

## THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF QUALITY OF LIFE IN RURAL AND URBAN SETTLEMENTS

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**Abstract:** The focus of work is the conception quality of life issues that in lately, it becomes increasingly important socio-economic issue. The work tends to argue how and which the context of the quality of rural life provides an opportunity to resolve the paradox of development interpreted by many researchers. Scientific interest in rural society created late 19 and early 20 centuries, when the village and agricultural society becomes affected global social processes of industrialization, urbanization and modernization. Then, there is a need to the whole a tangle of social processes and practical problems rationally understand and explain. In today's world the rural society is undergoing tumultuous changes, accompanied by great difficulty fitting into the dominant trends of modern society. Yes to urban settlements become holders of sustainable development, it is necessary to develop in - areas of advanced social development, green regeneration, that is areas that its attractiveness serves as drivers of economic development and establish positive principles of urban spatial development. Evaluating life satisfaction in general, lifting up (material) well-being and personal happiness are among the basic and central belief that every human during of life build. In addition to the impact they have on the personal life of the new general life attitudes largely determine the social behavior of people.

**Key words:** quality of life, rural settlements, urban settlements, geographical features]

*„Each discipline needs to borrow insights about quality of life from the other fields. A thorough understanding of subjective well-being requires knowledge of how objective conditions influence people's evaluations of their lives. Similarly, a complete understanding of objective indicators and how to select them requires that we understand people's values, and have knowledge about how objective indicators influence people's experience of well-being” Diener and Suh (1997).*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the literature, represent numerous studies quality of life and individual aspects that this quality makes. Economists estimate the quality of life on the basis of domestic product or economic standards, while is for ecologists quality of life is dependent primarily on preserving the natural environment. Nutritionists advocate a healthy diet as an important factor in quality of life, and social scientists dealing with social relations between different groups of people. Managers are focused on quality of life in the organization that affects working conditions and relations at work. Psychologists and medical workers to be study the quality of life from the standpoint of the individual. They often foul the life associated with health (Martins, 2005).

Geographers were the among the first who advocated the application of the indicators of quality of life at different spatial scales, it would be possible to identify and analyze the socio - spatial variation in the quality of life at lower geographical levels, not just at the national, as in the beginning of this research was The most common new analysis. Today, the geographical studies quality of life apply indicators at all levels, except that of the nineties the last century, the local level has become the central area of geographic studies, it is that in geographic studies used both objective and subjective indicators in the study of quality of life (Slavuj, 2012).

The geographical scale represents very important aspect of the quality of life research in geography. It primarily determines the degree to which our knowledge regarding the quality of life is (or will be) generalized. The study of the quality of life of every individual within his unique life space can be seen as an ideal, but at the same time difficult or even impossible kind of approach. As mentioned above, more likely the specification of studied area(s) and the form "*relation*" of people to it (e.g. residing people) is generally used. In this way it can be stated that the larger and bigger the studied area and population is, the higher is the degree our knowledge about quality of life is generalized (Andraško, 2009). The geographical scale also certainly acts as a determining factor of many other aspects of the quality of life research. It reflects in the selection of indicators, methods of data acquisition, treating or plotting. From the used indicators viewpoint, usually the larger the referential area is, the bigger is the proportional representation of objective indicators. In this way, the local level of research represents a suitable spatial framework for the use of subjective indicators or subjective as well as objective indicators. From global to local in recent quality of life research, virtually every possible geographical scale is being employed (see Andraško, 2009).

There are numerous dilemmas about how to manage the sustainable development of rural areas, even though, in theory and in practice, already known to many approaches, models, policies and strategies for sustainable rural development. According to Halfacree (2006) model of rural area consists of three key elements: material of rural areas, rural and the formal representations of everyday rural life. The material dimensions, formed by physical processes (flows, interaction) associated with the production or consumption. Formal representation of rural articulate capitalist interests, politicians and bureaucrats... Everyday rural life includes individual and social elements, culture and way of life.

General rules for the division into rural and urban settlements does not, according to Radovanović (2010) of the country according to its own circumstances and needs of selected indicators for their classification and concrete approach depends on - administrative territorial arrangement of the country and the availability of data. In developed countries used definition OECD, who as rural - considers the territorial unit with one or above of small / medium-sized towns surrounded by open space with a relatively low density (less than 150 in / km<sup>2</sup>) and the regional economic structure which reflects the situation in a particular market. Since the many indicators (and in developed statistics) are monitored at national and regional level, their projection on the lower level unreliable and often impossible. OECD recognizes two levels of rural: local and regional. At the local level (village - NUTS V) rural areas are defined by population density (150 inhabitants / km<sup>2</sup>). In rural areas at a higher level (regions, districts - NUTS III) are classified as larger units, depending on the part of the population in rural communities. In modern conditions the problems of

sustainable rural development by Ristić (2013) should be addressed integrally and appropriate specifications of each particular area, because generally accepted universal a model of sustainable rural development does not exist, but depends on the local development potential and the socio - economic environment, it is dependent on internal and external factors.

The European Union has accepted the concept of encouraging sustainable development of rural areas based on sustainable economic development, which means increasing living standards, but at the same time preserving the natural, cultural and traditional heritage. In this way, rural areas in contemporary Europe are transformed into environmentally preserved and cultivated areas, which are systematically equipped communal and social infrastructure, develop sustainable agriculture and local entrepreneurship and connect with the surroundings.

Rosu et al (2015) referring to the studies (Yuan et al., 1999; McCrea et al., 2006; Lee, 2008; Morias et al., 2013; Schwarz & Fritz, 1999; Schwarz, 2010; Stiglitz et al., 2010) indicating that the scientific research which focuses on Quality of Urban Life (QoUL) has gained a widespread attention during the last 50 years. As quality of life is a multi-faced construct objective and subjective as well as integrated approaches have tackled the concept of QoUL from multiple perspectives and at different scales, showing the importance of the results both for scholars and policy makers. A lot of research has been made for analyzing QoUL at city level, from the regional policy makers' point of view, studies which compare multiple cities are needed in order to identify areas with a high need of policy intervention and to determine the diversity of urban development. As for Europe, improving quality of life has become a priority during the last decade as four out of five European citizens are living in urban areas (*"Urbanization and Land Abandonment /Rewinding Europe"* 2015). It is one of the priorities of the renewed Lisbon Strategy and also of the Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion for 2007-2013 to improve the attractiveness of regions and cities. There still are wide gaps between cities and even countries on how their inhabitants perceive the quality of life in certain areas. Although the results emphasize large disparities between regions of Europe, and offer valuable information a more in-depth analysis using spatial statistics can reveal a different perspective at regional scale for QoUL (Rosu et al., 2015).

## METHODOLOGY

The development of settlements, regardless of how and from which theoretical perspective to this problem is approached, is to improve the quality of life of people. This issue is very complex because it depends on a number of objective and subjective factors, the characteristics of the rural and urban communities, but also features their physical, economic, social, cultural environment (Rajović & Bulatović, 2016; Rajović & Bulatović, 2015). The authors of this paper discuss theoretical approaches to the quality of life in rural and urban settlements, taking into account the geographical determinants of study. Presenting here interesting research Ira et al (2009) which indicate that specialized literature contains a great number of studies dealing with questions of the theory and methodology of the QoL. From the point of view of the scientific approach to QoL, above all definition or interpretation of the content of the concept, the related terminology, methodological basis and criteria dependence or criteria by which the QoL is estimated are the factors where a considerable plurality of views exists. It is only possible to talk about partial consensus when the idea of a *"two-dimensional"* or *"multidimensional"* structure of QoL is accepted. In spite of terminological similarity (which is confusing to some extent) the two characteristics of QoL possess their individual content and meaning. Two-dimensionality is the expression of duality of the QoL, a comparatively widely accepted assertion about the existence of its two basic dimensions: the objective and subjective. Ira et al (2009) further indicate that multidimensionality represents the concept frequently used for expression of the complexity of human life perceived as a certain type of *"complex quantity"* formed by numerous different dimensions. Although an attempt was made to discern

the content of two dimensionality and multidimensionality, it is true that the term dimension still appears in the context of QoL in dual meaning. In connection with the question of defining the QoL but also of the relevant terminology the use of so-called meta-concepts should also be mentioned. However, individual meta-concepts are still chaotically used to some extent in particular disciplines. Based on an extensive overview of the meta-concepts are arrived at the conclusion that due to their contents they all can be broadly comprised in the common quality of life concept. The whole information volume in this article was obtained through specific methods for the selective research, respecting all its stages from the methodological point of view: identification of the researched issue, research framework delimitation, information collection, data processing, analysis and interpretation drawing up the conclusions. Research also played an important role in the article, which consisted, on one hand, in the identification of other studies and articles on the same subject, and in the processing of some statistic data, on the other hand. Hence, the information sources used can be classified into governmental sources (statistic, ministerial and from research institutes), and into non-governmental sources (independent publications) (Sima, 2009).

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In order to understand the changes of the concept of quality of life, it is necessary to know the essence of life and its interaction with the social order, and with the physical environment. With the right Bohnke (2005) concludes that the improvement of the primary goal of European social policy: happy, satisfied and engaged citizens contribute to the booming of European society. In light of EU enlargement, the interest in living conditions in different European countries. Subjective well-being of the population is one of the many aspects that need to be explored in this context.

Improving the quality of life is often identified with the standard of living, but they are actually two different concepts and are not always connected. Quality of life is a subjective assessment, and says more about how a person feels, how and where he lives. In contrast, living standards tend to be measurable in a variety of economic and social indicators and are therefore more related to consumption and income level. At the EU level, improving the quality of life of are medium-term or long-term objective in the economic, social affairs and environmental policy. The concept of social quality was first officially introduced through the Amsterdam Declaration on the Social Quality of Europe in 1997. This Declaration recognized that citizens should *'have access to an acceptable level of economic security and social inclusion, live in cohesive communities, and be empowered to in passing its full economic potential'*. The report, *"Commission of the European Council"* of 2001, proposed the development of the *"quality of work"*, and the promotion of the information society strategy since 2000, indicating the use of information - communication technologies as a driver for *"future quality of life"*. Within the *"Fifth Framework Programmed"* for research, special attention is given to issues of health, air and noise pollution, ecology and conservation of natural and cultural resources ... EU sustainable development strategy in 2001 and defined four priorities to improve the quality of life: climate change, sustainable transport, public health, management of natural resources. The study, which was conducted during the 2002 *"European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions"*, has identified 12 domains relevant to the quality of life. Domains include: economic resources, health, and health, working conditions, knowledge, education and training, family and household...<sup>1</sup>

In order to get a result the essential condition of the quality of life by Milivojević et al (2011), it is necessary to build a new philosophy of life, which is based on the following assumptions: the essence and purpose of life; the understanding, reason, and knowledge; love,

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<sup>1</sup> [www.leader.org.rs](http://www.leader.org.rs)

kindness and justice; universality and higher levels of satisfaction; inherently environment; multidimensionality; complexity; sustainability of civilization; competitive philosophy of life. Thus viewed philosophy of life gives a real chance to get at least an approximate knowledge of the role of life and man in the whole material world. Only when one realizes his role a man can know whether it is the role filled or not and only then can we speak of the realization of complete happiness or supreme quality of life. Competitive philosophy of life do not change the above mentioned settings, but within them build up their value systems that allows you to build a society in which each member of the community feels protected, realized and happy.

Arsovski (2005) emphasizes that the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EFILWC) produced the first overview of the quality of life (EOQL) in the summer of 2003, which included 28 countries of the EU. Chosen by 6 key areas of quality of life: employment, economic resources, family and household, community life and social roles, health and health care and knowledge, education and training. According to Vasović (2003) evaluating life satisfaction in general, lifting up (material) well-being and personal happiness are among the basic and central belief that every human during of life build. In addition to the impact they have on the personal life of the new general life attitudes largely determine the social behavior of people.

In order to understand the changes of the concept of quality of life, it is necessary to know the essence of life and its interaction with the social order, and with the physical environment. Milivojević et al (2012) asks himself what the essence of satisfaction with their own lives and what are the key aspects? Is it the same for everyone and is a function of his age and his status in society? How to him affect the value systems and cultures of human communities? In the knowledge society more and more people want to work home while maintaining a career and raising children. Quality of performance is becoming more important than quantity. Old and young, men and women, all want to live healthier with a peaceful and spiritually fulfilling life. All they want highly ethical society in which they can trust, and that is not based on exploitation but on helping each other, which gives a real base to realize their hopes and dreams. People want to be happy throughout your life. This all suggests that there has been a significant change in key aspects of satisfaction with their lives.

The following table is designed to provide an answer to these questions. Here again we are above all concerned with the measure of the divergence between urban and rural regions in the various European countries. Regional differences may be more or less marked. If there are none, these countries have been indicated as neutral. The stronger the shading that appears on the vertical scale the greater the regional differences within the country under consideration. Starting from the value zero (neutral - no indication by a bar), the ranking of the countries can be read either in an upward or in a downward direction. A higher position in the table indicates a greater divergence between urban and country regions. But an "upward" tendency also means that evaluations derived from rural regions are significantly more positive than those from urban centers (Spellerberg et al., 2007). The differences that result, in divergence from zero, as we go down the table show to what extent the quality of life in rural regions is judged to be poor in comparison with urban districts. With reference to satisfaction (measured on a scale from 0 to 10), the range of regional differences found comes to 1.2 and 0.8 points on the scale. When it comes to evaluation of the country's economic situation, on the other hand, in many countries we find more positive attitudes in urban centers. So there is no general pattern here to the disadvantage of thinly populated areas. Evidently people balance out the disadvantages of living in the country – like the comparatively poor infrastructure and high cost of mobility - against advantages like clean air, more living space and closeness to nature, or else these evaluations are comparatively independent of geographical considerations, as perhaps having reference to social integration and private life factors (Spellerberg et al., 2007). According to Eurofound (2014) citing research Eurofound (2012) emphasizes those patterns at the EU level in terms of quality of life mask differences across

Member States. Table 1 shows how urban and rural areas compare in the various Member States using the same indicators. A complex pattern emerges, with rural areas in some countries performing worse than urban areas for most indicators (Croatia, Cyprus, Romania, Slovakia), and others where urban areas do worse on most indicators (Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden, UK). There is also a group where rural areas generally do somewhat worse than urban areas for many indicators, but the difference is not that clear on most accounts (Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Spain). There is a fourth group of countries where rural areas do worse on some indicators and urban areas on others, with a mixed pattern overall (Belgium, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Slovenia).

**Table 1.** Wellbeing in European rural areas and urban centers  
Source: Spellerberg et al., 2007

	General satisfaction with life	Satisfaction with the country's economic situation	Happiness	Evaluation of the financial position of the individual's own household
	0-10	0-10	0-10	Percentage of positive response
<b>Old Federal States</b>				
Rural regions 90.7	7.2		2.9	7.5
Urban centers 85.4	7.1	3.2	7.3	
Number of European countries covered by the ESS showing wider divergences D(E)	9	3	8 + D(E)	11 +
<b>New Federal States</b>				
Rural regions 83.7	6.6	2.6	7.1	
Urban centers 77.2	6.3	2.6	6.7	
Number of European countries covered by the ESS showing wider divergences	3	18 + D(W)	2	7
Divergence between East and West (centers)	0.8	0.6	0.6	8.2

**Table 2.** Difference in proportion of people experiencing low quality of life between urban and rural areas <sup>2</sup>  
Source: Eurofound, 2014

	Difficulties making ends meet	Materially deprived	Dissatisfied with accommodation	Socially excluded	Dissatisfied with life	Low trust in local government	At risk of bad mental health	Bad health
<b>Rural areas score clearly worse on most indicators</b>								
Romania	Dark Green	Dark Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Dark Orange	Light Green	Light Green
Slovakia	Dark Green	Dark Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Dark Orange	Light Green	Light Green
Croatia	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	White	White	Light Green
Cyprus	Dark Green	Dark Green	White	Light Green	White	Light Green	Light Green	White
<b>Rural areas score somewhat worse on most indicators</b>								
Finland	White	Light Green	White	Light Green	White	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green
Hungary	Light Green	Light Green	White	Light Green	White	Light Green	White	Light Green
Denmark	Light Green	Light Green	White	Light Green	White	Dark Green	White	Light Green
Portugal	White	Light Green	White	Light Green	White	Light Orange	Light Green	Light Green
Bulgaria	Light Green	Light Green	Light Orange	Light Green	White	White	White	Light Green
Poland	Light Green	Dark Green	White	Light Green	White	Dark Orange	Light Green	Light Green
Spain	Light Green	Dark Green	White	Light Green	White	Dark Orange	Light Green	Light Green
Malta	Light Orange	Light Orange	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	White	Light Green	Light Green
Latvia	Light Green	Light Green	White	Light Green	White	Dark Orange	White	Light Green
Lithuania	White	Light Green	Light Green	Dark Green	Light Orange	Dark Orange	Light Orange	Dark Green
<b>Less clear urban-rural divide: rural areas score worse on some, urban on other indicators</b>								
Slovenia	Light Green	Light Orange	Light Orange	Light Green	Light Green	White	Light Green	White
Italy	White	White	White	Light Green	White	Light Orange	White	White
Greece	Dark Green	Dark Green	White	Dark Orange	White	White	White	White
Belgium	Light Green	White	Light Orange	Light Orange	Light Orange	White	White	White
Estonia	White	Light Green	Light Orange	White	Light Orange	Dark Orange	White	Light Green
<b>Urban areas score generally worse</b>								
Luxembourg	Light Orange	Light Orange	White	White	Light Orange	Dark Green	White	White
Sweden	White	Light Green	White	White	White	Light Orange	Light Orange	White
Austria	White	Light Orange	Dark Orange	White	White	Dark Orange	White	White
France	Light Orange	Light Orange	Dark Orange	Light Orange	Light Orange	Light Orange	Light Orange	Light Orange
Czech Republic	White	White	Light Orange	White	White	Dark Orange	White	Light Orange
UK	White	White	White	Dark Orange	Light Orange	Light Orange	White	Light Orange
Netherlands	Light Orange	Light Orange	Light Orange	Light Orange	Light Orange	Light Orange	Light Orange	Light Orange
Germany	Light Orange	Light Orange	Light Orange	Light Orange	Light Orange	Dark Orange	White	White
Ireland	Light Orange	Dark Orange	Light Orange	Light Orange	Dark Orange	Light Green	Light Orange	White

In Cyprus, Romania and Slovakia, people in rural areas according to Eurofound (2014) citing research Eurofound (2012) points out that more often have difficulties making ends meet or are more often materially deprived than in urban areas (this is indicated by the dark green color in table 2). The difference is somewhat smaller, but also considerable in Greece, Poland and Spain. The situation is reversed in France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta and the Netherlands where more people in urban areas have difficulties making ends meet (and are more often materially deprived) than in rural areas.

<sup>2</sup> Percentage point difference, urban-rural. Table is sorted by sum of differences. A lot of green suggests rural areas are doing worse than urban ones for many aspects and a lot of orange suggests urban areas are doing worse: dark green = -8 percentage points or lower; light green = -7 to -3 percentage points; white = -2 to 2 percentage points; light orange = 3 to 7 percentage points; dark orange = 8 percentage points or larger.

Satisfaction with accommodation is lower in urban than in rural areas particularly in Austria and France. While dissatisfaction with accommodation is generally more of an urban problem, in some of the countries with high deprivation in rural areas, these areas do worse in terms of accommodation than urban areas (Croatia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia). Social exclusion is more of a rural than an urban problem especially in Croatia, Lithuania and Romania. In contrast, it is more of an urban issue especially in Greece and the UK. A higher proportion of people have lower life satisfaction in rural areas than in urban areas in Croatia and Slovakia in particular, but in more countries, urban areas score worse, with the largest difference in Ireland. Overall, the urban - rural divide is generally more in favors of urban areas in most of the Member States that have joined the EU since 2004 apart from the Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovenia. In Member States that had joined before 2004, the balance in contrast is more in favors of rural areas except in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. Given the many exceptions, the results largely confirm an earlier observation that this division between Member States that joined the EU since 2004 and those that joined before is becoming inappropriate for many aspects of quality of life (Eurofound, 2014).

Large research heterogeneity measurement of quality of life stems from the different approaches to the concept of quality of life (Thompson et al., 1962; Bunge, 1973; Frazier, 1982; Sufian, 1993; Johnston, 1997; Massam, 1999; Andraško, 2005; Ira & Andraško, 2007; Brereton et al., 2008). In fact, today there are many approaches to measuring quality of life, which may vary between countries and between regional - economic integration and organizations (egg use a different set of indicators to assess the quality of life are: the European Union, OECD, UNDP...) (Werner, 2012). Slavuj (2012) indicates that the geographers (Lewis, 1968; Smith, 1973, Smith, 1973; Smith, 1975; Knox, 1974, Knox, 1974; Knoh, 1975; Knoh, 1976; Knoh, 1976; Knoh, 1978; Knoh & MacLaran, 1978; Kuz, 1978; Helburn, 1982; Pacione, 1982; Pacione, 1984, 1986; Cutter, 1985), among the first advocates a need to introduce spatial dimensions, i.e. The importance of studying the quality of life at is different geographic levels. However, in the early nineties of the last century most influential geographical idea of studying the quality of life that emerged was related to the importance of sustainable development of local communities, it is the importance of understanding the quality of life and local levels (Boelhouwer, 2002; Wong, 2006).

So Bokić and Čikić (\*\*\*) emphasize that from the mid-twentieth century, the practice of rural development planning is increasingly turning to so-called bottom - planning which identify and analyze the real needs and opportunities of rural population to actively participate in the implementation of development policies and activities. Thus, this approach is close to the idea of community planning. Participatory and community building approach "pulled" for him and examining internal development capacities of local communities, social groups and / or individuals to define the (real) social objectives and consequently them, identify and analyze available (internal) capacity for their implementation in accordance with the theory of neo - endogenous rural development. These changes have, in fact, common ground and a common goal - to social development of rural communities adapt to the needs and possibilities of the specific physical and social space.

The mentioned approaches and ideas to Bokić and Čikić (\*\*\*) provide theoretical and more practical answer to the question of how to provide sustainable development of changes, and thus the continuity of (desired) quality of life. In this way (should yes) be realized even development of society - spatial units. This, in fact, was to ensure better internal function of parts of the social system. Thus, the struggle for the improvement of quality of life as is means for the elimination of social marginalization.

On this basis, according to Arsovski and Stojković (2014) developed a model in three steps for evaluating the impact of measures quality of life in rural development. This procedure is defined: access to infrastructure quality of life in the workplace, human capital and socio-economic performance, well-being in relation surrounding, cultural capital, social capital, governments at multiple levels and local government.

Some authors view the QoL in terms of subjective wellbeing, others argue that it is represented by a “*capability to flourish*” based on people’s ability to pursue the goals they value. A third point of view is based on allocating the non-market goods and services fairly across different groups. Yet, some authors (Stiglitz, 2009; Jackson, 2005) underline that QoL can only be maintained if the resource set is sustainably used; so there must be an environmental component. Despite of the relation between quality of life and wellbeing, also the latter is interpreted in various ways: it is generally viewed as a description of the state of people’s life situation (McGillivray and Clarke, 2006), but the theme is still evolving. It is also important according to Ploeg and Long (1994) that the concept of quality of life includes the two milestones of “*livability*” (services, environmental quality and social networks that make rural areas places in which people want to live) and ‘livelihoods’ (how people get their source of revenue and diversify their land-based and other activities to sustain those livelihoods, also in capitals point of view).

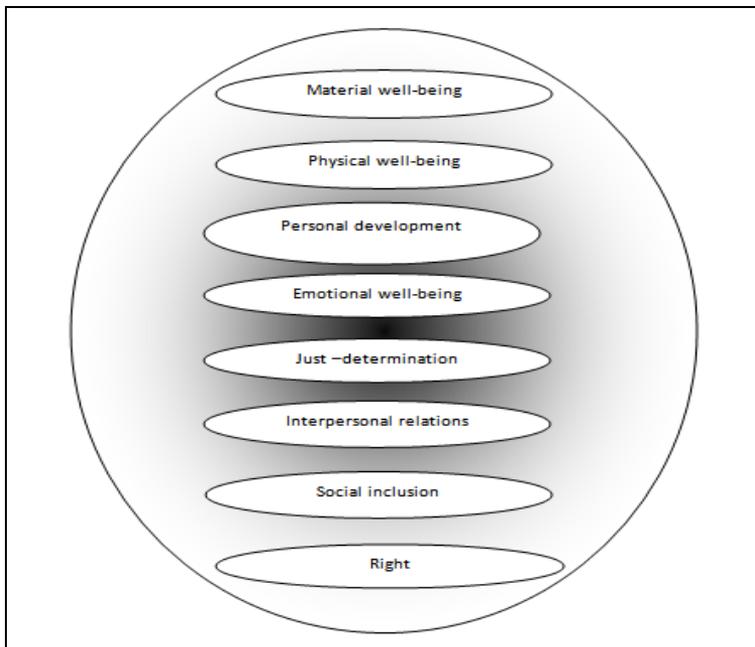


Figure 1. Key domain QoL

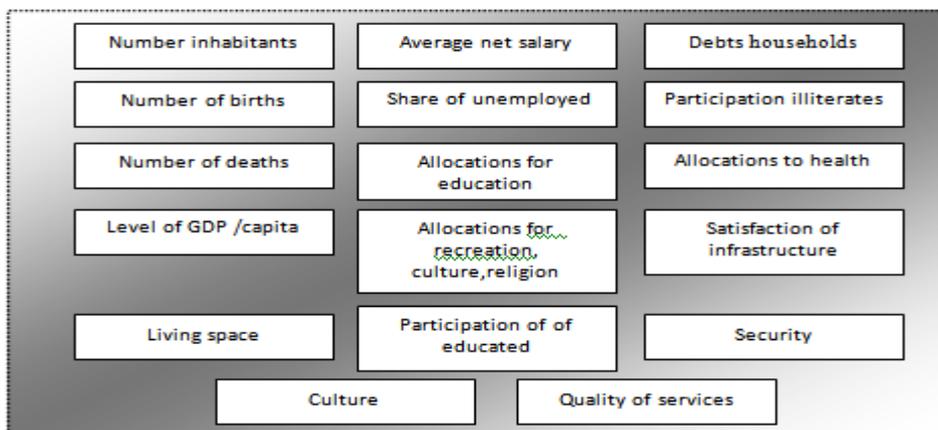


Figure 2. The initial data for determining the value of the quality of life in rural areas

Arsovski and Stojković (2014) to value the quality of life in rural areas, are determined following input data: number of inhabitants under 18 years of age, number of births, number of deaths, the level of GDP/capita, average net wage, arrears household, living space, share of unemployed, illiterate participation, participation of educated, expenditure for education, separation from the municipal budget for health, security people, budget allocations for recreation, culture and religion, satisfaction with the existing infrastructure, the quality of municipal services, the satisfaction of cultural events ...

According to the project *"The importance of rural development for the European Union (2014), agriculture is an important part, of the overall rural economy, not only in economic but also in social and cultural terms. Thus, agriculture represents the most significant activity of most rural communities and is of great importance for the way of life in rural areas. However, agriculture and farmer in modern rural community should be closely linked with other industries and occupations. Just planning a comprehensive development of small rural continent on the principles of sustainable development has been shown in the EU as a successful model of revival and progress of underdeveloped rural areas. Potential rural development projects should include restoration and development of villages, preservation of cultural heritage, and support investments in agricultural holdings, training, retraining and training of the local population, environmental protection measures, and promotion of quality local products... The legacy of traditional rural areas is a rich basis for dynamic development of rural tourism and many traditional features, such as cultural and historical diversity, architecture, traditional crafts and services, diverse and rich offer of local specialties... Infrastructure development is one of the important segments of the rural policy. Developed infrastructure contributes to economic aspects of life of rural communities, reducing regional disparities, improving market access, lower transportation and transaction costs, increased trade exchange, investment volume, the volume of revenue from other, non-agricultural branches of the rural economy, contributing to creating new jobs, reducing unemployment ... In addition to the economic, developed infrastructure contributes to the social aspect of life in rural areas by reducing the degree of isolation of rural areas, increased level of social integration, increased freedom of movement, mobility, significantly greater availability of social services.. "*<sup>3</sup>

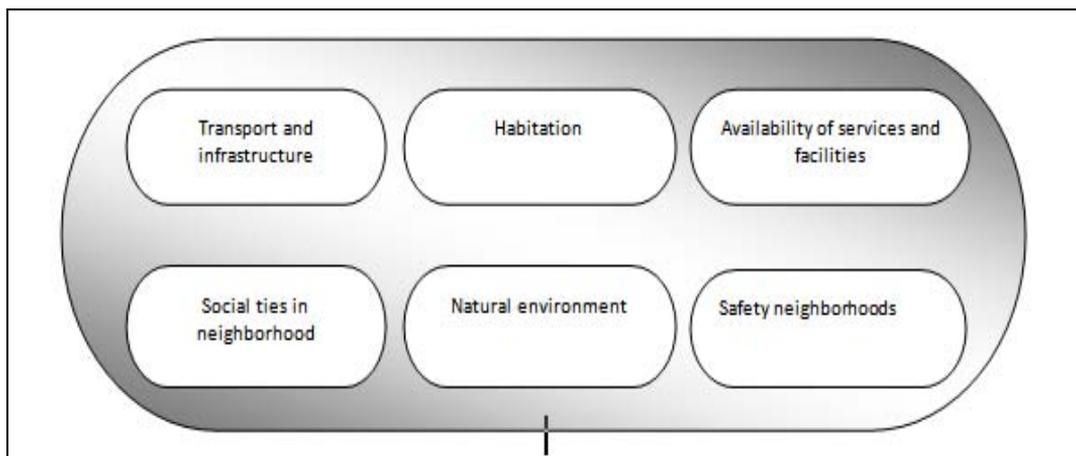
According to Slavuj (2012) based on an analysis of numerous reference (Kuz,1978; Türksever & Atalik, 2001; Bonaiuto et al., 2003; Witten et al., 2003; Bertone et al., 2006; Hardi & Pinter, 2006; Kahn, 2006; Apparicio et al., 2008; Lee, 2008; Alcazar & Andrade, 2008; Burk & Knopf, 2009; Holden et al., 2009; Martinez-Fernandez & Potts, 2009) including the latest research Uwadiegwu and Chukwu (2013), Najafpour et al., (2014), Saitluanga (2014), Norouzian - Maleki et al., (2015) and current knowledge in key domains of the concept of quality of life in urban settlements are: housing (size apartments, equipped apartments, housing status, the expenses for the apartment, the aesthetic appearance of the environment in the vicinity of the apartment), transport and infrastructure (parking places, availability of roads in the neighborhood, frequency of buses, quality of roads, quality of sidewalks, garbage collection and street cleaning), natural environment (drinking water quality, air quality, noise from traffic, amount of public green space, maintenance of cleanliness and tidiness of green areas), availability services and content (kindergarten, primary school, health center, hospitals, shops for everyday use, children's playgrounds, sports facilities and sports fields, parks and other green areas for recreation or walking, bus stations, cafes, restaurants), social ties in the neighborhood (relations with neighbors, behavior of neighbors, the willingness of neighbors to help), neighborhood safety (security on the streets during the day, security in the streets at night, the security of the neighborhood in terms of theft or burglary).

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<sup>3</sup> [www.mojsijev.com](http://www.mojsijev.com)

**Table 3.** The principles and criteria of urban life quality  
Source: Rezaei (2015).

	Dimensions	Index
Urban villages	Environmental	a. Diverse green spaces, b. Avoiding air pollution, c. Recreational areas and parks, d. Natural resources.
	Social	a. Social or public security, b. Leisure time spaces, c. Pedestrian spaces, d. Open and green spaces.
	Economic	a. Providing primary resources, b. Purchase power, c. Value of residential land, d. Job satisfaction.
	Physical	a. Residential space, b. Major housing facilities, c. Housing ownership, d. Number of rooms, e. Arrangement of buildings, f. Spatial order, g. Perspective sequence, h. Readability, i. Image, j. Spatial perception
	Communication	a. Communication tools, b. Public transportation, c. Traffic flow, d. Satisfaction of intercity trips.



**Figure 3.** The key domain of the concept of quality of life in urban settlements

Slavuj (2012) referring to the Local Agenda 21 (2011) indicates that more clear understanding of the impact of the urban area on the quality of life of residents and other users of the urban area, reflected in the key role that the issues of urban space to the strategies and programs of governments, international institutions, and local communities. One of the most popular programs of sustainable development, Agenda 21 stresses the need for action at all spatial levels. Key provisions of the program are: inclusion of as many members of the local community in the decision-making process, identifying strengths and weaknesses of the local resources, integration of sustainable development objectives in the policies of local authorities, raising awareness and education of the population, measurement, evaluation and reporting on the initiated projects. Local communities were invited to independently determine their own path towards sustainable development and environmental quality of life, due to their specificity and diversity. For example, the European Commission from 2003/04 implementing the project for the study of the quality of life in European cities under the name Urban Audit. The said project year 2006/07 (second series of studies) included 321 city from the 27 European Union member states, and an additional 36 cities in Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. The project applies 250 indicators for collecting information on demographic, social and economic aspects, civic activities, education, tourism, transport, information society, culture and recreation. The project collects data on three spatial levels: the urban region, a city within the city area. The idea is that the city authorities need reliable information for urban planning, sustainable and prosperous development. As special highlights the value of collecting data on the level of urban neighborhoods, or at the level that is really affecting people and that directly affect their experience of everyday life (Slavuj, 2012).

On the other hand sustainable development could affect an individual's quality of life positively or negatively as some sustainable development issues are acceptable and others are unacceptable to the individual member of society. For example, to achieve a sustainable transport system, drivers may well have to drive less; for some people, driving a car is more attractive than other modes of transport, because of its convenience, independence, flexibility, comfort, speed, perceived safety, and privacy; the car also provides more status and pleasure than other modes of transport; it is a means of self-expression, and enables one to control a powerful machine. Consequently, it is important to know which elements of different sustainable development have high or low public acceptance. As well as policymakers should give special attention to possible effects on the most important quality of life indicators when they design and implement sustainable development (Garling & Steg, 2007).

According to the data the Center for support and promotion of European integration (2012), the first of January 2011, 41% of the population in EU lived in urban areas, 35% in transitional / intermediate and 23% in rural areas. These data, published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, based on a new typology of the European Commission on urban / rural. This classification is conducted at the NUTS 3 regions. The regions are classified as rural, urban or transition based on analysis of population density and the total population. Thus, according to the Center for support and promotion of European integration (2012) as at 1 January 2011 the largest part of the population in the countries of the European Union who lived in urban areas was recorded in nine Member States and in particular to: Malta (100% of the population), Netherlands (71%), United Kingdom (71%), Belgium (68%), Spain (49%), Portugal (49%), Latvia (49%), Greece (47%) and Germany (43%). Luxembourg and Cyprus as a whole is considered one NUTS 3 regions and are classified as transitional areas. The largest number of population in the transitional areas in seven are countries of the European Union and in Sweden (56%), Estonia (52%), Bulgaria (45%), Romania (44%), Italy (44%), Canada (43 %) and Germany (40%). Most of the population in the countries of the European Union residing in the rural areas of the EU member states was recorded in Ireland (73%), Slovakia (50%), Estonia (48%), Hungary (47%) and Romania (46%). Then followed: Lithuania (43%), Greece (43%), Slovenia (43%), Denmark

(42%), Finland (43%), Austria (39%), Poland (38%), Bulgaria (38%), Latvia (38%), Portugal (36%), Canada (33%), France (29%), Sweden (22%), Italy (20%), Germany (17%), Spain (13%), Belgium (9%), United Kingdom (3%), Netherlands (1%).

**Table 4.** Population is per the typology of urban-rural states in the European Union 2011<sup>4</sup>

Source: CEPPEI (2012)

<b>Geographic area</b>	<b>Urban areas</b>	<b>Transitional areas</b>	<b>Rural areas</b>
European Union (27)	41	35	23
Belgium	68	24	9
Bulgaria	17	45	38
Czech Republic	24	43	33
Denmark	22	36	42
Germany	43	40	17
Estonia	-	52	48
Ireland	27	-	73
Greece	47	11	43
Spain	49	38	13
France	36	36	29
Italy	36	44	20
Cyprus	-	100	-
Latvia	49	13	38
Lithuania	26	31	43
Luxembourg	-	100	-
Hungary	17	36	47
Malta	100	-	-
Netherlands	71	28	1
Austria	35	27	39
Poland	28	34	38
Portugal	49	15	36
Romania	11	44	46
Slovenia	26	31	43
Slovakia	12	38	50
Finland	27	31	43
Sweden	22	56	22
United Kingdom	71	26	3

The concept of sustainable rural development based on the efficient use of resources, which leads to strengthening social cohesion in rural regions. In this concept agriculture has a special place. Sustainable agro system and take into account the conservation of natural resources, while not neglecting the economically and socially a valid approach to the development of the rural economy. Agriculture is seen as the basis for the diversification of local economic capacity in terms of improving the complementary activities. Particularly noteworthy is the connection between agriculture, protection of resources, unspoiled nature and tourism. EU countries particularly insist on this type of relationship that is built into the mechanisms of financial support from mutual funds, while candidates use IPA funds for targeting the rural development program. Countries that are still expected candidate status for membership can only be used a limited

<sup>4</sup> Population per the typology of urban-rural in the countries of the European Union in 2011 is given in thousands in compared to the total population.

number of programs whose task, among in other, to simulate a European model for supporting sustainable agricultural and rural development (Stojanović & Manić, 2009).

**Table 5.** Analysis of the impact of climate change on regions in the EU

Source: Milivojević et al (2015) according to European Commission (2009), Regions 2020 the climate change challenge for European regions, Brussels, March 2009

The causes of the changes and their impact on		Interregional differences the growth potential	Environmental sustainability middle	Social inequalities within the region
Climate change	Vulnerable sectors (tourism, agriculture and fisheries)	++ The impact on regions with high concentration of sectors which rely on natural resources and Services for ecosystems	++ Regions with higher concentration sectors which rely on Natural Resources and services ecosystems will be affected	+ Regions with highly vulnerable sectors must be faced with costs Society for Structural changes or adaptations
	Erosion and floods	++ The affected areas will seek funds - destroyed infrastructure	+++ Negative impact on ecosystems	+ The population because of the risk from Poverty is faced additional costs
	The risk of potential drought	++ Exhausting sectors that depend on of water	++ Negative impact on ecosystems	+ High costs for water will be all more lay stress households with low income

In order to urban settlements became bearers of sustainable development, it is necessary to develop in - areas of advanced social development on the issue: quality of life, ensure a balanced housing adapted to demographic needs with the preservation of high architectural quality and identity, providing social, health, educational services through vocational and lifelong training. Platform for democracy through: good governance, cultural and linguistic diversity, social and intercultural dialogue. Areas of green regeneration in terms of: a high level of environmental protection, increase the application of energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources, reduction of urban sprawl and the compact spatial planning and sustainable city, clean and accessible public transport with coordinated and developed bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Areas that its attractiveness serve as drivers of economic development in terms of: creativity, innovation and creation and the sharing of knowledge, stimulating proactive innovation and educational policies, sustainable construction, architecture and urban land use, high development of the local economy, exploitation of the architectural values, historical heritage buildings and

public spaces through the development and reconstruction of urban space. Urban settlements should set the positive principles of urban spatial development to be based on: balanced economic growth and territorial organization of activities, with a polycentric urban structure, strong metropolitan region that can provide services of general economic interest, a compact settlement structure with limited urban sprawl and the high level of protection of the environment and quality of life in the city and surrounding areas (European Union, Regional Policy, 2011).

Under the concept of sustainable quality of life implies the prosperous adaptation of humans to environmental changes (all aspects of the environment) while preserving a consistently high level of quality of life (objective and subjective) and the creation of conditions for its continuous improvement. In the case of this is completely is a clear difficulty of the task, bearing in mind that in a long period occasionally comes to drastic changes in one or more domains of life. Analysis of the regional differences induced climate change follows the logic shown in Table 5.

Regional variables at inter-regional differences are most influential potential of growth, environmental sustainability and interregional social differences. Impacts are presented qualitatively. The table sign goes from "*There is a clear link*" to "+" and "++" as a strong influence. The sign does not show a direction of change, but only the level of impact on regional variables (Milivojević et al., 2015).

Based shown in table 5, it is clear that climate change directly affect the quality of life of the individual and the community as a whole. Than the speed of adaptation to them will depend on and maintaining the existing quality of life. In order to ensure sustainability of the necessary is develop effective methods of protection and adaptation to the change. Unfortunately, the changes are not always predictable and not of the same intensity, often arise unexpectedly with devastating consequences for the physical and psychological state of the individual and the community. All this requires systematic research and monitoring of the state of quality of life in order to develop an effective system of protection and adaptation and create opportunities for sustainable quality of life (Milivojević et al., 2015).

## CONCLUSION

Planning rural and urban development, and even more measurement and assessment of its results, necessarily involves defining and selection of appropriate indicators. The literature the most commonly induces the objective and subjective indicators of quality of life. An objective approach is based on the study of the representation of various external indicators such as: material situation, state of the environment, political freedom, the level of democracy in society ..., while the subjective approach mainly deals with the subjective experiences and the experiences of individuals. Our research records when it comes to theoretical approaches to the study of quality of life in rural and urban settlements, indicating the following important conclusions:

1. The quality of life concept is becoming ever more popular both in Europe and the world at large. The term is a subjective one to a considerable extent or in other words interpretable in a subjective way. The consequence is a great number of definitions, ways of interpretations and approaches to quantification of the quality of life. But the same reason can be considered the principal source of its increasing popularity in public and in the political and decision making spheres. One of the basic traits of quality of life (QoL) is its interdisciplinary or rather multidisciplinary nature. Among the sciences that are involved with the quality of life issue sociology, economics and medicine dominate. The extent of geographically oriented studies dealing with the subject is, however much smaller compared to the other sciences (Ira et al., 2009);

2. As an academic discipline in the quality of life appeared in 1970 and was confirmed in 1974 and considered by the scientific journal "*Social Indicators Research*". The second important academic publications multidisciplinary "*Journal of Happiness Studies*", multidisciplinary journal that allows discussion on what are the two main starting points for the study of happiness, namely: theoretical essays good life and empirical research on subjective well-being. International

Association for Research Quality of life (ISQOLS) serves as a forum for academic researchers working in this field, encouraging interdisciplinary research, methodological discussions and development. Searching the database by Ilić et al (2010) for the period from 1974 to 2008, found is that the quality of life in the year 1974 mentions only in 8 publications, in the year 1984 in 284, in 1994 in 1.209, in 2003 in 3.519, in 2008 in 66.592 scientific articles. Quality of life is treated as a central theme in 1974 in a scientific article 2, in 1984 in 93, in 1994 in 502, in 2003 in 1.060 and 2008 in 20.355 (Ilić et al., 2010);

3. The fact that quality of life and social development do not always have a direct link with the wealth of certain countries, according to research by the Fifth International Conference of the International Society for Testing and Quality of Life, held in Frankfurt, presented by researchers from the University of Pennsylvania. They were also asked details which clearly indicate that the quality of life in the world is declining, even in some of the countries that recorded economic progress. Pennsylvanian researchers looked at the ten-year socio-economic indicators in 163 countries of the world, using data from national governments, United Nations and World Bank. They were also asked details which clearly indicate that the quality of life in the world is declining, even in some of the countries that recorded economic progress. Pennsylvanian researchers looked at the ten-year socio-economic indicators in 163 countries of the world, using data from national governments, United Nations and World Bank (Gaović & Timotijević, 2011);

4. The study treated 40 factors on which it made the charts, and index of quality of life in the world. In addition to economic indicators, purchasing power, unemployment and involvement in the world economy, are analyzed and factors such as the quality of healthcare and education, human rights situation, political maturity of the citizens, birth-rate military expenditure, and protection of the environment are status of women and the ability of society to the acceptance of cultural diversity. Research has identified 21 African and Asian countries that are near social collapse, primarily due to the high concentration of population, weak political institutions, and a number of economic failures, disease and cultural isolation. Especially poor state governments in the countries of Central, Eastern and Western Africa, where there has been an extremely negative trend of quality of life as a result of widespread corruption, inter-ethnic conflicts, protracted wars and the absence of civil institutions ... (Gaović & Timotijević, 2011);

5. In order to ensure continuous monitoring of the quality of life it is necessary to build a network of local, regional and national levels. It is implemented: connecting to the network divided and diverse resources of information, data and processes, turning on the computer, network connectivity, human resources and databases, supporting the development of advanced applications for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the quality of life, through the integration with external systems networks. Monitoring the quality of life is the most effective realized through the concept of the information society. The main role of monitoring is to continuously provide information on: changes of living and quality of life is the quality of individual life better during the time period, what is the life of a society, a region, a city compared with other companies, regions, cities, structural changes and the progress of society modernization how the social structure changes over time, such as the structural differentiation between the companies in the region. Is broken into, the data and information based on facts are the basis for improving the quality of life of the population (Milivojević et al., 2006);

6. According to Council Regulation (EC) N. 1698/2005, the support under axis 3 should involve: (a) measures to diversify the rural economy, comprising (i) diversification into non-agricultural activities for members of the farm household, (ii) support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises of less than 10 employees, (iii) encouragement of tourism activities; (b) measures to improve the quality of life in rural areas, comprising (i) basis services for the economy and rural population, (ii) village renewal and development, (iii) conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage; (c) a training and information measure; (d) a skills acquisition and animation measure. The support under axis 4 should involve: (e)

implementing local development strategies through Local Action Groups (LAGs), with a view to achieving the objectives of one or more of the three other axes; (f) implementing cooperation projects involving the objectives selected; (g) running the local action group, acquiring skills and animating the territory (Cagliero et al., 2010);

7. The New Urbanism, also called Nontraditional Design, is an urban design movement that developed in the late 1980s, it inspires its concepts from the traditional town and neighborhood design (TND). Its main goal is to create buildings, neighborhoods, and regions that provide a high quality of life for all residents, while protecting the natural environment. The organizing body for New Urbanism is the Congress for the New Urbanism, founded in 1993. Its foundational text is the *Charter of the New Urbanism*. The New Urbanism offered a set of principles that addressed land use, transportation, street network, public spaces, walk ability, mixed housing types, identity of place, and ecological concerns and offered a guide of alternatives to urban sprawl (Carruthers & Mundy, 2006).

Quality of life is very complex research area that has not yet been sufficiently explored. It covers virtually all aspects of human life (individual, nation), but also the entire life of individuals, nations and civilizations. It was developed a number of methods for calculating the quality of life (objective and subjective) for different levels of the system (individual, city, local community, region, nation/state, union). However, all these methods are more or less different among themselves, which complicates comparisons between countries and regions. On the other sides, quality of life, the value of a variable in time and has a dynamic structure. The fundamental question is how the quality of life makes it sustainable over time? This is because the dimensions and domains of life (a large number of them) suffer major changes and thus directly affecting the quality of life of individuals and communities. In order to ensure sustainability, it is necessary to develop effective methods of protection and adaptation to the change. All this requires systematic research and monitoring of the state of quality of life in order to develop an effective system of protection and adaptation and create opportunities for sustainable quality of life in the time continuum (Milivojević et al., 2015).

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