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RELIGIOSITY AND ECONOMIC BEHAVIOUR. AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS
OF THE HUNGARY-ROMANIA CROSS-BORDER AREA

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Abstract: Our paper is an exploratory analysis of the role religion can still have today with respect to directing students' economic behaviour. We evaluated and grouped the theories dealing with the relationship between religion and economics in three categories: theories that consider the two areas as incompatible, theories that identify mutual determination between them and theories that admit the coexistence or the mutual support between economics and religion. We sought to clarify the degree of religiosity of students and its relationship with the economic behaviour (employment during studies, job seeking, characteristics of the desired job etc.), relying our conclusions on the data of the questionnaire-based survey conducted among students in the Hungary-Romania cross-border area. Our study results indicate a decline regarding the degree of religiosity among students of both countries, but also important differences with respect to the religiosity degree recorded in the case of the students in the two countries, indicating a higher degree of religiosity among the students from Romania. Our research reveals the lack or the little effect concerning the influence that religiosity exerts on the economic behaviour, suggesting the need for other explanatory models of higher education students' labour market participation.

Key Words: youth, religion, religiousness, working students, work experience, volunteering

Introduction. Interdisciplinary approaches to social life

Gary Beker is the one who opens the path to an interdisciplinary approach to social life, especially toward an interpretation, from an economic perspective, of the various aspects: demography (fertility, 1960; children, 1973; marriage, 1977; family, 1981; life, 1992, 1997), education (1964), behaviour (discrimination, 1957; crime, 1968), attitudes (charity, envy and hatred, tastes, political influence, rationality). Even if, as he admits it, “the economic approach to human behaviour is not new, even outside the market sector”¹, as such concerns have existed since Adam Smith, Beker proposes complex models of analysis of the mutual interactions between the individual behaviour and the social environment changes, models that allow a better understanding of the social phenomenon as a whole. As in the case of Beker, who tries to explain from an economic perspective several social issues, there are also attempts to explain them from a perspective pertaining to religiosity, social, economic and cultural facts².

The increasingly rapid changes occurring in the socio-economic space are now a reality that cannot be challenged by anyone. Moreover, some researchers analysing the changing social phenomenon consider that it “follows the same pattern in all countries”³. Given the complexity of the relationships between social life components, as well as the differences between these components, we are reluctant to accept this point of view, especially in the area of our study: religion and economy. Of course, we can speak about a general trend, one concerning the decreasing influence religion exerts on society, one of a greater influence of religion on private life and individual behaviour and less on public life and various areas of public life⁴, but we cannot speak about a model, and even less about a unitary measure of changes.

The impact of religion on economy and economic behaviour

Studies regarding the relationship between economics and religion have been made both by economists and by scholars of different religions, in some cases independent from each other while in other cases together, common themes being related to economic policies (mainly those related to income redistribution and consumption)⁵, to the impact of religion on the economic behaviour of the individuals and collectivities, and also concerning the relationships between economic theory and theological thought⁶. The result of this approach was, on the one hand, the introduction of religious moral values in the economists’ speech as benchmarks of the economic activity, in other words, the inclusion by the economic, along the positivist character, of a normative character, and on the other hand, the approach to religion as an economic activity that in

conditions of competition provides religious services to those requesting them or produces social goods based on principles of competition and economic efficiency⁷.

The presence of such concerns in the research area is justified by the gaps in the development of the self-regulatory market economy, the serious damages to the environment, the deepening of intra and international differences between the rich and the poor, the economic crises that shake even the strongest economies, affecting their citizens, but generating, at the same time, chain effects on the global economy level. Regarding the relationship between religion and economy, the opinions are divided between those who see a causal relationship between the two⁸ and those who believe that “economics is fundamentally atheist. Religious beliefs, practices, and behaviour play no role in the life of homo economicus”⁹. Between them, there is the added view of coexistence between economics and religion in contemporary society¹⁰.

Approaches consistent with the incompatibility between economics and religion.

Factors such as industrialization, urbanization, the increasing level of education, the development of science and scientific rational thought, the rising of the living standards result in a decrease of the social functions of religion, considered by Durkheim (1912) as: the function of ensuring social solidarity and, above all, the function of social control¹¹ and, finally they lead to a decrease of the importance of religion primarily in the public sphere (politics, economics, etc.), but also in the private sphere, especially with respect to the increasing sense of existential security.

Thus, industrialization permanently breaks the domestic space from the work space, ensuring at the same time higher and safer incomes for a large part of society. The increased level of education and science development will offer alternative explanations of the natural phenomena. Urbanization changes religious behaviour by reducing religious participation and even the internalization of religious norms, due to a weaker social control of religion in large and heterogeneous communities. Restricting the socio-medical catastrophes (epidemics, hunger), due to the higher living standards and to the development of medicine, but also due to the increasing capacity of preventing and limiting the effects of natural phenomena (earthquakes, droughts, floods), lowers the number of believers and religious practitioners or the frequency of formal religious practice.

According to this approach, economy and religion did not work together well; an economy based on moral and religious values is impossible in a globalized economy in the pursuit of profit, power, efficiency and competitiveness. As long as religion requires restrictive behavioural rules, especially in what concerns the economic sphere, some

people will withdraw from taking part in it by arguing the principles of liberalism. In a world where values such as efficiency, predictability, control, technology, comfort are more and more popular, Christian moral values tend to fall into desuetude.

Jérôme Hergueux argues that “basically, the success of the European economy would have been due to the gradual development of an original and innovative secular moral ‘individualistic’ type in the West, as opposed to the moral ‘collectivist’ one tending to promote traditional religions. Ultimately, it remains quite striking that the vast majority of the developed countries at present is rather naturally directed towards the adoption of a system such as the ‘individualistic’ one in the Western countries, while the developing ones often remain the inheritors of a system that is more oriented towards ‘collectivism’ moral principles”¹².

Os Guinness believes that “the church is virtually in a coma”, and that “Christianity has contributed to the rise of the modern world; the modern world, in turn, undermined Christianity; Christianity has dug its own grave...”¹³ and all this in the specific cultural context of the new world. “Under the influence of the ‘terrible trio’ (advertising, television and pop culture), modernization has caused a profound changing of the public discourse: above all a shift from word to image, action to spectacle, exposition to entertainment, truth to feeling, conviction to sentiment and authoritative utterance to discussion and sharing”¹⁴. All this represents a pleasant offer even for the Christians who accept it first and then seek for it.

In parallel with the individualization of social areas and the structure of theories and rules of functioning, religion becomes less present in what concerns influence and social control, hence, the concern for modernization, for finding outlets, particularly in terms of private life (solitude, sorrow, identity, etc.). We can also add a decline of nationalism often fuelled by national religion, in terms of Europeanization and social and economic globalization.

Reports of mutual determination between economics and religion

After 100 years, Weber's ideas continue to present significant interest among researchers investigating the causes that determine some countries / regions to be richer and other poorer, giving credit to the idea that religion can be a factor that determines economic development. But the relationship between religion and economics is not unidirectional, as it manifests in both ways, since the eighteenth century theologian John Wesley (1703-1791) has noted a negative impact of economic growth on religiosity and faith.

The idea is developed by Laurence R. Iannaccone, Rachel M. McCleary and Robert J. Barro, who analyse religious behaviour from an economic perspective and “the ways in which economic development and the

development of political institutions affect religious beliefs and participation in religious life”¹⁵. They conclude that “empirical evidence supports, to a degree, the secularization thesis which states that having an increased income, people tend to become less religious (as measured by religious attendance and religious beliefs). Economic development causes religion to play a lesser role in the political process and in policymaking, in the legal process, as well as in social arrangements (marriages, friendships, colleagues)”¹⁶. Azzi and Ehrenberg (1975)¹⁷ also associated the increasing of salaries with the decreasing of religious participation, labour time reducing the time required for taking part in religious services. Lipford and Tollison also admitted that the relationship between religion and income is bi-causal: “religious participation mildly decreases income and higher income mildly deters religious participation”¹⁸.

However, the thesis of the negative correlation between economic development and religiousness is undermined by the U.S. reality: “American church membership rates have increased throughout most of the past two centuries – from 17 per cent of the population at the time of the Revolution, to 34 per cent by the mid-1800s, to more than 60 per cent today”¹⁹. Similar views can also be noticed in Greeley’s (1989)²⁰, or Finke and Stark’s studies (1992)²¹, which also generated the thesis of “American exceptionalism”²², as an exit from the situation when the secularization thesis should have been considered wrong. This thesis is argued by racial and ethnic diversity or by the superficial religiosity of the Americans²³. R.J. Barro and McCleary (2003) sustain the idea of “causal influences from religion to economic growth, rather than the reverse”²⁴.

Several studies have highlighted the effects of religion on various socio-economic behaviours: “More striking are the links between religiosity and a wide range of economically important social behaviour, such as criminal activity, drug and alcohol consumption, physical and mental health, and marriage, fertility, and divorce”²⁵. They have to be critically examined, taking into account that some of them reflect reality in a particular geographic area, generating doubts with respect to generalization, and others do not take into account a number of other factors that might act in the direction of having the same effects (for example education, age, income level etc.). There are also studies indicating that “religious effects tend to persist even after controlling the process regarding age, income, education, gender, race, and marital status, place of residence, social ties, and previous traumatic events”²⁶.

A study made in 2002 (Guiso, Sapienza, Zingales, 2002), using World Values Surveys data to capture the relationship between the intensity of religious beliefs and economic attitudes, concludes that “religion is good for the development of attitudes that are conducive to economic growth”, of course along with the differences between religions, faiths and their position in the religious context of a country or another. Therefore: “Christian religions are more positively associated with attitudes that are

conducive to economic growth, while the Islam is negatively associated in this aspect. The ranking between the two main Christian denominations is less clear. Protestants trust others and the legal system more than Catholics and they are less willing to cheat on taxes and accept a bribe with respect to the Catholics. By contrast, Catholics support private ownership twice as much as Protestants and are more in favour of competition than any other religious group (including Protestants). The only case in which Protestants seem more pro-market than Catholics is on incentives”²⁷, which only partially confirm Weber's theories.

Heath et al.²⁸ reach similar conclusions when analysing the U.S. data, concluding that membership in Jew religion is positively correlated with the income per capita, while in the case of Catholicism and fundamentalist Protestantism there is an inverse correlation, and liberal Protestantism is not correlated with the income per capita.

In turn, Putnam et al. (1993)²⁹ explain the lower level of development in southern Italy by taking into economic life the current situation within the Catholic Church: the strict hierarchy of the Catholic Church, very influential in the region, a situation harming the relationship with people, in other words an economic organization favourable to ‘*large distance from power*’ as Hoofstede would say, but unfavourable to cooperation. Similar views are supported by Landes³⁰ indicating the religious intolerance of the Catholic Church as a cause of the backwardness of Spain in the 16th-17th century, by reason of alienating valuable people from the country. Stulz and Williamson³¹ also accuse the Catholic intolerance of the idea of usury, which causes slow development of loans and hence economic development.

An admirer of Weber, Ioan Petru Culianu, deplores the lack of interest of Romanian historians in Weber's ideas and blames Orthodoxy for preventing the Romanians, in the early twentieth century and later on, from “understanding capitalism” because, unlike Protestantism, it considers wealth “as a sign of humiliation” and “exercise its power over spirits, and not of knowledge and does not interfere with the composition of this fallen world”³². This situation impacts economic development as the “ethical gap turns fatally into an economic gap, and this one into a chronological gap”³³, an idea present in fact in the early nineteenth century, and in a philosophical letter of Piotr Ceaadaev who believed that “Russian Orthodoxy was the main factor of the economic and political stagnation of the country”³⁴.

Economic and religious coexistence in a common social space in postmodern society

Today Weber's thesis of a causal relationship between religion and economic behaviour has no longer support; it may eventually be replaced by the one regarding a relationship between religious/moral-religious

education and economic behaviour. Weber's critics have accused him, on the one hand, for taking into account a single variable – religion – in order to explain the development of capitalism in some Western European countries, and, on the other hand, for his option for a discontinuous nature of evolution from feudalism to capitalism³⁵. Several studies have shown the influence of multiple factors on economic growth: the accumulation of human capital, research and development expenses, effective institutions and public infrastructure, the national financial system development etc.

Even if Acquaviva (1979) talks about the “decline of the sacred in the industrial society”³⁶, there are scholars of religion who claim not only that we are witnessing an increased secularization of the modern world, but also that this modernization even reinforces religion, and those who neglect the influence of religion in various analyses are exposed to a high risk³⁷.

Unlike the modern era in which rationality tends to subordinate faith, postmodernism is more open, more tolerant, more reflective and does not exclude religion³⁸, this fact promoting religious pluralism, the individualization of religious beliefs³⁹, but also religious fundamentalism⁴⁰.

Meanwhile religions/confessions have changed, have modernized and adapted to the requirements of the new society, studies, especially in the West, highlighting a decrease in the impact of religion on economic and social activity⁴¹, but also a maintenance, even an increase of its influence in the private sphere of inter-personal relationships – family, marriage etc. Some might say that it is all about a demotion of the role of church as an institution; in fact, it can be considered as complementary as long as it offers hope but also some certainties for hopeless people living in a sea of uncertainty.

In other words, we talk about the usefulness of religion and the church in the public or the private space. Nevertheless, the church is also a producer of social goods; of course, it is not the only one, so it is joined by the state, the family, the community, a situation in which the church, as a firm, thrives in conditions when the demand for such goods is high and the costs for their production are small, as it is the case of a weakened government, community, family. This situation is possible but only in smaller communities using simple technologies, because in the conditions of complex technologies that enhance production and commercial relationships, the state solves the problems arising from an opportunistic behaviour better than the church does⁴². This may be one reason why religion has more influence in less developed countries. On the other hand, under totalitarian regimes, the state intentionally reduces the influence of religion in society as it is the only authority responsible for the fate of its citizens.

Eisenstadt's⁴³ thesis is interesting as it replaces the causal relationship between Protestantism and Capitalism with the idea of the

transformative potential of religions, their ability to redefine the political and social institutions, to reformulate economic roles or to generate favourable attitudes toward economic growth: trust⁴⁴ or tolerance⁴⁵, aversion toward inequality and injustice, especially in the case of men, morality, especially in the case of women⁴⁶, respect for property rights, cooperation⁴⁷. A study conducted in 2008 shows that in order to retain valuable employees and to increase competitiveness, some organizations adapt their organizational culture to the religious needs of the employees, because the “employee’s morale (62%), retention (38%) and loyalty (37%) are most affected when organizations grant religious accommodation to their employees”⁴⁸.

Stark and Iannaccone (1994) argue that it is not a secularization process but rather changes regarding the offers from the producers of religious services, founding the “theory of religious mobilization”⁴⁹.

Barro and McCleary (2003) prove by analysing the data from six international surveys conducted between 1981 and 1999 that: “Although religiosity tends to decline economic development, partial relations depend on the specific dimensions of development. For example, the measures of religiosity are positively related to education, negatively related to urbanization, and positively related to the presence of children. The increased life expectancy tends to be negatively related to church attendance, but positively related to religious beliefs”. Furthermore, their results show a positive correlation between religious faith and economic growth, yet a negative correlation between economic growth and church attendance⁵⁰.

Human and social economy are areas of extended applicability of ethics in economy, the church and religion encouraging socially valuable activities. Such activities include the involvement of the disabled in specific economic activities, mutual aid, cooperation, valuable behaviour, and respect for the property rights. This stands as long as churches “promote doctrines rewarding particular member behaviour with an appealing afterlife and punishing misbehaviour with an unpleasant afterlife”⁵¹ upon the using the 10 Commandments.

Nevertheless, religion has “a considerable impact on the formation and the evolution of the juridical and institutional body of a society, which is itself a major determinant and recognized as longstanding for economic development”⁵².

Students in relation with work and religion/religiosity

In literature there are numerous papers regarding the link between education and religiosity⁵³, yet only a few include the work element in relation to the two concepts⁵⁴.

In the study “Religion and Economic Development”, Rachel M. McCleary (2008) highlights four indicators of the influence of religion

on economic development: education, value attributed to time, life expectancy, and urbanization. These factors are in their turn influenced by religion⁵⁵.

Regarding education, McCleary states that people with a higher educational level are less religious, being inclined towards scientific explanations of natural phenomena, yet meanwhile, participate in religious activities as a form of networking. On the other hand, the same people are drawn towards the possibility of speculative reasoning provided by religion, which leads to the neutralization of the negative relation between education and religion. This author concludes that “if societal expectations accompanying the educational attainment are not met, people will resort to non-productive activities, such as crime and terrorism. With non-productive time on their hands and grievance against society, people will engage in destructive behaviour. However, a virtuous cycle occurs when people believe relative to belonging. That is, people hold religious beliefs but do not spend enormous amounts of resources (time, income, talents) on their religion”⁵⁶.

Research objectives

- The evaluation of the religious phenomenon with respect to the students in the cross-border region, reported to the national means from the two countries
- The identification of correlated subjective religiosity and different aspects of economic behaviour of students (employment during studies, motivation for volunteering, job search, characteristics of jobs).

In the conducted research, we have started from the following hypotheses:

1. We expect a low level of religiosity regarding the students, in the larger context of secularization as well as in the special context of the academic environment characterized by the promotion of scientific education.
2. We expect a low influence of religiosity on the economic behaviour of students, materialized by employment during studies, job search or characteristics of future jobs.
3. Nevertheless, we expect that self-reported non-religious students will have a more pronounced economic attitude (will be employed during studies, will search for a job, manifest pragmatism regarding expected job characteristic) while self-reported religious students will be present more in voluntary activities.

Religion and religiosity in Bihor – Hajdu-Bihar cross-border region (Romania - Hungary)

In the former communist countries, the religious phenomenon, with all its components – faith, religious practices – suffered transformations that are defined by experts in different stages and manners: religion was banned by the state and was replaced by the governmental support for the church⁵⁷; the religious rebirth after the fall of communism⁵⁸; the continuous secularization of some Eastern European countries even after the fall of communism⁵⁹; a heterogeneous situation, different from country to country depending on the dominant religion before the fall of communism and the measurements of religiosity⁶⁰. Our results converge with this last opinion, the differences between Romanian and Hungarian students regarding religiosity being significant despite the proximity of habitation, of age and level of education as well as the ethnic and religious heterogeneity of the area.

Our research is based on the analysis of the survey data based on a questionnaire addressed to the students from the universities in the Romania-Hungary cross-border area, conducted during March – August 2012. The frame of the study is represented by the objectives of a European project developed in the Bihor – Hajdu-Bihar cross-border area: *HERD: Higher Education for Social Cohesion Cooperative Research and Development in a Cross-border Area* (HURO/0901/253/2.2.2.), a research project supported by the European Union European Regional Development Fund. The sample consists of 1510 cases, 796 from The University of Debrecen and 714 from The University of Oradea. The sample is representative in what concerns the students' level and all the educational levels and study programs.

According to the general understanding, the secularization phenomena as a decline of religiosity is present to a large extent among youth in general and higher educated youth in particular, as shown in several studies conducted on this topic. Besides the fact that the scientific ideas acquired in a university undermined the belief in the supernatural, even the religious influence within one's family tends to decline under the circumstances of students' integration in groups where they accept "new ideas, new styles of thought and behaviour"⁶¹. Also, the cultural academic environment to which the students are attached is preponderantly a non-religious one⁶².

As shown in the following Figure, in the Romanian-Hungarian cross-border region, 68% of the students, who did the survey, consider themselves religious, while 10% do not have such orientation. Nevertheless, the differences between the two countries are striking. If 80% of the students from the University of Oradea report themselves as religious (a percentage comparable at national level, communicated by National Institute of Statistics after the 2011 Census, according to which

98,4% of the Romanians are religious), at the University of Debrecen this percentage drops at 55%. Also at national level, Romanians are more religious than Hungarians, Romania being one of the first 10 religious populations out of the 57 countries included in the WIN-Gallup International study in 2012⁶³.

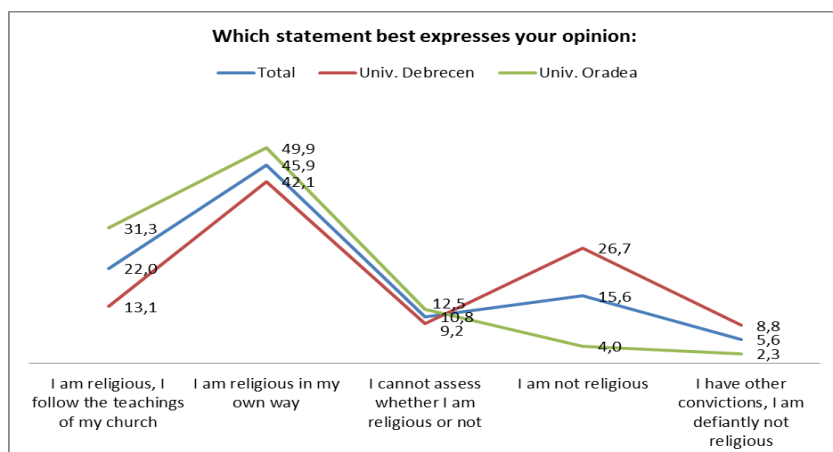


Figure 1. Religiosity among students in Romania-Hungary cross-border area

The number of students who declare themselves as religious is rather large, especially in Romania, by this fact may not suggest a “post-secular campus”⁶⁴, but rather the fact that in the post-communist countries, after a process of religious revival especially among youth, we are not in a process of religious decline, particularly in the academic environment⁶⁵.

The most interesting finding is the high number of students who declare that “I am religious in my own way”, almost double then those who declare they follow their church, namely almost half of the investigated subjects. This supports the idea of individualization of religion that is characteristic to post-modernity⁶⁶. Certainly, finding what is behind such answer deserves a separate analysis: what is involved in a personalized religious behaviour. It may mean *personalized* prayers instead of the *classical* ones, it may mean no church-attendance but the conception of a prayer place at home, and perhaps it may also mean the replacement of religious practices with a secular moral conduct.

In further analyses we have built a variable in order to distinguish between the two groups of students with respect to their relation with religiosity. The differences regarding religiosity between the students in the two countries are very strong (Pearson Chi-Square = 180.04, $p=.000$).

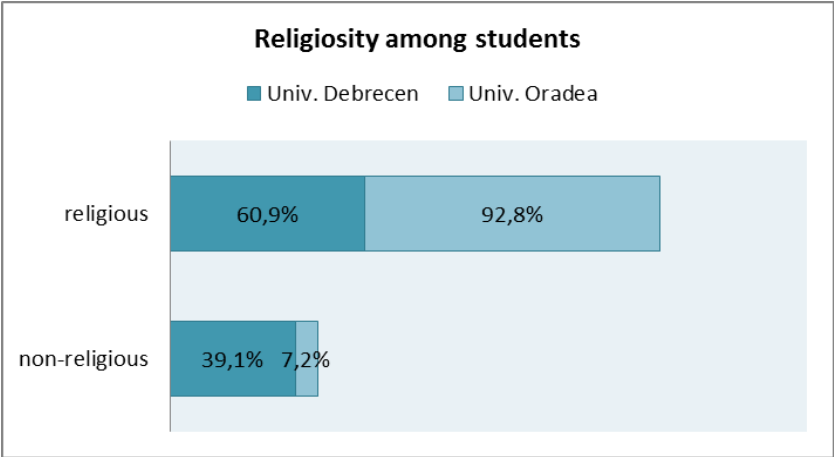


Figure 2. Religiosity in the cross-border area, a comparative analysis between the two universities

% for Yes	TOTAL SAMPLE	Universit y of Debrecen	Universi ty of Oradea
Catholic (roman-catholic/Armenian)	23.2%	36.5%	9.5%
Greek-catholic	12.9%	19.8%	6.6%
Reformed	34.2%	56.4%	9.6%
Evangelical	2.4%	3.5%	1.4%
Israelite	1.0%		1.8%
Orthodox	51.3%		80.3%
Unitarian	0.8%		1.4%
Baptist	3.3%	0.8%	5.3%
Other	8.9%	4.0%	12.0%
None	24.0%	43.7%	3.8%

Table 1. Sample structure according to the distribution of religions

The major differences between religiosity among the students in our region seem hard to understand given the ethnic and religious heterogeneous structure in both areas, near the Romanian-Hungarian border, the demographic chain and the religious history of Transylvania and Hungary, manifested especially in border regions⁶⁷, as well as the age and educational level of our sample. This suggests that the causes of religious differences should be found in other places. Most probably, these differences may be found at the educational policy level, especially the ones regarding religious education. Furthermore, it may be derived from the different levels of religious pluralism or predominance between the two countries. Not the least, it may be a consequence of the characteristics of the majority of religions from the two countries.

In other words, the religious orientation of the students in our sample may reflect the differences between orthodoxy – the major religion in Romania, and Catholicism together with Protestantism in Hungary. In Romania there is religious predominance, as 80% of the population is Orthodox (together with other religions, especially in the area of our study: Roman-catholic, Greek-catholic, Neo-protestant, Reformat) which exerts a considerable influence even in the regions with religious and ethnic pluralism. On the other hand, in Hungary, the Reformat (Calvinism) religion represents 56,4% along with the Catholicism (36%) and Greek-orthodoxy (12,9%) and thus provide alternatives to the religion of the majority. Somewhat paradoxically, this situation rejects the “supply-side theory”⁶⁸, according to which in the areas characterized by religious predominance, with a state religion (such as the Nordic countries) secularization is higher, while in a pluralist religious market (such as in the USA) religious practices and beliefs are regarded as important, the citizens being able to choose the religion which suits them.

Furthermore, secularization is understood differently by Catholicism and Orthodoxy: the first defines it as a decline of faith and the influence of the church, while the latter interprets it as an attack against the orthodox belief itself.

The trend is similar regarding the frequency of praying too. The differences are significant between the students in Romania and Hungary. As a dimension of religiosity, the practice of the prayer is more frequent in the case of the Romanian students. We most note the high percentage (40%) of students from Debrecen who declare they never prayed in the last year. Nevertheless, at the opposite pole, we find a similar percentage of those students which declare that they pray daily.

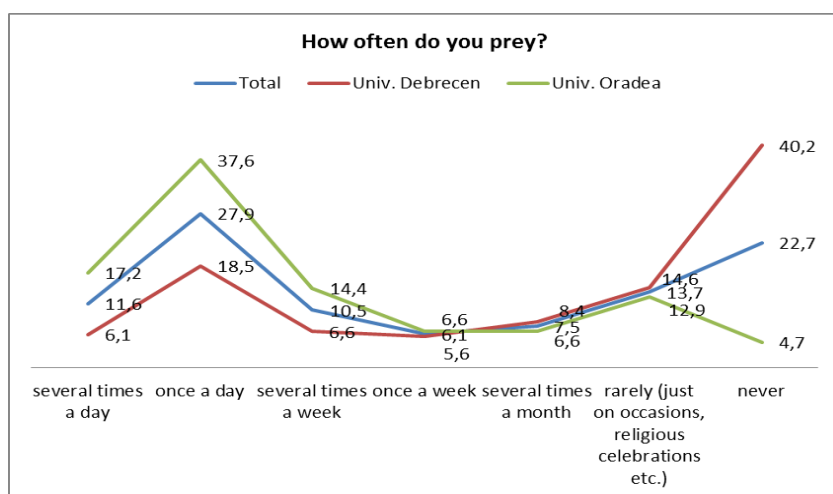


Figure 3. Frequency of praying

In addition, regarding the appreciation of the importance of religious beliefs, analyses highlight similar results as in the case of the two above discussed indicators: religion and faith play a more important role in the life of the Romanian students than in the case of their colleagues in Hungary.

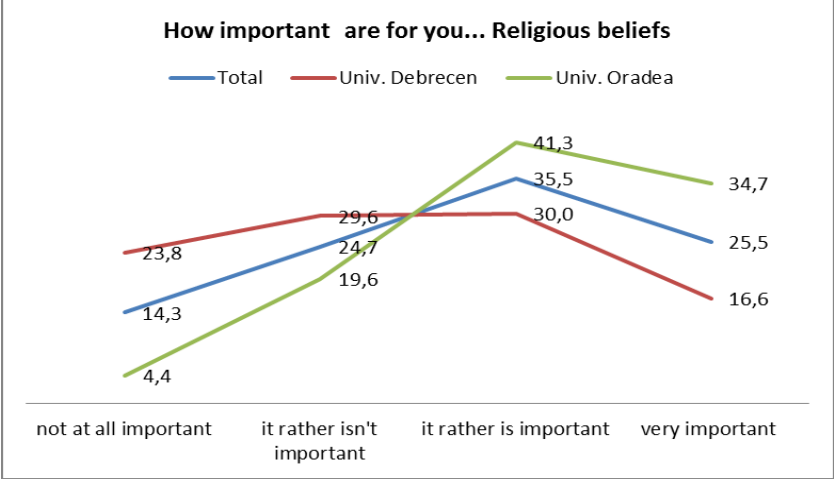


Figure 4. The importance of the religious beliefs

Religiosity and presence on the labour market

Studies show that high socio-economic status is negatively associated with religious beliefs⁶⁹, with some nuances of degree of religiosity and respectively of the socio-economic status.

In order to assess the relation between students' religiosity and participation on the labour market, we used as indicators the work involvement during the academic year, the work experience measured as employment before university studies and working abroad.

		Total		Univ. Debrecen		Univ. Oradea	
		non-religious	religious	non-religious	religious	non-religious	religious
Worked during university studies, during semester	never	14.0%	44.2%	22.6%	38.3%	4.8%	50.4%
	sometimes	5.8%	18.3%	9.9%	13.2%	1.5%	23.7%
	often	4.0%	13.7%	6.8%	9.2%	1.0%	18.5%
Working experience: worked before university studies	no	20.3%	60.3%	32.2%	55.2%	3.1%	67.7%
	yes	5.8%	13.5%	6.6%	6.0%	4.7%	24.4%

Worked abroad	no	21.8%	67.5%	36.6%	55.1%	5.8%	80.8%
	yes	2.0%	8.7%	2.6%	5.6%	1.3%	12.1%

Table 2. Religiosity and presence on the labour market

None of the three indicators used to assess the presence on the labour market do not have a significant relation regarding the students' degree of religiosity. Similar results were obtained regarding the other two indicators of religiosity: frequency of prayer and the importance of religious beliefs. These findings suggest the validation of the hypothesis according to which the relation between economy and religion is weak, at least regarding youth in higher education.

The influence of religiosity regarding the job search and job preferences

Within this study, we did not notice a significant difference regarding the job search between religious and non-religious students. The analyses of the two universities in the sample do not highlight any significant relation between the two variables analysed.

Regarding the evaluation of certain job characteristics, the analysis revealed that the mean values are higher concerning the religious students, in some of the items used: a secure and flexible job, good environment, oriented in the benefit of the society, to offer the possibility of helping people, oriented toward performance, to offer possibility for training.

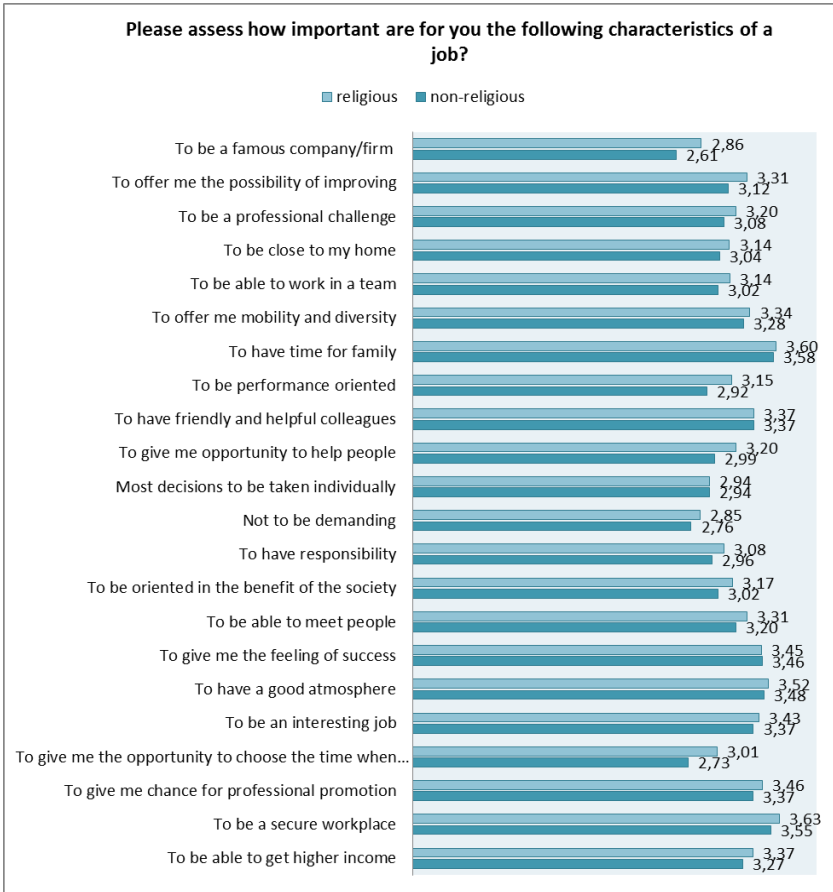


Figure 5. Desired job characteristic and religiosity

It is rather obvious that young students have expectations regarding their professional future which have no connection to religion. Religious or non-religious, in almost identical proportions, they aspire for a job that gives them a feeling of success, with a positive environment, where they can participate in the decision making, with friendly co-workers and that offers them the possibility to spend time with their family. Nevertheless, there are some small differences between the job characteristics linked to moral aspects: religious students wish in a higher degree that the jobs provide them with the opportunity to help others or to be socially good (which supports Eisenstadt's thesis regarding the transformative potential of religion, including the generation of attitudes that are favourable to economic development⁷⁰), as well as to benefit from a flexible schedule (probably in order to better allocate time between work and religious related activities⁷¹).

Religiosity and volunteering

The relationship between involvement as a volunteer in various activities and reporting to religiosity indicate significant differences, with a higher frequency of volunteering among religious students.

Among the reasons for the involvement in volunteer activities, the differences between religious students and those who do not consider themselves religious are found when volunteering is done in order to: help other people, spend free time in a useful way, improve or maintain relations, gain professional experience. The results refer to the charity nature of the voluntary activities; these types of actions are mainly directed to support people in need. Thus, this justifies the higher share of religious students performing voluntary work.

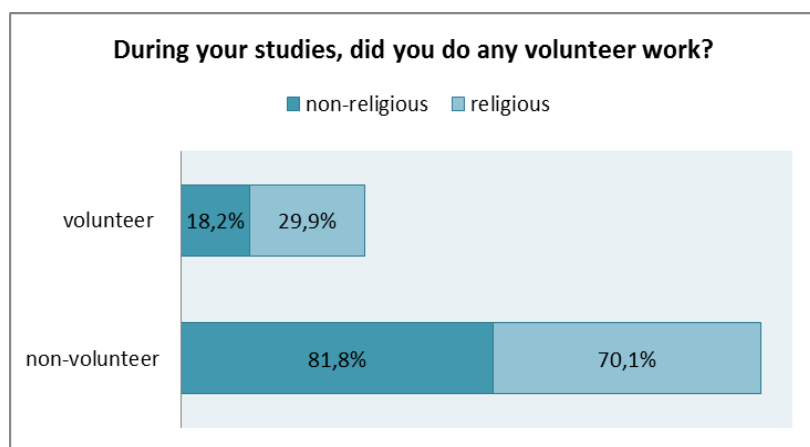


Figure 6. Volunteering and religiosity

Conclusions

The constant concern for decoding internal springs of religion in contemporary society and the multitude of theories explaining the relationship between religion/religiosity and social life, and especially the economic one, express the complexity of the religious phenomenon, the substantial changes that characterize it and also the fact that these changes are manifested in a different way not only in different geographical areas, but also in neighbouring areas or even within the same state or region, in different social segments.

Our paper argues in the favour of the idea that religion/religiosity lost its influence on economic behaviour, especially in the case of the young people with higher education. However, the need for religion continues to be a reality and Sandu Frunză gives a relevant explanation: "Religion is the answer for emptiness, for the void, for a tendency for annihilation, for the darkness, for a longing, for an absence. Religion

generates fullness, the fulfilment of meaning, the occurrence of light, the emergence of hope and the appearance of a presence”⁷².

The data of our study reveal strong differences between the students of the two universities (one from Hungary and one from Romania) regarding subjective religiosity. The results confirm the statement of other studies according to which faith and religious practice are more present in the lives of Romanians.

As predicted, we found no significant relationship between religiosity and the economic behaviour of the students. The results suggest that the development of an explanatory model of the economic behaviour of the young people requires the investigation of other factors, such as a positive career orientation, academic engagement and academic aspirations, the family and socio-economic status, social capital or social reproduction⁷³. The research does not capture any differences regarding the participation in the active life of the students belonging to the two universities included in the sample.

Religious students are more involved in voluntary activities than others, considering that in this way they can help people and be useful and therefore justifying the relationship between religiosity and the desirable social attitudes.

We subscribe to Iannaccone's idea according to which addressing the relationship between religion and economics can have an important virtue: to mediate between *homo economicus*, freed from any spiritual needs, and *homo religious*, who returns to pre-rational times⁷⁴.

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³ Jan Erik Lane and Svante Ersson, „Institutions and culture – Which matters most? In *Kultur som levemate*, ed. Per Selle, (Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 1996), 17.

⁴ See also Sandu Frunză, *Ethical Communication and Social Responsibility*, (Saarbruchen, Germany: Lap Lambert Academic Publishing, 2013).

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¹⁴ Os Guinness, "Mission in the Face of Modernity", in *The Gospel in the Modern World*, Ed. Eden and Wells, (Inter-Varsity Press, 1991).

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³³ Ioan Petru Culianu, 171.

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⁴⁹ Rodney Stark and Laurence R. Iannaccone, 231.

⁵⁰ Robert J. Barro and Rachel M. McCleary, 37-38.

⁵¹ Brooks B. Hull and Frederick Bold, 462.

⁵² Jérôme Hergueux, 78.

⁵³ Rodney Stark, "On the Incompatibility of Religion and Science: A Survey of American Graduate Students", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 3, (1963): 3-20; Andrew Greeley, "Comment on Stark's 'On the Incompatibility of Religion and Science'", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 3 (1964): 239-40; Fred Thalheimer, "Continuity and Change in Religiosity: A Study of Academicians." *Pacific Sociological Review*, 8 (1965): 101-8; Dean R. Hoge, *Commitment on Campus: Changes in Religion and Values over Five Decades*, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), ș.a.

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⁵⁷ Mary L. Gautier, "Church Affiliation and Religious Belief in Postcommunist Societies", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 36(2) (1997): 289-296.

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