

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF EXISTENTIAL SECURITY THEORY

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Abstract

Classical secularization theories have been subject to criticisms for their inability to explain religious change and vividness in modern society. The theory of existential security claims to respond to such criticisms. Indeed, unlike conventional theories, the theory of existential security asserts that the principal catalyzer for secularization is not rationalization and differentiation, but security. Accordingly, it explains secularity and religious vividness in a global aspect. Therefore, this paper questions the foregoing claims of existential security theory, since the latter cannot be different from conventional theories because of their common growth and the context in which they were developed. In addition, this study argues the difficulty of considering a single perspective to explain religiosity in a global aspect. Accordingly, the paper critically addresses the theory of existential security in light of sociological data and analyses.

Key Words: Existential security, secularization, Pippa Norris, Ronald Inglehart.

Background and the Problem

Almost all classical social scientists used to agree that religion would die out upon the arrival of a modern industrial society. This point of view regarding religion was systematized within the framework of secularization theory. In the words of José Casanova, it became the only framework to attain a paradigmatic status in social sciences.¹ Nevertheless, religion somehow subsisted in industrial and even post-industrial societies; and this fact questions the so-called classical secularization theory in the sociological literature. Accordingly, the opponents of secularization theory point to the functions of religion in social institutions, especially politics, and assert that it is not religion but the theory of secularization that collapsed. Therefore, in addition to alternative theories such as the economic model of religion, certain sociologists, such as Steve Bruce, have analyzed the classical theory of secularization and tried to respond to criticisms in light of new data. The theory of existential security is developed in consideration of foregoing criticisms. The founders of this theory, Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, to a certain extent agree with the opponents of secularization thesis regarding its inability to explain the global religious vividness. In this respect, Norris and Inglehart admit that secularization theory, which became a much-shared model in classical sociological thought, was wrong in its prediction about the extinction of religion in the wake of modernization. Therefore, Norris and Inglehart indicate that they agree with opponents of secularization theory such as Rodney Stark and Roger Finke with respect to the need for a theory that can explain religious change that is not based on the collapse of religion.² However, unlike the opponents of secularization theory, Norris and Inglehart think that it is necessary to revise and update the theory rather than to dismiss it from the social science literature.³ Thus, the two academicians try to develop a type of secularization theory that is based on the concept of existential security. What makes this theory different from others is that it takes shape within the framework of existential security rather than rationalization (Weberian) and functional differentiation

¹ José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 17.

² Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 13.

³ *Ibid.*, 4.

(Durkheimian) theses.⁴

Ronald Inglehart includes opinions regarding the foundations of existential security in almost all of his works. However, the theoretical framework is established in *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*, which he wrote with Pippa Norris in 2004. The book once again attempts to analyze the issues of religion and religiosity in modern societies and tries to develop a new framework that reveals how existential security triggered the process of secularization. Hypotheses on the theory of existential security are tested on the basis of data via four wave surveys under the World Values Survey and the European Values Study conducted between 1980 and 2001 in eighty countries that comprise the four major religions of the world. These studies cover societies with various characteristics that constitute approximately 85% of world population, including low-income societies and wealthy societies with established democracies.⁵ Moreover, in the new edition of *Sacred and Secular* in 2011 and in relevant papers, Norris and Inglehart undertook retesting and supporting the theses of existential security theory in light of data from studies on social psychology, health care literature, and welfare. They also accounted for the data from the World Values Survey in fifty-five countries between 2005 and 2007 and the Gallup World Poll conducted in 2007.⁶ In their data analysis, Norris and Inglehart made use of various techniques, including cross-national survey, longitudinal, and generational analysis.⁷ Unlike any other study about secularization, their study casts light upon the process of religious change around the world by means of putting forth levels of religiosity and secularity in different societies, trends of change in a given community over time, and, particularly, differences between generations with respect to religious tendencies and orientation.

By defining secularization as the “systematic erosion of religious practices, values, and beliefs,”⁸ Norris and Inglehart focus on three

⁴ *Ibid.*, 13, 217.

⁵ *Ibid.*, xiv.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 254.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 34-36.

⁸ Norris and Inglehart, “Uneven Secularization in the United States and Western Europe,” in *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism*, ed. Thomas Banchoff (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 33, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195307221.001.0001>.

aspects of secularization in terms of existential security: religious participation, religious values, and religious beliefs. According to them, the secularization process will impair the collective ritual aspect of religion within the scope of Christianity (Catholicism and Protestantism). Likewise, individual religiosity, such as daily worship in Islam and meditation in Buddhism, will also decline.⁹ In a broader sense, in case existential security is ensured, all religions and religiosities will no more have a central position in human life and evolve into a peripheral status.

The objective of this paper is to critically analyze the theory of existential security, with reference to reliable data and interpretations from social sciences and humanities. The essential thesis of our paper is as follows. Given the argument it uses, the environment it raised and, particularly, the consequences attained, one can hardly claim that theory of existential security is significantly dissociated from the conventional theory of secularization, the validity of which is currently subject to severe questioning. The theory falls short of explaining radical religious vividness and diversity in every aspect on a global scale since it adopts a reductive approach to address a sophisticated problem such as secularization.

I. Modernization, Human Development, and Secularization

By tracing classical social scientists, Norris and Inglehart assert that modernization, defined as a process of transformation and enrichment, will make religion lose ground. However, theorists of existential security note that religion will not completely perish in the face of modernization. According to these scholars, secularization will be realized thanks to economic development, social welfare, human development, and socioeconomic equality through modernization, and not because of rationalization and social differentiation as is claimed by conventional theories of secularization.¹⁰ In this regard, existential security, which is considered as the starter and provider of secularization, becomes possible in the process of modernization, as noted in Weberian and Durkheimian paradigms. Therefore, like classical secularization theorists, Norris and Inglehart assume a correlation between modernization and secularization, especially with

⁹ Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 40-41.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 13-18, 217-219.

respect to human development and socioeconomic equality.

Social scientists such as Rodney Stark, Peter Berger, Grace Davie, and José Casanova to a certain extent accept European secularity. However, they insist that it is more realistic to ground European secularity on historical experiences of societies with respect to the relationship between religion and the state rather than on modernization. In this regard, theorists of existential security that are revising classical secularization theory ground secularization on the concept of security rather than on rationalization and functional differentiation. Nevertheless, they share a common perspective with classical secularization theorists with respect to their starting point. Accordingly, the theory of existential security more closely resembles the classical secularization theory by Bryan Wilson and Steve Bruce rather than being an alternative theory or paradigm such as the religious market model in the footsteps of critical secularization theories by David Martin, José Casanova, and Grace Davie. In this regard, the principal criticism of classical secularization theories namely, the argument that secularization is not intrinsic to modernization, also applies to the theory of existential security. In this context, Stark indicates that theorists of existential security repeat the well-known issues but do not revise the theory. For him, this theory brings along nothing new except for the well-known Western European secularity. Stark insists there is no necessary correlation between modernization and secularization and claims to put forth this reality in statistical terms. Accordingly, Stark asserts he attained results that refute the theory of existential security by using the same scales of religiosity employed by the theory for testing the existence of any correlation between secularization, modernization, and human development, since such correlation is the point of departure of the theory of existential security.¹¹

According to findings of Stark, there is no statistically valid correlation between modernization and religiosity. In this regard, Stark states that modernization is apparently not a reason that erodes religiosity and leads to secularization.¹² Accordingly, Casanova notes that the secularity in a society, particularly in the so-called secular Western European societies, has developed with respect to historical

¹¹ Rodney Stark, *The Triumph of Faith: Why World is More Religious than Ever* (Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2015), 38.

¹² *Ibid.*, 38.

patterns between church and state and society and civil society, not because of modernization.¹³ Likewise, Stark discusses the possible role of several relative factors in the secularization of Europe before insisting that modernization is not among those factors. Consequently, according to Stark, the secularization of Western Europe is caused by something other than modernization.¹⁴

Modernization, which is considered as a process of industrialization, societalization, differentiation, rationalization, and bureaucratization, may actually have an abrasive effect on religion. Nevertheless, modernization is not the root cause of secularization. If, in line with assertions by Norris and Inglehart, the systematic erosion of religiosity is observed due to modernization, a realistic conclusion can only be attained via comparative analysis between modern societies and not by a comparison between modern and non-modern societies. In this framework, David Martin, who approaches theory of existential security with suspicion, indicates that Sweden is understandably and obviously ahead of Ghana in terms of development and existential security. Martin, however, underlines that it is difficult to explain within the frame of existential security why Limousin has a more secular attitude than Alsace.¹⁵

Alsace and Limousin, which are two nearby regions in France, share similar religious and cultural histories. Therefore, the criteria of development and security cannot explain why the former is more pious and the latter is rather secular. Likewise, it is difficult to explain the differences between the levels of religiosity in West and East Germany by means of security or modernity. Although West Germany is more modern than East Germany, the former is behind the latter in terms of secularity. Similarly, it is impossible to understand within the frame of modernity or security the difference in levels of secularity and religiosity in Poland and Czechia, two Slav-based Catholic societies that underwent the Soviet experience.¹⁶ Poland is among the more religious societies, whereas Czechia is among the most secular ones.

¹³ Casanova, "Exploring the Postsecular: Three Meanings of 'the Secular' and Their Possible Transcendence," in *Habermas and Religion*, ed., Craig Calhoun, Eduardo Mendieta, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 36-37.

¹⁴ Stark, *The Triumph of Faith*, 39.

¹⁵ David Martin, *Religion and Power: No Logos without Mythos* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), 26, <https://doi.org/10.2307/591190>.

¹⁶ Casanova, "Exploring the Postsecular," 36-37.

Likewise, the differences in religiosity levels between France and Italy, two Catholic societies of Latin origin, or between the Netherlands and Switzerland, two ultramodern Calvinist-Catholic countries, cannot be explained by means of modernization or security.¹⁷

Sophisticated modernization processes might be among the factors leading to secularization. Nonetheless, the argument that modernization is accompanied by a systematic secularization process is far from convincing, given the abovementioned examples of so called Iron Curtain societies, as well as France-Italy. At this stage, we should not overlook the role of relationships between religion and politics in the historical memory of these societies in determining the direction and speed of social evolution. Above all, the approach of the modern state apparatus of relevant society regarding secularism may be influential on the direction of secularity-religiosity in society. For example, a Jacobin secularist state structure can spread its ideology to the public through education. In other words, a state with a secularist approach similar to French or Soviet style can contribute to the secularization of society by easily spreading secular or anti-religious ideology through education policies.

II. Pious America?

Gridlock in discussions about secularization is based on different comprehensions of modernization by European social scientists such as Wilson and Bruce and American social scientists such as Stark and Greeley.¹⁸ In other words, this gridlock in discussions about secularization arises from the argument regarding whether secularization is intrinsic to modernization process. European sociologists of religion mostly defend that secularization is intrinsic to modernization, whereas American sociologists of religion, who follow Stark, argue that the secularization is not intrinsic to modernization, since American society has emerged as a differentiated modern society.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Casanova, "Beyond European and American Exceptionalisms: Towards a Global Perspective," in *Predicting Religion: Christian, Secular and Alternative Futures*, ed., Grace Davie, Paul Heelas, and Linda Woodhead (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), 17.

Theories by European social scientists in the context of Europe fail to explain the religious change in Poland, Italy, Ireland, and the United States. Likewise, theories such as the religious market model, which can explain the process religious change in American society, seem far from capable of expounding the outcome of religious change outside of the USA, especially in Europe.¹⁹ The findings of Norris and Inglehart apparently support the foregoing fact. According to these social scientists, the religious market can set forth the journey of religious change in American society. Nevertheless, it fails to explain religiosity and secularity in Europe.²⁰ Both perspectives however, are criticized for their inability to provide an explanation of religious change in modern societies on a global scale.

Purporting to explain religious change in a global sense, Norris and Inglehart explain the secularity of Western European societies within the framework of the theory of existential security. For them, the common religiosity in societies with higher religiosity indicators, arises from existential insecurity due to lack of social welfare and economic inequality.²¹ Although these scholars accept the United States as an outlier,²² they note that the figures about religiosity from the Gallup International Poll may have been systematically exaggerated by the mentioned American survey company due to improper methods to assess social desirability.²³ Moreover, according to Norris and Inglehart migration waves from Latin America to the USA presumably have a positive effect on religiosity, since the migrants are faithful people with higher fertility.²⁴

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 100-101. See also Norris and Inglehart, "Sellers or Buyers in Religious Markets? The Supply and Demand of Religion," *The Hedgehog Review* 8, no. 1-2 (2006), 83-86.

²¹ Norris and Inglehart, "Sellers or Buyers in Religious Markets?," 87-91.

²² Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 25.

²³ Norris and Inglehart, "God, Guns, and Gays: Supply and Demand of Religion in the US and Western Europe," *Public Policy Review* 12, no. 4 (2006), 229, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511791017>.

²⁴ Inglehart and Norris, "Why Didn't Religion Disappear? Re-examining the Secularization Thesis," in *Cultures and Globalization: Conflicts and Tensions*, ed., Helmut Anheier and Yudhishtir Raj Isar (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2007), 255.

The reasons put forth by Norris and Inglehart to explain the higher level of religiosity in American society compared to Western Europe are far from convincing. Indeed, an examination of the profile of devout masses in the United States reveals findings that are contrary to the assertions by theorists of existential security. In fact, religiosity in the USA is widespread, covering all sectors of society.²⁵ In other words, the profile of American religiosity consists of middle-class people with certain levels of economic security.²⁶ However, the poor and needy Americans stand out for their relative absences in Sunday services.²⁷ Norris and Inglehart try to attribute American religiosity to the poorer citizen, though they cannot explain through existential security why the religiosity indicators are higher in richer and wealthier places such as Dallas, Texas when compared to suburbs with higher crime rates.²⁸ If general and existential insecurity push people towards religiousness or supernatural powers, then Chinese²⁹ or Vietnamese society should have been more devout than Americans since they are less secure. However, as the findings by Norris and Inglehart clearly put forth, China and Vietnam are among the most secular societies in the world, in addition to France, the Netherlands, and Belgium.³⁰ Therefore, obviously there are additional factors other than security that determine the level and status of religion and religiosity in a given society.

Another thesis by Norris and Inglehart, which is that American secularization was disrupted by the migration of extended Hispanic families, also seems problematic. Indeed, indicators on American

²⁵ Casanova, "Exploring the Postsecular," 42; Peter Berger, Grace Davie, and Effie Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe?: A Theme and Variations* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 99.

²⁶ Gerhard E. Lenski, "Social Correlates of Religious Interest," *American Sociological Review* 18, no. 5 (1953), 538-539, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2087437>.

²⁷ Rodney Stark and Charles Y. Glock, *American Piety: The Nature of Religious Commitment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 97-98; Stark, *The Triumph of Faith*, 154.

²⁸ John von Heyking, "Secularization: Not Dead, But Never What It Seemed," *International Studies Review* 7, no. 2 (2005), 280, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2486.2005.00485.x>.

²⁹ See Casanova, "Exploring the Postsecular," 42; Casanova, "Rethinking Secularization," 13.

³⁰ Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 60.

religiosity remained steady before and after increased migration to the USA. The relative consistency in religiosity indicators for American society between 1972 and 2002 is also confirmed by the findings of Norris and Inglehart.³¹ In this regard, Stark cites the consistency in indicators of American religiosity in the last forty years, and argues that there is no significant change in the figures.³² Religiosity in American society remained consistent between 1920 and 1965 when US borders were closed to migrants. The figures are also consistent after 1965.³³ In addition, the assumption by theorists of existential security that the migrants from underdeveloped countries are pious is also questionable. Indeed, migrants in the USA consist of people who have higher level of education and income than the average American.³⁴ In a similar vein, Casanova talks about the persuasive historical evidence that shows that immigrant communities from all religions become more devout once they settle in the USA.³⁵ According to Michael Foley and Dean Hoge, New Immigrants Survey data does not support the assumption that immigrants “are more pious.” These social scientists inform that immigrants become more pious as they live in American society.³⁶ In addition, the so called secular societies in Europe, such as Germany, France, England, and the Netherlands, allow immigrants of Muslim and African origin to be part their social landscape especially in the 20th century. Nevertheless, the argument by Norris and Inglehart that immigrants will render the society more pious is untenable. For instance, the German Muslim community of five million and the French Muslim population of approximately six million immigrants have not transformed or changed the secular identity of host societies. Therefore, the thesis of Norris and Inglehart about migration seems invalid.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 89-94.

³² Stark, *The Triumph of Faith*, 189.

³³ Casanova, “Exploring the Postsecular,” 43. For a short history and profile of migration flows to USA, as well as for eventual socioeconomic change and transformation, also see Philip Martin and Elizabeth Midgley, “Immigration: Shaping and Reshaping America,” *Population Bulletin* 61, no. 4 (2006).

³⁴ Casanova, “Exploring the Postsecular,” 43.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Michael W. Foley and Dean R. Hoge, *Religion and New Immigrants: How Faith Communities Form Our Newest Citizens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 64-65, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195188707.001.0001>.

Norris and Inglehart are presumptuous in arguing that the religiosity indicators in the USA might be incorrectly measured or exaggerated by the Gallup International Poll.³⁷ Indeed, apart from the Gallup International Poll, many other public polls such as the World Values Survey, confirm that religiosity indicators are higher and relatively more stable in American society than Western Europe. For example, according to data from survey companies such as General Social Survey, Baylor Religion Survey, and World Values Survey, there has been no significant change in American society in terms of church attendance between 1974 and 2014. Therefore, a relative consistency is not in question.³⁸ In this regard, theses by Norris and Inglehart about high and relatively consistent religiosity in the USA may be construed as an effort to find Eurocentric religious change in another context. Such an effort gives the impression that the secularization experience, particularly in Western Europe, is taken as a model. In other words, one can argue that these scholars try to adapt religious change in societies with different historical memories to this center. As relevant data show, religiosity maintains its attractiveness contrary to popular belief. In our opinion, this fact undermines the credibility of the arguments by theorists of existential security who claim to explain religious change on a global scale.

III. Pious America vs. Secular Europe: Dissimilar Historical Memories

A significant point that requires emphasis in secularization debates is the uniqueness of historical memories of societies. In this context, one should not overlook that North American and European societies have undergone different modernization experiences. For example, French revolutionaries, who are known for their anti-clericalism, did not display the same attitude towards religion as the founders of American society who had a liberal world view. It would be improper to think that French society, which comes from a Jacobin modernization experience, shares the same process with American society, founded by people who were faithful or at least tolerant towards religion and the devout.

Given that the USA was founded as a differentiated modern society, it is obviously dissimilar to Europe, which underwent various historical

³⁷ Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 91-92.

³⁸ Stark, *The Triumph of Faith*, 189.

processes in terms of religion and its function in society.³⁹ Differentiation is an important element of secularization and it is summarized as a process where religion is kept away from affairs of state, becoming an institution among other institutions such as family, politics, the economy, and the like. As a matter of fact, American society almost never experienced such a process. Consequently, religion in the USA is not a phenomenon inherited from the premodern period, unlike other regions in the world, especially Europe. Religion has been an important element of American modernity.⁴⁰ In most European countries, churches remained under the custody of modern nation-states, even after the Reformation process when the monopolistic Vatican-based religious structure was broken. Nevertheless, the USA never had a national church. Influenced by Alexis de Tocqueville, Berger indicates that the independence of church and state from one another is significant in terms of religious vividness. For Berger, in case the religion is identical or close to the state, any apathy or distance towards state will affect religion.⁴¹ In this context, Stark notes two important consequences of being of a church under a state monopoly. First, the national church under the monopoly of the state paves the way for growing of lazy ecclesiastics. According to Stark, once accepted as civil servants and having secured a consistent income, men of the cloth become complacent since the rise or fall in the number of congregation members does not have any effect on the status of the ecclesiastics as civil servants. Second, in turn, once the church institution is under the administration of the state, people begin to see the church as a public utility. According to Stark, when church is considered as a public utility that belongs to the state, people lose their motivation to look after it.⁴² Following Stark, Berger informs that unlike European churches, American churches do not serve as a public utility but are voluntary associations. For Berger, voluntary associations correspond to the social aspect of religion and such associations are prone to be adapted to pluralist and competitive bases.⁴³ Thus, religion remained vibrant in American society while it

³⁹ Casanova, "Rethinking Secularization," 10-14.

⁴⁰ Casanova, "Are We Still Secular? Exploration on the Secular and the Post-Secular." In *Post-secular Society*, ed. Peter Nynäs, Mika Lassander, and Terhi Utriainen, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2012, 39.

⁴¹ Berger, Davie, and Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe?*, 16.

⁴² Stark, *The Triumph of Faith*, 52.

⁴³ Berger, Davie, and Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe?*, 16-17.

weakened in Western Europe, where it was compressed from the public to the private sphere.

Another notable difference between North America and Europe is that different versions of the Enlightenment were lived in these two continents, depending on industrialization and modernization. In this context, Berger remarks that the French Enlightenment, which influenced almost the entire European continent and Latin America, focused on anticlericalism and partially religious/Christian antagonism. Berger expresses that the anti-religious view of the Enlightenment is summarized in the following words of Voltaire about Catholic Church: "Destroy the infamy." Berger states that French revolutionaries abode by the words of Voltaire. Accordingly, the meaning of the 1905 French law on the Separation of the Church and the State is different from the case in the USA. Indeed, French secularism (*laïcité*) incorporates both the separation of religion from the state administration and the complete removal of religious symbols from the public sphere.⁴⁴ Likewise, Martin, who sees Europe as the battlefield for the Church and Enlightenment, indicates that this tension eventually led to the marginalization of religion and the Church as a phenomenon to be objected, losing all the institutional support.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, since American thinkers do not consider religion as a threat, "the politics of liberty" has been the theme of American Enlightenment. However, French Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire consider religion as superstitious or irrational and rational thought as the antithesis of religion. Consequently, the theme of the French Enlightenment has been a kind of "ideology of reason."⁴⁶ As a result, according to French Enlightenment philosophers, reason and religion cannot coexist, and the latter should be kept in the background. American thinkers on the other hand, who were at peace with religion and sought to create a new world, considered the coexistence of reason and religion possible and even necessary. This led to formation of a pluralist society based on the freedom of belief. Thus, American Enlightenment legitimized secularity neither in the state apparatus nor in society.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁵ David Martin, "The Secularization Issue," *The British Journal of Sociology* 42, no. 3 (1991), 468.

⁴⁶ See Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Roads to Modernity: The British, French, and American Enlightenments* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 147-187, 189-225.

Enlightenment is described as the peak of modern thought. Its influence in Europe is not restricted to social sciences; it also covers Christian theology. In the words of Stark, this process led to the emergence of an “enlightened clergy.” For Stark, the formation of enlightened clergy has been influential in reducing the intensity of religion and religious attendance. As a matter of fact, traditionally people go to church for worship services such as sermons, rituals, and others.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, since the enlightened men of the cloth do not want to carry out the expected rituals pursuant to procedures, they cause the public to keep the church at bay. In this context, Stark refers to Thorkild Grosbøll, a priest in the Church of Denmark, who does not conceal his disbelief and declares religious faith as a primitive thing that clashes with modern man. According to Stark, anti-religious views in the Enlightenment are common among Scandinavian clergy. In other words, state churches in Scandinavia have been flirting with impiety and disbelief for a long time.⁴⁸

As is seen, religiosity headed in different respective directions in the USA and Europe. Indeed, the state, which is the organizer and executive of economics, politics, and education in a society, establishes a roadmap around a certain worldview. Consequently, it influences all sections of society, including religion and the pious. In this context, one can argue that secularization does not appear as a natural sociological process but as a process realized by the state. This view goes in parallel with the conceptualization of “secularization from above” that was used by Enzo Pace when referring to the modernization/secularization of Muslim societies such as Turkey, Syria, and Iraq.⁴⁹ As a matter of fact, Casanova remarks that Western European secularization can be construed as the victory of “the knowledge regime of secularism” rather than a process of structural socioeconomic development.⁵⁰ In other words, Casanova indicates that the USA and non-Western European countries do not have the “secularist historical stadiial consciousness” such as those of many

⁴⁷ Stark, *The Triumph of Faith*, 54.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁹ See Enzo Pace, “The Helmet and the Turban: Secularization in Islam,” in *Secularization and Social Integration: Papers in Honor of Karel Dobbelaere*, ed. Rudi Laemans, Bryan Wilson, and Jaak Billiet (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1998), 165-175.

⁵⁰ Casanova, “Rethinking Secularization,” 15.

European countries, especially France.⁵¹ European philosophers of the Enlightenment had apparatuses that American intellectuals do not, such as social restructuring or, more broadly, social engineering within the scope of a laicization project. Education comes first from these apparatuses. In France, instructors were called “corps of teachers” and had the opportunity to instill official ideology of secularism by means of compulsory education up to secondary school to raise new secular and modern European luminaries. Nevertheless, until recently the US educational system has been under the control of local administrations and not the central government. French parents had to enroll their children in state schools due to lack of Catholic or Protestant schools in their neighborhood. However, American parents had the chance to choose the school they want for their children and to replace undesired teachers, even through the teacher’s dismissal.⁵²

Evidently, Europe and the USA had very different historical experiences in the modern era within the context of religion and the state. Consequently, religion has a different place in each continent. As Casanova notes, religiosity is considered as a significant constituent of the modern American society. Therefore, Americans may generally opt to introduce themselves as pious or at least as a believer. Nonetheless, secularity is considered as a prerequisite for being an intellectual, particularly in Continental Europe and Scandinavia, which is why Europeans rather call themselves secular. Eventually, Americans tend to exaggerate their religiosity, while Europeans are inclined to show off their secularity.⁵³ Therefore, it is necessary to take into account the genuine dynamics of societies in analyses on religious change. For instance, the fact that Continental Europe has had a relatively homogeneous religious structure since the Roman era, and holy wars in the wake of the Reformation are important.

On the other hand, the majority of “founding fathers” of the United States, such as John Adams, were at peace with religion and faith. It

⁵¹ Casanova, “The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms,” in *Rethinking Secularism*, ed. Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 67.

⁵² Berger, Davie, and Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe?*, 19; Peter L. Berger, “Reflections on the Sociology of Religion Today,” *Sociology of Religion* 62, no. 4, special issue: *Religion and Globalization at the Turn of the Millennium* (2001), 448, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3712435>.

⁵³ Casanova, “The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms,” 67-68.

can be argued that this attitude led to the foundation of a strong religious structure and contributed to the influence of religion on all sectors of society. As is well-known, the first amendment of the US Constitution secures freedom of religion and strictly forbids the foundation of a state church. The amendment kept religion away from the administrative system of the state but could never prevent the interference of religion on politics.

In this respect, the reason for the widespread religiosity in American society is not based on the lack of social welfare, as Norris and Inglehart suggest through European perspective. Instead, the foregoing factual differences between the two continents might have played their part. In this context, the relative social weakening of religion in Europe can be interpreted as a victory for secularism.⁵⁴ However, a strong religious structure that is a constituent of American modernization played an essential role in ensuring the vividness of religion in the USA. Thus, modernization and relevant phenomena, such as rationalization, do not seem to be primary factors for the weakening of religion and religiosity. Therefore, it is improbable to talk about a “super theory” developed within the context of modernization, such as the theory of existential security, which claims to explain the nature of religiosity on a global scale.

It is also worth noting that, European societies compared to American society, do not have a uniform structure. Each European society has a different historical and cultural past and a different religious identity. Like classical secularization theory, the theory of existential security fails to explain the process of religious change in all European countries. For instance, in the wake of the economic crisis in 2008, Amy Erbe Healy and Michael Breen examined data from the European Social Survey institution for the period between 2002 and 2012 to discover whether uncertainty and economic insecurity in Ireland, Spain, and Portugal stimulates religiosity. As a result, no significant change was observed. The foregoing social scientists consider the theory of existential security as a theory that ignores the continuous influences on religious belief and practices. They assert that a “grand theory” cannot explain a multidimensional concept such

⁵⁴ Casanova, “Rethinking Secularization,” 15.

as religiosity.⁵⁵ Indeed, the growth of social processes depends upon certain conditions,⁵⁶ and it is impossible to claim that all societies share the same sociological destiny. As Casanova puts it, “when it comes to religion, there is no global rule.”⁵⁷ Therefore, the Eurocentric theory of existential security by Norris and Inglehart seems destined to share the same fate with other large-scale theories, including the classical secularization theory, which claims universality.

IV. Modernization, Existential Security, and Risk

Norris and Inglehart, who develop their arguments around the concept of human security, define security as the availability of basic needs, health services, social equality, employment opportunities, low crime rates, and low fear of war.⁵⁸ According to these social scientists, existential security is a feeling that indicates the possibility of guaranteeing survival.⁵⁹ In other words, existential security is a subjective sense that means having a livelihood relatively free of threats, such as illness, unemployment, and war.⁶⁰

Existential security is on the rise during modernization thanks to improvements in gross national product per capita, economic equality, and access to clean water. Economic development, which emerged upon industrialization, plays an especially important role in ensuring security. Nevertheless, economic development is not the only element to ensure security. It is also important to distribute the economic growth in an equal manner to all sections of society.⁶¹ In the words of

⁵⁵ Amy Erbe Healy and Michael Breen, “Religiosity in Times of Insecurity: An Analysis of Irish, Spanish, and Portuguese European Social Survey Data, 2002-12,” *Irish Journal of Sociology* 22, no. 2 (2014), 4-29, <https://doi.org/10.7227/IJS.22.2.2>.

⁵⁶ Martin, “The Secularization Issue,” 467.

⁵⁷ Casanova, “Rethinking Secularization,” 17.

⁵⁸ Heyking, “Secularization,” 279.

⁵⁹ Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 4, 245.

⁶⁰ Jonathan A. Lanman, “An Order of Mutual Benefit: A Secular Age and the Cognitive Science of Religion,” in *Working with a Secular Age: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Charles Taylor’s Master Narrative*, ed. Florian Zemmin, Colin Jager, and Guido Vanheeswijck (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 79-80, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110375510-005>.

⁶¹ Norris and Inglehart, “Are High Levels of Existential Security Conducive to Secularization? A Response to Our Critics,” (paper presented at Mid-West Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, April 22, 2010), 12,

Norris and Inglehart, the prerequisite for security is human development rather than economic development.⁶² That is, human development or socioeconomic equality has the primary function to establish human security in general and existential security in particular. However, theorists of existential security claim that the risks and dangers that arose in the wake of modernization do not threaten life as uncertainty and insecurity in poorer societies. According to them, these risks and dangers are eliminated by welfare, vast resources of the state, and security measures in modern societies.⁶³ Nonetheless, Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens illustrate the severe consequences of modernization that threaten the future of humanity, such as ecological problems, nuclear war risk, and global terrorism. For Giddens, modernization is a double-sided process, and early sociologists did not stress enough the aspect which poses a threat on human life.⁶⁴

Giddens describes problems, such as global warming and global terrorist threats, as the “dark side” of modernity. In other words, Giddens asserts that the modernization process leads to certain idiosyncratic risks, and describes such risks as the specific risk profile of modern society. In the eyes of Giddens, the specific risk in modern society is the globalization of nuclear war that threatens the survival of humanity. In other words, the risk is globalized because of the rise in the number of contingent-unpredictable events that may affect a large portion or all of humanity.⁶⁵ In a similar vein, Beck takes into account the foregoing threats caused by modernization and propounds that modern society is a “risk society,” contrary to the claims of existential security by Norris and Inglehart. Like Giddens, Beck signals the two-dimensional aspect of the modernization process. Accordingly, industrialization, which is a significant component of modernization, provides technological possibilities in order to ease human life and lays the foundation for longer life. Nevertheless, it may also pave the

<https://sites.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Acrobat/MPSA%202010%20Existential%20Security%20and%20Secularization.pdf>, accessed September 28, 2017.

⁶² Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 53.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁶⁴ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 7.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 124-125.

way for global threats,⁶⁶ such as Chernobyl and Hiroshima.

Beck talks about three important characteristics that separate current global risk society from conventional societies. First, the risk is no more limited in terms of its causes and effects, and has become delocalized. In other words, any place can become the new Chernobyl or Nagasaki. Second, global risk is incalculable, particularly in terms of its consequences. Finally, Beck indicates that global risk is irrecoverable. He discusses some issues such as irrevocable climate change, mutation of human genetics or seizure of nuclear weapons by terrorist groups, and warns that global risk in society faces certain irrevocable dangers.⁶⁷ Traditional societies, which are in the process of modernization, are subject to problems that lead to physical insecurity, such as poverty and internal conflicts. On the other hand, post-industrialist societies have to address foregoing troubles mentioned by Beck and Giddens. At this point, Daniel Silver questions whether there is any difference between living in a poor country with social unrest, such as inner conflicts, and in a modern wealthy society that is under the threat of global terrorism, global nuclear war or the abovementioned problems.⁶⁸ Although modern wealthy societies are apparently ahead of traditional societies in terms of security, they nonetheless are also subject to threats such as global terrorism and global nuclear war. In this regard, a risk society, which emerges in the wake of modernization, threatens the alleged subconscious and ontological security of an individual.⁶⁹ Hence, Giddens notes that modernity is prone to crises since it “threatens the very core of self-

⁶⁶ Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, trans. Mark Ritter (London: Sage Publications, 1992), 72.

⁶⁷ Beck, “Living in the World Risk Society,” *Economy and Society* 35, no. 3 (2006), 333-334. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03085140600844902>.

⁶⁸ Daniel Silver, “What does it mean for religion to be important” (paper presented at Our Common Future, Hannover-Essen, November 2-6, 2010), 1, http://www.ourcommonfuture.de/fileadmin/user_upload/dateien/Reden/Silver_paper.pdf, accessed September 28, 2017.

⁶⁹ Alphia Possamai-Inesedy, “Beck’s Risk Society and Giddens’ Search for Ontological Security: A Comparative Analysis Between the Anthroposophical Society and the Assemblies of God,” *Australian Religion Studies Review* 15, no. 1 (2002), 30.

identity.”⁷⁰

In countries with higher awareness about the negative impact of modernization, the confidence in science and technological progress is at the lowest levels. This argument is supported by the findings from studies by Norris and Inglehart. According to these findings, modern societies, such as the Netherlands, Norway, and Denmark, are the most skeptical towards modern science and scientific progress.⁷¹ Norris and Inglehart make use of these findings to question the Weberian thesis that assumes an inversely proportional relationship between science and faith. In our opinion, these findings signal the creation of an essentially insecure and uncertain environment by modernization. As can be seen from above, the societies with higher awareness and developmental levels are comprised of people who question modern technology and scientific activities with regard to issues such as genetically modified food and nuclear arms.

Many qualitative and quantitative studies, including the findings by Norris and Inglehart, inform that the quest for meaning is gradually on the rise in almost every modern society. A significant rise is observed in all countries covered by Norris and Inglehart, except for Iceland, Spain, and Great Britain.⁷² Such a rise clearly contradicts the essential arguments of the theory of existential security.⁷³ More precisely, the rise in the rate of contemplation on the meaning of life in modern societies reveals that modern man is in an existential insecurity, contrary to the arguments by Norris and Inglehart. An individual who finds himself/herself in an existential emptiness or crisis or who feels existentially insecure will seek meaning in life. Moreover, countries such as Belgium and Finland, which are considered among the most existentially secure, have the highest suicide rates. Consequently, we cannot talk about existential security but rather existential insecurity in such countries.⁷⁴ This illustrates the environment of insecurity and uncertainty caused by modernity. Finally, it becomes difficult to talk

⁷⁰ Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 184-185.

⁷¹ See Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 67-68.

⁷² See *ibid.*, 75.

⁷³ Daniel Silver, “Religion without Instrumentalization,” *European Journal of Sociology* 47, no. 3 (2006), 427, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975606000166>.

⁷⁴ See OECD, “Suicide Rates,” <https://data.oecd.org/healthstat/suicide-rates.htm>, accessed July 6, 2016.

about existential security, which means life can be guaranteed in every sense, in a modern society.

V. Existential Security, Religion, and Religiosity

One of the most significant problems in sociological studies is the content or definition of religion. Sociological literature has often allowed for definitions of religion based on its substance and or its functions, and polythetic definitions that include multiple aspects rather than a single definition.⁷⁵ In other words, there is no consensus with respect to a certain definition of religion in social sciences. However, the definition of religion may ease the definition and presentation of secularization in relevant discussions.⁷⁶ Indeed, secularization generally talks about a religious decline or decadence. Thus, we should first determine what is the essential phenomenon that undergoes such a decline or decadence. How can we discuss a certain problem in the absence of a common conceptualization? In this regard, any talk about the decline or rise of religion with respect to secularization will “inevitably resemble attempts to nail pudding to the wall” unless there is a common definition of religion.⁷⁷ A social scientist who approaches religion in a functionalist perspective can easily claim that secularization never actually occurred, given the extensity of an ideology such as Marxism that can fulfil certain functions of conventional religion, of being a football fan that extends to fanaticism, or of New Age movements such as spiritualism. However, another social scientist who approaches religion and religiosity in an essentialist perspective, can assert that secularization dismissed religion, considering the fall of traditional Christian manifestations, particularly in Western European societies.

When describing secularization as a multidimensional phenomenon,⁷⁸ Norris and Inglehart did not attempt to define religion

⁷⁵ See Malcolm Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2001), 12-24; Keith A. Roberts and David Yamane, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1990), 3-9.

⁷⁶ Michael Hill, *A Sociology of Religion* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1973), 228.

⁷⁷ John Torpey, “A (Post-) Secular Age? Religion and the Two Exceptionalisms,” *Social Research* 77, no. 1 (2010), 271.

⁷⁸ Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 42.

in their study on the theory of existential security. However, an analysis on the secularization theory based on existential security shows that the views of Norris and Inglehart are similar to the understanding of social scientists of the classical era, such as Feuerbach, Marx and Freud. For example, Marx associates the birth of religion with the helplessness of primitive man against nature.⁷⁹ Norris and Inglehart indicate that they are aware of the existence of various philosophers and theologians who sought the meaning of life throughout the history of humanity. Likewise, Norris and Inglehart assert that the most common motive behind human intentions toward religion or religiosity is the need for security in a world full of dangers and uncertainties.⁸⁰ According to these social scientists, almost all so-called supernaturalist religions provide man with assurance in face of what keeps occurring in nature. In other words, supernaturalist religions that are often formed around a transcendental power assure man that everything in nature functions in an order and system. According to Norris and Inglehart, such faith or assurance soothes stress and anxiety and enables man to concentrate on daily life.⁸¹ In this regard, the motive for religious faith or belief is not constant in the eyes of these social scientists. Rather, it is a mechanism of atonement which develops in a reactive manner depending on environmental circumstances. In this way, Norris and Inglehart's understanding of religion resembles the "positivist primitive" understanding of religion in the 19th century. Seen from this perspective, religion becomes merely a socio-psychological phenomenon and arises from the lack of certainty and physical security.⁸² Through the Marxist perspective, Norris and Inglehart note that the most important function of religion is to instill confidence and to serve as a mechanism of atonement. For them, religion provides man, especially those in the limits of subsistence/poverty, with feelings of reassurance and certainty.⁸³ According to this theory, religion has begun to lose its functional relevance and *raison d'être* in the face of existential security caused by modernization.⁸⁴ Indeed, once existential insecurity is eliminated, religion is deprived of this important function.

⁷⁹ Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right'*, trans. Annette Jolin and Joseph O'Malley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 131.

⁸⁰ Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 231.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁸² Casanova, "Exploring the Postsecular," 41.

⁸³ Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 231.

⁸⁴ Casanova, "Exploring the Postsecular," 41.

For Norris and Inglehart, this is why religion remains vivid in societies where daily life is shaped around poverty, illness, and premature death.⁸⁵

It is clear that, these social scientists assume that all religions ensure existential security. Based on their research many scholars agree that religions may play a tranquilizing role in dealing with difficulties and soothing stress.⁸⁶ However, whether all religions can provide existential security is a controversial issue. For example, Silver notes that some Ancient Greek gods promise man uncertainty instead of security and certainty.⁸⁷ Therefore, the presence of such religious faiths in the history of humanity undermines the validity of an understanding of religion based on existential insecurity. Likewise, there are various opinions about whether Christians can ensure existential security as a religion. According to Eric Vogelin, the essence of Christianity is uncertainty. Therefore, the feeling of security in a world full of gods will fade away because of themselves.⁸⁸ Thus, Vogelin refers to lack of existential security in a faithful Christian, and indicates that man seeks security in modern conditions. This is why, according to Norris and Inglehart, it is controversial whether supernaturalist religions can provide man with a sense of reassurance and certainty.

For Norris and Inglehart, the importance of religious or spiritual values declines in the eyes of people in a modernized affluent society. Nonetheless, this process does not necessarily mean the extinction of all forms of religiosity. Symbolical elements, such as the adherence to a given religious identity or rituals, will survive even though they lose their meaning. For example, the role of the church in weddings and funeral ceremonies will survive even in secular societies. Likewise, in apparently secular countries such as England, France or Denmark, citizens remain adhered to certain religious communities in terms of their cultural identity because of their childhood, even though they have secular tendencies in terms of religious participation or practical religiosity. However, according to theorists of existential security, members of post-industrial societies do not have an obedient attitude

⁸⁵ Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 216.

⁸⁶ See Kenneth I. Pargament, *The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory, Research, Practice* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1997).

⁸⁷ Silver, "Religion without Instrumentalization," 430-431.

⁸⁸ Eric Vogelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 122.

towards religious leaders or institutions as they once did, and they do not abide by conventional religious obligations.⁸⁹

On the one hand Norris and Inglehart approach traditional religion in an essentialist perspective, on the other hand they claim through the functionalist view and rather paradoxically that secular ideologies, in addition to religion, provide man with the feeling of security.⁹⁰ According to Norris and Inglehart, Marxism in communist countries provides man with psychological security, predictability, and a feeling in line with a meaning and purpose in life, just like religion. For Norris and Inglehart, the Marxist ideology for creating a better society has given people a purpose of life.⁹¹ Without giving any data, theorists of existential security note that Marxism, which is an ideology without any metaphysical foundation, ensured material and spiritual reassurance, particularly in the former Soviet countries, and functions as a religion. However, these social scientists are reluctant to include New Age movements within the frame of religion, even though it apparently comprises higher religious identity than Marxism. In short, like classical secularization theories, the theory of existential security also departs from a reductionist understanding of religion and tries to restrict religion and religiosity exclusively to church attendance or religious participation. As a result, the cultural adherence to religious institutions or individual piety is overlooked and not considered as religion or religiosity. Such a reductionist approach led Norris and Inglehart to focus on the absence of the religious and to ignore still-active traditional⁹² and the newly emerging forms of religiosity.

Conclusion and Evaluation

Norris and Inglehart concentrate on the fall of conventional religious forms. They do not comment on any issues that may overshadow the theory of existential security and may be considered as religion in a functionalist perspective, such as New Age movements, or the search for meaning in secular societies. In this regard, secularization theories that focus on the fall or collapse of traditional religious forms seem far from being capable of interpreting the religious change in modern societies. Indeed, it is an obvious mistake

⁸⁹ Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 246-247.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 278.

⁹² Heyking, "Secularization," 281.

to claim that both traditional religious forms and alternative spiritualist movements are declining in modern societies. Many surveys show that church attendance rates are declining in many countries, including the USA. However, almost all indexes reveal that spiritualist movements, such as New Age, are rising.⁹³ In this context, theorists of individualization such as Grace Davie argue that religiosity retreated from the public to the private sphere, especially in Europe, but that religion is still alive in Europe and maintains its attraction. Accordingly, Davie develops the concepts of “believing without belonging”⁹⁴ and “vicarious religion”⁹⁵ that recalls the Muslim concept of “obligation of sufficiency/socially obligatory (*farḍ al-kifāyah*).” Davie defends that individual religiosity of various forms and contents are on the rise in Europe following the modernization of Western European societies, even though established religions declined.⁹⁶

Looked at from perspective of individualization theories, conventional religious patterns are abraded, particularly in modern wealthy regions such as Western Europe and North America. However, the individualized man began to head for new quasi-religious structures or to form new forms of religiosity. As religion retreated to the private sphere, it also began to take a form independent from religious authorities. As Berger notes, this form of individualized religiosity in modern societies is called “bricolage” by French sociologist Danièle Hervieu-Léger and “patchwork” by American sociologist Robert Wuthnow.⁹⁷ Put it simply, both conceptualizations are used to make reference to an all-you-can-eat, syncretized, and

⁹³ Paul Heelas, “Challenging Secularization Theory: The Growth of ‘New Age’ Spiritualities of Life,” *The Hedgehog Review* 8, no. 1-2 (2006), 46-58.

⁹⁴ See Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain Since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995).

⁹⁵ Davie, “Vicarious Religion: A Methodological Challenge,” in *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives*, ed. Nancy T. Ammerman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 23-35, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195305418.001.0001>.

⁹⁶ Detlef Pollack, “Religious Change in Europe: Theoretical Considerations and Empirical Findings,” *Social Compass* 55, no. 2 (2008), 171, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0037768607089737>.

⁹⁷ Berger, “Foreword,” in *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives*, ed. Nancy T. Ammerman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), vii, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195305418.001.0001>.

hybridized form of religiosity. In other words, modern man in the globalized world is selective in religion. He/she can easily reject a religious doctrine and examine and create a composition of doctrines as if he/she were making a choice on an à la carte menu or an all-you-can-eat buffet.

Pursuant to such a view, data about declines in forms of traditional religious faith, practice, and institutions should not be necessarily construed as an indication of secularization. Indeed, the decline in traditional religious forms points to a transformation of religion, where the latter lapses into new looks.⁹⁸ During this process, religion and religiosity evolved into new forms in contrast to traditional religious forms.⁹⁹ The fact that people keep practicing their religion through these new forms can allow us to conclude that secularization indicators may be misleading. In fact, religion can be said to have an eternal essence or principle that incessantly sustains its specific symbols in which it prospers.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, Emile Durkheim expresses that religion will undergo a transformation rather than regression.¹⁰¹ It seems clear that a religious aspect with or without metaphysical foundations will always remain alive in all societies, including the modern or postmodern ones.¹⁰² Therefore, the theory of religious change should be established to cover metamorphosed modern forms of religiosity instead of concentrating on religious decadence as in secularization theories. As Berger emphasizes, the studies on religious change, especially religiosity scales, should be organized to contain the forms of religiousness concerned. Berger refers to Luckmann's argument of "invisible religion" and says that, having been individualized in modern societies, religiosity today is experienced in places other than churches or synagogues also. According to Berger, the subjects in religiosity surveys who are put to scales developed for

⁹⁸ James A. Beckford, *Social Theory and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 52, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511520754>.

⁹⁹ For a discussion, see Mehmet Ali Kirman and Bülent Baloğlu, "New Forms of Religiosity within Secularization Process in Turkey," *World Journal of Islamic History and Civilization* 2, no. 3 (2012), 158-165.

¹⁰⁰ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain, 5th ed. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1964), 427.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 430.

¹⁰² See Kemal Ataman, *Ulus Olmanın Kutsal Temeli: Sivil Din* (Bursa: Sentez Yayıncılık, 2014).

presenting orthodoxy are confused about where to locate themselves.¹⁰³ In this regard, scales should be established in consideration of the religiosity experienced in a social manner. Admitting the shortcomings of the studies on religiosity in this regard, Norris and Inglehart agree with Silver in regard to reorganization of religiosity scales in consideration of differences between conventional supernaturalist religious forms and spiritualist movements such as New Age.¹⁰⁴ Silver notes that the religiosity scales by Norris and Inglehart are established in such a way to exclude non-supernaturalist forms of religiosity.¹⁰⁵

As long as the correspondence of religion and religiosity remains undefined in sociological terms, secularization will remain as an ambiguous conceptualization in the relevant literature. In other words, the ambiguity regarding the essence of religion and religiosity will directly be reflected on the concept of secularization. In our opinion, although it may not be possible to ensure a complete consensus on the concepts of religion and religiosity in terms of sociological semantic web, it is possible to develop the mentioned concepts in order to include modern forms of religiosity.

To conclude, in a society, the fall and rise of a multidimensional phenomenon such as religiosity is related to sociopolitical and sociocultural issues such as the relationship among religion, state, society, and civil society, rather than modernization or security. Therefore, we should interpret modernization as a process with a pluralistic effect on religious, cultural and political spheres, rather than an absolute secularizing factor.¹⁰⁶ In short, the modernization process that enhances interactions between societies and cultures, defines differences as richness, and entails their coexistence should be treated not as a starter of secularization but as a process that leads to pluralism in relevant spheres.

¹⁰³ Berger, "Foreword," v-vi.

¹⁰⁴ Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 250.

¹⁰⁵ Silver, "Religion without Instrumentalization," 429-430.

¹⁰⁶ Berger, *The Many Altars of Modernity: Toward a Paradigm for Religion in a Pluralist Age* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014).

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