Identification of Topic: "The Actual or Desirable Public Role of Religion in Societal Life"

Selection Protocol (v8.4)

Background Information: Objectives of our Research Project
The project aims at **comparing** the **national debates** of several democratic countries (Australia, Germany, Lebanon, Switzerland, Turkey, USA) and finding out about how the media in these different countries cover the **public role of religion in the respective country's societal life**.

This means that for this project not all topics discussed in the media of the respective countries will be relevant. Instead, only items (news articles or blog posts) should be selected that address the actual or desirable role of (a) religion in general and (b) religious practices and ideas or religious groups, persons, institutions, or organizations within the society.

Instructions for Selecting Items:

In selecting items for the project please go through each of the following four steps for **each item**:

1) *Section rule:* Please check whether the article appeared in one of the following sections/categories:
- Finances/markets/funds
- Sport/local sport/technology & motoring
- Events and appointments/advertisements
- TV/TV program
- Home/real estate
- Supplement/magazine

If this is the case, please enter "0" in the "relevance" column. Articles published in one of these sections should **not** be included in the analysis.

2) *Title rule:* Please read the article's <u>main headline(s) and subheading</u>. Now decide if they contain an indication as to whether the article addresses **the present or future actual or desirable public role of religion in the country's societal life**.

Examples of relevant topics in whose context the public (i.e., not strictly private) role of religion (including religious institutions) can be discussed are:
- the validity of religious justifications for public or generally binding policies and laws, such as
  - religiously motivated rejection of abortions, preimplantation diagnostics, or stem cell research;
  - acceptance and legitimacy of plural forms of life (for example, polygamy, homosexuality including adoption and marriage rights)
- the role and presence of religious symbols (e.g., headscarf, burka, yarmulke, crucifix) in the general public and in government institutions
- legal proceedings negotiating the use of religious symbols in the public or potential religiously motivated crimes (note: official courts should per se be understood as adjudicating generally binding rules (public rules), i.e., societal and public settlement of disputes).

Caution: This list of examples is by no means exhaustive. **Every** article dealing with the role of religion in the public life within the respective country's society should be selected.

Please note that the **geographic relevance** of an article should generally be assumed. This means that an article is geographically irrelevant only if it refers entirely to a geographic context different from the country of publication. Important: The decision about whether an article is geographically relevant should always be based on the official national state boundaries of the country in which the item/article was published.

Please also note that the geographic relevance to the country of publication is given **not only** if the issue is discussed at "national" level. Geographic relevance to the country of publication of the item/article is also given if it discusses a topic at the "subnational" level (for example, if it contains a reference to a specific place or region within the country), or at "supranational" level (for example, if it contains a reference to a larger region that comprises the relevant country, such as "Europe" for an article published in Germany).

3) *10-sentence rule:* If the main headline or subheading suggest such a thematic reference or the heading/subheading consist of 5 words or less, please read **the first 10 sentences** of the item/article. After you have read them, decide if they contain an indication as to whether the item/article as a whole addresses **the present or future actual or desirable public role of religion in the country's societal life**.

The article thus must, at least in part and implicitly, clearly identifiable to a reader as (a) thematically, (b) temporally and (c) geographically relevant.

*"**Public role of religion**" refers to any kind of significance that religion, or religious practices and ideas, may have for public, especially political, activities and decisions. Such public activities or decisions must be an explicit topic of at least part of the article. (Note: Such activities and decisions usually are characterized by referring not only to a single or individual case/person but to the "general public".)*

If you can confirm upon reading the item/article that it at least partially deals with **the present or future actual or desirable public role of religion in the country's societal life**, please select it for coding.

Caution: Please be strict when applying the 10-sentence rule! If you cannot identify a thematic, temporal, and geographic relevance of the article in the first 10 sentences, please do not select it and proceed with the next article -- even if you happen to come across such a reference after the first 10 sentences of the article. The strict application of the rule is very important to ensure the consistency of our selection!

4) *Case-of-doubt rule:* Whenever you are uncertain about your decision about whether an item is relevant for the research project according to steps 1-3 **always** code the item as relevant. In other words: When in doubt, decide in favor of coding items as relevant!

As you make your selection decision, always try to take a step back from the first 10 sentences of the item/article. Think of the overarching topic of the research project: the public role of religion in the societal life of the studied countries. This can often help you in coming to an intuitively correct judgment about whether an item/article as a whole speaks to this topic and is thus relevant for the project.