

A Few Characteristics of the Problems in the Private Life and in the Social Relationships and of the Resulting Conflicts

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1. Introduction

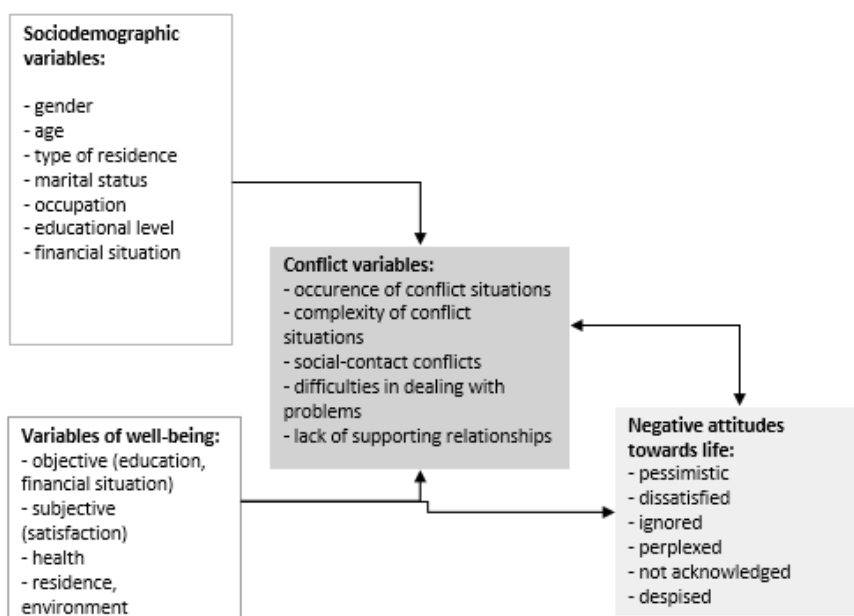
The purpose of this study is to present a few essential characteristics of personal-private problems in everyday life, interpersonal social-relationship problems in the private sphere, and social conflicts resulting from these problems by means of a nation-wide questionnaire survey (N = 2031 persons). The conceptual-theoretical framework of the research and the interpretation of social problems and conflicts were already previously explained in detail. In this paper, an attempt is made for a detailed empirical analysis of one component of the five dimensional, comprehensive conflict model (problems of private life and social relationships).

In the first step, after a short conceptual overview and a short overview of the literature, the method of the applied measuring by means of questionnaires, the applied questions in the research, which make up the conflicts indicators, and all of the above mentioned are presented. Afterwards, the burdens of problems and conflicts of the population in everyday life will be overviewed. As well as, the occurrence, connection and building on each other of the different forms of problems and conflicts are overviewed. Answers about in which social groups and along which social characteristics the occurrence of such situations happen at a higher probability, are also searched for. What are the characteristics of groups, which are burdened with social problems and conflicts? Finally, a look are taken at the connections between the two phenomena by using the developed indicators for measuring well-being. How close is the correlation between the personal, private and social problems and conflicts of everyday life and the objective and subjective indicators of well-being? Basically, the purpose is to provide a contribution to the issue, which is the background of the whole research program: namely the questions, to what extent, and in which direction different types of conflicts influence well-being.

Figure 1, can also be regarded as the content map of the research study,

which summarizes each dimension (factors) of the research, the empirically measured components (variables) of the dimensions and the possible directions of correlations between them. The focus of the analysis is certainly an in-depth description and representation of each conflict variable and an identification of negative attitudes towards life, which are at the same time both causes and consequences of problem situations experienced day-to-day. The possible explanatory factors serve to characterize those social groups, as accurately as possible, in which the private and personal problems and conflicts appear to a greater extent than usual. The arrows show here clearly that the effect and the role of these factors will be explained in the next pages.

Figure 1: Elements and connections of the research



Source: Own collection

The possible determining factors are divided into two groups for a more thorough examination of social well-being, thus, besides the traditional socio-demographic elements, four dimensions of the well-being, can also be included when exploring the correlations. It is possible that the figure indicates clearly that the development of conflicts and problem situations is influenced by so many factors. In this case, the potential effective factors can also be interpreted from all three fields (factor groups).

During the examinations three fundamental conceptions are applied. In connection with the concept of the social conflict, following the conceptions explained in the theoretical, introductory chapter, it is assumed that there is a conflict in the most general sense, if the interests of two or more social actors (persons, groups, institutions...etc.) are incommensurable and as a result there is a tension in their relationship to a certain extent (Crouch 2001). The possible most comprehensive definition of the concept of a social problem is that it is a socially constructed condition, based on objective facts and subjective perceptions, goes through individual and collective considerations, which jeopardize and undermine the well-being and the expected or targeted quality of life of some, many or all members of the society, in form of immediate damages or disadvantages or in form of narrowing of chances, opportunities or choices (Macionis 2012). Measuring social development, quality of life and well-being became a "hot topic" in the profession in the last years again (Harcsa 2011; Kopp, Martos 2011; Nagy 2014). In connection to well-being the multidimensional approach of the Stiglitz report (Stiglitz, Sen, Fitoussi 2010) is applied, which is based on the assumption that the quality of life of households should be examined in at least eight dimensions (material quality of life, health, education, individual activities, political representation, relationships, environment, factors of uncertainty) in such a way that besides the objective factors (e.g. income, education) also the subjective aspects of well-being (e.g. happiness, satisfaction, lack of negative attitudes toward life) are considered. Within the framework of this research the well-being is measured in four dimensions: objective well-being, subjective well-being, health condition, residential environment.

A comprehensive and complete overview of the literature is not the purpose of this paper. However, it should be at least emphasized that the number of scientific works, based partly on empirical research, in Hungarian research projects about private and social conflicts is surprisingly low and it concentrates around a few main topics. In the literature of social conflicts the political, social and ethnical, national, religious and environmental aspects are primarily emphasized. Concerning private life, everyday challenges and relationships, four main fields of research can be separated. In the case of intra-familial conflicts, a few earlier papers (Cseh-Szombathy 1985; Lengyel 1990; Csepregi 1994) can be regarded even today as a starting point for characterization of marital, partnership and, in a broader sense, of interpersonal conflicts. The most recent literature deals with the instability in partnerships (Pilinszki 2013) and with the intergen-

erational conflicts (Janky 2005). In the last few years there is an increasing number of research studies, which review the question of balance, compatibility and conflicts of work and private life (Barakonyi 2007; Koltai 2010; Makra, Farkas, Orosz 2012; Nagy 2014; Szalma 2014). The third main research field concentrates on social problems and conflicts related to city life, in the broader context of competitiveness, considering challenges caused by areal-regional coexistence (Csizmadia, Molnár, Váradi 2007; Szirmai, Váradi 2009; Szirmai 2009). Finally, following the conflict interpretation and definition of well-being of this paper, the examinations related to the quality of life (Kopp, Kovács 2006) and to the mental state of the population (Kopp 2008; Susánszky, Szántó 2013) are the starting points, because satisfaction, happiness and negative attitudes towards life, as the subjective dimension of well-being and causal determinants of conflicts in the private life, are important issues in this work.

2. Methodological questions – possibilities of measuring problems/conflicts in the private life with questionnaires

The first problem indicator perceives the main aspects of the issue generally, at the level of the Hungarian society, and not considering private households or living conditions. The question was about, in which areas are there *the most serious problems* in Hungary nowadays, according to the test persons in the sample, who had to select the two most important problems from altogether 14 problems¹. In general sense, the determination of scope and weight of determining factors behind these conflicts begins at this point.

Negative feelings, attitudes towards life have been measured independently from the specific situation or event in general (collectively). The persons, who completed the test, had to respond to certain statements with the help of a five-grade point system.² Six statements have been formulated, from which two measured the existence of positive and the other four of rather

¹ The list of problems, from which it could be selected, was the following: 1. low number of children; 2. condition of democracy; 3. health conditions of the people; 4. everyday living; 5. home situation; 6. environment pollution; 7. immorality; 8. alcoholism; 9. drug abuse; 10. imperfection of education; 11. number of suicides; 12. conflicts between older and younger generations; 13. ethnical problems; 14. public safety.

² Answer codes based on a five-grade point system: 1 point = do not agree at all; 5 points = completely agree.

negative attitudes.³ With merging of the answer categories „completely agree”, and „rather agree/do not agree” six status indicators of negative attitudes toward life as dummy variables have been developed: 1. pessimistic (20,1%, no answer: 0,4%); 2. unsatisfied (24,4%, no answer: 0,1%); 3. ignored (16,6%, no answer: 0,7%); 4. perplexed (22,2%, no answer: 0,2%); 5. not acknowledged/unappreciated (20,8%, no answer: 2,8%); 6. despised (11,7%, no answer: 3,3%). In the course of the analysis, the background factors behind each condition and the frequency of connection of each negative attitude towards life is examined.

Two specific conflict questions can be regarded as the central part of the research. These questions measured, possible problems and conflict situations related to the private life situation or in a broader context, to the narrow environment of the person (family, workplace, social networks). The two questioned areas were the following: 1) probability and frequency of various types of problems in the private life in the last year; 2) intensity of burden on interpersonal relationships caused by conflicts in the test persons' lives.

Conflicts and problems in private life have been assessed with the following questions: „How frequently⁴ have the following problems, worries⁵ arisen, causing conflicts or arguments in your private life? In this case, the main purpose was the determination of conflict-burden in the private life and the development of a list of hierarchical problems, based on the probability of occurrence of the problem areas.

The *conflict burden of social life and social networks* have been measured with a very simple intensity indicator („How do you feel about the conflict and tension load in your following social relationships in general?“), where among four options could be selected⁶ in that case, if the given relationship

³ Statements: 1. I am optimistic regarding the future. 2. The development of my life is as I would like it to be. 3. I feel myself ignored in society. 4. Life became so complicated these days that I can hardly find my way. 5. I do not feel that what I am doing is acknowledged as a value. 6. Some people despise me because of my work/unemployment, income.

⁴ Answer codes based on a four-grade point system: 1 point = hardly ever appears... 4 points = appears very often.

⁵ Problems: 1. earning money, income, living problems; 2. management of larger investments and expenses; 3. household tasks, works to do at home, split of duties; 4. individual ambitions and wishes pushed in the background; 5. problems resulting from learning or educating children; 6. health problems, illnesses; 7. problems from obligations regarding maintaining contacts with family members and relatives; 8. partnership problems; 9. other, especially...

⁶ Answer codes based on a four-grade point system: 1 point = not burdened at all ... 4 point = completely burdened.

form existed in the ego-network of the test person. The possible directions of connection have been classified into ten types, in the questionnaire.⁷ With this question, the complexity and conflict burden of the contact system could be examined with continuous consideration that the persons answering in the sample are presumably characterized by different contact configurations. This conflict indicator measures essentially, which percentage of all occurring contact types, which are relevant in the specific situation, are loaded at least to a small extent (a point value of at least 3 or 4) with conflicts or problems.⁸ In this case specific content of the problems and conflicts were not asked, because of the lack of time.

Besides the occurrence and intensity of conflicts, the determination of *conflict management* features has also been considered as important. On the one hand, how easy (or on the contrary, difficult) it is for the test persons to cope with problems, what kind of conflict management potential they possess. On the other hand, whom can they count on in the case of such problems rising, do they have external private supports, which can be mobilized in such situations, or do they have to rely essentially on themselves? In this case is the scope of interest of this research the persons, who have been left on their own, without supportive or helping relationships.

In the first step it has to be made clear, how difficult people believe *conflict management and coping with challenges* to be in everyday life.⁹ Ability to cope with problems has been measured on a 11-grade scale¹⁰, where a larger value implies a potential of coping with a more difficult conflict. Naturally, it was not possible to examine each problem area of the subject matter, due to the time constraint of the questionnaire. Therefore types of questions, which answers include the word "generally" were required, keeping in consideration that the starting point had to be the most serious challenge. The difficulties of coping with rising challenges are also a part of the problems in private life. Furthermore, the lower ability to cope with problems can play a role in the development of further conflicts, thus this indicator can be a part of a more complex description of the aspects of the conflict.

⁷ 1. with his/her partner or spouse; 2. with his/her parents; 3. with his/her children; 4. with his/her brothers and sisters; 5. with his/her other relatives; 6. with friends; 7. with his/her neighbours; 8. with his/her colleagues; 9. with his/her superiors; 10. with professional circles.

⁸ 49% of the test persons (996 persons) have not reported a single relationship conflict therefore the indicator can be related to a narrower part of the sample (1035 persons).

⁹ The question reads as follows: „How difficult is it for you, in your opinion, to cope with significant problems in your life?“

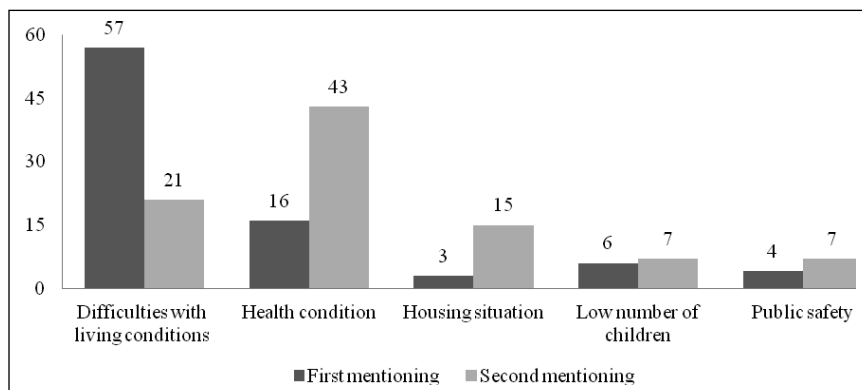
¹⁰ 1 point = very easy... 11 points = very difficult

Additionally, a question under consideration is, *on whom can rely* the individual *in such situations*, only on him- or herself, or is there a supportive, protective net around him/her, based on private relationships.¹¹ The presence of supportive relationships has been asked in three areas¹²: mental and emotional support; financial support; support and care in a physical sense. The main question was to decide, to which extent was the individual left in these situations on their own and with their own resources and on whom they count primarily in the form of supportive relationships.¹³

3. The basic characteristics of problem indicators

In the context of the most important problems, perceived in present Hungarian society, the way of thinking of the people follows a relatively simple pattern. Despite the 14 predefined problem areas, and the possibility of other answers, only two factors from the answers are striking remarkably (Figure 2).

Figure 2: The most important problems in the Hungarian society of today, % (N=1990)



Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

¹¹ The question reads as follows: „Whom can you count on in the first place, if you need help in the following areas in mitigating or solving of problems?“

¹² Relationship types used at the previous indicator was applied also in this case.

¹³ The conflict variables above with the exact question and frequency distributions can be found in the annexes.

In the first place, *as the most important problem*, a major share (57%) of the test persons mentioned problems with everyday living, this is followed by the health condition (16%), which is the dominant factor of the second mentionings as well (43%). In the list housing situation, low number of children and public safety are also mentioned, with lower proportion of occurrence, though. The proportion of votes for the other factors is insignificant (it is only around 1-2 percent). The most test persons have presumably answered the questions by taking their own environment as a starting point. Therefore it seems to be practical to compare the answers with the logic and composition of the problem system defined by their own situation.

The probability of frequency of problems in private life, which led to frequent conflicts or disputes in the own life of the test persons in the last year, has a similar logic (Table 1). From the four answer options, only the categories “often” and “very often” are dealt with. The sample is divided in two equal groups. 50 percent of the test persons had at least one kind of problem in the private life often or very often in the last year. In the other half of the sample there are only rarely occurring problems.

Table 1: Problems occurred often or very often in the last year, %

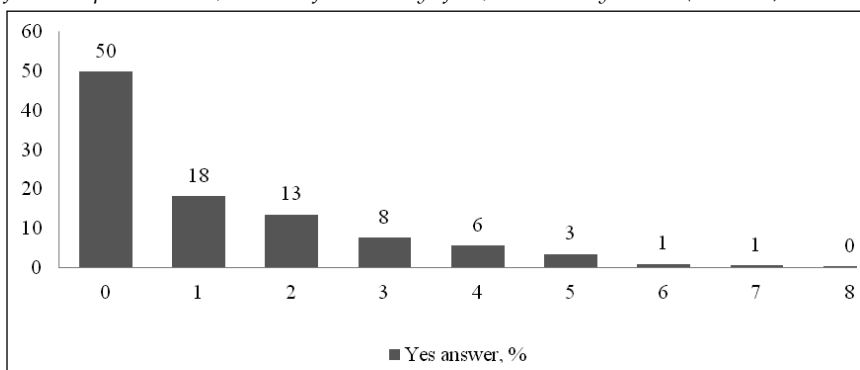
Problems	Question is irrelevant, %	Whole population, %	Only, if the question is relevant, %
Earning money, income, living difficulties	12	33	38
Managing of larger investments, expenses	15	23	28
Risk of losing job, unemployment	50	12	25
Health problems, illnesses	11	19	22
Individual ambitions, wishes pushed in the background	16	15	18
Household tasks, works to do at home, split of duties	10	13	14
Problems resulting from learning or educating children	51	6	14
Maintaining contacts with family members and relatives	9	6	7
Problems in partnership	32	4	6

Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

In the problem system the main parts are definitely the factors related to finances, quality of life and living. During the weekdays the most vital problems are in connection with earning money, living, management of larger investments and expenditures and with the risk of losing job or unemployment. These generate disputes and conflicts in the households with the highest probability. In the middle of the order of frequency, roughly at each fifth test person, health problems, individual ambitions and complications around difficulties with self-fulfilment play a role. The occurrence of problems based on social relationships is surprisingly low. Among those people concerned, the probability of occurrence often or very often of such private conflicts was only 6-7 percent.

A more serious accumulation of problems and conflicts, which occur more frequently and return many times, is very rare (Figure 3).¹⁴ In half of the sample there was no problem area, in 18 percent only one and in 13 percent at most two problem areas have occurred more often in the last year.

Figure 3: Index of complexity of problems in private life – How many problems have occurred, from the possible nine, at least often or very often, in the last year? % (N=2031)



Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

According to their complexity three groups are developed, which are examined later more thoroughly. The largest group is the set of those people, where none of the problems occurs frequently (50%), the second group belong to those, with two types of problems occurring more fre-

¹⁴ The complexity of problems in the private life has been measured in that way, that it was counted in how many cases the questioned person answered at least with the category of answer „occurs often“, or „occurs very often“.

quently (32%) at most and in the third group are those people, who are burdened by private problems to a greater and more intensive extent (18%).

With crosstab analysis the probability of occurrence of the 9 listed factors is examined in the two groups with different problem loads (Table 2). The values are suitable to specify the phenomena, which are the core of the problem situations in the private life in the two groups.

Table 2: Occurrence of each problem types in the two groups, loaded with problems, %

Problems	Group 2 – 32% (problems 1-2)	Group 3 – 18% (problems 3-8)
Earning money, income, living difficulties	52%	90%
Management of larger investments, expenses	26%	82%
Risk of losing job, unemployment	17%	32%
Health problems, illnesses	31%	51%
Individual ambitions, wishes pushed in the background	13%	56%
Household tasks, works to do at home, split of duties	11%	52%
Problems resulting from learning or educating children	5%	26%
Maintaining contacts with family members and relatives	3%	30%
Problems in partnership	2%	18%

Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

It can be easily noticed that in the group with the complex problem situation, the challenges of living (the first two factors), which are present with almost everybody, are extended by nonmaterial factors with different probabilities. Particularly high is the probability of occurrence of disputes and conflicts in the area of health, self-fulfilment and the split of duties at home.

The *connections between the problems* can also be measured by analysis of correlations between the total points indicating the occurrence (Figure 4). The correlation coefficients between the factors are significant; each time they indicate a positive relationship and the values are spread between 0.245 and 0.642. In six cases the values of the positive correlation coefficients in pairs are particularly strong.

Figure 4: Connection of each problem area – correlation coefficient in pairs

Workplace	0.642	Earning money
Earning money	0.630	Larger expenditures
Family relationships	0.601	Partnership
Individual ambitions	0.540	Learning or educating children
Individual ambitions	0.520	Household, housework
Household, housework	0.488	Learning or educating children

Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

Our *social relationships* are essential conflict channels in our everyday life; they are fields of development and reflexion of conflicts, while in some cases they are efficient tools for handling conflicts as well. It is obvious that relationship conflicts are dependent on the interactions. It is difficult to generalize this question. It was not possible to carry out a more thorough examination of social networks during the questionnaire survey, therefore the tensions during interpersonal relationships could not be analysed with complete accuracy. In spite of this, questions had been asked about the load of some kind of social contact forms with conflicts and tensions (Table 3).¹⁵ A contact is considered as loaded with conflict, if the test person had chosen at least the answer “loaded to a small extent” (the answers loaded very much and loaded completely clearly belonged to this category).¹⁶ Measuring the phenomenon in this way, mainly those questions could be answered, what is the probability of carrying signs of conflicts at each type of connection.

Table 3: How do you feel your social contacts are loaded with conflicts and tensions generally? – The relationship is loaded at least to a small extent, %

Direction of relationships	Do you have this kind of relationship?, %	Was there a conflict at least to a small extent?, %
With superiors	47	33
With direct colleagues	49	30

¹⁵ At each direction of relationship, a general answer had to be given, not regarding a specific person in the relationship, and the extent of the burdening had to be measured with a four-grade point system.

¹⁶ It concerns only those, who have this given form of relationship. The probability of occurrences has been calculated only related to these test persons.

Direction of relationships	Do you have this kind of relationship?, %	Was there a conflict at least to a small extent?, %
With partner, spouse	60	26
With other relatives	96	24
With neighbours	99	24
With parents	62	23
In professional relationships	48	22
With brothers and sisters	81	21
With own children	70	19
With friends	96	14

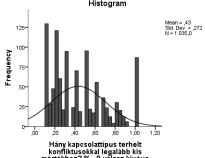

Source: *Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013*

Basically all values are low, considering the fact that even a load to a small extent is regarded as an acceptable criterion. In case of all relationship forms, two-thirds of the population has not reported any tensions or problems. Generally relations regarding working environment (30-33 percentage of the concerned persons) and in the interactions of partnership relations (one-quarter of the concerned persons) are loaded with conflicts to the highest extent. The most stable relationships are developed with interaction forms which are based on strong bonds with friends, children and brothers and sisters.

An indicator for measuring *the complexity of conflict-load of the relationship system* has been developed. From the 10 different listed relationship directions, 7 types occurred in the case of persons included in the sample. It can be concluded from this, that most of them have a complex relational system. Of course there is no information about connection points, which could be assigned to each type of relationship direction and this question will not be dealt with. On the other hand, it can be said at which proportion of all existing relationship directions some kind of conflict, dispute or tension occurred, at least to a small extent. The higher the percentage indicator is, the higher the load ratio of the social relationships of the test person with conflicts is (Figure 5). Within the whole sample, problems and conflicts, based on the same kind of relationships, occurred to 1035 persons. On average in 43 percent of the relationship types a conflict occurred, at least to a small extent. The values are between 10 and 100 percent, the standard deviation is 27.2. In the case of simpler, more restricted personal relation-

ships, which includes only a few types of binding (relationship types 1-5) the average value is 50 percent, while at truly complex relationship systems (relationship types 8-10) the load indicator is around 40 percent.

Figure 5: Indicators of conflict load of relationship system

How many relationship types are loaded at least to a small extent with conflicts from the possible 10?	The development of the average of the load indicators, according to the number of relationship types.	Development of load indicator, 4 groups
<p>Valid answers: 1035 persons Average: 43% Median: 37% Standard deviation: 27%</p>  <p><small>Cases weighted by 4 dimenziós súly (nem-ko-skola-teljesítés típus) a 2011-es Népszámlálás adatok szerint</small></p>	<p>1-4 types - 49% 5-7 types - 46% 8-10 types - 40%</p>	<p>1-16% - 158 persons (15,3%) 17-43% - 438 persons (42,3%) 44-72% - 255 persons (24,6%) 72-100% - 185 persons (17,8%)</p>  <p><small>Cases weighted by 4 dimenziós súly (nem-ko-skola-teljesítés típus) a 2011-es Népszámlálás adatok szerint</small></p>
<p>The conflict load of the relationship system is above average:</p>	<p>44-71% 72-100%</p>	<p>255 persons (12,5% of the whole sample) 185 persons (9,1% of the whole sample)</p>

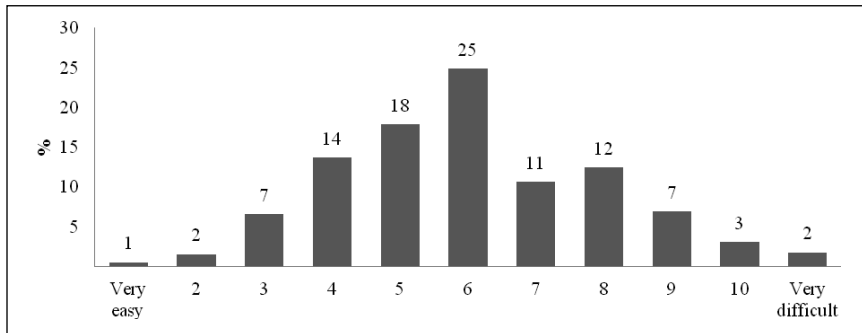
Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

Categorizing the results, two groups are formed, in which it can be observed, that the number of participants' interaction channels, loaded with conflicts, is more than average. Considering the whole sample, each fifth person is a member in one of the two groups, but even the size of the category of a more complex load (72-100%) is 9 percent.

In the *problem treatment* area a simple question was measured generally, how easy or difficult is it for the test persons to overcome major problems in everyday life (Figure 6).¹⁷

¹⁷ The question had to be scored from zero until ten (0 = very difficult...10 = very easy). Because of the topics the scale had been turned around. The higher the value was, the more difficult it was for the test person to cope with larger problems.

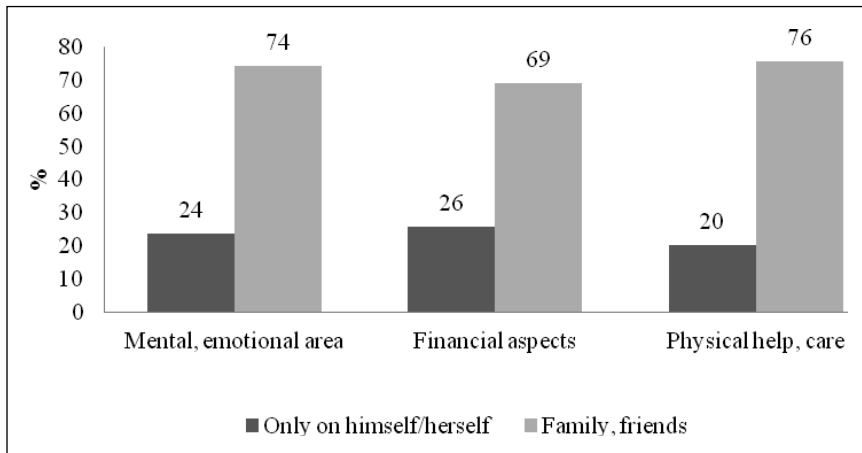
Figure 6: Difficulty of overcoming major problems, % (N=2011)



Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

The larger part of the population, following the usual answer pattern for these questions, considers the difficulty of overcoming problems and conflicts as an average. However, in this study the extreme values are of importance. For the later examinations, the upper segment of the normally distributed indicator will be of importance, which is the group of those persons, who consider the process of problem handling and overcoming conflicts rather difficult (7-8 points, 464 persons, 23%), or really difficult (9-11 points, 237 persons, 12%).

Figure 7: On whom can you count in the first place, if you need help – the two most frequent categories of answers, %



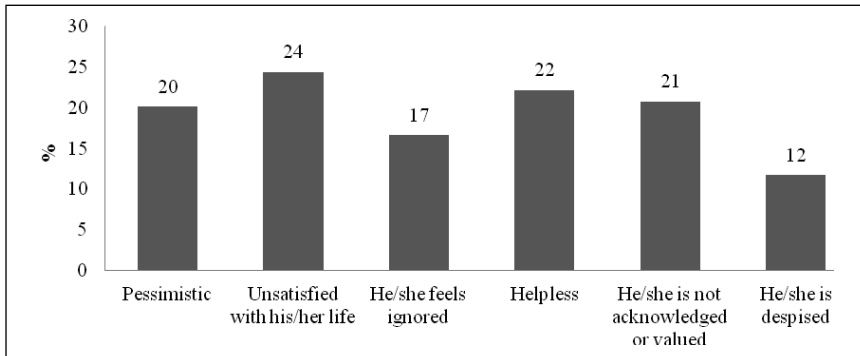
Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

In relation to the primary supporting relationships, private and publicly organized supports, *which play a role in solution and mitigation of conflicts*, there is a really simple logic. Practically most people count on the support of their narrow environment (family, friends), or on themselves (Figure 7). The proportion of representatives of professional associations, the civil society and the helping professions is in the answers only insignificant (1-2%).

It can be considered a more hindering factor of handling of difficulties and problems if the test person can rely only on himself/herself in more problem situations, because of the dominant role of strong relationships. Thus he/she cannot activate private supports, from his/her social environments, which would listen to him/her and offer him/her mental, possibly financial, support or any other physical support. Briefly, the question is, how typical is it, in the life of the individual that he/she cannot count on anybody besides himself/herself? Counting up the answers "only on himself/herself" in the three areas, a new indicator can be developed, which indicates in how many cases from the three areas, supports or external helping relationships are missing. At 58 percent of the population, there are in all three areas external helping relationships, at 24 percent the external support is missing only in one area. Regarding this research, the group of people with lack of external support is more important. This group is (counting only on himself/herself in 2 or 3 areas) approximately 18 percent of the population, but even in the most extreme case (counting only on himself/herself in 3 areas) is 10 percent.

The analysis of social problems and conflicts regarding personal life is finished with the topic, occurrence of *negative attitudes towards life*. These are conditions, which are at the same time causes and consequences of challenges occurring in everyday life and can be considered in their indirect form, especially combined with each other, also as a good measurement of conflict load (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Occurrence of negative attitudes towards life („entirely true”, or „rather true” answers), %



Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

One-fifth of the persons, who answered the questions, occasionally even a quarter, reported some kind of negative attitudes toward life (e.g. pessimistic about his/her future, unsatisfied with the course of his/her life until now, his/her merits will not be acknowledged, he/she is unsuccessful in today's world), moreover 17 percent feel ignored in the society, 12 percent think that he/she is despised because of his/her job, income or standard of living. There is no connection of individual status indicators in the majority of the population: there are no such negative attitudes toward life in 49 percent of the sample, in 21 percent, at most in one case and in 19 percent, at most in 2-3 cases. On the other hand, 11 percent of the tested persons reported in at least 4 questions about such problems.

As it is apparent, the endeavour during the descriptive analyses at each conflict and problem indicator is that the group of people should be highlighted, in whose life the values of individual status indicators are below average or sometimes even unexpectedly high and extreme. After identification of such persons, who are loaded with problems to a greater extent, it will be examined which common characteristics those groups have and what the connection system is of the individual problem indicators in the everyday life of individuals.

4. Connection of problem and conflict situations

According to the descriptive analysis, altogether five status indicator group variables¹⁸ have been proven as suitable for identification of different aspects of challenges in private life. In the next phase of the analysis, the correlation is examined between these status indicators of problem and conflict situations. All five index numbers (Table 4) represent some kind of condition or situation, thus they are suitable to separate such kind of specific groups in the national representative sample, in which it is characteristic for the participants that problems and conflicts in private life occur to a greater extent.

Table 4: Weight of the five problem indicator status variables in the whole sample

Variables	Number of elements	Frequency
1. Occurrence of at least 3 different types of conflicts from the possible 9 in private life during the last year (e.g. living, health, split of duties in the family).	375	18,5%
2. At least 70 percent of relationship types are loaded with conflicts.	185	9,1%
3. Difficult or very difficult coping with major problems in his/her life.	237	11,8%
4. He/she can count only on himself/herself in case of problems or conflicts.	347	17,5%
5. Occurrence of negative attitudes toward life in at least three areas from the possible six (e.g. pessimism, dissatisfaction, state of being ignored).	354	17,5%

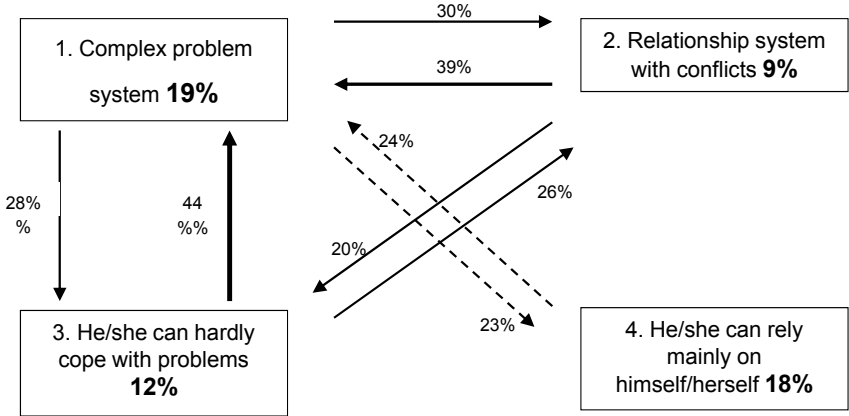
Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

The probability of connection of each condition has been examined with crosstab analysis (Figure 9). Apart from the lack of external, helping supports, in each case, a significant correlation can be observed between the problem indicator status variables (for the interpretation of the figure, see the explanation). The most obvious and logical correlation can be observed

¹⁸ Because of the kind of questions asked, variables with an ordinal measure level could be developed at most, which are calculated in the most cases from the occurrence of "some special situations". Thus, it seems to be more suitable, if the presence of conflict situations is measured primarily with the occurrence or lack of "some special situations" in everyday life.

between the ability of problem handling and the complexity of problems. Among those who can cope hardly with everyday challenges, the proportion of occurrence of a complex problem system is twice higher (44 percent compared to the average of 19 percent, of the sample). Similarly convincing is the relation of social network and accumulation of problems.

Figure 9: Correlation between the status variables – crosstab-analysis, cell frequency of characteristics by pairs, %



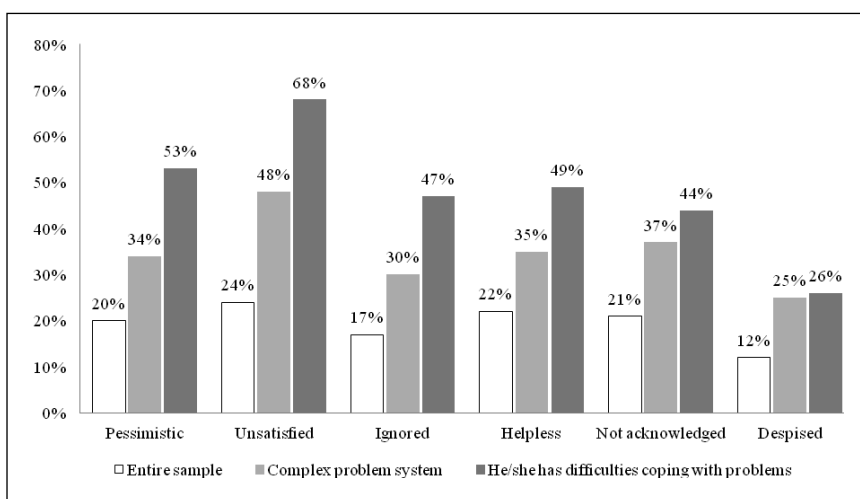
Explanation: The values show the probability of occurrence of characteristics pairwise. E.g. if the problem system is complex, then 28 percent of those persons also can hardly cope with problems, which is a much higher probability, than the average of 12 percent in the whole sample. The arrow in the opposite direction implies that 44 percent of those, who have difficulties coping with problems, report a complex problem system, although the proportion of people under such conditions is only 19 percent in the whole sample. The thickness of the arrows shows the strength of correlation.

Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

Of course the concentration of conflict situations and problems in private life also have an impact on the area of negative attitudes toward life. It is analysed in groups loaded to a greater extent with problems, to which extent are those participants overrepresented, who have more than one negative attitude towards life. In the complete sample, 17.5 percent of the test persons reported negative attitudes toward life in at least three areas. On the contrary, this proportion among people with a complex problem system is 36 percent, among those people, who can hardly cope with prob-

lems is 51 percent and among people with relationship system with conflicts is 25 percent. In case of lack of supportive, helping relationships no significant differences can be observed among the answers. From the various forms of negative judgements of life situations, problems have the strongest influence on the dissatisfaction and on the pessimistic future prospects. Furthermore, it can clearly be seen in the results (Figure 10) that these values are also extraordinarily high among those, who have difficulties coping with problems.

Figure 10: Occurrence of different forms of negative attitudes toward life in groups, which are loaded with problems to a greater extent, %



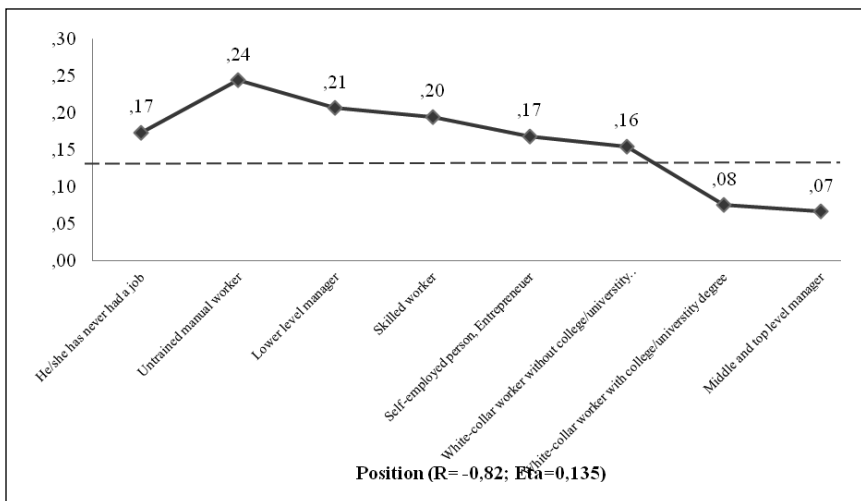
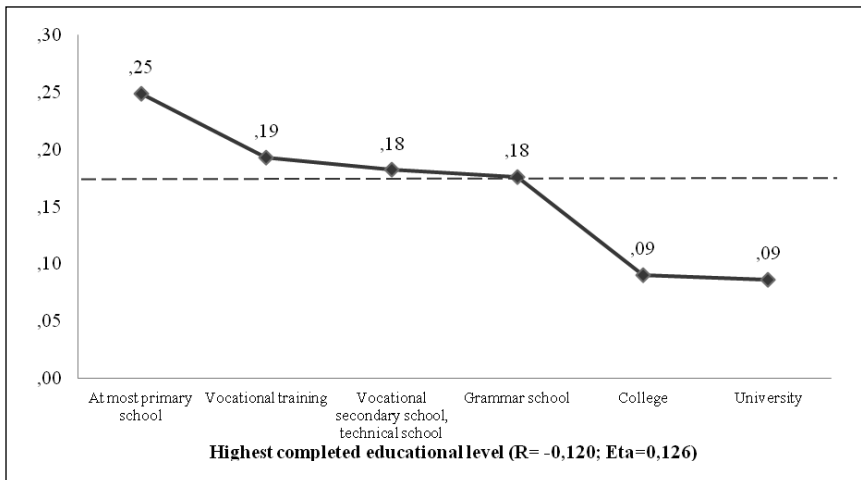
Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

5. Social characteristics of groups with private problems and conflicts

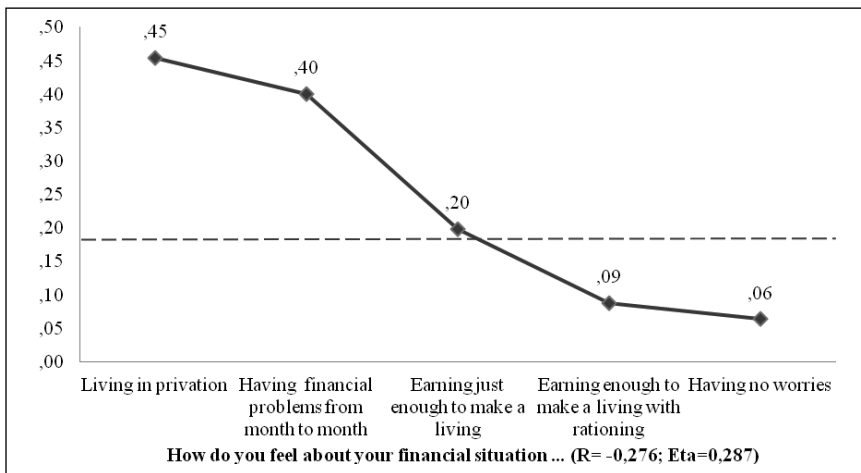
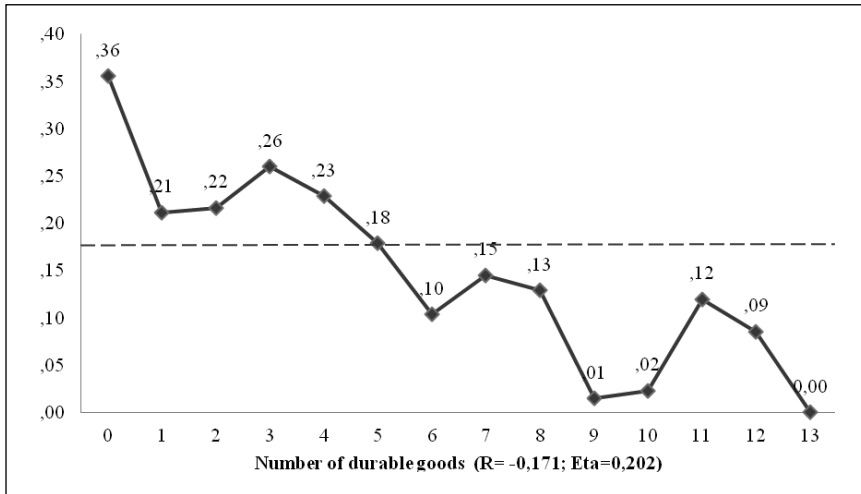
It has turned out previously that in the subjective judgement of problem situations and conflict situations in the context of everyday life, the key factors are those incidents, which are related to financial conditions, costs of living and work. That means that these are the most frequently occurring incidents in households with complex problem systems. Thus, it is not surprising that among the demographical background variables only those play a dominant role, which form these key factors, namely the educational level, the position and the financial conditions (Figure 11).

The results make it clear that even though it is not necessarily true that “money does not make you happy” but a more favourable social status will decrease the challenges of everyday life. The occurrence of primary conflict resources among the population will be moderated significantly by a higher educational level, position as a university/college graduate or by more favourable financial circumstances.

Figure 11: Probability of occurrence of complex problem situations with at least three factors as a function of educational level, position and financial conditions, 1 = 100%



Continuation of Figure 11...



Explanation: The horizontal line represents the whole sample average (18%).

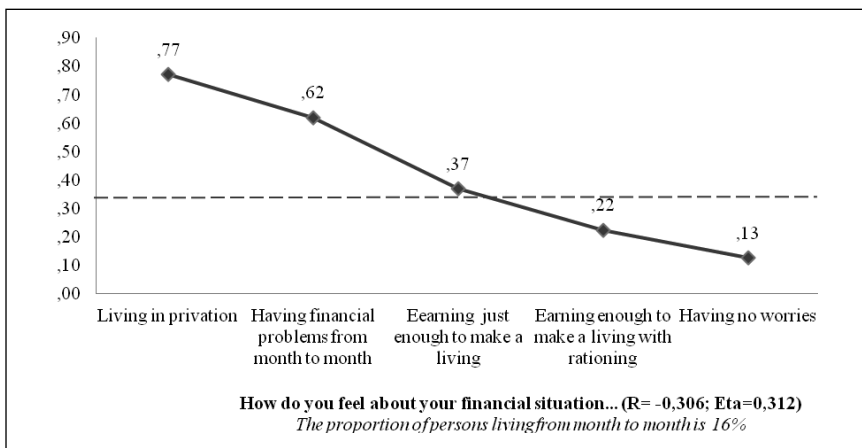
Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

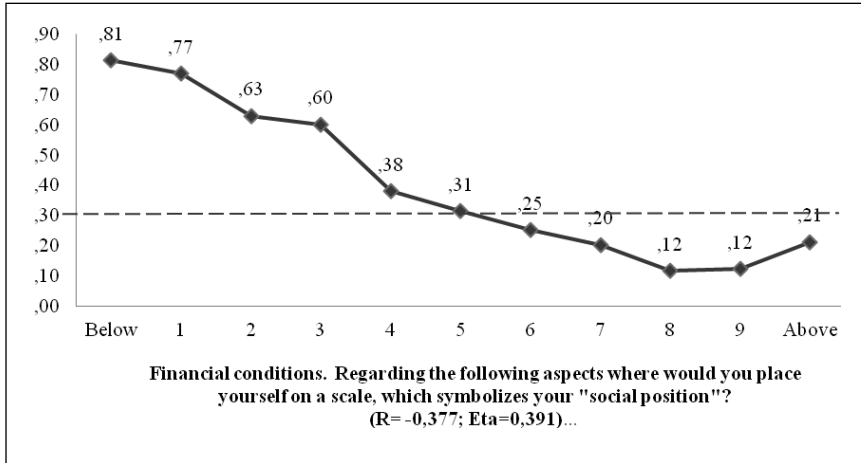
If the first three financial factors are removed from the problem list and a problem complexity index is built only based on the remaining six elements, then the picture will be slightly changed. At 64 percent of the population not a single problem has occurred during the last year. In the remaining 36 percent of the sample at most one or two types of problems occurred. In this index number, without those factors, which relate to the costs of living, the meaning of the complex problem system is that at least

two types of problems have occurred at the same time in the last year. 16 percent of the test persons can be characterized by such a life situation. Gender, age or type of settlement play no significant role, even in this case, in the formation of values. On the other hand persons with a lower educational background (22%), divorced people (23%), widows and widowers (19%), singles (22%) and unskilled blue-collar workers (21%) are even in this case overrepresented in the categories living under bad financial conditions, indigents and living from month to month (32%). The list of "protecting factors", which include higher educational level, higher occupational status and, as a result of these, more favourable financial conditions can be extended to the partnership (both marriage and life partnership) and to the lack of loneliness.

It was shown previously from the point of view of coping with problems and challenges of everyday life that on the average it is difficult or very difficult for 35 percent of the population to cope with these situations and circumstances and within the whole sample this task is definitely very difficult for 12 percent. Also in this case, persons with a lower education level and with less favourable financial conditions and the singles are overrepresented in the group of persons, who are having difficulties or having a lot of difficulties coping with problems. The most remarkable differences can be observed along the financial factors, thus, from these factors two examples will be presented (Figure 12).

Figure 12: He/she has difficulties or a lot of difficulties coping with the problems and conflict situations of everyday life, probability of YES answers as a function of the financial situation. 1 = 100%



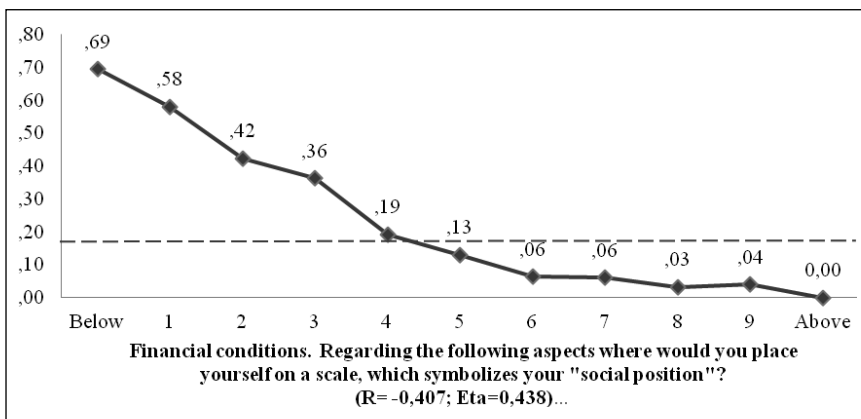


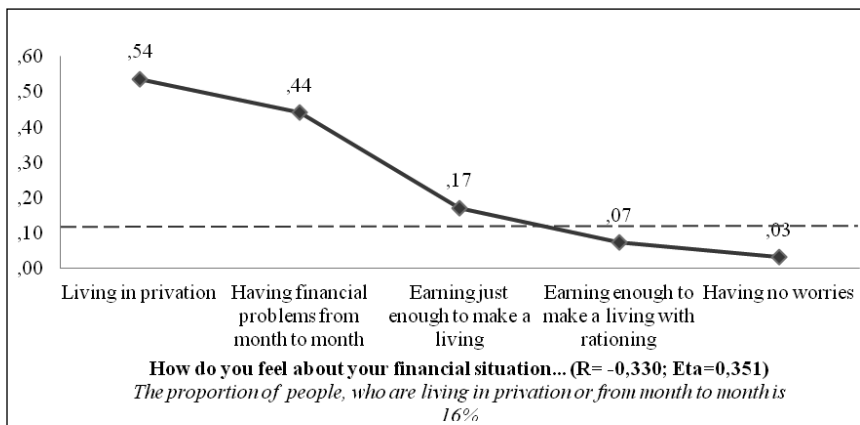
Explanation: The horizontal line represents the entire sample average (35%).

Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

It can be clearly seen that the potential for coping with problems is alarmingly bad for the poorer groups with a lower social status and lower education. In the lowest group, which is a magnitude of one fifth of the society, 60-80 percent of the test persons can only cope with problems and conflicts with a lot of difficulties in their everyday life and perceive their situation practically hopeless.

Figure 13: Simultaneous occurrence of at least three negative attitudes towards life, probability of YES answers as a function of the financial situation, 1 = 100%





Explanation: The horizontal line represents the entire sample average (17%).

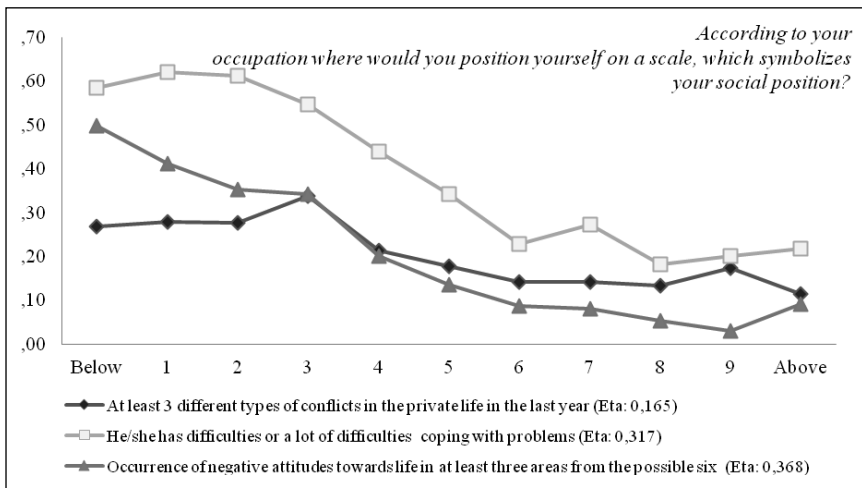
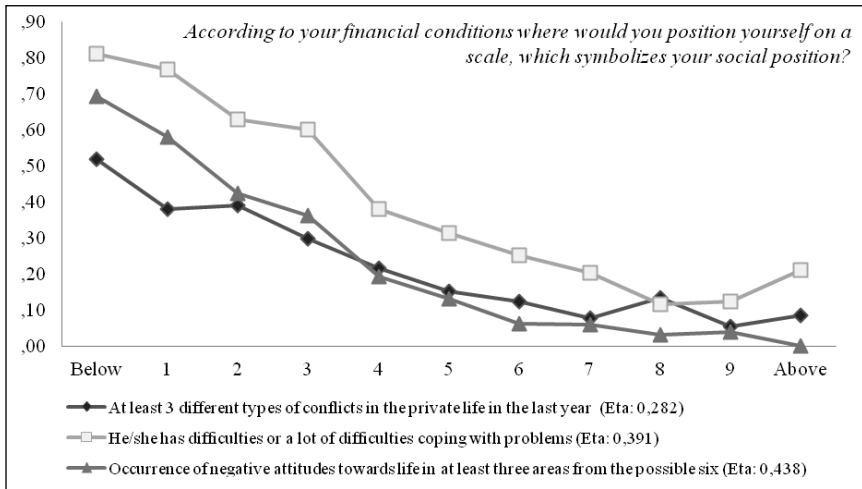
Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

Also related to bad mental conditions, which can be described as negative attitudes towards life, a similar context system can be observed. Lower education level, lack of partnership, loneliness, manual work in a low level position and especially unfavourable living circumstances, significantly increase the negative judgement of their life situation, the perspectives and the living opportunities, the social esteem and the social approval (Figure 13).

It can be clearly seen that the accumulation and the rate of occurrence of negative attitudes towards life are extraordinarily high in groups, which are poor, have a lower social status and a lower educational background. In the lowest group, with a magnitude of one fifth of the society, 40-60 percent of the test persons are simultaneously in many aspects in an unfavourable emotional-mental condition, as a consequence of pessimism, dissatisfaction, perplexity, state of being ignored...etc. Persons in the lowest one fifth of the society, regarding the ladder of financial status, can be characterized for example, by the following: the proportion of those, who are unsatisfied with their life, is around 60 percent, the proportion of those, who have a pessimistic future perspective, is around 50 percent, the proportion of those, who feel themselves ignored, is around 40 percent, the proportion of those, who feel themselves not acknowledged or unappreciated in the world of work, is similar to the previous percentage and one third of these people think that he/she is despised because of his/her standard of living, income and status.

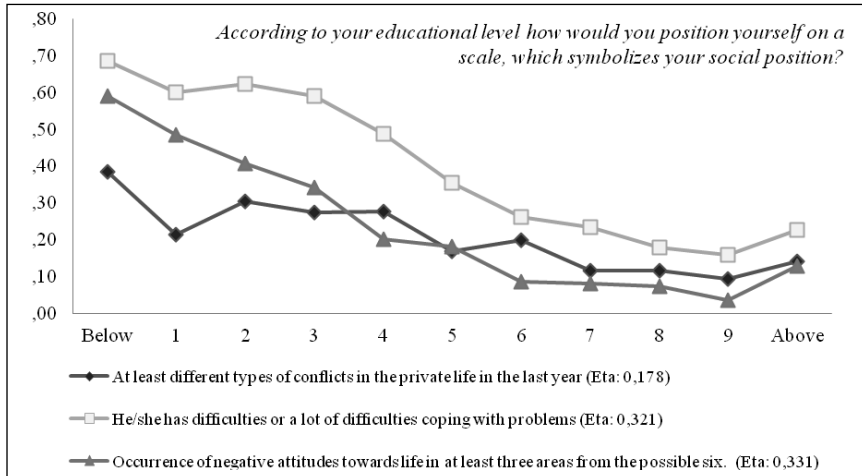
As a summary, the behaviour of the three conflict indicators has been examined from the aspect, where the test person positioned himself/herself on a 10-grade scale according to his/her educational background, position at work and financial condition. The probability occurrence of problem and conflict indicators will be examined at each grade of the social stratification, based on a certain kind of self-classification (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Correlation between the social status, based on self-classification, and the occurrence of conflict indicators, proportion of YES answers, 1 = 100%



Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

Continuation of Figure 14...



Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

The negative, close, linear correlation between the status in the social ladder and some aspects of private problems and conflicts is clearly visible at all three “symbolical scales” and at all of the three conflict indicators. In the lower segments of the social structure, especially in the lower one fifth, complex conflict situations and challenges with many problems simultaneously, occur more frequently. Furthermore, because of the accumulation of problems, the persons concerned can cope with problems only with difficulties or with a lot of difficulties in everyday life. These unfavourable conditions influence them in the judgement of their life situation, in form of negative attitudes, such as pessimism, dissatisfaction, helplessness, the state of believing to be ignored or despised.

The correlation system above is logical and seems probably even trivial, but with empirical tools, the depth and complexity of this problem area and the extreme conditions present could hopefully be demonstrated. These extreme conditions, as it seems, tear apart the texture of the Hungarian society, not only in the financial dimension, but they also generate conflict situations, unfavourable mental concepts and emotional conditions in everyday life. Also from these relations it is clearly visible that these problems are essential parts of the social wealth and a close correlation can be observed between the two groups of incidents. Therefore, the integration of such kind of examination of quality of life in the measuring of wealth is of crucial importance. Thus, after the examination of the classical so-

cio-demographic determination, it is worthwhile to examine also the correlations between the wealth indicators and the variables of everyday problems and conflicts, in more detail.

6. Correlation between conflict load and wealth

There is presumably a correlation between the problems of private life, social-relations and the different dimensions of wealth, in which both appearances are causes and consequences at the same time. A lower level of wealth will clearly generate tensions and problems in everyday life, in the micronet texture of social life. These results will clearly be enhanced by the social determination relations, which were presented above, especially in the hard, objective dimensions of well-being (e.g. educational background, occupational position, financial situation, social status). In this analysis the occurrence and connections of negative attitudes toward life refers to the lack of subjective well-being. The significant relationships were also in this case convincingly visible. Lack or a less favourable condition of well-being increases definitely such conflicts and problems.

In this phase of the analysis the approach of the connection system is from the other point of view: answers for the questions will be examined, to see to what extent the occurrence and the increasing of the intensity of different conflict indicators will harm the well-being indices (for the question of development and content of the indices, the methodological chapter of the book delivers important facts). Thus, the following questions arise: Are the indicators of well-being in those households less favourable, in which problems of private life and social-relationships can be identified? What is the impact of complexity of problems on the well-being? Are the indicators of well-being significantly worse in case of households with increased load? If yes, what is the extent of these differences?

The development of the four indices of well-being (objective, subjective, residential, relating to health) have been examined with variance analysis, as a function of composition and intensity of conflict load in the private life, and in the social network of the test person. The average values of the four aggregated, standardized values of well-being have been compared to the categories of three conflict variables (complexity of conflicts in private life, complexity of relationship conflicts, intensity of difficulty of coping with problems) with ordinal measurement levels. In the question „on whom can you count with different problems“ no significant correla-

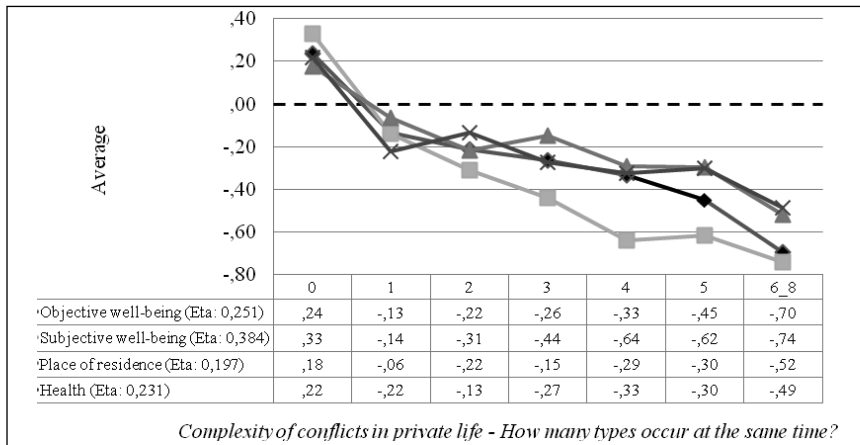
tion can be observed, therefore the presentation of this will be left out of consideration and the question “occurrence of negative attitudes toward life”, is a part of the variable subjective well-being (in form of lack of negative attitudes toward life).

The categories in an extreme position with a small number of elements have been drawn together (e.g. problems, which occur at the type of relationships 5-10, are one group, because of the low number of elements). As a result of standardization, the average value of the well-being indicators is zero. The positive sign indicates a feature, which is better than average and the negative sign implies a less favourable feature. The results are summarized on three figures (Figures 15-17), where our primary purpose is to demonstrate the direction and slope of the correlation as best as possible.

In the context of conflicts and problems the four variables of well-being do not behave equally. In the dimensions of satisfaction with their place of residence and health condition no significant correlation can be observed, or the correlation is very weak. This correlation is not surprising, since challenges, problems and conflict situations on the level of everyday life are not connected very closely with the health conditions or the place of residence and the extent of satisfaction with this living environment. On the contrary, with the two most important components (objective and subjective well-being) there is a significant, one-way, negative, linear differentiation, which appears in the average values of indices at each of the three conflict variables. The other common point is that in each case, the strongest association index number can be observed regarding the indicator for subjective well-being. The indices of subjective well-being are lower and lower along the appearance of problems, the connection of conflicts and the more and more increasing difficulties of coping with problems.

Regarding the eight types of conflicts the first crucial “break” is at the distinction between occurring – not occurring. This can be illustrated on the figure with the first steep fall after the point 0. It is clearly visible that the appearance of problems pushes the well-being indicators below average. From here on, as the problem system becomes more and more heterogeneous and as more and more different types of conflict situations are accumulated on each other, the group averages of the well-being indices are shifted in a worse and worse range. All four indices are moving together, but the behaviour of the subjective well-being is the most sensitive one.

Figure 15: Correlation between complexity of conflicts in private life and well-being

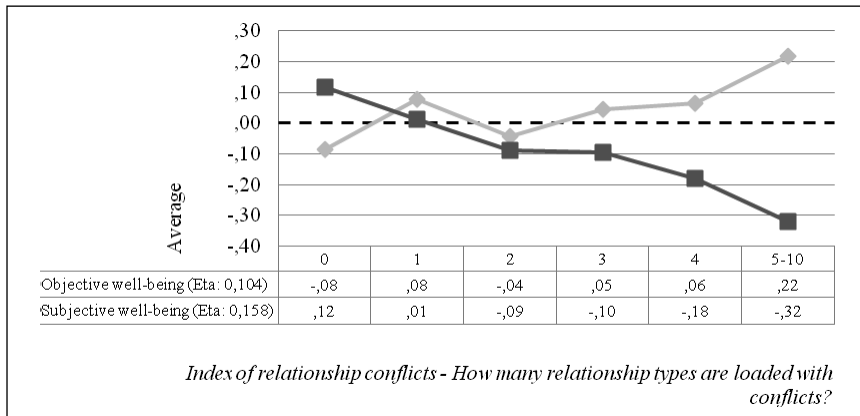


Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

For three problem-types (losing job, problems with earning money and living, difficulty of larger investments and expenses) from the possible nine, there is a very close connection with the living dimension of well-being. Therefore, as a control, the variance analysis has also been executed without these three items. In this case, the work is carried out through the following six forms: household tasks; works to do at home; splitting housework in the family; individual ambitions; pushing desires into the background; problems arising from learning or educating children; health problems, illnesses; problems arising from maintaining contact with family members and relatives and from the obligations towards them; partnership problems. The tendencies have not been changed in this case either, only the association indices have been decreased slightly. The appearance and accumulation of non-financial problems of private life also has a negative impact on the indicators of well-being.

In the case of the heterogeneity indicator of conflicts based on relationships (Figure 16), it has no significant impact on the two indices of well-being (dimensions health and place of residence) and parallel to this a new tendency also arises in the trends. In connection with the index of objective well-being, a positive correlation can be observed. The reason for this is that at groups with a more favourable educational background and financial situation, the relational capital is also generally higher and more complex. Nevertheless, also for the appearance and for the accumulation of relationship conflicts a many-sided connection system is required.

Figure 16: Correlation between conflicts in relationships and well-being

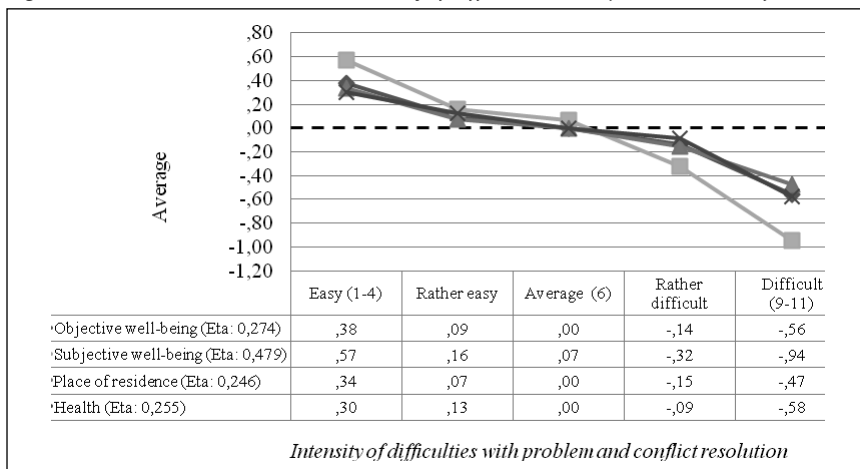


Explanation: In the case of health and place of residence dimensions, no significant relationship can be observed.

Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

As a whole, the differentiation of the indicators as a function of the relationship variable is much smaller and no such significant negative effect can be observed as with the previous variable. On the other hand, the subjective indicator of well-being behaves according to the expectations: the average value of the index at each group deteriorates proportionally to the increase of the number of relationship conflicts.

Figure 17: Correlation between the intensity of difficulties with problem and conflict resolution



Source: Questionnaire survey about economic and social conflicts, 2013

As it was seen before, the difficulty of coping with challenges in everyday life can be seen in itself as a challenge. The difficulties of coping with problems are causes and consequences of such situations and conditions. From the data it is apparent that the higher the challenge of coping with problems and conflicts is, the lower the group averages of indices of well-being are. Those persons, who can cope with problems in their life easily or rather easily, can be characterized by indicators of well-being above average. Whereas, those who think that these tasks are rather difficult or really difficult, have the least favourable average points for well-being.

7. Summary

The purpose of this study was, being aware of the limits of the method of a questionnaire survey, to enlighten the depth, complexity and those extreme conditions, which apparently tear apart the texture of the Hungarian society, not only in the financial dimension, but they also generate conflict situations, unfavourable mental concepts and emotional conditions in everyday life.

Financial challenges in connection with living can be regarded as the primary factor of conflicts and problems, which appear in the everyday life of the population. Most people are faced with problems in connection with earning money, with larger investments and expenses and also with the risk of losing their job. Surprisingly on the other hand is the occurrence probability of conflicts, based on relationships. Considering all forms of relationships, two-thirds of the population has not reported about tensions or problems in this area. In fact, the relations in connection with the world of work and the interactions in the partnership are loaded with conflicts in the highest proportion. The most stable relationships develop in forms of interactions based on tight, strong bonds with friends, children and brothers and sisters. There is a really simple logic regarding the primary supporting relationships and the private and public supports, which play a role in solving and mitigating conflicts: most people can count either on the support of their narrow environment (family, friends) or on themselves. Regarding the mental condition of the population, really unfavourable phenomena have been found. One-fifth, or in some cases even one-quarter, of the test persons reported some kind of negative attitudes toward life, 17 percent felt ignored and 12 percent thought that he/she is despised because of his/her job, income or quality of life. The individual conflict

indicators can also be connected to each other. The most obvious correlation can be observed between the ability to deal with problems and the complexity of the problems. Among those, who have difficulties coping with the challenges of everyday life, the proportion of occurrence of a complex problem system is twice as high. Similarly convincing is the relationship between the social relationship system loaded with conflicts and the accumulation of problems.

The results make it clear that even though it is not necessarily true that "money does not make you happy", a more favourable social status decreases the challenges of everyday life. The occurrence of primary conflict resources within the population is significantly moderated by a higher education level, occupation as a university/college graduate and more favourable financial circumstances.

It can be clearly seen that the potential for coping with problems, at the poorer groups with a lower social status and education is alarmingly bad. In the lowest group, with a magnitude of one fifth of the society, 60-80 percent of the test persons have a lot of difficulties coping with problems and conflicts in their everyday life and perceive their situation, in fact, hopeless.

Also related to unfavourable mood, which can be described in connection to negative attitudes toward life, a similar context system can be observed. Lower education level, lack of partnership, loneliness, low level of manual work and especially unfavourable living circumstances significantly increase the negative judgement of their own life situation, the perspectives and the chance in life, the social esteem and approval.

The close, negative, linear relationship between the position on the social ladder and certain conditions of problems in private life and conflicts is clearly visible. In the lowest segments of the social structure, especially in the last fifth, there are much more complex conflict situations and challenges, resulting from simultaneous problems. Furthermore, because of the accumulation of problems, the persons concerned have difficulties or a lot of difficulties coping with problems in everyday life, and these unfavourable conditions have an impact on the judgement of their own opportunities in life.

The Characteristics of Well-being from the Perspective of Spatial-Social Attachments and Social Relationships

ZOLTÁN BUGOVICS

1. Introduction

The research attempts to make statements with the elements of the well-being index about social relationships according to the social-spatial attachment, which can also serve with explanations for social conflicts. The starting point is the spatial category belonging to communities, assuming the validity of the old principle according to which space is a social construction. Thus, attachment to space means actually belonging to communities, extended with the presence of a few geographical or natural elements or even with the elements of the built environment. Besides the theoretical background of the attachment, the study starts at the narrowed index of well-being, used in the research, in which the satisfaction, the positive emotions and the lack of negative emotions were taken as a basis and as such it also includes the feeling of happiness. With the application of the well-being index, the study tries to analyse the characteristics of conflicts related to spatial categories as well. Another important aspect of this approach is the trust, since it is a factor, which serves in the stability of communities and it can also explain the qualitative aspect of commitments to the communities.

2. Theoretical background

Although, the characteristics of modernizing societies, which begin the postmodern way of living, are different, but certainly the elements of the common sets can also be found, among which for example the following terms can be emphasized: fragmenting identity, identity conflicts, individualization, weakening of attachments, value conflicts, disintegration of communities...etc. (Erikson, 1959), (Goffman 1991), (Castells, 1997), (Bendle, 2002) (Beck, 2003). At the same time, these indicate that in our age the