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# **Politicization of the Salafi Movement: The Emergence and Influence of Political Salafism in Egypt**

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## **Abstract**

*Based on the theoretical framework of French Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, this article analyzes the transformation of the Salafi movement in Egypt in the post-Mubarak period. Originally a movement with an exclusive focus on religion, the ouster of Mubarak and the democratic process it initiated turned Salafi groups into political actors. This article seeks to describe how Salafis, historically ardent critics of political engagement and democracy, try to adapt to their newfound political role and explain if such politicization is feasible without losing religious legitimacy. Addressing a situation still surrounded by much uncertainty, the article argues that through this double involvement, Salafi groups risk losing legitimacy within both their religious and political constituencies.*

## **Introduction**

Prior to the Arab revolutions beginning in late 2010 and gaining ground in 2011, the term Salafi<sup>1</sup> was predominantly used externally to describe radical Muslims adhering to a fundamental interpretation of the Qur'an. On an internal level, Muslims used this term to indicate a correct and

puritan religious doctrine with reference to *al-salaf al-salih*, the pious ancestors.<sup>2</sup> As such, Salafism was a notion inherently connected to the religious sphere. However, the post-revolution election in Egypt saw the emergence of organized Salafi parties battling for political power through democratic processes. Salafis have traditionally condemned democracy due to an adherence to the notion of *tawhid* (the oneness of God).<sup>3</sup> Disregarding previous reservations concerning political and democratic participation, Salafist parties played a central role in the latest Egyptian elections as the Salafist coalition went on to win 127 seats in the lower house and 45 seats in the Shura Council.<sup>4</sup> With Salafis embedded in politics, the question becomes how such a radical shift away from an exclusive focus on religion to engagement in politics will affect the Salafist movement.

The study of the politicization of Salafism will be set in a historical context, initially focusing on the origins of Salafism and its characteristics before moving on to analyze how Salafis have begun to engage themselves in politics as witnessed in the latest election in Egypt. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu offers some helpful theoretical insights for considering the development of the Salafist movement. Bourdieu's theoretical framework is centered on *fields*, which are delimited structures of social relations between hierarchically defined positions. Within these fields, *capital*, a source of either material or symbolic character, defines the ability of actors to exercise power, while *habitus*, a set of socialized norms and predispositions, guide their behavior. The dynamics of capital and habitus are set within the structural limitations of the field, which Bourdieu conceptualized in the term *doxa*, which can be translated into the norms and rules governing the field. These notions will be introduced with the dual objective to focus the analysis and to emphasize the contemporary and future challenges of the Salafist movement.

Introducing Bourdieu's field notion will show how the Salafist movement in Egypt has transformed from a strictly religious movement into a movement engaged in the political field as well. Such transformation naturally stresses how the Salafist movement is capable of shifting its *raison d'être* and inherent philosophy and how necessary concessions are

affecting the movement's role in both fields. Of course such transformation has taken place over many years, but the radical shift in the aftermath of the revolution is extremely significant and revealing. Studies of such politicization of Salafism have been conducted, however mainly in the context of Saudi Arabia through the research of scholars like Stéphane Lacroix and Madawi Al Rasheed. Although the politicization of Egyptian Salafis is not entirely new, it has so far been relatively limited and recent occurrences characterize a quantum leap for political Salafism in the Egyptian context. Since the changes are of such recent occurrence, analyses of the transformation are still at an initial stage and are waiting to see how the Salafist movement tackles its new societal role.

### **Explaining Salafism**

Before analyzing the transformation of the Egyptian Salafist movement, it is necessary to define precisely what I mean by the term *Salafi*.<sup>5</sup> First, it is important to stress that Salafis usually differed from what traditionally has been labeled *Islamists*, with the Muslim Brotherhood serving as the best-known example of the latter. From a contemporary perspective however, some Salafis should be included in the Islamist grouping, as they now engage in the political objective of creating an Islamic political state in Egypt. Nonetheless, Salafis will be referred to as a group differing from the Islamists, but as a group transforming itself into the Islamist group. Second, by Salafism I do not refer to the Islamic reformist movement of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh and their students, who also claim adherence to fundamental Islam as practiced by the *salaf* (and who are likewise being referred to as *al-salafiyya*), but differ on several issues, the most important of which is the use of reasoning in the interpretation of Islamic sources.<sup>6</sup>

Unlike Islamists, the primary concern of Salafis has traditionally been *'aqida* (creed) and not shari'a or politics. Although Salafist groups differ, they are united by this common creed which "provides organizing principles, guiding precepts, and procedures for constructing religious legal positions on contemporary issues,"<sup>7</sup> all of which are centered on the

concept of tawhid.<sup>8</sup> Based on a literalist reading of the Qur'an and Sunna, Salafism tries to impose the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad and the rightly guided Khalifas. Salafis claim to adhere to the "purest" and most "authentic" form of Islam and argue that any valid religious judgment should be based on the Qur'an, the Sunna, or *ijma* (consensus among religious scholars) of the pious forefathers. Theoretically, this stance entails rejection of *taqlid* (imitation) and the promulgation of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) as the course of law.<sup>9</sup> The Salafi emphasis on *ijtihad* constitutes a real paradox, as Haykel stresses that in practice, most Salafis choose to follow the principles of the Hanbali school of jurisprudence.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, with the emphasis on concepts as tawhid and *ijtihad*, it is obvious that Salafis take much of their inspiration from the 14<sup>th</sup> century Hanbali-scholar ibn Taymiyyah, whose work continues to serve as a central referential framework among contemporary Salafi sheikhs.

Considering Salafis' relation to politics, the concept of tawhid is particularly essential. Since Salafis regard God as the sole legitimate legislator, politics, including democracy, is a violation of God's oneness and supremacy. As Wiktorowicz explains, the "Qur'an mentions God as the supreme legislator, and humans are obliged to follow the Shari'a in its entirety. To do otherwise is to imply that humans can legislate, a power clearly reserved for God alone."<sup>11</sup> As a consequence Salafis have until recently avoided political engagement, which they explicitly characterized as *haram* (illegal), while instead being preoccupied with *da'wa* (preaching or proselytizing) and religious and social reform.

This description of Salafism is not sufficient because it does not take into account the idea that Salafis are internally divided, particularly regarding the question of political engagement. Haykel analyzes the Salafist movement from the perspective of the three distinctive elements: 'aqida, shari'a, and *manhaj*. The latter refers to "how to engage in the world," thus directly relating it to political involvement. He argues that on matters of 'aqida, Salafis appear to be in unanimous agreement,<sup>12</sup> while on questions of legal theory and practice, such consensus is somehow challenged, even though most Salafis believe that *ijtihad* is a requirement.

However, “the divisions within the movement are more prominent, as is to be expected perhaps, on how to make Salafi teachings pertinent to political life and questions of power.”<sup>13</sup> Regarding manhaj or political engagement, Haykel further argues that Salafis can be divided into three groups on a general level: Salafi-Jihadis, Salafi activists, and Quietists.<sup>14</sup> To some extent it can be argued that the main difference between the three groups lies in the degree of influence exerted on them by the Muslim Brotherhood and its main ideologists. The Jihadis, mainly influenced by the radical thoughts of Sayyid Qutb, favor violent action against the political establishment, based on the notions of *hakimiyya* (sovereignty of God) and *jahiliyya* (ignorance). On a different level, the activists propagate an approach characterized by political reform and are thus much more in line with the Bannaist faction (Al-Banaeeun) of the Brotherhood, whereas the Quietists – identified particularly by the approach of Nasir al-Din al-Albani – argue for a posture against overt political engagement, instead focusing on religious purity and education.<sup>15</sup> So far the Quietist trend has dominated the Salafi attitude to manhaj,<sup>16</sup> especially exemplified by the official Saudi *‘ulama* (Islamic scholar). However, the 1960s and 1970s saw the rise of more activist-oriented Salafis in the kingdom known as the Sahwa movement, *al-Sahwa al-Islamiyya*, and the *Sururis*.<sup>17</sup> In Egypt the Quietists’ domination of Salafism continued until recently, when the revolutionary events have seen the activists rise to more dominant positions within the movement. This essay will therefore focus on the rise of the Salafi activists and this shift in power.

### **Salafism in an Egyptian Context**

Salafism in Egypt began in 1926 when the first Salafist association, *Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadiyya* (the supporters of the Prophet’s tradition), was established.<sup>18</sup> As Brown explains, Salafi inspiration initially came from the Levant; however, an increased contact with Saudi Arabia later strengthened the role of Salafism in Egyptian society.<sup>19</sup> From the beginning, Egyptian Salafism strictly focused on creed, da’wa, and religious education and was in line with the later practice of al-Albani and his Quietist tradition. Hence, members of Ansar al-Sunna had a scholarly focus and audience and did not engage in politics. While still very much

alive, the Quietist tradition is currently identified by movements such as Jama'iyya al-Shar'iyya,<sup>20</sup> one of the main apolitical Salafi movements in contemporary Egypt.

In an attempt to estimate the number of Salafis in Egypt, Will McCants argues that Salafis count somewhere between three and five million.<sup>21</sup> However, such estimation is complicated, because a strict delimitation of Salafis is problematic due to their proximity to traditional Islamists. This relationship is exemplified by the fact that the Islamist Gama'a al-Islamiyya was the source of the main Salafi movement in Egypt when some members broke away in the 1970s and established al-Da'wa Salafiyya in Alexandria, a city that evolved to be the epicenter of Egyptian Salafism.

Looking closely at the Egyptian Salafist movement, it is clear that Salafism does not constitute a single homogenous group. Until the public protests against the Mubarak regime began in January 2011, the Quietist and regime-loyal Salafis dominated, but more rebellious factions did exist. In particular the so-called "Salafist School of Alexandria" and the "Reformist Salafist" stand out. Whereas the former traditionally occupied a more autonomous position in the regime, the latter, characterized by personalities like Gamal Sultan, takes its inspiration from the Saudi Sahwa movement. Such Salafi activism that takes part in post-revolution Egypt manifests itself in several official political parties, with the majority rooted in established religious movements. Originating from the informal al-Da'wa al-Salafiyya movement, the al-Nour Party established itself as the main Salafi party and was supported by the Asala Party and the Construction and Development Party in the Salafist coalition in the 2011-2012 parliamentary elections. After the elections, several minor Salafist parties like Al 'Amal Al-Jadeed (New Labour), Al-Fadila (the Virtue Party), and Al-Shaab (the People's Party) have appeared but gained little support. The latest and probably most interesting addition to the Salafi political landscape is the early 2013 political offshoot of al-Nour, Al-Watan, which is led by former al-Nour leader Emad Abdel Ghaffour, who created his own party along with several other former senior al-Nour members. With their elitist approach, Al-Watan still has not managed to

attract as many followers as the party would have liked, which is why the party's actual influence is still minimal.

As already explained, politicization of Salafis is not an entirely new phenomenon considering the experiences with the Sahwa in Saudi Arabia and some of the more rebellious Salafist factions in Egypt. However, direct engagement in the Egyptian political process, followed by the legitimization of formal democratic political processes, is certainly an indication of increasing politicization of the Salafist movement, which has the potential to fundamentally alter Egyptian Salafism.

### **Salafis as Political Actors**

With the introduction of the Salafist doctrine and its prominence in Egypt, it is interesting to consider the Salafist movement's transformation from a strictly religious movement to a politically engaged movement using concepts from Bourdieu's theoretical framework. Bourdieu introduced the "field" concept, which is a relatively autonomous social sub-system, where actors interact within boundaries that are defined by an internal agreement of "the stakes at stake." Fields are governed by their own distinctive logic – what Bourdieu calls *doxa* – and subscribe to different forms of capital. These forms of capital contribute to the power of actors in the field and thus are instrumental for the social hierarchy within the field. If one considers the Egyptian Salafis from such a perspective, it becomes clear that the Salafist movement has historically limited itself to engagement solely in the religious field. Although it is a religious movement, this is not as self-evident as it could seem, since Islamist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood are characterized by engagement in both the religious field and the political field as they strive for the establishment of an Islamic state. In the context of the Egyptian religious field, dominance is highly contested as different denominations within Islam compete among themselves and with Christianity for the definition of what capital enables an actor to claim a powerful position in the field. With their insistence on strict adherence to a literalist interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunna, Salafis compete over the capital definition by stressing the importance of things like shari'a and Sunna knowledge, religious

education, specific social behaviors, and appearance. For Salafis, the focus has thus been on the importance of what Bourdieu calls cultural capital and religious capital. To counter the Salafis, moderate Islamists and Muslim seculars argue in favor of religious interpretations and societal roles characterized by a reason-based Ashari creed and Maliki school of jurisprudence.<sup>22</sup>

Interestingly, the Salafis began to change and accommodate previous political stances in the wake of the incipient public protests in order to take full advantage of the transforming political structures. At the outset, prominent Salafi sheikhs condemned the protests as unlawful rebellion according to Islamic law. During a sermon, leading Salafi cleric Muhammad Hassan called for restraint in order to keep order in the country,<sup>23</sup> while the Salafi sheikh and leader of al-Da'wa, Yasser al-Burhami, announced a fatwa on his website SalafVoice "affirming the illicit nature of the demonstrations."<sup>24</sup> Another Salafi scholar, Mustafa Al-'Adawi, even stated on Egyptian state television that Muslims participating in the protests should return home to prevent Muslim blood from spilling. He did so with an Islamic reference arguing that those who died would not become martyrs, which exemplifies the initial dominance of an Islamic discourse by the Salafis.<sup>25</sup>

However, it did not take long before such discourse changed among leading Salafis. Ghaffour, previously a leading figure within the Salafi Da'wa, initiated this critical change as he suggested the establishment of a political party. Although the movement never declared involvement in politics haram, this development represented a juncture in Egyptian Salafi history. As a very contentious issue, such establishments were naturally fiercely debated, and ended with the creation of the al-Nour party, leading to the formal entrance of Salafis to the Egyptian political sphere. It makes sense to consider the creation of the al-Nour in the light of the political field's doxa or rules. In a democracy, doxa stress the necessity of engagement through formal political parties in order to appear legitimate. Furthermore, the entrance of the Salafis caused an intra-Islamist clash between al-Nour and the Muslim Brotherhood, where these "rules" or characteristics of the field increased competition between the parties,

clearly pushing the Salafi sheikhs in a more populist direction. To some degree, the same situation has taken place in Tunisia as Tunisian Salafist groups initially condemned the protests and even refused to participate in the election following the ouster of Ben Ali based on religious arguments. Nonetheless, after elections the Salafis created their own party, the Jabhat al-Islah, with the objective of participating in future elections. Perhaps less remarkable but still significant was the response to the Egyptian revolution by some Saudi Salafis, with the prominent Sahwa-turned-loyalist sheikh Salman al-Awda supporting the protests from the beginning. He stated on his Twitter feed that “democracy might not be an ideal system, but it is the least harmful, and it can be developed and adapted to respond to local needs and circumstances.”<sup>26</sup>

The Salafist parties have naturally entered the political field strongly influenced by a habitus developed through a lifetime involved exclusively in the religious field. However, many Salafis-turned-politicians have quickly learned to adapt to the political rules through a populist approach. In contrast to previous religious arguments, several Salafis now promote a free market economy and increasing foreign direct investments.<sup>27</sup> Recently, al-Burhami voiced approval for an interest-bearing loan from the International Monetary Fund, even though Islamic law, as interpreted by Salafis, forbids usury.<sup>28</sup> On a more philosophical level, Salafis have even begun to stress the practical nature of politics, arguing that “now is not the time for ideology,” and al-Nour has called for a civil state without discrimination to any part of the population,<sup>29</sup> which is “far from a theocracy that claims the government rules by God’s will.”<sup>30</sup> This newfound pragmatism was evident during the previous presidential election, where the Salafi coalition opted to back Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh as their candidate although the partnership was clearly founded on mutual political interests and neither ideological nor religious affinities. The young but influential spokesman of al-Nour, Nader Bakar, even went as far as saying, “We were looking for a president who can be a mere executive manager, not an Islamic caliph.”<sup>31</sup> The particular example of al-Burhami provides an excellent illustration of the change and pragmatism of many Salafis from the immediate post-revolution period until now. Originally an ultraconservative member of the Salafī Da’wa and an

opponent of the protests, he has developed into a central political actor in Egypt and is deeply engaged in traditional politics and the rise of al-Nour.

It is fair to argue that engagement in formal politics has increased centralization and discipline in the Salafist movement, as Salafis discover the need to embrace pragmatism and consider public opinion. As Brown indicates, Salafis “have learned to either compromise on the call for shari’a rule, or to express their religious commitments in non-threatening ways.”<sup>32</sup> Even Quietist Salafis have ended up entangled in politics (somehow a paradoxical statement) using the argument that an Islamic state continues to be the preferred ideology, but “in its absence it is imperative to participate in a secular system in order to prevent the return of an oppressive and corrupt government.”<sup>33</sup> Although the Salafist coalition fared well in the latest elections to parliament and the Shura Council, and have generally managed to adapt to the rules of the political environment fairly quickly, problems have occurred due to their religiously influenced habitus. Although not too prevalent thus far, there have been examples where Salafis have crossed the boundaries of what is considered acceptable in the political field. These missteps include references to a radical interpretation of Islam in formal political situations, as well as actions of a more benign character. For example, this occurred when Salafi member of parliament, Mamdouh Ismail, decided to call to afternoon prayer during a parliament session.<sup>34</sup> Surely these experiences show that with their habitus, Salafis face difficulties in accommodating their own ways within the political field. However, besides their difficulties and unorthodox character, these practices can simultaneously be regarded as an attempt to challenge both the doxa in the political field and the definition of capital by introducing the discussion of religious creed, an aspect the Muslim Brotherhood never bothered to discuss in detail. Nonetheless, it is remarkable that the religious discourse of Salafis is now, in many cases, overshadowed by a political discourse, which has largely been accepted. This sudden public acceptability of Salafis and their fundamental (albeit moderated) stance, it has been argued, is due to a “quiet revolution” in the Egyptian society during the last few decades, characterized by “the increasing hegemony of conservative Islamic discourse.”<sup>35</sup>

## **Implications and Challenges for Political Salafism**

With their entrance into the political field in the aftermath of the 2011 revolution, the Salafis will face the challenge of simultaneously excelling in two fields as sources and structures of power and the behavioral norms differ between fields. The greatest difficulty will be to uphold legitimacy within both spheres, as Salafist actors necessarily will need to draw upon different discourses to satisfy both religious and political supporters. To some extent, this has already become problematic. The political Salafis have been attacked from both sides with supporters of the Quietist faction arguing against such dominant political focus, while critics from the political domain, who are moderate Islamists and seculars, have highlighted inappropriate radical statements by the Salafis. In order to alleviate these troubles, Salafi politicians have tried to import religious discourse into the political field. Beyond the discussion of creed, they have also used the argument that Islam is an all-encompassing religion – with the hope of homogenizing the structures of the two fields and thereby draw upon their strong position in the religious field. Such transformation is complicated however, as it depends on the position of the actor to exert influence and thus shape the field according to ones interests. In the particular political setting of post-Mubarak Egypt, Salafis have been handed a rare opportunity.

The public ouster of Mubarak, along with the general discontent of the political system and its elite, has fundamentally affected and changed the political field. This includes the capital that is of importance to the political game. This initially benefitted Salafi parties as the public discontent afforded them more freedom and enabled them to gain support. Directly, the overthrow triggered a new freedom for political activism and unobstructed party formation, allowing Salafist groups to establish political parties and participate in electoral politics. Perhaps of even more importance is the fact that there were no real liberal, national or leftist forces with sufficient support able to compete against the blossoming religious currents. The confluence of these factors led to religious groups, particularly Salafis, gaining the upper hand.<sup>36</sup>

The internal challenge facing Salafist groups can be explained by what Wiktorowicz defines as a “generational struggle between the senior purists, on the one hand, and the younger politicians and jihadi scholars, on the other.”<sup>37</sup> The younger generation argues that their superior knowledge about current international political affairs enables them to draw on discourses and capitals far removed from the traditional Salafi focus on social and cultural capital. This reasoning has been used by political Salafis in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, with Abd al-Rahman Abd al-Khaliq as a particularly strong example, as they stress that they still adhere to the Salafi tradition, but they simply have a better understanding of the current political context and therefore are able to produce correctly informed fatwas. To support such an argument, Salafis often make reference to al-Albani’s much-criticized fatwa regarding the Palestinians, who he argued should emigrate from occupied territory because it was no longer considered *Dar al-Islam*. This internal split can become severe for politically engaged Salafis, as purists still hold power in rural Egypt. Too much discontent on their side can eventually threaten the loyalty of the Salafist parties’ constituencies, which would be catastrophic for Salafis’ political ambitions.

At the heart of this internal struggle lies a philosophical and theological debate. The purists believe the adoption of western-inspired parties emphasizes “the dangers of foreign influences on method: parties follow their own logic of political power, which results in partisanship (*hizbiyya*), thereby pushing activists to place the interest of the party and political power over God and the necessity of protecting *tawhid* [the oneness of God].”<sup>38</sup> This use of what they regard a non-Islamic method to promote the creed leads purists to levy a serious accusation against political Salafis: they argue that these Salafi activists or *politicos* have committed *irja* (the separation of belief and action) by failing to adhere to the strict Salafi perception of the oneness of God, thus implying they may accept the Salafi creed but have failed to follow the prophetic model. Seen in the light of the recent proliferation of Salafist parties, this becomes particularly critical from an internal perspective, where coherence regarding societal engagement usually ruled. That party interests take

priority over “God and the necessity of protecting tawhid” became evident in the recent exit of prominent al-Nour members led by Emad Abdel Ghaffour, who later created the al-Watan party. During the process, a member of al-Watan stated that “the main difference between al-Watan and al-Nour is not ideology, but the way ideology is being used,” while an ally of al-Watan argued that they would not enter into a coalition with al-Nour because there are too many differences.<sup>39</sup> This tendency of internal criticism and branching within the Salafi political movement has driven the branches farther apart, potentially adding to the Islamist clash first highlighted by controversies between Salafis and the Muslim Brotherhood. In Tunisia too this has been a problem, with the Ennahda party rebuking Salafis for their attempt to impose the veil in universities, for Salafi attacks on businesses who sell alcohol, and for the Salafi-led social media campaigns attacking Tunisian female competitors in the Olympics.

Experiences so far show that Salafis had been successful to some degree in their attempt to change the structures of the Egyptian political field to their advantage in the period preceding the ouster of Morsi. The large public protests against the former political elite certainly enabled such transformation, but Salafi politicians have also managed for their part to adapt to the rules of the political sphere. With this in mind, experiences also show that their engagement in these two fields – the religious and the political – has proven to be an enormous challenge for the Salafist parties. External and internal critiques indicate that the unfamiliar doxa of the political field, the Salafis’ strong religious habitus, and their predominantly cultural and religious capital have been significant factors and limitations in their in their political engagement and their attempt to gain even more influential political positions. Unlike members of the Brotherhood, many of whom are well-seasoned politicians, Salafis have found the change from Quietist sheikh to the position of politician-in-charge very challenging. This is also partly the result of their out-of-step experience with the current political field. In their attempt to participate in two separate fields and secure legitimacy in both, Salafis have stressed that they distinguish between the “procedures of democracy,” which they accept, and the “philosophy of democracy,” which they reject.<sup>40</sup> The

important question is whether political Salafis from a fundamentalist religious foundation are capable of fulfilling a political role with all its attendant responsibility, or whether their sometimes contradictory religious and political ambitions will prove too difficult to reconcile.

Recent tendencies point to the prevalence of party politics, which could be severe as Salafis try to maintain their more religiously focused constituencies. Hence, the involvement of Salafis in the democratic process in Egypt and more recently statements on potential participation in a future government cabinet is deemed to alter or at least challenge the movement's ideology,<sup>41</sup> which has the potential to become a very critical issue for a movement that theoretically exists on a foundation of strict adherence to a specific way of life. Considering internal reactions from the Quietist wing of the Salafis, it becomes clear that politics continues to play an illegitimate role, making Salafis dependent on an ability to identify the right balance between their religious and political engagements. For this to succeed, Bourdieu would argue, Salafis need to make the two fields as homogenous as possible. Despite the increasingly conservative Egyptian identity, such future homogenization seems difficult with the popular dissatisfaction regarding Islamic leadership and the removal of Morsi and the Brotherhood government in mind. Over the long-term, this difficulty is further compounded as liberal and secular forces in Egypt are beginning to become more organized and thus more capable of challenging Egyptian Islamists such as the Salafis. Predictions are difficult, but Olivier Roy argues that the Salafis "will increasingly mix technocratic modernism and conservative values" and he stresses that "the movements that have entered the political mainstream cannot now afford to turn their backs on multiparty politics for fear of alienating a significant portion of the electorate."<sup>42</sup> However, as the transformation process is still at an early stage any success or failure for Egyptian political Salafis is very much possible, thus leaving the coming parliamentary election and experiences of being politically responsible important parameters for the future of political Salafism in Egypt.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Including the adjectives *Salafist* and *Salafi*.

<sup>2</sup> The pious ancestors were the Prophet Muhammad and the first three generations of his followers; see Stéphane Lacroix, “Between Revolution and Apoliticism: Nasir al-Din al-Albani and his Impact on the Shaping of Contemporary Salafism,” in *Global Salafism: Islam’s New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer (London: Hurst, 2009), 58-80.

<sup>3</sup> Quintan Wiktorowicz, “Anatomy of the Salafi Movement,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 3 (2006): 207-239. For an elaboration of the concept of *Tawhid*, see footnote 8. The philosophical difficulties of uniting *Tawhid* and democracy are discussed on page 12 in this paper.

<sup>4</sup> The coalition consisted of the al-Nour Party, the Asala Party, and the Construction and Development Party.

<sup>5</sup> As the objective of this paper is not to provide an exhaustive explanation of Salafism and its religious foundation, a more thorough elaboration can be found in Wiktorowicz, “Anatomy of the Salafi Movement.”

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212. For a historical and conceptual investigation of the Salafi term, see Henri Lauzière, “The Construction of Salafiyya: Reconsidering Salafism from the Perspective of Conceptual History,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42, no. 3 (2010): 369–389, <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0020743810000401>>

<sup>7</sup> Wiktorowicz, “Anatomy of the Salafi Movement,” 208.

<sup>8</sup> For Salafis the most central notion is *tawhid*, which can be divided into three categories: *Tawhid al Rubu’biya* (oneness of the lordship of God) meaning God should be regarded as the sole creator, *Tawhid al `Ululhiyya* (oneness of the worship of God) meaning that only God should be worshipped, and *Tawheed-al-Asma was-Sifaat* (oneness of the names and attributes of God) meaning the impermissibility of assigning partners or equals to God through the use of names and attributes outlined in the Qur’an. For information on *tawhid*, see Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, *The Fundamentals of Tawheed* (Riyadh: Tawheed publications, 1990), 1-26, and for more extensive elaboration consult Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, *Millat Ibrahim and the Calling of the Prophets and Messengers and the Methods of the Transgressing Rulers in Dissolving It and Turning the Callers Away from It* (At-Tibyan Publications, date unknown).

<sup>9</sup> Lacroix, “Between Revolution and Apoliticism,” 60.

<sup>10</sup> Bernard Haykel, “On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action,” in *Global Salafism: Islam’s New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer (London: Hurst, 2009), 43.

<sup>11</sup> Wiktorowicz, “Anatomy of the Salafi Movement,” 208-209.

<sup>12</sup> Salafis seem to be in agreement on the substance of ‘*aqida*, but not necessarily its scope, which has led to intra-Salafi confrontations.

<sup>13</sup> Such division is backed by, among others, Hassan Mneimneh, “The Spring of a New Political Salafism,” Hudson Institute, *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 12 (2012): 21-36.

<sup>14</sup> Wiktorowicz also introduced such a division of Salafis into three factions although he labels them “Purists,” “Politicos,” and “Jihadis” (Wiktorowicz, “Anatomy of the Salafi Movement,” 208).

<sup>15</sup> The chapter “Between Revolution and Apoliticism” by Stéphane Lacroix in *Global Salafism*, ed. Roel Meijer, gives a more elaborate explanation on al-Albani and the Quietist tradition.

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Brown, “Salafis and Sufis in Egypt,” Carnegie Endowment, December 2011, 3, <[http://carnegieendowment.org/files/salafis\\_sufis.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/salafis_sufis.pdf)>

<sup>17</sup> The emergence of political Salafism was caused by an influx of Muslim Brothers from mainly Egypt and Syria, who influenced the Salafis in the kingdom prompting the rise of the Sahwa. In the following decades political Salafism in the kingdom was characterised by such continuous reciprocal influence between the Brothers and the Salafis. See: Stéphane Lacroix, *Awakening Islam: the politics of religious dissent in contemporary Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Stéphane Lacroix, “Sheikhs and Politicians: Inside the new Egyptian Salafism,” Brookings Doha Center, June 2012, 1, <<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2012/6/07%20egyptian%20salafism%20lacroix/stephane%20lacroix%20policy%20briefing%20english.pdf>>

<sup>19</sup> Brown, “Salafis and Sufis in Egypt,” 4.

<sup>20</sup> Saba Mahmood describes the movement in *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005).

<sup>21</sup> Will McCants, “A New Salafi Politics,” *Foreign Policy*, October 12, 2012, <[http://mideastafrica.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/10/12/a\\_new\\_salafi\\_politics](http://mideastafrica.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/10/12/a_new_salafi_politics)>

<sup>22</sup> Named after 8<sup>th</sup> century Islamic scholar Imam Malik ibn Anas, the Maliki school of jurisprudence has been dominant in northern and western Africa and is characterized by a more moderate jurisprudence than the Hanbali school. For more, see Wael Hallaq, *The origins and evolution of Islamic law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>23</sup> Brown, “Salafis and Sufis in Egypt,” 6.

<sup>24</sup> Husam Tammam and Patrick Haenni, “Egypt: Islam in the Insurrection,” *Religioscope (Religion.info)*, February 22, 2011, <[http://religion.info/english/articles/article\\_519.shtml](http://religion.info/english/articles/article_519.shtml)>

<sup>25</sup> Other Salafi sheikhs, including Safwat Abdul-Ghani, Sheikh Mohammed Yusri, Sheikh Nashat Ahmed, Sheikh Fawzy al-Saeed, and Hisham Oqda, did embrace the protests from the beginning. See: Khalil Al-Anani, “The Role of Religion in the Public Domain in Egypt After the January 25 Revolution,” Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies, April 2012, 8, <<http://english.dohainstitute.org/file/get/26ee36e7-82c9-432e-80e7-d541dda32253.pdf>>

<sup>26</sup> As quoted in Aaron Y. Zelin, “Democracy, Salafi Style,” *Foreign Policy*, July 20, 2012, <[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/07/19/democracy\\_salafi\\_style](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/07/19/democracy_salafi_style)>

<sup>27</sup> Khalil Al-Anani, “Islamist Parties Post-Arab Spring,” *Mediterranean Politics* 17, no. 3 (2012): 466-472, DOI: 10.1080/13629395.2012.725309. See p. 470.

<sup>28</sup> McCants, “A New Salafi Politics.”

<sup>29</sup> Other Salafis argue that there exists a distinctive Islamic model of statehood, which – they insist – is perfectly compatible with the modern state (al-dawla al-‘asriyya). Hence they are not entirely in favor of a civil state with simply an Islamic reference.

<sup>30</sup> Brown, "Salafis and Sufis in Egypt," 9.

<sup>31</sup> Khalil Al-Anani, "Egypt's 'blessed' Salafi votes," *Foreign Policy*, May 2, 2012, <[http://mideastafrica.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/05/02/egypts\\_blessed\\_salafi\\_votes](http://mideastafrica.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/05/02/egypts_blessed_salafi_votes)>

<sup>32</sup> Brown, "Salafis and Sufis in Egypt," 8.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>34</sup> Eman El-Shenawi, "Egyptian Salafi MP calls to prayer in parliament session, met with anger," *Al Arabiya*, February 7, 2012. <<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/02/07/193234.html>>.

<sup>35</sup> Lacroix, "Sheikhs and Politicians," 1.

<sup>36</sup> Ali Bakr, "Egypt's Salafists: A closer look," *Ahram Online*, October 15, 2012, <<http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/55636.aspx>>

<sup>37</sup> Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement," 207.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>39</sup> Alaa Bayoumi, "Egypt's Salafis split ahead of elections," *Al Jazeera*, January 14, 2013. <<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/01/2013114105047960749.html>>

<sup>40</sup> Lacroix, "Sheikhs and Politicians," 5.

<sup>41</sup> "Egypt's Salafist Nour Party may participate in new government," *Ahram Online*, February 24, 2014 <<http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/95165.aspx>>

<sup>42</sup> Olivier Roy, "The New Islamists," *Foreign Policy*, April 16, 2012, <[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/16/the\\_new\\_islamists](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/16/the_new_islamists)>