



DE GRUYTER  
OPEN

DOI 10.1515/pesd-2015-0040

PESD, VOL. 9, no. 2, 2015

## SOCIAL-GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF POPULATION'S QUALITY OF LIVING (THE CASE OF CHERNIVTSI REGION)

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**Keywords:** social-geographic, quality of living, Chernivtsi

**Abstract** Thus, the Chernivtsi Region takes the third place in Ukraine with respect to quality of living. Traditionally high ratings are shown within the frame of social components (reproduction of population, social standing, and decent work). In the last years, situation has improved with regard to population's comfort of life and level of education, though the ratings of education are the worst in Ukraine. Such components as material state (well-being) still stays to be problematic.

### Introduction

The studies into quality of population's living show their increasing relevance within the whole scope of social-geographic investigations. It is especially relevant on a regional level where the problems of living standards' provision are as a rule systemic and complex. The social-geographic analysis and the assessment of components that constitute the quality of living, the factors that lead to said quality changes, and the use of up-to date methods to help develop regional concepts of population living standards' increase make the basis for the efficient regional social policy. Despite the fundamental significance of these problems for the purpose of realization of regional management, they still stay insufficiently studied in social-geographic aspect

Problems of formation and rise of population's quality of living were highlighted in works by national geographers, economists, sociologists and demographers, such as V. S. Bakirova, I. V. Gukalova, M. I. Dolishniy, E. M. Libanova, and foreign scientists, such as R. Bauer, G. Galbraith, A. Sena, D. Smith, A. Campbell, G. Keynes, E. Michan, V. Rogers, E. Toffler, etc. A considerable contribution to development of this category was made by the United Nations

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Organization, International Labor Organization, and Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, which were first to develop the system of social indicators [4].

Though the aforesaid scientific contributions are of great theoretical and practical significance, they majorly represent branch-concentrated studies of the quality and especially the level of people's living. This is why it seems important to define and classify the factors that effect upon the quality of living, and develop the parameters for its complex assessment on different taxonomic levels to help clarify regional differences and form adequate regional programs of social-economic development. Since touching upon different processes within a certain territory, the quality of living from the point of view of geography is a social-geographic phenomenon. It covers all spheres of life of single individual and the whole society. The majority of geographers agree to interpret the quality of life as a complex multi-sided category that characterizes the level of satisfaction of material, social, ecological, cultural and spiritual needs of human being [1]. To our opinion, the quality of population's living from the point of view of social geography should be considered as a category that characterizes the conditions of population's vital activity formed under the influence of specific geo-spatial-temporal factors with consideration of the provision of society's balanced development [2].

Among geographic factors that effect upon the quality of living, social-geographic disposition of the administrative region with respect to the state border of the country and the neighboring administrative regions plays an especially important role. Favorability or unfavorability of this factor is accompanied by changes in the mode and the conditions of life, regional employment structure and labor migration. Historic-geographical, demographic, social, economic, natural-geographic, cultural-artistic are among the other important factors.

By their mutual decision taken in 2012, the Presidium of National Academy of Sciences, Ukraine, and the Board of the State Service for Statistics, Ukraine, approved new Methods to Measure Regional Human Development elaborated by specialists from the M.V. Ptukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies, National Academy of Sciences, Ukraine, and the experts from the State Service for Statistics, Ukraine. They suggested 33 parameters in 6 blocks that would help quantitatively define regional index of human development, said six blocks representing as follows: reproduction of population, social standing, comfort of life, well-being, decent work, and education [3].

Following the new methods, the authors of the present work have assessed the integral regional human development in Ukrainian administrative regions in 2004-2012. Table 1 represents the rating of the Chernivtsi Region with respect to integral regional human development and its components (6 blocks).

Tab. 1 Ratings of Indices of Human Development and Integral Regional Human Development (RHD) in Chernivtsi Region in 2004–2012

| Blocks                     | Years    |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|                            | 2004     | 2005     | 2006     | 2007     | 2008     | 2009     | 2010     | 2011     | 2012     |
| Reproduction of Population | 6        | 5        | 10       | 5        | 5        | 4        | 3        | 7        | 7        |
| Social Standing            | 3        | 2        | 4        | 4        | 4        | 4        | 4        | 4        | 3        |
| Comfort of Life            | 16       | 20       | 18       | 16       | 17       | 11       | 11       | 11       | 10       |
| Well-Being                 | 19       | 21       | 19       | 15       | 10       | 3        | 13       | 10       | 11       |
| Decent Work                | 11       | 10       | 11       | 9        | 9        | 7        | 6        | 9        | 8        |
| Education                  | 21       | 20       | 20       | 19       | 22       | 22       | 21       | 22       | 20       |
| <b>Integral RHD</b>        | <b>5</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> |

As it is evident from Table 1, the Chernivtsi Region traditionally wins high ratings with respect to social components (reproduction of population, social standing, and decent work). And, if compared to previous years, it significantly redressed the situation as to comfort of life, and the level of education. Due to these, the Chernivtsi Region occupied leading positions in 2010-2012 ratings, and headed the national rating of regional human development in 2009.

As to the parameters of the first block (reproduction of population) of the integral index of regional human development, the Chernivtsi Region is among the top ten regions of Ukraine. This is explained by the low level of infantine mortality, high level of state of health indicator, high expected lifetime at birth, as well as men's and women's high lifetime.

Social standing is an important aspect of human development. It determines the specificity of the phenomenon of health as its component, since the level of human skills, artistic gifts and their realization, as well as the intensity and the efficiency of individual's vital activity wholly depend upon the state of his/her state of health [4]. With respect to this aspect, the Chernivtsi Region was the third in Ukraine in 2012, and was among the first five Ukrainian regions in previous years.

Analyzing the Chernivtsi Region population's comfort of life, we can not but note that this parameter shows average Ukrainian ratings, but tends to improvement in the last four years (2009-2012). Situation is explained by low crime rate, comparatively insignificant number of orphaned children and those deprived of parental care, as well as by small number of suicides thus witnessing the high level of psychic health in population of the Chernivtsi Region.

Material state essentially influences upon the quality of living and determines specificities of work, state of health, chances for education, possible change of



workplace or the career. Provision with accommodation characterizes the comfort of life; population may use conveniences in both urban and rural environments, and avail social welfare facilities. As to the third block, the Chernivtsi Region has improved its positions in the last four years (2009-2012), and was 10th in the 2012 rating among 25 Ukrainian administrative regions which is its highest position in the last nine years. It was in the first turn stipulated by the improvements in conditions of life in rural localities (increase of accommodation with central drainage and gas supply), and the state of the surrounding environment.

Improvement of ratings of the Chernivtsi Region is also observed with the level of population's well-being which is assessed proceeding from the parameters of the level of poverty, people's well-being with respect to its provision with food products, durable goods, and the production of gross regional product.

The Chernivtsi Region is distinguished for relatively satisfactory level of unemployment and labor conditions *праці*, and it is only fair that it holds place in the top ten with regard to ratings related to the fifth block – Decent Work.

The index of education is very important when the integral regional human development is assessed. It also influences upon the parameters of the other five blocks. This or that level of education effects on the field of individual's activity, his/her chances to improve the material state, housing conditions, and labor. This dimension of human development becomes of special value with the rise of rates of development of scientific-technical revolution and labor intellectualization that demand continuous and life-time upgrade of knowledge, and readiness for self-development and self-improvement.

With respect to the sixth block of the integral index of regional human development, the Chernivtsi Region shows the worst parameters placed the 20th or beyond the top twenty throughout the whole course of nine years. The reason lies in school students' low Overall Grade Point Average when they are independently attested in comparison to the other administrative regions; relatively insignificant share of individuals with higher education among the people of over 25. This, in its turn, is connected with the region's-frontier disposition and active migration among the inhabitants with higher education, the so-called "brain drain".

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