

THESES – AUFBRUCH II. PAUL M. ZULEHNER

1. The following analysis is based on the methodological turn of the last decade in the studies of religion. Just like the main problems of the last century have turned from a form- and meaning-shaping institution to an individual, so, in the course of the advancing social individualization, the formulation of survey questions has been also changed. From nun on the focus is on the choosing individual. Belonging to an institution is not any longer a “destiny” of a person, but his/her “choice” (Peter L. Berger). The following analysis applies this to the religiosity of people. The question is, which “houses of faith” do people chose, construct and inhabit? In the conclusion, individuals’ preferences in their relation with religious communities (churches, institutions) are investigated.

RELIGIOSITY

2. People in the 14 countries of Central and East Europe, studied in this survey, are “equipped” with religiosity in different ways. There are countries (cultures) in which self-identified religious people are unmistakably in a majority. But there are also polarised countries. Moreover, there are countries which could be defined as “atheised” (i.e. having a high level of atheism).

3. Religiosity reveals itself through various patterns of individuals’ attitudes and actions. In the study, the following dimensions of religiosity are investigated:

- RITUALS (birth, marriage, death)
- RELIGION OF PEOPLE (candle, blessing of monks/priests, frequency of prayer, fasting)
- OBJECTS (icon, the Bibel...)
- CHARACTERISTICS of religious people (healthier, more faithful...)
- QUALITIES of religious people (to look after old people, to contribute in keeping the culture...)
- INFLUENCE of religion (on the work, relations, politics)
- IMPORTANCE of religion (for personal happiness, marriage, democracy...)
- MEANING (religious, secular...).

4. By using a cluster analysis, one can determine a manageable number of types and, based on the aforementioned dimensions, these types can be interpreted as the following: *Non-Religious*, *Culturally Religious*, *Ritualistic* and *Religious*. In each country, these types are combined in very different ways:

- In Romania, Moldova, Poland, Croatia and Slovakia the type *Religious* encompasses more than a half of the population. One can speak about “religious cultures” there.
- The input of the type *Ritualistic* is high in Lithuania, Bulgaria and Serbia.
- The cultures of East Germany and Czech Republic are significantly influenced by the *Non-Religious* type.
- Slovenia and Hungary are polarised. There, the *Religious* and *Non-Religious* are kept in balance, although, in Hungary, the *Ritualistic* type has a greater presence than in Slovenia.

Religion

5. There are different levels of atheism. It is obvious that atheists also have a certain “capacity for belief.” However, when the “atheising” energy weakens, the “atheists” tend to turn to religious rituals – not to religious positions.

RELIGION

6. People of Eastern and Central Europe believe in science more than in God. Unfortunately, 11% do not believe in science.

There is also a certain hierarchy in the beliefs: God is on the very top (78%) of the hierarchy of beliefs and the Devil – on the very bottom (26%). In between and closer to God there are the Soul (78%), the Paradise (58%) and the two practices of religious piety, the help through prayer (60%) and the belief in the healing power of holy water (55%). Belief in predictions of the future – (33%).

7. The data on religious beliefs allows us to construct a typology of the houses of faith. The following types can be defined: *Secular* (27%), *Uncertain* (36%) and *Believers* (37%). It is quite expectable, that the composition of these types is very different in different countries.

8. Science is perceived and practiced by the *Believers* as a part of their beliefs system; but it is perceived and practiced by the *Secular* anti-religiously. This gives us a hint into the relation between science and belief, i.e. science itself can be seen as the matter of belief – and so even by the *Secular*.

CHURCHLINESS

9. 72% of the respondents identify themselves as members of a religious community/church.

10. The image of the church is polarised in peoples’ views: between rich and poor, this-worldly and other-worldly.

11. The feeling of connection with a religious community/church is the subjective side of the “objective” membership, and its strength can be graded from close to loose. Based on this grading, the following results are received: 6% define themselves as absolutely not connected to their religious community/church, 24% as loosely connected; 24% consider themselves as closely connected, and the rest 9% as very closely connected (37% are not members).

12. With regard to churchliness, the following types are identified:

- The *Intensive* (26%) have a high frequency of church attendance and communion, and they feel themselves connected to the church. These are the core members of the churches.
- The second groups are the *Usual* (23%): These people take part in the church services as a matter of usual, habitual, mass practice (from here comes the term “Usual”); in reality, these people might take part in church services even a little more often, than they theoretically think of themselves. They also have a good connection with the church, which is expressed in their participation in the practice of communion.
- Then, there are the *Occasional* (27%): This group is characterised by the lack of correspondence between the intention and the practice. In other words, these

people evaluate their church attendance much higher than they actually go to church. The latter can be controlled by the question about the last time, when a respondent visited a church.

- And, finally, the *Infrequent* ones (24%). Those, who – despite a rudimental connection with the church, do not really involve into church practices.

13. “Do you think that, during the last decade, the big Christian Churches acquired too much or not enough publicity?” The frequency analysis of the “too much” answers gave the following result: the Catholics (35%) are on the top, and they are followed by the non-members (24%), with the Orthodox – on the very bottom (14%). The different degrees of churchliness of the respondents do not bring much difference. It is remarkable, that non-churched people – as a criticism of the Church? – are most likely to give “not enough” answer to this question (32% in comparison with that of the churchly people: 23%).

14. The Churches’ competency in answering important social questions was evaluated differently by the adherents of different Churches:

FIGURE 1: Competency of Churches / Denomination and Religion

	Questions of the meaning of life	Moral problems and needs of individuals	Problems of family life	Social problems of one's country
Orthodox Church	77%	73%	70%	56%
Catholic Church	62%	54%	52%	39%
Reformed Church	60%	55%	54%	42%
Muslims	48%	48%	41%	32%

15. “During last years, churches and religious communities have opened various institutions. Would you say that the churches and religious communities still have too little or already too many of the following institutions?”

The data are very convincing. People expect the Churches to open kindergartens, schools, homes for the elderly and hospitals with up to 90% value. Even non-members have expectation from 46% to 80%. Two thirds of the respondents would also imagine churches as having more media organizations.

SUMMARY

When all the information (Indizes) is taken together, an all-embracing typology can be received, in which three main types can be identified: *Believers*, *Culturally Religious* and *Secular*. These three types form the poles of a socio-religious scale, in which *Believers* (connected to the church) are on the one side of the scale, because they have the highest positive value in all indicators; the people whose religious and churchly life has a tendency to be *Distant* are on the other side of the scale. We say “tendency” because, in some indicators, *Distant* people can be compared with the non-religious and non-

summary

believers, because of their expectations from churches. *Distant* people view churches like social organisations, i.e. they expect churches to contribute to public life through social initiatives and relevant public statements. In the middle of the scale, there are *Culturally Religious*, who, compared with *Believers*, tend to have social expectations from churches.

16. *Believers* are found mostly among the Greco-Catholics, as well as among the Orthodox and the Roman Catholics. Muslims constitute a large part of the *Culturally Religious*. Among non-members there is a predominant number of the *Secular* (56%), but among them there are also some *Culturally Religious* (28%) and *Believers* (15%).

17. There are more *Believers* among women, rather than men, among older people, rather than younger, and among those with elementary or high education, rather than those with middle education.