


Declining Muslim Religious Levels in the Middle East and North Africa Region

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Keywords:	Abstract:
Religious, Middle Eastern, North African, Arab Spring, Muslim, Non-religious	At present it seems that the religiousness of Muslims is decreasing more and more. This can be seen from the increasing number of Muslims with liberal views and also by the increasing number of atheism, especially in the Middle East and North Africa. The causes and how the decline in the quality of reverberation, especially in areas where the majority are Muslim, will be discussed in this article. This research will use the literature study method by looking for various sources of available statistical data and surveys. Even though the countries in the region are Islamic countries, the research results show that even though the number of Muslim populations is increasing every year, the religiousness of the people in the region has decreased dramatically, especially after the end of the Arab Spring in 2011.
Kata Kunci	Abstrak
Kereligiusan, Timur Tengah, Afrika Utara, Arab Spring, Muslim, Non-religijs	Di masa sekarang tampaknya kereligiusan umat muslim semakin lama semakin menurun. Hal ini dapat terlihat dari semakin banyaknya umat muslim yang berpandangan liberal dan juga dengan meningkatnya jumlah ateisme khususnya di kawasan timur tengah dan afrika utara. Penyebab dan bagaimana turunnya kualitas bergama khususnya di kawasan yang mayoritas beragama islam tersebut akan menjadi pembahasan dalam artikel ini. Penelitian ini akan menggunakan metode studi literatur dengan mencari berbagai sumber data statistik dan survei yang telah tersedia. Walaupun negara-negara di kawasan tersebut adalah negara islam, hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun jumlah populasi umat muslim setiap tahunnya semakin bertambah banyak, tetapi kereligiusan masyarakat di kawasan tersebut semakin menurun secara dramatis terutama setelah berakhirnya arab spring pada tahun 2011.

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1. Introduction

Issues regarding religious transformation have received little attention in the scientific literature in the Arab region (van Nieuwkerk, 2021). Countries in the Middle East and North Africa are predominantly Muslim. There are almost 100% Muslims there. Countries in the Middle East and North Africa region include Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen (*The Arab World in Seven Charts: Are Arabs Turning Their Backs on Religion?*, 2019). However, the fact is those religious movements that occurred in the Arab region such as instilling conservative values through sermons and can also be seen in the many mosques that were built, veils (hijab and niqab), growing beards and the emergence of "zibib", dark marks on the foreheads of followers Islam which shows the

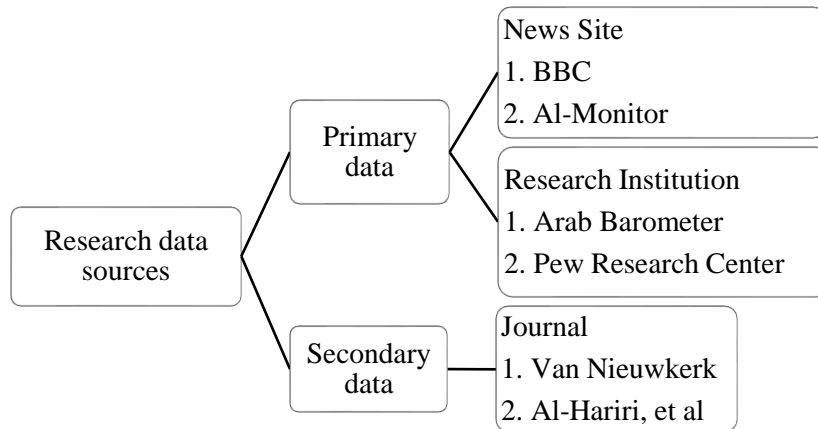
frequency of a Muslim's forehead from touching a prayer rug (van Nieuwkerk, 2021). It's starting to experience a lot of declines. Although the percentage is not too high, it is still a decrease. The decline fell dramatically and dropped the most compared to previous years. Especially after the Arab spring happened. However, if we look at the data released by the Pew Research Center, it shows the opposite, that the number of Muslims in the Middle East region is increasing. In the future, the number of Muslims will continue to increase every year (*The Future of The Global Muslim Population. Region: Middle East-North Africa*, 2011), but the data only looks at certain factors such as the fertility rate of the people there.

The decline in the Middle East region can be seen from the increasing secularization and increasing calls from Muslim communities in the Arab world to reform their political institutions. Even the majority of Muslims living in countries with Muslim governments for hundreds of years have now become secular for the most part such as the republics of Central Asia, Turkey, and Tunisia (Krämer, 2013). Political institutions or government agencies in the Arab region include religious institutions that play their role. So, people's lives in the Arab region are all controlled by religion, from religious life, and the media to the school curriculum (Holleis, 2021). Many of them are also dissatisfied with issues regarding women's rights, and migration until sexuality (*Aktivis Pembela Hak-Hak Perempuan Arab Saudi "Terancam Hukuman Mati,"* 2018). The decrease in the level of Muslim religiousness is also followed by an increase in the number of apostates and atheists, but data about them is difficult to find because several countries in the Arab region will punish those who declare themselves openly as atheists. So, they prefer to remain silent and not show themselves that they have no religion (Pipes, 2021).

As in the article written by Van Nieuwkerk that the decreasing level of religiousness in the Arab region has occurred a lot after the end of the Arab Spring (van Nieuwkerk, 2021). The ease of using social media is increasingly helping them to discuss matters of spirituality and religiosity. They also get a lot of information about whether or not a religion makes sense. They do this also disappoint them against their government that runs the government according to Islamic law, but in reality it is not. It also makes people wonder whether Islam is really like that. Also, articles that Al-Hariri and others have written (Al Hariri et al., 2019). From there it can be seen that there have been many people in the area who have begun to lose a lot of their religion. The survey results were proven through discussions they had with non-religious people on Twitter. This paper will explain what is behind the decline in the level of religiousness of Muslims in the Middle East and North Africa.

2. Methods

The research discussed uses qualitative and quantitative methods with literature studies. These results were obtained by searching for data from written sources, namely journals and statistical data. The main data is obtained from Middle East news sites and from special agencies that research the Middle East and North Africa regions. Meanwhile, the secondary data was obtained from journals that had researched issues related to the religiousness of the people of the Middle East before. This secondary data also serves as an explanation and strengthens statistical data as a source of primary data. From the data that has been collected, it is then analyzed and then generates concluding points regarding the topics discussed. Primary data sourced from the Arab Barometer institution was obtained through data collection using qualitative methods with direct surveys of local public opinion. Likewise with the Pew Research Center which collects its data through various research methods. Secondary data was obtained from obtaining data sourced from the journal *Arabs and Atheism: Religious Discussions in the Arab Twittersphere* data collected by al Hariri, et al derived from Twitter discussions and van Nieuwkerk's journal with the title *Religious Transformation in the Middle East: Spirituality, Religious Doubt, and Non-Religion in the Middle East*



Statistical data obtained from this primary source will help researchers to provide an overview of the ups and downs of the level of religiosity in Muslim communities in the Middle East and North Africa.

Table 1. The data above is sourced from the Pew Research Center

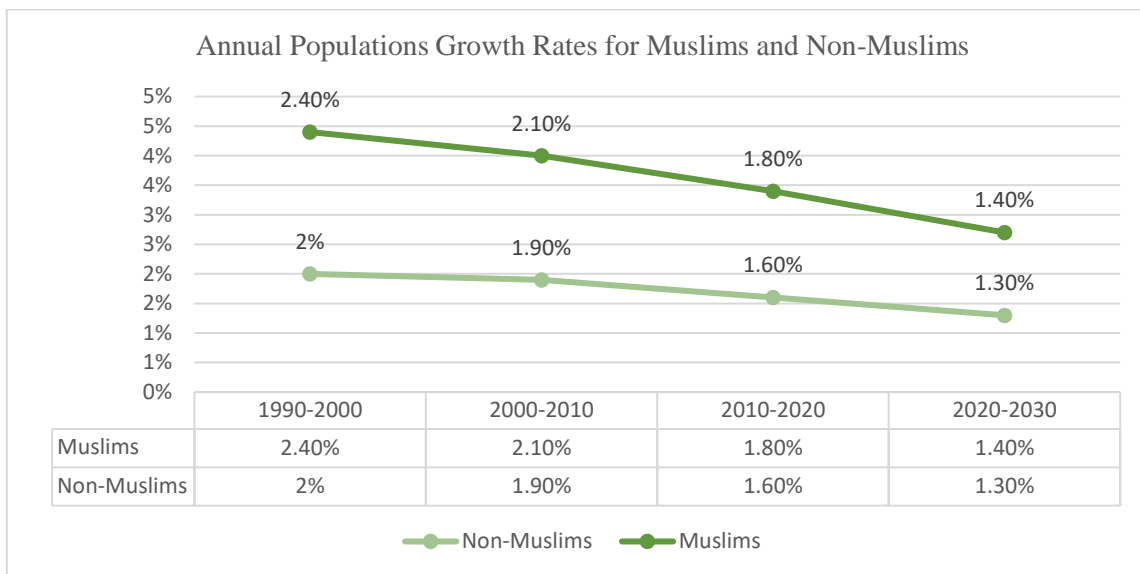
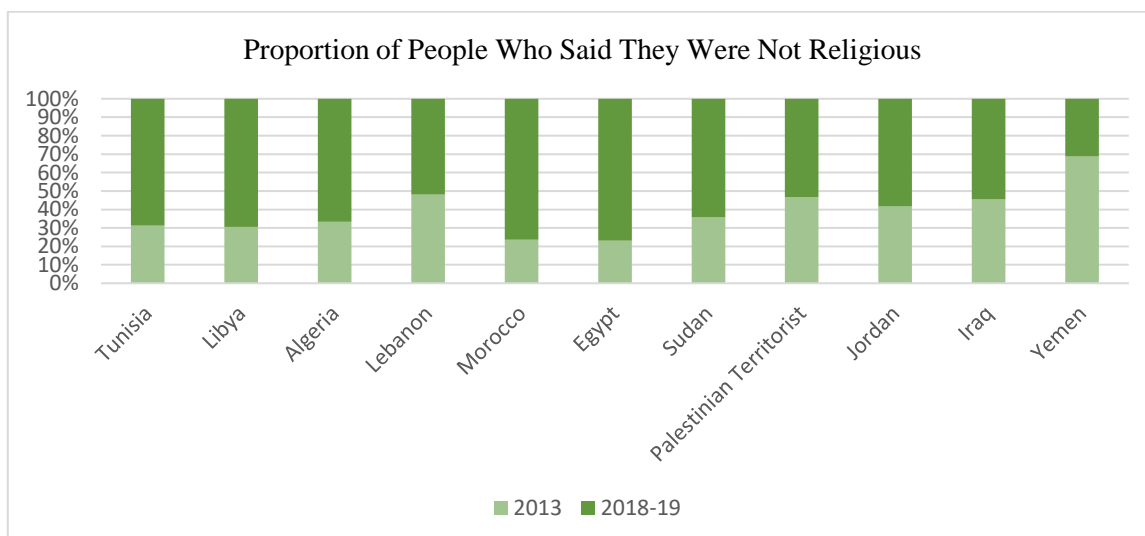


Table 2. The data above is sourced from Arabic Barometer



However, it should be noted that this statistical data prioritizes generalization. so that the results of these data can damage the meaning of individual subjects or every Muslim in the region (Moleong, 2017). Therefore, in order not to reduce the meaning of individual religiosity, this study does not only use statistical data, but is also accompanied by data and explanations from journals. From the results of the data found then processed, analyzed using descriptive analysis so that conclusions can be drawn from the data regarding the decline in the level of Muslim religiousness in the Middle East and North Africa.

3. Results and Discussion

Several factors make countries in this predominantly Muslim region - even the number of Muslims approaching 100 percent - experience many changes in their beliefs. This downward trend in the level of religiousness could continue. In this article, we will find out how this can happen, what are the causes, and what are the effects.

a. Results

1) The decline in the level of religiosity

Research on religion in the Arab region is very interesting because as we know, this area is an area where the majority of the people are Muslims, they are known as a religious community and now it seems that they have started to turn bolder to be a little liberal. However, in fact, this is also very sensitive in the region so literature on topics like this often does not get attention in the region (Al Hariri et al., 2019).

In 2019, the Arab Barometer – a non-partisan organization that researches social, political and economic life throughout the Middle East and North Africa region – was surveyed to find out the level of religiousness of the Arab community. This survey was conducted in all parts of MENA, including areas in the Gulf region (Saudi, UAE, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Iraq). However, not all countries can provide free access to this research. For example in Kuwait. The only country that gives access to publish survey results. While for the entire bay area questions regarding religious matters cannot be raised, it can be assumed that only a few residents in the bay area recognize themselves as non-religious people. From the results of a survey on the non-religiousness of almost 50% of Tunisian youths, 33.33% of Libyan youths, 25% of Algerian youths and 20% of Egyptian youths, it was concluded that irreligiousness in 2013 was as much as 8%, increasing to 13% in 2019. In 2011, people's trust in political parties with religious nuances also began to fall by more than a third to 15%. Even the people in the MENA region have lost their faith in Islamic movements. This is shown based on the results of a survey which said that this trust fell from 35% in 2013 to 20% in 2018. This lost trust shows that politics has shifted in the region.

In fact, the separation between state or political affairs and religion is not possible there and in the Arab region where the majority of the people are Muslims. Because in Islam itself does not recognize secularism. All rules in the life of Muslims to matters in the country must always refer to the Koran and as-sunnah. They believed that they would be able to enforce Islamic rules in their government like when the caliph Umar, the caliph Usman and other caliphs who had ruled under Islam (Krämer, 2013). However, in 2019, based on an interview with the senior vice president of the Middle East and North Africa forum at the University of Cambridge, who was accompanied by a postgraduate student who had the opportunity to have a conversation with the director of the Arab Barometer, Michael Robbins, said that, the level of religious trust and belief in political parties have declined in the Middle East and North Africa.

Trust in the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt fell in 2011 by 44%, down to 17% in 2019. In Jordan, in 2012, it was 35%, down to 14% in 2019. In Morocco, in 2013, it was 45%, down to 25 % in 2019.

In Tunisia, in 2011 as much as 40% decreased their trust in the Ennahda party to 11% in 2019. This will be the highest significant change in subsequent years (*Young Arabs Are Changing Their Beliefs and Preception: New Survey*, 2019). Tunisian society, which experienced the most decline, will become more secular in the following years, but this is not the case for the majority population in the MENA region. 77% of residents still pray, 50% of Muslim residents still read or listen to the Koran every day and 66.67% of Muslim men also still go to the mosque once a week. These religious activities will continue for many years to come because for the majority of citizens in the Arab region this religious practice is considered very important.

The decline in trust in religious leaders has also occurred even though the ruling religious elites have maintained their hold on power throughout the region. This downward trend is not only happening in MENA, but also in all world religious institutions as well. The influences on the institution are gone. In Arabia, they still exist, but their public recognition has been lost. Meanwhile, Iraq and Lebanon are not inclined toward this trend. They are not affected, even there, religion for them is the center of self-identity (Habtom, 2020).

Because this trend is common in the Arab region and North Africa, many Islamic political parties in Iraq are warning their citizens about the dangers of this atheism that have spread. However, interviews Al-Monitor has conducted with youths in Baghdad suggest that they are also starting to question their faith. They turned their backs on religious leaders and religious parties. Some of them even joined the Communist Party. This also led to the emergence of a movement in southern Iraq in October 2019. The demonstration was shown to protest against the government, denouncing corruption and lack of public services (Neurink, 2020).

Also, there is another study conducted based on an online survey of millions of tweets. Based on the results of the survey, hundreds of Twitter account users stated that some countries in the Arab region strictly prohibit atheism and that punishment also applies. However, the survey shows that recently the atheist population has increased in the region. In fact, also from the results of the survey they conducted, it was found that Christians in the Arab region tended to dislike Islam rather than dislike atheism (Al Hariri et al., 2019). It is not surprising that there are many young people whose religious level is low. As many as 47% of young people in Tunisia admit that they are not religious and this is the same thing happening in the United States, where 56% of youths are not religious (Habtom, 2020).

Research conducted by BBC Arabic together with Arab Barometer also stated that in 2013 as many as 8% of people who said they had no religion increased to 13% in 2019 and as many as 18% were under 30 years old (*Is the Arab World Really Becoming Less Religious.*, 2019). By research conducted by Arab Barometer, the Middle Eastern regions are experiencing an increasing trend of irreligiousness, while the Yemeni region has not experienced an increase, instead it has decreased (van Nieuwkerk, 2021). Residents in the Iranian region are also increasingly showing that they are now more modern and secular, even though Islamic law is still being implemented in the region (Krastev et al., 2012).

If we look at the available data, the Muslim population in the MENA region is declining. From 2000-2010 the population was 2.1%. Then from 2010-2020, the population will be 1.8% and from 2020 to 2030 the Muslim population is projected to be 1.4%. Even if the growing Muslim population in the region slows down, their population will still be higher than the non-Muslim population. With this decrease in number, it does not mean that they will decrease in the following years. The Muslim population in the region will increase in the future because the population in the region is increasing every year. However, this data only looks at factors of birth or fertility, probable length of life and future migration (*The Future of The Global Muslim Population. Region: Middle East-North Africa*, 2011). They did not explain the level of Muslim religiosity in the region and only presented the number of data levels for how many Muslims there are in the region (*The Future of The Global Muslim Population. Region: Middle East-North Africa*, 2011). Many young people in the region only pretend to be Muslims

(Neurink, 2020) or call them liberal Muslims. Official statistics are not available, but this trend is clearly illustrated by the fact that religious practices such as mosque attendance have declined. According to the Arab Barometer, in the past five years from 2014-2019, only 33% of Muslims performed Friday prayers at the mosque, this number decreased from 60% (Neurink, 2020).

The trend of non-religiousness in this region is also related to social problems such as issues of women's rights, the role of women, and homosexuality. Religious or not religious, most of them still have a lot of problems with these things. However, things like homosexuality are not only in the Arab region which many do not agree with but also in people throughout the world, from those who are religious to those who are not more religious, who do not approve of it. Surveys that have been conducted across the MENA region, except Algeria, they say that the majority agree if they have a female president, except for Morocco. There, more than half of the people say that the husband must have the final say in family decisions, in other words, in a matter that must be decided, it is men who have the last right to decide (*Is the Arab World Really Becoming Less Religious.*, 2019). The level of religiosity also applies to viewing the role and rights of women. As many as 63% who are religious said the husband should always make the final decision. In other words, it is men who must always make decisions and as many as 56% who are not religious do not agree with this (Habtom, 2020).

In the area of Egypt, there are many people who are critically religious or in other words they are not religious in a conventional way. However, there are even more people who are religious with conventional views, but they all live their daily lives in a way that is not following the rules of their religion, such as by judging people who differ from their beliefs, they say they are infidels and their place in hell (Schielke, 2012) and in fact, dishonorable behaviors such as consuming drugs, alcohol, homo, prostitution still exist and occur in society, but this is only behind the public. This happens in modern state governments such as Morocco and even Saudi Arabia (Krämer, 2013).

2) Causes of decline

One of the reasons for the trend of non-religiousness in this region is historical factors. For example, in Tunisia where less than half of the youth there do not describe themselves as religious. Also in Algeria, the level of religiosity in their society is low. This is most likely due to the strong French culture that exists in that area. Apart from that, what causes this trend to increase is that most of these trends are experienced by young people, who during their youth experience a lot of instability and youth is a time when they are looking for an identity. This results in the emergence of a possibility, it could be that these youths were simply not religious in their youth and will return to being religious if old age has come to them or when these youths have started a family. However, even if this had not happened, most of the regions in Arabia would have remained dominated by religion for decades, even though this downward trend continued (*Young Arabs Are Changing Their Beliefs and Preception: New Survey*, 2019).

The youth in the Arab region are also not happy with religious institutions participating in running institutions in government. They manage all religious life up to their curriculum at school. State leaders in the MENA region fought hard to keep their power afloat, as many as 66.67% of Arab youths believed that in the Middle East region, religion was too influential so there was a need for reform of religious institutions. Their religious-based government apparently does not reflect the Islamic teachings that they profess. They even committed injustice to their people, acted arbitrarily, corruption occurred everywhere until there was an economic crisis that made the people more miserable in the end there was a revolution in the Arab region or what can be called the Arab Spring. they rebelled and carried out demonstrations until they carried weapons. The ISIS network, which has carried out a lot of violence and atrocities in the name of Islam, is increasing the number of people who are far from religion and many of them are wondering what Islam is. Finally, this has also caused many people to reflect on their understanding of Islam or other religions (van Nieuwkerk, 2021).

This revolution or Arab spring has also spread throughout the world through social media and this has made those outside the region know what happened in the Arab region and what the causes were. It's not only the Arab Spring that use social media to facilitate the spread of their revolution. Social media also facilitates atheists or non-believers to communicate with each other and show that they exist, even in a religious country like Indonesia (Al Hariri et al., 2019). The wide accessibility of social media as a source of information has enabled youth to actively question ideas and seek alternative information about forms of religiosity and spirituality. Even the youths asked something "If all religions think they must be true, how do I know that the religion I follow is the only true religion?" As a result, many questions arise asking whether this makes sense or not (van Nieuwkerk, 2021).

Many young Muslims use the internet to join local groups that are the same as them. They comment on hereditary Islamic culture, and even create their own version of Islam (Krastev et al., 2012). The breadth of internet access has made it easier for young people to find out about non-belief and atheism, which society fears and hates. Actually, free critical thinking about religion is not a new thing that has occurred in the Arab region since 1937, but this has become limited since the rise of Islamic movements in the 1980s. However, in the 21st century, atheism is just starting to change the intellectual world of the Middle East, especially the translation of Dawkins' book entitled *The God Delusion* (2006) which also influences changes in the Arab world (van Nieuwkerk, 2021). Various forms of free thought, disbelief and issues surrounding atheism gradually became available online aided by an active youth blogging movement and YouTubers from the Arab Atheism Network as well as the spread of atheist grubs on Facebook in the late 2000s (van Nieuwkerk, 2021).

Apart from these factors, economic weakness in the Arab region such as reduced oil, demand and rents used to strengthen the tourism sector there helped to advance a new and moderate government. So, when King Salman was appointed king, rules such as; women may not drive alone; Prohibition of playing music indiscriminately; beach visitors who should not be mixed up between men and women are also prohibited from using alcohol there. All of these regulations changed which made Arabic now more modern (Krastev et al., 2012). The atheists also voiced women's rights in Saudi, where women should be free to choose without having a guardian. They are atheists forcing rules such as prohibitions on traveling, obtaining passports and driving to be revoked. However, most of the theists there disagree and refuse even though they have shown sympathy and the cause (Al Hariri et al., 2019). Many consider these prohibitions to be related to religion, but Prince Faisal bin Abdullah bin Muhammad once said that the prohibition for women to drive alone has nothing to do with Islam, statutory regulations that are made only as a traditional cultural decision of the government (Ireiqat, 2015).

3) As a result of the decline

Even though the majority of youths throughout the MENA region are very religious in nature, if this downward trend in the level of religiosity continues in the following years, people in this region in the future may be much less religious. As a result of the declining belief in the Islamic religion and the declining religious level of the Muslim community in the MENA region, perhaps in the long run it will cause the Muslim center which has always been in the Arab world to be shifted. It could even be, Indonesia or Pakistan that will determine how Islam will be in the future.

Although the level of religiosity in the MENA region is low, issues such as homosexuality and the role of women remain social problems. In fact, in any region, whether religious or non-religious, the level of acceptance of homosexuality will remain low and this is certainly the case in MENA. Because indeed the issues of homosexuality and Islam can never be united and cannot be combined if we look at it based on the interpretation of Islam itself, but it will indeed be different if it uses a modern interpretation and in this case Muslims in the Arab region choose to continue to use Islamic interpretation (Holleis, 2021). Women in the MENA region have also become increasingly educated and involved in work life, but the influence of women in the region will remain incomplete as long as

they are excluded from decision-making and political participation (*Is the Arab World Really Becoming Less Religious?*, 2019). What's interesting here is that despite Iraq's conservative culture, many of the demonstrators were women. Unfortunately, one of the activists in Iraq, Basra Rihaam Yacoub, was shot dead in the street due to his actions in organizing women's protests (Neurink, 2020). Not only that, in Saudi Arabia, activists who defend women's rights will also be threatened and they will be arrested (*Mengapa Perempuan Di Arab Saudi Bisa Dipenjara Kalau Tidak Mematuhi Perintah Ayah?*, 2019). Also with the ban on women driving alone, even though the ban has been lifted, there is still a guardianship system. The guardianship system includes fathers, husbands, siblings and their sons. Where there are women who do not want to obey their guardians, then this can be reported and those who do not obey their guardians will be arrested. An example of this case is two female activists named Badawi and Mariam who ran away from their homes, they were detained because their father reported them on charges that their child was disobedient to his father (*Mengapa Perempuan Di Arab Saudi Bisa Dipenjara Kalau Tidak Mematuhi Perintah Ayah?*, 2019). There are even women activists who face the death penalty. The officials decided this because it was an act against the government.

The dissatisfaction of the people in the Arab region towards the previous authoritarian regime has also caused the occurrence of the Arab Spring. The Arab community wanted a revolution and in the end, they succeeded in changing the government and the constitution. The rise of the Arab world also affected religious authority because religion and politics were intertwined in various regions of the Middle East (van Nieuwkerk, 2021). When the Arab Spring happened, the demonstrators demanded human dignity, elections, democracy, good governance and did not forget that they also demanded human rights. They only want to change the new political order (Krastev et al., 2012). because the regime and government institutions there are running very badly.

With the end of the Arab Spring, it does not mean that the mosques will become even more crowded and will be filled with more worshipers than before. Even religion is getting here, it's becoming more and more a personal matter, and people are starting to separate religion from the world. This happened because of their disappointment with the previous government which ran a government based on religion, but, they were not like that coupled with their very authoritarian power. The separation that the Arab community is carrying out does not mean secularization. However, the community still adheres to the teachings of their Islamic religion and they begin to reinterpret the Islamic religion not only in textual terms, but they interpret Islamic religion according to conditions and also by mutual agreement (Krastev et al., 2012). In addition to this decline, at present it seems that the surrounding Arab community is more interested in Sufism, especially those of the youth in the area. Even Buddhism itself also claims they have experienced an increase in popularity (van Nieuwkerk, 2021).

After the Arab Spring occurred, many people in the Arab region experienced a decrease in their level of religiosity. Religious inspirational sermons became less accepted and less attractive to young people after the revolution (van Nieuwkerk, 2021). This is also because when the Arab Spring occurred, the majority of the population in the area were mostly young people, many of whom had critical thinking. After the Arab Spring occurred and spread widely through cyberspace, surveillance in spaces containing sensitive topics did not disappear, instead, surveillance throughout space, be it space in the real world or in cyberspace, was more advanced than previous surveillance. So that in several countries in the Arab region they are not free to express their critical opinions about religion, let alone non-religion. As is the regulation in force in Morocco, in the region for anyone who tries to shake or even deliberately shake the faith of a Muslim, a person who shakes that faith will be subject to Article 220 of the Criminal Code (van Nieuwkerk, 2021).

Even a Muslim who chooses to leave Islam itself is considered a betrayal by the local community, even the punishment for them is a very severe punishment, namely the death penalty. However, the death penalty only applies to men, while women are not sentenced to death, but they will be beaten and imprisoned. There are also punishments for those who insult the prophets believed by Muslims, for

example, an insult to the prophet Muhammad, they will receive punishment and this humiliation includes the crime of treason (Krämer, 2013).

There is one strange thing, people in Egypt who have no faith or no religion then they will consider it tantamount to not having good morals. In another sense, not being religious is immoral. Even though those who have no faith or even those with religions other than Islam do a lot of good things such as being honest, tolerant, sympathetic and empathetic, loyal, local people will still think they are not good because they are not Muslims (Schielke, 2012). And to eradicate these free thinkers and atheists, the people in the Arabian Gulf region have even marked a special think-tank organization called the Barheen Center for treating theological crises. This is an attempt by them to fight atheism there (Obiedat, 2022).

b. Discussion

Now technology has developed more so that western thoughts have spread everywhere. Many Muslims today are becoming more free or liberal. They are even too free to go beyond the corridors of religious law because their thoughts are mixed with western thoughts. The results of previous research that was explained by Karin Van Niewkerk, regarding the rise of the Arab world has affected religious authority because religion and politics are interrelated in various regions in the Middle East. After the Arab spring happened, the level of religiosity decreased. Religious inspirational sermons became less accepted and less attractive. The breadth of internet access has made it easier to find out about non-belief and atheism, which society fears and hates. Likewise with the findings made by Al Hariri Y, Magdy W and Wolters M, they found out the level of religiosity in the Arab region through social media, namely Twitter. From the discussion on Twitter, the thing that was discussed was about atheism in the Middle Eastern world. There, atheists and other non-religious people do not openly oppose religion, they only want religious reform because according to them religion is too conservative. This discussion indicates that there are non-religious people in the Middle East. These findings indicate that the decline in the level of religiousness of Muslims in the Middle East region is indeed decreasing.

In this study it can be seen that the discussion on this topic found the results that; 1) After the Arab Spring occurred, more and more Muslims whose religious level dropped, especially youth. 2) Getting here, human critical thinking is increasing. Followed by free access to social media, even the most sensitive matters in the Arab region can be discussed through social media. Also related to the western world which often voices individual freedom is also a factor in the decline in the religiousness of Muslims, many Muslims are starting to grow with liberal views, even with a level of liberality that violates Islamic law. 3) Even though the number of these religious levels is decreasing, the number of Muslim population there is still large and will be getting bigger every year. This is because the human population in the Middle East region is also increasing. However, the high Muslim population there does not mean that the level of religion there is also high, because there are many threats to those who are not religious. These threats indicate that there are religious people in the Middle East region who prefer freedom, but are hindered by threats from the government and the surrounding environment.

Research and supervision of religion in the Arab region is very limited and sensitive because in some regions of the Middle East there are those that do not allow surveys on religion, the level of religiosity and mistrust in the Middle East. However, for future research researchers can also find out in advance why non-religious matters are prohibited there so that the results of research on religious matters are even more perfect. If it is indeed prohibited, researchers can review it via social media as did Al Hariri, et al. and as a researcher must be prepared to accept research risks.

4. Conclusions

The decline that occurred in the Middle East and North Africa was the lowest and most occurred

after the end of the Arab Revolution or the Arab Spring. This decline was mostly experienced by the youth because many of them had a high level of critical thinking. They want revolution and reform of government institutions or bodies there so that they are not carried out entirely by religious institutions. There are not many people in the Arab region who, when surveyed, admit that religion is not entirely true because in their country there are laws that prohibit things that promote non-religiousness. If this decline continues, the center of Islamic civilization may shift to Indonesia. Even though this decline has occurred a lot, the religious level of Muslims in the Arab region remains high. It's only since the Arab Spring that this decline has been more pronounced than ever. When viewed from the predicted number of data, indeed the number of Muslims in the Arab region will be even higher, but this is only seen in terms of the fertility rate in the region and not from each individual Muslim in the region.

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