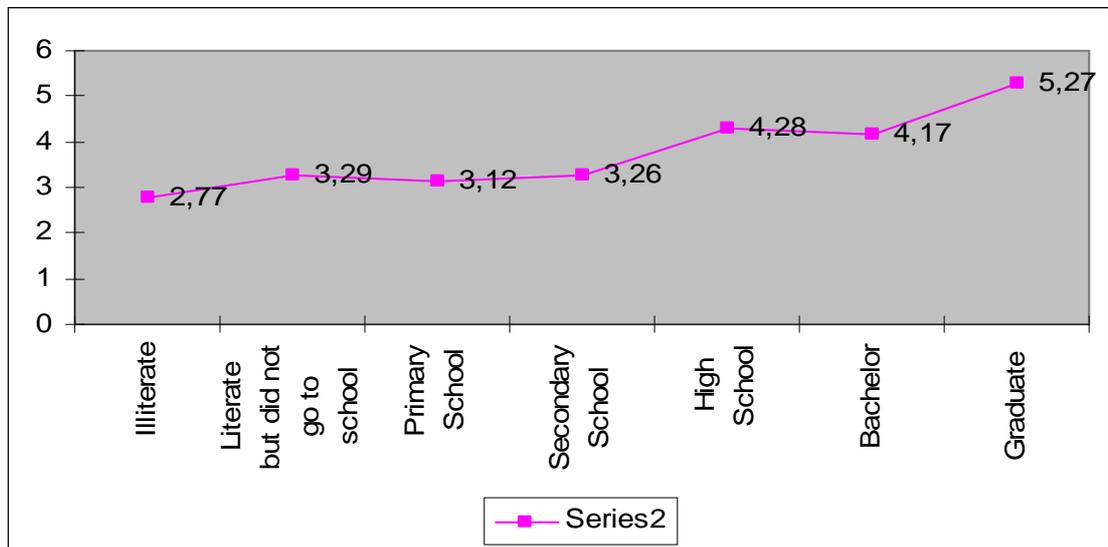


Figure 6.3: Life Satisfaction In Relation to the Educational Level of the Respondents

### 6.3.5 Household Income and Life Satisfaction

The adjustment of Azerbaijan's national economy to global economy has been a painful process for its citizens. As discussed in the previous chapter, sharp economic growth does not influence ordinary people's well-being because of the unjust distribution of the national income in the country. In 2005, nearly one third of the population lived below the poverty line (29 %) and this rate has been steadily increasing since then (UNDP Report, 2005). The majority of people in the country are below the poverty line and income inequality is embedded in people's everyday lives. In this context, income is the main factor in understanding the subjective well-being of the people living in the country.

Since the unit of analysis in the survey is the household, people were asked about their total household income per month. The average household income is 193 New Manat

(172 USD \$). This is quite low when one considers people's purchasing power. The survey data revealed that the total income of 54,5 % of Azerbaijani people is inadequate to meet the needs of the household. These people stated that their income meets the needs of their household with great difficulty. On the other hand, only 9 % of the respondents find their income as quite sufficient to meet their needs.

On a much more subjective level, people were asked to rate their satisfaction with their household income. It is very remarkable to see that 12,3 % of the people rate '0' to indicate their absolute dissatisfaction with their income. Additionally, it should be noted that great majority (86,8 %) of the respondents rate their present income '5 and below' out of '10'

To explore the relationship between people's life satisfaction and their satisfaction with their income, the bivariate correlation between these two variables was examined. The result shows that there is a strong positive correlation between the Azerbaijani people's life satisfaction and their satisfaction with their income (.726; significant at the 0.01 level).

As can be expected, the degree of life satisfaction varies among people from different income groups. Figure 6.4 summarizes this observation. It can be clearly observed that people who have the lowest average of life satisfaction survive with the least amount of income. On the other hand, when the total household income increases, the average levels of life satisfaction of people also increases.

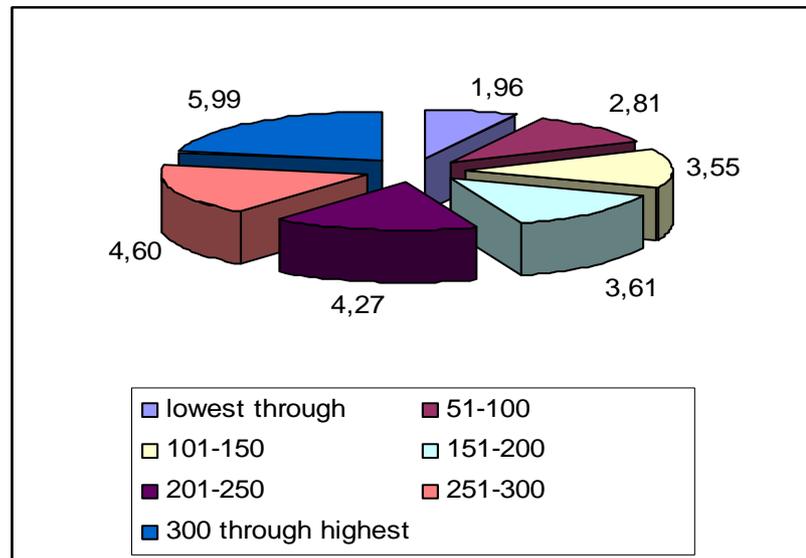


Figure 6.4: The Average Life Satisfaction According to Household Income of the Respondents

### 6.3.5.1 The Living Standards of the Azerbaijani People

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the living standards of the people in Azerbaijan have deteriorated dramatically. Since the material living standards of the people are directly dependent on the household income, the sharp increase in inflation rates and the significant decrease in purchasing power led to people's dissatisfaction with the income they earned. As Matutinovic observes, in most of the Eastern European countries, the drop in wages and purchasing power was reflected onto the households in terms of the loss in living standards, which is the driving factor of the growing informal employment that complements the money earned by primary occupations in order to satisfy people's needs (2004, p.103). Besides the sharp decline in the values of real wages, free market economy has influenced the needs and demands of the ordinary Azerbaijani people. In opposition to the command economy, this neo-liberal economic system allows the entry of all kinds of goods and services into the country. It is very important to observe that in line with the internalization of capitalist economy, all daily exchanges between people have been transformed and

these relations have been shaped by the new rules and regulations of consumer society. Within this general framework, this part of the thesis will try to go further in explaining why income is the main factor for understanding the life satisfaction of the Azerbaijani people.

Having given descriptive information about the household income of the respondents, a summary of the living standards of the people will contribute to our understanding of the well-being of the people in a broader sense. To begin with, the quality of the accommodation and utilities will be summarized. It was observed that people's houses are quite spacious, that is, the average number of rooms in a house is 3.1. Table 4.4 indicates the number of rooms in the houses of the respondents.

Table 6.4: The Number of Rooms in the House

| Number of rooms | Count | Valid Percent |
|-----------------|-------|---------------|
| 1               | 74    | 7,2           |
| 2               | 251   | 24,3          |
| 3               | 377   | 36,5          |
| 4               | 229   | 22,2          |
| 5               | 59    | 5,7           |
| 6 and above     | 42    | 4,1           |
| Total           | 1032  | 100.0         |

As can be expected, people live in flats in urban areas and in detached houses in the rural areas. It is significant to note that 42 % of the people in the cities live in detached houses, like the people in rural areas. The survey data indicates that most of the people own their houses. This is a critical issue in the sense that private property rights first appeared just after the collapse of the Soviet Union and there have been and still are significant problems related with this issue. In Soviet times, the housing policy was

based on providing affordable residential areas and social housing to all citizens. During the transition period most of the people had a chance to get the rights of property to their houses. The survey results also confirm that this is the case and nearly 90 % of the respondents are the owners of the houses they are living in(See Table 4.5). This is the direct result of the privatization of social housing during the 1990s, which was also seen in other post-Soviet countries.

Table 6.5: Ownership Status of the House

| Ownership status                  | Count | Valid percent |
|-----------------------------------|-------|---------------|
| Owner                             | 924   | 89,4          |
| Family-owned house                | 37    | 3,6           |
| Renter                            | 19    | 1,8           |
| Family-owned house and not renter | 29    | 2,8           |
| State-owned                       | 14    | 1,4           |
| Other                             | 5     | 0,5           |
| Total                             | 1033  | 100           |

Furthermore, the facilities in the houses are reasonable objective indicators of the quality of accommodation. According to survey data, most of the households both in urban and rural areas have a separate kitchen in the house. Furthermore, a bath or shower is available in most of the houses in the urban areas (86,8 %). However, for the houses in rural areas this percentage is 65.1. To figure out the characteristics of the houses, the respondents were asked about the availability of hot water in their houses. Only 20 % of the respondents stated that they have running hot water in their houses.

Moreover, the utilities provided in the houses are very significant in terms of evaluating the quality of the housing. It can be argued that after the independence, the services related to the urban infrastructure, which influence the well-being of citizens

significantly, have deteriorated because of the lack of maintenance by the local governments. In order to determine the well-being of Azerbaijani people, the respondents were asked about the quality of the utilities provided to them and Table 4.6 summarizes the results obtained from this question.

Table 6.6: The Properties of the Infrastructure of the Houses

| Utilities        | REGULAR |       | IRREGULAR |       | NOT AVAILABLE |       |
|------------------|---------|-------|-----------|-------|---------------|-------|
|                  | Rural   | Urban | Rural     | Urban | Rural         | Urban |
| Drinking water   | 49.7    | 73.6  | 49.3      | 26.2  | 1.0           | 0.2   |
| Electricity      | 62.6    | 83.5  | 37.0      | 16.5  | 0.4           | -     |
| Gas              | 23.4    | 66.3  | 27.9      | 26.4  | 48.7          | 7.3   |
| <b>Telephone</b> | 69.1    | 84.2  | 14.0      | 10.4  | 16.9          | 5.3   |

It can be perceived that drinking water is supplied to the people living in urban areas more regularly (73,6 %) than it is to the households in the rural areas (49,7 %). In addition to this, electricity is another significant utility that every household owns regularly. Since the infrastructure is much more developed in urban areas, there have been relatively fewer power cuts for the households in these locations (16.5 %). On the other hand, the respondents living in rural areas complained about the high frequency of the power cuts in their houses. Although Azerbaijan is rich in terms of natural gas reserves, the rate of access to this service is very low for citizens in the country. The regional disparities can be clearly observed in the percentages of access to gas in the houses. In the rural areas, gas is regularly available in only 23.4 % of people's houses and 48,7 % of the houses do not have this utility.

In addition to the determination of the quality of housing in Azerbaijan through the use of objective indicators, the respondents were also asked about their personal satisfaction with their accommodation. People's average satisfaction with their accommodation is 4.13, which is below the mean.

### **6.3.5.2 Having and Necessities of Azerbaijani People**

With the aim of understanding people's living standards in greater detail, people were asked "There are different views/opinions about what one needs for a decent living. What is your opinion: What items on this list should every household in your country be able to afford? What could be renounced, what is desirable but not necessarily needed, and what is absolutely necessary? Which of the following do you have?" They were given a list which is composed of people's common basic needs (Question 9.1). Examining the responses to this question is very important in the sense that it may give one an opportunity to understand the relative deprivation of the people in Azerbaijani society where income inequalities are very deep. To observe the gap between the percentages of the respondents on the items which are seen as 'necessary' and the status of people's ownership of these items, see Table 6.7, which summarizes the results for some selected items.

First of all, although 70 % of the respondents believe that living in an apartment in which every household member has his own room is necessary, only less than half of them have this opportunity. Moreover, people's opinions on the basic electronic machines used in the houses are good indicators for measuring the level of the living standards in the country. For instance, everybody agrees on the necessity of a television in every house (92,5 %) and almost everybody has a television at home (93,9 %). Another item which is used by many houses is the washing machine and it can be argued that it is very hard to afford it in Azerbaijan. Having a washing machine can be an indicator of socioeconomic status because while 63,5 % of the people think that it is absolutely necessary only 42, 2 % of the people have it in their houses. Similarly, the dishwasher is another strong indicator of Azerbaijanis' socio-economic status. Only 2,6 % of the people have a dish washer in their houses.

Secondly, since people's expectations of having one week vacation-related travel every year can also be an important indicator, it will be useful to give the figures

regarding this. Azerbaijani people stated that this vacation is not obligatory but it is good to have (67,5 %). Interestingly, a considerable percentage of the people can afford this kind of vacation (79,9 %).

Table 6.7: The Frequency Distribution of Necessities and Having

| Necessities  | could be renounced | desirable | necessary | Does she/he have? |
|--|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
| a) An apartment in which every household member has his own room | 0,8                | 22,2      | 77        | 30,3              |
| d) One week vacation–related travel per year                     | 12,1               | 67,5      | 20,3      | 79,9              |
| e) Internet  | 30,3               | 54,9      | 14,9      | 6,2               |
| g) Buy new clothes regularly                                     | 3,9                | 66,8      | 29,3      | 21                |
| h) Replace worn-out furniture                                    | 22,8               | 66,7      | 10,5      | 9,2               |
| j) Invite friends for dinner once a month                        | 10,6               | 67        | 22,4      | 28,6              |
| k) Take the family out for dinner once a month                   | 25,3               | 62        | 22,4      | 8,8               |
| l) Car   | 7,8                | 45,6      | 46,7      | 25,3              |
| m) Television  | 0,4                | 7,1       | 92,5      | 93,9              |
| n) Washing machine   | 6,8                | 29,7      | 63,5      | 42,2              |
| o) Dish washer   | 24                 | 38,5      | 37,5      | 2,6               |
| p) Save at least 50 Manat per month                              | 1,4                | 39,8      | 58,8      | 14,7              |
| r) Video camera  | 35,4               | 54,1      | 10,4      | 8,2               |
| s) Computer  | 29,7               | 55,9      | 14,5      | 6,3               |
| t) Mobile phone  | 12,5               | 33,6      | 53,8      | 46,5              |

Taking the family out for dinner at least once a month is also very difficult to afford for the respondents. Only 8,8 % of the respondents stated that they can do this easily. In Azerbaijan, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) penetrate faster than people are able to acquire computer hardware. ICT penetration into the economy and the society is becoming a precondition for Azerbaijan's accession to the World Trade Organization and integration into Europe.<sup>6</sup> Only 6.3 % of all respondents have a PC (and they all reside in Baku) and 6.2% have a modem for a dial-up Internet connection.

<sup>6</sup> [www.ICTproject.az](http://www.ICTproject.az)

It can be argued that the swift entry of the capitalist economy into the country along with the values of consumer society has perpetuated people's materialistic values. Almost all the items in the list are demanded by the Azerbaijani people; however, the actualization of these expectations is very difficult for them. Figure 4.4 is helpful for understanding the influence of this situation on people's average life satisfaction.

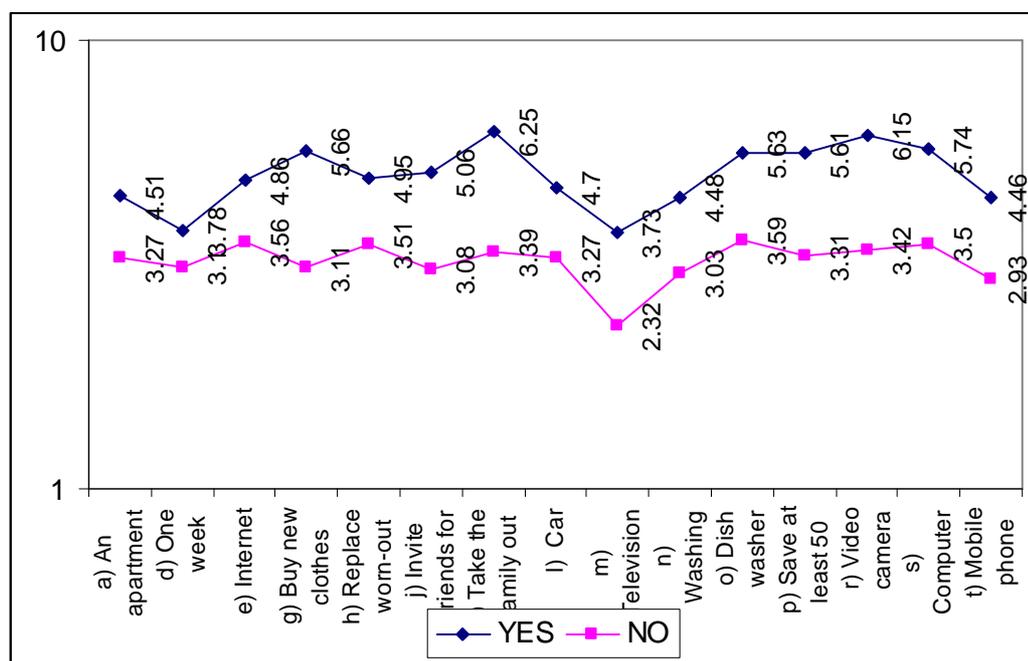


Figure 6.5: Life Satisfaction According to People's Necessities and Having

### 6.3.5.3. Satisfaction with Living Standards and Life Satisfaction

Up to this point the household income and living standards of Azerbaijani people were analyzed in order to understand the relationship between people's average life satisfaction and their income in the country. In addition to low wages, increasing income inequalities among the people influenced their perception of well-being. According to Falkingham, income inequalities have been increasing in the post-Soviet context due to (1) restructuring of economic activity and greater private sector

income; (2) change in wage distribution; (3) increase in open unemployment; (4) redistribution of wealth and privatization of state assets (1999, p.13). These macro-level changes transform people's social status and new class relationships have emerged since the collapse of the Soviet economic system. It is a well-known fact that the overall distribution of income was much more egalitarian in that system than in most market economies because of the higher level of resource allocation to social expenditures. During the transition period, some groups will welcome these changes and experience them as a positive opportunity to improve their welfare. However, for the majority of the people the institutionalization of capitalist economy will be experienced negatively and will reduce their ability to maintain their welfare. To illustrate, during the interviews one of the professors said:

“Listen, I want to put it like this. I visited Moscow at least two times with the money I earned from teaching at the university in Soviet times. I lived on this money in Moscow easily. Now I can't even get out on the street with the money I earn.” (Man, 53 years old, Baku).

The basic principle of the communist system was to provide minimum standards of living for everybody and it can be argued that equal opportunities for all were achieved in the basic domains of welfare such as education, health and employment. Furthermore, this system was based on the ideal of a 'classless society' and state-guaranteed social rights were the main tool for reaching this aim. However, after the dissolution, the capitalist system distorted this egalitarian social environment, basically with private property rights. This led to social stratification based on class privileges. One of the interviewees touched upon this issue:

“We had social security. We were working. Our wages were sufficient to meet our needs. There was no social stratification among people. That is to say, the difference between the people was clear. The difference between the people who had higher education and people with secondary vocational education was known by everybody. People's living standards were not so different from one another. Now this kind of differentiation is too much. Now there are few rich people and a lot of poor ones. Then, people were afraid of buying expensive cars and building houses. These were the features of Soviet times. Now people go abroad for holiday, build big houses, and use foreign cars. The middle class

is getting poor. The salary we receive now is not enough to fill our food basket. Therefore we are getting poor.” (Woman, 46 years old, Baku).

For the purposes of further analysis, the respondents were asked to personally evaluate their living standards today and during the Soviet period. In line with their dissatisfaction with the household income, the Azerbaijani people were not happy with their living standards today. The mean of this evaluation is 3.04, which refers to a very low level of wellbeing in the country. 78.3 % of the people rate their satisfaction level as ‘5 and below’. On the other hand, the winners of the new economic system are very satisfied with their living standards (21.7 %). It should be emphasized that many people complain about their current living conditions through comparing their living standards with those in Soviet times. People who are well educated and had adequate income during the Soviet period are especially upset because of their high level of relative deprivation. In the survey, the respondents were also asked about their degree of satisfaction with their living standards during the Soviet period. A comparison of the average levels of satisfaction today and in the past indicates the dramatic deterioration in the Azerbaijani people’s quality of life after the independence. The respondents clearly stated that their living standards were better in Soviet times; they rated their average level of satisfaction as ‘6’ out of ‘10’. This mean is much higher than the level of satisfaction with their current living standards (3.04). It can easily be observed that the number of people who are dissatisfied with their living standards is very high after the independence. For instance, in evaluating their living standards in Soviet times 16,6 % of the people give the score of 10 out of 10. However, only 0.02 % of the people use this rate to score their satisfaction with the current living standards. (See Figure 6.5)

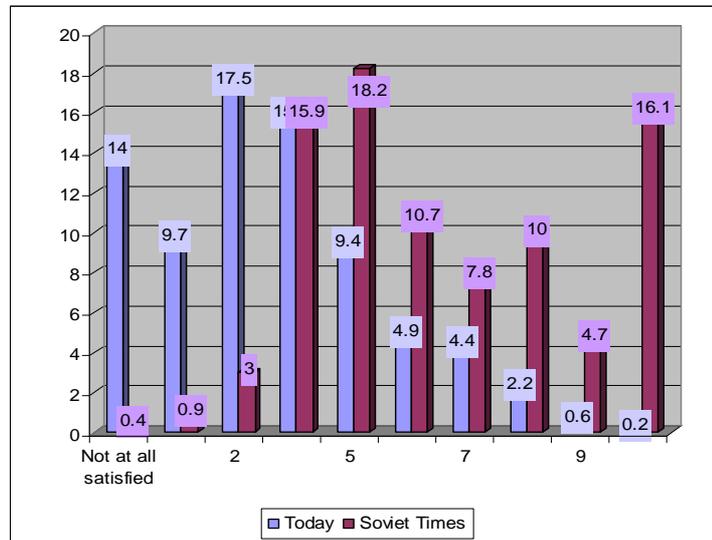


Figure 6.6: The Average Satisfaction with Living Standards Today and in Soviet Times

As a result of the long term instability within the country because of the war with Armenia and poor living conditions, Azerbaijani people have a feeling of nostalgia with regard to Soviet times. After independence, people have realized that there is neither a progress in the political system towards democratization nor improvements in their living standards with free market economy. Therefore the Soviet times are seen as a golden age because of the welfare that people experienced at that time. The survey reveals that Azerbaijani people only appreciate the recognition of political rights and legal liberties. However, because of the high level of corruption and the lack of rule of law, the ruling elite do not allow people to use their political rights. Especially due to the oppression placed on the media and the opposition parties, people could not grasp the benefits of a free democratic society. People who participated in in-depth interviews also talked about their well-being during Soviet times and they tried to show the decline in their living standards by telling about their experiences in the past. Furthermore, the excuse of the ruling elite for the material deprivation of the Azerbaijani people was the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. They

claimed that they had to allocate part of the national income to meeting the economic and social costs of the war. Thus it can be argued that the Azerbaijani people attach a high value to all the established institutions in the Soviet system. First of all, the Soviet times are identified by the people as the golden age of welfare when job security and income guarantee were a reality for everybody. One of the interviewees summarizes this:

“During Soviet times, there were factories and they were active. My salary was 195 Manat, which was enough for me and for my family. We went on holiday at least once a year. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, my wage covers only our kitchen costs with great difficulty” (Man, 40 years old, Genje)

Additionally, a woman living in Baku said that:

“The minimum standards of living were guaranteed by the state in Soviet times, especially for the children, students, pensioners” (Woman, 40 years old, Baku)

According to another interviewee the instability of the country is the result of the insufficiency of the state’s control mechanisms. He stated that:

“The USSR was an ordered country. There was hierarchy from top to bottom. There was no bribe, corruption as today. There was no unemployment. All institutions and enterprises were active. People lived on their wages easily. To name the current system is a hard job. It is not clear whether we are living under democracy or authoritarianism. The country is totally corrupted.” (Man, 45 years old, Neftcala).

In addition, most of the people also believe that the young people’s living standards are poorer than their parents’ (% 67,3). On the other hand, one fifth of the respondents think the opposite. They claim that young people’s living standards today are better than that of the people living in Soviet times. These people argue that the entry into the free market economy enables people to see all kinds and brands of goods in their shopping malls. One of the interviewees also underlined the significance of the increase in the diversity of goods with the development of free market economy in the country. He stated:

“We are independent now. We have difficulties in terms of subsistence. These are temporary. Our president also says this. These difficulties are temporary. When I was associate professor in Soviet times, I received 320 ruble salary per month. What I could buy with this money? There was nothing in the shops to buy. There was queue for buying butter, meat. They sold frozen kangaroo meat to us. What difference did it make that we had money? If there is shortage of goods how would money be of use? If there is nothing to buy with money, money would become nothing more than paper.” (Man, 58 years old, Sumgayit).

### **6.3.6 Employment and Life Satisfaction**

The Soviet economic system relied on full employment and social security for the people. After graduation, the state guaranteed employment for everybody. Especially during Soviet times women’s participation in labor market was very high. Thus every citizen had social security and pension rights. After the dissolution of the union, unemployment has emerged as a serious social problem in all post-Soviet countries. In addition to this, many skilled workers have lost their jobs and are now employed in low-qualified jobs. The economic policies of the transition period have brought new contradictions for some of the economic sectors (industry, agriculture, etc.). While some jobs have lost their prestige, new jobs have appeared especially with the growth of the service sector. Business entrepreneurship has become popular again. The most privileged social group is comprised of private entrepreneurs, managers, and employees in private companies, people working abroad and workers with dual status of employees and private entrepreneurs. New professions have emerged, particularly ones related to the financial market and business services (Illner, 2004, p. 152). The skills and education acquired in the old regime are of little use in these new circumstances. Moreover, because of dropping incomes, many families had to discontinue using external services, substituting for them through the domestic labor of family members, primarily of women. The household labor budget survey in Azerbaijan indicates significant latency, and that the country is experiencing both secret unemployment and informal (grey) employment, out of the state’s control and official legislation. All these macro-changes have affected the material living

standards of the people negatively and lead to a considerable decrease in the well-being of the Azerbaijani people.

With regard to this, the life satisfaction of Azerbaijani people can be explained through examining their employment status. When asked about their current employment status, the survey data reveals that 54.5 % of the respondents replied that they currently have a job. People who have full-time jobs constitute 71.5 % of the working people and 6,0 % of the respondents have part-time jobs. It is significant to note that 22,2 % of the people find jobs only of an irregular kind.

On the other hand, 46,5 % of the respondents are not currently employed. Some of them are pensioners (35,5 %), some are disabled (7 %), others are housewives (19 %) or students (9 %). It should be emphasized that 25,5 % of the respondents are unemployed people who do not work because they could not find suitable jobs.

It can be argued that unemployment is one of the major social problems in Azerbaijan. Even finding a job is very difficult in the country. The respondents also agree on this. They declared that that if they lose their jobs, to find another job is either impossible (29.7 %) or very hard (51.8 %).

The people's average satisfaction with their jobs is 4.44, which indicates that the people appreciate having a job more than what the quality of the job is. This argument is supported by the difference between the levels of life satisfaction of the unemployed people (3,14) and the employed people (4,10). One of the interviewees emphasized the affect of unemployment on their well-being:

“If we didn't have an unemployment problem, our quality of life would be higher than now. Because of this problem, I am not satisfied with my life. In Soviet times, you knew that you would wake up early in the morning and you go to your work and get your salary. However, everyday I worry about what I will do tomorrow. How I can find job and where should I work. I worry about

whether I will earn enough money for my family's subsistence or not. However in Soviet times I never thought about it. " (Man, 50 years old, Baku)

Furthermore, the types of job that people have a significant effect on their perception of life (See Table 6.8). It can be said that people who deal with trade, who make up 2.0 % of the whole sample, are the luckiest group and the mean of their life satisfaction is 7.09. These people are employed in big companies or they are self-employed people who immigrate to neighboring countries such as Russia, Turkey or Iran. The high rate of unemployment and poverty are the main reasons for labor migration abroad. The vast majority of the participants of the in-depth interview say that migration is not voluntary and they argue that it takes place because of economic hardship. Officially, in 2005 1,342 men and 1,564 women left the country (46.18 % men and 53.82 % women, respectively).<sup>7</sup>

The second privileged group is officers who have desk jobs. These are civil servants and they have secure jobs and regular salaries. This positively reflects itself in their average level of life satisfaction, which is 4.50 out of 10. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that there is no significant difference between the means of the life satisfaction of people who are skilled manual workers (3.57) and unskilled manual workers (3.45).

---

<sup>7</sup> Information for 2005 requested by the State Committee for Women's Affairs.

Table 6.8: Jobs of the Respondents and Their Life Satisfaction

| Occupation (ISCO)   | Valid percent | Mean of Life Satisfaction |
|---|---------------|---------------------------|
| Farmer  | 1,8           | 4,10                      |
| Owner of a shop, craftsman, other self-employed person  | 9,5           | 3,92                      |
| Business proprietors, owner (full or partner) of a company  | 2,0           | 7,09                      |
| Professional (lawyer, medical practitioner, accountant, architect etc.)                             | 10,5          | 4,49                      |
| Middle management, other management (department head, junior manager, teacher, technician)          | 23,7          | 4,23                      |
| Employed position, working mainly at a desk   | 6,6           | 4,50                      |
| Employed position, not at a desk but traveling (salesman, driver etc.)                              | 7,7           | 3,93                      |
| Employed position, not at a desk, but in a service job (hospital, restaurant, police, fireman etc.) | 7,2           | 3,79                      |
| Skilled manual worker   | 14,1          | 3,57                      |
| Unskilled manual worker, servant  | 12,3          | 3,45                      |

#### 6.4. Life Satisfaction and the Quality of Society in Azerbaijan

Determining the quality of the social context in which people live complements the overall picture of people's objective living conditions and their subjective well-being. The conditions in societies influence people's life strategies and have a decisive impact on the quality of their lives. According to the European Quality of Life Survey Report (2006), in countries in which citizens have little trust in others, where there is poor social capital, where people perceive tensions between various groups, and where public services are of low quality, positive life strategies are not likely to be encouraged (EQOLS, 2006, p.10). In his study, Veenhoven (1996) uses the concept of 'liveability' to express the opportunities and services provided by the society for its citizens to sustain their quality of life.

In this part of the thesis, the significance of the quality of the society in a broader sense will be analyzed in order to discuss the factors influencing people's life satisfaction. This part has been divided into three main sections. In the first section, people's opinions about their government will be considered and their political participation will be studied under the subtitle of 'life satisfaction and political participation'. Secondly, global indicators of subjective well-being such as the degree of anomie and alienation will be examined in order to address the issue. In the third section, in addition to people's social environment, their physical environment will also be discussed. Lastly there will be a special part on the IDPs.

#### **6.4.1. Life satisfaction and Political Participation**

As mentioned before the liveability of the society directly influences people's well-being of. One of the most significant conditions for improving people's liveability is to provide the suitable political environment for listening to their wishes and demands. Ergun (2005) argues that after the independence, the democratization process is the most painful stage of the transition in Azerbaijani society. As opposed to the repressive political environment of the Soviet system, there have been slight improvements in the individual rights and liberties after the independence, like the right of free speech. However, the oppressive politics especially that practiced on opposition groups still continues in Azerbaijan and this political environment discourages the people from participating in politics. In addition to this, it is always disputable that free and fair elections have been carried out in the country. Besides these problems, the establishment of the rule of law is another significant problem area.

The fieldwork of the present study was conducted just after the parliamentary elections which were held on November 6<sup>th</sup> 2005. Most of the people who were interviewed during fieldwork were uneasy with the parliamentary elections. As a matter of fact, the Azerbaijani people were disappointed with the results of the

elections because they hardly observed any change in the government's attitude towards democratization.

Democratization is highly valued by Azerbaijani people. They believe in the power of freedom of speech and thought with regard to expressing their wishes to the state. Neither autocracy nor Soviet dictatorship is approved of by the people.

“Democracy is a very useful thing. That is to say people choose the politicians they trust by voting. From now on the people they trust are their deputies and their president. Their representation in the state provides trust among people. Therefore democracy is vital for our country.” (Man, 45 years old, Neftcala).

In line with this, according to the preliminary results of the survey, 80.1 percent of the respondents stated that free and fair elections are not carried out in their country. It is notable to see that people have little trust in political parties and organizations in Azerbaijan. People are strongly dissatisfied with the democratic institutions and their average satisfaction level is 3,42 out of 10. This low level of trust in the democratic process in the country is also declared by the interviewees. One of them said that:

“It is impossible to change anything on my own. I went to vote. I voted for the person I support. What happened? Another person won the elections. Everyone knows that he was not the winner. We could not do anything.” (Woman, 43 years old, Ali Bayramli).

One of the ex-members of the Communist party during the Soviet times appreciates the progress in the political system towards democratic consolidation. He stated that:

“What I understand by the term democracy is that there is freedom of thought, freedom of press. There are elections. That is, people are free. For example, I was a member of Communist party. I made speeches according to the framework given during the previous meetings. I could not speak as I wanted. I talked about what was written on that paper. However now there are meetings. People talk about whatever they want without preparation. We say “there are problems here”. There are many newspapers. People say whatever they want to say. This does not mean that people get whatever they want but they say what they think at least.” (Man, 50 years old, Neftcala).

To understand the level of people's political participation, the respondents were asked about membership in non-governmental organizations or political parties. 30,1 % of the people said that they had membership in an organization, these were mostly political parties. It can be observed that voluntary participation in non-governmental organizations is very low (4.4 %). Many of the interviewees argued that people's low level of participation in politics is the result of the oppressive behaviors of the ruling elite and they stressed that there is no control mechanism over this group.

“We wanted to establish a democratic order. We wanted people's power. People should supervise the ruling power. We do not have such an authority. There are useful articles in the constitution. People should be able to hold meetings. Oppositional parties should be able to express their opinions on television. However, in practice they could not find such an opportunity. The ruling party does not allow people to hold public meetings. TV channels serve only the ruling party. This indicates the suspension towards democracy. People should be free in democratic regimes. They should freely express their opinions. We have a police state. The practices of the ruling elite contradict the principles of democracy.” (Man, 47 years old, Deveci).

It can be said that people's life satisfaction is positively influenced by their political participation. The mean of the life satisfaction of people who are currently members of political organizations is 4.51 whereas this rate drops to 3.27 for people who do not have membership status.

#### **6.4.2. Life Satisfaction and Sense of Belongingness**

As the Azerbaijani people are living in a transition society, uncertainty has a considerable influence on all their relationships and their perception of future. In his study, Illner summarizes the basic characteristics of the transition society these people are living in the following way:

1. the anomie following the fall of the communist regime, the break-down of the legitimacy of its normative system.
2. the new general emphasis on the freedom of the individual, understood by many as a right to recklessly pursue one's own interests

3. the abolition of state control over individuals' private lives and the "shock of freedom"
  4. the lack of new rules and laws or rather the inevitably slow pace of re-building the old legal system and the imperfection of the new laws
  5. the opening of the borders and the arrival of foreign organized crime from both west and east
  6. the extraordinary opportunities which privatization and other forms of re-distributing state property present for criminal behavior
- (2004, p.162)

It can be said that all these aspects influence the subjective well-being of Azerbaijani people. To what extent the new dynamics of capitalist society determine people's everyday lives after the collapse of the old structure is an important question. To what extent people internalize and accept this new social environment is another issue in order evaluating this transitional society. How satisfied people are with their lives could be a strong indicator while trying to monitor this dramatic change. However, the lack of panel data on this indicator is a big obstacle in the way of such a proposal. This study based on cross-sectional data and people's satisfaction with life was conducted during only a limited period and in a single effort.

In Azerbaijan, people's perception of the quality of their society is extremely low: at the individual level, people have little trust in others, often feel alienated and lost in society, perceive their own communities as not being very safe and evaluate the quality of social services as very low.

In general terms social trust can be an explanatory factor in understanding the relationship between the quality of society and people's perceptions about life. Simmel argued that trust is one of the most important synthetic forces within a society (1950, p.326) and likewise, in his famous study *Trust and Power*, Luhmann states that trust is a tool for reducing complexity (1979, p.7). Since continuous change is the inevitable fate of Azerbaijani society which is driven by the institutionalization of free market economy, nationalization and democratization processes, people have to trust

to someone or some social groups to cope with the contingencies and uncertainties of the new social order. The study reveals that there is a lack of trust among Azerbaijani people. 71.7 % of the respondents said that they can't be too careful when dealing with people. On the other hand, 28.3 % of the people stated that most people in their society can be trusted. Figure 4.6 shows people's trust bonds with other people in the society according to their degree of closeness. The Azerbaijani people only trust their family members. The family is the basic institution that helps the people survive in the face of the uncertainties and risks of the new post-Soviet social order. Therefore, primary relationships are very significant while trying to grasp the network ties among the Azerbaijani people. On the other hand, it is interesting to see that people do not confide in their relatives, friends and neighbors. The degree of trust in other people in the society is extremely low.

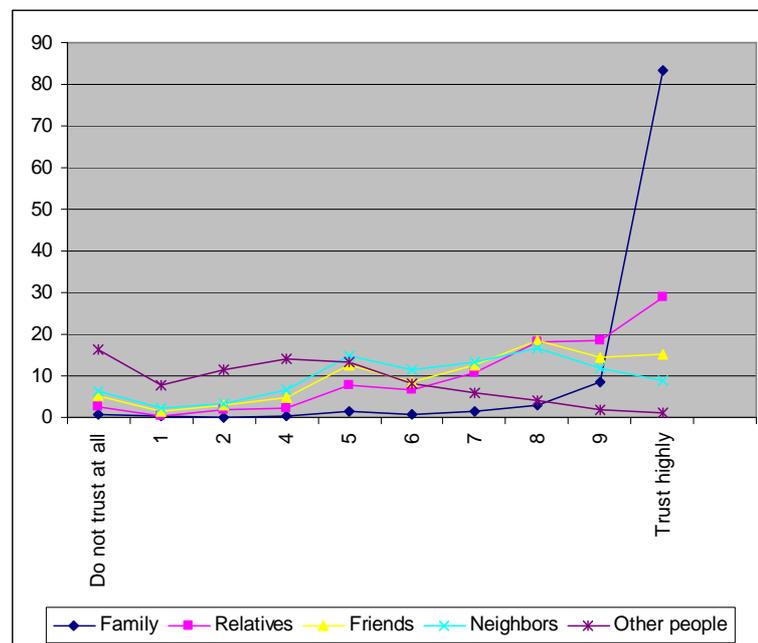


Figure 6.7: Trust in people

In the survey, people were asked whether they agree or disagree with the statements listed in Table 4.9. The survey data indicates that many Azerbaijani people feel marginalized and see their lives as being led by factors beyond their control. 81.2 % of the people stated that they do not have the influence to solve the problems of life. On the other hand, 40.8 % of the respondents expressed that they have their own survival strategies to cope with the difficulties of daily life. Yet nearly half the respondents disagree with them (46.8 %).

Table 6.9: Anomie index

| Statement  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------|----------------|
| I cannot influence most of today's problems.                                     | 2,6               | 16,3     | 45,2  | 35,9           |
| I often feel lonely.   | 5,5               | 37,1     | 37,7  | 19,7           |
| Life has become so complicated today that I almost can't find my way.            | 7,1               | 46,1     | 33,9  | 12,9           |
| In order to get ahead nowadays you are forced to do things that are not correct. | 37,9              | 40,8     | 16,2  | 5              |
| Nobody cares what happens to others.   | 2,5               | 30,9     | 46    | 20,5           |
| People are usually selfish and want to misuse others.                            | 2,4               | 26,7     | 52,1  | 18,7           |
| If I do good to somebody, I can hope he/she will similarly treat me well         | 29,4              | 40,4     | 23    | 7,2            |

To explore the relationship between the anomie and people's life satisfaction an anomie index is determined which ranges from 0 to 5 and summarizes agreement (strongly agree and agree) with the statements (Cronbach's alpha: 0.706). It is notable that the Pearson correlation coefficient is  $-0.43$  (significant on a level of  $p=0.01$ ). To put it more clearly the more people feel anomie, the less people are satisfied with their lives.

Furthermore, in the survey, the people were asked about their happiness. According to the responses, 69 % of the people said that they were 'unhappy' and 31 % stated that they were 'happy'. This telling mental picture completes the Azerbaijani people's low level of life satisfaction. However, it is a striking fact that the people think that their situation is temporary. In other words, this dark picture is conjectural in the sense that they are very optimistic about their near future and the progress of their societies (72.7 %). This is one of the most significant findings of this study. The Azerbaijani people have great hope for the near future, for a time when their living standards would be very high and the structural problems of the country would be solved. For their personal future, most of the people believe that their living conditions will be better than they are now. While people rate their current living conditions as '3.69' out of '10', they stated that their living conditions after five years would improve and jump to '5.10' out of '10'.

In brief, the underlying factors that explain the level of the Azerbaijani people's life satisfaction have been summarized in this chapter. It can be claimed that the transition from the socialist system has dramatically influenced the quality of the Azerbaijani people's lives. Poor material living conditions, high unemployment rate, inadequate health and educational services have a great impact on the life satisfaction of the ordinary people living in the country. Thus, the Azerbaijani people's low life satisfaction is basically determined by their household income, employment status, and education level. Furthermore, it is observed that the uncertainties and contingencies of the new social order have influenced people's subjective well-being dramatically. The degree of alienation and anomie in the society is very severe and people have had to develop their own coping strategies around primary social relationships in this highly corrupted society.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **CONCLUSION**

To conclude, it can be argued that the transition from the socialist system has influenced the quality of life of the Azerbaijani people dramatically. Although the Soviet period was characterized by restrictions in rights and liberties, the Azerbaijani people have a strong nostalgia for their living conditions during that period. After independence, since the revenue from free market trade has not been distributed equally, poverty and unemployment has increased considerably. Moreover, the widespread bribery and corruption in all fields of life make the situation worse. Today most Azerbaijani people think that there is no difference between their present government and the state during Soviet times because of the autocratic policies of their ruling elite, the fraudulence in presidential elections, and the subordination of opposing voices. Thus, poor material living conditions, a high unemployment rate and inadequate health and educational services have a great impact on the life satisfaction of the ordinary people living in the country. After fifteen years of independence, the Azerbaijani people still live with the memories of the good old days because of their country's unsuccessful project of transition.

In spite of this dark picture, the Azerbaijani people are very optimistic about their future. They internalize the situation, telling themselves that these days of difficulty are the natural cost of independence and they will stand on their own when the right time comes. They think and state that 'Herşey yahşı olar'<sup>8</sup>. These times are temporary. Their transformation will be successful. In line with this, they believe in the legitimacy of democracy. They will solve their problems with their repressive government in time, by the help of democracy.

---

<sup>8</sup> Everything's gonna be alright.

Within this framework, the Azerbaijani people's low life satisfaction is basically determined by household income, educational level, and employment status of the people. Satisfaction tends to rise with high levels of income. There are significant differences among different income groups. It can be said that the commoditization of all goods and services with free market economy has led to an absolute dependence on money for meeting the minimum standards of living. However, the devolution of the wages and high unemployment rates leads to a deficiency in the material living conditions of the Azerbaijani people. Therefore, having a regular job is a very significant factor in explaining the life satisfaction of the people. Most categories of employment status are associated with lower values of satisfaction relative to full-time employment. Unemployment has a particularly negative effect on satisfaction; other things being equal, being unemployed rather than having full-time employment raise the probability of recording the lowest level of satisfaction. Although the education system in the country has many serious problems, having a higher level of education positively influences people's satisfaction with their lives. Furthermore, the uncertainties and contingencies of the new social order have influenced people's subjective well-being dramatically. The alienation and anomie in the society is very deep and people have had to develop their own coping strategies around primary social relationships in this highly corrupted society.

While there are no simple solutions to these problems, it is likely that creating certain conditions – such as the sustainable functioning of the market economy, more rapid economic growth, the modernization of social services, a more socially acceptable redistribution of income and better law enforcement will contribute to a better quality of society and to an improved quality of life for the citizens of Azerbaijan.

Since this study is the first of its kind to be conducted in Azerbaijan, there is a great potential for future research. Future research can focus on how people's perception of their lives will change with regard to the rapid development in the national economy.

Will the great increase in national income lead to sudden improvements in people's material living conditions? Finally, how will the ongoing reforms in the political system and the constitution shape the people's satisfaction with their lives?

## REFERENCES

- Abbott, P., & Sapsford, R. (2006) 'Life-Satisfaction in Post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine', *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 7(2):pp.251-287
- Allardt, E. (1993) 'Having, Loving, Being: An Alternative to the Swedish Model of Welfare Research', in Sen, A., Nussbaum, M. (eds) *The Quality of Life*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 88-94.
- André, P., & Dieudonné, B. (2001) 'Development of a Conceptual and Methodological Framework for the Integrated Assessment of the Impacts of Linear Infrastructure Projects on Quality of Life', *Research and Development Monograph Series*.  
Retrieved May 15, 2006 from [http://www.ceaa-cee.gc.ca/015/001/015/title\\_e.htm](http://www.ceaa-cee.gc.ca/015/001/015/title_e.htm)
- Argyle, Michael. (1994) 'The Psychology of Happiness', London: Routledge
- Bayulgen, O., (2003) 'Facing the Dilemma of Global Capitalism: The Case of Azerbaijan', *Central Asian Survey*, 22(2/3):pp.209-220
- Boarini, et al., (2006), 'Alternative Measures of Wellbeing', *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, February, 33, pp. 1-57.
- Böhnke, Petra. (2005) 'First European Quality of Life Survey: Life satisfaction, happiness and sense of belonging', *European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions*.
- Bognar, Greg. (2005) 'The Concept of Quality of Life', *Social Theory and Practice*, 31(4):561- 580.
- Bramston, P., et al, (2002), 'Unravelling Subjective Quality of Life: An Investigation of Individual and Community Determinants', *Social Indicators Research*, 59(3):pp.261-274
- Brickman, P. & Campbell, D. T. (1971). Hedonic relativism and planning the good society. In M. H. Apley (Ed.), *Adaptation-level theory: A symposium*, pp. 287-302. New York: Academic Press.
- CIA World Fact Book, 2007, Azerbaijan's Country Profile  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/aj.html>
- Dahrendorf, R. (1990) 'Reflections on the Revolution in Europe', London: Chatto Windus.

Delhey, J. (2004) 'Life Satisfaction in an Enlarged Europe', *European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions*.

Delhey, J., et al., (2002) 'Quality of Life in a European Perspective: The Euromodule as a New Instrument for Comparative Welfare Research', *Social Indicators Research* 58(2):163-176.

Diener, E., & Suh, E., (1997) 'Measuring Quality of Life: Economic, Social, And Subjective Indicators', *Social Indicators Research*, 40(1/2):pp.189-216

Diener, E., & Oishi, S., (2000), 'Money and happiness: Income and subjective wellbeing across nations' in E. Diener & E. M. Suh (Eds.), *Cross-cultural psychology of subjective well-being*. Boston: MIT Press.

Diener, E., Sandvik, E. & Pavot, W.G., (1991), 'Happiness is the Frequency, not the Intensity, of Positive vs Negative Affect', in: Strack, F., Argyle, M. and Schwarz, N., Editors, 1991. *Subjective well being: An interdisciplinary perspective*, Pergamon Press, Oxford, pp. 119–139.

Easterlin, Richard A. (2001) 'Income and Happiness: Toward a Unified Theory', *The Economic Journal*, 111:465-484.

----- (2003) 'Explaining happiness', *PNAS*, 100(19):11176-11183.

Ergun, A., (2005), 'Democratization from Below: The Role of Civil Society in Azerbaijan' in *Black Sea Politics: Political Culture and Civil Society in an Unstable Region* edited by Ayşe Ayata, Ayça Ergun and Işıl Çelimli, IB Tauris

Ergun, Ayça. (1998) 'Process of Democratization and Political Elites in Azerbaijan, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Middle East Technical University, Ankara

Erikson, R., 1993, Descriptions of Inequality: The Swedish Approach to Welfare Research. In: M. Nussbaum, A. Sen (eds.), *The Quality of Life*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 67-87.

EUROFUND, 2006, 'Quality of Life in Europe', *First European Quality of Life Survey Report*

Falkingham, Jane. (1999) 'Welfare Trends in Poverty and Well-being in Central Asia', *Center for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) paper*, London

Freedom House Report, Nations in Transit, 2004 and 2006

- Gerson, Elihu M. (1976) 'On "Quality of Life' *American Sociological Review*, 41(5):pp. 793-806
- Hagerty, M.R. (1999) 'Testing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: National Quality-of-Life across Time', *Social Indicators Research*, 46(3):pp.249-271
- Hajiran, H. (2006) 'Toward a Quality of Life Theory: Net Domestic Product of Happiness', *Social Indicators Research*, 75(2):31-43.
- Headey, B. (2006), 'Happiness: Revising Set Point Theory and Dynamic Equilibrium Theory to Account for Long Term Change', *DIW Berlin Discussion Papers* 607, pp.1-15
- International Crisis Group (ICG), 2004, 'Azerbaijan: Turning Over a new Leaf?', *Europe Report*, No:156, pp. 1-38
- Illner, Michal. (2004) 'The Changing Quality of Life in a Post-Communist Country: The Case of Czech Republic', *Social Indicators Research*, 43(1/2):pp.141-170
- İskender, M. (2004) 'Azerbaycan'da Ekonomik Sistemin Dönüşümü' in Selçuk, Hasan (eds), *Yeni Yüzyılda Azerbaycan'ın Sosyo-Ekonomik Yapısı*, İstanbul:Tasam Yayınları
- Kahneman, D., & Krueger, A.B. (2006) 'Developments in the Measurement of Subjective Well-being', *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(1):pp.3-24
- Luhmann, Niklas. (1979) *Trust and Power*. Chichester: Wiley
- Matutinovic, Igor. (2004) 'Quality of Life in Transition Countries: Central East Europe with Special Reference to Croatia', *Social Indicators Research*, 43(1/2):pp.97-119
- Maslow, A. (1962) 'Toward a Psychology of Being' Van Nostrand, New York.
- Michalos, A. C. (1985), 'Multiple Discrepancies Theory (MDT)', *Social Indicators Research*, 16: pp. 347-413.
- Moore, S. et al, (2005) 'Subjective Well-Being and Life Satisfaction in the Kingdom of Tonga', *Social Indicators Research*, 70(3):pp.287-170
- Namazie, C. Z., & Sanfey, P. (2001) 'Happiness and Transition: The Case of Kyrgyzstan.' *Review of Development Economics*, 5(3): pp. 392-405.

Noll, Heinz-Herbert. (2002) 'Towards a European System of Social Indicators: Theoretical Framework and System Architecture', *Social Indicators Research*, 58(1/3):pp.47-87

Society at a Glance: OECD Social Indicators (2006), OECD publishing

Phillips, David. (2006) 'Quality of Life: Concept, Policy and Practice, London: Routledge.

Rasizade, Alec. (2003) 'Azerbaijan Descending into the Third World after a Decade of Independence', *Journal of Third World Studies*, 21(1):pp.191-219

Rasizade, Alec. (2004) 'Azerbaijan after Heydar Aliyev', *Nationalities Papers*, 32(1):pp. 134-168

Rasizade, Alec. (2004) 'Azerbaijan in Transition to the "New Age of Democracy"', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 36:pp.345-372

Seghieri, C., et al. (2006), 'The richer, the happier? An empirical investigation in selected European countries', *Social Indicators Research*, 79, pp: 455–476.

Sen, A., & Nussbaum, M., (1993) 'The Quality of Life', ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Schuessler, K. F., & Fisher, G. A. (1985), 'Quality of Life Research and Sociology', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 11:129-149.

Sirgy, M.J., Cornwell, T. (2001), 'Further Validation of The Sirgy et al.'s Measure of Community Quality of Life', *Social Indicators Research*, 56(2):125-43.

Sirgy, M. J., et al., (2006) 'The Quality-Of-Life (QOL) Research Movement: Past, Present and Future', *Social Indicators Research*, 76(1):343-466.

Simmel, G. (1950), 'The Sociology of Georg Simmel'. (*Kurt H. Wolff* Trans.). New York: Free Press.

Sztompka, P. (2000) 'Cultural Trauma: The Other Face of Social Change', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 3(4):pp. 449-466

Suleymanov, E. (2006) 'Milletleşme Sürecinde Azerbaycan Türkleri: Rus İşgalinden Günümüze Sosyolojik Bir Değerlendirme', Ötüken, İstanbul.

UNDP, 2005, 'Azerbaijan's State Poverty Reduction and Economic Development' Report

UNESCAP, 2004, [http://www.unescap.org/stat/data/statind/pdf/t3\\_dec04.pdf](http://www.unescap.org/stat/data/statind/pdf/t3_dec04.pdf)

Veenhoven, Ruut. (1996) 'The Study of Life Satisfaction' in Saris, W.E., Veenhoven, R., Scherpenzeel, A.C., Bunting, B. (eds), *A Comparative Study of Satisfaction with Life in Europe*, Eötvös University Press.

----- (1999) 'Quality of Life in Individualistic Society- A comparison of 43 nations in early 1990's', *Social Indicators Research*, 48:pp. 157-186

----- (2000) 'The Four Qualities of Life- Ordering concepts and measures of the good life', *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 1: pp. 1-39.

----- (2002) 'Why Social Policy Needs Subjective Indicators' in Hagerty, M.R., Vogel, J., Møller, V. (eds), *Assessing Quality of Life and Living Conditions to Guide National Policy The State of the Art*, Springer Netherlands.

Yetim, Ünsal. (2001) 'Toplumdan Bireye Mutluluk Resimleri', Baglam, İstanbul.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

The study is a kind of extension of EUROMODULE<sup>9</sup> which was set up in 1998 by 19 European countries including Turkey. The aim of EUROMODULE is to monitor and systematically analyze the existing and changing living conditions and quality of life in Europe in a cooperative perspective. According to Delhey et. al. (2002), what distinguishes this project from other international or European social surveys is its inclusion of non-EU countries such as Switzerland and Turkey and the fact that it covers a broad range of quality of life indicators. As indicated in Table 5.1, EUROMODULE includes three different welfare concepts: objective living conditions, subjective well-being and (perceived) quality of society.

Different Aspects of Welfare Covered by EUROMODULE

|                  | Objective  | Subjective   |
|------------------|--|--|
| Individual Level | Objective living conditions<br>(e.g. income)     | Subjective well-being<br>(e.g. income satisfaction)  |
| Societal Level   | Quality of society<br>(e.g. income distribution) | Perceived quality of society<br>(e.g. perceived strength of conflicts between rich and poor) |

Source: Delhey et. al (2002, p.170)

---

<sup>9</sup> "Social Indicators: EUROMODULE Workshop" has become a significant field of specialization in the Department of Sociology since 1999 and Prof. Sencer Ayata and Prof. Wolfgang Zapf made the first collaboration in *Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung* (WZB-Social Science Research Center, Berlin) and the first nationwide survey, coordinated by Dr. Adnan Akçay and Prof. Yusuf Ziya Özcan, was conducted in Turkey in 2001.

The EUROMODULE has been carried out in eight countries so far: in Germany, Hungary, Slovenia, Sweden (all in 1999); Spain and Switzerland (2000); Italy and Turkey (2000) (Delhey et. al, 2002). With South Korea taking part in the network in 2001 and South Africa preparing to adapt the EUROMODULE questionnaire, the EUROMODULE data makes an international comparison possible for several domains of the quality of life (Please see Appendix I).

Delhey et al. (2002) lists the indicators used in EUROMODULE as follows:

**1. Objective living conditions:**

- Housing
- Household composition
- Social Relations
- Participation
- Standard of living
- Income
- Health
- Education and Work

**2. Subjective well-being:**

- Domain satisfactions
- General life satisfaction
- Happiness
- Anxieties and anomie
- Subjective class position
- Importance of various life domains
- Optimism / pessimism for various social concerns
- Evaluation of the own living conditions

**3. (Perceived) quality of society:**

- Social conflicts
- Trust in other people
- Degree of achievement of public goods (freedom, security, social justice)
- Living conditions in various European countries in comparison to the own country
- Preconditions for social integration

## APPENDIX B

### IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### AZƏRBAYCANDA YAŞAYIŞ SƏVİYYƏSİ TƏDQIQATI GENİŞ MÜSAHİBƏ SUALLARI

Hörmətli Respondent

Bu tədqiqat ölkədəki yaşayış səviyyəsini öyrənmək və digər ölkələrlə müqayisə aparmaq üçün həyata keçirilməkdədir. Sovet İttifaqının dağılmasından sonra mstəqil Avrasya ölkələrindəki yaşayış səviyyəsini öyrənmək əsas məqsədimizdir. Belə tədqiqatlar bu günlərdə bir çox ölkələrdə aparılmaqdadır.

Sualların səhv və ya düz cavabları yoxdur. Sizə uyğun gələn cavabı deməyiniz kifayət edər. Cavabınızın səmimi olması ölkədəki yaşayış səviyyəsini düzgün öyrənilməsi üçün çox vacibdir.

Bu tədqiqat Milli və Beynəlxalq Araşdırmalar Mərkəzi tərəfindən aparılır.

Vaxt ayırdığınız üçün çox təşəkkür edirik.

Ölkə: AZƏRBAYCAN

Rayon:

Yaşayış məntəqəsi: ( ) Kənd ( ) Şəhər

Mənşəyi:

Evin yerləşdiyi yaşayış məntəqəsi:

Respondentin cinsi: Qadın ( )

Kişi ( )

Respondentin yaşı: ( )

Respondentin ailə başçısı ilə qohumluq əlaqəsi nədir?

- a) Özü ( )
- b) Həyat Yoldaşı ( )
- c) Qızı/Oğlu ( )
- d) Qohumu ( )
- e) Digər (yazın)..... ( )

Respondentin ailə vəziyyəti:

- a) Subay
- b) Ailəli və həyat yoldaşı ilə bir yerdə yaşayır
- c) Ailəli, lakin həyat yoldaşından ayrı yaşayır
- d) Həyat yoldaşı rəhmətə gedib
- e) Həyat yoldaşından boşanıb

Respondentin peşəsi:.....

1. Sovet dövrü və ondan sonrakı dövrün müqayisəsi
  - Müsbət və mənfi tərəfləri
  - Müxtəlif sahələrdə müqayisələr (məs. Sovet dövründə sosial – iqtisadi sahədə dövlət təminatı var idi, amma siyasi sahədə təzyiqlər var idi).
2. Demokratiyanı necə başa düşürsünüz, demokratiyanın yaxşı və pis tərəfləri nələrdir?
3. Bu günkü və gələcəkdəki durumunu ehtimal edə bilirmi?
  - Cəryan edən prosesləri başa düşüb qəbul edirmi ya da əksinə qəbul etmir?
  - Proseslərə təsir etmək gücündədirmi (siyasi, dövlət orqanları və cəmiyyətə)?
4. Gündəlik yaşam tərzində hansı problemlərlə üzləşirsiniz (Məs. avtobus vaxtında gəlirmi, həkimə gedəndə yerində olurmu və s.)
5. Etimad:
  - Küçədə gəzərkən tam rahat olursunuz
  - Satıcıların sizi aldatmadığına inanırmısınız
  - Bir səhvə yol verəndə onu düzəldə biləcəyinizə inanmaq
  - Qonşu qonşuya kömək edirmi
  - Hüquq – mühafizə orqanları sizi qoruyur, yoxsa sizə təhlükə yaradır
  - Uşağının məktəbdən sağ – salamat gələ biləcəyi ilə bağlı narahatlığı varmı?
6. Gələcəklə bağlı gözləntiləri, ümidləri və sevincləri
  - Həyatdan gözlədikləri ilə həyata keçirdikləri və həyata keçirə biləcəkləri arasında bir uyğunluq varmı?
  - Gələcəyə ümidlə baxırmı, xoşbəxtdirmi, yoxsa əksinə?
7. Həyatında özünə aid problemləri hansı səviyyədə həll edə bilir?