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RELIGIOUS PLURALISATION IN SLOVENIA

Abstract. *The article analyses the dynamics of religious pluralisation in Slovenia. Historical developments in various states have kept Slovenians almost exclusively within the Roman-Catholic Church, except for a short Reformation period. The socialist after-war secularisation of society has in many respects undermined the Catholic monopoly, but it failed to create an open religious market. In the transitional period the statistics of Catholics continued to drop, and at the same time ever more new religious movements emerged. These are mostly very small and at the time being do not show the potential for substantial growth. The article analyses in detail religious pluralisation in the regions of Ljubljana and Nova Gorica.*
Keywords: *religious pluralisation, Catholic Church, religious market, secularisation*

From religious monopoly to pluralisation – historical contexts

The polytheistic forefathers of today's Slovenians settled in the hills and valleys between the north-eastern shores of the Adriatic and south-eastern fringes of the Alps during the 6th and 7th centuries CE. The proximity of the Salzburg Archbishopric and Aquileia Patriarchate ensured that these settlers soon became the target of missionaries who were not only in pursuit of religious conversion but also, on behalf of their feudal rulers, strove to achieve political subjugation. Following the capture of Slav nobles, who were held as hostages, the loosely aligned and self-determining tribal state of Carantania bowed to the pressure; however, adherents to the tradition that worshiped personifications of nature – and in particular such deities as *Veles*, *Mokoš* and *Perun* – were to take up arms against the new order on at least two occasions. In the mid-19th century and the era of Slovenia's national awakening movement, the epic poem *Baptism on the Savica* by France Prešeren

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elevated the waning of the old religion and the political inevitability of this period to the status of a tragic national myth.

From the 9th century onwards, when ancient Slovenians became ever more politically incorporated into the Frankish (Carolingian) Empire which, in its later evolution, became the Holy Roman Empire, the power and status of the new religion – Roman Christianity – also became ever more consolidated and institutionalised. It also became increasingly wealthy; indeed, the emergence of the monasteries and the acquisition in 1004 of extensive lands below Mt Triglav by the bishops of Freising are both indicative of this. The Freising Manuscripts (972–1022) inscribed behind the monastery walls are not only the first written testimony of a seminal Slovenian literary language, but also an indicator of the partial acculturation of the Roman Catholic Church, whose local hierarchy was of predominantly Germanic extraction.

As in other European environments the acculturation was also clear in the syncretistic processes occurring at the levels of doctrine and worship. Through his descriptions of parallelisms in worship between Catholicism and pre-Christian religions, Primož Trubar (1508–1586), the leading personality of the Reformation among ethnic Slovenians, could be considered among the European pioneers of comparative religious studies. In his analysis of the Catholic veneration of saints, Trubar effectively revealed how this had been mapped upon the cult of pagan gods. Although prior to the Reformation those centuries that proceeded the first Christian baptism of Slovenians are officially considered to have been an era of religious uniformity, they should not be understood as absolute: adherence to many a pre-Christian tradition – although in Christian guise – demonstrated the continuity of a psychological fracture which traversed the somewhat forcible conversion to Christianity.

This explains the comparatively strong Reformation movement among the ethnic group which, after the 16th century, was increasingly being identified as *Slovenians*. Also, in the context of the above, it is possible to understand such seemingly irrational accompanying phenomena as *štiftarstvo* and *skakači*[1]. Although historians are not unanimous in their estimations, the opinion prevails that by the mid-16th century the majority of the population

[1] *Assimilating numerous pagan elements, štiftarstvo (a pious laity who rejected the existing social order, venerated saints and engaged in the direct and emphatic expression of emotion) and skakači (so-called 'jumpers' who bounded and shuddered in the presence of their god) were two popular sects that developed in these lands during the mid-16th century. Both of these cults, which largely operated within the framework of the Catholic Church, were deemed pagan-idolatry and severely opposed by protestant theologians. However, in the context of its struggle against the Reformation movement the Catholic Church entered into transient alliances with both these movements, and thus their suppression did not occur until the 1580s (see Kerševan, 1989: 65).*

of this territory's larger towns adhered to the notion of the Reformation. In volume seven of his *Die Ehre dess Hertzogthums Crain* (*The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola*) published in Nürnberg in 1689, Carniolan polymath Johann Weichard Valvasor, a member of the Royal Society of London, notes the considerable prevalence of Lutheran Protestantism in towns and – with the exception of castles inhabited by the aristocracy – significantly lower adherence to the Reformation in the countryside.

Primož Trubar, a Catholic priest who converted to Lutheran Protestantism under the influence of Bishop Pietro Bonomo of Trieste, occupied a central role in the Reformation movement across Slovenian-speaking lands. In conditions of political and religious uncertainty, Trubar was often compelled to resort to exile, thus it was in 1550 in the Swabian city of Tübingen that he printed a Slovenian translation of the Catechism (*Catechismus*) incorporating the *Abecedarium*, a short Slovenian grammar, which is today regarded as the first book in the Slovenian language. In 1584 Trubar also oversaw publication of the first translation of the Bible into the Slovenian language, a work undertaken by Jurij Dalmatin (c.1547–1589).

While religious motives and goals were undoubtedly at the forefront of Trubar's endeavours, their broader cultural and national implications were objectively far more important in the long run. Education, in itself, was important for Protestantism and thus schools became a means of spreading the new religion based on the belief that the Bible should be accessible to all in their mother tongue. The printing of books in Slovenian – and with that five decades during which literacy in the language of the common people was, regardless of age, gender or social status, actively promoted – proved to be extremely significant. The Slovenian language endured, although it would be more than three centuries before it would prevail. It therefore comes as no surprise that, in the eyes of contemporary (and nominally predominantly Catholic) Slovenians, the Protestant campaigner Primož Trubar is deemed this country's most important historical personage[2] in public opinion polls[3].

As in other parts of the Empire, the principle *cuius regio, eius religio* brought about the end of the Reformation. The Counter-Reformation, which got underway in these lands at the end of the 16th century, was carried out in the spirit of the maxims that had endured as part of the ideological arsenal of Roman Catholicism in Slovenia deep into the 20th century. Urban Tekstor, the Bishop of Ljubljana (1544–1548), justified the suppression of heterodoxies – or as he put it "religious disorder" – by way of an anti-pluralistic

[2] He remains unharmed by the speculations of several contemporary Catholic writers (e.g. Rode, 1997: 54) who claim that the triumph of Protestantism would have led to the »Germanisation of Slovenians«.

[3] Slovenian Public Opinion Poll 1995/3: Understanding the Past (Toš, 1999a).

metaphor "*one sheep-pen – one shepherd*" (i.e. one people – one Church). Following their arrival in 1597, the Jesuits assumed responsibility for the provision of *education* which was instrumental in bringing the sheep back into the fold.

The Counter-Reformation across Slovenian territories was far less brutal than it was in Bohemia, for example; nevertheless, the coercion wrought by Ferdinand II's general patent, organised book burnings, the demolition of Protestant buildings and desecration of graveyards, together with forcible conversions and the actual persecution of Protestants, left traces of (new) resentments and grievances against the established Church, in the light of which it is possible to more easily understand the anti-clerical inclinations that were to prevail in later eras.

Protected under the 1606 Treaty of Vienna, the Reformation only remained in the extreme north-eastern portion of ethnic Slovenian territories which were subject to the Hungarian crown.[4] Lutheranism was also preserved in the form of crypto-Protestantism in some highland areas of the country. A number of 19th century Slovenian authors wrote with nostalgic remorse about this lost historical opportunity, and even referred to that period as a time when the better half of Slovenians were repressed[5]. Contemporary debate also addresses whether sociological aspects of Protestantism survive today, namely as residual values, such as individualism and work ethic. In any case, it is possible to affirm that religious monism in a hermetic absolute sense proved impossible: whilst it won recognition in the public and visible level of social interaction, it failed to do so in its entirety at the level of human intimacy.

Like in other parts of Europe subject to the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*, there followed a long period of confessionalisation across Slovenian lands in an effort to firmly establish and consolidate the Catholic faith. One cannot claim, however, that this process led to absolute religious uniformity. This politically dependent realm, a people without indigenous aristocracy or middle classes, was both culturally and intellectually decidedly dominated by the Catholic clergy; within such a milieu, religious scepticism, distrust of clerics or the derision of piety were nevertheless present. This was further buttressed by the gradual emergence of a class of secular intellectuals, free-thinking liberal-minded men of letters, who in many respects ultimately assumed the role of national leaders.

From here on the question regarding the presence or absence of religious pluralism and its social effects among Slovenians can be appropriately

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[4] *Today's community of some 20,000 Slovenian Lutherans is thus a consequence of historical circumstances.*

[5] *Such as in the play Hlapci (Serfs), by the writer, essayist, poet and political activist Ivan Cankar (1876–1918), regarded as the greatest ever writer in the Slovenian language.*

contextualised in the theory of secularisation and western civilisation developed three decades ago by the British sociologist David Martin (Martin, 1978). If one distinguishes between American, British, Scandinavian-Lutheran, mixed i.e. dual, Orthodox and Latin (Catholic) religio-cultural patterns, then historically Slovenians clearly belong to the latter, characterised by the pre-eminence of the Roman Catholic Church. The experience of Slovenians was thus essentially different from that of Germans, who belonged to a dual – i.e. mixed – pattern, and Finns, whose history occurred within the context of a special variant of the Scandinavian-Lutheran pattern.

According to Martin, a central characteristic of the Latin pattern from the Age of Enlightenment onwards is a pronounced social polarisation of pro-clerical and anti-clerical social forces. In addition to religious structure, the polarisation and its intensity were significantly determined by the character of the Church, namely its tendency to integrism – i.e. its dominance over all public/social life, which retarded secularisation at the societal level. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, such polarisation among Slovenians became manifest and gained expression as an aggravated political and spiritual division between anti-clerical liberals on one side, and formal Catholics and pro-Church clericals on the other. While the former strove for the creation of a social order in which the Church had a less significant role, the latter explicitly insisted that politics, art, education, the economy, philosophy and science, be subordinate to the paramount idea of Catholicism.

Following dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of the First World War, this was the legacy that in 1918 the Slovenians brought into a new political formation of Southern Slavs, which from 1929 onwards became the Kingdom of Yugoslavia[6]. The new multi-ethnic and multi-religious state, dominated by Orthodox Serbs, did not jeopardise the majority status or ideological monopoly enjoyed by the Catholic Church across those ethnic Slovenian lands that were encompassed by the new kingdom[7], so its religious structure remained unaltered. The 1921 and 1931 census both determined a Catholic majority (97%) and the weak presence of six other religious communities: Protestants (Slovenian and German Lutherans and Reformed Churches) accounted for a little over 2%, while other religious communities – Orthodox, Muslims, Greek-Catholics and Jews – together accounted for less than 1% of the total population (see Table 1).

[6] *The State of Slovenians, Croats and Serbs was formed in October 1918; it joined with the Kingdom of Serbia to form the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians in December 1918, which changed its name to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in January 1929.*

[7] *At the end of the First World War, in accordance with the 1915 Treaty of London much of western Slovenian territory was ceded to Italy, as was Istria and a number of Dalmatian islands. By way of new borders, ethnic Slovenians also found themselves living within the new republics of Hungary and Austria; all in all, some 350,000 Slovenians were then living outside the new state (Prunk, 1996: 119).*

The approaching Second World War further reinforced some aspects of the Latin polarisation: papal encyclicals such as *Quadragesimo anno* and *Divini redemptoris,* unresolved social issues in Yugoslavia where dictatorship had been introduced in 1929, together with echoes of the Spanish Civil War, all contributed to an intensification of radical right- and left-wing ideologies. Following the invasion of Yugoslavia by the Axis powers in 1941, and the country's dismemberment, Slovenian ethnic territory was divided between Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and its ally – in search of territory lost to it after the First World War – Hungary. Civil conflict erupted, which for the large part occurred along the lines of traditional pro-clerical – anti-clerical polarisation. The so-called Province of Ljubljana was particularly affected; occupied and annexed by Fascist Italy following the invasion, conservative social forces, steered by the Ljubljana diocese confronted the ideologically heterogeneous Liberation Front, a resistance movement in which the leading role had gradually been taken over by the Communists. While the former slid into some compromising forms of collaboration with the forces of occupation,[8] the latter increasingly associated their fight for liberation with ideas of a post-war assumption of power and social revolution.

The political transformations which occurred at the end of the Second World War, and the creation of a new socialist Yugoslavia within the new European *cuius regio, eius religio* determined at Yalta in February 1945, might well be considered the realisation of those possibilities David Martin attributes to the Latin (and in part the Orthodox) pattern: Given suitable historical circumstances, polarisation can develop into a conflict of vicious dimensions. Such a confrontation may, according to Martin, result in either a strengthened rightist pro-Church authoritarian regime or a leftist anti-clerical authoritarian regime. Precipitated by the Second World War, the second option prevailed in Slovenia and with it a conflict pattern of social secularisation was established. In the atmosphere of brutal post-war retaliations carried out by the victors against their adversaries[9] together with the mutual loathing which existed between the Roman Catholic Church and Yugoslavia's new Communist authorities, the separation of church and state then introduced could not be considered neutral.

[8] *Most notably in the creation of the pro-Catholic anti-Communist Axis-collaborationist militias known as the Bela Garda (White Guard) and later the Slovensko Domobranstvo (Slovenian Home Guard) which acted as auxiliaries to, respectively, the Italian and German forces of occupation in their actions against the partisans. Under the patronage of the Ljubljana diocese and in the heart of the Slovenian capital, the Home Guard corps made two public pledges to Adolf Hitler – in April 1944 and again in April 1945.*

[9] *Slovenian territory witnessed some of the last fighting in Europe at the end of the Second World War; it was also the scene of mass post-war killings, reprisals for wartime collaboration. In June 1945 some 12,000 members of the Home Guard corps were victims of extrajudicial killings (Pirjevec, 2008: 160).*

Secularisation introduced at the societal level was ambivalent (Kerševan, 1993) and while the Communist authorities fervently went about abolishing the plethora a privileges that had historically been enjoyed by the Catholic Church, they enforced their own ideological monopoly vindicated on the basis of an assortment of inviolable absolute secular values; indeed, much the same as integrism. From the perspective of the sociology of religion, the new regime was not without religious qualities: the very ideology of Yugoslav Socialism can, therefore, to a certain extent be addressed within a discussion of civil i.e. secular religion (see Smrke, 1990; Flere, 2007)[10]. The coexistence of Catholicism, pushed to the margins of the social milieu but nevertheless an experience shared by the majority of Slovenians, and such a secular or civil religion as Yugoslav Socialism, is thus indicative of religious dualism.

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed some significant changes: 1) in religious structure; 2) in the character of the Catholic Church; and 3) in the attitude of the Communist authorities towards religion, all of which created conditions that facilitated the development of a post-Latin religious cultural pattern. Such a pattern does not generate (pro)clerical – anti-clerical antagonisms of such intensity as characterised the (basic) Latin pattern (see Martin, 1990). The erstwhile conflict relationship that existed between the state and the Catholic Church gradually evolved into one of compromise (Roter, 1976: 281). The key structural changes determining the post-Latin pattern included: 1) a gradual decline in the numbers of formal believers and members of the Church – a consequence of secularisation[11] or religious conversion in the context of the emergence of other faiths; and 2) the internal diversification of nominal Catholics – following the Second Vatican Council they discernibly divided into a minority of traditionalist-conservatives and an increasing majority of more-or-less selectively or autonomously religious. The key conceptual or ideological changes pertained to: 1) the Second Vatican Council, which accepted the separation of the Church and state and relinquished the concept of integrism; and 2) the development of a more lenient attitude towards religion and the churches by the Communist Party.[12]

[10] In this regard, David Martin draws attention to the fact that the anti-clerical side may become a mirror image of its opponent, particularly when it is attached to a single ideology, e.g. Marxism, in which case the ideology might assume the doctrinal character of a secular religion.

[11] The Slovenian Public Opinion Poll indicates that the decade 1968 to 1978 was marked by intensive secularisation (of Catholics); the percentage of people identifying themselves as "religious" fell from 67.8% in 1968 to 45.3% in 1978, whilst the share attending Sunday mass dropped from 21.7% to 11.8%. The period of de-secularisation that was to follow did not restore the previous status.

[12] It is hard to imagine the March 1971 meeting between Pope Paul VI and the Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito without the appropriate conceptual adjustments having been made by both sides – on the part of the Roman Catholic Church in relation to socialist regimes, and on the part of the Communist Party in relation to religion.

In an atmosphere of détente between these two longstanding antagonists, space for religious alternatives gradually opened up in Slovenia. By the end of the 1980s, 15 officially recognised religious communities existed within the country, a number of which did not gain, and would never have gained, recognition in any of the previous incarnations of the state. At the same time, around twice as many religious-spiritual groups actively existed without any official status or sanction (see Table 4). In this respect, as a constituent republic of the socialist federal state, Slovenia was not far behind Western European trends. After it dramatically severed its ties with the Soviet Union in 1948, Yugoslavia became relatively open to flows of ideas and concepts which did not emanate from the Communist bloc[13]. Migrations from other Yugoslav republics increased the numbers of adherents to some other faiths – above all Muslims and Orthodox Christians, but neither accounted for more than 2% of the total population of Slovenia. Yugoslavia's socialist civil religion was strengthened immediately after the death of Yugoslavia's president-for-life Josip Broz Tito in 1980, but this was then followed by a prolonged period of dissolution of the regime's hold over society, and commensurate with this was a rise in the expression of religiosity, particularly amongst Slovenians.

Additional expressions of religious pluralism occurred upon Slovenia's independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, and the introduction of a multi-party democracy. The number of registered religious communities rose to 43, while dozens remained unregistered. At the same time, the Catholic Church demonstrated some tendencies to try and regain its former position and maintain a cultural hegemony; nevertheless, it failed. A variety of New Age phenomena largely attract a portion of the nominally Catholic population, as well as many opinion-makers. The impression is that to a certain extent Slovenia is also undergoing *Easternisation*, as defined by Campbell (2007).

In contrast to the 100-year-old tradition of Catholic monoconfessionality – interrupted only by the culturally prolific yet ultimately suppressed period of (Lutheran) Reformation as well as the Socialist era which followed the Second World War and deprived the Catholic Church of its pre-eminent role in society – modern-day Slovenians enjoy religious plurality. From a sociological perspective, the internal heterogeneity of Catholics is particularly important.

[13] It is important to note that, unlike those of the Warsaw Pact states, Yugoslavia's borders were open. It is historically erroneous to present Yugoslavia as part of the former Soviet sphere of influence.

From religious monopoly to pluralisation: The legal framework

Prior to 1945 Slovenians lived in a land in which there was a state Church. Roman Catholicism initially enjoyed this status during the era of the Holy Roman Empire. It continued throughout the Habsburg era, which ended in the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of the First World War. Also in the inter-war Yugoslavia, the Catholic Church remained at the fore, with its pre-eminence only being brought to an end by the outcome of the Second World War.

During the Habsburg rule, and later under the terms of the compromise of the Dual Monarchy, the rigid monopolistic conditions introduced by the Counter-Reformation were only loosened gradually. Baroque rigidity in these lands was interrupted solely by the Josephinian reforms (undertaken by Emperor Joseph II, 1741–1790). The 1781 *Patent of Toleration* allowed Protestant and Orthodox Christians *exercitium religionis privatum,* providing them with a guarantee of freedom of worship in private, as well as the building of churches that lacked external signs of such, i.e. belfries, bells and street entrances; Joseph's 1782 *Edict of Tolerance* similarly granted Jews a degree of religious freedom. The Catholic Church opposed both statutes, claiming they encroached upon its natural and divine rights. With regard to Slovenian lands, both laws only concerned a small portion of the population living in the far north-east of its ethnic territories. More germane to the majority of Slovenians were Joseph II's measures which curtailed the power and authority of the Church and – in the spirit of Josephinian encouragement of simplicity, utility and frugality – dissolved many of the monasteries. His reorganisation of dioceses, initiated by Count Johann Carl Herberstein, Bishop of Ljubljana, was also important in that the territory of the Ljubljana diocese then corresponded to that of the Duchy of Carniola.

Rome's resistance to the Josephinian reforms culminated in the signing of a Concordat between Pope Pius IX and Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I in 1855, leading to the restoration of a considerable portion of the Catholic Church's privileges. However, Franz Joseph's reign was also marked by some successes of the (anti-clerical) liberals: The 1861 Protestant patent brought both the Lutheran and Reformed Churches a step closer to equality of rights with the Catholic Church, particularly as the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 guaranteed religious equality in its Constitution. The obvious contrariety of this constitutional provision with the 1855 Concordat was only partly resolved: although the Concordat remained, some of its provisions were stricken by way of the so-called religious belief laws (1868). Indeed, the liberals forced through a series of anti-clerical laws in 1868 which brought both secular education and civil marriage under the control of the state, further chipping away at the tenets of the 1855 Concordat. In

1870, the First Vatican Council formally defined the doctrine of papal infallibility, as well as introduced new unacceptable meanings to the Concordat and thus it was henceforth declared void in its entirety; its annulment, however, did not end the legal arrangement under which Catholicism remained the state religion.

The constitutional order introduced in 1918 by the State of Slovenians, Croats and Serbs, and inherited by its successors, namely the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians and then, in 1929, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, essentially preserved the status enjoyed by majority religions in each of the constituent provinces; the Roman Catholic Church thus preserved its status of a state church among Croats and Slovenians[14], while the Serbian Orthodox Church preserved its status of a state church among Serbs, Montenegrins and Macedonians. The 1921 Constitution did not proclaim the separation of state and religion, and the new order recognised a selection of churches which operated legally. The Serbian Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches enjoyed especial privileges in their innate regions, but the Greek Catholic Church, Old Catholic Church, Lutheran Church, Reformed Churches, Baptists, Methodists, Church of the Nazarene, as well as Islam and Judaism were also recognised. Other religions, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, were proscribed. The free churches were in an inferior position to Islam, Judaism and the Lutheran and Reformed Churches as they were not permitted to perform weddings or undertake funerals. The Yugoslav Constitutions introduced in 1929 and 1931 did not introduce any significant changes in this area (Mojzes, 1992: 341).

With a nominal 97% adherence to the Catholic faith (see Table 1), the differences in the treatment of the various other churches hardly concerned Slovenians. At the same time, the privileged position enjoyed by the Catholic Church was a key determinant in the compelling triple pressure exerted by the church, state and (local) community to ensure conformity in ideas and beliefs. The exceptional atheist or non-adherent was a second-class citizen[15]. There was the overriding perception that »a Slovenian is a Catholic«, thus the power and authority enjoyed by the clergy in public and social spheres, which encompassed both politics and education, engendered a most restrictive milieu which was most poignantly felt by the country's liberal intelligentsia. Accordingly, demands for the disestablishment of the state and (Catholic) Church were thus not uncommon during the inter-war period and were even expressed by some critical clerics such as Janez Evangelist Krek.

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[14] Slovenians who, following the First World War, found themselves within the republics of Italy and Austria, also lived in conditions of a state church (see footnote 10).

[15] According to Kušej, "Citizens without faith commonly experienced rejection and social inconvenience, particular if they did not espouse any of the recognised faiths or if they publicly expounded their atheist ideology; adherence to an accepted faith was considered normal and the whole legal order was integral to this" (Kušej, 1972: 100–101).

Upon the Axis powers' invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941, the lion's share of Slovenian ethnic territory was divided between the Kingdom of Italy and the Third Reich (Greater Germany), while a smaller portion of the north-eastern part was occupied by Hungary. Wartime religious life across the territories was regulated by way of 1929 Lateran Treaty (in areas subjugated by Italy), and the *1933 Reichskonkordat* in areas annexed by the Third Reich. Both vested the Roman Catholic Church with the specific role of the state church. The independent Slovenian authorities, which had developed within the context of the so-called national liberation struggle attempting to oust the invaders, were unable to determine a definitive attitude towards religion and the established Church. Curates and religious commissions operating in the context of the liberation struggle were in opposition to the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church which vehemently opposed the (communist) Partisan movement.

The first post-Second World War Constitution in 1946 introduced the separation of state and religion. It proclaimed the freedom of religion and equality of all citizens, regardless of their faith. It also prohibited the exploitation of religion for political purposes – and this was in direct response to the actual internecine exploitation of religion during the Second World War, in particular with regard to the violence precipitated between (Catholic) Croats and (Orthodox) Serbs. Confessional religious classes in state schools were elective and thus no longer compulsory. As a consequence of agrarian reform, the Catholic Church was stripped of its large landholdings, including the Freising estates bestowed in 1004. The position of religion in society, and moreover the separation of church and state, was not only dictated from the perspective of the ruling Communist Party, but was also necessitated by the hatred that had carried over from the war, something that had been far from overcome. In the immediate years following the Second World War dozens of Slovenian Catholic priests were sentenced to prison terms; four were condemned to death.

By the beginning of the 1950s, relations between the state and the Catholic Church had become particularly strained. This strife culminated in the separation of the Faculty of Theology from the University, the total abolition of confessional religious education in state schools in 1952[16], and the proscription of religious teachers from the teaching profession. From then on, confessional religious education took place in the confines of the rectory, and at that time and later they were attended by roughly three-quarters of all children.

[16] *The arguments employed by the Church to preserve confessional religious education in schools were often quite weak and, upon occasions, even scandalous. An October 1945 diary entry of the poet and politician Edvard Kocbek, a pre-eminent Slovenian Christian Socialist and post-war dissident, reads, "I was horrified at the mind-set of our bishops, when I heard what motif he (Nikola Dobrečić, Catholic Archbishop of Bar) was going to use to convince Tito to allow religious education: "The fear of God is the best fear in which to keep your people. If they are afraid of God, they will be afraid of you too..." (Kocbek, 1991: 71).*

Frequent revisions of legislation and Constitutions followed: the 1953 Primary Act on the Legal Status of Religious Communities; the 1963 Constitution; in 1965 there was a new Act on the Status of Religious Communities, and in 1974 another Constitution, followed by yet another Act on the Legal Status of Religious Communities in 1976. The latter two were the final pieces of socialist legislation governing this field. All of these laws and constitutions reiterated the freedom of religion and separation of state and church; however, the restrictions were explicit: Churches could only found schools for the education of clergy, and only possess property intended for religious purposes in the narrowest sense, while the registration of all religious communities became mandatory. Although this legal order was considered the most liberal in the communist world (Mojzes, 1992: 364), it was nevertheless possible to observe that the activities of churches were severely restricted, and that those wishing to openly express their faith became, in many respects, second-class citizens. It was membership of the Communist Party, later renamed the League of Communists, that then facilitated social promotion; membership was – at least from the Party's perspective – incompatible with religious belief, and this status quo continued until the mid-1980s. While religious ceremonies and holidays were not actively hindered, they had become virtually invisible by the 1980s. Public articulation – by the clergy, theologians or the lay public – of opinions that were unacceptable from the perspective of the socialist authorities led, in a number of instances, to surveillance by the security service and imprisonment on the basis of »anti-state activities«. Conscientious objectors – who were for the most part Jehovah's Witnesses – also tended to end up in confinement.

Following the country's secession from federal Yugoslavia, the 1991 Constitution of the newly independent Slovenia stipulated the freedom of religion and the continued separation of church and state. Certain provisions of the 1976 Act on Religious Communities were repealed, churches were granted the right to establish schools, and the (Catholic) Faculty of Theology was reintegrated into the University of Ljubljana. The 1998 Denationalisation Act and the return of property confiscated after the Second World War – including the former Freising estates – again made the Catholic Church a sizeable land owner; such restitution was not carried out without protest, nor did it add to the Catholic Church's social reputation in the eyes of a critical public. Slovenia's 2001 Agreement with the Holy See envisaged no re-establishment of a state church[17] but formalised the existing legal relations between the state and the Catholic Church. Catholic affirmation of the drive

[17] Slovenia's Constitutional Court deemed that the Agreement was not contrary to the Constitution, providing that it was interpreted in a manner whereby the Catholic Church was subject to the legal order of the Republic of Slovenia; the principle of the separation of church and state would thus be upheld.

towards Slovenian independence came in 1983 with a regional conference of Slovenian Bishops within the context of the Yugoslav conference, and in 1993 with the creation of a fully autonomous conference of Slovenian Bishops.

Although the Catholic Church anticipated the reintroduction of confessional religious education into state education, the principle of disestablishment prevailed and accordingly confessional religious education in public (state) schools was not permitted.[18] However, an elective class entitled Religions and Ethics was introduced in the context of the final three years of the nine-year primary public/state school education programme (Smrke and Rakar, 2006).

In 2007 Slovenia's parliament passed a (new) Religious Freedom Act[19] with a majority of a single vote (46/90). Article 4 of the Act proclaims the neutrality of the state in matters of religion, yet in the same breath it introduces a formal differentiation between churches and other religious communities in the context of Slovenian legal order; Article 5 defines churches and religious communities as »organisations of general benefit«. Numerous forms of state financial support for religious activities, mostly in the context of so-called closed institutions, derive from this definition within the Act. This is all supposedly in accordance with the cordial separation of religion and the state as advocated by the political right. Dissimilarity in the sizes of the various churches active in Slovenia, which is itself a consequence of the centuries of Catholic pre-eminence, ensures that such funding applies almost exclusively to the Roman Catholic Church[20]. It is mostly Catholic priests for which the state pays social security and health insurance contributions[21], and who in numerous situations now act as civil servants.[22]

Article 29 of the 2007 Religious Freedom Act stipulates additional possibilities of state funding for religious communities, without clearly defining the terms, conditions or restrictions. The conditions required for registering a religious community are most significant and revealing since they are also

[18] Confessional religious classes currently take place in one Catholic primary school and four Catholic grammar schools in Slovenia, and the state finances the majority of the curricula taught at these schools.

[19] One Slovenian religious community, the Dharmaling Buddhist Congregation, drafted an alternative bill based on the strict separation of church and state. It even managed to initiate a parliamentary process through an opposition member Aleš Gulič; the government, however, ultimately curtailed proceedings in relation to this draft proposal.

[20] According to the Act, financial support is provided in relation to, and at the ratio of, one priest per thousand believers; thus most religious communities automatically fail to qualify and fail to benefit.

[21] Social security contributions were already partly paid by the former socialist federal state and by the Republic of Slovenia prior to adoption of the new Act. By way of this legislation, however, the portion paid by the state has increased and, most importantly, the maximum amount is not strictly set.

[22] It has been noted that the Catholic Church increasingly engages in proselytistic activities within bodies such as the Slovenian police and army.

more restrictive than the conditions laid down by the rejected liberal draft (see footnote 22) and even more restrictive than the criteria stipulated by the erstwhile socialist legislation of 1976. In order to be registered, a religious community has to have been active in Slovenia for at least 10 years and must have at least 100 adult members. Had these same criteria been applied at the time of their registration, more than half of today's registered religious communities would not have met the conditions.[23] The impression is that the Act allows the former monopolist purveyor of faith (the Roman Catholic Church) to regain at least some of its lost privileges.[24]

In conclusion: In contradistinction to the centuries-long tradition of a state church, albeit interrupted by the Reformation and most recently post-war socialism – with the latter introducing the separation of church and state through the exclusion of religion from public life – the independent Slovenia maintains a degree of separation of church and state; yet its laws incorporate some elements of bias in favour of the Roman Catholic Church.

Religious situation in figures

With two million inhabitants, Slovenia ranks among Europe's smaller states. Censuses[25] from 1921 to 2002 reveal the pronounced prevalence of Catholicism among the population. The proportion of self-proclaimed Catholics has dropped since the Second World War (see Table 1). The most recent census (2002) reveals that less than half of those living in urban environments – namely 46.9% – are avowedly Catholic.[26] The shares are higher

[23] Considering he was only active for three years, and had just twelve disciples, it is not without irony that Jesus Christ would not have been eligible to register in accordance with these criteria.

[24] It could be argued that the 2007 Religious Freedom Act would fail elementary tests of disestablishment conformity as are recognised in the United States, for example, which incidentally has the longest tradition of such separation. At the time of writing this article, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia has yet to deliver its verdict on whether this legislation contravenes any provisions of the Slovenian Constitution.

[25] Census data on religious adherence were collected in 1921, 1931, 1953, 1991 and 2002 (in 1991 and 2002 the question on religious adherence was subsequently included following much discussion and polemics; in 2002 the admissibility of the question was addressed by the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia). Censuses in the socialist era – 1948, 1961, 1971 and 1981 – did not survey religious adherence. In 2002 it was decided that the question regarding religion would not be included in future census questionnaires.

[26] Comparing the data is difficult because the modalities of questions and answers differ from census to census. When interpreting these statistics one must consider changes in the territory encompassed by an individual census as well as a number of other factors (see Šircelj, 2003: 69). The 1921 and 1931 censuses were carried out in conditions where only some larger, traditional religious communities were officially recognised, while the activities of all the others was made either difficult or impossible. Likewise, the results of the 1953 census were impacted by the existing socio-political context in which any public expression of faith by an individual may have proven detrimental in the context of a system averse to religion; yet it was nevertheless compulsory to answer the pertinent census question. Another specific of the 1953 census was

among ethnic Slovenians, who comprise 83 % of population, as are the numbers of baptised Catholics.[27]

The second largest denominations are Orthodox Christians (45,908 adherents according to the 2002 census) and Muslims (47,488), each making up just over 2 % of the total population, and their adherents are, respectively, almost exclusively Serbs and Bosniaks. The Muslim community had notably increased over the previous decade (up from 29,361 in 1991), and this may be attributed to the disappearance of Yugoslav identity (following the disintegration of Yugoslavia), the pronounced de-secularisation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and – most of all – to the inward migration of refugees fleeing the war in Bosnia. Muslims living in Slovenia have still not been granted permission to build a mosque, although they have been striving for one for some 40 years. In lieu of legal impediments to the construction of a mosque, there have always existed administrative hindrances. The impression is that in the post-socialist era the mosque issue triggers explicit expressions of Slovenian Islamophobia (Dragoš, 2004).

Table 1: POPULATION OF SLOVENIA BY RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION, FROM 1921–2002 CENSUSES

Faith	1921	1931	1953	1991	2002
Catholic	96.6	97.0	82.8	71.6	57.8
Protestant	2.6	2.3	1.5	0.9	0.8
Orthodox	0.6	0.6	0.3	2.4	2.3
Muslim	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.5	2.4
Other religions	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.2
Believer, but adheres to no religion (non-adherent believer)	0.0	–	0.1	0.2	3.5
Non-believer, atheist	–	0.0	10.3	4.4	10.2
Refused to answer	–	–	–	4.3	15.7
Unknown	–	0.0	4.9	14.6	7.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

As regards the non-religious proportion of the population, the 2002 census uncritically equates religious adherence and belief and accordingly underestimates the percentage of those deemed non-religious. This is clear

that it did not survey religious adherence directly, rather it surveyed a personal attitude towards religion. Religious adherence was then surveyed through an additional question posed only to the self-proclaimed religious respondents (see Šircelj, 2003: 28). The 1991 and 2002 censuses in Slovenia took place in conditions of the formal separation of church and state and the constitutionally guaranteed equality of religious communities; the 2002 census explicitly permitted an individual to autonomously decide whether or not to answer questions regarding religious (as well as national) adherence.

[27] *According to data provided by the Catholic Church, 81.5 % of Slovenian citizens have been baptised (Potočnik, 2001: 203).*

from comparisons between the census and public opinion polls where the share of self-proclaimed non-believers stands at some 40 %. At the same time, the census takes into consideration believers who are not adherents – their numbers rose from 3,929 in 1991 to 68,714 in 2002.

From its beginnings in 1968, the Slovenian Public Opinion Poll survey has included religious variables which allow evaluations of the deeper dimensions of belief. Despite a number of oscillations and even a period of de-secularisation at the conscious level during the 1980s and early 1990s, it is clear that today only a minority of self-proclaimed Catholics are religious in the manner prescribed by the Church. Only one-third of nominal Catholics in Slovenia declare belief in fundamental Christian dogma (personal God, Resurrection, hell, heaven, eternal life), and the majority of these even express disagreement with a series of behavioural norms – such as the prohibition on contraception, premarital sex and abortion – which are imposed by the Catholic Church. According to Niko Toš (Toš, 1999b: 72), only 18.7 % of Slovenians are religious in such an entire and complete sense while, according to Sergej Flere and Rudi Klanjšek (Flere & Klanjšek, 2007), a certain hollowness is generally characteristic of the belief of Slovenian Catholics[28], and such is a pronounced version of a wider European phenomenon of *belonging, not believing*.[29]

In tandem with a loosening of Catholic identity, the number of new religious communities has increased over recent decades; while seven were officially registered before the Second World War, nine in the 1970s, and fifteen at the end of the 1980s, Slovenia's Office for Religious Communities today states there are forty-three.

Table 2: REGISTERED CHURCHES AND OTHER RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA (2010)

No.	Name	Year of entry on the list of religious communities
1	Catholic Church	1976
2	Evangelical Church in the Republic of Slovenia	1976
3	Jewish Community of Slovenia	1976
4	Union of Baptist Churches in the Republic of Slovenia	1976
5	Serbian Orthodox Church Metropolitanate of Zagreb and Ljubljana	1976

[28] *According to Flere, in comparison to some other countries, a quite considerable portion of Slovenian believers who are nominally Catholic are relatively unwilling to make much of a sacrifice for their religion.*

[29] *Conversely, adherents to some smaller religious communities display incomparably higher levels of orthodoxy in their beliefs and the way they lead their everyday lives, with members of the Society for Krishna Consciousness being the most thoroughly researched example (see Črnič, 2009).*

No.	Name	Year of entry on the list of religi-ous communities
6	Islamic Community in the Republic of Slovenia	1976
7	The Pentecostal Church in the Republic of Slovenia	1976
8	Seventh-Day Adventist Church	1976
9	Jehovah's Witnesses – Christian Religious Community	1976
10	Christian Brethren Assembly	1981
11	The New Apostolic Church of Slovenia	1982
12	The Free Church in the Republic of Slovenia	1983
13	Society for Krishna Consciousness	1983
14	Liberal Catholic Church	1984
15	Lectorium Rosicrucianum – The International School of the Golden Rosycross	1987
16	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	1991
17	Universal Life	1991
18	Unification Church	1991
19	Baha'i Community of Slovenia	1992
20	The Ordo Templi Orientis	1992
21	Reformation Christian Church of Slovenia	1993
22	The Shri Radhakunda – Community for Shri Gauranga Consciousness	1994
23	Macedonian Orthodox Community in the Republic of Slovenia "Saint Clement of Ohrid"	1994
24	Buddha Dharma Union of Buddhists in the Republic of Slovenia	1995
25	Church of Scientology	1995
26	The Church of Jesus Christ "Living Water"	1995
27	New Generation Christian Centre	1995
28	The Evangelical Baptist Community	1997
29	International Christian Fellowship	1997
30	The White Gnostic Church	
31	Sacrament of Transition	1999
32	Christian Church Kalvarija	2003
33	Buddhist Congregation Dharmaling	2003
34	Hindu Religious Community in Slovenia	2003
35	Christian Outreach Centre Ljubljana	2003
36	The Universal Religious Community of the Rising Sun	2003
37	Raelian Religion in Slovenia	2004
38	Church of New Covenant – Slovenia	2004
39	The Holy Church Annasann	2004
40	The Reformed Evangelical Church	2004
41	The Muslim Community of Slovenia	2006
42	New Life Church	2006
43	Orisha Spiritual Community – Energies of Nature	2007

Source: Office RS for Religious Communities (http://www.mizks.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/urad_za_verske_skupnosti/register_cerkva_in_drugih_verskih_skupnosti/)

Of the 43 registered religious communities, more than three-quarters may be regarded as new religious movements (NRMs), among which some are more controversial such as the Scientologists, Unification Church, International Society for Krishna Consciousness (Hare Krishna movement) and the Raelians. Moreover, there are also numerous NRMs that are not formally registered as religious communities, but which are active as legal entities of a different type (see Table 3). The most widespread form of legal entity in private law in Slovenia is an association, and quite a few NRMs are registered as such.[30] Some NRMs also operate as interest groups without any formal organisation because they see no advantage in obtaining a legal status or perhaps – unlike sociologists – they do not consider their activities to be religious. For this reason, we can presume that the actual number of NRMs is considerably higher than officially recorded and/or otherwise perceived by the public. Further, according to research into new religious and spiritual movements in Slovenia (see Črnič and Lesjak, 2006; as well as www.religije.info)[31] there are an estimated 70 to 100 NRMs operating in Slovenia.[32]

[30] Associations unite individuals with the same interests, regardless of their belief. According to the official register, over 19,200 associations were registered in Slovenia at the beginning of 2005 and, among these, almost 300 were classed in the administrative sub-category of "associations for spiritual dimensions of life".

[31] Between 2002 and 2006 semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of new religious groups in order to obtain information in relation to five thematic fields: 1) The sources and cultural background of each movement; 2) The timeframe and formal organisation of the movement; 3) Membership; 4) Material and financial dimensions; and 5) Relations with the wider community and society in general. 76 groups were detected and 61 interviews were conducted (some of the groups had ceased their activities). This is by no means a definitive list of new religious and spiritual movements in Slovenia, and the research project is designed in such a way that it will be permanent, entailing the systematic following of the emergence of any new groups.

[32] A few instances of specifically Slovenian religious and spiritual innovations are perceptible. Examples include a charismatic, magical and apocalyptic (Holy) Family led by an extraordinary young woman named Vesuel, who announced that she would give birth to a new Jesus; a unique apocalyptic branch of Ordo Templi Orientis known as the Holy Church of Annasann; as well as several Pentecostal communities, the most innovative of which is probably the Living Water Community. Some other groups should also be added, although their group identity might sometimes not be very clear or obvious: e.g. the Sacrament of Transition, which practices the ritual use of ibogaine – an allegedly holy drug – and the science of biocybernetics; there is also the VITAAA Association inspired by the work of the sculptor, geomancer and earth-healer Marko Pogačnik.

Table 3: FORMAL STATUS OF NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS OPERATING IN SLOVENIA IN 2010

Status	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Religious Community	31	50.8	51.7
Association	15	24.6	25.0
Business Association	2	3.3	3.3
Not Registered	12	19.7	20.0
Total	60	98.4	100.0
Missing data	1	1.6	
Total	61	100.0	

Table 4 below shows that a number of new religious groups emerged during the 1980s as the former political regime waned; however, most NRMs in Slovenia began their activities in the 1990s in the era of the newly-independent Slovenia. The implication is that the more intensive development of the new religious scene commenced in the liberal decade prior to Slovenia's independence, which is to some extent exceptional in Eastern Europe where the vast majority of NRMs only started operating after the fall of communism.

Table 4: FOUNDING OF NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN SLOVENIA

Period	Frequency	Percent
1905–1930	3	4.9
1931–1960	4	6.6
1961–1980	2	3.3
1981–1990	11	18.0
1991–2000	29	47.5
2000–	11	18.0
Missing data	1	1.6
Total	61	100.0

The largest sub-group of new religions in Slovenia comprises the Evangelical Christian Churches, while the nation's religious pluralism is further enhanced by the heirs to the charismatic Pentecostal movement. A further component of Slovenian society is made up of communities that belong to an older esoteric tradition – such as the Theosophical Movement, the Ordo Templi Orientis and Lectorium Rosicrucianum, and the International School of the Golden Rosycross – all of which never became integrated into mainstream culture.

Slovenia also hosts prophetic or redemptive religious groups that are in one way or another linked with Christianity, with examples being Universal Life and the Unification Church. The largest worldwide group of new

religions, marked by the introduction of some unfamiliar and exotic cultures into a new environment, is represented by several Hindu and Buddhist groups. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (the Hare Krishnas) and Soka Gakkai International are communities with the oldest standing in this category in Slovenia. All manner of varieties of radical religious innovation are also encompassed by the term NRM, such as, for example, the Church of Scientology and the Raelian Movement.

Table 5: TYPOLOGY OF THE NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

Sub-group	Frequency	Percent
Christian	24	39.3
Asian	18	29.5
Esoteric	8	13.1
Radical innovations	7	11.4
(Neo)pagan	2	3.3
New Age	2	3.3
Total	61	100.0

The predominantly urban nature of Slovenian NRMs is also very obvious – 85% are located in towns, and by far the biggest share is based in the capital of Slovenia, Ljubljana, which hosts 72% of the groups studied. Given that Catholicism is predominantly present in rural areas, one may conclude that the urban milieu is distinguished by a greater degree of secularisation, plurality and openness to religious novelty.

Research Area: Ljubljana

Encompassing Slovenia's capital, which is by far the largest city in Slovenia and the nation's most important commercial centre, Ljubljana is one of 26 municipalities in the Osrednjeslovenska statistical region[33]. It covers

[33] With a population density of 199.1 inhabitants per km² (2007), the Osrednjeslovenska (Central Slovenia) statistical region covers 2,555 km² (12.6% of state territory) and as such is the country's second largest. It also boasts the highest number of inhabitants: 508,607 in 2007, represents 25.1% of the entire population of Slovenia. Its favourable central position, excellent communications, centres of tertiary education, as well as important research, development and distribution sectors all serve to the region's advantage, while thanks to the capital this region is the most economically developed in the country, with a GDP per capita of EUR 22,286 in 2006, and accounting for a little over one-third of total GDP as well as three-quarters of the country's service sector. Average non-public sector income is also the highest in Slovenia (with net monthly incomes in 2007 exceeding the national monthly average by EUR 90). The percentage of those with a higher education in the 24 to 64 age group stood at 30.4% in 2007 (i.e. 8.2 percent above the national average and, as such, Slovenia's highest). The population is rising steadily as a consequence of immigration: population growth through migration was 9.0 per 1,000 population in 2007, which is higher than the Slovenian average (7.7); such a net growth in population is thus only surpassed in the country's coastal regions (in the Obalno-Kraška and Notranjsko-Kraška regions), but also as a consequence of a net

an area of 275 km^2, divided into 17 quarters; in 2008 it had 272,828 inhabitants (thus the average density was 992 persons per km^2). In 2008, 12.8% of the population was under 14 years, while 17.1% was aged over 65. The city is also growing rapidly: in 2008 the natural increase (births minus deaths) stood at 3.0 per 1,000 inhabitants, while the total increase – compounded by immigration – was 29.4 per 1,000 inhabitants. Indeed, in 2008 population growth as a consequence of net migration from/to abroad was 4.8 per 1,000 population, and there was a further 2.3 per 1,000 population as a consequence of internal migration within municipalities.

The current situation regarding religious pluralisation in Ljubljana is illustrated in the table below.

Table 6: RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN THE CITY OF LJUBLJANA

Religion	Members
1) Christianity	
1.1 Roman Catholic Church	104,219
1.1.1 Roman Catholic Orders	
Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul	66
1.1.1.2 Franciscan Missionaries of Mary	7
1.1.1.3 Claretian sisters	5
1.1.1.4 Sisters of Mary of the Miraculous Medal	63
1.1.1.5 Missionaries of Charity	4
1.1.1.6 Bruder, Schwestern und Familiaren von Deutschen Haus Sankt Mariens in Jerusalem	5
1.1.1.7 Ursulines	24
1.1.1.8 Sisters of the Holy Cross	2
1.1.1.9 School Sisters of Notre Dame	8
1.1.1.10 School Sisters of St. Francis of Christ the King	31
1.1.1.11 Institutum Figliarum Mariae Auxiliatricis	25

natural increase (1,549 i.e. 3.1 per 1,000 population in 2007). Registered unemployment stood at 5.9% in 2007.

Slovenia is divided into 12 statistical regions, including Osrednjeslovenska (Central Slovenia) and Goriška which forms the northern part of Primorska (Slovenia's Littoral), these being further divided into municipalities wielding local executive power. More established is the division of the country into eight historical and geographical regions, which do not entirely encompass or overlap the new statistical ones. These are: Primorska (the Littoral region) encompassing northern Istria the eastern Karst, the Vipava Valley and the Soča (Upper Isonzo) Valley: Primorska also includes much of Habsburg Austria's erstwhile Coastal Province and the eastern part of the former Habsburg county of Gőrz (Gorica/Gorizia), but not the city of Gorizia which, like Trieste and the westernmost portion of the Karst, is today part of Italy); Notranjska (Inner Carniola); Gorenjska (Upper Carniola); Dolenjska (Lower Carniola); Bela Krajina (White Carniola); Koroška (the easternmost quarter of the former Inner-Austrian province of Carinthia, the remainder forms Austrian Kärnten); Štajerska (the southernmost third of Styria – whereas the northernmost portions of the former Habsburg Inner-Austrian province form Austrian Styria, which is known as Steirmark); and Prekmurje (north-eastern Slovenia which, unlike the rest of the country, was part of the Kingdom of Hungary prior to 1918). Ljubljana is located in central Carniola, namely at the juncture of Gorenjska and Dolenjska.

Religion	Members
1.1.1.12 Franciscans of the Immaculate Conception	5
1.1.1.13 Society of Jesus – Jesuits	25
1.1.1.14 Capuchins	10
1.1.1.15 Order of the Teutonic Knights of St. Mary's Hospital of Jerusalem	3
1.1.1.16 Franciscans – Order of Friars Minor	35
1.1.1.17 Congregation of the Mission – Lazarists	11
1.1.1.18 Salesians	28
1.1.1.19 Minorites – Ordo Fratrum Minorum S. Francisi conventionalum	5
1.1.2 Roman Catholic Religious Communities	
1.1.2.1 Family of Christ Redeemer	12
1.1.2.2 Instituto Secolare Piccola Famiglia Franciscana	2
1.1.2.3 Emanuel Community	60–70
1.1.2.4 Opus Dei	20
1.1.2.5 Don Bosco Volunteers	-
1. 2 Protestant Churches	
1.2.1 **Lutheran Churches**	
1.2.1.1 Evangelical Church in the Republic of Slovenia	600
1.2.2 Pentecostal Churches	
1.2.2.1 Pentecostal Church of Ljubljana	100
1.2.2.2 House Church of Ljubljana	15
1.2.2.3 Christian Center Ljubljana	40
1.2.2.4 New Generation Christian Center	90
1.2.2.5 New Life Church	20
1.2.2.6 International Christian Fellowship	50
1.2.3 **Baptists**	
1.2.3.1 Christian Baptist Church – Word of Gospel, Ljubljana	40
1.2.4 **Other Protestant Churches** (Evangelicals, Adventists etc.)	
1.2.4.1 International Church of Ljubljana	20
1.2.4.2 Seventh-day Adventist Church	250
1.2.4.3 Calvary Chapel	10
1.2.4.4 Reformed Evangelical Church (formal links with the Church Missionary Society, Australia)	25
1.3 Orthodox Churches	
1.3.1 Serbian Orthodox Church Metropolitanate of Zagreb and Ljubljana	cca. 13,000
1.3.2 Macedonian Orthodox Community in the Republic of Slovenia "*Saint Clement of Ohrid*"	700
1.4 Other Churches	
1.4.1 The New Apostolic Church in Slovenia	15
1.4.2 Universal Life	80
1.4.3 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons)	200
1.4.4 Family International	15
1.4.5 Jehovah's Witnesses – Christian Religious Community	300
1.4.6 Unification Church	80
2) Judaism	
2.1 Jewish Community of Slovenia –Jewish Community of Ljubljana	70
3) Islam	

Religion	Members
3.1 Islamic Community in the Republic of Slovenia	cca. 13,000
3.2 The Muslim Community of Slovenia	50
4) Zoroastrianism	
5) Indian religions (or religions of Indian origin)	
5.1 Buddhism	
5.1.1 Buddhist Congregation Dharmaling	100
5.1.2 Palpung Ješe Čöling Slovenija – Karma Kagyu Dharma Society	10
5.1.3 Association of Theravada Buddhism Bhavana	20
5.1.4 Slovenian Buddhist Association Madyamika	40
5.1.5 Soka Gakkai International in Slovenia	60
5.1.6 Shambala Buddhism Group Ljubljana	10
5.1.7 Yeshe Khorlo Slovenia	10
5.1.8 Zen Group (Vita-zen)	10
5.2 Hinduism	
5.2.1 Hindu Religious Community in Slovenia	70
5.2.2 Society for Krishna Consciousness	150
5.3 Sikhism	
5.3.1 Elan Vital	30
5.3.2 Sant Mat – Science of Spirituality	10
5.4 Yoga (estimation of regular practitioners of yoga as a spiritual practice)	
5.4.1 Yoga in Daily Life	70
5.4.2 Esoteric School of Tantra 'Vama Marga' – Kriya Tantra Yoga	60
5.4.3 Namaste Society (Yoga studio Sadhana)	20
5.4.4 Satya Society	20
5.4.5 Sahaya Yoga	50
5.4.6 Suryashakti Yoga Center	10
5.5 Other	
5.5.1 The Art of Living	50
5.5.2 Transcendental Meditation – Ljubljana Transcendental Meditation Society	40
5.5.3 Sai Baba – Sathya Sai Baba Society for the Development of Human Values	50
5.5.4 Sri Chinmoj Centre	20
5.5.5 Osho Information Center	10
6) East Asian Religions	
6.1 Falun Dafa (Falun Gong)	10
6.2 Shen qi center for quality of life	20
7) Indigenous and Pagan Traditions	
8) Western Esoteric and New Age Groups	
8.1 Anthroposophy – Waldorf Movement	
8.1.1 Kortina Society	125
8.1.2 Sredina Society	25
8.2 Lectorium Rosicrucianum – The International School of the Golden Rosycross	80
8.3 Theosophical Movement in Slovenia	50
8.4 Ordo Templi Orientis	20
8.5 Lotos Society – Share International	30

Religion	Members
8.6 Ecclesia Gnostica Alba	10
8.7 VITAA – Society for the peaceful coexistence of man, nature and space	50
8.8 Free Catholic Church	8
9) Modern Western Cultures	
9.1 The Church of Holy Simplicity	5
9.2 Movement for Justice and Development	30
9.3 Church of Scientology	20
9.4 Raelian Religion in Slovenia	5
10) Other (new global/world religions)	
10.1 Baha'i Community of Slovenia	80

According to figures derived from the above table, some 38% of people registered as living in Ljubljana – Slovenia's largest urban agglomeration – adhere to the Roman Catholic faith, while other Christian churches embrace a mere 8% of the population; with Orthodox churches alone accounting for 7.3% of that 8%. Muslims account for some 4.8% of the total population of Ljubljana. The Orthodox and Muslim believers are mostly first- or second-generation immigrants from other former Yugoslav republics. Some 0.6% of the population adheres to one Eastern faith or another (emanating from the Indian subcontinent or East Asia), New Age movement or other religious communities (modern Western cultures). Among these, the highest representation is enjoyed by beliefs emanating from the Indian subcontinent (62%), with Buddhism in the leading place followed by Hinduism, and also encompassing practitioners of Yoga.

Research area: The Goriška region

The Goriška statistical region (also known as *Severna Primorska* – the Northern Littoral region) covers 2,325 km^2 (11.5% of state territory), and by area is the fourth largest such division of Slovenia. Lying in the far west of the country adjacent to the Italian Friuli (the provinces of Udine and Gorizia), the region has no coastline as such; its prominent geographical features include the Julian Alps (to the north) as well as the drainage basin of the Soča (upper Isonzo) River, together with the river systems of its tributaries the Idrijca and Vipava (the Vipava Valley).[34]

[34] The region borders Osrednjeslovenska (Central Slovenia) to the east, Obalno-Kraška to the south, and Gorenjska to the northwest. It is also bounded by Mt Triglav (the country's highest peak) as well as other summits of the Julian Alps, the Karst highlands, the hills of Notranjska and Italy's Friuli-Venezia Giulia region. This area's political history is an interesting one, while its disparate topography (from high Alps to the Mediterranean plain) and climate have resulted in a diversity of farming as well as cultural and economic development.

This statistical region is further subdivided into four administrative units (Ajdovščina, Idrija, Nova Gorica and Tolmin), whilst local government remains the responsibility of 13 municipalities.[35] The relatively poor communications and lack of homogeneity of this frontier territory has led to the development of sub-regional centres; indeed, the main town of Nova Gorica (accounting for some 27% of the region's population) is a new one, and lies adjacent to the old city of Gorizia, which is today in Italy. Given its large swathe of Alpine highlands, Goriška has a low average population density (51.8 per km^2 in 2007), although Nova Gorica and the Vipava Valley are very much an exception. In 2007, Goriška had 120,329 inhabitants (i.e. the region accounted for 5.9% of the total of Slovenia) and a population declining at a rate of some 0.5% per annum.[36]

Although the overall population numbers have remained fairly stable in recent years, rural upland areas – especially the most remote ones – have suffered from depopulation, and this has been a large and seemingly insoluble problem for decades. At the same time, longevity (the average lifespan across the littoral region is the country's highest) and the large numbers of young people moving away to major urban centres in search of employment have caused the share of elderly persons there to rise. The share of the population aged 0–14 is declining (13.3% in 2007), while the share of those aged 65 and over is rising (17.9% in 2007) and is the highest in the country. The net migration rate (i.e. immigration minus emigration in the region) was 0.15% in 2008, while the share of non-native inhabitants is slightly above the Slovenian average (3.7% in 2007).

The present situation regarding religious pluralisation in the Goriška region is illustrated in the table below.

Table 7: RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN THE GORIŠKA STATISTICAL REGION

Religion	Members
1) Christianity	
1.1 Roman Catholic Church	70,201
1.1.1 Orders	
1.1.1.1. Congregation of the Sisters of Charity – St. Vincent de Paul (Nova Gorica)	52

[35] *The Tolmin administrative unit, to the north, encompasses the Upper Soča (municipalities of Bovec, Kobarid and Tolmin); the Idrija administrative unit, to the east, encompasses the Idrija river basin (municipalities of Cerkno and Idrija); the Nova Gorica administrative unit, to the west, encompasses the area adjacent the region's main town (municipalities of Nova Gorica, Brda, Kanal ob Soči, Miren-Kostanjevica, Renče-Vogrsko and Šempeter-Vrtojba); whilst the Ajdovščina administrative unit, to the south, embraces the major portion of the Vipava Valley (municipalities of Ajdovščina and Vipava).*

[36] *Page 56 of Slovenian Regions in Numbers (2009), published by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, states a declining rate of 0.5%, whereas pages 6 and 7 state a zero natural increase.*

Religion	Members
1.1.1.2 Sisters of Mary of the Miraculous Medal (Nova Gorica)	2
1.1.1.3 School Sisters of St. Francis Christ the King (Ajdovščina)	6
1.1.1.4 Franciscans – Order of Friars Minor (Nova Gorica)	13
1.1.1.5 Congregation of the Mission – Vincentian Lazarists (Nova Gorica)	7
1.1.1.6 Capuchins (Ajdovščina)	5
1.1.2 Religious Communities	
1.1.2.1 Concordia et Pax (Nova Gorica)	30
1.1.2.2 Vozel Youth Society (Ajdovščina)	40
1.1.2.3 MMM Society (Ajdovščina)	40
1.1.2.4 Zarja Zakriž cultural and artistic society for the preservation of old customs (Idrija)	20
1.1.2.5 Youth society of the Idrija-Cerkno deaconry (Idrija)	60
1.1.2.6 ARS Society of the Virgin Mary in the Field (Bovec)	24
1. 2 Protestant Churches	
1.2.1 Lutheran Churches	
1.2.1.1 Evangelical Church in the Republic of Slovenia (Nova Gorica, Tolmin, Idrija)	25
1.3 Orthodox Churches	
1.3.1 Serbian Orthodox Church Metropolitanate of Zagreb and Ljubljana (Nova Gorica)	30
3) Islam	
3.1 Committee of the Nova Gorica-Ajdovščina Islamic Community	100
5) Indian religions (or religions of Indian origin)	
5.4 Yoga (estimation of regular practitioners of yoga as spiritual practice)	
5.4.1 Yoga in Daily Life (Nova Gorica, Ajdovščina, Idrija)	50
5.5 Other	
5.5.1 The Art of Living (Nova Gorica, Tolmin)	12
8) Western Esoteric and New Age Groups	
8.2 Lectorium Rosicrucianum – The International School of the Golden Rosycross (Nova Gorica)	12
8.7 VITAAA – Society for peaceful coexistence of humans, nature and space (Nova Gorica)	10
8.9 Alvador Art and Culture Society (Nova Gorica, Idrija)	12
9) Modern Western Cultures	
9.2 Movement for Justice and Development (Nova Gorica)	10
9.5 Umica Society, Tolmin	50

Compared to Ljubljana, the Goriška region is more homogeneous and consequently less pluralistic as regards the diversity of its religious communities and, considering socio-demographic factors, this is quite understandable. With the exception of the region's urban centres – Nova Gorica, Ajdovščina, Idrija, Tolmin – which are all small towns, the region is a rural

one. Adherents to the Roman Catholic faith (58.3% of the total population) considerably exceed the share recorded for the more cosmopolitan capital. Protestant and Orthodox churches are hardly present (no more than a couple of dozen members each), while only 0.1% of the population is Muslim (mostly living in Nova Gorica). The share of Eastern (Indian and East Asian) religions, New Age (i.e. Western esoteric and New Age groups) and other religious communities (modern Western cultures), which were for the most part established as associations during the 1990s,[37] is barely discernible (0.13%); most are based in Nova Gorica. The majority of these are simply practitioners of yoga or adherents to modern Western cultures with an often ambiguous status (e.g. Umica Tolmin is organised as an association of young people who practice spirituality, mostly in combination with activities in nature).

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[37] *The Art of Living (in 1994), Alvador Art and Culture Association (in Nova Gorica and Idrija in 1996), Yoga in Daily Life (Nova Gorica, Ajdovščina and Idrija in 1998, as well as Umica Tolmin in 2003).*

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