

RELIGIOSITY IN SLOVAKIA - WHITE PAPER

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1. Historical overview

Slovakia counts among many Eastern and Central European countries in which Religious Studies, i. e. an academic approach to the study of religion was established relatively late. The reason for this was not merely the unfavourable ideological milieu under the Communist regime (1948-1989), but also the rather complicated history of Slovakia over the past two centuries, and the associated process of emergence of a modern Slovak nation (see for instance Kirschbaum, 1995).

1.1. From the mid 19th century until 1918

From 11th century until 1918, “Slovaks” resided mostly the part of Hungarian realm, politically determined by the geographical position as Upper Hungary. Stretching from the Early Middle Ages into the High Modern Era, the Slovak region lived under what in many aspects amounted to a true political and cultural hegemony (Holec, 2007). From this era, we do not dispose relevant documents concerning the religiosity of Upper Hungary, nevertheless relevant data to religiosity can be obtained from one of the oldest Official lexicon of settlements from 1773 (*Lexicon universorum regni Hungariae...*) (Šprocha, Tišliar, 2009: 8; Majo, Kusendová, 2015: 4). In the February 1867 the monarchy in Dunube region was splited in two parts: Austria and Hungary. This was the result and success of Hungarian ethno-national movements, but for Slovaks this political act resulted in the era of forced Hungarization (Holec, 2007). The Legal act from 1867 concerning ethic issues of newly constituted state, anticipated the only one unic nation – Hungarian one. Coming out of this premise, the Hungarian language became the only official language. Nevertheless, it was allowed to use the languages of ethnic minorities at primary and secondary education, in administration, during the court hearings, and in religious life. Religiosity was not the focus of any of administrative or “scientific” search until the first censuses started in the mid of 19th. According to the *Atlas of religiosity of Slovakia* (Majo, Kusendová, 2015: 9-21) and cartographic processing of data concerning confessionality (based

on censuses from the mid 19th century until last census within Hungarian state in 1910) we can follow the dynamics of religious life in Slovakia (in the terms of “confessional religiosity”) (see **TABLE 1**).

TABLE 1

	Census 1857	Census 1869¹	Census 1880	Census 1890	Census 1990	Census 1910
Total number of inhabitants (millions)	2.47	2.46	2.4	2.57	2.7	2.92
Catholic church (millions)	65.1%	65.6%	66.3%	67.2%	68.3%	69.9%
	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.9	> 2.0
Lutheran	15.5%	15.9%	15.3%	14.8%	14.2%	13.5%
Evangelic Church	382,000	391,000	377,000	382,000	394,000	395,000
Greek-Catholic Church	7.3%	7.6%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	6.8%
	182,000	186,000	175,000	183,000	197,000	197,000
Reformed Church	6.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.4%	5.3%	5.2%
	161,000	134,000	134,000	140,000	148,000	153,000
Jews	5.5%	5.5%	5.7%	5.4%	5.0%	4.8%
	136,000	134,000	140,000	138,000	140,000	139,000
Other confession	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
	554	400	1700	766	> 1000	> 2000
NONES	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-

Processed by T. Podolinská, based on *Atlas of religiosity of Slovakia* (Majo, Kusendová 2015: 8-19)

The the first modern census matching also the territory of recent Slovakia in 1857 has showed that despite of the new Law act that made in Hungary all confessions equal with the Catholic church (1848), more than 65% of its inhabitants belonged to this confession, making thus Slovakia predominantly Catholic region. Catholics were dominant in almost all regions of

¹ The first Census in the history of modern Hungary was processed to the date 31st December 1869. The Census (at the level of villages) was published after the revision of L. Sebök in 2005, but some of the data form Abov region are incomplete (Majo, Kusendová, 2015: 11).

nowadays Slovakia (except of Uh and Zemplín regions in the East part of Slovakia, and the cities like Modra - in 1857 57% of citizens declared to be Lutherans). The strong Jewish communities were in Nitra (32%), Trenčín (27%) and Bratislava (14%) (Majo, Kusendová 2015: 35).

Till the break of the 19th and 20th centuries, the ratio of believers affiliated to Catholic Church increased plus 17%. The strongest citadels of Catholicism were in Trenčín region (more than 87%) (Ibidem: 36-37). Lutherans, in the terms of numbers faced stagnation. The Greek-Catholic church had 5% of internal increase. The strongest influence of this confession was in Zemplin (41%), Uh (40%) and Šariš (31%) regions (Ibidem: 37). The Reformed Church increased rapidly in given period, plus 11% of belongs. Orthodox Church counted only 1000 individuals, nevertheless, there was an important trend of increase.

1.2. The Religiosity, Church and state (1918-1989)

The establishment of so called Czechoslovak Republic was not only the success of ethno-national ambitions and more than 60 years of political fight, it was also an important break point in the terms of postulation of religious freedom and new order of negotiations between the church and state. Not surprisingly, because of the strong visibilisation of conservative Catholic Church on the side of Habsburgs' dynasty in the former regime, many political parties have included into their electoral program the point of separation of church and state. The first draft of the new Constitutions included such a paragraph. Nevertheless, due to the complicated and different situation on Slovak and Czech sides, the requirement of separation of Church and State in the first republic of Czechs and Slovaks, was not included in the textation of new Constitution as it was accepted in 1920 (Hubenák, 2007). The religious issues were so complicated to negotiate, that finally there was even no paragraph concerning or moderating the Church and State relations. The key paragraph § 124 of the Constitution made all confesions equal under the law. The Constitution in § 121 assured not only the religious freedom but also the freedom to be without church affiliation or without confession, it means the freedom in one's religiosity or irreligiosity. According to the Census in 1921 there were 725 000 of people without confession.

In 1926 the so called Law of Congruation was introduced (act n. 122/1926). This law distinguished between so called *congruated* and *subvenced* churches and religious communities. On the territory of Czech Republic and Morava only Catholic Church (of all three rites) and Orthodox churches were „congruated “. In Slovakia and Ruthenia, the Catholic

Church (of all three rites), Lutheran Evangelic Church, Reformed Church, Orthodox Church and Jewish religious communities were „recipied“. The lowest “congruas” (i.r. state contributions) were 9000 Czechoslovak Crowns per year. In sum, the „recognized churches“ received from state from 130 to 150 million of Czechoslovak Crowns per year, two thirds of it received Catholic Church (Hubenák, 2007). The negotiations of newly constituted republic with Vatican started in 1920. In 1928 the document *Modus Vivendi* was parafed.

TABLE 2

	Census 1921	Census 1930	Census 1940²	Census 1950
Total number of inhabitants (million)	> 3.0	3.3	2.6	3.4
Catholic church (million)	71.0% 2.1	71.8% 2.3	74.1% 1.9	76.2% 2.6
Lutheran Evangelic Church	12.8% 383,000	12.1% 400,000	14.3% 388,000	12.9% 443,000
Greek-Catholic Church	6.4% 190,000	6.4% 211,000	6.9% 183,000	6.6% 225,000
Reformed Church	4.7% 140,000	4.3% 141,000	0,5% 12,000	3.2% 111,000
Jews	4.5% 135,000	4.1% 135,000	3.2% 86,000	0.2% >7,000
Orthodox Church			0.3%	0.2% <8,000
Other confession	0.6% 17,000	1.5% 48,000	0.2%	0.3%
NONES	0.2% <7,000	0.5% 16,000	0.2%	0.3% >9,000
Sin data/no answer				0,1%

Processed by T. Podolinská, based on *Atlas of religiosity of Slovakia* (Majo, Kusendová 2015: 20-27).

² Due to the Vienna arbitration the total number of inhabitants decreased dramatically. In the territory occupied by Hungary rested approximately 901,000 people (70% of them belonged to Catholic church, followed by reformed church, Greek-Catholics, Jews and Lutherans. (Ibidem: 25)

What concerns the religious situation in Czechoslovak Republic, the atmosphere and public discourse was very different. There was visible and remarkable decrease of importance of Catholic Church in the Czech part of the Republic. Slovak part faced totally opposite trend - Catholic Church had almost 25% of internal increase of believers with 72% of ratio in general population. In some regions of Slovakia, the ratio of Catholic believers exceeded 90% (Kysucké Nové Mesto 99%). In 1930 in Slovakia the less Catholic region was Medzilaborce district (9%) (Majo, Kusendová, 2015: 37). What concerns nationality in 1930, 76% out of Catholic believers declared the Slovak ethnicity, 17% Hungarian one and only 5% declared German ethnicity (Ibidem).

In 1921 Czechoslovakia had 13,5 millions of inhabitants, 724 thousand of them declared to be „without confession“ (further called as „*nones*“). In Czech part it was 5,32 %, whereas in Slovakia only 0,23 %. In 1931 there were 14,7 millions of inhabitants, out of them 854 thousand of *nones*. The distribution of *nones* was remarkably different: 5,8 % in the Czech part, and only 0,51 % in the Slovak one. After the 1945 the situation has changed dramatically; 2,9 millions of Czech Germans was evicted and Czechoslovakia lost Ruthenia. As a consequence of that the total number of inhabitants had fallen to 12,7 millions. Out of them there was 766 thousand of „*nones*“.

Between the years 1940 and 1950, the religious development of Catholic Church was positive and stable, in the terms of number of believers. Despite of the lost of Ruthenia and the lost of total number of inhabitants (minus 20%!), the ratio of Catholics in Slovak population have reached 74% (Majo, Kusendová 2015: 38). There was 10% of internal increase of believers in the Catholic church in Slovakia between 1930-1950. What concerns Lutherans, after the Vienna arbitration, only 3% of them resided outside of the new borders. The ratio of Lutherans in Slovak population increased to 15% (Ibidem: 39). Greek-Catholic Church faced increase in ratio of Slovak population, plus 7% (1940 to 1930). In 1950, before its abolition, it had 6% of internal increase and its ratio in Slovak population had reached 6,6%. The strongest Greek-Catholic districts were Medzilaborce (86%) and Svidník (83%).

The change of the border dramatically touched the Reformed church. Ten years after 1938 the number of reformed decreased by 91% to the ratio 0,5% with the total number of believers 13,000. As the strongest districts stayed Trebišov and Michalovce and Bratislava with 1,000 believers. The most drastic change, however, was documented among Jews. Due to the Vienna arbitrations and deportations, there was a 95% of decline (1950 to 1940). In 1950

there lived only 7500 Jews in Slovakia, in comparison to 87 thousand in 1940. 89% of settlements in Slovakia were without Jewish population. The Orthodox faced 18% internal decline. In 1950 their total number increased and reached 8,000 believers residing mostly at the Eastern part of Slovakia (Majo, Kusendová 2015: 39).

Census processed at March 31st in 1950, at the very beginning of the era of socialism in Slovakia, was for a long period last one to collecting the answers concerning the ones confession. According to this census, Czechoslovakia had 12 million and 338,450 of inhabitants, out of them 3 442 317 in Slovak part. The Catholic church declared 74.42 % of affiliated in Czech part and 76.2% in Slovak one. In 1960 the new Constitution of Czechoslovak Socialist Republic has been accepted, by which the era of discrimination of all Churches and suppression of all religious representation definitively had started.

2. Post-communist era and recent trends of religiosity in Slovakia

In the first decade after the fall of communism there was a rapid rise of the number of believers in Slovakia, from around 63.5% in the early 1990s to around 76% in the late 1990s (*European Values Study*, further EVS 1991, 1999). It is possible to interpret this „religious turn“ as a result of the specific post-communist climate. The old institutional framework was totally dismantled, together with all of its ‘securities’. Civil society has been in its „embryonic“ state with the virtual absence of an intermediary layer of NGOs; nuclear family and values were in a deep crisis. The other very important limitation was an economic one: this was a period of extreme material hardships after the downfall of the planned economy of socialism. Not surprisingly, after some period of „inflated expectations“ and a period of the „freedom of self“, a period of „normative confusion“ has followed. Trespassing such turbulent times as these, people were searching for the lost „security“ and a new „protective umbrella“. In these conditions, the historically attested tradition of religion and a credible institutional representative as embodied by a traditional church became the „major option“. Our case showed yet one important development. In Slovakia, the traditional church adopted the position of a „communist martyr“ and (at least in the first post-communist decade) profited very much from the social capital of such a position. Moreover, the church privatized also the position of a „housekeeper“ of the national tradition.

The concept of „traditional“ religion that has its historical merits and privileges

became a common device for structuring religious policy and legal debate.

This turbulent development and flexible strategy of the Roman Catholic Church resulted (at least) at a „numeral“ re-birth of traditional Catholicism in Slovakia. As a consequence Slovakia is (besides Poland) frequently referred to as one of the most traditional ‘citadels’ of Catholicism in Europe.³

Coming out of interim analysis of the first and second waves of EVS (1991, 1999) the first post-communist decade was indeed the decade of religious turn in Slovakia. Religious faith was strengthened along with the church-attendance rate and the general confidence in the church (Krivý, 2001: 14). In 1991 the ‘prevailing confidence’ in the church has been reported by 49% of the Slovak respondents. In 1999 there was a 16% increase and the number has reached 64.8% (EVS 1991, 1999). Nevertheless, hand in hand with these pro-church-oriented attitudes, people started to declare the opinion that the church should be focused more/(merely) on religious and spiritual issues. Thus religious influence was endorsed ‘only’ in those cases when it kept within the pressure limits and did not interfere directly into the sphere of politics. Tolerance to coexistence of people of various religions or without religion was higher as it was in the early 1990s (Ibidem).

Based on figures from the latest surveys we can follow the religious dynamics of the second post-communistic decade in comparison with the first one. Both EVS 2008 and ISSP 2008 results indicate that the perceptions of the church’s responses to spiritual, moral and family issues in Slovakia as adequate exceeds the European average. In 2004 the national survey Collective identities in contemporary Slovakia revealed that 34% of the respondents explicitly support the weakening of the power of the Roman Catholic Church in public space and negatively perceive the rising influence of the church. Among the higher-educated respondents the figure reached up to 45.8% (Krivý, 2004: 37, 67). In the same research, 72.6% of the respondents agreed with the statement that „Christian values should be interpreted in more modern way than the church in Slovakia used to do“.

If we follow the dynamic of religiosity in Slovakia through the lenses of the last three censuses the religious situation seems to be very stable, almost untouched by dramatical political or economic changes of the whole society during the era of transition (**TABLE 3**).

³ In this concern and clarification of context see the part 4 of the study.

TABLE 3

	Census 1991	Census 2001	Census 2011
Total number of inhabitants (million)	5.2	5.35	5.39
Catholic church (million)	60.4%	68.9%	62%
	3.1	3.7	3.3
Lutheran Evangelic Church	6.2%	6.9%	5.9%
	326,000	372,000	316,000
Greek-Catholic Church	3.4%	4.1%	3.8%
	178,000	219,000	206,000
Reformed Church	1.6%	2.0%	1.8
	82,000	107,000	98,000
Orthodox Church	0.7%	0.9%	0.9%
	34,000	50,000	49,000
Other confessions	0.6%	1.1%	1.5%
	30,000	50,000	79,000
NONES	9.8%	13.0%	1,4%
	515,000	697,000	725,000
Sin data/ no answer	17,4%	3%	10,6%
	917,000	160,000	571,000

Processed by T. Podolinská, based on *Atlas of religiosity of Slovakia* (Majo, Kusendová 2015 28-33).

Miroslav Tížik

For better understanding of present state of religiosity in Slovakia it is important to describe the political and historical context of changes, mostly after 1989 changes. Then it can be started deeper investigation on various types of religiosity in Slovakia.

The situation in which the Slovak Republic found itself in 1993 can be characterised as a struggle with three traditions. First problem was the way how to deal with and find an attitude to the period of the last 40 years of the state-socialism (communist regime) which was declared itself as a materialist order. Fall of the rule of the Communist party was one of the issues for the legitimisation of a new order. As a result, official rhetorics of the new Slovak republic

rejected continuity with this era (Tížik, 2007). Second problem in the discussions about the character of the new state was the separation of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, it means the rupture in common Czechoslovak traditions and self-definition outside of heritage of the united federative republic and against the Czech Republic became prevailing. Third important factor at the search for legitimacy of the new state and new regime was a very specific temporality of Slovak citizens. Historian Ľ. Lipták called it „new temporality“ (Lipták, 2002). According to his hypothesis, generation who reached retiring age in 1993 has throughout its life experienced five political regimes, revolutions, territorial, state and politic changes or economic systems. Out of the five regimes this generation of people experienced, only two can be considered democratic.

Not only in European context, the Slovakia can be on the beginning of 21st century considered as a part of moderately religious countries – countries with a high level of declarative religiosity and an average level of church attendance - together with United States, Slovakia, Spain (Tížik 2012). The 25 years of transformation in the relationship between religion and the state in Slovakia since 1989 can be divided into five periods (Tížik, 2015).

The first period refers to the years of a common Czech and Slovak Federative Republic (1990-1992). This period can be called the period of the genesis of an independent religious field in Slovakia (Bourdieu, 1971) and in this time the religious freedom was one of the most crucial issue. But it was still in the frame of common Czechoslovakia with some small specific differences from Czechs, caused by federal character of the Czechoslovakia. In addition, religious freedom and the economic and legal independence of religion from the state were guaranteed.

The second phase (1993 – 2000) is characterized by the creation of state authorities in the new Slovak Republic. The social importance of religion in the symbolic character of the state increased, and the basic rules of the religious field were strengthened. The religious field, like the symbolic space of the state, was Christianized, and Christianity became a nation-forming and a state-forming principle. In that phase the positions of the Catholic and Lutheran Churches became dominant.

The third phase (2000 – 2004) began with the adoption of a Basic Treaty between the Slovak Republic and the Holy See in 2000. Roman Catholicism, as the *doxa* of the religious field, was strengthened, and the presence of dominant actors of the religious field in the field of power was stabilized.

The fourth phase (2004-2009) initiated by Slovakia's accession to the European Union in 2004 brought about a halt to the increase in the influence and power of the Catholic Church within the field of power and within symbolic space in Slovakia. This was manifested openly in 2005 in a governmental crisis, which resulted in pre-term elections. This crisis was related to disputes over issues promoted by the Catholic Church, which was seeking a treaty with the Holy See on the Right to Conscientious Objection, meant to guarantee the right of public actors not to engage in activities that run counter to the teachings of the Church. On the one hand, this highlighted the presence of the Catholic Church within power segments of the state; on the other hand, it also demonstrated the Church's inability to enforce an agreement unilaterally advantageous to it against the interests of the state, which protected its existing (restricted) monopoly over symbolic violence, and which respected several international obligations toward the European Union and other international actors.

The fifth and latest well-defined phase began with the introduction of the common euro currency in 2009. This phase overlaps with the advent of economic and financial crisis, which has made Europe-wide issues less important and has strengthened nation states as actors in international politics. In terms of relations between the state and religion in Slovakia, this period has witnessed the enforcement of religious institutions as important public actors in multiple spheres of political life in the country. In 2012 there certain indications suggest the potential beginning of a new, sixth phase in relations between the state and churches, as the largest churches begin to be integrated into the field of power in new ways. For example, some parts of the Churches, also of Catholic Church became to be a part of Eurosceptic camp and supported the initiatives for leaving the European Union started in the summer of 2016.

All these changes in the relationship between church and state took place in a society whose religious structure can be considered stable, with a long history in which a majority of inhabitants have belonged to the Catholic Church, alongside a significant minority of non-Catholic churches.

The newly emerging state placed increasing symbolic weight on religion, and specifically on Christian religion, as a source of symbolic capital and constituent power. Apart from that, the two dominant actors, the Catholic and Lutheran Churches, were granted differential privilege within the religious field through a number of measures that led to the formation of a *Catholic-Lutheran asymmetrical dualism*, with the Catholic Church serving as the dominant actor of the two within the emerging field of power (Tížik, 2011: 339). Still, all

registered churches in Slovakia (there were 15 in 1993 and 18 in 2016) were part of the religious field, and the core included all those churches that received state subsidies and participated in discussions regarding the conditions for this subsidy (this included 12 of the 15 registered churches in 1993).

2.1. Data on religiosity

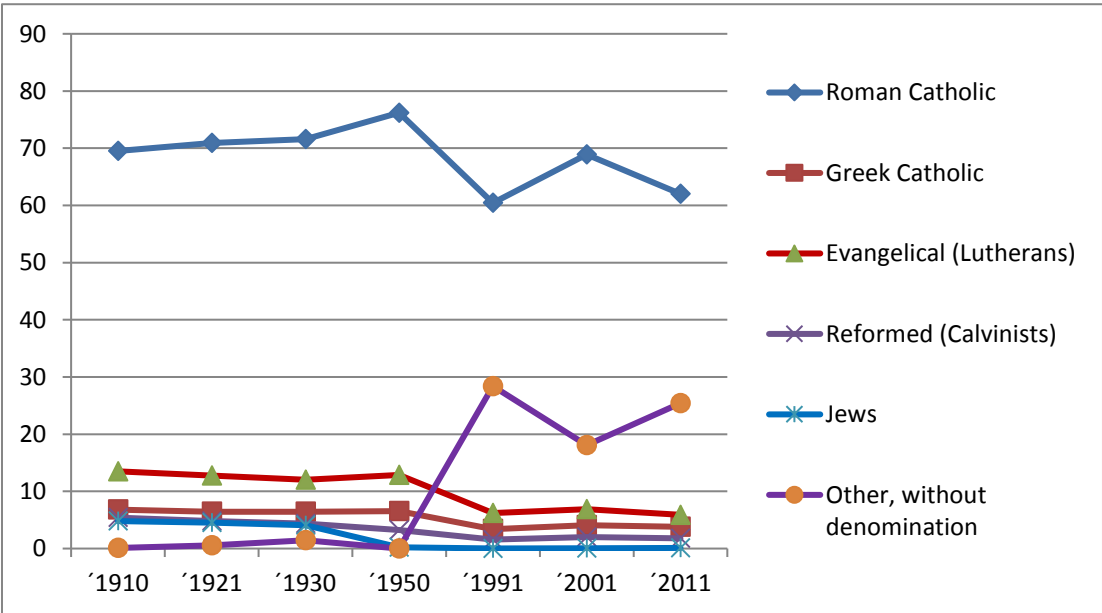
In the investigation of religiosity various data can be used:

a) Censuses

Data from censuses can help to understand the changes in religious structure of Slovakia more than over 100 years. For the moment there are missing the data on religious affiliation from censuses hold in 1940, 1960, 1970 and 1980. But in general it can be show the general trend of religious change in Slovakia.

Graph 1 shows that, in spite of other significant demographic changes, this basic religious structure has not changed in Slovakia for 100 years. The structure has even become more stable since 1989.

Graph 1. Religious structure in Slovakia



Processed by M. Tižik 2015, source: Censuses 1910, 1921, 1930, 1959, 1991, 2001, 2011.

The graph shows that there have been changes in the composition of the non-Catholic religious population, including most notably the near extermination of the country's Jewish community during World War II. There has also been an increase in the number of people without declared religious denomination. The predominance of the Catholic Church, however, along with the existence of several smaller Christian Churches, has not changed. Some changes after 1989 may be ascribed to changes in methodology. In 1991, the number of believers was slightly undercounted because a different method of measurement was employed.

b) Surveys

Except of data from censuses there are already accessible plenty of surveys in some way connecting with measurement of religiosity. The first one done in Slovakia is from 1998 and the last one from 2016. The most of them are free accessible in Slovak Archive of Social Data (SASD) on-line: www.sasd.sav.sk :

There are various kinds of surveys useful for understanding of religiosity in Slovakia:

National surveys (done only in Slovakia):

1. Word View Attitudes in Slovakia 1968, SPOS 1968
(http://sasd.sav.sk/sk/data_katalog_abs.php?id=sasd_1968002)
2. Equality and Minorities in Slovakia 2008
(http://sasd.sav.sk/sk/data_katalog_abs.php?id=sasd_2008005)
3. Democracy and Citizens in Slovakia, DOS 2014
(http://sasd.sav.sk/sk/data_katalog_abs.php?id=sasd_2014003)

International comparative surveys (most of them comparable within V4 countries):

1. European Values Study EVS (1991, 1999, 2008, 2017)
2. World Values Survey WVS (1990, 1998, 2017 together with EVS)
3. International Social Survey Programme ISSP (Religion 1998, 2008 and also National Identity 1995, 2003, 2015, Citizenship and others)
4. European Social Survey ESS
5. Aufbruch 1997, 2007

For the basis overview on the religious change in Slovakia the comparison between the year 1968 and 2014 can be useful.

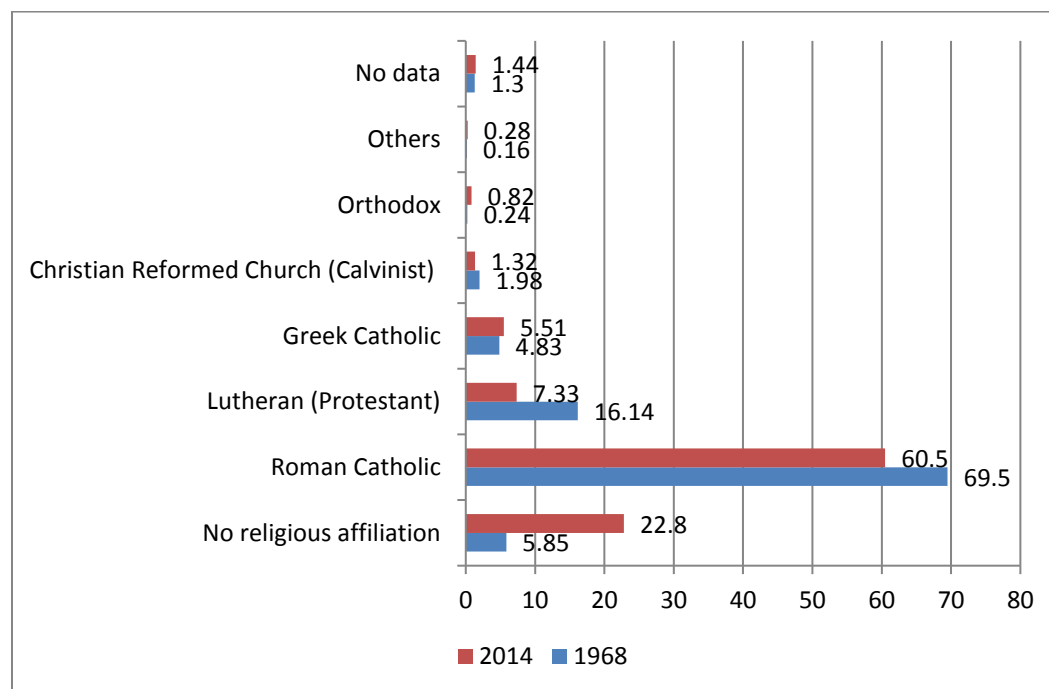
2.2. Changes in the religiosity in Slovakia

For further characteristics, as a case study of dynamics of religiosity in Slovakia the comparison of data from two surveys will be used. The surveys done in 1968 (SPOS 1968) and 2014 (DOS 2014) can help deeper describe multidimensional character of religiosity and show the basic tendencies in the religious change. There can be distinguished three basic dimensions of religiosity, used in most of surveys: - religious affiliation (or to without religion), - religious practice (church attendance, frequency of prayer, reading of religious book, pilgrimages and so on), - religious beliefs (belief to God, to church teaching, to spiritual entities and so on). In both surveys there was also investigated attitudes of respondents to other religious beliefs and also attitude to the relation of religion and churches in the public space.

Religious affiliation in Slovakia

Data from surveys show similar tendencies as data from censuses. A kind of stability of religious landscape, with the growing group of people without religious affiliation and more significant decrease of people affiliated with protestant churches.

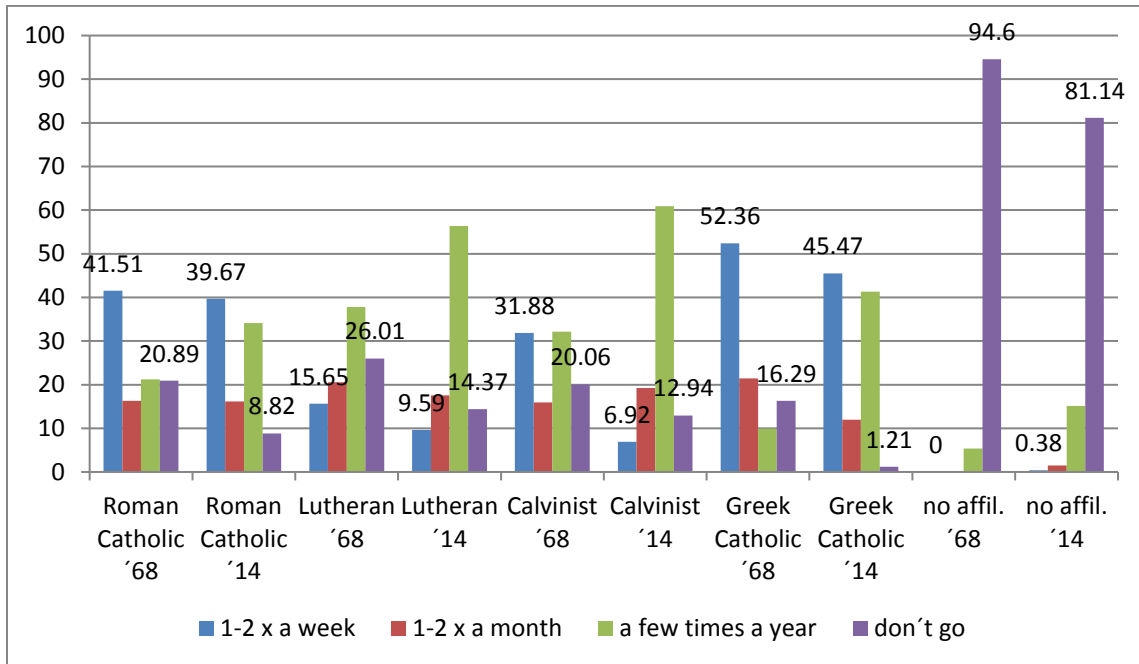
Fig. 1 What is your religious affiliation?



Processed by M. Tížik 2017.

Religious practices

Fig. 2. How often do you take part in religious ceremonies (such as Mass or other church services)?

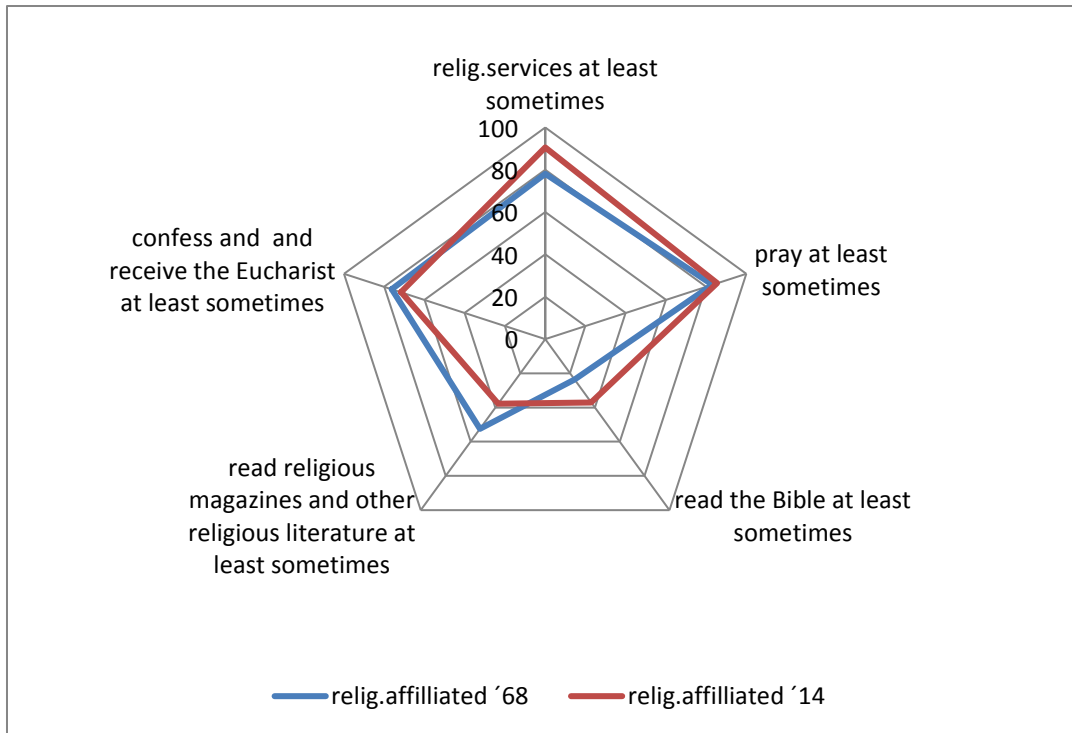


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In the Fig. 2 it is evident that there was an important decrease of regular church attendance mostly in protestant churches (Lutherans and Calvinists) but in the same time there were decrease of non-affiliated people who never go to the church. In half of century comparison it is still the member of Greek Catholic church who attend the religious ceremonies the most frequently.

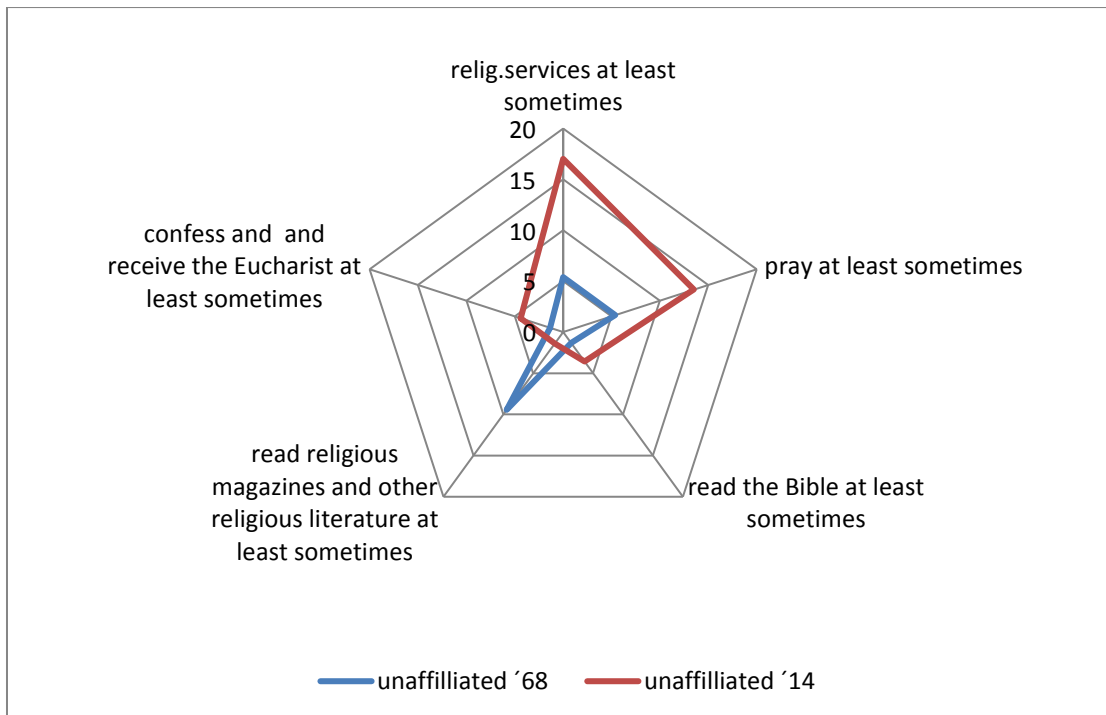
In comparison of various religious practices (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4) there are evident some tendencies. Among the people declared an affiliation with religion there are declared increase of church going and reading the Bible. Among the those who declared not be affiliated with some religion there are significant increase of church going and the other practices, except of reading the religious magazines or newspapers.

Fig. 3. Comparison of basic religious practices of affiliated with religion



Processed by M. Tížik 2017.

Fig. 4. Comparison of basic religious practices of non affiliated with religion

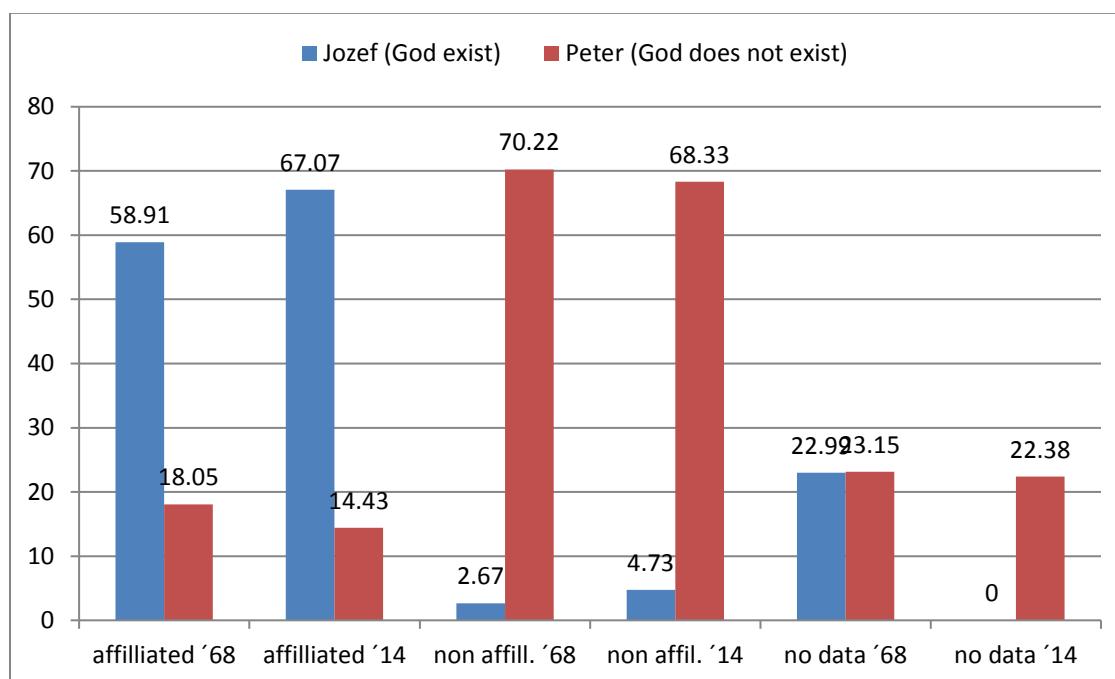


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Religious beliefs

"Imagine this situation: Two young people, Peter and Joseph, discuss the world today. Peter says that God does not exist, because if God existed, he would not allow things that have occurred and are occurring in the world today. Joseph disagrees with Peter and says that God exists and that people will account for their deeds before God. Peter: God does not exist, because he wouldn't allow what is happening to take place Joseph: God exists and people will account for their deeds before God.

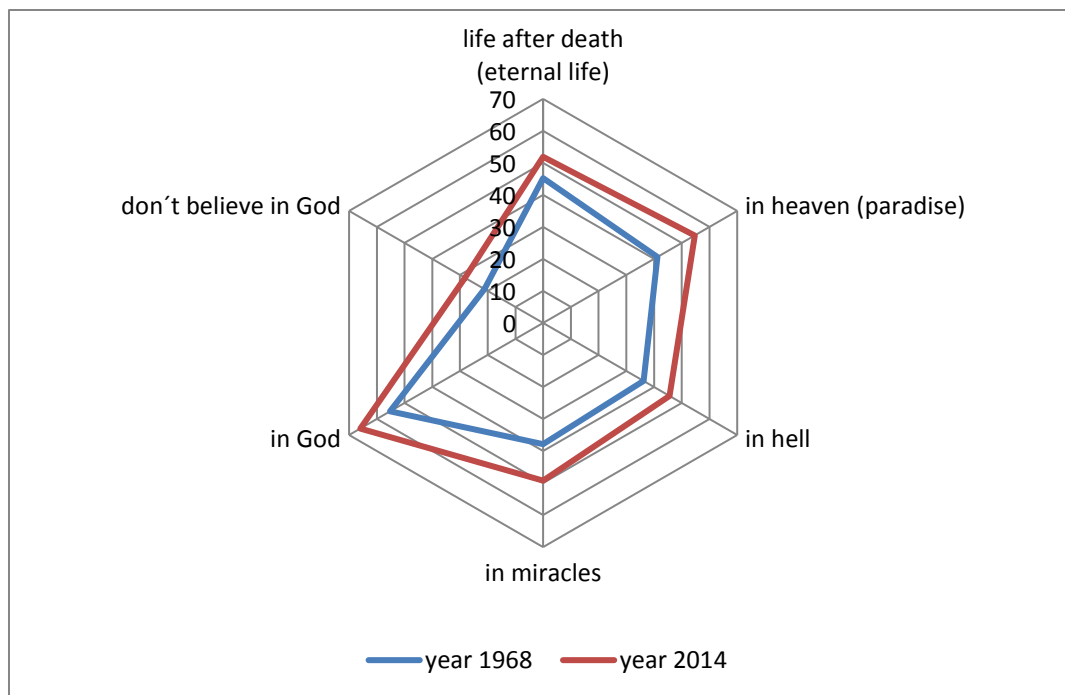
Fig. 5. Belief to existence of God



Processed by M. Tižik 2017.

The increase of religious beliefs in a traditional way confirms also additional data from surveys done in 1968 and 2014. Although there was decrease on number of people who declare to be affiliated with the church (and in the same time increase of number of respondents who don't believe to God), there was an increase of people who declare beliefs to traditional christian principles.

Fig. 6. Comparison of basic religious beliefs in 1968 and 2014



Processed by M. Tížik 2017.

Juraj Majo

3. Some demographic aspects of non-affiliated population in Slovakia

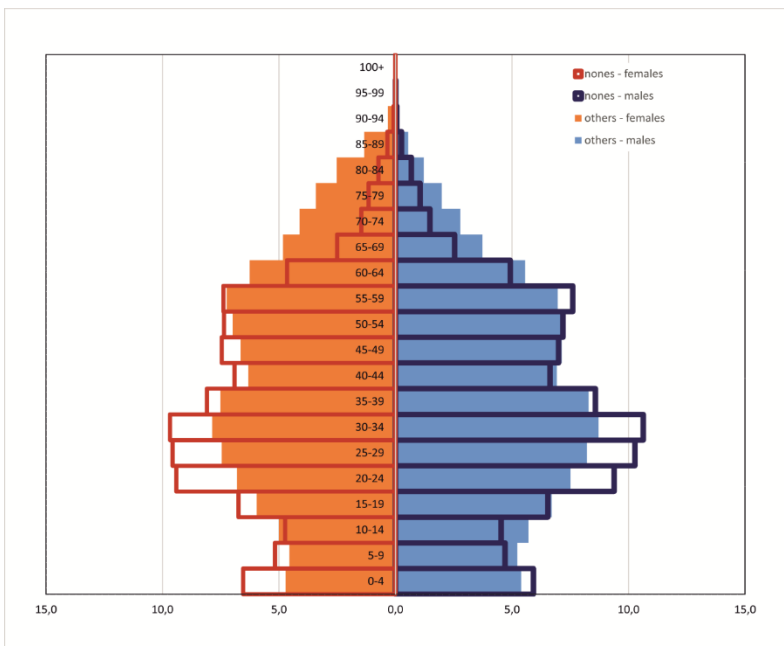
Increasing proportions of religious nonaffiliation characterize not only Slovakia (it is the second most numerous segment of population) but the same trend face majority of Western societies, although the periods over which these increases have occurred and the speed in which they happen do vary. Consequently, some nations now have larger unaffiliated groups and others much smaller ones. The recent survey revealed that, in areas where unaffiliated groups are larger, the religious “nones” have become more distinct from the actively religious in their attitudes and behavior. In contexts of advanced secularization, the gap is greater between the actively religious and the nonreligious when it comes to their views on family life and reproduction and the unaffiliated are more liberal in their attitudes and less religious in their private life. Based on the analyzing data from over 200 North American, European, and Oceanic country subregions included in the 2008 International Social Survey Programme, with hierarchical linear models, the sociologists of religion find that, in areas where the unaffiliated form a larger proportion of the population, the differences between the actively religious and

the unaffiliated in family values and personal religiosity tend to be greater (Wilkins-Laflamme 2016).

3.1. Nones in Slovakia - Age composition

Fig. 7 Age pyramid of the population of *nones* in Slovakia and the rest of the population in 2011

Due to lack of data on religious affiliation for several decades, we can start thorough demographic analyses from 1991, or 2001 only. The data collected in censuses provide quite solid source of information, although not fully exhaustive. One of the most interesting comparison is age breakdown of nones compared against age breakdown of the rest of the population. The proportion of aged 0-14 in population of nones is only 2 % higher than in the whole population. It is interesting, that in many, mostly rural areas, the proportion is even lower (in many Eastern Slovakian districts in 2001, the proportion of 0-14 in the population of nones was more than 30 % lower). Only in Bratislava

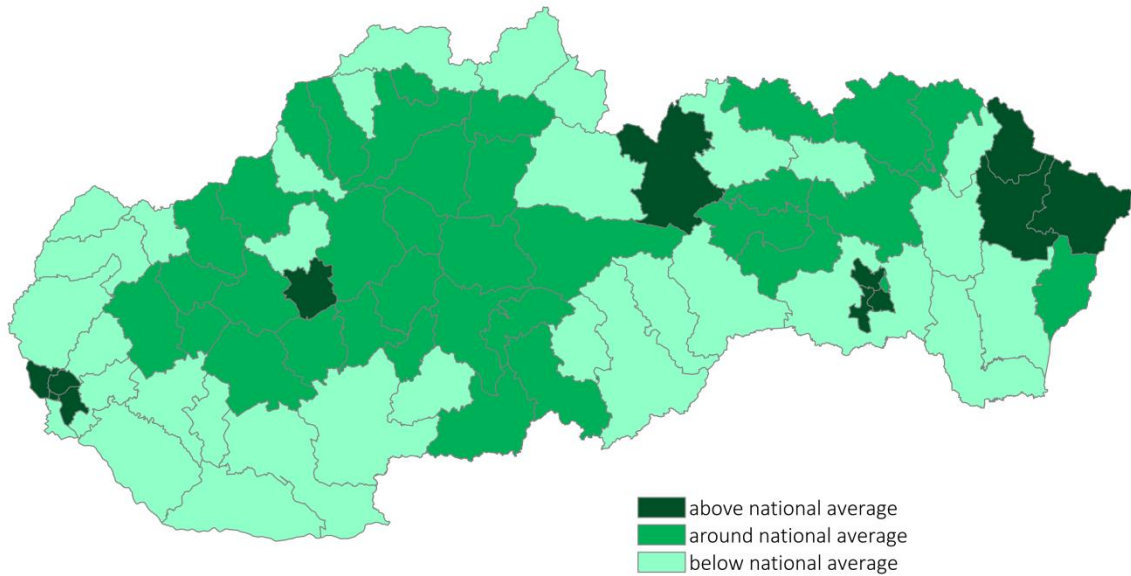


Source: Census 2011

city and adjacent districts, the population of nones was generally speaking younger than the whole population. The best way how to depict age characteristics of a society is by using an age pyramid method. Generally speaking, the population of nones and other population are not notably different in their overall age characteristics. There are, however, differences in relative size of individual age groups or generations. First notable difference is in lower proportion of nones aged 60+. The divergence is especially visible among women. Research outcomes of Dana Hamplová (2011) proved that in Czech society, religious women are dominant in every age category (307) and we presume, the tendencies are similar in Slovakian society as well. If we take spatial approach into account, we can see, that most of “aged” nones are located in districts that cover biggest cities (Bratislava in the West, and Košice in the East), and in North-Eastern regions. These Eastern Slovakian regions are regions with strong Orthodox and Greek-

Catholic background and historically also regions with strong left-parties (especially Communists) electorate (see for example Krivý, Feglová, Balko 1996). If we compare proportion of 60+ among nones against proportion of 60+ in the rest of the population, such ratio is always lower (-64 %), but in eastern Slovakia it is somehow “less” lower (North-Eastern Slovakia has around -25 - -30 %). It is not clear how to identify such group. One of the hypothesis could be the cohort of those who reacted to forced introduction of Orthodox Church in dismissed Greek Catholic Church parishes. Barnovský, Pešek (1997, 249) in description of groups of former Greek-Catholic believers and their reaction to its dismissal identified the “indifferent” as the largest group. These were full of uncertainty in the time of dismissal, had little information and interest and after all they were those with lower level of religious experience. One reaction and strategy of the members of this group could have been their

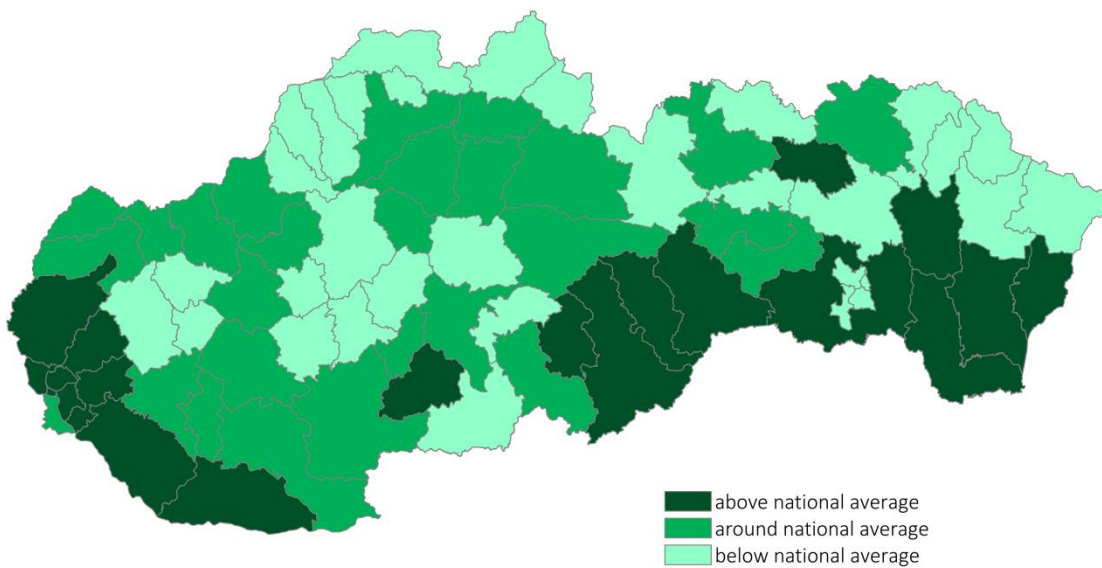
Fig. 8 Proportion of *nones* 60+ in districts of Slovakia in 2011



Source: Census 2011; processed by J. Majo 2017.

withdrawal from church life. Another salient difference in age structure is vivid among generations 20-35 years old. These are the individuals born on the verge of existence of an old

Fig. 9 Proportion of *nones* 0-14 in districts of Slovakia in 2011



Source: Census 2011; processed by J. Majo 2017.

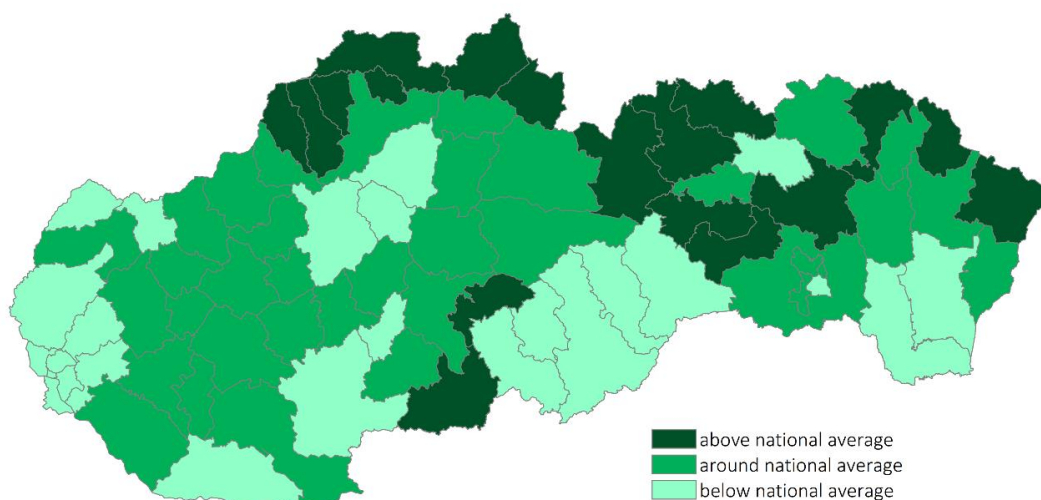
regime, and those generations seem to be influenced by secular worldviews the most (needs to be verified, if it is due to Socialism and their parents mostly living in it, or general societal trends towards secularization as they work elsewhere in Europe). The proportion of such generation at the level of nones is 27 % higher than the proportion of similar generations at the rest of the population. Very high proportion of young nones is mostly in Western Slovakian districts (Bratislava I, Komárno, Myjava, Nové Mesto nad Váhom), where the ratio is almost 50 % higher.

Most of the nones are therefore grouped in productive age groups. It is then slightly surprising, that the nones are not much dominant in the age group 0-14 (only 3 % higher than in other population). Here we have set of 43 districts out of 80, where the proportion of nones in the youngest generation is even lower than in the rest. These are for example regions in North-Eastern Slovakia (Medzilaborce) who on one hand had proportion of old nones above Slovakian average, but the proportion of nones among youngsters is 56 % lower. The highest divergence is in most districts of Bratislava city (proportion is 60 % higher).

3.2. Educational attainment

There is a general approach that nones or even atheists are found among the people with the highest education (Keysar, 2017: 44-45) and on the other hand, religious people are more likely

Fig. 10 Nones with university education in Slovakia in 2011 (%)



Source: Census 2011; processed by J. Majo 2017.

to have no formal education. However, educational attainment in correlation with religion in the US did not for example prove that nones have the highest level (Kosmin, Keysar 2006: 152-153) and where the survey results proved certain positive correlation between congregational attachment and educational level (283). The findings for Slovakian society can be easily explained by several adjacent variables – such as rural/urban dichotomy and different concentration of nones in such landscapes, different age distribution within those subpopulations, employment, and so on. Then, the distribution of the most educated has similar spatial patterns to those who declare themselves as nones. It is also the case of Slovakia – the proportion of nones with university degree is almost 100 % higher than in the rest of the population, and as expected, the proportion of individuals with elementary education is 44 % lower than in the rest of the population. It is interesting that, the biggest gap between two subpopulations is not in the most secular regions (such as urban and suburban areas of Bratislava and Košice cities), but in regions, where the number of nones is not very high (especially in mostly rural and Catholic regions in Northern Slovakia) The proportion of university educated nones is here almost 200 % higher. Moreover, two of the five districts of Bratislava city with quite new immigration profile mostly in large housing estates have even lower proportion of university educated nones than the rest of the population. These regions have generally very high share of university degree individuals, but this might mean that either the young educated generations are anchored in any of the denominations more than their parents, or that there is just higher proportion of those who did not declare anything (neither their non-confessionalism, nor their religious affiliation).

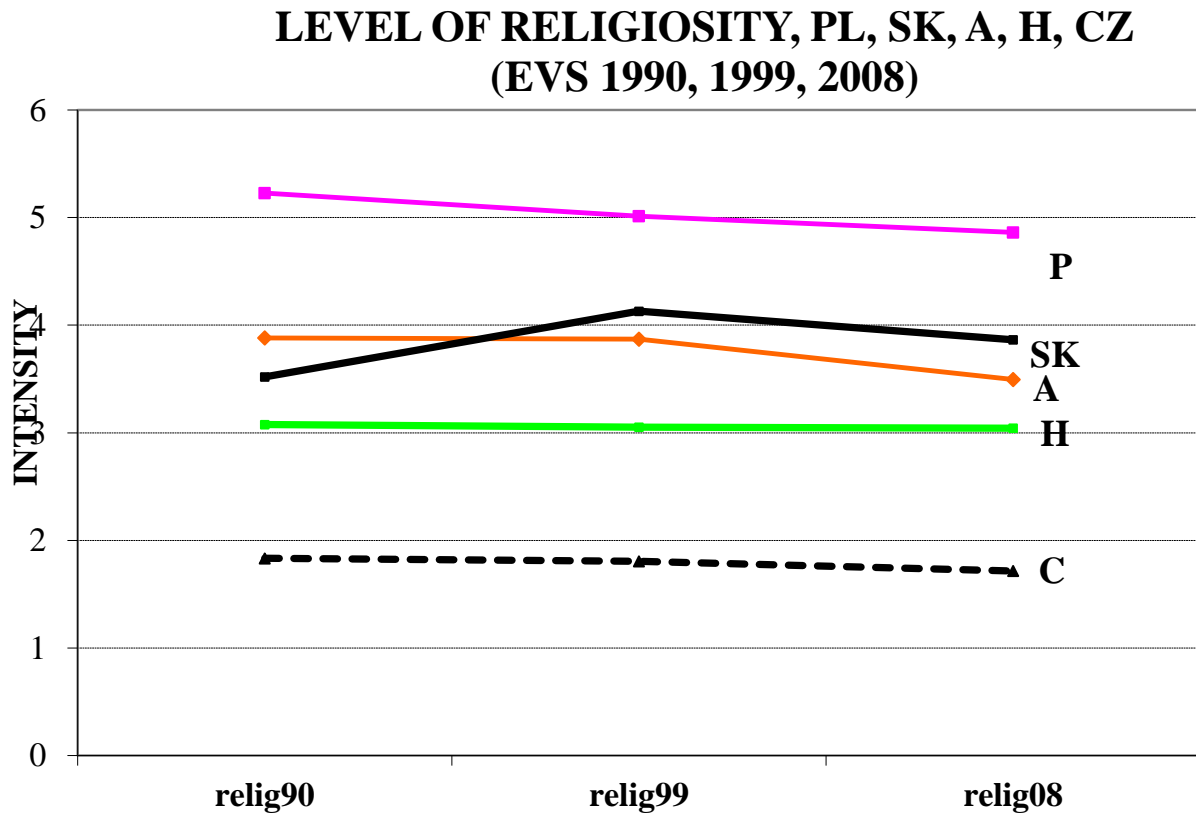
Tatiana Podolinská

4. Slovakia – comparative perspective

At the very end, for the contextualization of data of censuses, surveys, cartographic and demographic researches done in the concern with the religiosity in Slovakia during the last decades, we will briefly introduce comparative perspective of religiosity of Slovakia within the representative surveys conducted in Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Austria and Poland (EVS 1990, 1999, 2008). On the base of these international comparative researches the analysis of the extent of religiousness through three *dimensions* – belief, membership, and practising was done (see Podolinská, Krivý, Bahna 2013). The analyses showed that among the analysed

countries, **Slovakia** is the **only** country where **religiosity became stronger** when comparing the years 1991 and 2008 (**Fig. 11**).

Fig. 11



Source: Podolinská, Krivý, Bahna 2013: 213, processed by Vladimír Krivý in 2013.

In Poland and Austria, religiousness considerably weakened in the given period, and in Hungary and the Czech Republic it declined slightly. Yet, all these trends developed at significantly different *levels of religiousness*. Poland is a country with by most far the highest level of religiousness, while the Czech Republic is known for its low degree of religiousness. The third group of countries, the “group in the middle“, is represented by Slovakia, Austria and Hungary. The closest country to Slovakia in terms of the average level of religiousness is Austria, followed by Hungary. Following the same criterion, the farthest country is the Czech Republic.

During the past almost 20 years, the share of fully religious people (people with the highest level of religiousness) decreased in three countries: there was a dramatic decline in Poland, and a slight decrease in Austria and Hungary. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, these shares

were identical at the beginning and at the end of the given period – though in a different way in both countries. The shares of fully secular people and people with a very low degree of religiousness are the highest in the Czech Republic, followed by Hungary and Slovakia (TABLE 4)

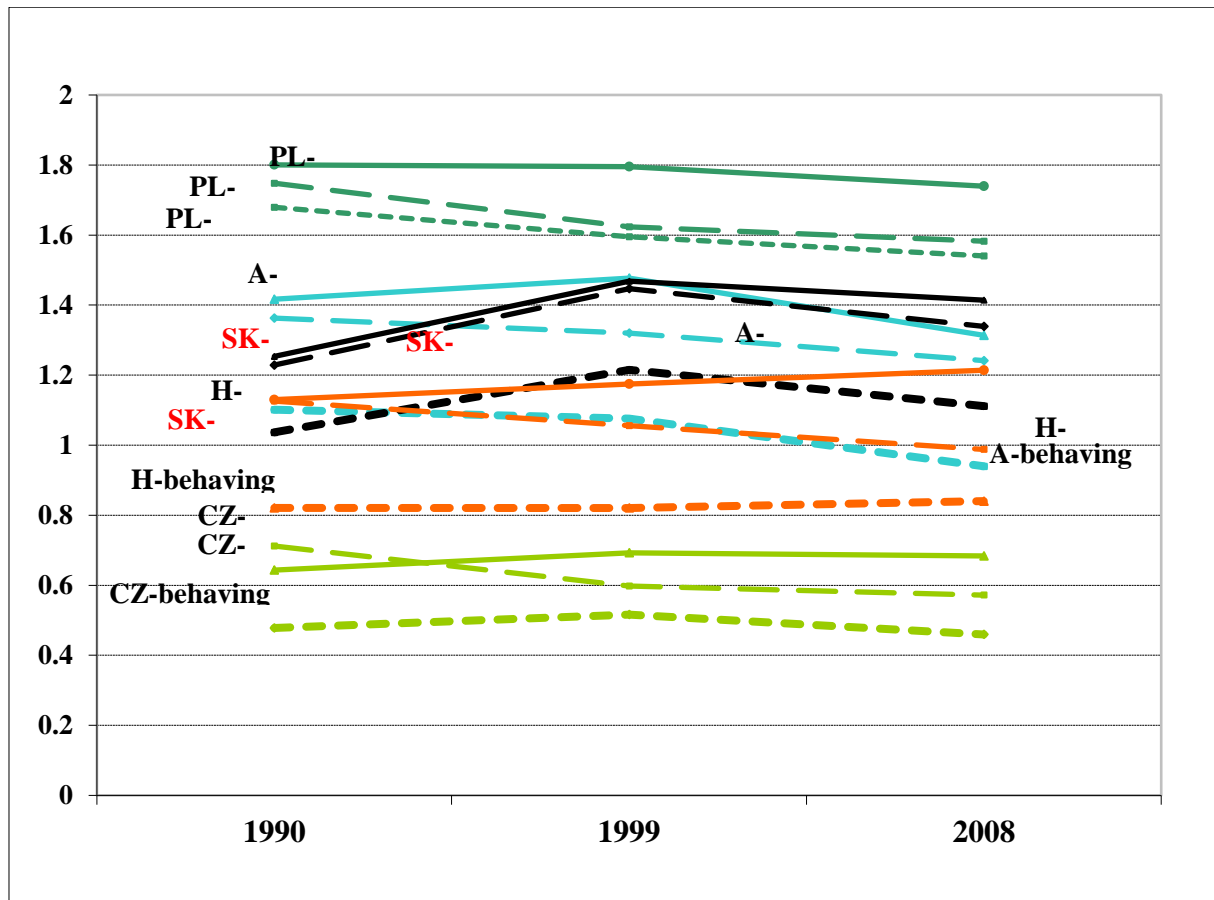
TABLE 4

COUNTRY	LEVEL / INTENSITY OF RELIGIOSITY in		
	1991	1999	2008
Poland (PL)	5,2	5,0	4,9
Slovakia (SK)	3,5	4,1	3,9
Austria (A)	3,9	3,9	3,5
Hungary (H)	3,1	3,1	3,0
Czech Rep. (CZ)	1,8	1,8	1,7

Source: Podolinská, Krivý, Bahna 2013, processed by Tatiana Podolinská in 2017 on the base of calculations of Vladimír Krivý in 2013.

In each of the five countries, the inter-dimensional differences (belief, membership, practising) diverged in the period 1991–2008. The general pattern is the following: *belief as the strongest dimension*, membership in the middle, and practising as the weakest dimension. While all three dimensions weakened in Poland and Austria in the given period, Slovakia saw an opposite tendency – the strenghtening of all three dimensions. **Overall, religiosity increased with regard to the belief dimension in three countries, declined with regard to the membership dimension in four countries, and also declined with regard to the practising dimension in three countries (Fig. 12).**

Fig. 12

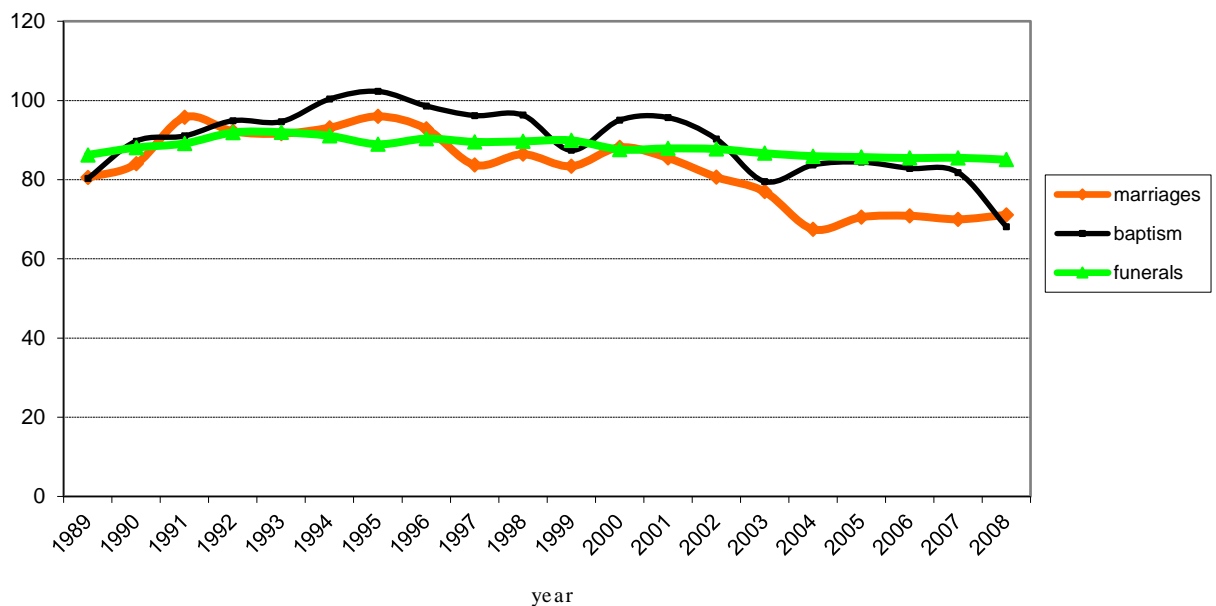


Source: Podolinská, Krivý, Bahna 2013: 217, processed by Vladimír Krivý in 2013.

Practising turned to be clearly the *weakest point of religiosity*. In all five countries, private (individual) practising of religiosity is present to a much greater extent than public (collective) practising. Poland is an exception in this respect, as the level of public practising in this country is larger than the occurrence of private practising in all four other countries. Overall, the phenomenon of smaller practising can lead to stronger religiosity based on belief and private practising in future generations, but it can also continue weakening private practising and belief as such.

As far as religious *rituals* are concerned, the norm has become more and more accepted among young people and less and less accepted among older people throughout the past almost 20 years. Overall, an inter-generational convergence in the acceptance of baptism, church marriage and church funeral has been observed (**Fig.13**).

Fig. 13. Religious rituals 1989 - 2008



Source: Podolinská, Krivý, Bahna 2013: 235, processed by Vladimír Krivý in 2013.

Finally, the proportion of consuming the non-Christian ideas and so called alternative spirituality in concern with the level of religiosity was searched. In Slovakia, non-Christian and non-conformist ideas (to a certain degree corresponding with “alternative spirituality”) are more frequent among people with a higher degree of religiousness. Instead of seeking an “alternative” to traditional religiosity, we can rather speak about acceptance of the “alternative” in the framework of traditional religiosity. At the level of the individual, this can be considered as detraditionalisation or even individualisation of (personal) religiosity.

Tatiana Podolinská – Miroslav Tížik – Juraj Majo

Conclusions

Societal, political and international changes during more than 20 years of the Slovak Republic show some basic conclusions. Religion, in some situations, can be an important component for the mobilization of collective identity. As the effect of integration of religion to symbolical character of the State there is increase of widespreading of traditional Christian

beliefs. In this sense the religion serves as a kind of compensatory legitimating tool in cases where few other symbolic sources of national identity are available in collective memory or in the principles of institutional functioning. Nevertheless, even while religion helps preserve the homogeneity of society in “critical” situations, this does not manifest itself in an increase in religious affiliation. Only in some basic religious practices there is some increase of activity of Slovak population.

In the case of Slovak Republic, the state’s symbolic and legal privileging of Christian actors, particularly the Catholic Church and partly also Lutheran Church, and the integration of these actors into the symbolic character of the state, has increased throughout the last two decades. Representatives of the Catholic Church have become important actors of political and public debates. Moreover, the Catholic Church has become a hegemonic leader in establishing of the basic principles of regulation and functioning of the religious life in Slovakia. The strengthening of economic positions and the symbolic favoring of traditional Churches are strong factors that make possible the reproduction of the principles of dominant churches but also of the field of power, which date back to the formation of the Slovak Republic.

However, “traditional” landscape of religiosity in Slovakia, is facing during the last decades also phenomena of rapid increase of non-affiliated people and people not willing to respond the question concerning their religiosity. Population of the *nones* in Slovak Republic has many specificities, although the differences from the rest of the population are not notably different, as one would have expected. The age profile follows general trends of society with highest percentage among productive age group, especially around age 30 and younger. Age groups around the age 30 are very strong in western part of country and in Bratislava. The older age groups, are on the other hands present slightly above the national average in Eastern Slovakian yet mostly rural districts possibly reflecting its past evolution. Educational attainment seems to be specific in generally higher proportion of college/university degree holders among nones, and low proportion of individuals with elementary school only. The concentration of nones with higher education is notably higher in the regions with low imprints of secularization.

Alongside with the process of “visible secularization“ of Slovak society, we are experiencing a process of transformation and adaptation of traditional Christianity. Current Christianity in Slovakia is a multi-coloured mixture of traditional, post-traditional and non-traditional religiosity. Nevertheless, comparing the overall level of religiosity in Slovakia with its

neighbours (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Austria) Slovakia belongs to the „group in the middle“, is represented by Slovakia, Austria and Hungary. The closest country to Slovakia in terms of the average level of religiousness is Austria, followed by Hungary. Following the same criterion, the farthest country is the Czech Republic. From given countries, Slovakia is the only country where the overall religiosity increased (1991-2008) in all dimension of religiousness believing, belonging and practising.

Practising turned to be clearly the *weakest point of religiosity*. Private (individual) practising of religiosity is present to a much greater extent than public (collective) practising in Slovakia. Overall, the phenomenon of smaller practising can lead to stronger religiosity based on belief and private practising in future generations, but it can also continue weakening private practising and belief as such.

In Slovakia, non-Christian and non-conformist ideas (to a certain degree corresponding with “alternative spirituality”) are more frequent among people with a higher degree of religiousness. Instead of seeking an “alternative” to traditional religiosity, we can rather speak about acceptance of the “alternative” in the framework of traditional religiosity. At the level of the individual, this can be considered as detraditionalisation or even individualisation of (personal) religiosity.

We can conclude in general that churches and other religious or faith-based institutions in Slovakia should be aware of the multi-coloured landscape of modern believers and modify the dialog according to the specifics of the respect strata of believers. In this respect sometimes the flexible and non-orthodox approach of „non-traditional“ churches is more fitting the needs of the post-traditional and non-traditional believers. In this respect two ways are possible: 1) to develop a kind of experiment and support the intensive dialog at the „margins“ of the „orthodoxy“ and „normativity“ (sometimes called post-christianity) or 2) to guard the door and get rid of all „free passengers“ (even more orthodox christianity).

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