VALUES AND NORMS OF YOUTH IN ROMANIA

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INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this study is to construct a socio-moral portrait of the young in Romania, containing the main characteristics that distinguish Romanian youth from the rest of the population. In order to achieve this aim the authors took into account two specific objectives:

a. the identification of the main socio-cultural sub-groups within the Romanian youth displaying relatively separate value hierarchies within the large category of Romanian youth, who exhibit their own value systems guiding their attitudes and behavior.

b. The identification of the place of Romanian youth within the contemporary European value system by estimating the socio-political and moral values that have lost some of their importance during the last few years, as well as the values which should be defended and restored today.

For the purpose of achieving these aims we have conducted a national sociological survey on a representative sample of approximately 2000 young people from 21 counties in the following geo-cultural areas of the country: Moldova, Dobrogea, Muntenia, Oltenia, Banat, Crisana-Maramures, Transylvania and Bucharest. The conclusions of this paper were also based on the results of other researches having the same topic and conducted by research institutes in Romania, France, Hungary and Poland.

As an overall comment we could state that the prevailing moral and civic values of the youth in the present Romania display three fundamental axes of life: family, work and inter-personal relations, especially love and friendship. Together they constitute the dominant values for the current and future behavior of the young.

We can also notice a relative confusion of the values of Romanian youth that equally leads to an unequal manifestation of the growing-up process, including the formation of moral and civic conscience.

The youth in Romania significantly conduct their behavior and reactions *first according to their own beliefs*, but also to the way in which the community would react. Thus, conformist behavior seems to have its importance in the moral conduct of the young, at least at the level of social perception.

A third very broad conclusion refers to politics and touches upon its vigorous degradation on the evaluation scale of the juvenile population, as well as of the entire population. As we well know, Romanians and especially the young expected a series of clear decisions and options, capable to ensure a bearable transition of this difficult
period of social, economic and spiritual change from the new regime after December 1989. Unfortunately the low efficiency of the Romanian political system, no matter what the color of the various governments has been, led to powerfully demoralizing and alienating effects, including a major devaluation of politics on the population’s value scale. Accordingly, nowadays anything political, politics and politicians are ranked the last in the hierarchy of the values that are appreciated by the young. Moreover, the elements of the political system are often envisaged as the main causes of the current economic and moral degradation.

In the hierarchy of the aspects considered essential by the young for their lives family, money, work and love occupy the first places.

In so far as work is concerned we notice that, although it is considered a fundamental form of accomplishing one’s personality, still, the young seem to value more powerfully the extrinsic factors such as money and the safety of the work place, and the intrinsic factors, such as self-accomplishment through professional fulfillment come only afterwards. The social utility of work as a value comes only in the last place. The young nowadays have become more individualistic and materialist (in the sense of being interested in material aspects) compared to the young of the previous periods. It is possible that they are simply more honest and give less conforming answers to the social scientist’s questions, if compared to the communist epoch conformism.

In what follows we will stress in a synthetic manner the main results of the study regarding the following aspects:
1. The universe of the values and civic attitudes of the young in Romania.
2. Romanian youth and identity values.
3. Manifestations of responsibility – as value and attitude – among the Romanian youth.
4. The young and marginal cultural values.
5. Rural youth: elements for a special psycho-moral profile.
6. Tendencies in the evolution of the socio-moral values in Europe and the place of the Romanian young from the point of view of these tendencies.

1. THE UNIVERSE OF THE VALUES AND CIVIC ATTITUDES OF THE YOUNG IN ROMANIA

The first aspect concerns the civic priorities in Romania in the youth’s view, namely the attitudes and civic actions that could improve the present situation. According to the national research, the majority of young people consider that it is extremely important to respect the law, to maintain order in the country, to respect human rights, to denounce fiscal frauds as well as to fight against any type of violence in order to improve the situation. At a closer analysis of the type of mentality suggested by the aforementioned attitudes we notice stress on order compared to freedom, on the respect of norms and on limiting the excessive manifestations of individual freedom. We appreciate that this type of attitude is not caused by any inclination towards totalitarianism in the Romanian youth, but it arises from the shocking remark that the law and order and various types of norms have not been respected to an alarming extent.
in Romania during the past few years. This reality gives birth to reactions of an ‘authoritarian’ type and not to any special attachment to totalitarian solutions of maintaining order and respecting norms. *The balance between order and freedom is, for the moment, in favor of order*, given its extreme lack on the level of the entire society. We consider that so long as the attitudes and mentalities of ‘pro-order’ and ‘pro-limitation’ towards the excessive manifestations of individual freedom seek to ensure the public good and the defense of the others’ sphere of freedom we can attach the label of ‘civic’ to these attitudes without being wrong. The lack of harmonization and even the crisis in the sphere of norms during the past years induce the need for denouncing all serious forms of law infringement in collective mentality, including that of the young, for the exposure and condemnation of large fiscal frauds and opposition to all forms of violence.

In so far as civism is concerned, just like in the case of other socio-moral and political values, the distance between the intentional and the actual is quite significant. Thus we appreciate that currently civism seems to be a socio-political ideal rather than reality in Romania; it seems to be ‘activated’ only in some ‘social oases’, the rest remaining, in the best case, at the level of potentiality.

In order to have real democratic behavior it is not enough to have civic mentality and attitudes, which many young seem to have assimilated, but something more is also necessary, and that is effective involvement in the defense of public good, in a word: civic participation. In modern times the best way for civic participation is the association of people in various organizations or associations independent from the government or power. And what these NGOs should primarily seek is solidarity and protection.

The potential of civic involvement of the young in Romania was revealed by the answers regarding the organizations (associations) in which they would like to be active. The result was that among the options concerning the civic involvement of the young were the associations for defending human rights, for the protection of the environment and humanitarian solidarity among the first, all of them make up a set of value-oriented options which are in perfect agreement with the above mentioned desirable civic attitudes.

An important place in expressing the desire for participation is occupied by activities and organizations with sports profile. Those, even if lacking an explicitly civic character, are specific and necessary at a young age, not only for the development of physical skills, but also for the development of sociability and the spirit of competition, moral values which prove to be so useful for a good adaptation to the requirements of modern times.

In the second place we find the youth’s option for organizations and activities which imply the protection of the interests of citizens, namely associations for religious charity, combating racism, organizations for the defense and preservation of culture and even the desire to participate in the school councils.

A different situation is registered in the case of civic involvement through the means of political parties and trade unions, the institutional mistrust manifesting this time through the quasi-general rejection by the young to participate in the community’s life in the political or trade union sphere.
Elements of civic activity are found in the analysis of the attitude of the youth towards four serious problems of humanity: globalization, interethnic conflicts, conflicts between the rich and poor, intergenerational conflicts.

The evaluation of the seriousness of these problems for Romania reveals the fact that what alarms the young in the first place is the increase of the difference between the rich and poor, environmental pollution and the decrease of the importance of national culture.

A secondary level of seriousness concerns the problems related to the inter-group or inter-identity relationships, be they interethnic, interracial or intergenerational ones.

A third type of serious problems evaluated by the young refers to globalization with its two adjacent tendencies: Americanization and the growth of multinational trusts. Nevertheless, neither of those seem to constitute a very serious threat in the young’s perception for the time being, compared to the perception of the young in other contemporary societies, including the Western ones. Such anti-globalist positions have appeared in Romania as well, although they are still rudimentary, naïve and confused, representing shy signs of rejecting the intrusion of foreign companies in the national economy, sporadically denouncing its consequences in the field of economic life, the degradation of the environment (unemployment, poverty, pollution), harming national sovereignty and the decrease of the importance of national culture. In spite of the incipient stage of the anti-globalist social positions half of the young questioned consider that “the rich West exploits the poor East”, while about a third of them sense that “the East European countries could not be equal partners to the West”.

Another important step towards a real civic behavior presupposes the internalization of tolerance as a principle for relating to others, as individuals, groups or communities. To the extent the number of individuals in a society, manifesting toleration, is reasonably high, that society qualifies as being authentically democratic.

If tolerance is the first step towards a civic democracy and pluralism in any given society (in everyday life, politics, culture, etc.), intolerance, on the contrary, can lead and often in history it did lead to totalitarian manifestations. It must be stressed that the totalitarian type of attitudes does not necessarily refer solely to the political regime, but also to the non-acceptance, or weak acceptance of different opinions, habits, culture or even color differences, of physical appearance, etc. All these attitudes can be found in the Romanian society, in groups, communities or individuals, or even at the level of some public institutions or private firms. Discrimination by age, sex, by the color of skin, religion, by weight of body is only an example of the manifestations of intolerance in society. We could also say that a society in which the dominant attitudes are those of rejection and intolerance towards the minorities (which go beyond the socially accepted patterns) is not a democratic one, even if formally, the laws and Constitution may create the impression that difference and pluralism are accepted and even defended.

The tolerance of the young regarding minorities other than the ethnic ones, was analyzed on the basis of answers to the question: “Would you accept as neighbors individuals belonging to some groups considered as more or less marginal ‘social outsiders’?” By naming these minority groups we reached the result revealing that
although no social minority enjoys maximum tolerance on behalf of the young, there are some categories of people who, even if different from the ‘average citizen’ are tolerated by the vast majority of people: people with a different skin color and those with large families. Also, political extremists, be they leftists or rightists, get similar results of tolerance, high enough to allow us to infer that politically the Romanian youth is not intolerant. The highest if not the maximum of intolerance was expressed towards alcoholics and drug addicts. Also a very low tolerance was registered in the case of persons having a criminal record and of homosexuals, indicating that the violation of the Penal Code and sexual normality are more difficult to ‘digest’ and accept by the Romanian youth in comparison to other physical or spiritual differences.

2. THE ROMANIAN YOUTH AND VALUES OF IDENTITY

The importance given by the Romanian young to values of national identity is quite significant and can be compared to the other socio-political values. From this point of view probably the Romanian youth belong to the category of a patriarchal and national type rather than to the cosmopolitan one. This is a feature in spite of the fact that the young population is powerfully attached to Europeanism and cosmopolitanism. In the eyes of the Romanian youth the most important national values are: national unity, the country’s economic independence, cultural riches, the maintenance of national traditions and the political sovereignty of the country.

It should also be noted that the necessity of safeguarding the borders is not taken into account by the young, or at least not to the extent required by European standards. The more permissive thinking of the Romanian youth towards immigration and towards foreigners generally is also confirmed by other indicators which will be analyzed below, as well as the acceptance of the phenomena of immigration to the territory of Romania and especially tolerance towards other ethnic groups and other nations.

The criteria for ethnic identification include, in the perception of Romanian youth, objective factors like the language, as well as affective elements such as national pride or sacrifice for the country. Synthesizing the answer received to the question: “What should someone be like so as to be considered Romanian?” - we obtained at least four types of ethnic markers:

a. Elements of self-identification which regard the feeling of belonging to a certain ethnic group; also other markers of identity were included in the sphere of psychology: to be ready to give their life for Romania, love the Romanian flag, know and love Romanian culture and to be considered Romanians by the people in their proximity.

b. Another significant category of identification is the linguistic one, it is a basic objective criterion in differentiating and self-perception of identification.

c. A third category of criteria of national identification is represented by the so-called ‘benefit and respect of the law’. In this case the Romanian young have included criteria such as: ‘to respect Romanian law’, ‘to exercise their right to vote in Romania’ and be ‘in agreement with the Romanian state’.

d. The last type of the ethnic predictors of identity comprise what is understood by the objective national juridical status: in order to be Romanian an individual must live
in Romania or at least one of the parents has to be Romanian, or that individual must have been born in Romania or have Romanian nationality.

In short, for the Romanian youth ethnic identification is a concept that refers first to free will and one’s own option, second to the community of the desired or inherited language and third to the respect of the same norms and benefiting from the same political and civic rights. These identity markers contain the great political values of modern Europe transferred to the field of ethnic identity: democracy, liberty, participation and a respect of freedom.

In so far as the attitude towards other ethnic groups is concerned, it can also offer relevant indications regarding the degree of tolerance and xenophobia within the society. It was often said about Romania as a negative assessment of their relationship to foreigners that its people are excessively hospitable, even towards enemies. Paul Anghel defined this special characteristic of Romanians as a “deficit of aggressiveness”, that Romanians do hit or attack but very seldom because they have an excessive trust in foreigners. In the same sense Ilie Badescu talks about a high coefficient of “trustful expectations” of the Romanian population, visible until today.

In the following some elements will be presented which have resulted from the study of the youth in Romania and Hungary regarding the problems of interethnic relations, tolerance and trust towards other ethnic groups and nations in the two countries.

In so far as the perceptions and representations about other ethnic groups or nations of the young in Romania and Hungary are concerned it must be stressed that the prejudices, suspicions and processes of exclusion do not disappear once treaties are signed between two countries or nations, or official and formal statements of friendship and mutual respect are made.

In the analysis of the interethnic relations and representations we have used the following indicators:

a. trust in various nations or ethnic groups; b. tolerance towards certain ethnic minorities and c. permissiveness towards immigrants and immigration.

a. The trust of the young in various nations or ethnic groups

As far as the Romanian young are concerned the research revealed the following types and degrees of interethnic trust: the nations which enjoy the greatest trust in the eyes of the Romanian young are the British, the French, the Americans and, somewhat less the Germans; the nations which enjoy a medium amount of trust are the Hungarians, the Chinese, the African Black; in descending order the following nations and ethnic groups enjoy no trust at all: the Roma, (Gypsies) the Russians and the Arabs.

The recognition of the others, their positive appreciation implicitly supposes the existence of a certain degree of trust in a particular ethnic or national group. The phenomenon of recognition, although present, is unequal in the social representations

1 The research in Romania (The Institute of Sociology of the Romanian Academy of Sciences) on a representative sample of 2049 young subjects was carried out simultaneously and with the same instruments as in Hungary, on a sample of over 3000 young subjects (Institute of Minorities Studies, Budapest). D. Banciu and I. Petre were responsible for the project in Romania and I. Szabó and A. Órkény were responsible in Hungary.

of the Romanian young, some peoples, nations or ethnic groups being better represented regarding (positive) recognition. There is at the same time a group of ethnic or national communities, which lacks recognition in the eyes of the Romanian young, the most significant negative image being registered in the case of the Roma (Gypsies). Practically the distance between total trust and total mistrust is enormous: three quarters of the young in Romania declare that they have no confidence whatsoever in the Roma population.

The situation of the Roma is, in fact, a relevant example for the Romanian ethnic space but not only for that. In other European countries, including Hungary, the image of the Roma is a very negative one in public perception. In this matter it must be noted that there are not many ethnic groups which suffered as a result of the negative social stereotypes the majority have in relation to them like the Gypsies and the Jews, the scope of these negative stereotypes reaching the European as well as the international space. More recently perhaps another has been added to the two groups mentioned above, namely that of the Arabs.

b. Self-recognition represents, together with the national one, a significant step in the processes of the harmonization of interethnic and inter-nations climate with the social climate in general.

In a certain sense self-recognition precedes recognition by the others and even influences it. Trust in the value of one’s own nation, and in national culture induces a certain attitude of trust on behalf of the others. Conversely, an ethnic behavior of continuous self-depreciation triggers a low evaluation on behalf of the other communities with which a community comes in contact. But the reverse is also true: good opinion about oneself is sometimes decisively influenced by the trust that the others manifest towards someone as part of a nation, ethnic group or towards an individual; it is the image in the mirror (to look oneself in others’ eyes) which has determined so many times the colonized to feel inferior to the colonizers, women inferior to men, black people inferior to the whites, etc. From the perspective of the self-knowledge of Romanians the present research has revealed something not necessarily positive: the Romanian young do not totally trust their own nation. Thus, to the question: “How much do you trust Romanians?” 44.2 % of the respondents answered a lot, 38.9 % a little, and 16.9 % had no trust whatsoever. Thus currently we can identify a quite extensive feeling of self-humiliation among the Romanian young.

Comparing the scale of inter-nations trust in Romania and Hungary we notice that in Hungary Germans enjoy the greatest trust, while in Romania it is the French and British who are in that position. It can also be noted that except for the perception of Germans the Hungarian young are less trustful in other nations than the Romanians. Here the ‘trustful expectation’ of Romanians is proved as against the Hungarians’ circumspect attitude towards foreigners. It can be stated in general that the main feature of the inter-nations relationship is that in Romania the attitude of interethnic trust and tolerance is much more widely present than in Hungary, at least in the case of
the young. The largest differences between the two countries arise from the attitudes towards the Roma, the French and the Arabs.

c. Mutual trust of Romanians towards Hungarians and of Hungarians towards Romanians

The phenomenon of mutual trust between the two nations is extremely important, bearing socio-political consequences for both countries, and it is even more significant since in Romania there is an important ethnic Hungarian minority. This stresses once more the way in which mutual trust between the two nations is manifested in the eyes of the young in the two countries. Practically the Romanian young have got much higher marks than the ones in Hungary: the number of the Romanian young who trust Hungarians is over three times higher than that of the Hungarian young who trust Romanians. From this point of view the young Hungarians in Hungary place us on the last but one place on the interethnic trust scale, the Roma being the last. The differences are striking also if we compare the number of the young in Hungary having no trust whatsoever in Romanians with the number of Romanians having no trust whatsoever in Hungarians: 74.6 % as opposed to 38.1 %, which is almost double. This tendency is in fact similar to that of the young Hungarians who live in Romania and it expresses a high deficit of positive perception of Romanians.

The attitude towards immigrants and immigration has revealed an index of a high value of hospitality of Romanians towards foreigners, and, in any case, higher than that of the Hungarian teenagers. The scale of permissiveness towards immigration in descending order is as follows: Romanians who live in other countries, African Blacks, Hungarians, Chinese, Albanians from Kosovo, Arabs, the Roma. Once more the significantly unfavorable attitude towards the Roma and Arabs is confirmed as well as a good or reasonable attitude towards other ethnic groups or nations. In so far as the degree of reciprocal acceptability of immigration is concerned, it was noticed that Romanians would accept Hungarians as immigrants in a percentage ten times higher than the acceptability of Romanians as potential immigrants by Hungarians.

3. MANIFESTATIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY – AS VALUE AND ATTITUDE – AMONG THE ROMANIAN YOUTH

Among the important notions characterizing the behavior of the young that have undergone fundamental changes during the transition period there is responsibility which expresses their involvement in the social interaction process through the assumption of the consequences resulting from their actions. In the present study the notion of responsibility was coded through a series of indicators such as: the degree of the young’s involvement in taking some important decisions concerning their lives, the main moral features which define or circumscribe a young one’s responsibility, the main factors which shape his behavior, the young person’s attitudes towards deviant and antisocial manifestations which are morally or legally sanctioned.
In so far as the young one’s degree of involvement in making personal decisions is concerned, the present study, similarly to other researches carried out by other institutions in the field, has revealed that the young consider themselves involved to a large extent in the decision-making process concerning their own lives, a fact that equals to an independent, cautious and safety-oriented attitude. Nevertheless, there are still many who exhibit a less responsible attitude and who consider that “caution does not lead to anything good given the fact that the events and decision-making depend on external factors and not on us”.

Moral features most appreciated by the young are the ones they would like to cultivate in their children in order to facilitate their success in life.

In the first places we find good manners, responsibility, tolerance and respect for others. Very closely they are followed by characteristics referring to the pleasure of work, independence and perseverance. Almost all those values have predominantly instrumental functions and they can help in better adapting to the difficult conditions of transition and prolonged social crisis, preceding the so-called ‘expressive’ moral qualities such as imagination, personal charm, popularity which can serve less as instruments for social success and adaptation.

Civic values such as moral integrity, self-assertion, reciprocity and trust in God were found to be weakly represented.

In so far as responsibility for their own success is concerned, the young in today’s Romania seem to consider their failures and successes as their own to a large extent. Thus, for their successes the young consider that it is due to their or their family’s merit, while factors such as school, institutions of the present society, luck or opportunity play only a secondary role. In so far as the failures are concerned, the young attribute those to their own mistakes, and, to a certain degree, to the society, bad luck or lack of opportunity. It is surprising though that school, the institutions as such are perceived as playing a minor role regarding the success or failure of the young which could also mean a certain ‘contesting’ of the present manner in which school is involved in ensuring the access of the young to social life.

In order to evaluate hierarchically the factors that guide most the young and their behavior the following scale was made:

1. Personal beliefs
2. Moral norms
3. Personal advantages
4. Legislation
5. Religious norms
6. Reaction of the community.

The outcome is that behavior represents the result of personal factors (level of aspiration, beliefs, convictions, habits and motivations) as well as of socio-cultural ones (moral and religious principles, the group’s influences or the reaction of the community, normative influences and requirements).

The research has revealed a large consensus of the young concerning the major role of personal beliefs and advantages in the orientation of their behavior. The young perceive the way of structuring their behavior in life first from the perspective of the internal dimension of control (self-control), represented by the socialization and internalization of the beliefs and personal advantages and only afterwards from the
perspective of the external dimension of social control, represented by morals, religion, legislation and social reaction. This proves the trust of the young in their own capacities, motivations and personal aspirations evaluated as more important in their orientation than the moral, religious and legislative principles.

To sum up, one can identify at least two categories of the young which relate relatively differently to the notion of responsibility: a. the young with a ‘social’ behavior, placing on the top of the list the needs and expectations of others, promoting social engagement, caution and safety in their actions and who reject deviant or violent behavior; b. the young displaying a ‘traditionalist’ or ‘romantic’ behavior and who primarily appeal to a series of traditional values such as honor, morality, integrity, dignity and less to competence, merit and social contribution in order to define responsibility.

4. THE YOUNG AND MARGINAL CULTURAL VALUES

In the search for an exit from everyday routine the young increasingly orient themselves towards spaces in which they non-conventionally experience social and cultural cooperation, towards the so-called ‘spaces of re-composition’, or spaces which can make them escape everyday monotony, conformity and the misery of the political sphere, towards ‘spaces of creation’ which offer them the possibility to express their attitude towards the present social and political order. From these groups one can distinguish the music groups which may miss real success among the great consumers of music, but which manage through their message and through the adopted artistic practices to concentrate a large number of fans around themselves, gradually becoming generators of behavioral models and values for their followers. Found at the borderline between normality and deviance, these cultural minorities, also called ‘peripheral cultures’, are the expression of the desire for diverting the influencing processes of institutions that have a socializing role (family, school, mass-media etc.) from the individual’s life. Organized as a response to a general state of boredom, mediocrity and poverty of the soul’s aspirations and feelings, the minority cultural groups offer the young the possibility of satisfying the needs specific to their age, including that of being different, that of having a little bizarre and exhibitionist identity. These are identity values in the most obvious sense of the word. Thus, the techno-styles, rock, rap and alternative groups form nucleuses of minority culture but they are becoming increasingly present in Romanian social reality.

One of the objectives that the authors of the present study had in mind was the identification of the attitude (tolerance) of the Romanian young towards these minority cultural groups. We started as usual from the identification of the music styles preferred by the young, noting that almost half of the young prefer dance, hip-hop and rock music, styles which are also the ones promoted by the radio and TV channels. The young who are less adept, have the styles of punk, rave and rap.

Placed in the situation of having to express their sympathy towards six minority cultural groups, the Romanian young have structured their position as follows: the largest sympathy was registered for the rappers, alternatives and rockers, groups which
could be considered as offering a moderate form of musical, socio-behavioral models and a socio-political message as compared for instance to the punks or skinheads who have accumulated 3.4-3.5 % of sympathy, being associated, as we well know, with the extreme right and even with neo-nazis.

5. ELEMENTS FOR A PSYCHO-MORAL PORTRAIT OF THE YOUNG IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Corroborating results of researches carried out by the Center of Researches on Problems of the Young, by the Institute of Sociology of the Romanian Academy and by the Faculty of Psychology of the “Spiru Haret” University, we obtained a certain profile, relatively specific for the rural youth which includes the following average features:

– from the varied range of aspirations and projections concerning work and life it could be seen that the young in the rural areas are more realistic, more restrained in their desires and more rational when it comes down to means, instruments by which they could accomplish their goals;

– they are more scrupulous and more conforming concerning the respect of norms and laws and less permissive with those who have inadequate behavior in society, who are less non-conforming;

– compared to the young in urban areas, the young in the rural areas seem to be more preoccupied with and sooner inclined towards accomplishment through work than through entertainment, a fact that allows them being characterized as responsible. Although in general work occupies a central place for the young in the present Romania, in rural areas work is placed on an even higher grade by the youth than in urban areas;

– the study of national or ethnic identity values reveals a rural youth that is more balanced but also more sensitive to the traditional values, customs and habits;

– according to the way the crisis situations are perceived, crisis with which the young are confronted at present, the young in rural areas seem less panicky and therefore more resisting to stress, but also less idealistic;

– the attitude towards the change of governments during the past years denotes a lower degree of critical spirit, probably out of reflex, and a higher timidity as well as a persistence of the inferiority complexes towards the other young;

– the lower propensity for the modern facilities of technology, including IT, derives not only from the belief of its uselessness, but also from the lack of financial means for acquiring them;

– the lower quality of life of the young in the rural areas is also reflected in the lower level of their school education. The research has revealed that the chances of access to the medium and higher levels of instruction are quite diminished in the case of the rural young. Maybe that is why some young prefer to put their need for higher school education to the second place, so that, as the national statistics prove dropping out of school in the rural areas has alarmingly grown, increasing the social gap as opposed to the quality of life in urban areas;
– the way in which the need for modesty and sociability is appreciated implicitly means that the rural young are themselves more sociable, less inclined towards infatuation and more modest in behavior and self-appreciation;

– particularly the researches carried out by the specialists of the Faculty of Psychology revealed that certain psychological features are better represented among the young in rural areas, features such as: seriousness, perseverance, depth in dealing with the issues of life;

– comparative psycho-sociological studies have revealed that most of the young in the rural areas mature earlier and are confronted with difficult problems of life; due to that reason they have the tendency to assume more responsibility for their own acts, successes and failures, but also to solve their problems themselves, without any external help. A real degree of independence in the decision-making process and especially in solving the problems is superior in rural areas. They learn earlier to manage on their own, to survive and progress, and as a result they are more independent and more adaptable to the often difficult conditions of the present life in Romania;

– although the young in the rural areas are more disadvantaged than the urban ones in many respects (limited opportunities of study, work, transport, entertainment, etc.), they do not display an even more acute feeling of frustration. In Romania today generally all the young feel being slightly marginalized and disadvantaged. The present frustration of the young in the rural areas points to the fact that they do not value as the previous generations did the traditional rural way of life, its rhythm and its constraints: thus the several household chores allocated to the young from the family roles increase their feelings of dissatisfaction, displeasure, and even a desire to escape from that way of life to which they no longer feel attached or attracted. The lower disposition for the rural way of life, especially for the agricultural and household work affects the individual lives of the young as well as their integration in the community, their support for the preservation and development of the village;

– in all difficult situations with which they are confronted (education and training, job seeking, practicing one’s job, family problems, etc.) the young in the rural areas favor the importance of ambition, this being considered as an essential condition for the success of any action by the young person. The positive value of ambition is not limited to a favorable opinion, the young in the rural areas are more ambitious and persistent when following and accomplishing a bigger or smaller goal, they fight more for a cause. This quality has developed more in the case of the young in villages since they realize that they cannot survive unless they insist, persist and they can succeed in life only by their own strength and competences. Their ambition has developed because they had become aware of the fact that under conditions of harsh competition, they have to overcome the numerous handicaps alone.
6. TENDENCIES IN THE EVOLUTION OF EUROPE’S SOCIO-MORAL VALUES AND THE RELATED PLACE OF THE ROMANIAN YOUNG

The situation of the socio-moral and political values in contemporary Europe shows the following tendencies:

a. *during the past years* in Europe as well as in Romania we have witnessed a significant *regression of some traditional moral values such as*: honesty, politeness, the respect of common good, family spirit, feeling of duty, equality;

b. *today the material values are of overwhelming importance*, putting the spiritual values, such as the psycho-moral, political or civic ones to the second place;

c. *today the world of the young appears to be more restless and uncertain, due to the cult of money and of individual success*;

d. today, in the eyes of the young, as well as in those of the mature population *individual values prevail* to the detriment of the *collectivist ones*;

e. yet the desirable social value elements seem to be rather of the ‘post-materialist’ type, the people, the young, though they feel the need for *going back to some of the traditional values*, also want to *maintain some others typical of modern times such as*: honesty, justice, politeness, freedom and competition.