



2-1-2012

Revolution and Democratization: Can Egypt Transition to a Modern Day Democracy?

Kristin M. Horitski

Western Michigan University, kristin.m.horitski@wmich.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/honors_theses



Part of the Political Science Commons

Recommended Citation

Horitski, Kristin M., "Revolution and Democratization: Can Egypt Transition to a Modern Day Democracy?" (2012). *Honors Theses*. 745.

https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/honors_theses/745

This Honors Thesis-Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Lee Honors College at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



The Carl and Winifred Lee Honors College

THE CARL AND WINIFRED LEE HONORS COLLEGE
CERTIFICATE OF ORAL DEFENSE OF HONORS THESIS

Kristin M. Horitski, having been admitted to the Carl and Winifred Lee Honors College in the fall of 2008, successfully completed the Lee Honors College Thesis on February 1, 2012.

The title of the thesis is:

“Revolution and Democratization: Can Egypt Transition
to a Modern Day Democracy?”

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Howard Dooley", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Howard Dooley, History

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mustafa Mughazy", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Mustafa Mughazy, Foreign Languages

*Revolution and Democratization:
Can Egypt Transition to a Modern Day Democracy?*

Kristin Horitski

Honors Thesis

On January 25, 2011, the world's attention was transfixed by Egypt. The people took to the streets in a series of demonstrations and marches to protest the long-time reign of President Hosni Mubarak and demand his immediate resignation. While the protests started out as peaceful acts of civil disobedience, the Mubarak government's response was not. Police and security forces used conventional techniques such as tear gas and water cannons on the protesters, before turning to terror tactics such as snipers, live ammunition, and thugs and criminals who terrorized the people. A couple days into the uprising, Mubarak deployed the army, but they were welcomed by the protesters and did not interfere in confrontations between the police and protesters. After abolishing his cabinet and making several other moves to try to hang onto power, it was finally over for Mubarak.

Fourteen days after the uprising began, Mubarak stepped down turning power over to the military, ending 30 years of his authoritarian rule and beginning a period of uncertainty that left the world questioning: will Egypt be able to transition to a democracy with free and fair elections, political parties, and an actively involved civil society or will it be drawn back to the world of authoritarian regimes?

The Road to Revolution

Revolutions do not happen by chance and Egypt is no exception. They are the culmination of years of injustices and mistreatment by the regime, as well as, events that serve as a catalyst for change. In the case of Egypt, revolution was the result of repression and mistreatment by the regime and finally a spark of hope by events happening in surrounding countries and the people of Egypt ready to through off the old regime and start a new, democratic era.

Mubarak ascended to the Presidency after the assassination of President Anwar Sadat by radical Islamic members of the army in 1981 and has been consolidating power ever since. The first move Mubarak made to tighten his hold was to declare a state of emergency and the laws under this state of emergency have been in place since 1981. Under the state of emergency the President of Egypt “has been able to institute measures of criminal law which... limit procedural safeguards, through, for instance, referral of cases to military courts...broadening the scope of what is considered ‘criminal’ so as to place many people at risk of being prosecuted/persecuted.”¹ More specifically, the state of emergency created laws under which the security forces have extended powers, censorship is legalized, people can be detained without being charged, non-approved political organizations and any form of anti-government activity is banned.

During his Presidency, Mubarak used the provisions of the emergency law to persecute the Muslim Brotherhood and other rivals such as Ayman Nour that he deemed to be political threats. In 1983, during the first Parliamentary elections of his Presidency, Mubarak changed the election laws and the new law “confined activism to legal political parties, thus excluding independent candidates from standing,”² as well as, all Islamist groups. This new law enabled Mubarak to secure a large victory for his own National Democratic Party in the People’s Assembly and control who participated in the elections. One party that was able to participate besides the NDP was the New Wafd Party, which never gained a large amount of seats and did not have the organizational structure or popular support that made it appear as a threat to the regime.

¹ Allain, Jean. (2004). *International Law in the Middle East: Closer to Power than Justice*. England: Ashgate Publishers. Pg. 205

² Zahid, Mohammed. (2010). *The Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt’s Succession Crisis: the Politics of Liberalisation and Reform in the Middle East*. New York: Tauris Academic Studies.

The antagonisms that helped fuel the revolution were the country's growing gap between the rich and poor and the growing control of police that exacerbated the problems that Egyptian citizens faced. Education has played a large role in the growing inequality gap. In the 1970s and 1980s there was a reappearance of private schools and foreign universities which helped to exacerbate the split in Egyptian society between those who could afford to send their children to private schools with a modern educational curricula and those who relied upon the free education provided by the Egyptian state. Those educated in private schools and universities were more likely to find higher paying jobs and made up the wealthier part of society whereas those with a public education background had to work harder for the same opportunities. Many Egyptians faced increasing frustration in finding a job or taking jobs that were below their skill level, as well as, a high level of unemployment.

Another irritant that fueled the people's anger were the actions of the police forces and the government turning a blind eye to their actions. This anger was brought to the forefront with the death of Khaled Said, a young, Alexandrian businessman in June of 2010. Khaled Said was beaten and died while in police custody, after posting a video online of police officers sharing the remnants of a drug bust.³ His torture and murder was not the first of its kind, but due to the fact he was killed in public, the media attention his death received, and the fact that he was a middle class citizen people took interest in his death because it brought forth the idea that no one was safe from the police and security forces. Initially, the police tried to frame Khaled Said as a drug dealer who died of an overdose, but after public opinion mounted against the police, the two police officers were charged with illegal arrest and excessive use of force rather than murder and the trial has continuously been postponed. This was yet another incident of police brutality.

³ (2010). Egypt Police in Brutality Trial Over Khaled Said Death. BBC News. Retrieved October 2011, from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-10773404>

According to Human Rights Watch “Egyptian security forces, particularly State Security Investigation (SSI) ... have been permitted to operate in a lawless manner. Human rights abuses by these forces include arbitrary arrest, incommunicado detention, and torture of suspects during interrogation.”⁴ The continued abuses by the regime such as torture, unlawful detention, the murder of Khaled Said and other issues such as Mubarak’s attempt to hand power over to his son, Gamal, and the decline of the economy helped to fuel anger against the government and largely contributed to the January protests and revolution.

The upheaval in Tunisia in late 2010 and January 2011 also helped to spark the revolution in Egypt. Political protests started in Tunisia after a young man named Mohammed Bouazizi, set himself on fire after being humiliated by a policewoman and because of the desperation he felt at not being able to make a living and care for his family. His act highlighted the desperation felt by many Tunisians who were frustrated with living conditions, police violence, rampant unemployment, and a lack of human rights. Bouazizi’s death served as a trigger and brought Tunisians into the streets protesting and when the police reacted harshly against the protestors, it sparked a revolution in Tunisia and also helped to inspire the events in Egypt. After almost a month of continued protests, Tunisian president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali fled the country and was eventually granted asylum in Saudi Arabia. The case of Tunisia showed that it was possible for a popular uprising to oust a long-serving dictator and give the promise of real change and a democratic transition.

Protests began in Egypt on January 25, 2011, after being organized through social networking sites, with thousands of Egyptians taking to the streets of Cairo around Tahrir Square

⁴ Human Rights Watch, Egypt: Hostage-Taking and Intimidation by Security Forces, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1995, available at <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1995/Egypt.htm>

and in other cities around the country. They gathered to protest the high levels of poverty, corruption, and unemployment that had been increasingly felt in the country. Over the coming days, the protest gained momentum and protestors clashed with security forces before the army was deployed on January 28 and tens of thousands of people joined the protests after Friday prayers. These events caused Mubarak to sack his cabinet in an attempt to appease protestors and two days later he appointed a vice president for the first time in his 30-year rule. January 31, spelled the beginning of the end for Mubarak when the army announced that they recognized the rights of the people and refused to use force against them. The stance of the army marked a turning point because it showed that the military which helped give Mubarak his power would no longer support his actions. Protests continued over the next eleven days with the number of people in the streets growing to number in the millions. On February 11, 2011, Mubarak finally ended his three decade rule and turned power over to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces headed by Field Marshall Muhamed Hussein Tantawi.

Is Democracy Possible?

The popular uprising and resignation of Hosni Mubarak left the country in a state of euphoria and hope, yet there were many uncertainties. The stability that the authoritarian regime had provided was now gone and the future of the country is in the hands of the Egyptian people with the guidance of the military. The situation Egypt found itself in was not unique, yet there were few examples for it to follow. The most promising of these models is the case of Indonesia.

In 1998, Indonesia experienced civil unrest against the 32-year old regime of General Suharto similar to what Egypt faced in January of 2011. The protests in Indonesia were fueled by the Asian Financial Crisis and brought people into the streets to protest how the government

handled the situation and other abuses by the authoritarian regime. The protests in both countries were started by young people using new internet tools and once they took hold, the protestors were not to be satisfied until the dictator was out of power. Indonesia is also similar to Egypt in the fact they both have majority Muslim populations and a military that was unwilling to harm its people, preferring to remove the regime from power and assist in the transition. Indonesia also leaves Egypt with a number of things to keep in mind from their own transition to a democracy. The need for a clear timeline under which new elections will be held is crucial to a stable transition. The people need to know when they will be able to start determining their own future and when the transitional authority will be out of power, yet they need to be patient and realize that democracies are not built over night. Indonesia is a promising model for Egypt, but the Egyptian people will need to carve out their own future.⁵

Democracy cannot exist in a country where the people are unwilling to take charge of their destiny and the will of the Egyptian people is strong. They have made tremendous strides in overturning an authoritarian regime, but they will need to remain vigilant to prevent another faction from gaining power. This vigilance can be demonstrated by reforming their current political institutions, carving out a distinct, limited role for the military, developing a diversified and market-oriented economy, and having a vibrant civil society.

Political Institutions

Every democracy needs political institutions in order to function and Egypt has a long history of democratic practices and institutions dating back to the constitution of 1882. The 1882 Constitution organized how delegates are elected to the National Assembly and placed

⁵ Brooks, Karen. (2011). Indonesia's Lessons for Egypt. In Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved March 3, 2011 from <http://www.cfr.org/region/indonesia/ri292>

restrictions on the authority of the Khedive (leader/governor of Egypt at the time). Shortly after the 1882 Constitution was put in place, Egypt was brought under British control and the provisions of the constitution were suppressed. Egypt remained under British control until 1922 when they regained their sovereignty and the following year the 1923 Constitution established Egypt as a constitutional monarchy. The 1923 Constitution drew inspiration from the Belgian Constitution and included provisions for freedom of expression, religious freedom, and property rights. The constitution also provided for two houses the Senate and the National Assembly, and the government was responsible to the National Assembly, but the King still retained the most power and had the authority to abolish parliament. The 1923 Constitution was followed by the 1930 Constitution which increased the powers of the King and reduced the role of Parliament, and the 1956 Constitution which changed the country from a constitutional monarchy to a presidential system before the current constitution was established in 1971.⁶

Due to its long political history, Egypt has political institutions in place that could support a democracy if the corruptions they have experienced in recent years are removed and they can function to their fullest potential. The Egyptian constitution written in 1971 created a strong executive branch, a bicameral legislature, and a judiciary based on Napoleonic Code.

The executive branch is comprised of the President, Prime Minister, and Cabinet, under the 1971 constitution. The president is selected by a two-thirds majority of the Parliament and is confirmed by the people in a popular referendum to a renewable six-year term. The president then has the power to appoint the vice president, prime minister and cabinet. The president is

⁶ Kiziltoprak, Suleyman & Nakip, Tahir. *Egyptian Constitutions from National Sovereignty to Individualistic Liberty*. Retrieved December 20, 2011 from <http://www.ordaf.org.tr/egyptian-constitutions-from-national-sovereignty-to-individualistic-liberty.aspx>

also the chair of the National Security Council, which controls defense and military policy.⁷ The 1971 constitution tries to dispense power by giving the prime minister considerable power in the day-to-day running of the government and in the domestic policy arena, but this power was greatly reduced under Mubarak as he fought to keep the prime minister and other cabinet positions under his close supervision and influence,⁸ as well as, consolidate power in general. Mubarak consolidated his presidency through rigged elections which gave his own National Democratic Party (NDP) a majority of seats and by persecuting those who spoke out against his rule or posed a threat to his power such as in 2005 when opposition leader Ayman Nour was jailed on trumped up charges of forging signatures on a petition to register his political party, Ghad (tomorrow). Another way Mubarak stayed in control was by not appointing a vice-president, so that he would not endorse someone else who might become more popular than him and left him free to groom his son, Gamal, to possibly succeed him as president. Mubarak also maintained tight control over his cabinet which was displayed when he promptly dismissed Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif and his cabinet on January 29, 2011 in an attempt to appease protestors, only to replace the prime minister with another close ally, Ahmed Shafik.

The power enjoyed by the executive, in particular the president of Egypt, is already facing reforms under the interim government headed by Field Marshall Mohamed Hussein Tantawi. A referendum held on March 19, 2011 had several provisions in regard to the presidency. It changed the length a president can serve from a six-year term with no term limits to a four-year term with a limit of two terms. The referendum also makes it easier for a candidate to run for President. A candidate now has to collect 30,000 signatures from fifteen provinces or

⁷ Sorenson, David S. (2008). *An Introduction to the Modern Middle East: History, Religion, Political Economy, Politics*. United States: Westview Press pg. 240

⁸ Sorenson, David S. pg. 241

thirty members of the legislature or be nominated by a party holding one or more seats in the legislature,⁹ a drastic change from the previous laws where a president was chosen by two-thirds majority of Parliament followed by a popular referendum. The provisions in the March 19, 2011 referendum, the first free referendum to take place in the fledgling democracy, were approved by 77.27% with 41.2% of registered voters participating.¹⁰ This referendum was one small step towards rebuilding the executive branch and election laws of Egypt and making them better able to support a democratic country.

The Egyptian Parliament is a bicameral legislature with the People's Assembly serving as the lower house and the Shura Council, as the upper house of Parliament. The People's Assembly has 454 seats with 444 of them being popularly elected. A 166 of the members are elected by majority vote through a two-round system of elections to serve a five year term and 332 of the members are elected through a proportional representation system to serve a five year term. Each district has two seats with one of those seats being reserved for a worker or farmer.¹¹ The People's Assembly also has ten seats whose deputies are appointed by the President and 64 seats that are especially reserved for women. Although the members of the People's Assembly are elected for a five-year term, the Assembly may be dissolved earlier by the President. The President should not have this sort of power over the People's Assembly and the law should be changed in the coming months to make the legislative and executive branches more equal and to provide for a system of checks and balances to prevent future presidents from abusing their power.

⁹ (2011). *Country Profile: Egypt*. Retrieved October 24, 2011 from Election Guide Web site: <http://www.electionguide.org/country.php?ID=65>

¹⁰ (2011). *Election Profile: Egypt*. Retrieved October 24, 2011, from Election Guide Web site: <http://www.electionguide.org/results.php?ID=1929>

¹¹ <http://www.electionguide.org/country.php?ID=65>

The People's Assembly has the power to draft laws and to draft, present, and approve the General State budget, since the constitution specifically states that the plan of economic and social development needs to be approved by the People's Assembly. The budget must be approved by a majority of the Assembly in order for it to be official and for any monetary transaction to occur.¹² The People's Assembly is also divided into eighteen different standing committees that help the Assembly to carry out its monitoring and legislative duties.

The upper house of Parliament is the Shura or Consultative Council and is composed of 264 members, 174 of whom are directly elected through majority vote for a six-year term and 88 are appointed by the President and can be replaced at his discretion. The Shura Council does not have as much power as the People's Assembly and serves more as a body to be consulted when there are issues relating to proposals for amendments to the articles of the Constitution, treaties affecting Egypt's territory or sovereignty, bills that are specifically referred to the Council by the president, and international issues that are given to the Council by the president.¹³

The Egyptian judiciary is independent of the other branches of government and is made up of both secular and religious courts, as well as, a Supreme Constitutional Court, and other specialized courts. The main role of the religious courts is to deal with problems that arise in cases where religious guidelines are applied such as in marriage, divorce, or inheritance (although these issues may also be considered in a secular court depending on the situation). The Supreme Constitutional Court was established in 1969 and is the highest judicial power in Egypt. It has jurisdiction to decide questions related to the constitutionality of laws and regulations, settle jurisdictional disputes between other courts, and interpret laws issued by the Parliament

¹² Wahab, Mohamed. (2006). An Overview of the Egyptian Legal System and Legal Research. Hauser Global Law School Program. Retrieved from http://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/egypt/htm#_The_Egyptian_Legal_System

¹³ Wahab, Mohamed. (2006) pg. 3

and decrees from the president if there is divergence in their implementation. The judicial system is based on French legal concepts and is influenced by Sharia law.¹⁴ Theoretically, judges are independent from the state and have judicial immunity, but during the Mubarak years they were often puppets of the regime and could be influenced and corrupted. The court system will need to be reformed under the interim and new governments of Egypt in order to root out the corruption and provide a truly unbiased and independent judiciary.

Although the 1971 Constitution set the foundation for a democratic political system by separating power between the judiciary, parliament, and executive, these institutions became puppets of the Mubarak regime. The judiciary became a way for Mubarak to persecute and jail his political opponents and suppress any rebellion by the people. The Executive was firmly in Mubarak's hands with the Prime Minister holding nothing more than a title and Parliament served at the pleasure of Mubarak to "rubber stamp" his decisions. These institutions became ways for Mubarak to consolidate his power and authority and their reform is essential in safeguarding a new truly democratic Egypt.

Role of Military

Since 1952 when the military overthrew the monarchy through a coup d'etat, the military has played a privileged role in politics. The first president of the republic General Muhammad Naguib and all subsequent presidents have been from the upper echelon of the military and have used their military careers to move into political positions. As president, Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak surrounded themselves with friends from the military and tied the military closely to politics and the state. Under Sadat and his economic openness policy, a link between private

¹⁴ Wahab, Mohamed. (2006) pg. 3

economic interests and the military developed. High ranking military officers and the economic elite were able to mutually benefit from the “commissions game” which enriched the bank accounts of military members and allowed for private businesses to get military contracts.¹⁵ The military also became involved in the country’s commercial and industrial sectors through the National Service Projects Organization (NSPO), the Arab Organization for Industrial Development, and other ventures. They had interests in the manufacture of weapons, electronics, and consumer goods; infrastructure development; various agricultural businesses; as well as interests in the service areas of aviation, tourism(developing hotels and resort complexes in particular), and security which has made the Egyptian military one of the most important economic entities.¹⁶ The economic interests the military holds have also been able to resist privatization plans over the last decade.

The military also has considerable political influence and played a major role in convincing Mubarak to resign in February 2011. Since February they have been running the country, but have been careful not to overstep their role and have not yet endorsed their own candidate for president or Parliamentary elections, serving to guide the country towards democracy, but not turn it into a military dominated country. If the military continues on this path, it will serve as a stabilizing force for the transition to a democracy. The true test will come when the military is asked to give up the power it has acquired and step back to allow a civilian government to run the country and have a civilian in control of the military.

Economy and Development

¹⁵ Cook, Steven A. (2007). *Ruling but Not Governing: The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press pg. 19

¹⁶ Cook, Steven A. pg. 19

The level of development in a country plays a large role in supporting a stable democracy. Countries with higher levels of development are more likely to establish a democratic government and better able to become consolidated democracies. The main index for measuring development is the United Nations Human Development Index which issues Human Development Reports each year that look at the level of human development through life expectancy, adult literacy and enrollment in education, and standard of living measured by purchasing power parity. The HDI is a good way to look at changes in a country over the course of a number of years, as it ranks the HDI of each country by the level of development they have such as very high human development through very low human development and by looking at a number of different factors rather than just GDP, the HDI gives a more accurate representation of a country's true progress.¹⁷

Since 1990 when the Human Development Index report first came out, Egypt has shown improvement in the areas of life expectancy, average number of years of schooling, and GNI per capita, as well as, overall progress. In 1990, the life expectancy in Egypt was 62 years and their GDP per capita was \$1,357 with a HDI score of .484 (0 being the worst and 1 being the best score possible).¹⁸ The HDI score of Egypt has risen over the past twenty years since the report was first published. In 1995, 2000, and 2005 the scores were .523, .566, and .587 respectively. In 2010, Egypt was ranked as having medium human development and was ranked 101 out of 169 with a overall score of .620 a life expectancy of 70.5 years, average years of schooling being 6.5

¹⁷ United Nations Development Program (2010). *Human Development Report 2010: The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan Press

¹⁸United Nations Development Program (1990) *Human Development Report 1990: Concept and Measurement of Human Development*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press Table 1

years, and GNI per capita at \$5,889.¹⁹ When compared with other Arab states, Egypt has a slightly higher overall HDI score, higher life expectancy, and more years of schooling. Egypt however, has a lower GNI per capita of \$5,889 compared to the Arab state average of \$7,861. This could be due to the larger population of Egypt and the lack of oil wealth in comparison to other nations in the region, particularly Gulf States.

The advancement of human development has been linked to democracy by political theorists such as Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi who argue in their article, “Modernization: Theories and Facts” that development leads to democratic stability and that there is a threshold of per capita income at which the transition to democracy is more likely to happen. They see development as leading to increased education, income, and urbanization, as well as, a more active civil society and a more complex economy. These factors cause the people to put more pressure on their leaders to democratize²⁰ and as the living conditions and standards improve the people began to demand and hope for more, and act to try and achieve a better future. As Egypt continues to development it increases its chances of transitioning to a democracy and of solidifying and maintaining that democracy.

A growing and diversified economy is an integral part of any development strategy and is necessary to help sustain a democratic country. Egypt is still classified as a lower middle income country by the World Bank²¹, but in the past decade they have made significant strides in reinventing and reforming their economy. The cabinet that came in following the 2004 elections introduced economic reforms that “simplified and reduced tariffs and taxes, improved

¹⁹ United Nations Development Program (2010). *Human Development Report 2010: The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan Press Table 1

²⁰ Przeworski, Adam & Limongi, Fernando. “Modernization Theories and Facts”. (1997). *World Politics*. 49.2, 155-183.

²¹ (2011). Egypt, Arab Rep. Retrieved November 1, 2011, from World Bank Web site: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/egypt-arab-republic>

transparency of the national budget, revived stalled privatizations of public enterprises and implemented economic legislation designed to foster private sector-driven economic growth and improve Egypt's competitiveness.”²²

Prior to the introduction of economic reforms in 2004, the growth of Egypt's economy had stagnated at about 3.2% real GDP growth in 2002 and 2003, which was well below the average growth rate of African nations which was at 5.7% and 5.2%, respectively. There was marginal improvement in 2004 and 2005, and the economy boasted a 6.8%, 7.1%, and 7.2% real GDP growth rate in 2006, 2007, and 2008, which surpassed the average growth rates of African nations.²³ Following the global recession in late 2008, Egypt's growth rate fell but had rebounded before being faced with a 55 day shutdown of the stock market because of the revolution in early 2011. In order to continue on a trajectory of continued economic growth and openness, economic reforms and re-structuring will need to be carried out by the new democratic government.

Although economic growth was solid in Egypt for several years, there is still a need for the economy to further diversify. As of 2009/2010, the services sector accounted for 48.5% of GDP, industry 37.5% and agriculture 14%²⁴ with the country being heavily dependent upon tourism, Suez Canal revenues, and oil and gas exports. Heavy reliance upon economic sectors that are susceptible to international fluctuations could lead to instability in the future and a more diversified economy would serve as a stabilizing safeguard.

²² (2010). Background Note: Egypt. U.S. Department of State. Retrieved September 2011 from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5309.htm>

²³ (2011). Egypt. African Economic Outlook. Retrieved November 4, 2011, from <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/north-africa/egypt/>

²⁴ (2011). *Egypt*. African Economic Outlook. Retrieved November 4, 2011, from <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/north-africa/egypt/>

Along with diversifying the economy, Egypt also needs to put an end to the widespread corruption in various economic sectors. According to the 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index which is issued by Transparency International, Egypt has a CPI score of 3.1 with zero being highly corrupt and 10 having no corruption.²⁵

Political Parties and Social Movements

The development of political parties is critical to the democratization of Egypt. Under Mubarak, political parties consisted of the New Delegation Party (al-Wafd), which advocated abolishing the emergency law, promoting democracy, and solving social and economic problems such as unemployment, housing, and the economy;²⁶ the Muslim Brotherhood, who was not recognized as a legal political party under the Mubarak regime so their candidates ran as independents and was a main opposition party that had a wide- reaching, well organized, support base party; the Tomorrow Party (al-Ghad) which started as a splinter group of the al-Wafd party by Ayman Nour and was immediately seen as a threat by the regime when Nour announced his intention to run for president in the 2005 Presidential elections;²⁷ and the National Democratic Party (NDP), Mubarak's party, which dominated the political scene. Although political parties were greatly limited under Mubarak both old and new parties now have the chance to shape the future of the country. The NDP was dissolved by court order in April 2011 for the corruption and election fraud they committed during the Mubarak era and although its members have formed other parties, they do not have the political strength or support of the old NDP or other emerging

²⁵ Transparency International. (2010). *Corruption Perceptions Index 2010*. Retrieved from www.transparency.org

²⁶ (2011). *Al-Wafd (Delegation Party)*. Retrieved December 21, 2011 from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Web site: <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/20/al-wafd-delegation-party>

²⁷ (2011). *Al-Ghad (Tomorrow Party)*. Retrieved December 21, 2011, from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Web site: <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/20/al-ghad-tomorrow-party>

parties.²⁸ Parliamentary elections are in progress with elections for the People’s Assembly completed and elections for the Shura Council which are scheduled to begin at the end of January. Prior to the start of elections, Egypt saw the emergence of four main political party alliances: the Democratic Alliance, the Egypt Bloc, the Islamist Alliance, and the “Completing the Revolution” Alliance.

The Democratic Alliance is one such group and is made up of the Muslim Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party, al-Ghad al-Jedid, and al-Karama. There are several other small parties in the alliance, but is dominated by the Freedom and Justice Party. The Democratic Alliance was the first political bloc to be formed after the revolution and has faced internal discourse since its founding with some groups leaving to join other blocs. Even with an internal party rivalry, this bloc has done well in the polls due to the popularity and organizational structure of the Muslim Brotherhood and has members contesting all seats in Parliament in the upcoming elections.²⁹

The second main political party alliance is the Egypt bloc which is the main liberal alliance and is made up of the Free Egyptians Party, the Social Democratic party and the National Progressive Unionist party which got 50, 40, and 10 percent of the places on the party lists, respectively. The Egypt bloc has 233 candidates participating in the upcoming elections in 46 constituencies. They also have a clear platform that focuses on “realizing the revolution’s ideals of liberal democracy and universal citizenship.”³⁰ The bloc also emphasizes a “civil state”

²⁸ (2011). *National Democratic Party*. Retrieved December 22, 2011, from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Web site: <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/22/national-democratic-party>

²⁹ (2011). *Al-Tahaluf al-Dimuqrati (The Democratic Alliance)*. Retrieved November 14, 2011 from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Web site: <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/26/the-democratic-alliance>

³⁰ (2011). *Al-Ketla al Masriyya (The Egypt Bloc)*. Retrieved November 14, 2011 from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Web site: <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/26/the-egypt-bloc>

which entwines Islam within the political system and has endorsed the idea that Islam is to be the official religion and the main source of legislation, but it does not want Egypt transformed into an Islamic state.

The third alliance, the Islamist Alliance, consists of the Salafi al-Nour party, the Salafi al-Asala party and the Building and Development Party. Salafi, is the idea of returning to the ideal time of the prophet and first four caliphs, and the Islamist alliance represents the interests of ideologically conservative Islamism and differs from other Islamist parties such as the Freedom and Justice Party in the realm of foreign policy. The Islamist Alliance parties share a hardline stance regarding the peace treaty with Israel and relations with western countries.³¹

The fourth alliance is the “Completing the Revolution” Alliance, a new group made up of the Egypt Freedom Party, the Egyptian Current Party, the Socialist Popular Alliance Party, the Egyptian Liberation Party, the Equality and Development Party, the Revolutionary Youth Coalition, the Youth Movement for Justice and Freedom, and the Union of Independent Farmers. This alliance includes socialist, liberal, and moderate Islamist parties and will have 300 candidates running in the upcoming elections in 33 electoral districts.³²

Aside from the four main political alliances that will participate in the upcoming elections there are also a number of social movements that are contributing the Egypt’s developing civil society. These groups include organizations that have been around for decades

³¹ (2011). Al-Tahaluf al-Islami (The Islamist Alliance). Retrieved November 14, 2011, from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Web site: <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/11/02/al-tahaluf-al-islami-the-islamist-alliance>

³² (2011). *Istikmal al-Thawra* (“Completing the Revolution” Alliance). Retrieved November 14, 2011, from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Web site: <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/11/02/istikmal-al-thawra-%E2%80%9Ccompleting-the-revolution%E2%80%9D-alliance>

such as the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as those that formed more recently like the Kifaya movement which began in 2004 to protest Mubarak's presidency and the possibility he could transfer power to his son, as well as, the corruption and stagnation in the political system. Other groups such as the National Association for Change and the April 6 Youth Movement have also formed more recently helping to develop Egypt's civil society. The April 6 Youth Movement and the National Association for Change both helped to organize the protests in January that fueled the Revolution. The presence of these movements in Egyptian society will help the country to move forward as a democracy and shows the promise of a diverse and active civil society.

Parliamentary elections began on November 28 and the third round concluded on January 3 with success. It is estimated that the first round of elections had around sixty-two percent voter turnout or 8.5 million people³³ and the elections were not marred by fraud or corruption such as ballot stuffing or arrests and harassment of candidates that were common under the previous regime. Although elections for the People's Assembly are over, there are still up and coming elections for the Shura Council and the presidential election with a greater chance of violence as poll results from other governates are released ahead of elections in other areas. In the first two rounds of elections the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party and the Salafi Nour Party came in first and second respectively and will play a large role in the new parliament that will be convened following the third round of elections in the middle of January.

Conclusions

³³ (2011). Record-High Voter Turnout in Egypt Polls. Aljazeera. Retrieved December 20, 2011, from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/12/2011122181522174366.html>

Egypt is currently at a precarious point. It is experiencing elections for the first time since revolution swept the country in February 2011 and there is no guarantee at what the outcomes of these elections will be. There are three main paths that Egypt may take in the years to come, but none of these are guaranteed or can easily be varied.

The first possible path is one of optimism. Egypt has the tools that it needs to transition to a democratic country. It has political institutions that can sustain a democracy with simple adjustments and an active civil society with developing political parties and social movements. However, the Egyptian people must take care to keep the military from holding onto power as they have been making a move to do in recent weeks, by publishing a draft proclamation that would keep the military in power and give them power over the drafting of the new constitution.³⁴

The parliamentary elections currently taking place are crucial to the democratic transition of Egypt, because the Parliament will be drafting a new constitution for the country and various groups are competing to make their voices heard. If Egypt can make it through the elections in the coming months and draft a new constitution they will be on a good path to democratization. They must remain vigilant however, about the amount of control and influence the military has in politics and be aware that the path to democratization is going to have bumps in the road and that once it has an elected civilian government, that government is going to have to rise to meet the challenges that face the country and inspired the revolution in the first place. Although the democratic process may be filled with opposition and controversy, Egypt will be able to

³⁴ Ottaway, Marina. (2011). Electing a New Egypt. Retrieved December 1, 2011 from <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/11/28/electing-new-egypt#smooth>

successfully complete the democratization process and become a country truly run by the wishes of its people.

The second possible path that Egypt may be on is one that may leave the country in chaos for years to come. At this point there is a struggle between the military that is still in many ways tied to the old regimes and the political and social groups that are forming and/or working to transition the country to a democracy. The military has shown a reluctance to give up too much power and if they do not give the new parliament the power it needs there may well be violent uprising for years to come until the country is either pulled firmly back into its authoritarian ways or power and influence the military holds is finally broken.

Another factor that could leave Egypt in turmoil is the state of its economy and finances. The revolution and uncertainty over the past months have hurt the tourism industry, which Egypt relies heavily upon, as well as, lowering the level of business investment in the country. If Egypt continues for years in a state of chaos and uncertainty, the economic situation will lead to further decline which will also exacerbate problems within the country such as food shortages and unemployment.

The third possible route for Egypt to take is one of middle ground. Elections will take place and a new Parliament will come in, but the military will continue to fight to control the civilian government. While the country will not slip back into authoritarianism, it may experience corruption and a power struggle that could hamper its democratic and economic development in the coming years. Social, political, and economic problems within the country could get worse before they get better and protests by the people will continue. Also, Egypt

could face the problem of the newly elected civilian government that is too divided and unable to form coalitions to achieve a government that is able to address issues facing the country.

There is no guarantee of the path that Egypt will take in the coming months, since all democratic transitions are fluid and face their own problems and successes. However, with the political institutions, civil society, and will of Egyptian people to move their country forward being strong there is reason to hope and believe that over the coming months and years Egypt will transition and solidify into a democratic county controlled by the will of its people.

References

- (2010). Background Note: Egypt. *U.S. Department of State*. Retrieved September 2011 from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5309.htm>
- (2010). Egypt Police in Brutality Trial Over Khaled Said Death. *BBC News*. Retrieved October 2011, from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-10773404>
- (2011). *Al-Ghad (Tomorrow Party)*. Retrieved December 21, 2011, from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Web site: <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/20/al-ghad-tomorrow-party>
- (2011). *Al-Ketla al Masriyya (The Egypt Bloc)*. Retrieved November 14, from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Web site: <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/26/the-egypt-bloc>
- (2011). *Al-Tahaluf al-Dimuqrati (The Democratic Alliance)*. Retrieved November 14, from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Web site: <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/26/the-democratic-alliance>
- (2011). *Al-Tahaluf al-Islami (The Islamist Alliance)*. Retrieved November 14, 2011, from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Web site: <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/11/02/al-tahaluf-al-islami-the-islamist-alliance>
- (2011). *Al-Wafd (Delegation party)*. Retrieved December 21, 2011, from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Web site: <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/20/al-wafd-delegation-party>
- (2011). Background Note: Indonesia. *U.S. Department of State*. Retrieved November 1, 2011 from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2748.htm>
- (2011). *Country Profile: Egypt*. Retrieved October 24, 2011, form Election Guide Web site: <http://www.electionguide.org/country.php?ID=65>
- (2011). *Egypt*. African Economic Outlook. Retrieved November 4, 2011, from <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/north-africa/egypt/>
- (2011). *Egypt, Arab Rep.* Retrieved November 1, 2011, from the World Bank Web site: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/egypt-arab-republic>
- (2011). *Egypt*. In the CIA World Factbook. Retrieved October 22, 2011, from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/eg.html>
- (2011). *Election Profile: Egypt*. Retrieved October 24, 2011, from Election Guide Web site: <http://www.electionguide.org/results.php?ID=1929>
- (2011). *Guide to Egypt's Transition*. Retrieved November 14, from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Web site: <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/>

- (2011). *Istikmal al-Thawra* (“*Completing the Revolution*” Alliance). Retrieved November 14, 2011, from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Web site:
<http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/11/02/istikmal-al-thawra-%E2%80%9Ccompleting-the-revolution%E2%80%9D-alliance>
- (2011). *National Democratic Party*. Retrieved December 22, 2011, from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Web site:
<http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/22/national-democratic-party>
- (2011). Record-High Voter Turnout in Egypt Polls. *Aljazeera*. Retrieved December 20, 2011, from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/12/2011122181522174366.html>
- Allain, Jean. (2004). *International Law in the Middle East: Closer to Power than Justice*. England: Ashgate Publishers.
- Brooks, Karen. (2011). Indonesia’s Lessons for Egypt. In *Council on Foreign Relations*. Retrieved March 3, 2011, from <http://www.cfr.org/region/indonesia/ri292>
- Cook, Steven A. (2007). *Ruling but Not Governing: The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Human Rights Watch, *Egypt: Hostage-Taking and Intimidation by Security Forces*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1995, available at <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1995/Egypt.htm>
- Kiziltoprak, Suleyman & Nakip, Tahir. *Egyptian Constitutions from National Sovereignty to Individualistic Liberty*. Retrieved December 20, 2011 from <http://www.ordaf.org.tr/egyptian-constitutions-from-national-sovereignty-to-individualistic-liberty.aspx>
- Ottaway, Marina. (2011). *Electing a New Egypt*. Retrieved December 1, 2011 from <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/11/28/electing-new-egypt#smooth>
- Przeworski, Adam & Limongi, Fernando. Modernization Theories and Facts. (1997). *World Politics*. 49.2, 155-183.
- Sorenson, David S. (2008). *An Introduction to the Modern Middle East: History, Religion, Political Economy, Politics*. United States: Westview Press
- Transparency International. (2010). *Corruption Perceptions Index 2010*. Retrieved from www.transparency.org
- United Nations Development Program (1990) *Human Development Report 1990: Concept and Measurement of Human Development*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press
- United Nations Development Program (2010). *Human Development Report 2010: The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan Press

Wahab, Mohamed. (2006). *An Overview of the Egyptian Legal System and Legal Research*. Hauser Global Law School Program. Retrieved from http://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/egypt.htm#_The_Egyptian_Legal_System

Zahid, Mohammed. (2010). *The Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt's Succession Crisis: the Politics of Liberalisation and Reform in the Middle East*. New York: Tauris Academic Studies