5.1 RELIGION IN PRAGUE

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The Czech religious landscape has undergone some major changes since the beginning of the 20th century, pioneered from the beginning of the 20th century, and even earlier, by the capital, Prague (Boháč 1923). We assume that even today changes in the religious pattern appear at first, and with high intensity, in Prague. The purpose of this map sheet is to assess the evolution of the capital's religious structure in the 20th century and focus on trends affecting Prague today. The changes in religious structure that Prague have experienced during the last century have had a major impact on both dominant and marginal religions. Therefore, the map shows the evolution of the number of adherents of the Roman-Catholic Church, over the long term the most important religion in Prague, as well as the evolution of minority religions manifesting specific changes over time. The map also presents Prague's current inner religious differentiation.

The map sheet draws on current and historical sources, mainly on the 1921 and 2011 census results. Additional data come from Boháč's publication (1923) which also uses census results. This book is the only remaining source containing detailed information on Prague's religious structure between wars. The analysis of Prague's religious structure and its evolution using census results is complex due to several reasons. The capital's growth during the course of the 20th century and the changes in some administrative units' borders make using a single indicator to assess the evolution on the territory of the whole city quite difficult. The comparison of data on religion from different censuses is hampered by changing methods and their territorial focus. Some census results on selected religious beliefs were published as summary data on several religions (for ex. Evangelical religion in 1921-1930). The census question on religious belief has been optional since 2001, therefore it can be left unanswered, a choice made by an increasing number of Prague's inhabitants (see Figure 5.1.1). This means that all 2011 census results shown on the map refer to those inhabitants who stated their religious beliefs. Results from socialistic censuses also present some issues. The 1950 census data on religious structure are only available for Prague in total, in the years 1961-1980 the question on religious belief was omitted altogether. To conclude, it is important to stress the difference between a *subjective indication* of religious beliefs as an answer to a census question and *realized religiosity*, i.e. participation in the life of the religious community (Heřmanová 2009). A comparison of the SLDB data and other data sources on people's religiosity (European Values Survey, censuses of church-service goers organised by the Czech Bishops' Conference) reveals that the rate of realized religiosity among Czech inhabitants is lower than the rate of indicated religiosity recorded in the census. Nevertheless, as far as regional differentiation is concerned, various sources provide corresponding patterns (Hůle 2005).

The long-term trend manifesting itself on the whole territory of Czechia is a decreasing share of religious believers on total population (Havlíček 2009), with Prague being no exception (see Figure 5.1.1). While the share of religious population slightly increased during the first half of the 20th century, most likely thanks to urbanization, it plummeted in the following period. Religious believers, who used to represent 90% of Prague's population, have become a minority (Havlıcek (2008) notes the same trend for the whole country). As the proportion of Prague's believers decreased, so fell the number of followers of the largest Churches in Czechia. The number of Roman Catholics, who in 2011 represented 88% of all Catholics in Prague, decreased for instance. Despite a major decline in the number of followers, Roman Catholic Church currently has the highest number of adherents (206,000 persons in 2001 and 80,000 persons in 2011 compared to 497,000 followers in 1930) from all registered Churches present in Prague. Therefore, its followers represent approximately a third of all believers in Prague. The distribution of Roman Catholics in Prague also changed between 1921 and 2011: during the interwar period most of the Roman Catholics lived in central parts of the city, today they are spread quite evenly across Prague's districts.
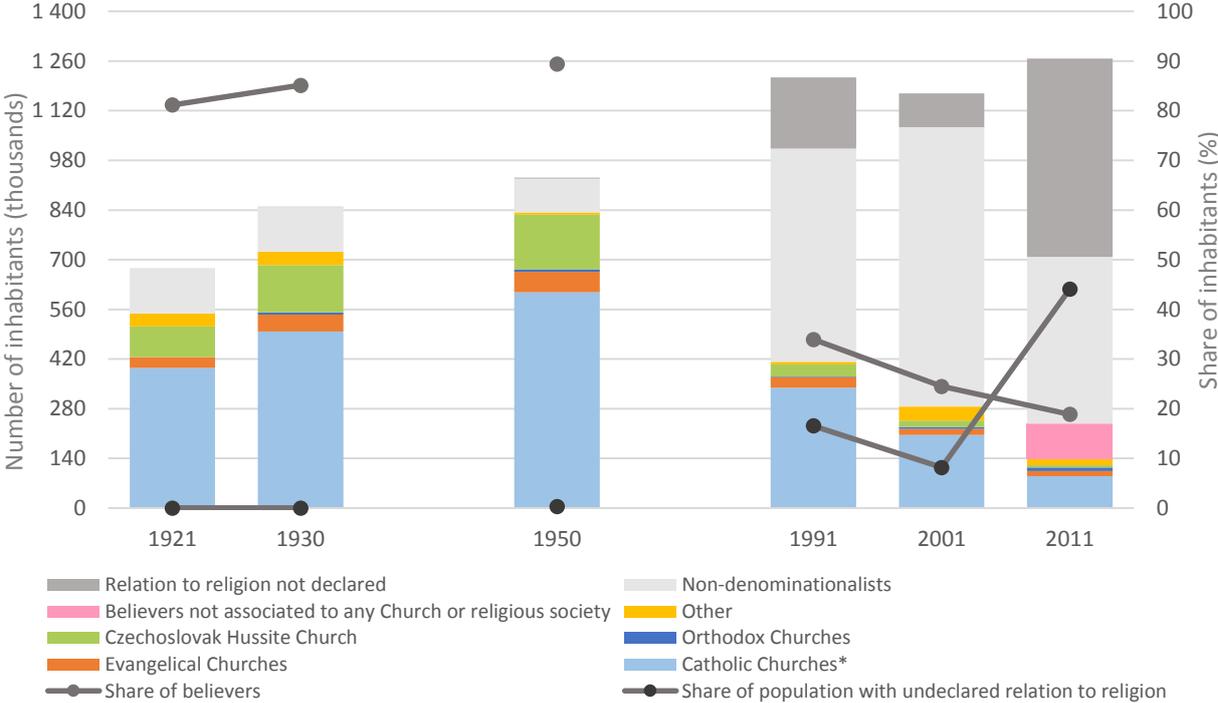

Figure 5.1.1*: The evolution of Prague's religious structure between 1921 and 2011*
Source: *SÚS 1924, 1934, 1958; ČSÚ, 1991, 2001, 2011*
*Note: * = only Roman Catholic Church in 1921*

A specific feature of Prague, in comparison with the rest of the country, is a considerable concentration of religious minorities. Representing around 5% of Prague's religious inhabitants, Jews were an important minority during the interwar period. They were mainly living in the centre of Prague and its neighbourhoods, for several reasons. First of all, they were previously allowed to live only in designated parts of the city (mainly in

the Josefov neighbourhood). Moreover, the centre and the inner city were business-friendly, with business often being their main economic activity, and they also had a higher socio-economic standing which allowed them to live in Prague's wealthy neighbourhoods (Boháč 1923). Because of the Second World War and the advent of communism, the number of the members of the Jewish minority dropped to less than a tenth of 1930 numbers (35,400 in 1930 vs 3,433 in 1950). The post-socialist era saw the arrival of new religious minorities to Prague in the context of rising interest in smaller Churches in the society (Havlíček 2005): the religious movement of Jehovah's Witnesses or Buddhism gained new followers for instance. The importance of some new Churches was also considerably boosted by incoming immigrants. Cadastral territories with the highest proportion of foreign nationals show the highest numbers of adherents to religious minorities gaining in importance in Prague. The neighbourhood of Stodůlky, for instance, has a large Russian minority affiliated with the newly registered Russian Orthodox Church. Also gaining ground in Prague is a new minority group of people declaring being Muslim (1,201 individuals), 70% of them are foreign nationals.

High heterogeneity		Low heterogeneity	
Smíchov	1.19	Hostavice	0.83
Bubeneč	1.19	Lochkov	0.82
Lysolaje	1.19	Hájek u Uhříněvsi	0.81
Vinohrady	1.22	Holyně	0.80
Dejvice	1.22	Miškovice	0.74
Malá Strana	1.23	Přední Kopanina	0.74
Nové Město	1.24	Malá Chuchle	0.68
Střešovice	1.24	Nedvězí u Říčan	0.68
Vyšehrad	1.25	Zadní Kopanina	0.56
Staré Město	1.26	Cholupice	0.55

Table 5.1.1: *Prague's cadastral territories by religious heterogeneity in 2011*
Source: *ČSÚ, 2011*

Note: Religious heterogeneity was calculated using the entropy index which allows to qualify the spatial distribution of any number of groups in a given area using the following formula: $h_i = -\Sigma p_{ij}\, ln(p_{ij})$, where p_{ij} is the proportion of followers of the j-th religion in the area i. The value of the index is maximized when a maximum number of religious groups with an even number of followers is present in the area. To calculate the index of religious heterogeneity for Prague's cadastral territories, followers of different Churches were divided into seven groups: 1. people with no religious belief, 2. religious believers with no Church or religious group affiliation, 3. Catholics, 4. members of the Evangelical Church, 5. members of the Orthodox Church, 6. Indian religions and Islam, 7. other and non-specified religions. The index maximum value for 7 groups is 1.95.

The post-socialistic era saw changes in Prague's religious structure, too. The highest religiosity rate today is recorded in the inner city and in north-western Prague where "good address" neighbourhoods are located (Dejvice, Střešovice), despite the fact that these locations experienced the most pronounced drop in the number of religious

believers between 1991 and 2001. At the same time, these locations, as well as inner city cadastral territories, show the highest religious heterogeneity of its inhabitants, i.e. these neighbourhoods represent a mix of followers of different religions (see Table 5.1.1). On the contrary, the highest religiosity rate and only a slight decrease in the number of religious believers between 1991 and 2001 was recorded in the neighbourhoods consisting of large housing estates (Bohnice, Letňany, Černý Most, Chodov, Stodůlky, etc.). Marginal parts of Prague, which have preserved their rural character, manifest the lowest rate of religious heterogeneity.

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