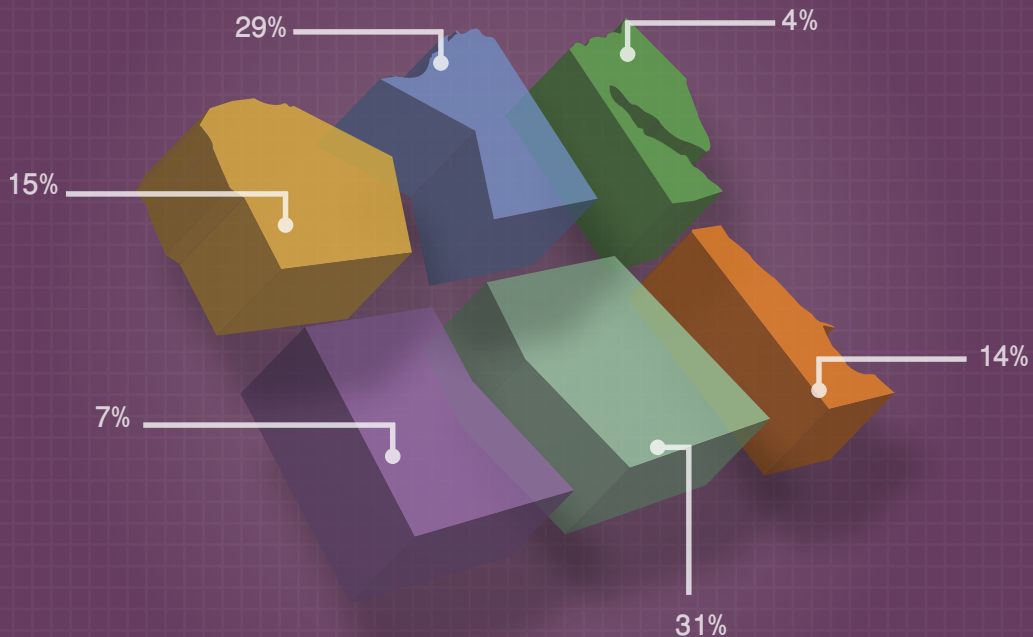


# Egypt Electoral Constituencies

Socio-economic classification  
of Egypt's party electoral constituencies





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**Socio-economic classification of Egypt's party  
electoral constituencies**

**Report**

**Danish-Egyptian Dialogue Institute**

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## Executive Summary

This report explores the voting behavior in the party voting constituencies based on a survey conducted by the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in 22 governorates in Egypt in October with 2400 respondents. The report is furthermore based on socio-demographic data from a household census conducted by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) in Egypt.

In the 2011 parliamentary elections Egypt will be divided into 46 party voting constituencies. By combining the census data with the electoral constituencies the report discerns the socio-demographic profile of the party voting constituencies. To get a better understanding of the impact of the socio-demographic profile of the constituencies, the party voting constituencies were clustered into five clusters based on:

- Share of 15-44 year olds
- Share of illiterate
- Share of university and above graduates
- Share of unemployed
- Share of public sector workers

Clustering the voting constituencies using these variables created 5 clusters of constituencies ranging from poor to rich. The poor were identified by a high share of illiteracy and a high share of non-access to public sanitation. On the other end of the spectrum the rich cluster of constituencies were characterized by a low share of illiteracy and a high share of access to public sanitation.

Looking into the voting behavior in the different clusters of voting constituencies a clear pattern emerged. In the poorer clusters the Muslim Brotherhood party Freedom and Justice Part and the Salafist Nour Party had strong support.

In the richer and more affluent clusters the Egyptian Bloc and Wafd party had a comparative strong support. As the two main competing blocs are the liberal bloc consisting of Egyptian Bloc and Wafd Party and the Islamist bloc consisting of Freedom and Justice Party and Nour Party, this would indicate that this is not merely a struggle over which role religion should have in a future Egyptian democracy, but is also a class struggle between the richer and the poorer segments of Egyptian society.

This class struggle may play a key role in determining the results of the on-going parliamentary elections in Egypt, as a majority of the undecided voters in October, were from the poorer segments of the Egyptian society, which should give the Freedom and Justice Party and Nour Party the upper hand in attracting these voters and thereby enhance their already likely electoral success.

## **2 Introduction: Analysis of Electoral Constituencies**

The Egyptian electoral system is a complex matter, which has undergone several changes in the last year. Changes to the electoral system was first put into place with the provisional constitution that was drafted by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) and approved by referendum in March 2011. The election law also underwent significant changes during 2011 and it has been amended three times following protest from different political actors. The many amendments and compromises have created a complex election law in Egypt that warrants a further exploration.

The Egyptian Parliament consists of two houses: the People's Assembly (lower house) and the Shura Council (the Upper house).

One of the contested issues has been the voting system and the way politicians get elected for the People's Assembly. During the Mubarak era all members were elected through a system of direct vote with individual candidates. A candidate needed 50 percent of the votes in his/her constituency in order to win. This favoured large parties and helped secure the NDP overwhelming majority in the parliament (along with election fraud and a limited opposition).

After the 25 January revolution the SCAF introduced several changes to the election system and Egypt has settled for a dual voting system. The People's Assembly will thus consist of politicians elected from both party and single voting constituencies. 2/3 or 332 of the members will be elected in party voting constituencies based on proportional representation. The last 1/3 or 166 members will be elected from 83 single voting constituencies with a majority election of two candidates from each constituency.

This report will explore the voting behaviour and patterns in the 46 party voting constituencies to give an insight into the socio-demographic dynamics that influences the voters. Based on these findings it will be possible to portray the likely outcomes of the parliamentary elections in Egypt.

The report contains the following sections:

- Chapter 2: The Egyptian Election System
- Chapter 3: The Party Electoral Constituencies
- Chapter 4: Methodology

## 2 The Egyptian Electoral System

In this section the complex Egyptian electoral system and the significant changes that it has undergone since January 2011 will be presented.

The system consists of 46 party electoral constituencies and 83 single district constituencies with 2/3 of the seats elected from party constituencies and 1/3 of the seats elected from single district constituencies. Two candidates are elected from the single constituencies and are chosen via French majority system. The 46 party electoral constituencies are chosen via proportional representation.

The former regime introduced a quota on the number of women in parliament. This quota has been replaced with a requirement that all party lists contain at least one woman. While this remnant of the former regime has been removed another quota dating back to the Nasser era remains. In the spirit of Arab socialism and in an effort to empower the Egyptian workers Nasser introduced a quota stipulating that 50 % of the parliamentary seats should be filled by "peasants" and "workers". A "worker" is simply defined as a paying member of a labor union and one who receives his or her income exclusively from manual or intellectual labor. A "peasant" is defined as someone who receives his or her income from farming, resides in the countryside and owns no more than 10 feddans of land. These definitions have led to a lot of exploitation and whether they have actually helped increase the number of peasants and workers in the parliament is debatable <sup>1</sup>.

This election system for the People's Assembly favors large parties as candidates from both types of constituencies are elected constituency based and not according to the proportional representation of the parties across Egypt as a whole.

The 166 members elected from the single voting constituencies are likely to be from a popular family or clan in locality or be a well-known candidate from the former governing party: The National Democratic Party. The 322 candidates elected from the 332 party constituencies are likely to represent large parties or coalitions of parties as the threshold for getting a candidate elected is going to be very high – possibly a threshold of 8-12% depending on the number of candidates elected from the particular constituency. This favors the Freedom and Justice Party. Strong and well-known candidates on the lists may very well have a big impact on the actual results of voting.

### 2.1 Changes since the January 25 revolution

Since the revolution the election system has undergone several changes. The former electoral system was, following the revolution, heavily criticized for favouring the big parties and especially the NDP and not leave any room for smaller parties to win seats.

In April 2011 the Supreme Administrative Court dissolved the NDP <sup>2</sup>. This alleviated some of the concerns with the former electoral system, but many of the new parties still feared that the system would not allow them to compete with the parties that had longer history in Egyptian society, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Al Waf Party.

On 30 May 2011 the SCAF proposed a draft law for the electoral system. The law left many questions unanswered but did take measures to alleviate the concerns of the newly formed political parties. The draft law proposed that 2/3 of the seats in the People's Assembly would be allocated to single voting constituencies elected in a first-past-the-post system, while the last 1/3 of the seats would be allocated to the party constituencies elected by proportional representation. The law proposal furthermore removed the quota on women in the People's Assembly that Mubarak had put in place.

The new draft law was criticized by the political parties for not allocating more seats to the proportional representation, which would empower the political parties. Some were also concerned that the use of a mixed system would confuse the voters and some felt that the voting should be exclusively based on proportional representation <sup>3</sup>. The law furthermore left out specifics on the total number of seats in the People's Assembly, which formula that would be used to allocate the proportional representation seats and whether or not the electoral boundaries would be redrawn <sup>4</sup>.

Following consultations with the political parties the draft law was amended and a new electoral law was approved on 6 July 2011 by the caretaker government. The concerns of the parties had to some extent been taken into consideration as the new law stipulated an equal division of seats between proportional representation and first-past-the-post system. The law furthermore stipulated that the total number of seats in the People's Assembly would be 500 and that the minimum age for candidates would be 25, which formerly stood at 30.

This however did not appease the political parties and 18 of the parties, including the big parties Al Wafd party and the Muslim Brotherhood, called for the law proposal to be withdrawn and a complete proportional representation system put in place <sup>5</sup>.

**On 21 July 2011, the SCAF announced:**

That the election (for both the People’s Assembly and the Shura Council) would be held in three rounds in October, with 15-day intervals in-between;  
That half the seats would be reserved for workers and farmers;  
That the size of the People’s Assembly would be 504

On Sunday 25 September the electoral law was once again amended this time increasing the share of seats filled by proportional representation from 50 % to 66 %. The new law furthermore decreased the number of seats in the People’s Assembly to 498. The political parties were however not satisfied with the amendments as the MP’s elected by first-past-the-post system could only be independent candidates and not belong to political parties. This was seen as a favouring the former NDP candidates as these were largely running as independents following the dissolution of NDP <sup>6</sup>.

The parties threatened to boycott elections if their demands for a change in the electoral law were not met by 2 October. After a meeting with political party leaders on 1 October 2011, the SCAF agreed to allow party members to run for the directly elected seats.

**2.2 The Election System**

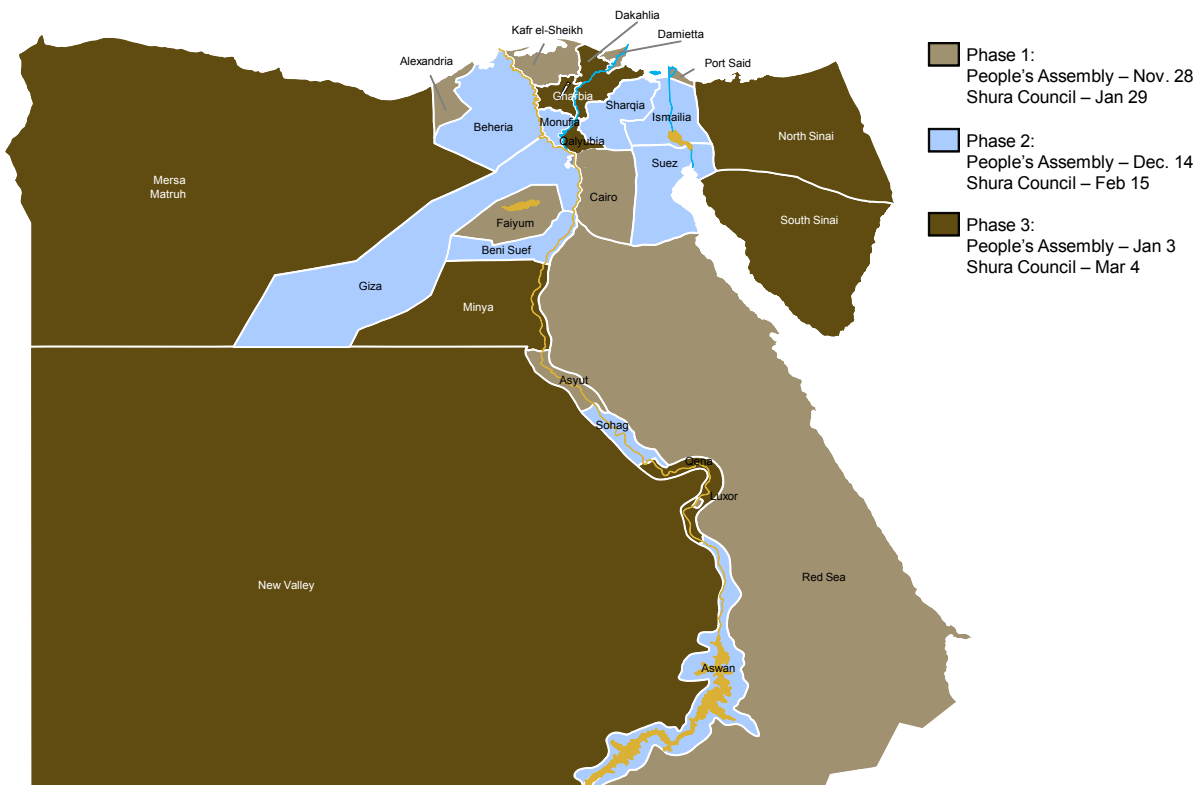
The results of the process since January with several amendments to the electoral law is as follows:

- There will be 498 seats in the People’s Assembly. 322 of these seats or 2/3 will be elected through a proportional representation system. The last 166 seats will be elected through first-past-the-post system.
- Egypt has been divided into 46 party voting constituencies and 83 single voting constituencies. There is between 4 to 12 seats allocated to each party voting constituency, while the single voting constituencies will have 2 seats each.
- 50 % of the members of the People’s Assembly must be either peasants or workers.

The election for the People’s Assembly will be held in three rounds with the first round starting on November 28, second round starting on the 14 December and the third round starting on the 3 January 2012. The geographical division of the voting rounds is as follows:

**Figure 1: Geographical distribution of voting phases**

**People’s Assembly and Shura Council Election in Egypt**  
The Geographical Distribution of the Three Election Rounds in Egypt



One of the main issues still surrounded by uncertainty is the mathematical method for allocating the seats under the proportional representation system. This can have a significant impact on the allocation of seats to the different parties.

### 3 Party Electoral Constituencies

The complex electoral system of Egypt warrants an in-depth study of the electoral constituencies in order to shed light on the voting behaviour and dynamics. Creating this knowledge base can create some degrees of certainty in a very uncertain and complex voting system environment.

#### 3.1 Introduction

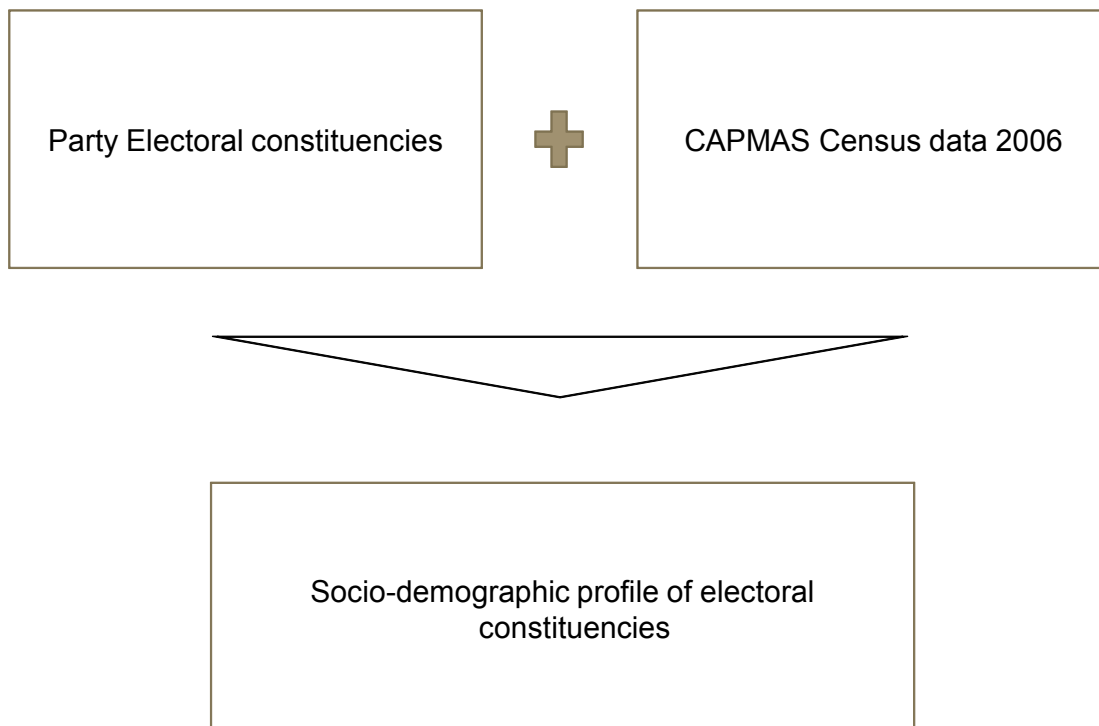
The 46 voting constituencies all have individual characteristics but also share certain traits and features with other voting constituencies.

The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) in Egypt conducted a household survey in 2006. This data was aggregated on the levels of governorates and on kism/markas level.

The party voting constituencies contain several kism/markas. By combining the kism/markas of each party voting constituency with the CAPMAS census data it was possible to create a socio-demographic profile of each electoral constituency.

**Figure 2: Method for socio-demographic description**

#### Method for Describing the Party Constituencies Combining the Census Data and Party Electoral Constituencies



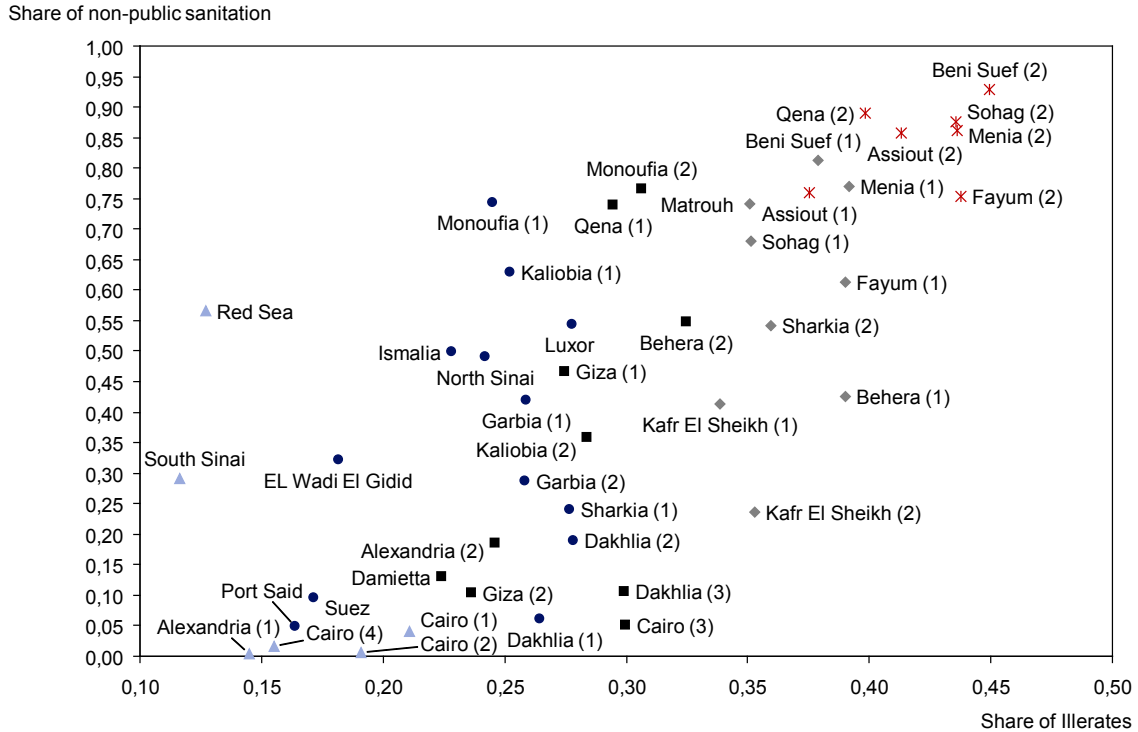
### 3.2 Clusters of Constituencies

In order to diminish the complexity and to gain a better understanding of the voting behaviour and patterns of the Egyptian populace, the 46 party voting constituencies were clustered according to different socio-demographics variables (see chapter 5 for methodology).

This allowed a segregation of the party voting constituencies into 5 different clusters. When comparing the party voting constituencies in relation to the share of illiterates and share of non-public sanitation a clear pattern is visible.

**Figure 3: Segmentation of voting constituencies**

#### Five Clusters of Party Electoral Constituencies Electoral constituencies are differentiated by socio-economic indicators



At the one end of the spectrum the cluster containing party voting constituencies such as Beni Suef (2), Sohag (2) and Assiout (2) all share similar traits in terms of a high share of illiterates and high share of no access to public sanitation. This cluster of voting constituencies can be categorised as a poor cluster, as high illiteracy rates and low access to public sanitation both can be seen as indicators of poverty.

At the other end of the spectrum the cluster containing party voting constituencies such as Alexandria (1), Cairo (1) and South Sinai all share the same traits in terms of low illiteracy rates and good access to public sanitation. This cluster of voting constituencies can be categorised as rich.

In the table below the segregation of the party voting constituencies is visible in detail.

**Figure 4: Categorisation of the voting constituencies**

**The Five Clusters are Categorised**

Socio-Economic variables defines the five clusters

	<u>Party Electoral constituencies</u>	<u>Seats in People Assembly</u>
Cluster 1: Rich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alexandria (1), Cairo (1), Cairo (2), Cairo (4), Red Sea, South Sinai</li> </ul>	42
Cluster 2: Middle One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dakhlia (1), Dakhlia (2), EL Wadi El Gidid, Garbia (1), Garbia (2), Ismalia, Kaliobia (1), Luxor, Monoufia (1), North Sinai, Port Said, Sharkia (1), Suez</li> </ul>	82
Cluster 3: Middle Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alexandria (2), Aswan, Behera (2), Cairo (3), Dakhlia (3), Damietta Giza (1), Giza (2), Kaliobia (2), Monoufia (2), Qena (1)</li> </ul>	86
Cluster 4: Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behera (1), Beni Suef (1), Fayum (1), Kafr El Sheikh (1), Kafr El Sheikh (2), Matrouh, Menia (1), Sharkia (2), Sohag (1)</li> </ul>	74
Cluster 5: Very Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assiout (1), Assiout (2), Beni Suef (2), Fayum (2), Menia (2), Qena (2), Sohag (2)</li> </ul>	48

### 3.3 Party Strength and weaknesses in different clusters of constituencies

Socio-demographic indicators often have been impact on the voting behaviour. People living in poor areas will thus likely be attracted to certain type of parties speaking to this segment of voters, while people living in rich voting constituencies will have other preferences.

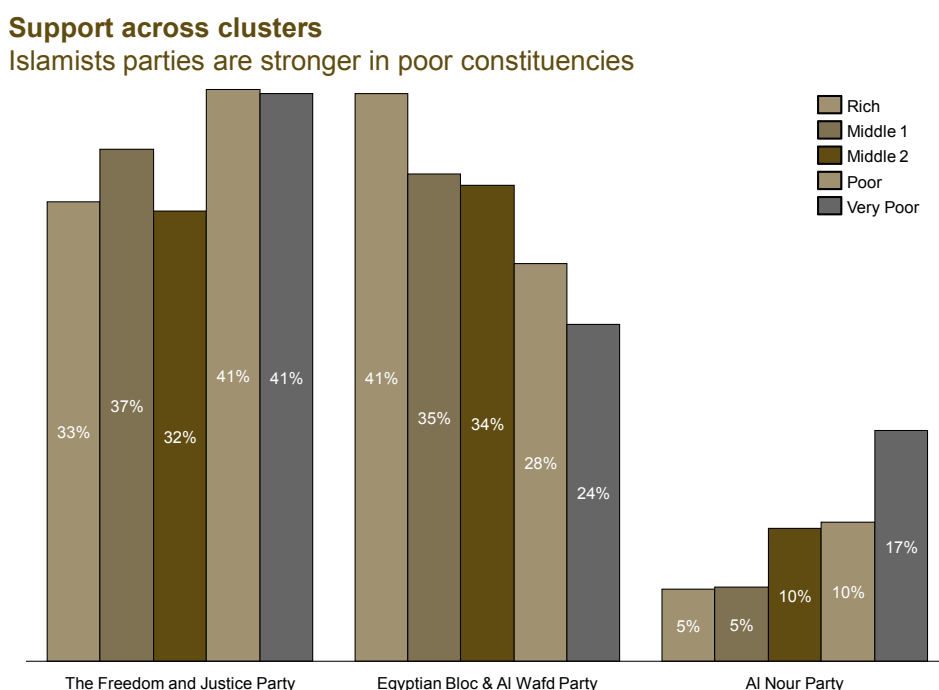
In Egypt four major parties exist, who are accounted for 74% % of the decided votes in a recent poll conducted by the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies and Danish-Egyptian Dialogue Institute.

Party	Political platform
<b>The Freedom and Justice Party (Muslim Brotherhood)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supporting the establishment of a civil state with Islam as state religion and Islamic law as legislative source.</li> <li>- Calls for a parliamentary system with only a symbolic role for the president.</li> <li>- Promoting a market economy with social justice.</li> </ul>
<b>The Wafd Party</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promoting economic development through neoliberal, free market principles.</li> <li>- Supporting cultural and religious rights for all Egyptian citizens, regardless of race or sect.</li> <li>- Decentralizing the political system by delegating enhanced powers to local governing institutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Al-Nour (Salafist)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementation of Shari'a in Egypt.</li> <li>- Preservation of right to propriety and free economic competition as long as it does not hurt the interests of society.</li> </ul>
<b>Egyptian Bloc (Free Egyptian Party, Egyptian Social Democrats, Tagammu Party)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mainly include liberal and socialist elements and opposes an Islamic state in Egypt</li> <li>- Free economy while ensuring social justice – social market economy</li> <li>- Strong focus on liberal rights such as freedom of expression, equality in front of the law and religious freedom</li> </ul>

These parties speak to different segments of the Egyptian population.

The Islamic parties have a strong social platform and run schools and health services in poor areas in Egypt. While this would give these groups a favourable image amongst the poor it will also contribute to another very important aspect in the current election struggle in Egypt: awareness. As this is Egypt's first experience with a true democratic election with a plurality of parties, the key issue for the new formed parties has been to create awareness. This has proven an immense challenge for the parties. The parties with a longer history and strong organizations have thus found it easier to attract voters, which is also evident by the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood party Freedom and Justice and Al Wafd are clearly leading the electoral race. Based on these findings the Islamic parties will likely, due to their strong social platform and presence in poor areas, have a larger share of votes in the poorer party voting clusters.

**Figure 5: Party support across clusters**

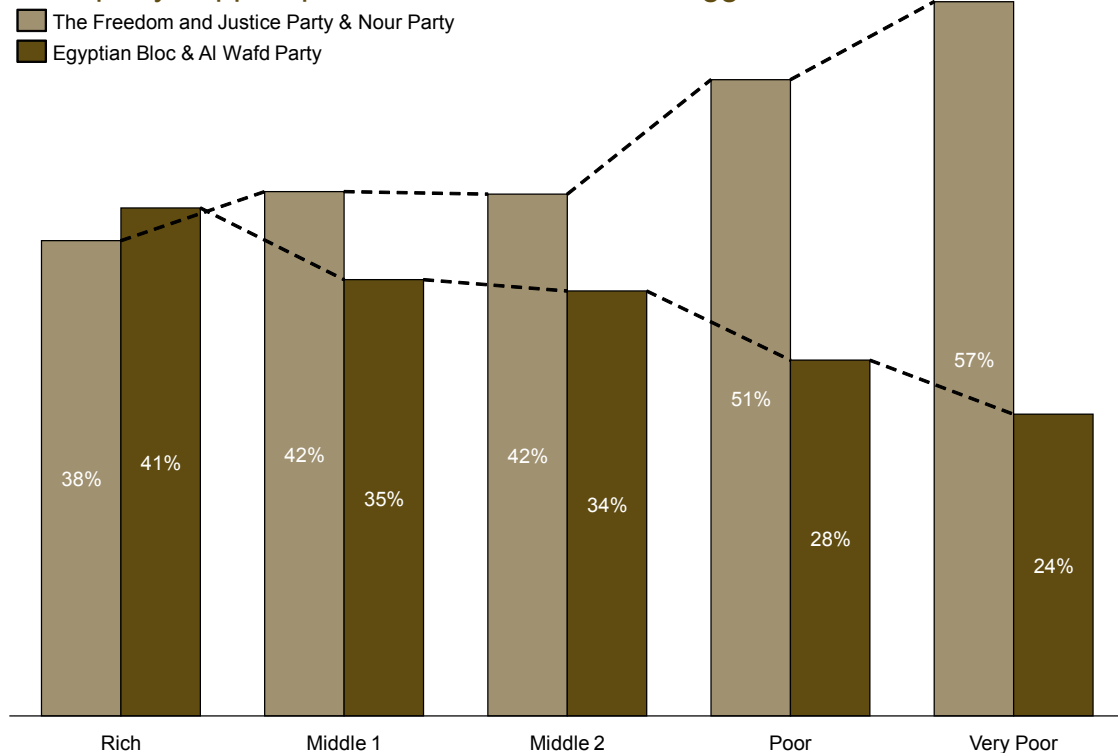


As visible both the Islamist Nour party and the Freedom and Justice party have a stronger showing in the poorer party voting clusters, while the Egyptian Bloc and Wafd party have a very low showing in the poor voting clusters, but have a comparatively strong showing in the rich voting cluster.

This is an important finding and something that should guide our understanding of the strong support for the Islamist parties in Egypt. This may reflect a strong religious sentiment in Egypt, which undoubtedly exists, but it is also a question of a class struggle, between the poor, usually rural areas in Egypt, that has been neglected by the ruling regime, who have failed to provide secure amongst other proper schooling and access to education, as evidenced earlier.

**Figure 6: Islamist parties vs. Liberal parties**

**Support for the largest party blocs in Egypt across clusters**  
 Do the party support patterns reflect a class struggle?



On the opposite side of this class struggle there are the richer, usually urban areas in Egypt, who have gained the most from Egypt’s economic development in the 1990’s. In these areas economic opportunities are the more valued than social justice, which is why the party platform of the liberal parties has a stronger currency in these areas.

These findings could suggest that the Islamist parties will likely enhance their electoral success from the current 41 % of the votes. The majority of the undecided voters are in the lower or lower middle-class why the Nour Party and Freedom and Justice Party are the most likely candidates of where these voters will place their votes, if they decide to participate in the election. As the number of undecided voters was 51 % in October this is a sizable group of potential voters.

## Methodology

The census data was downloaded from the CAPMAS website. This data was segregated on the level of "kism/markas". From the website [www.elections2011.eg](http://www.elections2011.eg) it was possible to obtain a list of the "kism/markas" that belonged to each party voting constituency. Combining these two allowed us to segregate the CAPMAS data on the level of party voting constituency.

Following this segregation SPSS was used to conduct a hierarchical cluster analysis, which is the preferred method when clustering a small data set. Ward's method was used to create the clusters. For each cluster, the means for all variables are calculated. Then, for each case, the Euclidean distance to the cluster means is calculated. These distances are summed for all of the cases. At each step, the two clusters that merge are those that result in the smallest increase in the overall sum of the squared within-cluster distances. The clustering of the party voting constituencies was made using the following socio-demographic variables:

- Share of 15-44 year olds
- Share of illiterate
- Share of university and above graduates
- Share of unemployed
- Share of public sector workers

Following the cluster analysis the survey conducted by the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies and the Danish-Egyptian Dialogue Institute was used to obtain the voting preferences of each cluster. By combining the party voting constituencies in the dataset it was possible to recreate the clusters obtained in the CAPMAS dataset.

## Appendix

### Socio-demographics of Cluster of Party Electoral Constituencies Based on CAPMAS Census 2006

	Population	Education		Sanitation		Work status			Migration	
		Illiterates	University & above	Public	Trench	Employer	Employee	Retired	Work	Marriage
Cluster 1: Rich	9,7 mio.	15,8%	17,6%	80,0%	15,4%	4,7%	80,7%	7,1%	36,8%	26,4%
Cluster 2: Middle one	15,9 mio.	23,8%	10,0%	52,1%	35,2%	3,0%	81,7%	4,3%	19,1%	34,2%
Cluster 3: Middle two	18,9 mio.	27,5%	9,3%	54,4%	34,5%	4,0%	80,6%	4,8%	23,8%	35,5%
Cluster 4: Poor	16,2 mio.	36,7%	5,9%	21,6%	58,2%	2,7%	82,5%	2,7%	22,9%	30,4%
Cluster 5: Very poor	10,2 mio.	42,1%	4,0%	8,1%	84,7%	1,8%	85,7%	2,2%	18,3%	49,5%

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- 1 (Charbel, 2011)
- 2 (Al-Masry al-Youm, 2011)
- 3 (El-Hennawy, 2011)
- 4 (International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2011)
- 5 (Kamel, 2011)
- 6 (Carnegie Middle East Center)

