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Muslims Against the Islamic State

Arab Critics and Supporters of Ali Abdarraziq's Islamic Laicism

PL ACADEMIC RESEARCH

1. Introduction

1.1. Islamic State versus Islamic Laicism

> Very typically, over history, the intellectual classes have subordinated themselves to power, with very few exceptions.[1]
> In general, one would expect any group with access to power and affluence to construct an ideology that will justify this state of affairs on grounds of the general welfare.[2]
>
> Noam Chomsky

The above-mentioned statements also hold true for religious institutions. It is reported that the first Sassanid king of Iran, Ardashir I. (224–41), gave the following piece of advice to his son, Shapur I. (241–72): "My dear son, the religion and governance are sisters, none of which can do without the help of the other. In fact, the religion is the foundation of rule, and rule is the guardian of the religion. Anything that has no foundation will be destroyed, and anything that has no guardian will perish."[3] Udo Steinbach writes that prior to the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the Persian theologians used to oscillate between assisting the regime and openly resisting it.[4] Nowadays some state officials in Muslim-majority countries

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1 Tresilian, David. 3–9 June 2010. ‚Noam Chomsky: speaking of truth and power.' *Al-Ahram Weekly On-line*, Cairo: Al-Ahram Publishing House. See http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2010/1001/intrvw.htm (Dec. 19, 2012).

2 Chomsky, Noam. 2002 (1967). ‚Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship' in Chomsky, Noam (ed) *American Power and the New Mandarins*, New York: The New Press. Page: 27. See also: Chomsky, Noam/Pateman, Barry (ed) (2005) *Chomsky On Anarchism*. Edinburgh, Oakland and West Virginia: AK Press. Page: 13.

3 Gaube, Heinz. 1986. ‚Theologe und Staat in Iran (Theologians and State in Iran)' in Stietencron, Heinrich von (ed) *Theologen und Theologien in verschiedenen Kulturkreisen (Theologians and Theologies in Different Civilizations)*, Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag. Page: 164 (my own translation). The author cites Rotter, Gernot/al-Masʿūdī. 1978. *Bis zu den Grenzen der Erde (To the Ends of the Earth)*. Tübingen: Erdmann. Page: 116.

4 Steinbach, Udo. 2005. ‚Die Stellung des Islams und des islamischen Rechts in ausgewählten Staaten: Iran (The Position of Islam and Islamic Law in Selected States: Iran)' in Ende, Werner/Steinbach, Udo (ed) *Der Islam in der Gegenwart (Islam in the Present Age)*, Bonn/Munich: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung/Verlag C.H. Beck. Page: 247.

claim that they represent an "Islamic state" (others do not), while some oppositional groups in Muslim-majority countries demand an "Islamic state" (others do not). Does a Muslim, in order to be a good Muslim, have to advocate an "Islamic state?" And what does that mean in concrete terms? What are the arguments of the supporters of the so-called "Islamic state?" If there are also religious Muslims who do not want to live under an "Islamic state" for *Islamic* reasons, how do these "Islamic Laicists," as they are called in this work, justify this view?

Apart from the Islamic-theological arguments, the significance of the "Islamic state" lies in the fact that it is connected to the issues of human rights, women's rights, individual liberties, democratization and socio-economic development. Since the beginning of the "Arab Spring" revolts in December 2010, some people among the non-Muslim minorities in Egypt and elsewhere have feared that they would suffer from more religious discrimination due to the possible rise of the "Islamic state." These fears are based on experiences with some states that call themselves "Islamic." Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd (1943–2010) urged us to distinguish between the "society" and the "state" and to struggle for a state that represents all of its citizens:

> We should, in the Arab and Muslim world, make this kind of distinction between the state as the apparatus, or the machine through which the society is organized, and the society. But now, especially in the Arab world, the state is identified with the society, and both are identified with the ruler, with the dictator, whether the dictator is a sultan or a king or a president. I cannot think that the religion of Egypt is Islam because the religions of the Egyptians are Islam, Christianity, and we still have a Jewish community in Egypt. So who claims that the state, which should represent all the citizens, should harbor only one religion to say "this is my religion or our religion?" This is what I mean by the separation between the state and religion. The state should not identify itself with any specific religion.[5]

The central thesis and the goals of this study

The central thesis of this study is that there are religious Muslims who are against the Islamic State for Islamic reasons. The main goal of this study is to explain ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq's Islamic Laicism and to show the arguments and counterarguments of a selection of his Arab critics and supporters. Although the other goals are subordinate, they are connected to the above-mentioned main goal: First, one can regard the Egyptian shariah judge ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq as the intellectual

5 The author of this thesis interviewed Naṣr Abū Zayd at the University of Leiden, the Netherlands, on October 13, 2008 at the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Room 501.

father of Islamic Laicism, at least among the Arab Muslims. Second, one can see that certain Arab Islamic thinkers have stepped into his shoes since 1925. Third, this work wants to show that by the 1920s, several Arab Muslims had started to contribute to the profound debate about the relationship between the political and the religious institutions and that this discussion has continued until the present. Fourth, it should be understood that there can very well be a truly religious Muslim society without an "Islamic state." Fifth, it is important to distinguish between *Islamic* Laicism and *secular* (non-religious) laicism: Whereas the Kemalist laicism of Turkey, for example, has had an anti-religious and dictatorial fundament, the Islamic Laicists demand a pro-religious and democratic laicism based on a decidedly *Islamic* argumentation.[6]

Laicism, secularism and ʿalmānīyah

What is the difference between the terms "secularism" and "laicism," and what about the Arabic word *"al-ʿalmānīyah?"* In this work I prefer the expression "laicism" over "secularism" because I want to avoid, on all accounts, the etymological relation between "secularism" and "secularization," i.e. the process by which religion is marginalized from the various areas of life. This is, as far as I can see, a factual process in most parts of the world, yet it is definitely *not* what ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq and the other Islamic Laicists argue for. As content should always outweigh form, I do not wish to be dogmatic about the preference for a specific term; yet for the above-mentioned reason, this work applies "Islamic Laicism" in the meaning of "separating the religious institution from the political institution in a democratic and pro-religious way." What Islamic Laicists want people to understand is that it is better for the Muslims, Islam, and the non-Muslims to separate the religious institutions (the mosque) from the political institutions (the state). In Germany, where I am writing this thesis, many falsely believe that the German state is secular, although it has two dominant churches, the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church, and the state even collects church taxes for them, which provides them with billions of euros per year.[7] Besides the tax privileges, a church which is recognized by the German state is also entitled to

6 See Navīd Kermānī in: Abū Zayd, Naṣr Hāmid. 1996. *Islam und Politik – Kritik des religiösen Diskurses (Islam and Politics – Critique of the Religious Discourse)*. Frankfurt: dipa-Verlag. Page: 193.

7 Willenbrock, Harald. April 4, 2010. ‚Weshalb kassiert der Staat eigentlich Kirchensteuern? (Why does the State actually Collect Church Taxes?).' *brand eins Wirtschaftsmagazin*, Hamburg: brand eins Verlag. Page: 14–15.

have civil servants and to influence public television, public radio and youth welfare.[8] Andrea Dernbach also reminds us that the separation of church and state is actually neither a reality, nor a desirable situation for the people in many Western European countries; not in England with its Anglican state church; not in Italy, a country that has always been ruled by an elected government on the one hand, and the Vatican on the other. And not in Germany either, where the treasury collects taxes on behalf of the church, where bishops and the pope allocate professorships which are paid by the state, and where employee rights within the church are considerably restricted.[9] Claus Leggewie ascertains that the Federal Republic of Germany has experienced an anachronistic symbiosis of state and church, while in the United States the separation between state and church is stricter than in Europe.[10] On the other hand, Navīd Kermānī states that the secularness as the Germans and other Western Europeans know it, which goes beyond the separation of state and religion and which actually means the comprehensive loss of the significance of organized religion – a kind of religious apathy, to put it bluntly – is a singular occurrence in some parts of Europe. Neither the US nor the whole of Europe is secular in this sense. In Greece, in the Balkan states and in adjacent Poland the religions play a central and firmly political role in public life.[11]

In Germany, many people also think that "laicism" is the more rigorous version of "secularism," since they identify the former with the French Republic or the Turkish Republic where church and state are separated more strongly and where the states are more anti-religious than in Germany. There is a basis for this

8 Muckel, Stefan. 2010. ‚Zur christlich-abendländischen Tradition als Problem für den Islam in deutschen Gesetzen (Why the Christian-Occidental Tradition is a Problem for Islam in German Laws)' in Thorsten Gerald Schneiders (ed) *Islamfeindlichkeit (Hostility toward Islam)*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag. Page: 266.

9 Dernbach, Andrea. Nov. 30, 2009. ‚Germany's New Elite.' *Qantara.de*, Bonn/Berlin: Deutsche Welle. See http://en.qantara.de/wcsite.php?wc_c=9614 (March 11, 2013).

10 Leggewie, Claus. 2008. ‚Religion zwischen Staat und Kirche (Religion between State and Church).' *SPIEGEL Special (Nr. 2/2008): Allah im Abendland – Der Islam und die Deutschen (Allah in the Occident – Islam and the Germans)*, Hamburg: SPIEGEL-Verlag Rudolf Augstein. Page: 29.

11 Kermānī, Navīd. 2009. *Wer ist wir? Deutschland und seine Muslime (Who Is We? Germany and her Muslims)*. Munich: C. H. Beck. Page: 32. See also: Kermānī, Navīd. 2008. ‚Der fundamentale Irrtum (The Fundamental Misapprehension).' *SPIEGEL Special (Nr. 2/2008): Allah im Abendland – Der Islam und die Deutschen (Allah in the Occident – Islam and the Germans)*, Hamburg: SPIEGEL-Verlag Rudolf Augstein. Page: 16.

view whose background was explained by Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd (probably the most prominent professed supporter of ʿAbdarrāziq's Islamic Laicism):

> Of course I'm aware of some sort of laicism – the French one is the most obvious representation of this laicism – that despises any public expression of religious identity. And therefore this kind of laicism is absolute privatization of religion. And in one of my interviews I think I said this is very much like Wahhabism. I mean by "Wahhabism" that this laicism has been established in a very very rigorous battle against the church. This is the context. The French Revolution was very very violent because of the church – I don't have to go into the details of the church. But how far did laicism develop beyond this moment? The power of the church is not there any more, so this battle is already won. So you expect ideas to develop. […] Any ideology, any set of ideas that cannot bypass the historical context of its emergence is subject to die or to commit the same crimes that were committed by the church. So now laicism is committing crimes against religious people who would just like to show their identity, whether it is symbolized in a headscarf, cross or anything else. What we need in the Arab and the Muslim world is not this kind of extremist laicism. We need another form of secularism that does not exclude or despise religion as an antithesis, a secularism that considers different views as valid as long as they are involved in conversation in a free political and cultural space. Everything is negotiable, nothing is absolute.[12]

Like Germany, the English-speaking world is more familiar with the term "secularism" than with "laicism," which is why English texts normally translate the Arabic "*ʿalmānīyah*" in this way. In "Orientalism" Edward Said not only applies the term "secularized" but also resorts to the less widespread expression "laicized."[13] He also utilizes the term "lay science" ("la science laïque").[14] In the Arabic language the term *"al-ʿalmānīyah"* (secularism) is much more widespread than its alternative *"al-lāʾikīyah"*[15] (laicism). Unfortunately, many Arab Muslims are afraid of (or polemicize against) *"al-ʿalmānīyah"* because they believe (or want to make people believe) that its objective is the secularization (*ʿalmanah*) of society in order to remove religion from the public domain or to eliminate it completely, and not to merely separate mosque and state. In all likelihood, this is the result of the age-old indoctrination of Muslims by states, "Islamic churches" as well as traditionalist, fundamentalist and extremist Muslim groups. Of course there are a lot of people who do not like Islam or any religion, but only a

12 See the above-mentioned interview with Naṣr Abū Zayd of October 13, 2008.

13 Said, Edward W. 2003 (1978). *Orientalism*. London: Penguin Books. Page: 122.

14 Ibid. 134.

15 See al-Jirārī, ʿAbbās. May 12, 2003. *al-islām wa al-lāʾikīyah – maʿrifat al-islām (Islam and Laicism – the Knowledge of Islam)*. Rabat. See abbesjirari.com/lai_ar.htm#_Toc40457516 (March 11, 2013).

tiny faction is fanatic enough to believe that Islam, today's religion of about 1.4 billion Muslims, could really be annihilated. In reality, Islamic Laicists want to minimize the potential for Islamically-legitimized oppression. Islamic Laicism is based on the desire to prevent politicians from abusing the religion to justify their policies, so that the state is not able to monopolize the interpretation of the religion. Why not employ the term "Muslim laicist?" Because a Muslim laicist is a laicist who happens to be Muslim but does not rely on Islamic arguments, while Islamic Laicists give *Islamic* reasons for why they want the "people of the state" not to be confused with the "people of the mosque." From this it follows that if someone is a true Islamic Laicist, he or she by definition cannot be an opponent of the religion (from his or her own perspective), contrary to what others say.

In "Islam and Ideology – Towards a Typology" William Shepard describes "the most radical form of secularism" which "wants to replace Islam in all areas, public and private, as in Marxist Albania, whose constitution makes virtually no reference to religion and whose government has closed the mosques and churches." This extremist anti-religious kind of secularism cannot be equated with Islamic Laicism, of course. Then Shepard adds: 'Far more influential has been a "moderate secularism" which seeks to separate religion from politics and other areas of public life. […] In a "moderate secularism" constitution Islam is not the religion of state and sovereignty is not vested in God but in the "nation" or the "people."'[16] The second part of Shepard's description is the very essence of Islamic Laicism, yet the first part is not: Islamic Laicism is not about separating religion from politics and other areas of public life, but rather is concerned with separating the mosque from the state. Marcia Pally hints at the goal of Islamic Laicism while explaining why North American Muslims were better integrated into their societies in 2007 than their European counterparts: 'What allows them to participate without assimilation is the "pluralistic" public sphere, not a secular one – secular meaning "without religion" and pluralistic meaning "with many."'[17] Islamic Laicism is an "inclusive laicism" with a positive neutrality vis-à-vis religions, not an "exclusive secularism" which forces civil servants to hide their own beliefs in terms of dresscode, jewelry, or rhetoric. Islamic Laicism demands that the state should not regard religion as something negative and that the political institutions ought to equally fulfill the political wishes of every religious and every non-religious group. Islamic Laicism demands that politicians pursue

16 Shepard, William E. (Aug. 1987) ‚Islam and Ideology: Towards a Typology', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19 (No. 3). Page: 309.

17 Pally, Marcia. June 15, 2007. ‚Familiarity with Difference.' *Qantara.de*, Bonn/Berlin: Deutsche Welle. See http://en.qantara.de/wcsite.php?wc_c=7935 (March 11, 2013).

policies in the interest of the people, not in the interest of a particular religious group or religion.

In "Säkularisten und Islamisten: Ein Kategorisierungsversuch in Ägypten" ("Secularists and Islamists: An Attempt at Categorization in Egypt"), Fritz Steppat discusses an essay by the professed Islamist Muḥammad ʿAmārah entitled *"al-ḥiwār bayna al-islāmīyīn wa al-ʿalmānīyīn"* ("The Dialog between the Islamists and the Secularists"). Steppat describes ʿAmārah's tripartite categorization of secularists: anti-religious secularists, anti-Islamic supporters of Westen culture, and "the advocators of separating the religion from the state among the patriotic and nationalist secularists" (*duʿāt faṣl al-dīn ʿan al-dawlah min al-ʿalmānīyīn al-waṭanīyīn wa al-qawmīyīn*). ʿAmārah emphasizes that the Islamists should conduct a conversation with the third secularist group only because it consists of Muslims who follow the tenets of Islam (*yatadayyanūna bi-ʿaqāʾid al-islām*). They do not reject the shariah and, therefore, have not become unbelievers.[18] This certainly applies to the Islamic Laicists, even though not every Islamic Laicist is necessarily a patriot or nationalist (whatever one understands by these terms). Naturally, some supporters of "state Islam" ("Islamists") are also very different from others. The term "Islamist" is not supposed to be understood pejoratively in this work but ought to cover the wide range of Muslims who advocate some kind of blending of the state and institutionalized religion. There is a vast difference between mild modernist Islamists, on the one hand, and dogmatic fundamentalist Islamists, on the other. One could divide Islamists into four categories: extremist Islamists (who consider Muslims to be in a constant war), fundamentalist Islamists (intolerant hardliners but not warmongers), traditionalist Islamists (moderately conservative) and modernist Islamists. The latter are liberals who demand moral policies by a symbolically "Islamic state" which does not discriminate against anyone.

Alexander Flores defines "secularism" as the attitude advocating secularization and its advancement. If this means an extensive rollback of religion until it is eliminated, this is certainly not the Islamic Laicists' aim. If secularization meant liberating many areas of life from *mosque* dominance, the Islamic Laicists would agree. As always, it depends on the definition of religion: Do we mean a package of dogmatic rules, or are we speaking about general values which are hardly controversial? Flores rightly underlines the fact that the slogan *"al-islām dīn wa*

18 Steppat, Fritz (1991) ‚Säkularisten und Islamisten: Ein Kategorisierungsversuch in Ägypten (Secularists and Islamists: An Attempt at Categorization in Egypt)' , *Asien, Afrika, Lateinamerika* 19 (No. 4): Berlin. Page: 699–704. The author cites the Cairene monthly *"al-hilāl"* of September 1990, p. 94–105.

dawlah" ("Islam is religion and state") is fairly young,[19] and if we follow his distinction between explicit and implicit secularism,[20] the Islamic Laicists could support the latter, i.e. a *religious justification* for the autonomy of most areas of life from mosque dominance. Accordingly, Flores describes ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq's book as the advocacy of secularism explicitly on religious grounds. It is precisely ʿAbdarrāziq's "Islamization of secularism,"[21] or the coining of an "Islamic Laicism," which expresses what many pious Muslims believe, namely that there is no primitive dichotomy into "religious Muslims who want an Islamic state" and "non-religious Muslims who do not want an Islamic state." Flores cites Khālid Muḥammad Khālid who in 1950 published an English book entitled "From Here We Start"[22] in which he criticized the "priesthood" in Islam, i.e. the instrumentalization of religion in the interest of the ruling elites, whereby he confirmed ʿAbdarrāziq's message (even though he rejected it later on). This is about the advocacy of the autonomy of life from institutionalized religious hegemony.[23] Unfortunately, the often proclaimed statement that "there is no church or priesthood in Islam" is the ideal rather than the reality.[24]

Researching ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq's "al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm"

ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq published the first edition of *"al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm"* in April 1925.[25] In the year of ʿAbdarrāziq's death (1966), a publisher in Beirut released an edition containing a detailed critique of the book by Mamdūḥ Ḥiqqī, which was republished in 1978.[26] By 1972 Muḥammad ʿAmārah had edited a thorough

19 See Flores, Alexander. 2005. ‚Die innerislamische Diskussion zu Säkularismus, Demokratie und Menschenrechten (The Internal Islamic Discussions on Secularism, Democracy, and Human Rights)' in Ende/Steinbach (Der Islam): 621.

20 Ibid. 622.

21 Ibid. 623.

22 Khālid, Khālid Muḥammad. 1953. *From Here We Start*. Washington D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies.

23 Flores in Ende/Steinbach (Der Islam): 624.

24 Ibid. 627–28.

25 ʿAbdarrāziq, ʿAlī. 1925. *al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm - baḥth fī al-khilāfah wa al-ḥukūmah fī al-islām (Islam and the Foundations of Governance - A Study of the Caliphate and Government in Islam)*. Cairo: maṭbaʿat miṣr sharikah musāhamah miṣrīyah.

26 ʿAbdarrāziq, ʿAlī. 1978 (1966). *al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm – baḥth fī al-khilāfah wa al-ḥukūmah fī al-islām (Islam and the Foundations of Governance: A Study of the Caliphate and Government in Islam). Critique and commentary by Mamdūḥ Ḥiqqī*. Beirut: manshūrāt dār maktabat al-ḥayāt.

study around ʿAbdarrāziq's book which also contains the complete work.[27] He republished it in 1988, and in 1989 he released *"maʿrakat al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm"* ("The Battle of Islam and the Foundations of Governance") with both *"al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm"* and Muḥammad al-Khiḍr Ḥusayn's *"naqḍ kitāb al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm"* ("Critique of Islam and the Foundations of Governance").[28] Wajīh al-Kawtharānī's 1996 compilation entitled *"al-dawlah wa al-khilāfah fī al-khiṭāb al-ʿarabī ibbāna al-thawrah al-kimālīyah fī turkiyā"* ("The State and the Caliphate in the Arab Discourse during the Kemalist Revolution in Turkey")[29] also comprises *"al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm."* Further editions of the book were published in 1993,[30] 1999,[31] 2000,[32] 2005,[33] and 2012.[34] A complete English translation of ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq's *"al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm"* was published in 2012 by Maryam Loutfi and Abdou Filali-Ansary.[35] Charles C. Adams had announced one in the preface (written in April 1932) of his "Islam and Modernism

27 ʿAmārah, Muḥammad. 1972. *al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm li-ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq – dirāsah wa wathāʾiq (Islam und the Foundations of Governance by ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq – a Study and Documents)*. Beirut: al-muʾassasah al-ʿarabīyah lil-dirāsāt wa al-nashr.

28 ʿAmārah, Muḥammad. 1989. *maʿrakat al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm (The Battle of "Islam and the Foundations of Governance")*. Cairo: dār al-shurūq.

29 al-Kawtharānī, Wajīh (ed) (1996) *al-dawlah wa al-khilāfah fī al-khiṭāb al-ʿarabī ibbāna al-thawrah al-kimālīyah fī turkiyā (The State and the Caliphate in the Arab Discourse during the Kemalist Revolution in Turkey)*. Beirut: dār al-ṭaliʿah lil-ṭibāʿah wa al-nashr.

30 ʿAbdarrāziq, ʿAlī. 1993 (1925). *al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm – baḥth fī l-khilāfah wa al-ḥukūmah fī al-islām (Islam and the Foundations of Governance: A Study of the Caliphate and Government in Islam)*: Introduction by Jābir ʿUṣfūr. Cairo: maṭābiʿ al-haiʾah al-miṣrīyah al-ʿāmmah lil-kitab.

31 ʿAbdarrāziq, ʿAlī. 1999. *al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm – baḥth fī l-khilāfah wa al-ḥukūmah fī al-islām (Islam and the Foundations of Governance: A Study of the Caliphate and Government in Islam)*. Sūsah: dār al-maʿārif lil-ṭibāʿah wa al-nashr.

32 ʿAbdarrāziq, ʿAlī. 2000 (1925). *al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm – baḥth fī l-khilāfah wa al-ḥukūmah fī al-islām (Islam and the Foundations of Governance: A Study of the Caliphate and Government in Islam)*. Cairo: dār al-hilāl.

33 ʿAbdarrāziq, ʿAlī. 2005. *al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm – baḥth fī l-khilāfah wa al-ḥukūmah fī al-islām (Islam and the Foundations of Governance: A Study of the Caliphate and Government in Islam)*. Beirut: al-takwīn.

34 ʿAbdarrāziq, ʿAlī. 2012. *al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm (Islam and the Foundations of Governance)*: taqdīm (introduction) by ʿAmmār ʿAlī Ḥasan. Cairo: dār al-kitāb al-miṣrī.

35 Abdel Razek, Ali. 2012. *Islam and the Foundations of Political Power*: Translated by Maryam Loutfi and edited by Abdou Filali-Ansary. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

in Egypt."[36] There is an old two-part French translation by Léon Bercher[37] of 1933/34 and a newer one by Abdou Filali-Ansari (1994).[38] There are also Spanish[39] and Italian translations,[40] and in 2010 Hans-Georg Ebert and Assem Hefny added a German one.[41] A Malaysian version exists, too.[42] During his teaching stays in Indonesia, Naṣr Abū Zayd found out that ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq's book was translated into Indonesian a long time ago and that his main point, namely that there is no such thing as an "Islamic state," has been heavily quoted and cited since then. Moreover, Abū Zayd added that the impact of the book has also been far-reaching in Iran, where ʿAbdarrāziq has been used as a counterargument against Ayatollah Khomeini's concept called *"wilāyat al-faqīh"* ("The political authority of the supreme Islamic jurist"), which, according to Abū Zayd, was influenced by the Sunni Islamism of Abū al-Aʿlā al-Mawdūdī (1903–79), Ḥasan al-Bannā (1906–49) and Sayyid Quṭb (1906–66).[43]

As early as 1933 Charles Adams discussed ʿAbdarrāziq's main theses in English in his above-mentioned "Islam and Modernism in Egypt." Albert Hourani continued where the latter had left off when he dedicated a chapter of his "Arabic

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36 Adams, Charles C. 1968 (1933). *Islam and Modernism in Egypt*. New York: Russell & Russell.

37 Bercher, Léon (1933) ‚L'islam et les bases du pouvoir par ʿAli ʿAbdurraziq (1) [Islam and the Foundations of Rule by ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq (Part 1)]', *Revue des Études Islamiques* (Cahier I, Paris, Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner): 355–91; and: Bercher, Léon (1934) ‚L'islam et les bases du pouvoir par ʿAli ʿAbdurraziq (2) [Islam and the Foundations of Rule by ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq (Part 2)]', *Revue des Études Islamiques* (Cahier II, Paris, Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner): 163–222.

38 Abderraziq, Ali. 1994. *L'islam et les fondements du pouvoir (Islam and the Foundations of Rule)*: Translated by Abdou Filali-Ansary. Paris/Cairo: Éditions La Découverte/ CEDEJ.

39 ʿAbdarrāziq, ʿAlī. 2007. *El Islam y los fundamentos del poder – estudio sobre el Califato y el gobierno en el Islam (Islam and the Foundations of Rule – A Study on the Caliphate and Government in Islam)*: Translated by Juan Antonio Pacheco. Granada: Ed. Univ. de Granada.

40 ʿAbdarrāziq, ʿAlī. 1957. *Islam e le basi del potere (Islam and the Foundations of Power)*: Translated by Ester Panetta. Florence: Sansoni.

41 Ebert, Hans-Georg/Hefny, Assem. 2010. *Der Islam und die Grundlagen der Herrschaft (Islam and the Foundations of Rule)*: Leipziger Beiträge zur Orientforschung. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

42 ʿAbd al-Rāziq, ʿAlī (ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq). 2004. *Islam & dasar pemerintahan – sebuah kajian tentang kedudukan khilafah dan kerajaan dalam Islam*. Kuala Lumpur: Institut Kajian Dasar.

43 See above-mentioned interview with Naṣr Abū Zayd of October 13, 2008.

Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939"[44] to ʿAbdarrāziq's ideas. Leonard Binder contributed an extensive section of his "*Islamic Liberalism – A Critique of Development Ideologies*"[45] to both ʿAbdarrāziq's Islamic Laicism and to the counterarguments of one of his biggest critics, Ḍiāʾaddīn al-Rayyis. In 2009 Souad T. Ali published "A Religion, Not a State – Ali ʿAbd al-Raziqʿs Justification of Political Secularism."[46]

Method and Structure

For the sake of exactness and out of respect for the overwhelming majority of non-Arab Muslims, it must be underlined that this thesis focuses on the debate among a selection of *Arab* Muslims. The main reason for this is that it utilizes the Arabic work *"al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm*" ("Islam and the Foundations of Governance") by ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq (1888–1966) as the starting point of the debate. This thesis uses the method of the "commentary" in order to empower anglophone readers to comprehend and interpret the pros and cons propounded by Arab Islamic thinkers concerning the two concepts "the Islamic state" and "Islamic Laicism." In "Commentaries – Kommentare"[47] Glenn W. Most suggests that what a commentary most essentialIy does is to empower people, even though "some commentaries have been designed consciously and primarily so as to disempower institutions, to silence rivals, and to reduce readers to a feeling of helpless, mute astonishment." Still, a commentary can empower authors by bringing them "back from the exile of having written too long ago and of no Ionger being fully understandable." A commentary can also empower a reader "because it puts materials at his disposal which help him not only to understand that text in ways that the commentator wants him to believe the author to have intended, but also other texts and other matters as weIl, thereby increasing his competence […]." Apart from this introductory chapter ("Islamic State versus Islamic Laicism"), the first part of this book ("Introduction") also includes "ʿAbdarrāziq's Life and the Battle around his Book" and "Classical Political Theory in Islam," where the political

44 Hourani, Albert. 1983 (1962). ,ʿAbduhʿs Egyptian Disciples: Islam and Modern Civilizationʿ in Hourani, Albert (ed) *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939*, Oxford: Cambridge University Press, 161–192.

45 Binder, Leonard. 1988. *Islamic Liberalism – A Critique of Development Ideologies*. Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press.

46 Ali, Souad Tagelsir. 2009. *A Religion, Not a State – Ali ʿAbd al-Raziqʿs Justification of Political Secularism*. Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press.

47 Most, Glenn W. (ed) (1999) *Commentaries – Kommentare*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Page: X–XI.

thoughts of three highly influential thinkers are discussed, namely al-Māwardī (972–1058), Ibn Taymiyah (1263–1328), and Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406). Part Two, which focuses on "ʿAbdarrāziq's Islamic Laicism," starts off with a chapter called "Disempowering the Caliphate," in which the Kemalists' Islamic justification to create a non-political caliphate is contrasted with Rashīd Riḍā's demand to reform but preserve the institution. This debate and the complete abolishment of the caliphate in 1924 constitute the background of the publication of ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq's *"al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm,"* which is summarized in 'The Essence of "Islam and the Foundations of Governance."' The following chapter extracts "Ten Core Statements" and "Four Main Arguments" of the book which are supposed to serve as a thread for the controversy beginning with "The Heated Debate of 1925," i.e. subsequent to the release of the book. Part Two concludes with "ʿAbdarrāziq's Later Views."

The third part, "Critics of ʿAbdarrāziq's Islamic Laicism," opens with a short introduction of "Six Arab Critics of Islamic Laicism" who are Arabs from Egypt, Tunisia, and Syria: Muḥammad al-Bahī (1905–1982), Ḍiyāʾaddīn al-Rayyis (1912–77), Abderrazzak Sanhoury (ʿAbdarrazzāq al-Sanhūrī, 1895–1971), Muḥammad ʿAmārah (born 1931), Muḥammad al-Khiḍr Ḥusayn (1876–1958), and Mamdūḥ Ḥiqqī (1910–2002). What these authors have in common is that they have written books or book sections that are explicitly against ʿAbdarrāziq's Islamic Laicism. Furthermore, these authors represent a wide range between mild and benevolent critics who agree with a lot of ʿAbdarrāziq's arguments, and harsh and hostile critics who tried to refute each one of them. The reasons for their opposition to ʿAbdarrāziq's Islamic Laicism are presented in "Islamist Counterarguments," where the critics attempt to refute the Ten Core Statements of the book. The next chapter deals with their "Rejecting the Main Arguments" of ʿAbdarrāziq's Islamic Laicism. Part Four deals with five later Arab "Supporters of ʿAbdarrāziq's Islamic Laicism," three of whom are (or were) ʿAbdarrāziq's countrymen – Naṣr Abū Zayd (1943–2010), Jamāl al-Bannā (1920–2013), and Faraj Fōdah (1945–92) – while the two others originate from Egypt's neighbor Sudan and its quasi-neighbor Saudi Arabia, namely ʿAbdullāhi al-Naʿīm (born 1946) and Turkī al-Ḥamad (born 1952). Thus, the selection aims at presenting different thinkers who do not all consider themselves direct supporters of ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq's Islamic Laicism. Moreover, it attempts to find a balance between the focus on ʿAbdarrāziq's homeland and broadening the debate from an Egyptian to an Arab one.

The fifth and "Final Part" comprises a chapter that aims to show the lasting significance of "ʿAbdarrāziq's Islamic Laicism in 21st-Century Arabia." The conclusion, "Islamic Laicism for a Better Islam," intends to summarize the main arguments of this work and to reconfirm that Islamic Laicism is directed against

the state's abuse of Islam, not against Islam. Furthermore, the libertarian, egalitarian, and humanistic features in ʿAbdarrāziq's Islamic Laicism have the general potential to contribute to more democracy and social justice. The afterword, entitled "State Power and Moral Principles," adds that state power may corrupt not only Islamic principles but others too.

1.2. ʿAbdarrāziq's Life and the Battle around his Book

> How then, if it had been part of the Messenger's work to found a state, how could he have left the issue of this state unclear for the Muslims, so that the Muslims quickly became confused again after him and started smashing each other's heads! Why did he not address the issue of who was to take over the state after him? This is the first thing ancient and modern state founders have had to deal with! How could he not have left any guidance for the Muslims concerning this! How could he have left them in such confusion and gloom, almost fighting each other while the Messenger's body had not been buried yet?[48]
>
> ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq 1925

ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq's Life (1888–1966)

ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq was born in the Egyptian village of Abū Jirj in the Minya Governorate in 1888.[49] He was the son of notable provincial parents and a rich family of landowners well-known for their commitment to the liberal current of Egypt.[50] ʿAbdarrāziq began his religious studies at al-Azhar University around 1898.[51] Despite remaining at al-Azhar, he also enrolled in Cairo University in 1908 or 1910.[52] In 1911 or 1912 ʿAbdarrāziq graduated from al-Azhar with "the degree of scholarliness" (*al-ʿālimīyah*).[53] He gave lectures on Arabic rhetoric at al-Azhar in 1911–12, i.e. at the end of his studies and before his stay abroad. After studying English in London in 1912–13, ʿAbdarrāziq enrolled in Oxford University to study economics and political science, but the outbreak of World War One forced him to return to Egypt.[54] In 1915 he was appointed judge at the

48 ʿAbdarrāziq (*uṣūl al-ḥukm* 1978): 175 (my own translation).
49 ʿAbdarrāziq/Ḥasan (*uṣūl al-ḥukm* 2012): 31.
50 Abderraziq/Filali-Ansary (les fondements): 9–11.
51 Adams (Modernism in Egypt): 259–60.
52 ʿAmmār ʿAlī Ḥasan writes "1908," and Adams writes "1910." See ʿAbdarrāziq/Ḥasan (*uṣūl al-ḥukm* 2012) p. 31–32 and Adams (Modernism in Egypt) p. 260.
53 Ḥasan writes "1912" and Adams "1911;" see previous footnote.
54 Adams (Modernism in Egypt): 260. See also ʿAbdarrāziq (*uṣūl al-ḥukm* 2012) p. 31–32 and Raḍwān, Fatḥī (Dec. 1966) ,ʿAlī ʿAbdarrāziq wa al-islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm (ʿAlī