Self-transcendence Values in Hungary and Romania. A preliminary Analysis of Benevolence and Universalism

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Abstract. *The European Social Survey (ESS) uses an adapted and shortened version of the Schwartz's Value Survey in order to reveal individuals' value orientations, that is the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ). The PVQ module of the ESS comprises 21 items, which sketch the portrait of other people in terms of their important goals, wishes and aspirations. Respondents are then asked to compare each portrait to themselves and rate their similarity to the portraits on a 6-point scale (from 'very much like me' to 'not at all like me'). The PVQ module studies ten types of values, corresponding to the broader value orientations of self-enhancement, self-transcendence, openness to change and conservation. Our analysis is based on the fourth wave (2008) of the ESS and deals only with self-transcendence values, that is the valuation of others' well-being. The approach is comparative and preliminary: empirical analyses are used to reveal the theoretical vs. empirical structure of the self-transcendence values in Hungary and Romania to model the profile of individuals for whom the well-being of others is important. Results suggest that while self-transcendence values are the most important values in both countries, Hungarians are significantly more in favor of these values than Romanians. Women and upper level educated respondents are in both countries significantly more in favor of self-transcendence values, but age is not significantly decisive in this regard.*

Key words: benevolence, universalism, values, PVQ, European Social Survey.
Cuvinte cheie: bunăvoință, universalism, valori, PVQ, European Social Survey.

Introduction

The study of values has attracted continuous attention from the part of social scientists. The relative importance of values within the discourse and practice of social research can be explained through the fact that values, understood as a system of principles about what is desirable, influence attitudes and behaviors, provide coherence for spiritual and material products and determine a specific profile of personality.

Regarding the role and function of values in the mentality and behaviors of individuals

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and following authors like Allport (1965), Rokeach (1973), Schwartz (1992), Iluț (2004), Gavreliuc (2010), etc., we retain here only some brief and very general aspects. Thus, the process of socialization and social integration leads to the reception of values and general axiological structures. Since individuals are, concomitantly, members of several groups, the influence of the sociocultural context is multi-directional and heterogeneous. Values are situated at the center of the self, they are strongly linked to affects and emotions and serve as guiding standards for our actions, as well as guiding evaluations for other people's actions. In the same time, values serve as criteria of choice between variants of actions, especially in situations of motivational conflict. Integrated into a belief system, values provide coherence and consistency for the human person, respectively, through their socially shared nature, to groups, societies and cultures.

In order to understand the structure and dynamics of a certain culture, society or country, it is indispensable the in-depth analysis of values, of their hierarchy, of the ways in which values are embedded in the mentality of the individuals, respectively the investigation of the manner in which value configurations are translated in concrete behavior. This means that albeit value-configurations are usually considered cultural level specificities, the fact that, ultimately, individuals are the concrete bearers of the values has determined that the most frequent way of assessing (whether cultural or individual) value structures and priorities is to ask individuals about their values (Schwartz, 1999). Based on these considerations, it is understandable the increase in the number of those cross-national and longitudinal studies whose major aim is to study human values (Davidov, 2010). Sociological survey programs, like the World/European Values Survey, International Social Survey Program, European Social Survey, etc. have all incorporated in their questionnaires items which are directed towards investigating individuals' values. Then, through the aggregation of individual responses, these cross-cultural survey programs are able to draw societal and cultural level axiological maps and to compare cultures in terms of the importance their members give to certain values, preferences and behaviors, respectively to assess some possible intercultural differences and similarities.

In the present article[1] we base our study on the data of the last (2008) wave of the European Social Survey (ESS). The ESS is a repeated cross-sectional survey program, initiated by the European Commission in 2001 (www.europeansocialsurvey.org). The ESS questionnaires investigate individuals' attitudes and behaviors towards various domains of life. Respondents' basic values are specifically studied through the so called Portrait Value Questionnaire, i.e. PVQ (Schwartz, 2003), which is an adapted and shortened version of the broader PVQ (Schwartz, Melech, Lehmann, Burgess, Harris and Owens, 2001), which was developed, in turn, on the basis of the original Schwartz Value Survey and the theory of basic human values (Schwartz, 1992, 1994). The specificity of the PVQ module is that it contains 21 enounces, sketching the portraits of other people in forms of goals, wishes and aspirations which are important to them. Respondents are then asked to compare each portrait to themselves and rate the similarity between them and the portrait on a 6-point scale (from 'very much like me' to 'not at all like me'). Constructed like this, the PVQ infers individual values from the self-reported similarities. Based on the ESS, respectively its PVQ module, there were realized several empirical studies in relation to values (e.g. Ramos, 2006; Davidov, 2008, 2010; Davidov, Schmidt and Schwartz, 2008; Keller, 2008), and our study wishes to contribute to this stream.

The theory of basic human values (Schwartz, 1992, 1994) assesses the existence of a set of ten universal values (benevolence, universalism, self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity and tradition), which comprise the

major goals of human beings. Albeit these ten human values exist all over the world, there are also inter-individual and inter-cultural differences in the hierarchy of these values. Such axiological specificities usually result from the different emphasis 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, for instance, in terms of diverging from conservation and traditional values to values of self-direction and self-enhancement, as it is the case of transition from traditional to modern and post-modern values, in the case of Inglehart's (1997) theory.

In order to limit space and enhance perspicuity, we concentrate, in the followings, on two specific values out of the ten basic human values, that is on *benevolence* and *universalism*, corresponding to the higher order value of self-transcendence, in Schwartz's (1992) theory. These two values tap the importance people add to the welfare and well-being of close-others (*benevolence*) and more departed others (*universalism*).

As far as the analysis concerns the study of values in two countries, it is indispensable to elucidate the level of the approach we are taking, in the sense that are we adopting a societal level or an individual level approach. This question is as much legitimated as the society level aggregation of the ten individual level basic human values led to seven cultural or societal level values (Schwartz, 1999). So, there is another question: are we relying on ten or on seven values? Our response is that, given the fact that we are working with the ESS, respectively PVQ based data, which was specifically designed by Schwartz to measure the ten basic value orientations across ESS participant nations (Schwartz, 2003), we are directed towards the observation of this ten value based structure, respectively the place of the two self-transcendence values inside this structure. In addition, based on the ten values, we are going to present both societal level and individual level analyses. Thus, we are going to use sample means, in order to present some national value hierarchies; by aggregating individual level responses on the 21 PVQ items, respectively on the ten values developed on the basis of these items, we are going to elucidate the country level value structures. Then, we move on the individual level and will analyze the role of several individual positional factors, like age, gender and education, in emphasizing the two self-transcendent values.

Hungary and Romania are two neighbor countries from the Eastern part of Europe, which share both a number of similarities and differences, no matter we refer to macro-social aspects or sociopsychological issues. Both countries shared the communist past and, later on, entered the EU. However, the communist regime was less inclement in Hungary, compared to Romania, transitional reforms and economic restructuring were more rapid and fluent in Hungary (EBRD, 2001) and, consequently, Hungary entered the EU in 2004, three years earlier than Romania.

On the other hand, both Hungary and Romania show a rather traditional, survival oriented value configuration, which presents, however, some nuance as well. The cultural map of the world developed by Inglehart and Welzel (2005) and which places nations in a bi-polar structure, based on the emphasis of survival/self-expression values, respectively that of the traditional–religious/secular–rational values reveals that, while both countries emphasize survival values and, consequently, are materialist cultures, Hungary is, in the meantime, less religious, compared to Romania. Analyses regarding the case of religion and religiosity in the post-communist world (e.g. Voicu M., 2007; Rosta, 2009) assess also that, while Romania is one of the religious leaders of the region, Hungary presents a more secularized profile. The data of the present ESS survey re-emphasize these findings: while 40% of the Hungarian respondents declared that they are not affiliated to any religion, the corresponding rate of religious non-affiliation is 8% in the case of

Romania. In terms of affiliations, Hungary is a Catholic nation, while Romania is an Orthodox society, meanwhile Hungary is a more diverse religious landscape, since one quarter of those who affiliate are Protestants, compared to Romania where nearly 90% of the respondents declared Eastern Orthodox affiliation.

On the basis of their materialism oriented culture, whose prevalence might be explained in the case of both countries through the relative economic scarcity (at least compared to the West, and whose roots go back to the communist legacy), both countries are expected to give priority to values of survival and security, in terms of emphasizing economic growth and stability, social order and security (cf. Inglehart, 1997). These are values corresponding to conservation values, in the case of Schwartz's theory, and there was indeed assessed that Eastern European, formerly communist nations put high emphasis on conservation values (e.g. Schwartz and Bardi, 1997; Schwartz, 1999).

On the other hand, there were signaled positive correlations between religiosity and conservation values (Schwartz and Huismans, 1995) and there was assessed also the fact that the strength of association between religion and values depends on the socioeconomic development of the societies, in the sense that in more developed and more democratic societies religion implies less conservative values (Saroglou, Delpierre and Dernelle, 2004). By putting both aspects in balance there results the expectation that Hungarian respondents will be probably less conservative than Romanian respondents. But what is the linkage between conservatism and self-transcendence values?

The existence of two kinds of self-transcendence values in the theory of Schwartz, i.e. *benevolence* and *universalism,* helps us to reveal the linkage. According to Schwartz (1992), *benevolence* is a much more in-group oriented value, which regards the well-being of close others, that is the family. In contrast, universalism is directed towards the well-being of more departed others, that is towards the well-being of the whole society, world, nature and universe. By trying an equivalence between Inglehart's (1997) theory and that of Schwartz's (1992), it might be said that in survival oriented cultures people are more connected to their families, since these contexts provide them with security. In contrast, in post-materialist cultures, where people are concerned with self-expression, they are more individualized, put more emphasis on freedom, are less connected to their in-groups and they are, in the meantime, more tolerant towards and more concerned about more departed others or nature (for a quantitative analysis illustrating this, see Voicu, 2007). In translation, this would mean that survival oriented cultures put more emphasis on *benevolence* and less on *universalism*. Moreover, studies shown that, especially Christian religious teaching, emphasizes the benefaction with close-others (Schwart and Huismans, 1995). Thus, it is reasonable to expect that more secularised Hungarians will put less emphasis on benevolence than on universalism, while the situation will be the reverse in Romania. This expectation is as much legitimated as, according to Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), on the individualism/collectivism dimension Hungary appears as a much more individualistic culture than Romania, that is Hungarian individuals put more emphasis on self-gratification than on in-groups oriented gratifications.

In line with Schwartz (1992, 2003), we presuppose that economic development, collectivism and religiosity are important contextual factors in shaping the importance given to self-transcendence values, not so much compared to other values (as far as these values are in nearly all societies among the most important – cf. Schwartz and Bardi, 2001), but in the sense of how the two self-transcendence values are emphasized, compared to each other.

Our empirical research is directed towards three aspects. First, we intend to establish the value hierarchy existing in the

two countries, respectively, the place of the two self-transcendence values inside the hierarchy. Second, we intend to investigate the structure of the ten basic human values across the two countries, respectively, the localization of the two self-transcendence values inside this structure. This question practically investigates the compatibilities and conflicts between self-transcendence and other values, and wishes to respond to the question to what extent country-level structures are similar to each other, respectively to the theoretical structure (Schwartz, 1992, 2003). Finally, we seek to test – much more illustratively than exhaustively – several hypotheses regarding the relationship between sociodemographical variables and the two self-transcendence values, respectively the differences/ similarities existing, in this regard, between the two countries.

The theory and measurement of the ten basic human values

Values represent a set of general, abstract principles about what is desirable and what should be followed in life. They also guide the attitudes and actions of individuals. Values as general principles, transcend particular situations and are socially shared. In spite of the existence of these general principles, there are important axiological differences on the level of individuals, groups and cultures. Such specificities do not result, however, from the existence of some particular values, but are rather examples for a different hierarchy and configuration of the same general human values. These are only a few among those considerations, which are implicit for the theory of basic human values (Schwartz, 1992).

Schwartz's value theory follows a number of previous conceptualizations about the nature of values, e.g. the approach of Kluckhohn (1951), Rokeach (1973), Hofstede (1980), Inglehart (1977), etc., and hypothesizes the existence of ten basic types of values (*benevolence*, *universalism*, *self-direction*, *stimulation*, *hedonism*, *achievement*, *power*, *security*, *conformity* and *tradition*), which have different motivational goals corresponding to three distinct requirements of human's life: needs of individuals as biological organisms, necessities of coordinated social interaction, welfare and survival of groups (Table 1).

Table 1. *The core goals of the ten basic human values*

Values	Core goals
Benevolence	*Concern for the preservation and enhancement of the welfare of close-others, e.g. the family, friends, etc. (loyalty, honesty, helpfulness, forgiving, responsibility).*
Universalism	*Concern for the welfare of all people and nature (social justice, equity, unity with nature, world of beauty, world of peace, etc.).*
Self-direction	Independence in thought and action (creativity, freedom, independence, etc.).
Stimulation	Excitement, novelty, adventure (daring, exciting, adventurous life, etc.)
Hedonism	Seeking pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself (life enjoyment, self-indulgence, etc.).
Achievement	Seeking personal success (successful, ambitious, influential, etc.).
Power	Seeking social status and prestige, authority and dominance over other people and over resources (authority, wealth, social influence, etc.).
Security	Valuing the safety and stability of social contexts and of self (order, social security, risk avoidance, etc.).
Conformity	Obedience to social rules, norms and expectations (politeness, obedience, discipline, etc.).
Tradition	Respecting and accepting the customs (humble, modest, etc.).

Authors' synthesis based on Schwartz (2003, p. 267). Self-transcendence values with italics.

Schwartz integrated these ten value types in a quasi-circular theoretical structure with two orthogonal dimensions (Figure 1). This structure resembles both the complementarities and oppositions between certain values (see the original schema in Schwartz, 1992, p. 14). One of these orthogonal dimensions opposes *self-enhancement* (values of power and achievement) and *self-transcendence* (values of *benevolence* and *universalism*), while the second dimension opposes *openness to change* (values of stimulation and self-direction) and *conservation* (values of security, conformity and tradition). Hedonism is supposed to share both elements of openness to change and self-enhancement. Consequently, inside the two-dimensional structure, compatible value types, which have shared motivational orientations, are adjacent to one another, while conflicting values are situated opposite to each other. Schwartz (1992) hypothesized that, out of the ten values, five serve primarily individual interests (power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, that is the higher order values of self-enhancement and openness to change) and these values are opposed to three values, which serve primarily collective interests (*benevolence*, *tradition*, *conformity*, that is a part of the higher order values of *self-transcendence* and *conservation*). Two other values, from the higher order values of self-transcendence and conservation, namely *universalism* and *security*, serve both types of interests and they are located on the boundaries between these regions.

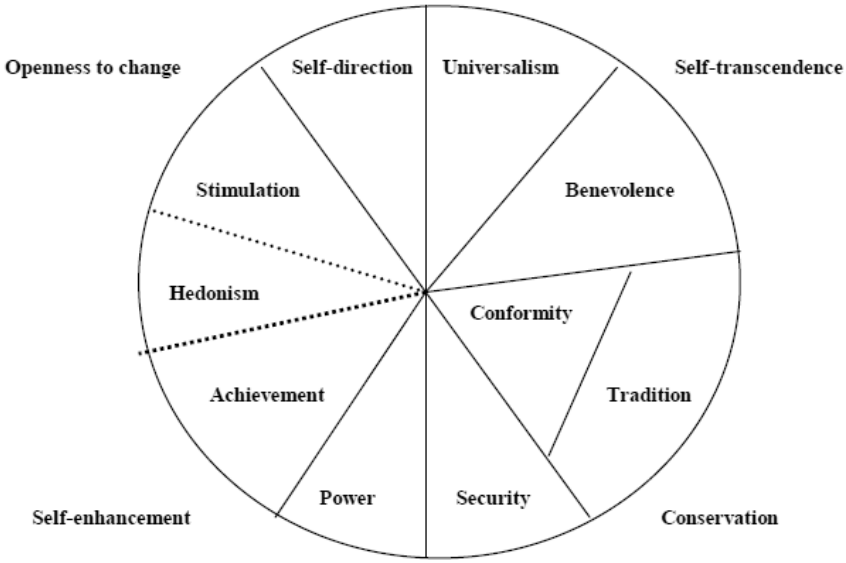

Figure 1. *The theoretical representation of the ten basic values according to Schwartz. Authors' reproduction based on Schwartz (2003, 270)*

If we stop at the self-transcendence values, according to Schwartz's (1992) theory, universalism and benevolence are the most compatible, because "both are concerned with the enhancement of others and transcendence of selfish interests" (p. 15), however self-direction is also compatible with universalism, because "both express reliance on one's own judgment and comfort with the diversity of existence" (p. 15). On the other hand,

universalism and benevolence are in conflict with achievement and power, since "acceptance of others as equals and concern for their welfare interferes with the pursuit of one's own relative success and dominance over others" (p. 15). As a consequence, the two self-transcendence values, universalism and benevolence are situated adjacently; respectively universalism is neighbored by self-direction, while benevolence, by tradition values. The two self-transcendence values are opposed to values of *power* and *achievement*

Based on the theory of basic human values, Schwartz (1992) developed a measurement instrument, known as the Schwartz Value Survey, consisting in 56 specific values corresponding to the ten hypothesized value types. This instrument was applied in samples from different cultural contexts and results confirmed the distinct motivational basis of the ten values and their hypothesized, bi-polar structure[2]. A decade later, an up-dated and specific version of the Schwartz Value Survey was launched (Schwartz et al., 2001) in the form of the Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ), which measures the same ten basic value orientation as the original instrument. The PVQ consists in 40 short verbal statements of different people describing their important goals, wishes and aspirations (i.e. values). Then, 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'). Thus, the PVQ infers individual values from individuals' self-reported similarities to the described portraits. Due to space limitations, the European Social Survey (ESS) uses an adapted and shortened version of the original PVQ, consisting in 21 items, out of which two items for each value type, except universalism, which, due to its broader meaning, is tapped through three items. Table 2 presents the 21 PVQ items included in the ESS.

Table 2. *The list of the 21 PVQ items from the fourth (2008) round of the ESS.*

Value dimensions	Value types	PVQ items
Self-transcendence	***Benevolence***	***It is very important to him/her to help the people around him. He/she wants to care for their well-being.***
		It is important to him/her to be loyal to his friends. He/she wants to devote himself to people close to him.
	Universalism	***He/she thinks it is important that every person in the world should be treated equally. He/she believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life.***
		It is important to him/her to listen to people who are different from him. Even when he/she disagrees with them, he/she still wants to understand them.
		He/she strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to him/her.
Openness to change	Self-direction	Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him/her. He/she likes to do things in his/her own original way.
		It is important to him/her to make his/her own decisions about what he does. He/she likes to be free and not depend on others.
	Stimulation	He/she likes surprises and is always looking for new things to do. He/she thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life.
		He/she looks for adventures and likes to take risks. He/she wants to have an exciting life.

Value dimensions	Value types	PVQ items
	Hedonism	He/she seeks every chance he can to have fun. It is important to him/her to do things that give him/her pleasure.
Self-enhancement		Having a good time is important to him/her. He/she likes to "spoil" himself/herself.
	Achievement	It is important to him/her to show his/her abilities. He wants people to admire what he/she does.
		Being very successful is important to him/her. He/she hopes people will recognize his/her achievements.
	Power	It is important to him/he to be rich. He/she wants to have a lot of money and expensive things.
		It is important to him/her to get respect from others. He/she wants people to do what he/she says.
Conservation	Security	It is important to him/her to live in secure surroundings. He/she avoids anything that might endanger his/her safety.
		It is important to him/her that the government ensures his/her safety against all threats. He/she wants the state to be strong, so it can defend its citizens.
	Conformity	It is important to him/her always to behave properly. He/she wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.
		He/she believes that people should do what they are told. He/she thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no-one is watching.
	Tradition	It is important to him/her to be humble and modest. He/she tries not to draw attention to himself/herself.
		Tradition is important to him/her. He/she tries to follow the custom handed down by his religion or his family.

Note: Items are not presented in accordance to their order in the questionnaire, but to their corresponding value type (first column). Self-transcendence values and items with italics.

Self-transcendence values in Hungary and Romania: hypotheses and methodology

As it has already been mentioned, two out of the ten basic values, namely *benevolence* and *universalism* are focused explicitly towards the welfare of others. Cross-cultural empirical findings in relation to basic human values suggest the existence of a quasi-universal hierarchy of values, inside which both self-transcendence values are the top value priorities (Schwartz and Bardi, 2001). Consequently, it is rationale to suppose that the concern for the well-being of others is one of the main motivational goal of humans' existence.

According to Schwartz (1992), beyond their incontestable similarity, there is also an important distinction between the meaning and coverage of *benevolence* and *universalism*. *Benevolence* refers to concerns for the welfare of close others in everyday interactions, and, consequently, "the motivational goal of benevolence values is preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact" (p. 11) in terms of helpfulness, loyalty, forgiving, honesty, responsibility, etc. Benevolence values are socialized early in the childhood, within the family and other primary groups (Schwartz, 1992) and derive from the need of affiliation (cf. Maslow, 1954).

Universalism, similarly to *benevolence* refers also to the well-being of others, but

contrary to the former, universalism has a much broader coverage, since its motivational goal is "understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of *all* people and for nature" (Schwartz, 1992, p. 12 – original emphasis). According to Schwartz (1992), the motivational goal of universalism can be the best understood in situations in which people come into contact with those outside their primary groups, respectively in situations when people become aware of the scarcity of natural resources. In such situations, people recognize that their survival is dependent not only on their affiliation to close others and the well-being of the in-groups, but also on the welfare of more departed others and on natural resources. Once this dependence recognized, people begin to value goals like *social justice*, *equality*, *world of peace*, *world of beauty*, *unity with nature*, *protecting the environment*, etc. Easy to see, that compared to benevolence values, which are learned during the process of primary sociallization, universalism values are adopted during the process of secondary socialization, after people enter in contact with others outside their extended primary groups.

The two values of self-transcendence, i.e. benevolence and universalism are, thus, similar in their motivational goals, but different in their coverage and comprehensiveness. These aspects were supported by empirical findings, since in almost each of the empirical studies, benevolence and universalism values were positioned adjacently inside the value structure (Schwartz, 1992). On the other hand, the existing difference in the focus of the two self-transcendent values was empirically assessed by data which showed different correlates for these two values, both in terms of contextual and individual factors (Schwartz, 1992).

In this sense, Schwartz (1992) assessed that members of collectivist cultures show a great concern for the well-being of close others, but are relatively indifferent to the needs of more-departed others. On the contrary, in the case of the members of individualist cultures there might happen to distinguish less dramatically between in-groups and out-groups and, consequently, to assign equal importance to benevolence and universalism values, or, on the contrary, to put more emphasis on *universalism* values, compared to *benevolence*. Later on, Schwartz and Sagie (2000) stated that values of *openness to change*, *self-direction* and *self-transcendence* are more important in societies with greater social and economic development (which are also more individualistic in their value orientations – cf. Hofstede, 1980). On the contrary, values of *conservation* have greater importance in societies with lower economic development, since these values emphasize the status quo, obedience and respect for the authority and power.

A major research direction in the study of values is directed towards the identification of those background variables which explain individual differences in value priorities (Schwartz, 2003). In this sense, there were signaled cross-culturally consistent and meaningful associations between individuals' value priorities and their sociodemographical background (Davidov et al., 2008). These findings assess that age correlates positively with *conservation* values and negatively with *openness to change*. Moreover, as people enter families of procreation, respectively become older, they become also less preoccupied by values of *self-enhancement* and *openness to change* and tend to put more emphasis on values of self-transcendence. 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 *conservation* values. Educational experiences facilitate also the openness and flexibility towards the well-being of (departed) others and, consequently, it

was assessed that more educated people are usually more oriented towards self-transcendence, especially in terms of *universalism*, than their less educated counterparts. These associations have been confirmed in many studies (for a review see Schwartz, 2003). Regarding the two self-transcendence values and their relationship with gender, Schwartz and Rubel (2005) summarized the findings of several empirical studies, which nearly concomitantly suggest that women attribute more importance than men to both *benevolence* and *universalism* values. This gender difference in the endorsement of self-transcendence values is usually explained through the fact that women – possibly due to their socialization as main care givers within the family (cf. Gilligan, 1982) – are more directed towards ensuring the well-being of close others. Schwartz and Rubel-Lifschitz (2009) assess that this rationale may apply to universalism values as well, because this value extends the essence of benevolence to the wider society and further sensitizes women's openness towards the need to provide care for others.

As already mentioned within the Introduction, given the fact that both Hungary and Romania are societies oriented towards materialistic and conservative values (see, for instance, Keller, 2010 – for Hungary; Voicu, 2007 – for Romania) we hypothesized a relatively similar value structure and hierarchy in both countries, but we put forward also the possibility that self-transcendence values, and especially universalism, will be more emphasized in Hungary, compared to Romania.

As previously stated, both countries shared a communist past and stepped later on the road of a complex transition process, during which they witnessed similar macro-institutional experiences (e.g. privatization, European integration). No doubt, however, that they experienced, also, a number of different roads. During the transition process, these two countries were dichotomized and referred to as 'good' vs. 'bad examples' of economic development and reform potential. The slower economic, political and institutional performance of Romania, compared to Hungary and other ex-communist countries was well reflected in the 'two-wave' approach developed by the European Commission in relation to the post-communist European countries' EU accession: based on their progress alongside the transition period, these countries were split into first and second wave countries, the former group being composed of, among others, Hungary, while the latter, among others, Romania (Jones, 2001). According to Schwartz and Sagie (2000), contextual factors, like economic development, can influence the priority given to values. Consequently, we put forward the question if the relatively better economic situation of Hungary can be translated in a different value-hierarchy, compared to Romania. If the answer is yes, then we expect – specifically in relation to self-transcendence values – a greater priority given to universalism values in Hungary, compared to Romania, in line with the approach of Schwartz and Sagi (2000). This expectation is further accentuated by the fact that Hungary is a considerably less collectivist and less religious country than Romania.

No matter which would be the empirically grounded answer on the question above, we expect that, in both countries, self-transcendence values will be among the top value priorities (cf. Schwartz and Bardi, 2001), and that the importance given to these values will be more accentuated among the groups of women, older and more educated people. Regarding the placement of the benevolence and universalism values inside the whole value structure, our aim is to investigate both the inter-country similarities and both the similarities existing between the empirical results and Schwartz's theoretical model.

In order to answer these preliminary research questions we provide in the fol-

lowings an analysis based on the data of the European Social Survey's fourth wave (2008). 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, respectively to the four higher order values (*self-enhancement*, *self-transcendence*, *openness to change* and *conservation*). Items corresponding to each basic and higher order value types were selected based on Schwartz's (2003) indication (see Table 2). On the basis of the corresponding items, we calculated individual, respectively national mean scores for each of the values and higher order values. Given the fact that responses on 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 can range, in turn, from 1 to 6.

In order to assess the structuring of the ten values, respectively the two self-transcendence values and that of the 21 PVQ items in the two countries, we relied on multidimensional scaling, which enables the mapping of the proximities between the values. To present some intra-country differences in the mean scores of values we used paired sample t-tests, while inter-country differences were assessed through independent samples t-tests. The relationship between value priorities and sociodemographical groups was investigated through analyses of variance (ANOVA).

Results

Country-level findings

We start the presentation of our results with descriptive measures of the ten basic human values, in the case of both countries. Albeit the Cronbach *Alpha* values of the ten theorized values are, in some cases, quite low (Table 1), we followed Schwartz's (2003) indication and considered this to constitute no impediment towards developing the ten values based on the means of items which index them. It is important, however, to mention that these low values might signal that respondents do not differentiate clearly between the hypothesized values (for a broader discussion see Davidov, 2010).

Table 3. *Cronbach's Alphas for the ten basic human values and the four higher order values in Hungary and Romania*

	Hungary	Romania
Benevolence	**0.55**	**0.64**
Universalism	**0.54**	**0.66**
Self-direction	0.44	0.55
Stimulation	0.62	0.53
Hedonism	0.60	0.52
Achievement	0.72	0.70
Power	0.42	0.42
Security	0.60	0.64
Conformity	0.36	0.54
Tradition	0.47	0.44
Self-transcendence	**0.78**	**0.72**
Self-enhancement	0.78	0.77
Conservation	0.78	0.68
Openness to change	0.68	0.67

Authors' calculation based on ESS fourth round, 2008.

Our country-level findings suggest that, in accordance with the consideration of Schwartz and Bardi (2001), self-transcendence values are among the most important value priorities in both countries and fall on the second and third place in Hungary, respectively on the second and fourth place in Romania (Figure 2).

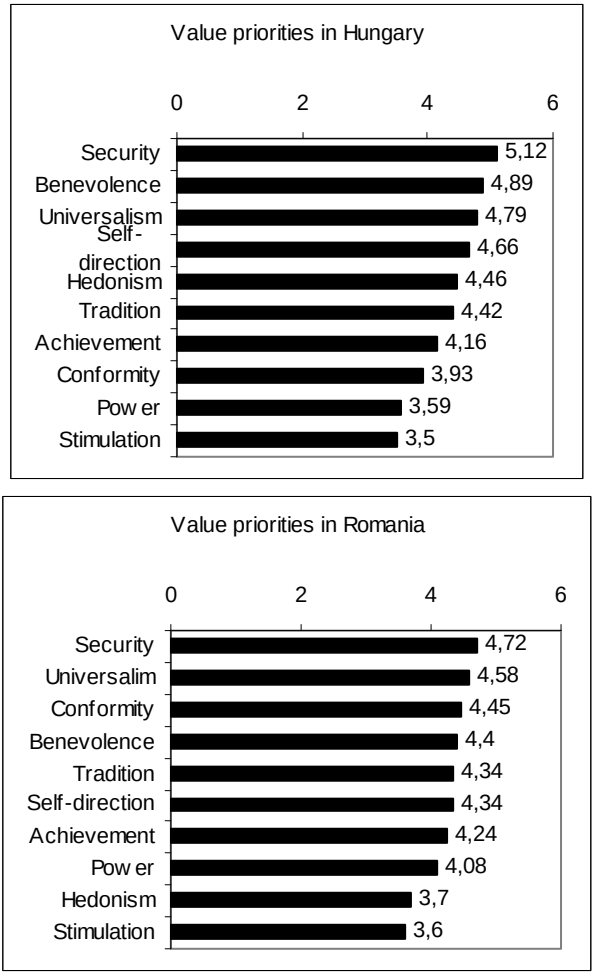

Figure 3. *Value priorities in Hungary and Romania*
Authors' calculation based on ESS fourth round, 2008

In accordance to our presupposition, security, which is a conservation value tops the value hierarchy in both countries. Paired sample t-test suggest that in both countries respondents attached significantly more importance to the value of security, compared to the values of self-transcendence, that is benevolence ($t=10.1$; $p<0.001$ in the case of Hungary; $t=15.38$; $p<0.001$ in the case of Romania) and universalism ($t=15.31$; $p<0.001$ in the case of Hungary; $t=7.74$; $p<0.001$ in the case of Romania).

The two other values of conservation, that is conformity and tradition are however situated on different places of the hierarchy in the two countries. As it appears from

Figure 2, these two values are seemingly less valued than self-transcendence values in Hungary, however in Romania they are on the third and fifth place of the value hierarchy. Paired sample t-tests help us to bring ground to the visualization from Figure 2. In Hungary, benevolence is significantly more valued than both conformity (t=31.4; p<0.001) and tradition (t=17.27; p<0.001 in Hungary and t=2.85; p<0.01). Universalism is, in turn, significantly more valued than both conformity (t=29.7; p<0.001) and tradition (t=14.22; p<0.001). In the case of Romania conformity is significantly more emphasized than benevolence (t=2.85; p<0.05), but it is significantly less important than universalism (t=-7.64; p<0.001). On the other hand, tradition is significantly less valued than both benevolence (t=-2.87; p<0.001) and universalism (t=-12.65; p<0.001). These results suggest not only the fact that Hungary seems to be less conservationist than Romania, but also the fact that, even in the seemingly more conservationist Romania, self-transcendence values might be better emphasized than certain values of conservation.

Table 4. *Inter-country differences between the country level means of the ten values and of the four higher order values*

Values	Hungary's Mean Score	Romania's Mean Score	T-values
Benevolence	**4.89 (0.85)**	**4.40 (0.94)**	**15.89*****
Universalism	**4.79 (0.79)**	**4.58 (0.86)**	**7.48*****
Self-direction	4.66 (0.97)	4.34 (1.05)	9.04***
Stimulation	3.50 (1.24)	3.60 (1.22)	-2.19*
Hedonism	4.46 (1.01)	3.70 (1.26)	19.76***
Achievement	4.16 (1.17)	4.24 (1.08)	-2.09*
Power	3.59 (1.10)	4.08 (1.01)	-13.47***
Security	5.12 (0.87)	4.72 (0.99)	12.70***
Conformity	3.93 (1.05)	4.45 (0.97)	-14.68***
Tradition	4.42 (1.03)	4.34 (0.98)	2.36*
Self-transcendence	**4.83 (0.73)**	**4.51 (0.81)**	**12.15*****
Self-enhancement	4.07 (0.89)	4.01 (0.93)	1.89
Conservation	4.44 (0.68)	4.45 (0.77)	0.43
Openness to change	4.08 (0.94)	3.97 (0.98)	3.42***

Standard deviations in parentheses; ***p<0.001; *p<0.05.
Authors' calculation based on ESS fourth round, 2008

Another interesting finding – which is readable also from Figure 2 – is that, while in Hungary benevolence is more important than universalism (t=5.1; p<0.001), in the case of Romania the situation is the opposite and universalism is significantly better emphasized than benevolence (t=10.43; p<0.001) At first sight, this finding is contrary to our expectations exposed in previous sections of the article. A more attentive consideration based on the investigation of the country level mean scores suggests, however, that Hungarians are significantly more in favor of both benevolence and universalism, compared to Romanians, that is Hungarians are signifi-

cantly more directed towards self-transcendent values in general than Romanians. Moreover, Hungarians are – as previously suggested and also in accordance to our presupposition – significantly more directed towards the valuation of the majority of self-enhancement and openness to change values, while Romanians are significantly more directed towards the valuation of power and conformity (Table 4).

In the followings, we were interested in the structuring of the 21 PVQ items. For this purpose, multidimensional scaling was used. Figure 2, which reveals the structuring of the 21 items in the case of Hungary signals that, in this country, values of self-transcendence, namely benevolence (*help people*, *loyal*) and universalism (*understanding*, *equality* and *nature*) are extremely close to each other and some of them are virtually fused. However, it is also notable that this fusion does not occur between the specific values of benevolence or universalism, but between one of the items corresponding to the benevolence (*loyal*) and two other items (*equality* and *nature*) corresponding to the universalism facet. On the contrary, two other items corresponding to benevolence (*help people*), respectively universalism (*understanding*) are a bit more distanced from the former. This fact suggests that in the mentality of Hungarians there is no harsh demarcation between benevolence and universalism as specific facets of self-transcendence. This fact is observable also from the low Cronbach values of the separately taken benevolence and universalism values, respectively from the comfortable value of this coefficient, when the higher order self-transcendence value is concerned (Table 3). The fact that there is no clear demarcation between the items designed to measure benevolence and universalism respectively, could be quoted also as a reason of why benevolence values are better valued than universalism values in this country – contrary to our expectations. In any case, what is obvious from the figure, is that self-transcendence values are in the same dimension (dimension 1) with the majority of items corresponding to the values of *conservation*, but also with certain items corresponding to *openness to change* values (specifically self-direction values: *new ideas*, *own decision*). On the other hand, self-enhancement values and a minor part of the conservation values fall in the other dimension of the structure.

It follows from here that, in Hungary, self-transcendence values are virtually as close to conservation values (particularly to values of security) as to values of self-direction. This finding empirically reveals the theoretical approach of Schwartz (1992), according to which self-transcendence values can be compatible with self-direction values, from the perspective that both values concern the comfort of the person (i.e. the comfort resulted from social affiliation, respectively the comfort resulted from the independence of thought and action, the latter being also responsible for autonomous decisions about individuals involvement in caring for others). This observation gets further accents alongside the second dimension which separates conservation values from the other three types of values.

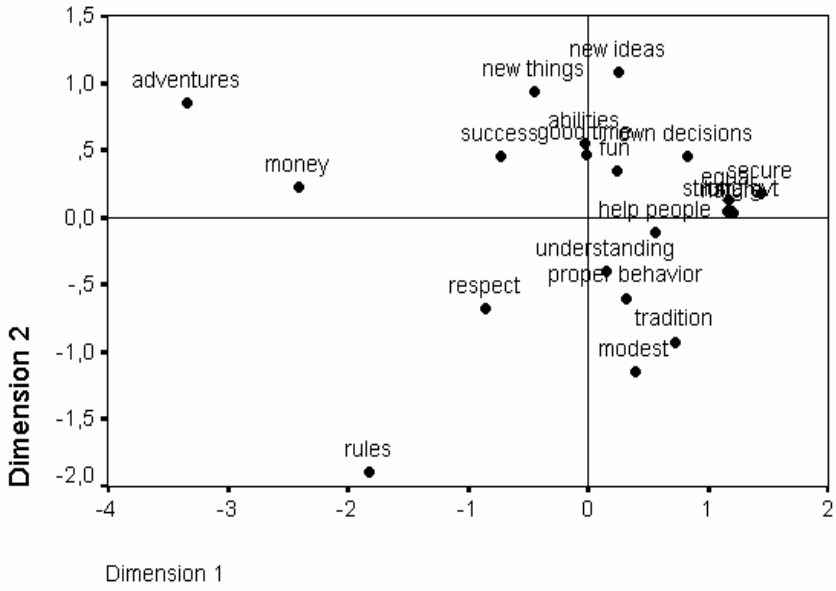

Figure 3. *Value structure in Hungary based on the 21 PVQ items*
Eucledian distance model; Stress=0.04; RSQ=0.99
Authors' calculation based on ESS fourth round, 2008

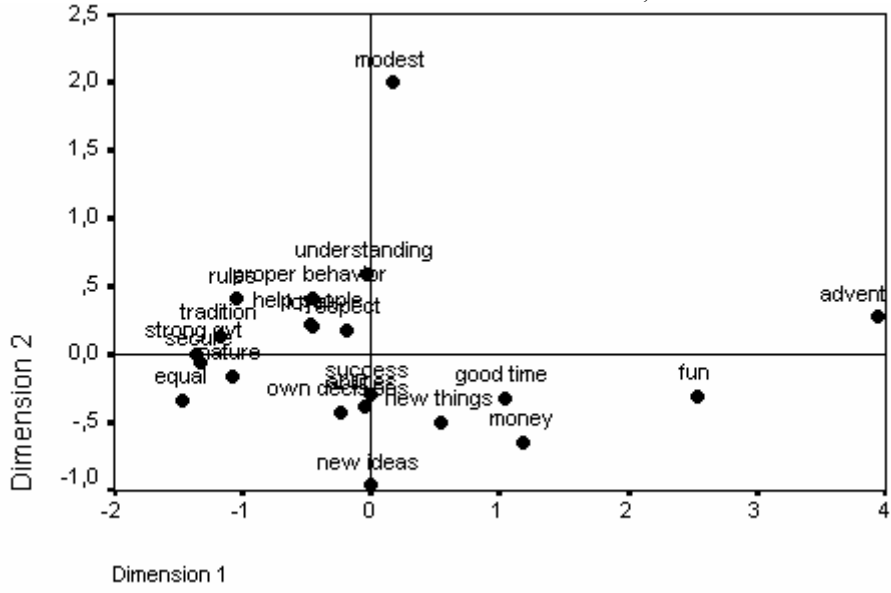

Figure 4. *Value structure in Romania based on the 21 PVQ items*
Eucledian distance model; Stress=0.05; RSQ=0.99
Authors' calculation based on ESS fourth round, 2008.

The situation occurred in Romania is quite similar to that of Hungary, but there appear some differences as well. The first one is that one of the *universalism* items (i.e. *understanding*) appears as a bit more distanced from the rest of the self-transcendence items than in Hungary. Thus, it seems that this facet of universalism, which taps the importance of tolerance, in the mentality of the Romanians, is closer to the idea of being humble and modest than to the meaning of the other values of self-transcendence. Regarding Romania it is also evident that, alongside the first dimension, self-transcendence values are situated close to each other and are also mixed with conservation values, particularly with values of *tradition* and *security*. The second dimension reveals the fact that self-transcendence values (except the case of the *equality*) are less compatible with values of *openness to change* than in Hungary. In fact, this second dimension separates the values of self-transcendence and conservation and the rest of the values, that is *openness to change* and self-enhancement values. With these findings in mind, we can say that, in Romania, self-transcendence values are much more compatible with values of conservation than with values of self-direction and that, probably, the valuation of others' interest and well being is much more rooted in *security* and *obedience* than in individual, voluntarily decisions.

It can be stated that *grosso modo,* and especially alongside the first dimensions, there is a similar structuring of values in both countries and this structure follows – quite closely – the theoretical approach: in both countries, self-transcendence items share the same components with the adjacent conservation values, but are also compatible (especially in Hungary) with values of *openness to change*, particularly *self-direction* values. This situation reflects the idea already mentioned by Schwartz (1992) that both self-transcendence and conservation values can promote social relations and helpfulness (however, from a different motivational background: i.e., self-transcendence values serve as motivational goals for voluntarily actions for the welfare of others, conservation values promote pro-social behaviors, in order to avoid negative outcomes for the self) and both self-transcendence and self-direction values can promote the comfort of the self (however, from a different motivational background, as already mentioned before).

Value priorities across age, gender and education

The relationships between preference for the two self-transcendence values, respectively for the higher order self-transcendence value itself and socio-demographical variables like gender, age and education were analyzed through analyses of variance (ANOVA). Tables 5, 6 and 7 comprise the means of the two basic values of self-transcendence, respectively that of the overall self-transcendence itself across these variables, in the case of both countries.

The results show that, in both countries, in comparison to men, women attach more importance to both benevolence [$F(1, 1423)=24.19$, $p<0.001$ – for Hungary and $F(1, 2076)=15.702$, $p<0.001$ – for Romania], universalism [$F(1, 1421)=11.01$, $p<0.001$ – for Hungary and $F(1, 2092)=4.92$, $p<0.05$ – for Romania] and, consequently, also to the higher order self-transcendence [$F(1, 1412)=19.41$, $p<0.001$ – for Hungary and $F(1, 2066)=9.96$, $p<0.01$– for Romania]. With these results, the hypothesis according to which women attach higher importance to self-transcendence values can be accepted and previous research findings obtained in this regard can be reconfirmed, in the case of these two East-Central European neighboring countries.

Table 5. *Mean scores on benevolence, universalism and overall self-transcendence in Hungary and Romania, according to gender*

	Hungary		Romania	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Benevolence	4.77 (0.88)	4.99 (0.81)	4.31 (0.91)	4.47 (0.95)
Universalism	4.71 (0.81)	4.85 (0.76)	4.53 (0.85)	4.62 (0.86)
Self-transcendence	4.74 (0.76)	4.91 (0.70)	4.45 (0.78)	4.56 (0.83)

Standard deviations in parentheses.
Authors' calculation based on ESS fourth (2008) round.

The analyses of variance resulted in the case of both countries in no statistically significant regarding the differences in the endorsement of either benevolence [F(5, 1419)=1.35, p>0.1 – for Hungary; F (5,2075)=0.81, p>0.1 – for Romania], universalism [F(5,1417)=1.19, p>0.01 – for Hungary; F(5,2088)=0.61, p>0.1- for Romania) or overall self-transcendence [F(5,1408)=1.44, p>0.01 – for Hungary; F(5,2062)=0.81, p>0.01 – for Romania] values across age groups. Thus, the conclusion is that, no matter which is the age of the respondents, they do not differ statistically significant in the importance they give to benevolence or universalism.

Table 6. *Mean scores on benevolence, universalism and overall self-transcendence in Hungary and Romania, according to age groups*

	Lower than 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66 and older
Hungary						
Benevolence	4.83 (0.84)	4.79 (0.84)	4.93 (0.82)	4.94 (0.85)	4.91 (0.91)	4.93 (0.91)
Universalism	4.70 (0.77)	4.74 (0.73)	4.84 (0.78)	4.83 (0.77)	4.78 (0.78)	4.82 (0.85)
Self-transcendence	4.75 (0.69)	4.77 (0.70)	4.88 (0.72)	4.87 (0.73)	4.84 (0.72)	4.86 (0.79)
Romania						
Benevolence	4.35 (0.97)	4.41 (0.93)	4.44 (0.87)	4.42 (0.93)	4.34 (0.93)	4.44 (0.97)
Universalism	4.52 (0.83)	4.56 (0.81)	4.61 (0.85)	4.62 (0.83)	4.58 (0.87)	4.57 (0.86)
Self-transcendence	4.45 (0.81)	4.50 (0.77)	4.55 (0.77)	4.54 (0.81)	4.48 (0.81)	4.52 (0.81)

Standard deviations in parentheses.
Authors' calculation based on ESS fourth (2008) round.

In the following, we were interested in self-transcendence values across educational levels. For this purpose, we collapsed the original variable which measures educational attainment in the ESS in three categories: lower (i.e. not completed primary and primary education), medium (i.e. secondary and upper secondary education) and upper (tertiary and post-tertiary) educational levels. The first category, lower education, corresponds to results of ANOVA and Scheffé analyses which suggest that in comparison with the lower and medium level educated respondents, those with upper education, in the case of Romania, valued significantly more benevolence, $F(2, 2078)=9.93$, $p<0.001$, while this difference was only marginal in the case of Hungary, $F(2, 1421)=1.83$, $p<0.01$). Universalism values are in both countries significantly better endorsed by upper educated respondents compared with those with medium and lower level educational attainments: $F(2, 1419)=4.57$, $p<0.05$ – for Hungary and $F(2, 2091)=15.87$, $p<0.001$. In none of the cases, the differences between lower and medium level educated respondents were significant. This is also the case of the overall self-transcendence values. Consequently, we can accept the hypothesis that educational attainment raises the valuation of the self-transcendence values. Moreover, we can also subscribe to the finding of Schwartz (2006), according to which self-transcendence values, and especially *universalism*, begin to rise, especially in the last years of higher education, reflecting the broadening of horizons through higher education.

Table 7. *Mean scores on benevolence, universalism and overall self-transcendence in Hungary and Romania, according to educational attainment*

	Hungary			Romania		
	Lower	Medium	Upper	Lower	Medium	Upper
Benevolence	4.87 (0.89)	4.87 (0.86)	4.99 (0.85)	4.33 (0.96)	4.42 (0.93)	4.58 (0.93)
Universalism	4.73 (0.82)	4.78 (0.77)	4.93 (0.73)	4.53 (0.89)	4.52 (0.79)	4.80 (0.82)
Self-transcendence	4.78 (0.77)	4.82 (0.72)	4.95 (0.67)	4.45 (0.84)	4.48 (0.75)	4.71 (0.78)

Standard deviations in parentheses.
Authors' calculation based on ESS fourth (2008) round.

We were interested also in possible interaction effects of the gender, age and education variables on benevolence, universalism and overall self-transcendence, respectively. For this purpose we run factorial ANOVA and investigated concurrently the effects of the three considered independent variables on value preferences. Results of these analyses reconfirmed, in the case of both countries and each of the three values, the main effects of gender and education on the preference given to self-transcendence values, but there were obtained no significant results in terms of interaction effects. That is, there are no statistical reasons to think that there are combined influences from the part of these independent variables on self-transcendence values.

Discussions, limitations and further openings

We should first make the remark that – in spite of a number of inter-country differences between value-scores and hierarchies

– there are important similarities between the two countries. As our preliminary results suggest, the identity or profile of those who emphasize the analyzed self-transcendence values is similar. There are statistical arguments which determine us to locate these values among upper educated people and among women. This similarity is not an accident, as far as these two countries are situated not only in the same geographical area, but also (except the more or less distance to each other) in the same part of an imaginary axiological map, in a region of transition between values of *conservation* and *tradition* and values of *openness to change* and *modernism/ postmodernism*.

We assume that there are some macro-level, contextual factors, which should be mentioned when interpreting the results of our analysis. One of these factors refers to the religious background, both in the sense of secularism vs. religiosity, and both in the sense of a better prevalence of the the Weberian Protestantism in Hungary. As it is well-known, both secularism and religious Protestantism imply the spirit of initiative, the valuation of progress, individualism and also the openness towards departed others etc., that is the emphasis of values which can be regarded as values of self-enhancement, openness to change, and self-transcendence. Contrary to the case of Hungary, the widespread Orthodoxy in Romania promotes values of conservation (see also Iluț and Nistor, 2011). It should be however mentioned that Christianity in general attaches a high priority to axiological imperatives like *help*, *love*, *respect for other human beings*, etc. – that is towards values of self-transcendence, concomitantly with the values of conservation (promotion of the status quo, obedience, etc.) and this fact might be a possible macro-level explanation for the mixing between conservation and self-transcendence values, which is especially observable in the case of Romania.

Results can be then explained also through socioeconomic influences, similarly to the findings of Schwartz and Sagie (2000). In the economically better off Hungary, albeit benevolence is more valued than universalism, overall national mean scores indicate that self-transcendence *per se* is more emphasized than in Romania. In this sense, it is relevant the differentiation which occurs as a function of education (which is usually associated with higher incomes and better life quality): both in Hungary and Romania, upper educated people express a greater adherence to self-transcendence values, and thus it seems that higher education makes people more open-minded towards others, but creates also – through economic resources – a favorable background for shifting the attention towards other people.

Historical factors should be mentioned in turn. Compared to Hungary, the socialist regime – especially after the 1970s – was much more restrictive and totalitarian, in the case of Romania. This political-historical context, in association with the values promoted by Orthodoxy can be quoted as an important contextual factor in explaining the different value hierarchies occurring in the two countries. It is illustrative, in this respect, the case of the value of *conformity* (statistically placed on the third place, in the case of Romania and on the eight place in Hungary). In the context of the harshly restrictive Ceauşescu regime, Romanians were expected to be obedient, conformist and to reject values of self-enhancement and openness to change. This institutionally promoted social learning process resulted, after all, in the reception of a set of corresponding values, which cannot be changed all of a sudden. Comparatively, in Hungary, the Kadar regime was not so inclement; consequently the value-socialization directed from above was not so harsh either.

Moreover, we should not forget about the different post-1989 roads of the two

countries which led to the EU in both of the cases, but were dispersed with different experiences, as a result of Hungary's better reform and economical potential. The most important difference in this regard consists in the different moments of EU-accessions. Hungary, compared to Romania was a forerunner in this sense, and succeeded to join the EU in 2004. From this perspective, Hungary has an advantage, compared to Romania, in the sense that Hungarians had the chance to experience earlier processes like the free movement of persons, labor migration, economic development, etc. – aspects which all have an impact on the value hierarchy in general and on the preference added to self-transcendence values in particular.

No doubt that more ample, complex research can translate our hypotheses in more certain evidence and explanations. We list some major directions in this regard, through which we do not intend to affirm that the study of values and the relationship between values and different aspects of the social is inopportune (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.

The first of these directions concerns methodological developments in a sense of a more sophisticated methodology, aiming at detaching some sociodemographic profiles (e.g. cluster analysis), inside which to show more clearly not only the contribution of certain variables, but also their combined effects (e.g., structural equation).

Second, 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 several attitudes and behaviors it is necessary to make use of semi-structural individual and group interviews. This is as much indicated as values are abstract and latent constructs and, thus, the usage of a more diverse methodology could better reveal the meanings respondents assess to certain values. 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 questions, as much as we have a comparative analysis, in which the same items are translated in different languages. Besides the need of 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, respectively the so-called self-presentation concern constitute unanimously recognized fundamental bias.

There remains also the important question regarding the relationship between values and behaviors. It is not difficult to realize the difference between the two parts of the same coin: the valuation of the well-being of the others and the implication in voluntary actions with the aim to effectively promote the well-being of others. And it is a well-known issue, that civic participation in voluntary action is a rare phenomenon in both Hungary and Romania. Thus, there remains the important question of why self-transcendence, which constitutes the top value priority in the case of both countries are not translated in sufficiently visible self-transcendent actions. This problem constitutes, certainly, the object of analysis for further research.

1. We wish to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions on previous version of this article.

2. It is important to mention that, in large scale, cross-cultural analyses, based on the aggregation of individual responses in forms of sample means, usually there were revealed not ten, but seven values, which were named cultural values. These seven values are the following: c*onservatism* as opposed to *intellectual autonomy* and *affective autonomy; hierarchy* as opposed to *egalitarianism; mastery* as opposed to *harmony.*

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