

VALUE ORIENTATIONS OF THE ROMANIAN POPULATION

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Abstract: *The values reflect a synthetic image or a result of the transformations that take place in the way of life of the population, representing, compared to the other aspects of human life, a "superstructure" of the social. The values cover the multitude of aspects, including dimensions and indicators of great diversity, usually embodied in questionnaires applied through opinion polls such as the one whose results we present, in part, below. We further present some data obtained through the CURS survey, precisely to provide a comparison framework, based on research on the value guidelines of the Romanian population, for the results of such surveys conducted in other countries, but also for future similar research in the country. The aspects we refer to in this article are: social capital, the faith of the Romanian population, ethnic and social relations, perception of identity, opinions and political orientations.*

Keywords: *value orientations; social capital; social relations; identity perceptions; political orientations.*

1. Research methodology

This article is based on an opinion poll coordinated by the author of this article and conducted by CURS in September-October 2019, at the request of the Coalition for the Family. The results are representative for the Romanian population aged 18 and over, in a maximum margin of error of $\pm 3\%$, at a confidence level of 95%. In order to make the data comparable internationally, some indicators tested in the Eurobarometers of value guidelines carried out periodically in different EU countries were also used.¹

¹ Unfortunately, such concerns are very few in Romania, being known only the research conducted in the early '90s within the ICCV. Other sociological studies and research such as those carried out within the ICCV and the Institute of Sociology of the Academy, in other institutions and universities such as the sociology departments of the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work at the University of Bucharest, sociology or social studies departments of Babeş Bolyai University from Cluj Napoca, Petre Andrei University from Iaşi, West University from Timișoara, University from Craiova etc. it partially covers various social issues involving the study of values. Aspects of quality of life, standard of living, welfare, poverty, social policies, employment, health, education, social inclusion, social inequality, child protection can be mentioned, to name just a few researches conducted within the ICCV. Within ISAR, for example, other aspects related to social values are addressed, such as the social dimensions of the rural environment, the sociology of deviance, social problems, family abuse, community resilience, social risks, demographic decline, etc. Other social aspects closely related to the study of values orientations were addressed through opinion polls by various profile institutes. Among the topics researched in this way we mention only some of the CURS archive such as: social capital, labor resources, labor migration abroad, social discrimination, interethnic relations, political

2. Social capital

1.1. Trust in people and institutions

Social capital is a modern concept used in sociology to measure the essence of community vitality. As defined by R. Putnam, social capital refers, in essence, to social values, especially trust, social networks, especially the associative behavior of people and social norms (obligations and moral norms).

In principle, high or strong social capital is considered to be associated with economic growth and prosperity, and low social capital is associated with low economic growth or development.

In our survey, the dimension of trust is measured by general trust, trust in certain categories of people and trust in institutions.

We present, below, the main results regarding the social capital in Romania from the perspective of trust in people and institutions and of associative behavior.

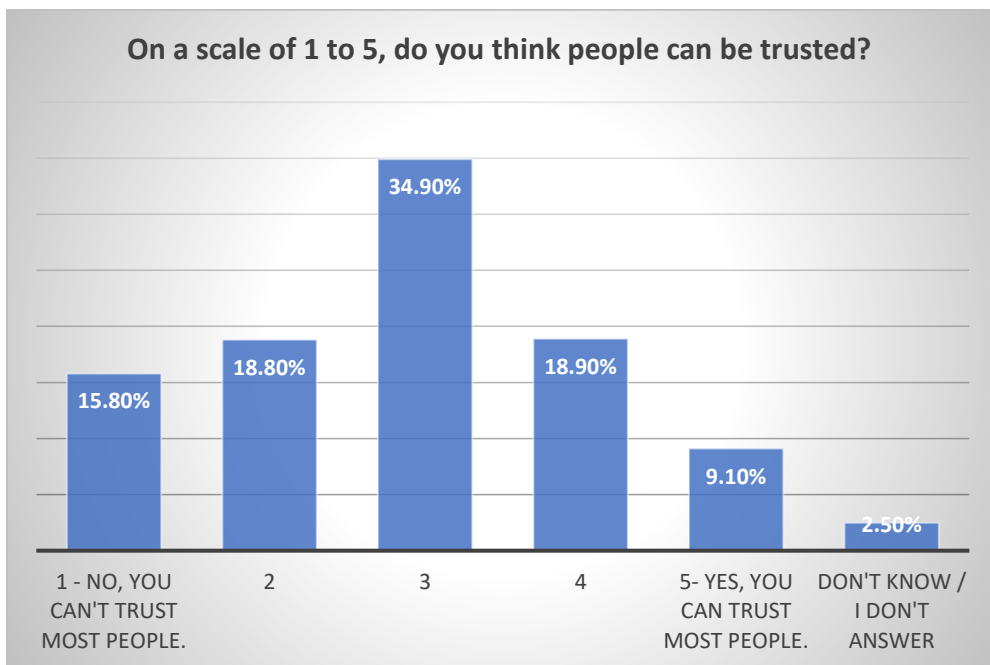


Figure no 1. Distribution of answers to question "On a scale of 1 to 5, do you think people can be trusted?"

options and voting motivation, regional development and forecast of Bucharest's evolution in perspective 2030s etc.

As shown in the data in **Fig. no. 1**, which follows, high confidence in people in Romania, respectively codes 5 and 4 of the scale from 1 to 5, where 5 represents very high confidence, shows that the percentage of trust in most people is 28%, similar to the European average (31.5%), but higher than in developing or underdeveloped countries in Africa, for example.

The situation is very different in terms of trust in different categories of people or institutions. People have high confidence, over 50% in the army, church, doctors, teachers, priests, journalists, police and relatively low trust in non-governmental organizations (16), trade unions (15), political parties (14), parliament (13), government (12), banks (11), business people (10), politicians (9).

It can be said, based on these data, that in Romania there are currently forces or institutions of social consensus as well as forces or institutions that do not yet have sufficient confidence to enjoy a majority social recognition.

Of course, not all people have the same level of confidence in different sections of the population. For example, the rural population has less trust in people (24%) than those in urban areas (31% trust), but has more trust in priests (58% trust much and very much) compared to the urban population (45% a lot and a lot of trust in priests).

The same in the church. The rural population trusts a lot and a lot in the church in proportion of 73%, while the urban population only in proportion of 58%. There are also inverse situations when the urban population has more confidence than the rural one, as is the case of non-governmental organizations (31% trust in the case of urban ones and 27% in the situation of the rural population). Likewise, the confidence in different categories of population differs depending on age, level of education, etc. However, in total, the data are essentially concordant, with about the same categories or institutions enjoying high or low confidence, although this varies slightly depending on the particularities of the evaluated population.

1.2. Associative behavior

Regarding the associative behavior, the survey data show that almost a third of the adult population of Romania declares that they belong or voluntarily support different forms of association, in the first places being the social services for the elderly, disabled, youth support, women's protection. At the same time, even if they are not members of a form of association, the majority of Romania's adult population would agree to support such forms of association, with social services for the elderly, youth support, women's protection, organizations taking the lead. religious aid, supporting local communities on issues of poverty, employment, combating discrimination.

2. The faith of the Romanian population

There are countless opinions regarding the number or share of believers or religious in the population of Romania as well as regarding the meaning or content of the term religious or believer.

From a quantitative point of view, specialized studies, based essentially on opinion polls, show that the number or share of the religious or religious population that associates the faith with effective behavior, such as church or place of worship (at least once a week) it is somewhere between 10% and 15% of the adult population.

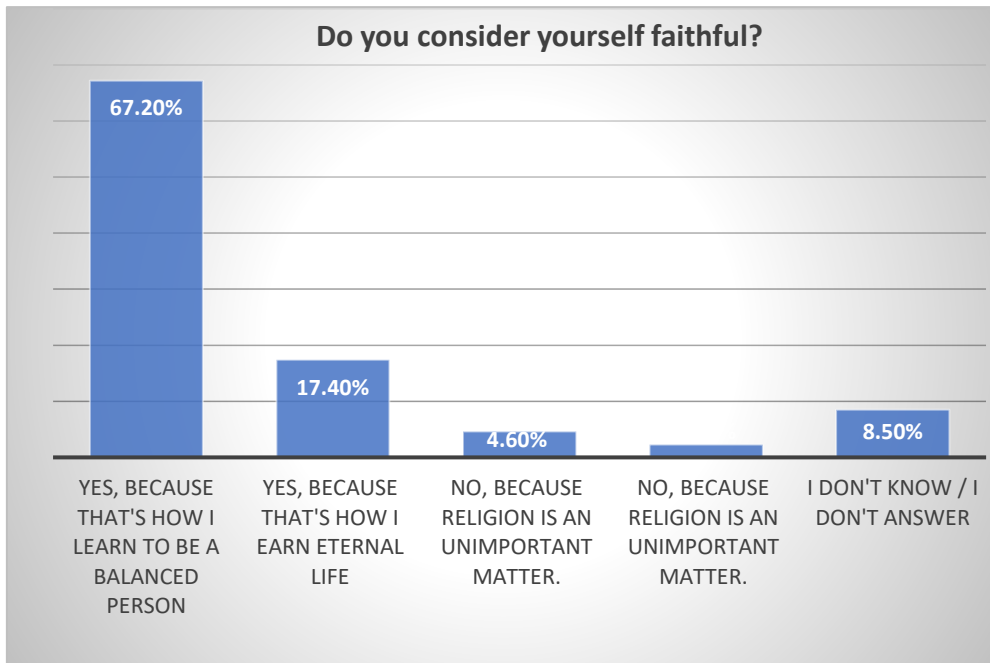


Figure no 2. Distribution of answers to question "Do you consider yourself faithful?"

It is true, on the other hand, that the share of those who consider religion / belief to be very important and quite important amounts to over 80% of the adult population, and about 70% say they have high and very high confidence in the church. However, the population puts this belief into practice, at least in terms of attending church, only occasionally, on the occasion of major religious holidays or family events, such as birth, marriage, death. In fact, the faith is only partially confirmed by attending church as long as only 14% go to the place of worship at least once a week, 19% once or 2-3 times a month, 42% on holidays or once a year and 25% never go or less than once a year.

So there is, at least in principle, a strong self-esteem by which the adult population of Romania considers itself faithful, which amounts to 85% of the population and which says that it has faith in God in proportion of 92%.

The data confirm, as a trend, the findings of international studies (Norris & Inglehart, 2017) according to which all industrially developed societies have evolved towards more secular values in the last half century, but

the world as a whole now has more people with traditional religious views than it has ever had. (However, it is confirmed that religion persists more strongly among vulnerable populations, especially in poor or crisis-ridden nations, and religious practices have been systematically eroded among wealthy people in economically developed countries).

Those who consider themselves believers or answer Yes to such a question link the affirmative answer to the fact that being a believer learns to be a balanced person (67%) or that he thus earns eternal life (17%). Of course, the level of religiosity is not the same for different categories of the population. For example, the adult population in urban areas is considered faithful in proportion of 80%, while that in rural areas is considered proportionate in proportion of 90%. Likewise, the adult population in urban areas believes in God in proportion of 88%, while that in rural areas in proportion of 96%. The same trend is maintained for young people and the elderly, which confirms the association of faith with traditional values.

If we look at things in depth we can see that the appreciation of the level of faith, in general, is associated, more or less, with certain values or dogmas of faith such as: life after death, the existence of the soul, the devil, evil, sin, the resurrection after death. Thus, 45% of the population believes in the afterlife, 62% in the existence of the soul, 56% in heaven, 56% in sin, 37% in the existence of the devil.

In addition, religious faith is partially affected or agressed by the existence in the public space of ideas more or less related to faith or religion such as faith in a personal God (in which 26% of the population believes), faith in reincarnation in which 12% of the population believes), belief in aliens (15%), witches (18%).

It is clear that the mixture of ideas, beliefs, habits, behaviors, etc. leads to a spiritual confusion that manifests itself in a significant part of the Romanian population.

Of course, there are significant differences in the existence of different forms of belief in different categories of the population. For example, the rural population with a lower and older level of education believes in a higher proportion in God (96% compared to 88% of the urban population); in life after death (49% vs 41%); in the existence of heaven (60% vs 53%). In turn, the population of cities believes more than that of villages in the existence of a personal God (31% vs. 19%); in reincarnation (13% vs 9%); in aliens (16% vs 13%). There are no significant differences in the trust of the two categories of population in the existence of the soul, the devil, sin, in the resurrection after death and in witchcraft.

3. Ethnic and social relations

A first indicator of the social distance between different ethnic groups, essentially between the ethnic majority of a country's population and other existing ethnic or minority social groups in a country is given by favorable or

unfavorable opinion. It is, in essence, the index of favorability of the majority population towards different minority groups existing in the country, respectively in Romania.

From the analysis of the survey data regarding the very good, good, bad and very bad opinion or opinion about different minority ethnic and social groups, existing in Romania, it results that the favorability index is very different from one group to another as shown in the graph. which follows:

Thus, the Romanian population has a high index of favorability about Romanians in Romania (self-esteem), of over 80% compared to Germans in Romania, 69% compared to Romanians in the Republic of Moldova in Romania, of Turks in Romania, 56%, of Jews from Romania 56%, of Ukrainians from Romania, of 53%, of Tatars from Romania, of 52%, of Hungarians from Romania, of 49%, of Russians from Romania, of 48% and of Roma (Gypsies) from Romania, 22%. The very low opinion or index of favorability towards the Roma is explained, as shown in other CURS surveys, by the lifestyle of this category of population, which is largely rejected, and this is also reflected in the attitude of the population. to this community.

The index of favorability towards other social groups is also very different. Thus, the Romanian population has a very good and good opinion about Protestants in Romania (45%), about neo-Protestants in Romania (41%), but there is a low index of favorability towards immigrant Arabs and Muslims (26%), other immigrants from Romania, 22%, lesbians (12%), homosexuals, transsexuals (12%).

It should be noted that the share of non-responses to non-ethnic minority groups is generally high, over 20%, reaching in some cases over a third of the population. This means, among other things, that such minority groups are less known in Romania.

A set of questions that more rigorously measures social distance from certain social categories or groups of people refers to questions that assess the level of acceptance of these categories of people as neighbors (this is an important indicator that measures a higher level of acceptance / coexistence levels in the Bogardus scale applied in Romania by CURS in terms of social distance from ethnic groups. The results are presented in D. Abraham, I. Bădescu and S. Chelcea. *Interethnic Relations in Romania*, Ed Carpatica Cluj Napoca 1995.

The population of Romania has the highest degree of rejection of the neighborhood or the greatest social distance from people convicted of crimes, rape, etc. (66%), drug users (62%), homosexuals (48%), prostitutes (48%), alcoholics (40%), Roma people (34%), people with AIDS (19%).

In essence, the data show that there are different social distances between the majority population and various other minority ethnic or social groups.

Thus, regarding the ethnic communities it can be said that towards the majority of ethnic groups in Romania, except for the Roma population, there is a relatively high tolerance, ie an appreciation that falls within a space of

positive coexistence, the highest level of acceptability being in relation to the Germans in Romania (of course according to the Romanians themselves). At the other extreme, the space of tolerance and positive coexistence in relation to the Roma population is the smallest, the population largely rejecting a certain lifestyle and not the ethnic group itself, in many cases the Romanian and Roma population living in areas of positive coexistence.

Towards different social minorities, the population has either an attitude of acceptance or ignorance (for example towards certain religious groups), or an attitude of rejection or ignorance, as is the case of the LGBT category and partly of immigrant Muslim minorities lately in Romania. In fact, the reserved opinion towards LGBT is in line with the pro-family attitude of the population which considers, in proportion of 90%, that the family should raise two or more children.

4. Identity perception

To the standard question regarding the perception of identity, based on the self-declaration of ethnic or socio-territorial affiliation, respectively what is considered first, second, third and fourth, the survey data confirm, in essence, other such research in Romania.

Thus, the respondents consider themselves first of all 61% Romanians, 6% Europeans, 6% Transylvanians, 3% Moldovans, 2% Bucharestians, 2% Dobrogeans, 1% Oltenians or belong to a certain county (Sibiu, Bihorean, Constanța, Buzau, Brasov, vrâncean etc.), 19%. About 8% did not respond. If we take into account the fact that only 6% of the adult inhabitants of Romania consider themselves to be, first of all, Europeans, we could say that we are dealing with an ethnocentric population.

Secondly, the respondents consider themselves Europeans 23%, Romanians 20%, Transylvanians 9%, Oltenians 4% Moldovans 2% Muntenians 2%, Bucharestians 2%, another county, and 28% do not answer.

If we take into account the fact that the Romanian population feels that secondly it is European, so the word European appears most often this time, then it can be seen that the EU's influence on ethnic perception is gaining ground, at least as a trend. 90 indicated only a proportion of only 3% - 5%, in this sense.

Thirdly, the respondents consider themselves Europeans 13%, Romanians 2%, Muntenians 2%, Bucharestians 2% and 76% do not answer. The perception of European is maintained in the collective mentality in significant proportions and at this level even if it does not compete with the position held by Romanians in the first place. If this trend continues, it can be said that the European dimension of the Romanian population will practically double, at some point, the ethnic perception of Romanians.

Finally, fourthly, 96% do not know how to answer, and 2% consider themselves European. It should be mentioned that the socio-territorial perception, of belonging to the locality, county, etc. it occurs at all four levels of

identity perception. This perception doubles as a socio-territorial substrate the ethnic dimension.

5. Opinions and political orientations

The interest of the Romanian population towards politics is small, at least at a declarative level. When asked directly, only 23% of Romania's adult population says that they are "very interested" or "rather interested" in politics, as shown in the chart "How interested are you in politics?". 39% of the Romanian electorate consider that they are "not at all interested" in politics. However, as it is known, during the political elections, about half of the Romanians go to the polls, their share being, in fact, higher if the data are calculated on the population of the country, the voting lists including many voters who are go to work abroad, die, etc.

However, the adult population directly and manifestly involved in politics is small. Only 3% of voters say they are members of a political party (see chart "Are you a member of a political party?") And a very small proportion of the population is actively involved in various forms of political protests such as signing a petition, participating in demonstrations participation in strikes, illegal rallies and the occupation of buildings, institutions. Thus, as shown in the following chart, only 16% of the Romanian electorate admits that they were involved in signing a petition and 9% participated in legal demonstrations. Much fewer, 2.5% participated in strikes or illegal rallies and 0.4% were involved in the occupation of buildings or institutions. However, there is a willingness to get involved in such actions, in the sense that they could get involved, especially in legal protests.

The fact that the majority of the electorate is not interested in politics is also confirmed by the political orientation to the left or to the right. As the following graph shows, more than a third of survey respondents do not know how to answer the policy question, about 41% consider themselves left-wing and 17% consider themselves right-wing (on a scale of 1 to 10). Or, if the values obtained for the steps 4,5,6 and 7 of the scale are considered by the center, then it can be said that about 43% of the electorate is perceived as having a center orientation, which means a certain confusion of the population in relation with left-right political orientation.

This centrist orientation is also confirmed by the distribution of the answers to the question "Please tell me where you would place your opinion on a scale from 1 to 10 regarding the ratio between" private property and state property ". At the end of the scale, 10% is added to 1, respectively private property in business and industry should increase and also 10% in code 10, the other extreme, "state property in business and industry should increase". Only 9% do not answer this question, and again, most of the answers, over 40% are at the center of the scale, codes 4, 5, 6 and 7.

The more right-wing orientation of the Romanian electorate appears from the answers to the question on revenues. Thus, about 60% of Romania's

population is in the center right, on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 means "individual effort must be stimulated more" and 1 = "income must be as equal as possible", their opinion is at levels 6-10, and only 24% have an opinion that places them on the side of statism and egalitarianism.

This orientation of the population is in line with the ideological current that the closest respondent feels. From this perspective, of the closer ideological current, the electorate feels closer to the liberal, social and Christian-conservative political current. Thus, if we leave aside the electorate that does not know or cannot answer this question, then the proportion of the population that is attracted by the liberal current is around 37%, the one that is attracted by the social (socialist) current of 26% and the part that feels attracted to the Christian and / or conservative current (traditional) reaches almost 27%.

These data only partially agree with the voting intentions of the Romanian population at present because the vote is not given only according to the ideological current, especially since a significant part of the Romanian electorate does not know the ideological orientation of the different parties. In fact, 59% of the electorate appreciate that there is no party in Romania to represent them. The options of the 34% who answer in the affirmative to this question go to the existing parties, as in the case of the presidential candidates, by the way.

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