

**THE COMPLEXITY OF THE CONCEPT
OF ISLAMIC REVIVALISM AND
REVIVALISTS' UNDERSTANDING OF
A PROPER MODEL OF STATE**

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Islamic Revivalism is not a brand-new phenomenon, but, with increasing files of exponents, it promotes a variety of discussions on how and when it started, what is the mainstream ideology, what are the foremost goals of its activists, etc. Summing up all the analysis and propositions, it could be stated that the phenomenon of Islamic Revivalism (which started, the latest, with the Iranian revolution) designates all-out efforts aimed at the wholesale re-islamization of polities through direct political and/or military actions. As the definition suggests, the goal of revivalists (a proper Islamic state with three key elements: Islam, Sharia, Islamic ruling system) is the same but the approach to reaching it might not be indiscrete. Therefore, Sunni Islamic revivalists, who are the main object of the research, are divided into three groups: islamists (the most moderate Muslim revivalists with political goals), fundamentalists (who might radically impose religion on politics, though do not necessarily will claim to have a political project), and radical Muslims (who are committed to violence and seek for their goals on any terms).

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Introduction

There is a well-known saying “the West and the rest” which draws the Euro/American–centristic line. However, today the phenomenon of Islamic Revivalism is challenging this theory by giving a very clear hint of a parallel assumption – “Islam and the rest”. This becomes more substantive with the delivery of statistics. Islam is the world’s fastest growing religion, accounting for more or less a quarter of the world’s population.¹ According to the recent research on more than 200 countries, there are around 1.57 billion Muslims of all ages living in the world today,² thereof approximately 1 billion Muslims live in 44 countries where Muslims constitute the majority of the population.³

The theme of Islamic Revivalism is not a brand-new. There are different attitudes towards the phenomenon of Islamic Revivalism and even more discussions on how and when did it start, what is its mainstream ideology, and what are the foremost goals of its activists.⁴ The clash is most visible between Islamic Revivalism and Western civilizations (with the U.S. ahead), which produces worldwide outcomes, but there are also clashes in areas where the West is not necessarily included, like South Asia or Sub-Saharan Africa.

¹ Lubeck Paul M. , “The Islamic Revival: Antinomies of Islamic Movements under Globalization”, CGIRS *Working paper No. WP#99-1*, Santa Cruz: Center for Global International & Regional Studies, University of California, 2000, p. 5

² Stencel Sandra et al., “Mapping the global Muslim population”, A report on the size and distribution of the World’s Muslim population, *the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life*, Washington D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2009, p. 1

³ Stahnke T., Blitt R. C., “The Religion–State Relationship and the Right to Freedom of Religion or Belief: A Comparative Textual Analysis of the Constitution of Predominantly Muslim Countries,” United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, March 2005, p. 7

⁴ Denooux G., “The forgotten swamp: navigating political Islam”, *Middle East Policy* IX (2), June 2002; Kirmanj S., “The Relationships between traditional and contemporary islamist political thought”, *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 12 (1), March 2008; Crisis Group, “Understanding Islamism”, *Middle East/North Africa Report N°37*, 02/03/2005

With the growth of Islamic Revivalism in the world, there have been mounting debates in states with big communities of Muslims about whether the law of a state should be closely related to religion or wholly detached from it. In some states where Muslims do not constitute the absolute majority, though compose a bigger part of citizens, partial implementation of *Sharia*, which satisfies Muslims up to a point, is applied.⁵ *Sharia* could be implemented as a law of a State or state(s) in a federation, and applied to Muslims only or to everyone who is staying (temporarily or permanently) in that state, and it also could be implemented as a specific area of the country's judiciary law, like civil or criminal code of law, again, applied to Muslims only or to every citizen.

It is a common case that the most active supporters of religion involvement into politics are Islamic Revivalists whose ultimate goal is creation of the Islamic state in which *Sharia* takes a crucial role. For this reason, Islamic revivalist groups are often viewed as a threat to existing (non-Islamic) governments.⁶ Among a range of possible threats that various Islamic Revivalism activists may cause (or are already causing) to others, democracy becomes one of the possible factors that is (or is not) challenged by Islamic Revivalism.⁷ However, as Islamic Revivalism is not a unanimous formation, this threat could be partitioned into several levels. Apart from separating Sunni Islam (the majority) from Shi'a and Ibadi Islam, in this article Sunni

⁵ Bonderman D., "Modernization and Changing Perceptions of Islamic Law", *Harvard Law Review* 81 (6), April 1968; An-Na'im Abdullahi Ahmed, *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Sharia*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 2008; Kirmanj, *Relationships*

⁶ Pipes D., *In the Path of God*, New Brunswick (U.S.A.) and London (U.K.): Transaction Publisher, 2003; Nasr S. V. R., "Democracy and Islamic Revivalism", *Political Science Quarterly* 110 (2), 1995; Kramer M., "Coming to terms: Fundamentalists or islamists?", *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2003, <<http://www.meforum.org/541/coming-to-terms-fundamentalists-or-islamists>> (2011 01 07)

⁷ Turam B., "The politics of engagement between Islam and the secular state: ambivalences of civil society", *The British Journal of Sociology*, 2004, vol. 55 issue 2; Bukay D., *Can there be an Islamic Democracy?*, Middle East Forum XIV (2), Spring 2007, <<http://www.meforum.org/1680/can-there-be-an-islamic-democracy>> (2011 01 07)

Islamic revivalists (the main object of the research) are also going to be divided into three groups – islamists, fundamentalists, and radical Muslims – which, while having the same goal, might vary in strategies, tactics and tools they use.

So, the problem emerges when a state, which is not indicating itself as Islamic, decides to implement *Sharia*. The implementation of *Sharia*, which is often a political compromise between Islamic Revivalism groups and State, quite often causes a discrepancy between the secular and Islamic laws.⁸ However, it is just a temporary solution, because it will never satisfy both sides and most likely will cause further discord, especially in the states that do not have all-in-one (e.g., religious, ethnical, etc.) status. Therefore, the main research **question** is how Islamic Revivalism challenges and /or threatens the nature of non-Islamic states.

Thus, the **aim** of the research is to reveal the steps of Islamic Revivalism in the process of transforming a non-Islamic state into an Islamic state. Some supplementary questions are used as a help to specify the standpoint of the research. It is very important to identify different types and strategies of Islamic revivalists, which will help to rate the threat level, to determine how Islamic Revivalism originates and proceeds in non-Islamic states, as well as what is an appropriate government model of Islamic state from revivalists' point of view.

While searching for the arguments that could help to examine the statement outlined in the aim, some theories, such as the proportion of religion and politics, phenomena of Islamic Revivalism will be useful.

This brings to a hypothesis that any compromises made by Islamic revivalists and authorities of a non-Islamic state are just a means to transform a non-Islamic state into Islamic one.

⁸ Danfulani Umar H. D., *The Sharia Issue and Christian–Muslim Relations in Contemporary Nigeria*, Sweden: Universitetsstryckeriet, Uppsala, 2005; Crisis Group, “Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict”, *Africa Report* N°168, Dakar / Brussels, 20/12/2010; Liow J. C., *Piety and Politics: Islamism in Contemporary Malaysia*, New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2009

This research is based on the analysis of rhetorical, primary and secondary sources and of political discourse, and the descriptive method is used to display the theories prevailing over the phenomenon of Islamic Revivalism. The article is divided into six parts: (1) a theoretical overview of the formation and evolution of the Islamic Revivalism phenomenon in the prevailing literature, (2) classification of revivalists according to their strategies, (3) understanding of the notions of democracy and (4) secularism, (5) importance of *Sharia* and (6) revivalists' viewpoint towards government model of (proper) State.

1. Evolution of Islamic Revivalism and its forms today

As already mentioned in the introduction, the topic of Islamic Revivalism is not new, but growing numbers and files of Islamic activists are forcing scholars more earnestly to analyze and interpret a (new?) phenomenon, which emerges in unexpected forms and is challenging the world's politics and security. The enormous diversity of ideas about the phenomenon are grouped under one label of "Islamic Revivalism", while the start of it is dated, interpreted, and explained in different ways depending on a period of analysis and the outlook of particular scholars. Nevertheless, there is one thing that is almost universally agreed upon: the core of Islamic Revivalism is the idea of returning to the fundamental values of Islam. However, the questions when, in what forms and how the phenomenon has emerged are still under a constant discussion.

Islam is not a solid piece, but it would be too voluminous to discuss its different branches, so this article will concentrate on its Sunni branch, which constitutes the majority in Islam. Yet, Sunni Islam is also not all-in-one; it has different activist groups which might endeavor same goals but by using different means. This happens because of the vast disparity of interpretation and proposed solutions due to sectarian differences and four legal schools among the Sunnis.

Such situation the causes the absence of a unified code of Islamic law⁹ Sunni Islam might be referred to an orthodox form of Islam due to resistance of innovations, but of course, the changing global political trends have been influencing Islam occasionally. For this reason, Sunnis uprose (or revived) with a new wave of activists calling for return to the origins of Islam (the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*).

Hussin Mutalib claims that Muslims' desire to revive and to return to the fundamental teaching of Islam have gone through different forms and phases of Islamic Revivalism all the way through the Islamic civilization, which started at the time of the Prophet Muhammad.¹⁰ Individuals believing that their faith is facing a noxious threat of survival form Islamic reactive movements, which are searching for possible solutions to eliminate the threat. But, according to them, the only way to avoid the encroachment of outsiders who threaten to draw them into an irreligious cultural milieu is to return to the original principles and values of Islam.¹¹ The strategies and means of Islamic revivalists can soundly vary from political debates to violence and sometimes even to armed conflicts. Nevertheless, political means predominate over violence.

According to J. C. Liow, the analysis about political Islam most often begins with designating the fact that Islam is inherently political. Proponents of this logic claim that most of the Muslims are sure that there is no separation between religion and politics in Islam.¹² First of all, this belief is based on the idea that Prophet Muhammad established the first religiously governed state in Medina. Later, the regime of the first four caliphs was a highly politicized epoch due to the inter-conflicts over the questions of succession and legitima-

⁹ Lubeck, p. 10

¹⁰ Mutalib H., *Islam in Malaysia – from Revivalism to Islamic State?*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1993, p. 1

¹¹ Denoeux, p. 58

¹² 'Islam din wa dawla' - Islam is religion and state; in other words, faith goes along with polity.

cy, which emerged within the Muslim community after the death of Muhammad in 632. The competition embraced all levels of the state from power, authority, legitimacy, validity to the driving seat of Islam. Liow presumes that exactly this fusion of religion and politics is the major catch that has been causing the creation of revivalists' movements from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the rise of Islamism in the wake of the failure of Arab nationalism in the 1970s, to the Iranian Revolution, and then right up to the current post-September 11 milieu.¹³

The literature review by S. Kirmanj suggests that Islamic Revivalism is a modern creation which has nothing to do with the idea of "returning back":

Nazih Ayubi asserts who that present-day Islamism does not represent a return to any situation that existed in the past or to any former theories but, rather, is a new invention. Samir Amin claims that Islamists are not interested in theology and never refer to the classical theologians, and in a similar vein Bassam Tibi argues that the notions of the "Islamic state" and "God's rule" are recent additions to Islamic thought.¹⁴

But Kirmanj himself disagrees with these statements and argues that a sporadic though significant behaviour of Islamic activists had emerged many times in history but, being regional, did not produce a noted international outcry. He grounds his premise by listing some fundamentalists and radical Muslims such as Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780–855), Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328), Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292–1350), Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792), Hassan al-Banna (1906–1949), Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903–1979), and Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966).¹⁵ Kirmanj upholds the idea that, although the start of the contemporary Islamic Revivalism as a phenomenon could be dated to the second part of the twentieth century, its germs are to be found in much earlier centuries.

¹³ Liow, p. 5

¹⁴ Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 69

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 69–70

Another group of scholars identifies the germs of this phenomenon in the nineteenth (some even in the eighteenth¹⁶) century, relating it to Salafism (from *al-Salafiyya*) which emerged primarily in the Arab world and then has gone global.¹⁷

Salafism and Tablighi are the two main currents of religious activism within Sunni Islam, though Tablighi has increasingly been eclipsed by its rival Salafism.¹⁸ Officially, both trends are apolitical, but this does not mean that they are completely devoid political objectives or interests. According to the Crisis group, Islam is a religion of law, and this makes all forms of Islamic activism political to some degree.¹⁹ So, although these religious activists do not seek political power for themselves (distinctly from influencing the power-holders) and decline public political actions (like party competition or elections) in favour of preaching and proselytizing (*al-da'wa*), they are still involved in politics at some level.²⁰

G. Denoeux considers Salafism to be the closest to the Western concept of “fundamentalism” within the Islamic context. The main idea of Salafism is to advocate the return to the faultless and pure form of Islam as it was practiced by the Prophet Muhammad and his successors. Any other practices, like Sufi rituals, expanded belief, such as the belief in saints, or the behaviour that is not directly supported by the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* – all are rejected as an inappropriate interpretation, which deviates from the truthful pathway. But Salafism is not a monolithic movement, either. Its main idea – return to true Islam – was sporadically materializing in diverse levels of “return” advocated by various leaders in different places from the eighteenth century (e. g. by Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab in Saudi Arabia and by Usman dan Fodio in the former Sokoto caliphate, Northern part of

¹⁶ Dobbin C., “Islamic Revivalism in Minangkabau at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century”, *Modern Asian Studies* 8 (3), 1974, p. 319

¹⁷ Crisis Group, *Understanding*, p. 4, 9

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9–10

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8

latter-day Nigeria) throughout the nineteenth century (e. g. by Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb in Egypt and by Abul A'la Mawdudi in India and latter in Pakistan) till 1979 (by a coalition of various Sunni Muslims against Khomeini's ideas in Iran). As it has expressed itself in a multiplicity of movements, there is no single ideology or organization of Salafism. Salafism commonly reflects specific historical circumstances and local conditions.²¹ This is particularly obvious in the split of fundamentalists, radical Muslims and islamists approaches (see Part 2). According to the Crisis Group, the generation of revivalists, which came of age in the 1980s, has no memory of the original Salafism's perspective,²² which was to prevail against the internal forces of cultural, spiritual and intellectual decline in Muslim society by promoting a kind of reform which could not be stigmatized as profane or unorthodox, but which would permit a modernist renewal of Islamic civilization. The combination of Western and Islamic order in the confrontation with the Western power made sense as long as most of the Muslim world (*Dar al-Islam*) was still under Muslim rule, and Muslim societies possessed the political power of decision and choice. However, this was strongly rejected after the destruction of the Ottoman Empire and intensification of Western powers (mainly French and British) in the region. The propellant of orthodox ideas was Wahhabism, which became predominant over the others in the movement. Wahhabism's ideology was created with regard to the laxity and moral corruption of society, stressing the need to return to the monotheism that Islam had once introduced in that desert society, herewith eradicating everything not consistent with literal interpretation of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. This formed an ultra-orthodox position forbidding the interpretation of Islam.²³ Kirmanj supports Denoeux's affirmation about the conservative position of Wahhabism, but at the same time he perceives Wahhabism as a bridge between

²¹ Denoeux, p. 59–60

²² Crisis Group, *Understanding*, p. 10

²³ Denoeux, p. 60

the past and contemporary revivalists.²⁴ In any case, following the conservative direction (including the guidance of a disciple of Abduh and his successor Rashid Rida), the priority was visibly shifted from renewal to resistance, from reforming the Islamic polity to re-establishing it as the precondition of everything else.²⁵

However, as the Salafism–Wahhabism trend promotes hostility to elections and political parties (as outcomes of the Western political product) and believes that politics corrupts the religion, not all Islamic revivalists relate themselves with this trend. The choice is grounded on the fact that Wahhabism is excessively preoccupied with individual behavior (such as correct Islamic dress, rituals of eating, sitting, sleeping, etc.), which distracts attention from more urgent issues.²⁶ For this reason, non-Wahhabists take the original idea of Salafism which includes political actions, and adopt it to the same goal – return to fundamental Islam – that all revivalists are seeking for.

One of the best examples of this trend is the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which was founded by Hassan al-Banna in Egypt in 1928. The original idea of the movement was intended basically for a spiritual and moral reform, and it mostly concerned charitable activities and religious education without great emphasis on political issues. However, with its expansion during the 1930s, the movement became active on the political level, thus creating an opportunity for a variety of more militant tendencies to emerge. Apart from the new branches that broke off from the Muslims Brotherhood, a secret paramilitary branch was formed within the movement. This group carried out attacks against the British, the monarchy and senior officials.²⁷ According to Kirmanj, the primary concern of al-Banna, as well as Mawdudi (leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami²⁸ organization), was the desire to liber-

²⁴ Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 73

²⁵ Crisis Group, *Understanding*, p. 9

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4–5

²⁷ Denoeux, p. 77

²⁸ The movement was founded in India during the British rule and after partition moved to the newly created Muslim state of Pakistan.

ate the country from British domination.²⁹ However, later, by articulating a distinctly political interpretation of Islam,³⁰ Mawdudi encouraged Muslims to initiate a universal movement with its major aim to enable Islam to become a superpower and a cultural hegemonic force, which could capture the moral and intellectual political leadership of mankind.³¹ As any means were justified, it evolved into a violent movement with a radical policy. S. Kirmanj predicates that extremist ideas have a tendency to be acceptable if people are frustrated by poverty, injustice, oppression, illiteracy, and the absence of democracy.³² Partially for this reason, *jihad* became a very popular tool in the sense of the armed defense of the *umma*, especially in the relationships between the Muslim world and the West at both the onset and closing off the colonial era. This period of resistance produced the explicit form of *jihad*.³³ Following that, the well-known leading intellectual Sayyid Qutb radicalized Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1950s–1960s in the name of saving Muslims from the barbaric ignorance of Islam.³⁴ He suggested that Muslims would not be able to manage their own destiny if they did not follow the footsteps of the first generation of Muslims³⁵ and did not admit that the authority in all respects belongs to the God.³⁶ Qutb gave a start to the so-called Qutbist movement and initiated to wage jihad against “the nearer enemy” (local regimes) before redeploying to the global jihad against “the further enemy”, specifically against Israel and the West.³⁷

This is just one of the examples how moderate Islamic Revivalism movements can easily radicalize their policy by implementing violent means.

²⁹ Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 70

³⁰ Nasr, p. 264

³¹ Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 73

³² *Ibid.*, p. 70

³³ Crisis Group, *Understanding*, p. 15

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7

³⁵ Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 71

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 72

³⁷ Crisis Group, *Understanding*, p. 4

The last group of scholars believe that Islamic Revivalism is a new phenomenon and draw a strict line of its uprising since the second half of the twentieth century, although the opinions which event could be the most suitable disjuncture of the start of the phenomenon slightly differ.

H. Mutalib is apt to recognize the start of the development of Islamic Revivalism phenomena since the 1970s–1980s (Israel–Arab wars and the revolution of Iran).³⁸ Meanwhile M. Kramer is more willing to date Islamic Revivalism of today (including violent and non-violent) after Iranian Revolution in 1979, which is also known as Islamic Revolution.³⁹ The importance of Iranian Revolution has been acknowledged by D. Pipes since 1983, and he keeps extending the extraordinary role of Islam in world's politics, adding that Islamic Revivalism (although he refers more to radical Islam) was primarily a Middle Eastern phenomenon, and now it has spread to other regions (West Africa, South Asia, the Balkans), even to the countries that have been relatively untouched (like Nigeria, Indonesia, Bangladesh etc.).⁴⁰ B. Turam and some other scholars are more inclined to believe that Islam began to be singled out as a new source of fear in world politics just upon the fall of the Soviet Union.⁴¹

Consequently, even scholars do not agree which event is superlative to date the start of the Islamic Revivalism phenomenon, they are in agreement upon the fact that the Iranian revolution changed the political culture and started a new era of the Islamization of politics, and if there had been any uncertainty about Islam being political, the Iranian revolution eliminated the last doubts.⁴²

A novel and essential distinction of this period is the emergence of Shi'a Islamic Revivalism. Commonly, Islamic Revivalism is seen as

³⁸ Mutalib, *Islam in*, p. 1

³⁹ Kramer M., *Coming*

⁴⁰ Pipes, *In the Path*, p. ix- x

⁴¹ Turam, *The Politics*, p. 16

⁴² Crisis Group, *Understanding*, p. 2

a phenomenon directed to the call of returning to the fundamentals of Islam and against Western civilization, without amplifying who are the revivalists. Regarding to this fact, a massive mistake is usually made by assimilating Khomeini's revolutionary Shiites' activism to the Wahhabism or the Qutbism trends herewith calling them all "Islamic fundamentalism". However, Sunnis consider Shiites as "evil" as Westerners, because the doctrinal ground of Khomeini's politics is entirely opposite to the thought of the main trends of Salafism.⁴³

Another aspect of Islamic Revivalism of the twentieth century is its two-side relation to modernity and the West. On the one hand, they are criticizing the West, its policy and interference into Muslim issues, herewith showing a strong desire to break away from the Western terminology. On the other hand, Islamic revivalists are very up-to-date in two critical respects: the profile of their leaders and reliance on Western technology, especially in achieving their goals.⁴⁴ So, although they associate modernity with the negative Western influence, they do not decline modern information and communication technologies, thereby showing a staggering improvement over the last decades. One of the examples dates to the mid-1990s when the opposition to the Saudi regime used its headquarters in London to attack the Saudi royal family through faxes, tapes and the Internet. Since then, number of revivalists groups have started developing their own websites to disseminate the Islamic ideas.⁴⁵ Obviously, this cannot be completely unified as there are radical trends, like *Boko Haram* in Nigeria, which reject everything that is modern or related to the Western education. However, these trends are rather exceptional than tendentious.

Considering the evolution of Islamic Revivalism (at least its last stages), one Esposito quote could be used to generalize the essence: "Like the Islamic modernist movements in the late nineteenth and

⁴³ Ibid., p. 20

⁴⁴ Denooux, p. 61

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 62

early twentieth centuries and later, the Islamic (fundamentalist) movements of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jamaat-i-Islami, today's Islamically oriented intellectuals and activists continue the process of Islamic modernization and reform. However, today's reformers represent a creative new stage in that they not only reformulate Islam conceptually but also implement their ideas through their positions in government and the public arena."⁴⁶

Hence, summing up all the propositions, it could be stated that the today's phenomenon of Islamic Revivalism designates all-out efforts aimed at a wholesale re-islamization of polities through direct political and/or military actions.

2. Classification of Islamic Revivalism

In addition to the call for returning to Islam, Islamic state, Islamic law and Islamic way of living are the objects all Islamic revivalists are targeting, but, as the definition of the Islamic Revivalism phenomenon suggests, the approach might not be indiscrete. The ways of approach are described and named differently depending on how revivalists are moderate or radical, though sometimes the difference could seem very trivial. The major problem arises, when scholars try to describe violent and non-violent, or political and militant Islamic Revivalism.

Generally occurring notions used to distinguish the branches of Islamic Revivalism are Islamism, fundamentalism, Islamic fundamentalism, extremism, jihadism, political Islamism, etc. All these notions are related to Islam in one or another way, but they often have different meaning considering the time. For example, with reference to M. Kramer's research, the term "fundamentalism" originated in America in the 1920s, and it was associated with Protestant Chris-

⁴⁶ Esposito J. L., *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 10 [chapter 4] <http://www.esubjects.com/curric/general/world_history/unit_three/pdf/unholy_war_chapter4.pdf> [2010 12 21]

tians. After a few decades, the term was referred to Islam as well, but in a different meaning than we understand it nowadays,⁴⁷ and just after Islamic Revolution in Iran it started to reflect the today's meaning.

The descriptions of divisions and notions of Islamic Revivalism branches are very intricate and complicated. For example, S. Kirmanj does not use the term "Islamic Revivalism", but divides Muslims into three categories: radical Islamists, traditional Islamists, and neo-Islamists,⁴⁸ which partially correspond to the chosen division (see below) and frame in what is called Islamic Revivalism in this article. There are more examples, but the denominations and determinations of the division of Islamic Revivalism found in M. Kramer's and Crisis Group researches are preferred here and are going to be used as the guidelines:

- *Islamists* (Muslims who draw upon the beliefs, symbols, and language of Islam to inspire and shape a religiously based government and policies in governance⁴⁹ or, simply, Muslims with political goals,⁵⁰ although their goals have more to do with power than with religion.⁵¹ For this reason, islamists interpret the *Sharia* in the ways that facilitate the acceptance of whichever Western practices they wish to see adopted.⁵² Additionally, islamists seek for power by political rather than violent means⁵³ – a top-down approach);

⁴⁷ Kramer M., *Coming*

⁴⁸ Kirmanj, "Islam, politics and government", *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9 (1), University of South Australia, March 2008

⁴⁹ Kirjam, *The Relationships*, p. 70; Pelletreau R. H., *Dealing with the Muslim Politics of the Middle East: Algeria, Hamas, Iran*, speech, Council on Foreign Relations, 08/05/1996, <<http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/bureaus/nea/960508PelletreauMuslim.html>> [2010 10 20]

⁵⁰ Kramer M., *Coming*

⁵¹ Denoeux, p. 63

⁵² Pipes, "The rise of Muslims fundamentalism", *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 1984, <<http://www.danielpipes.org/5327/the-rise-of-muslim-fundamentalism>> [2010 10 20]

⁵³ Crisis Group, *Understanding*, p. 3

- *Fundamentalists* (they are advocating returning to the fundamentals of Islam, which seize different levels of society and state.⁵⁴ They might radically impose religion into politics (though do not necessarily violently) whereas claim to a political project is optional.⁵⁵ While seeing secularism as a blemish, fundamentalists are pursuing a political program that derives from their understanding of the Islamic law, which holds the answers to modern problems⁵⁶ – a bottom-up approach).

And the third group, which is more likely to operate in a different dimension but still belongs to Islamic Revivalism, is:

- *Radical Muslims* (they are committed to violence and seek for the Islamic state in any terms. The key distinction from fundamentalists is that they prioritize jihad over other pillars. For this reason, they might be called *jihadists*).⁵⁷

It should be noted that such classification of Islamic Revivalism is not 100 percent precise. There are things that all Islamic revivalists have in common; for example, all branches are idealizing an early Islamic history and expose the desire to restore the original purity of the faith conducted by the *Qur'an* and *Sunna*⁵⁸, or things that make islamists similar to fundamentalists, and fundamentalists similar to radical Muslims. This is because (as described above) the phenomenon is multicomponent depending on a period and a region, with a number of exceptions or one-time emersions.

3. (In)Compatibility of democracy and Islam

Following Turam's idea that democracy has increasingly become to be seen as a universal value and that acceptance of its principles is

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 6–7

⁵⁵ Denoeux, p. 58

⁵⁶ Kramer M., *Coming*; Crisis Group, *Understanding*, p. 7

⁵⁷ Esposito, *Unholy*, 10; Crisis Group, *Understanding*, p. ii, 4

⁵⁸ Denoeux, p. 63

still growing across cultures,⁵⁹ Esposito supplements it by saying that democratization has progressively become an issue in Muslim politics.⁶⁰ This rises a discussion whether the concept of democracy is understood in the same way in Islamic perspective and in the Western comprehension, or maybe democracy has a different shape or is not even adaptable at all in Islamic countries where religious and political spheres are barely separated, or where the term “Muslim” becomes synonymous to “citizen”, as basically there is no distinction between religious membership and national identity.⁶¹ Meanwhile, D. Bukay asks: are Islam and democracy compatible at all? With reference to his question, Bukay upraises an interesting proposition which claims that while Western scholars perform intellectual somersaults to demonstrate the compatibility of Islam and democracy, prominent Muslim scholars argue democracy to be incompatible with their religion. The argument on incompatibility is based on two reasons: first of all, Islamic law regulates the believers’ activities in every area of life, and secondly, Muslim society can accomplish all its goals only if the believers walk in the path of God. This, according to Bukay, predicates that fundamental principles of democracy (like sovereignty, legitimacy, political participation and pluralism, civil society, etc.) do not exist in a system where Islam is the ultimate source of law.⁶² Nonie Darwish is even more radical by specifying *Sharia* which, according to her, is opposite to Western law, to be not a religious right, but rather a totalitarian legal and political system.⁶³ Although, there are scholars who uphold the idea that democracy

⁵⁹ Turam B., *Between Islam and the State: the Politics of Engagement*, California: Stanford University Press, 2007, p. 151

⁶⁰ Esposito, *Unholy*, p. 20

⁶¹ Cristi M., *From Civil to Political Religion: the Intersection of Culture, Religion and Politics*, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2001, p. 249

⁶² Bukay

⁶³ “Sharia (Islamic) Law: Cruel and Usual Punishment” (2 of 2), *CBN News Sunday*, 09/08/2009, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbhiWynpwIU&feature=related>> (2010 12 22)

has a basis in the *Qur'an* since “mutual consultation” among people is commended (42: 38 Quran).⁶⁴ Based on this, Esposito is opposing Bukay’s assumption, stating that “Democracy is an integral part of modern Islamic political thought and practice, accepted in many Muslim countries as a litmus test by which both the openness of government and the relevance of Islamic groups or other political parties are certified. However, questions about what particular forms democratization might take in diverse Muslim political cultures remain difficult to answer. Muslim political traditions and institutions, as social conditions and class structures, continue to evolve and are critical as to the future of democracy in the Muslim world.”⁶⁵ G. Kramer does not object, but is incredulously questioning the sincerity of Islamic activists when they declare their democratic convictions; maybe they are playing a necessary role to get more support, which later will help them to reach power through democratic elections.⁶⁶ Nasr is also cautious about placing democracy in Muslim countries, contemplating that democracy might open the political process to Islamic Revivalism and provide it with a new opportunity through which revivalists would be able to implement their political agenda.⁶⁷ This concern could be partly supported with A. M. Guedes doubts that theory of the democratic principle of equal power sharing not always works in the states that are a composition of very different groups (no matter whether it is religious, or ethnic, etc. groups).⁶⁸ The Crisis Group is not analyzing this angle, but it does specify revivalists due to their attitude towards democracy, and upholds that Islamists (differently

⁶⁴ Johnson T., *Islam: Governing under Sharia (aka shariah, shari'a)*, Council on foreign relations, updated 10/11/2010, <<http://www.cfr.org/publication/8034/islam.html>> (2010 12 100)

⁶⁵ Esposito, *Unholy*, p. 20

⁶⁶ Kramer G., “Islamist Notions of Democracy”, *Middle East Report*, No. 183, July–August 1993, p. 3

⁶⁷ Nasr, p. 262

⁶⁸ Guedes A. M., *Making a comparison of semi-presidential model efficiency in Europe and in post-colonial countries*, public lecture, IIRPS VU, 30 November 2010

from fundamentalists or radical Muslims) have gone furthest in accepting democratic principles previously rejected as “un-Islamic”, and at the same time simultaneously adopting a modernist attitude towards Islamic law.⁶⁹

However, there are many scholars who support Bukay’s idea of the incompatibility of Islam and democracy, grounding it on the fact that secularism is a prerequisite for viable democracy.⁷⁰ It is obviously related to the contemporary (during the last three decades) clashes of Islamic Revivalism and secular (or/and Western) states, which, especially after the September 11 incident, have reinforced the predominant assumption of aggression, resistance and distrust as essential qualities of the Islamic Revivalism. Due to this, Islam is often singled out for its essence of recurrence to fundamentalism and opposition of secularization. Interestingly, even the last statement is constructed by the Western scholars, most radical Muslim scholars agree on the predication, stating that “secularization” is a Western invention which does not dovetail with Islamic values and principles of ruling.

Yet, it is not always “black” vs. “white” (or “Western / Christian” vs. “Muslim”); therefore, it is odd that both groups of scholars are missing a “grey zone” or a possibility of the potential co-operation between Islam and a secular state. The Gulen movement in Turkey, which advocates the reconciliation of Islamic faith and the way of life within a secular institutional milieu, could be an example of such co-operation. Activists of the Gulen movement emphasize civil society as a key element in the state, and claim that the only way Islam can produce civil society is via revitalization of faith under conditions of secular democracy and not in opposition to secular political institutions. They believe that success is reachable, but only after de-centering the Eurocentric notion of secularization.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Crisis Group, *Understanding*, p. 5

⁷⁰ Nasr, p. 262

⁷¹ Turam, *The Politics*, p. 260–261

Therefore, some contemporary critics are challenging the Eurocentric view of separation of public and private life (which is placing religion into the private sphere) by highlighting the new public face of Islam, which is able to combine religion and democracy along the road of modernity.⁷² Mabry thinks that Muslim society can productively modernize without transforming itself into a fundamentalist *umma*. Naturally, Islam would be separated from a secular government, and civil law would prevail over Islamic law.⁷³ Consequently, this forms a new trend of scholars who advocate the presumption that Muslims, while leveling the Eurocentric notion of secularism and revitalizing the Islamic faith, are able to combine the Islamic way of life with the working process in a secular institutional milieu. In other words, Islam can be incorporated in civil society which functions between individuals and state, without undermining Islamic or democratic principles. This suggests that Islamic Revivalism might not be a challenge to a state if some adjustments are applied, though it could be hard for some states to leave out of consideration the feeling of historical distrust and fear of betrayal. Item, a friendly compartmentalization is likely to institutionalize engagements between religion and the state than hostile separation which is damaging to the democracy.⁷⁴

4. Reasons for rejecting the secular model

Apart from scholars mentioned in Part 3, who might be grouped into three parties (the optimists who believe that Islam and democracy can blend (Esposito, T. Johnson), the doubtful ones who cautiously try to penetrate the conspiracy (Nasr, G. Kramer), and skeptics who

⁷² Ibid, 267

⁷³ Mabry T. J., „Modernization, nationalism and Islam: an examination of Ernest Gellner's writings on Muslim society with reference to Indonesia and Malaysia“, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21 (1), January, Routledge, 1998, p. 70

⁷⁴ Turam, *The Politics*, p. 278

believe that Islam is inconsistent with democracy (Bukay, Darwish)), there is another group which falls in-between. They claim that the main obstruction to materialize the mentioned presumption of compartmentalization of Islam and democracy is a dissimilar apprehension of the notion of secularism.

The general understanding of secularism is that a religion should not be a basis of politics, herewith excluding it from the public life. The notion of secularism is a highly contested concept, which can be used in several different and at the same time related ways.⁷⁵ This produces an inextricable confusion in understanding the actual meaning. So, the biggest debate is whether secularism means separation from the public sphere or / and state. Wide-ranging theories about the inevitability of secularization appear to be valid mainly to Western Europe, and there is little evidence that religion is losing its grip elsewhere. The religiously inspired cultural change remains a live option, especially in the Islamic world where the growth of new forms of religiosity is seen in the recent decades.⁷⁶

Even the general understanding suggests that common Muslims reject secularism as an inadequate form of government since they believe in the inseparability of state and religion,⁷⁷ there are Muslim secularists who believe that success in the modern world requires to overtake the good experience from the West, and argue for a complete withdrawal of religion from the public sphere,⁷⁸ because Islam is a religion and not a state and should have nothing to do with politics.⁷⁹ Turkey would be one of the examples. However, these who advocate for secularism do not belong to Islamic Revivalist files.

On the other hand, there are scholars who claim that a state should be secular, but not society. A. An-Na'im does not see secularism as

⁷⁵ Turam, *The Politics*, p. 264–265

⁷⁶ Fukuyama F., “Social capital and Civil Society”, IMF *Working Paper WP/00/74*, International Monetary Fund Institute, 2000, p. 19

⁷⁷ Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 74

⁷⁸ Pipes, *The rise*

⁷⁹ Kramer G., *Islamist Notions*, p. 4

a strict separation of the relationship between religion and state. According to him, secularism does not mean exclusion of religion from public life, whereas a negative perception of secularism emerges from a failure to distinguish between state and politics. By failing to recognize this distinction, many Muslims take the separation of Islam and state to mean the total relegation of Islam to a purely private domain and its elimination from the public policy. This misconception is one of the reasons why many Muslims tend to be hostile to the secular model of governance.⁸⁰

To a certain degree, Al-Attas agrees with A. An-Na'im by saying that Muslims are lacking the understanding of the true nature and implications of secularization. The general understanding of the notion among Muslims is indoctrinated by the Western view which suggests that a secular state is a state which is not governed by the *ulama*, or which legal system is not based upon *Sharia*. In this perspective, a secular state means that it is opposed to a theocratic state. However, Al-Attas believes that this is just in the Western version to determine, and at the same time claims that "a Muslim state calling itself secular does not necessarily have to oppose religious truth and religious education, it does not necessarily have to divest the nature of spiritual meaning, does not necessarily have to deny religious values and virtues in politics and human affairs."⁸¹

Meanwhile D. Pipes upholds a more Western view of secularization. While using Ernest Krausz's definition, he sees secularism as a process which totally excludes religious thinking, practice and institutions from the social dimension of a state, separating it as the domain of private faith.⁸²

All these different mindsets (mostly determined by the scholars' background) bring to the question: is it possible to exclude religious

⁸⁰ An-Na'im, 8–9, p. 36

⁸¹ Al-Attas Syed M. N., *Islam and Secularism*, Malaysia: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1993, XV–XVI

⁸² Pipes, *In the Path*, p. 5

thinking from a religious person? People proceed with their life according to their values in private as well as in public spheres. So, if the values emerge from religion, the person will be guided by them. This suggests that even the Western model of secularism is not purely neutral, especially in countries where religion takes an essential place. An-Na'im shares the idea that the religious beliefs of Muslims, whether as officials of a state or as private citizens, constantly affect their actions and political behaviour; therefore, there is a necessity to keep an unambiguous distinction between Islam and state, i.e. institutional separation is important in making sure that institutions of the state neither favour nor disfavour any religious doctrine or principle. At the same time, An-Na'im does not see a need to separate religion and politics, though includes the necessity to regulate their relations.⁸³

However, as the primary goal of Islamic revivalists is to return to the traditional way of living as it used to be in Muhammad's days when Islam, law, politics, and institutions were indistinguishable (this version is doctrinaire), it is absolutely clear that any form of secularism is not a model of a state for Islamic revivalists.

5. Role of Sharia in (non)Islamic state

The rejection of religion and state separation leads to the question of *Sharia* role in Islamic and non-Islamic states.

It would not be important to analyze this if *Sharia* was a simple set of rules that has no juridical function, but revivalists see *Sharia* as a cornerstone of the Islamic order and government, which is required as a legislative to guarantee the proper way of life and ruling, as well as justice. Commonly, the notion of *Sharia* is used interchangeably with "Islamic law", though it is not entirely correct. There are parts of *Sharia* that are legal, but the respective sources of *Sharia*⁸⁴ and Western laws are different. *Sharia* covers five areas (worship and rituals,

⁸³ An-Na'im, p. 4

⁸⁴ *Qur'an* is a primary source of *Sharia*

family matters, trade and commerce, crimes and punishments, and government together with international relations) which, according to some scholars, not necessarily correspond to the notion of law today. Apart from Western scholars and a few reformist Muslims who assert that only certain parts of *Sharia* can be acknowledged as a law, because it implicates non-legal elements, many Muslim scholars still equate *Sharia* to the Western notion of law, which is supposed to be applicable in a state.⁸⁵

In general, Islam encompasses faith, politics, and law (as set in the *Qur'an* and *Sunna*), which was later developed into *Sharia* by Muslim theologians and jurists.⁸⁶ An-Na'im is challenging those who consider the purest form of Islam (including the full scope of laws) to be the same as practiced in the seventh century,⁸⁷ by emphasizing that the principles of *Sharia* are always derived from the human interpretation of the *Qur'an* and *Sunna*, and men seek to obey within their own specific historical context.⁸⁸ Nonie Darwish, an Egyptian author of the book "Cruel and Usual Punishments" supplements this idea from a different angle by saying that "*Sharia* was created after Muhammad died by Muslims who wanted to control the public and to keep them within Islam."⁸⁹ Meanwhile, A. Salim and G. Kramer elaborate on a common mistake of mixing notions. Frequently *Sharia* and *fiqh* are treated as the same, but they are not equivalent. The key distinction is that *Sharia* in Muslims' understanding comes from God, and *fiqh* is humans' interpretations of *Qur'an*, and while the implementation of the immutable and transcendent *Sharia* is imperative, Muslims can choose any legal understanding (*fiqh*), which is

⁸⁵ Salim A., *Challenging the Secular State: the Islamization of Law in Modern Indonesia*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, The Maple-Vail Book Manufacturing Group, 2008, p. 11

⁸⁶ Kramer G., *Islamist Notions*, p. 4

⁸⁷ Johnson

⁸⁸ An-Na'im, 10

⁸⁹ "Sharia (Islamic) Law: Cruel and Usual Punishment" (1 of 2), *CBN News Sunday*, 09/08/2009, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8LwPJ2ucKk>> [2010 12 22]

variable, flexible, temporal, and suitable to one's situation.⁹⁰ Bonderman does not deny such an apprehension of the notions, but remarks that the view of *Sharia* as immutable and unchanging dates to present times, because in the first few hundred years it had been dynamic and growing, and just thereafter became increasingly rigid.⁹¹ Nevertheless, it is obvious that there are two distinct concepts of religious law in Islam, where *fiqh*, according to Salim, is more comparable to contemporary notion of law.⁹² However, even knowing the differences and various approaches to the notion of *Sharia*, this article will follow the mainstream which sustains *Sharia* as an Islamic law that incorporates *fiqh* considering the existing situation.

Regarding to the importance of *Sharia*, it is common practice (if not a rule) that one of the first steps by Islamic revivalists is either to declare Islam as a religion of a state or to implement *Sharia*, depending on circumstances. In any case, Islamic revivalists are constantly seeking to issue *Sharia de jure* as a legal basis for life, which also sometimes happens to be applied to non-Muslims. Even Islamists, who are seeking for but are not as much demanding on Islamic state as fundamentalists or radical Muslims, quite strictly insist on the realization of *Sharia*,⁹³ which is allegedly the only religiously valid legal system⁹⁴ and is not questioned by any true Muslim.⁹⁵

The intent to incorporate (if not to replace) *Sharia* into the legal system of a state seems to be a universal goal among the revivalists; however, the ways of introducing it to a state might differ. In accordance with G. Denoëux, fundamentalists, as well as radical Muslims, militate for a strict implementation of *Sharia* and insist on all laws to be based on it. Gradual and incremental Islamization of laws is

⁹⁰ Salim, p. 12; G. Kramer, *Islamist Notions*, p. 5

⁹¹ Bonderman, p. 1175

⁹² Salim, p. 12

⁹³ Crisis Group, *Understanding*, p. 7

⁹⁴ Bonderman, p. 1173

⁹⁵ Esposito, *Unholy*, p. 17

their priority, since it has to be the most reliable way of making society more Islamic. Islamists also support Islamization of laws, though they prefer the Islamic order to come first. They believe that the implementation of *Sharia* should follow through the capture of political power, because if *Sharia* is introduced to a society that is not yet truly Islamic, it may create an opposition. In other words, Islamists' first step is to supplant the political milieu which will create an appropriate environment for *Sharia*,⁹⁶ whereas the formation of an Islamic state depends on the circumstances.

A relatively recent case, which occurred in the U.S., could be used as an illustration of revivalists' attempts, while its failure sustains Islamists' standpoint as to the priority of actions. The requirement of the Muslim community for *Sharia* in Oklahoma was firstly legally rejected: "forbids courts from considering or using either international law or Islamic religious law, known as Sharia, with the amendment defined as being based on the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed", but later the federal judge Vicki Miles-LaGrange in Oklahoma issued a temporal order putting the amendment on hold, grounding it on the individual's constitutional right. Herewith the Council of American–Islamic Relations (CAIR) asserted that the amendment violated both the establishment and free-exercise clauses of the First Amendment's guarantee of religious freedom. Despite these arguments, it was finally agreed to issue a permanent injunction against *Sharia*.⁹⁷

While some believe that the application of *Sharia* requires a proper sociopolitical milieu and / or an Islamic state which would stand as a guarantor for *Sharia* enforcement,⁹⁸ others, like Rashid Ridda, argue that *Sharia* cannot be codified as a state law⁹⁹ and has to be

⁹⁶ Denoeux, p. 64

⁹⁷ Mears B., "Judge issues permanent injunction on Oklahoma Sharia law ban", *CNN*, 29/11/2010, <http://articles.cnn.com/2010-11-29/us/oklahoma.sharia.law_1_sharia-law-state-courts-international-law?_s=PM:US> (2010 11 29)

⁹⁸ Kramer G., *Islamist Notions*, p. 5

⁹⁹ An-Na'im, p. 2

observed without restraints and only by believers, otherwise it will lose its religious authority and value when enforced by the state.¹⁰⁰ Hence, there are Muslim scholars who believe that the secular government is the best way to observe *Sharia*¹⁰¹, but this position is not popular; therefore, the majority of Islamic revivalists assume that all political decisions have to be based on the words of God who is the only legislator. “If Islam is a policeman, then *Sharia* is a gun.”¹⁰²

The concept of God’s sovereignty and the importance of *Sharia*, found within the first wave of Islamic Revivalism, is nowadays used for almost identical political purposes. While the policy of Islamists may seem to be an intellectual challenge (e.g., looking for gaps in the juridical system for the legal insertion of *Sharia*), the real threat might occur to a state when Muslims proceed teaching the fundamental revivalists ideas which, in accordance with obedience to authority, basically do not fluctuate through ages. In the eighth century, Muqaffa claimed that the government that does not follow prescriptions of the *Qur’an* and *Sunnah* does not deserve obedience. In the fourteenth century, Ibn Khaldun reiterated that a religious state has to implement *Sharia*, otherwise, if it is not operating under the rule of Islamic law, the citizens of the state are not obliged to give their allegiance to such a government. According to him, *Sharia* has to be placed above all other laws, because it is more comprehensive and concerns both worldly and spiritual affairs. In the twentieth century, Mawdudi echoed the same ideas by calling on Muslims to disobey any laws that are not from God.¹⁰³

Obviously, these ideas, seeded in a secular state, can be nurtured into an actual threat. It also raises ambiguity, which gives an opportunity for extensive interpretations. Firstly, how Muslims should behave in a non-Islamic state where they constitute a moiety or a minor

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 4

¹⁰¹ Johnson

¹⁰² Darwish Quoting N., *Sharia (Islamic) Law* (1 of 2)

¹⁰³ Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 72–73

ity (still disobey the government or act under the non-Islamic order / laws?). While some revivalists call for disobedience, Jamal Badawi suggests that: "Muslims who are living in non-Muslim countries are required to follow the law of the land unless it prevents them from performing their fundamental religious duties such as their freedom of belief, worship, or obligations such as prayers, charity, fasting and pilgrimage".¹⁰⁴ Thereby, he militates for the implementation of *Sharia* which, according to him, is harmless to a state and its legislation. Additionally, it is interesting to mention that, referring to J. Badawi's statement about the freedom of belief, it is said that a Muslim can disobey any law that restricts or denies that freedom. Qutb similarly states that "it is not the ambition of Muslims to oblige others to follow Islam, but its object is that Muslims should be free to preach Islam and let others have the freedom of belief".¹⁰⁵ What they both failed to mention is that taking the right of freedom of beliefs in the context of *Sharia*, this right is treated differently, or, that under Islamic order and *Sharia* non-Muslims will have to follow Islamic rules and will always be "second-class" citizens (since a non-Muslim cannot rule an Islamic state). Meanwhile, Ibn Khaldun and Ibn Taymiyya were not so diplomatic and unambiguously emphasized the superiority of Islam over other religions by asserting that one is obliged to convert non-Muslims into Islam "either by persuasion or by force".¹⁰⁶

Furthermore, another interpretation is related to the extent of *Sharia* implementation in a non-Islamic state (partial or a full-scope) and who are the subjects under this law (Muslims only or also non-Muslims). Naturally, a wide space for interpretations is a vigorous tool which can be used by revivalists in a more advantageous way. Besides, according to *Sharia*, Muslims are obliged to lie to non-Muslims.

¹⁰⁴ Entzminger A., "Sharia law dispute goes to court", *The Washington Times*, 21/11/2010, <<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/nov/21/sharia-law-dispute-goes-to-court/>> (2010 12 12)

¹⁰⁵ Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 78

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 72

lims if it is for obligatory commandments.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, a state that does not define itself as an Islamic state but considers the full implementation of *Sharia* should be aware of some licit and illicit aspects approved by *Sharia*, which might be inconsistent with the accepted (national and international¹⁰⁸) legal system. For example, criticism of Islam is treated as a felony, and a punishment might be applied to non-Muslims as well; punishments like whipping gamblers and drinkers, mutilating thieves by cutting off a hand, death penalties for adultery, pre-marital sex and apostasy, child marriages, “the an eye for an eye” form of revenge are under *Sharia*; moreover, a woman’s testimony is worth half the man’s.¹⁰⁹ Though, as criminal law is most controversial, Ali Mazrui claims that “in reality, most Muslim countries do not use traditional classical Islamic punishments”.¹¹⁰

Scholars repeatedly refer to the significant role of *Sharia* in Islamic revivalists’ agenda, but hardly mention how revivalists see the opposition as regards the implementation of *Sharia*. In general, Islamists and fundamentalists are trying to use opportune moments and gaps in the legal system to win over the opposition, while, radical Muslims are really sometimes falling for extreme forms of act; e.g., the Egyptian sheikh Muhammad al-Ghazali declared that “every Muslim who pleads for the suspension of the *Sharia* is an apostate and can be killed. The killing of those apostates cannot be prosecuted under Islamic law because this killing is justified.”¹¹¹ Another example has also its roots in Egypt. The radical organization *al-Takfir wal-Hijra* (Repentance and Holy Flight) treats any society as being infidel if it does not follow *Sharia*, even if Islamic rituals are pro-

¹⁰⁷ Darwish Quoting N., *Sharia (Islamic) Law* (2 of 2)

¹⁰⁸ Physical punishments are inconsistent with ICCPR and with CAT

¹⁰⁹ Arlandson J., *Top ten reasons why Sharia is bad for all societies*, American Thinker, 13/08/2005, <http://www.americanthinker.com/2005/08/top_ten_reasons_why_sharia_is.html> (2010 12 15); Johnson T., *Sharia (Islamic) Law* (1 of 2)

¹¹⁰ Johnson

¹¹¹ Tibi B., *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder*, London: University of California Press, 1998, p. 155

ceeded. Therefore, the only solution for believers is to flee the infidel community and call for jihad against it.¹¹²

As mentioned above, the importance of jihad and jihadists was significant in colonial times, but it was supposed to subside later. However, radical Muslims took over the ideas of former jihadists and adapted them to the new era. They see various invasions of the West into the Muslim world as new forms of colonialism, which should be destroyed. This idea keeps radical Muslims emerging in what they conceive to be military defense against infidels. Of course, depending on a region and background, individuals and nations respond differently when subject to various invasions,¹¹³ and certainly not all revivalists are so radical. Commonly, Islamists and fundamentalists are using non-violent means, though sometimes undamentalists can take quite drastic political measures. Therefore, considering the possible threats to a state, it is vital to indicate how moderate or radical revivalists are (especially those with a legal or political power) and under which Islamic laws or legal opinions they are acting. The issue of the use of *Sharia* in secular courts, combined with charges of disloyalty and Islamization, have been increasingly prominent in recent years in the West because of the gradual increase of the Muslim population there.¹¹⁴ Meanwhile, non-Islamic states with Muslim majorities or moieties are already a step forward and tackling with the role of Islam constitutionally. Ramifications of establishing a constitutionally authorized role of Islam can vary from country to country. On the other hand, it is common to position *Sharia* into political systems in three general ways: government under God (when Islam is approved by constitution as the official religion of State and *Sharia* is declared to be the source, or a source of the laws), completely secular (Muslim predominant countries where the government is constitutionally secular), and dual legal system (when the government is secular, but

¹¹² Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 75

¹¹³ Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 79

¹¹⁴ Entzminger

Muslims can choose to bring familial and financial disputes to *Sharia* courts).¹¹⁵ For example, in Egypt, the role of interpretation of *Sharia* has fallen under the Supreme Constitutional Court privilege, whereas in Pakistan, the constitution specifically assigns this role to the Federal Shariat Court,¹¹⁶ which is similar to Nigeria where the constitution denotes the role of the Sharia Court of Appeal of the State and the Sharia Court of Appeal of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, and to Malaysia where *Sharia* (better known as *Syariah*) courts are constitutionally approved.

6. *The Concept of Islamic state*

While overviewing the elements of state, sovereignty should also be discussed. Though, as it could be already guessed, the notion of “sovereignty” as understood in the Western part of the world differs from the Muslim understanding. Ibn Taymiyya and al-Ghazali believed that the absolute sovereignty of God and not a man is an essential foundation of a state,¹¹⁷ as religion and power were coalesced and inseparable from the beginning. They claimed that religion without control of government cannot survive, therefore governing the affairs of the Muslim society is a religious obligation, while the exercise of authority is a religious purpose. Similarities could be found with ideas by another radical Muslim, Abd al-Wahhab, who emphasized that Islam forbids the separation of religion from any matters of life, including politics and law. Consequently, the establishment of an Islamic state is indispensable, because, without Islamic order there will be no existence of true values, religion or even the world itself.¹¹⁸ However, as it was already discussed, any form of secularism is unacceptable to all branches of revivalists (especially fundamentalists

¹¹⁵ Johnson

¹¹⁶ Stahnke, Blitt, p. 11

¹¹⁷ Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 71; Esposito, *Unholy*, p. 17

¹¹⁸ Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 74–75

and radical Muslims) who see it as an inheritance of Western civilization, which is inconsistent with Islamic values and principles, and, since everything is erroneous that is related to Western culture, secularism is treated as a blemish.¹¹⁹

The presumption that Islamic Revivalists do not acknowledge Western or any other model of secular state and endeavor for an Islamic state raises the question whether the Islamic state equals a theocratic state. According to al-Attas, an Islamic state is neither wholly theocratic, nor wholly secular, and Islam does not involve itself in the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane.¹²⁰ So, supposing that Muslims equally reject the secular and the theocratic models of government, the imperative of an alternative model is faced. There are numbers of discussions on the definition of Islamic state, but none of them provides the universal components that are essential to an Islamic state. This concerns the different schools which have their own interpretation of the subject, although some formulations are more common than others, and this prompts a possible fluxion.

First of all, it is important to determine a reasonable (in Islamic revivalists' understanding) proportion of religion in a state subject to the government and sovereignty.

According to T. Stahnke's and R. C. Blitt's research, today only 10 states out of the 22 that have declared Islam as the official religion of State declare to be Islamic states by their constitutions.¹²¹ This evidences to a very vital matter: the declaration of Islam as the state religion does not make the country an Islamic state. Meanwhile, if a

¹¹⁹ Rejection of Westernization depends on how radical fundamentalists are. Some rejects everything what is modern, like *Boko Haram* in Nigeria, some believe that means are not important and use Western inventions to spread the message and reach their goals. For example, there are even some fan pages on social networks like *Facebook*, although it does not enjoy great success: Islamic fundamentalism – 29 fans, Islamic revival – 8 fans, Islamic extremism-1 fan, Islamic revivalism – 0 fan, Islamic fundamentalism – 0 fan (7/11/2010)

¹²⁰ Al-Attas, p. XV

¹²¹ Stahnke, Blitt, p. 7

state is seeking for a broader and more significant role of Islam in the country, it will declare itself as an Islamic state with a constitutional provision. This could be done in various ways, whereas the practical ramifications of a constitution declaring an Islamic state are not homogeneous.¹²²

While T. Stahnke and R. C. Blitt are using the notion “Islamic state” at large, some scholars are not comfortable with it. An-Na’im claims that “the notion of an Islamic state is in fact a postcolonial innovation based on a European model of the state and a totalitarian view of law and public policy as instruments of social engineering by the ruling elites. Although the states that historically ruled over Muslims did seek Islamic legitimacy in a variety of ways, they were not claimed to be Islamic states.”¹²³ Denoeux also observes a disparity between the terms “Muslim country” and “Islamic country”. According to him, while the former could be any country where Muslims constitute the majority, the latter one has to base its legitimacy on Islam. Besides, there are levels (public life, sociopolitical order, and government) that need to be Islamized in order the Islamic State to start functioning. And all these levels have to be committed to Islam via Islamic values and modest behaviour.¹²⁴

Following the research of S. Kirmanj, Islamic revivalists do not treat Islam only as a religion since Islam to them is an all-inclusive system to govern every part of public, social, and political life.¹²⁵ Revivalists believe that Islam came to reform society and to form a nation along with a government or, in other words, to innovate the elements that are imperative to outline what is called an Islamic state. The general claim is that the basis for governance is provided by the main sources of Islam – the *Qur’an* and *Sunna* (the sayings and acts of the Prophet Muhammad). For this reason, fundamen-

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ An-Na’im, p. 7

¹²⁴ Denoeux, p. 57

¹²⁵ Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 73

talists¹²⁶ believe that politics is part of religion, and government is founded on the justice of God and Muhammad. Therefore, as Muhammad was the first who established an Islamic state by following God's will and is considered as the first "Head of State",¹²⁷ some revivalists, such as Ibn al-Muqaffa, categorically indicated to disobey any government which is not guided by the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*.¹²⁸

Kirmanj contests these arguments by saying that the claims the Prophet's intention to establish an Islamic state, or that he was the Head of State, cannot be supported, because the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* do not prescribe any specific form of regime or any political theory that would describe how to develop a particular form of government. Although, he does not question the political role of the Prophet Muhammad within the Islamic community.¹²⁹ Meanwhile, Islamists, who are more moderate than fundamentalists, sustain Kirmanj's remark and acknowledge the fact that there is no clear definition of Islamic state. Therefore, they no longer operate with the definite and demanding conception of "Islamic state" and try to act by taking different forms in existing states at their expense.¹³⁰

A. S. Ahmed and H. Donnan also predicate that Muslims (without classifying them into fundamentalists, Islamists or radical Muslims) do not see a boundary between secular and sacred in the political realm or any other part of public or private life. Therefore, a universal feature of the Islamization process becomes a force to eliminate discrepancies between different standards and sources of authority, by reshuffling the administrative political unit with the religious one. In short, it is a politicization of religion. As a result, Islamic revi-

¹²⁶ Kirmanj uses the term Islamist – a Muslim political activist who does not distinguish between the sacred and the profane, between the spiritual and the temporal, and between politics and religion. Here, Kirmanj's Islamist, the way it is used in the text, is closer to his primer description (stretched in the beginning) of what is a traditional Islamist, and it correlates with what is called a fundamentalist in this research.

¹²⁷ Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 74; Kirmanj, *Islam*, p. 51

¹²⁸ Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 72

¹²⁹ Kirmanj, *Islam*, p. 47, 56

¹³⁰ Crisis Group, *Understanding*, p. 6

valists are seeking (in)directly and (non)violently to overtake political control as regards the creation of Islamic state.¹³¹

Meanwhile, scholars from the Oxford Islamic Studies observe the role of Islamic state as a tool to achieve security and order in ways favourable to Muslims attending their religious duties, who are to enjoy good and to avoid evil. Therefore, an Islamic state (as an ideological state) could be run only by true believers with reference to the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*.¹³² On the other hand, Ibn Hanbal, similarly to al-Muqaffa, is certain that citizens of an Islamic state “should only obey rulers who observe correct religious regulations.”¹³³

It is very important to acknowledge who, in the opinion of Islamic revivalists, are these “true believers” or proper rulers that are allowed to run the state. With reference to Kirmanj’s research, the head of a state (like a caliph), apart from being a citizen of an Islamic state, has to be a mature Muslim male, a scholar in *Sharia* with the knowledge of Islamic regulations, which is equivalent to the knowledge of a *mujtahid*.¹³⁴ Qualifications for lower rank rulers and office, listed by all revivalists, differ vaguely, though not soundly. On the other hand, Kirmanj explicitly explains a very dissimilar status of women and non-Muslims, which is significant in societies where Muslims do not constitute the (absolute) majority, although do have Islamic revivalists in politics and in key positions of a state.

Subject to Islamic Revivalism branches, the attitude towards women and non-Muslims might slightly differ. Al-Mawardi accepts that non-Muslims can hold a high office position in Islamic state as long as they are off the executive category. Taymiyy was stricter and claimed that non-Muslims have to be eliminated from any political

¹³¹ Ed. Ahmed Akbar S. and Donnan Hastings, *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity*, London, New York: Routledge, 1994, p. 65

¹³² Ayubi Nazih N. et al., *Islamic State*, The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World, Oxford Islamic Studies online, <<http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0394>> (2010 11 17)

¹³³ Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 72

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 74, 75

or military position without any exceptions. Mawdudi believed that Islam seeks to eliminate discrimination based on colour, race, nationality, blood, and lineage, but at the same time he mentioned differences between “the party of God”, who are Muslims, and “the other party” meaning the non-Muslim party. Naturally, non-Muslims are not in position to occupy the key posts, such as the head of a state or a member of parliament, in an Islamic state. Additionally, Mawdudi, together with Zedan, assert that non-Muslims (along with children and mentally ill) are not qualified to vote in an Islamic state.¹³⁵

It is noteworthy that all these necessary qualifications which, according to revivalists, “come out of the book”, have never been specifically defined by the *Qur'an* or *Sunnah*.¹³⁶

Islamists are more moderate than fundamentalists or radical Muslims considering the women's situation,¹³⁷ as the last two mentioned do not even consider a possibility of sharing power with women. While Esposito affirms that a lower status of women is partly caused by the fact that society was defined in a patriarchal past when males were the one to interpret principles of religion,¹³⁸ there are some, but not very reasoned, speculations that women were not marked separately because they were treated equally to men. Islamists do not exclude women from participation in the politics, but require that parliamentary seats for both non-Muslims and women would be limited in number. Regarding to reforms and democratization processes, Islamists are treating women more diplomatically, but at the same time marginalize them to safeguard the majority of men in power.¹³⁹

Further, apart from listing citizens and their rights in an Islamic state (or caliphate), Al-Mawardi and Ibn Taymiyy also specify the

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 76–77

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 75

¹³⁷ Esposito J. L., „Claiming the Center: Political Islam in Transition“, *Harvard International Review*, 1997, 4, <<http://www.pdfchaser.com/Claiming-the-Center:-Political-Islam-in-Transition.html>> (2010 12 19); Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 77; Denooux, p. 64

¹³⁸ Esposito, *Claiming*, p. 4

¹³⁹ Kirmanj, *The Relationships*, p. 77

role of the Head of State who, with his institutions, is supposed to be in charge of legislative, executive and judicial duties, while just a few of them are really related to religion: “to maintain the religion, to execute judgment between claimants, to protect the house of Islam, to implement *Sharia*, to guard the frontiers, to undertake jihad, to appoint advisors, to collect taxes, to pay salaries, and to oversee community affairs personally, to lead the Friday prayer, the performance of pilgrimage, and the celebration of religious festivals.”¹⁴⁰

Even though the ruling system of an Islamic state might seem to be far beyond the democratic values, the group of Oxford scholars presume that there exists a certain component of equilibrium (power sharing?) between the key powers:

- head of a state as the guardian of the community and faith (according to Sunni Islam, he should be selected by *Shura*¹⁴¹);
- religious scholars (*ulama*) involved in the function of rendering religiously legal advice (*ifta*);
- and the judges who settle disputes in accordance with religious laws.¹⁴²

A propos, the Islamic state for Sunnis is a rather utopian idea as they acknowledge only the first four caliphs – Mohammed’s successors who rightfully took his place as the leaders of Muslims. Therefore, apart from confuting T. Stahnke’s and R. C. Blitt’s claims about ten Islamic states,¹⁴³ this shows that it is impossible to create an Islamic state nowadays, thereat countries sustaining Sunni Islam could be Muslim states at best. Admittedly, this does not mean they will not become Islamic countries by definition.

Moreover, in accordance with revivalists, Islamic values are universally important to everyone, and the only place where these wan-

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 74

¹⁴¹ Similar to parliament

¹⁴² Ayubi Nazih N. et al.

¹⁴³ Stahnke, Blitt, p. 7

ing principles might be secured is an Islamic state which implements *Sharia* and acts according to the Islamic ruling system. And it does not matter that the Islamic state is an utopia in Sunnis' understanding; every Muslim still ought to endeavour for the materialization of its components, which are important in the daily life of both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Conclusions

Politicization of Islam is an old phenomenon, adapted by Islamic revivalists who designate all-out efforts aimed at wholesale re-Islamization of polities through direct political and / or military actions. This means that no matter how divided Islamic revivalists are over methods, tactics and strategies, all exponents are seeking for the same goal – to impose the Islamic way of living within an Islamic State regulated by the Islamic law.

Moreover, all revivalists have almost the same understanding as to the definition of Islamic state; the Islamists have been using the term “Islamic state” and prefer Islamic order to come before *Sharia*, while fundamentalists (almost like radical Muslims) use the term “caliphate” and believe that *Sharia* has to be implemented first.

Generalizing all ideas by various branches of (Sunni) Islamic revivalists, the formula of Islamic state could be deduced:

Islamic state = Islam + *Sharia* + Islamic ruling system

Apparently, in any case *Sharia* is one of the key objectives or a hallmark of a proper (Islamic) state in Islamic revivalists' understanding. Therefore, no matter how moderate revivalists can be (not to mention radical ones), they always seek for the implementation of *Sharia* by using any means to reach their goal. Consequently, *Sharia* can be approved as an additional law to the existing judicial system, as a state law in federations or as a law of State. It can be applicable only to Muslims or to everyone acting in the defined judicial area.

The full scope of *Sharia* is desirable, but compromises are available (depending on circumstances).

Nevertheless, it is important to mention that any compromises related to the implementation of *Sharia* are just a temporal solution, meaning that Islamic revivalists will seize any judicial gaps in a state's legal system to go beyond the (federal, state, etc.) laws. This suggests that a state, if it is not qualifying itself as Islamic (and is not planning to do so in the future), should always be "on standby".

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*SANTRAUKA**ISLAMIŠKO REVAIVALIZMO
KONCEPCIJOS PROBLEMATIKA IR
REVAIVALISTŲ DERAMO VALSTYBĖS MODELIO
SUVOKIMAS*

Islamo revaivalizmo tema nėra nauja akademiniam pasaulyje, bet didėjančios šio judėjimo šalininkų gretos skatina mokslininkus atidžiau analizuoti šį fenomeną.

Apžvelgus ir apibendrinus įvairių mokslininkų interpretacijas, kaip, kada ir dėl kokių priežasčių prasidėjo islamo revaivalizmas, būtų galima teigti, kad tai sudėtingas ir įvairialypis fenomenas, kuris atskleidžia visapusiškas pastangas masiškai reislamizuoti valstybes tiesioginiais politiniais ir / ar kariniais veiksmais. Akivaizdu, kad nors šis reiškinyk koncentruojasi į reislamizaciją, jis nėra vienalytis, nes revaivalizmo šalininkai (tyrimas telkiasi į sunitų islamą, kaip dominuojančią islamo atšaką) naudoja skirtingas priemones tikslui pasiekti. Dėl to revaivalistai šiame straipsnyje yra skirstomi į tris atšakas: islamistus, kurie yra nuosaikiau ir pirmenybę teikia politinėms priemonėms, fundamentalistus, kurie siekia islamizacijos politiniais veiksmais ir, jeigu reikia, nevengia smurtinių priemonių, ir radikaliuosius musulmonus, kurių veiksmai iš principo paremti smurtu.

Revaivalistai, kurie kviečia musulmonus išgryninti islamą ir sugrįžti prie tikrojo tikėjimo pagrindų, kelia iššūkius nemusulmoniškoms valstybėms ne tik politiniu, bet ir teisiniu lygiu. Jų manymu, sekuliarizmas yra netinkama valdymo forma, iš dalies dėl to, kad tai vakarietiškos politikos padarinys, taip pat dėl to, kad sekuliarizmas paneigia aukščiausios valdžios, kylančios iš Dievo, principą. Dėl to ideali valstybė (anot revaivalistų) yra islamiška valstybė, kuri susideda iš trijų esminių komponentų: islamo, kaip valstybinės religijos, islamo teisės ir islamiškos valdymo santvarkos. Nepaisant skirtumų, visos trys revaivalistų atšakos įvardija šiuos esminius elementus, pabrėždamos šarijos vaidmenį.

Tai lėmė darbo tikslą. Straipsnyje siekiama pateikti galimą veiksmų planą, kuriuo naudodamiesi islamo revaivalizmo atstovai siekia įtakos valstybėms, neturinčioms ambicijų tapti islamiškomis. Didžiausias pavojus kyla toms valstybėms, kurios dėl skirtingos piliečių sudėties (pvz., religinių, etninių grupių ir pan.) leidžiasi į kompromisus dėl vienokios ar kitokios šarijos formos įteisinimo, ne visada suvokdamos, jog tai pirmieji revaivalistų žingsniai islamiškos valstybės link, vis labiau „apleidžiant“ esamą sekuliarųjį valdymo pobūdį.