The sociocultural identity of young people in post-communist Romania: attitudes towards work and emigration

Luca, Sabina-Adina; Gheorghiță, Bogdan; Kádár, Annamária; Dragoman, Dragoș

The Sociocultural Identity of Young People in Post-communist Romania
Attitudes Towards Work and Emigration*

SABINA-ADINA LUCA, BOGDAN GHEORGHIȚĂ
ANNAMÁRIA KÁDÁR, DRAGOȘ DRAGOMAN

The concept of cultural identity was largely theorized during the 50's in the United States, alonside social studies regarding the integration of immigrants. It is linked to the larger concept of social identity, in the same time being one of its components. In today's social psychology, the topic of social identity plays a pivotal role, but over the course of time it can be traced in the philosophical, psychological and sociological thought as a response to the necessity of defining the relationship between the individual and the group, between personal affirmation and group affirmation.

Hegel (the theory of knowledge), S. Freud (Self, Ego and Superego), C. Jung (collective unconscious and conscious), G.W. Allport (cardinal traits), E.H. Erikson (defining identity), R. Linton (the cultural background of personality), A. Kardiner (basic personality), R. Benedict (modal personality), G.H. Mead (the generalized other), C.H. Cooley (the "looking glass self"), E. Goffman (façade identity, total institutions), M. Zavalloni (psychosocial identity), A. Muchielli (personal and social identity), Tajfel and Turner (social identity theory), L. Festinger (the social comparison theory), T. Adorno (the authoritarian personality), E. Durkheim (identity and types of sociality), M. Weber (types of authority, bureaucracy), F. Tönnies (community and society), T. Parsons (personality and society), R. K. Merton (anticipatory socialization), P. Sorokin (social stratification and mobility), V. Pareto (elites and identity types), K. Marx (class and class consciousness) – are to be acknowledged as the most important authors to have tackled more or less directly the issue of identity[1]. Although in social research the problem of identity first appeared in Durkheim's works, which dealt with aspects of collective consciousness, it was further built upon in several other works on topics such as socialization processes (Weber, Parsons, Bourdieu), deviance (Merton, Goffman, Becker) or emphasized in the theory of action by Parsons, Touraine, and Hirschman[2]. Social identity, as presented in sociological researches, was studied from the starting point of the conception as a self representation – of the individual or of the group – on the basis of the dominant ideology of a given society[3]. As shown by Bernstein[4], who developed his theory on the study of the working class or of the ethnic

---

[1] D. JURCAN, *Identitate și societate: modele aspiraționale în tranziție*, Eikon, Cluj, 2005.

[2] L. BAUGNET, *L'identité sociale*, Dunod, Paris, 1998.

[3] For example, see W. LABOV, *Sociolinguistique*, Minuit, Paris, 1976.

[4] B. BERNSTEIN, "Social Class, Language and Socialization", in R. GHIGLIONE (ed.), *Language and Social Context*, Penguin, Middlesex, 1972.

or sexual minority groups, it has been proven that these groups internalize a certain meaning/interpretation/significance of their occupying place inside the production process and power relations, in such a way that their members no longer perceive the influence of social factors/determinants over their own personal destinies. Today, we witness a consensus concerning the fact that every individual or group can use, consecutively or simultaneously, several identities that are updated according to the historical, social and cultural context of their times[1]. That is why some researchers have questioned the notion of identity, in its classical meaning, since we may speak today in the plural form about identities – reminding us that there is no empirical knowledge outside the social context.

An individual's social identity is characterized by the sum of his/her attachments to the social system: he/she belongs to an age group, a sexual category, a social class, a nation, etc. All the studies regarding the issue of social identity were based on the same idea: social identity implies at the same time both inclusion and exclusion; it identifies the group, which comprises members who are identical from a certain standpoint, distinguishing it from other groups, whose members differ from those of the first group from the same standpoint. The majority of social identity theories were built upon the experiments of Tajfel and, later on, of Turner[2]. The two collaborators have shown that once individuals become part of a social group, they try to maximize the contrast between their group and any given out-group. The motivational resort in this case is the personal need to find a positive personal distinctiveness which represents, in the end, the basis for inter-group discrimination. The two authors made a distinction between behaviors and inter-individual and inter-group representations, placing them on a continuum: at the first pole we find the individual, who acts according to his/her personal traits (thus, personal identity), whilst at the opposite pole we find the group, where individuals act based on common traits (thus, social identity)[3]. The authors assume the following theoretical principles: the individuals seek to maintain or accede to a positive social identity; positive social identity is based, to a great extent, on favorable comparisons between the affiliated group and certain other relevant groups. The affiliated group has to be perceived as positively different or distinct from other relevant groups; when social identity is unsatisfactory, individuals will seek to abandon the group they belong to, in order to become part of a more positively appreciated group and to act in such way that their own group becomes positive[4]. Tajfel's theory, the C.I.C., namely social categorization-social identity-social comparison, is centered on the idea that individuals tend to acquire positive group distinctiveness. In order to obtain this positively evaluated distinctiveness, the individuals increase at maximum the contrast between their group and other groups (out-groups), even though this may sometimes occur in the detriment of both personal and group advantages. While Tajfel defines social identity as a consequence of an individual's membership to social groups, according to Jenkins[5], social identity,

---

[1] M.N. TURLIUC, *Imaginar, identitate și reprezentări sociale. Imaginea elementului alogen în mentalul colectiv românesc*, Editura Universității "Al.I. Cuza" din Iași, Iași, 2004.

[2] H. TAJFEL, J.C. TURNER, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict", in W.G. AUSTIN, S. WORCHEL (eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, Brooks & Cole, Monterey, C.A., 1979.

[3] *Ibidem*.

[4] *Ibidem*.

[5] R. JENKINS, *Social Identity*, Routledge, London, 1996.

in a nutshell, refers to the ways in which individuals and communities differ in social relations from other individuals and communities. It is necessary to keep in mind that every social group has a particular way of life, way of life meaning the ensemble of learnt behaviors and their results, whose composing elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a society and which, in fact, describe a culture or a cultural pattern[1]. As early as 1951, Talcott Parsons asserted that cultural patterns are internalized: they become an integrant part of the agent's personality structure[2]. These evaluative attitudes (judgments) are genuine dispositions-necessities of the personality. It is only by virtue of the internalization of institutionalized values that an authentic motivational integration of the behavior in the social structure occurs.

In his work, Erikson showed that the development of identity implies a synthesis of the more important identifications that take place in the process of socialization[3]. Gradually, identity is enriched, through the process of identification with larger groups, with new cultural and social commitments. Taking as an example the young immigrants, Cuche explains how multiple identities or multidimensional identities are constructed[4]. He believes that if we consider identity as being monolithic, it will prevent us from understanding the mixed identity phenomena that are so frequent in every society. What is claimed to be the double identity of the young immigrants is, in fact, the result of a mixed identity. The alleged double identity of young immigrants stems in fact from a mixed identity. Contrary to what some researchers assert, these young people do not have two identities that confront each other inside their being and make them feel divided.

Dubar believes that we are witnessing a double crisis of identity, for adults, as well as for youngsters: young people exhibit a loss of guidelines, a disregard for the past and for adult authority, a development of virile values, of a desire for revenge in the abyss of rotten fortresses, of a shame caused by expulsion and by the humiliations their parents were subjected to[5]. The adults are affected by a crisis of communication, by the break from the parents, by autonomies and paradoxes of double identities. For these reasons, the issue of identity creation in the case of young people is still of great interest among sociologists. Whether we speak of being exposed to new value and action models that youngsters discover outside the Romanian area[6], or of behavioral schemes and value systems disseminated throughout socialization, or of changes in identity components caused by channeling cultural consumption in certain directions etc., all these constitute strong reasons for social research and demand not only a theoretical analysis, but a serious empirical analyis as well.

---

[1] S. LUCA, ''Elemente ale modelului cultural al tinerilor din Romania'', *Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane Sibiu*, 2005, pp. 277-295.

[2] T. PARSONS, *The Social System*, Free Press, Glencoe, IL, 1951.

[3] E.H. ERIKSON, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, Faber & Faber, London, 1968.

[4] D. CUCHE, *Noțiunea de cultură în științele sociale*, Romanian transl. by Mihai-Eugen Avădanei, Institutul European, Iași, 2003.

[5] C. DUBAR, *Criza identităților*, Romanian transl. by Gheorghe Chiriță, Editura Știința, București, 2003.

[6] S. LUCA, B. GHEORGHIȚĂ, *Politică și democrație. O introducere în științele politice*, Editura Universității ''Lucian Blaga'' din Sibiu, Sibiu, 2006, p. 209.

Methodological Aspects

Noticing that the cultural consumption of Romanian young people is very precarious[1], and the Romanian cultural values are less and less appreciated, we begin by emphasizing a possible diminution/erosion of the Romanian socio-cultural identity, especially in the case of young people. The infusion of values beyond the Romanian borders, especially as a result of the globalization, is very big and can raise questions concerning the new cultural patterns of young people, regarding the new values which determine the construction or the reconstruction of their identity.

The present study tries to identify the way of reporting the youth to the social values as well as the work and the commitment to the country and also tries to analyze the young people attitudes concerning the corruption, the poverty and the emigration issue. The main working hypothesis was that the young people's expectations regarding the work and the career increase the availability of those ones to share favorable attitudes towards the migration. This phenomenon is mainly due to the impossibility of satisfying the expectations concerning employment in Romania.

Our research is based on primary data which come from social inquiries based on questionnaire, interviews and focus-groups. The inquiries based on questionnaires were made in 2004 and 2005 on a sample of 472, respectively 1100 respondents. The inquiries based on interviews were made in 2005, respectively 2011, on a sample of 50, respectively 150 respondents, who were people between 18 and 35 years old belonging to various socio-occupational categories. The four focus-groups were made in 2011, being made up of ten people each, aged 18-35 and having various jobs.

Young People between Attitudes and Social Values

One of the questions that the young people had to answer in our research dwelt with things which they feared most. The highest percent of the young people (27%), identify unemployment as the most threatening menace of today's society. A share of 22% of the young people are afraid of high prices and of a possible war in the region, while 18% are afraid of delinquency, and 9% of them are concerned with the lack of a proper housing. Regarding the direction in which things are moving in Romania, a high percent of the subjects (40%) was reluctant in making an appreciation, and an equal percent (30%) of young people had both a positive and a negative attitude regarding the evolution of the general environment in our country. From the interviews (following the application of questionnaires) we noticed the fact that the skepticism or the lack of optimism of young people regarding the way things work in Romania, is triggered mainly by the failure of government programs, with the extension of the transition period, by the inefficiency of public policy adopted in various fields ("There was not a significant leap towards democracy"; "In some fields things seem to get worse"). Corruption is very much mentioned in the answers of young people under scrutiny, and it is a problem which strongly affects the functioning of several domains in Romania. From the survey conducted by the Department of Political Science, "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu in 2005, we see that 26.7% of young people consider as a main cause

---

[1] S. LUCA, *Identitatea socioculturală a tinerilor. Repere în contextul globalizării și al schimbării sociale*, Institutul European, Iași, 2010.

of the corruption in Romania the fact that the law is not applied and complied with. This opinion resulted also from the calculation of weighted average which has a value of 3.5%, for all age categories cumulated. Therefore, the answers to the question "which do you think is the main cause of corruption in Romania" are concentrated around the following possible answers: "The law is not applied and complied with" and "people in high positions try to enrich overnight". 21.4% of young people argue that the main cause of the corruption in Romania is the fact that people in high positions try to enrich overnight, and 16.4% of the youngsters rank on the first place the low wages in the public sector. The following causes of the corruption are mentioned in lower figures: "People got used to be corrupted during the communist times" (12.6%), "the dishonesty of all citizens" (9.1%), "the immorality of the public administration officials" (7.5%) and "it is the tradition/the custom in Romania" (5.3%).

Being asked how do they think one of the Romanian people succeed in making a fortune, the subjects gave answers which gravity around the idea of breaking the law. 46.2% of the youth sustain the idea that braking the law is the main means by which one of the Romanian people succeed in making a fortune, and 28.9% of them claim that one of those people had succeed due to their personal relationships. Only 28.9% of the youth declared that one made a fortune as a result of personal merit and work, and 8.2% indicated as a factor for the financial success nothing but the chance. Corruption is, indeed, among the sociologists' explanations regarding the shortcomings of the transition in Romania. Zamfir emphasizes in this respect that an explanation regarding the shortcomings of the transition, more and more invoked lately, is represented by a lack of morality, the abuse of power, and corruption[1]. This kind of extrinsic factor transforms into a target especially the leading class, which, by virtue of its position, has an access to the obtaining of illicit earnings.

The poverty is very often taken into account in many of the answers given by the youth. Because of the fact that a high percentage of the Romanian population is in need, most of the young people (35.7%) considered as main reason the fact that the society is unfair. The second reason for the state of insecurity would be the fact that people in need are lazy and unmotivated (idea sustained by 31.6% of the young people). 18% of the young people claim that poverty is an inherent state to every society situated in a period of transition, and 12.9% attribute the disadvantaged economic situation of some people to the lack of chance.

Regarding trust of young people in different institutions, we note its very low levels. The church remains the only institution in which both young people and the other age categories still invest a very high confidence. When it comes to rate confidence in the government, the police, the justice, the army, young people's trust is very low. In the European Union there is a relative high trust, especially regarding young people. Due to the fact that the trust in major state institutions is very low, one can explain, from this point of view, the non-involvement of young people in different organizations, as well as their abstention during elections. The lack of trust becomes de-motivating and it is considered to be a "burden" for important actions, which could bring a change in one way or another.

In fact, Pasti, Miroiu and Codiță state that

"the optimism that dominated the first period after the revolution was step by step replaced by pessimism and resignation [...] The confusion is being

---

[1] C. ZAMFIR, *O analiză critică a tranziției*, Polirom, Iași, 2004.

accentuated also by the feeling that, in Romania, nothing seems to go well. The changes, the actions and the reforms, which, dogmatically, sounded as the most promising, seemed to be completely ineffective, moreover generated unexpected severe consequences"[1].

Under these circumstances, young people's attitudes to the presented phenomena seem natural. Although maybe the first who accepted the social change in Romania with the revolution in 1989, the youth are disappointed by the politicians' lack of results and the government strategies in various fields: economic, social, political, cultural, etc, wherefrom the more and more powerful orientation towards the Occident mirage.

As to the proud of being Romanian, the respondents' opinion is divided: they vary from the admission of this feeling to its complete denial. The main reasons for which the subjects are proud of the Romanian identity are the history of the Romanian people, the Romanian culture, the performances in sports, the intelligence of the majority of Romanians ("I am proud of being Romanian because Iancu de Hunedoara, who was a Transylvanian Romanian, fought against the Turks and even ended to rule the Hungarian kingdom; I am proud of the country music, especially that from Oltenia; I like our traditional costumes; I am proud of the existence of the 'haiduci' – owtlaws who stole from rich people and gave the earnings to the poor people, very loved by the latter ones –, who could handle the guns, but also love and have fun…"; "I am proud when our country is known for its positive activities, for exemple the performances in gymnastics at the World Championships"; "I am not at all ashamed of being Romanian; I am proud for many reasons: the main reason is that we are a large producer of native intelligence, good athletes, we have so much diversity in such a small space – on our territory one can find natural resources, but we are stupid and we don't know how to explore them, we don't know how to give value to our belongings, and that is pissing me off"). One of the reasons for which one of the subjects is not proud of being Romanian are the bad economic situation and one of our citizens' dishonesty. ("Abroad, I would whisper about the fact that I am Romanian"; "I have no reason for being proud, if I had a good economic situation in Romania, I would be proud of being Romanian"; "I am not proud because people see us as thieves and dishonest people").

Being asked to what extent the subjects consider that Romanians can be characterized as lazy, their opinions were divided: 36% have chosen the alternatives "In a large measure" and "In a very large measure", 37% have chosen the alternative "Not in a large, but nor in a small measure" and 27% sustain in a small and a very small measure that the Romanians can be characterized as lazy. We were interested in answers to these questions because one of the coordinates of the cultural model or of the socio-cultural identity of the youth is work and their attitude towards work, in general. This one is related to both material benefits and the complacency or vocation in the chosen field ("Work should always be related with vocation"; "Work is an activity which one develop with or without pleasure, but which can bring material benefits, although most of the times not made to measure"; "Work means survival and pleasure"; "Work shouldn't be looked as a duty, because everybody must work in nowadays society", "I am willing to work, but I expect to be paid proportional to the work which I make").

The survey made in 2004 in Sibiu (city) shows that work is important for every three age categories (youth, adults, elderly), although regarding the consideration of that one as being very important there are differences between the young category

---

[1] V. PASTI, M. MIROIU, C. CODIȚĂ, *România – starea de fapt*, Nemira, București, 1997, p. 97.

and the other categories. While 78.7% of the adults and 75.6% of the elder people appreciate the work as being very important, the young people's percent who attributes work a very important place is only 58.3%. 36.6% of the youth consider work as being pretty important. Being asked in what extent the respondents consider that by honest work one can achieve o a high standard of living in Romania, most of them (46%) had a negative attitude towards this thing, while only 17% of the youth agreed, in a large measure, with the fact that in our country by honest work one can achieve o a high standard of living.

The young people's explanations were very different: work is not well paid, there is a high level of corruption, some people take advantages on others who work etc., but one of them sustain the idea that there is the possibility of being fulfilled by honest work, even in Romania, if you are hard-working ("Here in Romania nobody really work; everybody cuts work; in order to do something you must have a fantastic capital from the very beginning"; "I still believe in honest work, that is why I stayed here, in our country, and if I don't succeed I will probably leave"; "You can succeed by honest work even in Romania, provided that you have a honest employer, but because everyone steals from whoever they can, things change; nowadays, the highest satisfaction is to make a lot of money, not to work in an honest way"; "I believe or I hope that by honest work one can succeed even in Romania, but only under the circumstances in which your itelligence can also help you"; "By honest work you will always get what you want").

In the survey made in 2005 in the city of Sibiu, the respondents were asked, among other things, to state if they agree with different affirmations regarding work. One of those was that "work must always be first, even if that means less free time". Following the calculation and the way of some statistical indicators such as the weighted average, the median show, the majority of the answers are being concentrated around the possible answer "agree with". (The weighted average is 2.3.). So the most part of the respondents agreed with the idea that work must always be first, even if that means less free time. 18.6% of the young people totally agree with this idea, 27% of them agree with this idea, while 17.3% of the youth are more against the idea, and 10.1% of them are totally against this idea. There is a pretty high percent of those who are undecided, that means of those who are not pro nor against the idea, 26.4%, which shows that for one of the young people is not very clear what is really important: work or free time.

Regarding the attitudes towards the affirmation that "it is humiliating to get money without working for earning it", the weighted average regarding all age categories cumulated is 2.4, which means that the answers are being concentrated around the possible answers "agree with" or "neither agree with, either disagree with". A significant difference appears between the category of young people and that of the elderly regarding the possible answer "totally agree with": while almost a half of the elder people (48.4%) sustained that they totally agree with the idea that it is humiliating to get money without working for earning it, among youth, only 21.2% of them gave the same answer. So, there is a difference between the value systems of the two generations, the elder society maybe giving a more importance to the work, than to the earnings without working. 26.2% of the young people answered "agree with", but the highest percentage (29.3%) appears for the possible answer "not agree with, nor agree with". Therefore, those young people can really appreciate the importance of working, but they are not totally convinced that getting money without working it is humiliating.

"Work is a duty towards the society" is another statement for which the respondents should agree or disagree with. The weighted average for all the population regardless the age is 2.2, which means that all the answers are being concentrated around the

possible answer "agree with". Also in this case it is significant the difference between youth's answer and the elder people's one. Only 19.4% of the young people totally agreed with the idea that work is a duty to the society, while the percent of the elder people answering to the same question was significantly higher: 47.2%. The answer "agree with" was given by 27.9% of the youth, but the aspect that really surprise is the high percentage of 31.3% undecided people, which means that young people don't have a clear representation of what work really is for nowadays society. Considering the state of anomia, meaning a confusion of standards and values specific generally to the societies in transition, the young people's confusion regarding the role of work in a society is sort of understandable.

Another statement that requested the respondents' attitudes was the following: "You must have a job in order to highlight your skills". The weighted average is 1.95, which shows that the subjects' answers, regardless the age, are being concentrated around the second possible answer, respectively "agree with". 37.4% of the youth totally agreed with this statement, 42.7% declared that they agree with this statement and only 2.2% disagree with the idea. The undecided people's percentage is significantly lower, only 13.1%. Moreover, it can not be noticed a big difference between youth's answers and those of the people belonging to other age categories, adults and elder people. Regarding the expectations of the chosen job, these ones concerns in the first place achieving a certain material standard, having a reputation, a prestige, and, although in few cases mentioned, ensuring a certain level of satisfaction, in personal level an ("From my job I expect money, a house, a car and reputation"; "From my job I expect, in the first place, money for living a decent life, and in the second place the satisfaction of a work which I like, that means working in the same field in which I was educated to"). One of the young people's fears regarding their professional future is the pretty much possible situation of not working in the domain in which they were trained to because of the labor market offers, or lack of offers, because of the clientele system, because of the nepotism, etc. Many of the young people say that, for surviving, they would accept any type of job, either in Romania or abroad.

In the survey made in 2005, the respondents were asked to mention several things which they consider important for a job. The list shows that, the most voted quality of a job is "to be well-paid". In decreasing order of the percentage of the qualities voted, the list of things important for young people is the following:

- Rank 1: to be well-paid (93.3%);
- Rank 2: to work with good people (79.5%);
- Rank 3: the safety of the workplace (79%);
- Rank 4: real chances to be promoted (77.2%);
- Rank 5: a job suited for one's skills (75.9%);
- Rank 6: a job that makes you feel you can really achieve something (75.8%);
- Rank 7: an interesting job (70.7%);
- Rank 8: a suitable program (64.2%);
- Rank 9: the possibility of taking the initiative (63.5%);
- Rank 10: a job respected by the people in general (59.4%);
- Rank 11: to meet people (54.8%);
- Rank 12: a job that gives one responsabilities (50.8%);
- Rank 13: a job useful to the society (50.3%);
- Rank 14: more vacation days (44.4%);
- Rank 15: not very soliciting (22.2%).

Whereas 93.3% of young people have indicated that it is important for a job to be well-paid, only 22.2% consider that a job must not be very soliciting. Generally, in the answers of the subjects there were not differences between youth's answers and those of the people belonging to other age categories, adults and elder people. A clear difference appears only in the case of three situations and it is about the gap between youth's answers and the elder people's ones. A high percent of the young people's category (77.2%) considers that it is important for a job to offer good chances to be promoted, while only 51.1% of the elder people consider the same and 60.2% of the adults. Also 70.7% of the youth would wish an interesting job, while only 62.6% of the adults and 52.3% of the elder people wish the same thing. Half of the young people and half of the adults have chosen as a possible answer "a job with responsabilities", while only 41.8% of the elder people have chosen the same answer, meaning that they wish a job with responsabilities.

It seemed to be interesting in this context to see different categories of people who live in Romania, in terms of attitudes and expectations they have from a job. The answers which our survey was based of belong to all age categories, and not only to the youth, and we can not state that the conclusions resulted after this survey, are specific to the young people.

The factor analysis showed that we can list the aspects considered to be important for a job in three categories, issue that allowed us to reveal three psychological profiles based on the individuals' expectations at the workplace wanted. The total variation explained by the three factors (by those three categories listed below) is 50.3%, namely the first factor 35.1%, the second factor 8.5% and the third factor 6.6%.

Table 1

Factor Analysis for the Determination of Attitudes towards Work

Factors	Saturation indices	Possible description of the factor
Factor 1	to work with good people (13.6)	Attitudes of devotion or attachment to a job
	the safety of the workplace (0.88)	
	real chances to be promoted (0.81)	
	a job respected by the people in general (0.78)	
	a suitable program (0.68)	
	the possibility of taking the initiative (0.65)	
	a job useful to the society (0.61)	
	to meet people (0.54)	
	a job that makes you feel you can really achieve something (0.51)	
	a job that gives one responsabilities (0.51)	
	an intersting job (0.48)	
	a job suited for one's skills (0.44)	
Factor 2	to be well-paid (5.63)	Attitudes of detachment from a job
	not very soliciting (10.5)	
	more vacation days (0.59)	
Factor 3	none of these things is considered important (0.41)	Attitudes of indecision

Principal Component Analysis. Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization (KMO = 0.935).

The typology resulted from this factor analysis include three types of individuals or three psychological profiles:

1. *People devoted to work*. For this type of people it is important an interesting job, right with one's own skills, a job in which one can feel that it is capable of achieving something, that requires responsabilities and the possibility of de taking the initiative, a job useful to the society and respected by people, which allows one to meet people and to have chances on being promoted, a suitable program and safety.

2. *People detached from work*. This type of people expect from a job only to be well-paid, not to involve too much stress and to have many days of vacation. For this category of people work does not have a special value, and only the personal interests are a priority.

3. *Undecided people*. There is a category of undecided people, who does not have yet a firm idea about what work really means, who has not decided yet on the job they want.

The factor analysis unraveled three sets of attitudes towards a given job: attitudes of devotion or attachment to a job, attitudes of detachment from a job and attitudes of indecision. However, the detailed interviews showed attitudes which combine factors from the first two categories, meaning, beside the fact that it is wanted a job in which one's own skills can be noticed, it is wished for an interesting job which offers possibilities of promotion and own initiative, it would also be wanted a well-paid job: "I would wish for a job where I could do whatever I pleased, where I could do the best things that I were good at and for which I had been trained, and if I were well-paid, that would be excellent"; "I would want a well-paid, interesting job, where I could be promoted, and not to feel limited".

In this context, the young people's attitude towards the *emigration* from Romania does not surprise anybody at all. The majority of the respondents (73%) agree wiyh the idea of emigration, mentioning as the main reasons the poverty or the lack of jobs in the field they trained, while only 23% of the youth disapprove the migration phenomenon ("I would emigrate for money, but I would come back; I don't agree with those who emigrate only for the sake to get rid of Romania and I don't agree with the export of intelligence"; "The main reason of emigration from Romania is the financial situation, because, although they work, people don't earn enough money to live a decent life; another reason would be that the university graduates were not appreciated anymore, everything gravitates around the money"; "Money is the reason for which a person emigrates"; "I am not at all against the idea of emigration, on the contrary, I totally agree with this phenomena; the explanation is that as long as you can not find work in the field you have been trained in your own country, leaving the country will help you to be appreciated at your true value. The intellectuals' emigration, although it is not good for the country, because the country loses beautiful minds, it is beneficial for the specialists who can implement their projects. *Why should I accept a bad-paid job in our country and sometimes do something completely different from I was trained to, when I can leave the country and do what I like, my job? The only reason for which I returned would be family and friends…if I could take everybody with me, I would not come back, and I don't think I would regret it*").

Moreover, the majority of the interviewed students (81%) admitted that at some point they thought about emigration, although the real intention of emigration is present only at 48% of them ("I thought of leaving the country after I finished the university, because in Romania nothing will change in the near future… corruption

is at a very high level"; "I thought of leaving for financial reasons; I think abroad I would be fairly paid for my work"). Many of the subjects state that they are going to emigrate, but they will return in Romania after they achieve a certain financial standard ("I would wish to come back, but only after I have some financial stability"). Some of the young people are aware of the difficulties that they could find abroad ("I leave the country with the idea of making money, in order to return here… I don't leave because I think that 'all is not gold that glitters'"). There are also young people (although in a lower percentage) for whom the idea of emigration is absolutely out of the question; they have roots here, in Romania and they don't see the leaving as a solution for the lack of money ("One can live even in Romania; there are also possibilities to find a job, to live well, to get along well with the others").

The essential difference between Romanian people and a someone from Western Europe or the United States of America consists in the way of thinking/the mentality, according to the most of the subjects (39%), the lifestyle for 20% of the subjects and the culture for 15% of them ("Foreigners are more civilized, but the Romanians are more intelligent, I think"). As one can notice in many of the answers given by the students, there is a very large intellectual capital in Romania, there are very well trained specialists, willing of highlighting their knowledge and skills. The great deficit appears because of the mentality in the sense that a really efficient person is not appreciated to his own merit, he can not be paid as his performances. That is why feelings such as frustration, inferiority or self exclusion might be felt in relation to the individuals having a high economical standard achieved through various other means but honest work. In Romania it seems that money became a value itself and this is because of the economic insecurity in which a great part of the population live. The state of anomia in which the population lives beginning with 1990, the upheaval of the value systems, the contradictions and the conflicts even between values and standards, determined some of the young people to valorize more the life beyond the borders, although, in many cases, they do not know the reality from abroad.

However, young people seem to have a sort of preference for citizens of different countries, both in terms of a simple relation of collegiality or neighbourhood, or regarding a more complex relationship, or friendship, or marriage. By finding similarities with some other foreign citizens and by finding themselves clearly different one from each other, young people draw up new coordinates in their identity spectrum. Concerning friendship, collegiality and neighbourhood, the shares are similar. About a quarter of the interviewees do not discriminate between citizens of another county ("I don't mind the foreigners, they would become my friends, if they were honest people, it would not mind if they were Romaian or of another ethnic group: Americans, Hungarians […]"). In descending order, citizens of the following countries are preferred: USA, Germany, France, Italy, and Spain. There are very low percentages for less rich countries, such as Bulgaria, Portugal and for Asian countries, such as Japan. Besides the United States, countries that inspire a positive attitude are the European countries, and this is probably due to some similarities between their cultural models. Romanians' preference for some countries is underlined also by Sandu's findings, who empahasizes their predilection, regarding the emigration, for states as Germany or the USA[1].

---

[1] D. SANDU, *Lumile sociale ale migrației românești în străinătate*, Polirom, Iași, 2010, p. 41.

Conclusion

Whereas migration is a fundamental problem for the Romanian society[1], it is worth to wonder what is that cause for its unprecedented boost. By this research, we tried to unravel the importance of representations and attitudes that young people from Romania display regarding various issues that make them conceive emigration as a possible solution. Helpless feelings towards corruption, poverty or towards the more and more emphasized social polarization, make young people to foster powerful feelings of frustration. The Western "mirage" does not surprise anymore sociologists, who unravel in their studies the temptation of assuming the Western cultural model[2].

Discontent regarding jobs is also important. More and more young people blame the socio-economic system in Romania for its failure in finding a job in accordance to their educational level and their specialization. More and more young people state that Romanian labor market does not offer them what they really want: a well-paid, stable job, which can provide them with possibilities of promotion, an easy working program with less responsibility. From this point of view, young people are different from adults or elderly people, because the latter do not seem to avoid responsibilities or busy schedules.

One of the most surprising issues regarding attitudes towards profession was the low emphasis on vocational aspects. Few young people seem to be eager to use their capabilities or to explore their own potential. The satisfaction about the work done is not a priority anymore, in comparison with the possibility of a substantial earning, job safety and stability, as well as the possibilities of promotion. The temptation of a material earning is not a surprise, because the standard of living for the most of the the Romanian people is low. Therefore, seriously emphasizing the programs of career guidance for young people would be a solution, as well as the implementation of some public policies that might offer a vocational support for them. On the long run, they could make young people change their mind about work and the profession they choose.

---

[1] *Ibidem*, p. 17.
[2] S. LUCA, *Identitatea socioculturală a tinerilor*...cit.