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Reli gious ity

IN HUNGARY

About the research

The study presents the results of several years of religiosity research by the Social Science Research Group of Századvég. Our 2017 research was conducted using a quantitative, computer-assisted, telephone data collection method (CATI) between September and November 2017. After data cleaning, a sample of 53,061 people developed¹. Two years later, in our 2019 questionnaire survey, we interviewed 5,000 adult Hungarian residents, also by using a computer-assisted, telephone method². This summary is based on the volume of the research published in Hungarian³.

1 It took 25 minutes to fill in the questionnaire. A simple random sampling procedure was used for data collection. The final database was later corrected by cell weighting based on region, county, age group, educational attainment, and the gender of the respondents, compared to the 2011 census data tables.

2 The sample represents the entire Hungarian adult population by gender, age group, settlement type and educational attainment. In this case, the errors resulting from the sampling was corrected by using iterative weighting, now based on the 2016 Mikrocenzus data.

3 Gyorgyovich, Miklós (ed.) Vallásosság Magyarországon (Religiosity in Hungary), Századvég, 2020.

The history of Hungarian religiosity research in short

In Hungary, the study of religiosity dates back to the 1970s. By examining the Hungarian tendencies, it can be said that the susceptibility of Hungarians to religion began to strengthen again from the end of the 1970s until the period after the change of regime (1990). Between 1978 and 1995, the number of those who considered themselves as somewhat religious increased from thirty-eight to forty-five % to sixty-five to seventy-two %. The proportion of those going to church on Sundays (or claiming to do so) rose from 8% to 14 fourteen to 16 %. Also, the number of those who attributed various social tasks and roles to the Church increased, as did the confidence in the Church as an institution. The tendency of increasing religiosity due to the change of regime was then replaced by a period of strong stagnation. According to the European Social Survey, there was no significant change between 2002 and 2010. But between 2010 and 2018, there was already a significant decline in belonging to a particular denomination. This result is also confirmed by the data of the European Value Study, although it is nuanced to some extent, as in the case of belonging to a denomination, we can register a decrease of almost

10 % points by 2017 compared to the 2008 data. However, as a whole, the number of both those who considered themselves religious and believers in God, increased during the period under survey.

In accordance with previous research, it can be said that the tendencies of religiosity in Hungary can be identified along two main patterns. There is an increasing proportion of those who are open to transcendence in some form, that is, they believe in God and the afterlife, for example. In addition, the number of those who have some form of religious practice, such as praying or meditating, is growing. In contrast, institutional religious practice is increasingly declining. Both the number of church attendees and the proportion of those who consider themselves members of a denomination show a downward trend. In other words, the form of religion tied to institutions is constantly weakening, and individualized religiosity is becoming more and more widespread⁴.

⁴ Tomka 2010, 407

European perspective: changes in the character and experience of religious faith

In the 1960s, the sociology of religion was paradoxically dominated by the problem of secularization, that is, the assumption that its object, namely religion, ceases to exist. The issue of secularization is typically examined within the theoretical framework of modernization. To put it simply, the “secularization hypothesis” argues that religion is first increasingly pushed in the background as a result of modernization and then becomes marginalized or disappears altogether⁵.

In empirical religion sociology, three approaches have emerged:

1. The first focuses on the temporal nature of modernization. In this model, the question is whether the number of religious people decreases over time.
2. In the second approach, the development of religiosity is examined in the context of certain economic and competitiveness indicators. It is assumed that the economic performance of each country shows

⁵ For a summary and critique of the secularization hypothesis, see Tomka 1996.

a negative correlation with the number of religious people.

3. Finally, the proponents of the third approach try to capture modernization through coordinated changes in various components of social structure. In this case, the central question of the analyses is how the horizontalization of hierarchical structures, increasing individualization, and the pluralization of culture affect the development of the number of religious people.

According to this way of thinking, religion does not disappear, only its institutional frameworks dissolve that were previously carriers of religious doctrines⁶. That is, although the tendencies that predict the disappearance, or at least the decline, of the practice of institutional religion seem plausible, these movements do not go hand in hand with the cessation of individuals' need for the transcendent. However, there is no consensus among the proponents of this approach as to what “means” meet the individuals' need for this type of transcendence.

⁶ Tomka 1996, Davie 1994, Luckmann 1996

There are basically three different hypotheses for this question.

1. People satisfy their need for transcendence by using an existing religious tradition⁷.

2. People satisfy their desire for transcendence not from one but from several different religious traditions, selected from the religious market⁸.

3. People do not satisfy their “need for transcendence” through explicit religious forms but through various “profane sacraments” based on “immanent transcendence”⁹.

That is, according to the secularization paradigm prevalent in the sociology of religion, a trend can be traced in which the institutional form of religion is transformed and takes a shape independent of the institutional system, differentiated according to religious perceptual practice, with an abstract image of God. These results are supported by several studies specifically examining the Central and Eastern European region. Following Miklós Tomka, we can observe two main tendencies. On the one hand, belief in God and the afterlife is becoming more common in many countries, and the proportion of those who pray and meditate regularly is increasing in several countries. On the

other hand, the number of people practicing their religiosity in a community setting is constantly declining. “The proportion of both church attendees and those who consider themselves members of a Church is declining.”¹⁰ In line with this, it can be stated that the importance of the form of religion tied to institutions is constantly decreasing, and individualized religiosity, formulated primarily through faith in God, is becoming more and more widespread.

In our analyses, we examined the proportions of those belonging to a denomination, religious self-characterization, those who go to church at least once a month and those who believe in God. Also, we dealt with the study of individual forms of religion.

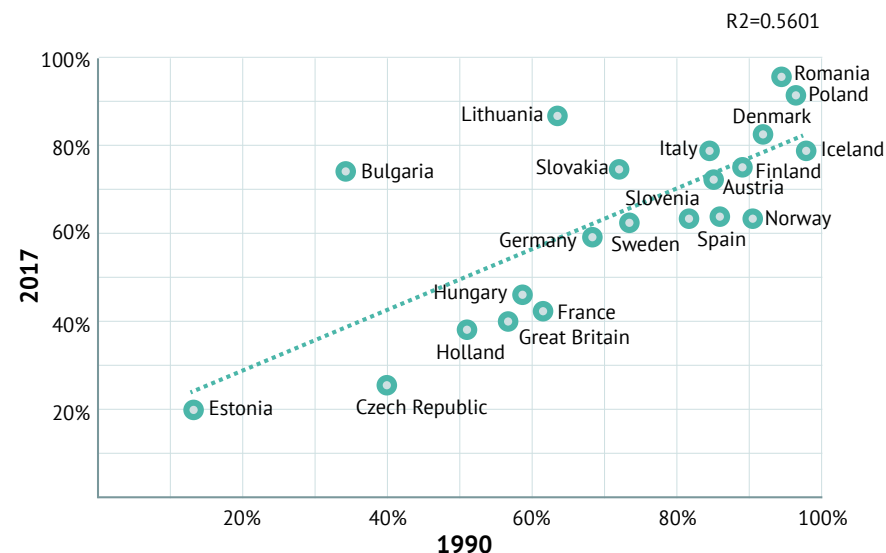
The first figure shows the proportion of those who declared themselves as belonging to a denomination¹¹. During the years under survey, there was an extremely big change in Bulgaria, where the proportion of the respondents belonging to a denomination doubled¹².

¹⁰ Tomka 2010, 407

¹¹ The original wording of the question was “Do you belong to a religious denomination?”.

¹² Bulgaria achieved outstanding results in several respects. All the factors examined suggest that there was a significant change, namely in the direction of religiosity, while in most countries we can talk about a much smaller change and overall, for the country under study, there was a slight decrease in religiosity along various factors. Although it is

Figure 1. Changes in the proportion of those belonging to a denomination in certain European countries between 1990 and 2017



In addition to Bulgaria, the proportion of those belonging to a denomination increased in Lithuania, Slovakia,

not discussed in this study, it is worth mentioning that Bulgaria underwent the most significant changes (more than 25 % points in the case of belief in God, for example) between the 1990 and 1999 data collection. In Bulgaria, the Church and the state were separated in terms of public law in 1947. This measure covered the regulation of marriages and divorces. No religious subjects were taught in public schools, private schools were abolished, and the priesthood was oppressed (especially the Protestant and the Catholic). Democratic change began in 1989, when communism collapsed in Eastern Europe (Cohen, 1999). In addition to these, it is worth noting that it is not surprising that this democratic change had not yet had an impact in the 1990 wave.

Estonia and Romania. There is a slight decrease in the proportion of those belonging to a denomination in Poland and Denmark. In Austria, Italy, Finland, Slovenia and Germany, there is a small decrease (5%-13%) but a relatively high proportion (60%-80%) of those belonging to a denomination. In Sweden, Iceland, Spain and Norway, there is a more significant decrease (18%-26%), but still the proportion of those belonging to a denomination is over 60%. The last group formed on the basis of belonging to a denomination includes France, Hungary, the Netherlands and Great Britain. Here, the proportion of those belonging to a denomination is between 39% and 50%, which has decreased by 12%

⁷ Alston 1991

⁸ Stark – Bainbrige 1967, Gyorgyovich – Pillók 2014

⁹ Taylor 2008, Luckmann 1996

to 18%. There are two countries that cannot be included in any of the groups. In the Czech Republic and Estonia, the proportion of those belonging to a denomination is low (26% and 21%), with a 13% decrease in the Czech Republic, whereas in the case of Estonia, it is a 9% increase compared to the 1990 results. Overall, the proportion of those belonging to a denomination fell from 71% to 64% in the countries surveyed. The proportion of the population belonging to a denomination in certain countries does not fit the history, political or economic situation of the specific country. The proportion of belonging to a denomination cannot really be explained by these factors.

Among the European countries surveyed, it is worth highlighting Poland, where, despite an almost 10% decrease, the proportion of those who profess to be religious was high (96% and 87%)¹³. (Table 1) In Romania, the proportion of religious people is high, which increased by 10% between the two survey years. There was strong growth in Lithuania, where the proportion of religious people rose from 55% to 86%, making it the second most religious country surveyed.

The situation is different if we examine the frequency of church attendance. Again, Poland shows

the most outstanding values. Apart from Poland, the proportion of regular church attendees reached 50% only in Italy, but it also decreased there and was only 42% in 2017. It was low in several countries even in 1990, with a further slight decrease of 1%-7% occurring over the time period. In all countries surveyed, the proportion of regular church attendees decreased by 5%, from 28% to 23%.

Compared to regular church attendees, there was a significantly higher proportion of those who said that they believe in God¹⁴.

The table below (Table 2) shows the results of the other method, in which the lower and upper 20% of the countries were highlighted in each column¹⁵. We examined four aspects: we surveyed faith in God, Heaven, Hell, and the afterlife – the respondents who believed in all four of these were considered religious; those who believed in none of them were considered irreligious. Those who believed in one, two, or three of those listed (in any possible combination) were characterized by individualized religiosity.

¹⁴ The original wording of the question was “Which of the following do you believe and not believe? – God.”

¹⁵ Green colour: The top 20% of the values in the column examined. Red colour: The bottom 20% of the values in the column examined. The order of the countries in the table is given by the aggregate individual and religious value based on the 2017 data (this is not shown in the table).

Table 1. Change in the proportion of the respondents who are religious in different ways, between 1990 and 2017 (%)

	1990			2017		
	Irreligious	Individualized	Religious	Irreligious	Individualized	Religious
Czech Republic	64	27	9	57	31	12
Germany	45	46	9	56	37	8
Holland	33	56	11	50	40	11
Sweden	48	46	5	49	42	9
Norway	37	47	16	44	43	12
Iceland	13	78	9	43	49	9
France	34	54	12	39	45	16
Great Britain	23	57	20	38	44	18
Denmark	36	59	5	38	56	6
Slovenia	42	47	11	36	46	18
Finland	32	50	18	35	52	13
Hungary	40	49	12	30	48	22
Spain	18	62	20	29	52	19
Bulgaria	61	32	7	29	52	19
Slovakia	35	40	25	27	36	37
Austria	18	68	15	25	56	19
Italy	16	54	30	21	48	31
Poland	5	62	33	9	42	49
Romania	10	59	31	6	49	46

¹³ The original wording of the question was “Whether you go to church or not, what would you say about yourself, do you...?”.

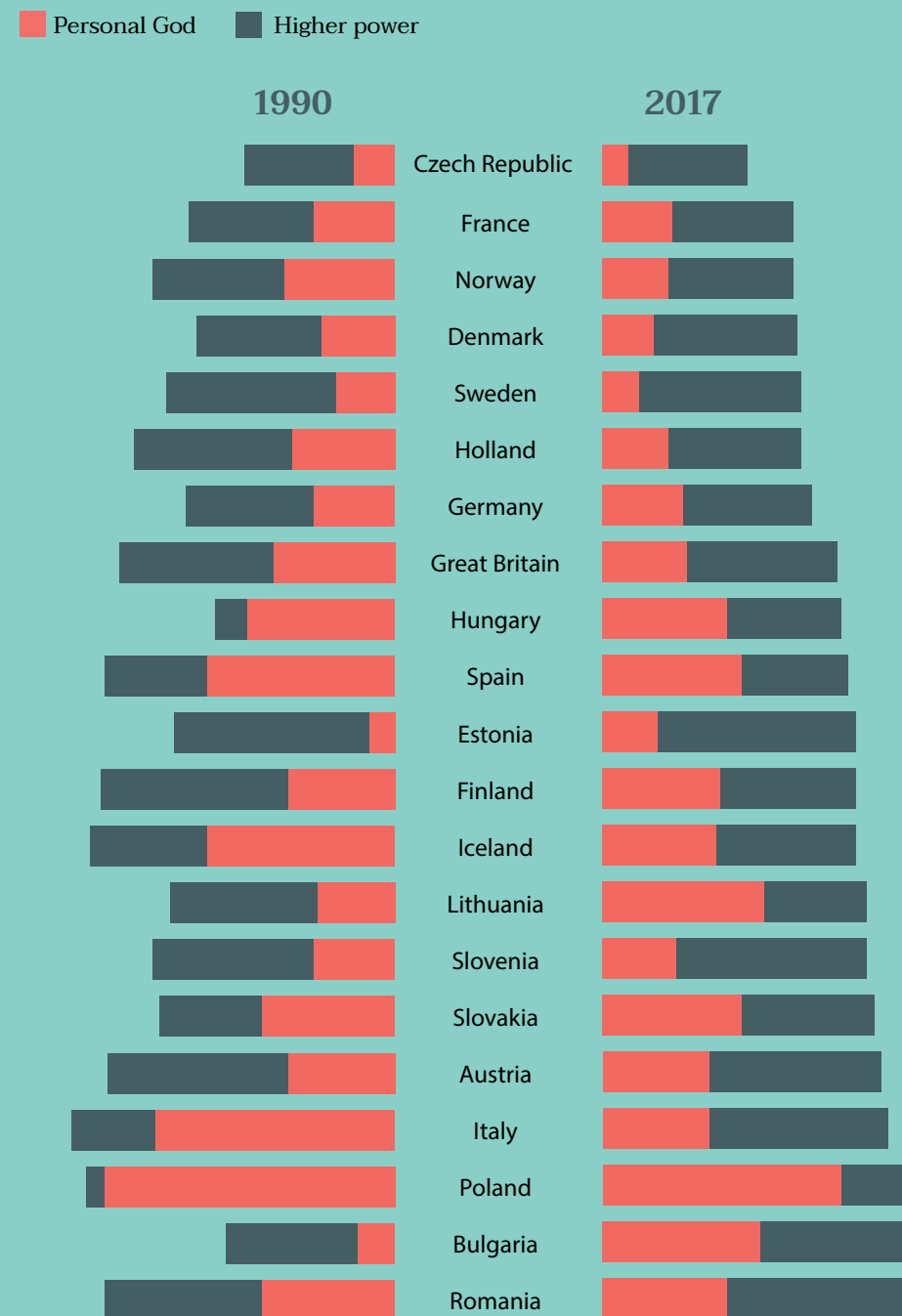
As already stated, the Czech Republic had the highest proportion of irreligious people in 2017. We also asked those surveyed what they believe in¹⁶. (Table 3) The possible answers were a personal God, a higher power, “I don’t know what to think” and nothing. Overall, again, the Czech Republic had the lowest proportion of people who believe in something. Regarding the belief in a personal God, the Czechs were in the bottom fifth again in both survey years. Europe’s religiosity underwent significant changes during the period analysed. The degree of religiosity decreased, but the rate of decline is not exceptionally high for any of the elements. The proportion of those who believe in God and those who belong to a denomination decreased by 6% and 6%, respectively, and that of church attendees by 5%. In terms of institutional and individualized religiosity, there is a decrease of 5% and only 1%, respectively. Individualized religiosity increased in nine countries, while institutional religiosity increased in only two, which

– in addition to the percentage results – suggests that individualized religiosity is gaining ground. The increase in religiosity typically occurred in Central and Eastern Europe, with faith in God increasing in Romania¹⁷, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Germany, which are post-socialist countries. One possible explanation for the change in this group is that growth may not only mean a higher proportion of theists but more respondents who admit that they believe in God. However, this is contradicted by the fact that we are not seeing a rapid but a continuous growth in several countries. In these countries, with the exception of Romania, individualized religiosity spread, and in parallel, institutional religiosity declined.

¹⁶ The original wording of the question was “Which of the following statements are the closest to your belief? 1. There is a God as a person. 2. There is some spiritual creature or life-force. 3. I do not really know what to think. 4. I do not think there is any God, spiritual being or life force.” In the table, each country was ranked on the basis of the sum of the 2017 results (believers), which is not shown, and those who chose neither of the two options are not shown either for transparency.

¹⁷ Due to the significantly widespread faith in God, the case of Romania is also special.

Table 2. Changes in the proportion of the respondents believing in different things, between 1990 and 2017 (%)



Research method

The question is how the characteristics attributed to modern society, such as the functional differentiation of social systems, individualization, the increasing pluralism of the religious market, affect the development of religiosity. In line with this, we perform our analyses at two levels using the multilevel regression method¹⁸. At the first level, we examine how the individualized value system, which focuses on individualization and is based on individual decisions, the attitude towards the functional differentiation of social systems, the acceptance of religious pluralism, and the socio-demographic background, affect the change of different forms of religiosity. At the second level, we explore the extent to which the degree of each country's modernization explains the differences between countries. Religiosity was operationalized through two variables. One variable measures the importance of God and the other the frequency of church attendance. According to our data,

the more heterogeneous the religious market in a given country, the fewer people go to church. The situation in Europe seems to refute R. Stark's thesis of religious economics that due to religious pluralism – the wide range – religiosity is stronger in the United States than in Europe. However, among those who consider God to be of the utmost importance, modernization factors are essentially completely independent of the frequency of church attendance. Moreover, although it is somewhat reduced by the post-material values and the functionally differentiated worldview, the chances of church attendance are increased by a higher level of educational attainment. This confirms the hypothesis that institutional religion in Europe has an increasingly elitist nature and is becoming a kind of indicator of status.

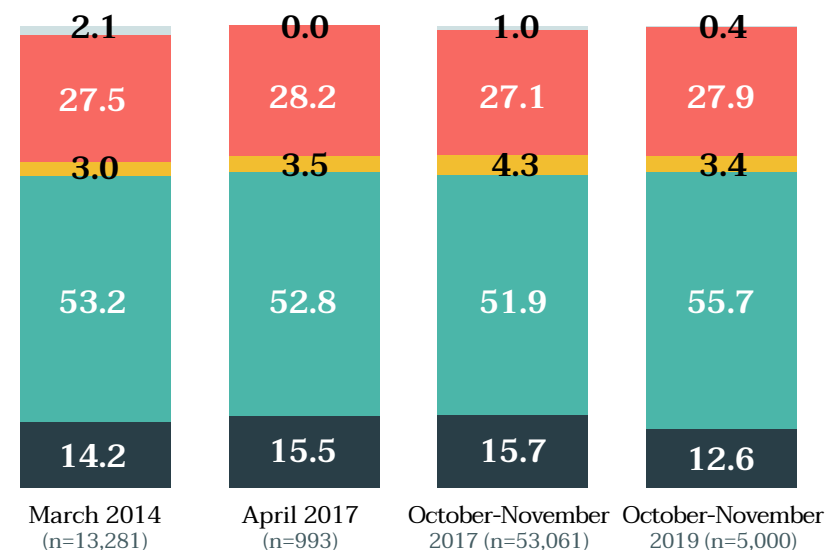
¹⁸ Through multilevel regression, we can simultaneously examine individual and macro-level effects on the evolution of the dependent variable. The HLM 8 program was used for the analyses.

Results: The most important religiosity indicators in Hungary

In both cases, the question structure of our research was based on our own pre-established definition of religion related to the situation in Hungary. In this sense, we consider religion to be a coherent, organized system of the principles of faith, symbols and institutional practices, which typically gives meaning to the creation of

existing things (the world) and people, their existence, the purpose of their existence, and formulates advice or commands for the proper life conduct. We consider religiosity as the relationship to the religion defined above and to the transcendent, its more or less conscious commitment, experience and practice, the complex feeling of

Figure 2. Which of the following statements would best describe you? – compared to the same questions asked by earlier research conducted by Századvég (percentage)



- I am religious, I follow the teachings of my church.
- In my own way, I am religious. I cannot tell whether I am religious or not.
- I am not religious. Does not know / does not answer.

Figure 3. In which Church or denomination were you BAPTIZED or REGISTERED “officially”? – in proportion of the respondents (percentage)

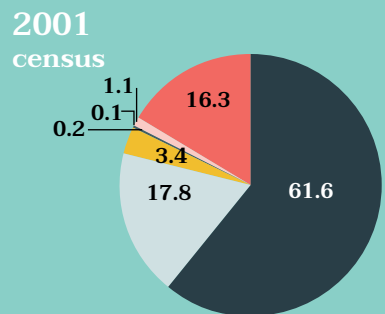
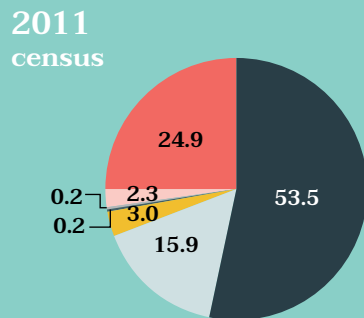
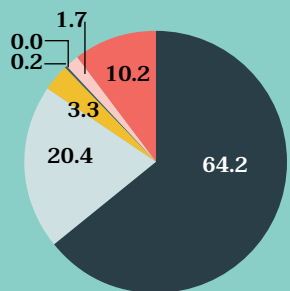


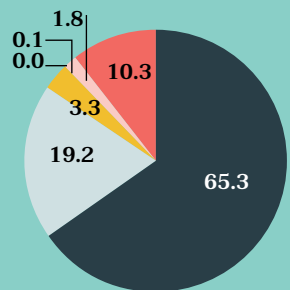
Figure 4. Which Church or denomination do you think you belong to? – in proportion of the respondents (percentage)



2017 (Századvég)



2017 (Századvég)



- Catholic (Roman, Greek, Armenian, Coptic)
- Reformed
- Lutheran
- Greek Orthodox
- Israelite
- Other church, denomination
- Those who do not belong to a church/atheists

its various aspects that has a meaningful effect on the individual’s self and world perception.

Those who identify themselves as non-religious make up over a quarter of the Hungarian adult population.

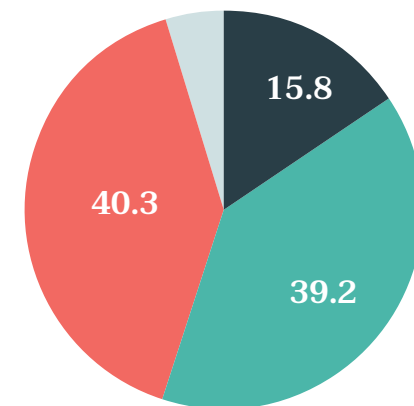
The declining trend of institutional religiosity is in line with the trends shown by previous religious research, which indicate the privatization of religion and the strengthening of the individualized character of religion, rather than the complete loss of religiosity.

It refers to the trend outlined above that if we take religious feelings as a basis, that is, we ask which denomination the respondents think they belong to, the proportion of the religious population declined further since the 2011 census, and our results suggest the same in the two-year period since 2017.

The question describing the relationship to the Bible was also included in the topic of religious identity. The subject of the question is the holiest book of the Christian religion, so the inclusion of people of different religions in the survey promises dubious results. However, as their proportion in Hungarian society is essentially negligible, the study of the issue in the whole population sample does not show a significantly different picture. However, it is an interesting result that more than half of the adults interviewed consider Scripture to be God’s “inspired word”.

Comparing the results with demographic variables, we find that the

Figure 5. If you think of the Bible, which of the following statements is closest to your opinion? (2019, percentage)

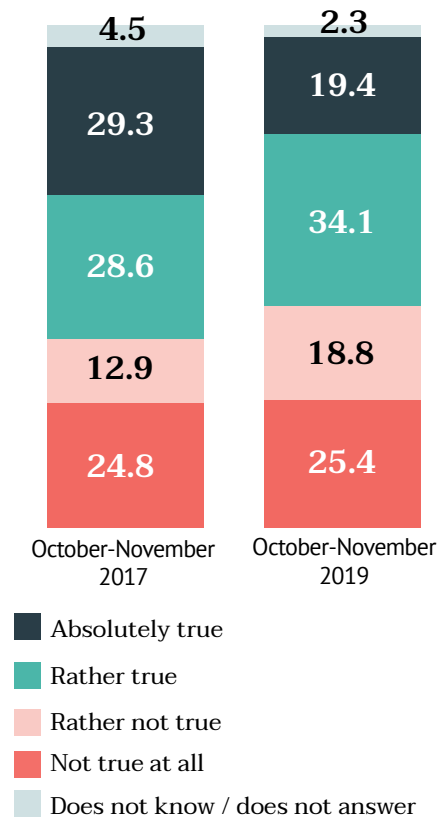


- The Bible is God’s inspired Word, it must be taken literally.
- The Bible is God’s inspired Word, but it does not have to be taken literally.
- The Bible is an ancient book of tales, legends, historical and moral doctrines written by man.
- Does not know / does not answer.

proportion of women, for whom the statement included in the question is to some extent true, is outstanding, 60.1%. In contrast, in the case of educational attainment, only the result of those with the lowest qualification deviate from the average, almost two thirds of them chose the option of “rather” or “completely”.

The respondents are best able to identify with the teachings of the Catholic Church, but it is remarkable that

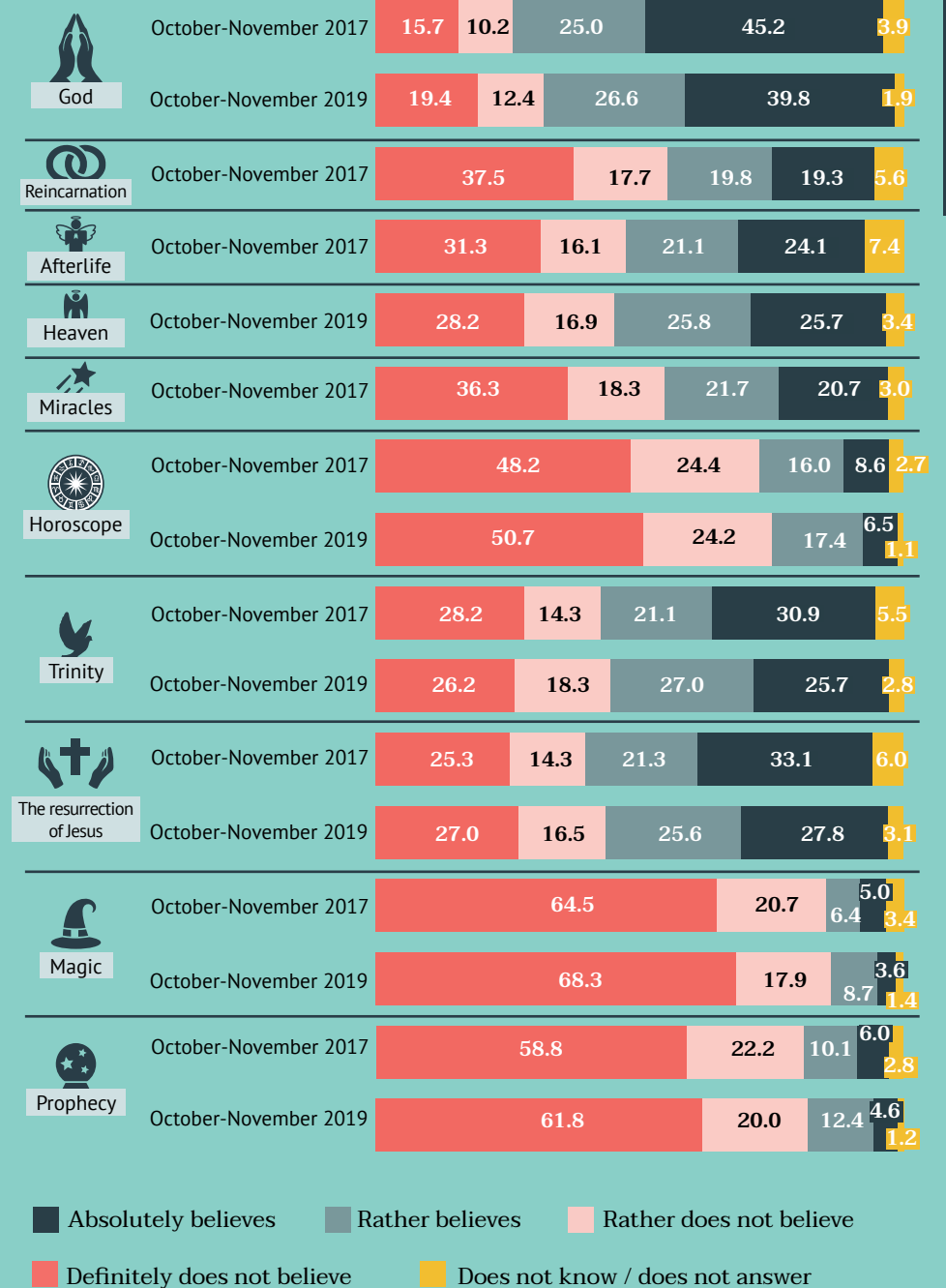
Figure 6. How well does it describe you that religion provides comfort in times of trouble? (percentage)



among those who consider the teaching of several religions to be acceptable, an exceptionally high proportion of them also accept the Reformed and Lutheran doctrines. Of the religions slightly different from our culture, Buddhism is still considered an outstanding favourite. Although Buddhism is accepted only by 7.6% of the Hungarian population and was marked by 5.4% of those accepting only one religion, it was marked by over one third

of those who can identify with the teachings of several religions. Thus, a kind of “Buddhist romance” can be clearly seen in Hungarian society. In this research, we also compared the proportion of belief in traditional Christian dogmas with some new beliefs related to the New Age. We could not, mutatis mutandis, ask about the beliefs in every new idea and dogma, so we tried to approach them in general. The respondents were able to express the perceived depth of their faith on a four-point scale. Treating the “definitely believe” and “rather believe” answers jointly, we recorded the following order: God (66.4%), resurrection of Jesus (53.4%), Trinity (52.7%), Heaven (51.5%), Horoscope (23.9%), Prophecy (17%), Magic (12.3%).

Figure 7. To what extent do you believe in the following? (percentage)



Those who have fluid religiosity

The religiosity of Hungarians is much more differentiated than making polarized statements about the extent thereof. A significant portion of them are neither religious nor irreligious – they can also be called fluid in their “intermediate existence”. The (2017) large-scale data collection that forms the basis of the research provides an opportunity to break this very heterogeneous population into further segments, presenting different nuances of the characteristics of each of their segments, both in terms of the socio-demographic profile and the ten religiosity indicators used in the study. First the social significance of religious fluidity is interpreted and then the ideal-typical groups created through cluster analysis is examined in detail.

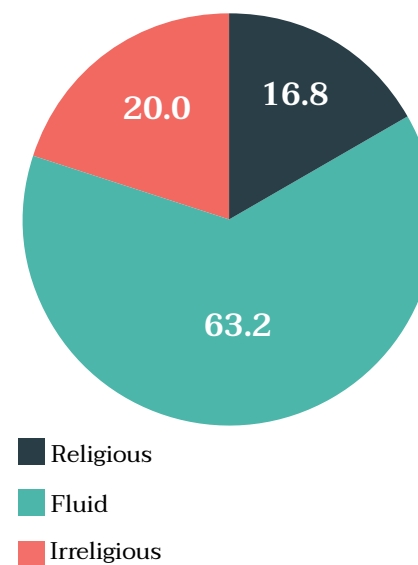
It should also be taken into consideration that the answers do not only, and in many cases perhaps not primarily, serve to describe actual thoughts, emotional attitudes, actions and repetitive practices, but rather to self-position in a mosaic of identities that has been enabled by social discourse, to build identity that repaint the horizons of the past and the future. In theory, for those classified as religious and irreligious, all eight aspects

used for their classification¹⁹ are typically of identification significance, that is, they are willing to take the opportunity to clearly place themselves along one of the indicators on either side of the social field divided by the “blank marker”. A common feature of the cases classified in one of the other five clusters (reliers, those avoiding the Church, Church seekers, believers in God, sponsors) is that they typically deviate from this basic logic: because the indicators used to denote religiosity are less relevant to their identification, and/or because the data for the eight indicators are inconsistent in terms of religiosity and are not unidirectional in terms of identification (in a sense, this also indicates “lopsided” religiosity/irreligiosity). In this study, the focus is specifically on them: on those who are “fluid” in terms of religiosity.

Among the clusters presented in our research, in addition to about 20% of

¹⁹ The cluster analysis covering the entire sample was based on eight indicators: religious self-characterization, God-centredness, institutional practice of religion, religious experience, religious consolation, intention to follow norms, trust in the Church, financial support (c.f. *ibid.*).

Figure 8. The emergence of three basic types of attitudes towards religion in Hungarian society (percentage, n=47,172)



the irreligious and 16.8% of the religious, 63.2% were those who, when included in the intermediate clusters, make up the mass of those with fluid religiosity.

This type of attitude is somewhat more typical for women (7.7),²⁰ those between the ages of 30 and 39 (2.6), 40 and 49 (4.5) and 50 and 59 (4.9), those living in Western (4.3) and Southern Transdanubia (3.7), members of

²⁰ Based on the corrected standardized residues above 2.0, indicating significant correlation (overrepresentation). The values in parentheses are for the specific cells in the crosstab analysis. The higher this number, the more fluid religiosity is characteristic to a given group.

three-person households (3.9), those living in small settlements (villages or homesteads) (5.3), those living at a low standard (the bottom three values on a ten-point scale) (in ascending order of degrees of the scale: 2.7; 2.8; 2.5), members of the working class (5.7), low-income earners (HUF 50,000 or less) in terms of monthly per capita income (7.7), and those with secondary education without a school-leaving exam (5.9).

On the basis of the variances²¹ of the ten examined religiosity indicators – based on attitudes and confessed patterns of behaviour – we can conclude to what extent the attitudes within a given population are divergent for a given aspect. In this case, based on the current or possible future importance of religiosity, the population that seems relevant and thus taken into consideration at this point of the analysis is a combined population of the two clusters that are integrated in terms of religiosity (“religious”) and can be addressed by the churches or religion (“fluid religiosity”) (i.e. the inherently aloof “irreligious” were excluded from the analysis). The ten religiosity indicators used for the analysis were grouped in pairs, according to which dimension we believed they belong to²².

²¹ The square of the mean deviation of the values from the mean.

²² The dimensions were defined after the preparation of the questionnaire and data collection, so in some respects this phase of the work is of a secondary analysis nature.

Figure 9. Variance of religiosity indicators among those who are “non-irreligious” (n=37,576)²³



Accordingly, the following classification was developed: Indicators of

religious self-characterization and God-centredness were considered as the dimension of identification. The indicators of the trust in church and the intention to follow norms – as the expressions of the attitude towards

“non-irreligious”. The grouping of religiosity indicators according to theoretical dimensions is indicated by the colouring of the bars as follows: dimension of identification – light green; dimension of attitude – red; dimension of support – yellow; dimension of feeling – orange; dimension of practice – light blue.

²³ The primary values at the end of the data bars on the chart show the variance of each religiosity indicator – in each case based on three variables with recordable values (-1: rather irreligious, 0: fluid, 1: rather religious). When naming the indicators, the average values are indicated in parentheses, which, according to a given aspect, show the irreligiosity (in the case of values close to minus 1) and religiosity (in the case of a value close to 1) of those who are

the religious community and institution – were listed in the dimension of attitude. The two indicators of the dimension of support were institutional volunteering and financial support. Religious consolation and religious experience as factors expressing personal experience were added to the dimension of feeling. Finally, the dimension of practice can be mentioned, where the two indicators expressing the practice of religion – its individual and institutional aspects – were listed. During the analysis, an index suitable for measuring religious fluidity was developed. Moving through the Religious Fluidity Index (RFI), an overview

is provided on the diverse mean values of the different categories of the major socio-demographic variables, i.e. their formability with different chances. The fluidity index is a scale from 0 to 10. Its values were calculated on the basis of the ten religiosity indicators used in the analysis. The higher the value of the RFI, the more characteristic the non-commitment of the given group along the various indicators of religiosity – that is, at least in theory, the variability and formability of its religiosity. The lower the value in question, the more aspects of religiosity the members of a given group have a relatively strong belief in – that

Figure 10. RFI averages by age groups (n = 53,061)

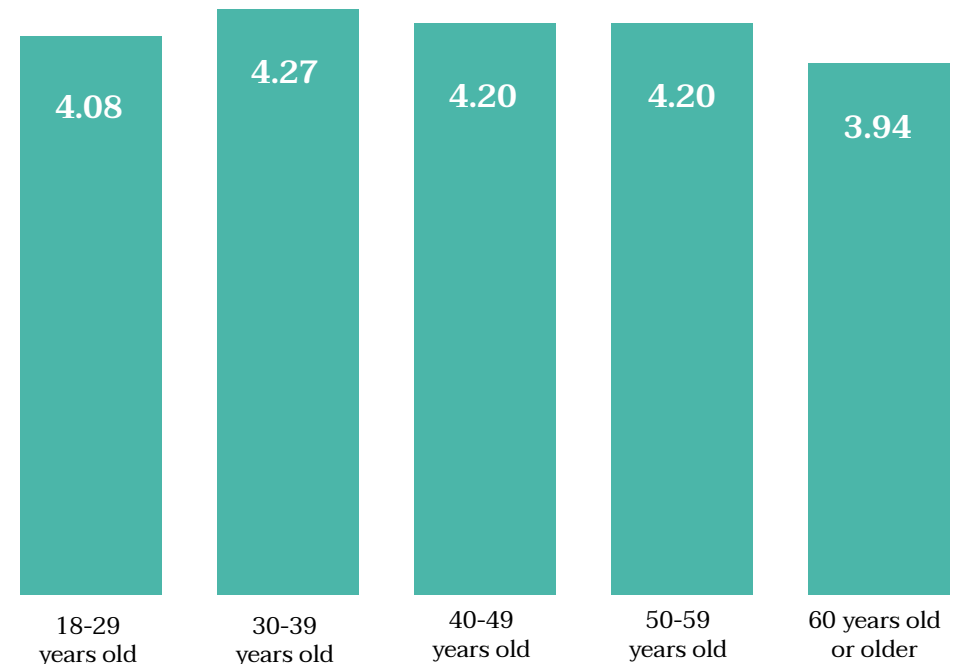
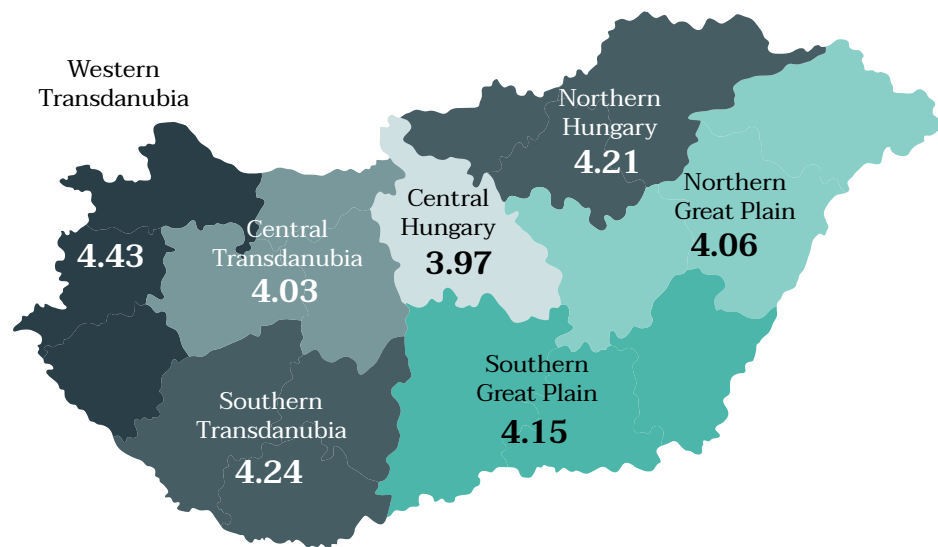


Figure 11. RFI means by regions (n=53,061)



is, in theory, the perception of religion as an empty marker of identification significance²⁴. It can be said that, based on the average values of the RFI, the religiosity of women (4.15) is somewhat more fluid than that of men (4.07). In terms of age groups, the members of the generation born in the last decade of the Kádár era (1956-1990) can be considered to be more variable and more

religious (the RFI average of those between the ages of 30 and 39 is 4.27), while, somewhat expected, members of the oldest age group have the most solid preferences (the RFI average is 3.94 among those in their sixties). Regarding the four basic types of settlements, the religiosity of those living in smaller settlements (villages, farms) is the most fluid (RFI average: 4.27), and the firmest (religious or irreligious) belief is characteristic of those living in the capital (RFI average: 3.85). A similar value of those living in a county seat is 4.06, and of those living in other cities is 4.09. In a regional comparison, the religiosity of those living in Western Transdanubia (4.43) and Southern Transdanubia (4.24)

24 That is, if the value was zero within a group, it would mean that all members of the group consider themselves either religious or irreligious along all ten religiosity indicators. If the value was 10, it would mean that each group member is considered fluid in terms of religion, according to each indicator.

Figure 12. RFI mean by household size (n=52,808)



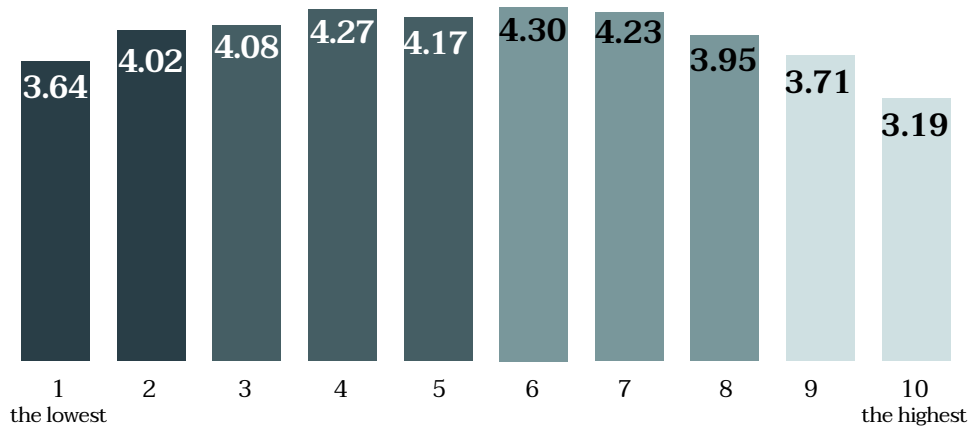
and in Northern Hungary (4.21) seems to be the most fluid²⁵. Significant differences can also be observed based on household size. The religiosity/irreligiosity of those living alone can be most determined by the group's RFI mean of 3.74. The other extreme can be registered for four-person households (4.31), their religiosity seems to be the most fluid, based on the data. Along the various socio-demographic variables related to social status,

25 All this may be related to the settlement structure in Hungary, where smaller settlements (in which religious fluidity is already characteristic) are typically concentrated in the regions in question (c.f. Gerse – Szilágyi, 2015).

especially living standards and social class, it can be shown that the religiosity of those belonging to the middle categories is more fluid than that of the lower and upper social strata²⁶. While the RFI mean for the lower class is only 3.72, the corresponding value is 4.14 for the working class and 4.24 for the lower middle class. The mean of the middle class is already somewhat lower (4.16), that of the upper middle class is 4.02, and that of the narrow upper class is only 2.88. A similar picture is outlined on the basis of the living standard variable based on self-declaration: the four highest values are in the four middle categories (between 4.17 and 4.30), but the chart also shows that the religiosity of the more deprived is more fluid than that of the wealthy. In addition to the living standard variable, which can be mainly related to financial conditions and lifestyle, the values of the four categories of the highest educational attainment also

26 Such a correlation between religious fluidity and social status seems to be explained, at least in part, by the social mobility and openness that characterizes the middle strata more than others, and by the greater chance of encountering and adopting different life forms. However, in their analysis, Gábor Hajdu and Boldizsár Megyesi concluded that the supply of social and relationship capital in Hungary, apart from those lagging behind and living in extreme poverty, does not affect any lower strata of the middle class that is poor in relationships, while the elite cannot be considered particularly closed in this respect (Hajdu – Megyesi, 2017:12.).

Figure 13. RFI means by living standard categories (n=51,714)



confirm that it is mainly the “middle groups” of society who have flexible attitudes towards religious factors. At the same time, the data on qualifications also nuance those presented earlier, as graduates have a higher variability value (4.16) than those with maximum primary education (3.86). It

can be concluded that, with regard to religiosity among the highly educated, the fluid attitude system that is characteristic of the middle strata prevails. During the segmentation of the 63.2% of the society with fluid religiosity, it was considered a key aspect that the created clusters should be as

Figure 14. RFI means by the highest completed educational attainment (n=53,061)

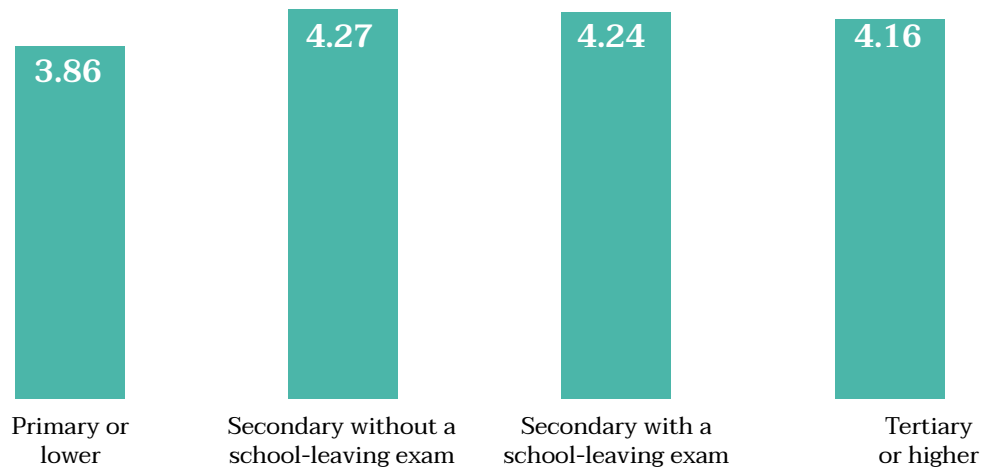
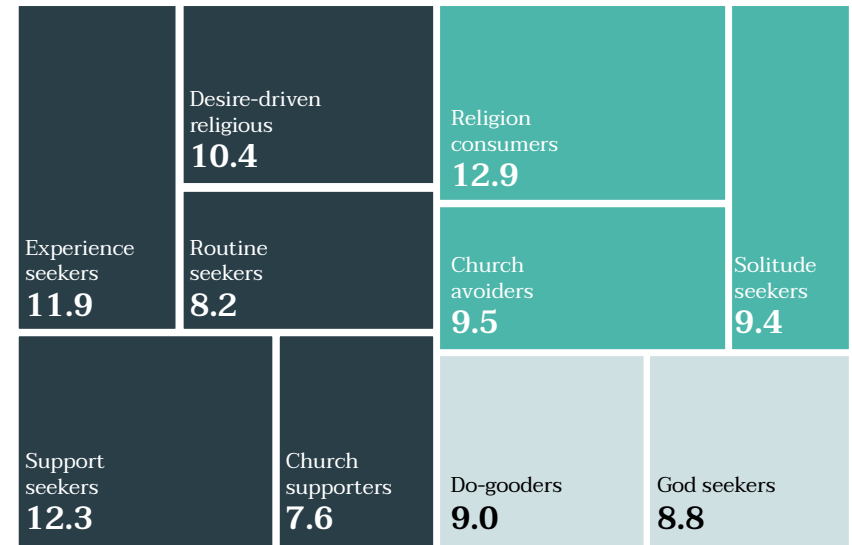


Figure 15. Distribution of the subtypes of those with fluid religiosity (percentage, n=29,682)



■ bigger susceptibility ■ moderate susceptibility ■ smaller susceptibility

differentiated as possible and, at the same time, divide the surveyed population into well-interpreted groups. All ten three-position religiosity indicators mentioned at the beginning of the study were included in the statistical procedure, and those with fluidity were classified into a total of ten clusters using the so-called K-means method. Based on the aggregated values of the cluster centres, the clusters can also be ranked according to the degree of their general susceptibility to religiosity²⁷. The group called

desire-driven religious (2.82) makes up 10.4% of those with fluidity, who are considered to be the most open cluster to religiosity. They are followed by experience seekers (2.59), routine seekers (1.57), and support seekers (0.65), who make up 11.9, 8.2, and 12.3% of the subsample, respectively. church supporters (0.04), who make up 7.6% of those with fluid religiosity, can be listed among the groups with relatively higher affinity. The clusters marked with

²⁷ The aggregated value of the cluster centres of each group is shown in parentheses. The higher the given value, the greater the general suscep-

tibility to religion (the relevant value would be 10 if everyone in the given cluster was meant to be religious, -10 if everyone was meant to be irreligious and 0 if everyone was meant to be fluid along all religiosity indicators.

Table 3. Interpreting the fluidity of individual clusters

Clusters (lines) / characteristics (columns)	How can an ideal-typical cluster member be characterized?	What are his/her existing points of connection to religion?	What other aspects make it possible to approach religion?	Fluidity index (cluster mean)
Desire-driven religious	Poor people with large families living in villages in Northern Hungary	He/she is practicing religion, in a community-incorporated way	Strengthening the dimension of feeling, religious identity and institutional bonding	6.28
Experience seekers	Deprived retired woman living in Northern Hungary	Deeply experienced, specifically individualized religious practice	Strengthening institutional bonding and religious identity	4.13
Routine seekers	Retired woman living in a village in Western Transdanubia	Formalized, institutional religious practice	Strengthening religious identity and community commitment	4.83
Support seekers	Highly educated, middle-class elderly woman living in a city	Individualized religious practice and distancing commitment	Strengthening emotional support and institutional trust	5.75
Church supporters	Young man living in a Transdanubian village at a moderate standard	Willing to financially support the maintenance of the church	Eliminating disinterest, finding religious opportunities	7.41
Church avoiders	Unskilled young woman living alone and at a low standard	Strongly individualized faith in God	Finding emotional support, strengthening trust	4.26
Religion consumers	Middle-class wealthy young man living in the capital	Slightly religious feeling	Strengthening religious identity and institutional trust, finding elements of experience nature	6.42
Solitude seekers	Educated young man under the age of 40, living in the capital at a medium standard	Individualized and occasional religious practice	Strengthening institutional bonding and religious identity	5.76
God seekers	Young man with a low level of education and of low social status, living in the capital	Moderately preserved faith in God	Strengthening religious identity, general trust and support function	4.01
Do-gooders	Middle-aged, highly educated, wealthy man living in the capital	Financial support of the church	Strengthening religious identity and institutional trust	4.16

church avoiders (-1.74), religion consumers (-1.86) and solitude seekers (-2.73) are characterized by moderate susceptibility. They make up 9.5, 12.9, and 9.4% of the subsample, respectively. Finally, even within the large mass considered fluid, two groups can be distinguished that, on the whole, show less interest in religion than others: God seekers (-4.86) make up 8.8% of the population in question, and do-gooders (-5.00) make up about 9%.

In addition to a more detailed description of the data on the ten clusters of those with fluid religiosity, it is expedient to summarize in a single table – even with a view to simplifying the interpretation – what we know about each group, what we can consider to be the most important characteristics in relation to religion and transcendence. In the table above (Table 3.), we have tried to highlight the meaning of the ten indicators along which the members of each group have a relatively significant – already existing – connection point, and those through which the indifference or uncertainty in the responses, or the relatively minor distancing, suggest a possible – future – susceptibility of an interpretable degree. To facilitate the possibility of capturing, for each cluster in the table, we attempted to depict an imaginary, ideal-typical person who could be the representation of a given subtype of fluidity based on the cross-section of the groups overrepresented according to

sociodemographic data. In addition to the order of the clusters' religious susceptibility aggregated by groups, the individual values of the fluidity index in the last column may provide further information – the higher the given value, theoretically, the less solid preference placed on the religious-irreligious axis those have who belong to the given circle.

Summary

As a result of our research, we can say that religiosity has developed similarly in Hungary as in Europe in general. From the 1960s, religiosity declined here as well, and then increased somewhat after the regime change (1990). However, even with this increase, Hungarian religiosity is around the European average.

Religiosity in Hungary differs from the religiosity of European countries not only in its degree but also in its nature. Religion is also strongly privatized here, institutional religiosity is weak, and religious pluralism is quite broad, with the New Age also playing a significant role.

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