

Interrelations between the Economic Attitudes and Personal Values: Cross-confessional Analysis¹

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Abstract

The purpose of the given study is to reveal the differences in values, in economic attitudes and in the structures of their interrelations between Christians and Muslims of Russia. To identify models of economic behavior we have developed a special methodology of economic behavior scenarios which allows identifying economic attitudes. Schwartz Value Survey was used for the individual level values exposure. The sample included representatives from Christian (Armenians, Georgians, Ossetians) (N = 60) and Muslim (Chechens, Dagestanians, Kabardinians) (N = 65) nations, living in the North Caucasian region in Russia. Student's t-test was used to reveal the differences between groups. Cross-confessional comparison showed the significant differences in values on the individual level between Christians and Muslims. Also significant differences in economic attitudes were found. The structures of interrelations between values and economic attitudes are different in these two groups: some scenarios of economic behavior are predicted by values only among Muslims, some others – only among Christians. Different values have a predictive power for explanation of economic attitudes in these two groups.

Introduction

Beginning with the Max Weber's classical work in 1905 [Weber, 2002] the influence of religion on economic behavior became an incontestable fact. The synthesis of studies in this area shows that they are all devoted to the study of economic success or failure of the representatives from different confessions [Mitchell, 1969; La Porta et al., 1997; Barro & McCleary, 2003; Guiso, Sapienza, Zingales, 2003 ; Putnam, 1993; Susokolov, 2006, 2009, 2011], and there are very few studies that have examined specific economic attitudes of various religious groups. Despite the fact that religion as a factor in economic behavior has been regarded at the very beginning of the century, culture in general, as the broader context of human existence, remained long enough without significant attention in discussions on the causes of economic prosperity in different countries. Only at the end of the twentieth century, in the mid 80's, in Western science beginning to emerge investigations in the research field of economic psychology, which takes into account the cultural context [Siega, Shwalb, 1985; Furnharn, Lewis,

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1986; Furnham, 1987]: this is for the most part the study of economic attitudes and perceptions - the perception of economic justice and perceptions of poverty. A little later, by the early 90's, there are studies on the cultural dimension of economic socialization [Roland-Lévy, 1990a, Roland-Lévy, 1990b, Leiser, Sevón, Lévy, 1990]. As for Russian science, the idea of exploring an economic behaviour came rather late [Linchevsky, 1981, Kitov, 1987; Popov, 1989; Filippov, Kovalev, 1989], and the culture as a factor in economic behavior, has attracted attention only at the end of the 90's [Social Psychology of Economic Behavior, 1999].

In this paper we attempt to examine the effect of values through the prism of religion on economic attitudes. Russia is a multinational and multi-confessional country. One of the most variegated, and consequently the most conflictogenic region of Russia is North Caucasus. A lot of different ethnic groups with different religions live there, and as economic situation in this region is rather complicated, it is very important to understand, what kind of economic attitudes have these people, and how their values interrelated with these attitudes. Despite the fact that the great role of culture and religion in economic attitudes and behavior of human beings is obvious, there are no researches, devoted to this theme in Russia.

The purpose of the given study is to reveal the differences in values, in economic attitudes and in the structures of their interrelations between Christians and Muslims of Russian North Caucasus.

Theoretical hypothesis: economic attitudes are interrelated with values, the structure of these relations are culture-specific, and, in among other factors depends on religion, shared in the specific culture.

Specific hypotheses:

1. There are significant differences in economic attitudes and values among Christians and Muslims.
2. The structure of the interrelations between values and economic attitudes are different in these two groups.

Method

Participants

For analysis we chose two biggest confessions in the region – Christians (Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic Church) and Muslims (Sunnites). The sample included representatives from Christian (Armenians, Georgians, Ossetians) (N = 60) and Muslim (Chechens, Dagestanians, Kabardinians) (N = 65) nations, living in the North Caucasian region in Russia.

Group	Number of respondents	Sex	Age
Christians	60	Male – 36.7 % Female – 61.7 % Missing – 1.7 %	Minimum = 18 Maximum = 60 Median = 28
Muslims	65	Male – 45.5% Female – 54.5%	Minimum = 17 Maximum = 68 Median = 25

Table 1 – Sample description

Design

Our study is based on the Schwartz's Theory of Basic Human Values, and Schwartz Value Survey (SVS) was used for the individual level values exposure.

To identify models of economic behavior we have developed a special methodology of economic behavior scenarios which allows identifying economic attitudes. This method is based on scenario approach, developed by P. Smith. Below is the list of dimensions which were identified in process of approbation of method on the Russian sample:

1. «Economic paternalism – Economic independence».
2. «Saving of time – Saving of money ».
3. «Short-term – Long-term perspectives in economic behavior».
4. «Wastefulness – Economy»
5. «Economic interest - Economic indifference».
6. «Priority of the law – Priority of profit».
7. «Economic activity – economic passivity».
8. «Acceptability of using credits – Unacceptability of using credits».
9. «Equal distribution of remuneration – Just distribution of remuneration».
10. «Inclination to impulsive purchases – absence of inclination to impulsive purchases».
11. «Priority of profit – priority of creativeness in job».

Respondents needed to estimate each of 11 scenarios by 2 scales: “Emotional preference” and “Readiness” to behave in that way. Scales are seven-point: the left pole of each dimension are coded as 1, the right pole – as 7. Kolmogorov-Smirnov’s Z-test was used to reveal the differences in values and economic attitudes between groups. Correlation analysis (by Spearman’s coefficient) was used to find interrelations between values and attitudes.

Procedure

Paper questionnaires were used in this survey. Before filling it out the general instruction were given:

“International Scientific-Educational Laboratory of Sociocultural Researches at Moscow National Research University - Higher School of Economics (Moscow, Russia) is carrying out a study of how current changes in Russian society influence on people, their values, and behavior. We kindly request you to take part in the study and complete the questionnaire. Your input will be treated strictly confidential. Please, follow the instructions attentively and please answer every question to the best of your abilities”.

Respondents were welcomed to ask questions, and after the clarifications they start filling questionnaire out. Completion of questionnaires took place in classes and in working places.

Results

Before we start to talk about the interrelations between values and economic attitudes, it is very important to examine two groups of respondents in terms of value priorities and economic attitudes preferences.

	Mean (Christian nations)	Mean (Muslim nations)	Significance level
Security	4.32	4.55	.007
Conformity	4.23	4.45	.007

Tradition	3.50	3.86	.002
Benevolence	4.07	4.42	.000
Universalism	3.86	3.88	.715
Self-direction	4.08	4.05	.681
Stimulation	3.67	2.96	.000
Hedonism	4.06	3.57	.003
Achievement	3.86	3.85	.843
Power	3.59	3.26	.019

Table 2 – Differences in values between groups

In cross-confessional comparison we can see many significant differences in individual values of Muslims and Christians. In 7 from 10 values the groups are significantly different. Christians have higher rate in such values as Stimulation, Hedonism and Power, Muslims – in Security, Conformity, Tradition and Benevolence.

In Table 3 has shown the differences in economic attitudes of Christians and Muslims.

Dimensions		Mean (Christian nations)	Mean (Muslim nations)	Significance level
Economic paternalism – Economic independence	Emotional preference	3.98	4.28	.313
	Readiness	3.93	3.68	.368
Saving of money – Saving of time	Emotional preference	4.22	4.19	.923
	Readiness	4.05	4.36	.336
Short-term– Long-term perspectives in economic behavior	Emotional preference	4.07	4.18	.703
	Readiness	3.76	3.71	.863
Wastefulness – Economy	Emotional preference	2.81	3.85	.008
	Readiness	2.62	3.49	.019
Economic indifference – Economic interest	Emotional preference	3.21	3.05	.602
	Readiness	2.77	2.56	.477
Priority of profit – Priority of the law	Emotional preference	2.78	3.42	.151
	Readiness	2.61	2.98	.331

Economic passivity – economic activity	Emotional preference	3.77	3.89	.685
	Readiness	3.54	3.24	.298
Unacceptability of using credits – Acceptability of using credits	Emotional preference	2.71	2.60	.737
	Readiness	2.75	2.57	.589
Equal distribution of remuneration – Just distribution of remuneration	Emotional preference	4.45	4.90	.179
	Readiness	4.33	4.75	.190
Absence of inclination to impulsive purchases – Inclination to impulsive purchases	Emotional preference	3.09	2.35	.138
	Readiness	2.88	2.81	.836
Priority of profit – priority of creativeness in job	Emotional preference	3.45	3.47	.948
	Readiness	3.10	3.15	.888

Table 3 – Differences in economic attitudes between groups

There are almost no significant differences in economic attitudes. Only attitudes towards economy are different. Muslims emotionally prefer economy and ready to be economical more than Christians.

Table 4 – Correlations between values and economic attitudes, Muslims

		Security	Conformity	Tradition	Benevolence	Universalism	Self-direction	Stimulation	Hedonism	Achievement	Power
Economic paternalism – Economic independence	R ¹			-.21*							
Saving of money – Saving of time	EP ²					-.29**					
	R		-.20*			-.20*					
Short-term – Long-term perspectives in economic behavior	R				.23**						
Wastefulness	R		.22*		.20*			-.22*			

– Economy											
Economic indifference - Economic interest	R				.20*						
Priority of profit – Priority of the law	EP									-.23*	
	R		.24**		.29**			-.18*			-.26**
Equal distribution of remuneration – Just distribution of remuneration	EP	.31***						-.26**			
	R	.26**						-.28**			
Absence of inclination to impulsive purchases – Inclination to impulsive purchases	EP	-.28**					.19*	.19*			
	R							.23*	.23*		
Priority of profit – priority of creativeness in job	R						.25**				-.19*

Note: 1 – Readiness, 2 – Emotional preference;

** $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$;*

In group of Muslims readiness for economic independence negatively correlates with Tradition. Both dimensions in situation “saving time by spending money” are negatively connected with Universalism, readiness to behave in such way also negatively with Conformity. Readiness for long-term perspectives in economic behavior positively correlates with Benevolence. Readiness to be thrifty positively interrelated with Benevolence and Conformity, and negatively – with Stimulation. Benevolence also has positive correlation with economic interest. Muslims with higher rates in Achievement emotionally prefer to break the law to get more profit. In combination with high rates in Stimulation and Power they will be ready to do it, but high rates in Benevolence and Conformity will not allow doing it. Emotional preference and readiness for just distribution of remuneration are positively connected with Security and negatively – with Stimulation. People with lower rates in Security and higher rates in Self-directions and Stimulation emotionally prefer rash purchases; people with higher rates in Stimulation and Hedonism are ready to do them. Readiness to choose a creative and interesting job, even if it’s not well-paid positively connected with Stimulation, and negatively – with Power.

Table 4 – Correlations between values and economic attitudes, Christians

		Conformity	Tradition	Benevolence	Universalism	Self-direction	Stimulation	Hedonism	Achievement
Economic paternalism – Economic independence	EP ²						-.38**		
	R ¹						-.36**		
Saving of money – Saving of time	R							.29*	
Wastefulness – Economy	EP						-.31*		-.33*
	R								-.34*
Economic indifference – Economic interest	EP					.40**			
Economic passivity – Economic activity	EP		-.34*						
Unacceptability of using credits – Acceptability of using credits	EP				.35*			-.36*	
	R		.30*		.43**			-.40**	
Absence of inclination to impulsive purchases – Inclination to impulsive purchases	EP			.30*		.38**			
	R					.29*			
Priority of profit – Priority of creativeness in job	EP	-.30*			.37**				
	R				.36*			-.35*	

Note: 1 – Readiness, 2 – Emotional preference;

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$;

Both dimensions of economic independence negatively correlated with Stimulation. Readiness to spend money, but save time connected with Hedonism. Emotional preference of wastefulness is higher among Christians who has higher rates in Stimulation and Achievement. Those for who value of achievement are high, not only

emotionally prefer, but also ready to be wasteful. Value of self-direction positively connected with economic interest. Tradition and economic activity are negatively interconnected. Attitudes towards credits are the richest in terms of relations with individual values. People, who emotionally accept credits, have higher rates in Universalism, and lower – in Hedonism. People who is ready to take credits, are inclined to values of Tradition and Universalism, and again, as in dimension of emotional preference, lower rates in Hedonism. Christians with higher rates of Benevolence and Self-directions are emotionally inclined to impulsive purchases; readiness to do such rash purchases is positively connected with Self-direction. Emotional preference of creative job in contrast to well-paid job is positively related with Universalism, negatively – with Conformity, readiness to choose such job – positively with Universalism, and negatively – with Hedonism.

Discussion

Cross-confessional comparison showed the significant differences in values and economic attitudes between Christians and Muslims.

Comparison of individual level values can be interpreted using the structure of human values, introduced by S. Schwartz and W. Bilsky [Schwartz, Bilsky, 1987]. According to this model, results of the research showed that Muslims are inclined to such value types as “Conservation” and “Self- transcendence”, while Christians – to “Openness to change” and “Self- enhancement”.

As we can see in Table 3, there are not so many differences in economic attitudes between these two groups, but further analysis showed that similar, on the whole, attitudes of Muslims and Christians have very different causes: the structures of correlations between values and economic attitudes in two groups are absolutely different.

For example such scenarios as «Equal – Just distribution of remuneration», «Short-term – Long-term perspectives in economic behavior» and «Priority of profit – law» are interrelated with values only among the Muslims. At the same time such dimensions as “Economic passivity – activity” and “Unacceptability – Acceptability of using credits” are interrelated with individual values only among Christians.

In figures below one can see how that each situation, where two respondents from two different confessions can act equally, the reasons of such behavior are totally different. In general we can say that for Muslims values of benevolence and tradition are more often than other values related with economic attitude. The values of stimulation and achievement have the most predictive power for economic attitudes in the Christians’ group.

A good example of the opposite reasons that lead to the same behavior among the representatives of two groups can serve a measure of attitude towards economic independence: among the Christians it negatively correlates with the Stimulation, but among the Muslims - negatively with Tradition. Given that the value of Tradition refers to the values of Conservation, and the value of Stimulation to the values of Openness to change, it is clear that the representatives of the two confessions demonstrate commitment to the same behavior, based on entirely different messages. Connection of expectations of economic support "from above" with Stimulation among the Christians can be interpreted, in our opinion, in two ways: the first explanation is that the value of Stimulation in a group of Christians is understood as simply the pleasure of life, new experiences, etc. but no zeal in the work, which is a part of independence in economic behavior. The second explanation is based on the content of the situation itself, which was founded in the methodology for the identification of this indicator: in the situation of the respondent had to choose, would prefer he stay and work at a research institute, with low wages and dim

prospects for career growth, or would have gone with this work, and would open their own business. A specific of this situation is that people, much appreciated by the desire for new, can feel sympathy for a man who prefers to do science, not business. Among the Muslims such behavior is connected with traditionalism - autonomy in economic behavior is not a traditionalist behavior.

Positive correlation of readiness to save time rather than money with Hedonism in the Christians group is quite easy to explain: spending money, saving time, you also save the energies, "spoil yourself." Muslims have interesting connections obtained on this model with value-motivational orientations: readiness to save time, spending money, positively related with the values of Self-enhancement, and negatively - of Self-transcendence. It shows some reluctance of Muslims to spend money, and that will be repeated in other situations (recall also that the only situation in which the groups differed significantly was "economy" and the Muslims here are much more economical than Christians).

Very curious are revealed connections with values of the attitude towards wastefulness/economy. Emotional preference of wastefulness in the economic behavior of the Christians is positively correlated with the values of Stimulation and Achievement, and readiness to behave in such way - only with a value of Achievement. This connections can be explained by the general tendency toward "consumer" philosophy, which frames all of these components - the value of Achievement, Stimulation and wastefulness - form a system - to achieve for "have", and consume. Muslims have a readiness to economy positively connected with Benevolence and Conformity, negatively - with the Stimulation. This connections show that wastefulness is not a traditional form of behavior among this group. Only a sufficiently strong desire for new experiences can push Muslims to wastefulness. Rather significant are the results, revealed by attitudes towards interest in the economic: among the Christians this attitudes positively related with Self-direction, then the Muslims - Benevolence. It again confirms an importance of the role of Self-transcendence values in economic behavior of Muslims. As we can see differences in the structure of interrelations between economic attitudes and values in the two groups are significant. The only attitude which has some common base in two groups is an attitude towards hasty, impulsive purchases. The similarity of the two groups is shown in a positive connection of emotional preference and readiness to do such buying with the values of Openness to change (Self-direction). Perhaps, in general, on an emotional level the impulsive purchases connected with a certain degree of freedom: "I want now to buy this thing, I'll buy it, and it's my decision, my desire" - hence the connection between this attitude and value of Self-direction. Positive correlation between Benevolence and readiness to do impulse purchases in a sample of Christians can be explained also through the feeling of "free choice", which is in harmony with the values of Self-transcendence. Readiness to make such purchases in the group of Muslims associated with the Stimulation and Hedonism, so in the group of Muslims rash purchase - it's just a way to spoil yourself. Obviously, even in this case, when the attitude is based on certain common human need, which seems to have no determination by culture, we find, nevertheless, some barely perceptible differences that show us the power of culture over a human being with his whole value-motivational structure and system of attitudes.

Findings

1. The results, obtained in the given study, show that there are many significant differences in individual values between Christian and Muslim nations of North Caucasian region of Russia: Muslims are

inclined to such value types as “Conservation” and “Self- transcendence”, while Christians – to “Openness to change” and “Self- enhancement”.

2. The economical attitudes of respondents from different confessions are rather similar, but the reasons of such attitudes are absolutely different.
3. Values and economic attitudes are interrelated.
4. The structure of interrelations between values and economic attitudes in two groups are totally different.
5. Such scenarios as «Equal – Just distribution of remuneration», «Short-term – Long-term perspectives in economic behavior» and «Priority of profit – law» are interrelated with values only among the Muslims.
6. Such dimensions as “Economic passivity – activity” and “Unacceptability – Acceptability of using credits” are interrelated with individual values only among Christians.
7. The economic attitudes of Muslims mostly determined by values of Conservation and Self- transcendence, while Christians’ – Openness to change and Self- enhancement.

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