GENERAL PREVALENCE AND FORMS OF MANIFESTING THE RELIGIOSITY AMONG THE POPULATION IN THE OHRID-STRUGA REGION

Bashkimi Bashkim, PhD[1]

Abstract: Today, as a result of the failure of socialism, we are facing a period of numerous big changes in society, which are of economic, political and social nature. In addition, these changes are accompanied by changes in the value priorities of the social value system. More precisely, people are exposed to influences of social, political and cultural events, so it is difficult for them to adapt. In such a situation, religion offers a philosophy of life that is compatible to specific confession. Ethnicity and religion are basic cohesive factors in multicultural and multiconfessional areas like ours. There are tendencies of individuals and groups to equate nationality with religion. Religion as one of the key factors of human consciousness influences not only the building of spiritual system and the social value system, but also the way of life. Losing self-confidence in solving the important tasks in life, man tries to find help, and it is precisely religion that is the right direction to look for it. It is very important to emphasize the activities of the confessional communities which insist on attracting attention with their organizational structures and filling the gaps that other social institution and organization left empty. The social changes occurring in the late 1980s and early 1990s brought about by the failure of socialism are changing the social role of religion. We live in a world characterized by processes of desecularization or sacralization. The percentage of those who have declared themselves non-religious in the past is almost equal to those who have declared themselves religious in the period after the 1990s. This reversal or change of attitude towards religion, which is characterized by increased religiosity among the entire population, is an inspirational ground for the study of religion. In this research, the subject of investigation was the religiosity of the population in the Ohrid-Struga region, a region that represents ethnic and religion heterogeneous environment. The two most important religious organizations are

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[1]   Center for social work in Struga, R. North Macedonia, email: baskimbaskimi@hotmail.com

the Macedonian Orthodox Church - the Ohrid Archbishopric and the Islamic Religious Community. The target group is consisted of people older than 18. The results obtained by the research show the influence of religiosity, which is at a very high level, on the value orientations of the population in the Ohrid-Struga region.

Keywords: *religion, religiosity, religious organizations, value orientations, religious tolerance**.***

Introduction

In everyday life we face many occurrences, happenings and symbols that associate us with religion and religiosity. Religion as a social phenomenon and historical category is a feature of all human societies.

There are a large number of researchers and members of different scientific disciplines that share the view that the religion and religiosity are very complex and dynamic social phenomena. On the other side, few researchers agree with a single definition of religion and religiosity. The reason for the many types of religions and religious determinations should be sought not only in the complexity of these phenomena "but also in different points of view, embodied in numerous disciplinary approaches and within their different theoretical understandings" (Blagojević, 2005: 36 -37). However, there is also no unity in the definition of religion and religiosity regarding the sociological approach. These differences are most evident at the level of global sociological theories such as the Functionalist, the Marxist, and the Phenomenological theories.

There are some difficulties in defining religion, greater than they seem at the first glance, which are primarily the result of the complexity of the religion phenomenon. It is difficult to find a common name for the many types and various manifested forms of religion and the sacred, from prehistoric times to the present day. Also, a second type of difficulty in defining religion comes from the subjects of belief. The research should start from specific individuals with their specific religious experiences and their understanding of that experience. Granted, certain difficulties in defining religion also come from the very disciplinary approaches used, which ultimately determine the type of definition of religion. Religion has different meanings for theology, philosophy, history and sociology, due to the different methods specific to each scientific discipline. For example, the theological method is deductive and it starts from the publication, while the sociological method is based on experience and it is inductive.

As we said at the beginning of the research, we need to have a definition of religion, because without it the research is not possible. However, the definition is not closed and eternal. "At the beginning of the research the definition of religion clearly limits the subject of the research, but there is an opportunity for the research itself to correct and supplement the original definition of religion by using argumentation during the research. Thus, all the time we have to work with an operational definition of religion, because the full definition of religion is its true history" (Blagojević, 2005: 39)

However, despite the difficulty of defining it, at the beginning of each research one must have a precise, operational definition. It is a question of which definition of religion should be established at the beginning when there are many of them and at the same time, they are quite different from each other. Of course, the researcher may selectively eliminate some of them, depending on the purpose of the research. In our case, the purpose of the research is to explore established (institutionalized) traditional religions and conventional religions, and therefore it should begin from that kind of definition.

Let's see what some definitions of religion look like that present the basis for creating good heuristics and a fruitful definition. Highlighting the diversity of religious beliefs and the inability of religion to define itself by only a segment of it, Anthony Giddens distinguishes between what religion cannot be and what religion actually is. According to Giddens, religion should not be equated with monotheism or moral regulations. Also, religion does not always have to deal with explaining what it is and religion cannot always be equated with the supernatural. According to Giddens, "the characteristics common to all religions refer to the following elements: religion always implies the existence of a series of symbols that is provoking a sense of respect and reverence; then there are rituals and ceremonies in which the community of believers participate in" (Gidens, 2001: 272).

Vuko Pavicevic thinks that the definition of religion is built or composed out of five elements: the idea of the supernatural being, religious feelings, religious symbols, rituals and religious organization. Vuko Pavicevic gives the following phenomenological definition of religion: "Religion is an organized set of beliefs, feelings, symbols, cult practices and moral rules tied to the idea or notion of the Genesis that is taken care of by a special organization- the church" (Pavičević, 1980: 17).

In defining religion, Susnjic assumes that religion must primarily be defined by its essence, not by its function. According to Susnjic, "Religion can be regarded as any belief in absolute and mystical power upon which man depends and controls their life and death, but which they can influence, if they behave in certain ways; it can express their experience with that power in a cognitive, emotional, practical and mystical way in the form of teaching, ritual, community of believers or charismatic people; gaining and expressing experiences with that power has a certain meaning for them and a certain importance for the community, because without that, their own life and the life of the community would look completely different" (Šušnjić, 1998: 50).

According to Besic and Djukanovic, the definition of religion should contain the following elements: faith, sacred, collective, transcendent and cultural-historical conditionality. Accordingly, "religion is a culturally and historically conditioned and collectively stated religion in the sacred which as such is transcendent in nature" (Besić i Đukanović, 2000: 32).

When determining religion, some authors emphasize more its subjective way i.e., the individual experience, while others point out that religion is a distinctly specific organization. Religion is a broad term in which religions and confessional communities have their place. This means that religion is a multidimensional "subjective and objective, individual and collective phenomenon" (Kostoski, 1972: 31).

Research Results

In this research we have tried to define the question of religiosity, that is, the expansion of certain forms of religious behaviour among the population in the Ohrid-

Struga region, by looking at the issues related to the participation in religious rites, as well as the influence of attitudes towards religion and other forms of behaviour.

The Ohrid-Struga region, which is comprised of the municipalities of Ohrid, Struga, Debrca and Vevcani with their characteristics as a multicultural, multiethnic and multiconfessional environment, is in some ways a minimized form of the Macedonian multicultural, mutually multiethnic and multiethnic community. According to the Census of population, the total number of people, households and dwellings in the Republic of Macedonia in 2002 is 127.065 inhabitants, 58,592 of whom belong to the cities of Ohrid and Struga. In terms of ethnicity, 75.432 (59.4%) inhabitants declared themselves as Macedonians, 39.147 (30.8%) Albanians, 5.898 (4.6%) Turks, 185 (0.1%) Roma, 981 (0.8%) Vlachs, 483 (0,4%) Serbs, 132 (0.1%) Bosniaks and 4.816 (3.8%) are remaining. While 74.975 (59.1%) were religiously orthodox, 50.721 (39.9%) were Muslim, 178 (0.1%) were Catholics and 1.191 (0.9%) belonged to other ethnic group (Census of population, households and dwellings in the Republic of Macedonia, 2002-BookX).

It should also be noted that besides the subjective dimension of religion, that is, Religiosity, Religion also exists as a separate specific organization, i.e., as a confessional community. As previously mentioned, the Macedonian Orthodox Church - Ohrid Archbishopric and the Islamic Religious Community act in the surveyed area.

The design of the sample is in line with the research subject and expected objectives, as well as the research approach. This study uses a quota sample. The quotas express the variation of the phenomenon under investigation. This sample includes 400 respondents at the age of 18, selected according to previously defined relevant characteristics. In fact, when determining the quotas in the sample, care was taken to reflect the different geographical and socio-demographic characteristics of the surveyed area. For that purpose, the sample included respondents from different settlements in the Ohrid-Struga region having different socio-demographic characteristics that correspond to the geographical and socio-demographic characteristics of the surveyed area. The field research was conducted by the author in 2015 and 2016. The results presented in this text are a segment of the results obtained from the research conducted during the preparation of my doctoral dissertation entitled Religiosity in the population in the Ohrid-Struga region. The following techniques, questionnaire, informal interviews and observation were used to collect and record the facts of the research subject.

As we have previously pointed out, the questions of the survey in the first part of the questionnaire are the same for both religions, while the questions in the second part of the questionnaire are different and tailored to their religious affiliation. At the beginning, there is a need to try to present the general picture of the religiosity of the population in the Ohrid-Struga region.

The questions in the questionnaire are arranged in a way that encompasses all segments of religion, starting with belief in the sacred, the behaviour of the respondents in a society that springs from the moral aspects of religion, religious practice, and knowledge of the theological doctrine of one's own religion.

The beginning covers the questions and answers of the two segments of, namely the belief in the sacred and the patterns of behavior in society that arise from the moral aspect of religion shown in Table 1. According to the answers to the questions that cover these two segments of religion shown in the table, we can see that a large number of respondents stated that they accept or agree with the views in the above mentioned questions.

In order to get a clearer picture of these segments of religiosity, we tried to calculate an average of the answer percentages to all of the questions listed in the table. The results show that the average number of respondents that agree with all the views is quite high (80.6%), compared to those who disagree (4.9%) or do not know (11.8%).

From the data obtained, we can conclude that beliefs in the sacred and the patterns of behaviour in society that emerge from the moral aspect of religion as two segments of religiosity are quite typical among the population in the study area.

As mentioned earlier in the second part of the questionnaire, which includes questions related to the third segment of religiosity – religious practice, that is, the usual behaviour of the respondents in communication with the sacred, and the fourth segment of religiosity, i.e., the knowledge of theological doctrine, the questions are adapted to the religious affiliation of the respondents so that the answers to the questions are presented separately.

Table 1. Forms of manifesting religiosity
(Belief in the sacred and moral forms of behaviour in the society)

	I don't agree	I don't know	I agree
Does God exist?	1.0 %	7.2 %	90.5 %
Do we have to believe in God?	1.3 %	4.0 %	93.8 %
Is God the creator of all that exists?	4.0 %	8.3 %	85.0 %
Did God create humanity?	4.5 %	9.3 %	84.0 %
Is there heaven and hell?	1.8 %	18.3 %	75.0 %
Is the destiny of humanity in God's hands?	3.0 %	10.3 %	83.8 %
Does an eternal life awaits after a transient life on earth thanks to God?	2.5 %	20.0 %	75.8 %
Belief in God helps man to design life on earth to ensure eternal life and peace?	2.8 %	11.5%	83.5 %
Does God see everything and know everything?	1.8 %	10.5%	85.3 %
Morality, truth, and the greatest good are in God?	0.5 %	7.0 %	91.3 %
All the laws of nature and society are governed by the invisible power of God, and all the achievements of the human race and science are the result of God's laws?	10.3 %	13.8%	73.3 %
Man will answer in front of God for their own moral actions?	1.0 %	14.0 %	84 %
Anyone who believes in God must not lie and deceive for material gain?	1.3 %	6.0 %	92.0 %
People who do state work should do so in accordance with God's commandments?	11.8 %	23.4%	61.1 %

In religious families, the younger members will respect the older ones?	2.5 %	4.0 %	91.7%
Children need to know and act in harmony with God's laws?	2.5 %	5.5 %	90.2 %
Others should be helped even at the cost of our own sacrifice?	16.9 %	19.9%	57.4 %
All the work we do can only be done with God's help?	7.2 %	9.8 %	79.0 %
People should not obey state laws that are contrary to God's laws?	16.8 %	26.4%	50.0 %
People who cheat have sins according to God's laws?	3.0 %	5.8 %	88.5 %
A person who believes in God is not miserable and greedy?	8.5 %	13.3 %	76.7 %
All songs, books, and music that in any way offend God should be avoided?	4.0 %	10.5 %	82.5 %
Total average value	4.9%	11.8%	80.6%

Average:

- I don't agree 4.9%
- I don't know 11.8%
- I agree 80.6%

Table 2 covers the questions and answers regarding the third segment of religiosity – religious practice, i.e., the usual behaviour of the respondents of Orthodox and Islamic religion when communicating with the sacred. Although there are some differences in the representation of this segment of religion compared to the two above mentioned religious segments: the belief in the sacred and the patterns of behaviour in society that emerge from the moral aspect of religion, the average number of those respondents who reported that they regularly (41.9%) or occasionally (34.9%) practice religious practice is significantly higher compared to those (17.4%) who reported that never practice religion.

**TABLE 2. Forms of manifesting religion
(Practice or religious practice)**

	Never	Occasionally	Regularly
How often do you visit a religious temple?	4.9%	63.0 %	31.3 %
Do you confess?	42.7%	37.0 %	15.4 %
Do you pray during the day?	11.4%	63.4 %	21.5%
Do you fast?	24.6 %	51.6 %	19.3 %
Do you read religious literature (books, newspapers, news....) ?	46.7 %	46.7 %	2.0 %
Are you involved in the activities of your church?	48.0 %	38.2 %	10.6 %

Do you pray?	8.4%	50.6 %	39.0 %
Do you celebrate Eid?	0.0 %	0.6 %	99.4 %
Do you follow the Islamic regulations on food?	0.0 %	9.2%	88.2%
Do you respect the ban on the use of alcoholic beverages?	6.5 %	16.2 %	76.0 %
Do you fast during the month of Ramadan?	4.6 %	20.5 %	74.8 %
Do you respect Islamic hygiene regulations?	1.9 %	3.9 %	94.2 %
Do you give zakat?	5.8 %	39.6 %	49.4 %
Do you go to a mosque?	13.6 %	68.2 %	15.6 %
Total average value	17.4%	34.9%	41.9%

Average:

- never 17.4%
- occasionally 34.9%
- regularly 41.9%

Table 3 covers the questions and answers of the fourth segment of religion, namely the knowledge of the theological doctrine of one's own religion. We will try to see this segment of religiosity by analysing the answers to the questions in the table that refer to the respondents from both religions.

The table shows that the percentage of representation of this comparative religion segment is also high. The results show that the average number of those who answered correctly is quite high (83.3%), compared to those who answered incorrectly (14.2%) or did not answer the questions (2.2%).

TABLE 3. Forms of manifesting religion
(Awareness of the theological doctrine of one's own religion)

	Answered correctly	Wrong answer	Didn't answer
Specify the sources from which a Christian learns his faith?	76.8%	18.7%	4.5%
Who is the holy person of the Holy Trinity?	93.4%	3.3%	3.3%
Who is the Lord Jesus Christ?	70.9%	26.7%	2.5%
What is Church?	81.6%	17.5%	0.8%
What is a holy liturgy?	45.5%	52.8%	1.6%
Which of the following terms denotes the Holy Secret?	45.6%	46.0%	8.4%
What is Heavenly Kingdom?	80.5%	17.8%	1.6%
What is Hell?	87.8%	9.3%	2.8%
From the answers above, which one is the essential meaning to the greeting As -salamu aleikum?	93.5%	2.2%	3.2%
How many Islamic pillars are there?	92.2%	5.2%	2.6%
Which of the following terms denotes one of the five daily prayers?	89.5%	9.8%	0.7%

On the day of judgment to whom do the Islamic believers answer?	95.4%	1.8%	0.0%
Which is the fifth Islamic pillar?	88.9%	9.8%	0.7%
Which of the following terms signifies the book of God?	98.1%	1.3%	0.6%
Which of the following behaviours is strictly forbidden by Islam?	96.9%	1.9%	1.3%
What is the basic religious thought in Islam?	96.8%	3.2%	0.0%
Total average value	83.3%	14.2%	2.2%

Average:

- Answered correctly 83.3 %
- Answered incorrectly 14.2 %
- Didn't answer 2.2 %

From the results we can conclude that although not all segments of religiosity are equally represented, the prevalence of forms of religiosity among the population in the surveyed area is quite high.

In addition, with our attempt to show the prevalence of certain forms of religiosity among the population in the surveyed area, we will try to make a typology of religiosity by using some of the above-mentioned indicators. For this purpose, we used indicators to measure religiosity that were divided into four groups: belief in the sacred, the behaviour of the respondents in a society that derives from the moral aspects of religion, religious practice and the emergence of the theological doctrine of one's own religion.

The respondents were categorized in certain segments of religion based on the answers to the questions asked. The first category, i.e. respondents belonging to the group with a low level of religiosity, are the ones that disagreed with the presented statements (e.g., having a belief in God during life on earth will lead to an eternal life, etc, the ones that answered "never" (e.g., do you pray during the day, do you fast, etc.) or the ones that gave incorrect answers to the questions related to the knowledge of the theological doctrine of one's own religion.

The second category, i.e., respondents with medium degree of religiosity, include those who answered the questions with "I do not know" and "sometimes". The third category i.e., respondents with high degree of religiosity, includes those whose answers to the questions were "I agree", "regularly" and "correctly".

According to the data obtained from the research, this is how the level of religiousness of the population in the Ohrid-Struga region looks like.

TABLE 4. Level of religiousness in respondents

Degree of religiosity	frequencies	%
High degree	278	69.6
Medium degree	69	17.3
Low degree	53	13.1

The results from Table 4 show that the percentage of respondents with a high degree of religiosity is significantly higher (69.6%) compared to respondents with a moderate level (17.3%) and a low degree of religiosity (13.1%).

Degree of religiosity
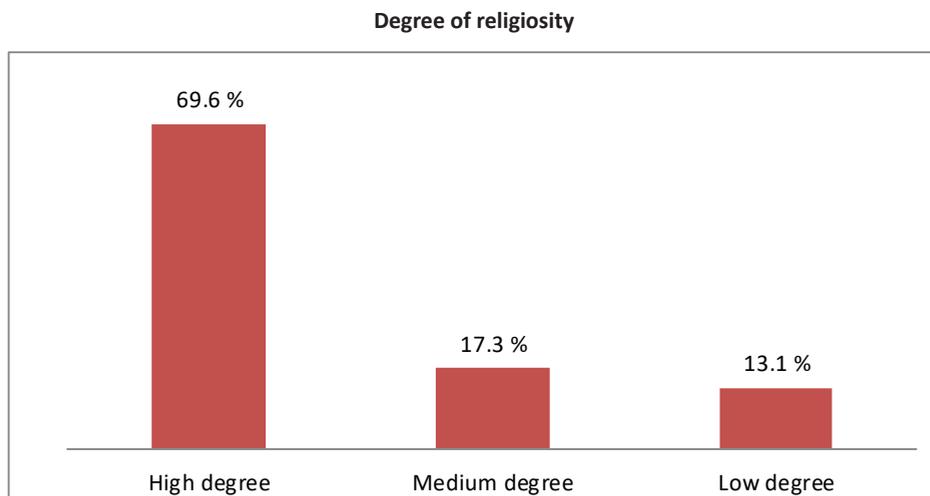
Concluding observations

Based on the obtained results, i.e., the respondents' own statements, as well as the results obtained through observation, informal conversations and individual observations of the segments of religiosity, we can conclude that the prevalence of religions forms in the area is quite high. Accordingly, the belief in the sacred and the patterns of behaviour in society that emerge from the moral aspect of religion and the knowledge of the theological doctrine of one's own religion are the most highly represented segments, that is, they are almost completely accepted by the respondents compared to the religious practice.

80.6% of the total number of respondents declared to believe in the sacred and the accepted patterns of behaviour in society that derive from the moral aspect of religion, 83.3% correctly answered questions about knowing the theological doctrine of one's own religion compared to 41.9% who reported that they regularly practice religion. Despite these differences in the representation of certain segments of religiosity, according to the percentage of respondents, we can conclude that the general picture of religiosity among the population in the Ohrid-Struga region is characterized by a high degree of religiosity.

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