From looking at the actions of Egyptian intellectuals during the time leading up to the protests to the aftermath of determining the line between religion and politics, Charles Hirschkind and Hussein Ali Agrama reflect on the solidarity across the secular-religious divide in Egypt in this quarter’s American Ethnologist.

Hirschkind, a sociocultural anthropologist and Associate Professor at the University of California Berkeley, examines the careers of three Egyptian intellectuals and finds that their questioning of the place of Islam helped to empower the people to bring down the Mubarak regime in his article, Beyond Secular and Religious: An intellectual genealogy of Tahrir Square. This tactic of exploitation that helped Mubarak gain power was now solidifying a nation to take him out of power. Professor Hirschkind is available for interview.

Agrama, assistant professor at the University of Chicago, notes in his article Reflections of Secularism, Democracy, and Politics in Egypt, that the protests didn’t consider religious differences in the uprising; however, in the aftermath Egyptians struggle with where to draw the line between politics and religion. “Thus, they stood outside the problem-space of secularism, representing what I call an ‘asecular’ moment,” writes Professor Agrama. He continues to emphasize that such asecular moments are the meaningful victories in Egypt today.

American Ethnologist, a quarterly journal produced by the American Ethnological Society (AES), in its February 2012 issue features these articles on the Arab Spring uprising in Egypt. The nine authors are anthropologists with a wide range of specialties who have years of research experience in Egypt. The online and print editions are currently available. Articles and abstracts are available at www.americanethnologist.org.

This journal is edited by Angelique Haugerud of Rutgers University and its content deals with all facets of ethnology in the broadest sense of the term. Articles creatively demonstrate the connections between ethnographic specificity and theoretical originality, as well as the ongoing relevance of the ethnographic imagination to the contemporary world.

The American Ethnological Society, founded in 1842, sponsors the journal American Ethnologist. AES is a section of the American Anthropological Association.

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Founded in 1902, the American Anthropological Association is the world’s largest professional organization of anthropologists and others interested in anthropology, with an average annual membership of more than 10,000. The Arlington, VA-based association represents all specialties within anthropology – cultural anthropology, biological (or physical) anthropology, archaeology, linguistics and applied anthropology.