

AFFIRMING BOUNDARIES, CONTESTING BOUNDARIES

Citizenships, Multi/Inter-cultures, Subjectivities

3-4 June 2013, Paris

« The Paradox of Christian Coptic Identity in Egypt: Shared or distinctive? »

By : Mai Mogib
Assistant Professor of Political Science
Faculty of Economics and Political Science
Cairo University
Mai_mogib@feps.edu.eg



Dr. Mai graduated from Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University in 2003 where she got the BA with Honors. In the same she was appointed among the teaching staff at the Political Science Department. In 2006, she completed an MA with a thesis entitled “*Ethnic Groups Strategies Versus the State- A Case Study for the Iraqi Shiites 2003-2005*”.

In 2011, Dr. Mai obtained a PhD degree with the thesis entitled “*Copts and their Demands between Inclusion and Exclusion 1991-2008*”. To finish her PhD studies, Dr. Mai conducted many interviews with the Coptic elite in Egypt and the United States so as to figure out the main problems that face Christian Copts in Egypt and the ways out to combat discrimination and sectarian problems.

Dr. Mai is the sole author of the book entitled *Copts in Egypt and their Demands between Inclusion and Exclusion*, and the co-author of the book *Egypt after the revolution: The struggle for a new Political system*, published in 2013, in addition to tens of academic articles inside and outside Egypt.

Problematic:

What are the main reasons behind the distinctive rise of Christian Coptic identity on religious basis rather than its inclusion on an overall national ground?

Questions:

- How identity politics is born from the dialectics between the state and society relations?
- Is there an influence for Christian faith and Coptic distinguished identity?
- What are the factors that challenged the inclusion and integration of Christian Copts in Egypt?

Approach:

State- Society relations.

Conclusions:

-The concept of identity has exposed to different changes and challenges within the Egyptian context, and religious identity is not an exception.

-It's normal that if religious identities are confronting each other, the followers of the minor religion on basis of number opt to isolation and "scalping" inside their religious identities which may lead to conflicts among the members of different religious groups.

-There are different causes for the rise of the Coptic identity on religious basis as the nature of the state- Church relations under the previous regime of Mubarak, the retreating state role from the public sphere and the rising role of the religious institutions, the increasing international interest in the issues of human rights and religious freedoms, the communication and information revolution and its impact, the charismatic character of the former Pope Shenouda