

THE INFLUENCE OF THE INSTITUTION OF RELIGION ON STRATIFICATION PROCESSES (ISLAMIC EXAMPLE)

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Abstract. It is well known from the history of mankind that in the life of every society the issues of social stratification processes acquire fundamental importance. Since ancient times people have been thinking about the reasons of stratification. In ancient Greece encyclopedic scientists in their works tried to scientifically substantiate the phenomenon of inequality as a natural process. With this approach, they justified the pattern of human exploitation. Along with other factors, religion, too, as a social institution, significantly influenced the stratification processes. This tendency is inherent to all world and national religions. And in modern conditions both material and spiritual factors actively influence the processes of social stratification. In this article the influence of the institute of religion on the processes of social stratification is investigated. It is noted that in some doctrines religion is the backbone of closed stratification systems. An example of such stratification is the caste system of India. In Islam all people are considered equal and the privileged position coming from the ancestral dynasty is strictly condemned. In comparison with material wealth, the status of an educated person is considered the most prestigious. In the history of our country, as a result of adaptation of the precepts of Islam to the interests of the ruling classes, there were classes of Ishans, Khojis, Sayyids, etc., which had nothing to do with Islam. Nowadays, these classes have only a symbolic meaning. Therefore, Islam does not affect the stratification processes of contemporary Uzbek society. However, observance by people of the norms of Islamic morality is important in the activities of officials. These findings have been confirmed by empirical research conducted in various regions of the country, among various classes of the population.

Keywords: stratification, stratification, institution, religion, Islam, middle class, caste, city religion, dynasty, Khoja, sayyid, ishan, parochialism.

Introduction. History of mankind shows that with the emergence of private property began to occur stratification processes that stimulated the emergence of various social classes. This phenomenon determined a person's belonging to this or that class and contributed to social inequality. This is why people have different opportunities in society. Sociological literature provides different types of definitions of social stratification. In our opinion, the following definition differs in its specificity. "Social stratification is a hierarchically organized structure of social inequality (ranks, status groups, etc.) that exists in any society (middle class). As in geology, the term refers to layered structuring or strata, but in sociology they are composed of social groups and emphasis is placed on how they are structured and how the inequalities between them are maintained over time" [5. 239-240].

Before proceeding with the analysis of the problem, we consider it necessary to make a brief excursion into the history of science, since any scientific study, including one dealing with social stratification issues, has its initial beginning. By the way, this is not a repetition of texts of the past, as some researchers believe, but a natural process. For, any new beginning is based on experience of the previous generation as in a science principles of historicism and continuity

operate. Observance of these principles will ensure the integrity of scientific analysis of the problem under study. We, too, proceed from this logic and start our own research on the relationship between religion and stratification processes.

Main part. As we know, the thinkers of ancient Greece laid the foundation of the stratification theory. Plato emphasized that the vital needs of the society's inhabitants were different, and their ability to meet those needs was limited. For the production of necessary high quality goods in the right quantity people should be engaged in only one occupation and no more [7. 158-159.].

The social division of labor has led to the emergence of different classes. According to Plato's idea, the producers of material goods occupy the lowest step on the social ladder. Above them there are the highest classes - philosophers-rulers and warriors-guards [4. 179].

Later Plato's ideas were developed by his gifted student, Aristotle. In his work "Politics" he put forward his views on stratification issues. In his opinion, the social structure is too complicated. Wealthy people everywhere make up a smaller part of the population. Where rich people dominate, there is an oligarchic system, where the poor are governed by a democratic regime. However, Aristotle considers the most perfect social system where neither minority-rich nor majority-poor prevails, and the meaning "middle element" prevails. It is the impressive volume of this class that forms the most prosperous system [3, 508].

As the "middle element" Aristotle does not point to the class standing between slaves and slave owners, because there can be no other class between them. Therefore he searches for his "middle element" among the slaves on the basis of the quantitative degree of possession of slaves. So he uses this term to define the middle class within the slaveholders. In his opinion, only the middle class can be loyal to the state and its interests. Therefore, it is the foundation of a prosperous society. The question arises, why does he pay special attention to the middle class? The fact is that the system consisting of the middle class is the best, as its residents live in safety. Equally, they will not encroach on other people's property. At the same time, others will do the same to the property of middle class members [3. 508].

These statements of Aristotle still have their meaning today. For if the citizens of the middle class constitute the majority of the population, such a society is considered prosperous and developed in every respect. Therefore, increasing the number of people with middle-class wealth is a strategic task for Uzbekistan.

If there is such a phenomenon as stratification in public life, then a natural question arises - is there a relationship between social stratification processes and religion? It is known from the pages of human history that the rulers of ancient Rome disdained the new religion - Christianity. They not only denied it, but also waged an immeasurable war with it. Because it promoted ideas of brotherhood, mutual respect and mercy among the various sections of the population. It was this circumstance that seemed unnatural to them, because the poor were mostly drawn to it. Fearing that the new religion threatened their aristocratic status, they tried with all their might to discredit it. From this we can conclude that in the vast territories of the Roman Empire, the factor of religion had an active influence on the stratification processes.

As you know, M. Weber in his works described early Christianity as "urban religion". The fact is that organized Christian communities could not be imagined outside of urban conditions. In his opinion, the values of Christianity, calling people for mercy and good were formed precisely because of urbanization. He also noted a sharp contradiction on religious issues between rich and poor [7, 140].

There are other examples from the history of other regions of the world concerning the influence of religion on social stratification. The caste system is closed and it is determinant in the stratification process of India. Hinduism is the embodiment of this system. According to it, a person's social status in a caste is determined from birth and cannot be changed. In modern

India there are mainly four castes: Brahmans, Kshatri, Vaishya and Shudras. The transition from one caste to another is categorically prohibited to this day.

The Indian experience suggests that in some countries religion actively affects the stratification of society. However, as already noted, in Hinduism, the social status of man does not change, the caste system is a closed education. Therefore the person should accept the destiny as according to Hinduism the soul of the person after his death again returns in a body of other person and he for obedience to the god and patience in a new life will be happy. But, in other countries, if a man changes his religion, then he is given unprecedented new opportunities for career growth. If we turn to the history of Turkey, whose citizens dominated the Islamic world for a long time after the Abbasids, then we find that if their captives were foreigners as a result of the occupation of their country adopted Islam, it gave them ample opportunity to change their social status. As a result of this policy, the former captives were able to successfully assimilate to the new socio-cultural conditions that allowed them to take their rightful place in the political hierarchy of Turkey. For example, during the reign of Sultan Bayezid II (end of the 14th century and beginning of the 15th century), prisoners were able to find their rightful place in the political hierarchy of Turkey.

XVI Four vizier were Slavs who adopted Islam, then during the rule of Sultan Sulayman I and Sultan Selim II (second half of the XVI century) eight former Slavs-Christians, and now Muslims rose to the level of a great vizier. Means, conditions of acceptance of an Islam and have served as the basic criterion concerning dominating elite [6. 10.].

If we turn our eyes to the rich history of Uzbekistan, we may witness that earlier on its territories Islam also influenced the stratification processes. In particular, social classes such as the Ishan, Khoja, Sayyid and others held high positions on the "social ladder" and their social status was much higher than that of ordinary citizens. Of course, such stratification fundamentally contradicted the strict prescriptions of Islam. Representatives of the abovementioned strata bypassed these demands by misinterpreting the provisions of Islam in order to gain dominance over the rest of society. In fact, Islam strictly condemns the egoistic behaviour of people seeking personal gain based on their religious and generational status. According to the doctrine of Islam, all people are equal, and the material condition of a particular person depends on his or her professional activity. That is why Islam does not prohibit or limit material wealth, but only requires that people should not become aware of that wealth and that material wealth should be spent on God-pleasing works. As it is said in the longest surah of the Qur'an: "Those who spend their possessions in the way of Allah and then what is spent are not accompanied by transgressions and offences, their reward is from their Lord, and there is no fear of them, and they will not be sad" [10.34].

The hadiths also provide detailed information about the benefits of spending wealth on good intentions, and about the dangers of gaining wealth in a dishonest manner: "The world is beautiful and bright. If someone takes it honestly, they will find abundance. And if he has it under the influence of greed, he has nothing but hell during Judgment Day." [12.134].

Empirical materials. Here I would like to refer to the results of our own empirical study, which was conducted in the form of a questionnaire survey entitled "Social development and its factors", based on a representative sample in May-June 2018 in Jizzakh, Bukhara, Khorezm, Namangan, Kashkadarya regions, the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Tashkent city. It was attended by 1,477 respondents, and its representativeness was ensured by methods of quota and random sampling of participants. The majority of respondents answered in the affirmative to the questionnaire question "Will you be able to stop your activity, which is profitable if you find out that it contradicts Islamic prescriptions? One third evasively answered, and about 6% of respondents said that it is not necessary to reckon with the moral norms of Islam to improve living conditions.

I am at a loss to answer

No, I do not take into account the moral norms of Islam in improving the financial situation

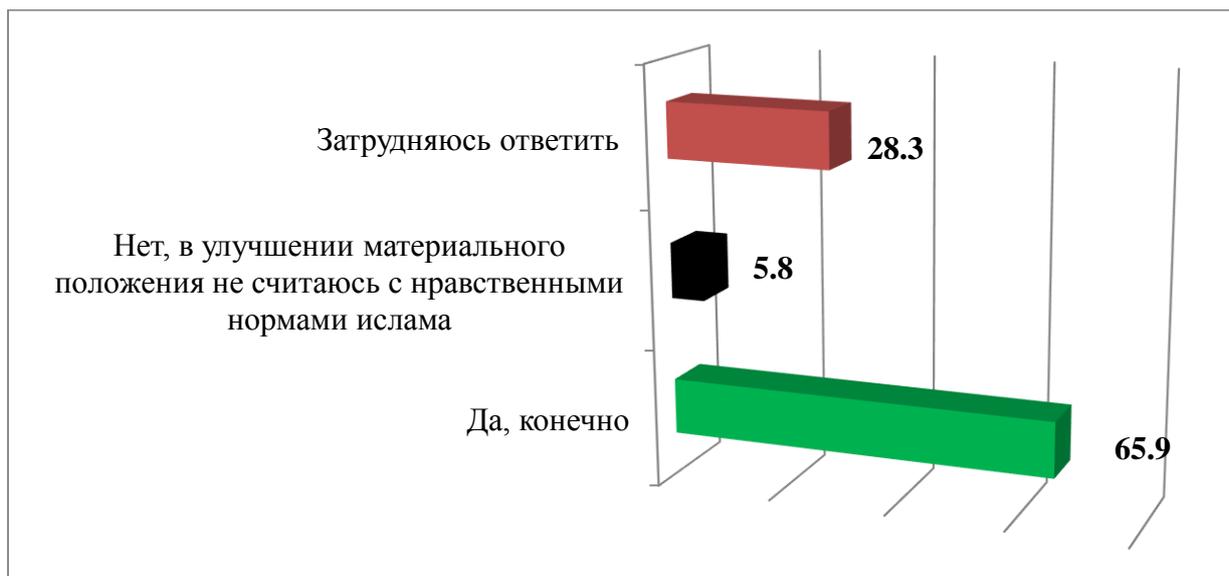


Figure 1. Attitude to dishonest profits, contrary to the requirements of Islam

The results show that most respondents do not want to possess wealth that is contrary to the moral standards of Islam. However, every third respondent gave an evasive answer to this question. It turns out that for 5.8% of the participants, what is allowed and not allowed to achieve a material condition according to the laws of Islam does not matter.

Table 1: Attitude to dishonest profits, contrary to the requirements of Islam.

№	Answers	Regions								
		<i>Jizzakh</i>	<i>Bukhara</i>	<i>Khorezm</i>	<i>Namangan</i>	<i>Kashkadarya</i>	<i>Nukus</i>	<i>Amu Darya</i>	<i>Tashkent</i>	
1.	Yes, I will.	52,8	72,1	58,6	78,8	42,8	49,4	51,9	74,2	
2.	No, I won't take Islam into account in improving my financial situation.	10,4	3,9	9,0	3,8	7,4	0,0	1,9	4,2	
3.	Hard to answer.	36,8	24,0	32,4	17,4	49,8	50,6	46,2	21,6	

Of course, in Islam the rich material status of a person is not condemned; on the contrary, in this religion the preference for begging is not approved. There is even such a proverb – “from poverty one step to blasphemy.” However, Islam imposes strict requirements on the owner of material wealth.

From this point of view, firstly, it is necessary to earn these riches in an honest way and secondly, to protect oneself from doubtful wealth. Then this wealth will bring happiness to a person and serve as a stimulating material factor of social development. Therefore, it will contribute to strengthening feelings of social solidarity between people. Indeed, if a person gets rich on the basis of honest and useful work for the society, pays taxes imposed in the society and leads a modest lifestyle, it will fully meet the requirements of Islam. As the hadith says, "Give gifts to each other, then you will be merciful, say hello, and your heart will be cleansed from dislike" [14.33].

In modern conditions, Islam has no influence on stratification processes in our country. Until recently, however, one circumstance that had nothing to do with Islam prevented the creation of a new family. Here we are talking about the division of members of society into Ishan, Khoja, Sayyid, etc.. For example, the descendants of these estates did not marry their daughters off to their sons from the common people. In turn, ordinary people did not dare to ask for the hand of the daughters of these privileged estates for their sons. Of course, this was fundamentally against the tenets of Islam. Scientist-sociologist K.K. Kalonov drew attention to this fact: "...at the same time, young Sayyids were allowed to marry girls from ordinary families. On the contrary, girls from Sayyid families were not allowed to marry representatives of unequal classes, i.e., she can only marry a representative of the Sayyid family". [9.205]. Of course, due to the increase in the level of religious knowledge of the population, this custom, which has nothing to do with Islam, has gradually disappeared into the past. Now if future newlyweds like each other and their parents give their consent, regardless of the fact that they belong to different families, then please, they can play their wedding and create a strong family. However, in our society, the stratification processes are affected by another undesirable phenomenon, which is always spoken about with particular concern by the leadership of our country "...mestnichestvo and clan-kin relations undermine the authority of the state authorities and become a serious obstacle to economic growth and development of entrepreneurship".

[1.46].

These harmful antisocial acts of some people have nothing to do with Islam. The fact is that in this religion, knowing about kinship ties, territorial origin is categorically condemned. But the social status of educated people is quoted higher than that of uneducated people. Thanks to translations of the Qur'an text into our native language, we have well assimilated the following verses from the Qur'an ayats: "Will those who know and those who do not know become equal! [16.200].

From the above it becomes clear that according to the dogmas of Islam, the status of representatives of science is much higher than that of members of other estates. Based on the positions of the Ayats and Hadith, Imam al-Ghazali made a clear statement in this regard. In particular, he drew his attention to the 11th ayat of the surah "Mujodala": "Allah exalts those of you who have believed and those who have been given knowledge to varying degrees". [2.41].

From the contents of the aforementioned ayat it becomes clear that the position, money, accumulated material wealth are worth nothing to Allah, as some people believe. Allah raises the status of a godly man only through faith and knowledge. Here, it is advisable to clarify the fact that when such a word as knowledge is mentioned, we need to keep in mind that by knowledge Islam understands not only religious knowledge, but also secular knowledge inclusive. So, it is obligatory for Muslims to master secular knowledge [17.85].

In Islam, the profession of teacher is very highly valued. Our ancestors themselves studied with dignity, and others were taught on the basis of advanced pedagogical technologies of that period. In the study of the hadith Imam Bukhori, Imam Termizi, and other thinkers actively used the so-called "oral history" method. For example, it is known from the history of Islam that Imam Bukhori collected more than 600,000 hadith through retellings by connoisseurs of Islamic knowledge. However, some scholars believe that the method of "oral history" was first actively applied in the West in the early 90s of the twentieth century [18]. This is reported by Professor Sh. Madayeva in her dissertation [11.64]. Of course, one can argue with this approach.

In the Middle Ages, due to the weakening of the introduction into public life of the prescriptions of the above ayats and hadith by scientists of the Muslim world, we began to fall far behind Western countries in this area. If we look at the data of modern statistics, we find the following state: "There are only 1% of Muslims among scientists in the world; there are more scientists in Israel than in the entire Muslim world. In Arab countries, five times less foreign books are translated annually than in Greece" [13.12].

By the way, there is also an acute shortage of highly qualified scientists in our country today. The reason for this acute problem is that in the difficult 90s of the transition period many highly qualified scientists and teachers could not patiently endure the difficulties of that time and hurried to move to the sphere of trade and entrepreneurship. Although, the hadith clearly and specifically states that if a person's profession allows him to provide for himself with everything vital, it should not be changed until the profession itself changes. "If Allah delivers daily bread to one of you through a certain profession until that profession changes, do not change that profession" [12.132]. Of course, we are far from condemning the above act of our former colleagues in the workshop. If these scientists would realize from the bottom of their hearts that the degree of status of a scientist on the Day of Judgment would be equal to that of people who died for their faith, they would not put material wealth higher than possession of knowledge. "On the Day of Judgment, the ink of scientists will be balanced [on the scales of Justice] with the blood of those who have fallen for their faith" [2.45]. Since the beginning of 90th years of the last century stratification processes which proceeded in our country had the negative maintenance. The profession of mentor, which has always been highly valued and especially in Islam, began to lose much of its social prestige. Compared to other professions, it has noticeably lost its position. Even the sons of famous scientists and teachers did not want to continue their fathers' profession and considered it to be inconsistent with their own status. Of course, they did not openly declare it, they just translated the conversation in a different way. They still managed to justify their position in such a way that in our society the profession of teacher-teacher is purely a female thing. Unfortunately, some parents actively supported their sons' actions in this matter. Meanwhile, the teaching of science and the transfer of this knowledge to other people in Islam is very highly valued. The famous thinker Hasan Basri wrote the following statement about it: "If it were not for scientists, people would become like cattle", i.e. according to the idea of al-Ghazali, scientists raise people from the level of an animal to the level of man through training (education) [2.61].

There is a saying in the Uzbek people: "a mentor is as great as a father". Today, thanks to the selfless work of mentors, tremendous changes are taking place in public life. This is the result of the policy pursued by President Mirziyoyev. Having started from the first days of his presidency, the head of our state has been consistently improving the material and social status of scholars in the country. For only science is the main impetus to social development. This is evidenced by the experience of developed countries. It means that today there is no influence of religious factor on stratification processes taking place in our country. However, a certain part of the population would still like to see the moral norms of Islam at least partially participate in the recruitment process. These conclusions are confirmed by the data of our

empirical research. The respondents were asked: "If you hold a certain position, who would you hire first?"

Table 2.: The basic qualities of a specialist required for employment

№	Answers	B %
1	First of all, he must be a relative of ours, or a close acquaintance.	2,3
2	No matter what, he should be an expert in his field.	58,1
3	Must be an honest, decent and highly qualified specialist with a strong religious faith.	30,1
4	Let him be a specialist who knows his business at the required level, and his religious belief is not important.	7,5
5	We're having trouble answering.	2,0

The peculiarity of the results of the research on this issue is that the main required personal qualities of the recruited people are, firstly, high qualification, and secondly, honesty and decency based on religious belief. Even kinship and regionalism were not crucial in this regard. This shows that our fellow citizens are gradually developing pragmatic thinking.

It is known that on the part of the institution of the state and its citizens, there are serious requirements for leaders: to have different levels of qualities such as professional skill, moral decency and crystal honesty. Islam also prescribes such requirements for leaders. Based on this approach, we have formed the following question: "In your opinion, is it important for a person to have Islamic morals when appointed to a leadership position? The answers are reflected in the diagram below.

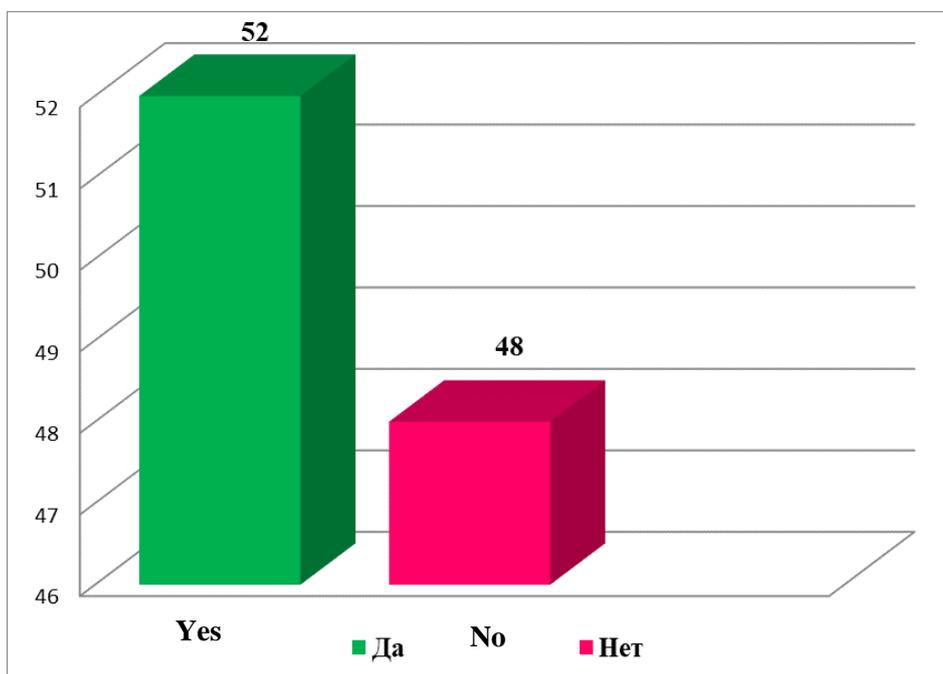


Figure 2. : The importance of Islamic morality in the appointment to a leadership position
As can be seen from the results, the opinions of respondents on this issue were divided almost in half. The results show that participants who answered in the affirmative indicated the following three important factors on a bottom-up scale:

1. A believer does not abuse the position.
2. A believer avoids bribery and extortion.
3. Leaders are well aware that a believer works honestly and behaves decently.

It was also interesting to know the opinion of respondents who negatively answered this question. In their opinion, it is unimportant for leaders to have the moral qualities of Islam, because, firstly, if the leader observes the principles of justice, then his religious faith does not matter, and secondly, the leader may not take bribes without observing the requirements of the Islamic norm, thirdly, to be honest and decent leader does not necessarily adhere to Islamic values.

Studying the opinion of various sectors of society on this issue, we simultaneously studied the attitude of specialists in the form of an expert survey. Well-known experts-philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, Islamic experts from organizations such as the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the National University of Uzbekistan, the Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies, the Center for the Study of Public Opinion "Izhtimoi Fikr" and the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan acted as experts. The expert opinion on the question "Do you consider it important to have the features of Islamic ethics when appointing people to a leadership position?" divided into several options. Most experts consider this a normal phenomenon, but further specify their opinion that for this there must be a close connection between religious faith and secular culture. Other experts argue that it is not necessary to require people appointed to leadership positions to comply with Islamic moral standards. They also add that such an approach should be regulated in the framework of the law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations (new edition)", adopted in 1998.

Conclusion. Summing up the theoretical conclusions and summarizing the materials of the practical research, we come to the following conclusion: indeed, in the stratification process taking place in our society, the role of religion is practically not felt, but the principle of Islamic rationalism has a solid potential for regulating informal relations between different layers of society.

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