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INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON ECONOMIC GROWTH AND THE STATE
OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN RELATION TO CONTEMPORARY
THEORIES OF SECULARISATION

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Abstract: The article concerns contemporary research on the influence of religion on economic growth and the state of the environment, its limitations and the need to consider the category of secularisation and its various concepts. The authors concretise this objective by analysing the existing literature on the subject. In the first part, they discuss the methodological aspects of the problem signalled. In the next two, they review theories on the relationship between religion and economic growth as well as the state of the environment. In the fourth part, they analyse the concept of secularisation and its importance in objectifying the relationships and discrepancies occurring between religion, economics, and the environment. They conclude by arguing that the data collected does not support the strong secularisation thesis, according to which religion in its essential manifestations is consistently and irreversibly displaced from social life, and thus its influence on the economy and the natural environment disappears.

Key words: economic growth, religion, environment, theories of secularisation.

1. Introduction

Concepts of secularisation, for it is appropriate to use the plural here, are an important subject of reflection in contemporary sociological, theological and philosophical thought, religious studies, political science, anthropology, psychology as well as economic sciences. This is why the research continuum is very broad. In this article, we will highlight the need for a more in-depth discussion of the research, which has been growing in recent decades, relating to issues of the influence of religion on the economy and the environment. We focus on Christian denominations only. In particular, we will refer to Barroso and McCleary's results from the field of economics of religion (2003; 2005; 2019). These results are based on surveys included in the World Values Survey and the International Survey Programme. In analysing the influence of religion on the environment, we will also use the theoretical concept of the so-called environmental Kuznets curve (EKC). The term first appeared in Grossman and Krueger's (1991) article on US–Mexico trade liberalisation issues; its name, however, comes from Panayotou (1993). The EKC curve describes the dependence of pollution levels on GDP per capita; initially, as wealth increases, pollution levels also increase only to begin to decrease once a certain value of GDP per capita is reached; thus, the EKC curve is shaped like an inverted U.

This curve is important in that it indicates the dependence of environmental issues on economic growth. It makes it possible to combine two strands of research, namely the consideration of: (1) the influence of religious practices and beliefs on economic growth and (2) their influence on the state of the environment. Both of these strands of research are widely represented in the scientific literature of the last few decades, with the former, of course, having a much longer tradition dating back to the works of Weber and Durkheim in the twentieth century.

The research findings presented hereafter are relevant to discussions concerning the secularisation processes taking place in contemporary societies. In particular, they may be useful in assessing the extent of the phenomenon of secularisation. They will support the search for answers to two important questions: whether, in the modern world, the influence of the entire complex of religious beliefs, practices, rituals, values, and structures is being reduced; or whether there is a certain nucleus or centre of this complex that resists the processes of secularisation.

2. Methodology

An analysis of the literature on the influence of religion on economic growth and the state of the environment indicates the need for a multifaceted approach to the topic. It may be useful, for example, to include economic, sociological and theological perspectives in the research. This can be done by applying the concepts of *homo oeconomicus*, *homo socialis* and *homo religiosus*. Referring to the description of the attributes of the sociological man and the economic man compiled by W. Morawski (2001, 34 ff) and extending this depiction with the attributes of the religious man in the Christian sense (Bartnik 2020), the following table of analytical indicators can be obtained.

| Dimensions | Religious man | Economic man | Sociological man |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Subject | human being, humanity as a community | individual | group, community, individual as a member of a group or community |
| Motivation | salvation of oneself and the members of the community | self-interest | value (e.g. freedom, tradition, equality, faith) |
| Evaluation criteria | faith, commandments, teaching of the Church (churches) | calculative rationality, utilitarian and consequentialist criteria | various rationalities, non-rationalities and irrationalities, criteria of a normative nature |
| Principles of operation | Divine grace or free choice (e.g. in Pelagianism) to act in accordance with the commandments | free choice with restrictions concerning capital resources and other means of production | activities subject to soft constraints related to the actions of others as well as to habit and tradition |
| Area of operation | the sacred sphere and the <i>profanum</i> sphere as subordinate to the former | the market, the private sphere | society and its systems and institutions, the public sphere |
| Principle of social organisation | Scripture, dogmas, rituals, community organised hierarchically (Catholicism) or hierarchically with elements of democracy; faith | interaction of individuals according to procedural rationality and preferences held | impact of policies according to criteria of substantive rationality (e.g. social justice) |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--|
| | seeking a rational basis | | |
| Aims of the analysis | justification of faith | prediction | description, explanation, interpretation |
| Methods | diverse (historical, textual analysis, hermeneutics, phenomenology, metaphysical analogy, etc.) | formal, mathematical, statistical and empirical | empirical, qualitative, statistical |
| Methodology | historical, positivist, speculative, personalist; also fragmentary methodologies (e.g. kerygmatic, intuitive) | reductionism, individualism | holism, organicism |
| Intellectual tradition | Scripture, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, also M. Luther, J. Calvin, F. Schleiermacher | A. Smith, A. Marshall, J. M. Keynes, P. Samuelson and the heterodox schools | K. Marx, E. Durkheim, M. Weber, T. Parsons, P. Berger, T. Luckmann |

The above compilation, as already suggested, shows the complexity of analyses dealing with issues related to secularisation processes, their scope, intensity and structural links and their role with regard to economic growth and the environment. Establishing an exploratory framework is complex and necessarily has to take into account the contexts of different scientific disciplines.

An important theoretical reference to support the understanding of the issues raised here is provided by a review of the literature relating to the relationship between religion, economic growth, the state of the environment and, against this background, an overview of the discussion of secularisation on the ground of social science and social philosophy. It is also necessary to take into account, as already mentioned, surveys and formal tools related to the EKC hypothesis, and thus concepts from the field of mathematical modelling of environmental economics phenomena. The results obtained should be considered in relation to the various definitions of secularisation and with the assumption that the basic measure of economic growth is GDP *per capita*. Although it is not the only indicator of well-being and, moreover, there is debate around its adequacy, it still plays a crucial role in economic theory (Coyle 2015).

3. Religion and Economic Growth

The first significant concept addressing the issue of the influence of religion on the level of economic development was Max Weber's theory outlined in his well-known book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904-1905). This work includes a thesis that Calvinism was particularly important for the birth of the capitalist economy. This denomination, through the radicalism of its doctrine of Grace and justification, encouraged hard work and thrift, for the wealth resulting from such behaviour was to be the only visible sign of belonging to the group of people chosen by God and saved. Underlying Weber's concept was certain historiosophy, undoubtedly alluding to Hegel and Marx, according to which the history of humanity is the manifestation of an evolving rationality; it is this rationality that is embodied in, among other things, magical rituals, religions and, finally, a society based on free market exchange. Weber could be said to have reversed the relationship between base and superstructure found in Marxian thought, in a way taking a step towards Hegel. Thus, religions ceased to be merely reactive elements of modern history and, according to this sociologist, became – at least some of them – important drivers of progress. The above-mentioned views were later referred to by Tawney (1998), who extended Weber's theses to other Protestant denominations. A somewhat affirmative attitude towards religion is also shown by the systems theory of Parsons (1968) which links religion to culture, ranked high among other social systems.

Significant transformations and new ideas in reflection on religion and its links with economic sciences came in the 1970s and 1980s. The works of Azzi and Ehrenberg (1975), Becker (1976) and Stigler (1982) initiated the implementation of the concept of rational choice in the description of the phenomenon of religion; these efforts were then continued by Iannaccone (1992). The result was a theory of religion as a particular market in which there is, as in conventional markets, demand and supply. "Transactions" that take place within this market are analogous to *strict* economic exchanges, although they are often subject to various regulations, as pointed out by Chaves and Cann (1992). Namely, the state authorities may support certain religions by means of appropriate laws (for example, "blue laws" restrict business activity in certain states of the USA) and budgetary measures; they may also combat them – this was and is the case in communist countries (Froese 2008; Johnson 2018). However, as noted by Khan, Aigerim and Wu (2023), freedom of religion is an important factor in economic development.

The above-mentioned works belong to a strand of research to be distinguished from the economic theory of religion by Stark and

Bainbridge (1987) emerging from their theory of action, according to which religion can be reduced to an exchange of rewards – such as a place within a community or the opportunity to participate in rituals – and compensators, which include hope for a future life, inner peace, prayer. The concept is also a theory of power, for it is power that sets the exchange ratios between the various rewards and compensators, and it is access to it that facilitates the acquisition of the most attractive among them.

In recent decades, a number of articles have been published that refer to the writings of Max Weber, while at the same time referring to the idea of a religious market. These articles compare – based on archival records – wealth level, education, and attitudes to hard and persistent work in population groups belonging to different denominations. In particular, Becker and Woessmann (2008) analysed tax data from the Kingdom of Prussia from the second half of the nineteenth century and concluded from this that there was a relationship between denomination and education and wealth level: Protestants clearly fell into the richer group, which also had superior certified knowledge compared to Catholics. Meanwhile the articles by Boppert et al. (2013; 2014), also referring to the second half of the nineteenth century, examined Swiss schooling in terms of the academic performance of students belonging to different denominations and obtained results consistent with Weber's concepts; young people from Protestant families apparently had better results than young people from Catholic communities. Basten and Betz (2013) and similarly Spenkuch (2017) addressed the issue of Protestants' and Catholics' attitudes towards leisure time in Germany and Switzerland; from their research, one can learn that Protestants statistically devote more time to work and are more engaged in it.

Of relevance to the research strand described above are the works of Barro and McCleary. The authors, in the spirit of rational choice theory applied to the workings of religion, treat individual denominations as enterprises with specific production functions converting "inputs", in the form of, among other things, church attendance and financial offerings, into "outputs", which are to be beliefs in particular.

Barro and McCleary, drawing on data taken from, among others, the World Survey Values and the International Survey Programme, assess the impact of selected measures characterising religiosity on economic growth as measured by GDP per capita. The measures mentioned are frequency of church attendance, belief in heaven and belief in the existence of hell. The authors achieve significant results, as they show that an increase in belief in heaven and, to an even greater extent, an increase in belief in the existence of hell, contribute to economic growth expressed through the size of GDP per capita. At the same time, an increase in the frequency of church attendance is accompanied by a decrease in GDP per capita. These results naturally raise the question of the balance of the

impact of the above-mentioned factors on the economy. According to Barro and McCleary, the net effect on the economy is difficult to estimate and depends largely on the efficiency with which the two components of religious experience, believing and belonging, occur and which of these elements plays a greater role.

The results presented here require a comment, as the relationship between the measures of religiosity indicated above and the size of GDP per capita is subject to important assumptions. Namely, it is assumed, when assessing the relationship between each of the above measures and economic growth as measured by GDP per capita, that the other two measures remain unchanged. Thus, in particular, the increase in frequency of church attendance is negatively related to GDP per capita growth only under the assumption that belief in heaven and belief in the existence of hell remain unchanged. The simultaneous upward dynamic of all the measures of religiosity under consideration makes it likely that the social capital needed for economic development will increase, although it does not determine this increase with certainty.

Concluding this section of the article, it is important to note the publications devoted to the possible influence of religion on the development of that part of the economy which is not reflected in official economic data, namely the so-called *shadow economy*. The influence of religion on it has been explored by Schneider, Linsbauer, and Heinemann (2015), and Qayyum, Anjum, and Sabir (2020). This phenomenon stems from religious institutions frequently supplementing or substituting for state roles, thereby establishing broad networks based on ethical considerations, poverty alleviation, and hierarchical governance.

4. Religion and the State of the Environment

The Christians have a special attitude towards what we today call the environment, nature (in the narrower sense of the term), the collection of earthly ecosystems, and what Scripture calls creation, with the word also including human beings. In contrast to the secularised institutions of the modern Western world, the media or NGOs, for Christians the environment has a complex ontological dimension, and is always treated as a part of the exceptional relationship linking them to the Creator, as both His gift and reflection. Moreover, Christianity sees man as the focal point of creation, and therefore ecology – as Benedict XVI expressed it in his encyclical *Caritas in veritate* (2009) – cannot disregard the legitimate and morally decent needs of man. More radical in nature is the encyclical – the first ever document of its kind devoted entirely to the environment – *Laudato si* by Pope Francis (2015), in which the author, writing about integral ecology, identifies Christ as the saviour not only of man but of all

nature. Moreover, and this is an important novelty, Francis mentions ecological sin as a serious expression of disorder in human action.

The Catholic Church's interest in environmental issues dates back to the 1960s, for already the Constitution *Gaudium et spes* adopted at the Second Vatican Council in 1965 points to the need to respect *earthly things*, whose functioning is determined by the order established by God. Five years later, in 1970, Paul VI raised ecological issues in an address to FAO representatives for the first time in the history of his office. Since then, the popes – in addition to the two encyclicals mentioned above – have presented a number of documents on environmental issues.

The traditional Protestant churches have also spoken out on ecological issues. As McFee notes (2002), the World Council of Churches presented its position on this matter as early as 1966. Similarly, the Lutheran World Federation has been voicing its opinions on topics related to ecology since the 1970s. These issues have also been addressed by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. The head of the Orthodox Church, Bartholomew I, is also constantly involved in environmental protection; he has thus become known as the “Green Patriarch”, similar to Benedict XVI, who was referred to as the “Green Pope” (for a broader overview of the positions of the Christian churches, see Gruszecki et al. (2023).

A different attitude to environmental issues is held by many new evangelical groups, whose members often question the human impact on climate change or, while recognising the threat, treat it as an eschatological prophecy fulfilling the words of Scripture about the end of time. Consequently, these movements see no need to fight against environmental degradation (Veldman et al. 2014; Veldman 2019; Poole 2020; Luetz et al. 2021; Tyson 2022).

Despite declarations by many church institutions about respect for nature and the need to combat climate change, some scientists are convinced of the negative impact of the Christian message on the state of the environment. One example is White, who, in his article (1967), based on an analysis of biblical texts such as the famous verse 28 of Exodus which speaks of man's dominion over flora and fauna, accused Judeo-Christian civilisation of an abusive attitude towards nature.

White's claim has been subjected to intense criticism by many scholars. Above all, it has been pointed out that the Bible contains – in addition to what might be called the dominant tradition – wisdom tradition (exemplified by Ps. 24: 1) and prophetic tradition (represented by Isa. 24: 7), and these emphasise the special connection between God and nature (Johnson 2000; Pietrzak 2019). Opponents of White's thesis also point to other elements of the Christian message that speak of the Creator's solidarity with creation; these are mainly the Christological dogmas attesting to the Incarnation and the saving death of Jesus on the cross and the doctrine of the third person of the Trinity, or the dogmas concerning the Holy Spirit emphasising God's immanence in the natural

world.

The subject of the influence of Christianity on ecology has been repeatedly addressed in publications of recent decades. In this context, we can mention the books by Hessel et al. (2000), Jenkins (2008), McDaniel (2009), LeVasseur et al. (2017) or Pietrzak (2019); also noteworthy are the compendia *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology* edited by Gottlieb (2006) and the Jenkins et al. *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology* (2017). The references of individual Christian denominations to ecological issues are addressed in the works of Penna-Firme (2023) and Roccia (2024).

We conclude this section with a result that is relevant to the thesis defended in this article. Namely, in Gruszecki et al. (2021) it was shown, based on the works of Barro and McCleary cited above, that – assuming the environmental Kuznets curve hypothesis is true – as the measures of religiosity mentioned in the previous section increase, the level of pollution and environmental devastation initially increases and then, after exceeding a certain critical value in terms of GDP per capita, begins to gradually decrease. Thus, the relationships between the values characterising the level of religiosity and the values describing the state of the environment recreate the relationship between economic growth and the level of pollution, in mathematical terms taking the shape of an inverted U. We will return to the thesis presented above in section 5 of our article.

5. Definitions of Secularisation

The term “secularisation” is known to be ambiguous. It derives its origins from the material sphere, where it meant a transfer of ownership – or a change in the management of some property – from that held by the churches (in particular the Catholic Church) to the secular. Nowadays, there are many understandings of the term in the social sciences that attempt to answer the fundamental questions: what is the process of secularisation if we assume, and most scholars do, that it is a fact? Which domains does it affect? What are its dynamics? What are its causes?

From the point of view of this article and the argumentation presented in the following section, the most relevant are the questions about the extent of the process of secularisation and the directionality of the changes taking place. The general perception is that secularisation is supposed to consist in a gradual reduction of the influence of religion in all its dimensions (institutional, symbolic, ritual, personal beliefs and emotions) on other sectors of society. In particular, this phenomenon therefore implies a significant weakening of belief in dogmas and the vanishing of religious practices and – by the same token – a reduction in the influence of inspirations emanating from the domain of religion towards various social systems, for example economic systems. The process described can only lead to a reduction of the importance of

religion in public life or can even, as some scholars believe, head towards its almost complete elimination. The latter view – one might call it a strong secularisation thesis – represented, for example, by Marx, Nietzsche and, as it seems, the early Berger, implies the complete eradication of transcendence and the closing of immanence in itself (in Nietzsche's words).

Most theories of secularisation are more nuanced and balanced in their theses. Berger himself, in later publications such as *A Rumor of Angels* (1970), distanced himself from the claims made in *The Sacred Canopy* (1967), only to make another turn towards a more moderate concept of secularisation in his book *The Many Altars of Modernity: Toward a Paradigm for Religion in a Pluralist Age* (2014); in the latter, the phenomenon of cultural pluralisation does not necessarily mean the twilight of faith. Luckmann, the creator of the concept of *invisible religion* (1967), sees the potential for all beliefs that can be hidden in the modernisation and pluralisation of the social world, although this author, using a particular concept of transcendence referring to the phenomenology of A. Schutz, expands the concept of religion to a great extent, making it of little use for the study of typically religious beliefs and behaviour. Despite the above observation, one can conclude from his reflections that secularisation is a process that affects institutional religions, creating in their place a broad spectrum of private and individual religions. Luckmann refers to such phenomena approvingly, which means that in his view secularisation is a positive thing.

Secularisation in one of its understandings proposed by Schmitt (1922) is also becoming a positive phenomenon, although differently understood. In addition to the dominant notion of secularisation as the fading of religious values, he also distinguished another concept of it, according to which secularisation is the transfer of religious structures of thought and power into the secular sphere (he offered examples of this in the fields of politics and law). A non-standard approach to the term under consideration is also adopted by N. Luhmann, who on the one hand, following Parsons, treats secularisation as the result of a process of differentiation of social systems, while on the other hand notes that it is a phenomenon originating in religion itself and serving to "position" it against its environmental system. Luhmann (1977; 1984). This approach is also referred to by Puczyłowski (2017), who sees in the concept analysed here an expression of the dialectical relationship and interaction between the religious and the secular.

Among the theories of secularisation that are part of the traditional way of defining the term, we should mention in particular the concepts of Fenn (1978), Wilson (1976; 1985) and Bruce (2002) or Norris et al. (2011). The theory proposed by the last two authors is currently very popular; they refer to some of Wilson's ideas and suggest that religion compensates for people's lack of a sense of security and, in addition, gives them a sense

of being rooted in the cultural traditions of a particular region or country. Culture, in turn, is an irreplaceable source of meanings that create reference frames for the functioning of individuals and large social groups.

Theories of secularisation – as defined above – have been and continue to be extensively criticised (Mandes 2016, 219-231). They are accused of being ideological (Hadden (1987), underestimating tradition (Hervieu-Leger 2000), or failing to understand new forms of religiousness, such as *believing without belonging* (Davie 2000; 2008). Authors of the critical publications generally do not undermine the significance of certain processes like differentiation, modernisation, or rationalisation. They also recognise the problems faced by ecclesiastical institutions in the Western world. However, they draw attention to the vitality of religious beliefs and emotions manifested at the individual level. They thus clearly separate such components of religion as institution or ritual from the internal faith of individuals, albeit that faith is often unorthodox and displays a high degree of syncretism.

There have been various attempts to classify or typologise theories of secularisation. One of the more influential is the typologisation derived from J. Sommerville (1998), who has effectively distinguished five different usages of the term “secularisation” (the sixth *usus* of the term does not add anything relevant to the division). Therefore, the term can refer to:

- (1) specific institutions,
- (2) large social structures,
- (3) activities,
- (4) the mental sphere,
- (5) populations.

The first point refers to the change in the nature of institutions: from ecclesiastical to secular; an example of this is the secularisation of the Duchy of Prussia. Point (2) describes the phenomenon of differentiation and autonomisation of different systems, which is fundamental in the sociological understanding of society. Condition (3) indicates the transfer of activities, such as charity, from the religious space into the domain of the state and secular organisations. The next point (4) relates to the change in motivation for different behaviours – people are increasingly less concerned with reward or punishment after death and more focused on temporal motivation. Condition (5) is meant to indicate a general decline in the importance of religion – in all its dimensions – in social life.

We will still use the above list of meanings of the term “secularisation”, translating into a typologisation of different theories of secularisation, in the argumentation presented in the next section. Thus, although many sociology of religion theorists have put forward other divisions, we consider Sommerville’s concept to be a suitable point of reference.

6. Conclusions

The issues discussed in the article warrant the conclusion that the research into the relationship between religion, economic growth and the state of the environment should take into account the issue of secularisation, but a strong secularisation thesis is inadequate.

On the one hand, in section 2, in addition to reviewing works on the relationship between religion and the economy, we cited the following statements from Barro and McCleary:

(A) An increase in frequency of church attendance reduces GDP per capita;

(B) An increase in belief in heaven increases GDP per capita;

(C) An increase in belief in the existence of hell increases GDP per capita. On the other hand, in section 3, based on Barro and McCleary's results and the environmental Kuznets curve hypothesis, we obtained the following relationships:

(D) An increase in the frequency of church attendance causes environmental pollution to first increase and then decrease;

(E) An increase in belief in heaven causes environmental pollution to first increase and then decrease;

(F) An increase in belief in the existence of hell causes environmental pollution to first increase and then decrease. It should be stated that the last sentences are merely hypotheses and depend on the confirmation (or rejection) of the EKC hypothesis for a given region. In Poland, it was confirmed in the work of Józwick et al. (2021).

In this context, let us look again at the ways of understanding secularisation as a term and as a concept proposed by Sommerville. To begin with, let us note that definition (1) indicates certain facts of the past (analogous events may also occur in the future); their status is not cognitively questionable. Both proponents and opponents of a strong secularisation thesis must agree on the occurrence of said events. Definition (2) also appears not to raise much doubt; the differentiation of social systems in recent history is a fact (the question of the interrelationship of autonomising secular systems and the religious system remains to some extent open and disputed). The same applies to the description in (3). In our opinion, definitions (4) and especially (5) correspond most closely with the understanding of secularisation proposed here.

Important conclusions can also be obtained by comparing statements A and C with Sommerville's points. It is not difficult to see that A can in principle be combined with each of the above definitions, while points B and C indicate the presence of religious motivations at the individual level and their positive impact on – after all, crucial for all social structures – economic growth (of course, such motivations coexist with motivations of a secular nature). Thus, B and C contradict in particular the understanding

of secularisation found in condition (5).

Let us further ask which of the definitions (1) – (5) describe the phenomenon under consideration most adequately and consistently with socially dominant beliefs. In our opinion, the thesis which best encapsulates social beliefs about secularisation, and which causes the most controversy is the strong secularisation thesis. We use this term to distinguish other concepts of secularisation from the one used in this article.

How should we interpret the observations in the fourth paragraph? Do they indicate the growing importance of the group described by the phrase *believing without belonging*? There is the first obvious answer. However, the problem is more complicated. There is and can be no such thing as a completely private religion, just as there is no such thing as, according to Wittgenstein, a private language. Religion requires a certain level of communication and communicability, and with this, it seems, must come a certain, perhaps limited, level of institutionalisation. This problem certainly requires further research.

In the case of relationships D and F, their hypothetical nature also limits their argumentative power. Assuming the EKC hypothesis is true, these appear to indicate a variable effect of the considered measures of religiosity on the state of the environment. However, for their high values, a decrease in pollution rates is predicted. This would indicate a positive impact of intensely lived faith on the environment and thus on society; however, it should be borne in mind that the above-mentioned impact takes place through complex political and economic systems, which are themselves transformed in the process. This again contradicts the strong secularisation thesis. For this thesis presupposes the displacement of religion in all its manifestations from social life.

This article reviewed publications from recent decades on the topic of the influence of religion on the economy and the state of the environment. These areas were linked using the concept of EKC. The results of the studies by Barro et al. (2003; 2019) played a special role in our analysis. These results were compared with various definitions of secularisation and especially with the strong secularisation thesis, according to which religion is consistently removed from social life in all its aspects. In our opinion, the results presented contradict this position. Measures of religiosity such as belief in heaven and belief in the existence of hell show a positive effect on economic growth reflected by GDP per capita. This means that religiosity at the level of inner beliefs and religious emotions still plays a socially important role. However, further in-depth research into the significance of various manifestations of religious institution functioning is desirable.

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