

# Emigration and the diffusion of political Salafism: Religious remittances and support for Salafi parties in Egypt during the Arab Spring

Party Politics  
2017, Vol. 23(6) 731–745  
© The Author(s) 2016  
Reprints and permission:  
[sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav](http://sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav)  
DOI: 10.1177/1354068815625999  
[journals.sagepub.com/home/ppq](http://journals.sagepub.com/home/ppq)  


**Ekrem Karakoç**

Binghamton University (SUNY), USA

**Talha Köse and Mesut Özcan**

Istanbul Sehir University, Turkey

## Abstract

This study investigates the impact of emigration on the political behavior of citizens in Egypt. In particular, it argues that emigrants' family members are more likely to vote for Salafi parties for several reasons, including the transfer of religious remittances by Egyptian emigrants to the Gulf and the influence of transnational Salafi networks. In order to test our argument, we conducted an original public opinion survey with around 1100 individuals between January 12, 2012 and January 25, 2012, just after the Egyptian parliamentary election. We find that individuals with family members who had emigrated to the Gulf voted heavily for Islamist parties, particularly the Freedom and Justice Party and the Nour Party. Further analysis shows that there is no statistical difference between individuals with and without emigrant family members in voting for the Muslim Brotherhood, while the Nour's popularity among voters with emigrant family members is substantial and statistically significant. In particular, we find that the strongest support for the Nour came from individuals whose family members had immigrated to Saudi Arabia, whereas those whose family members had immigrated to other countries, including other Gulf countries, do not differ significantly from non-emigrant family members in their party preferences.

## Keywords

Arab Spring, Egypt, emigration, political participation, Salafism

Does emigration influence political attitudes and behavior? Despite a vast number of studies on the association between emigration and economic outcomes, only recently has a burgeoning literature begun to investigate the overlooked role of emigration on political change in the host country. Focusing mostly on Latin America and using macro-level regional/national or survey research, these studies have reached differing conclusions. While Ahmed (2012) argues that remittances decrease public spending and sustain autocratic governments, Tyburski (2012) and Escribà-Folch et al. (2015) find that remittances have a positive impact on support for political opposition and democratization. Recent studies on public opinion polls, which focus mostly on Mexico and South America, such as Pérez-Armendáriz and Crow's (2010) study, provide empirical evidence that families of emigrants are likely to participate in communal

activities and hold pro-democratic values. Others emphasize the differential impact of emigration experiences on various modes of political participation (Bravo, 2008; Tyburski, 2012). While these studies do not find that emigration has a statistically significant impact on electoral participation at the national level, studies such as Pérez-Armendáriz and Crow's (2010) do reveal a lower level of

---

Paper submitted 1 February 2015; accepted for publication 8 December 2015

## Corresponding author:

Ekrem Karakoç, Binghamton University (SUNY), 4400 Vestal Pkwy E, Binghamton, NY 13902, USA.  
Email: [ekarakoc@binghamton.edu](mailto:ekarakoc@binghamton.edu)

electoral participation and political interest in Mexican municipalities with higher levels of emigration.

The major focus in these studies has been on the transmission of values from developed democracies to authoritarian regimes or new democracies. This is not surprising, because these studies have focused on emigration from Mexico and South America to the United States. This regional focus has necessarily overlooked other types of diffusion regarding emigration: emigrants also move to rich authoritarian countries and socialize under authoritarian cultures and political institutions, and they may develop social and political norms and values associated with their authoritarian host country. These emigrants internalize these norms and values and transmit them to their home countries through their various contacts with their relatives, including face-to-face and phone/Internet contact. This leads us to ask the following question: do migrants' experiences in nondemocratic countries lead to the transmission of the host country's political values to sending nations? And does this influence also affect emigrants' family members' party preferences in elections?

We focus on Egyptian emigration and examine the relationship between Egyptians' emigration destination and their family members' party choice in the historic 2011–2012 parliamentary election, the first free and open universal election in Egyptian history. In this election, the Nour (Hizb al-Nūr), the party of Salafi groups—formerly non-political groups that had once seen democracy as antithetical to Islam and whose aim had been to purify Islamic rituals and practices—surprisingly emerged as the second strongest party, with around 28% of the vote and 25% of the seats. However, we still do not know how these seemingly apolitical groups turned into a major political force in the transition era or who supported them in the election.

Building upon the bridging democratization, political behavior and Middle East literature, this study argues that emigration to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Saudi Arabia) was one of the key factors in the electoral success of the Nour Party. In particular, it asserts that political socialization in Saudi Arabia and the cross-national religious networks between that country and Egypt were effective in transmitting Salafi religious doctrines to emigrants' families in Egypt, creating a fertile source for the political success of the Nour.

In order to test our argument, we conducted an original public opinion survey with around 1100 individuals over 2 weeks, between January 12, 2012 and January 25, 2012, just after the Egyptian parliamentary election. We asked extensive questions regarding whether the respondent or anyone in their family was or had been an emigrant worker and, if so, in which country they had worked. In addition, we employed a battery of questions on party choice, religious denomination, and other important factors, such as an assessment of the household and national economy. Even though the Supreme Constitutional Court controversially

invalidated the parliamentary election in June 2012 on the grounds that the electoral system violated constitutional principles,<sup>1</sup> our election survey provided us with a unique opportunity to analyze voters' party choices in the first free and fair election in Egypt in which people were able to disclose their true preferences.

We find that individuals with family members who had emigrated to the Gulf voted heavily for Islamist parties, particularly the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) and the Nour Party. However, further analysis shows that there is no statistical difference between individuals with and without emigrant family members in voting for the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), while the Nour's popularity among voters with emigrant family members is substantial and statistically significant. In particular, we find that the strongest support for the Nour came from voters whose family members had immigrated to Saudi Arabia, whereas voters with family members who had immigrated to other Gulf countries did not significantly differ in their party preferences.

The contribution of our research is manifold. First, this study conducted one of the few election polls in Egypt right after the historic 2011–2012 parliamentary election and enables us to disclose the social bases of both Islamist and non-Islamist parties. Second, it sheds light on an important but overlooked phenomenon, namely, the relationship between emigration and political behavior. By doing so, it also offers a new argument and empirical evidence for the claim that the rise of Islamist parties in Egypt is linked to Egyptian emigration to Saudi Arabia. Third, while previous studies have examined how the political socialization of immigrants from authoritarian countries to democratic ones instills in them democratic norms and values (Itzigsohn and Villacrés, 2008; Pérez-Armendáriz and Crow, 2010; Pfitze, 2013; Rother, 2009),<sup>2</sup> this study offers an original argument that socialization in a nondemocratic context may also instill nondemocratic norms and values and lead to increased support for parties that are not committed to democratic values.

Subsequently, we will first discuss the brief history of Egyptian emigration to Saudi Arabia and other countries. We will then discuss the social, economic, and political context in which Egyptian migrants have worked and lived. After offering our argument, we will present our research design and the findings.

## Emigration to the Gulf and other countries

The history of Egyptian emigration extends to the pre-1950 period, during which the modest demand for labor in the newly emerging political entities in the Gulf was a result of their discovery of oil and natural gas in their territories. However, the scale of emigration during these years was small (Errichiello, 2012). What intensified the flow was the

combination of the demand for white- and blue-collar labor from the new sheikhdoms in the former British protectorates in subsequent years and political turmoil and repression in Egypt in the 1950s. In particular, political repression of the MB under King Farouk and, more significantly, the crackdown on the MB beginning in 1954, using the pretext of the assassination attempt against Nasser, caused many members of the MB to seek refuge in other countries. Thousands of its members were detained in camps in the Sinai Desert, where they faced torture and death, while the rest either went underground or found refuge in Libya, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other Gulf countries, which welcomed the relatively educated cadres of the MB (Munson, 2001). The newly emerging kingdoms desperately needed teachers, administrators, and professionals because the level of education in these states was strikingly low. For example, even in Kuwait, the country with the most developed educational system in the Gulf at the time, only about 7% of the population had completed secondary education (Birks and Sinclair, 1979b).

While political reasons were initially responsible for Islamists' emigration from Egypt to the Gulf, economic reasons replaced them shortly thereafter: the newly established socialist Arab republic could not fulfill its promise to guarantee jobs to all educated Egyptians and could not solve growing unemployment in the country. In addition, the significant wage differences for white- and blue-collar jobs between Egypt and oil-rich countries, including Libya, Iraq, and the Gulf countries, increased the incentive to emigrate to those countries (Birks and Sinclair, 1979a).<sup>3</sup>

Migrants from the Arab World, including Egyptians, were mostly educated—teachers and administrators—up to the early 1970s. Egyptian emigrants participated in state-building processes in the Gulf, taking positions in areas ranging from administration to unskilled labor. According to Hadley, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 1974, 54% of government employees, mostly Arabs, were foreigners, while in Oman 18% were foreigners. At around the same time in Qatar, 36% of all government workers were nonnationals and 13% of government jobs were vacant. In Kuwait, the numbers were even higher than in the UAE (Hadley, 1977). Troubled by the rise of Arab nationalism, these new regimes, especially Saudi Arabia, welcomed the Islamist leaders, professionals, and workers who established their networks, provided that they did not interfere in domestic politics and were loyal to the regime (Choucri, 1986). The biggest economy of the region, Saudi Arabia, prioritized Arab immigration to such a degree that, at their peak in the 1970s, about 90% of all migrant workers in the country were Arabs (Birks and Sinclair, 1979a). Unlike non-Arab workers, Egyptian and other non-Gulf Arab migrants moved to the Gulf states with their families, thereby increasing the non-Gulf Arab population there. And they stayed in these countries much longer than their

Asian, European, and American counterparts (Choucri, 1986).

The biggest financial impetus for the increase in emigration from Egypt and other Arab and non-Arab countries to the Gulf occurred during the post-1974 oil boom, which attracted hundreds of thousands of people to relatively well-paid jobs. Indeed, immigrants came to dominate sectors like education (Choucri, 1986; Kapiszewski, 2006). In the 1975–1976 academic year, Hadley (1977) found that more than 25% of Egyptian teachers working abroad were in Saudi Arabia.<sup>4</sup>

More significantly, during the second half of the 1970s, new, mostly non-skilled immigrants from South Asia (Indians and Pakistanis) responded to the demand for labor arising from new development and infrastructure projects (Choucri, 1986; Sayan, 2004). According to Birk and Sinclair (1979b), up until the 1970s, despite increasing demand for South Asian workers, 91% of migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, 93% in Libya, and 69% in Kuwait were from Arab countries. Exceptions were the UAE (25%), Qatar (27%), and Bahrain (21%). A significant proportion of these migrants were Egyptians who were overemployed in professional jobs requiring university or postsecondary degrees in these countries (Birks and Sinclair, 1979b).

The decrease of oil prices in the 1980s slowed down the development projects. In this era, Kapiszewski (2006) notes that economically cheaper and politically safe Asian migrants outnumbered their Arab counterparts in Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and the UAE, while 70–80% of migrant workers in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were still Arabs.<sup>5</sup> However, the real demographic change took place in the 1990s, especially after the Gulf War. Thousands of Yemenis, Palestinians, and Jordanians were expelled from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait because their governments did not support the US-led coalition forces against or were allied with Iraq. Egypt's pro-Gulf regimes policy brought favor to Egyptian migrant workers in the Gulf states, while Asian workers replaced Yemenis and Palestinians, whose governments took pro-Saddam positions (Kapiszewski, 2004). This decreased the proportion of Arab migrant workers in Saudi Arabia from 79% in 1985 to about 30% in the 1990s and 2000s. Even so, official statistics show that, of the non-Gulf Arab population in Saudi Arabia, there were 900,000 Egyptians, followed by 700,000 Yemenis and 300,000 Palestinians and Jordanians. Egyptians again made up a significant proportion of the non-Gulf Arab population in Kuwait and the UAE, numbering 260,000 and 140,000 in 2004, respectively (Kapiszewski, 2006). These official statistics may actually underestimate the extent of Egyptian emigration to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries, but it clearly indicates that the cultural and religious interaction between the Gulf and Egypt has consisted of more than just financial flows from public and private organizations from the Gulf.

## Argument: Religious remittances to Egypt and transnational networks

To what extent does socialization under Saudi Arabia's theocratic regime affect people's social and political preferences? Levitt (1998) argues that migrants transfer new ideas, values, and behavior to their sending countries through "social remittances." In particular, everyday conversations between emigrants and relatives back home that contrast political institutions in the host and home countries are one of the major sources of social remittances. Contact through face-to-face interactions, phone, or Internet can affect people's attitude toward political regimes and contribute to civic and democratic values to bring "political change" (Levitt, 1998; Pfutze, 2013; Pérez-Armendáriz, 2014). A number of studies have examined the extent to which individuals with and without emigrant family members differ in their political participation in the home country, and the extent to which emigrants' experience of social and political norms in a democratic country has an impact on the communal or electoral participation of their families. Tyburski (2012), Pfutze (2013), and Escribà-Folch et al. (2015) find that remittances weaken the patronage links between the dominant political party and society in the home country, thereby increasing support for political opposition. In particular, Pfutze (2013) and Pérez-Armendáriz and Crow (2010) argue that communities with transnational ties can import not only remittances but also political values from the host countries. Goodman and Hiskey (2008) found that emigration has a positive impact on non-electoral participation, while Pérez-Armendáriz and Crow (2010) show that the migration experience diffuses to the family back home, increasing pro-democratic attitudes and participation in the communal organizations of Mexicans who have family abroad. In the analysis of six Latin American countries, Córdova and Hiskey (2015) found that individuals with cross-border ties in the United States are more likely to participate in local politics and show more sympathy toward a specific political party.

A few recent studies on other parts of the world suggest similar findings: Omar Mahmoud et al. (2013) find that localities with more migration to developed democracies are less likely to vote for the Communist Party in Moldova's parliamentary elections. Once Moldovans who have been to Western Europe return, they demand similar political institutions in their home country (Batista and Vicente, 2011). Emigration may also reduce electoral participation and political interest, however, because remittances insulate emigrants' family members from economic crises, high inflation, and other economic problems. As a result, their dissatisfaction with the government or regime may be lower than that of non-emigrants. For example, Goodman and Hiskey (2008) show that those with families abroad are less likely to rely on the state for their needs, reducing their interest in domestic politics. Moreover, along with Pérez-

Armendáriz and Crow (2010) they find no statistically significant relationship between emigration and electoral participation.

These studies exclusively examine how the migration experience in a developed democracy such as the United States or Western European country influences the diffusion of democratic norms and attitudes and the behaviors that are associated with those norms. In contrast, our case offers a unique opportunity to understand how migrants' experience in an authoritarian country affects their and their family members' political preferences in the first democratic election in Egypt. Even though the elections and the first democratically elected parliament were invalidated by the Supreme Constitutional Court in June 2012, 6 months afterward, and the military took power a year and a half after that, it provides a unique opportunity to investigate people's political preferences.

We examine another form of social remittances, religious remittances, the transfer of religious norms and values, and their impact on political choices. While previous studies have examined democratic norms, values, tolerance, and support for democracy as the major social remittances, the transfer of religious norms and values has been ignored.<sup>6</sup> The brief relatively democratic era in Egypt enables us to investigate the impact of emigration to Saudi Arabia and other countries on party choice, in particular, on voting for the Nour.

We argue that religious socialization in Saudi Arabia and its enhanced impact through transnational networks has been influential in transmitting religious remittances and contributing to the strength of the Salafī movement in Egypt. In contrast, because of the absence of an official religious doctrine as well as the nature of the political and economic systems in countries such as Kuwait, the UAE, and Qatar, these countries have not had the same impact. They permitted alternative Islamic groups, whether local or emigrant organizations,<sup>7</sup> but Saudi Arabia was more restrictive in this regard, especially after the deadly Siege of Mecca incident in 1979 (Commins, 2006).<sup>8</sup> Starting from the 1970s, other Gulf countries increasingly brought in thousands of imams each year from Egypt because of a lack of desire among citizens to become religious clergy.<sup>9</sup> In Saudi Arabia, in contrast, the Wahhabi religious elite completely dominated the social, educational, and cultural spheres, from designing school books to running religious programs on TV, leaving almost no room for alternative religious groups and their interpretations.<sup>10</sup> There are several reasons that Arab migrants in general, and Egyptians in particular, are more likely to be exposed to and influenced by the dominant religious doctrine than non-Arab migrants.

First, Arabic-speaking migrants are not socially isolated from the locals, unlike Western and non-Arab migrants. As indicated earlier, Arab migrants, unlike the domestic servants who come from Asia, bring their families to the countries to which they emigrate (Kapiszewski, 2006). In

addition, Arab migrants share the language and religion with the locals, as a result of which they are more likely to share space with them than are non-Arab migrants, including by praying together and attending religious lectures offered by (Salafi) religious leaders (Naithani et al., 2010). Arab migrants, especially white-collar workers, are more likely than non-Arab migrants to work in the same place and live in the same housing units as locals or in near proximity to them.

Second, the dominance of Wahhabism in the media and the lack of alternative media channels have made it easier to transmit Salafi values to migrant communities in Saudi Arabia. Egyptian immigrants in Saudi Arabia are likely to consume Saudi television channels and be exposed to their messages. This consumption was higher in the pre-2000 era, when the regime restricted non-Saudi satellite channels (Field and Hamam, 2009). In addition, the influence of Salafism is stronger in schools. Migrant children can enroll in public schools up until university free of charge. A sizable proportion of Egyptians who emigrate with their families are able to benefit from public schools because they speak Arabic. In contrast, most non-Arabic-speaking migrants (e.g. Indians, Pakistanis, and others), except highly skilled workers, are single or cannot bring their families, while Western and other migrants who bring their families send their children to international schools. These religious views and practices are transmitted to Egypt directly through returnee emigrants or their contact with family members by phone or through the Internet.

There is some empirical evidence for the relationship between the rise of Salafism in Egypt and emigration. It is reported that Salafi preaching in Egypt became more visible in the mid- to late 1970s.<sup>11</sup> Earlier studies have also found that when migrants return to Egypt, they bring ideas and lifestyles with them, including gender and clothing norms. Wright (2012) argues that many emigrants, influenced by the wealth of the Gulf, believe and preach to their family members that if they removed *bid'ah* from Islam in Egypt and the true Islamic community emerged, Egypt would solve all its economic, social, and moral problems. Saudi Arabia is prosperous because it follows the only true path in Islam, the understanding and lifestyle of the Prophet Mohammed and his companions. Returning emigrants bring back norms and values similar to those that are dominant in Saudi Arabia; they have been conspicuous in their adoption of lifestyles, including attitudes toward women and clothing.

We also further argue that transnational Salafi networks reinforce the transmission of norms and values associated with Salafism among emigrant families in Egypt. In particular, Salafi networks, which have been slowly expanding since the 1970s, have helped make their messages heard across Egyptian society and reinforced the Salafi messages to which emigrant families have already been exposed, regardless of whether they call themselves Salafi or not.

Salafi networks in Egypt and Saudi Arabia are interconnected through charity and other types of organizations, and these networks have been instrumental in supporting the charity organizations, educational facilities, and other organizations that promote Salafi teachings in Egypt.

During the Mubarak regime, Salafis' focus on a virtuous and apolitical lifestyle saved adherents from being targeted by the regime, in contrast to the MB. Before the Arab Uprisings, Salafis in Egypt shunned politics as religiously prohibited (*haram*) and were occupied with purifying society in line with the Quran and Sunna (Gauvain, 2010). Mubarak, who came to power in 1981, condoned their activities as a counterbalance to the political Islamist MB, especially in the suburban and impoverished areas of Cairo and other governorates (Al-Anani and Malik, 2013; Chalcraft, 2014). While the MB and jihadist Islamists were imprisoned or moved underground in the 1990s, Salafis were able to spread their messages relatively freely.

Høigilt and Nome (2014) argue that Salafi messages effectively penetrated Egyptian society through the networks of Salafi preachers on the ground, "cassette preachers," who were popular in Egypt in the 1980s and 1990s and, since 2006, popular Salafi satellite TV stations, right after the MB captured one-fifth of the seats in the 2005 parliamentary elections. At the same time, Salafi messages have resonated not only with emigrant families already familiar with them but also with poor families through their social welfare programs, including free food distribution, literacy classes, and cash transfers to the poor.

Until Egypt's first free election, there was a great degree of uncertainty regarding the extent to which Salafism had been successful in appealing to people in the political arena, as the absence of political doctrines among most Salafi groups and the lack of electoral competition under Mubarak disguised their true strength. The historic election provided a unique opportunity to measure to the strength of Islamist movements, including the Salafists, which decided to participate in the democratic elections, contrary to their long-held view that political participation was antithetical to their beliefs.

### Contextualizing the electoral scene during Egypt's historic elections

The first democratic election in Egypt was held between November 28, 2011 and January 11, 2012. The election was reported as having represented the will of the Egyptian people and described as relatively free and without any major rigging.<sup>12</sup> The Egyptian electoral system was a combination of both the proportional representation (PR) and single-member district (SMD) systems. Two-thirds of the seats were competed through political parties' list under PR, while the rest went to independent candidates through the SMD. Even though there were attempts to create an

electoral coalition between the Islamist and secular parties, such as between the FJP and al-Wafd, such attempts failed. As a result, two Islamist blocs and several major secular parties dominated the election (Hassan, 2012). The Salafi alliance was led by the Nour Party and included a Salafi party, Al-Asala, and another small Islamist party, al-Fadhilla.

Before and during the January 25 Revolution, the Salafi movement was composed of weakly organized groups whose leaders were mostly religious sheiks interested in preaching their doctrines. Salafi groups were initially opposed to the removal of Mubarak from power, arguing that believers, even if they were only nominally Muslim, should obey the ruler so as to avoid chaos (Al-Anani and Malik, 2013). However, Malik and Awadallah (2013) note that as the fall of Mubarak became imminent, these groups repositioned themselves by arguing that they had to defend the rights of believers in the non-Islamic political system. Major Salafi groups decided to participate in the election after the January 25 Revolution. Their umbrella group, the Salafi Call, was pivotal in forming the Nour.

In line with moderation theory, according to which political parties reject radical platforms in order to increase their electoral success, one would expect that participating in elections would have led Islamist parties to moderate their behavior and ideology (Gurses, 2014; Schwedler, 2013; Tezcür, 2010; Wickham, 2004). However, the regime collapse created a political environment in which the leaders of the Islamist parties, including the Nour, did not come under sufficient pressure to reduce their non-democratic statements and behavior. In addition to the political uncertainty, as Schwedler (2013) pointed out, the ideological rivalry between the FJP and the Nour led these two parties to compete over religious voters, reducing their incentive to moderate their behavior and ideology, which increased skepticism toward them among secular Egyptians.

Salafi charities and foundations in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, feeling threatened by the possible victory of the MB, favored the Nour, especially relative to the non-Islamist parties. It has recently been reported that, with the help of Saudi petrodollars, the Salafi movement was especially successful in garnering support in rural areas through charities that were instrumental in reaching the poor and peasants.<sup>13</sup> According to a report in *Der Spiegel*, the Nour received USD100 million from Saudi Arabia during the electoral campaign.<sup>14</sup> These funds, together with the already strong Salafi networks, certainly gave the Nour an advantage over other parties.<sup>15</sup>

The second bloc was the Democratic Alliance, dominated by the political wing of the MB, the FJP, and including other small liberal and Nasserist parties. Before the Revolution, the Mubarak regime had not permitted the MB to form a political party, as a result of which MB candidates had participated as independents. The MB

formed its political party in April 2011, 7 months before the parliamentary election.

Like the Nour, the FJP called for Sharia law as a source of legislation, and the two shared similar positions on several salient issues, which cast doubt on both parties' democratic credentials in the new era: for example, both were initially opposed to the right of women and Copts to become head of state, although growing domestic and international pressure caused them to reverse their position on this issue.<sup>16</sup> The two parties differed, however, in their economic policies, while the FJP advocated for the creation of a strong private business sector, the Nour was more in favor of state involvement in the provision of health-care, housing, and education to the poor (Kelley, 2012). Regardless of the two parties' platforms, Masoud (2014) found that both parties, and the FJP in particular, were perceived as more in favor of redistribution than the other parties.

The first of the two main non-Islamist political parties was the Egyptian Bloc, an electoral alliance of the Free Egyptians, the Egyptian Social Democratic Party and Tagammu. The second was Egypt's oldest liberal political party, al-Wafd (Hassan, 2012). Both were opposed to the Islamists' stance on the role of religion in post-Mubarak Egypt. The parties in the Egyptian Bloc differed in their views regarding the role of the state in the economy. The most liberal among them, the Free Egyptians, advocated a low flat tax rate and a high degree of private sector involvement.

Another party, al-Wasat, a moderate Islamist party, was an offspring of the MB, formed in reaction to the MB's ruling elites. Among its founders were Copts and former members of the MB. Al-Wasat distanced itself from the MB and developed a new party program that embraced a civilizational concept of Islam that was more inclusive of women and Copts (Stacher, 2002; Wickham, 2004). A number of other parties also participated in the election, but Table 1 suggests that they remained marginal in terms of the votes they gathered.

Table 1 displays the election results. The Democratic Alliance, dominated by the FJP, received 37.3% of the votes in the PR elections, followed by 27.7% for the Salafi Alliance, dominated by The Nour. The non-Islamist parties were far behind them. In the PR elections, al-Wafd received about 9.3% of the votes, the Egyptian Bloc 8.9% and Al-Wasat about 3.7%. The FJP dominated the majoritarian vote, in which it won 45% of the seats.

## Research design

### Data

We conducted face-to-face interviews in Egypt between January 12, 2012, and January 25, 2012, with a sample of adults over the age of 18. We employed stratified random sampling, which enabled us to capture religious minorities that are heavily concentrated in several governorates and

**Table 1.** Egyptian Parliamentary Election, 2011–2012.

	PR votes (%)	PRseats (%)	FPTPseats (%)	Total seats (%)
Democratic Alliance	37.3	38.3	65.1	47.2
FJP	–	–	–	45
Karama (Dignity)	–	–	–	1.2
Revolution's Tomorrow	–	–	–	0.4
Hadara (Civilization)	–	–	–	0.4
Labour	–	–	–	0.2
Al-Nour	27.7	28.9	16.3	24.7
Al-Nour	–	–	–	21.5
Construction and Development	–	–	–	2.6
Al-Asala	–	–	–	0.6
Al-Wafd	9.2	10.8	1.2	7.6
Egyptian Bloc	8.9	9.9	0.6	6.8
Egyptian Social Democratic Party	–	–	–	3.2
Free Egyptian	–	–	–	3
Tagammu (Association)	–	–	–	0.6
Wasat	3.7	3	–	2
Reform and Development	2.2	2.4	0.6	1.8
Continuous Revolution	2.8	2.1	–	1.4
Egypt's Nationalist Party	1.6	1.2	0.6	1
Freedom	1.9	1.2	–	0.8
Egyptian Citizen	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.8
Independents	–	–	13.9	4.6
Others	3.8	1.3	1.1	1.3

Note: The figures were derived from Hassan (2012: 373). FPTP: first-past-the-post; PR: proportional representation.

cities. First, we derived our samples from the following governorates, which host most of the population in Egypt: Cairo, Alexandria, Giza, Qalyubia, Asyut, Gharbia, Qena, al Sharqia, Dakahlia, Faiyum, Beheira, Minya, and Monufia. Then we divided each of these governorates into urban and rural areas and chose cities, towns and villages from urban and rural areas in each governorate, but had to exclude villages in distant rural areas because of the difficulty of accessibility and the cost. Afterward, using random sampling, we selected households and individuals in each of these areas. Even though the sample size was 1100, “no response” and “do not know” observations substantively reduced the sample size to 675 in our two main multivariate analyses.

### Dependent variable

Our dependent variable is the respondents' political party choice. To capture their party choice, we asked respondents which political party they voted for in the last election. The most preferred choices were the FJP, The Nour, al-Wafd, the Egyptian Bloc, and al-Wasat, in line with the official election results. The survey results included several other political parties, but we include only those that received more than 2% support in the survey and the election. Those that received less than 2% in the survey are labeled “others.” We also note that a significant number of voters did not vote or did not want to respond. We excluded them from our multivariate analysis, given that our interest lies in comparing political parties' popular bases.

### Independent variables

Our main independent variable is emigrant family members.<sup>17</sup> To measure whether respondents belonged to an emigrant family, we asked them whether they or any member of their family had worked abroad for at least 6 months. To be more precise, “emigrant family members” include individuals who worked abroad or who had a family member who was currently doing so or had done so in the past. Fourteen percent of the respondents were members of emigrant families. Then we asked which country they worked or had worked in. Not surprisingly, a plurality, 32%, had worked in the country with the biggest economy, Saudi Arabia, while 12% had worked in Kuwait. They were followed by the UAE (9%); Libya (6.4%); and Iraq, the United Kingdom, and the United States, each with 4%. All other countries received smaller percentages of emigrant families.

One may assume that those who left for Saudi Arabia were already sympathetic toward Salafism. Although we cannot test the argument empirically, secondary sources suggest that the *Gulfization* of Egyptian neighborhoods and towns only began after the return of Egyptians from the Gulf in the late 1970s and 1980s. Therefore, it seems likely that the emigration experience in Saudi Arabia boosted the positive perception of Salafism, which in turn may have increased the likelihood of voting for the Nour. Second, although political considerations were important in emigrants' decision regarding their destination country of

choice in the mid-1950s and 1960s, particularly for MB supporters, economic considerations became predominant thereafter. Moreover, in general, most economic emigrants have less freedom to determine their destination country.

Another important cleavage in Egyptian politics is the role of religion in politics. Our public secularization (support for a smaller role for religion in politics) variable is an index composed of three questions. The respondents were asked to assess the following statements: religion and government should be separate; religious officials and leaders should not influence how people vote in elections; and religious officials and leaders should not influence government decisions. The possible responses to these statements vary from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). We ran the factor analysis, which shows that one underlying factor captures these three questions, and our  $\alpha$  scale reliability test showed that the reliability was high (Cronbach  $\alpha = 0.80$ ). The expectation is that those who hold secular attitudes toward politics tend to vote for the non-Islamist Egyptian Bloc and al-Wafd.

Previous studies have emphasized a number of factors that affect voting behavior. For the sake of space, we will discuss them briefly. The economic voting literature argues that people's perception of the economy significantly affects how they vote in an election (Anderson, 2007), but we should also take into consideration the political context. In our model, we tested the impact of respondents' assessment of the household and national economy on party choice. We employed two questions. First, compared to the last 12 months, how had their household economy changed? Second, how did they assess the national economy today compared to 12 months ago? The possible answers were "better," "almost the same," and "worse." Given that the response for both questions was small, we recoded *better* and *almost the same* as 0 and *worse* as 1. For both questions, we tested the negative assessment of the household and national economy, given that only a minority assessed the national economy positively.

We also used standard demographic variables such as age, gender, employment status, and education. We expect that those with a higher income and level of education are more likely to vote for non-Islamist parties. According to the dominant view, the popularity of Islamist groups in the Mubarak era was based on the fact that their messages appealed to a broad swathe of the population and that their social services demonstrated their success (Woltering, 2002). One expects that those who benefited from these services, the poor, were more likely to vote for the FJP or the Nour, which took a strong welfare state position in the election (Masoud, 2014). One also expects that those who had a stable job and a high level of education were more likely to support non-Islamist parties (Gumuscu, 2010).

A recent study found that religiosity did have a weak effect on voters' choices but that recipients of social welfare were more likely to vote for the FJP, but not al-Noor,

than for non-Islamist parties (Masoud, 2013). Blaydes and Linzer (2008) found that women are more likely to vote for Islamist parties and that women were responsible for the MB's success in the election. The inclusion of the religiosity variable does not change the substantive interpretation of our main variables, but it significantly reduces the overall sample. Therefore, we do not display it in our models (see Supplementary Appendix B for the variation of religiosity among supporters of different parties). Public employees and individuals with lower paid jobs in Egypt may have different party preferences than others. Whenever demonstrations erupted in Egypt, the Mubarak regime increased public employees' salaries significantly, which suggests that their dissatisfaction with the regime was conspicuous. In the absence of Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP) in the election as a major party, we do not have any expectation as to whether their grievances led this group to vote for the non-Islamist or Islamist opposition.

Egypt has a significant Coptic population. It is hard to give an exact figure for the size of this population, but it is believed to range between 9% and 20% (Tadros, 2013; Zeidan, 1999).<sup>18</sup> We asked the respondents about their religious affiliation; based on this question, we detected Christians (Copts and other Christian denominations) in the country. Fourteen percent of respondents were Copts. Although the FJP repeatedly stated that Copts are equal citizens during the election campaign, its previous statements on the eligibility of Copts to participate in the military and become president was unable to alleviate their concerns. Therefore, we expect that they likely voted for non-Islamist parties.

## Method

We run a multinomial probit analysis (MNP) in order to predict individual vote choice and hold the FJP as a base category. Choice models are theoretically based on the expected utility calculations of individuals who have idiosyncratic preference ordering and prefer one choice over another (Long, 1997). Theoretically, we should assume that any new alternative should not be irrelevant to an individual's old preference order. In other words, having a preference for voting for the FJP is not independent from voting for another Islamist party, such as the Nour. That is why we preferred the MNP over the multinomial logit analysis due to the relevance of the choices in the Egyptian elections.<sup>19</sup>

## Results

We first present the preliminary evidence using the crosstabulation analysis, which displays a crude relationship between party choice and emigrant family members. Note that respondents were asked whether they or their family



**Table 2.** Party choice for emigrant families.

Political parties	Emigrant family member	
	Yes %	No %
FJP	31	29
Al-Nour	31	15
Al-Wafd	2	11
Egyptian Bloc	16	23
Wasat	5	4
Others	16	19
Total percentage	100	100
N	169	652

members had worked in a foreign country for at least 6 months. Table 2 suggests that 31% of respondents with emigrant family members voted for the FJP, while 29% of those with non-emigrant family members did the same. A *t*-test suggests that there is no especially significant relationship between emigrant families and the rest of the sample in voting for the FJP. In contrast, although the same percentage of those with emigrant family members (31%) voted for the Nour, only 15% of those with non-emigrant family members did the same. The Egyptian Bloc and the small parties in the Others category received a significant number of votes from those with emigrant family members, but they received more votes from those with non-emigrant family members. Al-Wafd was the most disadvantaged party in terms of the vote share it received from those with emigrant family members, only 2%.

Although this result suggests that emigrant families are an important part of the electoral base of Islamist parties, especially Salafi ones, it does not tell us whether the country of destination affects this choice. For this reason, we examined the relationship between the regions in which emigrants had worked and party choice and then between the three major countries of destination and party choice. We divided the countries into three regions: the Gulf, non-Gulf Arab countries (e.g. Iraq, Libya, and Algeria), and Europe/North America. Then we focused on the three major Gulf countries that have hosted the highest number of Egyptian emigrants.

Table 3 suggests that emigrant family members who had lived in the Gulf voted for Islamist parties, the FJP and the Nour, 36% and 26%, respectively. These two parties also performed well among those voters whose family members had worked in non-Gulf Arab countries, receiving 32% of the vote each, although the number of voters whose family members had worked in these countries is much smaller. The Egyptian Bloc performed much better among those whose family members had worked in non-Gulf Arab countries (22%) and Europe/North America (38%). The FJP and the Nour did poorly compared to the Egyptian Bloc among those whose family members had worked in Europe/North America, 19% and 25%, respectively. The findings on

emigrant families associated with Europe and North America may be due to the secular nature of politics in those regions, while this does not exclude the fact that religious networks still work to assist newcomers.<sup>20</sup> A close look at the data also shows that most Coptic emigrants moved to Europe and North America and voted heavily for the non-Islamist Egyptian Bloc.

Given that the Gulf countries received most of Egypt's emigrant workers, we decided to examine the relationship between the Gulf country of destination and party choice, listed in the last three columns of Table 3. The vote share of the Nour increases to 32% for those connected to Saudi Arabia, while the FJP's vote share declines by a small amount, to 32%. In contrast, we find that the FJP performed significantly better than the Nour and other parties among those with family members who had worked in Kuwait or the UAE.

For a more rigorous test, we turn to our MNPs.<sup>21</sup> Our reference category for emigrant families in the multivariate analysis is non-emigrant families. We run our models using all parties, but the Nour as a reference category so that we can see how the Nour performs relative to the Islamist and non-Islamist parties, FJP, al-Wasat, al-Wafd, and the Egyptian Bloc. Table 4 presents our results. It suggests that, compared to non-emigrant families, those who had migrated to Saudi Arabia were more likely to vote for the Nour than the FJP or other parties. Other emigration destinations do not exert any statistically significant impact on party choice. For instance, those with family members who had migrated to Europe or North America were neither less nor more likely to vote for a particular party.

In order to present our results more substantially, we have calculated the marginal effect for the Nour by emigration destination country. Figure 1 shows the marginal effect of the Saudi variable and the non-Gulf Arab variable for the Nour. Figure 1(a) shows that belonging to a family whose members have worked in Saudi Arabia increases one's likelihood of voting for the Nour by 9.5%. Figure 1(b) suggests that belonging to a family with members who have migrated to other Gulf countries reduces the probability of voting for the Nour, but the result is not statistically significant. In contrast, Figure 1(c) shows that belonging to a family with members in non-Gulf Arab countries increases the predicted probability of voting for the Nour by 11.6%. The marginal effect of Europe/North America is also not statistically significant (Figure 1(d)). However, the size and almost statistical significance of the coefficient is due to the reduced number of observations in our model. Running the model only with the main independent variables and demographic variables (age, income, education, gender, and religion) shows that the non-Gulf variable does not have any statistically significant impact. We have provided this model in the supplementary appendix.

As for the other variables, we also calculated their marginal effects for all outcomes. We found that being secular

**Table 3.** Party choice and emigrant families by emigration destination.

	Gulf Countries	Non-Gulf Arab Countries	Europe/North America	Major Gulf countries for work		
				Saudi Arabia	Kuwait	United Arab Emirates
Political parties	%	%	%	%	%	%
FJP	36	32	19	32	45	53
Al-Nour	26	32	25	32	5	31
Al-Wafd	3	0	0	3	0	8
Egyptian Bloc	9	22	38	9	20	0
Wasat	7	5	0	5	10	0
Others	19	9	18	19	20	8
Total percentage	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	102	22	16	59	20	13

**Table 4.** Multinomial probit model: Party choice and emigrant families.

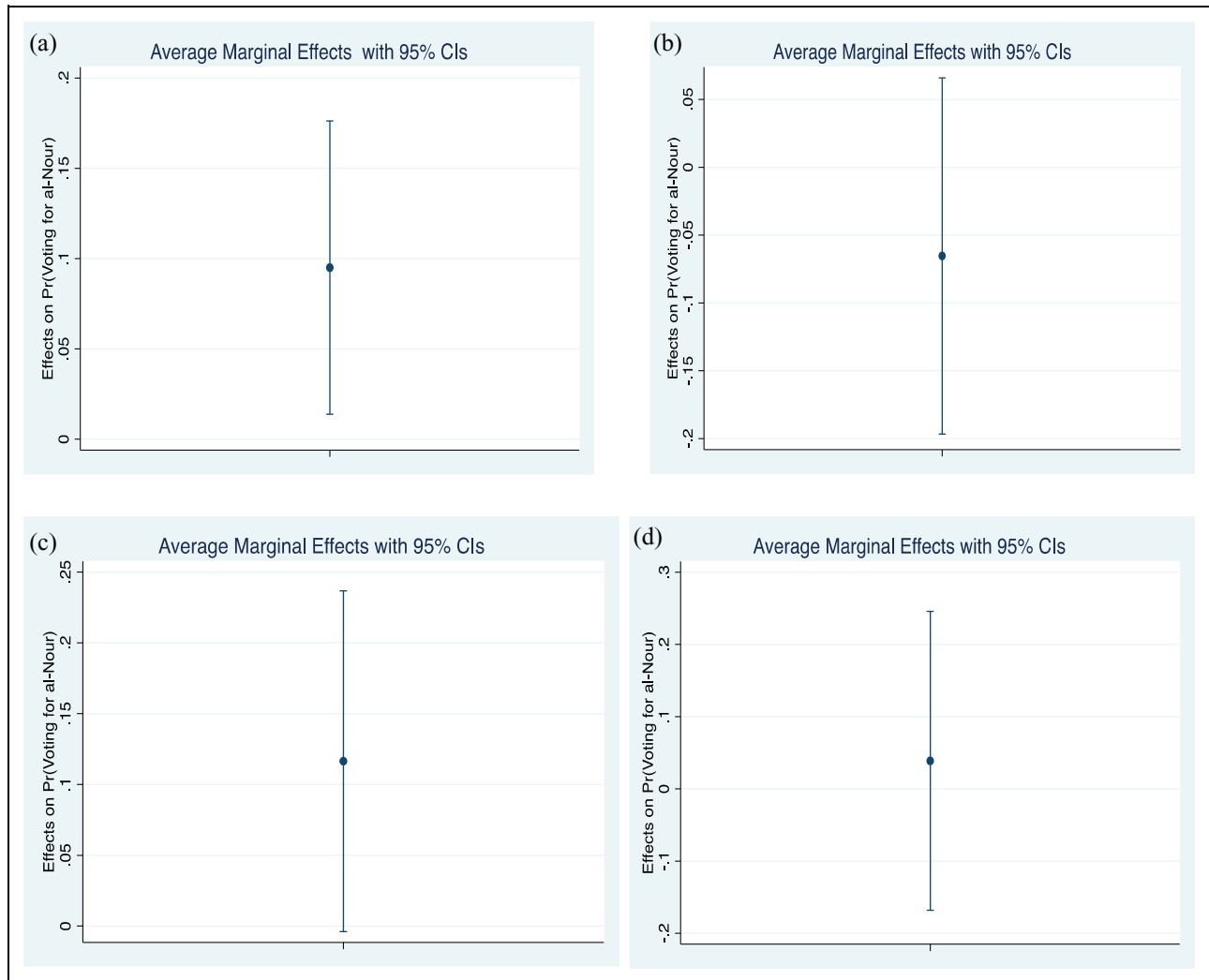
	Al-Nour vs.FJP	Al-Nour vs. Egyptian Bloc	Al-Nour vs. Al-Wafd	Al-Nour vs. Al-Wasat
<b>Main variables</b>				
Emigrant family				
Saudi Arabia	0.682**	-0.046	0.245	-0.424
	0.300	0.425	0.517	0.436
Gulf Arab countries	-0.551	0.919	0.828	-0.547
	0.446	0.676	0.670	0.455
Non-Gulf Arab countries	0.710	0.084	0.455	-0.678
	0.454	0.553	0.724	0.603
Europe/North America	0.190	-0.075	0.105	-0.555
	0.733	0.943	0.942	0.882
<b>Control variables</b>				
Support for secularism	-0.012	-0.440***	-0.329***	-0.210***
	0.028	0.041	0.040	0.044
Household economy	0.451**	0.250	-0.436*	-0.001
	0.200	0.232	0.250	0.281
National economy	-0.105	0.050	0.541**	0.018
	0.238	0.268	0.276	0.318
Income	-0.074	0.066	0.091	-0.147*
	0.059	0.070	0.071	0.086
Christian	0.076	-2.853***	-1.656***	-1.382**
	0.613	0.448	0.492	0.561
Female	0.139	-1.222***	-0.448*	-0.327
	0.201	0.227	0.237	0.270
Age	0.013*	-0.003	-0.006	0.005
	0.008	0.009	0.010	0.012
Education	0.042	0.150*	-0.314**	-0.098
	0.067	0.083	0.101	0.111
Public employee	-0.178	0.043	1.002**	0.280
	0.267	0.323	0.411	0.435
Unemployed	0.248	-0.106	0.631	-0.330
	0.310	0.373	0.425	0.406
Constant	-1.025*	4.759***	5.412***	4.425***
	0.614	0.773	0.856	0.981

Note:  $N = 675$ . Standard errors are below coefficient estimates; Log likelihood of model = -787.87; Wald  $\chi^2(70) = 338.51$ . FJP: Freedom and Justice Party.

\* $p < 0.1$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

decreases the predicted probability of voting for the FJP by 4% and for a-Nour by 2.5%, but increases the predicted probability of voting for al-Wafd by 0.07% and the

Egyptian Bloc by 2.6%. As for the economic variables, those who were not content with their household economy were more likely to vote for the Nour by 6.4% and for



**Figure 1.** Emigrant family members and the Nour Party. (a) Saudi Arabia, (b) other Gulf countries, (c) non-Gulf Arab countries, and (d) Europe and North America.

al-Wafd by 4.2%, but less likely to vote for the FJP by 5.5% and for the Egyptian Bloc by 7%. The household economy does not have any statistically significant impact on other outcomes. Those who believed that the national economy had worsened over the previous year were less likely to vote for al-Wafd, but this view had no statistically significant impact on any other variable.

Copts were more likely to vote for any party other than the FJP. Our calculation of marginal effects suggests that being a Copt reduces the probability of voting for the FJP by 22%, while it increases the probability of voting for the Egyptian Bloc by 25%.

Women were less likely to vote for the FJP by 7% but more likely to vote for the Egyptian Bloc by 15%. The increase in educational level shows an interesting result: people with a lower level of education were more likely to vote for the Egyptian Bloc by 3.7%, while those with a higher level of education were more likely to vote for al-

Wafd by 3.7%.<sup>22</sup> These variables, female and education, do not have a statistically significant impact on other outcomes. Working for the public sector reduced the likelihood of voting for al-Wafd by 8%, while its impact on voting for other parties is not statistically significant. Older people were slightly more likely to vote for the Nour (0.2%). A higher income increased the predicted probability of voting for al-Wasat by 1.2%.

## Conclusion

The electoral success of the Salafi bloc in the Egyptian parliamentary election in 2011–2012 attracted a great deal of attention. The dominant view in the media is that financial flows from the Gulf into Egyptian Salafi movements were responsible for their success: they helped create effective health clinics, educational facilities, and other social services, which translated into electoral support for Salafi

groups, which, because they had absented themselves from politics during the Mubarak era, were not tarnished by association with the regime. Our argument differs from these explanations that emphasize the supply of financial, religious, or social services (Masoud, 2014).<sup>23</sup> While we do not deny the importance of these factors, we argue that there is another important factor that scholars of democratization and Middle Eastern studies have overlooked—religious remittances from Saudi Arabia through emigration. Using an original public opinion survey, we tested our argument and found supporting evidence: more than a third of emigrant households in Egypt have worked in Saudi Arabia and religious remittances did affect the electoral results of the first democratic election in Egypt.

This research makes several contributions. First, it speaks to the literature on political socialization and emigration, in which scholars examine how emigration to democratic countries instills democratic norms and values in emigrants from authoritarian countries (Itzigsohn and Villacrés, 2008; Pérez-Armendáriz and Crow, 2010; Pfutze, 2013; Rother, 2009). While emigration may produce social remittances conducive to democracy in countries such as Latin America and the Caribbean, this relationship is not unidirectional but multifaceted. This research suggests that religious remittances as a result of emigration may instill nondemocratic values, leading to support for political parties skeptical of democracy. In this respect, this study, by providing important empirical evidence regarding how emigration shaped the outcome of Egypt's first democratic election, shows how authoritarian countries may affect people's religious orientation and their support for nondemocratic parties.

Second, it allows us to draw a few important conclusions about the electoral bases of Egypt's the Nour Party. Emigrant families played a significant role in boosting the vote for the Salafi bloc, and the implications of emigration on citizens' political views should be evaluated further. The Gulf's links to the strength of Islamism in Egypt has been noted by scholars, but their research has focused on the cash, religious materials, and funds sent to charities given by either Gulf states or private donors from them to Islamist organizations. To our knowledge, this is the first study that investigates the impact of religious remittances on political behavior. The effect of the Saudi connection through emigration on apolitical and political Salafism should be further studied to test whether emigration has a significant effect on religious and political behavior in other countries. Given that Saudi Arabia has been a magnet for millions of people from Arab and non-Arab countries, especially since the early 1970s, the Saudi connection to the diffusion of Salafism through emigration may extend beyond Egypt.

We would like to end our discussion with recent political developments in Egypt. The failure of the transition to democracy in Egypt as a result of the military coup on July 3, 2013, has had important implications for the Nour in

particular and political and military Islamist movements in general. The Nour had been weakened because its former party leader, Emad Abdel Ghaffour, and other party members could not reconcile their differences with the Salafi Call leadership. Ghaffour and his supporters formed a new party, al-Watan, in January 2013. The July 3 military coup and the co-optation of the Salafi Call and its political wing, the Nour, into the pro-military establishment by Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, the coup leader and current president of Egypt, eroded their credibility in the eyes of affiliated and nonaffiliated Salafi groups, the Islamist electorate, and much of society in general (Fahmi, 2015). Using the pretext of an Islamist threat, the regime has sanctioned anti-Islamist discourse in the media and adopted anti-Islamist policies for the private and public sectors, which have further weakened the co-opted Salafi Call and the Nour (el-Sherif 2014). The initial 2015 parliamentary election results confirm growing dissatisfaction with the Nour, which, in the two rounds of elections, received only 12 of 568 seats open to contestation.<sup>24</sup>

The end of the democratic process as a result of the military coup, the ostracization of Islamist parties in Egyptian politics and anti-Islamic discourses has resulted in the weakening of Islamist parties. However, this is an ominous sign for Egyptian politics. Despite concerted efforts, ranging from intimidation to extra official holidays, to encourage citizens to vote, low voter turnout, officially at 28%, suggests that most Egyptians, including the electoral base of the Nour in the 2011–2012 election, have become distrustful of political elites and institutions and disengaged from politics, and that support for the regenerated authoritarian regime under el-Sisi is low. Furthermore, the growth of political violence by Salafi and other jihadi groups whose anti-regime and takfiri messages could better resonate among disaffected Islamist youth diminishes optimism regarding the stability of the Egyptian political landscape.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Tarek Masoud, Amaney Jamal, and other participants of 2015 Winter Experimental Social Sciences Institute at New York University Abu Dhabi. We also grateful for the comments and suggestions of the participants of the Arab Spring workshop held at Istanbul Sehir University in January 2014 for earlier versions of this manuscript. We thank the Eurasia Strategic Research Foundation (ASAM) in Istanbul for funding our public opinion survey in Egypt, which is not responsible for the analysis/interpretation of the data used in this study.

### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: The

present research has been financially supported by the Euroasia Turkish Culture Research Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey “HIGM\_4233.”

## Notes

1. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/15/world/middleeast/new-political-showdown-in-egypt-as-court-invalidates-parliament.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed 15 January 2015).
2. However, see Goodman Hiskey (2008) for the opposite impact of emigration on voting.
3. Most migrants to the Gulf in the initial migration wave were Arabs.
4. Hadley (1977: 298) found that there was a high motivation for people from Arab countries to immigrate to the Gulf. He estimated, for example, that Egyptian teachers received salaries 5.4 times higher in Saudi Arabia, 4.6 times higher in Libya, and 6.5 times higher in Kuwait than teachers in their home country. Lawyers in Saudi Arabia received salaries 9.1 times higher. Such lucrative job opportunities had increased emigration to the Gulf even before 1974. According to Hadley (1977), in only 5 years, from 1968 to 1972, around 10,000 doctors, chemists, and engineers, 11,000 teachers and, interestingly, 15,000 imams left Egypt to find jobs, mostly in the Gulf and Libya.
5. They were considered politically safe because they were less likely to bring nationalist and other ideologies with them.
6. In this study, we use the term “religious remittances” to refer to the transmission of a given religious doctrine to another country through emigration. The religious doctrines of the host country are adopted and then transmitted to the emigrant’s home country through social interaction and financial assistance.
7. <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/5116/kuwaits-muslim-brotherhood>.
8. Even some MB members developed sympathy for the dominant religious doctrines in the Gulf countries. This is not surprising, as the differences between the two approaches, Islamism and nonpolitical Salafism, are not that large. While the former aims to Islamize society through politics, the latter aims to do so through purifying religious practices.
9. In the United Arab Emirates, the leadership eventually restricted the employment of Egyptians as imams, security officials, and other occupations.
10. What are Salafism and Wahhabism? The term *Salafi* comes from *Salaf* (to precede) and refers to the companions of the Prophet Muhammad who met and learned Islam from him or those who knew him. The primary goal of Salafi movements is to eliminate *bid’ah* (innovation) and return to the pure form of Islam practiced by the Prophet and Salaf; Salafis consider interpretations other than their own as deviations from Islam. It should be noted that all Wahhabis are Salafists but not all Salafists are Wahhabis. Wahhabism considers itself to be the true Salafi movement (Moussalli, 2009). Given that Salafism is a general term that includes Wahhabism, it is used throughout the article for the sake of simplicity, except where Wahhabism in particular is meant. Although some divide Salafis into nonpolitical and political groups, even nonpolitical groups have a long-term project to create a political system based on what they consider “pure Islam” (Haykel, 2009; Wiktorowicz, 2001) Salafis denounced democracies as a *bid’ah*, because they usurp God’s role as lawmaker and rejected party politics because it divides the Ummah into factions (Haykel, 2009). Salafi ideology, which emphasizes the purification of religious practices and remained distant from politics, has been promoted by the Saudi regime’s Wahhabi elites and other Salafi groups in the country (Meijer, 2009). Salafi groups, active in proselytizing in Saudi society and supported by private donors or foundations, have also been running missionary activities among migrants. The monopoly in religious education and media and organizations such as the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice have increased the prominence of Salafi doctrines in the country.
11. <http://dar.aucegypt.edu/handle/10526/3149> (accessed 12 June 2014).
12. [http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/11/01/egypts\\_electoral\\_cunundrum](http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/11/01/egypts_electoral_cunundrum); see [https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace\\_publications/election\\_reports/egypt-2011-2012-final-rpt.pdf](https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/election_reports/egypt-2011-2012-final-rpt.pdf) for the Carter Center’s on the election (accessed 3 October 2015).
13. <http://www.france24.com/en/20120929-how-saudi-arabia-petrodollars-finance-salafist-winter-islamism-wahhabism-egypt> (accessed 12 June 2014).
14. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/what-the-salafists-want-egypt-faces-a-hardline-islamic-future-a-803500.html> (accessed 12 June 2014).
15. <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/egyptsource/anatomy-of-egypts-salafi-surge> (accessed 12 June 2014).
16. The Nour in particular was composed of diverse religious groups whose opinions on women and Copts varied, causing public outcry, especially among secular groups.
17. See Supplementary Appendix A for the wording of all questions relevant to this study.
18. The CIA’s *World Factbook* puts the figure at 9%, while other sources vary; Tadros (2013).
19. We thank an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.
20. We thank an anonymous reviewer for raising this important point.
21. The missing observations in the control variables reduce our observations in our final models. The non-Gulf emigration variable in our model does not have any voters for al-Wafd and the Europe/North America variable does not have anybody for al-Wafd and al-Wasat, which does not allow the convergence of the probit model. Therefore, we randomly recoded three observations from 0 to 1, so that it can converge. The substantive results are not affected by these three recoded observations.
22. The finding for the Egyptian Bloc is surprising, and this may be due to the overrepresentation of higher levels of education in our sample.
23. Due to the data constraints, we could not test the impact of social services on party choice; but recent work by Masoud

(2014) provides extensive evidence that they had an insignificant impact on party choice. We direct readers to his work.

24. <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/164/172490/Egypt/Egypt-Elections-/Free-Egyptians-claim-majority-of-seats-won-by-any-.aspx> (accessed 5 December 2015).

## Supplemental material

Supplementary material for this article is available online.

## References

- Ahmed FZ (2012) The perils of unearned foreign income: aid, remittances, and government survival. *American Political Science Review* 106: 146–165.
- Al-Anani K and Malik M (2013) Pious way to politics: the rise of political salafism in post-Mubarak Egypt. *Digest of Middle East Studies* 22: 57–73.
- Anderson CJ (2007) The end of economic voting? Contingency dilemmas and the limits of democratic accountability. *Annual Review of Political Science* 10: 271–296.
- Batista C and Vicente PC (2011) Do migrants improve governance at home? Evidence from a voting experiment. *The World Bank Economic Review*; 25(1): 77–104.
- Birks J and Sinclair C (1979a) International labour migration in the Arab middle east. *Third World Quarterly* 1: 87–99.
- Birks J and Sinclair C (1979b) The international migration project: an enquiry into the Middle East labor market. *International Migration Review* 13: 122–135.
- Blaydes L and Linzer DA (2008) The political economy of women's support for fundamentalist Islam. *World Politics* 60: 576–609.
- Bravo J (2008) *The Political Economy of Mexico-US Migration*. Durham: Duke University.
- Chalcraft J (2014) Egypt's 25 January uprising, hegemonic contestation, and the explosion of the poor. In: Gerges FA (ed) *The New Middle East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 155–179.
- Choucri N (1986) The hidden economy: a new view of remittances in the Arab world. *World Development* 14: 697–712.
- Commins D (2006) *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia*. New York: IB Tauris.
- Córdova A and Hiskey J (2015) Shaping politics at home cross-border social ties and local-level political engagement. *Comparative Political Studies* 48(11): 1454–1487.
- El-Sherif A (2014) Egypt's post-Mubarak political predicament. Carnegie Paper, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Available at: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/04/29/egypt-s-salafists-at-crossroads/i7y8> (accessed 20 November 2015).
- Errichiello G (2012) Foreign workforce in the Arab Gulf States (1930–1950): migration patterns and nationality clause. *International Migration Review* 46: 389–413.
- Escribà-Folch A, Meseguer C and Wright J (2015) Remittances and democratization. *International Studies Quarterly* 59: 571–586.
- Fahmi G (2015) The future of political Islam in Egypt and Tunisia. Carnegie Paper, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Available at: <http://carnegie-mec.org/2015/11/16/future-of-political-salafism-in-egypt-and-tunisia/ilx5> (accessed 20 November 2015).
- Field N and Hamam A (2009) Salafi satellite TV in Egypt. *Arab Media and Society* 8: 1–8.
- Gauvain R (2010) Salafism in modern Egypt: panacea or pest? *Political Theology* 11: 802–825.
- Goodman GL and Hiskey JT (2008) Exit without leaving: political disengagement in high migration municipalities in Mexico. *Comparative Politics* 40: 169–188.
- Gumuscu S (2010) Class, status, and party: the changing face of political Islam in Turkey and Egypt. *Comparative Political Studies* 43: 835–861.
- Gurses M (2014) Islamists, democracy and Turkey: a test of the inclusion-moderation hypothesis. *Party Politics* 20: 646–653.
- Hadley LH (1977) The migration of Egyptian human capital to the Arab oil-producing states: a cost-benefit analysis. *International Migration Review* 11: 285–299.
- Hassan M (2012) Elections of the People's Assembly, Egypt 2011/12. *Electoral Studies* 32(2): 370–374.
- Haykel B (2009) On the nature of Salafi thought and action. In: Meijer R (ed) *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 33–57.
- Høigilt J and Nome F (2014) Egyptian Salafism in revolution. *Journal of Islamic Studies* 25: 33–54.
- Itzigsohn J and Villacrés D (2008) Migrant political transnationalism and the practice of democracy: Dominican external voting rights and Salvadoran home town associations. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31: 664–686.
- Kapiszewski A (2004) Arab labour migration to the GCC states. In: IOM/League of Arab States (ed) *Arab Migration in a Globalized World*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration, pp. 115–133.
- Kapiszewski A (2006) Arab versus Asian migrant workers in the GCC countries. *United Nations Expert Group Meeting on International Migration and Development in the Arab Region, Beirut, May 15–17*.
- Kelley JG (2012) International influences on elections in new multiparty states. *Annual Review of Political Science* 15: 203–220.
- Levitt P (1998) Social remittances: migration driven local-level forms of cultural diffusion. *International Migration Review* 32: 926–948.
- Long JS (1997) *Regression Models for Categorical and Limited Dependent Variables*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Malik A and Awadallah B (2013) The economics of the Arab Spring. *World Development* 45: 296–313.
- Masoud T (2013) Arabs want redistribution, so why don't they vote left? Theory and evidence from Egypt. In: School HK (ed) *Faculty Research Working Paper Series*. Cambridge, MA.
- Masoud T (2014) *Counting Islam: Religion, Class, and Elections in Egypt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Meijer R (2009) Introduction. In: Meijer R (ed) *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*. New York: London: Hurst & Co, p. 463.
- Moussalli A (2009) Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamism: who is the enemy? *A Conflict Forum Monograph* 1 1–39.
- Munson Z (2001) Islamic mobilization: social movement theory and the Egyptian Muslim brotherhood. *The Sociological Quarterly* 42: 487–510.
- Naithani P, Jha AN and Ranchi L (2010) Challenges faced by expatriate workers in Gulf Cooperation Council countries. *International Journal of Business and Management* 5: 98–103.
- Omar Mahmoud T, Rapoport H, Steinmayr A, et al. (2013) The effect of labor migration on the diffusion of democracy: Evidence from a former Soviet Republic. Discussion Paper Series No. 1320, Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration (CReAM), Department of Economics, University College London.
- Pérez-Armendáriz C (2014) Cross-border discussions and political behavior in migrant-sending countries. *Studies in Comparative International Development* 49: 67–88.
- Pérez-Armendáriz C and Crow D (2010) Do migrants remit democracy? International migration, political beliefs, and behavior in Mexico. *Comparative Political Studies* 43: 119–148.
- Pfütze T (2013) Clientelism versus social learning: the electoral effects of international migration. *International Studies Quarterly* 58: 295–307.
- Rother S (2009) Changed in migration? Philippine return migrants and (Un) democratic remittances. *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 8: 245–274.
- Sayan S (2004) Guest workers' remittances and output fluctuations in host and home countries: the case of remittances from Turkish workers in Germany. *Emerging Markets Finance and Trade* 40: 68–81.
- Schwedler J (2013) Islamists in power? Inclusion, moderation, and the Arab uprisings. *Middle East Development Journal* 5: 1–8.
- Stacher JA (2002) Post-Islamist rumblings in Egypt: the emergence of the Wasat party. *The Middle East Journal* 56: 415–432.
- Tadros M (2013) *Copts at the Crossroads: The Challenges of Building Inclusive Democracy in Egypt*. London: IB Tauris.
- Tezcür GM (2010) The moderation theory revisited the case of Islamic political actors. *Party Politics* 16: 69–88.
- Tyburski MD (2012) The resource curse reversed? Remittances and corruption in Mexico. *International Studies Quarterly* 56: 339–350.
- Wickham CR (2004) The path to moderation: strategy and learning in the formation of Egypt's Wasat party. *Comparative Politics* 36: 205–228.
- Wiktorowicz Q (2001) The new global threat: transnational Salafis and Jihad. *Middle East Policy* 8: 18–38.
- Woltering RA (2002) The roots of Islamist popularity. *Third World Quarterly* 23: 1133–1143.
- Wright R (2012) The Middle East: they've arrived. In: Wright R (ed) *The Islamists Are Coming: Who They Really Are*. Herndon: United States Inst of Peace Press, pp. 1–12.
- Zeidan D (1999) The Copts—equal, protected or persecuted? The impact of Islamization on Muslim-Christian relations in modern Egypt. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 10: 53–67.

### Author biographies

**Ekrem Karakoç** is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science at Binghamton University (SUNY). He specializes in comparative politics with a focus on political institutions, political behavior, and democratization.

**Talha Köse** is an Assistant Professor and the Chair of the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Istanbul Sehir University. He specializes in conflict analysis and resolution and identity issues in modern Turkish society.

**Mesut Özcan** is an Associate Professor of international relations and Director of the Diplomacy Academy, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is an Adjunct Professor at Istanbul Sehir University, Department of Political Science and International Relations.