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# WHAT MAKES PEOPLE IN EUROPE SATISFIED WITH THE CITY WHERE THEY LIVE?

Evidence from the 2019  
European Commission  
perception survey on the quality  
of life in European cities

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Regional and  
Urban Policy



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# ABSTRACT

This working paper identifies the main factors that determine city-life satisfaction across Europe. Data come from the 2019 survey launched by the European Commission on the quality of life in European cities and cover 83 cities located in the European Union, European Free Trade Association countries and the United Kingdom. Based on around 58 000 responses to the survey, we quantify the relative importance of the various factors affecting overall satisfaction with city life, thus offering novel insights to shape evidence-based urban policies. The main results show that three main policy areas contribute to higher satisfaction with life in European cities: (1) satisfaction with amenities; (2) safety and trust; and (3) inclusiveness. Socioeconomic factors are generally not statistically relevant, with the exception of labour market insecurity. This analysis shows that policies that improve a city's amenities, its inclusivity and its safety are likely to also increase the residents' satisfaction with living in that city. In the European Union, cohesion policy funds a wide range of policy areas, such as public transport, healthcare, education, green spaces, public spaces, inclusivity and safety.

**Keywords:** cities, quality of urban life, subjective indicators, Europe, EU cohesion policy

# 1. INTRODUCTION

*Cities are important drivers of economic growth in the EU. It is in cities where most citizens live, where the biggest share of the Gross Domestic Product is generated, where a large part of EU policies and legislation are implemented and where a significant share of EU funds is spent. In addition, cities are actors of open innovation, enabling multi-level, multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral interactions between different stakeholders involved in the co-creation, co-design and co-implementation of integrated and innovative solutions<sup>(1)</sup>.*

Cities are the places where most opportunities relating to the green transition will arise (e.g. the low-emission transition, circular economy, clean mobility). At the same time, many challenges have a large impact on cities, and it is there that they are best addressed. These challenges can relate to global issues (e.g. unemployment, migration, impacts of disasters exacerbated by climate change, water scarcity), but they can also relate to local issues, linked closely to citizens' quality of life (e.g. air quality, safety, recreational space, public transport, traffic and noise levels, water pollution)<sup>(2)</sup>.

Since the Brexit referendum and elections where populist and anti-European Union (EU) parties have received more rural votes, many articles have focused on rural discontent (for example de Dominicis et al., 2020). The eighth cohesion report (European Commission, 2022), however, shows that city residents are less satisfied with their life than rural residents in most of the richer Member States. Although average household income is higher in cities than in rural areas in all Member States, city residents are less satisfied with their financial situation in richer Member States. This may be due to higher real estate costs and higher poverty rates in those cities.

Research in the United States has also shown that discontent can emerge in cities due to the high cost of living and rising within-city inequality (Florida, 2017; Glaeser, 2020).

In the 2014–2020 period, around EUR 115 billion in cohesion policy funding was invested in cities, towns and suburbs<sup>(3)</sup>. Cohesion policy provides targeted investment adapted to different local and regional contexts. It tackles many interlinked urban challenges found across Europe: social inclusion and the regeneration of urban neighbourhoods; sustainable urban mobility; the circular economy and housing in functional urban areas; access to public services and digital solutions in small and medium-sized cities; and links with rural communities. The urban dimension of cohesion policy has been further strengthened for the 2021–2027 period. The five objectives of cohesion policy – focused on a smarter, greener, more connected and more social Europe and on a Europe closer to citizens – will mobilise substantial investment in urban areas. A minimum of 8 % of the European Regional Development Fund's resources in each Member State must be invested in priorities and projects selected by cities themselves, based on their own sustainable urban development strategies.

Since 2004, the European Commission has monitored the quality of life in European cities every 3 years through a dedicated perception survey. Indeed, many dimensions linked to the quality of life depend on where people live, ranging from housing costs to clean air, from cultural amenities to transport and from opportunities (such as access to museums) to risks (such as crime). For this reason, the place where people live affects their quality of life (for a review, see Marans, 2015). By using microdata from the survey, i.e. responses from single individuals, we aim to explain, in a rigorous way, what city characteristics are more likely to make people satisfied with the place where they live.

<sup>1</sup> European Commission (2017).

<sup>2</sup> European Commission and UN-HABITAT (2016).

<sup>3</sup> European Commission Open Data Portal for the European Structural Investment Funds, available at: <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/stories/s/How-does-Cohesion-Policy-support-cities-and-local-rgzr-e44d>.



## 2. QUALITY OF LIFE IN CITIES AND ITS DETERMINANTS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the years, the study of the quality of life and its determinants has attracted the attention of researchers from a wide range of academic disciplines (from psychology to economics and geography; for a review, see Marans and Stimson, 2011b) and the interest of planners, politicians and policymakers (e.g. European Commission, 2020).

Despite the growing body of research in this area, however, quality of life remains a largely elusive concept, often used interchangeably with the notions of **well-being**, **satisfaction** and **happiness**, and its multidimensional nature is affected by both objective elements and subjective perceptions.

Accordingly, we can distinguish between two main streams of quality-of-life research (Ballas, 2013). The first privileges an 'objective' approach by making use of a number of quantifiable social and economic indicators, such as employment and income (Chadi, 2014; Clark et al., 2010; Shields et al., 2009; Stavrova et al., 2011). The second (and more recent) emphasises the 'subjective' experience of quality of life, based on self-reported levels of fulfilment with various dimensions of life such as socioeconomic conditions and accessibility to amenities and services (Gidlöf-Gunnarsson & Öhrström, 2007; Perucca, 2018).

The use of 'geographical lenses' is another major emerging trend in quality-of-life studies, especially from a city-level perspective. A fundamental assumption of the geographical

approach is that, in a context of advanced economies where most people live in urbanised areas, cities can be designed to increase their residents' level of satisfaction with life. In other words, as cities become major economic, innovation and policy hubs, they can increasingly act to attract people, thus affecting demographic differential dynamics.

This stream of research, which mostly relates to the urban geography field, explores the links between cities' measurable characteristics (size, density, income, inequality, etc.) and the perceived quality of (urban) life. It is found that, even if personal traits remain the main determinants of life satisfaction (Ballas and Tranmer, 2012), the context does also affect well-being. Levels of reported happiness, for instance, are lower in urbanised areas in most Member States than in rural areas<sup>4</sup>, and lower in large cities in developed countries (Berry and Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2009, 2011). The underlying hypothesis (Requena, 2016) is that rural living standards in wealthier countries are high enough to create a higher level of happiness. Still, large cities are found to score best on socioeconomic and liveability aspects, although the correlation of these variables with the population size is ultimately not so strong (Goerlich and Reig, 2021).

Despite the growing body of research in the field of quality of urban life, however, few empirical studies explicitly investigate the role of place and space with regard to quality of life in a multi-country context (Węziak-Białowolska (2016) is an exception in this respect), and the relative importance of how various aspects of urban living contribute to the quality of urban life remains mostly unknown (Marans and Stimson, 2011a). The research presented in this paper builds on the existing stream of work on the determinants of the quality of urban life and extends it to a multi-country context, covering 36 countries in Europe.

<sup>4</sup> Source of the data: EU statistics on income and living conditions from 2020. See: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-statistics-on-income-and-living-conditions>.

### 3. MEASURING QUALITY OF LIFE IN EUROPEAN CITIES: 2019 EUROPEAN COMMISSION PERCEPTION SURVEY

Since 2004, the Commission has monitored the quality of life in a number of European cities every 3 years by means of a dedicated survey. The survey mainly focuses on perceived quality of life, showing how satisfied people are with various aspects of urban life, such as employment opportunities, public transport, quality of public administration and perceived safety and inclusiveness<sup>(5)</sup>. For the 2019 edition, 700 complete interviews were carried out between July and September 2019 for each of the 83 cities surveyed<sup>(6)</sup>, for a total of 58 100 interviews<sup>(7)</sup>.

This section presents some descriptive results on residents' satisfaction with living in their city. The 2019 survey asked people whether they agreed with the following statement: 'I am satisfied to live in my city'. Respondents could answer as follows: (i) strongly agree, (ii) somewhat agree, (iii) somewhat disagree or (iv) strongly disagree. For our analyses we grouped the four potential answers into two groups and labelled them as (1) total agree / total satisfied or (2) total disagree / total not satisfied. The present work will look at how citizens responded to this question and will relate the extent to which they are satisfied to a set of city characteristics (public transport, air quality, job opportunities, etc.) and satisfaction with these characteristics<sup>(8)</sup>.

The results from the survey show that 9 out of 10 people in Europe are satisfied with living in their city (Figure 1)<sup>(9)</sup>. More people are satisfied in cities in the EU, the European Free Trade Association and the United Kingdom, while fewer are satisfied in cities located in the western Balkans and Türkiye. For EU cities, the percentage of satisfied people is highest in those located in the northern and western EU (94 % and 92 %,

respectively). On average, cities in southern Member States score lower (83 %). This is due, in particular, to the low scores in Greece and the southern Italian cities. Overall, non-capital cities (at 91 %) score higher than capital cities (87 %). While capital cities may offer more employment opportunities and amenities, they are also perceived as providing public services of poorer quality and less-affordable housing opportunities (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2021).

A number of studies have shown that, in more-developed countries, happiness or subjective well-being is often higher in smaller cities than in larger ones (Burger et al., 2020). This is also what we observe. Around 90 % of people living in a city with fewer than 1 million inhabitants are satisfied with living in that city. This drops to 87 % for cities with a population of between 1 million and 5 million. The average of the three cities with over 5 million inhabitants (Istanbul, London and Paris) is even lower (82 %), mainly because of Istanbul's low score, at 66 %.

There is a great deal of variation in terms of satisfaction, both across the sampled cities and among cities in the same country (Figure 1). Of the 83 cities included in the survey, Copenhagen (Denmark) and Stockholm (Sweden) are ranked first, with around 98 % of residents satisfied with living in their city. Zurich (Switzerland), Gdańsk (Poland), Braga (Portugal) and Oslo (Norway) are close behind, with around 97 % of residents satisfied with life in their cities. In contrast, Belgrade (Serbia), Palermo (Italy), Athens (Greece) and Istanbul (Türkiye) are found at the bottom of the distribution, with fewer than 67 % of residents being satisfied with city life.

The largest within-country differences are observed in Italy, Türkiye and Greece. In Italy, the percentages of residents satisfied with the city where they live range between 93 % in Bologna and 64 % in Palermo, a difference of 29 percentage points. Only 66 % of people living in Istanbul are satisfied with living in their city, compared to 91 % of those living in Antalya. The two Greek cities in the survey score below the overall average, with the lowest percentage found in Athens (64 %) and the highest in Heraklion, where 82 % of the residents are satisfied with living in their city.

<sup>5</sup> The survey employed a dual-frame sampling approach, using both mobile and fixed-line telephone numbers. For more information, see: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/information/maps/quality\\_of\\_life](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/maps/quality_of_life).

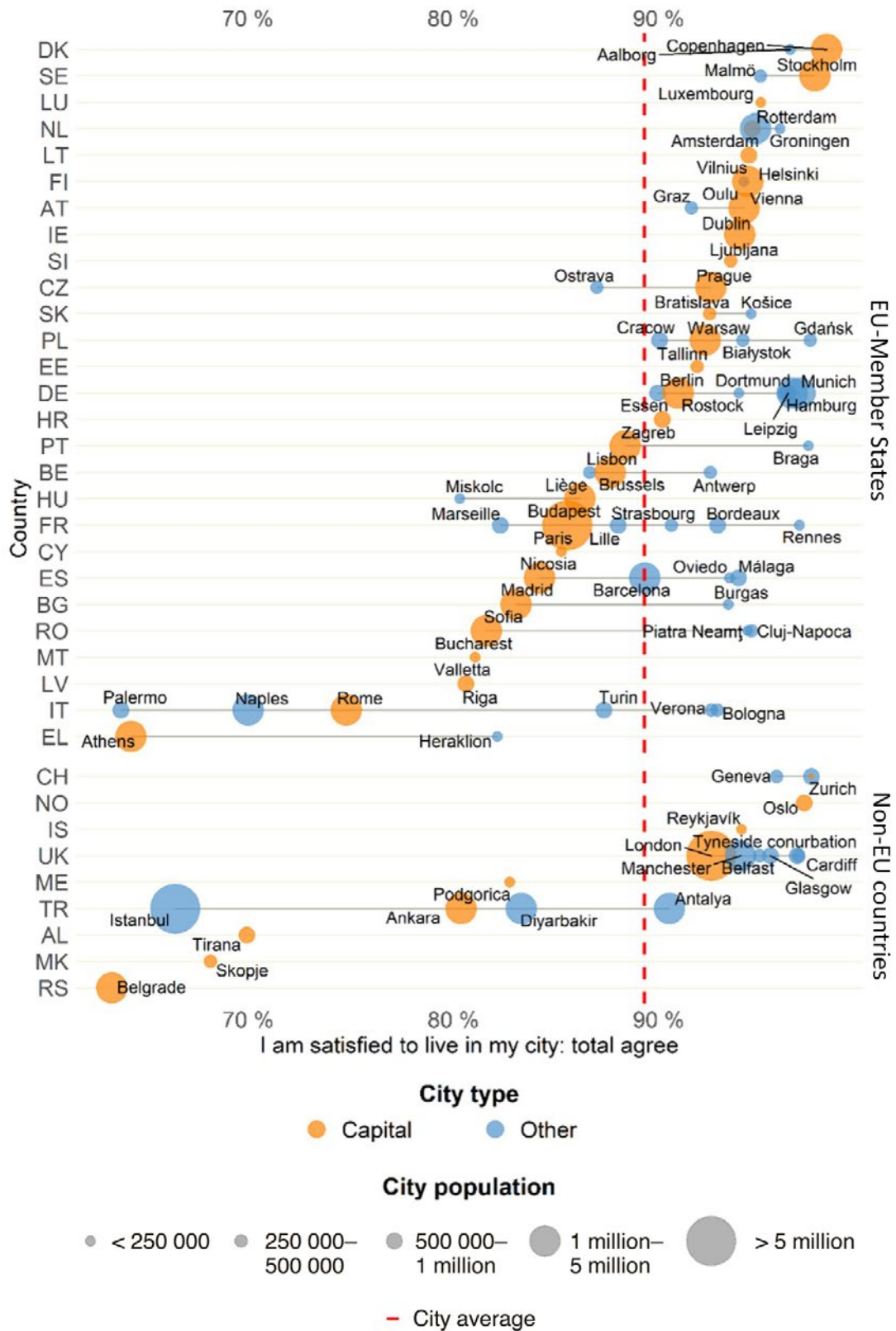
<sup>6</sup> The population living in EU cities covered by the survey represents 39 % of the total population living in EU cities. Shares at the Member State level are presented in the Appendix.

<sup>7</sup> The sample was weighted in each country using a post-stratification weight, calibrating for age and gender, and a design weight to control for unequal selection probabilities of sample units, based on phone-type ownership (whether mobile phone, landline or both). Weighting benchmarks for age and gender (which were also used during the fieldwork to monitor the sample performance) were based on Eurostat data for all cities within the EU and the United Kingdom.

<sup>8</sup> Percentages are calculated based on all respondents, excluding 'don't know/not answered', i.e. we only include in the totals those who had an opinion.

<sup>9</sup> For a full descriptive analysis of the 2019 survey, see: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/information/maps/quality\\_of\\_life](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/maps/quality_of_life).

Figure 1: I am satisfied with living in my city



Source: European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, 'Quality of life in European cities survey', 2019.

NB: Countries are ordered by average in capital cities. Percentages are based on all respondents (excluding don't know/not answered). For country codes, see Table A1.

## 4. WHAT MAKES PEOPLE SATISFIED WITH LIVING IN THEIR CITY? DETERMINANTS OF CITY-LIFE SATISFACTION

In order to analyse the determinants of (perceived) quality of life across European cities, we use the following equation:

$$Y_{ijc} = X_{ijc}\beta + A_{ijc}\alpha + I_{ijc}\delta + S_{ijc}\gamma + Z_{ijc}\theta + \varepsilon_{ijc} \quad (1)$$

where  $Y_{ijc}$  is a variable equal to 1 if the respondent  $i$  living in city  $j$  in country  $c$  strongly agrees or somewhat agrees with the statement 'I am satisfied to live in my city', or 0 otherwise.  $X_{ijc}$  is a vector of variables capturing the socioeconomic status and the demographic and household characteristics of individual  $i$ , while  $A_{ijc}$  and  $I_{ijc}$  measure the evaluation by respondent  $i$  of, respectively, the amenities and the level of inclusiveness of city  $j$  in country  $c$ . Finally,  $Z_{ijc}$  accounts for additional city characteristics, as further detailed below.

More specifically, the set of **socioeconomic characteristics**  $X_{ijc}$  includes **gender, age, migration background, educational level, labour market status** and the **financial situation** of each survey respondent  $i$ , along with some information on **household composition** (e.g. presence of children).

Vector  $A_{ijc}$  covers **citizens' assessment across a number of amenities** available in the city where they live, namely **public transport, healthcare services, cultural facilities** (e.g. concert halls, theatres, museums and libraries), **green spaces** (e.g. public parks and gardens), **public spaces** (e.g. markets, squares, pedestrian areas), and **air quality / cleanliness** of the city. The subjective evaluation of each amenity is measured with a dummy variable equal to 1 if the respondent declares that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the amenity under scrutiny, or 0 otherwise. Cities have a multitude of functions and need to meet the needs and aspirations of their residents, who should live in properly functioning cities. The underlying assumption is that the positive assessment of these cities' domains should contribute to the overall city satisfaction.

Vector  $I_{ijc}$  includes two indicators on the **perceived inclusiveness** of the city, capturing whether respondents perceive their cities to be **inclusive towards migrants from other countries and gay and lesbian people**. The latter is measured with two dummy variables equal to 1 if the respondents report that their city is 'a good place to live' for immigrants and for gay and lesbian people, or 0 otherwise.

Vector  $S_{ijc}$  includes indicators on the **perceived safety** of the city, in particular a measure of **generalised trust** and two indicators relating to **crime victimisation** and **safety perception**. The safety variable indicates whether the respondent agrees or somewhat agrees that they feel safe walking alone at night in the city, whereas crime victimisation is an indicator equal to 1 if, within the last 12 months, the respondent or any member of their household has had any money or property stolen. Lastly, generalised trust is equal to 1 if the respondent strongly agrees or somewhat agrees that most people in their city can be trusted, or 0 otherwise.

Finally, among the **additional city characteristics** included in vector  $Z_{ijc}$  we have one on whether the city is a **capital** and two indicators with a value of 1 when the respondent believes that (i) it is easy to find **good housing in the city at a reasonable price** and/or (ii) there is **corruption in the local public administration**, or 0 otherwise<sup>10</sup>. Equation (1) is estimated using a linear probability model, based on an ordinary least square estimator<sup>11</sup>. Among these variables, we also control for city size.

The estimated coefficients are reported in column (1) of Table 1. To check the robustness of the findings, in columns (3) and (4) the same model is replicated with the inclusion of city and country fixed effects respectively. Column (2) presents the same estimates, but cleanliness is excluded in favour of air quality. The two variables are considered separately because of their high level of correlation.

The discussion that follows is based on the results displayed in column (4) and those reported in [Figure 2](#) on the relative importance of the three main policy-relevant areas accounted for in equation (1), namely the individuals' socioeconomic characteristics and the perceived amenities and inclusiveness of the cities. The 'other characteristics' category covers a set of city characteristics that do not fall within the policy areas mentioned above.

Overall, satisfaction with the amenities present in the city and the extent to which cities are perceived as being safe and inclusive contribute most to overall satisfaction.

<sup>10</sup> Additional information on the definition of each variable is provided in Tables A1 and A2 in the Appendix, along with summary statistics.

<sup>11</sup> The use of an ordinary least square is advantageous as it allows us to quantify the relative importance of the variables relating to the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents, city amenities and inclusiveness in shaping overall city satisfaction. This is operationally obtained through the decomposition of the explained variance or, equivalently, the  $R^2$ , as proposed by Grömping (2006; 2015). More specifically, the method quantifies the relative contribution of each variable in the right-hand side of equation (1) to the model's total explanatory power. This approach accounts for the dependence of partial  $R^2$  on the order of entrance of the covariates in equation (1) by averaging over all possible orders. The variables' relative importance is rescaled to sum to 1. As a robustness check, we also estimated equation (1) via an ordered logit model, based on a maximum likelihood estimator. The results, reported in Table A4 of the Appendix, are consistent with those of Table 1.

**Table 1: What drives citizens' satisfaction with life in the city?**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<b>Socioeconomic characteristics</b>				
Sex: Female	++	++	++	++
Lived in other cities	---	---	---	---
Difficulty paying bills	---	---	---	---
<i>Age (reference group: below 25)</i>				
Age 25–39	---	---	---	---
Age 40–54	---	---	---	---
Age 55+	---	---	---	---
<i>Education (reference group: Primary education)</i>				
Secondary education	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Tertiary education	(-)	(-)	(+)	(+)
<i>Household composition (reference group: Household with no children)</i>				
Household with children below 25	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Household with children above 25	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Other	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
<i>Working status (reference group: Employed full-time)</i>				
Employed part-time	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Unemployed	---	---	---	---
Retired	++	++	+++	+++
Other status	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
<b>Amenities of the city</b>				
Public transport	+++	+++	+++	+++
Health system	+++	+++	+++	+++
Cultural facilities	+++	+++	+++	+++
Green spaces	+++	+++	+++	+++
Public spaces	+++	+++	+++	+++
Cleanliness/air quality	+++	+++	+++	+++
<b>Safety and trust in the city</b>				
Trust	+++	+++	+++	+++
Safety perception	+++	+++	+++	+++
Crime victimisation	---	---	---	---
<b>Inclusiveness of the city</b>				
Inclusive city for migrants	+++	+++	+++	+++
Inclusive city for gay and lesbian people	+++	+++	+++	+++
<b>Additional city characteristics</b>				
Capital	(+)	(+)		
Availability of affordable housing	+++	+++	+++	+++
Absence of corruption	+++	+++	+++	+++
City size	---	---		---
City fixed effects	No	No	Yes	<b>No</b>
Country fixed effects	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>
Observations	56 198	56 198	56 198	<b>56 198</b>
R <sup>2</sup>	0.14	0.14	0.15	<b>0.15</b>
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.14	0.14	0.15	<b>0.14</b>

NB: +/- stand for coefficients that are statistically different from 0 with  $p < 0.10$ , +/+- with  $p < 0.05$  and +++/- with  $p < 0.01$ . Between brackets if the estimated coefficients are not statistically different from 0. For all variables, the answer category 'don't know/refuses' has been included as a separate one to preserve the sample size. For the sake of brevity, these variables are not reported in the tables. See A3 in the Appendix for a table reporting regression coefficients and standard errors.

As shown in Panel A of Figure 2, almost 75 % of the predicted variation in city satisfaction is due to satisfaction with **amenities** and **safety**. Country fixed effects account for about 15 % of the predicted variation.

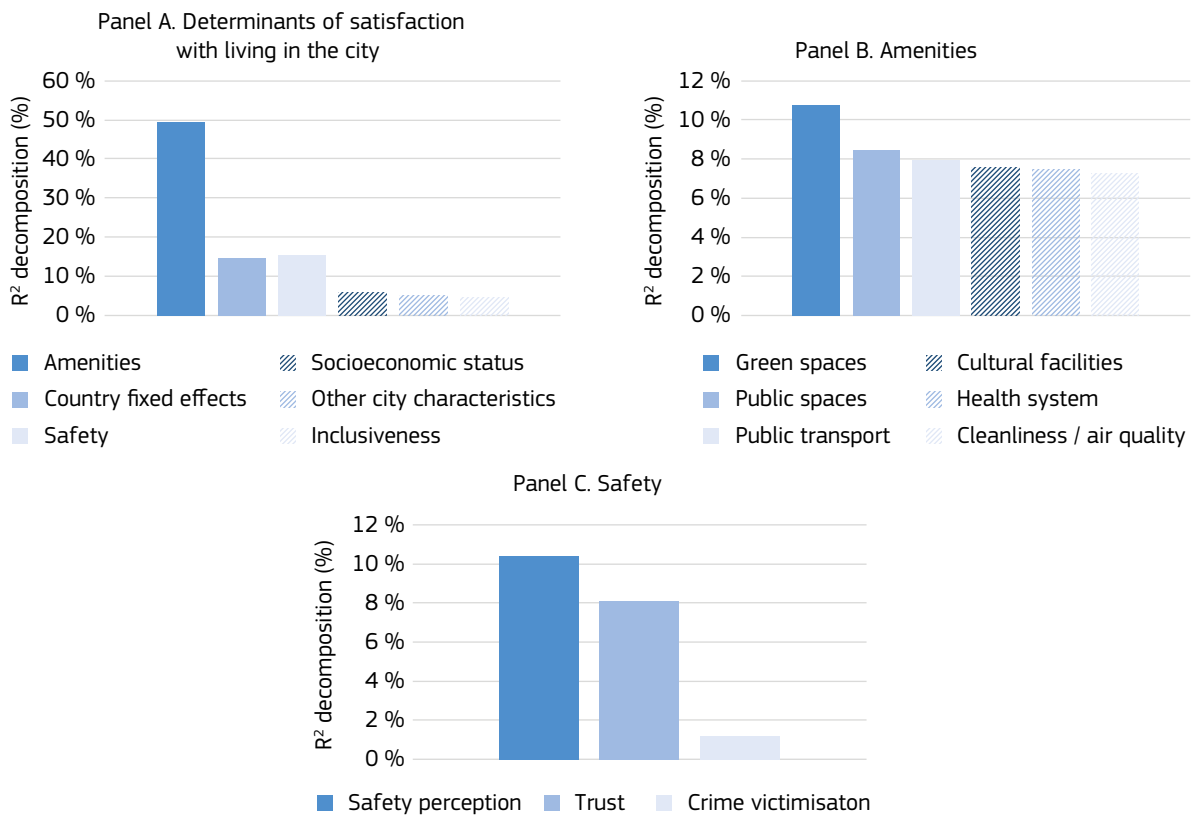
The socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents are not particularly significant in explaining the variation across the sample in city satisfaction, and this is confirmed by the results

in Table 1. While the estimated coefficients associated with age, sex, working status and having lived in another city are statistically significant, household composition, education and working part-time are not (for the full list of variables included in the **socioeconomic status** group, see Table 1).

In the remaining part of this section, variables belonging to each area are analysed separately and in detail.

Figure 2: What factors most explain citizens' satisfaction with life in their city?

Panel A displays the major determinants of city satisfaction by policy area, while Panels B and C focus respectively on amenities and on safety.



NB: Based on the estimation of equation (1) reported in column (1) of Table 1.

## 4.1. AMENITIES

As expected, the evaluation of city amenities by the respondents is a key component of city satisfaction. The six categories of amenities analysed (see Panel B of Figure 2) are all statistically correlated with city satisfaction and account, overall, for almost 50 % of the sample variation in city satisfaction. The inclusion of country or city fixed effects does not affect the empirical findings.

First, respondents satisfied with public transport in their city also report higher city satisfaction (Insch and Florek, 2010; Türksever and Atalik, 2001). This is not surprising, as transport is an important component of daily life. This also suggests that problems such as congestion, road accidents, noise and air pollution, along with greenhouse gas emissions that typically relate to private transport, may at least partially be overcome by an efficient public transport system. The relative importance of this amenity is also apparent in Panel C of Figure 2, as almost one tenth of the variation of  $\hat{Y}_{jic}$  across the sample is explained by the level of satisfaction with public transport.

Second, city satisfaction also positively correlates with appreciation of the city's health infrastructure (Zenker et al., 2013), with the latter accounting for around 7.5 % of the variance of  $\hat{Y}_{jic}$ . With an ageing population, there is a growing concern that the population should have a healthcare system that responds to their expectations<sup>(12)</sup>. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted even further the importance of having a properly functioning health system.

Third, citizens' satisfaction with local cultural facilities goes hand in hand with city satisfaction. Cultural and artistic activities can stimulate people's imagination and emotional responses (e.g. Ascenso, et al., 2018), foster social interaction and healthy lifestyles (e.g. Jones et al., 2013) and help raise cognitive, creative and relational capabilities, which ultimately contribute to their individual and collective well-being (e.g. Blessi et al., 2016; Fancourt and Steptoe, 2018; Grossi, et al., 2019; Grossi et al., 2012). This explains why satisfaction with local cultural facilities is another important determinant of satisfaction with city life, accounting for 7.5 % of the R<sup>2</sup> of equation (1) – similar in importance to transport (8 %) and satisfaction with healthcare facilities (7.5 %).

Fourth, people tend to be more satisfied in cities with greater access to green urban areas. Green urban areas can contribute to the quality of life in cities (e.g. Bonaiuto et al., 2015; Gidlöf-Gunnarsson and Öhrström, 2007) at all life stages (Douglas et al., 2017), for instance by providing places to relax and socialise or to do sports in a more natural setting (Zenker et al., 2013; Zhang, et al., 2017). As shown in Figure 2, accessibility to green areas is the city amenity that contributes most to city satisfaction, with 10 % of total R<sup>2</sup> explained by this component.

Fifth, satisfaction with respect to markets, squares and pedestrian areas in the city is also an important element when judging the quality of life in a city. In ancient Greece, the *agorà* (i.e. the main square) was already the centre of city life. Today,

some 2 500 years later, markets and squares remain the most vibrant parts of cities as they offer room for creativity, social interaction and economic activities. The COVID-19 outbreak, however, is likely to permanently affect the way we perceive and interact with public (green) spaces, as highlighted by the most recent literature on the topic (e.g. Honey-Rosés et al., 2020).

Finally, people who are satisfied with the cleanliness of their city also report higher city satisfaction (Zenker et al., 2013). Cleanliness is likely important for citizens' perception of the liveability of their surroundings. Similarly, satisfaction with air quality is, all else being equal, positively and significantly associated with city satisfaction (column 2 of Table 1). This finding is in line with Węziak-Białowska (2016), Luechinger (2010) and Ferreira et al. (2013), who find that pollution has a negative impact on life satisfaction in European countries.

### New cultural life for historic factory complex in Rijeka, Croatia

An abandoned industrial area in Rijeka, Croatia, is being transformed into a modern cultural district housing the city's museum and library, along with a creative space for children. After being abandoned for more than two decades, three buildings in the Rikard Benčić factory complex in Krešimirova Street are being transformed to provide bigger and more suitable accommodation. This will benefit the City Museum of Rijeka, the Rijeka City Library and the Children's House, which is the first such building in Croatia dedicated to the development of creativity in children. The project will help promote cooperation between these three cultural entities. The complex's open space is being revamped for general public use. The institutions, in collaboration with Rijeka's citizens, will plan further development of the cultural district, in line with changing urban needs and developments.

The investment forms part of the Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture project and is jointly funded by the European Regional Development Fund, the city and the national government. The total amount of investment for the project is EUR 35 600 000 (HRK 267 701 220), with the European Regional Development Fund contributing EUR 15 800 000 (HRK 119 115 852) through the competitiveness and cohesion operational programme for the 2014–2020 programming period. The investment falls under the 'sustainable urban development' priority.

See also:

[https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/projects/Croatia/new-cultural-life-for-historic-factory-complex-in-rijeka-croatia](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/projects/Croatia/new-cultural-life-for-historic-factory-complex-in-rijeka-croatia).

<sup>(12)</sup> In the EU, one in five people is 65 or older (Eurostat, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Population\\_structure\\_and\\_ageing](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Population_structure_and_ageing), last accessed 22 January 2022).

## 4.2. SAFETY IN THE CITY

All of the variables included in equation (1) that relate to the perceived and experienced safety of the city are statistically associated with city satisfaction (Table 1).

As for the amenities, the introduction of country or city fixed effect does not have any substantial consequences for the magnitude and significance of the estimated coefficients.

Panel C of Figure 2 suggests that perceived safety is, overall, the strongest predictor of city satisfaction, contributing to 14 % of the explained variation in city satisfaction (Moeinaddini et al., 2020; Clifton et al., 2008). Generalised trust also matters. People who indicate that most people can be trusted report higher city satisfaction (Węziak-Białowska, 2016), whereas the opposite is found for those who have experienced crime in the past 12 months. There is ample literature documenting that both social capital and personal safety are positively associated with life satisfaction. Social capital also contributes to fostering bonds between individuals, which, in turn, facilitates cooperation and happiness (Glatz and Eder, 2020; Helliwell and Putnam, 2004; Rodríguez-Pose and von Berlepsch, 2014). Similarly, the perception of insecurity also induces reduced autonomy in the living environment. Individuals who have experienced crime or who fear crime have been found to engage less in outdoor activities and to report higher levels of distress and lower levels of well-being (Hanslmaier, 2013; Brereton et al., 2008; Denkers and Winkel, 1998). However, it must be highlighted that crime victimisation is far less important (1 %) than trust and safety perceptions.

## 4.3. INCLUSIVENESS OF THE CITY

City inclusiveness – measured by two variables indicating to what extent people perceive that their city is a good place to live for immigrants and for gay and lesbian people – is also positively associated with the quality of life in the city. This supports previous research on tolerance and openness to different cultures as positive drivers of citizen satisfaction (Zenker et al., 2013). However, the relative contribution of these two proxies to overall satisfaction is low (2 % each).

### **Neighbourhood Mothers Neukölln – Stadtteilmütter Neukölln: integrating immigrant mothers via local women, Germany**

'Neighbourhood mothers', known as Stadtteilmütter in Neukölln in Germany, is a grassroots outreach project aiming to facilitate access to information and services that help families from immigrant backgrounds with children up to 12 years old. It was launched in 2004 in Berlin's Neukölln area, with 12 Turkish mothers receiving training to support newly arrived mothers. It has now become a network of more than 70 neighbourhood mothers from various nationalities, and helps to integrate families and create a cohesive community. This project empowers women on both sides of the relationship: newcomers receive valuable advice and information and gain confidence, while neighbourhood mothers gain employment income and status. The support benefits the local community, increases integration and boosts interaction with immigrant families and social cohesion.

The total amount of investment for the project is EUR 2 725 463, of which the EU's European Regional Development Fund contributed EUR 1 050 828 from the Berlin operational programme for the 2007–2013 and 2014–2020 programming periods.

See also:

[https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/projects/Germany/neighbourhood-mothers-neukolln-stadtteilmutter-neukolln-integrating-immigrant-mothers-via-local-women](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/projects/Germany/neighbourhood-mothers-neukolln-stadtteilmutter-neukolln-integrating-immigrant-mothers-via-local-women).

## 4.4. INDIVIDUAL SOCIOECONOMIC VARIABLES AND OTHER CITY CHARACTERISTICS

As shown in Table 1, the seven socioeconomic characteristics included in the analysis cumulatively explain just 7.5 % of  $R^2$ . Unemployed respondents and those who have difficulty paying their monthly bills report significantly lower city satisfaction. Labour market status is particularly relevant, as it explains around 6 % of the  $R^2$ . This is in line with findings at the national level and with findings relating to life satisfaction in general (Eurostat, 2016). There also seems to be a gradient with respect to the age of the respondents. Retired people and young adults (15–24) tend to be more satisfied than those of working age (thus providing evidence in favour of the U-shaped relationship between well-being and age found in Blanchflower and Oswald (2008) and Graham and Pozuelo (2017)). Difficulties in achieving work–life balance could be a reason for this finding. Being able to combine work, family commitments and personal life is indeed important for people's well-being (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2011). Women report slightly higher city satisfaction than men, while having lived in another city is associated with lower satisfaction.



Finally, as shown in Figure 2, variables grouped in the ‘other’ category contribute only marginally to the variation of  $\hat{Y}_{ijc}$  across the sample (5 %). However, we note from Table 1 that satisfaction decreases with city size. Affordable housing and corruption are also, respectively, positively and negatively associated with city satisfaction (Zenker et al., 2013; Holmberg et al., 2009; Park and Blenkinsopp, 2011) <sup>(13)</sup>.

### **Social housing pilot in Ostrava promotes inclusion in Czechia**

Ostrava, Czechia’s third-largest city, has put in place a social housing pilot project to improve social inclusion in the Moravian Silesia region. The project has renovated 105 apartments for families who would otherwise live in substandard housing, with five set aside as emergency homes. It has also developed processes to access housing, a framework to cooperate with city districts and a system of social support for tenants. Tenants can more easily stabilise their lives and participate in society, while their low rent returns a profit to the city. At the national level, cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is allowing the project to influence social housing legislation and to help create methodologies for other parts of Czechia. In particular, it is a positive example of policies that could benefit the Moravian Silesia region.

The total amount of investment for the social housing in the city of Ostrava project is EUR 540 489, with the EU’s European Social Fund contributing EUR 459 416 through the employment operational programme for the 2014–2020 programming period. The investment falls under the ‘fighting poverty’ and ‘social innovation and transnational cooperation’ priorities.

See also:

[https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/projects/Czechia/social-housing-pilot-in-ostrava-promotes-inclusion-in-the-czech-republic](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/projects/Czechia/social-housing-pilot-in-ostrava-promotes-inclusion-in-the-czech-republic).

<sup>(13)</sup> Finally, as a robustness check, we also estimated equation (1) using an **ordered logit model**. The results, in Table A4 in the Appendix, are consistent with those of Table 1.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we analyse the determinants of city satisfaction across a sample of 83 cities located in the EU, European Free Trade Association countries and the United Kingdom. Data are drawn from the fifth survey on quality of life in European cities (European Commission, 2020), with the estimates reported in the study based on a sample of more than 58 000 individuals, which is representative of the population of each city. Besides the results of our econometric analysis, which is robust in relation to various specifications, we exploit a technique proposed by Grömping (2006, 2015) to quantify the relative importance of different quality-of-urban-life determinants which have still not been addressed in the literature (Marans and Stimson, 2011a). This allows us to offer novel insights to shape evidence-based urban policies.

The main outcomes support the strand of literature that emphasises the importance of ‘subjective’ experience of quality of life, based on self-reported levels of fulfilment with various dimensions of life (Gidlöf-Gunnarsson and Öhrström, 2007; Perucca, 2018). In particular, we find that satisfaction with a city’s amenities and the safety and inclusiveness of the city account respectively for 50 %, 14 % and 4 % of the predicted variation across the sample in city-life satisfaction. Satisfaction with green spaces is what most explains city-life satisfaction, although the positive evaluation of the other amenities covered in the analysis – namely public spaces, the health system, public transport, cultural facilities and cleanliness – are close behind. All of the city characteristics included in the estimates and linked to safety are significantly (with the expected signs) associated with city-life satisfaction, but only feelings of safety and trust have a relative importance above 8 %, while crime victimisation explains only 2 %. The perceived inclusiveness of the city towards immigrants and gay and lesbian people accounts for around 5 % of the predicted variation in city-life satisfaction across the sample. Finally, the importance of socioeconomic characteristics is very low compared to the three areas discussed above.

Our results invite policymakers to make sure cities offer a diverse set of amenities, from health infrastructure to green areas. Local health facilities are going to acquire even more importance in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and, as highlighted by Klinenberg (2018), having comfortable and accessible physical and institutional infrastructures will be key to the development and maintenance of social connections. This is because public spaces can facilitate social relations, communities of place and a sense of belonging (Eyles and Litva, 1998), providing access to social capital and building trust, participation and perceptions of safety (Hawe and Shiell, 2000). This result, which is consistent with the other main results of our analysis, i.e. the importance of trust and safety, emphasises the role of public infrastructures as a form of ‘social glue’, calling for local public administrations, which represent the

most public face of the state, to take an active role (Walker and Andrews, 2015). At the same time, the confirmed relevance of amenities invites policymakers to reflect on the need to invest in facilities that can more effectively balance socialisation and health needs under the new pandemic scenario(s).

Cities are also the places where pro-sustainability opportunities arising from the urban context can be seized upon, such as the low emission transition, the circular economy and clean mobility (European Commission, 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic also gave new impetus to this with the re-emergence of the concept of the ‘15-minute city’, initially proposed by Moreno in 2016 <sup>(14)</sup>, where human needs and sustainability go hand in hand (Allam et al., 2022).

Another relevant aspect to be accounted for is economic insecurity, which may be related to various factors such as the rising cost of living and within-city inequality caused by various phenomena, including gentrification processes (Florida, 2017; Glaeser 2020). As recently pointed out by Glaeser (2020, p. 194), ‘The urban discontent of today arguably reflects failures in both education and regulation that have made cities far less accommodating to the less fortunate’. In this sense, policymakers must carefully prevent ‘the production of urban space for progressively more affluent users’ (Hackworth, 2002, p. 815), and must encourage upward mobility, in particular in more densely populated cities and neighbourhoods, via such means as good-quality education.

This analysis shows that policies that improve a city’s amenities, its inclusivity and its safety are likely to also increase residents’ satisfaction with living in that city. In the EU, cohesion policy funds a wide range of projects in these policy areas. In the 2021–2027 period, cohesion policy will continue to support integrated territorial and local development strategies through various tools, namely integrated territorial investment and community-led local development, and other territorial tools will be deployed to implement these strategies. The new European urban initiative will finance innovative actions to experiment with and develop transferable and scalable innovative solutions to urban challenges; improve the capacity of cities to design and implement sustainable urban policies and practices in an integrated and participative way; and promote knowledge sharing and capitalisation for the benefit of urban policymakers and practitioners.

In 2023, the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy will organise its fifth Cities Forum, bringing together more than 700 key European-, national- and local-level stakeholders and all of the EU Member States to debate about common achievements and reflect on the future direction of urban development within cohesion policy areas, including the future of the urban agenda for the EU, and in the context of recent unforeseen areas of turmoil, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukrainian refugee crisis.

<sup>(14)</sup> See <https://www.la Tribune.fr/regions/smart-cities/la-tribune-de-carlos-moreno/la-ville-du-quart-d-heure-pour-un-nouveau-chrono-urbanisme-604358.html>. According to this concept, city dwellers are able to access all of their basic essentials at distances that would not take them more than 15 minutes by foot or by bicycle.

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## APPENDIX

Table A1: Share of population living in EU cities covered by the survey and country codes

EU Member State	Country code	Share of population living in the cities covered by the survey over total city population in the EU	Share of population living in the cities covered by the survey over total population in the EU
Belgium	BE	68 %	19 %
Bulgaria	BG	45 %	21 %
Czechia	CZ	49 %	15 %
Denmark	DK	81 %	26 %
Germany	DE	30 %	11 %
Estonia	EE	75 %	32 %
Ireland	IE	82 %	28 %
Greece	EL	55 %	26 %
Spain	ES	31 %	16 %
France	FR	42 %	15 %
Croatia	HR	59 %	20 %
Italy	IT	37 %	14 %
Cyprus	CY	55 %	28 %
Latvia	LV	76 %	33 %
Lithuania	LT	45 %	19 %
Luxembourg	LU	100 %	19 %
Hungary	HU	55 %	19 %
Malta	MT	100 %	45 %
Netherlands	NL	26 %	14 %
Austria	AT	74 %	23 %
Poland	PL	25 %	8 %
Portugal	PT	45 %	20 %
Romania	RO	38 %	13 %
Slovenia	SI	72 %	14 %
Slovakia	SK	60 %	12 %
Finland	FI	65 %	25 %
Sweden	SE	51 %	20 %
European Union	EU-27	39 %	15 %
<b>Non-EU country</b>			
Albania	AL		
Iceland	IS		
Montenegro	ME		
North Macedonia	MK		
Norway	NO		
Serbia	SR		
Switzerland	CH		
Türkiye	TK		
United Kingdom	UK		

Source: Eurostat, Joint Research Centre. Reference year: 2018.

NB: Population shares are only reported for EU Member States.

Table A2: Description of the variables

<b>Dependent variable</b>	
City satisfaction	Variable equal to 1 if the respondent strongly agrees or somewhat agrees with the statement 'I am satisfied to live in my city', or 0 otherwise.
<b>Covariates – Socioeconomic characteristics</b>	
Age 25–39 Age 40–54 Age 55+	Three dummy variables equal to 1 if the respondent is aged respectively (i) between 25 and 39 years old, (ii) between 40 and 54 years old or (iii) 55 or more, or 0 otherwise.
Female	Dummy variable equal to 1 if the respondent is female, or 0 otherwise.
Lived in other cities	Dummy equal to 1 if the respondent has ever lived in another city for at least 1 year, or 0 otherwise.
<b>Household composition</b>	
Household with children below 25	Household with children below 25 is equal to 1 if the household is composed of a lone parent or a couple with at least one child aged under 25, or 0 otherwise.
Household with children above 25	Household with children above 25 is equal to 1 if the household is composed of a lone parent or a couple with all children aged 25 or more, or 0 otherwise.
Household – other	Household – other is equal to 1 if the household is composed of one person, a couple without any children or does not correspond to any of the categories defining the first two household dummies, or 0 otherwise.
<b>Education</b>	
Secondary education	Secondary education is equal to 1 if the respondent completed lower or upper secondary education (International Standard Classification of Education level 2/3), or 0 otherwise.
Tertiary education	Tertiary education is equal to 1 if the respondent has completed post-secondary non-tertiary education, a short cycle of tertiary education, a bachelor's degree (or equivalent), a master's degree (or equivalent) or a doctoral (or equivalent) degree, or 0 otherwise.
<b>Working status</b>	
Employed part-time	Employed part-time is equal to 1 if the respondent reports that they are employed or self-employed part-time, or 0 otherwise.
Unemployed	Unemployed is equal to 1 if the respondent is unemployed (whether or not looking actively for a job), or 0 otherwise.
Retired	Retired is equal to 1 if the respondent is retired, or 0 otherwise.
Other status	Other status is equal to 1 if the respondent declares that they are unable to work due to long-standing health problems, a student (at school, university, etc.), a full-time homemaker, doing compulsory military or civilian service or other, or 0 otherwise.
Difficulty paying bills	Financial situation is equal to 1 if the respondent reports that they have had difficulty most of the time or from time to time with paying bills at the end of the month, or 0 otherwise.

<b>Amenities of the city</b>	
Public transport	Dummy equal to 1 if the respondent reports that they are very satisfied or rather satisfied with the public transport in their city or area, or 0 otherwise.
Health system	Dummy equal to 1 if the respondent reports that they are very satisfied or rather satisfied with the healthcare services, doctors and hospitals in their city or area, or 0 otherwise.
Cultural facilities	Dummy equal to 1 if the respondent reports that they are very satisfied or rather satisfied with cultural facilities such as concert halls, theatres, museums and libraries in their city or area, or 0 otherwise.
Green spaces	Dummy equal to 1 if the respondent reports that they are very satisfied or rather satisfied with green spaces such as parks and gardens in their city or area, or 0 otherwise.
Public space	Dummy equal to 1 if the respondent reports that they are very satisfied or rather satisfied with public spaces such as markets, squares, pedestrian areas in their city or area, or 0 otherwise.
Environment: cleanliness or air quality	Dummy equal to 1 if the respondent reports that they are very satisfied or rather satisfied with the quality of the air/cleanliness in their city, or 0 otherwise.
<b>Safety of the city</b>	
Trust	Dummy equal to 1 if the respondent strongly agrees or somewhat agrees that most people in their city can be trusted, or 0 otherwise.
Safety perception	Dummy is equal to 1 if the respondent agrees or somewhat agrees that they feel safe walking alone at night in the city, or 0 otherwise.
Crime victimisation	Dummy is equal to 1 if the respondent reports that they have been assaulted or mugged in their city within the last 12 months, or 0 otherwise.
<b>Inclusiveness of the city</b>	
Inclusive city for immigrants	Dummy equal to 1 if the respondent reports that the city is a good place to live for immigrants from other countries, or 0 otherwise.
Inclusive city for gay and lesbian people	Dummy equal to 1 if the respondent reports that the city is a good place to live for gay and lesbian people, or 0 otherwise.
<b>Additional city characteristics</b>	
City size	City population in 2018
Capital	Capital is equal to 1 if the respondent lives in a capital city, or 0 otherwise.
Affordable housing	Housing situation is equal to 1 if the respondent agrees or somewhat agrees that it is easy to find good housing in the city at a reasonable price, or 0 otherwise.
Corruption	Corruption is equal to 1 if the respondent reports that they disagree or strongly disagree that there is corruption in the local public administration, or 0 otherwise.

NB: For all covariates described above, the answer category 'don't know/refuses' has been included as a separate one to preserve the sample size. For the sake of brevity, these variables are not reported in the tables.



Table A3: Determinants of satisfaction with life in the city: ordinary least square estimation

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<b>Socioeconomic characteristics</b>				
Sex: Female	0.006**	0.006**	0.006**	<b>0.006**</b>
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	<b>(0.002)</b>
Lived in other cities	- 0.007***	- 0.007***	- 0.007***	<b>- 0.007***</b>
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	<b>(0.002)</b>
Difficulty paying bills	- 0.036***	- 0.036***	- 0.033***	<b>- 0.033***</b>
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	<b>(0.003)</b>
<i>Age (reference group: below 25)</i>				
Age 25-39	- 0.019***	- 0.019***	- 0.022***	<b>- 0.022***</b>
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	<b>(0.005)</b>
Age 40-54	- 0.015***	- 0.014***	- 0.018***	<b>- 0.017***</b>
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	<b>(0.005)</b>
Age 55+	- 0.018***	- 0.017***	- 0.019***	<b>- 0.019***</b>
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	<b>(0.005)</b>
<i>Education (reference group: Primary education)</i>				
Secondary education	- 0.002	- 0.002	- 0.0003	<b>- 0.001</b>
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	<b>(0.003)</b>
Tertiary education	- 0.001	- 0.0005	0.003	<b>0.004</b>
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	<b>(0.004)</b>
<i>Household composition (reference group: Household with no children)</i>				
Household with children below 25	- 0.002	- 0.002	- 0.0003	<b>- 0.001</b>
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	<b>(0.003)</b>
Household with children above 25	- 0.006	- 0.006	- 0.004	<b>- 0.003</b>
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	<b>(0.004)</b>
Other	- 0.006	- 0.006	- 0.002	<b>- 0.003</b>
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	<b>(0.005)</b>
<i>Working status (reference group: Employed full-time)</i>				
Employed part-time	- 0.002	- 0.002	- 0.002	<b>- 0.002</b>
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	<b>(0.004)</b>
Unemployed	- 0.034***	- 0.035***	- 0.030***	<b>- 0.030***</b>
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)	<b>(0.005)</b>
Retired	0.010**	0.010**	0.012***	<b>0.012***</b>
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	<b>(0.005)</b>
Other status	- 0.003	- 0.002	- 0.001	<b>- 0.002</b>
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	<b>(0.005)</b>

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<b>Amenities of the city</b>				
Public transport	0.056*** (0.003)	0.056*** (0.003)	0.048*** (0.003)	<b>0.052***</b> <b>(0.003)</b>
Health system	0.047*** (0.003)	0.047*** (0.003)	0.047*** (0.003)	<b>0.049***</b> <b>(0.003)</b>
Cultural facilities	0.065*** (0.004)	0.065*** (0.004)	0.062*** (0.004)	<b>0.063***</b> <b>(0.004)</b>
Green spaces	0.068*** (0.003)	0.068*** (0.003)	0.059*** (0.003)	<b>0.064***</b> <b>(0.003)</b>
Public spaces	0.053*** (0.003)	0.053*** (0.003)	0.047*** (0.003)	<b>0.050***</b> <b>(0.003)</b>
Cleanliness	0.040*** (0.003)		0.035*** (0.003)	<b>0.037***</b> <b>(0.003)</b>
Air quality		0.040*** (0.003)		
<b>Safety and trust in the city</b>				
Trust	0.049*** (0.003)	0.049*** (0.003)	0.046*** (0.003)	<b>0.046***</b> <b>(0.003)</b>
Safety perception	0.065*** (0.003)	0.065*** (0.003)	0.061*** (0.003)	<b>0.064***</b> <b>(0.003)</b>
Crime victimisation	- 0.032*** (0.005)	- 0.033*** (0.005)	- 0.027*** (0.005)	<b>- 0.028***</b> <b>(0.005)</b>
<b>Inclusiveness of the city</b>				
Inclusive city for immigrants	0.020*** (0.003)	0.020*** (0.003)	0.015*** (0.003)	<b>0.015***</b> <b>(0.003)</b>
Inclusive city for gay and lesbian people	0.025*** (0.003)	0.025*** (0.003)	0.023*** (0.004)	<b>0.023***</b> <b>(0.004)</b>
<b>Additional city characteristics</b>				
Capital	0.001 (0.003)	0.001 (0.003)		
Availability of affordable housing	0.013*** (0.003)	0.013*** (0.003)	0.021*** (0.003)	<b>0.015***</b> <b>(0.003)</b>
Absence of corruption	0.016*** (0.003)	0.016*** (0.003)	0.015*** (0.003)	<b>0.017***</b> <b>(0.003)</b>
City size	- 0.006*** (0.001)	- 0.006*** (0.001)		<b>- 0.006***</b> <b>(0.001)</b>
City fixed effects	No	No	Yes	<b>No</b>
Country fixed effects	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>
Observations	56 198	56 198	56 198	<b>56 198</b>
R <sup>2</sup>	0.14	0.14	0.15	<b>0.15</b>
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.14	0.14	0.15	<b>0.14</b>

NB: \*\*\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.01$ . For all variables, the answer category 'don't know/refuses' has been included as a separate one to preserve the sample size. For the sake of brevity, these variables are not reported in the tables. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table A4: Determinants of satisfaction with life in the city: ordered logit model

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<b>Socioeconomic characteristics</b>				
Female	0.093*** (0.017)	0.093*** (0.018)	0.099*** (0.018)	0.099*** (0.018)
Lived in other cities	- 0.032* (0.017)	- 0.033* (0.017)	- 0.074*** (0.018)	- 0.061*** (0.018)
Difficulty paying bills	- 0.269*** (0.019)	- 0.269*** (0.019)	- 0.221*** (0.020)	- 0.226*** (0.020)
<i>Age (reference group: below 25)</i>				
Age 25–39	- 0.197*** (0.033)	- 0.195*** (0.033)	- 0.207*** (0.034)	- 0.206*** (0.034)
Age 40–54	- 0.225*** (0.033)	- 0.218*** (0.033)	- 0.224*** (0.033)	- 0.217*** (0.033)
Age 55+	- 0.143*** (0.037)	- 0.139*** (0.038)	- 0.107*** (0.038)	- 0.102*** (0.038)
<i>Education (reference group: Primary education)</i>				
Secondary education	0.014 (0.029)	0.013 (0.029)	0.034 (0.029)	0.033 (0.029)
Tertiary education	0.056* (0.030)	0.053* (0.030)	0.087*** (0.030)	0.084*** (0.030)
<i>Household composition (reference group: Household with no children)</i>				
Household with children below 25	- 0.046** (0.022)	- 0.048** (0.022)	- 0.021 (0.023)	- 0.020 (0.023)
Household with children above 25	- 0.070** (0.029)	- 0.075*** (0.029)	- 0.043 (0.029)	- 0.040 (0.029)
Other	- 0.072** (0.033)	- 0.072** (0.033)	- 0.030 (0.034)	- 0.033 (0.034)
<i>Working status (reference group: Employed full-time)</i>				
Employed part-time	- 0.008 (0.030)	- 0.007 (0.030)	- 0.008 (0.030)	- 0.010 (0.030)
Unemployed	- 0.131*** (0.038)	- 0.135*** (0.038)	- 0.121*** (0.039)	- 0.110*** (0.039)
Retired	0.168*** (0.032)	0.167*** (0.032)	0.192*** (0.033)	0.190*** (0.033)
Other status	- 0.018 (0.032)	- 0.013 (0.033)	0.003 (0.033)	- 0.001 (0.033)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<b>Amenities of the city</b>				
Public transport	0.452 <sup>***</sup>	0.450 <sup>***</sup>	0.387 <sup>***</sup>	0.397 <sup>***</sup>
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.021)
Health system	0.384 <sup>***</sup>	0.381 <sup>***</sup>	0.402 <sup>***</sup>	0.399 <sup>***</sup>
	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.020)
Cultural facilities	0.430 <sup>***</sup>	0.425 <sup>***</sup>	0.415 <sup>***</sup>	0.410 <sup>***</sup>
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.024)
Green spaces	0.540 <sup>***</sup>	0.539 <sup>***</sup>	0.460 <sup>***</sup>	0.479 <sup>***</sup>
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Public spaces	0.394 <sup>***</sup>	0.395 <sup>***</sup>	0.377 <sup>***</sup>	0.395 <sup>***</sup>
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Cleanliness	0.472 <sup>***</sup>		0.382 <sup>***</sup>	0.419 <sup>***</sup>
	(0.019)		(0.020)	(0.019)
Air quality		0.473 <sup>***</sup>		
		(0.019)		
<b>Safety of the city</b>				
Trust	0.410 <sup>***</sup>	0.411 <sup>***</sup>	0.295 <sup>***</sup>	0.320 <sup>***</sup>
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Safety perception	0.492 <sup>***</sup>	0.493 <sup>***</sup>	0.393 <sup>***</sup>	0.437 <sup>***</sup>
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Crime victimisation	- 0.217 <sup>***</sup>	- 0.220 <sup>***</sup>	- 0.145 <sup>***</sup>	- 0.168 <sup>***</sup>
	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.036)
<b>Inclusiveness of the city</b>				
Inclusive city for immigrants	0.254 <sup>***</sup>	0.255 <sup>***</sup>	0.219 <sup>***</sup>	0.215 <sup>***</sup>
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Inclusive city for gay and lesbian people	0.201 <sup>***</sup>	0.200 <sup>***</sup>	0.197 <sup>***</sup>	0.192 <sup>***</sup>
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.026)	(0.025)
<b>Additional city characteristics</b>				
Capital	0.035 <sup>*</sup>	0.034 <sup>*</sup>		
	(0.018)	(0.018)		
Affordable housing	0.069 <sup>***</sup>	0.069 <sup>***</sup>	0.165 <sup>***</sup>	0.125 <sup>***</sup>
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Corruption	0.170 <sup>***</sup>	0.167 <sup>***</sup>	0.097 <sup>***</sup>	0.111 <sup>***</sup>
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)
City size	- 0.044 <sup>***</sup>	- 0.045 <sup>***</sup>		- 0.071 <sup>***</sup>
	(0.004)	(0.004)		(0.005)
City fixed effects	No	No	Yes	No
Country fixed effects	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	56 198	56 198	56 198	56 198

NB: <sup>\*\*\*</sup>  $p < 0.10$ , <sup>\*\*</sup>  $p < 0.05$ , <sup>\*</sup>  $p < 0.01$ . For all variables, the answer category 'don't know/refuses' has been included as a separate one to preserve the sample size. For the sake of brevity, these variables are not reported in the tables. Standard errors in parentheses.

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