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## RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE IN CZECHIA: NEW STRUCTURES AND TRENDS

T. Havlíček, M. Hupková: *Religious landscape in Czechia: new structures and trends*. – Geografie–Sborník ČGS, 113, 3, pp. 302–319 (2008). – The intent of this paper is to analyse trends and processes in the religious landscape in Czechia during the transformation period. In Czechia, society has been secularized to an extent unprecedented in the rest of Europe. The paper also uses the term sacralization of landscape, which is primarily connected with the restoration of sacred places. It has often been used in this context after 1989, creating a certain contradiction to the general trend of secularisation in Czech society and to the diversification, near disintegration, of religious communities. This research attempts to monitor the main reasons for the transformation of sacral objects as well as to seek fundamental consequences of these changes with the examples of select locations.

KEY WORDS: geography of religion – Czechia – religious landscape – transformation.

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### Introduction

This paper intends to describe and analyse, primarily, new structures and trends in studying the geography of religion, or the religious landscape, with the example of Czechia during the transformation period, beginning after 1989. The term religious landscape (e.g. Zelinsky 2001, Knippenberg 2005) is initially perceived in a broader sense mainly as both the territory and society of a selected, larger territorial unit (e.g. Czechia) which is influenced by general religious impacts and, in a stricter sense, as individual sacral objects completing or even forming and defining the landscape's character in the given region (e.g. sacral structures as dominant features in rural landscapes). Religious landscape will first be analysed on the basis of the regional differentiation of religiosity in the society of Czechia during the transformation (e.g. Siwek 2005, Havlíček 2006a, Siwek 2006), which is also perceived to be a contribution to the mosaic of research on the organization of society during the transformation process (Hampl 2001). The second main research theme is a reflection on the development of religious landscape in selected micro-regions of Czechia, both on the basis of the affirmations of key actors and the transformation of sacral objects in the given territories. For a

better understanding of some trends it is necessary to remember their historical context.

Czechia, situated in central Europe, has been, due to its geographic position, influenced in the past by a variety of religious streams and trends. In the period of early Christianity, an eastern form of Christianity, represented by Cyril and Methodius, began to penetrate the territory of present-day Czechia, beginning in the 9th century, while, on the other hand, the Catholic Church, with its pope in Rome, was presenting an increasing influence from the west. Before the Hussite movement and Protestantism in the 15th century, the Roman-Catholic religion was predominant in the Kingdom of Bohemia. Then a significant increase of reformed, protestant, religious movements occurred, such as, for instance, the Czech Brethren (Herrnhuter) in Eastern Bohemia. After defeat in the Battle of White Mountain in 1620, the Czech lands were again subject to re-catholicization. Frequent fluctuation of the dominant religious orientation and a general heterogeneity of religious beliefs have continued to the present time. In contrast with other European countries, a strong religious tradition has not been formed here. In addition to this, Czechia, or Czechoslovakia, was exposed, during the second half of the 20th century, to strong pressure from the communist dictatorship aimed at the complete removal of God and the supernatural from the thinking of the people. This process was supported by the transfer of the German, mostly Catholic, population from the Czech border areas. These facts, and certainly many additional circumstances, have caused Czechia to enter the 21st century as one of the most secularized countries in the world. Almost 60% of population (2001) indicate that they are nondenominational. This phenomenon is nevertheless very unevenly distributed throughout the country. How is the religious persuasion of the Czech population distributed in the territory? Which are now the dominant religious orientations and where are their centres? Are there any areas being formed or even strong polarizations? Which have been the main trends in the development of religious landscape after 1989? Is the growing secularization of society reflected by the secularization of religious objects in the landscape?

### **New geography of religion**

During the last twenty years, research on the interaction of religion and space has significantly changed and therefore we can speak about a so-called „new“ geography of religion (e.g. Kong 1990, Pacione 1999, Kong 2001, Henkel 2004, Proctor 2006, Havlíček 2007). In this context, two basic directions (Henkel 2004), which also generally correspond to both tendencies in the socio-geographic research, exist. On the one hand, there is the predominantly qualitative empirical research of the so-called „Caliban School“ and, on the other hand, the predominantly post-modernist papers of the new cultural geography of the so-called „Hamlet School“ (Peach 1999). Within the first school, atlases of the religions of various states (Henkel 2001, Knippenberg 2005), for example, can be mentioned. These are, however, focused, not only on the cartographic presentation of religious manifestations, but also at their historical contexts and explanation. This category also includes predominantly quantitative research into the religious landscape of selected territories (e.g. Zelinsky 2001, Knippenberg 2005).

The second school of the new cultural geography, with a post-modernist orientation, is represented above all by papers from Lily Kong (2001, 2004), which characterize, through qualitative research, the significance of religious symbols and objects for the identity of people in a certain space, among other things. This also causes possible conflicts impacting both sacral and secular institutions. Another paper summing up this research into schematic frameworks is a publication from the „Heidelberg School“ of geography of religion by Edgard Wunder (2005).

Lily Kong (1990, 2004) gives six main research trends or themes within the new geography of religion:

1. Research on society and landscape with various religious orientations, including secularization and the isolation of smaller religious groups and cultures (e.g.. Henkel 2001; Knippenberg 1998; Wunder 2005; Bilska-Wodecka 2005, 2006; Matlovič 1997).
2. Increased investigation of links between sacral and secular objects, or between cultural and political ones (Huntington 1996) as well as investigation of religious and secular landscapes.
3. Studies of religious groups and communities in their social and political context, studying identity.
4. Increased interest in symbolic religious localities and their description („Cracow School“).
5. An effort to understand processes through which objects, landscapes and buildings manifest religious attributes (e.g. new post-modern temples).
6. Sacral experiences with religious localities („Cracow School“).
7. In contrast to the United States or North America, in Europe and Czechia there is a significant lack of religious geographic research, as if the idea that the topic of religion is not compatible with the enlightenment, modern spirit and science prevails in the European, geographic sciences. In this regard, geography is isolated from other branches of science. Religious issues are much more intensely investigated by sciences that are topically very similar to geography, like sociology or history. Because geographers do not study interactions between religion and space, such topics are for the most part covered by scientists specialized in the sociology of religion (e.g. Flere 2001, Tomka 2001, Borowik 2004).

In general, it is possible to define several main aspects of research within the new geography of religion. In terms of perception of the term „sacred place“ (Matlovič 2001, Havlíček 2006b), it is mostly a majority-minority relationship (e.g. mosques in Germany, Schmidt 2003). Important attributes are also religious conflicts (Islamic terrorism, Israel, Maluku, etc.) and also the relation between religion and human rights in selected regions (Leimgruber, Gill 2003). A very frequently quoted study on conflict of civilizations (Huntington 1996) has started discussion on the relation of religion and globalization as well as the relation of Church and state. Research on the sites and trails of pilgrimage („Cracow School“, Graham a Murray 1997) also remains relevant. The explanation of tensions between sacral and secular phenomena (e.g. the secularization, or sacralization of Czechia) is also an important theme within these recent trends.

Studies integrating evolution in the post-modern, or „post-religious“ society (Wunder 2005) are also generally applicable. Fundamental research is carried out mainly on a micro-regional scale with significant sociological aspects as well as in minority religious groups (Islam in Germany, Hutterites in Canada, etc.).

These principal research trends are framed by the great interdisciplinary nature of research (sociology, political science, science on religion) with more or less spatial aspects, such as, for example, studying the development of religious landscape, which is, with the example of Czechia, one of the major themes of this paper.

### **Religious processes in Czech society during the transformation period**

It is clear that religious processes must be understood in the general context of the development of Czech society (Hampl 2001). An important trend of the Czech society during the period of transformation has been a significant decrease in persons declaring their support of churches and religious communities. Much more than in the rest of Europe, a high secularization of society exists in Czechia (Lužný, Navrátilová 2001). Religious institutions along with religious consciousness and behaviour are losing their social significance. There is an ongoing shift away from religious control to profane forms of control. People devote increasingly less time and resources to supernatural things. In terms of this, Lužný (1999) affirms that the basic condition is thus the dualism of the profane and ecclesiastical power and the separation of sciences, defining their branch of study without theology or interpretation of myths. The process of secularization is accelerated even more and backed by authoritative regimes (in Czechia this was the case of the communist dictatorship), which see religious communities as their enemies. Park (1994) understands secularization in a triple sense: a) the exclusion of religious belief (increasing separation of church and State), b) a lack of importance, rejection of religious ideas (decreased interest in religious traditions, lower awareness and respect of church representatives) c) secularization of thinking and behaviour, no interest whatsoever in religious ideas. Secularization is thus one of the most visible processes in the religious landscape, not only in Czechia, but also throughout contemporary Europe.

From 1991–2001, some religious communities manifested a different development than during the period of communist rule. A population census was done in Czechia in 1991 and again in 2001. The religiosity of the population was also ascertained during the census, according to data of a subjective nature, as individual respondents were asked to classify themselves as members of a certain religious group. The Czech census of 1991 and 2001 was the first since 1950 to pose a question on religion. There are three ways in which to examine religion: belief, practice and affiliation. The Czech census question was in the category of affiliation and each person could classify themselves in two main categories: without denomination and believer. There were no separate tick boxes for specific denomination. Each person has the freedom to write his denomination in the special field. The census question on religion were not compulsory as far as answers were concerned it can be seen from Table 1 that 16.2 % (1991) and 8.8 % (2001) of population did not answer this question.

A decrease in the largest group, the Roman Catholic Church, continued – from 39 % (1991) to 26.7 % (2001) as larger protestant churches also lost more than one third of their members. In the Czechoslovak Hussite Church, the

Tab. 1 – Distribution of religious denominations in Czechia in 1991–2001

Denomination	1991 (number)	1991 (%)	2001 (number)	2001 (%)	Change 91/01 (number)	Change 91/01 (%)
Roman Catholic Church	4,021,358	39.0	2,740,780	26.8	-1,280,578	-31.8
Evangelic Church of Czech Brethren	203,996	2.0	117,212	1.1	-86,784	-42.5
Czechoslovak Hussite Church	178,036	1.7	99,130	1.0	-78,906	-44.3
Jehovah's Witnesses	14,575	0.1	23,162	0.2	8,587	58.9
Orthodox Church	19,354	0.2	22,968	0.2	3,614	18.7
Evangelic Silesian Church	33,130	0.3	14,020	0.1	-19,110	-57.7
Brethren Evangelical Free Church	2,759	0.0	9,931	0.1	7,172	259.9
Adventists	7,674	0.1	9,757	0.1	2,083	27.1
Greek Catholic Church	7,030	0.1	7,657	0.1	627	9.2
Evangelical Free Church	3,017	0.0	6,927	0.1	3,910	129.6
Apostolic Church	1,485	0.0	4,565	0.0	3,080	207.4
Baptist Church	2,544	0.0	3,622	0.0	1,078	42.4
Methodist Church	2,855	0.0	2,694	0.0	-161	-5.6
Old Catholic Church	2,725	0.0	1,605	0.0	-1,120	-41.1
Judaism	1,292	0.0	1,515	0.0	223	17.3
New Apostolic Church	427	0.0	449	0.0	22	5.2
Unitarian	365	0.0	302	0.0	-63	-17.3
Mormons	–	–	1366	0.0	–	–
Islam	–	–	3699	0.0	–	–
Buddhism	–	–	6817	0.1	–	–
Hinduism	–	–	767	0.0	–	–
Movement Hare Krishna	–	–	294	0.0	–	–
Others	21,085	0.2	208,858	2.1	187,773	951.9
Believers (total)	4,523,734	43.9	3,288,088	32.2	-1,235,646	-27.3
Non-denominationalists	4,112,864	39.9	6,039,991	59.0	1,927,127	46.9
Not identified	1,665,617	16.2	901,981	8.8	-763,636	-45.8
Czech population (total)	10,302,215	100	10,230,060	100	-72,155	-0.7

Source: ČSÚ – Czech Statistical Office (2004)

figure decreased from 1.7 % (1991) of inhabitants to 1 % (2001). On the contrary, smaller Christian communities, such as the Brethren Evangelical Free Church, Baptists, Evangelical Free Church, Apostolic Church, etc., recorded strong growth. Also the number of members of the religious community of Jehovah's Witnesses, which is not included in a classification of Christian churches, has increased by more than 40 % to reach some 23,000 members throughout Czechia. Although the absolute numbers of worshippers of these Churches reach thousands and even tens of thousands of members, it is evident that the Czech population is not heading towards an almost absolutely profane society, but that interest in God has been growing in smaller communities. Only during the last monitored period, membership in these Churches has grown by more than seven times. The Orthodox Church also manifests an increase, mainly due to high immigration from Ukraine and Russia to Czechia. Also due to emigration, the number of Jews in Czech society has increased slightly. What was the trend towards increased secularization of society like at the turn of the millennium? According to census results, there is a clearly increasing trend towards a profane culture and society. During this period, the percentage of the non-denominational

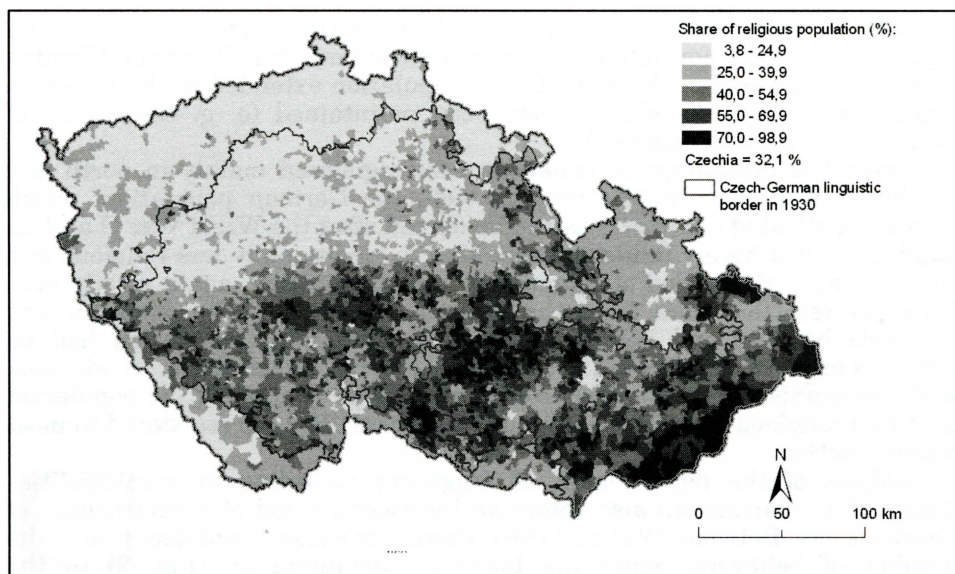


Fig. 1 – Percentage of religious population in Czechia by municipalities (2001)

population grew from 39.9 % (1991) to 58.2 % (2001). We can only add that a lower percentage in this category in 1991 was due, primarily to a temporary higher receptivity of society to transcendent phenomena following the fall of the communist regime.

The next reason for the distinctive decrease of believers between the years 1991 and 2001 can we observe in the mortality of old generation who got religion during the period before WWII und this generation has a very high level of religiosity. The similar development is also in the other European countries, e.g. Germany, The Netherlands, Finland (Knippenberg 2005).

On the contrary, the number of inhabitants refusing to answer the question about their faith fell from 16.2 % (1991) to 10 % (2001). In general, it can be said that the Czech religious scene is becoming more and more diversified. Large churches are losing their worshippers and, on the contrary, smaller Christian communities have increasingly more members. In addition, religious communities in Czechia are becoming more and more split up.

For a higher degree of clarity and to stress the high regional differentiation, the boundaries of municipalities were used as basic territorial units. With the first glance at the territorial distribution of believers in Czechia (Fig. 1), a strong territorial polarization is already quite clear:

1. Non-religious north (below 25 %) and a relatively religious south (40–70 %)
2. Weakly religious west (Bohemia) and strongly religious east with 60 to 95 % believers (Moravia and the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands).

In addition, primarily communities along the border with Slovakia and in the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands manifest relative numbers of believers above 70 % of the total population. When observing percentages of the population that believe in the southern and western border regions in greater detail, the former border of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, i.e. between former predominantly Czech and German populations, is evident. After World War II, the German population, which was mostly Catholic, was

transferred from the border regions of the former Czechoslovakia and replaced by mostly non-religious people from the interior, Romania, Ukraine or Slovakia. In areas, where the Czech population extended to the border, a higher percentage of believers has been maintained (e. g. the region of Domažlice, Velenice, Jemnice).

A very low percentage of believers were registered mainly in north and northwest Bohemia. In this area as well, the German population, which almost constituted a majority, was transferred after the World War II and, in addition, it is a highly industrial area that is traditionally less religious and where, during the period of communist industrialization, again mostly non-believers resettled here from the interior, mainly because of cheap and available housing and higher wages. This immigrant population had no religious or cultural links to the areas and was not rooted there. In addition, with communist, anti-religious propaganda the percentage of the population that was religious steadily decreased to a level of 10–20 % registered in most municipalities.

Analysis of the development of religiosity according to municipalities (index of secularization) also shows an increasing trend of secularization of Czech society. Between 1991 and 2001, there was a significant decrease in the number of believers, while the index of secularization (Fig. 2) in the municipalities of Czechia reached 31.8.

In addition to the previously mentioned and most significant process of secularization, there is also a trend towards higher diversification, or demopolization of religious communities leading to a high degree of separation or even the complete disintegration of various religious movements within Czechia (Table 1). On the one hand, the largest churches (Roman Catholic, Evangelic Church of Czech Brethren and Czechoslovak Hussite Church) register a high decrease in their number of worshippers, and on the contrary, smaller, mostly protestant or evangelical churches (e.g. Brethren Evangelical Free Church, Evangelical Free Church) register a steady increase in worshippers. However, the highest increase, in Czech society, is registered in occultism (horoscopes, divination, etc.) where the trend seems to change from the once dominant Christianity to occultism (Hamplová 2000). At the turn of millennium, Christianity lost its dominant position and more than half of the population (52.1 %) declared, either partly or entirely, their support for occultism (Hamplová 2000, Havlíček 2004b). An ISSP survey (Hamplová 2000) also showed frequent interpenetration of both spiritual streams as well as the fact that one third of the respondents professing Christianity are entirely settled, while in occultism this portion only reaches one fifth.

### **The religious landscape of Czechia during the transformation period**

To truly grasp the central structures and trends present in the religious landscape of Czechia it is not sufficient to merely analyse quantitative changes and the differentiation of the religiosity of the population, it is also necessary to take the consequences of this development into account with qualitative research focused on model territories. As part of this research on the development of the religious landscape, qualitative research was carried



out from 2005 to 2007 in 27 micro-regions (model territories) of Czechia (Fig. 2) to analyse the role of the religion and the character of the religious landscape. Initially, sacral objects in the landscape were monitored and documented then we sought to explain the obtained results by analysing the historical development, relations within the territory and the specific traits of the area. Because of Czechia's geographic variability, several hypotheses, which should be valid for the model territories, can be determined, even before monitoring the religious landscape.

Field research was carried out by students from the Department of Social Geography and Regional Development, Charles University in Prague, from July through September in 2005, 2006 and 2007. Each model territory was studied for approximately seven days. Table 2 gives basic data on the various model territories – their name, year of field research, type of territory (rural or urban area) and level of religiosity. Model territories were selected on the basis of two factors. The first was an attempt to employ the general geographic variability of Czechia through selecting model areas so as to take into account both vertical and horizontal variability (e.g. town – countryside, interior – border region, Bohemia – Moravia). The second factor for selecting territories was the individual, i.e. subjective, knowledge of the given territory by the researchers. Contacts within a territory are important when looking for sacral objects and local people often know about the connections of, for example, the origin or disappearance of sacral objects. Model territories were determined by municipal boundaries, because of the availability of statistical data for these territorial units, or by cadastral boundaries in larger cities. The size of the model territories corresponded with the size of the municipalities; they were 5 each of rural municipalities, quadrants or sections of large cities (Prague, Plzeň, Liberec, Hradec Králové, Olomouc).

Before the field inquiry, working hypotheses on the quantity and state of sacral monuments were determined according to the character of the territory and the level of religiosity. The goal of the field inquiry was to reveal causes for the development and the general state of the religious landscape in each model territory and to grasp the phenomena and specific characteristics of the given territory, both as part of the social capital and in the relation between the profane and sacral sphere to religious objects (the relationship between church and state, or municipality). Initially, sacral objects were monitored and their position was mapped. Each object was assigned values from a qualitative and a quantitative typology. Qualitative categories are defined according to the physical state and the age of objects: a) sacral objects built before 1989; b) sacral objects built or made accessible after 1989; c) sacral objects reconstructed after 1989.

Quantitative typology is based on the repartition of sacral objects according to their importance and size: a) multi-religious and multicultural buildings (community centres, building complexes, e. g. Hare Krishna), b) utilised one-purpose buildings (church, mosque, etc.), unused church („abolished“), c) chapels, oratories, rooms for oracles, etc. (mostly only one room), d) small sacral buildings in landscape (crosses, Calvaries, pictures, statues, etc.), e) small sacral objects on buildings (e.g. statues on houses, etc.), f) cemetery objects.

After analysing sacral objects in the field, we proceeded to direct interviews with „key personalities“ which helped us to elucidate the religious climate in the model territory. The first personality was a church representative. This interview helped answer questions on attendance at worship services



Tab. 2 – Survey of model territories, including their basic characteristics, selected results and the aggregate „level of sacralization“ index

Model area	Year	Type	Religiosity	1	2	3	4	Sacralization rate	
Rakvicko	2007	rur	55.1	+	+	+	+	++++	high
Vranovsko	2007	rur	38.6	+	+	+	+	++++	high
Bohutínsko	2005	rur	38.9	+	+	+	+	++++	high
Kamýčko	2006	rur	45.4	+	+	+	0	+++	high
Milevsko	2006	urb	37.9	+	+	+	0	+++	high
Olomouc	2006	urb	38.9	+	+	+	0	+++	high
Hořovice	2007	urb/rur	17.7	–	+	+	+	++	medium
Čerčansko	2005	rur	27.3	0	+	+	0	++	medium
Choceňsko	2006	urb/rur	27.8	0	+	+	0	++	medium
Plzeň	2007	urb	18.9	–	+	+	+	++	medium
Praha	2007	urb	27.9	0	+	0	+	++	medium
Roztocko	2006	urb	25.5	0	+	+	0	++	medium
Říčansko	2007	urb/rur	24.9	0	+	+	0	++	medium
Soběslav	2007	urb	29.3	0	+	+	0	++	medium
Suchdolsko	2007	rur	30.6	0	+	+	0	++	medium
Sušicko	2005	urb	35.7	+	0	+	0	++	medium
Hradec Králové	2005	urb	21.8	–	+	+	0	+	medium
Kounovsko	2007	rur	52.7	+	0	0	0	+	medium
Netolicko	2005	urb	34.5	0	+	0	0	+	medium
Svatojanský	2006	rur	17.3	–	+	+	0	+	medium
Liberec	2006	urb	17.1	–	+	0	0	0	low
Moravskokrumlovsko	2006	urb	39.7	+	–	0	0	0	low
Stanovicko	2005	rur	24.8	0	+	–	0	0	low
Čelákovicko	2007	urb	20.5	–	–	0	+	–	low
Neratovicko	2007	urb/rur	21.4	–	+	–	0	–	low
Pečky	2007	rur	22.8	–	+	–	0	–	low
Velkopopovicko	2005	rur	26.0	0	–	0	0	–	low

Note. Type: urb = urban character of the territory, rur = rural character of the territory, urb/rur = intermediate character of the territory. Religiosity: as a portion of inhabitants from the total population in 2001 in the model territory (data for municipalities): 1. Level of religiosity: + (above average), 0 (average), – (below average). 2. Relationship between church and the state: + (good), 0 (neutral), – (bad). 3. Qualitative state of sacral objects: + (good), 0 good only in the case of larger objects or in the centre), – (bad). Existence of new sacral objects built after 1989: + (they exist), 0 (they do not exist).

(average attendance, age or nationalities represented), on church activities and on the interviewee's opinion concerning the role of religion in society. The second „key personality“ was a representative of the municipal authority responsible for monument preservation. This interview helped elucidate property rights to sacral objects in the territory, monument preservation issues and possibilities for the reconstruction of sacral objects. We also ascertained the mutual relationship and cooperation between churches and the municipality. Finally we evaluated the validity of our pre-defined working hypotheses and subjectively assessed the character of the religious landscape in the model territory with an emphasis placed upon the causes of the present situation.

Table 2 gives a survey of model territories along with selected results from the field monitoring. Evaluation of the religious landscape and the religious climate in model territories exhibited a subjective character. The tentative synthesis of these data helped build a „level of sacralization“ index, which schematically expresses the level of sacralization in the model territory, not only in terms of the quality of sacral objects, but also in terms of the warmth

of the local religious climate. The „level of sacralization“ index was construed by combining four characteristics assessed by a three-degree scale where „+“ indicates a positive, „0“ a neutral and „-“ a negative occurrence of the phenomenon. The characteristics included in the aggregate index are the following:

The level of sacralization can be divided into three categories: high (+++, +), average (++, +) and low (0, -). Model territories with the lowest level of sacralization are situated in the hinterland or in areas adjacent to Prague. This is indicative of the character of life in Prague's suburbia (low levels of religiosity, commuting to Prague for work and services, generally low relationships with the territory, newly developed areas). According to these results, a claim could be made that the level of sacralization increases along a northwest to southeast axis as well as with the decreasing size of municipalities and in proximity to sites of pilgrimage. In general, large cities manifest an average level of sacralization, with the exception of Olomouc and Liberec. These two large cities manifest a level of sacralization corresponding to their geographic position (compare Fig. 1). The high level of sacralization in Olomouc is also accentuated by the significance of the city as the seat of an archbishopric and as a UNESCO monument. A unique situation exists in the area of Moravský Krumlov which has, contrary to expectations, a very low level of sacralization. This is probably due to the existence of an significant communication barrier among the local government, public administration and the Church. Local factors that influence the development of the sacral landscape and the religious climate in model territories (i.e. those that were used for assessing the level of religiosity) are described further in the text.

It is presumed that due to the transfer of Germans from border regions after World War II the so-called Sudeten region will have more devastated or completely destroyed/removed religious objects (Valenčík 2006). At the same time, we presume that differences in the character of the religious landscape increase in a northwest to southeast direction. In the southeast direction, religiosity of the population increases (Fig. 1), so a higher number of sacral objects along with their better physical condition are expected. In this direction we also expect a higher frequency of building new sacral objects. Comparison of the field monitoring results from the model areas (Fig. 2) with the expected results indicates whether the character of the religious landscape is developing according to the expected formula. This formula is understood as the general geographic variability of Czechia (presupposed differences: town – rural area, town – hinterland, industrial area – agricultural area, so-called Sudeten land – interior) along with location of believers and tendencies in the number and location of believers within Czechia (number of believers, index of secularization).

### **The factor of human and social capital**

The results of this field monitoring (the monitoring of sacral objects and interviews with key actors in micro-regions) show that the religious landscape develops only partly according to the general presumptions (see above). A second variable influencing the character of the religious landscape as well as the role of religion in a given territory is the human and the social factor. By synthesising the ascertained information it is possible to distinguish three key positions, a good customised mixture of which can significantly

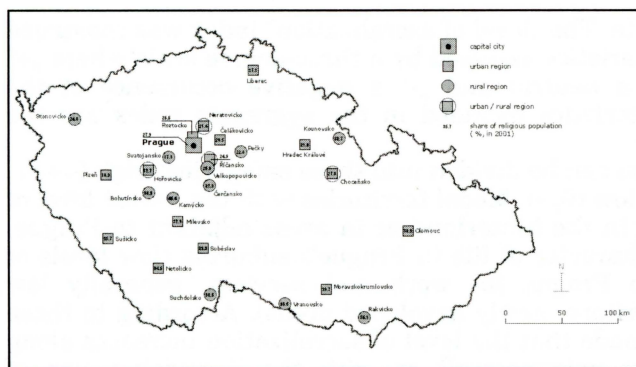


Fig. 2 – Model areas for field monitoring of the religious landscape

strengthen the role of religion in society. According to the research in model areas, the three key positions are: a) a religious representative (e.g. priest), b) involved subjects (e.g. municipal and regional authorities, councilors), and c) the local population (believers, patrons or sponsors).

An important factor influencing the position of religion in an area is

the approach of the priest. The results of our monitoring show that a helpful approach of the religious representative both to believers and unbelievers is very important. In the monitored areas, religious representatives, with an active and informal manner of communicating and discussing, arouse the interest of young people in religion. In these areas, cooperation between churches and schools was also more frequent, the Church participated more in local cultural life. Key actors (e.g. priest) as well as the relations between these representatives have an impact on the importance of the role of religion in a given area. A priest's personality ensures not only communication between local people and the Church, but also between the Church and local government.

Communication between the Church and the municipality, represented by officials with jurisdiction over heritage protection, is an important step towards the renewal and safeguarding of sacral objects in the landscape – mainly in terms of acquiring financial means for reconstruction. It is positive that bad relations and cooperation between the Church and the municipality were registered in only 5 % of the monitored areas. Opinions of the elected local representatives (municipal council, mayor) can also strengthen or cut down the role of religion in the municipality. A higher portion of the local political elite belonging to political parties backing religion can result in more significant support of religion and religious objects in the area. In Czechia, the correlation of the political party with Christian characteristics (Christian Democratic Union) and religiosity is very high (Havlíček 2005).

Local people can also contribute to the proliferation of religion and sacral objects in their hometown. However, this phenomenon occurs primarily in smaller municipalities (with less than 5,000 inhabitants). If there is a group of actively participating believers in such a municipality, they are able, by their joint effort, to maintain religious life and to ensure the good condition of sacral objects. In smaller municipalities, there are religious objects of local importance, the maintenance and reconstruction of which can be financed from financial sources obtained by collections. State subsidies are not necessary as is the case with larger buildings. According to representatives of both municipalities and churches, reconstruction of sacral objects without financial contribution from local people would be problematic or even impossible. In addition to the local religious population, an involved corporation participated in repairs in 15 % of municipalities – either through a financial contribution for reconstruction or by entirely financing it. These



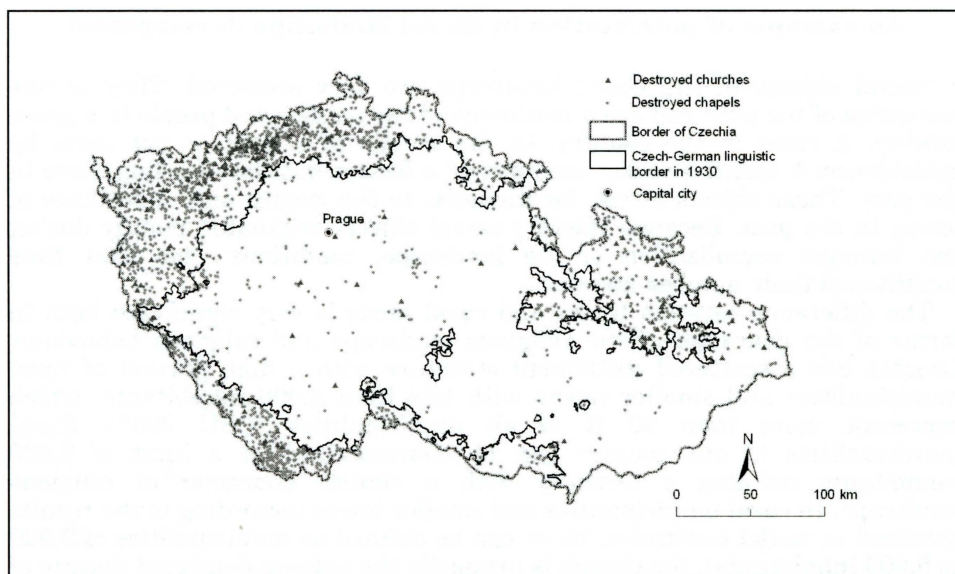


Fig. 3 – Churches and chapels destroyed in Czechia during the communist period 1948-1989. Source database: Valenčík (2006)

were mostly non-believers with a strong interest in history and monuments, but it is difficult to ascertain whether such patrons or sponsors were also interested in the spiritual dimension of the entire affair.

Many sacral buildings in the so-called Sudeten area were destroyed after the transfer of Germans after World War II (Valenčík 2006). This example also attests to the prevailing existence of the so-called relict border which was, in 1930, the language border between the Czech and the German speaking populations (Fig 3). This pronounced polarization between border regions and interior shows the consequences of the exchange of population in the borderland, which is also reflected in the religious landscape. Sacral objects in the Sudeten areas are being renewed there largely thanks to the backing of German and Austrian citizens, who, or whose families, were transferred from these border regions. In addition to this help, which is historically motivated, we also find cross-border cooperation in the renewal of sacral objects (in the model areas this was cooperation with Austria). The development of sacral objects is different in Bohemia than in Moravia (the already mentioned gradient northwest – southeast). In Moravia, i.e. in the southeast, the state of sacral objects is visibly better thanks to the greater significance of religion.

The research done in model areas makes it clear that only one key actor is significantly active in the area. For good development of the role of religion in the area it is therefore not necessary that all relationships are in place and that highly educated people hold the positions of key actors, but in many cases the existence of one strong personality at one key post (priest, municipality or local people) is sufficient. Good mutual relations are nevertheless an indubitable advantage for further development of the sacral landscape.

## An example of polarization in sacral landscape development

Sacral objects in the Czech landscape are very scattered. They invoke memories of the past and are a testimony of the history and people in a given locality. A cross in the country, in the middle of a field, is not there by coincidence; it testifies to the existence of a former pathway leading there in the past. These objects attest, for instance, to the wealth and importance of towns in the past. Because existing sacral objects originated mainly during the Baroque sacralization of the landscape, conditions from that time conditioned their number and size.

The difference between towns and rural areas is very significant both in terms of the character of the religious landscape and religious behaviour. Czechia has a scattered settlement structure with a high portion of rural municipalities and smaller towns with less than 5,000 inhabitants, which represent more than 90 % of all municipalities (ČSÚ 2007). Rural municipalities in our country can be characterized by a limit of 3,000 inhabitants defining a territory with a similar character of religious landscape. In rural municipalities and smaller towns (according to the results obtained in model territories, these can be defined as municipalities of 3,000 to 5,000 inhabitants), the church is primarily the natural dominant feature of the municipality. According to the representatives of local governments, it is inadmissible that such an object be in a bad condition. It is to the credit of the municipality, not only from a believers' point of view, but also from that of disbelievers. For this reason, 95 % of churches (in the model territories) are now in good condition (Fig. 4). In larger cities, surrounding higher buildings suppress the dominance of religious objects.

In smaller towns and rural areas, religious objects are not too large and therefore they can be more easily repaired from financial means obtained by local representatives (municipalities, churches, patrons or sponsors as well as local people). In larger cities, religious objects are often part of an urban conservation area or even a cultural heritage monument. In such cases, reconstruction or any intervention concerning the object is subject to special rules according to the Act on Preservation of Monuments (Act No. 20/1987

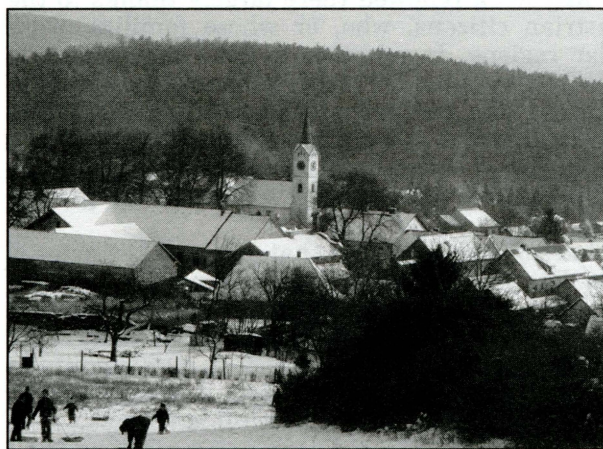


Fig. 4 – Church as the dominant feature of a municipality (Pyšely). Source: authors.

Coll.). Increased obligations are nevertheless compensated by the opportunity of obtaining subsidies for reconstruction from public administration bodies. The destiny of a sacral building is conditioned by financial possibilities and by the priorities of its owner. An example of the importance of ownership of sacral buildings is the situation of two Jewish cemeteries in the same municipality (Sušice). The cemeteries are 500 m apart from each other and are situated



near the town centre. The first, owned by the Jewish community, is in a catastrophic state, while the second, owned by the municipality, was reconstructed in 2004–2005. This reconstruction was not done for religious reasons, but for cultural ones as the goal was to increase the aesthetic quality of the town and to make it more attractive for tourists.

Data furnished by priests on attendance of divine services were evaluated in the model territories. When comparing the average attendance of services at the local church with the number of proclaimed members of the given Church in the municipality, we obtained values between 5 and 50 %. This percentage expresses the „activity of believers in the municipality“. The resulting value was significantly influenced by the size of the municipality. We obtained data about 20 churches in different municipalities of 100 to 16,000 inhabitants. A correlation coefficient of -0.6 shows a negative correlation between the activity of believers and the size of the municipality. This means that in smaller municipalities the attendance at worship services is relatively higher than in larger municipalities (the existence of multiple churches with services in one municipality was taken into consideration). The described dependence can be explained by stronger traditions in rural areas than in cities as well as by a generally hectic way of life in cities.

In several municipalities, worship services in churches were cancelled for economic reasons. As a consequence, active religious life in the municipality has decreased. Direct contact of the priest with believers in the municipality itself is irreplaceable and due to the age of believers, attendance at services in other municipalities is problematic. Between 1991 and 2001, the portion of believers older than 50 years of age within the total number of believers grew by approximately 10 % to reach some 55 % of all believers in 2001 (ČSÚ 2007). Attendance at worship services is seasonal – in summer it is higher than in winter; the highest attendance occurs on holidays (nearly double). A specific position is held by pilgrimage sites (model territories Svatý Jan and Bohutín) which, due to their significance, attract believers from the entire region and attendance at masses in pilgrimage churches is very high. Pilgrimage sites also have a higher number of sacral objects than other territories of comparable size.

What characteristics do sacral objects in model territories manifest? In cities, there are, in accordance with our presumptions, more sacral objects of higher significance and size (churches, chapels, multi-religious and multicultural buildings). These objects are in very good physical condition, primarily thanks to financial backing from the municipality and the state aimed at maintaining their representative function. In smaller municipalities sacral objects are smaller (chapels, crosses, statues) and they are scattered throughout the landscape. Opportunities for their renewal are conditioned by the quantity of financial means available and gifts from the population. New sacral places do not appear often and in the model regions, there were only four religious objects built during the period of transformation, after 1989. In the landscape, there are often visible remnants of small sacral objects which were stolen. The disappearance of sacral objects is due not only to their devastation and theft, but also to changes in their function, or to their destruction on a mental level (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5 – Example of the transformation of a sacral object (former synagogue, now a research library for the Vyškov district archives in Slavkov u Brna). Source: authors.

## Conclusion

Analysis of the development of religiosity according to municipalities also shows an increasing trend of secularization in Czech society. There is trend for higher diversification, or the de-monopolization of religious communities leading to a high dismembering or even to disintegration of various religious movements. The highest increase, in Czech society, is registered in occultism (horoscopes, divination, etc.), where the trend is a change from the once dominant Christianity to occultism. Many sacral buildings in the so-called Sudeten area were destroyed after the transfer of Germans, after World War II. This example also validates the prevailing existence of the so-called relic border which was, in 1930, the language border between the Czech and the German speaking populations. Communication between churches and the municipality, represented by officers with jurisdiction over heritage protection, is an important step to the renewal and safeguarding of sacral objects in the landscape – mainly as a means of acquiring financial means for reconstruction. Model territories with the lowest level of sacralization are situated in the hinterland or in areas adjacent to Prague. This is indicative of the character of life in Prague's suburbia (low levels of religiosity, commuting to Prague for work and services, generally low relationships with the territory, newly developed areas). According to these results, a claim could be made that the level of sacralization increases along a northwest to southeast axis as well as with the decreasing size of municipalities and in proximity to sites of pilgrimage. In general, large cities manifest an average level of sacralization, with the exception of Olomouc and Liberec. These two large cities manifest a level of sacralization corresponding to their geographic



position. The research carried out in model areas makes it clear that only one key actor is significantly active in the area. For good development of the role of religion in the area it is therefore not necessary that all relationships are in place and that highly educated people hold the positions of key actors, but that in many cases the existence of one strong personality at one key position (priest, municipality or local people) is sufficient.

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## S h r n u t í

### RELIGIÓZNÍ KRAJINA V ČESKU: NOVÉ STRUKTURY A TRENDY

Předkládaný příspěvek si klade za cíl popsat a analyzovat především nové struktury a trendy ve výzkumu religiózní geografie, resp. religiózní krajiny na příkladu Česka v období transformace po roce 1989. Česko ležící ve střední Evropě bylo v minulosti díky své geografické poloze ovlivňováno různými náboženskými proudy a směry. Časté střídání hlavních náboženských proudů a heterogenita v náboženském myšlení zůstaly zachovány až do dnešní doby. Nepodařilo se jako tomu je v jiných evropských zemích zde vytvořit silnou náboženskou tradici. Česko resp. Československo bylo poté ještě vystaveno během druhé poloviny 20. století silnému tlaku ze strany komunistické diktatury za účelem vymazání Boha a nadpřirozena z myšlení lidí. Tento proces byl ještě zvýrazněn odsunem německého převážně katolického obyvatelstva z českého pohraničí. Všechny tyto skutečnosti a jistě i mnohé další způsobily, že Česko vstupuje do 21. století jako jedna z nejvíce sekularizovaných zemí na světě. Téměř 60 % obyvatelstva (2001) udává, že je bez náboženského vyznání.

Během posledních dvou desetiletí se výzkum interakce náboženství a prostoru významně proměnil, a proto lze jistě v tomto směru hovořit o tzv. „nové“ religiózní geografii (např. Kong 1990, Pacione 1999, Kong 2001, Henkel 2004, Proctor 2006, Havlíček 2007). V této souvislosti lze objevit dva základní směry (Henkel 2004), které také obecně odpovídají oběma tendencím v sociogeografickém výzkumu. Na jedné straně se jedná o převážně kvalitativní empirický výzkum tzv. „školy Caliban“ a na straně druhé o převážně postmoderní práce z nové kulturní geografie tzv. „školy Hamlet“ (Peach 1999). Lily Kong (1990, 2004) uvádí šest hlavních výzkumných směrů, resp. témat v rámci „nové“ religiózní geografie:

1. Výzkum společnosti a krajiny s různorodou náboženskou orientací vč. sekularizace a izolovaných menších náboženských skupin a kultur (např. Henkel 2001, Knippenberg 1998, Wunder 2005).
2. Nárůst zkoumání vazeb sakrálního a sekulárního objektu, resp. kulturního a politického (Huntington 1996) a také religiózní a sekulární krajiny.
3. Studium náboženských skupin a komunit v sociálním a politickém kontextu, studium identity.

4. Nárůst zájmu o symbolická, religiózní místa a především jejich deskripce.
5. Snaha porozumět procesům, při nichž objekty, krajiny a budovy vykazují náboženské atributy (např. nové chrámy postmoderny).
6. Sakrální zkušenost s náboženskými místy.

Tyto hlavní výzkumné trendy jsou zářamovány velkou interdisciplinarnitou výzkumu (sociologie, politologie, religionistika) s méně či více prostorovými aspekty jako je například studium vývoje religiózní krajiny, což je také na příkladu Česka jedním z hlavních témat tohoto příspěvku.

Je zřejmé, že religiózní procesy je nutné chápat v obecném kontextu vývoje české společnosti (Hampel 2001). Významným trendem v české společnosti v období transformace je značný úbytek lidí hlásící se k církvím a náboženským společnostem. Daleko více než v ostatní Evropě se tak v Česku prosadila značná sekularizace společnosti. Také analýza vývoje religiozity podle obcí (index sekularizace) poukazuje na prohlubující se trend, který výše zmíněnou sekularizaci české společnosti nadále prohlubuje. Mezi roky 1991 a 2001 došlo k výraznému propadu počtu věřících, kdy v rámci obcí Česka dosáhl index sekularizace (obr. 2) hodnoty 31,8. Kromě zmíněného nejvýznamnějšího procesu sekularizace zaznamenává Česko také trend větší diverzifikaci, resp. demonopolizaci náboženských komunit, který vede k výraznému rozdrobení až atomizaci jednotlivých náboženských hnutí.

V rámci studia vývoje religiózní krajiny bylo v letech 2005 až 2007 provedeno kvalitativní šetření v 27 mikroregionech (modelových územích) Česka (obr. 3), ve kterých je analyzována role náboženství a charakter religiózní krajiny. Z výsledků terénních výzkumů (monitorování sakrálních objektů a řízené rozhovory s klíčovými osobnostmi v mikroregionech) vyplývá, že religiózní krajina se podle obecných předpokladů (viz výše) vyvíjí jen zčásti. Druhou částí, která udává charakter religiózní krajiny i roli náboženství v konkrétním území je lidský a sociální faktor. Syntézou zjištěných informací je možné rozlišit 3 klíčové posty, jejichž kvalitní personální obsazení má velmi výrazné posílit roli náboženství ve společnosti. Třemi klíčovými posty jsou podle výzkumu v modelových oblastech: a) náboženský představitel (např. farář), b) zainteresované subjekty (např. obecní a krajské úřady, zastupitelé), c) místní obyvatelstvo (věřící, mecenáš nebo sponzor). Rozdíl mezi městem a venkovem je z hlediska charakteru náboženské krajiny i náboženského chování výrazný. Z vyjádření představitelů samospráv je nepřipustné, aby sakrální objekt byl v neuspokojivém stavu. Jedná se o jakousi vizitku obce nejen pro věřící ale také nevěřící obyvatelstvo. Z toho důvodu je v současnosti 95 % kostelů (v modelových územích) ve velmi dobrém stavu. V menších městech a na venkově nenabývají religiózní objekty přílišné velikosti, proto jsou snáze opravitelné z finančních zdrojů získaných místními představiteli (obec, církev, mecenáš nebo sponzor a také místní obyvatelé). Ve větších městech jsou často religiózní objekty součástí památkové zóny obce nebo jsou vyhlášeny za kulturní památku. Specifické postavení mají poutní místa (modelová území Svatojanská a Bohutínská), která svým významem přilákávají věřící ze širšího okolí a účast na bohoslužbách v poutním kostele je velmi vysoká. Poutní místo vykazuje i vyšší počet sakrálních objektů než jiné území srovnatelné velikosti. Modelová území s nejnižší mírou sakralizace se nacházejí v zázemí či okolí Prahy. Je to dáno charakterem života v suburbii Prahy (nízká míra religiozity, dojíždka do Prahy za zaměstnáním a službami, nepřilíš vysoký vztah k území, nová rozvíjející se zástavba). Podle výsledků lze obecně říci, že míra sakralizace narůstá ve směru severozápad – jihovýchod. Přičemž se snižující se velikostí obcí a blízkostí poutního místa se míra sakralizace jeví vyšší. Velká města vykazují průměrnou míru sakralizace, s výjimkou Olomouce a Liberce. Tato dvě velká města mají míru sakralizace takovou, jakou lze očekávat vzhledem k jejich geografické poloze

Obr. 1 – Podíl věřících v Česku podle obcí (2001)

Obr. 2 – Modelové oblasti terénního výzkumu religiózní krajiny

Obr. 3 – Zničené kostely a kaple v Česku během komunistického období v letech 1948–1989

Obr. 4 – Kostel jako dominanta obce (Pyšely)

Obr. 5 – Příklad transformace sakrálního objektu (bývalá synagoga, nyní badatelna státního okresního archivu Vyškov ve Slavkově u Brna)

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