

PREFACE

The idea for this book, “*The Rise of Islamism in Egypt*,” crystalized after the publication of my book “The Mubarak Leadership and the Future of Democracy in Egypt” (Palgrave, New York & London, 2009). Upon its publication, the key political actors in the Mubarak regime were the National Democratic Party (NDP), the neoliberal elite, the military, and political Islam in the form of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). As I had already studied the NDP and neoliberal elites in the aforementioned book, I began learning more about the other two political forces that shaped the key actors of Mubarak regime: MB and the military. But while conducting fieldwork, the 2011 uprising erupted. At the time, I was senior political analyst in the Centre d’Etudes et de Documentation Economiques, Juridiques et Sociales (CEDEJ) (“Centre for Economic, Judicial, and Social Study and Documentation), and I quickly became caught up in the furor. The CEDEJ is just a five-minute walk from Tahrir Square and so I became an eyewitness to many of the incidents shaping the 2011 uprising. The uprising forced me to redraft a new structure for my book as new actors gained relevance, and others, including the National Democratic Party (NDP), ceased to exist. Besides, the MB, represented by its political arm, the Freedom and Development Party (FJP), and the military, represented by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), the three types of political actors, emerged after the downfall of Mubarak. The first is the radical groups and parties represented by the Salafist Call and its political arm, Al-Nour Party, and

the Jihadist Salafism groups and parties. The second is the revolutionary forces and secular forces and parties, and the third is *hizb al-kanba*, or the “couch party,” unaffiliated mainstream Egyptians who helped oust Mubarak. While the power struggle that ensued was between the first three actors, the Islamist camp, the SCAF, and the revolutionary and secular forces, the fourth group, *hizb al-kanba*, determined the result (in both the 2011 and 2013 uprisings). Once *hizb al-kanba* took to the street in great numbers, the army intervened, under the guise of protecting Egypt’s national security, toppling the president in order to bring stability and maintain the status quo.

This book explores the three key political actors and the rise of Islamism in post-Mubarak Egypt. The three players, each with their own political cards and resources, were nowhere near equal in power. The Salafist Call dominated mosques and Salafist satellite television stations, while the revolutionary forces dominated Tahrir Square. *Hizb al-kanba* had the majority of the vote, while the military had the majority of the guns.

Structurally, the book is divided into two interconnected parts: Part I, “Key Actors in Egypt’s Political System” (the MB; Salafist groups; and the military), explores in four chapters the ideological development of political Islam in Egypt and Mubarak’s civil–military relations; Part II, “The Rise of the Islamists,” explores, in three chapters, how the MB and other radical and extremist groups, through their cooperation with the SCAF, dominated the Egyptian political system, including the parliament, drafting a new Islamist constitution, and winning the presidency. The rise of Islamism in Egyptian politics took just one and half years (from February 11, 2011 to June 30, 2012), while they lasted in power for just one year (from June 30, 2012 to June 30, 2013). Their fall from power required just 3 days of constant demonstrations (from June 30, 2013 to July 3, 2013) and several of one million people demonstrating, while Mubarak took 18 days to fall.

The system of transliteration follows generally the format used by the International Journal of Middle East Studies which is adopted here. The well-known proper names are presented as they appear in the English literature or as they have been transliterated by individuals themselves. I also follow the system of transliteration used by local English newspapers, especially al-Ahram Weekly, particularly for names of local areas and local politicians.

The crucial period of writing occurred during 2010–2015, when I was senior political analyst in CEDEJ and Professor of Middle East Studies at *Université Française d'Égypte* (UFE), the French University in Egypt (FUE). I am most grateful to my colleagues in CEDEJ and UFE with whom I discussed my work, especially Marc Lavergne, the respected former director of CEDEJ, Stephen Lacroix, and Patrick Hanenni.

I wish also to thank my former dean and distinguished professor Stephen Chan, at SOAS, London University, for the support and help he provided, and still provides, regarding this work. I wish also to thank my close friend Peter Harling, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria program director for the International Crisis Group (ICG).

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Finally, I wish also to thank my wife, my two daughters, Sara and Logina, and my son Adham for allowing me the time to write this book.

Needless to say, none of the persons named above bear any responsibility for the ideas and opinions expressed in this book or for its shortcomings. For these, I alone am responsible.

Muscat, Oman

Alaa Al-Din Arafat



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Arafat, A.A.-D.

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