

Transmission of Moral, Moral-Religious and Religious Values through the Educational System

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ABSTRACT: The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century brought, among other things, the development of the educational system, through which it transmitted its moral, moral-religious and religious values. The United States of America was formed as a Protestant society, its values influencing the lives of Americans. However, not only American society was influenced by Protestantism, but also the whole of modern society. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate if there are significant differences between Protestant values and those of traditional churches (in this case, the Romanian Orthodox Church). The results of the study demonstrated the existence of these differences in favor of Protestantism.

KEY WORDS: ethic, morality, values, education, Protestantism, Adventism

Introduction

In recent years, it has been clearly shown that the cultural dimension of development has become increasingly evident, in the sense that all cultural components have a causal role in the development of societies. That is why we talk about non-economic factors of development, about the importance of the education system, as a strategic place where the future of society is being prepared (Georgiu 2004, 153).

Referring to the non-economic factors of development, the American sociologist Daniel Chirot states that social changes are determined by these factors, which have their source in the fields of knowledge and education, where possible solutions and responses to the demands of society are formed. In his view, the most important factors of social change are the assimilation of science and new technologies, education and the ability of a culture to change within, producing new ideas, ways of thinking and representations. These new ideas must accumulate until they put pressure on society to change it (Chirot 1996, 214).

This study was born from these factors of non-economic development, this study was born, more precisely the way in which moral values are transmitted through the educational system. The Protestant Reformation was a 16th-century religious movement that not only sought to reform the Catholic Church in Western Europe by returning to the original purity of New Testament Christianity (Cairns 1997, 270), but transmitted moral-religious values by developing the Education. Therefore, the present study analyzes to what extent there is a significant difference between moral, moral-religious or religious values, transmitted through the Orthodox (the majority religion in Romania) and Protestant educational system.

A number of authors and/or researchers have confirmed the existence of significant differences between Protestant values and those of traditional Christianity (Catholic, for example). Thus, although England and France are, in many respects, similar societies (approximately the same profile of the population, with comparable socio-economic levels and technological developments), their educational systems are different due to contrasting cultural traditions: Protestant fundamental values in England, respectively Catholic in France (Sharpe 1997, 329-331).

America was founded as a Protestant society. For about two hundred years, almost all Americans were Protestants. This proportion began to decline as Catholic immigration increased. Thus, in 2000, about 60% of Americans were Protestants. However, Protestant beliefs, values, and dogmas continued to permeate and shape American life, society, and thinking. Firstly, the Protestant values, which are the core of American culture, have profoundly influenced both Catholicism and other American religions,

and secondly, they have shaped the Americans' attitudes toward public and private morality, economic activity, government activity, and public policies (Huntington 2004, 49).

However, it was not only American Protestantism that influenced Catholicism and other religions. The analysis carried out by Ronald Inglehart on the data from the World Values Survey (conducted between 1990-1993), has shown that, in fact, Catholics living in societies shaped by Protestantism throughout their history - Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United States - have similar values to those of their Protestant compatriots rather than those of Catholics in other countries (Huntington 2004, 73).

A major theme of Western scholars and Sociology, in particular, is the idea that Protestantism, compared to Catholicism, has historically been favorably inclined toward modernity and especially to accompany the development of capitalism and science (Lehman and Witty 1931; Knapp and Goodrich 1952; Knapp and Greenbaum 1953; Lenski 1963; Ben-David 1965; Feldhay and Elkana 1989). The best known author who promoted this theory was Max Weber, in his famous book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (also known as Weber's theory).

At the end of the 19th century, Martin Offenbacher examined the denominational composition of secondary schools in the state of Baden, Germany. The results of his statistical study are often cited to support this statement, that there is a link between Protestant ethics and the development of capitalism and science (Parsons 1968; Knapp and Goodrich 1952; McClelland 1967; Weber 2003, 25-35). This study shows that Protestants, compared to their representation in the German population, frequently outclass Catholics in various secondary schools, on various subjects: science, mathematics or other practical subjects (Becker 2000, 311-312).

Both Max Weber (2003, 28) and Robert K. Merton (1968, 628-660) reproduced Offenbacher's statistics from Baden (1885-1895) and demonstrated the superiority of Protestants regarding the capitalist entrepreneurial spirit (Weber's thesis) and the scientific efforts (Merton's thesis). Becker disputes these results, saying that in fact there is no significant difference between Protestants and Catholics (Becker 2000).

Several other authors have denied Weber's theory. Thus, a study conducted in 1990, World Values Survey, found that Weber's theory does not work in Latin America, at least in cultural terms of defining the role of Protestantism (Gill 2004). Studying the economic situation of Protestant countries in the 19th century, Delacroix and Nielsen concluded that the connection between Protestant ethics and the emergence of industrial capitalism in 19th Europe is an illusion (Delacroix and Nielsen 2001, 510-511).

However, a number of authors have confirmed the link between Protestant ethics and the emergence and development of industrialized capitalism in 19th century Europe (Barclay, 1969; Buck, 1993).

A study in post-colonial Africa has shown that the failure of Western capitalism in this region was explained by a lack of Protestant ethics. Traditional values and religions in sub-Saharan Africa are an impediment to the acceptance of Western capitalism. This is because the Western economic system is based on individualism, which is in conflict with communitarian-oriented African economic relations. Thus, Protestant ethics is indispensable for the development of capitalism (Murove 2005, 390).

In another US study, Wayne Baker and Melissa Forbes concluded that Protestants tend to have a pro-market attitude (that is, people need to take more responsibility for themselves), given the latest legacy of Protestant ethics and the spirit of capitalism. This suggests that the market is embedded in the moral system, just as it is embedded in the networks of social relations. The historical role of Protestantism in the development of modern capitalism suggests that today's Protestants may have a pro-market attitude compared to non-Protestants. Studies have also shown that moral values influence pro-market attitudes (Baker and Forbes 2006, 23-26).

Methodology

The study aimed to investigate the issue of moral, moral-religious and religious values transmitted to the individual through the education system. The aim is to see if there is a significant difference between Adventist and Orthodox high school students in terms of moral, moral-religious and religious values in the 2008-2009 school year.

The study was attended by 94 high school students, half from the Adventist religion (from the Adventist theological high school in Bucharest, Romania) and the other half from the Orthodox religion (the majority religion in Romania). The tool used was the “Inventory of values” made by the university lecturer Dr. Daniel Duta, who uses the Likert scale in five steps, from 5-very important to 1-unimportant. The inventory of values contains three subscales: moral values (friendship, love, intimacy, sincerity, sacrifice, modesty, responsibility, diligence, creativity, optimism), moral-religious values (happiness, hope, forgiveness, altruism, tolerance) and religious values (God, faith, prayer, Church, Bible, worship, service, sin, repentance, icon).

The measurement scales of the two variables are one of interval (moral value, moral-religious, religious) and the other nominal (religion). For testing the hypothesis we applied the “t student” test.

Results and discussions

Regarding the moral values, the significance threshold is 0.001 (less than 0.05), which means that the hypothesis is 99.9% true. In other words, there are significant differences between the two categories of students in terms of moral values in favor of Adventist students. They obtained higher scores than Orthodox students, as it can be seen in the graph below.

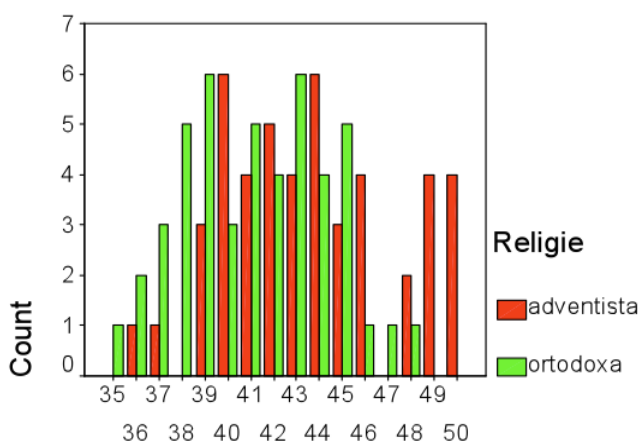


Figure 1. Moral Values

Analyzing each moral value separately, it is found that there are no significant differences between the two categories of students in terms of moral values such as: friendship, love, privacy, responsibility, creativity, optimism. Orthodox students obtained a higher sum of ranks than Adventist students in two moral values, friendship and intimacy. Adventist students obtained a higher rank than the Orthodox in the following moral values: love, responsibility, creativity and optimism.

Significant differences occur at moral values such as: sincerity ($p = 0.046$, the probability that the hypothesis is true is 96.4%), sacrifice ($p = 0.001$, the probability that the hypothesis is true is 99.1%), modesty ($p = 0.004$, the probability that the hypothesis is true is 99.6%), diligence ($p = 0.001$, the probability that the hypothesis is true is 99.1%) in favor of Adventist students, due to the higher scores obtained.

Following the analysis of the data, it is found that there are significant differences between Adventist and Orthodox students in terms of moral and religious values. According to the “t student” test, the significance threshold being $p = 0$, the probability that the hypothesis is true is 100%. As we can see in the chart below, Adventist students scored the best, which means that significant differences in moral and religious values are in favor of Adventist students.

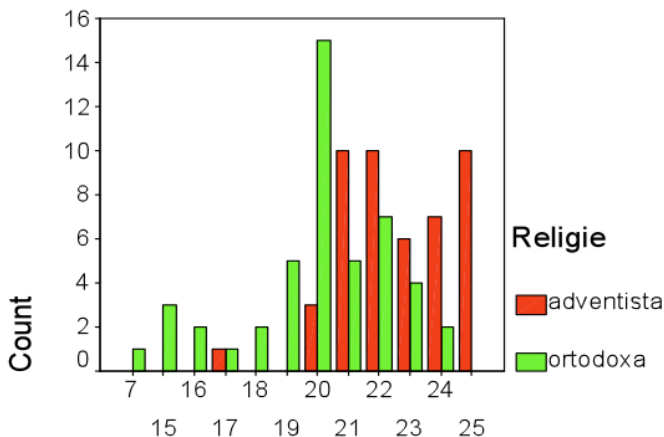


Figure 2. Moral-religious Values

Analyzing each moral-religious value separately, it is found that there are no significant differences between the two categories of students in terms of “happiness”. At this specific value, Orthodox high school students scored slightly higher than Adventists.

There are significant differences between the two categories of students regarding the following moral-religious values: hope ($p = 0$, the probability that the hypothesis is true is 100%), forgiveness ($p = 0$, the probability that the hypothesis is true is 100%), altruism ($p = 0$, the probability that the hypothesis is true is 100%) and tolerance ($p = 0.009$, which means that the probability that this hypothesis is true is 99.1%), all of these values being in favor of Adventist students.

Even regarding religious values, it is found that the hypothesis is true. The significance threshold, by performing the “t student” test, is $p = 0$, which means that the probability that the hypothesis is true is 100%. The differences are significant in favor of Adventist high school students who scored higher than their Orthodox peers, as can be seen in the chart below.

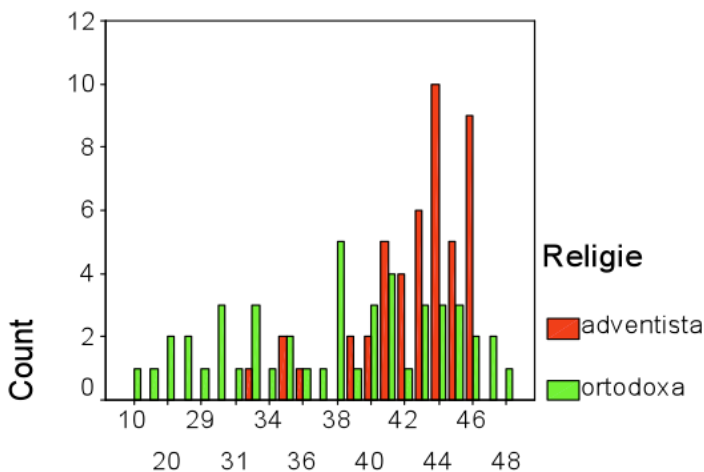


Figure 3. Religious Values

Analyzing each religious value separately, it is found that there are significant differences between Adventist and Orthodox students in favor of Adventist students regarding the following religious values: God, faith,

prayer, church, Bible, worship, service, sin and repentance. At all these values the significance threshold is $p = 0$, which means that the probability that the hypothesis is true is 100%.

We also notice significant differences between Adventist and Orthodox students in terms of the last religious value, the “the icon”. The significance threshold is $p = 0$, which means that the probability that this hypothesis is true is 100%. Significant differences are, this time, in favor of Orthodox students, who scored high on Adventists.

Conclusions

The study, conducted on the two categories of high school students, shows that Protestantism has influenced and still influences society through the values it transmits to the individual through the education system.

In terms of moral values, Adventists are more sincere, ready to sacrifice, more modest, and more diligent than Orthodox. At these moral values, significant differences were found between the two categories of young high school students. Although no significant differences were found in the other values, Adventists still have an extra love, responsibility, creativity and optimism towards the Orthodox (the latter having an extra friendship and intimacy).

Regarding moral-religious values, Adventist students have more hope, are more forgiving, more selfless, and more tolerant than Orthodox students. In terms of happiness, both categories are about equally happy.

Regarding religious values, God, faith, prayer, the church, the Bible, worship, ministry, the issue of sin, and repentance mean much more for Adventist students than for Orthodox students. The exception is the icon, which means a lot to Orthodox high school students, and this is because there are major doctrinal differences between the two religions regarding this religious value.

All these moral, moral-religious and religious values that have arrived in society through the individual can produce, at some point, changes for the better in today’s society, where respect for values, authority or work almost no longer exists.

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