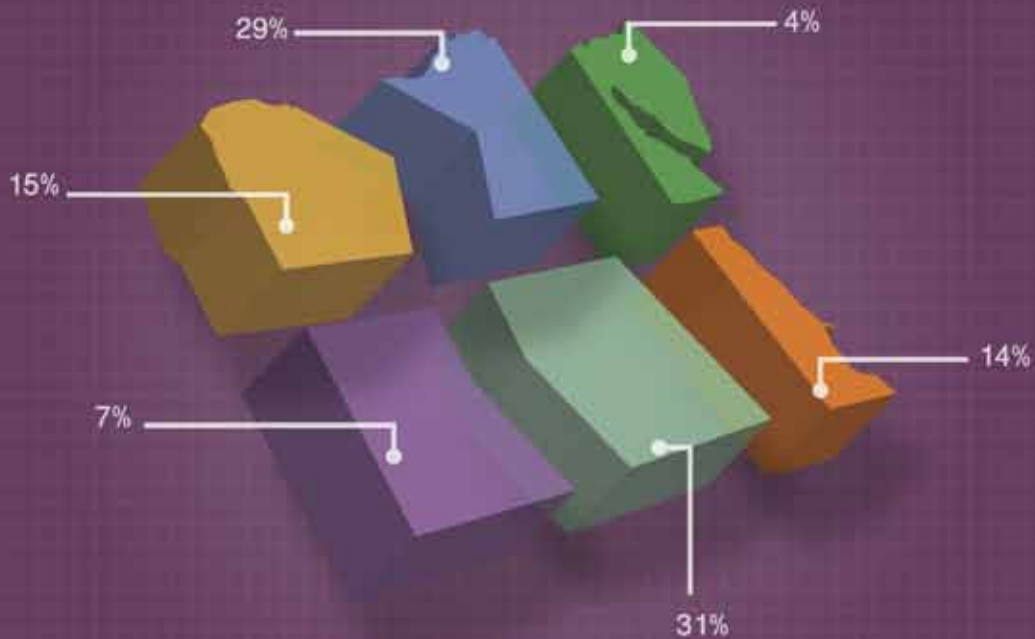


Political Culture in Egypt

The Political Values and Norms of the Voters



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The Political Values and Norms of the Voters

Report

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1 Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of three surveys conducted in 22 governorates across Egypt by the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies between August and October 2011 and additional interviews with key professors and researchers in Egypt.

The report looks into four dimensions of the political values and norms of the Egyptians that all potentially have a strong impact on the workings of the future political system that will be put in place following years of authoritarian rule:

- Political participation
- Political competence
- Political support
- Social capital

The overall conclusion is that the many years of authoritarian rule have left a severe mark on the Egyptians' political values and norms which can have a potential negative impact on workings of a future political system, however there is cause for optimism in the Egyptian's ability and will to influence the political system in informal ways as well as their strong feeling of connection to the Egyptian state.

Following many years where political participation did exist but was not considered to have any effect, the levels of formal political participation, such as joining parties, remain low. 76 % of Egyptians however intend to vote in the upcoming parliamentary election, which will be a record high in Egypt. As formal participation is widely not considered a viable way to influence politics, there are seemingly high levels of informal political participation, witnessed by the massive mobilizations during the revolution in January, which 8 % of Egyptians participated in. The main participants in the protest were young, well-educated, urban, middle class citizens who were overrepresented among the activists, which questions whether informal participation will be able to disperse to other societal groups.

This high level of informal political participation was aided by a greater sense among the activists that they could influence politics more than the average Egyptians. The activists furthermore felt more strongly that the political system was unresponsive to their needs and demands. The combination of these two factors left the activist with protesting as the only option for expressing their frustration and therefore excluded engaging in the formal political process as an option. For the average Egyptian, however, their political competence is low, with a low factual knowledge about the political system, low education levels and low feeling of being able to influence politics.

The frustration and grievances that the activist felt, which was shared by the majority of Egyptians, were highly related to the bad governance of the past regime. This continues to affect the support for the policies of the government, which remains very low. A majority of Egyptians thus feel that government policies have a negative impact on their daily lives, that corruption poses a problem when dealing with officials and that the government treats citizens unequally. This low support also translates into low support for the political actors, especially political parties, unions and civil society organizations, who have failed to act as the guardians of the citizens interest vis a vis the political system.

While the Egyptians are widely distrustful of the political institutions and actors, there is an overall commitment to the state of Egypt, as 99 % are proud to be Egyptian. There is however an identity split as 43 % of Egyptians primarily consider themselves Egyptian, while another 50 % primarily consider themselves as Muslim/Christians. This divide also translates into a division in terms of the values in relation to which political system that should govern Egypt in the future, with an almost even split between a civic and an Islamic state.

The many years of authoritarian rule have also left its mark on the trust between Egyptians. The past regimes have tried to divide social groups to inhibit these from allying against the authoritarian regimes and legitimizing the strong control of interaction between different societal groups. This distrust persists in Egypt today, where the circles of trust do not seem to extend further than the immediate acquaintances such as neighbours and co-workers. Besides from the influence of the past regimes' active policies to create societal division these low levels of trust is also a product of the low levels social interaction in Egypt with low levels of membership in associations and groups, where the few members are primarily drawn from the same social background.

Introduction

On February 11, 2011 the political landscape of Egypt experienced a dramatic change. President Hosni Mubarak stepped down following massive protests in Egypt. From its epicentre in Tahrir Square in Cairo the revolution demanded an end of the authoritarian regime. The protests were an unprecedented mobilization of the Egyptian public that united behind this common goal.

The seeds of the revolution may have been sown by the regime itself. After a decade of poor economic performance in the 1980's, Egypt benefited from Western goodwill following its support for the Iraq war. Egypt received debt relief and the IMF and World Bank offered loans to Egypt conditioned on an increased economic liberalisation of its state-dominated economy.¹ Throughout the 1990's and especially in the 2000's this created a booming upper-middle class and a new breed of Egyptians, who were well-educated and globally connected. A tacit agreement between this middle class and the regime allowed them a share in the wealth generated by the strong economic growth while also providing security through a strong state. In return this middle class offered its support for the Mubarak regime.

This alliance came under a considerable strain during the later part of the 2000's as inflation started to devalue the economic privileges of the middle class. In the end the alliance rested almost entirely on the regime providing security. In June 2010 the situation however changed. While sitting in an internet cafe in Alexandria, a 28 year old middle class named Khalid Said was beaten to death by two police officers, allegedly as retaliation for a video Khalid Said had posted online, showing policemen sharing the spoils of a drug bust.

A case like Khalid Said was nothing new in Egypt, but still this played a major role in creating the roots of the revolution. The case was an eye-opener for the middle class indicating that they were no longer spared from police brutality which otherwise was targeted at the poor lower class and political opponents. The deteriorating security conditions eradicated the last component of the alliance between the regime and the middle class. Furthermore as Khalid Said was an active member of online communities the "We are all Khalid Said" Facebook group soon appeared. Within a month of his death the Facebook group had roughly 500,000 followers.² The Khalid Said event triggered the revolution but several factors enabled it to happen.

Hosni Mubarak had besides from courting relationships with the middle class also sought to pursue strong relationship with the West. In order to get the (economic) support from the West he tried to uphold an image of himself as a democratic leader. In order for this image to gain currency he allowed for certain political freedoms, such as allowing some levels of criticism, ability to protest, etc. Mubarak felt confident that he was able to control this limited opening so it would not threaten his power, while at the same time convincing the West that he was pursuing democracy for Egypt. Mubarak was walking a tight-rope between opening up and keeping control.

This opening caused a growing amount of civil society activities and the formation of several youth movements. Kefaya was a prominent movement that materialised in November 2004 and it was unique in terms of uniting very divergent political orientations and interest. Its call for regime change was furthermore also a unique element.³ While it may not have been very successful it did inspire other groups to form.

One of these groups were the April 6 Movement that formed in the spring of 2008. This group was one of the main actors coordinating the demonstrations during the revolution along with the "We are Khalid Said" Facebook group.⁴ These groups were largely able to fly under the radar of the Mubarak regime and state security. This enabled them to create a strong support and establish a base for mobilization and sphere of influence. Other groups also formed such as the Youth Movement for Justice and Freedom, Workers for Change and March 9 Movement. When these disparate groups started to meet each other, exchange ideas, etc. they realised that they shared much of the same grievances. Furthermore they realised that their potential as individual groups were limited, but if they joined forces they were likely to be able to make a real impact.

This report seeks to explore the political values and norms of the protests and Egyptian society as a whole. What were the demands of the revolution, the values of the activists and youth movement groups and how does this reflect on the general Egyptian society? What form of government is expected to materialize after the current transition period? These questions will be explored in greater detail in the subsequent chapters.

Studies of political values and norms have been around since the 1960's and different studies have different emphasis. Overall four dimensions of political values and norms have emerged as the central study elements. Firstly political participation is an obvious study object since values and norms in relation to participation are very important in inclusive political systems such as democracy.⁵ Secondly the political competence of citizens, both their factual knowledge, but also their feelings about their own abilities and the responsiveness of the political system, is important in non-authoritarian political systems, as this can ensure that decision-making is rational.⁶ Thirdly the values and norms in relation to the desired political system, the political actors and political institutions are important aspects that influence the level of support for the political system as a whole and thereby the stability of the system.⁷ Fourthly the effectiveness of inclusive political systems are influenced by the values and norms in relation to trust in fellow citizens as these political systems entail that people have to act collectively.⁸ This report will on this basis look into the Egyptians political values and norms in relations to (1) political participation, (2) political competence, (3) political support and (4) social capital.

This report is based on three surveys conducted in Egypt between August and October 2011 implemented by Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies each with 2400 respondents across 22 governorates. These surveys have been supplemented by interviews with key Egyptian researchers and professors. The report will be structured as follows:

- Chapter 2: Political participation
- Chapter 3: Political competence
- Chapter 4: Political support
- Chapter 5: Social capital

2 Political participation

Summary:

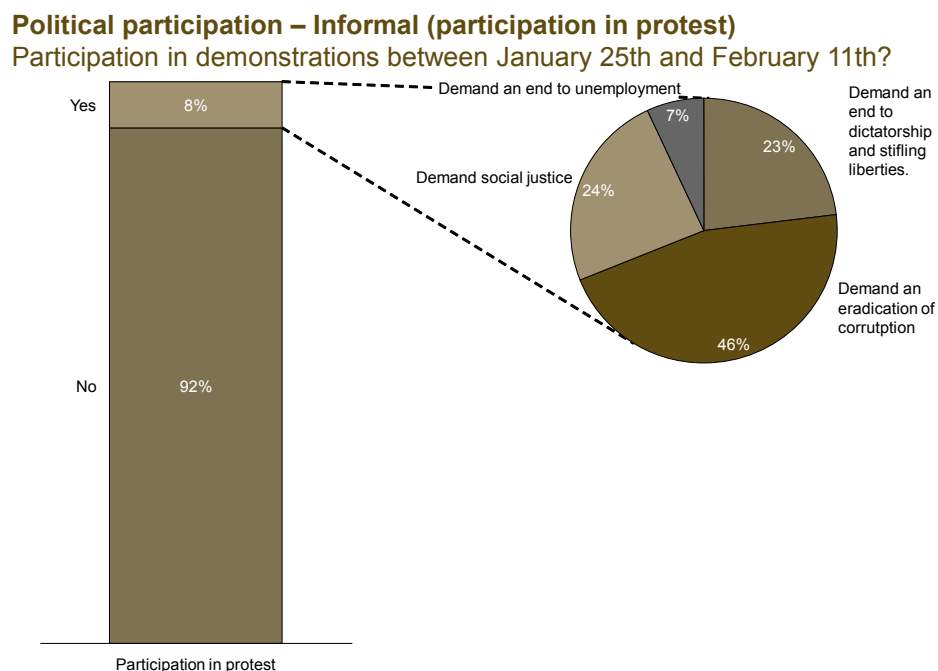
- Many years of authoritarian rule have had a severe negative impact on the intention of the Egyptians to formally participate in politics. This has not changed overnight and the overall levels of formal political participation remains low. A bright spot is that 76 % of Egyptians voted in the latest parliamentary elections which was an historic high
- Another positive participation aspect is the high levels of informal participation as witnessed by the large mobilization during the revolution in January. A political participation that was, however, dominated by young, well-educated, urban, middle class citizens.

An important aspect in any non-authoritarian political system is the levels of participation as a minimum level of participation, such as voting in elections, is necessary to enable the political system to be responsive to the interest of the public. Theoretically it is possible to divide political participation in two broad categories: (1) formal participation which is political participation within the formal rules of the political system, such as voting, joining parties, demonstrating, etc. and (2) informal participation which is outside the formal rules of the political system, such as illegal protests, boycotting products, etc.

2.1 Informal political participation

Informal politics is often in opposition to the existing political system and essentially an activity with the aim of politicising certain issues and get the political system to respond to the issues of concern to the protesters. In January 2011 Egypt experienced an unprecedented public mobilization with protest that brought millions of Egyptians to the street. As street demonstrations were largely prohibited by the emergency law, which had been in place in Egypt since the Six-Day War in 1967, this was an example of informal political participation. The aim was to politicise issues such as social justice and corruption and to get the political system to come up with solutions and commit to combating these issues. Corruption has long been a major problem in Egyptian society and Egypt was in 2010 ranked as 98 in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index.

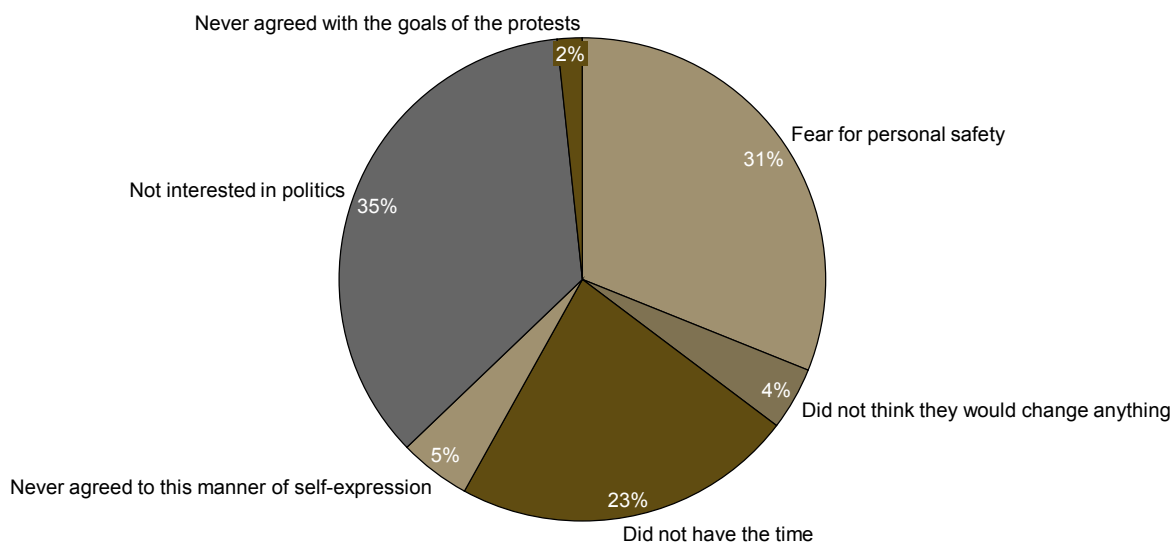
Figure 1: Participation in demonstration



As evident 8% of Egyptians took part in the demonstrations that brought down Mubarak’s regime, which must be characterised as a high level of participation, as the participants faced great risks, such as torture, jail and death, as a result of participating. The aim of the revolution was, as mentioned above, an eradication of corruption, social justice and end to dictatorship. A striking thing is that democracy is absent as a demand of the activists even though many news outlets, commentators, etc. has referred to the demonstrations as “Egypt’s democratic movement”.⁹ One obvious reason why democracy, at least to start out with, was not the overall goal, was that when the activist went to the streets on 25th January the purpose was not to remove the regime. They demanded reform and end of corruption. When the regime refused to answer the activists’ demands, it left the activist with no other choice than to demand the removal of the regime if it were to reach it goals of social justice, end to corruption, etc. This indicates that the main purpose of the revolution was not political objectives, but largely economic objectives. As will be shown later, another reason that democracy was not put forward as the main goal, was that the activists greatly differed on the type of democracy. The activists had widely different political agendas and thus the only thing uniting these different groups where the discontent with corruption and social justice. Had the revolution been based on demands for democracy, the unity of the different activists groups would have been diminished and the large mobilization made difficult.

Figure 2: Non-participants

Political participation – Informal (participation in protest)
Motivation for non-participation



While participation in illegal demonstrations does imply high level of personal insecurity, as witnessed by the roughly 1,000 people killed during the revolution, only 1/3 of non-participants indicate this as their reason for not participating. A clear majority of non-participants can be categorised as political apathetic, as they indicated lack of time or interest as the main reason for not participating. This obviously raises concerns for the future levels of participation in Egypt, which is important for a well-functioning governing system.

This shows that political participation in Egypt is largely confined to a small segment of the population. This was the segment that went to the streets and protested. This group can be characterised as

"...a new breed of people we have in Egyptian society. The middle class, well-educated and globally connected people."¹⁰

Looking at socio-demographic variables it is possible to create a clearer picture of this “new breed” of Egyptians.

Table 1: Socio-demographics of the activists

Socio-demographic variable	Activists
Age	52 % of activists were between 18-30 years old, while this age category is only 40 % in the general population. Especially 50+ age groups are underrepresented.
Social class	17 % participation rate in upper-middle class as compared to the overall participation rate of 8 %. Upper class and lower class were both underrepresented.
Urban/rural	55 % of activist lived in urban areas, as compared to the average of 43 % in the general population.

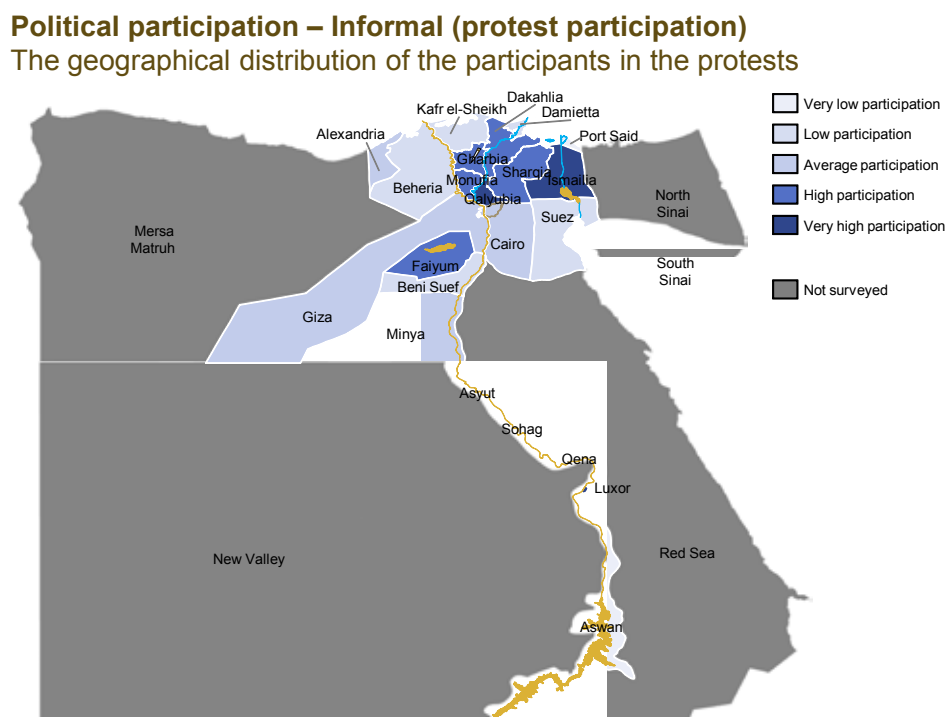
As shown the majority of this group of political activists are found in the age group of 18-30 years old, which is also why the revolution is often referred to as a youth revolution. These young people were discontent with growing up with a political system largely dominated by elderly politicians, who were unresponsive to the interests of the youth, such as securing employment.

The protesters were furthermore mainly drawn from the urban areas of Egypt in comparison to the rural areas. This may not be surprising as the major protests were largely confined to the urban areas and large cities such as Cairo and Alexandria.

As shown above a majority of the activist were middle class citizens, with especially the upper middle class being overrepresented compared to its size in Egypt. This supports that the “new breed” of Egyptians were largely developed in the middle class, which after losing its tacit security arrangement with the regime, took to the streets to demand reform and change.

There were also considerable regional differences in the protest participation rates.

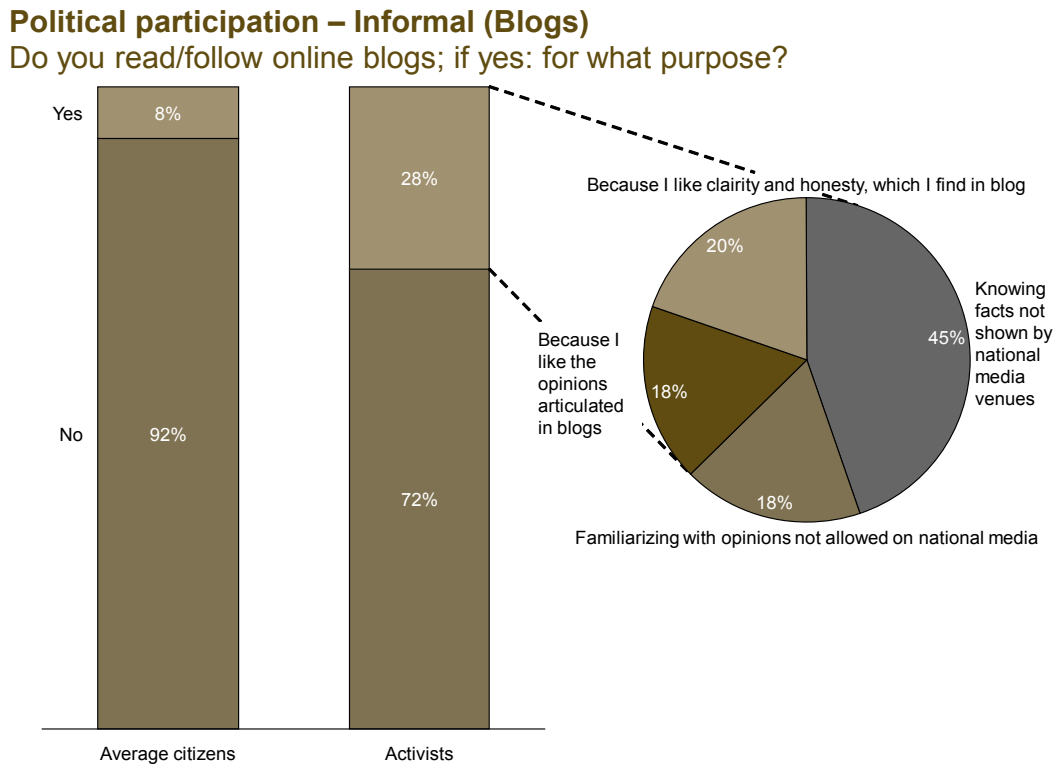
Figure 3: Geographical distribution



As evident there were also considerable regional differences in the distribution of the protesters. In the southern governorates of Aswan, Asyut, Qena and Sohag there were very low levels of participation, while in Ismailia and the surrounding governorates the participation rates were high. In Ismailia almost 1 out of 5 citizens participated. This urbanization of the protest may explain why Luxor appears as an outlier in the southern governorates with a 12% participation rate. Roughly 50% of Luxor governorate's population lives in urban areas, while for the other southern governorates (except Aswan) the urban population is less than 25% .

Meanwhile these groups of young people were globally connected, which meant that they had easy access to information from the outside and knowledge about the living conditions of the youth in other countries.

Figure 4: Reading online blogs



As evident the activist had, compared to the general population, a more frequent use of the internet as a source of information. Furthermore this also shows that the users of blogs are very critical citizens, who look to have different sources of information to get a more accurate picture of reality.

Broadly speaking, the use of blogs and internet in Egypt is limited as internet is not widely accessible in the Egyptian population. The more frequent use of internet as a source of information is thus also an indicator that the activists where from the upper social layers of Egyptian society.

High levels of protest participation seems largely confined to this group of Egyptians, who are mainly recruited from the urbanized middle class and the majority of Egyptians do not informally participate in politics. This may be explained by the many years of authoritarian rule that largely illegalised protest participation and essentially made it a costly activity. Following the revolution informal participation has largely become a cost-free activity, but it will take time to change the norms and values that are deeply rooted in the larger majority of the population. The Egyptians at-large seem to be very involved in local issues and able to mobilize participation at the local level. Here they have created a space of local informal political participation, for example by participating in activities to alleviate poverty. If this participation is capable of feeding into larger informal participation on national issues it has the potential to generate high levels of informal political participation.

2.2 Formal political participation

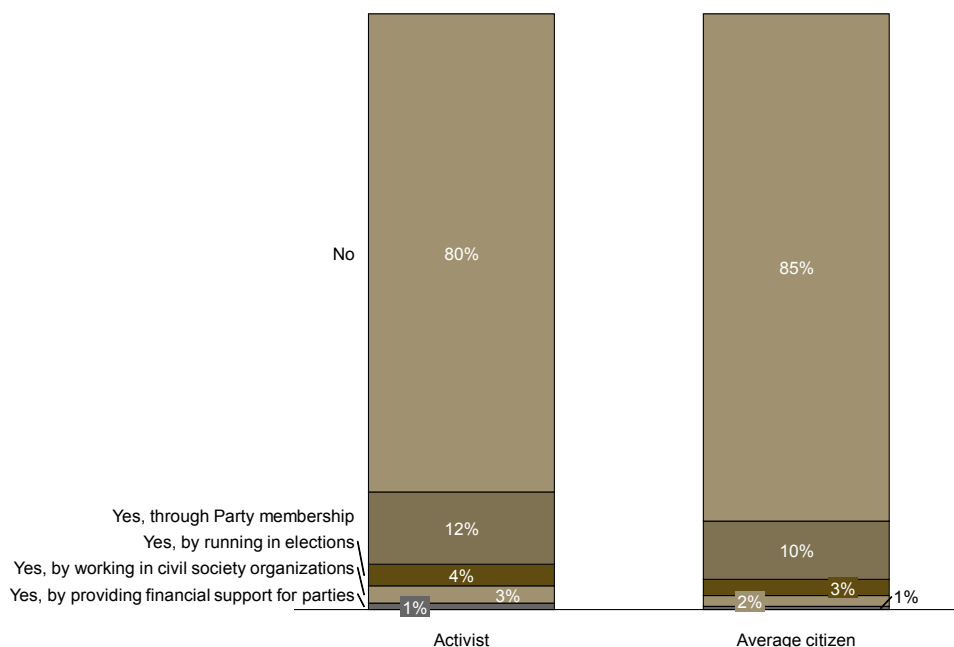
While informal political participation, during the many years of emergency law and authoritarian rule, was largely illegal some forms of political participation venues existed, such as presidential and parliamentary elections. These have been held, but have to a large extent been confined to one presidential candidate and one political party. In 2005 Egypt held its first presidential election with multiple candidates. This lack of free and fair elections have meant that voting participation rates traditionally have been low and that the actors in the political system have largely been looked at with suspicion.

With the end of the authoritarian regime there have been high hopes that the levels of formal participation would grow in Egypt. In the referendum in March 2011 on the constitutional amendments the participation rate reached 41%, which was a historic high for Egypt.

Another development that many commentators hoped for was that the high mobilization during the revolution could translate into high levels of formal participation. The hopes were that the many activists who took part in the protest would join some of the existing parties or create new parties. Many new parties have indeed formed in the wake of Mubarak's departure. Furthermore the power of the protesters to bring down the regime might also work to show ordinary Egyptians that political participation indeed can bring about a positive change.

Figure 5: Party engagement

Political participation – Formal (intention of engaging in politics) Do you see yourself engaging in politics in the coming period?

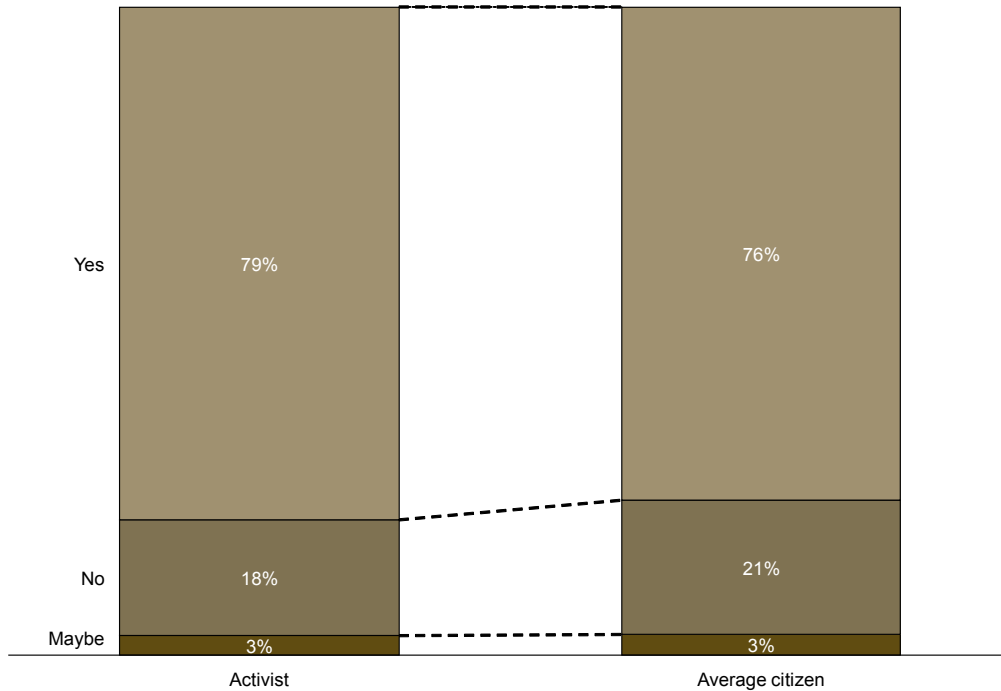


Indeed the activist does not seem to have a significantly higher propensity to join the formal political process and the overall levels seem to be low with 85% of Egyptians saying they will not be engaging in politics in the coming period. That the political activist does not have a significantly higher intention of joining the formal political process may be a testament to its oppositional identity vis-à-vis the formal political system. Many of these groups and activists may prefer staying on the sideline and thereby not having to compromise with their ideals and goals, which participation in a formal political process might necessitate. Furthermore this is also a testimony to the fact that the Egyptians in general, and the activists in particular feel that the political system is unresponsive to the needs of the citizens, as will be evident in chapter 3. The activist may feel that they are likely to enhance their ability to influence politics if they stay outside the formal political system.

These results may also indicate a deep felt suspicion of the political system, which for many years has been associated with high levels of corruption and clientelism.

Figure 6: Voting intention

Political participation – Formal (intention of voting)
 Do you intend to vote in the upcoming People’s Assembly elections?



While the referendum in March brought 41% of eligible Egyptian voters to the voting booth, the parliamentary elections in the end of November 2011, are looking to set a new high in terms of participation. 76% of Egyptians thus intend to vote in the election. This number will probably decrease on the actual election day, but will likely still remain above 50%.

These numbers are reasonably high in light of Egypt’s political history. As voters are inexperienced with regards to a representative political system, it is reasonable to expect growing electoral participation in the future after people gain experience with a representative government.

While the revolution did witness a high level of political mobilization in Egypt it was largely confined to a well-educated middle class. Even though the revolution created new opportunities for political participation – both formal and informal – it has yet to materialize. Voting intention is likely to be high, but direct involvement in politics is likely to remain low.

This gives reason for concern of political system will be able to be responsive to the interest of the voters. If participation is largely a middle class activity this can have detrimental effects on the lower class, whose interest might not be represented.

3 Political competence

Summary:

- The Egyptians generally have low factual political knowledge and the overall levels of education is not very high with especially illiteracy posing a serious issues for the voters abilities.
- The Egyptians generally do not feel that they are politically competent and able to influence politics and neither feel that the political system is responsive to their needs.
- The combination of higher levels of feeling able to influence politics combined with a lower level of feeling that the political system would respond to their demands, was probably a key reason why the activist vended their frustration through protest and not by engaging in the formal political process.

As the Egyptians were heading to the voting booth this November an important aspect was their ability to make the optimal choice in relation to their interest. If citizens are not politically competent an electoral process risks ending up with a sub-optimal result, as voters interest may not be represented correctly.

A representative government thus puts higher demands on citizens, as their involvement in the electoral process necessitates that they have a basis on which to evaluate their options. In the Egyptian context this has been hard for the voters for four reasons:

1. The many years of authoritarian rule have meant that citizens are not used to being heard and thus has not before been asked to evaluate which political party/group that best serves their interest.
2. Following the revolution a host of new parties appeared in Egypt. These have subsequently also created different coalitions, which again has fallen apart, such as Democratic Alliance for Egypt consisting mainly of the Wafd and Freedom and Justice Party. This overcrowded and constantly changing political landscape makes it difficult for the voters to assert which party that best serves their interest.
3. Many of the parties have yet to develop a political platform and the parties have yet to offer any solutions to the problems facing Egypt. This leaves the voters without any ability to assert, which party will put in place policies that best serves the voter's interest.
4. The electoral system in Egypt favours large parties as it is based on proportional representation within the electoral constituencies and not on a national level. This means that the Egyptian voters have to take into consideration not only which party best serve their interest, but also the likelihood of that party to actually win a seat in parliament.

Political competence can be measured by looking at objective elements such as the factual political knowledge and the education levels citizens have. Another important aspect is whether people think they can influence politics and that the political system is responsive to their needs.

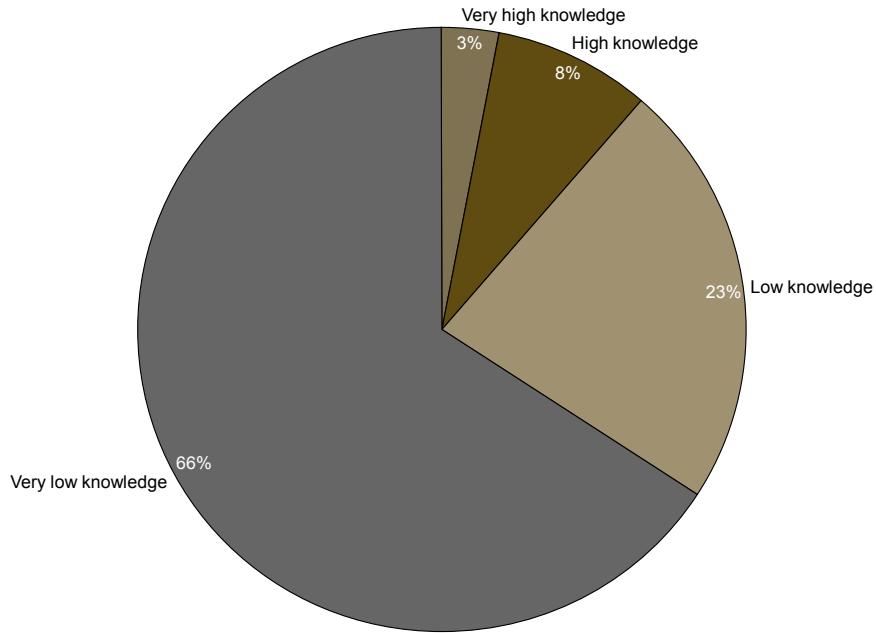
3.1 Factual knowledge and education levels

The objective knowledge and analytical capacity of the Egyptians are, as mentioned, an important aspect in securing a rational electoral process.

Figure 7: Factual knowledge

Political competence – Knowledge

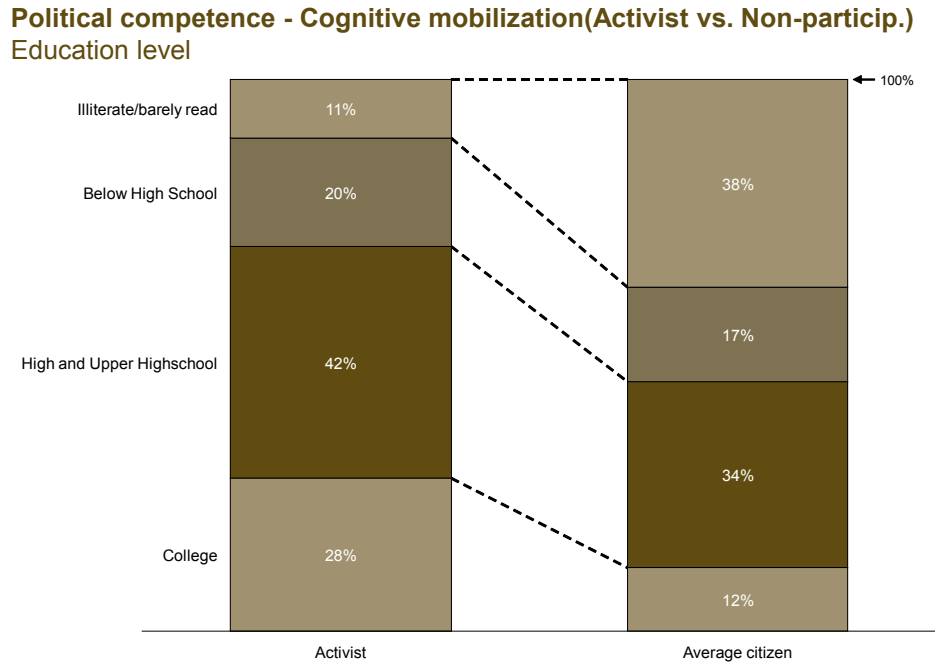
Ability to name governor, Prime minister, foreign minister & interior minister



As evident only 3% of Egyptians were able to name their local governor, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Interior. 66% of Egyptians were able only to name 1 or zero of these. Not being able to name the most central politicians is posing an obvious problem, as this can be seen as an indicator of a general lack of interest in politics. If a large majority of Egyptians are not able to name public figures, it is also doubtful that they are able to assert the political programs and platforms of the different parties.

This lack of factual knowledge is clearly connected to the general levels of education in Egypt.

Figure 8: Political Competence – Education Level



As evident the general level of education in Egypt is low, with 38 % of Egyptians being either illiterate or barely able to read, which poses a serious problem. This creates practical problems such as reading electoral lists, which is why the candidates in Egypt also use symbols in the electoral lists. Furthermore it creates problems as illiterates are not able to read political programs, political material, newspapers, etc. This lack of ability to evaluate ones political choices will likely lead many illiterates to be disillusioned with the electoral process which might lead to low participation rates by this particular group.

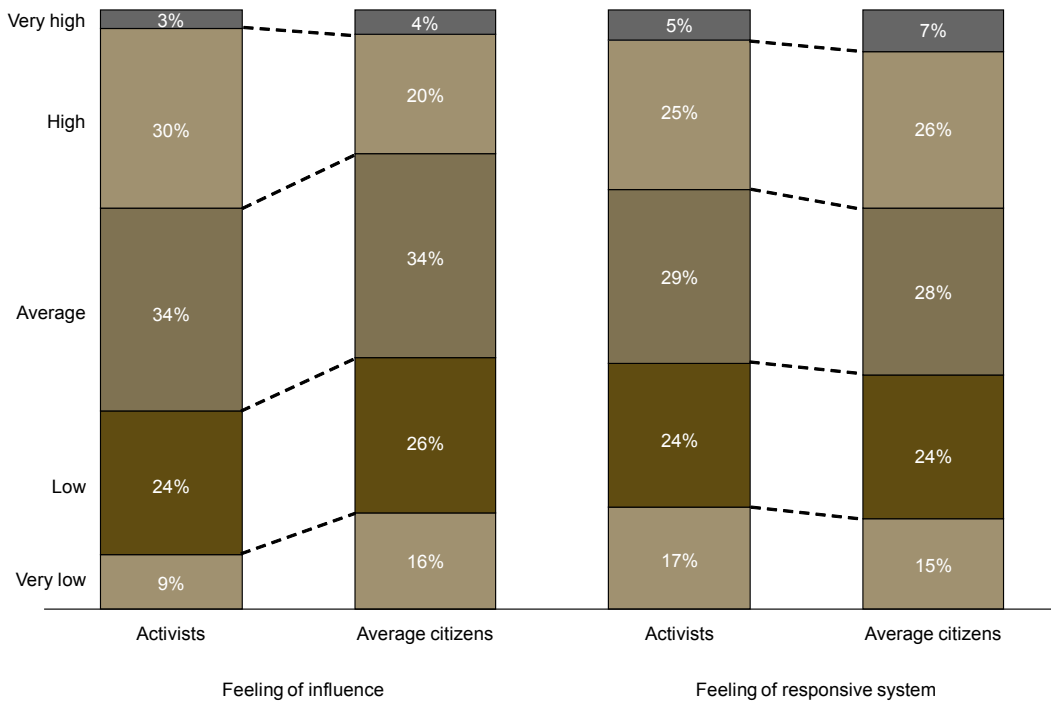
Again the activists clearly have a better background for evaluating their political preferences, which may lead them and people with similar socio-economic background to dominate the elections.

3.2 Feeling of political competence

This is an important component in political competence as citizens' may have high factual knowledge and high education, but if they do not feel competent, they are not likely to put their competences to good use. The feeling of political competence can be divided into two components: (1) whether citizens feel that they are capable of understanding and influencing politics and (2) whether citizens feel that the political system is responsive to their demands.

Figure 9: Feeling of political competence

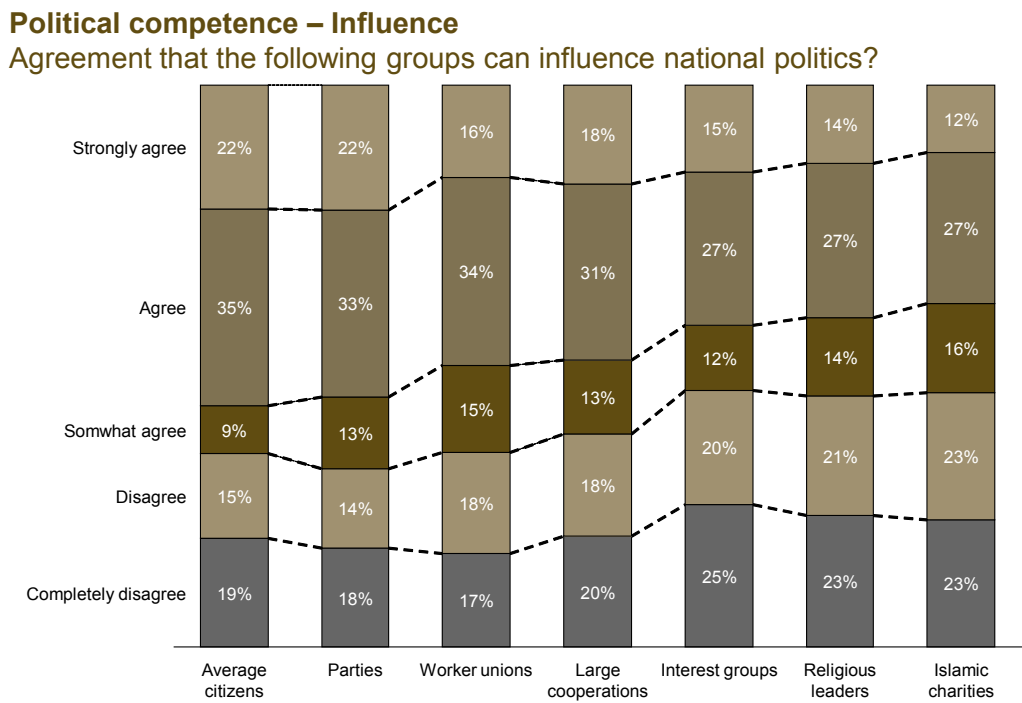
Political competence – Subjective (Activist vs. Average citizens)
 Feeling of ability to influence politics & feeling of responsive political system



As evident a majority of Egyptians exhibit low levels of both feeling they are able to influence politics and feeling that the political system is responsive to their needs. The low levels of feeling able to understand and influence politics confirm the picture of the objective measures of political competence: Egyptians are not very political knowledgeable and do not think they are. More interestingly the level of feeling that the political system is responsive is higher than one would expect from many years of authoritarian rule, which is characterized by its lack of responsiveness to citizens’ demands.

What is most striking is that the activists have lower levels of feeling the political system is responsive, but a greater feeling that they are able to influence politics than the average Egyptian. This may be another key explanation why the revolution materialised in the first place. The activist had important grievances concerning corruption, social justice, etc. but did not feel that by engaging the political system their grievances would be taken into account. However they did feel that they had the power to influence politics, which let them not to give up on addressing their grievances. With a feeling that the political system would not respond through engagement the only option available for activist were protest politics. This combination of a greater feeling of ability to influence politics and lower levels of feeling the political system is responsive has produced the high levels of informal political participation and low levels of formal political participation as witnessed earlier.

Figure 10: Actors influence



The negative impact of the low levels of feeling able to influence politics in the Egyptian population could be somewhat offset if the Egyptians felt that they could influence politics by proxy, such as through unions, parties, co-operations, etc. However, the above graph shows that most people perceive the average citizen to be the most influential actor in politics.

This suggests that Egyptians are not very likely to try to influence politics by proxy, which as noticed earlier, may be one of the explanations for the low membership in political parties. This also confirms the view that the political system is viewed as highly unresponsive.

Given that the Egyptians are not likely to act by proxy, and a majority exhibit low level of both internal and external efficacy, the subjective political competence of the Egyptian society is lacking.

4 Political support

Summary:

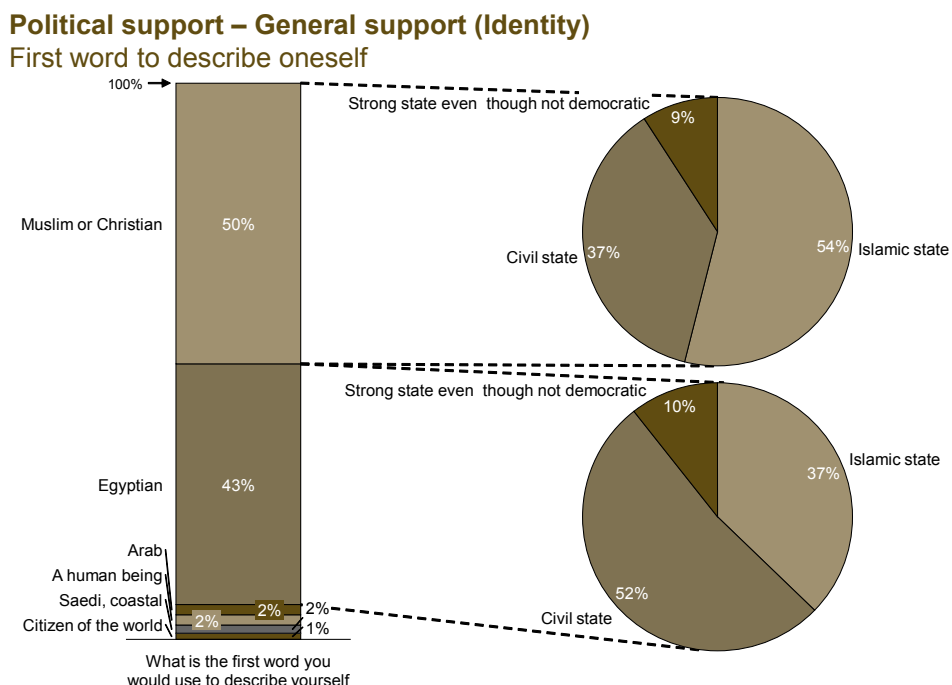
- There is a strong support for the overall political entity of Egypt, as 99% of Egyptians are proud to be Egyptians. They are however divided in terms of identity between a religious and national identity, which also affects their political values which is divided between an Islamic and civic state.
- The bad governance of the past 40 years has left Egyptians highly unsupportive of most political actors and institutions, with only the SCAF, the courts and Islamic charities commanding a majority in terms of confidence from the citizens.
- Furthermore the feeling that Egypt is plagued by bad governance is still persisting with most people believing government policies have a negative impact on their daily lives, corruption posing a problem when dealing with public officials and that the government treats citizens unequally.

This dimension evaluates the Egyptians' values and norms in relation to the political system. This section thus looks into Egyptians' view on the legitimacy of the political system and actors therein. Legitimacy is for any political system and actor, essential for its ability to work properly and effectively. The fall of the Mubarak regime is one example of the detrimental effects a lack of political support and legitimacy can have for a political system. Political support is related to the overall and specific support for the nation, the political system, political actors, political institutions and political policies.

As evidenced earlier the main reasons for participating in the revolution was grievances related to social justice, corruption and unemployment. This suggests that there was very low support for the specific outputs and policies of the Mubarak regime. Another 23% mention ending dictatorship as a main reason for participation. This can be interpreted as a low level of general support for the political system as a whole.

99% of Egyptians are proud to be Egyptians, which is an important level of support for the overall integrity of the state. However there seems to be an identity divide in Egypt between a religious identity and national identity of roughly equal size.

Figure 11: Identity divide



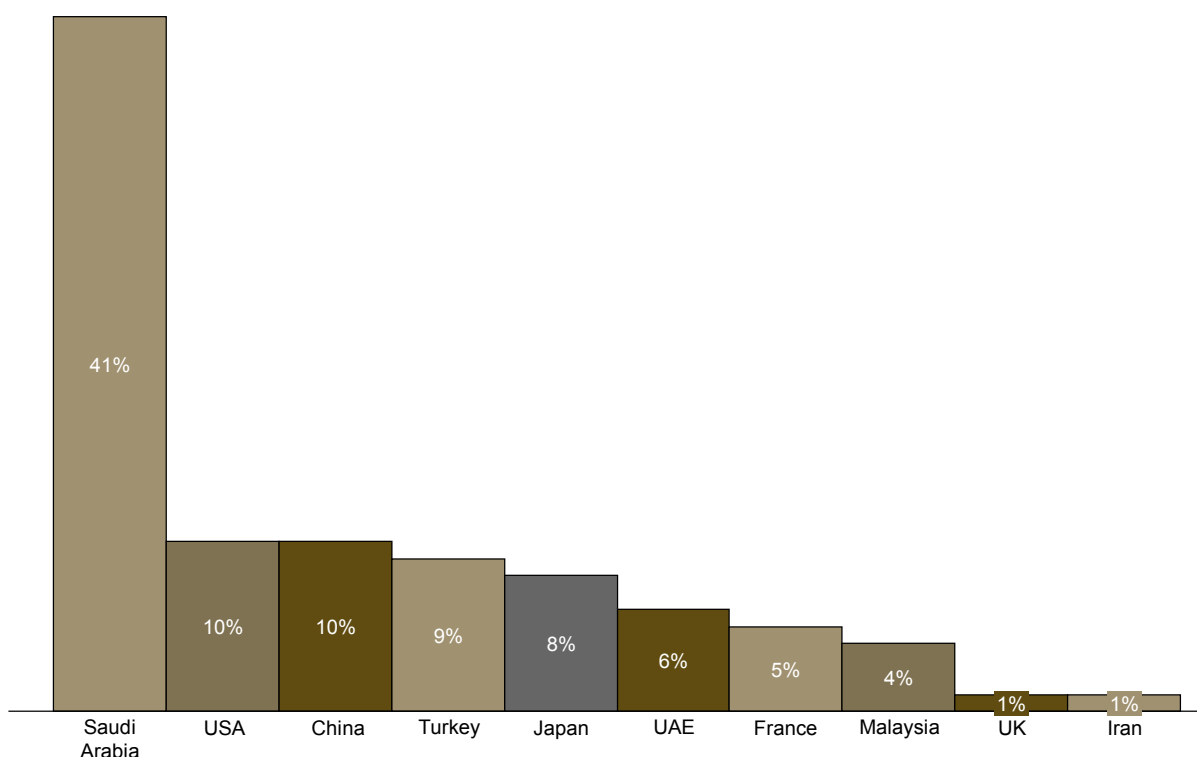
As evident this divide also influences the political values as the citizens with a civic-national identity prefer a civil state, while the citizens with a religious identity prefer an Islamic state. As evident there is no agreement in Egyptian society over which state model should govern Egypt. This divide is just as pronounced among the activists, who are exactly as divided on this issue as the general population. This is further evidence that supports the assertion that the revolution was not mainly a political revolution. The activist did not promote a new political project, as there was no agreement on what that project should be.

This sharp divide over which political system should govern Egypt can have a very destabilizing effect as this can result in more or less 50% lacking general support for the political system, whichever system will be implemented.

That Islamic values play a key role in relation to political preferences is also evident by the fact that a clear majority of Egyptians prefer Saudi Arabia as a country Egypt should follow.

Figure 12: Saudi Arabia preferred model country

Political support – Overall support (state model)
Which country should Egypt consider a model?



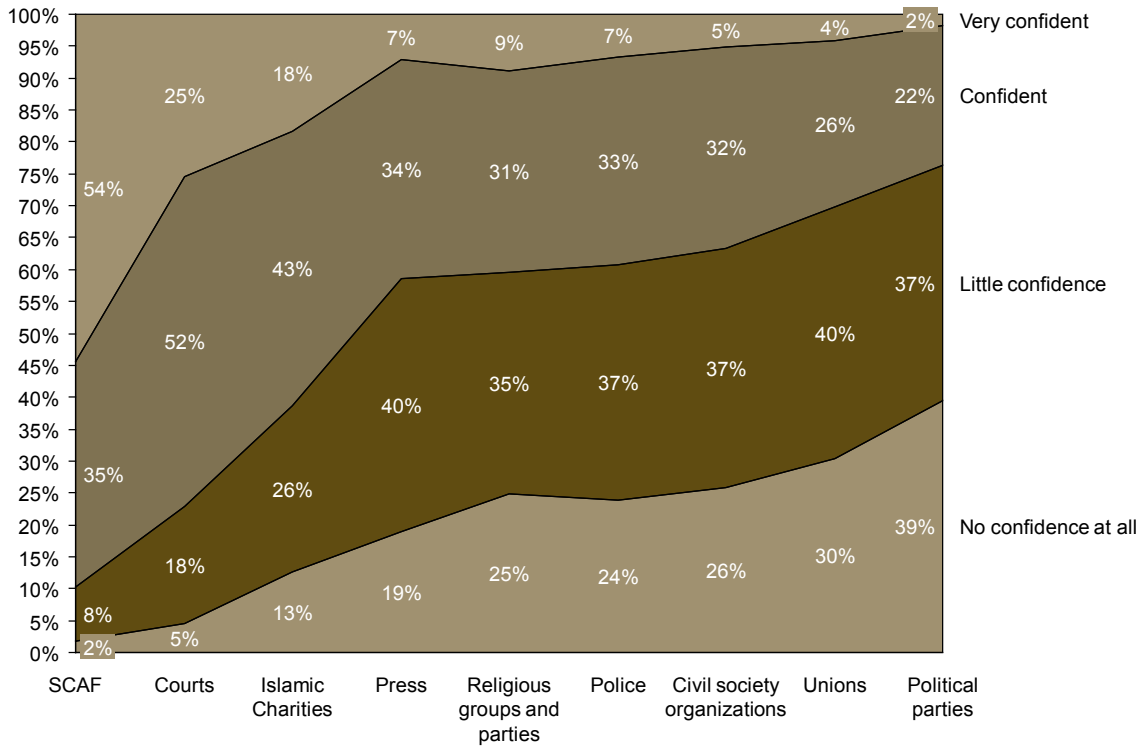
The third survey showed that the positive feelings towards Saudi Arabia were mainly due to the perception that it was a model Islamic country, as 73% stated this reason for their positive feelings. A minor group of 16% pointed to Saudi Arabia’s strong economic performance.

The high levels of national pride should create an incitement for citizens to work towards bridging this divide and create a durable solution for the overall entity: Egypt. Coming up with a compromise between these two positions is essential for the future stability of Egypt as neither of these two identities or value sets are likely to disappear or significantly diminish in the foreseeable future.

While there is disagreement about the overall values in relation to the political system, there is a general feeling of lack of support for most civic-democratic institutions and actors.

Figure 13: Support for political actors and institutions

Political support – Overall support (political actors and institutions)
Confidence in different actors and institutions



As evident from the above figure few institutions and actors have a majority of the citizens’ confidence and support. Especially civic political actors and institutions such as political parties, unions and civil society organizations have relatively low support compared to its religious counterparts in the form of Islamic charities and religious groups and parties. This is likely linked to the fact that Egyptians feel that the government is unresponsive to their demands and the actors and institutions that could secure the demands of the people have failed to fulfil that role. Furthermore this low level of support is also connected to the views that bad governance is a major issue in Egypt – an issue which these actors have played a role in creating.

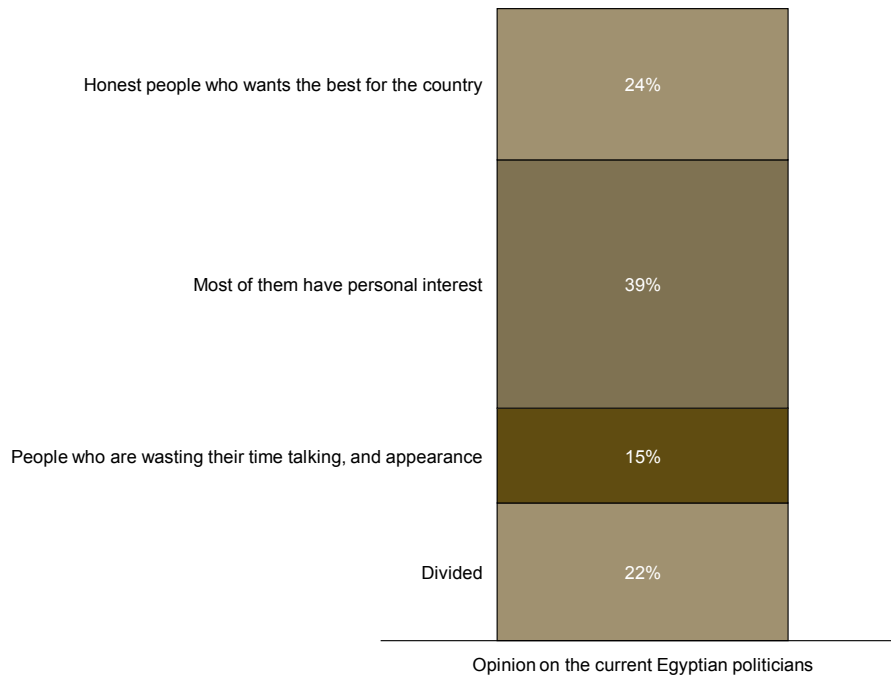
These results are from the second survey conducted in September, which does give some uncertainty in terms of the current levels of support, especially in relation to the SCAF. It should however be noted that following the Maspairo event the support for the SCAF only fell slightly, even though the military was badly criticized for their handling of this event. □

There is a high general level of support for politicians in Egypt with 88 % believing that society needs them. This is very high considering that there is a very low level of specific support for the current politicians.

Figure 14: View on current politicians

Political support – Specific support (parties and politicians)

Opinion on the current Egyptian politicians and the role of parties



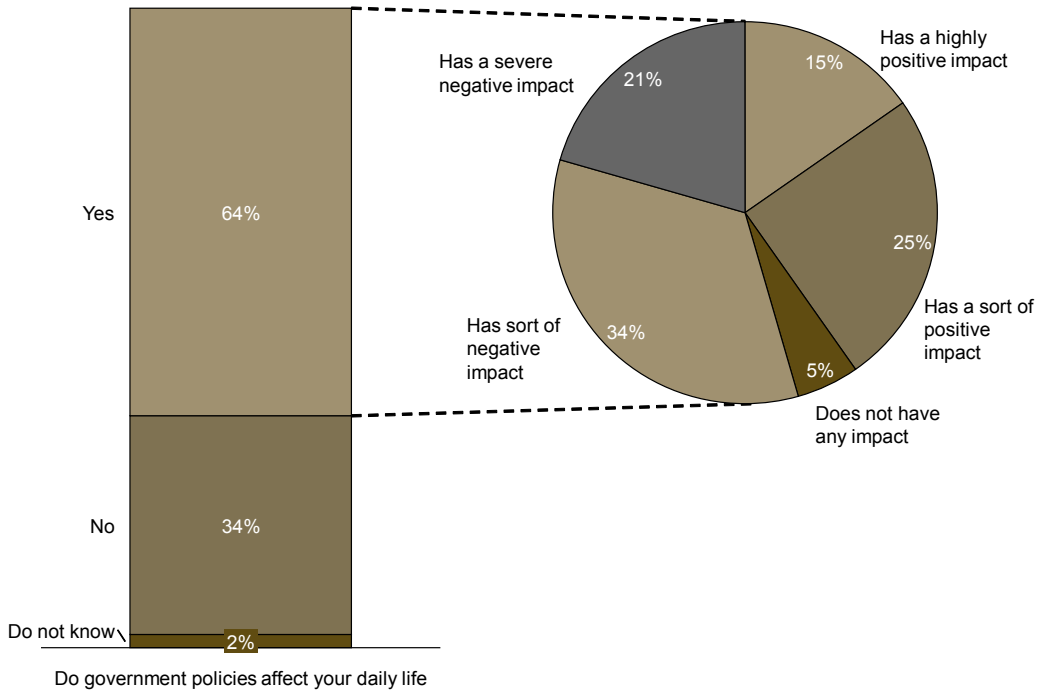
Most Egyptians believe that the current politicians only serve their own interest and only 24 % believe they are honest people.

The most pressing issue in Egypt in relation to the levels of political support remain the very low level of support for the governance in Egypt. This is obviously connected to the feeling that the political system is unresponsive to the demands of the citizens. Furthermore this low level of support for the governance of Egypt was also evident in the reasons given by the activists as to why they participated in the revolution. There feeling of bad governance is widely shared by Egyptians.

Figure 15: Impact of government policies

Political support – Specific support (government policies)

Do government policies affect your daily life; if yes: what sort of impact?

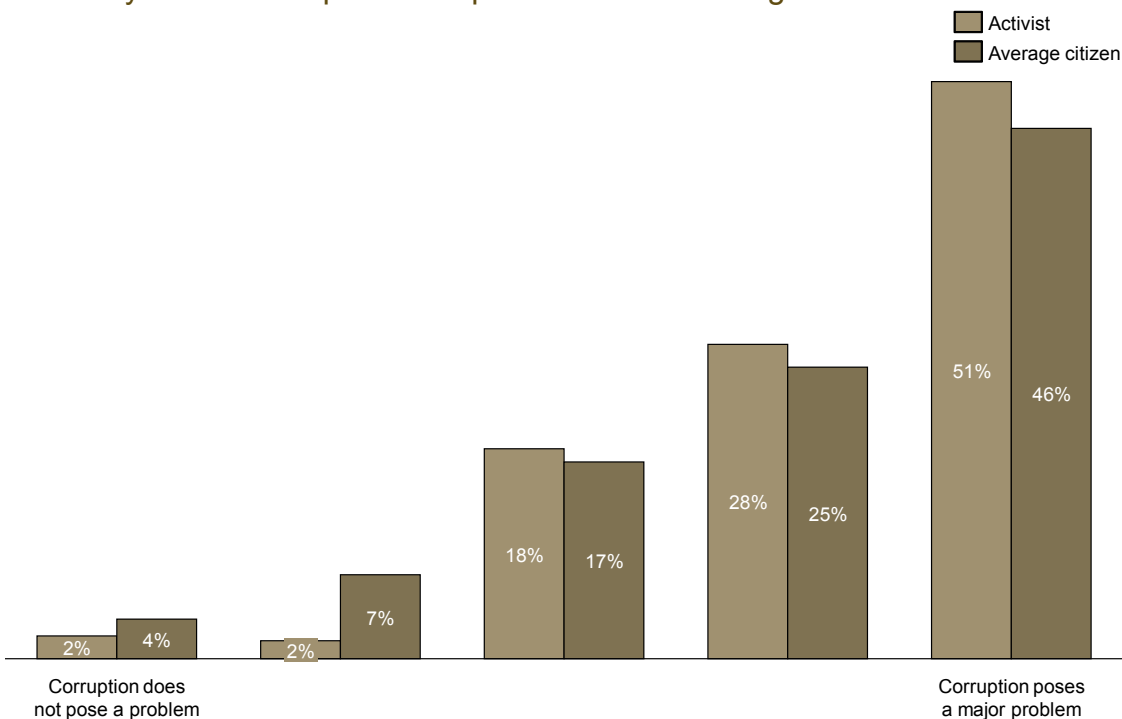


Out of the 64% of Egyptians who claim that government policies have an impact, 55% believe it is negative. This obviously poses a great legitimacy problem for the political system and actors as a majority of the population believe they are essentially doing a bad job. Some of the reason for the lack of specific support for the political system can be explained by the fact that Egyptians believe that corruption poses a considerable problem among public officials.

Figure 16: Corruption

Political support – Specific support (Corruption)

How do you rate corruption as a problem when dealing with officials?

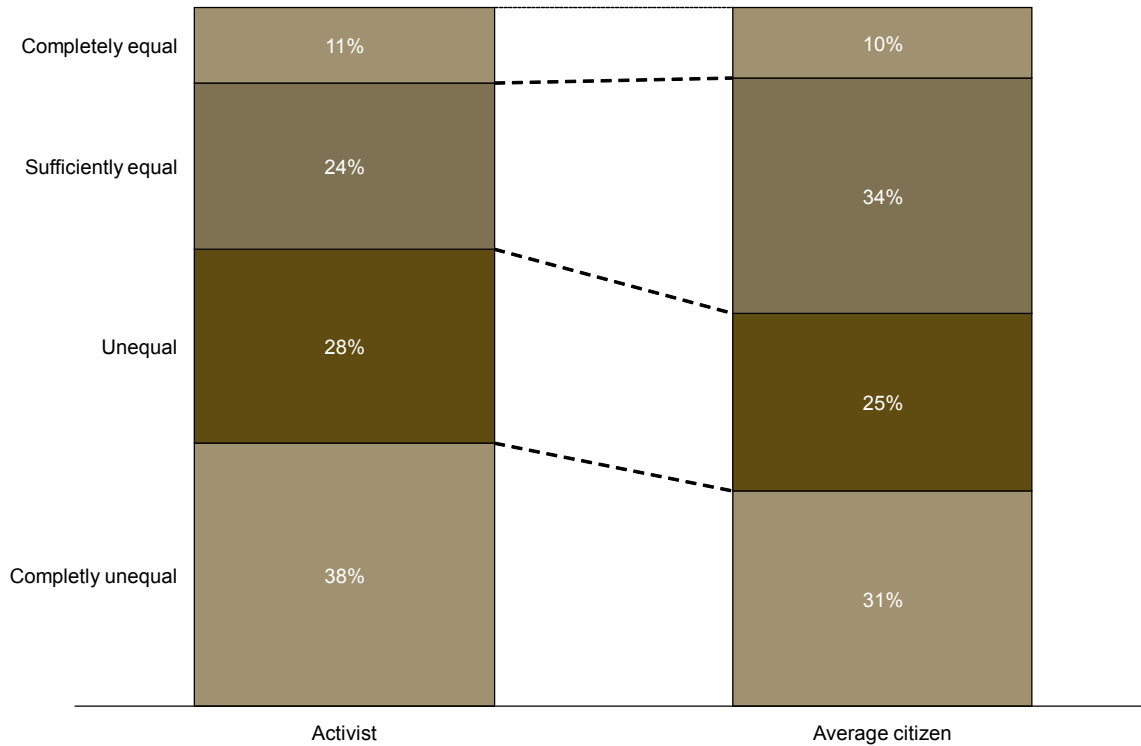


71% of Egyptians say they feel that corruption poses a problem when dealing with public officials. This obviously lowers the specific support and legitimacy of the political system. Corruption can furthermore lead to unequal treatment by the political system, which the Egyptians also believe is an issue.

Figure 17: Unequal treatment

Political support – Specific support (government treatment of citizens)

Do you believe that the government treats everyone...



As evident 56% of Egyptians believe that the government does not treat everyone equally.

Both of these figures furthermore show that the activist have a lower specific support than the average citizen. The activists are largely more concerned with unequal treatment of citizens and corruption.

5 Social capital

Summary:

- The many years of authoritarian rule have left its mark on the inter-personal trust in Egypt with the former regime pursuing a strategy of divide-and-rule. This has resulted in the circles of trust not extending further than ones immediate acquaintances such as neighbours and co-workers.
- The low social trust is furthermore a product of the low levels of social interaction in associations and groups, where the few members are primarily drawn from the same social background.

Social capital is the societal interaction and trust that helps enable citizens to act together. It is the “grease” in the “wheel” of acting collectively. If people trust and know each other they are likely to be more willing to act together. Through interaction and trust they realise the shared interest with other citizens.

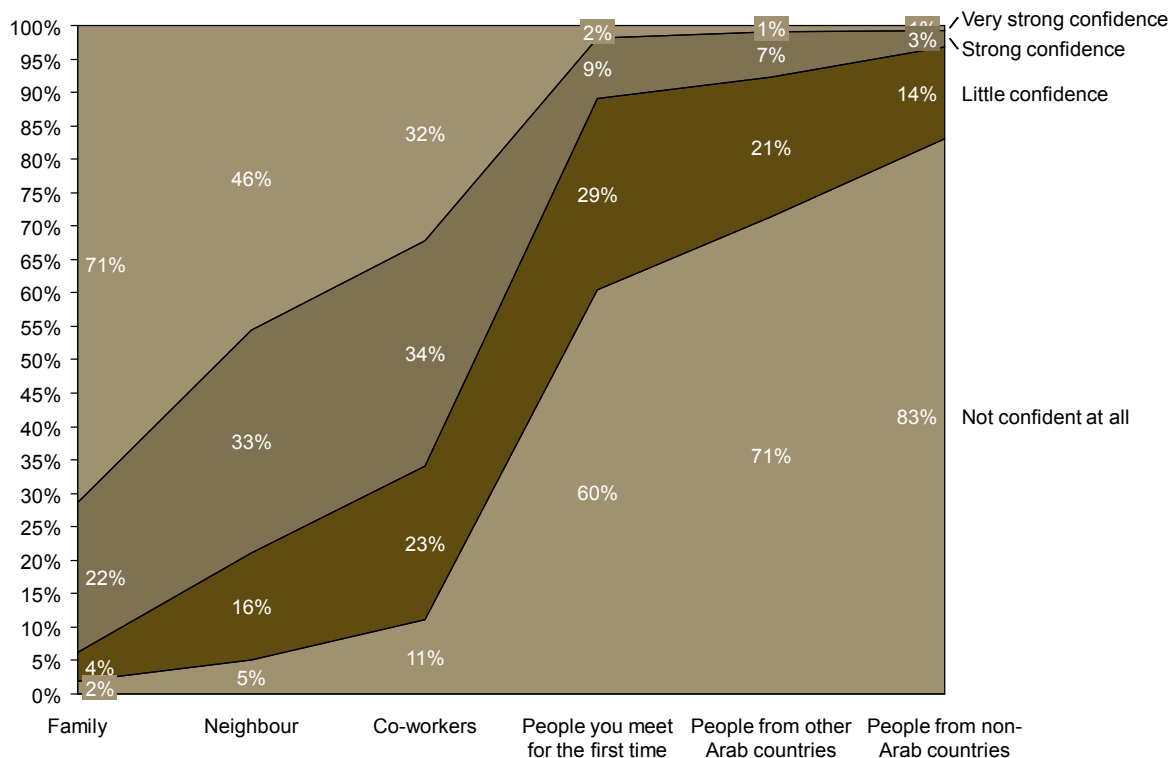
It is however important that trust and interaction cut across different social segments. If trust and interaction are leading back to trust and interaction confined to other members of the same social group this tends to create a greater sense of in-group coherence and sharper dividing lines towards other social groups.

5.1 Inter-personal trust

As evident from the graph below the levels of trust is somewhat narrow in Egypt, as a general sense of confidence towards people does not extend further than ones co-workers.

Figure 18: Confidence levels

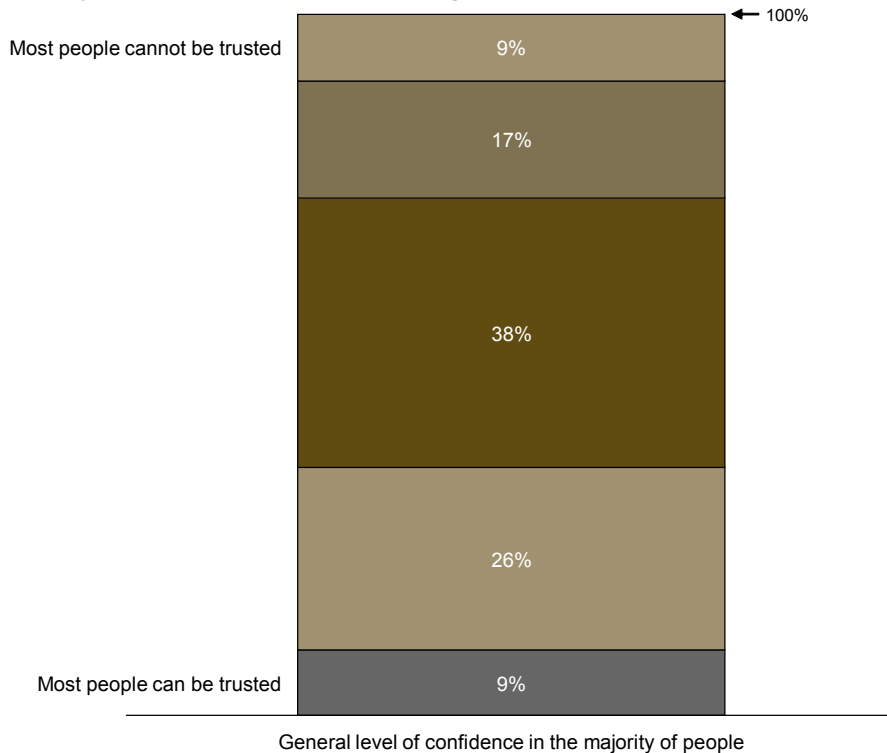
Social capital – Trust (inter-personal trust) Confidence in different groups of people



As evident there is a sharp incline in the no-confidence category clearly demarcating the borders of trust and confidence in Egypt. It is obviously not very conducive to acting collectively that the Egyptians initial view on people they meet is that they are untrustworthy. This means that in order for collective action to run smoothly one has first to gain trust – trust is not something you lose, but something you gain. This clearly takes time and diminishes the effectiveness of acting collectively.

Figure 19: General trust in people

Social capital – Trust (Inter-personal trust)
 What is your view on the following statement: most people can be trusted?

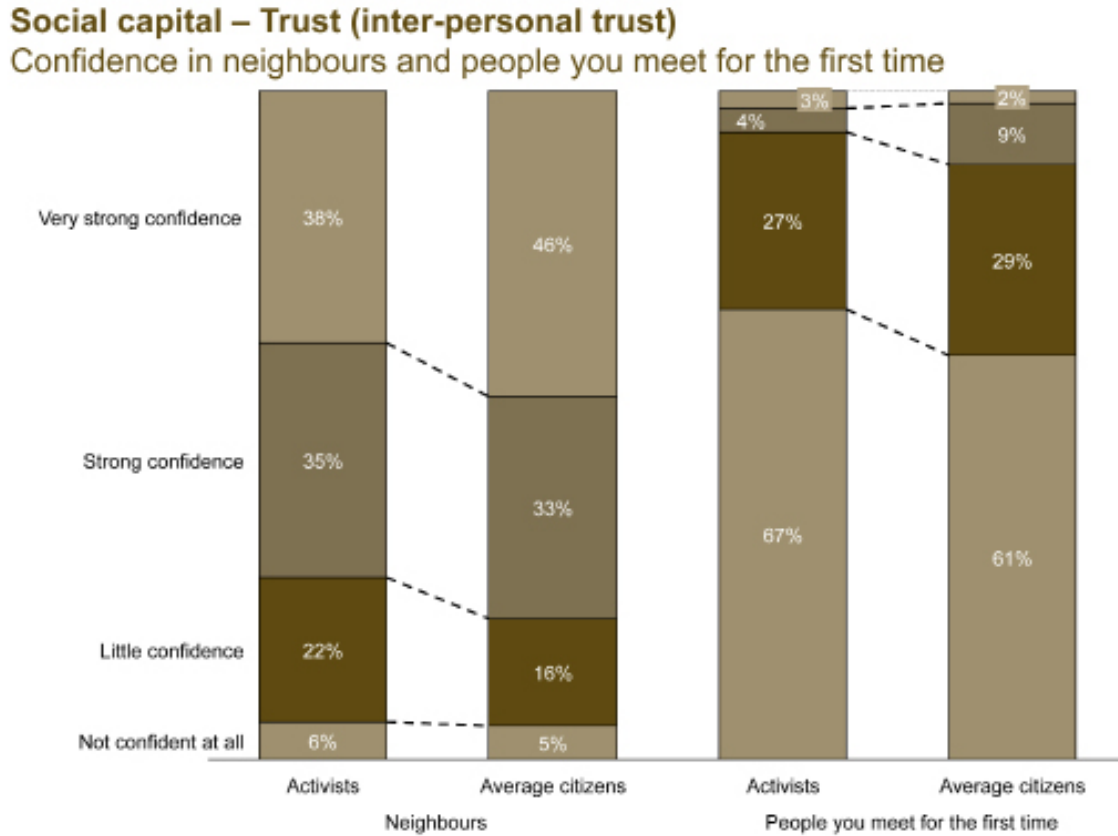


The above graph somewhat blurs the picture of inter-personal trust in Egypt, as there are more people, who believe that most people can be trusted (35%) as opposed to people, who believe that most people cannot be trusted (26%). This can lead to two conclusions: (1) the initial conclusion needs some adjustment as the general levels of trust seems to be higher than indicated by asking about specific groups of persons or (2) that respondents in evaluating “most people” mainly refer to the people they have most contact with, which evidently will be ones family, neighbours and co-workers. This last conclusion would thus support the initial conclusion.

A low level of inter-personal trust is supported by the fact that the past regime has tried to play on fear of the different social classes and groups as means to legitimize the strong police state having to control the interaction between different societal groups. This divide-and-rule strategy of past regimes has apparently worked to limit the degrees of inter-personal trust in people.

A striking fact, however, is that the activists actually had lower levels of inter-personal trust than the average citizens.

Figure 20: Activists' trust



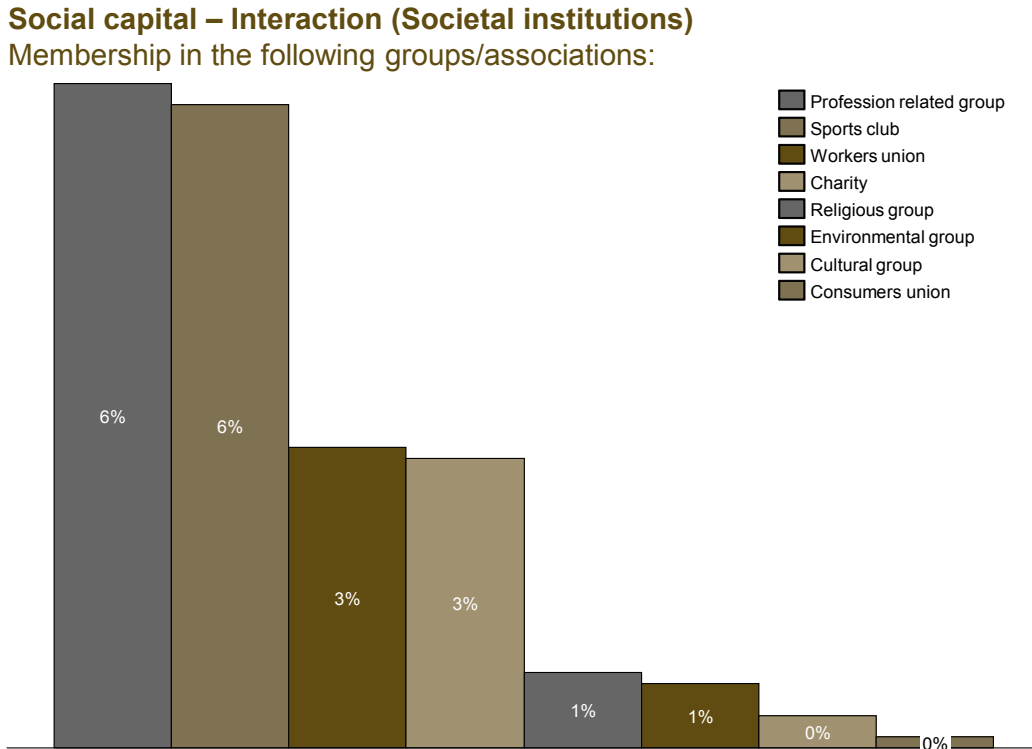
This is surprising results as the protests and demonstrations were an extreme form of collective action that usually requires a great deal of trust in ones fellow citizens. Defying police forces and risking imprisonment, torture and one's life would usually require that one trust that fellow citizens will follow suit, as this will be ones main protection against these potential negative outcomes. One reasonable explanation for these results is that the confidence levels between activists probably were high and that activists did not see other activists as belonging to these different groups of persons the survey questions refer too.

What might have occurred during the 18 intense days of the revolution was that a sense of shared vulnerability of the activists led them to cooperate and trust in each other out of necessity. Following the ousting of Mubarak this trust might have evaporated as the activists no longer shared the same project, vulnerability and interdependence.

5.2 Interaction and tolerance

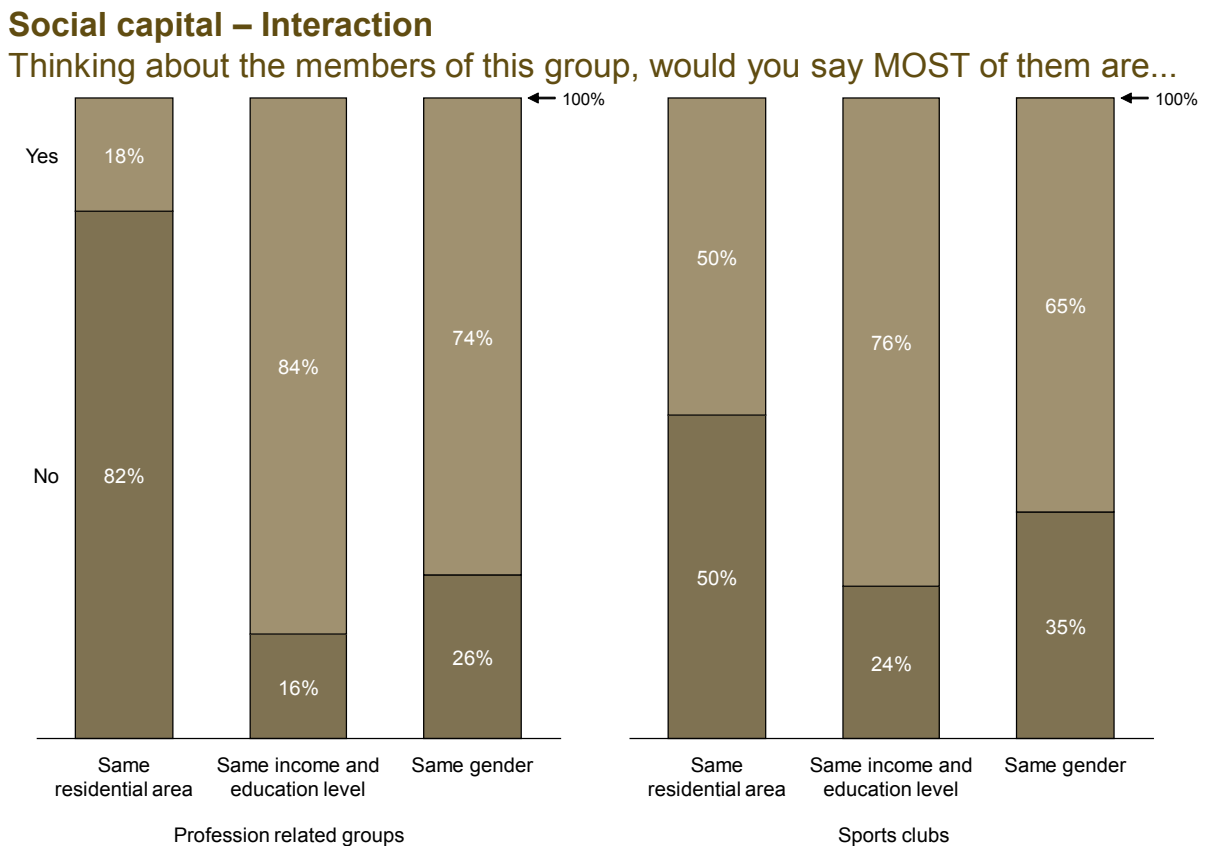
While low social trust exists in Egypt high levels of interaction and tolerance might be a place where higher degrees of social trust can be generated. If people interact and tolerate others action they are likely also to start building trust and relationships.

Figure 21: Interaction in associations



As visible, there seem to be a very low degree of membership in groups and associations. Sports clubs and profession related groups are the ones attracting the most members.

Figure 22: Interaction across groups



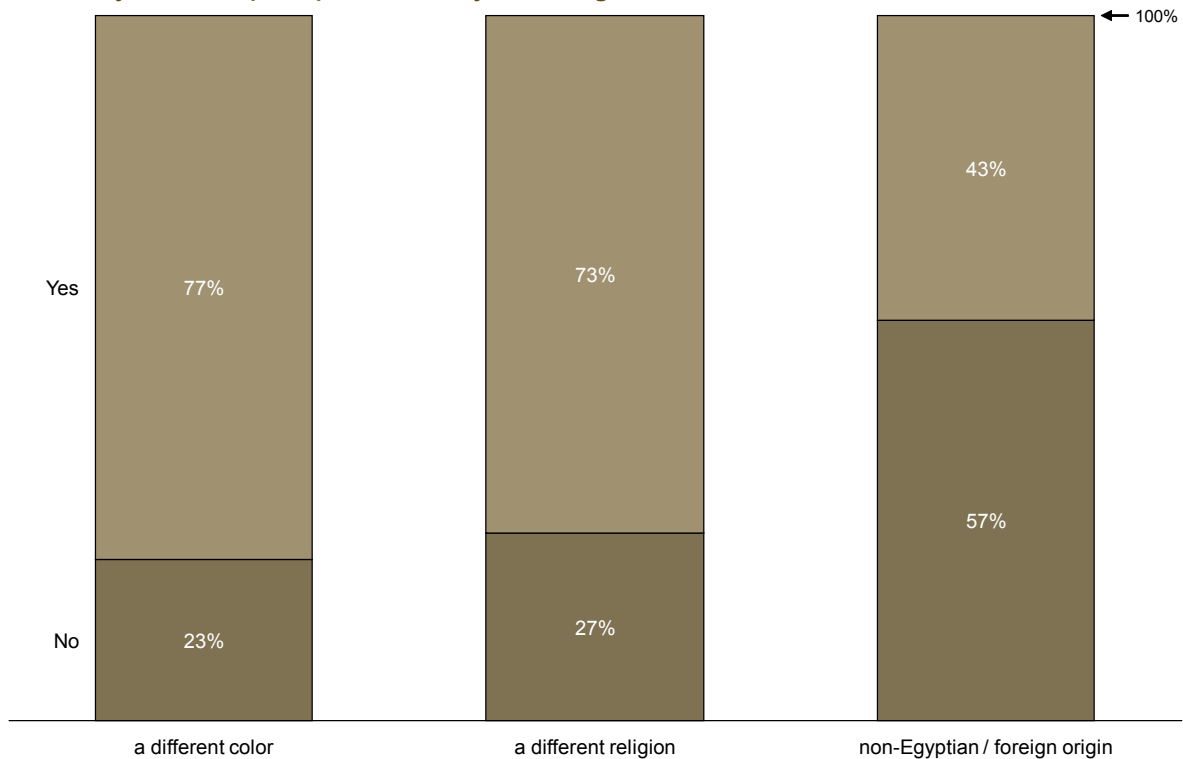
As visible, most of the members are from the same education and income level, whereby it seems that the societal associations and groups are working to enhance interaction within social groups and not across groups. This means that there are low levels of interaction between different societal groups, and that these groups work to enhance in-group trust and coherence. This can thus work to sharpen societal division in Egypt and enhance the inter-personal mistrust.

While these groups do not seem able to enhance societal trust and maybe work to create greater mistrust, there still exist some levels of tolerance in Egyptian society.

Figure 23: Tolerance

Social capital – Tolerance

Would you accept a person as your neighbour if he/she had...?



As visible, there exists a great deal of tolerance towards people of different ethnicity and religion, but less when it comes to foreigners. Especially the religious tolerance is an important finding as one should then not interpret the Maspiro event as a sign of growing sectarian conflict.

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List of interviewees

- Dr. Gamal Abdel Gwad, former director of Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies and current director of the their Survey Research Program.
- Dr. Emad Gad, head of the International Affairs Unit at the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies.
- Sherine El-Taraboulsi, research manager at the John D. Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement, American University of Cairo.

Endnotes

- 1 (Joya, 2011)
- 2 (Carnegie Middle East Center)
- 3 (Oweidat, Benard, Stahl, Kildani, O'Connell, & Grant, 2008)
- 4 (Carnegie Middle East Center)
- 5 (Almond & Verba, 1989), (Dahl, 1989), (Hay, 2007)
- 6 (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954), (Diamond, 1999), (Dalton, 1984)
- 7 (Easton, 1975)
- 8 (Putnam, 1993)
- 9 I.e. (Christian Science Monitor, 2011), (Kristof, 2011), (Friedman, 2011), (Daily Telegraph, 2011)
- 10 Interview with Dr. Gamal Abdel Gawad Soltan, former director of Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (ACPSS) and current head of the Survey Research Program at ACPSS