THE STUDY OF SOCIAL VALUES
IN RECENT ROMANIAN PUBLICATIONS

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Abstract

Conceived in order to draw intercultural comparisons on the value orientations of the population in the Euro-Atlantic space, the European Values Survey (EVS) and the World Values Survey (WVS) proved to be the largest international research project on values. Beginning with the second wave of investigation in which Romania also took part, the interest for the results of this project becomes visible through numerous empirical or theoretical studies published in magazines or printed by Romanian publishing houses. This article aims to make a brief review of the publications on the subject of social values that appeared in the last 15 years in Romania, in order to integrate the results of several studies serving as a point of departure for future research. In our approach, we focused on journals and studies in the field of sociology, without conducting systematic research in other fields.

Keywords: social values, social tolerance, social solidarity

Résumé

Conçues afin de réaliser des comparaisons interculturelles concernant les orientations des valeurs de la population de l'espace Euro Atlantique, European Values Survey (EVS) et World Values Survey (WVS) ont prouvé être le projet international de recherche le plus ample concernant les valeurs. A partir de la deuxième vague d'enquête où la Roumanie a pris part elle aussi, l'intérêt pour les résultats de ce projet devient visible par de nombreuses études empiriques ou théoriques publiées dans des revues ou imprimées aux maisons d'édition roumaines. Cet article se propose de réaliser une brève présentation des publications parues dans les 15 dernières années en Roumanie, orientées vers le thème des valeurs sociales, afin d'intégrer les résultats de plusieurs études qui servent comme point de départ pour les recherches futures, dans une démarche centrée sur des revues et des travaux du domaine de la sociologie et nous n'avons pas réalisé une recherche systématique vers d'autres domaines.

Mots-clés: valeurs sociales, tolérance sociale, solidarité sociale

Rezumat

Concepute pentru a realiza comparaţii interculturale privind orientările valorice ale populaţiei din spaţiul euro-atlantic, European Values Survey (EVS) şi World Values Survey (WVS) s-au dovedit a fi cel mai amplu proiect internaţional de cercetare asupra valorilor. Începând cu cel de-al doilea val de anchetă la care şi România a luat parte, interesul petru rezultatele acestui proiect devine vizibil prin numeroase studii empirice sau teoretice publicate in reviste sau tipărite la edituri româneşti. Articolul de faţă îşi propune o scurtă prezentare a publicaţiilor apărute în ultimii 15 ani în România orientate spre tema valorilor

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sociale, cu scopul de integrare a rezultatelor mai multor studii, servind ca punct de plecare pentru viitoare cercetări. În demersul nostru, ne-am focalizat pe revistele şi lucrările din domeniul sociologiei fără a realiza o căutare sistematică spre alte domenii.

Cuvinte cheie: valori sociale, toleranţă socială, solidaritate socială

This article aims to identify the studies published in Romania between the years 2000-2015, which are oriented towards the social values theme and, at the same time, to highlight the specifics of the studies, the major research directions, and theoretical approaches used. For the present study I selected a wide range of Romanian journals, using the CEEOL and PROQUEST databases: *Sciencific Annals of the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iasi, Sociology and Social Work Section (Analele Ştiinţifice ale Universităţii Alexandru Ioan Cuza, Secţiunea Sociologie şi Asistenţă Socială); Romanian Journal of Sociology (Revista Română de Sociologie); Studia Sociologica; Romanian Sociology (Sociologie Românească); Quality of Life (Calitatea Vieţii)*, as well as *Revista Inovaţia Socială* available online http://www.inovatiasociala.ro. I took into consideration both the articles published in Romanian, as well as those published in English and French.

Currently the European Values Survey and the World Values Survey constitute the most important and most quoted surveys dedicated to the comparative analysis of values.

In 2002, Cosmina Rughiniş publishes in *Sociologie Românească*, the article *Valori europene în relaţiile intime. Studiu comparativ / European values in intimate relationships. A comparative study*. The research focuses on eight countries: Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Poland, The Czech Republic, France, Germany, and Italy, and it involves the processing of the information provided by the databases from 1993 and 1999 of the EVS. The comparative analysis is oriented towards family behavior, the symmetry of gender roles, the expectations regarding the conditions of a happy marriage, the tolerance of non-conventional intimate relationships in these eight countries, but also towards the changes that took place between 1993 and 1999 in the values of Romanian people.

Another study which belongs to Professor Dumitru Sandu was also published in *Sociologie Românească* Magazine, discusses the European differentiations of social tolerance – *Diferenţieri europene ale toleranţei sociale*. The researcher works with data from EVS at a level of 25 European countries, and emphasizes the importance of religious and political experiences in the sociability of a tolerant type, considering important "three large groups from the former communist countries (with maximum intolerance), countries with a predominantly Protestant population (of maximum tolerance), and those with a predominantly Catholic population" (Sandu 2002, p. 1).

Valori, toleranţă şi spiritualitate la tinerii români / Values, tolerance and spirituality in Romanian youth is the title of an article which uses both data of EVS

and the results of the research *Starea socială şi aşteptările tinerilor din România – Barometrul Tineret 2008 (The social status and the expectations of Romanian youth)*. It involves a comparison between youth and adult values, between Romanian youth and European youth values, as well as an analysis of the evolution of these values over several years (Lazăr 2012, pp. 463-482). The study dedicated to the value profile of the Romanian society, *România pseudo-modernă / Pseudo-modern Romania*, written by Bogdan Voicu, quotes the EVS results for comparative analyses between Romania and other European countries, proving that the Romanian society is profoundly oriented towards material values, compared to countries such as Sweden, The Netherlands, and Denmark, which show more interest in post-material values. The results of another study of values oriented towards Romania and Hungary, this time based on the information provided by the European Social Survey, can be analyzed in the article *Self-transcendence Values in Hungary and Romania. A preliminary Analysis of Benevolence*, written by Laura Nistor and Petru Iluţ (2011, pp. 25-46).

Studia Sociologica Magazine offers a special issue in 2011 with the title: *Twenty years of post-communist transformations. Changes in values and attitudes.* The themes addressed by the authors of this issue include the changes which occurred within the Europeans' attitudes and values in the post-communist transition period. Wil Arts presents the theoretical guidelines of the comparative study of values in the article *Explaining European Value Patterns: Problems and Solutions*, thus offering a brief history of the EVS, and arguing the necessity to improve its theoretical framework in time (2011, pp. 7-31). Mircea Comşa and Horaţiu Rusu, through the article *Value change in Eastern Europe: what is happening there*, engage in longitudinal and cross-national analysis regarding the value changes in Eastern Europe, with the intention of finding similar values in countries with a similar culture and economic development. Using the resources offered by EVS/WVS for a period of 19 years (1990-2009) related to Albania, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, The Czech Republic, East Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine, the two authors show it is not possible to talk about a global development towards the convergence of values in Eastern Europe, but only about a partial convergence on certain groups of countries. The question that concludes the study, and which can indicate the path to a new research project, is whether these partial convergences can be explained in terms of the variety of social, cultural, political, and economic circumstances (2011, pp. 33-61).

Another article, *Linking normlessness and value change in the post-communist world. Patterns of support for democracy in Spain and Romania* establishes two research directions: the first studies whether the transformations of the capitalist culture is reflected in the individual values which change the informal control, and the second studies whether the new latent sociability is connected to the lack of norms. Both perspectives start from the premise that the apparent reality of the

communist dystopia caused not only a change in individual life, "a boom in human happiness", but also a change in social life. However, people seem to devalue the sphere of interpersonal relationships in the transition period, since the residents of the former communist countries are often nostalgic and pessimistic when talking about the changes in the interpersonal relationships, about friendship, family, or social commitment. The study focuses on patterns of democracy support in the post-totalitarian period (Swader 2011, pp. 63-94).

Sociologie Românească Magazine dedicates two issues to the subject of values: issues 1-2 from 2002 with the title *Valori / Values*, and 1-4/2001, *Valori şi democraţie / Values and democracy*. From the articles which can be found in the latter issue, we mention: *Trust-mistrust in European Democracies* (Dogan 2001, pp. 1-19); *România în cadrul celui de-al doilea val al democratizării / Romania in the second wave of democratization* (Mărginean, Precupeţu, I. and Precupeţu, M. 2001, pp. 20-34); *Modernitate religioasă în societatea românească / Religious modernity in the Romanian society* (Voicu 2001, pp. 70-96); *Structură socială şi etnicitate / Social structure and ethnicity* (Tufiş 2001, pp. 97-123).

Romanian youth values is the subject of a nationwide study which integrates, at the same time, the results of other research studies carried out in France, Hungary, and Poland, and whose conclusions are presented in the article *Valori, norme, atitudini morale şi civice în rândul tineretului / Values, norms, moral and civic attitudes among the youth* (Petre 2002, pp. 71-84). The same subject is addressed in the article *Un posibil portret socio-moral al tineretului rural / A possible socio-moral portrait of the rural youth* (Petre 2002, pp. 349-364). Based on the data coming from research conducted on representative national samples, but also on the information obtained from a case study in two rural communities from Sibiu, the study *Profilul valoric în contextul ruralului românesc actual. Studiu de caz: comunităţi rurale din judeţul Sibiu / The value profile in the context of Romanian rural areas today. Case study: rural communities in Sibiu* outlines a value profile of the rural population in Romania (Popa 2004, pp. 244-255). Iluţ Petru focuses on the relationship between universal and local values, but also on the ratio between the individual and the social ones, in the article *Dinamica valorilor sociale /The social values dynamics.* Here, the author "works with R. Boudon's idea of axiological irreversibility, and adds the idea of axiological negentropy" (Iluţ 2004, p. 16).

Mălina Voicu and Bogdan Voicu present in the article *Romanian Sociology Today: Continuities and Discontinuities in Social Values in Post-communist Romania* the social values dynamics in post-communist Romania, showing the changes which appeared in value orientations in areas such as religion, family, gender equality, democracy, work, and tolerance, with a slight increase of these orientations towards modern values, which is expected to be much higher in the following years (2009, pp. 161-178). Two years later, these authors publish a study which is focused on the effects of the social capital indicators on welfare, *How sociability and trust impact on welfare attitudes: a cross-European analysis*

(Voicu, M., Voicu, B. 2011). The study *Egalitate şi roluri tradiţionale. O analiză comparativă a valorilor implicate în legitimarea politicilor de suport pentru femei în ţările europene* /*Equality and traditional roles. A comparative analysis of the values involved in legitimizing the support policies for women in European countries* is based on the hypothesis of an existing relationship between the type of policies promoted by different countries to support women and the type of values related to women's position in that society. For this purpose, the author focuses on the policies which are meant to facilitate women's access to the labor market and to favor the division of household tasks, being interested in policy models designed to support women from various European countries (Voicu, M. 2002).

With the study *Social remittances and social capital: values and practices of transnational social space,* Eliza Markley clarifies the significance of social remittances in relation to other types of remittances, with an accent on the factors which influence the magnitude of their impact on society. In the second part, the author presents the concept of social capital "as a transfer network of social values and norms between home countries and host countries" (in the case of migrations) and its attributes: trust and reciprocity. Because the latter ones hold an important role in forming solidarity between migrants and those in the home country, the author argues that "the transnational space is created by the social capital" (2011, pp. 365-378). At the same time, "the symbolic capital, made by view and trust" can have an important role in ensuring collaboration between institutions (Stan *et al*. 2011, pp. 123-143).

A series of articles is oriented towards specific values, such as social tolerance: *Încredere şi toleranţă faţă de alte naţiuni sau etnii. Cercetare comparativă asupra tinerilor din România şi Ungaria / Trust and tolerance towards other nations and ethinicities. Comparative research on youth in Romania and Hungary* (Petre 2004, pp. 197-209); *Pratique religieuse, intolérance sociale et autoritarisme politique. Le renouveau religieux dans la Roumanie urbaine postcommuniste* (Dragoman 2011, pp. 96-112); *Discriminarea în România comparativ cu situaţia din ţările vecine / Discrimination in Romania compared to the situation in neighboring countries* (Chelcea 2009); *Patologii sociale în România actuală. Posibile soluţii spirituale / Social pathologies in Romania today. Possible spiritual solutions* (Gavriluţă 2010); *Diferenţieri europene ale toleranţei sociale/ European differentiations of social tolerance* (Sandu 2002, pp. 1-37).

Another group of studies focuses on the theme of social solidarity: *Solidaritatea socială în criză / Social solidarity in crisis* (Preotesi 2010); *Solidaritate şi spirit comunitar în vremuri de restrişte / Solidarity and community spirit in difficult times* (Dima 2010, pp. 260-295); *Solidaritatea socială, în contextul reformelor sistemelor de pensii / Social solidarity in the context of pension system reforms* (Frunzaru 2006, pp. 363-373). Bogdan Voicu, Horaţiu Rusu and Mircea Comşa make a cross-country comparison regarding the solidarity of Romanians by reference to European societies in the study *Atitudini faţă de solidaritate în România (Attitudes*

towards solidarity in Romania), published in the volume *Ocupare şi incluziune socială (Social occupancy and inclusion)*, using the databases provided by EVS and WVS. The article *Intergenerational solidarity in Romanian social and health care policies*, written by Daniela Şoitu and Adina Rebeleanu, proposes "a critical analysis of the effects that public policy developments have on intergenerational solidarity, which guide the health and social protection fields in Romania" (2012, p. 33). The theme of intergenerational solidarity is also addressed in the study *Pour le vieillissement actif et la solidarite entre les generations* (Ionescu 2012, pp. 7-33). The interest in social solidarity within a society, even in the context of correlating it with the level of economic growth, derives from the appreciation of social values as "key values, fundamental in the development of a region", and especially in "social development" (Medeleanu 2013, p. 122).

Among the volumes with the theme of social values, edited in Romania in the past 15 years: Sandu, D.*, Sociabilitatea în spaţiul dezvoltării: încredere, toleranţă şi reţele sociale* (2003); Iluţ P., *Valori, atitudini şi comportamente sociale. Teme actuale de psihosociologie* (2004); Voicu B., Voicu M., *Valori ale românilor: 1993-2006: o perspectivă sociologică* (2007); Voicu M. *România religioasă: pe valul european sau în urma lui?* (2007); Crăiţoiu, C., *Societatea românească azi: diferenţieri socio-culturale şi orientări valorice* (2011); Bodea, D., *Valorile angajaţilor români* (2013).

Conclusions

The results of this study show varied tendencies in approaching the social values theme in the Romanian research. Part of the mentioned research uses information which is available through the European Values Survey and World Values Survey databases in order to make cross-country comparisons using comparative methods of value analysis by relating Romania to the rest of the European countries. Another category made longitudinal analysis, compared the evolution of the values of the Romanian society over an extended period of time. At the same time, a different group focused on the theoretical framework of social values. It can be said that the new waves of the ESV investigation demonstrate the dynamics of social values which will lead to a series of new debates and research on the Romanian social values.

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