
The National Religious Environment and the Orthodoxy of Christian Beliefs: A Comparison of Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia*

JAN VÁNĚ** and MARTINA ŠTÍPKOVÁ
University of West Bohemia, Pilsen

Abstract: The authors analyse the relationship between primary religious socialisation and the preservation of religious orthodoxy expressed by attitudes and practices in adulthood. They aim to test the effect of socialisation and the effect of religious practices in adulthood on the orthodoxy of people's beliefs in three countries (Austria, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic), which are similar in terms of their cultural context, but have different religious environments. The authors see the different religious environment of each of the studied countries as the main explanatory factor. They also try to demonstrate that in an era of pluralism, orthodox religious attitudes (corresponding to official teachings and practices) are more likely to be preserved in environments that are prevailingly secular in character. The authors work with data from the ISSP—Religion 2008 survey, tracking the following variables: primary religious socialisation, religious practice in adulthood, and orthodoxy of faith.

Keywords: religious socialisation, orthodoxy of beliefs, religious practices, sociology of religion, cross-national comparisons, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic

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Introduction

Every religious group strives to preserve the continuity of its faith (in its orthodox form) and practice. However, the way in which modern pluralistic societies are organised has made the preservation and reproduction of orthodox forms of religion increasingly problematic. Researchers studying religion as a feature of modern societies have argued that it is no longer the central element of (modern)

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** Direct all correspondence to: Jan Váně, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, University of West Bohemia, Avalon, Poděbradova 1, 306 14 Plzeň, Czech Republic, e-mail:vanejan@kss.zcu.cz.

life. They have pointed out that religion is no longer an institution in the position of the main opinion leader (regardless of whether this means on the individual or the national level). However, there is evidence that religion is re-entering the public sphere and is growing in importance. The ambivalence of the relationship between religion and modern societies has furthermore been confirmed by other important phenomena, such as (religious) pluralism, individualism, consumerism, urbanism and the spreading feeling of uncertainty [cf., e.g., Bauman 2010; Beck 2010; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Berger 1997, 1999; Livezey 2000].

The consequences of these phenomena have led us to a situation in which no social group is able to develop and implement a view of the world strong enough to form the foundations on which to build society. And what is more, there is no group that can even create a safe, all-encompassing environment for their own members [Berger 1997: 75]. This situation weighs heavily upon everybody, including various religious groups, which aim to provide their members with a universal tool of orientation with which to guide them through this world. Orthodox religiosity therefore faces a challenge in modern societies.

This article concentrates on orthodox Christian religiosity in three countries (Austria, the Czech Republic, and the Slovak Republic), where we studied how primary religious socialisation and adult religious practice contribute to shape orthodox Christian beliefs. We chose these three countries because they are culturally similar, but they differ in terms of their religious environment. By 'religious environment' we mean the presence or absence of religious values in the public discourse and the perception of such values as being among those that the society traditionally adheres to or not. We also believe that religion 'takes different forms in accordance with each country's history and cultural traditions' [Bréchon 2007: 486].

Our goal is to test what is important for maintaining orthodox beliefs in the three national/religious contexts. In particular, we focus on two forces that may influence whether a person holds orthodox Christian beliefs. The first is religious socialisation, whereby a person becomes a member of a religious community. The second is religious practice as an adult, which is something that reinforces the beliefs held by the church.

In this paper, we will first explain the processes that are challenging orthodox religiosity in modern societies: secularisation and individualisation. We will then discuss the differences between the selected countries in our study in terms of their religious environment (different degrees of secularisation and individualisation) and formulate hypotheses about the role of religious socialisation and religious practice in adulthood in the different country contexts. These hypotheses are then tested using ISSP 2008 data.

The factors that challenge and support orthodox religiosity in modern societies

Secularisation processes in 'Western' countries

There are various research projects, such as the World Values Survey (WVS), the European Values Survey (EVS), and the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), that can attest to the fact that religiosity in late modern societies has undergone dynamic changes. The aforementioned studies have also served as a basis for a number of theories seeking to explain and predict the possible development of religiosity worldwide.

As early as the start of the 1990s, Grace Davie [1994] observed, within the European context, the idea of 'believing without belonging'.¹ This idea reflects the principal transformation of the relationship between believers and religious institutions in Europe. Individuation-related processes² are considered to be the central feature of this approach, with individuation having a dual impact: on the one hand, a believer is free and chooses the forms of his/her identity (religiosity) according to his/her own will; on the other hand, doing this (having broken with religious institutions) he/she becomes a lonely believer [Berger 1997: 71–90]. As forms of faith have become individualised, sociology of religion has turned its attention to spirituality [Heelas and Woodhead 2005], though this might not be entirely justified: the phenomenon of a religious revival does not concern just individuals.

Since the 1980s there has been an increase in the number of religious groups in society. These groups are striving to re-enter the public space, from which they have been sidelined as a result of processes related to modernisation. This development has been studied and conceptualised by José Casanova [1994].

Sociologists of religion in general tend to consider pluralisation and, in particular, individualisation processes as a fact. Their effects, however, are interpreted in many different ways; this was reflected in the strong wave of criticism that has been directed against secularisation theory and its general significance [cf. Bruce 2002, 2011; Dobbelaere 2002; Martin 2005; Turner 2010]. Individualisation and pluralisation have also been addressed in the debate over the validity of an alternative theory (economic market model theory) [Goldstein 2009; Stark and Iannaccone 1994: 230–252; Stark and Finke 2000], which some scholars regard as a new paradigm in the field of sociology of religion [Warner 1993: 1044–1093].

¹ José Casanova [2007: 334] and David Voas and Alasdair Crockett [2005: 11–28], for example, would argue against this idea.

² Grace Davie was, of course, not the first person to study how individualisation influences various forms of religion: Thomas Luckmann [1967] and Daniele Hervieu-Léger [2003: 161–175; 2004] are to be counted among the most important representatives of individualisation theory.

To sum up, in order to explain the transformation of religion, the sociology of religion uses in most cases one of the following three models: (a) secularisation theory (Bruce, Dobbelaere), (b) the economic market model (Finke, Iannaccone, Stark), or (c) individualisation theory (Luckmann, Davie, Hervieu-Léger). If we wanted to sum up the above in a nutshell, we could say that all three models try to answer the key question of the sociology of religion, i.e. what is the relationship between growing religious pluralism on the one hand and the growing or decreasing vitality of religion on the other one, which is reflected through various forms of orthodoxy of religious faith and practice. Partisans of the secularisation theory believe that religious pluralism makes it harder to accept individual religions, in this way fuelling further secularisation. This means, in fact, that the theory of secularisation assumes a negative correlation between modernisation processes and religiosity. Economic market model theorists see things in reverse: religious pluralism, according to them, helps to fulfil religious needs in increasingly pluralised societies. In other words, the economic market theory assumes that the diversification of faith options helps to stimulate the vitality of religious communities [*cf.* Young 1997]. And advocates of the individualisation theory primarily strive to conceptualise religion as a specific form of conviction influenced by the kind of bonds that tie individuals to their communities, which, in turn, are formed, for example, by the intergenerational (non) transfer of tradition, i.e. collective memory [*cf.* Hervieu-Léger 2000]. In other words, the individualisation theory assumes that the process of modernisation will not lead to a decline in the social significance of religion, but will change its social forms.

These theories have been tested on data gathered in empirical sociological surveys [Müller 2011: 21–37]. The data describing the religious behaviour of Europeans seem to be at variance with the assumptions on which the economic market model is based [Pollack 2008: 168–186; Aarts et al. 2010: 657–672]. Generally speaking, it seems that Europe has not developed a religious market that reflects the assumptions of the economic market model (which is what exists in the United States of America) [Lechner 2007: 82–85]. Grace Davie has noted that, historically, European churches function much more as public services agents, available whenever they are needed and not requiring any special involvement from their members (unlike in the United States, where religious groups compete for the chance to fulfil the religious yearnings of its members but also expect everyday involvement from them). This may also be put as follows: Europeans activate their loyalty to churches during key moments, not on a permanent basis, which means that it is Europe that has a specific approach to religiosity, not the rest of the world [see Davie 2002]. Taking this argument into consideration, we believe that the secularisation and individualisation theories are more applicable to the needs and purpose of this study.

We would like to compare three countries, two of which rank in the category of 'post-communist' countries. This raises the question whether it is possible to compare post-communist countries with a country that has gone through processes typical for Western Europe. In other words: 'Did the erosion of religion,

nourished systematically by communist regimes, lead to secularisation similar to that observed in Western Europe and elsewhere in Central Europe?' [cf. Borowik 2002: 239–252; 2006; Gautier 1997: 289–296; Müller 2011: 21–37; Norris and Inglehart 2004: 111–132; Pickel and Sammelt 2012; Pollack 2003: 321–334; Tomka 2011; Tomka and Zulehner 1999, 2000] Discussions around this question were initially based on the assumption that secularisation processes in post-communist countries differed significantly from those that went on in the West. This assumption was founded on the fact that the role played by the state (political regime) differed in the two blocs of countries. However, it was challenged as soon as it became clear that no significant revival of religious values could be detected among the younger generations in post-communist countries [Zrinščák 2004: 221–234] and that these generations' preferences and behaviour do not reflect any religious values [e.g. Norris and Inglehart 2004: 131; Bréchon 2007: 463–489]. The initial assumption was then challenged even further: differences in the religiosity of different countries may be explained by factors other than differing secularisation processes. As an example, we can cite the explanations introduced by Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, who argue that differences in religiosity among countries both in the former Eastern bloc and Western Europe are due to the degree of their development, and they claim that it is the feeling of security (whether economic, political or social security) that is the most important factor [Norris and Inglehart 2004: 13–17].

In other words, traditional institutionalised forms of religion have been transforming along with the transformation of societies (agrarian/industrial/post-industrial economics). This theory, of course does not ignore the role of the religious or cultural environment [Inglehart and Baker 2000: 49], but it is one that leads us to reconsider the assumption about the existence of a significantly different process of secularisation in post-communist countries and in Western Europe, which, in turn, justifies carrying out a more complex comparison between post-communist and West European countries.

The significance of primary religious socialisation and religious practice as predictors of orthodoxy

The preservation and reproduction of religious integrity thus seem to be at risk or the conditions for doing so substantially modified. No matter what theoretical approach one adopts, the following question has to be dealt with: How and how successfully are institutionalised religious groups able to reproduce the orthodoxy of their faith and make their members respect and adhere to religious practices? If it is true that religious groups are not able to offer even their own members a consistent faith environment, how can they make it possible to reproduce and preserve their orthodox values and practices? In other words: if it is true that secularisation and individualisation pressures have eaten away at the tools that traditional religious groups once wielded and that the church has lost most

of its influence on the various stages of the individual's life cycle and is no longer able to control it, it must be said that traditional religious groups have no access to almost any other tools than primary socialisation if they want to transfer the orthodoxy of faith and practice.

Religious groups enter the public space and there they set the (religious) agenda and pursue active or passive forms of religious missions, but researchers on religion attach a great importance to primary religious socialisation [Bréchon 2007: 474–478]. Primary socialisation is perceived as the most important factor in preserving not only the orthodoxy of faith [cf. Boyatzis 2003: 213–219; cf. Hoge, Petrillo and Smith 1982: 569–580; O'Connor, Hoge and Alexander 2002: 723–732] and as a positive factor of physical and emotional health [Regnerus 2003: 394–413]. The question, of course, is which of these factors constitute primary religious socialisation and to what extent it is possible to talk about their significance in the process of preserving the orthodoxy of faith and practice in adulthood. It needs to be said that no consensus exists among researchers when it comes to solving the above question. But it is evident that different faith factors do influence primary socialisation [Marks 2004: 217–231], to which we attach particular attention in this study, seeing it as a process determined by the external environment [Kelley and Graff 1997: 639–659]. Religious groups and families act in particular religious environments characterised by varying levels of secularisation and individualisation.

Taking the above into consideration, we based our work on Inglehart's and Norris's assumption that when societies evolve into post-industrial economies they become more secular when it comes to their value orientations [Norris and Inglehart 2004]. We accept this assumption³ and that the significance of traditional religious institutions (churches) is likely to decline. We assume that it is the intensity of religious practice that decides the degree of orthodoxy of its form. We consider practice as a factor that makes a person preserve their orthodox faith in an environment either unfriendly to religion or strongly individualised. The forms of religious orthodoxy are, therefore, influenced by both primary socialisation and religious practice.

³ We have two reasons to adopt Norris's and Inglehart's standpoint. The first one is the aforementioned fact that they have proven, on the basis of an analysis of EVS data, that secularisation processes do not differ so significantly between the Western and Eastern blocs. Secondly, their data analyses [2004], relating to the conditions of existential security and religion and population growth models, are of the greatest possible complexity. (Only the work of Nienke Moor [2009] might be able to match their work. Nienke Moor, however, interpreted forms of religiosity and the position of religion in the world through the level of industrialisation in particular countries using EVS/WVS data.) For an assessment of the significance of Inglehart's theory, compare, for example, a monograph evaluating the 25 years of comparative studies based on the EVS/WVS surveys [Esmer and Pettersson 2007]. The authors of this collective monograph discuss the fundamental theoretical and methodological questions of research, concentrating on some of the most elementary processes influencing value transformations, such as cultural globalisation, individualisation, secularisation and democratisation.

The religious environment in Austria and the Czech and Slovak Republics

The theoretical explanations presented above as to what supports and what inhibits orthodox religiosity may play a different role in different religious environments.⁴ In order to confirm or contest our assumption that the religious environment influences the reproduction of religion, we decided to study and compare three countries in Central Europe: the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Austria. These countries have distinct religious environments, but they share a similar cultural and geographical tradition that stretches back to the era when they were all a part of Austria-Hungary (1526–1918). And even more important, in the early modern era they all belonged to the same state unit. Although Austria-Hungary collapsed in 1918, the three countries remain anchored in a similar cultural context (Central Europe). The 1948 communist coup in Czechoslovakia, however, led to the development of an environment dramatically different from that in Austria: the regime systematically liquidated religious opposition and strove to eradicate any trace of religiosity among the population. But differences are to be found not only between Austria and (former) Czechoslovakia (1918–1992): the Czech Republic and Slovakia also differ significantly when it comes to religiosity [see Kusá and Tížik 2009].

Societies move along different developmental trajectories (e.g. the influence exerted by the communist regime on the religious environment in the Czech and Slovak Republics), but their value systems are, in a long-term (historical) perspective, built on a religious foundation, whether it be Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam or Confucianism [Davie 2002: 155]. (Catholicism, of course, is the subject of our study.) Despite this, religious environments vary from place to place. A comparison of basic indicators (such as membership in a church, attendance at church services, trust in the church) is an established way of assessing what place religion occupies in a particular country (these indicators talk about the role and position occupied by traditional religions and reflect the significance of religious practice in a particular country [*cf.*, e.g., Pollack and Müller 2006: 22–36; Müller 2011: 21–37]).⁵

Let us now look at religiosity in the studied countries through statistical data. Table 1 compares the shares of believers (in each country) according to the

⁴ Jonathan Kelley and Nan Dirk De Graff [1997: 639–659], for example, are among the authors who have tried to analyse the correlations between the religious environment and socialisation.

⁵ Pollack and Müller used data from PCE—Political Culture in Central and Eastern Europe to analyse the position of religion in eleven post-communist countries. They then divided post-communist countries into three rather different groups: (a) countries where traditional religious groups have a strong position and exercise quite a strong influence, (b) countries where traditional religious groups have a stable position and exercise a significant influence, (c) countries where traditional religious groups have a weak position and exercise little influence [Pollack and Müller 2006: 22–36].

Table 1. Religiosity in Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, 2001 population censuses

	Austria	Czech Republic	Slovakia
People who belong to some religion or faith	86%	32%	84%
of which:			
Christian churches	91%	93%	99%
Roman Catholic Church	86%	83%	82%
Those who are not a member of any religion or faith	12%	59%	13%
Refused to answer	2%	9%	3%
<i>N</i> (number of inhabitants)	8 032 926	10 230 060	5 379 455

Source: Czech Statistical Office, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, Statistics Austria.

2001 census. The Czech Republic has the smallest number of believers at not even a third of the population. In Slovakia, 84% of the population claim to belong to some kind of religion. In Austria, the number is even higher, with 86% of the population declaring they are religious. Christians account for over 90% of all believers in all three countries, and more than 80% of all believers in all the countries profess themselves to be members of the Catholic Church (see Table 1).

We have already said that the studied countries share a historical context, in which the Catholic Church plays an important role. At the same time, however, we work with the idea that the religious environments of individual countries differ. In order to explain in more detail what exactly are the differences, we are going to use one of the possible typologies that were created on the basis of the data gathered in empirical sociological studies. Most often these studies took into consideration the above-mentioned basic indicators. We have already talked about Pollack’s and Müller’ typology (see footnote 10), at this point, however, we prefer to use Miroslav Tížik’s typology because it works with the latest comparisons.

Tížik⁶ introduced five basic types of religiosity by combining the levels of declared religious affiliation and the frequency of church attendance. These levels are: (a) strongly religious countries: a high level of declared religiosity, a high rate of church attendance; (b) moderately religious countries: a high level of declared religiosity, an average rate of church attendance—e.g. Slovakia; (c) (performatively) weak religious countries: a high level of declarative religiosity.

⁶ Tížik combined levels of declared religious affiliation and frequency of church attendance to compare religiosity in 15 European countries and the USA using ISSP data (1995, 2003, 2008) [Tížik 2012: 101–123].

ity, a low rate of church attendance – e.g. Austria; (d) partly secularised countries: an average level of declared religiosity and an average rate of church attendance; (e) secularised countries: a low level of declarative religiosity and a low rate of church attendance—e.g. the Czech Republic [Tížik 2012: 110–111].

One of the characteristic features of the Czech Republic is that it has the highest (declared) level of secularity and indifference to religious affairs and the ‘process of secularization has even become more advanced’ [Müller 2011: 31]. It is one of the countries in which religious groups have little influence and occupy a weak position [Hamplová and Nešpor 2009: 581–597; Hamplová 2010: 3–8]. In Slovakia, on the other hand, religion remained an important factor in the country’s environment, despite the communist propaganda, and it ranks with those post-communist countries where traditional religious groups are still prominent actors in society [Podolinská 2010: 85–101] and exercise quite a strong influence, and where the significance of religion as an issue has been growing [Müller 2011: 32].

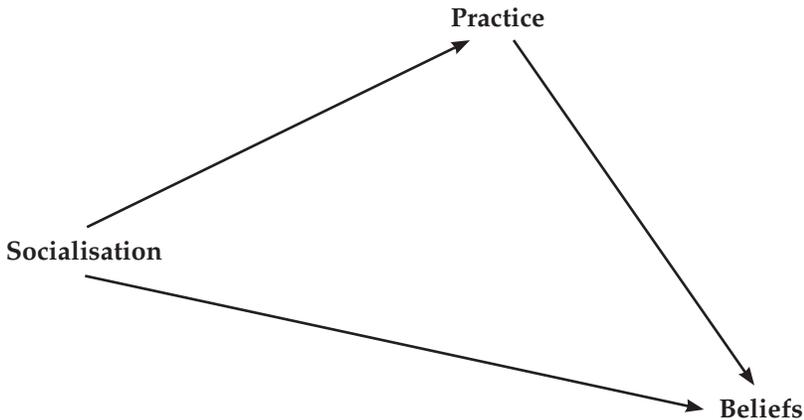
Out of the countries we studied, Austria has the highest level of religiosity but a low level of church attendance. Historical circumstances taken into consideration, it is possible to say that in this country religious socialisation forms part of the generally accepted religious environment. While communist propaganda did not exercise an influence in Austria, the country has been fully exposed to the secularisation tendencies associated with the individuation processes typical for Western Europe [Zulehner et al. 1993]. This can be seen, for example, when we look at the diversity of strategies individual religious groups adopt when it comes to fertility, marriage or divorce. These strategies are the source of the expectations that the traditionally dominant religious group (Catholic Church) will lose influence in Austria [Goujon et al. 2007: 237–270].

Hypotheses

According to the theories and arguments outlined above, we can expect that the factors which positively influence adherence to orthodox Christian beliefs are not equally strong in different religious environments. We expect the relationships depicted in Figure 1 to exist in each of the three countries. We presume that people who underwent religious *socialisation* (went to church regularly during childhood) are more likely to continue to *practise* religion in adulthood. Religious socialisation should also have a direct positive influence on orthodox *beliefs*. We further expect that *practising* Christians (regardless of whether they were socialised in religion or not) are more inclined to possess orthodox *beliefs* than other believers or non-believers.⁷

⁷ We do not claim the relationship between religious practice and orthodox beliefs to be strictly causal. There is no way of determining whether regular prayer and church attendance causes orthodox beliefs or vice versa. We rather study the strength of the association.

Figure 1. Expected relationships between variables



Source: Authors.

We assume these relationships to be valid in all three countries, but the strength of the effects should vary by religious environment. We expect that a secular environment is more ‘conducive’ to the inter-generational transmission of orthodox religious beliefs. In such a context, primary socialisation in the family is the main means by which a person can acquire religious values and a religious life-style. The religion-free public space does not offer many alternative (i.e. less orthodox) religious values to be followed later in adulthood.

Consequently, the effect of religious socialisation on religious practice and, thereby, on orthodox beliefs should be stronger in secular countries. On the other hand, we expect that in countries where secularisation has not extensively weakened the importance of and public trust in traditional Christian churches (such as Slovakia), primary socialisation will have less of an effect on the orthodoxy of beliefs. In such a context, bringing up children in a religious manner may have further non-religious motivations.

A similar explanation applies to religious practice. We expect that in a secularised environment the decision to practice a faith has much more to do with the orthodoxy of beliefs. When someone decides to practice their faith in an orthodox fashion (regular church-going, regular prayer), even though there is no social pressure and no societal reward for it, this probably reflects a deep identification with the orthodox beliefs of the religion. The expected stronger relationship between religious practice and orthodox beliefs would be explained by the stronger selection of practising believers in secularised countries. Besides selection, the practice itself might reinforce orthodox beliefs more effectively if the prevailing environment of the country is hostile to manifestations of religion. The reason is that a religion-free public environment does not question the orthodoxy of a

person's beliefs. However the public presence of religious values (not always orthodox) may weaken the orthodoxy of a practising believer's opinions.

We expect to find slightly different effects of individualisation. In individualised countries more influence is ascribed to religion than in secularised countries (see Tížik's typology), but the individualisation of religiosity in those countries results in a transformation of the social meaning of religion within the public space. In our study, Austria represents such a case. What this means is that in strongly individualised societies the religious environment is likely to positively influence individual religiosity, but, simultaneously, the impact of institutionalised forms of religiosity (i.e. of the church) is weaker because there are multiple forms of religiosity or spirituality. In this environment we expect that primary socialisation would have a milder effect on beliefs in adulthood, because the orthodoxy is questioned by numerous and easily available alternative religiosities. In our view this is because in such an environment people are more likely to encounter religious values and ideas during secondary socialisation, which may challenge their religiosity obtained through primary socialisation.

Similarly, the relationship between religious practice and the orthodoxy of faith should be weaker in individualised countries, compared to those with one main church. We assume that people in a country with individualised religion are more likely to encounter a plurality of religious notions and interpretations of religious doctrines, which may lead to a weaker adherence to orthodox beliefs.

The most secularised country in our study is the Czech Republic and the least secularised is Slovakia. Religious individualisation is most prominent in Austria and least prominent in Slovakia. We expect that the relationships between religious socialisation and practice on the one hand and orthodox beliefs on the other would differ in the following way.

- The effect of primary religious socialisation and adult practice is stronger in more secularised nations (the Czech Republic).
- The effect of primary religious socialisation and adult practice is weaker in more individualised nations (Austria).

The differences between countries can be manifested in three ways:

1. A direct country-specific effect of socialisation upon the orthodoxy of beliefs.
2. An indirect (operating through practice) country-specific effect of socialisation upon the orthodoxy of beliefs. In this option, socialisation influences the orthodoxy of beliefs differently in different religious contexts, because it has a varying effect on whether or not people practise religion in adulthood (which then influences their adherence to orthodox beliefs).
3. The effect of religious practice in adulthood itself varies by the level of secularisation/individualisation without regard to the effect of socialisation.

The following analysis will evaluate whether any of these relationships differs by country.

Method

To test our hypotheses, we used data collected by the International Social Survey Programme's (ISSP) Religion module in 2008 on the Czech Republic, ($N=1472$), Slovakia ($N=1221$) and Austria ($N=985$). Respondents aged 18 and over were identified in all three countries through stratified random sampling. We constructed binary variables for primary religious socialisation, adult religious practice, and orthodoxy of beliefs.

Socialisation

Respondents were coded as having gone through primary religious socialisation if they met two conditions:

- (a) claimed to have been brought up in the Christian religion,
- (b) reported that they went to church almost every week or more often at the age of 12.

Adult practice

Respondents were coded as practising religion if they met three conditions:

- (a) claimed to be members of a Christian church,
- (b) reported attending church services almost every week or more often,
- (c) reported praying almost every week or more often.

We unfortunately do not have any information about the history of respondents' practice during their adult life course; questions were asked concerning the current situation only. The results may therefore be biased since respondents were not of the same age.

Orthodoxy of beliefs

Respondents were coded as having orthodox Christian beliefs if they reported to believe (options 'yes, definitely' or 'yes, probably' on a four-point scale) in the existence of all four of the following:

- (a) a God who cares for every human being
- (b) Heaven
- (c) Hell
- (d) miracles.

Let us also point out that in our research, orthodoxy of beliefs is not equated with beliefs in reincarnation, nirvana, or the power of deceased ancestors. There-

fore, those respondents who indicated one or more of these 'alternative' beliefs were coded as non-orthodox, regardless of whether or not they believed in God, Heaven and Hell, or miracles.

Table 2 presents readers with descriptive statistics. The table shows a trend common to all three countries: those who were socialised into a religion are more numerous than people practising religion in an orthodox way and orthodox believers are rather rare. However, the level of religiosity differs in the three countries. Slovakia is the most religious; there one-half of respondents were brought up in a religion in their family and almost one-third of them practise religion as adults. Between 6% and 7% of respondents claim to hold orthodox beliefs. On the other hand, the least orthodox religiosity is found in the Czech Republic. Only less than 15% of respondents were brought up in a religious way. About 5% of people meet our criteria of a practising Christian and only 2% hold orthodox beliefs. The percentage of people with orthodox beliefs is the same in Austria (2%), but this country has more people who were socialised in a religion (almost 40%) and who practise religion in adulthood (12%). These results are in line with what we suggested above. Austria and Slovakia have a large number of people who identify themselves as believers (recall Table 1), but strong individualisation pressures in Austria made the share of orthodox believers as small as in the openly non-religious Czech population.

All the variables we are working with are categorical. We chose to use log-linear modelling, which is a convenient tool for analysing relationships in this kind of data. We focused on logit models and in particular on the modified path analysis approach [see Hageaars 1990: 70–82]. This kind of modelling assesses how the odds of belonging to a category of a dependent variable (e.g. odds of having orthodox beliefs) change with respect to explanatory variable categories. We estimated several models mirroring various options of what the proposed relationships between our variables look like and testing which of these models fit the data best.

Table 2. Percentage of respondents who underwent religious socialisation in childhood, practise religion as an adult and hold orthodox Christian beliefs in the three compared countries

	Austria	Czech Republic	Slovakia
Christian socialisation	38.3	15.0	48.7
Adult practice	11.5	5.0	30.4
Orthodoxy of beliefs	1.7	1.8	6.5
<i>N</i>	985	1472	1221

Source: ISSP 2008; authors' computations.

Note: *N*=3678.

As the outcome variables, orthodox practice and beliefs, have very few positive outcomes (especially in the Czech Republic), we did not include more control variables to keep the number of parameters as low as possible. There are reasons to assume that the inclusion of respondents' individual characteristics, such as age, sex, or educational attainment, would not change the results. We performed a sensitivity analysis⁸ with continuous measures of religiosity which included also respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. Inclusion of these variables changed the observed relationships only slightly and did not influence the statistical significance or interpretation of the results.

Model selection

Our data can be imagined as a four-way contingency table with three 'country' categories, two 'socialisation' categories, two 'practice' categories and two 'beliefs' categories. The contingency table may be perfectly described by the saturated model. As can be seen in Figure 1, two of our variables (practice and beliefs) occur in the position of dependent variables; the equation therefore has two parts:

$$\begin{aligned} \Omega_{ij}^{CS\bar{P}} &= \beta^{\bar{P}} + \beta_i^{C\bar{P}} + \beta_j^{S\bar{P}} + \beta_{ij}^{CS\bar{P}} \\ \Omega_{ij}^{CSP\bar{B}} &= \beta^{\bar{B}} + \beta_i^{C\bar{B}} + \beta_j^{S\bar{B}} + \beta_k^{P\bar{B}} + \beta_{ij}^{CS\bar{B}} + \beta_{ik}^{CP\bar{B}} + \beta_{jk}^{SP\bar{B}} + \beta_{ijk}^{CSP\bar{B}} \end{aligned} \tag{Eq. 1},$$

where $\Omega_{ij}^{CS\bar{P}}$ is a natural logarithm of the conditional odds of practising religion in a given country and as a result of relevant socialisation. Similarly, $\Omega_{ij}^{CSP\bar{B}}$ is a natural logarithm of the odds of having orthodox beliefs depending on the country, the form of socialisation and the form of religious practice. The saturated model represents a perfect description of a contingency table. In order to test our hypotheses, we will assume the relations among variables to be simpler than those described by the saturated model and monitor whether these simpler models are able to describe the data precisely enough. We will compare the models with the likelihood ratio test and the BIC (Bayesian Information Criterion).

The first part of the model refers to the relationship between socialisation and religious practice in adulthood. The (non)significance of the term $\Omega_{ij}^{CS\bar{P}}$ will help to determine whether the effect of socialisation works directly or indirectly. Once the first of the models has been appropriately specified, the second part, studying the relationship between orthodox beliefs and all remaining variables, is modelled. Table 3 presents all the models along with their goodness of fit statistics.

Models 1 and 2 refer to the relationships between socialisation and country context on the one hand and adult religious practice on the other hand. Model 1 is

⁸ Not presented. The authors can provide it on request.

Table 3. Goodness of fit of the estimated models

Model	L2	DF	<i>p</i> -value	Δ	BIC
M1: P CS {SP CP}	1.96	2	0.375	0.5%	-14.41
M2: P CS {CSP}	0	0	x	0%	0
M3: M1+B CSP {SB CB PB}	19.95	9	0.018	1.0%	-53.70
M4: M1+B CSP {CSB PB}	15.41	7	0.031	0.7%	-41.87
M5: M1+B CSP {CPB SB}	12.54	7	0.084	0.8%	-44.73

Source: ISSP 2008; authors' computations.

Note: C=country, S=religious socialisation, P=orthodox religious practice, B=orthodox religious beliefs; *N*=3678.

more parsimonious. It assumes that there is a relationship between socialisation and adult practice ('SP'), and that countries have different amounts of practising believers ('CP'), but there is no interaction between country and the strength of the relationship between socialisation and adult practice. Such interaction ('CSP') is included in Model 2. A comparison of Models 1 and 2 suggests that this interaction is not significant and can be thus omitted from the first part of the model. Model 1's *p*-value of 0.4 indicates that it is not significantly different from the saturated model (Model 2) and a negative value of BIC adds support for the more parsimonious Model 1. Model 1 is used in all subsequent models to define the relationships between country context, socialisation, and adult practice. The preference for Model 1 indicates that the relationship between socialisation in childhood and practising religion in adulthood is very similar (strictly speaking, equal) in all three countries under study. This means that if the countries differ in the strength of the relationship between socialisation in childhood and orthodox beliefs in adulthood, it is not because socialisation has a different influence on religious practice.

As for the influences affecting the orthodoxy of beliefs, we start modelling them with Model 3, which is a quite simple model of just two-way interactions, i.e. country context, religious socialisation and adult religious practice, assumed to have an independent effect on orthodox beliefs. This model does not fit the data well. The BIC supports this model because of its parsimony, but the standard L-squared criterion suggests that the saturated model is significantly (*p*-value 0.018) better than Model 3. We then have to look for a more complex model. Model 4 assumes that countries differ in terms of how strong the relationship between socialisation and beliefs is (the CSB interaction is added). Model 5 assumes cross-country differences in the effect of practice on orthodox beliefs. Both interactions improve the model fit, but Model 5 fits the data best. It is significantly better than the saturated model (unlike Model 4) and it has lower BIC than Mod-

el 4. The countries then do not differ in the strength of the direct effect of religious socialisation on orthodox beliefs. We will see below that socialisation has an important and significant effect on the orthodoxy of religious beliefs in adulthood, but this effect does not seem to be related to the religious environment in the given country. On the other hand, the good fit of Model 5 supports the possibility that the effect of being a practising believer on the orthodoxy of beliefs varies by a country's religious environment.

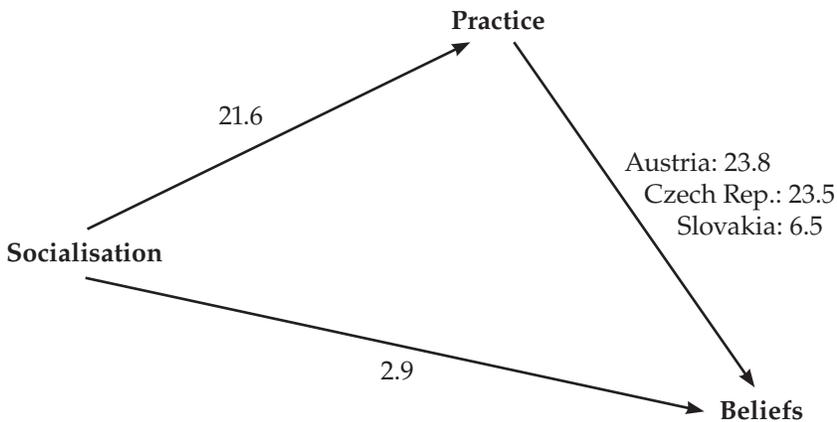
Results

The results of Model 5 are shown in Table 4. The coefficients are presented in exponentiated form so that they refer directly to odds and not to logged odds. We estimated the models using dummy coding with 'Austria' as the reference category of country, 'not religious' as the reference category of socialisation, 'not practising' as the reference category of practice, and 'non-orthodox' as the reference category of beliefs.

Marginal coefficients and their country/country-specific interactions mirror the distribution of our variables of interest in the three compared populations. We thus focus on higher-level coefficients that produce more interesting findings. In order to make our results as clear as possible, the strength of the relationships we studied in individual countries is presented in Figure 2. As expected, people who experienced religious socialisation in childhood tend to show more orthodox religiosity in adulthood with respect to both practise and beliefs.

If a person underwent religious socialisation as a child, the odds that he/she will practise religion in adulthood increase. This increase is more than

Figure 2. Effects estimated by Model 5



Source: Authors.

Table 4. Parameters estimated by Model 5

CSP		CSPB	
Practice		Beliefs	
Practising (Austria)	0.017	Orthodox beliefs (Austria)	0.002
Not practising	reference cat.	Other beliefs	reference cat.
Country x practising		Country x orthodox beliefs	
Austria	reference cat.	Austria	reference cat.
Czech Rep.	0.772	Czech Rep.	2.372
Slovakia	2.973	Slovakia	5.347
Socialisation x practising		Practice x orthodox beliefs	
Socialised (all countries)	21.596	Practising (Austria)	23.814
Not socialised	reference cat.	Not practising	reference cat.
		Country x practising x orthodox beliefs	
		Austria	reference cat.
		Czech Rep.	0.988
		Slovakia	0.273
		Socialisation x orthodox beliefs	
		Socialised (all countries)	2.913
		Not socialised	reference cat.

Source: ISSP 2008; authors' computations.

Note: $N=3678$.

twenty-fold, irrespective of the national context. Religious socialisation also has a positive effect on orthodox beliefs, although much weaker. Those who were socialised into religion have almost three times higher odds of having orthodox beliefs in adulthood than those who did not have such socialisation. However, the most important factor that influences orthodoxy of beliefs is religious practice in adulthood and its effect is country-specific. It is very strong in Austria and the Czech Republic (where the odds are almost twenty-four times higher) and much weaker, although still relatively strong, in Slovakia ('only' a seven-fold increase of the odds of having orthodox beliefs).

The effect of religious socialisation on both religious practice and orthodox belief in adulthood has the same strength in all three countries. The effect of practice on orthodox belief is stronger in more secularised countries (the Czech Republic and Austria), which supports our first hypothesis. There is no evidence to support the second hypothesis, which assumed a stronger association of orthodox beliefs with religious practice in less individualised religious environments. Slovakia, the least individualised of the three countries, has the lowest value of the association.

Conclusion

In this study, we analysed what influence primary religious socialisation has on the orthodoxy of a person's religious faith and practices and to what extent religious practice strengthens the orthodoxy of faith during adulthood. We analysed ISSP 2008 data, comparing three selected countries (the Czech and Slovak Republics and Austria). These countries have a similar cultural tradition, but different religious environments. We expected that these countries would differ in the extent to which religious socialisation in childhood and religious practice in adulthood influence the orthodoxy of Christian beliefs.

This expectation was only partly confirmed by our results. It has been proven that socialisation has a substantially and statistically significant influence on the religious practice and orthodoxy of beliefs in adulthood in all countries. However, this effect was not found to differ across countries. On the other hand, there are significant differences in the effect of religious practice on orthodox beliefs (when socialisation is controlled for). We found that the positive influence of regular church-going and prayer on adherence to orthodox beliefs is strongest in the most secularised religious environments (Austria and the Czech Republic) and weaker in the less secularised Slovakia. This is in line with our assumption that religious communities in a secular environment act as a block to the emergence of a religion-free public space by sticking to the orthodox doctrines. Interestingly, the two more secularised countries, Austria and the Czech Republic, are more similar to each other in this regard than the Czech Republic and Slovakia, despite their common history of forced secularisation by the communist regime.

We also had an alternative expectation related to the level of religious individualisation in the given country. Growing individualisation was hypothesised to attenuate orthodoxy of beliefs among practising believers. However, this was not confirmed by our data. Either the individualisation does not work in the expected way at all or its effect is much weaker than the effect of secularisation. Our sample of only three countries does not provide the necessary variability to test which of these explanations is valid. If individualisation does not weaken the association between religious practice and orthodox beliefs an alternative mechanism would be required. Peter Berger argues that believers in an individualised

and pluralised religious environment have the need to repeatedly reaffirm their faith. Those who regularly practise religion are more likely to reaffirm orthodox beliefs.

A very surprising result is that the effect of primary religious socialisation is the same in countries where the religious environments are different. We do not have any explanation for this finding. A tentative explanation is that the effect of religious socialisation on religious outcomes in adulthood may be universal within the shared cultural context of our three countries. A comparison with another cultural tradition (e.g. a protestant one) could lead to a different result.

Our results confirm that primary religious socialisation exerts a strong influence on religious practice and beliefs in adulthood. It is thus crucial for maintaining orthodox religiosity. However, we could not explain the causal mechanism that relates religious socialisation in childhood to adult religious outcomes and only relied on a few variables in the analysis. The impact of religious socialisation and its consequences deserves more specific attention in future research. Sociologists of religion have shown that the process of religious socialisation and its outcomes are influenced by further variables. Researchers have tried to identify stages in the life course that are critical for retaining religious beliefs and relate them to the educational trajectory [see Gunnoe and Moore 2002: 613–622; Need and Graf 1996: 87–99; Tilley 2003: 269–278; Voas and Deobler 2011: 39–62].

Another factor that needs to be introduced in the context of primary religious socialisation and its impact on the form of faith and practice a person adopts in adulthood is the role of gender or the influence of gender-specific socialisation strategies [Freese 2004: 88–91; Stark 2002: 495–507]. The last factor we suggest for consideration in future research are the changes of religious socialisation and its adult outcomes in time. An analysis of cohorts would help to provide an understanding of how a personal affiliation with institutionalised forms of religiosity is transformed and what mechanisms are behind the preservation of orthodoxy of beliefs and practice. These considerations should be taken into account in future research to reach a fuller understanding of the reproduction of orthodox religiosity.

JAN VÁNĚ is a senior researcher in the Department of Sociology, University of West Bohemia in Pilsen. He specialises in comparative research and his main interests include sociology of religion, social theory and political philosophy.

MARTINA ŠTÍPKOVÁ is a PhD student in sociology at Charles University in Prague. She is a junior researcher and assistant in the Department of Sociology, University of West Bohemia in Pilsen. Her main interests include social stratification, health and family and quantitative methodology.

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