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## Analysis of Influence of Territorial Socioeconomic Development on Psychosocial Condition of Population (as Exemplified by Central Kazakhstan)

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**Abstract.** The relevance of the problem discussed in this paper is shaped by the need to set up comfortable living conditions in all territories in Kazakhstan, particularly, Central Kazakhstan. The paper substantiates the utility of anchoring territorial socioeconomic planning to studies of actual socioeconomic conditions in the region, city or locality based on statistics, territorial development analysis, self-assessments by the population of their respective living standards and quality of life and psychosocial sentiments. The paper engages the qualitative and quantitative methods of sociological research conducted by the authors in Central Kazakhstan in 2019. Literature review and analyses of Kazakh and foreign practices of territorial socioeconomic studies, analyses of perceived attractiveness of a territory as a place of residence, living standards, quality of life and psychosocial conditions were used to develop and test a toolkit for assessments of the psychosocial condition of regional populations. The findings helped to establish the factors exerting significant influence on the perceived attractiveness of a territory, assessments of living standards and the quality of life, which can inform the setting of priorities in socioeconomic planning in various regions and localities.

**Keywords:** territorial socioeconomic development; territorial development planning; living standards and quality of life; psychosocial condition of the population; service level satisfaction; monitoring; Central Kazakhstan.

Research area: economics.

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## Оценка влияния социально-экономического развития территории на социально-психологическое самочувствие населения (на материалах Центрального Казахстана)

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**Аннотация.** Актуальность рассматриваемой в статье проблемы обусловлена необходимостью создания комфортных условий жизнедеятельности человека на всех территориях Казахстана, в частности Центрального Казахстана. В статье обоснована целесообразность при планировании социально-экономического развития территории исследования реального социально-экономического состояния региона, города, населенного пункта на основе статистической информации, анализа развития территории, а также оценки населением своего уровня и качества жизни, социально-психологического настроения. В статье использованы качественные и количественные методы социологических исследований, проведенных авторами в 2019 году на территории Центрального Казахстана. Анализ научной литературы, отечественных и зарубежных практик исследования социально-экономического развития территорий, оценки привлекательности территорий для постоянного проживания, уровня и качества жизни населения, социально-психологического самочувствия позволил разработать и апробировать инструментарий оценки социально-психологического самочувствия населения региона. По результатам исследования выявлены факторы, которые оказывают существенное влияние на оценку привлекательности территории, уровня и качества жизни населения, что может служить основанием для установления приоритетов в планировании социально-экономического развития территории, населенных пунктов.

**Ключевые слова:** социально-экономическое развитие территории, планирование развития территории, уровень и качество жизни, социально-психологическое самочувствие населения, удовлетворенность качеством услуг, мониторинг, Центральный Казахстан.

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## Introduction

The sociological diagnostics of the psychosocial condition of the population is integral and essential for assessing the potential level of tensions in Central Kazakhstan (CK), which constitutes 15.7 % of the territory and is home to 7.0 % of the population of Kazakhstan. Such studies at the regional level are integral and crucial. The results of sociodiagnostics by territorial administrative entities can inform the development of regional programmes and socioeconomic planning. This paper is based on the conducted studies of the psychosocial condition monitoring of the population of CK.

**The main purpose of this research** is to analyse the influence of a territorial socioeconomic profile on the psychosocial condition of the population and the potential level of tensions that should be reasonably taken into account in managerial decisions regarding socioeconomic improvements in CK to bring up the living standards and quality of life.

The principal contribution of this paper, on the one hand, lies in the assessments of the psychosocial condition of the population and the potential of tensions in CK and its constituent regions and, on the other hand, in setting the ground for improvements of the living standards and quality of life in the analysed territorial administrative entities through managerial decision-making for more efficient socioeconomic planning.

CK consists of nine cities and nine rural districts differing by the level of economic development, their production and social infrastructure and living standards. Such developmental differences between territorial administrative entities shape the level of social tensions in cities and localities and potentially contribute to the buildup of migration sentiments and the development of both internal and external migration. Arguably, the assessments of the psychosocial condition of the population by cities and localities can be viewed as the feedback of the population alongside socioeconomic indicators of territorial development.

Transformation processes have changed the social structure and contributed to social differentiation, showing in uneven access to

material and spiritual resources and, accordingly, uneven potential to accommodate the essential living requirements of individuals, groups and regions. The pursued course of socioeconomic and political transformations does not always properly take into account the interests of the majority of the population. It is thus essential to monitor the effects of the pursued measures for the living standards across various social groups, to measure the level of social tensions and observe the change of trends in offence levels in different regions. Some segments of the population try to adapt to the changing socioeconomic realities. Such emerging reality should constitute a reference measured in qualitative and quantitative terms by local government authorities and should inform territorial socioeconomic planning.

Note that territorial socioeconomic planning (in cities and localities) aims to ensure their sustainable development in the future. Socioeconomic planning draws information from official sources on the state and development of all industries constituting the regional economy (all types of production), all production and social infrastructure, environmental conditions and living standards, and plans should be developed for all regions.

Moreover, it is deemed essential and valuable to accumulate information on the level of satisfaction with the region's production and social infrastructure, the quality of services, income level and distribution, as well as on environmental conditions, popular attitudes and perceptions regarding official economic and social policies. Such information could be acquired in regular series by setting up the monitoring of the psychosocial condition of the population.

An important priority is the development of a methodology for such monitoring of the psychosocial condition of the population, which should particularly address:

- the factors describing the change in psychosocial conditions;
- the factors determining the potential level of tensions in a territory;
- the level of satisfaction with the quality and accessibility of living conditions (social infrastructure, improvements in localities);

- satisfaction levels with regard to national and regional economic development profile and outlook;
- the level of life satisfaction in the country, region;
- the identification of weaknesses.

## 1. Literature Review

The previous scholarly research in the subject primarily concerns studies analysing social wellbeing as a tool to measure life satisfaction. Over the past years, quite comprehensive studies were conducted into the assessments of living standards and quality of life, which addressed their essential characteristics and potential systems of indicators, the directions of improvements and instruments of government regulation (Gavrilova and Makarov, 2017: 133; Dendak, 2016: 22; Karimova, 2018; Silin *et al.*, 2003). Such studies were conducted both for individual countries and regions.

A special highlight concerns the works addressing poverty and the conditions and factors of social differentiation, the level of poverty, the state and development of the regional economy, social infrastructure and its accessibility for wide population groups (Silin *et al.*, 2003; Rodríguez-Pose and Hardy, 2015: 11). Quite often these papers also address government support measures aimed at those groups of the population that are out of work or have to live off sporadic earnings. Such government support measures include targeted social support for the underprivileged, disability and survivorship benefits, housing support, maternity and unemployment benefits.

The assessments of living standards must include the analyses of accessibility of social infrastructure and satisfaction with its quality and the quality of services provided by the entities of social infrastructure. Specifically, the objects of sociological studies usually include the adequacy of housing (own residence, such as a standalone house or apartment; rented housing; dormitory; sharing a home with parents), level of improvements (cold and hot water supply, sewerage, heating, gas, electricity, telephone connections, Internet, waste removal services). Such studies are conducted at certain intervals at the nationwide level and across var-

ious regions and their findings are often used to determine the rankings of regions by the living standards, quality of life and their perceived attractiveness (Silin *et al.*, 2003; Rodríguez-Pose and Hardy, 2015: 11; Zheleznyakov and Risin, 2017: 80; Talalushkina, 2015; Martynov and Bogoslavskaya, 2018: 25).

Also of interest are scholarly papers on employment, individual social status, income level and sources, income and spending structure, household income per family member, purchasing power of wages, cross-country and inter-country wage comparisons. The findings of such research are used for the development and refinement of social policies and for working out regional social programmes aimed at improvements in living standards (Karimova, 2018; Kuznetsov *et al.*, 2017: 137).

A special highlight is scholarly papers concerned with analyses of poverty and inequality in rural territories, regional socioeconomic asymmetries in the current situation and determining the directions of economic and social policies to improve the attractiveness of a territory (Rodríguez-Pose and Hardy, 2015: 11; Feraru, 2015: 49; Fabry and Zeghni, 2013: 327).

A special domain comprises research concerned with assessing the social and psychological state of the society in general and individual groups, which influences in a meaningful way the social and demographic security profile of the region (Toshchenko and Kharchenko, 1996; Kornilova, 2015: 135; Mashukov and Zhukova, 2018: 36).

Sustainability aspects (social, economic and environmental aspects) are addressed by many researchers (Pearsall and Pierce, 2010: 569; Davidson, 2009: 607; Seto *et al.*, 2017: 8935; Cowell, 2013: 212; Kostina and Orlova, 2017: 35). The balance of social, economic and environmental aspects shapes the perceived attractiveness of a locality as a place of residence. Quite often, the attractiveness of a particular region as a place of residence in each individual case depends on whether it stands up to expectations and is shaped by comparisons with the living standards of one's relatives, friends, colleagues and class or versus the conditions and living standards in developed countries where

the respondent sees good opportunities of employability.

Another special domain comprises research meant to capture social sentiment, social condition and social wellbeing of the population (defining the respective categories, establishing their interrelations and applicable measurements), where the above notions are addressed as the factors of social and demographic security and an instrument to assess regional performance (Feraru, 2015: 49; Toshchenko and Kharchenko, 1996; Cowell, 2013: 212; Salimova and Akhatova, 2017: 869; Feraru *et al.*, 2011: 27; Anchorena and Anjos, 2015: 63). Measuring the levels of social sentiment, social conditions and social wellbeing of the population residing in a territory can be used by local government to adopt and pursue decisions aimed at the development of enterprise, social infrastructure and environmental objectives, to advance healthcare, education and local governance.

Note that existing research and publications have failed to properly address the influence of socioeconomic development in a territory on the psychosocial condition of the population. Conducting such research at the regional level is essential for:

- ensuring social and economic security in the territory;
- planning improvements of the living standards and quality of life for the population;
- territorial socioeconomic planning;
- development and implementation of regional economic and social programmes;
- development and implementation of economic and social policies by local government authorities.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The analysis of the influence of the specifics and directions of territorial socioeconomic development on the psychosocial condition of the population was conducted applying the discourse of the methodology of sociological research (Toshchenko and Kharchenko, 1996). The positions and dispositions of social groups were identified by gender, age, social status, education and income levels per family member. To obtain the required qualitative data, we developed and applied a qualitative sociolog-

ical toolkit: mass surveys of regional populations with specifications of respondents' characteristics, focus groups and content analysis of the media and social media. Competent and responsible interviewers with appropriate qualifications were engaged to conduct the surveys and other research.

The methodological toolkit was developed and adapted to analyse change as it occurs through the temporal and territorial lens.

The analysis of survey findings was broken down for individual cities and rural districts of CK to provide local government authorities with reliable input as to popular perceptions regarding:

- actual socioeconomic profile of the region in question;
- current economic and social policies in the country and region;
- performance of local government authorities;
- satisfaction with living standards and the quality of life;
- confidence in the future.

Accordingly, we identified five groups of questions to address the following objectives:

1. to discover popular perceptions of the regional sociopolitical situation: understanding of the current situation, view of Kazakhstan at the moment and going forward and national objectives for the future;
2. to discover popular perceptions of living standards and the quality of life: life satisfaction, satisfaction with living standards, economic wellbeing and level and quality of housing of the family, level of healthcare and education, quality of infrastructure, level of wellbeing;
3. to discover the degree of perceived political change and transformations: identifying problems faced by the local population in the region, assessments of government performance in addressing these problems and self-perception of own engagement in transformations of the country;
4. to determine the psychosocial condition of the population: measuring the essential indicators of social and economic conditions of the population, discovering the current scope of social problems in the region;

5. to discover the potential level of tensions: measuring protest sentiments, probability of eruption of protests and protest activities in the region.

### 3. Results

The paper analyses perceptions concerning the outlook, trends and prospects of the region's sociopolitical situation providing a glimpse into the underlying factors. A vast majority of respondents, 91.5 % for the region in general, describe the sociopolitical situation as favourable or rather favourable vs. 0.8 % calling it unfavourable. Note that the "rather unfavourable" option is cited by the respondents in four cities (with the respective range of 7.8 % to 25.4 %) and only one rural region, 12.9 %. The highly positive perception of the regional sociopolitical situation was mainly cast by the rural population. Urban populations share more radical views, as a rule.

In our research, we managed to discover the idea of Kazakhstan as people would like it to be at the moment and in the future. The respondents view the Republic of Kazakhstan in the future as a multi-ethnic tolerant state respectful to all ethnicities, a country of wellbeing, with a prosperous economy, high pace of economic development, advanced technologies and a digital economy in place, as a state deserving international recognition and respect. The respondents' views shared in the survey correspond to the national development objectives as set forth in the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy. Notably, age, education, the level of prosperity and affiliation with a particular social group make no principal difference when it comes to ideas of Kazakhstan as a prosperous state. Anyone in Kazakhstan would like to live in a country of wellbeing, which is how Kazakhstan is seen in the future.

Accordingly, a crucial aspect is public awareness of the goals that have to be set for the country and successfully implemented by society in a joint effort. The following objectives were cited by the respondents: modern equitable state (22.9 %); steady progress with a clear action plan (33.0 %); conscientious living – don't do unto others what you would not have done unto you (31.2 %); personal re-

sponsibility toward the country and each other (11.9 %); prosperity and education for the people as a principal objective (15.9 %); the state for individuals, not individuals for the state; (5.1 %); country with the proper pace of economic development (12.9 %). There is common recognition in the region that no prosperity, nor the high level of individual wellbeing can be achieved unless every Kazakh exerts meaningful efforts and strives with others with a single aspiration to achieve the set strategic goals. All the above objectives are essential and are outlined in the strategic papers describing the future of Kazakhstan.

The level of regional socioeconomic development is expressed in the assessments by the population of their respective living standards. We were primarily interested in life satisfaction, here is what we heard from the respondents (Fig. 1).

The survey showed that the majority of the population in cities and districts of CK are largely satisfied with their individual lives. Responses of dissatisfaction were as follows: *rather dissatisfied*: 3.5 % of respondents, *completely dissatisfied*: 0.6 %, undecided: 0.3 %. Among those citing dissatisfaction with their individual lives were those who have to withstand inferior living standards, but there are also those who failed to realise their expectations of the future. The first group needs assistance to improve their subjective wellbeing. The respondents perceived their living standards as follows: 11.9 % cited high living standards, 81.1 % regarded their situation as average, 5.0 %, mentioned low living standards, 2.0 % described those as unstable, and 11.9 % were undecided. As a rule, average conditions were cited by the middle class. Certainly, it would not be correct to recognise 81.1 % of respondents as belonging to the middle class. Though, the fact that people themselves regard their living standards at this level can be considered as a positive factor. *Low living* standards were cited by 14.9 % of respondents in Zhezkazgan, though the level of wages there is the highest in the region.

An essential parameter determining the living standards is the economic conditions of the family. One in six respondents finds it pos-

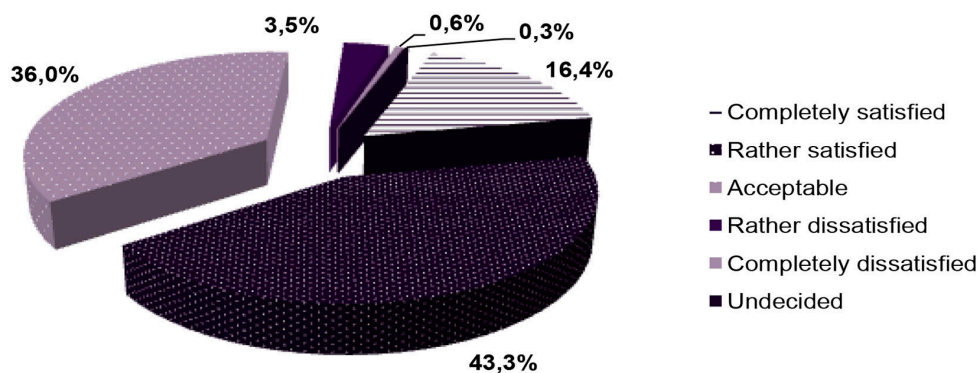


Fig. 1. Life satisfaction

sible “to afford quite expensive items, such as a car, an apartment and many others” (15.7 %); the corresponding results were one in three respondents in Zhezkazgan (35.8 %), one in four respondents in Balkhash (25.9 %), about half respondents in the Karkaraly District (57.7 %), one in three respondents in the Shet District (38.7 %), the Osakarov District (34.8 %) and the Abay District (32.5 %).

Keep in mind that when surveyed about their incomes, respondents usually tend to understate their estimates. Consequently, the following observations can be made: the coefficient of estimates of economic conditions declines with age; the population with higher education level is less negative in assessments of their respective economic conditions; as to marital status, the most positive assessments of economic conditions are drawn by singles; the breakdown by occupation shows that negative assessments of economic conditions are provided by retirees and the unemployed.

The quality of life is contingent on housing conditions, satisfaction with them, adequacy of, and satisfaction with, utility services. Half of respondents (53.4 %) live in a separate apartment (house); 35.1 % share a home with relatives but have a room of their own; 3.3 % live with their family without a separate room; 6.3 % live in a rented apartment; 2.0 % live in a dormitory. Rented flats are mostly used by respondents in cities (Karaganda, Balkhash, Zhezkazgan, Satpayev, Temirtau, Shakhtinsk) and two districts (Abay and Zhanaarka Districts). Rented housing is used by recent movers

arriving at the locality and young families opting to live separate from their relatives. A vast majority of respondents are satisfied with their housing: 92.6 % (completely satisfied and rather satisfied); the highest dissatisfaction levels (rather dissatisfied and completely dissatisfied) is found among the respondents of Balkhash, 15.5 %, and Zhezkazgan, 11.9 %.

Respondents in cities live both in developed housing and the private sector; therefore, the level of coverage of utilities such as central heating, hot water supply and sewerage does not reach 100.0 %. The coverage of fixed telephone lines today can be regarded not through the lens of waiting lists and telephonisation of localities, but rather from the angle of economic considerations and the use of mobile communications. Respondents in the Aktogay, Zhanaarka, Karkaraly, Nura, Osakarov and Shet districts live in the private sector and do not have access to central heating, hot water supply and sewerage. Satisfaction with the quality of utility services (completely satisfied, rather satisfied) is relatively high. Those connected to central heating in rural districts cite dissatisfaction with the quality of hot water, as it is not available in the localities and using hot water from the heating system is prohibited. The unsatisfactory assessments of the quality of hot water supply in cities reflect the prolonged periods of outage in summer seasons. A notable aspect is the negative assessments of the quality of cold water, sewerage and waste removal services in some localities.

The quality of life is also characterised by the “food basket”. The findings of the survey in this respect show that a vast majority of respondents observe quality and balanced diets. Specifically, 23.3 % of respondents believe their basket contains all the products they want; 52.7 % cite all kinds of products but without delicacies; 21.4 % point at only essentials and seasonal fruit and vegetables; 0.9 % say their “food basket” is poor and lacks variety; 1.1 % only get utmost essentials, 0.2 % say that even essentials are not always available, 0.4 % are undecided.

The quality of life is also contingent on the accessibility of healthcare services and medicines. The perceptions regarding this component are as follows: all types of healthcare are accessible: 36.6 %; healthcare is accessible except for treatment in expensive private clinics: 43.3 %; healthcare from fee-based medical services departments of public hospitals is accessible: 12.3 %; only guaranteed free healthcare services are accessible: 6.0 %; undecided: 1.9 %. Certainly, people would prefer a wider range of guaranteed medical services compared to what is available now. Complex types of medical services such as surgery can be obtained under a quota. For various reasons, a patient often cannot wait for such quota to obtain medical services. The range of guaranteed medical services is expanding by the years. It is crucial to diagnose an illness at an early stage when a healthcare service is provided. Respondents’ satisfaction with the quality of healthcare is quite high: 88.3 % (completely satisfied and rather satisfied). The estimate “rather dissatisfied” is not completely negative as it reflects the respondent’s doubts.

The present study also looked at satisfaction with the quality of education in the country, region and locality of residence, it is quite high at 91.9 %.

The quality of life of the population is also contingent on satisfaction with the quality of infrastructure (preschool facilities, retail, cultural sites, sports facilities, roads, improvements). Satisfaction with the quality of all infrastructure is relatively high, except for roads and improvements. Also of interest are the comparisons of living in the place of res-

idence vs. other regions of Kazakhstan. 5.4 % of respondents believe it to be definitely better, 17.3 %, probably better, 68.7 % find it as good as elsewhere. A fraction of respondents (3.8 %) consider it as poor as in other regions of Kazakhstan, 1.3 % find it worse than in other regions, 3.4 % were undecided.

Assessments of economic standing should take into account what share of income is spent on food, utilities, education, medication and leisure (Fig. 2).

It is not easy to establish the structure of spending, as only the “budget holder” knows the actual state of things in the family. The sociological survey was conducted among male and female respondents in various age and marital status groups. The majority of respondents spend between 20.0 and 30.0 % of income on food, 5.0 to 10.0 % on utility bills, 10.0–15.0 % on education, 5.0 to 10.0 % on medication, 5.0 to 20.0 % on leisure and entertainment. Older age groups run bigger spending on medication, while younger groups have relatively bigger spending on leisure and entertainment compared to older groups. Utility bills are significant among those who rent a home, as well as those who own mortgaged housing (mortgage payments are calculated in the utilities spending).

Measurements of living standards and the quality of life should take into account changes in the respondents’ living conditions compared to 2014. In 2019, there is an improvement in living conditions in most items: economic conditions (62.7 %), opportunities for earnings (44.1 %), accessibility of clothes (61.3 %), food (56.0 %), housing conditions (43.9 %), life prospects (48.1 %), accessibility of good education (39.5 %), accessibility of competent medication (39.9 %), opportunities for decent living standards (36.7 %), passenger transport operation improved (38.9 %), life improved in general (55.3 %). A deterioration of principal living conditions across the region is estimated by 1.9 to 4.1 % of respondents. Respondents in rural districts largely do not see any deterioration in principal living conditions in 2019 compared to 2014.

Current studies confirm that conflicts mostly arise as a result of the cumulative neg-



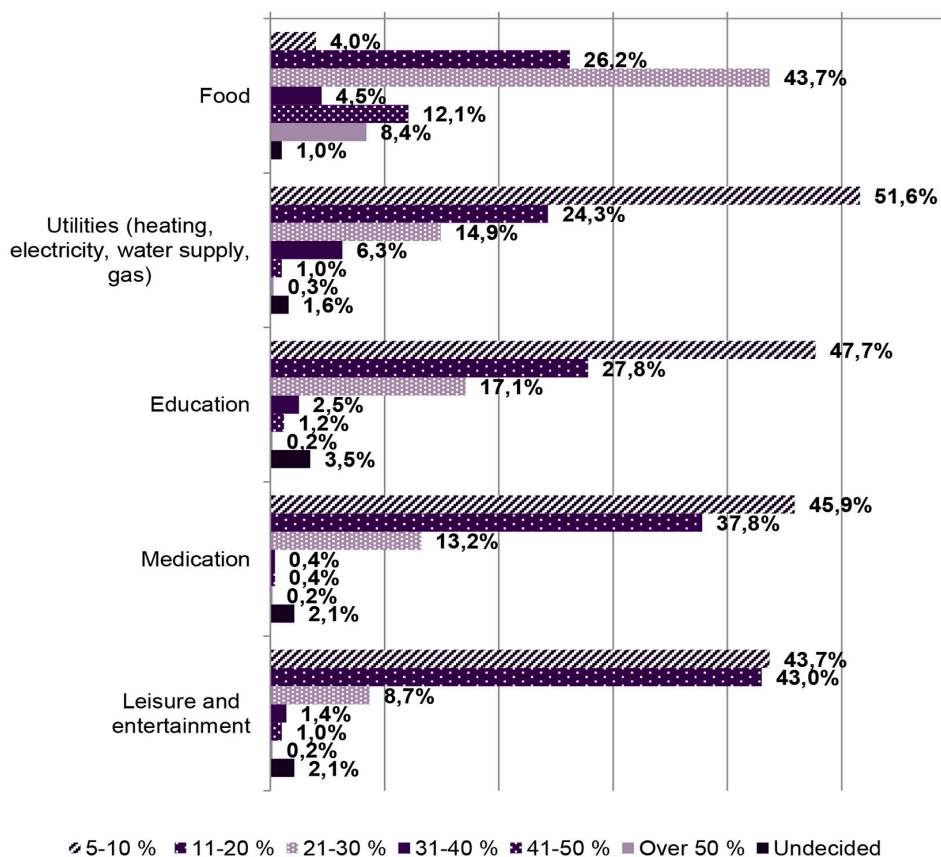


Fig. 2. Share of your (your family) income spent on...

ative potential as an irritant. After a critical point, frustration inevitably manifests in some form. We tried to identify what may be a potential irritant for the regional population. Respondents cited the following important problems: housing (unavailability of own housing, need to improve housing): 64.0 %; price growth and increasing utility rates: 22.7 %; rising prices of food and essentials: 19.1 %; environmental problems: 13.5 %; unemployment, problems with gaining a job: 6.0 %; poor road conditions, lack of permanent access to and poor quality of potable water, insufficient support for socially vulnerable groups, poor quality of medication (2.2 % to 4.6 % of respondents). Today, more and more people feel anxiety and fear caused by stress. Some can cope with it promptly and independently. Others cannot cope with it and their condition begins to affect their life and sometimes other people. Studies have found

that when respondents talk from an expert position (i.e., when they judge other people's feelings), they tend to be more intense in describing negative conditions.

People want to know whether their problems are addressed by the government, whether these efforts are efficient and meet their expectations. The sociological survey found that a vast majority of respondents believed the problems were indeed addressed (yes: 20.5 %; more likely yes than no: 67.1 %); the efforts of the government were effective (18.5 % of respondents said they were "effective", 68.1 % "rather effective"); the performance of local government authorities was praised and mostly met people's expectations (fully meets expectations: 30.1 %, probably meets expectations: 58.2 %).

The psychosocial condition of the population is contingent on national health, individual

health conditions, comfortable living environment and accessibility of social services. Everyone needs security for oneself and one's family and needs to feel confident in the future. Some degree of confidence was demonstrated by a vast majority of respondents in the region (completely confident: 37.2 %; confident to some extent: 30.1 %; rather confident than not: 27.4 %). 16.3 % of respondents believe there will be improvements but not very soon; 44.0 % hope for improvements in the near future; 25.3 % prefer living for the day and "not losing sleep over it". Prevalent pessimism and pessimistic expectations (no anticipation of improvements) are registered in Karaganda (16.6 %), Shakh-tinsk (19.0 %) and the Nura District (56.8 %). According to our survey, more than three in four respondents (82.9 %) have no intention of leaving their place of residence. There are several reasons behind this percentage: 61.5 % of respondents are people of Kazakh ethnicity, and the region does not have an excess working population, which means people can smoothly accommodate their employment aspirations. When describing the reasons for their departure, respondents cite the intent to be close to their relatives: 12.8 %; lack of opportunities for own business: 5.7 %. Regarding the perceived probability of protests or mass actions, the survey found that a vast majority of respondents agree that "there is likely no such probability" and "there is certainly no such probability" (the total of these responses is 94.0 %) and only a minor fraction of respondents (1.2 %) believe that such probability exists. The population of districts and cities of CK believes that the probability of protests is non-existent or negligible. Our study identified the reasons that potentially contribute to the buildup of protest sentiments and protest actions. The quantitative estimate of such reasons behind protest sentiments is not worrisome.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusions

Summarising the findings of sociological surveys, the proposed hypothesis is confirmed: CK is characterised by a stable sociopolitical situation and a relatively high and positive profile of psychosocial sentiments of the population. The majority of respondents (91.5 %)

describe the sociopolitical situation as favourable or rather favourable. One in fourteen respondents feels anxiety and rather assesses the sociopolitical situation as unfavourable. These people primarily live in Karaganda, Balkhash, Satpayev and the Shet District.

The majority of respondents (59.7 %) are completely satisfied or rather satisfied with their life; 36.0 % regard their situation as normal. The cases of respondents' dissatisfaction with their life (completely dissatisfied) are those when they have not set their perspective and did not achieve it; in such case, indeed, the living standards are low for some reasons.

93.0 % of respondents regard their living standards as high (11.9 %) or average (81.1 %); low living standards are cited by 5.0 % of respondents, which is quite favourable.

The majority of respondents (62.7 %) believe their economic conditions have improved compared to 2014; 55.3 % of respondents believe life has improved in general. Those pointing at a deterioration chose the following reasons from the list of options: illness (1.9 %), growing prices outpacing the dynamics of incomes (1.7 %), loss of a well-paid job and part-time employment (0.9 % each). The quantitative assessment is not worrisome.

Willingness to move where respondents plan it is attributed to the following reasons: the intent to be close to their relatives (12.8 %); lack of opportunities for own business (5.7 %); other reasons can be considered negligible.

More than half of respondents believe protests will not erupt in the near future (No, there is no such possibility: 55.5 %, no, it is probably unlikely: 38.5 %); 3.4 % believe there is a possibility of protests. The possibility of national and religious conflicts is viewed as unlikely by most respondents.

Notably, respondents shared their views regarding living standards and the quality of life and their psychological conditions driven by their desire to contribute to the process of improvement for the benefit of the population. The findings and specific recommendations for the region and localities were submitted to the local government authorities to inform further development and implementation of an action plan.

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