Spirituality and Values:
Similarities and Differences Across Three
Hungarian Communities

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The present master's thesis compares meanings and interpretations of spirituality, as well as its relation to values, between members of three Hungarian communities: two religious - a Christian and a Buddhist - and one secular (work) community.

The study considers how spirituality is related to other values in a religious and non-religious context. A large proportion of theory and research uses the terms spirituality and religiosity with similar meanings, while others attribute to religiosity more conservative and collective values, and to spirituality more personal and less formal characteristics and therefore less tradition and more self-direction. Values studied here are those of Schwartz's value theory (1992).

Participants were 44 Hungarians, members in either a Christian or a Buddhist religious, or one non-religious work community from the field of IT. The study made use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Results revealed differences as well as similarities between the three communities. Christians differed the most in terms of spirituality and values, while Buddhists were somewhat closer to secular people who showed more openness and a higher personal focus. In the same time, many similarities were observed alongside the differences. Participants emphasised the relational dimension of spirituality, either to something or someone greater (like God or Nature), or to other people. Consequently, non-material beliefs and self-transcendence values (mostly benevolence and to some degree, universalism) were primarily associated to spirituality, whether religious or non-religious.

Quantitative results indicated higher spirituality and conservation value levels for Christians, as well as lower self-enhancement and openness levels. However, self-transcendence values demonstrated no significant differences between the three communities. Spirituality seems to be influenced by an interaction between active community membership and self-transcendence values, as well as by a preference for conservative values over openness ones. Word associations showed mostly benevolence, safety and tradition values for Christians, openness, flexibility and self-direction for Buddhists, and for the IT group, a mix of benevolence, self-direction, but also conformity and openness values. The qualitative content analysis revealed three main categories of defining spirituality for each community: spiritual experiences seen as life-impacting, spirituality viewed in terms of religious and spiritual determinants, and spirituality related to personal growth. Values were identified along three main dimensions as well: benevolence, transcendence and personal focus.

The findings are discussed in light of methodological concerns and socio-cultural implications. The results seem to indicate that interreligious dialogue is possible, especially through shared self-transcendence values. Further research would be needed to assist this process with empirical information on how this communication can be best accomplished.
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1 Introduction

This study intends to explore meanings and interpretations of spirituality as a religious and non-religious concept, and its relationship to values. More specifically, I attempt to investigate possible similarities and differences relative to the above mentioned concepts between two different religious, and one secular (work) community in Hungary.

Though spirituality is not a popular topic in itself in research, when related to religion and values, it carries a potential for conflict and violence. That makes it a concept which should not be ignored, especially in times of economic difficulties when conflicts become more prevalent. Religiously motivated terrorism, for instance, has become a timely and unfortunately worldwide danger. In a conflict of values, spirituality and religiosity can serve as both triggers and de-escalating factors. Religions have also the potential for ameliorating religiously and culturally charged national or international conflicts by mediating and conciliating them (Weingardt, 2008). To accomplish that, however, there is a need for a dialogue between religions embracing diverse religiosities and spiritualities, where values become essential due to their importance in people’s lives and relationships. For an efficient communication, it becomes important to understand what spirituality means for different people and different religions, in order to reduce misunderstandings and increase collaborative action. However, for finding common standards of communication, differences should be recognised.

This study aims to assist in the clarification of how the concepts of spirituality and religiosity are perceived by different people and how they relate to values. In the following section (chapter 2), the theoretical concepts of spirituality, values and religiosity are presented. Different meanings associated to spirituality and religiousness, as well as theories of spirituality, will be discussed. Value interrelationships based on Schwartz’s value theory (1992) and empirical findings from this research area will be investigated in relation to both personal characteristics and communities. Finally, value priorities of the two religions from the study- Christianity and Buddhism- will be approached. In chapter 3, following the theoretical background, the research questions and hypotheses will be outlined. As this research made use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods, the research questions will be addressed separately for
each. The subsequent section, chapter 4, will detail the methodology, including information about participants, research instruments and analytical strategies for the two different types of data. Chapter 5 will present the results of the quantitative analysis, as well as the qualitative findings and their analysing process. Discussion in chapter 6 will summarise the results in the light of the theory, and reflect on its limitations but also on its contributions. Reliability and validity issues will be addressed, and some suggestions for future research will be presented.

2 Theoretical Background

The present master’s thesis revolves around what values are associated to spirituality in a religious and non-religious context, in order to understand what their similarities and differences are. I hope that, by finding some kind of an answer to this question, it will help in clarifying the meaning of spirituality and spiritual values as they are used in the scientific literature as well as in the everyday life. In the following section I will present a theoretical background to the different notions of the research, as well as their relationship with each other so as to be able to advance my research questions and hypotheses. The concept of spirituality and other values are based on Schwartz’s value theory (1992) and the research done in this area. I try to explore different understandings and conceptualisations of spirituality. The meaning of spirituality as understood by people participating in the study is a broad question which I will try to address primarily through the qualitative analysis of the participants’ answers. Although not the same in the social science literature, in this study the terms “community” and “group” will be used interchangeably and with the same meaning, because the participants who are members of one of the three communities that are studied here, are also group members within this sample.

2.1. Spirituality and Values

2.1.1 Schwartz’s values theory and the concept of spirituality

Values have always played an important role in the nature of the individual and his / her relationship to the society. Both Dewey (1939) in his theory of pragmatism, and Parsons (1937) in his theory of action, viewed values as essential contributors to their conclusions. Rokeach (1973, 1979) brought the concept of values into modern focus,
based on which Schwartz (1992) developed his widely known model of value priorities (Hitlin, 2003).

Schwartz (1992, p.1) defined values as “criteria people use to select and justify actions and evaluate people (including the self) and events”. They are guiding principles which serve different interests and have different types and contents. Though individuals and groups may differ in the relative importance they attribute to values, thus having different value priorities, the nature and structure of values is universal and recognizable in all cultures (Schwartz, 1992, 2012).

In his value model, Schwartz (1992) identified 56 single values which can be divided into ten motivational types. These can be compatible or conflicting with each other, forming a two-dimensional continuum. Values belonging to the same value dimension are compatible with each other, which means that they partly measure similar contents (e.g., security and conformity, both focusing on protection of order and harmony in relations). Values from opposite dimensions conflict with one another (e.g. benevolence and power: acceptance of and concern for others opposes the pursuit of own success and dominance over others). The structure of values refers to these dynamic relations of conflict and congruence between values. Adjacent value types are most compatible—the greater the distance around the circular order, the greater the conflict. On the one end, we find the value dimension Openness-to-Change vs. Conservation. Openness-to-Change contains the values hedonism, stimulation and self-direction (compatible with each other), which conflicts with the Conservation values (conformity, tradition, security). Openness values emphasise independent thought, feelings and actions as well as readiness for new experience, while Conservation values rest upon self-restriction, order and resistance to change. On the other end stands the dimension Self-Transcendence against Self-Enhancement. Self-Transcendence values (universalism and benevolence) are in conflict with values belonging to Self-Enhancement (power, achievement). Self-Enhancement accentuates pursuit of self-interest, whereas Self-Transcendence values affirm concern for the welfare and interests of others. Thus, another level of the dynamic relations of values refers to the differentiation between values which serve individual interests, forming one set of adjacent regions (power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction) and values pursuing collective interests (benevolence, tradition, conformity). Universalism and security enforce both, and can be found at the boundary between the two types of interests.
The principal motivational goals of the different values are as follows: power centres around social status, prestige, and dominance, relating to achievement which accentuates personal success through social competence. Hedonism refers to enjoyment, pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself, standing close to stimulation which features excitement, novelty and challenge in life. Self-direction is defined by independence of thought and action, freedom of choice and exploration. Universalism emphasises understanding, tolerance, appreciation for the welfare of all people and nature, being a mature value type, whereas benevolence stays close, but remains still different by the concern for the welfare of close ones, with whom one is frequent contact (the “in-group”). Conformity refers to self-restraint of actions and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social norms, while tradition accentuates respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas of one’s traditional culture and religion. Lastly, security focuses on safety, harmony and stability on a societal level as well as on the level of personal relationships and the self (Schwartz, 1992.).

Cross-cultural research demonstrated that the relative importance attributed to values across societies is very similar. In most nations studied, benevolence, universalism and self-direction values can be found at the top of the value hierarchy, while power,
tradition and stimulation are at the bottom. This suggests that the aspects of human nature responsible for shaping individual value priorities are widely shared across cultures (Schwartz, 2012).

The eleventh value type, spirituality, is not included in Schwartz’s original model of value types because, according to his results, it is not universal in character, demonstrating a wide variety of meanings associated. However, it can be used in unicultural studies. Schwartz (1992, p. 10-11) referred to spirituality as the manifestation of the basic human need to endow life with meaning, with the motivational goal to transcend everyday reality. Its distinctive features are inner harmony, meaning of life and a spiritual life, having substantial differences in meanings across individuals and groups (Schwartz & Husimans, 1995). Though spiritual values take varying forms for different people, they also show some coherence, for instance, in the contact with the supernatural, unity with nature, detachment from material cares and personal desires, social action on behalf of the in-group or discovering the true “self”. Some of these values coincide with values from the realm of universalism, benevolence, and somewhat those of self-direction, placing spirituality somewhere along the self-transcendence dimension, also touching on openness and perhaps paradoxically on conservation as well. Interestingly, these form the basis of differentiation but also conversion of different forms of spiritual values, whether related or not to religiosity. According to Schwartz (1992, 1995), spirituality is compatible with universalism, benevolence, and partly with tradition and conformity, and conflicts with hedonism, power and achievement, because the search for meaning through transcendence is in contradiction with pursuing of material and sensual rewards (see also Myyry & Helkama, 2001). Finding meaning in life seems thus to at least partly coincide with self-transcendence through concern for others. (Schwartz, 1992, p. 38). In his study with Finnish pupils, Verkasalo (1996) placed spirituality between the values universalism and benevolence. Schwartz (1992, p. 13) suggested that spirituality could be placed in the collective region within the value content structure, as its potential values serve mainly collective interests. I would partly argue with this standpoint, and would attribute spirituality both collective and individual characteristics, similarly to universalism or security. Some forms of spirituality seem closely related to openness values such as self-direction, and are more focused on the self than on others, therefore they primarily serve orientedness towards one’s self.
As highlighted above, an important question regards the meanings associated to concepts and values. For example, the notion “life after death” can be understood as either “resurrection” or “going to heaven” (Christian, theistic interpretation - but also Buddhist interpretation, in a different manner), as “reincarnation” (typically Buddhist interpretation) or the spirit otherwise “living on” (New Age and other non-religious spiritual streams’ interpretation). Similarly, the “belief in a soul” is also common to mainstream churches as well as to alternative spiritual orientations. The “belief in God” can hide a variety of meanings, from the Christian, the Jewish or the Islam God to the “God within”, shared by a number of modern spiritual communities (Houtman et al., 2009).

2.1.2 Meanings of spirituality

Defining spirituality can be a challenging pursuit. Spirituality is a notion which is often related to religiosity, being considered at the same time a partially distinct “new psychological reality” (Saroglou & Muñoz-Garcia, 2008, p. 88). Most of the scientific articles about spirituality and religiousness handle these concepts with relative flexibility in their meaning. They are often referred to as revolving around the same or very similar main ideas, and are often used interchangeably (Zinnbauer et al. 1997, p.550). They imply an individual or collective “search for transcendent meaning” (Astrow, Puchalsky & Sulmasy, 2001, p. 285), “the experience or expression of the sacred” (adapted from Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 1967), a quest for the meaning of life and a yearning for connectedness to God, the universe or all life (Zinnbauer, Pargament & Scott, 1999, pp. 895, 913). The aspiration to connect to and comprehend what is beyond the material world is the common core - the difference is the way spirituality and religiosity relate to it. The point of reference of these two notions plays an important role in their distinction as well, as all are matters which can be related to personal and collective or social levels, meanings and values in the same time. They have common values like respect, love, or compassion, but can have several different or even antithetic values like self-direction, tradition or universalism. As I will elaborate this idea further on in the following subchapters, classic religiousness is more focused on religious rituals and in-group values, while spirituality is more loose in the adherence to shared ideas and values, is more individualistic and liberal, but still has a need for some kind of order and practices (Saroglou & Muñoz-Garcia, 2008). The former often relates to the sacred outside of the individual- with the mentioning that not
all religions believe in a God, but they all believe in the sacred-, whereas the latter focuses on the sacred “within”.

In the past decades, especially in the Western countries and Central / Western Europe there has been a growing tendency to a secularisation of religiousness towards a more gnostic and areligious spirituality (Hill et al., 2000). At the same time, however, recent studies show that different concepts and ideas are used with similar meaning in case of both (Houtman, Aupers & Heelas, 2009). Both spirituality and religiousness- which can be and is often related to religion-, are related systems of meaning through which we seek to understand our reason for being and our place in the universe.

The lack of clear boundaries in defining and understanding the concepts of spirituality and religiosity makes them more difficult to assess. Furthermore, differentiating between religion and religiousness raises new questions as well. The separating line between spirituality and religiousness is even “fuzzier” because they appear to be different concepts but are not fully independent, and they are not operationalised explicitly (Zinnbauer et al., 1997). As an example, Zinnbauer et al. mention possible value conflicts between mental health professionals who separate the two concepts and clients who integrate them (p. 562). Which leads to an interesting question: are they to be separated or integrated? Do their many different forms and approaches refer to the same contents and meanings or are they different concepts altogether?

The traditional approach presented religiosity and spirituality as broad and balanced concepts, not explicitly differentiated from one another. Gradually, this picture has changed towards the modern emerging of spirituality and religiosity as narrower constructs polarised from each other. Zinnbauer, Pargament and Scott (1999), in their examination about traditional and modern characterisations of spirituality and religiousness, found three such polarisations: organised religion versus personal spirituality (religiosity as formalised belief and spirituality as the personal relation to the transcendent), substantive religion versus functional spirituality (religion as static substantive entity versus spirituality as dynamic process), and negative religiousness versus positive spirituality (spirituality as more direct and positive experience than religiosity seen as institutional and dogmatic). Zinnbauer et al. (ibid.) argue that this polarisation limits the understanding of both concepts, and propose an alternative approach. Religion is defined by Pargament (1997, p. 32) as a ”search for significance
in the ways related to the sacred”, while spirituality is a search for the sacred (ibid., p.39), and by this, is the central function of religion. The concept of the sacred is not limited to traditional concepts of God or a higher power. Anything invested with a sacred character can take this role, from relationships to meaning, community or justice.

One of the reasons why we often use spirituality and religiousness together or without explaining and clarifying them may be that they are deeply rooted in our life and in our consciousness. We are familiar with them without really being able to define them or differentiate between them, because they have always played an important role in our social existence. Due to these inconsistencies in meaning, it is possibly understandable why spirituality has not been considered as a universal value type common to all cultures. Nonetheless, it is present in all human societies with diverse contents and values associated to it. Zinnbauer et al. (1997) suggest that individuals taking different religious, spiritual and secular pathways may differ in a variety of ways which can be addressed through empirical research.

Conceptualising spirituality. Kaiser (2000) defines spirituality as referring to “a broad set of principles that transcend all religions”, which “is best defined as a relationship between yourself and something larger”, and “means being in the right relationship with all that is. It is a stance of harmlessness toward all living beings and an understanding of their mutual interdependence”. Religiosity can be the manifestation of one’s spirituality, yet a person can be spiritual without being religious, or religious without being spiritual. A person can also be outwardly “religious” in performing certain practices, and yet not focus on the underlying principles of spirituality. Buck (2006) regards spirituality as the most human experience which “seeks to transcend the self and find meaning and purpose through connection with others, nature, and/or a Supreme Being, which may or may not involve religious structures or traditions” (p. 290).

If we denude it from its institutionalised forms, spirituality appears to be a middle way between the religious and the secular. Spiritual people appear to be higher in openness-although, Saroglou, Delpierre and Dernelle (2004) suggest that this is more clearly an openness to experience per se than an openness to novelty / open-mindedness. If we consider that, even in a world of spiritual belief, there is still a need for order, practices and shared experiences, spirituality becomes less distinguishable from religiousness in the more modern religious movements. These new religious ways seem more suited to a
world of increasingly “worldly” and secular orientations, and emphasise on spirituality quite heavily. An important cultural change as a consequence of the process of modernisation is the elevation of the self into a “value base” (Geyer and Baumeister, 2005, p. 419). Value bases are important moral resources for society. As a consequence, where traditional morality and religiousness sought a restriction of self-interested behaviour, today this becomes a moral obligation. Such societal changes led to moral diversity which emphasises the legitimacy of different standards (ibid.).

Modern spirituality has two main characteristics: it includes a reference to transcendence or the sacred but not necessarily God or supernatural entities as defined within religious traditions, and it emphasises an individual reality of connection with transcendence, others, and the world in general, without necessarily belonging or referring to a particular religious institution or group (Hill et al. 2000; Miller & Thoresen 2003; Piedmont 1999; Saroglou & Muñoz-Garcia, 2008). In this sense, if we differentiate between spirituality and religiosity, we could state that spirituality is a rather autonomous expression of the individual’s relation with transcendence, independently of religious institutions and traditions, and so it indicates a greater correlation than organised religiosity with values like universalism, self-direction, and hedonism. It shares with religion the prosocial tendency in interpersonal relationships (benevolence), and can be negatively associated with conservation values (Saroglou & Muñoz-Garcia, 2008, p. 93). There are, however, questions regarding the boundaries and limits of conceptualising spirituality and religiousness, issues referring to whether spirituality is a broader concept than religiousness, or vice versa (as Pargament (1997) suggests) and whether it reflects a dynamic rather than static, and an emotion-based rather than beliefs-based reality (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005).

In a time of scientific evolution and an increasingly individualistic and rational worldview, spirituality has gained more popularity over religiousness as a multidimensional construct which offers and includes more secular values and secularising in a way also the sacred, thus making it more approachable and less fearful (Hill et al., 2000). Religion is founded on objective truths, codified rites and moral norms, whereas spirituality rests on the individual’s own experiences and feelings, and on the realisation of his / her own self. It is a subjective and relative reality. The experience of the sacred, thus, belonging originally to the realm of religious belief, remains to be explored through the personal experience of it.
2.1.3 Spirituality and religiosity

As highlighted above, there are several issues to clarify when trying to assess the concepts of spirituality and religiosity. They seem to be closely related, still keeping some different characteristics. Nevertheless, there are not enough relevant information about the nature and content of these characteristics, particularly referring to their meaning in people’s interpretations. Most of the difficulties in understanding, thus being able to differentiate or integrate the two notions, stem from the prejudice that we can “describe” or “translate” religiousness or spirituality without really capturing the experience and practice in the individual’s own mind and life. Just as Loizzo (2006) remarks it in his article comparing science, religion and objectivity in Buddhism and the West, a validation of meditative techniques, for example, cannot be possible by any measure other than “valid personal experience and self-transformations” (Loizzo, 2006, p.106).

Many meeting points between differing conceptualisations do exist however, and these are leading in the present towards a more open-minded and complex view on religiousness and spirituality. There are tendencies of a “spiritualisation” of theistic religion, like in Islam (Sufism) as well as in Christianity (e.g., Pentecostalism, evangelicalism, and the Catholic charismatic movement) (Heelas 2008, ref. Houtman et al., 2009). There are also clear links between the sense of the sacred, the self- and other-oriented religiousness in different religions or even in the broader sense of spirituality. For instance, even though Buddhists do not pray to a God as the Christians do, there are forms of Buddhist worship that might be considered other-directed. In the Tibetan traditions, prayers are commonly addressed to lamas both living and deceased, to tutelary deities, or to Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. In contrast, there are many elements in Christian spirituality which can be called unitive, emphasising the mutual encounter between creature and Creator in which the separation between the two, though not erased, becomes irrelevant within the intense current of what is known as the prayer of union (Lahey, 2007, p. 42).

Based on these information and on other current findings (e.g., Flere & Kirbis, 2009), we can state that both more modern religiousness and spirituality tend toward a similar worldview that generally opposes irreligiosity or non-spirituality, empiricism, and rationalism. All these underline the importance of lived and experienced faith- the
upholding pillar of any form of spiritual life. Some of the research seem to also suggest that the modern spiritual forms may be better explained within, rather than separate from, an association with religion (Flere & Kirbis, 2009; Houtman et al., 2009).

2.2 Spirituality as Religious and Non-Religious

2.2.1 Religion and spiritual values

Religion focuses on making sense of life, and is based on values which should function as a guidance to resolve the “ontological problems of interpretability” (Little & Twiss, 1978, ref. Harvey, 2000, p. 2). The most commonly associated values to religion are tradition, security, and conformity. Schwartz (1992, p. 10) associates religious rites and norms of behaviour to tradition. Interestingly, stimulation did not provide statistically significant results in the expected negative direction in Schwartz’s original study (1992). Religious individuals attribute high importance to values reflecting conservation (tradition, conformity- only classic religiosity) and limited self-transcendence (benevolence but not universalism), as well as low importance to values indicating openness to change and self-enhancement (self-direction, hedonism, stimulation, and in a less extended and systematic way, power and achievement) (Saroglou et al., 2004; Saroglou & Muñoz-Garcia, 2008). Likewise, in their cross-cultural study between college students in Turkey, the United States and Philippines, Cukur, Guzmand and Carlo (2004) have found religiosity to be associated positively with conservative values and collectivism. In consequence, we can state that religious people give merit to conservative as well as benevolence values, but attribute lower importance to universalism. Religious spirituality can be thus positively associated with conservation and partly with self-transcendence values, and relates negatively with self-enhancement and openness to change values. In case of non-religious spirituality however, we can find a greater correlation with values like universalism, self-direction, and hedonism. The latter shares with religious spirituality the prosocial tendency in interpersonal relationships (benevolence), and can be negatively associated with conservation values (Saroglou & Muñoz-Garcia, 2008, p. 93). The adoption of social morality and related values by the secular state and its institutions results in the consequence that non-religious persons may be socialized to benevolence values almost as strongly as the active and committed religious people (Schwartz & Huismans, 1995, p. 103). Therefore, it can be concluded that in a society where the moral values are prevalently centred
around benevolence values, these would show no significant differences between members of different communities, religious or non-religious. There should be, however significant divergencies in relation to some values of the other three value types - conservation, self-enhancement and openness -, as well as in universalism.

It is important to mention that in most of these studies religiosity is associated with affiliation and commitment to a specific (and most of the time, Christian) religion, or being part of a religious community. Consequently, active membership in a community can have an important effect on the values associated to spirituality and their effect on it. We can therefore deduce that community membership interacts with values and value dimensions in defining their effect on spirituality. Also, most of the times religiousness, as approached in research, is related to the concept of the supernatural or the divine. Verbit (1970, ref. Cukur et al., 2004), on the other hand, talks about subjective religiosity not necessarily as linkage between an individual and the divinities of religion but rather in the sense of a certain personal worldview. In this way, religiosity may become something different than being religious as discussed in the sense above, and may have different forms of manifestation. This idea is in line with Saroglou’s (2002) meta-analysis, which reviewed 13 studies investigating how religion / religiosity is associated with personality in terms of the five factor models (commonly referred to as FFM (Five Factor Model), comprising the following personality dimensions: agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism and openness). Religious measures were classified into four categories: 1) religiosity (intrinsic and general); 2) open and mature religiosity and spirituality; 3) religious fundamentalism; and 4) extrinsic religiosity. Results showed that general and intrinsic religiosity correlated mainly with agreeableness and conscientiousness, but also with low openness. Open, mature religion and spirituality both were positively correlated with agreeableness, but also with emotional stability (as opposed to neuroticism) and openness to experience. In the same time, religious fundamentalism showed negative correlation with openness, and surprisingly, also with neuroticism and was positively associated with agreeableness. Finally, extrinsic religiosity was unrelated to the three factors which seemed typical for religiousness (agreeableness, conscientiousness and some extraversion), but showed positive relation to neuroticism. These findings suggest that the greatest difference between religious maturity and spirituality, and other forms of religiosity, is the degree of openness. The more extrinsic (and to a certain degree,
fundamentalist) the religiousness, the less emotional stability and ultimately, the less “typically religious” it becomes.

2.2.2 Spiritual values and spiritual religiosity

While religion is the organised form of belief, implying a group / community consciousness and emphasis, a religious spirituality, which does not adhere to a specific religious ideology, is closer to a personally “lived” and experienced belief, allowing a more personal touch to it. Naturally, we should bear in mind also that personal belief has social origins, and that adopting a faith shared by / in a community means also individual participation. However, results such as those of Zinnbauer et al. (1997) comparing self-rated religiousness and spirituality among American members (aged 15 to 85 years) of a wide variety of churches, institutions, mental health case workers, students, New Age groups, show that more conservative religious persons (ex. Roman Catholics) make less distinction between religiousness and spirituality, while members of less traditional religions like Unitarians or New Age-followers rate spirituality higher than religiousness. This trend shows that the more one distances himself or herself from the traditional forms of faith, the more the focus of concern becomes the individual and his / her freedom. This is also in accordance with the recent tendency, especially in the Western welfare societies, towards more liberal, more open, and less constricting forms of belief, as priorly pointed out. Some argue that the safety of the modern welfare state with its high economic security eroded the authority of religion, and gave power to the individual life (Birindelli, 2011, p.3). Similarly to the findings of Zinnbauer et al. (1997), other research has shown that in societies where classic religion has a stronger tradition, the new spiritual views are better integrated into religiosity than in more liberal cultures with more secular background, where the differentiation of the two concepts is greater (Houtman et al., 2009). It becomes important thus, to differentiate between religious spirituality and spiritual religiousness which stands close to and has many meeting points with non-religious spirituality.

In my viewpoint, spiritual religiosity is a multidimensional construct, with difficulties in measuring what is called “subjective religiosity”, as well as its meaning across different cultural groups (Cukur et al., 2004; Hood et al., 1996; Reimer, 1995). It is close to what Saroglou (2002) defines as mature and open religiosity, and to what Zinnbauer et al. (1997) suggest about those who have a holistic approach towards life, finding all of it
sacred and consequently integrating religiosity and spirituality. However, this integration is open and accepts differences within. Chatters, Levin, and Taylor (1992) propose a three-dimensional model of religiosity: two religiosity dimensions, which include organisational involvement (formal involvement such as church attendance) and non-organisational involvement (informal involvement such as prayer and Bible studies at home), and one spirituality dimension, which is referred to as subjective religiosity (beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, and the perceived importance of religion in the individual’s life). If we use the model of Chatters et al. as an example, we could state that the first two dimensions are more related to the formal manifestation of religiosity, while the third dimension, suggestively named spirituality, shows the shift towards the individual and the subjective experience of religiosity. This model is somewhat similar to the three-dimensional models of spirituality, involving the meaning seeking of the intraindividual level (subjective religiosity), a (here: religious) group-based interindivdual level where relationship with other fellow believers is accentuated (formal involvement), and the transpersonal level where personal connection with God is sought after (informal involvement). However, this last dimension is influenced by the specific doctrine of the chosen religion.

According to Schwartz (1992, p. 48), secular people rate tradition values more opposed to universalism and self-direction and closer to power values than religious people. Fontaine, Luyten, and Corveleyen (2000) have extended the theories of Hutsebaut (1996) about religious attitudes, and Wulff’s (1997) model about personal value orientation and religious commitment, investigating the relationship between values and four religious attitudes: Orthodoxy (only one correct answer to religious questions), Symbolic Belief (the Bible is a guide and not a historical account; inclusion of transcendence), Relativism (Bible is context-dependent), and External Critique (scientific clarifications have made religious clarifications superfluous). The results of their study with Dutch-speaking Belgian students showed significant positive correlation between Orthodoxy and tradition, conformity, and security, as well as significant negative relation with self-direction and hedonism. Symbolic Belief (inclusion of transcendence) related positively with tradition, benevolence and conformity, and negatively with hedonism, stimulation, and power. Interestingly, relativistic religious attitude has been found to be positively linked to self-direction and negatively to hedonism (and security). External Critique
showed significant positive correlation with hedonism and significant negative correlation with tradition.

Similarly, Corveleyn et al. (2005) studied the relations between the religiosity dimensions of Wulff (1997) and value priorities on seven samples of Flemish-speaking Belgian secondary school pupils, students and adults religiously affiliated and not affiliated. Their findings suggest that the dimension Exclusion vs. Inclusion of Transcendence relates most strongly to the openness vs. conservation pattern and second most to the hedonism vs. tradition pattern, whereas the Literal vs. Symbolic dimension corresponds to the self-enhancement vs. self-transcendence pattern. The first value pattern is characterized by a conflict between hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction on the one hand, and tradition and conformity on the other hand. Also, in the second pattern we can talk about value conflicts between security and power on the one hand, and universalism and benevolence on the other hand. This suggests that the shift towards a more inclusive religiousness may be characterised by a greater degree of openness, as suggested earlier: a view of religiousness as a more personal experience, as well as a more symbolic, universalistic—again, less restrictive or exclusive—perspective. There is also evidence that, while classic religiousness seems to imply a discomfort with materialistic values and (egotistic) self-gratification, leading to negative associations with hedonism and stimulation, the modern spiritual valorisations of the body and the senses may lead to the absence of such negative associations. New religious expressions thus seem to share prosocial values with classic religion but not the emphasis on conservation and survival values (Inglehart & Baker 2000; Saroglou et al., 2004; Saroglou & Muñoz-Garcia, 2008).

In my opinion, in terms of values, the distinction between universalism and benevolence may be a key to differentiate between religious spirituality and spiritual religiosity. While benevolence focuses on concern for the welfare of close others in everyday interaction, is more about the in-group, the community one lives in, being a “prosocial value type”, universalism concentrates on “understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature”, and is a “mature value type” (Schwartz, 1992, pp. 11,12). It contrasts with the narrower focus of benevolence values, which value seems to be higher in traditional religious groups. Universalism, on the other hand, is a broader, more open, more integrating, symbolic term, which could be
the differentiating element in the way towards religiousness apart from specific forms of
religion. In Schwartz’s circle of values, it is placed between self-direction and
benevolence, and this may also be a starting point in placing it between modern
spirituality and traditional religiosity. Maybe the self-direction could be the separating
line between religiousness and spirituality, with religiousness keeping a more humble
attitude towards the self than spirituality. While spirituality locates the self into the
centre of attention (sanctifying it) and regards it as the starting point of understanding
the whole, religiosity locates the reference point onto a higher level than the self (the
sacred) and places the self to the endpoint of the communication. In my viewpoint, the
spiritual self is a seeker – paraphrasing Descartes, we could say his / her belief is
“Dubito ergo sum”: the journey itself is the goal, with no need and no possibility of an
end. There will never be a rest for this self, because the journey of discovery is never-
ending. It is a search. The religious self is a finder- as someone who knows what to seek
for, having found it-, stating “Credo ergo sum”, concentrating on or keeping the end in
mind continuously. The self will be influenced by its found truth- that is its strength but
also its weakness. The person who is only outwardly religious, without the spiritual
substance, is a seeker who unfortunately considers himself / herself a finder, with a
question as a motto: “Dubito ergo credo?”

2.3 Theories of Spirituality

2.3.1. Spirituality as universal

The term “philosophia perennis” was first used by Agostino Steucho in 1540, and it
refers to the same divine origin of all knowledge. This idea is rooted in the Judeo-
Christian theology and spirituality, as well as in the philosophical ideas of Plato
(Schmidt-Biggemann, 2004.). It accentuates the invariable core of spirituality,
independently of culture and history, most evident in spiritual experiences, like the so-
called pure consciousness events (PCEs). According to Forman (1990,1997), these
events share features of mystical experience common across cultures, characterised by a
sense of inner awareness, clarity and alertness, but devoid of thought, action or
perception.

This standpoint is syncretic, integrative, and transcends cultures, implying that the
essence of spirituality is the same, varying only in how it is expressed, which is
influenced by the cultural environment. Most empirical studies about spirituality assume
that it can be studied in terms of universal components. Several such components have been identified by different studies. Hall and Edwards (2002), for instance, in their theistic model of spiritual development researched spirituality in terms of awareness of God (religious experience) and relationship with God. Piedmont (1999) differentiates between religiosity and spiritual transcendence, and attributes the latter the following elements: connectedness with all life, universality (the unitive nature of life), prayer fulfilment, and additionally mentions tolerance of paradoxes (the ability to live with inconsistencies and contradictions), nonjudgementality, existentiality (embrace the moment), and gratefulness. He even suggests that spirituality is a separate psychological dimension of personality, distinct from the other five personality domains of the FFM. This explains why people high on transcendence and spirituality are so diverse, ranging from strict ritual-following religious adherents to those who completely reject formal religion and try to encounter an amorphous “higher intelligence” (p. 990). Likewise, Saroglou (2002) notes that similar patterns of religiousness-FFM association may be found across countries (mostly USA and European countries were studied). He also found similar psychological aspects of religiosity across a variety of religions (Christians, Jews, and Muslims), denominations (Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants) and countries including Europe, the USA, and Middle East (Saroglou et al., 2004). It seems that, irrespectively of history, context, religion or culture, similar psychological reasons explain why some (the same) people are religious or spiritual. At the same time, Saroglou et al. (2004) suggest that the relationship between values, culture and religiosity is greater than that of personality and religiosity. Religiosity and spirituality seem to depend on cultural-environmental and economical context in a stronger way than on genetic influences (p.732).

2.3.2. Spirituality as culturally constructed

Constructionism emphasises that there is no universality or common core in spiritual experience. Spirituality is mediated culturally, so it should be regarded as a cultural construction. Katz (1983), in his book about mysticism and religious traditions, states that there only exists the spirituality and mysticism of Buddhism, Christianity, etc. He considers mystical experiences as being the result of traversing a process of a spiritual evolution within the individual, which depends on the religious ideology that the person studies, and which creates to some degree the anticipated experience.
In understanding and categorising spirituality, Hense (2011, 2013) proposes to regard it in terms of categorisation as described by Wittgenstein (1959, ref. Hense, 2011, 2013), which viewed categories as having no common feature but still being connected. In her opinion, different spiritualities share similar components, and must be studied separately and compared and evaluated in their diversity. Schwartz (1992) as well suggests that there are different kinds of spirituality, with different forms and components, and that spirituality cannot be considered universal. People interpret life events and their cause depending on the cultural and specific religious context. For example, in a study on 124 Thai women conducted by Jirojwong, Thassri and Skolnik (1994), investigating perceptions about possible causes of cervical cancer, it was found that spiritual beliefs have a strong influence on how individuals perceive the cause of an illness. Those who were Buddhists believed that Karma (previous behaviour) caused their illness. Other studies (e.g., Moch, 1998; Hall, 1998) about the relationship between spirituality and coping with illness, have similarly found that beliefs about a higher power, connectedness with the self, others and nature, families and communities, shaped their perception about their illness, and gave them the incentive to transcend beyond suffering.

2.3.3 Understanding spirituality: connection and integration

According to Delaney (2005) spirituality is universally experienced, in part socially constructed and individually developed all through life. In the development of her Spirituality Scale (2005), she proposes a conceptual framework attributing spirituality the following dimensions: 1) self-discovery (intrapersonal), 2) relationships (interpersonal), and 3) eco-awareness (transpersonal), noting that the concept of spirituality evolved from a term synonymous with religion to an association with a search for meaning and purpose, extending to an inclusion of relationships and to a connection with the whole, the environment, the universe or with a higher entity. Spilka (1993, ref. Hill et al., 2000) reviewed the literature of spirituality, and concluded that there were three categories of understanding of contemporary spirituality: 1) a God-oriented spirituality, with its premise in theologies; 2) world-oriented spirituality concentrating on our connectedness with nature, and 3) a humanistic or people-oriented spirituality focusing on the human potential. This is similar to Delaney’s (2005) three-factorial model of spirituality. However, in Delaney’s viewpoint the connectedness with nature belongs to the transpersonal level and is the same as belief in a higher
power/universal intelligence, while Spilka differentiates between the theistic and nature-oriented forms of spirituality. Also, Spilka combines Delaney’s intra- and interpersonal dimensions focusing on the human potential. Nonetheless, both authors regard spirituality as a multidimensional construct.

Others emphasise a tri-dimensional view on spirituality as well. Reed (1992, ref. Buck, 2006) describes spirituality in terms of connection within, between and beyond the person, with observable forms of connection such as personal integration, friendship or trust, and mystical experiences, respectively. According to Tanyi (2002), attributes of spirituality include belief and faith, connectedness, and inner strength and peace. Inner strength comes from having faith and a belief system (p. 504). Connectedness refers to how well one is in touch with oneself, a higher meaning or a higher power, or significant relationships.

Most conceptualisations trying to assess what spirituality is about emphasise connection. As Caleb (2003, ref. Delaney, 2005, p. 149) points out: “Spirituality is all about relationships- God to human, human to human, human to nature, human to cosmic reality”. Even the search for meaning and purpose as a central aspect of spirituality is relational, since the attempt is to define the relationship of our own life to ultimate truth and reality (Carson & Stoll, 1989, 2008). Carson and Stoll differentiate between vertical and horizontal connectedness. The vertical component refers to a personal relationship with a Higher Being or God, not necessarily as defined by a particular religion, while the horizontal component involves a relationship with ourselves, with others, and with nature, and is influenced by the relationship with the Divine (ibid., p. 7).

In their model of integrated spirituality, Walker and Avant (2005, ref. Buck, 2006) provide a model of spirituality in the form of three concentric circles. Central concepts to this model are connection and integration. It is an integrated model of three types of spiritual connection. Criteria for spirituality include it being: 1) intrinsically human but cognitively limited, 2) ontological and teleological, 3) self-transcendent, 4) connected with others, nature and / or a Supreme being, and 5) involving or not involving religious traditions.
If we consider the three-dimensional models of spirituality, we can conclude that religious spirituality focuses more on the transpersonal and interpersonal dimensions and tones down the intrapersonal, while non-religious spirituality directs the attention primarily to the self and extends the relation of the self towards the universal intelligence, nature and others.

2.4 Spirituality and Values in Relation to Personal Characteristics

2.4.1 Spirituality, values and age

People’s personal characteristics like age, education, gender, etc., significantly determine their life circumstances, which affect value priorities. Values formed in adolescence change little over time. The more insecurity a person experiences at that age, the more materialistic values become important later on for him / her (Schwartz, 2012). According to Schwartz (1992, 2012), conservation values like security, tradition, increase with age, while openness to change values such as hedonism or self-direction, decrease. Similarly, self-transcendence related values increase when getting older, as people become more socially and other-oriented, causing a decrease in self-enhancement values. It could be therefore presupposed that spirituality, since related primarily to self-transcendence values, should increase with age. Due to the increased prosperity over the last 50 years, especially in Western-Europe (and in a more limited way, after the fall of the communism, in Central Europe as well), there have been changes in value priorities because of more extended possibilities in exploring
individual opportunities. This suggests that younger people give greater priority to hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, and, possibly, to universalism values, but value less security, tradition, and conformity, a situation which gets reversed with ageing (Schwartz, 1992, 2012). Different life stages influence value priorities as well. When young, individuals are faced with life circumstances which encourage the pursuit of achievement and stimulation values. Later, in middle adulthood, establishing a family, work, social relations, bring forward security, conformity and tradition values, and the emphasis on the latter two increases with getting old. Consequently, age should correlate positively with conservation values and most prominently tradition, and negatively with self-enhancement values. There should also be some positive relation between age and self-transcendence values. However, it seems age differences are quite small (Schwartz, 2012.).

Regarding religious values but also education, Schwartz and Huismans (2005) found that age and gender had not affected the values-religiosity relations significantly in their study with highly educated respondents, concluding that age and gender differences are less among this group of people (p.100). Education has a reciprocal relationship with value priorities, both influencing each other (Schwartz, 2012).

2.4.2 Spirituality, values and gender

In his intercultural studies, Schwartz (1997, 2005) found gender differences in value priorities, with men attributing higher importance to power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation and self-direction (self-enhancement and openness to change dimensions), while women valued benevolence, universalism and to a lesser extent, security and tradition, more than men (self-transcendence and some conservation dimension). There were fewer differences along conservation values compared to the other three dimensions. Regarding the value hierarchy by gender, slight differences were found. In case of both sexes, benevolence values came first. However, in case of women, these were followed by universalism, self-direction, security, conformity, hedonism, achievement, tradition, stimulation, and power. For men, self-direction values preceded universalism, and were continued by security, hedonism, conformity, achievement, stimulation, tradition, and power (Schwartz & Rubel, 2005.). Verkasalo (1996) found achievement and hedonism favoured by males. Myyry and Helkama (2001) reported gender differences in associated values and spirituality, with communal values
(benevolence, universalism, spirituality) as feminine values, and agentic values (power, stimulation, self-direction) as masculine. Relative to spiritual values however, among actively religious people, Simpson, Cloud, Newman and Fuqua (2008) found no statistically significant differences in religious participation between men and women, contrary to previous studies suggesting that women are more religious or spiritual than men. They concluded that the relationship between gender and spirituality / religiousness needs additional exploration (p.45).

According to Schwartz and Rubel (2005), sex differences are smaller and explain less variance than age or culture. In their studies, age accounted for more variance than gender in the case of all values except power and benevolence. Studies across many cultures reveal small differences that are reliable only in large samples. Therefore, in a small sample probably no significant divergencies could be detected regarding both age and gender.

2.5 Values and Religious Communities

2.5.1 In-group / out-group differentiation across values

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986) regards the individual self-concept as based on group membership. Groups give a sense of social identity. Since people belong to several groups simultaneously, the self is composed of various social identities.

Hitlin (2003) suggests that values are predictors of various role- and group-identities. Different social structural positions like social class, race, religion, lead to differing interpretations of the same values. Gecas (2000) introduces the term “value-identities”, to emphasise the role of culture in the development and maintenance of social identities. Culture provides patterned structural effects on people’s value structures. Individuals define themselves in terms of the values they hold (Gecas, 2000, p. 96). In this sense, it is not the value itself that leads to a certain behaviour (e.g., to help someone in need as a manifestation of benevolence), but the “value-identity”: a person’s view of himself / herself (in this case, as a “good person”), which mediates the value. The value-identities result from behaviours which reflect culturally prescribed behavioural patterns and values.
The human tendency to recognize and search for patterns invariably results in categorisation of people into in-groups and out-groups. The inclination to view the in-group in a more favourable light in order to increase self-esteem has the consequence of degrading the image of out-groups. This develops a more positive self-image and an enhanced sense of well-being as well as a stronger social cohesion within the in-group (Cuhadar & Dayton, 2011). Individuals belong to multiple identity groups and they become most aware of the identities which are under threat (Northrup 1989). Intergroup contact can reduce the out-group bias, whether by direct contact (Pettigrew, 1986), or simply by gaining knowledge or observation of in-group / out-group friendships (Wright et al., 1997).

More than sets of beliefs, religions are “sets of practices” that bind people together into cooperative communities that are generally good for their members, and which can be either beneficial to societies (because they civilise and socialise their members) or harmful (when attacked, or when hijacked by demagogues) (Haidt, 2010, 2012). Haidt and Graham (2010) analysed the role of religion in social development today, and debated the issue of religion in moral development from the perspective of survival and flourishing of the human species. They stated that “religion should be studied as a complex system with many social functions” (p. 140). Hence, moving from an individual level to a group level represents a manner of better charting the role of religion in contemporary morality. They related religion to the “binding” moral dimensions of In-group / loyalty, Authority / respect, Purity / sanctity. These have common group-oriented system principles, are concerned about the promises people make to each other and the degree to which they help or harm in-group members, and ultimately serve to suppress selfishness (Haidt & Kesebir, 2010, p. 821). Consequently, they centre primarily around benevolence values. The idea of God can also serve such purposes. In their study with European and Asian undergraduate students, examining the relationship between cheating behaviour and views of God, Shariff & Norenzayan (2011) found that people who believed in an angry, punishing God cheated less than people who believed in a loving, forgiving God. As Haidt (2010, p. 821) mentions, religions function to increase trust, cooperation, generosity, and solidarity within the moral community- “religions bind and build” (Haidt & Graham, 2010, p. 140). Unfortunately, they can also exclude and debase those outside their own community. The downside of collectivism and belonging to communities is that such benevolent
values and feelings are often not extended to out-group members. Prosocial tendencies in religious communities as well show a pattern of in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination (Jackson & Essen, 1997; Jackson & Hunsberger, 1999). Haidt (2012, p. 219) refers to this stating that “morality binds and blinds”- binding people into ideological teams which turn against each other, and blinding them to the fact that each team is composed of good people. Similarly, Schwartz & Huismans (1995) as well point out that most religious communities oblige members into exclusivist, solidary groups, reducing so the importance towards the welfare of all people, which is a core aspect of universalism, and concentrating on benevolence values only. Therefore, people who value universalism values and accept diversity, are less likely to develop or maintain a commitment to a specific religion.

### 2.5.2 The role of spiritual values

If we consider the social aspect of life, there are always general standards, values, guidelines which organise the behaviour and thinking of the members of any community. These are collective choices about what is desirable and undesirable, about what is to be expected, in other words, typical. If there are many different or atypical views, there are many different standpoints, and different rights and wrongs. It is difficult, though sometimes necessary, to reduce relative standards to a universally valid truth. Morality talks about the way people decide and judge about what is considered good and wrong.

We can rarely think of morality, of morally desirable or appropriate issues without considering questions of values, as “morality deals with value choices” (Helkama, 2010). Values are influential factors in a community. They are constructive and enable self-determination. At the same time, individual aspirations cannot develop without social cooperation. Values should therefore promote personal, collective, and relational well-being, since individual and collective values cannot exist separately from one another (Prilleltensky, 2001).

Just as values shape community morality, religious beliefs, practices, communities have an impact on these values. In analysing spirituality and religiosity, we cannot ignore the social-cultural context. In this sense, it is not surprising that the popularity of (non-religious) spirituality has grown in cultures which value individualism and reject conventional authority. At the same time, these movements have been accompanied by
the formation of a great number of organisations, groups, communities, such as New Age groups, meditation and yoga groups, etc. These alternative gatherings can eventually become church-like themselves, where like-minded people can share their views (Zimbauer et al., 1999). In the context of today’s religious and spiritual pluralism, as elaborated earlier, the meanings of the same central constructs of spirituality and religiousness are subject to diverse interpretations (ibid., p. 892). This relativity in conceptualisation makes spirituality, whether religious or non-religious, prone to conflicts between groups / communities endorsing different (“other”) types of spiritualities / religiousness, especially since these can bear powerful meanings associated to social existence. Religions embody cultural values and traditions and therefore may be important factors in cultural identity, but at the same time they may also have a significant role in justifying or legitimizing violence. Cultural and religious stereotypes, as well as mistrust, tension and fear caused by differences can play a major role in the escalation of intergroup conflicts. However, they can also play an important part in their resolution (Abu-Nimer, 2001; Fox, 2004). Relative to the role of spirituality in conflict transformation, it must be noted that, in the framework of its cultural environment, spirituality, just as religion, has the potential to make motivation, inclusiveness, participation and continuity possible through dialogue. Because they might be closer to people, non-governmental organisations and church based agencies and organisations can accompany and deal constructively with intergroup conflicts at a level below the state. It is therefore important to be aware of the meanings and conceptualisations attributed to spirituality in religious and non-religious or secular interpretations, in order to achieve a constructive dialogue, and make our own value concepts and guiding ideas transparent to our partners (Holenstein, 2005.). Values have a great influence on how this dialogue can be realised, either assisting or impeding it. For instance, if spiritual values influence the behaviour leading to a response or attitude which is benevolent towards in-group members but does not extend to non-members, this hinders a successful communication with them. If, however, benevolence values transcend towards universalism, this implies a greater openness and acceptance of alternative viewpoints and consequently, improves communication.

2.5.3 Hungary: Value priorities

For my thesis I conducted my research in Hungary. In the Hungarian society and culture there is a background in Catholic faith, which has lost considerable territory
over the last decades, similarly to many Western societies- a fact which lead to alternative searches and spiritual communities. At the same time, there is a historical attraction towards Eastern philosophies, which makes Hungary an interesting meeting point for different ideologies and values.

In Ingelhart’s (1971, 1977, 1997) classification in his theory of postmodernism, there are two main value dimensions. The first is the survival versus self-expression dimension, which is related to the socio-economic change and the modernisation as a consequence of the transition from industrial to post-industrial societies, where materialist values shifted towards post-materialist values. These new values reflect conditions of economic security and emphasise self-expression, trust, tolerance towards cultural diversity. Most developing countries are still moving from traditional to modern values. The second dimension is authority, where the focus is on traditional versus secular-rational value orientation. Based on Ingelhart’s theory, the World Value Survey places Hungary low on self-expression values (high on security), and high on secular-rational values. Accordingly, the results show low status on free expression of opinion, trust, and tolerance (www.worldvaluessurvey.org). In interpreting these results, it needs to be mentioned that the history of 50 years of communism should be taken into consideration. Also, Catholicism, with its hierarchical worldview, is related to low interpersonal trust (Keller, 2009.).

The political and economic changes from the beginning of the 1990s have caused a series of fundamental changes in Hungary, including modifications in lifestyle and value system. The concept of human identity has evolved from materialistic security orientation and fulfilment of external expectations towards development of personal abilities, self-fulfilment and inner adventure (Perényi, 2010). Consequently, Hungarians should value self-enhancement values like self-direction, and self-transcendence values, but at the same time, resulting from the history and influence of Catholicism as well as communism, conservative values like security or tradition should also play an important role in Hungarians’ value priorities.

2.6 Christian and Buddhist Spiritual Values

2.6.1 Christian spirituality
Christianity is the world’s largest religion, counting more than two billion adherents (Encyclopaedia Britannica Online: http://global.britannica.com/…). According to the
Christian worldview, which is based on the Holy Bible, and more specifically on the New Testament, people are God’s creation, designed to govern the world and worship Him (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:15). The sin against God of the first humans, Adam and Eve, subjected the whole world to a curse (Genesis 3). God Himself has redeemed the world through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ (Genesis 3:15; Luke 19:10), and will one day restore His Creation to its former perfect state (Isaiah 65:17-25). Accordingly, the Christian worldview rests on moral absolutes, hope, miracles, human dignity, and the possibility of redemption, but also on fear and punishment. By proclaiming Himself “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6), Jesus became the absolute foundation of Christianity. Christian rituals and prayers are directed to God and Jesus (http://www.gotquestions.org/).

All in all, the Christian worldview is based on hope through the Christ, valuing love, kindness and compassion for others. St. Paul pronounces faith, hope and love as the three abiding virtues, out of which love is the most important one (1Cor. 13:13). Jesus mentions two “Great Commandments”: love to God and love towards one’s neighbour, specifying that “neighbour” is anyone in need (Matt 22:37-39; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27; Luke 26:27-28). By this, Jesus emphasises the universal nature of this commandment. The Bible contains a similar statement in the Old Testament, preceding Jesus’ Commandments (Leviticus 19:18: ”You shall love your neighbour as yourself”); however it restricts it only to close ones (“among your people.”), making it a benevolence value instead of a universalism value like promoted by Jesus. Jesus also talks of self-sacrificial love, which He considers the greatest manifestation of love: “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends“ (John15:13). Although this suggests a benevolent attitude rather than a universalistic one, His attitude and friendship towards sinners and social, moral or religious outcasts (Matt 9:10; Luke 15:1-2), or women, considered inferior at that time (Luke 7:36-47), as well as His freedom towards the Sabbath law (Mark 3:1-6), suggests an attitude accepting of all beings. His attitude was indeed considered revolutionary, challenging social, gender and racial boundaries, for which He was often criticized (e.g., Mark 7:5 Matt 15:2).

The code of the Golden Rule (the principle of reciprocity) is an ethical code found in almost every religion and ethical tradition of the world. According to it, one should treat others in the way one would like others to treat him / her. What is specific in Jesus’
formulation, however, is that, while most formulations concentrate on not doing to others what we would not like others to do to us, He states the rule in a positive manner, accentuating the need for positive action (actively “doing good”), instead of only restraint from hurting others. Cunningham (1998, p. 108) observes that Jesus’ encouragement to love our enemies is a derivative of the Golden Rule.

In their book discussing Christian ethics, McDonald and Harvey (1995, p. 7) specify that the fundamental “biblical principles” relating to it are justice, equality, fraternity, truthfulness, fidelity or trustworthiness, integrity, loyalty, prudence, benevolence, reciprocity, humility, and neighbour love (“agape”). Consequently, the principal values of Christianity centre around self-transcendence values, predominantly benevolence but also universalism, as well as conservation values like conformity or tradition. This suggests a disregard towards self-enhancement values as well as openness to change values, although the new Christian movements seem to have a more liberal attitude regarding the latter category of values. Studies show differences between different Christian movements in terms of values, with an emphasis on tradition, security and conformity community-based values in case of Orthodoxism and Catholicism, and self-direction and a greater degree of openness related to a more relativistic religious attitude (Protestantism) (Fontaine et al., 2000; Corveleyn et al., 2005).

2.6.2 Buddhist spirituality

Buddhism is a religion and philosophy based on teachings attributed to Siddhartha Gautama, commonly known as the Buddha (“The Awakened One”). After He became enlightened, Buddha taught that the way to become free of suffering begins with understanding the true nature of the world. The main goal of Buddhism is the ending of suffering (“dukkha”) through destruction of attachment, hatred and delusion, since everything in this world is impermanent and in constant movement. Therefore, the principal quality of the world is not “being” but “becoming”. This idea is in contrast with the Christian idea of a perfect and unchangeable “God”: in Buddhism, the idea of a perfect God would mean the most changeable reality (Knitter, 2009, p. 9).

Buddhists have three key sources of guidance: the Buddha (“rediscoverer” and teacher of liberating truths as well as the embodiment of liberating qualities), the Dhamma (the teaching of the Buddhas, the path to the Buddhist goal), and Sangha (the Community of advanced practitioners) (Harvey, 2000). The main sacred writings are the teachings of
the Buddha, handed down in a collection of writings known as the “Three Baskets” (Tri-Pitaka). The most famous Tibetan Buddhist text is the “Bardo Thodol” (“liberation through hearing in the intermediate state”), popularly known as the Tibetan Book of the Dead. The “Bardo Thodol” is a funerary text that describes the experiences of the soul during the interval between death and rebirth called “bardo”. A person approaching and passing the point of death will be read the text with the aim of guiding the soul through this process (Harvey, 2000). There are two major branches in Buddhism: Theravada (“The School of the Elders”) and Mahayana (“The Great Vehicle”). Tibetan Buddhism forms part of Mahayana Buddhism which has been more welcoming of new ideas and sets a greater emphasis on compassion. Unlike Theravada, it says that all people can achieve enlightenment. The depth of every person is pure – this “embryo of the Truth-attained One”- or the “Buddha-nature”, represents the potential for ultimate change: the enlightenment, and as such is the basis of respecting all beings (Harvey, 2000, p. 35).

According to the Buddhist worldview, the world is the result of an endless cycle of creation and destruction. The universe is infinite and cyclical in terms of both time and space, and it is created and then destroyed over and over again, in a process of natural evolution. It is not a creation of an omnipotent God, but neither are the course of events a blind matter of chance. The human being was created by the laws of nature; the world was not created for the humans. There never was a beginning, and there never will be an end. The universe is whole and harmonious in its diversity (http://www.religionfacts.com/buddhism). Everything is constantly changing, because everything is interrelated. Everything comes into being and continues in being through something else: nothing has its own existence. We are not “beings” but “becomings”; moreover, we are “becoming-with”, therefore one with all else. (Knitter, 2009, p. 10).

Buddhists believe that all people are reborn again and again, in a cycle called Samsara (“wondering on”), until they achieve spiritual enlightenment and reach Nirvana, a state of being in which attachment to the material world has been transcended. The movements of all beings between rebirths is governed by the law of Karma (“action”), according to which the rebirth depends on the nature and quality of past actions: how people are reborn in the next life depends on how they behave in this life. The ultimate truth, the Dharma, refers to the truth, teachings, and nature as one and the same (Harvey, 2000.). Dharma states that there is nothing in this world that is permanent or absolute, not even the self. Because we cling to the material world and the idea of a
permanent, eternal self, we suffer, and we should therefore let go. By letting go of our craving and attachment, we can touch the timeless dimension of experience, which is the playful, unborn and undying, endlessly creative dimension of life. Although even this state does not last, it still underpins one’s values, choices and actions, providing “the ethical ground for mindful and focused awareness” (Batchelor, 1998, p. 11).

The central values of Buddhism are non-greed, non-hate and non-delusion. Though expressed negatively, they are equivalent to generosity and non-attachment; love, kindness and compassion; and wisdom, in the sense of clear seeing the nature of life without misorientation (Harvey, 2000). Giving is perceived as karmikal fruitfulness, which is said to be greater than its opposite, as regretting a bad action can stop from repeating it, but there is no need to regret a karmikally fruitful action, and it leads to further spiritual progress—joy, calm, concentration and insight—which generates more karmikal fruitfulness. (Harvey, 2000, p. 20). Thereby, the core Buddhist values are related to self-transcendence, with accent on both universalism and benevolence, as well as some openness to change values belonging to self-direction. At the same time, since attachment towards anything worldly and impermanent needs to be transcended, there should be a negative relation towards other openness values like hedonism and possibly stimulation. From the same logic follows a probable negative direction towards self-enhancement values. Having a great tradition and a number of specific guidelines results in respect and high regard for conservation values such as tradition or conformity. Low emphasis is given to security, as it becomes unnecessary insofar as one is conscious of the ephemerality of all we experience. Consequently, the relationship should be a negative one, if significant.

According to a study conducted with Western European Buddhists by Saroglou and Dupuis (2006), in terms of values, low importance is attributed to hedonism, power, and achievement, and high value is given to tradition, conformity, and benevolence, as well as to agreeableness. These findings seem to be similar with other results about different religions (mainly Christianity). However, contrary to other studies, these results indicated also a lack of need for closure and security, as well as the lack of depreciation of self-direction and stimulation, and the importance of universalism.
2.6.3 Similarities and differences in spirituality and values

Christianity and Buddhism are two of the world’s most popular and influential religions. Although they have different ideologies and frameworks, many meeting points can be found in their teachings. Both religions have love, kindness and compassion for all beings as their fundamental principles of moral behaviour. The Christian God is presented in the Bible as a God of compassion and comfort: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves received from God (2 Corinthians 1:3-7). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus accentuates the importance of compassion: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt 5:7). In the parable of the Good Samaritan, He also describes the human ideal of compassionate behaviour (Lk 10:29-37). Likewise, compassion for others is a central element also in Buddhism: “Even as a mother protects with her life Her child, her only child, So with a boundless heart Should one cherish all living beings; Radiating kindness over the entire world” (The Buddha, http://www.accesstoinsight.org/…). The ultimate aim of Tibetan Buddhism is to achieve the enlightenment of Buddhahood for the sake of all beings.

Another ethical principle common to both religions is the Golden Rule. Buddhism and Christianity show many similarities in their doctrines on how to treat others. Just like Jesus, Buddha also places great emphasis on not hurting others, a principle which appears in several places of His written teachings (e.g., “Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful”, Udanavarga 5:18). The act of giving is considered by the Buddhists to help one’s karma and thus is highly encouraged (Harvey, 2000). This giving relates to the Christian principle of doing good and helping those in need. Moreover, acting for the benefit of others is considered by both religions to be of higher value than its opposite of refraining from hurting others. This way, self-transcendence values seem to be a shared foundation of their ethical systems.

Relative to their view on the whole of creation and nature, as well as humans’ position within the creation- a universalism-related feature-, again, Christianity and Buddhism demonstrate similarities besides differences. In fact, Waldau (2001) argues that both religions have been “specieist” and therefore have failed in their generalisation of compassion towards all beings, by justifying a different moral treatment for animals.
Christians, though encouraged to respect all of God’s creation, consider nature and other non-human beings as inferior to humans, designed for the human benefit. For Buddhists, although they pronounce equality between all beings as part of Nature, and confer conscience and karmic properties to animals as well, being born human is considered superior and a goal of the future rebirth, since only humans can attain awakening (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: http://plato.stanford.edu/…).

Many fundamental disparities exist between the two religions as well, and most of them regard the ideological and doctrinal coating of the similar ethical principles of love and compassion. Christianity is a monotheistic religion which centres around a Creator and His Son, the Christ. Instead, while some forms of Buddhism believe in a creative force, in general Buddhists reject the notion of a Creator God. The ultimate answer comes thus in two different forms: God versus the Emptiness, showing that the focus is on questions about the nature of things of “why” and “how” in the case of Christians, and “what” for Buddhists (Abe Masao & Heine, 1995). In addition, just like believing in a beginning, Christians also believe in the End of Times and the Judgement Day, while Buddhists believe in an endless universe with no starting point and no end. From the above presented follows that Christians have a stronger orientation towards security and tradition / conformity values (conservation dimension), while Buddhists value self-direction more, as well as tradition. Jesus’ crucifixion and the peaceful Buddha are other two contrasting images which represent the core references of the two religions. Their personalities are also in stark contrast: Jesus is described as an “energising power” who possessed a “passionate quality,” contrary to the Buddha, who was “cool,” “dispassionate,” and “calm” (Smith, 1991, pp. 115, 217). Christianity teaches engagement, while Buddhism values detachment. In a study examining good feelings and ideal affect (how people ideally want to feel) by Christian and Buddhist students from North-America, Tsai, Miao and Seppala (2007), found that Christians valued high arousal positive states such as excitement more, while Buddhists preferred low arousal positive states such as calmness.

In spite of their apparently irreconcilable differences, Buddhism and Christianity can also be approached in ways showing that they are closely related. Knitter (2009) attempts to redefine their core divergencies. Noting that “God is in the way” (p. 8) of a communication between the two religions, Knitter points out the “experience of God”, which connects the two, developing further the idea of “God as a verb”, introduced by
Cooper (1998). Similarly, Masato Abe (1995) compares the experience of God through the Christian mystical kenosis (the Greek word for “emptiness”), where the Spirit of Christ takes over our emptied self, with the Mahayana Buddhist notion of Sunyata, a dynamic activity of taking form freely through emptying everything, including the self (p. 151). Shared interreligious aspects are the “mystic experience, the dimension of silence, respect toward creation (and) the life of charity and compassion”, as highlighted by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (Catholic New Times 23.11 (Jun 20, 1999): 2). The focus of these aspects revolves around self-transcendence values like universalism and benevolence, as well as spirituality.

3 Research Questions

The main objective of this study is to find out whether individuals belonging to different religious or non-religious communities differ in how they perceive spirituality and other values, as well as in what meanings and interpretations they associate to the concept of spirituality. Particularly, I am interested in the relationship between spirituality and other values, as well as in spirituality as religious and non-religious. Consequently, the thesis comprises some specific questions but also broader inquiries, which will be approached in different ways. The research questions are divided into the ones relating to specific hypotheses and into the exploratory research questions.

Based on the theoretical ideas and the empirical findings illustrated above, the present study views spirituality as a universally experienced multidimensional construct with similar core structural aspects which relate to similar personality characteristics in many different ways, showing a wide variety of forms, contents and interpretations across contexts and cultures. Spirituality can be understood along three broad dimensions involving the intrapersonal, interpersonal and transpersonal, each of which can have a different influence or different weight on perceptions about spiritual life. The more the focus is on internal and universal, structural and non-contextual elements, the more meeting points can be noticed between different individuals and groups. Likewise, the more accent on the contextual and cultural components of spirituality, the more diversity of preceptions and interpretations both on the individual and on the social level. Therefore, it is expected that groups or communities organised around a specific spiritual and / or religious ideology will be influenced more in their perception
by the chosen ideology and will show less flexibility and diversity in their interpretations about spirituality than individuals outside of such communities—
spirituality will be perceived in a more conservative manner related to the communities’ concept definition. At the same time, however, spirituality as part of self-transcendence (spirituality-related self-transcendence values: universalism and benevolence), if related to a core structure of the concept, will show more similarities than differences across different groups and persons. If that is so, the differences between communities or groups should be about other values and not so much about the central concept features of spirituality. This paradox shows that, although each person experiences spirituality individually, everyone conceptualising it in their own way (from here the presumption that it is inexpressible (see Hense, 2011)), even with a multitude of fuzzy definitions there is an understanding underneath these about what spirituality is all about. Definitions about spirituality seem to also evidentiate the same core aspects if we accept an open, flexible conceptualisation of these facets.

Value priorities are expected to be quite heavily influenced by the community philosophy and principles and so will show differences between different persons of different groups even with the same social-cultural background. Still, the general cultural context will also have some influence on values. In line with the findings of Schwartz (1992), or Cukur et al. (2004), religiosity should be associated with conservative and collectivist values. Accordingly, members of the two religious communities studied here should demonstrate a higher preference for conservative values, especially tradition, than secular persons. Since people are socialised around moral values, which centre around benevolence, as much in non-religious settings as in religious ones (Schwartz, 1995), benevolence values should be a priority in all the three communities’ value hierarchies. Universalism, on the other hand, being a broader and more open value type, should be lower in traditional religious communities (ibid.), but generally higher among people who value openness and self-direction more— in this case, the Buddhists should belong into this category and therefore differ from the Christians (Saroglou & Dupuis, 2006). They should also be lower in security and higher in self-direction and stimulation when compared to the Christian community (ibid.). Consequently, Buddhist community members should be higher in openness values, similarly to secular people. Self-enhancement values are expected to be lower
in religious persons, as discussed earlier (Cukur et al., 2004; Saroglou et al., 2004; Saroglou & Muñoz-Garcia, 2008; Schwartz, 1992).

3.1 Quantitative Research Questions and Hypotheses

My research targets two different research directions. One refers to the comparison of the three different groups within the sample along specific, pre-defined aspects, the other involves a comparison of the sample groups involving phenomena which emerge from their written answers as they will be analysed. The principal research questions of the study are the following:

1 (a): Is spirituality perceived differently by individuals belonging to two different religious communities- Christianity and Buddhism-, as well as to non-religious (work) communities in Hungary? 1 (b): Are other values perceived differently by these persons?

The other main question is, 2: How is spirituality related to other values as well as other personal characteristics in the chosen sample?

Consequently, I would like to investigate: What is the relationship between spirituality and all the other values studied in this research? Similarly, I am interested in: What differences and similarities are there in spirituality and other values among members of two religious, and a non-religious Hungarian community? I also want to investigate: What possible effects can values and other personal characteristics like age, gender and active community membership have on the level of spirituality in these communities?

Therefore, the hypotheses are:

H1. Spirituality will have a

  a. positive relationship with conservation values, thus with the preference of conservative values over openness to change values

  b. positive relationship with self-transcendence values, thus with the preference of self-transcendence values over self-enhancement values

H2. Organisation / community will have a significant effect on values, which will manifest in the following way:

  a. spirituality of the Christian community will be significantly higher compared to the other two groups
b. self-transcendence values will show no significant differences between the three communities

c. self-enhancement values will be significantly lower in religious persons when compared to the IT group, but will show no significant divergencies between the two religious communities

d. openness to change values will show significantly lower scores by Christians relative to Buddhists and IT persons, but the latter two groups will have no differences

e. conservation values will attest significantly lower results in the case of the IT community when compared to the religious communities

H3. a. Conservation values will have a significant and greater effect on the variance of the level of spirituality than openness to change values

b. Self-transcendence values will have a significantly greater effect on spirituality than self-enhancement values.

H4. Participants who are active members of a religious or spiritual community will have a higher level of spirituality, thus active membership in a community has a significant effect on spirituality.

H5. a. Active community membership will show a significant interaction with the value dimension conservation versus openness to change, having a joint significant effect on the level of spirituality

b. Active community membership will interact significantly with the values dimension self-transcendence versus self-enhancement, together significantly affecting the level of spirituality

H6. The age (a) and gender (b) of the participants will have a significant and positive effect on spirituality.
3.2 Qualitative Research Questions

3.2.1 WAT research questions

The word association task (WAT) was the first task of the questionnaire. It stood at the beginning because in this way it gave the participants the opportunity to produce their own thoughts, free of any information which might have arisen from the subsequent questions.

The main questions relative to the WAT test are the following:

3: What values do members of the three communities associate to the four words?

4: What are the similarities and differences between the word associations of the three communities?

5: What connotations relative to spirituality are there in the three groups’ word associations?

3.2.2 Exploratory research questions

Qualitative research aims to get a complex perspective on a phenomenon of interest. By choosing to make a research where open-ended questions were also included along with the scale, I tried to gather information from different angles in order to gain a richer picture on my phenomena of interest: spirituality and values. The research questions which relate to the qualitative analysis are generally very similar to my main questions previously stated, however, the nature of the data and their analysis will be completely different. Through the written answers’ verbal data of the participants I intend to find out

6: What meanings and interpretations do the participants who are members of two different religious communities as well as a non-religious work community, give to spirituality? Also, 7: How do the persons of the sample interpret spirituality in relation to religiosity?

In addition, I would like to explore:

8: What are the value priorities of the participants?
The concept of spirituality is defined by the participants themselves: the analysis will be conducted based on the constructs and interpretations that the members of the sample give to experiences which they describe as spiritual.

4 Methodology

As noted, the aim of the research is to find out how spirituality is related to other values, as well as how it is understood among people who are active participants in a religious community, and among people who work in an IT company. Besides the value profile of the three mentioned communities, further detailing is sought after by attempting to reveal interpretations and meanings attributed to spirituality by the participants. Therefore, as stated before, both quantitative and qualitative methods will be applied. Value priorities and their differences across the three groups will be examined using quantitative measurements, while interpretations will be analysed qualitatively.

In the present methodological section, information about participants will be examined, as well as the data and the instruments used for their collection, followed by the analytical strategies, which will handle the quantitative and qualitative analysis separately.

4.1 Participants and Data

The study population consisted of religious community members and individuals working in IT companies in Hungary. The two religious communities present in the study- Protestant Christian and Buddhist- were selected because they represent two different communities of two religions which are popular in Hungary. The IT company portrays an alternative of people belonging (through work) to a non-religious community, offering so a hopefully different perspective on spirituality. The information about the participants’ gender, age and active membership in a religious or spiritual community were used for the research, along with the Schwartz Value Survey (1992), with the purpose of identifying value priorities. The qualitative analysis studied the interpretations of participants based on their answers to the open-ended questions, as well as their word-associations.
The data were procured from three different sources in Budapest, Hungary, between the fall of 2011 and the spring of 2012. Twenty-four members of two religious communities, with twelve people belonging to each— one Christian (Protestant) and one Buddhist community, respectively— filled out questionnaires containing open-ended questions, word associations, and one scale. One person from each of the communities did not fill out the questionnaires completely, so they were left out of the analysis. The same questionnaires were distributed in a multinational IT company, and were filled out by twenty-four participants working in the company. Two persons returned incomplete questionnaires. The final sample consisted thus of forty-four participants, out of which twenty-two were members of two different religious communities and twenty-two were individuals working in an IT company.

The two communities and the IT company were contacted for the data collection. The questionnaires were given in envelopes to a contact person from each community, who distributed them to the participants. The contact persons were asked to emphasise the fact that, in order for the analysis to be correctly performed, all the questions and especially the scale needed to be filled out completely. The respondents could take the questionnaires home and fill them out at their own pace. The envelopes were then closed by the participants and given to the contact person who returned them to me. In that way, anonymity was ensured. The two communities and the IT company received envelopes of different colour each, so as to be able to differentiate between them. Participation in the study was voluntary.

The contact persons contacted and chose the participants themselves. In case of the two religious communities, only the requested number of twelve questionnaires were given to the contact persons. Relative to the Christians, three out of the twelve questionnaires have been copied (it was visible that they were not the originals), meaning that three persons had taken questionnaires but had not returned them, so the contact person has made three new copies. Unfortunately, I do not have information on exactly how many people were contacted inside the two religious communities. However, taking the previously stated into consideration, we could conclude that, additionally to the twelve individuals responding, at least three persons from the Christian group did not fill out the questionnaires. Relative to the Buddhist community, there is no information on how many people were contacted until the twelve participants filled out the questionnaires.
In case of the IT company, forty questionnaires were given to the contact person, who provided the information that thirty-eight questionnaires were distributed and the resulting twenty-four were returned, amounting to a response rate of 63.1%. In addition, only around two-three people refused to fill out the questionnaires. It should be mentioned that the selected persons were all personal acquaintances - colleagues - of the contact person, or acquaintances of her colleagues. This fact does probably account significantly for the high response rate.

The age of the participants ranged from 13 years to 48 years, with a mean of 29.52 (SD = 7.11). In case of the Buddhists, the mean age was 33.45, for Christians it was 24.72, and the IT persons had a mean age of 29.95. The sex distribution was the following: in the Buddhist group, there were seven men and four women; in the Christian community, three men and eight women, and finally, nine men and thirteen women in the IT group. In total there were 19 (43.18%) men and 25 (56.82%) women in the sample. Relative to religious community membership, all of the respondents from the IT group who said they were active members in a religious / spiritual community named the Christian community as their community (seven persons within the IT group, accounting for 31.81%).

The only distinct group level feature according to which the communities differed from each other was their membership, either in a religious community or in a work community. There are several categories of sample information missing, as for example the education of the respondents, which were not asked from the participants, because part of them stressed their wish for providing only the personal data most required and indispensable for the current purpose of the research. Since other characteristics were not controlled for, it cannot be guaranteed that any differences, if found, would be exclusively due to membership in a certain community. However, all participants, except for a 13 and a 48 year-old, were young adults living in Budapest, spoke Hungarian on a native speaker level, and, though official information on education was not available, the respondents from the IT company had at least completed high school education, which means at least twelve years of education (it was a prerequisite for getting hired at the company). From the priest who was the contact person for the Christian company, I understood that the persons contacted within the community were taking part in a Bible group of young community members, who had completed at least high school. I have no official information on the Buddhists’ education, but,
considering that it is an alternative religious community based on voluntary involvement, which is the result of some sort of spiritual seeking, it can be speculated that most of the Buddhist participants had completed some higher form of education. Since participation was voluntary, all those who filled out the questionnaire had the responsive attitude in common. I thought that, by not setting any boundaries other than the obviously needed (community), the respondents would be closer to the average Hungarians- at least as much as possible under the given sampling circumstances.

For the regression analysis I used all the data (n=44) and did not divide the participants into different groups, however, it needs to mentioned that the results and especially the ones regarding the dependent variable may have been influenced also by the fact that half of the participants were active members of a religious community, and only one half of them has been contacted outside of such a community.

4.2 Instruments

Demographic questions about age and gender were asked from the participants, as well as a question referring to membership in a religious or a spiritual community (a yes-no question)- and if the answer was yes, they were asked to specify it (in case of the members of the IT company). The rest of the questionnaire contained a word association task (WAT), comprising the words understanding, unity with God/nature, playfulness, compassion, as well as five open-ended questions, and the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS)(1992,1994). The SVS data were analysed quantitatively, while the rest of the data were examined using qualitative methods.

The open-ended questions were the following:

*Have you ever had an experience which you feel was out of ordinary? If yes, please write about it.*

*Do you think this experience was a spiritual experience? Why?*

*Do you think this experience was a religious experience? Why?*

*If you have never had such an experience, what do you think an experience which is out of ordinary is like?*

*What are the most important things in your life? Why?*
The scale was translated from English into Hungarian by me, and checked with a Hungarian person who had university background in English, as well as a teacher of Hungarian who speaks English on an academic level. The participants’ written responses were also translated by me, using the same procedure.

**The Schwartz Value Survey (SVS).** The Schwartz Value Survey (1992) is used for identifying value priorities. It contains 56 single items measured on a nine-point scale (-1-opposed to my values; 0- not at all important; 7-of supreme importance). An additional number of 11 values were added, mostly work-related values, as well as two extra spirituality-values (grace of God, salvation). Consequently, the final scale contained 67 value items, the additional items of which were added by Myyry & Helkama (2001). To control for differential use of the scale, centralised sum variables were used in the analysis. A personal mean of all 67 values was calculated for each subject separately, and the items of the sum variable were summed together and divided by the personal mean multiplied by the number of items included in the sum variable. (Myyry & Helkama, 2001.). All value variable results comprised numbers between 0 and 2, 0 meaning the lack of the respective value, and 2 meaning the maximum level of the value.

The SVS was used to construct all value variables. The variable spirituality contained four items from the survey (spiritual life, meaning of life, God’s grace and salvation (through redemption)). It is important to mention that in this way, spirituality is conceptualised as closely related to (theistic) religiosity, its measurement containing two values out of four which refer to “God’s grace” and “salvation (through redemption)”’. This can affect the spirituality results of the SVS. It should be mentioned that the four items of measure refer to only two of the three dimensions of spirituality which were presented in the theoretical section: the intrapersonal and the transpersonal. The third dimension, however, is present in other value items across the scale, but will not be taken into consideration as belonging to the variable spirituality when the results will be calculated. Because of theistic references in two out of four items, spirituality here shows less openness to differing interpretations of the higher intelligence (the transpersonal level), and will therefore expectedly be perceived in a more conservative manner. The item “spiritual life” is quite vague and leaves room for a variety of interpretations. Although spirituality is viewed to be pertaining mainly to the self-transcendence dimension, it is not included in any of the four dimensions, and is treated
separately within the SVS data analysis process. The other independent value variables were organised along two bipolar dimensions: one dimensions contrasts conservation and openness to change, the other self-transcendence and self-enhancement (Schwartz, 1992, 2012). Conservation consists of 23 items, openness to change of 13 items, self-transcendence has 16 items, and self-enhancement has 11.

For the regression analysis, value dimensions conflicting with each other, which are placed on the two opposite poles of the values structure, have been subtracted from one another. Since openness to change was negatively correlated with conservation (r=-.704, p<0.01), and self-transcendence showed negative correlation with self-enhancement (r=-.648, p<0.01), the bipolar value dimension was computed by subtracting openness to change values from conservation values, and self-enhancement values from self-transcendence values. Using these values separately in the regression would reduce the power of the analysis because of a higher number of possible interactions (Lipponen, Bardi & Haapamäki, 2008). The results of the subtracted value dimensions ranged from -2 (the lack of importance attributed to the former value dimension and maximal preference for the latter) to 2 (the maximum importance attributed to the former value dimension and the lack of importance attributed to the subtracted one).

4.3 Analytical Strategies

As mentioned earlier, the analysis contained both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative data, including effect sizes, were analysed using PASW Statistics 18. Measurements included bivariate analyses for examining the relation between two variables (scatterplots, crosstabulations, correlations), as well as univariate analysis for identifying influencing factors on the data (analysis of variance (ANOVA)). Multivariate regression analysis was also performed for exploring possible effects that certain values and other personal characteristics have on the level of spirituality. Although the sample size was much too small for appropriate results, and these were expected to be most probably statistically not significant or if yes, they were to be inaccurately so, they still provided worthwhile information. In case of the regression, the unstandardised regression coefficients of the regression analysis were interpreted.

The qualitative data was analysed by hand, using content analysis. The word associations were organised into semantically similar categories and analysed by
comparing their frequencies and contents between the three communities. The material of the participants’ written answers to the open-ended questions was described systematically and structured using a coding frame. The main categories within the texts were identified, and specifications about these were used as subcategories. As a result, several hierarchical levels were obtained within the structure of the coding frame. Attention was paid that each level / dimension presented only one aspect of the material so as to avoid “mixing dimensions” (Schreier, 2012). Concept-driven and data-driven strategies were combined in an attempt to provide a more complex analysis. A data matrix was created across the dimensions of the coding frame, followed by additional data exploration and analysis. This procedure was used in a comparative way to present differences and similarities between the three groups. This way, across each dimension three different hierarchical structures were created for the three participant groups.

4.3.1 Quantitative data

Scale reliability. When discussing reliability, it needs to be pointed out that different requirements have to be met in case of quantitative and qualitative analysis. This was a great challenge for the present study, because it was difficult to find a “middle way” to accurately and realistically build up the research and analyse the data. For the qualitative analysis, the requirements were satisfactorily met, however, for the quantitative data analysis a greater sample would be needed for reliable results. As stated, I am aware of this problem, and therefore used the results with due caution, mainly for giving a general picture by identifying some relationship patterns between the variables, which could complement the results of the exploratory content analysis.

In quantitative data analysis, a large number of respondents is required to achieve reliability. Adding to that, the Schwartz Value Scale has also been known to have relatively low internal reliability regarding some of its components, because, addressing such complex constructs as values, it tries to assess several different characteristics of the same value instead of convergent aspects of it (Schwartz, 1992, 2012). Due to their diverse conceptual components, the contents for the values are more heterogeneous (Schwartz, 2012). Value items belonging to motivationally adjacent values can also be combined to form more reliable indexes of broader value orientations.
Table 1. Cronbach’s alphas for the scales

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<td>Power</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>Universalism</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonism</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulation</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Direction</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Operationalisation of the variables. As previously mentioned, information about age and gender of the participants were asked in the questionnaire, together with a request for them to specify whether they were active members in a religious or spiritual community, and if yes, they were asked to name which one. Active community membership was a dichotomous “yes / no”- variable. This information was used only in the regression analysis. The independent variables were age, gender, and eleven single values organised along four dimensions: conservation (CO), openness to change (OC), self-enhancement (SE) and self-transcendence (ST). The variable active membership in a religious or spiritual community (organisation) was the dependent variable in the ANOVA, while spirituality was the dependent variable in the multiple regression and in the correlation.

To strengthen the power of analysis and avoid multicollinearity, the dimension openness to change was subtracted from conservation, and the dimension self-enhancement was subtracted from self-transcendence, creating thuswise two new independent variables: conservation vs. openness to change, named consopen (also used as CO vs. OC), and self-transcendence vs. self-enhancement, named selftransen (also used as ST vs. SE).

The organisation to which participants belonged, as well as spirituality, were recoded into categorical variables as well, in order to allow for crosstabulation which could offer a more detailed view upon the data. The variables gender and active membership were recoded into binary.
**Hypothesis testing.** Hypothesis 1 was tested with bivariate analysis, using Pearson’s correlations between spirituality and the other values, as well as the subtracted value dimensions. Crosstabulations were also done in order to get a better understanding of the data.

For testing hypothesis 2 one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. The means of the three communities were compared to examine whether there are statistically significant differences, and the post hoc tests gave also information about where the found differences lay. This way, I wanted to present how and in what values the three communities differ from each other.

In order to test hypotheses 3, 4, 5 and 6, multiple regression analysis was performed in a stepwise manner. Different models were tested to find out what effect the different values and characteristics like active community membership, a possible interaction between active membership and values, as well as gender and age, have on spirituality.

### 4.3.2 Qualitative data

Information such as reliability and validity of the qualitative data is impossible to provide at this stage, since these data became available only as the coding process progressed to the appropriate stage. When I will relate the qualitative analysis process, I will talk about the reliability and validity of the analysis as well. Since there has not been a suitable second coder, intra-coder reliability was used. The information about the qualitatively analysed results unfolded during the analysing process and provided then the necessary assessment information. There is no hypothesis testing in content analysis, but the coding itself was based on my previous knowledge and was also related at the end to the quantitative results with the aim to offer a more holistic view on the participants’ perceptions and conceptualisations about spirituality and values. In the generating and structuring of my coding frame I made use of both concept-driven and data-driven coding strategies. Concept-driven coding was used to build the main categories, to which subcategories based on the material were added, using data-driven coding procedure. Progressive summarising was applied in developing the coding frame.
5 Results

The results section comprises the quantitative as well as the qualitative measures’ outcomes. These will be handled and presented separately.

5.1 Results of the Quantitative Analysis

The present thesis’ quantitative research part tested the effect of a series of independent variables including values, active community membership, gender and age, on the variance of the dependent variables, which were spirituality and organisation/community - depending on the test conducted. For the analysis of variance, the dependent variable was organisation, while in case of the regression analysis, it was spirituality.

5.1.1 Descriptive statistics

Before starting the analysis, it should be again mentioned that, due to the fact that the present study includes both quantitative and qualitative measurements, the sample is small. This fact should be taken into consideration when interpreting the data and the results, since there appears to be a lot of variation which is based on sample size. The small number of data cannot give very accurate information on the shape of the distribution. The main goal of the present study is to identify some patterns and possible interrelations and their directions in the relationship of the studied phenomena.

Descriptive parameters. Table 2 presents the main descriptive parameters of the variables.

Table 2. Descriptives of the variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEnevolence</td>
<td>1.216</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNiversalism</td>
<td>1.106</td>
<td>.213</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Direction</td>
<td>1.099</td>
<td>.163</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>1.095</td>
<td>.431</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECurity</td>
<td>1.027</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to have a clearer picture of the relationship between spirituality and the four different value dimensions, as well as active membership in an organisation and the type of the organisation itself, crosstabulations were performed. The variable spirituality was recoded into a categorical variable to make bivariate analysis with the aforementioned categorical variables possible. The value dimension variables and the subtracted value variables were also recoded into categorical variables for the purpose of crosstabulation.

With regard to active community membership (p < 0.01, Cramer’s V = .770), it can be stated that community membership was associated to a higher degree in spirituality. The organisation / community to which participants belonged (p < 0.01, Cramer’s V = .489), showed higher levels of spirituality in Christians but not in Buddhists, and a fairly equal distribution in case of the IT company between the first three spirituality levels but a smaller percentage of the highest level.

Crosstabulations were also performed to have more information about the relationship between spirituality and the other continuous variables besides the value variables. In case of spirituality and gender (p = 0.886, Cramer’s V=.121) no significant differences could be found, with women scoring higher in low, but also in high levels of spirituality.
Thus, when based on these cross-table results, we can reject the null hypothesis that there are differences in spirituality by gender in the present sample.

The scatterplot examining the bivariate relationship between the (in the regression analysis dependent) variable spirituality and the continuous independent variables revealed a quadratic relationship between spirituality and age, with the initial high level of spirituality dropping gradually to the mid 30s, after which it begins to rise again by the end of the 40s (after which period there are no data). This relationship indicates a valid reason for exploring this non-linear association with a polynomial later on in the regression analysis.

5.1.2 Differences in spirituality along value dimensions

**Hypothesis 1: Spirituality and values.** The first hypothesis anticipated a positive relation between spirituality and conservation (a) and self-transcendence (b) values.

By cross-tabulating spirituality with the four value dimensions, it was found that the results were statistically significant at the 01% level in case of openness to change (p < 0.01, Cramer’s V = .444), as well as conservation values (p < 0.01, Cramer’s V = .580). The results for the other two value dimensions were statistically non-significant. As can be seen in table 3, higher spirituality was associated with lower levels in openness to change values, while the relationship of conservation values with spirituality follows a reversed pattern, and the divergences are larger. The same was shown also when associating spirituality with the subtracted variable conservation vs. openness to change (CO vs. OC) (p < 0.01, Cramer’s V = .446). With regard to the relationship between spirituality and self-transcendence vs. self-enhancement values (ST vs. SE) (p < 0.05, Cramer’s V = .407), a preference for self-transcendence values was accompanied by a higher level of spirituality. However, generally, the differences are not large, and most results tend to fall within the range of the lower-upper middle level.
Table 3. Crosstabulation percentages between spirituality and value dimension levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value dimension levels</th>
<th>Spirituality</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LL</td>
<td>LML</td>
<td>HML</td>
<td>HL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LML</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HML</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>15,8</td>
<td>47,4</td>
<td>36,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LML</td>
<td>3,2</td>
<td>25,8</td>
<td>45,2</td>
<td>25,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HML</td>
<td>41,7</td>
<td>41,7</td>
<td>16,7</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO vs. OC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LML</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41,7</td>
<td>23,5</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HML</td>
<td>4,8</td>
<td>23,8</td>
<td>52,4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST vs. SE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LML</td>
<td>9,5</td>
<td>57,1</td>
<td>23,8</td>
<td>9,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HML</td>
<td>14,3</td>
<td>9,5</td>
<td>47,6</td>
<td>28,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL</td>
<td>13,6</td>
<td>31,8</td>
<td>36,4</td>
<td>18,2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. LL=low level; LML=lower middle level; HML=higher middle level; HL=high level

The correlations indicated a significant positive relation of spirituality with the preference for conservative values over openness values, (the value variable consopen ($r = 0.67, p < 0.01$), as well as that of self-transcendence over self-enhancement values (selftransen ($r = 0.39, p < 0.01$). It appears that higher conservation value priorities go together with a higher level of spirituality (H1 (a)), and the same, to a smaller extent, can be said about people who value self-transcendence values over self-enhancement related ones (H1 (b)) (see table 4 for specific values). Conservation values ($r = 0.533, p < 0.01$), such as tradition, had a high positive relationship with spiritual values, while openness to change ($r=-0.67, p < 0.01$), and self-enhancement values ($r = -0.38, p = 0.01$) correlated negatively with them, although the conservation value security suggested a moderately significant negative relation to spirituality. As a consequence, we can state that H1 received confirmation regarding both of its subpoints.
Table 4. Correlation between spirituality and single values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Spirituality</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. PO</td>
<td>-.33*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. AC</td>
<td>-.45**</td>
<td>.30*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. HE</td>
<td>-.60**</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. STI</td>
<td>-.43**</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.36*</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. SD</td>
<td>-.49**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.47**</td>
<td>.36*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. UN</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.46**</td>
<td>-.42**</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.45**</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. BE</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>-.34*</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>-.49**</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>-.44**</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. TR</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td>-.61**</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.59**</td>
<td>-.52**</td>
<td>-.67**</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. CONF</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.33*</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. SEC</td>
<td>-.30*</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>-.36*</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.32*</td>
<td>.32*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, **p < .01 (1-tailed). *p < .05, **p < .01 (1-tailed).

5.1.3 Differences in values along communities

Cross-tabulations were effectuated to measure the interaction between the three communities in order to test whether there are differences along value dimensions, as well as relative to active religious community membership. For graphical representation of the differences between the means mean plots as well as boxplots were used.

Regarding active membership in a religious or spiritual community, active membership was highest in the Christian group, and lowest in the IT group (p < 0.01, Cramer’s V = .582). Openness to change related values showed statistically significant differences across the three groups, the IT community having the highest rate of openness values, with 91.7% of the highest range found in the sample (higher middle level), while most of the Christian and Buddhist scores fell within the lower middle level category (p < 0.01, Cramer’s V = .400). When associating the three communities and conservation values (p < 0.01, Cramer’s V = .568), the results indicated that the highest percentage of conservative values existing in the sample (higher middle level of conservative values) were found in the Christian group (91% of the total number of the community),
followed proportionally by the Buddhists with 36.3%, the least conservative being the IT community with 29.4% of people with a higher level of conservation values. The same tendency is shown with the interaction between organisation and the subtracted variable consopen (p < 0.01, Cramer’s V = .609).

With regard to the three communities, it can be noticed that here, too, like in the case of spirituality, most of the answers across openness and conservation values belonged to the two (lower and upper) middle levels of both variables. The results seem to indicate a somewhat greater difference between the three groups, however, we should bear in mind the small sample number and the fact that most of the answers belong not to the extreme but the middle range, and the differences are within this range.

**Comparing means along the communities.** A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect which belonging to either a specific religious or a non-religious community can have on the value system of the persons from the sample. The F-test indicated the results of the comparison of the differences between the group means to the differences within each group. The dependent variable list contained all eleven values, as well as age and gender, and used organisation (the community to which an individual belonged) as independent variable.

*Table 5. Averages, standard deviations, and variance of group means of value variables and value-group variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Christians</th>
<th>Buddhists</th>
<th>IT</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRadition</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEdonism</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Direction</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECurity</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POwer</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 2: Values and communities. The results indicated that there was a significant effect of organisation at the p<.01 level in the case of spirituality (F(2, 41) = 9.673, p < 0.01, η² = .321), hedonism (F(2, 41) = 8.377, p < 0.01, η² = .290), self-direction (F(2, 41) = 7.554, p < 0.01, η² = .269), tradition (F(2, 41) = 13.290, p < 0.01, η² = .393) and security (F(2, 41) = 6.735, p < 0.01, η² = .247). The result was marginally significant also for the power variable (F(2, 41) = 3.104, p = 0.056, η² = .131). All other values, along with age and gender, showed non-significant results. In all cases except the variable spirituality, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met (with tradition coming closest to the 5% significance level (p = 0.069) - all others fell within the 1% significance range). However, it needs to be mentioned that the Levene test of homogeneity of variances was statistically significant in case of spirituality, indicating that there is a significant difference between the three group’s variances, thus the ANOVA test results cannot be trusted concerning spirituality. Therefore, the Welch’s Robust Tests of Equality of Means table was used rather than the ANOVA summary table when interpreting the F statistic (F(2, 25,131) = 13.136, p < 0.001). Since the adjusted F-ratio was found to be significant, it can be concluded
that at least two of the group means are significantly different from each other. Consequently, it is justifiable to proceed in comparing the group means with a post post-hoc follow up test, taking into consideration that the equal variance assumption has been violated. The effect sizes of the statistically significant results also indicate that the magnitude in difference is appropriate to warrant further investigation.

In order to further explore the found differences between the means of the three groups and determine which of these are significantly different from the others, post hoc tests were performed. Since the sample sizes were unequal and, in case of spirituality, there was also heterogeneity of variance, the Games-Howell test was used for interpreting the results, which allows for both. The second hypothesis’ (a) subpoint predicted a higher level of spirituality for Christians when compared to the other two groups. It also presumed that there would be no significant differences between the Buddhists and the IT community. Post hoc comparisons indicated that, regarding spirituality, the mean score for the Christian community (M = 1.50, SD = 0.27) was significantly different than the Buddhist (M = 1.03, SD = 0.26) and IT community (M = 0.92, SD = 0.43). However, the Buddhist group mean score did not significantly differ from that of the IT community. We can therefore conclude, that H2 (a) was confirmed- with the mentioning that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not met. The three groups did not show significant differences in universalism and benevolence, thereby H2 (b), foreseeing no differences in self-transcendence values between the communities, received support. Post hoc tests also indicated that self-transcendence score differences were non-significant.

Other statistically significant results at the p < 0.05 level were for power, where the differences were significant in case of the Christian versus IT group, but were not significant what the Buddhist community was concerned (relative to both of the formerly mentioned). For hedonism, the mean for the Christian group was again, significantly different from both the Buddhist and IT group, indicating lower hedonism in comparison (p < 0.01). The results showed differences in self-direction as well, where the Christian group mean score was less, and significant regarding the IT group’s, but not significant relative to the Buddhist group mean (p < 0.01). Tradition means revealed significantly less mean scores for the IT groups relative to both religious communities (p < 0.01), which communities did not have significant deviations in relation to each other. Concerning the value security, the lowest group
mean is given by the Buddhists, which is significant in relation to the IT community, but non-significant regarding the Christians (p = 0.01).

These results indicated that in case of self-enhancement values, out of which two had statistically significant differences, power confirmed the lower ratings by the two religious communities compared to the IT community, while hedonism indicated significantly lower ratings only in the case of Christians. When performing the post hoc tests with the four value groupings, self-enhancement scores showed non-significant differences. Hence, we can conclude that H2 (c), concerning significantly lower ratings from the religious communities, was only partially confirmed. Openness to change values did have significantly differing mean scores in case of the Christian community in comparison to both other groups, showing lower scores than these (p < 0.01). Consequently, H2 (d) was supported. Conservation values revealed statistically higher results for Christians when comparing to both other groups, the IT community having the less conservative value orientation. Since H2 (e) predicted higher conservation scores for both religious communities, it was only partially proved right. Tough tradition value results showed no significant differences between the two religious communities and lower ratings by the IT group, security was rated lowest by the Buddhists, and conformity revealed no significant divergences along the three communities.

Predictably, the subtracted variable consopen showed statistically significant differences what the Christian group is concerned, having higher conservation - lower openness value orientation relative to both other groups (p < 0.01). Similarly, the other subtracted variable, selftransen, reaffirmed that there was no significant divergence relative to a preference in self-transcendence values over self-enhancement ones across all three groups.

Active membership results indicated significant differences of the IT group with regard to both religious communities (p < 0.05), but showed no significant dissimilitude between the two religious communities, both with higher membership scores. Results on gender and age were non-significant.

Taken together, these results suggest that, in most cases, the Christian community shows differences in values, mostly with regard to the IT group (spirituality, power, self-direction, hedonism, tradition, OC and CO values, as well as conservation vs.
Spirituality and Values

openness, active membership), and in some cases in relation to the Buddhist group (spirituality, hedonism, OC and CO values, conservation vs. openness). Christians seem to be higher on conservative values and lower on openness and self-enhancement values. Also, the spirituality level seems to be higher, but spirituality-related values such as universalism and benevolence show no significant differences in comparison to the other two communities, while self-direction seems to be lower in religious people. Interesting are the results with regard to the value security, which show non-significant differences between the two religious communities (the Buddhist group rating it lowest), as well as between Christians and persons belonging to the IT community, but attest significant differences between IT people and Buddhists. This result is perhaps understandable when considering the Buddhist ideology of a relaxed attitude in front of insecurity. The prioritization of security was highest among the IT group.

All in all, it can be concluded that belonging to a religious community increases the prioritisation of conservative values over openness to change values but not necessarily that of self-transcendence values when compared to the non-religious community. In case of being a Christian, it also raises the probability of a higher level of spirituality, as opposed to the non-religious persons, but also relative to the Buddhists, in the present sample. Belonging to the secular group (the IT community) accentuates openness and self-enhancement values and reduces conservation values, although the comparatively lower level of the latter is only significant in relation to the Christian group. While spirituality as defined by the Schwartz Value Inventory seems to be significantly different within the specific communities, the relating self-transcendence values—universalism and benevolence—do not indicate statistically significant differences across the communities from the sample. The differences seem to be more related to other type of values.

5.1.4 The relationship between spirituality and other values and personal characteristics

One of the main questions of the present research revolves around what possible effects can certain values and other personal characteristics have on the level of spirituality, how much of its variance in the chosen sample can be explained by these. To explore this question, regression analysis was applied, as this method is best suited for measuring causality between two or more variables. H3, H4, H5 and H6 were tested
this way. Multiple regression offers a more complex explanation or prediction of the dependent variable, as well as the possibility of having more certainty regarding the effect of each independent variable, since the distorting influences of the other independent variables are removed or controlled for (Lewis-Beck, 1980, p.47). The method was used stepwise to test different combinations of independent variables. The sample size and its non-representativeness has to be taken into consideration, and the data from the regression analysis should be understood in light of all the other results in order to gain a more complex and appropriate picture about the sample and research problem. This fact does also account for the significance levels of the different variables. The presented models are quite limited, and so is the sample, therefore the results must be interpreted with appropriate caution and more on an informative level. However, even with the small sample size, the results can hopefully still show interesting information.

**Hypotheses 3 & 4: Value effects and preferences.** In the first model, a regression analysis was run, comprising the independent variables age, gender (men), active community membership (actmembbinary), the two contracted value variables (consopen and selftransen), and organisation. The first regression could explain 63.6% of the variance of the dependent variable spirituality in the sample, and when adjusted, it was still 57.7%. The significance level of the F-test for all coefficients equal to 0 was \( p < 0.01 \). Relative to the regression coefficients, only the constant (\( p < 0.001 \)), active community membership (\( p < 0.01 \)), and the preference for conservative values over openness values (\( p < 0.05 \)), were statistically significant, while age (\( p = 0.15 \)), gender (men) (\( p = 0.95 \)), self-transcendence vs. self-enhancement (\( p = 0.63 \)) and organisation (\( p = 0.18 \)) were non-significant. (see Table 6). Based on the first regression, H3 (a) was confirmed, while H3 (b) was not supported, since a preference for self-transcendence values over self-enhancement ones did not prove statistically significant. Active community membership showed a significant result in the t-test, so it can be concluded that H4 received support. The results of the first model suggest that, hypothetically speaking, when all variables are set to 0, the predicted level of spirituality is 1.13 (with 0 as minimum and 2 as maximum). With each year, it decreases by 0.01, and in case of men, there is a slight increase of 0.005 (Gender was only included in the first model, as it had no statistically significant effect). Active membership in a community increases the spirituality level by 0.48. Endorsing conservation rather than openness to change
values increases spirituality by 0.46, while a preference for self-transcendence vs. self-enhancement values is related to an increase in the level of spirituality of 0.1. Belonging to an organisation decreases the predicted spirituality level by 0.07.

**Hypothesis 6: Age, gender and spirituality.** Although the results for age were statistically non-significant, I still wanted to explore the non-linear relationship with spirituality, to see the possible direction pattern of spiritual values with the advancement in age. As stated previously, from the scatterplot examining the relationship between spirituality and age it was concluded that it takes a non-linear, quadratic form, which necessitates the inclusion of a polynomial variable for age, to test whether its coefficient is statistically different from 0 in the sample population.

To visualize the effect of predicted values for spirituality for all values of age, while controlling for the effect of the other independent variables, an effect plot was calculated (see Figure 3).

![Figure 3. Effect plot of age on spirituality](image)

The conditional effect plot showed that the predicted values of spirituality decreased with age until the mid 20s, after which they increased to a higher level, and with time
the increase became more accentuated. After including the age polynomial (age2) in the regression model, the F-test indicated a significant effect \( (p = 0.01) \), with an \( R^2 \) accounting for 19% of the variance in spirituality. Since the age polynomial’s coefficient was statistically significant, it was decided to be kept in the further analysis (the second model) and taken into account when considering its joint effect with age on the dependent variable. However, when adding the variables for active community membership, a preference for conservative vs. openness values, as well as a preference for self-transcendent vs. self-enhancing values, the polynomial became statistically non-significant \( (p = 0.28 \text{ for age and } p = 0.41 \text{ for age2}) \), but with a significant F-ratio \( (R^2 = .62, \text{ adjusted } R^2 = .57, p < 0.001) \), and with all other variables at a 5% significance level. Since the age and age2 coefficients’ significance level on the t-test was not satisfactory, they were left out of the last model. From the age-related results, we can conclude that, though age was found to increase the level of spirituality, it had no significant effect on its variance. Gender was only included in the first model, as it had no significant effect. Therefore, H6 failed to receive support regarding both subpoints.

**Hypothesis 5: Active community membership, values and spirituality.** In the theoretical section it was concluded that membership in a religious or spiritual community, which can be associated to partly different values than in case of non-membership, does interact with these values and this, in turn, affects the spirituality level. Based on these theoretical information, it can be assumed that there might be an interaction effect between active membership and the value dimensions on spirituality. To test this assumption, an interaction term was calculated both for conservation vs. openness to change and self-transcendence vs. self-enhancement values, and active community membership. The names of the new variables were \( \text{consopenmemb} \) for the former and \( \text{selftransenmemb} \) for the latter. The first interaction term was non-significant \( (p= 0.33) \), while the interaction between self-transcendence vs. self-enhancement and active community membership \( (R^2 = 0.57, p < 0.01) \) proved to be statistically significant at the 5% level. To visualize the effect of the interaction term’s two components separately, two effect plots were created:
Figure 4. Conditional effect plots showing the effect of ST vs SE and active membership on spirituality

The effect plots indicated that active membership had a greater effect on the level of spirituality than had the value dimension self-transcendence vs. self-enhancement. Other than that, the direction in case of both effect plots was the same, a positive one. Consequently, the final model contained the independent variables actmemmbinary, consopen, selftransen as well as the interaction term selftransenmemb:

Table 6. Hierarchical OLS-regression Models Predicting Spirituality (n=44)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>R²adj.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active comm. membership</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.54***</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO vs OC</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.32*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST vs SE</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active comm. membership</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO vs OC</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST vs SE</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age polynomial</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active comm. membership</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO vs OC</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST vs SE</td>
<td>-.56</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>-.35*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int. STvsSE &amp; active comm. memb.</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.66*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05;  ** p < .01;  *** p < .001;
The regression showed a rather good model fit, accounting for more than 64% of the variance of spirituality in the chosen sample population ($R^2 = 64.2\%$ (adjusted $R^2 = 60.6\%$), with a significance level of 1%. All coefficients were statistically significant at the 5% level, except for active community membership, which was in an interaction with the extracted value coefficient selftransenmemb, resulting in a statistically significant combination (see Table 6). The regression equation in the case of this last regression predicted that, on a hypothetical level, when setting all variables to 0, the predicted level of spirituality is .949 (out of values between 0 and 2). Endorsing conservation vs. openness values increases the level of spirituality with 0.5. Being an active member of a religious or spiritual community together with a self-transcendence over self-enhancement value priority increases the spirituality level by .85. These last results reaffirmed that active community membership interacts with a preference for ST values over SE ones and together they have a significant effect on spirituality in the sample. Conservative values do affect the spirituality level as well, but they do not seem to interact with active membership in a spiritual or religious community. In conclusion, H5 (b) was confirmed, while H5 (a) failed to receive support.

5.2 Results of the Qualitative Analysis

5.2.1 Word Associations Task results

The Word Associations Task contained four words: understanding, unity with God/Nature, playfulness, and compassion. I chose these notions because they all relate to spirituality and each of them has specific significance within the two chosen religions, but can also be understood in a worldly and unreligious way. I found them suitable to discover possible differences, diversities as well as similarities between the three different communities regarding spiritual values. They also cover the main characteristics of spirituality as discussed in the theoretical section: aspiration to find meaning, acceptance and harmlessness, seeking contact with a higher entity but also with all that exists, openness, connectedness with others.

Understanding is a psychological process which can involve both the cognitive and affective systems, and can be interpreted with an individual or social emphasis. Understanding can be regarded as finding meaning, but also as accepting. Both of these appeared in the associations of the three groups and showed many similarities.
Unity with God/Nature is a central concept of both religions, but with different interpretations. Christianity believes in an Almighty God, while Buddhists do not. However, Buddhism regards Nature with the deepest respect and worship-like feelings, emphasising on harmony with Nature as the basis of Buddhist morality (Harvey, 2000). Consequently, an association referring to both “God” and “Nature”, has the potential of naturally bringing to light these different interpretations. The term is also a concept relating to spirituality outside a religious frame, therefore it can be a benchmark between religious and non-religious interpretations with respect to spirituality.

Playfulness is a term which does not directly relate to spiritual or religious concepts, however, it can provide insights into possible differences between religious and non-religious, as well as between a Christian and a Buddhist attitude. Playfulness is regarded as an important element in some manifestations which could be related to spirituality. Andre Droogers (2006) regards playfulness as a very relevant notion in accepting new and different forms of religiosity and spirituality. Play is a way for realising that there can be several ways of constructing reality, and it invites us to an “inner dialogue of contrasting views” (p. 81), widening our perspective.

Compassion (for all beings) is the central concept and, along with loving kindness, considered the root motivation of Buddhists (Harvey, 2000), but it plays an equally important role within the Christian world as well (Knitter, 2009). It is in the same time also given emphasis in any social environment, and relates to the interpersonal dimension of spirituality.

Table 7. Number and total percentage of associations of the three communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Buddhists</th>
<th>Christians</th>
<th>IT</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>124 (27,99 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playfulness</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>117 (26,41 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity with God / Nature</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>111 (25,05 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>91 (20,54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>95 (21,44 %)</td>
<td>142 (32,05 %)</td>
<td>206 (46,50 %)</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Out of the four terms, understanding received most descriptors, followed by playfulness, unity with God/Nature, and compassion. While the IT community and Buddhists provided most associations for understanding and playfulness, Christians attributed most descriptions to unity with God / Nature and to understanding. It should be mentioned, though, that Buddhists provided eight times compassion as association for understanding.

Generally, people associated positive or neutral words to all the terms, the number of associations considered negative by the participants was very low (30 in total out of 444 associations). Buddhists did not name any negative descriptors, but interestingly, their neutral associations were quite close in number to the positive ones (50 vs. 45 in total). When taking into account the number of participants in each group, Christians provided the overall highest number of associations, out of which positive descriptors outnumbered by far the neutral or negative associations. However, their neutral or negative associations proved to be quite interesting and rich in information as well, as was the case with the negative descriptors of the IT group. Proportionally, the IT community came second in terms of the number of overall associations, and lastly came the Buddhists.

Tables 8, 9 and 10 list the categories, the different associations within them, as well as their frequencies - their number and valence (positive-negative-neutral/missing) for each group. The first column under frequencies shows the total number of associations for the respective concept(s) (several can belong together), while the subsequent three columns contain the number of associations for each valence out of the total number of associations. The different categories listed words which were semantically similar or conceptually comparable. Due to the fact that the sample itself was small, the number of associations was often relatively small as well. I was fairly flexible in grouping the terms together, because I wanted to have fewer, but meaningful categories and preferably more than one term in each subcategory. However, if conceptually some term did not fit into an existing subcategory, I created a new one for it. In cases where inside one category there were different valences to the words, I marked all associations with the corresponding valence(s).
### Table 8. Word associations for Buddhists by categories, total and by condition (n=11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Attributed associations</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Understanding</td>
<td>Cognitive processes</td>
<td>Intellect/reason, logic, comprehension, assimilation, knowledge</td>
<td>All 28 + 15 - 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>All 1 + 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>Compass</td>
<td>All 8 + 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Love, goodness</td>
<td>All 3 + 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Empathy, sensitivity</td>
<td>All 3 + 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>All 2 + 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal growth</td>
<td>Truthfulness+, honesty to oneself°, putting away own ideas°</td>
<td>All 5 + 2 - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Essential</td>
<td>All 1 + 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Unity with God/Nature</td>
<td>Completeness</td>
<td>Whole+, everything/all+, core with all essence°, circle+</td>
<td>All 5 + 4 - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Harmony, peace, joy</td>
<td>All 4 + 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Law, order, emptiness</td>
<td>All 3 + 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual abilities</td>
<td>Inner strength, attention, openness without concepts, self-knowledge, self-mastery</td>
<td>All 5 + 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious references</td>
<td>Faith°, Buddha+, Zen+, Christianity°</td>
<td>All 4 + 2 - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Playfulness</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serene attitude</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serenity/peacefulness°, happiness+, cheerfulness+/°, joy°, lightness+/°, flexibility°, to be beyond self-pity°, not taking things too seriously°</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom, impartiality</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childlike state</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Inner) child+/°, innocence°, purity+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety, diversity, colourness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football®, ball+/°, skillfulness+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wave, sea</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Compassion</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance and respect</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total acceptance°, love+, goodness+, heart+, warmth+</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-centred attitude°, empathy (“I am you”), no expectations°, togetherness+</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual/religious references</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddha-state+, way(path)+, fundamental virtue+, emptiness+, light°</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total #</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total%</td>
<td>21,39%</td>
<td>11,26%</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total (443)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Note.** + positive valence, - negative valence, 0 neutral valence, x no valence given

Table 9. *Word associations for Christians by categories, total and by condition (n=11)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Attributed associations</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Understanding</td>
<td>Acceptance of each other</td>
<td>Acceptance of others+/-, love+, care+, friendliness+, amiability+, tolerance+/-</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Empathy+°, sympathy+°, pity‾</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Openness+, broad-mindedness°</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cognitive processes</td>
<td>Intelligence+, acquiescence+, understanding: No°, a friend°, God°, apprehension+</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Process, decision</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Patience, sincerity</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spiritual or religious references</td>
<td>Following Jesus, disciple of Jesus</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New life, wonder and treasure</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Unity with God/Nature</td>
<td>Religious references</td>
<td>God as: love, faith, trust, truth, creation+; relationship with God+; Lord+, Creator of the world+, Almighty+, Caregiver+, Sovereign+, Jesus Christ+, Bible+, unity with God (not) as unity with nature°/-</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Spirituality and Values

#### Power, force, disposal over everything
- Completeness: Calmness, peacefulness, quietness, silence, love (unity with) Nature: harmony, wonderful, joy, freedom, autumn
- Beyond physicality: The spring of life, the atmosphere of the everyday life, the only truth

#### Completeness
- Calmness, peacefulness, quietness, silence, love: 8
- (unity with) Nature: harmony, wonderful, joy, freedom, autumn: 5
- The spring of life, the atmosphere of the everyday life, the only truth: 3

#### Beyond physicality
- Inexplicable, unchangeable fearful: 4

#### 3. Playfulness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compleness</th>
<th>Power, force, disposal over everything</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completeness</td>
<td>Calmness, peacefulness, quietness, silence, love (unity with) Nature: harmony, wonderful, joy, freedom, autumn</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond physicality</td>
<td>The spring of life, the atmosphere of the everyday life, the only truth</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inexplicable, unchangeable fearful</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Serene attitude
- Cheerfulness, joy, laughter, good mood, fun, humor, youth of the soul, tenselessness: 12
- Love, trust, safety, openness, aptness for life: 5
- Weightlessness, airiness: 2

#### Childlike state
- Childishness, childlike, cute, nice shoe laces, “fülolaj”="ear oil" (Kosztolányi): 5
- Recklessness, irresponsibility: 2

#### Play
- Playing with abandon, exciting: 2
- Little cat plays with a grass+, dog°: 2

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1 The term, literally meaning “ear oil”, refers to an anecdote about Hungarian writer Frigyes Karinthy, who participated at an international “language-contest”, where everyone had to say “I love you” in their own language. Karinthy thought the Hungarian word “Szeretlek” would sound like frog’s croak, so he said instead the smoothly sounding word “fülolaj”, and he won the contest.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Attributed associations</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Understanding</td>
<td>Acceptance of each other</td>
<td>(Non-romantic) love, friendship, helping, caring, selflessness</td>
<td>All: 58 +: 53 -: 1 0/X: 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Spirituality and Values

#### Personal relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value 1</th>
<th>Value 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empathy, sympathy, fellow-feeling</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance, non-judgement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner, spouse, romantic love</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust, honesty</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family, motherly understanding</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindness, patience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Cognitive processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value 1</th>
<th>Value 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence, comprehension, learning, understanding of written text</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking, expressing thoughts, listening, communication, language</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Personal growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value 1</th>
<th>Value 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2. Unity with God/Nature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value 1</th>
<th>Value 2</th>
<th>Value 3</th>
<th>Value 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature, naturalness, balance</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural balance+, natural wonders+, beauty in nature+, biology+, forest+, excursion+, environmental protection+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony, peacefulness, equilibrium, completeness</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith- in life+, ourselves+, in something greater+, esoteric belief+</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God+, Almighty+, Bible-, religion+/-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack, lost</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. Playfulness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>0/X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Childlike state</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheerfulness, entertainment, ease, fun, impishness, laughter, humour</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child+, childhood+, childish joy+, infantilism-, youth+</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity, tentative and joy of creation, art</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings: love, friendliness, sympathy, warmth</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Miscellaneous</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence+, self+, balance+, “salt of life” +, essential human quality+, free time+, lack-, danger-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4. Compassion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>0/X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regard for others</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship, relationship, care, support</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding others and their feelings, empathy, tolerance, acceptance, respect</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuition, affective intelligence, attention</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious references</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus’ healing of a leprous, mercy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problems</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness, pain, loss, death, tragedy, mourning, illness</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total # | 206 | 176 | 20  | 10  |
Total% | 46,39% | 39,63% | 4,50% | 2,25% |

% of total (443)

*Note. + positive valence, - negative valence, 0 neutral valence, x no valence given*
The associations for the term *understanding* showed similarities in case of the three groups and they were associated to both empathy, acceptance and reason/intellect. Categories common to all were *acceptance* and *cognitive processes*. The Buddhists and the IT group had also personal growth and personal relationships, respectively. Regarding the associations considered negative, in the Christian group, tolerance, seen as acceptance (of opinion) without discrimination is regarded with mixed feelings. So is pity, a form of sympathy.

As mentioned earlier, the term *unity with God / Nature* received the most positive descriptors from the Christians, and these were very often related to God Himself and His superiority in relation to the human being but also His love. Interestingly, the negative associations pointed towards the inexplicableness of such a higher entity, as well as fear. The Buddhist associations for the term *unity with God / Nature* showed a looser, more flexible attitude than that of the Christians. This approach was oriented towards harmony and also towards a more self-oriented viewpoint (e.g., inner harmony, self-knowledge) while having as many neutral descriptors as positive ones. The IT group mentioned mostly nature-related descriptors but also mixed religious concepts and self-orientedness (e.g., faith in someone or something greater but also faith in the self). Harmony, peacefulness was a common point in the association of all the three groups in relation to unity with God or Nature. Categories common to all groups were *completeness*, often associated with examples from nature, and *religious and esoteric notions*.

*Playfulness* received a high number of associations from all groups and was mostly understood in similar ways, concentrating around ideas like serenity, cheerfulness, childishness, joy. The highest percentage was given by the IT community, who associated many different topics with it, such as childish joy, positive feelings, free time or intelligence. *Childlike state* was a common category for all communities, and contained expressions like cheerfulness, fun, childhood. Christians and Buddhists shared other two categories: *play* and *serene attitude*. Buddhists also named elements from nature, while IT persons referred also to creativity. An interesting antithesis is given by something like “not taking things too seriously” as a neutral Buddhist descriptor versus “irresponsibility” as a negative Christian descriptor.
Out of the four concepts, **compassion** received the least positive descriptors, and in the same time, it got the highest number of negative descriptors- 16 in total, out of which 13 were given by the IT community. The categories were, again, very similar in case of the three groups, and showed towards three main directions: *regard and care for others* (in case of the Christians and the IT group) / *acceptance and respect* (by the Buddhists), *spiritual / religious references*, and *problems*. With regard to the first category, the notions used by the persons highlighted empathy from understanding the other, as well as positive feelings, while the Christians emphasised support-related behaviours and selflessness, and the IT group gave importance to relationships but also empathy.

Under problems, pain was common to all three groups, though the Buddhist rate was positive to it. Other negative descriptors included condolence or helplessness (Christians), as well as loss, mourning or illness (IT group). The IT community had also a fourth category about *individual abilities*, such as affective intelligence.

All in all, according to the word association test results, the majority of the Christian descriptions were primarily focused on responsibility and commitment towards the chosen faith / religion and the community and close ones, while Buddhist associations were more related to the self and attention to being open-minded and accepting in the relationship with others. The descriptors of the IT group seemed to emphasise both personal relationships and individual abilities. Consequently, Christians seemed to have more benevolence, safety and tradition-related values and terms (relationships, community, friends were accentuated, as well as responsibility but also faith), while Buddhists preferred to relate concepts predominantly to more holistic, abstract and individualistic notions (accentuating openness, flexibility, comprehension, the natural laws of life, universalism and self-direction values). The IT group emphasised social and personal relationships firstly, relating to self-transcendence values like benevolence, as well as some conformity (sympathy, selflessness, acceptance), but also gave value to openness to change related concepts such as self-direction (e.g., comprehension, learning or incentive). Besides benevolence values, universalism was prevalent in the associations of all three communities (wisdom, harmony, tolerance, beauty of nature).

Spirituality appeared in both religious and non-religious associations. Most of religious associations were provided for Unity with God/Nature and compassion. All groups made references like *God’s compassion* (Christians), *faith in life, in the self and in*...
something greater (IT group) or Buddha-state (Buddhists) which shows that people contextualised their understanding of religious spirituality according to their belief system. Christians viewed God as a separate entity, while the Buddhists’ conceptualisation pointed towards the inner God-like state in the human being, one with Nature and un-separated from the divinity, and the non-religious persons showed a mixed picture containing both types of elements, mentioning both God and a more abstract higher entity often related to the self. The Christians made the most religious references and had them for all words except for playfulness, where they gave some non-religious spiritual associations. Spirituality in its non-religious meaning was found in several associations for playfulness (e.g., serenity, wisdom by Buddhists; youth of the soul by Christians; balance, “salt of life” by IT people). Terms like openness, broad-mindedness, harmony, were also present in the associations of the Christian and IT group for the word understanding.

As can be seen, there were many similarities between the three communities, evident in the shared associations present in the common categories. Similar value priorities can also be noticed in the emphasis on self-transcendence values, most notably pertaining to benevolence, offered by all the groups. Spirituality presented some similar concepts but also some differences, predominantly in religious references. It is also notable that the Buddhist community had no negative valences to their associations, while the other two communities provided proportionally the same amount of negative descriptors. In that sense, it might be concluded that the Buddhists differed from the other two groups.

5.2.2 Findings of the content analysis of the open-ended questions

5.2.2.1 The analysing process

The material of the participants’ written answers was structured into a coding frame which contained the key aspects and segments of the material assigned into dimensions or main categories. These were the concept-driven codes of the coding frame. Before finalising the frame, all the written material of the open-ended questions was analysed. The subcategories were added in a data-driven way, as they emerged from the material. In their creation a special importance was given to how these filtered the data, so that no important aspect was left out in the process. This was not easy, given that the material was diverse and segmented into three different groups. I tried to accomplish this by re-coding the material at different times. In the initial phases, the material was
progressively summarized, paraphrasing relevant parts, “streamlining” them each (Schreier, 2012, p. 107), then comparing and summarising the similar paraphrases as one. Common patterns were thus grouped into themes in a manner to reflect the texts they represented. In the same time, I wanted to compare material from three different sources. Therefore, in creating the themes and categories, I attempted to capture the similarity within the material from each source, and added categories to capture the differences from the other sources, contrasting the material from the different sources, based on the strategy developed by Boyatzis (1998). The emerging themes were named and organised into an initial set of categories. These categories were subsequently refined. Reliability of the content analysis was calculated with the coefficient of agreement measuring the percentage of agreement between the initial code unit numbers and the final code unit numbers. This way I tried to assess the consistency between different points in time (Boyatzis, 1998). Reliability of spirituality definition results with measurement of stability over time is 84.65 %. Reliability of values over time is 80.64 % (with about two weeks difference).

Since the five open-ended questions each comprised key elements I wished to focus on, the dimensions were selected around the three topics they represented. The first and fourth questions were concerned with how the participants define spiritual experiences in their lives, in order to be able to assess how they define spirituality. The second and third questions addressed the topic spirituality vs. religiosity, referring to the question whether the participants made any distinctions between the two concepts based on what they considered spiritual and / or religious. Finally, the fifth question concerned the participants’ value priorities. Consequently, the main categories or main dimensions were: Defining spirituality in participants’ lives, Spirituality as religious versus non-religious, and Values. The emerging subcategories will be discussed in the case of the three groups in the following. During the analysis, the hierarchical structure of the categories will be described for each of the main dimensions. Examples for the different categories will be provided using some relevant excerpts of some of the respondents’ written material. These excerpts are presented in the original language in the appendix 3. To identify the participants, a number is provided for everyone, based on the number I wrote on the envelopes. Christians received the numbers from 1 to 11, Buddhists were given the numbers between 12 - 22, and the IT group members were identified using the rest of the numbers between 23 - 44.
5.2.2.2 Defining spirituality

In the following analysis, the main dimensions regarding spirituality, as seen by the respondents, will be described in detail. The analysis will address each of the dimensions identified above, with their respective categories. In naming the subcategories (especially the lower-level ones) I tried to be as close as possible to the participants’ own expressions. Although the codes were identified in a data-driven way, based on what was in the text, the naming of the codes (mostly the higher-level ones) was often also based on my previous knowledge and the theoretical background I presented earlier, but still keeping close to the respondents’ words. When calculating the frequencies, I added together each time a participant mentioned the topic and concept(s) in question.

In asking the participants to relate about their own spiritual experiences, I tried to assess how they thought about lived spirituality rather than an abstract notion, and how spirituality is experienced, understood and expressed by people in everyday life. The personal references of the questions were also meant to motivate the participants to write more and make it easier for them to do so. The analysis of the participants’ responses resulted in 67 definitions about spirituality, with 35 subcategories in total for the three groups, organised around three main dimensions (main categories). However, when calculating the categories so that those which were common for two or three groups were taken into consideration only once, 26 subcategories were identified in total. Proportionally, 38.80% of the definitions were provided by the Christians (26), 35.82% were given by the IT group (24), and 25.37% by the Buddhists (17). The answers of the IT group were organised around 13 subcategories built into three- and four-level structures, including the main categories. The Christian community provided 12 subcategories in total with three- and four-level structures, and the Buddhists had 10 subcategories within three-level structures.

Table 11 presents the categories of definitions and the frequencies of the first main dimension, Defining spirituality in participants’ lives.
Table 11. Categories and frequencies of definitions of spirituality in participants’ lives, by communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buddhists</th>
<th>Christians</th>
<th>IT Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✷ Spiritual experiences as life-impacting (9)</td>
<td>✷ Spiritual experiences as life-impacting (9)</td>
<td>✷ Spiritual experiences as life-impacting (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Everyday experiences (e.g., dreams) (2)</td>
<td>➢ Continuous, everyday experiences (7)</td>
<td>➢ Lasting energy source (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Extraordinary, unexplainable experiences (7)</td>
<td>➢ Extraordinary experiences (2)</td>
<td>✷ Journey (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ Transcendence (2)</td>
<td>≥ Transcendence (2)</td>
<td>➢ Interactions with others (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Levels of spiritual evolution (2)</td>
<td>- Relation to God (2)</td>
<td>➢ Extraordinary, stunning experiences (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ Paranormal experiences (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td>➷ Transcendence (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Symbolic inner path (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Mystery (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➷ Paranormal experiences (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious spiritual determinants</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karma, test</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of spiritual life</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal growth</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious spiritual determinants</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation (God’s grace, redemption)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help from God, trust in God</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility as a believer</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling, faith</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious and spiritual determinants</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual help in difficult situations</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlightenment</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<td><strong>Personal growth</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Personal growth</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value and uniqueness of human life</td>
<td>(2)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The three main categories within the spirituality definitions dimension were the following: Spiritual experiences as life-impacting, Religious (and) spiritual determinants and Personal growth.

Of the respondents, 50.74% defined spirituality in terms of life-impacting phenomena (34 definitions in total by the three groups). This category applied if a participant, when relating about experience(s) he/she considered spiritual, expressed the opinion that such experiences have a strong impact on a person’s life, regardless of the content of the experience. This impact causes a change within the person on a spiritual level. For instance, participant 23 (from the IT group) defined spiritual experience as “something astonishing, sudden, cathartic. It would be pivotal, or causing a change in one’s outlook on life”.

Two types of such experiences were identified in case of each group. Part of the responses regarded spirituality as occurring in people’s everyday lives, and exerting a continuous influence on them. Participants who expressed such definitions viewed spirituality as extraordinary in an ordinary way, as something which occurs on a daily basis but is nonetheless a powerful, strengthening, lasting energy source on our lifelong journey. Christian respondents emphasised God’s continuous presence and working in their daily lives, while Buddhists referred to compassion and empathy towards others, as well as to dreams, and IT people mentioned social relationships as spiritually meaningful everyday occurrences and the idea of journey. Participant 10 from the Christian community wrote about spiritual experiences that:

If, from the Bible or at a sermon, I get to understand something which God says - which therefore is not from this world, is not a human viewpoint or wisdom, but stands above it -, and this somehow becomes related to my personal life, that is always a special experience.

It is clear from this passage of text that spirituality in the participant’s life means primarily a personal connection with God who represents the highest standard of guidance. This connection is translated in the discovery of personally relevant messages from Him, and an understanding of these messages. Buddhist respondent 12 referred to spiritual experiences as “Every time when I really feel what another person feels, when I truly feel the compassion, every such time is a special event”. This participant emphasises the relevance of the capacity to feel empathy and compassion towards others in her everyday life, and identities this as the basis of her spirituality. A
member of the IT work community (respondent 31) defined spiritual experiences in
terms of social interactions: “The first “serious” relationship with a girl in my life. The
first walk hand-in-hand. The first kiss. The first social experiences.【--】because
they opened a new spiritual dimension, that of social relationships”. This passage refers
to the spiritual dimension of interpersonal connections, and the referral to “firsts”
accentuates their perceived importance. The interpersonal level of spirituality and the
concept of connection and connectedness to one another or to something bigger was
prevalent in these interpretations of everyday-type spiritual experiences.

The other type of spiritual experience described by the respondents as life-impacting,
refers to extraordinary, unexplainable experiences. Such occurrences involve
transcending dimensions of physical reality, and contain references which are
considered out-of-ordinary by the participants. Transcendence means an experience or
the existence of something beyond the normal or physical level (based on the definition
group) wrote about this:

If we think about it, we realise that we cannot understand the universe, there
are important, mysterious things in the world. A scientist cannot tell more than
the average person about questions like: - What is beyond that? - What was
there before? - Is there life after death? - Is there a God? etc.

Existential questions revolving around non-material beliefs and search for meaning and
purpose were presented as the core of spirituality by this respondent. He accentuated
this by adding that spiritual experiences “make us think about all the important
intellectual questions”. The respondent also expressed the belief that these questions
remain impossible to explore, even on a scientific level. Persons writing about spiritual
transcendence mentioned out-of-sensory events and other non-material references
which become accessible through spiritual exploration, but cannot be easily explained
by science. Christian respondents focused on the awareness of God as a higher power
and the possibility to transcend the limited human condition through a relationship with
Him. The Buddhist approach emphasised the need to transcend to higher levels of
spiritual evolution as the goal of life. Members of the IT group defined spiritual
experiences in terms of transcendence by references like symbolic inner path (an
awareness of being on a spiritual journey where guiding messages and symbols are
accessible via regressive meditation or dreamlike states), “cosmos” experience
(experiencing an inner state of “nothing and everything”), or inaccessible mystery (stating that spirituality is inaccessible and undefinable within human possibilities). Participant 27, member of the IT group, described such an event during a regressive meditation, where

I talked to my own “inner being”, which appeared in the form of a big old sicamore tree, which was dying. We did [again] not communicate with words, but we understood each other. In a split of a second we shared millions of pieces of information. During this time it began to heal and grew some leaves here and there again. I experienced here the “nothing and everything”, which I named “cosmos”, because now in a watchful state it doesn’t seem logical and understandable anymore.

The respondent wrote about the healing power of a spiritual experience where she got in touch with her own self. The symbols she saw helped communication and understanding, and she described an experience which - as she herself concluded - is beyond the realm of human comprehension. She refers here to the intrapersonal level of spirituality. In this sense, spiritual transcendence means some sort of intuitive knowledge and awareness that can lead to sensing or seeing a bigger picture which surpasses the physical reality.

Within this subcategory, some Buddhists and IT group members also mentioned paranormal experiences. This category denotes events which involve some sort of paranormal activity representing phenomena that are beyond normal scientific explanations. Such happenings were in Buddhist version events like astral journey, near-death and out-of-body experiences, or external suggestions (from above). Members of the IT group mentioned astral journey, communication with dead relatives, spirits, brain-control games, premonitions.

The second category within the dimension Defining spirituality in participants’ lives indicated Religious (and) spiritual determinants. This category refers to relevant events, information or experiences which are considered by the participants to have a determining influence over their spiritual and / or religious views. These often have an explanatory role relative to spiritual experiences and can serve as a guidance in such situations. It is a process of meaning making. Definitions belonging to this subcategory differ in accordance with the religious and spiritual ideology adopted by the respondents. For example, participant 13 considered that “The real goal of [our] testing is ultimately for the growth of the soul-spirit”. Consequently, Buddhists made
references to Karma and to life perceived as a test designed to assist our spiritual evolution, as well as to spirituality regarded as determining the quality of our experiences. Alternatively, Christians wrote about God’s salvation, redemption and conversion. A number of religious references were given by them which represent an emphasis on our dependence on God, on His grace and the responsibility to live according to His standards. Respondent 6 understood her spirituality by “learning that for God my consecration is more important than my comfort”. Other markers of spirituality were Christian conversion, as well as faith and calling related to it. In the IT group there was an interesting mixture of both Christian motives like conversion, and typically Buddhist ones such as enlightenment. Spirituality was here defined also in terms of assistance and help in difficult situations. Respondent 36 described such a process:

A very dear friend of mine had cancer. When her state was very bad - irreversible - I went on an evening to her to the hospital. I touched my lips to her forehead and promised her that everything would be fine, she can “go” in peace (to the other world). I went home, I cried - like never before in my life -, and said every prayer that I know several times (there are not many, one or two). Next morning while going to work I received the news that she passed away. I felt a great sense of calmness. I felt this was right. I think I was able to help her to leave this world.

In this experience, the participant drew comfort from religious spiritual rituals with which she felt she was able to help her friend and which in turn helped her to deal with her loss.

The third main category of the dimension Defining spirituality in participants’ lives denotes Personal growth through spiritual experiences involving emotions, an attitude of respect or wisdom. These lead to a spiritual development within the individual. Spirituality was associated with mostly positive feelings like compassion (Buddhists), happiness, joy, thankfulness, love, selflessness (Christians), but also with assistance in dealing with negative feelings of loss, which bring a positive development on a a spiritual level (Christians). For instance, respondent 3 wrote:

Not long ago a friend of mine who is also 19 had a suicide attempt, which is of course in itself a shocking “event”, but what made me think the most was how difficult it is to be a responsible friend. I was shallow, and if I look around among my peers, I see the same. It showed me what I needed to change in my friendships.
The suicide attempt of her friend brought the participant to reflect on the significance of friendship and ultimately brought forward a positive change inside her. She named her friend’s suicide attempt “shocking”, and by that she stressed her own failure in being a responsible friend who should have “read the signs”. From her self-critique follows that she had a representation in her mind about what a responsible friendship is, and self-reflection made her realise that she needed to change something for the better.

Other associations included the positive effect of wisdom and understanding (Buddhists), as well as that of respect by acceptance and paying attention (IT members). The latter community also referred to individual spiritual evolution through the realisation of the value and uniqueness of human life. Participant 40 related about her pregnancy that it was the time of

an intimacy never felt before, 【to feel】 how a little life is preparing inside. The way we connected way before his birth...And perhaps the strongest was when I first felt that I needed him at least as much as he needed me.

By paying attention to her unborn child developing inside herself, and the connection they developed, the participant discovered how precious a person can be, how valuable life is.

These definitions from the material of the participants’ written answers to the open-ended questions seem to be in line with previous definitions such as Buck’s (2006), which regard spirituality as an aspiration to transcend the self and to find meaning through connection with others, nature or a higher power. The categories resulting from the content analysis can be compared to a three-dimensional perspective involving the intrapersonal, interpersonal and transpersonal levels and they all express a search for meaning and purpose. Spiritual experiences as life-impacting phenomena point towards extraordinary events which often transcend the normal and material reality. They involve primarily inner experiences of the self with regard to normal and not-so-normal dimensions of life, but also refer to connectedness with others. Definitions in this category emphasise the relational focus of spirituality - to the self, to others, to something bigger or even unexplainable. Religious spiritual influences make reference to the transpersonal level through the lens of religious and spiritual background of respondents and involve meaning making. Spirituality definitions also express a personal dimension and a possibility of evolving thanks to a personally lived
spirituality. Being spiritual attunes the individual to a deeper level of understanding and appreciating life and the world.

5.2.2.3 Spirituality versus religiosity

The second and third questions of the open-ended question-set attempted to compare religiosity and spirituality in the views of the respondents, by asking whether the spiritual experience the participants had previously described was spiritual and whether it was religious. In total, 36.36% of the respondents considered their experiences spiritual, not religious, 31.81% viewed them as both, 11.36% were unsure and 20.45% provided inconsistent or no answers. Table 12 presents the responses of the participants.

Table 12. Classifications of own experiences in terms of spirituality and religiosity, by community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Spiritual &amp; religious</th>
<th>Spiritual, not religious</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Neither</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Neither refers to inconsistent answer or no answer

While 72.72% of the Christian respondents considered spirituality as equivalent to religiosity, this was not evident in the other two groups’ responses. Only 18.18% of the Buddhists regarded spirituality and religiosity in the same way, while 54.54% differentiated between the two notions, considering their experiences spiritual but not religious. Within the IT community, 40.90% expressed this opinion, as opposed to 18.18% who considered their experiences both spiritual and religious. Many of the answers did not elaborate their reasons for separating or not separating the two concepts. From those who did, respondent 17 of the Buddhist community expressed the difference between spirituality and religiosity in its meaning tied to religion, in the following way:

What is religion? Experiences have nothing in common with religion. Religions are created by people. And the mind projects its own world. In my opinion even the most materialist person has spiritual experiences, because, even though he / she is a materialist, he / she still has a spirit. The dream is also a spiritual experience, but since it happens every day, it doesn’t seem out-of-ordinary.
In this sense, religion-related religiousness is a human product, while spiritual refers to everything related to the spirit and the non-material. Likewise, several others mentioned the capacity of the spirit to project itself into the material world and focused on spirituality rather than on religiosity. However, the separation line between the two is not easy to draw. Another Buddhist respondent (20), for instance, provided an open-minded opinion which changes or resets the balance:

> It depends on what one “believes”. Everybody’s belief system is different. If my belief system is religious, then the experience is “religious”, this in my opinion depends on the depth (height) and quality of the experience. It can differ according to experiences, and across individuals definitely.

She identified the personal belief system as being the wedge between spirituality and religiosity, connecting or separating them accordingly. In this viewpoint, whether religiosity and spirituality are different concepts is a matter of quality and depth. Mature and open religiosity, like evidentiated by Saroglou (2002), can have much in common with spirituality. Participant 27 of the IT group regarded differentiating between the two concepts as a question of faith and conceptualisation of religiosity. Referring to the spiritual experience she related previously, she stated: “I don’t really know, because it could have been a trick of my mind and it could have been a spiritual experience. It’s a matter of faith. Whether it was a religious experience depends on what we define as religion”. Another respondent from the IT group (33) expressed that spirituality brings up all the important intellectual questions and the question regarding the existence of God as well (which is inevitably tied to religion).

As a consequence, the results indicate that, while more participants then not separated the concept of spirituality from religiosity, and most respondents from the Buddhist and the IT community did so, they experienced difficulties in explaining their perceived differences. The Christian community differed in this regard, their answers united in most cases the two notions. This seems to be in line with previous research showing that classic religion tends to integrate spirituality into religiosity and make less differentiation between the two concepts (e.g., Houtman et al., 2009). In Hungary, Buddhism is not regarded as “classic religion”, since it is an alternative and not the “mainstream” religion within the country. Often, its ideology is adapted to local

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2 **megélés** — the participant refers to the process of experiencing, not the experience itself
context and values, to make it more understandable and adaptable for the followers. Therefore, this idea about classic religion and integration of the two concepts seems not to apply for the Buddhist community in this research.

### 5.2.2.4 Values

The last of the open-ended question asked the participants to write about the things which are most important in their lives, in order to identify their value priorities. The analysis of the answers led to the development of three main dimensions / categories of values, out of which one refers to the interpersonal, one to the transpersonal and one to the intrapersonal level. Consequently, in each of the three groups the main value categories are: *Benevolence, Transcendence, and Personal focus*. If we adapt the main categories to the Schwartz model (1992), the first two have a predominantly social focus, whereas the third comprises firstly person-centred values. Similar subcategories were identified for the three groups as well, with some differences, organised around two-, three- and four-level hierarchical structures. Besides the three main categories, a number of 47 subcategories resulted in total for the three groups, and, when adding common subcategories only once for the three groups, 26 subcategories were identified. Out of the 47 subcategories, the IT group had 19, the Buddhist community provided 17 and the Christians 11 subcategories. The total number of value frequencies was 120. Of these, the IT group gave 57 (47.5%), followed by the Christians with 35 (29.16 %), and lastly by the Buddhists who provided 28 (23.33 %).

*Table 13. Percentages of the main value categories by communities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Benevolence</th>
<th>Transcendence</th>
<th>Personal focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>21.31</td>
<td>26.47</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>32.78</td>
<td>38.23</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>45.90</td>
<td>35.29</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14. Categories and frequencies of participants’ value priorities, by communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buddhists</th>
<th>Christians</th>
<th>IT Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❖ Benevolence (13)</td>
<td>❖ Benevolence (20)</td>
<td>❖ Benevolence (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Relationships (3)</td>
<td>➢ Relationships (16)</td>
<td>➢ Relationships (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ with close ones (3)</td>
<td>✷ with close ones (10)</td>
<td>✷ with beloved ones (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Care for children (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Care for children (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Good will / good deeds (10)</td>
<td>➢ Good will / good deeds (4)</td>
<td>➢ Good will / good deeds (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ Helping others, love, compassion, honesty, trustworthiness (10)</td>
<td>✷ Love, faithfulness, humbleness (4)</td>
<td>✷ Love, support for others (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Transcendence (9)</td>
<td>❖ Transcendence (13)</td>
<td>❖ Transcendence (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Spirituality (4)</td>
<td>➢ Spirituality (3)</td>
<td>➢ Spirituality (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ Meaning in life (1)</td>
<td>✷ Meaningful life (3)</td>
<td>✷ Harmony (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ Harmony (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>✷ Wholeness (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ Wholeness, wisdom (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>✷ Wholeness (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist religiosity (3)</td>
<td>Christian religiosity (10)</td>
<td>Universalism (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner path, meditation (3)</td>
<td>God, Christian path, faith (10)</td>
<td>Understanding (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universalism (2)</td>
<td>Value of human life (2)</td>
<td>Accepting and respecting others (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal focus (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moral stand (honesty, equity) (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-fulfilment (1)</td>
<td>Goal attainment (1)</td>
<td>Personal focus (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health (3)</td>
<td>Material goods (1)</td>
<td>Goal attainment, entertainment, joy (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty towards oneself (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Health (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material goods (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-knowledge (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Material goods (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Security, control (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Change, varied life (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14 shows the hierarchical structure of the value categories as well as their frequencies for the three communities. The first category, *Benevolence*, received a total of 61 nominations (50.83%), followed by *Transcendence* with 34 (28.33%), and finally, by *Personal focus* with 25 (20.83%) nominations. Although the main themes within the value dimension were the same in the case of all the groups, there were several differences on the subsequent levels, and mainly in the conceptualisations and explanations of their own value priorities. Even if many subcategories were very similar or even the same, sometimes the understanding behind the same notions differed, which became visible in the way the participants explained their values.

The first main category, *Benevolence*, refers to a concern for others’- mainly significant others’- welfare and is based on supportive social relations. According to the Oxford Dictionary, benevolence means “The quality of being well meaning; kindness” (Oxford Dictionaries, [http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/...](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/...)). Consequently, this category applied if a participant expressed values which relate to preserving and enhancing the connection to and the welfare of people who are important to him / her (family, friends, partner, and the in-group in general). Such values are, for instance, helpfulness, honesty, support, trustworthiness, etc. Benevolence values comprised 50.83 % of the total number of value nominations. Christians gave benevolence 49.12% of their own overall nominations, the IT group named 57.14 % out of their total number, and Buddhists provided their 46.42 %. Within the category, two subcategories of values were identified. The greater part of the answers referred to personal relationships with other people who the respondents felt close to, and with God. An interesting contrast is given by the low number of such values provided by the Buddhist community, compared to the other two groups.

For the Christians, a “living” connection to God is of essential value, just like essential is having a close relationship with beloved ones. For instance, participant 5 wrote:

> The first and most important thing is having a living relationship with God. In the same time, important in my life are also my family and my friends. Without connection, however, life becomes meaningless, therefore God stands in the centre of everything and He is the one who decides what will be good and bad anyway, regardless of what I find [good or bad or] important.

Relationships were the basis of the value system of this participant. She viewed God as a power from above, external to us, directly affecting (her) life and values, and having
control over them. Family and friends are the most frequently mentioned people with whom enduring relationships are most valuable for the participants of all three communities. Care for children was named a top value priority by some respondents and was given a special emphasis so that it earned the status of a subcategory in itself within relationships, for both the Buddhists and the IT group members. These people viewed children in terms of continuity and responsibility, but also as the reason for living. Participant 12 (from the Buddhist group) wrote: “It is important that I transmit everything I know to the children: cooking, meditation, experiences about romantic relationships, etc. These are important because this is how life becomes valuable: helping, serving others”. Good will and good deeds towards others are central values to many respondents, most of them Buddhists and IT members. Although mentioned as an inner guiding principle, helping others is often concretised as support for personally important others and the in-group in general. This support is regarded in terms of reciprocity which gives a sense of security, as stated by respondent 32 (from the IT group)

The human being is a social being, it is important to be able to share the joy and the sorrow, to have someone to feel anxious for and to be happy about their successes. It is a good feeling to know that, if I was in trouble, I could count on many persons, just as they can count on me.

The IT group emphasised love quite heavily, while Buddhist respondents focused on compassion, helpfulness or trustworthiness, and Christians also stressed faithfulness or humbleness. Some participants mentioned love in a general way, but most of them referred primarily to their beloved ones.

The second main category, Transcendence, refers to values reflecting what is beyond or above the normal or material reality. It is also related to going beyond personal interests and showing acceptance and concern for the world in general and for nature. If either of these applied to a value a respondent wrote about, it was included into this category. 37,14 % of the overall values of the Christian community belong to this category, with 32, 14 % of all the Buddhist value nominations, and 21,05 % of the IT group’s values. Within this category, spirituality was present in all the groups, as a value dimension reflecting, in this case, a search for meaning in life, harmony with the self and / or the world and a feeling of wholeness, of being one with everything that is.
In the Christian version, a meaningful life related to accomplishment of goals but also to living according to Christian standards. Buddhists emphasised balance of mind, spirit and body as harmony, and wholeness as the ultimate goal of life. IT group members highlighted harmony within the self as giving peace and happiness, but also harmony with others. Other important values were a sense of wholeness and a quest for meaning in life. Participant 34 (IT group) expressed that her greatest values were

Experiencing the sense of wholeness and the development in relationships and in the relationship with myself. To live a meaningful life. Money, success, etc. have never satisfied me, they are simply not enough. I was always interested what life can be about besides these.

Going beyond the material towards the spiritual realm is an important goal for this participant. She expressed the need of development in her relation to herself as well as to others, and also emphasised her wish for her life to have a meaning. Living and evolving in her relationships, as well as experiencing herself as undivided, complete, is of essential value for her, and she regards these as giving meaning to her life.

Religiosity as a subcategory of the dimension Transcendence was present only in the case of Buddhists and Christians, with the specificity of each of the two religions. As a consequence, Buddhist religiosity appeared in the form of inner path and meditation as helping personal development and wisdom, while Christian religiosity referred to the Christian path of following the Lord and having faith in His wisdom. Therefore, values presented here are mostly tradition, conformity and security-type values.

The third subcategory of Transcendence, universalism, appeared by IT people and Buddhists, but was missing by Christians. Universalism applied here if a participant expressed a value which related to protection, understanding, appreciation of life in general (of all life), to tolerance of diversity and to equality. This appeared in the form of value for human life in the Buddhist form and acceptance and respect for others in the IT form. IT group members also mentioned understanding and moral stand as universalism values.

The third main value category or dimension is represented by Personal focus. 29.82% of the IT group’s overall values belong to this category, followed by 21.42% of the Buddhists’ responses, and lastly by 5.71% of all the Christian value choices. This category comprises values which relate to pursuit of own interests, welfare and
independence, and applies if a participant expresses such values (for instance, entertainment, or wealth, but also self-knowledge or self-fulfilment). Self-direction (and partly achievement) values like attainment of goals and self-fulfilment were present in all three communities, as was material goods (power / security value). Buddhists and IT members had also health in common (security-related value). Buddhists wrote about honesty towards oneself, while IT group members mentioned self-knowledge, both self-direction values. This latter group also named hedonistic values like joy or entertainment and reducing suffering, as well as the need of change (stimulation). Participant 29 (from the IT group) referred to this person-centredness as “Do what is possible, and enjoy all the fruits of it”. Another respondent from the IT community (44), explained how a change in something familiar fosters flexibility and divergent thinking:

The eternal process of change: I believe that change always brings something good. The new shows a different angle of the already familiar, which makes me think forward about how I can look to the future differently, how to make my present more interesting.

For this person, novelty and the challenge of constant change represents the source of a more fulfilled and varied life. The process of change fosters multiple-perspective thinking which offers the present more possibilities to consider.

If we look at the values of the three communities as expressed in their written responses, we can conclude that there are both similarities and differences between them. The interpersonal focus of benevolence and within it, relationship-centred values, appears to be at the top of all three groups’ value hierarchies. Likewise, the spiritual dimension of life as well as its universal value seem to be important for most of the participants. Spirituality shows differences as well, in how certain aspects related to the transpersonal and intrapersonal levels are perceived by respondents belonging to different ideological (religious) groups. Universalism in values is more visible in the Buddhist and IT communities. The Christian community appears different from the other two groups also in the low personal focus in its value priorities.
6 Discussion

The present section is a synthesis of the findings of the study and the theoretical field and its literature which it aims to enrich. First, the main results and findings of the quantitative and qualitative analyses will be evaluated in light of the research questions. Next, the methodological issues of both the quantitative and qualitative research methods will be presented, addressing also questions of reliability and validity. Following this, contributions and strengths to the research field will be contemplated, and finally, some thoughts and ideas about future directions will be reflected on.

6.1 The Research Questions and the Results

The present research attempted to find out the relationship between spirituality and values, as well as the meanings and interpretations of spirituality, for members of two religious and a non-religious (work) community from Hungary. The aim was to discover what the differences and similarities between the three communities were in spirituality and values priorities. This goal was concretised in two quantitative research questions with six hypotheses as well as six exploratory questions.

The two main question of the quantitative section investigated whether spirituality and values are perceived differently by members of the three different communities, as well how spirituality is related to other values and personal characteristics like age and gender. It was first hypothesised that spirituality has a positive relation to conservation and self-transcendence values. This hypothesis received confirmation, indicating that higher spirituality corresponds to a preference for conservative values over openness to change ones, as well as for self-transcendence over self-enhancement values. However, the differences were not large. This is in line with previous research which relates spirituality to self-transcendence values as well as conservation values (e.g., Schwartz, 1992, 1995).

The second hypothesis referred to the effect of the organisation / community on the value system of the participants and contained five specific expectations, relative to spirituality and to the four value dimensions. According to the results, the spirituality level of the Christian community was found to be significantly higher compared to the other two groups which showed no significant differences, with the clarification that
the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not met in the ANOVA. As predicted, there were no statistically significant differences between the three communities in self-transcendence values—universalism and benevolence. One thing which could account for the high spirituality levels of Christians compared to the other two groups, is the measurement of the variable spirituality with the SVS, which contained some direct references to theistic religiousness.

Results for self-enhancement values supported only partially the hypothesis that they are different for the two religious communities compared to the IT group—lower power, showing lower hedonism scores only for Christians. The Christian community had also lower levels of openness to change values relative to the other two communities, confirming the hypothesis’ respective subpoint. The hypothesis regarding conservation values, which predicted significantly lower results for the IT group but no significant differences between the religious communities, received only partial support. In fact, taken together, conservation values showed differences only in the case of Christians, and only tradition met the prediction. It seems that previous findings with regard to lower emphasis attributed by religious persons to self-enhancement and openness values, refer here in most cases only to the Christian community, showing no major differences relative to Buddhists and formally non-religious people (individuals who are not affiliated to a particular religious community), represented here by the IT group. Buddhists were expected to value self-direction but attribute lower importance to the other openness values such as stimulation or hedonism. While the prediction for self-direction was met, interestingly, hedonism scores of Buddhists were not significantly lower than those of secular people (IT group), and stimulation scores were non-significant either. Considering that Buddhism in Hungary is mostly chosen as an alternative to the “mainstream” religion, it can “afford” being more liberal and more loose in adherence to norms. It would be interesting to see whether Buddhists in Buddhist countries would have a somewhat similar pattern towards a more institutionalised form of religiousness as the one of the Christians in my study, or at least show more conformity, since the traditional ethic of responsibility (Abe Masao, 1997) was present here as well. On the other hand, some point out that Buddhism in general has proven to be less vulnerable to extremism and fanatical zeal than other major religions or even modern ideologies such as nationalism or secularism. A major teaching of Buddha is to avoid being bound to any doctrine or ideology, even
Buddhists ones, because “all systems of thought are guiding means; they are not absolute truth.” (Nhat Hanh, ref. Mishra, 2007). It follows that Buddhist values allow for more openness, and emphasis on detachment for the sake of clarity can reduce the level of conservative values.

The third hypothesis tested the effects of values on the level of spirituality in the sample. It was hypothesised that conservation values have a significantly greater effect on spirituality than openness to change values, and self-transcendence values impact spirituality levels at a significantly higher degree than self-enhancement values. The first prediction proved correct, while the second one failed to receive support, since only the preference for conservation values over self-enhancement ones was statistically significant in the regression analysis. Hypothesis four predicted higher levels of spirituality in members of a religious or spiritual community, and active community membership was confirmed to have significant effect. The fifth hypothesis tested the effect of an interaction between active community membership and value dimensions on spirituality. It was confirmed that active community membership interacts with a preference for self-transcendence values over self-enhancement ones, and together they have a significant effect on the spirituality level of participants. However, the possibility of a joint effect of the other value dimension (conservation vs. openness to change) and active community membership was informed. Nonetheless, the value dimension itself did have a significant effect on spirituality. Age and gender proved to be statistically non-significant in the present sample, invalidating the sixth hypothesis. The regression analysis results, though cautiously approached due to the small participant number, seem to back up the previous findings of relationship patterns, and offer an extra insight on causal relations of different values and spirituality.

The exploratory questions of the qualitative section comprised three questions relative to the word associations of the respondents, and three inquiries for the open-ended questions. The WAT questions aimed to identify the respondents’ value priorities from their free associations, and investigate the similarities and differences between the word associations of the three communities. The responses suggested that all three groups give a high emphasis to social values such as benevolence but also universalism. There were several differences as well, with Christians focusing on tradition and conformity values more (responsibility, commitment, loyalty), while Buddhists
emphasised openness-values such as self-direction as well as universalism, and the IT group accentuated relationships but also conformity and openness, offering a more varied picture. Spirituality-related associations appeared in religious as well as non-religious forms. Religious spirituality was contextualised in accordance with the participants’ belief system and emphasised transcendence towards the divinity outside the individual as well as within, while non-religious spirituality appeared in similar associations offered by the three communities, such as wisdom, broad-mindedness or harmony. Although spiritual values are held important by both religious groups, the meanings they associate to these can often vary. Several elements of being spiritual and belonging to a religious group are interpreted in specific ways which come from distinct worldviews and ideological frameworks. Both religious groups hold community values in high regard. Buddhism seems more flexible in meanings associated to different notions relative to spiritual and/or religious values, while the Christians seem more committed in general, to the community, to God or the task at hand. The Buddhist views are more balanced and worldly, and the Christians are more preoccupied with spirituality related to the sacred (God).

To my knowledge, not many studies about values have been made using word associations. One notable exception is a study about value associations of Finnish university students of three different study fields, which is meaningful because it aimed to find out respondents’ implicit theories associated to a set of values selected from the Schwartz model to test the congruency with Schwartz’s qualifications. Myyry (2008) found in this study that most of the values received fairly uniform associations, reaffirming the universality of the different value contents and nuances.

The open-ended questions explored the meanings of spirituality in the participants’ answers, as well as the relationship between spirituality and religiosity, and compared the value priorities of the members of the three communities. The definitions of spirituality provided by the respondents resulted in three main categories for each community from the sample. The first of these referred to spirituality in terms of experiences of great impact on one’s life, disclosing a focus on relationships of lasting influence, with others, with the self or with a higher power, sometimes experienced on levels beyond the normal or explainable realm of reality. Another category regarded spirituality in light of religious spiritual views determining the persons’ meaning making and spiritual guidance. The third main category reflected spirituality in relation
with personal growth through the positive effect of wisdom or understanding the value of life on a deeper level. The main categories and many subcategories were commonly present in all three communities’ definitions, showing many similarities. In fact, there were more similarities than differences, and the differences related more to explanations of similar constructs. For instance, transcendence involved in all cases some higher-level experience beyond and / or above the normal, which was then explained in accordance with and integrated into the person’s own system of interpretations and meanings. Religious views functioned as explanatory mechanisms as well, and regarded the unknown dimensions of life, the afterlife, and their effect on the everyday dimension. Religious understanding of spiritual occurrences showed most differences, and these were most evident in case of the two religious communities. Generally speaking, the Christians differed most from the other two communities, in their high emphasis on God and their many religious references. Buddhists made less outright religious remarks, however, elements of Buddhists worldview and ideology were present throughout the responses. Nevertheless, these were more worldly and closer to the IT group’s writings then to the Christians. In general, these findings seem to support the results of the quantitative analysis. The meanings of spirituality found here seem to also reflect the findings of Zinnbauer et al. (1997), where spirituality was defined in terms of personal connection or relationship with a Higher Power of some kind, or integrating personal beliefs and values with everyday behaviour. By comparison, religiosity seemed to be defined in the same terms, with the additional inclusion of institutional beliefs and practices. This pattern was also traceable in the Christians’ and, to a lesser degree, in the Buddhists’ definitions. In another study about definitions of spirituality of African American women, Mattis (2000) identified 13 categories of responses using content analysis. Most of the women in her study defined spirituality as a connection to God or a Higher Power, and expressed an awareness of a transcendent, non-material dimension of life. These motives appeared in most of the answers of my study as well. Other participants in the Mattis research (2000) referred to spirituality in terms of relationships to others as well to oneself, or as a journey to self-knowledge and a search for meaning. Some associated it with guidance in life as well as peace, calm, wisdom, happiness. In my study, relationships are an important focus as well, and involve the self, others and something higher. Guidance appears here as well, in the form of religious or spiritual guidelines which are adopted by the
participants. Spirituality as leading to positive feelings and states, as well as personal
development is also present in the current research.

Regarding the opinions of the respondents about the relationship between spirituality
and religiosity, there was a strange balance between most of the Christians relating the
two concepts and many of the participants of the other two communities separating
them. Explaining their perceptions, however, proved to be a challenge for most. Some
pointed out that the difference may lie in the conceptualisation of religiosity or the
quality and depth of experiencing spirituality. Likewise, Zinnbauer et al. (1997) found
that, although most people in their large sample (346 individuals) rated themselves as
spiritual and the larger part identified themselves as religious, there were variations in
how the participants perceived these terms. Here, the personal value system and values
may provide additional insight into these meanings.

The value priorities of the members of the three communities revealed three main
categories for each of them, out of which two had a social focus and one reflected
person-centred values. Benevolence as concern for personally significant others
reflected in the importance attributed to supportive relationships and good will / good
deeds. The other main category emphasised values of transcendence beyond the
normal or material reality, but also beyond personal interests. Spirituality appeared
here as search for meaning in life, harmony or wholeness, and was, again, understood
in its contextualised forms of personal beliefs. Religiosity in values was present by the
two religious communities, with their specific motives of tradition, conformity or
security. The third main category of values focused on personal interest and
independence, with a preference for self-direction values but also achievement or
security-related ones. Regarding value priorities, the main observations about the
definitions of spirituality applied here as well. The Christian community provided a
higher number of religious spiritual values but a lower proportion of values relative to
non-religious spirituality or universalism. They also differed in the low personal focus
of their value priorities, while the IT group named a comparatively higher amount of
such values.

6.2 Methodological Issues

There are a number of limitations of the present research which need to be addressed.
Firstly, I chose to combine two different research types with very distinct
methodologies, with the challenge of applying them correctly together. Quantitative
and qualitative research differ in their analytical objectives, types of question they
investigate, data collection instruments and data analysing manner. Additionally,
though both respect the rules of scientific research, different standards need to be met
in case of each. The greatest problem in this regard is undoubtedly the sample size, the
lack of representativeness and the lack of information about the sample. The size of the
research sample is too small to meet the standards of a good quantitative research,
therefore the results should be interpreted with due caution. Furthermore, in the
quantitative measurement process I partly compared the three groups within the sample
(in the ANOVA), and partly used the entire sample (for the rest of the analyses). This
was necessary for the investigations I wanted to perform, even being aware of the
methodological insufficiencies. However, the same sample size is appropriate for
qualitative research, and my hope was that the combination of the different methods
will show some consistency which will provide a higher overall credibility, efficiency
and quality. Quantitative research, with its clearly defined and therefore more
narrowed questions, is precise and controlled, but fails to take into account exactly
what qualitative research uses as a strength: the individuals’ ability to interpret their
own experiences. The use of multiple research modalities allowed me to gain a more
complex view on the phenomena I was interested in– spirituality and values–, by
providing multiple angles of investigation. Even so, however, I am well aware that
neither of them was fully explored, and a number of compromises were made. Besides
the limited sample, several important (demographic and other) information are missing,
which could have influenced the results. I explained in the section 4.1 that this was
because part of the participants expressed their wish not to provide any personal
information except for the ones indispensable for the purpose of the research. As a
result, however, there had been several factors which were not controlled, such as, for
instance, the education of the participants, which might have had an influence on the
lack of difference or small differences in gender and age, since these differences in
relation to values and spirituality are smaller in the case of highly educated individuals
(Schwartz & Rubel, 2005). Although there were no direct information about it, it is
probable that most respondents had some higher form of education. Another problem,
related also to missing sample information, is that, aside of membership in a specific
community, there is no guarantee that the participants were otherwise equivalent.
Moreover, 31.81% of the respondents from the IT group regarded themselves as
actively Christian community members, which was taken into consideration in the regression analysis, but was not addressed separately in the other analyses comparing the communities, and might have had some influence on their results as well. Due to how the data were collected and especially the small number of participants, as well as the non-probability-sampling, these results cannot be generalised. It is important to note that the sample is not representative of the Hungarian population, not even the religious- Christian and Buddhist- population or the people working in a multinational company in Hungary (secular people). It was not the aim of this study to target a representative sample. However, we can state that the information provided by the present research did offer some insight on the spirituality level, on its relation to other values and how it is perceived among people who belong to two specific religious communities and people who work in an IT company, representing formally non-religious individuals, in Hungary. As a general consequence, there were many methodological issues with the current study which serve as valuable experience for the future.

Relative to reliability and validity questions faced by the present research, reliability of the Schwartz value scale for the quantitative part was already discussed in chapter 4.2. What is also important to mention here as well, is the issue of construct validity of the notion of spirituality as used within this scale. That spirituality is difficult to conceptualise has been discussed all throughout this thesis. Its conceptualisation in the SVS partly in terms of theistic religiosity may have affected the responses of the participants, as pointed out above, leading to significantly higher spirituality results from the Christian community, especially considering that the related value concepts of benevolence and universalism showed no such differences. Similarly, the SVS as well as the qualitative analysis of the responses disclosed that some of the Christian participants gave an un-flexible interpretation of a few terms, like “inner harmony”, “a world of beauty”, or “broadminded”, as was even pointed out by some respondents. “Inner harmony” was sometimes interpreted as too self-oriented, a “world of beauty” as overestimating nature as something divine, and ”broadminded” as too tolerant (there was a reference to this latter notion also in the word associations).

Regarding reliability of the qualitative research part, it is important to reflect about the problematic of interpretation in terms of „contextualised research phenomenon” and „contextualised researcher” (Bergman & Coxon, 2005). In light of the fact that there
was no second coder available, I could only make use of intra-coder reliability and validity measurement. Thereby I needed to carefully reflect on my preconceptions as a researcher. Furthermore, I had to also consider that not only the researchers are prone to be biased, but also the respondents bring their own interpretations into their responses, and often it is unclear if the answer was about the questions as understood by the researcher or as understood by the respondent. Therefore the open-ended questions were worded in a way to avoid leading the participants into any direction of response, formulated as generally as possible. This is why in addressing interpretations and meanings attributed to spirituality by the participants, they were asked to describe an event from their lives which was out-of-ordinary. This, however, may have caused an inexact conceptualisation of spirituality, and a gap between what the question was really about and what the responses were about. I noticed this as I was trying to answer my own research question about the meanings of spirituality based on what the respondent wrote about their experiences. In that case, content validity of the question addressing the conceptualisation of spirituality may be questionable. Still, the results did provide applicable to my research question and offered adequate information about the ways the respondents interpreted spirituality.

To assess the face validity of my coding frame, I evaluated the residual category of the initial coding, with the aim of reducing the parts of the material which I was unable to describe in terms of the substantive categories (Schreier, 2012). Fortunately, such elements were very few, and I managed to reassign them or to re-name categories to include them as well. I also checked the subcategories for high coding frequencies, and found that there was mostly a balanced situation. The biggest challenge was not being too flexible in assigning the segments to the subcategories which were common to the three groups. By trying to remain close to the participants’ own words when naming the categories, I tried to avoid that the categories become too abstract (ibid.).

6.3 Strengths and Contributions

One of the strengths of the study is at the same time one of its weaknesses: the use of combined, qualitative and quantitative research methods. Although presenting a number of challenges, the application of multiple approaches in methods provided a richer picture about the relationship between spirituality, religiosity and values by Hungarians who are members of Christian or Buddhist communities, or who are
formally not religious. To my knowledge, there are not many studies which targeted spirituality and value measurement and interrelationship, as well as spirituality and value interpretation analysis for different groups in the same time, using both quantitative and qualitative measures. One of the most notable such researches is the study of Zinnbauer et al. (1997) evaluating how individuals define their own religiousness and spirituality by comparing different groups. They conducted various analyses on their large sample from diverse religious backgrounds, among which correlations, comparison of group means as well as content analysis of spirituality and religiousness definitions. Their results were discussed in various parts of this study. As another example, a recent study by Callaghan (2014) investigated the interrelationships between cultural values, individual values, individual performance and their influence on research productivity in academic fields in South Africa. In developing and testing a theory which relates the aforementioned concepts to research productivity he used both quantitative and qualitative measurements.

Another contribution of my research is that it attempted to assist in the clarification of the concepts of spirituality and religiosity, and in doing this, tried to consider several standpoints within the literature. Since spirituality, whether religious or non-religious, is a concept difficult to describe in a number or exhaustive characteristics, this research did not resolve the unclarities around it. However, it did offer some additional information on how different forms of spirituality can be similar or divergent for different people and different communities. Spirituality seems to be highest in religious communities- with a preference for self-transcendence values as well as for conservative values. This was most evident by the Christian community. At the same time, active community membership seems to interact with self-transcendence values in affecting the spirituality level of the participants. The results show that the most similarities in values between the three communities were along the dimensions of self-transcendence values as well as most of self-enhancement values (a preference of the former over the latter). Benevolence values were at the top of the value hierarchies of all the groups. Interesting were the findings about universalism values, which indicated no significant differences in the quantitative measures for the three communities. Yet, in the qualitative analysis a more complex picture is shown. In the content analysis universalism was missing from the Christian categories, while the word associations indicated that universalism values were present in the associations of
all three groups. This might be explained also by the fact that word associations target the respondents’ intuitive thinking, mental models and understanding, as well as their personalities (Nielsen & Ingwersen, 1999). If that is the case, we might conclude that, when there was less context and therefore less association with the chosen form of religious or spiritual affiliation, similarities in universalism emerged in the free associations. Which is an interesting idea because word associations seem to reveal core structural elements of spirituality present in all three groups. This is evident especially in the term “playfulness”, which is a central notion for identifying both similarities and differences (mostly between Christians and Buddhists), as well as in associations for “understanding”. While the Christians did differ, too, in these associations, similarities were also evident. Although the Christians who filled out the questionnaire belong to the Protestant Church (reformed), the majority of the responses show that the culture itself is still a Catholic culture. Tradition, security and conformity community-based values are given great importance, but the results for self-direction, besides the specific socio-cultural background, show also some degree of openness, which is more prevalent in the case of a more relativistic religious attitude (Protestantism) (Fontaine et al., 2000; Corveleyn et al., 2005). This can perhaps reinforce the path towards a more open interfaith-dialogue.

In the same time, conformity-related values were likewise found in all three groups in a similar way. Tradition and security values are higher and power values lower among religious people in this sample, while self-enhancement values seem to be most favoured by formally non-religious individuals. These persons as well as Buddhists have a higher preference for openness values compared to the Christians, who generally demonstrate a low focus on person-centred values. An interesting surprise were the higher hedonism as well as somewhat lower self-direction levels than expected for Buddhists in the ANOVA results. In the word associations analysis however, findings revealed more openness (and even somewhat more self-enhancement) values, especially related to self-direction, for the Buddhist community, than observed in the quantitative analysis.

The results of the quantitative measures and the findings of the qualitative content analysis seem to be consistent for the most part, contributing to the study’s overall reliability. In the same time, the qualitative analysis provides extra in-depth
information about the structure, contents and quality of the concepts in the participants’ interpretations.

6.4 Thoughts for future directions

The present study was a complex but at the same time in many ways a limited research, and its findings point to several other directions which could be explored further. For instance, the relationship between (meanings of) spirituality and values could be more fully explored within each community. This research was conducted in a European country with Christian religious background. An interesting alternative would also be a comparison between Christians and Buddhists and lay people in a country where Buddhism is the mainstream religion. Alternatively, extending this research to qualitatively analyse meanings and interpretations of spirituality in relation to value priorities cross-culturally and across a wide variety of religions, would indubitably clarify more about possible structural core elements and different contents attributed to these concepts. Then these could be tested across cultures using quantitative methods. This would be a major pursuit, but a welcome one as it would help to fill the gap of today’s domination in the scientific literature of Christian religiosity- and Christian spirituality-related questions, measurement instruments and findings, and would shed light to differences and similarities of different religions and different religiosities in relation to spirituality and values. As pointed out by Tarakeshwar, Stanton and Pargament (2003) in their article recommending to include religion in cross-cultural research, religions have a strong influence on cross-cultural dimensions and at the same time, culture and its values also influence and shape religious beliefs and practices. There have been some studies which addressed spirituality and religiosity across cultures. For example, Dy-Liacco et al. (2009) evaluated the Western spirituality and religiosity constructs in a non-Western culture (Philippines), comparing it to a US sample, and using several measures along a variety of variables. The results indicated that the Western constructs of religiousness and spirituality were valid in the Philippine sample, though the religion was, in both cases, Christian. More diversity in religious beliefs would be needed for a better understanding of spirituality and religiosity in different contexts and with different manifestations.

Perhaps not addressed separately and specifically in this study, however, spiritual values in work communities is a topic which could also bring interesting contributions
relative to lay people and spirituality (and religiosity), with their respective associated values, in a secular work environment—represented here by the IT community. Recently, Gibbons (2014) examined the relationship between spirituality in its complexity (with values related to it), addressing issues of definition, measurement, and adaptability of spirituality to work environment. Many of his remarks about the characteristics of post-modern spirituality, like spiritual pluralism, spirituality seen as a personal journey, lived out in daily life, and integrative, have been mentioned and found, too, in the present thesis. Gibbons argues that the most common values in contemporary work context are individualism and materialism, but a focus on self-interest is at odds with a spiritual perspective on life. However, a spiritual worldview accentuates personal responsibility and reinforces right action and attitude, improving the work experience. He concludes that spirituality needs to consider phenomenological and constructivist approaches along with essentialist ones. In the work environment, with its profit-oriented values, spirituality needs to retain its distinctiveness as a search for what is sacred, instead of a “quick-fix” for personal and organisational morale issues, which debases it (Gibbons, 2014). In this sense, though not investigated here, further research could also target how the values of the work community members relate to and reflect their well-being and its relations to their spirituality.

6.5 Final remarks

This study attempted to answer the questions: Do (people belonging to) different spiritual and/or religious communities differ from each another in how they perceive and experience spirituality? Do they differ from secular persons? What role do values have in relation to spirituality in a religious and non-religious context? My principal motivation in answering these questions was partly that, after becoming interested in the topic, I found a general lack of clarity surrounding the concepts of spirituality and religiosity. Another reason for my pursuit is the potential of conflict and violence legitimisation in all religions, which is such a contrast to their common bases of spirituality and transcendence, and the respect for the sacred. As guidelines for followers, religions’ claims of exclusivity of a single truth and absoluteness make interreligious dialogue difficult. Yet, religions have the potential for peace as well. It is an intriguing question whether and how values are in the way of an efficient dialogue or how they can become a bridge to it. The “Declaration Toward a Global Ethic” (1993)
made by the second Parliament of the World’s Religions (7000 representatives of 250 faith groups, ref. Weingardt, 2008) is an example of such an agreement of common ethical standards across all religions. In this Declaration, universal dimensions of spiritual religiosity are formulated and related values are highlighted:

As religious and spiritual persons we base our lives on an Ultimate Reality, and draw spiritual power and hope therefrom, in trust, in prayer or meditation, in word or silence. We have a special responsibility for the welfare of all humanity and care for the planet Earth. We do not consider ourselves better than other women and men, but we trust that the ancient wisdom of our religions can point the way for the future. The spiritual powers of the religions can offer a fundamental sense of trust, a ground of meaning, ultimate standards, and a spiritual home. Of course religions are credible only when they eliminate those conflicts which spring from the religions themselves, dismantling mutual arrogance, mistrust, prejudice, and even hostile images, and thus demonstrate respect for the traditions, holy places, feasts, and rituals of people who believe differently (p.4).

The answers to my questions seem to be as complex as the questions themselves. Relative to the present sample, people from different religious communities show differences in values and spirituality, and these differences can be smaller or greater when compared to secular persons. In general, Christians showed most differences in both spirituality and values, while Buddhists seem somewhat closer to lay people, both groups demonstrating more openness but also less conscientiousness, along with a higher personal focus and more diversity in value priorities (especially secular people). At the same time, the three communities reveal many similarities. Therefore, both theories about universality of spiritual values and their interrelations, and constructionist theories focusing on context and culture, have received confirmation. Mostly, individuals from the sample emphasised the relational dimension of spirituality, both vertically, to something or someone greater, and horizontally, to others. Nature and cosmos can be seen as belonging to both the vertical or horizontal dimensions, depending on their perceived sacredness in people’s interpretations. Non-material beliefs and benevolence values are associated the most to spirituality, whether religious or non-religious. Beliefs are filtered through culturally and religiously shaped lenses. (Self-)Transcendence is associated with higher focus on other’s and the world’s welfare as well as personal spiritual development. Eventually, one of the biggest lessons of this study is that, even though spirituality may not be universal, the fact that people experience it makes it universal. As Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (n.d.) remarked:

“We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having
a human experience” (BrainyQuote.com). The other lesson is not to forget the limitations of studying a particular type of person, community, religion, spirituality, etc., and not to be too quick to generalise inappropriately to others. Concluding with the remarks of Native American professor Hilary Weaver (2008): “We must recognise that there are many different ways of understanding and experiencing the spiritual” (p. 7). This, on the other hand, makes it difficult to operationalise spirituality in research. In my opinion, being open and inclusive brings up many problems to face, especially in social research, but the rewards of a more complex understanding might be worth the try.
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Appendix 1: The Research Questionnaire, English

SEX______________
AGE _______________

Are you an active member of a religious or spiritual community? ______________

If yes, which one? _______________________________________________________

Write down the words, phrases or sentences which first come to your mind when you read the following words (treat each one separately). Answer quickly and write down whatever you think of first. Please rate each word (sentence) you write down, according to whether it is positive (+), negative (-) or neutral (0):

understanding______________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

unity with God / Nature___________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

playfulness______________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

compassion______________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

Take some time to think about the following questions. Describe in your own words what you think or feel about them. There are no right or wrong answers. Try to focus on what each of these mean to you.

Have you ever had an experience which you feel was out of ordinary? If yes, please write about it.

Do you think this experience was a spiritual experience? Why?

Do you think this experience was a religious experience? Why?

If you have never had such an experience, what do you think an experience which is out of ordinary is like?

What are the most important things in your life? Why?

When answering the questions concerning values you are to ask yourself: “What values are important to ME as guiding principles in MY life, and what values are less important to me?” There are two lists of values on the following pages. These values come from different cultures. In the parentheses following each value is an explanation that may help you to understand its meaning. Your task is to rate how important each value is for you as a guiding principle in your life.

As a guiding principle in my life, this value is:

Opposed to my values  not important  important  very important

-1     0     1     2     3     4     5     6     7

The higher the number, the more important the value is in Your life. For example, values rated with 7 are of supreme importance in your life. Ordinarily, there are no more than two of such values.
**Value List I: Guiding principles in my life**

Before starting, read the values 1.-30., choose that which is the most important for you, and rate its importance with one of the given numbers. Then choose the value which is opposite to your value system, or- if there is no such value, choose the value which is least important and rate it with the appropriate number. After that, rate the rest of the values with their respective numbers. Use the scale from -1 to 7 presented above.

**As a guiding principle in my life, this value is:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opposed to my values</th>
<th>not important</th>
<th>important</th>
<th>very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

S01 ---- EQUALITY (equal opportunity for all)
S02 ---- INNER HARMONY (at peace with myself)
S03 ---- SOCIAL POWER (control over others, dominance
S04 ---- PLEASURE (gratification of desires)
S05 ---- FREEDOM (freedom of action and thought)
S06---- A SPIRITUAL LIFE (emphasis on spiritual not material matters
S07---- SENSE OF BELONGING (feeling that others care about me)
S08 ---- SOCIAL ORDER (stability of society)
S09 ---- AN EXCITING LIFE (stimulating experiences)
S10 ---- MEANING IN LIFE (a purpose in life)
S11 ---- POLITENESS (courtesy, good manners)
S12 ---- WEALTH (material possessions, money
S13 ---- NATIONAL SECURITY (protection of my nation from enemies)
S14 ---- SELF-INTEREST (belief in one’s own worth)
S15 ---- RECIPROCATION OF FAVORS (avoidance of indebtedness
S16 ---- CREATIVITY (uniqueness, imagination)
S17 ---- A WORLD AT PEACE (free of war and conflict)
S18 ---- RESPECT FOR TRADITION (preservation of time-honored customs)
S19 ---- MATURE LOVE (deep emotional and spiritual intimacy)
S20 ---- SELF-DISCIPLINE (self-restraint, resistance to temptation)
S21 ---- DETACHMENT (from worldly concerns)
S22 ---- FAMILY SECURITY (safety for loved ones)
S23 ---- SOCIAL RECOGNITION (respect, approval by others)
S24 ---- UNITY WITH NATURE (fitting into nature
S25---- A VARIED LIFE (filled with challenge, novelty, and change)
S26 ---- WISDOM (a mature understanding of life)
S27 ---- AUTHORITY (the right to lead or command)
S28 ---- TRUE FRIENDSHIP (close, supportive friends)
S29 ---- A WORLD OF BEAUTY (beauty of nature and the arts)
S30 ---- SOCIAL JUSTICE (correcting injustice, care for the weak)
### Value List II: Actions

Now rate the same way like until now, how important each of the following values is for You:

**As a guiding principle in my life, this value is:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opposed to my values</th>
<th>not important</th>
<th>important</th>
<th>very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-1</td>
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</table>

S31 --- INDEPENDENT (self-reliant, self-sufficient)
S32 --- MODERATE (avoiding extremes of feeling and action)
S33 --- LOYAL (faithful to my friends, group)
S34 --- AMBITIOUS (hardworking, aspiring)
S35 --- BROAD-MINDED (tolerant of different ideas and beliefs)
S36 --- HUMBLE (modest, self-effacing)
S37 --- DARING (seeking adventure, risk)
S38 --- PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT (preserving nature)
S39 --- INFLUENTIAL (having an impact on people and events)
S40 --- HONORING OF PARENTS AND ELDERS (showing respect)
S41 --- CHOOSING OWN GOALS (selecting own purposes)
S42 --- HEALTHY (not being sick physically or mentally)
S43 --- CAPABLE (competent, effective, efficient)
S44 --- ACCEPTING MY PORTION IN LIFE (submitting to life’s circumstances)
S45 --- HONEST (genuine, sincere)
S46 --- PRESERVING MY PUBLIC IMAGES (protecting my “face”)
S47 --- OBEDIENT (dutiful, meeting obligation)
S48 --- INTELLIGENT (logical, thinking)
S49 --- HELPFUL (working for the welfare of others)
S50 --- ENJOYING LIFE (enjoying food, sex, leisure, etc.)
S51 --- DEVOUT (holding to religious faith and belief)
S52 --- RESPONSIBLE (dependable, reliable)
S53 --- CURIOUS (interested in everything, exploring)
S54 --- FORGIVING (willing to pardon others)
S55 --- SUCCESSFUL (achieving goals)
S56 --- CLEAN (neat, tidy)
S57 --- PERSEVERENT (persistent, animated)
S58 --- GOD’S GRACE (trusting in God)
S59 --- SALVATION (religious redemption, salvation)
S60 --- SPOILING ONESELF (doing pleasant things)
S61 --- HARDWORKING (diligent, studious)
S62 --- CONSCIENTIOUS
S63 --- DISCIPLINED (orderly, systematic)
S64 --- PUNCTUAL (precise)
S65 --- LONG-TERM PLANIFICATION (long-term attitude)
S66 --- DIGNITY (respectability, trustworthiness, honesty)
S67 --- THRIFTY (economically)
Appendix 2: The Research Questionnaire, Hungarian

NEM _____________

ÉLETKOR ___________

Aktív tagja vagy-e valamilyen vallásos vagy spirituális közösségnek? __________

Ha igen, melyiknek? _______________________

Írd le azon szavakat, kifejezéseket vagy mondatokat, amelyek először eszedbe ötlenek, amikor elolvasod az alábbi szavakat (mindeniket külön-külön kezeld). Válaszolj gyorsan, és írj le bármit, ami elsőként eszedbe jut. Kérlek jelöld meg mindenik szót (mondatot) azok közül, amiket leírsz, attól függően, hogy pozitív (+), negatív (-) vagy semleges (0):

megértés_______________________________________________________________

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Isten / Természet(tel való egység)_________________________________________

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Írd le azon szavakat, kifejezéseket vagy mondatokat, amelyek először eszedbe ötlenek, amikor elolvasod az alábbi szavakat (mindeniket külön-külön kezeld). Válaszolj gyorsan, és írj le bármit, ami elsőként eszedbe jut. Kérlek jelöld meg mindenik szót (mondatot) azok közül, amiket leírsz, attól függően, hogy pozitív (+), negatív (-) vagy semleges (0):

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játékosság___________________________________ __________________________

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együttérzés_____________________________________________________________

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Volt-e valaha olyan élményed, amiről úgy érzed, hogy különleges, nem hétköznapi élmény volt? Ha igen, kérlek mesélj róla. Ha többet szeretél írni, a lap hátoldalán is folytathatod.

Szerinted ez az élmény lelki, szellemi élettel kapcsolatos élmény volt vagy nem? Miért?

Úgy véled, hogy ez az élmény egy vallásos élmény volt vagy nem? Miért?

Ha nem volt soha ilyen élményed, mi a véleményed, milyen kellene legyen egy különleges, szellemi élettel összefüggő élmény?

Melyek a legfontosabb dolgok az életedben? Miért?


**Vezérlő elvként az életemben, ez az érték**

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Minél nagyobb a szám, annál fontosabb a szóban levő érték a Te életedben. Így például a 7-tel jelölt érték(ek) rendkívüli fontossággal bírnak az életedben. Általában ezekből nem szokott kettőnél több előfordulni.
## Értéklista I: Vezérlő elvek az életemben

Mielőtt elkezdénéd, olvasd el az 1.-30. számú értékeket, és válaszd ki azt, amelyik a legfontosabb számodra és jelez és fontosságát egy számmal a megadottak közül. Aztán válaszd ki azt az értéket, amely az értékszereddel ellentétes, vagy -ha nincs ilyen- válaszd ki a legkevésbé fontosat, és jelölőd a megfelelő számmal. Ezután jelölőd meg a következő értékeket a nekik megfelelő számokkal. Használd a fent bemutatott -1 – 7 skálát.

### Vezérlő elvként az életemben, ez az érték

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**S01 ----** EGYNLŐSÉG (egyenlő esély mindenkinek)

**S02 ----** BELSŐ HARMÓNIA (békében, összhangban lenni magammal)

**S03 ----** SZOCIÁLIS HATALOM (mások feletti kontroll, dominancia)

**S04 ----** ÉLVEZET (a vágyak teljesülése)

**S05 ----** SZABADSÁG (a tettek és gondolatok szabadsága)

**S06 ----** SPIRITUÁLIS ÉLET (lelki, szellemi dolgokra való összpontosítás anyagi dolgok helyett)

**S07 ----** VALAHOVATARTOZÁS ÉRZÉSE (érezni azt, hogy mások szeretnek, törődnek velem)

**S08 ----** TÁRSADALMI REND (a társadalom stabilitása)

**S09 ----** IZGALMAS ÉLET (stimuláló tapasztalatok)

**S10 ----** ÉLET ÉRTELME (értelmet, célt adni az életnek)

**S11 ----** UDVARIASSÁG (jólneveltség, udvarias viselkedés)

**S12 ----** GAZDASÁG (anyagi javak, pénz)

**S13 ----** NEMZETI BITONSÁG (nemzetem védelme ellenségekkel szemben)

**S14 ----** ÖNBECSÜLÉS (bizalom saját értékemben)

**S15 ----** SZÍVESSEGÉK VISZONZÁSA (lekötelezettség elkerülése)

**S16 ----** KREATIVITÁS (egyediségs, képzelet)

**S17 ----** BÉKÉS VILÁG (háború- és konfliktusmentesség)

**S18 ----** HAGYOMÁNYTISZEZTELET (régi szokások megőrzése)

**S19 ----** ÉRETT SZERETET/SZERELEM (mély emocionális és lelki intimitás, meghittség)

**S20 ----** ÖNFEGYELEM (önmegtartóztatás, csábításokkal szemben)

**S21 ----** MAGÁNÉLET (a magánszféra joga)

**S22 ----** CSALÁDI BIZTONSÁG (biztonság a szeretteimnek)

**S23 ----** SZOCIÁLIS ELISMERÉS (másoktól kapott tisztelet, helyeslés)

**S24 ----** EGYSÉG A TERMÉSZETTEL (a természetes való tartozás)

**S25 ----** VÁLTOZATOS, SOKSZÍNŰ ÉLET (kihívással, újdonságokkal és változásokkal teli)

**S26 ----** BÖLCSÉSSÉG (érett megértése az életnek)

**S27 ----** TEKINTÉLY (a vezetés, parancsolás joga)

**S28 ----** IGAZI BARÁTSÁG (közeli, támogató barátok)

**S29 ----** SZÉPSÉG AZ ÉLETBEN (a természet és a művészetek szépsége)

**S30 ----** SZOCIÁLIS IGAZSÁG (igazságtalanság korrigálása, a gyengékkel való törődés)
Értéklista II: Tettek

Most értékel ugyanazon a módon, mint eddig, hogy a következő értékek mindegyike mennyire fontos Neked:

**Vezérlő elvként az életemben, ez az érték**

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S31 --- **FÜGGETLEN** (önmagára támaszkodó, magabiztos)
S32 --- **MÉRTÉKLETES** (végletek elkerülése érzelmekben és tettekben)
S33 --- **HŰSÉGES** (lojális a barátaimhoz, a csoportomhoz)
S34 --- **AMBICIÓS** (türelmű)
S35 --- **SZÉLES LÁTÓKÖRŰ** (toleráns különböző ötletekkel, nézőpontokkal, meggyőződésekkel szemben)
S36 --- **ALÁZATOS** (szerény, félrevonuló)
S37 --- **MERÉSZ** (kalandvágyó, kockázatkereső)
S38 --- **KÖRNYEZETVÉDŐ** (a természetet megőrző)
S39 --- **BEFOLYÁSOS** (hatással van az emberekre és a történésekre)
S40 --- **SZÜLŐK ÉS IDŐSEBBEK TISZTELETE** (kötelezettség, szavahihető)
S41 --- **ELKÖTELEZETT** (vallásos hit és meggyőződést tisztelő)
S42 --- **MEGBOCSÁTÓ** (másokat felmentő, megbocsátani hajlandó)
S43 --- **SZÜLŐK ÉS IDŐSEBBEK TISZTELETE** (kötelezettség, szavahihető)
S44 --- **ENGEDELMES** (kötelezettség, kötelezettségeinek eleget tevő)
S45 --- **IKEDUESZI** (felhívás, bevizsgáló)
S46 --- **SZERÉNY** (örömös, örömesevő)
S47 --- **LELKIISMERETES** (közönségig társadalmi szerepe)
S48 --- **LELKIISMERETES** (közönségig társadalmi szerepe)
S49 --- **LELKIISMERETES** (közönségig társadalmi szerepe)
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S66 --- **LELKIISMERETES** (közönségig társadalmi szerepe)
S67 --- **LELKIISMERETES** (közönségig társadalmi szerepe)
Appendix 3: The excerpts of the participants’ written material used in the qualitative content analysis, in English and Hungarian

**English**

Participant 10 (Christian)

If, from the Bible or at a sermon, I get to understand something which God says - which therefore is not from this world, is not a human viewpoint or wisdom, but stands above it –, and this somehow becomes related to my personal life, that is always a special experience.

Participant 33 (IT)

If we think about it, we realise that we cannot understand the universe, there are important, mysterious things in the world. A scientist cannot tell more than the average person about questions like: - What is beyond that? - What was there before? - Is there life after death? - Is there a God? Etc.

**Hungarian**

Participant 10 (Christian)

Ha a Bibliából vagy az istentiszteleten megértek valamit, amit Isten mond- tehát nem ebből a világból származik, nem emberi szempont vagy bölcsesség, hanem afölött álló-, és ez valahogy az én személyes életém mellett is kapcsolatba kerül, az mindig különleges élmény.

Participant 33 (IT)

Participant 27 (IT)

I talked to my own “inner being”, which appeared in the form of a big old sicamore tree, which was dying. We did not communicate with words, but we understood each other. In a split of a second we shared millions of pieces of information. During this time it began to heal and grew some leaves here and there again. I experienced here the “nothing and everything”, which I named “cosmos”, because now in a watchful state it doesn’t seem logical and understandable anymore.

Participant 36 (IT)

A very dear friend of mine had cancer. When her state was very bad - irreversible - I went on an evening to her to the hospital. I touched my lips to her forehead and promised her that everything would be fine, she can “go” in peace (to the other world). I went home, I cried - like never before in my life - , and said every prayer that I know several times (there are not many, one or two). Next morning while going to work I received the news that she passed away. I felt a great sense of calmness. I felt this was right. I think I was able to help her to leave this world.
Participant 3 (Christian)

Not long ago a friend of mine who is also 19 had a suicide attempt, which is of course in itself a shocking “event”, but what made me think the most was how difficult it is to be a responsible friend. I was shallow, and if I look around among my peers, I see the same. It showed me what I needed to change in my friendships.

Participant 40 (IT)

An intimacy never felt before, how a little life is preparing inside. The way we connected way before his birth...And perhaps the strongest was when I first felt that I needed him at least as much as he needed me.

Participant 17 (Buddhist)

What is religion? Experiences have nothing in common with religion. Religions are created by people. And the mind projects its own world. In my opinion even the most materialist person has spiritual experiences, because, even though he / she is a materialist, he / she still has a spirit. The dream is also a spiritual experience, but since it happens every day, it doesn’t seem out-of-ordinary.

Participant 3 (Christian)

Nem sokáig ezelőtt a szintén 19 éves barátnőm öngyilkosságot kísérelt meg, ami természetesen már önmagában is megrendítő „élénk”, de engem leginkább az gondolkodtatott el, hogy mennyire nehéz felelősségteljes barátnak lenni. Felületes voltam, és ha körülnézek a kortársaim körében, ugyanezt látom. Mgemutatta, min kell változtatnom a barátságaimban.

Participant 40 (IT)

A soha nem érzett meghittség, ahogy egy kis életke készülődik odabenn. Ahogyan kapcsolatot teremtettünk egymással már jóval a megszületése előtt... És talán a legerősebben az érzés, amikor először éreztem, hogy nekem legalább akkora szükségem van rá, mint neki rám.

Participant 17 (Buddhist)

Mi az, hogy vallás? Az élményeknek semmi közük a valláshoz. A vallások emberek által kreatív dolgok. Az elme pedig vetítő saját világát. Szerintem még a legmaterialistább emberek is vannak szellemi élményei, hiszen attól, hogy materialista, neki is van szellemé. Az álom is szellem élmény, csak mivel mindennap történik, azért nem számít különlegesnek.
Participant 20 (Buddhist)

It depends on what one “believes”. Everybody’s belief system is different. If my belief system is religious, then the experience is “religious”, this in my opinion depends on the depth (height) and quality of the experience. It can differ according to experiences, and across individuals definitely.

Participant 5 (Christian)

The first and most important thing is having a living relationship with God. In the same time, important in my life are also my family and my friends. Without connection, however, life becomes meaningless, therefore God stands in the centre of everything and He is the one who decides what will be good and bad anyway, regardless of what I find important.

Participant 32 (IT)

The human being is a social being, it is important to be able to share the joy and the sorrow, to have someone to feel anxious for and to be happy about their successes. It is a good feeling to know that, if I was in trouble, I could count on many persons, just as they can count on me.

Participant 20 (Buddhist)

Attól függ, mit “vall” az ember. Mindenkinek más a hitrendszere. Ha a hitrendszerem vallásos, akkor “vallásos” az élmény, ez szerintem a megélés mélységétől (magasságától) és minőségétől függ. Élményenként is változhat, egyénenként mindenképpen.

Participant 5 (Christian)

Az első és legfontosabb dolog, hogy élő kapcsolatom legyen Istennel. Fontosak ugyanakkor a családom és barátaim az életemben. Kapcsolat nélkül viszont értelmetlen lesz az élet, úgyhogy Isten áll mindennek a középpontjában és úgyis Ő dönti el, hogy mi lesz jó és rossz, függetlenül attól, hogy én mit tartok annak vagy fontosnak.

Participant 32 (IT)

Az ember társas lény, fontos, hogy legyen kivel megosztani örömembén, legyen kiért izgulni és kivel együtt örülni a sikereinek. Jó érzés, hogy tudom, ha baj történne velem, sok emberre számíthatnám, ahogy rám is számíthatnak.
Participant 34 (IT)

Experiencing the sense of wholeness and the development - in relationships and in the relationship with myself. To live a meaningful life. Money, success, etc. have never satisfied me, they are simply not enough. I was always interested what life can be about besides these.

Participant 44 (IT)

The eternal process of change: I believe that change always brings something good. The new shows a different angle of the already familiar, which makes me think forward about how I can look to the future differently, how to make my present more interesting.

Participant 34 (IT)

A teljesség megélése és a fejlődés - kapcsolatokban és a saját magammal való kapcsolatban. Az, hogy értelmes életet éljek. A pénz, siker, stb. soha nem elégtett ki, egyszerűen nem élég. Mindig érdekelt, miről szólhat még az élet ezeken kívül.

Participant 44 (IT)

Változások örökké a folyamata: hiszem azt, hogy a változás mindig jót hoz. Az új egy másfajta oldalát mutatja az addig ismertnek, ami arra készítet, hogy továbbgondoljam, hogyan nézhetek a jövő elé másképp, hogyan tegyenem még érdekessebbé a jelenem.
Participant 12 (Buddhist)
Every time when I really feel what another person feels, when I truly feel the compassion, every such time is a special event.

Participant 31 (IT)
The first “serious” relationship with a girl in my life. The first walk hand-in-hand. The first kiss. The first social experiences.【——】because they opened a new spiritual dimension, that of social relationships”

Participant 13 (Buddhist)
The real goal of 【our】testing is ultimately for the growth of the soul-spirit.

Participant 27 (IT)
“I don’t really know, because it could have been a trick of my mind and it could have been a spiritual experience. It’s a matter of faith.

【Whether it was a religious experience】 depends on what we define as religion.

Participant 12 (Buddhist)
Minden olyan alkalom, amikor tényleg, amikor tényleg azt érzem, amit a másik ember érez, amikor érzem valóban az együttérzést, az különleges alkalom.

Participant 31 (IT)
Az első “komoly” lány az életemben. Az első kéz a kézben séta. Az első csók. Az első társas élmények.【——】mert egy új szellemi síkot, a társas kapcsolatokét nyitotta meg.

Participant 13 (Buddhist)
A teszteltetések valódi célja végső fokon a lélek-szellem épüléséért van.

Participant 27 (IT)
Nem tudom igazán, mert lehetett az agyam játéka és lehetett szellemi, lelki élmény. Hit kérdése.【Hogy vallásos élmény volt-e】attól függ mint nevezünk vallásnak.