The Relationship between State and Religion in the Arab and Islamicate Contexts: Civil State, Secular State, Religious/Islamic State

International Workshop at the Centre for Advanced Studies
"Multiple Secularities – Beyond the West, Beyond Modernities", Leipzig University
9–10 December 2021
Online event via Zoom.

Convenors: Housamedden Darwish (Leipzig University), Markus Dressler (Leipzig University)

Approach

The workshop aims at understanding the concepts of 'civil state', 'secular state' and 'religious/Islamic state' and their relation to (the concept/ideal of) democracy in Arab and Islamicate contexts. It starts from a political and philosophical perspective and addresses from there normative and descriptive questions concerning the actual and/or potential forms of the relationship between (democratic) state and/or politics and religion.

In recent decades, the concept of 'civil state' has, next to the concepts of 'secular state' and 'religious/Islamic state', gained prominence among religious and secular intellectuals, politicians and scholars in the Arab and Islamicate worlds. The descriptive content of the concept 'civil state' appears to be rather fluid and sometimes ambivalent – it has been used as synonymous to 'secular state' in some contexts, and to 'religious/Islamic state' in other contexts.

The workshop seeks to bring together case studies and theoretical reflections and discussions on the three concepts in different disciplines and academic and political contexts in Arab and Islamicate states, with the aim of answering the following questions: How could/should we approach these concepts theoretically? What is the relationship between state and religion in the intellectual and political Arab and Islamicate Contexts? In what sense and to what extent can we talk about a state as civil, secular and/or religious/Islamic state? Does secularism mean separation religion (or church) from state, politics or sovereignty? Or does it mean the separation of religious and political authorities? What are the practical and conceptual differences between these definitions and meanings of secularism? Can the concept of 'civil state' be a complementary, substitute or an alternative concept to the concepts of 'secular state' and 'religious/Islamic state'? In what sense and to what extent can (not) each of these states be democratic?

The workshop will take place as an online event. If you wish to attend the workshop, please send a short inquiry to multiple-secularities@uni-leipzig.de.

This workshop is supported by:

Schedule

Thursday, 9 December 2021

09:00–09:15	**Welcoming and Opening Remarks** Housamedden Darwish (Leipzig University)
09:15–11:00	**Panel I – Discussant: Housamedden Darwish**
09:15–09:35	Mohammed Hashas (Leibniz Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin) "Religion and the State in Contemporary Moroccan Thought."
09:35–09:55	Hiroki Okazaki (Chiba University) "How did Syrian Political Thinkers Understand an Alliance between Secularism and Authoritarian State?"
09:55–10:15	Abdulrahman Helli (Qatar University) "The Controversy of Religion and Secularism in the Arab World: Methodological and Philosophical approaches."
10:15–11:00	Panel I Discussion
11:00–11:30	**Coffee Break**
11:30–13:15	**Panel II – Discussant: Markus Dressler**
11:30–11:50	Ahmet T. Kuru (San Diego State University) "Can the 'Civil State' Be a Middle Ground Between Assertive Secularist and Islamist States?"
11:50–12:10	Limor Lavie (Bar Ilan University) "The Constitutionalization of the Civil State in Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen."
12:10–12:30	Housamedden Darwish (Leipzig University) "Political Islam and its Prospects in the Arab and Islamicate World(s)."
12:30–13:15	Panel II Discussion
13:15–14:45	**Lunch Break**
14:45–16:30	**Panel III – Discussant: Dietrich Jung**
14:45–15:05	Ahmed M. F. Abd-Elsalam (Orient Institute Beirut) "The contemporary Concept of Muwāṭana and the Constitution of Medina."
15:05–15:25	Doha Abdelgawad (University of Warwick) "Elements of Secularization and Authenticity in the Political Discourse of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood Members (2011-2013)."
15:25–15:45	Emilio González Ferrín (University of Seville) "The mirage State: retrospective narration and the three Islams."
15:45–16:30	Panel III Discussion

Schedule

Friday, 10 December 2021

09:00–10:45	**Panel IV – Discussant: Mohammed Hashas**
09:00–09:20	Sari Hanafi (American University of Beirut) "The relationship between State and Religion in the Arab world: A separation/connection/multiple actions approach."
09:20–09:40	Dietrich Jung (University of Southern Denmark) "The Concepts of Islamic States in Saudi, Malaysia and Iran."
09:40–10:00	Mujtaba Isani (University of Mannheim) "Popular Sovereignty, the Caliphate of Man and the Flexibility of an Islamic Democracy."
10:00–10:45	Panel IV Discussion
10:45–11:15	**Coffee Break**

11:15–13:45	**Panel V – Discussant: Sari Hanafi**
11:15–11:35	Salim Hmimnat (Mohammed V University in Rabat) "'*Morocco is a civil state, yet with an Islamic reference*': Muslim Secularization to Circumvent the Islamism and Secularism Trap."
11:35–11:55	Madi Elfatih Ali Ibrahim (Centre of Diplomatic and Strategic Studies) "Sudan: The Great Transition from an Islamic to a Secular State."
11:55–12:15	Amany Abdelrazik Alsiefy (Free University of Berlin) "Secular State and Feminism in Post-Colonial Egypt: The politics of the Right to Exclude."
12:15–13:45	Panel V Discussion and Closing Remarks