Introduction

On January 25, 2011, the earth shook in Egypt. Despite being a metaphorical earthquake, in many ways it was very similar to an actual one. Earthquakes are difficult to predict, despite the existence of early warning factors. In hindsight, it is easy to point out the subterranean currents that heralded the increase of internal pressure against the 30-year-old authoritarian rule of Husni Mubarak.[1] But in actual fact, the best academic researchers and intelligence agencies in the world did not expect that it would reach such a peak, not even after the fall of President Zine al-ʿAbidine Bin ʿAli in Tunisia, nor that Mubarak would indeed step down.[2]

Earthquakes and their after effects do not always completely change the face of the Earth. So too in the Egyptian case. The citizens of Egypt do not, at this time, feel a fundamental change in their economic, social, and political situation, even though the country has experienced deep changes, with implications for the short and long term. After a prolonged convulsion and more than a few political upheavals, Egypt is currently still at the stage where it is finding its bearings, recovering, and stabilizing. One cannot rule out the possibility of additional shocks along the way, whether due to economic factors, the security situation regarding the fight against the Islamic State in the Sinai District, the concentration of power in the hands of the regime, or due to the tensions over the character of the state.

Similar to an earthquake, the "January 25 Revolution" destroyed structures of veteran institutions such as the ruling party, parliament, and the constitution; diminished bridges of delicate political and social relationships that connected rival groups, the minority with the majority, the military and the government; and created fierce sea waves, of significant change, aftershocks, and even a tsunami in the form of

the rise of the Muslim Brothers in the first democratic elections and their fall a year later, on June 30, 2013, in a soft coup.[3]

Since the fall of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, academic research has offered several explanations to the questions: Why did the Muslim Brothers' attempt fail, even though it rose to power democratically as a result of a historic revolution? What was missing that could have guaranteed their success? What went wrong? The leading answers are of two types: the first explains the fall of the Muslim Brothers by pointing to a conspiracy on the part of veteran establishment institutions that desired to preserve their power in the post-Mubarak era; the second explains the soft coup by indicating the Muslim Brothers' failure to administer power in numerous areas.

More specifically, the first type of explanation revolves around the "deep state." According to this approach, the veteran institutions of the state, such as the military, police, legal system, al-Azhar, the media, and others wished to preserve the status they enjoyed and their interests under Mubarak and opposition to the ongoing changes. Therefore, they made it difficult for the Muslim Brothers to impose their rule and change the existing arrangements. This approach envisions a pyramid with the pyramidion nipped off, meaning that the president had indeed been deposed but that the underlying hierarchical structure remained functioning and strong. It also points out in particular the role of the military establishment as the preserver of the status quo, picturing it as an opportunistic player waiting for the right time of governmental weakness and public momentum to regain power.[4]

This approach is joined by arguments that the military fomented crises in order to increase the level of public protest against the Mursi regime. For instance, one argument is that the military, along with confidants of the former regime that owned private gas stations, fueled the energy crisis that plagued the end of Mursi's regime: a severe shortage in fuel that paralyzed Cairo and created unending lines at gas stations, disruptions in the supply of food and bread, in addition to frequent power outages and unsolvable economic problems (unemployment, a worsening public deficit, a decline in Egypt's credit ratings, and more).[5]

The second type of explanation revolves around the Muslim Brothers' lack of experience and knowledge in running a state, which led to failures in administration in several areas. According to this approach, the Muslim Brothers rose to power due to the religious orientation of the movement, but were in actual fact judged according to their

success or failure in the practical areas of democratization, economic development and distribution of capital, and foreign policy—areas in which they showed a weakness that disappointed their voters.[6]

In the brief period of his rule, Mursi did not advance the goals of the revolution: The frequent appointment of Muslim Brothers' confidants to key positions was reminiscent of the favoritism that characterized the Mubarak regime and made the impression that Mursi was working to benefit his own rather than acting to benefit the public as whole.[7] In light of the attempts by the military and the legal system to undermine his authority, Mursi adopted a centralist policy and granted himself absolute authority. Although he permitted freedom of expression to some extent, during his rule human rights organizations documented blatant violations of human rights, violations of the rule of law, and forceful oppression of quiet protests.[8] Order and stability remained out of reach, and so did the sense of security in the streets. The constitution that was drafted with his encouragement was ratified in an unusual procedure that served only to highlight the social polarization. Although this constitution did expand several rights and liberties, it limited religious freedom of non-Muslims and did not remove many of the restrictions that had been imposed upon civil organizations and the press. Justice was not fully served in the case of Mubarak and his people, and most of the monies smuggled out of the country were not returned.

Economically the situation did not improve either during Mursi's time. The political and security instability thwarted the reception of a loan from the IMF worth close to five billion dollars, which could have restored the confidence of the world market in the Egyptian economy. Food prices rose and a shortage of fuel was created. The unemployment rate continued to rise, with over 75 percent of the unemployed between the ages of 15 through 29.[9]

With regard to foreign policy, Mursi showed incompetence in his dealings with Ethiopia, failing to prevent it from diverting the waters of the Blue Nile in order to construct the Millennium Dam, which was seen as a real threat to Egypt's share of the water. Generally speaking, this approach argues that he did not show himself capable of conducting an independent foreign policy or of preferring the national Egyptian interest over the Islamic project.[10] As a result of all of the above, the Muslim Brothers were forced to rely on technocrats who were close to the deposed regime and who were not loyal to the new one.[11]

The Muslim Brothers failed to create a new, unifying narrative after they gained power. According to this approach, the success of a revolution depends upon a successful narrative of justice that plants in the citizens' hearts hope for peace and wellbeing. A regime that does not manage to create such a narrative is forced to use authoritarian instruments and coercive measures. Post-revolutionary rulers are required to adapt the narrative to the changing context and to reform the existing institutions accordingly. A failure to create such a narrative leads to instability. According to this thesis, the Muslim Brothers rose to power due to a reliable narrative based on a lengthy history of providing services to orphans, widows, the sick, and the needy, and also based on brave opposition to a long-standing dictatorship. However, with their rise to power, the spotlight revealed gaps between ideology and practice, occasional cooperation with the figures of the previous regime; an inability to impose authority upon the state systems (legal system, the military, the police, and so on); and a failure to establish a social consensus, to include all the groups in society, and to expand their support base beyond the movement's supporters.

Eric Trager, for example, stresses that the very organizational characteristics that helped the Muslim Brothers win power also contributed to their rapid downfall since it bred exclusivism.[12] The unilateral, belligerent ratification of the Islamist constitution of 2012 raised specific concerns that it would pave the way for a theocracy and thus constituted a threat to the overall doctrine of the country's nonreligious public.[13] The Muslim Brothers were mistaken when they acted monopolistically, while also failing to repair the rift between themselves and the young revolutionaries.[14] All these deepened the polarization in society and eroded the public trust in the Muslim Brothers and the legitimacy of their rule, to the point that they became isolated.[15] Since the secular opposition was not strong enough to manufacture an alternative to the rule of the Muslim Brothers, it was forced to accept once again the authority of the military, if only to remove the Muslim Brothers from power.

This book offers a different way of looking at the factors that led to the soft coup against the Muslim Brothers. The book's main argument is that the June 30, 2013, soft coup in Egypt was a product of the long struggle between the secular and Islamist currents over Egypt's identity and over the status of religion therein. The book offers a new conceptualization of Mursi's ouster by the Armed Forces, supported by the masses: This historical moment marked a climax in the struggle

between the champions of the civil state and the supporters of "a civil state with an Islamic source of authority." "Civil state"—meaning a nonreligious, anti-Islamist state; "Civil state with an Islamic source of authority"—meaning the counter-model supported by the Islamist currents, which accepts only certain norms of the civil state, the ones compatible with their interpretation of the principles of Shariʿa. The coup was a decisive attempt by the military establishment to protect Egypt's civil (non-Islamist) character.

The concept of "civil state" (*Dawla Madanīyya*) played a pivotal role in the political discourse in most of the Arab countries after the Arab Spring, especially in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria. On the face of it, in the public debate over the character of the Arab states after the collapse of the authoritarian regimes, the demand to establish a civil state was shared by almost all the political streams. In practice, different political streams render the concept differently, interpreting it according to their political ideology.

The term "civil state" originates in Western political philosophy, where it refers to a country that maintains modern ideas and institutions, such as the separation of powers, local government, contracts, services, taxation, etc., contrary to premodern governance patterns.[16] It is not a common term in Western political philosophy, and its popular Western meanings are not quite the same as the interpretations given to it in the intellectual discourse of Arab states. While in Western thought the emphasis in defining the civil state is given to the nature of state institutions and their role in the service of citizens, the main emphasis in the definition of the civil state in Arab intellectual discourse is given to the type of relationship between state and religion.

The term "civil state" emerged in the Arab context due to the lack of a Western term equivalent to the state model that many in the Arab world sought for themselves. The term "secular state" is seen as lewd, referring to a country afflicted by Western permissiveness, anti-religiosity, or even atheism, while the term "religious state" holds its own negative connotations, those of an oppressive, medieval European Christian state, or of post-revolution Shiite Iran. The term "civil state" is one that more and more Arab people choose nowadays for describing their ideal country: a political regime that adopts modern secular norms while corresponding with the history and culture of the people and their religion; a regime that does not seek to recreate every detail of history or reconstruct the patterns of its political system, nor does it wish to completely detach itself from them.

The civil state in the Arab discourse is a post-secular, intermediate model seeking to bring together Islamic history and culture, and modernity. The concept is a result of the difficulty in applying the existing, rigid categories—religious state or secular state—to the Egyptian case, a product of the constant ambivalence toward religion in Egypt, and the long-standing sociopolitical debate over its identity. It is an attempt to compromise between an Iranian type of religiosity and a European type of secularity—a middle ground between going backward and imitating the West. This model is meant to provide a solution for a society that is subject to tensions between the desire to catch up with global modernization and democratization processes versus the desire to reject them.

In the public debate over the character of the Egyptian state, in particular following the January 25, 2011, revolution, the model of the civil state assumed a central place. On the face of it, the demand to establish a civil state was shared by almost all the political streams in Egypt. However, when these streams sought to lay out basic guidelines for Egypt's future, it soon became clear that they were far from reaching a consensus, and that the concept of the civil state was at the heart of the controversy between them.

Ahmad 'Abd Rabbuh, a political science lecturer at the University of Cairo and the American University in Cairo recognized the great confusion over the use of the concept of the civil state in contemporary Egyptian discourse, particularly after the January 25, 2011, revolution and the ouster of the Muslim Brothers on July 3, 2013:

> It is not easy in political science in particular and the social sciences in general to provide a comprehensive definition for concepts, but I haven't coped with the complexity and diversity in the definitions of the concept '*madanīyya*' [civil], especially in Egypt and the Arab world, since the expression is vague and has different meanings among the elites and the people . . . everyone is calling for building a civil and democratic Egypt, but everyone views '*madanīyya*' and democracy in their own way, their own method, and their own definition, so that one can find two opposing factions that each call for establishing '*madanīyya*,' while preventing each other from achieving the same vague goal. . . ."[17]

Prior to the 2011 Revolution, academic research did not engage, for the most part, with the civil state concept.[18] Academic interest in the

concept and its origins arose following the January 25, 2011, revolution,[19] but the few researches that have referred to this concept are characterized by confusion and imprecision, and in any case they did not conduct a complete and comprehensive discussion of the concept, its origins, and development.[20]

The next chapters trace the overall transition of the civil state concept from Western philosophy and its assimilation in Egyptian political thought, stressing that this was accompanied by two parallel processes. The first was the "Islamization" and localization of the concept and its adaptation to Muslim society, thereby imbuing the concept with new connotations that have caused considerable confusion as to its meaning. The second process involved the secularization of Egyptian political thinking, which was not a conscious rebellion against religion, but a secularization in the sense of relocating the political regime and the procedures of government from the religious arena to the secular one.[21] This process required a rationalization of religion to render it more enlightened and embed secular norms within it.

This book traces the major milestones in the development of this concept and the transformations it underwent as it gained currency among rival sectors in Egypt: liberals and Islamists;[22] regime circles, oppositionist circles, and civil society;[23] the Muslim majority and the Coptic minority. The book offers a detailed genealogy of the evolution of the civil state concept and the controversy that has evolved around it over the years, since the 1970s and up to the current period. Hence, it provides the historic depth necessary to comprehend the polarization that has grown in Egyptian society between the rival factions, which led to the forceful ouster of the first elected president in democratic elections in the history of Egypt. It traces several periods in the evolution of the civil state concept:

a. During the first half of the twentieth century, the term penetrated into the intellectual discourse in Egypt but remained marginal, evoked only by a handful of liberal intellectuals who used it to mean the opposite of the Christian European religious state.

b. In the 1970s, it was adopted by liberals who claimed that the burgeoning of political Islam in Sadat's Egypt would turn the country into a religious state similar to Iran after the Islamic revolution. At the same time, it was also adopted by Islamist intellectuals from the Wasatiyya movement, in a bid to deflect these claims.

    c. From the second half of the 1990s, the term was also incorporated into the discourse and later on into the official political platform of the Muslim Brothers, which had rejected it for decades. The movement was compelled to make this change after the Mubarak regime incorporated the civil state concept into its own official ideology in a bid to impose a uniform understanding of this term and adapt it to its own agenda. The regime was assisted in this endeavor by intellectuals who idealized the concept and by the religious establishment, which granted it religious legitimacy.

    d. The fall of the Mubarak regime exposed the Islamists' deep-seated opposition to defining post-revolutionary Egypt as a civil state. Under the rule of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), the term acquired a new meaning, of a non-military rule. Somewhat paradoxically, the Egyptian army emerged as a prominent defender of the civil state in its traditional meaning, and acted to prevent the establishment of what it saw as a religious regime, under President Mursi.

This book maps the different interpretations given to the term "civil state" by the rival groups in the Egyptian discourse, creating a typology out of the mixture of usages of the concept. The meanings that are accepted, at least in theory, by most of the groups are the following: a civil state is the opposite of a religious theocracy, namely a state whose ruler is a representative of the people rather than a cleric ruling by God-given right; it is the reverse of a military state; it is a state based upon full civil equality without discrimination on the basis of religion, belief, gender, etc.; and a state based on modern institutions and procedures of government, such as parliamentarism, regular government turnover through free elections, freedoms, and human rights.

Other potential implications of the term "civil state" are disputed, especially those pertaining to the status of Islamic Shariʿa. Civil currents see it as a state with a civil source of authority that nonetheless honors religion. Islamic currents see it as a state with a religious source of authority, which implies a partial enactment of Shariʿa. More conservative currents demand the full enactment of Shariʿa, and regard the civil state as a heretic, anti-religious state.

The book examines the impact of the civil state concept on the Egyptian political scene in light of historical processes in the country, the region, and the world that affected its development, stressing that the struggle over Egypt's civil character in the post-Mubarak era was the main reason for the turbulence the country experienced in June 30, 2013, namely, the ouster of President Muhammad Mursi by the Armed Forces.

Finally, the book broadens its scope from the Egyptian case to the Tunisian one where, contrary to Egypt, the civil state concept was included in the new post-revolutionary constitution in the second article, which defines the identity of the country. In this way, the book explores the meanings of the concept and its usage in the political scene in light of historical and social processes that are unique to each country and to the local circumstances of each place.

In doing so, the book provides a comprehensive overview of the civil state model in contemporary Arab political thought, which stands in contrast to other prevalent models, such as nationalism, Pan-Arabism, political Islam, and so forth. Analyzing the Tunisian experience emphasizes that the roots of the Egyptian coup lay in the worldview of society's main groups toward the identity of the state and in their ability to contain the point of view of others, instead of coercing theirs. In the Tunisian case study, the Islamists' willingness to accept the civil state concept created a consensus, while in Egypt, the unwillingness by some to accept it created a divide.

The research was conducted in the conceptual history approach. This approach enables research of the civil state as a concept by studying the changes it underwent in sociopolitical contexts, based on observing the Arab term's semantics and pragmatics (i.e., linguistic use within social context) in the relevant time period. This approach views the concept as more than a word or a definition. It relates to its complexity, its various aspects, its history of contradictions, and its share in designing social and political developments.[24]

The research is based mostly on the analysis of Arabic primary sources: texts and publications by Arab figures, institutions, organizations that affected public opinion and reflected conceptual attitudes, and attempts to form identity features, including disagreements, disputes, and conceptual discussions that took place in Egyptian and Tunisian public.

The book is organized chronologically according to the main periods in the development of the civil state concept. The first part

traces the harbingers of the civil state concept in the neoliberal dis-
course and in the Islamist intellectual discourse in the 1970s. Then,
through a textual analysis of the writings of prominent Egyptian
intellectuals, it describes the intensification of the polemic between
the sides regarding the concept of a civil state during the first decade
of Mubarak's reign.

The second part deals with the institutionalization of the civil
state discourse in the rival platforms of Mubarak's reigning party, the
National Democratic Party (NDP) and the Muslim Brothers, outlining
the incentives of each side to take a stand toward the concept and
the differences between them. The third part is concerned with the
polarization revealed in society toward the civil state concept in the
aftermath of the Mubarak regime, especially around the drafting of
the new constitution. This part focuses on the SCAF's first hasty and
failed attempt to secure Egypt's civil (non-Islamist) character and to
prevent the monopolization of the drafting of the constitution by the
Islamists.

The fourth part is dedicated to the civil state discourse following
President Mursi's first year in power, his ouster, and the rise to power
of the current Egyptian president, ʿAbd al-Fattah al-Sisi. It delves into
the debate over the drafting of the 2014 constitution and the regime's
difficulty in defining Egypt as a civil state in the constitution, even
though the Islamist opposition was disadvantaged and excluded. The
fifth part is a comparison between the experience of the civil-state
concept in Egypt and Tunisia, dealing with the question of why did
the concept manage to enter the new Tunisian constitution as opposed
to the Egyptian case, and what this difference indicates regarding the
root causes of the Egyptian coup.