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Quality of life in Romania

QUALITY OF LIFE IN ROMANIA

with an Introduction study by Professor Cătălin Zamfir,
Corresponding Member of the Romanian Academy

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ISBN 973-618-031-X

Published in 2004

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The *Expert* Publishing House

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FOREWORD

This book contains a selection of texts from the book “Calitatea vieții în România” (Quality of Life in Romania) published by Expert Publishing House in 2002.

We consider a social-human array of problems of general interest and specific at the same time to each of us. In fact, the quality of life can be identified in the everyday life, each of us has his/her own experience of life, which remains unknown to the others without a proper scientific investigation.

Although the reflections on the quality of life can be traced back to the early written history in various philosophic and religious papers and later on in sociological, psychological, economic papers, the approach to this topic from a distinct angle is only a few decades old. The beginning of the investigation paradigm in the quality of life, which forms a distinct perspective on the human society, originated in the US scientific and public action approaches of the ‘60s and ‘70s of the 20th century, as well as in the preoccupations of several international bodies (UN, UNDP, UNESCO, WHO, ILO, etc.), period after which they experienced a rapid international expansion, the more so as they could be related to certain studies and practices established in different countries.

*In Romania, the most important contribution to the introduction and development of quality of life investigations belongs to Professor Cătălin Zamfir, Corresponding Member of the Romanian Academy, author of the Introductory study to this book. Among the pioneering papers in the quality of life produced by Professor Zamfir, we may mention here the co-ordination of a survey starting with 1975 and of the related volume of papers published in 1984, **Indices and sources of variation of the quality of life** (Political Publishing House). This paper was an important source of inspiration for the surveys conducted by the Institute for Quality of Life after 1990.*

A short but relevant history of quality of life research in Romania is presented in the Addenda to this book.

*The **paradigm of the quality** of life is formed by assessing the states of fact (actions, events) that affect one way or another one or several persons, possibly social groups and categories, up to overall the population of a given country, an not only, by the particular population. It follows that the major*

issue here includes the assessments from inside, rather than the assessments from outside (although they are not excluded altogether). The people themselves assess their own life within a scientific survey approach to diagnosis, analysis and explanation.

The sources of data to be used by this book consist, mainly, of 10 national sociological surveys conducted annually between 1990-1999, concerning the diagnosis of the quality of life in Romania, as well as other surveys conducted by the Institute for Quality of Life or by other institutes; we also used statistical data.

We would like to thank warmly to all those who received us in their homes (about 25,000 families) and who answered our questions, not always pleasant, but necessary in order to produce a scientific approach to knowledge. We would also like to thank the officials from the prefectures and town halls who supported us in the field investigations (among which the access to election lists enabling us to produce nationally representative samples).

We do not forget our colleagues and collaborators either (researchers, field operators, administrative staff), in the range of hundreds, who, at least during one year, contributed to the field investigations.

We would like to mention the decisive role of Academician Tudorel Postolache in establishing the institute and in supporting it, in his position of Director General of the National Institute of Economic Research under the aegis of the Romanian Academy. We also thank all the persons who held or hold managing positions in the National Institute of Economic Research (NIER), the members of the Scientific Council of the NIER, the staff of the Centre for Economic Information and Documenting, and the Expert Publishing House for their support.

The points of view expressed in the book belong exclusively to the authors and they should not be extended in any way to other persons and/or institutions.

The Editor

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

EVOLUTION OF QUALITY OF LIFE RESEARCH TOPICS: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

by Prof. Dr. Cătălin Zamfir
Corresponding Member of the Romanian Academy

The fact that the topics of sociology are strongly dependent on the context of the society they are developing in is a theorem solidly proved. The topics of quality of life research is no exception to this. It is clearly sensitive to the context. Within different social contexts, the concerns for the quality of life have different significances. The review of the experience that has built up during the past three decades shows clearly that both the interest for the quality of life and the approach are not dictated only by the pure logic or research, but also, maybe even more, by the social configuration.

The exploration of the relation between the social context and the topics of quality of life research provides, besides a better understanding of the profile of research analyses, an extremely interesting perspective on the profiles of the society itself. The global human reaction within a given social context becomes thus particularly intelligible.

The concept of quality of life became the focus of political, ideological, philosophic and particularly sociological concern starting with the '60-'70s in the capitalist western countries, but it also experienced a special popularity in Romania of the '70-'80s and immediately after the Revolution. As far as I

know, this was not characteristic to the other socialist countries, where a certain ideological reservations persisted about the area of the quality of life.

The Western context

The topics of quality of life formed a “fold” of the history of capitalistic society. The analysis of its evolution opens a new perspective on the main stages, from the standpoint of the global human orientation, which the Western society experienced after World War Two. This is not about the stages of the economic or social-political evolution, but about the successive configurations of the global human experience, including human attitudes, aspirations and seeking, as they are shaped by the social-economic context.

Three large stages can be distinguished in the social-economic evolution of the Western capitalistic countries to which, as I shall try to suggest, distinct human experience correspond:

1. The stage of the effort of economic and social-political reconstruction: end of war until the late ‘50s.
2. The stage of the economic boom: the late ‘50s and the ‘60s through the ‘70s.
3. The stage of the new economic stress of the expansion towards the final limits of market economy inclusion: the ‘80s – ‘90s.

From the viewpoint of the philosophical and scientific expressions of the human experience, the last two stages are distinct configurations that deserve to be analyzed in detail.

The ‘60s and the ‘70s: economic boom accompanied by the crisis of meaning of the capitalistic civilization and start of the total humanist program

The topics of the quality of life, which exploded in the Western countries during the ‘60s-‘70s, represented a positive reaction of getting out of an unexpected human crisis of the capitalistic civilization in rapid expansion. It could be included in the wider orientation of the *post-materialism*, expressing the perspective of a society with a high standard of living, experiencing a fast process of economic growth.

The '60s and the early '70s represented a distinct period for the Western countries. After the stress of World War Two and of the period of rehabilitation, the collectivities experienced a fast and substantial growth in the standard of living. The human experience in this context was shaped first of all by several fundamental conditions.

The first condition regards the economy. The Western world experienced a fast pace of economic growth based on a privileged economic, political and technological position in the world. The lack of competition made this economic growth relax and seem durable. At the same time, this growth released significant economic resources for a wide range of non-economic programs. First, we witnessed a sharp development of the *welfare* state, which yielded a feeling of consolidated security and high optimism concerning the future welfare. The welfare state developed an important circuit of meeting the human needs, outside the actual economy. A typical example is the slightly utopian but credible project of the *humanized enterprises* focusing on a high quality social and human inner environment. Two enemies to the economic performance were hidden in this fold of history: on the one hand, the inner human factor (the satisfaction of work became the essential motivator), on the other hand, the public image of the enterprise, its social acceptance.

The second condition belongs to the field of social psychology: a stressed dynamics of possibilities *versus* aspirations. The generation that was confronted with the severe restrictions imposed by the war and then by the reconstruction woke up in front of an explosive development of the opportunities. The multiplication of opportunities led to what was frequently named during that period, **an explosion of aspirations**. However, if we look at things from the perspective of the present time, we could say that at least for a wide segment of the population, the opportunities increased much more than the needs for consumption. This lag created a mass *availability* for something else than material consumption. Cumulated with the lower demand for economic activities (less working hours, longer holidays), a large availability was created for *other* kinds of goods than those offered by the actual economic consumption. This availability, which was not covered by crystallized

social activities, generated a feeling of “emptiness”, of seeking “something else” in life.

Pressed by the poorly satisfied basic needs, economy focused, and it was only natural to do so, on meeting the “material” needs. The explosion of supply led to a certain saturation of the demand. Other needs, still vaguely defined, which were met neither by the economic offer, nor by the social services of the state, started to become manifest. Under these circumstances an idea took shape, that economy doesn’t meet all demands; that besides the economy, other non-economic activities must be developed, to meet the new requirements through their own mechanisms. The concept of post-materialism considered not just the orientation towards new non-material, but at the same time non-economic needs, meaning needs that were not satisfied by the market economy. These needs seemed to be achieved outside the economic system: neither did they require important economic resources (and they did not require an effort to obtain the economic resources to get them) nor were they produced by the economic system.

In other words, the economic system developed on the premise to meet the basic needs lag behind the explosion of “non-material” needs. This lag was responsible for the social movements that have shocked the ‘60s: the famous *hippy* phenomenon and the burst of student movements in 1968. These social movements were characterized by a radical contestation of the establishment built around the so-called consumption society. The contestation covered both the material consumption and the economic benefits.

Ideologically, the crisis of human meaning of the “civilization of consumption” yielded a combination between a **program of global humanization** of the social life and the reactions, often surprisingly violent, against the capitalistic civilization. The stage can be characterized briefly by **global humanism**, targeted towards the reconstruction, by humane measure, of the entire social life and by **anti-consumerism**.

In sociology, the answer to this crisis of human meaning of the Western civilization took mainly the following three forms:

-
- In the analysis of the dynamics of the **value orientations**, the program of detecting the new “post-materialist” trends crystallized.
 - The **topics of quality of life** were a constructive reaction. The sharply increased, but not so much required resources seemed to be available to improve the quality of all the spheres of life. A cleaner and nicer both natural and built environment. A life gradually freed of the concern over tomorrow and of the sorrow of consumption reduced to the limit of survival. A more human and satisfying working life. Quality relations between persons, in the family, on the street. The people seemed to treasure more, above a given stage, a highly human satisfactory work, than a well paid work: the program for making work more human, for increasing the human quality of work, otherwise said, for the *quality of working life*.
 - The **topics of alternate life styles**. In the ‘60s there was a whole sociological movement focused on the identification of the *alternate life styles*, initiated and coordinated by the Swedish sociologist Galtung. The standard life style generated by the establishment was considered to be a product of the market economy: work for a benefit / benefit for consumption. Such a cycle seemed to enclose the human life in a tight circle, narrowing it beyond reason. On the one hand, many of the most important human necessities, the non-material ones, that could be satisfied by non-economic consumption, were poorly, if at all covered. Although very important to the human development, the people were poorly aware of their importance and the supply to satisfy them was by far unsatisfactory. This is a cycle that Marx had formulated excellently: not just the need yield the instrument to meet this need, but the offer of goods also yield the appropriate needs; without the product, without the offer, the need remains in a poor state of awareness, vague and thus quite latent. Starting from this mechanism it becomes now clear how the mechanism of market economy induces over-consumption in certain areas: where production is

profitable, the supply is substantial, in turn, the supply develops the appropriate needs, which finally, generates an oversized consumption. The term of consumerism was frequently used in that period to denote a specific pathology: the deformation of the system of needs of the human individual and of meeting these needs, therefore, of the consumption. While the non-material, non-economic needs remain poorly satisfied, the material needs are covered in excess. Human life seemed to take place under the imperative: buy! consume! throw away! buy!.... On the other hand, in order to get the resources needed to cover the artificially raised economic consumption, the individual is compelled to work more than necessary for a balanced satisfaction of his/her actual, authentic needs. The artificially raised material needs generate a pressure towards overworking, excessive working, which in turn, deforms the human life.

Which are the alternate life styles?

First, refocus the life on the true human needs. This refocusing was to decrease the need of economic resources and, therefore, of economic effort. Freed of the obsession of overworking, mankind gained a free space of development – giving shape to a major direction of the quality of life. The international project promoted by Galtung was to stimulate national reports on the trends that may be identified in the different, developed or poor, areas of the world, of crystallization of such alternate life styles.

Consumerism was considered to have a destructive effect not just on the life of the individual, but also on the collective life, on the whole planet. It leads to material overproduction, which strongly affects the limited natural resources and destroys the environment. A lower pace of the industrial development in order to alleviate its destructive effects on humanity is easily achievable by decreasing over-consumption. On the other hand, consumerism is one of the factors responsible for the worldwide increasing economic inequity. Slowing down the economic consumption and directing the consumption towards non-economic areas was thought to be a major way to cut down the worldwide inequality and provide for the development of third world countries.

The '60s may be considered as a period that witnessed the birth of a net type of humanism, establishing a program of humanizing the social

life comparable to the one during the Renaissance. Man was trying to find himself, this time freed from the servitudes of the struggle for survival, to identify his *authentically human* needs, rethink and rebuild its life according a new logic, a global and authentic logic of the human nature. Man wants to gain back the position in the centre of the universe, rebuild its whole world by its own measure. The quality of life promised to become the instrument of such a reconstruction by human measure.

The theory of young Marx on the authentic human nature became an important intellectual resource of that time, being one of the main sources of the new humanism. The most representative intellectual development of this new mechanism, with an enormous influence during that époque, was the *humanist psychology*. Maslow's theory of the human nature became, despite the rigorous scientific limitations, probably the most influential psychological pattern of the program of humanising the different areas of life. Although not very popular in the standard field of psychology, in the reform programs of the organisations, in the management books, it became the reference psychological pattern. The same happened to the multitude of humanist therapy patterns.

The '80s - '90s: fall back on the earth

The '80s experienced a dramatic and unexpected change of perspective in the Western society. All the ambitious programs of humanising society and redirecting the individual and collective life, so much tempting and seemingly solid and durable, vanished actually overnight. During the last four decades of the past century a giant historical experiment unfolded in the Western countries, which I am sure, will captivate the analysts of the future, as enough time passes by.

The following changes have generated such an overturn.

Economy. The economic growth became problematic being due to increasing stresses. The oil crisis was the first shock, which generated a strong pressure to rationalise and innovate throughout the whole industry. Less spectacular but durable competition on the world market increased. The new modern economies of the different parts of the world

cancelled the until then undisputed supremacy of the West. Even the competition within the Western countries became a powerful stressing factor. The satisfaction of work and the human quality of work ceased to be a program of action, remaining something more like desideratum. The place of humanising work was taken by other imperatives with often contrary effects: effectiveness, technological innovation, rapid adaptation to market requirements. The place of claiming free time as a space for human development was taken by claiming work as a space for profit. The new economic conjuncture cut down brutally the interest in human development and alternate life styles, bringing the people again to work. The place of the human paternalism of the past decade was taken by the owners' organisations partnership to cope jointly with the increasingly sharp competition.

The rapid extension of marketisation in meeting the human needs

The distinction between the economic and non-economic needs, which seemed very clear during the past decades, lost rapidly the clear delimitation of its boundaries. A dramatic expansion of the economic offer occurred. The economic system tends to overtake rapidly the satisfaction of many needs that seemed impossible to meet before with the mechanisms of the market economy. Counselling during the difficult moments of life, social work, culture, peace of mind, harmony, individual development, all can be achieved through market economy mechanisms that may provide, in principle, any service at high quality and low price. The concept of non-economic need seems to have lost its purpose. Any need can be satisfied by the market. Margaret Thatcher's program of social service marketisation was probably the most articulate in this respect. Any service, any good must be produced business-like.

Reconsideration of the significance of the economic gain. The post-materialism philosophy suggested that the effort of obtaining economic resources is, beyond a given limit, counterproductive. This conclusion was natural under the circumstances in which the satisfaction of many non-economic, non-material needs was not met by economic mechanisms, therefore did not incur economic resources.

Such a supposition ceases, however, to be decisively true. The large majority of the needs, irrespective of their nature, can be satisfied by economic needs. Therefore, the individual economic resources increase in importance. A materialist refocusing, that is focusing on gain, emerged. The idea of shorter working time starts to sound more like a limitation of the opportunities rather than a condition of the human development.

Reconsideration of the welfare state and of the public, non-economic mechanisms of satisfying human needs. The fast, even explosive development of the welfare state in the '50s-'70s meant, among others the promotion of some public mechanisms, different from the market mechanisms, of meeting a large array of needs. The increased concern and responsibility for meeting some needs of the individuals was equivalent to the decrease in the personal concern and effort. Not just the reach of a critical point in the evolution of the welfare state, beyond which it exceeded the financial resources available to the community, but also the reconsideration of the system of goods production changed the basis of the problem. The consumption of free benefits based on eligibility and qualification according to social and moral criteria is beginning to be replaced by consumption based on own resources. A new logo appeared: "*increase the financial contribution of the beneficiary*". At least partially, the state withdraws from the function of meeting some types of needs. In the best situation, a partnership was established between the state and the beneficiary individual in sharing the costs. Free education is gradually replaced by a system which "diversifies its financial resources" including by contributions from the beneficiaries. The same situation occurred in health care. Unemployment peaked, and the unemployment benefit decreased and was limited in time in order to promote reinsertion in the labour market. New logos and principles emerge: avoid the danger of dependence (on the state, of persons in difficulty)! Increase the persons' capacity for autonomous life (consumption based on own resources)! The effects were complex. In the enthusiasm of the '60s, the taxes increased in order to support a consumption achieved by other mechanisms than the market. One of the major objectives of the new ages is to cut down taxation, letting the individual decide its own consumption and achieve it through the standard means of the market.

Instead of radical, coherent and global, highly structured humanism founded mainly on the humanist psychology and on the program of quality of life, a new theoretic paradigm emerged, designed by the concept of **postmodernism**: man decayed from his position of coherent centre of the universe, with the ambition of shaping it by his own measure, and became part of a confuse complex. Human life ceases to be the object of a program of coherent organisation by promoting the logic of authentic human needs. It tends to fragment in an infinity of coloured bits of glass that no longer shade light coming from its own logic, but which rather shine as reflex of a wider mechanism with an external and diffuse logic.

Postmodernism can be regarded as expressing sociologically and philosophically the spirit of the new age.

What happened with the field of the quality of life? The concept was assimilated as one of the important intellectual instruments of the public discourse, designing a criterion of human performance, an objective to be reached by different systems. Its connection to an articulate program of action proved to be rather pale. No spectacular contributions seem to have emerged in the field of research during the past two decades. As expected, a trend has appeared to place the attention given to this field in the background. The same has happened to the complementary topics of the life styles. The life style, as an important resource of the quality of life and social reorientation, became a rather marginal concern. The idea of alternate life styles practically disappeared.

Romania: the '70s-'80s

Curiously, philosophically and ideologically, both the capitalistic society and the socialist society of the time shared a trend towards global humanism and a program of human reconstruction of the society, but with different motivations and orientations.

The period of the '60s-'70s was one of unusual ideological opening. Due to a specific conjuncture characterised among others by increasing the distance from the Soviet Union and, complementarily, by a strange ideological liberalisation characteristic to the '60s, a specific

ideological pattern crystallised, having a two-sides orientation: reformatory / critical. On the one hand, a specific reformatory orientation consolidated: the trend to force the reform of the new socialist system by including some current topics of the Western countries, particularly under the shade of science and implementation of science in the process of leading the society. So, a lot of “fashionable” Western topics were taken over rapidly in domestic discussions. The regime was very tolerant to these topics, trying thus to prove the increasing distance between it and Moscow, the shorter distance towards the west, and its opening towards modernisation. Of course, the intent of launching such topics was not just the reform, but somehow the criticism of the system. The dominant finality was, however, the attempt to force the system to change. Often though, the assimilation of such topics was neutralised by their including in the ideology of the system.

In this context, the fast assimilation of the topic of the quality of life in the domestic discourses was no surprise.

As a subject of sociologic research, it just happened that I introduced it in the late ‘70s. As a subject of philosophical reflection with ideological impact, it had already become one of the new topics with increasing popularity. A few books have been written on quality of life topics. As I remember, Pavel Apostool published a book that included in its title the phrase “quality of life”. During 1973-1974 I was a visiting professor in the United States, at the Ann Arbor Institute of Social Research, Michigan. Among others, the institute had the most extensive program of sociological research in the quality of life. They had a set of indicators measuring the quality of life and they did some extensive empirical surveys.

Towards the late ‘70s, in our country, a group of sociologists launched a research program on quality of life and life styles topics. This program gathered many colleagues, sociologists particularly, on a strictly voluntary basis.

The program started several empirical surveys and theoretical and methodological studies. Briefly, here are some noteworthy publications of this group. In 1980 a collection of translations on subjects of quality of life and life styles was co-ordinated by Cătălin Zamfir and Nicolae

Lotreanu. In 1978, an extensive empirical research was started on the quality of life in urban areas (Elena Zamfir, Ion-Andrei Popescu, Ștefan Ștefănescu, Alin Teodorescu, Lazăr Vlăsceanu, Cătălin Zamfir) using the standard American methodology, the results being published in 1984 (**Indicators and variation sources of the quality of life**).

Also in late '70s, together with Ion Rebedeu, I co-ordinated a program on the topic of **Way of life and style of life**. Several papers resulted: **Way of life and the quality of life** (co-ordinated by Ion Rebedeu and Cătălin Zamfir – Political Publishing House, 1982), **Life styles** (Cătălin Zamfir and Ion Rebedeu– Academy Publishing House, 1989), **Culture of the interpersonal relations** (Elena Zamfir – Political Publishing House, 1982), **Excursion into the human universe: new hypostases and dimensions of happiness** (Albatros Publishing House, 1989). (Editor's Note: see the Addenda in this volume).

The topics of quality of life and life styles had a completely different significance in Romania than in the west in '70s-'80s.

The topic of quality of life enjoyed from the beginning a very wide interest, rather ideological and political, than actual scientific. It offered a way to discuss the performance of the communist regime from the point of view of the final criterion – human welfare – accepted as such by the pattern of the communist ideology (man as the supreme objective of the whole social construction), as well as by the population which was more and more affected the sacrifices it had to endure from the policy of the communist regime, which was actually indifferent towards the people. The subject had a two-fold significance: a combination of reforming attempt to push the system to consider population welfare and to criticise the negative performance of the regime. Particularly after 1980, when it became increasingly clear that at least the regime of Ceaușescu had no reserve for internal change, entering its final crisis, the discussions of the quality of life had only a critical function, but they became rather frustrating. Beyond its ideological significance, quality of life analysis was an interesting opportunity for theoretical and methodological exercise in the field of sociology.

The topics of life styles had a special significance in the '70s. In the socialist ideology there was a traditional subject concerning the socialist way of living. It was supposed that, besides the construction of a new type of society, a new way of life, socialist, was also to take shape.

The identification of the tendency to build the new socialist way of life was a standard topic. Obviously, such topics brought about nothing interesting: some platitudes, strongly imbibed by a naïve ideology of how the new man should live in a completely new society, which had no connection with the actual socialist society. During the '70s, however, the problem of the life styles had a different significance, somehow similar to the one in the West. Socialism, succeeded during the '60s-'70s to bring a moderate welfare. It was obvious however, that for an indefinite period, the economic resources were to be limited or at least in a moderate increase. A country with a modest standard of living, with no perspective of spectacular increase, in which the individual effort towards the maximisation of resources was structurally limited, the improved utilisation of the existing resources in a more satisfactory and better organised life style, seemed to be an important way to maximise the quality of life. The life style could thus represent an important resource of the quality of life. The resources, as modest as they were, provided by the socialist economy, could be used better or worse. There was here a space for increasing the quality of life by amplifying the individual competence. Furthermore, challenged by the destructive social forces, the life style was still a sphere of positive construction, which could resist the processes of social dissolution.

The crisis of the '80s was to blow away any hope, in the sphere of the quality of life and life styles as well.

Romania after 1989

After the 1989 Revolution, quality of life was one of the possible research topics. The tradition in research was a positive factor, but maybe not the decisive one. A favourable context for starting again quality of life surveys immediately after the Revolution were the expectations and illusions of the Revolution itself. People hoped that additional resources would be made available immediately, which would increase the quality of life. The problem was how to direct the resources. Maybe the most important thing was the hope in a rational and global social reconstruction. This was an illusion generated by any social break: the collective would become active in designing its own change, and a program directed on the idea of the quality of life was very

promising. The establishment of the Institute for Quality of Life Research (IQL) within the Romanian Academy had important consequences for the subsequent evolution of the topics. For the first time a unique perspective was created: a global approach to the quality of life, in which the analysis of the subjective welfare, standard topic of the previous sociological analyses, was to join the analysis of the objective configuration of the income and consumption. Finally, the political perspective of welfare added: quality of life as an objective of the social policy. The new institute, even from the very beginning, developed these three distinct perspectives: the subjective welfare, the economic resources and the social policy. Other indicators of the quality of life added later on: health state, crime rate, etc.

The dynamics of the Romanian society configuration stressed inevitably some components of this research program. First, the economic crash generated by transition, particularly brought under criticism the incomes and social policy of correcting the distribution of incomes, particularly concerning the poor segments. It is not a coincidence that three major research programs have started from the very beginning of our activity:

Program 1: Quality of life diagnosis, which resumed the previous approaches in the new context. Between 1990 and 2000, yearly diagnoses of the quality of life were done using standardised instruments. The annual diagnosis of the quality of life is a single data base achieved during a period with extremely rapid social and economic changes.

Program 2: Standard of life and poverty diagnosis. Special attention was paid to the standard of living (income, consumption, housing conditions) as a central component of the quality of life. It was obvious from the beginning that transition would affect the quality of life, particularly by the economic resources of the standard of life, that poverty will be the most significant cost of the changes, as early as 1991, a research program on the dynamics and distribution of income was set out, focusing on the diagnosis of the poverty processes. Because the statistics of that period did not provide representative data on the population's standard of living, a set of three empirical surveys was done on nationally representative samples: 1991, 1994, 1994. The results of the surveys were included in a first report on the state of poverty (1993) and in 1995 in a book on the diagnosis and configuration of poverty.

Program 3: Social policies. In the context of transition, the social policies were from the beginning a key variable in promoting the quality of life. On the one hand, the welfare state had to be reconsidered in the new society under construction, and, on the other hand, the intervention of the state was vital in providing for a socially protected transition. In 1993 the institute published the first strategy to reform the system of social protection. The research in social policy, which was an important direction of the activity of the institute, materialised in several books and studies, in two master degree programs and one doctor's degree program, in collaboration with the Bucharest University.

During such a troubled period of transition, the concerns for the quality of life had to be developed towards the analysis of some social groups with special risks. The institute paid special attention to the situation of children, the Roma population and the elderly, the analysis having a global perspective, joining the diagnosis of the conditions of life with the analysis of the supportive social policies.

The life style studies, although approached several times, were seemingly not encouraged by the dynamics of the current social context. Transition was not a time for the smooth construction of the personal life, for focusing on the life style. We are living in a stressed society, in which the most important direction became, to a limit, the struggle for a minimal decent standard of living, and to the other limit, the primitive accumulation, in a late historic context of wealth. Such a configuration of social orientation caused the quality of life studies to focus on the economic standard of living and the social policy perceived as the most important instrument of social protection of the collective during the dramatic process of social and economic changes.

What can be foreseen on the future evolution of the quality of life topics?

Paradoxically, if the concerns for the quality of life were associated with the exploration of the non-economic resources and directions of life, transition redirected the interest towards the economic infrastructure of life and towards the social policies focused on the minimal protection of the standard of living.

The dramatic economic fall pushed, for most of the population, in the foreground the provision or survival conditions, while for the middle class it was a decent standard of living through stressed efforts, often by overtime and a high degree of stress.

In turn, the government attempted to find solutions to the extremely complex problems, often in desperate situations: on the one hand, how to provide for the reform of economy, stopping the process of dissolution and attempting to start the growth, and on the other hand, to how provide a minimal standard of living for a huge part of population. The topic of quality of life is expected within this context to become an abstract formulation, with no role, or maybe just a marginal one, in the practice political discourse.

A certain ebb of the concerns for the quality of life was observed in the Western societies, too, as an effect of a combination of other types of factors: on the one hand, the marked stress of a highly competitive economy, and on the other hand, the shattered internalisation of some sub-objectives of the quality of life in the current policy. The stress seems to be here, too, on achieving some minimal standards in different spheres of life and less on the global humanist approach to which the concept of quality of life is bonded.

For the time being, at the world-wide level, the topics of quality of life seems to have lost attractiveness as the core of a program of global humanisation of the society. At least in this fold of history. It subsists as sociological research topic that may present a special professional interest, however, without an important impact on the programs of actual social development.

It might be considered that the quality of life as a central topic of the global concern may occur under special conditions:

a. A world free of the stress of military confrontations, terrorism being a new type of destructive threat that will block the generation of global concerns of human development.

b. A world free of the stress of brutal competition, in which a large segment is formed of the ones that lose, and today's winners may be the ones that will lose everything tomorrow.

c. On set of a new cycle of socio-human development. In its first stage of emergence, the topics of quality of life tended to be shattered in the process of conversion into sub-objectives. A given end of focusing on sub-objectives may generate a new type of crisis of assembling the sectoral objectives within the global objective of the quality of life. This time, quality of life will no longer be a principle generating specific sub-objectives (how to organise the different spheres of life in order to increase the global quality of life), but a globalising core: how to assembly the different sub-objectives that are largely assimilated in the functioning of the actual social system, so as to maximise the global objective.

Furthermore, the quality of life must become a concept which should expand from the individual situations of life to the collective ones. It must be organically assimilated within the social policies: the quality of life policy will be concerned with assembling the sectoral policies in a global political objective of increasing the quality of life.

Chapter 1

SIGNIFICANCE OF QUALITY OF LIFE RESEARCH

If we consider the general topics of the social research (sociology, anthropology, social psychology), we notice that one way or another, they all involve aspects connected to the life of people. There is no other way to do it. **The reason for conducting social research is to know the life of the people.** Yet, although it may seem paradoxical, the actual investigations in the quality of life appeared rather late in the history of social research. Indeed, contrary to the temptation to identify the **beginning of actual quality of life investigations** somewhere long ago, maybe even in the ancient writings, the experts indicated the **first half of the 7th decade of the 20th century**. Although the term as such was used before the mentioned period, the concept of “quality of life” emerged first in the United States and it was rapidly assimilated in Europe, not just due to its attractiveness, as a syntagm bearing an **assessing value on the human life**, at the level of the individual, community, group, society or planet.

No doubt, other kinds of connections have been made and are still made between the concept of quality of life and different other approaches to the human life. Here are some arguments that we have here something new, not as much by the object of investigation, but as the **content revealed by a specific paradigm of approach**, one that without conforming to the common sense on the idea of quality, involves the **assessment (self-assessment) by the population of its own life, by**

checking some differences of degree, order or size. This fact allows comparisons between the quality of life of some communities or between different moments within the same community. Of course, it is not our intention to diminish the value of the different other related investigations. Our interest is not targeted towards making subjective hierarchies, we simply want to reveal the specificity of the paradigm investigating the quality of life and thus apprehend as much as possible the knowledge it brings; we also try to prevent the attempts to dilute this specificity up to its elimination by attempts to determine a certain continuity with other investigation and to melt it down into a pre-established design.

Before the period in which the assessing concept of “quality of life” took shape, and after it, expressions such as “the life of people”, “the life of nations” or even “the quality of people’s life” were used and are still used. The contexts in which such concepts are used refer to **general notions characterising different populations, groups, communities, ethnic groups or nations.** This is expected to be so, because the assessing concept of “quality of life” does not cover all the situations in which the traditional, previously mentioned expressions are used, as well as the investigations of the quality of life do not cover at all the whole range of social research.

The inclusion of the quality of life as general objective of the sociological knowledge is remarkably highlighted, for instance, in the ending paragraph of the paper *Sociological imagination* (published by C. W. Mills in 1959) ... “the sociological issues, if properly formulated, must incorporate, at the same time, the attempts of individual life, as well as social, conflicting problems, history and biography, the whole sphere comprising the intricate relations between them. It is in this sphere that the life of people takes place and societies are forged, and it is in this sphere that the sociological imagination has the opportunity to **distinguish the quality of human life** in our time” (*my mark, I.M.*) (translation by Political Publishing House, 1975).

I highlighted the expression “quality of human life” not to draw the attention to the fact that Mills would be the origin of the studies of quality of life, but because he speaks of the quality of human life as of a general objective of knowledge in sociology. In fact he is not even concerned with the assessing concept of “quality of life” even if such expressions are more

and more used, by mass-media as well. Bearing in mind this general objective of the social knowledge, we might consider that the investigations in the quality of life are just sociological investigations and nothing more. Yet, there are arguments, according to which the **paradigm “quality of life”** is not limited to sociology, rather **it is an interdisciplinary paradigm**. A fact is beyond dispute – it is not just the sociologists who conduct quality of life surveys, although they had important contributions even from the beginning by defining the concept and the paradigm of approaching by the empirical investigations in this field as well, without which the whole thing would have remained in the state of project.

Indeed, besides sociologists, the psychologists, economists, ecologists, doctors, demographers, anthropologists, and even the specialists in engineering and natural sciences are interested in the survey of the quality of life. A perverted effect of this quasi general interest is the approach by some specialists of just some limited aspects of the quality of life, in agreement with the curriculum interests of the investigators. Nevertheless, in order to have a proper approach of the quality of life, we consider it is necessary to have an interdisciplinary approach to the general background of this investigation, provided by sociology as the science of the social, to which the quality of life belongs. Otherwise said, the quality of life can not be understood without the contribution of sociology, as the latter is not enough to form the new research paradigm mentioned before, which is a social one.

The formation of the new paradigm required the contribution of other sciences too, economy first of all. This was done decisively in the 6th – 7th decades of the 20th century. This is what J.K.Galbraith writes in his book *The New Industrial State* (published in 1967 as a continuation to a previous book from 1958, which already invokes the idea of quality of life), concerning the necessity to emancipate the man from the domination of the economic purposes, so they can not have an improper monopoly on life to the detriment of other more valuable purposes: **what matters is not the amount of our goods, but the quality of life”** (*my mark, I.M.*). Also, the cover of the book includes a phrasing particularly relevant to this approach. It expresses the neighbouring of economy to the social and thus to sociology, which made possible the subsequent investigations in the quality of life. It said that we have **a fresh and lucid**

examination of the economic society and of the quality of modern life” (*my mark, I.M.*). The second part of the quotation is similar to the objective stated by Mills. Obviously, it was not Galbraith that founded the study of the quality of life when he published his paper in 1967, the studies were already in progress. The syntagm used by Galbraith can be also found in a famous speech of President Johnson (1964) and the assessing concept of quality of life had already been incorporated in the scientific and political speech. The merit of Galbraith and of other economists was that by asking to eliminate the domination of the economic on the life of man, a break was created in the economic theory of the post-industrial state. The idea was backed up by Galbraith in a much later book (1996) *The Good Society – The Humane Agenda*“. The good society must consider the institutional structure and the specific human features, already shaped and unmovable”. Thus, the good (perfect) society is that in which there is as good quality of the life of people.

Meanwhile, the assessing concept of “quality of life” took its full shape, although the first time it was mentioned as an entry in a dictionary was in 1979, as mentioned by A. Szalay (1980), as a term included in *Sociological Abstracts*. This information is supported by subsequent publications that have mentioned it, too. For instance, the study *Quality of Life Research and Sociology* published by K.F. Schuessler and G.A. Fisher in *Annual Review of Sociology*, No. 11/1985. The authors consider that the interest in sociologists for studies on the quality of life is expected to increase in the future, although at that time the topic was rarely presented in the reputed journals of sociology, despite the several books published on this subject. Kyriakou S. Markides in the *Encyclopaedia of Sociology*, ed. Borgatta and M. Borgatta (1992) gives credit to these statements including them in the ample presentation of the concept of “quality of life”.

As far as the actual beginnings of quality of life research are concerned, there are enough arguments to place them in the North American society during the mentioned period, in connection with the preoccupations to define the **national objectives** and measuring the degree of achieving these objectives through **social indicators**. The latter expresses characteristics of the public interest in the social processes, mentioning both **objective social indicators** (of

state) and **subjective social indicators** (of perception and assessment of the objective states). So, the **completion of economic indicators with social indicators represents the actual beginning of quality of life research**. The economists played a significant role in promoting this idea. The idea did not emerge so much as an implacable evolution of the research interest in different fields, but as an **innovation, creation**. We do not think that the significance of the concept of quality of life can be determined better if we tie it to some previous concerns in different sciences or to the specific papers in which it was stated and which referred to the analysis of the consequences of the technological development (in particular of the American space program), or of the economic growth, because its significance is rather tied to a new state of attitude on the human issue.

No doubt, we must also consider the contributions of other social sciences: sociology, economy, social psychology, from ecology, mass-media and the politics. They are rather ex-post factum elaborations, of assimilation of the new concept. It is particularly interesting to find out how natural this assimilation in very diverse fields is, which tells us a lot about the relevance of the new concept.

The attempts to relate the paternity of the assessing concept of “quality of life” to one discipline or another only deprive it of the significance that may be given to it and to narrow the area of applicability, even if certain connections can be determined, such as those with the sociological and psychosocial studies on happiness, satisfaction, life style, etc. Such papers were written by Burgess and Cattrell (1939) *Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage*; Gurrin, Veroff and Feld (1960) *Americans View Their Mental Health*; Nexgarten, Havinghurst and Tobin (1961) *The Measurement of Life Satisfaction*; Cantril (1965) *The Pattern of Human Concerns*.

Other analysts focus on the concerns of the ecologists for environmental protection or on the studies of economists on the standard of living, level life, function of utility (the quality of life being assimilated to welfare), and on the medical studies on the post-treatment recovery of the sick.

In fact, without being reduced to any of the mentioned fields, quality of life research includes them all in its new approach. It is indeed wrong to try and limit quality of life research to any area, such as

happiness, satisfaction, life style, economic standard, environmental protection, working life quality, post-treatment recovery, etc. The described situation, of different identification of the founding sources of quality of life research, is facilitated somehow, as already mentioned, by the fact that we do not deal with the establishment of the new paradigm, in which it is to be defined explicitly, but rather with partial contributions along several years. Of course, the topic of social indicators also has its own history. Thus, the Belgian A. Quetlet (1796-1874) concerned with the theory of the average man, published in 1835 his paper *Sur l'homme et le développement de ses facultés, ou essai de physique sociale*. Much later, in 1920, A. Niceforo, in his paper *Les indices numériques de la civilisation et du progrès*, considered by P. Lazarsfeld as a first attempt to “measure life” brings us much closer to the significance of the concept of “social indicator”. These papers were known to Simion Mehedinți, who was also concerned during 1926-1928 by the characterisation of the life of a people by its work and tools.

During the same period, in the United States, President Hoover appointed a commission to study the social trends. The president of the Commission, W. Ogburn, had published previously, in 1922, a paper *Social Change with Respect to Culture and Original Nature*. The report of the commission was published in 1933 under the title *Recent Social Change*.

During the post-war period of the '60s, the idea of national objectives triggered a large political and scientific activity. This is the period when presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson appointed commissions to define the national objectives. Concomitantly, studies are conducted in universities on the consequences of the technical development and economic growth. Thus was formed the area of concern of the '60 – '64, which launched the concepts of “social indicator” and “quality of life”. In 1962, the American Academy of Arts and Science published the first report for the NASA concerning the consequences of the space program, followed by a second report in 1966. This was one of the most remarkable papers with this topic, *Social Indicators*, by R. Bauer. The main authors of the volume, B. Gross and A. Biderman have contributed by their previous activity to the dissemination of the concepts of “social indicators” and “quality of life”. The terms had

already been widely accepted by 1966 by the political leaders of an international organisation (UN, UNESCO) as well. The political component did not delay too much. In early 1964, the “The Great Society” program was set out by President Johnson. The Great Society is nothing else but a society with a high quality of human life.

Here are some excerpts from the paper mentioned earlier, in which Johnson presented the program: “Great Society is the place where the last of us will find satisfaction and the best of us will probably find grandeur. We will all respect the dignity of the others and will admire the results of the others” (*My hope for America, 1964*). “We can open the door to education, to useful work and to a well deserved leisure time not just for the few privileged, but we can open it to everybody. These purposes can only be measured by the **quality of our life** (*my mark, I.M.*). Millions of Americans gathered wealth and discovered that ownership alone is not enough. They need a change to gather knowledge, reach the beauty, enjoy the success, the family and community” (*Remark of the President, 1964*). This type of society “presumes not just how much and how good, not just how to create wealth, but also how to use it, not just how fast we go, but where we go. It proposes as first test for a nation the quality of its population” (*State of the Nation Message, 1965*).

K. Merkides (*op. cit.*) mentioned (according to Campbell, 1981) another quoting of the 1964 presidential message: “The task of the Great Society is to provide to the population the social environment, capacity and structures which to provide a real source to pursue their individual happiness. Thus, the Great Society is concerned not by how much, but by how good, not by the amount of goods, but by the quality of people’s life”. The last expression can also be found at Galbraith in 1967 in the context of the economic theory.

It is well known that in the United States, more than in any other country, the prevailing idea was that the economic growth was the fundamental objective of the society, which would bring welfare to everybody. The strong commitment to this creed continued to be manifest, although it was noticed that despite the remarkable economic results in the post war period, not all the population reached a proper level of welfare. Although the Great Society program was not conceived as another type of welfare state, it also played such a role. Thus it draw criticisms from the opponents. This is not the most important thing, although the implications of social policy must not be ignored. The program was, before all, a program of the quality of life for the whole nation.

The concept of quality of life brings us closer to the American, West European pattern of development of the post-war period, where by substantiated social policies, the welfare state was built, which was not directed exclusively to the poor, but included them as citizens having the right to a better life.

The delimitations we make are not intended to take out the problem of the poor from the topics of the quality of life, we just want to underline that they do not form the basic content of the new approach, by which the material aspects are brought to their real importance as long as they are confronted with a constellation of human purposes.

Also in 1964, B.M. Russett from the Yale University published *Political and Social Indicators* (two other editions in 1972 and 1983). Two years later, in 1966, when *Social Indicators* was published, the Report of the National Commission on Technology, Automation and Economic Progress was published, which analyses a system of social accounting adopted subsequently by the social report of the Department of Education, Health and Work in 1969, *Toward a Social Report*. Several sociologists and economists have been involved in these papers, such as: D. Bell, *The Idea of Social Report*, O. Mancur, *The Plan and Purpose at Social Report* (both studies published in Public Interest 1969), O.D. Duncan, *Toward Social Reporting* (Sage, 1969) (also see G. Lucuț, doctoral thesis, Institute of Sociology of the Romanian Academy, 1999).

During the '70s, other papers were published, which consolidated the new approach of knowledge. J. Wilson published in 1967 *Quality of Life in the United States: An Excursion into the New Frontier of Socioeconomic Indicators*. The French J. Delors (*Les indicateurs sociaux*), B. Jouvenal and others are the European pioneers of what was to become an international movement on the social and quality of life research indicators.

Scientific meetings are organised, some sponsored by the UN, on the subject of social and quality of life indicators. In fact, the UN, through its institutions, manifested as a supportive environment or the research of the social indicators, including by publishing manuals. *Social Indicators Research* journal appeared since 1974 (main editor A. Michalos).

Among the pioneers of this movement, besides the names already mentioned, one may also find K. Land, W. Moore, E. Sheldon, A. Campbell, P. Converse, W. Rodgers, R. Quinn, F. Andrews, S. Whitey, S. Seashore and many others.

The Romanian sociologists, economists, psychologists also joined this new approach from the early years of the 7th decade by articles published in field journals (See the Introductory Study and the Addenda).

Before we take other steps in quality of life analysis it is necessary to point out some significance of perceptions and self-assessments in this type of research.

Due to the research experience of the past three decades, the necessity of knowing the perceptions and self-assessment of people concerning their life in order to determine the quality of life in a human collective is quasi generally accepted.

An adequate interpretation of these perceptions and self-assessments requires the clarification of their nature. As a matter of fact, these are the display of individual mental elaborations, particularly relevant to understand the life of our fellow citizens from the outside. Related to a state of facts that concerns the life environment and/or the subject that supplies information, the perceptions and self-assessments express what people think in a personalised reality, a image dependent on the person that shares its perceptions or self-assessments. The phenomenon involved here does not limit to observing the different capacity of people to observe and judge a certain state of facts. It is something far more complex, the reality lived by each and every individual. What we obtain by studying the perceptions and self-assessments of people is the individually filtered reality, and the filter in use varies from a group of population to another. In quality of life analysis we observe that the perceptions and self-assessments are not completely independent from reality, but they can get significantly remote from the economic reality. Indeed, several studies whose results are presented in this book, shows the existence of a certain degree of dependence of the perceptions and self-assessments of the population on the existing state of facts, even if sometimes, the association measured in terms of statistics is at the lower limit of significance, as there are cases when no such statistic connection can be established, and sometimes the states of fact that the perceptions and self-assessments refer remain unknown to the researcher.

At the same time, besides the reference to the state of facts, including those unknown to the outsider, the perceptions and self-assessments include a whole set of expectations, interests, motivations, moods, norms, values, political, philosophical or religious options, as well as the public and opinion and other elements that may influence them one way or other. All these aspects determine important variations in the perception and self-assessment of the quality of life from one person to another, from a social group to another.

The personalisation of perceptions or self-assessments makes impossible to be determined from the outside. In the different normative judgements released by an assessor (researcher, politician, any other person) in connection with the desirable values of the quality of life indicators, one cannot ignore the personal importance that our fellows attach to their lives, if we want to remain in the area of the plausible credibility, knowing that people react on the basis of impressions, judgements, knowledge about certain aspect of life on which they focus at a particular moment.

From the specificity of perceptions and self-assessments we infer a range of consequences for the knowledge of the perceived quality of life: one and the same state of fact can be perceived identically or differently; rather different states of fact can be perceived as different or identical by two or more persons or by the same person in different moments and/or circumstances. For instance, for similar levels of income, some persons consider their material resources are insufficient, possibly place themselves in the area of poverty, while other persons consider their material state is satisfactory, even good; also, there are persons with significantly different material resources, for an external observer, perceive the same level of satisfaction of their life requirements. These examples may continue for any other dimension of the quality of life, including the identification of cases when what from the exterior seemed to be more favourable for a person or group than for another one (person or group), their perceptions are inverse: the lower level of income is self-assessed more favourably by a person or group than another person or group with a significantly higher income. There are situations in which the perceptions and self-assessments are rather relevant for the psychological states of the people, their states of spirit, type of personality, than for states of the external environment.

These aspects get amplified in the case of the projections in the future (such as “How will the world look in ten years” or “What do you think about how you will live after ten years”) or for the assessment of past states. The past and future are judged according to the current state of the person, to his/her current experience, the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction and frustration specific to a particular moment. The optimistic persons are more confident in the possibilities of making right some adverse states, they are oriented towards the present and future. The pessimists, however, glorify the past and project a bleak image on the future. In the studies on large communities, there is a chance that the exaggerations in one direction or another compensate for each other, the result being closer to what is characteristic in general of that collective.

Knowing the specificity of the data of quality of life perception and self-assessment, we may understand better the importance and significance of the results obtained by researchers on this subject and we are warned that the normative judgements are not adequate to this area, meaning that from the outside we cannot know what people think. A state of fact assessed from the outside as favourable (good, positive) does not lead automatically to a quality of life perceived as high, just as a state of fact less favourable is not associated automatically with a quality of life perceived as poor (bad) for each of the involved persons and, maybe, for none of them. In order to know what the people think about a certain aspect of their life or about life in its whole, we have to ask them. At the same time, based on the perception of a state of fact, one cannot attribute merits, possibly unmediated responsibilities, to someone for the activities that form the object of perceptions and self-assessments by the population: a government perceived as good is not necessary a good one, but it could be; similarly, if it is perceived as managing poorly, it does not mean it is actually this way, but it is a fact that in this latter case it did not succeed to convince the population about its capacity, or, maybe, the effects of its activity are not conclusive in relation to the expectations of the population. The manner in which the population perceived the government (to stay with this example) has consequences, however. People will react at the next elections, reconfirming or rejecting a new mandate of that government (party). A value perceived as low for a social area or other is a warning and requires intervention to improve the states of fact and to respond to the

expectations of the population, while even a value perceived as high does not exclude the requirement for such interventions. The expression “improvement of the population’s quality of life” is improper anyhow, if we consider that the action aims to change the states of fact in the desired direction, change that may lead or not, in time, to the change of the values of the perceived quality of life. It is obvious, however, that in practice one cannot ignore the effects of the dynamics of the involved processes, natural or social ones. The failure to consider the effects of the evolution of the states of fact may affect the quality of life of those self-assessing their conditions of living. For instance, the polluting factors act on the state of health of the individual, even though that individual may consider them harmless or harmful. On the other hand, the perception of the existence of a potential danger may lead to a defence reaction, avoiding thus getting ill, but we may also expect the psychical affection of some people up to the development of stress situations that deteriorate that person’s state of health, even in the absence of the polluting factor. On another plan, the social one, we may expect that the wrong decisions of a popular government affect negatively the population supporting that government, just like an unpopular government may be beneficial, by the measures it adopts, to the populations that abhors it.

But beyond these limitations we may expect the existence of a compatibility between the states of fact and their perception by the population in large communities. Thus, the good and well paid jobs, the unpolluted environment, harmonious social relations, almost equal opportunities for accessibility to education and professional career, high quality services, the respect paid to the citizen in the public activity and other similar aspects lead to a quality of life perceived as better than in the situation when the above-mentioned conditions are not met.

We present subsequently the relations between the quality of life and social indicators, the new perspective on society introduced by quality of life research, as well as the profiles of the diagnosis of the quality of life perceived by overall population and by certain subpopulations (specific groups).

Chapter 2

QUALITY OF LIFE AND THE SOCIAL INDICATORS

The definitions of the literature converge towards underlining the complex character of the quality of life. Thus, one of the first extensive papers dedicated to social and quality of life indicators stated both the pragmatic information gathering in order to see if things are going well or bad socially, or concerning the life of the population, and the multitude of elements that have to be considered: participation, affection, status, respect, power, security, liberty, self-achievement, beauty, creativity (R. Bauer, ed.1966).

Also having a practical finality because it shows what man (collective) can do to change and improve the conditions of living, the concept has a high **assessing** character. It included not just the life conditions (nature, habitat, household management, social relations, health care, education, leisure, economic resources, working conditions, opportunities of participation, quality of the administration), corresponding to the different areas of life (biological, working, family, social group, etc.), but also the assessing indicators-criteria of perception of the objective states and of satisfaction.

The field of quality of life can be defined as the **assembly of elements** making reference to the physical, economic, social, cultural, political, health situation in which people live, **the content and nature of their activities, the characteristics of the social relations and**

processes to which they participate and the services they have access to, the patterns of consumption they adopted, their manner and style of life, assessment of the circumstances and results of the activities that correspond to the expectations of the population, the subjective states of satisfaction/dissatisfaction, happiness, frustration, etc.

The social indicators reflect certain features of the social phenomena and processes being at the same time elements of the practical action. They express both the objective state of the social systems - structure (composition, relations), functionality and performance – and their subjective state (satisfaction, dissatisfaction) (C. Zamfir, 1976).

The elaboration of the social indicators considers the information requirements and the requirements for the organisation and management at a given level of social structure (economic units, territorial communities, nation).

To become a social indicator, an element it has to be submitted to systematic investigations to determine the extent to which it can fulfil successfully different functionalities (attributions) of the social indicators, such as:

- a) Means of information on the state of a social field of interest, a means of social diagnosis;
- b) Means of investigation of the social–political objectives in a given field;
- c) Means of analysis, assessment and interpretation of the different phenomena, relations, social processes and actions;
- d) Instrument of the prognosis of the social development;
- e) Means of materialising certain objectives in a given field;
- f) Means of monitoring (measuring) the changes in the evolution of the particular phenomena (“natural” or induced changes), of determining the trend and consequences of a given.

Thus, if any indicator has to be relevant in relation to what it indicates, a social indicator also has to be functional at the level of the management and practical action, it also has to be useful as an instrument of the practical action. On the one hand, not all indicators can fulfil such a function and, on the other hand, it would not be economical that all these indicators be used as social indicators needing data to be gathered

systematically from large communities, which would presume a huge volume of work; their useful utilisation would be very difficult. The selection of the social indicators for a given field is done according to a set of criteria:

- a) Informative value of the indicators;
- b) Indicator relevance for the practical activity at different levels of social organisation;
- c) Existence of the informational basis of those indicators or the possibility to create one;
- d) Possibility of organising data gathering to provide information, in dynamics, for the selected indicators;
- e) Possibility of assembling the indicators into a system to yield descriptive and applied models of the field they represent.

As noticed, part of these criteria aim at the level of the present knowledge (a and e), another part (b) refers mainly to the field of practical action and decision, while the others (c and d) address mainly the technical means (equipment), material and human resources available for the development and maintenance of a proper system of information.

The experience of the social research shows that it is not possible to develop relevant indicators for a given sector of the social life as long as they approach just one side of the process of scientific knowledge. In fact, the strategy of indicator development involves both a theoretical (conceptual) analysis of the investigated phenomena, and their empirical investigation stressing one aspect or another, according to the tasks to be fulfilled and to the level of knowledge of the particular phenomena. Thus, there are two complementary ways of developing the indicators:

- a) from theory towards empirical research;
- b) from empirical towards theoretical construction.

In elaborating relevant indicators we notice a formal side, much standardised (for instance, Lazarsfeld's design) and a side of content, which influences the technical approach. A paradigm of elaboration does not yield automatically the relevant indicators. It just shows the activities that are performed, having thus an euristic role, a guide to research. The actual progress of the prescribed operations depends on a multitude of

theoretical and individual elements specific to each researcher, hence the diversity of solutions proposed for the same field of the social reality.

A brief summary of these activities or stages of the social indicators development could be the following:

- a) definition of the investigated field (conceptual analysis);
- b) determination of the objectives for which the system of social indicators is developed;
- c) related level of social organisation;
- d) concept specificity, by determining the main sub-fields of the particular phenomenon (dimensions);
- e) elaboration of the operational (descriptive) design by setting the plausible indicators suitable both for the field and the proposed objectives;
- f) data gathering for the empirical indicators;
- g) indicator analysis: power of discrimination, of containing and rejection in relation to the indicated, area of non-determination, independence, relevance, normalisation, standardisation;
- h) analysis of the relations between indicators (homogeneity, internal consistency);
- i) selection of the optimal social indicators in relation to the previously mentioned criteria (external validity, inter-exchangeability);
- j) implementation of the system of social indicators;
- k) utilisation (functioning) of the system – institutionalisation.

Both activities concerning the social indicators have been initiated world-wide. Among these approaches, we mention the UN handbook on social indicators.

The UN handbook is meant to be a guide for the construction of the system of social indicators in any country, following certain peculiarities according to the level of the economic and social development (*Handbook on Social Indicators*, New York, United Nations, 1989). Here is the list of areas and problems recommended to be taken into consideration: population – natural movement, international migration, demographic structures, national and ethnic groups; settlements and

dwellings – geographical distribution of the population, urban and rural areas, stock of dwellings and construction of new dwellings, water and sanitary installations, rents and expenses on the dwelling, power consumption by the household; household and family – size of the household, consumption, marriages, divorces, fertility; health care and health services – mortality and morbidity, disabled persons, diseases, health care, resources, nutrition, consumption of alcohol and tobacco; teaching and education – level of education an illiteracy, school enrolment, adult education, professional training, costs; economic activity – participation of the work force, non-occupied population, occupation, unemployment, work benefits, conditions, level of qualification; social economic groups and social mobility – occupational structure, intra- and intergeneration mobility; income, consumption, wealth – level, increase and structure of household income, level, increase and composition of the consumption, distribution of the income and consumption, level and distribution of wealth; social security and services – protection against losing the income, use and importance of the protection; leisure time, culture and communication – use of leisure time and cultural activities, facilities, expenses, mass communication means; public order and individual safety – frequency and severity of crimes, characteristics and treatment applied to delinquents, institutions of justice, staff.

In relation to the previous concerns (a first handbook was published in 1978), new elements have been introduced, such as the international migration (concerning the population), the handicapped, consumption of alcohol and tobacco (health care), school dropout (education), unemployment, non-occupied (economically) population, distribution of wealth (income), economic protection (social security). The handbook also recommends to consider four special groups of population – women, the elderly, the young and the handicapped, and considers necessary to expand the fields in order to include the natural environment, the social relations and the political activities.

A system of social indicators must fulfil several criteria: it has to be comprehensive and active, it has to be relevant to the current situation and the future evolution of the society. It will include statistics as well as information gathered from field investigations, which can provide data

on the individuals and households (much more relevant than the average values that are calculated on the basis of global statistics). The flaws of global analysis are well known just due to the low level of accuracy concerning the interferences that may occur. For instance, the indicators of development, such as the gross national product (GNP), national income or other similar indicators, cannot express with accuracy the actual state of the living conditions of the population, the average values covering very different situations, from a rather balanced distribution of the goods and services to cases of discrimination and the existence of unfavoured groups. The investigations in the quality of life developed just in relation with the need to get the analysis to the level of the individuals and family household.

The general indicators cannot express the costs of development, or the adverse effects, when part of the investment are intended exactly to the elimination of such effects, but on the world-wide level, they count as a positive element that contributes to the increase in GNP value. Thus, a developed economy with high GNP value per capita does not indicate implicitly a high quality of life for all citizens concerning all involved aspects. Although relevant, one may notice that the indicators of welfare do not include several data such as: pollution, poverty, lack of individual security, crime, alcoholism, etc. Such elements and similar ones affect the level of the quality of life and have to be known. No doubt, the global approaches are not lacking significance; on the contrary, they are absolutely necessary to understand some processes and get pertinent conclusions, on condition that they have relevant information. These requirements can be met by regular general censuses and by high quality current official statistics.

Four levels of indicators are often noticed: economic, social, quality of life and public policies: the economic indicators measure the economic conditions of the social welfare; the social indicators provide statistics and research with data on the objective conditions of the social welfare and their consequences; the quality of life indicators deal with the subjective reactions of the people to the economic and social, affective and cognitive processes, attitudes, behavioural patterns, assessments (E. Hankiss, 1983); the public policy indicators are adapted to the requirements of practical action and to measuring the effects of such actions (M. Blumer, 1988; M. Poenaru, 1998).

A particularly special project of using the economic and social indicators is that of the UNDP concerning the measurement of the degree of human development in different countries. It included reports on human development starting with 1990, with data on all the countries. The procedure involves the construction of the index of human development (a composite measurement) on a scale from 0 to 1 taking into consideration the following: the **economic development** expressed in GNP, USD at the purchasing power parity (adjusted for the strongly developed countries), **education** (school enrolment and level of literacy) and the **life expectancy at birth**. In 1995, Romania started the publication of a *National Report on Human Development*.

The economic and social indicators are also used to analyse the social capital, community and regional development (D. Sandu, 1999), as well as many other areas, such as the quality of social work services, in health care, culture, education, in the study of democracy, human rights and liberty observation.

In our project we took into consideration that the system of quality of life indicators had to be truly operational, easily covered by data and comprehensive. First, 21 complex areas (dimensions) of quality of life were developed, then up to five indicators were usually specified for a dimension, considering their relevance for the quality of life, relations of inter-exchangeability and their cumulative (synthetic) properties (I. Mărginean, 1991).

The following pages present quality of life dimensions and indicators of the Project.

Dimensions and indicators of the quality of life

I. Person

Modern society brought man in the forefront, not man in general, but each individual, with its own personality, needs, wishes, aspirations, thoughts and activities, who had to enjoy freedom, actual opportunities (often referred to as equal) of achievement in education, work, culture, policy, etc., recognising the dependency of the results on the capacity and preoccupation, but also on the circumstances.

II. Population

Population is the subject of any social analysis or investigation aiming to know the manner of living, structures, activities, affiliation to different groups, opinions and states of spirit, creeds, needs, requirements, wishes, aspirations, options or other aspects that may characterise it, becoming thus the aim of research.

Of the multitude of indicators on population, those expressing cumulative processes such as the average life expectancy or infantile mortality, are of particular relevance to the quality of life.

III. Natural environment

The adverse impact of the development on the natural environment was, in the early '70s, a prime impulse to adopt and then widely accept in public the concerns for improving the quality of life by measures of ecological protection. Even considered as a component or just a premise of the quality of life, the natural environment is included in all investigations and analyses pertaining to the quality of life, as well as in the programs aiming to preserve the conditions of human existence. Usually, indicators that show different aggressive factors (noise, radiation, noxious matters in the air, soil, water, food) and their effects on the human organism, proportion of affected population and perception of the natural environment conditions are used.

IV. Human settlements

The quality of the built environment, providing for optimal conditions of living, fitting with technical means, including the movement between localities, these are elements to be considered in analysing the manner of living, the facilities the people can use. At this level the subjective dimension, the perceptions and assessments become more important: some persons prefer the rural life (in many cases the only one they know, or experienced), other consider such a life just for the vacation. The differences in technical fitting, in the possibilities of professional work, leisure, make the comparisons inoperative such as

between the cities and the other localities. Yet, the preference of the population for one residential area or another, for a given locality, are often unequivocal, so they cannot be ignored from a survey of the quality of life.

V. Dwelling

In the social practice several indicators are used to express the quality and comfort of the dwelling, the degree of fitting with technical means, starting with the construction materials that were used, noise and thermal insulation, water proofing, vertical dwelling, built and useful area, sources of power, sanitary installations, location within the settlement. This time too we have to make a severe selection of the indicators considering first those of particular relevance to the quality of life, such as the available dwelling area per person.

VI. Social environment

The quality of the social relations measured by indicators of cohesion, general-human values, mutual help, solidarity, morality, responsibility, tolerance and by the lack of some factors of social pathology or by their high or lower level – delinquency, alcoholism, prostitution, sexual perversion – is of great importance for the human life, individuals, groups or communities of different sizes, including the whole society.

VII. Family

To any person, the family is a central point of reference, often the only support of the individual. The situation of the family, its solidarity and cohesion, the success or failure in life of its members, their state of health are as many elements relevant to the quality of life of the population.

VIII. Occupation

Work determines the volume, structure and quality of the material and spiritual goods, of the services available in society. For a given

period of life (active age), work is a means of providing for the existence (although some persons have to work for a living outside the active age too, while other might not work a single day in their life). Work is a purpose to the man, to the extent it allows man to value a duty using the principle of compensation, according to which any man has to contribute – in a given way and according to his own capacity – to increasing the welfare in the society in which he lives, where he cannot be just a consumer, irrespective whether he has or has not own sources of existence. The relevant indicators in this area show the degree of occupation and dependence, availability of working places, occupational structure, proportion and average duration of unemployment, etc.

IX. Quality of working life

The studies on the quality of the working life consider tens of indicators regarding the conditions, nature and content of work, working time, working relations, organisation, management and material rewards and other benefits, results of work and satisfaction. We have to limit to a low number of indicators, the most relevant of them.

X. Macroeconomic resources for the standard of living

Reflecting the level of development reached by society, the economic indicators, such as gross national product, allow synthetic expressions of the standard of living. They have to be completed however, with statistics on households and individuals.

XI. Incomes

This part covers the income of the population considering its sources (work, property, insurance, budgetary allocations, donations) and distribution. Special attention is paid to the determination of the minimal income for a normal life (the social minimum), beyond which we find poverty. Hence the need to relate the incomes to the household, to the individual, considering the peculiarities in setting the level of the minimum level.

XII. Consumption

Consumption is one of the final components of the standard of living and of the quality of life. Beyond the peculiarities of the resources available in the area, the habits developed in time, the cultural and religious rules, indicators can be identified as having a comparative value in this area. They express, in physical units, as value or percentage, the consumption of goods and services by the population. Special attention is given to a balanced nutrition, avoidance of harmful products, particularly the excessive consumption of alcohol and tobacco.

XIII. Services to the population

The development of the tertiary sector is a criterion assessing the modernity of the economy and at the same time a source of improving the quality of life. Important to the population are the diversity and quality of available services, their material availability, how close they are in space, time of waiting to receive services.

XIV. Household

If the family is a type of human community focusing on the social relations between its members, the household (that only seldom gathers all the members of a family, possibly consisting of the members of several families) concerns the economic aspects, being defined by the group of persons that live together on a common budget.

The material conditions of a household are expressed by the current incomes, savings, available wealth, including the long-term goods. The research experience shows the difficulty of an accurate determination of the material conditions of a household. The problems start with the inventory of the lawful goods and savings, the wealth of a household. One could argue that these elements should not be our concern. Yet, in determining the possible aid from the state budget, one cannot ignore all the resources available in a household, otherwise it may take advantage at the expense of the contributions by the other. Then, the studies of the standard of living and social stratification monitor the distribution of wealth to the society, and without an accurate determination, they may

become a source of misinformation. For our objectives we will only consider the endowment of the household with long-term goods, not just as average values, but also as proportion of the total households.

XV. Education

It is admitted that the education has diversified its attributions: the general function of socialisation-education-social integration is completed by a function of professional training. In our studies the education concerns both the determination of the opportunities of access to different levels of education, the degree of enrolment and graduation (drop out), as well as the general level of education of the population (stock of education).

XVI. Health care

The health care services provided to the population, the access to health care and its cost, on the one hand, mortality by cause, diseases, on the other hand, are the relevant indicators of the quality of life in this respect. In accordance with the principles stated previously, the system we developed will only include some of these indicators.

XVII. Culture

We are interested in the access of the population to culture, the services of culture dissemination and the cultural services.

XVIII. Insurance and social assistance

This chapter gathers the issues of insurance and social assistance considering their role in providing a social protection to all categories of population, both to the active population and to the most unfavoured groups: the orphan and abandoned children, the disabled, the elderly.

XIX. Leisure

The global assessment of the quality of the population's life cannot oversee the facilities for leisure, rest and recreation.

XX. Quality of the political environment

The participative virtues of the political environment, of the citizens involvement in the act of leading, the observation of the democratic rules of the political game, complete the indicators that determine the quality of the population's life.

XXI. State institutions and the public order

Among the areas of making quality of life operational are the characteristics of the legal framework, observance of the human rights and liberties, citizen protection towards possible abuses from the public officials, control the manifestations of social pathology.

A list of 100 most important objective and subjective indicators distributed by each dimension is taken here as an operational Scheme of quality of life research.

The list of the quality of life indicators

Nr. crt.	Specification	Level
I. Person		
1.	State of health	global, categories of population
2.	Rate of death due to extreme causes (accidents, violence)	global
3.	Number of suicides by 100,000 persons	global
4.	Satisfaction about the everyday life	global, categories of population
5.	Individual security (assessment)	global, categories of population
II. Population		
6.	Overall population of Romania	global
7.	Annual rate of population increase in Romania	global
8.	Average life expectancy	global
9.	Child mortality	global, categories of population
10.	Ageing level	global, categories of population
III. Natural environment		
11.	Proportion of overall population living in very polluted areas	global

Nr. crt.	Specification	Level
12.	Quality of the natural conditions of life (assessment)	global, categories of population
IV. Human settlements		
13.	Proportion of urban population	global
14.	Proportion of localities with power supply	global, residential areas
15.	Proportion of km streets covered in asphalt of overall street length	global, residential areas
16.	Endowment and construction equipment (assessment)	global, residential areas
17.	Green areas by 1000 inhabitants	urban
18.	Public transportation quality	global, residential areas
V. Dwellings		
19.	Inhabitable area per capita (sq.m)	global, residential areas
20.	Average number of persons per room	global, residential areas
21.	Power consumption in households	global, residential areas
22.	Proportion of dwelling having tap water installations	global, residential areas
23.	Dwelling comfort (assessment)	global, residential areas, categories of population
VI. Social environment		
24.	Quality of social relations	global, categories of population
25.	Trust in fellow people (assessment)	global, categories of population
26.	Number of murders by 100,000 inhabitants	global
27.	Number of prison sentences by 100,000 inhabitants	global
28.	Proportion of minor delinquents in the respective age groups	global
VII. Family		
29.	Family members state of health (assessment)	global, categories of population
30.	Satisfaction about the state of the family	global, categories of population
31.	Number of divorces by 1000 marriages	global, residential areas

Nr. crt.	Specification	Level
32.	Number of abandoned children by 1000 children below 16	global
33.	Proportion of single parent families	global, categories of population
VIII. Occupation		
34.	Proportion of occupied population	global, residential areas
35.	Structure of occupied population by sector of activity	global, residential areas
36.	Proportion of unemployment out of overall work force	global, categories of population
37.	Work place security (assessment)	global, categories of population
IX. Working life quality		
38.	Average number of working hours in a week	global, economy branches
39.	Proportion of people working in the night shift	global, economy branches
40.	Wage distribution for the normal time of work	global, economy branches
41.	Proportion of occupied population working in hazardous conditions	global
42.	Number of strike days by 1000 employees	global
43.	Average number of holidays and non-working days in a year	global
44.	Quality of working conditions (assessment)	global, categories of population
45.	Satisfaction about the work	global, categories of population
X. Macroeconomic resources of the standard of living		
46.	GDP per capita (ROL, USD)	global
47.	Consumption fund per capita (ROL)	global
48.	GDP share of social and cultural budgetary expenditure	global
XI. Incomes		
49.	Distribution of monthly net incomes per capita in a household	global, categories of population
50.	Real income per capita (ROL)	global, categories of population
51.	Income level related to household requirements (assessment)	global, categories of population
XII. Consumption		
52.	Overall per capita consumption (ROL)	global

Nr. crt.	Specification	Level
53.	Structure of population consumption (ROL)	global
54.	Per capita consumption of staples (kg): meat and meat products, milk and dairy products, vegetables, fruits, cereals, potatoes	global, categories of population
55.	Per capita calories consumption	global, categories of population
56.	Food supply (assessment)	global, categories of population
57.	Non-food goods supply (assessment)	global, categories of population
XIII. Services to the population		
58.	Services structure by category	global
59.	Quality of the services to the population (assessment)	global, categories of population
XIV. Endowment with durables		
60.	Radio sets, by 1000 inhabitants	global, residential areas
61.	TV sets, by 1000 inhabitants	global, residential areas
62.	Refrigerators, by 1000 inhabitants	global, residential areas
63.	Washing machines, by 1000 inhabitants	global, residential areas
64.	Cars, by 1000 inhabitants	global, residential areas
65.	Proportion of dwellings with phone sets	global, residential areas
66.	Comfort of the dwelling (assessment)	global, categories of population
XV. Education		
67.	Enrolment of school-age children	global, residential areas
68.	Education stock	global
69.	Student number by 10,000 inhabitants	global
70.	GDP share of expenses for education	global
71.	Quality of education (assessment)	global, categories of population
XVI. Health care		
72.	Number of inhabitants per doctor	global, residential areas
73.	Hospital beds by 1000 inhabitants	global

Nr. crt.	Specification	Level
74.	Morbidity (number of sick people by 1000 inhabitants)	global
75.	GPD share of expenses on health care	global
76.	Quality of health care (assessment)	global, categories of population
XVII. Culture		
77.	Number of TV broadcasting hours in a week	global
78.	Territory coverage by radio broadcasting	global
79.	Per capita number of book copies issued in a year	global
80.	Per capita number of journals and magazines	global
81.	GDP share of expenses on culture	global
82.	Cultural facilities (assessment)	global, categories of population
XVIII. Social assistance insurances		
83.	Proportion of occupied population enrolled in social assistance systems	global
84.	Proportion of the elderly receiving a pension	global
85.	Proportion of population receiving social assistance	global
86.	Proportion of students receiving state scholarships	global
87.	Proportion of children under 16 receiving state allowance	global
88.	GDP share of expenses on social and family assistance	global
89.	Quality of social assistance services (assessment)	global, categories of population
XIX. Leisure time		
90.	Number of tourist beds by 100,000 inhabitants	global
91.	Number of free hours in a week	categories of population
92.	Per capita state budget expenditure on rest and treatment, physical education, sport	global
93.	Facilities for leisure time (assessment)	global, categories of population
XX. Political environment		
94.	Proportion of ballot participation	global, categories of population
95.	Proportion of adult population joining political parties	global
96.	Quality of society management	global, categories of population
97.	Participation in decision making (assessment)	global, categories of population

Nr. crt.	Specification	Level
XXI. State institutions and public order		
98.	Proportion of crimes with known authors	global
99.	Activity of the state administration institutions (assessment)	global, categories of population
100	Solving the problems of population (assessment)	global, categories of population

In delimiting the dimensions of the quality of life the principle of local independence is observed, which means elimination of overlapping and redundancy, so that every dimension has its own significant relevance. Having a local dimension, the values that a dimension has do not take shape according to the values of any other dimension and cannot be compensated by one another (the high incomes do not compensate for the low level of education, the poor state of health or the conflicting situations within the family). The degree of local independence varies with the dimension. Some dimensions can be related to a more general domain of the quality of life, such as those regarding the standard of living or the economic standard. However, in these particular situations too, there still is a rather high degree of local independence (at the same level of income there are different patterns of consumption, for instance).

The feature of local independence is also present in many of the indicators of the quality of life, the more so as they belong to different dimensions. Due to the specific nature of the dimensions that compose quality of life diagnosis, the attempts to build some composed general indicators (indexes) to join in a given way all the diagnosis indicators with the purpose of synthesising information, have a totally artificial character. Indeed, with such operations we move away from the empirical properties reflected by the indicators, those constructions being just means of analysis, without a correspondent, be it mediated, in the material and/or spiritual reality under investigation (I. Mărginean, 1992; 2000). Yet, there are attempts to join some indicators that belong to different dimensions, some of great circulation, such as the indicator of human development (see the next pages). These composite, artificial constructions have a given value for the comparisons in time, in order to detect the changes or for comparisons of human groups, countries, etc.

Obviously, the possibility of any composite construction or measurement is conditioned by the nature of its indicators (statistics, opinions), level of comparison (individual, household, country, etc.). Nevertheless, there is not always compatibility between measurements: some are statistics, others are research data, some concern individuals, other concern households, communities or the country as a whole. This heterogeneity hinders the construction of composite indices with empirical relevance to characterise the quality of life of the population. Therefore, for an adequate understanding of the quality of life, the descriptive level is of major importance, which determines finally the content and manner of presentation of the particular topics.

Of course, we can refer to the quality of life in other ways too, not just in terms of diagnosis. The latter, however, is the support foundation, be it even far, of the other modalities of relation, including the philosophical ones, highly speculative, if one wants to keep the discourse in the area of the real and not to simply pass to pure improvisations.

Chapter 3

THE NEW PERSPECTIVE ON THE SOCIETY INTRODUCED BY THE QUALITY OF LIFE RESEARCH

Quality of life research has a particular significance for knowing society better and developing directions of social action directed towards people and expected by them.

The way of working consists in overlapping the expectations of people, the states of fact related to their life. There are possible aspects that characterise the natural, social, economic, politic, cultural environment, characters related to the activities they perform, to family life and to their own person. The individual determines thus the “value of his life for himself” (C. Zamfir, 1984).

Obviously, the resort to self-evaluations made by the population do not exclude the analyses from outside (researcher assessment). It results thus in a complex scheme of comparison between the state of facts and the subjective states of perception and assessment, but also between self-assessment and the external assessment. Also, the operative scheme also considers the self assessments differentiated by groups and areas of interest, at given time intervals.

With this new research perspective on human life, quality of life investigations have a more general impact **on the plane of social knowledge and of understanding the human society**. We do not exaggerate if we consider we actually have a **paradigm of social**

investigation. The first step is the individual, then the data are aggregated and they pass to the next stage, the human groups and communities to which the investigated persons belong, or to the society as a whole.

This paradigm of the quality of life is a successful example to avoid the traps of methodological disputes, of obstinate opposition between the objective and subjective approaches, of quantitative and qualitative approaches, or *vice versa*, as long as they are targeted, knowledge of the states of fact (state indicators), the people's relation to them (subjective indicators), as well as qualitative and quantitative information. Indeed, the quality of life paradigm is integrative and it corresponds to a rather expanded society.

From this perspective, the principle criticism of a so-called positivism inherent to sociology is superfluous as long as we observe that investigation means develop to deal with the social life in an unitary manner.

Sociology does not melt into psychology to investigate phenomena of subjective nature. In other words, it does not become phenomenological, interactionist-symbolic or ethnomethodological, because it would no longer be sociology, but it is obvious that it works together, which is a good thing, with such approaches, which have their foundations, according to the investigated area, but particularly according to the objective targeted at a given moment (I. Mărginean, 2000). This necessity of working together, based on the results of knowledge from different disciplines, is quasi general. Such interlocking of different disciplines is valorised by the studies of quality of life, once the single-sided approaches of external description and the strictly subjective viewpoints are rejected.

We shall subsequently exemplify, by a few directions of development of the quality of life studies, the way of joining the objective-subjective, quantitative-qualitative points of view.

a. Quality of the human habitat

Objectively, noise pollution measurement is related to a threshold of admissibility of the number of decibels. The subjective studies of

perception will identify individuals that claim physical and psychological discomfort at a level below the threshold, as well as individuals that although do not notice adversely high noise levels (possibly over the admitted threshold), are affected as their health is concerned.

The inclusion of the natural and built environment in quality of life investigations is fully acknowledged. In some countries (France), the very concept of “quality of life” was strongly associated to the activity of environmental protection. At the end of the 7th decade a Ministry of the Environment and Quality of Life was functioning (F. Andrews; J. Szalay, 1980). The quality of inhabiting is a component present in the quality of life surveys, including by the elaboration of measurement indicators (J. O. Wilson, 1967; Danish Building Research Institute, Copenhagen, 1975; B. Ch. Liu, 1976).

b. Standard of living

The objective indicators refer to the level of the population’s income and to the level of expenditures, number of calories and presence of nutritive factors, state of the dwelling, durables, consumption behaviour, etc. On the one hand, we notice that the global values (absolute or average values) often hide significant differences between individuals and households which requires detailed information on the population categories and income groups, expenditure structure etc. On the other hand, we gain in knowledge if we introduce subjective elements in the analysis, such as assessments and satisfaction about the economic standard. The role of subjective factors in making some objective indicators will be thus observed, such as persons that are satisfied with a low income and do not want to make additional efforts to increase the income, orientation towards consumption and ignoring the need to improve the dwelling, etc.

The studies on the standard of living are widely present in the quality of life surveys. Here are some distinguished achievements: OECD list of social indicators (1970); Comparative research on the standard of living and inequality in northern countries (1984) with 33 indicators. In Romania there is a system of indicators (282 indicators grouped in 8 domains) of the General Direction of Statistics (Journal of Statistics, No.7/1986, and more

recently the investigations of the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, Institute for the Quality of Life, Institute of National Economy) and of other research institutes and teams (Family budgets and the integrated survey in households, INS; Quality of life diagnosis, IQL).

c. Health state and health care

The objective indicators express the morbidity rate, the causes of death, the staff and utilities of certain medical units (number of persons by doctor, number of hospital beds per 1000 inhabitants). The subjective indicators allow us to notice aspects such as real accessibility to health care services, quality of doctor-patient relationships and of health care services, as well as elements of patients quality of life.

Most studies of quality of life in health care are in the Great Britain and USA, then in Germany and France (S. Baldwin and Ch. Godfrey, 1994; I. Guggennoas-Holzmann, 1995) with stress on the time of survival of the patients beneficiary of medical treatment.

d. Performance of some public institutions

Objectively, this is shown by indicators that make the content of public institutions activity operational and express the percent of solved cases out of overall cases, average time of solving a case, the average cost by case; in turn, the perceptions show the popularity of the institutions, the public image, etc.

e. Areas of quality of life

This time we have a different strategy than the ones shown before. That is why we describe it briefly. This strategy joins census data on a given residential area, structure of the consumption of goods and services as well as the results of surveys concerning the different social, political or cultural aspects.

The beginning was made in 1962, in the United States, when ZIP codes (ZIP – Zone Improvement Plan) were introduced, which proved

very important later not just for mail services but also for other areas, since statistic data were collected and processed by territorial areas where mail areas were in fact the third level. The first level is formed of the census circumscription with 340 households. A total of 254,000 circumscriptions were created for the 86 million households in the USA. Then there were 68,000 census regions (of 1270 households each) and only then there were the mail areas – 36,000 (with 2320 households each). Finally, the territory is divided into 200 TV commercial areas. The existence and record of statistical data, their updating, the opinion surveys, the technical facilities and the ingenuity of the people developed a very interesting and useful system of quality of life areas.

Michael I. Weiss presents in detail the manner of work in his book *The Clustering of America* (1991). In 1974, a social researcher Jonathan Robin, who turned into businessman later using his creation and known as “king of the mail code”, was the one who put into relation the mail code with several demographic, social and occupational data, obtained from census and with data on the consumption of goods and services. Data processing by clustering yielded 40 types of life styles. He pretended to be able to tell what a person belonging to a given life style eats, drinks, what car he drives and even his political options. The author of PRZIM (Potential Rating Index for Zip Market) established a company, as many others did thereafter, supplying information to the customers helping them to market their products, from cars to papers, and even to organise election campaigns. In turn, Weiss confessed that he was intrigued by the cultural implications of these 40 life styles, by this new approach of looking at the nation “not just like 50 states, but rather as 40 types of neighbourhood, each with distinct boundaries, values, consumption habits and political preferences” (p. XII). Actually there are 40 areas of standard of living (ZQ – Zip Quality) that can “answer” questions concerning different other social and cultural phenomena. They consist of areas of large urban agglomerations, different rural areas or just rural localities dissipated, although unequally, all over the territory of the country. It proves that people living thousands of kilometres apart have the same type of neighbourhood, having more things in common than with people just a few kilometres away. Beyond the fact that the choice of a certain type of car or of a given political position may be tied

to those types of marketing and mass communication, a new map of the country emerged. The areas of quality of life are ordered according to wealth, the value of the annual income of the household, the value of the house and the level of education, which are relevant to the type of occupation too, as proved by the 1987 census.

A few elements concerning these areas of quality may seem interesting to the reader, so we present them here. On the top level we find the richest – the Blue Blood Estates. One of ten inhabitants is millionaire, one of five earns 100,000 USD per year, the average level of annual income per household is 70,000 USD, the average value of the house exceeds 200,000 USD (the last value in the group covered by the census), 50% are college graduates. This area of quality of life holds 1.1% of overall households (about 900,000 households) and is on top of success, have royal tastes, import luxury cars, buy things from foreign countries, buy treasury bonds, go frequently to theatre, spend the holiday in exotic places; therefore, they can afford anything, are very selective, usually make large donations particularly to colleges (the donations also are a means to get tax deductions), they do not seem favourable to the social programs of the government, they are conservative republicans in politics. On the map of the country, the Blue Blood area can be met either at Malibu – Beverly Hills, California, or at McLean – Virginia or Lake Forest – Illinois, Potomac – Maryland, etc. The households are recognised by tall steel gates, gardens with well trimmed ornamental bushes, private security.

The second area of quality of life is named Money and Brain – it holds 0.9% of overall households (about 800,000), half of the population graduate colleges and earns over 50,000 USD per year (the annual average income of the household exceeds 45,000 USD), the average value of the house is 150,000 USD. Here one finds the successful scientists, teachers, managers – the wealthy intellectuals, with sophisticated tastes, they make donations to the political parties, but remain independent as political option, some are moderate conservatives, others are liberals. The typical places of this area of quality of life are close to the great universities and science centres: Georgetown – Washington D.C., Palo Alto – California, Princeton – New Jersey, etc.

The most numerous as share in overall households is the area of the wealthy workers (6%, over 5 million households). This life style holds the tenth position in the hierarchy from 1 to 40 and belongs to the middle class (highly skilled workers, pensioners). Most inhabitants graduated the high school. Their annual income ranges from 25,000 to 50,000 USD. They have good quality houses (average value 72,000 USD). They own American cars, have a moderate ideology.

The least numerous group is the urban golden coast, with 0.5% of the households (about 450,000). They hold the fourth position in the hierarchy (very close to the top) and are located in the area of great cities, such as East and West Side in Manhattan, New York, West-End Washington, D.C., Fort Dearborn, Chicago, Illinois; Rincon East, San Francisco, California. It is the most populated area (large demographic density), the most frequent occupations are office work, many are retired. This the area with very few children. One third of the inhabitants are Jews. They do not have cars, but they rent cars or used cabs. The annual income of the household averages 36,000 USD. The houses are among the most expensive (similar to the large owners – around 200,000 USD). They are moderate liberals, most of them vote the Democrat Party, they oppose the influence of the religious right, act in organisations such as the American Union for Civil Liberties, National Women Organisation.

At the lower level of the quality of life hierarchy is poverty. The last but one group is named hard Scrabble, which means “make a living from farming arid land”. These are the inhabitants of the rural areas on the highlands, the small farmers, the Indian reservations, Latin America immigrants. The area holds 1.5% of overall households (1.3 million). The inhabitants have low education level (59% did not graduate the high school), they earn less than 15,000 USD a year (annual household income 12.8 thousands USD), live in low price houses (average price 27,6 thousands USD), 12% live in mobile houses. The communities are small, they cannot afford to organise a shop, they live day after day. They adopt populist positions.

The last category consists of the persons receiving social assistance. They represent 3.1% of overall USA households (over 2.5 million households). They are the inhabitants of the ghettos of the large

cities, an underclass of society consisting of mothers benefiting of social assistance, unskilled youth, poor workers, poor old people – people without the possibility of making a choice, as they are named by the author of the book; 70% are black people, the average annual income of the household is 10.8 thousands USD, the house is valued at 28.3 thousands USD; the problems concerning them are poverty and finding a job.

To get a full picture, even if it is a sketchy one, of these areas of quality of life and their significance, we should possibly add that the high levels are completed by the population with success in business, the highly educated people and the white-collar jobs, among which the military too. Here the blue-collar jobs too are included. Although the ethnic information is scarce, one can infer that black people can also be met in top areas (VI and particularly XVI, named “black enterprise”) as well as some immigrants. Most people of the top levels live in urban areas (metropolis, suburbs or small towns). The rural areas are largely inhabited by people from the second half of the list. The agri-business with the highest position ranks only the 26th, while on the 23rd position one can find small towns with light industry and farms. Otherwise, the farmers are adversely affected by the low prices and by overproduction. We can find most of them in the lower positions – the cereal belt people rank 33rd with 20,000 USD average annual income of the household.

The quality of life areas are not considered once for good. They keep changing, people resembling group together due to the material conditions and because they share common ideals. Some characteristics of the areas also change, which requires longitudinal investigations for better knowledge.

The data of 1987 census show that the great estates hold 1.1% of overall households, the so-called middle class (64% - 55 million - of overall households) holds levels 2 to 26, with average annual income ranging from 20,000 to 45,000 USD, some areas belong by many characteristics to the working class that reached a high level of welfare. The lower classes, where deprivations are more or less present (under 20,000 USD average annual income) hold 35% of overall households (about 30 million households), some of them describing themselves however, as belonging to the middle class.

If we consider the overall households number, the average annual income by household is 24,269 USD, the average value of the house is 64,182 USD, while 16.2% of the population graduated colleges.

Of course, beyond the significance of relevant information on quality of life areas in the USA, we might ask ourselves whether such a situation would be specific to Romania too. That is, whether under the known conditions that have characterised the Romanian society undergoing a declared process of social homogenisation, different quality of life areas could form. The free observation allows us to support the existence of such areas. Investigations are meant to support this statement and reveal the characteristics of these areas. To solve these problems, the institutions conducting statistical activities should have adequate equipment, while the desire to organise activities investigating the quality of life areas should be manifest. In Romania there are no more than 8 million households, and the analyses can be done by census sectors, sections and districts.

For the time being, we have just reports on the residential areas and fewer on areas, but it is obvious that the analysis could go down to the level of census districts, sections and sectors, at least for the existing data, which should be completed in the future.

f. Quality of life global diagnosis

The pattern of this research direction reveals the best the specificity and objectives targeted even from the beginning of the quality of life studies. It is present in reference papers published first by F. Andrews, 1974. This global design of quality of life diagnosis was also used by the investigations co-ordinated by professor C. Zamfir in the '90s (C. Zamfir, 1984) as well as by the investigations initiated by IQL in 1990 and presented in this book (paragraph 1.2.1.).

The literature of the past decades argues fully that a diversified set of social indicators is needed in order to know as properly as possible the quality of life of the population. Furthermore, these indicators are set within a theoretical approach that establishes a relation with the quality of life and structures them by relevant dimensions.

Indeed, making a social diagnosis requires a highly accurate systematic description as well as the determination of the characteristics of the social phenomena, actions and processes examined by the various investigations.

In order to fulfil these conditions in quality of life research, area of great complexity, a methodological framework of interdisciplinary approach was developed in agreement with the theoretical delimitations. Thus, the work instruments respond to the nature of the social information required to draw up quality of life diagnosis: economic and social indicators, various statistics on life conditions, people activity, personal data, etc., their assessment by the population, the subjective states of satisfaction, and happiness, of dissatisfaction, frustration, unhappiness, etc. In fact, this is supposed to be a comprehensive set (operational design) of components (social variables), dimensions and indicators both objective and subjective of description, perception and assessment, intended to form a global pattern of quality of life analysis shaped by keeping the valuable international and national expertise in the field (C. Zamfir, 1984).

The following chapters present several results of the quality of life diagnosis surveys conducted during 1990-2000 by the Institute for the Quality of Life, with the aim of making a characterisation of the quality of life in Romania. When the research started as soon as the institute was established under the aegis of the Romanian Academy, a long-term program was considered, including the degree of stability of the quality of life values determined at a particular moment and the changes in time. Thus, sociological surveys were conducted in population households. During 1990-1999, annual surveys were conducted on nationally representative samples, with two series of panel studies of three years each, during 1993-1995 and 1996-1998. Some aspects of quality of life diagnosis were studied in depth by distinct investigations, such as those concerning the incomes and consumption or the population groups (young, elderly, minorities), by unfavoured areas, etc. At the same time a database with the quality of life indicators was set up (Internet address www.roda.ro).

As previously mentioned, an important component of the quality of life diagnosis is represented by data collected directly from the population with questionnaires, concerning the conditions of life, assessments and

perceptions of the states of fact, the degree of satisfaction of everyday life. The descriptive design of the quality of life perceived in Romania includes nine areas, several dimensions and multiple indicators for each dimension.

The integral descriptive design with the areas, dimensions and indicators surveyed by questionnaires is shown below.

I. Factual variable:

- gender
- age
- occupation
- area of activity
- education
- function
- residential area
- marital status
- husband's (wife's) education
- husband's (wife's) occupation
- father's occupation
- family size
- number of children
- number of family members that work

II. Economic standard of the household

2.1 Incomes

- income sources
- monthly income of the occupied persons
- household per capita income

2.2 Consumption

- consumption expenditure
- structure of consumption expenditure
- savings
- consumption from own resources (selfconsumption)

2.3 Dwelling

- type of dwelling
- property

- comfort
- endowment
- 2.4 *Household endowment*
 - electronic devices
 - electronic equipment
 - radio, TV sets
 - transportation means
 - production means
- 2.5 *Wealth (property)*
 - house
 - land
 - animals
 - workshops
 - production means

III. Perceived quality of life

- 3.1 *Life conditions*
 - 3.1.1. Personal
 - health
 - ability to solve life problems
 - ability to work
 - 3.1.2 Family
 - health
 - family relations
 - children's situation
 - 3.1.3 Habitat
 - dwelling
 - environment
 - district
 - town
- 3.2 *Assessment of economic resources*
- 3.3 *Working conditions*
 - job availability

- quality of professional life
- relations with fellow workers

3.4 Free time

- volume
- organisation
- leisure possibilities

3.5 Social environment

- organisation
- correctitude of the people around
- individual security
- public institutions functioning
- observance of the rights of other people

3.6 Economic services

- transportation means
- access to tap water

3.7 Social services

- health care
- accessibility and quality of education
- solving of social problems

3.8 Social and political participation

- quality of received information
- possibility to influence decisions
- levels of participation

IV. Perception of change

- image of the future related to the present
- image of the present related to the past
- decision of change
- groups favoured/unfavoured by changes

V. Work

- working program
- activity assembly

VI. Free time behaviour

- type of activities

VII. Human environment

- relation with the people around
- trust in fellow people

VIII. Concerns**IX. Satisfaction about life and some of its components**

In the present analysis of the diagnosis of quality of life a total of 62 indicators are used to draw up the general and categorial profile of the perceived quality of life. The diagnosis analysis is combined with other quality of life indicators referring to family life, work, income, consumption and so on.

Chapter 4

GENERAL PROFILE OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE PERCEIVED IN ROMANIA

The information analysed here allows us to shape an overall image that we may consider conclusive on what the Romanians perceive about their life, if we consider the quite long period of time of survey and the high degree of representation of the national samples, including the panel samples, meaning the same persons surveyed along several years (see Appendix 1) of analysis of the sample degree of representation.

In order to cover properly the huge volume of data resulting from the 10 successive field surveys, we grouped a number of 62 indicators of self-assessment, the perception of some external and satisfaction characteristics, according to some thresholds, which led to the formation of hierarchy classes of the quality of life. The threshold values refer both to the average values and to the frequency distribution by answer variants, differentiated by hierarchy scales with three, five, six or ten degrees of intensity, thus oriented so that the most favourable level of quality of life has the highest score.

The standard scale used for 57 of the 62 indicators has five degrees of intensity: 5. very much (very well, very favourable, very satisfied); 4. much; 3. satisfactory; 2. little; 1. very little. The theoretical mean of this scale (m_5) is 3. As the answer variants are farther from 3 and closer to 5, we have a quality of life perceived as high; as the answers are farther

from 3 and closer to 1, we have a quality of life perceived as lower. Some scales with three or ten scale points were also used. We will refer to these scales with the symbols of m5, m3, m10 in order to indicate their mean value. (Appendix 2).

Below we present quality of life structure perceived in Romania, starting from the data of the 1999 survey, also showing the evolution during the previous period, according to Appendix 3.

The data refer to the population of Romania from the family households. Our survey did not cover the persons included in the “total” type institutions such as the army, the penitentiaries, re-education schools, or in residential type institutions such as hospital homes, homes for the elderly, etc.

The subjects that have answered the questions are adult persons (aged over 18) and the information refers to the situation of the subjects of the sociological survey and to the family household and social environment in which they live, starting with the one immediately next to them and ending with the country level.

Surveys like ours (of 1000 to 2000 subjects) cannot cover very small segments of population. Thus, we do not present the small but opulent segment of the top hierarchy (economic and political elite) and the group of the poorest.

Seven classes making the hierarchy of the perceived quality of life were formed by the threshold values: I. Very high quality of life (very favourable, very good), *Privileges*; II. High quality of life, *Supportive human relations*; III. Averagely high quality of life, *Professional success*; IV. Average quality of life, *Free time*; V. Precarious conditions of life, averagely low, *Social pathology*; VI. Poor quality of life, *Survival*; VII. Very low quality of life (very unfavourable, very bad), *Fiscal pressure*.

The quality of life classes perceived in Romania are unequally distributed, from a single indicator in the highest class (that of the privileged and in the 4th class of quality of life), to 24 indicators in the before last class in decreasing order (6th class – Survival) (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Distribution of 64 indicators by quality of life classes

(November 1999 survey)

I. Very good ($m_5 = 4,5$ code 5 >50%) Privileges	II. Good ($m_5 > 3,5 < 4,5$, codes 4+5 > 50%) Human supportive relations	III. Averagely high ($m_5 > 3 = 3,5$; codes 3+4+5 > 50%) Professional success	IV. Average ($m_5 = 3$) Free time	V. Average low ($m_5 = 2,5 < 3$; codes 1+2+3 > 50%) Precarious life conditions	VI. Low ($m_5 > 1,5 < 2,5$; codes 1+2 > 50%) Social pathology	VII. Very low ($m_5 = 1,5$ code 1 > 50%) Fiscal pressure
1. Politicians favoured by the post communist changes	1. directors are favoured 2. family relations 3. relations with neighbours 4. satisfaction about the family life 5. minorities can live according to their own traditions and customs 6. quality of mass- media information 7. quality of dwelling	1. satisfaction about the profession 2. satisfaction about the job 3. natural environment 4. quality of education 5. tap water 6. minorities favoured by the changes 7. entrepreneurs favoured by the changes 8. health care 9. satisfaction about the achievements in life 10. feeling of no threats 11. police activity 12. work conditions 13. personal health	1. Satisfaction about spending the free time	1. town hall activity 2. living conditions in the country over 10 years 3. non-conflicting ethnic relations 4. public transportation 5. personal security 6. observation of individual rights 7. satisfaction about everyday life 8. accessibility of education 9. relations between humans 10. non-conflicting religious relations 11. satisfaction about the possibilities of leisure 12. non-conflicting intergeneration relations 13. influencing the decisions at the place of work	1. family income 2. the subject is favoured by the changes 3. the intellectuals are favoured by the changes 4. changes are appreciated 5. present conditions of living compared to the conditions of 1989 6. non-conflicting social relations (rich-poor) 7. satisfaction about personal income 8. possibility of assertion in life 9. society is concerned for the needy 10. personal standard of living compared to the year before the survey 11. the current personal standard of living compared to 1989 12. quality of management at the country level 13. possibility of getting a job	1. influencing decisions at the country level. 2. prices are not feared 3. taxes are not a concern

<p>I. Very good ($m_3 = 4,5$ code 5 >50%) Privileges</p>	<p>II. Good ($m_3 > 3,5 < 4,5$, codes 4+5 > 50%) Human supportive relations</p>	<p>III. Averagely high ($m_3 > 3 = 3,5$; codes 3+4+5 > 50%) Professional success</p>	<p>IV. Average ($m_3 = 3$) Free time</p>	<p>V. Average low ($m_3 = 2,5 < 3$; codes 1+2+3 > 50%) Precarious life conditions</p>	<p>VI. Low ($m_3 > 1,5 < 2,5$; codes 1+2 > 50%) Social pathology</p>	<p>VII. Very low ($m_3 = 1,5$ code 1 > 50%) Fiscal pressure</p>
<p>14. influencing the decisions at the local level 15. social conflicts are not feared 16. unemployment is no fear 17. crime is no fear 18. helping the next to you 19. satisfaction to the political life of the country 20. non-conflicting work relations (employees-management) 21. non-conflicting political relations 22. the peasants are favoured by the changes 23. the workers are favoured by the changes 24. economic status (rich-poor scale)</p>						

Class I of perceived quality of life – Privileges

This first class of the quality of life belongs to the most privileged people of Romania. According to the perception of the population they are **the politicians who were the most favoured by the post-communist changes**. Thus, "the perception of favouring politicians", on a scale from 1 to 5 (5 – clearly favoured; 4 – favoured; 3 – neither favoured, nor unfavoured; 2 – unfavoured; 1 – clearly unfavoured), the mean of the answers from 1999 was 4.5 and code 5 of the scale accounts for over 69% of the answers. The interpretation of this result requires nuances. On the one hand, we have the perception of the fact that the political activity brings individual benefits and, on the other hand, as long as the large groups of population (workers, peasants, intellectuals) are placed at the other end of the scale of the quality of life, unlike the directors and entrepreneurs that follow to the politicians in their benefits from the change, the responses of the population denote reproaches towards the group (class) of favoured politicians.

During the years when data were collected for this indicator (1994–1999), the recorded values were always located in this category of quality of life (mean value of this five points scale ranged between 4.5 and 4.7). Contrary to the natural expectations, after years of deprivations, the post-communist changes favoured the top of the political hierarchy and unfavoured the people at the bottom, by deviation from the principles of equal opportunity (also see the assessments of the political activity, namely the quality of leadership at the local and national country level).

The implicit reproach to the politicians, correlated with a low trust of the population in politicians and political parties, does not question the significance of the democrat political regime. On the contrary, the studies on political attitudes show a high degree of social support for democracy in Romania (I. Mărginean, 1999). In fact this evolution reflect low economic performance and high social cost of transition period. (In the following Box we may find the situation of macro-economic resources of the standard of living of the population in the transition period).

Macro-economic resources of the standard of living of the population

The material resources available in the society at a given moment depend on what is produced and on what was accumulated in time. The economic standard (the standard of living) expresses the conditions in which people live. It consists of the overall goods and services available to the population and is determined for individual persons, households of the population, localities, social, demographic and occupational groups, geographical areas, countries, international community.

The accounted monetary value of the goods and services used by a person (household) is expressed by the cost of living. We may also consider the expenses by groups of goods and services, among which of particular relevance is the value of expenditure on the daily purchase of food products, for the dwelling, clothing, health, education and culture, durables, leisure activities and other.

Relating the cost of living to the consumption requirements of the population allows us to determine given levels (thresholds) of satisfying these requirements, such as: subsistence (subsistence living), decency (related to social and human standards), abundance (wealth, luxury); and also some styles (patterns) of consumption: balanced, austere, deficient, ostentatious, noxious, etc.

Analysing the relation between the level of macro-economic resources produced by the society (materialised in goods and services) and the standard of living of the population, we can highlight some noteworthy aspects which make us understand better the facts. On the one hand, the new resources created within a time span can be supplemented by previous reserves and/or possible foreign loans, or they can be diminished by paying back previous foreign debts.

On the other hand, not all the resources available at a given moment may end to be consumed by the population. There also are other destinations of the resources, besides the households of the population, such as consumption by the public administration (central and local) and the formation of capital required to resume the cycle of productive activities and the investments in development.

Within this context, it is important to know both the level of the new created value, of the value available in society and that of the value intended for the consumption by the population. Several other elements must be considered, which regard the pattern of distribution of the direct access (through own activity) of the population to goods and services and the level of redistribution carried out by the state in favour of some persons who, either had insufficient resources for a decent living through their own effort (in order to continue to participate in the productive activity and for their social assertion), or cannot or do not have the opportunity for carrying out income earning activities. That is to know whether, following the processes of distribution and redistribution, we have differentiations of functional income or stressed discrepancies displayed by excessive social polarisation, that is a low number of wealthy people and a mass of marginalised poor excluded from enjoying decent conditions of life.

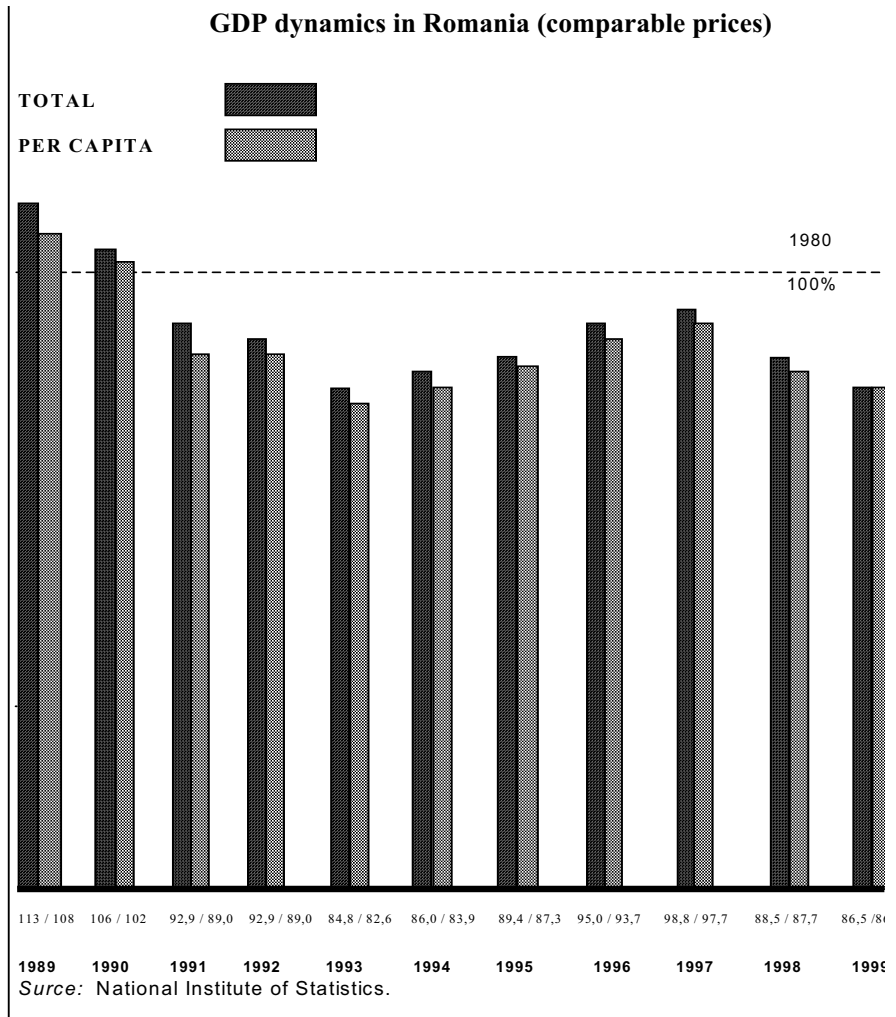
Thus, the standard of living of a person (household depends on its possibilities of access to material resources by own activity and redistribution, the payment capacity for the goods and services considered to be necessary. A significant role is played by the patterns of consumption and the life styles adopted by the individuals, knowing that by their nature, they can make the most adequate use of the resources available to an individual (household) or, on the contrary, they can waste the available, scarce or plenty, resources. Thus, a person with rather modest material resources provides for the bare daily necessities by a behaviour of balanced consumption, while another person with the same level of resources or even higher, can't cope with the daily expenditure because of the misbalanced consumption pattern due to the stress placed on luxury goods and services by channelling the expenditure on collateral destinations (fun, gambling, excessive consumption of alcohol, etc.).

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

For a better characterisation of the macro-economic resources of the standard of living we will make an analysis of the indicator – gross domestic product (GDP). This indicator measures the level of the new value created (added) in a period of time. Without having a high degree of accuracy (i.e. it does not record the new value created by household activities, but sums up several values whose production attracts external costs, such as pollution), the GDP indicator is present in all national and international statistics expressing the material welfare of a society, its level of economic and social development.

In the attempt to make a general characterisation of the situation in Romania in terms of the GDP, we will find out that our potential of development is only used to a small extent, by a low economic efficiency, which means rather little added value incorporated in the goods and services which result from the different activities, with high consumption of raw materials, materials, fuels, power, etc. Furthermore, during the period of post-communist transition the volume of activity diminished, the economy shrank, particularly industry. In agriculture, although the number of occupied persons increased during the reference period, the degree of resource exploitation decreased because not all the farming land was cultivated, the stock of animals decreased, etc. The services too have not yet experienced the expansion specific to the developed societies, where they hold 50-60% of the occupied population.

Thus, during the last decade of the communist regime the pace of GDP increase slowed down significantly (0.93% average annual pace of growth during 1980-1989), while during the period of transition the value of this indicator actually crashed, its current value being much below the 1980 level. GDP was in 1999 just 86.5% of 1980.



It means an average annual rate of decrease of 0.7% over 19 years. Over the period 1990-1999, the average annual rate of GDP decrease was 2.04%.

The most acute intervals of GDP decrease were during 1991-1992 and 1997-1999. In 2000, the direction changed and a slight increase was noticed in GDP level (1.2% compared to the previous year), the increase continuing during the following year (about 4%).

Per capita GDP value (reference value for the analyses concerning the economic standard of the population) experienced, in comparable prices, a lower rate of increase than the overall GDP during 1980-1989 (average annual rate of increase 0.88%) and also a lower reduction in the interval 1990-1999, due to the decreasing overall population count. The average annual rate of increase was 0.73% in the interval 1980-1989, while the average annual rate of decrease was 1.85% in the interval 1980-1989. Without the demographic decrease (which also is a concerning phenomenon), the level of macro-economic resources per capita would have been even lower.

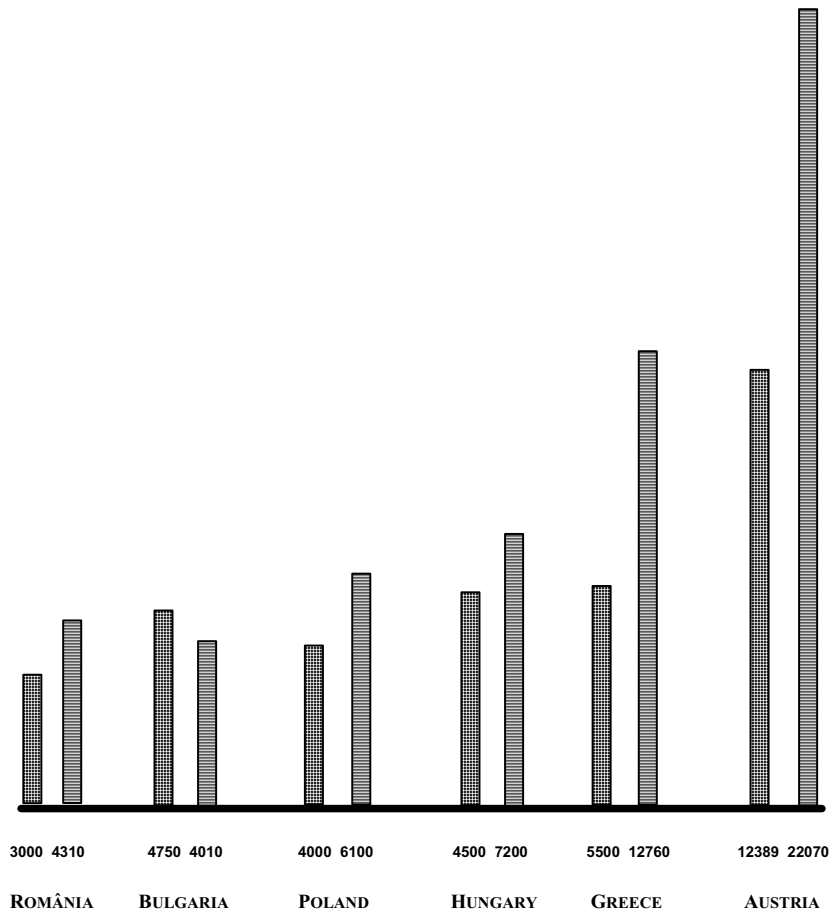
GDP expression in foreign currency, such as the US dollar, shows even more suggestively what has happened to the macro-economic resources and to the standard of living after the exchange rate of the ROL was partially liberalised in 1990. Thus, considering the exchange rate ROL/USD of the particular years, we observe that in 1990 the per capita value of the GDP was about 1500\$, decreasing to 1100\$ in 1999. Of course, when making a comparison of the absolute values in a foreign currency, USD included, we have to consider that in 1999 the degree of liberalisation of ROL exchange rate was higher than in 1990; thus in 1990 the exchange rate was an artificial one which caused an over-assessment of GDP value in USD, than if the ROL had been completely freely exchangeable. Furthermore, the inflation during the reference interval affected the US dollar as well.

The difference in comparable prices is much higher than the bare arithmetic difference because 1100\$ could buy more goods and services in 1990 than nine years later.

The effects of the fluctuating exchange rate are cancelled by GDP calculation at the the purchasing power parity (PPP), which expresses the value of goods and services purchased in each country, calculated on the basis of a standard methodology and comparable prices related to a country of reference in the area for Romania, the reference country was Austria.

Due to the recorded evolutions, the lag between Romania and EU member states placed lower by GDP per capita, such as Greece, increased; the same occurred if compared to the neighbouring accession countries, except Bulgaria, where the economic crash was stronger in 1997 than in 1987.

**GDP per capita in Romania and other countries (PPP)
in 1987 and 1997**



Source: Human Development Reports, UNDP.

We may notice that Romania was listed among the developed countries at the beginning of the period (1987) on which there were data determined by the PPP system. Our country ranked 46th world-wide by GDP, of a total of 130 countries.

However, the value of 3000\$ was only 24% of the corresponding value in Austria, a country ranked among the average strongly developed countries, 54% of the value in Greece, 63% in Bulgaria, 66% in Hungary and 75% in Poland. In a decade, Romania went down on rank 80 of 174 states and territories.

The value of GDP per capita calculated in comparable prices was 4310\$, higher than Bulgaria, but representing just 19.5% compared to the similar value for Austria, 34% compared to Greece, 57% compared to Hungary and 63% compared to Poland.

The Human Development Index (HDI)

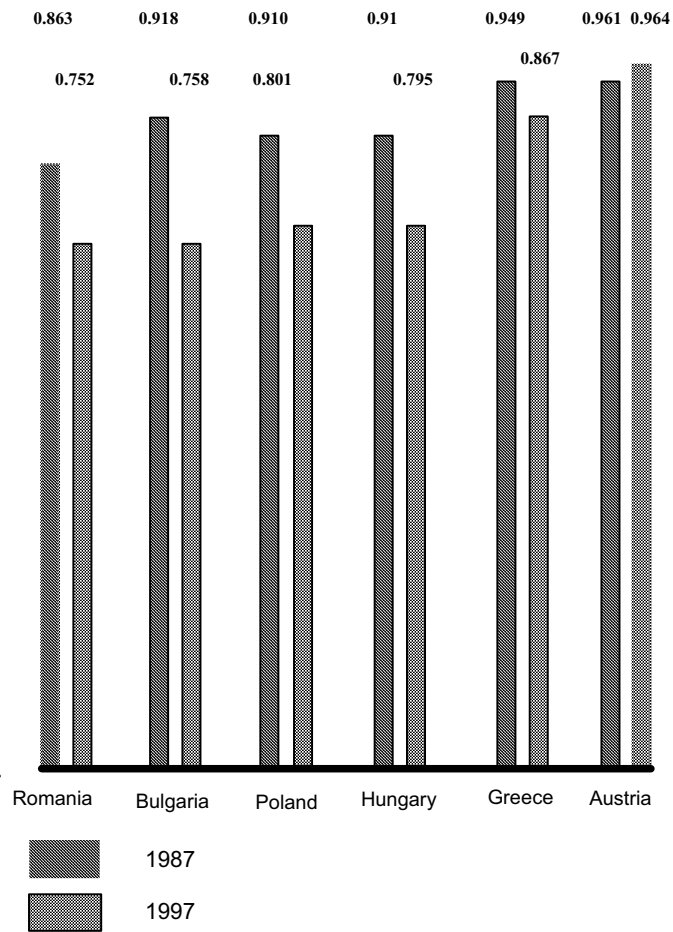
The value of GDP per capita joins, together with the index of education (school enrolment, degree of literacy) and with the life expectancy at birth, in calculating the human development index. Due mainly to the low level of GDP and of the expectancy of life at birth (below 70 in Romania, as compared to the world-wide maximum of 85), our country ranks much behind by HDI than expected, considering the existing potential of development.

To make comparisons between countries, a human development index was established, with theoretical values on the interval 0-1. With the value of 0.752 in 1997, Romania ranked 68 compared to 41 in 1987, losing thus 27 positions.

For 1987, the education parameter within the HDI considered only the degree of literacy, not including the rate of enrolment. This explains certain depressions in the value of HDI during the analysed period. This is important when you make comparisons between countries, Romania dropping several positions also because of the low rate of enrolment at all levels of education (68% of all children and the young aged 7-25).

Beyond the reservations we may have regarding the capacity of the indicators analysed previously to reflect with accuracy the material welfare and the level of human development, the fact that they are developed using a standard methodology for all countries provides them with the quality of instrument of comparison.

These indicators allow us to define the position of Romania in comparison with other countries and the resulting situation is strongly unfavourable.



Source: Human Development Reports, UNDP, 1990 and 1998.

While during the analysed period many countries, not just the strongly developed ones, experienced noteworthy progress in increasing the material welfare, Romania lagged behind. Some causes for this state are inherited, as it is the unhealthy economic development, mainly extensive, with investments in large enterprises with low efficiency. Other causes may be found, however, in the present society, among which, for instance, economic units incurring losses are kept in function, the principle of paying a wage according to the efficiency of work is not firmly introduced in all sectors, the development is underfinanced, the social sector included, starting with the investment in education and professional training in agreement with the international trends, the existence of a harsh competition on the sales markets.

Romania has favourable chances for its future development also because it has a young population, which means important labour reserves for the next 20 years.

The end consumption by the population (ECP)

The strong shrinkage of the new created value during the last decade of the 20th century generated a high pressure on GDP distribution by category of users.

Among the three directions: population consumption, gross formation of fixed capital, consumption by the public administration (central and local), the first was the most affected. Also, the resources for the gross formation of fixed capital diminished considerably during 1991-1993.

The consumption by the public administration, without being financed in excess, was privileged, if compared to the other two categories of users.

(1990=100%)

Year	End consumption by the population	End consumption by the public administration	Gross formation of fixed capital
1991	83.8	110.6	68.4
1992	77.5	113.0	75.9
1993	78.2	116.0	82.2
1994	80.2	128.8	99.2
1995	90.7	130.1	106.1
1996	98.0	132.0	112.1
1997	94.4	120.4	114.0
1998	94.9	123.0	107.5
1999	90.5	115.5	103.0

Source: National Institute of Statistics.

The food shortage at the end of 1989 and the social pressure led to the substantial increase in 1990, in the volume of resources allocated to the end consumption by the population as compared to the previous year (109%), when the GDP value decreased to 94%. This fact created a strong imbalance by categories of GDP users to the detriment of investments (64.4% in 1990, 44.1% in 1991 and 48.9% in 1992 compared to 1989). After five years the lag in the formation of gross capital was recovered as compared to 1990, but not compared to 1989.

Foreign loans were taken to cover consumption, diminished as it was, of the society, of the population included. Related to the number of inhabitants, the foreign debt of Romania (below 400\$ per capita) is lower than that of other countries in the area. The payment of the foreign loans is made by decreasing the domestic consumption, but under the conditions in which a large segment of the population lives in poverty (over 40%).

The end consumption by the population, which includes all purchases of goods and services needed to satisfy the individual requirements of the members of households residing in Romania, including the expenditure on the food and clothing of the military (it does not include, however, the purchase of houses, tools and materials required by the professional activity), did not yet reach (ten years after) the 1990 level. The crash of the consumption fund of the population was the strongest during 1992-1993. The subsequent recovery of part of the statistical lag registered during the first part of the past decade is not enough for a positive assessment because, on the one hand, at the beginning of the reference period the consumption needs were very high and, on the other hand, these requirements increased in the subsequent years due to the shifts in the overall social life, in the pattern and style of life of the population, in the demographic structure of the country. Among the factors of influence we may mention those due to an increased social inequity and to consumption inequality. Under these new conditions, the mean values of consumption come from very different (polarised) values by groups of population.

On the one hand, a low level of consumption by a rather large mass of the population living in poverty or at the limit of subsistence and, on the other hand, a very high level of consumption, including a luxurious consumption, of a small group. To take the population out of the area of poverty, important resources are needed, higher than for a rather homogenous distribution to all the population, how it was before 1989.

(Ioan Mărginean)

Class II of perceived quality of life – Human relations of support

At the highest level of this class of quality of life is the indicator "degree of favouring the directors" by the post-communist changes (m5=4.4), with a very high stability of the values (means between 4.2

and 4.3). Further, there is a group of indicators referring to the family life and to the relations with the neighbours “Quality of family relations” (m5=4.0) and “Satisfaction about the family life” (m5=3.9) show that the family is the fundamental support and a particularly important value for the Romanians. The most favourable variants of answers (codes 4 + 5) hold 82% of the highly stable frequencies during the 10 years of survey.

Family and child in the Romanian society

We may say that in Romania the family experienced the phenomena of erosion observed in the Western societies only as marginal phenomena. Thus, the devotion to the family is still strong, being at the same time the aspect of life that gives the individuals the greatest satisfaction. About 98% of the interviewed persons consider the family important for their life.

Work and religion are also regarded as important aspects in the life of the individual. At the opposite end one finds politics, which the subjects regard as unimportant. In fact, the importance given to the family does not vary significantly with the age, even among the youngest (which display the lowest value), where it rated over three quarters of the votes.

The adaptation of the family to the changes experienced during transition is an active and rather autonomous process; thus, we should not look for strict causes such as: external social changes – changes inside the family. After 1989, it is obvious that the Romanian family pattern is undergoing changes, but this must not be interpreted only through the prism of the transition to market economy. We are currently in full process of consolidating family modernisation, displaying even some trends towards post-modernity.

Transition, with all its economic and social aspects impacted, no doubt, upon the family, one of the most serious consequences being the dramatic decrease of the birth rate. Against this background, the concerns for the future of the family appeared more and more in the Romanian political or scientific discourse. The myth of the decline in or dissolution of the “family as we know it” is spreading in our society too, as it did in the Western societies, although as shown by this study, there is less reason to worry.

If the Western societies display a clear trend towards fewer and postponed marriages, the Romanian marital pattern is characterised by the universality of marriage and by a quite low average age at the first marriage. Even if alternative family patterns are extending in the Western societies, the most spread being the informal cohabitation and the celibate, in Romania these phenomena are rather poorly represented, the nucleus family remaining dominant.

The target family pattern is that of the single child. The explanation of this phenomenon includes several aspects. On the one hand, the continuous decrease in the standard of living made the parents focus their resources to raise one child only. The inherited cultural pattern of the “restrained natality” as backfire to the pronatalist policy during the socialist regime also played a particularly important role (Zamfir, 1999). Furthermore, we must also consider the general change in the attitude towards the children in post-modernity, its effects being manifest in practically all Western societies, and acting probably here, too. The expanded, multigeneration families are quite numerous in Romania both due to the economic pressure and as a display of the traditional pattern persistence.

The surveys show that the devotion to the family remains very high, the family holding the top position in the hierarchy of values, being the area providing the highest satisfaction. We should add, nevertheless, that the satisfaction about the family life decreased slightly particularly due to the material difficulties confronting most households. The main cause for the problems emerging within the family is the lack of money.

Among the things that make a marriage be happy we identified a modern, romantic pattern (with the mutual trust and love on the top position), adapted nevertheless to the conditions of transition (own dwelling and the money also playing an important role). The importance given to the dwelling must also be understood as devotion to the nuclear family, as option for own home.

The traditional work division within the family is undergoing changes. The differentiation among roles remains, despite a higher flexibility of both partners. The attitude towards the status and the roles of the man and women within the family is generally a modern one, positive towards the equality of relations. However, there still is a stereotype according to which the duty of the man is to bring money home and the duty of the women is to raise the child and look after the household.

The child is an essential resource of any society, for the mere fact that he/she ensures the perpetuation of the society itself. Although traditionally, the child is a central asset, and the Romanian family invested and is still investing in children, the communist period, and the transition period too, have generated complex problems regarding the child and its protection. Many of the Romanian children are confronted today with the risk of ending in a state of severe poverty, of being neglected and even abused by their own families or by other persons, of not being enrolled in schools, of not receiving proper medical care, of getting AIDS, of being entrusted for indeterminate periods to institutions or even of being abandoned in those particular institutions or in the street, with the risk of putting up for adoption for money, of becoming delinquents, "street children", as the most serious form of exclusion from family and social integration. Within this context, child protection and the observation of his/her rights are one of the milestones in monitoring our country by international bodies and one of the conditions for the European integration.

Even if in the period after 1989, considerable progress was done with respect to child protection, the analysis of the current situation shows some aspects that need special attention.

The situation of families with many children seems to aggravate over time. Poverty and implicitly the risks confronting the children living in such families display an increasing trend. The assumption of this problem remains essential in the development of the future strategies since, by its consequences it may also create other serious social problems. Such a consequence is the issue of neglected or abused children, an increasingly visible phenomenon. School enrolment and the health state of children are also problematic aspects.

The integration of children with special needs into the normal process of education next to the process of deinstitutionalisation and diversification of alternative services are just a few of the positive results of the initiatives taken during the past few years. School integration of the child with disabilities aimed not only to open the normal schools for the children with moderate or slight disabilities, but the establishment of special schools for the children with severe disabilities. We must take into consideration nevertheless, that the integration presumes the adaptation of the school curricula, the training of didactic staff to work with these children, campaigns of information and training of the social actors involved in this change, in general, the development of a tolerating attitude towards these children.

The number of institutionalised children is decreasing, while the number of children protected within the family system is increasing continuously, over 3 times more children being protected in this way in 2001 as compared to 1997. The transfer of institutions from the Ministry of Education and Research (school units from the system of special education), the Ministry of Health and Family (the units or hospital sections conducting dystrophy recovery, neuropsychomotric recovery or rehabilitation, HIV/AIDS children) or SSPH (institutions of special protection of the persons with disabilities) within the Specialised Public Services for Child Protection, despite all emerging difficulties, lead to a more comprehensive approach to children needs and allowed for a better collaboration with the NGOs. Yet, without discussing the positive aspects of taking the children out of the institutions, we must remind there are risks involved in this process, the more so as the process has quite a fast pace. That is why we must ensure that the families in question are assessed carefully for their material and affective possibilities, ensuring thus the proper integration of the children.

(Raluca Popescu)

A pretty high importance was also attached to the indicator “quality of relations with the neighbours” (m5=4; codes 4 + 5 hold 85% of frequencies), showing a second relational support for the Romanians, strong antidote against the risk of individual isolation in today’s society. Far from inferring here a sign of the so-called ancestral collectivism reproached to the Romanians by those who do not know our traditional life, we are sure that we have here a strong assertion of the principle of human solidarity.

The next indicator, “the minorities can live according to their own traditions and customs” (m5=3.8; and codes 4 + 5 hold 60% of the frequencies) supports the feeling of human solidarity.

It is interesting to see how the ethnic groups perceive their situation. Our survey allows us to refer just to the Magyar group (large enough to make representative the references to the sample). Thus, in 1999, the number of Magyars who self-identified themselves as such was 86 (7.2% of the sample), and the average value of the perception that minorities can live by their own traditions and customs has the same value as for the overall sample – 3.8, while codes 4 and 5 hold 61% of the frequencies. The profile of quality of life diagnosis as perceived by the Magyars from Romania is rather close overall to the one of the

Romanians. Concerning the Roma population, the situation of some of them is very precarious due first of all to the lack of education, professional training and a low level of occupation.

At the lower limit of this class is “the quality of information through mass-media” (m5=3.6; codes 4+5 hold 59% of the frequencies). As we may see, the mass media gets a positive global qualification, higher during 1995-1999 than during the previous period. As an object of profound transformations during the transition period, the Romanian mass media enjoy independence under the conditions of a strong competition. The mass media still have a long way to go so as to fulfil the role they assumed, the correctness of the information and the respect towards the citizen. The promotion of legal principles, even the direct involvement in the political competition requires impeccable behaviour of the mass media people, behaviour that has nothing to do with publishing unverified information, prejudicing some persons, manipulation and many other elements that could rightfully be reproached.

The public radio and TV stations deserve special attention. They should focus mainly on a correct information of the people and spend the resources they have on what is most important to the public, which pays taxes for them. It is supposed that the public stations do not compete with the private stations by concessions made to the good taste, violence and pornography. Their activity must be assessed by the quality of their programs, not by the rating, just because of their role in informing and promoting the humanist and democratic values. All mass media should respect strictly the common sense, the human dignity, even if it means lower gains.

“Quality of the dwelling” (m5=3.6; codes 4+5 hold 58% of the frequencies) ends the list of indicators in this category of perceived quality of life. The Romanian assess positively their dwelling, particularly related to other aspects of life, but we should bear in mind that our samples included only people that had a place to live, either as owners, or tenants.

Housing

Under the conditions in which in 1999, 7.5 million dwellings, 95% of the overall 7.9 million at the national level, are owned by the people living in them, the attachment to them is higher although they don't have the comfort everyone would desire. Generally, anomalies are expected in dwelling construction. The trend in dwelling building is now individual houses in rural and urban periphery areas, rather than blocks of apartments, the town experiencing an acute lack of dwellings. Unfortunately we do not have yet a viable system of building with mortgage credits, while the number of social dwellings does not meet the needs. As the demand for dwellings is increasing, no wonder those having a dwelling consider themselves as lucky and try to modernise them. The flats are now very expensive valuing a fortune. The lack of income creates problems to a large category of people when they have to pay for the utilities (water, fuel, power), so they end in having very large debts.

A special problem is the lack of funds of the flat owners for the maintenance of the common areas and to replace the worn out installations, which deteriorates the area of living. There still are blocks which started to be built in attractive areas before 1990 and not yet finished. The very expensive construction materials, the bureaucracy in getting the license to build something, the ever increasing price of the land and handwork vanishes many times the dreams of many town people to live in an individual house.

In case of scarcity, competition raises the prices; if the lack is removed, the price drops. That is why such an approach is needed, to increase the access of the population, of the youth particularly, to a decent, affordable dwelling.

Among the multitude of aspects that may be discussed here, we will just refer to a few, which we consider more important. On the one hand, the land areas inside towns were passed in excess in the property of economic units and public institutions thus decreasing drastically the area available to constructions. Other land areas are not clarified as to the type of property and remained barren areas in the central areas of the towns.

On the other hand, for a significant period, the rent of state dwellings was kept at very low levels (including for the people who could pay more), which reduced the resources for investments in the building of social dwellings, while the different stimulants for dwelling building (mortgage credits) don't work properly, but there are some signs that a new trend has started.

(Ioan Mărginean)

Class III of perceived quality of life – Professional success

The first places in the third class of perceived quality of life belong to the “satisfaction about the profession” (m5=3.5; codes 4+5 hold 63% of the frequencies) and to the “satisfaction about the job” (m5=3.5; codes 4+5 hold 61% of the frequencies). In the same area one finds the “satisfaction about the achievements in life” (m5=3.3; codes 4+5 hold 54% of the frequencies). Although placed in the positive part of the 5

grade scale, the values of these three indicators show rather a mediocre situation related to their importance for the everyday life of any person. Lower values of the satisfaction about the job are supported by the values concerning the assessment of the “quality of working conditions” ($m_5=3.1$; codes 3+4+5 hold 71% of the frequencies). We will also see later the perception of an acute lack of job opportunities and of chances to assert in life (class VI of quality of life).

Working regime

The Romanian Constitution stipulates that the normal working day is on average of no more than eight hours long.

A special law enforced in March 1991, stipulated fewer working hours a day for the people working under special conditions – damaging, hazardous, hard. The shorter working day in this situation doesn't affect the wage and the work seniority. The length of the working day is reduced considering the action of the noxious factors – physical, chemical, biological – on the health state and on the working capacity and considering the extent to which the consequences of these factors can be alleviated or cancelled by reducing the period of exposure.

The duration of the shorter working day and staff assignment for shorter working days are set by negotiations between the employers and the trade unions, or the employees' representatives.

The criteria for jobs under special working conditions are as follows:

- a) Presence at the place of work of physical professional noxious agents such as noise, vibrations, electromagnetic waves, pressure, ionising radiation, unprotected powerful laser beams, of chemical or biological professional noxious agents, as stipulated in the General rules for work protection, which do not observe the limits stipulated by these rules.*
- b) Specific response of the organism to the aggression of the professional noxious agent, as shown by indices of exposure and/or of biological effect, established by Order of the Ministry of Health and Family.*
- c) Morbidity, expressed in professional diseases registered for that job during the past 15 years.*

The European Social Chart, Art. 2. The right to equitable working conditions

In order to provide for the actual exercise of the right to equitable working conditions, the sides undertake to:

- 1. Set a reasonable duration of the working day and week, the working week must be gradually reduced as allowed by the increased productivity and by the other relevant factors;*

2. *Stipulate paid holidays;*
3. *Provide an annual paid vacation of at least 4 weeks;*
4. *Eliminate the risks inherent to the hazardous or insalubrious jobs and, when these risks could not yet be cancelled or sufficiently alleviated, provide for such workers either shorter working hours or additional paid vacation days;*
5. *Provide additional resting period coinciding, as much as possible, with the day of the week recognised as day of rest by tradition or by the custom of the country or region;*
6. *Provide the workers, as soon as possible but no later than two months after employment, with written information on the essential aspects of the working contract;*
7. *Provide special conditions for the workers in the night shift, according to the special nature of this work.*

In Romania forced labour is banned (Art. 39 of the Constitution). From the juridical point of view, the right to work is not an obligation: "a person has the right to work, but can not be compelled to do a work that he/she did not choose (or freely accepted) or to work in a place that he/she did not choose or freely accepted" (Romanian Constitution, 1992). By these stipulations, the Romanian Constitution complied with the stipulations of the international Pact on the economic, social and cultural rights.

The average duration of the working week. According to the law, the normal working week is 40 hours.

In 2000, the usual average duration of the working week for the occupied persons was 40 hours. A total of 434,000 persons worked fewer hours (AMIGO 2000, NSI 2001). The bias from the working week are given by the part-time work. Part time work is more of an alternative to unemployment than a personal option: the NSI surveys showed that over 90% of the part-time workers stated they are looking for a full time job.

(Ana Bălaşa)

Another group of indicators of perception in this class of quality of life refers to "favouring of entrepreneurs by the post-communist changes" (m5=3.4; codes 4+5 hold 56% of the frequencies) and "favouring the minorities" (m5=3.4; codes 3+4+5 hold 87% of the frequencies). In 1999, the values of these two indicators were lower than in the previous years when the mean value was 4.3-4.4 for the first indicator and 3.6-3.7 for the second indicator. The fact that the entrepreneurs are regarded as favoured by the post-communist changes is not surprising, they form a new category of economic agents on the labour market just due to the changes that occurred in the post-communist Romanian society. The answer here can get some nuances

too, it may be interpreted in relation to the economic behavior of some entrepreneurs outside the legal framework (“cardboard” billionaires and rapid enrichment, underground activity, etc.). Concerning the perception of favouring the minorities, we have here the recognition of the citizen’s rights and liberties, including of the citizens of other nationalities than Romanian.

The perception of favouring the ethnic minorities has values of perception higher to the personal favouring. However, important differences may appear between the ethnic group as to the influence of changes. A large part of the Roma population is confronted with extremely serious problems: poor school enrolment, low occupational level of the persons able to work, standard of living in the area of extreme poverty, antisocial behaviours, some of them extremely serious.

“Quality of education” (m5=3.4; codes 4+5 hold 52% of the frequencies and together with code 3 get closer to 80% of the frequencies) is very poorly assessed.

No matter how much its assets would be highlighted, such as competent professors dedicated to their profession and eminent students, the mediocre quality of education cannot be ignored. The practice used mainly in the rural areas to teach simultaneously 2-4 grades of the elementary education, the large proportion of substitute educators and teachers with no qualification or daily classes organised in two or even three shifts in the urban areas are just a few of the aspects responsible for the situation described earlier, which should be areas of intervention for remediation.

“Quality of the natural environment” (m5=3.4; codes 3+4+5 hold 79% of the frequencies) is highly stable in time. Although during the last decade there was a drastic decrease in the industrial activity, there was no significant shift in the previous situation. On the other hand, the number of cars increased, there are frequent cases of pollution by negligence, so that much of the population suffers. This requires decided actions to stop environmental deterioration, the strict control of the polluting factors, improvement of the quality of ecological education of the population.

“Supply of tap water” (m5=3.4; codes 4+5 hold 55% of the frequencies) represents another aspect that requires the intervention of

the local and central institutions to provide the access of the population to a source essential to life and to improve the comfort of inhabiting by bathroom and sewage installations. Environmental pollution in some areas and the longer periods of drought require active actions as well as significant financial resources for the expected change.

“Quality of the medical care” ($m_5=3.3$; codes 3+4+5 hold 76% of the frequencies) recorded important fluctuations in time (means ranging from 2.9 to 3.5). No progresses were made in the medical care to improve population’s assessment: 21% of the responding subjects gave the rating “poor” and “very poor” to the quality of the medical care they received. Otherwise, the indicator “State of the personal health” ($m_5=3.1$; codes 3+4+5 hold 70% of the frequencies) has a particularly low level if we consider everybody’s desire and the general wish to be healthy that occurs so often in the interhuman relations. However, considering that our survey included persons aged 18 to very old persons, health problems are expected to occur, but the health care services do not meet the requirements. When the universal character of the health care service was cancelled (law of the health care social insurances, other regulations), the accessibility to medical care narrowed for part of the population, the one with low income, and the medical costs incurred by the population increased a lot, while the quality of the medical services didn’t increase.

“Feeling of no threats” ($m_5=3.3$; codes 4+5 hold 56% of the frequencies) has values that show a rather concerning state. The question asked the subjects to assess the degree of threat to their person. This indicator is then reformulated, to have the same format as the other indicators, so that the lack of threat is the positive value.

Trying to characterise the threats to the subjects during 1996-1999, we obtained the following situation: the proportion of people declaring that they felt threatened increased every year, from 15.4% in 1996 to 28% in 1999; the main threatening elements were: poverty, unemployment, social instability, followed by prices, war and crime. The other aspects had particularly low values (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Threats 1996 – 1999

Nr. crt.	Threats	Average (over 4 years)	1996	1997	1998	1999
1.	Poverty	6.3	3.9	5.7	7.3	9.0
2.	Unemployment	3.0	2.5	2.4	4.1	4.2
3.	Social instability	2.9	2.4	3.4	2.9	2.9
4.	Prices	2.1	1.3	2.8	1.8	2.6
5.	War	2.1	1.5	1.8	4.1	1.5
6.	Crime	1.4	1.1	1.0	1.2	2.3
7.	Disease	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.4
8.	Taxes	0.3	-	0.2	0.4	0.8
9.	Corruption	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.5
10.	Dictatorship	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
11.	Other	3.1	2.3	2.3	2.6	3.7
12.	No threat	78.1	84.4	79.7	74.5	72.0

We can also see that the proportions of different threats increased during the period of time mentioned. The danger of poverty increased 2.3 times, while unemployment increased 1.7 times.

“The activity of police” (m5=3.2; codes 3+4+5 hold 78% of the frequencies), with constant values throughout the surveyed period (1995-1999), is perceived little over the theoretical mean of the 5 degree scale. We don't know what was the perception of the police during 1990-1991, much more tense years, so we can observe a subsequent improvement, but obviously, the nature of police activity is not something that can satisfy someone.

Class IV of perceived quality of life – Free time

“Satisfaction about spending the free time” (m5=3; close distribution for the extremes of the scale, 1 and 5, 2 and 4, similar with 1+2 and 4+5). The answers to such indicator may also involve the claim of no free time or the lack of material means, but no one denies the necessity to improve the leisure facilities, a true industry and a source of income for the developed societies.

Working time – Free time

The free time, as complement to the working time, displays certain peculiarities related to the occupational status.

Generally, in Romania, in 1990, the working week was reduced to five working days, which resulted in more free time. Other processes and phenomena too lead to a further diversification of the free time duration for different segments of the population; due to changes in the occupational/professional structure, due to the increased diversification of the manner of performing occupations/professions, due to new constraints in performing them, the duration of the free time either increased or shortened in different segments. At the same time, the role of the personal option increased with respect to the working time and to the free time.

The duration and distribution of the working time (resulted from constraint or option) determines the duration and distribution of the working time.

The free time varies by size and distribution during the day and throughout the week according to the characteristics of the occupational activity of each person: active/inactive occupationally, actually occupied/temporarily nonoccupied, belonging to a socio-occupational category and having a given occupational status.

The new occupations and professions (company owners, businessmen entrepreneurs of all kinds), which involve an ever-increasing number of persons, are performed during a longer daily and weekly time, resulting thus in shorter free time.

Part of the employees (particularly those with higher education and the technicians) gave up partially their free time after 1990 when they had the legal possibility to get a second job besides the basic one.

The agricultural workers, due to the reversion of the agricultural land, have assumed all the corresponding responsibilities and activities increasing thus the working time throughout the year, at the expense of the free time.

For the unemployed, on the other hand (category and phenomenon emerged after 1990), there is nonoccupied time that often acquires the content of free time, which assumes preoccupations corresponding to the function of leisure time or to the function of free time for the development of personality according to the educational level of the persons in question, to the duration of the unemployment period and to the reason of unemployment and its prolongation.

For the active persons or for the persons actually occupied, the working time may also extend at the expense of the free time due to the supplementary requirements of the occupations and professions they perform, required to maintain that position or for promotion, as it happened after 1990.

This way of spending the free time is largely preserved in all socio-occupational categories. The frequency of the main preoccupations differs, nevertheless, both due to the specificity of work and of the length of the working time and to the educational level corresponding to each socio-occupational category.

Main free time preoccupations by occupations (1999)

Occupation	Place of the main free time preoccupations, %			
	1	2	3	4
<i>Worker</i>	TV 58	newspapers, magazines 34	meetings, parties 16	reading 10
Agricultural worker	TV 38	meetings 10	newspapers, magazines 9	reading 5
Technician	TV 68	newspapers, magazines 53	reading 33	meetings, parties 21
Higher education specialist	TV 66	newspapers, magazines 61	reading 44	meetings, parties 21
<i>Total</i>	TV 56	newspapers, magazines 29	reading meetings 15	

The presence of television on the first place in the hierarchy of free time preoccupations is accounted by the fact that it is much more comfortable, and by the fact that TV is for Romanians, after 1989, a window towards the outer world, knowing this world; the fascination of knowledge did not yet disappear particularly since the low economic possibilities prohibited voyages abroad.

(Laureana Urse)

Class V of perceived quality of life – Social pathology

A first group of indicators in this class of quality of life concerns the social conflicts. To use the same significance of the indicators (the higher values mean a better quality of life), we speak of the lack of conflicts, and the values below the theoretical mean draw our attention to possible problems. This is the case: “non-conflicting ethnic relations” (m5=2.9; codes 1+2+3 hold 69% of the frequencies). The indicator was unstable in time, from a mean value that placed it in the following class of quality of life in 1991 (m5=2.5), when such a type of conflicts was more visible, to a higher value that placed it in the third class of quality of life in 1996 (m5=3.5); “non-conflicting religious relations” (m5=2.7; codes 1+2+3 hold 73% of the frequencies). The indicator showed a quality perceived as higher during the first part of the analysed period than in 1998-1999; “non-conflicting relations between generations” (m5=2.5; codes 1+2 hold 52% of the frequencies): this time the values of the indicator was stable in time which means the perpetuation of a

precarious situation of the harmonisation of inter-generation relations; “satisfaction towards the relations between people” (m5=2.7; codes 1+2+3 hold 77% of the frequencies): considering the perception of conflicts rather in ethnic, religious and between generations, the indicator of satisfaction about the relations between people was expected to have low values too, the more so as that another group of social relations, such as the political relations, working relations and the relations between the social strata have values placing them in class VI of quality of life.

The level of satisfaction about the relations between people is stable in time. Without underestimating the stress on the religious and ethnic relations in the feeling of the public, it may be observed that the other types of inter-human relations, political, of work and social stratification, have an increased degree of stress, being a true warning on the nature of inter-human relations in the Romanian society of today.

A second group of indicators of this class of perceived quality of life concerns the administration of localities and the performance of the public services.

“Activity of the town halls” (m5=2.9; codes 1+2+3 hold 67% of the frequencies). The indicator varied in time, with the lowest level (m5=2.6) in 1993-1994.

Several aspects could be mentioned concerning the low value of the quality of town hall activity. We have in mind the dirt in the streets with deteriorated cover, roamed by community dogs making hundreds of victims daily; The deplorable quality of the environment is the responsibility of citizens who, by their behaviour, not only that they fail to improve the living environment, but make it worse. On another plane, we may refer to the excessive bureaucracy, the lack of consideration towards the citizens going to public offices, benefits required from citizens for services they are entitled to, deprivation of the citizens of getting their rights, profits obtained by counsellors and officials by association to private companies supplying services to the town halls, etc.

The low value of the indicator of perception of town hall activity is accompanied by even lower values of: “quality of public transportation” (m5=2.8; codes 1+2+3 hold 63% of the frequencies), which remains a

problem in many localities; “possibilities of recreation” (m5=2.6; codes 1+2+3 hold 76% of the frequencies); “personal security in the street and dwelling” (m5=2.8; codes 1+2+3 hold 74% of the frequencies); “observation of personal rights” (m5=2.7; codes 1+2+3 hold 81% of the frequencies). The strong feeling of personal insecurity (more stressed than the feeling of personal security), as well as the feeling that they are deprived of their rights are strong sources of frustration of the population. These sources of frustration join others, so that the indicator “state of satisfaction towards everyday life” (m5=2.7; codes 1+2+3 hold 75% of the frequencies) show us that the population of Romania is rather unsatisfied. The distancing of this indicator from the normal repartition, as it would be expected in this case, shows the pressure of the daily worries. No radical improvement is foreseen in the future either. The indicator of projection “living conditions in the country in ten years as compared to the current conditions” (m5=2.9; codes 1+2+3 hold 68% of the frequencies), although it has a higher value than the assessment of the actual state, shows a stressed state of pessimism during the last two years as compared to the previous state. The influence of external factors with cyclical character, such as elections, is relevant to this indicator. The first year of data collection was 1992 (immediately after the local elections), then, the mean value of the indicator was 3.5 (on a scale of 5), dropping to 3.3 and then to 3.2 in the subsequent years, increasing again to 3.8 in 1996 (after the local and general elections) and decreasing thereafter to the previous values. In other words, the coming to power of the new local and central authorities creates for a short time the hope of fulfilled promises, only to find out later that they were untrue.

Other two indicators of particular relevance to the life of people are placed at the level of 1999 in this class of quality of life. They are “accessibility to education” (m5=2.7; codes 1+2+3 hold 77% of the frequencies) and “possibilities of influencing decisions at the place of work (m5=2.5; codes 1+2+3 hold 76% of the frequencies). In both cases, the mean value for 1999 coincides with the lowest value of the indicator of all analysed period.

The values of the indicator of education accessibility should alert highly regarding the fulfilment of legal stipulations of general accessibility such as the free state education; nonetheless, the perception

of a lack of accessibility raises the question of the equitable division of the public funds in education. This concerns the school enrolment in pre-school, elementary and secondary school education, particularly in isolated villages, of the Roma children or the accessibility of children coming from families with social problems to high school and university education. Also, the value of the indicator of employees' involvement in taking decisions at the place of work is much too low, considering that no material resources are required in order to make the collaborators more responsible.

On the contrary, the enlargement of responsibilities, of involving the employees in the decision making at the place of work, improves their motivation for performance obtaining thus benefits both as individual satisfaction and as material benefits for the participants, employer or employee. However, this important potential of development is not yet valued in the Romanian enterprises, institutions and organisations.

Class VI of quality of life perception – Survival

With 24 indicators of 62 classified, this class of quality of life, which represents theoretically just 1/5 of the assessment space (mean values between 2.5 and 1.5 on a scale from 1 to 5), has a decisive importance in the diagnosis presented here, to the extent the indicators presented here have significance for the life of people. We consider this is the way things are, and when the subjects of the survey were asked to list the elements on which the improvement of their quality of life depends, we obtained a list similar to the survey indicators, which only supports the validity of this model.

The first group of indicators of the category of poor quality of life includes indicators referring to material resources: the assessment of “family income” ($m_5=2.4$; codes 1+2 hold 56% of the frequencies). The indicator had values stable in time after a slight deterioration starting with 1994 compared to the period 1991-1993. If compared to the year prior to our investigation the “level of personal standard of living” ($m_5=2.1$; codes 1+2 hold 74% of the frequencies), compared to 1989 ($m_5=2.0$; codes 1+2 hold 75% of the frequencies), as well as placing the subjects on a “rich-poor scale of 10, from 1, the poorest to 10, the

wealthiest (m10=3.7; codes 1+2+3+4 hold 58% of the frequencies), signifies the continuous deterioration of the standard of living of the population. During the analysed period, a dramatic deterioration of the real income was observed, as well as a considerable increase in taxes and dues. At the same time, the population lost important amounts of money in different pyramidal systems of deposits, as well as due to fraudulent bankruptcy of some banks and mutual funds surveyed by state institutions, which did not succeed to protect in all cases the millions of investors, while often the bank interest was below the inflation rate.

In Romania the monetary measures of macro stabilisation predominated, with mechanisms of price indexing and exchange rate control, which intended to lower consumption and stimulate exports, with no success however, in giving a new start to production, but with a very high social cost hardly bearable by the population. The “satisfaction about the personal income” (m5=2.3; codes 1+2 hold 66% of the frequencies) reflects indeed the material difficulties of many people.

The precarious individual material situation is completed by the perception of the actual “living conditions in the country” (m5=2.2; codes 1+2 hold 72% of the frequencies). The values deteriorated even more after 1999 if compared to the previous situation.

**Evolutions in the economic standard of the population,
that are relevant for quality of life diagnosis**

We develop here a previous study (Ioan Mărginean, Narcisa Țambrea, Ion Voinea, 1994), in the attempt to continue and monitor the evolutions throughout the period 1993-1999 in the field of the economic standard in Romania. In fact, this type of analysis of quality of life surveys started previously (Ana Bălașa, Ioan Mărginean, Gheorghe Socol, Ilie Sandu, 1992) and we consider it is highly relevant in assessing the living conditions of the population.

Available incomes

Considering the detachment in time from the period of investigation, the actual level of incomes may be of less interest now (although it should not be neglected from the perspective of knowledge). We will rather insist on the changes which occurred during the interval of reference.

As expected, most adult persons of our samples have individual, permanent and/or occasional incomes from work and from other sources. In the first year of comparison, 1993, 97% of the subjects declared they had individual income, while in 1996 and 1999 the proportion was 95%. Only 3 to 7 households in the three years did not declare incomes. This fact already raises a question. The working pattern transforms the actual consumption of products (from any source) into monetary income even though there may not be monetary

incomes. An income was consumed, which was given by the value of products and services that were consumed. Since we surveyed the consumption for 30 days prior to the date of survey it is impossible not to have consumption over a period of 30 days. There may be statistically acceptable errors of recording, but there may also be situations of not disclosing the source of income. However, due to the lack of additional information, we cannot speculate on the situation of incomeless families.

By occupational categories, the individual incomes of the subjects displayed different dynamics. If the agricultural workers, for instance, had slightly lower values of the income compared to the mean sample and to the other categories in 1999 as compared to 1993 and 1996, the self employed, the specialists, the high school graduates, the workers and even the pensioner and unemployed displayed increases.

Relation between the individual incomes by occupation (1993, 1996, 1999)

	1993		1996		1999	
	Basis		Basis		Basis	
	Worker income = 1	Mean sample income = 1	Worker income = 1	Mean sample income = 1	Worker income = 1	Mean sample income = 1
Workers	1	1.1	1	1.1	1	1.3
Unemployed	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.5
Pensioners	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.0
Agricultural workers	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.5	0.7
High school graduates	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.6
Specialists	1.4	1.6	2.2	2.4	1.7	2.1
Self-employed	-	-	2.5	2.7	2.4	3.1

Indeed, related to the mean sample income, the agricultural workers decreased from 0.8 to 0.7 during 1996-1999, while the unemployed were situated better in 1996 as compared to 1993, but in 1999 their level decreased under the 1993 level. The pensioners saw a minimal increase, similarly to the other occupational categories. The specialists were better situated in 1996 as compared to 1993 and 1999, the latter year being, however, more favourable than the first.

We observe that the agricultural workers experienced a drastic decrease in their income (from 0.7 to 0.5), the self-employed decreased from 2.5 to 2.4 during 1996-1999. The unemployed remained at the same level (0.4), the same as the high school graduates (1.2), while the specialists and the pensioners increased slightly. The pensioners felt the cumulative effect of two processes.

One of this processes concerns the death during 1993-1999 of many pensioners with low pensions and the retirement of other people who received higher pensions than the pensions before 1990. So there was not an overall improvement of the material status of the pensioners, but rather a more stressed difference of income between the older and newer pensioners.

For the segment of population of the sample, the highest ratio between the available individual incomes is 1 to 6 (unemployed – self-employed). This inequality in income may be considered acceptable). But there are other aspects which are warning signals, namely the precarious consumption resources for the most unfavoured categories of population (unemployed, agricultural workers, pensioners) and within this group, of the large families, in which the proportion of the persons without income exceeds the proportion of persons having an income, where health care expenditures are specially needed. On the other hand, vicious habits (smoking, consumption of alcohol, gambling) as well as a poor administration of the incomes decreases the material status of many families, particularly of the children living in these families.

Thus, the self-assessment of the ratio of the family income to requirements shows a dramatic picture.

Family incomes and subjective requirements for consumption (1993, 1996, 1999)%

Family income	Overall subjects			Panel		
	1999	1996	1993	1998	1997	1996
Not enough for the bare necessities	40	34	25	37	37	34
Enough just for the bare necessities	37	37	35	39	36	36
Enough for a decent living	16	21	30	16	19	21
Enough to buy expensive goods	6	7	8	6	6	7
Enough to buy all they need	0	0	1	1	1	1

Note: The difference up to 100% is non-answers.

This time, it is no more the problem of some families that did not declare an income, but of an extremely concerning part of population having precarious material status. In fact, there is a significant deterioration of the perceived situation concerning the ratio of income to consumption requirements of the families surveyed during 1993-1999. This phenomenon is also supported by the answers to the panel survey during 1996-1998.

Differentiated by category of population in 1999, the most dramatic discrepancy between the income and the requirement was observed in the persons without school education and who did not graduate secondary school (66% stated their income is not enough for the bare necessities), followed by pensioners and the unemployed (53%), etc.

The best situation was observed in the higher education specialists (11% of which are in subjective poverty though). Their situation is not particularly favourable either as long as no subject stated that his family “manages to have whatever they want”. The values recorded in this variant of answer may be rather considered errors, ranging between 0 and 1.6% of overall subjects by categories of population.

Assessment of family income related to the requirements (1999)

	Number of subjects	Not enough for bare necessities	Enough just for the bare necessities	Enough for a decent living but can't afford to buy expensive goods	Enough to buy expensive goods	Enough to buy all we need without great efforts	%
Gender							
Males	566	37.8	35.2	18.2	6.5	1.1	
Females	629	41.3	38.0	14.9	5.1	-	
Occupation							
Agricultural workers	335	48.1	35.5	11.8	2.3	0.3	
Industrial workers	250	31.6	42.4	18.8	6.0	0.8	
Technicians	104	17.3	40.4	28.8	13.5	-	
Higher education jobs	116	11.2	44.0	31.0	13.9	-	
Pensioners	216	53.2	34.7	9.7	1.9	-	
Persons working in the household	45	62.2	26.7	6.7	4.4	-	
Unemployed	104	52.9	31.7	9.6	3.8	-	
Type of activity							
Employees	405	23.5	41.2	25.2	8.9	1.0	
Self-employed	362	47.5	35.6	12.7	1.9	0.3	
Company owners	19	15.8	36.8	26.3	21.1	-	
School education							
No school education, did not graduate secondary school	210	66.2	26.7	4.3	1.4	-	
Secondary school	339	46.3	36.3	13.6	1.8	-	
Vocational school	207	39.1	36.2	16.9	6.3	1.0	
High school	244	25.0	39.3	24.2	9.8	1.6	
Post high school education	74	28.4	48.6	14.9	8.1	-	
Higher education	116	11.2	44.0	31.0	13.8	-	
Environment							
Rural	545	44.8	35.6	14.1	3.5	0.7	
Urban	650	35.4	37.5	18.5	7.7	0.3	
Age category							
Young people (aged 18-30)	265	31.6	35.5	20.0	10.9	1.1	
Adult people (aged 31-60)	678	38.6	36.9	18.0	5.3	0.4	
Elder people (aged 61 and over)	252	50.8	37.3	8.7	1.6	-	

The difference up to 100% is non-answers.

Income sources

The contribution of the different sources to the incomes of the population has a general social significance because it is structured according to several social and economic mechanisms that function at a given moment in society. That is why it is expected that during the period that lapsed since the postcommunist changes started, changes have occurred in the share of the different sources. More precisely, in the context of Romania, we monitored the emergence and evolution of new sources of income. It is obvious that we are mainly interested in the sources of income associated to the development of the status of economic independence of the population and their families, namely the income from properties, activities as entrepreneur, sale of agricultural products.

At a first level, we will compare the income from wages with the income from entrepreneurial activities or from the property. In this respect we may observe a decreasing trend of the wages as income source in the family household. Thus, if in 1993, 54.2% of the subjects and 72.6% of the households declared incomes from wages, in 1999 the values decreased to 35.9% and 46.7%, respectively. However, the proportion of wages in the individual and family household income remained rather constant. This fact shows a higher competitiveness of the wage incomes as compared to the incomes from other sources.

Indeed, the second group of incomes, the one concerning the nature of economic transformation, could not exceed the income from wages. Over the period 1993-1999, the evolution of the group of incomes from free enterprise had a slow dynamics: from 8.4% in 1993 to 11.7% in 1999 for the subjects and from 10.4% in 1993 to 13.6% in 1999 for the families. Their share within overall income sources is not particularly significant either (from 15.4% to 15% and from 8% to 9.2%, respectively). If we analyse however, what is called the "output" of the income sources, the activity of entrepreneur is by far the most profitable, (1.1% of the subjects contribute with 9.1% to the individual income in 1993 – ratio of 8.2). The property still plays a low profile role as a source of incomes, while the sales of agricultural products oscillates by the year and decreased its output from 2.7 to 2.3 in the years of survey. The output of wages was 0.8 in 1993 and 1.3 in 1999. It is noteworthy that 3 to 4% of the subjects have a second job.

A special characteristic of the income sources in Romania is the excessive share of self-consumption. About two thirds of the subjects (and their families) get products in their households or receive them. The share of individual self-consumption in the individual and household income is lower, however, ranging between 0.1 and 0.3.

The social benefits (allowances, pensions, scholarships) also are an important source of income to the population, but their output is low.

Sources of the individual and family household income
(1993, 1996, 1999)

Income from wages	1993					1999						
	% subjects (1)	% of individual income (2)	R 2/1	% household (3)	% of household income (4)	R 3/4	% subjects (9)	% of individual income (10)	R 10/9	% household (11)	% of household income (12)	R 12/11
Wages	54.2	46.3	0.8	72.6	49.2	0.7	35.9	45.6	1.3	56.3	46.7	0.8
Entrepreneurial activities	1.1	9.1	8.2	1.8	4.6	2.5	21.8	4.3	2.3	0.3	3.1	1.0
Property	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.2	1.8	1.3	0.7	2.2	0.7	0.3
Sales of agricultural products	7.0	6.2	0.9	8.1	3.3	0.4	9.1	9.4	1.0	11.1	5.4	0.5
Occasional activities	8.7	6.9	0.8	9.8	3.6	0.4	11.9	7.2	0.6	17.7	5.5	0.3
Allowances for children	-	-	-	36.9	1.4	0.04	-	-	-	46.9	2.3	0.05
Unemployment	1.4	0.7	0.5	10.8	1.4	0.1	14.4	1.3	0.3	9.1	1.3	0.1
Pensions	27.3	12.1	0.4	44.4	11.8	0.3	31.0	18.3	0.6	51.0	17.8	3.4
Scholarships	-	-	-	0.5	-	-	0.6	0.4	0.6	1.3	0.5	0.4
Other incomes (allowances etc.)	2.1	3.5	1.6	3.2	2.7	0.8	0.2	1.5	7.5	3.3	1.0	0.02
Self-consumption	66.1	15.1	0.2	66.1	21.9	0.3	64.4	10.7	0.1	64.4	15.7	0.2
		100%		100%	100%			100%			100%	

Consumption expenditure in the household

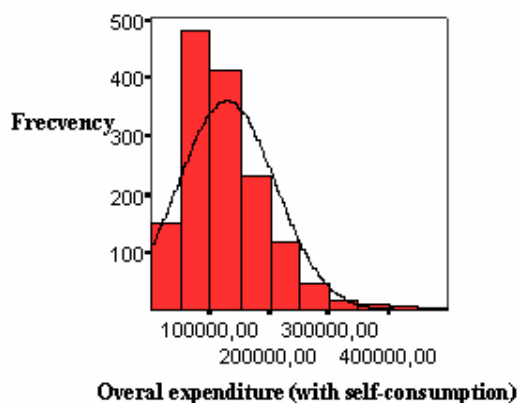
We determined the consumption expenditures considering the amounts actually paid for purchasing products (food, drinks, cigarettes, clothing and footwear) and services. Added to these is the food consumption from own sources, which indicates the total level of expenditure. All analyses were conducted taking into consideration the household consumption. While the income may be separated by family (or household) member, the expenditure on certain products cannot be differentiated (food, drinks, utility fees). For this analysis we used the data from the Diagnosis of the quality of life in 1993, 1996 and 1999. (A detailed analysis of the consumption in 1993 was made by Mădălina Tatu (*Quality of Life*, nr.5/1994).

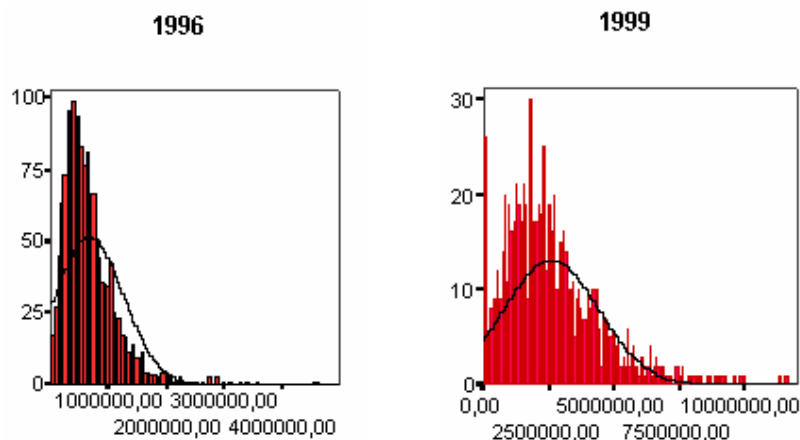
In 1999, 56% of the families declared that they could not cover all the expenditure required for the month preceding the survey, while for 44% of the families the income covered the expenditure. A low number of families, 6%, managed to save. As for 80% of those who saved, that amount is below the mean wage per sample. By accumulation over time, only 20% of the families managed to have spare funds to be used in need while 12% did so to cope with the expenditure in the preceding month (before the survey).

The data of the three years of comparison (October 1993, October 1996 and November 1999) show that the values of population expenditure are heterogeneous, and the households with expenses below the mean national sample are predominant.

Overall expenditure

1993

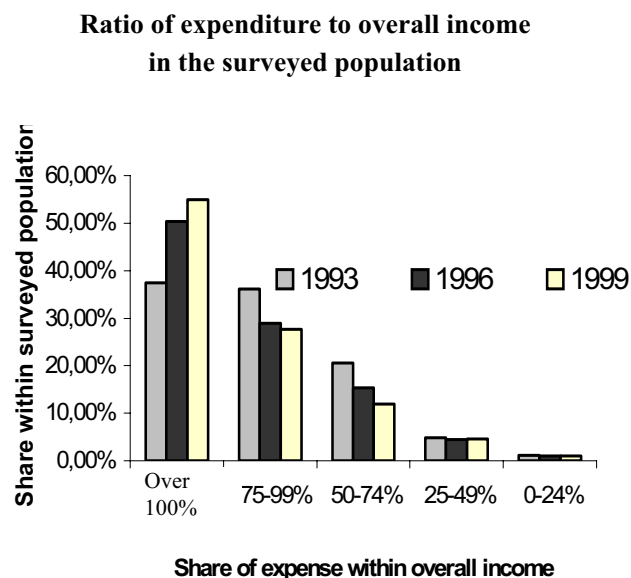




In 1993, the average value of the expenses of the surveyed households was 127,222 ROL. Inflation made the amount irrelevant over years. The analysis of the distribution shows that most expenses are below this mean value. The median (the point showing 50% of frequencies) is on the left of the mean, amounting to 111,000 ROL. This distribution of expenses shows their heterogeneity. A number of 24 households spent less than 20,000 ROL, while only 42 of the surveyed households spent more than 300,000 ROL. In 1996 too, there was a similar situation. The mean value of the overall expenditure was 654,811 ROL. Over 50% (the median amounted to 541,227 ROL) of the households declared expenditure below this figure and only 3.2% of the declared amounts exceeded 1.5 million ROL.

In 1999, the arithmetic mean of overall household expenditure was 2,575,912 ROL. As in the preceding cases, the distribution shifted towards the left, showing thus a predominance of the household spending below the mean (the median was 2,230,203 ROL).

In most of the cases surveyed along the three years, over 75% of household income was for consumption. 1996 and 1999 showed that over 50% of the surveyed households exceed the limit of the monthly expenditure for consumption. In 1999, 7.4% of the interviewed persons stated that they spent more than the double of their income, while in 1996, the figure was 8.3%. This situation is accounted partially by the improper statement of the income (underassessment) and by the decreasing standard of living.



Share of expenditure in overall income

In order to fill the real gap between the income and expenditure of a month, the people use their reserves or borrow money. We have observed, nevertheless, that only few households have saved funds that can be used in such circumstances of financial deficit. The loans are something particular.

In October 1999, no less than 37% of the families (according to their statements) borrowed for current expenses and almost 3% borrowed in order to buy durables. Analysing the status of loans, most of them from relatives or acquaintances, we can observe they are not actually a source of income, but a type of economy that might delay the development of society by bypassing the banking system, as it was mentioned sometimes. This is rather a way of managing resources by anticipated expenditure in relation to the individual income.

The people borrow a few days earlier than the moment they get their own income and return the loan when the family budget is supplied by that particular income, often changing the status, that is, the person who gave the loan may next time borrow from the person who took the loan. Therefore, we may not say that people live from loans, but rather with loans.

The size of loans is particularly high (most of them exceed 1/2 of the average wage) and a large share (1/5) exceeds the average wage, so that, unless returned in short time, the due payments would accumulate that would make the system unable to work. Obviously, there are cases when the blockage appears, some persons can not pay back and are eliminated from this system of mutual assistance.

Another strategy adopted in lack of income is the delay in paying the utilities (power, water, fuel). In the long run, nevertheless, these, just like the loan with interest, lead to forced payment that may end in severe restrictions of the current consumption, sale of household goods, eviction of the tenants, sale of the dwelling, etc., each of such action affecting the standard of life of the involved people.

(Ioan Mărginean, Iuliana Precupețu, Ana Maria Preoteasa).

Also, in this first group of indicators of this class of quality of life, we include the “concern of the society for the needy” (m5=2.1; codes 1+2 hold 68% of the frequencies), assessed at very low values. One may observe that the indicator does not imply particularly the intervention of the state, but of the society as a whole. Hence, the need to consider a multitude of mechanisms by which the needy can be helped. The local and central institutions of the state must act as long as the needs to cover are particularly stressing.

A second group of indicators concerns the “opportunities for self-assertion in life” (m5=2.2; codes 1+2 hold 68% of the frequencies) and the “opportunities for getting a job” (m5=1.8; codes 1+2 hold 81% of the frequencies).

The shrinking economic activity after 1990 decreased the number of jobs particularly in the areas with just one industry (mining, steel production, etc.), or in less developed areas with large numbers of young people, such as Moldova. Job creation was not significant and the ruling governments used mainly the passive protection of the unemployed. The long-time use of a special system of subsidies for the wages paid in the high tech industry did not revive that industry. Similarly, the use of compensation payments for the employees who left voluntarily their jobs in the industrial sectors undergoing reorganisation consumed large funds, solved maybe some personal problems but did not create jobs. The low level of unemployment benefits is not motivating for the unemployed as

long as new jobs are not created, while the compensation payments granted to just some categories of employees created flagrant inequities.

The third group of indicators in this category of perceived quality of life determines directly the indicators concerning the conditions of living. Included here are “unfavouring the workers” (m5=1.7; codes 1+2 hold 84% of the frequencies), “unfavouring the peasants” (m5=1.9; codes 1+2 hold 74% of the frequencies), “unfavouring the intellectuals” (m5=2.4; codes 1+2 hold 53% of the frequencies) and “unfavouring the subject of survey” (m5=2.4; codes 1+2 hold 57% of the frequencies) by the changes produced in the post-communist period. We should consider here all changes. It would be wrong to reduce these changes to the economic ones, to the transition to market economy, which meant economic reorganisation, unemployment, price liberalisation, increased inflation, etc. There have been other changes too, in the area of public political responsibility, such as the distribution and redistribution of incomes, which have caused an excessive social polarisation, an important proportion of the population being impoverished. It is no coincidence that the assessment of the changes as such is negative overall (m5=2.4; codes 1+2 hold 54% of the frequencies).

The patterns of consumption by the Romanian population

The consumption patterns by the population express the behavioural peculiarities adopted by different categories of population concerning the purchasing of goods and services for their personal and household needs.

A consumption pattern can develop within a geographical area, being active on a given historical interval (according to the durability of the premises of that particular consumption pattern) and it includes sets of repetitive concrete activities performed at different intervals, organised in structures that aim the existence and consciousness of a common set of facts and social realities by the consumers.

The essential premises that form the basis of consumption patterns structuring can be found in the material and economic constraints and liberties defined by the pattern of consumption, as well as in the socio-cultural context: habits, customs, traditions, norms, values, etc., materialised in the social orientation, and are always linked organically, acting synchronously.

The integrated household survey throughout 1995-1998 revealed the following structure of the overall expenses of the population:

	Urban				Rural			
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1995	1996	1997	1998
Overall consumption expenses	75.4	75.5	76.9	79.2	72.6	71.8	72.0	83.1
Taxes and dues	16.5	16.5	15.5	14.2	7.2	6.3	5.3	4.8
Other expenses	8.1	8.0	7.6	6.6	20.2	21.9	22.7	12.1

Source: Integrated household survey, 1995-1998, NSC.

The structure of the consumption expenses, by area of residence, throughout 1995-1998 was the following:

	Urban				Rural			
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1995	1996	1997	1998
Food expenses	58.8	58.7	60.3	56.5	62.1	64.0	66.1	58.0
Non-food expenses	27.1	26.7	23.9	24.5	28.3	26.8	24.0	31.9
Services expenses	14.1	14.6	15.8	19.0	9.6	9.2	9.9	10.1

Source: Integrated household survey, 1995-1998, NSC.

The structure of the consumption expenses, which allocates 60% or more of the available funds to food, shows the existence of particularly high tensions and frustrations in decision-making by the consumers. This kind of expenses distribution is specific to very poor populations, forced to a painful choice between meeting the food and non-food necessities or the ever-increasing periodical and mandatory payments for utilities.

In the '90s, in Romania, only the company owner families spent on food below 50% of the overall everyday expenses, the other household categories recording (in 1998, for instance) rates of 54.8% (employed) and 63.2% (unemployed).

Therefore, the only type of family about which we can say that displayed a somehow not tensed distribution of its consumption incomes was the company owner type, although even within this social category there was a great gap between the consumption of the company owner families with high incomes and those with lower incomes. The proportion of 50% spent on food by this type of family shows that, for the Romanian families, the issue of insufficient income is far from being solved, even for many of those regarded as wealthy by most of the population between 1990-1999. In 2000, the company owner families displayed for the first time in the transition years a higher proportion of the non-food expenses than of the food expenses.

The average statistical pattern of consumption of our country ranges, roughly, within the Central and East-European consumption pattern, more similar to the Bulgarian pattern

and less similar to the Czech or Polish one. Romania allocates almost as much as Bulgaria to the food expenses; that is why it is much behind the Czech Republic, Poland and even Hungary as proportion of expenses on culture, education and leisure activities.

Towards the analysed interval, the soaring expenses on dwelling facilities constrained the Romanians to cut down other consumption items, getting thus closer to the Hungarian pattern.

(Mariana Stanciu)

Another group of indicators involves the perception of the conflicts existing in the Romanian society concerning the “poor-rich relations” (m5=2.3; codes 1+2 hold 63% of the frequencies), the “political relations” (m5=1.9; codes 1+2 hold 75% of the frequencies), the “employee-employer relations” (m5=1.9; codes 1+2 hold 78% of the frequencies). As it can be observed, the working relations, the social relations and the political relations are perceived more deficient than the intergeneration relations, particularly than the ethnic and religious relations within the Romanian society. Finally, the last group of indicators in this class concerns the sphere of leadership. A first indicator aims at the “quality of leadership at the country level” (m5=1.9; codes 1+2 hold 77% of the frequencies). Compared to the previous situation, the last two years (1998-1999) recorded by far the lowest levels of this indicator. During 1991-1997, the stability of country leadership perception remained at mean values of 2.6-2.8 if compared to 3.2 in 1990. The data of the panel survey show us clearly the shift in the population’s picture on the leadership starting with 1998. Another indicator connected to the previous one is the “satisfaction about the political life of the country” (m5=1.8; codes 1+2 hold 80% of the frequencies). The lowest values of this indicator were in 1990, then in 1998 and 1999, while the highest levels were in 1996 (after the general elections that changed the government). The negative public image of the political institutions and of the politicians (seen as the main beneficiaries of the post-communist changes) is a very serious warning.

No doubt, significant changes can be observed in the national political life, such as the introduction of democratic institutions, but at the same time the politicians received executive positions, managers in national agencies instead of appointing specialists, positions in the boards of administration of state economic enterprises, high public positions through the political algorithm, not to mention political

positions. Hence the true crusades of the political parties to sack the people of the old government and appoint their own people, often with adverse effects on the very efficiency of that institution.

The “possibilities of influencing the decisions at the level of locality” ($m_5=1.8$; codes 1+2 hold 83% of the frequencies) are in a similar position. Against the national expectation for a democratic political regime, the people perceive the local leadership as being very remote. The low values of the indicator persist throughout the analysed period (1990-1999), the election cycles having no influence whatsoever. The general observation is that there is a very low involvement of the citizens in the local decision making, a damaging lack of elementary requirements to motivate the citizens to participate in solving the problems of the locality they live in and where they pay taxes and dues.

Class VII of perceived quality of life – Fiscal pressure

a) “Opportunity for participating in decision making at the country level: ($m_5=1.4$; code 1 holds 65% of the frequencies). The value of the indicator decreased from 2.2 – 2.0 during 1990-1992. Population has an increasingly stressing feeling of uselessness, impotence in influencing the manner in which problems are solved at the country level. In a way, we may say that there was a gap between the expectations of the first years after the old regime was upturned and the subsequent evolutions. We detect a certain influence of the election cycle, more precisely, after the new authorities are invested with a new capital of trust, then deception follows again.

b) “Lack of fear of price increase” ($m_3=1.1$; code 1 – very intense fear, holds 91% of the frequencies). On a scale from 3 to 1, the value of the indicator signifies in the highest degree the fear of the population towards the increase of prices. The mean value in 1999 was similar to that of the previous years, starting with 1992, immediately after the prices were set free in 1991. The galloping evolution of the index of price increase, under the conditions of the diminishing true value of wages and pensions, fully entitles such a perception by the population.

The discrepancy between the prices and the various categories of the population's incomes

The phenomenon bearing nation-wide repercussions on the living conditions of the people is inflation, displayed as clear as possible by the increased prices of the consumption goods and services. As a result of the unfavourable evolution of the ratio of demand to supply, under the conditions of liberalised prices, the increase of prices outran, most times, by far, the increase in the nominal incomes and decreased, thus, the purchasing power on these incomes.

Evolution of the net average wages related to the prices

During 1990-2000, the prices and the tariffs of the consumption goods and services increased 1.248 times (the next table), while the net average wages only 690 times. The following table shows the evolution of prices and of the net average wages, considering the month of October during the period 1990-2000.

The indices of prices and of the net average wages, in October, between 1990 – 2000

1990 = 100%

Year	October									
	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
1. Indices of the net average wages	287.8	705.3	2335.4	4700.7	7106.4	10973.4	23350.7	34297.7	51305.9	69045.1
2. Price indices	352.6	1035.0	4291.3	8103.3	10073.5	14615.4	39345.8	57931.6	87332.5	124803.8
1/2	81.6	68.1	54.4	58.0	70.5	75.1	59.3	59.2	58.7	55.3

Source: Statistical processing using the monthly information bulletins of NIS during 1990-2000.

Relating the index of the net average wages to the index of prices, it resulted that the actual purchasing power was 45% lower in October 2000, as compared to October 1990. Otherwise said, the average wages of October 2000 could purchase only about 55% of what could be purchased in October 1990.

The extent of the difficulties confronting many employed families in our country also results from the degree to which the net average wages (supplemented by the state allowance for children, where applicable) cover the minimal standard of living. If we consider a family of four persons (parents and two minor children), the net average wage and the state allowance for children could cover, throughout 1990-2000, only part of the requirement for a decent standard of living, ranging between 72% in 1990 and 37% in 2000.

Evolution of the extent to which the net average wages plus the state allowances for children covered in October 1990 to 2000, the minimal requirements for a decent standard of living and for subsistence¹

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Net average wage plus state allowance for children / minimal requirements for a decent standard of living	71.9	56.7	46.2	37.3	38.7	46.9	49.5	43.3	42.1	38.0	37.1
Net average wage plus state allowance for children / minimal requirements for subsistence	117.1	93.6	76.3	61.6	63.9	77.4	81.6	71.4	69.4	62.7	61.2

Source: Statistical processing using the monthly information bulletins of NIS during 1990-2000.

The unemployed experience increased material difficulties, mainly because their incomes when employed, for a determined period, drop drastically, being much below the nominal wage received before getting unemployed.

¹ The extent of covering the two minimal standards of living was assessed by relating the net average wages plus the state allowances for children to the minimal standards determined by a team of IQL researchers headed by dr. Gheorghe Barbu.

Evolution of the purchasing power of the unemployment benefit during 1991-1999

1991=100%

Year	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
1. Index of the unemployment benefit	186.3	522.8	1588.6	1992.2	2968.8	7771.4	10538.4	17822.6
2. Index of prices	310.4	1105.3	2617.3	3461.7	4805.1	12241.6	19476.0	28396.8
1 / 2	60.0	47.3	60.7	57.5	61.8	63.5	54.1	62.8

Source: Statistical processing using the monthly information bulletins of NIS during 1992-1999

The table data show that, between 1992-1999, the purchasing power of the average unemployment benefit was rather constant (around 60%), the worst situation being recorded in 1993 and 1998 (47% and 54% as compared to the reference year, 1991).

Pensions - Incomes under the pressure of reality

The most dramatic moments of the incapacity of a social insurance pension to cover the minimal requirement assessed for a retired person were 1993 (39%) and 1997 (40%). Between 1990-2000, the average monthly pension exceeded slightly half of the amount that a pensioner required to purchase the goods and services used in 1990. The purchasing power of an agricultural worker's pension was and still is lower, as it can be seen in the next table.

Dynamics of the average pension compared to the index of prices between 1990-2000

1990 = 100%

Year	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
1. Index of the average monthly pension	209.6	546.8	1690.3	3830.8	5499.9	7917.2	15912.4	24233.9	42780.7	49886.0

Year	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
2. Index of the average monthly pension in agriculture	111.3	186.5	739.9	2511.1	3372.9	5335.0	14162.5	21155.9	28262.5	38603.1
3. Price index	352.6	1035.0	4291.3	8103.3	10073.5	14615.4	39345.8	57931.6	87332.5	124803.8
1 / 3	59.4	52.8	39.4	47.3	54.6	54.2	40.4	41.8	49.0	40.0
2 / 3	31.6	18.0	17.2	30.9	33.5	36.5	36.0	36.5	32.4	30.9

Source: Statistical processing using the monthly information bulletins of NIS during 1990-2000.

The worst years were 1992 and 1993, when the nominal pension could purchase only one fifth (18-17.2%) of what it could buy in 1990.

Extent of the degree to which a social insurance pension covered the minimal requirements of an elder person living in urban area, for a decent life and for subsistence, 1990-2000

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Average pension / minimal requirement for decent standard of living	67.5	40.4	35.9	26.7	32.2	37.2	37.2	27.8	28.7	33.0	59.2
Average pension / minimal requirement for subsistence	95.8	57.3	50.9	37.9	45.7	52.8	52.5	39.2	40.6	47.5	85.1

Source: Statistical processing using the monthly information bulletins of NIS during 1990-2000

At the end of 1990 (fourth quarter), the average social insurance pension covered almost entirely (95.8%) the assessed requirement for the subsistence of an elder person living in urban areas. Thereafter, the extent of covering decreased, ranging only from 38% to 85% in 2000, as shown in table.

(Adina Mihăilescu)

c) "Lack of fear of taxes" ($m_3=1.1$; code 1 holds 86% of the frequencies). The value of the indicator in 1999 was the lowest of all the surveyed period, in which the fear of taxes remained, nevertheless, at alarming levels (mean between 1.2 and 1.4), remaining in the lowest class of quality of life. If, for inflation we may have some arguments concerning the nature of changes in economy, from the centralised model to market economy, with no justification, for the levels of inflation, outside the policies adopted meanwhile, the policy makers remain responsible for the situation of burdening taxes. We mean particularly the income tax and the contributions to social insurance, comparable to those on the highest incomes world-wide that may reach, when cumulated, 20% of the lowest income (when just social contributions are paid) and 50% of the income, without considering the contribution of the employer, of another 35% of the insured wage.

*

* *

1. According to the data analysis over the last decade of the past century we come to the general conclusion that the quality of life of the Romanian population was perceived as modest, with few elements of support and many critical areas.

Approaching this problem from the perspective of the expectations of the population for the things to be done in order to improve the quality of life in Romania, we get an impressive list of desires, dominated, however, by the creation of new, safe jobs, reform and economic development. After the need for a job, the other important actions concern the performance of the political management: radical political change, better management, elimination of corruption, and the life conditions: social protection, prices, wages etc.

**Actions to improve the quality of life
in Romania (1996-1999)%**

Nr. crt.	Action	Total	1996	1997	1998	1999
1.	Job creation	14.5	11.8	15.4	17.1	14.7
2.	Radical political change	8.2	1.8	6.0	9.5	17.3
3.	Stop price increase	8.0	12.3	7.5	6.0	4.7

Nr. crt.	Action	Total	1996	1997	1998	1999
4.	Social protection	7.6	8.7	8.3	7.2	6.0
5.	Increased wages	6.9	9.3	6.5	7.0	4.0
6.	Better management	6.1	4.8	3.7	8.4	7.9
7.	Less work	5.3	8.4	5.4	4.4	1.9
8.	Reform and economic development	5.1	4.1	3.9	8.9	3.9
9.	Eliminate corruption	3.9	5.2	4.2	3.0	2.9
10.	Support for agriculture	2.3	1.8	3.4	1.8	2.0
11.	Proper social behaviour	2.1	1.1	2.6	2.5	2.5
12.	Better laws	1.4	1.5	2.1	0.8	1.1
13.	Lower taxes	1.2	1.8	0.7	0.6	1.5
14.	Other	3.3	3.6	3.5	2.7	3.3
15.	No answer	24.1	23.8	26.8	20.1	26.3

One may see that three quarters of the subjects indicated actions which they expected to improve the quality of life in Romania.

2. Significant variations can be observed in the values of the different indicators of the perceived quality of life function of the actual state of fact, mostly in the precarious situations. In other words, when population is confronted with difficulties, they usually have less favourable or even negative perceptions. It is the case of the indicators of the standard of living, of the activity of the different public institutions at the local or national level, including the leadership of the country and the town halls.

3. The quality of life classes are delimited by the mean values of the indicators and the proportion of answers by used variants. Concerning the mean values, the difference of 7 hundreds is significant statistically for a threshold of 0.05. If some classes differ by at least a tenth, in some cases (between classes VI and VII) the difference is of 4 tenths.

The statistically significant differences exist not just by classes of quality of life, but also for most indicators of the diagnosis analysed by pairs (each with each).

4. The information concerning the perceived quality of life have a strong structure, As we have seen, we do not have chaotic, fortuitous

data, with unexplainable variations in the values which the population attaches to perception and self- assessment. On the contrary, the values of the indicators of perception and self-assessment of quality of life agree, stronger for the indicators belonging to the same dimension (income assessment and satisfaction about the income, quality of country leadership, etc.).

Another peculiarity of the frequency distribution of quality of life perception and self-assessment data concerns their grouping in segments of the different scales of hierarchy (with three or more degrees of intensity). In other words, there are no very close values for all the answer variants of the type: much – satisfactory – little; very much – much – satisfactory - very little, etc. but we also have only few cases of normal distributions (bell-shaped, with the average value in the middle of the scale), or bimodal distributions. The extreme values are often avoided, which would signify extremely negative or positive states (“i” or “j” shaped repartitions). Thus, in many cases, the values concentrate not in the middle or on the extremes, but on intermediate segments, on average-high or average-low segments.

All these general characteristics of the value distribution confirm the existence of rather stable patterns of the specific indicators of quality of life, while the deviation from these patterns enable us to draw clear conclusions.

5. The values of most indicators of perceived quality of life are highly stable in time. Methodologically, we may thus speak of a high degree of fidelity (trust) of the results, while explicatively, we observe that no important changes of the characteristics of the manner in which the population perceives the quality of life occurred during the reference interval.

6. Without being large, the changes observed in the perceived quality of life, usually have a negative significance. It is the perception of deteriorating quality of life, more stressed for the aspects concerning mainly the material conditions of existence (job, income, etc.) and the political environment.

Chapter 5

QUALITY OF LIFE OF SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC AND OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

After determining the general profile of the quality of life perceived in Romania, it is advisable to monitor it by the main groups of population formed according to the very often considered social variables such as the gender, age, residential area, school education, professional training, occupation and professional status.

Gender. When we consider a population, the significance of this variable exceeds its function of morphological and physiological differentiation, becoming a basis for structuring a set of social characteristics (relations, functions, etc.) The social-historical practice built a specific framework of life for the two sexes; however, several forms of social inequality also developed as parts of a more general complex of such exploitation relations, unfavourable to women, depriving even, subduing in several societies. The modern ages witnessed a wide process of supporting the emancipation and social assertion of women in all spheres of the social life. The action target the removal of all gender, age, race, ethnic or social origin, religious faith-related discrimination and the provision of equal opportunities for access to education, jobs, promotion, assertion in society on all plan: economic, political, cultural etc.

Considering the Romanian society, we may say that the 20th century witnessed important steps towards legislative stipulations and

towards the actual, practical implementation of the social equity between men and women. That is why it is extremely important to know which is the quality of life perceived by men and women.

Although in analysing the social status of men and women only certain factors bear relevance (the opportunity for access to education is such a significant indicator for the subject under study, while the quality of education assessment is no longer important with respect to the social status of men and women), we will review the whole set of indicators of the perceived quality of life diagnosis, which will display its detailed profile by gender.

According to the average values of the surveyed indicators, the profiles of the quality of life perceived by men and women in 1999 follows three patterns: agreement (similar values for men and women), alternation (deviation of the individual value of either considered subpopulation from overall population mean), opposition (concomitant detachment in opposite directions of the individual value of men and women from the overall population mean).

a) Agreement. In 1999, 41 indicators (of the 62 used in the diagnosis) displayed the same mean values of the quality of life perceived by men and women, or values that were not statistically different (differences less than one decimal of the mean values, therefore less than the minimal value required to accept statistically significant differences between the levels of at least 0.05, maximal limit considered in the social surveys for proofing the hypothesis of association between two or more variables), coinciding thus with the mean values of the overall population (since the two groups of population include all the interviewed subjects): relations with the neighbours, provision of tap water, health care quality, police activity, quality of education, quality of information received by mass-media, quality of public transportation, leisure opportunities, assertion in life, accessibility to education, job opportunities, participation in decision-making on the job, assistance to fellow citizens, satisfaction about everyday life, assessment of the conditions of life in 10 years, satisfaction provided by the profession, by the job, spending the free time, quality of country leaders, satisfaction about the achievements in life, self-ranking on the poor-rich scale, perception of work, social and political conflicts, personal standard of

living as compared to the previous year (1998) and to 1989, how much the workers, peasants, entrepreneurs, politicians and ethnic minorities are favoured by the post-communist changes, how much the subject was favoured by the post-communist changes, whether the minorities can live according to their traditions and custom, level of concern for the social conflicts, prices, taxes;

b) Alternation (13 indicators in 1999). The differences in the pattern of alternation are slightly to the advantage of men, meaning that 7 indicators have higher mean values for men than for women: quality of dwelling and of the environment, family income, security in the street, participation in decision-making in the locality and at the country level, perception of ethnic conflicts. Women recorded higher mean values for the balance of six indicators: quality of country leaders, assessment of the current standard of living as compared to 1989, observance of the personal rights, less personal threatening, the directors being favoured by the post-communist changes, less fear of unemployment.

Differentiation of quality of life profile as perceived by men and women (1999)

Overall (O) (n = 1195)

Men (M) (n = 566)

Women (W) (n = 629)

Quality of life indicators	1	Mean values	5
a) Pattern of alternation			
1. Quality of dwelling		W 3.5; O; M 3.6	
2. Quality of the environment		W 3.3; O; M 3.4	
3. Family incomes		W 2.3; O; M 2.4	
4. Quality of country leaders	M 1.8; O	W 1.9	
5. Security in the street		W 2.8; O; M 2.9	
6. Observation of the individual rights		M 2.6; O W 2.7	
7. Participation in decision-making at the local level	W 1.7; O;	M 1.8	
8. Participation in decision-making at the country level	W 1.4; O;	M 1.5	
9. Assessment of the current standard of living as compared to 1989		M 2.1; O; W 2.2	

Quality of life indicators	1	Mean values	5
10. Whether there are ethnic conflicts		W 2.9; O; M 3.0	
11. Whether the directors are favoured		M 4.4; O; W 4.7	
12. Whether there are personal threats		M 3.1; O; W 3.3	
13. Concern over unemployment	O; M 1.8; W 1.9		
b) Pattern of opposition			
1. Health state		W 2.9; O 3.1; M 3.2	
2. Family relations		W 3.9; O 4.0; M 4.1	
3. Satisfaction towards family life		W 3.8; O 3.9; M 4.0	
4. Working conditions		M 3.0; O 3.1; W 3.2	
5. Satisfaction towards incomes	W 2.1; O 2.3; M 2.4		
6. Whether there are intergeneration conflicts		W 2.4; O 2.5; M 2.7	
7. Whether there are religious conflicts		W 2.6; O 2.7; M 2.8	
8. Whether the intellectuals are favoured by the post-communist changes		W 2.3; O 2.4; M 2.5	
9. Degree of concern over the crime rate*		W 1.7; O 1.8; M 1.9	

* On a scale of 3.

Note: The difference higher than one decimal between the mean values of the indicators is statistically significant for $p = 0.05$.

The information presented above shows that men and women have significant similarities between the profiles of perceived quality of life. More precisely, both men and women perceive a rather modest quality of life with many critical aspects. This profile is more favourable to men, however, than to women. This differentiation results both from the distribution of the 22 indicators of the patterns of alternation or opposition between men and women (15 in favour of men and 7 in favour of women), and from the fact that the values making the differentiation, although low, are in favour of men. Thus, men are favoured by three indicators and women are favoured by one indicator in case of the differentiation of three decimals of the mean values. The differences of 2 decimals are distributed 5 in favour of the men and 2 in favour of the

women, while of the differences of just one decimal, 7 are in favour of the men and 4 are in favour of the women.

If we consider only the indicators relevant to the social status of the person within the society, we observe that few of them are different by gender. In the case of men there are: “influencing the decision-making process at the local and national level”, “satisfaction about the income”, “family relations and satisfaction about the family life”. In the case of women there are “observance of the individual rights”, “quality of the working conditions”, perception of “whether there are threats”, a lower “fear of unemployment”.

Special attention should be paid to the assessment of the family relations and to the satisfaction about them, which could be connected both to the greater involvement of women in the family life despite the difficulties incurred by a give non-involvement of men, and with a possible status of economic dependence (women working in the household), with the violence upon women in some families, with the problems associated to the survival of the wife after the death of the husband.

The mean values for the two subpopulations coincide for other indicators, having significance for the social status of the individual: “job opportunities”, “decision-making on the job”, possibilities of “assertion in life” and “achievements in life”.

The rest of differences concern the perception and specific assessment by men and women of their individual status or of the social environment (next to them or farther away), without direct connections to the social status. They express different ways of organising one’s life or different levels of expectation rather than different social positions. For instance, men perceive more favourably the following indicators: “personal health”, “security in the street”, “satisfaction about the relations between people”, perception of “whether there are intergeneration, religious and ethnic conflicts”, “whether the intellectuals were favoured by the postcommunist changes”, “lack of concern for crime activities”. Women perceive more favourably other indicators: “police activity”, “quality of education and of mass-media information”, “leisure possibilities”, “assistance to the fellow citizens”, “projection of

the conditions of living in the country over 10 years”, “satisfaction towards the political life in the country”, “whether the peasants and the directors were favoured by the postcommunist changes”, “assessment of the direction of the postcommunist changes”.

Such a profile of the perceived quality of life supports a high degree of similitude of the social status as perceived by men and by women, which contradicts those attitudes which use unlawfully, in order to gain social and possibly political capital, the feminist idea, by exacerbating the gender differences for areas that are insufficiently documented, some of them imported, with no actual connection to the topic. The analysis of the equal opportunities of men and women should concern the things that matter to the social status of the person within society: access to education and professional training, in agreement with the aspirations and options, undiscriminated employment and waging, access to prestigious social, economic, political and cultural status. Those elements that are normally different and which would be abnormally similar, should not be included. The promotion of women’ rights must not be done in order to obtain equality with men in all areas, which is an absurd idea. The human beings have distinct personalities and they develop different sets of aspirations, motivations, interests, ideals and preoccupations, not just from person to person, but even by the same person at different moments of his/her life cycle.

Preserving the idea of support for the authentic feminist idea, which nevertheless, does not presume a society deprived of the charm that ultimately make the human life more interesting, concerning the common life of men and women, the mutual respect should be strengthened, the bureaucratic obstacles hindering the personal assertion should be removed, the people wronged by public or private actions should be protected, as should be the people suffering from family abuse and violence, etc.

Age. The age-related profile of the quality of life requires first the delimitation of groups of population by intervals of years of life. The grouping is necessary, on the one hand, because it is difficult to make comparative analyses of each year, the age variable of the elder population having up to 70 values with high enough frequencies to become significant statistically, which is very expensive, with no proper gain of knowledge because when the adult population is concerned we

may expect significant variations in the quality of life profile, as in many other areas, by cohorts of one year.

There are two ways to solve this problem. The first variant, more laborious, records first the age of subjects in full years and tries thereafter, by statistical methods of grouping, to draw the possible lines of distinction concerning the quality of life. The second method, more simple but with less exact results though, sets beforehand groups of age, most often of 5-10 years, then collects field data based on these groups and then performs statistical analyses to track the possible similarities between and differences in the profile of the perceived quality of life by group. Regrouping may be done by joining the initial intervals. It was the method used in our surveys, which run the final analysis by several categories of cycle of life, namely the young, adults, elderly.

In defining these age categories we used several social categories. Thus, for the youth we used criteria concerning school graduation, acquiring a profession, starting a family, birth of children. According to these criteria, the category of youth we interviewed was aged 18 to 30, much used in social surveys and in the everyday practice.

It is much more difficult to draw a line of distinction for the elderly. For this age group we also used social criteria, rather than biological criteria related to ageing. As a matter of fact we will not even use the words of "old men" or "old women" but rather "elder people".

The social practice records important variations in the perception of what an elder person is. To the young, the distance in years to such a person is considerable, so they lower the age limit to 50 or even less. The older the people get, the higher the age limit they consider themselves elder (third age) is. In the succession of generations, the period 25 to 30 is the segment of life that links the predecessors and the successors. If we consider the age of 25, the third age starts at 50, but we don't think we can talk of elder people at that age, the more so as the past decades witnessed an increased age of the parents at the birth of their first child. We must also consider the fact that during the past 70 years life expectancy increased in Romania from 42 to almost 70 years (67 for men and 73 for women), which is a spectacular leap forward, although we didn't get yet to 85 (the life expectancy in the developed countries) and even far behind the age of 120 which seems to be the genetic program of our species. That is why the limit of the third age is

pushed forward to 60-70 years. Otherwise, even the main social criterion of distinction that we use, which concerns the conclusion of the professional career, not necessarily at the moment of retirement, but by limiting the activity to the household, supports this idea.

Grouping the age segment 30 to 70 by ages of 10 years allowed us to consider different limits used to track the similarities/differences in the profile of the quality of life according to the age of the subject. The results of comparisons conducted in Romania shows the limit of 70 for the highest differentiation by age category. About 30% of the interviewed subjects over 60 reported they were still working.

The general conclusion is that for this criterion, as for the previous one, the similarities are predominant. The only indicator whose values are different in all large age groups is no surprise, since it concerns the “state of health” ($m_5=3.7$ for the young, 3.1 for the persons aged 31-60, 2.5 for the persons aged 61-70 and 2.2 for the persons over 70²).

The 1999 indicators having the same values irrespective of the age category under consideration concern no less than 37 indicators (based on the previous hypothesis they could be even more): quality of the environment, relations with the neighbours, drinking water provision in the locality, police activity, quality of the public transportation, quality of town hall activity, accessibility of the different forms of education, security in the street, participation in decision-making on the job (active population), in the locality and in the country, standard of living over 10 years, satisfaction towards the profession and job, about the family life and about the relations between people, perception of intergeneration, work, rich-poor, religious conflicts, standard of living compared to the previous year, favouring of the workers, peasants, intellectuals, entrepreneurs, minorities and of the subject by the postcommunist

² Considering the volume of the delimited groups from 100 subjects for the eldest group (70 and over) to almost 700 for the adult population aged 31-60, in agreement with the results of the Tukey test, the statistically significant differences are of at least 2-3 decimals at the mean values. The Tukey HSD test used to compute the differences between the mean values of more than two groups use the harmonic means when the size of the groups is unequal, but it does not guarantee against the type 1 errors. In other words, we may be in the position to reject incorrectly the null hypothesis, of the lack of differences between the compared values. It means that we could consider as different something that could actually be similar, so that we have to be more cautious about the differences at the limit of the statistical threshold of significance.

changes, assessment of these changes, perceived degree of threat, life of the minorities, concern over unemployment, conflicts, crime activities, prices and taxes.

The youth (18-30) perceive a profile of the quality of life slightly more favourable as compared to that of the other categories of age. However, for the young too, the perceived quality of life is rather modest with important critical areas, as it is for the overall Romanian population. We may see that there is no discrimination of the youth, the precarious situation of the youth being due to the serious problems existing in the society, which confront the whole population. Besides a better state of health, the youth show higher values for other 9 indicators: better family relations (m5=4.1 compared to 3.8 for the population aged over 70); higher incomes (m5=2.6 compared to 2.1 for the population aged over 60); perception of the concern of society for the needy (m3=2.3 compared to 2.0 for the elderly); possibility of getting a job (m5=2.0 compared to 1.8 for the population aged 31-60); better possibilities of self-assertion (m5=2.3 compared to 2.0 for the population aged over 60); better observation of the personal rights (m5=2.8 compared to 2.6 for the population aged over 30); satisfaction about the everyday life (m5=3.0 compared to 2.6 for the population aged 31-70); living conditions (m5=2.4 compared to 2.0 for the elderly); satisfaction about the personal income (m5=2.4 compared to 2.0 for the eldest population).

Other 6 indicators of young and the population aged 31-60 were higher than those for the elder population: family relations (m5=4.1-4.0 compared to 3.8 for the elderly); health care and education quality (m5=3.4 compared to 3.0 for the elderly); mass-media information (m5=3.6 compared to 3.3); leisure possibilities (m5=2.8 as compared to 2.5 for the elderly); self-ranking on the rich-poor scale (m10=3.9-3.7 as compared to 3.4 for the elderly).

Also together with the population 31-60, the youth express a lower satisfaction towards the achievements in life (m5=3.2-3.3 compared to 3.5 for the elderly) and they would count less on the support of the fellow citizens (m5=1.8-1.7 as compared to 2.0 for the population over 70). Here we find only only indicators whose values are lower for the youth than for the elderly. Nevertheless, these differences are expectable. The youth need less support from the others and rely mostly on their own

capacity. That is why the result cannot express the perception of a lower human solidarity, when they state they would not count on the support of their fellows. Also, a lower state of satisfaction of the young about the achievements in life is understandable. The discontent can also be a source of frustration for some people.

The population aged 31-60. The profile of the life perceived by the adults, the largest sample, is rather similar to that of the overall population. They accounted for almost 60% of the total sample in each year (56% in 1999).

Indeed, if to the 37 indicators with values that do not differentiate for all age categories we add the indicators whose values for the population aged 31-60 do not differentiate from the overall community, we obtain a total of 52 indicators of 62. Of the 10 indicators differentiating the population aged 31-60, 8 have similar values to those for the young (6 with higher values than the elderly and 2 with lower values), while for 2 indicators, "satisfaction about everyday life" and the "state of health", the adults have lower values than the young.

The population aged over 60. The profile of this age category has lower values in almost all indicators. The most critical areas are health state, incomes, self-ranking on the rich-poor scale, observation of the personal rights, trust in fellow citizens, satisfaction about everyday life.

The population aged over 70. Obvious here we find the unfavourable aspects of the quality of life profile mentioned at the previous age category, plus a worse state of the family relations and of the quality of the dwelling.

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Quality life profile regresses as the age increases. This fact could be framed within the logic of the human life if the problem would not be so dramatic considering that the quality of life has low overall values in Romania. Under these conditions, the regressive evolution goes from something critical to something even more critical.

The residential area. Each of the two residential areas, rural and urban, have advantages and disadvantages. The village and the town, the types of locality corresponding to the residential areas are dwelling options for the population, materialising under the influence of the different transfers from society, by the two-way rural-urban migration. If

the traditional (premodern) societies were preponderantly rural, a rural area subordinated to the urban (town fortress) concentrating the political, administrative, military, handicrafts, trading activities, in the modern societies industrialisation started a process of rural-urban migration which clustered around towns most of the developed countries' population. The other countries, however, among which Romania, still have a considerable share of their population living in rural areas. The modernisation of rural and urban areas was done differently in these countries.

The urban areas continued to concentrate the non-agricultural economic activities bringing higher revenues than the agriculture, also progressing faster as the comfort of dwelling (electricity, tap water, sewage system, streets covered in asphalt, etc.). But living in large urban agglomerations has disadvantages. The advantages of the rural area consist of the way of life closer to the nature. Among the disadvantages one finds the lower level of comfort, lower access to the formal education in order to allow for the diversification of the professional options. The rural remained preponderantly agricultural and the agriculture is disadvantaged compared to the other economic sectors. This aspect was exacerbated in the Romanian society of the second half of the 20th century by the forced cooperativisation of agriculture and the onset of a massive process of migration from the rural to the urban in search of industrial jobs. The rural investments were very low except for the electricity and the procurement of agricultural machinery. While in the developed countries where the modernised (higher comfort of dwelling) rural is inhabited by just a small share of the population and supportive policies are adopted for the rural areas and their inhabitants, particularly since many town people moved their homes outside the large cities, the communist regime adopted an opposite policy. Under the pretext of rural land systematisation a plan was set up to narrow forcefully the area of villages, to eliminate altogether other villages considered as nonviable, their population being moved to blocks of flats of very low comfort, lacking the most elementary facilities.

After the overturn of the communist regime the rural asserted its right to existence and measures were taken to alleviate the adverse consequences accumulated previously: land reversion, reconsideration of the town areas

allocated to buildings, etc. It is not our intent to analyse here in detail the opportunity of these decisions, the effects of the actions taken to restore the credibility of the rural as residential area; significant changes in this area have obviously taken place. Correlated with the diminishing number of town jobs after 1990, the rural-urban migration decreased drastically while the reverse migration started: the former peasants returned to their native places, some compelled by the circumstances, others in search of a better living environment.

Considering the characteristics of living in the towns in villages in Romania, we may expect large variations in the profile of the perceived quality of life.

This is the situation determined by our surveys. Thus, in 1999, of 62 indicators 24 have concordant values, which means we have here a situation similar to the differentiation between the young and the elderly when the age was considered, and much more different from the profiles of the quality of life perceived by men and women, where the similarities were predominant.

The 24 indicators of concordance of the profiles of the quality of life perceived by town and village dwellers concern both the dwelling conditions and the quality of services and more general indicators such as the perception of the public institutions. Here are the 24 indicators: quality of dwelling, relations with the neighbours, drinking water supply, quality of education, job opportunities, possibilities of self-assertion in life, observation of the personal rights, participation in decision-making on the job, satisfaction about the everyday life, assessment of the current conditions of living as compared to the 1989 satisfaction about the job, spending the free time, life family and personal income, self-ranking on the rich-poor scale, assessment of ethnic conflicts, personal standard of living as compared to 1989, whether the postcommunist changes have favoured the workers, peasants and minorities, whether the minorities can live according to their custom and traditions.

The indicators of differentiation, 38, are dominated by the pattern of the rural-urban opposition related to the mean values for overall population, more precisely to 25 indicators, as compared to just 13 indicators that follow the pattern of alternation. This time too, the differences between the means are not excessive. Most differentiation

resides in close vicinity of the threshold of statistical significance (a difference of 1-2 decimals at the mean values), but there were some farther away up to 6 decimals at the mean values.

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If we follow the configuration of the quality of life profiles by residential area we may see that 22 indicators have higher values for the rural compared to the urban, while 16 indicators have higher values for the urban. Some of these indicators are significant for the conditions of living in these areas. Thus, the rural is advantaged by: the natural environment (3.7 versus 3.1), security in the street (3.0 versus 2.61), participation in decision making in the locality (2.8 versus 1.61), satisfaction about the relations among people (2.8 versus 2.6), fewer threats (3.4 versus 3.1), lower fear of unemployment and crime activities (1.9 versus 1.7)*, of social conflicts (1.9 versus 1.8)*, and of taxes (1.2 versus 1.1)*. The urban is advantaged by: the family relations (4.1 versus 3.9), working conditions (3.3 versus 2.8), quality of mass-media information (3.7 versus 3.4), public transportation (2.9 versus 2.7), leisure opportunities (2.7 versus 2.5), accessibility of education (2.9 versus 2.5), satisfaction towards profession (3.6 versus 3.4), health care (3.4 versus 3.2), conditions of living over 10 years (3.0 versus 2.7).

As we may see, the two residential areas share their attractiveness, if we may say so, considering the low level of the values of all the indicators of the diagnosis of the perceived quality of life. It would be more accurate to say that the rural is advantaged as dwelling area, while the urban is advantaged as professional activity. The urban population is also more optimistic than the rural population, while the latter feels less the shortcomings of life probably because it has lower expectations concerning the manner in which the country and the locality are managed, the danger of conflicts within society and the adverse social consequences of changes.

* The scales have three points.

The impact of transition on the quality of life in the rural areas

About 45% of the population of Romania lives in rural areas, with agriculture as their main occupation. Assessed according to the modern criteria, the Romanian agriculture was quite lagging in late '80s and early '90s. Judged in the context of the national economy, however, it was an important branch of the economy. Its contribution to the establishment of the social product and of the national income was 13.8% and 20.6% in 1990 (Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 1991).

The importance of agriculture within the Romanian national economy (related to the other sectors) must not make us forget its low productivity, because 28.2% of the Romanian population, working in agriculture (according to the same source) produced 20.6% of the national income. In the countries with high output agriculture, the share of agriculture in the national income equals or has a close value to the share of population working in agriculture and producing that income. For instance, in late '80s France, 10% of the occupied population was working in agriculture, which was producing 10% of the national income. In the United States, 3% of the occupied population works in agriculture, producing 3% of the national GDP.

From the social perspective, the lag we mentioned earlier reveals the probable income differences and thus the differences in the quality of life of the agriculture workers as compared to the workers in the other economic branches. Considering, in order to make it more simple, that the workers in agriculture are allotted all the national income they created, we have $20.6 : 28.2 = 0.73$. The other economic branches, during the same period, included 71.8% of the occupied population, which was producing 79.4% of the national income. This time we have $79.4 : 71.8 = 1.1$, which means that more than one percent of the national income is allotted to each percent of labour force from economic branches other than agriculture. The income is the basis of the standard of living and of the quality of life in general, so that the mentioned differences in income will be detected, more or less, in differences of the standard of living and of quality of life.

Once the agricultural production co-operatives were discontinued and the private land property was restored, new possibilities appeared for the development of the individual agricultural exploitation. The first requirement that such a viable agricultural exploitation has to fulfil is to have enough land. However, restraining the reverted land to just 10 hectares and banning land transactions, Law 18 barred the concentration of land property. As it is already known, the result was the excessive dissolution of the agricultural land down to an average land area of 2.5 ha by landowner, which is completely unfavourable to the organisation of rational agricultural exploitations. Of course, the countries with advanced agriculture also have small farms. In Greece, for instance, 69.4% of the agricultural exploitations had less than 5 ha, while in Italy the farms of this size accounted for 67.9% of the overall farms (Ion Păun Otiman, Rural Development in Romania, Agroprint, Timișoara, 1997).

Owning, usually, not enough land area, the peasant agricultural exploitation can only function currently as exploitation for subsistence: subsistence at the limit of survival, as shown by the surveys and studies of villages.

Little as it was, the land repossessed after the Revolution had to be worked, but the new owners had no tools to do it. Therefore, all these years of transition after 1991, the peasants invested their available capital, mainly in agricultural tools.

Unfortunately, after the restitution of the private agricultural property and of the individual exploitation as a form of organisation, the evolution of the new agricultural structures resided mainly on the inspiration and on the limited private possibilities. Even though the state allocated quite important funds to agriculture, they were not aimed mainly at the improvement of the agricultural structures, but rather at the current agricultural activities: sowing, crop maintenance, harvesting, storage, etc. Thus, each new agricultural cycle generally found the private agricultural structures as they were in the previous cycle.

Thus, the existential support of the rural population, particularly of the peasant families living on agricultural activities, is not much different than it was in early transition, which is the small exploitation of subsistence. The small progress made in time by this exploitation in terms of modern or traditional agricultural equipment, was cancelled by the change in the economic environment to its detriment, and we mean by this the ever-increasing cost of agricultural inputs, which, in 2000 only, increased by 41-42% due to inflation, while the price which the peasants received from the middlemen for their wheat remained about the same as in 1999. At the same time, the cost of life reproduces for the agricultural worker the slope of inflation. Otherwise said, supposing the peasant household has the same sources in kind as it did at the beginning of the transition, their market value decreased over time due to the increasing gap between the price of agricultural products and the cost of industrial services and products.

It is no surprise, therefore, that the standard of living of the people living in the countryside, peasants particularly, didn't improve, but rather decreased during the past decade. However, it is more than a surprise to find out that the incomes, and therefore the quality of life of the persons involved in agriculture, decreased obviously, absolutely and relatively, despite that, unlike what it happened in the other areas of activity, the agricultural production remained at quite the same level as during early transition.

In 1998, the industrial production represented merely 45.1% of the 1989 level. At the same time, the agriculture produced 94.5% of the 1989 level (Violeta Florian, Filon Toderoiu, 2000, Institutional patterns of the rural development in Romania, INCE Annals, X, vol.41, nr.4). The incomes of the people making these productions had a completely different course. Thus, in 1991, the ratio of the net average monthly wage and the net monthly incomes from agriculture was 1.36 in favour of the employees. After 7 years, during which the industrial production decreased to less than half of the initial level, while the agricultural production decreased by merely 5.5%, instead of observing an improvement of the ratio in favour of the peasants, it got worse for them, getting to 1.53 in favour of the employees.

We may therefore ask how this paradoxical situation was possible, contrary to all economic laws, and to the relation between the incomes of the mentioned socio-economic categories on the one hand, and between the incomes and the economic results of their particular areas of activity, on the other hand.

No doubt, the main reason is economic. The market economy, as it took shape in our country during the past decade, causes the prices to fluctuate according to the demand and supply. In Romania, the domestic supply of agricultural products is generally higher than the demand and in some products it is higher than the demand that can be fulfilled. This gap is a first cause that the price of the agricultural products and, therefore, of the incomes, to decrease. An aggravating issue is the invasion of imported agricultural products, which being subsidised by their particular governments, are offered at lower prices than the domestic ones, which compels the Romanian producers to cut down their prices as well. The domestic overproduction of primary agricultural products and the inflow of such imported products allow the local traders to act in a discretionary manner and impose lower prices to the Romanian producers, as it happened, in 2002 with the wheat, for instance, about at the 2000 price, ignoring thus the effect of inflation and the additional costs of the inputs.

The deterioration of the relation between production and incomes in agriculture and the adverse action on the agricultural producers, particularly if compared to the situation in other areas of activity, also has a social (or organisational) explanation. Unlike other social categories, in Romania, the peasant class is dispersed, rather non-organised, and therefore non-combative on the political arena. The absence of a structure as distinct social group makes it unable to promote its economic or other interests. Thus, unlike other social categories, which are combative and manage thus to impose not only their rights, but rather their privileges, the weak attempts of the peasants, never asserted in an organised manner, to promote their interests in front of other groups or in front of the authorities were constantly ignored. Under these circumstances, the peasants continue to increase, as always, from its few assets, the wealth of others.

The standard of living and the quality of life of a population are shown by indicators, such as the income and its capacity to provide the proper satisfaction of all individual and family needs: food, clothing, hygiene, health care, education, culture, social integration and self-assertion, etc. by indicators measuring the degree of satisfying the food requirements, the health state, the comfort of dwelling, the social status, etc.; by subjective indicators expressing the perception by a particular individual of the different aspects of its existence.

A special manner of assessing the quality of life and the standard of living of a larger community or even of a nation, frequently used lately, starts from the concept of poverty.

The investigations on poverty use the household as basic unit. The rural household, however, differs much from the rural household. The rural household has important productive traits, while the urban household has preponderantly, or even exclusively, consumption traits. The productive dimension of the rural household is given by the ownership and exploitation of agricultural land, by animal raising (at least in the yard), which allows it to provide from own sources 55-80% of the food consumption and 30-60% of the overall consumption (World Bank, NCS, 1999). Despite this important advantage, 54% of the poor, identified in 1998 by the Integrated Household Survey of NCS, live in rural areas (World Bank, NCS, 1999).

During the transition years, the rate of poor people reached 40% in the rural areas, according to the Integrated Household Survey. Considering that in 2000 agriculture was confronted with the most serious drought, the standard of living must certainly have dropped even further in the rural areas.

Agriculture is the main economic activity in the rural areas, but the socio-occupational picture is more diversified. The migration of the youth from villages particularly before 1989, of the elderly from town to the village, particularly after the Revolution, caused that a pensioner becomes head of many agricultural households, former agricultural worker or employee, who continues to act in agriculture to some extent. The pension supplemented by agricultural production allows these households to have the lowest rate of poverty among the rural socio-occupational categories (27.4%).

The Integrated Household Survey also showed that the rural households headed by an employee are better protected against the risk of poverty than the agricultural worker households (39.2% vs. 57% poor, for the two categories, respectively).

The bottom position of the agricultural worker households to reach a standard of living below the threshold of poverty, proves once more that during transition, the agricultural activity was under-evaluated, while the state of employee or pensioner was privileged.

As bottom line, the quality of life is determined by the overall household income (including, obviously, the value of household grown agricultural products). Based on the 1998 Integrated Household Survey conducted by the National Institute for Statistics, the overall income per capita in an employee household was 1,001,814 ROL, of a pensioner household was 875,357 ROL, while that of a peasant household was 663,886 ROL. Otherwise said, the income of a peasant was 66.3% of the income of an employee and 75.8% of the income of a pensioner. In the European Union, the preoccupation for having peasant incomes similar to that of the other occupational categories lead to the enforcement of special policies for this target. Thus, in the EU countries with developed agriculture, the income of agricultural workers is already on the average around 90% of similar professions.

Agriculture will remain in the predictable future the main component of the rural economy in Romania, so that the well-being of the villages is tied first of all of the modernisation of this sector. Modern agriculture with high output is an activity in which the main production unit is the private exploitation of land of proper size, with modern equipment, using the latest achievements in agri-biology. If we want to have a modern agriculture providing welfare for the people doing it, the current small size agricultural household must be turned gradually, as soon as possible, into a strong exploitation.

The modernisation of agriculture alone will not offer all the peoples living in rural areas enough opportunities for occupation and income, in order to provide for a plenty life and will not change significantly the physiognomy of the village. Industrial and service activities have to develop, in order to improve the ratio of the job offer to the available work force, under conditions of acceptable marginal output. Even so, there will still be a surplus of workforce that will have to be absorbed by the towns.

(Gheorghe Socol)

School education. School education bears multiple influences on the system of thinking, attitudes, values, aspirations and behaviour of the people. In fact, this is about the level of education, its forms, the type of school, and even the school units attended during school and university training. The social functions of the school within the modern society, of education and professional training of the new generations and thus of influencing the occupational careers and the subsequent social statuses, make the free access to education be one of the most important criteria of judging a society. That is why recruiting for the top economic, social, cultural and political positions should be based on competence and personal effort by competition open to everybody. Thus, it is only natural to relate education to the quality of life profile. Our analysis concerns the level of school education: people attending just a few grades (some no education at all), graduates of secondary school, of vocational school, of high school, post-high school training and higher education.

Our conclusions support the expectation according to which the profile of the quality of life differs more by the level of school education. Thus, if for a number of 30 indicators of the profile of the perceived quality of life, from the 1999 investigation, their values coincide or are at the limit of the area of random variation, for other 32 indicators of the total 62, the values differ by level of school education. This time, however, the dominant pattern of differentiation is increasing, related to the number of school years, meaning that the persons with a higher level of education perceive a more favourable quality of life than the persons with lower education.

The following indicators have concordant values: relations with the neighbours, drinking water supply, quality of education, leisure opportunities, society concern for the needy, town-hall activity, qualities of country management, job opportunities, observance of the personal rights, decision-making at the local and national level, satisfaction about the job, way of spending the free time, national political life and life achievements, intergeneration, work, rich-poor, political, religious, ethnic conflicts, standard of living compared to last year, favours to the workers, peasants, intellectuals, politicians, minorities, degree of threat, fear of crime activities, prices and taxes.

Concerning the differentiation, it is noticeable that, in agreement with the increasing pattern, quality of life profiles for neighbouring levels of education resemble more than those for the more remote levels of education. The situation we have causes that when passing from one level of school education to the next one, the values of some indicators increase by just 1-2 decimals, which is not statistically significant, but this threshold appears at the third level of school education (the statistically significant difference is of no less than 4 decimals to the mean values for sample groups between 100 and 300 persons). Thus, between the population that attended just a few elementary grades and the middle school graduates, the differences in quality of life perception, although present, are not consistent.

Graduates of few elementary grades ($n = 210$ subjects). The quality of life profile for the indicators of differentiation is the least favourable. If compared to the secondary school graduates, the differences are minimal, and the most relevant indicator of differentiation for the quality of life is the self-ranking on the "rich-poor" scale ($m_{10}=2.9$ compared to 3.6).

This category of population also feels the adverse effects on the quality of life of other analysed variables such as the older age. Thus, of the total of 32 variables of differentiation, for 29 the values of the quality of life perceived by the population that graduated only a few elementary grades are lower at least if compared to the population that graduated higher education. Most of the unfavourable differentiation situations concern the conditions of life and work: family incomes ($m_5=1.9$ if compared to 2.9 for the population with higher education), "rich-poor" scale ($m_{10}=2.9$ if compared to 4.5), whether that particular person was favoured by the changes ($m_5=2.3$ if compared to 2.9), accessibility of education ($m_5=2.4$ if compared to 3.1), satisfaction about everyday life (2.0 compared to 3.0), projection of the conditions of living over 10 years (2.6 compared to 3.4), assessment of the perceived conditions of living (2.0 compared to 2.5). The indicators where the population with little education has higher indicators than the other categories of population are quality of the environment ($m_5=3.5$ if compared to 3.1 for the population with higher education), police activity ($m_5=3.4$ if compared to 2.9), trust in the support of the fellow citizens ($m_5=2.0$ if compared to 1.5), security in the street ($m_5=3.0$ if compared to 2.6). Among

these indicators, only the last two matter for the personal quality of life. Overall, this category of population has differentiated values (most times lower values) at least if compared to another category for all 32 indicators of differentiation.

Graduates from secondary school (n = 339 subjects). The quality of life profile of this category of population displays the effects of low educational level, being closer to that of the population that has not graduated the middle school (except the self-ranking on the rich-poor scale), than to the profile of the population that has graduated high schools or more. This time too, the higher differentiation (unfavouring them) appears when compared to the higher education population: family relations (3.9 compared to 4.3), dwelling (3.4 compared to 3.8), working conditions (2.8 compared to 3.6), family incomes (2.1 compared to 2.9), opportunity for assertion in life (2.1 compared to 2.5), accessibility to education (2.6 compared to 3.1), satisfaction about the everyday life (2.6 compared to 3.0), projection of the conditions of living over 10 years (2.6 compared to 3.4), assessment of the current conditions of living (2.1 compared to 2.5), satisfaction about the profession (3.2 compared to 3.9), self-ranking on the rich-poor scale (3.6 compared to 4.5), standard of living compared to 1989 (1.9 compared to 2.5), promotion of changes (2.3 compared to 2.9).

Graduates from vocational schools (n = 207 subjects). The values of the quality of life profile for this category of population stand somewhere between the least favourable values of the population with just a few grades and the most favourable values of the population with higher education. The indicators for the favourable delimitation from the first category of population concern the family relations, working conditions, family incomes, self-ranking on the rich-poor scale, while the unfavourable differentiation concerns the fear of unemployment.

High school graduates (n = 244 subjects). The profile of the perceived quality of life detaches largely by favourable values from the population with just a few grades, getting very close to the profile of the higher education graduates. Indeed, at this level, many of the disadvantages disappear if compared to the higher education graduates recorded in the population with lower education. The following indicators can be enumerated for the first relation: family income, participation in decision-making on the job, satisfaction towards the everyday life, projection of the conditions of living over 10 years,

satisfaction towards the profession and towards the personal income, self-ranking on the rich-poor scale. This category too, feels more threatened by unemployment.

Post-high school graduates (n = 74). The same profile of the perceived quality of life characterising the high school graduates, that is more favourable compared to the persons with pre-high school training and less favourable compared to the higher education graduates.

Higher education graduates (n = 116 subjects). The quality of life profile perceived by the graduates of higher education stands out mostly by favourable values as compared to the other categories mentioned here. But the mean values are not particularly high. On the contrary, we have here a modest quality of life. Health condition (3.5), family relations (4.3), dwelling (3.8), working conditions (3.6), family incomes (2.9), received health care (3.4), opportunities for self-assertion in life (2.5), accessibility to education (3.1), participation in decision-making on the job (2.9), satisfaction about everyday life (3.0), projection of the conditions of living over 10 years (3.4), assessment of current conditions of living compared to 1989 (2.5), satisfaction about the profession (3.9), family life (4.2), personal income (2.7), self-ranking on the rich-poor scale (4.5), current standard of living as compared to 1989 (2.5), whether the particular individual was advantaged by the postcommunist changes (2.9).

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The level of education marks significantly the profile of the perceived quality of life. If for the age variable we observe a decreasing trend meaning that as the person ages the variables of the quality of life diagnosis decrease, for the training level variable, the pattern is increasing. The highest values of the quality of life diagnosis were observed in the population which graduated higher education, but we cannot speak of a good quality of life here either, rather of a less critical one as compared to the population with less school education.

Occupational status. In the modern society, occupations underwent a process of turning professional, meaning the training of the people before they get employed and thereafter throughout their employed life

due to increased complexity and rapid changes in the content of the work. The level of becoming professional at a given moment differs among the professions and for the same professions they differ between countries according to the degree of development and achieved technical progress.

The occupational status of the subjects is a set of characteristics of the occupational activity of a given individual, starting with the fact of being an occupationally active or inactive person, actually occupied or temporarily unoccupied (unemployed, other situation), etc.

In order to build up the profile of the perceived quality of life by components of the occupational status we will first consider the large socio-occupational categories: agricultural worker, worker, technician, higher education specialist.

The pattern of value concordance for the 4 socio-occupational categories characterises 23 indicators: relations with the neighbours, tap water supply, quality of education, public transportation, leisure opportunities, society concern for the needy, observance of the personal rights, participation in decision-making on the job and in the locality, satisfaction towards the national political life, assessment of the degree of social, intergeneration and ethnic conflicts, assessment of the living standard as compared to 1989, whether the workers, peasants, intellectuals, directors, politicians and minorities were favoured, assessment of the changes, assessment of the observance of the custom and traditions of the minorities, level of concern for the prices and taxes.

Among the socio-occupational categories, only the agricultural workers (n = 355 subjects in 1999) registered the lowest values for all indicators of differentiation. It is true that sometimes the agricultural workers are not the only ones in this situation, the workers often being at the same level with the agricultural workers, separately from the technicians and higher education specialists. The agricultural workers have the lowest mean values as compared with at least one other socio-occupational category concerning: the health state (2.8 versus 3.2-3.6), working conditions (2.6 versus 3.1-3.5), family income (2.1 versus 2.6-3.0), health care (3.1 versus 3.6), quality of mass-media information (3.3 versus 3.6-3.7), opportunities for self-assertion in life (2.1 versus 2.3-2.6), accessibility to education (2.6 versus 2.9-3.0), projection of living conditions over 10 years (2.6 versus 2.9-3.4), assessment of the current living conditions (2.1 versus 2.3-2.6),

satisfaction about the profession (3.2 versus 3.5-4.0), family life (3.8 versus 4.1-4.2), incomes (2.1 versus 2.5-2.8), self-ranking on the poor-rich scale (3.5 versus 4.3-4.5), whether the individual was favoured by the postcommunist changes (2.1 versus 2.6).

For some indicators, the agricultural workers are better positioned than other socio-occupational categories: quality of the environment (m5=3.7 versus 3.0-3.4), decision making on the job (2.6 versus 2.3), and in the locality (2.0 versus 1.7), fear of unemployment (m3=2.1 versus 1.5-1.7), assessment of police activity (3.4 versus 3.0-3.2), social conflicts (2.1 versus 1.8), crime activities (2.0 versus 1.6-1.7), trust in the help received from fellow citizens (2.0 versus 1.5-1.7), whether there are political (2.1 versus 1.8), religious (2.9 versus 2.4), ethnic (3.0 versus 2.7), social (2.5 versus 2.2), work (2.1 versus 1.8), intergenerational conflicts (2.6 versus 2.3).

The workers are very close to the profile of life perceived by the agricultural workers, as long as from the 62 indicators of the diagnosis, only 15 have statistically different values for the two categories. Among them, workers are better placed as compared to the agricultural workers for the following indicators: health state (m5=3.3 versus 2.8), working conditions (3.1 versus 2.6), family incomes (2.6 versus 2.1), health care (3.4 versus 3.1), mass media information (3.7 versus 3.3), satisfaction about the profession and job (3.5 versus 3.1), projection of the living conditions over 10 years (2.9 versus 2.6).

The workers (n = 250 subjects) have lower values than the agricultural workers and the other socio-occupational categories for the following indicators: decision-making on the job (2.3 versus 2.6), and in the locality (1.7 versus 2.0), no fear of unemployment (1.5 versus 2.1), crime rate (1.8 versus 2.1) and social conflicts (2.0 versus 1.7).

The technicians (n=104 subjects) are largely close to the profile of the higher education specialists by higher values than the agricultural and industrial workers. Thus, only 8 values show differences in the profile of the quality of life perceived by the technicians and the higher education specialists, the first ones having lower values: opportunities for self-assertion in life (m5=2.3 versus 2.6), participation in decision-making on the job (2.6 versus 2.9) and in the country (1.3 versus 1.6), projection of the life conditions over 10 years (3.1 versus 3.4), assessment of current conditions

of living as compared to 1989 (2.3 versus 2.6), satisfaction about the job (3.6 versus 3.9), whether there are religious (2.4 versus 2.8) or ethnic conflicts (2.7 versus 3.0).

The higher education specialists (n=62) displayed the most favourable standard of living among the four socio-professional categories considered here, but not even they have highly favourable conditions. The indicators for which the specialists display high values (second category of the quality of life) of the quality of life profile are: health state (3.6), family relations (4.3), relations with the neighbours (4.0), health care (3.6), mass media information (3.6), satisfaction about the profession (4.0), the job (3.0) and the family life (4.2).

The regime of occupation is another indicator of the occupational status. The available data allow us to make comparisons of two categories: employees (n=405 subjects in 1999) and self-employed persons (n=360).

From the very beginning we must mention that the employees perceive a better quality of life than the self-employed persons. This situation is accountable at least partially by the fact that the employees include the higher education persons, who have already been identified as having a higher profile of the quality of life, while the self-employed generally include agricultural workers whose profile of the quality of life is obviously lower.

Overall, we have here a set of 21 indicators with values concordant for both categories of population: relations with the neighbours, tap water quality, education quality, concern of the society for the needy, town hall activity, opportunity for self-assertion in life, participation in decision-making in the country, manner of spending the free time, satisfaction about the political life in the country, assessment of the level of ethnic conflicts, projection of the standard of living over 10 years, whether the workers, agricultural workers, intellectuals, directors, politicians, minorities and the person of the subject were favoured by the postcommunist changes, level of threats.

For the other 41 indicators there are differences in the profile of the quality of life between the employees and the self-employed. Most of these differences (35) follow the pattern of opposition (detachment of both categories from the overall mean value): health state (3.5 versus 2.9),

family relations (4.2 versus 3.9), quality of the environment (3.2 versus 3.7), working conditions (3.3 versus 2.6), family incomes (2.7 versus 2.2), health care (3.4 versus 3.1), police activity (3.4 versus 3.1), mass media information (3.7 versus 2.7), quality of country leaders (1.8 versus 2.0), accessibility of education (2.8 versus 2.6), job opportunities (2.0 versus 1.8), security in the street (2.8 versus 3.1), decision-making on the job (2.5 versus 2.8), and in the locality (1.7 versus 2.0), satisfaction about everyday life (2.8 versus 2.6), confidence in the support of fellow citizens (1.6 versus 2.0), projection of the conditions of living over 10 years (3.0 versus 2.6), current conditions of living as compared to 1989 (2.3 versus 2.1), satisfaction about the profession (3.7 versus 3.3), the job (3.5 versus 3.3), family life (4.1 versus 3.8), incomes (2.6 versus 2.2), achievements in life (3.4 versus 3.2), relations among people (2.6 versus 2.8), poor-rich scale (4.0 versus 3.5), whether there are intergeneration (2.5 versus 2.7), work (1.9 versus 2.1), social (2.2 versus 2.5), political (1.8 versus 2.1), religious conflicts (2.6 versus 2.9), whether the entrepreneurs were favoured (3.5 versus 3.7), assessment of change possibilities (2.5 versus 2.3), minorities can observe their custom and traditions (3.9 versus 3.6), no fear of unemployment (1.7 versus 2.1), social conflicts (1.6 versus 2.0), crime activities (1.3 versus 2.0).

Overall, the employees display more favourable values for 26 indicators of 41, while the self-employed for just 15. The employees are on a more favourable level as regards the indicators referring to the family life and profession, while the self-employed are better placed at the indicators of social solidarity (by the perception of a less conflicting environment of life) and at the indicators displaying the concern for difficulties (unemployment, social conflicts, crime activities).

The unemployed (n=104 in 1999) represent another category of population related to the occupational status. The unemployed, although being able and willing to work, they were unemployed at the moment of our survey. If compared to the occupied population, the unemployed have the worst quality of life, also if compared to the industrial and agricultural workers. Thus, of 62 indicators of the quality of life diagnosis, the unemployed have lower values than all other occupational categories under consideration for 10 indicators: dwelling (m=3.3), relations with the neighbours (3.7), family income (1.9), public

transportation (2.5), opportunities for self-assertion in life (1.9), job opportunities (1.6), satisfaction about everyday life (2.3), satisfaction about income (1.6), spending the free time (2.7), personal standard of living as compared to the last year and to 1989 (1.8). There are thus 3 components to consider: no job, precarious conditions of living and the state of dissatisfaction.

The pensioners (n=216 in 1999). Due to the heterogeneous composition of the pensioners according to the analysed criteria, they do not differ significantly from the other categories of occupational status. In other words, there is only a low number of indicators for which the pensioners have the lowest or the highest values if compared to the other five categories (unemployed, agricultural and industrial workers, technicians, higher education specialists).

Thus, only the health state (in association to the older age) stands out by the lowest value (m=2.6 versus 2.8-3.6), as well as the feeling of no threats (2.1 versus 3.2-3.6), while they consider themselves as the most "favoured" by the postcommunist changes (2.8 versus 2.0-2.6).

This perception may seem surprising if we consider the low level of pensions. A favourable influence comes probably from the fact that during the past years the people could retire before the standard age limit while the level of pensions increased to more acceptable levels, higher anyhow than those of the people that retired before 1990.

There are other situations too in which the pensioners have a more favourable position by the significant indicators of the quality of personal life at least compared to one of the other socio-occupational categories, such as: quality of dwelling (3.7 versus 3.3 for the unemployed), incomes (2.1 versus 1.9 for the unemployed), opportunities for self-assertion in life (2.1 versus 1.9 for the unemployed), leisure opportunities (2.8 versus 2.4-2.5 for the agricultural workers and the unemployed), satisfaction about the everyday life (3.0 versus 2.6-2.8 for the agricultural workers and the unemployed), satisfaction about the income (1.9 versus 1.6 for the unemployed), achievements in life (3.5 versus 3.2-3.1 for the agricultural workers and the unemployed). If compared to the best situated categories (higher education specialists and technicians), the quality of life perceived by the pensioners is lower. There are several such indicators: social environment, conditions of living, incomes, opportunities for self-assertion

in life, decision-making in the locality, satisfaction about everyday life, projection of the working conditions and assessment of the present state as compared to 1989.

Some differences in the profiles of the perceived quality of life appear in the categories of population delimited by socio-demographic criteria. This fact justifies, from the perspective of knowledge, their distinct analysis. In fact, if we refer to all the categories of population delimited according to the socio-demographic and occupational criteria, there is no indicator with a different value for at least one of the particular categories. It must be mentioned, however, that very often, the differentiation between the values of quality of life diagnosis indicators by categories of population are at the limit of the threshold of statistical significance, so that we may say without doubt that similarities rather than differentiation predominate.

From the methodological point of view, the similarities between the profiles of the perceived quality of life strengthen the accuracy of data and the confidence in the results concerning the whole community, meaning that the overall values do not appear as aggregations of disparate values, rather they compose a structure with a high degree of internal congruence.

Concerning the results by category of population, they too show rather modest profiles of the perceived quality of life. Among the outstanding ones there are some very critical ones, such as the profile of quality of life perceived by the unemployed and by other categories of population. None of the 20 categories of population under scrutiny has all indicators in the positive area of the scale (mean values of at least 3). The most favourable profile of the perceived quality of life is displayed by the specialists with higher education, an important segment of the emerging middle class. At the same time, for several categories of population, we identify certain advantages by comparison with other categories, but the general level lies somewhere between modest and critical for most of the indicators of the perceived quality of life.

We will conclude the presentation of the profiles of perceived quality of life by stating again that our survey could not cover the most unfavoured social groups, the homeless and the people without registered residence, or the top of the social hierarchy, the economic and political elite.

The association between the categories of population and the maximum and minimum for each indicator is presented below.

Minimal and maximal values of the perceived quality of life by categories of population (1999)

Dimensions/indicators	Average values	
	Minimal	Maximal
<i>I. Person</i>		
- Personal health	elders over 70 (m ₅ = 2.2)	young people (m ₅ = 3.7)
- Opportunities for self-assertion in life	unemployed (m ₅ = 1.9)	men (m ₅ = 2.2)
- Personal security (at home and in the street)	specialists, pensioners (m ₅ = 2.6)	agricultural workers (m ₅ = 3.1)
No feeling of personal threat	pensioners (m ₅ = 2.1)	workers (m ₅ = 3.6)
Observance of personal rights	men (m ₅ = 2.6)	higher education (m ₅ = 2.8)
<i>II. Satisfaction about:</i>		
- Everyday life	unemployed (m ₅ = 2.3)	Specialists (m ₅ = 3.0)
- Profession	agricultural workers (m ₅ = 3.2)	specialists (m ₅ = 4.0)
- Job	agricultural workers (m ₅ = 3.1)	specialists (m ₅ = 4.0)
- Free time	unemployed (m ₅ = 2.7)	specialists (m ₅ = 3.3)
- Family life	unemployed (m ₅ = 3.7)	specialists (m ₅ = 4.2)
- Personal income	unemployed (m ₅ = 1.6)	specialists (m ₅ = 2.8)
- Domestic political life	urban (m ₅ = 1.7)	rural (m ₅ = 1.9)
- Relationships between people	specialists (m ₅ = 2.3)	agricultural workers rural (m ₅ = 2.8)
- Achievements in life	unemployed (m ₅ = 3.1)	pensioners technicians (m ₅ = 3.5)
<i>III. Work</i>		
- Conditions of work	not graduated middle school (m ₅ = 2.5)	higher education (m ₅ = 3.6)
- Job opportunities	unemployed (m ₅ = 1.6)	Specialists (m ₅ = 2.2)
- Influence decision-making on the job	workers (m ₅ = 2.3)	specialists (m ₅ = 2.9)

Dimensions/indicators	Average values	
	Minimal	Maximal
IV. Material conditions of living		
- Dwelling	unemployed ($m_5 = 3.3$)	pensioners ($m_5 = 3.7$)
- Family income	unemployed not graduated middle school ($m_5 = 1.9$)	specialists ($m_5 = 3.0$)
- Conditions of living over 10 years	agricultural workers, not graduated middle school ($m_5 = 2.6$)	Specialists ($m_5 = 3.4$)
- Current conditions of living as compared to 1989	unemployed pensioners ($m_5 = 2.0$)	specialists ($m_5 = 2.6$)
- Self-ranking on the poor-rich scale	not graduated middle school ($m_5 = 2.9$)	Specialists ($m_5 = 4.5$)
- Current standard of living as compared to last year	unemployed ($m_5 = 1.8$)	workers specialists ($m_5 = 2.2$)
- Current standard of living as compared to 1989	not graduated middle school ($m_5 = 1.8$)	higher education ($m_5 = 2.5$)
V. Local public administration		
- Town hall activity	not differentiated ($m_5 = 2.8 - 3.0$)	
- Police activity	specialists ($m_5 = 2.9$)	agricultural workers ($m_5 = 3.4$)
- Influencing decision-making in the locality	urban ($m_5 = 1.6$)	rural ($m_5 = 2.0$)
VI. Central public administration		
- Country leaders	unemployed ($m_5 = 1.7$)	elderly over 70 ($m_5 = 2.1$)
- Influencing decision-making at country level	urban ($m_5 = 1.3$)	rural ($m_5 = 1.5$)
VII. Habitat		
- Quality of the natural environment	technicians ($m_5 = 3.0$)	rural agricultural workers ($m_5 = 3.7$)
- Tap water supply	not differentiated ($m_5 = 3.2 - 3.4$)	
- Public transportation	unemployed ($m_5 = 2.5$)	Pensioners ($m_5 = 3.0$)
- Leisure opportunities	unemployed ($m_5 = 2.4$)	pensioners ($m_5 = 2.8$)
VIII. Social services		
- Received health care	elderly not graduated middle school ($m_5 = 3.0$)	specialists ($m_5 = 3.6$)

Dimensions/indicators	Average values	
	Minimal	Maximal
- Quality of education	elderly ($m_5 = 3.1$)	most people ($m_5 = 3.4$)
- Accessibility to education	rural ($m_5 = 2.5$)	specialists ($m_5 = 3.0$)
- Mass media information	agricultural workers ($m_5 = 3.4$)	employees workers technicians ($m_5 = 3.7$)
<i>IX. Social cohesion</i>		
- Family relation	not graduated middle school ($m_5 = 3.7$)	specialists ($m_5 = 4.3$)
- Relations with the neighbours	unemployed ($m_5 = 3.3$)	most people ($m_5 = 4.0 - 4.1$)
- Trust in help from fellow citizens	unemployed pensioners ($m_5 = 1.6$)	elderly not graduated middle school ($m_5 = 2.1$)
- Society concern for the needy	pensioners ($m_3 = 1.9$)	workers ($m_3 = 2.3$)
- Observance of minority traditions and customs	not graduated middle school ($m_5 = 3.0$)	higher education ($m_5 = 4.0$)
<i>X. Society without conflicts</i>		
- Intergeneration (young vs. elder)	specialists ($m_5 = 2.3$)	men agricultural workers ($m_5 = 2.7$)
- At work (employees vs. employers)	unemployed ($m_5 = 1.8$)	agricultural workers ($m_5 = 2.1$)
- Social (poor vs. wealthy)	unemployed ($m_5 = 2.1$)	agricultural workers ($m_5 = 2.5$)
- Political	technicians ($m_5 = 1.8$)	agricultural workers ($m_5 = 2.1$)
- Religious	technicians ($m_5 = 2.4$)	agricultural workers ($m_5 = 2.9$)
- Ethnic	technicians ($m_5 = 2.7$)	unemployed men ($m_5 = 3.0$)
<i>XI. No concern for</i>		
- Unemployment	unemployed workers ($m_3 = 1.4 - 1.5$)	agricultural workers self-employed ($m_3 = 2.1$)
- Social conflicts	most people ($m_3 = 1.8$)	agricultural workers ($m_3 = 2.1$)
- Crimes	higher education high school ($m_3 = 1.7$)	agricultural workers self-employed ($m_3 = 2.0$)
- Prices	not differentiated ($m_3 = 1.0 - 1.2$)	

Dimensions/indicators	Average values	
	Minimal	Maximal
- Taxation	not differentiated ($m_3 = 1.1 - 1.2$)	
<i>XII. Whether favoured by the post-communist changes</i>		
- Workers	not differentiated ($m_5 = 1.7 - 1.9$)	
- Peasants	not graduated middle school ($m_5 = 1.6$)	higher education ($m_5 = 2.1$)
- Intellectuals	higher education ($m_5 = 2.1$)	rural ($m_5 = 2.6$)
- Entrepreneurs	higher education high school urban ($m_5 = 3.4$)	not graduated middle school ($m_5 = 3.8$)
- Directors	not graduated middle school ($m_5 = 3.9$)	urban ($m_5 = 4.4$)
- Politicians	pensioners ($m_5 = 3.9$)	urban ($m_5 = 4.7$)
- Minorities	agricultural workers ($m_5 = 3.3$)	higher education ($m_5 = 3.7$)
- Personal	not graduated middle school ($m_5 = 2.3$)	higher education ($m_5 = 2.9$)
- How much favoured by the post-communist changes	not graduated middle school ($m_5 = 2.1$)	higher education ($m_5 = 2.8$)

Addenda

QUALITY OF LIFE RESEARCH IN ROMANIA

In the history of the Romanian sociology, the quality of life is a large and long term project comparable (within limits) with that of the monographs, developed during the inter-war period by the School of Bucharest. A very large number of sociologists (and other specialists) are motivated by a similar research interest. The field research developing centre is at the Institute for Quality of Life (IQL), affiliated to the Romanian Academy. The density of investigations increases further by the association between IQL and the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work of the Bucharest University, also joined by other institutes of education and scientific research, involving hundreds of researchers, PhD student and students. The concepts associated to the quality of life circulate not just between the specialists (whether they are sociologists, economists or politologists), but also between journalists and politicians, becoming “trade currency” in the public debate.

The project started in the late 70s (ways of life and styles of life, diagnosis of the perceived quality of life), it amplified during the ‘90s (annual diagnosis of the quality of life, standard of living and poverty, social policies, sectoral social research or social research focused on social groups at risk). During the past 12 years, many books, studies and reports were produced, including the research results (also in social politics journal *Quality of Life*, published by IQL.). The year 2000 seemed a moment of “balance” by focusing on syntheses, construction of

a social database, support of the public debate (with finality in the social policies) on the issues of poverty and the associated social risks.

A quarter of century of continuous quality of life research would have not been possible without the dedicated scientific work of the founders and without the methodological contributions of the '90s. The coherence of theoretical direction of the research suggests the existence of a new school of quality of life research in Bucharest.

The late '70s: towards a sociological theory of the quality of life

The quality of life is not a Romanian finding, but both the concept and the research strategy have been redefined. The theoretical and methodological contributions did not originate just in the constraints of using in the Romanian social context – quite different at that time from that of the countries where it had been created – but also from an original view on sociology in its whole and of the methodology of social research. Even a brief comparison with the international movement of ideas shows the similitude, and the peculiarities of the Romanian research of quality of life in its early decade of existence.

Like other concepts with a long career in the social sciences, it is no longer important today who the founder was. The discovery belongs to a whole generation of intellectuals who looked critically at the social benefits and costs of the economic development of the '50s and '60s and shared “a new state of attitude towards the human issues”. It is important that the new concept yielded new ways of asking and seeking answers to the trends in social life in several social sciences, while their relations with the community were reconsidered.

In the late '50s, C.W. Mills proposed the quality of life as a general objective of the sociological research, but also before that time, the issues we consider today as belonging to material and emotional welfare were present in the sociological research, sometimes explicitly, but mostly implicitly. It was rather a “shadow-concept” in sociology. Later on, the field of quality of life became a distinct concern for sociologists. Yet, after four

decades, although there is a large number of sociologists dedicated to quality of life research, within numerous research programs, the references and debates in the field literature are quite scarce. Where could we seek the causes of this poor assimilation of this subject by sociology (anyhow not to the extent of its field and scientific relevance), of “being ignored” by the specialists approaching the “classical fields”. An answer may be that the option for quality of life research is in conflict with the methodological norms of positivism, the widest movement in sociology. It does not adopt the subjective approach either, which is specific to ethno-methodological and interpretative-symbolic researches, the quality of life studies verifying rather the Weberian solution to the major problem of objectivity in social research. This statement is even more valid for the approach by the Romanian school, which adopted both the objective and the subjective ones. Humanism, the value that inspired the concerns in this area of social research is a general orientation, “it concerns the community as a whole” says C. Zamfir, which may fully entitle that approach. Once this value is adopted explicitly, the course of the empirical research and of the theoretical construction can be unfold while observing the methodological rules of the objectivity. As one may notice in the first part of the volume, this project introduces a new perspective on society and pursues a pragmatic finality.

The virtues of the concept of quality of life emerge from the comparison with another term, that of welfare, which has a longer tradition than the one of quality of life, appearing in syntagms such as “material welfare” or “the welfare state”.

As it is defined, the concept of quality of life has both an objective dimension (material welfare) and a subjective one. Thus, the concept of quality of life does not replace, but rather includes the concept of welfare.

The genesis and dynamics of quality of life research seems to bring new evidence (which add to many other) in support of Mattei Dogan’s theory, according to which the specialisation of disciplines, the fragmentation of patrimonies and hybridisation are successive stages of the current scientific progress. The specialisation through hybridisation changed the configuration of traditional disciplines and generated a kaleidoscope of the social sciences. There is a wide diversity of recombinations taking place at the intersection of the research fields.

Linked with each other, underdisciplines exchange concepts, theories and methods (M. Dogan, R. Pahre, 1993, p.71-73). The process of hybridisation “is also obvious in the exchanges of information, substance, indices, statistical data and the daily praxis of the empirical research” (Dogan, 1999, p. 384). The “quality of life” is another research field where several social sciences (or their subdomains) intersect: sociology, economy, psychology, political sciences, demography, medical sciences, etc. In time, the specialists have elaborated a common language that eases communication and transfer mutually concepts and measurement instruments: material and subjective welfare, standard of living, consumption, values, requirements, expectations, satisfaction, environmental conditions, the population’s state of health, minimal standard of living, procedures to measure the absolute and relative poverty, social exclusion, social policies, etc. We should note, however, that there are not just theoretical, but also methodological differences, the most important delimitation concerning the disciplinary perspectives of approaching the quality of life.

At the moment when C. Zamfir proposed a new concept (mid ‘70s), quality of life research and the movement of social indicators had already passed through a fertile decade. They had many roots in the social context of the developed countries, with consolidated representative democracies, so that the assimilation of the topic of quality of life in the Romanian social research still seems in our days to be a paradox. In the 8th decade, the Romanian literature also recorded other references to the concepts of “quality of life” and “social indicators”, but the approaches were either reductionist, focusing on the standard of living, or speculative and abstract, without particular relevance to the social research. But, “quality of life” is not an axiologically neutral point of view.

Coming back to what we named the Romanian School of Quality of Life Research, it is important to pursue its significance in time. Trying to have a picture of the subjective welfare of the Romanians (assessment of the conditions of living in terms of values and aspirations) means to discuss the very rationale of the social organisation at that moment. C. Zamfir, A. Teodorescu, I. Rebedeu, L. Vlăsceanu, E. Zamfir, D. Sandu, N. Lotreanu, etc. formed a true “invisible college” of quality of life

research in Romania in those years, although there was also a formal organisation. Certainly, they did not ignore the pragmatic significance and the political consequences of their scientific work. By their contribution, a research project (with many theoretical and methodological innovations) was set up, relevant to the social context of Romania. Otherwise, C. Zamfir anticipated the essentials of the research project of quality of life investigation in his book *Strategies for social development* (1977).

Quality of life is a multidisciplinary field of research, but the Romanian perspective is of sociologic origin. It does not exclude the co-operation between sociologists, psychologists, economists, demographers and other specialists. On the contrary, the study resulting from this co-operation testifies to it: standard of living and poverty, consumption or perceived quality of life, to illustrate just partially this openness of sociology towards other social sciences. Quality of life research “is preponderantly sociological, but also includes interdisciplinary elements, in the attempt to shape an as complete “image” as possible of that particular field” (Chapter 1).

C. Zamfir formulated a new general hypothesis, contrary to the one of the “theoretical crisis” of sociology. The excursion into the infrastructure of sociology, as a particular area of scientific knowledge, presented sufficient arguments to observe that “a coherent paradigm of thinking had already begun to form” (C. Zamfir, 1987, p.50). He proposes an integrative explanatory design of the causal and structural-functional analysis. In the standard structure of the causal theory, particularly important to understand the logic that governed the construction of the “quality of life”, we can find four sets of variables whose connections are described by the abstract theory (that connects the effect variable with the endogenous, abstract causal variables), by the actual contextual theory (that connects the effect variables with the exogenous contextual variables) and by the pragmatic theory (that connects the effect variable with the programmatic acting variables) (C. Zamfir, 1987, 1999).

These fundamental sociological options explain the strategy of quality of life analysis and of its sources of variation within the social context of Romania: redefine the concept, clarify the measurement problems, elaboration of an explanatory theory, of an empirical model and of the operational design with the indicators included in the research. In this

systematic research of the best ways of action, the Romanian sociologists have assimilated selectively the best international methodological solutions to quality of life research, but added an important amount of scientific innovation that configured the peculiarity of the Romanian concept.

C. Zamfir and his collaborators from the “invisible college” defined the quality of life as an assessing concept: the result of assessing the conditions of life, of the “state of life” in terms of value criteria (system of requirements and aspirations of each person). From such a definition “it results that any indicator of the standard of life will have to represent the synthesis of two indicators: an indicator of the state and an indicator of the assessment criteria, of the human necessities” (C. Zamfir, 1984, p.31). To describe the “state of life” the authors used the demographic indicators, indicators of the state of health, of consumption, of the conditions of living, of school enrolment ,etc., that we can find in the “social accounting” conducted continuously by the society, building indicators which describe the perception by the people of the conditions of living. Such a definition of the concept of quality of life describes the complexity of the research field, as well as the complicated issues of measurement. The boundaries are open, but the inclusion of new fields must take into account “the laws of decreasing correlation between the indicators of activities and their products, on the one hand, and the indicators of the quality of life, on the other hand. This law states: the lower the values of the human activities and products are, the higher the correlation between them and the quality of life is ...” (C. Zamfir, 1984, p.37). The reverse hypothesis is also true.

The invoked law – with no explanation as to the large variability of the assessment grids – allows us to understand the dynamic mechanism of the criteria assessing the “state” of life. The evolution of the living conditions, of the supply (in the wide meaning of the concept, as defined by R. Dahrendorf, 1996) acts on the hierarchy of human needs and on the intensity at which they are perceived by humans. The variation of supply from penury to abundance in a social field acts on the system of criteria and on the assessment of the quality of life. The causal chain is more complex, the endogenous variable acting through the exogenous, contextual variables of the social status of the person, of its value orientations, of its knowledge and level of education, of the events of life

during the human development (evolution by age), etc. The euristic value of the research hypothesis is obvious. But the programmed political significance is surprising. Romania of the '80s was a country characterised by the scarce supply of goods and services, and the "law of agreement" drew the attention just to this characteristic of the social environment and on the influence on the quality of people's life. The authors dare even more and select from among the quality of life variables – to test the empirical model – "the assessed quality of the goods existing in shops". "Each subject assessed the goods available in shops" (C. Zamfir, 1984, p.75). Showing the true face of the official politics and rhetoric, here is a function of the quality of life assumed by the researchers of the "invisible college". No doubt, the finality of "welfare" research is visible today even.

The Romanian project of quality of life research endeavoured to offer more than a description of the "state of life" and of the assessments of the people in terms of values, aspirations, expectations. The strategy of quality of life analysis – which founded the 1980 research – is relevant to a research approach intending not just to describe, but also to explain the variation of material and subjective welfare: based on concept redefinition, an abstract theory of the quality of life was formulated, the contextual variables was identified, an empirical model was formulated and the variables were made operational (C. Zamfir, 1984). The study charted the quality of life of the people living in urban communities and identified their sources of variation. Today, the results of the survey offer a good basis for comparisons and for understanding the evolutions in the past two decades in the quality of life of the Romanians. In the configuration of the perceived quality of life, the "critical area" includes the indicators with the lowest rates: participation, economic resources and services. Then, like now, the family and profession are the main sources of satisfaction in life for most people. These similitudes draw the attention to the judgements of the people on the satisfaction in life, that is on some life patterns.

The numerous investigations conducted along time in several countries of the world show that when people talk of satisfaction in life they refer to the economic situation, family, profession and health. The correlation between "money" and "happiness" detected at the individual level is no longer identified at the national level. This apparently

paradoxical character comes from the evolution of the social rules and representations concerning what good life means, concerning what is desirable in the life of a family.

It explains the relative constancy over time of the satisfaction with life within the context of an economic growth (Easterlin, 1975)

The 90s: towards the modulation of social policies

In the '90s, Romania is a society on the move. The political Revolution of 1989 was followed by a period of reform, not yet concluded. During these years, everything changed: institutions, norms, behaviours. The processes of social disorganisation and organisation are almost simultaneous and occur in all spheres of society. New mechanisms come in action to allocate the resources and place people at different levels of welfare, power and prestige. The periods when the new cleavage turn into conflicts alternate with periods of stability and social peace. By the width and breadth of the social change, transition is a "lesson of sociology". Indeed, revolutions, just like the period of accelerated social change (transitions), are rare events, thus much more challenging and interesting to sociology and to the other social sciences; the experiments require particular precautions. In the absence of research experiments, the observation of social phenomena and processes may produce the "evidence" required to check the theories and/or elaborate new hypotheses. The institutionalisation of quality of life research occurred as early as 1990 by the establishment of the Institute for Quality of Life Research under the aegis of the Romanian Academy marked a new stage in the development of the research activities in Romania. On an international plane, the fourth decade of quality of life research did not bring spectacular changes in methodology, The concept itself has different contents from one research group to another. "The existing quality of life research involves two major perspectives: the normative or descriptive indicators from the census data or from current reports on the population are used to analyse the quality of life of specific groups or subgroups as the basis of most reports on the objective welfare. The indicators of satisfaction (or the subjective welfare) are used to

understand how the individuals assess the quality of their life. These data are derived from studies using many scales and other measures assessing the perception on an individual on welfare". (V.H. Adams, 1997, p.205). Some researchers separate the objective dimension of the welfare from the subjective one and consider that the "movement of social indicators" and the "quality of life" are complementary, but distinct areas of concern, the latter describing the subjective reactions, the perceptions and assessments by the people. Sometimes, the simplification of the concept gets even further and the quality of life is regarded as a subjective, global but one-dimensional assessment of the satisfaction in someone's life (Th.M. Beckie, L.A. Hayduc, 1997, p.21). J. Vogel prefers to talk of connected concepts, while the quality of life, together with the conditions of living, standard of living and life style are areas (branches) of the movement of the social indicators (J. Vogel, 1997, p.106).

One should notice that, in the social quality of life research, the preoccupations focused on operationalisation and measurement. During the last decade, the attempts to increase the explained variant of the quality of life intensified, which led to the formulation of hypotheses concerning the construction of a theory of average rank of the quality of life. It is the case, for instance, of the theory of multiple discrepancy of A.C. Michalos (1985, 1991), which makes operational the gaps between values and performance, between "expectations" and the "perceived reality", between the "current conditions of life" and an "idealised state of things", between what a man "has" and he "wishes" or "what the others don't have", etc. (apud: J.C. Jacob, M.B. Brinkerhoff, 1997). Several procedures have been used to describe these discrepancies: direct or separate questions, when the gap is identified by comparing the answers. (Independently, in 1984, C. Zamfir was talking about measuring the "discrepancy"), and the synthetic indicators of the quality of life – as ratio between the requirements, aspirations, wishes and the "state" of life – was just the methodological solution to the problem. The ratio between the "indicator of the criterion" and the "indicator of state" may range between 0 and 1, the scale allowing for a finer measurement of the degree of satisfaction of the individual needs and aspirations. Descriptivism remains, however, the predominant orientation in the quality of life research.

The problem of the complex and highly disputed relation between politics and economy explains partially the poorer concern for the theory of

the quality of life. Although there have been ample efforts dedicated to the issues of measurement and construction of social indicators upstream and downstream of material and subjective welfare research, there is too little theory. The description of variation and trends of the quality of life in a concrete social time and space has, undoubtedly, a pragmatic finality, too (“where are we? what is to be done?”), but the legitimate questions on the causes (factors) of the differences in welfare are not answered. Are the variations in the quality of the individual and/or collective life contingent, or systematic? In the latter case, a question arises naturally: which are the sources? Few researchers, and quite rarely, have passed the Rubicon separating the description and the explication of the social trends and of the changes in the quality of life of the people. This is the point where the Romanian school of quality of life research particularises its theoretical and methodological contributions.

During the ‘90s, along with the revival of sociology and the institutionalisation of the quality of life research, the perspective on the field enlarges in a global, integral approach to welfare dimensions: subjective and objective (configuration of the incomes and consumption); it was then joined by the political perspective on welfare: quality of life as an objective of social policies. In the new research project, “the objective data mix with perception, satisfaction and assessment data. (...) Thus, several measurements are used for some variables (for the income, for instance, there are three measurements: the level of income – cash and in kind – self-assessment of the degree in which the income would cover the consumption requirements of the family, satisfaction with the income)”.

The conceptual analysis and the complex problem of measuring the quality of life resumed in the ‘90s by the newly established institute. A design of the quality of life indicators is proposed (I. Mărginean, 1991). At the same time, a program of field research started, the annual diagnosis of the quality of life. The topic was a current one in 2000, not just in Romania, but world-wide too: an “ideal” system of social indicators –to satisfy simultaneously the methodological requirements, the cognitive or pragmatic finalities and to allow international comparisons – is further considered.

The thematic content and the problems of measurement imposed a major concern for the systematic, highly accurate, description of the quality of life within the new social context. In order to build a comprehensive descriptive and operational model, the selection of

indicators screened the most relevant ones for a given dimension of the quality of life.

In a way, we might say that the wealth of the information gathered by research is equivalent only to the wealth of life itself. The temptation of constructing composite indices by field, or even a global index of the quality of life, although big, cannot be an adequate approach when we are interested by the content of the quality of life. How can one summarise the quality of life of millions of people and the wide range of assessments they make towards their subjective welfare? The multiple dimensions of the concept and the local independence of the indices raise a major methodological obstacle in the development of an index to summarise the perceived quality of life. The construction of indices may have certain second grade heuristic functions. More, not to describe the content of the phenomena, but to make comparisons in time or between collectives (nations). When we are interested to know the content, much more relevant are, for instance, the classes of quality of life. This is a procedure that allows simultaneously grouping the data of quality of life diagnosis and to describe the observed trends, without distorting the information, as it might have happened by constructing a partial index or indices (by field) of the quality of life. The seven classes of quality of life are a significant step in understanding the changes in time of the material or emotional welfare. We understand better how the landscape of life changes on the road from “fiscal pressure” and “survival” to “human relations of support” and “privileges”. We understand better which are the “strong” and “weak” points in Romania in 2000, the critical areas of the personal and collective life which the people assess as being “bad”, “unsatisfactory”. We understand better the social representations of the transition. The perceptions, assessments and satisfaction of life are not uniform within the Romanian population (although in certain areas, such as politics, the consensus is quite large), but they also do not vary randomly. How much do the people get closer or farther when they assess their lives? The present book introduces three categories which analyse the distance – agreement, alternate and opposition – which allows us to observe that there are more sources of systematic variation in the perceived quality of life; however, the most important ones are the variables of occupation, education and affiliation to the urban or rural

community in which they live. The hypotheses formulated in the '80s by C. Zamfir and collaborators prove once more not just actual, but also useful tools for the expanded and in depth research.

The years 2000: balance of quality of life research in Romania

The pragmatic orientation of quality of life research determined a major preoccupation with the issues of perception measurement and the standard of living. The built social database is impressive, comparable to the ones existing in other countries with remarkable results in this field. Did the Romanian research succeed to shape the social policies of transition? In what direction will quality of life go?

In the '60s, when a new type of humanism was proposed – observed C. Zamfir – the quality of life seemed to be instrument of social life reconstruction, comparable to the Renaissance instruments. “Its connection to an articulate program of action, became rather pale”. It shows that the “interest in the quality of life and its approach are not imposed just by the pure logic of research, but maybe more, by the social configuration” (C. Zamfir, Introductory study). After 30 years, as J. Vogel observed, one of the most important functions of the movement of social indicators – including quality of life on the political agenda and stimulating the public debate – was achieved only in a few countries. In other countries, it was eliminated or rejected and it was never fully accepted internationally (J. Vogel, 1997, p.107).

How can the balance over three decades in this wide field of social research be characterised? Some specialists argue the decline and failure in supplying data on social trends as well as the best methods for the management of the public policies. Other observers, J. Vogel among them, think we should rather talk of a change in the direction of research due to the diversification and specialisation in the movement of social indicators and a new role of it in the representative democracies. “As the social indicators are accepted in the public speech, they voice those who cast the votes. They supply an objective measurement of the progress

towards stated targets: a decent existence, economic security and correct distribution of welfare.” (J. Vogel, 1997, p.108). The formation of the public, the vote, and decision-making should rely on objective information collected with the instruments of the scientific method available to all citizens. This “democratic mission of the movement of social indicators” – as Vogel names it – seems rather a new way to influence the political agenda. Anyhow, the observation that the quality of life also plays a role in “general enlightenment” has a special significance to the transition societies such as Romania, where the emergence of the civil society is a critical threshold both for the democratisation and for the formation of the national market economy. “Without a stable civil society, without the incorporation of the norms of trust and decency, the market cannot flourish and democracy can be undermined” (A. Giddens, 2002, p.152).

The sinuous destiny of the relation between quality of life research and politics has much of its origin in the opinion which the first promotes explicitly or implicitly in a secular debate on the relation between the state and the economy: intervention or non-intervention. These are two creeds that divide both the political world and the scientific circles. The moderate positions are rare, but important particularly when the arguments are based on the idea of social change during the second half of the 20th century and of the consequences generated by “too much” or “too little” intervention of the state in economy and society. “There is not just an economic imperialism, which hopes to get everything by increasing the offer, but a political imperialism as well, which tries to define all economic problems as entitlements (R. Dahrendorf, 1996, p.25). Is there a right to welfare? “More opportunities in life for more people – this is the intention of the policy of liberty” (R. Dahrendorf, 1996, p.30).

The changes in the Romanian society of the ‘90s can be and are assessed from varied perspectives with specific instruments and standards, globally or sectorally: emergence of the economic market, labour market evolution, democratisation, efficiency of the public policies, etc. “Welfare” has also been assessed: income, expenditure, consumption, dwelling, etc. The statistics of poverty, natality, mortality, immigration, health, crime, drug consumption, traffic of persons, and other data, even incomplete, show the

emergence after a decade of transition of certain “critical thresholds” in the evolution of the social phenomena, with consequences not just in the personal life, but also on the social balance and functioning of society as a whole. Nevertheless, the assessments focus on the economic institutions and norms of the market; they deal rarely with the conditions of life and other social phenomena. What else does “quality of life diagnosis” bring? The logic of the assessment is the same, but the “audit” of life concerns the subjective welfare of people. They are both the source of the assessment standards (desirable situation) and assessors of their personal or collective life. In this case, operationalisation and measurement are much more sophisticated than in any other field, but once these methodological obstacles are eliminated, the social landscape of transition appears much more clear in all its wealth and variety, so that we understand more profoundly the dynamics of institutions and individual or group behaviours, of the human values and aspirations.

According to the data analysed in this book, most Romanians assess negatively the social changes of the first post-communist decade and they think that today (1999), the living conditions are worse than in 1989, the standard of living decreasing. Most of them assess that transition has not offered them the opportunity for a better life to them and their family but favoured the politicians primarily, then the managers and entrepreneurs. This is the picture concerning the changes in the life environment. Few are those considering that the Romanian society offers them opportunities for “self-assertion in life”, of “access to education” or to “get a job”. Almost in consensus, the people assess negatively the possibility of influencing decisions, either at the national, or at the local level. Policy, in general, is a critical area for the collective quality of life. Many people feel safe, but others feel threatened by poverty, unemployment, social unrest or price increase. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising at all that every third citizen is pessimistic regarding the future evolution of the conditions of life. The level of satisfaction is the result of the comparison between “what they want to have” and “what they have”, between “how they wish their life to be” and “how their life is”. The discrepancy between these “poles” of assessment generates more or less dissatisfaction. And *vice versa*, the shorter the distance is, the higher the degree of satisfaction is. “Satisfaction with any component of life expresses the degree to which that particular component satisfied the particular requirements of that subject” (C. Zamfir,

1995, p.33). "This is an assessment not of the actual state of life, but of its assessed quality" (C. Zamfir, 1995, p.41-42). When we consider the satisfaction about everyday life – the most important system of reference when people assess the quality of their life – the Romanians are quite unsatisfied. For most Romanians, the family relations and the work (occupation) are sources of satisfaction. The income, however, is a source of dissatisfaction to most people. The individual and family economic situation is the most critical area in assessing the quality of personal life. Incomes are a real problem (not just a perceived one) for a large segment of the population. If we analyse the relationship between income distribution and the subjective standard of life, we observe a high relation between the two, which is a mutual verification of the indicators" (C. Zamfir, 1995, p.27). As early as 1995, C. Zamfir drew the attention to the contradictory and worrying perspectives of the standard of living. "On the average and long term, the danger of the current situation is the development of a strongly polarised society, with areas of highly stable, chronic poverty" (C. Zamfir, 1995, p.161). In 2002, in Romania there were over 6 and half a million poor that lived an older or newer (for most) experience of life. Between them ("those who don't have") and the top layer, with high incomes ("those who have"), other millions of people are more or less stable or mobile on the welfare scale, according to the evolution of the economy. without a strong and prosperous middle class, attached to the values of liberty and democracy, how and where is Romania going?

The global assessment of the transition in Romania is rather critical, adverse. Looking at the social reality in terms of quality of life we understand better and in a particular manner the society we are living in. The quality of life diagnosis tells us another story of the social changes in Romania in the '90s. It is not entirely another history of transition than the one provided by the "objective data" of the statistics in the standard of living, health, natural movement of the population, crime, etc. However, this is a different perspective: the judgements of the people on the social situation in terms of their values and aspirations.

It is not a matter of determining how much "truth" one finds in this representation of the Romanian transition as long as the practice inferences, the options and behaviour of people relay on such a "definition of their social state". They behave as the "definition" of transition is true. No doubt, the people's grid of assessment is

contaminated by their values and aspirations, by their representation of what “a good life” means, by the norms they use to assess what is desirable to be happy. The variety of socialising conditions and experiments during one’s life personalise the standards used by the members of the community to assess the quality of their personal or collective life. Not all social changes influence the individual subjective welfare and they also do not have the same significance (importance) to all people. The wage policy may affect the situation of the employees in the public sector, but not that of the employees in the private sector. Some people may consider that a governmental environmental program (water quality) is important and urgent, while to others it makes no difference because they don’t “see” how could the quality of water affect their everyday life. This relative (not absolute) independence of the assessment standards of the people explains why, by comparison with the previous years, in 1999 “we have a significant deterioration of the indicators of quality of life state and a relative stability of the indicators of perception and satisfaction (I. Mărginean, coord. 1999, p.1).

Under these circumstances, why is quality of life diagnosis so important? *Cui bono?*

During the ‘60s, the researchers noticed that the statistics concerning the conditions of life, no matter how rich they were, remained incomplete, they were “mute” about the variety of the situations of life because they operated with aggregate and mean data. Quality of life research provides an even greater wealth of data, which concern simultaneously both the individual conditions of life and the human dimension of the cognitive and affective relations with them.

The knowledge of the personal and collective perceived quality of life is important (valued) only under the context of democracy. The choices of people (vote, consumption, immigration, etc.) are not independent of the way quality of life is perceived. The confidence in and support for democracy can be affected by the quality of life. Quantitative and qualitative investigations are required to check this classical hypothesis of sociology in the Romanian context, showing how and how much the perception of a social situation influences the political, immigrating, etc. behaviour.

A longitudinal investigation on democratisation in Romania (1990-1998) showed that during that period the political participation decreased, while dissatisfaction increased ((I. Mărginean, 1998). The same study also showed that six people of ten supported and still support “a paternalist welfare state, which acts to protect people from economic hardships”. The socialising experience of the quality of life is part of the complex sociological mechanism of attitude formation and shaping. This experience could also be invoked in explaining the vote, anomia (increased rate of crime, suicide, etc.), of the immigration trends or of the demographic behaviour, etc. The judgements the people make on their quality of life are premises in the practice inference and in the decisions they make. (As one may notice, there is a wide range of analyses in which quality of life appears as an explanatory variable). In order to make a decision, people need the objective information (obtained by scientific methods) provided by quality of life reports. This is the meaning of the “democratic mission”, which J. Vogel mentioned when he approached the movement of the social indicators.

The quality of life research fulfils completely its pragmatic finality when the issues of welfare are included in the political agenda and become objectives of the public policies. The Romanian researchers have analysed in detail the social policies and how they could be shaped in order to support transition in Romania (E. Zamfir, C. Zamfir, 1995, I. Mărginean, 1994, 2000). The assimilation of the methods to increase social policy efficiency remains an open issue in the Romanian policy. The international comparisons on welfare policies and on the confusing situation of the performance criteria is relevant in the Romanian context, too. “It is not accidental that most analyses of the diversity of welfare systems suggest that the political power of the different segments of population is a determining factor” (E. Zamfir, C. Zamfir, 1995, p.366).

In conclusion, the quality of life research is a viable and necessary instrument monitoring the social trends, assessing the evolution of the Romanian society and of the social policies, with not just theoretical value, but mainly practical value. Material and subjective welfare research is among the few fields in which sociology passes from description to explanation and to “construction”. The sensitivity of politicians, entrepreneurs and intellectuals to quality of life issues is another problem and this is the “critical” point of the pragmatic finalisation of research. As a

subject of sociological research, it is of interest from now on, too (C. Zamfir).

Instead of conclusion

Quality of life is an “assessing concept: result of assessing the conditions of life, the “state” of life in terms of value criteria (system of requirements and aspirations of every person)”. (C. Zamfir, 1999, p.44). Logically and psychologically, the assessments are comparisons between the “state of fact” (perceptions, representations) and a “desirable state”, towards which people aspire and which they believe they are entitled to, the comparisons having both a cognitive and an affective dimension. The fundamental nature of the concept of quality of life is sociological. The assessments can be correlated with the variables of personality, but the personal configuration or the value orientations (incorporated in aspirations, projects, purposes in life, personal requirements and even in the criteria of comparison with others) must be connected to the complex and subtle mechanism of social interactions and socialisation, of the collective experience of life and communication with the others. The variation in the perceived quality of life (and in the assessment criteria) is not completely at random – as it would have been if an individual would have seen life strictly individually – but rather systematic, and an important source that “orders” the assessments is the social position of the individual and the multiple affiliations to social groups that are the source of social representations and of the norms assessing welfare.

As one may notice, the description and explanation of the different types of quality of life variation – intra-individual (during life), between individuals, between groups and between communities, between nations – requires a perspective, a reason, a strategy of research and sociological instruments. Co-operation and the exchange of concepts, methods and indices with other sciences improves the understanding of the complex phenomenology of quality of life, while the research widens its heritage and has a new source of scientific innovation irrespective of whether it is sociology, economy, psychology or political science. The Romanian quality of life research used the multiple discipline approach method with success, as seen in the mutual citations between economists studying

transition and the sociologists. (We don't have a study on citations, but it seems that the *Dimensions of poverty*, (C. Zamfir, coord. 1995) is the most cited book by economists).

Quality of life is a sociological concept, although it also has economic and psychological dimensions. It is not the only concept with widely circulated in social sciences that stimulates and fertilises social research. However, there are no universal concepts; each time, their assimilation and utilisation in a science is done by reinterpreting them in agreement with the theoretical and methodological system of reference regarding the social reality.

The concepts are "buds of theory" and they cannot be integrated into the vocabulary of a science by ignoring the other terms unless taking the risk of a kaleidoscopic, deformed image of the social reality. "A borrowed concept must be redefined and adapted to its new object" (M. Dogan, R. Pahre, 1993, p. 134).

Quality of life has all the characteristics of a total social fact (I. Mărginean) because it includes the whole society and its functioning, its institutions and human behaviour, the individual and collective life with its objective and subjective data. The creator of this term, M. Mauss, considered that the study of total or general social facts "has particularly the advantage of reality. We may observe the actual social facts, as they are (M. Mauss, 1997, p.220). Only so can we survey societies in their dynamic state, "the essential, the movement of the whole, the living aspect, the running moment when society and its people know sentimentally themselves and their status in relation to the others. In this actual observation of the social life there is a means of discovering new facts that we hardly begin to distinguish. In our opinion – Mauss added – nothing can be more fruitful and urgent than the study of such social facts" (M. Mauss, 1997, p.219). Three quarters of century later these lines are a good description of the euristic virtues of the "quality of life" as a social fact.

Within the same general, integrating character of the quality of life, we find also the highest methodological difficulties of research. Many of them were approached in the '80s, when the first quality of life diagnosis was conducted. We mean here the problems related to measurement, the

hypotheses derived from the abstract theory or the empirical hypotheses that founded the multi-variant analysis. Subsequently, new approaches to quality of life survey developed and a huge database accumulated. A secondary analysis of these data could refine further the methodology and increase the relevance of the existing data. The analysis of available statistics (demographic, health, crime, income, expenditure, consumption, etc.) would be another step required to set up a stable system of social indicators, which requires the co-operation of specialists from other fields and the co-operation of many institutions. A national system of social indicators should be used only to make comparisons, at least with West-European countries (remember the social dimension of EU).

Where is quality of life research going to? It is difficult to answer because it involves not just the sociological options, and we also have to consider institutional decisions, the resources and even the sensitivity of the political elite to issues of material and emotional welfare as objectives of public policies. The Romanian quality of life research supplied during the past decade highly accurate information as well as methods useful in modelling, rationalising and assessing social policies. From the perspective of sociology we can identify several fields in which quality of life research should develop (value orientations; mobility and the quality of life; qualitative survey of the social representations on what a “good, satisfactory life” is, etc.). It is important that enough theoretical and empirical experience was gained in Romania so that quality of sociology could be one of the most vigorous branches of sociology, a field of scientific accumulation and innovation.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Degree of representation of the national samples of population surveyed during 1990-1999 in quality of life investigations

The first aspect of the degree of representation of the samples is their size. More precisely, whether the samples are large enough to be representative under the conditions of observing the other requirements, too. Over 10 years of surveys (1990-1999), the size of samples ranged between 2033 (in 1990) and 1136 (in 1998) individuals.

The second element of the degree of representation is given by the use of a probabilistic design of sampling. Except 1990, when we used quota sampling, the sampling design we used was multiple stage probabilistic stratified, which compensated for the lower number of subjects (due to financial reasons).

The use of a probabilistic method of sampling helps to assess the admitted error. In our case, we considered a theoretical error of maximum $\pm 3\%$ (with a probability of 0.95) of the values assessed during the survey, except for the extreme social segments (the poorest of the poor, the homeless on one side, the wealthiest people, belonging to a social strata ranging between 1-3% of the population of Romania).

The multiple-stage probabilistic stratified sampling design consists of the following components:

1) Stratification criteria

- a) Territorial area: 7 areas corresponding to the capital of the country and historical provinces – Ardeal, Banat-Crişana, Dobrogea, Moldova, Muntenia, Oltenia
- b) Residential area: rural, urban; the cities were classified as large, medium and small-size

2) Stages of selection

- a) Locality
- b) Sampling site (polling station)
- c) Lists of sample subjects

3) Selection methods

- Simple random for localities and sampling sites
- With mechanical steps for the selection of subjects from lists on sampling sites.

Thus, the adopted sampling method ensured the proper level of representation by residential areas and according to the size of the town. It also provided for a proper territorial dispersion of the sample at the country level and within the towns and communes.

At the same time, reasonable distributions were also obtained for the socio-demographic features of the population that were not used as stratification criteria.

The panel research was conducted for the intervals 1993–1995 and 1996-1998. During the second and third years the panel samples managed to include between 85 and 63% of subjects of the first year; the panels were supplemented with new subjects selected according to the general strategy.

On the other hand, the survey did not only refer to the interviewed subjects, but to the households members, too.

Appendix 2

Data assessment design by quality of life classes
Scales of 5, 10 and 3 degrees of intensity in increasing order
(codes 5, 10 and 3 are the desirable values)

%		
5 degree scale	10 degree scale	3 degree scale
1. Very high (very good, very well, very much, very satisfying)		
5>50%	9+10>50%	3>67%
2. High (good, well, much, satisfying)		
4+5>50%	7+8+9+10>50%	3>50%≤67%
3. Average - high		
3+4+5>50%	6+7+8+9+10>50%	2+3>50%
4. Average		
3>50%	5+6=50%	2>50%
5. Average - low		
1+2+3>50%	1+2+3+4+5>50%	1+2>50%
6. Low (bad, poor, little, dissatisfied)		
1+2>50%	1+2+3+4>50%	1>50%≤67%
7. Very low (very bad, very poor, very little, very dissatisfied)		
1>50%	1+2>50%	1>67%

**Average value assessment by
quality of life classes**

5 degree scale	The highest positive value is desirable	
	10 degree scale	3 degree scale
1. Very high (very well, very much)		
$m \geq 4.5$	$m \geq 9$	$m \geq 2.75$
2. High (well, much)		
$m \geq 3.5 < 4.5$	$m \geq 7 > 9$	$m > 2.25 < 2.75$
3. Average - high		
$m > 3.0 < 3.5$	$m > 6.0 < 7$	$m > 2.0 < 2.25$
4. Average		
$m = 3$	$m = 6.0$	$m = 2.0$
5. Average - low		
$m \geq 2.5 < 3$	$m > 5 < 6.0$	$m \geq 1.75 < 2.0$
6. Low (bad)		
$m \geq 1.5 < 2.5$	$m \geq 3 < 5.0$	$m \geq 1.25 < 1.75$
7. Very low (very bad)		
$m < 1.5$	$m < 3$	$m < 1.25$

Appendix 3

Data assessment design by quality of life classes
Scales of 5, 10 and 3 degrees of intensity in increasing order
(codes 5, 10 and 3 are the desirable values)

	Nov. 1999		October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995		Sept. 1994		Sept. 1993		May 1992		June 1990	
	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
Number of respondents	1195	1136	717	717	1218	717	1510	717	1509	1500	1500	1491	1516	1502	2033			
A. Assessments																		
<i>1. Personal health</i>																		
Very bad	9	9	9	10	9	10	9	10	6	6	6	7	4	3	1			
Bad	21	20	21	19	20	17	18	17	17	20	17	13	9	7				
Satisfactory	32	35	35	34	34	35	34	36	36	36	36	36	33	34	29			
Good	32	32	30	34	33	34	33	36	36	34	34	34	41	43	51			
Very good	6	4	3	4	3	5	5	4	4	4	4	6	9	10	12			
Mean	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.4	3.5	3.7			
<i>2. Family relations</i>																		
Very bad	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0*	1*	1*			
Bad	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	1			
Satisfactory	13	12	12	10	9	11	10	9	8	8	8	8	7	9	8			
Good	62	68	68	71	72	63	65	65	65	68	66	66	57	55	51			
Very good	21	17	17	17	17	21	20	23	22	22	24	34	33	33	39			
Mean	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.3			

	Nov. 1999	October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995		Sept. 1994		Sept. 1993		May 1992		June 1990	
		Total		Panel		Total		Panel		Total		Total		Total		Total	
Satisfactory	11	12	11	8	7	13	13	7	8	8	8	8	8	9	9	12	12
Good	67	71	73	72	73	65	65	71	69	69	69	69	69	62	57	61	61
Very good	18	13	13	16	16	18	18	19	20	21	20	21	25	29	29	23	23
Mean	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1
<i>7. Family income</i>																	
Very low	19	18	20	17	17	22	23	22	22	17	13	13	13	10	10		
Low	37	36	36	33	32	35	36	32	32	38	31	29	29	26	26		
Satisfactory	31	33	32	36	39	30	31	32	31	36	31	36	39	44	44		
Good	12	11	10	12	11	9	8	11	11	11	15	15	16	18	18		
Very good	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2		
Mean	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.7		
<i>8. Drinking water supply</i>																	
Very bad	5	5	4	6	5	8	7	7	7	6							
Bad	14	13	14	13	11	17	18	15	15	15							
Satisfactory	23	22	23	23	24	20	21	17	18	18							
Good	51	54	54	52	52	47	47	54	53	53							
Very good	5	5	4	6	6	6	5	6	6	6							
Mean	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.4	3.4							
<i>9. Health care</i>																	
Very bad	4	4	4	6	6	7	7	2	2	3	5	5	10	10	6	6	6
Bad	17	16	18	15	16	15	16	10	10	11	13	18	23	17	17	17	17
Satisfactory	27	29	29	28	28	28	30	26	26	29	29	32	32	32	33	33	33
Good	45	45	44	46	47	44	43	56	54	47	47	34	26	36	36	36	36
Very good	4	4	4	3	2	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	2	6	6	6	6
Mean	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.3	3.0	2.9	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2

	Nov. 1999	October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995 Total	Sept. 1994 Total	Sept. 1993 Total	May 1992 Total	June 1990	
		Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel					Total	Total
<i>10. Police activity</i>													
Very bad	5	4	3	7	6	5	4	4	3	7			
Bad	14	14	15	14	14	12	13	11	14	19			
Satisfactory	32	32	32	31	31	31	32	26	30	29			
Good	43	45	43	43	43	45	44	52	48	40			
Very good	3	2	2	3	2	4	3	5	3	3			
Mean	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.1			
<i>11. Quality of education</i>													
Very bad	4	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	4	2
Bad	11	7	7	7	7	7	7	6	6	7	11	12	7
Satisfactory	28	26	26	23	23	25	27	24	24	25	29	32	19
Good	48	53	53	57	57	56	56	61	60	55	47	35	29
Very good	4	3	2	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	3	5
Mean	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.2	3.4
<i>12. Information by mass media</i>													
Very bad	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	5	6	6
Bad	8	8	9	5	4	6	6	6	9	13	18	16	12
Satisfactory	27	25	27	24	25	24	25	29	34	34	36	39	32
Good	51	54	53	56	56	53	53	56	48	44	33	29	40
Very good	8	7	6	10	9	12	12	7	4	4	4	3	8
Mean	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.1	3.3
<i>13. Public transportation</i>													
Very bad	14	16	16	13	13	14	16	10	9	14	15	18	16
Bad	23	15	16	21	20	20	21	20	22	25	27	29	29

	Nov. 1999	October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995		Sept. 1994		Sept. 1993		May 1992		June 1990	
		Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel
Satisfactory	26	26	26	27	28	28	29	28	29	29	29	25	25	25	25	26	28
Good	30	37	36	34	33	32	30	38	31	31	27	24	19	20			
Very good	2	2	1	1	1	3	2	3	1	1	1	2	1	2			
Mean	2.8	2.9	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.8	3.0	2.9	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.5	2.6
<i>14. Leisure possibilities</i>																	
Very bad	15	10	11	15	15	16	17	13	12	12	14	16	13	13	24		
Bad	28	31	31	29	29	31	31	28	29	29	30	27	25	29			
Satisfactory	32	31	33	29	30	24	24	30	31	31	25	26	32	27			
Good	19	21	19	20	19	22	21	24	22	22	23	23	18	17			
Very good	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	3			
Mean	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.5
<i>15. Society concern for the needy</i>																	
Very bad	26	23	24	19	19	21	21	20	18	17	17						
Bad	42	43	42	35	36	36	38	36	36	35	34						
Satisfactory	20	24	24	28	29	27	25	26	27	27	31						
Good	8	7	7	11	11	11	11	14	13	17	14						
Very good	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
Mean	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
<i>16. Town hall activity</i>																	
Very bad	11	9	8	10	10	7	8	16	16	17	17	8	9	7			
Bad	22	23	23	18	18	21	20	28	28	28	28	27	26	23			
Satisfactory	34	36	37	34	34	34	33	28	33	32	32	34	36	38			
Good	30	28	29	32	33	34	34	25	21	21	21	25	22	27			
Very good	3	2	1	3	4	4	4	2	2	2	2	3	2	4			
Mean	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.1	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.8	3.0	2.8	2.8	3.0

	Nov. 1999		October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995		Sept. 1994		Sept. 1993		May 1992		June 1991		June 1990	
	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel
<i>17. Country leaders</i>																				
Very bad	38	22	23	12	13	14	13	14	12	12	15	14	11	14	11	5				
Bad	39	38	39	25	26	33	32	33	25	26	28	29	22	29	22	14				
Satisfactory	16	28	27	39	37	31	32	36	40	37	40	34	38	34	38	39				
Good	6	9	8	21	21	19	20	19	24	19	17	18	20	18	20	33				
Very good	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	7				
Mean	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.6	2.8	3.2				
<i>18. Opportunities for self-assertion in life</i>																				
Very bad	19	16	17	16	18	18	17	18	12	14	13	8	11	8	11	12				
Bad	49	46	45	40	41	38	38	37	40	43	39	33	27	33	27	22				
Satisfactory	21	25	24	25	22	28	28	27	30	23	24	32	31	32	31	38				
Good	6	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	10	8	12	13	10	13	10	15				
Very good	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1				
Mean	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.7				
<i>19. Accessibility to education</i>																				
Very bad	7	5	5	8	8	8	8	9	5	3	7	6	6	6	7					
Bad	33	23	24	23	24	24	24	23	21	21	21	19	21	19	19					
Satisfactory	37	34	33	33	31	35	35	34	36	36	26	32	30	32	30	30				
Good	17	28	28	24	25	23	24	24	31	31	28	24	13	24	13	18				
Very good	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	3				
Mean	2.7	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.0	2.8	3.0	2.8	2.9				
<i>20. Job opportunities</i>																				
Very bad	38	39	39	29	29	30	30	30	34	34	27	21	16	21	16	10				
Bad	43	39	40	43	45	41	39	39	42	39	36	33	27	33	27	23				

	Nov. 1999	October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995	Sept. 1994	Sept. 1993	May 1992	June 1990	
		Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel					Total	Total
Satisfactory	11	12	11	14	13	16	17	14	15	12	17	22	30
Good	5	5	5	7	6	7	7	7	7	10	11	11	19
Very good	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	3	2
Mean	1.8	1.8	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.9	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.8
<i>21. Personal safety</i>													
Very poor	8	8	9	7	7	8	7	7	9	12	13	18	10
Poor	27	21	22	21	21	23	24	22	26	33	28	30	23
Satisfactory	39	38	37	31	33	34	33	34	36	27	25	31	36
Good	22	30	29	36	35	31	31	34	25	23	27	14	23
Very good	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	6	3	6
Mean	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.7	2.8	2.5	2.9
<i>22. Observance of the personal rights</i>													
Very low	9	8	8	7	6	7	8	7	6	6	7	10	8
low	30	24	25	21	20	22	21	25	25	22	25	26	21
Satisfactory	42	42	40	39	40	41	39	38	40	42	39	41	41
High	15	22	22	29	31	25	26	28	25	28	25	15	25
Very high	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	3
Mean	2.7	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.9
<i>23. Possibility of influencing decisions at the place of work</i>													
Very low	18	18	17	17	18	20	17	17	15	19	16	15	16
Low	31	25	26	29	26	32	34	30	32	32	23	29	26
Satisfactory	27	25	26	22	22	24	23	23	22	17	23	32	31
High	16	18	19	22	23	19	21	22	23	25	26	17	22

	Nov. 1999	October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995	Sept. 1994	Sept. 1993	May 1992	June 1990	
		Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel					Total	Total
Very high	3	7	6	5	6	4	4	6	6	6	9	6	4
Mean	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.9	2.7	2.7
<i>24. Possibilities of influencing decisions in the locality</i>													
Very low	44	39	38	41	42	36	36	38	35	40	29	27	33
Low	39	38	39	39	37	42	43	41	45	39	39	28	30
Satisfactory	10	13	14	12	12	13	13	12	11	11	16	19	22
High	4	5	5	5	7	5	6	7	6	7	11	8	11
Very high	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2
Mean	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.8	2.1	2.1	2.1
<i>25. Possibility of influencing decisions at the country level</i>													
Very low	65	58	58	59	59	51	52	57	52	61	36	29	32
Low	26	29	30	29	29	31	30	29	36	27	31	27	28
Satisfactory	5	7	7	7	7	10	11	9	6	6	14	17	22
High	1	1	2	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	10	9	13
Very high	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	2
Mean	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.5	2.0	2.1	2.2
<i>26. Possibility of relying on the help of people</i>													
At all	42	46	45	43	41	40	41	45	53				
Little	39	38	38	36	36	40	41	39	30				
Much	17	15	16	20	23	18	17	15	17				
Mean	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.6				
<i>27. Standard of living in the country in 10 years</i>													
Much worse	7	5	6	4	3	1	1	4	3	3	3		
Worse	28	29	29	21	21	7	7	21	21	22	16		

	Nov. 1999	October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995	Sept. 1994	Sept. 1993	May 1992		June 1990	
		Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel				Total	Total	Total	Total
Similar	12	13	14	9	9	6	5	12	10	10	9			
Better	28	32	31	39	41	52	54	41	40	42	47			
Much better	2	1	1	3	2	10	9	4	4	4	7			
Mean	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.2	3.2	3.8	3.8	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.5			
<i>28. Present standard of living as compared to 1989</i>														
Much worse	22	14	16	13	13	5	4	12	9	10	8			
Worse	50	48	48	43	42	37	36	44	47	43	39			
Similar	7	11	12	9	10	36	37	12	11	12	13			
Better	15	21	18	26	26	16	17	28	28	30	33			
Much better	1	1	1	2	2	0	1	1	1	2	3			
Mean	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.8			
<i>29. Standard of living as compared to last year</i>														
Much worse	19	12	13	11	11	8	7	11	8	9	10	14		
Worse	55	44	43	45	46	36	36	44	44	43	39	36		
Similar	21	36	36	33	30	43	44	33	35	31	35	28		
Better	5	8	7	11	12	12	12	12	13	16	15	19		
Much better	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2		
Mean	2.1	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.6	3.4		
<i>30. Personal standard of living as compared to 1989</i>														
Much worse	35	24	25	20	20	*	*	19	17	19	14	13		
Worse	40	41	42	40	41	*	*	39	43	36	33	23		
Similar	10	11	10	11	11	*	*	13	11	13	15	20		
Better	14	22	20	25	24	*	*	26	26	31	34	36		
Much better	1	2	2	3	3	*	*	2	2	2	3	8		
Mean	2.0	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.5			2.5	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.9		

	Nov. 1999	October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995	Sept. 1994	Sept. 1993	May 1992	June 1990
		Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel					
<i>31. Minorities can live according to their own traditions and customs</i>												
Definite disagreement	2	4	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Disagreement	6	11	10	6	7	3	2	3	3	3		
Neither agreement, nor disagreement	12	11	12	9	9	7	7	6	4	4		
Agreement	45	45	45	48	48	46	48	48	48	48		
Definite agreement	15	17	18	24	24	29	29	36	39	39		
Mean	3.8	3.8	3.7	4.0	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.3		
<i>32. Assessment of post-communist changes</i>												
Definitely negative	17	10	10	7	8	5	4	6	5	5		
Negative	37	28	28	23	23	19	19	23	25	25		
In between	33	43	45	43	42	45	44	47	44	44		
Positive	10	15	14	21	21	24	24	19	21	21		
Definitely positive	2	3	2	4	4	6	7	4	3	3		
Mean	2.4	2.7	2.7	2.9	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0		
<i>33. Do you feel threatened?</i>												
Definitely yes	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	2				
Yes	25	25	25	20	20	14	15	20				
Can't tell	15	15	15	13	12	16	14	17				
No	52	56	56	60	62	59	61	54				
Definitely no	4	3	3	6	4	8	8	7				
Mean	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.5				

	Nov. 1999		October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995		Sept. 1994		May 1992		June 1990	
	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel
Poor	10	8	9	7	7	8	8	8	6	4						
1																
2	10	9	9	8	8	8	7	8	8	6						
3	18	19	19	18	19	18	18	14	15	15						
4	20	22	23	21	21	21	22	21	18	18						
5	26	27	27	31	30	29	29	36	40	40						
6	8	9	9	9	9	9	8	8	8	9						
7	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	5						
8	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2						
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Wealthy	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Mean	3.7	3.8	3.7	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.3	4.3						
<i>34. Self-assessment on a rich-poor scale</i>																
<i>35. Everyday life</i>																
Very unsatisfied	11	10	11	8	8	9	9	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	8	6
Unsatisfied	33	33	33	29	31	28	28	26	26	31	25	24	17	16	16	16
Neither satisfied, nor unsatisfied	31	31	31	36	35	33	32	36	36	35	35	37	57	47	47	47
Satisfied	23	25	24	25	25	28	29	29	29	25	31	30	13	26	26	26
Very satisfied	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	4	4	4
Mean	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.1
B. Satisfaction about:																
<i>36. Profession</i>																
Very unsatisfied	3	3	4	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	5	5	5	5
Unsatisfied	11	10	11	10	12	10	10	8	8	9	8	7	8	11	11	11

	Nov. 1999	October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995	Sept. 1994	Sept. 1993	May 1992		June 1990	
		Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel				Total	Total	Total	Total
Neither satisfied, nor unsatisfied	22	23	22	21	20	19	16	17	18	17	20	20	40	37
Satisfied	53	52	51	52	52	56	59	59	58	59	53	53	30	34
Very satisfied	10	9	9	10	9	10	11	15	12	13	15	15	17	13
Mean	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.4	3.4
<i>37. Job</i>														
Very unsatisfied	2	2	3	4	4	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	5
Unsatisfied	14	13	13	12	13	13	11	11	10	12	9	11	11	15
Neither satisfied, nor unsatisfied	22	23	25	19	18	18	18	17	20	16	20	20	45	37
Satisfied	53	53	49	52	52	55	57	57	57	59	53	53	26	32
Very satisfied	8	7	7	9	8	8	10	11	10	9	13	13	13	11
Mean	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.3	3.3
<i>38. Spending the free time</i>														
Very unsatisfied	5	4	4	6	7	8	8	4	6	5	5	5	16	14
Unsatisfied	24	29	30	27	27	27	27	21	26	23	21	21	22	23
Neither satisfied, nor unsatisfied	35	31	33	33	34	28	27	33	32	28	30	30	41	37
Satisfied	30	31	29	28	26	30	32	36	32	37	34	34	12	18
Very satisfied	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	3
Mean	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.1	2.6	2.7
<i>39. Family life</i>														
Very unsatisfied	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	3
Unsatisfied	4	5	6	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	5	5	4	6

	Nov. 1999	October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995	Sept. 1994	Sept. 1993	May 1992	June 1990		
		Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel					Total	Total	Total
Neither satisfied, nor unsatisfied	11	9	8	8	7	9	9	7	7	6	8	8	27	24
Satisfied	66	67	67	69	72	63	64	67	63	68	59	35	35	43
Very satisfied	16	17	16	18	15	21	21	20	24	22	27	29	29	24
Mean	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	3.8	3.8
<i>40. Personal income</i>														
Very unsatisfied	23	23	24	20	19	24	23	23	19	15	12	22	22	11
Unsatisfied	43	43	44	40	43	38	38	41	43	37	35	29	22	22
Neither satisfied, nor unsatisfied	18	18	18	20	19	20	22	18	24	26	27	38	50	50
Satisfied	15	14	12	17	16	17	15	15	13	21	23	8	14	14
Very satisfied	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	2	3	3
Mean	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.8	2.8
<i>41. National political life</i>														
Very unsatisfied	36	22	23	12	13	8	9	15	14	13	14	34	20	20
Unsatisfied	44	45	44	37	36	33	30	39	44	43	47	30	27	27
Neither satisfied, nor unsatisfied	12	22	22	30	30	35	37	32	27	27	24	25	34	34
Satisfied	4	5	5	13	13	19	18	10	9	12	10	5	12	12
Very satisfied	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	4	4
Mean	1.8	2.1	2.1	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.0	2.5	2.5
<i>42. Relationships between people</i>														
Very unsatisfied	10	9	11	6	7	5	5	6	8	7	10			
Unsatisfied	34	33	33	34	33	27	27	33	33	37	41			

	Nov. 1999	October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995 Total	Sept. 1994 Total	Sept. 1993 Total	May 1992 Total	June 1991 Total	June 1990 Total
		Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel						
Neither satisfied, nor unsatisfied	33	31	30	29	28	34	34	34	34	30	27		
Satisfied	21	23	23	27	29	31	31	24	22	23	20		
Very satisfied	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1		
Mean	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.8	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.6		
<i>43. Achievements in life</i>													
Very unsatisfied	5	3	4	3	3	4	3	2	3	1	3	9	6
Unsatisfied	17	18	18	17	17	17	15	14	15	14	14	19	15
Neither satisfied, nor unsatisfied	23	20	20	20	19	22	20	20	27	19	22	42	44
Satisfied	49	54	54	54	56	50	55	55	50	58	53	22	26
Very satisfied	5	4	3	5	5	6	6	7	5	7	8	7	8
Mean	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.0	3.1
C. Perception of conflicts existing between:													
<i>44. The young and the elderly</i>													
Very much	10	10	9	10	10	11	10	12	9	12	11	14	
Much	42	40	40	35	36	34	35	35	40	36	38	25	
Little	30	32	34	33	32	36	36	33	33	31	33	31	
Very little	10	9	10	9	10	10	10	10	10	9	8	20	
At all	4	5	5	8	9	6	5	8	6	10	8	8	
Mean	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.8	
<i>45. Employees – employers</i>													
Very much	28	21	21	18	18	16	14	18	15	19	18	21	
Much	50	48	47	47	46	39	40	49	50	44	45	39	

	Nov. 1999		October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995		Sept. 1994		Sept. 1993		May 1992		June 1990	
	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel
Little	12	18	20	20	20	20	27	29	22	22	22	22	18	20	20	20		
Very little	3	3	4	4	4	4	6	6	5	5	4	4	5	6	6	11		
At all	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	8	4	4	5		
Mean	1.9	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.2	2.4	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3		
<i>46. The wealthy - the poor</i>																		
Very much	20	16	16	16	18	18	19	18	20	20	15	19	19	20	20	24		
Much	43	40	39	40	38	37	37	37	38	38	40	40	36	36	36	30		
Little	22	27	28	24	24	22	22	22	23	23	24	23	23	21	21	24		
Very little	6	9	9	8	9	10	10	10	11	11	10	10	10	11	11	13		
At all	5	4	4	7	7	8	8	8	7	7	6	6	9	10	10	7		
Mean	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5		
<i>47. Political</i>																		
Very much	31	32	33	28	28	24	21	18	30	30	33	27	34	34	40			
Much	44	44	42	45	44	39	41	41	46	46	44	45	40	40	32			
Little	13	12	12	13	13	19	20	15	15	15	13	16	13	13	14			
Very little	3	3	3	3	3	8	8	8	4	4	3	4	5	5	8			
At all	2	2	2	3	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	5	5	5	4			
Mean	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.0	2.0	1.9	2.1	2.0	2.0	1.9			
<i>48. Religious</i>																		
Very much	11	15	14	12	11	8	8	8	10	10	7	7	13	13	15			
Much	32	35	35	29	27	20	20	20	23	23	26	22	26	26	23			
Little	30	28	29	23	24	28	27	27	27	28	28	28	21	23	23			
Very little	13	9	10	13	13	18	21	21	18	19	19	17	14	14	20			
At all	8	7	8	18	20	21	21	21	19	19	18	23	23	23	12			
Mean	2.7	2.6	2.6	3.0	3.0	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.1	2.9			

	Nov. 1999		October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995		Sept. 1994		Sept. 1993		May 1992		June 1991		June 1990		
	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	
Very much	8	12	13	9	9	9	5	5	7	5	5	8	8	12	23						
Much	27	33	32	29	27	27	13	11	21	21	21	25	29	29	31						
Little	34	31	31	31	32	31	31	32	31	30	30	29	29	24	20						
Very little	15	10	10	12	11	11	21	24	19	22	14	14	13	15							
At all	11	8	9	14	16	16	25	23	20	19	21	19	19	8							
Mean	2.9	2.7	2.7	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.2	3.3	3.1	3.0	3.0	2.5							
D. Fear of:																					
<i>50. Unemployment</i>																					
Much	44	40	39	36	36	36	35	31	34	42	29	29	34	37	16						
Little	23	23	23	19	18	18	23	23	23	21	17	17	18	26	33						
Not at all	31	34	36	40	43	40	40	43	42	33	53	53	45	34	48						
Mean	1.8	1.7	2.0	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.2	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.3						
<i>51. Social conflicts</i>																					
Much	33	26	26	18	18	20	19	19	20	21	20	20	27	39	38						
Little	40	46	46	36	36	36	39	37	40	38	39	39	39	41	41						
Not at all	24	26	26	41	41	41	39	41	40	39	40	40	33	18	19						
Mean	1.9	2.0	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1	1.8	1.8	2.2						
<i>52. Crimes</i>																					
Much	39	38	38	27	27	27	29	29	28	35	36	36	34	50	35						
Little	39	41	42	38	38	38	40	38	40	39	36	36	36	32	42						
Not at all	20	19	19	30	31	31	28	30	31	25	28	29	29	16	21						
Mean	1.8	1.8	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.6	1.8						

	Nov. 1999		October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995		Sept. 1994		Sept. 1993		May 1992		June 1991		June 1990	
	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel
	<i>53. Price increase</i>																			
Much	91	90	92	87	89	88	90	89	89	90	89	89	89	86	82	64				
Little	6	8	7	9	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	6	10	14	28				
Not at all	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	4	3	2	4	3	7				
Mean	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.4
	<i>54. Taxes</i>																			
Much	86	78	79	66	68	71	71	76	76	80	76	75	76	75	76					
Little	9	15	15	23	22	19	17	15	14	15	17	17	17	17	17					
Not at all	3	5	5	7	6	8	9	8	5	9	7	7	5	7	5					
Mean	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3					
E. Degree of being favoured / unfavoured by the changes that took place in the Romanian society																				
	<i>55. Workers</i>																			
Definitely unfavoured	41	32	31	30	30	21	22	30	26	26										
Unfavoured	43	46	45	43	45	44	43	43	47	47										
Neither favoured, nor unfavoured	7	11	11	11	11	14	15	11	11	11										
Favoured	2	3	3	5	5	7	7	7	6	6										
Definitely favoured	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1										
Mean	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.1	2.1	2.0	1.9	1.9										
	<i>56. Peasants</i>																			
Definitely unfavoured	36	31	32	23	23	17	16	27	14	14										
Unfavoured	38	33	33	31	32	32	33	27	29	29										

	Nov. 1999	October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995		Sept. 1994		May 1992		June 1990	
		Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel
Neither favoured, nor unfavoured	11	13	13	15	16	15	15	12	12	20					
Favoured	8	17	16	21	22	25	25	22	22	26					
Definitely favoured	1	1	1	2	1	4	4	4	4	3					
Mean	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.4	2.3	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.7					
<i>57. Intellectuals</i>															
Definitely unfavoured	19	11	11	12	12	11	11	17	17	10					
Unfavoured	34	32	33	28	28	30	30	30	30	33					
Neither favoured, nor unfavoured	20	25	24	24	24	18	20	23	23	23					
Favoured	11	11	11	13	12	12	11	12	12	10					
Definitely favoured	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	1					
Mean	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.5					
<i>58. Entrepreneurs</i>															
Definitely unfavoured	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	0					
Unfavoured	12	7	8	5	5	4	4	4	4	2					
Neither favoured, nor unfavoured	17	11	12	7	7	7	8	7	7	6					
Favoured	40	45	41	46	47	41	40	42	42	44					
Definitely favoured	16	23	23	25	25	32	31	35	35	37					
Mean	3.4	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.3					

	Nov. 1999		October 1998		October 1997		November 1996		Sept. 1995		Sept. 1994		Sept. 1993		May 1992		June 1990	
	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel
<i>59. Directors</i>																		
Definitely unfavoured	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0						
Unfavoured	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2						
Neither favoured, nor unfavoured	6	7	7	7	7	7	5	6	7	7	7	7						
Favoured	38	40	39	38	37	38	31	30	34	34	36	36						
Definitely favoured	41	39	39	36	36	36	41	41	42	42	40	40						
Mean	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3						
<i>60. Politicians</i>																		
Definitely unfavoured	1	0	1	1	1	1			0	0	0	0						
Unfavoured	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1						
Neither favoured, nor unfavoured	2	2	2	2	2	2			4	4	4	4						
Favoured	26	29	29	28	28	28			28	29	29	29						
Definitely favoured	64	56	56	53	53	53			53	49	49	49						
Mean	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.5			4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5						
<i>61. Minorities</i>																		
Definitely unfavoured	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
Unfavoured	8	7	7	4	4	4	6	7	5	5	4	4						
Neither favoured, nor unfavoured	31	28	30	25	27	27	36	40	34	34	34	34						

	Nov.	October		October		November		Sept.	Sept.	Sept.	May	June
	1999	1998		1997		1996		1995	1994	1993	1992	1991
		Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Panel	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
Favoured	23	29	26	31	30	16	15	25	26			
Definitely favoured	11	15	15	15	15	5	5	10	9			
Mean	3.4	3.6	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.2	3.4	3.5			
<i>62. Interviewed person</i>												
Definitely unfavoured	19	15	14	12	12	11	10					
Unfavoured	38	32	34	32	30	30	29					
Neither favoured, nor unfavoured	28	34	34	35	36	36	38					
Favoured	12	15	15	17	18	19	20					
Definitely favoured	3	4	3	3	3	4	3					
Mean	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.7					

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Bucharest, Romania

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ISBN 973-618-031-X

Published in 2004