

## **Some Aspects of the Relationship between Basic Human Values and Religiosity in Romania**

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**Abstract.** The article provides a summary of the analysis of the associations between Schwartz's basic human values and religiosity in Romania, using the data of the fourth wave of the European Social Survey (ESS). Previous cross-cultural research has suggested that religiosity is positively and significantly associated with conservativeness and self-transcendence. On the other hand, negative associations were reported between religiosity and openness to change, while the association between religiosity and self-enhancement was less consistent. Our results succeeded in only marginally confirming these results in the case of Romania. Based on our data, religiosity is positively and significantly, but not extremely strongly, associated with conservativeness and self-transcendence; while the correlations between religiosity and openness to change, as well as between religiosity and self-enhancement values, although negative, are not statistically significant. These results suggest that, contrary to the findings of the mainstream literature, religious Romanians, while more conservative than their less religious counterparts, are not less concerned with values of self-gratification than the less religious respondents. These findings can be explained, probably, through the transition process, during which there occurs not only a macro-social departure from traditionalism to modernism, but also a transition in the individuals' value priorities, which produces a nearly hazardous association between religiosity and values of self-gratification. Other possible reasons might be due to religious hypocrisy or to methodological bias associated with self-reported data.

**Keywords:** conservation, self-transcendence, self-enhancement, openness to change, religiosity, transition

### **INTRODUCTION**

In every culture and society we can find a system of principles about what is desirable. This system regulates behaviours, provides coherence for spiritual and material products, and determines a specific profile of

personality. From the moment of our birth, we are facing specific physical–geographical, technological, economical and social realities, but also a specific environment of mentality in which values constitute the major lines of conduct. In fact, between culture and configuration of personality there is a permanent causal circuit which gives to both entities stability and temporal unity. Both implicitly and explicitly, the socio-cultural context puts in motion a model of personality, which is typical and representative (i.e. modal personality) for every specific culture. It is equally true that in every culture we can find ideal (i.e. declarative, ideological) and real (i.e. effective behaviours) models of conduct (Linton, 1945: 3, 84). This distinction is valid for the whole of human history, but it is more acute in the contemporary world and, probably, it is even harsher in transition societies which are witnessing a growing social diversity and stratification, as in the case of Romania.

In complex societies, we can find inside the same culture a huge diversity of values and patterns of conduct. Consequently, in these types of societies it is practically impossible to locate a discrete configuration of personality, so that it is much more plausible to talk about a multi-modal personality (Tîrhaș, 2003: 255). In any case, in order to understand the structure and dynamics of a certain culture, society or country, an in-depth analysis of values, of their hierarchy and of the ways in which values are embedded in the mentality of the individuals is indispensable, as well as an investigation into the manner in which value configurations are translated into concrete behaviours. Based on these considerations, the present analysis summarizes the main findings of an empirical study in connection with Romanians' values as a function of their religiosity.

Between values and religiosity there is a complex relationship whose more general aspects can be summarized as follows: in every culture and society, from small communities to whole societies, religion occupies a central place; whether we are talking about philosophy texts or empirically grounded investigations we can deduce from them that values do not refer solely to moral guidance, but also to ethical judgments; even if morality in its most powerful meaning is not reducible to religious morality, the latter is the most frequently and the most forcefully linked to morality in general, whether we consider this linkage in reflexive or in objective, statistical terms.

More specifically, between values and religiosity there persists a causal circularity (Roccas, 2005: 757). People may put an accent on certain

values as a result of their religious socialization, but in the meantime they may become religious as a result of holding certain values, which are in accordance with religious teaching. Thus,

religious beliefs, practices, emotions and communities may have an impact on values, that is, intensity and priority given to specific values. Alternatively, people who firmly hold certain values, and de-emphasise opposite such as autonomy and hedonism, may turn to and find in religious systems, attitudes and practices a way to express, live and organize their hierarchy of values into a whole system. (Saroglou and Munoz-Garcia, 2008: 85)

Common sense and scientific knowledge assess religious people as being more traditional, conservative and less preoccupied by self-enhancement and individualism. We think, however, that these associations should not be taken for granted as many empirical results suggest that in different societal contexts the associations between religiosity and values might be different, and the strengths of associations may vary. The meta-analysis of several empirical studies (Saroglou, Delpierre and Dernelle, 2004: 731) concluded that the strength of association between religion and values depends on the socio-economic development of the societies, so that in more developed and more democratic societies, religion implies less conservativeness and puts more emphasis on self-enhancement values.

Survey data suggest that Romania is one of the most religious countries in Europe, no matter whether we refer to religious affiliation, subjective religiosity or religious practice. Throughout the transition period less than a tenth of the Romanian population declared religious non-affiliation. Regarding church attendance, Romania is not a European leader, since only half of the adult population attends church at least once a month. However, between 1993 and 1999 the percentage of those declaring church attendance at least once a month rose by more than ten percent in Romania, which is the highest growth of religious practice throughout Europe. At the same time, the rate of those respondents who declare they pray at least once a week is about eighty percent in Romania, one of the highest rates in Europe (Voicu, 2007: 59, 64). The country is a European leader also in terms of subjective religiosity, measured on the basis of the following variables: importance of religion in personal life, importance of God in personal life, trust in church's involvement in social life, and belief in religious ideas (Voicu, 2007: 84–

85). It would be, however, incorrect to deduce from this data that Romanians are equally religious. As Voicu (2007: 143–144) herself concludes, Romanians' degrees of religiosity vary a lot on the basis of a number of socio-demographic factors, like age, gender, education, residence, etc. Consequently, we presuppose that, depending on their degree of religiosity, people's value system might be more or less influenced by religiosity. On the other hand, it is plausible to think that people differ in their individual value priorities and, as a result, their value priorities may be more or less compatible with religious teaching. For instance, people who are more committed to religion may emphasize values which express the motivation of avoiding uncertainty and may assign low importance to values that express motivations to follow individual gratification or independence in thought and action (Roccas, 2005: 757).

Based on these sorts of epistemic and empirical foundations, the present article seeks to present the main findings of an empirical analysis which aimed to reveal the linkages between religiosity and Schwartz's basic human values in the case of present-day Romania, by verifying the already classical hypotheses existing in this regard in the literature.

## THEORETICAL REMARKS

### 1. Social values: patterns and functions

Values can be defined as general principles about what should be followed in life and guide the attitudes and actions of individuals. The fact that values are general principles refers to two fundamental aspects: values transcend particular situations and are socially shared. Obviously, here “general” does not mean “universal” and the axiological structure comprises many levels from individual, small and medium group levels to cultural levels and to those horizons which include a set of common values for the whole of humanity. It is illustrative in this latter regard that more and more authors discuss universal, pan-cultural values. The universality of values like solidarity, altruism, hedonism, freedom, etc. was demonstrated among others by Schwartz (1992: 1–56). The accelerated historical evolution that occurs nowadays shows that humanity is in a process of “axiological irreversibility” (Boudon, 2001: 7), in the sense that we are witnessing the coming up of some general human values, centred around human rights and democracy.

On the other hand, there are important axiological differences at the levels of individuals, groups and cultures. Here, we can mention at least three remarks. First, the axiological specificity of individuals, groups and cultures does not result from the existence of some particular values, but from the different hierarchies and configurations of the same general human values. This fact is observable not only in horizontal comparisons (between diverse groups and cultures), but also on a temporal scale, from the appearance of more complex societies. Thus, the frequently invoked values of postmaterialism have existed since ancient times; what makes this difference compared to the present is the lower fraction of these values in ancient societies. Second, no matter which level we consider the values in question to be on, values are, after all, embedded in and function through individuals. Even if it is justified to admit the existence of an institutional (both formal and informal) axiological “policy” – for instance in the sense of the spreading of religious values by churches – the axiological profile of the communities results from the fact that individuals share not so much certain single values, but value configurations and hierarchies, i.e. value orientations. Third, since individuals are the concrete bearers of axiological options, empirical approaches to values reside in the questioning of concrete individuals (i.e. methodological individualism); the present article, in turn, follows this practice.

In order to clarify the nature and characteristics of values, it is necessary to bring into the discussion some other, conceptually related, notions, for example ideals, interests, needs, norms and attitudes. The aim here is not to develop an inter-conceptual analysis (for details, see Iluț, 1995: 33–48); we mention only a few aspects in relation to our present endeavour. The degree of conceptual interference depends on the content we attach to the notions under discussion. For instance, in the classical literature on motivation, values are frequently considered higher needs; and the well-known pyramid of needs (Maslow, 1943: 370–396) takes a similar approach to the theory about materialist and postmaterialist values (e.g. Inglehart, 1997: 33). The difference is that while the pyramid of needs refers solely to individuals – and assumes that, once basic needs are satisfied, higher order needs begin to act as guides of actions – the theory of postmaterialism refers to cultures and societies and assumes on the macro-level that economical and social development determines that more and more individuals are turning

away from seeking economical survival and are beginning to adopt post-material values (e.g. freedom, solidarity, self-expression, etc.). In spite of these conceptual equivalences, or in spite of the subsuming of values to norms, general social attitudes, higher order needs, etc. or to “axiological structures” (Ilut, 1995: 33), there are also approaches that induce an epistemic distinction between the very close concepts of values, norms and attitudes. The major difference between values and norms is that the latter are perceived by the individuals as being situated exterior to their profound selves and that norms refer to behavioural rules in specific situations, compared to values, which constitute general guidance. Regarding the relationship between values and attitudes, the hierarchical model developed by Milton Rokeach (1973: 18) is very suggestive. According to this model, values as general principles are translated in attitudes and the latter are expressed in verbal opinions. At this point of the discussion it must be noted that, in concrete, empirical research, values are operationalized also in forms of verbal opinions; however, these opinions express general judgements of values. This is also the case with the present investigation.

## 2. The theory of basic human values

The theory of basic human values was introduced by Shalom Schwartz (1992: 1-65). In line with the approach of Rokeach (1973: 5), Schwartz's theory defines values as desirable, trans-situational goals which vary in their importance and serve as guiding principles in people's lives. The theory builds on previous research definitions, e.g. the approach of Kluckhohn (1951: 395), Rokeach (1973: 5) and Hofstede (1980: 19), and hypothesizes the existence of ten types of value (benevolence, universalism, self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity and tradition), which have different motivational goals corresponding to three distinct requirements of human life: needs of individuals as biological organisms, necessities of coordinated social interaction, and the welfare and survival of groups. The author postulated that these basic values, and the motivational goals they express, are universal and thus can be found in all cultures (Schwartz, 1992: 47–49).

Schwartz integrated these ten value types in a circular structure with two orthogonal dimensions. One of these dimensions opposes self-enhancement (values of power and achievement) and self-transcendence

(value of benevolence and universalism), while the second dimension opposes openness to change (values of stimulation and self-direction) and conservativeness (values of security, conformity and tradition). Hedonism is supposed to share both elements of openness and self-enhancement. This two-dimensional, circular structure reveals both the dynamic linkage and the conflict between certain values, since compatible value types, which have shared motivational orientations, are adjacent to one another, while conflicting values are situated opposite to each other. Thus, values of conservation are in conflict with values of openness to change, since values of tradition, conformity and security emphasize the status quo and obedience compared to values of stimulation and self-direction which put the accent on novelty, adventure and independence. On the other hand, self-transcendence is in opposition with self-enhancement, since values belonging to the former, i.e. universalism and benevolence, emphasize the welfare of others, while self-enhancement values like achievement, power and hedonism promote personal well-being. Consequently, the structure suggests that motivational goals of opposing value types cannot be achieved at the same time (Schwartz, 1992: 14–16).

Based on the theory of basic human values, the author (Schwartz, 1992: 17) developed a measurement instrument consisting of 56 specific values corresponding to the ten hypothesized value types. The instrument, which became known as the Schwartz Value Survey, was applied in samples from different cultural contexts and the results confirmed the distinct motivational basis of the ten values and their hypothesized, bi-polar structure. According to Schwartz (2003: 270), the conclusion of these empirical studies revealed that people may differ in the importance they attribute to values, but their values seem to be organized in the same structure of motivational oppositions and compatibilities.

A decade later an updated and specific version of the Schwartz Value Survey was launched (Schwartz, Melech, Lehmann, Burgess, Harris and Owens, 2001: 519-542) in the form of the Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ), which measures the same ten basic value orientations as the original instrument. The PVQ consists of 40 short verbal statements from different people, describing their important goals, wishes and aspirations (i.e. values). Respondents were asked to compare each portrait to themselves and rate the similarity to the portraits on a 6-point

scale ranging from 1 (not like me at all) to 6 (very much like me). Constructed like this, the PVQ infers individual values from the self-reported similarities. Due to space limitations, the European Social Survey (ESS), on whose data our analysis is built, uses an adopted and shortened version of the original PVQ, consisting of 21 items – two items for each value type except universalism, which due to its broader meaning is tapped through three items.

## VALUES AND RELIGIOSITY

Values and religiosity are closely related notions in the sense that some values constitute religious values or have such kind of character, especially in terms of their moral denotation. Religiosity always implies both a strong axiological component and effective behavioural components (e.g. commonly referred to as religious practice, like church attendance, praying, etc.). Compared to values, religious belief presupposes a more solid cognitive base about the cosmos and humans, about social structure and action, about the presence and role of divinity, etc. In this context, it is worth mentioning that religious practice, which empirically is relatively easy to identify, reflects only a part of the religious ideology and axiology and to an even lesser degree general human values, whether they are moral values or not. On the individual level, an important connection between values and religiosity (i.e. ideology) is the function of religion as moral guidance, especially in situations of motivational conflicts, in situations of ambivalence and uncertainty. Consequently, it is not inadvertent that evolutionary psychology assumes that the most important challenge in the appearance and perpetuation of religion resides in the human need for avoiding uncertainty. Thus, on the individual level, religiosity constitutes an excellent and facile instrument of rationalization and justification. Besides, religiosity is a decisive determinant both in the case of moral actions and in the case of anti-social behaviours, in this latter regard in the form of forgiveness occurring after the fulfilment of a questionable act.

If we take the relationship between values and religiosity in the form of a hierarchy, we can assert that religiosity has lost its importance, both on the declarative level and in terms of its translation into effective behaviours. This tendency is assessed through many studies, including



empirical evidence as well. On the macro-level this tendency is the most pronounced in the case of developed countries, while on the micro-level it is strongly correlated with individuals' educational level. Religious values and religion as a value continue, however, to subsist as important spiritual and motivational vectors, on societal, communitarian and individual levels. In the case of the individual level, which at least methodologically is fundamental, the role of the religious axiology as a motivational vector was well assessed by Allport (1950: 50–51).

Everyday observations and empirical research show that in Romania the place of religion as a central component of the personality can be especially found in the case of women, older persons and less educated strata of society (Voicu, 2007: 143–144). In the case of people for whom religious axiology constitutes the dominant force of their world view it seems unequivocal that other values are subordinated to religious values.

#### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOSITY AND THE TEN BASIC HUMAN VALUES: HYPOTHESES AND METHODOLOGY

A major research direction in the study of values is directed towards the identification of those background variables that explain individual differences in value priorities (Schwartz, 2003: 278). In this sense, there were signalled cross-culturally consistent and meaningful associations between individuals' value priorities and their socio-demographical background (Davidov, Schmidt and Schwartz, 2008: 440). These findings assess that age correlates positively with conservative values and negatively with openness to change. Due to older people's more accentuated concern with others, age correlates positively with self-transcendence values and negatively with self-enhancement values. Since educational experiences provide individuals with intellectual openness, rationality and flexibility, education is supposed to be positively associated with self-enhancement and openness to change values, and negatively with conservative values. These associations have been confirmed in many studies (for a review see Schwartz, 2003: 278–280). Thus, the conclusion yielded to the observation that more educated people present the same value patterns as young people. Regarding the linkage between gender and values, the assumption is that gender differences appear only in large samples and consist of greater emphasis

on security and benevolence values in women and of greater emphasis on self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement and power values in men.

There are also many studies, which – besides the role of the socio-demographical factors – examined the linkages between values and religiosity. The Rokeach Value Survey signalled, on the one hand, positive linkages between religiosity and preference for moral values, security, forgiveness and, on the other hand, negative linkages between religiosity and preference for personal and egoistic values like pleasure, excitement, independence (Roccas, 2005: 748). The relationship between Schwartz's values and subjective religiosity was, in turn, successively assessed in many different cultural and religious contexts and it was found that religiosity constitutes one of the most important factors that predict individual differences in values (e.g. Schwartz and Huisman, 1995: 88). The authors, and later on Roccas (2005: 750-751), outlined a set of hypotheses about the associations between the ten basic values and religiosity.

The rationale of these hypotheses is that religiosity should be positively associated with values that emphasize goals that are beyond the self and negatively with values that accentuate personal goals. Thus, the authors hypothesized a positive correlation between religiosity and the importance of conservative values, as far as these values emphasize the unquestioning preservation of social order, acceptance of traditional customs, submission to others' expectations and limitation of self-expression. The authors expected that, among conservative values, religiosity will be the most strongly correlated with tradition and less strongly, but also positively, with conformity and security. Openness to change values were supposed to correlate negatively with religiosity, as far as these values emphasize the acceptance of new world views and promote gratification of material needs. It was expected that religiosity would be most negatively correlated with hedonism, since religion promotes the limitation of self-indulgent activities. Regarding self-enhancement values, the hypothesis was that there might be positive, although less powerful, correlations between the values of power and achievement, since these values may serve to maintain the social order. Concerning self-transcendence values, the expectation was that religion would correlate positively with both benevolence and universalism values, although the correlation of religiosity would be stronger with

benevolence than with universalism. The rationale was that benevolence emphasizes the benefaction with close others, while universalism emphasizes the benefaction with others at a distance.

These hypotheses were confirmed in the authors' original study (Schwartz and Huismans, 1995: 88–107) of adherents of four religions (Judaism, Greek Orthodoxy, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism) and later on they were verified in many studies of individuals from different religions and nations. In all of these cases associations were in the expected direction. More recently, a meta-analysis of empirical findings about the relationship between values and religiosity, based on 21 studies from 15 nations, provided further evidence in this regard (Saroglou et al., 2004: 721-734). The conclusion of this assessment was that, across a variety of contexts, religious people attach high importance to values of conservativeness (especially tradition and conformity) and low importance to values indicating openness to change and self-enhancement. The authors' explanation re-accentuated the original rationale: religious doctrines put emphasis on obedience, tradition and prohibit self-expression and hedonism and, consequently, people who have a positive attitude towards religious beliefs (i.e. express greater subjective religiosity) tend to emphasize those values that are taught by doctrines.

Regarding the linkage between certain values and religiosity, several inter-cultural differences were also reported. Thus, compared to less developed countries, in more developed societies religious people are less directed towards the emphasizing of conservative values and tend to add greater importance to self-transcendence values. The explanation is that, in more developed societies, religion itself follows the general cultural change of modernization and democratization and believers become, in turn, less traditional (Saroglou et al., 2004: 731).

Based on these considerations we hypothesized that in the Romanian sample of the ESS 2008 religiosity would be associated positively with tradition, conformity, security, benevolence and universalism, that is, with the higher order values of conservativeness and self-transcendence. On the contrary, we hypothesized negative associations between religiosity and openness to change values, and also between religiosity and self-enhancement values.

We checked for these associations using the data of the European Social Survey's fourth wave (2008). The database was downloaded free

of charge from the website of the Norwegian Social Science Data Services. The dependent variables are represented by the PVQ items, corresponding to the ten value types of Schwartz's theory, and to the four higher order values (self-enhancement, self-transcendence, openness to change and conservativeness). Items corresponding to each basic and higher order value type were selected based on Schwartz's study (2003: 273). On the basis of the corresponding items we calculated individual mean scores for each of the values and higher order values. Given the fact that responses to the items of the PVQ range from 1 (not like me at all) to 6 (very much like me), the resulting mean scores of each value type range, in turn, from 1 to 6.

Religiosity is a multidimensional phenomenon and the belief in religious ideals usually become manifest in the form of religious practice (Stark and Glock, 1968: 182). The ESS questionnaire allows us to study specific facets of religiosity. Besides asking respondents about their religious denomination, in the ESS questionnaires there are three specific ways in which religiousness is assessed. One of these measures subjective religiosity as an answer on the question "Regardless of whether you belong to a particular religion, how religious would you say you are?" Responses range from 0 (not at all religious) to 10 (very religious). A similar single-item measure was used in previous studies (e.g. Schwartz and Huisman, 1995).

Two other items of the ESS questionnaire refer to religious practice. One of these concerns religious practice in the public sphere as answer to the question "Apart from special occasions, such as weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services nowadays?" The other refers to the private sphere religious practice as an answer to the question "Apart from when you are at religious services, how often, if at all, do you pray?" Responses to these two question range in both cases from 1 (never) to 7 (every day).

As expected, the statistical factor analysis of these three measures of religiosity suggests that there is a strong correlation between them. Each of the three items load heavily on the first extracted factor and the resulting factor explains 62% of the original variance, which means that 62% of the information contained in the three original measures of religiosity can be expressed through the resulting reduced factor. Consequently, we decided to use this reduced measure of religiosity in the subsequent analysis. As already mentioned, both religiosity and value

priorities correlate with several positional factors and this fact makes it plausible to control for at least socio-demographic variables when assessing the linkage between measures of religiosity and values. According to Schwartz (2003), when examining associations of the ten values with other variables it is necessary to correct for response tendencies in using the response scale and thus it is suggested to introduce individual's means for all items as covariates. As a consequence, the assessment of the hypotheses regarding the association between certain values and religiosity is done through partial correlation, which controls for socio-demographics (age, gender, education, income, type of locality) and includes values as covariates.

## RESULTS

In this section we provide the summary of our results regarding the associations between religiosity and values in Romania based on the ESS 2008 round (the detailed analysis can be obtained from the authors by request). Before assessing the results concerning the associations between values and religiosity, we must note that, alongside the Schwartz values, Romanians give the highest priority to conservative and self-transcendence values since each of the values of these dimensions (security, conformity and tradition for conservative values, and universalism and benevolence for self-transcendence values) are among the five most important values. On the contrary, values of self-enhancement (achievement, power and hedonism) and openness to change are much less endorsed. This picture confidently replicates previous findings, which, on the basis of other cross-national surveys (e.g. European Values Survey, World Values Survey), revealed very traditional value configurations for Romania (e.g. B. Voicu, 2007: 300).

In line with the previous considerations about the linkages between values and religiosity, Romanians' value priorities seem to be typical for a country in which 92% of respondents declare religious affiliation, 85% can be considered religious or very religious (averaging over 5 on the 0–10 scale of subjective religiosity) and the Romanian respondents' declared religious practice is above the ESS 2008 average based on 28 countries.

In order to investigate the associations between religiosity and value priorities we conducted partial correlation analyses between the ten value

types and religiosity, and between the four higher order values and religiosity, while keeping under control the effect of age, gender, education and type of residence, i.e. those variables that usually correlate with both values and religiosity.

The results obtained seem to confirm only partially the hypotheses outlined above, and provide a number of nuances in relation to the findings of Schwartz and Huisman (1995: 88). As expected, there is a positive, statistically significant association between religiosity and conservative values and, indeed, the association of religiosity is strongest with the value of tradition. Contrary to Schwartz and Huisman, who reported a stronger positive association between the in-group oriented benevolence values than with the out-group oriented universalism values, in the Romanian sample the results are the opposite, since we obtained a positive, statistically significant association between universalism and religiosity, while the linkage between religiosity and benevolence, although positive, is neither strong nor statistically significant.

In accordance with the expectations, hedonism, which in the Romanian sample belongs to the group of self-enhancement values, is significantly and negatively associated with religiosity; however, regarding the other values of self-enhancement and openness to change dimensions, there did not emerge any other significant associations and, consequently, none of the hypotheses can be confirmed in this regards.

As a consequence, in Romania, the individual level religiosity is associated with a significantly higher emphasis on conservative values and especially universalism, among the self-transcendence values. Except the value of hedonism, religious respondents do not endorse significantly less the values of stimulation, self-direction, achievement and power, i.e. the values which, in the theory of Schwartz, are the opposite of the former. On the basis of these results it is legitimate to conclude that very religious Romanian respondents are not less directed towards the gratification of personal needs than their less religious counterparts.

## DISCUSSION

We presuppose that our results can be explained through the fact that Romania, similarly to other countries of the region, constitutes a transition country. Transition means something more than to shove off socialism. In our meaning, transition refers to a very profound, long-

lasting social process during which the Romanian society has begun to depart from a traditional and rural society and move towards a modern and urban culture. This process puts a high burden on individuals in terms of their economical survival and, thus, it seems plausible that, no matter how religious they are, they are confronted with the same challenges in terms of their self-realization. Thus, the process of transition means also a transition of mentalities and, implicitly, that of values. The clashing points between traditional, modern and postmodern values frequently generate conflicts and confusions, and result in a less coherent value system. Thus, the axiological mix, the nearly hazardous association between religiosity and openness to change, etc., can be explained on the basis of the general process of transition from traditional to modern mentalities. This process might be the explanation also for the question of why there is a disjunction between our results and that of the literature, the latter suggesting strong linkages between religiosity and self-transcendence values and between non-religiosity and self-enhancement values.

There is no doubt that more ample, complex research can translate our reflexive hypothesis into more certain evidence and explanations. We list some major directions in this regard.

The first of these directions concerns methodological developments in the sense of a more sophisticated methodology, aimed at detaching some socio-demographical profiles (e.g. cluster analysis), in order to show more clearly not only the contribution of certain variables, but also their combined effects (e.g. structural equation). A more in-depth statistical analysis on the level of some highly relevant subpopulations could bring significant refinement and even dramatic overturns. We think, for instance, that the combined effect of poverty, education, age and rural setting could alter even the significant negative association between hedonism and religiosity. Differently put, hedonism, understood here as seeking of pleasure (it is also worth discussing what subjects understand as pleasure) is presupposed to be rejected not only through religiosity alone, but also due to economical, social and psycho-social conditions (e.g. age).

Secondly, we appreciate an epistemic gain from the usage of some complementary methods in data collection. In order to assess with more confidence the relationship between values and religiosity it is necessary to make use of semi-structured individual and group interviews. In this

way we could attain a more pronounced accuracy of the collected data, and could approach also the ways in which subjects define the notions in question (e.g. pleasure). Besides the need for conjunction between quantitative and qualitative methodology, there remain some problems connected to the self-reported data, in which case – and predominantly in the case of values and attitudes – the effect of social desirability, the so-called self-presentation concern, constitutes a unanimously recognized fundamental bias. A specific method in this regard is that which asks subjects not only about themselves, but also about their counterparts. It is not difficult to anticipate the differences that could result from these two questions: Do you consider yourself a religious person? And: How many of your acquaintances do you think are religious? (We do not intend to enter here into more complex discussions, for instance regarding the effect of psycho-social similarity which is present among acquaintances.)

Values are subjective, abstract realities, which are not easily observable from behaviours and it is also hard to measure them based on individuals' declarations. Moreover, we think – contrary to the mainstream literature which considers values as conscious and deliberate entities – that values, as parts of a more complex mentality, are not only guides of certain behaviours, but also justifiers of certain situations and life conditions and can act as automatic thoughts. Differently put, values can serve as *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1980: 88) in linking peoples' mentality to their behaviours. With this observation, we do not intend to conclude that the study of the relationship between values and different aspects of the social is irrelevant (as much as such an affirmation would nullify our investigation), but to underline that the interpretation of empirical results in a larger theoretical and methodological context needs to make reference to different perspectives and needs to give attention to a variety of factors. *Habitus* as a subjective stance refers to automat mental schemes which short-circuit the complex mechanism of the values–attitudes–behaviours relationship. Obviously, this mechanism is not reducible to habits, but *habitus* plays an important role in the understanding of the axiological significance of religious acts and rituals. For instance, it is a cliché that many individuals make the sign of the cross in public and rapidly after this engage themselves in immoral behaviours, whether we are talking about verbal affronts, profane words, frauds or more serious anti-social behaviours. In this sense, verbally



expressed religiosity can be understood, at least partly, as an indicator of moral hypocrisy.

Moreover, between some religious practices and immoral actions there exists not only a major dissonance in terms of religious values but also in the fact that religious practices become instruments for forgiveness. Similarly to hand washing after frauds, as described by the Macbeth effect (Zong and Liljenquist, 2006: 1451–1452), the reflex of making the sign of cross can serve as a way of reinstallation of psychical comfort. The fact that these gestures take place in public can induce the approval of others. These are only a few examples that urge us to consider the complex relationship of religious values, attitudes and behaviours and also some limits of the empirical research in the domain of religious values.

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