Politics Without Parties. Political Change and Democracy Building in Egypt Before and After the Revolution

Virginie Collombier

European University Institute
Max Weber Programme

Politics Without Parties. Political Change and Democracy Building in Egypt Before and After the Revolution

Virginie Collombier

Abstract
This working paper is the first draft of a work in progress on party politics in contemporary Egypt. Written in early 2013, following the first round of free elections to take place after Hosni Mubarak had been ousted from power, it focuses on non-Islamist parties, their development and their role in political change before and after the popular uprising of 2011.

It shows that since 2011, similarly throughout the 2000s, political mobilization in the non-Islamist sphere has mostly happened through fluid networks and alliances, rather than coherent organizations created with a view to gaining power and governing. While attempting to identify some of the obstacles that have impeded party development before and after the 2011 revolution, this draft paper also underlines the determining impact those have had on democracy building.

Virginie Collombier
Max Weber Fellow, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013

Introduction

Egypt has undergone dramatic political change since the beginning of the year 2011 with, first, unprecedented social mobilization leading to the ousting of President Mubarak and, second, the organization of parliamentary and presidential elections which have been considered free and fair and have contributed to the shaping of a new political map.[1] Considering the existing literature on political parties, we might have expected Egyptian parties to play a crucial role in both phases of this process of change: as a channel for expression of the demonstrators' demands, and as an instrument for electoral competition.

The first issue at stake was that of the framing of street protests and channeling of political and social demands put forward by demonstrators so that they could be addressed institutionally, in the framework of the new political system under construction: namely organizing and structuring, channeling and representing. Still, despite the liberalization of the political sphere after February 2011, mobilization has, for the most part, continued to take place – both on political and social grounds – outside formal institutions and procedures. Many contentious issues have not been transferred from the street to the institutionalized political arena, and the representation and participation of large sectors of Egyptian society in the political process have not been achieved.

The second issue at stake was that of the competition for direct exercise of power through elections. Literature on electoral politics puts parties "in the driver's seat", by underlining that the very act of organizing elections depends on parties, which are seen as the main agents of political representation and as playing a crucial role in articulating and aggregating citizens' demands. Yet parties have not played the major role in electoral competition for parliament and the presidency. On the contrary, the competition between Muslim Brother leader Mohamed Mursi and former army general Ahmed Shafiq, Hosni Mubarak's late Prime Minister, in the second round of the presidential election of May / June 2012 created the impression that Egypt was back to its old games: a face-to-face between the Muslim Brotherhood society and the former regime's apparatus, i.e. the only two groups that could rely on organized structures and nation-wide networks, but that are not literally parties – or at least not only parties.

As a matter of fact, despite the registration of dozens of new political parties since February 2011, none of them has proven capable of positioning itself as a credible and efficient instrument for channeling demands and representing the citizens in the new political arena. Only the recently created Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) and the Nur ("Light") Party – both Islamist parties – have distinguished themselves by their electoral performance: together, they managed to secure approximately 70 % of the seats in the People's Assembly. Yet, even though they are formally "new", both parties are relying on influential pre-existing networks which had primarily nothing to do with politics, and even less with institutionalized politics: the FJP is merely considered the political arm of the powerful Muslim Brotherhood society – and does not enjoy genuine autonomy from it, while Nur is the most important out of the three parties created by the Salafist movement. In contrast, the non-Islamist parties – both the Mubarak-era parties and those most recently created – obtained relatively poor results in the parliamentary elections: altogether they could secure approximately 25 % of the seats only. Moreover, none of the candidates who performed well in the presidential elections (A. Shafiq, H. Sabahi, A. Abul Futuh) could rely on a strong party structure to support him. Even H. Sabahi, who had founded the Dignity Party ("al-Karama") – a leftist pan-Arab, nationalist, Nasserist party – under Mubarak, chose to run as an independent candidate instead of relying on this organization.

---

[1] In June 2012, Mohamed Morsi, candidate of the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) was elected president in the second round of the elections. The parliamentary elections of November 2011 / January 2012 led to the Islamists (FJP and Salafist Nur Party) dominating the People's Assembly. Yet the elected assembly was dissolved by the then-ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) in June 2012, following a Supreme Court decision that the electoral law applied for this election was unconstitutional.

While the importance of party development to successful democratization – and its implication for democratic consolidation – has been well established in the literature (see for instance Huntington, 1968 & 1991, Diamond, 1999 & 2001, Mainwaring and Scully, 1995), these developments raise questions about the role of Egyptian political parties in political mobilization, political participation and transition to democracy. To date, it appears that Egyptian parties have not fulfilled their role as "the principal institutional means for organizing the expansion of political participation" (Huntington, 1968). On the contrary, my main argument here is that political change in contemporary Egypt before and after the revolution has happened without – and sometimes despite – political parties.

Even though the events of early 2011 constituted a point of rupture and have resulted in a widening of the room for maneuver for parties, the latter have not played a crucial role in the most recent developments. Since the events of early 2011, in the same way as during the 2000s, political mobilization has mostly taken place through fluid networks and alliances rather than coherent organizations with identifiable labels, created with a view to gaining power and governing – the former being viewed as the most efficient way to oppose dominant groups (be it the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, what is called the "deep state" or the Muslim Brotherhood). While there were political (mainly repression by the regime) and structural (such as organizational weakness) reasons for such a situation under Mubarak, I argue that party development in Egypt is still impeded by several obstacles, chief among which the continuing disconnection between elites and ordinary citizens and a dominant conception of politics that strongly rejects both ideologies and any idea of dividing the national community into what could be seen as competing "factions". This has had a determining impact on democracy building in Egypt since 2011, with a focus on the establishment of a formal – or procedural – democracy to the detriment of citizens' genuine participation in the political process (notably through the integration of their socioeconomic demands in the political agenda).[2]

1 – Contention in the 2000s: how political parties missed the train of change

While the 2000s were characterized by the emergence of new forms of contention, opposition parties played a limited role in the various movements that triggered political change during that period, which climaxed with the popular uprising of 2011 and the collapse of the Mubarak system.[3] Only the ruling party, the National Democratic Party (NDP), initiated a process of transformation that aimed at adapting to a fast-changing environment – both domestically and internationally – and happened to have a significant impact on the evolution of the political system from 2002-2003 onwards (Collombier, 2010). In the end, however, this process of transformation within the sphere of institutional politics may well have played a crucial role in the regime's incapacity to deal with the protests of January / February 2011 and contributed further to its disaggregation (Collombier, 2011 & 2012). Beyond that particular case, political parties remained largely isolated from the process of change that started in the mid-2000s.

Egyptian political parties? Which parties?

"*In Egypt, there are only two parties, Ahly and Zamalek* [the two most famous soccer teams]." (Haenni, 2005: 247). This joke is telling of the image and actual influence of political parties in contemporary Egypt. Even though the single party created by Nasser in 1953 was formally split into three "platforms" under Sadat in 1976, opening the way for the adoption of a multiparty system the same year, political parties have remained extremely weak to date.

---

[2] This argument has been well-developed by Amr Adly, "What is Egypt's politics all about", in *Al-masry al-youm English edition*, 13 March 2013, available at http://www.egyptindependent.com/opinion/what-egypt-s-politics-all-about, or Amr Ezzat, "Boxocracy juice", in *Al-masry al-youm English edition*, 15 March 2013, available at http://www.egyptindependent.com/opinion/boxocracy-juice.

[3] Here I use the term "system" rather than "regime" for I argue that large parts of the former regime have remained mostly intact after the 2011 uprising. In particular, the army and the security apparatus as a whole, the justice system, the administration – both at the national and local level – have not undergone major restructuring. Despite a major reshuffle in the leadership of the main state-controlled newspapers, the media sector has not been fundamentally affected either.

On the eve of the 2011 uprising, approximately twenty parties were officially licensed in Egypt, in application of Law n°40 of 1977 on Political Parties.[4] Handicapped by the tight control imposed on them by the authorities and by their own organizational deficiencies, opposition parties were particularly weak and inefficient. Moreover, their ambiguous relationship to the regime contributed to a large extent to their lack of legitimacy in citizens' eyes, and to the view that they were not only *part* of the regime, but even playing a role in its maintenance and durability (Albrecht, 2005 & 2007; Zartman, 1988). Based on the nature of their relationship with the regime – or more precisely on their degree of dependency on the latter – opposition parties could be classified into three main categories.[5] A first category included the small parties that had been granted a license by the Political Parties Committee, but of which most existed on paper only: completely unknown to Egyptian citizens, without members or funding, without any influence on the political scene, they could hardly rely on members or supporters beyond their own leadership. These parties were however granted a number of privileges and resources by the state, and could access Parliament (rarely with more than one or two seats) in return for their willingness to "play the game". Their integration within the system was therefore completely dependent on the decision and goodwill of the regime to "let them in". A second category was made up of parties which were deprived of an official license (such as al-Karama, al-Ghad, the Democratic Front) and therefore excluded from the political game, but which could rely on their own resources – such as private funding, a partisan structure (activists), or merely notoriety. A third category included parties that were licensed and hence part of the system (such as al-Wafd, al-Tagammu), had independent resources and could rely on a support network, but were partly dependent on the regime since the latter could always chose to withdraw their license or give them more or less broad access to Parliament (the 2010 elections were significant in this regard, since these parties were almost completely deprived of parliamentary representation, exactly at a time when they expected the contrary to happen). As a rule, and for varied reasons, opposition parties were strongly encouraged to "collaborate" with the regime. Refusing to do so could have jeopardized their very existence. Only the second category of parties – those who were not officially allowed in the game and could rely on resources of their own – were sufficiently independent to actually adopt a confrontational stance towards the regime. Most of the time they would chose extra-parliamentary action to do so, yet with very limited eventual impact.

On the other side of the political arena, even the presidential NDP would not play a significant role in the system, at least until the mid-2000s. At that time, a new leadership undertook a process of reform that aimed at turning the party into a durable, differentiated organization, in search for popular support with a view to gaining or managing power directly (La Palombara and Weiner, 1966), or at least transforming the political system so as to give the party a genuine role to play in the making and implementation of state policies (Collombier, 2010). Prior to that change, however, the NDP's very status as a "party" did not go by itself. Rather, it was seen as one of those façade institutions used by the regime to maintain a sense that the political system was "democratic". In reality, the NDP was mainly a channel of communication between the center and the provinces, a way to gain access to state resources and influence within the state apparatus (notably at the local level), but it had very little influence on the actual government of the country.[6] Moreover, it had never really served as an instrument for selecting and promoting elites.

An explanation for the weakness of political parties can certainly be found in Egypt's history of party development. As a matter of fact, while parties are traditionally defined as "voluntary associations organized for mobilizing popular support with a view to gaining or exercising direct political power" (Charlot, 1971), the Liberation Rally created by Nasser in 1953 – and later the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) – essentially aimed to gather all the varied political trends present in Egyptian society within a single structure, with a view to forming a support bloc for the regime. In a non-

---

[4] For details about this law before 2011, see Human Rights Watch, *Monopolizing Power: Egypt's Political Parties Law*, 4 January 2007, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/45a4e0a92.html, [accessed 5 June 2012].

[5] This typology is borrowed from Steuer, 2012.

[6] Interestingly enough, before 2004, neither the Prime Minister nor ministers were chosen by the President within the party's ranks. On the contrary, the new Prime Minister would often join the party after his nomination.

competitive political context, the ASU was conceived as a tool for *mobilizing* the people and *managing* power, but not for *gaining* power. Even after the official restoration of the multiparty system by Sadat in 1976, parties were kept dissociated from an actual competitive electoral competition (Ben Néfissa, 1998; Badie, 1991). While the genesis and development of political parties in Europe had been closely linked to the development of universal suffrage – and hence to the increased participation of citizens – Egypt's political parties were not created to fulfill such functions (Ben Néfissa, 1998). Until the 2000s, the NDP itself was no exception to this rule. As a result, while Egypt was experiencing significant social change in the 2000s, the party system appeared incapable of "translating, expressing, channeling (…) Egyptian society's 'new political demand'" (Ben Néfissa, 1998: 61).

Political protests in the 2000s: coordinating heterogeneous movements rather than building parties

The 2000s were characterized by a multiplication of protest movements which contributed to introducing "fresh air" into the political arena, but also confirmed that opposition parties were considered mostly irrelevant as a vehicle for change. In the "new protest movements" that were born during this period (Shehata, 2011), parties played only a marginal role: new and experienced political activists alike preferred new modes (extra-parliamentary) and new channels (varied movements loosely coordinated with one another) of action. As a matter of fact, in the mid-2000s, when political mobilization started to develop around the *Kifâya* movement, it mainly consisted in establishing bridges and building alliances among opposition groups and individuals (Bell and Delaney, 2001). This pattern evolved in the following years, notably with the creation of Facebook pages, "April 6 Youth Movement" (in 2008) and "We are all Khaled Said" (in 2010), and with the National Campaign for Change initiated in 2010 by former IAEA General Director Mohamed El Baradei. Yet in all these cases, coordination between diverse forces was preferred to the building of one single coherent organization.

The period 2003-2004 undoubtedly constituted a turning point for contention in Egypt. While the state of emergency in force since 1981 forbade most public gatherings, only demonstrations organized around very specific issues – such as the defense of the Palestinian cause – happened to be tolerated by the authorities (Haenni, 2002). Yet the war in Iraq in 2003 was the occasion for a significant change. Initially focused on foreign policy issues, the demonstrations organized from March 2003 onwards gradually moved to the field of domestic politics and direct expression of opposition to the regime (Collombier, 2003). The year 2004 was characterized by a radicalization in the opposition's demands, as the prospect of the presidential referendum of 2005 was approaching.[7] Yet the role of opposition parties remained relatively limited in the development and triggering of the protest movement, which was increasingly directed at President Mubarak and his family (in particular his younger son and supposed heir, Gamal). Despite renewed attempts to unite (for instance with the formation of a "National Alliance" made up of eight parties in September 2004), opposition parties could hardly overcome their divisions and remained therefore incapable of exerting a significant influence on the course of political events.

Kifâya: the precursors

The significant move came indeed from the adoption of a new approach, and the development of a new "formula" for opposing the regime (Rey, 2005). In 2004, two almost concomitant initiatives illustrated that change: the publication of "*Kifâya!*" – the first communiqué of the new-born Egyptian Movement for Change – in August, and the creation of the "Popular Campaign for Change" in September. Both initiatives were the result of an attempt to bring together diverse and heterogeneous groups united by their opposition to the Mubarak regime, in a move to go beyond parties whose divisions, weakness and legitimacy deficit were seen as impeding their action. Both *Kifâya* and the Campaign were made up of groups and individuals of diverse political trends, loosely organized,

---

[7] Before the constitutional reform announced by President Mubarak in February 2005, the President of the Republic was chosen by Parliament, whose choice was afterwards to be "approved" in a popular referendum.

gathering both authorized parties (such as the Nasserist Party), non-authorized parties (such as the Communist Party, al-Karama Party and the Muslim Brotherhood), civil society organizations (for instance the Hisham Mubarak Law Center) and popular collectives. In such a configuration, coordination happened to be crucial, since most groups – often poorly organized and structured – remained largely autonomous. Such a configuration was supposed to make it easier to get around security services' scrutiny. It was also seen as a mode of organization more in tune with the ideological preferences of the majority of activists (the Muslim Brotherhood excepted), since most of them belonged to the left or even the far-left. In 2005, the organization of the first direct presidential election between several candidates (after a constitutional amendment which made this possible) provided an opportunity for these platforms to intensify their efforts. *Kifâya* therefore gained much attention in 2005-2006, organizing protests and demonstrations that were often brutally suppressed by the security forces.

However, the movement never managed to extend significantly beyond the limited segments of the Cairo middle-classes out of which it was born. Focusing on particular political demands (notably constitutional change) that did not really make sense for the majority of ordinary citizens, it remained largely elitist, and hence very weak and isolated. As a result, by the end of 2006, the security forces had managed to repress the movement, using force against the demonstrators and arresting many of its leaders. Moreover, even though *Kifâya* had been efficient in bringing opponents to the regime together in expressing their opposition to Gamal Mubarak succeeding his father (what was called the "power inheritance" scenario, "*tawrîth al-sulta*"), it had proved incapable of going beyond this very limited platform and presenting itself as a credible alternative to the regime.

The National Association for Change: a turning point

A few years later, in 2010, the experience conducted under the leadership of Mohamed El Baradei upon his return to Egypt presented several similarities with *Kifâya*. The National Association for Change created by El Baradei was essentially based on the same idea of bringing Egyptians of all political and religious trends – including representatives of civil society and youth – together within a loose structure, but united in the aim to achieve a common objective: bringing about change in Egypt. Like *Kifâya*, the National Association for Change comprised a number of licensed and unlicensed parties such as al-Ghad, the Democratic Front, al-Wasat, al-Karama, movements like Egyptians for Change, the April 6 Youth Movement, the Popular Campaign in support of Baradei and demands for change. Personalities such as the activist Mohamed Abul-Ghar, legal and constitutional expert Yahya Gamal, film director Yusri Nasrallah, novelist Alaa al-Aswani, businessman Naguib Sawiris, also joined the Association. While El Baradei and his partners/supporters were very keen on reaching out and gathering Egyptians beyond specific ideological trends and affiliations, creating a structure of that kind was also conceived as a way to overcome the hardships of getting a political party licensed by the Political Parties Committee. Moreover, in their view, any political party – whatever it would be – would have too narrow a support base to match in front of the regime. For this reason, El Baradei made it clear on several occasions during that period that he did not intend to create a party. In the end, however, like *Kifâya* and all Egyptian political parties, the National Association for Change remained largely influenced by, and dependent upon, a number of personalities, chief among whom was Mohamed El Baradei himself. It also remained largely elitist in nature, most of its members and supporters belonging to the middle and upper classes and living in urban centers.

Despite similarities, however, the National Association for Change distinguished itself from *Kifâya* on at least two major points, both of which were highlighted by the broad campaign initiated in March 2010 to collect signatures in favor of a petition entitled "Together we will change". To general surprise, one million signatures were collected across the country in approximately seven months, showing that: 1) a movement of that kind could reach out to citizens beyond the capital city ("diffusion"), 2) with the proper arguments, people could be motivated to act ("motivation"). As a matter of fact, contrary to *Kifâya*, the National Association managed to create a nation-wide network of support: its action did not remain limited to downtown Cairo, but expanded to many governorates, thanks to the active campaigning on the ground of civil society and youth movement activists, and sometimes local notables. In addition, the National Association developed in 2010 an argument that

would prove crucial a few months later: the underpinning rationale of the petition campaign was that one million persons, providing that they decide to act, are enough to provoke the collapse of the regime. Hence, even though like *Kifâya* or traditional opposition parties the National Association did not represent a credible alternative to the regime, it probably had a major psychological impact on a large number of Egyptian citizens.

A general deficit of "linkage" within the Egyptian political system

On the eve of the 2011 revolution, the relevancy and efficiency of both traditional parties and new movements' strategies was questioned. In an article published in May 2010, entitled "Parties, Movements and Prospects for Change in Egypt", political scientist Amr Shubaki passed a very severe – but probably mostly accurate – judgment on Egyptian party politics and its deficiencies:

> Where are Egypt's political parties in this picture? Clearly the country's 24 licensed parties are not the engine of political dynamism. Nor have they been for some time; (…) they won only 9 seats in the 2005 parliamentary elections (5 of which went to the liberal Wafd party), as compared to 88 seats won by independent candidates affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, a banned organization. There are many reasons for the weakness of Egyptian parties, including regime restrictions and the general absence of politics from public life for many years. But parties now face complicated choices as they confront movements such as El Baradei's, as well as upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections. (…)
>
> Opposition parties suffer from leaders for life and a lack of internal democracy. (...) Legal political parties have been largely absent from new and evolving forms of social and political protest, and have failed to renew their political discourse and to reach out to young activists and other new political forces.
>
> The parties' difficulty in adapting to new developments in Egyptian politics is reflected in their positions toward El Baradei's movement [many of them have rejected it, or at least criticized it]. (…)
>
> The question remains whether the National Front represents a new chapter of opposition in Egypt or merely another page in an ongoing saga. The political protest movements that have emerged in Egypt since 2004 (such as Kifaya, April 6, blogger and youth movements, as well as groups of independent-minded judges, journalists, and university professors) have relied mostly on a strategy of protests against corruption and the absence of democracy. What has been missing so far was any serious attempt to build an effective opposition front linking the elite and the masses.
>
> In this regard, the emergence of El Baradei's movement has allayed some fears but raised others. On one hand, El Baradei has succeeded in inspiring many citizens and has thus produced a degree of political dynamism. He was able to present himself as a statesman with international standing who was interested in reforming his country. He has inspired democratic thinking—in fact, his popularity among the general public as well as the elite demonstrated Egyptians' readiness to embrace democratic values—and created the sense of some choice beyond the regime / Brotherhood poles. On the other hand, the National Front was hastily formed following a two-hour meeting between ElBaradei and political activists, and includes a number of forces representing failed political initiatives. Due to these weaknesses, the Front itself appears to be already failing as an organization. (…)[8]

Yet not only had party building and parties in general come to be viewed as an inappropriate and inefficient way of opposing the regime under Mubarak. While political activists have been experiencing new modes and channels of action, old and new movements alike have suffered a lot from their almost exclusive focus on institutional and procedural issues (especially constitutional reform), to the detriment of issues that would have appealed to ordinary citizens. While major social

---

[8] See the full article at http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/2010/05/20/parties-movements-and-prospects-for-change-in-egypt/6c04.

movements started in 2006 – quickly gaining momentum and expanding throughout the country – opposition parties (largely imitated in this by most new political movements) made no real attempt to integrate the economic and social demands expressed by workers, state employees and ordinary citizens into their own agenda. This also contributed to their marginalization in the process of change that started in the 2000s.

At the end of 2006, the strike initiated by workers from the huge industrial complex of al-Mahalla al-Kubra[9] rapidly extended to the rest of the country. Within a few weeks time more than 100,000 textile workers had joined the movement, followed by workers from other industrial sectors. Despite the fact that such an unprecedented wave of unrest started just after a peak in political protests, both political parties and movements such as *Kifâya* remained largely away from it. The regime's strategy, which had always aimed at keeping political and social demands isolated from one another so as to prevent the two from merging and having a possible spiral effect, once again proved successful. The traditional mistrust between workers and political parties helped the regime, since the two never really attempted to unite in order to consolidate their claims. Workers feared that political parties might exploit their demands and that they might have to face repression in return (Abdalla, 2011). As a matter of fact, this fear was confirmed in April 2008, when for the first time political activists, part of the April 6 Youth Movement (another loose coalition of young activists from different ideological trends and, for most of them, with no previous party affiliation), called on Egyptian citizens to strike in support of al-Mahalla workers through their Facebook page. Far from being successful, this initiative resulted in the security forces raiding al-Mahalla factories and repressing the workers' movement, thus reinforcing workers' fears of being coopted and manipulated by political groups. While labor strikes were going on and even widening, political parties – even those with left-wing leanings – played almost no role in the articulation and representation of workers demands in Egyptian politics (Abdalla, 2011). By so doing, they left out the issues that would have most likely helped them attract followers and supporters.

While during the second half of the 2000s numerous signals were perceptible, suggesting that the country was ripe for change, structures that could have played a role as a catalyst and a vehicle for it were obviously lacking. The channels through which the Egyptian people could have *expressed* themselves were desperately missing. The issue was all the more sensitive because the reforms conducted within the presidential party and the overall political system throughout the 2000s, under the leadership of Gamal Mubarak and his associates, had largely contributed to weakening – if not breaking – the traditional *communication* channels used by the regime. As a consequence, at the end of 2010, Egypt was facing a serious "linkage" deficit, both between the regime and the people, and between the people and the political movements and organizations that might have contributed to the citizens' expression of their opposition.

Despite its dramatic impact on the organization of power at the top of the state apparatus and on political life in general, the popular uprising of early 2011 did not constitute a major rupture in this regard. Political parties did not play a significant role in the mobilization. Most party leaders even considered the demonstrations organized at the end of January with skepticism, and did not call on their members to participate. As argued elsewhere (Steuer, 2012), at least in the first stage, the probability of losing the status and privileges they were granted by the regime, because of their participation in the demonstrations, by far exceeded the possibility that the regime might collapse and open the way for a genuine competition for power between opposition forces. The first demonstration, organized on 25th January 2011, was therefore called on by a coalition of young bloggers, most of whom were part of the April 6 Youth Movement or of the Facebook group "We are all Khaled Said", but did not belong to any political party (some of them, however, had been involved with former presidential candidate and ex-leader of al-Ghad party, Ayman Nur). If the decision of the Muslim Brotherhood to join the protest on 28th January proved decisive – in the sense that it completely

---

[9] Al-Mahalla al-Kubra is a large industrial and agricultural city located in the middle of the Nile Delta. It is known for its dominant textile industry. It is in particular home to the largest public sector Egyptian textile company, the Misr Spinning and Weaving Company, employing 27,000 persons.

changed the scope of the mobilization – the association itself played no role in initiating it (a number of young members were part of the various coalitions, yet as individuals). Like in all previous contentious phases of the 2000s, political protests were therefore initiated and conducted by a diversity of groups and movements, loosely structured, but tightly coordinated, in which political parties had neither a leading nor a decisive role. Rather, as we argued earlier (Collombier, 2012), what proved decisive was indeed the scope of the mobilization, its multisectoral character, and the critical conjuncture (Dobry, 1992) in which it took place, notably as a result of the prospect of Mubarak's succession and of growing divisions within the ruling elites.

If early 2011 is to be considered as a point of rupture, it is not because it provided an occasion for political parties to play a role in triggering or structuring political mobilization. What constituted a significant change was the sudden expansion of the room devoted for party politics: within a few weeks time, numerous parties were licensed – some of them recently created, some of them after several years of efforts and legal procedures (in the case of al-Wasat party, for instance).

2 – After 2011, new opportunities for party building, yet parties still lag behind in the process of political change

It could be argued that, in the context of an expansion of political consciousness and participation like the one experienced by Egypt in 2011, institutions were required in order to absorb new social forces into the system. As put forward by Huntington, "the principal institutional means for organizing the expansion of political participation are political parties and the party system" (Huntington, 1968/1996: 398). Institutions fulfill a major function, that of organizing interactions between groups and individuals – in particular by determining the rules of the game – but also that of mobilizing citizens and channeling their demands into the political system.

In the wake of the mass protests of early 2011, one crucial challenge was indeed the translation and conversion of the political and social demands expressed by street demonstrators into issues structured in such way that they could be addressed in the framework of institutional politics. Yet, since the transition process designed by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), which seized power on February 2011, had made the organization of parliamentary and presidential elections a priority, parties were granted little time to develop and get organized. More generally, political developments since 2011 are an illustration that "the primary problem of politics is the lag in the development of political institutions behind social and economic change" (Huntington, 1968/1996).

Practical and organizational constraints

Party building in the early post-Mubarak period was first and foremost impeded by practical and organizational constraints. On 28th March 2011, the SCAF introduced a new Political Parties Law, which eased restrictions on the legal establishment of new parties, but was still criticized as discriminatory. As a matter of fact, the new legislation stipulated that nascent parties should notify a legal committee once they had at least 5,000 members from at least 10 out of Egypt's 27 governorates – whereas they were previously required to have 1,000 members only. With parliamentary elections scheduled in November / December 2011, this gave very little time to the various political groups and movements willing to compete to organize themselves and have their legal existence acknowledged. Hence they found themselves in the difficult situation of having to, all at the same time, to reach out to potential members, develop and agree on organizational structures, develop and adopt a political platform, define an electoral strategy, select candidates in a significant number of constituencies, and start campaigning. For movements that often did not exist as such a few months earlier only, this constituted a huge challenge. The situation was even complicated by the fact that the poor management of the transition by the military compelled political activists to maintain pressure on the latter through street protests and popular mobilization, in order to, in their own words, "make sure that their revolution would not be stolen". While they were busy organizing gatherings and demonstrations in Cairo's Tahrir Square, new party activists had little time left to tour the country, get organized and develop a comprehensive political strategy.

As a consequence, Egypt's countryside has remained largely isolated from political developments in Cairo and other big cities – which is significant since the rural population was more than 46 million persons in 2010, i.e. about 57 % of the total population.[10] A few weeks before the parliamentary elections, most parties created after the revolution had neither an office nor any activity in most parts of the Delta region and Upper Egypt. As a former NDP local leader commented two months before the elections:

> There has been no actual change at the local level, no real activity. Only three parties were created in the district since February (2011), and the three of them are Islamist parties (…). The others don't do anything, they even don't have a local office. (…) What is important, anyhow, is the individuals, their image and reputation, not the party they belong to. People won't vote for a program or for a party; they want to elect someone they know and whom they think is a good person. (…) What people want is to see the face of someone they know on electoral posters.[11]

As a matter of fact, few non-Islamist parties managed to develop significantly in such a context. On the eve of the December 2011 parliamentary elections, the development of the new-born Egyptian Social Democratic Party (*al-hizb al-dimûqrâtî al-ijtimâ'î*") – labeled as a center-left party, close to the European social-democrats – was considered one of the most promising. Made up of left-wing personalities and individuals coming from civil society organizations, it looked like a rather homogenous organization. It could benefit from the numerous technocrats and experts with specific skills and connections within the state apparatus who had decided to join its ranks, which proved crucial for the development of a coherent party platform. Thanks to the involvement of many of its members in civil society organizations, they could build upon the latter's networks at the local level and initiate activities in many cities of the country. Moreover, the party also benefitted a lot from the previous participation of many of its leaders in the National Campaign for Change initiated by Mohamed al-Baradei in 2010. As a result, in August 2011, the party's website indicated that the SDP already had offices in 23 governorates.[12] Yet the SDP remained far behind the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists in the elections, achieving only 16 seats out of 508.[13]

The continuing disconnection between elites and ordinary citizens

Despite the efforts undertaken after the revolution, one major obstacle to the development of credible political parties has remained the huge gap that separates elites from ordinary citizens. After February 2011, the capacity of parties to gain the people's trust and present themselves as credible and legitimate representatives of the people has remained a crucial challenge. The crisis in confidence between citizens and political elites did not end with the revolution.

While the uprising of early 2011 was mainly initiated by upper-middle classes and a new "globalized youth", the same elites coming from the same social categories (upper-middle classes and intellectuals) have, most of the time, been involved in the process of party-building so far. This has raised questions about their capacity to represent and speak in the name of an important part of Egyptian society. Some of the youth who joined new parties in 2011, for instance, explained that they were shocked during the first meetings they participated in outside of Cairo when they realized the gap that separated them from the people they had come to address. After one meeting, one of them testified:

> I immediately felt that my appearance, my clothes, the way I was talking, everything looked alien to them… I immediately noticed this in the way they were staring at me. Even before the

---

[10] Source : World Bank, http://data.worldbank.org/country/egypt-arab-republic.

[11] Interview with the author, Alexandria, 18 September 2011.

[12] In March 2013, the party's website listed 33 offices throughout the country.

[13] By comparison, the other main two parties created after the revolution, the Free Egyptians (*al-misryîn al-ahrâr*) and the Popular Alliance (*al-tahâluf al-sh'abî*) took respectively 13 and 7 seats.

conference started, a woman came to me and asked me: 'you, what do you know of our problems? You don't know anything about us!'[14]

More than one and a half years later, and despite the efforts party leaders claim to have undertaken to reach out to people on the ground, no significant change has occurred in this regard. Beyond the gap that results from party leaders and members living in socio-economic conditions extremely different to that of most ordinary Egyptians, the former have not been able to transform the nature of the link that relates them to citizens. As a matter of fact, the communication system they established has remained essentially devised for allowing *authoritative* communication to the society ("top-down"), more than for enabling *expressive* communication of the citizens to the state ("bottom-up") (Sartori, 2005).

A party such as the SDP – which nevertheless highlights its nation-wide extension and its connections at the grassroots level – suffers deeply from the approach it adopted towards Egyptian citizens, and which could be described as the "university professor complex".[15] While they present the involvement of many of their members in civil society organizations as one of their main strengths – and the reason why they are more efficient than other new parties at reaching out to citizens at the grassroots level – this argument should be qualified. A distinction should indeed be made here between civil society organizations (*munadhâmât al-mujtamâ'a al-madanî*) and charity organizations (*munadhâmât al-mujtamâ'a al-âhlî*), which are often religiously motivated[16]: when they are involved in social activities on the ground, the former largely reproduce the divide between "enlightened" elites and the ordinary citizen (*"al-muâtin al-basît"*), i.e. the one who needs to be "educated" and taught how to behave / proceed. Similarly, the fact that a party such as the SDP counts many experts and technocrats in its ranks may also contribute to a widening of the cleavage between "the people who know" and "the others". Charity organizations, in contrast, mostly mobilize people belonging to the same communities as those they intend to support – which contributes to reinforcing their local penetration and extending their networks of support in return.

Against such a background, one initiative by young revolutionaries initially seemed to distinguish itself from the experience of parties such as the SDP. In the weeks that followed the revolution, a group of young people – approximately 40 % of whom lived in Cairo and 30 % of whom were former Muslim Brothers – decided to start working in view of establishing a political party, named the Egyptian Current (*"al-tayyâr al-masrî"*). They insisted on the fact that they intended to address politics in a way that would be completely different from the other parties. In the words of one member:

> Our priority is to build a real party, close to the people. (…) We go to the people on the ground to listen to them. We ask them to expose their problems to us. We want to show that we are listening to them, that we consider ourselves at the same level with them, that we are not superior to them and that we have no intention to lecture them. (…) We insist on the fact that the people themselves must participate in the reflection on how problems could be solved. (…) In a first stage, we focus on rallying members more than voters. We need to identify opinion leaders at the local level, get them involved in work on the ground, with the people.[17]

Because of a lack of resources, however – both human and financial – the Egyptian Current did not manage to collect the required signatures to be officially licensed.

---

[14] Interview with a young member of the new Justice Party (*« hizb al-'adl »*), Cairo, June 2011.

[15] This expression is borrowed from a Cairo-based political activist (discussion with the author, Cairo, 6 June 2012).

[16] On the concept of civil society in the Arab world and the distinction between *al-mujtamâ'a al-madanî* and *al-mujtamâ'a al-ahlî*, see "Arab Uprisings: Challenges during Political Transitions and Comparative Lessons for Civil Societies and in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)", conference report, available at http://graduateinstitute.ch/webdav/site/ccdp/shared/6305/Amman%20Conference%20Report%2023082012.pdf

[17] Interview with a member of the Egyptian Current, Cairo, 20 September 2011.

Slow change in the conception of politics

If limited results have been achieved in terms of party development, it might also be related to the way politics is still conceived of by many Egyptians. Despite the shock wave provoked by the early 2011 uprising, the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2011-2012 have shown that politics in Egypt at least partly continues to be played along the same rules as before.

While electoral results in big cities like Cairo and Alexandria interestingly highlighted that a new political behavior is emerging,[18] in many densely populated areas, such as the Delta region or Upper Egypt, local notables, as well as familial and tribal affiliations in general, have, in the main, continued to determine the vote at the local level. The intertwining between social and political structures described earlier by anthropologists (Hopkins, 2004) remains very tight, especially in the countryside. As a consequence, while among certain segments of society – notably youth and the upper middle classes –, political behavior and affiliations are increasingly viewed as the result of individual preferences and commitment, it is far from being the rule everywhere and for everyone in Egypt. Still, for many citizens, in parliamentary elections "the idea is not so much that of electing a member of parliament who has a political vision, someone who – within Parliament – is to discuss Egypt's domestic and foreign policy and possibly influence it, but rather to vote or 'have someone vote' for the person who will be the most capable of improving the everyday life of the people in the constituency. Being able to run as a candidate and being successful means being efficient at – or at least displaying some capacities for – mobilizing economic and relational resources with the dominant social groups of the constituency, as well as with the politicians and members of the state apparatus at both central and local levels" (Ben Néfissa, 1998).

In July 2011, a former NDP member of parliament from Alexandria told us a story taken from his own experience to describe his relationship with those he called "his peasants" (in reference to the peasants from his constituency) and the latter's behavior after the collapse of the regime. He described a visit he had recently paid to a village in his constituency (he had gone there to offer his condolences to a family):

> As soon as he arrived in the village, people flocked to his host's to greet him and talk. He spent a long time listening to the concerns and problems of each, discussing the general situation in the country, etc. The most interesting part of the story comes at the end. As he drove out of the village, a bus arrived in the opposite direction. He asked his driver to stop and let him pass. At that moment, he was surprised to see the bus stop and villagers get out. They had recognized him and wanted to greet him. When he was about to leave again, a fully veiled woman knocked at his window. He thought she was to ask for charity. But contrary to his expectations, she told him: "but tell me (she used a particular honorary title to show her respect), now that you are not here anymore, who is going to take care of us?"[19]

As a matter of fact, while new political parties initially focused on the development of political programs, they quickly realized that most citizens are still expecting services from their representatives, and that affiliations and reputation matter much more than any party label, at least for parliamentary elections. Hence their strategy soon became flawed with many ambiguities, as illustrated by the discussion we had with a Justice party member in September 2011. Initially, the young woman explained:

> The Justice party is a mainstream party, a people's party, which is always at the center. As a matter of fact, Egyptians don't have clear-cut ideological positions, they always have very vague definitions for the concepts they use. For instance, everyone claims to be a 'liberal', but what does

---

[18] See for instance the good results of Hamdeen Sabahi and Abdel Moneim Abul-Futuh in both cities. Their performance illustrates that many citizens no longer support the traditional competitors on Egypt's political scene: the state party (or the state networks) and the Muslim Brotherhood.

[19] Interview with the author, Cairo, 12 July 2011.

that mean? What is liberalism? (…) We are 'the party of Egyptian values', which means we adopt the positions which are the closest to those of the people. In a nutshell, we try to be a mix of the Egyptian people's values, a mix of religion and culture. But we are neither a secular party nor an Islamist party. (…) Our party, it's above all a party with a program, i.e. a party that comes with solutions to problems. In other words, our ideology, it's our program.[20]

Later, explaining how the party was getting prepared for legislative elections and was choosing its candidates, the same young woman argued that the party had to choose candidates who would fit the "criteria" required by the local contexts. In particular, she underlined that tribalism remained a very important phenomenon, and that they had to take it into account in certain constituencies: "In Alexandria, for instance, which is a big city, the party doesn't need to field a candidate who belongs to a 'family', but in Upper Egypt, you have no choice".[21]

Against such a background, political ideologies – or at least differentiated platforms – have played very little role in Egyptian politics so far. On the contrary, electoral competition in 2011 and 2012 was mainly articulated around the opposition between Islamists on the one side and non-Islamists on the other side, with the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists using religious and moral arguments to secure the citizens' votes, and their competitors proving unable to distance themselves from this sensitive ground and campaign on other issues, such as the economy. The unexpectedly good result obtained by Nasserist candidate Sabahi in the presidential election (he managed to secure 21.5 % of the votes and ranked third), however, proved that socio-economic issues were high priorities for Egyptians, and that they were ready to support a candidate who would address these challenges. Yet, despite such a signal, political parties in general have so far largely failed to aggregate and channel citizens' social and economic demands into institutional politics, thus accounting for the persistence of broad social protests throughout the country. Throughout 2011 and 2012, strikes and social movements not only continued, but even gained momentum, shedding crude light on the fact that the revolution's deep socioeconomic roots could not merely be quelled through the establishment of a formal or procedural democracy.

A constant reorganization and reshaping of the partisan landscape

The multiplication of electoral consultations since March 2011 and the poor results obtained by all non-Islamist parties, either created before or after the revolution, have forced several attempts at reorganizing and reshaping the partisan scene. This has also been a problem in terms of party identification and structuring.

For instance, after entering a coalition with other "revolutionary" groups and parties ("The Revolution continues" – "*al-thawra mustamirra*") for the parliamentary elections, most members of the Egyptian Current became involved in the presidential campaign in support of Abdel Moneim Abul-Futuh, a former Muslim Brotherhood member presented as a "liberal Islamist" who was expelled from the association in 2010 after announcing his intention to run for president. To date, the Egyptian Current young members' efforts to build a party therefore seem to have come to an end, as most members are now supporting Abul-Futuh (who came in fourth position in the 2012 presidential election, with 18 % of the votes). Even though far more successful, the experience of the SDP has not proved very convincing either as regards the organization's capacity to develop further and become a coherent and credible force. After entering a coalition (the Egyptian Bloc, "*al-kutla al-masri*"), mostly presented as an alliance against the Islamists during 2011-2012 parliamentary elections, the SDP decided to support a little-known independent candidate – lawyer Khaled Ali – in the presidential election. Yet, on an individual basis, many members became involved in other candidates' campaigns (mainly Abdel Moneim Abul-Futuh, Hamdeen Sabahi or Amr Musa, all of them running as independent, and not under the banner of a specific political party).

---

[20] Interview with the author, Cairo, 20 September 2011.

[21] Interview cited.

The June 2012 presidential election proved an important trigger for a major reshaping of the partisan scene around three significant figures. In the wake of the election, the third- and fourth-place contenders, Sabahi and Abul-Futuh, respectively formed the Popular Current (*al-tayyâr al-sh'abî*) and the Strong Egypt ("*misr al-qawiyya*") Party. Similarly, Mohamed El Baradei established the Constitution ("*dustur*") Party.[22] In reaction to the constitutional declaration issued by President Morsi on 22nd November 2012, both the Constitution Party and the Popular Current joined the National Salvation Front (NSF), a coalition gathering the majority of the oppositional leftist and liberal parties and movements and created with the main purpose of uniting the opposition's activities.

For the three leaders, these newly created organizations look very much like attempts to institutionalize their presidential campaigns in the case of Sabahi and Abul-Futuh, and his 2010 Campaign for Change in the case of El Baradei. Yet it remains to be seen whether they will prove more successful at overcoming the challenges that Egyptian political parties and movements have been faced with so far.

Between institutional politics and street politics

More generally, slow party development in post-Mubarak Egypt has also been the consequence of both the continued reluctance of activists to get organized in political parties, and of leaders and members of new parties to choose institutional politics as the main arena for action.

Those who have remained mobilized in "street politics" over the last two years (mostly in Cairo and other major urban centers such as Alexandria, Suez, Port Said or Mansura) have demonstrated skepticism towards most organized forms of political action, and towards institutionalized politics in general. While political theory often argues that "organization is the road to political power" (Huntington, 1968/1996), a section of the Egyptian street revolutionaries have refused to consider the elected institutions as relevant spaces or channels of expression. This could be interpreted as a sign of their ideological preferences, at least for some of them. Yet the exclusionary and arbitrary way in which the SCAF led the transition during 2011 and part of 2012 also accounted for a large part of such behavior. Excluded from decision making, and sometimes even from consultation by the new ruling authorities, the revolutionaries felt that they had no other option but to return to the street (or Cairo Tahrir Square) and trigger protests again when they were willing to express demands and exert pressure on the military council. The election of Mohamed Morsi has not completely changed the situation.

So far, part of the revolutionary youth has indeed systematically rejected calls by other supporters of the revolution to gather and get organized in a party that would be best equipped to channel their demands in the new institutional context. While Huntington argues that "in the modernizing he controls the future who organizes its politics" (Huntington, 1968/1996: 461), the revolutionary scene has become increasingly fragmented as time has gone by, with a myriad of tiny – often radicalized – groups with neither leader nor organizational structures, acting in an increasingly autonomous manner. Other revolutionaries often criticized this behavior, arguing that such modes of action were counterproductive. In January 2012, for instance, late SDP member and political scientist Samer Suleiman published an article entitled "A critical stance in support of my colleagues in the Revolution" in the daily *al-Shuruq*. An excerpt of this article is worth reporting here, since it gives an idea of the debates that have been going on between "revolutionaries":

> Politics is nothing but a collective activity that aims to organize the affairs of the state and society. Consequently, whoever is hostile to organizing is unwittingly hostile to politics. If you refuse to organize yourself in a party or group, how can you engage in an activity that basically aims at organizing society and the state? If you accept being organized in small groups, but absolutely reject parties, then you are hostile to the politics that aims to run the state apparatus. As a result, you insist on marginalizing yourself on the pretext of keeping your "revolutionary purity" away from party maneuvering. Yes, politics does not depend on party organizations alone, but is also based on non-party organizations such as pressure groups. However, these pressure groups are not

---

[22] On these three organizations, their structures, objectives, and challenges, see Abdalla, 2013.

an alternative to parties. Environmental groups, for example, push through their demands to limit pollution by communicating with parties, and cooperating with them and offering them support to the extent that they adopt programs to protect the environment. Whoever decides to act through politics must be a member in an organization of some sort: a party that aims to reach power or participate in it; a pressure group that does not wield power directly but which exerts influence on it; a union that defends workers' rights in a certain profession, etc. The important thing is that members of every type of organization cannot do without the other types, and that true change only comes through integration and forming alliances among different types of organization.[23]

As a rule, however, in contemporary Egypt and not only in the most recent period, party development has been impeded by the reluctance of political actors to create parties, which they tend to view not only as a constraining or inefficient frame, but also as a potentially divisive structure. As a matter of fact, partisanship has remained deeply influenced by the idea that the national community should be gathered behind a common flag, rather than driven by the will to make choices and determine orientations that might result in fragmentation and division of the community. Historically, this can be related to the "catch-all" nature of all parties created by incumbents since the Nasserist period. For many Egyptians, "party" is often still viewed as a "faction" (Sartori, 2005). Interestingly enough, both Mohamed El Baradei and Hamdeen Sabahi expressed their mistrust towards parties early on, the former by initially refusing to form a party that would build upon the networks created during the National Campaign for Change in 2010, the latter by insisting on distancing himself from his original Dignity Party when he became a candidate in the 2012 presidential elections. The argument used by both leaders back then was that they did not want to appear as the candidates of one particular (and hence limited) part of the people, but rather as the candidates of all Egyptians.

While the presidential elections and the relative success of third- and fourth-rank candidates Sabahi and Abul-Futuh have led the major figures of the Egyptian political scene to reconsider their initial views, the members of Sabahi's presidential campaign still decided not to transform into a party, but into a mere "movement" (the Popular Current). Unlike a traditional political party, the Popular Current adopted flexible and decentralized structures expected to facilitate its spread. Moreover, it is open to leaders and members of other parties, who have been encouraged to join and support it, while remaining organized in their own parties (Abdalla, 2013: 5).

Since 2011, one major challenge that parties and movements have also been faced with is the choice to be made, or at least the balance to be found, between institutional politics and street politics. NSF's decision in February 2013 to boycott the upcoming parliamentary elections has come as an illustration of this dilemma and the reluctance of new political actors to participate in a game whose rules they deem unfair and biased in favor of the dominant political power (initially the SCAF, and now the Muslim Brotherhood and its Freedom and Justice Party). Commenting on the distinction that he makes between *communication* and *expression*, Sartori underlines that one major of feature of political parties is that "parties provide for something that no poll or machine can supply: they transmit demands *backed by pressure*. The party throws its own weight into the demands it feels compelled to respond to." (Sartori, 2005: 25). In contrast, Egyptian political parties have largely failed so far to act as an effective channel for the people's demands, thus contributing to the perception that they are still not relevant tools for political action, and that the new political system remains a mere set of formal rules and procedures that does not allow for the genuine representation and/or participation of Egyptian citizens.

---

[23] See full text translated into English at http://www.arabist.net/blog/2012/1/13/in-translation-samer-soliman-on-revolution-and-reform.html.

Selective Bibliography

ABDALLA, Nadine (2013), "Egypt's Revolutionary Youth. From Street Politics to Party Politics", SWP Comments, available at http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publications/swp-comments-en/swp-aktuelle-details/article/egypts_youth_from_street_politics_to_party_politics.html.

ABDALLA, Nadine (2011), "Fahm, tatûîr wa mu'alâjat infijâr harakât al-ihtijâj al-ijtimâ'î", Cairo, Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

ALBRECHT, Hölger (2005), "How Can Opposition Support Authoritarianism? Lessons from Egypt", *Democratization*, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 378-397.

ALBRECHT, Hölger (2007), "Authoritarian Opposition and the Politics of Challenge in Egypt," in SCHLUMBERGER, Oliver (ed.), *Debating Arab Authoritarianism*, Palo Alto, Stanford University Press, pp. 59-74.

BADIE, Bertrand (1991), "L'analyse des partis politiques en monde musulman", in *Idéologies, partis politiques et groupes sociaux*, Paris, Fondation nationale des sciences politiques.

BEAMISH, Thomas D. and LUEBBERS, Amy J. (2009), "Alliance-Building Across Social Movements: Bridging Difference in a Peace and Justice Coalition", *Social Problems*, November, Volume 56, N° 4.

BELL, Sandra J. and DELANEY, Mary E. (2001), "Collaborating across Difference: From Theory Building to the Hard Reality of Building Coalitions", in BYSTYDZIENSKI J. M. & SCHACHT, S. P. (eds), *Forging Radical Alliances across Difference: Coalition Politics for the New Millennium*, Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, pp. 63–76.

BEN NEFISSA, Sarah, "Les partis politiques égyptiens entre les contraintes du système politique et le renouvellement des élites", in *Revue des Mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 1998, (81-82), p. 55-87.

CHARLOT, Jean (1971), *Les Partis Politiques*, Paris, Colin.

COLLOMBIER, Virginie (2012), "Egypt in 2011. A Regime That No Longer Knows How to Adapt? Fluid Conjunctures and Regime Transformations in Perspective", EUI Working Paper MWP, Florence, European University Institute.

COLLOMBIER, Virginie (2010), PhD dissertation, Institute of Political Studies of Grenoble.

COLLOMBIER, Virginie (2003), "Les élites égyptiennes, l'Amérique et le pouvoir: de l'antiaméricanisme à l'opposition au régime", Master's dissertation, Sciences Po Paris.

DOBRY, Michel (1992), *Sociologie des Crises Politiques: la Dynamique des Mobilisations Multisectorielles,* Paris, Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences politiques.

HAENNI, Patrick (2005), *L'Ordre des caïds. Conjurer la dissidence urbaine au Caire*, Le Caire-CEDEJ, Paris, Karthala.

HAENNI, Patrick (2002), "Un milliard de musulmans, émoi, émoi, émoi… les dessous de l'effervescence de la 'rue arabe'", non published; "La colère arabe et ses imaginaires locaux", unpublished; "Contester en soutenant: la mobilisation en faveur de l'*intifâda* en Egypte", unpublished.

HOPKINS, Nicholas (2004), "Sufi organization in rural Asyut", in HOPKINS, Nicholas and REEM, Saad (eds), *Upper Egypt : Identity and Change*, The American University in Cairo.

HUNTINGTON, Samuel (1968/1996), *Political order in changing societies,* New Haven/London, Yale University Press.

LUST-OKAR, Ellen (2005), *Structuring Conflict in the Arab world. Incumbents, Opponents and Institutions*, Yale University Press.

REY, Benjamin (2006), "Les partis d'opposition égyptiens à l'épreuve de la réforme constitutionnelle", in KOHSTALL, Florian (dir.), *L'Égypte dans l'année 2005*, CEDEJ, Le Caire.

SHEHATA, Dina (2011), *New Protest Movements in Egypt* (in Arabic), Cairo, Al-Ahram Center for Strategic Studies.

STEUER, Clément (2012), "Les partis politiques égyptiens dans la révolution", in *L'Année du Maghreb,* VIII, Paris, CNRS, pp. 181-192, available at http://anneemaghreb.revues.org/1451.

ZARTMAN, William (1988), "Opposition as Support for the State," in DAWISHA & ZARTMAN (eds), *Beyond Coercion: The Durability of the Arab State*, London, Croom Helm and Istituto Affari Internazionali, pp. 61-87.