

Summary

There can be identified two basic theoretical positions in the discussion of the association between lifestyles or tastes and social standing. The theory of homology is derived from the work of Bourdieu and the early ideas about elite and mass culture. This theory supposes that the hierarchy of the social standings is mirrored in the hierarchy of the tastes. High classes usually consume the high culture while lower classes like the popular culture. This idea is opposed by thoughts of some post-modern thinkers. Such authors as Beck or Bauman accent process of individualisation that disrupts strict connection between the social standing and the lifestyle. They say that the influence of socioeconomic determinants on the lifestyle is diminishing in today's western societies. These two theoretical positions could be understood as two opposing hypotheses that should be tested by an empirical research.

The empirical core of this paper is based on the marketing research data from survey Market & Media & Lifestyle 2004 (MEDIAN). I construct the typology of lifestyles represented by the patterns of consumption preferences. Four areas of lifestyle preferences are taken into account: culture consumption, eating, travelling and fashion. The differentiations in these realms are used for the construction of types based on the cluster analysis. Separated analysis for men and women identified four clusters in each subpopulation.

In the final part of an analysis I used multinomial logistic regression to determine the effect of different sociodemographic variables on lifestyle. Education and income as an indicator of one's social standing have significant effect on the differentiation of lifestyles. However, the life cycle represented by age and existence of the family has even greater influence on lifestyle. The inhabitants of Prague are also rather different in their consumption preferences, controlling for the other variables. I thus conclude that it's not possible to accept the post-modern thesis of individualization of lifestyle choices. On the other hand, the cultural homology is also not quite acceptable, especially due to the important influence of the non-socioeconomic variables such as a life cycle.