

Dr. Sárik Eszter, National Institute of Criminology

Religion among deviant youngsters

Background of the research

- Not common topic
- Most of the researches in Hungary (and Eastern Central Europe) conducted on socio-economic factors, on sociological background
- Materialism vs. Idealism
- Materialism – and sociological factors were accepted in socialism
- Idealism was 'forbidden'

Religion and spirituality as an important factor...

- Previous theories emphasized the relevance of
 - intrinsic
 - and extinsic religion (Allport).
- Current studies interpret:
 - Spirituality and
 - Religious activityseparately.

Spirituality influences...

- Mental health
- Positive self image
- Better physical health (blood pressure, less self destruction – relationship with religious activity)
- Optimistic attitude
- More success in coping with stress, with difficulties in life

Religious participation influences...

- Setting in and strengthening moral rules
- Setting in constructive and cooperative communication
- Developing interpersonal relations
- International and Hungarian researches proved that participation lowers:
 - smoking, alcohol abuse and criminality.

Protective factors (Fraser, Richman)

- **Individual factors:**

- Calm temper, responsible personality, positive attitude

- **Family factors:**

- Protecting atmosphere, structurally integrated family, protecting raising style

- **Outside family factors:**

- job, school, self development programs, skill development programs

Protective factors (Pollard and Hawkins)

- Individual features
- Social bonding/attachment:
 - family, school, peer group + social networks:
Such as: religious groups!
- Stable value scale

Hypothesis

- *Children and youngster declaring themselves as Romas or with double (or triple) national or ethnic identity would have a more positive affiliation than those who declare themselves purely as Hungarians.*
- This attitude would be measured in their valuescale.

Hypothesis

- *Spirituality and positive religious attitude would influence youngsters' behaviour.*
- *Religious attitude and participation would reduce criminal activity and spirituality would reduce addiction problems.*

Method of current research

- **2 questionnaires:** directly asked + self report
- 1st with the general data:
 - Sex
 - Age
 - Educational achievement/ type of school
 - Educational achievement by parents
 - Being on the run from home
 - Fostered by child protection

Method of the current study

- **1 st questionnaire:**
 - Family structure/ primary background (all forms)
 - Parents: divorced/ death of parent(s)/ in prison
 - Siblings (number)
 - Deviancy in family
 - Parents' job

Method of the survey

- **1 st questionnaire/ part2:**
- Asked by teachers/directors of the institute/child protection specialists:
 - Child abuse
 - Conduct problems
 - Nationality/ethnic minority
 - Crime committed by (upon official data)

Method of the survey

- Value survey – developed for this generation
- Rating 48 values from -2 to +2 (Likert Scale)
 - from: against my value structure to very important
- Questions on religion
- Question on nationality/ethnic minority

Measuring religious attitude

GENERAL RELIGIOUS DATA

1. Denomination
2. Religion:
 - a. Religious
 - b. not religious,
 - c. quest
3. Participation in religious groups (parent and youngster)

CONTENT

4. Content of religion:
 - a. Belief in God
 - b. Praying
 - c. Participating in religious group
 - d. Having a strong spiritual impression

Research sample

- **513** youngsters among 14-18
- Gender:
 - 70,8% boys
 - 29,2 girls
- Age: 9,7%: 14, 17,5% :15, **24%: 16, 30,6%: 17**
and 14,2% 18 year-old
- **Self reported nationality:**
 - 34,5%: Hungarian, 29,6%: Roma, 26,1%:
Roma and Hungarian

Current research sample

- Crimes and misdemeanors:
 - 40,2 %: crime
 - 7,2% misdemeanor
 - 13,8% crime and misdemeanor
- Educational achievement:
 - **72,5%** maximum of 8 school years
 - But only the half finished elementary school

Research sample

- **School type:**

- 62,4% general school
- 1,9% faith based school
- 6,6% to class with 'special' needs
- 0,8% private pupil
- Others: mixed or NA

- **Parents' school achievement:**

- Maximum of 8 years:
- **Mothers: 65,3% and fathers: 56,7%**

Family background

- Only **33,3%** raised up in 'ordinary' 2-parent families
- 12,1% had only mother or father but no changes in primary family structure
- **54,6% were raised in more than family**
- 21,1% were already in foster homes
- 16,4% were also raised by grandparents, aunts, uncles etc.

Attitude to religion

**POSITIVE ATTITUDE TO
RELIGION: 46, 8%**

- Religious: 20,5%
- Quest: 26,3%

**NEGATIVE ATTITUDE
TO RELIGION: 50,1%**

- Not religious: 35,1%
- No decision: 11,5%
- No answer: 4,3%

Spirituality

- Mostly more than one option were chosen
- Belief in God scored **23,6%** on its own
- Praying and belief in God: 16,8%
- 2,3% praying, belief in God and participating in religious groups
- Others combined versions

Religion and declaring oneself as a minority

Minority/religious attitude	Declaring themselves as Hungarians	Declaring themselves as Romas	Double identity
Religious	11,9%	25%	27,9%
Religious in his/her own way)	28,8%	21,2%	24,8%
Not at all religious	48%	36,2%	29,7%

The content of religion

Minority/ content of religion	Declaring themselves as Hungarians	Declaring themselves as Romas	Double identity
Belief in God	24,9%	25%	23,1%
Belief in God and regular praying	10,7%	20,4%	20,7%
No data on attitude	45,7%	31,5%	27,6%

Religious and drug abuse

	Droguser (70)	sample
Religious	30%	20,5%
Quest (religious in his/her own way)	34,3%	26,3
Not at all religious	22,9%	35,1

Religion and criminality

R	Criminals	Non-criminals
Religious	24,6%	16,8%
Quest (religious in his/her own way)	29,6%	25,3%
Not at all religious	29,1%	38,9%

Religion and valuescale

RELIGIOUS YOUNGSTERS

- 1. getting a job which would serve my character
- 2. getting good grades at school
- 3. profession

NOT RELIGIOUS

- 1. family
- 2. health
- 3. mother

Summary

- Religion is not valid marker of getting to be a criminal
- Strong relationship with belonging to a national/ethnic minority
- Strong relationship with valuestructure

Limitation...

- It is not yet finished...

So next year You can hear the data on the control groups!

Thank You for Your attention!