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## THE SECULARIZATION OF ISLAM: TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS

The problem of the correlation between Islam and secularization is one of great interest for understanding the specifics of the process of adaptation of Islam to the modern world. Answering the question of whether or not Islam could be secularized the same way as Christianity in the West may be helpful in determining the future course of Muslim societies as well as the perspectives of Islam's accommodation in Europe and North America.

To begin with, it is not a coincidence that the contemporary Islamic movements have been extremely negative about secularization since the latter has come into Islamic world not as a result of the gradual evolution of Muslim societies, but as a concomitant to the western styled political regimes advancing secularist ideology and enforcing it on society from above. Yet to understand the specificity of Islamic societies, there is a need to go deeper than the traditional for the previous studies "clash of civilization" framework, or in other words, to turn the focus of scholars' attention from the struggle between Islam and *secularism*<sup>1</sup> to the study of the relationship between Islam and *secularization*.

However, this dimension of the problem has been somewhat neglected by sociologists of religion. One example will suffice to illustrate the point. In their analysis of secularization, neither K. Dobbelaere [Dobbelaere 2009, 611–612], nor R. Stark [Stark 1999, 267–268] deals with Islam as a separate subject of inquiry, drawing their diverging conclusions from the works of other scholars whose analysis of the secularization processes in the Muslim societies cannot be considered as satisfactory either [see: Pace 1998; Tamney 1979].

Thus, there is a need to address the problem in the comprehensive and theoretically based way to determine the perspectives of natural evolution of Islamic societies towards secularization, to wit how Islam and main features of secularization correlate with each other. Such an analysis would also provide researchers with more comparative data to make conclusions about universality of the secularization paradigm or the limits of its applicability to non-western societies.

**Methodology.** To achieve the goals of the research, the following methodological approach is advanced.

On the theoretical level of analysis, the ideas of P. Berger, B. Wilson, K. Dobbelaere, S. Bruce and others will be employed to see how the major features of the secularization paradigm (such as social differentiation, societalization and rationalization) correlate with Islamic religious teaching and social structures of Muslim societies. According to the schema offered by K. Dobbelaere, secularization of Islam can be comprehensively considered on the three levels – societal, organizational and individual. However, on the current stage of research, these levels may be productively reduced to Peter Berger's division of secularization on *social-structural* (societal and organizational levels) and *secularization of consciousness* (individual level). Following B. Wilson and S. Bruce, we argue that secularization is in the first place a social-structural process which concerns societal level of society ("decline of the social significance of religion").

As for the personal religiosity (individual level), neither absolute decline of religion, nor its disappearance constitutes a hypothesis of this research. Following P. Berger, we consider

weakening of individual religiosity as a side effect of secularization on the societal level, rather than its necessary feature [Berger 1969, 127–153]. In this respect the data of the surveys from the contemporary Muslim societies will be used to determine whether or not there is a change in people's attitude to religious issues, or in other words check the status of the hierarchy of meaning (has it turned to a *bricolage*?) and the plausibility of religion in respondents' consciousness. In other words, the question is whether or not religion with its precepts is still predominant in people's outlook and their attitudes to controversial moral issues such as abortion, suicide, prostitution, etc.

Another important way in which social survey data may be extremely helpful is determining of *the index of compartmentalization* offered by K. Dobbelaere to reveal people's attitude to the social role of religion, the place which religion should occupy in public space and the scope of its influence on the social processes [Dobbelaere 1999, 241–242].

For this research the data of the World Value Survey (1999–2006, five waves) will be used. The sample includes a number of Middle Eastern and South Asian countries with predominantly Muslim population: Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey and Indonesia<sup>2</sup>. Following the selected methodological approach, the data will be analyzed according to the schema adapted from P. Norris and R. Inglehart's approach to the measurement of secularization (religious participation, religious beliefs, religious values). It must be mentioned though that the question of religious practice cannot be satisfactorily applied as long as these questions in the WVS appear to have been done without proper consideration of the specifics of the prayers and religious services in Islam. Instead, we will employ the category of *declarative religiosity*, or *religious self-identification*, which is intended to measure how people estimate their own religiosity<sup>3</sup>.

The analysis of Islamic religious teaching through the lenses of the secularization theories allows making the following preliminary observations.

### **1. Islam and secularization on the societal level (social-structural secularization).**

**Decline of the social significance of religion.** According to P. Berger and B. Wilson's definitions, the process of secularization mainly concerns diminishing or decline of the social significance of religion on the societal level. In the case of Islam, however, this means more than limiting its institutional control over the course of society's development. The main issue here is that Islam is not just a religious teaching aiming at a person's spiritual growth – as Gellner argues, it is rather a “blueprint of social order” [Gellner 1981, 1], e. i. the regulation of how society should be managed constitutes a substantial part of the Islamic doctrine. Therefore, for Islam, secularization comes not just as relinquishing of the social control (which as well as Christianity it used to enjoy due to the specific structure of power relations in the medieval societies), but it means cutting off a substantial part of its doctrine (a universal and holistic teaching that covers all the aspects of human private and social life), every part of which equally represents God's will. In other words, in the eyes of Muslims secularization of Islam comes as crucial blow to its identity and the loss of the distinctive advantage it has over other religious systems like Christianity and Judaism. On the contrary to Christianity, Islam does not contain explicitly and does not recognize the views which would turn it into “its own gravedigger” [Berger 1969, 129]<sup>4</sup>. Thus, the holistic character of Islamic teaching and, what is even more important, a great number of social norms and regulations it declares to be God's law, will not allow Islam to secularize, or simply let society follow its own course in the social matters. It may be presumed that, in addition to the historical role of a “vehicle of protest”, it is Islam's inherent rejection of secularization that made him one of the major forces combating against secularist nature of contemporary regimes in many Middle Eastern societies.

Another implication of this conclusion concerns the European situation, namely the question of application of Islamic law in Europe. Although this problem does not appear to be topical anywhere except for the Great Britain, it may be presumed that, as Muslim communities grow in size and institutionalize, they will show more concern for the introduction of

Islamic law as a parallel legal system. As some Muslim scholars point out, the impossibility to practice the prescription of the sharia creates for the Muslim a situation of growing emotional discomfort and, thus, leads to social alienation [see in: Nielsen 1999, 79].

At this point it may be concluded that on the contrary to Christianity in which the social and political elements were eventually rejected as not corresponding to the original teaching of Jesus Christ, the similar elements of Islam go back to its very origins and thus constitute an inseparable part of its teaching. Consequently, removing those social and political elements would inevitably mean reimagining of Islam and its transformation to a type of religion that has surrendered to the western secular standards.

**Functional differentiation.** As it follows from the conceptions of P. Berger and other theorists of secularization, the decline of the social significance of religion comes as a direct consequence of functional differentiation, whereas religion becomes a “sub-system alongside other sub-systems, losing in this process their over-arching claims over these other sub-systems” [Dobbelaere 2002, 166]. However, if applied to Muslim societies of the past, this situation does not constitute anything particularly new. For instance, Ira Lapidus has shown that the institutional separation between religious and political sub-systems was rather natural state of affairs for Medieval Muslim societies and did not challenge the status of Islam as a major authority and the source of all social norms and regulations [Lapidus 1975].

Another important dimension of this issue is that secularization on the social-structural level in the first place concerns highly institutionalized forms of religion with complex organizational structures. In this respect, the absence of such structure as church in Islam (both on the level of religious teaching and in the course of historical development) makes it less vulnerable to secularization processes. Various organizational forms in which Islam’s institutionalization has been manifested through the course of history (for instance, educational institutions like *madrassa*) never consolidated into a particularly centralized hierarchical institution which could pretend to have an exclusive right to speak for Islam in general and establish a regime of Orthodoxy. In other words, even though one can name a number of rather strong centers of religious authority in the Muslim world (like al-Azhar in Egypt), the institutional power in Islam is nonetheless distributed among a wide range of smaller organizations, movements and groups that represent different, often competing, schools of Islamic law or theology. It may be stated that this specific feature positions Islam beyond the immediate reach of secularization and constitute a substantial impediment to its progress in Muslim societies.

**The role of community in Islam.** In addition to the decline of religion’s social significance, there is another important issue on which the conception of secularization rests. As Bryan Wilson argues, secularization is tightly connected to the societalization processes which facilitate the destruction of community and its concomitants, such as specific ways of social control and communal consciousness.

The first aspect of this issue requires a deep qualitative analysis of the contemporary Muslim societies in order to understand whether or not the societalization processes there have taken place and the social structures are indeed taking a shape similar to that of the western individualist societies. In other words, if Wilson’s assumption is true, the preservation of traditional communal social structures may appear to be a real barrier for the progress of secularization in the Muslim world<sup>5</sup>.

Apart from the traditional social organization, another aspect that contributes to the preservation of communal structures in Muslim societies is Islam’s own powerful will to create and support community. It goes without saying that this point is not specific to Islamic teaching. Yet, it can be argued that, due to the pretension on maintaining social control, community occupies a particularly important place in Islam.

In its religious teaching, Islam places the major emphasis on the community of believers – *umma* – which in many respects compensates the lack of a formal institution similar to church. Thus, it is the community, not institution, that plays the role of a common denominator, global

identity for Muslims. This communal outlook is reflected in many Islamic norms and regulation. For example, the capital punishment for apostasy in Islamic law is justified by the fact that leaving Islam constitutes not an act of personal choice or a private issue *per se*, but rather a major threat to the whole Muslim community, its unity and safety. In a different manner, Islam's communal orientation may be illustrated by a passage from tafsir "In the shade of the Qur'an" written by the prominent ideologist of contemporary Islamic revival Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966). He writes:

"As indicated in Verse 193 of this surah (al-Baqara. – D. S.), Islam considers religious persecution and any threat to religion more dangerous for the future stability and existence of Islam than actual war. According to this great Islamic principle, the survival and prosperity of the faith take precedence over the preservation of human life itself" [Qutb, I, 351–352].

Taking this into account, it may be stated that maintaining community is of great significance for Islam as a way to extent and support social control. On the contrary, in a highly individualized society affected by societalization processes, it might be very difficult for Islam to effectively enforce many of its prescriptions and norms, especially those concerning *moral regulations*. Thus, Islam will not yield to the secularization processes as long as the traditional social structures (communal or tribal) in the Muslim world continue to function on the level of basic social structures.

**The question of Islamic law: morals and rationality.** The first two points mentioned earlier – the pretension on social control and community social structures – are tightly connected to the vision of Islamic law as one of the factors that stand in the way of secularization processes. On the contrary to the western legal systems which are moving towards "impersonal and amoral control, a matter for routine techniques and unknown officials" [Wilson 1976, 20], Islamic law (the *sharia* as a juridical phenomenon) still contains a lot of explicitly moral norms which in the western societies are now considered as belonging to the private sphere (the right to choose religion, adultery, dress-codes etc.). Moreover, as long as the *sharia* is regarded to be divinely sanctioned, those moral regulations cannot be dismissed or replaced by human-made rules. This is particularly obvious in the countries governed by "Islamic regimes" (like Saudi Arabia and Iran) as well as in many other Muslim societies where the *sharia* is incorporated to the legislation (Pakistan, Egypt, Nigeria, Sudan etc.).

Thus, even though Islamic law is a flexible and well-developed juridical system, it nonetheless has its limitations and specifics which establish and perpetuate the dominance of religious prescriptions in society. This constitutes an important barrier to the secularization of Islam.

In addition to the issue of moral regulation, there is also a question of rationality which according to S. Bruce is an essential feature of secularization. For example, rationalization as a part of modernization process in the West has extensively contributed to abolishing religious norms and principles that block development of economy or technology. Despite the fact that Islam is maintaining the image of a very rational teaching based on and recognizing the authority of reason, there are a number of precepts in Islamic law which could not be changed under any condition<sup>6</sup>. In this respect, any rational arguments cannot dismiss clearly formulated God's will.

## 2. Individual level (*secularization of consciousness*).

**The hierarchy of meaning: self-identification, religious beliefs, religious values.** Although a decline in personal religiosity is not considered to be the key feature of secularization, there are certain conditions of modernization processes that predispose it<sup>7</sup>. In this respect, a society affected by the secularization processes (on the societal level) can demonstrate a certain decrease in the level of personal religiosity. However, if this principle is correct, the data of the WVS testifies for absolute absence of secularization in the Muslim societies.

First, the rates of declarative religiosity, or self-identification, of the respondents remain very high and stable over the years. All Muslim countries in the sample, except for Turkey

and Iran, have shown the rate of more than 90 % in option “Religion is very important in life” which highly contrasts with Ukraine’s 18,3 % and Poland’s 47,8 %.

**Table 1.**  
**Important in life: Religion**  
**(% without DK/NA)**

Answer options	Countries								
	Poland	Ukraine	Indonesia	Egypt	Morocco	Iran	Jordan	Iraq	Turkey
Very important	47.8	18.3	94.7	95.4	90.6	78.5	94.5	96.1	74.7
Rather important	39.0	38.8	4.1	4.2	7.9	16.2	5.2	3.3	16.6
Not very important	10.4	27.7	0.9	0.2	1.3	3.9	0.2	0.4	6.2
Not at all important	2.8	15.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	1.5	0.2	0.2	2.5

Almost the same picture is reflected in the opinion of respondents on the importance of God in their lives.

**Table 2.**  
**How important is God in your life**  
**(% without DK/NA)**

Answer options	Country									
	Poland	Ukraine	Indonesia	Egypt	Morocco	Iran	Jordan	Iraq	Saudi Arabia	Turkey
Very important	52.1	25.4	97.3	81.6	99.3	83.6	98.6	91.4	94.2	80.7
9	9.9	6.3	1.8	9.4	-	6.7	0.6	4.9	1.7	6.1
8	10.9	10.5	0.3	4.5	0.1	4.1	0.5	2.5	1.5	4.2
7	8.7	6.6	0.4	2.1	-	2.0	0.1	0.4	0.6	1.9
...	...	...	...							
Not at all important	2.1	13.2	0.2	0.2	0.6	1.3	-	0.3	1.3	2.3

Secondly, the respondents in all Muslim countries in the sample demonstrate a very high level of consistency in answering the questions about *religious beliefs* as they not only declare absolute commitment to the fundamental principle of belief in God (98–99 %), but also in other important precepts of religion – belief in afterlife, heaven and hell. As it is evident from the tables below, in Ukraine belief in God is also rather high (80,3 %), however, the belief in afterlife, hell and heaven is evidently much lower – 39,8 %, 38,1 %, 40,3 % respectively.

**Table 3.**  
**Believe in: God**  
**(% without DK/NA)**

Answer options	Country									
	Poland	Ukraine	Indonesia	Egypt	Morocco	Iran	Jordan	Iraq	Saudi Arabia	Turkey
No	2.7	19.7	0.1	-	-	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.1	2.2
Yes	97.3	80.3	99.9	100.0	100.0	99.4	99.8	99.8	99.9	97.8

**Table 4.**  
**Believe in: life after death**  
**(% without DK/NA)**

Answer options	Country									
	Poland	Ukraine	Indonesia	Egypt	Morocco	Iran	Jordan	Iraq	Saudi Arabia	Turkey
No	19.6	60.2	0.5	-	0.2	2.4	2.5	2.7	0.9	8.8
Yes	80.4	39.8	99.5	100.0	99.8	97.6	97.5	97.3	99.1	91.2

**Table 5.**  
**Believe in: hell**  
**(% without DK/NA)**

Answer options	Country/region									
	Poland	Ukraine	Indonesia	Egypt	Morocco	Iran	Jordan	Iraq	Saudi Arabia	Turkey
No	34.4	61.9	0.1	-	0.2	1.8	0.7	0.7	0.5	7.3
Yes	65.6	38.1	99.9	100.0	99.8	98.2	99.3	99.3	99.5	92.7

**Table 6.**  
**Believe in: heaven**  
**(% without DK/NA)**

Answer options	Country									
	Poland	Ukraine	Indonesia	Egypt	Morocco	Iran	Jordan	Iraq	Saudi Arabia	Turkey
No	20.2	59.7	0.1	-	0.3	1.6	0.4	0.3	0.3	6.6
Yes	79.8	40.3	99.9	100.0	99.7	98.4	99.6	99.7	99.7	93.4

Thirdly, the data on religious values (or moral norms that are specifically emphasized and supported by religion), demonstrate lower rates of the “extreme opinions”; nevertheless opinions remain much more consistent in the Muslim societies than in the two European countries selected for this research. For example, the following tables represent respondents’ opinion on abortion, suicide, homosexuality, prostitution.

**Table 7.**  
**Justifiable: abortion**  
**(% without DK/NA)**

Answer options	Country									
	Poland	Ukraine	Indonesia	Egypt	Morocco	Iran	Jordan	Iraq	Saudi Arabia	Turkey
Never justifiable	43.9	33.0	88.3	56.5	82.0	76.8	84.7	76.9	62.2	64.4
2	6.5	6.8	3.6	16.3	2.9	4.6	2.9	13.6	6.4	4.4
3	5.9	7.3	3.7	10.8	2.2	3.5	3.9	2.8	5.7	5.6
4	4.7	7.5	1.1	3.9	1.0	3.0	2.1	1.0	5.8	3.6
5	15.3	24.2	2.6	5.6	9.2	6.9	3.8	1.0	7.8	12.2
6	4.2	6.0	0.6	2.5	0.8	1.6	1.3	0.4	4.4	3.0
7	4.4	4.2	-	1.8	0.3	1.2	0.2	0.4	2.7	1.4
8	6.1	4.5	-	1.5	0.2	0.6	0.5	0.8	1.8	1.6
9	2.4	2.8	0.1	0.7	0.3	0.6	0.5	2.4	1.2	0.9
Always justifiable	6.5	3.7	-	0.5	1.2	1.3	-	0.6	2.0	2.9

**Table 8.**  
**Justifiable: homosexuality**  
**(% without DK/NA)**

Answer options	Country									
	Poland	Ukraine	Indonesia	Egypt	Morocco	Iran	Jordan	Iraq	Saudi Arabia	Turkey
Never justifiable	59.9	71.0	95.0	99.9	-	94.0	98.1	-	84.9	84.7
2	5.8	2.9	2.2	-	-	1.2	0.8	-	6.2	3.6
3	4.1	2.6	0.7	-	-	0.9	0.4	-	2.5	2.1
4	3.9	2.5	0.4	-	-	0.6	0.1	-	1.9	1.0
5	10.0	9.6	1.1	0.1	-	1.2	0.2	-	3.4	5.3
6	1.6	2.7	0.3	-	-	0.5	0.2	-	0.5	0.8
7	2.4	1.6	-	-	-	0.2	*	-	0.3	0.3
8	3.9	2.4	0.1	-	-	0.1	*	-	-	0.8
9	1.7	1.7	0.2	-	-	0.1	-	-	-	0.2
Always justifiable	6.7	3.0	-	-	-	1.2	0.1	-	0.3	1.2

**Table 9.**  
**Justifiable: prostitution**  
**(% without DK/NA)**

Answer options	Country									
	Poland	Ukraine	Indonesia	Egypt	Morocco	Iran	Jordan	Iraq	Saudi Arabia	Turkey
Never justifiable	-	67.2	94.3	92.6	-	95.3	98.2	-	86.9	-
2	-	7.9	2.6	7.4	-	0.8	0.8	-	7.1	-
3	-	6.7	1.7	0.1	-	0.7	0.1	-	2.8	-
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Always justifiable	-	1.4	0.1	-	-	0.6	0.1	-	0.3	-

**Table 9a.**  
**Justifiable: prostitution (fifth wave, 2005–2008)**  
**(% without DK/NA)**

Answer options	Country									
	Poland	Ukraine	Indonesia	Egypt	Morocco	Iran	Jordan	Iraq	Saudi Arabia	Turkey
Never justifiable	57.7	57.3	88.3	-	-	82.6	99.6	-	-	72.8
2	9.4	9.1	4.5	-	-	7.5	0.2	-	-	9.8
3	7.1	6.9	1.5	-	-	2.5	0.1	-	-	5.0
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Always justifiable	2.0	0.7	0.7	-	-	1.1	-	-	-	0.7

**Table 10.**  
**Justifiable: suicide**  
**(% without DK/NA)**

Answer options	Country									
	Poland	Ukraine	Indonesia	Egypt	Morocco	Iran	Jordan	Iraq	Saudi Arabia	Turkey
Never justifiable	63.6	73.3	97.5	94.6	97.8	94.5	97.1	-	87.8	89.5
2	6.9	8.1	1.4	1.8	-	0.9	0.9	-	6.5	4.7
3	7.1	4.5	0.7	1.0	0.1	0.9	0.6	-	2.4	1.6
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Always justifiable	3.7	1.6	0.1	0.2	0.9	1.1	0.1	-	0.3	0.9

**Table 11.**  
**Justifiable: euthanasia**  
**(% without DK/NA)**

Answer options	Country									
	Poland	Ukraine	Indonesia	Egypt	Morocco	Iran	Jordan	Iraq	Saudi Arabia	Turkey
Never justifiable	50.4	30.0	83.9	77.6	94.0	76.3	89.8	-	79.6	65.1
2	6.6	5.5	5.8	12.4	2.0	3.8	2.2	-	8.8	5.1
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Always justifiable	7.4	19.3	0.5	0.1	1.6	6.1	1.2	-	1.0	8.2

This data on religious self-identification, beliefs and religious values serves as evidence that the secularization of consciousness in Muslim societies progresses very slowly (if progresses at all). In other words, the *hierarchy of meaning* in Muslim consciousness is a) remains intact and b) continues to be highly influenced by religion. The system of beliefs does not seem to be destroyed or transformed into a *bricolage* as it is clearly evident in the Ukrainian case. This also means that Islam is not suffering from *the crisis of plausibility* which according to P. Berger is an unavoidable side-effect of the secularization of consciousness.

The explanation of the failure of the secularization processes on the individual level or on the level of consciousness may be found in the reasons provided in the study of social structural aspects of the problem.

First, it is community structures that may be responsible for the persistence of Islam and its resistibility to secularization as community effectively maintains individual faith through specific ways of producing and transmitting knowledge. It also facilitates the uniformity of knowledge amongst the members of a community and proper channels for its passing along.

Secondly, Islam has a certain degree of immunity to the crisis of plausibility, because its doctrine contains a number of specific rational techniques and procedures which serve as a tool of producing of the "*effects of truth*". For example, Islam pays a lot of attention to convincing believers and converts that it is the only religion which teaching is a) truly rational in character, based on common sense and rooted in the human nature itself and b) has the sacred texts which 100 % authentic, that is transmitted directly from the founder of religion with application of the strict procedures of verification.

**The index of compartmentalization.** It must be noted that the WVS contains only few questions that might be helpful in determining the opinions of people on the social role and significance of religion.



On the one hand, the majority of respondents in different Muslim countries “agree” with the statement that religion can “give answers to the social problems”.

**Table 12.**  
**Churches give answers: the social problems**  
**(% without DK/NA)**

Answer options	Country									
	Poland	Ukraine	Indonesia	Egypt	Morocco	Iran	Jordan	Iraq	Saudi Arabia	Turkey
No	60.7	69.7	35.6	17.4	11.2	38.1	35.4	22.8	23.0	56.3
Yes	39.3	30.3	64.4	82.6	88.8	61.9	64.6	77.2	77.0	43.7

On the other hand, there seems to be a certain division of respondents’ opinions on the problem of whether or not religious leaders should influence government. As it is evident from the following table, the majority of respondents either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement that religious leaders *should not* influence government. In the same vein, a great deal of respondents appear to be neutral to this statement.

**Table 13.**  
**Religious leaders should not influence government**  
**(% without DK/NA)**

Answer options	Country									
	Poland	Ukraine	Indonesia	Egypt	Morocco	Iran	Jordan	Iraq	Turkey	
Agree strongly	44.8	29.2	17.6	-	18.1	17.3	29.7	-	26.3	
Agree	33.4	28.6	39.2	-	20.0	27.2	34.4	-	46.0	
Neither agree or disagree	10.3	25.5	17.1	-	36.7	27.7	18.4	-	9.2	
Disagree	8.5	12.3	22.3	-	17.1	22.0	14.0	-	14.5	
Strongly disagree	3.0	4.3	3.8	-	8.1	5.7	3.6	-	4.1	

The same picture is represented in the question on the role of religious leaders in election process: the majority of respondents seems to oppose religious leaders’ attempts to influence people’s choice.

**Table 14.**  
**Religious leaders should not influence how people vote**  
**(% without DK/NA)**

Answer options	Country									
	Poland	Ukraine	Indonesia	Egypt	Morocco	Iran	Jordan	Iraq	Saudi Arabia	Turkey
Agree strongly	52.7	28.8	28.0	-	14.7	26.3	36.3	24.2	-	29.7
Agree	30.0	35.1	49.7	-	24.0	34.1	35.8	28.2	-	48.4
Neither agree or disagree	6.8	23.7	11.6	-	32.8	21.7	9.3	29.5	-	6.6
Disagree	6.5	9.2	9.6	-	22.1	15.2	15.1	18.1	-	10.8
Strongly disagree	4.0	3.2	1.2	-	6.3	2.7	3.5	-	-	4.6

It can be admitted that the data provided above can be interpreted differently. However, there is a need to point out two important things.

First, there is much less uniformity in respondents' opinions about the social role of religion than in the answers concerning religious beliefs and values; the distribution of answers along the scale in some cases is a lot similar to that of much more secular societies such as Ukraine and Poland.

Secondly, although there is a clear tendency to regard religion as a source of answers to the social problems, this obviously contrasts with at least mixed or in other cases clearly negative attitude of respondents in Muslim countries to the influence of religion on political processes.

Thus, looking at the big picture, it appears that the high level of individual religiosity, personal beliefs and morals in different Muslim countries come in combination with cautious and moderate attitude to what concerns some aspects of religion's role in society. If we return to the basic claim of the secularization theory about "diminishing of the social significance of religion", this may be considered as a sign of slow progressing secularization.

**Additional observations.** The analysis of secularization processes in Islamic world on the two levels can be supplemented by a few additional assumptions.

First of all, in addition to the mutual exclusiveness of Islam and secularization described in the first part of this research, there is a need to mention another factor of special importance, namely the *oppositional status (image) of Islam*. To put it simply, no matter how intensive modernization processes in Muslim world are, secularization will have little or no progress at all as long as Islam is perceived as a major force that opposes negative effects of modernization, such as the decline of moral values, destruction of communal bounds, the pernicious influence of western culture etc. This situation parallels that of Catholicism in France at the beginning of the XX century. As F. Gugelot points out, the major wave of conversion arrived at the period when the church saw itself a *citadel* besieged by modernity. In its turn, a decrease in conversion started from the moment when the church engaged itself in reconquering society through accepting the rules of the new secular world [Hervieu-Leger 1998, 286]. Thus, it follows that opposition to modernity provides Islam with stable source of popularity and massive support in Muslim societies.

Second of all, social significance of Islam is not solely derived from the specific orientation of its teaching, but also from its historical role of the *vehicle of protest* in Muslim societies, or even the only legitimate way to express social and political disagreement. In this respect, Islam serves as a common denominator for different social classes and, thus, maintains its real social significance.

Third of all, there is a widespread notion that the outbursts of religious revivals in the XX century owe their origin to the failure of modernity to deliver its promises. Yet, there is no doubt that this failure affected western countries and Muslim societies in different ways. Although technological development and economic growth did not resolve the basic problems of human existence, they nonetheless substantially contributed to the improvement of the life quality of population in the West. On the contrary to that, modernization processes in Islamic countries did not succeed enough to meet basic needs of the substantial part of population, thus creating a very unpopular image of modernity and disappointment with western styled patterns of social order. If the religious revival in the USA in 1960<sup>th</sup> was generally a search for new ways to realize the potential of spirituality, spiritual search (new religious movements), "Islamic revival" of the middle of the XX century was not limited to spiritual dimension (the rise in religiosity) – it was driven by the social circumstances of the Muslim societies, rapidly evolving to become socio-political movement ("Islam is the answer"). This allows setting forth a hypothesis that only real success of modernization processes on societal level may produce secularization effects. Some support on this assumption may be derived from the situation with gradual internal secularization of Islamic movements in

Muslim societies where modernization effects are more visible (Persian Gulf, Turkey, Jordan). As many studies have shown, in these countries Islamic movements slowly adjust their political agendas and accept the rules of secular regimes in order to operate in their space legally<sup>8</sup>.

**Conclusions.** At this stage of research the theoretical inquiry and the analysis of data of the WVS allow making the following conclusions.

First, theoretical consideration of Islam using the basic assumptions of the secularization theories has shown that Islamic teaching contains elements that render it virtually incompatible or mutually exclusive with secularization. The most obvious of those elements is the inherent intention of Islam to maintain social control and the regulation of all aspects of private and social life through the establishment of Islamic law as the major source of authority at all the levels of society.

The second important aspect of Islam's resistance to secularization is its orientation to community. In the same way, Islamic law (*sharia*) which contains a lot of moral norms accords well with the traditional for the community structures type of social control which according to B. Wilson is moral in its nature. Thus, if Wilson's assumptions are correct, Islam cannot be secularized until the traditional social structures (communal or tribal) in the Muslim world are replaced by more individual-oriented social structures. The same might be said about Islam promoting communal outlook and stating the dominance of the community over an individual.

These and other points elaborated in the research evidence that Islam opposes secularization not just by virtue of its role as a "vehicle of protest" or the only alternative to the failed western models of political and social regimes, as S. Bruce would argue; the opposition to secularization is predisposed by the certain inherent features of Islam which run against major tendencies of secularization.

The implications of the abovementioned both for the secularization theories and for understanding the contemporary Muslim societies can be formulated as following.

On the one hand, if the secularization thesis is correct and there is a direct relationship between modernization and secularization, then contemporary Muslim societies so far cannot be considered as "modern" in the full sense of this term, regardless of the technological advancement and the level of urbanization. That is the real modernization in Islamic world is yet to come with all the social and political changes which facilitate secularization. In this scenario, if modernization is to occur, Islam will have to be transformed into a different type of religion – a contemporary western style one which has no ambition to execute social control. However, following S. Bruce's logic of argument, we will not be able to see this scenario at work or declare its complete failure until Islam stops playing its present role of the "vehicle of protest", or to put it differently, until the political and social situation in the Muslim societies is completely stabilized and social conflicts are settled.

On the other hand, if the secularization thesis is false, or at least not universal in the scale of its application (not applicable in the societies other than western), then there are good reasons to assume that there may be some other, non-secular versions of modernity which, fully embracing technological advancement, urbanization and industrialization, nonetheless coexists with traditional, or communal, consciousness which is the basis for the preservation of the hierarchy of meaning and the plausibility of religious interpretation of reality as universal truth. The data of the WVS concerning the religious and moral questions fully support this idea, demonstrating high level of religiosity in all of its aspects (beliefs and values accord with declarative religiosity), which is especially evident in comparison with the patterns of secularization in Ukraine and Poland. And yet it should be mentioned that there is a clear difference between the total uniformity in respondents' opinion concerning beliefs and values and certain variability of the answers concerning the social significance of religion: it might be considered as a very first and weak harbinger of certain secularization processes in this specific area of people's opinion.

<sup>1</sup> There are a huge number of publications on this topic. See, for instance: Hoebink M. Thinking about Renewal in Islam: Towards a History of Islamic Ideas on Modernization and Secularization // Arabica. – 1999. – Vol. 46/1. – P. 29–62; Islam and Secularism in the Middle East (ed. J. Esposito). – London, 2000; Kramer G. Islam and secularization // Secularization and the world religions (ed. Hans Joas). – Liverpool, 2009. – P. 108–122; Najjar F. M. The debate on Islam and secularism in Egypt // Arab Studies Quarterly. – 1996. – Vol. 18/2. – P. 1–21; Roy O. Secularism confronts Islam. – N. p.: Columbia University Press, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> It should be pointed out that some questions are missing from the questionnaires offered in different countries. In addition to that, the waves 1–4 and the fifth wave have a slightly different set of questions. However, whenever it is possible we use the data from the latest fifth wave. For the purpose of comparison, two additional countries were included to the data analysis: one with the predominant Catholic population (Poland) and one with the Orthodox population (Ukraine). Both countries reportedly have one of the highest rates of religiosity in their regions. Such a comparison will help better understand the specifics of secularization processes and secularization patterns in different parts of the world.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to the mentioned, the methodological approach employed for the data analysis in this research, attributes a special importance to the respondents' "extreme opinions" which reflect maximum (or, in some cases, minimum) support for a statement on the questionnaire ("never justifiable" or "always justifiable"). This appears to be more relevant when it comes to the study of religious consciousness as long as categorical opinions best characterize religious outlook and present the type of consciousness affected or not affected by secularization. We argue that extreme opinions conform to the requirement of religion for the full and uncompromised loyalty. In contrast to that, other answers on the scale besides "extremes" may come as a sign of secularization of consciousness: they may point to something besides religion that informs a person's opinion. In other words, a respondent is able to vary his opinion based on the concrete circumstances or his/her personal vision and preferences. For example, when religion is absolutely dominant in the hierarchy of meaning of an individual and completely controls his or her world view, answering the question about the justifiability of abortion, an Orthodox believer cannot give an answer other than "never justifiable". Thus, the more uncertain a respondent's answer, the more there is to argue that his/her consciousness has been affected by secularization.

<sup>4</sup> The most obvious example of this in Christianity is the principle stated in Matthew 22:21: "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's".

<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, there is only limited amount of sources that allow making any preliminary generalizations. For example, the field data (mainly interviews with the representatives of Muslim societies of Middle and Near East) suggest that the communal structures that go back to the tribal organization of society are still well and alive in Jordan. This may serve as evidence that the communal social organization can survive even in the new situation of progressive urbanization and industrialization tendencies which accompany modernization. If so, this last assumption directly challenges secularization hypothesis and testifies in favor of the "multiple modernities" paradigm.

<sup>6</sup> Such as the prohibition of loan interest (*riba*).

<sup>7</sup> For example, in his monograph "The sacred canopy", Berger argues that loosing the social control religion must give up its dominance in the worldview of the individual. Thus the latter is able to choose between belief and non-belief as well as between certain components of various religious traditions. In Luckman's terms, religion loses its dominant place in the "hierarchy of meaning" of the individual. According to Berger, religion's dominance is also affected by the effects of pluralism and other competing ideologies; this situation leads to a crisis of plausibility which undermines individual religiosity.

<sup>8</sup> See more on this: Abed-Kotob S. The Accommodationists Speak: Goals and Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt // International Journal of Middle East Studies. – 1995. – Vol. 27 (3). – P. 321–339; El-Ghobashy M. The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers // International Journal of Middle East Studies. – 2005. – Vol. 37 (3). – P. 373–395; Roald A. S. From theocracy to democracy? Towards secularization and individualization in the policy of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan // Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies. – 2008. – Vol. 8 (7). – P. 84–107; Wiktorowicz Q. The Salafi Movement in Jordan // International Journal of Middle East Studies. – 2000. – Vol. 32 (2). – P. 219–240.

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