

ONE PLACE – MANY WORLDS: GEOGRAPHICAL VARIABILITY IN LIFE STRATEGIES IN SLOVAK SOCIETY.

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The monograph “One Place – Many Worlds: Geographical variability in life strategies in Slovak society“ by A. Rochovská, M. Drgoncová, E. Džupinová, M. Horňák, M. Káčerová, M. Madzinová, J. Majo, and S. Ondoš, was published at the Department of Human Geography and Demography as a result of a research project. It gives an insight into distinctive existential (economic) livelihood strategies of households in Slovak regions.

In both quantitative and qualitative research, the authors used statistical data, data produced by questionnaires (500 households) as well as subsequent semi-structured interviews in selected households (100) and with local authorities (mayors, teachers, priests, etc.). They also employed observation.

The research was carried out in 13 villages of Horná Orava, Stredné Považie, Záhorie, Gemer and Horný Zemplín (in the publication, the regions are named by localities). Research strategies corresponded to the following factors: age structure; household size and number of generations; formal and informal economic activities of its members; and, in particular, household access to resources.

After introducing the research methodology, the authors focus on several theoretical approaches to the strategies in human geography and related disciplines. The next chapter deals with the specifics of the process of socio-economic transformation in Slovakia in the post-socialist period with an emphasis on employment issues and the character of households (housing, size, etc.).

The next part of the book presents existential strategies in rural environment. In accordance with the above-defined concept (British sociologist Burawoy) based on the study of the postsocialist economy, the authors identify several types of household resources. These are material resources (in the selected theoretical approach referred to as material assets) – land and house; employment (skill assets); and social assets and citizenship assets in a form of social benefits of the state.

The final chapter of the monograph deals with economy of everyday life in countryside, based on the informants' reflection and experience. The paper presents the results of a long-term systematic research of existential strategies in rural environment in post-socialist Slovakia. It is a inspirational contribution to this issue, which so far has been dealt with only in a few studies, and an incentive for further research in related disciplines.

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