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METAMORPHOSES OF GENERAL, DOCTRINAL
AND PRACTICAL DIMENSIONS
OF SLOVAK YOUTH RELIGIOSITY

Abstract. The presented empirical study deals with the issues of metamorphoses of Slovak youth religiosity – specifically in three basic dimensions of religiosity, namely general, doctrinal, and practical – concretely during the years 2006–2016. The article is based on socio-religious reflection that relates to the main paradigms or scenarios of religious changes of young people in the contemporary world. The empirical parts of the article refer mainly to data from last four censuses in Slovakia and two sociological surveys of youth religiosity from the diocese of Spiš in northern Slovakia (Spiš, Liptov and Orava regions). The obtained data does not only support the scenario of advancing secularization and intensifying the phenomenon of “belonging without believing” among a large part of the young generation of Slovaks, but partially also the scenario of stabilization or even revitalization of religiosity among a certain part of Slovak youth.

Keywords: general religiosity; doctrinal religiosity; practical religiosity; Slovak youth; transformation of religiosity.

INTRODUCTION

The presented sociological study deals with the issues of changes of religious involvement of Slovak youth during the last few years. The motivation for choosing such a topic was primarily the Author’s research interests, which are pertaining to the religious and moral values of the young generation of Slovaks. As part of them, two empirical researches of religiosity of the young generation of the Spiš diocese were also carried out – the first in

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2006¹ and the second in 2016.² They were no representative researches for the population of young Slovaks as a whole, but only for the population of the young generation of a particular church territory. In a dynamic perspective, however, it is important that the same population is searched and this condition was fulfilled. In the context outlined, this article presents the metamorphoses of religious faith, beliefs and practices of the young generation of Slovaks (based on the example of the Spiš diocese) during the years 2006–2016.

Almost everything is changing in the course of fast and radical social and cultural changes. This statement can be applied also for religiosity, especially for religiosity of the young generation. Sociologists of religion try to describe and explain these metamorphoses within specific theories, paradigms, concepts, scenarios or models. They usually claim that religiosity of young generation is changing according to different patterns of transformations – many young people emigrate from religious organizations, but some rather immigrate to them (for example to the new religious movements). In the context outlined, we can ask how the religious faith, beliefs and practices of the young generation of Slovaks are changing in the first decades of the third millennium? The description and an attempt to explain the presented issue are the basic goals of this sociological study. This article consists of three parts: 1 – Main theories or models of religious changes; 2 – Transformation of religious affiliation of Slovaks in the years 1991 – 2001 – 2011 – 2021; 3 – Metamorphoses of religious faith, beliefs and practices of Slovak youth.

1. MAIN THEORIES OR MODELS OF RELIGIOUS CHANGES

Before presenting the transformation of religious affiliation of Slovaks in the years 1991–2021 on the basis of the last four censuses and the metamorphoses of religious faith, beliefs and practices of Slovak youth in 2006–2016, it will be appropriate to briefly recall the main theories, scenarios, or models

¹ It is a quantitative research by means of a survey. Terrain data collection took place in November 2006. The target group (a basic set) was the 17-18 year-old youth in Spiš Diocese. From the basic set a sample (random set) was deliberately created, which consisted of 663 young people (24 grades of 8 public schools and one church school). The implemented set consists of 629 respondents, which constitutes 94,9% of the random set.

² It is a quantitative research by means of a survey. Terrain data collection took place in November 2016. The target group (a basic set) was the School-leaving youth in Spiš Diocese. From the basic set a sample (random set) was deliberately created, which consisted of 708 young people (30 grades of 7 public schools and two church schools). The implemented set consists of 677 respondents, which constitutes 95,6% of the random set.

of religious changes (with particular emphasis on the religiosity of the young generation). It is necessary to remember the fact that sociologists of religion observe and interpret these changes, not to mention religious progress or decline. There is no one general scenario of changes of the young generation's religiosity. Depending on the Author, we can distinguish at least a few main models of transformation. According to the well-known Polish sociologist of religion, J. Mariański, we can distinguish five partially complementary and partially competing scenarios of religious changes.

1.1. SCENARIO OF ADVANCING SECULARIZATION

This thesis is about the necessity of erosion of religion as a result of modernization processes and *ex definitione* applies to the young generation, which is significantly affected by social modernization. The weakening of religion has often been interpreted as a reverse side of technical and social progress, and Weber's "disenchantment of the World" as the inevitable fate of the modern societies. Many sociologists considered the model of Western European secularization as very probable also in countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Even if Poles or Slovaks are still characterized by high rate of religiosity, at least in some of its dimensions, its lowering is only a matter of time. According to the scenario of advancing secularization, the departure of contemporary people from religion is already a fact and it can be expected that this "emigration" will continue. Supporters of the described scenario of transformation believe that all societies are or will be affected by the process of secularization – especially young generation (Mariański, 2008, pp. 16-18).

1.2. SCENARIO OF RELIGIOUS PLURALIZATION

The next model of transformation is ideologically connected with the theory of pluralization. According to P.L. Berger (2005, pp. 5-7), modern globalization is a great engine of pluralism. As such, it questions the integrity of the system of beliefs and values – through migration and urbanization, through universal education and most of all through mass communication. The scenario of pluralization of religiosity expects that religious involvement will become more and more diverse. However, there will be no radical increase of atheism or agnosticism. The expanding religious market, forces people to make choices. Choosing among various options becomes a cultural imperative or a necessity in life. Religiosity becomes a private matter, it does not function as much as

a comprehensive system of beliefs and values, but as a system of diverse offers on the “religious market” from which the individual can freely choose in the processes of social communication. The described model emphasizes that, in fact, we are not observing so much the decline of religiosity as the transformation of its forms and images (Mariański, 2008, pp. 27-33).

1.3. SCENARIO OF RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM

The third scenario of religious changes is ideologically connected with the theory of individualization. As F. X. Kaufmann (2003, pp. 361-382) notes, there is no longer one common “whole” to which an individual belongs. People compose their individual worldviews from elements that come from their own tradition as well as from others. The process of globalization, which brings transformations on various levels and areas enables this type of tinkering. In any case, the religious reality cannot be fully understood apart from the global context. The scenario of religious syncretism points to the processes of formation of new forms of syncretic religiosity, even syncretic churches, in which diverse elements from different religious or *quasi*-religious traditions are mixed. In the processes of religious syncretism, elements of Christianity, other religions, magic, national symbols, and many other cultural elements are mixed. In some youth environments traditional churches lose their significance and raise those ideological directions in which the individual can selectively choose religious contents and acts, unite them in numerous ways and reinterpret them in a new way (Mariański, 2008, pp. 22-25).

1.4. SCENARIO OF RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM

The next model of transformation finds its expression in the idea of a “return to the roots.” Usually, it manifests in the effort of religious orthodoxy, in the effort of fidelity to traditional religious acts, or in the effort of fidelity to traditional moral values. Religious or moral fundamentalism understood in this way is most often associated with the rejection of secularism and religious or moral relativism and with the return to traditional religious beliefs or moral principles to all aspects of personal and social life. It is primarily caused by the universal liberalization in all spheres of modern people’s life. As demonstration of the revival of religious fundamentalism is considered for example a birth of new religious movements. E. Barker (2007, pp. 127-143) emphasizes that religious fundamentalism is associated with strict adherence to traditional

principles of faith or morality and is not necessarily associated with religious fanaticism. In addition, many empirical studies show that this connection is often not the case. Many contemporary people simply find the diversity and relativization of religious truths or moral principles as worrying. They do not accept the thesis that, ultimately, all religions or ethics are equally true (Mariański, 2008, pp. 25-27).

1.5. SCENARIO OF STABILIZATION OR EVEN REVITALIZATION OF RELIGIOSITY

Finally, the fifth and at the same time the last scenario of religious changes presupposes the cessation of secularization processes or even the gradual restoration of the religious order in society. Some of the supporters of such a model of transformation believe in the “re-religiousness” of social relations. Even if the model of revitalization of religion does not currently seem very probable, it cannot be *ex definitione* excluded. J. Casanova in connection with the described topic writes: “Western modernism is at a crossroads [...] It would be deeply ironic if religion, after all the blows it received from modernism, could in some unforeseen ways help to save it” (2005, p. 383). The revitalization of religion and religiosity is associated with the dynamic activity of religious organizations – especially in youth environments, seeking values that give real meaning to human life. Many sociologists of religion talk about the renaissance of religiosity, about the return of *sacrum*, about the repeated “enchantment of the world”. It can be said that in the process of revitalization of religiosity it is going especially about restoring its splendor and meaning, also in social dimensions (Mariański, 2008, pp. 19-22).

2. TRANSFORMATION OF RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF SLOVAKS IN THE YEARS 1991 – 2001 – 2011 – 2021

The above presented scenarios of religious metamorphoses in contemporary World – with particular emphasis on the religiosity of the young generation – represent a theoretical framework for empirical analyzes and reflections. Mentioned models of transformations can be considered as scientific hypotheses. The changes that have been taking place in the religious life of the inhabitants of Slovakia in recent decades are most objectively indicated by the evolution of religious affiliation, recorded during censuses every ten years. Moving to the empirical part of this study and coming closer to the core of the issue, I would

like to briefly recall data from the last four censuses in Slovakia, which communicate the changes in religious affiliation.

While before the Velvet Revolution in 1989 (during the communist regime in the former Czechoslovakia) the religious affiliation of the Slovak population was deliberately not established, more or less reliable empirical data is practically available only from the last four censuses in the years 1991 – 2001 – 2011 – 2021. It can be noted, that final data from the 2021 census regarding to religious affiliation was announced only in January this year. How Slovaks approached the issue of religious affiliation in the above-mentioned census years is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The structure of population by religious affiliation in the Slovak Republic in 1991, 2001, 2011 and 2021 (in %)

Churches or religious organisations	1991	2001	2011	2021
Roman Catholic Church	60,4	68,9	62,0	55,8
Greek Catholic Church	3,4	4,1	3,8	4,0
Orthodox Church	0,7	0,9	0,9	0,9
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession	6,2	6,9	5,9	5,3
Reformed Christian Church	1,6	2,0	1,8	1,6
Religious Society of Jehova's Witnesses	0,2	0,4	0,3	0,3
Other Christian Churches	0,3	0,6	0,7	1,0
Other religious organisations	0,1	0,2	0,5	0,9
With no religious affiliation	9,8	13,0	13,4	23,8
Not found out	17,4	3,0	10,6	6,5
Total N 1991 = 5 274 335; N 2001 = 5 379 455; N 2011 = 5 397 036; N 2021 = 5 449 270.	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Based on the presented empirical data from the last four censuses in Slovakia, it should be stated that – according to the 1991 census – 72,8% of Slovaks explicitly identified with some Church or religious organisation (9,8% of Slovak population was with no religious affiliation and 17,4% did not answer the analyzed question). At the same time, it can be stated that 63,8% of Slovaks identified with the Catholic Church, 0,7% with the Orthodox Church, 6,2% with the Evangelical Church, 1,6% with the Reformed Christian Church and

0,6% with other Churches or religious organisations. It should be noted that in the era of formation of a free democratic society immediately after the Velvet Revolution in 1989, the indicator of people who did not answer the question about religious affiliation was surprisingly high (as many as 17,4%) – perhaps for pragmatic and vigilant reasons.

The situation was a bit different in 2001. At the beginning of the third millennium, relatively high level of religious affiliation was marked. This was connected mainly with the fact that only a small portion of the population of Slovakia at that time refused to answer described question, which is very good for the reliability of sociological research. In Slovakia – according to the 2001 census – 84,0% of Slovak population explicitly identified with some Church or religious organisation (13,0% of Slovaks were with no religious affiliation and only 3,0% did not answer the analyzed question). At the same time, it can be stated that 73,0% of Slovak population identified with the Catholic Church, 0,9% with the Orthodox Church, 6,9% with the Evangelical Church, 2,0% with the Reformed Christian Church and 1,2% with other Churches or religious organisations.

At the beginning of the second decade of the third millennium (in 2011), to a certain degree the situation from 1991 was repeated – at least due to the fact that a relatively high percentage of Slovaks did not answer the question about religious affiliation. As a result, we do not know who they were. One way or another – according to the 2011 census – 76,0% of Slovaks explicitly identified with some Church or religious organisation (13,4% of Slovak population was with no religious affiliation and 10,6% did not answer the analyzed question). At the same time, it can be stated that 65,8% of Slovaks identified with the Catholic Church, 0,9% with the Orthodox Church, 5,9% with the Evangelical Church, 1,8% with the Reformed Christian Church and 1,5% with other Churches or religious organisations (Štefaňák, 2021a, pp. 103-107).

Finally, the most up-to-date Slovak census (in 2021) shows significantly lower indicators of religious affiliation and higher indicator of population with no religious affiliation. In Slovakia – according to the 2021 census – only 69,7% of Slovak population explicitly identified with some Church or religious organisation (23,8% of Slovaks were with no religious affiliation and 6,5% did not answer the analyzed question). At the same time, it can be stated that 59,8% of Slovak population identified with the Catholic Church, 0,9% with the

Orthodox Church, 5,3% with the Evangelical Church, 1,6% with the Reformed Christian Church and 2,2% with other Churches or religious organisations.³

In order to learn more about the transformation of religious affiliation of Slovaks, the above-presented empirical data should be methodologically correctly recalculated “in the manner of elections” (it means to not take into account missing data, because we do not know whether it is going about people who are not religious, indifferent to religion or religious who consider religious faith is a private matter). It is important mainly due to the fact that in individual censuses the percentages of missing data were quite different (in 1991 and 2011 they were much higher than in 2001 and 2021). The outlined – recalculated empirical data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Transformation of religious affiliation of Slovaks in 1991, 2001, 2011 and 2021 – without missing data (in %)

Churches or religious organisations	1991	2001	2011	2021
Roman Catholic Church	73,2	71,1	69,4	59,6
Greek Catholic Church	4,1	4,2	4,3	4,3
Orthodox Church	0,8	1,0	1,0	1,0
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession	7,5	7,1	6,6	5,6
Reformed Christian Church	1,9	2,1	2,0	1,7
Other Churches or religious organisations	0,6	1,3	1,8	2,4
With no religious affiliation	11,9	13,4	15,0	25,4
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

If we do not take into account missing data, in 1991 there were in Slovakia 88,1% of believers or – more correctly – identifying with some religious organisation (77,2% of Catholics) and 11,9% of non-believers or – more correctly – not identifying with any particular religion. In 2001 there were 86,6% identifying with some religious organisation (75,3% of Catholics) and 13,4% not identifying with any particular religion. In 2011 there were 85,0% identifying with some religious organisation (73,6% of Catholics) and 15,0% not identifying with any particular religion. Finally, in 2021 there were in Slovakia only

³ <https://www.scitanie.sk/en/population/basic-results/structure-of-population-by-religious-belief/SR/SK0/SR>, downloaded on April 15, 2022.

74,6% believers or identifying with some religious organisation (64,0% of Catholics) and 25,4% non-believers or not identifying with any particular religion. It should be added that in field of religious affiliation and other indicators of religiosity, there are significant differences between particular regions of Slovakia, as well as in terms of sex, age, education, place of residence and other demographic or social characteristics (Sopóci – Búzik, 2006, pp. 135-137).

It should be emphasized that in the above-outlined approach to the analyzed issues, Slovakia in the years 1991 – 2001 – 2011 secularized relatively slowly (1991: 88,1% represented believers – while 11,9% were non-believers; 2001: 86,6% were believers – and 13,4% were non-believers; 2011: 85,0% were believers – 15,0% were non-believers). It is really interesting that in 2021 the decline of religious affiliation was relatively significant – highlighted by approx. 10 percent (2021: 74,6% of believers – 25,4% of non-believers). It is difficult to clearly indicate the reasons for such a significant decline (natural replacement of generations, insufficient religious socialization of children and youth, the question of financing of Churches or religious organisations – depending on the results in the census, the crisis related to Covid-19, several publicly discussed issues related to the activity of churches or religious organisations since the previous census – e.g. the case of Archbishop Bezak ...).

If the above-outlined secularization trend continued (in 30 years a decrease of about 13 percent), in about 180 years there would be only non-believers or not identifying with any particular religion in Slovakia. It is obvious that as a sociologist of religion I cannot and do not take this “prophecy” seriously. For I would make the same mistake as the adherents of theory of secularization in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, who expected that religion is just finishing its life journey. Sociologists of religion have “learned” that the future cannot be treated in a linear way as a simple continuation of the present. In any case, the fact that in recent decades we have observed a decline of religiosity or – more correctly – religious affiliation in Slovakia, is not an irreversible process, as the theory of secularization expected or prophesied (Barker, 2007, p. 132).

Based on the empirical data from the last four censuses presented in second part of this article, we can claim that approx. three quarters of Slovaks still declare religious faith and approx. two thirds of them identify with the Catholic Church. It is obvious that the denominational declarations from censuses are quite often formal and superficial. On the one hand – some believers do not declare “their religion” during the census. On the other hand – even more people dispute some or many of religious beliefs or practices of

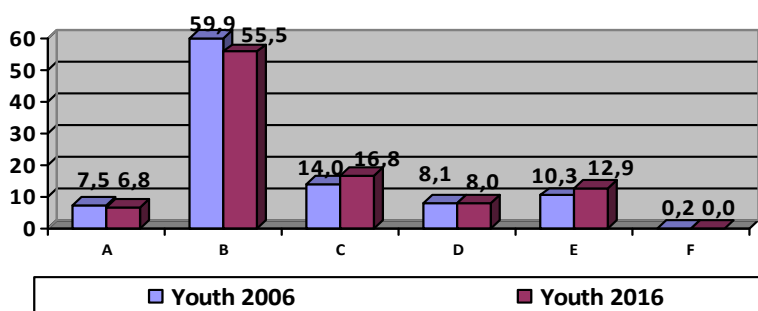
religion declared during the census. In today's pluralistic World, one can believe without belonging (*believing without belonging*), but also belong without believing (*belonging without believing*). The boundaries between religious belief and unbelief are not always the same as the boundaries between religious affiliation and non-affiliation (Hervieu-Léger, 1999, pp. 219-220).

3. METAMORPHOSES OF RELIGIOUS FAITH, BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF SLOVAK YOUTH

Empirical data from the last four censuses in Slovakia communicate that religiosity in the dimension of religious affiliation is quite a permanent element of Slovak culture, although it has significantly decreased especially during the last ten years. The question is if it is similar also in the environment of Slovak youth? In order to answer this question, in the third part of this study I will present a comparison of the religiosity of young people of the diocese of Spiš in northern Slovakia within its three most basic dimensions: general religiosity, acceptance of religious beliefs and realization of religious practices (Piwowarski, 2000, pp. 58-66). In order to present the metamorphoses of religious faith, beliefs and practices of the surveyed young Slovaks in a systematic manner, a couple of the most basic indicators of religious life were selected from each of analyzed dimensions of religiosity.

3.1. METAMORPHOSES OF GENERAL RELIGIOSITY

As part of general religiosity, indicators concerning transformations of global relationship to faith, religious affiliation, general attitude to religious practices and evaluation of changes in one's own religiosity are presented. The metamorphoses of global relationship to faith of the youth surveyed in 2006 and 2016 are presented in Graph 1. Among the youth 2006, there was a relatively high indicator of religious faith. More than two thirds of these young people (67,4%) considered themselves to be deeply religious or religious. Ten years later, 62,3% of respondents considered themselves to be deeply religious or religious. Although there were a few percent decrease, it should be noted that in the described comparison statistically significant the difference was not recorded ($p=0,319$).

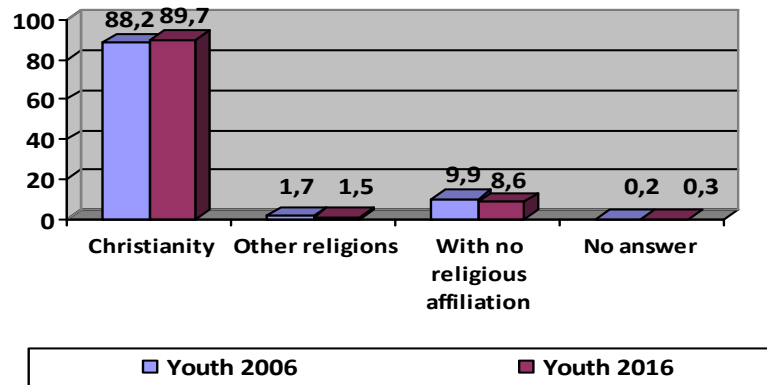


Graph 1. Metamorphoses of global relationship to faith (in %)

Note: A – Deeply religious; B – Religious; C – Connected with a religious tradition; D – Indifferent; E – Non-religious; F – No answer.

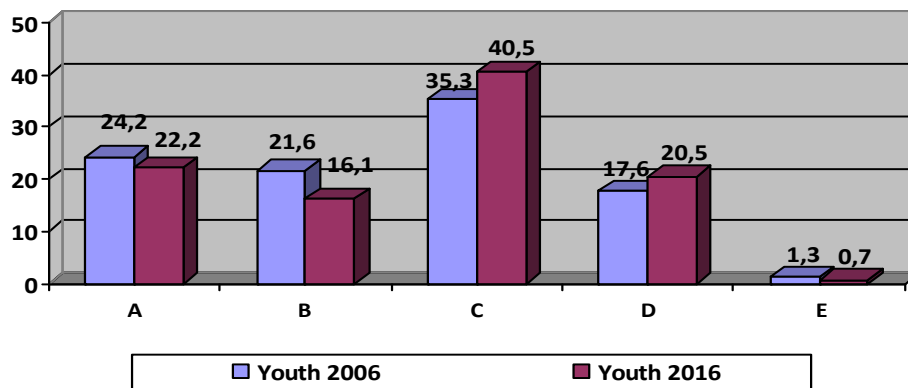
In order to obtain certain generalization, we can mention also the data from the research of religiosity of the Slovak population in 2014, where among young people significantly lower indicators of global relationship to faith were noted: very strongly religious – 2,7%; strongly religious – 11,4%; rather religious – 26,3%; neither religious nor non-religious – 16,8%; rather non-religious – 19,1%; strongly non-religious – 12,2%; very strongly non-religious – 8,9%; no answer – 2,6% (Tižik – Zeman, 2017, p. 137). In the survey of the Slovak population in 2020, among young people lower indicators of global relationship to faith were noted as well: deeply religious – 14,5%; religious – 41,1%; connected with a religious tradition – 19,4%; indifferent – 4,0%; non-religious – 21,0% (Štefaňak, 2021b, pp. 45-47). Thus, the religiosity of young people of the diocese of Spiš was situated at a slightly higher level than the religiosity of Slovak youth as a whole (although it is difficult to compare the responses to non-identical questionnaire formulations, the difference in relation to the analyzed question was approx. 10 – 15%).

Turning to religious affiliation (Graph 2), it should be stated that significant majority of young people in 2006 identified with some religious organisation (89,9%) – 88,2% of the respondents identified with Christian Churches. The indicators obtained ten years later were even slightly higher. In 2016, 91,1% of young people identified with a particular religion, and 89,7% of the respondents identified with Christian Churches. It is understandable that neither in this comparison, which supports the scenario of stabilization or even revitalization of religiosity more than the scenario of advancing secularization, significant statistical difference was noted ($p=0,782$)



Graph 2. Metamorphoses of religious affiliation (in %)

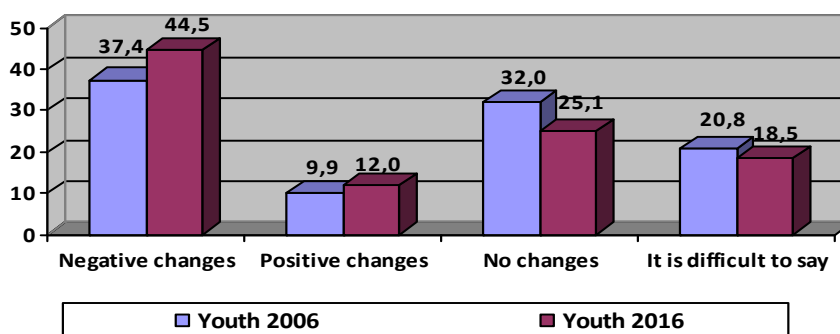
The changes of general attitude to religious practices of young people surveyed in 2006 and 2016 are presented in Graph 3. Based on empirical data, it can be stated that approx. four fifths of the youth surveyed in 2006 at least rarely practiced some religious practices (81,1%). This indicator was very close to percentage of young people declaring themselves religious or at least connected with a religious tradition (81,4%). Ten years later, 78,8% of the respondents were at least rarely practicing (religious or at least connected with a religious tradition were 79,1%). However, neither in this comparison – at the significance level of 0,01 – statistically significant difference was recorded ($p=0,033$).



Graph 3. Metamorphoses of general attitude to religious practices (in %)

Note: A – I practice regularly; B – I practice irregularly; C – I practice rarely; D – I do not practice at all; E – No answer.

Finally, when we reflect the transformation of evaluation of changes in one's own religiosity (Graph 4), we can notice that young people more frequently (4 times) declared its weakening than deepening (2006: 37,4% – 9,9%; 2016: 44,5% – 12,0%). More than one third of youth in 2006 declared weakening of their own religiosity. In the case of youth in 2016, the discussed indicator slightly increased, which communicates about advancing secularization among a significant part of surveyed young people. On the other hand, one tenth of youth in 2006 declared deepening of their own religiosity. It is interesting that in the case of youth in 2016, the discussed indicator also slightly increased, which communicates about stabilization or even revitalization of religiosity among a certain part of surveyed young people. It is important to say that observed percentage difference is also statistically significant ($p=0,008$; $V=0,094$).



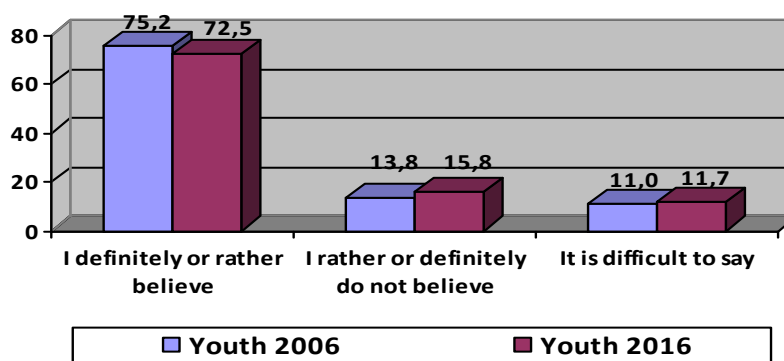
Graph 4. Metamorphoses of evaluation of changes in one's own religiosity (in %)

Summarizing the obtained empirical data in the context of general religiosity, it can be stated that young people in 2016 declared their religious faith and practices slightly less often, and at the same time weakening of their own religiosity slightly more often than youth in 2006. Although it was not always about statistically significant differences, the scenario of advancing secularization of a significant part of the young generation of Slovaks seems to be correct. Due to the opposite tendency in the case of deepening of their own religiosity we can also point to the credibility of the scenario of stabilization or even revitalization of religiosity among a certain part of Slovak youth. Finally, it is necessary to remind the phenomenon that in sociology of religion we call “belonging without believing” (Hervieu-Léger, 1999, pp.219-220). For if the rate of global relationship to faith and other indicators of religiosity

are decreasing and the rate of religious affiliation is not or not so much, it is about intensifying of that phenomenon (Štefaňak, 2018, pp. 119-121). However, the presented thesis should be more broadly and deeply examined within the framework of subsequent – more detailed dimensions and indicators of religious involvement.

3.2. METAMORPHOSES OF ACCEPTANCE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

As part of doctrinal religiosity, indicators concerning transformations of believing in the existence of God as a Transcendent Being, the Holy Trinity, the Deity of Jesus Christ, and the afterlife are presented. The metamorphoses of believing in the existence of God as a Transcendent Being of the youth surveyed in 2006 and 2016 are presented in Graph 5. Based on obtained empirical data, it can be stated that approx. three quarters of the youth in the first decade of the XXI century were convinced of the existence of God as a Transcendent Being (75,2%). Among young people in the second decade of the XXI century the discussed indicator was slightly lower – 72,5%. Although there was percentage decrease, the statistically significant difference was not recorded ($p=0,801$).

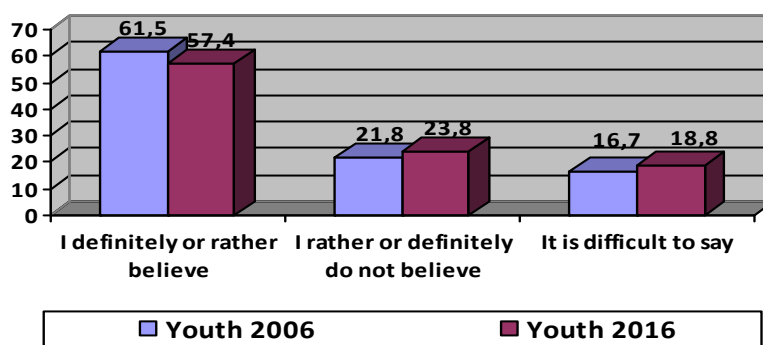


Graph 5. Metamorphoses of believing in the existence of God as a Transcendent Being (in %)

In order to obtain certain generalization, we can mention also the data from the research of religiosity of the Slovak population in 2014, where among young people significantly lower indicators of believing in the existence of God were noted: I definitely believe – 25,9%; I rather believe – 26,6%; I rather do not believe – 18,8%; I definitely do not believe – 17,3%; It is dif-

difficult to say – 11,4% (Tížik – Zeman, 2017, p. 95). In the survey of the Slovak population in 2020, among young people lower indicators of believing in the existence of God were noted as well: I know that God really exists and I have no doubts about it – 36,3%; Although I have doubts, I feel that I believe in God – 12,9%; Sometimes I feel like I believe in God, sometimes like I do not believe – 7,3%; I do not believe in a personal God, but I do believe in a Higher Being – 16,9%; I do not know if there is a God and I do not think it is possible to find out – 6,5%; I do not believe in God – 15,3%; It is difficult to say – 4,8% (Štefaňak, 2021b, pp. 47-50). Thus, the belief in the Transcendent Being among young people of the diocese of Spiš was situated at a slightly higher level than similar belief among Slovak youth as a whole (although it is difficult to compare the responses to non-identical questionnaire formulations, the difference in relation to the analyzed question was approx. 10 – 15%).

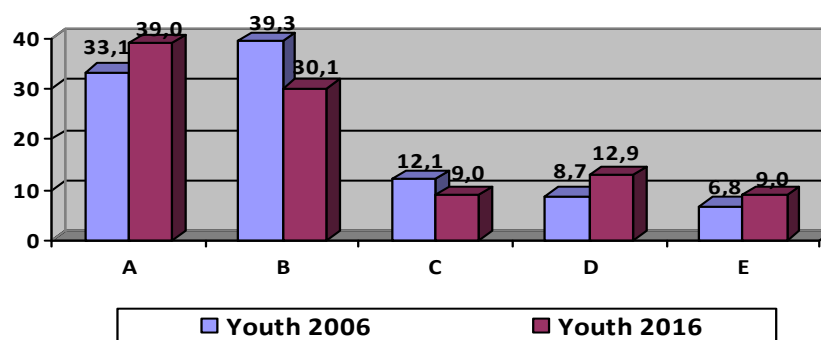
The basic indicator of Christian religiosity, concerning the significant majority of the surveyed youth (2006: 88,2%; 2016: 89,7%), is belief in the Trinity of Divine Persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Graph 6). In total, it can be stated that while more than three fifths of young people in 2006 believed in the Holy Trinity (61,5%), in the case of young people in 2016, a similar indicator was slightly lower (57,4%). Although there were a few percent decrease, neither in this comparison statistically significant difference was recorded ($p=0,581$).



Graph 6. Metamorphoses of believing in the Holy Trinity (in %)

Another basic indicator of Christian religiosity is belief in the Deity of Jesus Christ (Graph 7). Based on the obtained empirical data, it can be stated that while almost three quarters of youth in 2006 believed in Jesus Christ as God (72,4%), among youth in 2016 the discussed indicator was slightly lower – 69,1%.

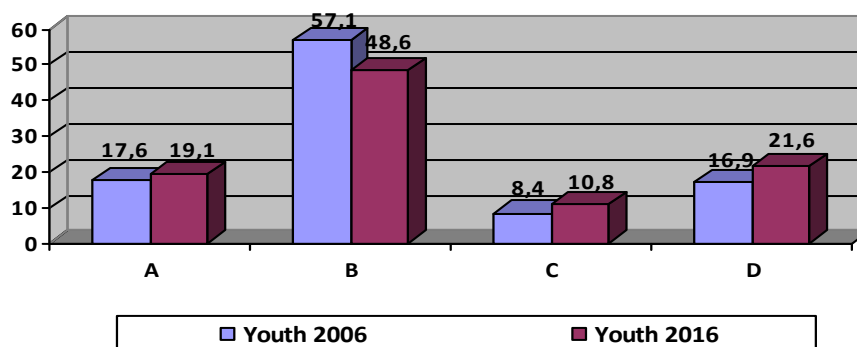
As a side note, it can be noticed that in the years 2006 – 2016, a decrease of the rate of Christian orthodoxy was noted – that Jesus Christ is God and man (2006: 39,3%; 2016: 30,1%). This is probably associated with a decline of religious knowledge. It is important to say that observed percentage difference is also statistically significant ($p < 0.0005$; $V = 0,127$).



Graph 7. Metamorphoses of believing in the Deity of Jesus Christ (in %)

Note: A – Only God (the Son of God); B – God and man; C – An outstanding historical figure; D – Legendary figure, myth; E – It is difficult to say.

Finally, a slightly more general indicator of doctrinal religiosity is belief in the after-life, which is associated not only with Christian religion, but also with other religions or private religiosity (graph 8). In total, it can be stated that only 17,6% of young people in 2006 and 19,1% of young people in 2016 believed in the Christian truth of faith about the resurrection of the human body. On the other hand, as many as 74,7% of youth in 2006 and 67,7% of youth in 2016 believed in the immortality of the human soul. Although there were a few percent decrease, neither in this comparison – at the significance level of 0,01 – statistically significant difference was recorded ($p = 0,015$).



Graph 8. Metamorphoses of believing in the afterlife (in %)

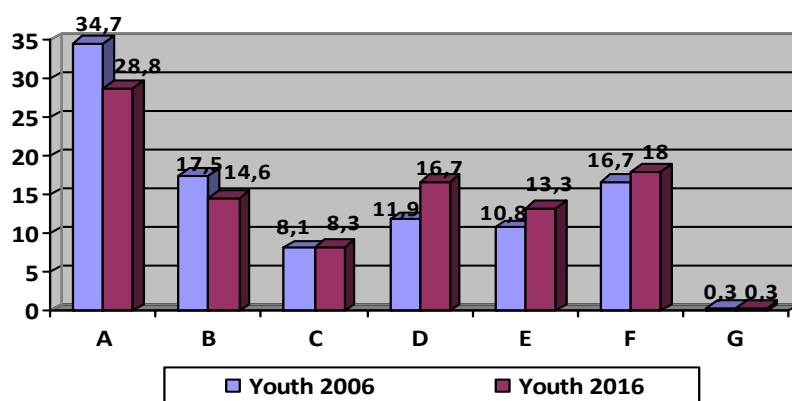
Note: A – People will be resurrected with body and soul after death; B – Only human souls will live after death; C – Neither soul nor body will live after death; D – It is difficult to say.

Summarizing the obtained empirical data in the context of doctrinal religiosity, it can be stated that young people in 2016 slightly less often believed in the existence of God as a Transcendent Being, the Holy Trinity, the Deity of Jesus Christ, and the immortality of the human soul than young people in 2006. Although it was not always about statistically significant differences, the scenario of advancing secularization of a significant part of Slovak youth and the intensification of the above-mentioned phenomenon of “belonging without believing” or – more precisely – “belonging without religious beliefs” seem to be correct (Štefaňak, 2019, pp. 99-121). Due to the opposite tendency in the case of belief in the resurrection of the human body we can also point to the credibility of the scenario of stabilization or even revitalization of religiosity among a certain part of the young generation of Slovaks.

3.3. METAMORPHOSES OF REALIZATION OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

As part of practical religiosity, indicators concerning transformations of attendance at religious services, receiving of the sacrament of reconciliation, practising of an individual prayer and its meaning are presented. The metamorphoses of attendance at religious services of the youth surveyed in 2006 and 2016 are presented in Graph 9. Based on obtained empirical data, it can be stated that the indicator of attending at religious services at least every Sunday in 2006 was slightly higher (34,7%) than similar indicator in 2016 (28,8%). On the other hand, among young people in the second decade of the third millenium, the indicators of visiting the Church only 1-2 times a month,

on bigger feasts, on specific occasions or not visiting it at all slightly increased (the difference was 8,8%). The observed percentage differences, however, do not mean that in this comparison – at the significance level of 0,01 – statistically significant difference was recorded ($p=0,045$).



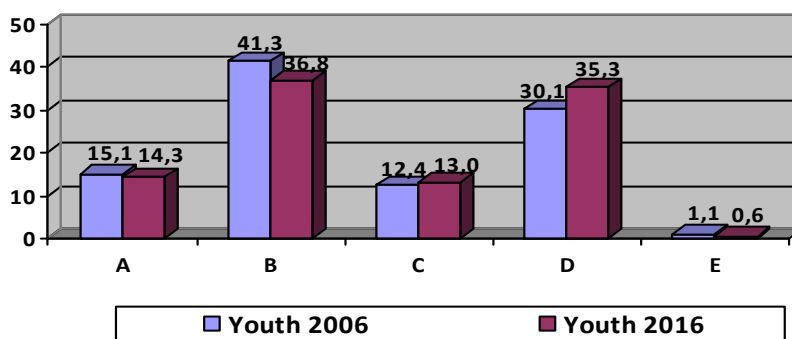
Graph 9. Metamorphoses of attendance at religious services (in %)

Note: A – Every Sunday; B – Almost every Sunday; C – 1-2 times a month; D – Only on bigger feasts; E – Only occasionally (wedding, funeral ...); F – Never; G – No answer.

In order to obtain certain generalization, we can mention also the data from the research of religiosity of the Slovak population in 2014, where among young people significantly lower indicators of attending at religious services were noted: At least every Sunday – 16,0%; At least once a month – 14,2%; At least once a year – 21,7%; Less often than once a year – 9,3%; Never – 36,1%; No answer – 2,7% (Tížik – Zeman, 2017, p. 121). In the survey of the Slovak population in 2020, among young people lower indicators of attending at religious services were noted as well: More often than every Sunday – 12,9%; Every Sunday – 13,7%; Almost every Sunday – 4,0%; 1-2 times a month – 6,5%; Only on bigger feasts – 9,7%; Only occasionally (wedding, funeral ...) – 27,4%; Never – 25,8% (Štefaňak, 2021b, pp. 50-53). Thus, the realisation of so-called Sunday practices among young people of the diocese of Spiš was situated at a slightly higher level than similar realisation among Slovak youth as a whole (although it is difficult to compare the responses to non-identical questionnaire formulations, the difference in relation to the analyzed question was approx. 10 – 15%).

The basic indicator of Catholic religiosity, concerning the significant majority of the surveyed youth (2006: 82,7%; 2016: 79,2%), is receiving of the

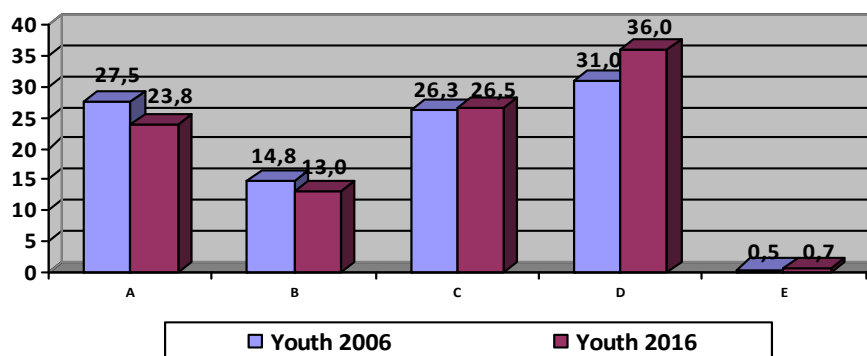
sacrament of reconciliation (Graph 10). In total, it can be stated that only 15,1% of young people in 2006 and 14,4% of young people in 2016 received the sacrament of reconciliation approx. every month. In the case of receiving of the sacrament of reconciliation at least once a year, the tendency was the same: young people in 2006 – 68,8%; young people in 2016 – 64,1%. Although there were a few percent decrease, neither in this comparison statistically significant difference was recorded ($p=0,236$).



Graph 10. Metamorphoses of receiving of the sacrament of reconciliation (in %)

Note: A – Approx. once a month; B – Several times a year; C – Once a year; D – Every few years or less often; E – No answer.

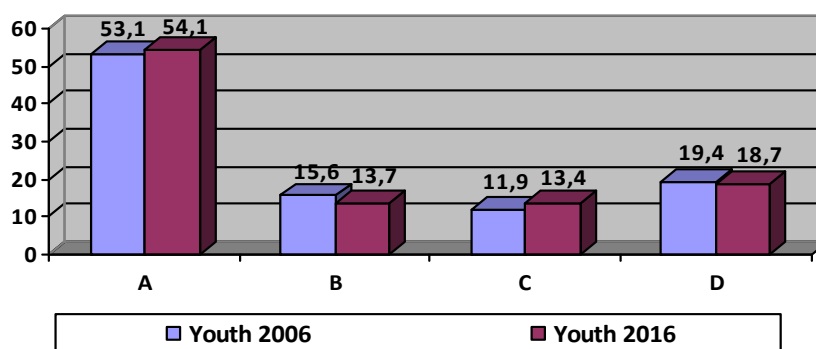
A slightly more general indicator of practical religiosity is practising of an individual prayer, which is associated not only with Christian religion or Catholic denomination, but also with other religions or private religiosity (graph 11). Based on the reported researches, it can be stated that young people in 2006 prayed slightly more often than young people in 2016 – daily 27,5% compared to 23,8%. On the other hand, among young people in the second decade of the third millenium, there was a slightly higher indicator of young people who prayed very rarely or not at all (the difference was 5,0%). The observed percentage differences, however, does not mean that in this comparison statistically significant difference was recorded ($p=0,238$).



Graph 11. Metamorphoses of practising of an individual prayer (in %)

Note: A – Every day; B – Every few days; C – From time to time; D – Very rarely or not at all; E – No answer.

Finally, from the point of view of sociology of religion, it is not only important what percentage of young people practise an individual prayer, but also what meaning they attach to it (graph 12). In total, it can be stated that in the presented comparison almost no percentage or statistical differences were recorded. The prayer was of very high or high importance to more than a half of young people in both researches (2006: 53,1%; 2016: 54,1%). On the other hand, the prayer was of little or very little importance to approx. one tenth of youth in both studies (2006: 11,9%; 2016: 13,4%). It is understandable that neither in the last comparison of this article significant statistical difference was noted ($p=0,907$).



Graph 12. Metamorphoses of meaning of the prayer (in %)

Note: A – Very high or high importance; B – Little or very little importance; C – No importance; D – It is difficult to say.

When summarizing the obtained empirical data in the context of practical religiosity, it can be stated that young people in 2016 were slightly less often attending at religious services, receiving the sacrament of reconciliation, and practising an individual prayer than young people in 2006. Although it was not about statistically significant differences, the scenario of advancing secularization of a significant part of the young generation of Slovaks and the intensification of the above-mentioned phenomenon of “belonging without believing” or – more precisely – “belonging without religious practices” seem to be correct (Štefaňak, 2019, pp. 77-98). Due to the low level of differences in the case of meaning of the prayer we can also point to the credibility of the scenario of stabilization of religiosity among a certain part of Slovak youth – at least in relation to some indicators of religiosity.

CONCLUSION

Through the process of percentage and statistical correlation, one can now formulate a strong argument that the stereotypical social views on the topic of metamorphose of religiosity of young people are not very far from the reality. It is true that during the period 2006 to 2016, the religious faith, beliefs, and practices of the surveyed youth was slightly lowered – although usually not at a statistically significant level. If we link the presented empirical data with the main theories or models of religious changes in contemporary World, we can say that the results of presented researches confirm not only the scenario of advancing secularization, but partly also the scenario of stabilization or even revitalization of religiosity (for example increase of identification with one’s own parish or belief in resurrection of human body), model of pluralization of religiosity or worldview (for example increase of the indicator of respondents declaring deepening of their own religiosity, belief in the resurrection of the human body and very high or high importance of the prayer). It seems, therefore, that a significant part of the young generation of Slovaks still emigrate from the Church, but some of them rather immigrate to it.

In addition, in relation to relatively high and above all stable indicator of religious affiliation (2006 – 89,9%; 2016 – 91,2%) associated with the decline of religiosity in cases of majority of its basic indicators, we can recall the phenomenon, which is in sociology of religion called “belonging without believing” – “belonging without religious beliefs” or “belonging without religious practices”. For if the different specific indicators of religiosity are declining

and the rate of religious affiliation is not or not so much, it is precisely about intensifying that phenomenon. The empirical surveys carried out in 2006 and 2016 and the analyzes and conclusions based on them are also supported by the results of other socio-religious studies – for example the empirical researches of M. Tížik – M. Zeman (2017) or J. Matulník (2008) in Slovakia, the empirical researches of J. Mariański (2018) or S.H. Zaręba (2012) in Poland etc.

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METAMORFOZY OGÓLNEGO, DOKTRYNALNEGO
ORAZ PRAKTYCZNEGO WYMIARU RELIGIJNOŚCI MŁODZIEŻY SŁOWACKIEJ

Streszczenie

Prezentowane studium empiryczne zajmuje się problematyką przemian religijności młodzieży słowackiej – konkretnie trzech podstawowych wymiarów religijności, a mianowicie ogólnego, doktrynalnego oraz praktycznego – konkretnie w latach 2006–2016. Artykuł bazuje na refleksji socioreligijnej, która dotyczy głównych paradygmatów lub scenariuszy przemian religijności młodzieży we współczesnym świecie. Empiryczne części artykułu referują przede wszystkim o danych pochodzących z ostatnich czterech spisów ludności na Słowacji oraz dwukrotnych badań socjologicznych nad religijnością młodzieży diecezji spiskiej w północnej Słowacji (rejon Spisz, Liptów i Orawa). Uzyskane dane wspierają nie tylko scenariusz postępującej sekularyzacji oraz intensyfikują fenomen „przynależności bez wiary” wśród znacznej części młodego pokolenia Słowaków, ale częściowo również scenariusz stabilizacji lub nawet rewitalizacji religijności wśród pewnej części młodzieży słowackiej.

Słowa kluczowe: religijność ogólna; religijność doktrynalna; religijność praktyczna; młodzież słowacka; przemiany religijności.