

CIVIC SELF-DETERMINATION: THE APPROACH TO DEFENCE FUNDING

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Abstract

Researches on levels of happiness enable to comprehensively analyse information about the society, political culture and public spirit. One of the fields of such researches can be the research on the relation between the level of happiness of the society and governance of the state. Responding to this field, the public opinion research centre “Vilmorus” conducted a representative survey of Lithuanian population, aiming to find out respondents’ opinions about the level of happiness last year and during next five years’ period as well as their attitude to that part of public expenditure which, seeking the increase of residents’ level of happiness, should be allocated for defence of the state. In total, 1005 respondents were surveyed (people over 18 years old from 19 towns and 31 villages). The research also revealed that the level of happiness determined respondents’ opinions about distribution of state budget and funding of defence of the state. It was found that in the opinion of respondents with lower level of happiness there was no need to allocate funds for defence of the state at all.

***Key words:** level of happiness of the Lithuanian society, public spirit, approach to funding of defence of the state*

Introduction

Civic education is one of the key aims stated in Lithuania’s progress strategy “Lithuania 2030” (Lithuania’s Progress Strategy “Lithuania 2030”, 2012). This aim promotes comprehensive studies on public spirit and examination of different aspects of public spirit.

Creating content of the civic education system, the idea of civil spirit is highlighted as one of the priorities of the system of education. Zaleskienė (1998) emphasises that all school life must create conditions to practically learn democratic way of life (e.g. organise self-governance of schools, pupils’ councils) and provides the following description of civic education: it is efficient socialization when human relations are governed by human rights and multicultural approaches; effective political socialization, when the principles of open and civic society are strongly advocated; fruitful management of young people’s vital energy; replacement of symbolic violence inherent to reproductive concept of education with relationships which are no longer based on power, dominance but are grounded on cooperation; and (self-)development of abilities and skills to live in the conditions of constant change.

Public spirit can be discussed as manifestation of political culture, which is acquired in the socialization process. Usually, the term “socialization” describes the process of becoming a member of the society, acceptance of its characteristic values. For instance, Matsumoto & Juang (2008) indicate that the essence of socialization consists of processes and mechanisms due to which social norms and cultural peculiarities are mastered.

Therefore, it is particularly important to analyse (un)consciously declared approaches, values and norms of social, cultural and educational environment, in which the personality is educated.

This process of mastering of norms and values involves both political and civic values, the totality of which can be named political culture. Clarifying the concept of political culture, Almond & Verba (1963) described it as specific orientation towards certain political actions. They performed the analysis of political culture of the United States, Great Britain and German Federal Republic and used it as a basis for grouping political culture into parochial, dependent and participative.

In the first case (parochial political culture) people are indifferent to national political aims and the system, are little interested in actions of central authorities and avoid participation in actions initiated by them. People are interested in local matters. Dependent political culture is characterized by considerable interest in activities and decisions of authorities. On the other hand, when the latter political culture is prevailing, citizens do not expect that their personal involvement can change the political system and affect political actions. They remain passive observers, although often they are sufficiently politically informed. Participative political culture is characterised by civic activeness and involvement. Representatives of this political culture believe that they can influence authorities and participate in civic campaigns, elections and activities of political parties. Almond & Verba (1963) treat the latter political culture as the pursued ideal and emphasise that it creates preconditions for democratic governance and higher wellbeing of the society.

Heunks & Hikspoors (1995) developed the discussed classification of political culture and supplemented it with new empirically established indicators: the overall assessment of the political system (in favour of the system or against it), trust in authorities, acknowledgement or denial of its legitimacy, assessment of personal involvement in politics. This approach enables to distinguish several types of political culture, which can be divided into two big groups: the active participation group and the passive participation group. Representatives of the first type perceive themselves as participants of the political process, while representatives of the second type do not think and feel that they can influence politics and do not want to take part in political activities. According to Heunks & Hikspoors (1995), their proposed conception of political culture helps both to assess culture and give a more precise definition of subcultures of various social groups.

Links of political culture with civic self-determination enable to assess political culture both formally and according to peculiarity of manifestation. Gerhards (2010) indicates that presence of democratic institutions and assurance of human rights are although necessary but insufficient prerequisites for democratic performance. When there is a lack of traditions of democratic political culture, norms and traditions expressing that culture, civic self-determination, active participation, solving problems of the society can be insufficient. Namely this kind of self-determination, perception of responsibility for the society and the state, according to Schyns & Koop (2010), reduces spread of anomic states, promotes dissemination of democratic values and creates prerequisites for material and spiritual progress.

Based on the standpoint of the above-mentioned scholars and many other researchers, it can be stated that civic self-determination, civic involvement and quality of life are interrelated. Existence of such links is also proved by researches. For example, Diener, Lucas, Schimmack,

& Helliwel (2009) indicate that political involvement, positive assessment of state institutions are statistically significantly related to the level of happiness of the society. Lithuanian population also supports development of democratic performance, more active participation of citizens, making decisions that are important for the society, treated as a trend of increasing the level of happiness of the society. According to the data of the study conducted in 2011–2012, three-quarters of Lithuanians are for wider participation of citizens in governance (Navaitis, 2013).

One of the most important aspects of governance is redistribution of funds, passing of funds and possibilities granted by them from one social group to another, from one region to another, from one generation to another, etc. Popkin (2003) indicates that such redistribution is based on values prevailing in the society, which are constantly changing and may contradict each other. Therefore, although assessment of financial policy is usually associated only with the effectiveness and rarely with such concepts as public spirit, happiness, subjective wellbeing, etc., anyway, assessment remains to be based on aims and norms of the society (Popkin, 2003).

Discussing links of such aims and norms with the level of happiness of the society, it is convenient to analyse the approach to state defence and its funding. This is determined by several circumstances. First, security of the state is not that type of value which could be directly consumed. Besides, current developments in international relations have affected the mission of the military, its relations with the society and value orientations. According to Moscos, Williams, & Seagal (2000), modern states live in the period when “societies, preventing war” are replacing “societies that are ready for war”. Respectively, the attitude of the society to the role of the military is changing (Moscos, Williams, & Seagal, 2000). These developments are also witnessed by data of sociological studies. In 2014, the public opinion and market research company “Sprinter tyrimai” conducted the public opinion poll which disclosed changing attitudes of Lithuanian people towards state defence and its funding. A few years ago, the vast majority of Lithuanian population expressed negative attitude to the increase of defence funding. In 2014, the increase of defence funding was supported by 64,3 percent of population (Visuomenės nuomonės tyrimas šalies saugumo ir gynybos klausimais (Eng. public opinion survey of the country’s security and defence issues, 2014).

The overview of theoretical approaches and facts enable to formulate the following problem questions: What is the level of happiness of Lithuanian population? Is the level of happiness related to public spirit? Is the attitude to financing of state defence the indicator of civic self-determination of Lithuanian population?

Responding to these problem questions, **the research aim** was formulated: to find out the level of happiness of Lithuanian population, their opinion about distribution of state budget, which is most favourable for their happiness and for happiness of the society, and the share of state funds, which they would allocate for state defence.

Object of the research: level of happiness of Lithuanian population, warranting their happiness associated state funds, which they would allocate for state defence.

The research method: a questionnaire survey at the respondent’s home.

The statistical analysis was performed using SPSS 13 software. Analyzing the results of the survey, mathematical-statistical analysis methods were applied: descriptive statistics (percentage frequencies) and analytical statistics. In order to assess significance of differences in socio-demographic groups, the Chi-square criterion was applied. The research employed standard 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$).

The sample of the survey: selecting the research sample, it was sought to have a representative sample, representing all population. Reliability of the sample is determined by the number of participants. Representativeness of the sample is determined by proportional

representation of all monitored units, in these case groups of population (Bitinas, 2006). The respondent selection method is a multi-stage random sampling. Selection of respondents was organized so that every Lithuanian citizen would have equal chance to be interviewed.

In total, 1005 people over 18 years old from 19 towns and 31 villages were interviewed. The survey took place in the cities of Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys, Druskininkai, Kretinga, in the districts of Kaunas, Alytus, Šakiai, Pakruojis, Utena, Tauragė, Švenčionys, Raseiniai, Kupiškis, Akmenė, Šilutė, Telšiai, Mažeikiai, Marijampolė, Trakai, Ukmergė.

The study was conducted in February 14-23, 2014. The survey was conducted by interviewers of the public opinion research centre “Vilmorus”.

Research ethics: the research was conducted in accordance with the Code of Ethics of ESOMAR (ESOMAR, 2008).

Quality control of the research was based on the following principles: a) the internal performance verification test; this means that 100% control was applied (the number of interviews, completeness of filling in of the questionnaire, consistency of the survey); b) external performance verification test; this means that at least 10% of interviewers were additionally controlled in order to determine whether the survey was carried out in accordance with methodological requirements, whether the principle of selection was not breached, whether there were no violations of procedures set out in the survey; c) data input control: at least 10% of input data were checked.

Main results of the research

Assessment of the last year and the perspective of next five years in order to access the level of happiness have been conducted. The respondents' mood, which according to Ahmed (2010), can be influenced even by such accidental factors as weather changes or game scores, can influence the assessment of happiness. This situational impact can be minimized if respondents are asked to assess longer periods and foresee possible perspectives of changes in their personal lives and in the situation of the society. For this reason, the respondents were asked to evaluate the last year and the perspective of next five years. Data about their answers are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The attitudes to happiness, based on evaluations of the last year and the perspective of next five-years

Opinions of respondents	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents, %
The last year was full of happiness and in the future the happiness will strengthen	68	6,8
The last year was full of happiness but in the future we will have to put additional efforts in order to sustain happiness	243	24,2
The last year was not happy, however, I expect positive changes in the next five years	414	41,2
The last year was not happy, and I do not expect any positive changes in the next five years	258	25,7

Comments. 22 respondents (out of 100) did not answer this question. Chi-square is = 24,872, $p < 0,001$ ($df = 3$, $n = 983$). The tool used for calculations for the chi-square test is: an interactive calculation tool for chi-square tests for happiness [Computer software] (Preacher, 2001).

Discussing the data presented in Table 1, it is purposeful to group respondents into three groups differing in their happiness and perception of future prospects. The first group would be made up of one-third of respondents who think that they are happy and have stronger or weaker hope of successful future. The second group would consist of people who are not happy about the current situation but hope that there will be positive changes. This group would consist of two out of five respondents. The third group can be named “the group of the most unhappy people”; it consists of every fourth respondent. The representatives of this group are disappointed about the present and do not expect any positive changes in the future. More detailed analysis of distinguished groups shows that the level of happiness is most significantly influenced by age, education, social status, income and the place of residence.

The approach to funding of state defence. Modern democratic states follow the provision that civil authorities control military authorities. According to Feaver (1997), despite of the fact that the opinion of the military is more professional, the opinion of representatives of civil authorities always has to be decisive. Reviewing funding of defence, civil authorities can be identified with political authorities and the latter must express the opinions of citizens who elect them.

The opinion of Lithuanian population about funding of state defence is presented in the Table 2.

Table 2. Public opinion about funding for state defence in Lithuania

Respondents' opinion	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents, %
The numbers of happy people in Lithuania will grow if 0 percent of state budget are allocated for state defence	155	16,8
The numbers of happy people in Lithuania will grow if from 1 to 5 percent of state budget are allocated for state defence.	365	39,7
The numbers of happy people in Lithuania will grow if from 6 to 10 percent of state budget are allocated for state defence.	335	36,4
The numbers of happy people in Lithuania will grow if from 11 to 15 percent of state budget are allocated for state defence.	40	4,3
The numbers of happy people in Lithuania will grow if from 16 to 20 percent of state budget are allocated for state defence.	21	2,3
The numbers of happy people in Lithuania will grow if more than 21 percent of state budget are allocated for state defence.	4	0,4

Comments. 85 respondents (out of 1005) did not answer this question. Chi-square is = 24,872, $p < 0,001$ ($df = 3$, $n = 920$).

Discussing data presented in Table 1, like in case of generalisation of the level of happiness, it is purposeful to group all respondents into three groups of people, who have different approaches to funding for state defence. The first group of respondents would allocate more than 6 percent of budget funds for state defence. The second group consisted of respondents proposing to allocate from 1 to 5 percent of budget funds for state defence. The third the group of respondents would consist of nearly one-sixth of respondents. They thought that there was no need to allocate funds for state defence at all.

It is worth noting that it would be reasonable to call opinions of the largest share of respondents (the second group) “realistic”, as they correspond to the current budget for state defence of Lithuania (2014), according to which in 2014, 3.1 percent of state funds were allocated for state defence (The Law on approval of financial indicators of state budget and municipal budgets of the Republic of Lithuania in 2014).

It is likely that representatives of the first group feel bigger threat to the state and, wishing to reduce it, propose to allocate more state funds for state defence. It should also be noticed that the largest share of respondents of this group (36.4 percent of all respondents) would allocate 6-10 percent of state funds for state defence. It would be appropriate to treat the latter value as quite “realistic” because it is close to today’s declared political aspiration, which is approved by all Lithuanian parliamentary parties: to ensure that state funding would make up 2 percent of the GDP (gross domestic product). Those who propose to allocate still larger funds for state defence make up a quite inconsiderable share of the first group of respondents (7.0 percent of all respondents).

The first group of respondents should be treated as the most problematic group. It consists of respondents who think that the Lithuanian society will become happier if the state does not fund state defence at all.

Statistical analysis of respondents’ features related to attribution of respondents to one or another group enables with high confidence ($p < 0.05$) to distinguish several features.

Firstly, it should be stated that respondents’ gender does not determine opinions about funding of state defence. (Significant difference was found only between male and female respondents, who chose the answer “it is necessary to allocate 11–15 percent of state budget for state defence”. This answer was chosen by 6.7 percent of male and 2.1 percent of female respondents).

Respondents’ age quite clearly influenced their opinion. Those “allocating” the largest share of the budget for state defence were dominated by young respondents. Among those who indicated that 0 percent must be allocated for state defence young people (under 29 years old) made up 11.3 percent, whilst old people (70 years old and older) made up 25.5 percent. Respondents who “allocated” the maximum share of the budget; i.e., 16 percent or more, are distributed accordingly: among young people (under 29 years) there were 4.8 percent of such respondents and among people aged 70 and over there were 2.4 percent of such respondents. Besides, in this group no older respondent proposed to allocate more than 21 percent of the budget, while 1.8 percent of younger respondents proposed this maximum allocation.

Opinions about funding of state defence determined by age are to be related to opinions about pensions. The younger respondents’ group allocated a clearly smaller share of budget for pensions than the older respondents’ group. Because respondents had to “distribute” one hundred percent of state budget, reduction or increase of one part of the budget presupposed corresponding changes in other parts of the budget.

The perceptions of state defence funding were notably influenced by respondents’ education. Among those who had unfinished secondary education even 21.5 percent indicated that they would allocate 0 percent of budget funds for defence matters.

Similar links between the place of residence of respondents and their opinion on defence funding were found. Among respondents who thought that there was no need to finance state defence 13.2 per cent were from Vilnius, 17.7 percent, from bigger cities (Kaunas, Klaipeda, Šiauliai, and Panevėžys), and 22.8 percent, from other (smaller) towns.

The analysis of the respondents’ level of happiness and their approach to funding of state defence demonstrates the statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) relationship between belonging to the third group with regard to happiness and belonging to the third group according to attitude to funding of state defence. That is, respondents who stated that the year was unhappy for them

and who did not expect any positive changes in the future often “proposed” not to allocate any funding for defence.

Discussion

Research data show that a significant share of respondents is disappointed about the present status and does not expect anything better in the future. In countries with the highest level of public happiness (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Canada, New Zealand, Switzerland, etc.) the share of such respondents usually does not exceed 1-3 percent. It can be assumed that persons who are dissatisfied with their present situation and who do not expect any possibilities of positive changes have negative opinion about themselves, the society and the state. Therefore, such researches are important both in order to disclose the wider approach to the state and to find out to what extent the society supports solution of state defence issues, the importance of comprehensive understanding of which increases together with possibilities of unconventional impacts on security of the state.

The opinion about funding of state defence also indirectly reflects general assessment of the state. It is evident that defence of the state, like other areas of activities of the state, must be properly funded. Survey data showed that a significant share of Lithuanian population (over 80 percent) quite realistically assessed state defence funding and prospects of its increase. In addition, it should be also noted that 16.8 per cent of respondents do not realize the importance of this type of funding. In their opinion, there is no need to allocate funding for state defence at all. This group is characterized by lower level of education. Part of older respondents and respondents living in small towns also belong to this group. These social demographic characteristics of the said group coincide with social demographic characteristics of representatives of the group, whose level of happiness is the lowest.

To sum up research data, it can be stated that they coincide with the statement of Frey and Frey Marti (2010) that happier population are more civic oriented.

This is worth considering developing public spirit, forming attitudes, norms and values and seeking social welfare in the state.

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Summary

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Studies on the level of happiness of the society provide grounding for the economy of happiness and for felicitary (*felicitas* from Latin means happiness) policies, implementing its principles. One of such research fields can be disclosure of relation between the level of happiness of the society and state governance. Responding to this field, the public opinion research centre “Vilmorus” conducted a representative survey of Lithuanian population, aiming to find out respondents’ opinions about the level of happiness of the last year and next five years’ period as well as their attitude to that part of public expenditure which, seeking the increase of residents’ level of happiness, should be allocated for defence of the state.

Problem questions of the research: What is the level of happiness of Lithuanian population? Is the level of happiness related to public spirit? Is the attitude to financing of state defence the indicator of civic self-determination of Lithuanian population?

Based on these problem questions **the research aim** was formulated: to find out the level of happiness of Lithuanian population and their opinion about allocation of state budget funds for state defence.

The research method: a questionnaire survey at the respondent’s home.

The respondent selection method is a multi-stage random sampling. Selection of respondents was organized so that every Lithuanian citizen would have equal chance of being interviewed. In total, 1005 people over 18 years old from 19 towns and 31 villages were interviewed. The survey took place in the cities of Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys, Druskininkai, Kretinga, and in the districts of Kaunas, Alytus, Šakiai, Pakruojis, Utena, Tauragė, Švenčionys, Raseiniai, Kupiškis, Akmenė, Šilutė, Telšiai, Mažeikiai, Marijampolė, Trakai, Ukmergė.

The study was conducted in February 14-23, 2014. The survey was conducted by interviewers of the public opinion research centre “Vilmorus”.

The study showed that respondents could be grouped into three groups of persons who differed in terms of their happiness and perception of future prospects. The first group consisted of 31.0 percent of respondents. They said they were happy and hoped that the future would be successful to a greater or lesser degree. The second group consisted of 41.2 per cent of respondents, who indicated that they

were dissatisfied with the current situation but were waiting for changes for the better. The third group consisted of 25.7 percent of respondents who indicated that they were disappointed with the present and did not expect any positive changes in their situation in the future. 2.2 per cent of respondents did not answer the question.

The research disclosed that happiness determines respondents' opinions about distribution of state budget and funding of state defence.

It is worth noting that it would be justifiable to call opinions of the most significant share of the respondents "realistic" because they correspond to current state defence budget, according to which in 2014, 3.1 percent of state expenses are allocated for state defence. This group consisted of 39.7 percent of respondents (365 persons). Respondents who think that the Lithuanian society will become happier if the state does not fund defence are to be treated as the most problematic.

The statistical analysis of the approach to funding of state defence enables to distinguish several features of respondents associated with this approach with confidence ($p < 0.05$). Firstly, it should be stated that respondents' gender does not determine opinions about funding of state defence. Respondents' age quite clearly influenced the discussed opinion. The share of population "allocating" the largest share of the budget for state defence was dominated by young people. Opinions about funding of state defence were considerably influenced by respondents' education. Among those who had unfinished secondary education even 21.5 percent indicated that they would allocate 0 percent of budget funds for defence matters. Similar links between the place of residence of respondents and their opinion on defence funding were found. Among respondents who thought that there was no need to finance state defence 13.2 per cent were from Vilnius, 17.7 percent, from bigger cities (Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, and Panevėžys), and 22.8 percent, from other (smaller) towns.