

Polity IV Country Report 2010: Egypt

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2009</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2010</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polity:</td> <td>-3</td> <td>-3</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Democ:</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Autoc:</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Durable:</td> <td></td> <td>5</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tentative:</td> <td></td> <td>No</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2009	2010	Change	Polity:	-3	-3	0	Democ:	1	1	0	Autoc:	4	4	0	Durable:		5		Tentative:		No		
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Durable:		5																							
Tentative:		No																							
SCODE	EGY	CCODE	651	Date of Report	1 June 2011																				
Polity IV Component Variables																									
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																				
2	1	4	3	3	3																				
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)																									
End Date		26 February 2005		Begin Date		27 February 2005																			
Polity Fragmentation: No																									
Constitution	1971; note: Constitution dissolved by military caretaker government 13 February 2011																								
Executive(s)	Presidency currently vacant as of 11 February 2011; Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces of Egypt, Mohamed Hussein Tantawi currently acting executive as of 11 February 2011																								
Legislature	Unicameral (Egypt has an upper house, the Shura Council, but it has no legislative authority): People's Assembly (Majlis al-Shaab; 518 seats; 508 directly elected, 10 selected by the President; most recent elections, 28 November and 5 December 2010; Note: the People's Assembly was dissolved by the military caretaker government on 13 February 2011, with new elections to be held in November 2011 National Democratic Party: 420 "Independents" (Muslim Brotherhood-MB): 1 Other parties: 12 Non-partisans: 71 Contested: 4 Selected members: 10																								
Judiciary	Court of Cassation																								

Narrative Description:¹

Executive Recruitment: Designation (3)

For all practical purposes Egypt remains a one-party state in which executive recruitment is conducted internally within the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP). Until 2005 the electorate was not able to freely choose among competing presidential candidates. Instead, the People's Assembly, which was and remains dominated by the NDP, selected the presidential candidate who was then elected through a popular referendum. Despite this facade of democratic institutions and procedures in Egypt, long-standing and credible complaints by NDP opponents regarding the freedom of legislative elections tainted the process by which the executive was recruited. President Hosni Mubarak was reelected to a fourth consecutive 6-year term on 27 September 1999, the last election held under these rules.

Egypt made limited progress towards democratic executive recruitment in 2005, with the approval of new constitutional rules by referendum on 1 May 2005 that provide for a multi-candidate competition for the presidency, decided by popular vote. In the country's first multi-candidate presidential election on 7 September 2005 Mubarak won 88.6% of the vote. Opposition candidates had to be approved by the government, which refused to certify the candidate of the largest opposition group, the Muslim Brotherhood. The election was marked by charges of media bias, alleged election-law violations, and boycotts by opposition parties.

Executive Constraints: Slight to Moderate Limitations (3)

Despite the strong influence of domineering personalities on Egyptian politics during the past 40 years (e.g., Nassar, Sadat and now Mubarak), Egypt is best understood as a bureaucratically-entrenched one-party state. The ASU and, after 1978, the NDP, has been the hegemonic force behind Egyptian politics in modern times. The People's Assembly, dominated by members of the NDP, serves as an arm of the executive branch. This limited horizontal accountability is reflected in the National Assembly's marginal influence in the areas of internal security and foreign affairs, as well as in their limited oversight of the President's use of emergency powers. Most legislation in Egypt continues to be initiated by the executive branch. While the People's Assembly has moderate influence over economic and social policy it cannot modify the budget without government approval. Moreover, while the courts have shown a great deal of independence in their decisions in recent years, nevertheless, they often lack the degree of power and independence necessary to enforce their decisions. For example, while the courts can find the government guilty of electoral malpractice, they do not have the capacity to remove officials elected under such a system.

Political Participation: Factional/Restricted Competition (6)

While recent years have seen a general, albeit tenuous and limited, liberalization of politics in Egypt, the NDP remains unwilling to expose themselves to truly democratic participation. While there are at least thirteen recognized political parties operating in Egypt, these parties are subject to systematic and widespread restrictions on their ability to mobilize their followers and speak freely. Flagrant abuses of human rights and manifest conflict between factions- the NDP-led government and its supporters and the Islamic fundamentalists, led by the Muslim Brotherhood- continue to plague this country. Egypt has been under a constant state of emergency since the assassination of President Sadat in 1981. While elements of polar factionalism are present in this case, given the widespread scope of the NDP's repression, targeted against both secular and religious opponents, political participation is best understood as being "restricted" in nature.

In 2003 discussions within the NDP to liberalize the political system were pushed to the top of the political agenda. At a NDP conference in August 2003 the ruling party made an unprecedented pledge to promote political reform as one of its central objectives. As part of this commitment, the NDP indicated its willingness to remove the constraints hampering the political activities of other parties in the near future. However, the scope of these proposed reforms was not made clear. This effort at liberalization, according to many political analysts, reflects the rise of the political faction within the NDP led by the President's son, Gamel. While President Mubarak denies claims that he is grooming his son to succeed him, nevertheless, Gamel, who is the party's Policy Secretariat, seems to be consolidating his power within the

¹ The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.

NDP in recent years. Gamel's faction represents reformers in the NDP who want greater political and economic liberalization. However, old-line party bosses who want to limit reform efforts continue to control the party apparatus and its leadership positions.

Constitutional reforms in 2005 allowed the organization of political parties; however, the Muslim Brotherhood remained banned. The reforms came under intense international pressure and served mainly to bring Egypt's political tensions closer to the surface. Opposition groups boycotted both the constitutional referendum and the September 2005 presidential election, and massive anti-government protests were held on 10 September 2005. Government policies restricting the political activities of the Muslim Brotherhood were particularly problematic in 2005 surrounding the legislative election, in which their members were forced to participate as independents. Despite the restrictions, the Islamists gained a substantial showing in the elections and eighty-eight seats in the largely-symbolic legislature.

Controversial National Assembly elections were conducted on 28 November and 5 December 2010. In these elections the ruling NDP clinched control of four-fifths of the new parliament, securing 420 of 508 seats, with "independents" gaining 70 seats and the opposition parties trailing far behind with only 14 seats. Wafd, the main secular opposition party, gained six seats even though it decided to boycott the second round balloting held on 5 December 2010. The Muslim Brotherhood had also chosen to withdraw from the second round balloting and, as a result, saw its parliamentary power reduced from 20% of the seats in the Assembly to zero. The NDP gained control of 80% of the seats, up from 70% in the previous parliament. The opposition parties have claimed that the elections were the most fraudulent in recent history, with opposition candidates and supporters subjected to political harassment and intimidation and blatant ballot box stuffing being reported. Hundreds of Brotherhood members were arrested prior to the election and armed clashes were reported in the north and south of the country. Despite these political clashes, the number of election-related deaths was down from 2005.

The one-sided electoral outcome was somewhat unexpected as the parliament, although dominated by the hegemonic power of the NDP, had seen significant liberalization in recent years as opposition parties and groups saw their representation rise. The leadership of the NDP, for its part, also seemed genuinely dismayed by the outcome of the ballot, hoping instead for a more "credible" result. The NDP had hoped to legitimize their continued dominance of the political arena by allowing opposition voices a greater presence in the legislative body. In particular, it was widely reported that in a pre-election agreement between the NDP leadership and the secular opposition that the Wafd party, which represents powerful business interests within the country, would be permitted to win 50 seats in the new parliament. In exchange, the NDP was hoping to co-opt their support for a more limited and gradual liberalization of the political order in Egypt. However, party discipline within the NDP broke down and undermined the pact. In a number of constituencies the ruling party fielded multiple candidates who were eager to gain access to the significant political and economic rewards associated with being an MP, thereby effectively shutting out the prospects for opposition party victories. About 830 candidates from the NDP, 250 from Wafd and 130 from the Muslim Brotherhood competed for the parliament's 508 seats in first round voting.

Ultimately, instead of bolstering support for the NDP, these elections further eroded the already weak legitimacy of the ruling party as street protests in Cairo have since taken place. The result of the virtual elimination of opposition voices inside the National Assembly not only undermined the legitimacy of the ruling party but also infused a measure of unity to the otherwise rudderless and fractious opposition. The Muslim Brotherhood and Wafd, who have historically been very leary of the goals and tactics of each other, promised to forge a greater unity in the future in their effort to pressure the government to reform the political order.