

MODELS OF ISLAMIC TOLERANCE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TURKEY, MALAYSIA AND THE UAE

¹L.Toktarbekova, ²M. Bektenova

ABSTRACT

This article presents a comparative analysis of models of Islamic tolerance in Turkey, Malaysia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The objective of this study is to ascertain the distinguishing characteristics of each model and the factors that influence religious tolerance in these countries. The research is grounded in discourses pertaining to Islam, secularism, political modernization, and religious diversity. The methodology employed in this study is anchored in a multifaceted approach, encompassing comparative historical analysis, discursive analysis, and content analysis. The primary sources utilized for this research are analytical articles, which serve as the foundation for the study's empirical underpinnings.

To illustrate the concept of diversity, three examples are examined. Turkey, as a secular state; Malaysia, as a multiethnic democracy; and the UAE, as a monarchy in the Persian Gulf region. This selection facilitates an examination of disparate political systems.

The primary conclusions that emerged from this study are as follows: Turkish secularism guaranteed the separation of Islam from political authority; however, it did not result in the establishment of complete religious egalitarianism. The rise of religiosity in recent decades has been accompanied by a decline in social tolerance. Malaysian institutional pluralism has achieved relative harmony among ethno-confessional communities through the ideology of "unity in diversity" and the practice of "passive tolerance". However, interreligious dialogue remains superficial. The Emirati approach to "moderate Islam" endeavors to promote tolerance values through state institutions and positive rhetoric. This approach establishes a correlation between religious tolerance and national identity, as well as the image of a modernizing state on the global stage.

Despite the evident disparities in the relationship between religion and the state, tolerance functions as a mechanism that serves to fortify national unity and legitimize political authority, while being firmly rooted in fundamental Islamic values.

Key words: Islamic Tolerance, Religious Pluralism, Secularism, laicism, Moderate Islam, Political Modernization, Turkey, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates, Interfaith Relations, Cultural Policy..

¹ Institute for Philosophy,
Political Science and Religious
Studies of the CS MES RK,
Almaty, Kazakhstan

² L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian
National University, Astana,
Kazakhstan

Author-correspondent:
Bektenova M.,
mbektenova13@gmail.com

Reference to this article:
Toktarbekova L., Bektenova M.
Models of Islamic Tolerance:
a Comparative Analysis of
Turkey, Malaysia and the UAE
// Adam Alemi. – 2025.
– № 4 (103). – P. 138-146.

Түркия, Малайзия және Біріккен Араб Әмірлігіндегі ислам толеранттылығы үлгілері: салыстырмалы талдауы

Аңдатпа. Мақала Түркия, Малайзия және Біріккен Араб Әмірлігіндегі ислам толеранттылығының үлгілерін салыстырмалы талдауға арналған. Зерттеудің мақсаты – әрбір модельдің ерекшеліктерін және осы елдердегі діни толеранттылықтың қалыптасуына әсер ететін факторларды анықтау. Зерттеу ислам, зайырлылық, саяси модернизация және діни саналуандыққа қатысты мәселелерді талқылауға негізделген. Әдістеме салыстырмалы тарихи, дискурсивті және мазмұндық талдауға негізделген, дереккөздер аналитикалық мақалалар. Зерттеу саналуандықты көрсету үшін таңдалған үш жағдайды қарастырды: зайырлы мемлекет, көпұлтты демократиялық мемлекет және Парсы шығанағы аймағындағы монархия. Бұл таңдау әртүрлі саяси жүйелерді қамтуға мүмкіндік берді. Негізгі тұжырымдар: түрік зайырлылығы исламның биліктен формальды бөлінуін қамтамасыз етті, бірақ діндердің толық теңдігіне әкелмеді, ал соңғы онжылдықтардағы діндарлықтың өсуі әлеуметтік толеранттылықтың төмендеуімен қатар жүрді. Малайзиялық институционалдық плюрализм «әртүрліліктегі бірлік» идеологиясы мен «пассивті төзімділік» тәжірибесіне негізделген этноконфессиялық қауымдастықтар арасындағы салыстырмалы үйлесімділікке қол жеткізді, дегенмен дінаралық диалог үстірт болып қалады. Әмірліктердегі «қалыпты ислам» көзқарасы мемлекеттік институттар мен позитивті риторика арқылы толеранттылық құндылықтарын енгізумен, діни толеранттылықты ұлттық бірегейлікпен және әлемдік аренадағы жаңғырушы мемлекеттің имиджімен байланыстырумен сипатталады. Дін мен мемлекеттің қарым-қатынасындағы айырмашылықтарға қарамастан, барлық жағдайда толеранттылық негізгі ислам құндылықтарына сүйене отырып, ұлттық бірлікті нығайту және билікті заңдастыру құралы ретінде қызмет етеді.

Түйін сөздер: исламдық толеранттылық, діни плюрализм, зайырлылық, лаицизм, қалыпты ислам, саяси модернизация, Түркия, Малайзия, Біріккен Араб Әмірліктері, дінаралық қатынастар, мәдени саясат.

Модели исламской толерантности: сравнительный анализ Турции, Малайзии и ОАЭ

Аннотация. Статья посвящена сравнительному анализу моделей исламской толерантности в Турции, Малайзии и ОАЭ. Цель исследования – выявить особенности каждой модели и факторы, влияющие на формирование религиозной терпимости в этих странах. В основе исследования лежат обсуждения

вопросов, связанных с исламом, светскостью, политической модернизацией и религиозным многообразием. Методология опирается на сравнительно-исторический, дискурсивный и содержательный анализ; источниками служат аналитические статьи. В рамках исследования были рассмотрены три примера, которые были выбраны для демонстрации разнообразия: светское государство, многонациональное государство с демократией и монархия в регионе Персидского залива. Такой выбор позволил охватить различные политические системы. Основные выводы: турецкий лаицизм обеспечил формальное отделение ислама от власти, но не привел к полноценному равноправию религий, и рост религиозности в последние десятилетия сопровождался снижением социальной терпимости. Малайзийский институциональный плюрализм достиг относительной гармонии этно-конфессиональных общин на основе идеологии «единства в многообразии» и практики «пассивной толерантности», хотя межрелигиозный диалог остается поверхностным. Эмиратский подход «умеренного ислама» характеризуется внедрением ценностей терпимости через государственные институты и позитивную риторику, связывая религиозную терпимость с национальной идентичностью и имиджем модернизирующегося государства на мировой арене. Несмотря на различия в соотношении религии и государства, во всех случаях толерантность служит инструментом укрепления национального единства и легитимации власти, опираясь на базовые исламские ценности.

Ключевые слова: исламская толерантность, религиозный плюрализм, секуляризм, лаицизм, умеренный ислам, политическая модернизация, Турция, Малайзия, Объединенные Арабские Эмираты, межрелигиозные отношения, культурная политика.

Introduction

The relationship between Islam and tolerance is a particularly salient question in contemporary Muslim societies, where religious revival and cultural diversity present novel challenges to states. The primary challenge confronting Islamic societies is the reconciliation of Islamic values with the principles of a pluralistic, tolerant society. The theoretical framework of this study encompasses discourses pertaining to Islam and secularism, political modernization, and religious pluralism. A prime example of this phenomenon is Turkey's experience with secularization under the leadership of Atatürk, which for a considerable duration, suppressed the religious sphere in the pursuit of modernization. Nevertheless, even in the wake of substantial reforms, Islamic values remained firmly entrenched in society, resulting in a resurgence of the religious dimension in politics. Conversely, other nations, such as Malaysia, have adopted institutionalized pluralism while maintaining Islam's symbolic significance. A third trajectory is emerging: The concept of "moderate Islam" is employed as a component of a broader modernization and soft power strategy. A notable illustration of this phenomenon is observed in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) [3]. The distinguishing characteristics among these cases allow us to formulate the following research question: A rigorous examination of the models of Islamic tolerance in Turkey, Malaysia, and the UAE is imperative to elucidate the historical, political, legal, and cultural factors that determine their similarities and differences. The objective of this article is to provide a comparative analysis of these three models, to identify their salient features, and to examine the relationship between religion, the state, and cultural practices in the formation of tolerance.

Research Methods

The present study is founded upon a comparative historical and discursive analysis. The data sources encompass analytical articles, empirical survey results (including comparative studies of

values), and regulatory and legal acts. This set of sources facilitates a comprehensive characterization of approaches to religious tolerance. A comparative analysis of three cases is conducted. Turkey, Malaysia, and the United Arab Emirates. The selection of these cases was predicated on the presence of maximal contrast in the domains of political and cultural models. Turkey is a secular republic with a Muslim majority, Malaysia is a multi-ethnic democracy with Islam as the state religion, and the UAE is a Gulf monarchy that promotes the ideology of "moderate Islam". This methodological approach facilitates the identification of the impact of historical conditions, state-religious relations, and socio-cultural factors on the development of tolerance models.

This approach involves a comparative analysis of the evolution of relations between religion and the state over time. Additionally, the discourse of official ideologies, including the principles of Rukun Negara and the "Year of Tolerance" initiative, is analyzed. Furthermore, an examination of political and legal measures that support religious diversity is conducted.

Turkey: Secularism and Islamic Tolerance

Turkey's unique concept of laicism, which is based on the principle of secularism, is a noteworthy example of this approach. This principle was established subsequent to the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The fundamental principle of the concept under discussion is the establishment of a secular state in which religion is to be disentangled from the realm of politics. This historical juncture gave rise to the conceptualization of a model of religious tolerance predicated on the tenets of secular governance, while simultaneously exhibiting deference to Islamic traditions, which exerted a profound influence on both cultural expression and private spheres.

Nevertheless, the notion of "tolerance" functioned as state ideology for an extended period, obscuring the structural disparities between the predominant Sunni Muslim majority and "other"

demographic groups, including ethnic and religious minorities, secular societal segments, and migrants.

The term "millet" was employed during the Ottoman Empire to denote the heterogeneity of the population. "The millet system emerged gradually as an answer to the efforts of the Ottoman administration to take into account the organization and culture of the various religious-ethnic groups it ruled" [4, p. 482-483]. The policy of Fatih Mehmed II in the early period of his reign, when, after the capture of Constantinople, he demonstrated examples of "tolerance and acceptance of the "others" in terms of race, religion, language, and culture" [4, p. 481], became the basis for the formation of a persistent myth about the «Ottoman multinational paradise.» However, as Ayhan Kaya observes, "toleration in the Ottoman context... refers to the "absence of persecution of people but not their acceptance into society as full and welcomed members of community" [5, p. 55]. In essence, tolerance can be interpreted as a form of condescension rather than genuine equality.

The modernization reforms of the 19th century, particularly the Tanzimat [6], profoundly transformed the empire. According to the findings of the study, the implementation of modernization reforms has led to the adoption of a more nation-state-like structure, thereby creating significant challenges for the ongoing sustainability of religious pluralism [7, p. 599]. Following the year 1908, the ideological tenets of Ottoman nationalism underwent a transformation, gravitating towards a homogenizing model [7, p. 579]. As stated in the Treaty of Lausanne [8], which was signed in 1923, the term "minority" was narrowed to encompass Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, while excluding Muslim groups, including Kurds and Alevis. Contrary to expectations, a growing trend towards stricter uniformity is emerging within a secular state. «Turkey's political elites voluntarily attempted the most radical secularization among the Muslim countries. The principle of democracy was secondary to that of state secularism» [1, p. 17, 19]. The implementation of the authoritarian secular model, known as Kemalism, resulted in the removal of religious symbols from public spaces. However, this intervention did not lead to the complete eradication of religion from the social structure. "Despite sweeping reforms... Islamic values remained deeply rooted in Turkish society... The revival of Islam... gathered momentum after the 1980s" [4, p. 505-510].

Therefore, the emergence of the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) in the 1990s became a "profound challenge to the state-centric, republican, and secular regime" [9, p. 11]. The combination of neoliberal reforms and transnational Islamic networks allowed the party to "attract the votes of the Islamic bourgeoisie, the upper middle class, and the marginalized lower class" [9, p. 11], overcoming previous class and regional barriers. The

World Values Survey confirms: "rising religiosity and intolerance can be traced back to 1995 and have become more visible during the AKP's rule" (Justice and Development Party/Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) [2, p. 9]. Empirical data collected by researchers Birol A. Yeşilada and Peter Noordijk based on four waves of comparative surveys (1990, 1996, 2001, 2007) indicate a stable, though not always statistically flawless, inverse relationship between religiosity and social tolerance: "The pattern of positive correlations means the more religious an individual, the less tolerant (s) he seems to become" [2, p. 21]. Despite the consideration of gender, frequency of church attendance, and other factors, the regression model did not demonstrate a statistically significant change in the strength of the relationship between religiosity and tolerance over the study period. This finding indicates that the relationship between religiosity and tolerance remains relatively stable over time [2, p. 22]. This finding suggests that the value gap is not mitigated by modernization processes or institutional reforms; rather, it is reinforced by cultural practices.

Concomitant with the persistence of negative correlation, there is an escalation in socio-political polarization. An analysis of a survey conducted in 2006 by Professor Ayhan Kaya reveals that only 20% of respondents identify as "secular", while 49% align with the Islamic pole. "The data from the survey conducted in 2006, provides insight to the division ... while 20 % of the participants placed themselves towards the secularist end, 49 % places themselves towards the Islamist side" [9, p. 25]. This imbalance serves to corroborate the conclusion of Birol A. Yeşilada and Peter Noordijk that a high degree of religiosity is associated with a reduced willingness to accept difference. Concurrently, it demonstrates how asymmetrical the "fields of attraction" of secularism and Islam are in Turkish society at the beginning of the 21st century.

When considered as a whole, these results suggest a twofold process: initially, religiosity remains a reliable predictor of declining tolerance; secondly, due to the shift in public sentiment toward Islamic identity, the scale of potential intolerance is expanding. A logical conclusion to be drawn from the available data is that policies of "tolerance" in Turkey must take into account not only institutional mechanisms, but also deep-rooted cultural determinants. Judging by the dynamics of the surveys, these determinants do not yet show a clear trend towards liberalization.

"The definition of tolerance is limited to the acceptance of Sunni Muslims and their secular colleagues under the banner of the Sunni Muslim Turkish nation" [9, p. 28]. The AKP's attempt to rethink the discourse through "diversity as ideology" in the process of European reform "did not lead to a significant change in the attitude of the Sunni Turkish majority towards... diversity" [9, p.

22]. Moreover, the growth of Salafi influence has reinforced a textualist-traditionalist reading of Islam, which, according to Ebru Altinoğlu, directly correlates with everyday intolerance: "that intolerance towards others (foreign groups) in public life is the result of a textualist traditionalist understanding of religion (in this case, Islam), and that religious devotion exacerbates this negative effect" [10, p. 2]. Among textualists, "35% of Turks do not want neighbors of other faiths, 40% do not want non-Muslims, and almost half do not want atheists" [10, p. 3]; the gap is particularly large "in the family and neighborhood" [10, p. 23].

The migration crisis after 2011 revealed the limits of the myth of hospitality. Accepting four million Syrians, the state acted in a "State of Exception", introducing accelerated norms from 2013 [11, p. 342]. Although "social acceptance remains extremely high despite discomfort" [11, p. 345], the degree of rejection grew: "tolerance towards Syrian refugees has decreased" [11, p. 356], and "the proportion of people who identify immigration as a problem... rose from 29% to 75%" [11, p. 350]; economic competition and rumors about naturalization have become key factors of alienation [11, p. 356].

The socio-economic dimension is also important: research by Ayfer Karayel reveals that "women are more tolerant of income inequality than men", and "people who never attend religious services are highly tolerant of inequality and oppose redistribution" [12, p. 101]. This indicates a complex configuration of values, where economic tolerance is not identical to cultural or religious tolerance. Similarly, a cross-cultural comparison of financial "risk tolerance" shows that Turkish students are more likely to demonstrate a high willingness to take risks than American students [13, p. 7], which can be interpreted as an adaptive strategy in conditions of instability, but not as a direct indicator of social liberalism.

Nevertheless, in recent years there have been attempts to soften the strict Kemalist control over religion. Dr. Şule Albayrak notes "eliminating obstacles that prevented religion and religious symbols from being displayed in public spaces" and "reinstating the seized rights of religious minorities" as significant steps [14, p. 1]. The paradox of the Turkish model is that the expansion of religious freedoms for the majority is not always accompanied by the recognition of minority rights; "Pluralism is the result of conditions of freedom, and it limits the authority of the state" [14, p. 2]. When the perception of threat intensifies, "respondents almost exclusively preferred members of the majority over any minority group" [15, p. 8], and the fault line more often runs along the "lifestyle cleavage between secular Turks and Sunni Muslims *a la turca*" [15, p. 1].

The evolution of Turkish secularism – from authoritarian secularization to the post-secular politics of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) – has demonstrated

the capacity of the "myth of tolerance" [5, p. 3] to serve as an instrument of cultural hegemony, albeit only in the face of genuine challenges, such as migration, economic inequality, and religious pluralism. The question remains unresolved: is genuine pluralism possible without revising the very concept of "nation" and without rethinking the historical link between "Sunni Islam, Muslim identity, and Turkishness", which limits the scope of civil equality? The Turkish experience demonstrates that while democratizing institutions and fostering an inclusive memory of Ottoman diversity are necessary conditions, they are insufficient on their own. It is equally crucial to deconstruct the patronizing understanding of tolerans, transforming it from the unilateral mercy of the majority into a bilateral recognition of equal rights to presence, voice, and participation.

Malaysia: Pluralism and Islam in a Multi-ethnic Society

Malaysia is a country with a high degree of ethnic diversity, and its population is predominantly Islamic. Islam is the official state religion, yet the country's constitution ensures the freedom of religion for all citizens. However, the Malaysian model of religious pluralism is predicated not solely on the constitutional formula «Islam is the religion of the Federation...», but also on the ideological core of Rukun Negara, proclaimed on August 31, 1970, in the aftermath of the traumatic riots of May 13, 1969, when "riots... occurred on May 13, 1969, in the capital" [14]. In the preamble to the text, the state explicitly formulates its intention: The Malaysian nation has demonstrated a commitment to the ideal of achieving unity, preserving a democratic way of life, and creating a just society. [13] is indicative of an aspiration to transform ethnic and religious diversity into a source of strength.

The document establishes five pillars of values: "Faith in God; Loyalty to the King and the country; Supremacy of the Constitution; Supremacy of the law; Politeness and morality" [16, p. 13]. As early as January 12, 1971, the Ministry of Education ordered "to repeat social studies subjects, including elements of Rukun Negara... to compose a song Rukun Negara for students to perform" [16, p. 10]. The text itself is positioned as "national ideology... a serious effort by the government to instill the principles of harmony and unity among the people" [16, p. 21], that is, as a moral and political contract connecting the Islamic axis and the multi-ethnic reality [16].

Rukun Negara, in its essence, serves as a foundational element that seamlessly integrates the practice of "polite" tolerance, thereby fostering a minimal consensus. This consensus is predicated on the principles of faith, loyalty to the monarchy, the supremacy of the constitution and the law, and norms of politeness. This amalgamation of principles not only establishes the legitimacy of

Islamic symbolic dominance but also ensures equitable civil opportunities for all groups.

Since gaining independence, Malaysia has been a notable example of religious and cultural pluralism. Prior to achieving independence, the country underwent a process of multiculturalism, and the influence of ethnicity continues to be a significant factor in various aspects of the nation's social and cultural landscape [17]. The constitution enshrined a dual formula, according to which "Islam is the religion of the Federation, but other religions can be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the country" [18, p. 94]. This sets the boundaries of what is permissible, because "the Malaysian constitution has already provided the boundaries of religious tolerance" [19, p. 624]. A distinctive feature of the Malaysian context is the almost complete coincidence of ethnicity and religion: "Being Malay means being a Muslim" [20, p. 1979]. This identification engenders an imbalance in symbolic capital, favoring Islam while concurrently upholding the legally codified equality of other religions. The ethnic and religious mosaic remains pronounced: 56% Muslim, 32% Buddhist-Taoist, 8% Hindu, etc. [21, p. 355]. While "Malaysia is a multiracial, multi-religious, and multicultural country" [22, p. 184], universalism is declared at the level of everyday norms: "Tolerance includes respecting the opinions or thoughts of others as well as helping each other or living side by side regardless of ethnicity, race, religion, and between groups" [20, p. 1976].

In an effort to mitigate ethnic and religious tensions, the state has initiated the promotion of large symbolic projects, such as the "One Malaysia concept, which promotes the unity of Malaysians from diverse ethnic and religious groups" [22, p. 185]. The rhetoric under scrutiny is predicated on the notion of "shared universal characters" serving as the foundational element of national identity. This concept is elucidated through the metaphor of "an elastic and intersecting network of multiple identities" [23, p. 194]. Nevertheless, the political field remains ethnocentric: "the Malays tend to be more ethnocentric in their attitude, while the Chinese do not believe in multi-ethnic political parties" [24, p. 12].

At the level of cultural practices, the idea of tolerance manifests itself, for example, in the food sphere: "All non-Muslim informants expressed that they felt comfortable with Muslims around them practising halal dining" [18, p. 103], and the organizers of joint celebrations "wanted to ensure that everybody felt comfortable and enjoyed the food" [18, p. 106]. In the fashion industry, urbanized Malay women demonstrate a hybrid identity: "Many multi-racial companies do not mind women wearing head scarves, but not to the extent of covering the whole face as it reflects extremism" [25, p. 456]. This exemplifies the ongoing endeavor to strike a balance between the professional standards of the global market and the religious modesty that is expected by many religious groups.

In a study conducted by Mohd Arip Kasmu and other authors, a survey was administered to 2,400 respondents in Malaysia. The survey employed a Likert scale, and t-tests were also conducted to test for intergroup differences.

A salient indicator of this phenomenon was the propensity of respondents to relinquish specific tenets of their religion in the interest of national unity. The study revealed that more than half of the surveyed participants (61.7%) expressed disagreement with this statement [22, p. 187]. The empirical evidence substantiates the hypothesis of "public tolerance without theological mutual adaptation". In Malaysia, there is a widespread consensus on the principle of non-violence and non-interference. However, this consensus does not entail a reworking of religious doctrines, particularly among the Muslim population. Government initiatives have been shown to promote civic cooperation and ritual coexistence. However, the degree of "doctrinal plasticity" remains constrained. This phenomenon is consistent with societal norms, as evidenced by the available data [22, p. 187–191].

The most important structural challenge lies in the dualism of legal regimes: "two different legal systems ... one for both Muslims and non-Muslims and another one for Muslims only" [26, p. 93]. Although non-Muslims have the right to apply to civil courts on family matters [21, p. 350], in practice, "rights between Muslims and non-Muslims ... are still not clearly defined" [27, p. 477]. Borderline cases provoke debate, fueled by the fact that "religious establishments and many Muslim non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are opposed to the idea of religious pluralism in all its forms" [19, p. 631]. This gives rise to "passive tolerance," where different groups "live side by side peacefully and accept variations that exist" [28, p. 82], but without deep dialogue, allowing critics to call the harmony "cosmetic in nature" [28, p. 85].

Nonetheless, even such a minimal consensus contributes to economic growth, as evidenced by the following assertion: "One of the many factors contributing to Malaysian economic development and growth is the existence and maintenance of religious tolerance and harmony" [26, p. 90]. The practice of peaceful coexistence is reinforced by the belief that no believer should provoke problems that could cause anger or discontent among other believers [29, p. 23–27]. Concurrently, researchers emphasize that "the higher the existing level of religious tolerance, the wider will be the common public space shared by the participating religions" [19, p. 623]. This suggests that deepening interfaith exchange remains a necessary condition for future sustainability.

The Malaysian model, therefore, exemplifies a dynamic equilibrium between Islam, which serves as the fundamental axis of national identity, and the pluralistic reality of a multi-ethnic society. The viability of this social order is ensured by a combination of constitutional guarantees, unity

programs, and every day practices of “comfortable” tolerance. However, the absence of active interfaith dialogue and legal dualism continue to generate structural friction. Nevertheless, the prevailing narrative regarding the educational potential of tolerance remains that of its feasibility: “if society is educated to always be tolerant and concerned with their choices, then the aspiration of unity and harmony of the country is not something that is impossible” [20, p. 1981].

UAE: A model of Islamic modernism and religious tolerance

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) serves as an exceptional case study, as it employs Islamic modernization as an ideological instrument, thereby establishing an institutionalized policy of religious tolerance while concurrently fortifying the legitimacy of the prevailing regime. The symbolic act of declaring a “Year of Tolerance” signaled a shift from traditional post-oil rhetoric of modernization to a value-based agenda. In this new agenda, “respect differences, promote coexistence, and reject extremism” [30, p. 406] became central political and cultural tenets. In their research, Aseel Zibin and Abdulrahman Dheyab Abdullah demonstrated that the concept of tolerance in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is influenced by various sources related to the country’s culture. The following sources were consulted: organism; plant; message; carpet; ship; oasis; tent; bridge; lighthouse; building; road [30, p. 411]. The researchers contend that the reference to the Bedouin heritage “...the early culture of the Bedouins of the Emirates, who wandered through the desert... gave rise to the source domains used to conceptualize tolerance in the UAE press” [30, p. 418] facilitates the embedding of a global slogan within the local cultural code. This visual choice is congruent with the overall concept. The following text is intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the subject matter. “Thus, it can be seen that the Al Ghaf tree has great cultural value in the UAE” [30, p. 416], “the tent of tolerance embodies the characteristics of the Emirati community” [31].

The authors posit that the conceptual metaphors employed in the media – organism, plant, message, carpet, ship, oasis, tent, bridge, lighthouse, building, road – represent a semiotic continuation of the historical way of life of the Bedouins of the Emirates. The tree “Al Ghaf played an influential role in the lives of Bedouins because it is the main source of food for wild animals that used to take refuge under its shade in the heat of summer”, and “the conceptual framework of an Emirati tent includes three aspects: people, venue, and tradition. The aspect of people includes the role of Arab people in general and Emiratis in particular in being welcoming to their guests no matter who they are and where they come from” [30, p. 416]. In this regard, the experience of living in the desert in the past – quenching thirst in an oasis, spend-

ing the night in a tent, resting on a carpet, fishing from a boat, and collecting pearls – became the basis for understanding tolerance as part of the cultural code of the UAE, which is reflected in the language. In official speeches, natural and nomadic places become symbols of “moderate Islam”, which corresponds to the concept of civic belonging that does not contradict religious identity.

The establishment of the world’s first Ministry of Tolerance: “...provides a strategic approach to teaching future generations the principles of the first rulers of the United Arab Emirates. The formation of the Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence is aimed at promoting tolerance, pluralism, and acceptance of others in the United Arab Emirates” [32, p. 7]. The political significance of this new entity is underscored by the words of its founding father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who articulated the importance of tolerance, stating, “Tolerance is a duty, because man is a human being first and foremost...” [32, p. 2]. The ministry’s operations are guided by a national program that is predicated on seven fundamental principles:

- “1) Islam,
- 2) the UAE Constitution,
- 3) Zayed’s legacy,
- 4) international instruments,
- 5) archaeology & history,
- 6) human instinct,
- 7) common values” [32, p. 8].

As Professor Natalya Seytakhmetova and Elizaveta Sharonova have noted, the 2016 program “aims to consolidate society and a shared understanding of fundamental values... and form a positive image of the UAE as a country on the world stage” [33, p. 393], transforming the discourse of tolerance into a strategic resource for the “post-oil order”.

The efficacy of this policy is corroborated by the findings of social surveys. “Findings revealed that 70.5% of the sample expressed the belief that the UAE is a relatively tolerant society, whereas 29.5% believe that more efforts need to be made to instill values of tolerance, inclusion, and acceptance. Surprisingly, more than half the respondents (53.5%) stated that they were unaware of the existence of a Ministry of Tolerance in the UAE” [34, p. 350]. This indicates that institutional reforms need additional public “translation”. One of the channels for such translation is digital platforms: “It is found that social media use positively affects tolerance among adolescents...” [35, p. 1]; “Social media can foster social tolerance by allowing individuals to connect, share, and receive support in a way that might not be possible in offline settings” [35, p. 3]. The active involvement of young people in online initiatives, primarily the “Year of Tolerance” campaign and the numerous #UAEForTolerance hashtags, transforms official rhetoric into everyday “respectful communication” (35, p. 7). The key to the model’s sustainability is educational policy. “Tolerance was a key pillar of Sheikh Zayed’s thought, and it was at the heart of his philosophy for life and governance”

[36] and "has been established in the UAE as a key pillar since its foundation" [37, p. 1]. Islamic education textbooks state that the four main components of tolerance are mercy, forgiveness, kind dialogue, and doing good to others [37, p. 3]. "Nearly 206 nationalities co-exist in the United Arab Emirates, either transiting or residing; these represent more than 200 nations and use 100 dialects. These racial groups exist in complete harmony and integration. The outcome of this has had a very good effect on various spheres" [37, p. 7]. Thus, the school represents tolerance not as a liberal abstraction but as a fundamental norm of "wasatiya" in Sharia and the historical legacy of the "Charter of Madinah", где "Equity between all... groups was established on the basis of common humanity" [37, p. 7]. "many mainstream religious institutions to qualify normative understandings of Islam with the description "moderate" that is rooted in Quranic Arabic words signifying balance, moderation and the middle-path. UAE government documents commonly precede the terms "Islam", "Islamic Education" or "Islamic values" with "moderate" [38, p. 9].

The foreign policy dimension serves to complement the internal institutionalization process. As demonstrated by Baycar Hamdullah and Mehmet Rakipoglu, the UAE's utilization of "moderate Islam" and "tolerance" as religious soft power aligns with the expectations of a state seeking influence and power in accordance with the principles of small state theory [39, p. 1]. The foundation of "The Emirates Fatwa Council is an example of what the UAE has created to have full control over religious issues" [39, p. 16] and "The Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies is an organization that was established in 2014 to increase the UAE's influence on Islamic thoughts globally" [39, p. 14]. These organizations not only consolidate theological expertise but also serve to legitimize international initiatives, ranging from the promotion of the "Declaration of Human Fraternity" to the visit of the Pope [40]. The initiative to brand itself as a "world-renowned capital of tolerance" [32, p. 6] is accompanied by material symbols: the Tolerance Bridge, the Mariam Umm Eisa Mosque, and the Abrahamic Family House in Abu Dhabi. Infrastructure in which religious diversity becomes an architecture of soft power. "The country aims to establish a version of Islam that will help its campaigns at the domestic, regional, and global levels" [39, p. 17-18]. It is important to remember that the state version of "moderate Islam" is also a disciplinary project: "This version of Islam stresses the importance of rulership and leadership while discouraging the idea of revolt and disobedience against the ruler" [39, p. 18]. The notion of "tolerance = obedience + diversity under surveillance" is exemplified by the concept of "family-state" [41] and the presence of entities such as the Emirates Fatwa Council, which regulate religious discourse. However, the 2020 Global Soft Power Index, compiled by Brand Finance, demonstrates that "the

general public is more positive towards the UAE than the experts... the UAE's biggest soft-power success is attributed to its business and economic environment" [39, p. 4]. The economic pragmatism, tourist appeal, and status of the region as a logistics hub have contributed to the transformation of tolerance from a humanistic principle to a component of national development.

The model of Islamic modernism and religious tolerance in the UAE is thus based on a three-level interconnection. The initial level is cultural and symbolic, involving the reconstruction of Bedouin and Islamic archetypes. The second level is normative and institutional. The Ministry of Tolerance, the National Program, and textbooks that set operational criteria such as "mercy, forgiveness, kind dialogue..." are indicative of the government's commitment to fostering a culture of tolerance and respect. The third level is geopolitical in nature. It involves the exportation of a discourse on "moderate Islam" as a form of religious soft power. This soft power is capitalized upon through visits by pontiffs and interfaith diplomacy. The interaction of these levels has given rise to the formation of a "post-oil order" in the Emirates between the state and society. In exchange for their political loyalty, the state guarantees multiculturalism, economic opportunities, and the symbolic capital of global modernity. This phenomenon is further substantiated by the observation that 70% of young people consider the Emirates to be a "relatively tolerant society" [42, p. 350]. Concurrently, approximately half of the youth population is uninformed about the existence of an official entity responsible for implementing tolerance policies. In the United Arab Emirates, tolerance has evolved from a mere ideological slogan to a fundamental component of daily life in an Islamic state that is actively pursuing modernization.

Conclusion

The synthesis of the results demonstrates the diversity of models of Islamic tolerance. In Turkey, an authoritarian-secular model has taken hold: Ataturk's secularism formally separated religion from the state; however, in practice, it solidified the dominance of the Sunni majority. Moreover, tolerance was conceptualized more as the patience of minorities rather than their equitable treatment. The religious revival that took place in the late 20th and early 21st centuries led to a strengthening of the role of Islam. According to surveys, this phenomenon was accompanied by a decline in social tolerance [2]. In Malaysia, the institutionalization of religious pluralism is evident. Islam is the official state religion, yet the Constitution and ideology of Rukun Negara [16] uphold the principle of unity in diversity. The practice of "polite tolerance" fosters peaceful coexistence among communities characterized by mutual respect, albeit without the engagement in profound interreligious dialogue. The parallelism of civil

and Sharia law, as well as the resistance of certain groups to the notion of religious equality, serve to limit the extent of tolerance. However, the Malaysian model, in its totality, effectively maintains stability and prevents the escalation of conflicts. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is implementing a model of tolerance that has been promoted by an authoritarian state and is based on the logic of "moderate Islam". Institutional initiatives, such as the Ministry of Tolerance and the "Year of Tolerance", as well as the incorporation of teaching values in schools, have been implemented to integrate tolerance into the national ideology and image of the country. According to survey results, the majority of young people hold a perception of UAE society as being tolerant. However, there is a notable lack of awareness regarding specific policies. The Emirati model exemplifies how diversity is promoted from a superior position, contingent upon the maintenance of allegiance to the ruling regime [39]. A comparative analysis of these cases reveals both differences and similarities. The primary distinctions pertain to the role of the state, which exhibits a progression from strict secularization in Turkey to a compromise pluralism in Malaysia and paternalistic control in the UAE. The mechanisms for ensuring tolerance vary across the examined cases. These mechanisms include legal equality reinforced by a nationalist myth, constitutional guarantees and the ideology of unity and official rhetoric and special institutions. However, a unifying element underpinning these diverse approaches is the common declaration of tolerance as a foundational value for national unity and development. In all discourses, the practice is justified by references to Islamic principles, including mercy, justice, and the "middle way". Theoretically, analysis confirms the decisive role of context: there is no universal model of tolerance in Islam; different historical trajectories and regimes form different configurations of relations between religion and the state. Secularism, in and of itself, does not ensure a high level of tolerance, as evidenced by Turkey. Conversely, managed pluralism can foster peaceful coexistence without necessitating the complete liberalization of religious discourse, as demonstrated by Malaysia. Empirical evidence demonstrates the significance of institutional support for fostering tolerance through educational initiatives, legislative measures, and public discourse. However, these findings also underscore the limitations of top-down initiatives that lack a concomitant shift in public attitudes. The efficacy of government programs is contingent upon a transformation of mass attitudes, akin to the shift observed in Turkey, or broad citizen involvement, analogous to the citizen participation observed in the UAE. The following text is intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the subject matter.

Sources of financing

This research was funded by the SC MSHE RK (Grant No. AP19679139 «The Architectonics of Islamic Toler-

ance in Kazakhstan: the Experience of Communication and Interfaith Dialogue»)

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INFORMATION ABOUT AUTHORS

Laura Toktarbekova

Leading Researcher, PhD, Institute of Philosophy, Political Science and Religious Studies of the CS MSHE RK, Almaty, Kazakhstan, email: lauratoktarbekova@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4063-8255

Madina Bektenova

Senior Lecturer, PhD, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana, Kazakhstan, email: madeka_1982@mail.ru

Лаура Ниязбековна Токтарбекова

жетекші ғылыми қызметкер, PhD, ҚР ҰЖБМ ҒК Философия, саясаттану және дінтану институты, Алматы, Қазақстан, email: lauratoktarbekova@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4063-8255

Мадина Кенесарқызы Бектенова

аға оқытушы, PhD, Л.Н.Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университеті, Астана, Қазақстан, email: madeka_1982@mail.ru

Лаура Ниязбековна Токтарбекова

ведущий научный сотрудник, PhD, Институт философии, политологии и религиоведения КН МНВО РК, Алматы, Казахстан, email: lauratoktarbekova@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4063-8255

Мадина Кенесариевна Бектенова

старший преподаватель, PhD, Евразийский национальный университет имени Л.Н. Гумилева, Астана, Казахстан, email: madeka_1982@mail.ru