

SOCIALIST SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RESIDUAL COMMUNISM IN ROMANIA AFTER A DECADE OF TRANSITION: A Secondary Analysis

Prof. Septimiu Chelcea, Ph. D.

The study is based on secondary analysis of an opinion poll. The sample had 37474 persons and it was representative both at the national level (with a +/- 3% error) and at the county level (with a +/-4% error). The public opinion poll was carried out by the Urban and Regional Sociology Center (CURS) in November 1999. According to the secondary analysis methodology, the results of the opinion poll were used to study a different problem than the one for which the data was collected. The target concepts were "socialist social justice" (the positive considerations of the principle of equality in the resources distribution and state intervention in economy) and "residual communism" (the positive consideration of the communist principles in the context of its disappearance as the unique and leading force in Romania). The results show that the population over 18 years old in Romania is attached to the socialist social justice in a proportion almost double than the population of the developed capitalist states (United States, United Kingdom, Germany at the level of 1991) and almost 1,5 times bigger than the population of some ex-communist states (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Russia, Hungary, in 1996). At the national level almost half of the population over 18 years old considers as fair the socialist social justice and almost a third of the electorate is characterized by a 'residual communism' type of mentality. The historical regional distribution of the two phenomena (socialist social justice and residual communism) reveals differences which plead in favor of regional sociological research. Thus, the design of a Romanian Social Map would be more useful. The study - the first of the kind in Romania - reveals the advantages as well as disadvantages of the secondary analysis in social researches.

Theoretical and Methodological Issues

The study seeks to reveal the value of secondary analysis of the data from opinion polls as well as the meaning of regional studies aimed at the elaboration of a Social Book of Romania. At the same time the study signals the difficulties of the post-communist transition and the pace of peoples' attitudes. I made a secondary analysis of the data of the opinion poll carried out in November 1999 by the Urban and Regional Sociology Center (see D. Abraham, 2001). However, our attempt requires the explanation of some methodological problems.