

The influence of religious motivations on young people`s civic engagement

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List of Contents

1. Abstract and keywords	4
2. Introduction	5
2.1. Between secularism and religious resurgence.....	5
2.2. Structure and objective of the dissertation.....	6
3. Summary of the Publications	7
3.1. Religious perceptions and political protests	7
3.2. Religion and civic engagement in the community	12
3.3. Why not participate anymore?	15
4. Discussion and Conclusions	19
5. References	22
6. Tables and appendices	26
7. Publications	39

Abstract

With respect to religious motivations for political participation and civic engagement, scholars have set their focus on social capital and the recruiting potential for volunteers inside religious communities. Less attention has been paid to individual religious impulses, but also to reasons for which people step out from deliberative processes, especially in regard to the Eastern European Orthodox cultural context. We are approaching this under-explored research field in this dissertation, with focus on the Romanian city of Timișoara, and look at three particular aspects: the influence of religious perceptions on political protests (analysis of the 1989 revolution), the manner in which religion motivates young people to volunteer (view on a local community project) and factors determining people to retreat from public engagement (analysis of citizens' local committees). The research methods are qualitative - interviews, group discussions and analytical interpretation. Results show that non- or less religious young people are encouraged to protest by an indefinable supernatural force and motivated by moral interests (need for dignity and a fair treatment / procedural justice), more than material ones (distributive justice). When engaging in the community, the impulse partially comes from an intrinsic spirituality and a privatized experience with the divine. Giving up civic engagement has nothing to do with remuneration, but with the need for freedom of expression and moral appreciation.

Keywords: Civic engagement, Community, Motivation, Religion, Protest, Young people

Between secularism and religious resurgence

Research has set its focus increasingly over the last decades on the complex relationship between religion and politics. This relation can be perceived through different angles and can refer to Church and State and the possible manners in which they are connected to each other, or to the role of religion in the private and social life of individuals, with consequences on the political spectrum of the society. Many scientists have ascertained an increasing distancing between political and religious institutions and a decrease in public religious behavior, at least in Western cultural settings - whereas others place spirituality and religion in the front of people's preoccupations. A specific view emphasizes the necessity for a balance between religious and secular, and for the common reason to be pursued in a dialogue by means of which both societal spheres could learn from each other (e.g. Habermas, Reder and Schmid, 2008). In other words, communication seems to be the most important aspect in this relationship, with religious arguments having to be welcome and taken into consideration when they are accompanied by common reason, and with politics not being allowed to discriminate - due to the inalienable rights of expressing personal convictions.

Literature has regarded this relationship under a variety of circumstances, including the potential individual religious influences on civic and political engagement. This is the field we are entering in this work, attempting to find out to which extent are personal religious motivations able to drive civic engagement and political participation forward. Civic engagement has been defined in many ways in the literature - basically, it speaks for "the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future" (Adler and Goggin, 2005). Political participation is mainly understood as "actions of private citizens by which they seek to influence or support government and politics" and, also, "all voluntary activities by individual citizens intended to influence either directly or indirectly political choices at various levels of the political system" (Ekman and Amna, 2012; Milbrath and La Goel, 1977, p. 2; Kaase and Marsch, 1979, p. 42). In relation to participating in politics and in

the community, research has mostly looked at collective and institutional elements of religion - the social capital built among church members, who socialize and are recruited by the religious environment to become active in their communities (e.g., Hill and den Dulk, 2013; Putnam and Campbell, 2010; Smith, 2003). Fewer studies have focused on individual spiritual and religious motivations (e.g. Glazier, 2015; McVeigh and Sikkink, 2001). This work addresses this under-explored research field, with respect to Eastern Europe, where there is a limited tradition of civic engagement (e.g. Ekman, Gherghina and Podolian, 2016) and where research on this subject has still much to provide.

Structure and objective of the dissertation

We have written and published three scientific articles for this dissertation, in the form of case studies focused on the Romanian city of Timișoara, and are shortly presenting this research in the following. Timișoara is the town where the anti-communist revolution in 1989, with religious collective and individual implications, has started. It is also the place where different civic initiatives have been set up by the local administration and partners of the civil society in the last decades, in the attempt to bring inhabitants, and especially young people, closer to public decision; that is, to build organized consultative and participatory systems able to stimulate public participation and a long-term collaboration between authorities and the citizen. The first article follows the potential influence of religious perceptions on political activism - more specifically, on the decision to protest against communism in 1989. The second study considers an initiative of the local administration to involve young people in the decisional process and investigates potential religious motivations to become active in their communities. Last, but not least, we intended to find out what determines people to step out from public engagement: We looked at the neighborhood consultative councils in Timișoara - a long-term participatory initiative with promising results in terms of efficiency, which was rewarded several times on the national and international level for its innovation. We did not study the spiritual or religious motivations for deciding to participate; this time, found it important to extract the reasons determining people to stop getting involved.

Table 1. Overview of the Articles

Contribution	Abbreviation
Adrian Schiffbeck (2021) Driven by the 'Indefinable Something': How Religious Perceptions Motivate Political Protests, <i>Politics, Religion & Ideology</i> , 22:1, 103-121. Double blind peer reviewed	A1 (PRI)
Adrian Schiffbeck (2020) "The spiritual «freelancers»: Young people, religiosity and community problem solving", <i>Scientia Moralitas. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research</i> , 5:1, 131-152. Double blind peer reviewed	A2 (SM)
Adrian Schiffbeck (2019) Attrition in long-term deliberative processes. The neighborhood consultative councils in Timisoara, <i>Contemporary Politics</i> , 25:1, 94-110. Double blind peer reviewed	A3 (CP)

The overall objective of the work - built on a qualitative methodological basis (including interviews and a group discussion), was to construct a coherent and relevant picture on religious motivations and engagement among young people, on one side, and to establish concrete reasons for which successful participatory systems cease their existence.

Summary of the Publications

We will detail these aspects by a presentation of the three articles in this chapter - focusing on the theoretical aspects, the data collection methods and interpretative instruments, as well as on the results, the relevance and implications of the work for further scientific research.

Religious perceptions and political protests

Previous research on religion and protesting had focused on possible spiritual motivations for social movements, taking mainly Protestants in the West (mostly on the

North American continent) into account. There were also studies regarding the Arab revolutions, in North Africa and the Middle East in 2010-2012, where scholars looked at Muslims and their openness towards religious impulses when deciding to fight against authoritarian regimes (e.g. Hoffman and Jamal, 2014). Research has far less regarded Orthodox believers, and the extreme circumstance of dictatorship - with traditional channels for becoming politically active being blocked. Particularly, the revolutions at the end of the 1980-s in Eastern Europe have received very little attention.

Literature review

A comprehensive research study on the manner in which American Protestants can be influenced by religious perceptions in their decision to choose contentious tactics in political activism was written by Rory McVeigh and David Sikkink (2001). One related direction of the study was the perception of religious belief as being threatened, which could motivate people to choose contentious tactics among different possibilities for becoming politically active. This reactive attitude is presented in the form of the cultural defense theory: People perceiving their religious and moral convictions as being betrayed, and politicians as failing to comply with a certain vision - tend to react and protect their values. This "coercive moralism" line of action (McVeigh and Sikkink, 2001, p. 1431) implies an attempt to preserve moral order by fighting against the ones posing a threat upon religious beliefs and standards.

The second religious perception with a potential to motivate demonstrators is the view upon the regime as sinful. Its manifestation is related to the first element, in the sense of looking at politicians as immoral, as disrespectful towards religious rules - the so-called moral absolutism: the opposed attitude to the moral relativism, where reality is judged in a more pluralistic manner, with actions not being perceived as "intrinsically right or wrong" (Luker, 1984, p. 184; McVeigh and Sikkink, 2001, p. 1432). To this extent, literature refers to distributive and procedural justice: In the first case, revolt is caused by the deficient manner in which goods and resources are being distributed and, in the second one, by the way people are being treated - with lack of fairness and respect, affecting their dignity (Klandermans and van Stekelenburg, 2010). When perceiving the

regime as sinful - for not acting morally, fairly and equitably - people become ready to start a fight for reinstalling justice: Especially youth can be religiously motivated by the perspective that "ultimately good will be rewarded and evil punished" (Smith, 2003, p. 23).

In the same line, the perception that God has a plan and people are called to fulfil it can act as a motivational factor. Evidence refers to the so-called providential believers, who tend to frame their political actions in a response to the divine intention (Glazier, 2015, p. 7). They intervene along with God in re-establishing justice and act according to the sacred mission they feel they are called to accomplish. The struggle is seen as legitimate and mandatory, due to its assimilation to God's will (McVeigh and Sikkink, 2001, p. 1432; Glazier, 2015, p. 5). This potential for radical movements does not put people into motion by itself: Mostly, the incentive comes from clergy or religious leaders and their messages, transmitted 'in a way that inspires collective political action' (Ben Nun-Bloom and Arian, 2019, p. 270).

Literature makes less reference to a fourth religious perception which we have approached in this study - the feeling of being encouraged and supported by the divinity. This view is related to the conviction that "God understands and shares in one's suffering"; it provides especially young people with 'the strength to confront and overcome injustice' (Smith, 2003, p. 23). There are some references in the 4th Wave of the World Values Survey to the perception of "getting comfort and strength from religion"(<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV4.jsp>) - but people's awareness of the divine support is not being related to their potential to demonstrate. This perception is the fourth path we have followed in this article, attempting to find out if perceiving God as a source of encouragement and guidance can function as a religious catalyst for demonstrators.

Case study and methods

We focused on an Orthodox Eastern European country, where, at the end of the '80-s, no means of political involvement were available. It was not people's choice to protest -

disregarding other options like voting, signing a petition or boycotting. An illegal movement was the only solution to express contrary opinions to the ones promoted by the regime. In Timișoara, supporters of the Reformed pastor Laszlo Tökes gathered on the 14th and 15th of December 1989 in front of the parish to defend him from the oppressive forces of the political police, the “Securitate”, who were trying to evacuate him. He had made his voice heard against communism and was seen as a courageous dissident. From a small supporting movement of several dozens of parishioners - the uncommon event (under the extremely restricted conditions) extended and hundreds, than thousands of people made their presence felt: by not discussing about the Reformed pastor anymore, but about grievances and living conditions, freedom and democracy. The gathering in front of the parish became an occasion for demonstrators to meet and to start the revolution on the 16th of December.

The investigation was a qualitative one, based on 45 semi-structured interviews with former participants at the revolution. They were chosen from a group of 800 people who had been arrested on those days. Their contact data came from local associations. Trying to discuss to as many people as possible was doubled by the principle of data saturation, encountered in qualitative research and according to which respondents should not be approached anymore when there is enough relevant data; that is, if no substantive information is to be provided anymore, the sample - even if less representative for the general population than in quantitative studies - should be closed and the investigator should attempt to obtain in-depth information. “(...) Participants who meet or exceed a specific criterion or criteria possess intimate (or, at the very least, greater) knowledge of the phenomenon of interest by virtue of their experience, making them information-rich cases” (Palinkas et al., 2015). The goal is to provide more meaning for a particular social practice and one can pursue it by means of a double hermeneutical interpretation process: The researcher tries to understand herself what people had understood. What we have used here (and in the other two case studies we will describe later) in terms of data interpretation is mainly the procedure of coding: We extracted the most relevant data and attempted to connect related elements to each other; to construct sub-concepts from the argumentation and, by putting them together

within a “unitary analysis perspective” (Struebing, 2013, p. 123), generate the final conceptualization as the answer to the research question (Appendix A1.2).

The final sample of interviewees included members of the Orthodox denomination - the majority, men, people in their twenties at that time, graduates of high-school or technical studies; most of them, with a significant level of religious faith (Table A1). We asked them if they had perceived their belief as being threatened by the communist regime, if they felt the authorities were sinful (or rather immoral), if a contribution to accomplishing God’s plan for Romania was one of the reasons to demonstrate and if they perceived an encouragement by the divinity. We added this last potential motivational factor to the theoretical elements described earlier (Appendix A1.1). Discussions were carried out at the end of 2018 and the beginning of 2019. The implications of the results can be regarded as valid today, taking the maintenance of Romania’s traditional characteristics into account: The country reveals a higher degree of religious emotionality than other European states and the most vibrant religious life on the continent (see e.g. Pew Research Center, 2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/12/05/how-do-european-countries-differ-in-religious-commitment/>, accessed on 21.12.2020).

Results

Findings in this research article showed that one of the perceptual factors mentioned earlier - the feeling of being encouraged and supported by the divinity, played a determinant part in the revolution. Many respondents referred to this perception as driving them forward - even people who had almost no connection to religion at that time felt an encouragement under oppressive circumstances. The communist authorities used lethal force in the attempt to disperse the protesters and hundreds of people sacrificed their lives. The view upon the regime as sinful, perceiving a contribution to God’s plan and religious faith as being threatened occurred tangentially during discussions - these perceptions were not primarily relevant. All the religious impulses played a secondary part compared to the main grievances which determined Romanians to take their destiny into their own hands: First, these were related to the so-called procedural justice, to the immoral, unjust and unfair way people were treated in -

lack of freedom of movement and expression, of manifesting their own personality. Then, it was about the distributive justice - the disastrous economic situation providing discontent and the impetuous to act against the regime.

Finally, the research revealed the significance of religious emotional elements in the decision to become involved in social movements and continue to demonstrate under oppressive circumstances. The importance of the specific perception that God offers the courage to oppose a totalitarian regime is the most relevant result, contributing to a broader understanding of religious emotionality in relation to protest behavior in the Eastern European Orthodox cultural context.

Religion and civic engagement in the community

The second subject we have approached in our work refers to civic engagement, particularly volunteering in the community.

Literature review

The theoretical structure of this article was based on the four main religious dimensions described, among others, by Vassilis Saroglou (2011) - belief, behavior, bonding and belonging - and their complex ways of manifestation among young people. We spoke to 13 participants - 11 students and two experts in the field of civic engagement (who had been involved in this and other similar programs) - several years after the project ended, and attempted to find out the extent to which young people were religiously motivated in the frame of the dimensions mentioned above. Previous studies (e.g. Hill and den Dulk, 2013; Groenlund et al., 2011; Smith, 2009) emphasize the importance of belonging - attending services and being part of a religious community - in the decision of young people to become active in local communities. Schools, but also Christian churches, are able to produce social capital - their interactive environment "recruits" volunteers. The young ones are being endowed with "confidence and functional capacities" and become more likely to get engaged in politics or neighborhood organizations (Smith 2003, p. 23). Less attention was provided in the literature to the cognitive religious dimension, of belief, and to the emotional one, of bonding. The cognitive form of religiosity seems to

play an insignificant role as a motivational factor for volunteering (Ruiter and de Graaf 2006, p. 193; Becker and Dhingra 2001, pp. 329-30). To the same extent, Wuthnow (1991, p. 56) and Putnam (2000, p. 74) speak about social interaction inside religious institutions as being able to drive volunteering forward - compared to privatized religion, which could provide a moral fulfillment, but does not act as an impulse to help others or become part of a network. Privatized religion is associated to bonding, too, to the emotional dimension of religion - with the individual ritual in the center of preoccupations: People can pray or construct their own form of getting in contact with the divinity outside the collective. Scholars have assessed the potential of such religious forms of manifestation for increasing civic engagement differently: Some did not find relevant causal connections (e.g. Hill and den Dulk, 2013), whereas others point to the frequency of prayer as a catalyst for involving in community associations (see Loveland et al. 2005, p. 10). The last moral religious aspect, of behavior (the so-called altruistic belief), was also seen differently in the literature: Altruism was found to be an important psychological factor to motivate civic participation (Wilson and Musick 1997a, 1997b; Oesterle, Kirkpatrick Johnson and Mortimer, 2004): This positive relation between altruistic belief and volunteering may seem tautological or self-evident, but there are studies assessing less connectivity between personal values and becoming active in the neighborhood - placing, again, the accent on socializing inside religious communities (e.g. Ruiter and de Graaf 2006, p. 193; Bekkers 2003).

Case study and methods

We performed a case study among young people to find out the extent to which they are potentially motivated by religious views and principles in their decision to become active as volunteers. We took a local project in Timișoara into account, entitled “Young people decide” (2010-2014), set up by the administration with the help of nongovernmental associations and schools. The objective was to attract students towards volunteering and to stimulate them into coming with own initiatives of improving the quality of life in their neighborhoods. Coordinated by teachers, adolescents had to propose plans and ideas by means of which parts of certain neighborhoods could

become the scenes of environmental, cultural or social projects. An annual competition was set up between schools and the best projects were rewarded and implemented. The idea was brought to Timișoara from Northern Italy (Piemont), following a bilateral cooperation.

For this article, we talked to several former students engaged in the project, and experts (Table A2). We wanted to compare the theory exposed earlier with the empirical findings by means of collecting the data through interviews (Appendix A2.1) and an interpretative approach based on memos, analytical notes, coding the information (Appendix A2.2) and designing situational maps (Appendix A2.3) of the identified elements (see, for instance, Parameswaran, Ozawa-Kirk and Latendresse, 2019; Struebing, 2013; Clarke, 2005; Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Results

The interpretation revealed an estrangement of young people from the Church in the Orthodox context, and individualized views on religion and spirituality. Many respondents referred to their decisions as being based on moral principles acquired in personal circumstances. The religious institutions or communities had very little role to play as a motivational factor for volunteering. The emotional and cognitive religious dimensions (bonding and belief) were placed inside the frame of a personal vision upon the divinity. Interviewees spoke about agnosticism, about belief without religious connotations and about spirituality manifested in individual, particular circumstances - less related to the element of belonging to certain communities, to religious teachings or doctrines. The “spiritual freelancers” are young people orientated towards spirituality in its intrinsic, interpretative and symbolic way of manifestation: with a flexible/questioning and/or autonomous way of conceiving the divinity, compared to the literal and dogmatic manner (Saroglou, 2011). This finding led us to the concept of invisible religion, introduced by Luckmann (1967) - where the privatized spiritual life involves a detachment from traditional religious models and rituals and the construction of a personal image of the supernatural force. With respect to the last religious dimension, of moral behavior, there are standards and values like altruism, generosity, truth, justice

and reciprocity - which respondents have been talking about and have partially placed in connection to religious circumstances in their past. Some of them spoke about moral values generated by religious teachings and able to motivate their behavior in the direction of volunteering.

The overall analysis showed a privatization of spiritual life among young people in Romania, doubled by moral standards derived from personal circumstances, sometimes with religious connotations (one respondent mentioned, for instance, religion classes in school as influencing her personality). Bonding (prayer, devotionism, private rituals) and belief - but in a rather asocial, heterodox manner - are able to drive young people towards volunteering, through the moral (sometimes associated to the religious) dimension of behavior. Belonging to religious communities, on the other hand, appeared as an insignificant motivational factor.

Why not participate anymore?

The final focus of the dissertation lies on motives determining participants to retract from deliberative processes. We found it important to stress this aspect - as the vast majority of studies on citizen participation explores the determinants of engagement and its connections to the efficiency of participatory mechanisms.

Literature review

By exploring previous research on the subject for this third article, we found out that non-response in survey research (Fitzgerald, Gottschalk, & Moffitt, 1998; Uhrig, 2008) and attrition have predominantly been studied in the phases of recruitment; organization of experiments has also been performed in recent years (Caluwaerts & Ugarizza, 2012; Hansen, 2004) - whereas the exploration of reasons for which citizens decide to step out from long-term participatory and deliberative procedures has less been in the attention of scholars. There is research on refusal to take part, or attrition, too, but it takes short-term deliberative processes into account (e.g. Jacquet, 2017; Karjalainen & Rapeli, 2014; Mutz, 2006). According to Jacquet, for instance (2017, p. 9), there are six main "logics of non-participation": concentration on the private sphere, internal

inefficacy, public meetings avoidance, conflict of schedule, political alienation and mini-public's lack of impact. Other motives refer to weak connections between politics and community, social categorization (differences in terms of age, income, education), the element of self-selection, financial stimulation, duration of the process, satisfaction towards the community, rootedness in the community and the personal orientation and attitude (altruism vs. individualism). All these possibilities find their correspondence in our analysis, with the exception of concentration on the private sphere, conflict of schedule and public meeting avoidance. An additional factor, of moral rewards, revealed its importance mainly among young people and it completes the scheme of argumentation.

Case study and methods

In this study, we looked at a consultative system built in Timișoara in 2003. Specifically, citizens' committees in different parts of the town were set up within a top down type of initiative and, thus, the neighborhood consultative councils, with the aim of contributing to the local decision making process, were about to start their existence. This form of participatory and consultative mechanism is part of the so-called democratic innovations, extensively studied in the scientific literature. Among the forms of such innovations, we mention the popular assemblies, direct legislation, mini-publics and e-democracy (Smith, 2009). The consultative councils in Timișoara are related to popular assemblies and to mini-publics, being designed to collaborate with the administration for a long period of time inside a participatory governance type of politics. They can be included in the category of democratic innovations, as their implementation was meant "to increase and deepen citizen participation in the political decision-making process" (Smith, 2009, p. 1).

These local citizen councils began to function in Timișoara in 2003, after an idea borrowed from the French twinned city of Mulhouse, where this system had proven its efficiency. During the course of several years, such an organization took shape in each of the 19 neighborhoods of the town, with the concrete logistic support of the City. Inhabitants were invited to gather and build an informal organization, elect their

representatives and start cooperating with local institutions, mainly for approaching concrete problems in their neighborhoods - related to infrastructure, traffic, public transportation, environment, playgrounds, public illuminating, schools etc. Their mission was to “become more active in formulating solutions for the problems they are confronting” (Consiliul Local Timișoara, 2003). Meetings took place almost weekly, between representatives of the local administration and specialists from different other institutions, and citizens. Usually, sessions took place inside a school room in the neighborhood and an average of 20 to 30 people was present. Each neighborhood council had at least one meeting in three months and they were also monitoring the way problems were being approached and what solutions had been identified. A permanent communication was set up between the neighborhood council's elected presidents/vice-presidents/secretaries, and a representative of the City Hall. The administrative and political leaders were also meeting the citizens periodically and the dialogue soon started to show its results: Besides concrete works in the neighborhoods, there were cultural events being put into practice, community newspapers and websites were founded for a better information of the inhabitants, and international cooperation with partner cities was also a focus of the activities. The citizens` organizations in Timișoara became known abroad and the system was rewarded on the national and international level for its innovative components.

According to the analysis of administrative documents, to the group discussion and the five interviews we have carried out with people involved in the local consultative procedures (Appendix A3.1), starting with 2014-2015 the number of meetings in the neighborhoods and the activities in general gradually reduced. Many people decided to take a step back and retreat from the activities. The research was performed with the aim of finding out what were the main factors determining people to give up volunteering - many of them, after several years in which they had occupied a leading function in these committees and were already known among the inhabitants in their areas. The interpretation of the data was structured using analytical notes, codes (Appendix A3.3) and situation maps (Appendix A3.2). We compared the findings with the elements identified in the literature as having an impact on attrition - even if these were

approached under different circumstances (mainly regarding short-term deliberative processes, as mentioned before).

Results

Findings of this article first showed that people tend to retreat from long-term participatory and deliberative processes when these systems use the self-selection procedure - that is, when citizens are the only ones to decide who becomes involved and for how long: Participatory mechanisms are in general voluntary and optional; constant participation, for several years, is a difficult objective to follow, but it could be pursued by means of innovative solutions. Engagement is also dependent on the results / the efficiency of the process on the concrete public policies: Lack of impact is a significant cause for attrition - if participants perceive their activities as having less or no influence on the public decisions, they will decide to take a step back. Equally important are the connections between politics and community - between citizens, administrators and politicians: If the quantity and quality of the communication diminish, trust decreases, too, and cooperation becomes more difficult.

Secondly, results revealed the significance of the personal orientation towards neighbors and of the satisfaction with the community: Participants with more altruistic attitudes and the ones connected to their community are more likely to stay on board, than the ones who act rather individualistically and do not develop a personal relation to the place they live or work in. Last, but not least, the discussions carried out with younger people showed the relevance of moral rewards (Table A3). Along with experts we have interviewed, students told us that adults setting up participatory and consultative procedures were less careful for acknowledging their involvement: Young people thus perceived their voluntary actions as being insufficiently appreciated - not with respect to the impact on public policies, but on the moral level. They felt their efforts of contributing to strengthening local democracy should have been valued and recognized more. Students spoke about some teachers blocking their freedom of expression and offering them little opportunities for personal manifestation. One of the experts - a writer and professor, involved in several projects related to civic engagement

among young people, further observed the negative effects deriving from lack of appreciation (M.O., interview, March 6, 2015): “There is no place for arrogance here (...) Suffering is profound and the effect will be horrible. When you build democracy, you are not allowed to make mistakes. The second time, people won’t get involved anymore”.

Discussion and conclusions

The objective of the dissertation was, on one hand, to study potential religious motivations in connection to civic and political activism, and, on the other, to establish reasons for which people decide to retreat from voluntary activities. We did not focus solely on spiritual and religious implications on participation, but also on questioning the efficiency of long-term participatory processes. We looked at previous literature on religious perceptions and protest behavior, on religious motivations for civic engagement in the community, and on reasons determining people to step out from consultative deliberative procedures. The aim was to bring a new theoretical input to the existing research, in the context of an Eastern European Orthodox society where these potential connections were approached in a marginal manner. Although the articles focused on events from the past (a possible source of memory biases and altered perceptions), we have asked detailed questions during discussions and obtained a relevant view upon the situation from the time respondents had lived the events. The quality, meaning and profoundness of the obtained data, characteristic for qualitative works, compensate its lower level of representativeness and generalizability. The mixed samples did not exclusively aim at an age category, but this strategy provided a more comprehensive view on the complex circumstances of the analyzed social practices.

Findings showed that the most significant religious perception motivating demonstrators against an authoritarian regime is the one of being supported by the divinity. When it comes to young people’s civic engagement in the community, the moral attitude is partially inspired by religious teachings and traditions and can function as a catalyst. Demotivation of volunteers and taking a step back after being civically active for a long time is mainly determined by weak connections between politics and community, self-

selection and, mostly among young people, lack of moral rewards. In the first article, interviewees were people mostly in their twenties at the time of the Romanian revolution, who were remembering their perceptions from the moments the events had been taking place. The target group in the study regarding religious motivations for civic engagement was formed by actual young adults, who spoke about their perceptions from the time they were adolescents; experts came with additional valuable knowledge. In the third study, we had a mix of interviewees - experts, members of neighborhood consultative councils and pupils involved in community projects.

There are similarities to be revealed in terms of reasons of young people for getting civically and politically engaged: Many of the respondents who demonstrated and were arrested in the Romanian anti-communist revolution were less or not religious at that time; they were not attending church and were generally connected to the religious phenomenon on a limited scale. Nevertheless, they felt the presence of the divine pushing them from behind; the spiritual and religious motivation was a secondary, but determinant incentive to protest. Moreover, they were orientated towards re-establishing a procedural justice, more than towards the distributive part of how they were treated: This means that the moral aspects of grievances, such as lack of freedom and dignity, were more important than the material living standard. These results are coupled with the predominant affirmations of young volunteers - the "spiritual freelancers" - detached from traditional religious rules, rituals, values and behavior, but orientated towards an inner, private, invisible spiritual life, and towards moral rewards; the question of material remuneration did not come along during the studies involving volunteers in the community, just as material grievances occupied the last place among demonstrators' reasons to protest. All in one, it can be concluded that, in the Eastern European Orthodox realm, even non- or less religious young people can be encouraged by the divinity, by the supernatural, by "the Indefinable something", to become politically active against a dictatorial regime, and that they are more likely to follow moral interests, than material ones. Non-religious young people engaging in civic activities in the community are, likewise, indirectly influenced by religion to volunteer, in the form of an intrinsic spirituality with potential religious roots - determining their moral attitudes and behavior;

and they are motivated by recompense in the form of moral appreciation: need for freedom of expression, for dignity, recognition and fairness - for procedural justice.

The findings of this dissertation come with theoretical and empirical implications. On the theoretical level, they add value to the existing scientific argumentation by the main finding detailed above, that Orthodox young people (practitioners and non-practitioners alike) are motivated by inner religious impulses to become politically and civically active - starting a protest and engaging in the community: First, by proving the relevance of perceiving the divinity's encouragement for the decision to protest, the research completes previous studies referring to Protestants in the West and Muslims in the Arab world - where demonstrators' religious motivations were studied without looking at this particular perception. Second, the indirect potential of individual religious motivations for volunteering (moral behavior rooted in religious values) is being emphasized in contrast to previous findings focusing on the social dimension of religious activity. And third, results prove the need for moral appreciation / procedural justice as a spiritual motivation to protest and to become civically engaged - a factor marginally explored in the literature before and with no references to the Orthodox cultural context.

Implications on the practical level refer to institutions dealing with civic participation among youth being able to make use of the results, when taking motivational factors into account in the process of building their strategies and objectives. Future research on religious motivations for civic engagement and political participation can be performed in a comparative manner, with a focus on Christian Protestants, Catholics and Orthodox, for instance, and can be extended to different geographical areas than Europe and the Western world. It could take mixed methods into account - using standardized questionnaires and completing the procedure with interviews, for a more extensive and detailed view upon a growingly relevant research subject.

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Tables and Appendices

Table A1. An Overview of the Respondents' Profiles

No.	Initials	Interview date	Gender	Birth decade	Level of education	Level of faith
1.	R.H.	12.12.2018	Male	1950-1959	N/A	N/A
2.	B.Z.	16.01.2019	Male	1970-1979	Technical studies graduate	High
3.	B.K.	17.01.2019	Male	N/A	N/A	High
4.	D.V.	23.01.2019	Male	1950-1959	High-school graduate	High
5.	F.T.	23.01.2019	Male	1950-1959	Technical studies graduate	High
6.	C.E..	29.01.2019	Female	1960-1969	College student	Low
7.	F.K.	29.01.2019	Male	1950-1959	College graduate	Moderate
8.	F.H.	29.01.2019	Female	1950-1959	College graduate	Moderate
9.	G.F.	31.01.2019	Female	1950-1959	High-school graduate	High
10.	G.L.	31.01.2019	Male	1950-1959	Technical studies graduate	High
11.	C.B.	31.01.2019	Male	1970-1979	High-school student	High
12.	F.W.	31.01.2019	Male	1960-1969	High-school graduate	Moderate
13.	Z.I.	01.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	Technical studies graduate	Moderate
14.	I.P.	01.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	College graduate	High
15.	H.G.	01.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	Technical studies graduate	High
16.	L.F.	04.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	Technical studies graduate	High
17.	B.N.	04.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	Technical studies graduate	Very high
18.	T.G.	04.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	Technical studies graduate	High
19.	M.A.	05.02.2019	Male	1970-1979	High-school student	Very high
20.	M.C.	07.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	Technical studies graduate	High
21.	N.B.	08.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	High-school graduate	Not a believer
22.	O.G.	08.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	Sec. school graduate	Very high
23.	M.S.	09.02.2019	Female	1960-1969	Technical studies graduate	Low
24.	P.O.	11.02.2019	Male	1940-1949	Technical studies graduate	High

25.	R.P.	12.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	Technical studies graduate	Not a believer
26.	P.V.	12.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	High-school graduate	Moderate
27.	J.B.	13.02.2019	Male	1950-1959	High-school graduate	High
28.	A.V.	13.02.2019	Female	1960-1969	High-school graduate	Very high
29.	R.E.	13.02.2019	Male	1940-1949	College graduate	Very high
30.	T.R.	14.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	Technical studies graduate	High
31.	D.A.	15.02.2019	Male	1940-1949	College graduate	High
32.	L.M.	15.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	College student	High
33.	S.T.	15.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	High-school graduate	Low
34.	S.V.	15.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	High-school graduate	Low
35.	T.U.	15.02.2019	Male	1950-1959	N/A	N/A
35.	S.C.	18.02.2019	Female	1960-1969	High-school graduate	Very high
37.	S.J.	18.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	High-school graduate	High
38.	C.J.	19.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	College student	Very high
39.	P.L.	19.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	Sec. school student	Moderate
40.	F.N.	20.02.2019	Male	1940-1949	High-school graduate	Moderate
41.	F.O.	20.02.2019	Male	1940-1949	College graduate	Not a believer
42.	K.B.	21.02.2019	Male	1950-1959	College graduate	Moderate
43.	C.I.	22.02.2019	Male	1940-1949	College graduate	Moderate
44.	C.H.	23.02.2019	Male	1960-1969	High-school student	Moderate
45.	I.A.	23.02.2019	Male	1940-1949	Sec. school graduate	Low

Appendix A1.1. The Interview Guide

- What were your main reasons for deciding to go out on the streets and protest in 1989?
- To what extent did you consider yourself a religious believer at that time?
- How do you assess the connections between your religious perceptions at that time and the decision to demonstrate?
- To what extent did you think your religious belief was threatened by the communist regime?
- Did you find the authorities in Romania sinful, or rather immoral, and why?
- How far did you think the divinity had a plan during the revolution, which you were called to fulfill?
- In what way did you feel supported or encouraged by God during the protest?

Appendix A1.2. The Coding Scheme

Belief threatened	Estrangement from Church	Social restrictions
	Isolation	Blackmail
	Manipulation	Freedom of thought
Fight against sinfulness	Immorality	Procedural justice
	Dignity	Oppressiveness
	Humiliation	Hypocrisy
Fulfillment of God's plan	Destiny	Tension
	Favorable circumstances	Weather
	Providence	Collective prayers
Support from the divinity	Courage	Certainty
	Personification	Energy
	Trust	Revelation

Table A2. Overview of the Interviewees

Initials	Gender	Age	Denomination	Role	Interview date	Interview mode
M.O.	Male	61	Orthodox	Expert	6 March 2015	On site (working place)
M.D.	Female	38	Orthodox	Expert	10 March 2015	On site (working place)
A.D.	Female	22	Orthodox	Participant	10 October 2018	E-mail
A.S.	Female	25	Orthodox	Participant	13 October 18	Phone
M.P.	Male	22	Neoprottestant	Participant	23 October 2018	E-mail
C.F.	Male	24	No denomination	Participant	13 November 2018	E-mail
M.N.	Female	25	Orthodox	Participant	14 November 2018	E-mail
C.A.	Male	24	Greek Catholic	Participant	22 November 2018	Phone
A.C.	Female	24	Orthodox	Participant	23 November 2018	E-mail
A.J.	Male	24	Orthodox	Participant	26 November 2018	Phone
O.L.	Male	25	Orthodox	Participant	26 November 2018	Phone
P.N.	Female	21	Orthodox	Participant	28 November 2018	Phone
R.U.	Female	22	Orthodox	Participant	15 January 2019	E-mail

Appendix A2.1. Interview Guide

- What were your main reasons for getting involved in the project “Young people decide!”?
- How do you appreciate your connections to religion during the time you were engaged in the project?
- To what extent did you consider yourself a believer in that period?
- After finishing high-school, in what way did you take part in volunteering activities?
- If you engaged in volunteering after finishing high-school, what were your motivations?
- To what extent do you consider yourself a religious believer today?
- How would you assess your current connections to religion and spirituality?

Appendix A2.2. Coding Scheme

Belonging	Virtually no connection to volunteering An “interesting” activity Observation of rituals Singing in the choir Family component
Belief	Rebellion Agnosticism Supernatural force Moral teachings Uncertainty
Bonding	“Invisible” spirituality Private prayer Peace Guidance Finding God everywhere
Behavior	Moral character Karma Reciprocity Principles Metaphysical interests

Appendix A2.3. Situation Map

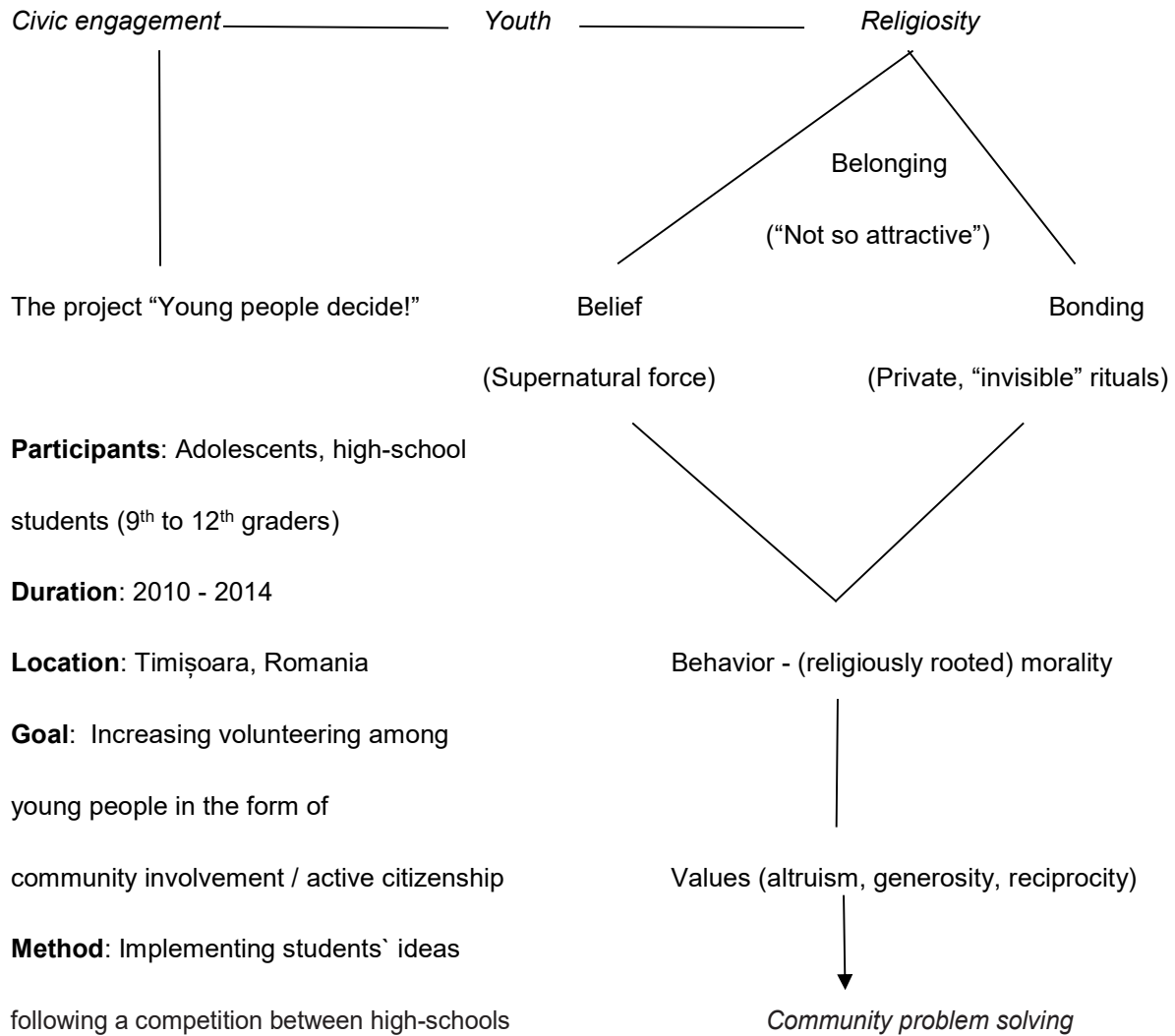


Table A3. Reasons for Attrition in Long-term Deliberative Processes

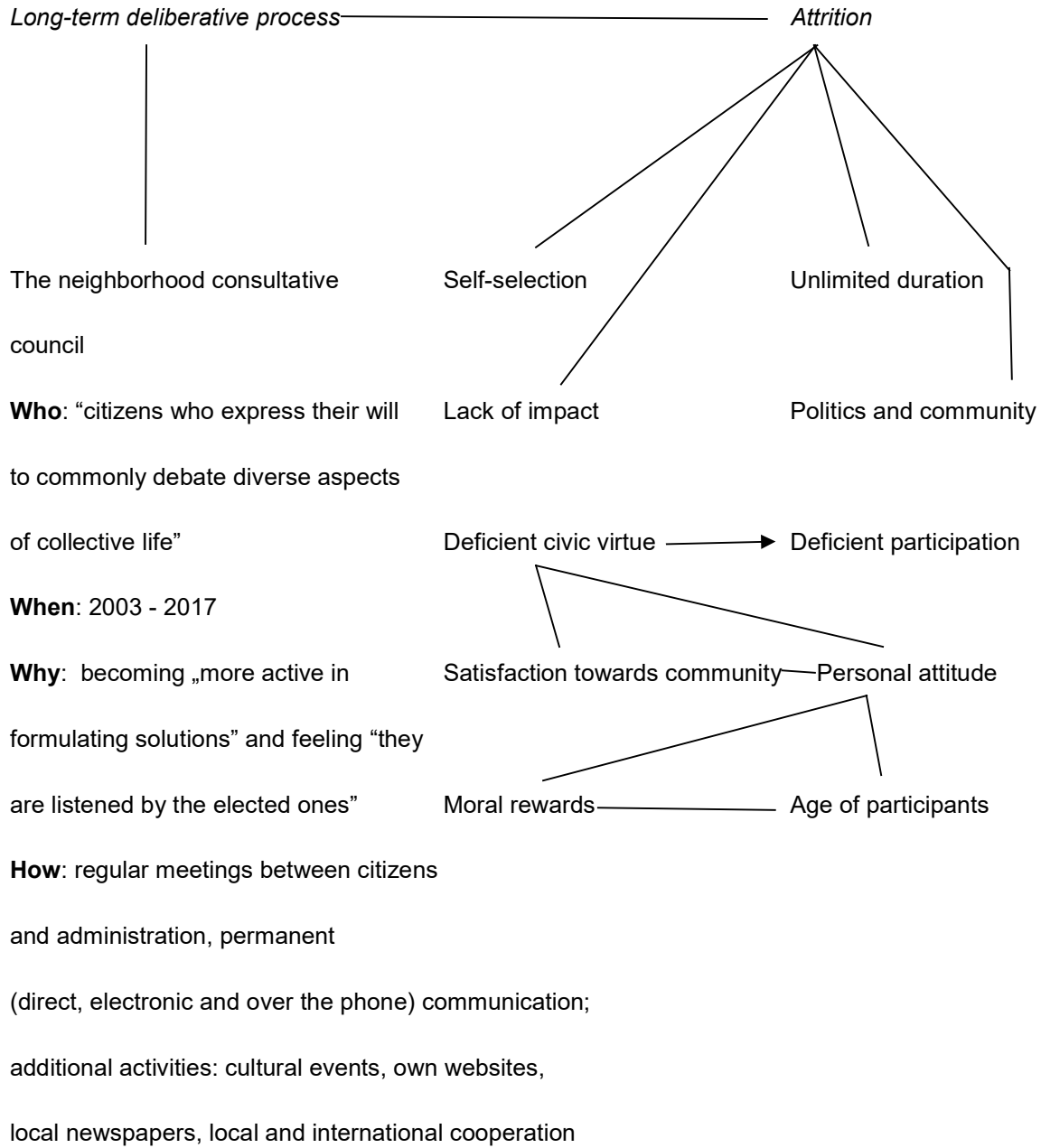
Argument	Description	Occurrence during the empirical research
Self-selection	The opportunity to drop out at any stage of the process	Predominantly
Duration of the process	A longer project tends to eliminate active people; only „diehards“ continue	Predominantly
Lack of impact	The administration's capacity to respond to demands by converting ideas into public policies	Predominantly
Politics and community	Close relations between authority and beneficiaries create efficient participatory mechanisms	Predominantly
Satisfaction towards the community	Collective content leads to neighboring, which produces higher levels of participation	Often
Personal orientation/ attitude	Accent on social contribution, rather than self-interest, increases participation	Often
Moral rewards	Appreciation / recognition of voluntary efforts	Often (especially with respect to young people)
Age differences	Young people tend to stay aside; older and middle-aged citizens form the majority of participants	Often
Social differences	Persons with higher income and education are more likely to participate	Less often
Rootedness	Higher probability for „old-timers“ / enrooted inhabitants to participate	Less often
Financial	Remuneration	Not the case

stimulation		
Political estrangement	Inveterate lack of trust and the feeling of manipulation reduce public engagement	Less often
Internal inefficacies	Appropriate design of debates as a condition for „successful participatory procedures“	Less often

Appendix A3.1. Interview Guide

- You were a very active person, who engaged in voluntary activities in the neighborhood. How do you think things evolved after 2011-2012?
- What is your perception on the activity of your neighborhood consultative council and of the other ones in the city, during the past years?
- What are the negative points in the evolution of neighborhood councils in the last years and why?
- What are the positive things, what do you think changed for the better, regarding the cooperation between citizens` councils and the administration?
- What solutions and what means of improvement do you see, regarding the problems you identify in the activities of citizens` organizations? I refer to organizational and communicational dysfunctions inside the council and in the cooperation with the administration.
- How could people be motivated to participate more in the activities of neighborhood consultative councils?

Appendix A3.2. Situation Map



Appendix A3.3. Coding Scheme

Self-selection	Opposed to random selection Characteristic for popular assemblies Structure determined by beneficiaries Freedom of “expressing your will” Freedom of “changing your mind” anytime
Duration of the process	Loss of focus and interest Lack of innovative elements Repetitive actions Saturation “Diehards” - the only ones to commit
Lack of impact	Effect on public policies Relevance of investments Complexity of public investments Credibility Unfulfilled expectations
Politics and community	Decision-makers and beneficiaries Communication Trust Responsibility Importance of the moderator

Publications

A1. “Driven by the ‘Indefinable Something’: How Religious Perceptions Motivate Political Protests”

Author: Adrian Schiffbeck

Published in: *Politics, Religion & Ideology* (2021), 22:1, pp. 103-121

Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2021.1892648>

A2. “The spiritual «freelancers»: Young people, religiosity and community problem solving”

Author: Adrian Schiffbeck

Published in: *Scientia Moralitas. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* (2020), 5:1, pp. 131-152

Available from: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3959810>

A3. “Attrition in long-term deliberative processes. The neighborhood consultative councils in Timisoara”

Author: Adrian Schiffbeck

Published in: *Contemporary Politics* (2019), 25:1, pp. 94-110

Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2018.1550707>

Versicherung (gem. § 4 Abs. 3 Satz 1 Nr. 5 PromO):

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Passau, den 25.03.2021

Adrian Schiffbeck