

SEKULAR STATEHOOD AND POLITICIZED RELIGIOSITY: THEIR ROLE AND IMPORTANCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN SOCIETY

Avazov K. Kh.

Head of the Department of Methodology of Socio-Economic Sciences,

PhD in Political Science, Associate Professor

Surkhandarya Regional Center for Pedagogical Excellence

Abstract

This article analyzes the theoretical foundations of secular statehood and politicized religiosity, their interrelationship, and their impact on the development of modern society. The legal and institutional characteristics of a secular state are examined, and the social and political risks arising from the politicization of religion are explored. Furthermore, the study provides a scientific justification for the importance of maintaining a balance between ensuring freedom of religion and preserving the secular principles of the state.

Keywords: Secular statehood, politicized religiosity, state–religion relations, freedom of religion, democracy, tolerance, rule of law.

Introduction

In the context of globalization, relations between religion and the state have become an important object of study not only in political science, but also in jurisprudence, sociology, and religious studies. The experience of modern state development shows that the principle of secularism plays a crucial role in ensuring social stability and cohesion. However, in recent decades, the politicization of religion has been observed in some regions.

This phenomenon is interpreted as politicized religiosity, and its socio-political consequences are widely discussed.

The aim of this article is to analyze the essence of secular statehood and politicized religiosity, to assess their impact on societal development, and to highlight the importance of maintaining a balance in state–religion relations.

Research Methodology

This study employs a range of scientific research methods to comprehensively examine the theoretical and methodological foundations of secular statehood and politicized religiosity. In particular, the comparative legal analysis method was used to compare mechanisms regulating state–religion relations in different countries, the legal foundations of secularism, and their practical implementation.

This method made it possible to identify both general and specific features of secular statehood.

Using a systems approach, secular statehood and politicized religiosity were analyzed as complex social phenomena closely interconnected with the political, legal, social, and spiritual life of society. This approach allowed for an assessment of the interaction between these concepts, their internal structural elements, and their impact on social stability.

The historical analysis method was applied to study the stages of formation and development of state–religion relations, the emergence and evolution of the idea of secular statehood, and the processes of politicization of religion in different historical periods.

The logical analysis method enabled the systematization and generalization of theoretical perspectives, scientific concepts, and legal approaches related to the topic, as well as the formulation of conclusions.

In addition, analysis and synthesis methods were widely used in the research process. Through analysis, the specific features, factors, and consequences of secular statehood and politicized religiosity were examined, while synthesis helped identify their interrelations and general patterns.

Induction and deduction methods were also applied to derive general conclusions from specific cases and to apply theoretical principles to particular socio-political processes.

The source base of the study includes scholarly works of both local and foreign researchers, documents of international organizations, national legislation, constitutional principles, and monographs devoted to state–religion relations. In particular, the works of P. Berger, J. Casanova, A. Kuru, C. Taylor, P. Norris, and

R. Inglehart on secularism theory and the role of religion in social life were analyzed. In addition, the research draws on the studies of Sh. Pakhrutdinov, N. Juraev, S. Otamuratov, and other scholars who have examined issues of statehood, national development, and ideological security in Uzbekistan.

The empirical base of the study consists of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations,” international legal instruments on human rights, as well as other normative legal acts regulating state–religion relations. Based on a comprehensive analysis of these sources, scientific conclusions were developed regarding the legal foundations of secular statehood and the impact of politicized religiosity on the development of modern society.

Secular Statehood and Its Key Characteristics

Secular statehood is one of the fundamental principles of modern public administration, referring to the independence of state authority from religious institutions. This principle implies that the state serves the interests of all members of society rather than those of a particular religion or religious denomination.

In a secular state, the rights and freedoms of citizens are guaranteed equally regardless of their religious beliefs, convictions, or confessional affiliation. In this sense, secularism is not only a legal principle regulating state–religion relations but also a political-legal mechanism ensuring social justice, equality, and tolerance.

In academic literature, various approaches to the concept of secularism exist. For instance, the American sociologist Peter Berger interprets secularization as a process in which the influence of religious institutions over different spheres of social life declines.

José Casanova, in turn, associates secularism with the institutional differentiation between the state and religious organizations. Ahmet T. Kuru distinguishes between passive and assertive models of secularism, emphasizing that the relationship between the state and religion depends on a country’s historical and political development.

The main criteria of secular statehood include the following:

First, the separation of state and religious organizations. According to this principle, religious institutions do not perform state governance functions, and the state does not interfere in the internal affairs of religious organizations. Such separation provides a legal foundation for the independent functioning of both institutions.

Second, the guarantee of freedom of conscience. A secular state ensures every individual's right to practice any religion, to have no religion, or to freely express their religious beliefs. Freedom of conscience is considered a fundamental human right protected by national legislation and international legal norms.

Third, the rule of law. In a secular state, all citizens, officials, and institutions are subject to a unified legal system. State decisions are based on the Constitution and laws rather than religious norms.

Fourth, equality of citizens. The state must not grant privileges to followers of any particular religion or discriminate against other confessions. All citizens are equal before the law and enjoy equal legal protection.

Fifth, the formation of an environment of interfaith tolerance. A secular state creates necessary legal and social conditions for peaceful coexistence among representatives of different religious traditions and beliefs, contributing to social stability and national cohesion.

Modern democratic experience demonstrates that secularism is one of the key institutional foundations of human rights protection, civil society, and the rule of law. In particular, the secular model ensures religious freedom while enhancing the neutrality and effectiveness of state governance.

It also serves as an important factor in preventing religious conflicts, fostering tolerance, and strengthening social stability. Therefore, secularism is widely recognized in academic and political discourse as an essential feature of modern statehood.

Characteristics of Politicized Religiosity

Politicized religiosity refers to the use of religion beyond its spiritual and moral functions as a tool for political power struggle. In this process, religious values and symbols are adapted to serve political objectives.

The main features of politicized religiosity include:

- integration of religious ideas into political programs;
- active involvement of religious organizations in political processes;

- use of religious identity as a means of political mobilization;
- attempts to prioritize religious norms in state governance.

Researchers note that while the politicization of religion may, under certain conditions, strengthen social cohesion, in most cases it increases polarization and social conflict.

The Relationship Between Secular Statehood and Religious Freedom

In some cases, secularism is misinterpreted as distancing from religion or restricting religious life. In reality, a secular state guarantees the legal protection of religious freedom. State secularism not only safeguards individuals' religious rights but also ensures equal conditions for followers of different beliefs.

From this perspective, secularism and religious freedom are not opposing concepts but mutually reinforcing legal and social mechanisms.

Contemporary Challenges in Modern Society

In the 21st century, religious extremism, radicalism, and transnational ideological threats require new approaches to state–religion relations. Under these conditions, the following tasks are of particular importance for states:

- development of a culture of religious tolerance;
- improvement of legal and religious literacy among the population;
- strengthening educational efforts against extremist ideologies;
- support for civil society institutions;

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that secular statehood constitutes a fundamental institutional mechanism for ensuring legal equality, social stability, and religious tolerance in contemporary societies. By establishing a clear separation between state authority and religious institutions, secular governance provides a neutral legal framework in which all citizens, regardless of their religious beliefs or affiliations, are granted equal rights and opportunities. In this regard, secularism serves not only as a constitutional principle but also as a broader socio-political foundation for sustaining pluralism, justice, and cohesion within diverse societies.

At the same time, the findings demonstrate that politicized religiosity, defined as the subordination of religious values and institutions to political objectives, may

lead to significant social and political consequences. In particular, it can contribute to ideological polarization, weaken social trust, and intensify tensions between different groups within society. When religious identity is instrumentalized for political mobilization, it often shifts from a unifying moral framework to a divisive factor, thereby increasing the risk of conflict and instability.

Consequently, modern states are required to adopt a balanced and context-sensitive approach in managing state–religion relations. While maintaining secular principles as a basis for governance, states must simultaneously ensure the full realization of freedom of religion and belief as a fundamental human right. This dual responsibility requires the development of comprehensive legal mechanisms that both protect religious liberty and prevent its misuse for political purposes.

In addition, it is essential to address the risks associated with the politicization of religion through preventive and constructive strategies. These include the establishment of inclusive public policies that respect religious diversity, the strengthening of legal and civic education to enhance public awareness, and the promotion of interfaith dialogue as a means of fostering mutual understanding and social harmony. Furthermore, cooperation between state institutions and civil society organizations plays a crucial role in reinforcing resilience against extremist ideologies and maintaining long-term societal stability.

Overall, the study confirms that a well-balanced secular framework, combined with effective protection of religious freedom, remains one of the most important conditions for sustainable development, peaceful coexistence, and democratic governance in the modern world.

References

1. Berger, P. L. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. New York: Anchor Books, 1967.
2. Casanova, J. *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
3. Fox, J. *Political Secularism, Religion and the State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
4. Haynes, J. *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*. London: Routledge, 2013.

5. Kuru, A. T. Secularism and State Policies toward Religion: The United States, France and Turkey. Cambridge University Press, 2009.
5. Norris, P., Inglehart, R. Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide. Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- 6 Taylor, C. A Secular Age. Harvard University Press, 2007.
7. Esposito, J. L. Islam and Politics. Syracuse University Press, 1998.
8. Shukritdin Pakhrutdinov. "Uzbekistan: Responsibility for Sustainable Development and Intensity of Rapid Changes". Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal, Vol. 6, No. 8, 2019, pp. 233–239. DOI: 10.14738/assrj.68.6918.
9. Pakhrutdinov, Sh. I. Threat: Theory and Practice. Modern Factors in the Formation of a Threat-Resistant Society. OmniScriptum Publishing, 2020.
10. Pakhrutdinov, Sh. I. "Strengthening Regional and International Cooperation in Order to Ensure Security and Stability in the Central Asian Region". European International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Management Studies, 2022.
11. Ш. И. Пахрутдинов, Таҳдид: назария ва амалиёт. Тошкент, Абу Али ибн Сино номидаги тиббиёт нашриёти, 1998.
12. Ш. И. Пахрутдинов, Миллий тараққиёт ва мафкуравий хавфсизлик масалалари. Тошкент, 2017.
13. Ш. И. Пахрутдинов, Глобаллашув шароитида давлат ва жамият хавфсизлиги. Тошкент, 2018.
14. Shukritdin Pakhrutdinov, "Democratic Society and Responsibility of Leaders in New Uzbekistan." European Journal of Humanities and Educational Advancements, vol. 4, no. 4, 17 Apr. 2023, pp. 156-159.
14. Shukritdin Pakhrutdinov. "The Essence of the Modern Period and the Growth of Importance Sustainability in Society." American Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences, vol. 19, 25 Dec. 2023, pp. 98-100.
15. Shukritdin Pakhrutdinov "Strengthening regional and international cooperation in order to ensure security and stability in the central Asian region." European International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Management Studies 2.12 (2022): 18-24.
16. Ш. И. Пахрутдинов, Барқарор тараққиёт ва раҳбар масъулияти. "Akademiya" нашриёти. 2011 й.