

The New Middle East

Protest and Revolution in the Arab World

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Dangers and Demon(izer)s of Democratization in Egypt

Through an Indonesian Glass, Darkly

John T. Sidel

Abstract

This chapter illuminates the ongoing transition from authoritarian rule since 2011 and prospects for democratization in Egypt in the years ahead through a comparison with Indonesia since 1998. The chapter identifies crucial commonalities between Egypt and Indonesia, including the political transformations leading up through the fall of Suharto in 1998 and Mubarak in 2011, suggesting that the situation in Egypt as of late 2012 mirrors the early post-Suharto interlude of 1998–1999. Political trends in Indonesia since that time, it is argued, suggest that the current political strength of Islamist forces in Egypt may be both more exaggerated and more ephemeral than is commonly understood. But both the similarities and the differences between the two countries also suggest the likely staying power of conservative forces associated with the *ancien régime* – the military establishment, the entrenched business oligarchy, and local political bosses – impeding the continuing struggle for democratization in Egypt.

As of January 2013, the ongoing transition from authoritarian rule in Egypt had unfolded through a series of developments that seemed to defy the expectations of most Egyptians and the predictions of most expert observers of Egyptian politics. In a few short weeks in early 2011, sustained popular protests in the squares and streets of Cairo produced the surprisingly swift forced resignation of President Hosni Mubarak, who had remained in power for thirty years without encountering any previous such serious challenges to his authoritarian rule. Over subsequent months, however, the sense of élan and optimism generated by this

'People Power' moment faded in the face of rising criminality and episodes of inter-religious violence, on the one hand, and the entrenchment of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) as a ruling military junta, on the other hand. Parliamentary elections in late 2011, moreover, produced yet another set of unanticipated political changes, with the Muslim Brotherhood exceeding expectations to claim 37.5 per cent of the vote and 45 per cent of parliamentary seats, and the 'dark-horse' Salafi Islamist Al-Nour Party winning more than 27 per cent of the vote and a quarter of the seats in the People's Assembly.

The year 2012 produced similarly unexpected and ambiguous developments. The Muslim Brotherhood's candidate, Mohamed Morsi, won the presidency after a tightly contested two-stage election, even as the Supreme Constitutional Court invalidated the 2011 parliamentary elections and dissolved the elected parliament. Following his election in June 2012, moreover, President Morsi defied expectations of civilian weakness vis-à-vis the military establishment, first by recruiting diverse representatives of Egyptian society to his cabinet, and then, in mid-August, by removing and replacing military officers and revoking the decree that had vested effective executive and legislative powers in the hands of the SCAF. In November 2012, Morsi issued a set of decrees strengthening the powers and prerogatives of the presidency vis-à-vis the judiciary, even as the allegedly Islamist-dominated Constituent Assembly finalized the drafting of a new Constitution. These moves provoked widespread protests in the streets of Cairo and other major Egyptian cities amidst accusations that Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood had assumed dictatorial powers and hijacked Egypt's transition to democracy. In December 2012, the new Constitution was approved in a popular referendum, with preparations for a new round of parliamentary elections mandated for the months to come. But as of January 2013, ongoing protests against the Morsi administration, Morsi's imposition of a state of emergency in several cities, calls by opposition party leaders for their inclusion in a national unity government, ambiguities about new regulations for parliamentary elections, and expressions of concern by senior military officers all pointed to continuing anxieties and uncertainties with regard to the prospects for democratization in Egypt.

Against the backdrop of these unexpected events, ambiguous developments, and abiding uncertainties, how can we understand, explain, and predict the course of democratization in Egypt today? One recent study has approached this question by comparing autocratic entrenchment and 'adaptation' in Egypt and Syria, where Bashar Al-Assad's regime has

persisted in power to the time of this writing in the face of mounting popular mobilization and internal regime defections.¹ Another obvious point of comparison is nearby Tunisia, where popular protests in early 2011 similarly forced out long-time president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, and where elections later the same year saw a similarly strong showing for the *Nahda* party, Tunisia's counterpart to the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party in Egypt. A close comparative analysis of the similarities and differences between the processes of democratization in Egypt and Tunisia to date would be highly illuminating and instructive.² Yet, insofar as the transition from authoritarian rule remains an ongoing process and consolidation of democracy has yet to be achieved in either Egypt or Tunisia, it is necessary to look beyond these two cases – and beyond the Middle East – for points of comparison that might help us to understand Egypt's experience of democratization to date as well as the prospects for democratization in the years to come.

Here, the case of Indonesia suggests itself as especially useful as a point of comparison and a prism for the analysis of democratization in Egypt. If the fall of long-time Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in February 2011 recalls the forced resignation of long-time Indonesian President Suharto in May 1998, and if the ambiguities, anxieties, and uncertainties haunting Egypt over 2011–2013 are reminiscent of Indonesia in 1998–2001, then perhaps democratization in Indonesia over the past thirteen to fourteen years might shed some light on the prospects for Egyptian democracy in, say, 2025. Such is the premise – and the promise – of what follows in this chapter. On the one hand, insofar as this paired comparison reveals similarities between the two countries' experience of transition from authoritarian rule, it demonstrates that the processes and outcomes coming into view in Egypt are less contingent and more structurally determined than would otherwise be understood to be the case. On the other hand, insofar as the comparison spotlights the differences between Indonesia and Egypt and specifies the peculiarities of Egypt's experience of democratization to date, it may help to offer explanations for provisional outcomes and ongoing processes in Egypt to date and help to identify pathways, if not predictions, for democratization in Egypt in the months and years ahead.³

¹ Joshua Stacher, *Adaptable Autocrats: Regime Power in Egypt and Syria* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012).

² See also the very insightful and interesting Chapter 11 by Roger Owen in this volume.

³ On the possibilities and limitations of paired comparisons, see: Sidney Tarrow, 'The Strategy of Paired Comparison: Toward a Theory of Practice', *Comparative Political Studies*, Volume 43, Number 2 (February 2010), pp. 230–59.

Egypt and Indonesia: Historical Parallels

Although Egypt and Indonesia are different in many obvious and important ways, there are also a number of striking similarities and shared features of the two countries in broader regional and global contexts and in historical and sociological terms that render a paired comparison between them not only plausible but potentially illuminating. Both countries, after all, are regional giants: Indonesia's population of more than 240 million makes it the largest country in Southeast Asia, whereas Egypt, with its 80 million, is the biggest in the Arab world. Yet both countries were first incorporated into the world capitalist economy under various forms of European colonial rule as producers of agricultural commodities and have remained dependent on foreign capital and capital goods for their economic development and limited industrialization. Both countries, moreover, are heavily reliant not only on Western imports and investment, but also on wealthy neighbouring countries – Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states in the case of Egypt, Singapore and Malaysia in the case of Indonesia – as sources of financial intermediation, on the one hand, and sites for large-scale labour migration and remittances, on the other. Egypt and Indonesia are giants, in other words, but poor and weak giants nonetheless.

Alongside their parallel positions within regional and global economic contexts, Egypt and Indonesia are also homes to societies that share a set of important distinguishing features. Both countries are predominantly Muslim and boast long traditions of Islamic scholarship and social activism. Cairo's Al-Azhar is recognized as the Muslim world's most enduring and important 'mosque university', even as the Java-based *Nadhlatul Ulama* stands as the single largest independent association of 'traditionalist' Islamic schools in the world. Self-consciously modernist Islamic education, associational activity, and political organizing in Indonesia dates back to the 1910s with the rise of the school networks of *Muhammadiyah*, *Al-Irsyad*, and *Persatuan Islam*, and the unprecedented mass mobilization of the *Sarekat Islam*, while the Muslim Brotherhood (*Al Ikhwān Al-Muslimūn*) and other Islamic networks in Egypt have enjoyed tremendous growth and influence in Egyptian society since the first half of the twentieth century. Thus, both countries have long boasted rich and varied forms of independent Islamic associational life and political activism in the name of the faith.

At the same time, both Egypt and Indonesia are countries whose national identities are not exclusively grounded in Islam. In both countries, the infrastructure of a modern national bureaucratic state and the

circuitries of a national economy emerged under the auspices of Western imperialism and colonial rule, with ‘modernization’ and ‘progress’ associated with Western capital and ‘secular’ education and ‘scientific’ knowledge. The rise of nationalist consciousness and nationalist mobilization in both countries unfolded not only as a reaction to European colonial encroachment and domination, but also through the emergence of new nationalist imaginings and ‘reinvented traditions’ harking back to pre-Islamic eras of cultural formation. Both countries, moreover, have long played home to important non-Muslim minorities who played prominent – and in some ways, problematic – roles in European colonial rule and early capitalist development. Here, the disproportionately high representation of Indonesians of immigrant Chinese ancestry and Christian faith, and of Egyptian Copts, in the professional classes and in the business world is still very noticeable in the two countries today.

Against the backdrop of these historical and sociological commonalities, Egypt and Indonesia have, in broad terms, experienced markedly similar political trajectories over the past sixty-odd years. In the 1950s and 1960s, both countries were led by populist nationalist leaders – Soekarno in Indonesia, Nasser in Egypt – who championed “Third World” independence, economic nationalism, and ‘socialism’. The two countries engaged in parallel conflicts with former colonial powers, pro-Western, ‘neo-colonial’ neighbours, and U.S. ‘imperialism’: Egypt’s Suez War with the UK, France, and Israel in 1956, and Indonesia’s nationalization of Dutch businesses in 1957; Egypt’s proxy war with Saudi Arabia in Yemen in the mid-late 1960s and its brief armed conflicts with Israel in 1967 and 1973, and Indonesia’s mobilization against continuing Dutch rule in West Papua and *Konfrontasi* with the United Kingdom and Malaysia in the early to mid-1960s. Under Nasser and Soekarno, both Egypt and Indonesia were positioned as prominent members of the Non-Aligned Movement. Both experienced tensions and conflicts with the United States while exploring various forms of linkage with Khrushchev’s USSR and Mao’s PRC over the course of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

But over the course of the late 1960s, popular nationalism in both countries met with defeat and disillusionment, as seen in the decline, demise, and death of Nasser and Soekarno by 1970. By the early-mid 1970s, both Egypt and Indonesia had experienced the emergence and entrenchment of more conservative military rulers – Sadat in Egypt, Suharto in Indonesia – who moved to seek accommodation with their neighbours, embraced the United States, and opened their economies to flows of international finance, investment, and trade. This rightward shift in domestic and foreign policy was accompanied and enabled by

tightening repression of leftist forces and drastic narrowing of the permissible political spectrum in both countries. Over subsequent years, economic liberalization, privatization, and deregulation allowed for widening social inequalities and the withdrawal of many of the subsidies and other forms of support for the poor promised in the preceding eras of Nasserist and Soekarnoist 'socialism'.

Against the backdrop of the dramatic rightward shifts of the late 1960s and early-mid 1970s, both countries experienced three decades of authoritarian rule under a single military strongman: Indonesia under Suharto (1966–98), Egypt under Mubarak (1981–2011). In both Egypt and Indonesia, the powers and prerogatives of the military establishment were greatly enhanced, expanded, and insulated from civilian control, even as heavily scripted elections and closely stage-managed parliamentary bodies provided a thin veneer of democratic accountability. Over the years, both Egypt and Indonesia adjusted their economic policies in tune with the 'Washington Consensus', reducing dependence on external rents and moving from import-substitution industrialization to export-oriented manufacturing under structural adjustment programs that entailed economic liberalization, privatization, and deregulation. In both countries, these policies enabled higher economic growth and the emergence of new business classes, while increasing social inequality and leading to rising labour unrest and urban and rural land struggles. The result was greater vulnerability to regional and global economic crises, as seen in Indonesia in 1997–98 and Egypt in the 1990s and again from 2008 onwards.⁴

In both Indonesia and Egypt, thirty years of authoritarian rule under a single military strongman spawned centralized corruption, cronyism, and nepotism. Both presidents encouraged their children to emerge as major figures in the business world, as seen in the diversified conglomerates of Suharto's sons and daughters and the vast empire of Mubarak's son Gamal. Over their final years in office, moreover, both presidents began to set the stage for dynastic succession in politics, with Suharto's daughter Tutut and Mubarak's son Gamal promoted to positions of increasing prominence in both regimes' electoral machines and growing influence in the innermost circles of power in Jakarta and Cairo.⁵

⁴ On these trends, see: Andrew Rosser, *The Politics of Economic Liberalization in Indonesia* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2002); Samer Soliman, *Autumn of Dictatorship: Fiscal Crisis and Political Change in Egypt under Mubarak* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).

⁵ Jason Brownlee, 'The Heir Apparency of Gamal Mubarak,' *Arab Studies Journal* (Fall 2007–Spring 2008), pp. 36–56.

In both Indonesia and Egypt, the final decades of military strongman rule fuelled significant social and political change. In both countries, visible signs of religious piety became more prevalent in the public sphere, and Islamic organizations began to assume more prominent positions in social and political life. In Indonesia, this trend was recognized and reinforced by the formation of the government-linked All-Indonesian Association of Islamic Intellectuals (ICMI) in 1991.⁶ In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood increasingly asserted its presence in various professional syndicates in the 1990s and made a dramatic showing in the 2005 parliamentary elections.⁷

Meanwhile, new secular or ecumenical opposition groups also emerged to challenge the two entrenched dictatorships. Under the leadership of former president Soekarno's daughter, Megawati Soekarnoputri, the *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* (PDI) performed strongly in the 1992 elections, whereas Egypt saw the rise of the *Kifaya!* ('Enough') movement and Ayman Nour's failed presidential bid in 2005.⁸ In both countries, however, the entrenched authoritarian regimes stubbornly resisted pressures for political change. In Indonesia, Megawati was forcibly removed from the leadership of the PDI in 1996, considerably diminishing the party's popularity and paving the way for a strengthened showing by Suharto's political machine, *Golkar*, in the parliamentary elections of 1997.⁹ In Egypt, heavy-handed electoral fraud, manipulation, restrictions, and vote-buying enabled the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) and allied independent candidates to win 90 per cent of the seats in parliament, drastically reducing the representation of candidates affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and various opposition parties.¹⁰

⁶ Robert W. Hefner, 'Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class', *Indonesia* 56 (October 1993), pp. 1–35.

⁷ Mona El-Ghobashy, 'The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers,' *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Volume 37, Number 3 (August 2005), pp. 373–95; Bruce K. Rutherford, *Egypt after Mubarak: Liberalism, Islam, and Democracy in the Arab World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 163–90.

⁸ Manar Shorbagy, 'The Egyptian Movement for Change – Kefaya: Redefining Politics in Egypt', *Public Culture*, Volume 19, Number 1 (Winter 2007), pp. 175–96; Nadia Oweidat, Cheryl Benard, Dale Stahl, Walid Kildani, Edward O'Connell, and Audra K. Grant, *The Kefaya Movement: A Case Study of a Grassroots Reform Initiative* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2008); Rabab El-Mahdi, 'Enough! Egypt's Quest for Democracy', *Comparative Political Studies*, Volume 42, Number 8 (August 2009), pp. 1011–39.

⁹ Edward Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto: Compromise, Resistance, and Regime Change in Indonesia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005).

¹⁰ For a careful and insightful study of the significance of parliamentary elections during the Mubarak era, see: Lisa Blaydes, *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt*

In both Indonesia and Egypt, the resulting political sclerosis set the stage for eventual mobilization against authoritarian rule in 1998 and 2011, respectively. In both countries, the presidents in office had ruled in autocratic fashion for thirty years without broadening political participation or deepening political institutionalization. As Suharto reached the age of 77 in 1998 and Mubarak turned 83 in 2011, protracted succession crises were already under way, with Suharto's daughter Tutut and Mubarak's son Gamal already moved into leadership positions within the ruling *Golkar* and NDP party machines in anticipation of their ascent to the highest offices in their respective lands. As 1998 unfolded in Indonesia and 2011 opened in Egypt, the two countries were faced with the prospect of inevitable – and rapidly approaching, if not imminent – transfers of power that favoured presidential family members at the expense of broader institutional and economic interests represented within the Suharto and Mubarak regimes.¹¹

It was against this backdrop that transitions from authoritarian rule began to unfold in Indonesia in early-mid 1998 and in Egypt in the first weeks of 2011. With electoral challenges foreclosed, ongoing internal succession struggles combined with international economic crises to heighten the sense of urgency and opportunity for new forms of political action. In this context, opposition to the Suharto and Mubarak regimes assumed the form of 'People Power' protests, with university students and other middle-class elements spearheading and sustaining non-violent organizing efforts, even as more disruptive forms of mobilization by the 'dangerous classes' erupted on the streets as well. Thus, April and May 1998 saw mounting student protests – and, in mid-May, mass riots – in Jakarta and other major Indonesian cities, much as January and early February 2011 witnessed growing mobilization in Tahrir Square and other key locations in Cairo and other Egyptian cities. Protesters focussed their grievances and their demands on Suharto and Mubarak, calling on these long-time authoritarian presidents to resign from office. In both Indonesia in 1998 and Egypt in 2011, the entrenched military establishment equivocated, with the Indonesian and Egyptian Armed Forces prioritizing their

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). See also: Mohamed Fahmy Menza, *Patronage Politics in Egypt: The National Democratic Party and Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo* (London: Routledge, 2013).

¹¹ On the succession crisis in Indonesia, see: John T. Sidel, 'Macet Total: Logics of Circulation and Accumulation in the Demise of Indonesia's New Order', *Indonesia*, Volume 66 (October 1998), pp. 159–95. On Gamal Mubarak in Egypt, see: Alaa Alaswany, *On the State in Egypt: What Caused the Revolution* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2011), pp. 1–64.

own institutional and economic interests over the personal concerns of the president and, notably, his family. Facing mounting popular protests in the streets and diminishing support from the military establishment, President Suharto resigned in May 1998, much as Hosni Mubarak did in February 2011, with both presidents choosing early retirement under military protection over forced exile overseas. Thus, the broad historical and sociological parallels between Indonesia and Egypt over the previously noted *longue durée* were fairly matched in the specific trajectories of Indonesian and Egyptian political transformation and regime breakdown until the fall of their respective long-time dictatorships.¹²

The parallels between Indonesia and Egypt, moreover, extended into the early aftermath of the fall of Suharto and Mubarak and the uneasy interregnum that ensued. In Indonesia in mid-1998 and Egypt in early 2011, the forced resignation of the long-time dictators did not spell an immediate end to authoritarian rule, as unelected governments remained in office and the military establishments, through their commanding officers, assumed powers and prerogatives – and occupied political space – previously reserved for the nominally civilian long-time strongmen presidents. In both countries, the onset of a regime transition had destabilizing consequences in society, with ongoing and anticipated shifts in power structures undermining established patterns of business influence, criminal activity and organization, and religious structures of authority and identity. Both Indonesia in 1998–99 and Egypt in 2011 thus experienced an upsurge of gang warfare and criminality as well as episodes of inter-religious violence, as seen in Christian-Muslim pogroms in parts of Maluku and Central Sulawesi in early 1999 and attacks on Coptic Christians in Cairo in October 2011. Both Indonesia in 1998–99 and Egypt in 2011, moreover, saw the seemingly unified force of ‘People Power’ in the streets replaced by more diverse and fragmented forms of street politics in response to the interim governments’ stalling and stage-managing of constitutional reform, institutional change, and parliamentary and presidential elections.

In both countries, this uneasy interregnum appeared to draw to a close with the holding of competitive and free elections, the convening of new parliaments, and the – direct or indirect – election of new presidents,

¹² On the fall of Suharto, see: Geoff Forrester and R. J. May (eds.), *The Fall of Soeharto* (London: C. Hurst, 1998). On the fall of Mubarak, see: Jeannie Sowers and Chris Toensing (eds.), *The Journey to Tahrir: Revolution, Protest, and Social Change in Egypt* (London: Verso, 2012).

a series of events that unfolded in mid-late 1999 in Indonesia and in late 2011 and early-mid 2012 in Egypt. In contrast with the praetorian 'People Power' moment that had forced the resignation of Suharto in May 1998 and Mubarak in February 2011, these processes promised the institutionalization of a democratic mechanism for political change and thus the reassuring prospect of demobilization and demilitarization, shifting politics from the streets and barracks to the realm of political opinion surveys, polling stations, parliamentary debates, and presidential policy initiatives. For the advocates of *Reformasi* in Indonesia in 1998 and the avowed supporters of *Al Thawra* (The Revolution) in Egypt in 2011, this shift to electoral politics spelled the limits of genuine political change. For businessmen and other more conservative forces in Indonesian and Egyptian society, the 'institutionalization of uncertainty' through elections was welcomed as offering a potential basis for the restoration of social order, political stability, and economic recovery and growth.

But in both Indonesia in 1999–2001 and Egypt in 2012–13, the electoralization of politics also conjured up new forms of anxiety, without resolving key ambiguities and uncertainties created by the forced resignations of Suharto and Mubarak and the messy interregnum that had ensued in their aftermath. In both countries, parliamentary and presidential elections elevated Islamic parties and politicians to positions of unprecedented prominence and power, as the infrastructure of Islamic social institutions provided unique bases for nationwide political networks in the new context of genuinely open and free electoral competition for state power. In Indonesia, Islamic parties won nearly 40 per cent of seats in parliament, a former head of the leading Islamic university student association *HMI* (and leader of the second-largest non-Islamic party) was named speaker of parliament, the head of the 'modernist' Islamic association *Muhammadiyah* was named to lead the supra-parliamentary People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), and chairman of the 'traditionalist' Islamic association *Nadhlatul Ulama*, Abdurrahman Wahid, was elevated to the presidency in October 1999. Egyptian parliamentary and presidential elections in late 2011 and early-mid 2012 followed similar lines. The Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party won 47 per cent of the parliamentary vote, with the Salafi-led *Al-Nour* party claiming an additional 23 per cent. One former member of the Guidance Bureau of the Muslim Brotherhood was elected as Speaker of the National Assembly, and, in June 2012, another member, Freedom and Justice Party head Mohamed Morsi, was popularly elected to the presidency.

In both countries, moreover, the ascension to the presidency of representatives of prominent Islamic associations led to increasing anxieties and uncertainties as to the prospects for the stabilization and consolidation of democracy. In Indonesia in 1999–2001, Wahid's moves to replace senior military officers and to impose reforms on the Indonesian Armed Forces ran up against considerable resentment and resistance from the military establishment. Wahid's efforts to assert presidential powers and prerogatives vis-à-vis the diverse political parties in parliament (who had supported his elevation to the presidency in October 1999), moreover, led to rising accusations of corruption and abuse of power, parliamentary censure of the president and moves to unseat him, a clumsy attempt by Wahid to seize emergency powers, and his forced resignation in July 2001, with Vice President Megawati Soekarnoputri assuming the presidency in his stead. In Egypt, Morsi's moves to assert control over the Armed Forces, his decrees arrogating special supra-judicial powers for the presidency, and his promotion of a controversial Constitution have likewise isolated his administration, galvanized the opposition, and renewed fears of military intervention in the political arena. In today's Egypt, as in Indonesia in 1999–2001, there is thus considerable anxiety and uncertainty about the role of Islam in politics, the aggregation and abuse of power by elected civilian presidents, and the continuing political prerogatives of the military establishment. Overall, as of January 2013, Egypt's past and Egypt's present were in many ways strikingly similar to those of Indonesia up through the early post-authoritarian context of 1999–2001.¹³

Democratization in Indonesia since 1998: Implications for Egypt?

If Egypt is so similar to Indonesia, and if the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy in Egypt has, so far, been so 'Indonesian', then what do the years from 1999–2012 in Indonesia portend for the future of democratization in Egypt in the years ahead? How seriously should we take all the alarmism today about the various dangers said to be threatening democratization in Egypt?

First of all, the trajectory of Indonesian politics since 1999 suggests that the putative dangers attributed to the rise of Islamic parties and politicians in Egypt today are likely to be grossly inflated and exaggerated. In

¹³ For a detailed and well-documented chronicle of major developments and trends in early post-Suharto Indonesia, see: Kees van Dijk, *A Country in Despair: Indonesia Between 1997 and 2000* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2001).

Indonesia, it is worth recalling, Suharto's resignation was followed by the ascension to the presidency of his Vice President B. J. Habibie, the founder and chairman of the All-Indonesia Association of Islamic Intellectuals (ICMI), an umbrella organization founded in 1991 that served as a major patronage network for Muslim politicians and a source of protection and support for diverse Islamist causes and groups in the late Suharto years. As previously noted, moreover, the 1999 parliamentary elections saw parties rooted in Islamic organizations winning nearly 35 per cent of the vote, and the new speaker of parliament, the new chairman of the supra-parliamentary MPR (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* or People's Consultative Assembly), and the new president were all closely associated with leading Islamic associations as well. In subsequent parliamentary elections in 2004 and 2009, Islamic parties continued to claim a quarter to a third of the electorate and a roughly commensurate position in parliamentary politics. Yet, the past thirteen years have also seen these Islamic parties failing to coalesce, to grow, or (since 2001) to achieve success for Islamic candidates for the presidency. At the same time, even the most stridently Islamist of these parties have abandoned efforts to demand constitutional change in favor of Sharia law and concentrated their energies instead on coalition politics with non-Islamic politicians and parties. These diverse Islamic parties have assiduously cultivated alliances with successive presidents to win seats in Cabinet, while actively fundraising and recruiting from amongst major businessmen and machine politicians in order to strengthen their campaigns. Even the supposedly puritanical Prosperous Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* or PKS) has been absorbed into and infested by 'money politics'.¹⁴

Thus, thirteen years of parliamentary politics has meant thirteen years of compromise, coalition building, cooptation, and corruption for Islamic parties and politicians, rather than aggressive or effective promotion of Islam. This outcome has reflected not only the limits of popular support and electoral success for parties rooted in Islamic organizations and avowedly Islamist aspirations, but also the inevitable diversity, fragmentation, and fractiousness of political parties claiming to represent Muslims in a populous country notable for pluralism of religious practices, education, and associational life. Thus, 'Islamic' parties in Indonesia have ranged from the National Awakening Party (PKB or *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa*) with a base in the 'traditionalist' Islamic boarding

¹⁴ Syahrul Hidayat, 'Managing the Impact of Moderation: The AKP in Turkey and the PKS in Indonesia' (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Exeter, 2012).

schools (*pesantren*) of *Nahdlatul Ulama* across rural Java, to the National Mandate Party (PAN or *Partai Amanat Nasional*) with its roots in the ‘modernist’ *Muhammadiyah* association, to the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS or *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*) founded and led by more puritanical Islamic university student activists of the 1980s and 1990s, and the United Development Party (PPP or *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*) that served as the sole Islamic party in the elections of the Suharto era and has retained some of its pseudo-populist pretensions and its political machinery. But the inexorable decline if not of Islamic parties, then of Islam as a distinctive basis for parliamentary politics in Indonesia over the past thirteen years has also stemmed from the ‘parliamentarization’ of politics itself. As parties originally rooted in Islamic organizations and oriented towards Islamist aspirations have competed – and cooperated – with non-Islamic parties in elections, in parliament, and in presidential cabinets in successive administrations, they have been compelled not only to reach compromises on matters of religious principle, but also to recalibrate relations with their constituencies, shifting away from linkages based on notions of religious community and structures of religious authority, and building new linkages based on delivery of public goods and popular policies, as well as rent-seeking activities and patron-client relations instead. The imperatives of coalition politics, of campaign financing, and of competition for constituencies, votes, and parliamentary and cabinet seats in democratic Indonesia have produced not only what some analysts celebrate as ‘moderation’ of Islamic parties, but also ‘regression towards the mean’ of money and machine politics as well.¹⁵

Second, the broader trends in Indonesian society since 1999 have likewise suggested that the more generalized fears about religious violence and sectarian conflict in Egypt today may be considerably overblown.¹⁶ The localized anti-Chinese riots that took place in Indonesia in the mid-1990s disappeared after Suharto’s fall in 1998, and the Muslim-Christian violence that erupted in Maluku and Central Sulawesi in early 1999 ran

¹⁵ Edward Aspinall, ‘Elections and the Normalization of Politics in Indonesia’, *South East Asia Research*, Volume 13, Number 2 (July 2005), pp. 117–56; Kikue Hamayotsu, ‘The End of Political Islam? A Comparative Analysis of Religious Parties in the Muslim Democracy of Indonesia’, *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, Volume 30, Number 3 (December 2011), pp. 133–59.

¹⁶ For background on the Coptic minority in Egypt, see: Mariz Tadros, ‘Vicissitudes in the Entente between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the State in Egypt (1952–2007)’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Volume 41, Number 2 (May 2009), pp. 269–87; and Elizabeth Iskander, *Sectarian Conflict in Egypt: Coptic Media, Identity and Representation* (London: Routledge, 2012).

its course by the end of 2001. Today, ethnic-Chinese Indonesians enjoy far greater freedom from discrimination, harassment, and persecution than ever before, and, by and large, Christians across Indonesia likewise practice their faith with few real fears or restrictions.¹⁷ To be sure, 2002–05 saw some Islamist terrorist activity (a single bombing attack on a foreign target each year), and since 2005 some Islamist groups have waged a campaign of persecution against “deviant” Muslim sects such as the Ahmadis. The Islamic parties succeeded in passing an anti-pornography law in 2008, and some local assemblies have passed new regulations supposedly inspired by Islamic law. But all in all, Indonesian society under democracy today is more pluralistic and liberal than it ever was under authoritarian rule. Even activists fighting for the rights of gay, lesbian, and transgender Indonesians have claimed real progress over the past decade and see bright prospects for the years ahead.¹⁸

These trends in religious violence and conflict have reflected not only the declining organizational power and political influence of forces mobilized in the name of Islam over the past thirteen years, but also shifts in the structures of religious boundaries, identities, and hierarchies of authority accompanying the transition from authoritarian rule and the consolidation of oligarchical democracy in Indonesia. With the fall of Suharto came destabilization of the centralized structures of authority that had underpinned not only the organization of state power, but also the allocation of monopoly franchises and concessions to businessmen, the awarding of ‘protection’ to gangsters, and the according of recognition to leaders of various churches and Islamic associations. Without any stable centralized source of authority and recognition, those who claimed to represent Islam and Muslims in Indonesia experienced new uncertainties and anxieties as to the nature and extent of their religious authority, much as their counterparts in Protestant and (perhaps to a lesser extent) Catholic churches did at the same time. It was against this backdrop that the uneasy interregnum between the ‘People Power’ moment leading to Suharto’s forced resignation in May 1998 and the elections of June 1999 saw the unfolding of myriad ‘turf wars’ between rival urban street gangs, anti-witchcraft campaigns in the remote highlands of rural Java, and rising tensions between competing networks of local businessmen, bureaucrats,

¹⁷ John T. Sidel, *Indonesia: Minorities, Migrant Workers, Refugees, and the New Citizenship Law* (Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, March 2007).

¹⁸ On these trends, see the various fine essays in Greg Fealy and Sally White (eds.), *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009).

politicians, gangsters, and retired and active military and police officers in regencies (*kabupaten*) and provinces around the country. In some localities – Ambon, the capital of Maluku and Poso, in Central Sulawesi – where these rival networks were divided along religious lines, and where Protestant and Muslim residents were in rough demographic and electoral parity, such tensions developed into full-blown inter-religious pogroms, with hundreds killed and tens of thousands forcibly displaced over the course of 1999, 2000, and 2001.¹⁹

But if the onset of transition from authoritarian rule enabled and impelled the irruption of inter-religious violence in Indonesia at the turn of the twenty-first century, the consolidation of democracy facilitated if not forced the demilitarization and demobilization of sectarian conflict over the course of the subsequent decade. In Jakarta, the influence of non-Muslim minorities in parliament, in the Armed Forces, and vis-à-vis the president eventually led to armed intervention and the imposition of a cessation of inter-religious hostilities. On the local level, moreover, the election of new local assemblies and of new mayors, regents (*bupati*), and governors combined with new opportunities for gerrymandering and the creation of new districts and provinces (*pemekaran*) to encourage power-sharing arrangements and the division of the spoils of local office between Protestant and Muslim political-cum-business networks, even in conflict-torn areas like Maluku and Poso.²⁰

Meanwhile, successive local and national elections worked to undermine confidence in ‘the Muslim vote’ and in the claims of Islamic parties and politicians to represent Muslims in Indonesia in a coherent, compelling, and consistent fashion. This trend in the arena of parliamentary politics arguably opened up new possibilities for extra-electoral efforts to assert claims not to represent Indonesian Muslims, but to represent Islam in Indonesia, whether through terrorist violence as seen in 2002–05, or through vigilante-style campaigns of harassment, intimidation, and violence against the threats to Islam allegedly posed by Christian proselytization, immorality (e.g., alcohol consumption, gambling, pornography, and prostitution), and ‘deviant sects’ within the faith. Thus, the past several years have witnessed episodic attacks on brothels and gambling casinos, Christian churches, and Ahmadiyya mosques, along with sporadic

¹⁹ John T. Sidel, *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 132–95.

²⁰ *Indonesia: The Search for Peace in Maluku* (Jakarta/Brussels: International Crisis Group, February 2002); *Indonesia: Managing Decentralization and Conflict in South Sulawesi* (Jakarta/Brussels: International Crisis Group, July 2003).

efforts by various actors – not all of them ‘Islamist’ – to impose local government regulations (*perda*) allegedly inspired by Sharia law, as well as restrictions on various forms of perceived religious deviance and immorality.²¹ But overall, such much-publicized activism in the name of Islam has been waged largely as a rear-guard action in the face of the downsizing of Islamic agendas and ambitions in government, the deterioration of Islamic political parties, the declining influence of established Islamic associations, and the diminishing fixity and force of any one source of religious authority in the face of democratization, decentralization, and the continuing liberalization of Indonesian economic, cultural, and social life.²²

Third and finally, Indonesia’s experience since 1999 has also demonstrated that there are more serious threats to democratic institutions and practices from other quarters than those associated with Islam. Since the overthrow of Suharto in 1998, the Indonesian military establishment has remained largely insulated from outside scrutiny. The Armed Forces has retained many of its business interests, its huge off-budget sources of finance, and its considerable freedom from external scrutiny in the procurement of weaponry and materiel. Thirteen years after the fall of Suharto, the Armed Forces still enjoys effective impunity for human rights abuses, the Army retains its territorial command structure down to the local level across the archipelago, and the military establishment as a whole commands substantial residual political influence.²³ Today, the President of Indonesia is a retired Army general – (Retired) Lieutenant General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004–14) – and many other retired military officers occupy positions of real prominence and power in Indonesian politics and society. As of this writing, the leading candidate for the Indonesian presidency in the 2014 elections is another

²¹ *Indonesia: Implications of the Ahmadiyah Decree* (Jakarta/Brussels: International Crisis Group, July 2008); *Indonesia: ‘Christianisation’ and Intolerance* (Jakarta/Brussels: International Crisis Group, November 2010); Michael Buehler, ‘The Rise of Shari’a By-Laws in Indonesian Districts’, *South East Asia Research*, Volume 16, Number 2 (July 2008), pp. 255–85.

²² John T. Sidel, ‘The Changing Politics of Religious Knowledge in Asia: The Case of Indonesia’, in Saw Swee-Hock and Danny Quah (eds.), *The Politics of Knowledge* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), pp. 156–92.

²³ See: Marcus Mietzner, *Military Politics, Islam, and the State in Indonesia: From Turbulent Transition to Democratic Consolidation* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), especially pp. 195–250, 360–83; Marcus Mietzner, *The Politics of Military Reform in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Elite Conflict, Nationalism, and Institutional Resistance* (Washington, DC: East-West Center, 2006).

former Army general. Overall, democratization has yet to lead to a full demilitarization of political life in the country.

Meanwhile, with the establishment of competitive elections, parliamentary rule, and a directly elected presidency, Indonesia has experienced the consolidation of a decidedly oligarchical form of democracy. On the one hand, as previously suggested, the vast agencies of the Indonesian state – most obviously its coercive apparatuses – have retained considerable autonomy from democratic control. The vestiges of the authoritarian ‘deep state’ include not only the Indonesian Armed Forces, but also the Indonesian Police, the State Intelligence Agency, and the court system, where a ‘judicial mafia’ is said to remain deeply entrenched.²⁴ In recent years, much publicized evidence of rampant rent-seeking within the ministries of education, health, and religious affairs has demonstrated the continuing insulation of the bureaucracy from external pressure and scrutiny, even as myriad state enterprises and state-owned landholdings still loom large in the national economy. On a local level, the remarkable success of career civil servants in winning elected executive positions as *bupati* (regent), *walikota* (mayor), and *gubernur* in *kabupaten* (regencies), cities, and provinces across the country has attested to their privileged control over state personnel and patronage, and to the relative importance of state-based resources vis-à-vis those in the private sector in the mustering of campaign funds and the mobilization of voters.²⁵

On the other hand, the past thirteen years have witnessed the continuing entrenchment of an oligarchy of interlocking private business interests that have succeeded in penetrating, capturing, or otherwise exerting considerable influence over political parties, parliament, and pockets of the bureaucracy. The costs of campaign financing have encouraged all political parties – and presidential candidates – to solicit donations from businessmen, to support businessmen as candidates for local and national offices, and to engage in assiduous efforts to provide assistance and advantages to favoured business interests through the discretionary use of state power.²⁶ Meanwhile, the costs of purchasing entry to, and ascending within, the bureaucracy have also encouraged many civil servants,

²⁴ Edward Aspinall and Gerry van Klinken (eds.), *The State and Illegality in Indonesia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011).

²⁵ Marcus Mietzner, ‘Soldiers, Parties, and Bureaucrats: Illicit Fund-Raising in Contemporary Indonesia’, *South East Asia Research*, Volume 16, Number 2 (July 2008), pp. 225–54.

²⁶ Marcus Mietzner, ‘Party-Financing in Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Between State Subsidies and Political Corruption’, *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Volume 29, Number 2 (August 2007), pp. 238–63.

police and military officers to find businessmen 'sponsors', thus further facilitating privileged access to and influence over the myriad agents and agencies of the Indonesian state on the basis of private wealth and personal connections. Overall, the past thirteen years in Indonesia have seen the consolidation of an oligarchic form of democracy, highly corrupt and hardly responsive to growing problems of social inequality and injustice across the country.²⁷

Against this backdrop of democratization and discontents in Indonesia from 1998–2012, an Indonesian future for Egyptian democracy is all too easy to envisage, both for better and for worse. Indeed, to date, Egypt has begun to follow Indonesia's trajectory, with President Mohamed Morsi working hard to extend his authority vis-à-vis the military establishment, much as 1998–2001 witnessed a protracted power struggle between presidents B. J. Habibie (1998–99) and Abdurrahman Wahid (1999–2001) and the leadership of the Indonesian Armed Forces. At the same time, as Egypt has begun to follow Indonesia's trajectory, Morsi's tenure in office has to date been marked by the president's difficulties assuaging Coptic Christian, liberal, and secular fears of Islamist ascendancy, on the one hand, and tensions and conflict with Salafi groups calling for Islamism, on the other hand, much as Abdurrahman Wahid faced during the height of inter-religious violence in Indonesia in 1999–2001. If Egypt continues to follow Indonesia's trajectory, moreover, the presidency of Mohamed Morsi will mark not only the apogee of political influence for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, but also the limits of civilian success in extending democratic control over the military establishment and the Egyptian state, much as 1998–2001 served as a narrow window of opportunity for presidents Habibie and Wahid to reduce the political powers of the Indonesian Armed Forces and to implement limited democratic reforms. Meanwhile, as Egypt has begun to follow Indonesia's trajectory so far, Morsi's presidency has faced rising dissatisfaction with the limitations of political change and economic recovery, and disillusionment with the compromises and allegations of incompetence and abuse of power that have haunted his administration, much as was seen in Indonesia in 1998–2001 under the notoriously 'mercurial' Habibie and the infamously 'erratic' Wahid.

²⁷ Richard Robison and Vedi R. Hadiz, *Reorganising Power in Indonesia: The Politics of Oligarchy in an Age of Markets* (London: Routledge, 2004); Dan Slater, 'Accountability Trap: Party Cartels and Presidential Power after Democratic Transition,' *Indonesia*, Volume 78 (October 2004), pp. 611–92; Marcus Mietzner, 'Indonesia's Democratic Stagnation: Anti-Reformist Elites and Resilient Civil Society,' *Democratization*, Volume 19, Number 2 (April 2012), pp. 209–29.

In years to come, if Egypt continues to follow Indonesia's post-authoritarian trajectory, the administration of Morsi may be followed by a marked retrenchment in democratization in Egypt, much as unfolded in Indonesia after Abdurrahman Wahid's forced removal from the presidency in Indonesia in mid-2001. The enactment of a new Egyptian constitution in November 2012 sets the stage for a new round of parliamentary and presidential elections that could see fragmentation and decline in the strength of parties and presidential candidates backed by the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi groups, and a commensurate regrouping and restrengthening of conservative political forces associated with the remnants (*feloul*) of the ancien régime, the 'deep state', and the business class, relying on money and machinery for mobilizing voters and (re)capturing parliament and the presidency. In this 'Indonesian' scenario, a second round of civilian political turnover would signal the 'consolidation' of Egyptian democracy, even as the Armed Forces would continue to enjoy informal power and prerogatives for years to come, with the military budget and economic interests, and both internal security and foreign policy, considerably insulated from civilian democratic control. In this 'Indonesian' scenario, the politics of the street (including the dimension of inter-religious conflict) would belatedly give way to what we might call the 'parliamentarization' of political life, with elections and political parties serving as the sole effective channels for popular participation and for access to state power and influence on state policy. In this 'Indonesian' scenario, Islamic parties and politicians in Egypt would remain strong, but suffer from increasing fragmentation and fractiousness, and coalition-building and corruption would inexorably erode the transformative potential of religion. Overall, the years ahead would see the entrenchment of an oligarchic democracy in Egypt, one in which money and machinery predominate in the electoral realm, business interests prevail in economic policy, and the military establishment and other fixtures of the 'deep state' would preserve their impunity and insulation from civilian democratic control and scrutiny. Perhaps in this 'Indonesian' scenario, Egypt would even see the rise to the presidency of a former Armed Forces general, much as Indonesia has seen with (Retired) Lieutenant General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono from 2004 through the present day.

Egyptian Idiosyncrasies and Departures from the Indonesian Model?

Needless to say, however, Indonesia and Egypt also differ in important ways that suggest both predictions and explanations for Egyptian

deviations from the Indonesian trajectory of democratization. By early 2013, some of these differences had already become evident insofar as Egypt departed from the Indonesian script over the two years since the fall of Mubarak. A close analysis of Egyptian deviations from the Indonesian script to date reveals the significance of differences in the institutional forms of state power under authoritarian rule and in the early phases of transition to democracy, differences that may spell further departures in Egypt's democratic trajectory in the months and years to come.

First of all, the military establishment assumed a much more prominent and problematic role in the early phase of transition from authoritarian rule to democracy in Egypt as compared with Indonesia. In Indonesia, the withdrawal of military support forced Suharto's resignation in May 1998, and under the two short-lived presidencies of B. J. Habibie (1998–99) and Abdurrahman Wahid (1999–2001), the Armed Forces enjoyed considerable success in resisting and restricting efforts to diminish its political powers and prerogatives, and to expand civilian and democratic control over the coercive apparatuses of the state. Thus, the Army retained its territorial command structure; senior Army officers moved into positions of great prominence and power in parliament, the cabinet, and, in due course, the presidency; and the military as an institution preserved many of its economic interests and much of its insulation from civilian democratic oversight. But at no point did the military as an institution occupy the position of a military as government, or effectively undo civilian-led initiatives producing political change. From Suharto's choice of vice president in March 1998 to the circumstances of his resignation in May 1998, from Habibie's ascension to the vice presidency in May 1998 to his decision to offer a referendum on independence to the people of East Timor, from the parliamentary elections of June 1999 to the elevation of Abdurrahman Wahid to the presidency in October 1999 – all the major turning points in this early post-authoritarian interregnum saw civilian initiatives encountering military ambivalence or antagonism, stimulating military foot-dragging and rear-guard sabotage, but winning military acquiescence in the end.²⁸

By contrast, the military establishment in Egypt played a more coherent, decisive, and proactive role in the developments and trends from the beginning of 2011 through mid-2012, not only defending the interests of the military as an institution, but imposing the military as government

²⁸ Mietzner, *Military Politics, Islam, and the State in Indonesia*, pp. 195–250; Mietzner, *The Politics of Military Reform in Post-Suharto Indonesia*.

as well. Convened in the final weeks of the Mubarak presidency, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) continued to exercise legislative and executive powers even in the aftermath of the parliamentary and presidential elections of late 2011 and early-mid 2012. Well into August 2012, SCAF's proclaimed prerogatives and perceived powers continued to loom large over newly elected president Mohamed Morsi's efforts to form a cabinet and otherwise exert his authority, and over ongoing efforts to draft a new constitution. Through SCAF's decrees, the military establishment very actively and openly moved to narrow the parameters of democratization in Egypt, far more than the Armed Forces did during the early post-Suharto years in Indonesia.

This Egyptian deviation from the aforementioned Indonesian trajectory should be understood in the light of important institutional differences between the military establishments under authoritarian rule in the two countries. Both Indonesia and in Egypt, to be sure, experienced decades of centralized authoritarian rule under the presidency of a retired senior military officer, in which the military as an institution enjoyed not only considerable impunity and insulation from external oversight, but also enormous privileges, powers, and prerogatives in the realms of business, on the one hand, and civilian administration on the other hand. In both Indonesia and Egypt, the military establishment came to own and operate a vast, diversified corporate empire and to enjoy enormous off-budget sources of finance, even as senior military officers came to occupy manifold positions of 'civilian' power as ministers, provincial governors, and directors of government agencies. But in Indonesia in the Suharto era, the military's own economic interests were increasingly dwarfed by the expansion and growth of diversified private business conglomerates, even as senior Armed Forces officers were increasingly drawn into civilian patronage networks rooted inside and outside the state. This trend was enabled and impelled by Suharto's strictly enforced retirement policies, which compelled Army generals to leave active service at the age of fifty-five and to seek higher office within the civilian realm, whether as members of parliament, cabinet ministers, heads of government agencies, ambassadors, or provincial governors, even as more junior officers sought similar 'pension schemes' at lower levels in the state hierarchy.²⁹ By the end of the Suharto era, this trend had taken its toll on the Armed Forces leadership, with the most senior officers known to be very intimately

²⁹ John A. MacDougall, 'Patterns of Military Control in the Indonesian Higher Bureaucracy', *Indonesia*, Volume 33 (April 1982), pp. 89–121.

affiliated with the president, members of his family, or other highly influential civilian figures in the regime.³⁰

This pattern of steady, relentless circulation, rotation, promotion, and retirement in the Indonesian Armed Forces prevented the consolidation of power in the hands of a military strongman or military junta in the aftermath of the fall of Suharto in May 1998. Even in the midst of all the political turmoil of the early post-Suharto era, Armed Forces officers continued to rise through the ranks year after year, and to 'retire' into civilian positions of power, privilege, and prestige.³¹ With the transformation from centralized authoritarian rule to decentralized democracy, retiring military officers thus shifted from alignments with rival factions within the regime to affiliations with rival powerbrokers and political parties in parliament. Thus, individual former senior military officers rose to prominent positions within a number of political parties, won seats in the national parliament or positions in local government, and, in a few cases, founded their own political parties and launched campaigns – in Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's case, successfully – for the presidency. In this way, the military as an institution succeeded not in actively entrenching itself as a military government, but rather in restricting and retarding the continuing diminution of its political powers and prerogatives as democratization proceeded after 1998.

In Egypt, by contrast, the military establishment continued to preserve its economic interests and institutional autonomy far more effectively under Mubarak than the Indonesian Armed Forces had done under Suharto, thus spelling much greater cohesion, coherence, and coercive power under the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) in the face of the ongoing transition from authoritarian rule to democracy. The vast, diversified business empire of the Egyptian Armed Forces continued to remain effectively impervious to external scrutiny and to retain a sizable share of the country's economy as a whole even as Egypt underwent extensive economic liberalization in the 1990s and 2000s, thus preserving more of a fiscal and social basis for autonomy than the Indonesian Armed Forces could claim in the face of economic reforms in the 1980s and a private investment boom of the early-mid 1990s in Indonesia. Instead of steady turnover within the armed services and 'retirement' into

³⁰ Sidel, 'Macet Total'.

³¹ Douglas Kammen and Siddharth Chandra, *A Tour of Duty: Changing Patterns of Military Politics in Indonesia in the 1990s* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1999).

civilian-led pillars of an authoritarian regime as in Suharto's Indonesia, the Egyptian Armed Forces combined extensive business interests of its own and extensive control over key cabinet ministries, government agencies, and provincial governorships with extended service by its senior officers, as witnessed in the long tenure of Field Marshal Muhamed Hussein Tantawi as minister of defense from 1991 through the end of the Mubarak era in early 2011. Up until early-mid August 2012, SCAF was thus led by a septuagenarian (the seventy-seven-year-old Tantawi) and a set of sixty-something service commanders and other senior officers. The contrast with Indonesia in late 1999, when the supposed military 'strongman' of the early post-Suharto era, General Wiranto, gave up his posts as Armed Forces Commander and Defense Minister at the age of fifty-five, could not be more striking. Compared to the Indonesian Armed Forces, it is clear that the Egyptian military has greater cohesion and capacity as an institution to retain its economic interests, its insulation from external control and scrutiny, and to resist ongoing pressures for democratization and demilitarization. Even President Morsi's decisive, dramatic, and much-debated removal of Tantawi, reshuffle of the military leadership, and revocation of SCAF's executive and legislative authority in early-mid August 2012 represented only an initial, exploratory effort to assert civilian control over the enormous, still well insulated, and seemingly impenetrable military establishment.³²

Additionally, the key civilian parliamentary pillar of authoritarian rule in Egypt, Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP), has proven far weaker than its Indonesian counterpart, Suharto's *Golkar* (*Golongan Karya* or Functional Groups), as a bulwark for continuity and conservatism in the context of a transition to democracy. The protests in Cairo in early 2011 led to the destruction of the NDP national headquarters, the party was subsequently dissolved, and former NDP politicians faced legal and other obstacles to participation in the parliamentary elections

³² Imad Harb, 'The Egyptian Military in Politics: Disengagement or Accommodation?', *Middle East Journal*, Volume 57, Number 2 (Spring 2003), pp. 269–90; Steven A. Cook, *Ruling but not Governing: The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); Ahmed S. Hashim, 'The Egyptian Military, Part One: From the Ottomans through Sadat', *Middle East Policy*, Volume 18, Number 3 (Fall 2011), pp. 63–78; Ahmed S. Hashim, 'The Egyptian Military, Part Two: From Mubarak Onward', *Middle East Policy*, Volume 18, Number 4 (Winter 2011), pp. 106–28; Yezid Sayigh, *Above the State: The Officers' Republic in Egypt* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, August 2012); and Hazem Kandil, *Soldiers, Spies, and Statesmen: Egypt's Road to Revolt* (London: Verso, 2012).

later the same year, thus enabling a 'critical realignment' in Egyptian party politics. By contrast, leading Golkar politicians in Parliament belatedly called for the resignation of President Suharto in Jakarta in May 1998, embraced the ascension of Habibie (a major Golkar powerbroker) to the presidency, and endorsed his favoured candidate as the party's new chairman in June of the same year. In the parliamentary elections of 1999, Golkar captured 22 per cent of the vote, second only to the *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan* (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle [PDIP]) with 34 per cent, thus positioning itself to play a major role in the coalition of parties electing Abdurrahman Wahid as president in October of that year and to win key cabinet seats in his administration. Subsequent parliamentary elections have seen Golkar continuing to perform as strongly in a very fragmented field of competition; its 20–22 per cent of the popular vote consistently landing it amongst the top two parties in successive elections over the years and winning the party key cabinet seats in successive administrations.³³

For a number of reasons, the NDP has not been fated to follow Golkar in this trajectory of post-authoritarian survival and success. Although Golkar enjoyed deep institutional roots in the bureaucracy and the Armed Forces in the early Suharto era and the party opened its ranks to private businessmen and Islamic activists in the late 1980s and early-mid 1990s, the NDP remained a weakly institutionalized rubric for patronage and, over the final decade of the Mubarak era, evolved into a vehicle for the launching of Gamal Mubarak's campaign to succeed his father as president of Egypt.³⁴ Against this backdrop, the forced resignation of Mubarak in early 2011 left business and other conservative elements associated with the former regime without an effective nationwide political machine through which to protect and promote their interests under conditions of competitive democratic elections, such as Golkar provided in Indonesia in 1999 and beyond. Thus, even as the military establishment demonstrated far greater staying power in Cairo in 2011–12 as

³³ Dirk Tomsa, *Party Politics and Democratization in Indonesia: Golkar in the Post-Suharto Era* (London: Routledge, 2008).

³⁴ Blaydes, *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt*, pp. 125–47; Rutherford, *Egypt after Mubarak*, pp. 218–24; Stacher, *Adaptable Autocrats*, pp. 98–107; Tarek Osman, *Egypt on the Brink: From the Rise of Nasser to the Fall of Mubarak* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 127–57; Mohammed Zahid, *The Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt's Succession Crisis: The Politics of Liberalisation and Reform in the Middle East* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 129–74; Fahmy, *Patronage Politics in Egypt*; and Sophie Pommier, 'Égypte: Le Parti National Démocratique au Coeur du Dispositif de Succession', *Politique Étrangère*, Volume 1 (2007), pp. 67–78.

compared with Jakarta in 1998–99, it did so without commensurately strong representation of civilian remnants (*feloul*) of authoritarian rule in the parliamentary arena, thus associating the shift from authoritarian rule to democracy with far greater electoral realignment and effective political change in Egypt as compared with Indonesia.

Finally, the role of Islamic associations and political parties in the ongoing transition to democracy in Egypt has proven even more prominent and powerful than was the case in Indonesia after the fall of Suharto. In large measure, this difference can be attributed to diverging patterns in the evolution of dominant party organizations, on the one hand, and in the engagement with autonomous Islamic associations, on the other hand, under authoritarian rule. In Indonesia, the final decade of the Suharto era witnessed various efforts to co-opt *Nahdlatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah*, and to incorporate into *Golkar*, parliament, the Cabinet, and other senior echelons of the bureaucracy (including the Armed Forces), upwardly mobile Muslim businessmen, civil servants, military officers, and professionals educated under the umbrella of these major Islamic associations. These efforts were reinforced by the formation in 1991 of the All-Indonesia Association of Islamic Intellectuals (ICMI) under the chairmanship of long-time Suharto associate and Minister for Research and Technology B. J. Habibie, who used ICMI to create a vast patronage network that stretched from the cabinet, *Golkar*, the parliament, and the Armed Forces into the business world and the ranks of various Islamic organizations.³⁵

This co-optation strategy, which culminated in the elevation of Habibie to the vice presidency in March 1998, had fateful consequences not only for Suharto, but also for post-Suharto Indonesia. In May 1998, Islamic organizations and activists linked to ICMI loomed large amongst the anti-Suharto protesters in the streets of Jakarta, even as Muslim politicians affiliated with Habibie were prominent amongst those submitting their cabinet resignations or calling for Suharto's resignation from the floor of the national parliament. Thus, Habibie's assumption of the presidency in late May 1998 was met with acceptance if not enthusiasm both by elements within the ancien régime and by many of the organizations and activists who had mobilized in the anti-Suharto protests

³⁵ Hefner, 'Islam, State, and Civil Society'; Takashi Shiraishi, 'Rewiring the Indonesian State', in Daniel S. Lev and Ruth McVey (eds.), *Making Indonesia: Essays on Modern Indonesia in Honor of George McT. Kahin* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1996), pp. 164–79.

of the preceding weeks and months. The provisional empowerment of Islamic organizations and the partial encouragement of Islamist aspirations under Habibie's interim government also coloured the June 1999 parliamentary elections in significant ways. *Golkar* succeeded not only in winning 22 per cent of the national vote, but also in continuing to attract support from Muslim politicians and voters and from Islamic activists and organizations who under other circumstances might have been drawn to other – Islamic – parties. Together with *Golkar*, the only other two parties that had been allowed to compete in Suharto-era elections – the omnibus Islamic PPP (United Development Party) and the secular-nationalist PDIP (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle) – captured two-thirds of the 1999 parliamentary vote, 34 per cent for PDIP and 11 per cent for PPP. Of the myriad new parties that competed in these first post-authoritarian elections, only those associated with Indonesia's two major Islamic associations – *Nahdlatul Ulama's* PKB (National Awakening Party) and *Muhammadiyah's* PAN (National Mandate Party) – performed strongly, with 13 per cent and 7 per cent of the vote, respectively. Thanks to Suharto's co-optation strategy of the late 1980s and early to mid-1990s, the critical realignment accompanying the first post-authoritarian election in Indonesia was thus qualified by significant continuities in the party system and by considerable success by the *Golkar* and PPP machines in absorbing Islamist energies and attracting Muslim votes otherwise represented almost exclusively by parties affiliated with the most established Islamic associations in the country.³⁶

In sharp contrast with the co-optation strategy of the late Suharto era, the continuing exclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic organizations from state power under Mubarak spelled a different trajectory for Islamic parties in the elections of 2011 and 2012. As previously noted, in sharp contrast with *Golkar*, the National Democratic Party (NDP) under Mubarak remained weakly institutionalized and became increasingly more narrowly associated with efforts to launch Gamal Mubarak's bid to succeed his father as president, even as the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic groups remained effectively excluded from its ranks and from direct access to state patronage and

³⁶ For contrasting accounts, see: Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); and Andrée Feillard and Remy Madinier, *The End of Innocence? Indonesian Islam and the Temptations of Radicalism* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2011).

power.³⁷ Thus, the critical realignment accompanying the first post-authoritarian elections in Egypt unfolded in the absence of an effective vehicle to promote continuity and to protect conservative interests associated with the former regime, and without other well-established, firmly institutionalized, nationwide political machines in place, aside from those associated with Islamic associational life. It was in this context that the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Freedom and Justice Party and the Salafi-led *Al-Nour* Party dominated the 2011 parliamentary elections and that the Brotherhood's candidate Mohamed Morsi won the presidency in June 2012. Thus, more than Indonesia during the presidencies of ICMI chairman Habibie (May 1998–October 1999) and *Nahdlatul Ulama* chairman Wahid (October 1999–July 2001), Egypt today is experiencing a transition from authoritarian rule to democracy in which Islamic – and decidedly Islamist – associations and aspirations, parties and politicians, are playing a very prominent and powerful role, and one more problematically counterposed against the continuing coercive power and institutional entrenchment of the military establishment.³⁸

Conclusion: Egyptian Democratization through an Indonesian Glass, Darkly

Overall, as previously suggested, Egypt's ongoing transition from authoritarian rule to democracy in the early 2010s can be illuminated in new ways through a paired comparison with Indonesia's experience in the early post-Suharto years at the turn of the twenty-first century. On the one hand, this comparison has suggested that a similar set of structural opportunities and constraints enabled and impelled the breakdown of authoritarian rule in Indonesia and Egypt, opened and inflected the early post-authoritarian interregnum under interim governments, and

³⁷ Zahid, *The Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt's Succession Crisis*; Rutherford, *Egypt After Mubarak*; Blaydes, *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt*, pp. 148–70; Fahmy, *Patronage Politics in Egypt*; Tarek Masoud, 'Why Islam Wins: Electoral Ecologies and Economies of Political Islam in Contemporary Egypt' (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2008); and Nathan J. Brown, *When Victory is Not an Option: Islamist Movements in Arab Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).

³⁸ See: Jonathan Brown, *Salafis and Sufis in Egypt* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 2011); Nathan J. Brown, *When Victory Becomes an Option: Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood Confronts Success* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, January 2012); and Stéphane Lacroix, *Sheikhs and Politicians: Inside the New Egyptian Salafism* (Doha: Brookings Doha Center, June 2012).

established the parameters of the possible for democratic parliamentary politics with the first set of post-authoritarian elections in the two countries. This comparative perspective thus reveals that the apparent uncertainties, anxieties, and indeterminacies of the early post-Mubarak era in Egypt have been somewhat exaggerated, and that a set of more ordered if not over-determined processes and outcomes have fallen into place, ones familiar to observers not only of Indonesian politics, but of oligarchical democracy in many other countries across the world. This comparative perspective also suggests that alarmist fears of dramatic social transformation or reconstituted authoritarianism under an early post-Mubarak, Islamist-led government in Egypt are misguided and misplaced, and that greater concern about the staying power of the military establishment and the reconstitution and re-entrenchment of Mubarak-era business interests and local bosses under oligarchical democracy is warranted instead.

On the other hand, this comparison has also cast new light on the distinctiveness of the Egyptian experience of transition from authoritarian rule to democracy and the specificity of the institutional and electoral constellations at play as of this writing. The entrenchment of the Egyptian military establishment and the electoral strength of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist forces in 2011–12, it has been shown, can be understood not as persistent reflections of the inherent and eternal features of the Egyptian political landscape, but as enduring institutional legacies of the authoritarian era and contingent provisional outcomes of the peculiarly structured pathways of authoritarian regime breakdown and transition to democracy in Egypt. Indeed, the nearly victorious presidential campaign of retired Air Force commander and Mubarak-era Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq in June 2012 signalled the enduring strength of conservative forces associated with the *ancien régime*, even as the strong showing of liberal, leftist, and Nasserist candidates in the May 2012 first round of the presidential elections suggested potential future bases for political alignment and opposition other than those associated with organized political Islam, as became increasingly evident on the streets of Cairo and other Egyptian cities in late 2012 and early 2013. Thus, even as the apparent inevitability of Indonesia-style oligarchical democracy looms large on the horizon, a distinctively Egyptian set of institutional obstacles, political options, and lived experiences lie ahead, laying the groundwork for a longer-term struggle for democratization for many years to come.

Against this backdrop, the comparison with Indonesia has also highlighted a set of key questions that merit further attention by political

analysts and democracy activists alike in Egypt today. If, as previously suggested, the military establishment is peculiarly problematic for democratization in Egypt, then much more needs to be unveiled and understood with regard to its institutional autonomy, economic empire, political power, and relationship with the United States. If, moreover, as has also been suggested, corporate interests and other conservative remnants of the authoritarian Mubarak regime have not preserved the NDP as a *Golkar*-like vehicle to protect and promote their interests, then it is essential to examine the alternative forms of influence and intermediation linking businessmen and local bosses to the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafi-led *Al Nour* party, and to rival politicians and parties in elections to come. Finally, if an Indonesia-style oligarchical democracy crystallizes in Egypt in the years ahead, then there will be much research to expose – and oppose – rent-seeking and corruption, local bossism and gangsterism, and the remnants of the ‘deep state’, much as scholars and other researchers have revealed in Indonesia over the past decade. It is only to be hoped that, in years to come, more positive developments and ‘progressive’ trends in Indonesia will provide new points of comparison, illumination, and inspiration as Egypt continues in its struggle for democratization.