STUDY ON SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT AND CIVIC ATTITUDE FOR PEOPLE BETWEEN 15-64 YEARS OLD FROM TARGOVISTE TOWN

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Abstract: *Supporting the practice of sports and encouraging the population in order to practice neighborhood sports activities should represent important objectives for the local authorities of Târgovişte Municipality. The purpose of the present study is to identify what was the degree of social involvement and civic attitude in people aged between 15-64 years from the Târgovişte Municipality. In this study 217 people participated. The results of the research highlighted the fact that, in general, participants do not get involved in the life of the community they belong to, they do not participate in actions that are intended to improve the quality of life of the neighborhood in wich they live and they do not accept the ideea of volunteering in such actions.*

Key words: *neighbourhood sport, socialization, questionnaire.*

1. Introduction

The term "social involvement" is generally used to refer to someone's participation in the activities of a social group [9]. Social involvement is linked to participation in collective activities, which consolidate social capital and norms [9]. The key elements of social involvement include activity (doing something), interaction (at least two people should be involved in this activity), social exchange (the activity involves giving or receiving something from others) and lack of coercion. For the most part, social involvement excludes activities for which someone receives payment or familial obligations [9]. Social involvement is a process in which people take collective measures to address public interest issues [8].

There are several current studies that have analysed the social involvement [6,7] and civic attitude of people within society, i.e., Allen et al. [1], Ballard et al. [2], Crocetti et al. [3], Ekman and Amna [4], Hope and Jagers [5].

The correlation with sports highlights

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the fact that these give individuals a great opportunity, by preparing them for life's various challenges, in later stages [10]. This includes developing good character, discipline, competitiveness and offering opportunities to experience different challenges which are useful for personal achievement [11]. Individuals or society could not exist without socialization, because they both depend on these unique processes [11]. Additionally, sports generally play a very important part in socializing. Socializing through sports is a complex process, in which individuals learn skills, attitudes, values and behaviour patterns that allow them to function within a given culture. Sports also allow the members of a society to interact and thus transmit skills, values, beliefs, knowledge and behaviour patterns related to that particular society [12].

In line with those mentioned, the purpose of this research was to identify the degree of social involvement and civic attitude of the inhabitants of the Târgoviște Municipality.

2. Materials and Methods
2.1. Subjects

The selection of subjects for the base experiment was based on multi-layer sampling, so as to cover a diverse population in terms of age, gender, educational level etc. The total number of respondents was 217. Of the 217 participants, 208 are male and 9 are female, all Romanian nationals. The 217 participants live in the city of Târgoviște, in its various neighbourhoods. Most participants are single, 17 are married, 13 stated they cohabitate, 16 are divorced and 2 are widowed. The research subjects were divided into 4 age categories, as

follows: 15 through 24 - 148 participants; 25 through 44 – 47 participants; 45 through 54 – 9 participants, and 13 participants between the ages of 55 and 64.

2.2. Research organization

A 12-item questionnaire was used in this research, aimed at assessing the social profile and civic attitude of the respondents. Additionally, this evaluation tool was validated using Cronbach's Alpha, which indicated a high level of reliability (Table 1).

2.3. Evaluation tools

The questionnaire was elaborated and applied to the respondents using the Google Forms platform. The applied questionnaire was divided as follows: in the first stage of the research the questionnaire contains 7 categories of items, regarding socio-demographic data and information on the participants' social involvement and civic attitude. The next questionnaire items focused on the participants' social status, and the first category refers to their marital status. This questionnaire included both open and closed answers, both single-choice and multiple-choice answers, as well as one question where the answer choices had to be ranked from 1 - the most important answer, to 7 - the least important.

2.4. Statistical analysis

This research used the following statistical analyses: Cronbach's Alpha, percentile calculation, arithmetic mean, standard deviation.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Validation of the questionnaire focusing on social involvement and civic attitude

The questionnaire focusing on social involvement and civic attitude obtained an Alpha validity coefficient of 0.861, indicating an excellent level of reliability (Table 1).

Table 1

Internal consistency of the questionnaire focusing on social involvement and civic attitude

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.861	12

3.2. Results obtained by respondents to the questionnaire regarding social involvement and civic attitude

The first item, "I am up to date on the problems arising in our neighbourhood", had the following answers: 28 of the participants stated that they are constantly up to date on the issues in the neighbourhood where they live, the vast majority (152 participants) stated that they are only aware of the very serious problems and 37 participants stated that they are never aware of the problems in their neighbourhood (figure 1).
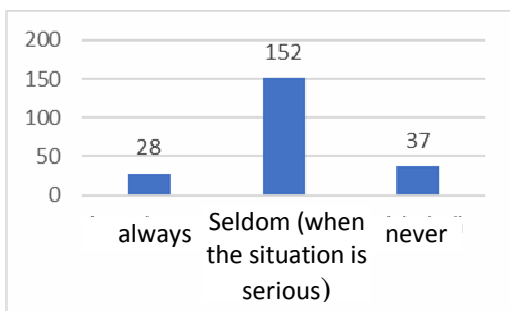

Fig. 1. *I am up to date on the problems arising in our neighbourhood*

The second item of this category concerns the participants' involvement in cleaning and sanitising activities carried out in their neighbourhood. Thus, as can be seen in figure 2, 15 of the respondents in this study always participate in cleaning and sanitising activities in their neighbourhoods, 30 participate rarely and the vast majority (172 respondents) never participate (figure 2).

Fig. 2. *Degree of involvement in cleaning and sanitising activities in neighbourhoods*

The third item in this category concerns the degree of involvement in community activities, as volunteers. Thus, only 15 participants stated they are always involved, while the overwhelming majority never gets involved (figure 3).
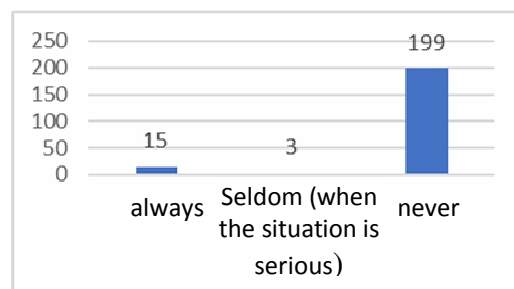

Fig. 3. *Degree of involvement in activities, as volunteers*

The next item concerns the participants' degree of familiarity with their neighbours

in their area of residence. As seen in Figure 18, most participants can name 2, 3 or 4 neighbours in the neighbourhood, and only 2 can name 10 or more neighbours in their area of residence (figure 4).
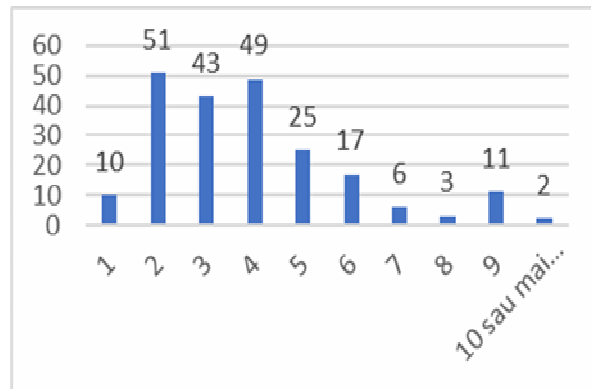

Fig. 4. *How many neighbours in your area can you name?*

The item "*With how many neighbours in your area do you maintain friendships or support or leisure relationships?*" highlighted the following results: 51 participants maintain friendships with 2 or 4 neighbours, while only 2 do so with 10 or more neighbours (figure 5).
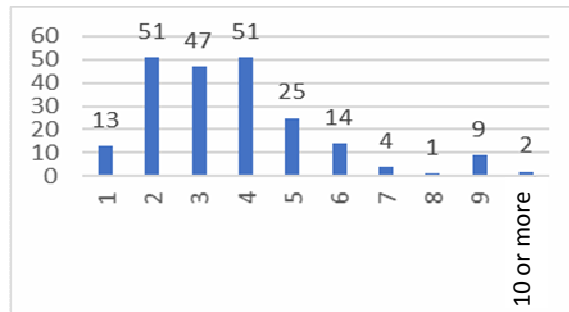

Fig. 5. *Number of neighbours they have friendship or support relationships with*

Regarding the attitude of pride of living in their neighbourhood, the participants stated as follows: only 13 of the 217 participants are proud to live in their neighbourhood, 35 are rarely proud of it and the vast majority - 168 participants, are never proud of the neighbourhood where they live (figure 6).
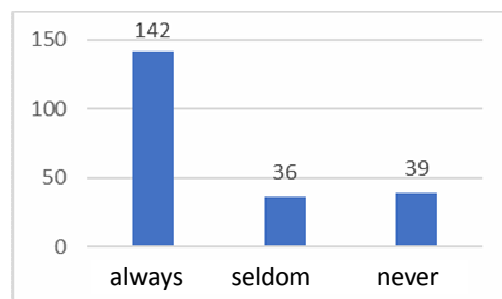

Fig. 6. *The participants' attitude of pride regarding the neighbourhood in which they live*

When it comes to the intention to change their current residence in the near future, the study participants answered as follows: 142 participants stated they intended to change their current residence, and only 39 stated they never think of that (figure 7).
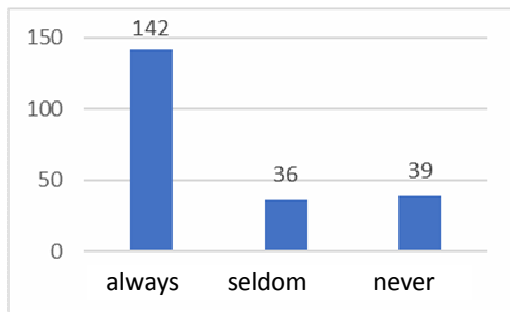

Fig. 7. *Intention to change residence in the near future*

The next item had the possibility of choosing multiple answers, and concerned the participants' opinion on actions that can influence the way in which people get involved in civic activities. Thus, as indicated by figure 8, the participants' answers were as follows:

- 54 participants consider that a better communication of local and neighbourhood projects can influence the way in which people get involved in civic activities (a);
- 137 respondents believe that additional funding can contribute to a higher level of citizen involvement in civic activities (b);
- 21 participants think that the involvement of certified and dedicated people in this type of activities will increase everyone's degree of involvement in neighbourhood activities (c);
- 26 respondents consider that pressure from the local community is a factor in

increasing the degree of involvement in civic activities (d);
- 55 participants consider that involving sports personalities can lead to resident involvement in civic activities (e).
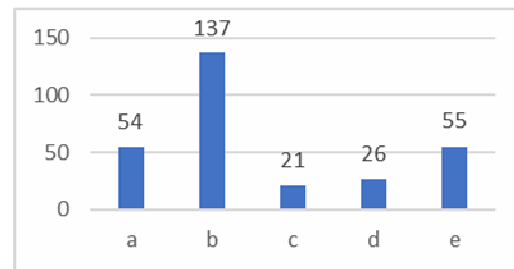

Fig. 8. *Actions that can influence the way in which people become involved in civic activities*

For the ninth item, participants were asked to rank the reasons why people practice social involvement, according to their personal opinion. The options provided to the respondents were:
a. individual upbringing
a. responsibility towards public institutions
b. pressure from family and friends
c. legal regulations
d. interests in the area
e. the desire to make others feel that they belong in society
f. the desire for self-affirmation

The participants' answers highlighted the following general hierarchy:
- 83 participants chose individual upbringing for first place;
- 49 participants chose the desire for self-affirmation for first place;
- 31 participants chose interests in the area for first place;
- 24 participants chose legal regulations for first place;
- 22 participants chose pressure from

family and friends for first place;
▪ 5 participants chose responsibility towards public institutions for first place;
▪ only 3 participants chose the desire to make others feel that they belong in society for first place (figure 9).
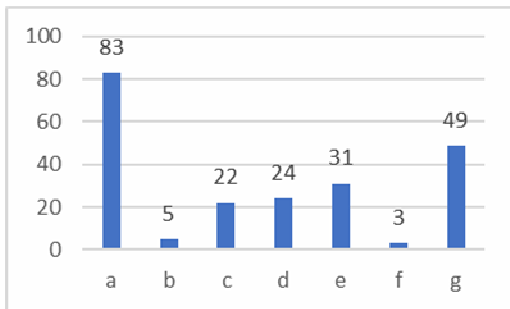

Fig. 9. *Reasons why people become socially involved*

The next item concerned the participants' opinions on the causes that they would support in their neighbourhood of residence (multiple-choice item). Among these could be:
    a. homeless people;
    b. elderly and bed-ridden people;
    c. abused people;
    d. children from broken families;
    e. sanitation of public areas;
    f. neighbourhood sports;
    g. building spaces for sporting activities;
    h. stray animals;
    i. reducing unemployment;
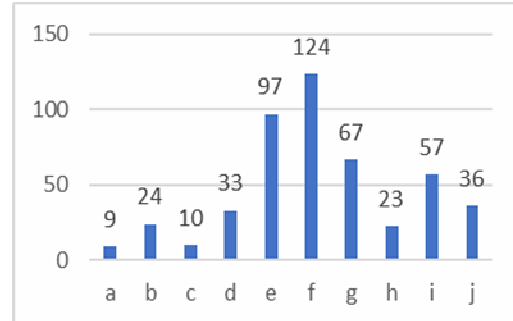   j. reducing crime.

Fig. 10. *Actions that could be carried out in their neighbourhood of residence*

The results highlighted the fact that the highest level of involvement from participants would be in actions such as neighbourhood sports (124 participants), sanitation of public areas (97 participants), building spaces for sporting activities (67 participants) and reducing unemployment (57 participants) (figure 10).

In terms of their degree of involvement when someone is in a humiliating situation, the participants answered as follows: 122 participants stated they do not get involved when someone is in such a situation, 56 participants rarely get involved and only 39 participants get involved in all situations when someone is in need of help (figure 11).
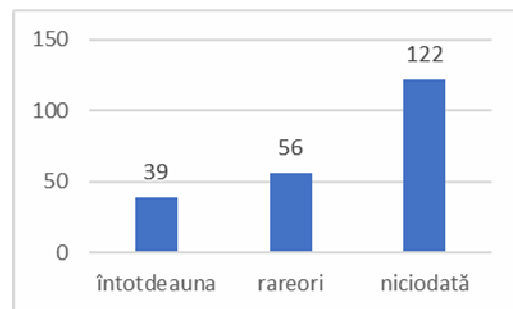

Fig. 11. *Degree of involvement of the participants when someone is in a humiliating situation*

The last item in the category focusing on social involvement and civic attitude refers to the participants' degree of involvement in a conflict in progress.

Thus, most participants (142) never intervene when they see a conflict in progress, 46 participants rarely intervene and only if the people involved in the conflict are acquaintances, while only 29 respondents would always get involved in a conflict in progress, in order to settle it (figure 12).
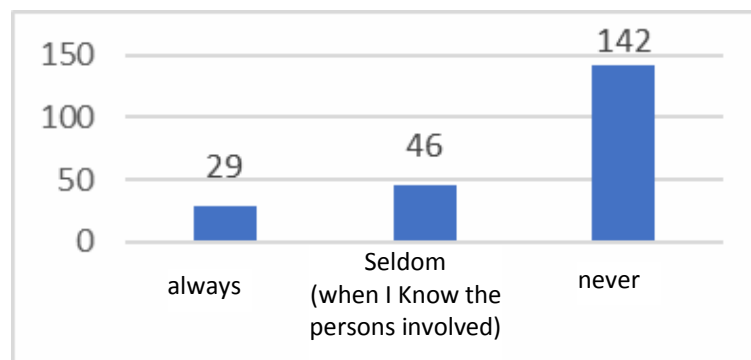

Fig. 12. *The degree of involvement of participants in a conflict in progress*

4. Conclusions

The research results have highlighted the fact that participants generally do not get involved in the life of their community, do not participate in actions meant to improve quality of life in the neighbourhood and do not accept the idea of volunteering in such actions. Nevertheless, a significant number of participants in this study would be willing to become involved if the neighbourhood activities would be related to sports (neighbourhood sports, building spaces for sporting activities, supporting actions if they are promoted by sports personalities etc.).

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