

# **Cultural values of urban population**

## **Case study: Cultural values of the Romanians in the regions South-West Oltenia, South-Walachia and West**

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### **Abstract**

This article aims to present the relations between urban area and culture, to reveal the specific of urban values and examine traditional and current cultural values of urban population, emphasizing by choice representative values for Romanians in three development regions. The article initially focuses on getting a perspective of the contemporary values in urban cultural area, resulting from theoretical approaches from different fields. In the second part of the article we presented the investigative field research based on opinion survey and participative observation conducted on the urban population of three Romanian development regions: South-West Oltenia, South-Walachia and West. The research sought to identify the current values of the urban population, the level of knowledge of cultural infrastructure and the desire of cultural consumption of citizens in urban area, to learn the level of interest for cultural activities by measuring the frequency of participation in cultural events but also visits of cultural institutions, to know the level of trust in public institutions that the people comprised in the sample give, to highlight the conservation or superannuation of traditions in contemporary society and to identify the possibilities of access to cultural goods of cities.

**Keywords:** *cultural values; urban environment; field research; development regions; Romania.*

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### **1. The cultural process of urbanization**

The process of urbanization is often associated with development, modernization, industrialization. Sociologists say that urbanism is a way of life, which, under the influence of some codes of values, customs and behaviors may change. This threatening show of the change of the face of the planet is inextricably linked to an inevitable process, which began at the dawn of human civilization, knows today extremely fast pace, covering areas increasingly wider for individual countries as well as for the whole planet: urbanization (Abraham 1991: p. 7).

Robert Auzelle characterized the phenomenon of urbanization as population growth (in number and longevity), increased space needs (housing, industry, commerce, circulation, recreation), increased personal mobility, use of time, energy and land, all these against the background of technical progress acceleration” (Auzelle 1971: p. 29).

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Some authors consider industrialization as decisive factor that generated the modern process of urbanization. In addition to the economic, technical and social aspects, Miron Constantinescu compares this phenomenon to a "social restructuring process" or a "problem of dynamic social structure" (Constantinescu, Stahl and Drăgan 1974: p. 29).

The definition of the urban environment as being a densely populated area, in comparison with human density in other areas, is insufficient. The urbanization process requires implicitly the focus of attention both on the density of industrial environment, of population and also on the degree of development of services, businesses etc. Radu Ioanid illustrated in his work "The urbanization in Romania. Social-economic implications", the idea that industrialization actually appears as a process aimed at accelerating urbanization, a significant directive of "rational urbanization" (Ioanid 1978: p. 34).

Sociologists have theoretically classified the approaches of urbanization from two major perspectives: the theories of convergence and the theories of divergence of urban development. According to the theories of convergence, urbanization is universal and unique and evolution generally follows everywhere the same general pattern. On the other hand, according to the theories of divergence there isn't a single pattern in the approach of the urbanization process, it is carried out according to the social, political, economic contexts.

The extraordinary development of industry, agriculture, transport, science, etc. finds its counterpart in culture. Today we are witnessing an unprecedented development of culture in all areas. The last decades have made available a huge mass of cultural values, the statistics showing that annually and worldwide there appear hundreds of thousands of book titles, there are broadcasted an impressive number of radio and TV programs, there are paintings and theater plays as they have never been before (Niță 2013, pp. 25-46).

We have reached a cultural explosion, especially in manufacturing and distribution, the individual having easier access to all cultural goods, being able to opt in which way he wants to fulfill his cultural needs. Some cultural goods such as films, TV programs or books are designed to be just a result in an industrial production.

Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer designate the Kulturindustrie (Culture industry) concept, in *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Dialectic of Enlightenment), as systematic and programmatic exploitation of "cultural property" for commercial purposes. Thus, we accept the definition of cultural industrialization as the process of producing cultural consumer goods according to the norms of cultural marketing and industrial rationality, identical to the ones in material production processes in developed economies. Cultural industry presents, from this perspective, the same reports and the same contradictions as material goods industry, except that, being an accomplice to the dominant ideology, its role is to mix and neutralize potential conflicts, especially those that might come from cultural backgrounds.

A substantial source of employment and implicitly of income is the branch of cultural industries in the European Union: publishing and printing, cinema and audiovisual, music or crafts. The European Union implements program platforms that support specific cultural spheres stimulating the community to pursue the benefits offered by the single market and current technologies.

Cultural industrialization developed via the mass media. Of course, it also had major advantages, but the trend of production and distribution of products led to self-consumption.

The process of urbanization has implicitly had effects on culture, creation and cultural consumption. Economic development has proved to be useful in understanding the mechanisms of culture. Since the years 1970-1980 it was developed in France, very rapidly, the economy of culture.

Regarding pretty diabolical alliance between culture and economy, it decided to respond fairly unanimous, in addition, it is remarkable to note that there is a great complicity between psychological and economic approach (Jofre 1997: p. 372).

From a modern sociological perspective on urbanization and lifestyles, Louis Wirth defined the city as a permanent rather wide community, characterized by a high density and heterogeneity (Wirth 1991: p. 128).

Peter Langer sees the city from two perspectives, arguing that it can be seen as a place of dirt, disease, crime, pollution, vice, poverty and other social problems or as a place of culture, art, wealth, work, vitality, spirituality and other social opportunities (Langer 1984: p. 100). The author classifies cities according to the structure and specific way of life that is found in urban areas in three categories: the bazaar city, the jungle city and car city (Langer 1984: p. 100).

## **2. The urbanization process in Romania**

In Romania, the urbanization process has been studied from different perspectives through different applied methods. There are explanations and approaches both in the vision of specialists in population geography, social sciences or economics.

Until 1912, urban population has remained somewhat in a constant balance, urban development knowing an average annual increase of 1.4%, so the city of Bucharest came to have at that time 17.6 % (Ioanid 1978: p. 49).

The period 1948 - 1966 is characterized by a rapid urbanization, "urban population increased during this period from 23.4% to 38.3%" (Abraham 1991: p. 208).

With the instauration of communism in Romania, industrialization was forcedly initiated, and according to the statistics provided by the National Institute of Statistics urban population increased dramatically in this period: 1960 - 5.9 million people, 1970 - 7.5 million people, 1989 - 10.2 million people, 1989 - 12.3 million.

In the past 30 years, the pace of the urbanization process has reduced significantly, more than that, a reversible phenomenon was found, individuals have started to migrate from rural to urban. Experts argue that this is largely due to the financial crisis, the lack of jobs and the undesirable living standards.

According to the population census conducted in Romania in 2011, in our country at that time, a percentage of 52.8% of the population lived in urban areas and 47.2% in rural areas (National Institute of Statistics 2012). Currently, according to data provided by European Commission, Romania has reached an urbanization rate of 54.69% in 2014 (European Commission 2015).

The United Nations, as a result of some research conducted, predicted the urbanization trends, so that in 2030 - 68% of the population of Romania will live in urban areas, while in 2050 this percentage will reach 77% (United Nations. Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Populations Division 2014).

The researches conducted in Romania reflect the social, cultural or economic aspects that proved difficult to quantify and which have a major impact on urban population involving the whole process.

The urbanization process in Romania was differently manifested, depending on the degree of industrialization and professional development opportunities that each region offered.

The whole range of services provided in urban areas is considerably superior to those found in the rural area. However, now it appears that in Romania, cities don't have a social, medical infrastructure etc., to reach the level of those in the powerful urban centers.

Besides this aspect, urbanization also requires the focus of individuals on new values and norms. Knowledge and appreciation of culture in the urban area is up to each person, compared to rural areas where, if a person depreciated tradition was morally sanctioned by the whole community.

Urbanization has manifested as a complex phenomenon and has had profound influences on the economic, political, social, cultural environment, etc. Human behavior has bended on new aspirations imposed by the urban area; there were created new lifestyles, new values, principles or concepts.

### **3. Cultural values of urban population in today's society**

Defined as "concepts, explicit or implicit, distinctive for an individual or characteristic for a group, on what is desirable, influencing the selection of the available modes, means and goals of action" (Kluckhohn 1951: p. 395), values are not independent, being induced by other values and inducing, in turn, other.

Values decisively influence the fundamental choices of individuals, practical and active attitudes, but also current responsibilities of the various specific demands of urban life. Each person lives according to some values, some as individual values, social values, we evolve facing values, we live, each one and all together, with value systems that closely communicate with one another (Diaconescu 1994: p. 13).

In light of some trends specific to contemporary urban societies, new values, norms that characterize different lifestyles have developed. These can bring individuals closer, but on the other hand if a person's value system is different from that assimilated by another person, sooner or later, the connection between the two begins to deteriorate. The existing approaches are, in most cases, strongly unilateral (Porumbescu, 2013: 189). With the emersion of these new values, others were diluted, coming today to disappear, to no longer exist for a great deal of the community.

Highlighting culture as central factor for the developing of contemporary societies is also favored by the globalization of economies and the rise of the production and communication means.

The XX<sup>th</sup> century led to radical changes in the sphere of culture, out of which we can highlight the great successes achieved in scientific knowledge, hence the great importance given to the values of science, the accelerating cultural changes, the crisis of traditional values, the increase in intensity of creation, the rapid integration of cultural values in the system of social activities through the mass media, the democratizing access to culture, the expanding mass culture, etc.

Crossing a period of mutual assimilation of national and European values, but also the permanent exercise of keeping local values belong to an old principle of preserving the verticality of national culture.

Social modernization came along with industrialization, urbanization, but also with the decrease of the role that religious institutions once had on society. Traditional authority has been replaced by legal authority. Industrialization brought along an increased need for manpower and, therefore, led to a greater female participation in the labor market (Voicu 2010: p 56). Thus, as a major effect on specific urban cultural values, roles were redistributed within households, other perspectives, other values or norms were sketched. Anthony Giddens showed that “democratization in the family context implies equality, mutual respect, autonomy, decision - making through communication and lack of violence” (Giddens 1998: p. 93). For these reasons, individuals are increasingly willing to support the values that underlie gender division in the family: a greater involvement of men in domestic activities and a greater participation of women in the labor market.

Regardless of the specific values, whether spiritual, personal, or social, whether they are found predominantly in the rural or urban area, they all have a historical determination. Only in historical perspective the man appears as a demiurge, as a spiritual force overcoming nature, at the same time overcoming himself (Diaconescu 1994: p. 13). An important factor that influences values is also the educational experience that promotes intellectual openness, flexibility and the size of essential perspective for self - orientation values.

The urbanization process and implicitly the modernization one provides development opportunities for the new social values, such as personal freedom, self - development, self - expression, creativity, equality and democracy (Ester, Halman and De Moor 1994: p. 8). Regardless of the society, they are all based on values such as respect, success, power, pleasure, etc., but they diversify and the platform of value orientations tends to bend over the aspirations and dreams of individuals. Values are present in all social processes and play a central role in establishing and maintaining the identity of individuals and collectivities.

Shalom H. Schwartz identified ten different value orientations from a motivational point of view and they are the result of people's thinking. In every society, no matter what time perspective it is regarded, there appear the ten values mentioned by the author, which are illustrated more strongly in urban communities (Schwartz 2005: p. 21). The ten values proposed by Schwartz are: Self - Orientation, Stimulation, Hedonism, Fulfillment, Power, Security, Conformity, Tradition, Benevolence and Universalism.

Rudolf Rezsöhazi classifies the values of contemporary societies, the ones characteristic for the period from the beginning of XXI<sup>st</sup> century, in four big categories: postmodern values, traditional values, central values and latent values. From the category of postmodern values the author included values such as individualism, freedom, honesty, intensity, hedonism, conviviality, spontaneity, fulfillment, relativity, tolerance, permissiveness, experimentation, present time and sexuality (Rezsöhazi 2008: p. 99). Values such as authority, moral rigor or work are enclosed by Rezsöhazi within traditional values, but they are also found in both rural and urban areas.

In the urban area, work is induced by personal fulfillment, which Rudolf Rezsóhazy said in “Sociology of values”, is conditioned by the satisfactions it acquires (Otovescu 2010: p. 261).

In the third group, the author mentions the central values, which he claims “are at the heart of our culture and are subject to general agreement” (Rezsóhazy 2008: p. 131). From the values such as love, family, friendship to those that refer to consumerism, leisure activities or professional success, all may change to a lesser or greater extent, they are found in all societies, but, however, have a different degree of intensity. Each community, each individual knows or lives by these values but they are treated differently depending on the importance they give and the principles they follow.

And finally, the last group of values, in René Rezsóhazy’s view, is the latent values which include: justice, kindness, solidarity and goodness.

Some values have a higher intensity in the countryside and others in urban environments. The ones in urban areas are constantly reforming, especially those which were formed in the last decades. The residence environment is just one of the factors that influence the individual to assume a certain value system, in addition to this there equally contribute the lived experiences, the education level etc., and for these reasons those in charge of studying and classifying values cannot delimitate them concretely.

#### **4. Methodological details used with the research**

As for any sociological research rigorously underlain, the project we conducted to develop the study, aimed at all key steps in such a research process: 1. Argument for choosing the theme; 2. Studying specialized literature; 3. Formulating the hypotheses and objectives of the research; 4. Establishing research methods; 5. Determining the study population; 6. Data collecting; 7. Analyzing the research results; 8. Formulating the conclusions (Mihăilescu 2003, pp. 32-35).

##### **Argument for choosing the theme**

Globalization is the phenomenon that causes significant structural changes in societies, involving a number of new processes like massive technological development, demographic aging or facilitating access to education, all these producing permanent changes of values, so that it became imminent the question: What cultural values dominate today and which of these will prevail in the future? In this context we have chosen to accomplish sociological research in Romania, aiming to analyze the cultural preferences of urban society, mainly focusing on value preferences, perceptions on cultural and social activities, the infrastructure of cultural sector.

##### **Studying specialized literature**

Because we have chosen to study the cultural values of urban population in our country, in the conceptual register of this research we have highlighted in the first part of our article the literature and statistics on the cultural process of urbanization and of the cultural values of urban population.

##### **Formulating the objectives of the research**

The objectives of the research can be summarized as follows:

- To identify the value preferences and orientations of the urban population;

- To identify the state of the cultural infrastructure in the West, South-Walachia and South-West Oltenia regions and the desire for cultural consumption of the citizens in these regions;
- To identify the degree of interest in cultural activities by measuring the frequency of participation in cultural events, but also the visits to cultural institutions;

**Establishing the research methods and techniques**

Because we have chosen as the main objectives the study of cultural values in urban areas, we have considered necessary to conduct a quantitative research that "allowed the examination of social facts through the traits expressed numerically" (Buzărnescu 2010, p. 140).

The opinion survey method was used, based on a questionnaire administered.

**Determining the study population**

The study on urban population values was performed on the adult population, with ages between 25 and 65 years in the regions South - West Oltenia, South - Walachia and West.

The sociological research was conducted, using quota sampling, considering the age and gender of the respondents, on a sample of 2.016 respondents, representative in regard with the number of urban population in the three regions. In choosing the sample of 2.016 persons, was achieved an investigation percentage of 0.1% of the total urban population (2.015.731 persons), divided in 978.370 men and 1.037.361 women, aged between 25 and 65 years (National Institute of Statistics 2013), respecting this percentage for each age category and gender.

The number of questionnaires applied in each region was distributed as follows:

**Table no. 1. Sampling by age and gender, based on the urban population of the three regions**

Age group \ Region		25 – 29	30 – 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 – 54	55 – 59	60 – 64	TOTAL
Urban population in South-Walachia	M	42.135	49.122	48.605	59.371	35.418	44.734	48.699	37.314	365.398
	F	40.049	47.820	49.272	64.739	39.720	50.285	54.118	42.968	388.971
Sample in South-Walachia	M	42	49	49	59	35	45	49	37	365
	F	40	48	49	65	40	50	54	43	389
Urban population in South-West Oltenia	M	34.789	39.417	38.221	45.353	29.497	36.816	35.650	26.083	285.826
	F	33.493	39.064	39.615	50.516	32.470	39.578	37.672	29.236	301.644
Sample in South-West	M	35	39	38	45	30	37	36	26	286
	F	33	39	40	51	32	40	38	29	302

<b>Oltenia</b>										
Urban population in West	M	40.809	44.495	43.988	52.376	32.545	38.945	41.353	32.635	327.146
	F	39.583	44.808	44.836	54.155	33.722	43.088	47.419	39.135	346.746
<b>Sample in West</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>327</b>
	<b>F</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>347</b>
Total urban population on the three regions	M	117.733	133.034	130.814	157.100	97.460	120.495	125.702	96.032	978.370
	F	113.125	131.692	133.723	169.410	105.912	132.951	139.209	111.339	1037.361
<b>Total sample divided by gender</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>978</b>
	<b>F</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>1.038</b>
<b>TOTAL sample</b>		<b>231</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>2.016</b>

**Data collecting**

Data collection in the three development regions was conducted in the period in July- November 2015.

**Results of the research**

As each individual lives in his own created space and shares common natural, political, economic or social conditions it is natural to identify similarities in many ways, but there still appear material, value, attitudinal and behavior distinctions (Vasile, 2010: p. 80).

Almost a quarter of the respondents said they are informed of such activities carried out in the locality where they live and only 17.7% said the opposite. Information can exert an effective influence over an individual’s ideas or opinions and in order to choose or participate in the cultural life you have to own information.

**Table no. 2.** Answer of the question: In general, you consider yourself a person informed about the cultural and social activities in the locality where you presently live?

<b>Answer</b>	Yes	No	I cannot appreciate
<b>Percentage</b>	80.4%	17.7%	1.9%

The awareness of individuals can cause differentiation, but this can be adjusted according to the aspirations or possibilities of each: some people have easier access to information derived from the cultural sphere, but do not use them constructively, and others, although they aspire to a thorough knowledge of a cultural area, don’t have financial or non - financial possibilities to acquire it.



**Table no. 3.** Answer of the question: The information on cultural activities in the locality, you get them, generally ?

Answer	From newspapers and magazines	From the local TV stations	From relatives/ friends/ neighbors	From radio	In a different way	I don't answer
Percentage	45.2%	32.1%	12.7%	6.2%	1.6%	2.2%

In a dynamic and ever changing world, such as the contemporary society, the information sources have diversified, each individual being able to properly manage the information he can get.

According to the 2011 Eurobarometer, published by the European Commission, the first source of information with an overwhelming proportion of 85% is the TV. Locally, newspapers and magazines outperform TV stations (32.1%), gathering a share of 45.2 %. Ranking at no. 3 are the relatives, friends and neighbors who are considered by 12.7 % a source of information on cultural activities taking place in their locality.

The TV stations existing locally are not so watched as the national ones and people in order to get information about the events taking place in their city turn to local newspapers and magazines. Radio can also be placed in the same context as a source of information: the ones who broadcast nationally make public large-scale events, rarely local cultural activities.

Each individual, after a solid experience, provides reliability to an information source or another; some occupy their time after the required working hours relaxing in front of the TV, while others prefer to spend it interacting with relatives and friends (Vasile 2010: p. 9). Individuals often choose information according to the area and cultural products they intend to consume in accordance with their already outlined habits.

Regarding the cultural sphere, infrastructure is one of the main landmarks in order to measure the cultural life in a society. A well equipped city in this regard may reflect on the degree of training and qualification of human resources. An interesting theoretical direction in the sociology of consumption consists in assessing the effects of the multiplication of complex commercial spaces that incorporate chain stores and multiple possibilities either of food, fashion and leisure (Vasile 2010: p. 11).

From the answer to the question “In the locality where you live are there ...? (\*Exhibition halls/ Cultural centers/ Museums/ Bookshops/ Libraries/ Cinemas/ Theatres/ Centers for audio - video rental/ Heritage objects\*)” we note that in the chapter of cultural infrastructure, the South - West Oltenia, South - Walachia and West regions are in a higher position. All 9 numbered indicators gathered over 67%, which confirms that the three regions provide opportunities for high access to cultural activities. The first three places are occupied by libraries, bookshops, but also community centers. Compared with other cultural institutions, the above mentioned are easier to maintain, but also financially more accessible.

A dynamic and in constant development society must respond promptly to all requirements imposed by the status it acquires. A society that claims to be evolved must integrate the necessary and efficient “equipment” to ensure a continuous and competitive cultural consumption.

**Table no. 4.** Answer of the question: In regard to your cultural needs and activities, what institutions do you consider would be more necessary in your locality?

Answer	Theaters	Cinemas	Museums	Philharmonic/ Opera halls	Polyvalent halls/ Sports centers	Exhibition halls	Libraries/ Bookstores	Others	I cannot appreciate
Percentage	22.2%	8.2%	5.3%	3.9%	3.9%	2.7%	1.7%	3.9%	48.2%

According to this study, nearly three quarters of the respondents chose "I cannot appreciate" when asked to name the institutions that they consider to be necessary in their locality, according to the cultural needs and activities. Respondents opted for this alternative response, either the locality where they live provides them with the necessary conditions to undertake cultural activities, either such activities are no longer a necessity for them.

However, 22.2% of respondents said theater was a necessary institution in their locality, 8.2% considered appropriate the presence of cinemas and only 5.3% said that, in regard to their cultural needs and activities, a museum would be necessary. The libraries, bookshops, exhibition halls, the philharmonic, opera or polyvalent halls, all these have gathered less than 4% each.

The weight of the expenses for culture from the total family budget shows the importance that individuals give to the cultural sector. Asked what percentage of the family income they have spent on cultural activities in the last month, nearly half of respondents could not appreciate this aspect, choosing the response "I cannot appreciate". Individuals are not concerned, in general, with planning a certain amount to spend on cultural activities, but become consumers of culture depending on the context. Although we frequently claim that we live in a postmodern society, the daily concerns of the individuals exclude the main condition of post modernity, life starts with a higher level for most people: the basic needs are assured, the people of the country are concerned with building themselves a beautiful life (Vasile 2010: p. 139).

According to Maslow's pyramid, individuals must first satisfy their physiological needs and then the security ones, but the contemporary Romanian society does not offer for many the possibility to reach the top of the pyramid (self-actualization). Although the budget for cultural activities is relatively low, 19.3% of respondents said they assign between 1% and 5% to these activities, 11.8% between 6 and 10 percent and 3.9% between 16 and 20 percent.

The lifestyle, defined as patterns of consumption, reflects a cultural model or cultural preference. But for these cultural social options to become manifested, individuals must have reached a certain level of material welfare so that the major concern of their life to have moved from the basic needs to the higher needs (Vasile 2010: p. 133).

**Table no. 5.** Answer of the question: In general, how often do you go to the theatre?

Answer	Several times a week	Several times a month	Once a month or less	Never
Percentage	0.7%	3.3%	64%	32%

Going to the theater remains a cultural activity that often involves a relatively small percentage of people, according to the barometer of Cultural Consumption conducted in late 2010. This trend is maintained and is available for the population studied in this research, thus only 0.7% of the respondents said they go to the theater several times a week and 3.3% confirm their presence in the theaters several times a month.

However, over half of the people in three sample said they go to the theater once a month or less, but, in contrast, are those who opted for the variant "Never", option that accumulated over a quarter of the total answers.

Going to the theater can be a means of leisure, but can be regarded as an effective addition to one's own culture. Today we find numerous leisure alternatives, but they depend on what each appreciates or what value they give to this institution.

**Table no. 6.** Answer of the question: In general, how often do you go to the opera?

Answer	Several times a week	Several times a month	Once a month or less	Never
Percentage	0.3%	2%	22.5%	75.2%

Over three quarters of the respondents mentioned they never go to the opera, a worrying thing for the activity of such institutions, but also for the community in general, and approximately a quarter of them said that once a month or less go to such performances. Only 2% of the respondents said they go to the opera few times a month and 0.3% attend the opera few times a week. Opera and operetta are considered cultural activities available especially to those with high incomes and this may be one of the reasons for which individuals give up going to such expensive shows.

**Table no. 7.** Answer of the question: In general, how often do you go to the cinema?

Answer	Several times a week	Several times a month	Once a month or less	Never
Percentage	0.3%	3.9%	60.1%	35.7%

Over half of the respondents said they go once a month or less to the cinema, but the opposite of 35.7 % said they never go. Approximately 4% of the interviewed people attend this institution several times a month or several times a week.

According to a study presented three years ago by MEDIA Salles at the Festival in Berlin, Romania is the country that registered the most spectacular growth throughout Europe for the number of spectators present in the cinemas, being in the top countries with the most spectacular jump.

**Table no. 8.** Answer of the question: In general, how often do you go to \_\_ museums / exhibitions?

Answer	Several times a week	Several times a month	Once a month or less	Never
Percentage	0.6%	3.7%	67.2%	28.5%

Cultural institutions such as museums and exhibition centers are attended once a month or less by 67.2% of persons comprised in the sample. On the other hand, 28.5% stated that they never visit museums and exhibitions and the percentage of those who are familiar with this type of cultural consumption is very low (below 5%).

**Table no. 9.** Answer of the question: In general, how often do you go to \_\_\_ shows / music concerts?

Answer	Several times a week	Several times a month	Once a month or less	Never
Percentage	0.3%	8.2%	79.2%	12.3%

Music, entertainment performances and local events are for most people a means of leisure, but also a way to participate in urban cultural life. Over 70% of the respondents said they participate in such performances once a month or less.

**Table no. 10.** Answer of the question: In general, how often do you go to \_\_\_ monasteries / churches?

Answer	Almost daily	Several times a week	Several times a month	Once a month or less	Never
Percentage	0.2%	7.6%	31.7%	53.2%	7.3%

Romania is a nation of believers, according to the latest statistics in the recent years, but we can speak of two types namely: people who believe in God and engage in church related activities, follow the practices and internalize the values promoted by it and believers who rarely go to church and do not necessarily take into account the traditions presented by the servants of this institution.

Between religion and the modern age there is an inevitable antagonism. The differentiation of social spheres and their specific operating norms produces a tension between social order and religion and in a modern society, man and his beliefs about individualism and autonomy act as a nucleus of a distinct religious culture (Durkheim 1973, p. 74).

According to this survey, over half of the respondents said they go to church or monasteries once a month or less and 31.7% several times a week. Only 7.3% of the people comprised in the sample never go to church / monasteries.

**Table no. 11.** Answer of the question: In general, how often do you go to supermarkets / malls?

Answer	Almost daily	Several times a week	Several times a month	Once a month or less	Never
Percentage	9.3%	22.1%	47.1%	21.2%	0.3%

Visits to the mall or supermarkets seem to be more attractive than leisure at the opera or the theatre. Almost half of the urban respondents of the three regions: West, South-West Oltenia and South-Walachia, go several times a month to this kind of shopping centers. A worrying thing is that for nearly 9.3% walking through hypermakets or malls has become a daily routine and 22.1% have this activity several times a week.

Commercial complexes, especially malls, have become the attraction of those who live in urban areas, making it one of the most common social interactions. According to the Marxist theory, the new consumption spaces are designed to make individuals consume more than they need, both in terms of quantity of goods and also in terms of money; they are a form of social control (Vasile 2010: p. 95). Whether they go to buy a particular thing or just admire the windows of the big brands, individuals have made these services not only a utility but also an additional pleasure.

Rezsóhazy stated in the “Sociology of values” that leisure activities have an important part in the value system of Europeans. Holiday periods give rhythm to the year. They become inviolable. Life stops. It is possible to mobilize people for a collective action (Otovescu 2010: p. 698).

**Table no. 12.** Answer of the question: If you had more leisure time, what would you like to do?

Answer	To read	To relax	To practice a sport	To register for training courses	To go to shows (opera, theatre etc.)	To spend more time with family	To repair/ make something in the house	To have fun with friends	To improve artistic skills	Something else
Percentage	16.5%	15.9%	15.1%	14.8%	12.7%	9.1%	7.3%	5%	1.5%	2.1%

Improving their artistic skills or attending specialty or training courses are activities that fall quite rarely in the free time program of the respondents in the three regions. Along with the redundancies in the last period the workloads of the persons engaged in the public system have multiplied, so the free time they can benefit from has been limited.

However, asked if they had more available free time, 16.5% of the respondents said that they would read, 15.9% would relax and 15.1% would practice a sport. At a very small difference from these activities we find spending time with family or going to shows. The manner in which people spend their leisure time is not the result of a free choice, but they are limited to some extent. The real needs of individuals are important and also how they can be met (Vasile 2010: p. 81).

The individual is characterized by a lifestyle and in order to know him in a coherent and deep manner it is not enough to analyze only the patterns of leisure or the specific of cultural consumption, but in the same measure there should be identified and correlated his interests and preferences.

**Table no. 13.** Answer of the request: In regard to the purposes and objectives that you have, please indicate the most important value for you, according to your priorities

Answer	Family	Money	Justice	Freedom	Power	Prestige	Career	Friends
Percentage	65.4%	13.4%	4.9%	3.9%	3.7%	3.6%	3.5%	1.6%

In order to find out what prevails regarding the purposes and objectives they have, urban respondents from the South-Walachia, South-West Oltenia and West regions were asked indicate the most important value for them, according to their priorities.

In the first place we find family which gathered 65.4% of respondents' answers, in second place with 13.4 percent we find money and the last place there is friends with 1,6%.

The perceived quality of life varies according to how they define the current situation and the projections they make about the future (Vasile 2010: p. 214). In times of recession, everyone's priorities change in order to resist demands promoted by society, but, however, family has always occupied a privileged place. Money or career, which ranked on the following positions are essential for supporting the whole family. Professional life is for many a very important part of existence, often occupying many hours every day, but it is a source of income.

## **5. Conclusions**

In a Romanian society in permanent transition from a social and value perspective and in an indefinite state of positioning cultural identity details, we disappointedly find that the superannuation of the population values in the urban area it is easily seen in the preferences of Romanians' extracted from cultural consumption. From the perspective of the theory of values and the theory of knowledge, the democratic age measures the width of structural changes at societal level with obvious accents of deterioration of creation and cultural analysis. The rethinking of values determined by the major social cultural changes has deepened national identity crisis into culture.

Strengthening the position of education is the main viable solution that can provide to every individual, as well as the nation he belongs to, the right to preserve his cultural memory and identity, without which we would be anonymous and irrelevant.

Values, intimate individual realities socially determined, shape attitudes and opinions, supporting each other and generating the choices that people make according on the context. They configure the structure and shape of society, social and professional relations, the organization of family, the state institutions.

And how in contemporary postmodern values circumscribe to the economics, the hedonism of urban population is increasing and contributes to the development of consumer society (centered on amusement, accumulation of material goods, travels, etc.), which is nothing but a clear effect of the development of capitalism. Thus, leisure, gender equality, corporate liability became the most promoted urban values.

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