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Comparing residents' perceptions of quality of life in three Kyiv neighbourhoods

According to Global North urban studies, the traditional low-rise mixed-function perimeter block is the most attractive urban morphology in terms of organization of space, time, values, and social interactions. This study examines how valid these basic theses are regarding the comfort of urban housing morphological types in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine. We compare residents' quality of life and analyse the differences in residents' behavioural patterns and spatial perception in different morphological types of housing to identify distinguishing features of the most comfortable urban form. Using expert evaluation and surveys, we assess history; jobs; social, educational, and cultural services; environmental indicators; security levels; and public activity in three differ-

ent neighbourhoods: Zhulyany (with detached houses), Podil (with low-rise perimeter blocks), and Rusanivka (with Soviet high-rises). The results reveal that the Soviet neighbourhood, Rusanivka, leads in terms of both objective indicators and residents' perception as the most comfortable living area. This finding contradicts generally accepted theories about exemplary and attractive urban morphology. This preference is based on the planning and construction priorities of the unique social system of Rusanivka, where its human-centeredness and a thoughtful integrated approach are highly valued.

Keywords: urban morphology, neighbourhoods, quality of life, perceptions, Kyiv

1 Introduction

One of the main reasons to study the quality of residents' life in different urban environments is to explore positive changes that improve people's living conditions. This desire can be achieved through appropriate urban management, planning, and design. A natural question about which form of urban housing is the best for residents arises when making management decisions in post-communist cities, where the urban environments formed under communist regimes are now being adapted and remodelled to new conditions shaped by the political, economic, and cultural transition to capitalist society (Sýkora, 2009). This question is very important in studying Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, where neighbourhoods with historical perimeter blocks, detached houses, and Soviet-era high-rises are physically combined in areas that are now actively and chaotically superimposed on the compacted complexes of the neoliberal post-Soviet era (Dronova & Brunn, 2018). To answer this question directly, it is important to identify the key features of different urban morphologies in the context of residents' quality of life. It is also important to understand how satisfied the residents are with their living conditions, what concerns them, and how their living environment shapes their behaviour, perception, and activity in the community. These issues are extremely timely when addressing the need to rebuild Ukrainian cities destroyed by Russian aggression in 2022. These paths toward restoration require in-depth investigation.

A number of urban morphology studies explore cities as human habitats with an emphasis on urban forms (Moudon, 1997; Gauthier & Gilliland, 2006; Standard, 2019). According to Kevin Lynch (1984), a pioneer in studying human habitats, urban form is "complex and mysterious as a system of human values", which emphasizes the relevance of the cognitive approach and attention to the image of the urban environment in human perception (Jang & Kim, 2019). Thus, what is important and interesting are the interconnections in the related processes; that is, how people develop space and how urban forms affect people's lives. The most optimal spatial development for residents' comfortable existence in an urban environment has been explored in previous urban studies. In terms of the organization of space, time, values, and social interactions, the most attractive urban morphological type is a neighbourhood with traditional low-rise mixed-function perimeter blocks with an active street front, a high level of security, necessary services and social amenities, and the availability of shops and an active nightlife (Alexander, 1977; Gehl, 2013; Rapoport, 2016; Talen, 2019). Neighbourhoods with detached houses are not considered as comfortable due to a lack of amenities and social activities. Neighbourhoods with Soviet high-rises are also not

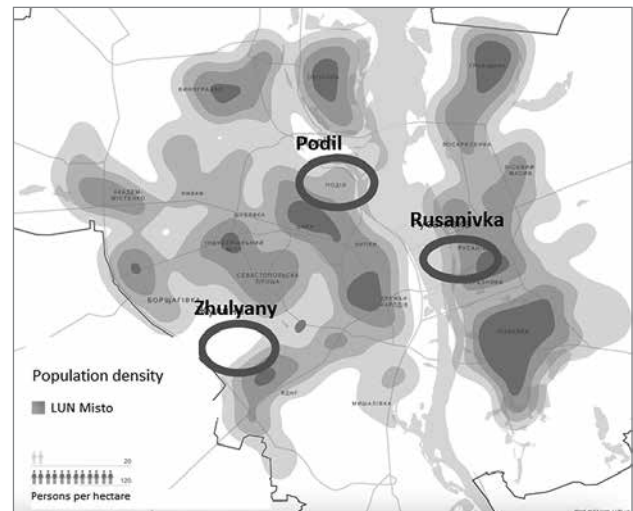


Figure 1: Kyiv population density map with the location of the three neighbourhoods (illustration: adapted from LUN misto, 2019).

considered comfortable enough due to scattered spaces and the isolation of the upper floors from any active social life.

In this study based on Kyiv, we examine how valid these basic theses are regarding the comfort of urban forms of residential areas for a city in post-communist space. It also identifies the perception and mental images or preferences of Kyiv residents for certain types of neighbourhoods that have emerged as a result of historical, socioeconomic, and political conditions in urban development (Conzen, 1960). Three neighbourhoods in Kyiv were selected for this study (Figure 1). They represent different morphological types of housing: Zhulyany (a neighbourhood with detached houses), Podil (a neighbourhood with low-rise perimeter blocks), and Rusanivka (a neighbourhood with Soviet high-rises). In each neighbourhood, residents' perceptions of their living conditions, involvement in community life, interactions with surrounding spaces, and security level are studied through online questionnaires and in-depth interviews.

The major objectives are to a) compare residents' quality of life in the three neighbourhoods, b) analyse the differences in behavioural patterns and mental maps in different urban housing morphologies, and c) identify features of the most comfortable urban morphological type of residential areas. Within the context of different historical formation conditions, we compare the quality of residents' lives in the neighbourhoods in terms of comfort, diversity, and functionality. In particular, we assess the availability of jobs, social services, and educational and cultural facilities, as well as air pollution, noise, availability of green areas and other open public spaces, and the level of security and activity within the community.

2 Theoretical background

To study different varieties of the urban environment, it is desirable to use homogeneous typological units. We use the concept of urban morphologies to refer to the complex set of various properties of physical structures and urban space (Sarjala et al., 2016). They relate to the historical and cultural context of property development, construction planning, functional purpose, and diversity. Urban morphology in general relates to the physical form of settlements. It is tied to the formation of urban fabric components and the relationship of these components, which describe their compositions and configurations through time (Chiaradia, 2019). Urban form refers to the main physical elements that structure and shape the city, including streets, squares (public space), blocks, lots, and buildings, to name the most important (Oliveira, 2016). Urban morphological types are generalized models that define strong socio-spatial complexes (Krashennikov, 2019). They are associated with social, economic, or political urban processes and are often used in urban design because they form a link between abstract ideas and real forms (Moudon, 1994). Certain features of human behaviour depend on the spatial surroundings, and repetitive patterns of behaviour change that space, suggesting that different internal variables will lead to different morphological types of the urban environment. These “ground” or space variables are also important to consider in exploring the behavioural and perceptual properties of an environment based on the people living there.

In the 1960s in the United States, Lynch (1960) was one of the first scholars to study the perception and mental images of the city. In his thinking, the technocratic modernist approach to urban development planning ignored the spatial-temporal complexity and dynamism of urban organisms and led to the anti-humanization of the city. Even in the 1960s, the opinion that modernist functional planning produced “inhuman” and “uninhabited” areas was widely supported in the research and administrative communities of the Global North (Jacobs, 1961; Fyfe, 1996). Beginning in the 1970s, the ideas of anti-functionalism were supported by Soviet architects and city planners, and later by urbanists. Glazychev (2008) writes that the dream of the twentieth-century modernists came true and existed in the Soviet Union. However, it also created more problems than successful solutions. The city of towers proposed by Le Corbusier and randomly placed within green space destroyed the traditional system of courtyards and neighbourhoods, and it created an empty undivided space (Jacobs, 2006).

Other authors also joined the discussion. Gutnov (1984), for example, noted that the ideas of communism, combined with the principles of “orthodox functionalism”, also played a positive role at a certain period of time in solving social problems after the Second World War. On the other hand, he added that free planning contributed to the loss of quality of the living environment: “Large, amorphous inner quarter territories of neighbourhoods belong to all buildings and, at the same time, as a result, such spaces often remain undeveloped.” The courtyard itself became open to outsiders and traffic. Alexander (1977) paid considerable attention to both an understanding of the comfortable urban morphological types that combine many functions and the perception of space by a particular individual. Paying attention to optimal building height and proposing the rules of “sandwich height”, he noted that the modernist building row type of construction is uncomfortable because the buildings shade the street and make space monotonous. In his opinion, it is optimal to arrange houses in groups, alternating height and architectural solutions. Gehl (2013) continues Alexander’s opinion by relying not only on the social aspects of specific morphological types but also delving into the biological mechanisms of human worldviews. He emphasizes that planning for the future should shift the focus of attention from building to human life. “Human life – space – building” is exactly the sequence in which the requirements for a comfortable urban environment are formed. The rejection of functional zoning, which leads to disconnection between urban space and citizens and to urban sprawl, has also long been supported by the advocates of new urbanism (Garde, 2020).

Whereas in the Global North the modernist principles in urban planning were initiated by architects, in the Soviet Union the impulse for their mass implementation was political (Dronova & Maruniak, 2019). The Soviet era to some extent left its mark on every city in Ukraine by creating a new cultural layer and a special architectural urban form of large-scale multistorey construction, which left a deep impression in the minds of urban residents. Unlike western Europe, where the loss of government support for modernist housing developments doomed them to decline (Le Normand, 2014), the many high-rise neighbourhoods in Ukraine were integrated into the city structure and are still treated as a satisfactory place to live. All this is happening against the general background of low-quality housing in Ukraine. Thus, even though the residents of such areas often experience alienation from their living space due to various economic, social, and other factors, this does not result in them changing their place of residence (Mysak, 2014).

Soviet approaches to urban planning viewed neighbourhoods as elements of the material and spatial environment of everyday human activity, not as multifunctional spaces. After the collapse of the communist bloc, cities faced new challenges: rethinking past planning decisions and finding new ones. Post-communist cities today are seen as a separate element in the network of European cities. Neoliberalism is widely recognized as the dominant ideology in former Soviet bloc countries (Stenning et al., 2010). Golubchikov et al. (2014) comment on post-communist urban development through the concept of hybrid spaces emerging from the mutual embodiment of neoliberalism and communist heritage. The communist legacy has been alienated from its history and has become the infrastructure of neoliberalization. Due to morphology, land use, and social segregation, some typical capitalist urban areas can be identified in these cities, whereas other areas of urban landscapes resemble frozen mirrors of communism (Sýkora & Bouzarovski, 2012).

Studies related to the quality of life in post-communist cities as a complex theoretical concept identify links between different areas of public planning, private life, and human perceptions (Massam, 2002). A number of recent studies consider improving the quality of life a potential key and describe the outcome of this in relation to public planning (Murgaš & Klobučnik, 2016; Merschdorf et al., 2020; Faka, 2020). Researchers associate quality of life with satisfaction in life, which is very often understood and considered within the context of the quality of a place (Dehimi, 2021). Research on quality of life encompasses many dimensions, including economic, social, cultural, environmental, demography, inclusiveness, security, involvement of the local population, and the human perception of the built environment. Such research focuses on both objective reality and subjective perceptions (Marans, 2001).

When examining quality-of-life issues in Ukraine, Gukalova (2013) notes that, despite the growing positive trend of some indicators, the nature of its reproduction continues to adhere to an extensive model of society that presents challenges regarding the quality of human habitation. Specific issues of post-communist transformation in Ukrainian cities have been identified in previous research (Mezentsev et al., 2019; Melnychuk & Gnatiuk, 2019; Dronova et al., 2021; Hudzeliak, 2021), addressing how different morphologies contribute to community formation and how they are perceived by their residents. Thus, this study analyses urban housing morphologies, focusing on the features of urban morphological types in different neighbourhoods in Kyiv.

3 Data and methods

Spatial perception, the focus of this study, is an interdisciplinary area that combines both spatial and social components as well as the relationships between them. The spatial aspect of this study includes the definition of historical preconditions related to formation of the areas, modern boundaries, and morphological types, and the study of quality of life defined by certain quantitative and qualitative parameters. The social aspect involves an analysis of parameters, such as the social and psychological identification of individuals in relation to space, a sense of belonging to an area and responsibility for it, the strength of psychological and emotional connection with space, and self-identification as being a part of a community. The following types of social interactions are also studied in this context: mutually good neighbourly practices, organized interrelationships, and public project activities in the community (Paniotto & Kharchenko, 2017).

The spatial and historical features that we examine focus on the morphological types of neighbourhoods identified by the planning documents in Ukraine (Derzhavni budivelni normy, 2019):

- Neighbourhoods with detached houses (Zhulyany): an element of urban development formed by individual houses and blocks of houses with plots of land.
- Neighbourhoods with low-rise perimeter blocks (Podil): a historically formed primary feature of urban space comprised of enclosed or semi-enclosed blocks of buildings (two to three stories high) along thoroughfares (20 to 50 hectares). They can have a perimeter form or stand in historically mixed neighbourhoods.
- Soviet high-rise neighbourhoods (Rusanivka): areas with apartment buildings with adjacent land of 80 to 400 hectares that are separated by main streets and roads of citywide importance. Such neighbourhoods as a morphological type were formed during Soviet urban planning. There are separate subtypes of medium-rise buildings (up to five stories) and high-rise buildings (over five stories).

This study was conducted in two stages. During the first stage, the authors collected and analysed open data from the State Statistics Service and from public organizations, research institutions, and enterprises. The methodology was based on the application of criteria that measured both qualitative and quantitative characteristics of each neighbourhood. We evaluated the indicators related to quality of life: ecological (air, noise pollution, and harmful enterprises), economic (jobs and spatial multi- or mono-functions), and social (public spaces,

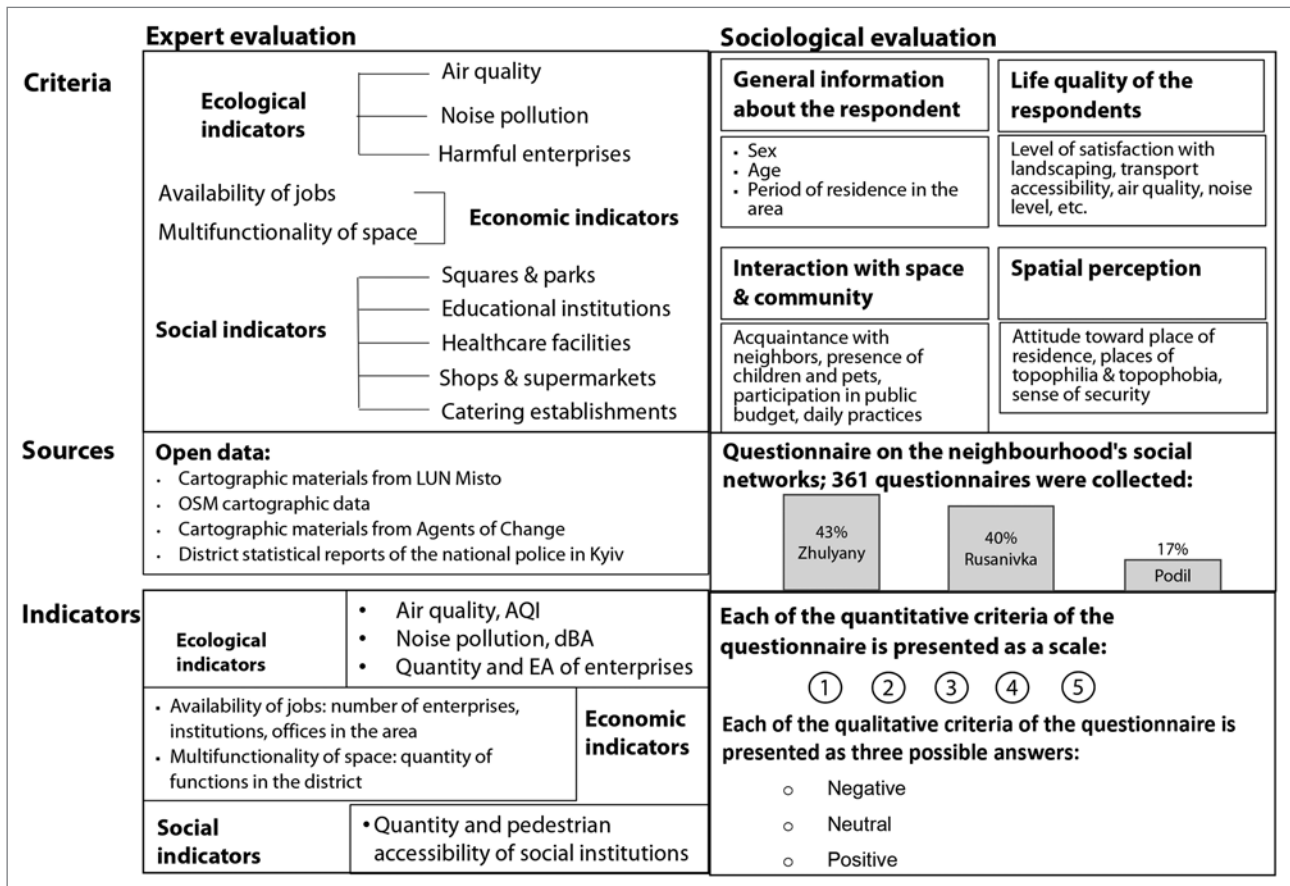


Figure 2: Research methodology (illustration: authors).

squares and parks, educational, healthcare institutions, and trade and catering facilities). These data as well as historical preconditions and population density were taken from open sources. To evaluate social interaction, public participation level, and inclusiveness, we considered approved municipal projects in the public budget. Thus, the comparison of neighbourhoods in terms of quality of life were performed based on certain criteria (Figure 2) used in calculating the integrated score evaluation. For a complex expert assessment of the quality of life in each type of neighbourhood, we used a point scale from 0 to 3 (lowest to highest).

The quality-of-life measurements were enhanced by examining behavioural patterns and residents' perception of their neighbourhoods. Thus, the second stage included field sociological studies of space perception (Figure 2). First, five in-depth interviews were conducted in February and March 2021 to aid in constructing a questionnaire for a broad sample of respondents. It provided an opportunity to compare specific behavioural patterns, motivations, and reflections of different individuals in the three morphological types. The five people interviewed in-depth were all renters twenty-five to thirty years old (one woman living in Zhulyany, a man and woman living

in Rusanivka, and a man and woman living in Podil). The in-depth interviews were supplemented by a survey of a wide sample of residents. An online questionnaire with twenty-three questions was posted on each neighbourhood's social network (Facebook) in April 2021. The objective was to obtain as many evaluations about basic indicators of space perception as possible. The twenty-three questions about quality of life were assessed in the following thematic categories: accessibility of facilities, transport accessibility, level of amenity development, level and quality of utilities, noise pollution, air quality, places citizens like and feel safe in, places citizens do not like and do not feel safe in (using mental maps), involvement of residents in neighbourhood life, their experiences of interaction with space, and their overall perception of the neighbourhood space itself.

Figure 2 summarizes the in-depth interviews and surveys in conjunction with an author's expert evaluation based on selected criteria of open sources with analytical, statistical, project, and research information, as well as the final processing of all the data obtained using socio-geographical methods, including analysis, synthesis, generalization, systematization, and mapping.



Figure 3: The three neighbourhood landscapes; (a) Zhulyany (source: Dom.ria), (b) Podil (source: Kyiv heritage guide), (c) Rusanivka (source: Informator.press).

4 Results

4.1 The neighbourhoods in Kyiv's history

The selected neighbourhoods developed in different historical periods and under different socioeconomic conditions. This timing had a major impact on the construction type and formation of the housing and the perception of this space (Figures 3 and 4). Before it was annexed by Kyiv, the Zhulyany neighbourhood with detached houses was a nearby village, which explains the existence of such a large neighbourhood of detached houses within the city limits. Zhulyany is characterized not only by low-rise detached houses, but also by a lack of typical urban features and practices. Indeed, the landscape has distinct rural features; that is, exclusively rural residential functions, personal acquaintance with neighbours, and some remoteness from social services and shops (Figure 3a).

The perimeter blocks of Podil were built during a significant historical period but acquired their current shape in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Podil largely consists of so-called “revenue houses”, an important feature of which is an active street front with shops, banks, barbershops, cafes, and so on at the ground level. Active facades had a service function, which is typical for Podil today. Today only half of the floors in Podil have residential functions. The ground floor is usually devoted to street retail, but there is also a significant share of offices and cultural spaces (Figure 3b).

The Rusanivka neighbourhood was one of the first spatial experiments by Soviet architects in the twentieth century. The buildings of the neighbourhood are mixed and have a distinct structure: the canal promenade features nine-storey buildings with some sixteen-storey buildings as a spatial dominant (Figure 3c). An important component of the neighbourhood was a very active ground floor; there were shops, hairdressers, and department stores. All the necessary social infrastructure was built within the neighbourhood at the time of construction, including preschools, schools, consumer services, cultural centres, and cinemas.

Both Zhulyany and Rusanivka feature significant green areas but also low inclusiveness within the city landscape. The reasons for this are different. Zhulyany is in a remote area of the city that was included in Kyiv's city structure relatively recently. Its type of planning does not allow it to form close ties with neighbouring areas; thus, interrelations of functions with surrounding areas do not occur. Rusanivka, although located almost in the city centre, is a completely separate area in Kyiv's urban structure. First, the island position of the neighbour-

hood on the Dnipro River and canals acts as a kind of border separating Rusanivka from neighbouring areas. The “thin” transport arteries do not allow for diffusion of urban processes. Second, Rusanivka was planned and designed as a city within a city to provide the necessary functions for a comfortable urban life. Only Podil, located in the heart of the city, is fully integrated into the urban landscape of Kyiv. It has transport accessibility, a small number of green areas, and no gaps in space and social interaction. There is active development of urban processes and active penetration of these processes into neighbouring areas.

An important parameter in the spatial structure and historical context of each of the neighbourhoods, which, in turn, affects the ongoing social processes, is the population density (Figure 1). The population density of each neighbourhood was calculated. The lowest figure is in Zhulyany, with fifteen people per hectare (with a total population of about 6,400). The detached houses result in a very low population density distributed throughout a fairly large area. This low density affects the (in)accessibility of many social functions and transport arteries. The population density in Podil is 135 people per hectare (with a total population of about 23,000). However, the actual number of people using the space in Podil averages three and a half to four times higher than its population because the vast majority of them are not residents of the neighbourhood. This affects many measures, including the perception of Podil's residents, who cannot and do not consider this neighbourhood completely “theirs”. The population density in Rusanivka is the highest, with about 150 people per hectare. It should be noted that Rusanivka, unlike Podil, is not a place appealing to tourists. Therefore, the number of users of the space roughly corresponds to the number of permanent residents. However, the Rusanivska promenade is an attractive place for many Kyiv residents, which means its spatial use is uneven over time and fluctuates throughout the year.

4.2 Results of expert evaluation

Among environmental indicators, including air quality, noise pollution, and the presence of harmful enterprises, the best values are recorded in Rusanivka, which is considered one of the cleanest areas of Kyiv because of its distinctive housing and social functions as well as its favourable planning structure. This neighbourhood does not have enterprises with a harmful environmental impact within its borders (Table 1).

When assessing economic indicators, particularly the multifunctionality of space and offering a sufficient number of jobs, we can observe two extremes: completely multifunctional Podil on the one hand and Zhulyany, which has an exclusive

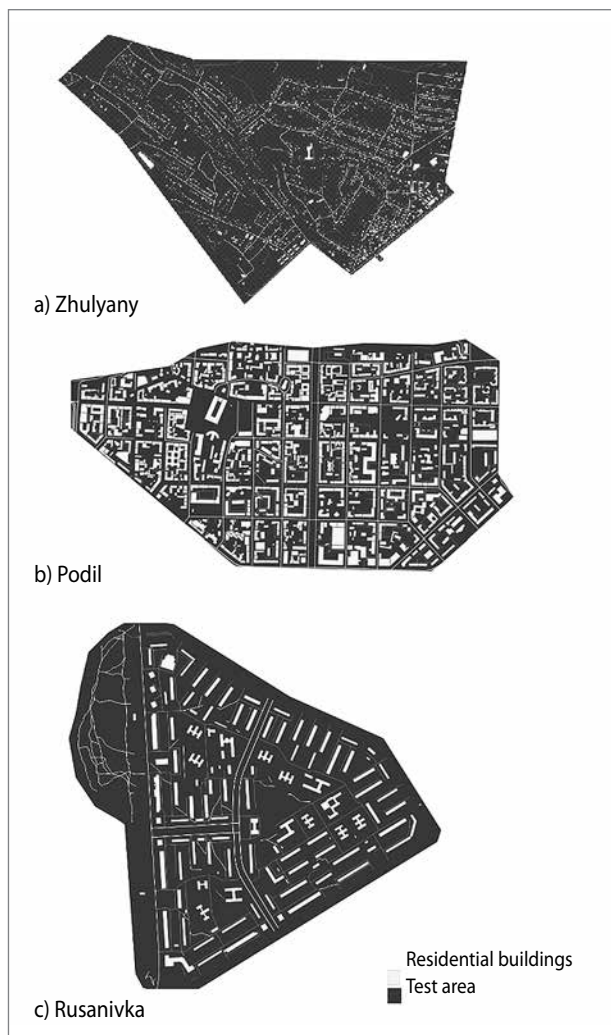


Figure 4: Spatial structure of neighbourhoods (illustration: authors).

Table 1: Assessment of life quality indicators in neighbourhoods.

Indicators	Zhulyany	Podil	Rusanivka
Ecological			
Air quality	2	1	2
Noise pollution	1	0	3
Harmful enterprises	3	2	3
Economic			
Multifunctionality of space	0	3	2
Availability of jobs	0	3	1
Social			
Squares and parks	1	2	3
Educational institutions	1	2	3
Healthcare facilities	0	2	2
Shops and supermarkets	2	3	2
Catering establishments	1	3	3
Safety level	3	2	3
Total score	14	23	27

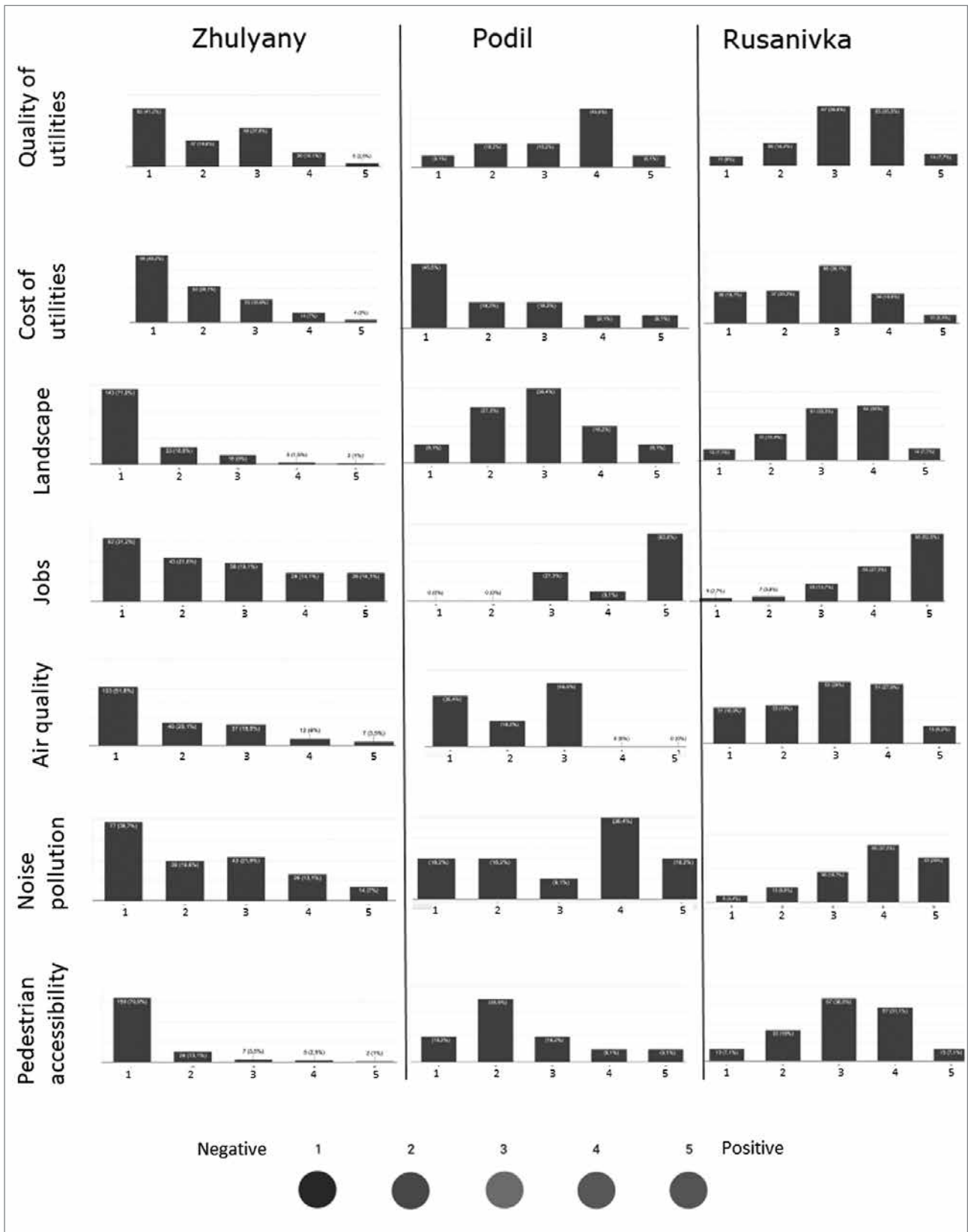


Figure 5: Differences in quality of life based on survey results in the three Kyiv neighbourhoods (illustration: authors).

housing function, on the other. There are practically no office, commercial, or production functions in Rusanivka. This area is well adapted for living and recreation, and it provides all the necessary social amenities, but the vast majority of residents travel to work in other Kyiv neighbourhoods.

Evaluation of social indicators also shows clear differences among the neighbourhoods (Table 1). The social sphere is best developed in Rusanivka. This favourable rating was facilitated by the historical context of the neighbourhood itself; it was designed from scratch under planned communist governance, the major goal of which was to meet and satisfy the residents' social needs. In second place is Podil, with average values for accessibility to educational institutions, medical institutions, and green areas, and above-average values for access to commerce and food. Zhulyany occupies the last place, with no or minimal development of the social sphere. This area does not provide affordable social amenities, which means that residents need to use other spaces to satisfy their own needs. Regarding the security level of living in each of the neighbourhoods, it was found that Rusanivka and Zhulyany are the safest; that is, they have the fewest crimes per 1,000 people during the year. According to the police, Podil is less secure because there are more users of the space. However, even this figure is much lower than the city average. In short, all three neighbourhoods can be considered relatively safe.

Based on all the criteria, a composite value or score for all the neighbourhoods was determined. Rusanivka, with a score of 27, was found most suitable for a comfortable life (Table 1). Podil is in the middle; it has high economic indicators and multifunctionality of space, but it is quite polluted. The lowest quality environment for comfortable living is the Zhulyany neighbourhood with its detached houses, which has poor social and economic functions along with low indicators of ecological comfort.

4.3 Survey results

While surveying residents in each neighbourhood, we also sought to assess their quality of life, involvement in public activity, and experiences of interactions with the spaces. As a result, an average perception of space was performed.

A total of 361 responses were received and examined. The quantity of responses from each neighbourhood were almost equal. The results showed that women were more active than men. The age of respondents in Zhulyany and Rusanivka was generally between twenty-five and forty-five, whereas in Podil the vast majority of respondents were between thirty-five

and forty-five. The share of the population in all neighbourhoods working outside their place of residence and traveling to work was 36 to 43%. However, more than a quarter of Podil's residents work in the neighbourhood they reside in, whereas in Rusanivka this figure is only 12%. In Zhulyany, 20% of the residents work within their neighbourhood, even though there is a shortage of jobs. A significant percentage of respondents either do not work at all or are on maternity or childcare leave. When assessing the quality of life in each neighbourhood through the questionnaire, some clear patterns can be observed (Figure 5):

- The residents of Zhulyany are extremely dissatisfied with indicators related to quality of life. The neighbourhood's environment is not considered comfortable.
- The residents of Rusanivka mainly assessed the area as comfortable to live in, which is confirmed by the authors' assessment.
- Podil's assessment was heterogeneous. There were positive assessments of some features and also some that were negative.

The analysis of public activity and inclusiveness of the population in the life of the neighbourhood showed that the highest level of acquaintance with neighbours was in Zhulyany (90%), and that the highest activity of residents was in Rusanivka (41% participated in voting on the city's public project budget). Podil is more like a "space of strangers". The main consumers of space are renters, tourists, and residents of other neighbourhoods. Only 8% of residents in this area voted on the city's public project budget.

In assessing the perception of space, through both questionnaires and in-depth interviews, it was found that local residents perceive Rusanivka as the most pleasant area. The neighbourhood meets the basic needs of residents according to many indicators, except for jobs. Residents of Zhulyany expressed the least satisfaction with the surrounding space and internal processes. In this area there is an acute lack of basic socioeconomic amenities and ongoing development. Podil cannot be defined clearly based on the survey results. Residents' image of Podil is rather blurry and unformed, and not clearly defined.

Regardless of the neighbourhood where they live, residents' major places with unfavourable ratings (topophobia) are basically the same; that is, noisy highways, crowded places, markets, and dark corners (Figure 6). Places with positive feelings (topophilia; Tuan, 1979) are open public spaces, green areas, bodies of water, and places with historical and cultural heritage.

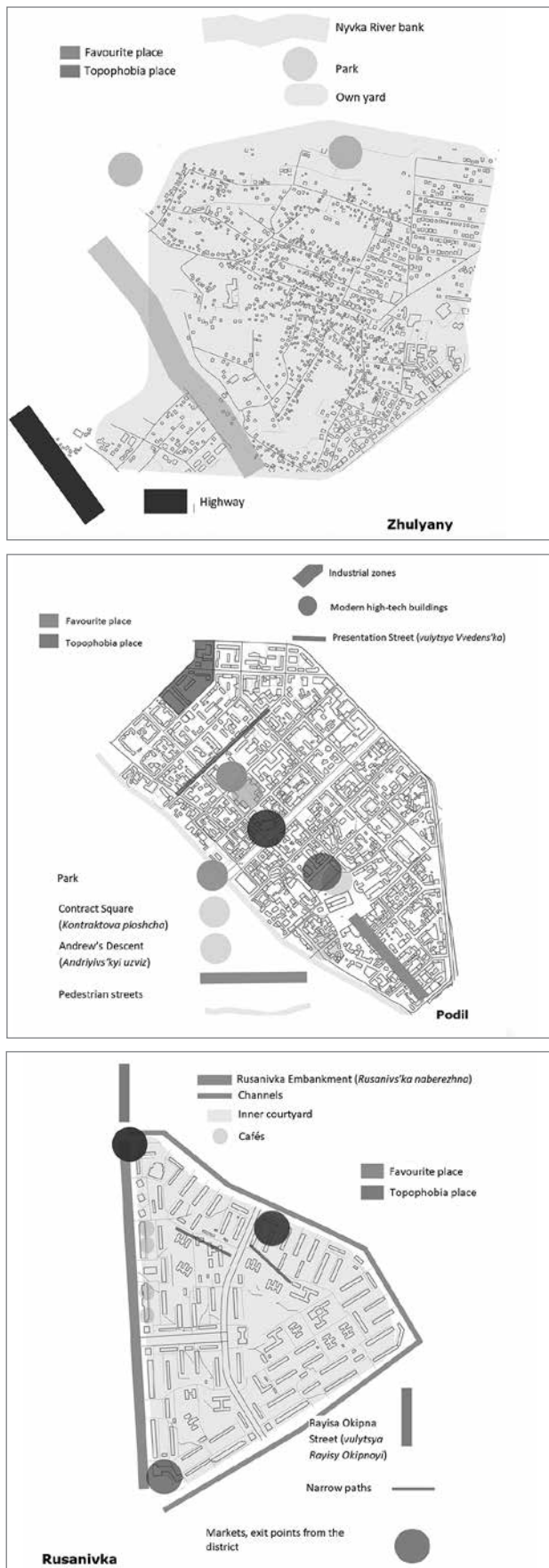


Figure 6: Comparing mental maps of respondents' perceptions in the three Kyiv neighbourhoods (illustration: authors).

5 Discussion

This study revealed some major differences in the perceptions of space and residential behaviour patterns in the three different morphological types of neighbourhoods in Kyiv. We were interested in exploring the features of some basic theories of spatial perception for the three neighbourhoods and discerning whether there were any major differences between their development and residents' views. It was found that none of the neighbourhoods can be considered representative of Kyiv neighbourhoods because each one has a significantly different context in its historical development and spatial nature. For instance, Zhulyany is a hybrid transitional space between a former rural village and an urban area. The main users of space in Podil are not local property owners, but tourists, residents of other neighbourhoods, and renters. Rusanivka is not a typical Soviet neighbourhood, but a well-designed closed spatially functional system that is exemplary even today.

Regarding expert assessment of quality of life, it was found that Rusanivka is the most comfortable living place for its residents in each of the three aspects: environmental, social, and economic. In addition, the community is characterized by a significant amount of social involvement and cohesion, as well as interest in implementing urban projects. Podil – which, in theory, was considered the most comfortable place to live – does not fully meet this expectation because the number of people using space is too high and its active nightlife not only does not guarantee safety but, in fact, is a leading cause of a higher crime rate.

The perception of space was studied through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and the creation of mental maps that identified the attractive and unattractive places in each neighbourhood. The survey mostly involved residents of the three neighbourhoods that spend a significant part of their time within their neighbourhood and have a firm opinion about the space where they reside. The survey results revealed that the most pleasant area in the eyes of local residents is Rusanivka, which, in most respects, meets their basic needs. Residents of Zhulyany expressed the least satisfaction with their urban space and its internal processes. There is an acute lack of basic socio-economic amenities and development. Podil cannot be clearly defined based on the results of the survey. Local residents' image of Podil is rather blurry and indistinct. Young people that took part in the in-depth interviews generally associate Podil with restaurants, walks through the old streets, and nightlife. They associate Rusanivka with quiet cosy courtyards and the waterfront, and Zhulyany is not perceived as a separate area. It was found that a clearer and deeper image of a neighbourhood comes from those respondents that had some previous

experience of living in areas with a similar morphological type and consciously sought a similar one when they moved to Kyiv. Even though renters in Kyiv do not usually take such an active part in the life of their neighbourhoods, they have the opportunity to reflect more deeply on their living space than those that were born and live in the neighbourhood.

In summary, these three selected areas are unique within the context of Kyiv. The results cannot easily be extrapolated to similar neighbourhoods in Kyiv or other cities in Ukraine. The historical context is fundamental in both; that is, the formation of quality-of-life indicators and the perception of the selected morphological types by their residents. The extent of space and place knowledge and involvement in its transformation by Kyiv residents directly depends on their previous experience and understanding of the context of the area where they reside. The results indicate that the Soviet residential neighbourhood of Rusanivka leads in terms of both objective indicators and perception by the residents as the most comfortable living area – a finding that contradicts generally accepted theories about exemplary and attractive morphological types. Rusanivka shows that in making urban decisions – regardless of the political background, historical roots, and physical design of the buildings – priority must be given to generating some human-centeredness, a deep thoughtful integrated approach to planning in a wide context, and an emphasis on meeting residents' needs for social interaction, comfort, and services, with special attention devoted to the spaces and places where everyday human practices are carried out.

6 Conclusion

Although this study has answered some questions about quality of life in three different neighbourhoods in Kyiv, additional research is needed. First, the residential neighbourhoods of Kyiv should be compared with those in other large and small cities in Ukraine. Are there similar housing and commercial neighbourhoods in Kharkiv, Dnipro, or Odesa? Second, it should be established whether there are any differences in the perception maps of the elderly, middle-aged, and youthful cohorts in Ukrainian cities. Third – and undoubtedly this should be the highest research priority – it should be determined what kind of rebuilding of large and small cities needs to be conducted following the Russian invasion of February 2022. Will rebuilding follow chaotic neoliberal intervention, serving the economic priorities of developers only, or will it apply some positive methods of Soviet housing and neighbourhood complex planning but with flexibility in the process and desired impacts of urban redevelopment, bearing in mind the necessity for public participation in making decisions? It is certain that

reconstruction will take place in various forms and designs, and this will merit the attention of geographers, social scientists, architects, and planners in observing what the priorities and desired outcomes are.

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