

Final scientific report of the project

PN-III-P1-1.1-PD-2019-0274

Social spatial diffusion and the regional impact of NGOs in the European Capitals of Culture 2021 (CC2021) Timișoara and Novi Sad

1. A theoretical framework of socio-spatial diffusion

A systematic literature review was done, taking into account (1) the major international schools focused on the Third Sector and NGOs (EMES, RIPESS, RIUESS) and (2) the most relevant publications in the field and area of interest. This demarche systematically put in comparison the theoretical approaches and clearly emphasize the role of the cultural NGOs in the development of local social capital. The way this happens is that NGOs create relationships of commitment and trust between volunteers and various partners, construct services that are embedded in the local cultural context, and combine several objectives (for example, careers advice/job finding with local development). In disadvantaged communities, NGOs goes beyond a helping role. It involves inhabitants in a variety of actions, provides them with qualifications and uses local resources. By so doing it attains three goals and achieves development that is involving, sustainable and community-based. The NGOs contributes to the modernization of a territory through the creation of innovative activities, by mobilizing local/regional players and resources and by generating social links – means for the expression of local democracy. Territorial co-production results from a style of governance that brings together the common interest, social usefulness and economic efficiency. All these strengthen the connection between the NGOs and local development, leading to an action plan that is coordinated and decentralized, designed to improve – in a sustainable way – the living conditions of inhabitants of an area, and in which development stimulates the participation of all intended players’.

2. A database of socio-economic variables of the studied territories

Official data on administrative territorial units have been collected in order to map the main elements of cohesion, disparities and diffusion in Western Romania¹. This database comprises a triptych of chapters:

- Population (general demographic balance, migratory demographic balance, fertility rate, birth rate, mortality, infant mortality, gross migration rate);
- Society (age structure of the population, gender structure, ethnic structure of the population, denominational structure of the population);
- Economy (number of enterprises, number of NGOs, entrepreneurial density, employment indicators, unemployment indicators).

Furthermore, by expanding the database on the dynamics of NGOs, the Western region has more than 7,000 associations and foundations formally registered in the National NGO Registry of the Ministry of Justice. The activity rate of these organizations is low; less than 50% filed their balance sheet at the end of the last fiscal year. Moreover, less than 10% of all NGOs develop an economic activity.

These figures call for two initial observations: (1) we are faced with a NGO sector that is still fragile and needs to be consolidated; (2) there is a difference between the organizations developing an economic activity and the others. While the former are few in number, large in size and concentrated in large cities, the latter carry out a wide variety of activities. The latter are also on the borderline between the formal and the informal, appealing the following conclusions:

First, with the exception of the four county capitals, Timișoara, Arad, Deva and Reșița, no other municipality has more than 150 NGOs. Even medium-sized cities, do not exceed this number. The case of Jiu Valley is significant enough: in the 6 cities there are no more than 300 NGOs.

Secondly, there are many municipalities that do not have any associations or foundations. This is mainly the "deep" rural: the north of Hunedoara County, the center of Caraș-Severin County and the east of Timiș.

¹ The main sources used: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/> and <http://edemos.insse.ro/>

Third, the western side of the region is more cohesive in terms of the number of NGOs. This is visible in the peri-urban communes of Timișoara and in the county of Arad, especially.

These observations appeal to previous work (Dragan, Popa, 2017, Dragan, 2018²), which shows that Western Romania operates on a two-speed principle:

- a hard outlying core, located in the western half, around the poles of Timișoara and Arad, with a number of enterprises and turnover cumulating more than twice the regional average, equipped with first-rate transport and training infrastructures, and a positive demographic balance;

- an eastern half of the region dominated by an ageing population, emigration and economic decline (see Figure 1).

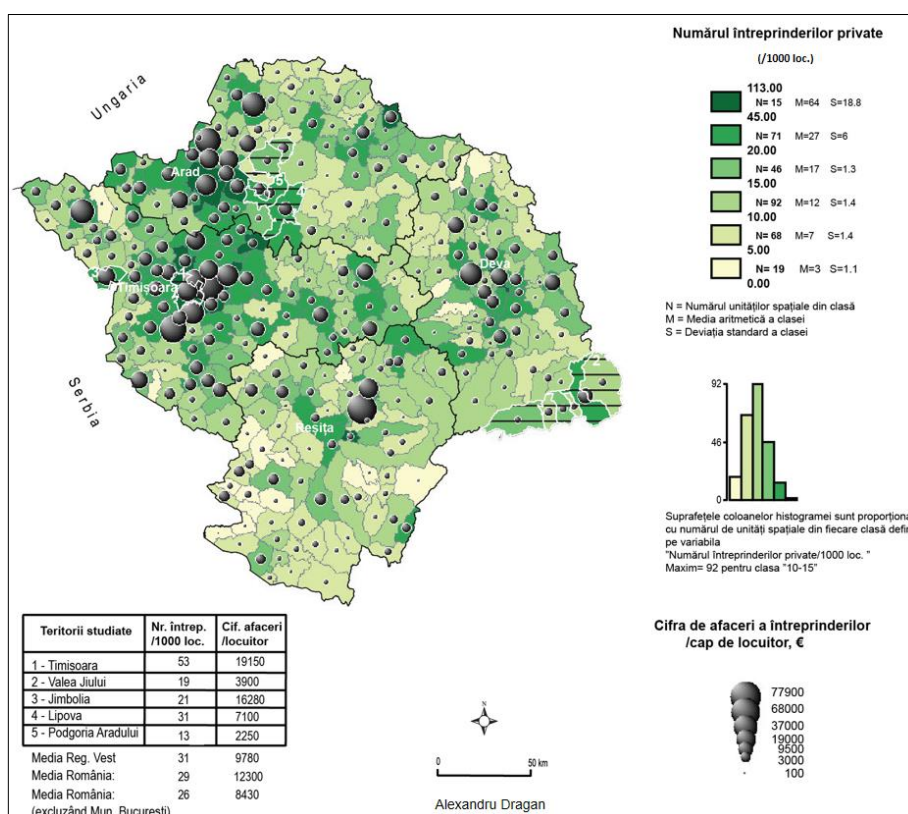


Fig. 1. Economic disparities in Romania's Western Region

² DRAGAN, A., POPA, N., 2017, « Social economy in post-communist Romania: what kind of volunteering for what type of NGOs? », Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies, vol. 19, nr. 3, pp. 330-350, doi:10.1080/19448953.2017.1277088

DRAGAN, A., 2018, « Émergence et structuration de l'économie sociale et solidaire en Roumanie », Editura Universității de Vest din Timișoara, Colecția "Biblioteca de cercetare", 206 p., ISBN 978-973-125-639-9

3. A database of cultural events developed under the aegis of the Capital of Culture

We have continuously observed the events organized under the aegis of the Capital of Culture. One difficulty was the pandemic context. On the one hand, the Timisoara 2021 project no longer exists, as it has been transferred to 2023. On the other hand, a large number of events could not take place due to the pandemic. In another vein, the Novi Sad Capital of Culture project has been transferred to 2022, which considerably hinders the comparison between the two projects, as they are no longer running in parallel.

The database of events was structured in line with the priority directions of the Cultural Capital project, namely Connections, Places, Extensions, People, including events outside the city, especially those held in localities near the Romanian-Serbian border, such as Lunga, Comloșu Mare, Comloșu Mic, Jimbolia, Lenauheim, Beba Veche, etc.

4. A focus on residents' perception of quality of life in Timisoara

This focus aims to assess the perception of quality of life in Timisoara. In order to achieve its purpose, this work attempts, on the one hand, to look beyond the subjectivity with which respondents treat the dimensions of interest and, on the other hand, tries to analyse a large number of such responses using statistical data analysis. Data analysis is carried out using IBM SPSS software.

The survey was conducted using the questionnaire administered by telephone, following pandemic conditions, to 1238 adult respondents between 11 and 30 November 2020. The sample is stratified by gender, age and neighbourhood, with a margin of error of $\pm 2.6\%$ for a 95% confidence interval. The area covered covers 24 neighbourhoods of Timisoara according to the General Urban Plan (Fig. 2).

The questionnaire is based on the following dimensions: satisfaction with the city's infrastructure, services and facilities, Timisoara residents' perception of the city, satisfaction with the environment, satisfaction with one's own life, and identification of the specificity of life in the pandemic.

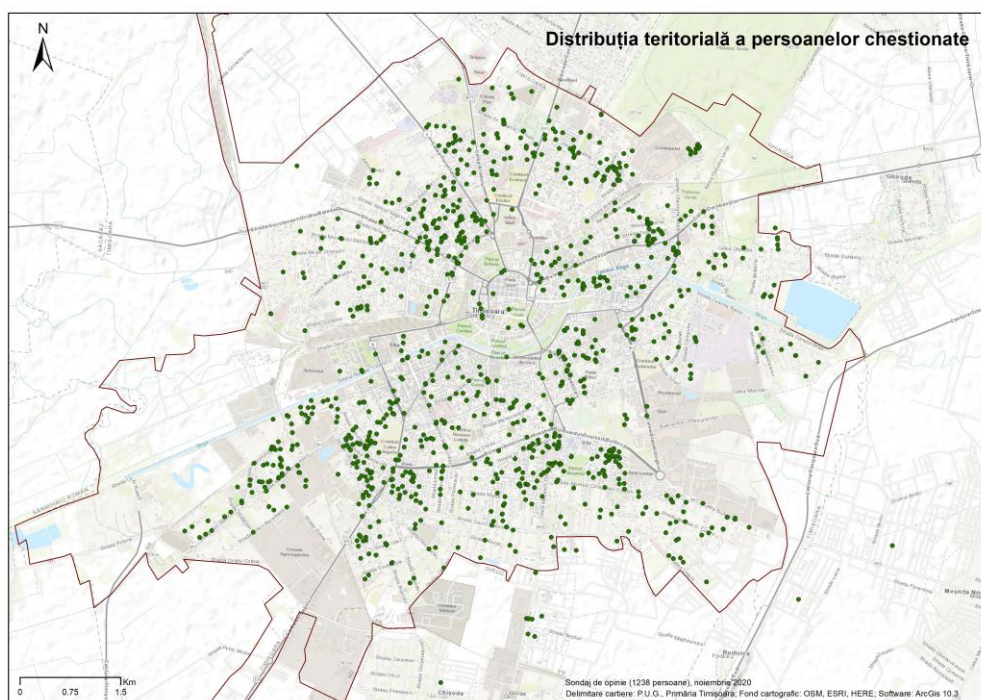


Fig. 2. Territorial distribution of the respondents

By spatiality and respondent mobility we refer to the following: migration experience, place of birth, respondent's neighbourhood and housing type. The survey results show that none of the indicators directly relate to the perception of where Timisoara is heading.

Although our initial hypothesis stated that the degree of optimism about the direction of the city depends on the type of housing, the results of our research show that this correlation is not significant, which is evidenced by the fact that regardless of the type of housing, respondents have a high degree of optimism, over 70%, but also by the result of the Chi-square test ($\chi^2(6) = 6.324, p = .388$). Also, the initial hypothesis stating that people born in Timisoara are more optimistic than those born here cannot be validated either, as the results of our research show that the degree of optimism does not differ according to the place of birth. People born in Timisoara show the same degree of optimism as those born elsewhere. Based on the Chi-square test result ($\chi^2(3) = 2.126, p = .547$), we can state that the difference in optimism between people born in Timisoara and those born outside Timisoara is insignificant. Optimism about the direction of Timisoara is not associated with place of birth. From the analysis of the relationship between the level of optimism and migration experience we find that the two variables are not associated. People who have been abroad show the same degree of optimism as those who have not. 75.5% of respondents who have been abroad believe that the city is heading in a good direction, a percentage relatively close to that of

72.5% for those who have never settled, even temporarily, in another country. So, we can say, based on the result of the Chi-square test ($\chi^2(1) = 1.116$, $p = .291$), that there is no correlation between migration experience and degree of optimism.

The respondent's neighbourhood of residence is also among the variables analysed in relation to the perception of the direction of the city. In general, the most satisfied people about the future development of Timisoara live in the Lidia area, Arad East, Cetate district, Iosefin and Gării area, with percentages higher than 80% of satisfaction. At the opposite end of the scale are the inhabitants of the districts of Blășcovici, Steaua-Fratelia and Ronaț, who feel that the city is not moving in a good direction (Fig. 3).

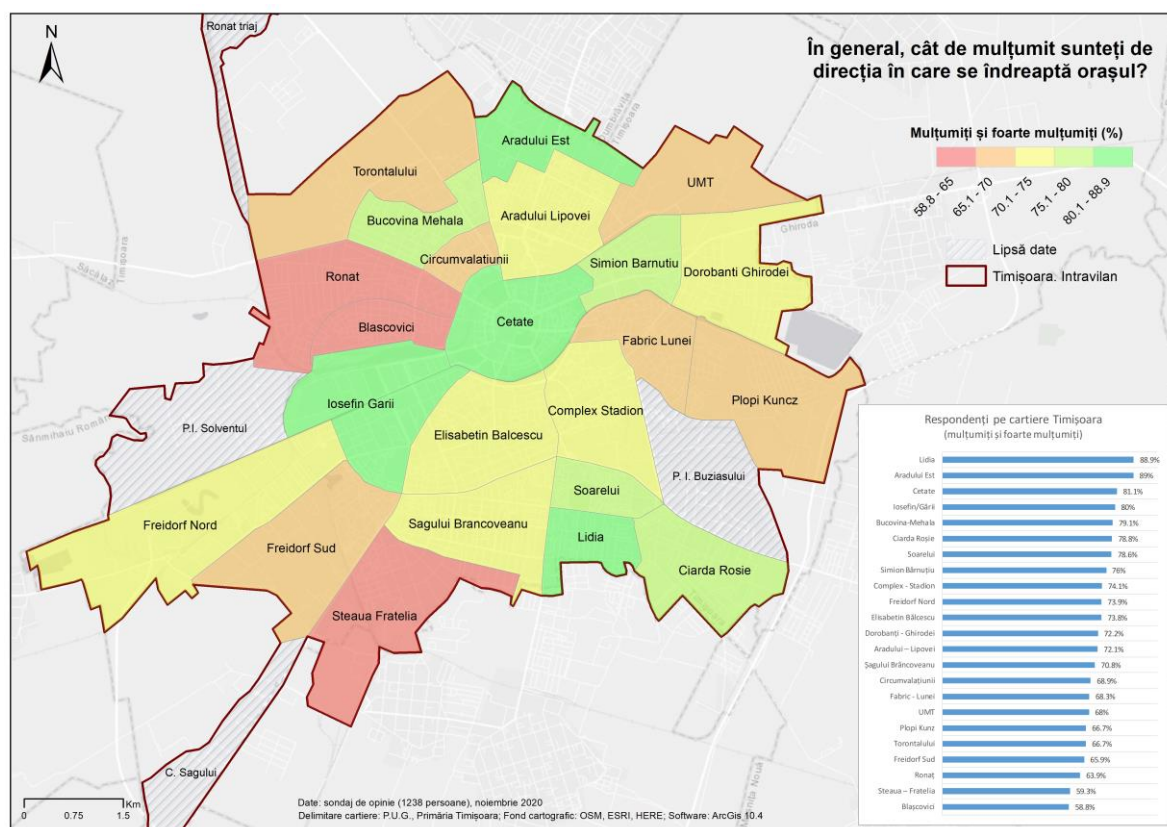


Fig. 3. Direction in which the city is heading versus the respondents' neighbourhood

To find out whether there is an association between optimism or pessimism about the direction the city is heading and the quality of your life, we used the Kruskal-Wallis test to analyze these variables: how you live, your financial situation, the job you have, your health status and the housing you live in. Of these, only the last variable listed was found to be insignificant for our research. People who say they are satisfied with the variables related to

their quality of life tend to think that the city is moving in a good direction. Interestingly, however, even people who say they are dissatisfied with the variables under discussion believe that Timisoara is moving in a good direction (tab. 1).

Tab. 1. Testing explanations between the direction in which the city is heading and related variables

The direction Timisoara is heading in	The way you live	Your financial situation	The job you have	Your state of health	The dwelling where you live
Sig.	.000	.000	.054	.001	.769

Most respondents express they are satisfied with *the city's education system*, with 32.9% being partially satisfied and 14.8% being totally satisfied. In the following we will try to answer the following question: "What is satisfaction with universities and high schools associated with?" using relevant statistical tests. In the first step, the relationship between satisfaction with universities, high schools, schools and kindergartens and the socio-demographic categories of the respondent: gender, age, level of education, occupation, ethnicity, religion was analysed. Of these, only education level had a significant result ($H(4) = 9.982, p < .05$). Thus, the degree of satisfaction is higher than the degree of dissatisfaction in all situations analyzed. The most satisfied with universities and high schools turn out to be the respondents with a university degree (62.2%), in the case of all educational levels, from secondary school to post-graduate studies, the degree of satisfaction passes the 50% threshold.

Subsequently, the relationship between satisfaction with the education system and respondent stability and mobility was also analysed. Using the Kruskal-Wallis test, we found that a significant association was only observed for the variable named "type of housing" ($H(6) = 17.442, p < .05$). Those most satisfied with educational institutions are those living in apartments built after 1989, with 68.3% satisfied. At the opposite pole are those living in apartments in historic buildings in the city, with only 25% of respondents satisfied in this respect. For the remaining respondents, satisfaction levels are in the 50%-55% range.

Analysing satisfaction with the Timisoara education system from a spatial point of view (see fig. 4), higher percentages of satisfaction were observed in the Simion Bărnuțiu

area, the UMT area and the Freidorf Sud area. In the central and pericentral areas of the city, a medium to high degree of satisfaction was recorded, while in the peripheral areas, dissatisfaction predominates. The neighbourhoods where respondents are most dissatisfied with schools, high schools and kindergartens are Freidorf-North, Aradului-Lipovei and Soarelui. A possible explanation for this result could be given, on the one hand, by the small number of schools present in the neighbourhoods listed above (Freidorf Nord, Aradului Lipovei), and, on the other hand, by the high demand and insufficient places for children about to start their education (Soarelui neighbourhood).

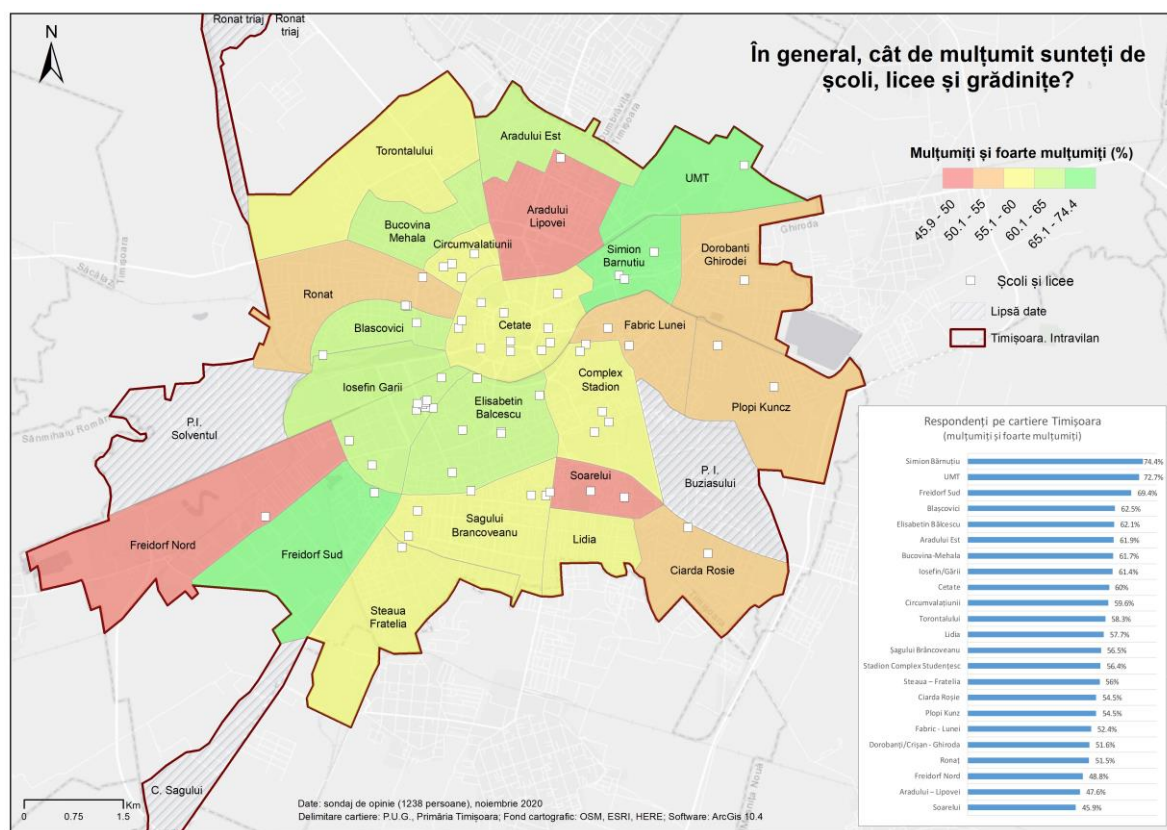


Fig. 4. Satisfaction with Timisoara education versus respondent's neighbourhood

The majority of respondents answered that they *trust* the people in their neighbourhood, with 36.6% strongly agreeing and 33.5% partially agreeing. Only 5.3% of respondents say their neighbours are not trustworthy, out of a total of 19.7% disagreement.

We tried to find out if there is a statistical link between respondents' perception of trust towards people in their neighbourhood and the socio-demographic categories they belong to. We therefore analysed the relationship between people's perception of trust in their

neighbours in the neighbourhood and gender, age, education level, marital status and occupation; significant results emerged across age categories and respondents' marital status.

Analyzing the first significant variable, we observed how the respondents' level of trust towards people in their neighborhood increases with age, with the lowest percentage found in the 18-24 age group of 71. This could be explained by the greater need for help that older people feel, which can come most quickly and easily from their neighbours.

The second significant variable refers to the marital status of the respondent. High percentages of trust, over 80%, are found in the case of divorced, married and widowed people. Those who have the least trust in the people in the neighbourhood where they live are cohabitants, with a percentage of only 66.7% ($H(5) = 14.456, p < .05$).

We also examined how respondent's spatial and mobility influence respondents' trust of people in their neighborhood, but none of the variables passed the Kruskal-Wallis test. Thus, variables such as housing type, migration experience and place of birth were found to be insignificant for our research, with a sig. of $p > .05$.

However, we consider it necessary to observe the spatial distribution of respondents' trust in people in their own neighbourhood. Thus, the citizens who fully agree with the statement "Most people in my neighbourhood are trustworthy" are those who live in Ronaț, Ciarda Roșșie and Blașcovici. At the opposite end of the spectrum are the inhabitants of the eastern and central-eastern part of the city, who generally state that they do not trust their neighbours, namely the following neighbourhoods/areas: Fabric-Lunei, Complex-Stadion, Simion-Bărnuțiu, Plopi-Kuncz (Fig. 5).

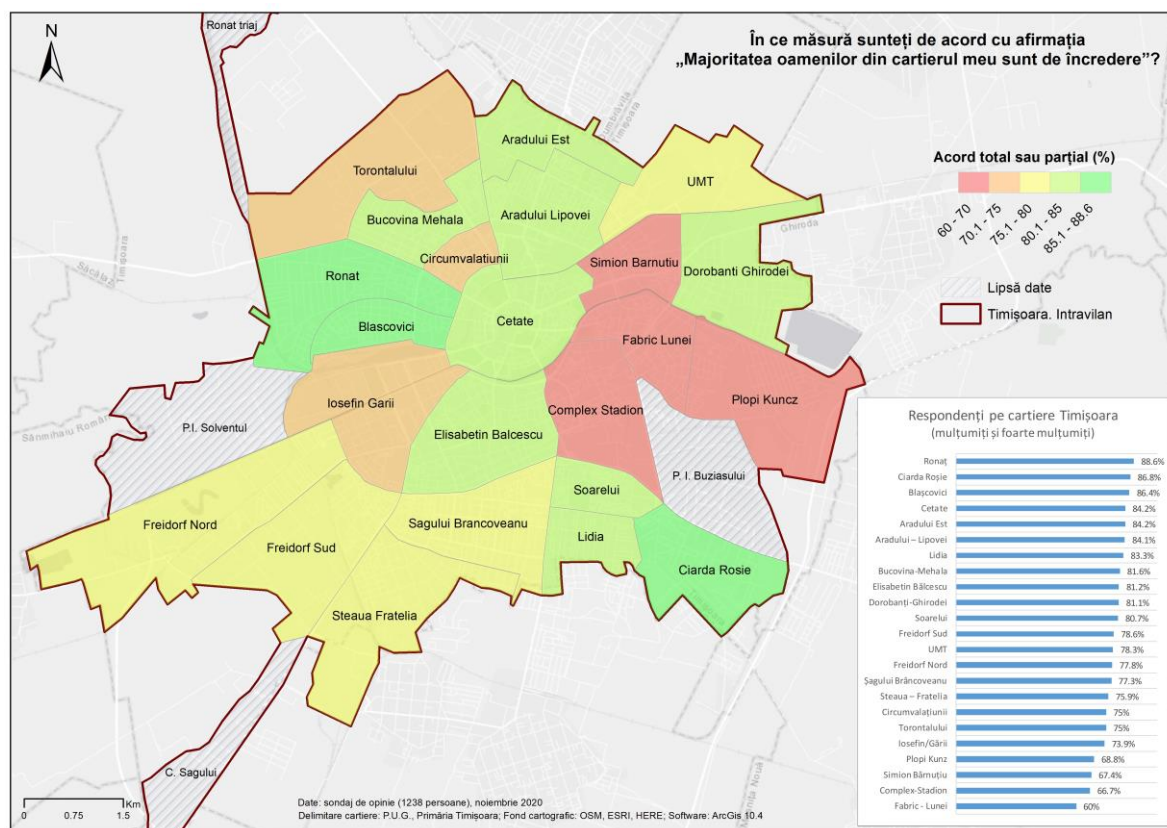


Fig. 5. Trust in people in own neighbourhood vs. respondent's neighbourhood

The *safety felt* in the city of Timisoara amounts to 73.2% of all respondents, of which 38.5% feel totally safe and 34.7% feel partially safe. At the other end of the scale, only 8.5% of the respondents do not agree at all with the statement "I feel safe in Timisoara".

To the question: "Is the perception of the respondents on the safety felt in the city influenced by the socio-demographic categories to which they belong?", the answer is affirmative, with significant correlations being established between gender and marital status of the respondent. Thus, although almost three quarters of the respondents answered that they feel safe in the city, the majority of them are male, 78.9%. Almost 9 percentage points less, 71% of women feel safe in the city ($H(1) = 9.733, p < .05$). In the case of marital status, those who feel safest are single and divorced, with percentages of over 75%. At the other end of the scale, people in cohabiting relationships most often feel fearful when moving around the city ($H(5) = 15.326, p < .05$).

To the question "Is the respondents' perception of the safety they feel in the city influenced by their spaciousness and mobility?", the answer is negative. None of the variables considered in this category (migration experience, type of housing, place of birth,

neighbourhood of the respondent) has any influence on the perceived level of safety in Timisoara.

However, in order to emphasize the importance of spatiality, our research sees it as necessary to analyze by neighbourhood the sense of safety felt by respondents (Fig. 6). At a first glance on the map showing the level of security felt in Timisoara, we can say that the city is divided into two large areas: the north of the city, where respondents feel safe (Arad East, Arad Lipovei, UMT), and the south of the city, where a higher level of insecurity is perceived (Freidorf South, Steaua-Fratelia). These are separated by the central area of the city, where respondents report an average level of safety (Cetate, Iosefin, Simion Bărnuțiu, Blășcovici, Circumvalațiunii).

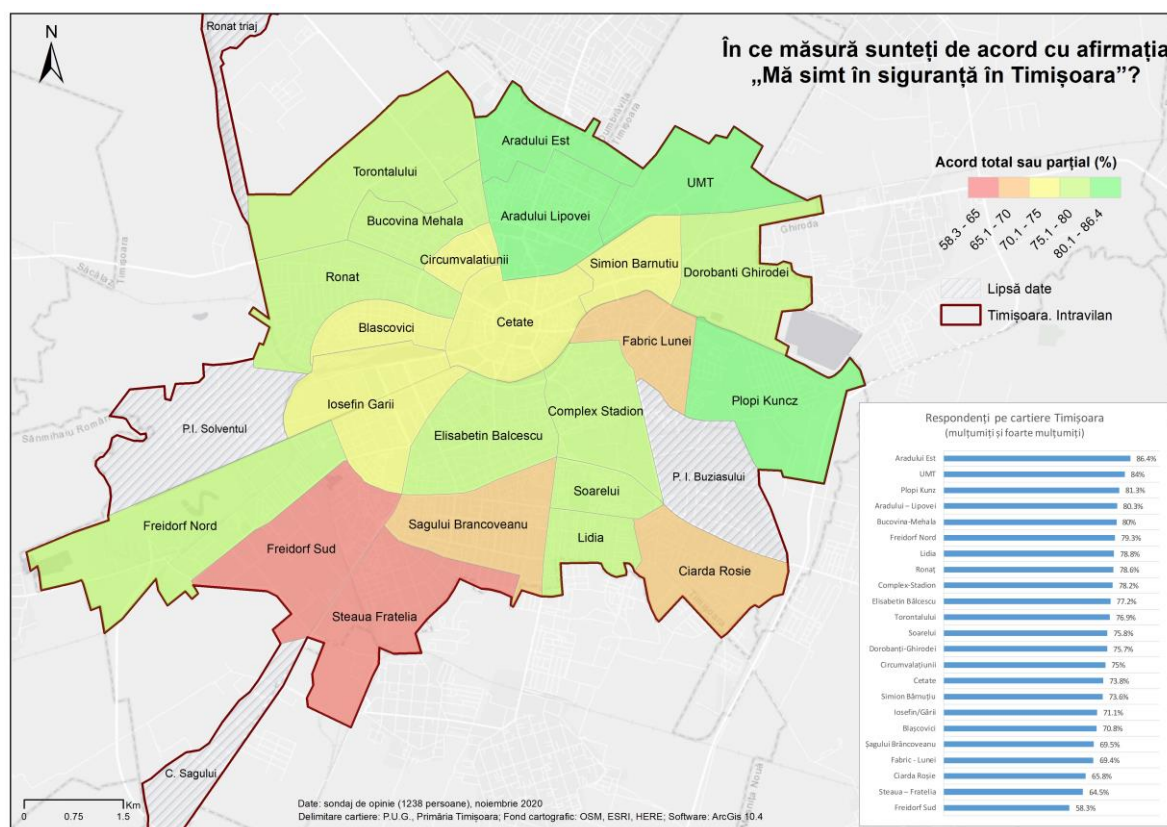


Fig. 6. Safety experienced in the city versus respondent's neighbourhood

A very high percentage of respondents, 91.6%, say they are satisfied with *the way they live*. Only 2.9% (out of a total of 7.8% dissatisfied) of the people surveyed say they are totally dissatisfied with this aspect of their quality of life. Can satisfaction with the way respondents live be influenced by the socio-demographic categories to which they belong? After analysing the data using the Kruskal-Wallis statistical test, we observed that the

variables that are directly related to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the quality of life are: marital status, level of education and religion.

In the case of marital status, satisfaction levels are very high for all categories, with only divorced or cohabiting individuals having a satisfaction level slightly below 90% ($H(5) = 15.344, p < .05$). In the case of education level, the increase in satisfaction with the way of life is evident with the increase in the level of the last school completed. Thus, the most satisfied with the quality of their lives are those who declare that they have postgraduate studies (95.1%), at the opposite pole are those who declare that they have only secondary education (81.3%). In other words, the higher the level of education, the higher the standard of living ($H(4) = 16.995, p < .05$).

In terms of denominational structure and how it influences perceptions of lifestyle, the most satisfied with this aspect are the neo-Protestants (Pentecostals, Baptists), who are 100% satisfied with their lifestyle. Very close behind are the Orthodox, with a satisfaction rate of 92.5%. The Protestants (Reformed, Lutherans, Calvinists), Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics are less than 90% satisfied, with the latter having the lowest satisfaction rate of 81.8% ($H(5) = 12.926, p < .05$).

Can satisfaction with the respondents' way of life be influenced by their mobility and spatiality? Analyzing the confounding variables, we found that the type of housing in which respondents live significantly influences how people perceive the quality of their lives. Thus, significant differences are observed in the case of people living at home, with the highest level of satisfaction found in those living in a house built after 1989 (95.5% of respondents being satisfied) and the lowest level found in those living in a house built before the Revolution (89.2% of respondents being satisfied). Similarly, those living in apartments in historic city buildings or in apartments built before 1989 are less satisfied than those living in newer apartments. In other words, the more recently built the dwelling in which respondents live, the better their perception of their quality of life ($H(5) = 16.250, p < .05$).

Crossing the degree of satisfaction with their own life with the neighbourhood of residence of the respondent, we observed that in general the respondents who are more dissatisfied with the way they live live in the western half of the city (Torontalului, Steaua-Fratelia, Circumvalațiunii, Blășcovici, etc.), while respondents who are rather satisfied with their way of life are located in the eastern half of Timisoara, with small

exceptions (Plopi-Kuncz, Soarelui), the highest percentages of satisfaction being present in the neighbourhoods: Cetate, Simion-Bărnuțiu and Ciarda Roșie (Fig. 7).

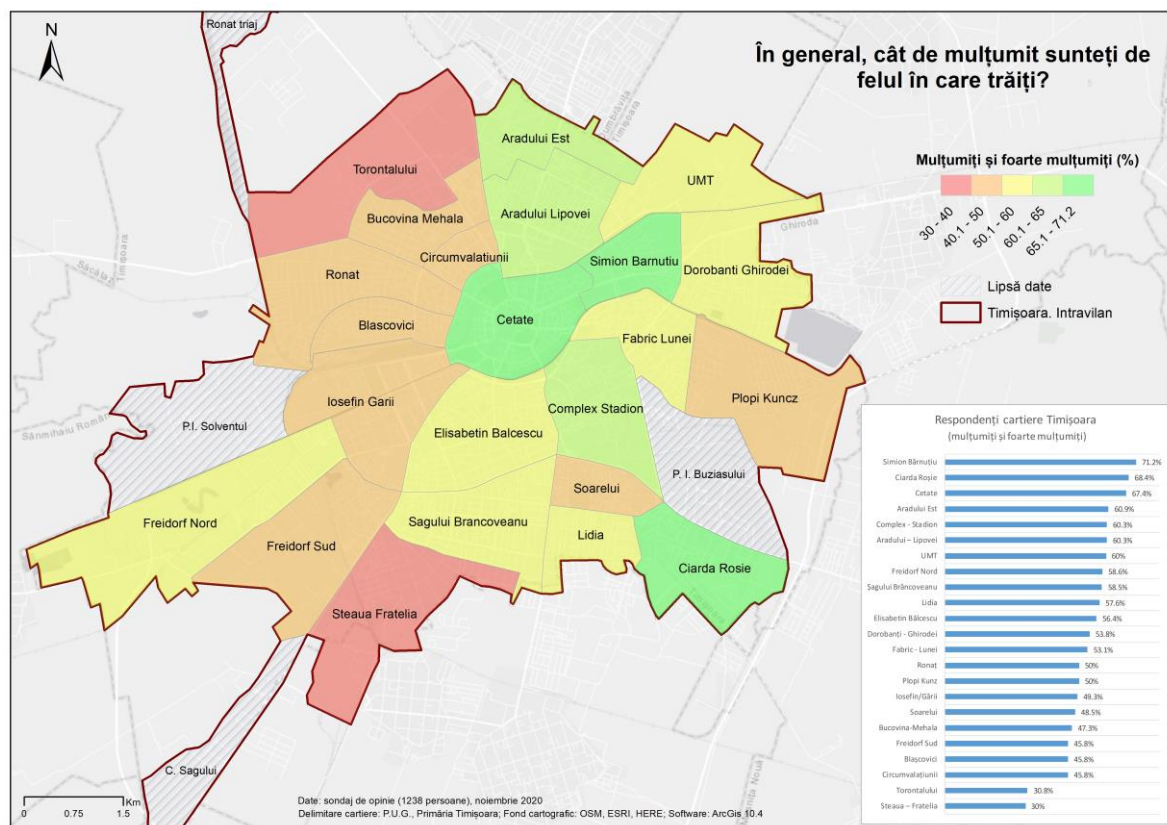


Fig. 7. Satisfaction with lifestyle versus respondent's neighbourhood

When it comes to *the financial situation* of respondents, a significant percentage is allocated to those who are partially satisfied (44.9%) and totally satisfied (38.3%). Of all the variables related to their lifestyle, the level of satisfaction with the financial situation reaches the highest levels of dissatisfaction, with 14.5% of respondents declaring themselves dissatisfied.

In terms of the socio-demographic categories of respondents, significant associations with satisfaction with one's own financial situation were established between variables related to: gender, age, educational and occupational level and religion. Thus, in terms of gender ($H(1) = 4.091, p < 0.5$) and age categories ($H(5) = 14.809, p < 0.5$), we observe that the most satisfied with their own finances are, on the one hand, men (87.7%) and, on the other hand, young people aged 18-24 (90.6%).

Another significant variable is the level of education. In the case of this indicator, it is clear how satisfaction with the financial situation increases with the level of the last school the respondent graduated from. Thus, the lowest level of satisfaction is found among those with secondary education (66.7%), and the highest level of satisfaction is found among those with post-graduate education (93.6%) ($H(4) = 28.950, p < .001$).

In the case of occupational status, the most satisfied are primary and secondary workers, each recording the highest level of satisfaction. High levels are also found among specialists in various fields of activity (91.2%), students/students (89.1%), and members of the legislature, the executive and public administration leaders (88.7%). At the opposite end of the spectrum are respondents on maternity leave, with more than half of them expressing dissatisfaction with their finances ($H(16) = 48.271, p < .001$).

The last significant indicator in the socio-demographic category is the respondent's religion. The most satisfied with their own financial situation are Protestants (92.3%) and non-Protestants (91.3%), and the least satisfied are Greek Catholics (60%) ($H(5) = 11.909, p < .05$). In terms of respondent stability and mobility, the only significant variable for satisfaction with respondents' financial situation is the type of housing. Thus, those who are most satisfied with their own finances are those who live either in an apartment or a house built after 1989 or in a historic building. Conversely, with lower levels of satisfaction are those living in older housing built before the fall of the communist regime ($H(5) = 23.961, p < .001$).

A neighbourhood average was also carried out on satisfaction with their own financial situation. Following this analysis, the highest values of satisfaction are found in the neighbourhoods of Torontalului, Bucovina-Mehala and Aradului-Lipovei, with percentages above 90%. At the opposite pole, there are respondents living in the neighbourhoods of Freidorf Sud, Steaua-Fratelia, Complex-Stadion, Simion-Bărnuțiu and UMT (Fig. 8).

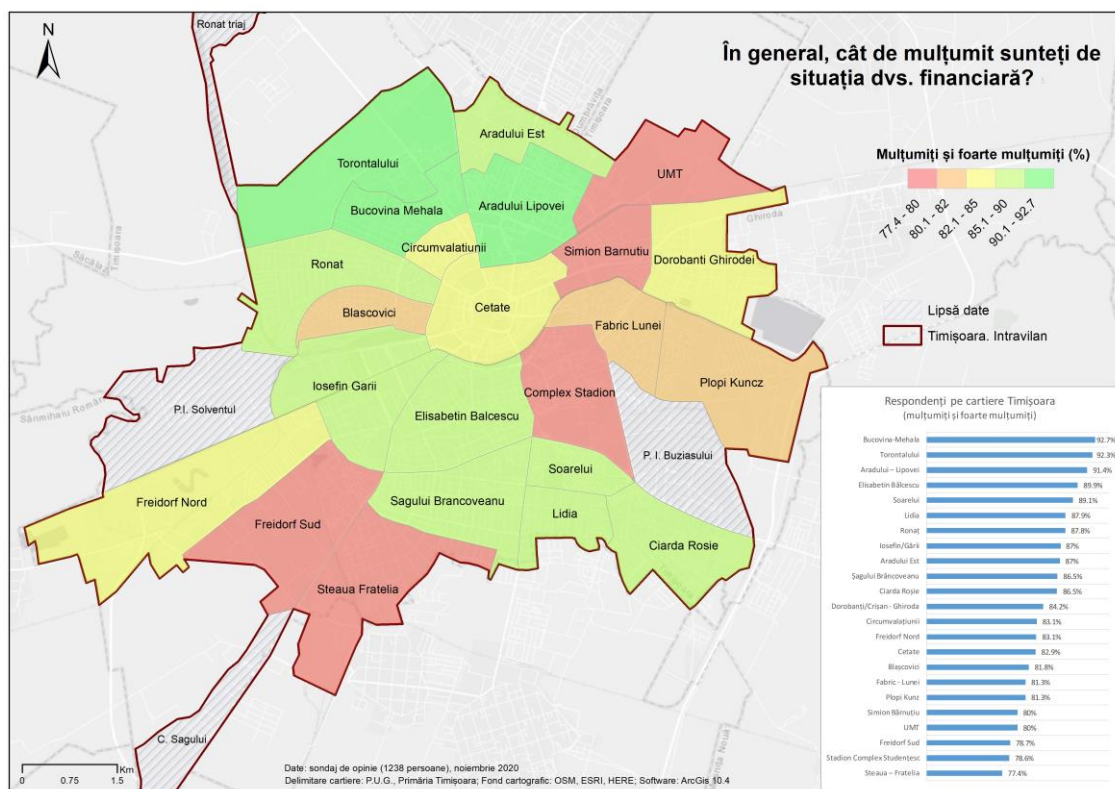


Fig. 8. Satisfaction with own financial situation versus respondent's neighbourhood

5. A focus on cities in terms of types and sizes of projects

We set out to explore the extent to which the idea of centralising projects applies within a city. To do this, we chose the city of Timisoara as a case study. For a more comprehensive view, we used the municipality's exhaustive database, which includes all official projects present in the Timișoara Growth Pole Development Strategy for the 2015-2020 period. 198 projects were mapped, with a total value of 1,695,799,236 euros (Timișoara City Hall, 2016).

The projects of this strategy are divided into five categories: the category called "ensuring an intercultural, cohesive and dynamic social environment, favourable to inclusion and progress" represents the largest share of the total number of projects, 42%, with 84 projects to be precise. This is followed by the category "development of an integrated, complex and flexible infrastructure and intelligent traffic management system to increase accessibility and mobility" with 67 projects, accounting for 34% of all projects. Under the category "providing an environmentally friendly, comfortable and attractive habitat" there are 26 projects, representing 13% of the total. The last two categories, and the ones with the fewest projects, are "increasing economic competitiveness and innovation capacity through

smart specialisation" and "promoting an intelligent, inclusive and transparent administration, concerned with increasing efficiency in sustainable development planning", which represent 9% and 2% of the total number of projects presented in the map respectively. (fig. 9).

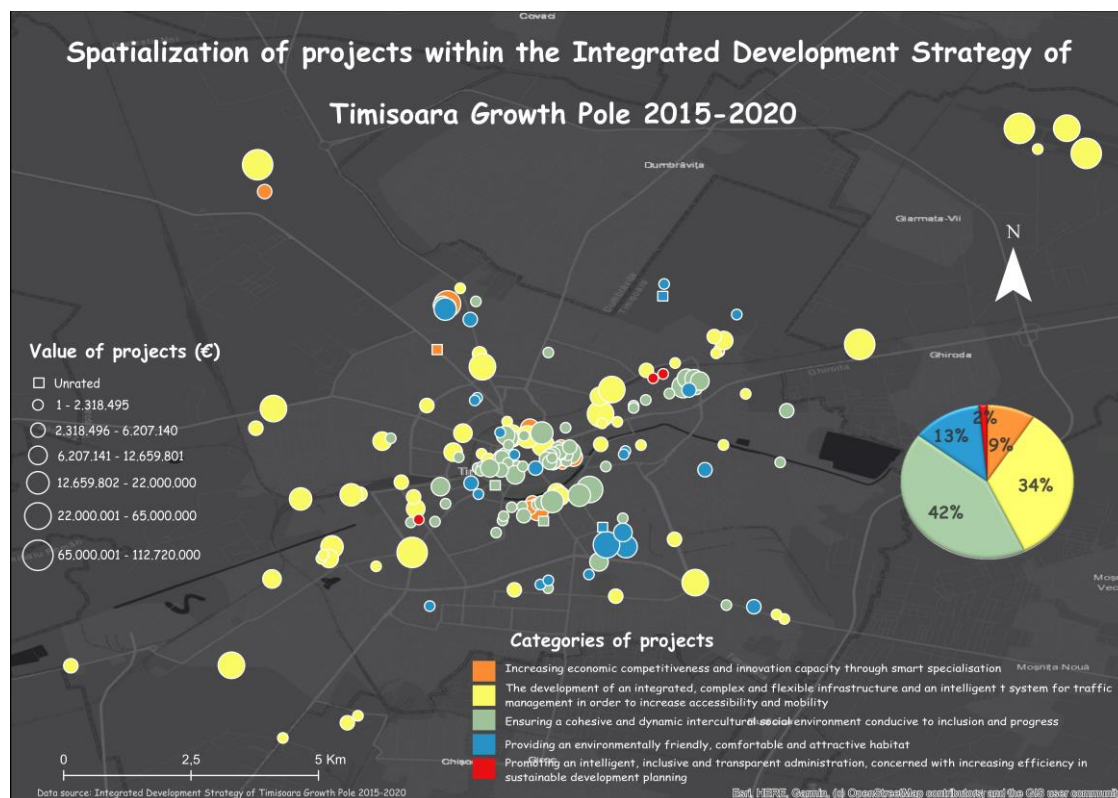


Fig. 9. Spatialization of projects within the Integrated Development Strategy of the Timisoara Growth Pole 2015-2020

If we would tend to speak of a spatial concentration of projects, the division of projects by concentric areas of the city (fig. 10) shows that both the number and the value of projects increase from the centre to the periphery: from 285,718,777 euro for the central area to 404,568,134 euro for the pericentral area, to 568,740,939 euro for the peripheral area, and 436,499,433 euro for the metropolitan area. This confirms that the city has a clear tendency to spill over from the centre to the outskirts, the phenomenon of peri-urbanisation already being a widespread trend in Romania's large cities.

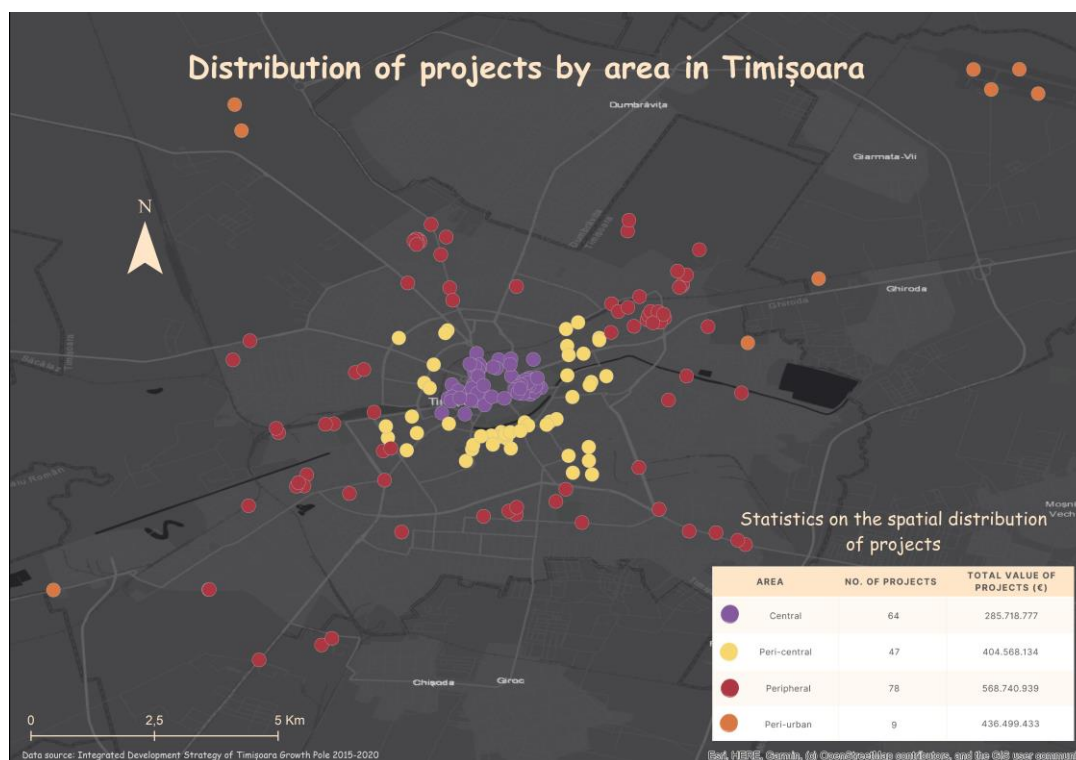


Fig. 10. Breakdown by area of the projects within the Integrated Development Strategy of the Timisoara Growth Pole 2015-2020

Since we have no benchmark, we decided to put the size of these projects in perspective by comparing them to other Romanian cities. One dataset available was that of smart city projects, centralised in Vegacomp Romania.

In territorial profile, of the 1001 smart city projects in 2022, more than half (571) are in county capital cities, 66 in other municipalities, and 249 in small towns, which already shows the generalization of the practice and concept. Bucharest (115 projects) does not dominate the subject at national level, as the share of projects does not exceed the share of the population of this city in the country as a whole. Then, regional cities are unevenly distributed in terms of projects: for example, the south and south-east of Romania are almost empty in terms of projects, although they have a substantial number of inhabitants (i.e. Constanta, Craiova, Ploiesti, Galati, etc.). The most prolific are the regional university centres of Cluj-Napoca (63 projects) and Iași (56 projects), followed by other university cities

in western Romania, which have benefited from many foreign investments (Fig. 11).

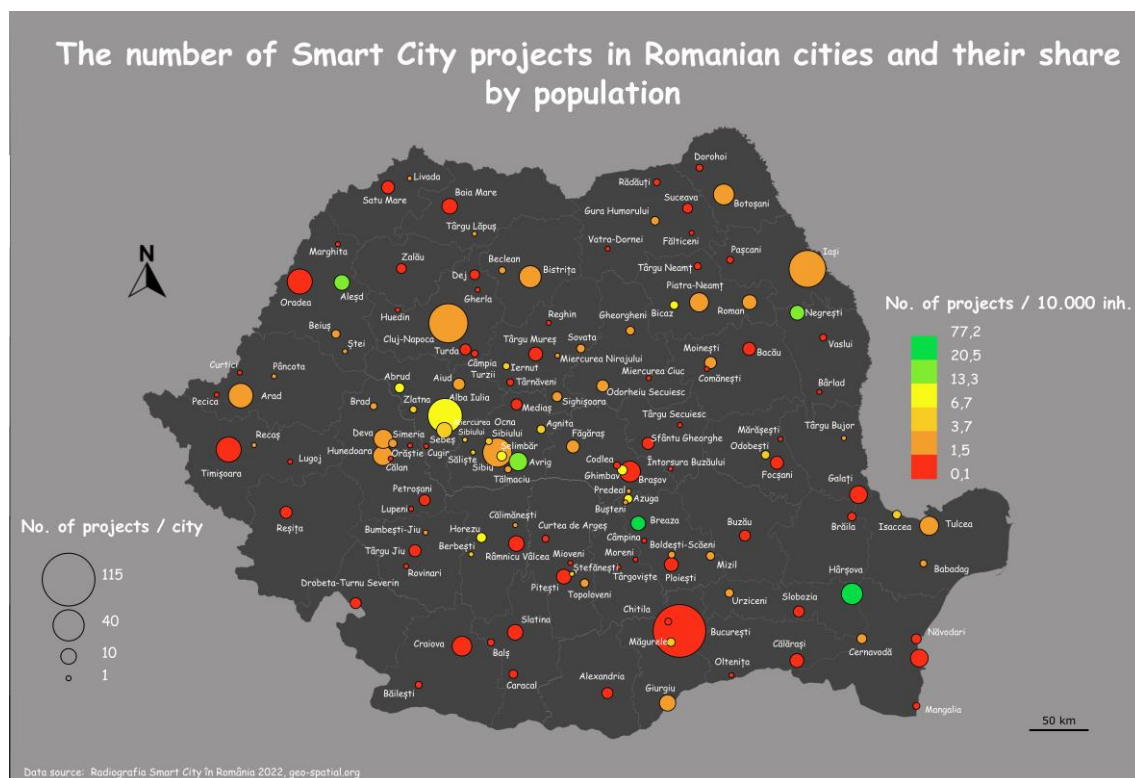


Fig. 11. Smart City projects in Romanian cities

A certain effervescence can be observed among the small towns of Transylvania, an area well equipped with an urban fabric and fairly efficient transport networks that interconnect these towns. However, if we relativise the data and relate the number of projects to the number of inhabitants we get a clearer picture of the dynamism. Thus, a whole host of small towns are 'lighting up', showing that they exist in this sphere. Spatially, we can see a hard core of Romania, both in Transylvania and south of the Carpathian Mountains, with the country taking on a spiral shape: with many projects located in the centre of the country, and fewer and fewer towards the edges. An impressive number of projects compared to the number of population is held by the town of Hârșova, which has 19 projects for a population of about 10,000 inhabitants. Smaller towns generally have fewer Smart City initiatives.

II. Dissemination

1. Publications

1.1. Books

Matichescu, M., Dragan, A., Tuță, A., Luceș, D., 2022, *Barometrul de opinie publică asupra calității vieții în municipiul Timișoara (2020)*, Editura Universității de Vest din Timișoara, 107 p., *in press*.

1.2. ISI articles – Q1

Dragan, A., Bulzan, R., 2022, *The generalization of smart city projects. Territorial disparities in Romanian cities*, Eurasian Geography and Economics, 14 p., *submitted*.

2. Scientific presentations

We made six oral presentations at international conferences held abroad, as first author, as follows:

2.1. 33rd CIRIEC International Congress New global dynamics in the post-covid era: challenges for the public, social and cooperative Economy (Valencia, Spain, 13-15 June 2022, in presence), with the presentation *Co-construction and disruptions of large projects in the post-Covid era. The case of the "Timișoara 2023 - European Capital of Culture" and the associative dynamics*;

2.2. EURA 2022: Defrag-Europe: fragility/antifragility at play in contemporary Europe (16-18 June 2022 Milan, Italy, in presence), with the presentation *The role of universities and NGOs in the local coproduction of large cultural projects: the case of Timișoara 2023 European Capital of Culture*;

2.3. 8th EMES International Training School, The key role of social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in post-pandemic (20-23 June 2022, Sevilla, Spain, in presence), with the presentation *The spatial dimension of civil society organisations*;

2.4. Colloque Territoires et Trajectoires de Développement: les dynamiques relationnelles comme clé d'analyse renouvelée (Angers, France, 16-17 June 2021, online), with the presentation *Construire une capitale européenne de la culture. Positionnement et actions du secteur associatif dans le projet « Timișoara 2023 »* (*Building an European capital of culture. Positioning and actions of the sector in the "Timișoara 2023" project*);

2.5. 8th EMES International Research Conference on Social Enterprise: Bringing principles and values to renew action (Zaragoza/Teruel, Spain, 4-8 October 2021, online), with the presentation *Roles and places of cultural NGOs in the fabric of a European Capital of Culture. A study case on Timisoara 2023*;

2.6. Quand les solidarités font territoires. Interroger les géographies du lien social à l'aune de la crise globale (Orléans, France, 3-4 December 2021, physical presence) with the presentation *Le long chemin de la cohésion : les dynamiques associatives (et solidaires ?) dans le projet « Timișoara 2023 Capitale européenne de la culture »* (*The long road to cohesion: associative (and solidarity?) dynamics in the project "Timișoara 2023 European Capital of Culture"*).

Outcome indicators

Our results differ slightly from the original plan. While we originally aimed for one submitted book chapter, one submitted ISI article and two BDI articles, we managed to publish a full book and submit an ISI Q1.

Also, if we initially aimed for six papers in general conferences, workshops or posters, we managed to present as first author all six papers in reputed international conferences abroad.

These differences are due to the pandemic context. The central topic of the research practically disappeared as the entire programme European Capital of Culture 2021 was cancelled. Timisoara was moved from 2021 to 2023 and Novi Sad from 2021 to 2022. Therefore, the comparison and analysis of the two events was technically no longer possible. However, the research was adapted and calibrated on similar themes in the economic, cultural and smart city spheres in the West region and Romania.

3. A project website

A project website is currently online and display relevant information about this project,
updated: <https://novitim.projects.uvt.ro/>

4. The present activity report