

Assessing resident's satisfaction with the housing environment - case study Rădăuți municipality

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Abstract

- ❑ This article proposes an empirical analysis on the perception of the population on the quality of housing within the municipality of Rădăuți .
- ❑ The research related to criteria associated with the characteristics of the housing environment and to the criteria regarding the accessibility of some utilities and services, for each category being selected variables that can be improved by involving the local administration
- ❑ The interpretation of the results allowed the association of the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the respondents with concrete aspects of the settlement, which made it possible to individualize the generating factors of some situations that were negatively appreciated by the population. This fact confirmed the hypothesis that there is an important gap between the needs of the population and the concrete situation of the facilities, utilities and services to which the population has access to, emphasizing the unattractive aspects of the living environment and the anticipated responses of the users to the future conditions.

Introduction

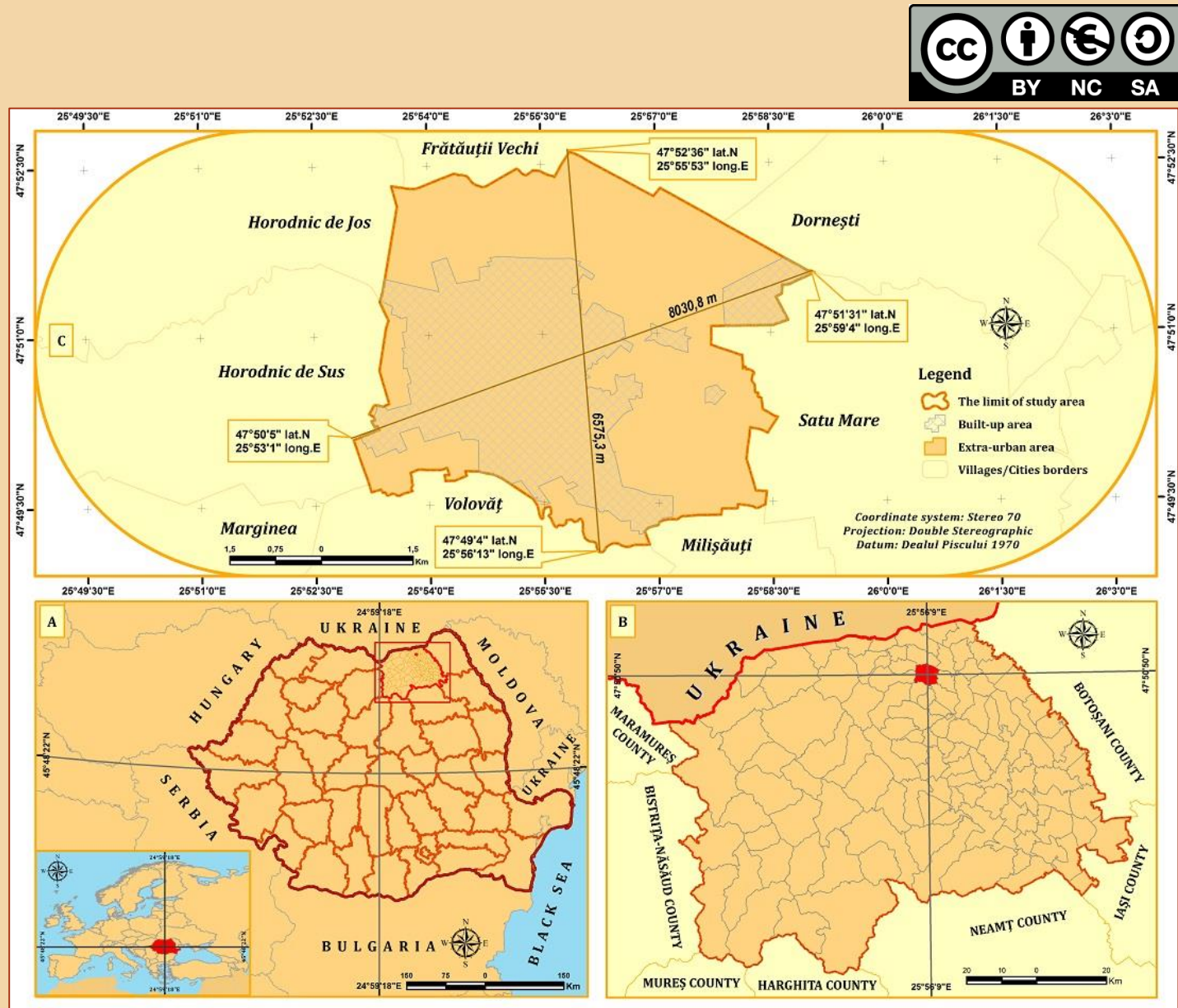
- ❑ Assessing the quality of housing is a major concern of researchers engaged in the study of housing, since the first decades of the twentieth century. Housing quality is a concept complex, integrated, subject to study of a wide range of specialists from various scientific fields: urban planners, architects, geographers, sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, environmental specialists etc. [1]
- ❑ The housing quality is a dynamic and multi-dimensional concept influenced by engineering, social and behavioral criteria [2].

Literature review

- ❑ The purpose of housing evaluations varies as evident in the literature [3]. The main purpose of earlier evaluations was to guide the identification of areas for urban renewal and slum clearance [4]. Later evaluations tended to guide policy formulation [5], housing outcomes [6] and improvement of user satisfaction [7].
- ❑ Quality on the other hand is more variable, referring to how well a product meets the requirements of the customer [8]. In the case of housing, the occupant is the customer.
- ❑ The importance of capturing residents' experiences and perceptions has been stressed by several authors like Campbell & Converse [9] and Scharf [10]. This is premised on the understanding that user perception to a large extent measures the degree of satisfaction of residents with their housing [11], gives indications of the degree of fit between residents' current housing condition and aspiration and can also be used in mapping housing deficits [12].

Study area

- ❑ The studied area is represented by Rădăuți, a town in Romania, the third largest city in Suceava County, which covers an area of 32,30 square km.
- ❑ The town is located in northern Romania, in Suceava County, within the Rădăuți Depression in the Suceava Plateau, a subunit of the Moldavian Plateau, approximately in the center of Rădăuți depression.
- ❑ The mathematical position of the city is defined by the coordinates $25^{\circ} 35'$ east longitude and $47^{\circ} 51'$ northern latitude.



Source: Horodnic V.-D., Graur Diana-Sofia, Afloari, M., Efros, V. *Geospatial analysis of land use dynamics using historical maps and GIS techniques, Case study of Rădăuți, Romania*. In the 4th International Scientific Conference Geobalcanica 2018. Proceedings (ISSN 1857-7636), pp. 577-594. Available at: <http://geobalcanica.org/wp-content/uploads/GBP/2018/GBP.2018.pdf>

Research methods

- ❑ The survey research method was adopted in collecting data. Quantitative data were obtained using a structured questionnaire designed to generate information on housing issues. The main criteria concern: residents the characteristics of the buildings in which the house is located, the characteristics of the house, socio-economic aspects regarding housing and access to services within the settlement.
- ❑ Twenty-four attributes, related to the main criteria, addressing housing quality in the questionnaire formed the basis for this paper.
- ❑ We worked on a group sample, the identification of the subjects was done randomly from the lists of electoral constituencies in the municipality of Rădăuți. The sample respects the proportional shares in the research universe (adult population in the municipality) related to the identification questions.

RESULTS

Respondents' Personal characteristics



Respondents' Personal characteristics	Percent age (%)
Gender	
Male	48,68
Female	51,32
Age (years)	
19-30	24,48
31-65	45,26
Over 65	30,26
Marital status	
Single	31,32
Married	68,68

Respondents' Personal characteristics	Percentage (%)
Employment status	
Manual worker	8,68
Technician /civil servant with secondary education	14,21
Employee with higher education	21,84
Employer	6,32
Unemployed	2,37
Retired	30,53
Housekeeper	13.42
Student	2,63

Respondents' Personal characteristics	Percent age (%)
Monthly income - relative to the national average income (5.300 lei)	
Bigger	20,79
Likewise	38,68
Smaller	22,89
I don't answer	17,64

RESULTS

Characteristics of the buildings in which the house is located



Building characteristics	Percent age (%)
Type of house occupied	
Detached house	27,37
Semi-detached house	3,68
Flat	65,27
Others	8,16
The age of the building (years)	
Under 10	28,95
10-30	36,58
30-50	26,31
Over 50	8,16

Building characteristics	Percentage (%)
Number of floors	
Single	18,41
Two	19,46
Three-five	61,05
Over five	1.08
Location	
Close to the center (under 300 m)	24,47
At a medium distance (below 300 and 800 m)	38,42
Long distance (over 800 m)	37,11

Building characteristics	Percent age (%)
Location in relation to the streets and traffic	
Close to	46,68
At a medium distance	37,39
Away from	13,95
The rehabilitation of the building	
Yes	49,41
No	50,78
Facilities for people with disabilities	
Yes	10,78
No	89,21

RESULTS

Characteristics of the dwelling



Dwelling characteristics	Percent age (%)
Utilities	
Potable watter	100
Hot watter	98,68
Bathroom inside	98,68
Sewerage	98,68
Heating	98,68
Electricity	98,15
Gas supply	73,42

Dwelling characteristics	Percent age (%)
Current tenure status of respondents	
Owner-occupier	76,57
Renter	22,10
Other	1,31
Partitioning	
Rooms	100
Kitchen	100
Bathroom	99,21
Garden	33,68
Terrace	29,73

Space near the dwellings	Percent age (%)
Facilities near the dwelling	
Public green space	50,78
Public playground	31,57
Parking	73,94
Sidewalks	87,36
Resting place	62,36
Street rubbish bins	55
Others facilities	51,84

RESULTS

Housing characteristics



Housing characteristics	Percent age (%)
Occupancy rate	
High / very high	22,63
Middle	43,95
Low / very low	33,42
Endowment with durable goods	
Good /very good	47,90
Satisfying	35
Weak /very weak	17,10

Housing characteristics	Percent age (%)
Natural lighting	
Good /very good	59,73
Satisfying	27,37
Weak /very weak	12,90
Intimacy	
Good /very good	48,16
Satisfying	18,95
Weak /very weak	32,89
Safety	
Good /very good	52,11
Satisfying	24,21
Weak /very weak	23,68

Housing characteristics	Percent age (%)
Thermal comfort	
Good /very good	62,63
Satisfying	30
Weak /very weak	7,37
Acoustic comfort	
Good /very good	33,95
Satisfying	25,53
Weak /very weak	40,52

RESULTS

Access to public services



Access to	Percent age (%)
Commercial services	
High / very high	67,90
Middle	11,84
Low / very low	20,26
Transport services	
Good /very good	36,84
Satisfying	20,26
Weak /very weak	42,90

Access to	Percent age (%)
Health services	
High / very high	47,37
Middle	22,37
Low / very low	30,26
Educational services	
Good /very good	47,63
Satisfying	21,84
Weak /very weak	30,53

Access to	Percent age (%)
Cultural services	
High / very high	26,05
Middle	29,21
Low / very low	44,74
Leisure services	
Good /very good	21,58
Satisfying	34,74
Weak /very weak	43,68

The profile of respondents who are very satisfied and satisfied with the living conditions

- represents 46.58% of the sample;
- they are equally represented by men and women;
- predominates people aged 19-65 years, only 17,51% are over 65 years old, 2/3 are married;
- have occupations that require secondary and higher education (62.15%);
- live in apartments (62,15%) and separate houses (33,9%) , which are mainly personal property (67,80%);
- live in apartments and in separate houses, which are mainly located in new, multi-story buildings (42,37%) which have not exceeded the period of use (38,42%); with a fairly balanced dispersion towards the center of the locality (31.64% say they live far from the center);
- 5 out of 10 respondents mention the proximity of the building in which they live to heavily trafficked streets;
- the access of the house to utilities is very good, also the endowment with durable goods;
- the homes in which they live have thermal comfort (95%) and good and very good lighting (94%)
- the space in the vicinity of the house is close to green spaces (68,92%), it is arranged for pedestrian passage (100%), with rest areas (93,22%), parking spaces (79,09) and street trash cans (79,09%).

The main problems of living in Rădăuți municipality in the perception of the inhabitants who declare themselves satisfied and very satisfied with the conditions in which they live

- ❑ in 19.3% of cases, the home is located in an old building;
- ❑ the lack, in the building where they live, of facilities for people with disabilities (87%);
- ❑ lack of playgrounds specially designed for children (54%);
- ❑ 3 out of 10 people rate the acoustic comfort as low;
- ❑ one third of respondents (35, 39%) are not satisfied with the privacy of living;
- ❑ 43% of respondents feel a lower level of safety;
- ❑ a general level of dissatisfaction is identified related to the access to urban services within the municipality of Rădăuți: 30.51% appreciate the transport services as unsatisfactory; 26% are not satisfied with access to health services and commercial services (22%); 41% are dissatisfied with cultural services and leisure opportunities (38.42%)

The profile of respondents who are very unsatisfied and unsatisfied with the living conditions

- represents 17,11% of the sample;
- they are equally represented by sex and age group;
- 2/3 are married;
- have occupations that require a medium or low level of education; high share of inactive people (retirees) - 8.43%;
- live in apartments (72,3%) and separate houses (15,38%) , which are mainly personal property (90,77%);
- live in apartments and in separate houses, which are mainly located in new, multi-story buildings (89%) which have not exceeded the period of use (56,92%); with a fairly balanced dispersion towards the center of the locality (50,76% say they live far from the center);
- 6 out of 10 respondents mention the proximity of the building in which they live to heavily trafficked streets;
- the access of the house to utilities is good; only 38.46% of respondents state that they have durable goods in the household; only half of the houses are connected to gas; the homes in which they live have thermal comfort (58,46%) and good and very good lighting (55,38%)
- the space in the vicinity of the house is close to green spaces (43,07%), it is arranged for pedestrian passage (69,23%), with rest areas (15,38%), parking spaces (73,84) and street trash cans (33,84%).

The main problems of living in Rădăuți municipality in the perception of the inhabitants who declare themselves satisfied and very satisfied with the conditions in which they live

- ❑ in 56,92% of cases, the home is located in an old building;
- ❑ the lack, in the building where they live, of facilities for people with disabilities (93,85%);
- ❑ lack of playgrounds specially designed for children (83,08%);
- ❑ 5 out of 10 people rate the acoustic comfort as low;
- ❑ 7.69% of homes do not have sewerage; 50% of respondents estimate that they live in houses without thermal comfort; one third of respondents (20%) are not satisfied with the privacy of living; 49,23% of respondents feel a lower level of safety;
- ❑ a general level of dissatisfaction is identified related to the access to urban services within the municipality of Rădăuți: 66,15% appreciate the transport services as unsatisfactory; 46% are not satisfied with access to educational services and health services (38,46); 46,15% are dissatisfied with cultural services and leisure opportunities (47.69%)

Conclusions

Strong points

- a large share of the city's inhabitants are satisfied and very satisfied with the living conditions
- landscaping and access to utilities for most existing homes;
- a large part of the houses have been rehabilitated and modernized;
- diversity of municipal services that are designed to meet the needs of residents;

Weak points

- 50% of homes have exceeded their useful life;
- insufficient development and territorial distribution of urban services;
- poor service of some spaces inside the city with basic equipment
- poor modernization of transport infrastructure;
- the level of security felt by the inhabitants is medium to low
- the low degree of privacy felt by the population living in apartments located in collective housing

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