JRAI Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute

Civilizing Muslim youth: Egyptian state culture programmes and Islamic television preachers

Jessica Winegar *Northwestern University*

This article explores the similarities and differences between artist and Islamic preacher discourses on art, culture, and youth in Mubarak-era Egypt in order to highlight the utility and limitations of current anthropological discussions of secularism and religious discursive traditions. By focusing on the shared civilizing and transformative associations of youth, art, and religion, it argues that there is an ingraining of Islamic civilizing traditions into modern governance and vice versa. Furthermore, explaining this phenomenon of ingraining requires that we give more attention to social class and geographical location, nationalism, global and national political-economic shifts, and the complicated ways that globally circulating discourses become entangled.

During the tenure of now deposed Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian government greatly expanded its youth cultural programmes at the same time that it adopted neoliberal economic policies. The Ministry of Culture built dozens of cultural institutions that featured youth programming, sponsored arts workshops and competitions for youth of varying ages, and played a large role in launching new youth libraries and book series. The central government allotted millions of Egyptian pounds for these projects as part of a larger expansion of the cultural realm, which organizers often described as a project of *tanwir* (enlightenment). Through these programs, state officials – many of whom were secular-oriented Muslims[1] and/or self-defined secularists (*ʿalmaniyyin*) – married a specific definition of national culture to particular notions of high/refined culture. The programmes, directed mainly by middle-class urbanites, promoted the arts as defining of the nation, of which Islam is one aspect among many, and they had the explicit goal of *tathqif* – cultural cultivation[2] – a concept that has a significant civilizing component.

Meanwhile, a group of religious intellectuals who had coalesced in the early 1980s around what came to be known as Islamic centrism (*al-wasatiyya*) also began, in the early 1990s, to speak more frequently about the positive value of art in an Islamic society (Baker 2003). Then, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, a few years after the state's youth enlightenment project began, a new group of satellite television preachers emerged who also directed their broadcasts to young people (on television, the

Internet, and in other venues). In recognizably upper-middle-class styles and modes of address, they lectured to young men and women on the importance of art and culture in creating an Islamic community and becoming closer to God. These 'callers to the faith' (*duʿat*), especially Amr Khaled and Moez Masoud, also used civilizing discourses in their calls for making more art in order to define the *umma* and raise the cultural level of Muslims. The rise of these preachers provoked considerable ridicule among many state cultural elites, and Egypt's literati more generally, who viewed them as the equivalent of snake oil salesmen, despite their similar views on art and youth.

The emergence of these two phenomena in Egypt raises a set of questions relevant to broader anthropological thinking on secularism, religion, the nation-state, and capitalism – which a focus on youth, and on art as a civilizing project, can illuminate. To what extent are the categories of the secular and religious ethnographically or analytically significant when people view themselves as opposed to one another on secular/religious grounds yet also appear to hold the same views on a central issue and frequently invoke the same aspects of a religious tradition to justify it? What might be gained or lost by foregrounding anthropological theories of the secular, or of religious discursive traditions, in understanding such complexities of lived experience, or of the state as a form of modern power? What if we widen the scope to take more seriously how this experience shapes and is shaped by political-economic configurations specific to one institution within a complex state apparatus? By nationalist ideology? By global discourse circulations enabled by particular communications technologies? And by a specific era of rapidly rising income inequality with neoliberalism?

We can attain a new perspective on these questions by viewing them through the lens of art and youth. In Egypt as in many societies, the arts are often viewed, along with religion, as having transformative potential, of having redemptive and/or salvational properties. In the modern period especially, art and religion have also become primary means of critiquing, embracing, and managing the outcomes of worldly pressures – particularly those of capitalism. Yet, in some modernist-secular formulations, art is supposed to replace, excise, or critique religion. Thus, art and religion are both given civilizing and transformative qualities, yet are sometimes opposed to one another in secular imaginaries. These civilizing and transformative qualities, then, make art and/or religion key to many projects to educate youth around the globe, and to inculcate them into certain communities. Often in this process, art and religion are made to represent a social collective – be it a nation, a social class, a group of practitioners such as the Islamic *umma*, and so on. Furthermore, the role of the state and of capital in matters of both art and religion is the subject of some of the most intense debates in social life, in Egypt as elsewhere. For example, should artistic or religious practice be influenced by the state? By monetary interests? Because of art's similarities to and tensions with religion, then, it provides a unique perspective on the question of how the categories of the secular and religious are constituted in relationship to each other and to the state and capitalism. This perspective, especially when considered in relationship to youth, also helps us better assess the utility of a focus on the secular as an analytic.

The anthropological literature on secularism and religious discursive traditions is by now a cottage 'industry' (Starrett 2010), and some of the most influential theorizing on the topic (and its relationship to Islam) is by Egypt scholars strongly influenced by the work of Talal Asad (Agrama 2012; Asad 2003; Hirschkind 2006; 2011; Mahmood 2005; 2006). The major criticisms of some of this work are that it tends to be ethnographically thin; takes a group of urban, largely middle-class aspirants to piety as representative of a whole; ignores the multiple, often contradictory, moral registers and desires that shape people's everyday lives; gives the impression that secularism is declining in value for Egyptians or that the state is defined by its secular-liberal governance; reinforces East/West dichotomies; generalizes or ignores the state apparatus; and de-emphasizes political economy (e.g. Bangstad 2009; Hafez 2011; Schielke 2010; Starrett 2010). This article suggests new avenues to address some of these shortcomings by directly comparing and contrasting the discourses of self-identified secularists (and/or 'secular-oriented' artists) with those of Muslim preachers in a range of programmes which might, from a secular imaginary, be viewed as opposed to one another: the Egyptian Ministry of Culture's main visual art programme for youth, an annual exhibition and competition held since 1989; the curriculum and views of professors at state art colleges; the lecture on art and culture in Amr Khaled's extremely popular *Life makers* (*Sunna' al-hayat*) television series (2004-2005), interviews he has given to the press, and his Facebook activity; and Moez Masoud's lecture on art in his television series *The right path* (*Al-tariq al-sah*, 2007) as well as his writings and interviews. By highlighting the similar civilizing associations made between art and religion in institutionally and socially distinct programmes directed towards youth, this article shows new utility for the Asadian analytic. Yet the focus on civilizing processes also suggests precisely why it might be limited with regard to political economy, generation, and geography (within Egypt, between 'East' and 'West').

Close examination of these sources reveals several insights. First, religious discourses on art are both 'entwined with' and 'counterpoised to' those of the nation-state, much as Hirschkind (2006) has documented for 'practices, languages, and techniques of ethical listening' in Egypt. Yet this is not all. The 'entwining', I suggest, has been socially compelling precisely because of the strong civilizing and transformative possibilities of art and religion, particularly for youth, in nationalist imaginaries. These have taken a particular form in the era of structural adjustment, when rising inequality poses a challenge to the euphoric nationalist ideology at the time of independence. And the 'counterpoising' arises when the proper place of religion in art-making and nation-making is contested, especially when those doing the contesting *self-identify* as secularist (*'almani*) or religious (*mutadayyin*). As Agrama (2012) has argued, this contested and ongoing question of the relationship between religion and politics is key to the power of secularism itself, as well as to the modern state.

Yet while there is value in describing, or tracing, discourses as emanating from modern-secular power formations or from religious traditions, it is also important to recognize that such discourses, and the forms of power they help constitute, often become so entangled that finding an origin for them, and/or separating them out and naming them 'secular' or 'religious', occludes major complexities of social life, institutional power formation, and global discourse circulation. In a way, then, the question of whether or not the state is defined and enabled primarily by modern-secular power, and challenging the normative premises of that question (Agrama 2012; Mahmood 2005; Scott & Hirschkind 2006; Starrett 1998), may unintentionally limit the scope of our analysis. Certainly, one aspect of the modern-secular power exerted by the state is that it discursively defines what constitutes legitimate religious practice and thought, as we see in the material here. On the other hand, as we will also see, there are many other dimensions and sources of its power. Starrett has suggested that the 'usefulness' of the secular 'as an analytic concept is deeply suspect' because it is always tied to a normative framework (2010: 628). Even if we take care not to collapse normative and analytic uses of the term, as Agrama advises (2012), the second we use it as an analytic label, as so much of the good work on secularism does, we are parsing out complex entanglements and associating values to them.

A focus on the civilizing potentialities of art and youth does show how the overlaps between the cultural sectors of the Mubarak state and preacher discourse on art are a particularly powerful instance of what Salvatore calls the 'ingraining' of civilizing Muslim traditions 'into modern mechanisms of social governance' (2001: 11), as well as the ingraining of civilizing mechanisms of modern governance into contemporary Muslim traditions. As the work of Salvatore (2001), Gasper (2009), and Schielke (2007) suggests, this ingraining of civilizing processes dates to the turn of the twentieth century for cultural institutions and discourses, and arguably back (at least) to the Muhammad Ali period in the nineteenth century. For our purposes, this historical ingraining is perhaps best represented by the moment in 1907 when the Islamic modernist Muhammad ʿAbduh wrote a *fatwa* supporting the establishment of a royal college of fine arts in Cairo partly on the basis of his view, shared by Prince Kamal along with European educators and bohemian Egyptian artists, that art was 'one of the best tools for learning' (cited in Rida 2006 [1931]: 501).[3] Was this view 'firmly grounded in the Islamic discursive tradition', as Haj argues his reform project was (2009: 71)? Can we also see it as intertwined with the discursive tradition of nation-states seeking to modernize by building schools and art museums? Here, even the origin story of modern art in Egypt defies state/non-state, secular/religious, East/West binaries. ʿAbduh's view, and the complex intertwining of different genealogies of thought it reflects, is repeated 100 years later by secular-oriented state employees as well as Islamist preachers working in a new private sector of satellite media. Thus, we can hardly, a priori and with little regard for the complexity of social life, designate a certain discourse as originating solely from a particular tradition, social group, ideology, institution, or geographical location.

Instead, it might be more productive to ask why, in the later Mubarak era, there was a renewed but noticeably increased focus on the value of art for the nation and for young people, and a striking confluence of what some scholars might describe as modernizing state and Islamic civilizing discourses on the matter. Even if these discourses were always imbricated, that does not mean that the pro-art aspects of them were always prominent across different time periods in particular institutional locations. Furthermore, those who produce such discourses do not always recognize the imbrication because they see themselves (and experience their lives) as socially, institutionally, and ideologically distinct from others for a variety of reasons that we must take seriously. This is a critical ethnographic point, which is not always captured by an analytic scope that focuses on the religious/secular question. So, does this confluence indicate that models of culture dominant in parts of the state apparatus in a particular period spread into circles of religious leadership where pro-art discourses had not been dominant for some time? And/or does it indicate a more public and concentrated acknowledgement (and perhaps embrace) of Islamic ideals within state cultural institutions, which arts leaders have typically fashioned as the last bastions of secularism? Perhaps we should look into additional causes for this confluence.

To be sure, it is extremely important to recognize that there are important differences between (and within) the two sets of civilizing discourses on art (*al-fann*) and culture (*al-thaqafa*) emanating from socially distinct sites. First, in no way should the preachers be taken as representative of the entire Islamic field's discourses on art in Egypt, nor should we think that everyone in the Ministry of Culture (or in other state institutions) shares the arts leaders' views on religion. Furthermore, the specific groups I discuss here imagined some quite different outcomes for their arts and culture projects. Preachers participated in *daʿwa*, the active calling of believers to the faith, and they wanted their listeners to participate in the *daʿwa* as well by calling on their friends to become better Muslims. Arts leaders, on the other hand, did not view their discourses on art and religion as intended to call people to the faith. Many of them were disinterested in whether or not their protégés actually fulfilled their religious obligations; some even encouraged youth to flout religion. Their main concern was to create well-behaved, nationalist adults who appreciated the arts (see Winegar 2006).

Yet despite these important differences, in the late Mubarak era there was a concerted campaign, among groups who disagreed substantially on the value of the Islamic Revival, to get young people *in particular* to make and appreciate art *in particular*. Tracing an imbrication of discourses on art from the Islamic tradition with those of the modern state (whether or not we call the state's power secular) only tells part of the story. Why were art and youth so important to these views of the future at that time? I suggest several reasons: the combination of the 1990s/2000s phases of structural adjustment/economic liberalization; the proliferation of global communications technologies; the growth of international interest in Middle Eastern arts after the end of the Cold War and the rise of 'War on Terror' discourse; the appearance of a demographic youth bulge; and militant attacks by Islamist groups against state interests. What we see as a result of these multiple factors is the development of a hegemonic understanding of the role of youth and art in society that aligns with a new kind of capitalist imaginary among northern urban elites. This imaginary favoured only certain kinds of (state-sanctioned) engagement with religion, and with the economic difficulties and opportunities of market liberalization.

State arts cultural cultivation (*tathqif*)

The two most common concepts of culture invoked in state projects are also two of the most popular concepts world-wide (see Sartori 2005): culture as those practices, ideas, and objects which characterize a group of people (anthropological/national); and culture as 'the best that has been thought and said in the world' (from Matthew Arnold). Both of these have deep roots in Egypt. Attempts to define notions of national culture and refined culturedness date back at least to the late nineteenth/early twentieth century, when intellectuals (holding varying perspectives on religion) viewed cultural renaissance (*nahda*) as the key to creating a modern society, and began establishing institutions to both create a national culture and uplift the culture of the so-called masses. From this early period, in cultural and educational circles, religion became 'functionalized' in the sense that views of art popular within Islamic discursive tradition, and/or within the European Enlightenment, for example, came to 'serve the strategic or utilitarian ends of another discourse' – that is, modern Egyptian nationalism propagated by state institutions (Starrett 1998: 9) – a process that was to continue for decades. In the 1930s and 1940s, the state built even more cultural institutions such as museums and arts colleges. Additionally, ateliers, literary salons, and cultural periodicals flourished, and intellectuals debated the components of a 'national culture' in often elitist ways. Taha Hussein's landmark 1938 book *The future of culture in Egypt*, for example, described Egypt both as culturally unique compared to the rest of the Middle

East, and as in need of cultured enlightenment. It remains a foundational, if contested, text among intellectuals to this day. But its marginalization (or denial, from the perspective of some) of an Arab or Islamic identity for Egypt, and its emphasis on the need to battle ignorance by educating youth, remained hallmarks of the secularist project as understood by its adherents.

With the creation of the Nasserist state in the 1950s and 1960s, civilizing cultural discourses became significantly centralized, and instantiated, in institutional projects to create an independent nation with Egyptian culture and Culture. State officials initiated 'cultural cultivation' (*tathqif*) programmes directed at the Egyptian population. To this end, the Supreme Council of Culture was formed in 1956, the Ministry of Culture and National Guidance in 1958, and the International Cairo Book Fair in 1968. Nasser also built a network of 'culture palaces' (*qusur thaqafa*) throughout the country to host art exhibitions, literary readings, and dance and music performances. Although Nasser had a complex and often troubled relationship with artists and intellectuals, the culture projects and discourses from the Nasser years had a lasting effect through the Mubarak era. Definitions of art and culture remained embedded in institutional bodies, procedures, and programmes. They were inculcated in a generation of employees in the state cultural apparatus, as well as in the first generations of graduates from the state university programmes in the arts. These are the individuals who sat on the Supreme Council of Culture and who ran many of the Ministry of Culture 'enlightenment' programmes in the later Mubarak years.

Among the most significant of these was Faruq Husni, appointed Minister of Culture in 1987. Although he was a controversial figure in many circles,[4] he none the less managed to consolidate and maintain power for twenty years, and to spearhead an unprecedented number of programmes aimed at creating a national culture and cultured Egyptians. Husni was given a large budget, especially in comparison to the culture budgets of other postcolonial nations (although his detractors rightly argue that projects were not funded to completion and suffered from corruption). Some of the Ministry's projects under Husni's tenure included: building new museums of art and renovating older ones; reinvigorating the General Organization of Culture Palaces by building over eighty in cities, towns, and villages throughout the country; launching cultural periodicals; and starting international arts biennials and triennials to put Egypt on the global arts map. The Ministry also ran the Cultural Development Fund (founded with the help of a Presidential Decree in 1989), which built Creativity Centers for training youth in arts and crafts and assisted in creating over thirty public libraries targeted at youth.

Secular-oriented Ministry of Culture officials and intellectuals continually argued for the urgency of such initiatives to fight what they bemoaned as 'ignorance' and 'backwardness' stemming from misunderstandings of Islam and the West. The most frequent examples they cited include: pervasive Islamic dress, beards, and prayer bruises on the forehead; the proliferation of mosque loudspeakers (often referred to as 'aural pollution' – *talawwith samaʿi*); iconoclasm; the suspicion towards (or lack of knowledge of, in their view) Western forms of 'high' culture; embrace of Western 'low' culture such as pop music and Hollywood movies; and bombings and shootings undertaken by Islamist groups. Indeed, it is no coincidence that this cultural campaign came at the same time as the new forms of globalization resulting from neoliberalism and the Islamist campaigns against the government and tourism in the 1990s. 'Culture' (both national and high) was, then, featured as the solution to excessive or bad

Figure 1. 'Twenty Years of Culture': Egyptian Ministry of Culture banners outside the state opera house mark the anniversary of a Mubarak-era cultural enlightenment project. (Photo by Jessica Winegar, 2010.)

Westernization, and to ignorant religiosity (Winegar 2009).[5] Arts planners viewed youth as particularly susceptible to Islamist influence, and as in danger of becoming too Westernized, owing to their supposed attraction to (Western) media and popular culture. Thus, culture workers often collaborated with the Ministries of Youth, Education, and Information, and the Supreme Council of Youth and Sport.

Indeed, the Ministry of Culture was not the only government entity attempting to manage religion by functionalizing it for nationalist youth causes in the late 1980s and 1990s. Starrett (1998) examines this phenomenon, and its historical development, in regard to the Ministry of Education. Ideas about the proper place of religion held by arts planners in the Ministry of Culture and arts professors paid by the Ministry of Education were also identical to those advocated by the state television writers whom Abu-Lughod (2005) examined in the same period. The state's management of religion was also found in the realm of law (Agrama 2012). For artists, filmmakers, actors, and screenwriters alike, the 'arts' (*al-funun*, broadly defined) had the potential (more than religion) to transform Egyptians into enlightened citizens, but only if religion was appropriately configured. As in television, religion in the visual art field was sanctioned if 'neatly linked to Egyptian patriotism' (Abu-Lughod 2005: 166). While the programme planners I worked with sometimes drew on the Qur'an and *hadith* to promote positive positions towards the arts, they and culture producers across different fields drew on other sources of understanding art and/or religion, especially those popular in the European Enlightenment, Nasserist nationalism, and Western government discourse on Islam and terrorism. In visual arts representation, as in some historical television dramas of the type that aired during Ramadan, Islam was domesticated as a (primarily) historical element alongside and equivalent to other elements that make up the national culture or character (*al-thaqafa al-misriyya, al-shakhsiyya al-misriyya*). Images or symbols of contemporary Islamic practice were, as in most television and film production, nearly absent – except for the spectre of the terrorist. The terrorist appeared only as a symbol of religious backwardness contrasted with modern enlightenment (Abu-Lughod 2005; Armbrust 1996). State-supported cultural production thereby aligned with the discourse on 'Islamic terrorism' increasingly favoured by Western governments after the Cold War.

For many of these elites, visual culture was particularly necessary to combat what they thought of as religious backwardness,whose visual aspects were increasingly dominating public space. Indeed, in Egypt and across the Middle East, members of piety movements have increasingly signalled, and cultivated, their piety through visual means such as dress and public signage (Deeb 2006; Mahmood 2005). It was indeed striking that, in the 1990s and early 2000s, one never saw explicit signs of the more common aspects of the widespread Islamic Revival in film, television, or visual arts in Egypt. Secular-oriented culture producers (from visual artists to television writers, actors, and filmmakers), many of whom were on the state's payroll in different ministries, were, in fact, creating an alternative visual universe that bore little relationship to the everyday forms of public piety increasingly seen on Egypt's streets. And this was the point. Just as self-identified religious people were reshaping public sound through cassette tapes with Islamic content (Hirschkind 2006), leaders of the cultural sectors of the state apparatus, who sometimes used the word 'religious' as an othering term to describe people, were trying to reduce or erase the visual signifiers of public piety. The sensorium became a shared battleground for people who none the less tended to view themselves on opposite sides of the secular/religious question, precisely because the sensorium in all of their views had transformative potential.

Again, sometimes viewing a project as inherently secular or religious is only fully analytically useful if we also pay attention to when, if, and how such categories (and the normative assumptions behind them) become ethnographically significant as people identify themselves, things, or practices in shifting social contexts. In such a context, art world intellectuals drew on different discourses towards art and religion in their project to make cultured Egyptians, at times highlighting one over others, and at times braiding them all together. We can see this especially clearly in the visual arts field. Amid concerns that youth were losing their national identity and becoming attracted to Islamist groups, in 1989 the Minister of Culture Faruq Husni (himself a painter) launched an annual competitive exhibition for young people under the age of 35 that became the premier event of the entire visual arts season. This 'Youth Salon' (*salon al-shabab*), along with state arts college education, became a critical source of *tathqif* discourses directed at youth. The central importance accorded to youth in defining and elevating the Egyptian nation through art, and thereby leading it towards a new renaissance, is a repeated theme throughout the Salon catalogues over the past twenty-five years, in editorials in the press on the Salon, and in college classrooms and handbooks. For example, the Minister's Salon catalogue introductions always expressed various versions of the idea that 'youth are the real investment towards the *nahda* of any nation' and that arts and culture are 'the basis of any civilization, and a sign of a nation undergoing an awakening in upward development and progress' (1998 Salon catalogue). One can trace this discourse back to the anti-colonial nationalism of Nasser and before, but it took on special urgency in an era of rising public piety, and in an era when the negative effects of structural adjustment were being acutely felt in the urban landscape. The acceptable visual signifiers of this high Egyptian culture become clear when one considers which works were typically selected and which garnered prizes. Secular-oriented jury members typically favoured installation art, works that mixed industrial with traditional media, and abstract paintings, to the near exclusion of figurative paintings or sculptures of what they viewed as unsophisticated motifs that lock Egypt in the past – motifs such as pyramids, peasants, and exclusively Islamic designs.

By favouring such media and forms, they hoped that Egypt would become a player on the international contemporary art scene, which was dominated by European and American cultural institutions. Yet the work could never imitate Western art. Rather, it should draw on the 'best' of Western art practice and mix this with local elements, thereby authentically embodying Egypt's specificity and cosmopolitanism. Truly Egyptian art could not contain any themes deemed 'vulgar' or 'distasteful', which meant the 'three forbiddens' of sex, (contemporary) religion, and politics. The acceptable way that Islam could appear was through the contained use of Islamic calligraphic or design traditions or as an image of a de-peopled pre-eighteenth-century mosque. Islam and Christianity were seen as only one component, and a historical one at that, of Egyptian artistic identity. Contemporary Islamic or Coptic art was not taught in the art schools.

Art school curricula also incorporated this theme of youth responsibility for defining Egyptian culture visually and spreading culturedness, which meant a specific approach to Islam. For example, in the 1999-2000 student handbook for the College of Art Education in Cairo, the Dean encouraged youth to use their art education to play a practical role in building and serving society, and the Deputy emphasized using art to 'elevate the nation'. The handbook went on to discuss the future role of the students as art educators who will undertake the cultural cultivation (*tathqif*) of the Egyptian population. This theme was reinforced in professor lectures at this school, as well as at the colleges of applied arts and (especially) in the architecture department of the fine arts college. In all of these educational sites, professors told students that they would be giving an artistic face to the nation and helping raise 'public taste' (*al-dhawq al-ʿamm*) through teaching arts to schoolchildren, designing beautiful buildings or products, or building tasteful décor for stores and television, film, or theatre sets. Students were called to combat the decline in public taste, which the professoriate argued had 'taken over' Egypt in recent decades. This decline was due not only to public religiosity, in their view, but also to the rise in migration to urban areas, migration to the Gulf (e.g. migrants were accused of bringing back garish or vulgar 'Gulf taste'), the rise of the *nouveaux riches* and the increase in the urban poor, and Western-style consumerism.

In both the Salon and the art college system, then, youth were posited as those who would transform Egypt through art, civilizing it through a period of structural adjustment and public piety. Elsewhere, I have detailed the ways in which artists tried to battle perceived declines in public taste through education and public art (Winegar 2006). Here I focus on how the visual arts were positioned as *especially* equipped to fight 'ignorant' religiosity because of their advanced sophistication and supposedly unique *visual* power to create enlightenment in a context of increasing visual forms of piety (e.g. Islamic dress, new signs, bookstalls, mosques). Mustafa al-Razzaz, a painter, frequent member of the Supreme Council of Culture, and popular art education professor, articulated this view clearly in his introduction to an international art critics' conference that accompanied the 1996 Youth Salon:

> The Supreme Council of Culture, in its current mission, will not be stopped or stalled by the [current] tempests or storms. It has announced with all clarity that it is on the side of enlightenment (*al-tanwir*), deep thought, and refined taste. Creativity ... opposes reactionism, *al-salafiyya* [by which he means fundamentalism], traditional/transmitted religious knowledge (*al-naqliyya*), and stagnation/inflexibility ...

Razzaz's use of terms such as *salafiyya* and *naqliyya*, each carrying strong associations with Islamic history and thought, points to the government's commitment to art as a 'tool' (as many called it) in fighting contemporary backwardness that goes by the name of Islam. Ahmed Sulayman, a doctoral student in art education, expanded upon these views in an article in a pamphlet accompanying the Salon. This article clearly shows that the government intended for visual arts programmes to draw youth away from political Islam. 'The role of youth in facing the waves of fundamentalism' argues that there is a dangerous rise in the popularity of Islamic groups on art college campuses and that they perpetuate erroneous ideas such that art, particularly figurative art, is forbidden (*haram*). Sulayman drew on religious scholarship to provide examples of the compatibility between Islam and art, and to argue that art institutions can play a vital role in steering young people away from these groups and encourage them to fight these trends through art. Sulayman's views were echoed by many professors I spoke with who lamented the increase of veils and beards among students, the occasional refusal of students to make sculptures, and what they saw as the fervency of adherence to prayer times on campus. Some professors even encouraged their students to question the current understandings of Islam, or to remove the veil, in order to become truly good artists for society. Administrators sometimes brought an imam from Al-Azhar (the main government religious educational institution) to the colleges to give a lecture on the historical compatibility between Islam and art. And professors would sometimes repeat the *hadith* 'God is beautiful and loves beauty, so how can his servants not desire it!' to communicate to students that art-making is permissible in Islam.

This new cultural policy of supporting youth arts as a means to civilize students into proper understandings of nation and religion was also intended to enhance Egypt's cultural standing internationally and counter views of the country as a terrorist hotbed. Islamist violence had state officials deeply worried, not only for their hold on power, but also for Egypt's reputation and – increasingly – ability to attract foreign investment as part of its structural adjustment programme. The cultivation of a youth art movement was, thus, a cultural counterpart to economic liberalization – proving that Egypt's youth were becoming cosmopolitan artists instead of threatening Islamists. The opening of new art venues and competitions could additionally help build confidence that Egypt was a cosmopolitan, safe place to do business.

In their creation of arts discourses and events targeted at youth, then, these arts leaders tried to manage religion and the effects of neoliberalism by transforming, and indeed civilizing, youth through the arts. Islam was to become one, mainly historical, mainly private component of an overall Egyptian identity. Unlike for the preachers, religion was not the primary means for this intended transformation; rather, religion was its target. Instead, from the state leaders' perspective, the arts were the primary means for creating an enlightened citizenry whose primary public allegiance was to be to Egypt, not to the Islamic *umma*.

What they did not anticipate, however, was that by the turn of the millennium, many Egyptian youth would want to know not just how art and Islam were compatible, or how art is necessary for patriotism, or how art can prevent people from becoming extremists. These youth attracted to the Islamic Revival also, and primarily, wanted to know how art could be an additional Islamic practice that would make them better Muslims, and how being Muslim could help them make better art. Part of the reason for the tremendous success of the Islamic Revival has been the development and spread of media technologies beyond the control of the nation-state. No matter how much state institutions and their associated intellectuals tried to set the agenda for the arts, they were all of a sudden competing with religious satellite television, which had a bigger audience among educated youth than the Youth Salon.

When preachers such as Amr Khaled and Moez Masoud rose to fame in the early 2000s, many arts professors and state cultural officials viewed them as unsophisticated, uneducated in Islamic jurisprudence, and responsible for spreading simplistic, erroneous, or backward religious thinking. Some even said that they were radical Islamists in sheep's clothing. Significantly, these so-called 'threats' came mainly from similar urban, educated groups to the Ministry of Culture officials and professoriate: Masoud is an economics graduate of the private, elite American University in Cairo; Khaled is a graduate of the Cairo Faculty of Commerce, and gained his first following among well-to-do families.[6] They, along with other satellite television preachers in their thirties and forties, such as Mustafa Husni and the Saudi Ahmed al-Shugayri, represented an increasingly influential segment of the larger Islamic Revival, so much so that they constituted a new category among many Egyptians, 'the new preachers' (*al-duʿat al-gudud*).

Culturing youth in Islamic media

Recent scholarship on Islam and art has noted the important role played by new preachers such as Khaled in encouraging the production of *al-fann al-hadif* (purposeful art) that is seen as morally and socially constructive (Tartoussieh 2007; van Nieuwkerk 2013). Khaled actually made art a central field for the Islamic Revival in his popular *Life makers* project. Meanwhile, Moez Masoud lectured extensively on art in his 2007 Ramadan programme *The right path* and continued to speak frequently on the topic. Their specific views on art deserve closer analysis than they have received because of the centrality they accorded it in their *daʿwa* projects to call young people (especially) to the faith and build the *umma*, and because of the preceding and concurrent importance of art in state projects to build a 'civilized' nation-state by targeting youth. Although there were differences between the preachers, here I focus more on their similarities in their approaches to art and youth. In their view, there was a need for purposeful art in order to counter the current wave of immorality in society and in the arts (particularly film and music); but also, and perhaps more importantly, they asserted that art constitutes a long-standing means within Islam to become closer to God and to build the *umma*.

It is clear that both Khaled and Masoud focused on youth because they saw them as capable of bringing the freshest ideas and energy to building the Islamic Revival. Khaled repeatedly characterized youth as those who will 'take the responsibility of drawing the features of our *umma*'. In the mid-2000s, Internet 'teams' of youth sprang up in different Middle Eastern countries, with his encouragement, to operationalize his call to do art that defines and advances both their countries and the transnational Islamic community. Masoud selected lecture topics of special interest to youth (such as drugs, alcohol, and romance) because he, like Khaled, also saw young people as especially vulnerable to immoral or overly Westernizing influences, owing to their interest in popular culture. In many ways, the preachers' views of youth as the key to community building, as well as especially vulnerable to certain negative forces and misunderstandings of Islam and the West, were similar to the views of youth propagated by the state arts leaders.

Khaled and Masoud not only provided audiences with a means to reconcile art with religious belief, something the state art colleges had long done. They also urged them to see art as central to their religious practice, which state art institutions only very rarely did, because their primary aim was to create good citizens. These new callers to the faith (*duʿat*) were both from and speaking to groups within the Egyptian Muslim population – mainly urban, middle to upper class, and formally educated – who, with the Islamic Revival of recent decades, have become increasingly concerned about the morality of cinema, music, and, to a lesser extent, figurative visual art. As others have noted (e.g. van Nieuwkerk 2013), this concern stems in part from the influence of earlier popular *duʿat* opposed to art, such as Shaykh Shaʿrawi (who is credited with starting the trend of repentant actresses quitting their careers and taking on the veil). And some religious leaders in the employ of the state also opposed some forms of art, while the Ministry of Culture supported it. For example, in 2006, then Mufti of the Republic ʿAli Gumʿa issued a *fatwa* against sculpture's use for decoration in homes, which relied mainly on a *hadith* frequently used in the history of Islamic jurisprudence to discourage art-making: 'Those most tormented on Judgment Day will be the image makers'.[7] The influential Egyptian scholar Yusif al-Qaradawi supported this *fatwa*, as well as the Taliban's destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas (after initially condemning the action).[8] Although Khaled and Masoud work in a different genre than these jurists, all of these figures produce discourses on art that may be drawn on by their audiences. Importantly, the preachers formulated their positive views on art by using the same verses from the Qur'an and *hadith* as did the state arts planners. And their views of what constitutes good art and culture, and their civilizing potential for a nation, align with the discourses dominant in state cultural institutions, which also resonate with those of the European Enlightenment, nationalist socialism, and the War on Terror. Yet, significantly, the preachers did not limit their direct citations from the Islamic tradition to these specific verses and *ahadith*, but rather integrated them with others, and with stories from the Prophet Muhammad's life, not commonly used by state planners.

In order to understand the role and weight of these different sources for the civilizing mission found in preachers' lessons, we need to look more closely at their arguments about art, and the ways in which they made them. Both began with the argument put forward by state arts leaders: there is no contradiction between art and Islam. Khaled also placed this argument in a civilizing discourse. He argued that loving art is akin to being 'cultured', and that the opposite of culture (*thaqafa*) is ignorance (*jahl*). He noted with disapproval the probable embarrassment of a prospective fiancé telling his girlfriend's father that he is an artist, and said that the poor state of culture in Egyptian society means that artists are not respected and valued. Meanwhile, Masoud opined that it is not right to criticize any religious figures' views in particular, because this causes a schism in the *umma*. Masoud's constant reference, in a very soft-spoken and friendly voice, to the idea that 'different people have different opinions, and that's okay', could be read as a 'civilized' style of argument. Many elites in Egypt, for example, complained about lower-class people who, they claimed, yell at each other in the streets. Masoud's deferential attitude towards differing viewpoints can also be read as an acknowledgement of the religious/educational hierarchy *vis-à-vis* the trained jurisprudents who have come out against certain kinds of art, and thus an acknowledgement of the prestige value of formal Islamic education.

While Khaled and Masoud were in part responding to contemporary manifestations of some Islamic discourses against art, they, like the professors at the art schools, drew on other long-standing discourses to promote an opposite view. They harnessed the same Qur'anic verses and *ahadith* to do so, but also provided a deeper contextualization of the positive role of art in religion than was common in the state contexts I studied. Significantly, Khaled and Masoud argued that art is at the essence of Islam – not only because God's creation *is* art, but also because it is through experiencing art (an earthly reflection of God's beauty) that humans get closer to God. With a greater range of sources from the Islamic tradition than those typically used by artists, including many historical stories, Khaled argued that God is the source of all art and beauty, that the Prophet valued the arts, and that the arts – including the visual image, poetry, and music – have been among the most effective ways to spread Islam's message. This is because Islam, through the Qur'an, 'cultivates the sense of beauty' in human hearts. Masoud mainly relied on the favoured *hadith* in the art schools, 'God is beautiful and loves beauty, so how can his servants not desire it', to make similar points.

Although this *hadith* has been used to justify art-making for centuries, it was not nearly as central to dominant discourses on art among religious leaders in the 1980s and 1990s as it was among state arts planners. Given that these secular-oriented arts planners circulated discourses asserting the compatibility of arts and Islam for at least a decade before the emergence of the preachers, and in many venues (colleges, museums, culture palaces, newspapers, television) that are accessed by thousands of Egyptians, it could be argued not only that the state officials became highly influential in delimiting (and keeping in circulation) which Islamic texts may be marshalled for positive views on art, but also that they laid much of the groundwork for positive reception of the new preachers' discourse on art and culture. I am not suggesting that this groundwork was not also laid by the intergenerational transmission and interpretation of positive Islamic discourses on art in the manner suggested by the analytic framework of the Islamic discursive tradition that Asad (1986) offers. However, we cannot ignore the fact that aspects of this discursive tradition become socially invisible at times or become mixed with other discourses, in part because of institutional forces.

In addition to the use of similar, if not the same, sources for justifying and encouraging art-making, both preachers and state planners made use of Sufi philosophy, but with different emphases. Masoud defined art as the 'ability to express a particular beauty that God makes visible in our hearts, a specific beauty that our Lord showed us and with which He has guided us'. Both preachers argued that because God is the original creator of all things beautiful in the universe, and because beauty has the power to move the heart, then engaging with art not only shows appreciation for God's work, but, in Masoud's words, also helps us 'remember God'. Art, then, is conceptually likened to *dhikr*, that important act of remembering God in Islam. This relationship between art and the heart, and art and remembrance, while not exclusive to Sufi philosophy, certainly has a central place within it. Sufi-influenced views of art-making were also sometimes articulated by arts leaders, but not with the primary goal of getting closer to God. Rather, many of those who referenced Sufism saw it as a way to cite historical Islam as part of an assemblage of components of Egyptian identity discussed earlier, and/or to invoke a generalized spiritual dimension to their artistic practice. Masoud, on the other hand, aimed for art to help people remember God constantly throughout a day punctuated by fulfilling the requirements of religion such as praying and fasting. This was the use of Sufi philosophy for a different goal: that of cultivating an ethical self, not of cultivating a generalized spiritual Egyptian artistic personality acceptable to international art elites who often included Sufi arts in their Middle East-related cultural programmes (Winegar 2008).

Although Sufism was the most appealing dimension of Islam for artists seeking to reference religion in their artistic practice, dominant state arts discourses rarely acknowledged contemporary Sufi practice except as a quaint folkloric 'holdover' filled with uncivilized behaviour. As Schielke (2012) argues, contemporary Sufi practice in Egypt challenges the sensibilities of many urban elites – both religious and secular-oriented – who tend to see things such as ecstatic *dhikr* and saints' *mulid*s (birthday celebrations) as less than civilized, and there are many state projects to civilize such events. Similarly, neither preacher made overt reference to Sufism, even though they (perhaps unwittingly) drew on Sufi philosophy. The unacknowledged use of Sufi philosophy (for the preachers) and its particularized use (for artists and state officials), as well as the distinction made between Sufi philosophy and practice, reflected their shared elite positions, and quite likely a civilizing interest towards the Egyptian population's understandings and practice of Islam, even if the goal was different in each case.

Despite the similarities I have discussed thus far, both the preachers and state arts employees had different takes on the issue of art as an obligation as it related to the notion of youth talent. Masoud made the extremely significant claim that art was an obligation (*fard*) for Muslims. I never encountered this argument in a state arts institution context at that time. In Masoud's view, to deny art was to deny God, because art was a reflection of God. Furthermore, God endowed some humans with artistic talent, and therefore to reject art-making was to deny God's gift. Masoud added that artists are also compelled to use that talent to remind others to remember God. The structure of state arts institutions, on the other hand, suggested that all human beings were ultimately able to cultivate artistic talent. Entrance to state colleges was determined by one's score on the general high school exam, a process that catapulted a huge diversity of students (some with artistic leanings but most not) into art colleges. In the education structure and in the state art school curriculum, talent and creativity were presented as completely teachable. This notion was at odds with the view that God only endowed certain people with talent. In this context, the state was the ultimate creator with the power to make an artist of any young person. This ideology laid a strong basis for the civilizing mission, because ostensibly anyone could be cultivated (though of course there were certain groups, such as the lower class and peasants, who were usually positioned by state elites as hopeless). For a student to refuse to make art, in the point of view of state arts planners, was not to deny God, but rather to deny the state's aims towards you as a future adult citizen. In art colleges, art was an obligation for everyone to undertake, but it was framed as an obligation towards the nation, not towards God.

Yet both groups shared the view that art *must* have a purpose, and its purpose was to modernize society by creating specific institutions geared towards solving society's problems. This view, as it was articulated, had strong resonances with Nasserist socialism as it had become embedded in state cultural institutions. Both preachers and state cultural officials used the concept of art as a 'tool' – an imagery and language that abounded in Nasserist cultural policy. Khaled even went so far as to nostalgically laud the arts and culture industries of the 1950s, the Nasser period, and exhort his audience to revive that artistic atmosphere. His statements in this regard were nearly identical to those of Ministry of Culture officials.

However, in Masoud's 2007 series *The right path*, he gave the image of the tool an added layer of interpretation. He told his young audience that art is a tool that artists can use to move hearts in the right direction, away from illicit desires (*shahawat*) and towards pious tranquillity (*sakina*). Therefore, art is needed especially now to help people reject dangerous, imposter forms of art, and to remind people of God's beauty. Masoud repeated the word 'beauty' (*gamal*) again and again as the true meaning of art, and said there is no problem with art if 'art is understood as an expression of beauty'. Here, art as beauty is presented as a means to cultivate ethical behaviour, and to encourage people to reject certain kinds of thoughts or behaviours believed to be immoral. This is a key aspect of the 'call to the faith' of the Islamic Revival (Hirschkind 2006; Mahmood 2005). The concept of beauty promoted by Masoud and Khaled was shaped by their interpretations of Islamic texts and by their experience as Muslims living in a majority Muslim society. This was the case for many of the culture officials and arts professors as well. Overt references in art (e.g. film, music, or painting) to extra-marital sex, drinking alcohol, or insulting the Prophet or Islam were given by both groups as examples of 'vulgarity' or the forbidden (*haram*) to be avoided. Thus we see that these urban elites shared moral parameters.

Crucially, however, we also need to move our analysis beyond that which sees religion as the sole source of morality (Schielke 2010). We need to consider how both groups' determinations of what does or does not constitute 'beauty' or good art were also shaped by their subject positions as elites (economic and/or cultural) concerned with what they considered to be increasingly distasteful aspects of society, aspects that were linked to global technology and commodity circulations as well as structural adjustment. Their concept of beauty was, perhaps first and foremost, shaped by the fact that they were urban northerners from the middle and upper-middle classes. Elsewhere (Winegar 2006), I detail the notions of beauty shared by this social group, and how they contrast with those held by others in Egypt (especially poorer people and southerners). These notions are frequently constructed in opposition to the increasing 'threats' these others pose to the aesthetics of what northern urban elites view to be their public space.[9] Similarities abound in the aesthetics of: what the arts leaders and preachers produced and favoured (artwork, televisions, websites); voice and gesture; and commodity selection and display (dress, décor, etc.).

Central to the shared notion of beauty among state planners and preachers was a kind of urbane cosmopolitanism that, at many levels, connected to new notions of capitalist success in which people must be innovative entrepreneurs, and any radical challenges to the inequalities wrought by intensified neoliberal policies were dissipated through appeals to becoming more cultured (de Koning 2009). While government cultural institutions tried to use art to draw capitalist investment, reduce threats from Islamists, and create entrepreneurial artists, the preachers also promoted a 'peaceful' capitalist imaginary of entrepreneurial cosmopolitanism and success. The image of the cosmopolitan and civilized Muslim created by the preachers was nearly identical to the image of the cosmopolitan artist promoted by state arts leaders: urban, educated, wearing the latest in Western fashion, with a particular sense of taste accompanied by interest in creating unique art and innovation, and exhibiting an openness to the world. Importantly, for both groups, visual communication was key to their objectives (Moll 2010). The preachers and arts planners also trafficked in the language of civilizational dialogue, and some even participated in the kinds of dialogue projects that are supported by state departments and foreign ministries.

But just as they supported open engagement with the 'West', preachers and cultural officials also shared an intense concern with Western imitation and with the proper engagement with Western ideas, cultural forms, and ways of life more generally. Masoud actually made the eradication of Western imitation and the building of an Islamic identity one of the three core goals of his entire series *The right path*. Similarly, Khaled placed art at the centre of the project to achieve this goal. Both preachers advanced the message that by being open to civilizational dialogue and Western arts *but wary of blind imitation*, one builds the *umma* and advances Islamic civilization, and brings it out of backwardness to return it to its former glory. On the one hand, the preachers' rejection of unreflective copying linked them to other interpreters of Islamic texts seen to prohibit blind imitation (*taqlid*), including the Islamic reformers of the early twentieth century. On the other hand, the preachers' phrasing, along with their examples of art and institutions, linked these concepts to modernist state arts projects to create a high national culture.

Whereas some state officials would say that Western influence, if not properly managed, might wipe out *Egyptian* culture, Khaled argued that art was a primary means for giving the Islamic *umma* its defining features, which were in danger of being entirely erased by Western influence. And whereas since the beginning of the twentieth century, art world elites and some Islamic reformers have argued that a modern Egyptian nation cannot exist without a defining art movement, Khaled argued that the Islamic Revival could not proceed without first having art 'pave the way'. If a central goal of the Islamic Revival was to build the *umma*, then to succeed it needed to have defining features, which only artists could provide. Thus, Khaled implored artists to use their God-given talent, telling his audience that 'we will not be able to carry out the Revival' without them. The urgency with which state arts officials argued that art was crucial to defining the nation was fully matched by Khaled's claim that art was the 'most dangerous' of the twenty-three fields he had targeted for Islamic Revival – dangerous because if not undertaken, there would be no defining features to the *umma*.

It is extremely important to note that Khaled and Masoud were against blind imitation of Western ways of life, especially those deemed immoral. They did not claim to be against Western modernity in its entirety, and in fact Western art and/or high culture examples were the only modern examples they used to illustrate their points. For instance, Masoud was fond of quoting Bob Dylan and Metallica (which can be high culture references in Egypt),[10] and highlighted Malevich's artwork on his website. (Malevich's modernist black cube paintings are said to show that the artist ultimately reached the truth that Islam had discovered long ago in the simplicity of the Kaʿba.) Masoud also wrote a romantic love song called 'Will you marry me?' with a Western pop melody.[11] The preachers' refusal to reject Western modernity, and their desire to tailor aspects of that modernity to suit Muslim values and interests, links them historically to the Islamic intellectuals of the earlier *nahda* movement. It also connects them to government projects which mix certain European high culture models with socialist ones to build a nationally specific civilized culture, and which embody the view that only the best should be taken from the West lest Egyptian identity be effaced.

Indeed, in their lessons, Masoud and Khaled did not reject allegiance to the Egyptian nation, because national commitment was part of their vision for what it meant to be a good Muslim. Their fans sometimes invoked and interpreted the *hadith* '*hubb al-watan min al-iman*' in a nationalist way to mean 'love of nation is part of faith'. When

Khaled asked his audience to imagine themselves as international businessmen, he also asked them to imagine what they could give to their 'countries' (*biladhum*) *and* to Muslims. In the promotional video for Masoud's *The right path* series, the preacher appeared amidst images of the Egyptian soccer team winning the African Cup. He said,

> Egypt won the cup, we'll talk together about that. You might feel like if you get close to God, you have to move away from your love of country (*watan*). The act of becoming more religious (*al-tadayyun*) has to quit presenting itself to people as if it were an affliction (*ghamm*).

The preachers' view of the compatibility of the Islamic Revival with building an Egyptian nation was very much at odds with radical Islamic internationalism, just as the culture officials' nationalism diverged from internationalist leftist movements.

The ingraining of civilizing missions

What do we make of the overlaps between these preachers' concentration on art and that of the state, despite the differences that exist? How do we interpret the fact that the major positive emphasis on art coincided with a major neoliberal programme of economic restructuring, the proliferation of global communications technologies, and challenges to authoritarianism in Egypt from right-wing religious groups? The aesthetic and discursive similarities between these groups (and their significance) are not captured by analyses that focus solely on questions of the secular and religious, which tend to sidestep political economy, geography, and generation, and sometimes unwittingly rely on East/West dichotomies (Bangstad 2009).

The preachers and many of their fans were from the same social groups that visited arts institutions, attended state-sponsored arts events, or enrolled in state art programmes. Secular-oriented artists, culture officials, and the preachers have attended or spoken at events at the Sawy Culture Wheel in the elite neighborhood of Zamalek, as have students at the nearby art schools and other fans of the preachers. In terms of style, taste, and consumption, many state arts employees and students were, or aspired to be, or could emulate those who were from the same middle/upper-middle-class world of the preachers and their fans, a world of air-conditioned coffee-shops and malls that signify new kinds of distinctions in an Egypt that has undergone significant economic restructuring (de Koning 2009; Mitchell 2002). Indeed, the manicured Minister of Culture in his Italian suits, or other Ministry officials and the professoriate in their ironed button-down dress shirts, would probably have not been too uncomfortable sharing a cappuccino in a fancy neighbourhood of Cairo with the preachers in their stylish, expensive dress.

The preachers' category of art was also very similar to that of the arts planners in its emphasis on 'high' arts and refinement, without overt sexual or political content. Khaled, for example, used the same notion of art, the same rhetorical tactic, and nearly verbatim phrasing when he exclaimed, 'Where are the museums and exhibitions of fine arts and paintings?! If you went to London and walked by Hyde Park on Sunday, you will find marvellous paintings hung over a 1 kilometre stretch on its fence. Unfortunately, we lack innovation'. The Minister of Culture, an abstract painter of squares (among other shapes), would probably have been pleased with Masoud's selection of an essay on the abstract painter Malevich for his website. Meanwhile, the preachers' goal – of creating productive, peaceful, nationally committed, and internationally oriented youth who 'innovate' to define and uplift culture – mirrored the goal of state

Figure 2. Billboard announcing a television show by preacher Amr Khaled (on the right), erected in Marina, a summer resort for Egyptian elites on Egypt's North Coast. (Photo courtesy of Yasmin Moll, 2012.)

cultural policy and worked well with Mubarak's economic policy. Although youth were being called to God through art, and to serve the Islamic *umma* by defining and uplifting it through arts and culture, they were not simultaneously being diverted from the ideologies of Egyptian nationalism or capitalism.

Preacher lectures on art were part of series of lessons on internationalism, work, business, and self-improvement. In fact, there was very little in the preacher discourse and presentation of 'culture' that contradicted the new neoliberal logics of individual responsibility and entrepreneurship that have accompanied the further opening of Egypt's markets, the erosion of state supports, and the retrenchment of authoritarianism. As Atia (2013) argues, these logics now dominate the field of Islamic economics and many Islamic charities in Cairo. An important section of Khaled's lecture called 'Determination' from his *Life makers* series gives us a final, poignant, example of the ways in which preacher discourse aligned with these new developments and the social class that benefited from them, even as it also drew on long-standing notions of hard work and individual obligation in Islam. He tells his young audience:

> Who do you want to become? Let's dream together. What do you wish to be?
>
> The owner of the biggest international company. I will compete with other international companies. I will be proud to be Muslim. And people will say, 'Wow, a Muslim succeeded like this?' And this will be the good that I do for my country, and for Muslims. And the products of this company will be advertised in Western markets – in the East and in the West. And I will have thousands of people working for me, so I will solve the unemployment problem.

Here we see youth being called towards entrepreneurship, to the market, and to solve problems that had previously been thought of as the burden of the state. Needless to say, the idea of presenting Muslim youth as internationally successful, pro-art cosmopolitans, and as competitive in an acceptable way (i.e. through 'legitimate' business), was one that officials throughout the state apparatus supported and actively cultivated.

It seems that state high culture has now become just one of many ways for youth to become cultured – ways that now include becoming a more pious Muslim in the manner advocated by the new preachers. The popularity of these new preachers suggests that a new form of *religious* high culture is gaining hegemony in Egypt, a way of being cultured that is perceived by pious youth as more authentic and ethical. It is partly produced by state power but is not defined solely by it. It also has greater appeal for young people because it is articulated through contemporary technologies that are more far-reaching and have a greater aesthetic appeal than rarefied paintings in a security-guarded state museum or gallery. Like the state's enculturation programmes, it contains a civilizing component directed at a particular understanding and practice of Islam, and of art that is entirely compatible with urban, northern, upper-middle-class taste, national loyalty, and global capitalist enterprise.

NOTES

Thanks are due to my colleague Beth Hurd for her encouragement, and to the following scholars for their careful reading and insightful suggestions on earlier versions of this article and the academic presentations that led to it: Lara Deeb, Matthew Engelke, Sherine Hamdy, Charles Hirschkind, Yasmin Moll, Samuli Schielke, Paul Sedra, Gregg Starrett, Karin van Nieuwkerk, and anonymous reviewers. Thanks also to the participants in the conferences 'The Decline of Secularism in Egypt' (organized by Tamir Moustafa and Paul Sedra) and 'Popularizing Islam, Recasting the Political' (organized by Annelies Moors) for their feedback.

[1] I borrow this useful term from Mahmood to describe those whose 'religious practice has limited relevance outside of personal devotion' (2005: 173), and to capture the fact that most of the state culture workers are believers (see Winegar 2006). Yet this orientation is also a strategic position undertaken by cultural elites with a particular political agenda towards certain forms of Islamic ideology and practice. Of course not all employees within the state cultural apparatus are secular-oriented, but the majority of influential planners are.

[2] *Tathqif* literally means 'to make cultured' and is conceptually related to notions of enlightenment (*tanwir*), progress (*tatawwur, taqaddum*), and awareness-raising (*tawʿiyya*).

[3] For more analysis of ʿAbduh's *fatwa*, see Ramadan (2013).

[4] For example, he was variously viewed as an immoral liberal Westernized homosexual who devalued local mores and artistic traditions, as well as a co-opted bureaucrat who '[gave] in too easily' to Islamist demands for censorship of art works that offended those local mores and traditions (see Abaza 2010; Mehrez 2008).

[5] For a lively critique of the contradictions within the government's *tanwir* programme, see Abaza (2010).

[6] For an excellent, comprehensive analysis of Amr Khaled that also examines his early appeal among privileged audiences, see Wise (2003).

[7] But in the summer of 2009, Gumʿa opened an art exhibition on the Prophet's life at the museum of a famous Egyptian sculptor. Flood (2002) discusses how the permissibility of figuration in Islam has been debated at particularly important political and social junctures since the beginning of the religion.

[8] Baker (2003) argues that al-Qaradawi has a positive view of the role of the arts in advancing the 'Islamic Awakening', although this is a matter of debate.

[9] For more on such contrasts, see Abu-Lughod (2005).

[10] Masoud reveals his elite status by citing this heavy metal rock band, because at the time the majority of metal fans in Egypt came from well-off urban, northern families.

[11] *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cTC5FeUFcM* (accessed 10 April 2014).

REFERENCES

Abaza, M. 2010. The trafficking with *tanwir* (enlightenment). *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* **30**, 32-46.

Abu-Lughod, L. 2005. *Dramas of nationhood: the politics of television in Egypt*. Chicago: University Press.

Agrama, H.A. 2012. *Questioning secularism: Islam, sovereignty, and the rule of law in modern Egypt*. Chicago: University Press.

Armbrust, W. 1996. *Mass culture and modernism in Egypt*. Cambridge: University Press.

Asad, T. 1986. *The idea of an anthropology of Islam* (Occasional Papers series). Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Center for Contemporary Arab Studies.

——— 2003. *Formations of the secular: Christianity, Islam, modernity*. Stanford: University Press.

Atia, M. 2013. *Building a house in heaven: pious neoliberalism and Islamic charity in Egypt*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Baker, R. 2003. *Islam without fear: Egypt and the new Islamists*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Bangstad, S. 2009. Contesting secularism/s: secularism and Islam in the work of Talal Asad. *Anthropological Theory* **9**, 188-208.

de Koning, A. 2009. *Global dreams: class, gender, and public space in cosmopolitan Cairo*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.

Deeb, L. 2006. *An enchanted modern: gender and public piety in Shi`i Lebanon*. Princeton: University Press.

Flood, F. 2002. Between cult and culture: Bamiyan, Islamic iconoclasm, and the museum. *Art Bulletin* **84**, 641-59.

Gasper, M. 2009. *The power of representation: publics, peasants, and Islam in Egypt*. Stanford: University Press.

Hafez, S. 2011. *An Islam of her own: reconsidering religion and secularism in women's Islamic movements*. New York: University Press.

Haj, S. 2009. *Reconfiguring Islamic tradition: reform, rationality, and modernity*. Stanford: University Press.

Hirschkind, C. 2006. *The ethical soundscape: cassette sermons and Islamic counterpublics*. New York: Columbia University Press.

——— 2011. Is there a secular body? *Cultural Anthropology* **26**, 633-47.

Mahmood, S. 2005. *Politics of piety: the Islamic Revival and the feminist subject*. Princeton: University Press.

——— 2006. Secularism, hermeneutics, and empire: the politics of Islamic reformation. *Public Culture* **18**, 323-47.

Mehrez, S. 2008. *Egypt's culture wars: politics and practice*. London: Routledge.

Mitchell, T. 2002. *Rule of experts: Egypt, techno-politics, modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Moll, Y. 2010. Islamic televangelism: religion, media, and visuality in contemporary Egypt. *Arab Media & Society* **10** (available on-line: *http://www.arabmediasociety.com/index.php?article=732&p=0*, accessed 10 April 2014).

Ramadan, D.A. 2013. 'One of the best tools for learning': rethinking the role of ʿAbduh's fatwa in Egyptian art history. In *A companion to modern African art* (eds) G. Salami & M. Visonà, 137-53. Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell.

Rida, R. 2006 [1931]. *Ta'rikh al-ustadh al-imam al-shaykh Muhammad ʿAbduh* [A history of the teacher imam Muhammad ʿAbduh]. Cairo: Dar al-Fadila.

Salvatore, A. 2001. The problem of the ingraining of civilizing traditions into social governance. In *Muslim traditions and modern techniques of power* (ed.) A. Salvatore, 9-42. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction.

Sartori, A. 2005. The resonance of 'culture': framing a problem in global concept-history. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* **47**, 676-99.

Schielke, S. 2007. Hegemonic encounters: criticism of saints-day festivals and the formation of modern Islam in late 19th and early 20th-century Egypt. *Die Welt des Islams* **47**, 319-55.

——— 2010. *Second thoughts about the anthropology of Islam, or how to make sense of grand schemes in everyday life* (Working Papers series). Berlin: Zentrum Moderner Orient.

——— 2012. *The perils of joy: contesting mulid festivals in contemporary Egypt*. Syracuse: University Press.

Scott, D. & C. Hirschkind 2006. *Powers of the secular modern: Talal Asad and his interlocutors*. Stanford: University Press.

Starrett, G. 1998. *Putting Islam to work: education, politics, and religious transformation in Egypt*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

——— 2010. The varieties of secular experience. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* **52**, 626-51.

Tartoussieh, K. 2007. Pious stardom: cinema and the Islamic Revival in Egypt. *Arab Studies Journal* **15**, 30-43.

van Nieuwkerk, K. 2013. *Performing piety: singers and actors in Egypt's Islamic Revival*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Winegar, J. 2006. *Creative reckonings: the politics of art and culture in contemporary Egypt*. Stanford: University Press.

——— 2008. The humanity game: art, Islam, and the War on Terror. *Anthropological Quarterly* **81**, 651-81.

——— 2009. Culture is the solution: the civilizing mission of Egypt's culture palaces. *Review of Middle East Studies* **43**, 189-97.

Wise, L. 2003. Words from the heart: new forms of Islamic preaching in Egypt. M. Phil. thesis in Modern Middle East Studies, St Antony's College, University of Oxford.

Civiliser la jeunesse musulmane : programmes de culture d'État et téléprédicateurs musulmans en Égypte

Résumé

L'article explore les points communs et les différences entre les discours des artistes et des prédicateurs islamiques sur l'art, la culture et la jeunesse dans l'Égypte de Moubarak, pour mettre en lumière l'utilité et les limites des débats anthropologiques actuels sur le sécularisme et les traditions discursives religieuses. En se concentrant sur les associations civilisatrices et transformatives entre jeunesse, art et religion qu'elles partagent, l'auteure avance que les traditions civilisatrices islamiques sont enracinées dans la gouvernance moderne, et vice versa. Pour expliquer ce phénomène d'enracinement, il faudrait que nous prêtions davantage d'attention à la classe sociale et à la position géographique, au nationalisme, aux changements politico-économiques mondiaux et nationaux et à l'entremêlement complexe des discours circulant à l'échelle globale.

Jessica Winegar is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at Northwestern University. She is the author of numerous articles on arts, culture, and revolution in the Middle East. Her book *Creative reckonings: the politics of art and culture in contemporary Egypt* (Stanford University Press, 2006) won the Hourani Prize for best book in Middle East studies.

Associate Professor, Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Anthropology, Northwestern University, 1810 Hinman Avenue, Evanston, IL 60208, USA. j-winegar@northwestern.edu