American Foreign Policy Council

EGYPT

QUICK FACTS

Population: 85,294,388

Area: 1,001,450 sq km

Ethnic Groups: Egyptian 99.6%, other 0.4%

Religions: Muslim (mostly Sunni) 90%, Coptic 9%, other Christian 1%

Government Type: Republic

GDP (official exchange rate): $256.7 billion

Map and Quick Facts courtesy of the CIA World Factbook (Last Updated September 2013)

Egypt has played a central role in the history and the development of Islamism. In 1928, an Egyptian teacher named Hassan al-Banna founded the world's first modern organized Islamist movement. That group, named the Muslim Brotherhood, soon conceived an ideological framework that would go on to inspire most contemporary Islamists, and soon became the main competing political force challenging the established regimes. From the rule of Nasser to the Mubarak regime, the Muslim Brotherhood was outlawed, but it continued to act as the major opposition force within Egypt's political system, holding seats in parliament and constantly expanding its influence on Egyptian society.

Since the 1990s, the Muslim Brothers began distancing themselves from violence, which temporarily eased their relationship with Egyptian authorities. Despite crackdowns on its members, the movement was granted enough space to expand its grip on civil society and further reinforce its outreach. The Brotherhood refrained from attacking the Mubarak regime, while the latter utilized this status

quo to slow the pace of democratization and reforms, arguing that political liberalization would lead to the emergence of an Islamist state.

With certain nuances, many of the stages of development of the Brotherhood occurred in other Egyptian Islamist groups. After a long period of confrontation with Cairo, the "Islamic Group" (Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya) and "Islamic Jihad" (Al-Jihad) gradually drifted away from the use of violence, following a dynamic of "deradicalization" in their ranks.[1] However, this process largely was circumstantial and opportunistic. A young generation of radicals, Salafists in particular, never stopped criticizing the moderate course of Egyptian Islamism, especially after the shift toward moderation on the part of earlier Islamist groups failed to bring about significant changes in terms of political participation.[2]

The January 2011 uprising against the Mubarak regime marked a turning point. After the ouster of Hosni Mubarak, Egyptian Islamists were brought back into the political spotlight. While pro-democracy protests were initially dominated by young, liberal and secular movements, Islamists won the three rounds of voting between November 2011 and January 2012, obtaining the largest share of seats in the new Egyptian parliament. A Muslim Brotherhood leader, Muhammad Morsi, was elected Egypt's president on June 30, 2012, in the country's first democratically organized elections. However, in the wake of mass protests against the Morsi regime's increasingly authoritarian government in late June and early July of 2013, the Egyptian military ousted Morsi and replaced him with an interim government tasked with drafting a new constitution. Since then, as civil unrest has continued, the military has worked to create a new framework for Egypt based on secular ideals.

ISLAMIST ACTIVITY

Egyptian Islamism has always spanned a diverse ideological and operational spectrum. The full breadth of this diversity has been reflected in the post-Mubarak era.

The first and most important Egyptian Islamist movement is the Muslim Brotherhood (*Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin*), founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna. Its ideology states that a true "Islamic society" should be one in which all state institutions and the government obey strict principles of the Qur'an.[3] Al-Banna, a teacher from a modest background, was heavily influenced by Syrian-Egyptian thinker Muhammad Rashid Rida, who believed that a return to the ancestral foundations of Islam was the only way to purge Muslim societies of Western influences and colonialism.[4] Initially, al-Banna's ambitions were moderate and focused on moral and social reform within

society. But his followers radicalized in the late 1940s as a result of the country's deepening political turmoil. Al-Banna's legacy was spread and developed by another key figure, Sayyid Qutb, who became the Brotherhood's chief ideologue in the 1950s and authored the famous Islamist manifesto *Milestones (Ma'alim fi-l-Tariq)*, in which he calls on Muslims to fight "paganism" (*jahiliyya*) through offensive jihad until the establishment of a united Islamic community worldwide.[5]

In the initial decades following its creation, the Muslim Brotherhood successfully spread its reach across the Islamic world. In the process, it provided many Islamists with inspiration in their attempts to establish Islamic states in their own countries and to advocate for violent struggle as a means to achieve this goal. Due to its influence, the movement was officially outlawed in Egypt in 1954, although it remained tolerated by authorities. The primary strength of the group has been its ability to adapt with the times and to the needs of its constituents; specifically, its leaders and members have succeeded in developing large social networks that offer basic services, jobs and healthcare to impoverished Egyptians. This impressive web of charities has allowed the Brotherhood to step in where the state had largely failed and to expand its grip over all levels of society, making it one of the most powerful grassroots Islamist movements in the region.

A second notable Islamist movement is the Islamic Group (*Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya*), which emerged in the late 1970s as a student offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood. It was first active on university campuses and carried out further recruiting within Egyptian prisons, as well as in the country's poor urban and rural areas. Although loosely organized, the group was reportedly involved in the 1981 assassination of President Anwar Sadat, and in a series of attacks during the 1980s and 1990s aimed at deposing Egypt's secular, autocratic government and replacing it with an Islamic theocracy. These attacks included the 1997 killing of Western tourists in Luxor, the attempted assassination of President Hosni Mubarak in Ethiopia in 1995, the Cairo bombings of 1993, and several other armed operations against Egyptian intellectuals and Coptic Christians. The movement's spiritual leader, Umar Abd al-Rahman, was connected to Ramzi Yusuf, the perpetrator of the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993.[6] (Rahman and nine followers were subsequently arrested and convicted in New York of plotting to blow up the United Nations headquarters, the New York Fed, the George Washington Bridge, and the Holland and Lincoln Tunnels). In 1999, the Islamic Group declared a unilateral ceasefire in its longstanding struggle against Cairo. This declaration marked a major ideological shift, and was accompanied by a steady drift away from the use of violence. The Islamic Group's members have not claimed responsibility for any armed attack since.[7] In 2003, the Islamic

Group reentered the Egyptian political arena. Subsequent moves to diminish radicalism within the party drove a faction of the Islamic Group's more violent adherents to join al-Qaeda in 2006.[8] In the 2011-2012 elections, the Islamic Group ran under the Building and Development Party and won 13 seats in the lower house.[9] Members of the Islamic group have protested the Egyptian military's deposing of Morsi and the dissolution of his government.

The third group of note is the Islamic Jihad (*Al-Jihad*). Active since the 1970s, it was officially formed in 1980 as a result of the merger of two Islamist cells led by Karam Zuhdi and Muhammad Abd al-Salam Faraj. Faraj's famous manifesto, *The Absent Duty (Al-Farida al-Ghaiba)*, outlined the ideology of the new movement.[10] Like affiliates of the Islamic Group, members of the Islamic Jihad form a relative minority within Egypt's Islamist spectrum and are mostly former members of the Brotherhood. Some are believed to have fought alongside the Afghan *mujahideen* in the 1980s against the Soviet Union. The organization's stated objective was to overthrow the Egyptian "infidel" regime and establish an Islamic government in its place, but also to attack U.S. and Israeli interests in Egypt and abroad. The group is famous for having assassinated President Anwar al-Sadat in 1981, and for additional efforts to eliminate Egyptian government members in the early 1990s. It is also believed to have attacked Egypt's embassy in Pakistan in 1995 and to have been involved in planning bombings against U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. In June 2001, the group merged with al-Qaeda to form a new entity, called *Gama'a Qa'idat al-Jihad* and headed by Osama bin Laden's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri.[11] Islamic Jihad members also ran in the 2011-2012 Egyptian parliamentary elections under two different parties: the Islamic Party and the Democratic Jihad Party.[12]

Over time, this landscape has evolved considerably. One of the most significant changes has been a gradual "deradicalization" of Islamist movements and their ideological abandonment of violence. This process has primarily focused on the changing attitudes of many Islamists toward the use of terror. While the ideology of Egyptian Islamist groups might remain radical and anti-democratic in nature, there has been tangible movement away from violence as a vehicle by which to impose their political views.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Muslim Brotherhood began undergoing broad deradicalization, and it increasingly disavowed *jihad* in favor of political moderation. Hassan al-Hudaybi, the movement's supreme guide, released a book in 1969 entitled *Preachers, Not Judges*, in which he justified the decision to reject violence and developed a series of theological counterarguments to Qutb's radical views.[13] Under the influence of al-Hudaybi and his successor Umar al-Tilmisani, the Brotherhood gradually distanced

itself from armed action, gave an oath to Sadat not to use violence against his regime, and even named him a "martyr" after he was killed in 1981. This ideological shift drew condemnation from other Islamist groups, most notably the Islamic Jihad and its commander Ayman al-Zawahiri, who severely criticized the Brotherhood's reorientation in a book entitled *The Bitter Harvest: The Muslim Brotherhood in Sixty Years (Al-Hasad al-Murr: Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun fi Sittin 'Aman)*.[14] In this book, al-Zawahiri criticized the Brotherhood for maintaining good relations with King Farouk and presidents Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak:

> "The Muslim Brotherhood, by recognizing the tyrants' legitimacy and sharing constitutional legitimacy with them, has become a tool in the tyrants' hands to strike *jihadist* groups in the name of [fighting] extremism and disobeying *Sharia* [Islamic law]. There should be no doubt that we are proud to be outside of this 'legitimacy of disbelief,' which the Muslim Brotherhood has accepted and approved."

A number of factors were necessary for this deradicalization to take root. Islamist ideas first had to be delegitimized through rational and theological arguments, with the process supported by charismatic and authentic former *jihadists*. One of the most prominent instances of this trend occurred within the Islamic Group. In July 1997, during a military tribunal, one of the group's activists, Muhammad al-Amin Abd al-Alim, read a statement signed by six other Islamist leaders that called on their affiliates to cease all armed operations in Egypt and abroad.[15] While it elicited considerable controversy within the movement, the statement heralded the beginning of its deradicalization. In March 1999, the group's leadership launched an "Initiative for Ceasing Violence" and declared a unilateral ceasefire. Ideologues and leaders—widely respected within the larger grassroots movement—were able to convince their base to renounce armed struggle and support their new course by authoring a series of texts to provide the ideological legitimation for their rejection of violence. Four books were issued in January 2002 under the title of *Correcting Conceptions (Silsilat Tashih al-Mafahim)*, addressing the reasons behind the Islamic Group's ideological reorientation and explaining why *jihad* in Egypt had failed. Twelve others followed, developing a critique of al-Qaeda's extreme ideology.[16]

A second factor that contributed to the deradicalization of Islamist movements was their interaction with external groups, among them "moderate" Islamists and non-Islamists. This, surprisingly, occurred within Egypt's prison facilities, where inmates discussed their beliefs and tactics, with such interactions resulting in the deradicalization of many prisoners. The Mus-

lim Brothers were the first to undergo such a process following the execution of Sayyid Qutb in 1966. Members of the movement began questioning the relevance of *jihad* as a way to combat the government, and many chose to reject violence. Another notable example of this positive dynamic—all the more significant since the trend elsewhere has been toward greater radicalization within prisons—was the interaction between the Islamic Group and the smaller, more radical Islamic Jihad that began in the 1990s and culminated in 2007 when the former finally embraced moderation. Deradicalization efforts were led by the movement's former leader Sayyid Imam al-Sharif—also known as Abd al-Qadir Ibn Abd al-Aziz or "Dr. Fadl." His *Document for the Right Guidance of Jihad in Egypt and the World (Tarshid al-'Amal al-Jihadi fi Misr wa-l-'Alam)* had an enormous impact within prisons and led numerous inmates to renounce returning to jihad.[17]

Eventually, the state's use of repression coupled with positive incentives contributed as well to this broad deradicalization dynamic.[18] Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the Mubarak regime—in an effort to appease Western anger—increasingly mobilized its resources to tame *jihadists*. In the case of the Islamic Group, the regime provided fighters with pensions, and the Interior Ministry offered other inducements such as business grants to redeemed Islamists.[19] In addition, the success of Egyptian security forces in suppressing radical movements convinced the leadership of such groups that armed violence was no longer a favorable method to achieve their goals. Many came to believe that the plight of Islamists in prison was proof that God no longer supported their actions.

Yet, many of the Islamist groups that have undergone ideological and organizational deradicalization have faced difficulties in imposing the same on their membership. Attempting to convince low- and mid-level *jihadists* to renounce terrorism carried the risk of mutiny and factionalization. The case of the Islamic Jihad, where deradicalization has only been partially successful, is instructive in this respect. While the group's leaders have publicly abandoned violence, some affiliated factions have refused to renounce *jihad*, sometimes even leaving the movement (as was the case with one cell that joined al-Qaeda and likely was involved thereafter in the wave of attacks that hit Egypt after 2003). The Islamic Group faced similar difficulties. In an interview, Nagih Ibrahim, one of its leading ideologues, emphasized that although the group's formal rejection of violence had obviously helped limit the spread of violent Islamism in Egypt, such ideological revisions had had less impact on the younger generations, especially on those sympathetic towards or active within hard-line *jihadist* groups such as al-Qaeda.[20]

Cases of re-radicalization within the Muslim Brotherhood became clear

before the 2011 uprising through the group's affiliation with, and public support for, movements such as the Iranian-backed Hamas (itself a Brotherhood offshoot) and the Hezbollah Shi'ite militia. Several little-known violent offshoots, like the *jihadist* "Abdallah Azzam Brigades in Egypt" or the "Holy Warriors of Egypt,"[21] also emerged in the 2000s, spreading Islamist ideology, conducting anti-regime activity, and accusing society and state institutions of "apostasy."[22] Another group calling itself "Monotheism and Holy War" (*Tawhid wa-l-Jihad*) and which was connected to al-Qaeda emerged during that period in the Sinai. It has since targeted the country's tourism sector in a wave of bombings that first hit the town of Taba in 2004 and then the resort towns of Sharm al-Sheikh and Dahab in 2005 and 2006.

When the Mubarak regime fell, Islamist activity resumed with a resurgence of attacks and incidents in the Sinai. On several occasions, armed fighters attacked Egyptian security forces, police stations, and the pipeline exporting gas to Israel and Jordan. Other operations targeted Israeli patrols and soldiers.[23] New *jihadist* groups also announced their founding, such as the "Supporters of Holy War" (*Ansar al-Jihad*),[24] while other existing groups, such as "Excommunication and Exodus" (*Takfir wa-l-Hijra*), established in 1965 by Muslim Brother Shukri Mustafa, have been reconstituted.[25] Even after former President Muhammad Morsi fell from power, anti-military violence continues in the Sinai, conducted mostly by small-cell, extremist militant groups that have little to no command structure[26] Some organized Islamists groups, such as *Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis*, have stepped forward to claim responsibility for various attacks.[27] On August 7, 2013, the army launched an operation into the Sinai and killed 60 suspected terrorists, losing 30 from their own ranks.[28] Overall, the Sinai region with its mountainous terrain, particularly in the areas of Rafah and Sheikh Zuwaid, provides vast hideouts for *jihadist* networks and could become a haven for major threats if attacks spread into the rest of Egypt and beyond its borders.

ISLAMISM AND SOCIETY

Throughout the years, state retreat, economic stagnation, and political exclusion have reinforced the stranglehold of reactionary political Islam on Egypt's population. Islamists have managed to establish themselves at the heart of society, using a simple ideology as a source of legitimacy and setting up a number of "informal" activities (charities, education, health services) that impact the livelihoods of countless impoverished Egyptians.[29] In spite of the deradicalization of many Islamist groups, Cairo's strategy of brutal persecution and onerous restrictions on individual and political freedoms—which left Islamists with little representation and no ability to influence politics—backfired, exacerbating religious conservatism and social violence. This pro-

voked the return of more diffuse and more radical discourses among Islamist circles. Many previously deradicalized *jihadists*, who had no education when they were released from prisons, returned to the Islamist fold when they realized the Egyptian state was unable or unwilling to address their needs.

The combination of severe political repression and poor economic conditions (at least for the lower classes) under the Mubarak regime contributed to a "re-radicalization" of Egyptian society and to the rise and spread of even more radical Islamist tendencies, such as Salafism.[30] Salafists inherit their name from the Arabic term "*al-salaf al-salif*", meaning the "worthy ancestors" in reference to the early generations of Muslims (*sahaba*), regarded as exemplary because they would always seek to emulate the Prophet Muhammad and maintain a literalist reading of the Qur'an and of Islamic traditions (*hadith*). Salafists consider the only true path to be one that abides by the practices of these first Muslims, and that anything deviating from this strictly literal interpretation is innovation (*bidaa*) and therefore apostasy (*kufr*). This stance also explains why they have historically focused more on personal behavior than politics, and why Salafism, in its first stages of development, has been a rather apolitical and quietist phenomenon.

Salafist groups have been present in Egypt since the early 20th century. The first Salafist association, the "Sharia Assembly," was created in 1912, even before the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood. Another group, named the "Supporters of the Sunna" (*Ansar Al-Sunna*), was founded by Sheikh Muhammad Hamid al-Fiqi in 1926. Its members were focused on protecting monotheism and fighting un-Islamic practices and beliefs such as innovation in religion, and reestablishing the Islamic Caliphate through non-violent means.

However, Salafism truly began to gain traction in the 1970s and 1980s, specifically with the return of Egyptian workers from various parts of the Arabian Peninsula, most notably Saudi Arabia. One of the largest and most prominent movements emerged during that period. Formally set up in 1977, it was called the "Salafist Call Society" (*Al-Da'wa Al-Salafiyya*). The Islamic Group at Alexandria University launched the movement after students with Salafist views refused to join the Muslim Brotherhood and its dominant ideology, leading to clashes. In 1980, the Salafists institutionalized their activities, and the Salafist Call Society became active in education and charity. Yet the movement was soon banned by the Egyptian regime, and its members were regularly arrested by the security forces.

Although few Egyptians would openly identify themselves as Salafists under the Mubarak regime, there were signs that popular thinking was being

influenced by this puritanical approach to faith. This was, for instance, evidenced by the mounting number of women wearing the full veil (*niqab*) and men growing their beards. Beyond the traditional role of radical imams in mosques, television satellite channels also started to show an overt Salafist tone—*Al-Naas* and *Al-Rahma* for instance—and gained a growing audience.[31] The phenomenon has been worrisome to a number of secular Egyptians, especially as it relates to the protection of the rights of women and religious minorities, which most Salafists reject.

Radical Islamists have openly targeted religious minorities for years in an attempt to provoke sectarian warfare in Egypt. According to some Salafists, Coptic Christians, a community that represents 10 percent of the population and derives its name from the Arabic "*qubt,*" meaning "Egyptian," are not citizens but *dhimmis*—a religious minority subject to Muslim rule.[32] Politically marginalized since Nasser's 1952 coup and regularly persecuted, Copts are commonly portrayed as "infidels" who conspire against Islam, and Salafists have regularly called for violent attacks on them.[33] Since the revolution, Salafists have engaged in a massive anti-Coptic hate campaign. The campaign has proved a disaster for Egypt's Christian community, which has begun to flee the county en masse.[34]

A devastating attack occurred on New Year's Day, 2011, when a bombing of a church in Alexandria killed more than 20 Copts and provoked clashes between Muslims and Christians. Many Copts were detained under the Morsi regime and their homes and stores looted and set ablaze. During the elections, some radical preachers called them "heretics" and promised to expel them if they did not pay the "*jizya*," a tax levied on non-Muslims.[35] In 2012, several Salafists accused Copts of being "traitors" for voting against Islamists in the presidential polls.[36] Currently, Copts continue to be attacked and persecuted for supporting the military takeover that ousted the Muslim Brotherhood government.

Salafists have also targeted other sects of Islam, such as the Shi'a, Baha'i and Sufis.[37] Before 2011, Salafists managed to ban *dhikr* (the Islamic devotional act of Sufi orders) and continue to call for the banning of all Sufi ceremonies. In addition to bashing Sufis as "infidels," Salafists accuse them of encouraging sin and debauchery by mixing the sexes at shrines and during their rituals—a practice that Salafists consider to be evil. They have, for example, regularly pointed to the mosque of Ahmad al-Badawi in Tanta—where the founder of the Sufi *Ahmadiyya* order is buried—which does not enforce segregation between men and women, except during prayers. Moreover, Salafists target the symbols of ancient Egypt, most recently demanding the destruction of the "idolatrous" Pharaonic statues and the Great Pyramids.[38]

Finally, Salafists have increasingly targeted Egyptian women, especially those who do not abide by their code of behavior. In 2009 a Salafist preacher called for the "Islamization" of all Coptic women in order to "destroy apostasy."[39] In 2011, a Salafist leader refused to appear on a political talk show until the female presenter agreed to put on a headscarf. Others have suggested phasing out revealing swimwear on beaches, banning women from driving as the Saudi authorities do, or even legalizing "sex-slave" marriages.[40] Egyptian Salafist groups have also actively campaigned for legislation compelling all Egyptian women, including non-Muslim or secular ones, to wear the veil.[41]

ISLAMISM AND THE STATE

From the 1970s until the overthrow of the Mubarak regime, Islamism as a both social and political phenomenon was actively fought by the Egyptian state, which detained its militants, jailed its leaders, and targeted its resources. In particular, the Muslim Brotherhood, which had managed to erect a vast network of popular support through charities, was subjected to harsh repression and mass arrests of its members—repression which resulted in the emergence of other, even more radical factions like the Salafists.

In 2005, the Brotherhood won 88 seats in the parliamentary elections, thereby becoming the biggest opposition bloc to the Mubarak regime. However, in an effort to prevent further political gains, the Egyptian regime engineered constitutional amendments and a restrictive new electoral law in 2007, making it impossible for Muslim Brothers to participate in either parliamentary or presidential polls. The new electoral law outlawed all political activities and parties "based on any religious background or foundation," targeting Islamist groups above all. The following year, these restrictions resulted in the rejection of more than 800 Muslim Brothers as candidates for local council elections. Subsequently, the movement failed to participate in elections for professional lawyers and journalist syndicates as well. Additional constitutional changes further extended the "temporary" emergency law enforced after the assassination of President Anwar Sadat in 1981; the adoption of a new anti-terrorism law (Article 179), while ostensibly designed to protect democratic rights, gave security forces extensive powers to crack down on Islamists.

Given their longstanding confrontation with successive political regimes, one might have expected the Brotherhood and other Islamists to be at the vanguard of the January 25, 2011 "Day of Anger." Yet most Islamists did not rally at the Tahrir Square uprising, suspicious of the youth-led protests and fearing a backlash from the regime if the revolution failed. Salafists, who

for most part stayed on the sidelines of the movement, sometimes argued that the Americans would have ordered Mubarak to "massacre them all" had they decided to take part in the demonstrations.[42] As for the Muslim Brotherhood, despite being the country's best-organized opposition group, its members did not fully endorse the popular mobilization until it became clear that a genuine revolution was underway. Thereafter, the group's leaders called their partisans to take part in the nationwide protests. This less active posture later became a source of considerable criticism from secular and liberal forces, who accused the Islamists of opportunism and exploiting the struggle for their own benefit.

Egypt's Islamist forces showed remarkable pragmatism and organization in "capturing" the political fruits of the revolution. In February 2011, when widespread protests forced Mubarak to step down and left an interim military government in control of Egypt—the "Supreme Council of the Armed Forces" (SCAF), which allowed the formation of political parties – Islamists from all backgrounds signaled their intention to officially participate in the transition. Yet in order to reassure the Egyptian population about their intentions, they coordinated with secular parties in the initial stages of the transition. The Muslim Brotherhood aligned itself with former IAEA head and Nobel Prize winner Muhammad El-Baradei and called for political reform. In a historic move, the group finally announced in late April 2011 the creation of its "Freedom and Justice Party" (FJP), stating that its policies would be grounded in Islamic principles, but that the party would be non-confessional and tolerant, including in its ranks both women and Christians. In June 2011, the FJP received official recognition as a political party, allowing it to run candidates in the 2011-2012 elections.

More surprising, and largely unexpected,[43] was the establishment by the Salafist Call of the "Light Party" (*Hizb al-Nur*), led by Imad Abd al-Ghaffour, and the "Building and Development Party" (*Hizb al-Bina' wa-l-Tanmia*) by the Islamic Group. The new Salafist political spectrum also included smaller movements such as the ultraconservative "Al-Asala Party" in Cairo, founded by Adil Abd al-Maqsoud Afifi. Beyond their lack of a unified leadership, political experience, and organizational structure, Salafists had always refused to take part in politics prior to the revolution. Since they perceived any political participation as religiously forbidden, members of the group generally refused to work with "un-Islamic" state institutions. They also shunned the concept of democracy as "alien," which gave human legislation precedence over Islamic law.[44] But under the guidance of charismatic preachers, the movement opted for participation as a pragmatic way to incorporate *Sharia* law into Egypt's new government.[45] In the process, they attracted strong support from the poor—who tend to identify more with religious

values than the "middle-class" Islamists associated with the Brotherhood—and also tried to reach out to young educated Egyptians by more vigorously embracing modernity.

Contrary to secular and liberal parties, which did rather poorly in the various rounds of voting, both the Muslim Brotherhood— gathering some Islamists and liberals around the "Democratic Alliance for Egypt"—and the Salafist "Coalition for Egypt," also known as the "Islamist Bloc" and led by the Al-Nour Party, enjoyed considerable electoral success. They won a total of 168 of the contested seats—34 for the Salafists and 78 for the Muslim Brothers—or 66.6% of the total seats. Having gained nearly a quarter of the total seats, the Salafist electoral breakthrough was by far the most unanticipated development of the election and the biggest surprise for liberals, external observers, and their fellow Islamists.[46]

As they moved away from their reputation as an unorganized movement, Egyptian Salafists managed to mobilize their followers and win a major victory when Muhammad Saad al-Katatni, Al-Nour's secretary-general, was appointed speaker of the new Parliament.[47] At the same time, this Islamist success immediately provoked major concerns, not only among Egypt's secular and liberal democrats, but also from moderate Muslims, many of whom felt deprived of "their" revolution and started to fear that Islamists could use their new institutional position to oppress women and minorities, curb freedom of speech and belief, and ultimately establish an Islamic state in Egypt.

There are several explanations for the Islamists' unexpected success in the polls. Many polling stations failed to open on time, ballots were delivered late, and illegal propaganda and advertising abounded.[48] The electoral system also favored Islamist parties in many areas. Districts were not proportionate to population size, ensuring that rural districts with stronger Islamist support enjoyed more representation than they had in the past.[49] The shortened timeframe of the elections also favored Islamists, since the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafist parties were among the most organized from the beginning. In contrast, after the destruction of the National Democratic Party, the secular parties participating generally had no structure or form and lacked adequate time to organize and campaign properly.[50]

Beyond the sustained effort made by Egypt's democratic forces, and by the military, to limit the influence of Islamists during the transitional phase, the main obstacle to the spread of such influence will likely come from the Islamists themselves. The post-Mubarak Islamist landscape is far from unified, marked by violent endogenous tensions than in the past. This fragmentation ensured that the anticipated governing alliance between the Muslim Brother-

hood and Salafist parties, which many Egyptians and foreign observers feared in the wake of the elections, did not materialize, as both movements disagreed on an ideological and tactical level, especially regarding the appropriate degree of Islamization of state and society.

The Brotherhood has not renounced its plan to institute a caliphate in Egypt, but it has made it a long-term goal, favoring in the meantime an image of openness to other parties and moderation. Salafists, however, believe that *sharia* must be the only source of legislation, and they have thus adopted a much more dogmatic stance. They fear collusion between the Brotherhood and the military in a potential attempt to suppress them. Fueled by these fears, in November 2011 the main Salafist parties quit the FJP-led Democratic Alliance and rallied in April 2012 with a coalition of moderates against the Brotherhood.

With no single doctrine and regular clashes between the movement's primary charismatic leaders, Egyptian Salafists remain deeply divided. While apolitical Salafists continue to condemn political activism, others advocate for it.[51] *Al-Madkhaliyya*, a lesser-known group inspired by Muslim scholar and Salafist proponent Rabi' al-Madkhali, has attacked many politicized Salafists, accusing them of provoking internal conflict. These ideological conflicts will likely continue to be a considerable source of tension, if not violence, between Salafist forces in the future.

Given its reputation as Egypt's most united opposition group, the fragmentation of the Muslim Brotherhood into several new parties has proved to be an even more spectacular development. The decades-old internal conflict between the movement's reformists and hardliners, which resurfaced in the post-Mubarak era, is primarily responsible.[52] The conflict encompasses a "generational" divide that has long pitted an aging, conservative, and ideologically inflexible leadership—embodied by current supreme guide Muhammad Badi[53]—against younger cadres seeking to bring about change within the organization.[54]

This younger generation largely ignored the leadership's orders to refrain from participating in the early stages of the revolution, choosing instead to join the Tahrir Square protests alongside secular and liberal democratic groups. Emboldened by this experience and the media attention that followed, these young Brothers have distanced themselves from the movement's hierarchy and formed their own parties. Thus, in July 2011, Muhammad Habib, a deputy of the Brotherhood and prominent reformist who had been bypassed during the movement's 2009-2010 internal elections, joined the *Al-Nahda* (Renaissance) party, a new entity spawned by former Muslim

Brothers and headed by Ibrahim al-Zaafarani.[55] Other new parties formed during that period included *Al-Riyada* (Pioneer) led by reformist Khaled Dawoud; the "Movement for Peace and Development" (*Harakat al-Salam wa-l-Tanmiyya*); and the youth-led "Egyptian Current" (*Al-Tayyar al-Masri*), which attracted many non-Islamist activists to its ranks.

Before the revolution, Muslim Brothers had opposed Mubarak's bid for a sixth presidential term and rejected his son Gamal as a replacement. In 2011, the movement's leadership initially stated that its party, the FJP, would not put forth a candidate for the presidential election but would seek an outsider to support instead. Only months later, in March 2012, the Brotherhood's announcement that Khairat al-Shater, a wealthy businessman and senior member of the organization, would run for president as the nominee of the FJP, contradicted their earlier statements. Shater, who had been jailed under Mubarak for funding the Brotherhood, was quickly disqualified from running by the national electoral commission[56], along with other candidates considered to be leading contenders of the race, including former vice president and intelligence chief Omar Suleiman and Salafist leader Hazim Salah Abu Ismail.[57] This prompted the Muslim Brotherhood to endorse FJP head Muhammad Morsi as its official candidate. The final list consisted of 13 presidential candidates, most notably including the military's candidate, Ahmed Chafiq, the leader of the democratic movement Hamdeen Sabbahi, and former head of the Arab League Amr Moussa. The elections took place on May 23-24, 2012, with Morsi ultimately securing victory with 24% of the votes.[58] Morsi was remarkable not only for his Islamist background, but for being first civilian elected president in Egypt's contemporary history.

Yet during its first year in power, the Morsi administration and the Freedom and Justice Party were the targets of growing criticism. Polls indicated that 70% of Egyptian citizens believed that the first year of Morsi's presidency had not lived up to their expectations. Poll results also indicated that most Egyptians considered themselves to be worse off under Morsi than they had been before.[59] Undemocratic efforts to consolidate presidential authority; fears of marginalization of Coptic Christians, women and minorities; and profound economic turmoil contributed to a new wave of demonstrations throughout 2012 and 2013 that culminated in the military ousting of President Morsi in July 2013. Both Saudi Arabia and the United States State Department have characterized the military takeover as legitimate, rather than a coup, given widespread levels of public support.[60]

The interim military government has pledged to hold new elections in early 2014.[61] However, in the months since Morsi was removed from office, Islamist groups have torched and looted schools, churches, orphanages, and

homes in an aggressive public demonstration of anger,[62] and violence against Coptic Christians has continued unabated.

ENDNOTES

[1] On the "deradicalization" of Egyptian Islamist movements, see Omar Ashour, *The Deradicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements* (London: Routledge, 2009); Omar Ashour, "Lions Tamed? An Inquiry Into The Causes Of De-Radicalization Of The Egyptian Islamic Group," *Middle East Journal* 61, no. 4 (2007), 596-597; Rohan Gunaratna and Mohamed Bin Alia, "De-Radicalization Initiatives In Egypt: A Preliminary Insight," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32, no. 4 (2009), 277-291.

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eg/2011/1053/op3.htm
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[15] Omar Ashour, "Lions tamed? An inquiry into the causes of de-radicalization of armed Islamist movements: the case of the Egyptian Islamic Group," *Middle East Journal* 61, no. 4 (2007), 596-597; Rohan Gunaratna and Mohamed Bin Ali, "De-Radicalization Initiatives in Egypt: A Preliminary Insight," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32, no. 4 (2009), 277-291.
[16] Among these can be mentioned Karam Zuhdi, *The Strategy and the Bombings of Al-Qaeda: Mistakes and Dangers (Istratijiyyat wa Tajjirat al-Qa'ida: Al-Akhta' wa-l-Akhtar)* (Cairo: Al-Turath al-Islami, 2002); Nagih Ibrahim and Ali al-Sharif, *Banning Extremism in Religion and the Excommunication of Muslims (Hurmat al-Ghuluw fi-I-Din wa Takfir al-Muslimin)* (Cairo: Al-Turath al-Islami, 2002).
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