



**DIFFERENT THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES TO
SECULARIZATION AND THE IMPACT OF
MIGRATION ON FUTURE RELIGIOSITY OF EUROPE**

**SEKÜLERLEŞMEYE FARKLI TEORİK PERSPEKTİFLER
VE GÖÇÜN AVRUPA’NIN GELECEKTEKİ
DİNDARLIĞI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ**

Tuğba GÜRÇEL AKDEMİR*

ABSTRACT

Secularization versus religious revival debate has been shifted to another dimension with the mass migration targeting Europe because of the conflicts in the Middle East. The literature concerning secularism was expecting a linear trend in line with the modernization and Europe was considered to be the nexus of both. This study delineates the secularization debate for evaluating the recent trend of migration within this rather neglected scope. The main argument is that among the secularization theories, religious market model and existential security paradigm have a greater explanatory power for the future state-religion relations in Europe. They indicate that as a result of migration, contrary to the expectation of classical secularism theories, the overall religiosity might increase in Europe due to the pluralization of the religious realm as well as the fact that Muslim migrants who are more religious also have higher fertility rate than Europeans. In that sense, Europe, which seemed to settle the dispute concerning religious realm for years now might be faced with a new challenge due to the migration phenomenon.

* Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Atılım Üniv., İşletme Fakültesi, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü, tugba.gurcel@atilim.edu.tr, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3882-645X>

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ÖZ

Sekülerleşme ve dindarlığın yükselişi tartışması, Ortadoğu’da yaşanan çatışmalar nedeniyle Avrupa’ya yönelen yoğun göçle birlikte farklı bir boyuta taşındı. Sekülerleşme literatürü, modernleşme ile uyumlu olarak doğrusal bir yükseliş trendi bekliyor ve Avrupa’nın her ikisi için de merkez noktası olmasını öngörüyordu. Bu çalışma, sekülerleşme tartışmasını ele alarak güncel göç dalgasını, bu görece ihmal edilmiş olan bağlamda incelemektedir. Ana fikir, sekülerleşme kuramları içerisinde dinde pazar modeli yaklaşımının ve varoluşsal güvenlik paradigmasının Avrupa’da din-devlet ilişkilerinin geleceği ile ilgili daha geniş bir açıklama gücüne sahip olduğudur. Buna göre, klasik sekülerleşme kuramlarının beklediğinin aksine, göçün sonucu olarak dini çoğulculuk ve hem doğum oranları hem de dindarlıkları Avrupalılardan daha yüksek olan Müslüman göçmenlerin Avrupa’daki dindarlığı artırmaları öngörülmektedir. Bu manada, dini alandaki tartışmaları büyük ölçüde geride bırakmış olan Avrupa, yaşanan göç fenomeni nedeniyle yeni bir mücadele ile karşı karşıya kalabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sekülerleşme, Göç, Avrupa, Dini Çoğulculuk, Dindarlık.

INTRODUCTION

Religion has been on the political agenda of the world in the last decades more than ever, including Western Europe, which is known for its long journey of secularization. The uprising interest of politicians, the media and the scholars from various disciplines in religion mainly stems from the public visibility and political relevance of it. The literature on the role of religion in politics is tightly associated with the fervent debate on whether there is a religious revival on global scale or a rise of secularization (Bruce, 2002; Norris and Inglehart, 2004; Casanova, 2006; Gill, 2008; Berger, 2014). The quantitative data displaying the trend in religiosity fall short at portraying the overall inclination since the indicators of religiosity are difficult to determine (Norris and Inglehart, 2004; Lyck-Bowen and Owen, 2019).

The trend in religiosity matters as religion has become an important component of policy making both at national and international levels (Pollack, 2008).

The debate about the trend in religiosity in Europe gained another dimension with the acceleration of migration to Europe from the Middle Eastern countries due to the ongoing civil wars at the homeland. This has become a crucial issue given the fact that “Since the beginning of the new millennium the number of international migrants defined as *persons living in a country other than where they were born*, has risen by 51 percent to nearly 260 million in 2017, which includes almost 26 million refugees” (Lyck-Bowen and Owen, 2019: 21-22). As a result, in the recent years, there has been great interest in the literature attempting at explaining the reasons and the consequences of this phenomenon (Snel, Bilgili and Staring, 2020; Üstübcü and Ergün, 2021; Stierl, 2020). Nonetheless, a relatively neglected field is the possible outcomes of this mass migration on the future religiosity and the transformation of state-religion relations in Europe. Like many other social spheres, the religious spectrum of the host countries will most probably alter in the near future due to such a drastic migration phenomenon. This paper addresses this rather overlooked aspect of the problematique and focuses on how this mass migration can bring into discussion the nature of state-religion relations which has been considered to be settled down in the European context. Europe, known for its long story of secularization, is now composing the crux of the question of how to accommodate such religious diversity.

Many conflicts all over the world increased the flux of migration especially from countries experiencing violence and oppression like Syria, Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan. The scope of conflictual area is not limited to those countries, but the general trend of migration is targeting Europe with the hope of a better life standard (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019). “Historically, a relatively small share of migrants to Europe are refugees from violence or persecution in their home countries” but since 2014 the number of refugees has flared up due to conflicts in the Middle East (Hackett et al., 2019, 100). Among these refugees, “roughly 1.6 million people who received refugee status in Europe between mid-2010 and mid-2016” and “more than three-quarters ... were estimated to be Muslims” (Hackett et al., 2019, 100).

European countries, on the other hand, are not sharing with each other the same stance against refugees. Some countries like Germany or Sweden are more flexible and stick to the humanitarian side of the issue but some other countries like Poland or Hungary are much stricter and even skeptical about their borders (Lyck-Bowen and Owen, 2019: 22). There are several reasons for such reluctance but one of the most prominent ones is the negative image of Muslims associated with “terror.” In such a case it is also difficult for the governments to take initiatives for the integration of these communities. Religious diversity in Europe

which is in increase due to the mass migration might give greater responsibilities to the civil society rather than the governments. The importance of the policies of civil society, the holistic understanding of the NGOs in the conduct of policies concerning migration also provides a bridge between the state and immigrants (Şenses, 2020: 73). The religious services will probably be provided by a “group of organisations that has traditionally been involved in supporting the reception and integration of migrants are organisations with religious origins and/or affiliations; often known as Faith-based Organisations (FBOs)” (Lyck-Bowen and Owen, 2019: 22).

This work attempts at portraying the theoretical framework of the secularization paradigm and thus offering ground for discussion about the impact of religion on contemporary politics of migration. First, it examines the fundamental functional evolution theory, the secularization theory, critiques to secularization paradigm, the supply-side approaches, the individualization thesis and the existential security paradigm in order to portray the secularization debate from a multidimensional perspective. Then the paper aims at providing a reflection on the future religiosity in Europe from the perspective of secularization theories. Furthermore, the recent demographic data determining the religious constitution of the migration flux is highlighted. The paper concludes that among the secularization theories, the religious market model (pluralization) and the existential security paradigm provide better explications for the future religiosity of Europe in the era of mass migration. More specifically, given the impact of migration, this work defends in the light of secularization theories that the overall religiosity will increase in Europe in the near future.

In methodological terms, this paper intends to make a projection on the future religiosity of Europe based on the premises of the secularization theories. It analyzes comparatively the premises of the theories of secularization and highlights the ones which have greater explanatory power. The theoretical debate on secularization and how different approaches perceive the future religiosity of Europe are taken into account. In this line of thinking, the mass migration is taken as the independent variable and the future religiosity of Europe as the dependent variable. The relation between the variables is explicated by secularization theories. The data on migration are imported from different sources and utilized in order to support or falsify the relevant premises of the secularization theories.

1. THE SECULARIZATION DEBATE

Since the Enlightenment, the intellectuals were expecting a decline in religiosity. Voltaire, Aguste Comte, Max Müller, and Wright Mills were among the prominent intellectuals who have anticipated a decline in religious vitality. They have foreseen that religion would fade away from the earth sooner or later

due to positivist thinking (Stark, 1999: 249). In a sense, there was universal consensus that secularization in Europe represented the future of all societies (Stark and Iannaccone, 1994: 230). This was not pointless given the spread of rationalization and science in the spirit of Enlightenment. There was a common sense among intellectuals that religion is false and harmful at the individual level as it impedes rational thought, and harmful for society since it sanctifies tyrants (Stark and Finke, 2000: 28). These intellectuals were convinced that the epochs of religion and metaphysics passed away and from thereon science and reason will rule the humanity (Hadden, 1987: 589).

In 1950s and 1960s, the mainstream argument was that under the unavoidable impact of modernization, both the political significance and individual adherence to religion were going to decrease. At best, religion would preserve its presence in the form of individual faith; lived and practiced in a private manner. The 20th century also witnessed anti-colonial movements where the gluing factor was nationalism, and it was expected to replace the role played by religion in proposing people another way of identifying themselves. National identity and citizenship were considered as “civil religion” that could perfectly match with the modernization motto of Western societies. In 1970s and 1980s, the assumptions about the reverse correlation between religion and modernization were consolidated.

Today while discussing the change in religious behavior, one must consider the “worldwide upswing in religious realm” (Pollack, 2008: 169). Therefore, the resurgence of religion, in most parts of the world, including one of the countries known for its high level of modernization; the United States, showed up as an undeniable fact (Sahliyeh, 1990: 3-4). This resurgence is termed in many ways such as “de-secularization (Berger, 1999), re-spiritualization (Horx, 1993), de-privatization (Casanova, 1994), or the ‘return of religions’ (Riesebrodt, 2000)” (Pollack, 2008: 169).

It is worth noting that such a complex phenomenon cannot be explicated from a single perspective or by a particular theoretical approach. While examining this multifaceted issue, a variety of theories that grasp this field should be investigated. “No single theory, concept, or approach can fully account for the recent political resurgence of religion” in the Middle East and secularization in Europe (Sayliyeh, 1990: 4). The secularization debate is not limited to a geographical milieu, but the literature mostly deals with Europe and the United States as the two stimulating cases. This work attempts to put special emphasis on Europe within the overall picture of the secularization/religious resurgence debate.

In order to shed light on the discussions about whether there is religious resurgence or continuing trend towards secularization, the next part will evaluate the debate from different theoretical perspectives. The attempts to explicate the trends in religion are unfolded under five headings: The functional evolution theory, the secularization paradigm, the supply-side approaches, individualization thesis and the existential security paradigm.

The Functional Evolution Theory

Early sociologists such as Max Weber and Emile Durkheim agreed that religion was going to lose its central position in modern societies. This constitutes the origin of functional evolution approach which indicates that the central role of religious institutions will fade away as their social functions like healthcare, education and social control are met by the welfare state (Norris and Inglehart, 2004: 9). Karel Dobbelaere (1985, 1987), and Steve Bruce (2002) were among the scholars who highlighted Durkheimian understanding of religion which highlights how social and structural differentiation progressively resulted in alteration of function for religious institutions. Bruce (2002: 8) explicated: “Education, health care, welfare and social control were once all in the domain of religious institutions; now we have specialist institutions for each.” This assumption explains the shift from religious institutions to secular ones in providing vital services. Bruce (2002: 8) also highlighted that “the shift of control was gradual and proceeded at various speeds in different settings, but religious professionals were replaced as specialist professionals were trained.” Differentiation, which is the product of modernization, had also an impact on the religious sphere. According to Dobbelaere (1999: 231): “secularization is only the particularization of the general process of functional differentiation in the religious subsystem.”

The theory of evolutionary functionalism became popular in sociology of religion in the 1950s and 1960s, the postwar period. Its level of analysis is society and therefore investigates the social role of religion. According to Gill (2008: 128), in the contemporary world, the welfare state keeps doing the same thing by offering services that substantiate the ones provided previously by religious organizations. As these services are offered by the government, people become less grateful to church and “begin to drift away from active participation in the church”; therefore “the higher the level of per capita social welfare spending by a government, the less church attendance there will be over time” (Gill, 2008: 128). The main argument of this theory constitutes an important core of the other secularization theories as “the sociological explanation of secularization starts with the process of functional differentiation” (Dobbelaere, 1999: 231).

While stressing the differentiation and its impact on secularization, a distinction has been made among the levels of analysis. Societal secularization

(macro level), organizational (meso level) and individual (micro level) secularization were considered as the three levels which were affected differently by the functional differentiation (Dobbelaere, 1999; Chaves 1997). Among these levels, according to Dobbelaere (1999: 244-24), “the religiosity of individuals cannot be explained exclusively by the secularization of the social system; other factors like the individualization of decisions, detraditionalization, mobility, and expressive and utilitarian individualism are at work.” Therefore, the functional evolution theory of secularization has more excessive explanatory power for meso and macro levels but when it comes to micro level religiosity, this approach falls short of offering a complete explanation.

The critiques for functional evolution theory hit its main assumption that “an erosion of the social purpose of the church through functional differentiation” means that “the core moral and spiritual roles of religious institutions are diminished or lost;” the critiques rather argue that religious institutions could even become more important (Norris and Inglehart, 2004: 10). The counter argument of functional evolution theory foresees “more complex historical and cross-country patterns” which cause fluctuations in religiosity instead of an unescapable and linear loss of faith (Norris and Inglehart, 2004: 10). Greeley (2008) also agrees that no linear and constant loss of faith, in means of atheism or agnosticism, is increasing in affluent European nations; it is rather existence of diverse patterns of religiosity.

Despite the critiques, the functional evolution theory constitutes an important part of the secularization theory, and it puts forward that “in Western European societies, religion underwent an epoch-making change of the social form of religion” (Luckmann, 2003: 283). The changes that religion went through and the analysis of the alteration of religiosity in institutional, societal and individual levels are discussed widely by secularization theory; to which functional evolution theory provided the basic assumptions.

The Secularization Theory

The most prominent approach in the secularization paradigm is the one that associates secularization with modernization. The main argument of secularization theory is that “with the diffusion of modern life forms including urbanization, industrialization, rationalization and pluralization, the social relevance of the religion and church would decrease, and religious worldviews would gradually be replaced by scientific, rationalized and secular interpretations of the world” (Pollack and Olson, 2008: 1). Secularization is generally defined by traditional secularization theorists “as a process, a movement towards less religious belief and organized practice” and “unidirectional trend” which follows a parallel path with modernization (Gill, 2008: 117). The forecast of secularization

theory was that a spread of modernization, departing from Western Europe, would replace religion with science and rational thinking. Thus, it is plausible to assert that “the secularization doctrine has always nestled within the broader theoretical framework of modernization theories” which puts forward that “as industrialization, urbanization and rationalization increase, religiousness must decrease” (Hadden, 1987: 588).

The main criticism to secularization theory is based on the argument that “rather than being replaced by new secular norms, traditional religions and religious institutions persisted and proved to be capable of adjusting to the requirements of political and economic modernization” (Sahliyah, 1990: 5). This determination hit the very basis of secularization paradigm by highlighting its deficiency in offering a universal rule, valid everywhere at any time. According to the critical view, this is also coupled with the fallacy of taking for granted that all societies progress along a single pathway toward a common end-point: The modern secular democratic state (Greeley, 2008). Instead, states, societies and communities experience diverse steps of social change.

Therefore, secularization theory is challenged not only for limiting the scope of analysis to modern societies but also for positioning secularization as an inescapable end. Yet expecting a unilinear demise of religion seems to be the weakest point of traditional secularization theories. The proponents of secularization theory responded to this criticism by stating that this is a cyclical pattern, and that religion will always be part of social life as long as it provides answers to existential questions (Swatos and Christiano, 1999: 217). Nonetheless, the lack of empirical data in the field demonstrating that a linear secularization is taking place is still the most grounded part of the criticisms (Stark and Finke, 2000).

A critical view purports that modernization did not undermine but on the contrary enhanced religious groups in many parts of the world (Sahliyah, 1990: 6). The efforts of secular elites for modernization in the Third World with reference to secular nationalism and national identity, could not gain success because in the milieu of crises, people became more attached to religion. According to this view, at the international level, modernization did not lead to social and economic prosperity but rather ended up with greater dependency on the developed part of the world: “The political revitalization of religion can therefore be seen as part of the Third World’s quest for political, economic, and cultural autonomy and authenticity” (Sahliyah, 1990: 7). This argument which is based on Wallerstein’s “dependency theory” makes it clear the discrepancy between the Third World countries’ secularization experience and of the West (Wallerstein, 2011). According to the religious groups, secular elites who aimed to modernize their country made it dependent on West. That is why after a while

religious movements aimed at finding “a way of life for the individual, the society, and the state, away from the influence of Western ideologies” (Sahliyah, 1990: 7). This can be perceived as the failure of the secular elites’ modernization motto in the Third World. As a result, most of the Middle Eastern countries stayed detached from the Western values and enhanced their religious ties. When faced with the migration phenomenon, Muslim migrants are bringing their cultural and religious underpinnings with them while moving to European countries. Nonetheless, the stigmatization of Muslims after 9/11 highlighted the meaning of the “other” (Dönmez, 2004: 82) and this made it much more difficult for Muslim immigrants to integrate into the European societies.

This theory also opens the door to a new approach to secularization; “one that situates religion and religious change in a concrete historical and institutional context” (Chaves, 1994: 752). The conflicts between social actors over the domination or maintenance of religious realm determine primarily the social significance of religion (Chaves, 1994:752). Furthermore, this approach also determines that in cases where religion does not have a direct impact on institutions or individuals, it can still have an influence due to its cultural power; this is another way for political actors in which they can make use of religious authority (Chaves, 1994: 762). Therefore, despite secularization, religious institutions do have a political power due to cultural underpinnings of religion. On the other side of the coin, in the countries receiving mass migration, the religious institutions which are expected to transfer their functions in religious services to secular state instruments may gain new roles due to new denominations.

For Europe in specific, it is stated that secularization has become a self-fulfilling prophecy instead of a natural outcome of modernization; because if the assertion that “the more modern a society the less religious will be its population” was right, one could not explicate the case of the US where the process of modernization was not followed by the same secularization trend as Europe (Casanova, 2006: 84). The main argument about the connection between secularization and modernization is consolidated in the case of Europe. Casanova (2006: 89) comments: “...the interesting issue is not the fact of progressive religious decline among the European population, but the fact that this decline is accompanied by a ‘secularistic’ self-understanding that interprets the decline as ‘normal’ and ‘progressive,’ and therefore as quasi-normative consequence of being a ‘modern’ and ‘enlightened’ European.” Therefore, twinning secularization with Europe is not just a perception of the rest of the world but also the self-identification of Europeans. This self-identification might be at the risk of shattering because of the migration phenomenon which may lead to a new definition of the “self.”

In the context of secularization, Europe constitutes a unique case; almost an ideal one and thus needs to be scrutinized very carefully. The surveys conducted for Europe indicate that there is a remarkable decline in church attendance and whether it is in line with a general loss of faith or not constitutes the main axis of discussion¹. Europe in that sense is the case that seems to approve the fundamental argument of the secularization thesis that modernization will be accompanied by a loss of faith and societies will evolve towards a more secular environment. To put it in another way, Europe has an exceptional status in the resurgence of religion in world politics because secularization, which is perceived as a significant outcome of modernization, is valid for Europe but not necessarily for the rest of the world (Thomas, 2005: 49-50).

This is a growing field given the importance of religion in global politics as well as the significance of state-religion relations in domestic politics. In an ever-changing conjuncture, it seems plausible that there emerged the need to review and enhance the secularization paradigm. Secularization theory which focuses on the “demand” for religion in the society falls short of explaining individuals’ attitudes against different religious market. That is why there are several newly emerging approaches to secularization debate which can be classified as the individualization theory (Davie, 2002, 2008; Katzenstein, 2006; Pollack, 2008), the *existential security theory* (intensively investigated by Norris and Inglehart, 2004) and the supply-side approaches (economic market model (Stark and Iannacone, 1994; Stark and Finke, 2000; Norris and Inglehart, 2004; Pollack, 2008; Gill, 2008) or rational choice theory applied to religion). The next section will delineate these approaches in order to shed a light on the impact of migration on religious sphere in Europe.

The Individualization Thesis

Individualization thesis mainly stems from the European critics of the secularization theory which indicate that faith may alter in form but does not necessarily fade away (Davie, 2008: 166). Actually, the problematique of the relation between belief and practice dates back to Durkheim who questioned whether belief or ritual (practice or action) precedes, or they have equal parity (Jones, 1998: 53). Individualization theory basically presupposes that the modernity causes the decline of large religious institutions and not necessarily leads to a loss of religiosity at individual level. The proponents of this theory try to display that there is “a reverse proportional correlation—the Churches’ decline leads to an upswing in personal belief” (Pollack, 2008: 6).

¹ For an extensive analysis please see Pollack et al., 2016. For a summary table of religious participation and church attendance see Ibid., p. 237, Table 11.3: Integration in church and religious practice.

Among the reasons of decline in church attendance, individualization theorists argue that it occurs as a natural part of the general trend of decrease in people's need in gathering together in the post-war period. Davie (2008: 167) explicates this phenomenon: "the reduction in church activity in Western Europe forms part of a profound change in the nature of social life; it is not, in contrast an unequivocal indicator of religious indifference." Therefore, individualization in religion, meaning less attending the religious practices is a natural outcome of the social life and daily circumstances.

Grace Davie (2008: 166) also defends that decrease in church attendance is not an indicator of religious indifference and that a new way of keeping faith is "believing without belonging." This argument explicates the secularization in Europe from different lenses which is generally evaluated as the loss of faith. In her view, there is widespread alienation from churches and thus "a shift in the institutional location of religion...rather than secularization, would be a more accurate description of the European situation" (Berger, 1999 quoted in Katzenstein, 2006: 7-8). At this point, a differentiation between religion and spirituality might be useful for better understanding the individualization thesis. This view opens up the path to explicate "New Age" religiosity: "Religion might be in decline, but spirituality – perceived to be less dogmatic, more tolerant and flexible, and better suited to the pursuit of personal inner quests – is waxing" (Davie et al., 2003: 2). Therefore, Davie's thesis of "believing without belonging" does not limit the scope of believing to religion; it embraces all kinds of spirituality. However, scholars examining the validity of the "believing without belonging" thesis state that this may cause inaccuracy in verifying data: "...if one examines belonging to a Christian church, one should also examine Christian beliefs rather than belief in any religious faith, since the gap between believing and belonging would otherwise be overestimated" (Aarts et al. 2008: 18). This means that if the scope of believing comprises different forms of spirituality other than Christian belief, one may not be able to measure the discrepancy between believing and belonging, which might be a weak point of the theory.

This may explain why "an increasing majority of European population has ceased participating in traditional religious practices, at least on a regular basis while still maintaining relatively high levels of private religious individual beliefs" (Casanova, 2006: 65). This is the main reason why the proponents of individualization theory prefer to talk about "*unchurching* of the European population and of religious individualization, rather than secularization" (Casanova, 2006: 65).

The assumption of individualization theory about "unchurching" is providing evidence for supply-side theories which assume that a pluralist religious market would enhance individual religiosity. However, the main difference of

supply-side theories with individualization thesis is that, in the former religious belief is considered to be “an exogenous phenomenon, which is not affected by the extent to which individuals attend to religious services” (Aarts et al., 2008: 17). Thus, they assume that “belief in the supernatural is strong” but the religious practice might be less as a consequence of inadequate religious supply (Aarts et al., 2008: 19). In addition, the individualization theory offers other reasons like the higher cost of attending religious services for individuals.

The “theoretical architecture” of individualization theory is somewhere between secularization theory and economic market model (Pollack, 2008: 6). Similar to what secularization theory suggests, functional differentiation, rationalization and cultural pluralization are the main reasons of macro-sociological changes, according to the individualization thesis. Different than secularization theory, individualization theory does not assume that these societal changes would necessarily result in decline in social significance of religion. The correlation that secularization theory foresees between modernization and religiosity is a negative one, whereas individualization theory assumes that the more modern society is, the less institutional religiosity there will be but at sum, religiosity will increase due to remarkable rise in individual religiosity.

As already indicated, individualization theory has also similarity with economic market model; individualization theory asserts that “modernity and religion are compatible” so modernity does not lead to a decline in the position of religion in society but rather leads to “a change in its forms” (Pollack, 2008: 6, Pollack and Olson, 2008: 170). Focusing on Europe, the individualization of religion can also be explicated in terms of an emerging religious market. To put in another way, the change in forms of religious understanding in Europe is explicated as the one “from obligation to consumption” which can be analyzed as:

Populations that have arrived in Europe primarily for economic reasons bring with them different ways of being religious. And quite apart from the incoming movements, European people travel the world, experiencing amongst other things considerable religious diversity. In this sense, a genuine religious market is emerging in most parts of the continent (Davie, 2008: 173).

Here the critical point is the secular state apparatus’ capacity to cope with the demands of the migrants in an ever-growing religious market.

In addition, with reference to European World Values survey data, Bruce and Voas (2010: 243) underline that there is no empirical finding supporting “believing without belonging” thesis. This is also the case for Europe: “...in the long run religions and churches have lost their social significance in European societies. The emergence of new religious groups and individualistic forms of

syncretistic religiosity is not able to compensate for the losses of the churches and the traditional forms” as offered by the individualization theory (Pollack, 2008: 168). What comes out of these statements is that individualization theory necessitates to be more substantiated with empirical data.

The Existential Security Paradigm

As a more recent model, Norris and Inglehart (2004) propose existential security paradigm. The authors have departed from Stark and Finke’s assertion: “What is needed is not a simple-minded theory of inevitable religious decline but a theory that explains variation” (Norris and Inglehart, 2004: 13). They have tried to formulate a theory that is capable of explaining the variance in religion both at societal and individual levels. The main argument of existential security paradigm is that when people feel secure, they address less to religious feelings. Even if it affects both societal and personal belief, it is anticipated that “residual and symbolic elements often remain, such as formal adherence to religious identities, even when their substantive meaning has faded away” (Norris and Inglehart, 2004: 18). Therefore, according to this view even in affluent societies, religion will not totally fade away but the function of religious institutions in providing well-being will not be necessitated anymore.

One of the strongest assertions of existential security model is its providing explanation to how rich regions in the world are becoming more secular whereas world as a whole is becoming increasingly religious. This disparity could not be explicated by other theories dealing with secularization paradigm. The reason relies on demographic hypothesis that the population size of the rich and affluent nations does not grow as much as the Third World nations and poorer societies that are anticipated to remain highly religious do have a growing population size (Norris and Inglehart, 2004: 22-23). In this way, even if secularization in modern world gains acceleration, the world as a whole will remain highly religious given the demographic evidence.

At the end of the survey, Norris and Inglehart found out that the “strongest decline in religious participation will occur in affluent and secure nations” whereas poorer and more insecure nations will stick to religious practices like worship and prayer (Norris and Inglehart, 2004: 21). They also reflect on secularization theory and state that it is right in the sense that “modernization” (the process of industrialization, urbanization, and rising levels of education and wealth) greatly weakens the influence of social institutions in affluent societies, bringing lower rates of attendances at religious services and making religion subjectively less important in people’s lives” (Norris and Inglehart, 2004: 24-25). They even offer an explanation for secularization in the US, and they claim that there is a trend of secularization, but it is masked by massive immigration of people from traditional

societies—Hispanic countries (Norris and Inglehart, 2004: 24-25). Due to the mass migration from the Middle East, it is likely to occur in Europe in the near future. Muslim migrants who have very deep existential security concerns will be more attached to religion. As these migrants' population will grow faster than the host country, they will augment the level of religiosity in the countries they migrate.

In the search of future religiosity, one of the most reliable data is the one based on demographic variation. In line with existential security paradigm, there is tendency to explicate religious change phenomenon via demographic indicators like age (Idler, 2021), fertility, mortality and immigration. Among the demographic factors, the most influential ones are fertility and immigration (Kauffman et al., 2012: 71)². As the fertility rate is higher among Muslim migrants, they have the capacity to augment the level of religiosity whether this religion be Islam (Kauffman et al., 2012: 71). According to demographic data taking into account the fertility rate and the immigration, Kauffman et al. (2012: 69) suggest that “Western Europe may be more religious at the end of our century than at its beginning.” This alteration can even be contemplated today: “Already, non-Europeans have changed the face of Western Europe, especially the cities. Their numbers will triple by 2050, and, toward the end of our century, those of unmixed European ancestry may be in the minority” (Kauffman et al., 2012: 71). With that increase it is not intended to describe a “postsecular” society where “religion returns to the public sphere of secular society and that the project of secularism, based on the rule of law and on a universalist and rationalist ideology, continues to wane” (Beaumont et al., 2020: 301). Nonetheless, “Europe lies between religious decline through switching and religious growth through population change” (Kauffman et al., 2012: 71). This growth might end up with a need of alteration in the supply of religious services. This point brings us to the following section on supply-side models in religious market.

The Supply-Side Approaches

Supply-side theories are also known as religious market model, economic market model, the new paradigm and also as the rational choice perspective on religion (Stark and Finke, 2000; Aarts et al., 2008; Papademetriu et al., 2016; Gaskins et al., 2013a). These theories assume that there exists a stable religious demand, but that people alter in their religious needs and preferences. In the work of Durkheim, the process of pluralization is expected to destroy the hegemonic power of a single theological faith (Jones, 1998: 54). Peter Berger (1967: 127) argued the same in his early works but for a different reason; he stressed that pluralism threatens the dignity of religions by revealing their human origins. There

² Kauffman et al. use the European Values Surveys and European Social Survey for the period 1981-2008 to determine the basic trends in religious attendance and belief across the 10 countries in Europe.

is a simple explanation for this argument; when we choose among a diverse range of religious beliefs “we are aware that we choose the gods rather than the gods choosing us” and when this is a personal choice instead of faith, it is weaker (Bruce, 1992: 170). This is why secularization theorists advocated that religious pluralism causes a decline in religiosity because “alternative religions tend to challenge the plausibility structure of well-established beliefs” (Aarts et al., 2008: 17).

The “new paradigm,” which is distinct from the traditional secularization theories asserts that “societies with no state church or predominant religion enjoy greater religious participation than those with government sponsored monopoly faiths. According to the new paradigm, “when political and ecclesiastical institutions are separated, people become more involved in religion” (Finke and Stark, 1992 in Philips, 2002: 139).

On the other side of the coin, according to the supply-side theory, pluralism is the main source of religious vitality. This approach mainly “disregards the public’s “demand” for religion, which is assumed to be constant, but focuses instead on how conditions of religious freedom, and the work of competing religious institutions, actively generate its “supply”” (Norris and Inglehart, 2004: 11). This understanding is interpreted by Stark and Finke (2000: 35-36) as economic market model and explicated as: “religious economies are consisted of current and potential followers (demand), a set of organizations (supply) seeking to serve that market, and the religious doctrines and practices (products) offered by the various organizations.” It is anticipated that free markets in religion, like free markets in other goods, increase efficiency amongst suppliers and therefore lead to increase in consumption (Bruce, 1992: 171). Norris and Inglehart (2004: 12) underline that “the core proposition in the religious market approach is the notion that vigorous competition between religious denominations has a positive effect on religious involvement.” To say it in another way;

...the more pluralist the religious market, the greater the competition between the various religious providers. [...] competition prompts each religious community and its representatives to improve their services in order to retain their clients and to attract new ones. [...] the diversification of faith options that is to be observed in modern societies serves to stimulate the vitality of religious communities (Pollack, 2008: 170).

It makes sense that when there is substantial diversity of religious expressions and organizations to represent them, it is more probable for each and every social group to find something which fits and satisfies their needs (Bruce, 1992: 170).

The well-suited example of religious pluralism is the United States where a great religious supply is responded with greater involvement in religion (Berger, 2014: 13). It should be highlighted that the strict separation between the church and the state, which can be found in the example of the US, as a “virtue of diversity” is of great importance for religious pluralism (Bruce, 1992: 170). At the end of the day, “Americans are considerably more religious than their European counterparts, and thus less likely to view religious immigrants with unease and suspicion” (Papademetriu et al., 2016: 8). That is why, “religion contributes to, rather than impedes, the Americanization process for immigrants (Papademetriu et al., 2016: 8). On the other hand, in a society where there is an outward religious homogeneity, there can be found state-sponsored policies enforcing that uniformity by specific privileges or prohibitions on competitors (Gill, 2008: 119). In such a case, new denominations (religious communities) cannot emerge and thus no environment of pluralism flourishes. The proponents of this model; Stark and Finke move further by indicating that because government favor established churches in Northern Europe and Scandinavia – socialized religion— there occurs a religious monopoly and it leads to indifference of people to religion (Norris and Inglehart, 2004: 12).

This means that “the degree to which a government regulates religious organizations will have a significant impact on the level of secularization in society” (Gill, 2008: 116). To be more specific, the amount of the starting costs necessary for smaller religious communities to establish is dependent on state’s intervention on religious affairs: if the cost is low, it means that the state does not favor one religious community over another and provides ground for new and smaller religious communities (Pollack, 2008: 170). To highlight once more what has been indicated above; contrary to the general understanding, the disestablishment of religion; meaning the strict separation of church and state should not be considered as an indication for further secularization in the meaning of religious decline. Conversely, in countries where extended separation between church and state is established, like the US, religion tends to flourish more (Gill, 2008: 117). On the other hand, this is not the case for France where secularization is practiced as a kind of containment of religious sphere but in British understanding of secularism, religious freedom prevails over. Casanova (1994: 214) adds that in order to survive in modern world where separation is a sine qua non, religions must work on evangelical revivalism and support pluralism.

In supply-side approach, the state is given a more active role in determining social religiosity. According to Gill (2008: 120), government policies can serve as a means to secularize society. For example, policies that restrain the ability of religious groups to assemble or tax impositions on churches, constrain the new religious communities which are seeking to gain new members. The correlation that Gill (2008: 121) foresees between the cost of being a member of religious

community and the participation is a negative one; he suggests that as the cost that people have to pay augments, the participation will decrease because “people vary in their willingness to pay for religious goods. Payment not only in means of money, but the time and energy it takes to attend services...” and “as all the costs of religion increase, some people do not want to value religious goods as highly as others will decrease participation, *ceteris paribus*” (Gill, 2008: 121). This makes sense given the elasticity assumption in economics; however, the opposite view also makes sense: Stark and Finke (2000: 22) put forward the opposite argument that “costly churches are strong churches *because* they are costly—... rational actors will prefer more demanding churches because they offer a more favorable cost/benefit ratio.” In this understanding, the more cost people pay for becoming a member of a religious community and the more costly to attend the church, the more they will tend to go for it. Thus, Stark and Finke (2000) observe a positive relationship between cost and religious participation.

What can be inferred from the arguments depicted so far about the stance of the state towards religion is that “extensive array of legal restrictions on religious minorities and public support for official state-sponsored denominations makes the growth of religious pluralism difficult in Europe” (Gill, 2008: 121). In line with this thinking, Stark and Iannaccone (1994: 230) put forward the argument that secularization that is apparent in many European societies shall be explicated by the supply-side weakness rather than a lack of individual religious demand. In other words, the fact that the church attendance is low in Europe especially in comparison to belief in God and religion, can be explained by the supply-side theories as the deficiency of religious suppliers in motivating believers to come to church (Gill, 2008). However, this can be reversed as “European governments maintain their support to certain religious traditions, forcing religious organizations into competition for “customer” and allowing the emergence of religious pluralism” (Aarts et al. 2008: 19).

More recent works of the supply-side approaches (Gaskins et al., 2013a: 824) also approve that “religious participation declines as the state regulations on religion increase”. Furthermore, in their empirical work, Gaskins et al. (2013a) tries to find out the relationship between the religious participation and economic attitudes. According to their model, religious participation is not necessarily linked with the economic conservatism, but they are all dependent on an individual’s level of income (Gaskins et al., 2013a: 839). In another empirical work of the same authors, they expose the linkage between religious participation and human development (Gaskins et al., 2013b). The empirical study they offer concludes that “religious participation declines with development and an individual’s ability to earn a secular income” (Gaskins et al., 2013b: 1139). Therefore, the supply-side approaches put forward that there exists a strong correlation between supply of the religious services and the religiosity of society. When these services are

provided by religious institutions in an environment of religious plurality where the state has a minimum interference, religiosity flourishes.

2. TRENDS IN MUSLIM MIGRANT FLOWS TO EUROPE

Due to the flux of migration to Europe especially speeding up after 2014, demographic data concerning this flow became popular in the last few years. Even though the future religiosity of Europe is tried to be depicted according to the contemporary data, there is a gap in explaining this spectrum from the lenses of secularization theories. According to the Pew Research Center, there are three expected scenarios concerning the future of Muslims in Europe. These scenarios are based on the rates of migration; the first scenario is zero-migration, second one is medium migration and third is high migration (Hackett et al., 2019). In the first scenario, hypothetically, if Europe receives no migration, then “Europe’s Muslim population is projected to increase by about 10 million people, from an estimated 25.8 million Muslims in 2016 to 35.8 million in 2050” (Lipka, 2017). In terms of the percentages, it is estimated that “Muslims would rise from about 5% of Europe’s overall population today to 7.4% at midcentury – not only because Muslims are growing in absolute numbers, but because the non-Muslim population in Europe is expected to decline by roughly 10%” (Lipka, 2017). In the recent years, “Europe has experienced low fertility rates, less than 1.6 children per adult in the European Union since 2011” (Blekesaune, 2020: 222). Low fertility and the aging population have been “balanced by massive immigration, particularly from high-fertility Muslim countries” (Blekesaune, 2020: 222). This phenomenon is twofold; the fertility rates of Muslim migrants are high and at the same time, Europe has an aging non-Muslim population. Surveys conducted in Europe determine that immigrants from Muslim countries have higher fertility; especially the highly religious immigrants (Blekesaune, 2020: 222). Nonetheless, fertility rates and the demographic factors cannot be the only indicators in determining the future religious composition of Europe because they tend to change by time and according to different circumstances like security concerns.

In the second scenario where medium rate of migration takes place, and which is more likely to happen due to ongoing flow of migration, it is anticipated that “Europe’s Muslim population doubles from 25.8 million (4.9%) in 2016 to 11.2% in 2050”. According to this assumption, “recent “regular” migration patterns would continue in the coming decades” (Lipka, 2017).³ With the high-migration scenario it is estimated that the flow of migrants extends indefinitely in the future. Though the researchers expect no boom in this flow given the EU policies concerning the refugees coming from Syria; it prefers to keep them in

³ Regular migrants are defined in this research as the ones who do not seek for asylum but who are leaving their home country because of economics, family, education concerns. For detailed information please see Lipka, 2017.

Turkey and provide sources for them. Also, given the externalization policies of the EU countries, the flux cannot always reach its intended end point, i.e., an EU member. But still, “if this high refugee flow were to continue, Europe’s Muslim population would grow to more than 75 million in 2050 –about 14% of the continent’s population” (Lipka, 2017). As a result, it is estimated that Muslims would constitute between 11.2% and 14% of Europe’s population in 2050 (Hackett et al., 2019, 98).

By relying on another data concerning the religiosity of the immigrants (“Social conditions and integration of foreign citizens” survey (ISTAT, 2011–2012)), in a very recent work, Molteni and Dimitriadis (2021) evaluate the discrepancy between religiosity of parents and their children among immigrants. They evaluate that “immigrant groups who share many characteristics with the natives tend to assimilate by adopting the same patterns of transmission (for example, Romanians in Italy)” (Molteni and Dimitriadis, 2021: 1485). According to this work, “immigrants coming from a very secular country” have a tendency to maintain this attitude in the receiving countries and to incrementally detach from their religiousness as well their denominational ties (Molteni and Dimitriadis, 2021: 1485). However, they also indicate that “immigrants who come from very different religious contexts” such as Muslims, have stronger attachment to their own religiosity and they react to the religious diversity in the host country as they stress the transmission of their own religion from one generation to the other (Molteni and Dimitriadis, 2021: 1485). These recent data verify the premises of the secularization theories on the future religiosity of Europe.

3. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This work highlights main paradigms of secularization theories; it displays how classical understanding that associates secularism with modernization is out of date as long as the fact has proven that this is not the one and only direction and an unescapable end for all societies. Among the more contemporary secularization paradigms, the individualization thesis, lacks empirical data and it is hard to determine whether personal belief increases as participation to religious rituals decline because it is not easy to measure “believing without belonging” thesis. On the other hand, existential security paradigm purports that as people feel more insecure and have existential concerns, they adhere more to religion. In more recent studies based on empirical data it is suggested that migration is one of the most prominent demographic factors that affects the religiosity of society. An overwhelming Muslim migration caused by the civil wars in the Middle East will most probably end up with a change in the religious conjuncture of Europe. At the same time, religious market theories suggest that demand will increase as supply increases so that religious pluralism which offers more choices for people enhances religiosity.

Muslims who immigrate to Europe are both more religious and the fertility rates are higher than the host population. This is one of the reasons why an increase in the overall religiosity is expected. Indeed, as it has been indicated before, “religiousness also affects fertility (Frejka and Westoff, 2008), and immigrants are more religious than native Europeans (van Tubergen and Sindradóttir, 2011)” (Blekesaune, 2020). Among the theories of secularization depicted in this paper, the most accurate ones in explaining the future religiosity of Europe are the ones that take into account the demographic change caused mainly by migration. Other secularization paradigms fall short of portraying the current trend in religiosity. After delineating the secularization vs. religious resurgence debate, this paper portrays how they foresee the future of religiosity in the European countries as a result of mass migration.

As separately mentioned above, the mass migration of Muslim populations to Europe is expected to affect religiosity in two ways; for one, it will enhance pluralization; and secondly, due to the existential security concerns of the migrants, this population will address more to their beliefs and as a result, these will increase the overall religiosity in Europe ipso facto. Therefore, in the religious market model where the state does not actively interfere into the religious sphere, migration-led religiosity can be expected to enhance pluralism in Europe. The increase in the overall religiosity in Europe can potentially challenge the secular character of it. However, non-intervention of the state to the religious realm and not to favor one belief over another implies a different version of secularism. The shift from one version of secularism to another in Europe and analyzing it within a framework of migration theories might be a substantive research topic for a further study.

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