

Changes of Worldview Structures in the Czech Republic and Slovakia After 1990. Methodological Aspects of Measuring Religiosity and “Nones”¹

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Changes of Worldview Structures in the Czech Republic and Slovakia After 1990. Methodological Aspects of Measuring Religiosity and “Nones”. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, four censuses have been conducted since 1990, in which the religious affiliation of the population was monitored. While the first one, in 1991, was carried out with a uniform methodology still within the framework of a common, albeit federalised, state, the later censuses differed from each other in both countries in their methodology, which was changed several times, but also in what they actually measured. In the same period, international surveys that worked with a more unified methodology for measuring religiosity were also conducted, most notably the EVS and WVS programmes. The study will focus on the analysis of the methodology used in both countries and the various risks involved in attempting to compare results between the two countries. Different survey and census results also lead to substantial differences in interpretation of the results of trends in religiosity change, leading to the need for a more in-depth analysis of the impact of the different methods on the results obtained. Comparisons will be made concerning the possible ways to analyse both the group of people claiming a religious affiliation and those who did not claim a religious affiliation (nones). The ways of comparing the results from the censuses will be tested by using the survey-type studies EVS/WVS.

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Introduction

The last decade in the scientific study of religion and sociology of religion in particular has been marked by an increased interest in a phenomenon that has been described very variously - sometimes as religious nones, sometimes as research on secular non-religion or atheism. The topic has become a subject of interest not only in the USA and in Western Europe, but also in Central and Eastern European academic milieu (Bubík et al. 2020; Gärtner 2022; Hazdovac Bajić 2022; Lipka 2019; Molteni 2017; Müller – Porada 2022; Smrke 2017; Zrinščák 2004; Vorpahl – Schuster 2020). Also the study of religion in Slovakia and Czechia has paid more and more attention to this phenomenon, either individually in each country or when comparing Czech and Slovak

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society (Froese 2005; Hamplová 2000; Hamplová 2013; Hamplová – Nešpor 2009; Hamplová – Řeháková 2009; Majo 2020; Majo 2022; Nešpor 2020; Tížik 2019; Tížik 2022; Váně 2012; Václavík 2022; Václavík et al. 2018; Zachar Podolinská – Majo 2022).

This research often understands secular as an opposite category to religious. But there is also another approach (today called the study of non-religion) that considers non-religion not as the absence of religion, but rather as something distinct from what is considered as religion (Lee 2015). So-called “nones” can include various non-traditional interpretations of religious worldviews / approaches to the world as well as agnostic, irreligious worldviews or not explicitly religious phenomena, such as “invisible religion” (Luckmann 1967), “spirituality” as a fundamentally different phenomenon from religion (Heelas – Woodhead 2005), non-institutionalised expressions of religion as “believing without belonging” (Davie 1990), “invented religion” (Lužný 2021), only declarative religiosity as “belonging without believing” (Hervieu-Léger 1993; Oakes 2015), or such labels of nones as “absence of religion” (Flory 2015) or “absence of believing and belonging” (Voas – Crockett 2005), “irreligion” (Smrke 2017), or even “atheism” (Lipka 2019). Whereas in Western Europe and the USA, in the context of continued secularization over the last three decades, there has been an increasing interest in research on “nones” (non-religious people) (Burge 2021; Kosmin 2009), in post-communist countries the emphasis for more than two decades after 1990 has been on the return of religion or various forms of religious revivalism (Doktór 2007; Kepel 1991; Michel 1993; Tomka 2001; Saggau 2018).

In the case of the analysis of the phenomenon, which can be very generally and simplistically described as “nones”, only a part of the analytical studies in the Slovak and Czech milieu is based on work with comparative quantitative data, i.e. comparing the development not only in one’s own country (Hamplová 2000; Nešpor 2020), and even fewer studies discuss critically the methodological difficulties in distinguishing people who claim religion from those who do not, i.e. by examining the difference between different types of religious affiliations (Bognár – Kmetty 2023; Fialová – Nešpor 2018; Havlíček 2019; Morávková 2004; Tížik 2014a; Tížik 2014b; Tížik 2022; Majo 2022). If a more detailed analysis of the different analyses dealing with the religious composition (religious structure of society) and the proportions of people without religion in a particular country were made, it would be seen that the various research results yield different outcomes. Another problem tends to be that research either focuses only on research on religiosity on the one hand, or only on research on people with no declared religion on the other. The study of

those who cannot be identified as explicitly religious often leads to questioning the very definition of religion and also of religion as an object of scientific inquiry. In the Czech and Slovak context Mišovič made an attempt at terminological clarification and differentiation of the terms religious and spiritual, but only with an indication of the situation in the Czech Republic based on changes of religious affiliation in the last four censuses (Mišovič 2023: 326).

This questioning of the term “religion”, for example, is part of the critical theory of religion. According to Henley the critical study of religion rejects the basic premise that religion is a thing that has causes, effects, or interactions. So a critical approach to the sociology of “religion” would tend to pivot toward entirely new questions: how and why do people categorize some things as religion or religions, and with what effects? How was “religion” invented in the first place, and to what extent has it been reinvented for different contexts? What does it mean to see no religion? These critical approaches to religion do not sit comfortably alongside the usual talk about religion’s role in society (Henley 2023). Horii (2021: 138) considers the dissemination of the category of “religion” on a broad, international scale as evidence of its success as a purveyor of what he describes as a colonial ideology. Horii’s work argues that any effective challenge to colonial thinking depends on the deconstruction of “religion” in all global contexts. According to Goldenberg the power of the category of religion depends on the continued mystification of both “the religious” and “the secular” (Goldenberg 2023). Also Lee questioned traditional use of the term “religion” and distinguishes between separate and incommensurable aspects of so-called secularity as insubstantial (those involving merely the absence of religion) and substantial (those involving beliefs, ritual practice) and identities that are alternative to religious ones. In this sense recognizing the cultural forms that present themselves as non-religious as Lee has done is a more egalitarian and more theoretically coherent way of thinking about people who are not religious (Lee 2015).

To overcome various narrowly focused analyses, it is therefore appropriate to turn to the classical concept of worldview, which is regularly used, especially in the German-speaking world (*Weltanschauung*) as a heritage of the Kantian tradition (including sociologists such as Max Weber, Thomas Luckmann and others), and which encompasses a whole range of different beliefs and motives of action - besides religious beliefs, philosophical approaches to the world, but also agnosticism or atheism. The term worldview as a way of coping with the problems of defining the concept of religion has also been operationalized empirically by psychologists of religion, e.g., Taves et al. (2018). They try to get beyond the solely negative identities connected with

atheism and agnosticism, and they have conceptualized an object of study that includes religions and non-religions. In their approach they advocate a shift from “religions” to “worldviews” (Taves et al. 2018).

In Slovak and Czech sociology of religion, also under the influence of the use of the term worldview before 1990, this concept is practically no longer used, which, however, has led to a reduction of the object of research to religious or spiritual forms of beliefs. The abandonment of sociological traditions based on German classical sociology and the move towards the Anglo-Saxon tradition was also a factor in the abandonment of the use of the term worldview. The use of the term worldview in this study will not only be a continuation of the tradition of Max Weber’s sociology, but also a way of avoiding a bipolar understanding of the relationship between religion and secularity, or the understanding of the non-religious as the absence of the religious. The term worldview will thus be used in this study as an umbrella term encompassing both religious and secular self-definitions and the associated practical action of people in Czechia and Slovakia.

One of the aims of this study is to describe the state and dynamics of change of the basic types of worldviews in Slovakia and Czechia over the last more than a quarter of a century. In this respect, the comparison of the change of confessional (religious) or worldview composition in the Czech and Slovak populations is a unique case for analysis, which also allows for a rigorous methodological critique. Both societies were part of a common state formation until 1993 and also they have been from 2004 members of the European Union and they are also countries that tend to be classified into diametrically opposed religiously defined groups of countries. Whereas Slovakia tends to be considered as one of the countries with strong religiosity in society, the Czech Republic, on the contrary, tends to be ranked among countries with the lowest level of religiosity in the world (Froese 2005; Müller – Porada 2022; Nešpor 2020; Pištora 2004). These claims are often based on census results, but similar conclusions, albeit in varying degrees of similarity, are also shown by survey-type studies.

To achieve the above-mentioned goal, it is the multidimensional understanding of non/religiosity that is the starting point of this study. For this reason, a typological method will be used as a starting point for the analysis of religiosity (or non-religiosity), treating non/religiosity as a structured phenomenon that manifests itself in different equivalent dimensions, where each type expresses a qualitatively different form of religiosity or non-religiosity. The typology will be based on the classical definition of Max Weber. According to his definition an ideal type “is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or

more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct..." (Weber 1997: 90)

The comparison between the Czech Republic and Slovakia is also beneficial from a methodological point of view, because uniform methodologies were still used to measure the confessional structure at the time of the existence of a common Czechoslovakia. This was either in the surveys or in the censuses (Morávková 2004; Růžicková 2017; Tížik 2014b). In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, four censuses have already been conducted since 1990 (an additional three were carried out in the period of a more centralised Czechoslovakia between 1920 and 1951), in which the religious affiliation of the population was also monitored. While the first one after the change of the political regime in 1991 was conducted with a uniform methodology still within the framework of a common, albeit federalised, state, the later censuses differed from each other in both countries in terms of their methodology, which was even changed several times in each country, but also in terms of what they actually measured. A thorough methodological analysis of the census results is made possible by longitudinal comparative survey-type studies, such as the ISSP (International Social Survey Programme) and EVS or WVS (European Value Study or World Values Survey),³ which were conducted in three to four waves throughout the period under analysis and which, unlike the censuses, use a uniform methodology within each programme (Majo 2020; Majo 2022; Tížik 2009; Tížik 2019). Although a number of studies on religiosity and worldview have been conducted in each of these countries after 1989 (Lužný 2012; Lužný – Václavík 2007; Váně 2012; Váně – Hášová 2014; Váně – Kreidl 2001), many of them have not been conducted in both countries or have been conducted with different methodologies, which prevents us from comparing the results and analysing the impact of methodology on the results for both countries.

Although this study does not seek to develop the theoretical foundations of the study of religious life in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, a reflection on the methodological problems posed by working with the data suggests, as pointed out by several authors (Havlíček 2019; Tížik 2021; Váně 2012; Vido 2019), that the main studies on religiosity in the Czech Republic and Slovakia lack a precise theoretical framing. This is particularly evident in research as unique as the situation in the former Czechoslovakia, where one social and

³ The data and documentation of the European Values Study (EVS) are at the German Social Data Archive at <http://zacat.gesis.org/webview/>. The data and documentation from World Values Survey are available at <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>.

political system, that of the Czechoslovak republic, built over seventy years on the foundations of originally two distinct national and political societies, has gradually evolved into two independent social systems of two independent states, and where it is precisely a theoretical anchoring that can help to direct inquiry in an attempt to explain existing differences or even persistent similarities (Tížik 2021: 120). As stated by Váně when describing the situation in the Czech Republic (and this is also the case in Slovakia), the problem is no longer that there is not enough data on religion and religiosity, but the problem is the conceptualisation of this data and its application (Váně 2012: 376).

This study sets itself two main goals. The first aim will be to analyse the methodology used in both countries for the investigation of religiosity and to identify a number of pitfalls in the possible comparison of census results between the two countries, but also in the comparison of longitudinal time-series results from various other research studies. The second objective will be to compare the evolution of the differentiated worldview compositions (including religious and non-religious) of the Czech and Slovak populations. The possibilities of comparing the results from the censuses will be tested with the example of surveys, namely the four waves of the European Values Survey (EVS 2021), which were carried out in the same period in both countries and the seventh wave of the World Values Study collected in both countries in 2022 (EVS/WVS 2022).⁴ The integration of the WVS7 results into the analysis is also an important test of the possible effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, both on the results of censuses held at the very time of the emergency measures fundamentally limiting collective activities, but also on the possible long-term effects on the reduction or growth of religiosity.

The hypothesis, based on the negation of the notion of religious renewal in post-communist countries (Doktór 2007; Kepel 1991; Michel 1993; Tomka 2001; Saggau 2018), is that the proportion of the most religiously active people gradually decreases as time progresses after the change of political regime. The partial hypotheses are: 1. Previous conclusions about worldview change in Slovakia and the Czech Republic have been based on uncritical work with data, leading to conclusions about significant worldview change. 2. The main manifestation of secularization in both societies is the significant growth of the

⁴ However, some methodological differences in EVS and WVS research should be noted. While the sampling in the EVS was done by random sampling (after 2008) and the resulting data are weighted, in 2022 the WVS created samples by quota sampling, hence the weighting used causes fewer differences between the collected and weighted results. The second difference between the EVS and the WVS is the way religious affiliation is measured. In the EVS, affiliation to a religious group was tracked by a two-step question; in the WVS, a single question was used, containing a non-denominational option in addition to a list of religious groups. The use of a one-step question tends to increase the proportion reporting to a religious group, as the results of the analysis showed (Tížik, 2014a; Tížik, 2014b)

share of self-declared atheist in the populations to the detriment of the growth of the religiously neutral.

Variety of ways of measuring worldview

One of the fundamental issues in quantitative research on religious life and measuring the form of religiosity or irreligiosity is how to observe these phenomena in the population as a whole, that is, how many people in the population are religious and how many are not. In the most general sense of the word, the various surveys and measurements so classified can be grouped into surveys of broadly defined religiosity or the broadly defined concept of worldview. However, for specific interpretations, which part of the worldview is being measured must be clearly identified.

It should therefore be stressed that what is often referred to as measuring religiosity in the context of analysing census results is measuring only one aspect of religiosity - that is, measuring only religious affiliation to a religion or religious group (belonging or affiliation). However, such data is not only collected from censuses but also from other sources. *The Swiss Metadatabase of Religious Affiliation in Europe* (SMRE, 2022) distinguishes three main data sources for measuring religious affiliation (Liedhegener – Odermatt 2013: 9):

1. representative opinion polls (surveys),
2. censuses (which are not carried out in all European countries in the investigation of religious affiliation),
3. the World Christian Database, the World Religion Database. But the authors do not consider this source unproblematic, since the data for individual countries is provided by American Christian missionaries, which partly skews the data in favour of Christianity.

The mere suggestion of different methods of measurement and the multidimensionality of religiosity and any worldview makes one wary of using census data as additional indicators of religiosity. At the same time, the need to supplement and partly correct these data with results obtained by other research methods becomes apparent. Triangulation, i.e. supporting an argument or conclusion with data from at least three sources or perspectives from at least three sides, is a procedure that makes it possible to objectify and validate the conclusions of researchers or those who work with data from different studies (Kusá 2022: 112; Rochovská et al. 2007: 343). Census data can also be approached in this way.

In probing religious adherence in Europe, the authors of the SMRE project use a large variety of data sources, among which representative sample surveys predominate. They pay separate and close attention to the quality of the databases and data they work with (Liedhegener – Odermatt 2013: 4-5). Because of these potential flaws, the authors emphasize the basic principles of scientific inquiry into religious belonging, as many current studies on this topic are not based on reliable data and critical work with sources. One of the important criteria for distinguishing data quality is the way in which the censuses are evaluated. The authors of the SMRE ranked Slovakia among the countries with reliable and credible data sources thanks to the way religious affiliation is measured in the censuses (Liedhegener – Odermatt 2013: 16). On the other hand, the Czech Republic, with its different way of measurement in censuses, is among the countries in the second group of probably reliable. Later, after 2015 countries with problematically reliable data were reclassified as unreliable, including the Czech Republic (SMRE 2022).

Differences in the results of measurements

As can be seen, even when assessing data quality at the pan-European level, the researchers suggest a divergence between the data collected in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. However, what about censuses, i.e. censuses that have been conducted within a common state over a long period of time? The 2021 census in Czechia and Slovakia showed a huge decrease in the proportion of the population declaring to have some religious affiliation compared to previous censuses (Table 1 and 2).

A glance at the results for both countries already shows some basic differences. In the Czech Republic, more than a third of the population has had no detected affiliation with religion since 2011, while in Slovakia this figure was only about 10% or less in that period. At the same time, there are differences in the development of the share of those who do not declare any religion in both countries. While in Slovakia this group is continually growing, which would be in line with the hypotheses of progressing secularisation, in the case of the Czech Republic the evolution is different and it looks as if this group first increased significantly until 2001, only to decrease significantly afterwards, even below the level of 1991, and then increased again, but not to the level of 2001.

Table 1: **Population in Slovakia by main confessions 1900-2022 (in %)**

<i>Church</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>1910</i>	<i>1921</i>	<i>1930</i>	<i>1950</i>	<i>1991</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2022</i>
Roman Catholic Church	censuses	69,5	70,9	71,6	76,2	60,4		68,9		62,0		55,8	
	EVS					58,1	59		62,5		56,3		62,4
Greek Catholic Church	censuses	6,8	6,5	6,4	6,6	3,4		4,1		3,8		4	
	EVS					3,3	4,9		4,1		3,3		3,6
Evangelical Church A. C. (ECAV-Lutherans)	censuses	13,5	12,8	12	12,9	6,2		6,9		5,9		5,3	
	EVS					7,2	9,2		5,2		7,5		6,7
Reformed Church (Calvinist)	censuses	5,4	4,8	4,4	3,2	1,6		2		1,8		1,6	
	EVS					0	1,8		1,5		1,9		1,3
Jews	censuses	4,8	4,5	4,1	0,2	0,1		0,1		0,1		0,1	
	EVS					0	0		0		0		0
Other	censuses	0,1	0,3	0	0	1,3		2,1		1,4		3	
	EVS					2,3	1,9		1,9		1,7		0,5
Without confession/ Not affiliated	censuses	0	0,2	1,5	0,9	9,7		13		13,4		23,8	
	EVS					29,1	23,2		24,7		29,2		25,5
Not specified/ No answer	censuses	0	0	0	0	17,4		3		10,6		6,5	
	EVS					0	0	0,1	0,1	0			

Source: Tížik (2011), Štatistický úrad SR, 2021 (<https://www.scitanie.sk/obyvatelia/zakladne-vysledky/struktura-obyvatelstva-podla-nabozenskeho-vyznania/SR/SK0/SR>), EVS (2021), EVS/WVS (2022)

Table 2: **Population in Czechia by main confessions 1910-2022 (in %)**⁵

<i>Church</i>	<i>Method</i>	1910	1921	1930	1950	1991	1999	2001	2008	2011	2017	2021	2022
Roman Catholic Church	censuses	94,8	82	78,5	76,3	39		26,1		10,26		7,4	
	EVS					35	27,8		21,5		18,4		24,4
Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren	censuses	3,1	2,3	2,7	4,5	2		1,1		0,49		0,31	
	EVS					1,2	1,4		0,9		0,9		
Czechoslovak Hussite Church	censuses	-	5,2	7,3	10,6	1,7		1		0,37		0,22	
	EVS					1,9	1,1		1,2		0,4		
Other	censuses	1,8	3,3	3,4	2,4	1		3,2		9,47		14,56	
	EVS					2	2,7		2,2		4		1,8
Without confession/ Not affiliated with any church	censuses	0,1	7,2	7,8	5,8	39,9		59		34,2		47,77	
	EVS					59,4	66,1		73,8		75,4		73,2
Not specified/ Don't know, no answer	censuses	-	0,1	0,3	0,3	16,2		8,8		45,2		30,1	
	EVS					0,5	0,9		0,4		0,9		0,6

Source: Tižik (2011), Statistický úřad ČR, 2021 (<https://www.czso.cz/csu/scitani2021/nabozenska-vira>), EVS (2021), EVS/WVS (2022)

While the census results show a fairly dynamic quantitative growth of the non-religious group in Slovakia, when another type of measure of religiosity is used, such as what Majo (2020) illustrated in the results of ISSP surveys, it appears that the growth of this group is not as rapid, but rather that previous censuses have failed to capture all those who do not declare a religious affiliation. Comparing the census and the EVS (and WVS7) shows just this kind of problem. In Table 1, it can be seen that, with the exception of Roman Catholics in 1999 (as the largest denomination), the results of the two types of

⁵ In the WVS7 survey conducted in spring 2022, not all Protestant churches registered in the Czech Republic are evaluated and coded, and also the results of those registered with the Roman Catholic Church differ in their tendency towards growth from the census results (the same as in Slovakia), which suggests possible methodological biases in this research and the need for a higher degree of caution in generalizing conclusions.

measurement do not differ significantly (with small differences in WVS7 carried out in 2022).

In the Czech Republic (Table 2), differences can be seen when comparing the results of the censuses and the EVS (and WVS7) survey, whose first two waves (till 1999) were always conducted relatively close to the census date. It can be seen that in this kind of measurement there are negligible proportions of respondents who did not answer the question, and at the same time a slightly linear increase in the proportion of people who do not subscribe to any church (nones).

While the 2021 census results in Slovakia for respondents with no religious affiliation are similar to the results of the EVS 2017 wave conducted only a few years earlier (it is only slightly lower), in the case of the Czech Republic, the census and EVS data show significant differences, and not only for those who did not subscribe to any religion.

Changes in the census methodology

Such contradictory results have also led to much questioning of the census results in both countries, to which a number of expert reactions have emerged (e.g. Morávková 2004; Tížik 2014a). Since the largest group in the Czech Republic turned out to be people who did not declare their religion or worldview, the question is what their worldview orientation is. This is what Fialová – Nešpor (2018) focused on when they analysed the group of those who did not answer the question in the 2011 census in the Czech Republic. They concluded that in almost half of the population that did not answer the question, a wide variety of secular groups of people are represented, i.e. those who could be considered members of churches, but also those who are religiously indifferent, or believers who do not want to report to an institutionalised church. Their findings confirm the hypothesis that the association between completing and not completing the question on religion (stating beliefs) has no demonstrable relationship to a person's religious affiliation based on the available information (Fialová – Nešpor 2018: 228).

However, a first look at the evolution of the worldview or confessional composition in both countries suggests that the results are not easily interpretable and, in the Czech Republic in particular, there have been other changes besides the change in the worldview composition, in this case, changes in the census methodology, as pointed out in their study by Fialová – Nešpor (2018: 207), who stress, contrary to Havlíček (2019), that in each census something different was measured.

Three important considerations need to be taken into account when dealing with the results from the Slovak and Czech censuses:

- a) Different census methodologies were used in different years, namely the respondent was stimulated to answer by a different question and different instructions.
- b) It should be taken into account whether the question on the census form was asked as a compulsory or optional question.
- c) The clarity or ambiguity of the question asked may also affect the proportion of those who subscribe to a religion and this also determines the possible ways of interpreting the results.

In the censuses of 1950 and earlier, the census sheets were mainly tracking church register affiliation; the respondent was instructed to record whether he or she had been baptised and thus symbolically integrated into a church, in other words what denomination had been recorded on the register for him or her. No subjective sense of belonging to a church or whether or not a person was a believer was tracked. Thus, people who did not believe and even those who, for ideological reasons, sought to eradicate religion from public life were reported as believers and members of churches. The census sheet designed in this way enabled almost all inhabitants of Czechoslovakia to be listed as members of a church (Tables 1 and 2).

The censuses changed methodology several times, even during the existence of Czechoslovakia. However, the question was already formulated differently and as a compulsory open question, it already measured subjective adherence to a religion or the indication that the informant was without religion. As the results show, in this census there was a high proportion of informants in Slovakia and the Czech Republic who did not subscribe to any religion or were not identified as such. However, Majo (2013: 218-219) considers the results of the 1991 census to be less "realistic" compared to later ones, as it was considered to have been conducted in a specific period with significant uncertainty in several areas, including declared religious affiliation, which should have been interpreted as an increased proportion of those who did not declare any religion.

Table 3 shows that while in Slovakia the methodology was changed, albeit not fundamentally, in 2001 and later in 2021, in the Czech Republic there were several changes that fundamentally changed what was being measured. As Morávková (2004: 119) states, since 2001 the Czech Republic has chosen the most 'liberal' approach among several recommendations of international

organisations. Comparisons also show that the Czech model has shifted from measuring confessionality (meaning belonging to a church) to measuring religious beliefs, i.e. faith (meaning whether the person consider themselves as a believer).

Table 3: Comparison of questions in censuses

	Czechia	Slovakia
Till 1950	Objective church membership (based on registration in church registers) – CONFESSIONALITY	Objective church membership (based on registration in church registers) – CONFESSIONALITY
1991	A subjective and open question: What is your religious affiliation? (coding according to the list of registered churches) CONFESSIONALITY	A subjective and open question: What is your religious affiliation? (coding according to the list of registered churches) CONFESSIONALITY
2001	Two-step question (REQUIRED): Religion, faith or no religion: 1. No religion 2. Believer - open-ended question with a distinction between believers with no religious affiliation and believers with church affiliation CONFESSIONALITY and FAITH	Religion/church + list of 15 registered churches, other (open), no religion. (REQUIRED): Interpretation in instruction ("participation in and relationship to the life of the church") - double-headedness CONFESSIONALITY
2011	Two-step question (OPTIONAL): Religious beliefs: 1a) Believers affiliated to a church or religious society - open question and filling in the name of the church 1b) believers not affiliated to a church 2) no religious belief FAITH	Religion/church + list of 18 registered churches, other (open), no religion. (REQUIRED): Interpretation in instruction ("participation in and relationship to the life of the church") - double-headedness CONFESSIONALITY

Table 3 (continued): **Comparison of questions in censuses**

	Czechia	Slovakia
2021	<p>Two-step question (OPTIONAL):</p> <p>Religious beliefs:</p> <p>1a) Believers affiliated to a church or religious society - open question and filling in the name of the church</p> <p>1b) believers not affiliated to a church</p> <p>2) no religious belief</p> <p>"In the question on religious belief, respondents could indicate their religious belief, which was described as the religious movement, church or society to which they subscribe. Respondents had the option to write the name of the church if they declared that they were religious - adhering to a church, religious society, etc. They could also choose to answer that they were religious - not affiliated to any church or religious society. The last possible answer was no religious belief. Respondents could also leave the question blank; it was optional."</p> <p>FAITH</p>	<p>Two-step question (REQUIRED):</p> <p>What is your religious affiliation?</p> <p>(‘Religious affiliation reflects your relationship/affiliation with a church, religious society or religion’)</p> <p>1. with a religious affiliation</p> <p>1. 1. (go to list of 18 registered churches + Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and others with a box to fill in)</p> <p>2. without religion</p> <p>Interpretation in the instructions - partly a double-headedness (not including practice)</p> <p>CONFESSONALITY</p>

A closer look at the exact data from the different investigations (Tables 1 and 2) and a comparison of the results according to the type of question used confirms the assumption that the wording of the question has an impact on whether more or fewer respondents subscribe to religion, either in the census or in the representative surveys (Table 3). This conclusion does not imply that one method of measurement is better than another, but rather that each method measures partly different things. Whereas in the case of an open-ended question, it can be assumed that the question measures not only formalized membership but also a higher degree of identification with a church or religious group, and thus says more about the respondent's religiosity, in the case of a closed-ended question, where the respondent is stimulated to choose to one of the options offered, this method is also likely to appeal to those respondents who do not subjectively feel a relationship with religion, or do not believe, but know that they were initiated into a tradition as children, or accept this tradition

as part of their cultural identity without any spiritual dimension or without a link to a particular church.

The use of a two-stage measurement, i.e., a filter question, has a similar effect to the use of an open-ended question. It even further reduces the response rate and increases the proportion of unselected respondents, as shown by the example of developments in the Czech Republic over the last two decades. Censuses and surveys that include a larger group of people with no identified religion cannot be considered less relevant and should be analysed. This goes against Majo, who decided not to analyse the 1991 census in Slovakia precisely because of the high rate of those who did not answer the question on religious affiliation (Majo 2013: 219). Non-affiliation is not a problem that needs to be eliminated, but rather it needs to be taken as a fact in interpretations and as a form of respondents' (interviewees') reaction to the use of some kind of method that is aimed at measuring a deeper level of identification with a religious group or church (Tížik 2014a).

Typology as a tool for more detailed investigation

These debates have been bogged down in several problems: defining who is a believer; how to measure belief; who should be considered an atheist; and how to treat those people without a religious affiliation who do not even claim to be atheists. However, the results of censuses cannot answer such questions (Majo 2013; Majo 2020; Tížik 2022) and it is necessary to focus on analyses of other available surveys, especially those representative surveys of the Czech and Slovak populations that have investigated more comprehensively the issues of the development of worldviews and religious composition in Slovakia and Czechia.

Census data tell us only about one dimension of broadly defined religiosity or worldview, about the subjective expression of a relationship to one of the recognized churches in Slovakia or Czechia or about the expression of belonging to some other religious group or to a group of people with no religious affiliation. However, analytical questions remain: What is the proportion of various types of religiosity for those who declare their affiliation to a religion in both populations? What is the proportion of various types of secular people, meaning those who do not declare themselves as part of any religion and describe themselves as non-believers or non-religious? Both the censuses and the EVS results show that in both populations there are also groups of people who refuse to express their religious or non-religious beliefs. These may be people who consider these issues to be a private matter, i.e. a kind of worldview privatists, but they may also be (though there is no evidence that

they are) people who are also referred to as displaying “fuzzy fidelity” (Storm 2009; Voas 2009) or being the “fuzzy middle” (Wilkins-Laflamme 2014; Zinnbauer et al. 1997). Due to the fact that this study is based on the analysis of already existing quantitative data, these groups will not be analysed because the absence of data does not allow us to reconstruct their worldview comprehensively as will be the case for other types.

One of the aims of this study is to describe the state and dynamics of change of the basic types of worldviews, meaning types of religiosity and types of secular approaches to the world in Slovakia and Czechia over the last more than a quarter of a century. When working with EVS results, the measurement of religiosity intensity is still the most widely used, and not only in academic research. However, it should be added that very different stimuli are used to measure it, several even focusing solely on subjective manifestations of religiosity (Tížik 2022). Measuring the intensity of religiosity – that is, emphasizing the principle of quantity as a differentiating factor – contains tempting assumptions: for example, if a respondent indicates a higher frequency of religious practice, or provides a longer list of beliefs, or lists a greater number of indicators of religiosity, then this is taken to reflect a higher degree of religiosity (for example Bognár – Kmetty 2023; Norris – Inglehart 2004). In such an understanding of measurement of religiosity, non/religiosity is assumed to be a phenomenon whose defining feature is either increasing or decreasing. But even in international comparisons, this approach is highly problematic, for a number of reasons. Already when comparing Christian traditions, different practices and degrees of religious commitment are not taken into account, such as in the case of dogmatic doctrine, and especially in the case of participation in religious services (the problematic nature of this indicator is pointed out, for example, by Vávra 2009). While in the Catholic tradition it is customary to express one’s religiosity by regular attendance at religious services, and the Church expects this from the faithful (and organizes the celebration of Mass on a daily basis, thus enabling for such a requirement to be fulfilled), in other Christian traditions this is not part of the basic religious duties, and neither does the organization of religious life include the possibility of daily attendance at religious services. While it is true that the above indicators of religiosity are generally typical of all major monotheistic traditions, they reflect the form of relationship to traditional teachings and the functioning of the Christian tradition rather than the intensity of religiosity. Thus, the very choice of indicators suggests a certain way of defining religiosity, albeit not always explicitly expressed, which the form of the measurement tool – whether it uses a quantitative or a qualitative approach – may amplify. The problem

with hierarchization in measuring religiosity and creating religious-secular opposites has also been pointed out by Horii (2021), who has drawn attention to the colonialist dimension of the use of these terms. He stresses that human phenomena are described by a number of different terms, such as beliefs, practices, lifeways, cosmologies, value orientations, worldviews, rituals, metaphysical representations, and the like. The problem is that all these are classified into “religious” and “secular” kinds in the same way as the colonial distinction between “religion” and non-religious “secular” what is not neutral and natural. It organizes human differences into a hierarchical order. It locates belief, myth and metaphysical representation of modernity at the top of the civilizational hierarchy as “non-religious” or “secular,” while other lifeways are placed below it by being classified as “religious.” Just as Horii sees a risk in the hierarchization and privileging of the secular over the religious in modern societies, so too in countries where the rejection of the secular has become the norm, the reverse may be true and the secular may be hierarchically inferior to the religious, which is also a frequent problem when comparing countries in terms of their level of religiosity. Thus non-religiosity is perceived as the lowest level of religiosity. In countries where the modern project of communism has been rejected as a break with tradition, this has also led in many cases to a re-polarisation of normative evaluations of the religious and the secular.

The comparison will be made on the basis of comparable data from Slovakia and Czechia collected in four waves of the EVS in 1991, 1999, 2008 and 2017 and from the WVS seventh module carried out in both countries in 2022. Longitudinal studies of this kind can trace the dynamics of the development of the religious structure of society and changes in the proportions of people who do not adhere to any religion. In spite of the fact that a large number of such surveys have been carried out in Czechia and Slovakia since 1990, only two research programmes allow for a systematic analysis of this development, the EVS (European Values Study, which in some waves was also a part of the WVS World Values Survey), and the ISSP (International Social Survey Programme) (Tížik 2022). The EVS research programme has been implemented in both countries four times so far, thus allowing us to capture the entire period of the transition of societies from the regime of state socialism to the current liberal and pluralistic democracy. The 2022 WVS data may bridge the gap between the pre-pandemic and census periods and the post-pandemic COVID-19 period. Because the different research programmes and also the censuses (which measure religiosity one-dimensionally) differ methodologically, it is necessary to pay attention to the limitations of each data collection

methodology and how it is analysed. Despite various academic critiques of the Western-centrism, Christian-centrism, and congregational-centrism of global research programmes such as the EVS and WVS (Goodwin et al. 2020; Herzog 2020), these nevertheless provide the possibility of comparison with local surveys or national institution-coordinated censuses in terms of analysing traditional Christian forms of religious life.

In attempting to comprehensively capture religiosity or worldview and its measurement, researchers are expected to proceed from problem definition to operationalization through indicators to subsequent measurement. However, when working with the results of a somewhat established research programme (such as the EVS, WVS, or ISSP), which already has pre-defined and determined indicators for the selected phenomena, it is only possible to move within these pre-defined boundaries when conducting the analysis. Thus, the researcher's options are limited by the list of already existing indicators and their exact form used in all years compared. The impossibility of influencing the choice of worldview indicators and the Christian-centricity of the EVS significantly limit the possibilities of measuring various other types of worldviews, such as various non-institutionalized spirituality-type beliefs or many non-theistic beliefs. This must be emphasized before presenting the typology generated by repeating stimuli in all waves of the EVS.

As we saw in Tables 1 and 2, the data on the non-religious population over the long term vary in relation to the method of measurement. However, the EVS survey, which shows a relatively stable and large group of people with no religion, allows for a combination with other measured characteristics to give a better idea of what type of worldview these people actually have and what the shape of their non-religiosity is, if the religiosity of those who affiliate with a religious group is anything to go by. All of the previously mentioned data on the number of people affiliated or not affiliated to a church are important for understanding the possibility of creating types of religiosity or worldviews in both countries.

Five basic types of worldview

Considering the four dimensions of religiosity that were selected from the EVS surveys as distinguishing criteria in the creation of types (Tížik 2019; Tížik 2022), the first two express rather objectivist aspects (affiliation to religion and church attendance), the second two rather subjective expressions of religiosity (self-declaration as a religious person or non-religious person or atheist and no belief in God). Combining all of the theoretical possibilities produces twelve basic theoretical worldview types, not all of which actually exist empirically.

Table 4 shows the saturation of basic theoretical worldview types (religiosity/non-religiosity) in the 2017 wave of the EVS in both countries.

Table 4: Saturation of theoretical types of non/religiosity in 2017 in Slovakia and Czechia

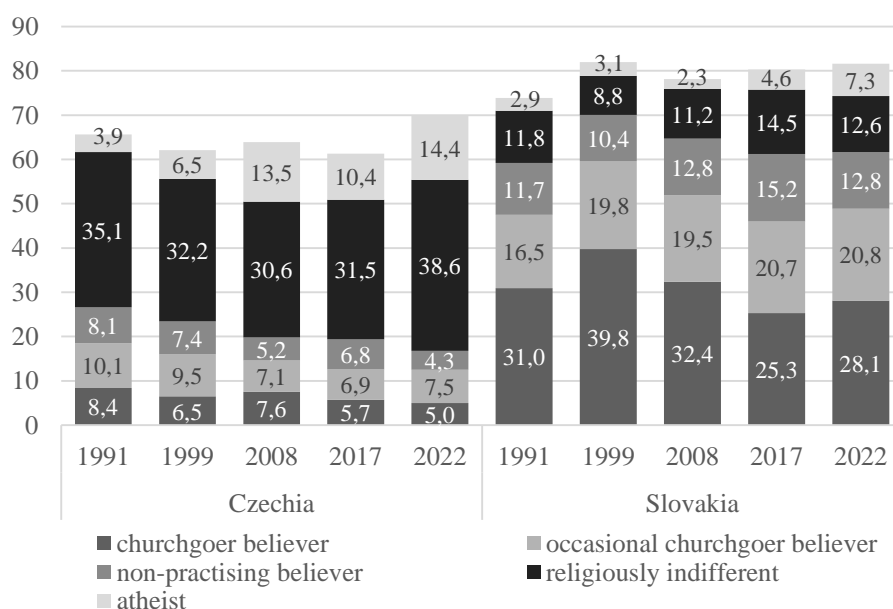
Type	Affiliation with a church	Attendance at religious services	Self-declaration of belief/non-belief/atheism	Belief in God	EVS 2017 Slovakia (in %)	EVS 2017 Czechia (in %)
1. churchgoer believer	yes	at least 1x a week	Believer	yes	25.3	5.7
2. occasional churchgoer believer	yes	1x per month, holidays	Believer	yes	20.7	6.8
3. non-practising believer	yes	1x per year, less, never	Believer	yes	15.2	6.7
4. religiously ritualistic non-believer	yes	at least 1x weekly	non-believer	no	0	0
5. formal religious non-believer	yes	once a month, holidays	non-believer	no	0	0
6. declarative confessional non-believer	yes	once a year, less and never	non-believer	no	2.5	0.8
7. non-confessional religious believer	no	at least 1x weekly	Believer	yes	0	0
8. religiously secularized believer	no	once a month, holidays	Believer	yes	0	1.9
9. non-church believer	no	once a year and less	Believer	yes	1.8	3.8
10. church-ritually secularized non-believer	no	once a month, holidays	non-believer	no	0	1.05
11. religiously indifferent	no	once a year, less or never	non-believer	no	14	31.59
12. atheist	no	less than once a year or never	Atheist	no	4.5	10.34
Total of all respondents					84.1	61.98

Source: Tížik (2019)

The results show that of the twelve theoretical types developed, only five types (three religious and two secular) actually exist in both countries in a quantity that allows for any generalizations to be made, and another three exist in such a low degree that this does not allow for further statistical analyses (only basic comparisons of change between countries and over time will be evaluated). At the same time, it can be seen that the Czech Republic has a much higher rate of inconsistent responses that do not fit into the typology.

Figure 1 shows how the saturation of these five types has evolved across waves of EVS and across the two countries compared. In both countries, a relatively high increase is seen within the atheistic type, although in Slovakia this is still a small group within the whole population.

Figure 1: Saturation of the five basic types of worldview in Czechia and Slovakia 1991-2022 (in %)



The typologically sorted answers from EVS show different trends in the development of the worldview composition of Slovak and Czech society from the results of the censuses. In addition, they also allow us to distinguish between two basic groups of secular people and to identify how many of them can be considered atheists and how many are only religiously indifferent.

The figure shows that for more than a quarter of a century there have been no major changes in the distribution of individual types in Slovakia and the

Czech Republic.⁶ In the Czech Republic there is still the largest group, about one third of the population, which can be described as religiously indifferent, although this group has slightly decreased in the period 1991 to 2017, but this has been accompanied by a relatively significant increase in the group of atheists. In Slovakia, on the other hand, the dominant type of religiosity is religious (churchgoer believer), which, however, seems to show a significant decline after a significant increase in 1999 to almost 40% of the respondents. By 2017, this group had gradually shrunk to the current 25%. But there was a very slight increase in the group of occasional churchgoer believers and non-practising believers. After a decline in the proportion of the religiously indifferent in 1999, there was a resurgence and by 2017 they were a larger proportion of those surveyed than in 1991. In Slovakia, the proportion of atheists has also increased, but even after the increase, the proportion is so small that this group cannot be analysed in detail.

The previous tables and figures show another important characteristic and difference between the samples for both countries - in Slovakia in 2017 almost 16% of respondents were not classifiable into any group because they were unable to respond or did not respond to a stimulus, while in the Czech Republic the group of such a type of uncategorizable was almost 40% (the share of uncategorizable has been steadily increasing since 1991). The question remains as to whether it is possible to construct a type or types from respondents for whom we do not have information on all objectifying or subjective manifestations of religiosity. Although this is a relatively large group of respondents, especially in the Czech Republic, one cannot unfoundedly attribute to them any typical religious or irreligious characteristics. Apparently, throughout the period under investigation, it was a problem for a large group of respondents to answer some questions related to religious life. These can be described as worldview privatists with no known relation to existing religious concepts.

As can be seen from the previous data and as another investigation shows (Tížik 2019), respondents had no difficulty in answering questions about “objective” indicators on their religious affiliation or how often they attend religious services but they had difficulty in expressing “subjective” indicators such as the content of their beliefs and in self-defining themselves. The biggest problem for such respondents is the question about belief in God. The question,

⁶ Because of a likely slight overestimation of the share of the religiously affiliated in the WVS in 2022 due to methodological differences in the measurement of religious affiliation, interpretations are made as of 2017. However, the WVS results show a tendency towards a strengthening of the share of atheists in both countries and of the religiously indifferent in the Czech Republic. At the same time, however, it can be seen that the pandemic period did not affect the distribution of religious types in the populations, but rather it is a linear continuation of long-term trends. It can also be seen that the samples in both countries have a higher proportion of respondents who are classifiable into one of the worldview types, i.e. a lower proportion of worldview-inconsistent respondents.

which was formulated in a very traditional (Christian or monotheistic) sense of the word was difficult to answer for the highest proportion of respondents not classified into particular worldview types. While the proportion of such respondents has steadily declined, this still remains a problem for over 7% of respondents. The second biggest difficulty for respondents was answering the question of who they actually consider themselves to be: whether a believer, a non-believer, or an atheist. In the case of this question as well, the proportion of such respondents is decreasing, which means that the proportion of those who do not have a clear self-concept in terms of worldview is also decreasing.

This indicates how religious faith or self-identification with religious faith is gradually disappearing as a matter of course from public life (especially in the Czech Republic), and if it remains a topic, it is probably more strongly connected with private life, which respondents do not want to talk about with the interviewer as a stranger. So, the data shows the tendency of continued secularization in the sense that the privatisation of worldview is one of facets of this process. Even if there were believers among the privatists (as suggested by the analyses of Fialová – Nešpor 2018), their reluctance to publicly declare their beliefs is an indicator of the retreat of religion from the public sphere and the emergence of the non-religious character of the public sphere as socially desirable. The Czech Republic is a prime example in this respect, as the results from the censuses from 1991 to 2011 also show a steadily increasing proportion of those who refused to answer the question about their religious affiliation and beliefs. The results of these comparisons from the EVS show that the reluctance to express one's form of belief in God may be related to so-called social desirability in one or the other country. While in the secularized environment of the Czech Republic, Catholics and people who go to church at least occasionally have more difficulty with this question, in Slovakia, the difficulty in expressing one's worldview is to be found especially among those who consider themselves atheists and, paradoxically, also among those who go to church at least on holidays or more often (Tížik 2019).

Conclusions

A comparison of the methodology of measuring worldview structures in Slovakia and the Czech Republic in censuses since 1991 and survey-type research, namely the four waves of the EVS and one of WVS, allows us to draw several conclusions.

The first is the fact that several changes in the methodology used in the censuses reduce the ability to compare data both between countries and in the long-term development in each of the countries. A more fundamental problem

with the censuses appears in the Czech Republic, where there has been a gradual change in the object of measurement from denomination to faith and a change of the question to a optional one, leading to a high rate of non-detected responses. In Slovakia, the changes in methodology were less fundamental, although they also affected the proportion of non-respondents in particular, despite the fact that it was a compulsory question throughout the survey. Although the census results in both countries are an indispensable source of information, especially on small religious groups, they do not allow adequate comparisons between the two countries and reduce the ability to make comparisons over time. The censuses also, by their one-dimensionality, do not allow a more detailed analysis of the beliefs of those who subscribe to a religion, let alone those who do not subscribe to any religion.

The second conclusion is that the use of a uniform methodology in representative survey-type research allows both international comparisons and the tracking of the dynamics of changes in the worldview composition of societies over time, albeit only at the macro level, i.e. the main structures in each society analysed. The use of more comprehensive tools for tracking worldview and religiosity in survey-type research allows for a more detailed analysis of the beliefs and practices of people who adhere to a religion, as well as of those who do not. It is also possible to partially reconstruct the shape of the worldviews of those who refuse to respond about their relationship to a particular religion. However, when using different research programmes, the uniformity of the methodology used is a necessary condition, as different programmes emphasise different dimensions and indicators of worldviews and religiosity in their surveys.

Both types of research procedures - survey and censuses - show continuing secularisation in both countries, but with the caveat that in Slovakia, after about a decade of a slight increase in religiosity, the progress of secularisation has been more modest than in the Czech Republic. Overall, however, the two countries have long been distinct in their worldview profiles. In Slovakia, the largest group is the churchgoer believer, which originally accounted for up to a third of the population and still accounted for a quarter of the population in 2017; in the Czech Republic, the religiously indifferent are consistently the largest worldview group. A closer look at the profiles of those who do not subscribe to any religion shows that in both countries the religiously indifferent are the dominant group (in the Czech Republic their share ranged from 35 to 31%, in Slovakia from 8 to 11%) and atheists made up only a small part of the non-religious (in the Czech Republic their share increased significantly, but only to about 13% of the population in 2009, in Slovakia it rose from 2.9% to

4.6% in 2017). The results from the 2022 WVS, despite slight methodological differences in measurement and hence results, confirm these underlying trends beyond the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the hypotheses formulated were partly confirmed. From the results of data collected in different ways, it can be seen that in both societies the share of religious people is gradually decreasing. However, the use of the typological method shows that the decline is significantly slower than the census results show. This also confirms the first partial hypothesis that significant changes in census methodology significantly affect the results and thus lead to inaccuracies or even erroneous conclusions when identifying the nature of religious change. However, the use of the typological method did not confirm the second partial hypothesis that the strongest manifestation of secularization is the growth of the number of atheists. It can be seen from the results that in both societies the secularization tendencies are mainly manifested by a change in the religious behaviour of believers, that is, by a weakening of religiosity. Among secular people, secularization manifests itself mainly in the growth of the share of those who are religiously indifferent. These conclusions are partly consistent with Bruce's (2002: 42-43) claims about the development of religiosity in the West that secularity is not the end point of secularization. Rather, the trend, according to him, is an increase in the proportion of people who are indifferent to religion. This is especially true in the case of Slovakia, where secularisation only began in a more significant way around the year 2000. But in the case of the Czech Republic, where secularisation began half a century or more earlier, secularisation is manifested by an increase in the proportion of atheists rather than the proportion of the religiously indifferent.

However, the combination of several indicators of religiosity makes it possible to make estimates of the profiles of those who are religious privatists, i.e. who refuse to talk about their relationship to religion or to God. In interpreting the characteristics of this group, the factor of so-called social desirability, i.e. the concealment of such views that are not socially promoted as desirable, emerges as a possible explanatory framework. At the same time, the growing proportion of individuals who refuse to express their worldview beliefs calls for more detailed and sophisticated research, especially international research, which will allow for more sensitive descriptions of the current worldview profiles of different societies.

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