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Islamist Strategies in the Context of “Bottom-Up Islamization” in Selected Middle Eastern Countries

Introduction

A factor that shaped the political and social character of the Middle East was the presence of Western powers in the region resulting in the transformation of local societies in the 20th and 21st centuries. The period of colonial rule did not last long, but its effects were of cardinal importance for the evolution of Muslim identity and the role of Islam as a political ideology. An important moment of this period was the creation of a secular nation state in the region, which was to reflect the Western pattern, and which was accepted by most Muslims as a manifestation of modern political evolution¹. Until then, Islam guaranteed the unity of the *ummah*, but in the new conditions of the nation-state, which was secular, as a legitimizing factor and state-forming element it was rejected or remained only one of its components². After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the Arab world was shaped by forces and tendencies unfamiliar to Islam, imposing European legal and administra-

¹ Sh.A. Jackson, *Islamic Reform between Islamic Law and the Nation-State*, [in:] *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics*, eds J.L. Esposito, E. El-Din Shahin, Oxford–New York 2013, p. 43.

² J. Danecki, *Arabowie*, Warsaw 2001, p. 370.

tive frameworks on traditional Muslim socio-political organization³. Religion has lost its significance due to modernization of the state. Reform programmes were based on modern Western models in the sphere of education, state administration or the political system⁴. Under these conditions, anti-Western and pro-Islamic attitudes were born as a response to foreign domination, opposition to values and norms incompatible with Islam. Muslim political sovereignty has been the object of dispute between supporters of Islamic universalism and secular nationalist ideas and political order based on a common language, territory, and history. Both these trends help explain the circumstances of Islamic revival and the emergence of modern Islamism as a new form of Muslim policy⁵. At the same time, Islamism is interpreted as a form of anti-colonial or anti-Western ideology and a tool for mobilizing the Arab world in conditions caused by external and internal factors⁶. Its modern genesis is associated with Hassan al-Banna and Abul A'la Maududi, who inspired Islamists over successive few generations, contributed to the emergence, in the late 1950s and at the beginning of the 1960s, of a new generation of ideologists, including Sayyid Qutb, the founder of the basis for the intellectual evolution of Islamism along with its military aspect⁷. The period of their activity included the rule of secular regimes in Arab countries, which for half a century, from the end of Euro-

³ F. Halliday, *Bliski Wschód w stosunkach międzynarodowych. Władza, polityka i ideologia*, Kraków 2009, p. 96.

⁴ J. Zdanowski, *Państwo na Muzułmańskim Bliskim Wschodzie. Procesy genezy i czynniki trwania*, Kraków 2014, p. 263.

⁵ P. Mandaville, *Islam and Politics*, London–New York 2014, p. 64.

⁶ K. Hroub, *Introduction*, [in:] *Political Islam. Context versus Ideology*, ed. K. Hroub, London 2010, pp. 15–16; J.L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York 1992.

⁷ P. Mandaville, *op.cit.*, p. 97.

pean colonialism in the 1950s, had control over the countries in the region. Islamist attitude fluctuated then between rejection of those regimes, confrontation with them, or acceptance of the status quo, but until the end of the 1990s, these regimes remained a decisive political force in the Middle East, controlling Islamist participation in the politics of their countries⁸.

An important issue of the political discourse of contemporary Muslim thinkers and activists is the relationship of the modern nation-state with Islam, and the place of Islam in contemporary societies and states. Although the concept of an Islamic state implies Islamist aspirations in many Middle Eastern countries, the tendency to place Islam at the heart of the political order is not typical for the entire Middle East. Respecting shariah and demanding it as the basis or condition of a Muslim state in general are completely different Muslim attitudes, just like trying to confront sharia with the norms and conditions of a modern secular state and proclaiming the absolute discrepancy between the two⁹. Proponents of Islamization may differ in methods and even purpose, as some will strive to “shari’ah-ization” of selected sectors of the law, while others will seek complete Islamization on a local or global scale¹⁰. In the modern Muslim world, models of implementing Islam are different, not always associated with the state, coexisting in some regions, while competing in others, it is “some type of inter – and intra-ideological civil war not only between Islamists and secularists but even inside each camp”¹¹.

⁸ T. Osman, *Islamism. What it Means for the Middle East and the World*, New Haven–London 2016, p. 14.

⁹ Sh.A. Jackson, *op.cit.*, pp. 42–43.

¹⁰ P. Mandaville, *op.cit.*, p. 74.

¹¹ M.A. Fattah, *Islam and Politics in the Middle East*, [in:] *The Oxford Handbook...*, *op.cit.*, p. 290.

The main objective of the article is to discuss those models that are part of the so-called “bottom-up Islamization” observed since the 1990s, represented mainly by Islamist formations that are in opposition to political power, an indication of how Islamism influenced the internal policy of selected countries but also changed under its control¹². The auxiliary objective is to indicate the different level of political involvement of Islamists and the method with which they competed or fought with the power of secular states trying to integrate into the political sphere. Referring to these objectives, one can hypothesize that the nature of “bottom-up Islamization” depends on the specificity of the country (e.g. allowed Islamist activities), on the strength of Islamist formations, flexibility of policy (the so-called contextual Islamization), often resulting in modification or even profound changing of strategy (in particular its de-radicalization). The validity of this claim requires a historical approach that will allow to draw conclusions about the variability of Islamist strategies in the context of the socio-political changes of the region in the mid-20th and 21st centuries. The comparative analysis applied to various Islamist formations on the one hand, and the various countries on the other hand, is equally important because of the heterogeneous nature of the Middle East region in terms of the state relation to religion, as it implies different models of actions of Islamist formations, different programmes of Islamist political parties and a different attitude toward the state as such. The conclusions obtained on the basis of historical comparative and critical analysis of sources creates the opportunity to verify the hypothesis.

¹² A. Zasuń, *Polityczny islam. Między religią polityczną a instrumentalizacją religii w polityce*, Częstochowa 2018, pp. 476–495.

The Attitude of Middle Eastern Countries to Islam

Islam defines the cultural nature of the Middle East, but its place in politics and societies of particular countries is diverse. Only a few countries are considered to be Muslim states (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Sudan, Malaysia), where Islam lies at the root of their constitutional law, plays a fundamental role in governing and shaping political institutions, the legislative process and foreign policy¹³. The governments of most Middle East countries are secular in nature and directly or with the help of administration tools combat the activity of Islamist groups and parties¹⁴. Some countries maintain a parallel judicial system, and others have a utilitarian approach, use the support of Islamism or its symbols in accordance with their own interests (e.g. Egypt during the times Anwar Sadat, or Gamal Abdel Nasser, or Iraq during the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein)¹⁵. Considering this diversity, Moataz A. Fattah has identified several strategies in the relations between the Middle East countries and Islam. The first is the apolitical strategy that limits Islam to faith and morality, supports the separation of religion and state, rejects the idea (among others Hassan Abd Allah al Turabi) that Islam is “religion, government, constitution and law”¹⁶. This strategy supports openness to the influence of modern civilizations and release from the brakes of tradition¹⁷. It is represented by secular parties (e.g. in Morocco, Algeria, Turkey, Jordan, Kuwait, Egypt

¹³ P. Mandaville, *op.cit.*, p. 206.

¹⁴ *Ibidem.*

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 203.

¹⁶ M. Mozaffari, *What is Islamism? History and Definition of a Concept, “Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions”* 2007, vol. 8, No. 1, p. 17.

¹⁷ M.A. Fattah, *op.cit.*, p. 291.

or Libya), but also by apolitical religious groups that depart from relations with the state, although the state often supports their activities¹⁸. The ecumenical Islamic strategy is also represented by apolitical intellectuals, *ulama*, who emphasize the importance of Islam as the basis for all Muslims, above political and social divisions. They strive for a union that embraces the entire Islamic world, emphasizing a common basis of all Muslim and Islamist programmes and the need to renew Islamic civilization¹⁹.

The utilitarian (secular-religious) strategy is represented by the political elites of Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco or Tunisia, where Islam is a tool of legitimacy and a source of symbols. Elites accept Islam in public space because of its importance for the identity of Muslims. In most Middle Eastern countries, the ruling elites respect the values of Islam (but not Islamism), acting as its representatives, even if they do not formally share its beliefs or include religious principles in the scope of political decisions²⁰. Islam is a religious facade, which is to strengthen the position of power, and the effectiveness of this strategy is based on controlling *ulama*, obtaining support from apolitical Muslims operating at mosques and schools, limiting or fighting the activities of Islamists who keep anti-regime policy²¹.

The next three types of strategy can be associated with the tendency current in the Middle East at the beginning of the

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ Ibidem, pp. 303–304. An example is the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS). Such organizations can be a facade for Islamist activities, in the case of IUMS it is reported that it was created in 2004, in particular by members of the Muslim Brotherhood – <https://www.reuters.com/article/gulf-qatar/islamist-group-rejects-terrorism-charge-by-states-boycotting-qatar-idUSL8N1O12V8>.

²⁰ M.A. Fattah, op.cit., p. 293.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 294.

last century to abandon European development models, reject the idea of a secular state and the defeat of the elites on the ground of economic modernization, which led to significant Islamization of political discourse in the region in the second half of the 20th century²². Each of them refers to the Islamization of Muslim society, although implemented in a different political conditions and with different results.

The strategy of radical Islamists is represented by groups seeking to change the current political order, which they consider anti-Islam or non-Islamic. The ideology of these groups is based on a narrow and literal interpretation of Islam, including such concepts as: *kafir* (infidels), *takfir wal-Hijra* (excommunication and exodus), and *jihad* in their radical meaning²³. Formations representing this strategy differ in their scope of operation (local, global), acceptance or rejection of violence. Some seek revolutionary and armed change, whereas others believe in a gradual change of Muslim ummah. In some Middle East countries, the process of de-radicalizing Islamist formations has been observed in recent decades; some Islamists abandon violence on the path to achieving political goals. Armed Islamist groups in Egypt, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Libya, Yemen and Jordan can be used as examples. The process of de-radicalization does not mean renouncing Islamist politics, only abandoning an armed form of action²⁴.

The strategy of armed Islamist resistance relates to the formations leading the national opposition to foreign occupation, or the prevailing regimes. They consider Islam as a tool of mobilization in their combat. Typical examples are Hezbollah and Hamas, as well as formations in Iraq or Somalia.

²² J. Zdanowski, op.cit., p. 263.

²³ J. Danecki, *Podstawowe wiadomości o islamie*, Warsaw 2011, p. 158; M.A. Fattah, op.cit., p. 295.

²⁴ M.A. Fattah, op.cit., p. 297.

Violence and armed activities are territorially limited and directed toward specific goals, and they are not rejected even when Islamists gain access to parliaments. They often combine political, military, social, including charitable activities with terrorist actions. They run in elections, and they sometimes get a majority in the government. Some their electoral gains can be attributed to an extensive network of social services. Their activities are supported equally by nationalist and religious aspects. They use Islamic symbols to legitimize their actions and mobilize the ummah²⁵.

The party strategy is implemented by Islamists, often referred to as “moderates”, who abandon violence and create political parties seeking opportunities to win the majority in parliaments. Their political programmes are based on social, economic and political aspects enabling them to launch more long-term actions. Tarek Osman writes that the gradual democratization, partial opening of political systems of some regimes (Hosni Mubarak in Egypt and Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia), and demand for free elections, improvement of political conditions and human rights put forward by social organizations created circumstances for Islamists to mobilize and achieve their political goals²⁶. For Islamists, the lack of possibility of real action, and often the persecution of traditional Islamist parties, was the reason for seeking new political strategies²⁷. The beginning of the 1990s was marked by Islamist participation in elections in many countries of the region, but often as independent candidates because activities of religious parties were banned (e.g. Egypt). It was not until the first half of the 21st century (earlier in 1979, in Iran) that

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 298.

²⁶ T. Osman, *Islamism. What it Means for the Middle East and the World*, New Haven–London 2016, p. 15.

²⁷ P. Mandaville, op.cit., p. 127.

Islamists could implement their project in Turkey after 2002, when power was taken over by the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP; founded in 2001 by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan), followed by the Arab Spring in Egypt and Tunisia in 2011²⁸. M.A. Fattah points out that the attitudes of the current regimes toward Islamist policy took various forms. The first is partial assimilation along with partial elimination without clearly defining which part of their policy is accepted or rejected. Thus, participation in elections did not guarantee Islamist freedom of political action, in particular after obtaining the majority of votes (e.g. Egypt)²⁹. The second form is legal assimilation and political neutralization when Islamists function legally, but in political practice they have no means, they cannot rule over the affairs of the ummah, because they are blocked by the regime. This form is represented by monarchies, e.g. Jordan (until the 1990s political parties could not operate here, their legalization took place only in 1992), Morocco, Kuwait, Algeria or Sudan³⁰. The third form is the autocratic exclusion of Islamists, their elimination occurs with the help of legal, political and police coercion, as in Tunisia, Syria, Libya (before the Arab Spring). Islamists lack legal and political space there³¹. The last form is secular democratic assimilation, such as in Turkey, where Islamist groups are recognized and included in the political sphere as long as they adhere to the rules of a secular and democratic state³².

In addition to the above, M.A. Fattah mentions strategy of Islam in power represented by three regimes: Saudi Ara-

²⁸ J. Zdanowski, *Historia społeczeństw muzułmańskiego Bliskiego Wschodu w XX wieku*, Warsaw 2013, pp. 307–308.

²⁹ M.A. Fattah, op.cit., p. 299.

³⁰ Ibidem.

³¹ Ibidem, pp. 299–300.

³² Ibidem, p. 300.

bia, Iran and Sudan, which officially declare themselves to be Muslim states, refer to Islam in domestic and foreign affairs, recognize sharia in relation to the individual and official law, and their ruling elites based their legitimacy on Islam³³. And also a lobbying Islamic strategy among groups of organized and spontaneous movements striving for short-term goals through demonstrations, manifestations and social pressure. They come from various environments and may occasionally enter into a coalition on the path to common micro-goals. The interests of these groups may coincide with the views of Islamist formations, but such cooperation is not considered ideal for either party. "For Islamists this is the minimum, the secularists are afraid of the spirit of theocracy, and it exerts pressure on the state, with which it must cope either through coercion or through dialogue"³⁴.

Not all of these strategies refer to the "bottom-up Islamization" or Islamist activities in general. Some have an apolitical nature (apolitical and ecumenical strategy), others concern rather the ruling elites and the importance of Islam for power (utilitarian strategy), or Muslim countries (strategy of Islam in power), which represent rather the model of "top-down Islamization". Important for the process of "bottom-up Islamization" are the strategies that relate to the context of the secular national state, in which democratic political activity is allowed at least to some extent, where Islamists have the opportunity to act in the political sphere, try to achieve their goals on a non-military path, strive to significant participation in the socio-political system, are heading for long-term changes, apply for political participation in regular political parties and participate in elections, gaining seats in parliament in order to gradu-

³³ Ibidem, pp. 300–302.

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 302.

ally introduce elements of Islamist doctrine and reform, and build-up social support, often with pro-Islamic propaganda or by putting pressure on the authorities. These strategies are represented by Islamist formations which strive for social acceptance and avoid rhetoric of the sharia law. Instead, they refer to the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law³⁵. They are also often involved in providing social support, thanks to which they gain credibility and endorsement of various social classes constituting an important factor in the increase of their range and popularity³⁶.

Varieties of “Bottom-Up Islamization” in the Middle East

Peter Mandaville called “bottom-up Islamization” – “Muslim democracy”, which is represented by groups pursuing secular and pluralistic goals in cooperation with a wide range of political groups, although they derive their ideas from religious norms³⁷. Such Islamists are sometimes referred to as “new Islamists” or “moderate Islamists”, often including the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) or Turkish AKP. Overlooking the problem, whether democracy is possible in Muslim countries, and whether striving to introduce sharia as the only source of legislation while supporting democracy, can be described as “Islamic democracy”³⁸, “bottom-up Islamization” refer primarily to the party strategy, because first of all it concerns the

³⁵ P. Mandaville, *op.cit.*, p. 130.

³⁶ A. Karam, *Transnational Political Islam and the USA: An Introduction*, [in:] *Transnational Political Islam. Religion, Ideology and Power*, ed. A. Karam, London 2004, p. 7.

³⁷ P. Mandaville, *op.cit.*, p. 122.

³⁸ J. Wójcik, „Umiarkowani” islamisci, islamska „demokracja”, <https://euroislam.pl/umiarkowani-islamisci-islamska-demokracja/> [Accessed: 10.10.2019].

functioning of Islamist political parties. To a limited extent, it will also be a strategy of radical Islamists, but in the context of the de-radicalization of their actions, and a strategy of armed Islamist resistance, in relation to the non-military activity of Islamist formations. The process of “bottom-up Islamization”, on the one hand, is associated with democracy, because it concerns the legitimate and constitutional rise of Islamist political parties to power. On the other hand, the implementation of Islamic order, even if through gradual reforms, guides all Islamists, including radical ones. The deficit of democracy in the Middle East and authoritarian tendencies are conditioned by the culture of the region, and more specifically by Islam³⁹. The Islamists’ attitude toward democracy is diverse, as Abdelwahab El-Affendi writes, some of them accept it and try to prove its compatibility with Islam, some reject it as an idea foreign to Islam, and others accept the principles of democracy to a limited extent, and want to adapt it to Islamic law. According to El-Affendi, this is the most numerous group identified with major Islamist organizations⁴⁰. They supported key elements of democracy, such as political pluralism and human rights, but always in confrontation with sharia, which is a key component of their political programmes.

Debates on Islam and democracy developed gradually on the background of the struggle against colonialism and the emergence of new states in the region. They were also associated with the development of nationalism and the processes of modernization and westernization. Events in the Middle East and in the international arena, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Iranian revolution in 1979, the collapse of the So-

³⁹ K. Czajkowska, A. Diawoń-Sitko, *Systemy polityczne wybranych państw Bliskiego Wschodu*, Warsaw 2012, p. 116.

⁴⁰ N. Hashemi, *Islam and Democracy*, [in:] *The Oxford Handbook...*, op.cit., p. 73.

viet Union and Western interventions in the region, also had influence on this debate⁴¹. Arab countries relied for a long time on authoritarian rule, power belonged to an individual ruler, and bringing in democratic order remained in the sphere of declarations and was directly rejected as imported and foreign to Islam, or limited to ostensible activities. Political parties were eradicated, and although they were allowed to remain active, only one political option representing the interests of central government usually had any genuine impact. Elections were controlled by the government, so there was little that the political opposition could do⁴². In the 1990s, there was greater economic liberalization, political reforms strengthened the role of the parliament through general elections, political parties were allowed to be more active and the constitutions took into account the division into legislative, executive and judicial power⁴³. In fact, however, the situation in many countries has not changed much in terms of executive power, and the coexistence of political freedoms and repression remained a characteristic aspect of the Middle Eastern political systems⁴⁴. Under these conditions, Islamists in many countries did not have many opportunities for real participation in power, nor did they form free political parties. Mehdi Mozaffari points out, that the Muslim political scene was, and still is, a place where two tendencies, authoritarianism of power and Islamism, are fighting, and only after the Iranian revolution did the second actually begin to matter. It should be noted that for over 50 years, until the revolution in 1979, Islamism was rather an “agglomeration of latent and dispersed extremist movements, always operating in opposition to their national

⁴¹ Ibidem, pp. 73–74.

⁴² K. Czajkowska, A. Diawoł-Sitko, *op.cit.*, pp. 126–127.

⁴³ Ibidem, p. 129.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 128.

regimes”⁴⁵. However, the revolution did not translate into the political success of Islamist groups. Some of them were either not interested in politics or had no real possibilities. In most countries, Islamist groups lacked or had a marginal impact on governance, and participation in elections or low percentage winnings prevented real power until 2011⁴⁶. In many Middle Eastern countries, Islamist groups have attempted to overcome this situation on a non-military basis, using a strategy typical of “bottom-up Islamization”, and created political parties to participated in parliamentary elections, formed coalitions even with secular groups to gain greater chances of coming to power and implementing the programme of Islamization.

A good example of the “bottom-up Islamization” is Egypt and the political activity of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). Pursuant to the provisions of the 1971 constitution, religious parties were banned in Egypt. In a country with a presidential regime and dominated for years the National Democratic Party, the opposition and political opponents were persecuted, so the authorities had no serious competitors. The exception was the MB who did not have an official status in the country but enjoyed social support⁴⁷. At the end of the 1980s, MB definitely advocated the concept of *hazbiyya* (i.e. becoming a party), that involved joining political activity at national level. However, attempts to obtain permission to function as an independent political party during the presidencies of Sadat (1970–1981) and Mubarak (1981–2011) failed, because the government blocked the possibilities of many political opposition parties⁴⁸. These

⁴⁵ M. Mozaffari, *Islamism. A new totalitarianism*, London 2017, p. 77.

⁴⁶ K. Pędziwiatr, *Przemiany islamizmów w Egipcie i Tunezji w cieniu Arabskiej Wiosny*, Kraków 2019, p. 19.

⁴⁷ P. Mandaville, op.cit., pp. 137–138.

⁴⁸ J. Zdanowski, *Współczesna muzułmańska myśl społeczno-polityczna. Nurt Braci Muzułmanów*, Warsaw 2009, pp. 110–111.

parties in Egypt had unequal access to state media with little airtime, and opportunity to reach potential voters on a mass scale⁴⁹. To participate in the elections, MB changed their attitude toward other Egyptian groups and parties, even the secular ones, which allowed them to build political alliances (e.g. an alliance with the Al-Wafd party in the 1984 elections, with the Hizb al-Amal party in 1987)⁵⁰. Obtaining the status of a political party would allow the MB to gain a place in parliament and seek Islamization of the legislation, as well as to change the constitution and closely link it to Muslim law⁵¹. However, government effectively limited political competition by tightening the electoral law. In 1990, it resulted in boycott of the elections by the MB and other groups, whereas in 1995, because the government feared strengthening of Islamist position, the MB was banned as a political party. The situation changed in 2005 when the support for the movement increased significantly and in the elections Islamists won 20% of the seats. In spite of their success, MB were still not recognized as an official political party. They boycotted the elections more than once, accusing the authorities of electoral fraud and difficult access to the state media. The Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), formed by the MB, which later created the Democratic Alliance for Egypt with 28 other Egyptian parties, participated in the 2011–2012 elections⁵², after the Egyptian revolution, which removed Mubarak from the government. The candidate of FJP, Mohammed Mursi, became the president and the Supreme Military Council dissolved the

⁴⁹ Arabska Republika Egiptu, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-374.396+01+DOC+PDF+V0//PL&language=PL> [Accessed: 05.10.2019].

⁵⁰ J. Zdanowski, op.cit., p. 111.

⁵¹ Ibidem, p. 116.

⁵² *Democratic Alliance for Egypt*, <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/3160/democratic-alliance-for-egypt> [Accessed: 23.01.2020].

parliament and announced a constitutional declaration, under which they granted themselves greater rights in legislation and security, limited opportunities of the president, which was considered a “constitutional coup” by members of the MB⁵³. Hizb An-Nur and Hizb al-Wasat also took part in these elections. Hizb al-Wasat was constituted by former members of the MB who, after leaving the association, implemented a moderate form of Islamism. Their programme involved not only Muslims, but also other communities, referring more to the modernist version of Islam than to the literal meaning of sharia⁵⁴. Only Hizb An-Nur participated in the 2015 elections, gaining little support, while Hizb al-Wasat boycotted the elections by opposing current regulations that do not provide fair representation and declaring the election process unfair⁵⁵.

The MB is often a point of reference in the context of the political activity of Islamists as part of “bottom-up Islamization”, also observed in other countries. Tunisia is a good example in this respect. When in 1981 President Habib Bourguiba allowed the legalization of political parties other than the ruling The Socialist Destourian Party (Parti Socialiste Destourien, PSD), the secret till then Islamic Al-Jama’a al-Islamiyya announced the creation of the legal political party the Islamic Tendency Movement (Mouvement de la Tendance Islamique, MTI), known since 1988 as Hizb an-Nahdah⁵⁶. The party has

⁵³ M. Sobczak, *Mohammed Mursi: kim jest nowy prezydent Egiptu?*, <http://www.politykaglobalna.pl/2012/06/mohammed-mursi-kim-jest-nowy-prezydent-egiptu/2/> [Accessed: 5.10.2019].

⁵⁴ P. Mandaville, *op.cit.*, p. 131.

⁵⁵ *Egypt election committee to announce date for parliamentary poll Sunday*, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/138976.aspx> [Accessed: 5.10.2019].

⁵⁶ M.J. Willis, *Islamic Movements in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia*, [in:] *The Oxford Handbook...*, *op.cit.*, p. 533; K. Izak, *Leksykon Organizacji i Ruchów Islamistycznych*, Warsaw 2016, pp. 255–256.

clear links with the MB and is relatively moderate. Its goal was to reconcile democracy with Islam⁵⁷. Until 2011, Tunisia was a presidential republic and the political system was based on strong presidential power. Despite official political pluralism and liberalism in the country, the freedoms of citizens were frequently violated⁵⁸. The Tunisian regime allowed the legalization only of certain parties, so when Islamists openly revealed their political ambitions, Hizb an-Nahdah was not only refused legalization, but its leaders were imprisoned. Bourguiba adopted the Western political orientation instead of the Islamic identity of the country, he also excluded religion from public life by blocking the activities of parties with Islamic ideological foundations⁵⁹. In this respect, the Bourguiba regime made more attempts to remove Islam from the political sphere and public life, even though the Tunisian constitution declares that Islam was the state religion of Tunisia. During the presidency of the abovementioned Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali (1987–2011), party leaders were released, and attempts were made to create a more pluralistic political system in Tunisia⁶⁰. In fact, however, both the Bourguiba regime and the rule of Ben Ali were a period when the Tunisian state maintained strict control over Islamists, “the government denied Islamist activists passports and revoked their identity cards. It prevented them from gaining employment, acquiring legal counsel, and even using public telephones. The government also restricted the wearing of ‘sectarian dress, which included the hijab, beards and *qamis* (long garb for men), despite the constitution pro-

⁵⁷ A.C. Larroque, *Geopolityka fundamentalizmów muzułmańskich*, Warsaw 2015, p. 57.

⁵⁸ K. Czajkowska, A. Diawoł-Sitko, op.cit., pp. 227–228.

⁵⁹ J. Cesari, *The Awakening of Muslim Democracy. Religion, Modernity, and the State*, New York 2014, p. 43.

⁶⁰ K. Pędziwiatr, op.cit., p. 97; M.J. Willis, *Islamic...*, op.cit., p. 533.

viding for Islam as the official religion of the state”⁶¹. Each Tunisian political party had to apply for legal recognition from the state, but the possibility of legalizing Islamist political parties was excluded, because no party had the right to appeal in its principles, action or programme to religion⁶². MTI tried to comply with the requirements of the act, which is why it changed name to Hizb an-Nahdah. However, it was not accepted as a legitimate political party, and its members stood for elections as independent candidates. Until the Arab Spring, not only in Tunisia, but also in Morocco or Algeria, Islamist movements posed a real threat to prevailing regimes that effectively blocked their political activity by using various forms of exclusion and repression. The emergence of governments led by Islamist parties in Tunisia and Morocco at the end of 2011 marked the beginning of a new era for the participation of Islamic movements in political processes in the region⁶³.

These examples relate to the party strategy, where “bottom-up Islamization” concerns not only the activities of Islamist political parties on the political scene, but the Islamization of political and cultural institutions as well. Although Islamists did not receive access to government institutions, they did, however, participate in elections, won seats in parliament, gained access to many professional organizations, and also conducted extensive social, cultural and educational activities. Examples of some countries also show, that it is the lack of space in politics, and often the persecution of Islamist formations, that became the factor which let them gained social trust and support. As Konrad Pędziwiatr writes, Islamists gained support precisely because they were perceived as free

⁶¹ J. Cesari, *op.cit.*, p. 43.

⁶² M.J. Willis, *op.cit.*, p. 534.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 542.

from regimes' corruption, so after the removal of Mubarak or Ben Ali from power, important places in the Egyptian and Tunisian policy fell to those who were sentenced to prison during their rule⁶⁴. As a result of the free elections in these countries in 2011, power was taken over by Islamists emerging from the shadow of the political opposition. These examples also show, that Islamists have become the dominant political opposition despite many years, when their formations had the illegal status. They also became an example of political mobilization in a non-military way.

An example of the party strategy is also provided by Jordan, which is the area of activity of the MB and Hizb ut-Tahrir (Party of Liberation). Political parties in Jordan are insignificant and for many years the only Islamist party with electoral success was the political wing of the MB, a moderate Islamic Action Front (IAF) formed in 1992. It may be due to the fact that in that year, democratic reforms led to the legalization of political parties⁶⁵. Although political parties were banned, social and especially charitable activities of Islamist formations was possible as long as they supported the monarchy and remained loyal to the king. A typical feature of the actions of Jordanian Islamists was that they allowed cooperation with the government, supported development of the country, various social sectors, ran for local government elections. At the same time some of them rejected any form of cooperation with the government or parties that did not correspond to the Muslim model and did not intend to establish Muslim state structures⁶⁶. The turning point in Jordan's policy were the parliamentary elections in 1989. Candidates, including those from

⁶⁴ K. Pędziwiatr, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

⁶⁵ K. Czajkowska, A. Diawoł-Sitko, *op.cit.*, pp. 261, 265.

⁶⁶ A. Wąs, *Bracia Muzułmanie w Jordanii. Doktryna i organizacja bractwa na przełomie XX i XXI wieku*, Lublin 2006, p. 80.

the MB, stood for the elections as independent candidates and gained such support that they became the largest block⁶⁷. Part of the MB, who gained real political influence after elections, could implement the social programme by being included in the government of Mudar Badran, where they took over the relevant ministry of education, justice, Awkaf (institutionalized Muslim alms), social affairs, and health. At the same time, however, taking advantage of this situation, the radical wing, aimed at radicalizing international policy, often referring to jihad and, as a result, deteriorating relations of the association with the monarchy⁶⁸. The next elections in 1993, mainly due to a change in the electoral law, which limited the presence of the Islamist movement in parliament, brought the MB a much worse result, in spite of the fact that they formed a coalition with other opposition groups. Introducing changes in the electoral law was a frequent tactics of the government applied to limit the presence of the Islamist bloc in parliament, and thus to avoid the progressive political opening and block implementation of the Islamist projects. The situation did not change in the subsequent elections in 1997, when the monarchy refused to change the electoral law, causing a boycott of the elections by the Islamists⁶⁹. In fact, Jordan's policy has followed this path since the beginning of the 1990s, i.e. on the one hand, there was the continuing process of democratization aimed primarily at gaining public favor, but on the other hand, the influence of Islamist parties was limited by preserving the electoral system that was detrimental to them⁷⁰. For these reasons, the Islamic opposition boycotted the elections in 2010 and 2013,

⁶⁷ Ibidem, p. 82.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, pp. 82–83.

⁶⁹ K. Bokhari, F. Senzai, *Political Islam in the Age of Democratization*, New York 2013, p. 54.

⁷⁰ K. Czajkowska, A. Diawoń-Sitko, op.cit., p. 260.

each time referring to the manipulation of electoral law and the support given to selected candidates.

Jordanian MB underwent a transformation that corresponds to the implementation of “bottom-up Islamization”, and they became a political organization which formed the “method of political pragmatism and a system of achieving its goals without resorting to violence”, which referred on the one hand to support of the monarchy, and on the other to active participation in the process of co-creating the parliamentary system⁷¹. Though, wherever there were opportunities to increase social support for the MB, they were also able to oppose the monarchy, as it was, among others, in 1996 when the government decision to reduce subsidies for basic food products met with severe criticism of the MB, and their attitude was considered by the king as important in controlling the difficult economic and political situation in Jordan⁷². However, the basic problem of the MB, which stood in the way of their political success, was the lack of unity between the radical and moderate fractions, which weakened the position and reduced the chance not only to develop a common strategy, e.g. in elections, but also resulted in the blockade of the government in the face of radical slogans and tendencies of parts of the MB, among others cooperation with Hamas, recognized as a natural element of Islamist aspirations to create a Muslim state, rejected by a moderate fraction as an obstacle to the democratic process⁷³. The Islamist strategy in Jordan was therefore based on balanced cooperation with the monarchy, legal activities and loyalty to the existing political system, which was a condition of any political activity, and remained essentially unchanged for a period of about 60 years. An important aspect

⁷¹ A. Wąs, *op.cit.*, p. 83.

⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 85.

⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 87.

of this strategy was the *dawah* system (from Arab *dawa*, a “call to Islam”), which referred to the ideology of proselytism, which over time evolved into a tool of political propaganda, spreading views of dynasties, then regimes, or as a method of recruiting religious or political supporters⁷⁴.

An example of combining the party strategy with the Islamist resistance and de-radicalization is the Lebanese Hezbollah. Since its inception in 1982, the Party of God (Hizb Allah), being a tool of Ayatollah Khomeini working for the revolution in Lebanon, advocated the introduction of Shi'ite theocratic rule in the country following the Iranian pattern⁷⁵. Hezbollah's original character was determined by the Israeli occupation of Lebanon; hence it is a typical example of armed Islamic resistance. Hezbollah is a nationalist formation which has developed armed wings mainly to fight the occupier, and although it also declares hostility toward the US, NATO and France for the misfortunes that fell on Muslims⁷⁶, its activity is concentrated primarily within the territory of the country, hence it is also a typical example of Islamization on a local scale. The ideology of jihad is only one of the dimensions of the movement's activity, besides, Hezbollah strives to political power through the law, seeking social recognition as a legal political entity, which is why it is also an example of “bottom-up Islamization”. Armed struggle is justified mainly by the occupation of Lebanon and aspirations for national liberation, but to implement the Islamist programme on the political scene, Hezbollah's actions are compliant with applicable law. By following the principles of legislative policy, the movement has

⁷⁴ D.F. Eickelman, J. Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*, Princeton 1996, p. 35.

⁷⁵ G. Kepel, *Jihad. The Trail of Political Islam*, London–New York 2016, p. 127.

⁷⁶ K. Dziedzic, *Ideologia Hezbollahu i jej ewolucja w latach 1982–2009*, “Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe” 2010, vol. VII, No. 1, p. 54.

significantly improved its image not only in Lebanon. Initially, the movement was based on a double function: as an armed factor in the radicalization of the Shi'ite community and as a non-military Iranian political tool⁷⁷. Hezbollah is extremely complex. The scope of its activity includes political, economic, military, issues, and its social activity covers a significant percentage of the Lebanese community gaining greater efficiency than the government of that country⁷⁸. At the beginning of the 1990s, the movement evolved into a legitimate political party, in 1992 it took part in the parliamentary elections, winning a seat in the Lebanese parliament. However, the position of the movement in the country or on the international arena is largely determined by the military potential, which allows shaping its own interest on the political stage of Lebanon and official speaking on behalf of the state⁷⁹. Hezbollah identified itself with the idea of a united, sovereign Lebanon, especially in the face of the Israeli occupation, and the establishment of an Islamic republic is also an important aspect of its policy, although the party did not explicitly include such information in the official documents (the 1985 political document and the 2009 political manifesto)⁸⁰. The movement election programmes from 1992–2005 show that Hezbollah has changed the approach and methods of implementation of its goals, using rhetoric of conciliation and convincing about the uniqueness of Islam, from which they derive the principles of democracy and human rights⁸¹. The political aspect of Hez-

⁷⁷ G. Kepel, *Święta wojna. Ekspansja i upadek fundamentalizmu muzułmańskiego*, Warsaw 2003, p. 131.

⁷⁸ R. Ożarowski, *Hezbollah w stosunkach międzynarodowych na Bliskim Wschodzie*, Gdańsk 2011, p. 73.

⁷⁹ Ibidem, p. 78.

⁸⁰ Ibidem, p. 82.

⁸¹ K. Dziedzic, op.cit., p. 61.

bollah activities, including their foreign contacts, relates to their functioning as a party, but it is not detached from the military aspects of the movement, because the central element of their policy is the issue of Israel or US intervention in the Middle East, which are the basis for justifying the necessity of maintaining the armed forces⁸² and continuing the resistance movement in Lebanon as long as the “Zionist unit” exists⁸³. Hezbollah is not a typical party, and despite the clearly emphasized social and political features of activity, both aforesaid documents mention the significance of the military potential of the movement, define enemies of Lebanon and the whole ummah, and the three pillars of the movement – Islam, jihad and *wilayat al-faqih* (leaving the highest state power in the hands of a lawyer). Announced before the 2009 elections, the election programme⁸⁴ was dominated however by the spirit of understanding and dialogue, building the state and strengthening the unity of the nation, emphasizing the most desirable issues for the nation such as stabilization and peace, a state based on the principles of law and powerful institutions, justice and unity of citizens, as well as inviolability and hostility toward Israel⁸⁵. It shows the flexibility of the Hezbollah strategy and a comprehensive approach to the Lebanon issue. The military dimension of the movement’s activity is as important as reforms that would allow to build a state based on equality of citizens, fair parliamentary representation with modern electoral law, modern institutions and public administration, capable of fighting corruption and injustice, in which the emphasis is on social and economic development, employment

⁸² R. Ożarowski, *op.cit.*, pp. 73–74, Annex 3.

⁸³ K. Dziedzic, *Ideologia...*, *op.cit.*, p. 62.

⁸⁴ On June 4, 2009, Hezbollah’s political programme was presented by Mohammed Ra’ad (R. Ożarowski, *op.cit.*, pp. 209–217, Annex 2).

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 211.

and education⁸⁶. Socially relevant problems, i.e. the reformulation of the goals of the movement into more pragmatic ones, long-term social work and commitment to social assistance, healthcare and education, decided about the support that Hezbollah gained in the society, and were also an important factor of its success⁸⁷. In particular, it concerns the results of the military operations in 2000 and then 2006 and war damages. The society needed a guarantee to meet basic needs, financial assistance, and reconstruction of the country. Hezbollah has become the main pillar of this reconstruction. Social support enabled the formation to achieve political success, from 1992 when Hezbollah gained a seat in the parliament, until 2009 it managed the opposition bloc⁸⁸. Similarly, the skillful building of a coalition with Amal, which has enjoyed public trust in Lebanon for years, has gained 30% support in the 2018 elections. Comments on these events speak of the crushing victory of Hezbollah, which became a state within state, and after this election some websites wrote "Lebanon is Hezbollah"⁸⁹.

Contextual Islamization and a similar strategy apply to Palestinian Hamas as well. Political and military conditions are also similar, it is the conflict with Israel, the desire to establish a Muslim state on its current territory, and on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as rivalry with the secular Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)⁹⁰. Hamas also adapts its strat-

⁸⁶ I. Moussawi, *The Making of Lebanon's Hizbullah*, [in:] *Political Islam. Context...*, op.cit., p. 222.

⁸⁷ G. Denoex, *The forgotten swamp. Navigating political Islam*, [in:] *Political islam. A critical reader*, ed. F. Volpi, London–New York 2011, p. 75.

⁸⁸ K. Izak, op.cit., pp. 241, 245.

⁸⁹ *Wybory w Libanie: zwycięstwo Hezbollahu*, <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2018-05-07/wybory-w-libanie-zwyciestwo-hezbollahu-zginela-co-najmniej-1-osoba/> [Accessed: 5.10.2019].

⁹⁰ M. Levitt, *Hamas. Polityka, dobroczynność i terroryzm w służbie dżihadu*, Kraków 2007, p. 11.

egy to political conditions, combines ideological and pragmatic aspects, social change, religious propaganda, political participation and military involvement with the *dawah* system⁹¹. The key change in the strategy of the movement was brought by 2006 and the electoral success of the Palestinian Legislative Council, when the movement gained 56% support. Hamas has become the key player in the Palestinian political scene, and in addition to an effective pro-Islamic campaign, an important aspect of this success was large-scale social, health and public service⁹². Hamas enemy rhetoric toward the West has also become more moderate, and their reluctance to the PLO turned into readiness to cooperate. Many of these changes took place at the expense of concessions and redefinition of the current ideology of the movement. One can say that success of Hamas was the result of their rational analysis of political options, consideration of non-religious possibilities or alliances, and at the same time the process of legitimacy, which included political choices and decisions with religious frame, so as to make them acceptable to the supporters and voters of Hamas⁹³. Hamas demonstrates the unique ability to blur the boundaries between politics, charity and terrorist activities, to use its services for military actions and at the same time for social and helpful ones⁹⁴. Hamas flexible strategy was also evident in the political clash with Fatah, the main PLO force that has ruled the West Bank since 1967. To form a government of national unity, Hamas several times undertook a dialogue with Fatah, including in 2007, in 2014 or in 2017 (signing of the agreement in Cairo)⁹⁵, assessed by the world

⁹¹ K. Hroub, *Hamas: Conflating National Liberation and Socio-Political Change*, [in:] *Political Islam. Context...*, op.cit., p. 174.

⁹² M. Levitt, op.cit., pp. 1–2.

⁹³ K. Hroub, op.cit., p. 178.

⁹⁴ M. Levitt, op.cit., p. 8.

⁹⁵ P. Scham, *Hamas-Fatah Reconciliation? The Implications*, <https://www>.

media as an extremely difficult or even unreal move. Matthew Levitt pointed out that support for Hamas in Palestinian society (especially in 2006) is a peculiar phenomenon, given the phantom of terror that has repeatedly affected civilians. Although the specificity of Hamas in the context of “bottom-up Islamization” concerns its political and social wing, it still functions as an integral part of the terror apparatus. Levitt wrote about “the myth of disparate wings”, in fact Hamas “benefits from an ostensible distinction drawn by some analysts between its ‘military’ and ‘political’, or ‘social wings’ (...). The evidence regarding the integration of Hamas’ political activism, social services, and terrorism demonstrate the centrality of the group’s overt activities to the organization’s ability to recruit, indoctrinate, train, fund, and dispatch suicide bombers to attack civilian targets”⁹⁶. However, the success of Hamas in the process of “bottom-up Islamization”, and in particular in the 2006 elections, is above all a response to the urgent need for social benefits among Palestinians, acting as an Islamic opposition to the secular Palestinian National Authority, in view of its administrative and economic neglect and the resulting dramatically low living standards⁹⁷. Hamas with its activities is part of the model of contextual Islamization. It is characterized by an unusual ability to satisfy the most urgent social interests and extensive charity activities, while blurring the boundaries between them and their political and terrorist activities⁹⁸.

The indicated party strategies of Islamist movements operating in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine, do not exhaust examples for the “bottom-up Islam-

mei.edu/publications/hamas-fatah-reconciliation-implications [Accessed: 30.09.2019].

⁹⁶ M. Levitt, *op.cit.*, p. 3.

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 7–8.

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

ization”, but they can be considered as the most representative and explicit. In many countries, Islamists wanting to implement an Islamization programme must consider far-reaching compromises or alliances. For various reasons, Islamists in many countries did not have many opportunities to shape the reality of their countries, either because of their small strength or the context in which they functioned. For example, in Pakistan, Islamic political parties like the Jama’at-e Islami (Muslim Party of Pakistan), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islami (Assembly of Islamic Clerics), and Jamiat Ulema-e Pakistan (Assembly of Pakistani Clergy) have the chance to enter parliament only due to alliances and the development of common interests because they are weak. Fragmentation of Islamist political forces in Pakistan gives them little chance for electoral success. Over the years 1990–2018, only once, in 2002, a coalition consisting of the conservative, Islamist and far-right parties of Pakistan – *Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal* (MMA, founded in 2002 as an opposition to the policy of President Pervez Musharraf) managed to get 19% support in parliamentary elections, and none of the other parties exceeded 5% support. The MMA decided to build an alliance also in the 2018 elections, however, it did not repeat the success of ten years ago⁹⁹. Some of these parties, e.g. the moderate Jama’at-e Islami, followed its founder, Abul A’la Maududi, proclaimed slogans of “top-down Islamization” and the Islamic revolution, more or less for these reasons some party supporters opposed participation in parliamentary elections. Over the past decade, the Jama’at-e Islami has been the largest religious organization in Pakistan, and as a political party is rather part of a lobbying strategy as one of the Pakistani pressure groups, organizes seminars, conferences, rallies

⁹⁹ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/255683-religious-parties-announce-revival-of-mma-after-a-decade> [Accessed: 5.10.2019].

and demonstrations, controls the network of mosques, and has followers in national media¹⁰⁰. Similarly, Jamiat Ulema-e Pakistan party acting rather as a pressure group, did not achieve any major political success.

The most difficult situation of Islamist parties is in Turkey. In the constitution, there is no reference to Islam, no sharia influence on Turkish national law, but this does not mean that it does not play a significant role in the Turkish society and politics. Moreover, the state elites use Islam as a tool for national homogenization¹⁰¹. In this respect, Turkey is part of the utilitarian strategy of M. A. Fattah to some extent. After the creation of Turkey as a nation-state, the phase of political and social westernization was initiated by Kemal Atatürk, seeking to secularize and, in consequence, control Islam by the state. Atatürk's policy removed Islam from the public sphere but did not create the basis for a clear separation of state and religion. As a result, we are dealing with "unique laicism in which religion is not part of public life but it is still controlled and reshaped by state policies"¹⁰². One of the largest pro-Islamic parties in the Turkish parliament was The Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, RP), which did not implement a radical Islamist programme but supported the extension of military-industrial cooperation with Israel and limitation of religious education. It has run in parliamentary elections since 1991, and in 1995 it became the most important parliament party. In 1996, the leader RP Necmettin Erbakan was appointed the Prime Minister, which, due to his pro-Islamic sympathies, caused resistance among Atatürk's policy supporters, similarly

¹⁰⁰ <https://www2.memri.org/polish/ideolog-dzamaat-e-islami-profesor-churszid-ahmad-w-kwestii-palestynskiej-niechaj-bedzie-rozwiazanie-jednego-panstwa-syjonisci-i-sila-militarna-ktorzy-kontroluja-nie-powinni-tam-is/1649> [Accessed: 15.10.2019].

¹⁰¹ J. Cesari, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*.

to RP intention in parliament. As a result, in 1997, the parliamentary coalition which supported Erbakan, including RP, was forced by the army to dissolve, and the Prime Minister was forced to resign¹⁰³. The following year, by virtue of a judgment of the Constitutional Tribunal in Turkey, the party was annulled for violation of the constitution, in particular the principles of Turkish secularism. Erbakan and many party members were deprived of the right to actively participate in politics for five years, and party funds were transferred to the state treasury¹⁰⁴. On the one hand, these events raised questions about Turkish democracy, and on the other, increased the tension in Turkey between supporters of a greater participation of religion in public life, and those for whom any departure from strict secularism is a violation of the basic principles governing the country¹⁰⁵. In spite of that, Islamists in Turkey ran in elections, either as independent candidates, or trying a more flexible strategy, focusing on gaining support, even at the expense of giving up some assumptions as long as they are not in line with mainstream national policy. This was the case in the early elections in 1999, in which Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi, FP) won 20% support. It was created as a result of the restoration of former RP, which supported, among others, Turkish aspirations for membership of the European Union and made democracy their major political goal¹⁰⁶. The attitude of the Turkish establishment toward pro-Islamist parties did not change significantly, the activities of subsequent parties were consistently inhibited, and so did FP, which was also suspended by the Constitutional Tribunal on the

¹⁰³ G. Kepel, *op.cit.*, p. 339.

¹⁰⁴ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/48001.stm [Accessed: 17.10.2019].

¹⁰⁵ *Ibidem.*

¹⁰⁶ G. Kepel, *op.cit.*, p. 355.

charge of violating the constitutional principle of secularism of the state¹⁰⁷. Other parties were created in their place, maintaining the character of the predecessor's ideology. In this way, the mentioned AKP was founded. It is not a typical Islamist party, although its large part is made up of former members of RP and FP¹⁰⁸. The strategy of the new movement was based mainly on a thorough change of the party's identity and programme – e.g. the party statute no longer referred to religion but to universalism of human rights, rule of law, the importance of civil society and political pluralism, as well as the integration of the Turkish economy with the European Union – which would allow not only to win elections, but also to survive in the conditions of Kemalist regime and the principles of the Constitutional Tribunal¹⁰⁹. Since 2002, the AKP has been running in the elections immediately gaining 66% support, which remained slightly hesitant until 2018. The ability to compromise, servitude to the public and openness to progress related to the Western world, and over time also demands to strengthen Turkey's rank in the region, all contributed to the party's success and strengthened its political base. These factors place the Turkish case among the examples of “bottom-up Islamization”. The party has often been attributed a hidden goal, which was the pursuit of power to Islamize Turkish society and politics. Although there are no such premises in the AKP programme, and party representatives publicly refuse to use Islam as a political tool, some explain that these fears arise from a special understanding of secularism. The so-called “passive secularism”, which means the neutrality of the state toward religious practices and enables the existence

¹⁰⁷ K. Bieniek, *Turecka Partia Sprawiedliwości i Rozwoju (AKP) – na drodze ku „nowej Turcji”*, “Cywilizacja i Polityka” 2017, No. 15, p. 126.

¹⁰⁸ P. Mandaville, op.cit., p. 132.

¹⁰⁹ K. Bieniek, op.cit., pp. 127–128.

of religious symbols in the public sphere. This vision of a neutral state attitude toward religion is supported by the AKP¹¹⁰.

Conclusions

The presented examples of strategies in relations between Islam and the state do not exhaust the model of “bottom-up Islamization”, but they justify the hypothesis that its nature depends on a network of various factors, is dynamic not only because of the context of the region, but it is also changeable in time. Majority of the invoked Islamist formations, represented by the new generation of “pragmatic Islamists”, while in opposition to political power, have developed new political strategies. In this way, some of them gained support significantly enough to actually take over the power and thus have a real impact on changes in their countries (e.g. the Turkish AKP); some, despite being outlawed, created new structures, participated in free-elections or joined in broader coalitions even with secular formations (e.g. MB in Egypt). Others, however, through partial de-radicalization, strengthened social and aid aspects in their programmes and, making use of local crises, created a base for rebuilding the country and thus achieved success (e.g. Palestinian Hamas).

The context of the region is an important element of “bottom-up Islamization”. Many Middle East countries declare Islam to be their official religion, and at the same time do not admit its institutional control or control of legal and judicial processes. Meanwhile, regardless of the state formula, Islam is an integral aspect of the identity of the Middle East societies, Islamism is based on this relationship, hence many Islamist for-

¹¹⁰ <http://www.nouvelle-europe.eu/en/turkey-akp-s-hidden-agenda-or-different-vision-secularism> [Accessed: 17.10.2019].

mations, despite the policies of their countries, did not give up these foundations, others remained with a symbolic reference to Islam, and little gave up looking for support in religion at all. Considering the strategies discussed as part of “bottom-up Islamization”, Islamists gained public support by choosing several paths: propaganda activities aimed at gradually changing social attitudes and beliefs, including keeping distance from the prevailing regimes, creating a platform for dialogue and referring to morality and conscience in society (*dawah*), building civil institutions or non-governmental organizations, creating formal political movements, establishing political parties and participating in elections. The last of these predominates in the countries that allow Islamists to become politically active in public life. But even in such cases, the level of access to equal political participation is quite varied, e.g. in Egypt, obtaining majority of votes in elections by the MB did not guarantee freedom of political activity, in Jordan, even after legalization of Islamist activity or any opposition at all, it was blocked by the regime, and finally in Turkey, where any activity was excluded by legal means, or legalized but on the secular foundations. The diverse level of political involvement of Islamists has therefore complex causes, which are not only the result of differences between Islamist formations – because they have rather a common purpose – the context of the region has a much greater impact.

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Abstract

The paper discusses the models of “bottom-up Islamization” observed since 1990s, represented by Islamist formations that are in opposition to political power. Islamism influenced the internal policy of selected countries but also was changed under its influence. The author analyzes the political involvement of Islamists and the methods by which they tried to join the political sphere. She also hypothesizes that the nature of “bottom-up Islamization” depends on the specificity of the country, on the strength of Islamist formations, flexibility of policy, often resulting in a modification or even a profound change in strategy. The historical approach adopted in the paper makes it possible to show the variability

of Islamist strategies in the context of the socio-political changes of the region in the mid-20th and 21st centuries. However, a comparative analysis of various Islamist formations and selected Middle Eastern countries, taking into account various forms of state relation to religion, justifies the contextual assumption on the nature of “bottom-up Islamization” and its changeability over time.

Keywords: Islamism, „bottom-up Islamization”, Islamic formations, religion, politics, Middle East, power