

VALUES: LINKING HOSFTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS TO ADRIAN-PAUL ILIESCU'S "RIGHT" & "LEFT" INTERPRETATIONS FROM POPPER'S "OPEN SOCIETY" PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

The study presented in this article aims at identifying a framework for value analysis in linking Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the dually oriented, left-right, value-ideological options of Adrian-Paul Iliescu's theory, from Popper's "open society" perspective, and with a focus on the Romanian democratic context. In relation with the theoretical framework, there was an ex ante expectation that the ideological right (valorization towards the right of freedom, equality, solidarity and the market economy) must be correlated with the value dimensions specific to the Western liberal democracies (low Power Distance, Individualism, Acceptance of Risks). Against this perspective, for the considered sample in the study, it can be underlined that the respondents with ideological orientation to the right according to Adrian-Paul Iliescu's theory also manifested a mainly positive orientation towards Hofstede's dimensions specific to liberal democracies: moderate Risk Acceptance and moderate Individualism, although a bias towards high Power Distance must be pointed out. In spite of sampling limitations, the study confirmed certain relationships among the value domains afferent to the two considered theories, from an "open society" perspective.

Keywords: cultural dimensions; democracy; "left-right" ideologies; "open society"; value analysis framework.

JEL Classification: D46, D71, D72, D73, M12, M14, Z1

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of values is closely related to the specific culture of a people. While "values are concepts, explicit or implicit, distinctive for an individual, or characteristic for a group"[1], „the ultimate reason of actions of individuals and collectivities, as defining elements of the social life” [2], culture is a set of „norms and values which prevail for a nation at a certain time” [3].

But what is the relationship between culture and values?

Hofstede (2001, 1991, 1980), Schwartz (1999), or Inglehart (2005), among many others, consider the values as the central element of culture. The relationship between values and the other elements of culture is extremely close because the dominant values transpose themselves into norms, rituals and artefacts that define the institutions along with the functioning of the society as a whole.

Ultimately, values define the social needs and the general principles that structure social life. Therefore, they depend on how individuals represent their needs, objects and purposes of human existence in defining behaviors and attitudes, in defining and being defined by other values, in defining and being defined by the characteristics of the social environment.

This study aims at identifying a framework for value analysis in linking Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions and the dually oriented, left-right, value-ideological options of Adrian-Paul Iliescu's theory (2003), from Popper's (1993) "open society" perspective, and with a focus on the Romanian democratic context.

2. HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS VS. ADRIAN-PAUL ILIESCU'S VALUE-IDEOLOGICAL FEATURES FROM POPPER'S PERSPECTIVE OF AN "OPEN SOCIETY"

Hofstede's theory (2001, 1991, 1980) places the values at the center of culture underlying their universality, though applicability to any society. He identifies five orientations of universal comparable value:

1. *Power Distance* – this dimension is a measure of a society's representations of inequality; cultures with low Power Distance are characterized by actions towards legitimating power and a permanent need to publicly debate on the sources of power; in contrast, societies with high Power Distance develop centralized hierarchical structures; the values attached to low Power Distance societies are *equality, freedom of action, low degrees of discrimination, democratic government, free market economy*;

2. *Individualism vs. Collectivism* – proposes an orientation from individual to society; in the individualist societies everyone is responsible for their own welfare, whereas the collectivist societies focus on defining the individuals according to their belonging / integration within a reference group; the values attached to the individualist societies suppose: promoting the individual, free initiative that means maximizing one's own welfare, inequality regarding personal income, building an educational system based on creativity and on the capacity of adapting to unpredicted situations, minimal state intervention in the economic activity;

3. *Masculinity vs. Femininity* – this dimension relates to gender inequality; "masculine" societies view men and women as performing different roles with attached attributions being clearly delineated by specific contexts, such as the family, the labor market, etc.; also these societies highly value assertiveness; the "feminine" societies suppose a higher degree of tolerance concerning gender and, simultaneously, a lesser degree of discrimination based on age, sex, religion, etc.;

4. *Uncertainty Avoidance* – involves people orientation towards risk taking; risks accepting societies present a reduced tolerance to uncertainty, react emotionally, are normative; among the main values of risks avoiding societies are planning of economic activities and a high degree of intolerance towards the different opinion trends; it can be pointed out that, in linking *Uncertainty Avoidance* to *Individualism-Collectivism*, the extended family, exhibiting high degrees of risk avoidance, is the central element of the collectivistic societies, while high degrees of relationship diversity, centered on the individual, is typical for individualistic societies; and

5. *Long Term Orientation vs. Short Term Orientation (Confucian Dynamism)* – Hofstede considered that the dimension represents the features of Virtue regardless of Truth; typical values associated to Long Term Orientation are thrift, perseverance, having a sense of shame and ordering relationships by status, whereas typical values for Short Term Orientation express an inclination for personal stability, respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations, protecting one's 'face', and reciprocation of greetings, favors, and gifts.

Adrian-Paul Iliescu (2003) proposes a value theory based on values' reflection within the right-left ideologies:

1. *Freedom* – is a *sine qua non* condition for liberalism, that may be translated by: individual independence, meaning independence in relationships with others, with institutions, and with the state that needs a personal domain for action; the left ideology considers that freedom depends on a more significant state/society intervention in one's private life: freedom might be endangered by the absence of opportunities, and the opportunities are provided by the state;

2. *Equality* – liberalism considers that people have to be and are free to follow their own goals and to fulfill their own desires; equal opportunities undermine human freedom by limiting the free use of personal resources, talents and virtues to get uneven results; the left considers that the political and legal equality is formal and superficial if they were not also economically and socially backed up; inequality based on merit is justifiable but while other kinds of inequality are unjust; equal opportunities are not possible if big economic and social inequalities existed, and the state must provide equality of chances for all;

3. *Solidarity* – liberalism has a prone to treating individual goals as real and authentic, and common goals as pseudo-goals and, also, to substituting the individual goods to the public ones, thus getting to a privatization of social life; individual initiative is eulogized at a political, social and economical level; for the left, the common goals exist, are important and must be followed; they stake on solidarity for common objectives and on social security; while liberalism considers that social security is subordinated to freedom, the left talks about economic and social security; and

4. *The relationship economy-state-market* – liberalism starts from the premise that the citizens' economic interests are satisfied by the market mechanisms and, as a consequence, each individual who follows the accomplishment of his own interests contributes to satisfying the common needs of the society; the left stakes on the creation of opportunities and on the equal repartition of income, criticizing poverty, considered as a great social danger, as well as economic inequality, considered unjustifiable and inequitable; the state has to consider the legitimate interests of the disfavored groups and to reduce social costs.

From Popper's perspective (1993), „inside a closed society the individuals have no choices to make, the social transformations being made in a utopian and substantial way, inside an open society the individual is confronted with certain decisions, the social change being made through small and reversible measures” [4]. Also, „inside closed societies decisions are not made by individuals, they arise as a result of group beliefs, of group decisions; inside open societies, individuals come first” [5].

Inside open, democratic societies, “the only authentic social entity consists of singular entities, individuals or persons, whereas the collective entity does not actually have a real existence. This conception presents social life as a *summum* of individual activities, recognizes individual values only and gives a central place to the individual rights and liberties [6]. In opposition, inside closed societies, inclined towards totalitarianism, predominantly collectivistic, there are promoted: adherence to norms, respect for authorities and for older people and tradition, conformity, association with stable, hierarchical roles, as well as encouragement of collective property.

So, the distinction „open society” – „closed society” is centered on the dichotomies: democracy - totalitarianism; individualism - collectivism, economic freedom – centralized economy.

In aiming at relating the theories of Adrian-Paul Iliescu and Geert Hofstede to Popper's “open society”, this study starts from the general premise that an open, democratic society is characterized by a predominant inclination to the right, to individualism, to low Power Distance, to a high degree of acceptance of risks, whereas the degree of masculinity / femininity and long term / short term orientation vary within large limits.

Furthermore, an ideological perspective of values may become relevant as long as the democratic societies are based on the principles of market economy and support a high degree of individualistic competition as well as liberalism in all its forms (Sartori, 1999; Przeworski, 2004).

Finally, the study proposes a methodology to determine if the specific dimensions of ideological liberalism were correlated with identifiable dimensions of values in Hofstede's theory, from an „open society” perspective (Table 1):

Table 1 – Connections among Hofstede, Ilescu and Popper's "open society"

Geert Hofstede	Adrian-Paul Ilescu	Karl Raymond Popper
<p><i>Power Distance:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual freedom of action; • Equality under the law; • Democratic governance; <p><i>Individualism:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation towards the individual; • Maximizing one's own welfare; • Meritocracy; <p><i>Risk Taking:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tolerance to uncertainty/unstructured situations (new, surprising, different from "normal"); • Limited regulatory system; • Acceptance of difference in opinion. 	<p><i>The ideological "right":</i></p> <p><i>1. Freedom:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual independence; • Valorization of the individual; • Individual rights; • The State: liberal democracy; <p><i>2. Equality:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal opportunities; • Positive rights; • Minimalist intervention of the State; <p><i>3. Solidarity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privatization of social life; • Freedom before solidarity; <p><i>4. Economic values:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free market mechanisms; • Individual needs; • Economic inequality; • Economic rationalism. 	<p><i>The "open society":</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic, free State; • Individualism; • Freedom of action; • Free market mechanisms; • Contract State; • Rationalism; • Individuals are equal under the law; • Rational institutional regulations; • Protection of the individual against state abuse or other individuals' abuse; • Respect of individual rights; • Inequality; • Rule of law.

3. METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

This study was designed in purpose to set the methodological framework for identifying core value content related to Hofstede's dimensions in correlation with the political-ideological values of Adrian-Paul Ilescu, from the perspective of Popper's „open society”.

Using a descriptive approach (Yin, 1989), the attention was focused on synchronic aspects of the targeted variables while data collection was based on a small scale survey due to resource constraints that limited the sampling process to a “convenience” and ‘snowball” (Henry, 1990) sample of young adults. Considering this, an array of inherent different types of errors (such as, for instance, age related) could have not been avoided.

The questionnaire used in the survey consisted of two parts: the first part dealt with core values embedded in Hofstede's dimensions along the “individualism-collectivism” *continuum* while the second part concerned the values addressed by A. P. Ilescu's theory (equality, freedom, solidarity, etc.) along the „right-left” *continuum*.

The variables representing the value content of the two theories were designed as ordinal, and those assigned to demographics as nominal. Coding was based on key words.

The mean of the scores obtained for each dual answer was computed in relation to an ordinal scale from (0) = „total agreement” to (100) = „total disagreement”, so that the values ranging from 0 to 40 represented low degree of intensity, between 40 and 60 medium degree of intensity, and over 60 high degree of intensity of the scores.

From 100 questionnaires randomly distributed within the period April-May 2009 to a “convenience” and “snowball” (Henry, 1990) sample of young adults in Iași area (North-Eastern Romania), mostly students/employees at the “Al. I. Cuza” University, 92 questionnaires were filled in. Obviously the limitations of sampling, mainly in terms of generalization potential and validity/reliability issues, must be underlined.

The summary of the demographic data is the following: 55.4% of female; 27.2% aged up to 20 years old, 53.3% between 20 and 25 years old, 6.5% between 26 and 30 years old and 13.1% over thirty years old; 96.7% Christian-Orthodox, and 3.3% Romano-Catholic; 80.4% single, 18.5% married, and 1.1% divorced; 80.4% from urban, and 19.6% from rural area; 39.2% from two and three member families, 41.3% from four member families, and 19.6% from five member or more families; last school graduated - 88.7% high school, 9.8% college, 3.3% Master's degree, 1.1% Ph.D., and 2.2% post graduate studies; at the time the questionnaire was distributed 77.2% declared

themselves students, 5.4% academic staff, 4.3% engineers, 2.2% trade operators, and 10.9% a mixture of sales agents, civil servants, secretaries, programmers, PR specialists, economists, doctors, jurists, employers; monthly income - 30.4% up to 500 RON, 18.5% from 500 to 1000 RON, 15.2% from 1000 to 2000 RON, 7.6% over 2000 RON, and 28.3% non-response; political endorsement - 45.7% party members, from which 26.1% with maximum one year of service, and 14.1% over one year of service.

In terms of Hofstede's theory, the following results were summarized:

1. *Power Distance* – building on the degree of acceptance of inequality in a society/social group, 85.9% of the respondents believed that the members of a group have to perform competitive activities, 91.3% declared that if they had aimed at doing something they have had to carry it out until the end, 71.7% perceived that all members of their families have had an equal status, 76.1% declared that they did business with the state authorities rather rarely, 82.6% didn't agree that the elderly were always right, and 79.3% declared that the people in power had got a privileged status; it may be noticed an inclination toward high Power Distance, except for the "rebellion" against the elderly, probably as an expression of the conflict between generations, "natural" for the respective sample content;

2. *Individualism vs. Collectivism* – 89.1% of the respondents declared that their achievements depend on the way they acted upon, 94.5% that they were interested in learning as many things as possible from the people around them, and 70.7% that school has to teach you a job the best way possible; the answers show a balance in respondents' preference for individualism / collectivism, with a slight prone to individualism;

3. *Masculinity vs. Femininity* – 30.4% of the respondents declared that in a family mainly men provide for financial support; 50% perceived that only some people have the stamina to succeed; 27.2% believed that anybody could do politics, and 82.6% declared that, generally, they were not bothered by topics related to sex; the scores show a slight preference for femininity;

4. *Uncertainty/Risk Avoidance/Taking* – 94.6% of the respondents declared that they were adaptive to new, unpredicted situations, 78.3% believed they have got involved in various activities, and 66.3% considered that peoples' mistakes were due to the decisions they made; also, 75% of the respondents were worried about the future of their families, 40.2% took the risks for their activities, and 84.8% declared that they liked to collaborate with as many people as possible; although moderate, it may be identified a tendency towards taking risks and to accepting unstructured situations; and

5. *Long Term vs. Short Term Orientation (Confucian Dynamism)* – 58.7% of respondents declared that they planed their personal finances in strict dependence of their expenses, 50% considered that the decisions were neither good nor bad, but only problems that needed to be solved, 87% believed they respected other people's opinions, and 67.4% declared that, when involved in an action, they planed the steps to be taken; the scores indicate a moderate Long Term orientation, in opposition to previous results (Gallup, 2005, quoted by Luca, A. [Online]).

Geert Hofstede ([Online], 2009) estimates for Romania high Power Distance (PDI 90) and Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI 90), low Individualism (IDV 30), and a tendency to femininity (MAS 42). Although Hofstede didn't estimate the index for Confucian Dynamism in Romania, there is an estimation of the above mentioned Gallup survey (2005) that computed a LTO of 42, so a moderate Short Term Orientation.

Comparatively, the results of this study show the same tendency to high Power Distance, a slight inclination to Individualism and Femininity (Individualism and Collectivism scores were practically balanced, showing a higher degree of Individualism than Hofstede's estimate, 2009), a moderate inclination towards Risk Taking and acceptance of unstructured situations, in contradiction with Hofstede's estimate (2009) and with the Gallup survey (2005), as well as a moderate Long Term Orientation, in contradiction with the Gallup results (2005).

Although the results are interesting from the „open society” ideological requirements, the limitations related to sampling allow neither conclusions, nor generalizations.

In respect with Adrian Paul Iliescu's theory, the following results were summarized:

1. *Equality* – 95.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with a society based on meritocracy; 44% agreed or strongly agreed with the assertion that „the state has to help the poor”, whereas 45.7% were neutral, and 9.6% didn't agree or totally disagreed; 86.9% declared that equal opportunities referred to lack of discrimination, and 76.1% believed that anyone was entitled to equal access to goods;

2. *Freedom* – 82.7% of respondents declared that they acted autonomously in order to reach their goals; 90.3% considered that inner cities public order must be guaranteed; 89.1% considered that everyone had to have the same degree of freedom in carrying out their activities; 60.9% declared that they agreed or strongly agreed that they were motivated by their earnings; 47.8% neither agreed nor disagreed with the fact that government regulations interfered as constraints in their activities, whereas 30.4% strongly agreed or agreed with it, and 21.7% didn't agree with this statement; 57.6% strongly agreed or agreed with the fact that freedom was important, but more important was the authority that governed it;

3. *Solidarity* – to the question if “education should have been paid by everyone”, 30.4% were neutral, 28.2% answered positively, and 41.3% gave a negative answer (disagreement or total disagreement); 69.6% declared that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that “the State ought to pay health insurance”; 69.3% considered that the state has to provide for the main goods and services, whereas 80.4% agreed or strongly agreed that the state have been charging too many taxes too much; and

4. *Values related to market economy* – 75% of respondents declared they agreed or totally agreed with the statement that “the State ought to provide for jobs and to take care of unemployment; 55.4% declared that they were positively positioned in respect to a competitive market; 58.7% considered that the state ought eliminate the risks related to the economy, and 91.4% of respondents agreed or totally agreed with the fact that each person has to strive for a better life.

It must also be noticed that *Equality* was strongly valued in relation with respondents' orientation to the right. For instance, the statement „everyone has to be rewarded according to one's merits”, and the statement referring to equal opportunities (absence of discrimination) received very high positive percentages in relation with the orientation to the right. As previously showed, the respondents also placed equality as a value of the left in stating their need for equal access to goods and services.

Oppositely, *Freedom* was valued more to the left: very high percentages for “public order and safety”, “equality in freedom”, “freedom guaranteed by the authorities”. At the individual level, the results indicated autonomous action, so orientation to the right. The State area of influence and authority seems not to affect the respondents' area of activity and liberties. Paradoxically, it must be stressed out that there are 57.6% of respondents that considered the authority that governs freedom more important than freedom itself, supporting this way high Power Distance.

Concerning *Solidarity*, the general perception is closer to the left, that is, there are valued the services collectively provided by the State for education, health care, or public order, even if the respondents exhibited a position of the right when they considered the fiscal system, understandable from an individual's perspective.

As for the *Values related to market economy*, the respondents combine the right and left perspectives: the state has to provide for jobs, to take care of the unemployment problem and to eliminate economic risks, even if, at the same time, the respondents agreed or totally agreed that demand and supply govern a competitive economy and that everyone has to strive for their individual welfare.

To sum up the findings related to Adrian Paul Iliescu's theory, it may be observed that the respondents do not have a clearly defined ideological identity.

4. CONCLUSIONS: VALUES, FROM IDEOLOGY TO A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

In relation with the theoretical synthesis in Table 1, there is an *ex ante* expectation that the ideological right (valorization towards the right of freedom, equality, solidarity and the market economy) must be correlated with the value dimensions specific to the Western liberal democracies (low Power Distance, Individualism, Acceptance of Risks).

Against this perspective, for the considered sample of respondents, data analysis identified the following:

1. The cultural profile from Hofstede's dimensions perspective: high Power Distance, opposed to the orientation towards the right; moderate Individualism, Femininity, and orientation towards Risk Taking, where Individualism and Risk Taking support a bias towards the right, while Femininity is a dimension that must be further investigated for the Romanian population (Huțu, 2003);

2. In respect with Adrian-Paul Iliescu's theory, the sample couldn't provide a clear respondents' profile as being oriented towards the right or the left; they valued freedom, equality, solidarity and the market economy, either to the left or to the right, depending on each item proposed and subordinated to each ideological dimension.

Although, in general, the statistical correlations of variables representing Hofstede's and Adrian Paul Iliescu's theories didn't reach statistical significance (and though were not previously discussed), it may be noticed that the respondents with ideological orientation to the right according to Adrian-Paul Iliescu's theory also manifested a mainly positive orientation towards Hofstede's dimensions specific to liberal democracies (low Power Distance, Individualism, Acceptance of Risks).

Finally, assuming the obvious limitations of sampling and of the sample structure and content, the conclusions of the study must be reserved in respect with a relevant correlation between the ideological and cultural perspectives, although, as previously discussed, there are obvious relationships among the afferent value domains.

There is no doubt that further methodological developments and follow-up studies, including sampling processes that will allow sampling error minimization, are needed in order to clearly confirm the correlation between the two approaches from Popper's „open society” perspective.

ENDNOTES

[1] Parsons, T., Shils, E., *Toward a general theory of action*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1951, p. 35.

[2] Parsons, T., *The structure of social action: a study in social theory with special reference to a group of recent European writers*, McGraw-Hill Book, Co., New York and London, 2005, p. 45.

[3] Almond, G., Verba, S., *Cultura civică, atitudini politice și democrație în cinci națiuni*, Ed. Du Style, București, 1996, p. 34.

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[5] Collas, D., *Dicționar de gândire politică Larousse*, Ed. Univers Enciclopedic, 2003, p. 287.

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