Grey-scales

Negotiating the Civil State in Post-Revolutionary Egypt

by Sarah Wessel

Dawla Madaniyya
A CARPO Series in Cooperation with GSSC and Re:Orient

This CARPO Study is the first volume of this series.

Table of Contents

This paper explores the changing state-society relations in Egypt, following the so-called 25 January Revolution until the ousting of Muhammad Mursi, by analysing the shifting processes of claim making and receiving on the creation of dawla madaniyya (civil state). Drawing from a comprehensive qualitative-empirical data collection gained in a long-term field study in capital, industrial, touristic, and rural areas 2010-2014, the analysis reveals that the shift in the debates from a secular state to a civil state reflects three notions and developments: (1) the opening of the discursive space to redefine the relationship between religion and politics, (2) the search for a "native" concept to organize representational structures, and (3) the increasing opposition to the political influence of the military. By investigating the complex assumptions, perceptions and circumstances expressed in support of the civil state, I will show that the diverse notions – apart from their incompatibility – indicate a deeper shared concern: whether the emerging political and social extremes can be reunified in order to rehabilitate the disintegration of the national collective.[1]

Introduction

This article explores the changing state-society relations in the post-revolutionary context of Egypt, by analysing the shifting debates on the creation of a *dawla madaniyya* (civil state), following the 25 January uprisings in 2011 – illuminating a period that was celebrated as a departure towards democracy, yet regressed into a reproduction of the authoritarian (military) regime three years later.

While current publications mainly look at the debates on *dawla madaniyya* amongst public figures and political groups on a macro-level, this paper emphasizes the reciprocal dynamics of claim making and receiving (Saward 2010). By incorporating how individuals on the local level explain their support or rejection of a civil state and by contextualizing these explanations in the enfolding political trajectories, I aim to reveal shared and competing assumptions on society and its political re-organization that goes beyond what can be said in public. Hence, I seek to understand how support, acceptance or rejection of the civil state, as the most recent vision on the nature of statehood, emerged and changed during a process of rapid transformations. On a more general level, I am interested in the question of how individuals, having

lived for decades under an oppressive authoritarian regime, can then envision and re-relate to the state when a space for political participation opens up, as was the case in Egypt after the 25 January uprisings.

Approaching the *dawla madaniyya* debate with focus on the processes of claim making and receiving is crucial for two major reasons. Firstly, 25 January marks a critical shift in the discourses on the diverse future visions about the nature of statehood in Egypt. While the three major visions of statehood – the Islamic state, the secular state, and the civil state – had already been debated before 2011, the discussions experienced a significant qualitative and quantitative jump after the uprisings: they entered into the general public domain and were discussed intensively throughout society, fuelled by the aim (or hope) to put one of these concepts, into practice. *Dawla madaniyya,* as the youngest vision of statehood and unknown by many until the uprisings, became very popular. The civil state debate even seemed to supersede the debate on a secular state. Hence, it is important to understand how individuals experience, (re-)produce, and relate to this particular state vision.

Secondly, *dawla madaniyya* is a highly debated concept amongst scholars, politicians and individuals: Some argue that it designates a secular state; others understand it as an alternative vision. In the Egyptian context it was increasingly used on a local level as an expression of compromise to bridge incompatible ideas of a secular and an Islamic state. While *dawla 'almaniyya* (secular state) separates religion from politics, *dawla islamiyya* (Islamic state) presupposes it. *Dawla madaniyya* (civil state) from the perspective of my research participants, more or less omitted the question which role religion should play in politics. In short: the *dawla madaniyya* opened the space to formulate a positive, inclusive political vision. Considering the oft-made argument that the lack of a positive vision has led to the (re-)emergence of the military dictatorship (Wessel 2013, Gerbaudo 2013), it is crucial to understand how support, acceptance or rejection of the civil state emerged and changed.

The analysis draws from a comprehensive qualitative-empirical data collection, gained in a long-term field study 2010-2014. In order to track the shifting political discourses and the reciprocal processes of claim making and receiving, different sets of data were collected and analysed. All in all, 225 in-depth interviews with different social groups in the capital, industrial, touristic, and rural areas were undertaken. Analytically, I compared the interviews in terms of repeated narratives that were explicitly and implicitly used in reference to a *dawla madaniyya*. In order to track shifts and changes in the debate from an individual perspective, I organized long-term ethnographic encounters with 23 individuals, which spanned the duration of the events in the given period. In addition, I conducted 104 interviews with random participants to verify

or differentiate narratives that came up in the discussions with the frequent participants. To analyse public debates on a national level, I collected newspaper articles and followed important TV events, such as the news, presidential speeches, advertisings of election campaigns, political talk shows, etc. In addition, I frequently attended public presentations, discussions, press conferences and election campaign events in diverse contexts, as well as conducted expert interviews.

After a brief outline of the emergence of the discourse on the civil state, in the first part of the article I will analyse the processes of claim making and receiving in relation to the civil state that shifted from *dawla ʿalmaniyya* to *dawla madaniyya* after 2011. The findings show that *dawla madaniyya* can only partly be considered as a replacement of the secular state concept. Rather, the data support the view that the debate represents the search for a "native" state concept, providing an alternative vision to "Western" democracies as well as to Islamist visions. In order to provide a deeper understanding of this alternative vision, in the second part of the article I will explore the complex assumptions, perceptions and circumstances to which my research participants – Egyptian citizens from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds – referred to when expressing their support for *dawla madaniyya*.[2]

The emergence of *dawla madaniyya* in public debates

Despite the fact that neither the international nor the national audience had been very familiar with the expression *dawla madaniyya* prior to the uprisings in 2011, the debate was by no means new. Scholars have contrasting views on the origin of the expression in the Egyptian context. Kamal Muhammad (2011) dates the concept back to the latter nineteenth century and attributes it to the Islamic scholar Muhammad ʿAbduh (1849-1905). In fact, however, ʿAbduh uses the expression *sulta madaniyya* (civil authority) not *dawla madaniyya* (Flores 2013). Nevertheless, it is true that ʿAbduh puts the expression 'civil' forward to stress that Islam, in contrast to Christianity, does not know a theocracy in

---

2 With a sample of 50 civil state supporters out of 127 research participants, the data set is small. Nevertheless, I argue that the data carries information contributing highly to the understanding of the changing state-society relations. When we approach culture as the practice of meaning-making as suggested by Lisa Wedeen (2002), then explicit explanations and statements as well as its implicit assumptions from individuals are partial reflections of the changing political culture. Meanings are not produced in a vacuum but through sharing; and are realized through acting.

the sense of a ruling clerical class. In 1925, 'Abd ar-Raziq uses the expression *dawla madaniyya* probably for the first time in his famous book *al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm* (Islam and the Sources of Political Authority, Zahalka 2016, 22). He argues against the idea of an Islamic notion of government, implying that Muslims are allowed to create democratic governments. In his understanding, *dawla madaniyya* is a secular counter-concept to an Islamic state. In contrast to Kamal Muhammad, 'Abd al-Karim al-Jiba'i (2011) argues that the term 'civil state' in current debates is applied with a variety of different meanings, according to the national debates and the actual groups using it. In this sense, he argues that the expression 'civil state' entered the national debates in Egypt after the revolution in 1952, when the Muslim Brotherhood mobilized the term to express its opposition to the military government.

There is more or less consensus that from the 1990's onwards, the notion of 'civil state' gained significant importance in public debates. On the one hand, elements of the Muslim Brotherhood used the expression 'civil state with Islamic reference', instead of *dawla islamiyya,* in order to distinguish themselves from the rising militant Islamists that also claimed to enforce an Islamist state (Tadros 2012, 50; Hamzawy and Brown 2010, 6-10). This expression also indicated the Muslim Brotherhood's shift, from an Islamist opposition towards a more 'legitimate' player, within the political landscape. On the other hand, liberal and even secular groups also increasingly used this emerging terminology. As argued by Anwar Mughith (2011) and Sayyid Yassin (2010), the expression 'secular state' had increasingly negative connotations, and 'civil state' was considered as a replacement, although rather in terms of terminology than in meaning.

In 2007, the debate on the term *dawla madaniyya* heated up, following an article by Gaber 'Asfur, a literary scholar and former Minister of Culture (2014-2015), published in the state-run newspaper *al-Ahram*. It was titled "There is no religious state in Islam" ('Asfur 2008, 451-494). He argued that a state headed by clerics could lead to a form of Islamist tyranny, while Islam would point towards a civil democratic state with man-made laws, and referred to this state as a *dawla madaniyya*.[3] Only four days later, the Grand Imam of al-Azhar, Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, replied with an article with the same title, mainly expressing his support for the idea that Islam does not imply the creation of state headed by clerics ('Asfur 2008, 451-494). The Mufti of Egypt, Egypt's minister of religious endowments, and the vice-president of al-Azhar University made similar statements in the following weeks (Azuri 2007).

---

3   In his function as Minister of Culture, he gave an interview stressing that the major task of the Ministry was to renew religious discourse to counter the rise of radical Islamism (El-Aref 2015).

The social scientist L. Azuri (2007) argues that the debate in 2007 unfolded for three reasons. First, the Egyptian religious establishment wanted to distance itself from the rising power of the Muslim Brotherhood; despite the political party being banned, as independent candidates they had won 87 out of 454 seats in the parliamentary elections in 2005. Second, it was "due to the Egyptian regime's wish to show the West, and particularly the U.S., that it is in the midst of processes of reform and democratization" (Azuri 2007). Third, the debates were a reaction to the Coptic community's demand that the "regime" should clarify why it would not amend Article 2 in the Constitution, which states: "Islam is the religion of the state" (Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt 1971, amended 2007). Supporters of the retention of Article 2 argued that a majority of Egyptians would identify with the article and therefore should not be changed.

However, although Azuri's argument might highlight some tendencies, it does not provide a full picture of the complex debate. On the one hand, the Muslim Brotherhood had already been using the expression: In November 2005, the Brotherhood wrote an election program in which they proclaimed that Islam rejects the idea of theocracy and that the state of Islam is a *dawla madaniyya*. The *umma*, the religious community, is the source of governmental powers and establishes the institutions and the political system (Arjomand 2013, 291). On the other hand, the amendment of Article 2 was also being debated vigorously within the Coptic community. One strand of Coptic argumentation was that the demand to abolish Article 2 could cause offense among some Muslims, a state which should be avoided (Scott 2010, 166-190).

Another interpretation for the increasing intensity of the *dawla madaniyya* debate arises when considering the then prevalent question of the succession of former president Husni Mubarak. Nathan Brown and Michele Dunne (2007) argue that a new discourse on citizenship enfolded the debates on the constitutional amendments in 2005/06: This new discourse was championed by the son of the president, Gamal Mubarak, to publicly emancipate himself as a political player from his father. In this context, the debate on *dawla madaniyya* can also be interpreted as an expression of support from political and other influential figures towards the expected future leader. Several of my research participants referred to this debate in 2005/06 when I asked them when they had first heard of the concept *dawla madaniyya*. However, the majority only became familiar with it following the 25 January uprisings.

Following 25 January 2011:
From *dawla ʿalmaniyya* to *dawla madaniyya*

The '25 January Revolution' was framed in the national and international media as an uprising of the liberal-secular educated youth (Bennani-Chraïbi 2012; Brown 2012, 5; Sanders 2012; El Mahdi 2011). This particular framing contributed to intense discussions on whether a secular state was the right format in which to shape the emerging Egyptian democracy. Indeed, I frequently heard the phrase *dawla ʿalmaniyya* chanted at Tahrir Square following the ousting of Mubarak. However, at the same time, only a few hours after the ousting, the now famous song "Dawla madaniyya" was repeatedly sung, over and over again, during demonstrations by the mixed crowd (see also: EgyCopticYouth 2011).

Many of the research participants, whom I repeatedly engaged with over an extended period, stated that by mid-2011 they no longer used the term 'secular state'. Their implicit and explicit reasons oscillated mainly around three narratives: a) the role of the military in politics; b) the increasing power of Islamists; and c) the urgent need for a native inclusive, positive political vision, based on new values and morals.

Dawla madaniyya as an opposing concept to military power

Downtown Cairo, taken by Sarah Wessel on 23 May 2012.

Graffiti by an anony mous street artist: A military man at the ballot box casting his vote using a chopped off, bloody hand. Similar graffiti were spread throughout the city of Cairo. They indicate that the parliamentary elections and the presidential election (both 2012) were perceived as dictated by the military.

While the military intervention in the 25 January Revolution to "secure" the protestors had resulted in the slogan *"al-shaʿb wa 'l-jaysh yad wahid"* (the people and the military are one hand), its credibility was soon questioned (Srage 2014, 248-250). In this context, the expression *dawla madaniyya* denoted the increasing distrust within the population towards the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF).[4] Already on 15 July 2011, the first split among

---

4 The council is a body consisting of 20-25 senior Egyptian military officers and is only convened in cases of war or national emergencies. In the aftermath of the 25 January uprisings, SCAF assumed power to govern Egypt until end of June 2012, when Muhammad Mursi was elected as president.

the demonstrators was visible. On Roxy Square in Heliopolis, New Cairo, a relatively small group of people were demonstrating to support the military, while at the same time demonstrators at Tahrir Square were considered as critical towards the Armed Forces.

The increasing public critique of the military derived from the general impression that SCAF had all the power in the country. For example, Muhammad, a 30 year old liberal, stated: "We always thought that Mubarak had the power, but after the revolution it became obvious that the real power had always been in the hands of the military" (23 May 2012). A row of major incidents strengthened the impression that SCAF would use the political vacuum to stay in power:

The re-establishment of the emergency law

When Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited Egypt on 13 September 2011, he was welcomed like a "rock star" (Abouzeid 2011). His visit came a few days after clashes between demonstrators and security forces in front of the Israeli embassy in Cairo, which left three people dead and more than 1,000 injured. The embassy protests addressed the accidental killing of six Egyptian guards in a cross-border incursion in the Sinai, following an attack on Israeli territory by militants believed to have crossed from the Egyptian side, which was seen as an act of undermining the sovereignty of the Egyptian state. Although Egyptian authorities had stated that the Israeli ambassador would be expelled from Egypt, they failed to follow though. Soon the rumour was spread that the clash had been initiated by the SCAF itself, in order to extend its powers. After the embassy clashes, the Armed Forces announced the reinstatement of emergency law, a law that had been in place during the entire reign of Husni Mubarak. This reinstatement enforced the increasingly accepted impression that the military acted not to support the regime, but to *be* the regime themselves. Erdoğan, who had recently expelled the Israeli ambassador from his country and thus positioned Turkey as the defender of Palestine, implicitly embodied the major dissatisfaction of many Egyptians with SCAF (Abouzeid 2011).

The use of massive violence against Egyptians

Violent reactions by the army, especially against the 'Maspiro demonstrators'[5] on 9 October 2011 and in Muhammad Mahmoud Street a month later in November,[6] led to an immense decrease of trust in the Military Council

---

5   A protest march, overwhelmingly of Egyptian Copts, as a reaction to the demolition of a Christian church in Upper Egypt, ended in massive clashes with security forces and the military, resulting in at least 28 deaths and 212 injured.

6   Demonstrations on Tahrir Square resulted in massive clashes on Muhammad Mahmud Street, between very young protestors and the Armed Forces, leaving 47 killed and hundreds injured.

and their aspirations to run the country. In respect to the 'Maspiro Massacre', Yusuf[7], a 30 year old Copt, described these developments as follows:

"Something had broken. Formerly, the Egyptians loved the military. We embraced each other on Tahrir. This has changed. No-one loves the military anymore […] People are angry that the military works with the same methods as the old regime. It does not talk about its politics. And people have the feeling that they have to take things in their own hands again" (15 October 2011).

"The no-campaign", taken in Downtown Cairo by Sarah Wessel, 9 March 2012.

This graffiti by an anonymous street artist displays the word "No", written in Arabic letters in red and black. Subtitle on the right: "No constitution before the president", on the left: "No to the emergency law". The campaign addresses the sequencing of the transformation process as organized by the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF).

National initiatives from different movements such as "No civilians in military trials" were another expression of this growing distrust. People and the military seemed not to be "one hand" anymore: the *madani* (civilian) and the *jaysh* (army) were increasingly being perceived as two opposing groups. Among most of my interviewees, *dawla madaniyya* became an expression that served to highlight their feeling that military interference in politics would become highly problematic:

"When the people think of the liberals, they think of secularism. In this way they also think of civil state. But I think that civil state means that the military should not have the power in all areas. This is what I want" (Manal, who describes herself as liberal, 6 May 2012).

Also on a public level, *dawla madaniyya* was mobilized to denounce military rule: Chants of *"Dawla madaniyya!"* were often sung together with "Down with SCAF!" during protests. Public figures, such as political scientist and liberal politician Amr Hamzawy, argued that post-Maspiro the civil state – in his reading defined as anti-military and anti-religious – was the only solution

---

7   All names of research participants have been changed.

for Egypt (El Amrani 2011). However, other secularists argued that *dawla madaniyya* could be read as a bow towards "the" Islamists who were increasingly gaining political influence and power (Feder 2014, 2).

Bridging the rural-urban gap: *Dawla madaniyya* as a response to supporters of *dawla islamiyya* and the increasing perception of a torn nation

The growing popularity of *dawla madaniyya* can also be described as a response to the diverse Islamic movements and groups calling for an Islamic state, such as the Salafi movements[8], becoming more visible and politically stronger. The struggle over whether to establish an Islamist state or a secular state was increasingly perceived as dividing society. Against this background, *dawla madaniyya* was used by my research participants as an expression of compromise, opening up the space for renegotiating the role of politics and religion.[9]

A turning point for the visibility of Salafi movements was a demonstration the end of July 2011, when groups in favour of an Islamist state were protesting at Tahrir (El-Hennawy 2011). It was the first time that throughout the whole square seemingly all the demonstrators were loudly calling for *dawla islamiyya* instead of *dawla madaniyya* or *dawla 'almaniyya*. Until then, almost none of my interview participants had been aware of the existence of Salafis in Egypt; in fact, most had never even heard of the term Salafi. For example, Muhammad, a 32 years old civil state supporter, who went with me to the demonstrations on Tahrir Square on that day, said:

> "Where are all the normal people gone and where is the youth? They should be here to oppose the Salafis and not let them take over the *maydan* (Tahrir Square). It is symbolically too important. Exactly this is their task"[10] (29 July 2011).

Or Magda, 29, whom I met at a reception at the German Embassy in Cairo, as she reflected on the demonstration and its context a few months later:

> "It is really something new that we all talk about politics – not only the ordinary people, also the educated people, like me. We have never participated in politics […] Or the Salafis, I did not even know that they exist or what they are. And now it turns out that there are plenty in Egypt" (5 September 2012).

---

8 The Salafi movement in Egypt is highly diverse. For further information, see for example: Jonathan Brown 2011; Stephanie Lacroix 2012; Reichinneck and Lübben 2015.

9 This is despite public Salafi figures rejecting the idea of *dawla madaniyya* (Lacroix 2012, 5).

10 There were chants for *dawla islamiyya* in the background.

In fact, Salafism has existed in Egypt since the early twentieth century, arriving via a movement in the Levant. *Ansar al-Sunna* was the major Salafi institution that established in Cairo around 1926, by Sheikh Muhammad Hamid al-Fiqi, a graduate of al-Azhar University. Further centres of *Ansar al-Sunna* opened, especially in medium size cities and rural areas such as Damanhour and Mansoura in the Nile Delta. Alexandria became the major hub for Salafism in Egypt (Brown 2011, 4). Other strands of Salafism emerged over time, such as *al-Daʿwa al-Salafiyya* (The Salafist Call), which was the outcome of student activism in the 1970. There are three reasons why many people like Muhammad and Magda had not been aware of the existence of Salafism in Egypt. First, the main strand of Salafism preaches political quietism. Second, under the rule of Mubarak, Islamists in general had a dangerous stand; and third, the major Salafi institutions were located in rural areas (Brown 2011, Lacroix 2012). In the wake of the revolution, however, famous Salafi figures, such as Yassir Burhami, the vice chairman of *al-Daʿwa al-Salafiyya,* called to form political parties.

The July demonstration at Tahrir was not only proof of the existence of Salafis, but also of their high degree of organization: around Tahrir Square, buses from all over the country had come to bring demonstrators to the square – from the 'periphery' to the 'centre' – and was a proof of Salafi networks throughout the country, especially the rural areas. This high level of organization was understood to be a sign of Salafi repositioning to start to actively engage in politics, marking a significant turn from their former position:

> "Despite their initial hesitation and avowed apoliticism, Salafi groups soon threw themselves into politics with abandon. In their early activities, however, Salafis were hampered by a lack of centralized authority, political inexperience, and disastrous messaging that frightened many Egyptians and also led to exaggerated accounts in the media. These early experiences moved the Salafis toward increased centralization, organizing, and greater attention to messaging, particularly once Salafis started forming political parties and competing in elections" (Brown 2011, 6-7).

Indeed, a few weeks later, three Salafi parties were established: *Hizb al-Nur* (The Party of Light), by *al-Daʿwa al-Salafiyya, Hizb al-Asala* (Authenticity Party), and *Hizb al-Fadila* (Virtue Party) (Jadaliyya 2011b). As a consequence, the question of how religion and politics interrelate moved to the core of the debates on the diverse state visions (El-Din 2011). The vast majority of my research participants were opponents of any Islamist movements (53 out of 104) and expressed their fears that this development could lead to the creation of an Islamist state. They often equated the situation with the Iranian Revolution of 1979[11], when the overthrow of the Pahlavi dynasty, a pro-Western, semi-

---

[11] International scholars also addressed these fears, which show the extent of this narrative on the national and international level (Brown 2013).

absolute monarchy, led to the foundation of the Islamic Republic, a theocratic regime. Male and female research participants from diverse socio-economic backgrounds often stressed that gender equality was impossible under Islamist rule. While their extreme opponents highlighted that 'the' Islamists had been imprisoned before and would now use their political power for their own, more modest voices stressed that Islamist rule would not affect the democratic political system, but some missteps were to be expected simply due to inexperience and lack of leadership skills.

The religious parties addressed these kinds of fears by mobilizing the vision of *dawla madaniyya*. In preparation for the parliamentary elections beginning in 2012, the Muslim Brotherhood sent clear signals to the public to distinguish themselves from the more extreme Islamist groups and parties, such as *Hizb al-Nur,* as well as associating themselves with the values espoused in the revolution by positioning themselves as supporters of a civil state. The Brotherhood clarified that a civil state "is not led by the military or clerics, but rather seeks guidance in the *maqasid*, or 'objectives', of *shari'a*. Non-Muslims should be allowed to follow their own practices in matters of personal status. However, *shari'a* must offer the general frame of reference for decision-making" (Jadaliyya 2011).

The statement however did not differ from their election program of 2005. Hence, to underline their current stance, the Brotherhood announced that they would replace the popular slogan "Islam is the solution" with "Freedom is the solution and justice its application" (Ikhwanweb 2011). It is not correct however that the Muslim Brotherhood ceased to use their earlier slogan in practice, as Khatbeth (2014) and Feder (2014) suggest: The Brotherhood used the slogan "Islam is the solution" despite the fact that religious slogans were prohibited in the parliamentary election campaigns (El-Din 2011). On the one hand, this points to internal fractions within the organization; on the other hand, the reference to religion as well as to a 'civil state' can also be understood as a campaigning strategy to satisfy a broader range of voters. This ambiguous strategy shows that religious parties tried to counter fears that might be associated with the idea of an Islamist state, while conversely also attempting to position themselves as supporters of the Islamist state in order to attract voters that were in favour of it.

The results of the parliamentary elections in the beginning of 2012 came as a surprise in the context of the 25 January uprisings that had been framed as secular protests: the Freedom and Justice Party of the Muslim Brotherhood gained the huge majority of the votes (more than 47 per cent), and *Hizb al-Nur*, the largest Salafi party, gained 22 per cent (Aljazeera 2012). These results reinforced the perception that not only the political factions were polarized, but

also society in general. A typical statement from anti-Islamists, such as the one below by Abdallah, a 70 year old liberal, shows how polarization affected individuals on the local level:

"Since the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis are in Egypt, I am not feeling comfortable anymore. I want to leave the country, like the foreigners do. I am also a foreigner, with the difference that I was born here and live here since 70 years. In the last decades we had moved towards a Western state and now the opposite is happening" (21 September 2013).

Hand in hand with the increased visibility and political influence of the Salafis came a new religious aesthetic: "The beard" turned into both a common expression and a derogatory gesture to designate Islamists.

Newspaper Sawt al-Umma, 9 January 2012

The newspaper lists the results of the parliamentary elections 2011/12, in which around 70% of the votes went to the party of the Muslim Brotherhood as well as to Salafi parties. The title reads: „Referendum on our God". The lines below the illustration on the left read: "Sawiris demands the West to intervene to stop the building of an Islamic state". Here, the beard becomes a new symbol to designate Islamists.

What then happened on the local level, as a reaction to the overwhelming victory of the Freedom and Justice Party in the parliamentary elections 2011/12, marks an important turning point in the transformation process of Egypt. Opponents of any Islamist party argued that despite the elections' victory, 'the' Islamists were not really representing the Egyptian people and therefore an Islamist state could not be established. The typical argument amongst a majority of my research participants that described themselves as liberals (20 out of 104) was that the ballot box in the current context could not lead to a just and fair representation. Among many in liberal circles, the results of the parliamentary elections evoked the impression that formal democratic procedures were not sufficient to create legitimacy in the given context. In this context, it is crucial to follow the reasoning of the opponents of the diverse Islamist parties in order to understand how Egyptian society moved towards polarization. A typical narrative is represented by the following conversation between two women working for an international institution, who consider themselves as liberal, responding to my question why the Islamists had won the elections:

Amira: "Well, one month before the elections, the woman who always treats my finger nails, tells me that people knocked on her door. She lives close

to the pyramids (author's note: in a low income district). They asked her whether she needed more gas. They gave her a business card with names of medics on it to whom she could return for free."

Hanan: "Indeed, things like that happened a lot. They just took the IDs from people and voted in their names. The problem is that we have a lot of simple-minded and naïve people who do not understand. They do what they are told to do."

Amira: "Half of the people live below the UN-poverty standard. They do not understand very much" (15 January 2012).

Opponents framed support for the Islamists in two basic ways: as cheating; or as a result of poverty, secondary to a lack of education and located within rural areas (Tadros 2012). Some of my research participants argued that democracy under these circumstances was not possible; they even suggested people with a degree in higher education be entitled to two or more votes. The debate about why the Islamists won widened the gap in Egyptian society between wealthy and poor, rural and urban, educated and uneducated; thus, contributing to the emerging narrative that national unity was starting to fall apart.

Against this background, in a statement in 2012, Grand Mufti ʿAli Gumʿa clarified the meaning of *dawla madaniyya*, presumably as a middle ground to satisfy both the national and the international audience. The Grand Mufti explained that 'civil state' "means a modern nationalist state that is compatible with Islamic provisions". He stressed that it was not an import from Western countries, and – addressing the international audience – that there were no reasons to worry that Egyptians had chosen religion to play an important role by choosing an Islamist government (El-Beheri 2012).

New idols: *dawla madaniyya* as an expression for a positive native state vision to create unity

At the beginning, the 25 January Revolution was widely represented as a highly unifying event, in which the Egyptian people – regardless of class, gender, and religion – had regained their freedom and pride by working together as a collective. However, this unity increasingly became perceived as fragmenting: protestors demanded opposing political actions; violence between different political groups and movements as well as the Armed Forces continued; the massive violence against overwhelmingly Christian protestors by the military at Maspiro in 2011 revived the debates concerning religious discrimination; and rapes and sexual harassment at Tahrir Square during the protests became public and raised questions of gender discrimination, casting doubt on the purity narrative of the revolution.

As described above, *dawla madaniyya* was brought forward from particular public figures, such as ʿAli Gumʿa or Amr Hamzawy, as a notion of compromise. This compromise, I argue, contained a deeper meaning: *dawla madaniyya* increasingly designated the urgent search for authenticity – socially, in terms of morals, and politically - in terms of a state system based on these morals. In other words: it designated a positive political vision yet to be negotiated, in which the Egyptian national identity could be reproduced and reunified.

Considering which vision of a state would be most suitable for Egypt after the uprisings, around 20 of my research participants eventually deemed secularism too extreme. They associated secularism with the idea of a ban of the *hijab* (scarf) at state institutions, with homosexuality, with the suppression of religious practices. That is, secularism for many meant that religion and morals would be compromised by the state.

> "The secular state is perceived as negative. It means that one is allowed to do everything. It means one can make sex in the streets" (Yusuf, 15 October 2011).

> "The expression is too radical for many. They believe that one is not allowed to build minarets, like in Switzerland or wear the *hijab* like in Turkey when one goes to school" (ʿAbduh, 24 October 2011).

The narrative that secularism would foster homosexuality was not only prevalent in the private sphere, but also entered public or semi-public spaces, as the following example shows. At the book fair in Cairo on 3 February 2012, two of my research participants, Hamza and Ahmad – both around 30, a designer and an artist – were approached by a research team, which claimed to be from an organization to advise the government on how to organize the future state,[12] and were now taking surveys to collect data as a basis for their advice. The researchers asked: "Are you in favour of *dawla ʿalmaniyya* or *dawla islamiyya*?" Hamza, who was very aware of the widespread negative connotations of a secular state, asked in return: "What do you mean by *dawla ʿalmaniyya*?" The researchers explained: "That religion should not play a role in politics." Despite Ahmad and Hamza both being convinced that religion should not interfere in politics, they replied: "Better *dawla madaniyya*". By using this third concept, they wanted to stress that questions on the role of religion in politics in the current developments increasingly seemed to split the diverse political parties and movements. Therefore, their view was such a question should not be the focus of the debate. Then again, they also wanted to distance themselves from negative associations with the secular state.

---

12 No further public information on the organization could be found.

Nevertheless, the research team continued: "Do you want homosexuals to get in positions of power?" Ahmad and Hamza answered: "No."

Three more research participants[13] explicitly stated that they preferred to use the expression *dawla madaniyya* to avoid any association with homosexuality. Hani, a 30 year old Copt, explained to me that he no longer use the expression 'secular state', for to do so would lead many people to assume he was gay. Instead, he would only use the expression *dawla madaniyya* (15 October 2011). Such statements indicate that amongst the population secularism was often associated with practices that were perceived as immoral and related to the exclusion and oppression of religion on a local level. Hence, instead of promoting freedom of religion, secular democracies were rather understood as excluding religion and morals, ultimately leading to the loss of morals within society. Some used *dawla madaniyya* simply as a replacement for *dawla 'almaniyya*, intending to avoid the negative connotations that from their perspectives derived from wrong perceptions of secularism; others used it as an alternative concept to stress that a political vision was needed, based on Egyptian values. The debate then progressed to which other democratic countries could serve as role models for Egypt. For many, this would ideally be a country that shared an Islamic tradition, such as Turkey or Indonesia.

The struggle over different state concepts did not lead to a positive, inclusive vision or a roadmap towards such a vision; rather, another discourse emerged – actively accelerated by the SCAF and the Egyptian government. This alternative, emerging discourse can be described as using a negative vision in order to provide a national narrative of a collective unity: an anti-foreign discourse, in which external international forces undermine the stability and democratization efforts of Egypt. This type of discourse had been prevalent under Mubarak to externalize political and economic issues: the national collective ought to be reunified by facing a shared enemy.

Expressions like 'hidden agenda', 'foreign hands', 'third hand', 'foreign funding', 'foreign elements', and 'spies' could frequently be heard in the streets, on television or read in newspapers (Shukrallah 2011; Egypt Independent 2012). These terms were used consciously or subconsciously to discredit specific groups and actions, indicating financial support from abroad, and thus manipulated by a 'hidden agenda' (Gribbon and Hawas 2012, 122). A statement from Ayman, a 32 year old bedouin, represents a common narrative:

> "Everywhere there are good and bad people. For example, there is the 6 April movement that stirs up all these strikes and pays money to the *baltagiyya* [thugs]. America is financing them" (13 March 2012).

---

13 The number may not seem very high, but one must consider that questions of homosexuality are not discussed very readily in the Egyptian context. Against this background, the number is rather remarkable.

One of the most striking examples showing the extent of this narrative was the broadcasting of several TV spots in 2012, produced by the Egyptian government[14], in which the Egyptian people were warned of exchanging any information with foreigners. The spots were broadcasted on state and private television stations (Asharq al-Awsat 2012). One such commercial opens with a foreign brown-haired young man entering a coffee shop. A narrator says: "From the beginning, he knows his mission and target. He won't have to spend much effort in getting to know the people in the place." The foreigner then spots three young Egyptians and heads over to them. The narrator says: "And we are generous by default". One of the Egyptians stands up, shakes hands and invites the foreigner to sit with them. The foreigner says in broken Arabic: "I love you so much", starts to smile, but narrows his eyes while listening to the three Egyptians. The narrator says: "He will sneak into your heart as if you were old friends."

It goes with the Egyptians talking about overhearing, in the subway, a plot against the ruling military council in the subway. "Important information he took for free", the narrator says. The three Egyptians then complain about car and transportation problems and high prices. The narrator asks: "Why complain to him? And why open the country's heart to him?" The narrator then advises: "You should not open your heart to anyone you meet, when you do not know what is hidden behind him. Mind what you say carefully. Every word comes with a price. Every word can save a nation." The last two sentences appear as written text in capital letters on the screen at the end: EVERY WORD COMES WITH A PRICE. EVERY WORD CAN SAVE A NATION (Operation Egypt 2013).

A few weeks later, the broadcast of the TV spots was stopped due to severe criticism. Nevertheless, similar narratives emerged repeatedly and continuously. For example, such narratives were also publicly addressed to persons that were under the suspicion of representing institutions exercising 'hidden agendas'. On 29 November 2011 on "90 minutes", a daily TV show on politics on the channel *Mehwar*,[15] EU Ambassador Marco Franco was invited to talk about the EU monitoring of the parliamentary elections. As the interviews in the show are usually in Arabic, this occasion was one of the few times it was conducted in English and then directly translated by the moderator. A summary of the most important answers were displayed in the subtitles. Two moments in the interview are of particular interest. After having been asked about the

---

14 No further information on which state agency was responsible for the production of these TV spots could be found (Asharq al-Awsat 2012).

15 Egyptian businessman Hassan Rateb is the main owner of this private channel, which is categorized as a news channel that broadcasts in Arabic language.

organization of the election process, Marco Franco stated that the procedures could be described as free and fair. He stressed that his impression was that Egypt is ready for democracy. Then the moderator asked why Europe was so keen to support NGO's in Egypt. Franco replied that this had been the case for many decades, in order to foster human rights and democracy. The subtitles wrote "Europe funds Egyptian NGO's for more than 20 years", while the moderator appeared surprised that this form of political influence had been taking place for such a long period. She then explicitly asked about hidden agendas, and pretended not to be convinced by her counterpart's answer that the only agenda was that Egypt is an important partner to Europe and thus there is the necessity to establish common ground by fostering shared values.

The accusation by the Egyptian government, in December 2011, that the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation had been operating illegally in Egypt for several decades was another critical juncture of the anti-foreign discourse, especially surprising as bilateral relations between Egypt and Germany were perceived as excellent at that time (El-Ahl 2012). Considered as a clear political signal towards Germany, as well as European institutions in general, this case not only resulted in the closing of the Cairo-branch of the foundation, but also deeply affected the ways other German and foreign institutions subsequently operated in Egypt (Salloum 2013).

However, such accusations and anti-foreign campaigns were not simply populist measures from the government to define a common but untouchable enemy based on conspiracy theories reproduced within the population and vice versa. It denotes a process during which many of my interview partners began to perceive foreign interference as problematic, being described by some as forms of 'soft imperialism'. The anti-foreign discourses served to expel the 'bad' from the national collective in order to preserve the fiction of national unity. Against this background, the mobilization of *dawla madaniyya* as an expression of compromise can be interpreted as the search for a positive inclusive political vision based on genuine morals.

State-perceptions from a bottom-up perspective

On an explicit level, the expression *dawla madaniyya* marked a discursive space of compromise for the emerging but opposing social-political ideologies. On an implicit level, the expression had diverse connotations. In the following I will explore the complex assumptions and perceptions of my research

Picture taken by Sarah Wessel close to Maydan Tahrir on 23 October 2011.

This famous graffiti by an anonymous street artist shows a chess board with dozens of pawns on the one side and a few superior chess pieces surrounding the king, who is checkmate, on the other. The king symbolises the ousted long-term dictator Husni Mubarak. The pawns symbolise the Egyptian people.

participants, in order to provide a deeper understanding of some of the shared and the opposed meanings related to the concept of civil state.

All research participants in favour of a civil state construct society around principles of individualism and pluralism, and stress the importance of discourse, political awareness, and participation to change the ways of thinking and understanding. They underline the necessity of a cultural revolution or a revolution of the Egyptian *mentality* in order to implement a just political system. Because the concept emphasises a shared approach in search for a native state system, *dawla madaniyya* locates the (yet to be defined) role of politics and religion on a wide range of grey scales between secularism and Islamism. Hence, in my analysis, I differentiate between civil state supporters that argue from a secular perspective and participants that take an Islamist approach.

Subjectivities and the state

The most crucial reason for the different tendencies within the civil state concept is related to the understandings of modernity formulated by my research participants. All civil state supporters describe Egypt as modern in the sense that the societal spheres are highly differentiated and specialised, and that the major principle of society should be individualism. Ahmad (35), a very religious person who nevertheless represents the secular stream within the *dawla madaniyya* debate, describes the characteristics of modern times, as stated below, and concludes that secularism is the most crucial principle to organize the state system.

"We live in modern times. Everything is much more specialised than in former times. At that time, an architect could build houses and sew costumes and vice versa. Today, this is not possible anymore. A religious *shaykh* cannot make politics, and a politician not religion. You can go to different *shaykh*s to get advice and based on this advice you make a decision. But it is not their job to make political decisions for anyone" (Ahmad, 19 December 2012).

The secularist response is to differentiate between politics and religion, religion being a private matter to ensure political representation of all individuals including religious minorities; the Islamist response indicates a new interpretation or thinking inspired by Islam to create holistic ideas organizing state and society. Sherif, a 33 year old PhD student, who mainly lives in Europe, explains:

> "Islam is not only in the hearts, it regulates affairs of daily life as well. Therefore, it is necessarily part of politics and cannot be separated from it. However, the question is how we deal with that. From my perspective, a new interpretation is required [...] While the Salafis want that we behave exactly like in times of the prophet, as well as the Muslim Brotherhood, more or less [...] I think we live in very different times now and therefore need a new interpretation" (Sherif, 31 April 2012).

Or Safwat, a 28 year old student of medicine and philosophy:[16]

> "We need to create a new understanding. We have to change the metaphysics of thinking, which in consequence creates a new thinking and morals in which we can live freely. We have to rethink law and order: the law should not say what you should do, rather it should say what you are not allowed to do" (Safwat, 14 March 2012).

Earlier in the interview, Safwat states that Islam serves as a rich source for inspiration to change the metaphysics of thinking.

All of the civil state supporters share the idea that society in times of the prophet was ideal and just. While it is important to understand how justice was established in the era of the prophet, one cannot simply adapt the same rules and measures in modern times. They conclude that the Qur'an needs to be understood in its historical context, but cannot be applied literally in the current context. From their perspectives, modern times, the differentiation and specialization of society, as well as globalization has brought new challenges that require new approaches. Based on their understanding of modernity, alternative conclusions are drawn concerning the institutionalization of the state and the policies, as well as the polity that ought to be established.

The level of policy and polity

According to the civil-secularists, the implementation of *shari'a* needs to be rejected for two reasons. First, the key characteristic of a modern society is a high degree of differentiation, which a single person alone cannot overview:

---

16 A year later he will strongly criticise the ousting of Muhammad Mursi by the Armed Forces as an undemocratic move.

Hence, a politician cannot judge religion and vice versa. Therefore religion and politics must be separated. Second, the rejection of *shariʿa* derives from ideas of justice, which is challenged through structural or systemic circumstances, such as poverty:

> "Look at Egypt. Look at the poverty. How should one not steal? You cannot introduce *shariʿa*. That would only be possible if we lived in a good society" (Ahmad, 16 November 2012).

The secular-oriented civil state supporters highlight the democratic system, especially as seen in Germany and other European countries, as a positive ideal for Egypt; in contrast, the Islamist-oriented civil state supporters do not name any new institutions or ideas, claiming they still need to be invented. Secular civil state supporters attribute the wealth of European countries to their just governments produced through the democratic system, and they locate the problems of Egypt in the state and its system. They propose that by taking a more democratic country as its example, Egypt would experience similar positive results. In contrast, Islamist civil state supporters perceive neoliberalism, established by Western countries in cooperation with national governments and companies, as the undermining force that causes major problems for all countries worldwide, such as the increasing gap between rich and poor. They believe this has affected not only countries such as Egypt, but also the countries mainly exercising and/or having established these forms of politics (i.e. Western countries). The approach to develop a new thinking is directed against this globally destructive force. Ahmad, representing the civil-Islamist stream, states:

> "The revolution was carried out by the youth. They have very different ideas of authority than the older generation. Those who are now sitting in parliament just took the same ideas from the former National Democratic Party and are proceeding with them. Also the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis. They abuse Islam as an ideology. However, we need a turnover concerning the public space. But the problem is that they all follow the American regime."
>
> Researcher: "What do you mean by American regime?"
>
> Ahmad: "It is a new form of imperialism. A kind of soft imperialism, one might say […] We have to take the ideas from everywhere and reinvent them." (14 March 2012)

In this sense, the civil-Islamist supporters do not locate the major problems facing Egyptian society within the Egyptian state as the civil-secular supporters do, but rather within a transnational context. Consequently, the civil-Islamists argue that the aim of the state should not be to copy-paste from other democratic states, as the civil-secular supporters assume, but to reinvent the development of Egypt towards a completely new direction.

State, political actors, institutional level

Concerning political actors, all the civil state supporters, regardless of affiliation, stressed the importance of strong leadership, especially in the current context which they describe as chaotic. While pluralism should enfold and be formalized within the political system to guarantee justice for all the different groups of people, a strong president should represent the unity of the nation in order to provide a unified identity. This narrative of a strong president and/ or leadership was prevalent among all my interviewees. For the civil state supporters, a strong leader is crucial as the figure of unity and identity, from which the people would learn: i.e. the "nature of human beings", as my research participants expressed it, would be civilized through observation and imitation. In contrast, research participants who argued in favour of a military state[17] argued that the requirement for a strong leader was to force people to follow the law. From their perspective, the nature of human beings requires restraint by externalized force and power.

Conclusions

The popularity of the expression *dawla madaniyya* increased at the same time Islamist groups grew in numbers and power and when concerns about the military were at a peak; that is, when the political extremes gained actual power.

In this context, *dawla madaniyya* opened a discursive space of compromise that enabled former Islamists and secularists to negotiate and resettle the social and political middle ground – a compromise that constitutes a space to define how and to which extent religion could be incorporated in (or by) the state and at the same time enables the junction of the political forces to oppose military intervention in politics. For a majority of my research participants, as well as public figures, such as Amr Hamazway or Grand Mufti ʿAli Gumʿa, that opposed the increasing polarization between 'the' Islamists and 'the' secularists, *dawla madaniyya* represents the search for native representational structures to politically reorganize society. Hence, in the struggle to define the meaning of *dawla madaniyya,* only the political groups and public

---

17 Interestingly, the support of a military state could not be expressed easily in public following the clashes with the Armed Forces at Maspiro and Muhammad Mahmud by the end of 2011 (see footnote above), but was prevalent on a local level.

figures that opposed such a compromise, such as some of the liberal-secular-ists and the majority of Salafi parties, described the civil state as a replace-ment for the secular discourse. In retrospective, the liberal parties and figures as well as Salafi parties were mainly the groups that supported the military coup, mid 2013, against the elected president Muhammad Mursi.[18]

The way my research participants – all of them non-activists and non-politi-cians with diverse socio-economic and political backgrounds – implicitly and explicitly described their understandings of *dawla madaniyya,* as well as the means to apply this vision in reality, provides insights into competing and shared concerns about society and its political reorganization in a period of rapid transformations.

While all civil state supporters stress the importance of reclaiming and re-gaining the public space and pursuing the integration and participation of people in politics by introducing a democratic political system, there are dif-ferent ideas in regard to how this should be translated into institutions and laws. Secular-civil approaches highlight the importance of keeping politics and religions separated. They suggest the introduction of a political system following European countries, which they describe as success models in terms of economic and political development. Islamist-civil approaches emphasize the need to invent new institutions inspired by a new interpretation of Islam that guarantees the integration of any minorities. Both sides agree that the political system should be based on competing and pluralist ideas, and that a strong leader is necessary to embody the solidarity needed to provide a cohesive identity for the whole nation. Both sides also agree that the *dawla madaniyya* excludes military intervention in politics. Consequently, despite the different interpretations of what the civil state should look like, the use of the concept indicates the broadly felt need and importance of creating a state system that represents unity, or at least reflects harmony, against the backdrop of competing, pluralist ideas.

Based on these insights, I suggest understanding the concept *dawla madaniyya* as a reproduction of the nationalist discourse, in which religion is no longer excluded from the discourse, but rather becomes a crucial part of the nego-tiable identity. It indicates a desire, or even urgency, to shift towards new interpretations of Islam – approaching religion as a base for critical thought and as a moral intervention in opposition to neoliberal politics.

In the current political environment, the regime of 'Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi, the former head of the Armed Forces, is exacerbating the emerging social and

---

18 For example, one would assume that *Hizb al-Nur*, the largest Salafi party, would rather support a president that has an Islamist background than the Armed Forces. However, the opposite was the case (Haddon 2013).

political polarizations as a strategy to legitimize its own political powers and decisions ("divide and rule"): Everyone who did not explicitly support the ousting of Muhammad Mursi in 2014 is discursively turned into a 'terrorist' by the government's forces, while supporters of the military are framed as 'good Egyptian citizens'. The initial and the underlying notion of the *dawla madaniyya* debate was exactly to prevent such a scenario.

References

Abouzeid, R. 2011. Why Turkey's Erdogan is greeted like a rock star in Egypt. *Time*, [online] 1 February. Available at: <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2093090,00.html> [Accessed 25 September 2015].

El-Ahl, A., Lutz, M., and Neumann, P. 2012. Absurde Vorwürfe gegen Demokratiehelfer in Kairo. *Die Welt,* [online] 26 February. Available at: <http://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article13889319/Absurde-Vorwuerfe-gegen-Demokratiehelfer-in-Kairo.html> [Accessed 24 February 2015].

El-Amrani, I. 2011. In Translation: Amr Hamzawy on the civil state. *The Arabist online,* [online]. Available at: <http://arabist.net/blog/2011/10/21/in-translation-amr-hamzawy-on-the-civil-state.html> [Accessed 25 September 2015].

El-Aref, N. 2015. Renewing Discourse. Interview with Minister of Culture Gaber Asfour about the challenges ahead. *Al Ahram Weekly*, [online] 26 February. Available at: <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/10567/23/Renewing-discourse.aspx> [Accessed 23 February 2015].

Arjomand, S. and Brown, N. 2013. *The rule of law, Islam, and constitutional politics in Egypt and Iran*. New York: State University of New York Press.

'Asfur, G. 2008. Naqd thaqafa al-takhaluf (*Critique on the culture of backwardness*). Cairo: Shorouk.

Asharq Al-Awsat 2012. Egypt pulls TV spots warning about foreigners. *Asharq al-Awsat,* [online] 11 June. Available at: <http://www.aawsat.net/2012/06/article55241746> [Accessed 5 January 2015].

Azuri, L. 2007. As part of its struggle against the Muslim Brotherhood, the Egyptian regime comes out against the concept of a cleric-led state. *MEMRI Inquiry and Analysis,* [online] 341. Available at: <http://www.memri.org/report/en/print2144.htm> [Accessed 7 January 2015].

Bennani-Chraïbi, M. et al. 2012. Towards a sociology of revolutionary situations. Reflections on the Arab uprisings. *Revue française de science politique* (5), pp. 1-29.

Brown, J. 2011. Salafis and Sufis in Egypt. *Carnegie Endowment For International Peace*, [online]. Available at: <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/salafis_sufis.pdf> [Accessed 24 February 2015].

Brown, N., Dunne, M., and Hamzawy, A., 2007. Egypt's controversial constitutional amendments. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,* [online]. Available at: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/01/10/when-victory-becomes-option-egypt-s-muslim-brotherhood-confronts-success> [Accessed 23 February 2015].

Brown, N. 2012. When victory becomes an option. Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood confronts success. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,* [online]. Available at: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/01/10/when-victory-becomes-option-egypt-s-muslim-brotherhood-confronts-success> [Accessed 7 January 2015].

Brown, N. 2013. Islam and Politics in the new Egypt. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, [online] 23 April. Available at: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/04/23/islam-and-politics-in-new-egypt/g0se> [Accessed 25 February 2015].

El Beheri, A. 2012. Egypt's grand mufti: civil state not at odds with Islam. *Al-Masry al-Youm,* [online] 1 November. Available at: <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/egypts-grand-mufti-civil-state-not-odds-islam>. [Accessed 8 September 2015].

El-Din, G. E. 2011. Political row over religious slogans. *Al-Ahram Weekly*, [online] 13-19 October, Issue No. 1068. Available at: <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2011/1068/eg51.htm> [Accessed 16 November 2011].

EgyCopticYouth 2011. Egypt Civil State. *Youtube,* [online] 28 February. Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aT2NTTQ-KeY> [Accessed 25 September 2015].

Egypt Independent 2011. Ganzouri blames cabinet clashes on foreign elements. *Egyptian Independent*, [online] 17 December. Available at: <http://www.egyptindependent.com//news/ganzouri-blames-cabinet-clashes-foreign-elements> [Accessed 5 January 2015].

Egypt Independent 2012. Five Salafi organization officials referred to trial in foreign funding case. *Egyptian Independent*, [online] 14 March. Available at: <http://www.egyptindependent.com//news/five-salafi-organization-officials-referred-trial-foreign-funding-case> [Accessed 5 January 2015].

Feder, R. K. 2014. The "Civil State" in political discourse after the Arab Spring. *Telavivnotes,* [online] 26 May. Available at: <http://www.dayan.org/sites/default/files/Rachel_Kantz_Feder_TA_NOTES_Civil_State_Discourse_26052014.pdf> [Accessed 8 September 2015].

Flores, Alexander 2013. Reform, Islam, Secularism; Farah Antûn and Muhammad Abduh. *Entre réforme sociale et mouvement national: Identité et modernisation en Égypte (1882-1962)*, edited by Alain Roussillon, 565-576. Cairo: CEDEJ.

Gerbaudo, P. 2013. "The roots of the coup. *Soundings*, [online] Issue No. 54, Available at: <https://www.lwbooks.co.uk/soundings/54/roots-of-the-coup> [Accessed 26 February 2016].

Gribbon, L. and Hawas, S. 2012. Signs and Signifiers: Visual Translations of Revolt. *Translating Egypt's revolution: the language of Tahrir*, edited by Samia Mehrez, 103-142. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.

Haddon, H. et al. 2013. Live updates. Morsi ousted; head of constitutional court to take over Egypt presidency. *Ahram,* [online] 3 July. Available at: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/75594.aspx> [Accessed 29 February 2016].

Hamzawy, A. and Brown, N. 2010. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Islamist Participation in a Closing Political Environment. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,* [online]. Available at: <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/muslim_bros_participation.pdf> [Accessed 7 January 2015].

El-Hennawy, N. 2011. After show of force, Islamists debate role of religion in politics. *Egypt Independent,* [online] 2 August. Available at: <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/node/482542> [Accessed 5 January 2014].

Ikhwanweb 2011. FJP Abandons the Motto 'Islam Is the Solution'. *Ikhwanweb*, [online] 20 May. Available at: http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=28604&ref=search.php [Accessed 8 September 2015].

Ismail, S. 2006. *Rethinking Islamist politics: culture, the state and Islamism*. London: I.B.Tauris.

Jadaliyya 2011a. Freedom and Justice Party. *Jadaliyya,* [online] 22 November. Available at: <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/3154/freedom-and-justice-party>[Accessed 25 September 2015].

Jadaliyya 2011b. Al-Nour party. *Jadaliyya,* [online] 18 November. Available at: <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/3171/al-nour-party> [Accessed 25 September 2015].

Al Jazeera 2012. Interactive: Full Egypt election results. *Aljazeera,* [online] 1 February. Available at: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2012/01/20121248225832718.html> [Accessed 25 September 2015].

Al-Jibaʿi, ʿA. 2011. Al-dawla al-madaniyya talfiq fikri wa talbis siyasi (The civil state as an intellectual fabrication and a political deception). *The Kurdish Contemporary Studies Center,* [online]. Available at: <http://tkcsc.com/ara/modules/publisher/item.php?com_mode=nest&com_order=0&itemid=22> [Accessed 7 January 2015].

Kamal, M. 2011. Naqd al-jadl wa mafahim al-mustakhdam fih (Criticism of the Debate and the Concepts of the 'Civil State'). *Al-dawla al-madaniyya: min ruʾa mutanuʿah ʾila itar mushtarak (The Civil State: From various perspectives to a mutual framework)*. Cairo: Civilization Center for Political Studies.

Katbeh, A. 2014. The civil state (dawla madaniya) – a new political term? *IFAIR Young Initiative on Foreign Affairs and International Relations e.V.,* [online]. Available at: <http://ifair.eu/think/the-civil-state-dawla-madaniya-a-new-political-term/> [Accessed 7 January 2015].

Laclau, E. and Mouffe, C. 1985. *Hegemony and socialist strategy. Towards a radical democratic politics*. Great Britain: Verso.

Lacroix, S. 2012. Sheikhs and politicians: Inside the new Egyptian Salafism. *Brooking Doha Center* [online] Available at: http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2012/6/07-egyptian-salafism-lacroix/stephane-lacroix-policy-briefing-english.pdf [Accessed 24 February 2016].

Mahdi, R. 2011. Orientalising the Egyptian uprising. *Jadaliyya,* [online] Available at: <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/1214/orientalising-the-egyptian-uprising> [Accessed 4 September 2014].

Mughith, A. 2011. Al-dawla al-madaniyya wa al-dawla al-ʿilmaniya. Hal hunak farq? (The civil state and the secular state. Is there a difference? *Youm 7 Newspaper,* [online]. Available at: <http://www.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=396736> [Accessed 7 January 2015].

Operation Egypt 2013. Egypt: Military rulers' state TV broadcasts anti-international journalist propaganda. *Youtube,* [video online]. Available at: </www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORlWniwwOHw> [Accessed 5 January 2015].

Pratt, N. 2005. Identity, culture and democratization: the case of Egypt. *New Political Science,* 27(1), pp. 73-90.

Reichinnek, H. and Lübben, I**.** 2015**.** Die Strategie der Nour-Partei nach dem Militärputsch. Ziele, Vorgehen und Beweggründe. [*The strategy of the Nour-party after the military coup. Aims, procedures, and motives*]. Schriftenreihe des Fachgebiets Politik am Centrum für Nah- und Mitteloststudien (CNMS), University of Marburg. [online]. Available at: <https://www.uni-marburg.de/cnms/politik/forschung/forschungsproj/islamismus/analysen/policy_paper/menadirekt07.pdf> [Accessed 8 April 2016].

Ramadan, T. 2012. *The Arab Awakening – Islam and the new Middle East*. London: Penguin Group.

Salloum, R. 2013. Prozess gegen NGO: Ägyptisches Gericht verurteilt Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. *Spiegel Online,* [online] 4 June. Available at: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/aegyptenstraft-konrad-adenauer-stiftung-ab-in-prozess-gegen-ngo-a-903537.html> [Accessed 5 January 2015].

Sanders, C. 2012. Deconstructing the 'Facebook Revolution' – Specifying the contribution of the youth to the radicalization of contentious politics in Egypt between 2000 and 2011. [Conference paper online] State of Peace Conference 2012, Democracy in Crisis, The Dynamics of Civic Protest and Civic Resistance, 18.-21.9.2012, Peace Centre Schlaining Castle, Austria. Available at: <http://www.friedensburg.at/uploads/files/Sanders_StoP2012_paper.pdf> [Accessed 6 January 2015].

Saward, M. 2010. *The representative claim.* Oxford: University Press.

Sayyid, R. 2012. Al-dawla wa al-din fi zaman thaurat (State and religion in times of revolution). *Al-mustaqbal al-'arabi (Arab Future)*, 406 (1), Dec. 2012, pp. 23-38.

Scott, R. 2010. *The challenge of political Islam. Non-Muslims and the Egyptian state.* Stanford: University Press.

Srage, N. 2014. *Revolution and the slogans of Egyptian youth: A linguistic study in spontaneous expression.* Doha: Arab Center for Research and Policy Study.

Tadros, M. 2012. *The Muslim Brotherhood in contemporary Egypt. Democracy redefined or confined?* Oxon: Routledge.

Tadros, S. 2012. Egypt's elections: Why the Islamists won. *Worldaffairs,* [online] March/April 2012. Available at: <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/egypt's-elections-why-islamists-won> [Accessed 25 September 2015].

Wessel, S. 2013. Political representation and legitimacy in Egypt: the making and the reception of claims during the parliamentary elections 2011. *Les élections de la révolution (2011-2012)*, edited by Clemens Steuer. Cairo: CEDEJ. Or: [online]. Available at <http://www.cedej-eg.org/spip.php?article734&lang=fr> [Accessed 6 January 2015].

Wessel, S. 2013. Shabab al-Thaura: Symbolische Macht der ägyptischen Revolutionsjugend. *Inamo, Informationsprojekt Naher und Mittlerer Osten* (73), pp. 22-25.

Yassin, S. 2010. Misr dawla madaniyya haditha (Egypt is a modern civil state). *Masress,* [online-interview]. Available at: <http://www.masress.com/elakhbar/2862> [Accessed 7 January 2015].

Shukrallah, H. 2011. Foreign fingers in Tahrir Square. *Ahram*, [online] 4 February. Available at: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/4/0/5013/Opinion/0/Foreign-fingers-in-Egypts-Tahrir-sq.aspx> [Accessed 26 February 2012].

Zahalka, Iyad 2016. *Shari'a in the Modern Era: Muslim Minorities Jurisprudence*. Cambridge University Press.

On the author

Sarah Wessel is a PhD candidate from the University of Hamburg in politics and cultural anthropology. From 2010-2015 she undertook fieldwork in Egypt for her research: "The Making of Political Representation in Post-Revolutionary Egypt". Her research interests include cultural and political transformations in the Middle East, political representation, relations between Europe and the Middle East, political and economic anthropology. In 2009 she graduated from the University of Muenster with a thesis on "The Representation of the Egyptian Economy in the German Press". From 2011-13 she worked as project coordinator for the German-Arab Transformation Partnership in the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). From 2012-15 she provided trainings on scientific working and research methods in various Egyptian universities within the DAAD Kairo Akademie. From 2013-15 she worked as research fellow at the Orient-Institut Beirut (OIB), Cairo Office. This article was prepared for the academic workshop "*Dawla Madaniyya* – A Future for the Civil State in the Arab World?", 19-20 January 2015, University of Cologne, and is part of her PhD thesis. sarah.wessel@yahoo.com

On the *dawla madaniyya* series

As a slogan, *dawla madaniyya* (civil state) was one of the most often heard during the 2011 'Arab Spring' uprisings across the Arab World. Various actors of diverse social and political backgrounds, such as anti-regime protestors, regime supporters, Islamic scholars ('*ulamāʾ*), secular intellectuals, Islamists and tribal *shaykh*s, invoked this term to frame their demands for the creation of a new political order and a new social contract. The possibility of creating a *dawla madaniyya* also became a major topic of the ensuing political negotiations and national dialogues in various Arab states. Yet, rather than bridging the demands of these opposing groups, *dawla madaniyya* became a 'floating signifier' invested with multiple notions on the relationship between the governing and the governed, on justice, security, good governance, religion and state, and inter-human relations. Its apparent vagueness should not obscure the fact, however, that those involved in forwarding the concept have (had) very clear ideas for a redefinition of statehood and governance, in theory and in practice. This series seeks to discuss and elucidate the underlying notions of, and visions for a *dawla madaniyya* in the Arab World. The papers published in this series were first presented at the workshop '*Dawla Madaniyya* – A Future for the Civil State in the Arab World?', which took place at the University of Cologne on 19-20 January 2015 and was co-organized by Marie-Christine Heinze (CARPO), Sabine Damir-Geilsdorf (GSSC, University of Cologne), and Laila al-Zwaini (Re:Orient).

On CARPO –
Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient

CARPO was founded in 2014 by Germany-based academics trained in the fields of Near and Middle Eastern Studies, Political Science and Social Anthropology. Its work is situated at the nexus of research, consultancy and exchange with a focus on implementing projects in close cooperation and partnership with stakeholders in the Orient. The researchers in CARPO's network believe that a prosperous and peaceful future for the region can best be achieved through inclusive policy making and economic investment that engages the creative and resourceful potential of all relevant actors. Therefore, CARPO opens enduring channels for interactive knowledge transfer between academics, citizens, entrepreneurs, and policy-makers.

On Re:Orient

Re:Orient is a bureau for applied research and knowledge production on, and exchange with, the Arab and Muslim world. It is founded by Laila al-Zwaini, an arabist and jurist specialised in shari`a, tribes, and rule of law. Histories, ideas, and humans from the Arab world form her primary inspiration to develop in-depth analyses and hands-on advices from novel perspectives. Re:Orient further aims at engaging thought-leaders, policy-makers, and artists in co-creating innovative scenarios towards positive change. 'Imagine Madaniya!' is its first cross-over enterprise to spark an inclusive Arab/Islamic master-narrative towards a 'civil state'.