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**The singles with higher education degree.
Sociological study over economic and cultural conditions for singleness.**

PHD dissertation is based on the analysis of economic and cultural conditions of well-educated people living as singles.

Methodology and research

Research is based on the analysis of commercial and cultural conditions of well-educated people living as singles. Studies have complex characteristics. Principal part of the research is in-depth interviewing with the singles. The second analysis of research results conducted among singles in Poland after 2000, is a complement to my study. In accordance to methods triangulation, the results of qualitative studies are examined using surveys. The qualitative studies (interviews) are dominating whereas quantitative tests (surveys) are supplementary. The target group was people, who living alone, high educated, self-independent, at age of 28-40 for women and 30-40 for men. I interviewed 20 people from this group – ten women and ten men. The interviews consisted of number of open questions. The subject matter of the surveys are conclusions from qualitative interviews. The questions included in the surveys are based on the feedback of the interviewed respondents. The respondents are singles fulfilling the statutory criteria determined in the definition of the single adopted in my thesis. Research sample numbers 100 respondents from Silesian voivodship and 633 respondents using dating site *sympatia.pl*.

The research's analysis was carried on the basis of the individualization theory formulated by U. Beck. The theory states that singleness is caused by economic and cultural factors. One of the most significant features of individualization is the necessity of taking responsibility for one's life. In this respect, people create their own life, construct biography by choice or do it yourself biographies. The identity is a task to do. Everybody creates his or her own biography. Individuals create their own biographies. Individualization is, above all, a process. People are not determined by firm, socially imposed rules.

Economic conditions of single lifestyle

All my respondents are employed people and they were also working while studying at the University. Some of them are underemployed. They treat their work as a source of income. However, not everyone gets job satisfaction. Their occupation realines long time. They often work from home too. Thanks to this they can develop their passions and hobbies. The financial situation of some respondents is quite good. However in some cases their salary average or even insufficient. They have to save money and some of them cannot put away.

They sometimes take up additional work. They often live in their own or rented flats. Some of them still live with their parents. The reasons given for this are a lack of funding, helping parents or convenience.

Cultural factors

Today's individuals perceive a relationship as a task to do. They analyse opportunities and threats. The relationship is to give them the sense of happiness and fulfilment. It also has to make their lives better than ever. The singles have their own criteria of partner's selection. Physical appearance such as eye colour, hairstyle, high, body shape is important. The level of education, intelligence and interesting personality are also essential. It is significant for the prospective partner to work professionally and have a hobby. Similar age is most preferred. Political and religious opinion and similar lifestyle are also crucial. The most desirable qualities are: wisdom, understanding (indulgence), sense of humour, resourcefulness, sociability. The respondents expect support, partnership, consideration. The interviewees want to choose only the best ones. Half of them use dating sites however, without any success. They also separate sexual sphere from the emotional one. They lead sexual life without entering into lasting relationships.

The reasons for singleness. Choice or necessity?

The respondents point out the necessity and the coincidence as the reasons for the singleness. They also say that there are no prospective partners. The sense of freedom, independence and also hobbies and lot of free time – these are the most frequently mentioned qualities of living alone. The main advantage is a sense of loneliness. However, they do not feel lonely since they have lot of friends and family members. Solitude is only sometimes felt. They perceive themselves as happy people. They experience happiness in everyday life. They appreciate the fact that they are healthy, employed and have interesting hobbies. They wonder about their future. Part of them is able to accept the fact, they will live alone and they think it wouldn't be so bad. The other are focused on looking for the partner. They cannot imagine living alone. They would not be happy that way. Another respondents are afraid of loneliness in their old age.

General reasons for single lifestyle in respondents' opinion.

The respondents were asked about their opinion on the phenomenon of singleness. They think that the cause for this can be found in consumer lifestyle, the possibilities to choose, social tolerance, mass culture and fashion. As economic factors they mention temporality and instability of employment, but also low income. However, they point out more often the cultural factors. Media also, in respondents' opinion, create the lifestyle of being independent and self-reliant and being "the king of life". The hedonistic attitude towards life, towards pleasure and benefiting from one's life are becoming fashionable.