

## **Job satisfaction across Europe: differences between and within regions**

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This study focuses on comparison of factors of job satisfaction within Europe. The rare comparative papers on this subject commonly compare Western Europe (WE) and Eastern Europe (EE) by pooling data on the two regions. By contrast, this analysis takes into account dis/similarities within each of the two regions. We use an ordered probit regression model based on European Social Survey 2010 and test the homogeneity of the two WE and EE regions. We apply a bottom-up psychological theory which divides factors into work-role inputs and work-role outputs. The results confirm the existing WE–EE gap in job satisfaction. Some factors show stronger effects on job satisfaction in one region than the other. The effects of gender and education proved statistically significant only in WE. Being paid appropriately is the most important work-role output and increases job satisfaction substantially more in Germany, France and the UK than in the rest of the WE region. Learning new things in work has the strongest positive impact in France, while Russia is the only country with a negative impact. The article provides a more detailed map of job satisfaction levels and its main factors across European countries.

Subjective well-being, happiness and life satisfaction have experienced a huge boom in interest from researchers in many fields. Subjective data have been largely used by psychologists and sociologists and lately also by economists. Beginning with the innovative Freeman (1978) study, economists are increasingly concerned also with job satisfaction. Lower job satisfaction appears to be associated with behaviour of people on the labour market, such as a higher quitting rate (Freeman 1978), higher absenteeism or higher turnover. Satisfied workers might perform better (see Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza 2000b for discussion). Rodriguez-Pose and Vilalta-Bufi (2005) examined the influence of job satisfaction on economic performance across European regions, finding that it might have an even stronger effect on economic growth than education.

The majority of studies on job satisfaction are single-country analyses, with much more attention devoted to Western Europe (WE) than Eastern Europe (EE). In contrast, there are few cross-country comparisons, which are associated with many problems. The relatively small sample sizes in surveys might mean that the models applied do not fit as well at the national level as they do at the ‘all-country’ level (e.g. Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza 2000b). Thus the first aim of the present article is to demonstrate that even an analysis of a single country over time encounters many obstacles, especially in some EE countries.

The problems associated with collecting subjective data are perhaps the reason for the relative rarity of comparative studies. Moreover, these studies either include only WE countries (e.g. Kaiser (2005) with a focus on gender or Origo and Pagani (2008)) or are mainly focused on comparison between the EE and WE regions as a whole. Večerník

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