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QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE CITY OF TÂRGOVIȘTE (DÂMBOVIȚA COUNTY, ROMANIA)

Adrian-Aurel BALTĂLUNGĂ *
Valahia University of Târgoviște, Faculty of Humanities, Geography Departament,
Lt. Stancu Ion Street, no. 34-36, Târgoviște, Dâmbovița, Romania, e-mail: aa_baltalunga@yahoo.com

Monica-Carmen BALTĂLUNGĂ
Secondary School "Mihai Viteazul", Prof. Alexandru Vasilescu, no. 1, Târgoviște, Dâmbovița, Romania, e-mail: carmen_barlad41@yahoo.com

Daniela DUMITRESCU
Valahia University of Târgoviște, Faculty of Humanities, Geography Departament,
Lt. Stancu Ion Street, no. 34-36, Târgoviște, Dâmbovița, Romania, e-mail: danieladro@yahoo.com

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Abstract : Quality of life studies are numerous and of great interest. Beyond their practical utility, are also heavily publicized. The methodologies used are highly heterogeneous, relying on various statistical data and indicators, comparisons and correlations its difficult to make. This study aims a combined analysis of data and statistical indicators with questionnaires applied in the field in order to introduce an qualitative aspect - self-perception. The obtained results have been interpreted, compared, validated through correlation coefficient calculation and predictively analysed through linear regression. The analysis allowed identification trends and the formulation of some conclusions regarding important aspects of quality of life.

Key words: Quality of life, geography, sustainable development, correlation, linear regression, Târgoviște, Romania.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of *quality of life* has gained significant attention in the past two decades, being present in scientific studies (since 1970 in the field of social sciences) as well as in the mass media and everyday vocabulary; hence the theoretical and practical importance of studying it. The concept and studies originated in the North

* Corresponding Author

American society, with President L. Johnson first using the term (Urse, 2008). Some authors attribute concerns about quality of life to the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987) and its definition of sustainable development.

Various scientific fields are involved in studying aspects of quality of life, ranging from sociology and psychology to geography and economics, extending to demography and anthropology, architecture and urban planning, with extensive research in geography, urban planning and other spatial sciences (Tiran, 2016). The relationships between man and the environment are best expressed through human settlements, in terms of habitation and economic activities, which practically represent a synthesis of this interaction (Baltălungă, 2019). The interdisciplinary approach of the concept is quite common and finding a universally accepted definition is challenging. The term *quality of life* (QoL) is frequently used across various scientific disciplines to express the idea of personal well-being within a more complex framework than that related solely to financial income (Mella and Gazzola, 2015). Urban quality of life is a useful concept, overlapping with other well-being concepts such as human development, social quality, standard of living etc. (Mandič, 2005). Depending on the perspective of the field from which the study is conducted, there will be a particularity in the definition of the concept. Of all, beyond quantitative and qualitative analyses, geography can best capture and render the spatialization of phenomena, "differentiating itself from other sciences by using a spatial reference framework and studying the effect of the geographic environment on quality of life" (Pacione, 2003, p. 316); it can also correlate and synthesize the multitude of elements discussed, alongside analysing ecological issues arising within human settlements, social issues, health issues and those concerning leisure time and how it is spent. Due to a wide range of theoretical concepts, the terminology used for discussions about quality of life may be ambiguous or even vague (Biolek et al., 2017). Therefore, socio-geographic research on quality of life should start from understanding the reciprocal interaction between people and their environment (Andráško, 2009). The concept of *quality of life* includes both material aspects (housing, areas etc.) and non-material aspects (environmental quality, social relationships, state of health etc.). The process of identifying and quantifying these aspects and especially correlating them represents a complex and difficult endeavour mainly in terms of the representativeness of elements selected for analysis. Thus, studies related to quality of life should include the analysis of objective indicators (based on statistical data), on the one hand, and subjective/particular indicators (necessary to determine people's perception of quality of life), on the other hand. The past or present economic situation leads to hypotheses about the future situation (Dumitrescu, 2008). A distinction between these indicators, between these categories of aspects, has sometimes been made (for example, by the European Committee of the Regions – CoR, 1999), but only an integrated approach can provide a more accurate picture.

Quality of life can be considered the ultimate goal of sustainable development. Attempts have been made to integrate the two notions (quality of life and sustainable development) into a single concept in the specialized literature (Wiesli et al., 2021). On the other hand, some opinions suggest that the two notions may contradict each other, even becoming antagonistic at times. We support the idea that high quality of life is often accompanied by a significant negative impact on the environment, incurring high costs for its improvement. Objective well-being may or may not be compatible with

environmental sustainability (Malkina and Pykh, 2016). The behaviour of one generation should not diminish the options of another generation (Rawls, 2009). From this perspective, it might be argued that this concept of *quality of life* can decisively contribute to managing local and regional development. Culture and territory should be integrated into any development model that, in order to be durable, must rest upon social cohesion (Mella and Gazzola, 2015). The conditions in which the population finds itself influence history (Dumitrescu, 2008).

In principle, in the initial phase, the improvement of quality of life is determined or even conditioned by economic development. "Quality of life includes all the goods and services, analysed quantitatively and qualitatively, benefiting the members of a human community" (Erdeli et al., 1999, p. 58). The challenge arises as this economic development entails a high consumption of resources (Săgeată, 2013). As a society becomes more complex, the domains of life become more sophisticated (Baltălungă, 2008). The standard of living should also be sustainable, which implies significant costs for all involved actors (citizens, local authorities, the business environment) (Greenwood and Holt, 2010). This involves not only financial costs, but also social and environmental costs. The general idea present in most analyses and studies in this field is that the benefits of improving the standard of living often bring about increased costs that can affect sustainable development.

According to the World Health Organization (WHOQOL User Manual, 1998, p. 11), quality of life consists of "an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value system in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns…". The resulting approach is predominantly qualitative, based on perceptions, influenced by the natural, economic and social environment. While subjective, it is essential to complement it with normative and statistical elements.

The quality of life of European citizens is increasingly present in political debates and decisions at the European Union level (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions), and any study in this field can and should contribute to improving living and working conditions. An example is the set of 11 "European Common Indicators" – an initiative supported by the European Commission and the European Environment Agency (1999). Current European policy concerns include raising living standards, improving living conditions, strengthening social cohesion and combating exclusion, all directly impacting quality of life (Eurofound, 2004). Notably, the European Union considers demographic changes as the most significant trend of the 21st century (Dumitrescu and Baltălungă, 2016).

The quality of housing represents a fundamental element of an individual's quality of life, encompassing both the conditions and characteristics of the residence and the conditions of the surrounding environment (natural and socio-economic) (Trudel, 1989; Vâlceanu and Zulaica, 2012). Housing represents the capacity of the habitat to meet the objective and subjective needs of an individual or group (Baltălungă, 2019). Urban Geography studies show that issues vary from one area to another within a city (Catană, 2012). Thus, the quality of human habitat greatly depends on the distribution of internal structural elements within a locality (Zotic et al., 2010).

From the perspective of environmental psychology, the "person-environment congruence" is considered to be highly significant in residential

environments (Moser, 2009). This involves the interrelation between an individual and their environment.

The rapid dynamics with which contemporary society is changing require a constant update and reconfiguration of concepts, fields and indicators used, particularly considering the disparities or contradictions generated by social and economic development (Baltălungă, 2008).

The indicators used in urban quality of life analysis result from combining a state indicator (...) and an evaluation criterion indicator (...) (Vert, 2001). Developing indicators for assessing quality of life is a constant methodological concern at the international level.

Studies related to quality of life need to include the analysis of objective indicators (based on statistical data) and "subjective" indicators (based on questionnaires) necessary to determine people's perception of quality of life.

It may be said that, essentially, quality of life focuses on individuals and their needs and expectations related to their standard of living. In other words, quality of life refers to the overall well-being of individuals, of society members.

No study can aim to address all aspects related to quality of life due to their complexity and the multitude of dimensions they may take or directions in which they can be analysed. Working with quantitative methods increasingly involves identifying with geocomputation, geographic data science, urban analysis, urban data science, geoAI etc. (Franklin, 2023).

This study aims, from a geographical perspective, to combine a quantitative analysis of the dynamics of indicators strictly related to quality of life with a qualitative analysis based on residents' perceptions at a specific time. It also seeks to verify the existence of causal or reciprocal relationships between these aspects and the possibility of creating a model for analysing such sets of data and information.

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

The City of Târgoviște is located in Dâmbovița County, Romania. It is the county seat (NUTS 3 - Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics, Eurostat 2022, Code RO313), part of the South Region (NUTS 2, Code RO31) and of Microregion Three, respectively (NUTS 1, Cod (RO3) (figure 1). It is the third most important city in the South Region (NUTS 2, Code RO31). Documented since 1396, it was the capital of the feudal state Wallachia for three centuries.

It has a population (by residence) of 89,253 inhabitants as of 1 July 2022 (98,660 inhabitants in 1992 and a peak of 100,813 inhabitants in 1997) and an area of 53.47 km^2 (according to the General Urban Plan revised in 2021), of which 21.60 km^2 built-up area (Naţional Institute of Statistics, 2023), resulting in an average population density in the built-up area of 4,132 inhabitants/km^2. Green spaces – approximately 11 m^2/inhabitant in the built-up area.

This study aims to conduct a quantitative analysis of the dynamics of indicators strictly related to quality of life, from a geographic perspective, and a qualitative analysis from the perspective of residents' perceptions at a given moment. Thus, the proposed analysis combines quantitative methods and aspects, including the study of the dynamics of time series data (related to housing and its quality, - the dynamics of the number of dwellings, their area, the number of rooms per dwelling, the number of inhabitants per dwelling, the habitable space per dwelling and per inhabitant, respectively), with qualitative methods and aspects achieved by applying the questionnaire as a survey

method. Opinion polling is a method of understanding public opinion based on sampling and a questionnaire (Baltălungă, 2019).

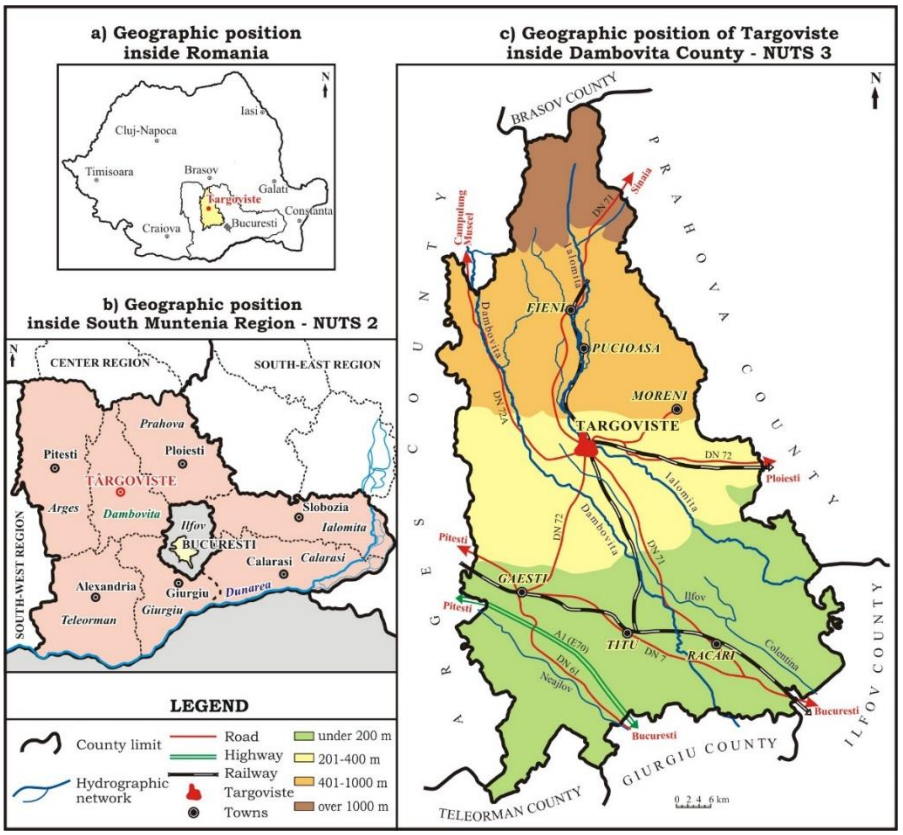

Figure 1. Geographic position of Târgoviște City

Figure 2. Târgoviște City
(Source: Florian Ispas, 2018)

Statistical data used are provided by the National Institute of Statistics via its website. The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions: two related to personal income; two about satisfaction with housing quality; three questions related to social aspects; two questions regarding environmental, cultural and recreational aspects; and a synthesis question, the last one, open-ended, related to measures considered necessary to improve the quality of life.

The sample structure considered gender, age group - adults over 18 years old (18-40 years 34.27%, 41-60 years 38.14%, 61 years and over 27.59% - figure 3 and 4), profession/occupation (8 categories, table 1) and education level (6 categories, from no education to post-graduate studies) - Table 2. The real structure of the city's population was respected, and the sample was proportional to the population in these respective categories. All interviews were anonymous and conducted face-to-face in the field. A total of 521 questionnaires were applied, which means that, under a 95% probability, the margin of error is 4.1%, or in the case of a 90% probability, the results are guaranteed with a maximum error of 3.5%, meaning there is a 90% probability that the responses represent the population's opinion, with a margin of error of up to 3.5%.

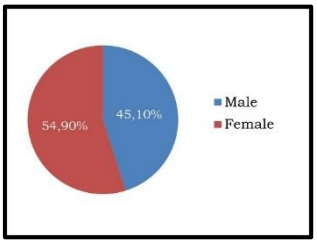

Figure 3. Sample structure by gender

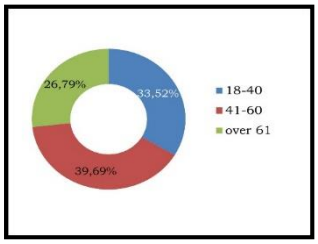

Figure 4. Sample structure by age group

Table 1. Sample structure by occupation

Profession/Occupation	**No.**		**%**	
Gender	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**
farmer	9	8	1,74	1,55
industry	19	6	3,66	1,17
construction	30	4	5,78	0,78
trade and other services	41	86	7,89	16,52
education/healthcare	14	47	2,70	9,04
pensioner	66	63	12,69	12,11
student	33	37	6,35	7,12
other (unemployed)	23	35	4,16	6,74
Total	**235**	**286**	**45,10**	**54,90**

Table 2. Sample structure by education level

Education	**No.**		**%**	
Gender	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**
no education	3	3	0,57	0,57
primary and middle school	22	33	4,28	6,33
vocational school	49	29	9,48	5,55
secondary/post-secondary	112	136	21,36	26,14
university	41	75	7,88	14,40
post-graduate	8	10	1,53	1,92
Total	**235**	**286**	**45,10**	**54,90**

The connection between the previously mentioned quantitative and qualitative aspects was made by verifying whether or not there were correlations between statistical indicators (two sets of data and three sets of calculated indicators were grouped into four pairs) and the population's perception (the 9 closed questions of the questionnaire were also grouped into four categories). This was done using Microsoft Excel (the *Correl* function). The equation for the correlation coefficient is (Correl feature – Microsoft Support) (1):

$$1.\ Correl\ (X,Y) = \frac{\Sigma\ (x-\bar{x})(y-\bar{y})}{\sqrt{\Sigma\ (x-\bar{x})^{\,2}\ \Sigma\ (y-\bar{y})^{\,2}}}$$

where x and y are the means for the samples, AVERAGE(array1) and AVERAGE(array2).

The closer its value is to +1, the higher the correlation, while a value closer to -1 indicates a negative correlation. A positive correlation means that if the values of one set of indicators increase, those of the second set will also increase. A negative correlation means that high values of one matrix are associated with low values of the other. If the value is 0, there is no linear correlation.

Subsequently, apart from correlation (in certain cases), the causal relationship, and a predictive analysis for and between the questionnaire questions were conducted through linear regression, also using Microsoft Excel. The equation for the slope of the regression curve is (2):

$$2.\ b = \frac{\Sigma\ (x-\bar{x})(y-\bar{y})}{\Sigma\ (x-\bar{x})}$$

where x and y are the means for the samples, AVERAGE (known_x's) and AVERAGE (known_y's). This refers to the *slope* function – "the slope is the ratio of the vertical distance to the horizontal distance between any two points on the line and represents the rate of change along the regression curve" (Slope function – Microsoft Support).

Multivariate statistical methods, such as correlation, linear or multiple regression analysis, structural equation modelling etc., have been previously used in similar survey-based research (McCrea et al., 2005; Marans and Kweon, 2011; Tiran, 2016 etc.) or even in interdisciplinary studies tackling the connection between subjective well-being and sustainable environmental development (Malkina and Pykh, 2016).

RESULTS AND ANALYSES

Statistical Indicators

In the first part of the study, a series of statistical data (table 3 - items 1 and 2) were analysed, as well as a series of housing-related indicators calculated based on statistical data (items 3, 4 and 5).

As regards the *number of dwellings*, a very clear upward trend is recorded (figure 5), accentuated after 2010 when the effects of the economic crisis began to diminish. Compared to the beginning of the analysed interval (1990), the increase was approximately 15%. In contrast, the *habitable space* (figure 6) increased much more, by about 62%, as emphasized by the indicator at position

3 (table 3), *habitable space per dwelling*, indicating an average increase of 41%. This is a general national trend explained by people's desire for larger homes after the experience of the communist period when most were small in size and especially communal block-type housing.

Table 3. Housing quality indicators
(* *Data source:* http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table – B10)

No.		1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2021
1.	No. of dwellings*	32.593	32.342	32.696	33.749	34.034	36.198	37.277
2.	Habitable space (m^2)*	1.053.278	1.119.371	1.141.924	1.275.122	1.301.591	1.627.359	1.702.757
3.	Habitable space / dwelling (m^2)	32,31	34,61	34,92	37,78	38,24	44,95	45,67
4.	No. of inhabitants / dwelling	3,05	3,11	3,05	2,93	2,85	2,59	2,42
5.	Habitable space / inhabitant (m^2)	10,56	11,10	11,43	12,88	13,41	17,30	18,84

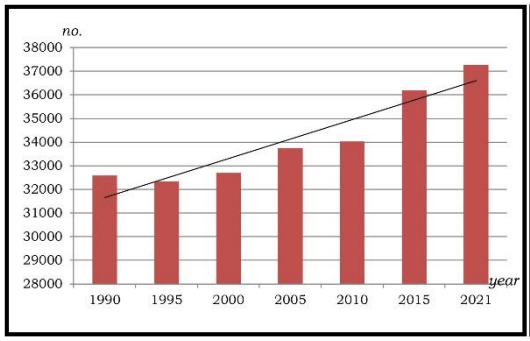

Figure 5. Dynamics of the number of dwellings (1990-2021)

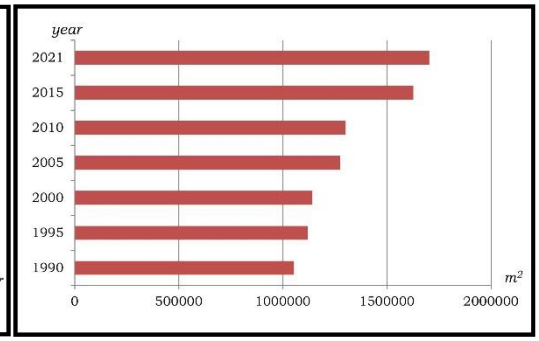

Figure 6. Dynamics of habitable space (1990-2021)

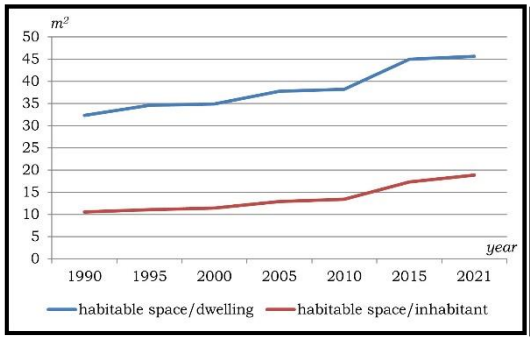

Figure 7. Dynamics of habitable space/dwelling and of habitable space/inhabitant (1990-2021)

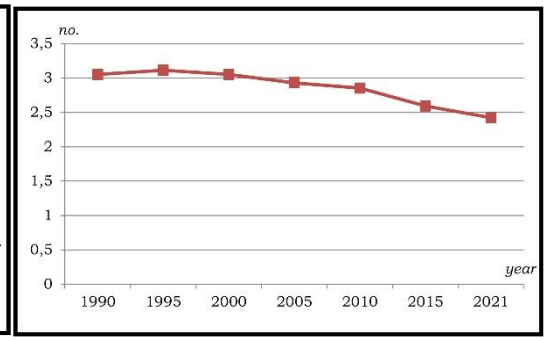

Figure 8. Dynamics of the number of inhabitants /dwelling (1990-2021).

In parallel with the increasing values presented above, a decrease in the *number of inhabitants per dwelling* is observed, approximately 20%, explained on the one hand by the increase in the number of dwellings and on the other hand by the decrease in the number of inhabitants (about 10% compared to the maximum number of inhabitants, a consequence of the decrease in natural growth and high

external migration). Even in this context, the decrease in the number of inhabitants per dwelling contributed to the improvement of quality of life.

The dynamics of the above indicators led to a spectacular increase in the indicator at position 5 in table 3, i.e., *habitable space per inhabitant*, from 10.56 m^2 to 18.84 m^2, i.e., 78.40%, which from the perspective of quality of life is a remarkable fact.

Data and Statistical Indicators Correlation

With regard to data and statistical indicators, pairs of values from table 3 were compared, and the correlation coefficient between them was calculated using Microsoft Excel (the Correl *function*), as follows:

- *a.* the number of dwellings and habitable space (figure 9). The correlation between *number of dwellings* and *habitable space* = 0.989961748;
- *b.* the number of inhabitants per dwelling and habitable space per inhabitant (figure 10). The correlation between the *number of inhabitants/dwelling* and *habitable space/inhabitant* = 0.99069;
- *c.* habitable space and habitable space per dwelling (figure 11). The correlation between *habitable space* and *habitable space/dwelling* = 0.99677;
- *d.* habitable space per dwelling and the number of inhabitants per dwelling (figure 12). The correlation between *habitable space/dwelling* and *number of inhabitants/dwelling* = 0.965463.

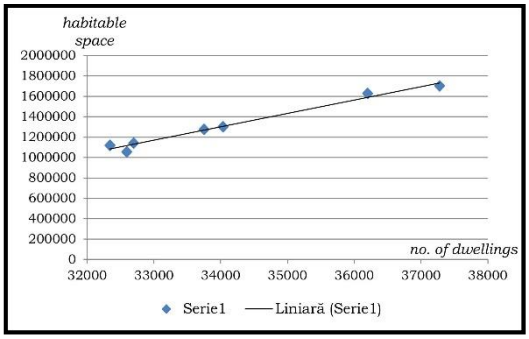

Figure 9. The correlation between the *number of dwellings* and *habitable space*

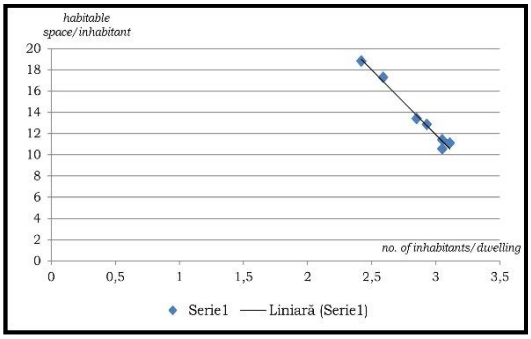

Figure 10. The correlation between the *number of inhabitants/dwelling* and *habitable space/inhabitant*

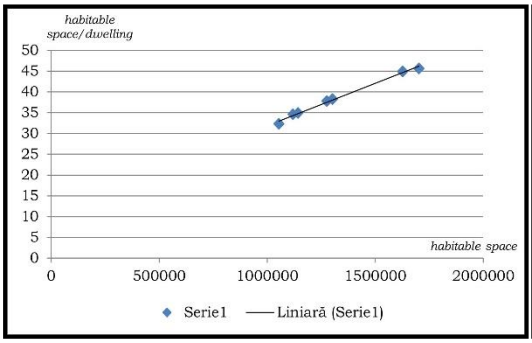

Figure 11. The correlation between *habitable space* and *habitable space/dwelling*

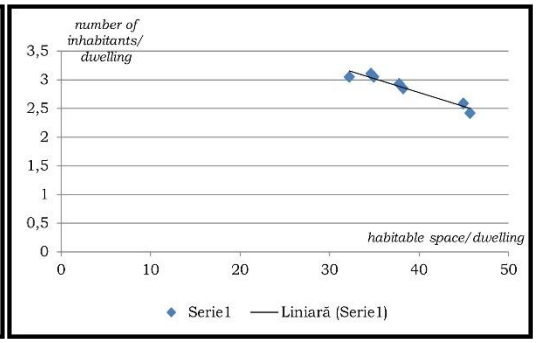

Figure 12. The correlation between *habitable space/dwelling* and *number of inhabitants/dwelling*

The strongest correlation is between *habitable space* and *habitable space/dwelling*, and the lowest is established between *habitable space/dwelling* and *number of inhabitants/dwelling*, with the mention that even the latter has a high value. Practically, all show correlation coefficient values above 0.95, meaning that if the values of one set of indicators increase or decrease, the values of the other set will also increase or decrease. Thus, in this regard, it should be noted that in cases *a.* and *c.* (figure 9 and figure 11), the correlation is direct-positive (increase), while in cases *b.* and *d.* (figure 10 and figure 12), there is an inverse-negative correlation (decrease).

Questionnaire

The first aspects considered were related to income, the status of which was suggested by the responses to the first two questions.

Question 1 (*Are you a homeowner?*) - 63.26% answered *yes*, and 36.74% answered *no*. The resulting values are below the national average.

Question 2 (*Are you a car owner?*) - 48.07% of respondents answered *yes*, and 51.93% answered *no*. In this case, the values are above the national average.

The questions related to the level of satisfaction/contentment regarding housing quality received the following responses:

- *Question 3* (*Degree of housing satisfaction*) - the majority of respondents declared a *high* degree (49.42%) of satisfaction and a *medium* degree (45.19%), while only 5.39% indicated a *low* degree of satisfaction with their own housing. If adult women predominate in the category of those with a *high* and *medium* level of satisfaction (56.81%), in the category of those with a *low* degree of housing satisfaction, the majority are young men, with a proportion of 57.14%;

- *Question 4* (*Degree of neighbourhood satisfaction*) - the same response options were available, and the results predominantly show a *medium* level of satisfaction (58.73%), while only 30.32% indicated a *high* degree of satisfaction with the neighbourhood. Among those with a high level of satisfaction, in terms of gender, adult women predominate (52.5%), as well as those who have indicated a *medium* level of satisfaction with the neighbourhood (57.19%). The highest degree of dissatisfaction was recorded among young and elderly male adults.

For questions related to social aspects (5, 6, and 7), the responses were as follows:

- *Question 5* (*Are you satisfied with urban services and facilities?*) - respondents had to choose among three answer options – *yes*, *no* and *don't know*. A slight majority declared that they are satisfied (54.12%), 30.32% responded negatively, while 15.56% were undecided. The most satisfied citizens with urban services and facilities are women aged 41-60, while the most dissatisfied are both female and male aged 18-40 (young adults), who have higher expectations regarding the modernization of the city, and elderly adults, for whom the requirements are much higher and the offers limited.

- regarding the level of satisfaction with the quality and access to healthcare services (*Question 6*), the majority of respondents express a high degree of dissatisfaction (57.70%).

- *Question 7* (*How do you assess personal and public safety in Târgoviște City?*) - the majority of respondents have a *satisfactory* (48.27%) or *good* (32.95%) assessment. However, it is essential to note the high percentage of dissatisfied individuals, approximately 19%, which is the third-highest percentage of negative responses. The highest satisfaction level is once again

recorded among adult and elderly women, while young adult women consider personal and public safety to be unsatisfactory (40.10%).

As for *Question 8* (*Are you satisfied with the quality of the environment in Târgovişte City?*), the majority of interviewed individuals (63.26%) expressed satisfaction, while the proportion of dissatisfied individuals is quite high, 36.74% (ranking second in dissatisfaction).

In terms of satisfaction with the cultural life of the city (***Question 9***: *Are you satisfied with the cultural/recreational opportunities/activities offered by the city?*), the majority have a positive opinion (66.41%), while the rest are either dissatisfied (13.74%) or undecided/indifferent. The most satisfied respondents are women aged 41-60. The most dissatisfied individuals are from the category of young adults (32.47%) and the elderly (29.18%), whereas the most indifferent are elderly adults.

Question 10, the last one in the questionnaire (*What measures do you consider necessary to improve the quality of life in Târgovişte City?*), the only open-ended question, received a wide variety of responses grouped by neighbourhoods, gender, age groups, education level and occupations. The aim of the question was to identify citizens' public agenda priorities, both at the neighbourhood and city levels. Responses were extremely diverse, finally grouped into 7 main domains (alongside "others" and "don't know"): urban regeneration (major concern for 24.6% of respondents), environmental quality (13.14%), urban mobility (12.50%), socio-cultural and recreational infrastructure (10.55%), social and economic measures (10.03%), public health (9.89%), trust in local public administration (6.40%), others (3.00%), don't know (9.88%).

The analysis of responses by gender reveals that young and adult women are primarily concerned with urban services, living standards, urban safety and the quality of health services, while elderly women focus on social measures and the integrity of the administration. On the other hand, young and adult men are more interested in the quality of urban services and living standards, and seniors are concerned with personal safety, the quality of health services and green spaces.

With respect to the level of education, respondents with a low level of training are more concerned about living standards, social and health services, while those with high school or university/postgraduate studies focus on environmental quality. A common dissatisfaction among respondents, regardless of gender, age and education level, is related to the integrity of the local administration, with extremely low satisfaction levels.

Students are more concerned with waste collection, recreational spaces and infrastructure. Respondents employed in education and healthcare express concerns about pollution, cleanliness, cultural and educational facilities, those working in agriculture, industry, construction and most of the tertiary sector - about urban services and the integrity of the local administration, while the unemployed and those without occupation focus on urban facilities and social services.

Linear Regression Analysis

In the case of questionnaire questions, aiming to yield a predictive model based on causality relationships, an analysis of responses was conducted through linear regression. Responses were grouped into matrices of three rows

and three columns based on age and gender, as well as the number of answer options (figure 13 A).

In the first analysed case, questions 3, 4 and 7 were considered. Thus, in terms of correlation, all exhibit high values (close to +1), indicating a strong correlation. The highest value is recorded between questions 4 and 7, followed by approximately equal values for questions 3 with 4 (figure 13 B) and 3 with 7 (figure 13 C). Predictive analysis through the linear regression slope confirms a closer causal relationship between questions 4 and 7 (figure 14 D) and a (perhaps surprisingly) less close relationship between questions 3 and 4 (figure 13 B).

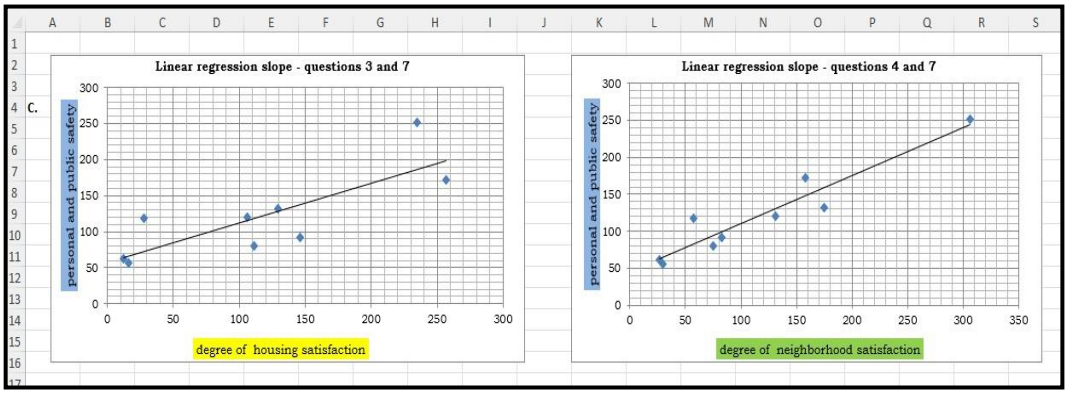

Figure 13. – A: Synthesis of answers to questions 3, 4, 7
B: Linear regression slope - questions 3 and 4

In other words, the highest correlation is between the degree of neighbourhood satisfaction and personal and public safety, a fact also confirmed by a close causal relationship. However, there is no confirmed close direct causal relationship between housing satisfaction and neighbourhood satisfaction.

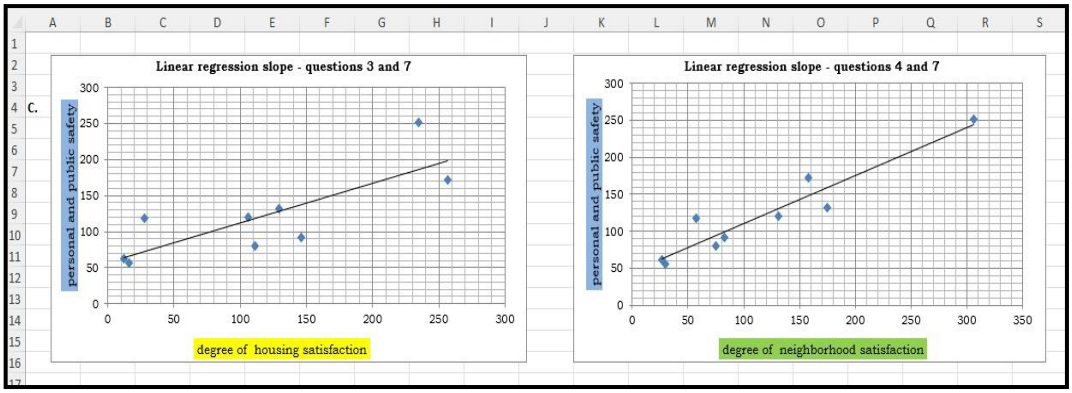

Figure 14. – C: Linear regression slope - questions 3 and 7
D: Linear regression slope - questions 4 and 7

The same analysis applied to questions 5 and 9 reveals a good correlation but a diminishing causal relationship trend (figure 15). It indicates that the possibility of engaging in cultural and recreational activities correlates well with satisfaction with urban services and facilities, complementing the latter, but they, in and of themselves, do not constitute a cause that determines this level of satisfaction.

		yes			not			not know			
Question 5		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
	18-40	33	62	95	29	27	56	14	8	22	
	41-60	51	65	116	21	33	54	13	24	37	
	61+	29	42	71	29	19	48	13	8	21	
	Total	113	169	282	79	79	158	40	40	80	
											slope
Question 9		yes			not			not know			0,73937
	18-40	44	69	13	17	15	32	17	15	32	
	41-60	65	81	146	4	15	19	23	21	44	
	61+	42	47	89	11	10	21	16	12	28	
	Total	151	197	348	32	40	72	56	48	104	
Total *Question 5*		113	169	282	79	79	158	40	40	80	slope
Total *Question 9*		151	197	348	32	40	72	56	48	104	0,67183

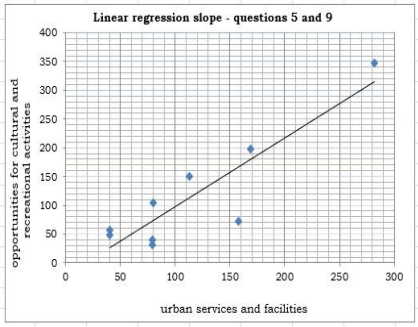

Figure 15. – Synthesis of answers to questions 5 and 9
Linear regression slope – questions 5 and 9

Regarding a potential connection between the answers to questions 6 and 8, the analysis indicates a good correlation and the existence of a causality relationship (slope = 0.724448). Therefore, the citizens of Târgoviște identify both a good correlation and a causal relationship between health-related aspects and those related to the environment.

The analysis and correlated interpretation of data and statistical indicators with the residents' perceptions obtained through the questionnaire has allowed the identification of trends and the formulation of conclusions regarding citizen and local community issues, issues related to the environment and the quality of life.

In the case of the level of neighbourhood satisfaction, a significantly lower proportion of individuals exhibit a high degree of satisfaction compared to housing satisfaction. Although respondents are satisfied with their homes (a result of their own choices, aspirations and financial possibilities), they are dissatisfied with the quality of the neighbourhood (which depends less on citizens and more on the responsibility and results of the activity of local authorities).

Personal and public safety represents a more pronounced concern among women.

Access to and quality of healthcare services top the list of dissatisfactions among those interviewed.

Regarding environmental quality, the majority of respondents express satisfaction. In the case of dissatisfied individuals, young people predominate, potentially reflecting the more intense environmental education provided both in schools and through mass media. A similar explanation, related to school education, may be valid for the elderly, who rank second among the dissatisfied.

Moreover, most citizens are satisfied with the recreational opportunities and cultural activities provided by the city. Overall, the active population is either satisfied or less interested, possibly due to limited leisure time for such activities. Additionally, this group expresses the highest satisfaction with their own housing, possibly explained by spending a larger portion of leisure time at home.

Access to healthcare services, their quality, environmental aspects and personal and public safety emerged as the most important issues based on the proportion of those dissatisfied in the case of the first nine questionnaire questions.

CONCLUSION

As regards the correlation between responses to questions, the one between neighbourhood satisfaction and personal and public safety stands out, confirmed by an increase in personal and public safety with the rising satisfaction with the neighbourhood. However, a less pronounced causality relationship is observed between housing satisfaction compared to neighbourhood satisfaction degree.

The level of satisfaction with urban services and facilities correlates with satisfaction regarding cultural activities and recreational opportunities, but an increase in the former does not automatically result in an increase in the latter.

On the other hand, response analysis indicates a connection between the degree of satisfaction with the quality and access to healthcare services and environmental quality, which is tighter than the one mentioned earlier between urban services and facilities and cultural activities and recreational opportunities.

Overall, some inconsistencies can be observed among the responses to the first nine questions (suggesting an overall positive image) and the last question (indicating a city with multiple issues to address despite appearances). A possible cause may be the respondents' subjectivity, potentially explained by the fact that the last question was open-ended.

Sustainable communities, especially successful ones, should incorporate the perspectives of those living in that area – as they are part of the urban design dialogue.

Analysing all aspects mentioned by the citizens who answered the questionnaire questions reveals the need to create *urban islands*, especially in neighbourhoods located far from the city centre, which will contribute to improving the quality of life.

The arrangement and remodelling of public spaces – squares, plazas, parks, playgrounds, urban furniture etc., are aspects that remain in citizens' focus and can be correlated with the aforementioned urban islands.

The causes of the negative aspects captured in the responses of interviewed residents can be grouped into three major categories: *citizen behaviour* (ignorance, indifference, lack of education), *weak institutions* (inefficiency, incompetence, corruption) and *inadequate* or *unenforced legislation*. It is true that a small portion of the expressed dissatisfaction (below 20%) falls outside the local authorities' competence.

Issues regarding urban regeneration and remodelling (infrastructure and lack of green spaces – the creation of green spaces is considered imperative), environmental quality issues (pollution, cleanliness and waste collection) and urban mobility issues (parking, traffic/circulation and public transport – urgent real solutions are demanded to address traffic congestion and parking issues) have been particularly noted.

A crucial conclusion from question 10 is *the necessity of including community feedback in the urban planning process*. Consulting citizens is no longer optional and should be done every time and with great seriousness, with a genuine desire to understand the perspective of those involved and to take it into account. Additionally, city residents believe they have the right to contribute to changes in the built environment of their neighbourhood and city.

The high proportion of answers such as *don't know*, *no answer* etc. reveals a lack of self-perception in assessing individual needs, a low level of education

and information (Târgovişte experienced significant development during the socialist industrialization period, and this evolution explains or is reflected in the behaviour, attitude and mentality of its inhabitants).

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