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**The Economics of Political Participation  
and Religion in the Czech Republic**  
*Bachelor's Thesis*

Author: Jiří Svatoš

Thesis Supervisor: Ing. Pavel Chalupníček, Ph. D.

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I declare on my honor that I have written my bachelor's thesis individually and unaided using the bibliography I have referred to.

Jiří Svatoš  
10 January 2010 in Prague

## **Abstract**

The thesis combines previous economic theory of information, Putnam's theory of correlation between "associational life" and politics and economic theory of differences between churches and sects. This combination provides new point of view on dependence between political participation and religion derived from economic theory. The theory is applied on Czech data, concretely the data from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) 1998 on Religion. The results are consistent with theory and show that sectarianism has negative effect on political participation with the exception of voting. However, the indirect effect of sectarianism (through "associational life") is also found.

## **Key words**

Churches and Sects, Political Participation, Strong and Weak Ties

## **JEL Classification**

D71, D72, D85, Z12

## **Abstrakt**

Bakalářská práce kombinuje teorii informací, Putnamovu teorii korelace mezi politickým a „společenským životem“ a ekonomicky podloženou teorii rozdílu mezi církvemi a sektami. Taková kombinace poskytuje nový náhled na závislost mezi politickou participací a náboženstvím, která má původ v ekonomické teorii. Tato teorie je následně aplikována na českých datech, konkrétně na datech z mezinárodního průzkumu ISSP 1998 – Náboženství, pomocí tzv. probitu. Výsledky analýzy jsou v souladu s teorií a ukazují, že vyšší míra sektářství vede k nižší politické participaci s výjimkou účasti ve volbách. Účast ve volbách je však mírou sektářství ovlivněna nepřímo skrz „společenský život“.

## **Klíčová slova**

Církev a sekty, Politická Participace, „Strong and Weak Ties“

## **JEL klasifikace**

D71, D72, D85, Z12

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# INTRODUCTION

*“Religion and politics are necessarily related.”*

Ronald Reagan

Relationship between politics and religion is still a hot topic in the United States. The role of the Tea Party Movement in 2010 Congressional and Senate elections only strengthen the discussion, what role has religion in American politics. On the contrary in the Czech republic religion is not in the centre of political events. Despite such a huge difference in political culture, there could be a similarities. This thesis is trying to find them.

One of the most famous researchers in the field Kenneth D. Wald (1987, p. 143 – 152) sees the churches mainly as interest groups with specific political goals, that differ between the Jews, the Protestants, the Catholics, etc. However, this paper is not concerned with these specific issues, where religion influences politics, like legalization of abortions or gay marriage. It focuses on religion, or more specifically belonging to a religious group, as a source of political participation.

The paper is based as many others (e.g. Vráblíková 2009, Teorell 2000, Klesner 2007, Ikeda and Richey 2005) on the work of Robert Putnam, who found a linkage between associational life and politics in his famous book “Making Democracy Work”. Putnam is probably the most popular author, but his work lacks elaborated econometrical technique, therefore the work of Verba, Schlozmann and Brady<sup>1</sup> (1995, 2002) provides the basic econometrical model. The Putnam’s theory of relation between associations and politics is enriched by the theory of church and sect (Iannacone 1988, Stark and Bainbridge 1980, 1986). Such an enrichment gives us an opportunity to study the differences between the influence of churches and sects.

Firstly, it will be shown that this enriched theory holds for the US, because the research of religion and politics is developed mainly there. Two different ways of political participation will be studied; general political participation (how people try to obtain their political goals in other way than voting in elections) and voter turnout. Of course, we cannot safely assume, that the effect of the churches and/or sects is the same in the US and Europe. On the contrary the difference in religiosity of Americans and Europeans is often discussed (e.g. Berger, Davie, Fokas 2008).

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<sup>1</sup> Henceforth “VSB”

Therefore, in the second phase the probit analysis of both general political participation and the voter turnout is going to be applied on Czech data. The religious environment in the Czech Republic is quite specific. Looking at data from the Czech Statistical Office (Český statistický úřad 2003), in 1991 43.9% and in 2001 even only 32.2% people had a church affiliation. Although the data from the ISSP 1998 on Religion (Sociologický ústav 1998) and the Czech survey on religion (Sociologický ústav 2006) show around 50% of people with an affiliation, we can safely assume it is not more than these 50%.<sup>2</sup> Prudký et al. (2009, p. 241-249) find the atheistic nature of the country in value surveys where sentences “*Would it be good, if a majority in the Czech Republic was believing in the God.*” and “*Life is meaningful, because the God exists.*” have high rejection rate.

This is one of the reasons why only several papers in the sociology or the economics of religion have been published in the Czech Republic.<sup>3</sup> Until 2004 only three papers in the sociology of religion had been published in the most influential Czech sociological journal – Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review (the journals merged in 2002) (Nešpor 2004, p. 448). The economics of religion in does not offer much either, one of a few Czech articles was written by Loužek (2007), but he focuses on general theory not on specific situation in the Czech Republic.

The Czech political science provides at least little help. For example Lebeda and Vlachová (2006) include effects of religiosity, church affiliation and mass attendance into their research of political participation. Linek and Lyons (2007) include mass attendance and Linek (2004) includes at least church affiliation in the research of voter turnout. Most of the other research does not cover reasons for political itself, but focuses mainly on the differences between people's choice of a political party and also the religion is mentioned there only marginally (e.g. Řeháková 1998).

The lack of both theoretical and empirical research in the Czech Republic and also the lack of detailed data as VSB gathered on political participation in the US constitute the biggest challenge for this paper. Other contributions of this paper are: first, the usage of a probit analysis, which is not used so often, especially in the Czech environment, because of its not so clear interpretation (see Section 6.1) and second, the differentiation between effects of different church activities (not only mass attendance or church affiliation).

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<sup>2</sup> The Czech Republic is an atheist or secular country, similar to Great Britain or France (Hamplová 2000).

<sup>3</sup> For more reasons see Nešpor (2004).

# 1 RELIGION, CHURCHES, SECTS...

What exactly is religion? One of the generally accepted definitions is: “*Religion is the attitude and feeling of a man to a transcendent reality.*” (Štampach 2008) However, this general definition should be slightly modified for the purpose of an economic analysis. The religion consist of simple norms or other institutions, “*that justify and specify the terms of exchange with a god or gods*”. (Stark 1999, p. 270) It follows “*Religious organizations are social enterprises whose primary purpose is to create, maintain, and supply religion to some set of individuals and to support and supervise their exchanges with a god [...] religious organization will be able to require extended and exclusive commitments to the extent that it offers otherworldly rewards*” (ibid, p. 279). All under assumption of a limited rationality. People attempt to maximize their utility limited by available information and options (Stark 1999).<sup>4</sup> At last, we assume religious activities organized by a church to be collective goods (Iannaconne 1994), because one gets higher utility by worshiping, singing and doing other group activities, when others participate with more enthusiasm. Also, many church activities are sponsored from common resources.<sup>5</sup>

We can safely assume monotheistic religion,<sup>6</sup> because our analysis focuses on “Western civilization”. Therefore religions like Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Tribalism, etc. can be excluded. It should be stressed, that no conclusion of this work can be transferred to different religious institutional framework without further research on the topic. The limited focus of the work allows to label religious organizations as churches<sup>7</sup> and differentiate between churches and sects. Weber (1998), who first used the term in sociology, defines a sect as an ideal type of exclusive religious organization compared to church as universal religious organization.<sup>8</sup> Such a definition has almost no value, because it is difficult to test. More valuable are four typical characteristics of a sect defined by Štampach (p. 186): 1) authoritative management 2) fundamentalism 3) physical or at least ideological closeness 4) one or both-ways selection of information. Similar characteristics provides Iannaconne’s

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<sup>4</sup> The concept of limited rationality in connection with religion can explain for example usage of “irrational evidence” (ordeals) by religion authorities in the Middle Ages (Leeson, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Believers gives money to church and volunteer in church activities.

<sup>6</sup> We can probably safely assume even prophecy religions defined by Štampach (2008, p. 43): “they start at spiritual reality and that, what they absorb in contact with it, they transform to everyday life.”

<sup>7</sup> It would be problematic, otherwise, because it could be improper to use Christian wording to other religions (for example, Buddhist church is not a valid term) (Štampach 2008, p. 33).

<sup>8</sup> Adam Smith used term sect in similar way long before Weber in his famous *Wealth of Nations* in accordance to expenditures on institutions for education of all ages (pp. 698-724).

(1998) model of church and sect, but in the model the sect's characteristics are consequences not causes of its existence. A sect is defined as a religious organization that generates concave production possibility frontier of religious and secular commodities and on the contrary churches generate convex frontier.<sup>9</sup> The model will be discussed in more detail in Section 4. In his onward research Iannaccone (1994, Iannaccone et al. 1995) uses the term strict churches, where strictness *"is the degree to which a group limits and thereby increases the cost of non-group activities, such as socializing with members of other churches or pursuing "secular" pastimes,"* (Iannaccone 1994, p. 1182) indiscriminately with the term sect or the term sectarian church, hence this work does not differentiate between these terms either. The term "liberal churches" means the exact opposite of the term strict churches.

## 2 RATIONALITY AND VOTING: WHY VOTE?

The Theory of Rational Ignorance (Downs, 1957) suggests that in a world without perfect information every voter is comparing marginal utility of voting (i.e. the utility from the "right" candidate winning the election times the probability of the vote to be decisive) to marginal costs of obtaining information. Because the elections are not usually decided by one vote her expected utility is relatively low, therefore she has no incentive to vote, because if majority of voters bears the costs of obtaining information, voter receives benefits no matter what. Nevertheless, the opposing argument is crucial for our analysis: *"when no one else is informed, [she] cannot produce these benefits by becoming well informed [herself], since a collective effort is necessary to achieve them"*. (ibid., p. 147)

Application of Downs' cost-benefit analysis can be used to find out a reason why somebody still votes. If we assume voting is a normal good, there exist two ways how to increase voting. Firstly, voter may lower the costs by getting "free" information (ibid., p. 146) as a member of high number of associations and/or by getting the information from her friends. Secondly, higher utility can be derived from the concept of intrinsic consumption. *"An individual is said to be intrinsically motivated to perform an activity when one receives no apparent reward except the activity itself. Intrinsic motivation to perform an act (or "duty") is based on moral and ethical considerations, but it is also affected by external intervention. In this context, individuals respond to low-cost signals that acknowledge the intrinsic value of action."* (Jones and Hudson 2005, p. 242) Religiosity should change the intrinsic motivation of an individual. Moral and ethical sphere of our lives is connected with

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<sup>9</sup> Graph in Appendix.

faith. Religious beliefs or their absence are one of the basics of a moral system of an individual. For instance Catholic catechism provides a moral imperative that every good Catholic shall vote.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, we can assume that the intensity and the number of low cost signals is based on community one lives in, especially on involvement in all sorts of associations (for example churches).

Third way of explanation of “some” turnout is also possible. Basically, voting as a collective good can be modeled as a stag hunt game<sup>11</sup> for voters with the same interest, where two types of pure Nash Equilibriums exist.<sup>12</sup> The first type occurs, when the exact number of voters needed to elect the “right” candidate goes to polls. The second one occurs when nobody goes to polls, but only the first one is Pareto-efficient. The question is: How can a group of voters increase the probability of the occurrence of the first equilibrium? It can create a system of institutions to encourage voting by providing trust in other members of the group to go to vote as well and therefore reaching the higher voter turnout equilibrium.<sup>13</sup> The reasoning behind is that the first is payoff dominant but the second risk-dominant.

All three explanations have one thing in common: the importance of associations, in which a voter participates and all three hold almost in the same way for general political participation. These are the crucial points for further analysis.

### 3 CIVIC COMMUNITY AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Previous section suggests that “vibrancy of associational life” (Putnam 1993, p. 91) should increase voter turnout. This section provides results of previous empirical research as a proof that the vibrancy of associational life is indeed correlated with political participation. The term political participation is not always defined clearly, but usually includes activities such as demonstrations, petitions, lobbying, membership in political parties and last but not least voting.

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<sup>10</sup> Catholic Catechism 1915: “*As far as possible citizens should take an active part in public life. The manner of this participation may vary from one country or culture to another. One must pay tribute to those nations whose systems permit the largest possible number of the citizens to take part in public life in a climate of genuine freedom.*”

<sup>11</sup> It is simplified only to a cooperative aspect of participation game, because the competitive aspect is not so important for the analysis and it would be much more complicated to model complex participation game as defined for example by Palfrey and Rosenthal (2001).

<sup>12</sup> With the exception of a possibility that there would never be enough voters with the same interest to overtake the elections.

<sup>13</sup> See for example Ostrom and Gardner (1993), Chalupníček and Dvořák (2006) for evidence on how institutions promote trust and efficiently solve the problem of collective action. Game-theoretic solution of the complex participation game influenced by social environment can be found in Großer and Schram (2004).

The link between political and social life is quite obvious. Probably the first scholar, who came with the observation of the linkage, was Alexis de Tocqueville in his famous work “Democracy in America”. He argued that the success and the stability of the American political system was derived from flourishing of various associations, that sought some collective goals (Putnam 1993, p. 89). Putnam (1993, 2000) proves Tocqueville’s argument in detailed studies of the U.S. and the Italian civic community and institutional performance. In “Voice and Equality” VSB (2002, p. 17) say: *“institutions - the families which individuals are born into, the schools they attend, the families they form as adults, the jobs they take, the non-political organizations and religious institutions with which they become affiliated-produce the factors that foster [political] participation”*. They also concludes that those *“who develop skills in an environment removed from politics are likely to become politically competent”*.

The previous statement does not to be true for all non-political organizations. For example Ayala (2000) demonstrates that political participation depends on membership in more voluntary organizations and not in less voluntary organizations (e.g. workplace-related organization).<sup>14</sup> Hence the civic skills you gain in your job do not foster civic participation. Nevertheless the correlation between voluntary organizations and participation is significant.

### 3.1 CHURCHES AS A PART OF CIVIC COMMUNITY

VSB (2002, p. 18) argue that religious institutions play very special role in the development of civic skills, because they offset otherwise still growing level of political resources gained by higher level of education of an individual. With higher education one gets more lucrative job and hence more political resources, but church does not make difference between poor and rich, between educated and not so educated. According to VSB a church can be even more important than alternative sources of civic-skills.<sup>15</sup>

More authors confirm the theory of churches as an important catalyst of active participation of their members in the politics in general (McVeigh and Smith 1999, Beyerlein and Chaves 2003,<sup>16</sup> Secret et al. 1990, Campbell 2004, Putnam 2000) or in elections in particular (Liu et. al. 2009, Lijphart, 1979, Olsen, 1972). Brooks (2006) finds that religious people give more to a charity and volunteer more often. *“Religious people are, inarguably, more charitable in every measurable way.”* (ibid., p. 40) According to his research religious

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<sup>14</sup> More precisely on the civic skills gained in more voluntary organizations.

<sup>15</sup> Jones-Correa and Leal (2001) finds greater importance of churches for Hispanics and Harris (1994) for Blacks.

<sup>16</sup> Beyerlein and Chaves focused on political activity of congregations not individuals. This focus could lead to bias, because of the possibility that only few leaders of congregation are really active and the others are just passive supporters.

people give more and volunteer more even in secular charities. He expands this conclusion to political participation. *“In 2000, people who gave money or volunteered were more than twice as likely as those who did not to attend a political meeting that year, participate in a political group, or belong to a group taking local action for political reform.”* (ibid., p. 155)

The results appear to be unanimous, but in fact they are not. In opposition to VSB's theory of civic skills other empirical results prove that church does not mobilize through gaining civic-skills, but through its function of an association (Jones-Correa and Leal 2001; Djupe and Grant). Secret et al (1990) conclude that voter turnout of more religious people is higher, but involvement in protests (as an example of nontraditional political participation) is lower. Their explanation for the variety of religion effects should be stressed. They argue that it is common for churches in the United States to approve the political system.<sup>17</sup> Therefore every true believer should express her opinion in organized elections, but not in anti-establishment ways (ibid. p. 98). This argument can be followed to the foundations of the first colonies in America by Puritans, the American Revolutionary War and the creation of the United States Constitution (Wald 1987, p. 35-60).

Putnam (2000) sees the religious groups in America as the main source of social capital,<sup>18</sup> but he concludes only some of them actually improve civic community. He sees a difference between bonding and bridging churches.<sup>19</sup> The bonding churches, the evangelical Protestant (i.e. strict churches), do not promote better civic community. *“The social capital of evangelicals is invested at home more than in wider community.”* (ibid. p. 77) According to Putnam bridging is connected with mainline Protestants and to a certain extent Catholics. However he finds, that “clericalism” of the Catholic Church in Italy (attendance at Mass, religious marriage, divorce rate) has a strong negative correlation with political activity (Putnam 1993, p. 107-108). Putnam argues the difference inheres in horizontality of the Catholic Church in Italy. According to Jones-Correa and Leal (2001) the argument of horizontality is not valid, at least not for the American Catholics. Therefore, the case of Italian clericalism indicates not only differences between denominational groups but possibly also differences in religious institutional framework between countries, which can have impact on churches as a factor of political mobilization.

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<sup>17</sup> For the special relationship between church and politics in the U.S. see Wald (1987), mainly pp. 48-55.

<sup>18</sup> Putnam includes both trust and reciprocity. This has not to be exactly the case, because trust can be seen more as human capital. For reason, why it could be important to differentiate trust and social capital see Chalupníček 2010.

<sup>19</sup> It has to be stressed, that bonding and bridging is not either-or. Organization can be both bonding and bridging, but evangelical protestants are according to Putnam more bonding than bridging.

Research made by Campbell (2004) leads to a similar conclusion as Putnam's. Political participation of strict churches<sup>20</sup> members decreases with the time these believers spend in church voluntarism. The opposite holds for a liberal church member. Nonetheless, strict churches can very efficiently mobilize their members, when values they stand for are at stake (Campbell 2004). Charity volunteering is also affected by a church membership. Religious liberals "*are a bit less likely to volunteer for religious causes, and a bit more likely to volunteer for nonreligious causes*". (Brooks 2006, p. 50) In other words, they are probably more active outside of the religious community.

To sum up, American empirical results lead to a conclusion, that there exist differences in potential of associations to politically mobilize. The main variance in the case of the churches seems to be the level of their strictness, but what exactly makes the difference?

## 4 CHURCHES AND INTRINSIC CONSUMPTION

Showed results and research lead to the concept of intrinsic consumption. Voter's intrinsic motivation has to be increased to overcome their rational ignorance (see Section 2). Churches influence the gains from voting, because believers have fulfillment of divine will in their utility function. "*As history repeatedly has taught, human beings will make enormous sacrifices if they believe themselves to be driven by a divine force.*" (Wald 1987, p. 30) Church attendance affects internal religiosity and through intrinsic motivation voter turnout (Harris, 1994).

Iannaccone (1998, p. 246) in his model of church and sect describes utility maximization between secular and religious commodities in a more specific way. The production of both religious and secular commodities depends on four inputs: time, (purchased) goods, human capital (prior religious experience) and conduct. In the model however time and goods are omitted, so the production depends only on human capital and conduct. Human capital is a broad term describing previous experience, knowledge, familiarity with church rituals, etc. Conduct is defined by three key attributes: „(1) *it is not reducible to time and goods*; (2) *it affects both religious and secular productivity*; and (3) *it remains the same in both religious and secular context.*“ (ibid. p. 247) The model can give an answer, why non-traditional political participation is not positively correlated with religion.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> He compares Evangelical and Mainline Protestants.

<sup>21</sup> For a graphical representation of the model see Appendix

If churches do not approve protests, strikes, etc., so such a conduct lowers religious productivity, hence the conduct would have to be compensated by secular productivity, which does not seem very plausible in most cases.<sup>22</sup>

Voter turnout is another conduct, that can be installed into the model. If voting is encouraged by a church, it positively affects religious productivity (fulfillment of the divine will), but negatively affects secular productivity (direct and opportunity costs of political participation).<sup>23</sup> In such a situation Iannaccone's model leads to a conclusion: the more important voting for the church, the higher voter turnout among its members.

An objection against this theory is lower turnout of the strict churches in general elections showed by Campbell (2004), but one possible explanation is provided by the model itself. Since, from the definition, if the production possibility frontier of religious and secular commodities is convex, the difference between sect's religion and social norm is great or the tolerance of society is small (Iannaccone 1988, p. 254). Therefore, opposition to the society is according to the model essential for a sect to even exist. If sectarian churches have more anti-societal tendencies, they will probably not encourage voting.<sup>24</sup> Although a sect, that encourages voting would have greater success, because the conduct according to the sect norm would produce much more religious commodities for an individual than the missed secular commodities would be. The higher turnout in a similar case was demonstrated on lottery referendum in Alabama<sup>25</sup> (Campbell, 2004, p. 172).

## 5 CHURCHES AS A PART OF SOCIAL NETWORK

### 5.1 STRONG SOCIETY, HIGH PARTICIPATION?

In *The Logic of Collective Action* Mancur Olson (1963, p. 2) states: "*unless the number of individuals in a group is quite small, or unless there is coercion or some other special device to make individuals act in their common interest, rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interest*". From this theory he

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<sup>22</sup> As is shown below this does not have to be the case for strict churches, the research did not differentiate the nature of the churches. The strict church (or sect) is more probable to have anti-society tendencies.

<sup>23</sup> It includes gathering the information necessary to vote „right“.

<sup>24</sup> An example could serve Jehovah's Witnesses, "*evangelistic millenarian sect practicing strict neutrality in government affairs, including political participation and militarism.*" (Persian 2005)

<sup>25</sup> In 1999 an increase of 12% in protestant voting turnout occurred, while there was decrease of 9% in non-protestant turnout from the last gubernatorial elections. The increase occurred despite many factors that normally lower the turnout (only referendum and off-year).

derives creation of small, but persuasive lobby groups interested in rent-seeking, cartels and other groups that can decrease the rate of economic growth. (Olson 1982, mainly pp. 41-47) This also means a strong small organization would not encourage voting, because rent-seeking would be more efficient way to achieve the common goal of the organization. Putnam (1993, p. 176) simplified Olson vision to: “*Strong society, weak economy.*” Whereas Putnam is trying to prove the exact opposite: “*Strong society, strong economy.*”

I argue both are right. Why? The answer can be found in the difference between strong and weak<sup>26</sup> ties (Granovetter 1973, 1983). Weaker ties needs less time and energy to maintain, but can promote only cheap benefits such as knowledge (i.e. information) “*The fewer indirect contacts one has the more encapsulated he will be in terms of knowledge of the world beyond his own friendship circle; thus, bridging weak ties (and the consequent indirect contacts) are important in both ways.*” (Granovetter 1973, p. 1371) Hence small lobbying groups are apparently a source of strong ties and bowling clubs are a source of weak ties.<sup>27</sup> Since maintaining weak ties is less expensive than maintaining strong ties, you can obtain more weak ties in the expense of few strong ones.

As showed above, according to Downs voting is mainly about the costs of information. The higher the total number of ties (strong plus weak) of an individual, the more free information from her social network she likely gets. However, strong ties encourage more costly sacrifices, because the related benefits are higher. Putting this observation into the political participation context: the weak ties promoting groups transmit more information, hence encourage voting. By contrast, the strong ties promoting groups are able to mobilize the members more efficiently, if the common goal of the organization is at stake. This is exactly the conclusion of Campbell (2004) and could explain the difference between political participation of denominations, if stricter churches create rather strong than weak ties and vice-versa.

## 5.2 THE ROLE OF CHURCHES

Firstly, strictness of the churches effects the strength of the created ties. The definition of strictness (see Section 1) implies increase in the costs of non-church activities.<sup>28</sup> “*You are therefore less likely to join (or remain active in) an exclusive sect if you have an extensive set of social ties to friends and family outside the sect.*” (Iannaccone 1994, p. 1200) Thus

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<sup>26</sup> Or in Putnam’s words bonding and bridging.

<sup>27</sup> Of course, we cannot conclude the strong ties are always bad, for example probably everybody will agree the strong ties in family should be supported.

<sup>28</sup> These costs provide a block against free-riding in church activities.

spending time in a sect leads to the “*social implosion*” (Stark and Bainbridge 1980), the internal ties strengthen and the external weaken, therefore the level of strictness is negatively correlated with the number of memberships in the non-sect organizations. Strict churches produce such an effect because of their tendency to control their members through strict rule enforcement. “*Frequent participation in church activities thickens social networks that can be used sporadically for rapid and intensive political mobilization. The impression of evangelical churches as hotbeds of activism, therefore, stems from periodic bursts of mobilization, rather than a sustained effort.*” (Campbell 2004, p. 156) The Štampach’s characteristics of the sect (see Section 1) also suggests closeness, that is stronger ties between members and less ties with others.

To sum up, liberal churches act as a source of weaker ties and allow a lot more non-church ties, because an individual does not need to spend so much energy in her congregation. We can conclude a sect member gets less free information and according to Downs’ theory is less likely to vote.

Secondly, membership in an association promotes trust, or more precisely a member gets to know the other members better (obtains more human capital), so she can anticipate cooperation in overcoming the Pareto inefficient equilibrium of the stag hunt (see Section 2). It follows, that the closer the group, the better chance to reach the efficient equilibrium. Therefore the stricter the church, the higher the turnout and from the empirical data we have seen such statement holds. Of course, it holds only in the case of the common interest of the members to vote.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, this hypothesis cannot be tested on Czech data, because no such data exist. (E.g. no lottery or abortion referendum has been done in the Czech Republic.)

## **6 HYPOTHESIS: LEVEL OF SECTARIANISM NEGATIVELY INFLUENCES POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

### **6.1 MODEL**

Both the economic theory and the empirical results from the US confirm the correlation between church membership and political participation and also predict lower participation of stricter churches.

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<sup>29</sup> If they did not share such an interest, the Stag Hunt Game assumption would not hold, because voting would no longer be a collective good.

The model of VSB (2002) and to a certain extent the modifications made by Campbell are going to be adapted to different cultural conditions in the Czech Republic and then tested on the data gathered from the ISSP 1998 on Religion (Sociologický ústav 1998). The model is interested in two different types of political participation; voting as a low cost participation and more costly types of participation (e.g. demonstration) measured by a political participation index. At this point it should be pointed out, that internal motivation is not included in the model. The internal motivation means political interest or feeling of political efficacy, data are missing to control for the effect. It could lead to a bias, if the motivation is an endogenous variable in the sense that people, who spend more time in a church, spend the time there because of their political interest, but we have no reason to assume political interest is an endogenous variable, so although our model does not cover the greatest mobilization factor in elections (Linek and Lyons 2007) according to VSB (1995) it does not necessarily mean it is biased.

Also, such an effect does not explain almost anything, just that people with preferences to vote go to vote. Even the participation act can be a signal of political interest. On the other hand a conclusion about the exact quantitative effect of variables cannot be made. Since the explanation of the exact effect is the biggest disadvantage of probit to logit<sup>30</sup> it allows to use the probit analysis. The lack of data concerning political interest also means that Pseudo  $R^2$  is going to be quite low (e.g. pseudo  $R^2$  for voting is only 0.098). Because the political participation index is multiple ordered category and voting is dichotomous variable the ordered respective binary probit are used. Logit analysis was also applied to the dataset and showed very similar results.

The index of political participation shows, how many participatory acts people took to carry through their important political demands. The index is an additive five point scale containing participation in these acts in the last five years: demonstration, public gathering, unofficial strike and letter to MP, plus volunteering for political parties in the last twelve month was included (signing a petition was not included, because it does not fulfill the higher cost condition).<sup>31</sup> The voting is measured by the participation in 1998's election.

First, people under 18 and those, who have no election right, are excluded from the sample. Second, standard socioeconomic characteristics are controlled for. Age in the form of three dummies 18-40, 40-65 and over 65, where the 40-65 dummy is excluded, education is

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<sup>30</sup> The only good explanation provides graphical representation (Becker and Waldman 1989), but it will not be used, because the thesis concentrates on the signs and the comparison of coefficients.

<sup>31</sup> Cronbach's alfa = 0,83.

measured by the number of years of education, the woman dummy is self-explanatory and class (ranging from 0 = lower to 5 = higher) is used instead of income as a proxy.<sup>32</sup> Then main denominational affiliations The Roman-Catholic Church, The Protestant Church of the Czech Brethren and The Czechoslovak Hussite Church are included, where no church affiliation rests as the excluded dummy. Other affiliations are excluded from the sample because of their low frequency in the sample.

Both models stress that it is not only the commitment to an association what matters in political participation, but the difference is what happens there, the same argument can be found in Putnam (2000) and VSB (1995, 2002). Therefore three different activities connected with religion are included as dummies: mass attendance, other church activities<sup>33</sup> (both at least once a month) and volunteering for a church (at least once last year). The model also controls for non-church sources of social capital. Specifically, membership in trade unions, time spent in other associations (at least once a month), volunteering in a charity (once a year), and volunteering in other associations (non-political, non-religious, non-charity – once a year).

There is a huge difference between the Czech Republic and the US in the number of denominations. The identification with a denomination is also lower in the Czech Republic than in the US, so we have to control for whole population not only for those who indentify as church members. Hamplová (2000) concludes, that the lower number of formal believers in the Czech Republic does not mean Czech people deny transcendental believes. Arbitrary denominational differences cannot be used, because no research have been made on differences in the strictness of denominations in the Czech Republic and also the differences are going to be present more inside of the denominations than in the US. Logic behind is, when you do not individualize yourself in various kinds of denominations as in the US, you produce sect-like associations inside the denominations or even outside of the denominations.

A good signal of sectarianism is particularism, specifically a degree of agreement with the sentence from the ISSP 1998: *“The truth is only in one religion.”* (Sociologický ústav 1998) It is completely consistent with the above developed theory of sects, where *“particularistic beliefs and attitudes serve as a compensator for relatively low honor and status in larger society.”* (Stark and Bainbridge 1986) Therefore, the dummy coded 1 for people who answered that only one religion is truthful is defined.

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<sup>32</sup> A question about income was also included in questionnaire, but over 40% people did not answer, on the other hand over 90% of people answered a question about their subjective class.

<sup>33</sup> Other church activities is a variable composed of activities in a church excluding mass attendance.

Previously, the development of trust as possible explanation of higher turnout was also mentioned. Two types of trust were mentioned, trust to political system (i.e. churches approve the political system) and trust to the other people (i.e. associations promote trust to overcome the less efficient equilibrium). Therefore another two dummies are included in the model. Trust in the people and trust in the Parliament. Results of the model shows Table 1.

**Table 1**

	Political Participation		Voting	
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>
Age: 18-40	-0.156241	0.11091	-0.278131**	0.128998
Age: over 65	-0.164752	0.153738	0.347909*	0.199003
Education	0.0122103	0.0141879	0.059756**	0.0277804
Class	0.135773***	0.0522095	0.0106005	0.0631143
Woman	-0.20749**	0.102285	-0.0229093	0.125335
Roman Catholic	-0.0486044	0.121416	0.0019443	0.134533
Czech Hussite	0.0828282	0.340871	6.1427***	0.174523
Czech Brethren	-0.00508867	0.282274	-0.0193224	0.325254
Mass attendance	-0.0492419	0.153539	0.470621**	0.219642
Church activity	0.0393287	0.189792	-0.44593	0.280788
Church volunteer	1.55362***	0.149956	0.0967456	0.218779
Trade unions	0.344772***	0.121654	0.431578***	0.15986
Charity volunteer	0.11423	0.110216	0.250707*	0.147869
Other volunteer	0.424686***	0.113682	-0.208227	0.137777
Sect	-0.294463*	0.170044	-0.0267123	0.206265
Trust Parliament	0.0353007	0.116497	0.332248**	0.156803
Trust people	0.160241	0.100843	0.0338242	0.120341
Associations	0.20023*	0.117232	0.395999**	0.161494
N	640		660	
Log-likelihood	-558.5731		-296.6334	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	-		0.098035	

\*\*\*p<0.01 \*\*p<0.05 \*p<0.10

## 6.2 RESULTS

### 6.2.1 POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The striking result is that church affiliation does not change participation in either way, when controlled for other explanatory variables. This is in a contrast to the previous research of Vlachová and Lebeda (2006), but the reason could be other involvement in church

not only mass attendance was controlled for. However, the results suggest that volunteering for a church has the biggest effect on political participation. On the contrary other church activities and mass attendance produce no effect. This might seem to be a strange conclusion, but it has several logical explanations. Take into account the above mentioned difference between strong and weak ties and the secular-religious productivity frontier. If you attend only mass without any further involvement in a church and the church fosters active participation in community, your religious benefits are really small. Serious involvement in a church is needed to obtain more benefits (e.g. help from the other church members, appreciation of your deeds etc.) to be willing to bear higher costs.

Participation in other church activity means you will get more benefits, the same is true for volunteering for a church. However, if the difference between volunteering and other church activity is bridging/bonding (i.e. other church activity means only meeting with people inside the church, while volunteering means meeting and helping the whole society), then through other church activity you obtain only bonding ties, but by volunteering you obtain not only strong ties, but also bridging ties, which you need to get involved in a whole community not only in your church. Other explanation can be derived from the research of VSB. If you get more civic skills by volunteering for a church than in other church activities, you obtain more resources for political participation. It seems quite plausible that volunteering provides more civic skills (e. g. know how to talk with others, organizational skill, etc.) than other church activity (for example collective reading of the Bible).

Very strong positive effect on political participation is produced by volunteering for non-political, non-church associations. Once again it fits VSB's theory and the bridging ties theory. Of course, we have to keep in mind, that the amount of free time cannot be successfully obtained from the data, hence other possible explanation could be that people who have more free time are more active in both volunteering and political participation.

The analysis shows several different sources of participation, namely income, membership in trade unions and time spent in other associations. The positive effect of income (recall class is a proxy for income) is predicted by almost all previous research (e.g. Campbell 2004, VSB 1995, Ayala 2000, Vráblíková 2009). Positive relation between membership in trade unions and political participation measured by the above defined index is also not a big surprise, when we keep in mind, that the activities included in the index are the main tools used by trade unions to pursue their goals. Time spent in other associations (such as sport clubs, NGOs, etc.) is basically a production of social capital as discussed throughout

this paper, so the relation suggested by Putnam (1993) for Italy and the USA (2000) and Teorell (2000) for Sweden holds even for the Czech Republic. It has to be point out that trust in others was really close to statistical significance on the 10% level ( $p\text{-value} = 0.11206$ ), so the possibility that promoting trust is one of the sources of the participation or that political participation promotes trust cannot be ruled out. Although, the participation as a consequence of trust seems more plausible, because you need to trust to even start participating.

Finally, being a woman and sectarianism have a negative effect on political participation. The fact that women participate less is observed in almost every post-communistic country, so again it is not very surprising, but this effect should according to the literature slowly disappear and it does not even exist in the Western countries<sup>34</sup> (Vráblíková 2009, Vlachová and Lebeda 2006).

Why sectarianism should have a negative effect is explained in length above. We have to be cautious though, because a lot of people did not answer the particularism question (around 30%) and it is statistical significant only on 10% level of probability. (Although the logit shows significant result even on 5% level.) To reaffirm that the main hypothesis is correct, the missing values were put to zero in the assumption that people who did not answer do not care about religion at all, therefore are not members of any religious sect.<sup>35</sup> Then the probit was rerun and the results are very similar. Although, sectarianism was not significant on 10% level of probability, but was really close ( $p\text{-value} = 0.1031$ ) and has almost the same coefficient ( $-0.264597$ ). Another objection could be that the control sample is whole population, hence the particularism question does not include those, who believe, that the only truth is in a different philosophy than religion. Such people could be in a sect-like organization, but not a religious one, but even this non-religious sect should have similar effects as the religious one. However such case would probably mean that our analysis even underscored the relevance of sectarianism. To reassure, the probit was rerun again but with the control sample defined only as those with denominational affiliation with the Czech Hussite as excluded dummy and consistently with previous statement significance of sectarianism went up (coefficient =  $-0.381937$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.0358$ ).

### 6.2.2 VOTING

The results suggest that being a Czech Hussite has enormous effect on voter turnout, but it is probably just an anomaly of a small sample, because all the 32 Hussites in the sample

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<sup>34</sup> Recall the survey was done in 1998 only ten years after the Velvet Revolution.

<sup>35</sup> Of course, it could be even vice-versa, people, who are in sects are ashamed, so they do not want to admit their intolerance, but such explanation seems less plausible.

participated in the 1998's election. The indication, that such hypothesis is true can be found in the data from ISSP 2001 on Social Networks (Sociologický ústav 2001), where only 13 of 18 Hussites voted (the data are for the same elections). The probit was rerun again only for the people without an affiliation, the Czech Brethren and the Roman-Catholic with no significant change of the results. However Linek (2004) found strong effect of the Czech Hussite affiliation, too. Possible explanation inheres in the fact that the Czech Hussites were originally established on 8 January 1920 as the Czechoslovakian Church, recognized by state on 15 September 1920 as the first completely new church in Czechoslovakia (Tretera 2002, p. 37). Also, it has had members almost purely in the Czech or Slovak republic, which predetermines it to be the most politically active church in those countries. Further qualitative research would be necessary for a detailed discussion about the Czech Hussites as the "national" church, which should foster voter turnout.

Age has the predicted positive effect (e.g. Linek and Lyons 2006). In the Czech Republic the most plausible explanation is probably the compulsory voting in the communist era, which created a habit, that promotes future voter turnout. (Green, Shachar 2000) Another predicted positive effect is the level of the trust in the Parliament (Linek and Lyons 2006).

The most important result of the research seems to be the difference between more costly types of political participation and voting. We could see, that the effect of volunteering disappeared, but mass attendance, time spent in associations, membership in trade unions and even education have positive effect on voter turnout. All these characteristics have in common flow of free information. For example, almost nobody studies because of getting information about politics, even though academic environment often provides a lot of such information. However, charity volunteering also has a positive effect on voting, which is puzzling according to no effect of the church and other volunteering. My hypothesis is that charity volunteering means for most people only donating and therefore not creating strong ties.

The effect of mass attendance has to be viewed in comparison with more costly church activities. From the results we can derive that it does not matter, if you are more or less involved in a church. It corresponds with the Downs' theory of information as the most important resource of mobilizing voter turnout. If information from the same association (contrary to information from many different associations) has diminishing marginal productivity, then the higher involvement in the form of volunteering or other church activities could not produce significant effect on voter turnout, when mass attendance is controlled for.

Sectarianism seems to have no direct effect on voter turnout, but it can have indirect impact through other explanatory variables. As was discussed above sectarianism should effect the time spent in another association and trust in the political institutions or in our case in the Parliament. Therefore, once again, probit analysis is used to find out if such effects exist, controlling for the same variables we have controlled before. Table 2 shows the results.

**Table 2**

	Associations		Trust Parliament	
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>
Age: 18-40	0.372663***	0.130192	0.0403843	0.133344
Age: over65	-0.344895*	0.194307	0.216851	0.168978
Education	0.00695815	0.0135757	-0.00356563	0.0113973
Class	0.121424**	0.0571926	0.198063***	0.0558476
Woman	-0.313299***	0.118941	-0.130208	0.119224
Roman Catholic	-0.193789	0.135968	-0.275347**	0.137761
Czech Hussite	0.188269	0.317131	-0.201818	0.304159
Czech Brethren	0.23339	0.348204	-0.523627	0.368959
Mass Attendance	0.356643*	0.209139	0.193189	0.206179
Church activity	0.0865593	0.28769	0.00923605	0.254763
Church volunteer	0.131483	0.213875	0.182211	0.220273
Trade unions	0.363238**	0.141121	-0.147917	0.146702
Charity volunteer	0.178687	0.13519	0.100564	0.132734
Other volunteer	0.710927***	0.12467	0.153526	0.135055
Sect	-0.409746	0.249401	-0.00801029	0.198345
Trust Parliament	0.155944	0.132923	-	-
Trust people	0.185881	0.12086	0.380681***	0.116566
Associations	-	-	0.110445	0.138604
N	660		660	
Log-likelihood	-307.1789		-324.4293	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.157035		0.066406	

\*\*\*p<0.01 \*\*p<0.05 \*p<0.10

We can see, that sectarianism is not statistically significant on the 10% level, but it is really close to the threshold (p-value = 0.1004) and has a quite high coefficient, so we cannot easily deny the hypothesis, that sectarianism lowers the associational involvement. If we look at the question from the survey on organizational time: “*I spend time with people in clubs and voluntary associations (sport, culture, charity, NGOs).*” then the effects of the socioeconomic characteristics start to make sense or at least allow to form a meaningful hypothesis. I argue,

that sport clubs are the most important part of associational life in the Czech Republic (e.g. almost every village in the Czech Republic has its own football team) and this cause that younger men associate more than older women. Although, confirmation of such a hypothesis would require further research.

The effect of volunteering in non-church, non-political, non-charity organization, follows the original question, too, and the correlation between associational life and volunteering is quite self-explanatory. Although it is more plausible that the dependence goes the other way, first you join an NGO or other association and then volunteer for it.

The weaker ties in the form of membership in trade unions and attendance at mass have also positive effects. Of course, the analysis itself cannot reject the possibility that the members of different associations visit a church more often and/or are more often members of unions. While we really cannot be sure about the relation between trade unions and associations, we probably can safely assume, that religious people go to a church, because of their religion not because they are members of non-church association.

The positive effect of income (class as a proxy) is consistent with VSB's (2002) research, where income is seen as a resource, that can give you possibilities to get more involved. You can pay for a nurse to take care for your children, pay for a cleaner and of course sometimes even a membership in a club costs money (e. g. membership in a golf club).

On the contrary the consequential analysis does not show any relation between trust in the Parliament and sectarianism. Except of the self-explanatory dependence between trust in others and trust in the Parliament, the only statistical significant explanatory variables are the Roman-Catholic affiliation and the class. The class can be explained in the way, that the higher classes are more conservative, because they want to keep current social order, so they believe more in the current political institutions. The effect of the affiliation to the Roman-Catholic church is puzzling. However, the specific post-communist and atheist environment in the Czech Republic could cause that the members of the Catholic church have really no reason to believe in the political institutions or consistently with Putnam (1993) the Catholic Church in the Czech Republic can differ from the US Catholics in the same way as the Italian Catholic Church does (i.e. not foster, but rather restrict trust in the political system).

Both the non-existent effect of sectarianism and the negative effect of the Roman-Catholic affiliation suggest, that in the Czech Republic the difference between churches and sects is not inherent in the support of the government.

## CONCLUSION

The paper contributes to the research of political participation in two ways. Firstly, it provides the economic theory, that could stand behind political participation of churches/sects. Secondly, it provides an empirical research on Czech data.

The model of church and sect and the theory of differences between strong and weak ties produce a basic argument of the negative influence of sectarianism on political participation. Two possible explanation its occurrence were derived. First, sects can be in an opposition to the state, therefore they do not encourage the participation. Secondly, sects restrict the total number of associations you are involved in through a creation of strong ties, hence you get more resources in terms of information and contacts.

The American data suggest the theory holds. Probit analysis of the Czech dataset produces strong evidence about relatively large direct effect of sectarianism on general political participation. On the other hand, the effect on voter turnout itself is not so straightforward. When controlled for involvement in associations such as sports club or NGOs, there is no direct effect of sectarianism, but indication of the indirect effect was found. Consistently with the theory, sectarianism restricts time spent in other associations and because involvement in associations has a strong effect on voter turnout, sectarianism influences voter turnout through its negative effect on time spent in associations. On the contrary the hypothesis suggesting sectarianism restrains trust (or support) to the government was not proved on the Czech data.

The analysis also shows a difference between resources to general political participation and voter turnout. The political participation demands higher engagement in an association, like volunteering. Decision to cast a vote depends in compliance with Downs' theory more on how much information you can get. Specifically, attendance at mass provides only free information, therefore resources for voter turnout. However, it is volunteering for a church that makes you participate more in general.

Of course, we have to be cautious to make any strong conclusions, the missing quantitative variables like time and income, even if they were replaced by proxy, means that it is complicated to find the exact effect of sectarianism, associations, etc. We can be quite sure about the sign of the effect, but the size is not so clear.

Obtaining better data for the social networks (including churches) and political participation is a goal to make larger progress in the field. Further research on differences inside of churches is needed to prove, that the affiliation to a church is not by itself sufficient

evidence that an individual is not part of a religious sect or sect-like intra church group. This is necessary condition to usage the level of sectarianism as was used in this paper.

Important research should also be done on other denominations in the Czech Republic, because despite the decrease of members of the three main affiliation in the Czech Republic, the numbers of people reporting themselves as other affiliation is increasing.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Table in Appendix.

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# APPENDIX

## MODEL OF CHURCH AND SECT

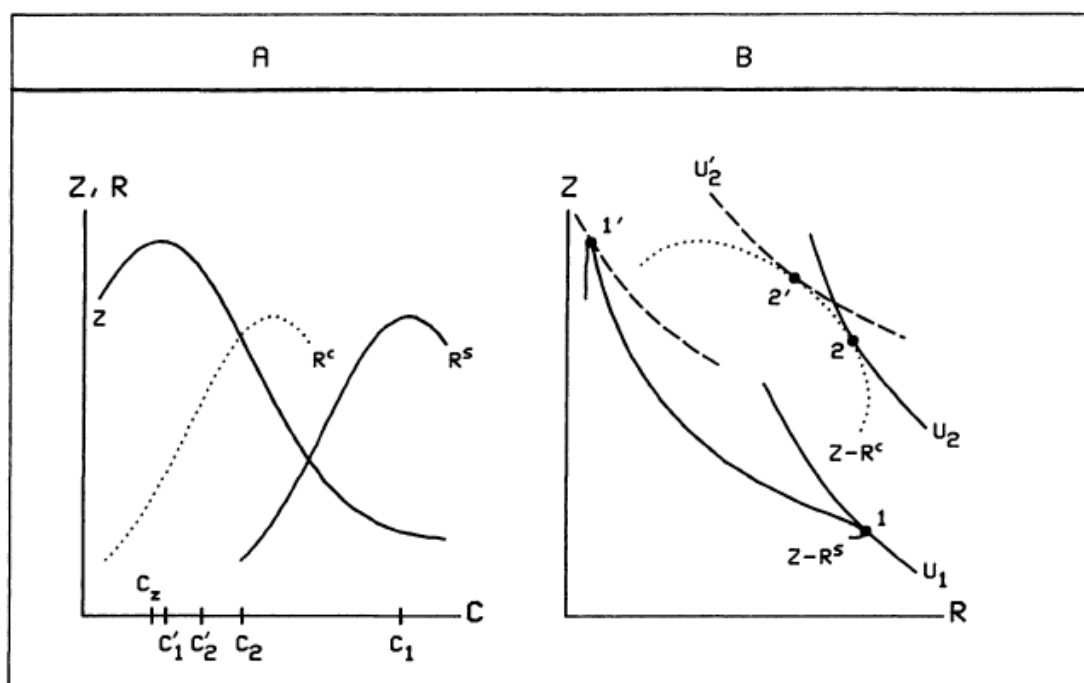


FIG. 5.—A,  $R^c$  and  $R^s$  are the profiles of church and sect, respectively. Sect norms,  $C_r^s$ , deviate farther from secular norms,  $C_z$ . B, The church frontier,  $Z-R^c$ , is concave; the sect frontier,  $Z-R^s$ , is convex. Two different sets of indifference curves and optima, primed and unprimed, are superimposed.

Source: A Formal Model of Church and Sect (Iannaccone 1988)

TABLE SHOWING CHURCH AFFILIATIONS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC  
IN 1991 AND 2001 CENSUS

Church Affiliation	1991		2001		Index 2001/1991
	absolute	%	absolute	%	
Believers (total)	4 523 734	43.9	3 288 088	32.2	72.7
The Czechoslovak Hussite Church	178 036	1.7	99 103	1	55.7
The Roman-Catholic Church	4 021 385	39	2 740 780	26.8	68.2
The Protestant Church of the Czech Brethren	203 996	2	117 212	1.2	57.5
Other Affiliations	120 317	1.2	330 993	3.2	275.1
No Affiliation	4 112 864	39.9	6 039 991	59	146.9
Not found	1 665 617	16.2	901 981	8.8	54.2
Total	10 302 215	100	10 230 060	100	99.3

Source: Český statistický úřad 2003