

POST – ‘ARAB SPRING’: BENEFICIAL LESSONS IN GOVERNANCE FROM RECENT EVENTS IN EGYPT AND TUNISIA

Abstract

The fall of elected Egyptian President Morsi is likely to reverberate into the future throughout the Arab World. It pits the growing large community of Islamic-committed citizens (just under 60 percent in Egypt according to Pew Center surveys) and frustrated youth wanting participatory governance and legitimate freedoms against military autocrats, their business and judicial associates, and hereditary rulers in the region who wish to maintain the status quo against the bedrock Islamic principle of representative governance. Tunisia leads the way in providing a to-date successful transition post-‘Arab Spring’ to an alternative vision favouring the welfare of its citizens. This is a consequence of the flexibility and willingness of Islamists there to work together in coalition with other groups even secularists. Egypt displays the beginning of an epic struggle that will unlikely end until some form of participatory governance is achieved through civil disobedience. President Mohammad Morsi managed the passage of a new constitution (presently suspended) under strong opposition but was unable to project a ‘democratic’ image or resolve the country’s economic problems. He also failed to embrace inclusiveness even to work closely with other Islamic forces – the Salafists and the Al-Azhar institution. Chief of the armed forces, Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi however, in rebelling against his civilian commander, is attempting to restore the pre-Arab Spring status of covert military rule. He successfully drew initial support from the Salafists and liberals but can no longer assume their backing. Shaykh Al-Azhar in openly supporting al-Sisi has compromised the erstwhile high regard held for Al-Azhar in the Muslim world.

Key Word: Morsi, General Sisi, Arab World, Egypt, Islamic principle, Salafists, Al-Azhar

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„Perhaps what General Sisi and his supporters inside and outside of Egypt didn't realise is that the Arab peoples who have tasted freedom and encountered the ballot box and free and fair elections for the first time, cannot now accept military dictatorship, under any pretext.”²

Abdel Bari Atwan³

Introduction

The “Arab Spring” represented a time of promise and hope for citizens of the Arab world for whom the benefits of participatory governance (‘democracy’) that fellow Muslims were experiencing elsewhere – such as in Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia and Pakistan – had eluded them. It is a response of the Arab people for freedom and good governance. Immediately prior to the Arab Spring, the political situation among Arab countries was such that on average they “continued to evince the lowest levels of freedom among the world regions”⁴ and lagged other regions of the world in “participatory governance”⁵. Also, results of a large-scale Gallup Poll covering 90% of the world's Muslims showed in 2007 that a vast majority of Muslims, 94% in Egypt, wanted *representative* government with religious values.⁶ The conditions were therefore just ripe awaiting a trigger to action, which was provided by public reaction to the death resulting from state injustice towards a poor Tunisian street vendor on 17 December 2010.

As the seasons change and we reach the “autumn” of discontent it is time to reflect on the state of the revolution that occurred with the overthrow of autocrats in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. It is fitting to talk of a revolution as it seriously challenged the long-accepted authoritarian form of governance in this region. Positive responses to the public's spirit for political change also occurred in Morocco and Qatar, while in the other Gulf countries, the “Spring” was denounced by their leaderships.

The Spring appeared in the beginning to lack an ‘Islamic’ dimension⁷ as the Islamists and Salafists did not take an active early overt role for two reasons: firstly, because any such showing would have led to powerful detrimental opposition from residual elements of the former regimes (in Egypt, the powerful armed forces and judiciary) and also certain antithetic foreign countries, and secondly, acknowledging that the majority of the Public keenly wanted “de-

2 Abdel Bari Atwan, “Al-Sisi's Appalling Mistakes May Destroy Egypt”, <http://www.bariatwan.com/english/?p=1921> (Accessed 30.09.2013).

3 Editor in Chief of AlQuds Al-Arabi Newspaper, London.

4 UNDP, *The Arab Human Development Report 2003*, UNDP/RBAS, New York, 2002, p. 28.

5 UNDP, *The Arab Human Development Report 2002*, UNDP/RBAS, New York, 2002, p. 2.

6 John L. Esposito, Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think*, Gallup Press, New York, 2007, p. 47.

7 Mohammad Hashim Kamali, “The Absence of Islam in the ‘Arab Spring’”, <http://www.iais.org.my/icr/index.php/icr/article/view/80>, (Accessed 30.09.2013)

mocracy" but was unsure Islamic parties could deliver since Islam in its history frequently condoned autocratic rulers. Some autocratic features indeed became evident in President Morsi's rule, which is why there was a public backlash.

Commentators often state that the Islamic-oriented parties were so successful in securing their leading positions in the first Arab Spring elections because they were better organised than others. This is partly true but it should also be clear that a high proportion of Muslims in these countries *are* Islamic-minded and would vote for such parties. As a key indicator, relatively high Islamicity levels are reflected in the proportion of Muslims reportedly praying five times daily in Tunisia (63%) and Egypt (53%)⁸.

Positive Developments in Tunisia

In Tunisia, the harbinger of change, the "Spring" is very much in bloom and can represent a model for regional reform aspirants. Ibrahim Sharqieh has stressed its key features of "national dialogue, its political coalition-building, and its bottom-up approach to reform ... For Tunisia, this approach of steady, inclusive, and rule-based state-building is allowing for broad reconciliation and a real evolution in Tunisian society"⁹.

Although, as in Egypt, an Islamist party, Ennahda, was successful in winning government with 41% of the vote in Tunisia, it wisely chose to expand its political base by forming a successful ruling alliance with two centre-left secular parties – the Ettakatol Party and the Congress for the Republic, with the latter's chief becoming the nation's President. Following the assassination of a leading politician, the government responded favourably to opposition demands by suspending sessions of the Constituent Assembly. The opposition's call for establishing a technocrat government is still on the table being discussed.

Tunisia's approach involves *ta'anun* (cooperating in the good) and pursuing a middle path (*wasattiya*)¹⁰ in dealing with former regime elements who may only be prosecuted individually with evidence; while judges are only removed from office when linked by hard evidence to malpractice. National dialogues (*musyawarah*) among political parties and civil society organisations have taken place on the nature of the state and the key challenges facing the country - agreement has been reached on rejecting the use of violence, prioritising addressing the parlous state of the economy, a road map for transition, consensus on the civil state and constitutional system, independence of the judiciary, and freedoms of assembly and the press.¹¹

8 Daud AbdulFattah Batchelor, A New Islamic Rating Index of Well-being for Muslim Countries, *Islam and Civilisational Review*, Vol. 4, No. 2, April 2013, Kuala Lumpur, p. 203.

9 Ibrahim Sharqieh, "Tunisia's Lesson's for the Middle East", *Foreign Affairs*, 17 September 2013, USA.

10 Eschewing a radical path as in Libya against former regime members or a weak approach as in Yemen.

11 Sharqieh, *Ibidem*.

Compared to Egypt though, Tunisia is fortunate in that its Muslims, comprising 99 percent of the population (95 percent in Egypt), display higher Islamicity levels¹², follow the moderate Maliki madhhab, lack serious sectarian differences, have a professional civilian-led army, as well as an enlightened Islamist party with modernist credentials. Tunisia also benefitted compared to Egypt, since many Ennahda leaders, including Rachid Al-Ghannouchi, had spent years in exile in Europe experiencing a participatory political system first-hand.

An Islamisation Program?

Mohamed Morsi during his Presidency (30 June 2012 – 3 July 2013) clearly walked a tightrope. With many serious issues to confront – the poor economy, obstacles placed in his path by the armed forces and Mubarak appointees in the courts, and the pregnant power of demonstrating dissidents – these no doubt hindered implementation of a balanced program of Islamisation measures. Contrary to accusations that the government's primary focus was on "Islamisation of state and society" in reality it had been focusing on maintaining its organisational unity.¹³ What was possible for President Morsi under the circumstances was largely limited to the formulation of an Islamic-inspired constitution and contributing to an Islamic discourse.

Prior to Morsi's successful election, the Muslim Brotherhood had presented itself as a "moderate, mainstream movement capable of acting as a bridge between both sides of the political spectrum – the 'civil' and 'Islamist' forces" while arguing for "a 'civil' state with an Islamic frame of reference".¹⁴ Lack of intellectual debate within the organisation however, had not clarified the details of the Brotherhood's position on an Islamic State and 'Islamisation' programme. The Morsi government was also unable to progress a legislative agenda to address the key fields of economic development and distribution, judicial reform and security sector reform, partly due to its inability to develop workable policies of its own.¹⁵

In his June 2012 inaugural speech, the President-elect called for national unity, vowed to preserve national and international agreements, and to protect the rights of women, children, and Christians and Muslims alike. He said that Coptic Christians are "certainly just as Egyptian as I am, and have as much right to this homeland as I do"¹⁶. Citing parts of Abu Bakar (RA)'s famous acceptance speech, he said "I've been given authority but I am not the best of

12 Batchelor, *Ibidem*, p. 203.

13 Ibrahim El Houdaiby, „From Prison to Palace: the Muslim Brotherhood's challenges and responses in post-revolution Egypt“, Fridé and Hivos, Netherlands, 2013, p. 13. http://www.fride.org/download/WP_117_From_Prison_to_Palace.pdf, (Accessed 30/09/2013).

14 Houdaiby, *Ibidem*, pp. 8-9.

15 *Ibidem*, p. 11.

16 See his speech in: Ikhwanweb, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=29405>, (Accessed 1/20/2013).

you ... Help me as long as I'm achieving justice, as long as I'm obeying God. Never obey me if I disobey God." The government legislated to close shops by 10 pm, regarding which Morsi questioned, "For those who stay up until the early hours of the morning when do you sleep? How do you expect to be gifted by God in your job when you are not performing the dawn prayers?"¹⁷ Given the level of Islamophobia displayed in the West, President Morsi in his address to the UN General Assembly on 26 December 2012 called for international legislation against speech inciting hatred. Significantly, as opposed to the popular perception of his image, he stated accurately that "[Islam] cannot be imposed on the people and it cannot be done from the top. It has to be initiated, created, and agreed upon by the people."¹⁸

The Morsi government displayed flexibility and pragmatism in recognising the peace treaty with Israel and cultivated ties with Western countries, but showed relative disinterest in instituting Islamic *sharia* in government policies and legislation to the disappointment of the Salafists. President Morsi also did not cultivate a good working relationship with the Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar and opposed Al-Azhar's authority in assessing the new "Sukuk" financial law, calling such involvement as "theocracy".¹⁹ Morsi's Brotherhood seemed more concerned in establishing an Islamic-style state and for this reason focused on preparation of the new constitution. After being ratified in a referendum, Morsi, differentiated himself from Hosni Mubarak saying, "The constitution makes the president a servant of his people not a dictator with absolute powers".²⁰

Public criticism mounted against the Morsi government in respect of its weak legislative agenda, its almost complete failure to restructure the state and dismantle its networks of crony capitalism; the president's unmet promises of his first 100-day programme; and the Freedom and Justice Party's failure to present a real alternative to the state policies it had criticized.²¹

December 2012 Constitution

The 2012 constitution ratified by referendum in December 2012 achieved 64 percent voter support but with a low 34 percent turnout. Its legitimacy was lessened somewhat, since although the constitutional assembly was elected by

17 See: Hatem Maher, In his own words: „President Morsi's first year of key“, *Ahramonline*, 29 Jun 2013, Cairo. <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/152/74506/Egypt/Morsi,-one-year-on/In-his-own-words-President-Morsis-first-year-of-ke.aspx>, (Accessed 30/09/2013).

18 Issandr El-Amrani, "An Interview with MB's Mohamed Morsi", *The Arabist*, 18, May 2011, <http://arabist.net/blog/2011/5/18/an-interview-with-the-mbs-mohamed-morsi.html>

19 Ashraf El-Sherif, "What Path Will Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood Choose?", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Press, Cairo, 23 September, 2013, <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2013/09/23/what-path-will-egypt%E2%80%99s-muslim-brotherhood-choose> (Accessed 30/09/2013).

20 Hatem Maher, *Ibidem*.

21 El Houdaiby, *Ibidem*, p. 10.

Parliament before its June 2012 court dissolution, liberals and Christians boycotted it contending their views were not being considered. As in the previous constitution, the 2012 Constitution declared Islam as the state religion and Islamic principles as the principle source of legislation. The Constitution was criticised for giving unprecedented powers to the *unelected* Sheikh al-Azhar to be consulted on all matters related to the Shariah. Although the incumbent Grand Sheikh is *unelected*, the new Egyptian Al-Azhar law provides for this and the Mufti's position to be *elected* in future by the 40-member Senior Scholars Authority.²² The Constitution left the generals with much of the power they held during the Mubarak era including their ability to try civilians if they "damage the armed forces". It provides welcome protection though against torture or detention without trial.²³ It did not incorporate the Salafi's wishes for the imposition of stricter moral codes and so the Salafis boycotted the referendum.

Interestingly, a draft for the *previous* provisional constitution, dated 12 February 2012, contained Article 8 – "*Our Armed Forces form a professional and national institution that does not interfere in political affairs*".²⁴ This article did not however survive in the version adopted by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) on 30 March 2011 – clearly SCAF had wished to keep their options open.

Authoritarian Tendency

Islamist parties often reflect an unfortunate tendency in the Muslim world over the past millennium towards autocratic rule, and that whoever captures government is entitled to govern as long as minimal respect is shown to Islamic law and the ruler outwardly participates in Islamic worship. In return, "the imam [ruler] must be obeyed" by all citizens.²⁵ An assumption of an elected leader today however, that he would have considerable latitude in governance and the populace would meekly accept his directives is seriously misplaced. Such a mindset may explain why Morsi and the Brotherhood blundered in their first and only Presidential year. They failed to broaden their political platform (as Ennahda did) to at least include more than one Salafist representatives in Cabinet and to ensure Sheikh Al-Azhar was onside. The consequences of projecting a disinterest in inclusive politics, was that when President Morsi on 22 November 2012 issued a declaration immunising his actions from any legal challenge until a new constitution is ratified, it was perceived

22 Gihan Shahine, "Risks to Al-Azhar?", Al-Ahram Weekly, 17 July, 2013, <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/3403/32/Risks-to-Al-Azhar-.aspx>, (Accessed 3 November 2013).

23 David D. Kirkpatrick, "Egyptian Islamists Approve Draft Constitution Despite Objections", *The New York Times*, 29 November, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/30/world/middleeast/panel-drafting-egypts-constitution-prepares-quick-vote.html?ref=world&pagewanted=all&r=0>, (Accessed 30.07.2013)

24 Nariman Youssef, "Egypt's draft constitution", *Egyptian Independent*, 02 December 2012, Cairo, <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/egypt-s-draft-constitution-translated>

25 Moten & Syed Serajul Islam, *Introduction to Political Science*, Thomson learning, Stamford, 2006, p. 214.

by most observers and the Egyptian public as a grab for unassailable power. Although Morsi purportedly took this measure due to the real threat of disbandment of the Constitutional Committee by the reactionary Mubarak-appointed judiciary, he exposed himself to the serious accusation by opposition leader, Mohammed ElBaradei, of "usurping authority and becoming a new pharaoh".²⁶ It reinforced the Public's fear he was becoming an authoritarian ruler like Hosni Mubarak. The reality was that the Mubarak-appointed judiciary was very much alive and may have axed the Constitutional Commission prematurely before it had completed a draft constitution to put to a referendum.

Counter-Revolution in Egypt and Its Significance

In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood, inexperienced in governance and facing a determined opposition, suffered expulsion in a coup from counter-revolutionary forces on 3 July, comprising the military led by General Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi, and pro-Mubarak Nasserists and other secular groups. The naïve actors who helped facilitate this against their own ultimate interests were the liberals, Salafists and the Sheikh Al-Azhar.

To give him his due, President Morsi was under severe constraints from the beginning of his term from a number of factors. Firstly, the parlous state of the economy after Mubarak's overthrow; secondly, the strong powers held by the justices originally appointed by Hosni Mubarak who controlled the courts, and thirdly interference from the armed forces. Morsi's presidency was the first time the Brothers had governed a country and so not surprisingly he and the Brothers displayed their inexperience²⁷. Commentators cite the main mistakes of Morsi's leadership as firstly, the lack of improvement in the economy since taking over government, secondly, the appointment of Brotherhood people into key positions, thirdly, the lack of public consultation in his decision-making. A seminal event was the presidential decree that his rulings were above reproach by the judiciary.

The banning of the 'moderate' Muslim Brotherhood party, which has sizeable support of around one-third of the population means that all future political deliberations by the Interim Government and future elected governments will lack full legitimacy. The coup architects who blamed the Muslim Brotherhood for their abuse of power - the Egyptian military and Tamarod organisation - are currently very much bent upon "re-Mobarakizing Egyptian institutions".²⁸

26 Peter Beaumont, „Mohamed Morsi bars court challenges and orders Hosni Mubarak retrial“, *The Guardian*, 22 November 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/nov/22/mohamed-morsi-mubarak-retrial-egypt>

27 However as Abdel Bari Atwan, former Editor-in-Chief of Al Quds AlArabi newspaper questioned reasonably: "Does the newborn democratic life need to be destroyed before having a chance to grow, develop and correct its mistakes like all new democracies must?"

28 Abukar Arman, "The Politics of Political Islam", 15 August 2013 <http://www.globalpolicyjournal>.

Sheikh Al-Azhar

The Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar, Ahmed Al-Tayyib, appointed by Hosni Mubarak, disappointed Muslims worldwide in standing shoulder-to-shoulder in vigorous and strong support of General Sisi's overthrow of President Morsi. Shari'ah and constitutional backing for Al-Tayyib's position seem to be lacking in view of Sisi's gross disobedience to President Morsi, his commander. Al-Tayyib's position would seem to discredit this august body's credibility as a neutral arbiter of issues. The Grand Sheikh should place the legal Shari'ah justification, if any, for his actions on public record. During the 2011 demonstrations which ousted Hosni Mubarak, Al-Tayyib had told the demonstrators to go home since protest is "illegitimate in Islam"²⁹ but in 2013 in response to President Morsi's request for him to issue a statement dissuading street protests, Al-Tayyib issued an edict that "peaceful opposition against a ruler is permissible according to Sharia Law"³⁰. Did Al-Tayyib change his fatwa when the target was not a dictator but an elected leader of an Islamist party? The respected President of the International Union of Islamic Scholars, Sheikh Yousuf Al Qaradawi, called the military move "un-Islamic" and maintained on Al-Jazeera that Morsi is still the legitimate President of Egypt.³¹ Similarly, Sheikh Hassan Al-Safei, a member of the Al-Azhar Senior Scholars Association and an advisor to Al-Tayyib, considered the so-called "30 June Revolution" "a carefully planned military coup under public cover that started a year ago".³²

Given that political independence of the institution of Sheikh Al-Azhar is provided by the recent Al-Azhar law, the Sheikh's controversial position supporting the military is quite outstanding. It may suggest he feels obligated as a government officer to accede to the wishes of the 'power of the land', the military. Partly though it was almost certainly due to the Grand Sheikh's "historic opposition" to the Brotherhood.³³ Government 'ulama throughout history have often acquiesced, rightly or wrongly, in the assumption of power by armed forces of various ilk and provided their blessing as long as the victor undertook to uphold Islamic law and did not openly neglect acts of worship. Today though, military coups are more likely seen as contravening Shari'ah law.

com/blog/15/08/2013/politics-political-islam (Accessed 17/10/2013).

29 Malika Zeghal, "What Were the Ulama Doing in Tahrir Square? Al-Azhar and the Narrative of Resistance to Oppression", 17 February 2011, http://divinity.uchicago.edu/martycenter/publications/sightings/archive_2011/0217.shtml (Accessed 17/10/2013).

30 Gihan Shahine, *Ibidem*.

31 Qaradawi: „Morsi is still the legitimate president and those who toppled him are Al Khawarij“, <http://imbd.blog.com/?p=964>, (Accessed 06/09/13).

32 Gihan Shahine, „Refusing Al-Azhar“, *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 16 August 2013, <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/3692/-/.aspx>, (Accessed 26/09/2013).

33 Gihan Shahine, "Risks to Al-Azhar", *Ahram weekly*, 17 July 2013, <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/Print/3403.aspx>

Salafists

Salafists are typically more concerned about ensuring that the Shari'ah is given prominent status than in constructing an Islamic state. The Salafists had a nuanced understanding of the political environment in Egypt. Leading Salafist Nour Party member, Sherif Taha, assessed that the Brotherhood's wish to "monopolise the political scene", and not to take "small steps" at a time, were their biggest mistakes.³⁴ The Nour party had provided consistent advice to the Brotherhood that if they were successful in winning Presidential elections they should form a national unity cabinet – this was also the approach taken by the Ennahda party in Tunisia. It would also seem appropriate that the Nour party is not even considering presenting a candidate for the next presidential elections. Clearly Muslim-based parties need to 'find their feet' first with experience in a participatory democracy and should not 'scare' the Public who may believe that Islamic governance is a risky business.

It is hard though to condone the support given by the Salafists to the coup d'état leading to banning of the Muslim Brotherhood. One would expect Al Nour to make a public statement that they do not agree with the courts' banning of the Brotherhood who represent a large percentage of Egyptian voters and fellow Muslims.

Gulf Leaders and Israel against Participatory Islamic Governance

King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Khalifa, President of the United Arab Emirates and Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah of Kuwait congratulated General Sisi and the coup-installed interim President of Egypt, Adly Mansour. Not only the middle class and intelligentsia in Saudi Arabia were upset by their rulers' position, but a group of 56 '*Ulama*' issued a statement describing Sisi's actions as "unquestionably a military coup and an unlawful and illicit criminal act". An imam at Masjid Al-Munawarra in Medina criticised the king's position on the coup in a sermon, while popular Kuwaiti TV presenter, Tareq al-Suwaidan with 1.9 million Twitter followers, was sacked due to his anti-coup comments.³⁵ The clear dissidence between hereditary Gulf leaders, whose support derives more from the United States, and the citizens and Islamic scholars on the other hand, who desire greater political freedoms is now an open and a rising issue. The 'genie is out of the bottle' and will not return quietly. David Hearst of The Guardian perspicaciously observed, "The battle lines have now been clearly drawn throughout the Arab world. The military coup in Egypt and Saudi support for it represents an attempt to turn the clock back to halt the wave of de-

34 Mena, Nour leader: Monopolising govt was Brotherhood's biggest mistake, ahramonline, 9 Aug 2013. <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/78669/Egypt/Politics-/Nour-leader-Monopolising-govt-was-Brotherhoods-big.aspx>, (Accessed 7/10/2013).

35 David Hearst, "Why Saudi Arabia is taking a risk by backing the Egyptian coup", *The Guardian*, 20 August 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/aug/20/saudi-arabia-coup-egypt>

mocratization heralded by the toppling of Arab dictatorships. It is unlikely to be the final word or battle in what promises to be an epic struggle.³⁶

General Sisi as former head of military intelligence has close ties with his Israeli military counterparts and western diplomats commented that Sisi and his circle “appeared to be in heavy communication with Israeli colleagues” over the takeover.³⁷ Israel supported the coup, encouraged Sisi not to worry about US threats to cut military aid and used its influential American Israel Public Affairs Committee in the United States to pressure senators against halting aid. Sisi and the Israelis clearly have much in common.

Gauging Support Levels for Islamic-Minded Leaders

The Pew Research Centre in the United States had conducted surveys in Egypt over the past five years on Islamic religiosity and found that in Egypt 53 percent of adult Muslims reportedly pray five times daily and 63.5 percent of males attend mosque at least once weekly. Given that Muslims comprise 95 percent of the Egyptian population; this suggests that a core 50 per cent of voters would be expected to show a strong committed support for Islamic-based parties with an additional 7 per cent providing their conditional support. As Christians comprise only 5 percent of the population that leaves only around 35 percent of the voting population who could be Muslim liberals, Nasserists or modernists who want to *minimise* the Islamic nature of the state.

Voting patterns for the first phase of free parliamentary elections on 28 November 2011 showed that the Salafist “Islamist Alliance” scored 28 percent of the vote while the Brotherhood-led “Democratic Alliance” obtained 38 percent. These total votes of “Islamic-minded” voters (66 percent) follow closely the totals for practicing Muslims indicated by the Pew Center data. Another indicator of the ‘ideological’ position of citizens was the 2-phase Presidential elections. The first phase indicated support levels as 43 percent for Islamists (Morsi and Fotou), 35 percent for Nasserists (Shafek and Moussa), and 19 percent for the Liberal candidate Sabahi. Some committed Muslims and liberals however, most likely supported the Nasserist candidate and Mubarak’s final prime minister, Ahmed Shafik, as they felt it was necessary to have continuity in governance to ensure a stable economy. Consequently, the relatively low support for Morsi did not fully reflect the full strength of the Islamic-minded population.

These figures for Islamic-minded voters – 50 percent of Egyptians strongly committed, another 7 percent conditionally committed – is in line with 2010 surveys of Muslims in Egypt that indicated 85 percent believe Islam’s influence in politics is positive. However, the Islamists also needed to address the find-

36 Ibidem.

37 Egypt’s military coup supported by Israel, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and AIPAC, *War in Context Web Site*, <http://warincontext.org/2013/08/17/egypts-military-coup-supported-by-israeli-saudi-arabia-uaeand-aipac/> (Accessed 30/10/2013)

ing that 59 percent of Egyptian Muslims are committed 'democrats' believing democracy is preferable to any other form of government.³⁸ In the month immediately prior to the coup, Egyptian Muslims surveyed still gave the Muslim Brotherhood and the affiliated Freedom and Justice party 63 percent and 52 percent positive ratings, respectively while secular leaders rated poorly. Possibly a majority approved Morsi's overthrow but after realising it was a takeover by the military and Mubarak associates, a sizeable number switched sides against the coup. Overt support for general Sisi from the Salafist leaders and Grand Sheikh Al-Azhar may have been critical in tilting the balance of citizen numbers to endorse the takeover. A 73 percent favourable rating for the military would be expected to have fallen very significantly now that the coup's objectives have become clear.³⁹

Constitutional Committee of 50

A Committee of 50 was appointed in August by the interim government to amend the 2012 Constitution. This is being done in a process whereby an unelected Committee of 10 identifies the chief amendments and these are then discussed and finalised by the Committee of 50 who are supposedly representative of the Egyptian polity. The Nour party has however, criticised the minimal Islamist representation⁴⁰. With a secular membership greater than their share of the population, there has been a heavy emphasis on removing or diluting Islamic provisions, such as rejecting sole reference to Principles of Islamic law as the main source of legislation (Article 2)⁴¹, reviewing the broad powers of Al-Azhar to be consulted when dealing "with issues related to Islamic Sharia" (article 4) and the state promotion of morality and decency (article 11). Although the latter comes under the Qur'anic rubric of *amr b'il ma'ruf wa nehi anil munkar*, one foreign non-Muslim commentator from the Rupert Murdoch media called this "a dangerous notion ...that can be used to infringe on individual freedoms".⁴² Secularists are zeroing in to remove Article 219, which they believe "consecrates the idea of a religious state" but it actually clarifies Article 2 as to what entails Islamic law: "The principles of Islamic law (sharia) include gen-

38 Tom Heneghan, "Egyptians want more Islam in politics, according to Pew poll", Reuters, February 2, 2011. <http://blogs.reuters.com/faithworld/2011/02/02/egyptians-want-more-islam-in-politics-according-to-pew-poll/>, (Accessed 30.09.2013)

39 "Egyptians Increasingly Glum", Pew Research, May 16, 2013, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2013/05/16/egyptians-increasingly-glum/>, (Accessed 30.09.2013)

40 Sue Lerner, Excerpts: Egyptian constitution-amending committee. Egypt crackdown on, *Independent Media*, 4 September 2013, <http://www.imra.org.il/story.php?id=61839>, (Accessed 30.09.2013)

41 Houdaiby, 4. The vast majority of Egyptians want the Shariah to be the only source of legislation.

42 Nicolò Donà dalle Rose, "Egypt Constitution: What You Need to Know", *PolicyMic*, August 11, 2013, <http://www.policymic.com/articles/58879/egypt-constitution-what-you-need-to-know>, (Accessed 30.09.2013)

eral evidence, the foundational principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*), and the reliable sources from among the Sunni schools of thought (*madhahib*)".

An ominous development is that this Committee is being asked now to approve an amendment suggested by the Committee of 10 that "The minister of defense is the general commander of the armed forces, chosen from its officers, after the approval of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces." This amendment would clearly prevent any elected president, as President Morsi did, from retiring a minister of defence and promoting a substitute Minister thus fatally weakening any future civilian government control. That the military wish to maintain future supremacy over the Egyptian state is confirmed by Decree Number 562 of the interim Egyptian president, Adly Mansour, that changed the military oath taken by new officers graduating from military school from binding officers to be "loyal to the president of the republic" to just "obey the military orders and execute the orders of the commanders". They apparently no longer would be required to be loyal to an elected president.⁴³ This would be wholly unacceptable since submission of the senior military commander to a civilian president is the only safeguard the Egyptian people have against a rogue general abusing his powers for pecuniary gain, such as lucrative funding from external powers. These developments stand in the face of Sisi's televised statement that the armed forces had no intention to enter political life⁴⁴; however, General Sisi is now being canvassed from some quarters to stand as a presidential candidate in the next elections. The reality is that senior and retired military officers and former Mubarak associates have extensive commercial operations and interests in the Egyptian economy, variously estimated at up to 40 percent control⁴⁵, which they wish to protect by all means at their disposal.

Al-Azhar has formed a committee to "analyze all the contested articles and announce Al-Azhar's position".⁴⁶ The amendments are expected to be finalised by December and then go to a referendum within 30 days. The Com-

43 Ibrahim, "Four ways Egypt's military is enshrining the 'deep state'", *Global Post*, 16 September, 2013, <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/middle-east/egypt/130915/four-ways-egypts-military-enshrining-the-deep-state>, (Accessed 30.09.2013)

44 "Egypt military unveils transitional roadmap", *Ahram Online*, 3 July, 2013 <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/75631/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-military-unveils-transitional-roadmap.aspx> General Sisi's speech reminds one of Pakistani General Musharraf's first speech on assuming power in the 1999 military coup that his aim was "another path towards democracy. The armed forces have no intention to stay in charge any longer than is absolutely necessary." He finally left his presidential office nine years later! Refer to: Hasan-Askari Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2000, p. xvii.

45 Dalia Kholaf, "The Egyptian army's economic juggernaut", *Al-jazeera online*, 13 August 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/08/20138435433181894.html>, (Accessed 30.09.2013)

46 Rana Mamdouh, "Rania Rabih al-Abd, Egypt: Fears of Military Privileges in New Constitution", *al-khabar*, 21 September, 2013, <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/17091>, (Accessed 30.09.2013)

mittee of 50 discussing changes to the rejected 2012 Constitution seems to be going against a clear polled majority of Egyptians who want Sharia as the only source of legislation. As the Salafists state, the Committee is unrepresentative of Egypt's Islamic-minded majority so the ensuing constitutional amendments will likely suffer less legitimacy compared to the 2012 constitution which was ratified democratically.

Conclusions

The movement towards participatory governance in Egypt has suffered a major setback with overthrow of the Morsi government. Egyptian Islamists should take away the lesson from their brief experience that a ruling party should develop a broad alliance with other groups such as the Salafists and Sheikh Al-Azhar, and be pluralistic in considering the concerns of the Christians and liberals as well – and ensure that at all times the government has 55-60 percent public support on any sizeable issue.

The open support of autocrats against elected governments by certain Gulf State leaders will likely initiate a new epoch of populist enlightened struggle including the Egyptian Salafists against rulers who do not facilitate participatory governance according to Islamic teachings and the blessed example of the *Khulafa al-Rashidun*. There is already evidence of cross-over influence from the Muslim Brotherhood on Salafist groups in the Gulf states, which is likely to confront the rulers there as they try to stymie any breakout for popular Islamic rule: "The dilemma facing the Saudi authorities is the democratization of the Islamic trend and the liberal tendencies of its young and educated generation".⁴⁷ Similarly Sheikh Al-Azhar's pro-military position goes against this strong Islamic trend and is likely to be increasingly challenged by leading scholars. Due to the Al-Azhar law, it will unlikely be able to revert to an apolitical role as in the past.

The immediate prospect for Egypt is disguised authoritarian rule. With the Muslim Brotherhood now banned from any socio-political role, the key to progress is whether the Salafists bow to the rule of the 'Old Guard' as their Gulf state mentors would wish. However, military rule is clearly against the essential character of an Islamic polity based on popular representation. It is probable that with the spread of the Qur'anic knowledge that those who rule with other than what Allah commands are *zulm* (aggressors) and *fisq* (disobedient) (Qur'an 5: 45, 47), the power of the military and their cohorts would be expected to gradually ebb as they lose legitimacy. Egypt will I believe, continue moving in fits and starts towards participatory civilian rule – however, this will most likely entail large sacrifices on the part of Egyptian Muslims.

The army will try to co-opt the liberals and the Christians for their sup-

47 The Cordoba Foundation, *The Saudi State and Its Salafi Trends*, The Mena Report, Vol.1, Issue 09, September 2013, pp. 15-17.

port with the Nasserists, but this is still altogether a minority group now in the Egyptian political equation and so their role as rulers would lack in legitimacy. Due to the likely gradual rejection over time by the Salafis, liberals and Al-Azhar factions, the military's popularity will decrease, which may take a number of years as popular support dwindles to a core level of perhaps 30 percent. Massive demonstrations against the military then would likely be met eventually by brute force that would split off sizeable factions from within the military itself. If this scenario is handled in an intelligent and Islamic manner through negotiations, a true participatory government may eventuate. Otherwise the outlook could be a disastrous civil war similar to what is happening now in Syria.

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ПОСЛЕ АРАПСКОГ ПРОЛЕЋА – КОРИСНЕ ЛЕКЦИЈЕ У УПРАВЉАЊУ ИЗ СКОРИЈИХ ДОГАЂАЈА У ЕГИПТУ И ТУНИСУ

Резиме

Пад изабраног египатског председника Морсија ће вероватно одјекивати арапским светом у будућности. Пад изазива растућу заједницу исламски настројених грађана (којих има нешто мање од 60 процената у Египту, према истраживању Pew Center – а из САД) и фрустрира омладину која жели партиципативно управљање и легитимне слободе против војних аутократа, њихових послова и правних саветника, и наследних владара у региону који желе да садрже статус кво противно темељном исламском принципу репрезентације. Тунис иде путем омогућавања успешне транзиције пост – арапског пролећа у алтернативну визију која фаворизује благостање грађана. Ово је последица флексибилности и спремности исламиста да раде у коалицијама са другим групама, чак и секуларистима. У Египту се води велика борба која ће се мало вероватно завршити све док се не створи нека форма партиципативне владе кроз грађанску непослушност. Председник Мухамед Морси је успео да уведе нови устав (који је тренутно суспендован) поред јаке опозиције, али који није успео да пројектује демократску слику, нити да реши економске проблеме државе. Он такође није желео да прихвати друге исламске снаге – Салафисте и Ал-Азхар инситуцију. Међутим, заповедник војних снага, Абдел-Фатах ал-Сиси, у побуни против цивилних команданата, покушава да поврати стање који је постојало пре арапског пролећа, тј. прикривену војну владу. Он је успео да добије подршку салафиста и либерала, али више не може да рачуна на њихову подршку. Отворена подршка ал-Сисију од стране Ал-Азхара компромитује некадашње велико поштовање које је ова институција имала у муслиманском свету.

Кључне речи: Морси, генерал Сиси, арапски свет, Египат, исламски принципи, салафисти, ал-Азхар

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