

*Wojciech Sadłoń**

ORCID: 0000-0002-2412-6607

Warsaw, Poland

Static and Dynamic Approach to Religiosity in the Perspective of Socialisation

Statyczne i dynamiczne ujęcie religijności w perspektywie socjalizacji

Summary: Religiosity is one of the most challenging theoretical categories in social sciences. How it is grasped and presented is strongly related to social ontology which determines the perspective for studying religion in society. In this article, I present two different theoretical approaches to religiosity. First framed by Rational Choice Theory was inspired by Adam Smith and later developed especially by American sociologists of religion. The second vision of religiosity is built upon Critical Realism and elaborated by Roy Bhaskar and later developed especially by Margaret Archer. I present how from such a perspective religiosity could be defined and presented. My intention is to highlight that realist understanding of religiosity is especially promising for studying religious socialisation. In realist perspective, religiosity represents dynamic category essentially related to human subjectivity and reflexivity.

Keywords: religiosity; subjectivity; socialisation.

* Dr Wojciech Sadłoń – assistant professor at Faculty of Humanities of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, director at Institute for Catholic Church Statistics. Address: ul. Skaryszewska 12, 03-802 Warszawa; email: w.sadlon@iskk.pl.

Streszczenie: Religijność jest jedną z najbardziej złożonych kategorii teoretycznych w naukach społecznych. Sposób, w jaki jest pojmowana i prezentowana, jest ściśle związany z ontologią społeczną, która określa perspektywę badania religii w społeczeństwie. W tym artykule przedstawiam dwa różne teoretyczne podejścia do religijności. W pierwszej części przedstawiam podstawowe założenia teorii racjonalnego wyboru, której wizja społeczeństwa i jednostki sięga swoimi początkami Adama Smitha i następnie w odniesieniu do religijności przyjęta została przez amerykańskich socjologów religii. Druga wizja religijności opiera się na opracowanym przez Roya Bhaskara i rozwiniętym szczególnie przez Margaret Archer realizmie krytycznym. W artykule przedstawiam, w jaki sposób można zdefiniować i przedstawić religijność w takiej perspektywie teoretycznej. Podkreślam, że realistyczne rozumienie religijności jest szczególnie obiecujące w badaniu socjalizacji religijnej. W perspektywie realistycznej religijność prezentuje się bowiem jako kategoria dynamiczna i silnie powiązana z ludzką podmiotowością i refleksyjnością.

Słowa kluczowe: religijność; podmiotowość; socjalizacja.

Religion represents a critical category in social science. The sociological study of religion is not limited to elaborating facts and collecting empirical data on religious behaviour. Religion may refer both to structural and subjective aspects of human being. Subjective aspects are often labelled as “religiosity”. Sociologists more or less unconsciously adopt an ontological view of religion. There is no doubt today that even positivism, which claims to be an objective and theoretically neutral approach to religion, includes strong ontological suppositions. Social ontology implies that the vision of religion determines the understanding of the link between human subjectivity and religion. The vision of religion also differs in the perspective to what extent it is assumed to be a dynamic or static characteristic of an individual.

Dynamic vision of religion is especially important from the perspective of socialisation. From such a perspective, religiosity represents much more than a set of characteristics such as ideas, beliefs or norms which could be attributed to an individual. Such a standpoint implies dynamic understanding of religion because socialisation is a process of internalising norms and values of society. The process of socialisation influences behaviour, actions, beliefs and generally attitudes of individuals. As a result, socialised individuals become members of a society or a group. In Durkheimian perspective, the individual becomes socialised by adopting the behaviour of his

group¹. An individual's behaviour is determined by collective representation such as ideas, norms and values. Socialisation is not only a structural or collective process. It also includes individual dynamism. Socialised individuals gain new identity and attain new social roles and values². Socialisation is the learning process in which individuals play an active role, reflexively combining the messages they get from different sources³. Socialisation influences the development of individual reflexivity and identity. Socialisation – in such an approach – could be defined as “producing an individual in society”⁴. Religious socialisation shapes people's religiousness as a part of individual identity. From such socialisation perspective, it is not so important if religiosity is growing or declining. Religiosity is not given or even pre-given characteristics of an individual but rather a manifestation of human reflexivity. Religiosity represents much more than a pre-given reference of individual to religious institutions.

In this article, I study different ontologies of religiosity. I present how religiosity is understood in Rational Choice Theory and what is the theoretical background of such an approach. As a comparison to such a positivistic perspective, I introduce the ontology of Critical Realism. I am aware that realist perspective is quite recent in sociology. I do not want to discuss all methodological and ontological currents of this perspective (paradigm) but introduce how Critical Realism may contribute to sociology of religion. My study on the concept of religiosity in realist approach is strongly built upon social ontology formulated by Margaret Archer. This descriptive study I undertake is concluded by highlighting that Critical Realism provides adequate theoretical platform for the study on religious socialisation.

1. Rational Choice Theory

“Rational choice could plausibly lay claim to being the grand theory of high modernity. Its metanarrative is fundamentally about the progressive

¹ Émile Durkheim, *Education and Sociology* (Glencoe: Free Press, 2001).

² Klaus Hurrelmann, *Sozialisation. Das Modell der produktiven Realitätsverarbeitung* (Weinheim/Basel: Beltz, 2012).

³ Andrea Maccarini, “Introduzione. Transizioni riflessive nella società morfogenetica”, in: *Vite riflessive. Discontinuità e traiettorie nella società morfogenetica*, eds. Silvio Scanagatta, Andrea Maccarini (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2011), 7–33.

⁴ See Mirosława Marody, *Jednostka po nowoczesności. Perspektywa socjologiczna* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2014), 165–166.

rationalisation of the West and then the rest of the world.”⁵ Following general neoliberal tendencies in social sciences in 20th century Rational Choice Theory also became popular in sociology of religion in the 1960s. Classical Rational Choice Theory in sociology of religion is represented by the methodology formulated by Rodney Stark. This one of the most well-known American sociologist of religion was fascinated with the philosophy of science represented by Karl Popper. “I read everyone important, but no one influenced me more than Karl Popper”⁶.

I learned from Popper and from many other philosophers of science that a real theory must predict and prohibit certain observations, and that some outcomes must be incompatible with the theory. Systems of thought that could accommodate all possible observations explained nothing because ahead of time they were of no predictive use – they were merely post hoc classification schemes capable only of description or codification⁷.

In 1967, Stark began a three-volume work on religious behaviour with Charles Glock. The first volume appeared in 1968. It was a largely conceptual and descriptive book entitled *American Piety: The Nature of Religious Commitment*. “The scheduled second volume was to focus on sources of religious commitment, and the third was to be concerned with consequences of religious commitment. Neither the second nor the third volume ever appeared. Additionally, theory was a major reason”⁸. Neither his colleagues such as Glock nor reviewers in scientific journals approved his formal approach to religion: “The second volume never appeared because I was not prepared to pull in my horns and Glock was not willing to stick out his neck”⁹. Stark was attempting to formulate a full-length deductive theory of religion. Such an approach to religiosity results from individuals’ characteristics and their behaviour. Society is shaped by the purposive actions of individuals. Fur-

⁵ Margaret Archer, Jonathan Tritter, “Introduction”, in: *Rational Choice Theory. Resisting Colonisation*, eds. Margaret Archer, Jonathan Tritter (New York, London: Routledge, 2000), iv, 1–16.

⁶ Rodney Stark, “Bringing Theory Back”, in: *Rational Choice Theory and Religion. Summary and Assessment*, ed. Lawrence A. Young (New York, London: Routledge 1997), 3.

⁷ *Ibidem*, 4.

⁸ *Ibidem*, 6.

⁹ *Ibidem*, 9.

thermore, individuals act in rational way. However, rationality is understood in a specific way.

Individuals choose the most efficient means for attainment of their goals and make a rational trade-off between costs and profits. Costs and rewards are both material and immaterial, personal and situational. A model of a human being assumed in Rational Choice Theory includes some simple rules. The man is principally characterised by its needs. Human action is aimed to meet these needs and possesses some information on possible consequences of actions. With the use of this information, human beings are trying to maximise utility of their action and minimising costs. Human action is a function of individual characteristics such as tastes, values or religiosity, which are manifestation of constant and stable human preferences. Human actions also result from striving for social approval, well-being or confirmation of behaviour.

Rational Choice Theory follows theoretical assumptions formulated already by Adam Smith in his opus magnum *The Wealth of Nations* described religion as a set of rules which affect behaviour. The strength of religious law result from the fact, that “people feel themselves so much interested in what relates of their subsistence in this life, or to their happiness in a life to come”¹⁰. Adam Smith in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* demonstrates that religion delivers sentiments which influences human action. Sense of duty should be the principle of human action. Religion inherits the potential to deliver a false sense of duty, misleading a person and covering dangerous or even criminals human passions.

Human beings reflect upon experiences of other by imagination which informs about feelings and sensations of other men. Imagination is a source of “fellow-feeling” for the misery of others. Cognitive relation to other person, especially concerning passions, arises emotions in human body. Emotions results in sympathy. “Upon some occasions sympathy may seem to arise merely from the view of a certain emotion in another person. The passions, upon some occasions, may seem to be transfused from one man to another, instantaneously, and antecedent to any knowledge of what excited them in the person principally concerned”¹¹. Society is able to function without disinterested motivations. Although relations consisting of love and

¹⁰ William Todd (ed.), *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith. An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, vol. II (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 539.

¹¹ Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 13.

affection delivers mutual help, “Society may subsist among different men, as among different merchants, from a sense of its utility, without any mutual love or affection; and though no man in it should owe any obligation, or be bound in gratitude to any other, it may be upheld by a mercenary exchange of good offices according to an agreed valuation”¹².

In Rational Choice Theory the basic assumptions for his study of human behaviour are “rational choice axioms” such as: (1) “Humans seek what they perceive to be rewards and avoid what they perceive to be costs”; (2) “Human action is directed by a complex information-processing system that functions to identify problems and attempt solutions to them” or (3) “Some desired rewards are limited in supply, including some that simply do not exist (in the physical world)”¹³. Stark introduces the concept of “compensator”. “Compensators are a sort of substitute for desired rewards”. Individuals who are not able to reach a reward directly and in a short time, are satisfied with compensators. Especially in religious domain.

Religion offers a divine reward which is not attainable directly but over the longer term. “When one’s behaviour is guided by such a set of instructions one has accepted a compensator”¹⁴. Rational Choice Theory describes the process of rational choices by which individuals value and exchange compensators. Using the concept of compensators in religious domain Stark defines the relationship between power and religious commitment which is labelled as “sectlike form of religious commitment”. “The power of an individual or group will be negatively associated with accepting religious compensators for rewards that are only scarce”¹⁵. It means that power enables one to pursue rewards and less powerful people tend to accept compensators. Churchlike form of religious commitment includes the power of individual and religious organisation to gain rewards from religious organisation¹⁶. Stark’s interest was focused on “religious compensators” because “everyone is deprived and everyone has a motive for being religious – that since everyone faces death, doctrines of an afterlife appeal to all. We could call this the universal form of religious commitment”¹⁷. Starks approach to religion assumes religious facts as compensators and in that sense as negative element of human life. Reli-

¹² Ibidem, 100.

¹³ Stark, “Bringing”, 6–8.

¹⁴ Ibidem, 7.

¹⁵ Ibidem, 8.

¹⁶ Ibidem, 8.

¹⁷ Ibidem, 8.

gion is however not only response to negative but as well affirmative. Stark's approach implies that religion is in a sense superficial for human beings and that "natural" state is without religion. In that sense, Rational Choice Theory is a continuation of secularisation theory. "Religion refers to systems of general compensators based on supernatural assumptions"¹⁸.

Stark and Roger Finke define religion as consisted in a "very general explanation of existence, including the terms of exchange with god or gods"¹⁹. Rationality "softens" and "expands" the maximisation of their behaviour: "Within the limits of their information and understanding, restricted by available options, guided by their preferences and tastes, humans attempt to make rational choices"²⁰. "Rationality has nothing to do with the goals which people pursue but only with the means they use to achieve them"²¹. Stark and Finke do not explain what is meant by: "Christian commitment in northern Europe was neither deep enough to generate much mass attendance" nor "deep enough to survive changes in the religious affiliation of their political leaders during Reformation"²².

Religion instructs people. "The institution for the instruction of people of all ages are chiefly those for religious instruction"²³. Religious institutions such as clergy possess the power to impose on individuals religious rules and oblige people to behave in a way that corresponds with theological norms. Religious institutions represent the tendency to take control over human behaviour.

Adam Smith uses the category of virtue which in his writings means no more than a set of characteristics which orient an individual to good purpose. The only crucial character of social life is justice and reciprocity. Mutual bonds must include justice and punishment of those who violate justice. Religion authorises the imagination of punishing injustice "in life to come".

Religion, even in its rudest form, gave a sanction to the rules of morality, long before the age of artificial reasoning and philosophy. That the terrors of religion should thus enforce the natural sense of duty, was of too much importance to

¹⁸ Ibidem, 13.

¹⁹ Rodney Stark, Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith. Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 91.

²⁰ Ibidem, 38.

²¹ Ibidem, 39.

²² Ibidem, 70.

²³ Todd (ed.), *The Glasgow Edition*, 788.

the happiness of mankind for nature to leave it dependent upon the slowness and uncertainty of philosophical researches²⁴.

Rational Choice Theory is applying economic insights to the analysis of religion and religious institutions. It opens an efficient method to study the relation between religious rules and institutions. In the analysis based on Rational Choice Theory, religion is often reduced to an independent or dependent variable. If religion is considered as an independent variable, it is an instrument to measure how religiosity affects individual characteristics. If analysed as a dependent variable, different contextual characteristics are used to demonstrate how it affects religious participation and beliefs.

In the perspective of Rational Choice Theory, religion designates above all individual characteristics which are most often grasped and objectified as independent reality and designated as “religiosity”. Religiosity is not empirically accessible except visible and measurable outcomes of it mean religious commitment, understood especially as action or behaviour. In such a perspective, social context of religion is less important. Such vision of religion comes from laissez-faire philosophy of social world. Individuals are free both to accept religious rules and not to follow them. Humans weight costs and benefits of religious commitment. Personal religiosity is intensified by the concomitant complementarity when personal religious needs are convergent with social opportunities of religious commitment. As well, personal religiosity is reduced when personal needs are challenged by contextual constraining. That is why “time devoted to formal religious services and personal prayer will be high among persons with low value of time... For example, older people may be more engaged in religious activity because their opportunity cost is low”²⁵.

Rational Choice Theory implies two models of religiosity: (1) demand-side and (2) supply-side. The first one is based on the assumption that the level of social religiosity is conditioned by the religious needs of individuals. In the supply-side model, religiosity of a society or group results from the activity of religious institutions, and it is implicitly assumed that the potential of individual religiosity is constant. In the supply-side model, religiosity results from competition between religious organisations and institutions or between religious and non-religious institutions. Religion is a matter of reasonable, well-informed actors, who choose to “consume religious commod-

²⁴ Smith, *The Theory*, 191.

²⁵ Robert Barro, Rachel McCleary, “Religion and Economy”, *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20 (2006): 50.

ities” analogically to evaluating costs and benefits of secular commodities. Religion is reduced to observable and measurable facts concerning individuals and groups. Any problems concerning the ontology of religion and the nature of religious motivation become meaningless.

2. Critical Realist perspective

The Critical Realist way of thinking in social science was initiated by Roy Bhaskar in 1975, when he published the influential book *A Realist Theory of Science*²⁶. His ideas emerged as an international and interdisciplinary scientific movement which opened up original perspectives for the comprehension of social reality, surmounting the domination of the rationalists and empiricists in methodological discussions within social science and also religion. According to Christian Smith, Critical Realism is not a philosophy of religion and takes “an agnostic, or better yet, uninterested and disinterested, view of the veracity of the metaphysical and theological truth claims of religions, however important and interesting they may be in and of themselves”²⁷. However in the introduction to the book entitled *Transcendence. Critical Realism and God* the authors distinctly tend to take theoretical position in regards to religion. They commonly declare that “We had until recently written purely secular and in some cases secularist books, but had arrived at religious positions (more specifically, Christian ones) about which we wanted to go public”²⁸.

Critical Realism as a theoretical approach is above all a specific social ontology which does not refer directly to religion. Critical Realism is born originally as a philosophy of science and epistemology. Critical Realists become interested in religion at the second stage of their work, when basic premises of their theory have been already clear. They realised that new ontology sheds new light on the ontological issues concerning religion. Despite some critics Critical Realism is not a theological vision of social life²⁹.

²⁶ Roy Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

²⁷ Christian Smith, *Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 19.

²⁸ Margaret Archer, Andrew Collier, Douglass Porpora, “Preface”, in: Margaret Archer, Andrew Collier, Douglas Porpora, *Transcendence. Critical Realism and God* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), ix.

²⁹ See e.g. Peter Doak, “Deconstructing Archer’s (Un)Critical Realism”, in: *Bringing Back the Social into the Sociology of Religion. Critical Approaches, Studies in Critical Research on Religion*, eds. Veronique Altglas, Matthew Wood (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 59–78.

In the centre of realist approach to society is the human person. The human being represents much more than only purpose oriented individuals and social construction. As presents it Pierpaolo Donati the person is a dynamic construction, essentially relational which is constituted by social relations³⁰. A human person represents not only a social agent which behaves and achieves goals which could be observed and described in terms of instrumental action. Human person is a dynamic construction which involves individual and unique characteristics. Personal dynamics are not easily observable from outside in the same way as action, which does not mean that are totally subjective or not intersubjective. This intrinsic dynamics of the person shapes human identity. It means that an individual is shaped by relations. This is what we name as a person results from relations. Individuals do not only make relations by action or behaviour but individuals or better to say human beings emerge from relations and are relations.

Social relations shape not only personal but also social identity of a person. As Margaret Archer states, “We are what we care about”³¹. “We are our ‘relational concerns’, as individuals as well as social agents/actors, since we necessarily live in many different contexts that are social circles [...] which imply a collective identity”³². Relationality of a person properly understood refers both to the fact that human person is shaped by social relations and that a person transforms social relations. “Relation is what makes us reflexive”³³. Human beings are able to reflect on how the reality which emerges from their interactions affects themselves. Such ability could be called “relational reason”. Human experiences are “regulated” by reflexivity, which is a part of human actions and interactions. Reflexivity is emergent property of persons which generates personal identity³⁴.

In human reflexivity, emotions play an important role. Emotions are among the main constituents of reflexivity because represent “fuel of our internal conversation”³⁵. Emotions represent commentaries upon our concerns

³⁰ Pierpaolo Donati, *Relational Sociology. A new paradigm for the social science* (New York, London: Routledge, 2010), xvi.

³¹ Margaret Archer, “Persons and Ultimate Concerns: Who We Are Is What We Care About, Conceptualization of the Person in Social Sciences”, *Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences. Acta* 11 (2006): 261–283.

³² Donati, *Relational*, xvi.

³³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴ Margaret Archer, *Being Human: the Problem of Agency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 194.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, 194.

and are emergent from relationships with the natural, practical and discursive orders of reality. Emotions involve a sense of our situation and are affective modes of awareness of situation. They are relational and emergent from situations and represent a sort of “import” of concerns. “Emotions are emergent from the relationship between nature’s properties and our bodily properties”³⁶. They operate in the human body not as “matters of stimulus and response” because they entail cognition about the intentional object and are related to expectations and “can be wrong the other way round and read imports far too complacently for physical well-being”³⁷. Emotion modifies the relation between body and environment. “Emotions, then, can be defined as modes of relational action readiness, either in the form of tendencies to establish, maintain, or disrupt a relationship with the environment or in the form or mode of relational readiness as such”³⁸. Human emotions “seem to work best within the natural order, where bodily concerns are laid down in the organism’s constitution and the whole emergence of commentary appears more like association because our concerns are constant for the species (and beyond it)”³⁹.

Reflexivity reviews emotional commentaries, elaborates them and shapes emotionality itself. In human reflexivity, “ultimate concerns” are established. Humans are equipped also in second-order capacity to reflect upon emotions and to transform our emotionality. This is why people are able to shape concerns in a deliberative way. Individuals’ concerns “define the way in which our situation is of relevance to our purposes, desires, aspirations”⁴⁰.

The most important of our social concerns is our self-worth which is vested in certain projects (career, family, community, club or church). The emergence of emotions in social order is dependent upon (1) subject status in society; (2) the receipt of moral evaluations from the social order, and (3) the conjunction between our personal concerns and the nature of society’s norms. People invest themselves in these social projects that “are susceptible of emotionality in relation to society’s normative evaluation of our performance in these roles”⁴¹.

³⁶ Ibidem, 201.

³⁷ Ibidem, 202.

³⁸ Ibidem, 206.

³⁹ Ibidem, 203.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, 219.

⁴¹ Ibidem, 219.

Reflexivity plays crucial role in the formation of the relationship between the individual and the society. The process of individual and social identity formation is labelled by Margaret Archer as “morphogenesis”. Socialisation in the perspective of morphogenesis is a relational⁴² and necessarily active⁴³ process.

Crucial for the understanding of human subjectivity is the relationship with orders of reality. Margaret Archer has initially assumed the existence of three orders of reality. Individuals are confronted with reality of the orders simultaneously; each order of reality is related with distinct type of concern. Orders of reality represent intentional objects and are related with three different clusters of emotions. Natural order confers concerns about physical well-being and import emotions that are excited in encounter with natural environment. Concerns related to natural order are embodied in physical constitution of human being. Practical order is represented by human labour (*homo faber*) and practical engagement with the world of material culture. Practical order relates to performative concerns. Here, it is maintained that performative achievement is the generic concern of *homo faber*. Social order includes participation of individual in the social realm and represents discursive environment. The social world is related with concerns about self-worth. Immersed in social relation, a human being is subject among subjects. Social order includes “subject-referring properties” which “convey the import of normativity to our concerns about social standing”⁴⁴. Concerns related to social order are shaped by social commitment of a person⁴⁵. Emotions in social order emerge from subjects’ concerns in relation to society’s moral order. Social norms “inflict evaluations on our comportment”⁴⁶. Emotions in social order are emergent from the relationship to other humans. In social order, emotions are elicited by judgements of approbation or disapproval.

Archer besides the natural, social and practical order distinguishes also the transcendental order. The transcendental order is “implicit in the basic,

⁴² Andrea Maccarini, “Reflexivity, Socialization, and Relations to the World: Theoretical and Practical Challenges”, *State of Affairs, Stan Rzeczy* 12 (2017): 141–176 [*The Relational Turn in Sociology. Implications for the Study of Society, Culture, and Persons*, eds. Elżbieta Hałas, Pierpaolo Donati].

⁴³ Margaret Archer, “Reconceptualising socialization as reflexive engagement”, in: *Engaging with the World. Agency, institutions, historical formations*, eds. Margaret Archer, Andrea Maccarini (New York, London: Routledge, 2013), 103–128.

⁴⁴ Archer, *Being Human*, 198–199.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, 215.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, 199.

Critical Realist distinction between the intransitive domain of the real and our transitive knowledge of it⁴⁷. The transcendental order that cannot be reduced to any other order of reality: neither social nor natural, pre-existing knowledge or tradition. Transcendence manifests itself in three different forms of human relations: (1) in subject-object; (2) subject-subject relations and (3) in relation to a divine being according to human beliefs. In the first form, people transcend their relations to things and ideas with creativity. Such creative activity helps people overcome problems by new ideas, technical innovations and other forms of inventiveness. Subject-subject form of transcendence transforms normative expectations in emotionality or commitment and extends “cognition through the intimate knowledge of the other that is required”. Subject-transcendent relations transcend descriptive religious traditions by “personal awareness of God as the ultimate reality, who may be apprehended in a diversity of ways and situations”. The last form of transcendent relation yield affective and cognitive difference with human love and cannot be understood as only extrapolation of such subject-subject relation. Social relations are integrated with identity of an individual. Relational approach in sociology implies a personalised vision of an individual. Social forces are embodied into human beings who are unique and should not be reduced to any structure or social mechanism.

Transcendental experiences are learning experiences (clarification/illumination) or intensely moving. The transcendental order is related with specific cluster of emotions. Religious experience is profoundly affective but from the perspective of social science, does not incorporate non-cognitive content. Integral to religious experience are emotional reactions to the experienced object and emotional attachment to experienced reality⁴⁸. Attitude towards religion results from experiences with respect to religion. “Integral to such experiences are emotional reactions to what is experienced and, in many cases, emotional attachments to the objects of such experience.”⁴⁹ Religious experience is a motivation for religious belief. Religious experience is a ground for religious traditions and inspiration for religious commitment.

⁴⁷ Margaret Archer, Andrew Collier, Douglass Porpora, “What do we mean by God?”, in: Margaret Archer, Andrew Collier, Douglas Porpora, *Transcendence. Critical Realism and God* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 27.

⁴⁸ Margaret Archer, Andrew Collier, Douglass Porpora, “Introduction”, in: Margaret Archer, Andrew Collier, Douglas Porpora, *Transcendence. Critical Realism and God* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 4.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, 4

Religious experience is profoundly affective and needs metaphors for being expressed. “Experience consists of three elements: the experiencing subject, the content of experience and the object of experience [...] In any true experience, the object of experience contributes something to the content of experience.”⁵⁰ Religious experience is shaped by social forces but is not to be reduced to one of such human forces. Experience of transcendence or the absence of such experience initiate the process of internal conversation about the experience and in relation to other personal experiences. Religious experience refers to socialisation. Religious experience is a subjective force to prioritise transcendent concerns. The transcendental experience “becomes both human *telos*, or ultimate concern, and also the *logos*, or reason that unifies our loving in due order”⁵¹. In that sense, religious experience fosters religious practice. Transcendent ultimate concerns arise as religious believer adventures “religious experience”. In religious experience, religious beliefs are “equipped” with emotions and personal attachment to this what is believed⁵². That is why religious experience include also emotional attachment:

The individual subject is bracketed out of existence. As a result, what is lost is the very category of experience. Practices, discourses and texts do not experience. Only individual subjects do; and what individual subjects experience, when they experience, is reality. Individuals and reality are the twin end-points connected by practices, discourses and texts. It is through practices, discourses and texts that individuals experience reality and express the reality they experience. Thus to try to understand practices, discourses and texts, without their end-points, is like trying to understand the institution of marriage while bracketing out husbands and wives⁵³.

Conclusion

Religion is one of the most challenging elements of social life in social science. The search for sociological understanding of religion not only reflects limits of social science but also highlights crucial and key components of sociological approach to society such as human rationality. In the perspec-

⁵⁰ Ibidem, 13.

⁵¹ Archer, Collier, Porpora, “What”, 28.

⁵² Archer, “Persons”, 274.

⁵³ Archer, Collier, Porpora, “Introduction”, 13.

tive of socialisation Rational Choice Theory and Critical Realism represent far reaching differences in defining religiosity. Both social ontologies represent distinguished understanding of religiosity and it has crucial role in the understanding of religious socialisation.

Rational Choice Theory does not place attention on the relationship between structure and agency in the study of religious changes, especially religious socialisation. Religiosity is understood as monolithic and static characteristic of individuals. Religiosity in such a perspective is “atemporal” and “stable”. In such Rational Choice approach, religiosity is strongly reduced because the understanding of human rationality is restricted to “instrumental rationality” and neglects human emotionality and reflexivity. What is more, religiosity in Rational Choice Theory is dominated by the “model of the cool, individualist bargain-hunter, seeking to maximise a ‘utility’”⁵⁴. Generally speaking, individuals represent “black boxes” which are stimulated from outside by impulses generating behavioural outcomes. It does not give enough space for the relationship between structure and agency in the study of religious changes, especially religious socialisation. Rational Choice Theory is focused especially on structural aspects of religion and neglects subjective aspects of religiosity. It ignores the dynamism of human personality and defines a religious person as an individual and static construction. Rational Choice Theory focuses rather on structural aspects of religion and rather ignores the internal dynamics of the individual. The fact that religiosity in lifespan may become more or less dominant or central in the life of individual and its identity is rather out of horizon in Rational Choice Theory.

In the comparison to Rational Choice Theory Critical, Realism provides a new perspective for religious socialisation. From this perspective, individual and social identity of a person also encompasses religiosity. Implementing such crucial concepts as reflexivity and transcendence, realist approach to religion puts attention to human subjectivity. The dynamic understanding of human being and including reflexivity in the study of social changes opens new perspective in the religious studies.

In such an approach, religiosity is reflexively elaborated. As the personal identity is dynamically shaped, religiosity is also regarded as dynamic. Religiosity as presented in Critical Realist approach is more “dynamic” and better corresponds with the dynamic nature of religiosity. Religiosity in such approach contributes to the dynamism of the human person and its subjective

⁵⁴ Archer, Tritter, “Introduction”, iv.

aspects. In Critical Realist perspective religiosity emerges in the process of socialisation and is not only culturally but also reflexively elaborated. I have highlighted in the text that realism opens sociology of religion for the study of human subjectivity in the relation to the experience of sacred and the dynamic relationship to religious elements of the culture.

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