PRACTICES, VALUES AND ATTITUDES OF YOUNG PEOPLE: A CASE STUDY BASED ON STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINHO

PRÁTICAS, VALORES E ATITUDES DOS JOVENS: UM ESTUDO DE CASO A PARTIR DE ALUNOS DA UNIVERSIDADE DO MINHO

PRÁCTICAS, VALORES Y ACTITUDES DE LOS JÓVENES: UN ESTUDIO DE CASO DE LOS ESTUDIANTES DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE MINHO

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ABSTRACT: Analyzing the behaviors, values and attitudes of youth allows us to make a merciless examination of our time, helping to understand the tangled roots of our collective experience, so that, when analyzing their options, we are not only studying the present time, but also to envision the future of our society. Having said that, the present study aims to analyze the practices, values and attitudes of young people in order to better understand their current evaluative and religious tendencies. Through a quantitative methodology, students at the University of Minho were surveyed, aged between 18 and 35 years. From the conclusions it appears that young people look for more individualistic and less social occupations, allowing them moments of personal satisfaction. Regarding their religious and evaluative dimension, it was found that little or no participation in religious services and that they show high levels of justification for certain behaviors, appearing to react openly to practices that are normally disapproved of by society. Environmental Protection, Racism and Xenophobia and Gender Violence are the current topics that deserve greater concern on the part of young university students.

KEYWORDS: Values. Youth. Religiosity. Postmodernity. Globalization.

RESUMO: *Analisar os comportamentos, valores e atitudes da juventude permite que se faça um exame impiedoso sobre o nosso tempo, ajudando a perceber as enredadas raízes da nossa vivência coletiva, pelo que, ao analisar as suas opções, estamos não só a estudar o tempo presente, mas também a vislumbrar o futuro da nossa sociedade. Exposto isto, o presente estudo visa analisar as práticas, valores e atitudes dos jovens de forma a melhor compreender as suas atuais tendências valorativas e religiosas. Através de uma metodologia quantitativa,*

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inqueriu-se estudantes na Universidade do Minho, com idades compreendidas entre os 18 e os 35 anos. Das conclusões depreende-se que os jovens procuram atividades de ocupação mais individualistas e menos sociais, possibilitando-lhes momentos de satisfação pessoal. Quanto à sua dimensão religiosa e valorativa, verificou-se que pouco ou nada participam nos serviços religiosos e que manifestam níveis elevados de justificação para determinados comportamentos, aparentando reagir abertamente a práticas que, normalmente, são desaprovadas pela sociedade. A Proteção do ambiente, o Racismo e a xenofobia e a Violência de género constituem os temas da atualidade que merecem maior preocupação por parte dos jovens universitários.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Valores. Juventude. Religiosidade. Pós-modernidade. Globalização.*

RESUMEN: *El análisis de los comportamientos, valores y actitudes de los jóvenes nos permite hacer un examen implacable de nuestro tiempo, ayudándonos a comprender las raíces enmarañadas de nuestra experiencia colectiva, de modo que al analizar sus elecciones no sólo estamos estudiando el tiempo presente, sino que también vislumbramos el futuro de nuestra sociedad. Por ello, el presente estudio pretende analizar las prácticas, los valores y las actitudes de los jóvenes para comprender mejor sus tendencias valorativas y religiosas actuales. A través de una metodología cuantitativa, se encuestó a estudiantes de la Universidad de Minho, de entre 18 y 35 años. De las conclusiones se desprende que los jóvenes buscan actividades ocupacionales más individualistas y menos sociales, que les posibilitan momentos de satisfacción personal. En cuanto a su dimensión religiosa y de valores, se constató que participan poco o nada en los servicios religiosos, y que manifiestan altos niveles de justificación de ciertos comportamientos, pareciendo reaccionar abiertamente ante prácticas que normalmente son desaprobadas por la sociedad. La protección del Medio Ambiente, el Racismo, la xenofobia y la Violencia de Género son los temas de actualidad que merecen una mayor preocupación por parte de los jóvenes universitarios.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Valores. Juventud. Religiosidad. Posmodernidad. Globalización.*

Introduction

Younghood. Who are they? How do they live? What motivates them? What are your practices? How do you feel? How do they act before society? What is the importance of a better functioning of society? What is the place of youth in contemporaneity? There are several reasons that lead us to question the experience of young people, and one of the strongest is the attempt to understand the appearance of the new social imaginary that appears in the context of the profound social changes that we are experiencing.

Each of us is branded and marked by his generation and each person contributes to the construction of society, opening possibilities for new models and new social constructions thus

giving rise to corporate transitions. But these do not mean abandoning the old for the new, but rather the coexistence of the old with the new for a long time.

The only certainty we have about the future is that we're the ones building it. We are responsible for the production of society, for reasons, exclusively, generational. By looking at youth as a space of different trajectories, we will have young people who want to change the world and others who want to preserve traditional models of family and society.

The research we propose to develop aims to determine the current tendencies and sensitivities of young people concerning the religious dimension, expressed in practices, values and attitudes in the academic environment.

In this sense, throughout this study, we will try to analyze the relationship between modernization and the consequent emergence of new religious forms among young people; to instill the causes of the process of social individualization of young people; to investigate the causes that led to the pluralization and personalization of the religious beliefs of young people and, finally, to try to understand whether we are facing the emergence or reconfiguration of new values.

In general, it aims to provide a deepening of religious experience and values among young university students of the University of Minho, gathering efforts to capture the multiplicity of forms and meanings that fill the life of each one.

Science, reason and religion in contemporary society

From the 18th century on, the awakening of forces that would revolutionize the world of the church's established dogmas began to be recorded in Europe. With the Enlightenment, a mentality is born guided by rational and scientific ideals, these being the main source of authority and legitimacy. From this new sensibility, individuals find themselves freed from the bonds of absolutism, and *science* proposes to replace the role, which was until then attributed to *religion*, as if religion were the new science, a fact that generates, in Duque's view (2019), an overconfidence "in the idea of infinite progress that creates an expectation in people that all problems will have a forged response in the light of science".

Lyotard (1989, p. 5) in this regard states that knowledge has become "the main force of production and constitutes the main bottleneck for developing countries". Rationalization *and technical-scientific knowledge* have thus become two fundamental elements for the consolidation of a full modernity, becoming visible in the most varied domains of life.

For Weber (1973, p. 157-159)

> "Increasing intellectualization and rationalization do not mean a growing general knowledge of the general conditions of life. Its meaning is very different; means that it is known or believed that, at any time at any time, one can come to know; that, therefore, do not exist around our lives hidden and unpredictable powers, but that, on the contrary, everything can be dominated through calculation and prediction. This simply means that the magician from the world has been excluded [...]. This is something that is achieved thanks to technical means and forecasting"

When we refer to the changes that have occurred in society, we cannot neglect the role of religion in the course of such transformations. With modernization, it was also evident the birth of new meanings of life and new ritual practices, very present in the experience of young people, these being the protagonists of the awakening of a generation, which leads Bourdieu (2003), to characterize them as a social unit, a group endowed with common interests. In the words of Machado Pais (1990, p. 141), "youth has been seen as a phase of life marked by a certain instability associated with certain 'social problems'. If young people do not strive to get around these 'problems', they are even at risk of being dubbed 'irresponsible' or 'disinterested'." The word "young" is noticeable in this context. When we give it becomes evident in our consciences that it is a layer of people aggregated in a certain age category, a certain number of behaviors and characteristics, such as revolt or an unconventional attitude. According to youth theorists, this is a concept that changes according to culture, social context and social class, from there that, according to different cultures and societies, is mentioned as young people, in their plural. As Duque (2007, p. 22) refers:

> "From a sociological perspective it can be said that youth is considered as a function of productive and demographic structures. The transition is understood as a social process, as such relative, that is, that it is not present in all cultures, depending on the social context in which it develops. Thus, it is possible to distinguish a plurality of youths and social groups within this age range, from those that would result in the dependent variable, related to other structural variables such as social class, economic situation and family of origin."

One of the problems that has been observed in the scenario of contemporaneity concerning young people is how they have appropriated normative conducts and beliefs, to the extent that they have taken advantage of their own conceptions of meaning of life (FEATHERSTONE, 2000), with all the glorifications of individuality, freedom and personal self-realization, achievements that gradually redraw a new religious-youth scenario.

The question that has been posed, in the context of social changes and new forms of life, is whether religion makes sense in the lives of young people or whether it has dissipated from its universe of experiences.

In an attempt to answer this question, we will try to specify, first, the *concept of religion* and with it some related concepts, such as beliefs, practices and *values*, so that one can understand the role of these in people's lives. Later, we will try to frame the concepts within the changes of the times we are living in.

Religion ″reconnects″ humanity with divinity, so tells us its etymological origin. However, there are several ways of "*reconnecting″* to deities, varying according to the cultural context. In the West, highly marked by Judeo-Christian culture, religion manifests itself in the relationship with the one and transcendent God. In Eastern societies, mostly Buddhist and Hindu, the transcendental dimension is not present, as in our societies, but assumes a more horizontal, pantheistic expression, where divinity is materialized in all things. Thus, religion is not a link to a superior and transcendent being, but to nature itself. Durkheim (200, p. 46), in turn, greatly values the practical and ritual dimensions, so he will define religion as "a unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things [...] that unite its adherents in a unique moral community called the church." As Durkheim tells us in this quote, beliefs and practices are usually the most salient aspects in religions. Thus, seeking to deconstruct this definition, we realize that religion is a system composed of *beliefs*, which give meaning to the world and life, through *practices*, means, signs experiences of connection to this sacred, according to our *values*, normative guidelines of behavior. In functional, and no longer substantive, or descriptive, terms religion,

> it allows to regulate and justify individual (normative) conduct, provide social (cohesive) cohesion, comfort and relieve (tranquilizer), fortify the will (stimulating), give meaning to life (significant), enable the experience of the sacred (experiential), grow and mature (maturing), provide identity (identity) and minister salvation (redemptive) (COUTINHO, 2012, p. 187).

Duque (2014, p. 25), seeking to escape exclusively substantive definitions, defines religion "as a set of beliefs and values, donors of stability, dynamics and meaning, organized in symbolic representations and referring to a reality that transcends the individual". This same author tells us that "this definition supposes the adjustment of the human spirit to reality, with all its symbolic and imaginative burden that it involves. We speak of adjustment because, strictly speaking, religion implies a situation, that is, a human and social context" (DUQUE, 2014, p. 25).

On the other hand, it is important to frame religion and young people in the context of the transformations of postmodernity. It is a fact that the phenomenon of individualization of our societies, relativism in the face of the value dimension and the impact of globalization have strongly marked institutions, leading, for example, to the Church having diminished her public expression in society, now assuming more peripheral positions and, in doing so, naturally opens space for new structures of meaning and new groups of belonging to emerge.

Despite the process of secularization of much of Western societies, religion has proved resilient, but that does not mean that it does not transform. It takes on the forms of time, thus manifesting itself in new trends.

Portuguese and European religious context

The objective of this chapter is to determine the religious situation in Portugal, in the context of the changes caused by modernization, delimiting the scenario of change in Portugal, in relation to Europe.

As we have reflected earlier, the imperialist revolution, which took place in 19th-century Europe – threatened by conflict between the traditional ideas of the Church and the ideas of freedom, progress and reason, which seemed to be in favor of a profound intellectual rebirth – was beginning to create a certain distancing of people from the Church, devoid of means to help to face modernizing forces, showing the first signs of what would become the beginning of a divorce between faith and reason that, in the words of Rodrigues (RODRIGUES, 1980), would lead to a certain "atheist humanism".

To prove the tendency of progressive abandonment of religion, several thinkers have delimited some conceptual dimensions that are useful to us to understand this fact. This is the case of Leok Halman (2001) who considered the concept of social individualization to assume greater autonomy in the behaviors and way of thinking of individuals. Using Menéndez's perspective (2007, p. 770), Halman's social individualization is "like a historical and social process where values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors are guided by personal choices and are less dependent on tradition and social institutions".

Regarding the Portuguese situation in relation to other European countries, since the study of Menéndez (2007), it was found that Portugal is a country of high Catholic identity, even though its religious practice is not as high as its identity, high levels of trust in the Church, as well as belief in God.

After a very brief theoretical framework, we start for the empirical part of this study, formulating the following research hypothesis: with the development of societies, young people feel the need to create new forms of relationship with God, evidencing the appearance of a new mentality, visible in their practices, values and attitudes.

Methodology

Since the religious phenomenon is complex and multiple, several methodological procedures could be combined in order to better understand the religiosity of young people, as well as other concepts underlying this phenomenon. However, for time reasons, only quantitative approach was chosen.

Regarding the sampling process, and taking into account the intentions of the study, all individuals from higher education, aged between 18 and 35 years, of both sexes, students at the University of Minho, at the poles of Gualtar and Azurém, were defined as the target population.

A non-probabilistic sample for convenience was used, since there were no criteria at the outset to consider that a particular person was part of the sampling process. A total of 191 questionnaires were obtained. All of them duly fulfilled and within the criteria defined in the sample.

The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 35 years (M = 22.80, SD = 3.88). There was a significant prevalence of female students, representing 74% of the sample, with only 26% corresponding to males. Regarding the distribution by course, it was found that the respondents attended Medicine, Sociology, Biological Engineering and Chemistry. Most respondents were enrolled in the 2nd or 3rd years, with 28.3% in each year. About 43% said they live in an urban area.

The *questionnaire* was prepared taking into account the objectives of the research and, since the central objective was to analyze the value dimension of young people taking into account the scenario of change and the consequent appearance of new forms of religiosity, it was preferably decided to carry out a questionnaire that could be useful in measuring values, perceptions, attitudes and opinions of higher education students.

In its elaboration, three dimensions were defined: in the first one it was intended to analyze the main activities that occupy the free *time of* young people. In this dimension, a question was also elaborated that aimed to assess the credibility that young people have in

relation to the institutions: Government, University, Catholic Church, Court, Police, National Health System, Social Services and European Union. The second dimension consisted in the analysis of the *religious and value dimension* of young people, taking into account the tendency of remoteness and "anemia" in the moral, political and religious field of young people in today's society. In this way, a series of questions were elaborated in order to analyze their religious and moral position. The third and final dimension aimed to define the socio-demographic *characterization* of the respondents.

Data analysis and interpretation

We propose to examine two groups of questions raised in the survey. In the first group, the main activities in which young university students spend their free time are questioned, as well as their connection and trust in relation to some institutions of society. In the second group, the questions raised focus on the religious and value dimension of young people.

Leisure time and institutional dimension

In this part of the study, we will analyze the first group of questions, in which we want to know the main activities of free time occupation of university students and evaluate the credibility they attribute to institutions.

Leisure activities

The data analyzed – and taking into account only the most relevant ones – show that 7 out of 10 young people report that they spend more of their free time *staying at home reading, listening to music and watching movies* (73.3%) or *going out with friends* (69.1%), in turn, 4 out of 10 mentions that they spend their free time going out *with family or visiting family* members (38.2%) or playing *sports and activities while (*37.7%).

These priorities are the same in both sexes, as both young girls and young boys report taking more of their free time *to staying at home reading, listening to* music and watching movies *or hanging out with friends*.

Join a group or organization

The distribution of university students according to membership of a group or organization reveals that *organizations or volunteer movements* are the ones that host the most expressive number of young university students, since 3 out of 10 say they belong to this type of organization, followed by *associations or centers of students* or *groups or movements of young religious* who in both cases bring together 2 out of 10 young people. Animal *rights protection organizations or environmental/ecology protection organizations are* those in which young people are less likely (5.2% and 1.6%, respectively).

Looking at this same issue, given the gender of the young people surveyed, we see that the priority in the choices is slightly different. While young women are more expressive ly linked in voluntary *organizations or movements*; associations *or centers of students* and in *groups or movements of religious youth*, in order of preference, men, in turn, present a different priority, referring to belong more expressively, first of all, to associations *or centers of students*, followed *by associations or sports groups* and, later, in *groups or movements of religious youth*. It is important to note that the young men surveyed do not identify with animal *rights protection* organizations or environmental/*ecology protection organizations*, as none of the respondents say they belong to these organizations.

Level of trust in institutions

The degree of trust of institutions by young university students is relatively high, especially the University, where 9 out of 10 young people report having a lot (59.2%) or some *confidence* (30.9%); the *National Health System* (with 31.4% and 56.5%, respectively) and the *European* Union (22% and 66%, respectively); 8 out of 10 reported having too much (21.5%) or some confidence, respectively) and the European Union (22% and 66%, respectively); 8 out of 10 reported having too much (21.5%) or some confidence (21.5%) or some confidence, respectively) and the European Union (22% and 66%, respectively); 8 out of 10 reported having too much (21.5%) or some confidence (21.5%) or some confidence, respectively) and the European Union (22% and 66%, respectively); 8 out of 10 reported having a lot (21.5%) or some confidence (21.5%) or some confidence, respectively) and the European Union (22% and 66%, respectively); 8 out of 10 reported having too much (21.5%) or some confidence (21.5%) or some confidence, respectively; 8 out of 10 said they have a lot (21.5%) or some confidence (21.5%) *or some confidence, respectively) and the European* (59.7%) in the Police; 7 out of

10 say they have a lot (11%) or *some* confidence (62.8%) in Social Services, in the *Courts* (212% and 59.2%, respectively) and *Government* (8.9% and 61.3%, respectively); 6 out of 10 say they have a lot (19.4%) *or some confidence* (35.1%) in the Catholic Church and is in *the Media* that young university students give less confidence, since only 5 out of 10 young people say they attribute too much (4.2%) *or some confidence* (44%).

It can be understood from this that the institutions in which young people place the most are the National Health Service, the University and the European Union. In turn, the lower level of trust attributed to institutions such as the Media, the Catholic Church and the Government may be related to the contemporary mentality that does not accept that institutions "share truths in which they believe" or propose "ways forward", recognizing only the legitimacy of individual truth.

Religious and value dimension

In this topic we will analyze the religious and value dimension of young university students and, for this, we will take into account values, principles, norms of conduct and behaviors that will be articulated with their moral and religious dimension.

In general, morality is a set of rules that guides individuals in society, guiding and giving meaning to their actions, categorizing them as right or wrong, according to society and social and religious groups (GONÇALVES, 2000; LIPOVESTKY, 2004; RACHELS, 2003).

As for *the religious position* of young people, it was found that the majority, 8 out of 10 university students, say they are *Catholic* (80%), while 1 in 10 say they are an *atheist* (13%). Only, 6% reported belonging *to another Christian* religion and 1% *to Eastern religions*. As several other studies have shown, it also reveals that women claim to be more Catholic than men.

Participation in religious services

When analyzing the frequency with which young people participate in religious services, not counting funerals and marriages, the most expressive number of young people, 3 out of 10, says that *never* participates (27.2%) or participates few *times a year* in religious services (26.7%). About 24% of young university students say they participate *once a week*, 12% participate only on *religious/festive days*, 7.9% *at least once a month* and only 2.6% report *participating more than once a week* (3%). These figures allow us to realize that the majority

of young university students do not have any religious practice or, if they have it, it is not very regular, evidencing a very fragile bond with *religious practice*.

If we analyze the same question, according to gender, it turns out that young university students have a more assiduous practice than men. In turn, as is also frequent, it is among male university students that there is a greater absenteeism in the frequency of religious services.

Religiousness

Faced with *the question "Regardless of whether belonging to a particular religion, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means "Nothing religious" and 10 "Very religious", I would say that it is a person",* the average religiosity of young university students is 4.93, and female students are on average more religious than male students, slightly above the range of the scale, 5.15 and 4.27, respectively.

It is interesting to verify that students with a higher level of religiosity attend the 6th year of school (5.78), followed by 4th graders (5.62) and 1st year students (5.17).

Belief in God

When asked about their beliefs, 4 out of 10 college students say they believe there *is a* God. In turn, 2 out of 10 say they believe that there *is a kind of God or living force*; so many other young people think *that there is no absolute spirit, God or living force*, and also 2 out of 10 university students, says that *they do not really know what to think*.

If we take this same question into account, analyzing it according to sex, we see that it is young women who manifest more their belief in the *existence of God* (45.1%) or a *kind of God or living force* (24.6%), that is, 7 out of 10 women believe in the existence of a deity, and only half of young men, Five out of 10 believe in that same existence.

Vision of the Catholic Church

This topic seeks to highlight the vision that young university students have towards the Catholic Church. Several perspectives on the Catholic Church were proposed, enabling different views of it, so that respondents could position themselves in relation to this dimension.

When analyzing the data, we see that there are clearer positions in relation to some views of the Catholic Church than of others.

When asked about the fact that the Catholic Church *is conservative*, 7 out of 10 young university students said that they *fully* agree (38.7%) or *partially agree* (35.5%). In turn, 2 out of 10 consider the *Church modern* (3.1% say they *are fully in agreement* and 15.2% *partially agree*).

Faced with the question of   whether *the Church is dialoguing or repulsive*, young university students show their position more in accordance with the idea that the Catholic Church is more dialoguing than repulsive, since 4 out of 10 young people say they agree fully (8.9%) or partially (33.5%) with the view that it *is dialoguing*, while only 3 out of 10 agree sums (10.5%) or partially (15.2%) that the Church is *repulsive*. It should be noted that 5 out of 10 young people do not fully agree (20.9%) or partially (30.4%) with the vision of a *repulsive Church*.

Regarding the view of the Catholic Church as *being joyful*, 5 out of 10 young people say they fully (9.9%) or partially (35.1%) agree with this perspective. Only 3 out of 10 mentions being totally (6.8%) or *partially at odds* (18.8%).

It is also important to highlight the *neutral* position of many young people in relation to some views on the Church, being more expressive when they have to pronounce on the Perspective of the *Church as being dialoguing* (36.1%)*, modern* (33.5%) *or joyful* (29.3%).

The data also allowed us to conclude that, *overall*, young university students have a more positive position of the Catholic Church *than* male members.

Current affairs

The current issues that are most of concern to young university students are *the Environment* (58.1%), *Racism and Xenophobia* (51.8%), *Gender Violence* (48.7%) *and Poverty in the least developed* countries (32.5%). On the other hand, the current issues that have the least attention of young university students are *religious* intolerance (6.8%), the *elderly* (9.9%) *and animal protection* (14%).

From these data we can conclude that young people seem to be more involved in current media issues, such as concern for the environment, which has been evident in the creation of various ecological movements, and the constant fight against gender violence, which has an echo in the rights of freedom and equality.

Justification of some actions

On a scale ranging from 1 (never *justifiable*) to 10 (*always justifiable*), on average, young university students consider almost all behaviors justifiable, since, with the exception *of drug use*, the other behaviors are above the average value of the scale. Homosexuality is the most justifiable behavior, presenting an average above the remaining values (8.8), followed by the *entry into the country of immigrant* workers (7.34) *and surrogate maternity (surrogates)* (7,14). On the other hand, the average *drug use* (3.86) is at the lowest level of the rest, indicating that it is an action for students, little or nothing justifiable.

When analyzing the same question according to gender, we found that, except for the average *of drug use* (3.65 for females and 4.45 for males), women have values higher than men's averages, which indicates that young women always consider these behaviors more acceptable than men.

Qualities/Principles

The qualities that most young university students consider to be more important in education are *because they are tolerant and respected others* and a *sense of responsibility* (82.2% in both), followed by the quality of *having good manners* (71.7%). There are other qualities that deserve their attention, but not for the majority, such as independent *being* (46.1%) or *be determined and persevering* (42.4%). In turn, there are qualities that respondents do not value as much in education as *being obedient* (5.2%), *having religious faith* (8.9%) *or being spared with money and things* (16.8%).

Exploratory analysis

After this descriptive analysis of the survey, we now present a more robust analysis to understand in greater depth what the data can reveal to us about the behaviors and attitudes of university students. To this do so, we will only work on the issues – scale or ordinal measures – that allow us to carry out their analysis. They are: the question of the level *of trust in institutions* (Q3), the *view of the Catholic Church* (Q9) and the *justification of practices or issues of conscience* (Q11).

Using *Cronbach's alpha* to measure the reliability of these three factors, it was found that the *confidence factor in the* institutions (formed by 9 items) presented an average value of

2.85 and an *alpha test* of 0.84. In turn, the factor related to the *questions of consciousness* (formed by 7 items) presented an average value of 6.8 and an *alpha value* of 0.86. Finally, the vision factor *of the Catholic* Church (composed of 5 items) presented an average value of 3.12 *and alpha* of 0.04, a very low value, so the items were removed: *conservative and repulsive*, to allow an increase in the mean values of the scale from 2.9 to 8.96 and an *increase in Cronbach's alpha* from 0.37 to 0.74. Thus, the final *factor of* the religious experience included only three items: *dialoguing, joyful* and *modern*.

Table 1 – Analysis of various dimensions of behaviors and attitudes of university students

	Number of items	**Average of factors**	***Cronbach's Alpha* standardized**
Trust in institutions	9	2,85	0,84
Issues of conscience	7	6,8	0,86
Vision of the Catholic Church Conservative Dialogive Cheerful Repulsive Modern	5	3,12	0,04
Vision of the Catholic Church Dialogive Cheerful Repulsive Modern	4	2,9	0,37
Vision of the Catholic Church Dialogive Cheerful Modern	3	8,96	0,74

Source: Own elaboration from the Survey on practices, values and attitudes, 2020

From the 9 items related to *the institutions*, the 7 items on the issues *of consciousness* and the 3 items related to the view of the *Catholic Church*, the analysis of main components was applied and a three-factor solution was obtained. The value of KMO = 0.84 validates this AFCP result and *the significant Bartlett check*, X^2 (153) = 1298.721, *p* >.001 allow rejecting the null hypothesis of the correlation matrix being equal to the identity matrix (also validating the factorial result). The commonalities values of items greater than 0.3 do not require additional removal of any of the included items.

The component matrix obtained by *varimax* rotation (and kaiser normalization factor) results in a three-factor structure. The first factor has an explanatory capacity of 23.7% of the data variability, the second 23.1% and the third 8.1%. As a whole, these three factors explain 55% of the variance of the data.

Through the figure below, it is observed that the three factors obtained were coincident with the "theoretical division": the first factor integrates the *issues of consciousness* (abortion practice, entry of immigrants into the country, surrogates, euthanasia, drug use, homosexuality and sexual relations with occasional partners); the second factor refers to the degree *of trust in institutions*; the third factor is related to *the way the Catholic Church is seen*. This result of the AFCP allowed the analysis of the reliability of the items.

Figure 1 - Results of Principal Component Analysis

Component Matrix	Components 1	Components 2	Components 3
Homosexuality	.811		
Surrogate	.809		
Euthanasia practice	.795		
Occasional sex partners	.772		
Abortion	.743		
Immigration entry	.666		
Drug consumption	.527		
Social Services		.769	
European Union		.709	
Court		.701	
Government		.698	
National Health System		.694	
Police		.688	
Social Communication		.624	
University		.617	
Modern			.808
Happy			.783
Dialogive			.737

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Source: Own elaboration from the Survey on practices, values and attitudes, 2020

The following graphic reveals the results of Hierarchical Cluster Analysis. This analysis allows us to indicate the organization of values in two groupings. On the one hand, we can observe the issues *of conscience* (such as abortion, euthanasia, immigrant entry, homosexuality and occasional partners), on the other hand, in a second cluster, the other variables.

Figure 2 - Results of Hierarchical Cluster Analysis
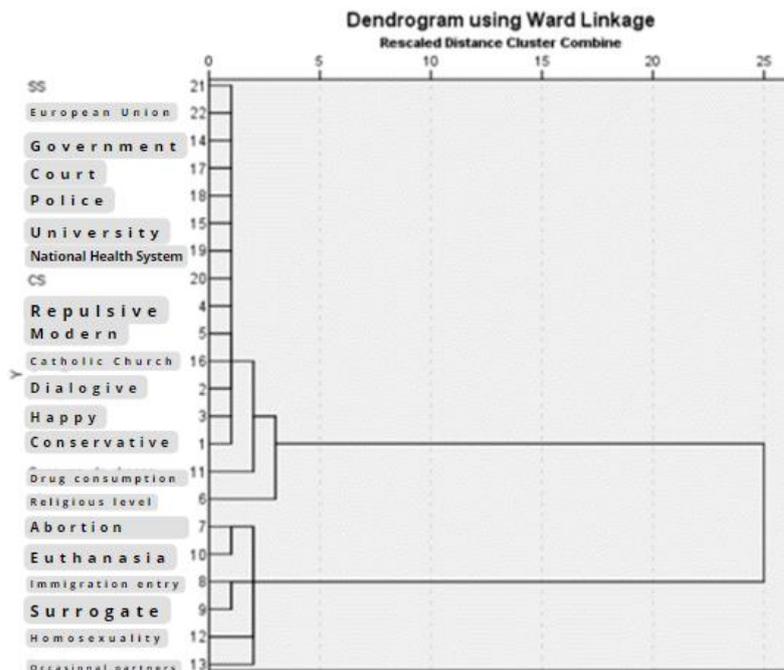
Source: Own elaboration from the Survey on practices, values and attitudes, 2020

The MDS (multidimensional scaling algorithm) technique was applied to represent similarities/dissimilarities in multiple dimensions.

According to the criteria for evaluating the quality of the results, the solution of the two dimensions is adequate (STRESS-I = 0.14; DAF = 0.98). The "Decomposition of Normalized Raw Stress" chart shows that there are no objects that do not contribute to *the values of Normalized Raw Stress* (STRESS-I) since all objects have STRESS-I values < 0.05, revealing a good adjustment of the solution obtained.

Figure 3 - Result of multidimensional escalation

Decomposition of Normalized Raw Stress

Object		Source SRC_1	Mean
Object	Government	.0081	.0081
	University	.0083	.0083
	Catholic Church	.0079	.0079
	Court	.0079	.0079
	Police	.0070	.0070
	National Health System	.0064	.0064
	Social communication	.0067	.0067
	Social services	.0064	.0064
	European Union	.0065	.0065
	Religious level	.0302	.0302
	Conservative	.0168	.0168
	Dialogive	.0119	.0119
	Happy	.0111	.0111
	Repulsive	.0144	.0144
	Modern	.0105	.0105
	Abortion	.0329	.0329
	Immigration entry	.0535	.0535
	Surrogate	.0415	.0415
	Euthanasia	.0417	.0417
	Drug comsumption	.0214	.0214
	Homosexuality	.0267	.0267
	Occasional sex partners	.0392	.0392
Mean		.0190	.0190

Source: Own elaboration from the Survey on practices, values and attitudes, 2020.

Figure 4 shows the coordinates of each object in the two dimensions of the final solution. The object identifies with the dimension for which it has a smaller dissimilarity (smaller values between the two columns). This figure allows us to support the reading and interpretation of the map of positioning of objects in the retained dimensions: in one dimension all the questions of *consciousness* and, in the other dimension, the *other objects are positioned*.

Figure 4 - Final solution

Final Coordinates

	Dimension 1	Dimension 2
Government	-.482	-.090
University	-.254	.040
Catholic Church	-.531	.223
Court	-.423	-.131
Police	-.364	.034
National Health System	-.260	-.052
Social communication	-.600	-.093
Social services	-.446	-.025
European Union	-.317	-.103
Religious level	.054	.964
Conservative	.022	.095
Dialogive	-.272	.221
Happy	-.310	.287
Repulsive	-.521	-.370
Modern	-.605	.145
Abortion	.752	.240
Immigration entry	.917	-.374
Surrogate	.960	-.053
Euthanasia	.812	-.091
Drug comsumption	-.114	-.653
Homosexuality	1.271	.512
Occasional sex partners	.711	-.728

Source: Own elaboration from the Survey on practices, values and attitudes, 2020.

Figure 5 - Map of positioning of the variables under analysis

STRESS-I=,1377
DAF ou R²=,981

Source: Own elaboration from the Survey on practices, values and attitudes, 2020

Linear regression analysis was used to estimate the levels of religiosity of young people, having as predictors or explanatory variables: *questions of consciousness, trust in institutions* and relationship *with God* (as scores obtained from AFCP) as well as *gender*, *age and place where they live*. The Enter method was used *and* the first model therefore included all independent variables. The variable age and then the place where it resides were excluded (in this order) because they presented low and non-significant coefficients, *p-value* > 0.05.

The third model tested presented all significant predictors (*p-value* < 0.05), a good adjustment to the data, $F_{(4, 186)} = 42.302$; $p < 0.001$ and an explanatory capacity of 47% of the dependent variable. Therefore, this was the model adopted to explain the level of religiosity of university students, taking into account the explanatory variables observed (Table 7).

Figure 6 - Multiple linear regression to estimate the level of religiosity

	Beta	Student T test t	p-value	IC 95% Inferior limit	IC 95% Superior limit
Constant	3.305	5.241	.000	2.061	4.548
Conscience questions	-.356	-6.614	.000	-1.305	-.705
Belief on institutions	.135	2.529	.012	.084	.678
Church views	.559	10.452	.000	1.279	1.875
Gender	.144	2.648	.009	.237	1.624
Determination coefficient	R^2 Ajusted ,465				
Statistic test	$F_{(4, 186)}=42,302$; p<0,001				

Dependent variable: religious level changed between zero (nothing religious) and ten (very religious).

Source: Own elaboration from the Survey on practices, values and attitudes, 2020

The *level of religiosity* of the students is inversely related to the acceptance of the questions of consciousness as justifiable, β=-,356, p-value<.001. This means that the higher the level of religiosity of students, the lower the degree of acceptance or justification of issues of conscience (abortion, entry of immigrants into the country, surrogates, euthanasia, drug use, homosexuality and sexual relations with occasional partners). The level of religiosity of students is 36% higher among those who consider abortion and euthanasia "never justifiable", for example, than among those who are at the level above the measured scale used (from 1 to 10), keeping the other variables constant.

The degree of trust in the institutions has a positive effect on the level of religiosity of students, $β = 0.14$, $p < 0.05$ (keeping the remaining variables of the equation constant) which indicates that for increasing levels of personal confidence in institutions (including the Church) the level of religiosity of young people increases by 14%.

The view of the Catholic Church (dialoguing, joyful and modern) is also a significant predictor of the level of religiosity, $β = o.56$, $p < 0.001$ revealing a positive relationship between religious experience and the level of religiosity. The level of religiosity of students increases, thus, by 56% the better their experience with the Church (keeping constant the other variables).

Gender also has a positive and significant influence on the level of religiosity, $\beta = 0.14$, $p < 0.05$. The level of religiosity is 14% higher among women compared to men.

In this model, the assumptions of the absence of multilinearity between the independent variables (Tolerance > 0.1 and VIF < 5), absence *of outliers* (Durbin-Watson coefficient = 1.88) and residues with a distribution adjusted to Normal, with zero mean, constant variance and absence of trend (Annex 1.1) were ensured. The linearity of independent variables was ensured against the dependent variables (Appendix 1.2).

Figure 7 - Analysis of residuals and linearity of independent variables[4]

Anexo 1.1. Análise dos Resíduos do primeiro modelo
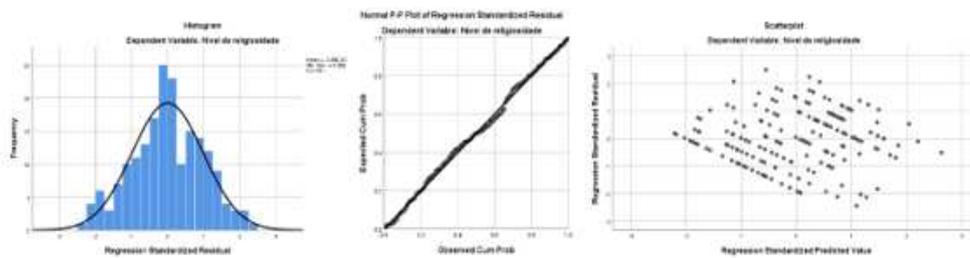
Anexo 1.2. Análise da linearidade das variáveis independentes do primeiro modelo

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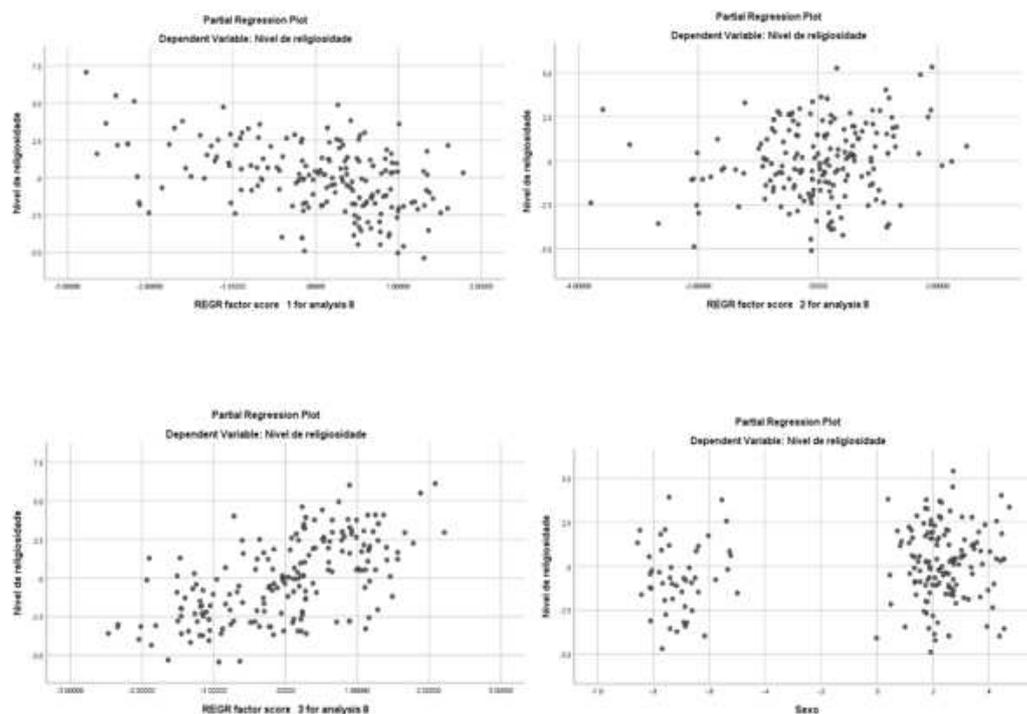
[4] Annex 1.1 Analysis of residuals of the first model; Annex 1.2 Analysis of linearity of independent variables.

Source: Own elaboration from the Survey on practices, values and attitudes, 2020.

Conclusion

After reading the results of the data analysis regarding the research on the practices, values and attitudes of young people at the University of Minho, it is possible to affirm that, in fact, currently, young people have been the reflection of the changes that have occurred in modern society, contributing to the emergence or reconfiguration of new values. We can therefore present some considerations about the results presented:

a) As far *as leisure and institutional dimension are* to be dimensioned, the following conclusions can be drawn:

• It is observed from the analysis that most young people (73%) *stay at home reading, listening to music, watching movies*. In turn, there are few who participate in cultural, social and voluntary activities, although 31% *reported that they volunteer in organizations or movements*;

• Young people claim to *place more* trust in institutions such *as the University*, the *National Health Service and the European Union* and, less trust, in *the Media,* the *Catholic Church and* the *Government*.

From this analysis it is possible to uncertain – albeit with all the necessary care for abusive interpretations – that the university community seeks activities of occupation of forums more focused on itself and less social, allowing it, in some way, moments of personal satisfaction, constituting a peculiar characteristic of contemporary societies. In turn, little confidence in the Catholic Church can be explained by the profound and extensive phenomenon of secularization, which has been addressed very lightly in the first part of this study, which has led, almost naturally, to the weakening of religious institutions.

b) As for *the religious and value dimension*, it can be concluded that:

• There is a strong influence of the Catholic religion, since the majority of young people say they *are* Catholic (68%), despite the fact that it is possible to have, even in a relatively small percentage, *young atheists* (21%);

- In general, the majority of young *university students participate* little or nothing in religious services (55%) and 26% report doing so one or *more times a week*, with young women being the ones who live the most in this religious practice;

- Most young people believe in *the existence of a God* (43%) or a *kind of God or living force* (22.5%), returning to being the most convinced female young women of this belief;

- Most young university students report having a *relationship with God* (50.2%), and some of them say they have religious practice (24.1%) and others maintain this relationship without any connection to the Church (23%) and others still feed this relationship through religious movements/groups (3.1%). On the other hand, 39.3% reported having no connection to God, some of them received religious education (36.2%) and others did not (3.1);

- The view of young university students in some aspects of the Catholic Church is clear: most consider it more *conservative* and less *modern*; they see the *Church more dialoguing* than *repulsive* and most have a view of her as being *joyful*. However, several young university students maintain a neutral position in relation to their vision of the Church, perhaps because they do not maintain a close relationship with her;

- Environmental protection*, racism *and xenophobia and gender-based violence are* the current issues that deserve the most concern today by university students;

- Young university students express high levels of justification for certain behaviors, appearing to react openly to practices that are usually disapproved by society;

- Young university students value more in the educational process *the ser tolerant and respect others, have a sense of responsibility and* have *good manners.* Thus, the values of respect, tolerance and responsibility seem to be currently the most recognized by young people, and may be related to contemporary discourses of valuing differences and the search for individual equality and freedom.

From the exploratory analysis to questions 3 (level of trust in institutions), 9 (view of the Catholic Church) and 11 (justification of practices or questions of conscience) of the questionnaires prepared for this study, we can conclude, from the factor analysis, that the three factors obtained reveal that there is consistency in the way the questions in question were prepared, since the factors obtained cluster the same items as the questions.

The *level of trust in the institutions*, the *vision of the Catholic Church* and *the justification of practices or issues of conscience* explain 47% of *the level of religiosity* of university students.

It was also concluded that the higher *the level of religiosity* of students, the lower the degree of acceptance or justification of *issues of conscience* (such as the practice of abortion, the entry of immigrants into the country, the surrogates, euthanasia, drug use, homosexuality and sexual relations with occasional partners).

Trust *in institutions* also interferes with *the level of religiosity* of students, as this increases by 14% as confidence in institutions also increases.

Finally, it was concluded that the *level of religiosity* of students increases by 56% the better the experience they *have with the* Church, in a particular way if they see it *as dialoguing, joyful and modern*.

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ANNEX

This survey is intended to obtain information for a sociological study on the practices, values and attitudes of young people studying at the University of Minho. The collected data will be treated strictly anonymously and confidentially according to the code of deontological of the Portuguese Association of Sociology.

Leisure time and institutional dimension

1. What activities do you spend your free time in? (Select a maximum of 3 options)

Hanging out with friends	
Participate in cultural activities (go to the theater, cinema, museums, concerts...)	
Practice sports and outdoor activities	
Stay at home reading, listening to music, watching movies	
Participate in social and voluntary activities	
Hanging out with family or visiting family members	
Stay at home surfing social networks	

2. Do you currently belong to some kind of organization?

Party group	
Organization for the protection of animal rights	
Environmental/ecology protection organization	
Association or sports group	
Association or cultural group	
Group or youth religious movement	
Student associations or nuclei	
Volunteering organizations or movements	

3. What level of personal trust do you have in the following institutions?

	No confidence	Little confidence	Some confidence	A lot of confidence
Government				
University				
Catholic Church				
Court				
Police				
National Health System				
Media				
Social Services				
European Union				

Religious and value dimension

4. What is your current religious position?

Catholic	
Another Christian	
Jewish	
Islamic/Muslim	
Eastern Religions	

5. Not to mention special occasions, such as weddings and funerals, how often do you currently participate in religious services?

More than once a week	
Once a week	
At least once a month	
Only on religious\festive days	
Few times a year	
Never	

6. Regardless of whether you belong to a particular religion, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means "Nothing religious" and 10 "Very religious", I would say that it is a person:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Nothing religious											Very religious

7. Which of the following statements best matches your beliefs?

There is a God	
There is a kind of spirit or living force	
I don't really know what to think.	
Deep down, I don't think there's any absolute spirit, God, or living force	

8. How do you define your relationship with God? (Select only one option).

I have a constant relationship with God, for I have religious practice	
I have a relationship with God personally, having no connection with any Church	
I have not received religious education, so I have no relationship with God	
I have a relationship with God through the religious movement/group to which I belong	
I received a religious education, but I stopped living it when I came to college.	
I received a religious education, but I never felt connected to God	
I did not receive a religious education, but I knew God through movements linked to university students	
I received a religious education, but I knew God better through movements linked to university students	

9. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "Totally at odds" and 5 "Totally in agreement", it describes your vision of the Catholic Church, taking into account your religious experience.

	1	2	3	4	5
Conservative					
Dialogive					
Cheerful					
Repulsive					
Modern					

10. Of the following topics, which are the ones that most concern you today? (Select a maximum of 3 options).

The environment	
Gender-based violence	
Migration/refugees	
Racism and xenophobia	
Political ideologies	
Religious intolerance	
Unemployment	
The protection of animals	
The elderly	

Poverty in the least developed countries	

11. Using the scale from 1 to 10, in which 1 means "Never justifiable and 10 "Always justifiable" say if you think the following actions are justified?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
The practice of abortion										
The entry into the country of immigrant workers										
Surrogate										
The practice of euthanasia										
Drug use										
Homosexuality										
Having sex with occasional partners										

12. The following list includes a number of qualities that can be taught to children at home. Tell me which ones you consider particularly important. (Select a maximum of 5 options)

Have good manners	
Be independent	
Being a worker	
Sense of responsibility	
Have imagination	
Be tolerant and respect others	
Be spared with money and things	
Be determined and persevering	
Having religious faith	
Don't be selfish	
Be obedient	

Sociodemographic characterization

13. Year of birth _____
14. Sex

Male	
Female	

15. Course that attends _____

16. Course year _____

17. Which of the following hypotheses best describes where you live?

A City	
The suburbs or surroundings of a city	
A village	
A country	

Thank you so much for your cooperation!