

Town's Faces. Study of Urban Sociology in Moinești Town

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Abstract: The problematic of urban development has become a very important preoccupation both for the specialists in public policies, sociologists, politologists etc. and for the simple people - more and more implied in the city life, being not indifferent as concern the quality of urban living. All these things become of maximum interest if we refer to the new challenges of the global economic development, of the mix of architectural types and others. Within this context the urban development tends to be the privilege of great demographic nodes (S. Sassen, 2006), of the already existing conurbations risking the marginalization of the urban population less evolved taking into consideration the infrastructure and/ or the geographical/geopolitical centrality.

The problems of the urban development became a concern of prime order both for the specialists in public politics, sociologists, political scientist etc and for ordinary people – more and more involved in the city life, therefore not being indifferent at the quality of the urban habitation. All these things are of maximum interest if we refer to the new challenges of the global economical development, of the interference of architectural types and not only. In this context the urban development tends to be the privilege of the great demographical knots (S. Sassen, 2006), of the conurbations already constituted risking the marginalization of some urban peoples less evaluated concerning the infrastructure and/or geographical/ geopolitical centrality!

Nevertheless from the economical perspective, the great investors' interest for these areas is not absent: the delocalization from the world industry tends towards these areas where we can find out a labor force qualified enough, less exposed to the emigration and settled for the net incomes inferior to those from the developed countries.

In this case we proposed to make a thoroughgoing study in the socio-economical dimension of the little cities – rather to delimitate a series of characteristics of the urban habitation in such a locality. Thus, in October 2008 I was solicited to make a sociologic study that had as theme the degree of urbanism process in Moinești town, Bacău county.

The sample comprised 750 subjects, selected through an aleatory stratification on two stages, out of which 364 were masculine persons and 386 feminine ones, the results having a margin for error of $\pm 3\%$ at a trust level of 95%.

The sample allotment on ages was the following:

Tab. No. 1 *Sample allotment on category of age*

Category of age	18-25 years	26-35 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	Over 55 years
Percentage	16,4%	25,9%	28,8%	15,1%	13,7%

The allotment from the sample approximated significantly the population structure of the town (in total of approximately 25 000 of inhabitants). The allotment in sample was the following: 22,1% graduates of some institutions of superior education, 54,4% graduates of high school and the rest of them in proportion of 32,5% were: graduates of some post high schools (4,1%), vocational education (12,6%) or ceased their studies after 7, 8, 10 classes (6,8%). I came across an entire scale of professions and occupations from unqualified workers up to doctors and teachers, lawyers and engineers. Besides these ones, a proportion of 4,9% of subjects were without occupation. The set of identity questions had in view the residence environment and the type of habitation which they possess. Thus, 76% from the subjects originate in the urban environment and 24% from the rural environment (periurban areas). As far as the habitation is concerned 59,4% from those who answered, live in block of flats, 36,5% live in houses and 4,1% in penthouses.

The study proposed to find out from the citizens how they perceive a civilized living in Moinești and which is the difference between the urban civilization as social representation and the situation itself, the current manner of living and the appreciation on the quality of habitation.

Living in a civilized town means for the citizens from Moinești:

- a certain level of spiritual culture and social development (32,2%)
- respect for the other inhabitants, a Romanian saying „șapte ani de acasă” - “a well- bred child”(15%)
- respect for the general social norms (14,4%)
- infrastructure (public lighting, drinking water etc.) and economical development, architectonic image (joining between old and new constructions)-(29,7%)

To be a civilized citizen means, in the Moinești people's vision: to be honest, sincere and correct (32,6%), to have common sense and respect (30,5%), to keep clean the city, to pay off the local taxes and duties, to participate at the community manifestations and to observe the law (24,2%). A minority stated that being civilized means being religious, diplomat, polite, intelligent etc.

As social representations the persons who answered approximated far enough the dictionary definition (DEX) of the term civilization/ civilized living: „level of material and spiritual development of the society from a period given to a people, to a state; material and spiritual culture or high level of development of a society”. At the same time, according to the same dictionary (DEX), something/somebody *civilized* means „that this one has a culture and an advanced technique; he has reached a superior level of civilization, at an increased life standard; that is polite and gentle”.

It is obvious that at social representations level everything is subordinated to a theoretical standard, to an ideal- type of habitation from different perspectives: social, economical, town-planning etc. Nevertheless the appreciations connected directly to the city where they live are mostly distant different of this pattern. For instance, asked about the cleaning condition of the town, the citizens of Moinești are divided as follows:

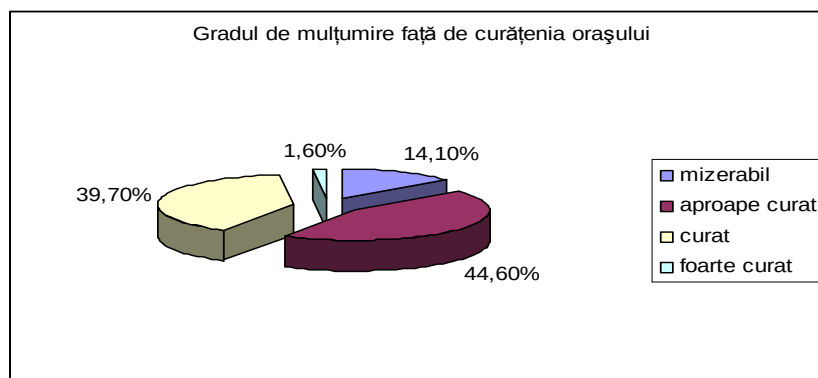


Diagram no.1 *Content degree concerning the town cleaning*

It is noticeable that a good part of those who answered have rather a critical remark concerning the cleaning condition of the town. I also noticed that only 1,6% of those who answered chose the variant „the city is very clean”. It is noticeable that the report between the positive

opinions and the negative ones concerning the town cleaning tends to balance, which is a significant fact.

The same difference I noticed as far as the degree of urbanism process is concerned generally and the appreciations about the urban development of the city:

URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN GENERAL	APPRECIATIONS ABOUT THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY
Buildings and spaces matched with the landscape as well with their aspects (11.9%)	The city is beautiful, acceptable and pleasant (38,7%)
Town extension and development (28%)	The town aspect leaves much to be desired (50,1%)
Infrastructure and economical development (12,7%)	Narrow streets / Problems of the traffic (5,4%)
Cultural development and town modernization (25,1%)	Weak economical development

Diagram no. 2 Differences between urban development appreciation in general and town development appreciation

It is obvious that a good part of these appreciations needs an increased attention for the part of the local authorities. In order to exemplify one of these problems we stopped on the subject of the traffic in Moinești. The citizens estimate the traffic in town as it is represented in the diagram below:

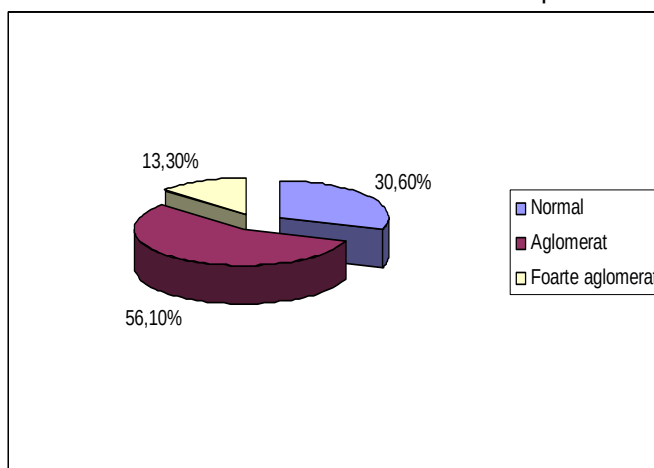


Diagram no.2 Opinion about the urban traffic from Moinești

It is noticeable that the majority consider the urban road traffic as unsatisfactory and through causes there were designated the following aspects:

- 42,9% of the subjects considered that there are too many cars
- 30,5% of the subjects accused the lack of parking and asphalt
- 16,9 % said that they can circulate in good condition
- 5.8% consider that the road traffic is disorderly
- 3,9% reclaim the participants' behaviour in traffic, etc.

This percentage refers predictably to the discontent ones but, on the other hand, I also noticed a significant tendency: nevertheless those who are content of the urban life quality in town cannot, mostly, justify this opinion. This sends as well to the idea of a limited horizon of waiting (there is sometimes the possibility to be satisfied on conditions of very little hoping or in cases when there cannot be significant comparisons!).

That is why I asked the subjects to put in balance three positive aspects and other three negative ones concerning the urban development of the town inviting them to be more punctual for this time:

POSITIVE ASPECTS	NEGATIVE ASPECTS
Wedding House	Gipsy issue
Parks, green spaces and children's playground	Public services of weak quality (water, sewerage, public lighting, sanitation)

Library	The Hotel
Municipal Hospital	The Black Building
Streets and pavements	Agro-alimentary Market
The Church of the Municipal Hospital	The front sides of the blocks
The town center	Lack of green spaces
Public lighting on streets	Communitarian dogs
Town Cleaning	Unemployment
Renovation of Select Complex	Lack of playgrounds, pleasure and sport activities
Infrastructure development	The park
Construction of the House of Culture	

Diagram no. 3 *Positive and negative aspects of the urban development in Moinești*

Another issue of this research aimed at the urban legibility and the question referred to the identification by those interrogated of the buildings / significant monuments for the community life. Thus, the subjects indicated in proportion of 40,2% the Dada Monument, 31,9% the Heroes Monument, 23,7% the Statues: Ștefan Luchian, Tristan Tzara and George Enescu. All these establishments should have had an influence on a certain cultural atmosphere (propitious to the cultural consumption), but Moinești people's opinions were alarming: 80,5% thought that these ones should be renovated, repaired and maintained but at the same time preserving the historical note specific to each monument; 19,6% thought that there should be done more for their promotion and for the social and cultural life stimulation. Otherwise, not accidentally, asked about the satisfaction degree concerning the cultural activities that take part in their locality only 12,4% of those who answered considered it normal, good or satisfactory and in proportion of 87,6% stated that this is mediocre, inexistent, weak, unsatisfactory etc.

We consider all these results not to be optimistic concerning the relaunch in future of a social and cultural positive life. In this context it was very useful to take into account the citizens' opinions from Moinești concerning a sustainable development of the urban life.

In this sense we wanted to find out if it is necessary the town extension with new residential quarters and which are the aimed areas. The necessity of urban area extension of Moinești town is remarked in proportion of 59,9% from those who answered. As far as the potential areas are concerned I obtained for their part, the following recommendations:

- Outskirts: 22,8%,
- Lucăcești: 13,55%,
- Gas Area: 12,45%,
- Waterside: 4,7%,
- Bridges: 2,1%

I noticed that the citizens of Moinești town reclaimed the lack of the green spaces and the crowded road traffic. At the same time they are discontent by the impossibility of spending their free time in a civilized manner, with benefices in the cultural and social life of the citizen. Because of this reason I addressed to the research subjects a series of four questions concerning these aspects, and I got the following results: the areas where the green spaces should be created are: "Băi" Park: 13,3%, Fir Park: 11,4%, on the spaces between blocks: 9,5%, everywhere this is possible: 32,6%, and the prohibition of the road traffic in the center area of Moinești during the week-end would be a solution for 77,7% of those who answered.

The present research put in evidence the inhabitants' desire from Moinești town of having a museum in their town in proportion of 81,1%. I went further and asked for their part a suggestion concerning the domain and I obtained the following results:

- History /Archeology: 33,9%,
- Oil: 19,3%, -
- Art/Culture and civilization: 13,1%,
- Ethnography and folklore: 7,7%,
- Any other domain: 22,3%

Finally, in order to fulfill a complete and complex image of Moinești people's opinions, I invited them to imagine that they themselves have the power to decide and specify the improvements that could bring an urban development to Moinești town. In a decisional position we shall see their reaction:

- 15,7% would create more jobs,

-42,7% would take care more of the town cleaning, of infrastructure, would cover with asphalt more streets, would renovate the parks, would arrange more green spaces and plant more flowers, would arrange and built more places for parking, would illuminate more streets, would create public toilets, would renovate the Spa, would accomplish the construction of the hotel;

-14% would activate the social and cultural life through movie and theatre performances, through the organization of some spectacles for population (public), sportive activities;

- 6,9% would built new habitations for young people and also old people's home and children's home, would modernize the schools and the kinder gardens .

- 6,8% would improve the public services

- 2,9% would solve the gipsy issue and the Black Building

- 2,0% would solve the issue of the communitarian dogs

- 1,1% would built a canteen for poor or old people's home

- 7,9% of the subjects did not answer.

This last question stirred a great interest for those who answered. Coming back to the starting variables let's add the fact that the town issues were of interest for the entire questioned population no matter the sex or studies, but on categories of age I noticed a massive lack of interest especially at the young persons of 20 years.

Conclusions

We think that the results of our research try to find a solution of the issues that the local public administrative authorities are confronting with, offering, at least for the moment, a framework of local action concerning the socio-economical development of the locality.

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*** Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române