Spirituality and Religiosity of Adolescents in the Context of Radicalisation[1]

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the phenomena of spirituality and religiosity of Slovak adolescents in the context of their radicalisation. The theoretical part of the paper presents a definition of terms, as well as an overview of their specific contexts, identified on the basis of previous research. The empirical part describes the author's quantitative research, in which the inter-relationships between spirituality, religiosity, family relationships, and adolescents' radicalisation were demonstrated. The results of the research show that in social work it is necessary to reflect on the spirituality of clients and to see it as an integral part of the bio-psycho-social-spiritual perception of the individual in the context of his social milieu.

Keywords: spirituality, religiosity, adolescence, radicalisation, social work

Introduction

The current period is characterised by continuous development and rapid change. Not only education and the labour market, but also the value orientation and the position of individuals and families in society are dynamically developing and changing. The generation that is on the threshold of adulthood and therefore amid the process of integration into this society is therefore often looking for a stable point of support that would provide it with a sense of stability and a value grounding that is resistant to these changes. For a certain proportion of adolescents, spirituality can be a life support work that gives them security and relative stability in values and thinking. A negative consequence of a misplaced grasp of spirituality can be in its totalitarian acceptance, leading to radical views. Thus, this article will focus on the relationship between spirituality, religiosity, family relationships, and adolescent radicalisation.

The radicalisation of young people in Slovakia has been a long-standing issue, significantly catalysed by the pandemic period, which was associated with restrictive measures impacting the lives of adolescents. Radicalisation is present among Slovak adolescents across all regions, school types, and families, with noticeable differences primarily observed in the degree of radicalisation.[2] Therefore,

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2   Gizela Brutovská and Matúš Béreš, 'How Do Revolting Young People Become Radicals – The Case of Slovakia', *Athens Journal of Social Sciences* 9, no. 2 (2022): 181–200, https://doi.org/10.30958/ajss.9-2-5.

the subject of interest in the article is currently relevant within the conditions of the Slovak Republic, as there is an observable effort by radical and extremist groups to expand their sphere of influence, to gain significance and societal impact. These groups can be primarily identified as having a radical nationalist political orientation historically linked to the problematic relationship between the majority and minority groups, along with the mythologisation of historical events. This can also be associated with the current inclination towards alternative and conspiratorial beliefs, amplified by certain media outlets. Research conducted by the Institute of Public Affairs demonstrated that although the concept of Christian conservatism resonates with only 8% of respondents aged 18 to 39, as many as 56% of respondents agree with the need to protect Christianity from Islam.[3]

Spirituality and Religiosity

We understand spirituality as the spiritual dimension of human existence that transcends everyday life, thereby complementing and co-creating a comprehensive, holistically-oriented bio-psycho-social-spiritual perspective on individuals.[4] The essence of spirituality encompasses topics such as the meaning of life, morality, and a transcendent reality that can be conceptualised in various ways. On the other hand, religiosity primarily comprises an institutionalised system of beliefs, values, expressions, and symbols focused on the spiritual realm. It holds a communal character and is transmitted over time as part of traditions.[5] The term 'spirituality' denotes an individual's personal experience within the realm of transcendence and the quest for life's meaning. In contrast, the related term 'religiosity' expresses a practical relationship to a specific religious doctrine or religious community.[6] Religiosity is more institutional, whereas spirituality is based on an individual's personal stance towards transcendental matters, hence making it a more overarching concept.[7] While religiosity emphasises the ceremonial and ritualistic aspects of religious experience, often formally associated with a specific religious direction, spirituality is characterised by an individual's subjective capacity to embrace a transcendent reality and adapt their experiences to it. Therefore, some authors consider spirituality as the core of religiosity.[8] Expressions of religiosity include activities like attending religious services and other rituals, private prayer, confession, or engaging in spiritual conversations. On the other hand, spirituality manifests primarily through contemplation of transcendent matters, reflecting on the meaning of life and other existential topics, belief in an afterlife, and reassessing the significance of religion as a whole.

The relationship between spirituality and religiosity can be perceived as separate (both phenomena symmetrically exist independently), mutually conditioning (one phenomenon complements the other), or interconnected (one phenomenon is linked to the other, yet they are equivalent).[9] The research connection between the concepts of spirituality and religiosity, particularly concerning

3   Marián Velšic, *Mladí Ľudia a Riziká Extrémizmu: Výskumná Štúdia* (Bratislava: Inštitút pre verejné otázky, 2017).

4   Stanislav Kratochvíl, *Základy psychoterapie* (Praha: Portál, 2017), 114.

5   Edward R. Canda, Leola Dyrud Furman, and Hwi-Ja Canda, *Spiritual diversity in social work practice: The heart of helping* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2019).

6   Tereza Cimrmannová, 'Spirituality in Social Work with Respect to the Helping Person's Education and Skills', *Caritas Et Veritas* 7, no. 1 (2017): 22–31, https://doi.org/10.32725/cetv.2017.005.

7   Jamal-E-Din MahdiNejad, Hamidreza Azemati, Ali Sadeghi Habibabad, and Pietro Matracchi, 'Investigating the Effect of Age and Gender of Users on Improving Spirituality by Using EEG', *Cognitive Neurodynamics* 15, no. 4 (2020): 637–47, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11571-020-09654-x.

8   Andrej Nikulin, *Psychosociálne aspekty vývinu religiozity* (Prešov: Vydavateľstvo Prešovskej univerzity, 2021), 9.

9   Sahaya Selvam, 'Towards Religious-Spirituality: A Multidimensional Matrix of Religion and Spirituality', *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, (2013), http://jsri.ro/ojs/index.php/jsri/article/view/718/600.

an individual's quality of life and well-being, is often referred to as the religio-spiritual factor.[10] From the above, it is evident that the spiritual and religious components play a significant role in shaping an individual's overall well-being. The absence of these components has the potential to negatively impact life quality or create a sense of incompleteness.[11] Similarly, research findings suggest that the absence of spirituality in an individual's life can, in certain cases, lead to a decline in their overall quality of life.[12] Research has also identified a significant correlation between religiosity, levels of satisfaction, and health.[13] Therefore, we consider it current and essential to focus on assessing the presence of spirituality among adolescents. They constitute a significant client group in social work and simultaneously find themselves in a specific period marked by considerable sensitivity to the development of radicalisation as well as other forms of socially risky behaviour.

Spirituality and Religiosity among Adolescents

Adolescence is typically characterised as a developmental period ranging from ages 16 to 20. This ontogenetic phase is commonly marked by interest differentiation and distinctiveness, the pursuit of personal identity, as well as an emphasis on intergenerational differences.[14]

A characteristic aspect linked to identity formation involves adolescents adopting various opinions and behavioural patterns, gradually internalising them. The process of shaping one's relationship with oneself and one's identity, as well as assuming responsibility for one's life and decisions, also extends to the realm of spirituality. Here, there is a revision of held values and beliefs, leading to the creation of a new relationship with religious experiences, spirituality, and religious expressions.[15] This quest for and formation of the meaning of life, pillars of moral principles, and transcendence precisely represent a significant part of the transition from childhood to adulthood.[16] This period of significant life changes and crises also acts as a catalyst for the search, discovery, or transformation of personal perception of spirituality.[17] The aforementioned transition from childhood to adulthood is associated with several existential crises, stemming, among other things, from the need to establish meaningful life goals. In the absence of adequate support in an adolescent's life, this can be a source of frustration, which negatively impacts adolescent development.[18] Research has examined the spirituality and religiosity of adolescents through several studies, and their results indicate a connection between adolescents' spirituality and their sense of purpose, as well as their coping strategies.[19] Therefore, it

10 Annette Mahoney and Annmarie Cano, 'Introduction to the Special Section on Religion and Spirituality in Family Life: Pathways between Relational Spirituality, Family Relationships and Personal Well-Being', *Journal of Family Psychology* 28, no. 6 (2014): 735–738, https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000041.

11 Manish Kumar, 'Adolescence Psychological Well-Being in Relation to Spirituality and pro-Social Behaviour', *Indian Journal of Positive Psychology* 6, no. 4 (2015): 361-366, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305323848_Adolescence_psychological_well-being_in_relation_to_spirituality_and_pro-social_behaviour

12 Tarek Mahmoud Omara and Khaled Harby, 'Medición y Análisis de Los Factores Religiosos y Espirituales de La Calidad de Vida de Los Residentes de Las Ciudades Islámicas', *Interdisciplinaria* 40, no. 1 (2022): 399–412, https://doi.org/10.16888/interd.2023.40.1.24.

13 Ahmed M. Abdel-Khalek, 'Religiosity, Health and Happiness: Significant Relations in Adolescents from Qatar', *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 60, no. 7 (2013): 656–661, https://doi.org/10.1177/0020764013511792.

14 Milan Nakonečný, *Psychologie* (Praha: Triton, 2011), 681–683.

15 Nikulin, *Psychosociálne aspekty*, 21.

16 Jeong Woong Cheon and Edward R. Canda, 'The Meaning and Engagement of Spirituality for Positive Youth Development in Social Work', *Families in Society-The Journal of Contemporary Social Services* 91, no. 2 (2010): 121–126, https://doi.org/10.1606/1044-3894.3981.

17 Annette Mahoney, 'The Spirituality of Us: Relational Spirituality in the Context of Family Relationships', *American Psychological Association EBooks*, (2013): 365–389, https://doi.org/10.1037/14045-020.

18 Li Lin and Daniel T. L. Shek, 'The Influence of Meaning in Life on Adolescents' Hedonic Well-Being and Risk Behaviour: Implications for Social Work', *British Journal of Social Work* 49, no. 1 (2018): 5–24, https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcy029.

19 Anna W. Wright, Joana Salifu Yendork, and Wendy Kliewer, 'Patterns of Spiritual Connectedness during Adolescence: Links to Coping and Adjustment in Low-Income Urban Youth', *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 47, no. 12 (2018): 2608–2624, https://doi.org/10.1007/

can be stated that spirituality forms a significant part of the overall lifestyle and well-being of adolescents.[20]

Spirituality, Risk Behaviour, Radicalisation, and Family Relationships of Adolescents in the Context of Social Work

The concept of spirituality is closely intertwined with social services and social work in general.[21] Despite the current trend where several authors link the themes of spirituality and social work or helping professions in general, there is little attention given to the spirituality of adolescents within this context.[22]

For social work, it is crucial to understand the changes in the spiritual and religious experiences of adolescents. Within this target group of social work, it is becoming common to delineate oneself from traditional spiritual expressions or to replace them with new forms. These newer forms are infused with different attributes stemming from contemporary times and encompass elements such as belief in the afterlife, predicting the future, or engaging in magical practices for bringing luck.[23]

The reflection on spirituality establishes a framework for a more adequate utilisation of various theoretical approaches in social work (e.g., person-in-environment). Social workers who reflect on their clients' spiritual experiences can assist adolescents in understanding the functioning, dysfunctions, complexity, and dynamics of their own spirituality. A proper grasp of spirituality by social workers leads to its transformation into a potential life resource, fostering meaning-fulness, growth, and empowerment among adolescents.[24] In general, adolescents who actively experience a particular form of spirituality tend to label themselves as prosocial individuals.[25] Current research, however, does not provide a reliable and unequivocal answer regarding the cause of these relationships.[26] Spirituality is also often associated with the level of resilience in individuals.[27] The presence of spiritual experiences in the lives of adolescents is presumed to function as a protective factor concerning the occurrence of various social pathological phenomena, such as substance abuse or premature and risky sexual behaviour. Positive manifestations of its presence also include improved academic performance, civic engagement, and overall mental health in adolescents.[28] Research has also demonstrated a significant positive correlation between

s10964-018-0886-6.

20 Connie L. Kvarfordt and Kasha Herba, 'Religion and Spirituality in Social Work Practice with Children and Adolescents: A Survey of Canadian Practitioners', *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal* 35, no. 2 (2017): 153–167, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-017-0513-5.

21 Walaa Elsayed, Konstantin Sokolovskiy, and Yulia Gavrilova, 'Religious Practices in the Effectiveness of Social Service Workers: A Subjective Assessment', *Public Organization Review*, (2022): 1385–1398, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11115-022-00668-z.

22 Cheon and Canda, 'The Meaning'.

23 David E. Herbert and Josh Bullock, 'Reaching for a New Sense of Connection: Soft Atheism and "Patch and Make Do" Spirituality amongst Nonreligious European Millennials', *Culture and Religion* 21, no. 2 (2020): 157–177, https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610.2020.1862887.

24 Jianbin Xu, 'Pargament's Theory of Religious Coping: Implications for Spiritually Sensitive Social Work Practice,' *British Journal of Social Work* 46, no. 5 (2015): 1394–1410, https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcv080.

25 Leslie J. Francis and Mandy Robbins, 'Prayer, Purpose in Life, and Attitudes toward Substances: A Study among 13 to 15 Year Olds in England and Wales', *Counseling Et Spiritualite* 28, no. 2 (2009): 83–104, https://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/2969/.

26 Nadia Khalili, Sandra L. Bosacki, and Victoria Talwar. 'The Moderating Role of Spirituality and Gender in Canadian and Iranian Emerging Adolescents' Theory of Mind and Prosocial Behavior', *Frontiers in Psychology* 14 (2023): 1–16, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1134826.

27 Amanda Hiles Howard, Megan Roberts, Tony Mitchell, and Nicole Gilberston Wilke, 'The Relationship Between Spirituality and Resilience and Well-Being: A Study of 529 Care Leavers from 11 Nations', *Adversity and Resilience Science* 4, no. 2 (2023): 177–90, https://doi.org/10.1007/s42844-023-00088-y.

28 Connie L. Kvarfordtand and Kasha Herba, 'Religion and Spirituality in Social Work Practice with Children and Adolescents: A Survey of Canadian Practitioners.'

the spirituality of adolescents and their life satisfaction. Negative correlations were observed between spirituality and feelings of hopelessness, delinquent behaviour, problematic internet use, intentional self-harming behaviour, and suicidal behaviour.[29] In addition to the aforementioned positive effects of spirituality and religiosity in adolescents' lives, it is essential to pay attention to potential negative aspects that may be reinforced by spirituality and religiosity. One such negative consequence could be radicalisation.

Radicalisation is defined as a process involving the influencing of individuals or groups by a radical ideology. Radical ideologies can have various political or religious foundations.[30] The process of radicalisation thus fosters radical beliefs, thinking, and behaviour.[31] The initial cause of radicalisation can be linked to an individual's confrontation with injustice, social inequality, and oppression. The response to encountering these realities might indeed lead an individual to incline towards radical thinking.[32] The process of radicalisation is characterised by individuals gravitating towards increasingly violent expressions targeting symbolic objectives or members of other groups. They might also opt for more violent means to achieve their goals or advocate for desired changes.[33] The conceptual differentiation between the terms 'radicalisation' and its related term 'extremism' lies precisely in the inclination towards violence. Radicalisation refers to the process of cognitively internalising extremist thoughts, accepting the legitimacy of using violence to achieve set goals. In extremism, emphasis is placed primarily on the conative component, encompassing various forms of participation in carrying out radical thoughts, ranging from activism to direct involvement in terrorist acts. Violence is, therefore, a common but not necessary accompanying phenomenon.[34] From the perspective of recipients of radical ideologies, radicalisation can be defined as a process of incremental socialisation towards extremism. From the viewpoint of disseminators of radical messages, one might speak of a process involving agitation, mobilisation, and manipulation, aiming to achieve metanoia – a profound shift in the recipient's life from an individualistic self-concept to accentuating a radical communal identity.[35]

In the context of radicalisation, it is crucial to emphasise that adolescence is a period of openness to embracing various ideologies, including those rooted in spirituality, which can captivate adolescents. This is especially true when these ideas are presented in an interesting and convincing manner. Demagogic presentation of spiritual values can consequently lead to a totalitarian orientation, wherein adolescents are motivated to advocate the alleged truth imposed on them by all available means.[36] Apart from spirituality or religiosity, other social factors such as unemployment, delinquency, or difficulties in integrating into various social institutions (such as family systems or the job market) represent risk factors for the development of radicalisation.[37]

29   Lin and Shek. 'The Influence'.

30   Vladimír Lichner, *Analýza radikálnych a extrémistických skupín, hnutí, siekt a kultov a ich pôsobenie v Slovenskej republike* (Košice: Univerzita Pavla Jozefa Šafárika v Košiciach: Vydavateľstvo ŠafárikPress, 2020), 163

31   Simona Trip, Carmen Bora, Mihai Marian, Angelica Hălmăjan, and Marius Drugaş, 'Psychological Mechanisms Involved in Radicalization and Extremism. A Rational Emotive Behavioral Conceptualization', *Frontiers in Psychology* 10 (2019): 1–8, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00437.

32   Beatrice De Graaf and Kees Van Den Bos, 'Religious Radicalization: Social Appraisals and Finding Radical Redemption in Extreme Beliefs', *Current Opinion in Psychology* 40 (2021): 56–60, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2020.08.028.

33   Bertjan Doosje, Fathali M. Moghaddam, Arie W. Kruglanski, Arjan De Wolf, Liesbeth Mann, and Allard R. Feddes, 'Terrorism, Radicalization and de-Radicalization', *Current Opinion in Psychology* 11 (2016): 79–84, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2016.06.008.

34   Mohammed M. Hafez and Creighton A. Mullins, 'The Radicalization Puzzle: A Theoretical Synthesis of Empirical Approaches to Homegrown Extremism', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38, no.11 (2015): 958–975, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610x.2015.1051375.

35   Giovanni Giulio Valtolina, 'Migration and Religious Radicalization: A Family Issue?', *IOS Press eBooks* (2023):188-202, https://doi.org/10.3233/stal230012.

36   Pavel Říčan, *Psychologie náboženství a spirituality* (Praha: Portál, 2007), 246–247.

37   Guillaume Bronsard et al., 'Adolescents Engaged in Radicalisation and Terrorism: A Dimensional and Categorical Assessment', *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 12 (2022): 1–11, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2021.774063.

Apart from spirituality, family relationships are a significant component of an adolescent's life. The family provides adolescents with environments for socialisation, acquiring personality traits, and shaping behavioural patterns.[38] During adolescence, the family becomes a crucial element significantly influencing an individual's development and their comprehensive integration into society. Research has demonstrated connections between the family environment and adolescents' subjective well-being, their positive attitudes towards life, and their self-esteem.[39] In the context of family background, one can discuss both direct and indirect influences on radicalisation.[40]

Social work, focusing on various aspects of an individual's life, can reliably cover a broad range of social factors contributing to radicalisation. In conjunction with a respectful approach towards understanding the spiritual experiences of the individual, this sets the stage for effective prevention, intervention, as well as the resocialisation of clients at risk of radicalisation or other forms of socially risky behaviour.

Empirical Study

The conducted research employed a quantitative design, utilising a nomothetic and deductive approach. The aim of the study was to determine the correlations between the main variables: level of religiosity, level of spirituality, degree of radicalisation, and the level of positive parental relationships.

Four main hypotheses were formulated:
- there exists a positive correlation between religiosity and radicalisation,
- there exists a positive correlation between religiosity and positive parental relationships,
- there exists a relationship between spirituality and radicalisation,
- there exists a positive correlation between spirituality and positive parental relationships.

The data collection itself was conducted through a battery of questionnaires. We utilised an author-developed religiosity questionnaire inspired by the European Social Survey (ESS) research.[41] It consisted of six items to which respondents answered on a scale: 1 = definitely no, 5 = definitely yes. The Cronbach's alpha reached a value of 0.933. The items pertained to religious practices: practising religious acts (prayer, Confession); belief in a higher power, in God; belief in an afterlife; private prayer; attending Mass; Confession attendance.

The author-developed spirituality questionnaire was inspired by MacDonald's Expressions of Spirituality Inventory (ESI) scale[42] and its Slovak translation.[43] The questionnaire consists of 11 items, to which respondents answered on a scale of 1 = disagree to 5 = agree. It includes items such as: 'I was not very interested in religion until I began to ask questions about the meaning and purpose of my life; I was forced to ask religious questions due to increasing awareness of tension in my world and my relationship to it; My life experiences led me to reconsider my religious beliefs; I constantly question my religious convictions; There are many religious questions on which my opinions are constantly changing.' We treated the questionnaire as a single-factor scale

38 Benjamin Johnson and Wendel A. Ray, 'Family Systems Theory', *Encyclopedia of Family Studies*, (2016), 1–5, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119085621.wbefs130.

39 Katja Rask, Päivi Åstedt-Kurki, Eija Paavilainen, and Pekka Laippala. 'Adolescent Subjective Well-Being and Family Dynamics', *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences* 17, no. 2 (2003): 129–138, https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0283-9318.2002.00118.x.

40 Brutovská and Matúš, 'How Do Revolting'.

41 Jozef Výrost, *Európska Sociálna Sonda* (Košice: Spoločenskovedný ústav SAV, 2012).

42 Douglas A. MacDonald, 'Spirituality: Description, Measurement, and Relation to the Five Factor Model of Personality', *Journal of Personality* 68, no. 1 (2000): 153–197, https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6494.t01-1-00094.

43 Michal Stríženec, *Novšie psychologické pohľady na religiozitu a spiritualitu* (Slovak Academic Press, 2007).

of spirituality, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.869.

The PRPS questionnaire is a questionnaire on positive relationships with parents designed for adolescents.[44] The questionnaire consists of six items where respondents rate on a frequency scale: 1 = never, 5 = always. The Cronbach's alpha value reached 0.893. The items are as follows: My mum/dad tells me that she/he is proud of me; My mum/dad is interested in what I do; My mum/dad listens to me when I talk to her/him; I can count on my mum/dad always being there when I need her/him; I talk to my mum/dad about things that are really important; It's nice to share my feelings and thoughts with my mum/dad.

The REPTSA questionnaire is by Lichner.[45] The questionnaire consists of 33 items where the respondent answers on a scale of 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree. The questionnaire is scored into two factors: Personal values (α = 0.887) and General values (α = 0.780). The purpose of the instrument is to capture opinions, attitudes, and values related to radicalisation and extremism in two factors:

F1 – Personal values, attitudes, and beliefs – a factor that reflects personal opinions about certain population groups, the determination of respondents towards active actions aimed at suppressing human and civil rights, which in our opinion indicates a commitment to engaging in activities showing signs of radicalisation and extremism;

F2 – General values and opinions supporting radicalisation and extremism – this factor is characterised by negative to hostile views towards specific population groups and minorities, bordering on xenophobic thoughts, as well as general negative beliefs that support radicalisation and extremism among respondents.

The questionnaire battery was supplemented with questions aimed at identifying selected socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

The collection of research data took place at the end of 2022 through an online tool. The research sample was selected using cluster random sampling. A complete list of secondary schools in the Slovak Republic was created. Schools were divided into three categories: gymnasiums (i.e., grammar schools), academies, and vocational schools. Subsequently, one secondary school from each category was randomly selected from each self-governing region. Students from selected secondary schools in their second and third years participated in the research. They were informed about the research during a designated school hour and provided access to the online version of the questionnaire. A total of 408 respondents participated. After eliminating questionnaires with omitted items, 334 respondents (149 males, 185 females) were included in the study, ranging in age from 15 to 21 years (X = 17.26; Med = 17; SD = 0.85).

We focused our interest on several research areas that rely on main variables – spirituality, religiosity, family relationships, and radicalisation:

- the relationship between religiosity and family relationships;
- the relationship between religiosity and radicalisation;
- the relationship between spirituality and family relationships;
- the relationship between spirituality and radicalisation.

The research was focused on the general presence of spirituality and religiosity among adolescents; therefore, we did not focus on respondents' affiliation with a specific faith or denomination.

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44   Elizabeth C. Hair, Kristin Moore, Sarah B Garrett, and Erik Michelsen, 'Psychometric Analyses of the Parent-Adolescent Relationship Scale in the National Longitudinal Survey Of...', *ResearchGate*, (2023): 1–31, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237383477_ Psychometric_Analyses_of_the_Parent-Adolescent_Relationship_Scale_in_the_National_Longitudinal_Survey_of_Youth_-_1997.

45   Vladimír Lichner, 'Proces radikalizácie vybraných rizikových skupín adolescentov z perspektívy sociálnej práce', (Hab. diss., Univerzita Pavla Jozefa Šafárika v Košiciach, 2020), 153.

For the same reason, questions related to religious affiliation were not part of the questionnaire battery.

Based on the Shapiro-Wilk test values indicating non-normal distribution of the data ($p < 0.001$), we opted for non-parametric statistical tests for the analytical procedures.

The respondents expressed their formal affiliation with a specific church or religion as follows.

Table 1 Formal affiliation with the church

State	n	%
I am a believer, I belong to a church	123	36.82 %
I am a believer, but I don't belong to a church	31	9.28 %
I don't know / undecided	66	19.76 %
I am a non-believer, I belong to a church	22	6.59 %
I am a non-believer, I don't belong to a church	92	27.54 %
Total	334	100 %

Table 1 shows that the majority of adolescents in our research sample have a clear formal relationship with a church and faith. The largest group of respondents identified themselves as believers affiliated with a specific church. The category with the second largest representation was respondents identifying as non-believers who are not affiliated with any church. The uncertainty or indecision in this matter was expressed by the smallest number of respondents.

The relationship between religiosity and family relationships

The average score on the 5-point frequency scale reached a value of 3.52. This indicates that adolescents exhibited a generally positive relationship with their parents. When examining the relationship between religiosity and positive relationships with parents, a statistically significant weak correlation was confirmed (Table 2). As religiosity is mainly understood in relation to practical manifestations of religion in specific activities, these results may suggest that adolescents engage in religious activities together with their families. In this case, such activities could be perceived as a shared ritual, fostering, among other things, positive family relationships. The provided explanation aligns with the claims made by authors Regnerus and Burdette, who cite the reinforcement of family relationships as one of the potential positive consequences of religious activities. Engaging in religious rituals together can create a pleasant atmosphere associated with family interactions, thereby contributing to the development of family models and behaviour patterns.[46]

Table 2 The correlation between religiosity and positive relationships with parents

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient	Religiosity
Positive relationships with parents	r = 0.205 $p < 0.001$***

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46   Mark D. Regnerus and Amy M. Burdette. 'Religious Change and Adolescent Family Dynamics', *Sociological Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (2006): 175–194, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.2006.00042.x.

The relationship between religiosity and radicalisation

The degree of radicalisation among the respondents reached an average score of 2.73 in the Personal Values factor and 1.93 in the General Values factor, showing a significant difference. This variance might be attributed to the fact that adolescents feel more closely connected to personal values than general values, which contributes to forming a clearer attitude in this area. It is noteworthy that a statistically significant positive correlation between radicalisation and religiosity was identified. Although this correlation is weak, its presence suggests a positive relationship between the presence of religious expressions and radicalisation in both general and personal values factors (Table 3). As for spirituality, no correlation was confirmed concerning radicalisation in the domain of personal values ($r = 0.023$; $p = 0.671$). However, a weak correlation was confirmed in the domain of general values ($r = 0.147$; $p = 0.007$).

Table 3 The correlation between religiosity and the degree of radicalisation

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient	Religiosity
Radicalisation Personal values	$r = 0.108$ $p = 0.048$*
Radicalisation General values	$r = 0.235$ $p < 0.001$***

The relationship between spirituality and family relationships

Table 4 The correlation between spirituality and family relationships.

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient	Spirituality
Positive relationships with parents	$r = -0.025$ $p = 0.645$

The correlation between spirituality and positive family relationships was not confirmed. In this case, it is important to consider that spirituality, unlike religiosity, which is based on specific expressions and activities, may have a more intimate dimension for adolescents that they do not share with their close relatives or immediate family.

The relationship between spirituality and radicalisation

Regarding the relationship between spirituality and radicalisation, we found a statistically significant weak correlation between spirituality and the second factor of radicalisation – General Values. The identified presence of this weak correlation can be explained by the fact that adolescents actively contemplating spiritual questions may also incline towards deeper contemplation on other topics, leading them to partially question socially accepted views. These views can be categorised as part of the general values explored among the respondents.

Table 5 Correlation between spirituality and adolescent radicalisation

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient	Spirituality
Radicalisation Personal values	r = 0.023 p = 0.671
Radicalisation General values	r = 0.147 p = 0.007**

Discussion and Implications for Practice

Given the complexity of the phenomenon of radicalisation, it is not possible to speak of its unequivocal explanation or identify a universal cause of this occurrence in society. However, partial research results can contribute to a more thorough mapping of the processes that lead to or reinforce radicalisation.

In our study, we focused on the relationships between spirituality, religiosity, family relationships, and the degree of adolescent radicalisation. From the established hypotheses, we confirmed existing correlations between religiosity and adolescent radicalisation in both of its examined factors. Similarly, the hypothesis concerning a significant correlation between religiosity and relationships with parents was empirically validated. We also identified a correlation between spirituality and radicalisation in the factor of general values. However, as the correlation did not prove to be significant in the factor of personal values, it is not possible to confirm definitively that hypothesis. Similarly, the hypothesis regarding the correlation between spirituality and relationships with parents was not confirmed.

Adolescent spirituality was also examined by the authors Torralba, Oviedo, and Canteras,[47] who conducted research on a sample of 531 Spanish adolescents (46.4% male) with an average age of 17.3 years. The average score for daily prayer on the four-point scale used by the authors reached a value of 1.57. In our study, utilising a five-point scale, the variable for private prayer reached an average score of 2.6 points. Considering the differences in the scales used, it can be observed that Spanish adolescents exhibit a slight tendency towards lower levels of prayer practice. Regarding the question focused on self-identification as a religious person, Spanish adolescents scored 1.82, while in our research sample, with a similarly formulated question, the score was 3.05. Both research groups thus oscillate around the mean values of individual scales; however, Slovak adolescents are more inclined to identify themselves as religious. Regular attendance at religious services scored 1.47 in the Spanish research sample, whereas in our research sample, the average score was 2.44. In this case as well, there is a slight inclination towards religious expressions in the Slovak research sample.

Rousseau et al.[48] conducted research on the social determinants of radicalisation or sympathy towards violent radicalisation across different age groups (n = 1190; males = 30%). In the group aged 16 to 18 (n = 435), the average radicalisation score was 23.1, while in the 19-21 age group (n = 430), the average score reached 23.8. Additionally, the authors observed a statistically significant lower radicalisation score in the group that obtained higher scores in religiosity (X = 21.6)

47   Josefa Torralba, Lluis Oviedo, and Manuel Canteras. 'Religious Coping in Adolescents: New Evidence and Relevance', *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 8, no. 1 (2021): 1–9, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00797-8.
48   Cécile Rousseauet al., 'From Social Adversity to Sympathy for Violent Radicalization: The Role of Depression, Religiosity and Social Support', *Archives of Public Health* 77, no. 1 (2019):1–12, https://doi.org/10.1186/s13690-019-0372-y.

compared to the group with lower religiosity scores (X = 23.8). Simon, Reichert, and Grabow[49] in a sample of 341 respondents (males = 33%) with an average age of 24 years, identified a negative correlation between religiosity and sympathies towards radicalism. In our research sample, a weak positive association was identified between religiosity and both factors of radicalisation. While the results from the mentioned authors suggest a rather protective effect of religiosity concerning radicalisation, our findings view it more as a risk factor. These differences may be influenced by distinct social, cultural, and political conditions in the countries where the studies were conducted, as well as variations in the identification of individual variables. In the conditions of the Slovak Republic, there might be a risk of linking religious content to extremist ideologies, either consciously or unconsciously. Brutovská and Béreš[50] describe the desire to belong as one of the main causes of adolescent radicalisation in Slovakia. This assertion may be linked to our identified correlation between religiosity and radicalisation, which was stronger than the correlation found with spirituality. Considering that religiosity is characterised by its collective nature associated with the social structure of the church or religious community, the tendency of radicalised adolescents to seek inclusion or acceptance into a stable structure might be observed. Strengthening cohesion within natural social structures of adolescents, primarily represented by the family or school system, could help satisfy this need. A crucial condition is that such an environment does not act as a catalyst for radicalisation.

Based on the described research results, for the purposes of practical social work in preventing radicalisation, intervening in this process, and subsequent deradicalisation, it might be advisable to consider the appropriate application of a spiritually sensitive social work model. This model should respect a holistic perception of the client, focusing on their strengths[51] and resources, which may also originate from the spiritual dimension of the clients. The level of spirituality as well as religiosity appears to be relatively stable despite societal changes and crisis periods such as the pandemic, energy crises, and even nearby armed conflicts. Although the content and expressions of religiosity change over time, spirituality remains prevalent in the lives of adolescents. Within the realm of social work, it is necessary to work with spirituality as a relatively stable resource, primarily at the individual level. Appropriately understanding religiosity can be considered a positive resource of which the utilisation goes beyond the individual level and can be employed in preventing radicalisation at the micro-social level (religiosity within the family), meso-social level (local communities of believers, youth gatherings), and macro-social level (engagement of churches and religious communities as a whole in preventing radicalisation).

Considering spirituality and radicalisation as multidimensional problems, multidisciplinary collaboration between social workers and experts from fields like psychology, theology, sociology, and other scientific disciplines exploring various aspects of human existence, including transcendent issues, seems necessary. The effectiveness of such collaboration primarily relies on the theoretical orientation of social workers in these subjects and their respectful approach towards the spiritual experiences of adolescent clients. In practical terms, drawing inspiration from religious organisations that provide opportunities for social interactions and leisure activities within communities could be considered. Social workers inspired by this model might allow for open discussions on spirituality during meetings, without necessarily linking them to any specific religion or faith.

49 Bernd Simon, Frank Reichert, and Olga Grabow. 'When Dual Identity Becomes a Liability', *Psychological Science* 24, no. 3 (2013): 251–257, https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797612450889.
50 Brutovská, and Matúš, 'How Do Revolting'.
51 Xu, 'Pargament's Theory'.

The issue of self-care in social work has been extensively researched and practically utilised over time. The holistic model of self-care also encompasses its spiritual dimension.[52] Self-care can be regarded as one of the ways to build an individual's resilience.[53] Taking into account the high level of spirituality among adolescents, interventions could be considered which focus on strengthening the spiritual component in self-care models. This area may play a role, especially for those adolescents who identify as spiritually oriented but not religious. For this category of young people, there is space for the influence of social work, which should offer them a variety of activities to meaningfully occupy their free time. These activities should reflect the diversity of their personal spiritual experiences.

The family plays a crucial role in an adolescent's life. Apart from its socialising function, it serves as one of the primary reference frameworks, offering feedback to the adolescent regarding their behaviour. Although the literature emphasises its role in the context of radicalisation, particularly in the phase of an individual's deradicalisation,[54] we consider it necessary to focus the attention of social workers on working with the family already in the phase of radicalisation prevention.[55] We identify with the opinion that families stand 'at the front lines' of preventing and combating adolescent radicalisation.[56] Examples of interventions can include activities that contribute to building family resilience, strengthening communication within it, and engaging in meaningful leisure time. Similarly, collective religious experiences, such as active religious practices, can enhance the mutual cohesion within the family.

Conclusion

Spirituality and religiosity, according to the empirical findings presented in our article, are an integral part of adolescents' lives and development. While 46.1% of respondents from our research sample identified themselves as believers, 34.1% identified themselves as non-believers. However, elements of spirituality are also present among non-believing adolescents or those who were uncertain or unable to express their religious beliefs unequivocally. The identified correlation between religiosity and positive relationships among adolescents and their parents is significant and holds importance for social work. Moreover, the values and relationships among variables suggest that religiosity and spirituality may play a role in the process of adolescent radicalisation. Religiosity and spirituality, as potential catalysts for radicalisation, deserve greater attention in academic research as well as in practical social work with clients. Therefore, it is imperative for social work to reflect on the current state and potential changes in adolescents' lives in this domain and to respond flexibly to these dynamics.

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52   Vladimír Lichner, Františka Petriková, and Eva Žiaková, 'Adolescents Self-Concept in the Context of Risk Behaviour and Self-Care', *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 26, no.1 (2021): 57–70, https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2021.1884102.

53   Emily Stapley, Ola Demkowicz, Mia Eisenstadt, Miranda Wolpert, and Jessica Deighton, 'Coping with the Stresses of Daily Life in England: A Qualitative Study of Self-Care Strategies and Social and Professional Support in Early Adolescence', *The Journal of Early Adolescence* 40, no. 5 (2019): 605–632, https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431619858420.

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56   Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), 'Initiative to Address the Life Cycle of Radicalization to Violence: The Role of Families in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: Strategic Recommendations and Programming Options', (2016): 1–7, https://www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Lifecycle%20Toolkit-documents/English-The-Role-of-Familes-in-PCVE.pdf?ver=2016-09-13-141058-860.

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