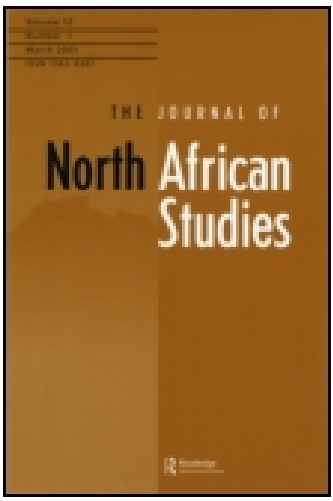

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Party proliferation and electoral transition in post-Mubarak Egypt

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In the aftermath of the popular revolt that overthrew President Mubarak in February 2011, Egypt's transition to democracy has been a cautious one. Despite the restrained pace of reform, one of the defining features of post-Mubarak politics has been a surge in the number of new political parties contesting seats in Parliament. This paper argues that the nature of Egypt's new mixed-member majoritarian electoral system encourages loose alliances dominated by three political factions: liberals, leftists, and religious parties. It focuses on Egypt's new electoral framework, emerging political realities, and those parties likely to shape the political landscape in the future.

Keywords: Egypt; political parties; elections; People's Assembly; Shura Council; SCAF; Muslim Brotherhood; Freedom and Justice Party; parliament

Introduction: the politics of predictability

For the past 30 years, an unrivalled degree of predictability has characterised the ebbs and flows of Egyptian politics. As elections, wars, and social movements provoked change and suffering throughout the region, Egyptian stability was typically taken for granted. Politically, the idea of a stable Egypt dominated by the command of Mubarakism remained immutable. Following the 18-day uprising that led to Mubarak's resignation, however, everything changed. Egyptian politics has entered the realm of the unpredictable.

As academics and experts begin to understand the underlying causes of modern revolution and reform in the Middle East, many still wonder why the resulting volatility of Egyptian politics was not anticipated despite the ubiquity of corruption, economic deprivation, and the absence of political rights. Taleb and Blyth (2011) offer one explanation of this paradox. They suggest that complex systems, such as the one commanded by Mubarak, suppressing volatility 'tend to become extremely fragile, while at the same time exhibiting no visible risks.' They continue:

> It is both misguided and dangerous to push unobserved risks further into the statistical tails of the probability distribution of outcomes and allow these high-impact, low-probability "tail risks"

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> to disappear from policymakers' fields of observation. What the world is witnessing in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya is simply what happens when highly constrained systems explode. (Taleb and Blyth 2011)

This nominal 'explosion' of the Egyptian political system has opened previously closed political spaces. While the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) has assumed interim responsibility for performing basic state functions, a number of draconian, Mubarak-era restrictions have been relaxed. This paper focuses on the consequences of loosening one of those restrictions – the state's regulation of political parties. Indeed, despite the restrained pace of reform, one of the defining features of post-Mubarak politics has been a surge in the number of new political parties. As of September 2011, there were at least 45 viable political parties (Al-Sayyed 2011). At least half of these parties earned recognition in the months following Mubarak's resignation, and many more pre- and post-Mubarak parties are politically active despite not having achieved legal recognition.

This paper proceeds in three parts. The first section provides an overview of legal changes approved since Mubarak's resignation, with particular attention to the Political Parties Law and the Law of the People's Assembly and Shura Council. The second section analyses electoral realities likely to shape Egypt's long-term political landscape and those factors that are likely to lead to the consolidation of religious, leftist, and liberal factions. The last section introduces the more popular parties likely to alter Egypt's political landscape within each faction.

The pursuit of legitimacy and Egypt's new electoral framework

Before Mubarak's resigned in February 2011, there was little reason to believe that the state would permit political parties the freedom to operate and contest seats in Parliament with increasing freedom. The ruling National Democratic Party (NDP), formed by President Anwar Sadat in 1978, exercised uncontested authority in all arenas of state politics. Although a number of small parties operated inside a nominal multi-party system, the NDP held a monopoly over most state institutions. Opposition political forces were barred from contesting the NDP's influence. In 2010, amidst allegations of fraud, vote rigging, and intimidation, a mere 16 seats went to opposition candidates in Parliamentary elections held in November. Roughly 3% of Parliament consisted of opposition candidates, compared to 23% representation in the previous session (Afify 2011).

Three months later, Mubarak's government was toppled after an 18-day uprising successfully forced his resignation. Less than an hour before President Mubarak resigned, NDP Secretary-General Hossam Badrawi resigned from his post as party leader. The era of NDP domination was effectively over: 'the next stage needs new parties with new blood and the NDP is no longer qualified to adjust to this stage' (Essam El-Din 2011c). This caused a sudden widening of political space, leading to a legal foundation by which other political parties could contest state power. The applicable laws that were amended included the Political Parties Law and the Law on the People's Assembly and Shura Council.

Political parties law

The emergence of independent Egyptian political parties began, in earnest, in 1974. Sadat's predecessor, Gamal Abdel Nasser, had established the state's first post-revolutionary political party

with the promulgation of the National Charter in 1962. The Charter established the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) as the state's premier political party.

Early origins and the rise of multiparty politics

Upon Nasser's death in 1974, Sadat took small steps to pluralise the policies and practices of the ASU. The party was split into three groups, or 'forums': the NDP, the National Progressive Unionist Grouping (Tagammu), and the Ahrar (Liberal) Party. Tagammu and Ahrar presented socialist and liberal programs, respectively, with the NDP operating as a centrist interlocutor. In June 1977, Sadat signed Egypt's first post-independence law (Law 40/1977) regulating the conduct of political parties, which established that 'Egyptians have the right to create political parties and every Egyptian has the right to belong to any political party' (Human Rights Watch 2007).

Law 40/1977 became known as the Political Parties Law (PPL). It set parameters for the legal establishment of political parties, but the responsibility for its administration and implementation was essentially turned over to the NDP. The law also mandated the creation of a body to oversee party activities: the Political Parties Affairs Committee (PPAC) was charged with overseeing the process by which parties obtained legal recognition. The President of the upper house of Parliament (the Shura Council) chaired the committee, and general membership consisted of other NDP partisans, such as the Minister of Interior.

Taking advantage of the law's vague language, the PPAC restricted party registration in two distinct ways. First, the committee prevented parties from registering on the grounds that they were redundant. If an ideological equivalent was believed to already exist, the party's application was rejected. Second, if the party took advantage of class divisions, or advocated on behalf of a particular group, the Committee could reject the party. While the law set certain guidelines for recognition, it essentially prevented the establishment of parties that could appeal to a widespread regional, religious or working-class constituency (Owen 1994). The PPAC could use these rules to restrict registration, but they could also be used to arbitrarily suspend the activities of any previously registered political party, as well.

The most significant changes to the law were made in 2005, when it was amended in Law 177/2005. Some of the restrictive disqualification criteria were relaxed. Parties no longer had to ensure that their principles did not contradict the 1952 revolution, nor were they forced to accept certain political givens. For example, the previous law made it easy for the PPAC to revoke the registration of parties critical of the Camp David Agreement with the United States and Israel.

Previously, all parties had to apply for recognition and hope that the PPAC would approve their request. After 2005, parties only had to notify the PPAC that they had initiated political activities. The body then had 90 days to respond with an objection (after which point the Committee's non response would indicate the absence of any valid objection). The law also introduced a few cosmetic changes to the composition of the PPAC by reducing the Cabinet's share of seats.

Despite the relaxing of many of these restrictions, the law still made it difficult for political parties to contest state power. There were new limits to the number of publications parties could sponsor and a new requirement for obtaining signatures of support from at least 10 governorates. More troublingly, parties also had to ensure they were contributing to 'national unity' and were still barred from recognition if another party shared their ideological concerns.

Mubarak's resignation and changes to the PPL

Shortly after Mubarak's resignation, in March 2011, the law was changed to reflect the public's insistence that NDP officials be banned and its members brought to justice. SCAF moved immediately to amend the law to allow nascent political parties and other groups time to prepare for elections in the Fall. This decision to openly promote political competition amongst new and established parties manifested itself in several distinct ways.

First, the PPAC's composition was reformed such that it would only include serving, non-partisan judges. This would minimise the potential for bias and restrict political parties from influencing the body's decisions (as the NDP did for years). Second, many restrictions were loosened and the PPAC's ability to unilaterally suspend party activities was rescinded. Parties were no longer required to distinguish themselves from existing ones, and vague terminology was edited in order to clarify specific restrictions. Last, the law was changed to require the PPAC to more expeditiously decide on cases referred to the courts for adjudication (Democracy Reporting International 2011)

In practice, though there are still a number of problems with the law, it has not obstructed political parties from contesting seats. Parties who submitted applications prior to Mubarak's resignation were immediately approved, and in most cases, new political parties were given approval.

The Law on the People's Assembly and the Shura Council

While changes to the Political Parties Law have undoubtedly changed the rules governing party behaviour, SCAF's comprehensive overhaul of the country's electoral framework will have an equally substantial impact on Egyptian politics writ-large.

The constitutional referendum and declaration

Prior to its decision to amend the PPL, on 13 February 2011, SCAF issued a proclamation suspending the Egyptian Constitution and dissolving both the People's Assembly, the lower house of Parliament, and the Shura Council, the upper house of Parliament. SCAF would assume control in order to govern Egypt during this transitional period, which would come to an end after six months or until presidential and parliamentary elections were held. A constitutional committee was formed to decide whether or not it would be best to immediately revise the Constitution and proceed with reform, or hold elections and charge an elected body with the task of doing so (Democracy Reporting International 2011).

SCAF quickly decided to allow a group of constitutional and legal experts, the eight-member Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC), to propose amendments to the existing 1971 Constitution. The CDC adopted a number of proposals designed to streamline and democratise the elections process, including: limiting presidential term limits to four years (from six), requiring the President to appoint at least one Vice-President, restoring the role of the judiciary in electoral supervision and adjudication, and requiring the approval of the People's Assembly in order to declare a state of emergency.

Most importantly, however, the CDC allowed the President or half of all Members of Parliament to call for the drafting of a new Constitution by a 100-member constituent assembly selected from amongst elected members of both houses of Parliament (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 2011). On 19 March 2011, the amendments passed in a nationwide referendum and were approved by 77% of those who voted.

Shortly thereafter, on 30 March 2011, SCAF released a 'Constitutional Declaration' outlining a number of constitutional provisions that would be in effect until the constituent assembly agreed on a new Constitution. Although the declaration covered a number of provisions dealing with basic rights (such as the religious and linguistic basis of the state, political rights, and economic regulation), the Declaration also changed the nature of the elections timetable.

Initially, the referendum suggested that the President or Members of Parliament *could* call for the creation of a constituent assembly to draft a Constitution. The Constitutional Declaration, however, required SCAF to do so within six months of Parliamentary elections. Once this assembly was formed, a draft constitution had to be produced within another six months, and a referendum must then be held within 15 days for popular approval (Guide to Egypt's Transition 2011c). It should be noted that the Declaration does not make any mention of the assembly's membership or of its legal obligations. Interestingly, and perhaps controversially, the Declaration preserved a Nasser-era requirement that half the seats in Parliament be reserved for 'workers and farmers,' a category of candidate that was previously manipulated by the NDP despite its intent to prioritise labour interests (Essam El-Din 2011b).

Movements toward a new electoral framework

Subsequently, SCAF issued periodic amendments to the Law of the People's Assembly and Shura Council in order to lay the foundation for a mixed-member majoritarian (MMM) political system. Since its introduction in 1972, the Law has addressed several issues relevant to the election and composition of Parliament, including the number of seats to be contested, the number of individuals elected per district, the worker and farmer quota, the electoral system and allocating mandates, the filling of seats and eligibility and registration information.

On 30 May 2011, SCAF formally proposed a new framework. According to the amended law, one-third of the People's Assembly and the Shura Council would be elected by closed party-lists, and the remaining two-thirds would be elected by the traditional individual candidacy system. Under this system, both independent and party-based candidates could run for election to Parliament. According to Mamdouh Shahin, SCAF's Legal Advisor, 'in each district, independents will be allowed to run either individually or on one ticket or list, while party-based candidates will run on lists of their own' (Essam El-Din 2011a).

The amendment also upheld the constitutionally set quota that half the seats in Parliament be reserved for workers and farmers. At the time, Shahin argued that

> the amendments refrained from revoking the quotas allocated for farmers, workers and women in parliament because this is not its job … it is the job of the new parliament which will be entrusted with drafting a new constitution to decide whether the above quotas should be maintained or not. (Essam El-Din 2011a)

Most political groups opposed the declaration, on the grounds that both the allowance of independents to be elected as individual candidates and the worker quota would invite former NDP officials and allow for widespread corruption (Essam El-Din 2011b).

Faced with growing party pressure, on 20 July 2011, SCAF issued new changes to the law. First, the amendments set the number of elected seats in Parliament at 504, with an additional 10 members to be appointed by the President. Second, SCAF changed the balance of seats between those elected by party-list, and those elected individually. Now, half of all seats would be elected by lists, and half by the individual candidate system. Most political parties were previously critical of SCAF's decision to let only one-third of all seats be elected by

list, so this was generally a welcome change. There would also be two different sets of electoral districts. The first set would divide the country into 126 districts, whereby each district would elect two individuals. The second set, for closed-list candidates, divides the country into 58 districts. Last, SCAF announced that there would be no changes to the rules for electing the Shura Council: the Council would comprise 390 members, 130 of which would be appointed by the President upon his or her election (Osman 2011).

On 25 September 2011, SCAF amended the law for a second and final time, again redrawing the districts and changing the balance of power between list and individual candidates. Now, individual candidates would comprise only one-third of Parliament, with party-lists electing the remaining two-thirds. In the People's Assembly, 46 list districts would elect 332 members, and 83 individual districts would elect 126 members, for a total of 498 elected members; an additional ten would still be appointed at a later date by the President (Guide to Egypt's Transition 2011b).

The total number of Shura Council members was cut from 390 to 270, one-third of which would still be appointed by the President at a later date. Of the 180 elected members, 30 list districts would elect 120 members, and 30 individual districts would elect 60 members (Guide to Egypt's Transition 2011b).

New electoral realities: Egypt's changing political landscape

Shortly after Mubarak's resignation, a number of new political groups moved to seek recognition under the legal umbrella of the amended Political Parties Law. The changes described above have led to a strong rise in party activity, given that party restrictions have been relaxed and two-thirds of Parliament will be elected by list vote. Consequently, these parties have eagerly manoeuvred to fill the political void created by the absence of the NDP's longstanding program of aggressive authoritarian centrism. In this section, I argue that three electoral realities caused by the aforementioned amendments will lead to a conflagration of loosely organised parties on the basis of three distinct ideological fault lines: liberal, socialist, and religious groups. I focus on three particular phenomena likely to influence party activity: issue salience, the electoral formula, and barriers to entry.

Issue salience: the role of Islam and the power of the market

As Egyptians begin to rethink basic constitutional freedoms, the structure and purpose of the state, and the state's capacity to manage the economy, it is becoming clear that two issues are dominating political discourse in the context of the constituent assembly's mandate to draft a new constitution. The first issue consists primarily of the balance between the secular (or 'civil') and Islamic identity of the state. Some groups have called for a rigorous implementation of shariah law and new laws to regulate behaviour in the public sphere according to Islamic values.

Although colloquially referred to as 'Islamists,' these groups tend to emphasise Islam as a 'reference' for political behaviour. Saad El-Katatny, one of the founders and leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood-offshoot Freedom and Justice Party, considers the party to be a civil one with 'an Islamic reference,' seeking to highlight the fact that Islam is the religion of the state and the source of legislation (Fahmy and Elyan 2011).

In contrast, other groups have emphasised the importance of protecting minority rights and the absence of forced adherence to Islamic values. Some liberal, leftist and nationalist parties are relying on Egypt's longstanding identity as a 'civil' state. These groups see secularism as

Figure 1. 'Issue A' – The role and relevance of Islam.

a prerequisite for pluralism and necessary to the assurance of equal citizenship for all. A stable Egypt in which all citizens live freely and equally requires moderation, centrism, and tolerance – a characteristic many liberals believe religious groups have not yet espoused. Figure 1 illustrates the potential (extreme) political choices available to voters – with most, if not all, parties espousing programs somewhere in the middle:

The other issue of importance to is the state's ability to manage the economy. Popular discontent with President Mubarak's management of the economy was one of the driving forces behind the uprising that led to his resignation, as was the prevalence of NDP-sanctioned patronage and corruption. Needless to say, the state's role in managing the economy has become an important election issue. While it is not likely to factor heavily in constituent assembly deliberations, there are expectations that the newly elected Parliament successfully manage the economy in the interim.

In the absence of concrete programs designed to help the new government manage the economy, for example, many socialists are calling for an end to the practice of privatising state-owned industries. Nearly 20 years ago, Mubarak's insistence on privatisation was seen as forward-looking as Egypt tried to rescue itself from a stagnant, centrally controlled economy. However, the public has become increasingly cynical of this practice:

> The act of selling state companies had become radioactive because of resistance from a skeptical public that believed that the transactions were riddled with corruption and insider dealing as well as from powerful old-guard officials who equated the status quo with stability.(Slackman 2010)

On the other hand, despite populist pressures to scale back free market reforms, many parties, such as the Free Egyptians Party, support the role of free market economics in promoting social justice. Naguib Sawiris, the party's founder, has described the movement's economic stance as a hybrid between free market economics and socialism. The party openly calls for a free market economy, but it also stresses 'support for poor Egyptians through unemployment support, social and health insurance. It also calls for the government to provide vital services such as health, transportation, housing, and proper infrastructure in a way that 'respects the humanity and dignity of the Egyptian citizen' (Egypt.com 2011). Figure 2 shows, again using extreme poles, the distinction between free market economics and moves to reduce the privatisation of state-owned industries:

These two issues, 'Issue A' and 'Issue B,' have come to dominate political discourse following Mubarak's resignation. Since there have not yet been free elections, and since polls have not been able to provide an accurate appraisal of popular opinion, most political parties do not have a strong empirical understanding of how the country is split on both lines. If the two spectrums are combined, a simplified double-issue political spectrum might better reveal voter preferences, and thus, the policies political parties are likely to capture (Figure 3).

A cursory examination of this model indicates that there are likely to be at least three factions competing for votes. The top left quadrant consists of liberals who believe in a 'civil' state and

Figure 2. 'Issue B' – The role and relevance of free market policies.

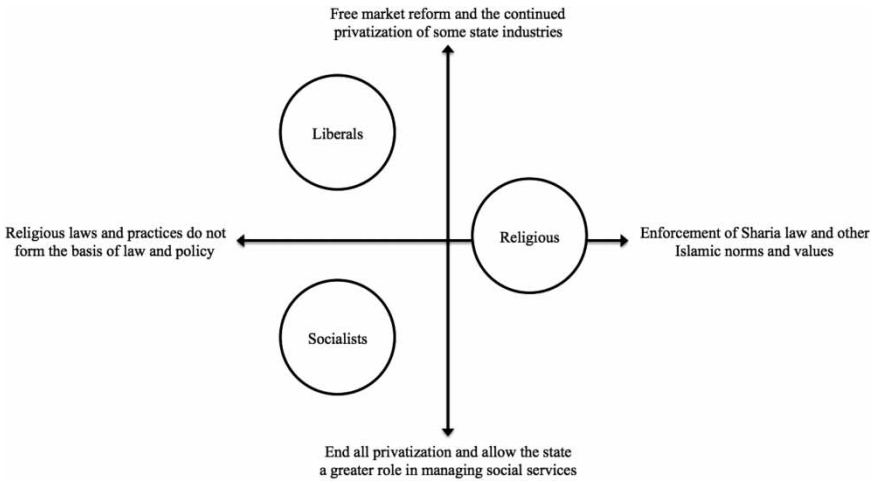

Figure 3. Dual-preference ('A' and 'B') political spectrum.

support free market reform. The bottom left consists of socialists who, though supportive of the idea of a civil state, favour more populist economic policies discouraging the privatisation of state-owned industries. Religious and secular groups will occupy both quadrants on the right, but they are likely to take more moderate positions on the economy – and thus be clustered closer to the axis.

This issue salience framework will likely captivate the Egyptian electorate over the course of the elections process and the subsequent drafting of the constitution. Once elections conclude, the framework is likely to influence Parliamentary politics in two ways. First, depending on issue *intensity*, it will likely affect coalition behaviour. If political groups move closer to extreme political poles, ideological affiliations will become increasingly important. Second, the framework suggests a number of potential tradeoffs. If religious parties win a plurality of seats in Parliament, their ability to control the constitutional process will largely depend on their political allies, and the political concessions that must be made to move forward.

A new electoral formula

Undoubtedly, the mixed character of Egypt's electoral formula would create confusion for many voters throughout the elections process. As described above, two-thirds of each house were to be elected by closed party lists, with the remaining one-third elected as individual candidates who may or may not be affiliated with a particular political party. For each of these voting systems, district lines differed. Egypt's 27 governorates were divided into different districts and departments for each voting system.

For the People's Assembly, 83 districts were to elect 166 members in a first-past-the-post, two-round system. Cairo had as many as nine districts, though each of the nine smallest governorates (in terms of population) had only one. For the party-list system, some of these districts were combined to form 46 districts that would elect 332 members. These districts range in size, with an average district magnitude of 7.2 members.

For the Shura Council, 30 districts were to elect 120 members from list votes and 60 as individual candidates. The districts here more closely reflected governorate lines. Each of the

Table 1. Parliamentary elections timetable.

People's Assembly		Shura Council	
Phase 1 Election	28 November 2011	**Phase 1 Election**	29 January 2012
Phase 1 Runoff	5 December 2011	**Phase 1 Runoff**	5 February 2012
Phase 1 Governorates: Cairo, Fayoum, Luxor, Port Said, Damietta, Alexandria, Kafr El Sheikh, Asyut, Red Sea			
Phase 2 Election	14 December 2011	**Phase 2 Election**	14 February 2012
Phase 2 Runoff	21 December 2011	**Phase 2 Runoff**	21 February 2012
Phase 2 Governorates: Giza, Beni Suef, Menoufia, Sharqia, Ismailia, Suez, Beheira, Sohag, Aswan			
Phase 3 Election	3 January 2012	**Phase 3 Election**	4 March 2012
Phase 3 Runoff	10 January 2012	**Phase 3 Runoff**	11 March 2012
Phase 3 Governorates: Minya, Qalyubia, Gharbia, Dakahlia, North Sinai, South Sinai, New Valley, Matruh, Qena			
Certification Date	13 January 2012	**Certification Date**	14 March 2012

27 governorates represented one distinct district, though Cairo, Giza, and Dakahlia were divided into two. Each party-list district was to elect four members (with an average district magnitude of 4).

To further complicate the elections process, the elections were to occur in six distinct phases, lasting through 11 March 2012. Elections to the People's Assembly were to conclude on 10 January 2012, with a deadline of January 13 to declare the final result. Elections to the Shura Council were to conclude on 11 March 2012, with a deadline of March 14 to declare the final result. With each body electing members in three separate phases, and the possibility of a run-off in each one, there were essentially twelve election days. Table 1 lists these phases in order of occurrence.

This electoral formula will have two effects on party activities. The first can be found in a simple application of Cox's (1997) generalisation of Duverger's Law, which holds that the number of viable candidates in a district is equal to district magnitude (M) plus one. Looking only at those double-member districts electing individual candidates, we can hypothesise that three parties, or groups, will remain viable in those districts. Although only one-third of all members are elected as individual candidacies, this finding is significant. We can expect three parties to successfully contest seats in these districts. We can also expect that, generally, the decision to run in a district is a strategic one. There are incentives for parties with similar programs to band together and negotiate agreements in individual districts so as not to split votes. Figure 3 outlines how this might occur, given Cox's 'M + 1' generalisation.

The second effect lies in the presence of high district magnitudes, particularly in list-districts for the People's Assembly. As noted above, the average list district magnitude for the People's Assembly is 7.2 members. Sartori (1968) proposes that district magnitude in multi-member proportional systems is a good predictor of the number of parties likely to contest the district. High district magnitudes tend to encourage more political parties to contest seats – the opposite of what we expect to occur in individual districts.

These two effects of the electoral formula underscore the fact that parties will be pulled in two different directions. On the one hand, individual districts incentivise parties to pool resources, negotiate certain districts, and come together on the basis of ideological affinity. However, high district magnitudes in list districts encourage party proliferation and provide disincentives

to coordination. We might expect, then, that although parties will coalesce into three distinct ideological groups, they will be both weak and loosely organised.

Barriers to entry

In his forthcoming book on the Muslim Brotherhood, Masoud (2012) accounts for the electoral success of the Brothers despite the NDP's authoritarian control over state resources.

> . . .The Brotherhood wins not because Islam is more potent, resonant, or unsullied by failure than other ideologies, or because it commands vast networks of mosque-based clinics and daycare centers, but because it "fits" the authoritarian electoral environments within which it is embedded better than its secular rivals. (Masoud 2012, pp. 22–23)

Masoud describes two electoral environments. In the first, there are low barriers to party entry (i.e., a candidate centric system with open nomination). There are abundant incentives and opportunities to move in and out of parties, thus straining party cohesion and incentivising patronage. This tends to advantage religious parties, which are highly cohesive and more focused on middle-class constituents rather than wealthy elites. In the second, there are high barriers to party entry (i.e., closed list elections with high thresholds). There are few incentives for elites to exit parties, thus promoting party cohesion and the development of robust party platforms. No clear type of party benefits under this system.

During Mubarak's reign, the electoral environment was characterised by very low barriers to entry. There were certainly restrictions that prohibited parties from contesting seats, but generally, elites could enter and exit parties as they wished. The Brotherhood benefited from this electoral structure:

> . . .under low barrier systems, while leftist parties find themselves bereft of votes and "caucus" parties find their elites leaking away, Islamists emerge as the only viable opposition organizations. However, these Brotherhood advantages, and the disadvantages faced by other parties, are specific to low barrier systems. Under closed electoral systems with high barriers to entry, the playing field levels. The left finds itself viable again. . . (Masoud 2012, p. 27)

Although Masoud is writing primarily in the context of opposition party behaviour, the model might shed light on Egypt's electoral terrain in light of amendments to the law. In many ways, the laws have led to an electoral system that imposes both high *and* low barriers to entry depending on the district. For example, in party-list districts, candidates must be part of a list in order to run. Individual candidates, however, need not be, although there are incentives for those candidates to associate with a particular party (for the purpose of obtaining party resources and support).

It is clear that there are more barriers to entry now than there were previously – and it is also clear that these rules promote a more level playing field. However, low thresholds and the ease by which parties can register for recognition seem to lower these barriers. Parties are the only groups that can successfully contest seats, but if any elite can form a party, there might be an *excessively* balanced, and thus, fragmented Parliament. The number of party 'off-shoots' reflects this phenomenon (see, e.g., Ikhwanweb 2011).

Party activity and the coalescence of post-Mubarak factions

As described above, new laws and electoral realities should signal the rise of numerous political parties operating loosely under the auspices of a particular ideologically oriented faction. This

section introduces the more popular parties likely to alter Egypt's political landscape within each group.

The first faction consists of religious parties, 'Salafist' parties, and those parties encouraging social programs and policies largely consistent Islamic values and norms. The second faction includes liberal parties, parties calling for a secular state, and parties keen on ensuring open markets and restricting state management of the economy. The third and final faction consists primarily of leftist and socialist parties, many of whom were active prior to Mubarak's resignation. Though some of these parties are more established, other leftist groups led by youth movements only recently gained momentum.

Religious parties and the secular-religious balance

The dominant movement in this respect is the Muslim Brotherhood and its associated political party, the Freedom and Justice Party.

The Muslim Brotherhood and the Freedom and Justice Party

On 21 February 2011, the Muslim Brotherhood announced its intention to form a political party to contest seats in Parliament. The Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) was created as an offshoot of the Brotherhood. Although its leadership structure is distinct from that of the Brotherhood, it has largely espoused the Brotherhood's ideology. According to Masoud (2011):

> The Brotherhood, fundamentally, believes that freedom must be bounded by respect for God's law. They talk about judicial independence, but they also believe in "erecting a value system in society that is derived from Islamic law, and that is hegemonic over the judicial system and the legislative and executive branches. (p. 125)

Despite the Brotherhood's reluctance to support a robust liberal democracy similar to what we might find in the West, the Brotherhood's model is perhaps not that far off from this ideal. Indeed, the Brotherhood benefits from democracy. Its status amongst most Egyptian citizens as a provider of social services and a positive bulwark against corruption serves as evidence. According to Wickham (2011), the Brotherhood 'is confident that its agenda is consistent with the preferences of a majority of Egyptian citizens, and hence that its efforts to protect Egypt's Islamic identity and values enjoys broad public support' (Wickham 2011, p. 207). More specifically, it is likely that the Brotherhood supports democratic procedures without necessarily internalising certain core values such as gender equality and the protection of individual liberties (Wickham 2011).

By extension, FJP's political project reflects these currents. In a statement celebrating the party's official announcement, the Brotherhood noted that it 'envisions the establishment of a democratic, civil state that draws on universal measures of freedom and justice, with central Islamic values serving all Egyptians regardless of colour, creed, political trend, or religion' (CNN.com 2011). Similarly, the party's platform emphasises respect for the law and shariah law as the main source of legislation (Al-Masry Al-Youm 2011a). The FJP has also committed to 'free market capitalism,' and has pledged to rely on tourism as a main source of income: a hint that the party has little interest in strict social regulations that might adversely impact the tourism industry (Youm7 2011).

Moderate and Salafist offshoots

Amongst voters likely to vote for a religious party, the FJP is relatively moderate. Two groups, however, have challenged the FJP's hold on the 'religious' vote. One such party is the 'New

Center Party,' Al-Wasat. Al-Wasat was the first political party to receive recognition after Mubarak's resignation, having submitted an application several times since its inception in 1996.

Al-Wasat was created by Abu Al-Ila Madi, a Brotherhood defector who sought to create a political movement promoting a more tolerant idea of Islam with more liberal practices (Youssef 2011). In an interview with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Madi emphasises the party's adoption of this vision of Islam:

> In some cases, there are specific instructions about [Islam] such as matters of marriage and divorce. But regarding general matters of governance—for example the Islamic principle of shura does not specify whether a system should have a unicameral or bicameral legislature of even whether the system should be presidential or parliamentary . . . How best to implement the principle depends on human expertise and the experiences of Islamic culture. (Arab Reform Bulletin 1996)

In the interview, Madi argues that there are two differences between Al-Wasat and the Brotherhood. The first lies in the Brotherhood's refusal to distinguish between missionary (da'wa) and political activities – a division necessary for the success of a civil state. The second lies in the Brotherhood's ambiguous approach to the concept of an Islamic state. Madi cites the existence of more rigid trends and personalities within the Brotherhood as a potential cause for concern (Arab Reform Bulletin 1996).

While Al-Wasat serves as a more moderate alternative to FJP, a number of 'Salafist' parties have gained legal recognition and seek to contest seats in Parliament. These parties are led primarily by the 'Party of Light,' Hizb Al-Nour. Although Al-Nour members are drawn from adherents to Salafism, party statements suggest the term might be misleading. Sheikh Abdul-Munim al-Shahhat, the official spokesman of the Alexandria-based Salafist 'Scientific School,' stresses that the movement aspires for a civil state with Islamic authority, and that the party is an Egyptian party for all Egyptians. His description of the party as 'another turning point in the relations between Salafis and society' is noteworthy (Rahman 2011).

This is not to say that Salafis do not have a political program worthy of mention. Generally, Salafis welcome the instrumentality of democracy and liberal concepts of freedom provided they are limited by God's law:

> While they accept the democratic mechanism as a "tool" for governance, they reject it as a philosophical basis. This position, [Shahhat] argues, is justified by the second article of the Egyptian constitution, which was retained in the recent constitutional amendments, which states that the basis of the country's legal system is Sharia. Al-Shahat extrapolates from this that therefore any law passed in Egypt must conform to Sharia. Democracy, he explains, is only acceptable to Salafis as a method for deciding between variations in interpretations of Islamic law. (Mackell 2011)

Other Salafist parties, such as the 'Authenticity Party,' Al-Asala, and 'Virtue Party,' Al-Fadila, have been more reluctant to enter politics. Some are concerned that their participation in politics could undermine their message, while others feel that participation is necessary to increase the degree to which shariah influences the constitutional process (Al-Masry Al-Youm 2011b).

There is also the case of the Building and Development Party, a party comprised members of Al-Gamaa Al-Islamiya, a militant group with a history of terrorist activity. Although the party has announced that it will not nominate members who have previously participated in armed attacks against the state, the party is also interested in rebuilding its image. It has coordinated its political activities with other Salafist groups, and will run on party-lists dominated by the Al-Nour Party (El Waziry 2011).

Liberalism after Mubarak

A proper account of liberalism in Egypt begins with the Wafd Party, the infamous force behind Egypt's transition to a constitutional monarchy in the early twentieth century. Although the 1952 Egyptian Revolution and the subsequent rise to power of Gamal Abdel Nasser all but destroyed Egypt's liberal experiment (and, by extension, the Wafd Party), liberalism as a political ideology still enjoys substantial support – particularly amongst educated, upper middle-class elites.

The old guard: The New Wafd Party

The New Wafd Party reemerged in 1978, aiming to contest state power and the Nasserist political program adopted by the ruling NDP. According to Hinnebusch (1984), the leaders of the party 'saw their party as a force seeking to hasten the dismantling of the system created by [Nasser] and to push Egypt in a liberal democratic-capitalist direction' (p. 109). Today, however, the Wafd Party suffers from internal divisions, aging leadership, and a general lack of dynamism. In 2004, Ayman Nour, a popular Wafd official, resigned from the Wafd and took nearly a quarter of the party's members with him to form Al-Ghad, another liberal party (Guide to Egypt's Transition 2011a).

Ideologically, the party has not evolved much. It still advocates for a free market system, limiting public sector provisions to critical areas of need such as healthcare and utilities. In particular, it advocates for a secular nationalist agenda emphasising new laws regulating political rights, the end of emergency rule, multi-party governance, and democratic reform.

The Party is ideologically similar to the Democratic Front Party, another liberal group founded in 2006. The group's founder, Osama Al-Ghazali Harb, left the NDP citing a lack of seriousness in initiating reforms. Despite its small size, it is perceived by many to be a more legitimate, less opportunistic voice for Egyptian liberals. Harb's unwillingness to negotiate with Mubarak and the NDP allowed him to achieve some notoriety during the protests that eventually toppled Mubarak's government (Colvin 2011).

New voices: Free Egyptians, Social Democrats, and other liberal groups

On 3 April 2011, telecom tycoon Naguib Sawiris announced the launch of the Free Egyptians Party, in what many described as an attempt to mitigate the electoral threat posed by the FJP and other religious parties. At the time, Sawiris emphasised his support for parties emphasising Egypt's identity as a civil state, 'not those that want to bring us back to the ancient times.' Despite the fact that Sawiris himself is a member of Egypt's Coptic Christian minority, the party does not aim specifically to recruit Coptic members. The party maintains that Article 2 of the Constitution, which confers status to Islam as the official state religion, should remain (Afify 2011).

Regarded by many to be the most powerful new liberal force in the upcoming elections, the party generally advocates for equal rights for all Egyptian citizens, the enhancement of political freedoms, the need to empower women in all domains of public life, the independence of the judiciary and separation of powers.[1] Despite the party's broad appeal, it has not campaigned without controversy. Although Sawiris is not competing in the elections, he angered many in June 2011 when he tweeted a cartoon image of Mickey Mouse dressed in Islamic garb. Salafis accused Sawiris of mocking Islam (MSNBC.com 2011).

If the Free Egyptians Party lies at one end of the liberal spectrum, the Social Democratic Party lies at the other. On 30 March 2011, the Egyptian Democratic Party and Egyptian Liberal Party merged to form the Social Democratic Party. The party advocates for free market economic

policies, though it insists on a 'good social program for the poor people of Egypt' (Viney 2011). In a June release of its party platform, the party described its emphasis on social justice in greater detail:

> [Social justice] guarantees equality of opportunity and aims for a minimum wage, health services, housing, and quality education. These goals are achieved through respecting the value of work and increasing its returns, collective negotiations by unions, and the intervention of the welfare state.[2]

Other liberal voices, such as the Justice, or Al-Adl, Party, advocate a more centrist approach. In particular, Al-Adl aims to attract Egyptians who do not support the dichotomous choice between being 'liberal' or being 'Islamic.' In September 2011, Al-Adl moved to form an electoral bloc known as the 'Third Way,' an attempt to act as 'the nucleus of the centrist trend in Egypt to blaze a new path for Egyptian citizens away from political polarisation between the various political movements' (Mahmoud 2011). One of the group's more popular leaders, Moustafa Al-Najjar, claimed that:

> Since the revolution, the Egyptian people have suffered from a state of constant polarization between liberals and Islamists. So the party decided to enter the elections without being allied with any of them in order to represent 'centrist' Egyptians who want the demands of the revolution to be achieved apart from the political polarization wars between the various trends. (Mahmoud 2011)

The party was eventually unsuccessful in developing any sort of centrist list (Wright 2011).

Leftist parties and the fight against privatisation

The dominance of Tagammu over the leftist political horizon has been seriously dented in the wake of the Mubarak regime but it, nonetheless, remains a potent, if waning, force in leftist politics.

The rise and fall of Tagammu

In 1976, the National Progressive Unionist Party (NPUP), more commonly known as Tagammu, was established as a socialist alternative to the liberal Wafd and the more centrist NDP. The party served as an umbrella organisation that included leftists, Nasserists, Marxists, and Arab nationalists. Initially, this led to disunity and a lack of organisational cohesion – leftist groups within Tagammu maintained their independent organisations outside the official party framework. Over the course of the Mubarak era, Tagammu advocated for the building of an independent national economy and a more just distribution of national income and services. According to one account of its platform in 1995:

> The programme emphasizes the need for a comprehensive change that gives priority to the interests of the under-privileged. It strongly opposes the withdrawal of the state from the public services sector, particularly health, education, and housing. It also calls for reforming and restructuring the public sector, but there is no mention of opposition to its privatization. (Al-Ahram Weekly 1995)

More recently, the party has called for a minimum and maximum wage and progressive taxation. The party's influence, however, has steadily declined since Mubarak's ouster. It was heavily criticised for participating in the 2010 Parliamentary elections (where it won six seats). Shortly thereafter, the party was also criticised for accepting a Cabinet seat once Mubarak had officially resigned and the Cabinet had been reshuffled.

New players on the left

In a sign that other leftist groups no longer look to Tagammu for support, the party has decided to join the Free Egyptians and the Social Democratic Party in an electoral alliance, known as the Egyptian Bloc. Interestingly, Only 10% of all list members are Tagammu' leaders, with the Free Egyptians taking 50%, and the Social Democrats taking 40% (Hussein 2011). The fact that such a mainstay of Egyptian electoral politics could be relegated to such a low number of list spots is indicative of Tagammu's waning influence.

The *new* left, however, is equally as disorganised as Tagammu was in the late 1970s. This is primarily because it consists of Tagammu members who disagreed with the party's involvement in the 2010 Parliamentary elections and formed similarly oriented offshoots. The Socialist Popular Alliance Party was only officially recognised in October 2011 as one of these groups.

Despite its late registration, the Alliance was one of the first political groups formed after Mubarak's resignation. In May, the group combined resources with the Social Party of Egypt, the Democratic Labor Party, the Egypt Communist Party, and the Revolutionary Socialists to form a common front (El Hebeishy 2011). The front, which became known as the Coalition of Socialist Forces, is still relatively small. At the time of its creation in late May 2011, the front had a combined membership of over 5000 members – the minimum required for party recognition (Omar 2011). The party advocates for an end to privatisation, and most members advocate for raising the minimum wage.

Conclusion

Taleb and Blyth's contention that Mubarak's suppression of volatility made Egyptian politics 'less predictable' and 'more dangerous' is accurate, but it certainly cannot be the case that the opposite is true. In fact, Egyptian politics has become even more unpredictable, and given the recent rise of sectarian violence and the continued threat of protests, it is perhaps even more dangerous. Taleb and Blyth are also correct in their assertion that 'seeking to restrict variability seems to be a good policy' for authoritarian leaders. But again, the opposite does not necessarily help – if 'all risks must be visible and out in the open,' the political system incentivises distrust and becomes more vulnerable autocratic pressures. This is evidenced both by the fact that SCAF has amended the laws several times, and by the shifting electoral alliances that characterised party behaviour prior to the elections.

It is perhaps more appropriate to examine party behaviour in the context of democratic transitions and democratic institution building. The contours of the post-Mubarak political landscape have been drawn, but the permanence of Egypt's new democratic experiment will depend largely upon the extent to which democratic gains are consolidated early and often. A systemic view of Egypt's electoral framework suggests this might be difficult. Competing pressures both to form coalitions and operate independently of them might lead to the formation of a fragmented Parliament with many parties and thin ideological allegiances. Only time will tell if the revolutionary fervour that gripped Egypt in 2011 will translate into real political success.

Notes

1. Information taken from the website of the Free Egyptians Party, available from: http://www.almasreyeenalahrrar.org/.
2. Information taken from a party handout, available from: http://www.tahrirdocuments.org/2011/07/the-principles-of-the-egyptian-social-democratic-party/.

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