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## **VALUES AND STUDENTS' POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

This study presents a series of theoretical aspects and empirical results obtained after some scientific research conducted on values (instrumental, terminal and religious) and on the political involvement of students from the university. The study was conducted using the statistical survey method in the aftermath of the general elections that took place in November 2008, among the student body of "A.I.Cuza" University of Iasi, Romania. The analysis underlined the fact that pupils placed a great importance on values and, considering the way they were ranked, the students are believed to have transmitted a specific signal on behalf of a social category that is struggling to be noticed in the context of the present Romanian society. The analysis also highlights the fact that the students' political participation is not significantly correlated on a statistical level to the extent of their adhesion to the values studied in the survey.

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## **Introduction**

In the studies about values, different definitions of this concept have been identified from different perspectives. The traditional vision considers that value is a preference that determines choice: value is an explicit or implicit conception regarding what is desirable, influencing the selection of manners, means and goals of a certain action<sup>1</sup>. In his attempt to hierarchize values, Kluckhohn uses the term "value orientation" to identify different levels of generality of conceptions referring to what is desirable. As far as the religious aspect is concerned, it represents such a value orientation having a high level of generality, referring to the disposition that determines the personal reference to a whole range of religious experiences, practices and explanations. As a value, religiosity means the attempt to understand reality in its whole using elements that relate to the transcendent.

When defining values, Shalom Schwartz also emphasizes their trans-situational character as well as their major importance in establishing the life principles of a person<sup>2</sup>.

On the other hand, an important author in this field, Milton Rokeach, focuses the definition of value, both on the idea of choice as well as on that

of persistence in time. Thus, “a value is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence”<sup>3</sup>. Values are organized in a value system, understood as “an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance”<sup>4</sup>.

For Rokeach, persistence in time is a feature that, although central in defining the value, still remains relative. Thus, if value could be characterized through total stability, individual and social changes could not be possible any longer. On the other hand, great instability would endanger continuity and consistency of human personality and society. According to this author, the value system undergoes gradual transformations depending on the changes of the human being's personality (such as ageing and life experience acquisition), as well as at social level (the general evolution of society)<sup>5</sup>. Values are acquired through social interaction, socialization and internalization processes. They are clarified, filtered by means of general life principles as well as a set of normative constraints that function within the social framework where a person lives. Taking into account Rokeach's conception, values are hierarchically organized according to their importance in establishing goals and involvement in activity, depending on the relations with the other values<sup>6</sup>. Of these attempts to define the concept, some characteristics are revealed representing as many difficulties in studying and defining values: values cannot be directly noticeable, they hold a strong social substantiation, focus on the personal and/or social preference, on behaviour, attitudes and goals and are relatively stable over time.

The studies regarding values have known a particular development in recent years. Having different perspectives, the researchers from this field proposed organizational theoretical models, classification and a hierarchization of values.

From a conservative viewpoint, Rokeach settles a distinction between two types of values that are interconnected through a functional relation: *instrumental values* that refer to manners or ways of behaviour and *terminal values* that refer to existence goals<sup>7</sup>. The author also distinguishes, within the first category of instrumental values, two types of values: *moral* (involved in interpersonal interactions, for instance honestly or lovingly) and *competence-values* (understood as self-actualization values, having personal meaning, such as imagination or being logical). All these value categories are inter-articulated, functioning as interconnected systems. Certainly, there is not a strict correspondence between a certain instrumental and terminal value (a particular and exclusive means-goal type of relation), but rather correspondences that are being established between certain ensembles of instrumental values and certain sets of terminal values. For example, for Rokeach, a particular behaviour (the expression of an instrumental value) can be performed in order to reach

several terminal values, the same way a set of behaviours (corresponding to several instrumental values) can be promoted by a person so as to attain a single terminal value<sup>8</sup>.

More recent approaches consider that values are not organized in a strict hierarchical system, but the individual uses them in very different situations as an integrated system where all values are equal in importance<sup>9</sup>. For instance, Shalom Schwartz proposed a structured value model<sup>10</sup>, having as an empirical support the results obtained through several types of research made in different countries. The author identified ten different types of values, each of them having an inner motivational goal. According to Schwartz, these values are organized in a two-dimensional circular complex structure, depending on the compatibility or conflict relations that settled among them. The two bipolar dimensions are openness to change vs. conservatism and self-enhancement vs. self-transcendence. The intersection of these two dimensions forms four areas, where the following values are distributed: universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, security, power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation and self-direction.

In a synthesis about this field of research, Shalom Schwartz thought that as regards to the research of values, the basic paradigm is to relate a value model, conceived as an articulated value system, with diverse social and demographic variables or certain behaviours, attitudes or simple opinions<sup>11</sup>.

As for the relationships between religiosity and values, Milton Rokeach is the one who undertook the first studies<sup>12</sup>. The author compared groups of highly religious subjects with other ones, having a low level of religiosity. The results showed that the religious participants evaluated values more favorably such as salvation, forgiveness or obedience than those that were not so religious. In exchange, the latter ones placed a higher importance on some values such as pleasure or independence. Several studies, subsequently accomplished, took their inspiration from Rokeach, the accent falling this time on comparisons among different religious notions.

The latest contemporary studies highlight the relation between values and culture and prove that the most important values in a society lie at the foundations of the norms that govern the fundamental institutions of that society<sup>13</sup>.

The older research, as well as those established in the last years, pointed out the role and potential of values in order to explain the political phenomenon in general and, especially, that of political participation of citizens<sup>14</sup>. The political attitudes are strongly correlated with the values that a person sets as being valid for oneself. As for the general value system, peculiar attention was drawn to the religious values and the way these influence the political participation<sup>15</sup>. The most important conclusion which came from the analysis of religious values and political

behaviour is that the degree of religious involvement is correlated with the degree of political colour and involvement of an individual or a group of individuals. As a consequence, the studies on values in general, especially on religious values, made the definition of voters' profiles, their distribution, as well as the shaping of efficient communication possibilities with the electorate attainable.

The specialty studies show that the relation between the religious involvement and political participation is significant in the cases where the religious involvement of the community members is important as well. Such studies prove that religious individuals highlight the importance of duty and community involvement of the Christian, while the religious participation helps to acquire competences that encourage volunteerism and the Christian's orientation towards others' needs<sup>16</sup>. In regards to the social theory, the religious factor is an important one as it facilitates the shift from the individual to the public focus and to social involvement<sup>17</sup>. As for political participation, the Church<sup>18</sup> plays an important role by creating some expectations concerning the social and political involvement of its members, as well as recruiting its members for getting them politically involved.

Recent studies have placed a great deal of stress on values and on the religious attitude in correlation with personality and political participation for homogeneous groups of populations, such as students<sup>19</sup>. Such studies have allowed a clearer distinction of the types of correlation among religious values and political options and involvement. For instance, Duriez et al (2002) conducted some research where they explored the impact of religiosity and values upon the political attitudes in Flanders (Belgium)<sup>20</sup>. The results showed that, within the explored socio-cultural and political context, in spite of the great impact of the value orientations, the catholic religious appurtenance that was separately analyzed represented a significant influencing factor of the political attitude.

In Romania, the studies on values and their influence, especially the religious ones, on political participation and orientation of the population are scarce and were recently published in the aftermath of the fall of the communist block in 1989<sup>21</sup>. In 2008, Andrei and some collaborators published the results of a survey that analyzed the influence of religious factors on the options of the electorate in Romania<sup>22</sup>. The authors presented that, the poorer the population and its level of education, the more receptive it is, within the sphere of political opinions, to religious messages transmitted by politicians.

Such studies, alongside the surveys completed by the institutes of the public opinion survey, show that in Romania - a major orthodox country - The Church represents one of the institutions enjoying much of the credit from the population. Despite this, in Romania, the religious adhesion of the population has not coherently found an echo into the social and public life, especially into the political option and involvement. The religiosity is

prevalently perceived as a dimension of the existence that belongs more to the private space and implies the focus on the underworld, on the unseen realities, while the Romanian theology has not encouraged a social doctrine<sup>23</sup>. In post-communist Romania, the relationship between religion and the politics have met the coordinates specific to an environment with a religious majority having the above-described specificity and a very young democracy, dominated by great changes of political option and involvement. Within the public space, the relationship between the religious and the political has taken the shape of a scenario that keeps repeating itself in which the politicians have staked on two expectations: the religious leaders can decisively influence the opinions of the electorate and a religious majority, which is the Christian-orthodox one, and can support a certain political majority. In fact, things have turned out quite different. Even though the religious leaders have continued to offer support to the politicians, it has had a reduced impact on political outcomes. The official statistics and surveys conducted by the institutes of public opinion surveys show that the religious majority has not produced a political majority<sup>24</sup> as well, the political participation being mainly influenced by environment, age and education<sup>25</sup>. According to this scenario, both mass-media and the specialists attempted to analyze the impact of the religious factor on the politics<sup>26</sup>, and the religious was dealt with according to the confidence degree of the population in the religious institutions and leaders or in relation to the opinion about religious life.

Apart from studying such a possibility about the influence of the religious factor on politics, we believe that the analysis from a perspective of values is much needed. More precisely, it is important to study the extent to which general values and especially the committed religious ones influence the political choice and involvement of the Romanian citizen. In this study we limited the analysis only to the student population, conducting a survey within "Al.I.Cuza" University of Iasi.

In this study we aim to study the way in which students perceive the terminal, instrumental and religious values, and the level of participation to voting in November 2008 and whether there is a correlation between the manner in which to commit to the values and to the political participation.

## 2. Methodology

### *Sample*

The research was conducted on a stochastic representative sample within "Al.I.Cuza" University of Iasi, in December 10-20, 2008. The representativeness of the sample was ensured by a stochastic stratified selection<sup>27</sup>, the sample including all faculties, depending on their profile. The sample volume consists of 462 subjects and meets the following distribution of the students from the university: 41% from Economics, 42% from Humanities and 17% from the Sciences. In order to ensure a higher

level of homogeneity, 2<sup>nd</sup> year students, undergraduate level, the Bologna system were interviewed (the respondents are more accustomed with the system, culture and student values).

#### Questionnaire

In order to collect data, a three section questionnaire was applied: one section for the terminal and instrumental values, one for the religious values and one section for the political dimension.

The questionnaire, measuring the adhesion to certain values, was built using the list from the value inventory D form, proposed by Milton Rokeach in 1973 as a support. In the original questionnaire, there were two dimensions (instrumental and terminal values), each of them with 18 items. Of the instrumental values (behavioural, means to attain the terminal values etc.) we can exemplify: capable, ambitious, clean, courageous, honest, imaginative etc. The terminal values (ultimate goals of existence) we can give as examples are: a world at peace, freedom, happiness, salvation, inner harmony, pleasure, self-respect, social recognition etc.<sup>28</sup>

The respondents' task was to rank the 18 items, for each value category, according to the importance they played in their lives. In the questionnaire from this study, we preserved the basic dimensions as well as the order and form of the items, but in exchange, we collected the answers using a 6 step scale (from 1 meaning very little importance to 6 representing very high importance in life). We operated this modification on the basis of Moore's<sup>29</sup>, Rankin and Grube's studies<sup>30</sup>, where the two assessment procedures are compared: *the ranking procedure* and *the rating procedure*. The research indicates comparable validity and fidelity values, without significant differences between the two measurement types. We preferred the scales' listing, as, according to Moore,<sup>31</sup> this form is more attractive and more rapid for the subjects, also bringing to the researcher indisputably more information and statistical processing opportunities.

The second section is a questionnaire of religious values that comprises a set of 28 affirmations, for which the respondents could put down a score from 1 to 6 for their degree of agreement to these affirmations (1 means *total disagreement* and 6 *total agreement*). When building up this questionnaire, we used three instruments: the revised measurement scale of religious motivation of Gorsuch and McPherson<sup>32</sup>, the measurement scale of religious orientation of Francis<sup>33</sup> and the religiosity scale containing 20 items of Joseph and DiDuca<sup>34</sup>. Our questionnaire was built in order to measure four dimensions of the religious attitude: preoccupation (or importance) manifested towards religion, convictions (beliefs), emotional involvement (religious feeling) and guidance by God. Each dimension was turned operational by means of 7 items and the respondents' answers were requested on a six step scale, attached to these items (from 1 meaning *total agreement* to 6 that signified

*total disagreement*). The items resulted from the operationalization process were subsequently mixed.

The third section contains a set of 13 questions about the political participation and option of respondents on the occasion of the parliamentary elections in Romania, during November 2008.

#### *Variables*

The questionnaire with the instrumental and terminal values allows the building of one variable for each item. Moreover, for each set of values from the three sections, a variable was built to summarize the score obtained by each respondent for the values (*Instrum\_value*, *Final\_value* and *Religious*). The calculation of the score is covered in the reliability test done for the data obtained by each questionnaire. After the test, the following values were obtained for Cronbach's Alpha: 0.881 for the instrumental values' questionnaire, 0.907 for the terminal values' questionnaire and 0.978 for the religious values' questionnaire. The scores obtained for the variables were built on the instrumental and terminal values' questionnaires and take values within the interval [18, 108]. For the variable that totals the score for religious values, the minimum value is 28 and the maximum one is 168, these values indicating the minimum and maximum degree of religiosity of the person.

Similarly, for the study of the political involvement, a reliability test was conducted upon the variables that measure the political involvement level of respondents; an alpha of 0.80 was obtained. The internal consistency of data allowed the building of the *Politic\_inv* variable that totals the scores given by the respondents on a 1 to 6 scale, for three questions that assess the degree of political involvement of a person (1 represents *to a very little extent* and 6 *to a very great extent*). For this variable, the variance field is between 3 and 18, from the lowest to the highest involvement degree in political life. The three variables measure the interest in political life, the information about political life and the degree of involvement in persuading other people to believe in the supported political ideas.

The confidence degree of students in the three most important institutions from political life - President, Parliament, Government - was evaluated by means of the variable *Politic\_conf* that totals the respondents' scores obtained with a 1 to 6 scale (1 meaning *very little confidence* and 6 *very high confidence*). The variable ranges within the interval [3, 18] and shows the confidence degree of the students in state institutions. Finally, in order to build the regression model that explains the decision to go to vote from the students by means of values, a dummy variable was set, taking the 0 value for the students that did not go to vote and the 1 value for those that voted in November 2008.

## Results and comments

After analyzing the observation data of the survey, we obtained a range of results that are presented in what follows.

### *Students have a high level of religiosity*

According to the built-in measurement instrument, the variable that measures the religious degree, *Religious*, has the minimal value 28, indicating the lowest level of religiosity among students, whereas the maximum value is 168 and represents their highest level of religiosity. Results from Table 1 also reveal the average level of the variable which indicates a high level of religiosity of the students, the average value being estimated by a score of 122.47 and being covered by the following confidence interval (119.49; 125.46), with a probability of 0.95. This average value is representative for the student population, a fact also confirmed by the value of the variance coefficient equal to 0.267, calculated on the basis of the average and Std. Deviation.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of student distribution according to the variable Religious

Descriptives			Statistic	Std. Error
Religious	Mean		122,47	1,522
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	119,48	
		Upper Bound	125,46	
	5% Trimmed Mean		124,67	
	Median		131,00	
	Variance		1069,798	
	Std. Deviation		32,708	
	Skewness		-,967	,114
	Kurtosis		,418	,227

**Source:** Calculations done by the authors by means of the survey results

This result ranges the student population within the general hypothesis concerning the high degree of religiosity of the Romanian population.

### *The reception of terminal values*

The data analysis regarding the final values points out an interesting feature of the student population. For all items used in the questionnaire, the average scores are over 4.5, indicating that the students are strongly oriented towards ideals and existence goals. The lowest average score was obtained for the value *A stimulating, active life* (a 4.5 average, for a 1 to 6 value scale) and the highest score recorded for the value *Family* (a 5.6



average). It is not at all surprising that in the top of the terminal values the value *Family* was met because, in Romanian society, most sociological studies show that family is still one of the traditional values of great importance that is also transmitted to the new generations. Perhaps what is surprising was the value from the students for *exciting life*, even if it received a high score, still remained positioned in last place among the values students opted for.

#### *The reception of instrumental values*

After the analysis of instrumental values, the results that the students appreciated the least, evaluating it with the lowest score, the value *Obedient (dutiful, respectful)*, for which the average score of 3.50 was calculated. At the opposite end was the value *Responsible (reliable)*, with an average score of 5.31. It is interesting to note that this polarity can be a sign of an option of the young Romanian educated generation in contrast with the recent past in Romanian society where credibility and responsibility were not visible values, while obedience to the system brought about only negative implications at the individual and social level as well.

#### *Participation in the polls*

According to the results offered by the Central Election Office, during the elections held in November 2008, the voter participation of the Romanian population was around 40% (7.2 million people out of 18.5 million people were entitled to vote). This is the poorest participation of the Romanian electorate after 1990 (the vote participation declined from 86.2% in 1990, to 58.5% in 2004 and 39.2% in 2008). The question that arises is whether this participation is a sign of maturation of the Romanian political system or does it represent an answer given by the population to the present political situation in Romania? The study conducted on the student population indicates their voting participation with a proportion of 34%. This result confirms the hypothesis of a poorer participation in the voting process from the young, in this particular case from the students. Related to this observation, it is important to identify the real causes of this poor participation, as well as the voter's profile in Romania.

#### *Right-Wing Political Capital*

From experience from previous elections, we ascertain that in Romania the population segmentation was created from the point of view of a preference towards a certain political party. Thus, the rural, the elderly, the average and below average educated population, who had an inclination of going left, unfailingly voted for the PSD (Social Democratic Party, left-wing party). The young population, especially the upper-class

educated one, voted for the right. Specific for the 2008 elections was the presence of competition between two parties that claimed to have the central-right and right-wing values: PDL (Liberal Democrat Party) and PNL (National Liberal Party). At the national level, the structures of the ballots for each party were the following:

- in the Senate Chamber: the PSD-PC alliance 34.16%, PDL 33.57%, PNL 18.74% and the difference belongs to other parties;
- in the Chamber of Deputies: the PSD-PC alliance 33.09%, PDL 32.36%, PNL 18.57% and the difference belongs to other parties;

The student population from the studied sample confirms the hypothesis according to which in Romania, for the right and central-right parties, the students represented very important political capital. In the Senate, the students voted this way: 41.6% PDL, 22.7% PNL, 22.6% PSD-PC, and the difference belonged to other parties. In the Chamber of Deputies, the votes were distributed this way: 40.9% PDL, 24.0% PNL, 24.7% PSD-PC, and the difference went to other parties.

#### *What made the difference in the voting process?*

A reason called to record by analysts regarding the poor participation to voting of the population is the confusion created by the voting system which was adopted too close to the election period. The citizens witnessed debates about a complicated voting system in which the political elites were always arguing about. The analysts' expectations for the elections in Romania were related to the extension of the citizens' inaction to vote for the political party or to associate the person voted by the preferred party. At the level of research it was observed that for the students' ballot in 45.5% of the cases counted both the party and the person - 27.9% of the students voted for the person and for 26.6% of the subjects the party was important. This result complies with the analysts' expectations regarding the confusion created and inaction the population will manifest towards the new voting system even at the student level.

#### *Reasons why students did not go to vote*

In the conducted research, the students that did not vote were requested to tell why they made such a decision. A high percentage (33%) of the students specified that they were not in the city (a sufficiently reasonably acceptable reason but difficult to be tested). Indeed, the elections took place on a Sunday, but during the academic semester and for the uninominal vote, people had to cast their ballot in their hometown. The mobility of a great number of students during the same period of time, as well as other population categories, remains a disadvantage of the uninominal elections; that is why the best solution would have been to organize the elections during a period with minimal mobility of the population, for example during the holidays. Secondly, with a percentage

of 23.4% there was the disappointment with respect to the political life and politicians in Romania. This is a reason constantly claimed after the 1996 elections by the young and the students, in addition to the lack of confidence in the political class. This latter reason was specified by 13% of the respondent students. The students' disappointment and lack of confidence in politicians represents an important signal for the Romanian political class. Another reason for the poor participation in the voting process is represented by the students' lack of interest in politics, a reason given by 13% of the surveyed persons.

#### *Confidence in the institutions*

In a democratic society, The Government, Parliament and Presidency are state institutions with great visibility and importance for the society as a whole. When asked about their degree of confidence (on a 1, – very little, to 6 - very great, scale) in these institutions, the students provided answers that are summarized in table 2.

**Table 2.** Students' distribution according to their degree of confidence in political institutions

	Guv. conf		Parl. conf		Presid. conf	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
1	115	25.16%	124	27.19%	106	23.25%
2	112	24.51%	104	22.81%	81	17.76%
3	131	28.67%	125	27.41%	100	21.93%
4	59	12.91%	73	16.01%	83	18.20%
5	33	7.22%	25	5.48%	60	13.16%
6	7	1.53%	5	1.10%	26	5.70%

**Source:** Calculations done on the basis of the survey results

The above-presented distribution shows very poor confidence from the students when it comes to Government and Parliament. This situation correlates with the general trend of the population disregarding the Romanian political class and these institutions. The Presidency enjoys a little more credit from the students than the other two institutions, but the degree of confidence is still low.

#### *Member of a political party or not*

For the sample under study, it was ascertained that only 4.6% of the interviewed persons were members of a political party. The students that were not party members motivated their lack of involvement in politics by means of several more important reasons. The signal transmitted by 24% of the students is worrying, these complaining about the existence of corruption in politics as being the reason why they did not enroll in a

political party. This boycott of politics as a corruption space constitutes a reaction that witnesses the existence of discernment among the students which could explain the future results in the context of their professional or even political involvement. Another 24% of the students specified that they had other life priorities, and 17.6% mentioned the fact they did not get the opportunity to be involved in a political party. 12.7% of the respondents expressed their lack of interest in politics.

*The lack of correlations between values and political involvement*

One of the most interesting results of the undertaken research referred to the fact that for the population under observation, the assumption of instrumental, terminal and religious values did not bring forth concrete implications in the political option and participation. The analysis conducted both for the synthetic variables that summarize the scores given by the students for the values and for each and every item, proves the same thing: the political option and participation and students' confidence in the political institutions do not significantly correlate on a statistical level with the extent of their adherence to the values studied in the survey.

By applying the Principal Component Analysis method for the variables instrumental, terminal and religious values and the participation and confidence in political institutions of students, the following results were obtained.

**Table 3.** The correlation matrix between the studied variables

**Correlation Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Instrum_value	Final_value	Religious	Politics_conf	Politic_inv	
Correlation	Instrum_value	1,000	,665	,359	,061	-,003
	Final_value	,665	1,000	,486	,070	,026
	Religious	,359	,486	1,000	,136	,042
	Politics_conf	,061	,070	,136	1,000	,319
	Politic_inv	-,003	,026	,042	,319	1,000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Instrum_value		,000	,000	,095	,472
	Final_value	,000		,000	,067	,289
	Religious	,000	,000		,002	,182
	Politics_conf	,095	,067	,002		,000
	Politic_inv	,472	,289	,182	,000	

a. Determinant = ,374

**Source:** Calculations done on the basis of the survey results

**Table 4.** Eigenvalues and Explained Variances

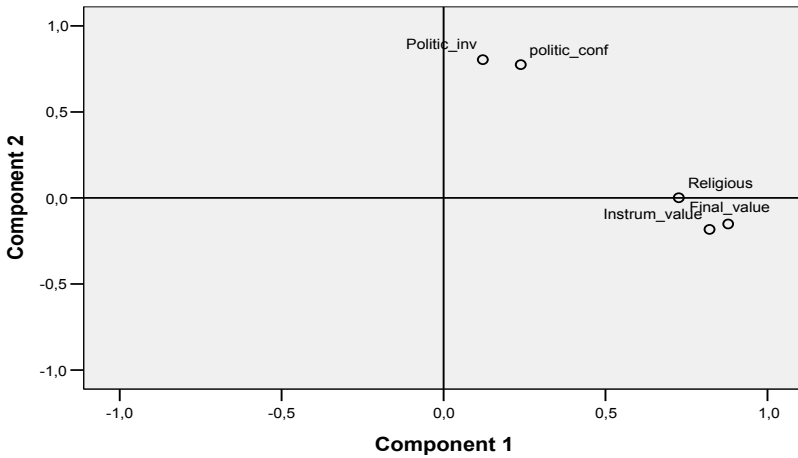
Component	Total Variance Explained						
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	
1	2,046	40,910	40,910	2,046	40,910	40,910	
2	1,303	26,063	66,973	1,303	26,063	66,973	
3	,696	13,927	80,900				
4	,640	12,800	93,701				
5	,315	6,299	100,000				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Source:** Calculations done on the basis of the survey results

The correlation matrix indicates an insignificant correlation of the variable that measures the students' political participation (*Politic\_inv*) with the variables that measure the degree of commitment of the studied values. The same situation can also be found in the case of the variable confidence in political institutions (*Politic\_conf*).

**Component Plot**



**Figure 1.** Components' representation on the two factorial axes

**Source:** Calculations done on the basis of the survey results

The same can be noticed from the analysis of the two components that explain 66% of the total variance. As Figure 1 shows, on the first factorial axis the variables that measure the degree of commitment to values are represented. These variables are positively correlated among them, and the correlation coefficients are statistically significant (Table 3). In exchange, on the second axis the variables that relate to the political dimension: political involvement and confidence are represented. The two

variables are positively correlated and the correlation coefficient, although not being high, is significant from a statistical point of view. This variable positioning on the two factorial axes indicates the lack of a correlation among the two groups of variables.

*Students' option for a certain party is not correlated with their religiosity level*

If we take into account the voting option expressed by the students during the elections and their degree of religiosity, it can be verified if between the two variants there is a correlation. For this purpose, the student population was broken down into four groups according to the quartiles calculated for the variable religiosity. It was verified that there weren't significant differences in the student structure for the four categories of parties for which the students had voted in the elections: PSD-PC, PDL, PNL and other parties.

*The modeling of the decision to go to vote according to values*

Even if the conclusion drawn from the study is that the students' political involvement and their degree of confidence in political institutions are not correlated with their degree of religiosity and with their adherence to instrumental and terminal values, the study tried to analyze whether the students' decision to go to vote was influenced by these values. For this purpose, we tried to model the students' decision to go to vote according to the variables *Instrum\_value*, *Final\_value*, *Religious* by means of a logistic regression<sup>35</sup>. This model estimates the probability for a student to go to vote in relation to the scores given for each value set. The first modeling step revealed that the variable *instrumental values* was statistically insignificant and the model should be built without a constant. The final result of the model is presented in table 5.

**Table 5.** Estimated regression coefficients and their significance

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1	Final_value	,019	,005	14,618	1	,000	1,020
	Religious	-,009	,004	6,221	1	,013	,991

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Final\_value, Religious.

**Source:** Calculations done on the basis of the survey results

The decision to go to vote can be modeled by means of the terminal and religious values through a logistic model using the formula:

$$\ln \frac{p_i}{1 - p_i} = 0,019 \text{Final\_value} - 0,009 \text{Religious} ,$$

where  $p_i$  is the probability to go to vote.

The analysis of the modeling errors (as differences between the observed probabilities and those estimated) leads to the idea that the estimated model meets the classical hypotheses of modeling: normality, independence, homoscedasticity. The model shows that for a student, the higher the religiosity level, the lower the probability it is to go to vote and the other way round. For instance, for the estimated value, at an average value of the variable *Final\_value* equal to 90, the probability to go to vote ranges from 0.54 for a student with a maximum level of religiosity to 0.81, for a student with a minimum level of religiosity.

The result obtained through modeling is interesting and somewhat surprising, taking into account the previous results. Such a result can lead to the hypothesis that for the students the decision to go to vote does not explicitly belong to the political implication.

## Conclusions

The study conducted on the sample of students from „Al.I. Cuza” University of Iasi enables one to draw some conclusions that can be extrapolated from the entire population from which the sample was taken (on the basis of the working methodology) and even to a larger scale, for the students of other Romanian Universities, if we take into consideration the fact that the student population is relatively homogeneous and the differences from one university to another are not significant.

A first conclusion is related to the reception manner of values at the students' level. For all three types of values, the general appreciation was focused on a predisposition, a students' orientation to place high importance on all values subjected to the analysis. One can especially notice the high importance the students gave to religious values, in circumstances where they represent a population category much more subjected to changes and more willing to give up their traditional values. We could also assess that the extent to which the students place differentiated importance on some terminal or instrumental values indicates that this population segment launches signals about the conditions influencing the life of Romanian society. At this level, it is expected that these signals should be translated in some form of social or political involvement that might allow the future development of society. Such a signal is connected, for instance, to the great importance paid by the students to the value responsibility.

The second conclusion focuses on the students' relationship with the political life in Romania. The poorer participation to vote than the national average, the orientation towards the central-right and right-wing parties are characteristics or behavioural patterns specific to this population group in Romania. In exchange, the affirmation of the disappointment and a lack of confidence in the political class and institutions managed by

politicians seem to fall under the same pattern of a signal sent by students addressing both the political class and the society as a whole.

The third conclusion refers to the surprising result of the statistical analysis that aims at identifying the correlations between values and the students' political involvement. Based on signals emitted by the manner in which the students appreciate terminal, instrumental and religious values, we had expected that the extent of this appreciation should reflect the students' political participation. The analysis showed that such correlations between the extent of the students' identification with the values and the extent of their political involvement are not statistically significant. The only conclusion that remains to be analyzed in other studies is the existence of other factors that determine the extent of the students' political involvement or that the intensity of their adhesion to values is in an initial stage that has not been translated in practice in the sphere of politics. Particularly, the high religiosity degree of the students does not offer clues about their degree of political participation or about their political option. For the studied population, for various degrees of religiosity, we cannot ascertain significant differences in the voting option for a certain party.

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## Notes

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<sup>4</sup> Rokeach, 5.

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