
ANALYSIS OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN ROMANIA AND AT THE LEVEL OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES: GERMANY, GREECE AND BULGARIA

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Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to describe the conceptual approach to quality of life in Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Germany and to identify the main measurable dimensions and indicators of quality of life in order to observe the phenomenon present in each of the countries mentioned above.

Researching and observing various situations of quality of life is an important step, in the context in which the quality of life is often ambiguous or has different meanings. Although it is often used as a guardianship that encompasses many aspects of human life, the paper proposes to show the logic of integrative approaches regarding the well-being/quality of life.

The identification of the main dimensions and the main measurable indicators of the quality of life together with a description of them, will serve to compare the living in the aforementioned countries.

Keywords: cality of life, indices of development, development, living, analysis, HDI

Introduction

At the basis of the choice of the four Member States, namely Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Germany were social, economic and environmental factors, which are essential areas both for harmonious development and for the quality of life of a state.

Romania is known to be a country with a high potential to develop, having important resources that once managed in an optimal and balanced way can lead the state to an upward trend of development and increase of the quality of life.

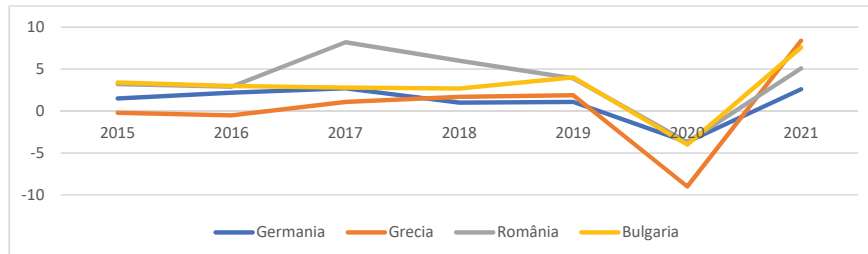
Germany is one of the most economically strong countries, with a high GDP and a diversified labour market and a broad horizon.

Greece is a country with a high degree of tourism, with both cultural and natural heritage. Also, part of the country's GDP comes from tourism, which registers high values especially during the season, which is also present and specific to Bulgaria.

I. Analysis of quality of life in terms of aggregated indicators

On the basis of aggregated indicators, the quality of life can be reflected, especially from a socio-economic point of view. Among the indicators are real GDP, real/capita GDP at Purchasing Power Parity, average net salary and many other indicators.

Figure 1.1 Real GDP dynamics in Romania and the countries analyzed, in the period 2015-2021 (CU.m:percentages)

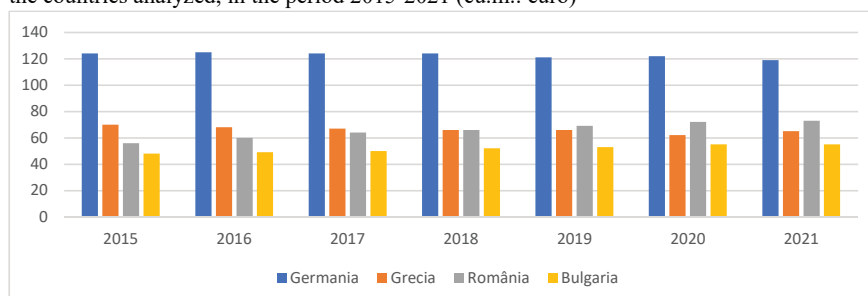


Source: own conceptualization of the author based on the data from the Romanian National Institute of Statistics

Analyzing the chart, we can note that the GDP growth rate in the mentioned countries is approximately constant until 2020, when it registers a sharp decrease due to the COVID phenomenon. In particular, countries where the main source of GDP growth is tourism, know decrease in GDP during the pandemic.

The highest real GDP was recorded in 2017 by Romania (about 8.2%). We also see that the smallest wave was recorded in 2016 by Greece in 2020 (about -9 %).

Figure 1.2. Evolution of real GDP/place at purchasing power standards (PPS) in Romania and the countries analyzed, in the period 2015-2021 (cu.m.: euro)



Source: proper conceptualization of the author based on the information on the Romanian National Institute of Statistics

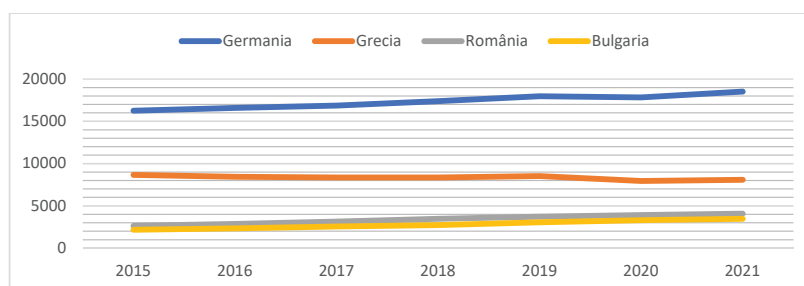
According to real GDP per capita at Purchasing Power Parity, the highest values are in Germany as we can see from the graph. The highest value of real GDP per inhabitant at Purchasing Power Parity is recorded in Germany with a value of 125 euros in 2016 compared to the lowest value recorded in 2021 of about 119 euros.

For Greece, the highest value recorded is 70 euros in 2015 and the lowest value is 62 euros recorded in 2020 and for Romania the highest value was recorded in 2021 being 73 euros and the lowest recorded value being in 2015 with a value of 56 euros.

II. Analysis of the quality of life through the prism of purchasing power in the period 2015-2021

Quality of life analysis is relevant based on indicators of income and purchasing power, since the desires, needs and satisfactions of individuals revolve around incomes.

Figure 2.1. The evolution of the average net salary in Romania and the selected states, in the period 2015-2021 (MDL)



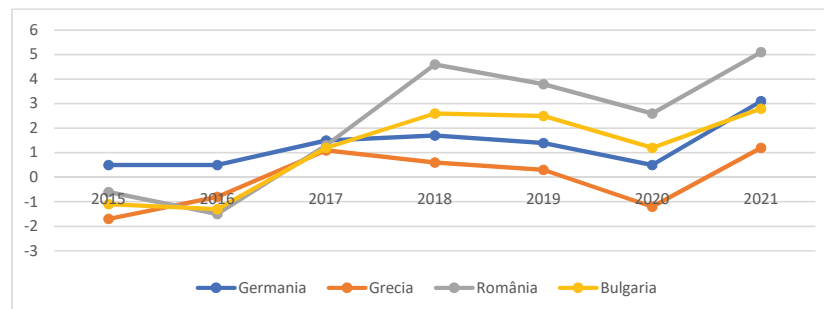
Source: own conceptualization of the author based on the information on the NIS of Romania

Analyzing the figure, we note that the average net salary varies over the seven years, regarding the comparison between Romania and Germany, the average net salary in the last year analyzed increased by approximately 1.4 million lei in Germany compared to Romania in the same year, and the net salary in Romania decreased by about 400 thousand lei in the last year analyzed compared to Greece.

It is also noted that Germany, Bulgaria and Romania are on a slightly ascending slope in terms of increasing the average net salary.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is an index used in the assessment of the change in the purchasing power of incomes, as well as in wage negotiations and price indexation provided for in the contraction. The Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) is a set of EU consumer price indices, calculated in accordance with a harmonised approach and a single set of definitions. The HICP is primarily designed to assess price stability in the euro area and the convergence of price developments in the EU, but also for comparisons of inflation at European level. From January 2016 onwards, the HICP series are published with the reference year 2015.

Figure 2.2. Harmonised Index of HICP Consumer Prices in Romania and selected Countries, in period 2015-2021 (cu.m.: percentages)

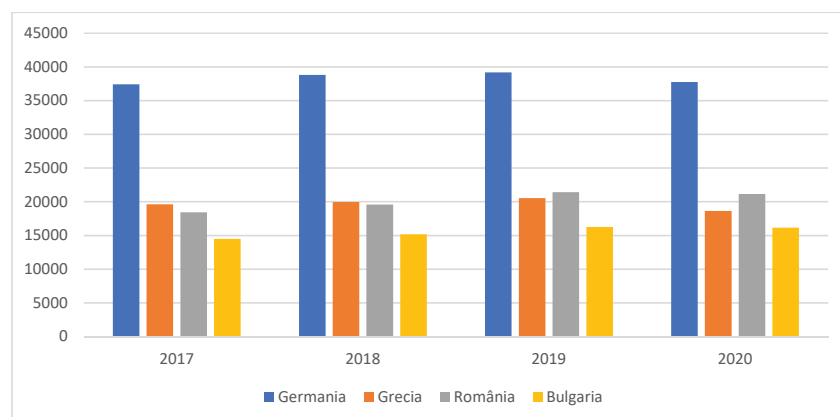


Source: author's own conceptualization based on Eurostat information

According to the consumer price index in 2015, the only country with a positive value is Germany, which is 0.5%.

Greece and Romania register negative values worth -1.7% respectively -0.6%, and over the years analyzed the values oscillate reaching that in 2021 Germany had the value of 3.1%, Greece 1.2% and Romania 5.1%, and Bulgaria 2.8%.

Figure 2.3. Gross income of the population



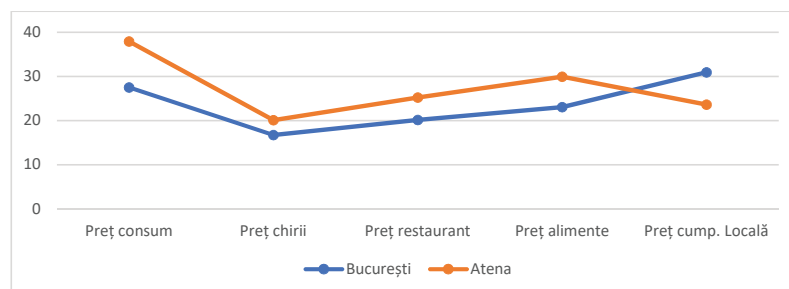
Source: own conceptualization of the author based on the information on the NIS of Romania

During the analyzed period, it can be found that the population's incomes vary during the analyzed period, and comparing Romania with Germany, a significant decrease of approximately 17 thousand lei can be observed in Romania compared to Germany in 2021, and in Romania compared to Greece, an increase of approximately 3 thousand lei can be highlighted in the last year analyzed.

III. Comparative analysis of the cost of living in cities belonging to the countries under review

It takes about € 2,390.53 (11,768.76 lei) in Bucharest to maintain the same standard of living that you can have with € 3,200.00 in Athens, respective € 4,543.91 in Berlin, and in Sofia the cost will be € 2,547.37 (assuming you rent in both cities). The cost of living plus rent index is used to compare the cost of living.

Figure 3.1. Difference in Bucharest-Athens indices



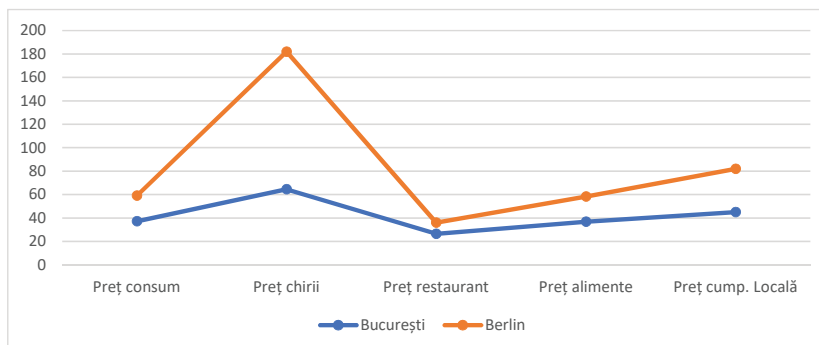
Source: author's own conceptualization

Consumer prices in Bucharest are 27.49% lower than in Athens (37.92%) (without rent), also, the price of rents in Bucharest is 16.74% lower than in Athens (20.10%).

Restaurant prices in Bucharest are 20.16% lower than in Athens (25.25%) and food prices in Bucharest are 23.04% lower than in Athens. (29.93%).

The local purchasing power in Bucharest is 30.94% higher than in Athens (23.63%).

Figure 3.2. Bucharest-Berlin index difference



Source: author's own conceptualization

According to the data in the table, referring to the difference in indices starting from the Consumer Price, rents and other variations on the same topic, a major difference can be observed in the rents part, namely their price being in Bucharest with 64% lower than those in Berlin, the rest of the indicators not having a remarkable change.

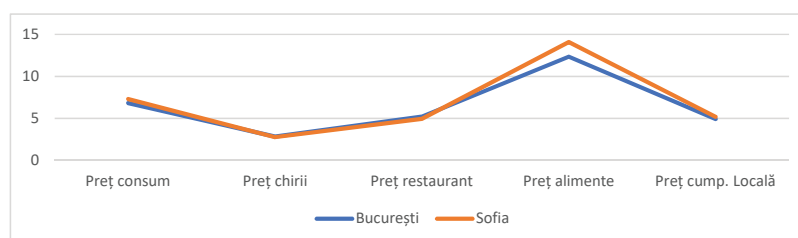
observed in the rents part, namely their price being in Bucharest with 64% lower than those in Berlin, the rest of the indicators not having a remarkable change.

Consumer prices in Bucharest are 37.13% lower than in Berlin (59.06%) (without rent), and the price of rents in Bucharest is 64.53% lower than in Berlin (181.96%).

Restaurant prices in Bucharest are 26.49% lower than in Berlin. (36.04%) and food prices in Bucharest are 36.83% lower than in Berlin. (58.30%).

The local purchasing power in Bucharest is 45.04% lower than in Berlin (81.96%).

Figure 3.3. Index difference Bucharest – Sofia



Source: author's own conceptualization

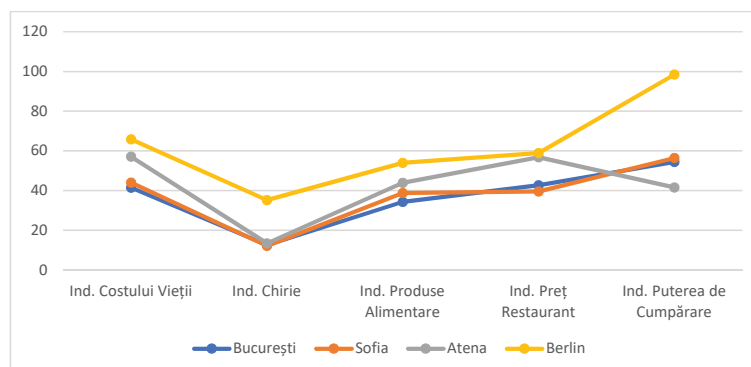
From the data obtained, we can see a close-up statistic between the two countries, the highest difference being observed in the area of food prices, where in Bucharest one can observe

Consumer prices in Bucharest are 6.81% lower than in Sofia (7.30%) (without rent), and the price of rents in Bucharest is 2.82% higher than in Sofia (2.75%).

Restaurant prices in Bucharest are 5.20% higher than in Sofia. (4.94%) and food prices in Bucharest are 12.35% lower than in Sofia. (14.09%)

The local purchasing power in Bucharest is 4.92% lower than in Sofia (5.18%), these data show that they are lower than in the Bulgarian capital by about 13 percentage points.

Figure 3.4. Comparative analysis of the analyzed cities



Source: own conceptualization of the authors

The analysis carried out in the context of that comparison between the cities concerned shows a rather large difference in indicators between Berlin and the other capitals. Making a comparison strictly between Bucharest, Sofia and Athens results in an approaching era of the indices in question, with small fluctuations.

The highest cost of living is found in Berlin, where purchasing power is worth about 98.45%.

The lowest cost of living is in Bucharest, where the purchasing power is about 54.38%.

The highest value of the rent index is recorded in Berlin (35.18%), and the lowest value being recorded in Sofia (44.04%).

The food index registers the highest value in Berlin (about 54%), and the lower value being recorded in Bucharest (12.56%).

The restaurant price index has the highest value in Berlin (about 59%) and the lowest value of this index is recorded in Sofia (about 40%).

Purchasing power has the highest value in Berlin (about 98.45%) and the lowest value is recorded in Athens (41.59%).

Table 3.1. Human development index within the analyzed cities (u.m.: percentage)

	HDI value	Life expectancy at birth	The years of the sheetwait	Average of the school years	Gross national income/capita
Germany					
2019	0.948	81.6	17.0	14.1	55,565
2020	0.944	81.1	17.0	14.1	53,078
2021	0.942	80.6	17.0	14.1	54,534
Greece					
2019	0.889	80.9	20.0	11.4	26,681
2020	0.886	77.1	15.9	13.5	38,048
2021	0.887	80.1	20.0	11.4	29,002
Romania					
2019	0.832	76.5	14.2	11.3	29,442
2020	0.824	75.3	14.2	11.3	28,359
2021	0.821	74.2	14.2	11.3	30,027
Bulgaria					
2019	0.810	75.1	13.9	11.4	22,732
2020	0.802	73.6	13.9	11.4	22,020
2021	0.795	71.8	13.9	11.4	23,079

Source: author's own conceptualization

Analyzing the table, it is noted that the highest value of the human development indicator is recorded in 2019 in Germany (about 0.95%).

We note that the highest life birth expectancy is recorded in Germany (81 years and 6 months).

Also, in Greece the life expectancy is 80 years and 1 month), while in Romania there is a hope of 74 years and 2 months and Bulgaria registers a value of hope of 71 years and 8 months.

In terms of education, Greece is ranked first, with a value of 20 years, and looking at the first gross national income /capita, Germany ranks first with a value of about 14 a in and one month.

Conclusions

Following the analysis, we conclude that the highest level of quality of life among the countries analyzed is found in Germany, due to the conditions and socio-economic factors that are balanced.

Although in terms of the Human Development Indicator it is almost at the level of the other countries, Germany registers values slightly above the averages of the countries analyzed.

When discussing education, it has been noted that Greece ranks on the prima position, with an average of 20 years.

From the point of view of the analysis of the cities, Bucharest is the most similar to Sofia, referring to the consumer price index, the rent price index, the price of restaurants, the local purchasing power , and the small difference is found in the food index, whose value is higher in Sofia, which leads us to think that food products are more expensive than in Bucharest.

Also, the rent price index registers a similar value in Bucharest, Sofia and Athens.

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