
CONTINUITY AND CHANGE OF VALUES AND ATTITUDES IN GENERATIONAL COHORTS OF THE POST-COMMUNIST ROMANIA

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to examine patterns in the distribution of values and attitudes for three generational cohorts in contemporary Romania: the 'younger' generation (M = 26 years), almost exclusively socialized during the period after the collapse of communism; the 'middle' generation (M = 41 years), socialized both during and after communism; and the 'older' generation (M = 56 years), exposed to extensive socialization during communism. Based on the differences in the exposure to communist or/and democratic regime and its multifaceted consequences in these three cohorts, two main competing hypotheses were tested: one predicted a change in attitudes and values across time and generations whereas the other hypothesis predicted conservation of attitudes and values. The field survey was carried out in November-December 2009 using regional generational representative samples consisting of 1481 subjects from the West Region of Development, formed by Timis, Caras-Severin, Arad and Hunedoara counties. Results indicated a conservation of attitudes and values, revealing relevant similarities in the axiological and attitudinal profiles among the two peripheral cohorts (the younger and the older generations).

KEYWORDS: *intergenerational comparison, value orientations, transgenerational patterns, social attitudes*

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The purpose of the current study was to investigate whether a historical great rupture, like the Romanian revolution of 1989, has changed the Romanians' values and attitudes. Two theoretical frameworks are at the basis of this study. The first theory takes on a social psychology perspective and maintains the idea of flexibility concerning the structure of values and attitudes (Aronson, 1988; Loewenstein, 2007; McGuire, 1985; Perloff, 1993). The second theory is rooted in the frame of mentalities and social representations which illustrates the changing character of profound mental structures and values (Braudel, 1996; Moscovici, 1988). Thus, the hypothesis of value and attitudinal change ('changing the world') will confront the hypothesis regarding the persistence of attitudes and values (*'la longue durée'*). Several measures were used in this paper examining fundamental attitudes: independence/interdependence (IND-INT), self-esteem (SE), locus of control (LC), and self-determination, (SD). Along with the attitudinal register, the value orientation register was also explored by using the Schwartz Values Survey (SVS).

The starting point of the current paper is based on contradictory results with regard to attitudes as well as similarities in values across three generations that were found in previous exploratory studies conducted with Romanian samples (Gavreliuc, 2011). These samples consisted of non-representative groups teachers and students from the academic area ($n = 179$) as well as individuals from the private economic environment ($n = 181$). The current research focuses on three representative generational samples from the same area of Romania, namely the Western region. The same instruments were used as in the previous research. The aim of the present study is to further investigate the extent to which the results from the preliminary studies are confirmed in a wider investigation.

Attitudes, Values and Societal Change

The assumption that social and political changes have a major impact on basic human values has constituted a controversy in social sciences. On the one hand, there is some (limited) evidence suggesting considerable changes in human values, especially in the post-communist area (Bardi & Schwartz, 1996; Schwartz & Bardi, 1997; Schwartz, Bardi, & Bianchi, 2000). On the other hand, the classical studies of Inkeles and Smith (1974) as well as Inglehart (1977, 1990) conducted on different post-war generational cohorts have shown major mutations in the configuration of values, qualified as a *silent revolution*. These second results come mainly from advanced industrial societies. Other comparative studies between countries with a consolidated democracy and those with a more modest experience with democracy (such as those from Central and Eastern Europe) have illustrated that values are related to the political system of that society (Broek & Moor, 1994).

Values may be perceived as the core of a culture (Hofstede, 1980; G. Hofstede, G. J. Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010; Schwartz, 1994b, 2006; Schwartz, Caprara, & Vecchione, 2010). Defined as a functional social implicit, the culture is

a manifestation of practices, symbols which are assumed and evaluated at a community level. These evaluations represent the basic values, described as what people think is 'good or bad', 'what could be done' and 'what should be avoided', what is 'desirable' or 'undesirable' at the societal level (Schwartz, 1992). Cultural values, such as freedom, order, prosperity, security, etc., are the basis of social norms that describe social behaviors.

Using sociological methods, Inglehart and colleagues (1997; 2004; 2005) conducted a broad research project on cultural values carried out worldwide, the World Values Surveys (WVS). The fundamental profile of attitudinal and value patterns can be divided into dimensions: *rational secular values vs. traditional values*, as well as *self-expression values vs. survival values*. Thus, throughout the world, national cultures are distributed according to a given implicit existential pattern (to survive / to become). On the one hand, secular-rational cultures from Anglo-Saxon cluster countries, Protestant and Catholic Europe, emphasize self-expression values. On the other hand, national cultures in Africa, South Asia and Eastern Europe (including Romania) maintain survival and traditional values (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005).

According to research, certain societies have experienced a shift from materialistic to post-materialistic values (Inglehart, 1997). This change can be explained by the way in which young generations have grown up in unprecedented social, economic and political security conditions. Individuals in these societies emphasize a subjective state of well-being, tolerance, trust, social functionality and moderation. It is no surprise that societies who receive a higher ranking on self-expression values tend to prioritize interpersonal and inter-institutional trust as a significant social resource. Thus, a culture of trust and tolerance arises, in which individual freedom and political activism are prevalent and dominant.

In contrast to this emphasis on changes in values and attitudes across time, research conducted or inspired by Hofstede (1980) and Schwartz (e.g., Schwartz, 2005) provided more evidence in favor of stability in values. Voicu and colleagues (2001; 2005; 2007) investigated the social values among Romanians, using the WVS methodology (Inglehart, 1997). These studies (e.g., B. Voicu & Voicu, 2007) revealed that Romania is a case of a stronger cultural inertia of value orientation compared with other national cultures. These reports demonstrate the absence of significant changes in the last decade as well as a persistence of a high average score on traditionalism for over a decade. Two distinct processes may explain the lack of changes in the basic values under the pressure of a constraining social-political environment: indoctrination and reinforcement. The first process is linked with the assimilation phenomenon of the Communist ideology through socialization (e.g. education, mass-media, institutional practices) based on what might be called the *indoctrination* phenomenon. However, not much evidence exists demonstrating the efficacy of this process. Bardi and Schwartz (1996) reported little success in the process of indoctrination in areas that were formerly under Soviet domination, the

values proposed by the communist propaganda being internalized rather superficially. Also, Broek and Moor (1994) showed in their comparative research conducted with samples from Eastern and Western Europe that, at least in part, some of the values related to politics, religion and basic human relationships are similar in the two areas of the European continent, although individuals had such distinct historical experiences. However, some significant differences were found, with Eastern Europeans showing low initiative, achievement and responsibility especially in terms of work ethic. Overall, these results are not conclusive with regard to the indoctrination phenomenon, suggesting that other processes may be involved here.

The second explanation refers to the argument that values change as a result of adapting to new life circumstances, following the *reinforcement principle* (Inkeles & Smith, 1974; Rokeach, 1973; Sheldon, 2005). Thus, confronted with a hostile socio-political environment, people learn 'naturally' adaptive responses by strengthening those values that are socially functional and discrediting those values that obstruct this adaptive process (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004; Hofmann-Towfigh, 2007). For example, studies have shown that people who live in a culture that encourages freedom of choice, the importance of self-direction values increases in comparison to conformity values (Broek & Moor, 1994; Kohn & Schooler, 1983). Deprivation of the basic needs described by Maslow (1970) enables a compensation mechanism (Bilsky & Schwartz, 1994). In short, under conditions of precarious socioeconomic conditions, the values of survival are more strongly emphasized than self-expression values; additionally, traditional values are higher than rational-legal values (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Backer, 2000; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). This hypothesis of value adaptation to contextual challenges is discussed in the following, with a focus on Eastern European countries.

Value adaptation to the socio-political environment

The assessment of human basic values in different societies was carried out using the theory of culture-level values developed by Schwartz (1994a, 2006). This set of values is considered more appropriate for comparing national samples. The testing of the theory demonstrated the existence of seven types of values, considered as being fundamental problems that society faces in order to optimize human activity: conservatism, intellectual autonomy, affective autonomy, hierarchy, egalitarianism, harmony and mastery (Schwartz, 2005; see Table 1 for definitions of these values).

The hypothesis of value adaptation to the socio-political environment was tested in a series of cross-cultural studies coordinated by Schwartz (2000; 2005) starting from the analogy proposed by Kohak (1992), who describes the acclimatization value process in a similar manner to the adaptation of long term incarcerated prisoners. Inmates develop a range of skills and attitudes that allow them to survive in conditions of constraint that produce effects in the attitudinal

register, generating detachment of responsibilities, dependency, retractability and fatalism. Starting from this explanatory mechanism and operationalizing this portrait in terms of attitudinal patterns, it is expected that subjects who went through such experience are characterized by external attribution (as an expression of avoiding responsibility), high interdependence and modest independence (as an expression of dependency on power networks and assistential system), low self-esteem (because of constant failure) and low self-determination (as a subjective qualification of a defective 'control' over life).

Table 1.

Definitions of Values Types and the Single Items Used to Index Them Inside of Theory of Culture-Level Values (Schwartz, 1994a)

Nr. crt.	Axiological Types	Definition of the values types and the single items used to index them
1	Conservatism Emphasis on status-quo, maintaining group solidarity and traditional order	Clean, devout, family security, forgiving, honoring parents and elders, moderate, national security, obedient, politeness, protecting public image, reciprocation of favors, respect for tradition, self-discipline, social order, wisdom.
2	Intellectual autonomy Emphasis on promoting ideas and individual's rights in order to achieve his/her objectives	Creativity, curious, broad-minded.
3	Affective Autonomy Emphasis on promoting individual's independent pursuit of affective positive experience	Enjoying life, exciting life, pleasure, varied life.
4	Hierarchy Emphasis on the legitimacy of hierarchical allocation of fixed roles and of resources	Authority, humble, influential, social power, wealth.
5	Egalitarianism Emphasis on transcendence of selfish interests in favor of voluntary commitment to promote the welfare of others	Equality, freedom, helpful, honest, loyal, responsible, social justice, world of peace.
6	Harmony Emphasis on fitting harmoniously into the environment	Protecting the environment, unity with nature, the world of beauty.
7	Mastery Emphasis on getting ahead through active self-assertion, through changing and mastering the natural and social environment	Ambitious, capable, choosing own goals, daring, independent, successful.

At the axiological level, East Europeans attribute greater importance to conservatism and hierarchy values. They also place less importance on affective and intellectual autonomy, egalitarianism and mastery values (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003; Schwartz, Bardi, & Bianchi, 2000). Producing true 'cultural trauma', combined with a lack of predictability in the social environment, the communist experience has generated an adaptive reconversion in values (Sztompka, 2000). For example, the atmosphere of supervision and reclusion, the rules with ideological content and the the anxiety state inhibited the spirit of competition, capacity for innovation, and altered autonomy values (Kohn & Schooler, 1983; Schooler, Mulatu, & Oates, 1999). Thus, returning to Schwartz's model (2005), the affective autonomy values were strongly undermined as well as the corresponding values like enjoying life, experiencing excitement and pleasure. Also, intellectual autonomy values were intensely discredited due to the ideological control, with little focus on creativity and curiosity, as well as mastery values (such as ambition and daring).

In a sociopolitical environment characterized by authoritarian patterns, values like self-discipline, moderation, social order, and obedience gained a functional role, helping people to integrate in a world in which the formal authority imposes the rules. Moreover, in Romania, the atmosphere of suspicion, anxiety, arbitrary victimization and continued surveillance – which became atrocious in the last years of *Securitate* – have considerably diminished aspects such as interpersonal trust (Antohi, 1999; Marody, 1998; Michelson & Michelson, 1993, May; Sandu, 2003). In a climate of suspicion and relational distrust, the registry of egalitarianism values were strongly undermined, because these values involved community engagement in the name of a common good. In a world characterized by inequity and social abuse, social autism and community abandonment, values such as social justice, honesty, equality, freedom are considerably discredited because their affirmation could generate substantial damage to the people who assume them (Michelson & Michelson, 1993, May).

In Romania, due to the fact that the State was the main agent of modernization throughout the last two centuries, no matter the nature of the political regime (Hitchins, 1994), the individual involvement was confronted with a paternalistic-etatistic dimension that emphasized passivity, public indifference and assistentialism. These characteristics contributed to the maintenance of a status quo, perceived as implacable, that consolidated conservatism values (Cernat, 2010). In a country where public opinion, in the post-communist period, indicates responses at around 15% when it comes to 'work' as a success predictor and responses at around 85% when it comes to factors such as 'relationships', 'luck' shows once more that the promotion in social networks is not acquired through meritocratic routes, but by 'exploiting' the relational capital and institutional opportunism, on the basis of a pattern inherited from the communist period (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2010). A study with teachers and students as well as employees from private companies showed that attitudinal patterns were characterized by high interdependence, modest

independence, low self-esteem, high externalism and precarious self-determination (Gavreliuc, 2006). Thus, it is expected that interdependent patterns of self-construal will dominate the independent ones, and that attribution patterns will be predominantly assistentialist. Also, appreciation of mediocrity and arbitrary generate a depreciation of mastery and intellectual autonomy values.

These theoretical frameworks underline the change of values and attitudes under the pressure of social and political context, but it remains an open question how fast this change will occur (Bardi, Lee, Towfigh, & Soutar, 2009). Theories in social psychology claim that radical change in the social context is accompanied by an immediate and significant change in human attitudes and values (Albarracin, 2011; Aronson, 1988; Loewenstein, 2007; McGuire, 1985; Perloff, 1993). Equally, at the other extreme, the school of history of mentalities and the school of social representations defend the power of inertia principle (Braudel, 1996; Gorshkov, 2010; Kollontai, 1999; Moscovici, 1988). The last perspective argues that the multigenerational dimension of the profound mental structures, among which the value orientations and attitudinal patterns form the most consistent core, are situated in the long historical time (*la longue durée*), and modulation happens over the course of several centuries (Braudel, 1996; Le Goff, 1988). Furthermore, there is empirical evidence that the fundamental social representations of a shared community have a residual character over the course of at least three generations (Flament, 1995).

The dynamic structure of values and attitudinal phenomenon can be assessed through longitudinal studies (e.g., Schwartz, 2000). Alternatively, cross-sectional cohort can give indirect insight into the impact of varying socio-political environments on value and attitudes. The focus of the current research was an intra-national cross-sectional study designed to test the impact of the communist interval (1947-1989) on values by differentiating three cohorts. As the exposure to socialization processes was significantly different for these distinct cohorts, attitudinal and value changes may differ across these cohorts.

Based on the theoretical outline presented above and previous empirical findings (Gavreliuc, 2006), three predictions were made:

Hypothesis 1: At the level of attitudinal structures, it is expected that the profile will indicate high scores for interdependence, low scores for independence, moderate self-esteem, high externalism and low self-determination patterns.

Hypothesis 2: At the basic values level, it is expected that high importance will be given to conservatism and hierarchy, and low importance will be given to intellectual autonomy, affective autonomy, mastery and egalitarianism.

Hypothesis 3: Two competing hypotheses were tested regarding cohort differences. The *value and attitude change hypothesis* (h3.1) predicts that the 'older generation', who had a more consistent socialization experience under communism, is structured differently from the 'young generation', who had not been so intensively exposed to the socialization patterns of communism. The difference

between two strata is more pronounced as the intergenerational gap is greater. The *value and attitude conservation hypothesis* (h3.2) predicts that, despite different generational socialization experiences, cohorts have rather similar attitudinal and values profile.

METHODS

Sample

The present quantitative study has been carried out in November – December, 2009. The research was coordinated by the Psychology Department at the West University of Timisoara. There were 32 students as field operators with prior training involved. The target population was represented by the inhabitants of the West Region of Development in Romania (Timiș, Caraș-Severin, Arad, Deva counties).

The current study used the same area, the same instruments and the same generational strata as the previous studies carried out on convenience samples (Gavreliuc, 2006). The membership in a generational stratum was decided based on the participant's age. In order to be included in the study, the difference between the participant's age and the average age of generational strata could not be larger than two years (+/- 2 y.o.). Within each generational stratum (conventionally called cohorts), a random sampling was made based on odds as sampling step and on quotas. The quotas were gender (which divided the sample into two equal subgroups) and residence type (rural, small urban - under 20,000 inhabitants, medium urban - between 20,001-100,000 inhabitants, high urban – more than 100,001 inhabitants). The corresponding weights of each category were determined according to the data provided by the Direction for Statistics of each county. Thus, the field operators had the following indication of inclusion in the study sample: age, gender and the type of residence. Participants were randomly selected from the electoral lists provided by the counties' city halls, using a sampling fixed step established for all operators. In order to maintain efficient communication between all territorial units, at the end of each day it was organized a brief video-call conference with all coordinator operators from the regions. This technique enabled operators to express any encountered difficulties, record how many questionnaires had been completed, and decide what measures should be taken to optimize data collection.

The target selection for each cohort was around 500 subjects, with an estimating sampling error of about 4.4% at a confidence level of 95% and the global response rate was relatively high (57%). The total sample consisted of 1,481 subjects, being divided into three cohorts as follows. G20: $n = 472$ with $M = 26.34$ years; G35: $n = 529$ with $M = 40.92$ years and G50: $n = 480$ with $M = 56.27$ years.

Instruments

The Self-Construal Scale (Singelis, 1994). The version with 13 items is intended to measure the attitude toward self-construal. The scale consists of 7 items that measure interdependence (e.g., “It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group”) and another 6 items that measure independence (e.g., “I'd rather say “No” directly than risk being misunderstood”). Each item was rated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The internal consistency for independence was $\alpha = .72$ and $\alpha = .74$ for interdependence.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) evaluates the explicit positive and negative attitudes toward self. The scale consists of 10 items (e.g., “I take a positive attitude toward myself”) measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and has very good internal consistency, $\alpha = .90$. Higher scores indicate a high level of explicit self-esteem.

The Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966; 1975) evaluates the type of attribution (internal / external) and consists of 29 items, of which 23 are active items and 6 items are neutral. For each item subjects have to choose between two statements that describe an external or internal orientation. The total LC score is obtained by counting the number of external responses (minimum 0, maximum 23, the average scale is 11.5). In this sample, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was $\alpha = .77$.

The Self-Determination Scale (Sheldon, Ryan, & Reis, 1996) measures the overall attitude towards 'owning your life'. It is composed of two sub-scales, each with five items: awareness of self and perceived choice. The two subscales can be used separately or combined to give an overall score of self-determination. In the present study the overall score of self-determination was used. For each item, subjects are faced with two opposing statements (A, B) in connection with the aspects measured. The Likert scale grading from 1 to 5 indicate the degree to which participants agree with the items. For example, if the assertion A is completely true and the assertion B is completely untrue, then the answer will be assessed with 1; if both statements are true to the same degree, the answer will be assessed with 3; if the statement A is completely untrue and the assertion B is completely true, the answer will be assessed with 5. The global score of self-determination can oscillate between 10 (minimum) and 50 (maximum), with an average score of 30. The reliability coefficient obtained for the global scale was $\alpha = .72$.

Schwartz Values Survey Questionnaire – SVS (Schwartz, 1992) includes 56 single values which subjects need to rate according to their importance ('as the guiding principle in my life'). The respondents' answers may vary from 7 (supreme importance), passing through 3 (important), 0 (not important) and -1 (opposed to my values). An average score was computed for each of the seven single value types by combining the scores of single values that have been indexed. The average scores can vary from -1 to 7, with an average of the scale of 3. The higher the scores, the higher that value type is ranked. This set of individual values is listed in

Table 1. The SVS questionnaire fits with the conceptual definition of value types and the empirical coherence in analyses conducted at cultural level has been demonstrated (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011; Schwartz, 1994a, 1994b). In the present study, an average score for all value types was calculated for each cohort.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1 predicted that, across all cohorts, participants will show high scores for interdependence, low scores for independence, moderate self-esteem, high externalism and low self-determination patterns. Results confirmed this hypothesis with the exception of self-esteem, for which high scores were found (see Table 2).

Table 2.

Intergenerational Comparison of Attitudes (One-Way ANOVAs)

	Generation			F-values
	G50 <i>M (SD)</i>	G35 <i>M (SD)</i>	G20 <i>M (SD)</i>	
Independence	2.22 (0.32)	2.10 (0.29)	2.18 (0.34)	1.48
Interdependence	2.90 ^a (0.39)	2.94 ^a (0.42)	3.13 ^b (0.44)	2.46*
Self-Esteem	30.18 (4.98)	28.16 (4.79)	31.15 (5.11)	1.67
Locus of Control	14.15 ^{ab} (4.11)	12.05 ^a (3.98)	14.85 ^b (4.26)	2.12*
Self Determination	22.04 ^b (4.23)	20.97 ^b (4.07)	17.70 ^a (3.93)	3.56**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. Notes: $df = 2, 1478$. Means with same letters do not differ significantly.

One-way ANOVAs with cohorts as independent variable found statistically significant intergenerational differences regarding interdependence, $F(2, 1478) = 2.46$, $p < 0.05$. Bonferoni post-hoc comparisons of the three groups indicated that the cohort 20 (G20) is more interdependent than cohort 35 (G35) and cohort 50 (G50) (see Table 2). Intergenerational differences were also found for locus of control, $F(2, 1478) = 2.12$, $p < 0.05$, which reveals that the younger generation (G20) emphasizes external orientation more than the middle generation (G35). For self-determination significant differences were found, $F(2, 1478) = 3.56$, $p < 0.01$; further analyses showed that G20 has the lowest self-determination level, lower than G35 and G50 (see Table 2). No significant differences between cohorts were found for independence and self-esteem.

To summarize, significant intergenerational differences were found for three dimensions, namely, interdependence, locus of control, and self-determination. No differences were found for independence and self-esteem. These findings provide only partial support for the attitude stability hypothesis (*h3.2*).

With regard to SVS scales, following the structure of the scales from SVS and the average of each scale (see Table 3), it was found that only conservatism values were significantly higher than the average scale, following the study prediction. Thus, in the axiological register, hypothesis 2 has been only partially confirmed.

Table 3.

Intergenerational Comparisons of Values (One-Way ANOVAs)

Values type	Generation			F-values
	G50 <i>M (SD)</i>	G35 <i>M (SD)</i>	G20 <i>M (SD)</i>	
Conservatism	4.06 ^a (0.15)	4.68 ^b (0.23)	4.21 ^a (0.18)	2.89*
Hierarchy	2.12 ^a (0.23)	2.97 ^b (0.31)	2.29 ^{ab} (0.21)	3.32**
Harmony	4.19 (0.34)	4.17 (0.29)	4.08 (0.26)	1.75
Egalitarianism	4.62 ^b (0.22)	4.23 ^a (0.19)	4.46 ^{ab} (0.20)	2.69*
Intellectual autonomy	4.78 ^b (0.41)	4.12 ^a (0.44)	4.43 ^{ab} (0.38)	2.93*
Affective autonomy	3.56 ^{ab} (0.40)	3.21 ^a (0.29)	3.81 ^b (0.33)	2.54*
Mastery	3.96 (0.12)	3.77 (0.17)	3.82 (0.20)	1.57

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. Notes: $df = 2, 1478$. Means with same letters do not differ significantly.

One-way ANOVAs with cohorts as independent variable yielded significant main effects for conservatism, hierarchy, egalitarianism, intellectual and affective autonomy (see Table 3). The comparisons between G50 and G35 showed that G35 has higher scores for conservatism and hierarchical values than G50, whereas G50 has more pronounced scores for egalitarianism and intellectual autonomy than G35. In terms of harmony, affective autonomy and mastery, no significant differences were found between the two cohorts (see Table 3).

Comparing G35 to G20, it was found that individuals from the 'middle generation' were significantly more conservative and scored lower on affective autonomy than those from G20. No significant differences between G20 and G35 were found for hierarchy, harmony, egalitarianism, intellectual autonomy and

mastery value types. Comparisons between cohorts G50 and G20 showed no significant differences in values at all.

Across all results for Schwartz values, there is more evidence for value stability (*h 3.2*) than value change (*h3.1*). Combining the findings for both attitudes and values, it can be concluded that this study invalidates the hypothesis of changing attitudes and values under the burden of social pressure and confirms the conservation of attitudes and values hypothesis (*h 3.2*).

DISCUSSION

In the current study, three generations of Romanians were compared with regard to various attitudes and values. The older generation (G50) consisted of subjects who went through a powerful communist socialization and were deeply integrated into the old social and political order; generation 35 consisted of subjects who had a secondary consistent socialization during communism, but who lived the second part of their life in post-communism and democracy; generation 20 consisted of subjects with almost exclusive socialization in post-communism and democracy. By comparing these three different generations, we learn more about changes in the attitudes and values as a consequence of dramatic changes in the society after the breakdown of communism. It was started from the premise that these representative samples integrated the attitudinal and value tendencies of the population associated with the specific cohorts. It has also been studied whether cohorts were differently affected by post-communism in regard to attitudes and values.

It is evident that the collapse of communism brought considerable changes at a social, political and behavioral level; however, little changes occurred in the profound mental structures (attitudes, especially values), as shown in this study. The current study focused on values that play a prominent role in society, as being consistent predictors of attitudinal and behavioral structures (Boehnke, 2008; Homer, 1993; Scott, 2000).

The results support the 'incarceration' model explanation, building a picture dominated by high interdependence for all the cohorts. This illustrates that in a confrontation with discretionary social and political environment, the capital relational resources are very important in contouring an adaptive strategy. It is important to highlight that in the present study there are some contradictory results with other classical studies that focused on the independence and interdependence dimensions (Singelis, 1994; Singelis, Bond, Sharkey, & Lai, 1999; Singelis & Brown, 1995). Studies that operate with these dimensions in relation with the age variable have noticed that youth is a predictor of a high level of independence. Likewise, the late adulthood period is accompanied by a more pronounced level of dependence, because of the increasingly need for assistance. While individualism and collectivism were considered extremes of a continuum by cross-cultural

psychology studies (Hofstede, 1980), Singelis (1994) argues that independence and interdependence can coexist in one person; independence is the personal correspondent of articulated individualism at the cultural and societal level, whereas interdependence is the correspondent of collectivism.

In the current study, the scores for independence were modest for all the three cohorts and no significant differences were found across cohorts. This suggests diminishing individual autonomy tendencies as an adaptive response to the social and political environment characterized by disengagement and social dispersion. Likewise, the tendency regarding interdependence contradicts results from other studies (e.g., Singelis, 1994; Singelis et al., 1999): we found that younger participants are more interdependent than older participants. Once again, the responsible, involved youngster stereotype is not confirmed in Romania, although behavioral changes between diverse generational strata were registered (Voicu, 2005).

All of these findings suggest that in post-communist Romania, an atmosphere of institutional mistrust, paternalism, corruption, insecurity and arbitrary, survived since the communist period. These trends attest that in Romania, similar to other post-communist countries, many of these pathological circumstances still exist (Kopecky, Doorenspleet, & Mudde, 2008; Lewis, 1997; Roskin, 2001). The fact that only a 'façade democracy' (Pasti, Miroiu, & Codiță, 1996) characterizes Romania is an expression of a transgenerational character of the individual attitudinal pattern.

A similar trend is remarked on the locus of control dimension, highlighting the dominance of an external attribution pattern, which proves the existence of an *increased helplessness* in the young generation (Gherasim, 2011). Locus of control theory (Rotter, 1966, 1975) emphasizes the role of social learning in the activation of a specific attribution mechanism. Favoring one of the external-internal control poles over another is anticipated by the subject's ability to routinely control the context around them. Thus, subjects who cannot control the context tend to become helpless and inert (hence the syntagm *learned helplessness*), fail constantly in tasks that require effort. These people often invoke being unlucky ('lack of chance') in life (Roesch & Amirkham, 1997). Failing constantly at different tasks, having no credible alternative success, results in *attributional alibi* that inhibits taking charge of their own behavior. This trend is more pronounced in the young generation and less present in the middle generation, suggesting once again that young people have a high inclination towards detaching from responsibility, which underlines the power of the post-communist context.

All cohorts presented high scores of self-esteem and no differences across generations were found. This tendency is surprising as we deal here with groups of subjects who faced precarious material and aspirational experiences specific to modest social capital societies with a reduced GDP/capita and limited opportunities for success (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). However, such results are not an exception

in social psychology, and attest the presence of a deficiency in the way people relate to relevant standards. The tendency is similar to that observed in education, where it was revealed that students from modest high-schools have a higher self-esteem than pupils from elite schools (Bachman & O'Malley, 1986). Thus, students from marginal schools feel an important psychological comfort when compared to colleagues in their modest local environment than if the same comparison is made in a fierce, competitive environment, with high-performance students. Not having a balanced point of comparison, students feed on the illusion that they are 'very good and gifted' and their self-esteem is strengthened (Bachman & O'Malley, 1986). Going back to the current study, such use of "self-deception" appears to be more moderate in 2009-2010 compared to 2002-2003 (Gavreliuc, 2011). The fact could be explained by the massive migration process, especially after Romania entered the European Union in 2007, when over 2 million Romanians have decided to work in countries with developed economies. As a result, they achieved new patterns of attitudes and values which contaminated the entire Romanian society, remodeling in a more demanding way the comparative self-image standards (Sandu, 2010).

The intergenerational analysis of self-determination revealed differences in a counterintuitive way, showing that young people were more modestly self-determined than the elderly, contrary to the studies conducted in Western cultures (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). This fact can be explained through a generalized transgenerational fatalistic trait characteristic for the Romanian society (Antohei, 1999), that encourages the formation of a precarious self-determined and frightened individual (Miroiu, 1999).

When it comes to the axiological register, high scores for conservatism can be noticed supporting the theoretical model that emphasized the adaptation to the circumstances of a sociopolitical environment.

The middle generation (G35), often labeled as the generation of 'decretei', is a distinct social stratum, one that may have internalized a dramatic social destiny: the generation who decisively contributed to the breaking down of the communist regime in Romania. When drawing the portrait of this particular generation, its instability, ambivalence and vulnerability are evident: the most pronounced conservatism, favoring the most intense hierarchy, lower average scores for egalitarianism, but especially the most modest average scores for intellectual and affective autonomy across the three cohorts, suggesting internalization of generational insecurity. The results also indicated an achievement in terms of socio-historical traumas, with deep implications in people's identity profile. Such vulnerability is also reported in other similar studies regarding the 'legacy of trauma' (de Mendelssohn, 2008; Kellermann, 2001). If the middle generation would be taken out of the picture, no significant differences in value orientations were observed between 'parents' (G50) and 'their children' (G20). Therefore, it can be argued that *intergenerational value transfer* resists, despite radical sociopolitical changes. Operating with generational representative samples, the sets of attitudes

and social values can be named as transgenerational, a term being used in previous studies (Boehnke, 2008; Boehnke, Hadjar, & Baier, 2007; Homer, 1993; Scott, 2000).

Taking into account scores of Western Europe as a reference when comparing the present study to other studies that used a similar instrument, it can be observed that conservatism and hierarchy values are more prevalent for the Romanian sample. Harmony values, intellectual autonomy, affective autonomy, and egalitarianism are less predominant for Romania than for the West European countries (Schwartz et al., 2000). These results appeared without any substantial differences regarding the mastery value type between scores of Romania and those of the Western European countries. However, these scores should be read with caution, because the present comparison is not legitimate from a statistical point of view - a test of significance has not been made, not having any access to the European database of cited studies. The samples were also built differently, e.g. convenience sample consisting of teachers and students in European studies vs. regional generational representative samples in the Romanian study.

Being under communism for half a century, Central and Southern European countries (including Romania) activated adaptive strategies that boosted conservatism and hierarchy values, reducing the importance attributed to intellectual and affective autonomy, egalitarianism and mastery values (Bardi & Schwarz, 1996; Schwartz et al., 2000). Furthermore, studies in other cultural areas proved the existence of an extremely slow process of value change, in spite of political, social and economic radical transformations (Moghaddam, 2008; Moghaddam & Crystal, 1997; Putnam, 1993; Schwartz et al., 2000).

CONCLUSIONS

'*La longue durée*' hypothesis was confirmed, the investigated social strata were characterized by a series of transgenerational patterns. Thus, high interdependence, modest independence, high self-esteem, dominant externalism, and low self-determination were highlighted at the attitudinal level, whereas conservatism and low affective and intellectual autonomy values were noted at an axiological level. Young Romanians seem to be the most vulnerable, dependent and less willing to take their life in their own hands when compared to the other cohorts. Additionally, young people structure their implicitly assumed values and attitudes in the same way as the older generation, "their parents", even if children these days sometimes condemn their parents for complicity and 'shameful disposals' in communist times. Such narrative recurrences appear frequently in the oral interviews with individuals who are part of the young cohorts, despite the persistence of transgenerational assistentialistic and fatalistic attitudes (Gavreliuc, 2011).

Limitations

The present study has some shortcomings. One of them refers to the fact that it is limited to only one historical moment (the end of the first decade of the 21st century). Moreover, only one regional area from Romania was studied, with its own specificity (Sandu, 2003). A longitudinal research with representative samples could have tested the hypotheses more directly. Inclusion of similar samples from other Central and East European countries could indicate if the tendencies underlined are more intense in Romania than in other postcommunist areas.

Furthermore, it is indispensable to take into account the link between the current tendencies and other structural and individual factors that have proven to be relevant, such as economic level (Inglehart, 1991; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005), previous types of political regime and dominant economic and social structures (Rupnik, 1988) or religiosity (Fontaine, Duriez, Luyten, Corveleyn, & Hutsebaut, 2005; Schwartz & Huisman, 1995). Lastly, a qualitative approach would complement the current study. A series of oral history interviews with subjects from the analyzed cohorts (G50, G35, G20) was conducted and the information resulted is being processed at the moment. Having access to the hidden semantic encoding and discursive recurrences, a more authentic set of attitudes and values can be identified. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, people's deeper mechanisms of assuming and integrating the history's changes might be revealed.

In spite of these shortcomings, this current research attempted to change the canonical approaches: from international comparisons to intra-national comparison, preserving the methodology of the previous studies and selecting a generational stratum as unit of comparison. The dynamics of these portraits were analyzed through representative samples for each generational stratum, and not only for convenience samples. As the exposure to socialization processes was significantly different for these distinct cohorts, the research examined the impact of the (post)communist period on the generational strata.

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