

Secularism and Secularization in the Arab World

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Abstract: *The development of secularism and secularization is a major issue in the Arab world in the intellectual, cultural and social dimensions. A general survey of the development of secularism and secularization in the Arab world is a premise to understand modern Arab politics, society and culture.*

Key Words: *Secularism; Secularization; Fouad Zakariyya; Arab politics*

The term “secularism” was coined by George Jacob Holyoake in the 1840s. For him, this term referred to “a variety of utilitarian social ethics and sought human improvement through reason, science, and social organization.”¹ It advocated that the state should be tolerant to all religious and philosophical doctrines, and should be especially impartial in religious matters. Holyoake had been acting as a key figure in the secularist movement until Charles Bradlaugh developed a more radical form of secularism. In his *Doubts in Dialogue*, he began to criticize all religions including Christianity. Then the separation of religion and politics became the key dimension of secularism. “In the twentieth century, secularism is generally known as an ideology that advocates the eradication of religious influences in political, social, and educational institutions. As a worldview, secularism has generally emphasized separation between the religious and political spheres.”²

Secularism emerged in the Arab world under the Western influence. Fouad Zakariyya, one of the most famous secularists in the contemporary Arab world, points out that there is a dispute about the derivation and meaning of the term secularism in Arabic. The correct form should be ‘ilmāniyyah if it is derived from the word ‘ilm (science) or ‘alamāniyyah if it is derived from the word ‘ālam (world).³ Fouad Zakariyya believes that the linkage between the term secularism and ‘ālam (world) in Arabic is more reasonable than with ‘ilm (science), because the term secularism in European languages is linked to

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¹ Mahmood Monshipouri, *Islamism, Secularism, and Human Rights in the Middle East* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), p.10.

² Mahmood Monshipouri, *ibid*, p. 11.

³ Azzam Tamimi, *The Origins of Arab Secularism*, in Azzam Tamimi and John L. Esposito, ed., *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East* (NY: New York University Press, 2000), p.13.

temporal matters and the term in Arabic is simply translated from those European languages. Furthermore, he believes that the two understandings of the root of the Arabic term are intertwined, since “scientific discourse is worldly by nature, focusing on this world in order to understand its laws,” so the dispute about the derivation of the term secularism in Arabic is highly exaggerated.⁴ Zakariyya explained that secularism, being derived from the word “world” and focusing on temporal matters, is embodied in the separation of religion and politics. Moreover, secularism is not only linked with science but also is embodied in rationalism. Rationalism is considered as the intellectual foundation of secularism which proposes the separation of religion and politics as its main political and social purpose.

Secularism is linked with secularization. The former means thoughts and theories focusing on the separation of religion and politics, which the secularists endeavor to realize intentionally as their goal. Secularization is a process of this separation, as either a result of intentional endeavors, or a mere natural outcome of the interaction among various social factors.

In the Arab world, two phases could be clearly discerned in the development of secularism. The first phase appeared “during the time of the Arab world’s civilizational shock resulting from encountering a superior entity, that is, the West.” The second is the contemporary phase of secularism, which “occurred during the last quarter of the twentieth century.”⁵ The first phase lasted from the second half of the 19th century to the mid 20th century, and the second phase began from the late 1970s. The former is considered as a response to the cultural challenge of the West, while the latter seems mainly as criticisms of the modern Islamism and a rational self-examination of Arab culture.

The Early Developments of Secularism in the Arab World

In the mid 19th century, the Arab world began to face the overwhelming Western cultural influences, and secularism “came to the Muslim world in the company of other related terms such as modernity, Westernization and modernization within the context of colonialism.”⁶ Secularism, in its first phase in the Arab world, was characterized by three features, as pointed out by Zakariyya. The first is that it sought to reconstruct the Arab society according to the modern European model; the second is that it was an integrated project to modernize all parts of Arab life in Western fashion, which was represented by Muhammad ‘Alī who proposed and fulfilled the first integrated modernization

⁴ Fouad Zakariyya, *Myth and Reality in the Contemporary Islamist Movement*, translated and with an introduction and Bibliography by Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi’ (London: Pluto Press, First Edition, 2005), pp. 14-15.

⁵ Fouad Zakariyya, *ibid*, p. 15.

⁶ Azzam Tamimi, *ibid*, p.13.

program and thus was considered to be the first real secularist in the modern Arab world; the third is a negative attitude towards Europe and European colonialism.⁷

According to Albert Hourani, there were two generations of new Arab intellectuals during the 19th century. The first generation (1830 -1870) consisted of those who began to pay close attention to the Western industrial, transportation, and political institutions, considering them as models to be imitated instead of threats. The second generation was from 1870 to 1900, when the West was considered as both enemy and model to be imitated. For those thinkers of this second generation the key concern was how to re-interpret Islam and make it in line with modern social life.⁸ Among the intellectuals of the first generation such names could be found as al-Taḥṭāwī (1801-1873) of Egypt, Khair al-Dīn (1810-1899) of Tunisia, and Buṭrus al-Bustānī (1819-1883) of Lebanon, and among those of the second generation Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1839-1897), Muḥammad 'Abduh (1849-1905), and 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kawākibī (1854-1902).

Among the Arab Christians, the discussion of secularism began from the first generation of new intellectuals, while it began from the second generation among the Arab Muslims. Although all of them were supporting secularism, Arab Christians and Arab Muslims were two different origins of secularism in the Arab world.

Most of the early Arab secularists were Christians. This is so partly because Arab Christians, compared with Arab Muslims, had more urgent requests for secularism. In classical Islamic societies, a clear social stratification could be discerned. In the Umayyad Dynasty, there were four social ranks: Arab Muslims, Non-Arab Muslims, Dhimmis including Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians as well as other religious communities, and slaves as the lowest rank. In the Othman Empire, society was divided into four millat (ethnic-religious-political communities): Muslims, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. For those Arab Christians in the Othman Empire, the main aim of their support for secularism "was to lay the basis of a secular state in which Muslims and Christians could participate on a footing of complete equality."⁹ Another explanation is that secularism was more acceptable to Christians, as argued by some scholars. "Since, unlike Islam, the Christian religion does not deal directly with worldly affairs, it is not surprising that it was much easier for Christians to take a secular stand."¹⁰ It was against this background that the Arab Christians in the Sham

⁷ Fouad Zakariyya, *ibid*, pp. 15-16.

⁸ Albert Hourani, *al-Fikr al-Arabi fi Aṣr al-Nahdah (1798-1939)*, translated into Arabic by Karīm 'Azqūl (Beirut: Naufal, 2001), pp.5-6.

⁹ Azzam Tamimi, *ibid*, p.22.

¹⁰ Nazik Saba Yared, *Secularism and the Arab World (1850-1939)* (London: Saqi Books, 2002), p.24.

region became the pioneers of Arab secularism.

From the mid 19th century to the mid 20th century, the main Arab Christian secularists were Shibli Shumayyil (1850-1917), Ya'qub Sarruf (1852-1927), Faris Nimr (1856-1951), Georgie Zaidan (1861-1914), Farah Antun (1874-1922), and Salama Musa (1887-1958).

The first proposal of the separation of religion and politics was proposed in the 1850s. In 1855, Faris al-Shidyaq (1805-1887), a Lebanese Maronite Catholic, vehemently criticized the Church for torturing his brother As'ad al-Shidyaq, who converted to Protestantism from the Maronite Catholic, to death. He challenged the power of the Church to penalize the adherents, pointing out that even Jesus Christ himself has said "render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Butrus al-Bustānī also criticized the Church. However, it should be noted that they "sought the separation of the spiritual from the temporal power of the Church, and not from that of the Ottoman Sultan."¹¹

Ya'qub Sarruf and Faris Nimr, two young teachers of the Syrian Protestant College, launched a magazine named *al-Muqtataf* in 1876. They moved this magazine to Egypt in 1884 to escape from the despotic reign of Othman Sultan 'Abd al-Hamīd II (reigned 1876-1909), and published it there for half a century. Georgie Zaidan, who used to study in the Syrian Protestant College, established *al-Hilāl* in 1892. The style of *al-Hilāl* was different from *al-Muqtataf*, since it focused more on humanities and social sciences, such as sociology, psychology, international politics, geography, history, languages, literature, and archaeology. The two magazines had consistently advocated the new idea that the foundation of civilization was science, and the science of Europe was universal, so Arabs should learn this kind of knowledge, and deduce from it new social system, i.e., the concept of nation-state.

Shibli Shumayyil graduated from the College of Medicine which was affiliated to the Syrian Protestant College, and continued his study in Paris, and then moved to Egypt and settled there. He believed that science should be the foundation of everything, and the science that he referred to was positive science established by Herbert Spencer on the base of Darwin's theory. For him, the world is in a process of continuing progress driven by competition and natural selection, but despotism forbids rational thinking and thereupon blocks the development of the world. Thus he believed that the legal and political institutions should be in a process of continuous improvement and development on the basis of free thinking and social cooperation. So he was against despotism and called for the separation of religion and politics.¹² He

¹¹ Nazik Saba Yared, *ibid*, p.25.

¹² Degui Cai, ed., *Contemporary Islamic-Arab Philosophy* (Beijing: Renmin Publishing House, 2001), p.411.

regarded this separation as a natural process, as the weaker the religious power is, the stronger the state will be; and it is the force of religious scholars instead of Islam and *the Holy Qur'an* that makes the state weak. He was one of the pioneers of Arab secularists and socialists, and the first one who spread Darwin's theory of evolution in the Arab world.

The Lebanese journalist Farah Antun left Tripoli for Cairo in 1897, where he edited the famous magazine *al-Jāmi'ah*. He translated French Orientalist Ernest Renan's *Vie de Jesus* into Arabic, as part of his research on the philosophy of Ibn Rushd (1126-1198). He believed that removal of the tension between religion and science should be realized by confining each of them in its own sphere. A secular state should be established upon two principles: in terms of religion, the belief should be separated from rituals; in terms of state, worldly power should be separated from spiritual power.

Salama Musa published the first book about socialism in the Arab world in 1912. He was influenced by Shibli Shumayyil and Farah Antun, as well as Darwin's theory of evolution and Marxism. He was extremely against religion, and regarded it as the first cause of the crisis among the Orient, and believed that the liberation from the worship of God was the precondition of liberation from colonialism.

Arab Muslim secularists began their reflection on secularism under the influence of Arab Christian secularists. Al-Kawākibī was the first who began to talk about secularism among the Arab Muslims. In *Umm al-Qurā* published in 1898 he advocated that religion and state should be separated from one another; and in *Tabā'ī' al-Istibdād* he supported the separation between politics, religion, and education, and said that if a Caliph was necessary, he should be only a pure spiritual authority, while the political, administrative, and military power should be conferred with a Sultan. So Muslims should obey the government as long as it is just, without reference to the ruler's religious affiliation.¹³

After al-Kawākibī, the chief Arab Muslim secularists were Qāsim Amīn (1865-1908) and Ahmad Lutfī al-Sayyid (1872-1963), "they had been influenced by the Christian pioneers of the secularist school of thought and began to work out the principles of a secular society in which Islam was honored but was no longer the arbitrator of law and policy."¹⁴

AlīAbd al-Rāziq (1888-1966) focused on the Caliphate in discussing secularism. He had been studying in the famous al-Azhar, then traveled to Europe, and finished his study at Oxford University. The abolishment of the Caliphate by the Turkish government in 1924 kindled vehement disputes in the Islamic world. He published *al-Islām wa Usūl al-Hukm* in 1925, doubting the necessity of a Caliphate, and even the existence of an Islamic ruling system.

¹³ Nazik Saba Yared, *ibid*, p.26.

¹⁴ Azzam Tamimi, *ibid*, p.24.

According to traditional opinions, the power of Caliphs came from the authority of Allah or the will of Ummah, and therefore to obey such a power was a duty. However, there are no clear regulations about the Caliphate either in *the Holy Qur'an* or in *the Prophetic Hadith*, nor was there any consensus on such an issue, and furthermore, the Caliphate was not considered to be necessary condition of belief and public interests. For the Prophet himself, there was no other function than the prophetic function to spread the Truth. The Prophet was not sent to fulfill any political power, and actually never fulfilled such a power.¹⁵ So the mission of the Prophet was purely spiritual. However, the essence of leadership was changed after the death of the Prophet, and it became a secular and political leadership, but it was still regarded as religious and spiritual one by Muslims. He drew the conclusion that the Caliphate was not a necessary factor of Islam, and religion was not linked with any fixed ruling system. Islam does not prohibit Muslims from establishing new political systems on the basis of the new theories of human rationality and experiences of various nations.

According to Taha Hussein (1889-1974), Islam is a religion instead of a political system, and all Islam wants is to order Muslims to be just and kind, and Islam permits Muslims to deal with the worldly affairs according to their own wills.¹⁶

For those Arab secularists from the mid 19th century to the mid 20th century, the Muslim secularists tried to reconcile between secularism with Islam, and illuminate the position of Islam in the secularist thought system, while there was no need for the Christian secularists to face such problem, so they could take a more rigorous position to criticize religion.

The Process of Secularization and the Challenge of Modern Islamism

As pointed out by John L. Esposito, modernization and development theory had for decades maintained unequivocally that "the development of modern states and societies required Westernisation and secularisation. Religion would then become restricted to private life. And if some spoke of the privatisation of religion, others predicted the marginalisation and ultimate disappearance of traditional belief."¹⁷ It is this concept that affected the political and social development in the Islamic world, and made many Islamic countries adopt secularization as their development model, which is embodied in modern Turkey, a secular Islamic country founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938).

¹⁵ Albert Hourani, *ibid*, p.194.

¹⁶ Nazik Saba Yared, *ibid*, p.39.

¹⁷ John L. Esposito, *Islam and Secularism in the Twenty-First Century*, in Azzam Tamimi and John L. Esposito, ed., *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East*, p.1.

Turkey actually had a long tradition of secularization since modern times. During the Othman Empire era, the process of secularization consisted of three phases: the reign of Sultan Maḥmūd II (reigned 1808-1839), Tazimat period (1839-1876), and the Young Turk period (1908-1918). Sultan Maḥmūd II ordered to set up the Ministry of Waqf, which was responsible for the administration of religious estates, in order to limit the economic force of religious scholars. At the same time the educational and jurisprudence functions were also shifted to the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Justice respectively. The ulama were deprived from their fiscal and administrative forces, and their power, authority, and status were weakened gradually. During the Tazimat period Sultan ‘Abd al-Majīd (reigned 1839-1861) and Sultan ‘Abd al-Azīz (reigned 1861-1876) introduced secular reforms in administrative, jurisprudent, and educational fields. In June 1913, the radical Young Turk officials came into power, and they carried out secular reforms through their monopolized power, with the purpose of “eliminating the dualistic opposition between the worldly and religious powers, and realizing the unity in the political, jurisprudence, and educational fields on the basis of secularization.”¹⁸

In this sense, Kemal’s policy was a continuation of the secular development modeled after the Othman Empire, and gained the greatest success. He abolished the Sultanate in 1922, and then declared Turkey to be a republic in 1923, and finally abolished the Caliphate itself in 1924. He pushed forward a comprehensive secular movement in the fields of politics, jurisprudence, education, and society, and made secularism a principle in the constitution. Because of the tradition of secularization and the radical secularization policies carried out by Kemal, the secularization model of Turkey became, labeled by Esposito as “militant secular fundamentalism.” For countries like Turkey, “secularism is not simply the separation of religion and politics but, as past and current history demonstrates, an anti-religious and anticlerical belief.”¹⁹

Although Turkey is a non-Arab country, the Turkish model established by Kemal inflicted deep influences upon the Arab world. Most of the newly independent Arab countries adopted the secularization model, with different positions ranging from clear and radical to unclear and mild. The radical position was taken by Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Algeria, Tunisia, and Palestinian Liberation Organization; for Jordan and Morocco, the development model is secularization-oriented while an integration of the Islamists into the political system is encouraged; in Libya, a subtle and cautious secularization is supported by Qadhafi.²⁰ The Gulf Cooperation Council countries are the only ones in the

¹⁸ Zhenyu Sun, *Legacy and Reality: Islam and Muslims in Turkey* (Beijing: Minzu Publishing House, 2001), p.12.

¹⁹ John L. Esposito, *ibid*, p.9.

²⁰ Mahmood Monshipouri, *ibid*, pp. 13-14.

Arab world where the secularist forces remain weak.

Esposito analyzed the relationship between Islam and the establishment of nation-state, holding that the leaders of the independence movements always make use of Islam as a symbol, slogan, and organizational force to gain their legitimacy and mobilize the masses, and they would adopt a development model influenced by Western secularist model after becoming independent.²¹ Mohammed Arkoun pointed out that the intellectual base of this phenomenon is Kemal Ataturk's concept of Islam and secularism. Kemal is not an isolated case, but represents a generation of Muslim intellectuals and political elites. During 1880--1940, something called "naive state of consciousness" by Mohammed Arkoun could be found among the Muslim intellectuals. They experienced a kind of cultural shock during their study in Europe and failed to recover from it all their life. The contrast between the advanced West and their backward homelands impressed them greatly, which made them captivated by their discoveries in the West and revolt against all the indigenous traditions in the homeland. "Such is the psychocultural background common to all political activity of every Muslim leader at least until the end of World War II. It was the period of naive consciousness, because these generations believed naively that it was enough to take the prescription for the success of Western civilization and apply them to Muslim countries. Secularism was perceived as one of those effective prescriptions to be applied to societies where religion controlled all the happenings and gestures of daily life. Those generations of Muslim intellectuals did not have a sufficient grasp of history to be able to pin down the ideological genesis, sociopolitical functions, and philosophical limits of secularism in the West."²²

The intellectuals and political elites who receive a Western or Westernized education and accept Western norms constitute the core of Westernization forces in the Arab world. The Westernization forces in the Islamic world consist of liberals as well as leftists and nationalists. The former is the right wing and the latter is the left wing. Westernization is often accompanied with secularism, so there is not a unified political position of the secularists, who could be liberals, nationalists, or leftists. Furthermore, the political conservatives also could be secularist forces, which could be found both in pre-revolutionary Egypt in the Arab world and the Pahlavi-ruled Iran in the non-Arab Islamic world. For these conservatives, the chief goal is to keep the power under the control of the monarch or his family, and they would carry out modernization, Westernization, and secularization under this premise. Generally speaking, the secularist forces are diversified, consisting of the liberals as their right wing,

²¹ John L. Esposito, *ibid*, p.2.

²² Mohammed Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers*, translated and edited by Robert D. Lee (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), p. 25.

nationalists and leftists as their left wing, i.e. conservatives. Whichever political position these secularists adopt, all of them are Westernization forces, forming the Westernized political and cultural elites, and forging a Westernized elite culture, which is extremely different from the traditional culture deeply enrooted in the masses of the middle and lower classes. The difference between the elite culture of the upper class and the traditional mass culture of the middle and lower classes is the basis of a cultural dichotomy in these countries, which splits the society and culture.

This type of traditional mass culture is the soil nourishing the modern Islamism. As soon as the ruling Westernization forces encounter any political and economic crisis, the modern Islamists will soon gain their power. During the late 1960s and the early 1970s, Arab nationalism suffered great setbacks, while modern Islamism made a tremendous progress. In the mid 1970s, Shah Pahlavi's high-speed modernization, radical secularization, and political despotism began to face pressures from Iran both inside and outside, and the Shah's reign was overthrown by the Islamic Revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini. The Islamist success in Iran was an example for Arab Islamists in the Arab world. As the non-Arab Turkey was an example for Arab states in carrying out secularization in the beginning of the 20th century, the non-Arab Iran, through its Islamic Revolution, gave impetus to Islamist movements in the Arab world in the late 20th century as a counterattack to secularism and secularization. Many Arab secular regimes were challenged by modern Islamism, including Egypt, Algeria, Syria, and Iraq, and Sudan even became an Islamic Republic ruled by Islamists.

Contemporary Arab Secularism Expressed by Fouad Zakariyya

Shākir al-Nāblūsī, a Jordanian scholar, emphasized that since the 1980s, the studies concerning secularism in Arab thoughts "had increased tremendously, exceeding any particular period of Arab history."²³ The elementary purpose of the secularism in this phase is to defend itself in the face of the increasingly intensified attacks by the modern Islamism. Zakariyya systematically refuted in his *Myth and Reality in the Contemporary Islamist Movement* the criticism against secularism in the Arab world.

Zakariyya argues that Islamists are intentionally trying to confuse the core meaning of "secularism". Their criticisms of secularism could be divided into two categories: rhetorical criticisms and scientific ones.²⁴ Although the rhetorical criticisms spread more widely, he pays more attention to the scientific ones, for the

²³ Shākir al-Nāblūsī, *al-Fikr al-'Arabī fi al-Qarn al-'Ishrīn (1950-2000)* (Beirut: al-Mu'assash al-'Arabiyyah li al-Dirāsāt wa al-Nashr, First Edition, 2001), Vol.1, p.186.

²⁴ Fouad Zakariyya, *ibid*, p. 23.

refutation against such criticisms may decide the fate of secularism. According to these criticisms, the emergence of secularism in Europe reflected the specific need of Europe, against the background of the specific situations of Europe. So secularism could be regarded as a unique European phenomenon, and thus it would be totally wrong to transplant it from Europe to the other regions of the world. The logic underlying this viewpoint is that Europe is quite different from the contemporary Muslim world. To this question, Zakariyya responds from three aspects.

First, he examines whether the religious authority in Islam is different from that in Europe. Although an organization similar to the Catholic Church in Europe could not be found in Islam, a strong religious authority indeed exists in every Muslim country, and it is represented by men specializing in religious matters, such as those of al-Azhar in Cairo in the Sunni Muslim world, and those with the titles of Grand Ayatollahs, Ayatollahs, and Hojjatolislams in the Shia Muslim world, and this religious authority has a tight relation with politics. It could be concluded that medieval Christianity and Islam had in common "the general orientation toward comprehensiveness." As a result, "the factors leading to the emergence of secularism in Europe can be found in the modern Muslim world as well."²⁵

Secondly, the opponents of secularism think that religion was against science in Europe, while the Islamic civilization never persecutes science and an attitude of tolerance and mutual understanding has been established in Islam. Zakariyya denounces this opinion, referring to the trial of al-Mu'tazilah, Ibn Rushd, Suhrawardī (1154-1191), and al-Hallāj (858-922), and also the ban of the books of Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, and Karl Marx as examples.

And thirdly, Zakariyya disagrees that secularism is only linked with the special social conditions at the end of the Middle Ages which have no equivalents in Islamic history. He argues that "the Middle Ages" are a mode of thinking rather than a period of time, and "as a mode of thinking, the Middle Ages could recur anywhere, and has many equivalents at present. People who conduct their lives on the basis of possessing the absolute truth, who are not open to debate or who keep quoting the sacred texts possess the medieval mentality even though they live at the dawn of the twenty-first century."²⁶ So Islam needs secularism just as it emerged in Europe at the end of the Middle Ages.

Furthermore, Zakariyya considers secularism as a continuation of Islamic tradition, for what secularism advocates are rationalism, criticism, logic, and intellectual independence, all of which have forged a part of the legacy of Islam and could be found in al-Mu'tazilah, al-Fārābī (870-950), Ibn Rushd, and Ibn al-Haytham (965-1039).

²⁵ Fouad Zakariyya, *ibid*, p. 35.

²⁶ Fouad Zakariyya, *ibid*, p. 38.

He is worried about the wide acceptance of modern Islamism in the Arab world, and regards it as a success of wrong concepts. "The various problems surrounding the concept of secularism in contemporary Arab society clearly reflect the decline of Arab thought in the past two decades. A feature of this decline is the fact that a large number of Arab people, including the Islamists, blindly embrace wrong ideas without first engaging in much contemplation or thought."²⁷

The discussions of Zakariya demonstrate that secularism in contemporary Arab world is a refutation against the criticisms from modern Islamism and an explanation at the same time. This type of secularism could be called defensive secularism, and is different from the secularism from the mid 19th century to the mid 20th century, which aimed at looking for a comprehensive development model for the Arab world. Nevertheless, a historical relationship is discernable in these two phases. Many Arab countries carried out different types of secularism associated with Westernization and modernization, which led to a cultural and social dichotomy. As a radical contradictory to the secularization and Westernization, modern Islamism gained its forces from this dichotomy. So secularism in contemporary Arab world should find some methods to solve this dichotomy besides the explanation and refutation, in order to make real progress in the face of the attacks launched by modern Islamism.

²⁷ Fouad Zakariyya, *ibid*, p. 44.