

# Church and Religion situation before and after 1990 in the case of Hungary

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## 1. Church Social history after 1945<sup>1</sup>

At the very beginning of this paper we are going to discuss the conclusive correlation between different dimensions of social and religious change. For this reason we would distribute the hungarian social history into 5 consecutive intervals: 1. Pre-World War II society and religion., 2. Society under totalitarian rule in late forties and early fifties., 3. Attempted Communist consumer society in the sixties and seventies, 4., The period of „liberalization” and decomposition of Communism., 5. Post –Communist society

„The key point is here –following Tomka’s view- de-Christianisation during Communism was basically not a part of secularisation, that would mean growing autonomy, differentiation, and segmentalisation of society, but of social decomposition and anomie. Accordingly, a religious revival occurred hand-in-hand with social recovery.”<sup>2</sup> So, as Tomka stated, after the political turning point (1990) we had a religious revival because of the hungarian society recovered. However, referring to the contemporary religious survey data (after 2000) we can not agree with this point of view what we will explain later in this paper.

### 1.1. Pre-World War II: society and religion

Hungary has had a pre-modern, prevailing rural and community-type „peasant society” before 1945. The population was mostly immobile, village –dwellers, earning their living in agriculture. Kinship, local communitiy and tradition were the undisturbed of social and cultural stability.

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<sup>1</sup> This part of this paper mainly based on Miklós Tomka’ s publications. (Edited by Zsuzsanna Bögre)

<sup>2</sup> Tomka (1997)

**Table I. Occupational Pattern in Hungary, (1949-1990) %**

strata	1949	1960	1970	1980	1990
managerial,professional	2	3	5	8	11
Clerical	8	14	21	22	22
Self-employed artisans, shopkeepers	8	2	2	2	4
skilled workers	11	16	19	23	26
semi or unskilled workers	17	27	29	28	24
self-employed farmers	47	20	2	1	1
agriculturak workers	7	18	22	16	12
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Agriculture altogether	54	40	24	17	13

Tomka (1997) 209.

The Church was strong what meant high level of religious participation in every kind of religious practice. Church ran 60% of all school, and half of all social institutions, and financed them from their own properties. Churches were the most important social institutions both in an economic and in a cultural sense. Non-belief was both officially and unofficially almost nonexistent. Each Church, The Catholic, Protestant and Ortodox ones, and the Jewish community, could be characterised by unit. Unity and a centralised and well controlled system got across in teaching and beliefs, in community and in organisation.

**Table II. The Division of Religious Communion in Hungary between 1930 and 1949 (%)**

Communion	Populatio n Census- 1930 (Population: 8688319)	Population census- 1941 (Population: 9319992)	Population census- 1949 (Population: 9204799)
Roman Catholic	64.9	65.7	67.8
Greek Catholic	2.3	2.5	2.7
Ortodox (Greek orthodox)	0.5	0.4	0.4
Evangelical	6.1	6.0	5.2
Reformed	20.9	20.8	21.9
Jewish	5.1	4.3	1.5
Unitarian	0.1	0.1	0.1
Other	0.1	0.2	0.4

Szabó (2016.) 85.

## 1.2. Society under totalitarian rule in late forties and early fifties

Soviet occupation and a totalitarian system built by Soviet support. The Communist takeover succeeded with Soviet assistance again the Hungarian people. The new regime intended to remodel society. Private ownership was abolished. Independent social, cultural and political organisation were banned. Social position based on wealth and traditional merits became a reason for persecution. Ecnomy and culture were concentrated in the hand of a totalitarian system as were politics and education. Hungarian totalitarian communism was buried by the 1956 revolution.

During this phase of Communism churches became the only institutions of opposition and nonconformism and targets of religious persecution. Hundreds of priest were imprisoned and tortured. Churches symbolised national cultural heritage and the devotion to continuity- in contrast with the revolutionary messianism of Communism. Even non-believers joined the church for its sociopolitical functions. As an expression of anti-Communism, religious practice increased in the late forties and early fifties reaching higher levels than ever before.

The state tried to break the Church unity by creating movements of „peace priests”. This remained small dissenting group often forced by torture and manipulation. Society felt itself oppressed and supported the only institution which encountered tyranny.

This period came to an end with the suppression of the Hungarian revolution. The collapse of open opposition and the general helplessness after 1956 resulted in a cultural and religious crisis as well.

### **1.3. Attempted Communist consumer society in the sixties and seventies**

In the third stage, the system of the sixties and the seventies tried to combine Communist rule and organization with the wealth of consumer society. This mixture was called „Gulash Communism”. Motives for this arrangement came both from the ruled and the ruler. The suppression of the Hungarian Revolution and the insight to be obliged to live for an unlimited future in Soviet system produced despair and apathy. The destruction of private agriculture and peasant households by the coerced organisation of kolkhozi unleashed a broad scale migration into cities and a big social mobility. Forced industrialisation and urbanisation contributed to social atomisation. Totalitarian control interrupted the rebirth of all kind of communities, social groups, and networks, all labeled by the authorities as conspiracy against the state. In the flow of Communist modernisation the social fabric became destroyed. The state systematically prevented the reproduction of an autonomous new system by compulsion. Individual, though, were able to adapt and find their luck one by one. The perception of such circumstances stimulated extreme individualism and the flight into privacy. Individualism and atomisation were possibly unintended outcomes of the system but welcomed by the state and party leader since the social abstinence of the people guaranteed relative political stability.

People saw no alternative to pretend formal acceptance of Communism. General accomodation with the sociopolitical system had its equivalent in the field of religion as well: Christian-Marxist dialogue, strongly manipulated by the state. The Vatican and Hungarian state tarted a dialogue as well. Its early fruit was an agreement. The loss of oppositional hopes, Communist „modernasion”, the destruction of cultural tradition and the atomisation of society had, as a side –effect, a drastic secularisation.

The public role of the churches disappeared almost completely. The sate managed to isolate them. Religiosity diminished to 10 to 15 percent of its former size.

## 1.4. The period of „liberalization” and decomposition of Communism in the eighties

The methods of the political power changed. In this period a new generation appeared who had neither the traumatic memories of WWII and the Holocaust, or Stalinism and 1956. This same youth had no direct ties to pre-war tradition and society, either. A big generation gap, the apathy of the parents, and Communist indoctrination implanted in turn much distrust both of the recent past and of the European Christian culture. This young generation succeeded in bypassing Marxist ideology and the centralized party state and planned economy. An “autonomous” informal system of society emerged both economy (second society next to first society) and in culture and public life (by Samizdat literature) and in ideology and world view (by base communities and religious underground initiatives). Communist political and socioeconomic order became more and more an empty facade. Inherent laws of private economy and autonomous social group undermined the power of authoritarian politics.

On the other hand a new process appeared by the end of 1978. We could say rapid de-Christianisation came up. In most fields of religious life, revival started in contrast to the former decline. Religious communities with their religious and profane activities became precursors of social reconstruction and won accordingly public acceptance and reputation. The general loss of credibility and support of the Communist system was counterbalanced by the exaggerated prestige of the churches and by excessive expectations from them. In a state of euphoria, people supposed that the churches could translate their nostalgias into reality, re-establish the undifferentiated culture and organic society of earlier history and heal all the injuries caused by Communism and „its” modernation. These hopes also contributed to the increase of religious participation.

## 2. Religion and Church in the Post-Communist Society<sup>3</sup>

### 2.1. Data for Religion right after 1990

The change of role and organization of the economy and the state set loose social differentiation and growing unemployment. There are enough motives for the development of a civil society of mature individuals and social self-determination. Most people are, however, not yet prepared to take responsibilities and risks. The emergence of a participatory democracy is a long process. The abolition of paternalist communist structures left gaps in social policy and the social security system.

This stage was introduced by an overall sympathy for religion and „historic churches” as models of social reconstruction and representatives of cultural heritage. In a legal and political context, the state attempted to re-establish churches as public actors. This endeavor coincided with the opinion of the majority. The people and the media waited for the social and political contributions of the churches in the creation of a democratic new order. Churches were overcharged with these demands. Their first efforts were concentrated on their own restoration. They did not have much energy to care about growing social and societal problems. In contrast, they put great emphasis on their own institutions and requested financial support from the state for this. The restitution of

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<sup>3</sup> This part of this paper by Bögre Zsuzsanna

church property, nationalised at the beginnings of Communism had been decided in one of the last acts of the communist parliament. Each building became, however, a source of conflict with the present users. In the resulting quarrels, churches lost much of the credit they had won in the previous years. Now, churches are participants of the overall social competition.

**Table III. Distributions of Denominations/Adult Population in Hungary (%)**

Denominations/Years	1972	1980	1984	1991
Catholic	67.5	72.6	72.8	71.0
Reformed	22.1	20.0	19.7	20.3
Evangelical	4.3	4.7	4.3	3.9
Israelite	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.3
Others	-	0.2	0.3	0.5
No affiliation	0.5	1.4	2.0	3.4
Unknown	4.6	0.6	0.4	0.6
Total %	100	100	100	100
N=	3424	9886	8992	4995

Tomka (2006) 220. According to the Public Opinion between 1978-1991

**Table IV. How often did the respondent go to church in 1992? (%)**

Type of occupation	Never	Almost never	1-3 times a month	Weekly	Total
Intellectual	41.5	41.5	7.7	9.4	100.0
Between	39.6	51.1	4.7	4.7	100.0
Worker	39.6	47.3	7.7	5.4	100.0
Total (N=2.077)	40.2	45.9	7.3	6.5	100.0

Hegedűs (2001) 117. Hungarian Household Panels Study (HHP) 1992.,

**Table V. How often did the respondent go to church in 1997? (%)**

Type of occupation	Never	Almost never	1-3 times a month	Weekly	Total
Intellectual	49.3	37.0	5.1	8.7	100.0
Between	52.8	40.2	2.0	5.1	100.0
Worker	48.3	41.9	5.3	4.6	100.0
Total N=1.663	49.3	40.0	4.7	6.0	100.0

Hegedűs (2001) 117. Hungarian Household Panels Study (HHP) 1997.

**Table VI. Is the respondent a believer in 1997? (%)**

Type of occupation	Believer	Non believer	Total
Intellectual	30.7	69.3	100.0
Between	30.9	69.1	100.0
Worker	35.5	64.5	100.0
Total (N=1.591)	33.2	66.8	100.0

Hegedűs (2001) 118. Hungarian Household Panels Study(HHP) 1997.

## 2.2 Shocking Census Data on Religiosity in 2011

It is important to know that in a Census the data relating to religiosity is measured by asking a question about denominational affiliation; this is also the case in Hungary. This is how it has been done up to 1949, for the Census which happened every 10 years. However, the question about denomination was left out of the Census between 1950 and 2000 and was only reintroduced in the 2001 and 2011 questionnaires. Moreover, while this question was mandatory up to 1949, from 2001 the question relating to religion was only optional.

Even the reintroduction of the question in the Census led to debate amongst the populace. What is more important, the results have shocked the people, both those belonging to the particular denominations and social scientists. On the one hand, statistical data can easily be used for their advantage economically or politically, on the other hand based on the results, the identity of each denomination can become stronger or weaker. Therefore, the results of the Census are very important. Furthermore, looking at the results of the two Census in question, they have differed so much that many received it with doubt. I am not going to describe the different sides of the argument, I will only show the process along with the presentation of the census data.

**Table VII. Percentages of belonging to each denomination – based on 2001 and 2011 census data, referring to the whole of the population.<sup>4</sup>**

Year	Roman Catholic	Greek Catholic	Reformed Church	Evangelist	Israelite	Does not belong to any denomination	No answer
2001	51.9	2.6	15.9	3.0	0.1	14.5	10.8
2011	37.1	1.8	11.6	2.2	0.1	16.7	27.2

Bögre (2016) 198. The data in the table based on data from the census.

The data in the table speaks for itself. The data has come as a shock for the representatives of the so-called historical Churches (see in the Table VII.) as they have shown a dramatic decline in all cases (except one Israelite Church) in the number of denominational memberships. Only in the number of those who "do not belong to any denomination" can we speak of an increase. It was also a real surprise to the social researchers that the rate of "no answer" has nearly trebled. The question is then what could have happened in Hungary in the 10 years in society in relation to religion? To the

<sup>4</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2013) Census 2011. 1.1.7.1. Population – by religion, denomination and sex. See an excellent interpretation on this topic by András Máté-Tóth, Dániel and Gergely Nagy, "A 2011-es népszámlálás vallási adatairól," in: *Egyház és társadalom* Vol. 04/4. 2013. <http://www.egyhazestarsadalom.hu/a-szemhataron-innen/egyeb-irasok/mate-toth-andras-nagy-gabor-daniel-a-2011-es-nepszamlalas-vallasi-adatairol/>

question "which denomination do you belong to?" a total of 2.699.025 did not provide an answer in 2011 (it was 1.034.767 to the same question in 2001). Many assumptions have been made about the results, e.g.: the question was misinterpreted, or the questions were ambiguous, or the Church has not promoted the necessity of responding, etc. Let's face it, we do not know the precise reasons behind it. However, the main thing is that in 2011 three times as many people chose not to answer this question.

In our interpretation, such an increase in the number of respondents choosing "no answer" does not only mean that there is a growing tendency of individualization within society, distrust towards institutions, and the privatization of religious questions. I don't even interpret it as another sign of secularization. Let's look at the results generously. Let's assume that the "no answer" responses mean that I have no "certain answer" to that question. There was no option that reflected the respondents' situation close enough, and there was no opportunity to comment why they have not responded. In short they have not responded as they had no response. Let's assume it is not a position of opposition, but the answer is much simpler. There is no answer. In other words, if we assume that the respondents are not guided by fear, or that they have not responded because of certain opposition to the question, then we shouldn't be contemplating the reasons for refusal to answer. We have to think about why people cannot answer that question. Inspecting the data of a different questionnaire will take us closer to the answer.

### **2.3. Data for Religious Self-categorization between 1980 and 2008**

As we mentioned it before in the communist era there were no questions relation to religiosity in the Census questionnaires. Despite that, we do have representative data on religiosity, thanks to Miklós Tomka, a sociologist of religion. He conducted different public opinion research works using questions about religion. One part of these data has been based on the self categorization of individuals, which means that the respondents had to position themselves in the five-category typology suggested Miklós Tomka. The categories of this typology are: 1. religious according to the teachings of the Church, 2. religious in his/her own way, 3. I can not decide weather I am religious or not, 4. I am not religious, 5. I have different beliefs, I am definitely non religious.

This five-category typology is used in the Hungarian sociology of religion when asking questions about religious self classification. The meaning of each group in a traditional sense is the following: the first group is church related religiosity, the second group is individual religiosity, the third group contains people who are uncertain, the fourth group contains people who are not religious, and the fifth group is the atheists. The sixth group initially meant that the person cannot answer, therefore there is no answer. Initially there were so few belonging to this last group that there were no interpretations of this group.

In 1977/78, Miklós Tomka started publishing about the fact that the previously used dichotomous category in relation to religiosity cannot be upheld. Whereas the dichotomous category contained two opposing groups: "religious" and "not religious," the author claimed even then that society is more complex than that. This dichotomous category only served the political ideology of the communist party, but did not fit the reality of society. The author stated that if the five-category typology suggested by him is used for describing religiosity, we can then clearly show that two third of Hungarian society is religious. He based this conclusion on the data from the statements, he has

combined the numbers from his first two categories, “religious according to the teachings of the Church” and “religious in his/her own way.” This statement, during the political conditions of the period, ideologically carried a lot of weight. We can clearly see in the table below, how the percentage in the self-classification has changed during the decades.

**Table VIII. Categories of self classification, 1980-2008 data is in percentage.<sup>5</sup>**

Year	Religious according to the teachings of the Church	Religious in their own way	Undecided/ I am unsure whether I believe or not	Not religious	Different convictions	No answer	Total
1980	10.6	40.9	8.2	19.3	19.0	2.0	100
1988	12.3	45.8	5.2	26.6	8.7	1.4	100
1991	16.0	52.8	5.4	20.8	4.5	0.5	100
2000	13.5	56.9	3.3	25.7	-	0.6	100
2008	17.8	48.3	5.7	27.9	-	0.2	100

Bögre (2016.) 201.

We can clearly see in the table that, according to the categories of religious self classification in Hungary, the religiosity of the population after the change of regime has increased. If we add the two groups, “according to the teachings of the Church” and “religious in his/her own way,” (which is customary in sociology of religion in Hungary) then we can see that in 1991 68.8% of the population,

<sup>5</sup> I have examined the shift of meaning in the categories based on the research and study of Miklós Tomka. Miklós Tomka, “A vallásosság mérése,” *Magyar Pszichológiai Szemle*, 1973. Vol. 1-2, pp. 122-135; Miklós Tomka, “The Beginning of Sociology of Religion in Hungary,” *Vienna UKI-reports 1977* (No. 1-2-3, 1979), pp. 5-95; Miklós Tomka, “Coping with Persecution. Religious Change in Communism and in Post-Communist Reconstruction in Central Europe.” *International Sociology* (No.13.2, 1998), pp. 229-248; Miklós Tomka, “Vallási helyzetkép – 2009. A vallásosság elterjedésének, társadalmi bázisának és az életben betöltött szerepének változásai az utóbbi évtizedekben Magyarországon,” in: Gergely Rosta and Miklós Tomka, eds., *Mit értékelnek a magyarok?*, Agóra IX (Budapest: OCIPE Magyarország–Faludi Ferenc Akadémia, 2010.); Miklós Tomka, *Expanding Religion. Religious revival in Post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 218-228,

I also take into consideration other terms of religiosity for instance Grace Davie, “Believing without Belonging: Is This the Future of Religion in Britain?,” *Social Compass* 1990, Vol. 37 (December), and Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945. Believing without Belonging* (Oxford/Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1994.)

<sup>5</sup> Based on studies Gergely Rosta, “Vallásosság a mai Magyarországon,” *Vigilia* (No. 10, 2011), pp. 741-750; Rita Hegedűs, “Tomka Miklós a vallás rétegződés kapcsolatáról,” in *Vallás a keresztény társadalom után*, Mónika Földvári and Dániel Gábor Nagy, eds. (Szeged: Belverede Meridionale 2012), pp. 81-93; Mónika Földvári, “Az egyház mibenléte és társadalmi szerepe Tomka Miklós munkásságában,” in *Vallás a keresztény társadalom után*, Mónika Földvári and Dániel Gábor Nagy, eds. (Szeged: Belverede Meridionale 2012), pp. 67-81.



in 2000 70% and in 2008 66.2% considered themselves religious. We can also see in the table that the religiosity of the Hungarian population is mostly individualistic, increasingly belonging to the “religious in his/her own way” group. Moreover the growing number of “not religious” means that there is a growing secularization. As the data covers nearly 30 years, we have examined how other authors dealing with the same topic have interpreted these categories from the table<sup>6</sup>.

In the papers Miklós Tomka published in the ‘70s and ‘80s the typology of religiosity was defined in accordance with the Catholic Church. At the time, the emphasis was on how accepted were the Christian, traditional, and institutional Churches. Those who kept themselves away from the expectations of institution, but interpreted their own religiosity according to the Christian values, fell in the group of “religious in his/her own way.”

In the early 90s, the typology started to become less clear-cut or one-dimensional.<sup>7</sup> The authors (Miklós Tomka and his disciples) started to talk about the fact that a church-related religiosity means something similar to what the western sociologists of religion call a “committed” or “confessor” behaviour. They had started to regard those in the category, “religious in their own way,” as cultural Christians. Cultural Christianity did not assume a commitment to follow the teaching of the Church, and meant a looser relationship with the Church than for the committed. Cultural Christianity in the ‘90s described those who expected religious services from the Church, but did not seriously commit themselves. It included those who wanted christening, First Communion, Confirmation, wedding ceremonies and funerals, but the expectations of the historical Churches did not define their everyday lives.

By the end of the ‘90s, in Hungary, the number of people who were “religious in their own way” had further increased, and the meaning of the term had changed again. The tendency of further departing from organized religion had remained, together with the utilitarian approach toward the Christian Church. As a new feature superstition, occultism, as well as different pseudo-religious elements had appeared. The spread of non-religious elements had become apparent.

Ten years later, in 2008, at the time of interpreting the results of the next large scale representative research, in the “religious in their own way” category there was more emphasis on the continuous change of the religious content and an increase of non-catholic content. What’s more, the researchers felt that in this category there was more emphasis on turning away from catholic traditions towards those of eastern religions. It is apparent from this short summary that between 1980 and 2008 the five-category typology had gone through significant change, especially the “religious in their own way” category. The most important changes were:

(1.) Individual religiosity had increased at the expense of church-related religiosity.

(2.) Along with Christian-oriented subject matter, esoteric and eastern religious elements had appeared.

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<sup>6</sup> Based on studies Gergely Rosta, “Vallásosság a mai Magyarországon,” *Vigilia* (No. 10, 2011), pp. 741-750; Rita Hegedűs, “Tomka Miklós a vallás rétegződés kapcsolatáról,” in *Vallás a keresztény társadalom után*, Mónika Földvári and Dániel Gábor Nagy, eds. (Szeged: Belverede Meridionale 2012), pp. 81-93; Mónika Földvári, “Az egyház mibenléte és társadalmi szerepe Tomka Miklós munkásságában,” in *Vallás a keresztény társadalom után*, Mónika Földvári and Dániel Gábor Nagy, eds. (Szeged: Belverede Meridionale 2012), pp. 67-81.

<sup>7</sup> Based on data from 1991 EVS (European Value Study).

(3.) The previously one dimensional category had turned into a multi-dimensional category.

The change of connotation of the typology (especially the category “religious in his/her own way”) had several explanations. Firstly, nearly thirty years had passed between the origin of the typology and the last of the data collected. Secondly, half way through the political regime changed totally, thirdly, the international relations of sociologists of religion had broadened, so that as a result of new information the usage of terms could change. Considering all this, we can state that the meaning of the categories of the typology based on self classification has transformed, and it is increasingly difficult to define what they mean. The respondents by the method of self-determination, turn the images of themselves into the possible answers, the content of which has become increasingly complex and uncertain.

After this short summary of the transformation of meaning of the categories, I now return to the interpretation of the data from table II. I have explained above the extent of change the category, “religious in his/her own way,” has gone through in the last thirty years. We can pose the question like this: Why couldn’t we now presume that the other categories have also changed? What did it mean in the 1980, in a socialist country to declare that one is not religious? And what does the same category mean in a newly forming democracy (after 1990)? Do respondents mean the same as the researchers when they put themselves into the group “I am not religious”? For researchers the growing number in that group means a spread of secularization. It is clear that this statement can be interpreted this way as well. However we cannot eliminate the possibility that the respondent could “only” say “I am not religious” but could not specify what else. It seems logical to examine this group (especially in Europe) as part of the reasons behind secularization. But I personally believe that the increase in this category alerts us to a different social phenomena. Over time this category has approached the undecided group, “I am not sure if I am religious or not.”

I must emphasize again, the statement “I am not religious” can not only mean that the person rejects religion but it can mean that the respondent is only sure of the fact that he or she is not religious. What can we say then? This category can include a seeker or someone in transition, or a static final position. In my opinion the members of this group are searching for an authentic interpretative framework that fits their lives. In other words I suppose the growth in these latter two categories means a growing number of seekers rather than a growing secularization.

For now we can only state that if the category “religious in his/her own way” has continuously changed over the last 30 years, (as we have seen above) then the same change is expected of the other categories as well. The change is not accidental: all frameworks for interpretation had changed in Hungary after the change of regime, and there was an increase in the number of people seeking their place, and interpretations.

Hereunder we will examine what we can see when looking at young people’s religious self classification.

## 2.4. Religious Self Classification of Young People (2000-2012)

People have learnt about the self classification of young people's faith based on the 2012 research of Hungarian Youth.<sup>8</sup>

**Table IX. Religious self- classification of young people, percentage (2000-2012).<sup>9</sup>**

Year	Religious according to the teachings of the Church	Religious in his/her own way	Undecided/I am unsure whether I believe or not	Not religious	Different convictions	No answer
2000	10	46	6	28	8	2
2004	10	48	4	24	13	1
2008	7	43	6	35	8	1
2012	7	31	8	40	7	7

Bögre (2016.) 205.

Based on the table, if we interpret the figures in a "traditional" way, we can see that there are clear trends. We can see that among young people, there is a decline in the number of those who believe according to the teachings of the Church as well as in the number of those who believes in his/her own way. Moreover, there was an increase in the number of not religious. We could see the same trend in Table II, in the total population data. The "only" difference is that among young people there was a drastic increase in the number of the latter group (not-religious). If we interpret the data in a "traditional" way, we can see not a trend of individualization among young people, but a trend of secularization.<sup>10</sup> (It is also interesting that according to the 2012 data the number of people not responding had increased. We had come across the same trend in the 2011 census.) According to the "traditional interpretation" the process of secularization is spreading among the young, at the expense of religious individualism.

However, if we take into consideration that the content of the categories had changed over time then we can add the following. It seems reasonable to assume that in young people's case also, those who chose the category "not religious," can also be regarded to know more what is not characteristic of them rather than what is. Faith is uncharacteristic of them. In 2012, the vast majority of young people chose this category, pushing the category "religious in his/her own way" to second place. We

<sup>8</sup> Gergely Rosta, "Hit és vallás," in: *Magyar Ifjúság 2012* (Budapest: Új Nemzedék, 2013), pp. 316-330

<sup>9</sup> See Rosta, "Hit és vallás," p. 319.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.

can draw the conclusion that there were only a few who could not specify their convictions if not religious. And from this it follows that the group “not religious” is a diverse group.

On the one hand, this category could mean that someone is not religious, and they do not think about religion at all. On the other hand, it could also mean that they are seeking their conviction, (even if not necessarily religion) but have not yet found it. In other words the category “not religious” used in the questionnaire for young people, includes people who later on may or may not become believers. The question is what, how, where and when are they looking? Who are they asking for a favour and what help might they accept, or whom can they count on? Do they expect external help in search of their identity?

To sum up, I believe that part of the “not religious” group are those who are still in search of their true identity. Next we will investigate what is characteristic of a seeker attitude.

### **3. Seekers and dwellers in Hungary<sup>11</sup>**

We try to elaborate one kind of the tripartite model of Taylor and Casanova based on the historical experiences in Hungary for the period after the fall of communism. Church we understand not as a theological or canonical unit, but more as one multifaced social organization. Therefore, we understand here between three dimensions of the Church. The first dimension of the church is the leadership, independent from the sacramental consecration. It is not only clerics that should be included in this category but lay people as well, if they are elected and delegated to leader positions.

Projects – the second dimension – are initiatives from below, which means initiated by the church leadership or from bottom-up, organized by the faithful without higher leadership functions. In case of church leadership, hierarchical communication channels are typical, but in the project dimension, horizontal ones prevail. Church leadership is territorially organized and has responsibility over particular territorial regions, e.g. in the case of bishops, one diocese. Projects are definitively functional and have special tasks and focus on special terms.

It is not only because sociological approaches important to see the church not only as a hierarchy but also from the broader theological perspective. The church as such is a theological (and sociological) abstraction, a term for orientation, and an expression for common tradition and liturgical practice. Projects, however, are concrete practical efforts and actions which make the abstract church tangible. Projects have more direct impact on the people connected to them. Therefore, they are perhaps more important regarding the issue of various spiritualities.

The last church dimension, the church individual, has to do with the attitude of private persons for whom church teaching and church provided rituals are crucial. Although I am interested in the public dimensions of the church, church private persons are an inherent part of it.

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<sup>11</sup> This part of this paper by Máté-Tóth András

### 3.1. Church Leadership

The fall of the communist regime in Hungary happened not over night, but through a yearlong transformation. Concerning catholic hierarchy, it meant no abrupt change at all. Only very slowly bishops with past communist collaborations retired and were replaced by new members of the Conference characterized with other experiences. But in the first wave of freedom, the behavior of church leadership was defined by the general enthusiasm for freedom and by jubilation for national autonomy. Although church leadership played no crucial role in the fall of the communist regime, it supported the main goals of the new democratic regime. Partly from national responsibility, partly in order to ensure political and financial stability for pastoral care. The time prompt by the collapse of communist regime, was not appropriate for a critical evaluation of church leadership in the former periods, but more a time for repositioning.

In the second wave of freedom, church leadership collected some impressions regarding democratic politics and perhaps more regarding permanent fighting in public media. The new challenge was to find equidistance from political parties and save church interests against real and phantom enemies. In the public arena church leadership tried to demonstrate the central Christian values like life, social justice, family and so on. Two big pastoral letters were published: "Toward a More Just and Brotherly World" (1996) and "Toward happiness of families" (1999). Every diocese held pastoral synods and tried to formulate pastoral goals for contemporary society. By all these activities the church leadership emphasized more clearly the "ecclesia docens" than the "ecclesia communicans".

### 3.2. Church project

The political turn to democracy around 1990 had a great impact on the project side of the church. Many active people – both priests and lay people – found careers in the new public possibilities in church and in civil politics. One consequence was the temporary lack of church projects. In case of supported spiritualities, the difference between church leadership and former members of church projects was not so significant as at the time of the first wave of freedom.

But as soon as new democratic structures were in place and the enthusiastic emotions cooled down, civil society in Hungary started to flourish. The new legal regulation of this field created frameworks for these kinds of activities. The definitive question now was who can and will solve the financial question and how there were. Three possible solutions: political parties, support from abroad, and a limited amount of fundraising. In addition, church projects tried to find serious funding, and they started to define their activities dependent on the possible funding and the demands of the spiritual market. Therefore, the level of creativity was very high, which supported and demonstrated a seeker-friendly atmosphere, and the content of the projects was more focused on spiritual and charity-like aims.

There is a considerable difference between church leadership and church projects in recent time regarding spirituality. The first seems to be more dweller-friendly and the second clearly definitely seeker-friendly. On the level of church projects, one can observe a very vivid and creative church with unbounded imagination and sensitivity to local needs. Parallel to this, the integrity of the church

and the mutual understanding between levels of hierarchy and between projects are rather more a hope than a reality.

### **3.3. Churched individuals**

The political turning point found these deserted churched people, and the quickly opening public possibilities attracted many engaged churched individuals, and the actual standards regarding rebuilding the free society determined their orientation and targets. In the first stage of freedom, suddenly quite a lot people placed their trust in the church, and for a short time churched individuals hoped for a regeneration, renewal and reforms as well. But the official church was greatly upset by the new political agenda in its interest for rebuilding national and state autonomy. In this new situation, democratic political forces together with the main churches triumphed over the fall of the past undemocratic regime. Stability was more important than the search for new ways and new words for the evangelization.

After the more or less enthusiastic period, churched individuals now show a very colorful picture. At the parish level the traditional way of Catholic life proceeds without obstacles. Regular churchgoers constitute a very loyal population. Critique and dissatisfactions are rather rare. Simple churchgoers still have a dweller's spirituality and for the church they are a very important core congregation. Churched individuals, active in church projects are creative and open to new ways and new encounters. Their spirituality is more that of the seeker, and they perform a very important ministry in the new Evangelization.

## **4. Scenarios about the future of public religions in Europe<sup>12</sup>**

The pressure of contemporary migration seems to be the grand challenge of our époque – affecting Hungary and Europe as a whole. Migration is starting out from Africa and from the less fortunate, sometimes war-thorn regions of Asia. The main questions on the future of religion and churches seems to be highly correlated in the cultural region of Europe - including Hungary and the V4 (Visegrad countries) - with the answers of the state power on the migration crisis. Of course, there are many religious movements independent from the state power, like the charismatic movements or the growing spiritual market with neo-pagan, esoteric and similar worldviews. But for the Christian religion, especially for Catholics, the main culture and structure, which offer the institutional context of the faith is still the church as a canonical and theological frame. It is so because of historical reasons, and also because of the style of the reorganization of society after the political turning point around 1990. In modern societies in general religion is placed under the responsibility of the churches – if we don't reflect on the postmodern political and sociological theories for example Zygmunt Baumann's liquid modernity. The perspectives of religion and religiosity in Hungary and in CEE highly depend on their relation to the state power. If churches and other religious organizations, as well as theologians and public Catholics should be seeking for new orientations for the future of ecclesiastical practices, they can't avoid these questions of power relations.

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<sup>12</sup> This part of this paper by Máté-Tóth András

There are also some main factors that have a strong influence on the societal cooperation among government and churches. The most important factor is the society-wide acceptance of a social contract, and its roots in the country's traditional political culture. Politicians and some members of the clergy are constantly questioning these social contracts, which were re-established in the era of the political transitions around 1989-1991. This constant questioning is the result of the broken political heritage of the majority of CEE countries: societal and political systems were pillaged by revolutionary and totalitarian ideologies; nothing was left untouched of the older value systems. Proponents of pre-totalitarianism era values often lay back to the methods of totalitarianism to secure their control of contemporary societal and religious cooperation and political leadership.

In the next paragraphs, we try to offer three different scenarios for the future of church and religion in Hungary, based on our very direct experiences in this country. Starting from our researches and analyses, we are convinced that the findings for Hungary are relevant at least for the countries of Visegrad 4 and perhaps for the entire Central and Eastern Europe. We named the three scenarios as totalitarian, egalitarian and pluralitarian.

#### 4.1. Totalitarian / Exclusive

The naming of the first scenario as totalitarian is not an argument that the contemporary state power is a totalitarian dictatorship. It cannot be compared to the socialist political system in the period of totalitarian dictatorship of communism. But the temptation for a total control over all societal processes is always present in the minds of thinkers and politicians in democratic political systems, too. We based on our category naming decision on John Hick's tripartite system about the three possible religious approaches labeled by him as exclusivist, inclusivist and pluralist. The political logic of state power and the religious logic have an inherent and profound parallelity; we argue for this by choosing this way of parallel naming.

Although we will not give thorough analysis with richness of detail, we still can try to identify that some societies today have clear tendencies for this first scenario. Poland's PiS government and the Catholic Church have worked together since the spring of 2016 on several issues. The mutual collaboration includes the issue of total ban on abortion, which is one of the most sensitive political issues for right wing governments and the Roman Catholic Church as well.

We can also find aims for totalitarian approaches in Russia, in president Putin's politics with the Russian Orthodox Church. It seems to be a good example of this totalitarian scenario: the new religion and church law (1997) and with the ban of evangelizing activities outside of Church walls, which is clearly against denominations such as Jehovah's Witnesses and others. About the restriction of the missionary activities, Putin argued with terror prevention motives. (July 8. 2016) The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has in its 2016 Annual Report categorized Turkey once again as a place where human and religious rights violations are "serious." Religious minority rights and the right for parents to not allow religious education for their children in public schools are still violated.

The Croatian constitution guarantees freedom of religion. Members of the Serbian Orthodox Church continue to report cases of intimidation and vandalism, though such incidents are less common than in the past. (Freedom House 2016) This contemporary situation obviously would not allow

categorizing Croatia in the totalitarian scenario, but the government already showed in the period of the Balkan wars (1992-1995) that it can be very exclusive against ethnical and religious minorities.

#### **4.2. For more security, governments and security forces prefer one religion and religious institution to strengthen power**

The contemporary refugee crisis is permanently named by the Hungarian government as a migration crisis. With this term the government's politics will demonstrate for the public that migrants, whom are mainly not refugees, threaten the country. The migrants should not receive compassion and caritative help organized and financed by the government, because they are people merely in search of better circumstances for their lives, not refugees of war. Migrants are coming from mostly Muslim majority countries; the government names this migration wave as an Islamic one. In government communications, they link it with the Ottoman invasion of the 16-17th century. In this way the political and the religious threat against Hungary are successfully combined and through this combination the state power and the religious power are expected to collaborate strongly. The higher will be the threat expected, the stronger would be the coalition between secular and religious forces and obviously the less is the freedom for alternative decisions. This kind of strong power logic can be named as totalitarian and as well as exclusivist. This kind of power perspective and power exercising are sympathetic for people and institutions with a clear dweller attitude.

#### **4.3. Option concerning religion will be a chance for more power and higher control in the society**

According to the logic of the strong interlink of state power and religious power, churched people and churches -- including different organizations of the churches - are forced or tempted to see in religion and church a factor or tool, which can be used to achieve different political and / or ecclesiastical aims. People will try to be more close to church representatives, they want to demonstrate their religiousness and churchedness in the public sphere, will regularly support different religious institutions and projects, will advise their children to visit church schools and to attend different activities organized by the church. They will attend on the important ecclesial celebrations, where the representatives of the leading political power are as well present.

This type of career building doesn't need personal relation to the religious teachings and rituals, no religious feelings and experiences. The carrier strategy is clearly a secular type and allows a successful separation of the personal religiousness and the political religion.

#### **4.4. The privileged church will become like a sub-institution of the regime and will lost her prophetic fortitude**

The forced collaboration between strong political regime and the mainstream church has the non-avoidable consequence that the church will become a sub-institution of the government. Not in the sense of the constitution or of the law that regulates state and church relationship, but in the sense of the practical working and of the public perception. In the political and ecclesial rhetoric, will be repeated almost the same political aims, situation analysis and motivations for activity in interest of the country, state or the nation. During the celebration of different national holidays state and



church representatives will be regularly appearing together. For special church interest as erecting or remodeling of church buildings, as occupying broadcasting time in radio and television controlled by the state and as well as introduction of religious education in public schools and other areas, where the government support will mean the possibility of living with new opportunities.

Through this kind of very close collaboration, church autonomy will be lesser, and in the issues of power critics might accuse the church in upholding of government sovereignty and giving up its own. Church leadership will have the argument of political calculation called "prudence": with openly and clear critics on the government we will lost the support for our important pastoral fields. Political issues uncomfortable for the government will not be thematized because they can be inappropriate for the stable relationship with the government.

#### **4.5. Non-privileged churches and alternative religions will be pushed on the periphery and will as well more attractive for dissidents**

The strong and mutual collaboration between state and church has the inevitable consequence for the non-privileged churches that they will be pushed to the periphery of the public life. For them there will be two options open. The first is the acceptance of and submission under this relationship between government and church hierarchy and to become politically like a part of the main church. The other possibility could be the openness and coalition with dissidents. Strong collaboration between government and church leaderships causes an ecumenical front of marginalized churches and other religious institutions. Non-privileged churches will not be supported in their activities by the state budget and will be suspected as enemy of the government and as well of the entire state and the nation.

#### **4.6. Egalitarian / Inclusive**

The egalitarian model of the state power and of the collaboration between state and church is in some dimensions very similar to the totalitarian model, with the important difference given by the denominational plurality of the society. For more security governments and security forces make contracts with the main religions rich on members to strengthen power. The religious values become inherent part of the governmental rhetoric and play a specified role in decisions of the state power. But the government negotiate with every main denomination not only with the single one, although by holding the same hegemonial logic. In the decision of the government whom of the different denominations should be privileged as well by the ecclesial law-making plays the leading role the simple political calculation.

This egalitarian and inclusive scenario can be more characterize countries with denominational pluralism, where some bigger churches give the definitive majority of all churches and include therefore the absolute majority of all religious population. Between the dominations there are some competition and effort to save their own historical and social positions. But the main impact for their future has the clear collaboration with the regime, the representing of the shared values, mainly the national proudness.

Option concerning religion will have a calculating element to be open for accredited church and to avoid not accredited. Carrier calculating bears the same logic as in the totalitarian scenario, but people have in the egalitarian scenario to decide for one denomination.

Privileged churches will have broader field for political and pastoral collaboration by being prudent with prophetic issues. And non-privileged churches and alternative religions will build up a regime-critical coalition being attractive for dissidents.

The egalitarian scenario fits nearly all countries in Central and Eastern Europe, among them Hungary as well. In the Fundamental Law of Hungary (01. 01. 2012) the freedom of religion is established and there are a lot of Christian values named and for the representation of them the Christian churches are accepted. Christianity as culture and main tradition of the country builds one of the most important spiritual and ethical resources of the country constitution stated. In the new law about freedom of conscience, religion and about the churches are 18 churches and other religious communities (as Jews, Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists) accepted as "church", which means the highest category of religious communities, other religious communities are categorized as religious associations. The decision of recognition belongs after intensive national and international critics on previous versions to the supreme court. This new law changed the former one from 1989 and through the new categorization about 300 religious associations named in the former law as churches to lose their status as "church" and were categorized as "religious association". The contemporary Fidesz (Hungarian Civic Alliance) and Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt (Christian democratic People's Party) coalition (since 2010 with about two third majority in parliament) has one clear and consequent political line for strengthen national unity and at the same time of emphasizing the Christian roots of Hungary and for making coalition with the main churches and main religious organizations.

At this point it should be remembered that the former communist religious politics distinguished among three categories of religious organizations: (1) legally recognized, (2) tolerated and (3) proscribed. To obtain recognized to obtained status, religious associations often had to adjust. The main difference between the communist and the democratic polity is not the differentiation among religious organizations, but between the main aim of the polity. Communists wanted total control over the entire religious dimension of the society and used law giving for this aim. In Central and Eastern Europe, many governments of the young democracies wanted to have establish one kind of radical new or fundamental renewed political and social system and for that aim they invite and instrumentalize churches and other religious organizations.

Although Orbán's politics is permanently criticized on national and international level as autocratic and exclusive and although his political rhetoric seems to boost these kind of critics, from the point of view of his religious politics because of the coalition and privilege of more the one main churches Hungary belongs to the egalitarian and inclusive scenario. The control would be totalitarian if religious values would merge into the societal values without any reservation, without the possibility of critics. The non-existence of competition among different churches and denominations also suggest the relevance of the totalitarian category. Hungary's governing political party redefined the social contract in its new Basic Law (2012), but there is a lack of a societal consensus, supported by a popular referendum on the foundations of the new system. Without this consensus present on the societal level, the relationship of government and churches will always have to serve as the protector

of the new social contract. Those religious entities, which are reluctant to defend the new social contract will be excluded from, those, which are eager to defend, will be included into the cooperation with the government.

#### 4.7. Pluralitarian / Agonistic

The alternative scenario called pluralitarian is basically different from both of former two, the totalitarian and the egalitarian, because the state and the government solve the problems coming from political pressures without collaboration of the one or more main denominations. This can happen because ideological reason something as state secularism or tradition of laïcité. But it can be as well possible because disappointment in former collaboration with churches or other religious organizations. So, the churchless governmental polity should be not always secularist, it can have other political arguments as well. The scenario can be called as pluralitarian if the religious values are not part of governmental polity and the government prefer not any churches for solving societal problems in the country. In the pluralistic scenario, the government ensures freedom of religion and of self-regulation of churches and other religious organizations, but it is the only one legal tool regarding to the religious dimension of the entire society. Therefore, the government use no anything but distinctions between the churches. This kind of scenario offer no carrier for churched people. But for every church open the way for constructive collaboration in solving societal and caritative problems of the country and in doing so churches can enjoy state budget support for their secular activities.

Churches in this scenario can make and strengthen their collaboration with other religious institutions for enforcing the caritative effectivity. People could cumulate through they extraordinary activity in social fields exceptionally public prestige but not by the grace of the government. People with huge prestige can play faith based prophetic role in interest of the poor.

This third scenario seems to fit Czech Republic in the region Central and Eastern Europe, because Czech Republic is the most secularized society in the region at least on the level of private religiosity. Nevertheless, on the political level and in the public discourse plays religion particularly the Catholic Church an ongoing and important role. This juxtaposition seems therefore not allow to keep this society in the scenario of pluralitarian, but it's clear it's the most near to them. Religious values do not mix with societal values in the case of this category, and religious organizations are left out of the social contract – and also from the redefinition of the social contract in this case.

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