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***SOCIAL AXIOMS AND PERSONAL
AUTONOMY IN ROMANIAN
EDUCATIONAL FIELD***

(Summary)

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Key-words: social axioms, personality dynamics, secondary socialization, self-determination

SOCIAL AXIOMS AND PERSONAL AUTONOMY IN ROMANIAN EDUCATIONAL FIELD

FIRST PART

Introduction. Culture and personality in Romanian educational field

The most consistent diagnosis of the Romanian educational area reveals that the “causal sources” for its failures (both systemic and personal) are found in the register of “mental inertia”, characterized in rhetorical formula of disengagement as: “old mentality”, “communist residues”, “conservative society through excellence”, “routines”. Therefore, for example, the analysis report of Presidential Commission on Education talks about the residual nature of many behavioral patterns and conservative values of the educational environment, which are responsible for the character “ineffective, irrelevant, unfair and poor quality” of the Romanian education (Miclea *et al.*, 2007, p. 7). Our paper argues for highlighting the idea that the main obstacle to genuine reform of the Romanian educational area is not the lack of material resources or information available to Romanian “school”, the poor opportunities to perform “accomplished biographies”, the “bureaucratic” ineffectiveness; but, above all, the burden of “mental inertia” rooted historical, relating to a particular set of fundamental social attitudes implicitly assumed. However, when studying the “pathologies” of the system, either a psychological or a structural (strictly sociological) analysis is made. Therefore, an approach which brings together the individual register (personal), structural (societal), organizational, but above all cultural, appears to be necessary and urgent.

In our analysis we examine the relevance of the premise that fuels an entire rhetorical of lamentations in the Romanian society about poor professional performance of the educational area, attributed to the modest resources, uneasy work climate and the “legacy” of heavy past more or less recently, and attempt to individualize the contribution of each register in achieving this “state of affairs”.

Thematic explored through this project undertakes two major theoretical approaches:

- "mental inertia" ("mentalities") of the educational environment, which could be adequately investigated by a sum of increasingly influential theoretical studies of the last 4-5 years in the intercultural register, represented by *social axioms* proposed by Michael Harris Bond and Kwok Leung in their research coordinated between 2002 and 2008 (Bond, Leung *et al.*, 2004a, 2004b, Bond, 2005; Bond, Leung, 2010; Chen *et al.*, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c; Leung, Bond, 2004; Singelis *et al.*, 2003).

- "organizational culture" of the educational area can be examined starting from the consistent literature centered on the concept of "cultural dimension", theorized by Geert Hofstede (Hofstede, 1980/2003, 1986, 2002; Smith, Dugan, Trompenaars, 1996, Schwartz 1992, 1994, 1999, Schwartz *et al.*, 2000, 2001, 2005).

All of these trends will be operationalized, therefore, as follows: "mental inertia" through "social axioms" - social axioms theory (Bond, Leung, 2002-2010) and "cultural dimensions" (Hofstede, 1983/2001); and "personal independence" through "self-determination", created in the area of self-determination theory (Ryan, Deci, 2000; Kashima, Foddy, Platow, 2002).

Briefly description of obtained results: our study is dealing with social axioms topic in educational area, examining the way in which different subscales of social axioms could be related with several personality dimensions, like self-determination, self-esteem, locus of control and with factors of Hofstede's model (power distance, individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity, long/short term orientation). The research has been conducted on a sample composed by 522 subjects (253 from secondary schools and 269 from universities) in Timisoara. Our study has underlined the following tendencies: a high score of the social cynicism, religiosity and fate control, and moderate scores of reward for application. Social cynicism of teachers from universities is significant higher than the social cynicism of teachers from secondary schools. This outcome could suggest acquiring of duplicitary and disengagement patterns through secondary socialization in "school". The teachers at the university level proves to be less self-determined and externalistic than the teachers from secondary schools. Despite of the assumed limits of our study, generated especially by the limit o samples, the results suggest a tendency of school in general, and of "university" especially, to modulate the people from educational Romanian system in a dependent and duplicitary manner, at the same time in the relational and in the institutional register.

1. Social axioms as a model for researching cultural dimensions

The central theoretical area of our approach is centered on the question of social axioms. Leung & Bond (2004) offer a definition to social axioms as general beliefs about oneself, social groups, social institutions, physical environment, or spiritual world, as well as beliefs about types of events and phenomena in the social world. This knowledge about the world may be construed as the personal representation that an individual develops over his or her life experiences about the distal social context constraining his or her actions in the world. Social axioms refer to context-free beliefs and assume the following form: A is related to B. A and B can be any constructs, and people's belief in a belief statement is reflected by their perceived likelihood of the relationship. For instance, for the belief 'competition leads to progress', some people may see a strong link between competition and progress, while others may think that the two are unrelated. In contrast, values refer to the importance or desirability that people attach to a construct, such as religion or power (Leung *et al.*, 2007). The label "axiom" is used to reflect the implicit nature that general beliefs have upon life, because a person assumes their validity without meticulous evaluation. The attribute "social" refers to the idea that these axioms are acquired through social experiences (Keung, Bond, 2002; Chen, Bond & Cheung, 2006). Like attitudes, social axioms serve four major functions; they facilitate the attainment of important goals (instrumental), help people protect their self-worth (ego-defensive), serve as a manifestation of one's values (value-expressive), and help people understand the world (knowledge). Social axioms are assumed to be pan-cultural because of their functionality and because of the universal problems that humans have to tackle for survival (Chen, Bond & Cheung, 2006).

To identify a cross-cultural structure of social axioms at individual level, K. Leung *et al.* (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of literature on beliefs, which is largely Euro-American in origins. Then, social axioms were identified by informants from different cultural groups on 4 continents. Beliefs generated from the studies were summarized in the primary list of social axioms with 182 items. Exploratory analysis suggested a solution with five factors, which presented a high degree of congruence in relation to all national samples. The factors highlighted in the study mentioned were: social cynicism, social complexity, reward for application, religiosity and fate control:

- *Social cynicism* reflects a negative view of human nature, mostly because it is being easily corrupted by power; a biased attitude against some groups of people; a mistrust of social

institutions, and a disregard of ethical means to achieve an end (e.g. 'Kind-hearted people usually suffer losses').

-*Social complexity* suggests that there are no rigid rules, but rather multiple ways of achieving a given outcome and that apparent inconsistency in human behavior is common (e.g. 'One has to deal with matters according to the specific circumstances').

-*Reward for application* represents a general belief that effort, knowledge, careful planning and the investment of other resources will lead to positive results and help avoid negative outcomes (e.g. 'Hard working people will achieve more in the end').

-*Religiosity* indicates an assessment about the positive, personal and social consequences of religious practice, along with the belief in the existence of a supreme being. (e.g. 'Religious people are more likely to maintain moral standards').

-*Fate Control* indicates the degree to which important outcomes in life are believed to be fated and under the control of impersonal forces, but is predictable and alterable. (e.g. 'Fate determines one's successes and failures').

2. Personal autonomy – theoretical framework and operationalization of concept

The theory of self-esteem refers to the process through which people regulate their own behavior in order to "look good" so that they will be perceived by others in a favorable manner. It distinguishes between high self-monitors, who monitor their behavior to fit different situations, and low self-monitors, who are more cross-situational and consistent and is consistent with assessing the self-esteem factors in generating self-integrity (Baumeister, 2006). Self-esteem represents the tendency to monitor one's behaviour and change one's behaviour to the given situation in order to achieve the reference groups' standards.

Locus of control theory expresses the way in which attribution pattern is activated like an external or internal links for explanation his/her own behaviour or related persons behaviour (Rotter, 1966, 1993).

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a general theory of human motivation and is concerned with the choices people make with their own free will and full sense of choice, without any external influence and interference. For example, a self-determined person chooses to behave in a manner that reflects his/her autonomy and his/her behavior is not to achieve an external reward or escape aversive stimuli in the environment. In simple terms, SDT focuses on the degree to which an individual's behavior is self-endorsed and self-determined (Sheldon, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2002 *apud* Kalovelonis, 2007). The different types

of motivation differ in the degree of self-determination, which is the feeling of the person that engages in an activity due to their choice, and they can be placed along with the self-determination continuum. On the left end of the continuum is the motivation, a non self-determined type of motivation and on the right end is the intrinsic motivation, the prototype self-determined motivation. The four types of external motivation fall along the self-determination continuum between amotivation and intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000, as cited in Kalovelonis, 2007). According to the self-determination theory an environment influences students' motivation through the satisfaction of their basic needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2004 *apud* Kalovelonis, 2007). Autonomy refers to being the perceived origin or source of one's own behavior. Competence refers to feeling effective in one's ongoing interaction with the social environment and experience opportunities to exercise and express one's capacities. Finally, relatedness refers to feeling connected to others, to caring by those others, to having a sense of belongingness both with other individuals and with one's community (Ryan, 1995).

Thus, the global term of personal autonomy has been operationalized through three distinct concepts: self-determination, self-esteem and locus of control. We are going to relate these three concepts with cultural dimensions provided by G. Hofstede's model and social axioms model and we are realizing some explanatory model (utilizing regressions) in order to predict some problematic behaviours.

3. Cultural dimensions and personal aggregation of personal identity in organizational context

Hofstede's (1980/2003) dimensions of culture have become the most widely used model for explaining various effects across cultures. Stedham and Yamamura (2004, as cited in Ogden & Cheng, 2005) describe culture as stable and enduring but also somewhat changeable due to external forces. We are interested in this structural theoretical perspective because it is a correlative of Singelis's model of interdependence-independence, which is relevant at the interpersonal level (Rohner, 1984; Markus, Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995; Singelis *et al.*, 1999). Hofstede's five dimensions include five dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity and long term orientation. The dimension of individualism/collectivism has to do with the relationship the individual has with the group and more generally with society. Hofstede points out that the nature of this relationship determines not only how people think about themselves and their

immediate group but the “structure and functioning of many institutions aside from the family” (Hofstede, 1980/2003, p210, *apud* Ogden & Cheng, 2005).

The dimension of individualism-collectivism refers to the relative priority given to personal goals as opposed to group goals. Individualist societies are those in which there is an emphasis on individual rights and where the goals of groups or collectives are subordinate to the goals of the individual. In collectivist societies, there is a greater emphasis placed on others than on the self, which leads to an emphasis on harmony and conformity and on subordination of one’s own goals to the goals of the collective (Hofstede, 1980/2003; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988; Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990, *apud* Ogden & Cheng, 2005).

SECOND PART

4. Research focused on relationship between cultural dimensions and personal autonomy in Romanian educational field

The stake and the specific of research

The present project is based on exploratory research conducted in the Western Romania educational area, and suggests an extension (in terms of sampling) and deepening (in terms of factors involved in diagnosis) of the results obtained with the previous occasion.

The first dilemma that was the basis of the investigation can be formulated as: to which extend teachers belonging to pre-university or university area (which requires the completion of secondary socialization stages in quantitatively and qualitatively different educational environments) is accompanied by specific identity profiles in the register of 'common beliefs' and relational patterns?

At the end of this exploratory approach, resulted a series of identity profiles about "How are the teachers?" in Timisoara educational area (belonged to the Western part of Romania) aiming the register of "social axioms" and "relational patterns concerning personal autonomy" of the subjects.

Methodological design

Participants

The sample consisted of 524 subjects (253 from lower and higher secondary school and 269 from universities) in Timisoara. Their distribution was homogeneous both from the point of view of specialization (they are teaching social sciences disciplines) and of propriety type of institution (all of them are from educational institutes belonging to state).

Instruments

The Social Axioms Survey – SAS 60 (Leung, Bond, 2006). The SAS was developed by Leung *et al.* (2002) to assess general social beliefs. This study employed the 60 items version of the SAS consisting of five subscales - SA (Leung *et al.*, 2002). There are five factors in

both versions (social cynicism, social complexity, reward for application, religiosity, and fate control). All responses were anchored on a 5-point scale, ranging from strongly disbelieve (1) to strongly believe (5). After a factorial analysis we are going to use a 55 items versions, grouped in a 5 factors model with good fit indexes.

Values Survey Module (VSM94) (Hofstede, 1980/2001) is a well-known test for measuring cultural dimensions of Geert Hofstede's model. This test is composed by 20 items, with five specific dimensions: power distance, individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity, long/short time orientation/perspective.

Self-determination Scale (Sheldon, Ryan, Reis, 1996). The Self-Determination Scale (SDS) was designed to assess individual differences in the extent to which people tend to function in a self-determined way. It is thus considered a relatively enduring aspect of people's personalities which reflects (1) being more aware of their feelings and their sense of self, and (2) feeling a sense of choice with respect to their behavior. The SDS is a short, 10-item scale, with two 5-item subscales. The first subscale is awareness of oneself, and the second is perceived choice in one's actions. The subscales can either be used separately or they can be combined into an overall SDS score.

Locus of control scale (LCS) – realized by J. Rotter is composed by 29 items (6 of them are neutral), in which scores above 11.5 conventional points express the high level of externalism.

Self-esteem scale (RSE) created by Morris Rosenberg establish the level of self-esteem for each subject. This specific test in realized from 10 items, 5 of them with reversed score.

Objectives and hypothesis of research

General objective of our project is represented by the evidencing the role assumed by cultural factors in identity dynamic of Romanian educational field.

Specific objectives are focused on:

O1: Examination of cultural dimensions register in relation with a series of variables that express personal autonomy (self-determination, self-esteem and locus of control) for whom are composing Romanian educational field.

O2: The study of particular structure of identity profiles from secondary school and academic are in the register of cultural dimensions and personal autonomy.

O3: Exploration of intergenerational distribution of cultural dimensions and cultural autonomy in educational field.

O4: Elaboration of explanatory models in order to increase the prediction power upon identity symptoms form Romanian school through including cultural factors.

The hypothesis of research:

H1: Identity portraits of Romanian educational field is going to articulate in the register of Hofstede's cultural dimensions in a similar configuration like other researches organized in Romanian organizational fields.

H2: Social axioms model applied to the Romanian educational field shows an identity portrait characterized by high scores of the factors of social axioms.

H3: Personal autonomy operationalized through the concepts of self-determination, locus of control, self-esteem is presented as a precarious resource in Romanian educational field.

H4: Gender is going to generate specific identity profiles in the register of personal autonomy and cultural dimensions.

H5: There are significant statistical differences between teachers from secondary schools and teachers from academics area in the register of cultural dimensions and personal autonomy.

H6: There are significant statistical differences between the generational cohorts in the register of cultural dimensions and personal autonomy in the educational area.

H7: The variables associated with cultural dimensions are in relationship with variables associated with personal autonomy.

H8: Cultural dimensions are going to increase the strength of prediction for explanatory model aggregated for clarifying the identity symptoms of Romanian educational field.

The hypothesis H1, H2, H3, H5, H6, H7, H8 are totally confirmed and the hypothesis H4 is partially confirmed. We are briefly describing in the following pages the main obtained results.

The analysis of results

The main results could be consulted below (see table no. 1 and table no. 2). Research findings could be summarized as exploratory. Participants, regardless of their pre-university or university membership, are characterized by the following tendencies:

(1) in the register of social axioms:

- high *social cynicism* (one of the highest specific scores compared with the results obtained on the 40 national samples studied to date);
- moderate *social complexity* (lower than most of the studied national samples);
- *reward for application* relatively high (subjects have significant expectations relating to symbolic rewards for engaging in activity);
- high *religiosity* (only Islamic samples provide higher scores);
- high *fate control* (one of the highest scores of all the specific national samples).

(2) in the register of relational patterns concerning "personal autonomy":

- poor self-determined sample (both in the emotional register, as well as in the cognitive one);
- low level of self-esteem scores for the sample;
- subjects with dominance of externalist patterns of social attribution.

Discussion

Concerning the register of social axioms, results indicate a high score on the scale of social cynicism. Cynical views seem to be prevalent in the modern world and many people distrust others and institutions around them, including politicians, business people and government. However, high social cynicism is expected if we refer to decades of communism where authority was excessively valorized, maintaining willingly, amongst people, a climax of fear and mistrust in others. It is clear for those who look back critically that "the authority" wanted a country of solitary people, where interpersonal interactions and solitary were feared, discouraged. As such, after decades of suspicious and duplicated interactions, we find that the ordinary subjects have forgotten to cooperate. Therefore, many of present behavior patterns have descended from: lack of responsibility and cooperation, mistrust in the institutions and their significant members, fatalism, deficient social hope, public disengagement – all those characteristics of the social cynicism – find their outcome in the contempt of the other. Into a

cynic climax of valorous judgments, the alterity can be seen as “taking advantage of us”, “using us”, in who “we” cannot trust.

The cynic feels and then he thinks that “the dices have been thrown” beyond his power. Poor self-determining (both in the register of perceived choice and self consciousness) correlated with high cynicism indicate a pattern of vulnerability and helplessness. Social cynicism has been correlated with feelings of frustrations of self, disillusion and mistrust in others and ideology. These characteristics indicate the acquisition of an adaptive duplicitous identity pattern, resulting from the belief that other will exploit you if opportunity arises. In the table 1 we are presented the specific scores for social axioms dimensions.

Table nr. 1 Cultural dimensions for social axioms in educational area

Dimensions for social axioms (n=522)	Minimal scores	Maximal scores
C.I. Social cynicism	1.76	4.65
C.II. Reward for application	1.75	4.83
C.III. Social complexity	2.08	4.33
C.IV. Fate control	1.00	4.57
C.V. Religiosity	1.29	5.00

At the same time, in the table nr. 2 we are presenting the scores for Hofstede’s model, characterized by high scores of power distance, collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, femininity and short term perspective.

Table nr. 2 Cultural map in educational area – Hofstede’s model (n=522)

Cultural dimensions (Hofstede’s model)	Specific average score	Standard deviation (SD)
F1. Power distance	78.06	24.018
F2. Individualism-collectivism	36.31	20.171
F3. Masculinity-femininity	33.72	19.739
F4. Uncertainty avoidance	85.07	19.221
F5. Long/short term perspective	23.89	15.784

In the table nr. 3 and table nr. 4 we are indicating correlations between the variables included in our study.

Tabelul nr. 3. Corelations between Hofstede's model factors and the other analyzed variables (social axioms dimensions, personal autonomy)

Corelations N=522	F1. Power distance	F2. Individualism -collectivism	F3. Masculinity- feminity	F4. Uncertainty avoidance	F5. Long/short term perspective
E1. Awareness of self	.103*	.015	.058	-.643**	.414**
E2. Perceived choice	.035	.010	.048	-.483**	.269**
E3. Self-determinations	.099*	.017	.074	-.786**	.479**
B. Self-esteem	-.048	.014	-.677**	.100*	-.085
D. Locus of control	.036	.029	.048	-.204**	.142**
F1. Power distance	1	.357**	.076	-.048	.100*
F2. Individualism- collectivism	.357**	1	-.005	-.032	.030
F3. Masculinity-feminity	.076	-.005	1	-.058	.080
F4. Uncertainty avoidance	-.048	-.032	-.058	1	-.572**
F5. Long/short term perspective	.100*	.030	.080	-.572**	1
C.I. Social cynicism	.392**	.255**	-.018	-.123**	.139**
C.II. Reward for applications	.114**	.112*	-.130**	.086	-.062
C.III. Social complexity	.148**	.089*	-.084	-.022	.032
C.IV. Fate control	.263**	.298**	.043	-.163**	.134**
C.V. Religiosity	.228**	.210**	.006	-.080	.020

* p< 0.05.

** p< 0.01

Moreover, the relation between social cynicism and power distance indicates the fact that, the more cynic we are, the more authoritarian the subject become. Therefore, the cynic typical subject is engaged in manipulative, suspicious and deceptive interactions, where the significant other is closely monitored and can be exploited for personal gain. This statement could indicate a defective, vicious model of interpersonal relationship where social interactions are perceived as well-constructed "strategies" for personal gain.

Results indicate also a significant relation between social cynicism and fate control that expresses the personal option for defeated social attitudes. All these trends are going to create a more accurate image of the social actor with behavioural tendencies toward self-promotion, emotional coldness, duplicity and aggressiveness. Moreover, results show a positive relation between colectivism and social cynicism, on the one hand, and between self-determination and uncertainty avoidance, on the other hand. This statement would lead us to ideas of manipulation and duplicity. Although the suspicion associated with cynical views

may protect people from being deceived (Leung & Bond, 2004), more often than not, studies have shown that cynicism can also reduce people's life satisfaction. As described in the studies of Leung and Bond (2006), social cynicism has survival value because it helps individuals avoid social traps and scams.

Tabelul nr. 3. Corelations between social axioms factors and the other analyzed variables (Hofstede's dimensions, personal autonomy)

Corelații N=522	C.I. Social cynicism	C.II. Reward for applications	C.III. Social complexity	C.IV. Fate control	C.V. Religiosity
E1. Awareness of self	.132**	-.028	.006	.163**	.098*
E2. Perceived choice	.137**	-.098*	-.004	.134**	.014
E3. Self-determinations	.186**	-.084	.002	.207**	.081
B. Self-esteem	.076	.144**	.125**	-.004	.031
D. Locus of control	.200**	-.124**	.116**	.180**	-.024
F1. Power distance	.392**	.114**	.148**	.263**	.228**
F2. Individualism-collectivism	.255**	.112*	.089*	.298**	.210**
F3. Masculinity-femininity	-.018	-.130**	-.084	.043	.006
F4. Uncertainty avoidance	-.123**	.086	-.022	-.163**	-.080
F5. Long/short term perspective	.139**	-.062	.032	.134**	.020
C.I. Social cynicism	1	.170**	.280**	.310**	.223**
C.II. Reward for applications	.170**	1	.274**	-.129**	.304**
C.III. Social complexity	.280**	.274**	1	.070	.136**
C.IV. Fate control	.310**	-.129**	.070	1	.250**
C.V. Religiosity	.223**	.304**	.136**	.250**	1

* p< 0.05.

** p< 0.01

The second factor, labeled as social complexity, suggests a belief that there are multiple ways of achieving a given outcome and that a given person's behavior is inconsistent from situation to situation. A belief in the complexity of social life was associated with endorsement of both collaboration and compromise in resolving interpersonal interdependencies. The world-view that there are multiple solutions to social issues is a functional cognitive resource in contemporary social system. However, moderate scores on social complexity associated with higher scores on fate control and religiosity show poor familiarization with implicitly accepted behavior which indicates a feeling of diminished freedom of movement.

Thirdly, reward for application indicates unrealistic expectations concerning personal symbolic reward and shows a tendency of discontent towards the conditions of self reality. The state of dissatisfaction characterizes the individualism of the one who perceives himself

differently from what he is in reality. Reward for application could be considered a coping strategy that requires grappling with the problem actively. Study results indicate an identity pattern of inadequate reporting to personal biographic success. As Leung and Bond (2004) observed, if a society constantly faces hardship associated with low living standards, social customs, structures, and institutions, subjects are likely to evolve into a configuration that is adaptive in a face of such hardship. Belief of its citizens in effort and hard work sustains the struggle against hardship, and beliefs associated with religiosity conduce towards social order and civility. Fatalism reflects some degree of helplessness in face of the hardship. Therefore, high scores of these social axioms seem interpretable as a consequence of the need to cope with difficult circumstances in living.

Religiosity was related to accommodation because of their mutual emphasis on sociality and agreeableness. Religiosity could be seen both as a general response to the spiritual need of humans and as a solution to many social problems. As Leung and Bond (2006) point out, religiosity seems to be more concerned with solutions to the challenges of creating social order and encouraging civility than with the satisfaction of spiritual need. Study results indicate a high score on religiosity (only Islamic samples have registered higher scores) and we can relate this to the feeling of subjugating to a higher divine force, hence the incapacity to take life in own hands.

Results on fate control indicate a tendency to accept any outcome without resisting. Fate control was related to accommodation because of the passivity in the face of external forces involved in the endorsement of fate's power. The belief that events in one's life are predetermined by fate may incline people towards acceptance of what happens. Therefore, passive acceptance and the feeling that all is in vain, as the individual has no actual control over his own personal life, indicate a fatalistic life attitude. Fate control sharpens an identity pattern of implicit public disengagement. As results indicate a higher fate control in the university sample, the present study has revealed that, as one climbs higher on the scale of more prestigious institutions, with higher symbolic capital, is more inclined to asses that "the dices have been thrown".

Conclusions

When statistically significant differences occur between the lots of subjects of pre-university and university areas, they indicate an attitudinal pattern of disengagement, more duplicitous and manipulative as they "advance" toward a socialized environment involving (quantitatively and quality) "more education", which is both against intuition, but also different from the results obtained in other research which similar design (Kuo et al, 2006). In this respect, the university reveals itself to be a school of dependency and duplicity. The factor that anticipates best the identity pattern of disengagement is, of course, the cultural dimension of social cynicism, obstacle in the reform process. The implicit characteristic of social axioms, in general, and of social cynicism, in particular, as opposed to explicit, declared, attests its informality, the latency of its nature. Therefore, "mental inertia" is implied without complete consciousness of the individual, conferring to the social axioms an unrevealed, internalized character. Despite appearances that would indicate that the university represents prestige, transparency, competence, what this study reveals at the end is an identity pattern of vulnerability (low self-determined, high fate control) and the need to compensate for this deficiency by illusory, duplicitous strategies (high social cynicism, low self-esteem and self-determination). The deficit of symbolic resources implicitly assumed is balanced through compensatory relational strategies that lack authenticity. Therefore, the emphasis is on what "they" seem to be, not on what "they" really are. Despite limitations of the study undertaken, particularly related to data collection by processes which did not allow sampling, the results suggest a trend of school in general and academics in particular, to shape those of the "system" in a more centered rather relational and institutional dependency and duplicity.

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