

ISLAM AND POLITICS IN THE NEW EGYPT

Nathan J. Brown

MIDDLE EAST | APRIL 2013

CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT

FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

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Summary

In the wake of Egypt's revolution, a sea change is undeniably under way: Islam is playing a different and more powerful role in Egyptian public life. But focusing on the growing influence of Islamic forces masks an unpredictable evolution proceeding underneath the surface. The Muslim Brotherhood, Salafis, and a host of state institutions dedicated to Islam are themselves being reshaped in profound but unpredictable ways by their growing involvement in politics.

Islamic Forces

- The currently dominant Muslim Brotherhood has shown tactical agility in winning electoral victories. But it still needs a clear strategic vision that enables it to change from an opposition social movement dedicated to the reform of all society into a competitive political party.
- Salafis have also enjoyed electoral success despite having much less political experience than the Brotherhood. Yet they must still determine how to combine their unswerving dedication to religious truth with the compromises necessary in democratic politics. And they have to learn how to form disciplined political organizations out of a formerly diffuse leadership of preachers and scholars.
- State religious institutions like the country's premier Sunni center of learning, al-Azhar, have achieved a more prominent role, sometimes enshrined in constitutional text and formal procedure. But the internal and external pressure that comes along with centrality in public life is likely to keep the battles for control of these institutions very much alive. In the end, al-Azhar in particular may find that every step toward increased centrality moves it further away from autonomy.

Underlying Trends

Islamic forces are being reshaped by their participation in politics. The Muslim Brotherhood, Salafis, and state institutions related to Islam are plunging into the new environment unaware of and unable to control the ways politics will change them.

Egypt is not following Iran's path toward theocracy, but when religion enters the realm of politics it will not remain unchanged. Clerics are not

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gaining positions of political power, state institutions continue to function, and democratic practices still manage to limp along, though they are increasingly threatened by distrust and polarization.

Religion will undoubtedly play a major part in the new Egypt—though the exact role is unclear. Islamic forces that want to use the power of the state to build a more religious society may one day conclude that they should have wished more carefully.

Introduction

Egypt's 2011 national uprising taken in the name of bread, freedom, and social justice has led to dramatic changes in the structures of Egyptian politics. Still, many participants voice deepening unease and disappointment at the results. Steps toward the realization of the inspirational but very general goals of the revolutionary crowds have been limited at best—and some steps have been taken in the wrong direction.

But for good or ill, one fundamental change is undeniably in motion: Islam, hardly dormant prior to 2011, is playing an even more powerful role in Egyptian public life.

The trend, while unmistakable, has also been very contentious. Bitter struggles about the relationship between religion and politics have played out in the new constitution, the courts, the media, electoral politics, and culture. Even before those battles have been resolved, it is clear that Islamic forces are in a powerful—and in some realms, dominant—position.

But those same Islamic forces are being reshaped by their participation in politics and even more by their string of political victories. The focus only on their influence risks missing how much they themselves are evolving, often in ways that their leaders did not anticipate and can only hope to guide. For Egypt, the question is not simply how Islam, Islamist forces, and Islamic institutions will shape postrevolutionary politics, but how the new politics is shaping them.

There are several diverse and indeterminate changes underway in both social and political movements—the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafis—and the array of state institutions related to Islam. But there is one overriding theme in all of them: unintended consequences. Islamist forces are plunging into the new environment unable to control and even unaware of some of the ways it is changing them.

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The Muslim Brotherhood

The past two years have been very heady ones for the Muslim Brotherhood, an organization suppressed, hounded, and demonized for over half a century.¹ It now controls the presidency and seems poised to knock down barriers to its members' entry into a host of state institutions, ranging from the media to

perhaps the military. The movement was able to steer the constitutional process and has not yet met its match at the voting booth.

The electoral success has made the Brotherhood's leaders a group of content, sometimes even smug, democrats. For many years, they labored under the hopeful assumption that their values represented those of the silenced majority. They now feel that this assumption is established as fact for all those who care to look.

Democratic electoral mechanisms have thus become very easy for them to accept, even though their triumphs have also led to a degree of majoritarianism and quiet contempt for what they view, fairly or not, as their noisy and electorally dysfunctional non-Islamist competitors.

But the fact remains that the Brotherhood was not built primarily for politics and certainly not for governing. It turns out that the movement has a strong ability to manage elections, but not exactly by design—it has managed to draw on assets and characteristics of an ideological and religious reform movement to run and win repeatedly. This is impressive because the organization was built under authoritarian conditions to attract dedicated and diligent

members distinguished by the quality of their contribution, not to coax the weakly committed noted only for the quantity of their votes.

But for all its confidence that the Brotherhood represents the popular will, the movement's leaders continue to betray a strong sense that they are still besieged. The move-

ment is pulled between its past as a hounded victim and its potential future as a governing party. In the past, while leaders never hid their belief that they were ultimately capable of assuming political authority, they were not fully prepared to do so quickly. They still do not speak as if they sought power, but instead as if the Egyptian people summoned them.

Over the short term, the awkward combination of grasping the reins of power while feeling under attack has generated Nixonian rhetoric and some political missteps. But the challenges are more profound than language and tactics—they go right to the movement's ideology and organization.

On an ideological level, the movement has seen a gradual politicization of its mission over the past few decades. That trend has continued with unexpected force in the last two years. Formed as a general reform movement in the 1920s, the Brotherhood's leaders have always insisted that politics is only a part of their mission and not necessarily the most important one. Their vision of reform purports to be comprehensive, encompassing the social, personal, educational, cultural, charitable, and family realms.

In the past two years, however, most of the movement's energies have been directed toward politics.² When I asked a member of the Guidance Bureau a year ago about the movement's nonpolitical activities, his main response was a sigh. The intervening period has accentuated the move toward politics.

The Brotherhood was not built primarily for politics and certainly not for governing.

It is not that the Brotherhood no longer cares about other realms, but its members increasingly show signs of viewing most of their work through a political prism. The movement is currently revising its curriculum—the list of readings that members gather to study and discuss in small groups³—and those familiar with the process speak of a shift away from writings more appropriate for an opposition and a social movement and toward Islamic writings on governance.

In Egyptian political discussions it is common to hear talk of the “Brotherhoodization of the state,” a process by which movement members enter and perhaps even dominate official institutions that had previously been closed to Islamists. But from the movement’s perspective, this creates a challenge described (inelegantly but perhaps presciently) by one activist as “the statification of the Brotherhood”⁴—the growing tendency of the movement to view Egyptian society from the vantage point of the state institutions it is beginning to inhabit.

A movement that prides itself on its ability to hold fixed positions but also show great practicality and flexibility will come under real pressure when it attempts to govern. Compromises are necessary—they are the stuff of normal politics—and the Brotherhood has never had much difficulty accepting the idea that pursuit of a long-term vision is best addressed through a series of gradual, short-term steps.

But politics married to the short-term logic of the electoral cycle, as well as the exigencies of governing a very poor society and a state caught in a web of international alignments and obligations, can risk making short-term compromises a bit more permanent or ongoing in nature.

There is little sign that the Brotherhood’s leadership has given much thought to how its fixed ideological vision can be sustained in such circumstances.

The Brotherhood must also adjust to a new environment where the shortcomings of public bodies are increasingly attributed to the movement. The Brotherhood has received more than its share of negative publicity before: the regime of Hosni Mubarak pilloried the Brotherhood for everything from terrorism to a claimed alignment with the United States. But the new environment is different. Any political problem or misstep—from an accident on the state railways to an increase in unemployment to perceived electoral fraud—risks not only tarnishing the Brotherhood’s image, but also alienating the population from any sort of Islamist vision for politics and society.

Indeed, important parts of society that initially reacted to the Brotherhood’s rise with wary skepticism have begun to speak in panicked terms. And political polarization is giving way to mutual delegitimation between Islamist and non-Islamist forces. Never before has the movement had to bear such a burden.

The organizational challenges stem similarly from the Brotherhood’s suddenly successful forays into politics. The movement has always been famous for its unity and discipline under the leadership of a general guide and a small

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Guidance Bureau that is generally between fifteen and twenty members. But now the movement can be said to have not one head but three—General Guide

Muhammad Badi', Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) head Saad al-Katatni, and Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi.

Each is theoretically independent and has a separate set of structures for consultation and making decisions. The party and the movement claim to coordinate on strategic and ideological issues but not on day-to-day decision-making, and the presidency has no formal authority over the movement nor does the movement or the party have any formal authority over the president.

Still, they clearly work well together, drawing on the movement's history and the tight personal bonds that have been the secret behind the Brotherhood's resilience in less friendly circumstances. All three leaders individually earned a reputation for solid loyalty to the organization, meaning that the world probably does not look fundamentally different to them despite their different vantage points today.

But there is no getting around the fact that the president's actions will deeply affect an organization that cannot hold him accountable or that the general guide will be taken as speaking for the president whether he is or not. Even were they to agree completely, the problem of coordination among disparate leaders or bodies is one the Brotherhood has only solved in the past through hierarchy and discipline, tools that cannot easily be deployed in the new environment. Over the long term, tensions and differences may grow.

And the organizational challenge goes far below the leadership level. The organization has been built to pursue the Brotherhood's mission of Islamizing reform in adverse conditions. Composed of hierarchically linked cells of dedicated followers, the Brotherhood has bestowed responsibility on (and heavily taxed) individuals on the basis of their proven loyalty to the organization.

The political party, by contrast, is designed to win electoral majorities at the national level (something that the Brotherhood had never tried to do in the past). The party will be forced to reward vote-getting ability and place greater stress on broad popularity and outward looking skills of a kind the movement has generally seen as valuable, but hardly critical.

And the problem is not only in the nature of the skills that the Brotherhood cultivates. It is now difficult to escape the impression that the most energetic and capable members of the movement have shifted their attention over to the political party. A visit to an FJP office reveals a beehive of activity; a visit to the movement's headquarters in Cairo finds cadres moving at a far more leisurely pace.

Movement leaders evince no concern over the organizational tensions created by distinct bodies for the movement and for the party. Sometimes leaders will obliquely acknowledge debates about the impact of politicization, but they are comfortable with an evolution that they see as logical: the FJP will gradually

move toward greater autonomy and separate membership, and the Brotherhood will continue with its broad focus and more disciplined membership.

Brotherhood and party leaders acknowledge that in electoral campaigns thus far the party has had to depend on the movement to mobilize supporters and turn out voters, because the party is not yet able to rely only on its own organization and foot soldiers. But over time, leaders confidently predict that the division of labor between party and movement will become clearer and the FJP will emerge as a fully autonomous body, able to make its own decisions, stake out its own positions, and rely only on the general guidance of the movement's ideology rather than close coordination with its leadership.

Indeed, the Brotherhood's surprise decision in March 2013 to register as a nongovernmental organization under the existing Mubarak-era law will place it under legal obligation to leave politics aside. With the strong overlap between movement and party, the FJP will likely be dependent on its core supporters from the Brotherhood for years to come, but compliance with the law might make some organizational differentiation necessary in order to avoid providing adversaries with legal ammunition.

And there is an incentive to move in that direction anyway. If the movement chose to fall back only on its core members, the Brotherhood would never be able to win an election. Reliable observers of the Brotherhood estimated in a personal conversation that their core support stands at about 4 million voters.⁵ Even in an election with only one-third of eligible voters casting ballots (turnout has varied greatly and is very hard to estimate), this level of support would only win the Brotherhood one-fourth of the final tally. That may be enough to form the largest parliamentary bloc and put any presidential candidate into a run off, but it is not enough for a clear victory in either realm. If it wants to win more votes, it will have to pull in those less committed to the organization who might otherwise vote for Salafi or non-Islamist parties.

The organizational task in the coming years, then, is to devise a set of structures that can divide the labor but not split the faithful. In other words, the Brotherhood needs to build a party that can attract many adherents without diluting the determination and discipline of its core followers. The FJP must be able to chart its own course, somewhat distinct from the Brotherhood movement, without going too far astray from the mission.

But if the path the movement wishes to follow is clear over the long term, it is less apparent that any real steps have been taken or that leaders have truly grappled with the possible organizational or ideological differences that could emerge over time. To be fair, the Brotherhood has talked about these issues and made a series of decisions (to form a party while keeping it on a fairly short leash⁶), but it has given little indication that it can navigate the key decisions over the longer term.

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Observers who wonder if the movement will fracture or fail are probably missing the main dangers. The question is not whether the organization will survive intact; it will likely flourish. Instead, the question is whether it will be able to remain true to its mission of Islamizing reform.

Those who have criticized the Brotherhood in the past as being solely concerned with political power have been far from the mark—a senior leader of the movement today

is more likely to have joined with the expectation of serving in prison than the hope of occupying the presidential palace. When Brotherhood leaders speak of being called into service before they felt fully ready, they are not being completely insincere. But in the new, postrevolutionary environment, the criticism is suddenly gaining some legitimacy.

And the movement's response to the political opportunities before it, for all its well-earned reputation for caution, has been to marry a vague strategic vision to a series of ad hoc decisions on how to run in elections, structure campaigns, form alliances, and pursue office and policies that betray more the impulsive ambition of Icarus than the methodical precision of a chess grandmaster.

Salafis

Salafis are comparatively inexperienced in the political realm, but they have realized quick electoral success (see the appendix for an overview of Egypt's Salafi groups and parties). Despite the novelty of their prominent political role, politics presents them with many of the same challenges as their more seasoned Islamist rivals in the Muslim Brotherhood—enough so that some have begun to speak of the “Brotherhoodization” of the Salafis.⁷

But unlike the Brotherhood, Salafis have had little time to prepare themselves or develop tactics to manage the ideological and organizational pressures. While they have therefore met the challenges with less coherence, this has not yet detracted from their political success.⁸

Prior to 2011, Salafi movements showed three marked differences from the Brotherhood. First, their interest in the correct interpretation of texts and following appropriate practice trumped all other concerns (sometimes earning them the appellation of textualists [*nususiyin*]). In contrast to the more free-wheeling approach of their Islamist colleagues in the Brotherhood, who admit that many interpretations are plausible, Salafis strove to find the best possible (and therefore correct) reading and apply it to personal behavior.

Second, Salafi movements tend to be far less formally organized as a matter of choice. To be sure, there were formal organizations that were especially active in the social and charitable realms, but the true heart of the Salafi movement lay in informal (though hardly unstructured) circles of followers of specific scholars.

Third, they tended to be far less committed to being involved with broader society. They hardly avoided social involvement and indeed were a growing presence in many areas of Egypt, but their way seemed to be far more oriented toward preaching to the faithful and leading by example. Individual Salafis were very visible in Egyptian society for those who cared to look—but many did not and therefore saw right past them. The Brotherhood, by contrast, made itself hard to ignore. It plunged into parliament, professional associations, and any other institution not barred to the movement.

Salafi leaders insist today that observers mistook practical concerns for principled ones—their absence from the political realm was not religiously or ideologically motivated. Instead, they now claim, in an autocratic state there was little room for them.

There may be considerable truth to this assertion, but skeptics who see a clear shift can point to the way in which some prominent leaders in the past showed not merely disinterest but a positive sense of loyalty to the former ruler (in accordance with some interpretations of proper conduct in an Islamic society) and distanced themselves from revolutionaries.

Indeed, to this day many prominent Salafi leaders continue to treat politics with disdain. Brotherhood leaders add an edge to such charges of a qualitative shift, claiming that the former regime allowed Salafis to flourish so that they would occupy the social space that was naturally the Brotherhood's constituency.

Regardless of the reason for their distance from politics, it took only a few months for some Salafis to grasp the new opportunities with enthusiasm. They plunged into politics by backing the March 2011 constitutional referendum as a way of protecting the provision in the Egyptian constitution describing the principles of Islamic sharia as the main source of legislation.

Quickly moving beyond this goal, they began to develop a more comprehensive approach to constitutional issues, coming to insist that the provision they had fought hard to protect was so vaguely worded (and so flexibly interpreted) that it had little meaning.

And to this growing ability to develop programmatic claims they added an extensive organizational apparatus by drawing on existing organizations and networks to form some explicitly political bodies. To be sure, some Salafis had been outwardly oriented all along, seeking to persuade Egyptians to be more pious and proper in their practice. But there was no attempt to use these skills to form a political party, something that changed within months of Mubarak's downfall. The most successful at first was al-Nour, an organization that showed an ability to mobilize Salafi voters, reach out to sympathetic supporters, and craft popular appeals on social and economic issues to a far broader public with astonishing speed.

How will this sudden turn outward alter a hitherto inward-looking movement? There is no doubt that most Salafi leaders have embraced the new political opportunities with enthusiasm (though occasionally a dissenting or

doubting opinion is voiced). But there is not much sign that those leaders have understood the ideological and organizational challenges they will face.

Ideologically, for instance, Salafi leaders who focused on practice and an Islamic legal heritage have suddenly needed to figure out how to take positions on positive legislation and even participate in drafting laws in parliament or constitutional clauses.

A widely circulated video during the constitutional debate revealed a prominent Salafi leader, Yasir Burhami, justifying the constitution to his followers by pointing to its Islamizing potential.⁹ Shocked opponents inclined to see the 2012 constitution as an Islamist Trojan horse felt they had a smoking gun. Whether or not they did, the video showed something else as well: a prominent Salafi leader forced to sell his compromises to followers who had before them a document that only had a few clauses with any obvious Islamic content. The fact that he needed to persuade his supporters by using terms that alienated non-Islamists showed the kinds of dilemmas that face all politicians in democratic settings.

And indeed in this case, the compromises the Salafi constitutional drafters were forced to make were far more than immediately met the eye of a non-Salafi skeptic. Two critical provisions risked turning Egypt into a religious state in the eyes of anti-Islamist forces, but they were not necessarily ideal for the Salafis. Article 4 buttressed the role of al-Azhar, an institution hitherto largely unfriendly to Salafism. And Article 219 defined the “principles of the Islamic shari‘a” with a far greater deference to centuries of Islamic jurisprudence than Salafis had ever shown, given their preference to go straight to foundational texts and downplay traditional jurisprudence.

While it was Salafi pressure that had led to the inclusion of these two clauses (with the Brotherhood merely acquiescing in order to get the constitution through), in fact the Islamic provisions of the 2012 constitution are far closer to Brotherhood than Salafi positions. Indeed, some Brotherhood members were delighted but puzzled that the clauses seemed to drop into their laps after the efforts of others. The “Brotherhoodization” of the Salafis may have an ideological and doctrinal component.

Other ideological pressures on Salafi political leaders may wreak unintended effects. First, unlike the Brotherhood, Salafis have far less experience in gradualism with its need for prioritization and, above all, compromise. Indeed, when I met with some of the leaders of a new Salafi political party, al-Watan, in January, they were absolutely insistent that politics would not involve compromise and that ideological parties entering politics were not changed by the experience.

Whether this was mere boastfulness was hard to read, but I strongly suspect they are wrong. Salafi parliamentarians in Kuwait have had to figure out how or whether to deal with a minister of education who did not dress with what they felt was the modesty required of a Muslim woman. The principled stand had both political and practical implications because they regarded the ministry as

having considerable importance. Would they really provoke a political crisis by opposing the government because of a single uncovered head? Or would they instead cooperate with a cabinet that offered them real opportunities? Egyptian Salafis will likewise have to make compromises and set priorities, and without having thought about how to do so, they will make them on the fly.

Salafi political leaders show great confidence now that they follow not only God's instructions but also the people's will—and that election results to date indicate there is no contradiction between them. Of course, they would also insist that if a conflict ever arises, it is the former that must take precedence. This will largely be the case, but not completely.

With the growing politicization of Salafism, tactical compromises might be necessary and will have to find some ideological or doctrinal justification for a movement that is founded on correct practice. Salafism might bend slightly to the will of the voters. But more subtly, differences among Salafi scholars and leaders may soon be settled not merely by textual arguments as in the past, but by the ability to attract more votes of pious but hardly educated followers.¹⁰

While ideological pressures may operate slowly and quietly, the organizational pressures of politicization are happening more quickly and publicly. In the 2011 parliamentary elections, the winnowing effect of balloting was clear. Al-Nour quickly established itself as the leading player and was backed by the country's largest Salafi network, but tensions quickly emerged.

There were tensions over the relative role of religious scholars who inspired the movement and political leaders who ran it, geographical rivalries, and personality conflicts. There were also issues about the relationship between the movement and the party and whether some Salafis were edging closer to the Brotherhood in outlook.

In a sense, the movement-party relationship that may bedevil the Brotherhood also poses a series of questions for Salafi leaders. But Salafis will need to answer them without the Brotherhood's experience and discipline and with a far stronger emphasis on the leading role of religious scholars and teachers in guiding their movement. Brotherhood leaders frequently squabble but rarely schism; Salafis have already shown far more fractious tendencies.

And there are other ways that politics may impose some shocks. Perhaps one that is most jarring for the Salafi rank and file is the rudeness of Egyptian political life itself. Salafis treat their teachers with reverence based on their superior learning, but they are suddenly finding such respected figures lampooned, ridiculed, and criticized. Of course, some prominent Salafis have been perfectly rude (and sometimes far worse) with their non-Islamist opponents and that in itself may lead to a deeper unanticipated challenge of politicization.

Prior to 2011, Salafis could be ignored or treated as odd curiosities by many Egyptians; after 2011, Salafis have many enemies. A movement that seeks to

Egyptian Salafis will have to make compromises and set priorities, and without having thought about how to do so, they will make them on the fly.

lead the way to truth may have had success with some, but it has failed with many others, actually leading large numbers to be repulsed by the Salafi call. Politics in a polarized environment has costs, and this has led to deep Salafi resentment about not only their scholars being mocked, but also about how the public sphere and powerful institutions are arrayed against them.

They do feel, of course, that they have the people on their side. Showing quiet confidence that they represent the downtrodden majority and feeling a strong sense of responsibility to the people, Salafi leaders have developed a populist democratic touch. But it is coupled with a deep sense of resentment and exclusion.

The leaders of the newly formed al-Watan Party I met with expressed this very strongly by repeatedly using an odd word—they complained that they were victims of racism (*‘unsuriyya*). I resisted the urge to lecture them on the meaning of the word “race” because it would have missed the point. What they meant to communicate was a feeling of exclusion and discrimination.

There were places they did not feel welcome or could not go, professions (such as the police in the past) they could not enter, and public locations where they would not be treated with respect.

Again, this was not dissimilar to how some members of the Brotherhood talk, but it was expressed with greater bitterness, perhaps for good reason. While the Brotherhood

can certainly claim to have borne a heavy political burden in the past, it is not uncommon to find Brotherhood supporters in prominent positions in important Egyptian institutions.

Salafis have been more of a society apart. They were perfectly visible as individuals in some public places and even in some professions. But their entry into political life, coming as suddenly and forcefully as it did, has been a shock to both them and to the people they wish to lead.

While they differ in both kind and degree, both Salafis and the Brotherhood still present the same challenge to the Egyptian polity—figuring out how to integrate popular movements characterized by a quiet self-confidence and even arrogance married to a sense of grievance and exclusion.

Brotherhood leaders frequently squabble but rarely schism; Salafis have already shown far more fractious tendencies.

State Institutions and Law

Egyptians are now discovering how under the Mubarak regime many state institutions retained some limited autonomy. The military even proved capable of abandoning the president at the end. Few other institutions were able to go that far, but various parts of the state—the security apparatus, the judiciary, and even the parliament—while generally kept under the watchful eye of reliable figures and co-opted with a variety of techniques, were able to show a limited measure of independence in internal decisionmaking, a sense of corporate

identity and mission, and some developed a set of professional standards. This allowed them to strike out on their own when the president was forced out.

This was the case for several critical religious institutions. Al-Azhar in particular retained a strong sense that it was the defender of a distinctive approach to Islam and that it had a responsibility to Egyptian society (and even to the entire Sunni world). But the fiscal dependence of al-Azhar on the Egyptian state and the fact that the sheikh of al-Azhar was a presidential appointment deeply rankled some scholars inside and outside of the institution.

For many such institutions, the revolution provided an opportunity to throw off presidential shackles and press for fuller autonomy. Stifled institutions could now speak more freely.

With Islamist forces controlling the presidency and the remaining upper house of parliament, this seems to be an opportune moment to move forward. Indeed, al-Azhar did not even have to wait, seeing itself granted an enormous degree of internal autonomy by the military in one of its last legislative acts in 2012¹¹ before the parliament was seated.

The constitution's article 4, which refers to the necessity to consult al-Azhar, has already been seized by the institution's leadership to speak out on Islamic legal issues even when it hasn't been called on to do so. When the upper house of parliament passed a law related to Islamic financial instruments, al-Azhar called foul and began to study the law, forcing an embarrassed Morsi to request the institution to undertake a review that it had already begun on its own authority.

Yet rather than transforming into independent arbiters, institutions like al-Azhar may find themselves at risk of becoming political footballs—or perhaps a better sporting metaphor would be to describe them as potential political playing fields. As they become more important, the stakes for controlling them get higher. It is unclear how much they will be able to enjoy their enhanced legal position and how much they will become victims of it.

The crown jewel of Egypt's Islamic institutions is al-Azhar (see figure 1)—the sprawling complex of university faculties, primary and secondary schools, and research bodies headed now by Sorbonne-educated, and briefly National Democratic Party leader, Ahmed al-Tayyib. His political agility, combined with his comparative liberalism within the Azhari tradition, have paid off handsomely during the postrevolutionary period.

Rather than being swept away in the revolutionary enthusiasm of 2011, al-Tayyib managed to reposition al-Azhar in what most of its personnel see as its proper role: the defender of Egypt's (Islamic) conscience and the voice for the (Islamic) public interest. Egypt's interim military leadership promised a group of rebellious Azharis, who saw the upheaval as an opportunity to secure al-Azhar's independence from the executive, that it would issue a new law before it relinquished power. And al-Tayyib made sure that the law was issued in accordance with his view of the institution's proper structure and centrality.¹²

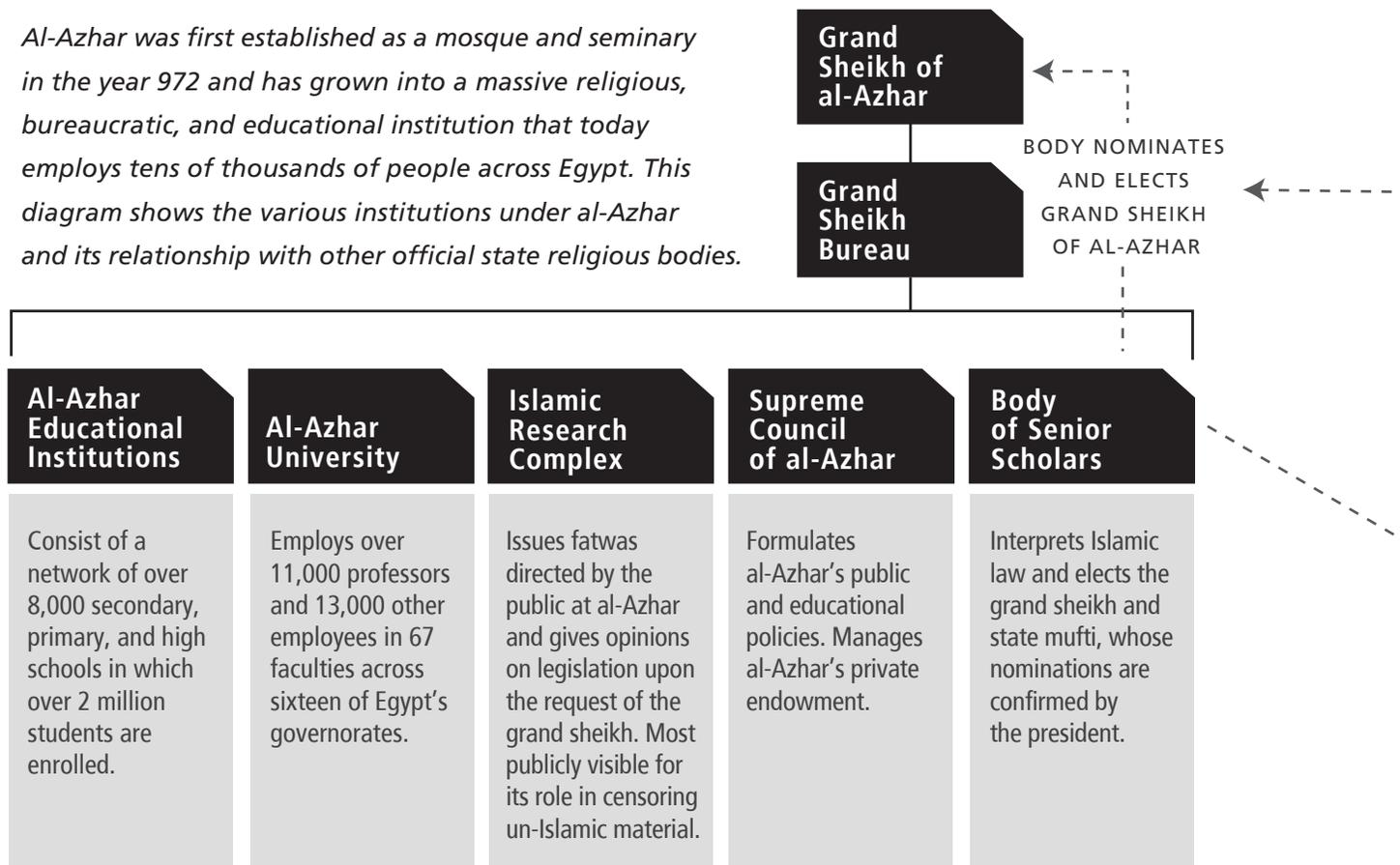
The centerpiece of the January 2012 decree was the recreation of an up to 40-member Body of Senior Ulama—of which only 26 have been selected to date (though one subsequently died).¹³ Not only is the body self-perpetuating (it appoints its own members), but it was given a powerful role over all aspects of Islam in the Egyptian state. Its voice in matters of Islamic law is decisive, and it was empowered to select Egypt’s top religious officials, including the sheikh of al-Azhar himself.

Al-Tayyib did not have to worry that this newly independent body would be formed under his nose: he was allowed to appoint all its initial members. The Brotherhood—and, to a lesser extent, the Salafis—thundered in protest.¹⁴ They wished al-Azhar to be independent and powerful, but the military was clearly shoving a law through days before the parliament sat in order to deprive the newly elected deputies any voice. And the strong role for al-Tayyib was suspect because of his political past, his perceived coolness toward the Brotherhood, and his more open stance against Salafism.¹⁵

Yet over a year after the al-Azhar law was sprung, it seems to have stuck. The Brotherhood made no move to change the law, and al-Tayyib proceeded very

Figure 1. Religious Structures in the Egyptian State

Al-Azhar was first established as a mosque and seminary in the year 972 and has grown into a massive religious, bureaucratic, and educational institution that today employs tens of thousands of people across Egypt. This diagram shows the various institutions under al-Azhar and its relationship with other official state religious bodies.

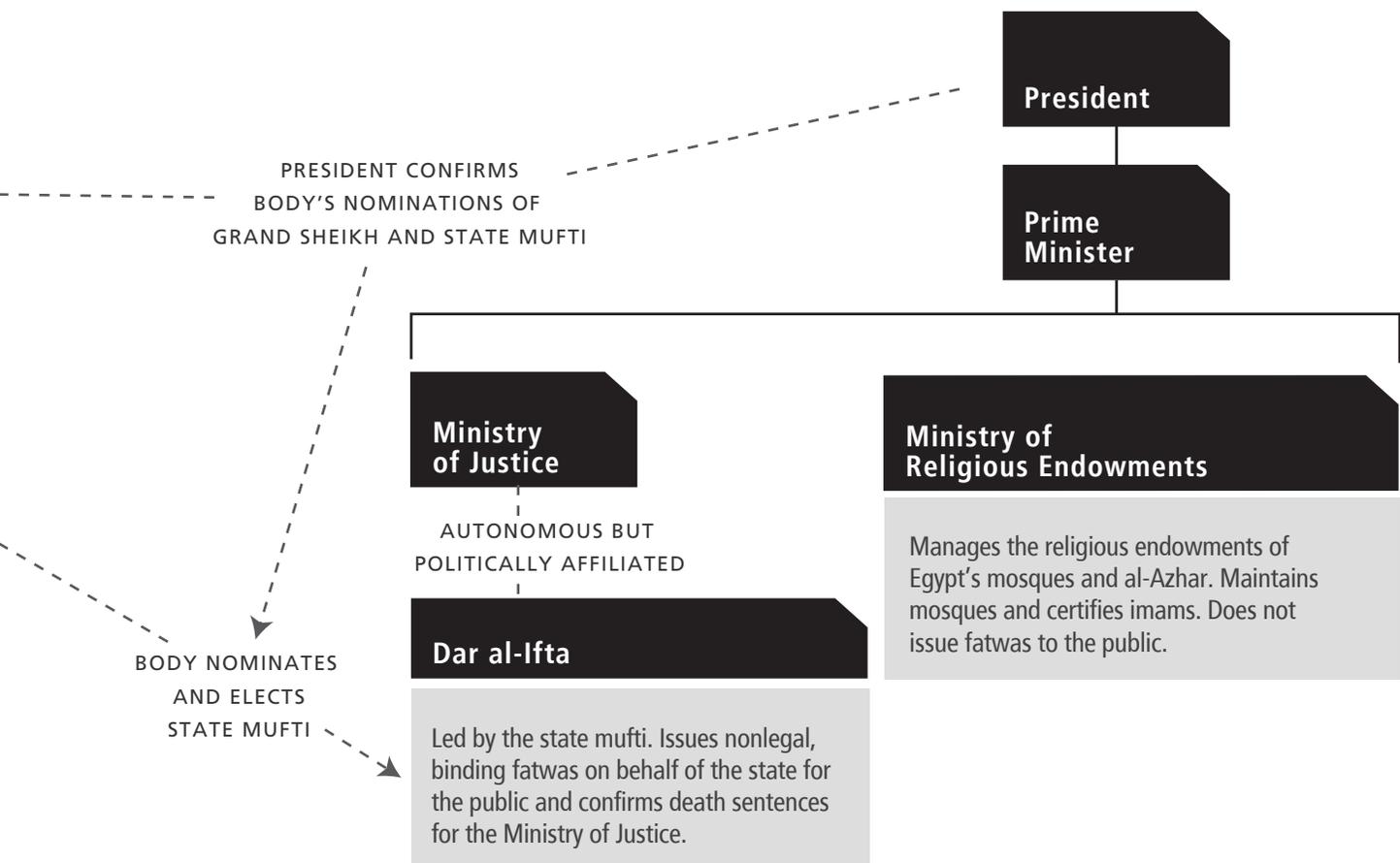


cautiously with his appointments to the body. He consulted widely, included a diversity of figures, and limited his appointments to a quorum of 26, enough for the body to operate but still signaling that he was willing to listen to other views about the remaining fourteen members.

The body clearly leans heavily in al-Tayyib’s direction, but the sheikh found a very credible set of names. And President Morsi, in one of his first official actions,¹⁶ signed off on the sheikh’s appointments.

At present, al-Azhar seems to have cemented its leadership. But its new centrality in public life as well as its explicit (if vaguely defined) constitutional role that it be consulted by the state in matters of Islamic law are likely to keep the battle for control of the institution very much alive. If anything, pressure from inside and outside the institution is likely to become stronger. In the end, al-Azhar may find that every step toward increased centrality risks forcing a step away from autonomy.

On the inside, the sheikh may be respected, but he is not universally trusted. He is sometimes criticized for having isolated the sheikh’s office from the rest of the institution. Among a faculty of religious scholars who have carefully



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built expertise, knowledge, and reputations, his position might be likened to a university dean presiding over a skeptical and tenured faculty. Indeed, al-

Tayyib was actually president of al-Azhar University from 2003 to 2010 and before that the mufti of Egypt from 2002 to 2003. But al-Tayyib does not merely herd cats, he also faces strong and diverse opinions within al-Azhar that could pose a challenge.

The bulk of al-Azhar scholars seem to feel that their proper role is to serve as an independent voice for Islam and the public interest. Some openly state that had al-Azhar been playing its proper role over the past century, the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood would never have happened. But a minority feel a stronger tug toward the Brotherhood (during Morsi's final campaign rally last June I saw an entire section reserved for Azharis in the front). Salafis are far fewer among the faculty, but they are not unknown within the institution. And the farther one moves down the hierarchy of al-Azhar—from deans to faculty to the student body—the more numerous Brotherhood followers and even Salafis become.

And when al-Tayyib looks outward rather than inward, he is likely to see many actors eying the institution he heads as a potential ally or adversary. The Brotherhood claims to have great respect for al-Azhar, but it also sees authoritarianism as having left heavy footprints on the institution. Its embrace of al-Azhar, coupled as it is with calls for reform, is likely seen by some as a thinly veiled project to bend al-Azhar in its direction.

Some within al-Azhar expect that Salafi respect for the institution, unexpectedly revealed in the drafting of the constitution, is a harbinger of an attempt to infiltrate its ranks, perhaps starting with the student body. Even non-Islamists have suddenly discovered that the leader of the institution matters—some have accordingly rallied around al-Tayyib as a friendly face. They can cite their respect for him and pull on the nationalist pride that many Egyptians feel for al-Azhar as a way to counter a perceived political Islamist onslaught.

The likely outcome will be to make senior appointments to al-Azhar something like what U.S. Supreme Court appointments have become: political battles among opposing forces that wrap arguments in jurisprudential garb.

Other critical institutions are also likely to find themselves in the same position, though in a less prominent way. Two parts of the Egyptian state's religious apparatus bear watching.

First, Dar al-Ifta, a body that issues interpretations of Islamic law and has some ancillary responsibilities, including its task of reviewing death sentences to ensure they have been pronounced in a legally and religiously appropriate manner, has traditionally been seen as less independent than al-Azhar. Because it is attached to the Ministry of Justice and is a smaller institution without the armies of independently minded scholars found in al-Azhar, it has

lacked some of the prestige and political space necessary to establish a more autonomous voice.

The recently retired mufti took strides to strengthen the institution. Those internal changes will now be supplemented by a critical external change. The mufti is no longer a presidential appointee (except in the strictly formal sense that the decree appointing the mufti still comes from the president of the republic), but is named by al-Azhar's Body of Senior Ulama.

Indeed, the body's most significant act to date is its naming of a new mufti¹⁷ in February 2013—a politically unaffiliated scholar whose appointment came amid a flurry of (probably ill-informed) speculation that the body would placate Morsi by naming a prominent Azhari scholar who is also a senior Brotherhood leader. The new appointee quickly showed a relatively liberal face.¹⁸ While critics of the “Brotherhoodization” of the Egyptian state were surprised, the episode illustrates how politically fraught senior religious appointments have become.

A second body of potential significance is a new independent authority to be formed to oversee religious endowments. Currently, the Ministry of Religious Endowments and Religious Affairs serves this function, and this ministry is expected to survive. But funding for many religious institutions comes from centuries of public and private endowments, and the subjugation of the religious establishment to the political leadership was accomplished in part through the assertion of state control over these endowments.

The ministry has its share of critics who describe it as opaque, inefficient, and even corrupt. The role of the new independent body is still to be determined by law, but it could be a major step in recasting the fiscal configuration of the official religious establishment.

But al-Azhar and its sister religious institutions are hardly going to be the only playing fields in the coming political battles over religion in society. The 2012 constitution ensures that the parliament and the judiciary are likely to play contentious roles as well. In one sense this is not new: even authoritarian regimes in Egypt provided limited space for both. The parliament enjoyed a legislative role in attempts to give Egyptian law an Islamic tinge, especially since the 1980s, and the judiciary, particularly the Supreme Constitutional Court, was called upon to adjudicate disputes related to the role of Islamic sharia in Egypt's legal order.

If the questions and actors are not completely new, the degree of public attention and the much more contentious political atmosphere mark a break from the pre-2011 period. There is no longer a single ruler whose will and word ultimately sets the bounds of debate within the Egyptian state.

The 2012 constitution repeats the language of its predecessor on Islamic law, but there are new, unclear provisions. While judicial bodies will have a critical role in determining the document's meaning, al-Azhar also plays a part. These bodies could exercise their role primarily by reviewing legislation that is

produced by a parliament where Islamists have a prominent—and perhaps the predominant—voice.

This may be a struggle that Egypt has never seen before. Judicial institutions and al-Azhar can claim a role in setting forth the law and interpreting the meaning of religious teachings. It is perfectly possible, for instance, that Egyptians will find al-Azhar instructing them that a law passed by a Brotherhood-dominated parliament contravenes the principles of Islamic sharia.

The stance of the judiciary is hard to predict over the long term. For the present, it is clear that Morsi and the Brotherhood have deeply alienated many—probably most—judges by their legal actions related to the constitution, but it is less clear whether this will lead to more expansive and hostile judicial rulings.

A Confusing Egyptian Path

While it is clear that religion will play a significant role in Egypt's political future, it remains unclear what that role will be, who will shape it, how it will be characterized, and whether religion itself (or at least Egyptians' conceptions of their faith) will change profoundly in the process.

Indeed, the process is so contentious that some are beginning to recoil. Piety is widespread throughout many parts of Egyptian society, but those with religious inclinations are beginning to discover their political differences. Indeed, some are even developing an approach that might be seen as American-style secularism, though its proponents would be loath to recognize it as such. They are seeking to build an Egypt where public space continues to be favorable for religion, but faith maintains some distance from political authority and the contaminations of day-to-day politics.

Such a trend may catch on in some intellectual circles, though it is unlikely to resonate among the majority of Egyptians who still believe that it is the separation of religious values from the political realm—rather than their inclu-

sion—that is a corrupting force. Yet in a society where public intellectuals still play a prominent role—and Egypt's current ruling party, the FJP, seems to be losing support among such intellectuals—the trend may still have some impact.

Egyptian Islamists repudiate any comparison between the political system they are building and Iran's theocracy. And they are right—the Egyptian revolution simply is not following the Iranian path. There is no systematic reconstruction of the state and there is nothing resembling the guardianship of the jurist (the system that puts clerics in positions of political power). Morsi's Egypt is not theocratic and democratic mechanisms still operate, however crudely and often illiberally.

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But the Iranian example does teach one lesson that Egyptian Islamists should learn: when religion enters politics, it rarely remains unchanged. Those who want to use the power of the state to build a more religious society may one day conclude that they should have been careful of what they wished for.

The strength of the Brotherhood and the Salafis has always been their ability to change society from the ground up in the face of suspicious or hostile regimes. Using state instruments, instead of evading them, will change the Islamists wielding power.

Appendix

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The Salafi current in Egypt is not monolithic but rather a collection of diverse and at times competing groups. They range from charity-based organizations to preaching (*dawa*) groups that began practicing politics after the revolution with the goal of establishing Islamic law. A brief overview of some of the major Salafi groups and political parties in Egypt is provided below.

Salafi Groups

Al-Jameyya al-Shariyya (Sharia-Based Society): The society was founded in 1912 by Azhari Sheikh Mahmoud Khattab al-Sobky, who sought to combat what he saw as the diminishing role of sharia in Egyptians' lives during the British occupation and weed out un-Islamic innovations (*bidaa*) spread by Sufi orders.¹ It is largely apolitical and maintains a grassroots charity movement in over 350 locations across Egypt. The current head is Azhari Sheikh Mohammad Mokhtar Mohamed al-Mahdy.

Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadeyya (Advocates of the Prophet Muhammad's Path and Teachings): Founded in Cairo in 1926 by Azhari Sheikh Muhammad Hamid al-Fiqis, the group focuses its message on the principle that Islam is both a religion and a political ideology and a belief in the need for gradual *dawa* in order to establish Islamic law in Egypt. It has historically been apolitical and instead focused on charity work and preaching, but after the January 25 revolution, it became involved in the political process.

Majles Shura al-Ulamaa (Council of Scholars): This is the advisory council of Ansar al-Sunna. It includes some of Egypt's most notable Salafi preachers, like televangelist preacher Mohammad Hassan (vice president) and Sheikh Abdullah Shaker (president), along with eight other prominent Salafi sheikhs. The council issued its first official statement on March 5, 2011, urging Muslims to vote "yes" in the March 2011 constitutional referendum. It decreed that there is no religious obstacle to participation in parliamentary or local elections, for it is a way to spread *dawa* in society.² The council supported Sheikh

Hazem Salah Abu Ismail in the 2012 presidential elections. After he was disqualified, it supported the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi instead of the Salafi Call's presidential pick of former Muslim Brotherhood leader Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh.

Al-Dawa al-Salafiyya (Salafi Call): The Salafi Call is Egypt's largest and most prominent Salafi organization. It is based in Alexandria and closely affiliated with Salafi sheikhs and informal groups spread across the lower Delta.³ The group was founded in the late 1970s by a group of Alexandrian Salafi students who were at ideological odds with the Muslim Brotherhood. Over the decades, they built a tight-knit organizational network across Egypt from their base in Alexandria. The group's top leader is Mohamed Abdel Fattah (Abu Idris), and one of its most prominent sheikhs is its vice president, Yasir Burhami. The Salafi Call founded al-Nour, a Salafi political party, in May 2011 to officially compete in the political landscape.

Al-Jamaa al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group): The Islamic Group has its roots in the 1970s in Upper Egypt. It began as a militant organization aiming to use violence to establish an Islamic state.⁴ After two decades of an unsuccessful insurgency against the Egyptian government, it abandoned violence in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Today, its leaders focus on preaching, charity, and their political party, the Building and Development Party, which was founded in June 2011. The Islamic Group seeks to redefine its role. It has positioned itself to be one of the most frequent organizers of and vocal participants in Islamist street protests.

Al-Haya al-Shariyya lil-Haquq wa-l Islah (Islamic Legitimate Body of Rights and Reformation [ILBRR]): The ILBRR is one of the newest Salafi organizations. It was founded in July 2011 by a group comprised of mainly Salafi and a few Azhari scholars. The organization claims to be an independent and moderate body that seeks to bring together different Islamist voices and views under one banner and spread the values of Islam in society. It has little noticeable influence, but the presence of the Muslim Brotherhood's Khairat al-Shater on its board is notable. It supported both al-Shater and Mohamed Morsi in the 2012 presidential campaign, vetting them—and not former Muslim Brotherhood leader Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, the Salafi Call's preferred candidate—as the only viable Islamist options.

Political Parties

Al-Nour Party: Al-Nour was launched by its then president Emad ad-Din Abd al-Ghofour (who later resigned to found the rival al-Watan Party) and was granted official license in June 2011. The party was established with the

resources and help of the Salafi Call and led the Islamist Alliance in the 2011–2012 parliamentary elections, winning 111 seats (or nearly 22 percent of the vote). It then became the strongest and most influential Salafi political party. The current president is Younis Makhyouun, who is also a leader of the Salafi Call. The party enjoys a wide base of support in Alexandria, the Delta, and Cairo. Its ideology is identical to that of the Salafi Call, as is its mission to help establish Islamic law in Egypt.

Al-Asala Party: The party was launched in July 2011 by General Adel Abd al-Maqsoud Afify (brother of Cairo-based Salafi preacher Mahmoud Abd al-Maqsoud Afify) following his resignation from the al-Fadila Party. Al-Asala's stated goals are to spread the values of justice and equality and restore Egypt's leading role in the world in conformity with the principles of Islamic law.⁵ It joined al-Nour in the Islamist Alliance in the 2011–2012 parliamentary elections and won three seats.

The Building and Development Party: The party was first launched by al-Jamaa al-Islamiyya in June 2011 and was later officially licensed in October 2011. It is the political arm of al-Jamaa al-Islamiyya. The party has accepted the principles of political pluralism and equality and renounced all violence. It joined the al-Nour–led Islamist Alliance in the 2011–2012 parliamentary elections and won thirteen seats. It has been active in organizing pro-Islamic law street demonstrations, and it espouses a more conservative and stricter tone than some other Salafi parties.

Al-Watan Party: Emad ad-Din Abd al-Ghofour, former president of al-Nour, launched al-Watan in January 2013. The leaders of al-Watan split from al-Nour over ideological and political differences. Al-Watan seeks to take advantage of the recent spat between al-Nour and the Muslim Brotherhood by offering itself as an alternative Islamist party.⁶ Its political message remains Salafi in character, and it works toward the establishment of Islamic law. Al-Watan claims it will be more sincere and effective in bringing this about than al-Nour.

Al-Raya Party: The party was launched in February 2013 by former presidential candidate and Salafi Sheikh Hazem Salah Abu Ismail and Islamist thinker Mohamed Abbas. The yet-to-be legally recognized group is the first organized political party by Sheikh Abu Ismail, one of the Salafi current's most independent and charismatic sheikhs. It identifies itself as both a new *dawa* and political movement that will participate in the next parliamentary elections. Sheikh Abu Ismail has positioned himself as a supporter of President Morsi and the political alliance he leads with seven smaller Islamist parties called the Ummah, or Nation Alliance, which is considered a new political rival to the Salafi Call's al-Nour Party.⁷

Appendix Notes

- 1 For more on Salafi organizations and thought, read Abdel Moniem Mounieb, “Kharitat al-harakat al-islamiyya fi misr,” March 2009, Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, www.anhri.net/reports/islamic-map/map/05.shtml, and Salahu al-Deen Hassan, “Al-tayarrat al-salafiyya fi misr . . . kharitat ma’lamatiyya,” OnIslam.net, March 2010, www.onislam.net/arabic/islamyoon/salafists/113039-2010-03-09%2014-32-04.html.
- 2 See www.ansaralsonna.com/web/play-5212.html.
- 3 For more information on the history of the Salafi Call and the Salafi current, see Alaa al-Attar and Hannan Hajjaj’s three-part series in *Al-Ahram*, “Al-Kharita al-salafiyya fi misr,” <http://digital.ahram.org/articles.aspx?Serial=586087&eid=3269> (June 29, 2011); <http://digital.ahram.org/articles.aspx?Serial=588927&eid=3269> (August 1, 2011); <http://digital.ahram.org/articles.aspx?Serial=592781&eid=3269> (August 11, 2011).
- 4 See Dina Shehata, “Mapping Islamic Actors in Egypt,” Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo and Al-Ahram Center for Strategic and Political Studies, March 2012, <http://media.leidenuniv.nl/legacy/mapping-islamic-actors---version-2.2.pdf>.
- 5 A more detailed backgrounder on the al-Asala Party can be found at <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/20/al-asala-authenticity-party>.
- 6 For more on the evolving Salafi political landscape and rivalries, see www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/03/morsi-egypt-political-islam-salafists-challenge-brotherhood.html.
- 7 To learn more about the newly launched party, visit its Facebook page, where its official statements are released: www.facebook.com/HezbAlrayah.Official.

Notes

- 1 See my earlier Carnegie Paper, “When Victory Becomes an Option: Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood Confronts Success,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, January 2012, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/brotherhood_success.pdf. Also of interest is Ibrahim El Houdaiby, “From Prison to Palace: The Muslim Brotherhood’s Challenges and Responses in Post-Revolution Egypt,” FRIDE, February 2013, www.fride.org/publication/1103/from-prison-to-palace:-the-muslim-brotherhood-challenges-and-responses-in-post-revolution-egypt.
- 2 From the beginning, Brotherhood watchers were aware of the possible strains that heavy political involvement might bring. See my March 24, 2011, Carnegie commentary, “The Brotherhood’s Coming Out Party,” <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/03/24/brotherhood-s-coming-out-party/25d>, and H. A. Hellyer, “Brotherhood Turns to Politics at Cost of Regional Credibility,” *National*, April 5, 2012, www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/comment/brotherhood-turns-to-politics-at-cost-of-regional-credibility.
- 3 The revision of the curriculum has received scattered attention in the Egyptian press. See, for instance, “Al-ikhwan tabhath taghyir manahija al-dakhiliyya wa-wad’ aliyat al-ta’awun ma’a ‘wali al-amr’ badalan min tawajuhatihi,” *Al-Watan*, October 11, 2012, www.elwatannews.com/news/details/60319. In conversations with activists in January 2013, I was told the process of revision was still under way.
- 4 Author’s interview with Muslim Brotherhood activist, Cairo, Egypt, January 2013.
- 5 Author’s interview with sources knowledgeable about the Brotherhood, Cairo, Egypt, January 2013.
- 6 See my earlier commentary, “The Muslim Brotherhood as Helicopter Parent,” Middle East Channel, May 27, 2011, http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/05/27/the_muslim_brotherhood_as_helicopter_parent.
- 7 See Mustafa Zahran, “Al-tayyarat al-salafiyya al-misriyya wa-azmat al-intiqal min fiqh al-da’wa ila fiqh al-dawla,” CISIP, February 2013, <http://cisip.altervista.org/alterpages/files/CisipInsightnumero4ARABIC.pdf>.
- 8 For three thorough treatments of the subject, see Stéphane Lacroix, “Sheikhs and Politicians: Inside the New Egyptian Salafism,” Brookings Doha Center, June 2012, www.brookings.edu/-/media/research/files/papers/2012/6/07%20egyptian%20salafism%20lacroix/stephane%20lacroix%20policy%20briefing%20english.pdf; Jonathan Brown, “Salafis and Sufis in Egypt,” Carnegie Paper, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 2011, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/salafis_sufis.pdf; and Daniel A. Boehmer and James P. Murphy, “The Politicization of the Egyptian *Salafiyya*: Principled Participation and Islamist Competition in the Post-Mubarak Era,” IMES Capstone Paper Series, Institute for Middle East Studies,

- George Washington University, May 2012, www.gwu.edu/~imes/assets/docs/Capstone%20Papers%20-%202012/Boehmer,%20Murphy.pdf.
- 9 “Salafi Leader Reveals Plot to Oust Azhar’s Grand Imam,” english.alarabiya.net, December 25, 2011, <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/12/25/256924.html>. The full lecture can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=_xzsVgwG9-o. An edited excerpt of the segment in question can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGbOM_4TJh4.
 - 10 A video of Salafi leader Sheikh Yasir Burhami justifying the presidential pick to followers can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=zURGz7xAJbc.
 - 11 Text of SCAF January 2012 Al-Azhar law can be accessed at <http://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/166452.aspx>.
 - 12 See my earlier Carnegie Paper, “Post-Revolutionary Al-Azhar,” Carnegie Paper, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 2011, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/al_azhar.pdf.
 - 13 The list of the 25 sheikhs selected by Grand Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayyib can be accessed at <http://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/225126.aspx>. Sheikh ‘Abd al-Mu‘ti Muhammad al-Bayumi passed away on July 30, 2012.
 - 14 See “Al-Ikhwan wa-l-salafiyyun ya’taradun ‘ala masa’i al-Tayyib li-iqar qanun al-Azhar,” January 9, 2012, www.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=574152; “Al-ikhwan al-muslimun tutalib bi-‘ard mashru‘ qanun al-Azhar al-sharif ‘ala majlis al-sha‘b,” January 9, 2012, <http://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/158552.aspx>; and “Al-nur yataqaddam bi-istijwab li-l-Ganzuri li-tamrir qanun al-azhar dun ‘ardihi ‘ala al-sha‘b,” January 31, 2012, www.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=591062.
 - 15 Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayyib has made many remarks criticizing Salafi doctrine. For instance, see “Sheikh al-azhar: al-salafiyyun al-judad hum khawarij al-‘asr,” April 4, 2011, www.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=591062.
 - 16 President Morsi approved the list during his third week in office on July 18, 2012. See “Al-ra’is ya’tamad awwal tashkil lehay’at kubar al-‘ulama’,” July 18, 2012, www.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=735380.
 - 17 See “Egypt’s New Mufti,” posted by Nathan J. Brown, [ForeignPolicy.com](http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/02/12/egypt_s_new_mufti), February 12, 2013, http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/02/12/egypt_s_new_mufti, and H. A. Hellyer, “Al Azhar’s Shake-Up Has Ramifications Far Beyond Egypt,” posted by H.A. Hellyer, *National*, February 15, 2013, www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/comment/al-azhars-shake-up-has-ramifications-far-beyond-egypt.
 - 18 The first official statement of the new mufti, Shawqi Ibrahim ‘Abd al-Karim ‘Alam, stressed that Christians are Muslims’ partners in society and that it is both a religious and civic duty to cooperate with them. See www.elwatannews.com/news/details/140941.

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