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# Қоғам & Дәуір

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Қоғам &  
Дәуір

ҒЫЛЫМИ-САРАПТАМАЛЫҚ ЖУРНАЛ

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Views on Islam as a Spiritual and  
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## **VIEWS ON ISLAM AS A SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL PHENOMEN IN POST-NORMAL**

**Abstract.** The contemporary era is defined by philosophers, sociologists, and futurologists as a post-normal time. This paper, being a part of broader study, examines the impact of post-normal times on religious institutions, focusing specifically on Islam in Kazakhstan. Through qualitative interviews, a study was undertaken to identify both general and particular characteristics of the institutionalization of Islam over the past decade. The main subject of interviews was the characteristics of the social, political and legal regulation of religious life in the region by governmental entities. The analysis reveals that the Islamic education landscape is in a state of continual change and evolution and predominantly emphasis ritualistic practices; while the ideological dimensions, philosophical considerations, and legal and economic characteristics are omitted by Islamic educational institutions. Our data indicate complex nature of confessional relations within Islam, which is challenging currently cohesive community of Muslims, thereby necessitating religious management to avert a schism. Finally, we argue that it is essential for the state to continue monitoring the actions of religious organizations, particularly given the growing importance of social networks.

**Keywords:** *Islam, Islamic education, Kazakhstan, confessional relations, post-normal time.*

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**Айгүл Забирова, Наталья Сейтахметова**  
**ПОСТНОРМАЛЬДЫ КЕЗЕҢДЕ: ИСЛАМНЫҢ РУХАНИ ЖӘНЕ**  
**ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК ФЕНОМЕН РЕТІНДЕ ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИЯЛАРЫ**

**Аңдатпа.** Философтар, әлеуметтанушылар және футурологтар қазіргі дәуірді постнормальды уақыт деп сипаттай бастады. Бұл мақалада, кеңірек зерттеудің бір бөлігі ретінде, постнормальды уақыттың діни институттарға, соның ішінде Қазақстандағы исламға әсері қарастырылады. Исламның жалпы және ерекше ерекшеліктерін анықтау мақсатында ақпарат жинаудың сапалы әдістері қолданылды. Дін саласындағы сарапшылармен жүргізілген сұхбаттың негізгі тақырыбы мемлекеттік құрылымдардың діни өмірді әлеуметтік, саяси және құқықтық реттеу сипаттары болды. Талдау нәтижелері исламдық білім беру ландшафтында тұрақты өзгерістер жүріп жатқанын, білімнің негізінен діни ритуалдарға бағытталғанын көрсетеді; ал исламдық білім беру мекемелерінде идеология, философия, құқық және экономикалық аспектілер жеткіліксіз қарастырылуда. Зерттеу нәтижесінде мемлекеттің діни ұйымдардың қызметін жүйелі түрде мониторингтеудің маңыздылығы, әсіресе әлеуметтік желілердің рөлі артып келе жатқан қазіргі кезеңде ерекше атап көрсетіледі.

**Түйін сөздер:** *Ислам, исламдық білім беру, Қазақстан, конфессионалдық қатынастар, постнормальды уақыт.*

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## **Айгүл Забирова, Наталья Сейтахметова** **ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИИ ИСЛАМА КАК ДУХОВНОГО И СОЦИАЛЬНОГО ФЕНОМЕНА В ПОСТ-НОРМАЛЬНЫЕ ВРЕМЕНА**

**Аннотация.** Философы, социологи и футурологи стали определять современную эпоху как постнормальное время. В данной статье, как части более широкого исследования, рассматривается влияние постнормального времени на религиозные институты, уделяя особое внимание исламу в Казахстане. С целью выявления как общих, так и специфических особенностей функционирования ислама было предпринято исследование с использованием качественных техник сбора информации. Основным предмет интервью с экспертами в религиозной сфере составили характеристики социального, политического и правового регулирования религиозной жизни государственными структурами. Анализ показывает, что исламский образовательный ландшафт претерпевает постоянные изменения, а образование в основном сосредоточено на ритуальных практиках; в то время как идеология, философия, право и экономические характеристики пока что не стали частью исламских образовательных учреждений. Полученные данные указывают на сложную природу конфессиональных отношений в исламе, что чревато поляризацией нынешнему сплоченному сообществу мусульман. В итогах работы мы приходим к выводу о необходимости систематического мониторинга государством деятельности религиозных организаций, особенно в свете растущей важности социальных сетей.

**Ключевые слова:** *Ислам, исламское образование, Казахстан, конфессиональные отношения, пост-нормальные времена.*

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## Preface

The contemporary era is defined by philosophers, sociologists, economists, and futurologists as a time of extreme unpredictability, disorder, and instability. Many scholars defined it as a post-normal time (PNT). This concept was introduced by the philosopher of science Ziauddin Sardar [1,2,3] and is consisted from four key elements: Complexity, Chaos, Contradictions, and Uncertainty. Its underlying assumptions are that history and experience are no longer reliable indicators of the future. Contemporary challenges are increasingly complex and thus necessitate a multifaceted approach that draws upon various fields of study. Nassib Taleb, the renowned economist and author of well-known books [4,5], suggests that rare yet impactful occurrences, often referred to as "black swans," which become a symbol of current era. He believes that effectively navigate these phenomena, systems must evolve to become "antifragile". Sociologist Manuel Castells [6], a leading figure in the exploration of the information society, perceives the evolution of digital technologies and the rapid spread of information as the primary catalyst of the post-normal world.

In the context of post-normal times, there is a profound transformation occurring within society and its foundational institutions, particularly those that have long been regarded as traditional, including family, state, education, media, economy, and religion. This transformation arises from the rapid pace of transformations, resulting in ambiguity, complexity, and at times, disorder. The COVID-19 pandemic serves as a reminder of how swiftly a biological issue can turn into a social, economic, and even political one. In essence, the era characterized by post-normal conditions has resulted in the dissolution of conventional boundaries and the advent of novel, frequently hybrid forms, as dynamic self-organizing structures substitutes stable institutions.

The phenomena of digitalization, global challenges, a crisis of trust, and the rise of individualism have contributed to the decline of conventional religious frameworks, resulting in a transformation of faith expressions and undermining the stability of religious institutions. The influence of religious leaders and places of worship is diminishing, with an increasing number of individuals moving away from rigid doctrines. As prayers and sermons transition to the online realm, social networks evolve into platforms for preaching. Individuals now have the ability to engage with religious leaders from across the globe.

This shift complicates the landscape of religious institutions and, paradoxically, seems to lead young people to gravitate towards more traditional expressions of faith. The contemporary rise of fundamentalism and religious radicalism can be understood as a response to anomie, as articulated by E. Durkheim [7]. Individuals seeking clear rules and stringent moral frameworks find these fundamentalist movements appealing, as they provide straightforward yet extreme solutions to complex issues. These represent the responses of individuals and communities to the inherent unpredictability of existence.

This paper is part of a broader study project, so at this stage we are giving "voices" to theologians, religious scholars, and governmental specialists. This study examines the impact of post-normal times on religious institutions, focusing specifically on Islam in Kazakhstan. Over the past thirty years, Islam

has experienced considerable transformations, characterized by a resurgence of traditional religious practices and the emergence of new movements such as the Salafis and Tablighi Jamaat. These represent novel phenomena; the "subtle" or invisible instances of religious factors shaping public consciousness, the rise of Islamophobic sentiments, and the development of radical discourse necessitate a more focused and meaningful examination.

The analysis of scientific literature and expert interviews conducted by project members clearly demonstrates the significant influence of Islam on both everyday and political life in Central Asian countries. The impact of Islam on the religious situation in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan is evident, as is the wide-ranging influence of the Islamic component on societal processes and transformations. The post-independence religious revival observed across all five states in the region has shaped the objectives of this qualitative research, aiming to clarify the significance and function of Islam in Central Asia, as well as the impact of religion on societal dynamics. Through qualitative interviews, a study was undertaken to identify both general and particular characteristics of the institutionalization of Islam over the past decade. The main subject of interviews was the characteristics of the social, political and legal regulation of religious life in the region by governmental entities.

#### ***Data collection and sample***

What is the rationale for employing qualitative data in the comprehensive analysis of the impact and future of Islam in post-normal times within Central Asian nations? The qualitative methodology enabled an intensive description and interpretation of the complicated nature of Islam and its expressions within social institutions, facilitating an evaluation of the current regional situation while emphasizing the strengths and weaknesses of political and social power models and state structures, alongside a comparative analysis of the ideological foundations of Islam and religious practices across the regions.

Expert interviews in narrative form focus on the description and interpretation of Islam as a spiritual-cultural, political, and social phenomenon, the prospects of Islam in post-normal times, on regional trends, and possible political scenarios for preserving religious and cultural sovereignty. This is crucial, the actual facts we gather might be assimilated into the ideological framework of post-normal times. Prior to conducting the interviews, we assumed that in Kazakhstan and Central Asia, Islam and its influence would coexist alongside secular principles, while greatly impacting cultural dynamics and spiritual life.

The expert sample comprised 9 individuals, encompassing imams, theologians, scientists, and public officers. Among these, there are eight men and one woman, where four represented specialized schooling. One individual is from Kyrgyzstan, while the other eight are from Kazakhstan.

The interviews were conducted in September and October 2024 by other member of the research group. Not authors of this paper.

A guide with the set of questions was developed:

- How Islamic education in Central Asian nations and Kazakhstan has changed in the last five years?
- In your view, is there any issues within confessions?



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3. Is there any impact of Islam on political dynamics in Kazakhstan and Central Asia?

- What regulations should govern the relationship between the state and religion in Kazakhstan?

- In which way has the state's approach towards religion in Kazakhstan evolved?

Is Kazakhstani society experiencing Islamization or, conversely, secularization?

### **Perspectives of Islam: An Empirical Analysis**

#### ***Islamic Education***

Beginning with the initial inquiry regarding the evolution of Islamic education in Central Asian nations and Kazakhstan over the preceding five years, as well as the necessity for reforms in this domain. All nine experts began the conversation by highlighting the serious personnel deficit in the sphere of religion since independence in 1991. Consequently, citizens of Central Asian nations (except Turkmenistan) begun traveling to Arab countries, including Egypt, Jordan, and Turkey. Upon their return, the majority secured jobs as Islamic clerics in the region. Although Kazakhstan has established opportunities for acquiring religious education through institutions such as the madrasah at the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan and the Nur-Mubarak Theological University, there remains a trend of educational migration among citizens to foreign countries. "This is related to the greater accessibility of education abroad and the significantly lower costs of education in the Middle East compared to our country. Certain institutions establish migratory support to attract foreign nationals, and currently, numerous charitable organizations in these nations offer educational services, including Arabic language and Quran studies" (expert K.).

Our research indicates that the majority of scholars analyzes the reform of Islamic education from a binary opposition perspective: whether theological knowledge or secular education should dominate the teaching of religion. Consequently, expert S. asserts that "due to pressure from our state executive bodies, without enhancing the religious aspect in education, there has been a shift towards secular disciplines. We are observing the evolution of Islamic education; yet, the incorporation of secular subjects pertaining to local history, such as courses on Abai, Shakarim, and Alash-Orda, remains a significant concern" (expert S.), "...the primary objective should be the establishment of universal human ideals. Nonetheless, the endeavors of certain educational institutions in Central Asia and the Arab nations possess distinct content, pursue alternative objectives, and hence, their ideology diverges significantly from our expectations. Certain educated citizens hold misguided perspectives in this domain" (expert K.).

A significant issue in this sense relates to the content of religious education in Central Asia, which is predominantly centered on ritualism. Education is confined solely to the examination of ritual services that are sought by society, including namaz, janazah, bata rituals, and the delivery of Friday sermons.

There are two doctrines of education in Islam. The first is the contemporary educational doctrine known as Shahada or bakhs, which involves a research methodology where an individual investigates a topic, composes a thesis, or

undertakes examinations. Shahada serves as a certificate, a document that verifies the completion of a specific educational institution. The university structure in Kazakhstan has been defined by the Bologna system. Ijaza represents a traditional form of religious education, granting permission from a teacher to a student, with a documented chain of succession leading back to the author of the text.

The increasing number of believers in Kazakhstan rising demand for Islamic education. Nur-Mubarak University of Islamic Culture functions as a secular institution, receiving grants that highlight the necessity for training specialists in Islamic education: “however, it is not limited to Nur-Mubarak. For instance, there is a new theology department at Kokshetau University, which curriculum clearly indicates a focus on Islamic theology. An increasing number of individuals are pursuing studies in specialties associated with religion, according to their perspective. The grant allocation for these programs is determined by state order; thus, training must align with state interests. Is this the case in reality? Is there a discrepancy between the expectations of believers seeking religious knowledge and the state's vision regarding the type of specialists produced by these programs?” (expert L.).

The theologians trained at the International College of Theology and Technology at Kokshetau University have extensive expertise in Islam, indicating a necessity for reforms in the differentiation between these different areas of study. “Let’s take madrasah education as the first stage. Subsequently, one proceeds to Nur-Mubarak, where the same field of study, namely Islamic theology, is pursued at a more advanced level. This ensures the continuity and quality of religious education. Individuals who have acquired foundational knowledge in madrasah, have an understanding of tajweed, are familiar with basic Quranic concepts, and have a certain proficiency in Arabic. This ensures that higher education will produce trained specialists with in-depth knowledge. This will bring us qualified Islamic theologians. This will enhance the professional development of personnel” (expert L.).

Furthermore, the theological curriculum is currently being adopted in Islamic studies, and individuals can participate through a general competition without any prerequisite knowledge, frequently merely because they are eligible for a public education grant.: “the initial level differs from that of individuals who attended madrasah. They lack proficiency in Arabic. Grants are allocated in this manner, which will not be effective in this domain” (expert L.).

### ***Complex confessional relationships***

Experts observe a notable increase in tension among different Islamic confessions. Scholars call this phenomenon as the “mosaicization” of Islam, resulting in confrontations, heightened conflicts among jamaats, and the polarization of adherents based on beliefs and religious practices. The previously cohesive Muslim community is becoming increasingly polarized, with certain conflicts becoming difficult to solve. Notable divisions include those between Salafis and Sufis, Gulenists and Erdoganists, as well as between the so-called Madkhalits and more politically active Salafis. This requires the implementation of religious management to address these differences.

In interviews, all scholars asked: “What activities are the imams engaged in?

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Their actions involve penalizing believers for specific behaviors within their own community. (expert S.).

“Over the past two months, I have visited several regions, including Semey, Almaty region, Almaty, Dzhezkazgan, Karaganda, Aktobe, and Oral. In the regions I visited, the clergy had entirely withdrawn” (expert M.).

Analysis of the data indicates a necessity for change in Islamic education. “Kazakhstan possesses the necessary tools, including 24 educators from Al-Azhar, alongside a cadre of highly qualified local teachers. It is necessary to establish a system that functions as a conveyor belt for the development of authoritative imams, scholars, opinion leaders, and bloggers. The programs require modification and revision; it is unnecessary to overload students with all subjects simultaneously” (expert S.).

“The fact that an individual joined the faith within a mosque raises questions about the presence of incomprehensible individuals operating in that mosque. The clergy assert that these matters pertain to security, advocating for state intervention, while they maintain their focus on emotional support, ritual practices, and burial services, which constitute their primary responsibilities. Education constitutes a significant intellectual endeavor. Addressing radicals, extremists, and terrorists presents a significant challenge, often evaded due to its burdensome nature. Furthermore, they often lack the necessary competence to engage with these individuals, provide education, and facilitate a reasoned discussion” (expert S.).

Following expert views, the SAMK in Kazakhstan, as a secular entity, should express more responsibility, resulting in a significant shift towards the theologization of state institutions, while the clergy, tasked with duties in mosques, have retreated. The interview indicates that, in this context, access for theologians within the mosque is restricted. A decree has been implemented that prohibits theologians from engaging in work within mosques. “What are the reasons? As we arrived at mosque, people want to speak with us as the theologians, since people stopped listening to the imams. Additionally, imams started to voice their displeasure with the theologians' use of the mosque's area. The SAMK has issued a directive prohibiting Nur-Mubarak teachers from entering mosques. Consider a scenario where all imams receive their education from Nur-Mubarak instructors, and the muftiate enacts a regulation prohibiting a teacher from delivering a lecture in a mosque if they approach a student there. This situation is quite confusing” (expert S.).

Experts highlight the increase in social tension, noting past incidents such as terrorist attacks and individuals traveling to regions like Syria, Iraq, and Waziristan. “Polarization is increasing. Previously, individuals who engaged with this ideology were recruited; now, from early childhood, there are representatives from various movements. These individuals are children who were raised in such families. If their parents previously lived a different lifestyle, then they were subsequently indoctrinated. They possess a distinct experience; however, those from the cradle lack alternative experiences and opportunities for comparison. They look like blind kittens, born to exist in this condition” (Expert S.).

### ***The impact of Islamic principles on political structures***

Interviews reveal that the impact of Islam on the political landscape in

Kazakhstan and Central Asia manifests through the politicization of the religion. However, some specialists "... believe there are no such issues in our country" (expert L.). Although a significant majority of the population identifies as Muslim, the state upholds a secular framework that ensures all individuals, regardless of their religious beliefs, can freely practice their faith, receive equal legal protection, and access medical, educational, and legal services without discrimination.

Some scholars argues that Islam is being used for political ends: "First, government officials who use religious rhetoric to increase their respectability, authority, and legitimacy. We observe the continually rising degree of religiosity and its ongoing attractiveness. Conversely, the practice of law enforcement operates in a different manner. The rhetoric is pro-Islamic, but law enforcement conduct is harsh. The discourse presents one perspective, while the actual practices of law enforcement, though not overtly repressive, can certainly be characterized as serious" (expert M.).

When examining how Islam has influenced politics in Kazakhstan and Central Asia, discursive practices—such as state servants demonstrating their Islamic beliefs—that are implicitly offered as symbols must be considered. "Since Kazakhstan is a secular nation, it is believed that all religions will be treated equally. However, it exerts a significant influence. Initially, civil servants express their religious convictions, thereby validating Islam in the perception of the populace. Furthermore, it plays a role in its politicization" (expert L.).

### ***Security approach to Islam***

In discussions about political and legal frameworks governing the relationship between the state and religion in Kazakhstan, a consensus among experts emerges highlighting a pronounced level of securitization in this dynamic, which tends to reflect a negative light on the nature of their interaction. Engagement in this sensitive domain necessitates adherence to legal doctrines and a commitment to the constitutional tenet of secularism. "Religious organizations are tasked with addressing matters pertaining to their faith, including those related to radicalism and extremism driven by religious motivations. State needs to function as an unbiased arbiter, refraining from favoring any particular party. This will facilitate the substitution of the securitized methodology with the so called "cold" secular principle established in our nation's Constitution. I believe that to be the case," stated the expert C.

Empirical evidence suggests that this connection has elements of disorder nowadays, leading to a lot of inappropriate and unreflective activity in the religious realm. An illustrative instance: "A distinct crisis of capability, both among religious leaders who have distanced themselves from the issue of radicalization among adherents, and a crisis of capability among those tasked with overseeing religion within the state." (Specialist O.).

When examining international practices, such as deradicalization initiatives in Southeast Asia, it becomes evident that the individuals involved are primarily imams rather than theologians; a similar scenario is observed in Great Britain. "Indeed, that is precisely what I am referring to. Imams have distanced themselves. What distinguishes imams from theologians? Theologians serve as the pivotal figures, thereby bridging the divide (expert M.).

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Other scholars assert that the secular framework in Kazakhstan is functioning effectively overall, with the establishment of dialogue platforms, such as the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Astana, which have a secretariat, aiming oversee state-confessional and interfaith relations within the nation. "The matter of wearing a headscarf is currently under careful examination; it is imperative that we address these issues within the legal framework to ensure that the rights of citizens to access education are not compromised. Primarily, it is imperative that we concentrate on guaranteeing that our young individuals obtain a high-quality education. Additionally, people are allowed to practice their faith in legally designated locations, such as mosques or their homes" (expert K.).

Previously, the notion of an ideal individual, encompassing Islamic education, received considerable attention in public opinion. The development of an individual with a profound inner spirituality, aligned with the tenets outlined by Islam, however, experts argue that "it appears that this internal content is becoming elusive. I concur. While spiritual principles must exist within, many practitioners want to show off their faith by saying things such as "Yes, I perform namaz, I fast, I speak openly, I propagate", so all these sayings demonstrate how much of a believer and saint they are. It is not my intention to present myself as particularly virtuous or devout. It is essential that these qualities reside within and express themselves not through superficial elements such as attire or facial hair, but rather through virtuous actions, integrity, and diligent effort" (expert K.).

### ***Public policy***

At the beginning of independence, the perception of Islam was remarkably favorable, as it was regarded as an integral component of Kazakh identity. However, contemporary perspectives are evolving, and views towards Islam are increasingly becoming different. Experts assert that the primary cause of such sentiments is the perception of religion through the lens of security: "Furthermore, there are initiatives aimed at diminishing the Islamic context. Media initiatives and opinion leaders accustomed to moderating Islamic attitudes" (Expert S.).

The history of religion's evolution as a social institution in Kazakhstan is such that, initially, regulations were passed allowing different religious groups to operate freely within the limits of Kazakhstan. "At first, they welcomed all individuals, regardless of their character or race" (Expert A.). The law did not support the emergence of new radical religious doctrines that began to appear in the early 1990s. The state felt obliged to undertake particular measures. Subsequently, legislation was enacted mandating registration. The state was compelled to enact normative laws that gradually regulated the operations of religious organizations: "Efforts in this domain are relatively structured. No issues. All religious organizations in Kazakhstan have been duly registered, and I believe there are no outstanding inquiries on this matter. We observe no instances of indignation or protest. The legislation not only safeguards citizens from extreme ideas but also guarantees the rights of various religious organizations, so affording equal rights to all" (expert T.).

Experts emphasize the significant impact of social networks. Currently, the advancement of information technology somewhat constrains the capacity of states to regulate or monitor certain behaviors. Various types of preachers on social

networks advocate for not just Islam but also for other religions. Furthermore, the involvement of celebrities, actresses, musicians, and sports champions in religion establishes a precedent that encourages both young individuals and adults to embrace religious beliefs. There is a chance that people will either deliberately or involuntarily turn to religion as a result of this tendency: “Yes, some individuals deliberately embrace the religion, while others do it unconsciously, influenced by the fact that their idol has adopted it; hence, they question why they should not also adhere to this faith. The state faces challenges in regulating these matters due to its secular nature, which guarantees individuals the right to freedom of conscience; thus, it cannot prohibit religious practices that do not pose a threat to society or national security” (expert L.).

The state's perspective on religion might be evaluated at multiple levels. The primary level is legislative, comprising two statutes concerning religion and religious organizations: Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On religious activities and religious associations" from 1992 and 2011 years. The modifications in these regularities indicate the evolving perspective of the authorities towards religious associations. Consequently, the 1992 legislation imposed lenient criteria for the registration necessary for conducting religious activities, particularly regarding numerical thresholds. But this was made impossible after the 2011 law was passed. “Registration requires the participation of 50 individuals. This reflects the state's perspective on religion. It appears that religious organizations with a limited number of adherents are excluded from lawful, justifiable operations. They do not constitute a threat; yet, they operate outside the law” (expert L.).

The 2011 law mandates that religious activities must be conducted exclusively within religious structures. It delineates the particular importance of two religious movements—Islam of the Hanafi madhhab and Orthodox Christianity—assigning them a distinct historical value. However, there are some additional religious movements in Kazakhstan. “If we neglect to discuss those who have arisen in Kazakhstan since independence, it implies that the others are not prioritized. I cannot assert that there exists a negative sentiment towards them, yet they appear to be overlooked. Judaism, Buddhism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Baptism have all existed in Kazakhstan, each contributing to varying degrees, albeit their influence is not equal to the two predominant faiths” (expert C.).

### ***Islamization versus secularization***

We were astonished by the certainty of all specialists about the rise of Islamization. “There appears to be no necessity for conducting research. I mean you see individuals attending Friday prayers in Astana, Petropavlovsk, and Kostanay at temperatures of -25 to -30 degrees Celsius, people praying outdoors at minus twenty degrees! Secularization seems to me artificial. Yes, many believe that secularization is occurring; however, this perception may be illusory. However, there is a notable rise in religiosity. Sure, this is my subjective observation” (Expert S.).

The process of Islamization in Kazakhstan is becoming evident through the occurrence of conversions. This discussion addresses the essential human need to belong to the prevailing social group. “This group predominantly embodies two identities: Islamic and Kazakh. Acquiring a Kazakh identity is not feasible;



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however, the new course on building the Kazakh nation now facilitates this process. The acquisition of Islamic identity is relatively straightforward, as it is characterized by the universal nature of Islam, which minimizes conflicts. The process of Islamization is expected to extend to additional ethnic groups that have not historically adhered to Islam” (expert L.).

Islamization is evident not only in demographic changes; the impact of Islamic factors on politics, economics, spirituality, and education within the country is also growing. Currently, there are only 9 madrassas; however, it is anticipated that this number will increase over time. Islam exerts an influence on the information landscape. Bloggers often present themselves as experts in the field of religion, stimulating interest and a desire for knowledge about Islam among individuals. “In Uralsk, numerous women are observed wearing attire that adheres to the principles of orthodox Islam. Numerous entities exist within the trade sector. They occupy specific ecological niches. These establishments are cell phone stores and gadget retailers catering to the Muslim community. A greater number of stores cater to individuals from various socioeconomic categories, offering lower prices that attract those with limited incomes. The store owners and employees distinctly exhibit Islamic identity. The ummah provides financial support, resulting in profitability for them. If an incident occurs, they will provide support and assist in acquiring even a house. This is also highly profitable for business professionals. Workers can receive income without deductions, indicating a shadow economy (Expert L.).

## **Conclusion**

Our analysis of the religious landscape in Kazakhstan, together with our review of the political and legal frameworks that regulate the religious sphere, make it possible to draw several conclusions.

Firstly, the Islamic education landscape is in a state of continual change and evolution; however, it remains imperative to confront the subsequent challenges:

- The subject matter of religious education. In Central Asia, the emphasis is predominantly on ritualistic practices; education is largely confined to the study of societal rituals such as namaz, zhanaza, bata rituals, and the delivery of Friday sermons. The ideological dimensions, philosophical considerations, and legal and economic features are largely neglected by Islamic educational institutions.
- Analyzing the framework of religious education within higher education institutions. Which understanding ought to dominate? Is it truly theological, religious knowledge, or secular knowledge?
- Compliance of curricula to global benchmarks.
- A pressing deficiency of qualified individuals within the domain of religious studies.

Secondly, the impact of Islam on the political landscape in Kazakhstan and Central Asia is on the rise. The politicization of the situation is evident, as new entities are emerging on Kazakhstan's political landscape, including such jamaats as Gulenists or Salafis.

Thirdly, the idea of secularism in Kazakhstan operates cohesively, with the establishment of dialogue platforms, including the Secretariat of the Congress,

which oversees state-religious and inter-religious relations within the nation. However, a more rigorous adherence to the constitutional principle of secularism is imperative. This form of regulation requires a more suitable and empirical approach, as there is a clear crisis of competence among both religious authorities and those tasked with overseeing religion within the state.

Finally, it is essential for the state to continue monitoring the actions of religious organizations, particularly given the growing importance of social networks.

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