
7 The Political Effects of Changing Public Opinion in Egypt

A STORY OF REVOLUTION

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SINCE THE EVENTS of the Arab Spring unfolded across North Africa, Syria, and Yemen, much debate and discussion has focused on the social drivers behind these uprisings. Further, as political dynamics in these countries had been defined by the status quo for decades, these events came as a shock to many observers—no other major event seems to have shifted so dramatically the nature of preexisting relations between governments and governed. Thus, one is left asking, what change has caused the uprisings? Toward answering this question, this chapter turns to the experience of Egypt. In the end, I assert that it was the political perspectives of the Egyptian people, not a dramatic event, that eventually broke the country's social contract and thus paved the way for revolution. Further, I argue that changes in these perspectives were manifested differently across various subgroups of the country's population, a development that facilitated two paths to democratic change. Egypt's middle class and youth embodied the convergence of these paths, thus becoming important influencers of their country's revolution.

While there has been a wealth of literature focusing on the “third wave” of democratization in other regions, little theoretical focus has been centered on political change in the Middle East. Instead, political dynamics in the region have been largely understood in the rentier state model (Beblawi and Luciani 1987), wherein citizens surrender political rights in exchange for economic security (Desai, Olofsgård, and Yousef 2009). Further, and at the expense of expanding understanding of how political dynamics may shift in this system, relevant academic research has focused more on the various ways regimes have maintained

power than on how citizens influence the political process. Thus, the political upheavals of 2011 have highlighted an intellectual gap regarding political change in the region.

As no dramatic development seems to have changed the dynamics of the aforementioned autocratic (or social) contract—there was no major cut in subsidies, reduction in economic growth, or sudden increase in unemployment before the uprising—a push for change must have come from somewhere else. It seems likely that the social contract was broken slowly, with people's relative preferences between the status quo and an alternative political structure changing gradually over time, reaching a breaking point in 2011.

Perhaps the most logical drivers for changing Egypt's political system were those most disadvantaged by its application. From this perspective, theories of distributional motive, in which revolutions reflect structural conflicts between various parts of society over income distribution, are particularly relevant. In game theoretic models of distributional motives (see Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Boix 2003; Przeworski 2009), poorer segments of a population are shown to favor taxation and redistribution, which the rich generally oppose. As a result, there is an incentive for the rich elite to govern in an autocratic way and for the poorer segment to attempt to take over and form a democracy, where the median voter determines policy.

While, admittedly, there is no direct evidence on the basis of distribution data that inequality has risen sharply in the recent past in Egypt (Bibi and Nabli 2010), there is reason to believe that many people had been disaffected by the country's governance.¹ Importantly, while the elite, and especially the military, worked to maintain the status quo, relying heavily on the country's growing middle class to provide a *legitimizing* coalition, the poor were largely denied economic advantages and were severely repressed (Richards et al. 2013). In addition, recent work by Belhaj (2012) and Chekir and Diwan (2015) suggests sharp increases in inequality of opportunity in education and in the labor market in Egypt, as well as rising cronyism. For their part, Egypt's middle class may have become increasingly disaffected with the governing contract²; there are indications that the economic liberalization of the 1990s, and especially its acceleration in the 2000s, took a toll on the economic well-being of this group.³

Adherents to political Islam, a group that has formed opposition to the country's military rule for decades, had also been greatly suppressed in Egypt and had much to gain from regime change (a fact evidenced by their rise to power with the election of Mohamed Morsi in 2012). Importantly, in the years before the revolution, several groups in the broad range of parties espousing political Islam moderated their messages and came to accept, at least nominally, the democratic system—in 2004, for example, the Muslim Brotherhood publicly committed to abide by a constitutional and democratic system (Shahin 2005).⁴

If it was not the strictly excluded who swayed public opinion toward political change, perhaps it was those new to the system, the country's youth, who in many ways had been unable to acquire the promises of the rentier state and had suffered its limitations. In "modernization" theories of revolution, where schooling (as well as wealth, urbanization, and industrialization) facilitates increased emancipation, which leads to an increasing

interest in democracy among a population (Lipset 1959), youth are paramount. In such models, their increasing replacement of typically less educated older generations paves the way for further democratization (Tilley 2002). From this perspective, the current wave of political upheaval in the Arab world could be seen as an extension of the weakening of traditional authority, driven by education, urbanization, and economic growth, which made these societies *ready* for democracy; toward this end, youth are important agents of change.⁵ Other modern values that are associated with emancipation typically include a greater preference for the private sector and competition, less support for redistributive policies, and more support for gender equality (Inglehart and Welzel 2010).

Indeed, indicators of human development show that “modernization” forces have made great strides over the past three decades in the Arab world as a whole. Egypt’s Human Development Index rose from 0.39 in 1980 to 0.62 in 2012, faster than the average Arab country and double the average rate among Latin American countries during the same period. Average schooling rose from 7.5 years in 1980 to 11 years in 2012, faster than averages in the Arab world, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa, and at the same average rate as that of East Asia (Kuhn 2012). Similarly, there has been significant improvement in Egypt on health indicators and urbanization, both of which are typically important variables in a modernization analysis.

Besides the hypotheses of modernization, distribution, and political Islam, an additional hypothesis that will be tested in this chapter is that political circumstances matter in shaping the political demands of various groups, that is, that there is a certain element of strategizing in their choices. In particular, three ideas will be investigated. First, there is reason to believe that as Islamist parties moderated their platforms, those in the middle class may have become more willing to turn any dissatisfaction into political action—in other words, it is possible that democratization was delayed in many countries of the Arab world because political Islam scared the largely secularist middle class into a “coalition of fear” with autocrats. Second, to the extent that richer and more educated individuals would fear that the ballot box would lead to governments that would implement policies that they dislike, such as income redistribution, this may neutralize their modern impulse to support democratic values. Third, one can expect circumstantial effects among the poor as well. Poor and uneducated individuals are affected by two opposite forces: by their economic interests toward redistribution and democracy and by their low levels of political emancipation toward a lack of interest in supporting political change. It may be that the political evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood has increased their interest in politics, encouraging them to participate more in the political life in order to further their economic interests.

Methods

If public opinion changed in ways that would suggest its strong influence on Egypt’s 2011 revolution, one should be able to find such changes reflected in public opinion data. This is

not to say that revolutions and uprisings are necessarily *caused* by changes in public opinion; such data, however, help measure the shifting political dynamics that do. To identify the drivers of Egypt's push for political change, this chapter studies the evolution of Egyptian public opinion as measured by the fourth and fifth waves of the World Values Survey (WVS). Further, to discern among which cross-sections of Egyptian society such changes were most pronounced, a set of variables are generated from the WVS data that relate to age, class, and level of education, as well as those that measure opinions regarding democracy (democracy versus order), redistributive economic policy (a rightist/leftist political economy dimension), and the role of religion in politics (secularist/Islamist orientation).⁶

As described on the WVS website, the WVS, using a common questionnaire, has organized "the largest non-commercial, cross-national, time series investigation of human beliefs and values" in the world. The survey covers nearly 100 countries, "almost 90 percent of the world's population," and just under 400,000 people.⁷ The fourth and fifth waves of the survey, the ones used for this analysis, were collected in 2000, roughly a decade before the Arab Spring, and in 2008, only a few years before its advent and on the eve of the international financial crisis, respectively.⁸ While the sixth wave of the WVS was collected closer to the outbreak of uprisings in Egypt (2012), its analytical import may be greatly affected by the political chaos that followed the uprisings and thus less instructive of the trends that led to them. As such, it is not included in this analysis.

As Beck and Dyer (chapter 1 here) show, the changing of the region's age structures has manifested significant policy challenges and opportunities throughout the region—a fact as true for Egypt as it has been for the wider region. In this context, youth have been important actors in the region's changing political dynamics. For this chapter, however, youth will be analyzed as one of many age groups, all of which importantly affect changing public opinion in some way. Organized by age, the respondents are divided into three broad categories. To start, those respondents aged 15–29 are labeled "youth," a designation shared throughout much of this book. In turn, those aged 30–59 are characterized as "adult," and those aged 60 years and above as "elderly." Between 2000 and 2008, the age shares of the sample population shifted, with the weight of the population aging. In 2000, the sample group consisted of 34 percent youth, 55 percent adult, and 11 percent elderly. By 2008, those shares had shifted to 25 percent, 62 percent, and 14 percent, respectively.⁹

To discern "class" among respondents, a WVS survey question asks respondents to indicate the class into which they self-identity (the choices being: poor, working class, middle class, upper middle class, and rich). Using these answers, the respondents are further organized into fewer groups, where those who identify as poor and working class are labeled "poor," those who identify as middle class and upper middle class as "middle class (MC)," and those who identify as rich as "rich." In the 2000 survey, 35 percent of the respondents self-identified as poor, while 65 percent and 1 percent identified as middle class and rich, respectively. In 2008, an increased 41 percent of respondents identified as poor, while 58 percent identified as middle class. The sample share of those who identified as rich remained at one percent.

The WVS divides its sample population into cohorts based on the level of education they have acquired, with groups ranging from “no schooling” to “university-level with degree.” As with the class variable, WVS cohorts are reorganized into fewer groups, whereby those who have acquired some primary-level education or less are characterized as “primary,” those who have attended or graduated from secondary school as “secondary,” and those who have attended university as “tertiary.”

Between 2000 and 2008, the educational composition of the sample groups notably shifted. (See Salehi-Isfahani, chapter 2 here, for an overview of expanding educational attainment across the region.) In 2000, for instance, the majority of the sample group (51 percent) had acquired no more than a primary education. The shares of those who had acquired secondary and tertiary levels were 38 percent and 11 percent, respectively. By 2008, however, the share of those characterized in the primary level had declined to 48 percent; in addition, that of secondary had declined to 34 percent, while that of tertiary had increased to 18 percent.

To measure opinions about democracy, a variable labeled “Preference for Democracy” (PfD) is constructed from responses to a question where respondents are asked to choose their first and second preferences from a list of four options that include “giving people more say in politics,” “protecting freedom of speech,” “maintaining order in the nation,” and “fighting rising prices.” A person is coded as preferring democracy when either of the two first choices is ranked higher than the third.¹⁰ Having respondents choose from a restricted set is useful in that it controls for the fact that in unconstrained survey questions that simply ask whether or not one likes democracy, people tend to show overwhelming support for the former, a development that limits the analytical import of the data.

To better understand whether any increase in favorability for democracy is related to an interest in more economic equality, a variable to measure “Preference for Equality” (PfE) is created. This variable is important, because while one may see changes among the Egyptian population with regard to democracy, one is left with additional questions. For example, does a shift toward democracy signify an interest in the ability to influence income redistribution, does it change regardless of economic considerations, or is there some other relationship involved? “Preference for Equality” is constructed from a survey question that asks respondents to rank (on a scale of 1 to 10) whether “incomes should be made more equal” (high score) or whether “we need larger income differences as incentives for individual efforts” (low score).¹¹ Toward better understanding respondents’ (possible) opinions regarding political Islam, this study relies on a question in which they are asked whether they believe that religious authorities provide answers to social problems.¹²

Results

With the analytical framework now explained, this chapter turns to the question of how public opinion in Egypt is manifested, and changed between 2000 and 2008, and how

those changes may have affected the country's path to revolution. As all of the aforementioned theories of change rest on the assumption that there was, in fact, an increase in support for democracy from 2000 to 2008, the PfD variable is perhaps the most important for this analysis. As such, it is here where the analysis will begin. From 2000 to 2008, there was a remarkable increase in respondents' PfD, with the variable jumping from 24 percent to 52 percent over that time. Interestingly, this trend distinguishes Egypt significantly from other countries of the Middle East and North Africa measured by WVS. In Morocco and Iran, for example, 36 percent in both Iran and Morocco indicated support for democracy in 2000, notably higher than that shown in Egypt that year. At 26 percent, the share of those who supported democracy in Jordan that year was only slightly higher than that of Egypt. Interestingly, however, as support for democracy increased dramatically from 2000 to 2008 in Egypt, it increased only marginally in Iran, Morocco, and Jordan (to 40 percent, 37 percent, and 28 percent, respectively). These figures suggest that the uprising in Egypt does seem to represent a deep social wave that is specific to that country. While many other countries rate "order" ahead of "democracy" in ways similar to Egypt in 2000, such preferences generally remain consistent over time.¹³ There may be many reasons for these changes in Egypt. Some could have been related to preferences for order, such as concerns about extremism that were more worrisome to the population in 2000. In addition, circumstances such as the presidential election that was to be held in 2011 (and fear of the constitution of a Mubarak/crony capitalist dynasty) may have played a role in the increased rejection of "order" by 2008 by a large share of the population. However, other reasons may run deeper, related to longer term social trends such as economic inequality, the rise of education among the youth, or the transformations in political Islam.

On closer examination, it is apparent that the rising support for democracy in Egypt is at least partially a class phenomenon. In particular, there is rising support for democracy among the poor and middle class but declining support among the rich. Interestingly, the middle class seems to have broadly switched from supporting autocracy in 2000 (with 75 percent of the middle class ranking "maintaining order" above "protecting freedom of speech" and "giving people more say") to supporting democracy in 2008 (with 55 percent ranking one of the other two alternatives above "maintaining order"). Among the poor, PfD increased from 22 percent in 2000 to 47 percent in 2008, while among the rich it decreased from 44 percent in 2000 to 31 percent in 2008.

With regard to age, youth were much more likely than their elders to support democracy in 2000. A third of young people indicated as much (34 percent) that year, while in contrast, only 18 percent of adults and 20 percent of the elderly indicated the same. Interestingly, by 2008, the PfD age disparity had largely evaporated, with youth and adults holding similarly favorable views toward democracy, both at 53 percent. Elderly support for democracy also increased during that time, reaching 48 percent in 2008.

Turning to Pfe, it is clear that there was a large increase in support for equality between 2000 and 2008, with the variable increasing from 23 percent to 53 percent over that

138 Young Generation Awakening

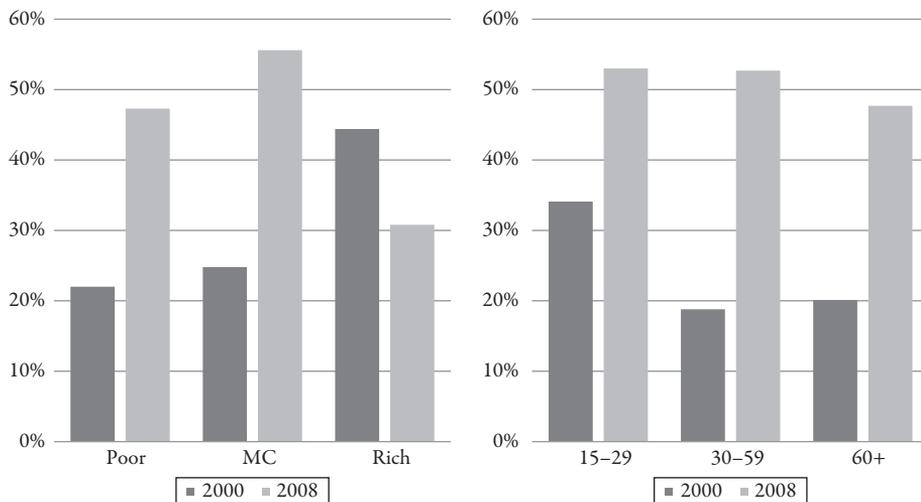


FIGURE 7.1 Preference for democracy by class (left) and age (right), Egypt, 2000 and 2008.

Source: World Values Survey, fourth and fifth rounds, author's calculations.

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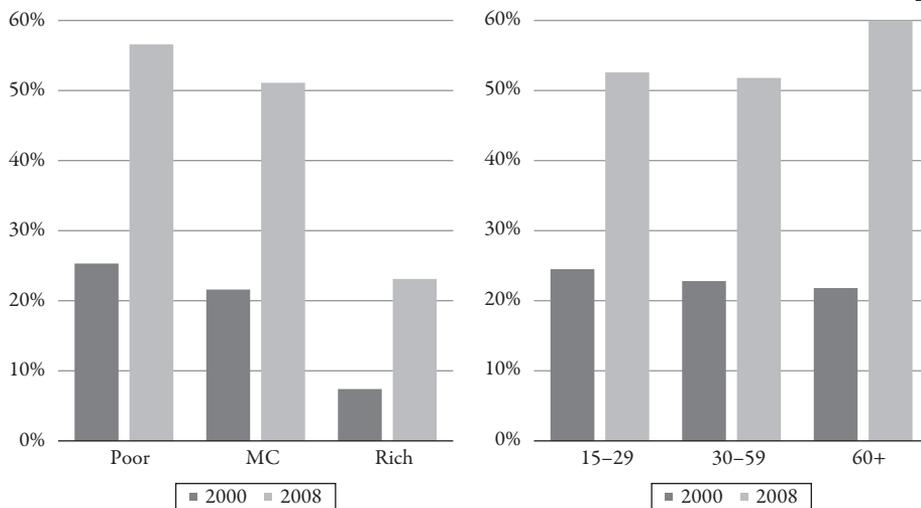


FIGURE 7.2 Preference for equality by class (left) and age (right), Egypt, 2000 and 2008.

Source: World Values Survey, fourth and fifth rounds, author's calculations.

period (see fig. 7.2). Similarly to changing PfD, this shift had a strong class correlation, with PfE strongest among the poor, followed by the middle class, and then, in turn, by the rich. This remained true in both 2000 and 2008. Despite these differences however, between 2000 and 2008, preference for equality increased among all three classes. In 2000, 26 percent of the poor, 22 percent of the middle class, and 7 percent of the rich preferred equality, while by 2008, those shares had changed to 57 percent among the poor, 51 percent among the middle class, and 23 percent among the rich.

In contrast to the effect of class, it is clear that age had little effect in influencing PfE (see fig. 7.2). Rather, preferences for equality increased among all age groups in a fairly consistent manner. In 2000, 25 percent of youth, 23 percent of adults, and 22 percent of the elderly preferred equality as opposed to inequality. By 2008, these shares had increased, reaching 53 percent, 52 percent, and a notably high 60 percent, respectively.

The popularity of political Islam seems to have declined from 2000 to 2008, although it retained majority favorability in both years. In 2000, 83 percent of respondents indicated a favorable opinion toward political Islam (in that they answered that religious leaders had solutions to social problems). By 2008, that share had decreased (albeit still a majority) to 60 percent.

Importantly, there was a strong class correlation to this shift, with the decrease in support for political Islam concentrated among the poor, where it fell from 81 percent in 2000 to 55 percent in 2008 (see fig. 7.3). Likewise, there was a fall in support for political Islam in the middle class. In contrast, support for political Islam remained relatively high among the rich in both 2000 and 2008, a surprising trend, given that education, which generally goes up with class, is usually correlated with a fall in religiosity. In 2000, 84 percent of the middle class and 85 percent of the rich supported political Islam. By 2008, those shares had declined to 62 percent and 78 percent, respectively. Thus, the decline in the middle class was 12 points, not that different than the 16-point decline for the poor. The only outlier was the rich, who saw only a four-point decline.

Similar to the changes in the preference for equality, there was not much of an age dimension to the decline in support for political Islam. In 2000, the youth were the least supportive of political Islam with 81 percent agreeing that religious authorities have

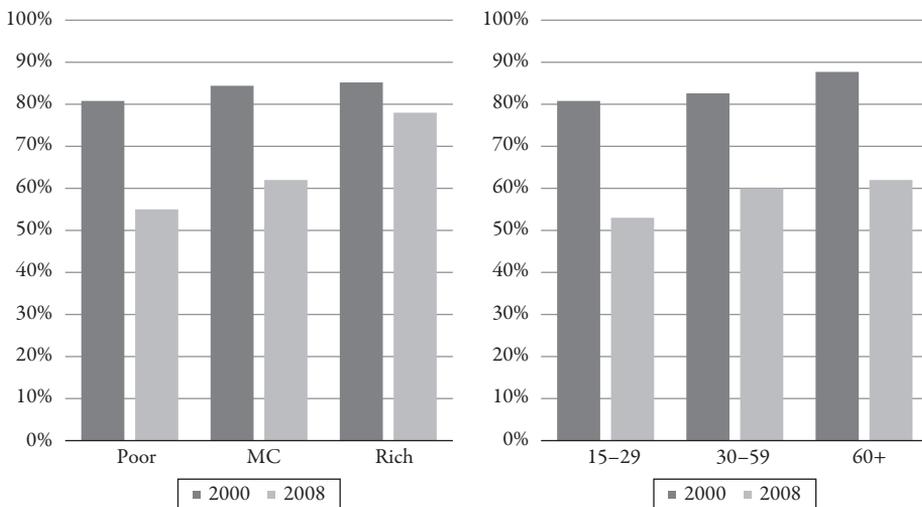


FIGURE 7.3 Support for political Islam by class (left) and age (right), Egypt, 2000 and 2008.

Source: World Values Survey, fourth and fifth rounds, author's calculations.

solutions to social problems, followed by adults and elderly with 83 percent and 88 percent, respectively. In 2008, all groups saw an approximate 25 percentage point decline in this variable. Youth support for political Islam fell to 53 percent, indicating a 28-point drop in support. However, this was not that dissimilar to what happened for adults (23-point decline to 60 percent) or for the elderly (26-point decline to 62 percent). Thus, while there appears to be some class component to the decline in support for political Islam, all age groups decreased their support (though it was still a majority of respondents) between the two waves of the survey.

Finding Meaning in the Data

As evidenced thus far, it is clear that public opinions greatly shifted in the decade preceding the 2011 Egyptian revolution. Moving forward, and framing the question in the theories of democratization introduced above, this chapter asks, what might these changes have meant for the eventual manifestation of that event?

To start, the rising support for democracy evidenced above is a necessary foundation for modernization theories of democratization. Importantly, though, it is not a sufficient one. One must also see intergenerational differences in opinions related to democracy, other modern values, and changing opinions about the role of the state in building opportunities for its citizens—generally, as modernization takes hold, individual agency, as opposed to reliance on the state, is increasingly viewed as the best path to opportunity.

In support of a modernization narrative, this chapter finds that higher levels of education are correlated with increased support for democracy. In 2000, among those Egyptians with a primary level of schooling or less, only 21 percent supported democracy. In contrast, 27 percent of those with a secondary level and 31 percent with a university level indicated the same. Further, the impact of education on PfD seems to have grown by 2008, a possible result, in part, of the Internet revolution, which increasingly allowed educated, or at least literate, individuals to more easily access large amounts of information. That year, 48 percent of those who had acquired some level of primary education, 55 percent of those who had reached a secondary level, and 57 percent of those with some university experience preferred democracy to autocracy—all notable increases from those recorded in 2000.

Higher levels of education tend to be closely correlated with age, reflecting the rapid rise in education attainments in the past decade. Education levels are also correlated in the data with other modern values, such as a preference for private over public ownership, more confidence in major private sector companies, more support for market competition and less support for income redistribution, and more support for gender equality (results not shown). As evidenced above, opinions regarding democracy also featured important age trends, with youth generally supporting democracy in higher shares than their elders. Further, the fact that the gap between youth and adult opinions was largely

closed by 2008 does not necessarily challenge a modernization narrative; if anything, it might even support it—youth opinions may have influenced those of their parents. The common closeness of Arab families, as recognized by Alexander and Welzel (2011), further underscores this possibility.

Taken together, Egypt's rising support for democracy from 2000 to 2008, and its correlation with pertinent variables related to education and age, builds a plausible story of modernization-driven change.¹⁴ Until one analyzes other contemporary trends, however, such as those related to equality and political Islam, one cannot say with more certainty how important these narratives are to understanding the causes of Egypt's 2011 revolution compared to competing narratives.

As noted earlier, the main implication of a distributional theory of democratization is that public opinion increasingly leans toward democracy as opinions shift in favor of redistributive policy—redistribution is the goal; democracy the tool. Further, shifting opinions would be formed along class lines. Importantly, from 2000 to 2008, this appears to be exactly what happened, with inclinations toward democracy strongest among the poor and weakest among the rich. As evidenced above, these trends differ from those related to age, with support for more equality increasing among all three age groups in a fairly consistent manner.

With the evidence considered, it seems clear that distributional motives played an important role in bringing Egypt closer to revolution. As such, a distributional narrative of political change must be added, or at least reconciled, to the story of modernization-driven democratization illustrated above. With that said, however, it is important to discern to which of these two paths of change carried the most weight in moving the Egyptian population closer to revolution. In short, from which sections of Egyptian society did the country's new supporters of a democratic order predominantly originate? Discerning these dynamics entails analyzing Egypt's changing public opinion between 2000 and 2008 against the changing composition of the country's population between those same years.¹⁵

Table 7.1 shows the distribution of all of those in the 2000 and 2008 survey who supported democracy over autocracy. Each cell in the table represents the proportion of the overall population who are "democrats" (were coded as preferring democracy over autocracy, as described in note 10) from that particular cell. For example, in the top panel, which shows the distribution of "democrats" by their level of PfE and class, the cell labeled "poor" on the column and "right" on the row shows that 5.6 percent of the people who preferred democracy did not prefer equality (thus "right") and were self-described as "poor." Notice the very small numbers in the "rich" category. Since the rich are 0.9 percent of the overall population, the highest value that any cell in the "rich" column can be is 0.9, even if everyone were a "democrat." Thus, more than in figures 7.1 and 7.2, table 7.1 allows to control for the size of these groups when analyzing the shift in attitudes.

The weight of changing opinion seems to have occurred on the redistribution rather than the modernization side; that is, a large share of the increased support for democracy

TABLE 7.1

Sources of the change in the number of “democrats” (share of total population), Egypt, 2000–2008.

Panel A: Preference for equality and class

	2000				2008				Change 2000–2008			
	Poor	MC	Rich	Total	Poor	MC	Rich	Total	Poor	MC	Rich	Total
Right	5.6	12.2	0.3	18.2	8.9	15.8	0.2	24.9	3.3	3.6	-0.2	6.7
Left	2.0	3.8	0.1	5.8	10.5	16.7	0.1	27.3	8.5	12.9	0.0	21.5
Total	7.6	16.0	0.4	24.0	19.4	32.5	0.3	52.2	11.8	16.5	-0.1	28.2

Panel B: Preference for equality and age

	2000				2008				Change 2000–2008			
	Youth	Adult	Elderly	Total	Youth	Adult	Elderly	Total	Youth	Adult	Elderly	Total
Right	8.4	7.8	1.9	18.1	6.7	15.4	2.9	24.9	-1.8	7.6	1.0	6.8
Left	3.2	2.5	0.4	6.1	6.5	17.1	3.6	27.3	3.4	14.6	3.2	21.2
Total	11.6	10.3	2.3	24.2	13.2	32.5	6.4	52.2	1.6	22.2	4.2	28.0

Source: World Values Survey, fourth and fifth rounds, author’s calculations.

was due to a shift to the left. As shown in panel A of table 7.1, of the 28.2 point increase in support for democracy in the World Value Survey data (PfD moving from 24.0 percent of the population in 2000 to 52.2 percent in 2008), 21.5 points of it (or three-quarters of the total change) came from individuals moving toward the left. In 2000, only one-quarter of all the “democrats” came from the left (5.8 of 24.0). By 2008, a bit more than 50 percent of all those who supported democracy also supported equality (27.3 of 52.2).

But while the surge to the left seems to have provided a big push to the support for democracy, the forces of modernization were more persistent and gradual—in 2000, the modernizers that supported democracy on the right represented already 18.2 percent of the population, and their numbers continued to rise to become 24.9 percent of the population in 2008. Thus, both modernization and redistribution played an approximately equal role in making democracy the majority view, the first through a slow and steady process and the second in a surge that paralleled a surge in the perception of income inequality, between 2000 and 2008.

In this transformation of public opinion, the middle class played a central role. Of the 52.2 percent of the population who supported democracy in 2008, 32.5 percentage points come from the middle class and 19.4 percent from the poor. Moreover, of the 28.2-point increase in popular support for democracy, 16.5 points come from the middle class and 11.8 points from the poor. The reason for the leadership role of the middle class in the rise of the demand for democracy seems to be that it participates strongly in both modernist and distributional channels. The poor on the other hand participate less in the first modernization channel because they tend to be less educated. But they also participated less in the second distributional channel as well, even though their demand for redistribution was the highest among the population, for the various reasons the poor tend to be less involved in politics.

When the same exercise is conducted looking at the source of “new democrats” by right/left orientation and age group, one sees the relative importance of the shift of the population aged 30–59 (adults). In this panel, the change in the proportion of the total population who are adults who are prodemocracy makes up 80 percent of the total shift by age group. While nearly half of the “democrats” in 2000 were made up of the youth, by 2008 only a quarter of the total “democrats” were youth and 60 percent of the “democrats” were adults, as the adults shifted their views and began to adopt values that only youth championed earlier on, in 2000. This suggests that the revolution was not driven by the particular interests of the youth, a theme that is explored further by Desai, Olofsgård, and Yousef in chapter 8.

Importantly, when data regarding political Islam are incorporated into this analysis, it is clear that political Islam seems to have supported, rather than catalyzed, the Egypt’s shift toward democratic change, with Islam serving primarily as a vehicle for change rather than as a cause for it.¹⁶ This is consistent with Tessler et al (2012) findings that Egyptians who espoused the values of political Islam in the 2000s tended to favor democracy as much as the rest of Egyptians.

Indeed, this study finds that in 2008, both secularists and Islamists had similar propensities to support democracy. (Moreover, that preference for political Islam seems to vary little by class and by age.)

Nevertheless, it is useful to note that the composition of the Islamic group changed between the two periods. In 2000, 62.3 percent of the population supported both autocracy and political Islam, but this group shrank to 28.6 percent in 2008 (see table 7.2). It is as if the acceptance by the Muslim Brotherhood in 2004 of the democratic rules of the game forced citizens to choose new political orientations. Two major social transformations are apparent in the recomposition of the political field: a move toward secularism (an increase of 22.6 percent of the population) and a move towards democracy (an increase of 26.6 percent). As a result, the religious “autocrats” of 2000 were mainly replaced by Islamist and secular “democrats” in 2008—indeed, while new “democrats” come mostly from secular backgrounds (an increase of 15.4 points), a large proportion come from political Islam backgrounds (an increase of 11.2 points).

We are left with the hypotheses regarding strategic interactive effects. To test these hypotheses, it is necessary to look at the PfD among various subgroups in a more disaggregated manner (see table 7.3).

First, did the fear of redistribution affect the PfD of particular groups, especially given the large shift to the left that occurred between 2000 and 2008? The proportion of “democrats” among the right is as high as that among the population, at about 53 percent, suggesting that there was no major pushback on this account. Nevertheless, the collapse in the PfD among the rich suggests that the rich did change their levels of support in light of the looming threat of redistribution—but being a small group, this hardly affected the aggregate figures. More important, the support for democracy rose equally among the middle class on the left and on the right, suggesting that unlike the rich, they did not have a fear of redistribution that was strong enough to overcome their modernization ideals.

Second, how about the fear of political Islam—did it affect the political choices of some groups? Here, it is necessary to look at the support for democracy among secular groups. It might well be that their support for democracy was low in 2000 because of fear of political Islam (while it was low among Islamists because the Muslim Brotherhood did not support the electoral process then). The rise of the support for democracy in 2008 to around 53 percent, which is around the national average, suggests that this fear was largely gone by 2008.

Third, what can be said about the impact of the greater involvement of the Muslim Brotherhood in politics and the willingness of the poor to support democracy? Table 7.3 indicates that the negative effect of political Islam on the support for democracy was stronger in 2000 than in 2008, affecting both the poor and the middle class. Adherents of political Islam did not support democracy in 2000 as much as secularists, among all classes. By 2008, the share of “democrats” among Islamists of the middle class becomes as large as among middle-class secular individuals (at 55.5 for “rightists” and 56.7 for “leftists”), while it remains lowest among poor “Islamists,” even when compared to the secular

TABLE 7.2

Changes in preferences along pro-political Islam/secular and "autocrat"/"democrat" dimensions (share of total population), Egypt, 2000–2008.

	2000		2008		Change 2000–2008		Total		Total	
	Secularists	Supporters of PI	Secularists	Supporters of PI	Secularists	Supporters of PI	Secularists	Supporters of PI	Secularists	Supporters of PI
Autocratic	11.8	62.3	74.1	Autocratic	18.9	28.6	47.5	Autocratic	7.1	-33.7
Democratic	5.6	20.3	25.9	Democratic	21	31.5	52.5	Democratic	15.4	11.2
Total	17.4	82.6	100	Total	40	60	100	Total	22.6	-22.6
										0

TABLE 7.3

	Proportion of “democrats” in various groups, Egypt, 2000–2008.							
	(2000)				(2008)			
	Poor	MC	Rich	Total	Poor	MC	Rich	Total
Right secular	26.1	28.8	66.7	28.1	52.0	55.1	0.0	53.3
Right political Islam	21.5	23.1	36.4	22.7	49.1	55.5	33.3	53.0
Left secular	28.6	28.8	100.0	29.4	47.8	56.8	0.0	52.5
Left political Islam	22.1	27.4	100.0	25.5	44.7	56.7	60.0	51.7
Total	22.6	24.7	44.4	24.2	48.0	56.1	30.8	52.5

Source: World Values Survey, fourth and fifth rounds, author's calculations.

poor. It seems then that the antidemocratic influences of political Islam had weakened by 2008 among the poor and disappeared among the middle class. It is probable that this is due to the fact that middle-class individuals were more influenced by moderate parties under the political Islam umbrella, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, while Salafi parties remained more popular among the poor (Masoud 2014).

Conclusion

Much of the analysis above has shown that the class-based versions of both modernization and distribution theories have strong support in the opinion data. Between 2000 and 2008 popular grievances increased, and the aspirations of a more educated population rose simultaneously. This concurrence explains why the middle class, which is at the intersection of both forces, turned out to be the main champion for democratization. In effect, if demand for democracy surged, it was because of the coincidence of large social change in the past decades, together with the rise of inequalities in the recent crony capitalism phase.

This chapter finds that the influence of political Islam operated mainly through its increased moderation over time. The political landscape in 2008 was reconfigured by the dissolution of the large “pro-autocracy” and pro-political Islam majority that prevailed in 2000. Moreover, the reduced adherence to political Islam by the poor and the reduction in the antidemocratic bias among them may have fostered the middle class's shift toward democracy by 2008. However, the distribution of Islamists along “democratic”/“autocratic” and “left”/“right” dimensions is similar to that in the overall population, supporting the argument that, in broad terms, political Islam has facilitated the emergence of grievances and aspirations rather than generating them. Indeed, the mix of aspirations and grievances was contained in several home-bred narratives along the religious/secular and left/right genres that have roots in Egyptian political history, and that were reflected in the

programs of the four “democratic” presidential candidates in 2012, which represented the secular right (Mussa), the secular Nasserist left (Sabahi), the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood right (Morsi), and the Islamist left (Abdel-Fotouh).

It remains to be seen how these attitudes to democracy will evolve after the political chaos created by the uprisings. The more recent 2012 sixth wave of the WVS indicates that the support for political Islam has collapsed. At the same time, support for democracy has also taken a hit, while support for strong rule has risen. Interestingly, though, it appears that the intensity of the support for democracy among the middle class and of the poor may have switched (Ississ and Diwan 2014). This suggests the possibility that the modernization motive that led to the uprisings was readily neutralized by the fear of insecurity and chaos that ensued. On the other hand the uprisings may have led to the political emancipation of the poor, lifting the veil of conservatism among them by demonstrating that street power works. If these new trends are maintained, the political field in Egypt may become over time more focused on distributional issues than in the past.

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NOTES

1. To start, household surveys are notorious for undercounting the rich. There are many indications that the income share of the richest 10 percent in Egyptian society has increased. Further, it is the richest Egyptians who are perceived to have benefited most from a more market-oriented economy, and the top 1 percent are perceived to have benefited most from the rampant crony capitalism of the last decade (Alvaredo and Piketty 2014).

2. More research is needed to understand more clearly the changing welfare of the middle class in this context.

3. In Egypt, for example, real wages in the public sector declined over time. The minimum wage, which anchors all wages, declined from 60 percent of per capita GDP in the early 1980s to a mere 13 percent in 2007 (Abdelhamid and El Baradei 2009). This can also be seen at the macro level: by 2009, 25 percent of the Egyptian labor force worked for the state but earned a total wage of less than 9 percent of GDP, implying that average wages were below GDP per capita, which is extremely low by international standards.

4. Similar processes of moderation through participation (Schwedler 2006) took place in other neighboring countries, notably Egypt, Tunisia, and Turkey (Demiralp 2009, Osman, 1989)

5. Cincotta and Doces (2011) assert that as countries age, they become increasingly inclined toward democracy. Countries with younger populations, the argument would go, face higher risks of political violence and armed conflict (see Urdal [2006] for a summary of this literature), and as a result, citizens of these countries prefer the security of an authoritarian bargain (Gandhi and Przeworski 2006).

6. In this way, the role of political Islam in Egypt's changing political dynamics will be analyzed as both a dependent and an independent variable.

7. From the WVS website, <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp>.

8. This timing is important, as the global financial crisis was associated with a large fall in real wages, and this development might have affected public opinion in several ways (Roushdy and Gadallah 2011). However, the global financial crisis had yet to impact the Middle East at the time that the fifth wave of the WVS was collected.

9. The percentages do not always sum to 100 due to rounding.

10. PfD is generated by ordering of V71 and V72 (all question references are in regard to the fifth wave of the WVS). A respondent who chooses 1 in V71 is taken to prefer autocracy; one who chooses 2 or 4 is categorized as preferring democracy. Question V71 reads: "If you had to choose, which one of the things on this card would you say is most important? (1) Maintaining order in the nation; (2) Giving people more say in important government decisions; (3) Fighting rising prices; (4) Protecting freedom of speech."

11. Preference for Equality (PfE) uses V116: "Now I'd like you to tell me your views on various issues. How would you place your views on this scale? 10 means you agree completely with the statement on the left (*Incomes should be made more equal*); 1 means you agree completely with the statement on the right (*We need larger income differences as incentives for individual effort*); and if your views fall somewhere in between, you can choose any number in between." In the actual survey, the scale is the reverse, but it was inverted to ease the interpretation of the results. Note that the exact level of this indicator depends on how one codes the information. Because opinions are very much clustered around the levels 1–3 in 2000, any score above 3 is taken to indicate a preference for equality.

12. To measure support for political Islam V191 is used. "Generally speaking, do you think that the religious authorities in your country are giving adequate answers *the social problems facing our society?*" (Y/N). "Yes" is coded as a 1; "No" is coded as a zero.

13. For example, the Pew Research Center Global Indicators Database, which measures preferences of "democracy" over "a strong leader," shows that countries such as Russia, Ukraine, and Pakistan have remained at such levels for many years. The Pew Global Indicators Database shows many countries with ratings at similar levels, including Mali, Kenya, Indonesia, Senegal, Turkey, and Peru.

14. While the shift away from an activist state does support a modernization view of the recent transformations in Egyptian society, one needs to recognize that this shift is only partial, as other values, which are typically seen as central to modernity, such as those associated with gender, do not seem to have improved over the period under consideration. Popular views on gender-related issues actually deteriorated. This is possibly due to unemployment. To the question "Is university more important for a boy than for a girl," for example, about 30 percent answered yes in 2000, and

nearly 40 percent in 2008. Marginal progress can be observed among the rich, as expected, but not among the poor and the middle class.

15. This comparison assumes that there is no churning in the data, since the data are repeated cross-sections and not a panel.

16. It has been argued by many that Islam, through the forum of mosques, is able to facilitate mobilization by resolving coordination problems, typically a central constraint in social movements.

Author Query:

AQ:1 Label Added for X and Y-axes for figure 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3