

RELIGIOSITY AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE EXAMPLE OF THE YOUNG

UDC 316.74:2(497.16)

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Abstract. *In the first part of the paper, we compendiously paid attention to the essential difference between men and women, and then we made a short theoretical framework on the theories and processes of secularization. With the help of certain empirical indicators, we comparatively paid attention to the assessment of religiosity on the basis of gender¹ during real socialism and in the first decade of the 21st century. We noted the growth and neutralization of religiosity on the basis of gender structure. The second part of the article presents an analysis of research from 2010 based on gender differences and on example of the young in Montenegro. On the basis of a descriptive analysis, the research confirmed that the difference between men and women in religiosity has disappeared. Moreover, the members of the male population were more religious than women in some indicators.*

Key words: *gender, religiosity, sex, religion, secularization, men, women, the young, the revitalization of religion.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The studies in some societies show that women are more religious than men. In the middle and at the end of the twentieth century, criticized by feminist movements, studies were focused on women and their experiences of marginalization and constant inferiority in almost all religions. It was very difficult for sex or gender, which were conceptually

Received July 2, 2016 / Accepted July 21, 2016

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¹ "Gender in Serbian language does not mean sex but type, category, group of people who are related, while the term sex is used when it is about a clear social character of human sex. Male and female refer to biological characteristics, therefore natural sex differences, while masculinity and femininity refer to the socially constructed cultural and symbolic differences that change in accordance with the changes in society and culture. Thus, the gender is a term that is used to define cultural and social norms, rules and roles attributed to people depending on the biological sex. Unlike sex, gender is an achieved status constructed by psychological, cultural and social means" (Radulovic 2009).

accepted in the social sciences, to fit in theology and dogma. Simone de Beauvoir would say “In a human adventure, she was never the subject, but at least an excuse or an initiator; her destiny is different in a moody or important direction” (Beauvoir 1987).

The approaches by which religious differences are interpreted on the basis of biological differences, which are gender differences, are not only a characteristic of the theological, but also a characteristic of the sociological point of view. The essence lies in the opinion that there are differences between men and women in some psychological characteristics and abilities that are related to one or the other sex. It is, in fact, a somewhat stereotypical opinion which is connected with some “female characteristics” such as: emotionality, sensitivity, intuition, care, while so-called male characteristics are rationality, aggressiveness, independence. Men are more focused on intellectual professions and sport, and women are oriented towards culture, art, etc. Traditional and to some extent anachronistic theories associate women with giving birth and the upbringing of children, which settled the woman into the private sphere, isolated from public life. Therefore, it is essential difference according to which there is an ontological difference between gender differences which is manifested in different physical, mental and spiritual characteristics.

When talking about gender difference in religiosity, Sergej Flere refers to the “conception of a monotheistic God, who is a powerful lord for boys, and a figure of trust for women, to whom they express confidence and with whom they can be in an intimate contact and can have a dialogue, as well as that boys more often pray for a specific purpose in order to get a specific role and answer, but mere dialogue with God is a value for girls, their aim is mere contact” (Flere 2002).² Thus, the differences in religiosity, on the basis of gender, are mostly based on psychological explanations, type of personality, etc.

2. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

When it comes to religion, the dominant theoretical framework is the framework which has its roots in the concept of modernization, and that primarily involves the theory of secularization. In many theoretical debates about secularization, the dominant theory is the theory which is based on industrialization, urbanization, and even individualization. This concept affects the reduction of religiosity in society. Individualization as a mediator between secularization on the one hand and religiosity on the other hand, is a product of the economic situation, urbanization, as well as the influence of secular education on the development of the individual (Halman & Patterson 2006). Some theoreticians like Inglehart (1997) believe that the reduction of religiosity is conditioned by an increase in social and economic stability in a post-modern society; therefore a certain decline in religiosity can be expected in these societies. The level of religiosity will reduce as society moves from material to post-material. However, Wilson directs his theoretical attention to Western societies and he states that secularization develops in the historical context when secular but not religious institutions receive primacy (Wilson 1998).

Regardless the fact that religion is losing the race at the macro level, religion survives at the micro level and in the sphere of privacy. Berger’s assertion that religiosity survives

² Justifying his thesis about the greater religiosity of women, Sergej Flere states as an argument the fact that a woman is often faced with a feeling of guilt.

as it has always survived, with the exceptions of a certain part of the world, is very interesting, while for Grace Davie religiosity is more oriented towards the individual basis, where the idea “believing without belonging” arises (Davie 2002).

Accordingly, not such a small number of theoreticians believes that the theory of secularization can be questioned, thus secularization is a kind of fiction or a myth for them. The basic theoretical starting point concerned the fact that Postmodernization did not leave a special mark on religiosity of the individual, although they admitted that the institutional form of religiosity declined to some extent. The example of the USA is stated as a highly industrialized and postmodern country where the level of religiosity is still very high (Finke & Stark 1992).

Analyzing the effects of secularization in different societies, we come to a brief conclusion that the theoretical scope moves from the concept of secularization which is dependent on religious tradition, via socio-economic consequences of separation of the individual from the church, towards all social communities where there is still a very strong connection between the state and the church. When it comes to the former Yugoslav countries, religiosity and even the position of religious institutions in real socialism was rather unenviable. The basic ideological postulate of real socialism was Marxism, which, in the opinion of ideologists of that time, sharply opposed the church and religion. The period of transition, which also affected the former Yugoslav republics, was followed by economic crises, unconsolidated democracy, growth of nationalism and ethno-phyletism, war events and religious illiteracy. Therefore, after the disintegration of a quasi-religious system in the style of real socialism, the other form of a quasi religion in the style of nationalistic ideology appeared, followed by rapid growth of traditional religiosity (more in Vukomanović 2001). The return of religiosity appears in the late eighties and early nineties of the twentieth century. It can be explained by the collapse of real socialism, but, in my opinion, we should not neglect the fact that a very difficult situation in economic and social terms contributed to it.

2.1. Religiosity and gender – a brief comparative review

While researching religiosity, especially religious orthodoxy and orthopraxy, gender differences differentiated. Namely, almost all previous studies have shown differences in religiosity on the basis of gender. Alan Miller directs us to some of these studies, informing us of the higher percentage of women’s religiosity, i.e. women’s greater interest for religion, women’s greater devotion to religion, women go to the church (liturgy or mass) more often, they pray and read Bible more frequently than men. The author informs us that religious distance on the gender basis is constantly retained throughout life.

On the other hand, some relevant studies warn us that there is no statistically significant distance in religiosity on the basis of gender – men are almost equally religious as women, and that questions the hypothesis that gender distance in religiosity is constant throughout life. Grace Davie directs us, for example, towards the study where men’s care for children rises them to the women’s level of religiosity (Walter & Davie 1998).

The situation is similar to the other so-called “hard” indicators which are typical of the sociological methodology of religiosity research. Consequently, some studies that examined religiosity on the basis of the indicator which refers to faith in God, come to the conclusion that on the basis of these indicators there is no significant difference between men and women (Bassett et al. 1990).

According to the research of the Franciscan Institute for Culture in Croatia, on the overall population (Anic 2008), and according to the indicator of self-assessment of religiosity, 84,9% of women and 70,1% of men declared themselves religious, while accordingly, more men than women considered themselves non-religious: 25,7% to 12,3% of women, and 4,2% of men and 2,8% of women declared themselves self-assured atheists. According to the same research, women pray daily outside religious services more than men. In total, 48,1% of women and 26% of men take part in Sunday prayer, and 16,3% of women and 10,5% of men pray more than once a week. The conclusion of this research is that it is possible to determine the statistical difference between men and women³ within the scope of religiosity, but sex differences as a prerequisite for the differences in religiosity are not a stable constant, since the differences on the basis of sex disappear in some situations. According to some studies in Croatia, there is almost no difference between men and women aged from 18 to 24 when we talk about going to Mass, while that difference slightly increases in the older generation (Crpic & Biscan 2000).

When it comes to Serbia, according to the previous studies (Djordjevic 1984) we have selected the following indicators of religiosity: self-declaration of religiosity, faith in God, going to church and liturgy. We will connect these indicators with the variables which are related to the gender (sex of the respondents). According to the above mentioned research, 30% of all female respondents and about 17% of male respondents declared themselves religious. When it comes to variables which are related to faith in God, according to Djordjevic's research, 23% of all female respondents and 12% of male respondents express faith in God. Visiting the church and Sunday service are a religious duty, the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church especially insist on that. According to the same study, the frequency of going to church was less than 1, thus the author did not consider it, with a statement that the respondents who regularly went to church was female, elderly, illiterate, etc. When it comes to liturgy, women are more regular than men: 8,8% of women in relation to 4,5% of men.

A study from 2008 (European Values Study) indicates that now we can talk about the revitalization of religion. The researches show that even the gender distance has been reduced in terms of religiosity. Hence, two and a half decades later, the religious situation is quite different, gender differences tend towards equalization. If we have seen from the previous research that women bear the greatest burden of religiosity, it is very difficult to differentiate who is more religious – men or women in the modern period. Of all the female respondents included in a sample from 2008, 89% of women declared themselves religious, while that result is 81% when it comes to the male respondents. By careful analysis we can see that the result of women's religiosity is almost three times higher, and the result of men's religiosity almost five times higher. The consensus about confessional religiosity of the population is almost equally distributed between the sexes.

When it comes to the indicators which are related to belief in God, according to the study from 2008, the result varies in relation of 89%:80% in favour of the women. On the basis of the indicator of going to church and according to the above mentioned research, the religiosity situation is quite different from a study carried out in 1984. Namely, the frequency of going to church is almost equal both for men and women.

³ Some studies in Croatia show a higher level of religiosity between men and women, giving priority to female gender in religiosity (Zrinscak & Crpic 2000; Crpic & Kusar 2003; Marinovic Jerolimov 2004).

3. THE METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The research included the population of the young aged 16 to 27, on a stratified sample of 558 respondents of the three majority confessions in Montenegro: Orthodox, Roman Catholics and the members of the Islamic religious community. In accordance with the modernization hypothesis which defends the view that the individualization is an important factor of secularization, we will examine the differences at the level of religiosity in relation to gender, or the gender structure of the respondents. We expect that the religiosity distance has been neutralized on the basis of gender. Since, in the previous comparative analyses, Roman Catholics and Muslims showed a higher level of religiosity than the Orthodox in the period of socialism, we assume that these two religious groups would express a slightly higher level of religiosity. As a result of global trends, we expect that men and women of the Islamic religion will show a higher level of religiosity than Roman Catholics.

3.1. Religious concept of belief – descriptive analysis

Religiosity is measured by the items which conceptually include several dimensions of religiosity. The first dimension is religious self-identification, belief in God and life after biological death. All concepts of belief are traditionally an integral part of theological doctrine of religious communities which are the subject of our comparison.

Tables 1. and 2. show the values of the religious concept of belief according to all indicators and for all confessions. When we compare the three above mentioned confessions in Montenegro at a descriptive level, we can see that the values of the Muslim respondents are on a slightly higher level in comparison with the two Christian confessions. Thus, male and female respondents of the two Christian confessions are less religious according to all the aspects in comparison with the members of the Islamic religious community. Furthermore, it is very noticeable that the gender distance completely disappeared within all the three confessions. On the basis of the mentioned indicators, the difference in religiosity between men and women is lowered to the level of a statistical error.

Table 1 The ratio of gender religiosity on the basis of religious self- identification

Gender		Subsample	Religious	Indifferent	Irreligious
Orthodox respondents					
Sex	Male	42,9	82,5	15,5	2,0
	Female	57,1	80,6	9,3	10,1
$\chi^2=11,075$, $df=5$, $p=0,050$					
Roman Catholic respondents					
Sex	Male	52,3	80,8	14,1	5,1
	Female	47,7	81,7	12,7	5,6
$\chi^2=4,341$, $df=4$, $p=0,362$					
Members of the Islamic religious community					
Sex	Male	54,8	84,5	9,3	6,2
	Female	45,2	85,0	7,5	7,5
$\chi^2=5,247$, $df=4$, $p=0,263$					

Bakrac 2013.

Table 2 The ratio of gender religiosity on the basis of dogmatic beliefs

Sex	Belief in God		
	Orthodox	Roman Catholics	Islam
Female	89,9	91,5	97,5
Male	92,8	93,6	89,6
	Belief in Jesus Christ and the Prophet Muhammad		
	Orthodox	Roman Catholics	Islam
Male	82,5	89,7	91,7
Female	82,9	84,5	91,2
	Life after biological death		
Male	36,0	47,4	60,8
Female	32,0	43,6	52,5

Bakrac 2013.

While the differences in self-evaluation of religiosity and faith in God, Jesus or Muhammad disappear within the confessions, the members of the Islamic religious community show a higher level of belief in life after death. All of this suggests that men and women of the Islamic confession are more religious than the two Orthodox and Roman Catholic confessions, by which our initial hypothesis is justified.

According to the indicator of religious self-identification, the members of the Islamic religious community are the most religious, as expected; the religiosity is noticeable to a lesser extent among the members of two Christian confessions, although not significantly, while it is significantly lower among the Orthodox. The young population of the two Christian confessions believe in God and Christ less than the members of the Islamic confession believe in Muhammad. All the respondents believe less in the life after death in comparison with the previous indicators, while the members of the Islamic confession are the most religious.

3.2. Religious practice

Religiosity is usually assessed on the basis of religious consciousness and religious behaviour or practice (orthopraxy). It is difficult to assess religiosity only on the basis of indicators of religious practice, without the influence of the elements of religious consciousness, and vice versa. Hence, all combinations are possible in society, an individual can be deeply religious but he/she does not respect religious practice, he/she does not go to church, he/she does not attend liturgy, he/she does not fast, he/she has not even been baptized, etc. On the other hand, an individual can intensively respect the religious practice, customs, rituals, etc. without feeling the religiosity in the depth of his soul.

Anyway, the combination of the indicators of religious consciousness, which refers to the dogmatic core of faith and religious practice, is necessary so that we could consider the level and scope of religiosity in some area from a sociological point of view. Religious practice has been treated as an integral part of religiosity since Durkheim. The very process of secularization, which we mentioned before, influenced the religious practice and was reflected in it. In this regard, many sociologists concluded that it referred to the erosion of religion and the increased rise of secularization.

Table 3. shows the situation of male and female religiosity on the basis of some indicators of traditional and inherent religious practice. Unlike the previous analysis which referred to orthodoxy, the sequence of events is somewhat different when it comes to orthopraxy. Namely, there are gender differences within confessions that men and women of the Orthodox confession are less frequent in the rites of baptism than the Roman Catholics, while the members of Islam are less diligent when it comes to celebrating religious holidays. Going to church (or a mosque) and prayer are quite strong arguments of religiosity, and show a slight advantage when it comes to men and women of the Roman Catholic confession.

Table 3 Religiosity on the basis of traditional and inherent practice

Baptism and the Sunnah as a traditional rite			
Sex	Orthodox	Roman Catholics	Islam
Female	72,8	93,5	-
Male	60,8	95,7	97,9
The Slava and religious holidays as a traditional rite			
Sex	Orthodox	Roman Catholics	Islam
Female	90,6	90,1	78,5
Male	94,8	91,5	78,5
Going to church (monthly) as an inherent indicator			
Sex	Orthodox	Roman Catholics	Islam
Male	34,1	60,2	39,1
Female	40,3	42,2	33,7
Prayer as an indicator of religiosity			
Sex	Orthodox	Roman Catholics	Islam
Male	36,0	35,9	16,4
Female	30,9	36,6	11,2

Bakrac 2013.

Most of the respondents attend religious services during religious holidays. The data on going to church (mosque) refer to the monthly level. The difference between the Roman Catholic and Islamic respondents is interesting, where men are significantly more diligent than women when it comes to going to church, in comparison with the Orthodox. In my opinion, the explanation lies in the fact that the respondents of the Roman Catholic and Islamic confession are mostly from traditional areas of Albanian nationality.

4. CONCLUSION

Differences in religiosity on the basis of gender in Montenegro do not require special attention. Data on gender differences were mostly included in the studies which dealt with religiosity in the Montenegrin society or with the religiosity of the young that we carried out in 2010 and which were not the subject of specific analytical reviews. Just because they are not the subject of a specific analysis, gender differences are often unnoticed. In this regard, there is no detailed review which deals with the peculiarities and causes of these differences. Most of the theories rest on the essentialist differences.

In my opinion, our research of religiosity that also included the gender of the respondents, did not confirm the essentialist theory, since it did not show a statistically significant difference in religiosity on the basis of gender differences. Not only has the gender difference in religiosity been neutralized (especially in comparison with the period of real socialism

and directed atheism) but also according to some indicators, men are slightly more religious than women. The research also confirmed the initial hypothesis that the male and female members of the Islamic confession are more religious than the two Christian confessions, according to most indicators. This research can be a kind of an impetus for further studies where the eventual disintegration of religiosity on the basis of gender differences could be observed.

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RELIGIOZNOST I RODNE RAZLIKE NA PRIMJERU MLADIH

U prvom dijelu rada, kompendiozno smo se zadržali na esencionalističkoj razlici između muškaraca i žena, a zatim smo napravili kratak teorijski okvir o teorijama i procesima sekularizacije. Nekim empirijskim pokazateljima komparativno smo se zadržali na procjenu religioznosti po rodnoj osnovi, za vrijeme real socijalizma i u prvoj deceniji 21. vijeka. Konstatovali smo skok i neutralizovanje religioznosti na osnovu polne strukture. Drugi dio članka donosi analizu istraživanja iz 2010. godine s obzirom na polne razlike na primjeru mladih u Crnoj Gori. U istraživanju, na osnovu deskriptivne analize, potvrđujemo da se istopila razlika između muškaraca i žena u religioznosti. Osim toga, u nekim indikatorima pripadnici muškog pola su se pokazali religiozniji od žena.

Ključne reči: rod, religioznost, pol, religija, sekularizacija, muškarci, žene, mladi, revitalizacija religije.