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# Residential satisfaction and mobility behaviour: insights from the post-Soviet city of Riga

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## Abstract

Urban residential areas in the former Soviet Union and Central Eastern Europe have experienced demographic and socioeconomic changes, the differentiation in housing conditions and the emergence of new lifestyles. These processes are not only essential in shaping the post-socialist urban transition, but also closely related to the different life domains that drive overall life satisfaction of individuals. The post-socialist urban transition that have been taking place in residential areas over the past 25 years rise concerns as to how these areas are perceived by the local residents. Although a number of studies have addressed post-socialist urban change, little is known about the self-reported residential satisfaction, especially in the light of human mobility. Many empirical studies have acknowledged the increased frequency and diversity of migration experiences within everyday lives. Thus, human mobility can be viewed as some kind of behavioural tool used to achieve place-associated goals, such as better job or a more pleasant residential environment. Residential (dis)satisfaction has been widely recognized in the literature as the key determinant of population mobility. Residential satisfaction and mobility behaviour as mutually intertwined concepts represent the complexity of contemporary urban living. From this perspective, it is relevant to explore individual's perceptions of changing residential environments and circumstances of daily life in different urban neighbourhoods that have been experiencing post-socialist transformations. The aim of this study is to investigate how mobility behaviour impacts individual's assessment of residential satisfaction. Indeed, because the mobility due to its selectivity has been recognised as a major force influencing neighbourhood social change. Using panel survey data of 2015-2016, we examine residential satisfaction and mobility behaviour. The survey sample consists of around 2,000 respondents who are permanent residents of Riga older than 18. The findings suggest that residential satisfaction is influenced by the individual circumstances of mobility. Our results confirm that mobility behaviour, family life, housing facilities and services significantly affect residential satisfaction. The data analysis reveals relatively high residential satisfaction. The long-term residents are more satisfied comparing to in-migrants. Thus, neighbourhood satisfaction of long-term residents is largely boosted by stronger emotional attachment to a place. Interestingly but more active urban lifestyle through multiple places with numerous everyday connections between places crates more critical residential assessment. Our findings also reveal differences among the studied residential areas. Although residential areas in post-socialist cities have still retained a relatively heterogeneous social composition, concerns about their possible social changes caused by selective mobility will be a subject of further research.

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