

History of Modern Islam in Egypt and the Challenges of Secularization



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ABSTRACT: The history of modern Islam in Egypt is a story of great transformation that combines the heritage of Islamic civilization with contemporary social, political, and cultural dynamics. In this article, we analyse the development of modern Islam in Egypt through two main theoretical frameworks, namely the Historical Theory of Islamic Civilization and the Theory of Islamic Law. Using these two theories, this article seeks to examine how the influence of classical Islamic civilization interacted with the changing times, as well as how Islamic law was understood and applied in a modern context. The study reveals that despite the significant changes that Egypt has undergone, its firmly held Islamic identity remains an important foundation in the country's social and political development.

KEYWORDS: Islamic History, Egypt, Islamic Civilization, Islamic Law, Modern Islam.

I. INTRODUCTION

Egypt, as one of the main centers of Islamic civilization, has a long and dynamic history in the development of Islam. Islam in Egypt not only developed as a religion, but also became a major pillar in forming the country's culture, law, and politics. Since the advent of Islam in the 7th century, Egypt has become the intellectual and religious center of the Islamic world, which has produced many influential scholars and law schools. In the context of modern Islam, Egypt has undergone many changes since the 19th century, especially with the entry of Western influence, colonization, and the Islamic reform movement that began in this period. In this article, The researcher explores how the historical perspective of Islamic civilization and Islamic law, can provide a deeper understanding of the long journey of modern Islam in Egypt.

II. SIGNIFICANT AND METHODS

The study examines how Egypt was the intellectual and religious center of the Islamic world, and its role in shaping the development of modern Islamic thought is crucial. By understanding the history of modern Islam in Egypt, we can explore how the interplay between Islamic tradition and modernity—including secularization, social reform, and politics—developed in the country. This research also helps to map the role of figures such as Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida, and other Islamist groups in shaping a more modern and responsive Islamic worldview to the challenges of the times. This study is also relevant to understanding the socio-political dynamics in Egypt related to the application of Islamic law in the context of a modern and secular state. Therefore, this study will provide new insights into how the debate over the Islamic identity of the state and the application of Islamic sharia is developing, as well as its impact on the Islamic reform movement globally.

Using a literature review method, this research identifies how global cultural shifts, along with Egypt's own historical transformations, have influenced the way Islamic law is perceived and applied. By tracing the intellectual history and legal reforms in modern Egypt, this study aims to illuminate how Islamic law has adapted to the demands of modern governance, the rise of secular institutions, and the challenges of global interconnectedness.

III. DISCUSSION

A. *The Development of Modern Islam in Egypt in the Historical Perspective of Islamic Civilization*

The Historical Perspective of Islamic civilization provides an understanding of the evolution of Islamic civilization, in which there is an interaction between culture, science, and religion. Islam in Egypt, which initially developed under the Fatimid and Mamluk

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dynasties, underwent significant transformations in modern times, especially with the advent of social and intellectual reforms. Since the 19th century, Egypt has been at the center of socio-political change, triggered by the reform movement spearheaded by figures such as Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida. The movement aims to integrate modern thinking with Islamic traditions, resulting in a new interpretation of Islamic teachings in the face of the challenges of the times¹².

Since the 19th century, Egypt has undergone major transformations influenced by socio-political changes, one of which was triggered by reform efforts spearheaded by figures such as **Muhammad Abduh** and **Rashid Rida**³. The reform aims to integrate modern thinking with Islamic traditions, creating new interpretations of Islamic teachings to meet the challenges of modern times. This process involves not only intellectual aspects, but also broader social, political, and economic dynamics.

In the 19th century, Egypt was in a very dynamic state. At that time, Egypt became part of the Ottoman Empire but was increasingly influenced by Western colonial powers, especially Britain and France. Under the reign of Muhammad Ali Pasha (1805–1848)⁴, Egypt underwent modernization in various sectors, such as the military, economy, and education, although it remained within the framework of authoritarian power. However, the deepening Western influence of this period led to tensions between Islamic traditions and secular Western values, which later became the catalyst for the reform movement in the 19th century⁵. **The reform movement** aims to build a synthesis between Islamic values and Western intellectual and technological advancement. This is because reformers feel that Muslims must be able to adapt to the progress of the times without losing their religious identity. These reforms not only focused on the theological aspect but also touched on the different social and political dimensions within Egyptian society.

1. The Role of Muhammad Abduh

Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905) is one of the main figures who explored the relationship between Islam and modernity. Born in Egypt, Abduh studied traditional Islamic education and was later influenced by Western ideas after studying in Europe. He sees that Muslims must strive to reform Islamic teachings in order to face the changing times⁶. Abduh has a belief that **Islam is not a static religion**. In his thinking, Islam provides space for rational and contextual thinking. One of Abduh's major contributions is in the field of **ijtihad** (reinterpretation of Islamic law) which is considered to need to be updated in order to adapt to the times. Abduh emphasized the importance of **using reason** in understanding Islam's holy texts, and called for a separation between religion and authoritarian political power. He also emphasized the importance of **education** in advancing Muslims, especially education that combines religious teachings with modern science.

For example, in his famous work **entitled "Risalah al-Tawhid"** (1901), Abduh explained that Islam is a religion that teaches a rational monotheism that is acceptable to common sense⁷. In this context, he seeks to respond to Western criticism of Islam by showing that Islam is in line with the principles of rationality. Abduh also played a role in the renewal of **fatwas** (Islamic legal opinions), by proposing that the existing fatwas should be more flexible and dynamic, as well as in accordance with the needs and context of the society at that time. He believed that a return to the **main principles of Islamic teachings** (such as the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith) could provide a way out of the stagnation that plagued the Islamic world.

2. Rashid Rida and Abduh's Continued Thinking

Rashid Rida (1865–1935), a disciple and loyal follower of Abduh, continued and developed his teacher's thinking in a broader context. Although there are some differences in their approach, Rida emphasizes the importance of **applying Islamic sharia** as the legal basis of the state and society, which in his view can overcome the problem of Muslims being backward compared to the Western world⁸. Rida was also more critical of the influence of Western colonialism and saw it as a threat that needed to be faced by rebuilding the intellectual and political power of Muslims. He argued that Muslims should return to **pure Islam**, but within a more modern framework and open to science and technology. Through his main work, **"Al-Manar"** (a magazine he founded in 1898), Rida introduced reformist ideas that tried to strike a balance between tradition and modernity. One of his important

¹ History of Development and others, 'History of the Development of Islamic Civilization in Egypt', *Rihlah: Journal of History and Culture*, 2.01 (2015), pp. 69–74, doi:10.24252/RIHLAH.V2I01.1361.

² Sadhriyani Pertiwi Saleh and others, 'INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS Digital Da'wah Transformation: Cultural and Methodological Change of Islamic Communication in the Current Digital Age', doi:10.47191/ijmra/v5-i8-18.

³ Nurlaelah Abbas, 'Muhammad Abduh : Konsep Rasionalisme Dalam Islam', *Jurnal Dakwah Tabligh*, 15.1 (2014).

⁴ Srianti Permata and others, 'MUHAMMAD ALI PASHA DAN IDE PEMBAHARUANNYA DI MESIR', *Jurnal Al-Mubarak: Jurnal Kajian Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir*, 8.1 (2023), doi:10.47435/al-mubarak.v8i1.2156.

⁵ Mehmet Ozan Aşik and Aykan Erdemir, 'Westernization as Cultural Trauma: Egyptian Radical Islamist Discourse on Religious Education', *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 9.25 (2010).

⁶ Abbas, 'Muhammad Abduh : Konsep Rasionalisme Dalam Islam'.

⁷ D. V. Mukhetdinov, 'The Reception of Egyptian Modernism in Indonesia: Harun Nasution on Theology of Muhammad Abduh', *Islam in the Modern World*, 16.3 (2020), doi:10.22311/2074-1529-2020-16-3-49-64.

⁸ Ahmad nabil Amir, 'The Influence of Abduh's Principle On Rashid Rida', *Minhaj: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah*, 1.2 (2020), doi:10.52431/minhaj.v1i2.266; Eliezer Tauber, 'Rashid Riḍā, Jews, and Zionism', *Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 12.4 (2021), doi:10.1080/21520844.2021.1938451.

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thoughts is about the implementation of a more just Islamic system of government, which prioritizes the principles of shura (deliberation) and social justice but is still based on Islamic teachings⁹.

3. Contributions to Modern Islamic Thought

The reform movement initiated by Abduh and Rida made a very important contribution to **modern Islamic thought**, both in Egypt and in the Islamic world as a whole. They put forward the idea that Islam should be understood as a religion that is relevant to the development of the times and can provide solutions to the socio-political problems faced by Muslims¹⁰. Their thinking leads to a **renewal of understanding of Islamic teachings** that is more rational and flexible and invites Muslims not to be trapped in forms of traditionalism that can hinder progress. This became the foundation for many subsequent Islamic reform movements, such as **the Salafi Movement, the Muslim Brotherhood**, and other Islamist movements that emerged in the 20th century¹¹. However, while this movement was highly influential, not all of their ideas were widely accepted, especially among conservative groups who felt that these reforms could undermine the traditional authority of the ulema and established sharia principles.

B. Modern Islam in Egypt in the Perspective of Islamic Law

Islamic law (fiqh) has a central role in understanding the legal system in modern Egypt, both in the context of colonial and post-colonial history. Fiqh—as a legal discipline based on Islamic teachings—has gone through various developmental processes influenced by the social, political, and cultural changes that occurred in Egypt, especially during the colonial and post-colonial periods. The influence of Islamic law in daily life, although it was influenced by the secularization and application of the Western legal system, still shows its relevance in certain aspects such as inheritance, marriage, and divorce.

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1. The Influence of Islamic Law on the Era of the Muhammad Ali Dynasty

During the **Muhammad Ali Dynasty** (1805–1952), which was an important period in the formation of modern Egypt, the country began to adopt a more secular Western legal system but did not completely ignore Islamic law¹². **Muhammad Ali Pasha**, the first ruler of this dynasty, carried out major reforms in various sectors, including in the field of law. Under the leadership of Muhammad Ali, Egypt tried to combine elements of Western law with the established tradition of Islamic law. However, **fiqh** remains an integral part of the regulation of family, inheritance, and personal status issues, which cannot be completely separated from Islamic law.

During this period, Egypt began to introduce a more secular legal system, especially after introducing **modernization policies** inspired by Western countries¹³. This legal system was designed to strengthen the country's control and modernize Egypt's economy and society. However, in many ways, the legal system that governs personal affairs still refers to **fiqh**, especially in the context of **inheritance** (Islamic inheritance law), **marriage** (including polygamy and women's rights in marriage), and **divorce**. Despite efforts to introduce secular elements in law, Islamic law still plays an important role in the daily lives of society¹⁴.

2. The 1923 Constitution: Islam as the State Religion and the Influence of Sharia

After Egypt gained independence from Britain in 1922, the country's first constitution was passed in 1923¹⁵. In the **1923 Constitution**, **Islam** is affirmed as the state religion, and **Islamic sharia** is used as the source of state law. The first article of this constitution states that "Islam is the state religion, and Arabic is the official language of the state". This reflects the strong influence of Islamic law in the structure of the modern Egyptian state, although at that time there were attempts to separate religious affairs from government affairs through the adoption of Western law in the judicial system.

⁹ Ihsan Nurmansyah, 'KAJIAN INTERTEKSTUALITAS TAFSIR AYAT ASH-SHIYAM KARYA MUHAMMAD BASIUNI IMRAN DAN TAFSIR AL-MANAR KARYA MUHAMMAD RASYID RIDHA', *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir*, 4.1 (2019), doi:10.15575/al-bayan.v4i1.4792; Amir, 'The Influence of Abduh's Principle On Rashid Rida'.

¹⁰ Liat Kozma, 'Omnia El Shakry, The Arabic Freud: Psychoanalysis and Islam in Modern Egypt', *Psychoanalysis and History*, 20.2 (2018), doi:10.3366/pah.2018.0263.

¹¹ B S Nuswantoro, 'The Cooperation of Ikhwanul Muslimin and Salafi In The Establish of Islamic Country In Egypt In The Post Revolution', *Lantip: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ekonomi ...*, 2016.

¹² Yelmi Eri Firdaus, Elfia Elfia, and Meirison Meirison, 'RISE AND FALL OF MAMLUK SULTANATE: The Struggle Against Mongols and Crusaders in Holy War', *Al-Adyan: Journal of Religious Studies*, 1.1 (2020), doi:10.15548/al-adyan.v1i1.1713.

¹³ Cici Cahyani Cici and Banu Irfan, 'History of Islamic Education in the Modernization Era of Egypt', *HISTORICAL: Journal of History and Social Sciences*, 1.1 (2022), doi:10.58355/historical.v1i1.29.

¹⁴ Isaac Friesen, 'Flexible States in History: Rethinking Secularism, Violence, and Centralized Power in Modern Egypt', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 66.2 (2024), doi:10.1017/S0010417523000452.

¹⁵ Relli Shechter, 'The 1923 Egyptian Constitution – Vision and Ambivalence in the Future of Education in Egypt', *History of Education*, 48.5 (2019), doi:10.1080/0046760X.2019.1628312.

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At that time, despite the desire to uphold Islamic law as the basis of the state, Egypt's political reality, influenced by **colonial political** interests and disapproval from secular circles and non-Muslim minorities, made the application of Islamic law not fully implemented in the socio-political aspects of the state. Islamic law is only applied more to personal matters, as mentioned earlier, but does not regulate the overall aspect of state life¹⁶.

3. Post-Revolution Secularization of 1952 and the Gamal Abdel Nasser Era

After the **1952 Egyptian Revolution**, which overthrew the monarchy and established the Republic of Egypt under **Gamal Abdel Nasser**, there was a significant change in the political and social direction of the country. Nasser introduced a **deeper secularization** in the social life and law of the state. **The legal and social reforms** introduced by Nasser aimed to modernize the Egyptian state and reduce the role of religion in public life, which had previously been strong during the Muhammad Ali Dynasty. One of Nasser's important steps in **the secularization of law** was to introduce a **more modern secular legal system**, which replaced many aspects of **fiqh** in the context of the state. Egypt adopted a **civil law code** inspired by the French legal system, replacing **traditional fiqh** in many aspects of life. This creates tensions between **Islamist** groups who want a wider application of **Islamic law** and secular groups who push for the separation of the state from religion¹⁷.

Although Nasser reduced the influence of Islamic law in the life of the state, he still maintained some Islamic principles in certain aspects. For example, although the secular legal system was introduced in general affairs, Islamic law is still applied to family and **inheritance** matters, where **fiqh** is still used as the basis for the regulation of inheritance rights, divorce, and marriage. However, in this context, Islamic law is only applied in the **personal domain** and does not affect the legal structure of the state as a whole.

4. The Role of Islamic Law in the Modern Context: Challenges and Developments

Nowadays, the **debate about the application of Islamic law** in Egypt continues, with the emergence of **Islamist movements** urging the application of **Islamic law** as the basis of state law. These groups, such as the **Muslim Brotherhood** and other Islamist groups, argue that Egypt should return to **the principles of fiqh** in designing the country's legal system. They want Islamic law to be applied more widely in political and social life, and not just limited to personal matters¹⁸.

However, despite these demands, the application of Islamic law in the modern Egyptian legal system faces a number of **obstacles** and **challenges**. Some of the factors that influence this dynamic are: **Social Plurality and Diversity of Society**, Egypt is a country with a predominantly Muslim population, but it also has a significant **Coptic Christian** group. The harsher application of Islamic law risks creating tensions between religious groups, as well as creating inequality for **women** and **minority groups**; **Secularism and Modernity**¹⁹. Since the Nasser era, Egypt has increasingly leaned towards secularism in political and social life. The concept of **state secularism** has become more and more solid, along with the influence of globalization and technological advances that demand a more universal and adaptive legal system to the changing times; **Military Politics, and Western Interests**²⁰. Since **July 2013**, Egypt has been under the government of **Abdel Fattah el-Sisi** who sees the importance of maintaining **national stability** through a more **authoritarian** and secular government²¹. On the other hand, Egypt also has to face **Western influence**, which demands the application of the principles of secularism and human rights in the life of the state; **Difficulties in Implementing Sharia in a Modern Context** Although some elements of **sharia** have been applied in the field of **the family**, such as inheritance and marriage law, **the broader sharia**—especially in criminal and political aspects—still faces major challenges. Discussions about **social justice** and **human rights** are often at odds with the harsher application of Islamic law²².

The perspective of Islamic law or **fiqh** also plays an important role in understanding how law is applied in modern Egyptian society. In this context, we see how Islamic law has developed influenced by the social and political changes that occurred in Egypt, both in the colonial and post-colonial periods. During the Muhammad Ali Dynasty (1805-1952), Egypt began to adopt a Western legal system that separated religious law from secular law. However, despite this, Islamic law is still applied in several areas of life, such as inheritance, marriage, and divorce, which are mostly governed by **fiqh**. In addition, the influence of Islamic law is seen in the

¹⁶ Friesen, 'Flexible States in History: Rethinking Secularism, Violence, and Centralized Power in Modern Egypt'; Johanna Pink, 'The Concept of Freedom of Belief and Its Boundaries in Egypt: The Jehovah's Witnesses and the Baha'i Faith Between Established Religions and An Authoritarian State', *Culture and Religion*, 6.1 (2005), doi:10.1080/01438300500071422.

¹⁷ Pink, 'The Concept of Freedom of Belief and Its Boundaries in Egypt: The Jehovah's Witnesses and the Baha'i Faith Between Established Religions and An Authoritarian State'.

¹⁸ 'Ikhwanul Muslimin Policy on Halal Tourism in Arab Republic of Egypt', 2018, doi:10.17758/erpub2.er0718407; Rusydi Sulaiman, 'Ikhwanul Muslimin Dan Politik Kenegaraan Mesir', *Madania*, 18.2 (2014); Márcia De Paiva Fernandes and Frederico Normanha Ribeiro De Almeida, 'Egypt between Islam and Liberalism: The Constitutional Trajectory of a Hybrid State', *Sociedade e Cultura*, 2018, doi:10.5216/sec.v21i1.54926.

¹⁹ Sevki Kiralp, 'Cyprus's Relations with Egypt and Israel during the Makarios Era: Influence of Regional Disputes, Economy, Socio-Cultural Interactions and UN Debates', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 59.3 (2023), doi:10.1080/00263206.2022.2110078.

²⁰ Kiralp, 'Cyprus's Relations with Egypt and Israel during the Makarios Era: Influence of Regional Disputes, Economy, Socio-Cultural Interactions and UN Debates'.

²¹ Mozes Adiguna Setiyono, 'From Pan-Arabism to Pharaonism: Egypt's Gradual Change of National Identity during the Sisi Era', *Jurnal Global Strategis*, 17.2 (2023), doi:10.20473/jgs.17.2.2023.307-326.

²² De Paiva Fernandes and De Almeida, 'Egypt between Islam and Liberalism: The Constitutional Trajectory of a Hybrid State'.

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Egyptian constitution which was first passed in 1923, which emphasizes that Islam is the state religion and Islamic sharia must be the source of state law.

However, the application of Islamic law in the modern legal system in Egypt has not been smooth. Along with political and social changes, especially after the 1952 revolution and the establishment of the Republic of Egypt, the country's laws underwent further secularization. Egypt, under the government of President Gamal Abdel Nasser, introduced social and legal reforms that emphasized secularism, which introduced challenges to the application of Islamic law in daily life.

C. Modern Islam and the Challenges of Secularization in Egypt

Modern Egypt faces major challenges related to secularization, especially in the long debate between secular and Islamist circles about the role of religion, especially Islam, in state life. Although the country adopted a secular system after independence from Britain in 1952, various Islamic groups, especially the **Muslim Brotherhood**, continued to fight for the application of Islamic law as the basis of the state²³. This debate reached its peak after the **2011 Egyptian Revolution**²⁴, which not only overthrew the authoritarian regime of Hosni Mubarak but also revived the discourse on the Islamic identity of the country and the application of sharia in a modern framework. In this analysis, I will explore how these challenges emerged, their relevance and impact on contemporary Egyptian socio-political developments, as well as the obstacles faced in applying Islamic law in the modern state.

After Egypt's independence from Britain in 1952, the country adopted a secular system, which is reflected in its constitution, government policies, and social life. **The influence of Gamal Abdel Nasser**, the first president after the military revolution that overthrew the monarchy, was enormous in shaping the direction of the secularism of the Egyptian state²⁵. Nasser created a state that promoted Arab nationalism, modernity, and economic development, with **an emphasis on secularism** in aspects of public life. This concept was further strengthened after the formation of **the Arab Republic of Egypt** which emphasized more on social justice and a government free from religious domination in the state structure.

However, tensions between secularization and Islamic values have emerged consistently since that time, especially with **the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood** in the Nasser era. This movement fought to make Islamic law the basis of the state. The Muslim Brotherhood, which was banned during Nasser's time, continued to operate in secrecy and continued to fight for the Islamization of the country. Thinking that **sharia** is not only a matter of personal aspects, but must also encompass all of social, political, and legal life, the Muslim Brotherhood seeks to build an alternative to the secular system that they consider to be failing to meet the needs of Muslims²⁶.

The 2011 Egyptian revolution, sparked by **pro-democracy movements** and dissatisfaction with **Hosni Mubarak's** government, not only toppled a dictator but also revived a deep debate about **the country's identity** and **the role of Islam in government**. After Mubarak's resignation, the Muslim Brotherhood, which played a major role in the revolutionary movement, seized the opportunity and won the **2012 presidential election**, with **Mohamed Morsi** of the Muslim Brotherhood elected president²⁷. Morsi is trying to implement more **Islamic elements in his government policies**, including in terms of **law** and **governance**. Morsi pushed for the inclusion of Islamic principles in Egypt's **2012 Constitution**, which drew massive protests from secular groups and non-Muslim minorities. Part of the constitution states that the state must operate by **sharia** principles, although it does not explicitly mention that Sharia will be **the only** legal basis of the state²⁸. This debate is heating up because **the application of sharia in law** creates tension with those who want a more secular state, which is more separate between religion and the state. These tensions created a sharp **social divide** in Egypt between those who support the wider implementation of sharia and those who struggle to maintain the secular system. **Secular groups** that prioritize **liberalism** and **pluralism** consider that the state should prioritize individual freedom and human rights without religious interference.

1. The Overthrow of Morsi and Military Resistance

Tensions between Islamist and secular groups reached a peak with the **overthrow of Mohamed Morsi** by the military in **July 2013**²⁹, after mass protests demanding his resignation. This reflects that although Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood managed to gain power through democratic means, they failed to build consensus with secular, military, and even mostly **moderate**

²³ Sulaiman, 'Ikhwanul Muslimin Dan Politik Kenegaraan Mesir'.

²⁴ Onook Oh, Chanyoung Eom, and H. R. Rao, 'Role of Social Media in Social Change: An Analysis of Collective Sense Making during the 2011 Egypt Revolution', *Information Systems Research*, 26.1 (2015), doi:10.1287/isre.2015.0565.

²⁵ Menna M. Imam, Ali F. Bakr, and Yousry M. Anany, 'Use of Freehand Sketching: Documenting Heritage Buildings, Gamal Abdel Nasser Street (1830–1930), Alexandria, Egypt', *Alexandria Engineering Journal*, 55.3 (2016), doi:10.1016/j.aej.2016.04.034.

²⁶ 'Ikhwanul Muslimin Policy on Halal Tourism in Arab Republic of Egypt'.

²⁷ Oh, Eom, and Rao, 'Role of Social Media in Social Change: An Analysis of Collective Sense Making during the 2011 Egypt Revolution'.

²⁸ Farhad Hassan Abdullah, 'Revolution in Egypt: Political Movements and Mobilisation of Resources', *Insight on Africa*, 12.1 (2020), doi:10.1177/0975087819848914.

²⁹ Amira Abdelhamid, 'Contested Legitimacies: Repression and Revolt in Post-Revolutionary Egypt', *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews*, 52.4 (2023), doi:10.1177/00943061231181317o.

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Islamists. The Islamization process led by Morsi led to widespread discontent, particularly because secular groups and non-Muslim minorities felt threatened by policies that were considered to lead to **Islamist** dictatorship.

The return of **Abdel Fattah el-Sisi** (the military commander who overthrew Morsi) to power after the revolution returned Egypt to the **path of authoritarian rule**³⁰. El-Sisi views the importance of maintaining **state secularism** as a political foundation to maintain national stability. However, despite his opposition to Islamization policies, his government still faces challenges in establishing a balance between religion and the state in Egypt. **The application of Islamic law** in society remains a complex issue because although Egypt has a **sharia assembly** and applies some sharia principles in **family law** (such as divorce and inheritance), many aspects of the country's law are still governed by the secular system.

2. **Obstacles to the Application of Islamic Law in the Modern Context**

The application of Islamic law in the modern context of Egypt faces several significant obstacles³¹: First, **Social Plurality and Community Diversity**. Egypt is a country with a majority Muslim population, but it also has a significant Coptic Christian group. The application of harsher Islamic law, as proposed by some Islamist groups, risks creating inequality and tension between religious groups; Second, **Criticism of Islamic Democracy and Sharia The stricter application of Islamic law, as desired by the Muslim Brotherhood, is often opposed by those who are more on the side of secular democratic values and human rights**. The group argues that sharia cannot be applied absolutely in the context of a modern state that requires **legal pluralism**; Third, **Military Politics and Submission to Western Interests**. Egypt, under military rule, often faces **Western influence**, particularly in the **economic and political** spheres. This dependence creates a dilemma between maintaining good relations with Western countries that encourage secularism and serving the wishes of the majority of society who support the application of Islamic values in state law.

The study finds that modern Egypt faces major challenges in terms of secularization, especially with differing views between secular and Islamist circles regarding the role of Islam in the state³². Although Egypt adopted a secular system after independence from Britain in 1952, many Islamic groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, struggled to make Islamic law the basis of state law. This debate reached its peak after the 2011 Egyptian revolution, which brought further tensions between secular and Islamist groups in determining the direction of the Egyptian state.

The 2011 Egyptian Revolution marked a turning point in Egypt's political history, which not only challenged the authoritarian regime but also revived the debate over the state's Islamic identity and the application of Islamic law³³. Although Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood managed to occupy the seat of power, resistance from secular and military groups caused tensions and eventually overthrew their governments. This struggle shows that although Islamic law has an important place in Egyptian society, the application of Islamic law in the modern context faces various social and political obstacles.

IV. CONCLUSION

In the 19th century, Egypt experienced a reform movement spearheaded by figures such as **Muhammad Abduh** and **Rashid Rida**, who sought to integrate modern thinking with the teachings of Islam. They produced a new interpretation of Islam that, despite facing criticism, made an important contribution to modern Islamic thought. These reforms also affected the role of **fiqh** in Egyptian law, where although a secular legal system was introduced, Islamic law still played a significant role, especially in personal matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance.

Modern Egypt is caught in a debate between secularization and Islamization, which is reflected in the **2012 Constitution** and tensions between secular and Islamist groups. Egypt adopted a secular system after the revolution, but the debate over the application of Islamic law remains strong. **The Muslim Brotherhood** briefly seized power in 2012, but it failed to build a consensus with secular groups and was eventually ousted. **The application of Islamic law** in Egypt faces major obstacles, including **social pluralism, tensions between groups, and military intervention** that hinders political and social reforms. Overall, Egypt continues to face challenges in aligning **the country's Islamic identity** with the needs of modernity and secularism. The debate on the application of Islamic law will continue to be an important issue affecting the political and social direction of the country.

³⁰ P. Ignatiev, 'EGYPT UNDER THE RULE OF ABDEL FATTAH EL-SISI: INTERNAL CHALLENGES', *ACTUAL PROBLEMS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*, 132, 2017, doi:10.17721/apmv.2017.132.0.4-17.

³¹ Baudouin Dupret, 'Legal Pluralism, Normative Plurality, and the Arab World', in *Legal Pluralism in the Arab World*, 2023, doi:10.1163/9789004416628_007.

³² Robert Stilling, 'Claiming Modernity in Egypt: Decadent Orientalism and Mayy Ziyādah's Fleurs de Rêve', *Feminist Modernist Studies*, 4.2 (2021), doi:10.1080/24692921.2021.1950471.

³³ Abdelhamid, 'Contested Legitimacies: Repression and Revolt in Post-Revolutionary Egypt'.

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