

ABSTRACT

of the thesis for the «Doctor of Philosophy» (Ph.D.) degree in the «6D050200 – Political Science» program Nurov Markhabbat Meshitbokovich «The analysis of the relationship between secularity and religiosity in Kazakhstan»

Relevance of the research topic. The relevance of this research topic is: firstly, the peculiarities of the modern political and socio-cultural contexts of interaction between the state, society, and religion; secondly, the interiorization of the research discourse of secularism in the regulation of political and social relations in the country as a guarantee of creating conditions for the realization of religious needs in a multi-confessional society.

The steady tendency towards secularism of traditional institutions is a feature of many societies that have faced the influence of modern civilizations. Despite the fact that they have different ethnic origins, geographical locations, historical development, and the state of politics, the changes taking place between them vary in scale and intensity. Nevertheless, it is impossible not to note a certain similarity in their experience of social change: in the course of political-social and cultural-spiritual evolution, most of humanity builds its development within the framework of secularism. At the same time, it is worth considering the importance of the question of the degree of influence of religion in the formation of social stability and interethnic relations in a secular state. The religious worldview of Kazakhstani citizens has been transformed since the beginning of independence, and this circumstance, namely the ratio of secularism and religiosity at the present stage of the country's development, requires in-depth analysis, in particular political research.

The purpose of the study is to conduct a political analysis of the validity of the development of secularism in Kazakhstan and to determine the concept of the essence and various forms of religiosity in relation to the factors of their development, the main contradictions, and trends.

Research hypotheses. *General hypothesis:* it is assumed that the modern religiosity of society is a condition and result of mega-macro-micro trends operating in Kazakh society, and manifests itself in forms reflecting secularization and globalization of cultural and political life. At the same time, contradictions in the dynamics of the growth of citizens' religiosity are realized in individual, group, national, ethnic, and social self-consciousness, manifested in blood-kinship relations, in the fields of education, politics, culture in the course of religious and non-religious activities. *Particular hypotheses:* it is assumed that (1) secularism (the process of secularization) in Kazakhstan is closely related to the Western (European) model; (2) the majority of Kazakhstanis identify themselves with Islam; (3) Muslim values, which came with spiritual renewal, contribute to increasing the religiosity of citizens; (4) the process of secularization, in turn, has a serious impact on the religious sphere, which can be traced, for example, in the systemic and structural changes of religious associations, etc.

The object of the study. The essence of religiosity and secularization in modern processes of socio-political development.

The subject of the study. Features of the manifestation of religiosity and the implementation of secularization policy in Kazakhstan.

Research objectives:

- to reveal the concept, essence, and historical development of secularism and religiosity and the political prerequisites for its formation;
- to study the methodological foundations of the study of secularism and religiosity;
- to identify the influence of secularism and religiosity on modern political processes;
- to consider the features of the models of the correlation of secularism and religiosity in the Soviet period, as well as in the programs of Alashorda;
- to conduct a sociological study and analyze the degree of manifestation of religiosity and the features of secularism in modern Kazakh society;
- to identify the results of the implementation of secular policy and its impact on the development of Kazakh society.

Theoretical and methodological foundations of the study. The theoretical and methodological basis of the research is the conceptual provisions of the theories and paradigms of secularization, the structural and functional approach, and the methodological discourse of the study of the religiosity of the population in the sociology of religion. The work uses an interdisciplinary principle that allows using political, sociological, historical, cultural, and philosophical methods and approaches to investigate the process of secularization and the phenomenon of religiosity. In order to identify the degree of religiosity of Kazakhstanis in the context of compensation theory, the methodology of sociological analysis (questionnaire survey) was applied in the dissertation. In the analysis of laws and regulatory legal acts regulating the activities of religious organizations in the country, and documents enshrining the principles of secularism in the field of public policy, the author applied the documentary method. The use of the method of synthesis of archival documents characterizing the policy of the Soviet government in the religious sphere contributed to the classification, unification, and grouping of data from archival documents, scientific papers, and collections of documents on the formation and development, the essence and content of religious policy in the Soviet period.

The empirical base of the study is based on the materials of two sociological measurements aimed at identifying indicators of the population's religiosity, conducted by the author with the support of the Kazakhstan Center for Humanitarian and Political Conjuncture. The survey was conducted in two stages (in the online format on the platform www.surveo.com):

1. Conducting a quantitative survey in February-March 2019, a stage in which 1,387 respondents aged 17 to 68 years took part (800 fully completed questionnaires were analyzed).

2. Conducting a quantitative survey using a combined sample in February-March 2021. In the second stage, 475 respondents from 18 major cities in Kazakhstan were selected. The IBM SPSS Statistics 26 program was used to analyze the survey results.

The source base of this research consists of materials from archival collections (the Administration of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the "Central State Archive" of the Committee for Archives and Documentation Management of the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan), collections of documents, resolutions, and resolutions of congresses, acts of state legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, statistical materials, scientific works of domestic and foreign authors, materials of periodical scientific publications, Internet resources, memoir sources, reference materials, and encyclopedias, the author's own field research is also involved, obtained from surveys in the period from 2019 to 2021.

The main provisions submitted for protection:

1. Secularism should be understood not as a one-sided process leading to the decline of religion and religiosity in society, but as a nonlinear process of changing the position of religion, religious institutions in society, and changes in the religious outlook of the people. The process of secularization causes changes in religion itself, in the system of religious governance, but these processes are reversible and depend on the activity of political institutions and groups that support certain values and attitudes.

2. Religiosity as a socio-philosophical category reflects the state of individual and social consciousness, lifestyle, and the whole being of a person, which through faith in "higher powers" acts as transcendent and real, mediating the connection between the forms of his activity, expressing the degree of connection of these ideas, images, motives in the consciousness and behavior of people. Religiosity allows us to better characterize religious faith – the relations of subjects and levels of communication. The essence, content, and forms of the phenomenon of religiosity reflect the totality of historically accumulated, manifested in individual consciousness and activity, specific properties, and patterns of social development. This gives grounds to use rational methods of studying the content and forms of religiosity. Indicators of citizens' appeal to irrational practices, those with higher education and a low level of religiosity demonstrate high indicators.

3. Secularism in Kazakhstan has its own characteristics and development trends and is determined by the globalization and modernization processes of society, which are interconnected and parallel to each other. Secularism and globalization are connected with the secular European and Western education system created in Kazakh society and occurred primarily in the part where citizens to a certain extent had higher education. The peculiarities of the modern stage of the development of the religiosity of Kazakh society are the growth of quantitative indicators of religious activity; the strengthening of the political positions of traditional religious organizations; the slowing down of the quantitative growth of other religious organizations and internal strengthening of the traditional religion of Islam for Kazakhstan; demonstration of the external, ritual side of religiosity, etc.

4. Religiosity has been studied using methods aimed at studying the nature of its structural elements in the following manifestations: religious consciousness is the basis of the revealed forms of behavior through the analysis of confessions, basic ideas, and moods at the level of individual and mass consciousness, as well as through the analysis of possibilities. According to the data obtained, the religiosity of

citizens is influenced by education and its levels. Among urban residents, 10.9% unequivocally believe in a non-institutional form of religiosity - occultism, and taking into account those who believe rather than not, this share increases to 37.0%. As expected, the higher the education, the lower the religiosity: if among citizens with secondary education, the share of those who somehow believe in other forms of non-institutional religiosity reaches 45.9%, then among citizens with higher education - 34.6%. More than a third of residents of cities of Kazakhstan with higher education in the age range from 35 to 50 years fully or more believe in occult knowledge.

5. The thesis that modernization is always accompanied by the loss of religiosity and secularism is presented in the scientific literature as an axiom. At the same time, the situation is quite profound: in the modern world, there is a decline in secularism and an increase in interest in religion, as well as clear trends in a variety of variants, from fundamentalism to new beliefs. Religious views have not been replaced by political ideologies. The interpretation and recognition of religions are often determined by the political culture of certain societies, their identity, historical mythology, and traditions. In other words, the European model of building a secular society is not universal.

The main scientific results of the study:

- the conceptual apparatus and operationalization of concepts, the essence and historical development of secularism and religiosity are defined, at the same time, the political prerequisites for the formation of secularism are revealed;

- the methodological foundations of the study of secularism and religiosity have been studied with the justification of the applicability of integrative paradigmatic approaches;

- the methodology of the research approach has been developed and tested using integrative methods aimed at identifying factors influencing the development of secularism and religiosity in modern political processes;

- comparative analysis was applied to identify the features of considering the models of the correlation of secularism and religiosity in the Soviet period, as well as in the programs of Alashorda;

- an evidence-based analysis of the degree of manifestation of religiosity is presented and the specifics of the manifestation of secularism in Kazakh society

are revealed; - the results of the implementation of secular policy and its impact on the social, cultural, and intellectual development of the country based on a dialogue of secular and religious ethics, sacred and secular values on the way to spiritual harmony, and social consolidation are revealed.

Compliance with the directions of research development or state programs. The study has a relationship with the main state programs, namely with the Strategy “Kazakhstan-2050: the new political course” of the established state from December 14, 2012; the program article “Course towards the future: modernization of Kazakhstan's identity” from 2017; State of the Nation Address by President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, September 1, 2020 “Kazakhstan in a new reality: time for action” on September 1, 2020; State of the Nation Address by President of the Republic of Kazakhstan “Unity of the people and systemic reforms -

a solid foundation for the prosperity of the country”, September 1, 2021; State of the Nation Address by President of the Republic of Kazakhstan “A fair state. One nation. Prosperous society”, September 1, 2022, and other regulatory documents.

Approbation and implementation of research results. The dissertation was discussed at the Department of political science and socio-philosophical Discipline of Abai KazNPU (Protocol No. 12) and recommended for protection. The main scientific results of the dissertation work are presented at various international scientific-theoretical and practical conferences, in scientific journals. The main ideas of the dissertation were reflected in 14 scientific papers, in particular, 2 articles – in the international scientific publications «European Journal of Science and Theology», and «Sociological Studies» included in the Scopus database, 6 articles – in scientific publications recommended by the Committee for Quality Assurance in the Field of Science and Higher Education of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 7 articles – in the materials of international conferences and publications of domestic and foreign countries.