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Is Faith Truly the Reason for Our Security? A study on the extent to which Islam influences Jordanian National Security

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Is Faith Truly the Reason for Our Security?

A study on the extent to which Islam influences Jordanian National Security

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Of course, I also owe a big thank you to my advisor for providing perspectives on the topic that I had not thought of, as well as helping me to lay out and format my thoughts, such that the cadence of this research would remain smooth.

Lastly, I would like to extend a special thank you to all my friends and family in and out of this program who helped me conduct and get through this research. Without all of your kind words, advice, and motivation, this research would not have turned out as wonderfully as it did.

Thank you.

Abstract

After witnessing years of coups, war, and overall civil unrest in the Middle East, it comes as no surprise that there are many competing explanations for why this is. Much to the disbelief of the researcher, the average American's theory for this was that the heavy influence of Islamic teachings in lawmaking prevented the successful implementation of democratic processes and overall peace in the region. However, Jordan appears to have evaded all forms of chaos, and remain peaceful despite also being a Muslim country. Why? Has Jordan escaped turmoil because unlike its neighbors it does not use Islam in its policies, despite being around 95% Muslim?

This research project is aimed at delving deeper into the role Islam has played in keeping Jordan safe, if any at all. In order to fully do this, the researcher broke national security down into three main areas: diplomacy, military, and economy. After doing this, the researcher conducted both interviews and questionnaires amongst prominent professionals and university students, respectively, to analyze Islam's influence on these three areas. By the end of the research, the researcher concluded that Islamic teachings have a very insignificant part in policymaking and therefore has little influence in national security, perpetuating the idea that secularism may be the key to peace and security in the region. However, an increase in Islam's use would not necessarily be detrimental to the nation, or its security.

Keywords: *Religion, National Security, Secularism*

Introduction:

Muslim Exceptionalism – a term coined by Diamond et al.[1] It is the idea that Muslims and Muslim countries are held to a different standard than other states; they require a special type of attention and study; that Islam and its use in the state cannot be viewed in the same way as Christianity and its use in the state. This exceptionalism and poor portrayal of Islam has led many to believe that Islam is a destructive religion, and its use in politics will only corrupt a nation, and cause conflict, as evidenced by the turmoil in many Middle Eastern countries. There is the perception that what works in a predominately Christian society will not work in a predominantly Muslim society. This research aims to shatter that belief by proving that theories which apply to other states, are just as applicable to Muslim states.

Given the recent terrorist attacks worldwide, it was only fitting that the research focus on Islam's role in national security – a topic very close to humans around the world. The Islam which is portrayed in the media is not the "true Islam", as many of my interviewees said. It is not the destructive, hateful religion it is seen to be. In fact, it is for this exact reason that I believe if Islamic teachings were heavily used in the policies surrounding Jordan's core values, then national security will drastically decrease. Not because of erratic, unaccommodating views, but rather because its teachings would allow Jordan to further open its gates to refugees, expatriates, etc. creating a mass economic strain on the already scarce resources.

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[1] (Diamond, Plattner, & Brumberg, 2003)

Often times, when trying to conceptualize national security, the average person identifies security exclusively with military phenomena and hardware[2] – i.e. that in order to successfully maintain national security, the nation must have a very powerful and capable army. However, as McNamara accurately stated, "It just isn't so." Joseph J. Romm defines a national security threat as "anything that could narrow the range of policy choices available to the government."[3] He does not explicitly mention military policy choices, and therefore by this definition, components of national security can range from physical security to environmental security. Berkowitz and Bock support this range when they define national security as "the ability of a nation to protect its internal values from external threats."[4] All countries have core values, and will therefore strive to maintain these values. As a result, anything that the country holds dear will constitute a portion of national security. By this same logic, a majority of the policies made in any given country are therefore made to protect its values and interests, and ultimately maintain national security.

Because national security is composed of so many different factors, the overall concept and maintenance of national security is highly impressionable. There are many social, both internal and external, factors which influence policies made in the name of security. For example, if foreign unrest, such as that in Syria, creates unrest in the form of economic instability and insecurity, in the domestic country, such as Jordan, then it is the responsibility of Jordanian economic policymakers to rewrite policies to regain the confidence of its population.

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[2] (Hermann, 1977)
[3] (Romm, 1993)
[4] (Hermann, 1977)

One of such influential factors is religion. Some very religious societies, such as that of Morocco or Saudi Arabia, will make a majority of their decisions and policies through the lens of religion – using their holy book as the determinant of how to react to the aforementioned internal and external threats. It is understandable why some states would choose to base much of their policies on religion – it is believed to be constant, never changing, despite the ever changing global climate. Because of this constant nature of religion, it can be argued that its use in policymaking will replicate this same consistency in the country. As discussed by Karl Marx, "religion binds people together under a shared God and common morality, which creates stability and order and social cohesion."[5]

However, according to the Theory of Secularism, sectors of society and culture will be removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols.[6] This implies that the power religion has over people, and by extension, security will decrease as society modernizes. By this logic, religion – no matter the religion – should be less influential on policymaking, and eventually national security.

There are three major levels which secularization is believed to occur on – Macro, Meso, and Individual.[7] Tschannen defines these three levels as follows: Macro – social differentiation; Meso – the decline of significance of religion in organizations; Individual – a reduction in levels of practice, belief, or affiliation at the individual level. With Jordan already considered to be a conservative secular society, if secularization were to occur, it would therefore occur on the Meso and Individual levels.

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[5] (Bruce, 2003)
[6] (Berger, 1967)
[7] (Tschannen, 1991)

As a result of this, alongside the broadness of national security, this research focuses specifically on Islam's influence on the national security areas of the military, economy, and diplomacy. This provides concrete areas in which evidence of secularization can be found. If it is discovered through this that the non-use of Islam in Jordanian national security policies is the reason for its peace, then a similar concept can be applied to many other nations, especially that in the Middle East.

Hypothesis:

I hypothesize that Islam plays an insignificant direct role in policymaking. However, because a majority of Jordan's population is comprised of Muslim's its values and teachings are still covertly used through the biases of decision makers, helping to retain a portion of the national security. If Islam were to be heavily used in Jordanian policymaking, then the overall national security of the country would drastically deteriorate.

With specific regard to the chosen areas of study – economics, diplomacy, and military – an increased Islamic presence would lead to a downward spiral in Jordan. First, many diplomatic relations would either be discontinued or not forged at all for a number of reasons. One of such reasons is that devout Muslims will not even enter the same room as that which contains alcohol. However, many networking events and informal meetings take place in the presence of alcohol – bars, dinners, etc. Another reason relations wouldn't be formed is as a result of conflicting interests, values and priorities related to religious opinions. Either that, or alliances would be formed with the "wrong places", in that naturally, if Jordanian society was heavily influenced by Islamic teaching, it would prioritize that above all else. As a result, Jordan would align with states that are

fundamentally similar to them, i.e. hold Islam at the core of their being, despite engaging in dubious behavior.

Jordan is heavily dependent on the help of foreign countries, however by not maintaining certain relationships, or by not sacrificing certain aspects for the greater good, much of that aid would be lost. This would cause immense strain on the economy, forcing the quality of life to go down exponentially, which would eventually lead to uprisings, like that which happened in Egypt. Aside from the economic strain, the implementation of Islam in policymaking would also mean that certain threats will not be isolated because certain alliances aren't formed. This would increase the likelihood of war and use of military action as a result of decreased security and safety, especially considering the conflict in all of Jordan's neighbors.

Literature Review

As the researcher was conducting this study, there was a recurring quote that many of the interviewees and scholars referred back to. They mentioned that religion, specifically Islam, is "between a man and Allah", and therefore, by extension each person's definition and understanding of Islam varies. However, Professor Mohammad Khazer al-Majali, in his *Islamic Culture & Thought* book, provides a general definition of Islam that every Muslim can relate to. He defines Islam as the "submission or surrender of one's will to the only true

Allah worthy of worship."[8]He then goes on to explain how peace and security in an Islamic region will be a natural consequence of the aforementioned submission to Allah.

However, although there are five necessities in every religion, including Islam – the preservation of religion, soul, mind, honor, and wealth – there are several ways in which total submission and these necessities can be interpreted and practiced. Out of the many interpretations of Islam, two have surfaced as the mainstream schools of thought. One of these believes that if the majority of a nation is Islam, as is the case with Jordan, then Islam should be heavily implemented in the law. This theory is arguably "hostile" towards ideas of secularism – the separation of the state from religion.[9]In summary it argues that because Islam and secularism don't go together, neither does Islam nor democracy – the epitome of modernization.

It is unclear as to whether this hostility stems purely from Qur'anic teachings, or if it is a mix of this, plus cultural beliefs. In a lecture by Dr. Mohammad Al-Majali, he also mentions how there is no original Arabic word for democracy; the English equivalent would be "consultation", further indicating the plausibility and root of this hostility.[10] This hostility was worsened by the terminology that surrounded secularism for years. In Arabic, the word that represented the idea of secularism was the same word used for atheism. This set the precedent for Muslims to perceive secularism as unforgivable and implausible. With specific regard to Jordan, there is evidence of the continued use of religion in politics, which may be linked back to the archaic idea that secularism is equivalent to atheism. For

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[8] (Al-Majali M. K., Islamic Culture & Thought, 2010)
[9] (Diamond, Plattner, & Brumberg, 2003)
[10] (Al-Majali M. K., 2016)

instance, of the countries in the Middle East, Jordan has the longest history of an Islamic movement regularly competing in elections.[11]

Dr. Al-Majali goes on to further explain that tradition and religion are not the same, as many would like to believe. [12] It is out of this mindset that one finds the second prominent interpretation of Islam. This side firmly believes that the idea of democracy because it perceives Islam to be a religion of human rights. Unfortunately, democracy tends to act as a doorway to secularism. With the coming of the Europeans to the Middle Eastern region, the dialogue surrounding secularism became more normalized and accepted.

Arguably, Jordan is more aligned with this second school of thought, despite trying to blend the two schools into a conservative secular society.[13] The official religion of the state, according to the constitution, is Islam. However, the constitution also separates Islam from politics, indicating that Jordan has been secular, and geared toward democracy from the very birth of its nation. With this in mind, the question then rises, how can Jordan fully separate Islam and the state, when its declared religion for the state is Islam? If the official religion is Islam, will policies not be forced to be created with this in mind and therefore, be aligned with Islamic teachings?

These questions are turned into reality in the way the Islamic Action Front and Muslim Brotherhood play an active role in government. It has been discovered that these organizations work within the law, but slowly push their religious agenda and expand the boundaries of said law.[14] Naturally, the Jordanian government, which is constitutionally

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[11] (Brown & Hamzawy, 2010)
[12] (Al-Majali M. K., 2016)
[13] (Abu Rumman & Abu Hanieh, 2013)
[14] (Brown & Hamzawy, 2010)

secular, tries to limit the amount of power these Islamist movements have because their agenda works against some of the goals and agendas of Jordan's powerful allies.[15]

According to Steve Bruce, only complex societies are capable of separating the state and religion.[16] Due to this definition, one can assume that Jordan is not a complex society because of the heavy intertwining of religion and politics. There still seems to exist an internal conflict amongst Muslims as to which school of thought is better. There seems to be uncertainty in whether to operate with the years of traditional thoughts against secularism, or accept the modern thoughts Europeans brought to them, not only around the Middle East as a whole, but also within the lives of Muslims in Jordan.[17]

Methodology

Overall Experience

After three weeks of research, I can decisively say that it was an overall good experience. There were no extreme challenges that I couldn't overcome or work around. Aside from learning and thoroughly studying Islam's role in Jordan, I was also able to learn more about Islam in general, and gain the perspective of it that the media refuses to show. After doing this research, I am even more motivated to not only come back and work in the Middle East, but also use the findings and experience from this research to change the stigma around Muslims and their faith.

In terms of my experience during interviews and questionnaires, they were all positive, with little to no problems. Everyone whom I interviewed was very willing to

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[15] (Brown & Hamzawy, 2010)
[16] (Bruce, 2003)
[17] (Diamond, Plattner, & Brumberg, 2003)

answer the questions, and even provide responses beyond the scope of the question. For instance, if the interviewee mentioned an unknown term or concept, he/she would take the time to explain it in detail, such that I gained an exponentially better understanding of the original response. Despite these explanations taking as long as ten minutes, at no point did I feel pressured or rushed to finish any of my interviews. In fact, in many of my interviews, I found myself done with my line of questioning, but wanting to ask more because the interviewee was so accommodating of me and genuinely wanted to help my research. If an interview was forced to end abruptly, it was never the fault of the interviewee, but rather circumstances outside their control, such as scheduling conflicts, or impromptu emergency meetings.

However, one source of frustration during this research was narrowing down my questions. Because of how broad this research topic is, it took longer for me to come up with questions for both the interview and questionnaire than originally anticipated. At the start of this research, I had an abstract idea of what I wanted to study. Unfortunately, as I tried to turn my abstract thoughts to concrete research questions and topics, I realized "the role of Islam in Jordanian National Security" was broader than I thought. Naturally, I was then forced to narrow down and prioritize exactly what it was I wanted to know, leaving the things I left out for further research. As a researcher, this was particularly frustrating because it meant that I would have to consciously put a limit to my curiosity and inquiries.

Beginning the Research

As mentioned earlier, the topic of national security is broader than many would expect – going far beyond military and physical protection. As a result, I learned very early on that if I wanted to properly analyze Islam's potential role, I would need to focus on more than one area of national security. Obviously, one of such areas would be the military because of the heavy contribution it has on national security. However, what many don't realize is that economic and diplomatic policies play an equally important role in the maintenance of safety and security. Economic stability is a must because without it individuals become unconfident in their government, country, and overall quality of life. Such unhappiness and discontent will naturally lead to uprisings, creating an internal threat to individual security. One must also recognize the role diplomacy plays in national security. Through diplomatic policies and relations, countries are able to rally allies and isolate threats. By so doing, diplomats exponentially decrease the likelihood of war, and, by extension, protect the lives of their soldiers, citizens, and overall population.

Once I narrowed down my study to these three categories, my research automatically assumed four major themes – religion, economics, diplomacy, and military – and as a result, choosing interviewees became monumentally easier. Naturally, I wanted to interview with professionals who were very involved in these fields, as they would give me a more accurate depiction of Islam's true influence– as compared to an average citizen, who can only speculate about the workings of policymakers. Ideally, I would interview individuals from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Industry & Trade, as well as with generals from the Jordanian Armed Forces. I also hoped to interview with professors from the University of Jordan, because, though they do not work directly in the field, they would provide a unique perspective to my research. Unlike the professionals working directly in

my topic areas, the professors would afford me the academic perspective which tells of the optimal, most ideal way for religion and national security to work together.

I also resolved to conduct all of my interviews in the offices of the individuals in order to ensure a degree of professionalism. This benefited my research because it guaranteed that the interviewee and I stayed on topic, as well as maintained the idea that this was a serious, purposeful conversation. However, as humans, there is a natural desire to protect our image at all costs. We, therefore, are less likely to completely open up and tell our true thoughts for fear of being perceived differently or negatively, especially by strangers. This is a phenomenon that occurs regularly, especially during formal interviews, to the point that it was termed the Social Desirability Bias. Therefore, by having the interviews in the offices of these individuals, there may have been a subconscious pressure to respond such that the response positively represented the ministry, school, company etc., as well as the individual. Luckily, I knew this was something I was guaranteed to run into, and therefore planned around it, i.e. phrased my questions such that it provoked the true thoughts of respondents to ensure that my results were as accurate and valid as possible.

In my study, Islam was the only constant variable – the aspect that everything else was being compared to. As a result, it only made sense that my advisor be someone very knowledgeable on Islam. However, I also wanted him to be a university professor because, as mentioned earlier, he would provide the academic, nearly objective perspective. By having an academic background in Islam, he would have the knowledge base to accurately compare the way Islam should be optimally integrated into the system and the way it is used in reality, and whether this has helped to increase or decrease national security.

Due to my desire to question people directly involved in my topic areas, I knew interviewing with them would be more beneficial to my research than surveying them. In an interview, I have the opportunity to ask for more details and explanations in order to gain a full and true understanding of Islam's direct and indirect role, as well as ensure there are no opportunities for miscommunication or misunderstandings. By so doing, the integrity of the results is maintained.

However, I also resolved to conduct a questionnaire on university students to provide an added aspect to my research – i.e. whether the trend amongst current leaders, with regards to Islam's influence in policymaking, will be continued by Jordan's future leaders or begin to decline. It has been observed that the Jordanian society is shifting from liberal, leftist orientations to more moderate to ring-wing orientations. Thus, since Jordan is 70% youth, and they will be the decision makers within the next twenty years, making it, therefore, imperative that I test their point of view on the topic as well. Due to the fact that they have not yet worked in the relevant fields, they cannot provide in depth responses like current professionals can, and therefore, questionnaires are better suited to gain their opinion.

After narrowing my topic, and figuring out the types of people I wanted to interview, I could begin planning the exact means by which I wanted to collect my data. The first step was to come up with questions under each main theme to guarantee that all aspects of the research were covered. However, in so doing, I came up with a line of questioning that

consisted of about thirty questions. Unfortunately, I could not ask all thirty questions in one interview sitting, so I was forced to consolidate them. In theory, consolidating my questions would have resulted in a decrease in the validity of my research, as it would have insinuated that I gave up potential good results for the sake of respecting the time of respondents. However, this wasn't the case with my research. I appreciate the decision to consolidate because it forced my questions to be stronger and more direct, giving me the exact type of responses I needed to thoroughly analyze Islam's influence. I also realized after this decision, that many of my questions asked the same thing in different ways, which would have made my research redundant. By shortening my list of questions, I forfeited the possibility of my results being less valid or repetitive.

At the time of my preliminary interviews, I realized that interruptions occur regularly, causing trains of thought to be lost or interviews to be ended altogether. As a result, I chose to prioritize my questions according to their direct relevance to the topic and results I was seeking. By so doing, I eliminated the possibility of losing key information due to unforeseen circumstances.

Naturally, after being questioned on the same topic for about thirty minutes, answers given by respondents will become shorter and less detailed. Therefore, by prioritizing the questions the way I did, I removed the possibility of receiving vague answers to the questions that mattered most, again improving the overall quality and accuracy of my findings.

Ideally, all of these decisions would lead the results to depict the most accurate image of Islam's role in Jordanian national security, both now and in the near future.

Obstacles and Problems

One of the major setbacks that occurred during this research was my inability to interview with generals from the Jordanian Armed Forces. Due to scheduling conflicts and reachability issues, I was unable to meet with generals from the Jordanian Armed Forces or from the National Center for Security and Crisis Management. This was very problematic, as the military makes up a large portion of national security, and meeting with people from these organizations would have provided unparalleled insight. Although I wasn't able to meet with officials in the military, part of my interview questions asked about Islam's influence on military policy. As a result, I was able to analyze Islam's potential influence from the prospective of others. However, without actually meeting with people from the military, my results on this section, and overall analysis of Islam in Jordanian national security, may or may not be accurate.

Aside from not being able to meet with military officials, I also underestimated the difficulty in reaching with prominent individuals. One potential interviewee, immediately on contact, rejected my proposal to meet with him on the basis that he had no free time in his schedule to see me. There were also instances where contact numbers were out of service, or in a constant state of "busy". Due to this, I was forced to move down the professional ladder, and meet with people who were still integrated into my various topics, but not as invested as a Minister or Sargent Major would be. This slightly affected my results because the individuals who I met with were not direct policymakers, and therefore, would not be able to fully explain whether Islam influenced policies.

In scheduling my interviews, I also found that many people were free on the same days at the same times. This forced me to choose which interviewee was more important to my research, as well as elongate the time frame I had originally dedicated to interviews. In all instances where there were time conflicts, I ultimately rescheduled interviews, in order to meet with everyone I needed, and everyone who was willing to meet with me. Though this did not serve as an immediate problem, it did act as a setback to my research, as it prolonged my interview period, and eventually my analysis of my findings.

Lastly, there were occasions in which I was unable to ask all of my questions. As mentioned earlier unforeseen circumstances can cause an abrupt end to the interview. Fortunately, my research results were not severely affected by this because of my foresight in prioritizing my questions. As a result of this, when an interview was cut short, I had already obtained responses to all of my crucial questions. However, naturally I could have gotten further details and perspective on some of my less important questions – such as how would the interviewee define national security – if the interview had progressed smoothly.

Results:

Prior to starting my research, I hypothesized that the use of Islam in Jordanian politics would deteriorate national security, and as a result, Islamic teachings currently play an insignificant role in policymaking. As mentioned earlier, the rationale for this was that Islam is a religion of peace and accommodation. Meaning, physical threats should not occur, but if they do, a Muslim should take the most peaceful route to fixing the problem. Jordan has served as the safe haven for all types of refugees in part because a majority of its

people are Muslim, and believe in the aforementioned peace and accommodation. However, if Jordan were to fully associate all of its policies with the teachings of Islam, though people would be patient and accommodating, the country would be quickly entrapped in a cycle of misfortunes as described earlier.

After spending time researching further into this topic, I've concluded my hypothesis was only partially correct. As accurately noted, Islamic teachings play an insignificant role in policymaking, and by extension, Jordanian national security. However, I was wrong in assuming that an increase in Islam's influence would automatically decrease national security. On the contrary, there is room for Islamic teachings to positively influence national security.

Religion

Prior to fully understanding the role Islam is capable of playing in policymaking, one must first understand the extent to which Islam is active in Jordanian society. At no point during the interviews were the interviewees directly questioned about their personal religious views. This was in an attempt to attain a true depiction, and avoid the Social Desirability bias that may arise. However, through observation of both the interviewee and their office environment, data was still collected on how religious they were.

Out of the five face-to-face interviews I conducted, two of the interviewees explicitly expressed their piety. This done through their diction, action, and choice of materials to have in their respective offices. During my first interview – with Dr. Muhammad Khazer Al-Majali – he spent the entirety of the interview with prayer beads in hand, rotating them, as though praying. Also, over the forty minute interview, he made several references to

Islamic sayings, with Inshallah and Bismallah being the most common. This was also true of Dr. Adab Asoud, another professor of Islamic Studies. Her passion for Islam showed through her response to many of the questions. For instance, when asked which areas of life Islam played the biggest role, she simply responded "Islam is simply a part of life in every sector. There is no separation between Islam and our life."[18]

Both professors had evidence of their faith in their offices – both had Qurans, prayer beads, and others in their office. However, this cannot be perfectly allocated to their personal faith, as they are both professors of Islamic Studies. It is only natural for them to have books related to it.

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[18] (Asoud, 2016)

Measurement of Religiousness

Number of Responses

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Regularity	4	3	0	7	6	9
Daily Influence	2	3	1	5	6	12

■ Regularity ■ Daily Influence
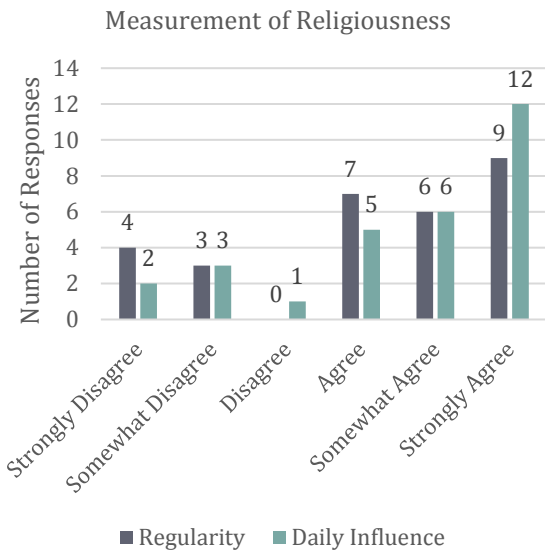
When students at the University of Jordan were questioned about the regularity in which they pray and

Future Use of Islam

21%
79%

■ No ■ Yes
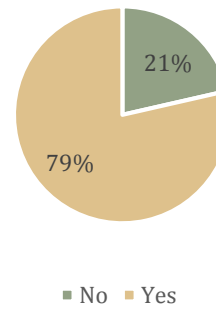
6.

attend sermon, 76% responded with 4, 5, or This indicates that over half of the sample agrees – granted in varying degrees – that they pray and attend sermon regularly. As shown by the graph to the left, a majority – 31% of total responses – indicated they strongly agree with the statement. With regards to how Islam influences daily life, there is a stark contrast. Where the question about regularity has a nearly evenly distributed trend, the question about daily influence finds a larger number of students – 79% of total responses – agreeing with the sentiment that Islam is very influential to them. However, as shown by the graph, more students (41%) selected 6, strongly agree, than with the previous question.

When students were asked in question 12 about whether they would consult a relgious leader in the future in decisionmaking, the majority (79%) responded "Yes", as displayed in the graph to the right. Of the 79%, when asked how frequently, most responded "weekly", with

5%
32% 27%
36%

■ Daily ■ Weekly ■ Monthly ■ Yearly
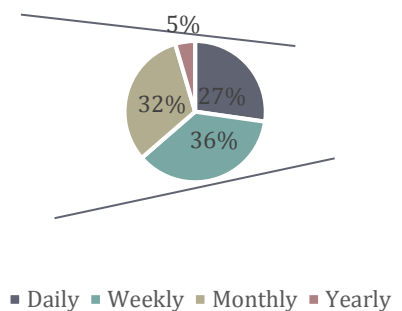
"daily" serving as the second most common answer.

This was particularly surprising because I orginally thoguht that the university students would show decreased connectivity with religion, than the older generations, as a result of being more exposed to the modern world and its way of thinking. In fact , I would have expected their views on Islam to have been negatively affected by all the negative images portrayed on the media in relation to Islam. On the contrary, as shown by the graph below, this was not the case. Of the total respondents, 31% indicated that their perception of Islam has not changed. However, in close second, 23% responded that this has rather positively influenced their opinion on Islam.
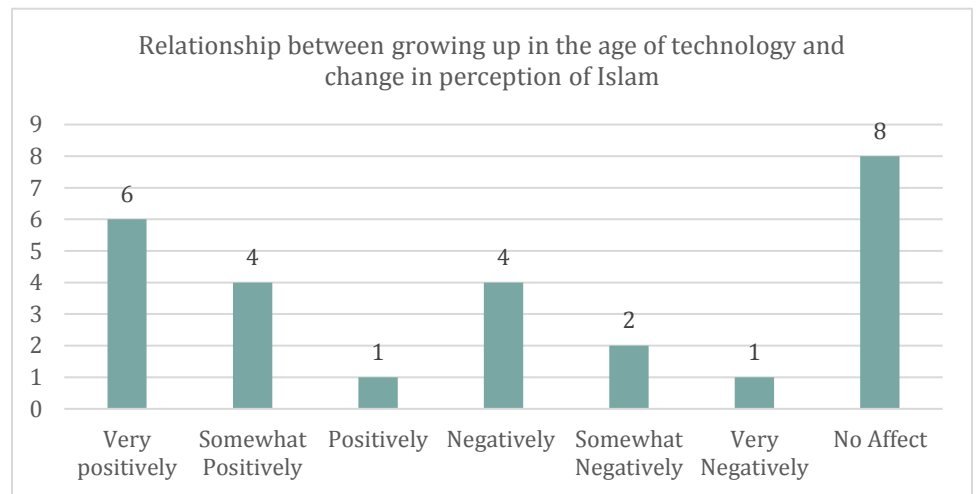
Relationship between growing up in the age of technology and change in perception of Islam

Very positively	Somewhat Positively	Positively	Negatively	Somewhat Negatively	Very Negatively	No Affect
6	4	1	4	2	1	8

Based off of these results, it is very apparent that Islam's reach and influence in the community is very deep and widespread, showing that Islam is very active in Jordan. As much as 79% of respondents at the University of Jordan disgreed, in varying degrees, with the notion that Islam in policymaking was the reason for the turmoil in the Middle East. One would then expect that Islam would be listed one of the factors for retain safety and securirty. However, this was not the case. Very few people, if any, mentioned the nearly homogenous and religious society, as the reason for Jordan's prolonged safety and security.

Many other reasons were brought forward instead, such as the idea that Jordan is protected by the world's super powers, especially given its proximity to Israel.[19] Others, such as Omar Shegem, Islam Maghayreh, and Dr. Adab Asoud, without hesitation named the regime as the primary cause for safety and security here in Jordan.

Economics:

In terms of analyzing Islam's influence in economics, most respondents came to the same conclusion. They explained that Islam should be more used in economic policies, as a majority of the individuals who are partaking in everyday, economic activity are Muslims. In fact, this was a claim supported by both interviewees and students at the University of Jordan. Nearly two-thirds of the surveyed students agreed that Islamic teachings should be more used in economic policymaking, as shown in the graph to the left. When asked to explain why, many gave responses similar to those of professionals in the field. One student argued that Islamic teachings should be used more because it "built the necessary rules and principles to make economic polices"[20] This claim was corroborated multiple times, primarily through the mention of Zakat al-Fitr, or commonly referred to simply as Zakat – a Qur'anic policy which calls for charity and giving alms to the poor, in order prevent money from staying in the hands of one person.[21] Dr. Adab Asoud explains that if Zakat was properly implemented the economy would be
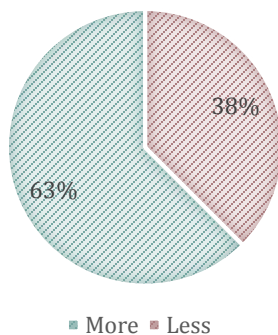
38%

63%

■ More ■ Less

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[19] (Al-Madi, 2016)
[20] (Kissi, Affect of Islam in Jordanian National Security, 2016)
[21] (Kissi, Affect of Islam in Jordanian National Security, 2016)

much better because there would be shared wealth.[22] Other students mentioned that Islamic teachings do not match the ambitions of politicians, and is therefore used less than it should be in the economy.[23]

This contrasts drastically from the perspective of Dr. Jawad Al-Anani, Minister of Economic Affairs, and current Deputy Prime Minister of Jordan. According to his perspective, Islamic teachings are used regularly in economic policy. He explains that aside from the Zakat tax – a mandatory 2.5% tax on individuals' net worth which is collected in hopes of alleviating poverty – there are other funds which were created out of Islamic teachings.[24] He mentioned that in Jordan exists a Pilgrimage fund –a savings account dedicate to the Islamic pilgrimage, which has proven to prevent human sacrifice; and a Waqf fund – similar to a trust fund where people can leave inheritances for the poor. He also reinforced the idea that Islamic teachings are used to appeal to the emotions of people, such that policies will be more successful.[25] According to him, politicians and diplomats like to "impose on Jordanians that being a good Muslim means working hard and with precision is good. And that those who cheat us, are not among us. It emphasizes the moral responsibility of people… There is a positive correlation between this and economic development."[26]

Diplomacy

Of the three areas I chose to study, diplomacy appears to be the area least influenced by Islamic teachings. In all of my interviews, there was a unanimous agreement that

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[22] (Asoud, 2016)
[23] (Kissi, Affect of Islam in Jordanian National Security, 2016)
[24] (Al-Anani, 2016)
[25] (Kissi, Affect of Islam in Jordanian National Security, 2016)
[26] (Al-Anani, 2016)

diplomats do not, and cannot, use Islamic teachings in their field of work. As Omar Shegem argues, diplomats cannot hold a diplomatic position and still be religious, and those did were either assassinated or thrown out, like King Faisal in Saudi Arabia.[27] Dr. Adab Asoud supports this in saying that diplomats have a job description, and therefore their priorities are clear and laid out for them.[28] However, according to her, sufficient efforts are not made accommodate Muslim diplomats. The perception of Islam as a violent and terrorist religion rings around the world, and therefore, Jordanian diplomats cannot make decisions with their faith, for fear relations will sour.[29]

Dr. Jawad Al-Anani, the current deputy Prime Minister, however has a less pessimistic view. According to him, Islam is used strategically in creating relations. He simply argues that "religion is one of the factors that leads to better relations, and sometimes it's not. Sometimes we feel we have common causes to cooperate with other Islamic countries. Sometimes Islam is not the binding factor." However, in the context of terrorism, he explains that Islam doesn't support terrorism, and therefore states which patronize these acts are solicited for relationships.[30]

However, as mentioned earlier in the religion section, there is a likelihood that this trend would change. When asked, a majority of the Jordan university students from the sample said they would take Islam into consideration if they were in a position of power. In fact, they speculated that they would regularly consult with religious leaders.

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[27] (Shegem, 2016)
[28] (Asoud, 2016)
[29] (Asoud, 2016)
[30] (Al-Anani, 2016)

Of the three studied sections, the military appeared to be the area most positively

and sufficiently influenced by Islamic teachings. According to Islam Maghayreh, military

training is based on the rules of Islam. Islam teaches soliders how they should behave in

war. They are also surrounded by religious influences, such as having a mosque on the site

of their base.[31] Dr. Muhammad Al-Majali supports this in his claim that soldiers are actually

encouraged to be religious, as the only way to properly encourage someone to give their

life for the security of the country is through religion; "it is not between the soldier and the

king, nor the solider to his leader. It is between the soldier and his God, to which he has the

utmost loyalty."[32]

Dr. Al-Anani continues to support the idea of Islam having a positive influence on

military training and policy. According to him, Islam teaches moral and athletic values; it

teaches them not to kill an old lady, to leave worshippers to pray, to be fit and disciplined

etc.[33] These are instilled values that ensure that they will fight for the right things. He also

goes on to explain that in the military, they also teach soldiers that these are values in all

religions, not just Islam. This is to keep them from gaining a false sense of security or

superiority over other religions.

As part of the questionnaire I delivered
to the University of Jordan students, I asked a
question regarding the relationship between

Strongly Disagree   Somewhat Disagree
Disagree   Agree
Somewhat Agree   Strongly Agree

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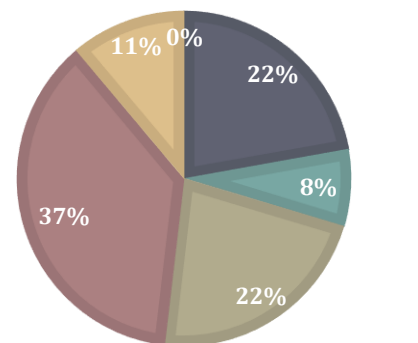
[31] (Maghayreh, 2016)
[32] (Al-Majali D. M., 2016)
[33] (Al-Anani, 2016)
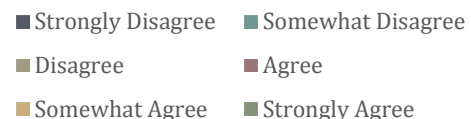
Islam and military training (see question 11 on questionnaire in appendix). These are the least polarized results I received from the students. There is a relatively even distribution of opinions, as shown by the chart to the right. The biggest portion of students simply agreed with this claim, but the second biggest portion simply disagreed. Because the answer options were out of 6, I can assume that had there been a middle "neutral" number, most students would have chosen that, based off the way over 50% of the results circulated around the central number options 3 and 4.

Conclusion:

Islam's overall influence on national security acts similar to the Wage Curve in economics. According to this economic phenomenon, there is a certain amount of hourly wage that needs to be made in order for individuals to be willing to sacrifice leisure time to work in order to purchase their survival needs. Therefore, as wage rises beyond this minimum, individuals will be willing to sacrifice even more hours to be able to purchase more and more luxuries. However, it reaches a peak point where the individual is making enough to purchase all their luxuries, and is thus less willing to sacrifice leisure time. Any income passed this point yields negative returns, in that people will begin to sacrifice work time for leisure.

Based off the results, Islam's influence on national security behaves the same way, disproving my hypothesis to a certain degree. There is a peak point where individuals in Jordan are content and secure because all policies, though not perfectly aligned with Islamic teachings, are not against said teachings. Beyond this point, Islam would begin to

have negative effects because its influence on the policies would stretch beyond the country, influencing several national security issues at once. Currently, Jordan has not reached this peak point, and therefore has the ability to increase Islam's influence on policies while still improving national security. This was made most evident in the responses related to Islam's influence in economic policies.

Rather than Islamic teachings causing a detrimental effect on national security, this research has proven that despite modernization and the theory of secularism, the use of Islam in policies surrounding national security can actually be beneficial for the country. With the youth showing signs of increasing the use of Islamic teachings in policymaking, it is only a matter years before Jordan reaches its optimal level of religion in society in relation to national security.

Study Limitations

All research projects aim to address all areas for possible inaccuracies, but despite all efforts, there will always still be room for improvement. This research project is no different. As explained in the methodology section, there were several areas where I tried to account for possible areas for error – reprioritizing questions, interviewing exclusively with people in the relevant fields etc.

However, of course limitations will still occur. One of the major limitations to my study, as I mentioned, was my failure to meet with military officials. As a result of this, my analysis on Islam's influence on military policy cannot be validated, in that there is the possibility that the conclusion I came to was inaccurate.

Another study limitation is the fact that I only distributed questionnaires to one lecture at the University of Jordan. Not only do specific types of students attend the university, but even within the lecture hall, there will only be certain types of students due to the subject matter of the specific class. For instance, all the students who responded to the demographics section on the questionnaire were Muslim. As a result, the results only shows the perspective of Muslim students, rather that of people of other faiths. Due to situations similar to these, the results yielded from my questionnaire are possibly unrepresentative of the true thoughts of university students. Even then, this is on the assumption that the social desirability bias did not come into play, and students provided responses that depict their practical thoughts – but this cannot be certain.

Also, one of the interviews I conducted was over the phone. As a result, I obviously was not able to observe the behavior nor environment of the interviewee. This may have affected the results in many ways, such as in causing me to perceive leaders as less religious than they actually are.

A last limitation to this research is the fact that in an attempt to make the results as accurate as possible, a large amount of data was collected – both from the questionnaires and interviews. As a result of this, it is up me, the researcher, to discern which responses are worth noting and using in the final analysis. This implies that inherent biases as to what I believe is considered important and relevant will cause a distortion in the representation of the data. This means that what I may see as important, another researcher reviewing or replicating my research, may not see as such, leading us to come to two separate conclusions.

Recommendations for Future Studies

One area that could be further studied is the influence of Islam on various generations. After conducting the questionnaires, I realized there seemed to be a backwards trend of religious influence. By this I mean, when I interviewed with professionals, they seemed to be either less religious or less likely to use Islam in their decision making. However, this was not the case amongst the youth. On the contrary, they responded with answers that pointed toward an increased influence of Islam on their lives, and therefore are more likely to implement Islamic teachings in lawmaking. I would suggest another research project looking into why this is.

Another topic for research could be analyzing the where and why there is a disconnect between Islam and leaders. Again, over the course of this research, respondents pointed to the educational system as the area of Jordanian life that is most influenced by Islamic teachings. These claims were supported by the responses received from the Jordanian University students. However, if they are so pious, and Islamic teachings are heavily present in the university, why is it that once they enter into leadership roles, the influence of Islamic teachings decreases?

A last topic for further research could be the influence of the regime on national security. As mentioned earlier, many of the respondents and interviewees named the regime as the primary reason for Jordan's safety. It would be wise to delve deeper into this as an extension of this research. What is it that this regime is doing correctly, that others

aren't, and how can the international world replicate this to create security around the

world?

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Appendices:

1. What do you believe is the main reason for Jordan's safety and lack of civil disturbances?

2. What role do you believe Islam plays in Jordanian national security?

3. In which areas of Jordanian life do you believe Islamic teachings play the biggest role?

4. What would you consider a national crisis? Does Islam help form your reasoning for this?

5. When diplomats create relationships with other countries, what factors do you think they consider most important?

6. Does Islam play a role in deciding which countries are worth creating relationships with?

7. Do you believe diplomats sacrifice their faith for the sake of forging diplomatic relations

8. Do you believe people in the ministries of economics or even the army make decisions with Islam in mind?

9. Has belief in Islam by the people helped make the economy in Jordan what it is today? Did this belief make the economy better or worse?

10. To what extent does religion play a role in the way soldiers are trained?

11. What factors are prioritized when determining whether military action or policies should be taken? Is Islam ever factored in?

12. Do you think decision makers consult a religious leader about the Islamic opinion on before making a policy?

13. How would you define national security?

Informed Consent Form:

SIT Study Abroad
a program of World Learning

Title: Is Faith the Reason for our Security?

Shynelle Kissi, The George Washington University

School for International Training—Jordan: Modernization and Social Change

1. The purpose of this study is to uncover the extent to which Jordanian national security is influenced by Islamic teachings.
2. **Rights Notice**
   If at any time, you feel that you are at risk or exposed to unreasonable harm, you may terminate and stop the interview. Please take some time to carefully read the statements provided below.

   a. *Privacy* - all information you present in this interview may be recorded and safeguarded. If you do not want the information recorded, you need to let the interviewer know.
   b. *Anonymity* - all names in this study will be kept anonymous unless the participant chooses otherwise.
   c. *Confidentiality* - all names will remain completely confidential and fully protected by the interviewer. By signing below, you give the interviewer full responsibility to uphold this contract and its contents. The interviewer will also sign a copy of this contract and give it to the participant.
3. **Instructions:**
Please read the following statements carefully and mark your preferences where indicated. Signing below indicates your agreement with all statements and your voluntary participation in the study. Signing below while failing to mark a preference where indicated will be interpreted as an affirmative preference. Please ask the researcher if you have any questions regarding this consent form.

I am aware that this interview is conducted by an independent undergraduate researcher with the goal of producing a descriptive case study on the role of Islam in Jordanian national security.

I am aware that the information I provide is for research purposes only. I understand that my responses will be confidential and that my name will not be associated with any results of this study.

I am aware that I have the right to full anonymity upon request, and that upon request the researcher will omit all identifying information from both notes and drafts.

I am aware that I have the right to refuse to answer any question and to terminate my participation at any time, and that the researcher will answer any questions I have about the study.

I am aware of and take full responsibility for any risk, physical, psychological, legal, or social, associated with participation in this study.

I am aware that I will not receive monetary compensation for participation in this study, but a copy of the final study will be made available to me upon request.

I [do / do not] give the researcher permission to use my name and position in the final study.

I [do / do not] give the researcher permission to use my organizational affiliation in the final study.

I [do / do not] give the researcher permission to use data collected in this interview in a later study.

Date:

_____

Participant's Signature:

_____

Participant's Printed Name:

_____

Researcher's Signature:

_____

Thank you for participating!

Questions, comments, complaints, and requests for the final written study can be directed to:

Dr. Ashraf F. Alqudah, SIT Jordan Academic Director

Telephone (962) 0785422478

Email: ashraf.alqudah@sit.edu

Please answer all of the questions on this questionnaire to the best of your abilities.

Demographic Information:

Name: _____   Major: _____   Year: _____

Age: _____   Sex: _____   Religion: _____

Please answer questions 1-6 based on the following scale:

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Somewhat Disagree

3 – Disagree

4 – Agree

5 – Somewhat Agree

6 – Strongly Agree

1.   To what extent do you agree that you are serious when it comes to your studies? I.e. you spend high amounts of time studying, doing schoolwork outside of class, and listening during lecture.1   2   3   4   5   6

2.   To what degree do enjoy your field of study, and are likely to work in the same field.

1   2   3   4   5   6

3.   To what extent do you agree that you are religious? I.e. you pray regularly and attend sermon regularly.1   2   3   4   5   6

4.   Islamic teaching influence your daily life and behavior.
1   2   3   4   5

5.   To what extent do you believe Islam teachings take priority when determining Jordanian economic, diplomatic, and military policies?
1   2   3   4   5   6

6.   To what extent do you believe the use of Islam in policymaking is the reason for the conflicts in most of the Arab World?   1   2   3   4   5   6

7.   What is your opinion on the reason for Jordan's continued safety? Do you think Islam has a role in this?

....

....

....

8.   How has growing up in the age of technology influenced your opinion of Islam? If it didn't influence your opinion, please circle "It had no effect"

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   It had no effect

   Positive   Negative

9.   Please select one of the bolded words in the following statement.

Islamic teachings should be **more / less** implemented in Jordanian economic policymaking. Why?

....

....

....

10. Please answer the following series of questions:

a.   How far do you agree belief in Islam and economic stability go hand in hand?

                    1   2   3   4   5   6

                 Disagree   Agree

b.   If your response to the previous question was between 4 and 6, skip the question and go to 11. If not, please answer the following:

If you believe Islam and economic stability go hand in hand, does the use of Islam then cause the economy to become **better** or **worse**?

11.   It has been said that military training in Jordan is based off Islamic teachings. To what extent do you agree? 1   2   3   4   5   6

12a. If you were in a position of power, would you take Islam into consideration when making policies?   **Yes / No**

 12b. If yes, how frequently would you consult with a religious leader?
Daily   Weekly   Monthly   Yearly

Arabic Questionnaire:

من فضلك أجب عن الأسئلة التالية بقدر استطاعتك في هذا الاستبيان .

معلومات ديموغرافية:

الاسم: _____ التخصص: _____ السنة الجامعية: _____

العمر: _____ الجنس: _____ الديانة: _____

من فضلك أجب عن الأسئلة من 1 إلى 6 باستخدام المقياس التالي. وضع دائرة حول إجابتك.

1 ـ معارض بشدة

2 ـ معارض أحياناً

3 ـ معارض

4 ـ موافق

5 ـ موافق أحياناً

6 ـ موافق بشدة

1. إلى أي مدى أنت جاد في دراستك؟ يعني هل تقضي وقت طويل في الدراسة وعمل الواجبات خارج الصف, وتستمع إلى محاضرتك .
   1   2   3   4   5   6

2. إلى أي مدى تستمتع بتخصصك, وهل ستعمل في نفس التخصص؟
   1   2   3   4   5   6

3. إلى أي مدى توافق انك متدين؟ اي تصلى عادةً وتحضر خطبة الجمعة عادةً؟
   1   2   3   4   5   6

4. إلى أي مدى تؤثر تعاليم الإسلام على حياتك وسلوكك اليومي؟
   1   2   3   4   5   6

5. إلى أي مدى تعتقد أن الدراسات الاسلامية تأخذ الأفضلية عندما تحدد السياسات الاقتصادية والدبلوماسية والعسكرية الأردنية؟
   1   2   3   4   5   6

6. إلى أي مدى توافق ان الاستعمال الإسلام في خلق السياسات هو سبب الصراعات والعنف في معظم العالم العربي؟
   1   2   3   4   5   6

7. ما هو رأيك عن السبب في الاستمرار السلامة في الاردن؟ هل تظن أن الإسلام لديه دور فيها؟
....
....

8. كيف بنشأة الحصر التكنولوجي تؤثر على رأيك عن الإسلام؟ اذا لم يؤثر على رأيك, من فضلك ضع دائرة حول الإجابة "ما أثر في رأيي".

ما أثر في رأيي   6   5   4   3   2   1

بشكل سلبا   بشكل إيجابي

9. من فضلك, اختيار واحدة من الكلمات المكتوبة بالخط العريض في الجملة التالية.
   تعليم الإسلامية تكون اقل / اكثر استخداماً في صناعة السياسة الاقتصادية. لماذا؟

....
....
....

10. من فضلك اجابة على سلسلة الأسئلة التالية.
   a. إلى أي مدى توافق أن الاعتقاد الإسلامي والاستقرار الاقتصادي يعملون مع بعضهم التعض؟
      6   5   4   3   2   1
      معارض   موافق

   b. اذا كان جوابك عن السؤال السابق بين 4 و 6, فترك هذا السؤال واذهب الى السؤال 11. إذا لا, من فضلك أجب السؤال التالي:

   اذا تعتقد ان الاسلام والاستقرار الاقتصادي يعملون مع بعض, هل استعمال الاسلام في الاقتصاد جعله أفضل أو أسوأ؟ ضع دائرة حول رأيك. أفضل / أسوأ

11. التدريبات العسكرية في الأردن كانت تعتمد على التعليم الإسلامية. إلى أي مدى توافق؟
      6   5   4   3   2   1
      معارض   موافق

12. من فضلك أجابة على الاسئلة التالية وضع دائرة حول رأيك:
   a. إذا كنت في موضع بالسلطة, هل تأخذ الإسلام بعين الاعتبار عندما تصنع السياسة؟   نعم او لا
   b. اذا كان الجواب نعم, كيف تتم الاستشارة مع القادة الدينيين؟   يومياً   اسبوعياً   شهرياً   سنوياً

شكراً جزيلاً لمساعدتك!