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## *Religious Identity Status and Readiness for Interreligious Dialogue in Youth. Developmental Analysis*

### ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to show statuses of religious identity in Polish Catholic adolescents. The distinguished statuses result from intensive consolidation processes which are characteristic of this age. Integration of religious identity has an effect on potential openness versus reluctance to interreligious dialogue. The study was conducted on 60 participants at the ages of 18 to 29 using the Scale of Religious Identity by Wieradzka-Pilarczyk (2015) and Centrality of Religiosity Scale Z-15 by S. Huber (2004). Three statuses of religious identity with different developmental possibilities of entering into interreligious dialogue were distinguished.

*KEYWORDS: religious identity, interreligious dialogue, youth.*

### INTRODUCTION

Religious identity formation may be analysed from two theoretical perspectives: psychology of religiosity development and psychology of identity development.

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Psychology of religiosity development and religious auto-identification (identity) formation are closely related to a comprehensive, multidimensional, autonomic and authentic development of religiosity. The process of religious identity formation is dynamic and encompasses all areas of life, and it can undergo changes in adulthood – as a result of life experiences, especially border experiences (see Walesa 2005; Rydz 2012).

Theoretical bases for psychology of identity development originate from modern concepts of identity within psychodynamic approach:

- Theory of *ego identity development* by E. Erikson,
- *Identity status theory* by J. Marcia, which includes the processes of *exploration* and *commitment*, and proposes four identity statuses: identity achievement, foreclosure, moratorium and identity diffusion,
- Theory by K. Luyckx and colleagues, introducing a new dimension- *ruminative exploration*, important in assessing the utilization rate of individual resources.

In the present-study, these theories serve as a basis for the operationalization of religious identity as well as to construct a measure of religious identity statuses.

According to Erikson (1997), sense of identity is a system of beliefs in oneself, the world, people and life goals. In the process of identity formation, the relationship with the outside world is especially important. Erikson draws attention to “consistency, continuity, and similarity of experience provide a rudimentary sense of ego identity” from the earliest stages of development (Erikson, 1977. p. 222). In adolescence young people seek continuity and inner stability, which is why they have to integrate all their experiences. A wide range of experiences is important also to the social, cultural and religious roots of identity, defined as “space-time” conditions (Erikson, 1997). These are: life history of the closest family members, history of family migrations, history of significant changes e.g. religious (conversions and apostasies) or

social (change of social class), history of assimilating into a community. These conditions, especially discovering meaningful events of the past, give an individual as well as their family as a whole, a strong sense of cultural identity.

Three types of identity are distinguished: 1) dispersion within self, 2) freely organizing whole and 3) uniform whole (Brzezińska, 2000).

The first type is characterized by a high permeability of boundaries between an individual and his or her context of development, strong introjection, willingness to open himself or herself to the environment, coexistence of different elements which do not have a solid structure or hierarchy, as well as a lack of a superior value which results in openness to external influences. A person with this type of identity perceives the world as chaotic and is particularly well-adjusted to the environment.

An individual with the second type of identity is characterized by permeable boundaries, openness to the environment, as well as a coexistence of different elements which however have a solid structure, hierarchy and a point of reference. Such persons have a well-grounded, stable value system which can be modified if needed. The outside world is perceived as organized.

The third type of identity features rigid boundaries, tendency to isolation, and defensiveness. It contains tightly connected elements which are similar to one another. It is internally cohesive and organized. The superior value is rigid and distinctly outlined, and completely dependent on the environment. The author stresses the importance of developed identity on the quality of the subsequent developmental period.

Marcia (1980) defines identity as a structure of self and characterizes it as inner and dynamic organization of motivation, abilities, beliefs and individual experiences. On the one hand it serves to determine one's place in the social world, and on the other it provides the feeling of personal uniqueness and exceptionality. In individual development sense of distinctiveness,

sense of identicalness, sense of continuity and sense of integrity appear. Sense of distinctiveness is a feeling of a distinct boundary between two people; an awareness that a person is both physically and mentally separate from others, and his or her features create a specific, individual system. An individual is able to indicate characteristics which separate him or her from other people, even those who are very similar in terms of appearance, character or behaviour.

The sense of identicalness is revealed in a conviction that “this is me as well”, independently of the role an individual is fulfilling now, and how he or she behaves in a specific situation. It is a feeling of being oneself, being faithful to values and ideals, independently of external circumstances, social and situational context.

Sense of continuity is the understanding of life over time: an individual recognizes himself or herself as a changing entity, recognizes similarities and differences in his or her course of action, but also is able to distinguish what is constant and characteristic for him or her only, which differentiates them from other people, in the past, present and future. The person will use his or her acquired competences easily, if the situation requires it.

Sense of integrity is revealed in a conviction that fulfilling different roles and tasks, despite their diversity and adaptation to circumstances, creates an entirety, a sense that “it is always me”. If the sense of integrity is strong, these individuals may feel that they stamp their signature on what they do, that “they are always themselves”, independently of the task, situation, and circumstances. This recognition comes not only from the individual, but it is acknowledged by the environment as well.

Marcia (1980) distinguishes two successive stages of identity formation:

- exploration status includes mainly an early stage of adolescence, which falls in the ages of 10/12 to 15/16,

- commitment status includes a subsequent stage, from 16/17 to 18/20.

Exploration is examining the environment, recognizing its characteristics, experimenting, but also testing, its “resilience”, analyzing the boundaries and discovering which ones are impermeable and which were set by agreements or are ostensible. Reducing exploration may result in a poor and not very diverse individual experience. In turn, an unlimited approval for exploration usually results in a rich and varied, but also disorganized and non-integrated, experience, causing the feeling of chaos, of being lost and of confusion.

Commitment manifests itself in the second phase of adolescence when more mature, adult forms of behaviour are expected, such as taking responsibility for others and oneself, as well as being ready to accept all the consequences of one’s actions. Social expectations are mainly aimed at motivating a young person to settle down, make certain decisions, engage in long-term activities, take on a commitment and fulfil it.

The combination of these two criteria, which result in completing, or not, the stage of exploration and taking on, or not, the commitments led Marcia to distinguish four so-called identity statuses: identity achievement, foreclosure, identity moratorium and identity diffusion. Each of the identity statuses results from a long-term process of identity consolidation, which is attaining the sense of continuity of self in time and space, the feeling of both identicalness and uniqueness. As a consequence, awareness of one’s assets and limitations, openness and curiosity about the world is achieved but without worries of disturbing the sense of security and violating the boundaries of own autonomy in establishing close relationships. Integration processes are the most intense in adolescence when people undergo an identity crisis, and its resolution determines the quality of the start of adulthood.

Identity achievement is related to a gradual entering into the period of adulthood with a feeling of closure of the previous de-

velopmental issues. Learning how to be an adult brings a personal satisfaction of extending competences as well as approval of the environment. An individual is aware of his or her abilities and is able to take responsibility for consequences of his or her actions.

People with foreclosed status have different type of entry into adulthood. Their moratorium in late adolescence was shortened because they started a job or a family when they were not ready for it. It can be called a risk of experiencing unpunctuality of life events.

As its name suggests, moratorium status refers to extending the moratorium period (with the dominant form of exploration and low level of commitment making) onto late adolescence. It is manifested in taking up developmental tasks, such as starting a job or a family, later than peers, as well as refusing offers and activities that require taking responsibility. In this status the risk of experiencing unpunctuality of life events is also present: however, it refers to taking them up too late.

The quality of entering into adulthood in identity diffusion status is described as an overlapping of developmental tasks from late and early adolescence; this brings a significant emotional load as well as inconsistency of expectations directed at and coming from other people. An individual experiences confusion of roles, tasks, competences and responsibilities which may arise in conflicts of roles, values and interpersonal relations. The phase of learning how to be adult does not bring personal satisfaction, but is often the source of negative judgement from the environment.

An important effect of identity integration processes is, according to Erikson (Erikson, 1968; Raskin, 1985), the quality of resolving developmental crisis of adulthood, namely building intimate relations and readiness for marriage, characterized by engagement and responsibility. Identity achievement refers to creating intimate relationships of friendship with both genders as well as romantic relationships. People whose identity statuses are less consolidated can remain in pre-intimate relationships,

such as friendships with peers; however, there is ambivalence in terms of engagement in romantic relationships despite the need of closeness and reciprocity. Pseudo-intimate relationships are characterized by lack of intimacy and depth. These include stereotypical and isolating relations where people do not establish close bonds with significant others.

Continuing the work of Marcia, Luyckx and colleagues (Luyckx, Goossens, & Soenens, 2006) hypothesized that exploration and commitment are complex, multistage, dynamic processes. They propose that exploration is present not only in early adolescence and commitment-making is not necessarily revealed having completed the stage of exploration. It was concluded that both of these processes are codependent and intertwine with each other throughout puberty aiming at achieving mature identity (Luyckx et al., 2006).

Waterman (1999) explored the specificity of these processes and pointed at a diverse character of exploration, distinguishing exploration in breadth – discovering new areas, recognizing new possibilities, and exploration in depth – verifying images, expectation and specificity of a field where commitments were already made. Two phases of engagement process were distinguished: 1) learning about making commitments and 2) identification with the consequences of decisions (Bosma & Kunnen, 2001). Analyzing both processes Luyckx and colleagues created a Model of Identity Formation (Luyckx et al., 2006). The first cycle – commitment formation– includes exploration in breadth and commitment making, which is a classic understanding of exploration according to Marcia. The second cycle – commitment evaluation– involves exploration in depth and identification with commitment where a person is ready to suffer negative consequences of his or her decisions. If exploration in depth results in a belief of unfitness between an individual and his or her commitments, exploration in breadth may start over and commence the whole cycle from the beginning. Both of these cycles are closely related and the

process of identity formation consists of a series of feedbacks. The authors do not distinguish separate phases of identity formation.

The correlations presented in the model were confirmed in research (see Luyckx et al., 2006). Exploration was found to favour the development of identity and quality of life, helping individuals to gain experience and learn about themselves. It is considered indispensable for identity achievement (see Brzezińska & Piotrowski, 2010). Nevertheless, the authors stress that exploration may result in putting off the commitments which may lead to identity confusion (Marcia 2002). It is defined as ruminative exploration.

In the light of the presented theories of identity development, a question arises: can similar mechanisms of identity formation and effects of consolidation be present in other areas, such as world view, spirituality and especially religious formation? What is religious identity? What is the process of consolidation? How is religious self-identification shaped?

S. Veerasamy (2003), D.M. Bell (2009), and, in Poland, A. Wieradzka-Pilarczyk (2015) worked on the definition and structure of religious identity as well as tools to measure it. Wieradzka-Pilarczyk defines religious identity as *“inner self-identification with supernatural reality created by the person in the dynamic process of individual integration as well as social image of religiosity. Identity formation is based on dynamic and overlapping processes of (1) exploration and (2) commitment (engagement)”*. Wieradzka-Pilarczyk (quoting: Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, Soenens, Vansteenkiste, Smits, & Goosens, 2008; Wieradzka-Pilarczyk, 2015) describes religious identity in five dimensions: exploration in breadth, exploration in depth, ruminative exploration, commitment making, identification with commitment (Table 1).



Table.1. Religious identity dimensions (Wieradzka-Pilarczyk, 2015 quoting: Luyckx et al., 2008).

<b>Identity dimension</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>Exploration in breadth</i>	Seeking personal values in the sphere of religiosity.
<i>Exploration in depth</i>	Deepened assessment of selected values in the sphere of religiosity.
<i>Ruminative exploration</i>	Dispersion, indecisiveness in religiosity.
<i>Commitment making</i>	Choices and obligations in acquired religiosity.
<i>Identification with commitment</i>	Identification with the choices and commitments in acquired religiosity.

Varied mutual systems of the dimensions of exploration and commitment allowed the author to distinguish statuses of religious identity, which are characterized by different levels of consolidation and maturity, externalization of religiosity and its regulative function, different level of openness and permeability of boundaries of religious identity as well as openness to people of different faith (Table 2).

Readiness to enter into religious dialogue was defined on the basis of identity formation theory by Erikson and Marcia as a result of consolidation. It consists of sense of distinctness, identicalness and continuity formation happening in two complex processes of exploration and commitment expressed by:

- 1) flexibility vs rigidity of boundaries of own religious identity (permeability of boundaries),
- 2) flexibility vs rigidity of elements of religious identity which exclude different components. In particular:
  - presence vs. lack of a well-grounded, stable value system with religious values which have an ordered structure, distinct hierarchy and central point with different elements and readiness for modification,

- internalization (autonomization) vs heteronomy of own religiosity,
- ease vs difficulty in expressing oneself, including one's own religiosity,
- openness to, vs isolation from, the outside world, including religious values without fear of disturbing one's sense of security; also curiosity vs lack of curiosity about the world, including religious values,
- establishing vs not establishing close relationships without fear of violating boundaries of one's own autonomy, also with people of different religions,
- independence vs dependence of the environment, unyielding/yielding to the influences of the environment, also in religious matters,
- perceiving the outside world as rich and varied vs as polarized, also in religion,
- perceiving the outside world as ordered (with driving and guiding force) vs chaotic.

Table 2. Statuses and dimensions of religious identity.

religious identity dimensions	RELIGIOUS IDENTITY STATUS	
	Characterists of religious identity	Characteristics of readiness to enter into interreligious dialogue
<b>Internalized religious identity</b>		
<b>Exploration:</b> intense /broad <b>Commitment:</b> high level of commitments	internalized religious choice integrity of faith-religious experience-cult making commitments in/for supernatural reality which is manifested in being responsible for oneself and other members of a community	plasticity of boundaries and elements of religious identity high level of internalization of religion stable hierarchy of religious values with readiness for modification high level of openness and curiosity about the world, also world of religious values with

	openness in asking questions about religion, worldview and courage in seeking answers openness to a religious community as well as people who do not directly belong to it	out fear of disturbing the sense of security establishing close relationships without fear of violating the boundaries of own autonomy, also with people of different religions potential readiness for interreligious dialogue
<b>External religious identity</b>		
<b>Exploration:</b> none /narrow/ chaotic <b>Commitment:</b> high level of commitments	more juridical approach to religion constant and rigid worldview traditionalism authoritarianism and bigotry lack of openness for religious dissimilarity principled approach constancy of choice	rigidity of boundaries and elements of religious identity low level of internalization of religiosity rigid hierarchy of religious values without readiness for modification low level of openness and curiosity about the world, also world of religious values fear of disturbing the sense of security reluctance to establish close relationships, fear of violating the boundaries of own autonomy, also with people of different religions low level of potential readiness for a religious dialogue
<b>Seeking religious identity</b>		
<b>Exploration:</b> intensive /broad <b>Commitment:</b> low level of commitment	variability, uncertainty of own religion seeking in the area of religious identity big changeability of the world view selectivity choices which are more pragmatic than moral transreligiosity	yielding to the influences of the environment, also in religious matters perceiving the outside world as rich and varied, but chaotic susceptibility to influences of different religions susceptibility to multi-religiousness on the basis of trends possibility of conversion

Undifferentiated and indifferent religious identity		
<b>Exploration:</b> none /narrow/ chaotic	religious instability lack of goal and sense in faith	little interest in spiritual and re- ligious matters superficiality in exploration of spiritual sphere
<b>Commitment:</b> low level of com- mitment or lack of com- mitment	unverified and unidenti- fied religiosity passivity and confusion in spiritual sphere, withdrawal or lack of interest in reli- gious matters	low interest in entering into in- terreligious dialogue or lack of interest in religious and spiritual matters as well as lack of interest in entering into inter- religious dialogue

The main research question of the presented study is more of an explorative and descriptive nature. The aim of the research was to analyze and determine different statuses of religious identity which would describe possibilities of entering into interreligious dialogue. Furthermore, religious centrality was measured to determine the level of its internalization.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are the statuses of religious identity displayed by the participants- Catholic adolescents?

What is the level of potential readiness to enter into interreligious dialogue in different religious identity statuses?

What is the relationship between religious identity status and centrality of religiosity?

#### RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. Three statuses of religious identity with different possibilities of entering into interreligious dialogue will be distinguished:

internalized religious identity, external religious identity and seeking religious identity.

The participants declared affiliation to the Catholic Church which should suggest higher forms of religious auto-identification and higher level of religious identity consolidation. It is hypothesized that undifferentiated or indifferent religious identity is not present in the participants, or is statistically insignificant.

2. People with different religious identity statuses differ in the level of centrality of religiosity.

This measurement was aimed at acquiring additional information on the regulatory function of religiosity and was conducted by measuring centrality of religiosity (Huber, 2004; Zarzycka, 2007). It was hypothesized that higher level of religious identity consolidation is correlated positively with centrality of religiosity (Wieradzka-Pilarczyk, 2015).

## METHODS

Scale of Religious Identity by A. Wieradzka-Pilarczyk (2015) and Centrality of Religiosity Scale Z-15 by S. Huber (2004; Zarzycka 2007) were used.

Scale of Religious Identity is composed of five sub-scales which correspond to dimensions of religious identity: exploration in breadth (4 items), exploration in depth (6 items), ruminative exploration (5 items), commitment making (6 items), identification with commitment (12 items). The total number of items is 33. The participants give their responses on a 1 to 7 scale. The subscales were found to have satisfactory validity and reliability values. They range from  $r = .64$  to  $r = .94$ , with the highest value of identification with commitment. The internal consistency reliability values (Cronbach's alpha) for the subscales ranged from  $\alpha = .77$

to  $\alpha = .95$ , also identification with commitment was found to have the highest value (Wieradzka-Pilarczyk, 2015).

Centrality of Religiosity Scale Z-15 contains 15 items and assesses the level of religiosity in five dimensions: interest in religious issues, religious convictions, prayer, cult and religious experience as well as in total score (scale of centrality of religiosity). The theoretical bases for the measure were drawn from Allport and Glock and define religiosity as a system of personal religious constructs. Centrality of religiosity is the measure of autonomy of the system of religious constructs within the structure of all personal constructs. The reliability and validity values meet the commonly used criteria (Zarzycka, 2007).

#### PARTICIPANTS

The study included 60 participants at the ages of 18 to 29 who were Catholic university students and graduates.

N = 60 (including 30 women)

Age 18 – 29

$M = 22.39$ ;  $SD = 3.41$

#### RESULTS

Three groups were distinguished in cluster analysis:

1. External religious identity (N = 31)
2. Seeking religious identity (N = 15)
3. Internalized religious identity (N = 14)

The groups were found to differ from one another in every identity dimension except for the dimension of ruminative exploration.

Table 3. Religious identity statuses and their dimension in adolescents.

	1. External religious identity		2. Seeking religious identity		3. Internalized religious identity		ANOVA	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F	<i>p</i>
<b>Commitment making</b>	5.81	.65	3.56	.91	6.15	.66	61.53	<.001
<b>Identification with commitment</b>	5.47	.79	3.18	.63	5.89	.76	60.29	<.001
<b>Exploration in breadth</b>	2.35	.79	3.30	1.03	4.93	1.09	37.92	<.001
<b>Exploration in depth</b>	4.03	.85	3.77	1.01	5.18	.85	10.75	<.001
<b>Ruminative exploration</b>	3.28	.96	4.07	1.22	3.41	1.50	2.38	.101

#### DATA ANALYSIS

The status of religious identity which was found in the majority of participants was *external religious identity status* (30 participants). It refers to juridical approach to religion, low level of openness and curiosity about the world, also the world of religious values, fear of disrupting the boundaries of own autonomy as well as of people of different beliefs, and low level of readiness for religious dialogue.

The next status of religious identity was *internalized religious identity status* (15 participants), which is characterized by internalized religious choice and high level of openness and curiosity about the world, also the world of religious values without worries of disturbing the sense of security, establishing close relationships without fear of violating the boundaries of own autonomy, also

with people of different beliefs, as well as readiness for religious dialogue.

Equally numerous group (14 participants) was composed of people *seeking religious identity status*. It is described as: changeability, uncertainty of own religion, seeking in the sphere of the professed religion, superficiality in explorations of the spiritual sphere, susceptibility to influences of other religions.

There were significant differences between the three groups of religious identity statuses. People with external and internalized religious identity were found to differ in the dimension of exploration in breadth ( $p < .001$ ): people with external religious identity show a low level of exploration in breadth, which means displaying a small search for personal values in religiosity. People with 'seeking religious identity' status were found to differ from the other participants in the dimension of commitment making ( $p < .001$ ) and identification with commitment ( $p < .001$ ). This state is described by Erikson and Marcia as moratorium, which can be related to the adolescent age of participants.

Subsequently, intergroup differences in centrality of religiosity and its five dimensions were tested.

Table 4. Religious identity statuses and centrality of religiosity in adolescents.

	1. External religious identity		2. Seeking religious identity		3. Inter- nalized religious identity		ANOVA		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Scheffe
Centrality of religiosity	3.93	.62	2.80	.80	4.15	.76	16.98	< .001	2 < 1, 3



In terms of centrality of religiosity, the results of people with internalized and external religious identity were significantly different from those individuals with seeking religious identity status. The highest value of regulatory function of religiosity in the system of personal constructs was obtained, firstly, by those with internalized religious identity status, then by external religious identity status, and lastly by individuals with seeking religious identity status.

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

It was proposed that among the participants who declared affiliation to the Catholic Church three religious identity statuses with different possibilities of entering into interreligious dialogue would be distinguished: external, internalized and seeking religious identity. The hypothesis was confirmed: statuses of undifferentiated and indifferent religious identity were not found in the participants.

The statuses show different possibilities of entering into inter-religious dialogue:

- Adolescents with *internalized religious identity* have the best possibilities. They have properly-formed and malleable boundaries of own identity, and are characterized by openness to interreligious dialogue and religiosity with autonomic and well-centralized features,
- People with *external religious identity* have reduced possibilities. They are described as having a juridical and heteronomic approach to the professed religion, rigid and closed boundaries of religious identity,
- People with *seeking religious identity* status are characterized by an excessive openness of boundaries of religious identity, and uncertainty of religious self-identity. They are the most

susceptible to unfavorable external influences, religious crises and conversions.

Hypothesis 2 which postulated that people of different religious identity statuses are different in terms of centrality of religiosity: higher level of religious identity consolidation is positively correlated with centrality. The hypothesis was partially confirmed: statistically significant differences in centrality were found between participants with seeking religious identity and those with both external and internalized identity.

The literature review indicates that up-to-date research on religious identity was focused on determining its statuses or seeking correlations with other aspects and dimensions of religiosity (Bell 2009, Wieradzka-Pilarczyk 2015). There is a gap in studies on the relationship between religious identity statuses and readiness to enter into interreligious dialogue. The presented research was explorative in nature. Psychological readiness to enter into interreligious dialogue which is a result of identity consolidation was analysed.

The obtained religious identity statuses are in agreement with theoretical conceptions of Erikson (1968, 2004) and Marcia (2002) as well as results of research by Bell (2009) and Wieradzka-Pilarczyk (2015). Among people of late adolescence and emerging adulthood (18 to 29 years of age) external and seeking religious identity dominate. Externalized religious identity becomes more common with age – which is in accordance with the premises of Luyckx (2006) and Arnett (2000). According to Wieradzka-Pilarczyk (2015) mature religious identity formation is mainly based on consolidation processes related to harmonization of exploration and commitment dimensions. The present study confirms these findings: two dimensions of exploration (in breadth and in depth) and two dimensions of commitment (commitment making and identification with commitment) showed significant statistical differences between the three groups of religious identity statuses.

The measure of centrality of religiosity confirmed the hypothesis of its regulatory function in people with strong religious self-identification. Those with seeking religious identity were found to have lower centrality of religiosity than other participants. Similar results were obtained by Wieradzka-Pilarczyk (2015) in her studies on religious identity statuses and religiosity dimensions.

Religious identity statuses determine different possibilities for entering into interreligious dialogue. The group of participants, young people, are often faced with making crucial religious decisions which stimulate intensive processes of religious autonomy and authentication (see Rydz, 2012; Walesa, 2015). Frequently adolescents start their adult life outside their family and home. They discover new environments with diverse value systems, convictions and beliefs. Subjected to these experiences, they undergo constant integration and disintegration processes in both personal and religious identity. Achieving a higher level of integration may be associated with a time regression and return to behaviours from previous developmental stages which are familiar and safe (see Piaget, 1972; Kohlberg, 1976; Gurba, 2011). In this case, more external forms of being religious may diminish readiness to enter into religious dialogue. Since it is the time of consolidation processes, it can be assumed that more intense explorations (seeking religious identity) will follow. Their outcome will be a more individualized, autonomous and authentic religiosity (internalized religious identity) with greater possibilities of interreligious dialogue. Due to disruption of consolidation some people may remain on a seeking and an external religiosity level. This can result in rigid religious identity statuses and a small potential of interreligious confrontation.

Answering these questions may inspire further research in the field, for instance, examining religious identity statuses in adolescents in longitudinal studies to determine the dynamics of changes happening in time. The present research was not aimed at

measuring attitudes towards other religions, motivation to entering into interreligious dialogue or prejudice towards other faiths and believers. Examining sociocultural issues was not the goal here. However, these subjects seem to open a broad and interesting research area to be explored further.

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