

Mónika Földvári

CHANGING MEANING OF RELIGIOUS CATEGORIES AND CONCEPTS

*The presentation has been realized under the research project "Religious Change in Hungary"
(registration number: K 119679), supported by the NKFI Fund of the National Research, Development and
Innovation Office*



PÁZMÁNY PÉTER
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



NATIONAL RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT
AND INNOVATION OFFICE
HUNGARY

PROJECT
FINANCED FROM
THE NRDI FUND

MOMENTUM OF INNOVATION

Research Questions - Change of Religious Concepts and Types of Religiosity

I/1. **What do the concepts mean for people** today, that we widely use in the empirical research of religiosity?

Religious

Heaven

Not
religious

Meditation

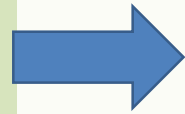
God

Life after
death

Research Questions - Change of Religious Concepts and Types of Religiosity

With which statement could you best describe yourself?

1. I am religious, I follow the teachings of the church.
2. I am religious on my own way
3. I cannot tell if I am religious or not
4. I am not religious, I am not interested
5. I am not religious, because I am convinced that the church is not right (Tomka 2000)



Types of religiosity

Church-related religiousness

Religious on their own way

Non-religious

Types of religiosity

Church-oriented Christianity

Religious on their own way

Non-religious



multivariate statistical methods – separating types of religiosity in several dimensions

(Földvári-Rosta 1998, 2004; Földvári 2003, 2004)



NATIONAL RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION OFFICE
HUNGARY

PROJECT FINANCED FROM THE NRDI FUND

MOMENTUM OF INNOVATION

Research Questions - Change of Religious Concepts and Types of Religiosity

I/2. Has the meaning of religious concepts and categories changed over time?

if yes:

To what extent?

Shift between generations change during the life cycle?

Do we measure the same phenomenon as decades ago?



NATIONAL RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT
AND INNOVATION OFFICE
HUNGARY

PROJECT
FINANCED FROM
THE NRDI FUND
MOMENTUM OF INNOVATION

Research Questions - Change of Religious Concepts and Types of Religiosity

II. How can different research methods follow the changing religiosity: are there concepts, categories that can describe modern religiosity better than the widely used survey questions?

methods and concepts of the study of religion are fundamentally suitable for the research of church related religiosity

central task of religion sociology: to elaborate a more general conception and a measuring tool of contemporary religion, that is getting out of institutional control

Research Questions - Qualitative research in „Religious change in Hungary” project

INTERVIEWS WITH THREE GENERATIONS OF FAMILIES

1. What is the meaning of the widely used categories (church related religiousness, religiousness on their own and non-religious type) for the members of different generations?
2. What (other) features of religion seem important in the interviews?

Method of Analysis

Thematic analysis:
data-driven, inductive method

Phases of thematic analysis

- Familiarisation with the data
- Coding: generating labels (lexical descriptions)
- Searching for themes (meaningful constructions of patterns in the interview data)
- Reviewing themes
- Defining and naming themes
- Writing up

(Mann 2016)

Interpretive approach

Respondents of groups with different social, cultural background can perceive themselves, their circumstances, the events of their lives in different ways



Comparing the the meaning of religious constructs of different social groups



NATIONAL RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT
AND INNOVATION OFFICE
HUNGARY

PROJECT
FINANCED FROM
THE NRDI FUND

MOMENTUM OF INNOVATION

Analysed in-depth interviews: three generations from 9 families

Family	First generation (64-87 years)	Second generation (47-61 years)	Third generation (19-35 years)
1.	Religious according to the teachings of church (greek catholic) – village - woman	Religious according to the teachings of church (greek catholic) – town - man	Religious according to the teachings of church (?) (greek catholic) – town - woman
2.	Religious according to the teachings of church (catholic) – town - woman	Religious according to the teachings of church (catholic) – agglomeration - woman	Not religious (ateist) – town - man
3.	Religious according to the teachings of church (catholic) – village - woman	Religious according to the teachings of church (catholic) – village - woman	Religious on their own way (catholic, Khrisna) – village – man
4.	Religious according to the teachings of church (calvinist) – town - woman	Religious on their own way (calvinist) – agglomeration - woman	Religious on their own way (catholic) – agglomeration - woman
5.	Religious on their own way (catholic) – town - woman	Religious on their own way (catholic) – town - man	Not religious – town - woman
6.	Religious according to the teachings of church (catholic) – village - woman	Religious on their own way (catholic) – village - woman	Religious on their own way (catholic) – village - woman
7.	Not religious – town - woman	Not religious (ateist) – town - man	Not religious (ateist) – town - man
8.	Religious on their own way (calvinist) – village - woman	Not religious - village - man	Not religious (buddhist) – town - woman
9.	Religious on their own way (catholic) – village - woman	Not religious - village - woman	Religious on their own way (calvinist) – village - woman

Religious According to the teachings of Church

	1st generation (64-87 years, 6 persons)	2nd generation (47-61 years, 3 persons)	3rd generation (19 years, 1 person)
Religiosity	Religion: natural part of life Traditional, institutional elements Religious: faith+going to church	Religion: present in every aspect of life Conscious decision	If God is a part of the life
Faith	God who helps Traditional elements	Connected to life God+traditional elements	God, traditional elements
Teaching of the church	Acception but incomplete knowledge Norms are important	Criticism	Not all of them are accepted
Practice	Church attending (inward) Personal prayer	Traditional forms+prayer alone and in communities	Traditional forms+prayer (communities)
Religious treat, experience	Connected to practice	Intense (sometimes mystical) experiences	Closeness of God in an everyday situation
Meaning of suffering	Can help, Punishment	Helps, it can be offered for others	Confirms people

Religious on their own way

	1st generation (64-87 years, 2 persons)	2nd generation (47-61 years, 3 persons)	3rd generation (19-35 years, 4 persons)
Religiosity	Distance from religious culture	Impact of living conditions Faith and its consequences	Seeking ways Rejection of religious institutions
Faith	God + not only traditional beliefs	God (impersonal power)+ not only christian beliefs	God+beliefs from several religions (reincarnation)
Teaching of the church	Norms are important (the ten commandments)	Religion-related universal values are important	Religion-related universal values are important
Practice	Rare, depends on living conditions Personal prayer	Rare, in case of crisis: more often Personal prayer	Refuse of compulsory, institutional forms Personal prayer
Religious treat, experience	Connected to personal relationship with God	Negative experiences connected to institutional religion	Positive personal experiences
Meaning of suffering	Diverse	Diverse Rejection of suffering	Helps

Not religious

	1st generation (64-87 years, 1 person)	2nd generation (47-61 years, 3 persons)	3rd generation (19-35 years, 4 persons)
Religiosity	Religion is valuable	Atheists: religion: crutch in life Rejection of churches	Religion: crutch in life Atheists: rejection of churches , questioning the value of religion
Faith	Supernatural (not connected with life) Inconsistent elements	Beliefs are mainly not transcendent	Beliefs are mainly not transcendent
Teaching of the church	Religion-related universal values are important	Universal values (justice, honesty, helping others)	Universal values
Practice	-	(funeral, wedding, baptism)	Rejection of institutional ceremonies meditation
Religious treat, experience	-	-	Spiritual experiences
Meaning of life	Family, children	Family, children Life has no meaning	To be happy and make others happy

Other important aspects of religiosity based on the interviews

1. **Consciousness:** important difference between the respondents who personally, consciously choose their religion or worldview and those who inherited their religion or simply not interested

"The real turning point was in 1976 on Good Friday...On Good Friday in 50% from rebellion, in 50% from devotion three of us did not go to dinner...we escaped, went to the church and spent the dinner time there...till then I was traditionally religious, who was interested...this firm decision rearranged me from the inside ...It was a completely personal decision."

"This was the first time when I pronounced that God cannot be perfectly Good and omnipotent if the world around me looks like this...I must not cling to the obsession that God exists...I can not maintain it, it is not logical. Then I felt relief when I said I did not believe in God"

Other important aspects of religiosity based on the interviews

2. **Spitituality**: personal experiences of transcendent reality

„I was travelling by a bus and I heard in my ear a song that title is „as stupid you are, I love you so much”....I thought, what if God had sent it to me, that everything is OK and he loved me even if I was so stupid.”

„At the university there were scientific competitions and I had to give a lecture, and I remember, before it started I sat down to meditate. I tried to concentrate intensively. There can be something spiritual in that.”

Other important aspects of religiosity based on the interviews

3. How **close** is the worldview/religion **to everyday life**, to what extent affects the lifestyle, experiences and decisions

"I think that it is the greatest miracle that despite all the difficulties ...our family is together... this is the greatest gift that we get by believing what we believe. And we try to live that way."

Other important aspects of religiosity based on the interviews

4. Is the respondent a member of a **religious community** that can be characterized by **personal relationships**?

"The community was around us... going to the meetings was a retaining force... We absolutely felt that we needed the community. You cannot be a Christian alone."

Conclusions

1. church related religiosity, religiosity on their own, not religious types are relevant: **the level of identification with institutional religiosity** as people experienced it in their surroundings
2. There are other important elements of religiosity: consciousness, spirituality, connection to everyday life, personal relationships in religious communities - they show **how people personally affected** by their religion or worldview.

<https://vwm.btk.ppke.hu>



PÁZMÁNY PÉTER
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



NATIONAL RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT
AND INNOVATION OFFICE
HUNGARY

PROJECT
FINANCED FROM
THE NRDI FUND
MOMENTUM OF INNOVATION