Beata Springer*
University of Zielona Góra, Zielona Góra, Poland
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2112-6556

The Free State of Bavaria –
between Christianization and secularism

Introduction

The article will analyze the conditions of changing attitudes to religion in the Free State of Bavaria. The reappraisals expressed in the disappearance of religiosity are influenced by a number of factors (social, cultural and economic changes and current politics/decisions). The clash of different value systems is causing a profound change that is reflected in the loss of importance of the Christian churches as institutions that shape people's priorities, help to make decisions and create convictions.

The exploration should begin with an analysis of the widely discussed phenomenon of secularization in the doctrine (mainly in the sociology of religion, but also in the political sciences). Secularization is understood as a multi-threaded process in which religion loses its social significance. The traditional dimension of religion and religiousness ceases to be a matter of public interest (Lat. *secularis* – earthly, transient world). Secularism, on the other hand, has been negatively characterized and signifies an ideology that negates all religious elements both in the social life of man and in the whole culture. In secularism, relations with God are denied. It is a peculiar kind of atheistic philosophy of life (although not always) with a simultaneous focus on the temporal matters of man. There is a phenomenon of anti-religiousness (Polish Society of Thomas Aquinas). Therefore, it is not legitimate to identify these notions. It is definitely necessary to separate them.

Theories of secularization

Traditionally, researchers have seen the main causes of secularization in social modernization (technological progress). The more societies benefited from the achievements of modernity, scientific thinking, rationality and explaining the world in this way, the less space was left for phenomena, thus, inexplicable, i.e. religious matters. Moreover, it was explained that in democratic systems, the bond between religious and secular power is

* Correspondence address: Instytut Nauk o Polityce i Administracji, Al. Wojska Polskiego 69, 65-762 Zielona Góra, Polska, e-mail: B.Springer@wh.uz.zgora.pl.

looser and the processes taking place in those societies (migration, urbanization, electronic communication) change the ways of functioning and living. There was talk about the decline of religion, religious practices and faith. In 1968, Peter L. Berger presented a thesis about secularization of the world. Religion was rapidly losing its influence in politics, economics and culture – a global trend (Perszon, 2014: 109-120). The author's position was significantly modified because, in the late 1990s, he stated that secularization researchers (including him) had made a mistake called falsification of the theory, because this theory is currently not fully confirmed, since without denying the existence of the phenomenon of secularization, it can be shown that in many places in the world societies still remain very religious. According to Berger, there is even a religious revival (Islam or Evangelicalism in Latin America). It should be remembered, however, that while in Western and Central Europe traditional theories of secularization are justified, North America, for example, eludes these analyses (progressive modernization without a decline in religiousness). Hence, the conclusion that Western and Central and Eastern Europe is a kind of "phenomenon of progressive secularization" (Berger, 2019). Janusz Mariański is right in stating that the different culturally specific variants of secularization processes do not allow for generalization, and each case should be considered individually, as exceptional, unique (Mariański, 2017: 250-254). In Western Europe, the processes of modernization of society were treated as contrary to religion (Mariański, 2004: 50). At the same time as Berger's theory, Thomas Luckmann created a concept – privatization of religion (partially different from secularization). According to Luckmann, individualization and pluralism make religion adaptable to personal needs, becoming a kind of "property" of the individual. The author states that: "[...] privatization is a religion without the Church, individual-theological responsibility, religious subjectivity, separation of religious and public issues, separation from the religion of morality, increasing selectivity in accepting the truths of the faith, and the emergence of 'new religious topics' such as sex, tourism, psychotherapy" (Borowik, 2008).

Another recognized researcher, Charles Taylor, uses a holistic approach to secularization in his analysis, indicating that the first is the detachment of public life from religion, and the second is the decline of religion, the atrophy of faith and the disappearance of religious practices (Taylor, 2010). The secularization that has been going on for hundreds of years in Europe has inevitably led to a change in the relationship between politics and religion. The whole of social and political life, embedded in a certain spiritual vision, intertwined with each other nowadays is impossible to realize (Mariański, 2004: 47). According to Taylor, however, we live in a secular era in which religion is a matter of conscious choice (Bielik-Robson, 2007). Analyzing the phenomenon of secularization, the author pointed to three modi of secularization. The first one was the elimination of religious symbols, references to God and religion in state documents. He called the sec-

ond modus the change at the level of religious practices and perception of religion as a phenomenon surrounded by a special esteem. The third approach, on the other hand, is related to the perception of the Christian religion as one of the possible ways of choosing to function in society (Kościelniak, 2011). Taylor also believes that the phenomenon of secularization should be redefined, modified, because it can provide an impulse for churches (faith) to modernize and adapt to the changing life of society. Religion, the church must also change if it wants to survive in a secularized, individualized society.

Jose Casanova (author of the theory on deprivatization of religion), an expert on the subject, sees the progressive decline of the institutional Christian religion in Western Europe. He states that the traditionally understood theory of secularization is reflected in Western Europe, but is not applicable in the United States. He distinguished three meanings of the term: as the collapse of religious beliefs and practices, as the privatization of religion, and as the separation, emancipation of the secular sphere from religious institutions and norms (Casanova, 2009-2010: 101). Casanova, not fully agreeing with the traditional explanation of secularization theory, believes that secularization of Western European societies can be: "[...] better explained in terms of the triumph of the regime's secularist content than in terms of the structural process of socioeconomic development" and in terms of the individual (particular) coincidence of historical events (Casanova, 2009-2010: 101). According to Casanova, it is a mistake of scientists to combine secularization with modernization instead of the disintegration and fusion of communities of different types: religious, political or social (Casanova, 2009-2010: 108).

To sum up, it can be said that understanding secularization as a social process in modern societies we are dealing with a religion losing its influence. Secularism, on the other hand, is a state in which religion will no longer have any meaning in social life (Mariański, 2016: 7 after Pickel, 2014). The phenomenon of secularization has undoubtedly brought us new forms of religiousness, religious pluralism, individualization as well as turning away from the institutional, traditional church. There has been a separation of the ecclesiastical/institutional layer and the rituals associated with it from the spiritual layer (faith in God itself). People still remain believers in God, but do so in a completely different way, perhaps modern, individual. They certainly want to have a choice. Hence the confirmation of the theory of plurality (and this is the element of secularization) and the variety (broad spectrum) of religious and spiritual forms. There has been an erosion of traditionally understood religion. One can say that the patterns of Christian European culture that have been shaping Europe for centuries are changing. There is a turn towards a new, individualized, personalized cultural identity (Siewierski, 2013: 22). A state is emerging that Grace Davie has described as "faith without belonging" without any institutional framework. Hence, the drastically changing level of religious

practice, but this does not prove a direct link between modernization and secularization (Krzyżanowski, 2007: 53-67)[1].

Religious pluralization of European countries has become a fact. Diversity and religious difference are everyday life in many countries. This is undoubtedly connected with the influx of immigrants, as Danièle Hervieu-Leger rightly notes: "The strong presence of Islam causes the problem of mutual acclimatization of different religious, cultural and social worlds. Society's response to the recognition of increasingly strong Islamic societies" (Hervieu-Leger, 2006: 4).

Cultural identity of Bavaria

Being the oldest federal state in history, Bavaria has a distinct cultural identity with a clear Catholic character. The image of the people of Bavaria, which functions in the public consciousness, is mainly associated with a group of Old Bavarians. *Laptop und Lederhosen* (laptop and traditional Bavarian leather pants) is a term that is supposed to combine Bavarian tradition with modernity. At the same time, it should be remembered that Bavaria is a country with a large number of immigrants (Dobrowolska-Nowak, 2017: 412)[2]. The cultivation of tradition is one of the expressions of 'Bavarianism', which is expressed in the preservation of the dialects: Bavarian, East-Franconian and Swabian-Alemanian. Singing old songs, playing music on old instruments, and the inhabitants of Oberammergau playing in religious performances (Passions from 1633 in Oberammergau) are an important part of Bavarian folklore. Identity for a large part of the Bavarians is an integral part of their functioning. To quote Tadeusz Paleczny, this is it:

Regional and local identity of an ethnic type. It is a type of pre-national identity closer to ethnic identification, with a cultural region, with local heritage, devoid of state ties. Members of such cultural groups are citizens of wider political societies, sharing territory with members of other groups. An identity such as that which characterizes the Kashubians in Poland or the Bavarians in Germany is a component of the wider interplay of German national culture (Paleczny, 2007: 171).

An element of Bavarianism is the attachment to Roman Catholicism. The Catholic identity of Bavaria is also visible on a political level. Over the years, there has been great support for the CSU (Christian Social Union – *Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern*), a conservative-Christian political party. The CSU's party programmes have reflected the importance of Bavaria of cultivating tradition and cultural individuality, the historical heritage, and Catholic social teaching in accordance with Christian ethics. In recent years,
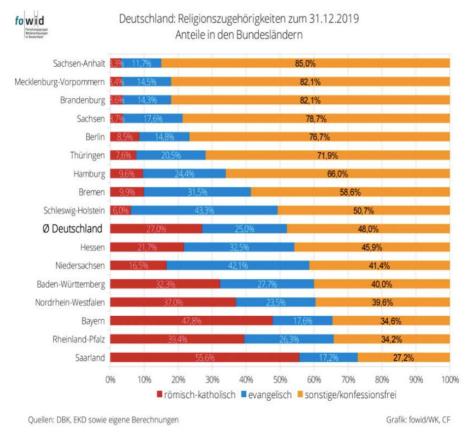
---

[1] In opposition to this theory, another researcher, Steve Bruce, invented the term belonging without faith, claiming that there is a decline in both beliefs and belonging, and Davie herself makes a definition error in recognizing the irrelevance of the level of religious practice. Secularization results from the combination of individualism with diversity.

[2] There are currently 1.19 million foreigners and people with a migration background in Bavaria. According to the federal system for the location of immigrants, 15.52% of all immigrants were located in Bavaria in 2016. More were only located in Rhineland-North Westphalia – 21.21%.

this support has not been so great. At its peak, it was 62.1% (1974), and now it fluctuates in the range of 33% (2018) (Frymark, 2018: 3). In the case of Bavaria, this identity is linked to Roman Catholicism, and despite the Bavarians' openness to Muslim immigrants (willingness to help, social programmes, etc.), the lack of willingness to integrate on the part of the latter causes extreme reactions and controversial and debatable decisions. According to the official statistics of the 2011 census (run by Bavarian Office for Statistics and Data Processing) Bavaria is predominantly Catholic (54.8%). The percentage of Protestant church members was 20.7%. As recently as 1987, about two thirds of the population of Bavaria (67.2%) were Roman Catholics. However, the number of Catholics fell from about 7.3 million to 6.8 million (Bayerisches Landesamt für Statistik, 2013). This is a trend that is evident throughout the Federal Republic of Germany because: the proportion of Catholics in the German population in the 1950s was 46.1% and 27.7% in 2018. The number of members of the Evangelical Church in Germany was 25.84 million in 2003 and 21.14 million in 2018. The number of Catholic priests is also declining. The statistics show a significant number of church departures, with 220,000 people leaving the Protestant Church in 2018 and about 216,100 leaving the Catholic Church. The prediction is that by 2027, the majority of the people in Germany will be non-denominational. According to data from the German Bishops' Conference, in 2019, only 9.1% of Catholics still regularly attended the service. In the Protestant regional churches, the proportion of people attending church services in 2017 was only 3.4%. Among Muslims, regular attendance at the mosques (for Friday's prayers) is practiced by about 50% (Forschungsgruppe Weltanschauungen in Deutschland, 2019). In Bavaria, too, we see such trends. According to the Bavarian Ministry of Education, 75% of the 1.25 million students participated in Catholic or Protestant religious instruction in 2018. However, this is 11% less than ten years earlier (in the school year 2008/2009), when the percentage was as high as 86%. The secularization process did not bypass Germany. However, it should be noted that the situation is completely different in the Western and Eastern *Länder*. The latter are generally secularized as a result of the long-term, deliberate policies of the former German Democratic Republic and the influence of the former Soviet Union.

The following graph shows the religious affiliation between the German states. Bavaria was third from the end of the scale in terms of the percentage of non-denominational persons (34.6%), with a very high prevalence of Roman Catholics (only surpassing the Saarland).

In recent decades, there has been a clash between Bavarian religiousness (understood as the attachment to tradition, the cultivation of identity) and secularization in Western Europe, sometimes even taking the form of secularism. It should be added that the German legal system bases the relationship between the state and the churches on the principle of neutrality; however, churches and religious communities are an important factor in shaping social life there and are part of the process of democratic and good

Deutschland: Religionszugehörigkeiten zum 31.12.2019
Anteile in den Bundesländern

Bundesland	römisch-katholisch	evangelisch	sonstige/konfessionsfrei
Sachsen-Anhalt	3,3%	11,7%	85,0%
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	3,4%	14,5%	82,1%
Brandenburg	3,6%	14,3%	82,1%
Sachsen	3,7%	17,6%	78,7%
Berlin	8,5%	14,8%	76,7%
Thüringen	7,6%	20,5%	71,9%
Hamburg	9,6%	24,4%	66,0%
Bremen	9,9%	31,5%	58,6%
Schleswig-Holstein	6,0%	43,3%	50,7%
Ø Deutschland	27,0%	25,0%	48,0%
Hessen	21,7%	32,5%	45,9%
Niedersachsen	16,5%	42,1%	41,4%
Baden-Württemberg	32,3%	27,7%	40,0%
Nordrhein-Westfalen	37,0%	23,5%	39,6%
Bayern	47,8%	17,6%	34,6%
Rheinland-Pfalz	39,4%	26,3%	34,2%
Saarland	55,6%	17,2%	27,2%

■ römisch-katholisch ■ evangelisch ■ sonstige/konfessionsfrei

Quellen: DBK, EKD sowie eigene Berechnungen   Grafik: fowid/WK, CF

Graph 1. Religious affiliation of the German *Länder*
Source: Forschungsgruppe Weltanschauungen in Deutschland, 2019

public life (Orzeszyna, 2007: 153-160). The position of the Christian denominations is strengthened by the Constitution of the Free State of Bavaria of December 8, 1946 (*Verfassung des Freistaates Bayern*), which, according to Art. 131, paragraph 2, states that the highest aims of education include respect for God, respect for religious beliefs, human dignity, self-restraint, a sense of responsibility, willingness to help, and openness to everything that is true, good and beautiful. Article 135, on the other hand, provides that public schools are common to all children subject to compulsory schooling. In these schools, children are taught and brought up on the basis of the principles of the Christian faith (Bavarian Parliament, 1946).

However, changes are noticeable, the processes of secularization have undoubtedly been going on for a long time. The reasons for this state of affairs include: changing society/generational change, the impact of migration, new European trends and globalization. There is a change in the function of religion, and a move away from an in-

stitutionalized religion. The decline in the importance of church (in light of the comments made in the first part of the text) is also associated with increased prosperity, social security, ever-increasing leisure offers, a changing value system, increasing levels of education, cultural and religious pluralism (new movements/ideologies/religions) and modernization (although there are divergent interpretations of the latter in the doctrine). Thinking and religious faith are separating themselves from religious practices and church institutions. In recent years, it can be seen that part of Western Europe has been expressing a sense of threat to its own identity in connection with the influx of immigrants, among other things. The doctrine speaks of the phenomenon of post-secularization, or of post-secular societies, in which there are signs of religious revival but perceived in a different way (individualized, plural in character, visible deconstruction and disappearance of the institutional church). This is also evident in Bavaria, since in the last few years (starting with the migration crisis in 2015) legal norms have been created that emphasize their own identity, such as the obligation to hang a cross in public offices (Świder, Góra, Springer, 2019: 98-99)[3]. The political party programmes also emphasize that Germany is shaped by a Christian tradition and must remember its Christian identity, while the integration of immigrants must be carried out with respect for *Leitkultur* (Kubiak, 2017: 3-4). Globalization also plays its role here, because: "the tension between the overwhelming marketplace and the need, which many are becoming increasingly aware of, to protect the 'local' culture, religion and history seems to be growing" (Załęcki, 2003: 102). However, from the point of view of religion, faith and religiousness, if the basis of religious revival were to be the disagreement with the behaviour of radical Islamist groups living in Europe, it would not be a true spiritual revival but only a political necessity, a choice caused by fear (Perszon, 2014: 117).

Conclusions

Questions about contemporary social change, secularist tendencies, the crisis of religion in the Free State of Bavaria are multi-faceted and conditioned by a number of the abovementioned premises. Can we talk about the disappearance of religious consciousness or just a certain institutional change in the perception of the institutional church? Are the changes introduced in the last 3-4 years in Bavaria to be understood as the begin-

---

[3] On April 24, 2018, the Prime Minister of the Bavarian government Marcus Söder of the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU), which governs Bavaria, announced that as of June 1, 2018, under the new regulations, crosses would be hung at the entrance of all offices under his authority. The new regulations are the result of an amendment to the General Regulations for the authorities of the Free State of Bavaria (*Allgemeine Geschäftsordnung für die Behörden des Freistaates Bayern Bekanntmachung der Bayerischen Staatsregierung*). In the light of paragraph 28: "A cross must be visibly hung in the entrance area of every public building as an expression of Bavarian historical and cultural identity. These regulations apply only to the offices of the Bavarian government, not to local and federal administration. Nor are the crosses to be displayed in the offices of officials, but only at the entrance to the building. Neither do the crosses have to be located in universities, theaters and museums or in buildings used for mass events" (Bavarian Boverment, 2018).

ning of a religious revival? Or a return to traditional religious perceptions? Is the introduction of restrictions (ban on covering the face) and solutions such as hanging a cross a struggle to defend traditional values and cultural identity? For some time now, the doctrine has been deliberating about a post-secular Europe which, in religious terms, follows a different path, peculiar to itself.

The simplest indicator to measure religiousness is the level of religious practice (that is, attendance at Mass, church vows, baptism, confirmation, priestly ordination, leaving churches), and here, indeed, there is a drastic decline across Western Europe. However, the question remains: what does this indicator tell us about? Does it reflect reality? Are we able to measure with this indicator whether faith in God is falling? Or perhaps it is that this indicator only shows us a change in the religiousness of societies – the transformation caused by, among others, modernization, modern technologies, increase in economic prosperity, cultural pluralization, increase in the level of education and the emerging dissonance between the development of science leading to attempts to rationally explain all phenomena.

It seems that an indispensable element in modern times for churches is their adaptation to secularization processes. Without changes in the churches themselves, it is impossible for them to come out strengthened after secularization processes. The loss of influence of religious institutions on society as understood so far seems to be permanent, and religion itself begins to resemble an 'object of consumption' without imposing, let alone inheriting, its values with very limited influence of religion on public life.

Undoubtedly, beyond all measure, regardless of the progressing processes of secularization and secularism, one must agree with the philosopher Zbigniew Mikołejko that: "the modern man of the West, despite his freedom from all 'kairos' (the filling of the time), so well-known to Christianity, is still 'homo religiosus' hungry for faith, hope and love" (Sroczyńska, 2018: 167).

Bibliography

Bavarian Parliament (1946), *The Constitution of the Free State of Bavaria of December 8, 1946*, https://www.bayern.landtag.de/fileadmin/Internet_Dokumente/Sonstiges_P/BV_Verfassung_Englisch_formatiert_14-12-16.pdf [access on: 2.11.2020].

Bavarian Government (2018), *General Regulations for the authorities of the Free State of Bavaria*, https://www.verkuendung-bayern.de/gvbl/2018-281/ [access on: 2.11.2020].

Bayerisches Landesamt für Statistik (2013), https://www.statistik.bayern.de/presse/archiv/2013/216_2013.php [access on: 2.11.2020].

Berger P.L. (2019), *Refleksje o dzisiejszej socjologii religii*, "Teologia Polityczna" https://teologiapolityczna.pl/peter-l-berger-refleksje-o-dzisiejszej-socjologii-religii [access on: 2.11.2020].

Bielik-Robson A. (2007), O religii w epoce sekularyzmu. Wywiad z Ch. Taylorem, "Wiadomości", https://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/wydarzenia/artykuly/66323,o-religii-w-epoce-sekularyzmu.html [access on: 2.11.2020].

Borowik I. (2008), *O sekularyzacji z perspektywy socjologicznej: teorie, proces społeczny, empirycz-ne argumenty*, "Towarzystwo Kultury Świeckiej im. Tadeusza Kotarbińskiego, http://www.kulturaswiecka.pl/node/19 [access on: 2.11.2020].

Casanova J. (2009-2010), *Sekularyzacja przemyślana na nowo: globalna perspektywa porównawcza*, "Teologia Polityczna", No. 5, pp. 101-114.

Dobrowolska-Nowak J. (2017), *Proces kształtowania niemieckiej kultury otwartości wobec imi-grantów*, "Przegląd Strategiczny", No. 10, pp. 407-422.

Forschungsgruppe Weltanschauungen in Deutschland (2019), *Religionszugehörigkeiten 2019*, https://fowid.de/meldung/religionszugehoerigkeiten-2019 [access on: 2.11.2020].

Frymark K. (2018), *Wolne państwo Bawaria i jego partia: CSU przed sprawdzianem wyborczym*, "Komentarze Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich", No. 288, pp. 1-10.

Hervieu-Leger D. (2006), *Rola religii w integracji społecznej*, "Res Publika Nowa", No. 1, pp. 1-17.

Kościelniak C. (2011), Sekularyzacja po polsku, "Znak", http://www.miesiecznik.znak.com.pl/6782011cezary-koscielniaksekularyzacja-po-polsku/ [access on: 2.11.2020].

Krzyżanowski Ł. (2007), *Wiara bez przynależności czy przynależność bez wiary? Grace Davie i Steve Bruce o przemianach religijności*, [in:] *Koniec sekularyzacji w Europie?*, edit. A Rokicka, M. Warat, P. Kapłon, Kraków, pp. 57-63.

Kubiak P. (2017), *CSU i jej 'Plan dla Bawarii': kulisy, główne tezy i możliwe konsekwencje*, "Biuletyn Instytutu Zachodniego", No. 322, pp.1-5.

Mariański J. (2004), *Co mówi 'duch czasu' – sekularyzacja religii i społeczeństwo postsekularne*, "Rocznik Nauk Społecznych", No. 32(1), pp. 49-83.

Mariański J. (2016), *Religia i religijność w zsekularyzowanych społeczeństwach*, "Zeszyty Naukowe KUL", No. 4(236), pp. 3-26.

Mariański J. (2017), *Sekularyzacja jako megatrend społeczno-kulturowy*, "Relacje międzykultu-rowe", No. 1(1), pp. 231-257.

Orzeszyna K. (2007), *Podstawy relacji między państwem a kościołami w konstytucjach państw członkowskich Unii Europejskiej. Studium prawnoporównawcze*, Lublin.

Paleczny T. (2007), *Interpersonalne stosunki międzykulturowe*, Kraków.

Perszon J. (2014), *Czy Kościół ma receptę na sekularyzm? Religia jako czynnik sprawczy w poli-tyce w kontekście zmierzchu chrześcijańskiej Europy*, "Studia Nauk Teologicznych", No. 9, pp. 109-120.

Pickel G. (2014), *Religion, Religiosität, Religionslosigkeit und religiöse Indifferenz. Religionssoz-iologische Perspectiven im vereinigten Deutschland*, [in:] *Konfessionslosigkeit heute. Zwischen Religiosität und Säkularität*, edit. M. Rose, M. Wermke, Leipzig.

Siewierski J. (2013), *Tożsamość europejska jako problem historii i współczesności*, "Kwartalnik Kolegium Ekonomiczno-Społecznego. Studia i Prace", No. 2, pp. 9-30.

Sroczyńska M. (2018), *O potrzebie religii w ponowoczesnym świecie (refleksje socjologa)*, "Chrześ-cijaństwo, Świat, Polityka, Zeszyty Społecznej Myśli Kościoła", No 22, pp. 166-175.

Świder M., Góra S., Springer B. (2019), *Muzułmanie i islam w Niemczech. Perspektywa polityczna, prawna i kulturowa*, Kraków.

Taylor Ch. (2010), *Epoka świecka i różne ścieżki wiary*, "Znak" https://www.miesiecznik.znak.com.pl/6652010charles-taylorepoka-swiecka-i-rozne-sciezki-wiary/ [access on: 2.11.2020].

Załęcki P. (2003), *Religia i globalizacja – wybrane problemy wzajemnych uwarunkowań*, [in:] *Wymiary globalizacji kulturowej. Wyzwania badawcze*, edit. M. Kempny, G. Woroniecka, Olsztyn, pp. 99-110.

Abstract: The article deals with issues related to the phenomena of secularization and secularism in the Free State of Bavaria. The analysis includes changes in attitudes towards religion in recent years, the perception of church institutions and the transformation of religiousness, and the partial disappearance of religiousness and the effects of multiculturalism in the context of the attachment to tradition and the strong cultivation of the Bavarian cultural identity.
Keywords: secularization, secularism, religion, faith in God, individualization of religion, institutional church, cultural identity