



Dynamics of Social Values: 1990–2012

Bogdan VOICU

Romanian Academy, Research Institute for Quality of Life, Bucharest, Romania
Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Romania
bogdan@iccv.ro

Balázs TELEGDY

Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
balazstelegdy@gmail.com

Abstract. Our paper starts by portraying our views on social change and on the role that value change plays in the mix of social change. Then, we explain the selection of the four domains – attitudes towards welfare state, attitudes towards democracy, the participative culture, and gender beliefs – and what we expect to see in a post-communist society. We do not intend to explore the four domains in-depth. However, the findings are important *per se* and provide a unique standpoint in the existing literature as they reveal some new aspects of the transitional period in Romania and generally in Central and Eastern Europe.

Keywords: welfare state attitudes, gender values, civic participation, attitudes towards democracy

Introduction

Sociology came into existence as an independent conceptual body and delimited from the broad philosophical root as a reflective conception about social change (Rusu 2016, Sztompka 2004). More precisely, it started as an explanation of modernization and modernity (Vlăsceanu 2007, Voicu 2010). It has remained up to nowadays the task of sociologists, and social scientists in a broader perspective, to take account of transformations in the human societies. In the age of normativism, there was even a surge in searching for a way to engineer change (Wright Mills 1959). A milder version of such attempt was latter embraced by the debate upon public sociology (Agger 2000).

Societies are always on the move. For instance, in the field of redistribution and welfare production, one may observe, in the recent decades, how generous welfare states were more or less changed under the influence of neoliberalism and how neoliberalism was replaced by social investment as core idea (Deeming

and Smyth 2015). When it comes to education, one may notice the expansion of higher education, with its transformation of vertical inequalities into horizontal ones: nowadays, it is less of a problem to access university, but the social structure reproduces through segmented access to better universities and to more prestigious departments within universities (Lucas 2001, Voicu and Vasile 2010).

Such visible changes do not come out of the blue. They are said to be at least accompanied, if not triggered, by transformations of public opinion (Page and Shapiro 1983), particularly in initial stages of institutionalization (Raven et al. 2011). Even more subtle, more intimate changes in social values are underlying the changes in attitudes, through which they are expressed (Jagodzinski 2004). ‘Silent revolutions’ (Inglehart 1971) are likely to occur, and change may surprise an uninformed public. Another side of the truth is that even the sociologists can be surprised by the evolution of the societies. A good example, within the sociology of transition, is the incapacity of social sciences, or at least of its practitioners, to predict sudden changes in the former socialist states in Europe, as it was debated in the conference entitled „Láttuk-e, hogy jön?” [original title in Hungarian; in English: Did we see it coming?] (1990, Budapest). However, it is the task of social science to anticipate such transformations, or at least to document them.

This is the task that this material undertakes. We consider changes in Romania, in the quarter of a century past from communist fall-down, and we document it from the viewpoint of selected social values and attitudes. We do not look for comprehensiveness but for illustrating a potentially tremendous change in society that goes beyond political organization and economic output.

We choose a simple, almost obsolete, but yet very familiar framework of reference, which any social scientist would easily recognize. We take Parson’s (1957) AGIL as an organizing structure. It helps us to select attitudes towards welfare state, attitudes towards democracy, the participative culture, and gender beliefs as the four domains that we address as exemplification.

The paper starts by portraying our views on social change and on the role that value change plays in the mix of social change. Then, we explain the selection of the four domains and what we expect to see, in a post-communist society. For each domain, we document change by using survey data and discuss the observed transformations. In the end, we discuss the implications and the trends that we expect in the near future.

We do not intend to explore the four domains in-depth. However, the findings are important *per se* and provide a unique standpoint in the existing literature as they reveals some new aspects of the transitional period in Central and Eastern Europe. The analysis of the countries which have experienced the communist rule can reveal the common communist heritage by showing similarities in different parts of the social institutions or value orientation despite the fact that they have quite significant differences in other contextual aspects.

Social change and value change

Change is inherent in human societies, but one needs careful thinking to discover what triggers it: social Darwinism looked at mere evolution (Niedenzu et al. [eds] 2015); economists devised it as a predetermined cyclical growth (Rostow 1990); it has been seen as a by-product of power-ordered relationships between nations involved in trading commodities and symbols (Cardoso 1977, Wallerstein 2011); as a common evolution of all segments of social life (Lipset 1981); as triggered by economic development (Inglehart 1997), by particular cultural patterns (Weber 2002), or by a mixture of factors of economic, social, and cultural nature (Inglehart and Welzel 2005).

The consensus about the causal relations to trigger change at macrosocial level is far from being reached. However, one may indicate that change is related to a certain action of social agents. They may change in a way or another the conditions in which society evolves, either of natural, social, economic, political, or cultural nature. And action and agency are related to patterns that lead to action.

The dual processual model claims that action depends on two types of processes (Evans 2011, Miles 2015, Vaissey 2009). One is automatic, based on quick cognitive processes. The second is slower, being consciously driven. Morals, values, or cultures stand behind action as core constituents of the invisible drivers to trigger individual attitudes and behaviours (Hitlin and Vaisey 2013, Jagodzinski 2004, Parsons and Shils 1951). This leads us to values as core elements for social change. A change in values may change society, providing it with a new ‘software’ to run it. We also have to mention the cultural lag phenomenon within societies where a sudden change occurs (Brinkman and Binkman 1997, Ogburn 1957). In our particular case, the societies of the socialist Europe need(ed) some time to form their responses – in reforming the old or creating new social institutions –, which would offer a proper way to satisfy its inhabitants’ needs in the new socio-economic and political context.

However, what are values? There is enough consensus that values are latent constructs to manifest through behaviours and attitudes (Jagodzinski 2004, Voicu 2010) that are social since they depend on the influence of social environment which instils core cognitive patterns in individuals (Parsons & Shils 1951), in particular during early socialization (Inglehart 1997). The idea that early socialization is decisive in shaping values led to a view that society changes mainly if generations change (Mannheim 1952), and values are stable over one’s life (Arts 2011, Jagodzinski 2004). However, this is contradicted by evidences that people may adopt rational/modern values at contact with the working environment (Inkeles 1969), that culture is adaptive to environment (Welzel 2007), in particular to negative economic fluctuations (Inglehart and Baker 2000). Another view discusses diffusion of values due to social networks, with a focus

on their topology and level of consolidation (Centola 2015). A newer body of literature discusses about institutionalization effects (Arts 2011, Gundelach 1994, Voicu 2014). Exposed to the influences of existing institutions, adults tend to change in the sense that they internalize the corresponding norms, and transform them into personal values. The explanation is consistent with the other above-mentioned explanations of value change as dependent on the influence of the environment. According to the dual processual model, this leads to changes in action. By extension, if institutional changes are in place, one may expect a change in values to be more important when the institutions become stable (Raven et al. 2011).

Such perspective makes even more interesting to consider the dynamic of values in a society in transition. This is a field where institutional change and negotiations around new societal organizations create the space in which existing values may influence the organizational set-up, while adoption of new institutions may lead to value change.

Regarding the topic of the paper, the transition in Eastern Europe means, in general terms, two major shifts. Generally speaking, one is in regard to the political system – from totalitarianism to democracy, i.e. the multi-party system, competing at regular intervals for power – and the other one is the shift from centrally planned economy to market-based economy. Modelling the transition process within these coordinates, as McIntosh et al. (1994) stated, there are four possible attitudes towards the change in the post-socialist Europe (*Table 1*).

Table 1. *The four possible types of reaction towards changes in Eastern Europe*

		Liberal Democracy	
		Enthusiasts	Sceptics
Free Market	Enthusiasts	Reform enthusiasts	Democratic sceptics/ market enthusiasts
	Sceptics	Democratic enthusiasts/ market sceptics	Reform sceptics

Source: McIntosh et al. (1994: 488)

AGIL & domains to be considered

Family, religion, the redistribution system provides consistent patterns that people tend to internalize as personal values (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001). They add to various large domains where values determine behaviours, including gender cultures, cultures of participation, norms of sociability, tolerance, orientations towards environment protection, etc. The aim of this paper is to simply exemplify value change in several domains in which it matters. Therefore, we do not cover

the whole range of potential value changes. Such task would be impossible in a journal paper. Instead, we decided to focus on a very short selection of domains.

We use the Parsonsian AGIL framework to guide the selection. In his functional theory of action, Parsons proposed a fourfold tableau to explain the major subsystems that shape society. Without necessarily agreeing with the Parsonsian explanation, we use the same framework to select the domains that we are looking for. Adaptation, Goal-Attainment, Integration, and Latency are the four broad fields in the scheme devised by Parsons to depict the social system through its core functions.

Adaptation involves the capacity of society to interact with environment. It is mainly related to the whole activity to produce commodities and to redistribute them in order to ensure the fulfilment of various needs of the individuals and collectivities. This paper chooses to refer to the redistributive side of the Adaptation, and we will refer values related to this dimension, which are reflected in the attitudes towards redistribution. They are an important topic for change, particularly in the transition societies, but also in established welfare regimes that underwent in recent decades through a shift from the affluent welfare provision to influence of neoliberalism, and then to priority for social investment (Deeming and Smyth 2015).

Goal-Attainment refers to the ability to set goals for future evolutions, and to develop corresponding policy. It involves dealing with major decisions related to societal organization, and we addressed it through the attitudes towards democracy, again a topic of interest for transition societies, but also one under attack in the Western World, considering the past 15 years of war-like attacks from non-democratic regimes that come together with a rise of extreme right and anti-establishment movements.

Integration has to do with the consistent value patterns within society, including agreement upon commonly accepted lifestyles and ways of doing. Since frequent relationships reflect a culture of integration, we consider participation as exemplification for this subsystem. In particular, we refer to the orientation to involve in voluntary organizations, which is a way to ensure a common basis for producing integration.

Latency refers to stability of society over time, in particular to institutions to boost consistency in norms and values between older and newer generations. Family and school are in particular important to this dimension. We refer to family, but we do it indirectly, through gender values. They are essential for setting up roles within society and family, and are also subject to continuous transformations over the past decades, and even during the entire past century.

Method and data

We employ survey data and we describe the dynamics of the indicators for each of our four domains. The main source is given by the Values Survey, provided by the World Values Survey Association and the European Values Study Foundation. Both groups provide full information about their aims and their surveys on their websites.¹ They have run comprehensive value surveys in some 100 societies (but not all in the same wave), in 1981–1984, 1990–1993, 1999–2002, 2005–2009, and 2009–2012. Some countries participated in all surveys, others just in some. For instance, Romania was part of the studies in 1993, 1999, 2005, and 2012. According to the current advice from the Romanian Group for Studying Social Values,² another instance of being part of WVS, in 1998, should be disregarded or used with much caution (Voicu and Voicu 2002b, 2007).

For *attitudes towards welfare state* that we use as indicator, following Voicu's operationalization, we argue that the general attitude towards the welfare state consists in the people's general attitude or value orientation towards a paternal state versus individual freedom. This attitude was measured in consecutive waves of EVS/WVS with the question: "The government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for." vs. "People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves." The answers are coded on a 10-point scale, where 1 means the total acceptance of government responsibility and 10 stands for the people's responsibility to provide for themselves.

For *gender beliefs*, we employ four 4-point scales, stating agreement with: on the whole, men make better political leaders than women do; a university education is more important for a boy than for a girl; a pre-school child suffers with a working mother; being a housewife is just as fulfilling as having a paid job.

For *membership in associations*, we use the typical EVS/WVS question, asking whether or not one participates in various types of voluntary organizations. Over time, the list of types changes, with only six of them to be unchanged in all the EVS waves (church or religious organization; art, music, or educational organization; labour union; political party; professional association; sports or recreational organization). We have analysed the data in two scenarios: first, we included only the six types, and computed an index to inform if the respondent is member in at least one such association. Secondly, we included all types of associations, ignoring the changes in the list. At least with respect to country-level aggregates, the conclusions remained unchanged. Therefore, in the following, we will present only the results using the full list of types of associations.

Our analysis is rather descriptive, to illustrate how society changes. We focus on aggregate data, which we split sometimes by socio-demographic categories.

1 www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu and www.worldvaluessurvey.org.

2 www.RomanianValues.ro.

We also look at Romania in comparative perspective, to have a feeling about how other societies changed in the same period.

Findings

Attitudes towards the welfare state

Most of the analyses dealing with the characteristics, the evolution, and the attitudes toward the welfare state in Europe are based mainly on the typology elaborated by Esping-Andersen (1990), which designates three types of welfare state: the Liberal, the Conservative, and the Social Democratic. To this list, two other types were added later: the Southern (Ferrera 1996) and the East-European welfare regimes (Jakobsen 2011).

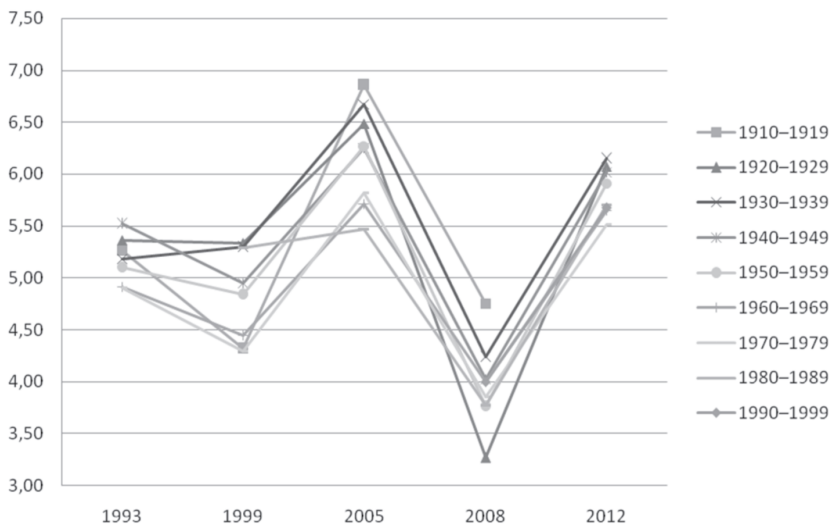
Without creating a new category, the particularities of the former socialist countries, beginning with the low level of trust (Uslaner 2003), the high level of corruption (Uslaner 2003), and also the high acceptance of state intervention in providing (Voicu and Voicu 2011, Vučković Juroš 2012), we argue that the selected countries are an interesting field of research in their own right. The above described situation is partially rooted in the socialist heritage as the roots of the socialist system are not grounded in the legitimacy of its institutions, but in repression. As a consequence, the lack of confidence in the institutions is a common characteristic of the transitional societies (Tufiş 2008). Also, in a transitional society, the roles of the new or renewed institutions are not always clear to the citizens and – above all – the corruption and unprofessionalism hinder their confidence even more in these institutions.

The citizen's attitudes towards the institutions have different layers. First, we should differentiate between the theoretic legitimacy and illegitimacy of the welfare state institutions in the sense that the people individually accept or not the role of these institutions. The second layer, the actual experience regarding the function and functionality of these institutions, has also two dimensions: the first one refers to the actual experience of the people with one employee of a particular institution and the second one to that the citizens usually generalize these experiences in forming an attitude towards the whole system. This approach is marked by Sztompka (1999) as primary and secondary targets of trust or by Tufiş (2008) as primary or secondary contact.

Briefly describing the macro-level context in the Eastern European countries during the transitional period, it can be stated that the welfare state institutions, along with the political and economic institutions, should have had a key role in the post-socialist transition period. As the social and economic costs became increasingly visible and experienced by the citizens of the states that had undergone

the transitional process, the economic cost of the transition became a burden for the welfare state, forcing it into a trap: to ease the situation of those who had been marginalized during the economic transition, the welfare services encountered an increased demand, and, on the other hand, the economic restructuring led to a decreasing income of the states. In this situation, the governments have two ways to deal with this situation: a. to decrease the volume and the area of the welfare services or b. to keep all welfare state services to the detriment of their efficiency. As Romania followed this second alternative, the satisfaction and the trust in the welfare state institutions, it has been recording low levels during the past 25 years. This approach can be considered an extension of previous results, which evidence the interconnection between the types of the welfare states and attitudes towards them (Edlund 2006, Voicu and Voicu 2011, Svallfors 2013).

We presumed this orientation to be influenced by the individual's socialization, and, as such, the generation-based approach seems suitable to analyse the differences among the different cohorts in the surveys.



Graph 1. Dynamics by cohort: “The government should take more responsibility to ensure that everybody is provided for.” versus “People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves.” Average point by cohorts – Romania, 1993–2012.

The general attitude towards the state providing, which can be interpreted as a general attitude towards the welfare state (Voicu and Voicu 2011, Vučković Juroš 2012) shows a general fluctuation in time. First, it must be mentioned that the fluctuation in time is not the result of an ecological fallacy as the average value increases and decreases do not match with the differences in the years associated

with the two surveying networks (WVS 2005, 2012, EVS 2008, and EVS/WVS 1993, 1999). As a consequence, the general attitude towards the welfare state, at least in Romania, shows a relative high level of fluctuation. If we take into account the generational differences, it can be stated that the general attitude towards the welfare state follows a uniform pattern, without significant differences between the pre-cold war, cold war, and post-cold war generations, as it could be expected based on Neudorf's results. On the other hand, according to Neudorf (2010) and Voicu (2010), the general economic situation significantly influences the attitudes towards democracy. Looking at the fluctuation in the graph, it can be stated that this indicator is very sensitive to the macro-level context such as the dominant political discourse or the economic situation of the country.

Attitudes towards democracy

The attitudes towards democracy, market-based economy, and welfare state are influenced by the past experiences of the citizens. The exposure of the citizens to communism in the Central and Eastern European countries influences their attitude towards the political, social, and economic changes undergone in the past quarter of a century in the mentioned part of Europe. It has been proven that the cohorts whose early political socialization happened during the socialist period are more reluctant to accept the new political and economic system, and, as a consequence, they are less satisfied with democracy than those whose socialization happened after 1990 (Neudorf 2010, Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2014). Also, previous researches show that even though the type of socialism was different in each country, the socialist socialization has a relatively homogenous effect, and as a consequence these results are valid for Romania as well (Neudorf 2010).

From a scholarly perspective, the struggle aimed at the reconceptualization of democracy in the social sciences, after the collapse of totalitarian regimes in the former socialist states in Europe, was imminent. Wallerstein (1991) stated that democracy did not automatically mean liberalism but benefits and inclusion in power, to which liberalism is often associated.

According to Easton (1965), the support towards democracy can be diffuse or specific, and in Romania the attitudes towards democracy fall under the first category (Tufiş 2008). Another approach is based on Lipset (1960), according to whom the support for a specific institution is based on the recent actual experience. As in Romania the introduction of democratic institutions and market economy started at the same time – being different from Latin America's experience –, the evaluation of economic performances directly influences the attitudes towards democracy (Tufiş 2008, Voicu 2010).

The integration of the former socialist states in the European Union has just complicated the democratic decision-making process as the citizens of these

countries feel particularly left out from this point of view (Zielonka 2007). This can be explained by the lack of knowledge and experience regarding the newly formed institutions (Tufiş 2008). But what is particular in Romania is that the general pattern – according to which people tend to trust less in the unknown – did not hold as the confidence towards the foreign, international institutions (EU, NATO, and UN) recorded the highest level of institutional trust. This phenomenon can be explained by the so-called “honeymoon effect”, which captures a mix of confidence and positive expectation toward a political institution (Catterberg and Moreno 2005). This situation is in contradiction with the general pattern in Eastern Europe, where the disillusionment with democracy was a common trend, called “post-honeymoon” period effect by Ingelhart and Catterberg (2002).

In the case of Romania, Voicu (2010) proves that the general support for democracy decreases along a West and East Europe continuum. The role of economic performance plays an important role in the evaluation of the quality of democracy, meaning that a successful economic restructuring in the 1990s led to a higher level of support for democracy (Voicu 2010). As in Romania the economic restructuring takes more than a decade, we expect democracy to take a supportive turn, following the general satisfaction with the economic situation.

From a historical perspective, the past experience of the citizens with communism influences the attitudes towards the democratic regimes and the attitudes towards them (Neundorf 2010, Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2014).

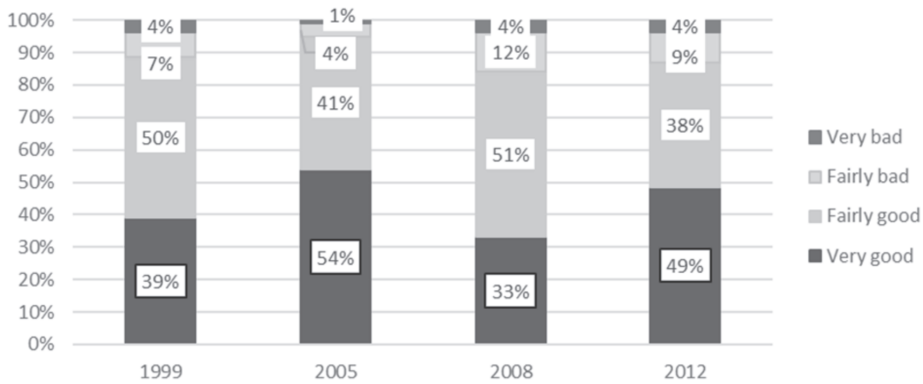
As our main scope is to give an illustrative image of the past 25 years of transition in Romania, in this study, we focus mainly on descriptive and general data as the limits of an article do not permit to enter in details.

Regarding the acceptance of the democratic political system, the first result is the level of acceptance of democracy in Romania, in the sense of how good the democratic political system is considered.

Generally speaking, the acceptance of a democratic political system is high in Romania, so it can be considered a legitimate and consolidated democracy.

The aggregate acceptance of the democratic political system, where we sum up the percentage of ‘Very good’ and ‘Fairly good’ answers, presented in *Table 2*, suggests the enthusiastic characteristics of the Romanians towards the democratic system. This affirmation is based on the comparison of the results: the positive appreciation in Romania reaches the level of the well-consolidated democratic countries from Western Europe, while, among the former socialist countries, we register a lower level of acceptance of the democratic system. These high values cannot be explained by the everyday practices in the Romanian society nor with the ‘honeymoon effect’, as we speak about a much longer period. A hypothesis of a future research could be to explain this long-term, consolidated support for the existing political system among the citizens of Romania.

Having a democratic political system



Graph 2. *The evaluation of the democratic political system in Romania, 1999–2012*

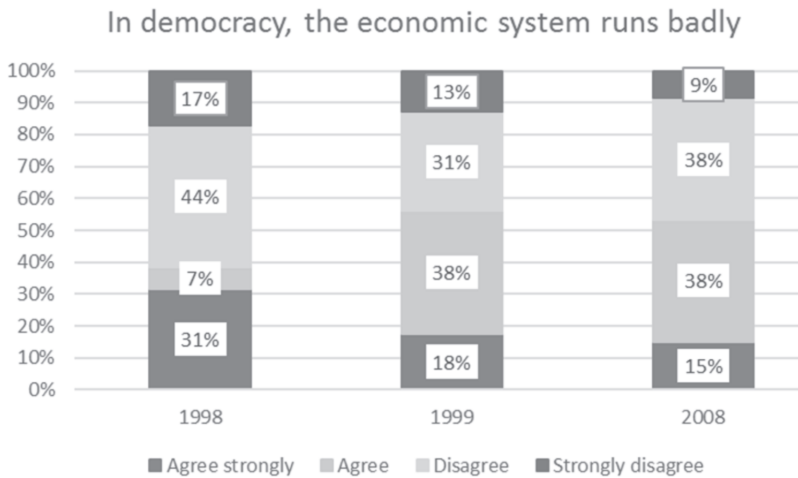
Table 2. *Percentages of agreement of having a democratic political system, 1990–2014*

Wave	1994–1998	2005–2009	2010–2014
RO survey	1998	2005	2012
Italy	-	94%	-
Sweden	96%	98%	96%
Great Britain	-	91%	-
Germany	96%	95%	95%
Bulgaria	86%	87%	-
Hungary	91%	92%	-
Poland	-	84%	83%
Russia	58%	79%	80%
Romania	91%	95%	87%

*In the first row, it is indicated when the EVS/WVS wave took place. In the second row, there is the year when the Romanian survey took place.

On the other hand, let us also note the relative decrease during the economic crisis, followed by quick recovery, possibly related to the positive experience of the society relatively easy getting through from the economic distress.

From our initial theoretical approach, we were interested in the reflection on the economic performance in the democracy. It is well known that the economic restructuration period was a harsh one in the former socialist states which succeed in dealing with the socialist economic burden with more or less success.



Graph 3. Representations of the economic performance of democracies: Romania, 1998–2008 (Question: “Does democracy perform better than other systems?”)

According to the results depicted in *Graph 3*, the appreciation of the economic system in the democratic political context seems to be a negative one in Romania, as in the past two waves – when this question was recorded –, the aggregate level of the agreement according to which the economy runs badly in democracy exceeded 50%. This can be the result of a general experience of the citizens due to a long-lasting reform period (Voicu 2010), where these experiences influence the general appreciation of the performances of democracy. But these results can also be the consequences of a diffuse support for the new political and economic system (Tufiş 2008), meaning in the terms of McIntosh et al. (1994) that the democratic political system is supported by the majority of the population in Romania, while the market-based economy does not have the support of the majority.

Gender values

Gender values are likely to change when society changes towards modernity, equalitarian beliefs related to gender roles were boosted by industrialization and are part of the democratization process (Cotter, Hermsen, Vanneman 2011; Inglehart and Norriss 2003; Wilensky 2002). Such processes put an entire self-reproduction mechanism on the move, for which participation in public life is the key feature. It exposes men and women to different gender role models, it enables them to control the social agenda, and provides chances to see more equal setups in action (Welzel and Alexander 2011).

In communist societies, the gender roles were more equalitarian as compared to the Western world (True 2012). Men and women were supposed to be equal by law, and women's participation in public life was encouraged (Freize et al. 2003, Voicu and Voicu 2002a). State policies are actually consistent with gender attitudes (Gal and Kligman 2000) and are reflected in the work–life balance as well (Crompton and Lyonette 2006). They are shaping Europe into a series of gender regimes (Hantrais 2000, Voicu 2004).

In the 1990s and early 2000s, Romania followed the Eastern model (Voicu 2004), with high support for women's presence on the labour market, but with much lower support for equality in the family life. This followed a long history of 45 years during which women were sent to factories by the need of post-war reconstruction and as part of visible echelons of political decision makers as a consequence of communist ideology.

The immediate impact was a relatively high support for the presence of women on the labour market. At the beginning of the 1990s, half of the adults considered that “Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as having a paid job”. This was much lower than in the seven countries selected for comparison in *Table 3*. This means that half of the sample supported the presence of women on the labour market, which was substantially higher even when compared to other post-communist societies.

Table 3. *Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as having a paid job (% of those to agree with the affirmation)*

Wave	1989– 1993	1994– 1999	1999– 2004	2005– 2007	2008– 2010	2010– 2014
RO survey	1993	1995	1999	2005	2008	2012
Italy	56%		55%	54%	52%	-
Sweden	62%	66%	51%	48%	47%	42%
Great Britain	60%		61%	68%	68%	-
Germany West	54%	47%	46%	51%	52%	58%
Bulgaria	87%	75%	49%	62%	42%	-
Hungary	76%	80%	61%		56%	-
Poland	63%	56%	60%	61%	63%	44%
Romania	48%		48%	35%	54%	34%

* In the first row, it is indicated when the EVS/WVS wave took place. In the second row, there is the year when the Romanian survey took place.

With few exceptions, the support for the presence of women on the labour market followed in the past 25 years an ascending trend all over Europe. This can be easily explained through post-modernization processes (Inglehart 1997) and the spread of emancipative values (Welzel 2013). Romania kept pace with this trend, as data show, and decreased the percentage of those to consider women as

being fulfilled as housewives. As expected, there is, however, a decrease in such attitudes during the economic recession. As Inglehart and Baker (2000) showed, in times of economic deterrence, culture tends to retreat to more traditional stances. After crisis, the support for women's participation on the labour market increased to the level reached before recession.

Table 4. *A pre-school child suffers with a working mother (% of those to agree with the affirmation)*

Wave	1989–1993	1999–2004	2008–2010	2010–2014
RO survey	1993	1999	2008	2012
Italy	78%	81%	76%	-
Sweden	74%	38%	19%	30%
Great Britain	55%	46%	36%	-
Germany West	84%	73%	63%	32%
Bulgaria	76%	61%	43%	-
Hungary	70%	63%	55%	-
Poland	94%	77%	62%	61%
Romania	58%	47%	53%	35%

* In the first row, it is indicated when the EVS/WVS wave took place. In the second row, there is the year when the Romanian survey took place.

The support for women's presence on the labour market slightly changes when it comes to the relationship with children (*Table 4*). As compared to other countries, in the early 1990s, Romanians were more in favour of the idea that children can develop when the mother is working. The figure had not changed much over the years, prior to the 2010s. It was probably the shock of experiencing unemployment to maintain a more non-egalitarian division of labour with respect to childcare (this is not the case for housework – see Voicu et al. 2007). In the meanwhile, Europe changed more and more in favour of the idea that children can grow up without preventing mothers from working. In 2008, Romania was also under the impact of the economic crisis, but also under the influence of a new generation that was more conservative than expected (Voicu & Voicu 2002a). However, post-crisis Romanians re-engaged in the egalitarian trend in this respect as well.

Table 5. *Inequality beyond participation (% of those to agree with the affirmations)*

Wave	On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do			A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl		
	1999– 2004	2005– 2007	2010– 2014	1999– 2004	2005– 2007	2010– 2014
RO survey	1999	2008	2012	1999	2008	2012
Italy	-	19%	-	-	8%	-
Sweden	18%	8%	11%	9%	1%	3%
Great Britain	-	20%	-	-	7%	-
Germany West	13%	20%	16%	10%	17%	12%
Bulgaria	61%	48%	-	19%	11%	-
Hungary	52%	-	-	20%	-	-
Poland	61%	43%	36%	35%	15%	12%
Romania	-	55%	44%	-	19%	21%

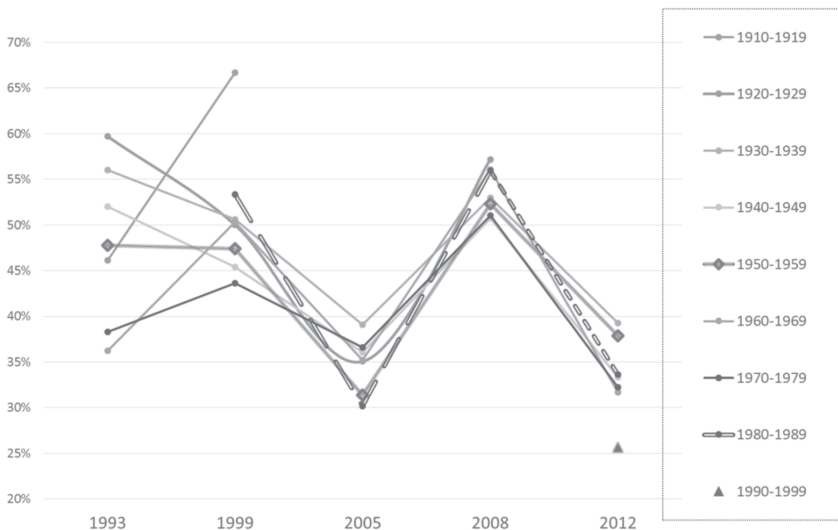
* In the second row, it is indicated when the EVS/WVS wave took place. In the third row, there is the year when the Romanian survey took place.

Participation in public space is only one side of the story. The EVS/WVS data lead to opposite findings when it comes to supporting equality. Most Western Europeans claimed that men and women make similarly good political leaders (*Table 5*, first columns). Examples of Queen Elisabeth or Margaret Thatcher were salient in the early nineties. In more recent times, Angela Merkel symbolically marked the strong position as equal to men in their capacity to lead the political world. Eastern Europeans, despite their communist heritage, were less convinced of such egalitarian principles. Maybe particularly due to enforcing women to become leaders during communism, as an adversity reaction, they rejected the idea that women may lead the world. Romania made no difference, and even in 2008 the majoritarian support was for inequality. In 2012 (the only time when they asked the question), among the countries we considered, Romania was the most conservative. The same happens when asking if “men make better business executives than women do”. The agreement levels were in 2012: 8% in Sweden, 22% in Germany, 27% in Poland, and 37% in Romania. It is also in Eastern Europe that a slightly higher percentage of the population thinks that rather boys should go to the university (the last columns in *Table 5*).

The findings depict a clear trend towards equality to manifest across Europe, and in Romania as well. Romanians are among the top supporters of gender equality with respect to participation, but between the last ones when it comes to equality between genders. In other words, it is a must that women are present in the public space, but they are not as often seen as equal participants in the

political, business, and education environment. There are signs of lower equality in the household as well.

A refined view over the dynamics of gender beliefs in Romania is depicted in *Graph 4*. The figure considers differences between cohorts. The important position is the one of newer generations, partially or completely socialized in post-communism: those born in 1980–1989 and those born after 1990. The first ones have oscillations that make them no different from older cohorts. This shades doubts over the hypothesis that change may come from cohort replacement. In fact, those born in 1980–1989 prove to be more conservative than one may have expected. The socialization in the context of the shortage of communism was actually completed by years of economic distress and uncertainty in the 90s. This makes their values more traditional than expected, given a natural change from one generation to another. Only in 2012 we have enough cases to draw conclusions about those born after 1990. Data indicate they are the most modern with respect to gender beliefs. This might be the case of the experiences of prosperity during most of the 2000s.



Graph 4. *Dynamics by cohort: Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as having a paid job (% of those to agree with the affirmation; Romania, 1993–2012)*

Participation in associations

One of the main differences between communism and other types of societal organizing modes resides in total control over the civic society. People did not participate in voluntary associations, irrespective of their nature. Even when such organizations existed, they were at least partially controlled by the state (Voicu & Voicu 2009). Moreover, it was the participative culture to suffer. Existing literature

systematically reported lower levels of social capital in Eastern Europe (Bădescu and Uslaner 2002, Raiser et al. 2001). They are part of consistent regimes of social capital (Pitchler and Wallace 2007) or cultures of participation (Voicu 2014).

Such cultures tend to be rather powerless against political changes. Despite formal freedom to associate, one may lack the habits to do so. The mere presence of the structure of opportunity is therefore not enough to boost increases in participation.

On the other hand, joining associations may be a sign of non-traditional societies, where families are less important in providing socialization. Friends tend to become salient in such situations (Pahl 2000). And friends are to be present in associations as well, where they develop activities for the sake of their common interests.

One may easily visualize the facts when considering the situation in the early 1990s (second column in *Table 6*). The levels of participation in associations was lower in Eastern Europe than it was ten years before in Western European societies (first column of the same table). Romanians were among the least predisposed to join associations. However, please also note that for 1993 the figure also includes participation in labour unions. At that time, most of the companies in Eastern Europe were still in public property and membership in unions was somehow mandatory (Voicu & Voicu 2003). This results in exaggerated figures regarding participation in associations, and explains the apparent decline toward 1999.

Table 6. Percentages of members in at least one association, in the selected countries, 1990–2014

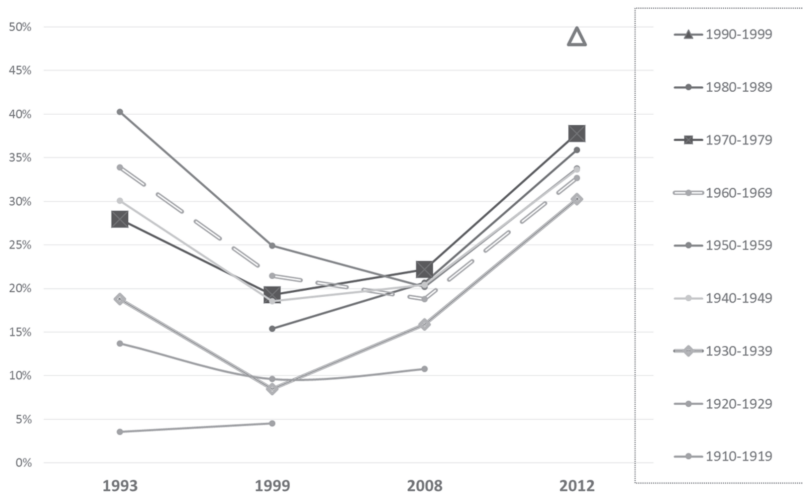
Wave	1981–1984	1989–1993	1999–2004	2008–2010	2010–2014
RO survey	1981	1993	1999	2008	2012
Italy	26%	32%	42%	38%	-
Sweden	67%	85%	96%	62%	90%
Great Britain	52%	53%	34%	46%	-
Germany West	50%	67%	52%	50%	79%
Bulgaria	-	41%	20%	19%	-
Hungary	0%	50%	29%	20%	-
Poland	-	21%	26%	17%	43%
Romania	-	30%	21%	24%	35%

* In the first row, it is indicated when the EVS/WVS wave took place. In the second row, there is the year when the Romanian survey took place.

If cleaning the 1990–1993 figures from the impact of labour unions, the figures for Western Europe do not change much, but it is almost half in the case of Eastern European countries. Then we have the increasing trends described for Romania by the figures for 1999–2012. Paradoxically, such increase seems to oppose the

tendencies in other post-communist societies. They also have an economic reasoning. There were many incentives for associations to start functioning, and they also used such incentives to fill in a niche given by the absence of small and medium enterprises. In time, associations started to function as associations, and anecdotic evidences may indicate their increased presence in Romania.

If comparing cohorts of age (*Graph 5*), there is no surprise to be noticed. Younger generations are more likely to join associations, in particular after they reach their 30s, and thus have more resources to share. The main exception is the generation born after 1990, which displays a much higher propensity to join voluntary associations even at very young adult ages.



Graph 5. Dynamics by cohort: Percentages of members in at least one association (Romania, 1993–2012)

The figures provide a clear pattern of change, which seems even more pronounced than in other European countries. It might be one of the fields in which Romanian development is stronger and which may push the rest of social life towards changing.

Discussion

This paper has reviewed several trends of the Romanian society over the past 25 years. Data show a mixed picture with quite a lot of dynamics in the past decades. On the one hand, one may notice a society rather undecided to give credit to a maximal or to a minimal state. Welfare provision seems to be part of experimenting, with important fluctuations from leftist to rightist and from rightist

to leftist stances from one EVS/WVS wave to another. More important, there is no obvious cohort-related pattern to be noticed with respect to welfare attitudes.

Democracy, on the other hand, proved to have a solid backing, gathering support from a large majority of Romanian citizens. Fluctuations are related mainly to economic performance, which may come to questioning when it comes to support for market economy.

Changes with respect to gender attitudes are more complex. Romania started the post-communist era by being more equalitarian-prone than many European societies and ended up with stances that are not in the “avant-garde” of Europe anymore. Moreover, the generation born in the 1980s and socialized under powerful economic distress seems more traditional than one would expect and marks a sort of a disruption in the pattern of transformations from one cohort to another.

Civic participation followed a decline after the initially combined honeymoon effect and persistence of rather formal organizations such as labour unions. However, after a short while, a boost in association membership became noticeable, in particular after 2008. Newer generations seem from this point of view more participative and create the premises of critical communities. The exception seems to be again the cohort born in the 1980s.

With such a complex view on change, one should find a lot of excitement in studying the post-transition societies such as the Romanian one. This was, in a way, the purpose of this introductory study. One may find more in-depth understanding of the dynamic Eastern European life by exploring the remaining papers of the current issue of *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae – Social Analysis*.

References

- Adler, Marina. A., Brayfield, April. 2006. Gender Regimes and Cultures of Care: Public Support for Maternal Employment in Germany and the United States. *Marriage & Family Review* 39: 229–253.
- Agger, Ben. 2000. *Public Sociology: From Social Facts to Literary Acts*. Lanham and Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Arts, Wil. 2011. Explaining European Value Patterns: Problems and Solutions. *Studia UBB Sociologia* LVI (1): 7–31.
- Bădescu, Gabriel, Eric M. Uslaner (eds). 2003. *Social Capital and the Transition to Democracy*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Beck, Ulrich, Beck-Gernsheim, Elisabeth. 2001. *Individualization. Institutionalized Individualism and Its Social and Political Consequences*. London: Sage.
- Bergh, Johannes. 2006. Gender Attitudes and Modernization Processes. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 19: 5–23.

- Brinkman, Richard. L., Brinkman, June E. 1997. Cultural Lag: Conception and Theory. *International Journal of Social Economics* 24: 609–627.
- Cardoso, Fernando H. 1977. The Consumption of Dependency Theory in the United States. *Latin American Research Review* 12: 7–24.
- Catterberg, Gabriela, Moreno, Alejandro. 2005. The Individual Base of Political Trust: Trends in New and Established Democracies. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 18: 32–48.
- Centola, Damon. 2015. The Social Origins of Networks and Diffusion. *American Journal of Sociology* 120: 1295–1338.
- Cotter, David, Hermsen, Joan M., Vanneman, Reeve. 2011. The End of Gender Revolution? Gender Role Attitudes from 1977 to 2008. *American Journal of Sociology* 117: 259–289.
- Crompton, Rosemary, Lyonette, Clare. 2006. Work–Life ‘Balance’ in Europe. *Acta Sociologica* 49: 379–393.
- Deeming, Christopher, Smyth, Paul. 2015. Social Investment after Neoliberalism: Policy Paradigms and Political Platforms. *Journal of Social Policy* 44: 297–318.
- Edlund, Jonas. 2006. Trust in the Capability of the Welfare State and General Welfare State Support: Sweden 1997–2002. *Acta Sociologica* 49: 395–417.
- Evans, Jonathan. St. B. T. 2011. Dual-Process Theories of Reasoning: Contemporary Issues and Developmental Applications. *Developmental Review* 31: 86–102.
- Ferrera, Maurizio. 1996. The “Southern Model” of Welfare in Social Europe. *Journal of European Social Policy* 6: 17–37.
- Frieze, Irene H., Ferligoj, Anuška, Kogovšek, Tina, Renner, Tanja, Horvat, Jasna, Šarlija, Nataša. 2003. Gender-Role Attitudes in University Students in the United States, Slovenia, and Croatia. *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 27: 256–261.
- Gal, Susan, Kligman, Gail. 2000. *The Politics of Gender after Socialism: A Comparative-Historical Essay*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gundelach, Peter. 1994. National Value Differences. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 35: 37–58.
- Hantrais, Linda (ed.). 2000. *Gendered Policies in Europe: Reconciling Employment and Family Life*. New York: St. Martin’s Press.
- Hantrais, Linda. 2000. From Equal Pay to Reconciliation of Employment and Family Life. In: L. Hantrais (ed.), *Gendered Policies in Europe—Reconciling Employment and Family Life*. 1–26. London: Macmillan Press.
- Hitlin, Steven, Vaisey, Stephen. 2013. The New Sociology of Morality. *Annual Reviews of Sociology* 39: 51–68.
- Inglehart, Ronald. 1971. The Silent Revolution in Europe: Intergenerational Change in Post-Industrial Societies. *American Political Science Review* 65: 991–1017.
- Inglehart, Ronald. 1997. *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Inglehart, Ronald, Baker, Wayne. E. 2000. Modernization, Cultural Change, and the Persistence of Traditional Values. *American Sociological Review* 65: 19–51.
- Inglehart, Ronald, Catterberg, Gabriela. 2002. Trends in Political Action: The Developmental Trend and the Post-Honeymoon Decline. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 43: 300–316.
- Inglehart, Ronald, Norris, Pippa. 2003. *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change around the World*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Inglehart, Ronald, Welzel, Christian. 2005. *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Inkeles, Alex. 1969. Making Man Modern: On the Causes and Consequences of Individual Change in Six Developing Countries. *American Journal of Sociology* 75: 208–225.
- Jagodzinski, Wolfgang. 2004. Methodological Problems of Value Research. In: H. Vinken, J. Soeters, P. Ester (eds), *Comparing Cultures: Dimensions of Culture in a Comparative Perspective*. 97–121. Leiden: Brill.
- Jakobsen, Tor Georg. 2011. Welfare Attitudes and Social Expenditure: Do Regimes Shape Public Opinion? *Social Indicator Research* 101: 323–340.
- Lenkei, Júlia (ed.). 1991. *Láttuk-e hogy jön? (A társadalomtudomány sikerei és kudarcai a kelet-európai politikai átalakulásban) [Did We See It Coming? (The Successes and Failures of Social Sciences in the East-European Political Transition)]*. Budapest: T-Twins Kiadói és Tipográfiai Kft.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1981. *Political Man* (expanded edition). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Lucas, Samuel R. 2001. Effectively Maintained Inequality: Education Transitions, Track Mobility, and Social Background Effects. *American Journal of Sociology* 106: 1642–1690.
- Mannheim, Karl. 1952. The Problem of Generations. In: K. Mannheim (ed.), *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*. 276–322. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- McIntosh, Mary E., Mac Iver Abele Martha, Abele Daniel G., Smeltz, Dina. 1994. Publics Meet Market Democracy in Central and East Europe, 1991–1993. *Slavic Review* 53: 483–512.
- Miles, Andrew. 2015. The (Re)Genesis of Values Examining the Importance of Values for Action. *American Sociological Review* 80: 680–704.
- Neundorf, Anja. 2010. Democracy in Transition: A Micro Perspective on System Change in Post-Socialist Societies. *The Journal of Politics* 72: 1096–1108.
- Niedenzu, Heinz-Jurgen, Meleghy, Tamás, Meyer, Peter (eds), 2015. *New Evolutionary Social Science: Human Nature, Social Behavior, and Social Change*. New York: Routledge.

- Ogburn, William F. 1957. Cultural Lag as Theory. *Sociology and Social Research* 41: 167–174.
- Page, Benjamin. I., Shapiro, Robert Y. 1983. Effects of Public Opinion of Policy. *The American Political Science Review* 77: 175–190.
- Pahl, Ray. 2000. *On Friendship*. Boston: Blackwell Publishing.
- Parsons, Talcott, Shils, Edward Albert. 1951. Values, Motives, and Systems of Action. In: T. Parsons, E. A. Shils, N. J. Smelser (eds), *Toward a General Theory of Action: Theoretical Foundations for the Social Sciences*. 247–275. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.
- Pichler, Florian, Wallace, Claire. 2007. Patterns of Formal and Informal Social Capital in Europe. *European Sociological Review* 23: 423–435.
- Pop-Eleches, Grigore, Tucker Joshua. A. 2014. Communist Socialization and Post-Communist Economic and Political Attitudes. *Electoral Studies* 33: 77–89.
- Raiser, Martin, Haerpfer, Christian, Noworthy, Thomas, Wallace, Claire. 2002. Social Capital in Transition: A First Look at the Evidence. *Czech Sociological Review* 38: 693–720.
- Raven, Judith, Achterberg, Peter, Van der Veen, Romke, Yerkes, Mara. 2011. An Institutional Embeddedness of Welfare Opinions? The Link between Public Opinion and Social Policy in the Netherlands (1970–2004). *Journal of Social Policy* 40: 369–386.
- Roosma, Femke, Gelissen, John, van Oorschot, Wim. 2013. The Multidimensionality of Welfare State Attitudes: A European Cross-National Study. *Social Indicator Research* 113: 235–255.
- Rostow, Walt Whitman. 1990. *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sztompka, Piotr. 2004. The Trauma of Social Change: A Case of Postcommunist Societies. In: A. C. Jeffrey, R. Eyerman, B. Giesen (eds), *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. 155–195. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- True, Jacqui. 2012. *Gender, Globalization, and Postsocialism: The Czech Republic after Communism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Tufiș, Claudiu D. 2008. Institutional Trust – Victim of the Postcommunist Transition. In: B. Voicu, M. Voicu (eds), *The Values of Romanians: 1993–2006. A Sociological perspective*. 115–143. Iași: Editura Institutul European.
- Uslaner, Eric M. 2003. Trust, Democracy and Governance: Can Government Policies Influence Generalized Trust? In: M. Honge, D. Stolle (eds), *Generating Social Capital*. 171–190. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Vaisey, Stephen. 2009. Motivation and Justification: A Dual-Process Model of Culture in Action. *American Journal of Sociology* 114: 1675–1715.
- Vlăsceanu, Lazăr. 2007. *Sociologie și modernitate. Tranziții spre modernitatea reflexivă*. Iași: Editura Polirom. [in Romanian].

- Voicu, Bogdan. 2010. Values and the Sociology of Values. In: L. Vlăsceanu (ed.), *Sociology*. 249–294 Iași: Polirom. [in Romanian].
- Voicu, Bogdan. 2014a. Participative Immigrants or Participative Cultures? The Importance of Cultural Heritage in Determining Involvement in Associations. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 25: 612–635.
- Voicu, Bogdan, Vasile, Marian. 2010. Rural-Urban Inequalities and Expansion of Tertiary Education in Romania. *Journal of Social Research & Policy* 1: 5–24.
- Voicu, Bogdan, Voicu, Mălina. 2003. Volunteering in Eastern Europe: One of the Missing Links. In: B. Voicu, H. Rusu (eds), *Globalization, Integration, and Social Development in Central and Eastern Europe*. 57–66. Sibiu: Psihomedica.
- Voicu, Bogdan, Voicu, Mălina. 2009. Volunteers and Volunteering in Central and Eastern Europe. *Sociologia. Slovak Journal of Sociology* 41: 539–563.
- Voicu, Bogdan, Voicu, Mălina. 2011. How Sociability and Trust Impact on Welfare Attitudes. A Cross-European Analysis. *Revista de Cercetare și Intervenție socială*. 3: 72–90.
- Voicu, Bogdan, Voicu, Mălina, Strapcová, Katarina. 2007. Gendered Housework. A Cross-European Analysis. *Slovak Sociological Review* 39: 502–521.
- Voicu, Mălina. 2004. Work and Family Life in Europe: Value Patterns and Policy Making. In: W. Arts, L. Halman (eds), *European Values at the Turn of the Millennium*. 231–254. Leiden: Brill.
- Voicu, Mălina. 2010. Eficiență economică sau orientare ideologică? Suportul social pentru democrație în Europa Centrală și de Est. In: M. Voicu (ed.), *Valori sociale ale tranziției post-comuniste*. 35–52. Iași: Editura Lumen. [in Romanian].
- Voicu, Mălina, Voicu, Bogdan. 2002a. Gender Values Dynamics: Towards a Common European Pattern? *Romanian Journal of Sociology* 13: 42–63.
- Voicu, Mălina and Voicu, Bogdan. 2002b. Proiectul de cercetare internațională privind studiul valorilor europene. *Calitatea Vieții* 13: 1–9. [in Romanian].
- Voicu, Mălina and Voicu, Bogdan. 2008. *The Values of Romanians*. Iași: Editura Institutul European.
- Vučković Juroš, Tanja. 2012. Cohort and Welfare Regime Differences in Attitudes on State: Multilevel Analysis of 29 Countries. *Croatian Journal of Social Policy* 19: 131–153.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. 2011. *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century (with a new prologue)* (vol. 1). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Weber, Max. 2002. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: and other writings*. New York: Penguin.
- Welzel, Christian. 2013. *Freedom Rising*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Welzel, Christian, Alexander, Amy. 2011. Empowering Women: The Role of Emancipative Beliefs. *European Sociological Review* 27: 364–384.
- Wright Mills, Charles. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zielonka, Jan. 2007. The Quality of Democracy after Joining the European Union. *East European Politics and Societies* 21: 162–180.