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Short scientific article

THE IMPACT OF RELIGIOSITY ON THE VALUE ORIENTATION OF THE HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH IN STRUGA¹

Bashkim BASHKIMI²

Abstract: Religion understood as a historical category continues its life in the modern society. Through the religious teaching a person is faced with from own birth, a relationship between a man and religion is established. Young people face some problems within the society. Religion offers solutions to many of the questions that require answers and therefore it makes the relationship between religion and young people current even in nowadays. Young people are instantly exposed to influences by social, political and cultural events where they find it hard to manage. Young people are not always able to fight with all the challenges and open questions alone. Religion certainly provides young people a philosophy of life, which is within the teachings of a particular confession. The subject of this research was religiosity among high school youth in Struga, i.e. the part of young people who, after completing primary education, continued their education i.e. among high school youth. The environment where this research was carried out is religiously heterogeneous environment. The research results show that the socio-demographic characteristics have a very strong impact on religiosity, which is quite emphasized and they further affect the value orientations of the high school youth.

Keywords: religion, religious, youth, research, religious tolerance

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, we are facing a period when important changes are happening from economic, political and social aspect, as a result of the socialism collapse. Additionally, these changes are followed by changes of the important priorities. In such a context it could be said that part of the young people find it difficult to adopt those new created valuable pathways. In particular, the young people are exposed to social, political and cultural influence, so they find it difficult to get by. There are many challenges in front of them, there are many issues related to the current situation and the future of the young people. The possibility to deal alone with all the challenges and opened issues is very small. Depending on the familiar and social context, the young person will address the answers of those questions and issue. Based on this, the religion offers a life

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² E-mail: baskimbaskimi@hotmail.com

philosophy, which includes a particular confession study. Therefore, expressing the religious views is a basic indicator that the individual accepts the religion.

The social changes happening in the late 80s and the beginning of the 90s of the past century have changed the social role of the religion, as a result of the socialism collapse. We live in a world characterized by de-secularization or sacralisation processes. The percentage of those reported as unreligious in the past is almost equal to those who are reported religious in the period of the 90s. This reversal or drastically different approach to religion is characterized by an increased number of religious believes in the overall population, which is very inspirational basis for religion studying.

The ethnicity and the religion are basic cohesive factors in the multiethnic and multifunctional environments, as our region. There are tendencies to melt and unify the different religious beliefs by some individuals and groups. In the last period we can witness increased activities of the religious communities. Through the religious studying, the ritual practice and widely spread social activities, the religious communities will insist to be more and more in direct contact with the population. The religious communities and their headmen strongly influence the social life, sometimes breaking the religious limits.

This research paper will be concentrated on the religiosity of the high school youth from the Municipality of Struga. The environment, where the research was done, is a heterogeneous religious environment. The two most important religious communities which function there are: the Macedonian Orthodox Church – Ohrid Archbishopric and the Islamic Religious Community, which make this environment an interesting place for research of their teachings.

Religion and Religiosity

There are many researchers, with different scientific profiles, who share the same opinion that the religion and religiosity are exceptionally complex and dynamic social phenomena. On the other hand, there are few researchers who agree on the common definition of religion and religiosity. Certainly the reason for the different determinations of the religion and religiosity should be found not only in the complexity of these phenomena, “but also the different point of views, embodied in numerous disciplinary approaches and the frameworks of the different theoretical understandings,” (Blagojević, 2005:36-37). The religion definition is built up depending on the research tasks, in most of the cases.

Despite the arguments that it is possible for a common definition to include all kinds of religions, we must have some definition before each research on religion, which must be neither closed nor given once and for all, but rather offer the opportunity to be corrected at the end of the research, based on the argumentation of that particular research, respectively to enrich the existing definition on religion. Related to the definition on religion, according to

Shushnjik, religion could be considered as “each believe in absolute and mystique power from which the individual depends, which controls the life and the death of the him, but he could influence on that power behaving on some manners; the individual could express his experience using that power on cognitive, emotional, practical and mystique way, respectively by studying, rituals, membership in sect; acquiring and sharing experiences using that power is very important for him and his environment, because without it his life and the life of the community would be very different” (Šušnjić, 1998.a: 50). According to Beshik and Gjukanovik, “the definition on religion must include the following elements: faith, sacred, corporate, transcendent, and cultural-historical condition. Based on that, the religion is a culturally-historical conditioned and corporately constituted faith in the sacred which is transcendent itself” (Besić i Đukanović, 2000: 32).

After the elaboration on what is religion, it is needed to determine closely the religiosity as well as to strengthen the difference between religion and religiosity. When discussing the difference between religion and the religiosity, it could be concluded that religion is a more general term than the religiosity. The term religion therefore represents a whole system of ideas, believes and values, while religiosity implies a subjective or personal attitude, which usually is followed by adopting a specific religious believe. “Religion is external, public, objective, basic and rational, while the religiosity is internal, private, subjective and emotional” (Marinović-Bobinac, 1995:854). Indeed, the religiosity represents a subjective system of attitudes, feelings, opinions, personal believes manifested by the believer, verbally or nonverbally. Different from the religion which is a wider category, the religiosity should be considered as a narrower category or a subjective feeling which deeply touches the soul and the spirit. According to Kuburic, “the religiosity is a subjective system of attitudes and internal permanent dispositions which includes the belief, knowledge, feelings and behavior” (Kuburić, 1999:77). In this research, the term “classical” religiosity is used, a term originally taken as it was used by all important researchers in the region. “Religiosity represents the subjective side (the individual experience); respectively, in our research the religiosity is defined as orientation or faith in the sacred- one GOD, which means adopting the basic theological principles of the given confession on the level of faith and knowledge, a determined religious practice as wells as determined wider models of behavior based on religious and moral norms resulting from this” (Башкими, 2009:14).

Identity building of the young people and their relationship with the religion

One definition is not enough to describe all the things which are part of the youth period. “The term youth in psychological context is related to population in the period of adolescence” (Ралева, 2003:15). The word “adolescent” comes from the Latin verb *adolescere* (to grow). The etymological meaning of the word shows that the youth is more a process than a condition. It is

an important period of the human life. "The whole period of adolescence is a developmental period characterized with lots of sensibility and reactivity. On the other hand, storming emotional reactions as anger, anxiety, and rebelliousness, period of shyness, abstractions and calmness are continuously changing." (Ралева, 2003:15). The youth period is a period when the young people experience many physiological, psychological and social changes. It's a "transitional" period from childhood to adulthood. During this period the young people experience crisis with different intensity, as a result of all the changes they experience. "Although the young people possess all the abilities of physical and intellectual nature, their personality still remains fragile, instinctive and poor" (Башкими, 2009:35). From a sociological point of view, within the human life, the youth period is a connection with the process of adopting norms and values achieved by the socialism mechanisms.

The developments within the modern society on local and international level followed by intensive changes and turbulences are specific problem for the young people. "Disintegrated and disorganized society is a very weak backbone and support for the adolescent and his peer system and even weaker stimulus for individual development" (Ралева, 2003:15). Related to the young people and the society, there is a perceptible difference between how the young people feel themselves and what their real role in the society is. On the one hand, they feel themselves as active factors in society, while on the other hand, they are on the society margins and have no opportunity to participate in the important segments of the social life (political, economic).

The youth period is a period when the young people get mature, a developmental period to built up their personality. The religion takes a special place, and plays a specific role in that period of the life. "The young people experience the religion as a moral study, an internal need, a help for overcoming the life difficulties, a national or family tradition, as the best "philosophy", spiritual community, a hope for posthumous life and etc." (Башкими, 2009:39).

The modern social changes and developments characterize the process of the beginning of the social religion reaffirmation, that is, its revitalization. The legal regulation changes enable religion and its communities to take the social and cultural space which they had lost during the social secularization processes. However, the activities of the confessional communities should not be neglected, because they strive to attract the youth, respectively the high school youth.

Empirical part

Goals and methods of the research

We tried to do a quantitative description of the religiosity, as a dependent variable and the specifically determined factors as independent variables, respectively we tried to do a comparative observation of the religiosity of the

Orthodox and Islam religious principles in the framework of our general view of the religiosity of the high school youth in the investigated region and how it influences their system of values.

The main goal of this research is to get a specific knowledge of the investigated subject. Through a scientific empirical method, the clear condition of religiosity should be received, and the condition of the religious understanding of a specific sample of the high school youth. Therefore, a description of the religiosity level of the high school youth in the municipality of Struga should be given. We will try to find out the forms by which the religiosity is manifested as well as to understand the religious behavior of the high school youth from Struga. Also, an insight should be done in order to find the correlation between the socio-demographic features and the religiosity, as well as the influence of the religiosity on a system of value development of the high school youth.

In order to receive the most relevant data taking into consideration the research subject, a methodological approach is used which would enable us to find out the crucial points of the investigated issue. In this research, the following instruments are used:

Questionnaire – as a basic resource for gathering data in this research. The religiosity research in the investigated region was carried out with a sample of 314 participants from the regional high school “D-r. Ibrahim Temo”, and the regional high school “Niko Nestor” in Struga. For the members of both religions, a questionnaire was used in this research. One part of the questionnaire is identical for members of both confessions, while the other part is created specifically for each of them.

Observation – This will be done by visiting the religious temples of both religious communities during the religious rituals in order to see the participation of the youth in those rituals.

Detailed structured interview – High school directors, lecturers, parents, political parties’ representatives, representatives of the MOC-OA and IRC were interviewed.

Informal conversations – These are completed with civil society members, active in the investigated region, and they are related to the youth activities, specifically the high school youth activities, as well as with religious officials from both religions related again for the youth participation in the religious rituals (Башкими, 2009: 65-66).

The influence of religiosity in the system of value-building of the high school youth in the municipality of Struga depending on several socio-demographic characteristics of the participants

The gained results from the research, and specifically the individual analysis of the religiosity segments showed that the proportion of the religiosity

forms of the high school youth in the investigated region is on a very high level. It is also evident that all the religiosity segments are not equally represented to the high school youth from Struga. For example, they believe that the sacred and the social behavior models which originate from the moral aspect of the religion are the most represented segments, and therefore these aspects are completely accepted by all the participants, compared with the religious practice and the knowledge of the theological doctrine of their own religion.

In terms of percentages, those who claim that they believe in the sacred and accept the social behavior models which originate from the moral aspect are 83.7% from the total number of participants, compared with those who claim that they regularly practice the religion 40.2%, and, respectively, they answered correctly the questions for knowing the theological doctrine of their own religion 38.3%. Despite the difference in the proportion of specific religiosity segments among the participants, we can freely conclude that the general situation of the religiosity of the high school youth is on a high level. Moreover, the research based on the four segments of religiosity, believing in the sacred and social behavior models originate from the moral aspect of the religion and the religious practice, showed that the number of high school students in the investigated region with a high level of religiosity is significantly higher than the participants with medium or low level of religiosity (Башкими, 2009:73-74).

As a dependent variable or subjective category, the religiosity is conditioned by the series of other independent variable categories, such as religion, gender, age, social origin of the participants. A quantitative description is completed of the dependence between the religiosity, as a dependent variable, and specifically considered factors, as independent variables, by this research.

We completed a comparative analysis of the religiosity of the Orthodox and Muslim believers in the frameworks of the general situation of the high school youth religiosity in the investigated region and its influence on their system of values. There are covered parts of the religiosity segments, such as believing in the sacred and religious practice, or the usual behavior of the participants while communicating with the sacred, which are common for both religions, and according to our opinion, they are sufficiently indicative to do a comparative analysis of the religiosity in the frameworks of the general situation in the target group.

When it comes to the influence of religiosity on building a system of values of the youth, depending on several socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, the research results are as follows:

1. The religiosity level of the high school youth from Struga is very high regardless of the fact that not all religiosity segments are equally present. The belief in sacred and the social behavior models which originate from the moral aspect of the religion are almost fully accepted by the young people, compared to the religious practice and knowing the theological doctrine of their own religion, for which the percentages were smaller. If

we analyze the total religiosity, respectively the level of religiosity based on the presence of these religiosity segments, it could be concluded that the number of high school youth with high level of religiosity is significantly bigger (58.6%) compared with those with medium level (35.0%) and low level (6.4%). We can conclude that: in the municipality of Struga the traditional believers, according to the way they accept the religion, are more represent.

2. We started our research following the basic hypothesis that the socio-demographic characteristics strongly influence the religiosity of the high school youth in the municipality of Struga and their system of values building.

From the received results, it is clear that regardless the fact that there is not an absolute generalization that in all the religiosity segments only one religion is dominant, yet we can analyze the religion in terms of the total religiosity, respectively, the level of religiosity, so we can conclude that the proportion of the participants with high level of religiosity is bigger among the Muslim believers (65.1%) compared with the Orthodox believers (51.2%), respectively the Muslim believers participants are more represented, based on their religious behavior. After all, we must emphasize that the religiosity level of the Orthodox believers (high school youth) from our region is significantly higher compared to the religiosity level of the young people from other regions of the country. The reasons for such conditions come from the specifics of the research region, respectively the multiethnic and multi confessional character of it.

The fact that the religion is over ethnicity and universal category is unquestionable, but still in the multiethnic and multi confessional environments, the religion and the ethnicity are in inseparable psychological relationship or in a protective relationship. In such environments, as the investigated region, each activity of one religious community is taken as kind of suspicious by the other one, and therefore provokes a kind of a threat. Such an emotion motivates the people to unite, where, of course, the religion plays a very important role. Religiosity manifestation, respectively the high level of religiosity of the young Muslims, affect the motivation of religious feelings among the young Orthodox believers, which helps to increase the religiosity level, a phenomenon which is not characteristic for a dominant single ethnicity environment, respectively dominant religion.

Related to the gender and based on the received results, we can conclude that there is a high religiosity level among both genders without any significant differences. The total number of male participants with high religiosity level (58.8%) is almost equal to the total number of female participants with high religiosity level (59.8%).

Almost identical results are received related in regard to the age. According to the received results, we can conclude that among the participants

from the first and the second year of high school, as well as among those from the third and the fourth year, the dominant are those with high religiosity level, without any significant differences. Respectively, the total number of the first and the second year high school participants with high religiosity level (59.3%) is almost equal to the total number of the third and the fourth year participants with high religiosity level (59.6%).

The religiosity influences the system of value-building depending on the social origin, that is, the economic status of the households the young people come from. The higher the economic status of the households, the lower the religiosity level of the young people. Thus, the religiosity level of the young people with low level economic status (63.6%) and the medium level (64.1%) is bigger than the level of religiosity among the young people with high economic status (55.1%).

The influence of religiosity on the integration level and the social engagement in the social-political life forms of the high school youth from the municipality of Struga

The municipality of Struga, as a multicultural, multiethnic and multi confessional environment, reflects, in a more miniature form, the Macedonian society.

The religious tolerance cannot be neglected in the investigation of a multi confessional environment, such as Struga. Despite the fact that our research was not deeply concentrate on the religious tolerance, it coul still serve as a motif for a further, more detailed reserach which will cover the etimological aspect of the religious tolerance, its manifestations' forms, the level of religious tolerance, respectively the intolerance.

Considering the fact that the environments with such characteristics are regularly under some integrative or disintegrated influences, and considering the fact that religion, or religiosity, takes an important place on those integrative / disintegrative processes, we began our research with the hypothesis that the religiosity influences the youth integration in Struga, emphasizing the level of integration of the high school youth in the investigated region. The following indicators were used: The influence on the increased contacts with the other religious communities members; the influence of religiosity on the increased mixed marriages (the spouses are from different religious community); and the influence of religiosity on tolerating the other religious communities members.

The level of religiosity of the young people strongly affects the increased contacts with the other religious communities. Those contacts are related to the best friends choice as well as the spouse choice. The biggest is the number of participants with high level of religiosity (94.6%) who claimed that their best friend belongs to the same religion, compared to the participants with medium level of religiosity (90.9%) and the low level (85.0%). The biggest is the number

of the the participant with high level of religiosity (79.3%) who would not get married with believer from another religion, compared with the participant with medium level (74.5%) and low level of religiosity (40.0%), respectively the biggest is the number of high level of religiosity participants (29.9%) who agree that the mix marriage is predetermined to collapse compared to the medium level of religiosity participants (18.2%) and low level of religiosity (5.0%). We can conclude that by increasing the level of religiosity, the number of those who claimed their best friend is from a different religion, is smaller, respectively the number of those who claimed they would get married with other religion member and disagree that the mix marriage is predetermined to collapse, is also smaller.

Also, the level of religiosity influences the tolerance of members of another religion. The feelings of concern and insecurity in the presence of the other religion members are received by the analysis of the attitude towards the issue – should they feel secure in an environment where the majority are other religion members, or should they still be carefull even if they are friends. The number of the high level of religiosity participants (60.3%) who agree that they should be carefull with other religion members friends is the highest, compared with those with medium level (56.4%) and low level of religiosity (55.0%), respectively the biggest is the number of high level of religiosity participants (44.6%) who agree that they can feel secure only when they are surrounded by friends from the same religion compared with the medium level (29.1%) and low level of religiosity participants (30.0%). We can conclude that the young people (high school youth) with higher religiosity level support the attitude that they should be carefull in the presence friends from the other religion, respectively they could only feel secure when surrounded by same religion members friends. The feelings of concern and insecurity towards the other religion members indicate divergence from the religious tolerance principles or early forms of religious intolerance.

The young people (high school youth), Orthodox or Muslim believers, are not very active in the socio-political organizations and communities. But, in terms of the level of religiosity, there are visible specific differences related to their activity. We can conclude that regardless of the influence of the other factors, by increasing the religiosity level of the young people, the activitiy of the participants in the socio-political organizations and communities is decreased. This is a result of the neglected condition of the young people by the socio-political structures.

Regarding the influence of religious belonging on the young people's further activity and engagement in the civil society, there are no important visible differences between those with higher level and those with lower level of religiosity. The number of young people who are not included in the organizations and civil society without a religious predisposition, is significantly bigger. However, related to the religiosity leve and the young people activity there are visible differences, which are not significant but still they reflect the condition and the tendency of the youth related to this issue. We can conclude

that by increasing the religiosity level, the activity of the young people is increased, as well as the desire to take part in a civil society without a religious predisposition (Башкими, 2009:121-124).

General conclusions

Based on the analysis, in which the forms of religiosity manifestation and the influence of religiosity on the value orientations of the high school youth from the munisipality of Struga were covered, we could list several general conclusions:

1. The religiosity of the young people in the munisipality of Struga is on a very high level despite the fact that there is not equal proportion of the all religiosity segments. The most emphasized are the believing in the sacred as well as the social behaviour models which originate from the moral aspect of the religion, the next are the religious practice and knowledge of the theological doctrine of their own religion. Based on the religiosity segments proportion, it could be concluded that the high school youth who show on a high level of religiosity is more represented that those who show a medium or low level of religiosity.
2. The socio-demographic characteristics strongly influence the religiosity of the high school youth from the municipality of Struga and the system of value-building. Although we cannot talk about absolute generalization that there is a dominant proportion of all the religiosity segments of one religion, , we can still conclude that the high religiosity level participants are the Muslim believers. The manifestation of religiosity, that is, the high level of religiosity of the young Muslims affects the motivation of religious feelings among young Orthodox believers, which results with increased level of religiosity; this is a phenomenon characteristic of same religion environment.

Related to the gender and age, we can conclude that among both genders as well as among the students of the four years, a high level of religiosity dominates, without any impoortant differences.

The religiosity influences the system of value-building depending on the social origin. The higher the economic status of the young people households, the lower the level of religiosity.

3. The level of religiosity of the young people strongly influences the integrative processes of the young people in Struga. The higher the level of religiosity, the lower the level of contacts with other religious communities, and the higher the level of feelings of insecurity and concern in the presence of other religion members, which essentially means divergence from the religious tolerance principles or early forms of religious intolerance.

4. Related to the activity of the young people (high school youth) in the socio-political organizations and communities as well as in the activity of the civil society without a religious predisposition, there are not visible important differences. The number of the young people who are not included in the activity of the civil society without religious predisposition is very high. But, in terms of the total religiosity, respectively the level of religiosity, there are visible specific differences related to the young people activity. Regardless of the influence of other factors, by increasing the level of religiosity the activity in the socio-political organizations and communities is decreased. This is a result of the neglected condition of the young people by the socio-political structures.

Anyway, at the end we would emphasize that such kind of research is very motivating for further studying of the religiosity, including not only the high school youth but also the other groups in the society. The data received from this research related not only to the religiosity, but also to the other social phenomena must serve as a platform in creating the national strategies of the country.

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ВЛИЈАНИЕТО НА РЕЛИГИОЗНОСТА ВРЗ ОРИЕНТАЦИЈАТА КОН ВРЕДНОСТИ МЕЃУ СРЕДНОШКОЛЦИТЕ ВО СТРУГА

Башким БАШКИМИ

Анстракт: Религијата разбрана како историска категорија го продолжува својот живот во модерното општество. Преку своите учења, религијата го следи човекот од неговото раѓање, со што се воспоставува врска меѓу човекот и религијата. Младите луѓе се соочуваат со извесни проблеми во општеството. Религијата нуди решенија на многу од прашањата што бараат одговори, со што односот меѓу религијата и младите останува актуелен дури и денес. Младите луѓе се соочуваат со решавање на многу важни задачи во својот живот. Но, при обидите да ги решат овие задачи, младите често ја губат самодовербата, така што за да ги решат овие задачи, бараат помош од религијата. Се разбира, не смееме да ја занемариме ниту активноста на верските заедници што бараат различни начини за да го привлечат вниманието на младите луѓе. Периодот на младост, т.е. адолесценција е оној во кој се забележува најзначаителен развој на личноста. Денес сме во период кога се случува многу промени во општеството, како што се економски, политички и општествени промени, придружени со промени во ориентацијата на вредностите, при што на поголемиот дел од населението, а особено на младите, им е тешко да се приспособат. Младите се изложени на влијанија од општествени, политички и културни настани со кои што им е тешко да се соочат. Младите не секогаш се способни сами да се борат со сите предизвици и отворени прашања. Религијата секако им овозможува на младите филозофија на животот, која е во рамките на учењата на одредената вероисповед. Предметот на ова истражување беше религиозноста меѓу средношколците во Струга, т.е. дел од младите луѓе кои завршиле основно образование и го продолжиле своето образование. Средината во која се спроведе истражувањето е верски хетерогена средина. Резултатите од истражувањето покажуваат дека општествено-демографските карактеристики имаат многу големо влијание врз религиозноста, а влијаат и врз ориентацијата на вредностите меѓу средношколците.

Клучни зборови: религија, религиозност, млади, истражување, верска толеранција