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The Copts of Egypt between two
uprisings:

Socio-political challenges and opportunities

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The Copts of Egypt between two uprisings:

Socio-political challenges and opportunities

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Abstract

After the uprisings of 25th January 2011 and 30th June 2013, the Copts in Egypt faced challenges of: lawlessness threats, sectarian violence and the rise of political Islam. On the same time they had the opportunities of: regime change and elections. The challenges and opportunities have great influences on the integration of the Copts into the political and social life in Egypt.

Keywords: Egypt, the Copts, minorities, ethnicity, integration.

Introduction

From an ethnic point of view the population of Egypt can be considered as quite homogeneous as Egypt's residents are nearly all ethnic Egyptians – this counts for nearly 99.6% of the population. Likewise, from a religious perspective, Egypt's population can be described as a very homogeneous one, too, as nearly 90% of the population are Sunni Muslims. The remaining Egyptians belong mostly to religions accepted and recognized by the state, including Christianity and Judaism. A very small percentage of Egyptians belong to religions or sects that the state does not officially accept or recognize – most notably Baha'is and Shi'a Muslims (CIA, 2016).

The Copts are Egypt's (largest) Christian community; they represent one of the most ancient communities in Christendom and one of the largest Christian communities in the Middle East. Question concerning their numbers is a politically contentious issue, estimates range between 6-7%, according to Egyptian government statistics, and 13-27%, according to unofficial Coptic estimates. The most palatable ratio of the Copts may be 10%. The Coptic communities in Egypt include: the Orthodox Copts, who currently represent over 90% of

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Christians in Egypt, the Protestant Copts, representing 4% to 6%, and the Catholic Copts, representing 2% to 3% (Selim, 2012, 1).

During the Mubarak era Egypt was considered a stable state ⁽¹⁾, while after Mubarak toppling and during the last five years Egypt is considered unstable state. In this short period, Egypt has witnessed two uprisings; the first was on 25th January, 2011 against the Mubarak regime, while the second was on 30th June, 2013 against the Morsi regime. Over these uprisings, the Copts have sought to improve aspects of the citizenship and social justice, to ensure their full integration on all political and social levels.

During the uprising of 25th January, 2011, which lasted 18 days and saw the toppling of Mubarak regime, the Church played a cautious role, calling on the Copts to refrain from participation. While some heeded the calls, others – particularly the youth – took part in the uprising. In Tahrir Square – the symbol of the uprising – Muslims and Copts acted side by side. During Friday prayers on February 4, 2011, Copts guarded Muslim protesters against any danger and attack, brandishing their tattooed wrists with a cross. In the same square, after two days, Muslims encircled the Coptic protesters during Sunday Mass to ensure their safety (Melcangi, 2012, 2).

These images refer to a status of integration, between the Egyptians, on the base of homeland and citizenship; they represented the beginning of the Copts' political mobility outside the Church confines. At that time, the Egyptians looked forward to end the forms

⁽¹⁾ According to the relationship between the governed and the government, there are three broad types of state are:

- a) Very stable states, where there are few crises, there is an essential harmony between the government and the population. Most citizens accept the legitimacy of the regime all of the time.
- b) Stable states, where the states are not racked by continual tensions between the government and the governed, but conflicts can occur. Most citizens accept the legitimacy of the regime most of the time.
- c) Unstable states, where crisis is the norm, there may be competing centers of political power. Ultimately social breakdown may erode the very fabric of civilized life.

These categories are not permanent. Things change. Unstable states may become more stable and stable states may become unstable (Short, 1993, 133-134).

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of discrimination, at all levels, to achieve the idea of civil state, and to build the state of law. Nevertheless, one month after the 2011 uprising, frequent sectarian attacks occurred including the burning of a church in Sol, March 2011, and the attack of a church in Imbaba, May 2011 (Ibrahim, 2012, 7-11).

After al-Marenab church in Upper Egypt had been attacked, Coptic protests, in October 2011, broke out in front of the state television building, in Maspiro Cairo. This resulted in the violent killing of 28 Copts besides many of wounded and injured (el-Issawi, 255-256). The events at Maspiro had multiple consequences and led to deep scars in the Coptic community and in the Coptic- Muslim relations.

In addition to the sectarian violence, after the 2011 uprising, the Copts faced more challenges such the rise of political Islam, which shaped the majority of the elected parliament in 2012. As well as, the Egyptian presidential elections in 2012 - which took place in an atmosphere of polarization - brought Morsi, the candidate of the Muslim Brotherhood, as head of state. The majority of Copts were not in favor of Morsi.

During the period of Morsi regime Egypt was unstable states, since the crisis is the norm, at the social, political, and economic level; as well a lack of security in the street accompanied these crises. The situations provoked many Egyptians against Morsi; the events culminated in the uprising of 30th June, 2013. The Copts took part in the uprising, to overthrow Morsi regime, which represents political Islam. Many hopes were held by the Copts depending on demise of the Morsi regime. From these hopes only one has been achieved, which is the removal of political Islam from the power. Nevertheless, the sectarian violence has not been stopped till now.

Spatial scope of the study

Egypt represents the spatial scope of this study (Figure 1), which is located in north-eastern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean in the north, Libya in the west, the Gaza Strip and Israel in the north-east, the Red Sea in the east, and Sudan in the south. The total area of

Egypt is nearly 1,001,450 km²; divided into 27 governorates. The total population of Egypt is nearly 90.1 million (CAPMAS, 2016, 2-4).

Aims and Objectives

The key objective of the study is to understanding the challenges that were imposed on the Copts through the two uprisings of January 25, 2011 and June 30, 2013; as well as monitoring the opportunities provided by the uprisings for the Copts, in order to engage and integrate into the political and social life in Egypt. Under the umbrella of the main purpose, it could be formulated the goals as follows:

- 1- To ascertain the Copts' awareness concerning the lawlessness in the wake of the January uprising,
- 2- To identify the causes, patterns and risks of the sectarian violence, as well as the mechanism of its eliminate,
- 3- To clarify the Copts' attitude towards the rise of political Islam and its threats,
- 4- To monitor the Copts' perceptions regarding the regime change towards their interests,
- 5- To describe the Copts' perception concerning the role of election towards their engagement into the political and social life.

Methodology

As this study is a qualitative one, the methodology depended on: (1) **Interviews** that have taken structured form, in which the researcher asked a list of prescribed questions (Appendix 1); these questions were always asked in the same way and the same order. Interviews were conducted during February, April and May 2016. Implementation of the interviews during the fieldwork relied on the geographical distribution of the Copts ⁽²⁾ in Egypt (Figure 2); the researcher sought to cover all regions of Egypt as much as possible. Thus, the interviews were distributed as follows: (a) urban governorates involved seven interviews, five in Cairo and two in Alexandria; (b) Upper Egypt governorates contained seven interviews, four in Minya and three in

⁽²⁾ According to Selim, R. (2012, 74) Upper Egypt have the largest proportion of the Copts by 64.1%; as well as in urban governorates - in particular Cairo and Alexandria - by 22.9%. While Delta governorates comprise 12.5%, and the border governorates include 0.5%.

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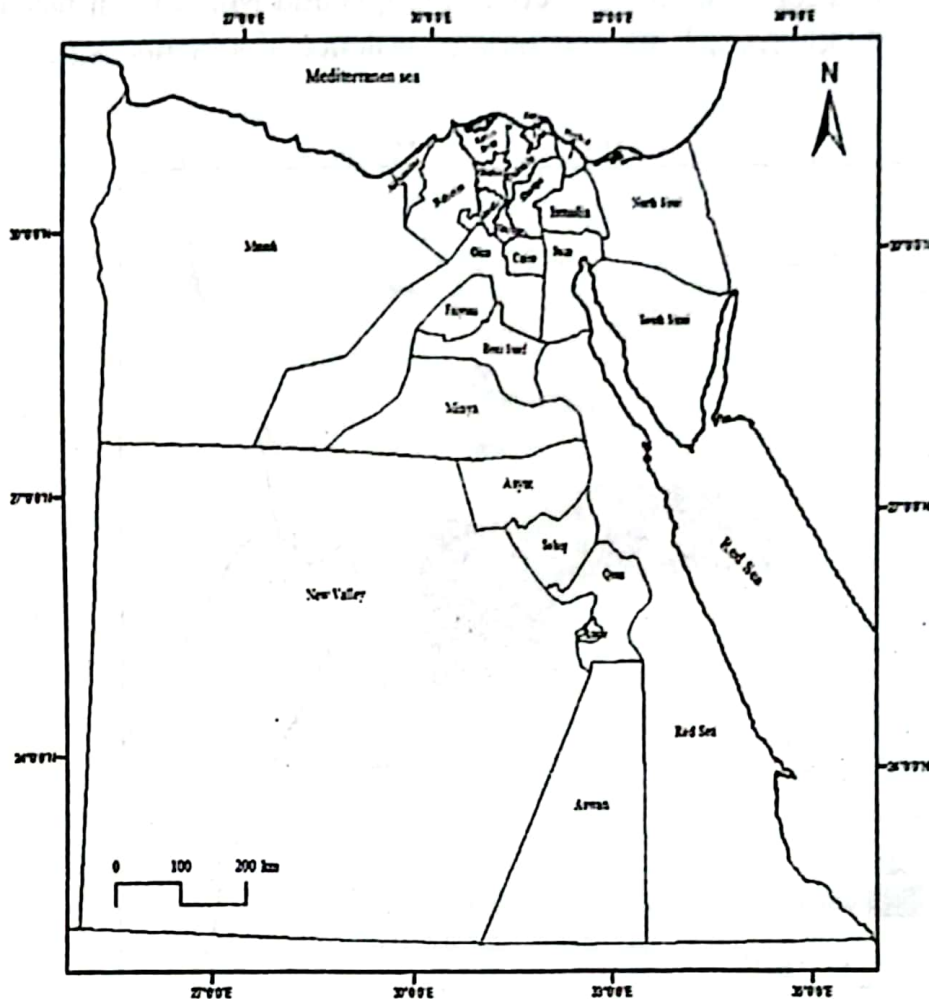


Figure 1: Area of the study, administrative divisions of Egypt

Assiut; (c) Delta governorates included five interviews, three in Sharkia and two in Dakahlia; (d) border governorates included two interviews which were conducted in South Sinai. The interviewees have been usually chosen on the basis of their experience relating to the Coptic question and the current political developments in Egypt. The interviews were carried out with Coptic priests (seven interviews), members of political parties (ten interviews, eight belong to liberal parties, six of them are Copts and two are Muslims; in addition to two belong to Islamic parties), researchers in universities (four interviews, all of them are liberal but do not belong to any party, three of them are Copts and one is Muslim).

(2) **Observation** has been used to monitor the reaction of the Copts population about the developments of political arena and about everyday relations and events between Copts and Muslims; it has also been used to record the sectarian violence incidents since the

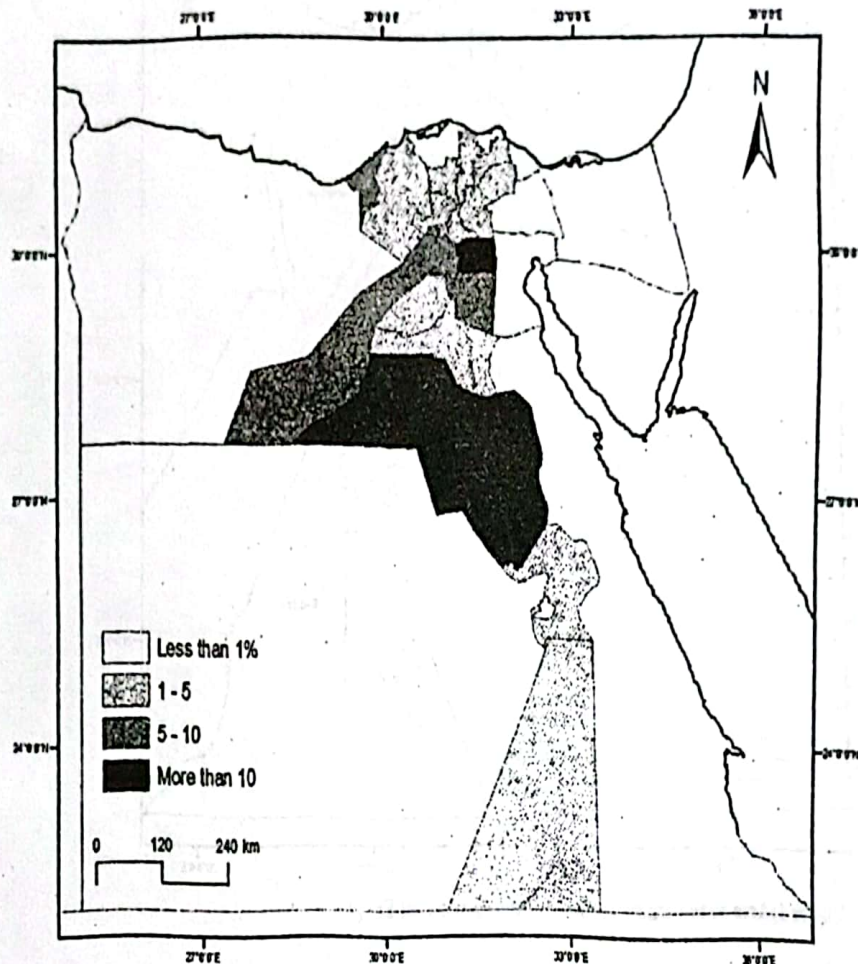


Figure2: Spatial distribution of the Copts in Egyptian governorates 2012

beginning of uprising in January till May 2016.

(3) **Content analysis** has been used to analyze the interview transcripts and the recorded observations; as well as to analyze publications such as articles in scientific journals and in public newspapers related to the Coptic issue after the 25th January uprising.

1- Socio-political challenges

According to Collin, P. (2004, 36) "challenge means an act or statement of defiance; a call to confrontation. It refers to a statement or action questioning a decision or criticizing. Challenge is to question the truth of something or refuse to accept that something is true; or to object to or refuse to accept something such as evidence; or to ask someone to do something difficult, which he or she may not be able to do". Geographically the challenge is a threat, a problem, a difficulty or an obstacle stemming from the surrounding environment, either local, regional or global. In this context, at the level of the state, it could be said that: socio-political challenges refer to inappropriate conditions pose a threat to the prevailing system of relations between population of the state, and thus threaten its stability. In other words socio-political challenges refer to threats that are shaping an atmosphere makes some groups unable to interact with other groups in society or engaging in the socio-political arena. After the uprising of 25th January, 2011, the Copts face socio-political challenges, which threaten their integration in the state. The challenges are: insecurity, rise of political Islam, and sectarian violence.

1-1- Insecurity

Gregory, D. et al. (2009, 672) argues that security is freedom from imagined or real danger in the present or future; it is about contemporary dangers but also thwarting potential future dangers. Therefore, security is the guarantee of safety (Scruton, 2007, 621) from harm, damage or attack; it also extends to include the feeling of being safe in a situation, or the degree to which someone feels safe (Collin, 2004, 223). Pursuant to the foregoing, it could be said that, the concept of insecurity refers to the state of being open to danger or threat; meaning lack of protection. This matter is linked to the circumstances which make security institutions arrangements in the state are unable to adjust the conditions and control over it to keep the stability.

Mental image of the Coptic participants concerning the insecurity refers to "the absence of safe feeling about self and property". This image is often linked to the failure of government to control the

street, as a result to the absence of security forces, as well as a lack of respect for the law. This means the Copts, like all Egyptians, are looking forward to a strong control of the government over the street, depending on security forces apply and respect the law. Regarding *the comparison between the Copts' perceptions about the security situations*, during the period among the two uprisings, 25th January and 30th June; it is turned out from the fieldwork that: (a) the security situations and the sense of safety prior the outbreak of 25th January uprising were much better; the persons were able to move and travel from place to other at any time of the day without fear. The contrary of the above mentioned has occurred after the 25th January uprising outbreak, the security situations have become horrible, particularly during the few months that followed the uprising. The security forces nearly were absent from the streets, and the policemen had relatively disappeared; they have no power that they were previously having, moreover they lost their own awe in the mind of population ⁽³⁾. (b) During the January uprising and after Mubarak's toppling, the people were arranging popular committees in neighborhoods, both in cities and villages, to protect their properties and to prevent thefts at night. The conditions were equal for all Egyptians, there is no difference between a Muslim and a Christian. (c) After 30th June uprising, especially after Morsi's toppling and end the two sit-ins of his supporters in Cairo ⁽⁴⁾, the Copts has suffered from insecurity, since many churches, properties and houses were raided ⁽⁵⁾. The Copts, like all Egyptians, have indeed suffered from insecurity, after the

⁽³⁾ In this context, an interviewee mentioned a scene he saw in his town, is: "in a traffic jam, after the uprising of January by about three months, the traffic cop works to organize the traffic to end the crowding by stopping the ticketed vehicles. Suddenly a driver of a ticketed car attacked the traffic cop by beatings and insults. This scene did not occur before the uprising".

⁽⁴⁾ The two sit-ins were at al-Nahda Square and Rabaa al-Adawiya Square; on 14 August 2013, the Egyptian security forces ended these sit-ins.

⁽⁵⁾ In this regard, one of the interviewees said: "after the end of Rabaa sit-in a rumor spread in my village, says the supporters of Morsi will attack the village church; the villagers, both Muslims and Copts, lined to protect the church against any attack. But the supporters of Morsi had not come, and the church had not exposed to harm".

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uprisings, but their suffering is more than the others; this has clearly appeared in the actions of attacking the churches and their properties ⁽⁶⁾. Nearly one year after the Morsi's toppling, the security situations have actually witnessed better improvement and development; the government became somewhat able to restore stability. In the current period, the security situations are heading to a better status than the previous periods, but they did not live up to the situations before 2011; the government seeks to achieve the security matter, it comes on the top of its priorities.

The causes of insecurity after 25th January, in conceptions of the Coptic interviewees, returned to: (a) clear emergence of political Islam and Islamic radical groups, especially after the release of their leaders from prisons and jails; (b) a sense that you (as a Copt) are rejected or strange by some people in your homeland, furthermore the doubts in your patriotism; (c) the actions of attacking churches by extremists; (d) the absence of expression freedom and spread of religions contempt lawsuits ⁽⁷⁾; (e) the security chaos, the weakness of government control over the scene within the state, the absence of the police apparatus from the streets, especially after the protesters have attacked the police stations in many cities; (f) escape many of thugs, bandits, gangsters and brigands from the prisons and jails, furthermore prevalence of bullying and weapons among the people. These reasons put a heavy load on the Copts, particularly they are a minority, which might be seen as a weak group during the circumstances of lawlessness.

Another big reason for growing the feeling of insecurity in the minds of the Copts is the Media, which played, and is playing, a big role in the growth of insecurity image for the Copts, as well as for the Egyptians. The media presents the incidents of brawl, disputes and

⁽⁶⁾ In this respect, the Copts interviewees have always repeat that: "there is no mosque was attacked or infringed in Egypt by the Copts, in contrast, churches".

⁽⁷⁾ In this regard, the Coptic interviewees have mentioned that religions contempt lawsuits against the Copts have escalated after the uprising of January, mostly against young Copts, who have posted pictures, video clips or comments concerning the Islam on the social networking sites.

quarrels between Copts and Muslims as a sectarian strife; furthermore it is exaggerating during the discussions and handling of these events, either on TV stations or newspapers. So it leads to mobilize imaginative geographies concerning their collective identity, as a result to invoke threats and violence, which swirl around their community, thus fuel the insecurity perceptions of the Copts in their homeland.

In the situations of insecurity, the *Church* has a great role to instill sense of security in the minds of the Copts. The Church is usually working to keep security in the state. The priests of the churches were working, and still work, to advise and offer guidance for the Copts through the speeches and sermons, in order to maintain the stability of the country, they always ask them to avoid the quarrels, disputes; as well as ask them to travel in groups, and cooperate with the security forces. The Church is always working under the principle of "security is a pillar of nation; the future carries the best for homeland".

It became clear that the insecurity erosion, or the perceptions of insecurity will disappear from the minds of the Copts when the law is equally applied, as well as when the security forces are recovering from a refractive status, which buffeted them during the uprising. Another trend will erode the insecurity situations is: the elimination of unemployment and improve the standard of living for the population, in order to reduce the theft crimes; as well as improve the quality of education, work on the eradication of illiteracy, which represent a fertile soil for extremism that creates an insecure society.

1-2- Rise of political Islam

According to Ayoob (2004, 1) the term "political Islam" is, Islam as political ideology rather than as a religious or theological construct. At the most basic level, adherents of political Islam believe that Islam, as a body of faith, has something important to say about how politics, law, economy and society should be ordered in the contemporary state. This means political Islam refers to the political activity which undertaken in the name of Islam in modern state; or represents a contemporary form of instrumentalization of the Islamic

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foundations by individuals, groups and organizations that seek to political purposes and goals (Knudsen, 2003, 2). Accordingly, it could be said, political Islam is a term used to describe the current political movements of change, which believe in Islam as a "political system of governance"; it refers to a set of ideas and political ends stemming from the Islamic law, used by Muslim fundamentalists, who believe that Islam is not only a religion, but it is a legal, social, political and economic system fit to build the institutions of state (Al-Hakish, 2012, 37). In brief, the core idea of political Islam denotes "Islam used to a political end". In this context, the term "Islamic state" was devised by modern Islamist political thinkers, in order to reconcile their romanticized vision of the Islamic polity, with the existence of sovereign states on the European model (Ayoob, 2004, 2).

Egypt, after the 25th January uprising, witnessed a rapid growth of political Islam, commonly referred to as an Islamic revival or Islamic resurgence. This appeared in the attainment of political Islam to the presidency in 2012, president Morsi. During the period of Morsi, Egypt suffered from instability, the country saw polarization at all levels, which led to the 30th June uprising that toppled Morsi from the power.

The Mental image of political Islam represents for the Coptic interviewees "the Islamic state, which is Caliphate, Dhimmis and Jizya, furthermore injustice for women and minorities ⁽⁸⁾". In their understanding political Islam is an organizations engaged in political action, on an ideology derived from Islamic law. They give them many names such as: Islamic movements, Islamic groups, Islamists, and Islamic fundamentalism; moreover the Copts -like the ordinary individuals of Muslims- give the adherents of these movements a common name, is "al-Shayoukh, the Sheikhs". On the other side, the Muslim participants of Islamic ideology asserted that: there is a confusion in conception of political Islam in the minds of the vast majority of the ordinary individuals of the Copts; they cannot differentiate between the Islamic groups, they see all of these groups

⁽⁸⁾ In this respect the most frequent words from the Coptic respondents are: "political Islam wants to drag the society into the past".

as a political Islam. They are seeing each bearded man of Muslims as a symbol of political Islam, but this is a false perception; because there are some Islamic groups are only focusing on Islamic Dawa, and have no role or relation to politics, such as "society for spreading faith - Jamaat al-Tabligh, and Ansar al-Sunna".

The Main groups of political Islam which engaged in political action on the Egyptian scene after the uprising of 25th January are: Muslim brotherhood, the Salafi dawah, and Islamic group; each of these groups have its own political party ⁽⁹⁾, which expresses its ideas, adopts its political program. The Copts -- also like most of the Egyptians Muslims-- can't differentiate between the members of these groups. In general they have always considered all groups of political Islam as Muslim brotherhood.

From the point of view of Muslim participants of Islamic ideology political Islam does not represent a challenge or a threat for the Copts, through applying the tolerant teachings of Islam, which support the maintain of the others' rights within the Islamic state; in addition to build a constitution preserves the equality among the citizens. At the same time, the perspective of liberal Muslims and the Copts participants contradicts the former viewpoint, they see political Islam as a great challenge for the ideas of civic culture ⁽¹⁰⁾, and hence for the Copts; it might not be able to achieve citizenship. Moreover they asserted that majority of the Copts, may be all of them, carry a

⁽⁹⁾ The political party of Muslim brotherhood is the Freedom and Justice Party, this party was dissolved in 2014. The political party of the Salafi dawah is al-Nour Party, it is still working in arena. The political party of Islamic group is the Building and Development Party it is still working in arena also.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Civic culture is the culture, beliefs, and values that direct a political system. Such cultures also involves attending to the institutions that bring about political socialization. The success of stable democracy was the result of civic institutions promoting democratic participation and creating opportunities for commitment and trust. The idea of civic culture is thus closely connected with the idea of civil society. Civic culture provides many local and national channels whereby ordinary individuals can participate in socio-political processes such as voting, registering opinions, membership in the socio-political associations, selecting political leaders, and influencing political opinion. (Turner, 2006, 69).

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negative image about political Islam and Islamic movements in Egypt. The interviewees of liberal Muslims and the Copts have identified the threats of political Islam in following issues: (a) the identity of the Egyptian state, civil or religious; it has settled in the mind of the Copts, from the discourse of political Islam, that the religious identity represents the basis of the state. Even that when the adherents of political Islam have tried to adjust their discourse, by saying civil state; they have attached to it the phrase: "with a religious reference", i.e. "civil state with a religious reference". It is an ambiguous discourse, difficult to understand, represents an opacity to listeners. This speech confuses and worries the Copts, moreover it also encourages them to search for their religious identity. The discourse about identity of the state works to: rise of religious affiliation above the national affiliation, it also eliminates the principle of citizenship, then reduces the idea of pluralism in the country. The Copts seek to civil state, they are with Egyptian nationalism, far from religious orientation ⁽¹¹⁾, and they are with Egyptianness. (b) Freedom of belief, after the uprising of 25th January, the discourse concerning Islamic identity of the state gives indicators to threat the freedom of belief. The extreme fatwas from some Salafist sheikhs go into the way of reduction of freedom of belief ⁽¹²⁾. The Copts have a fear on religious freedom, especially the issue of religious conversion, especially since the Islamic law applies apostasy. As well as there are sheikhs deny and prevent the build of churches in the Islamic state ⁽¹³⁾. (c) Equal access to leading

⁽¹¹⁾ The most repeated words from the liberal Muslims and Copts interviewees, in this respect, are: "I reject the religious state, either Islamic or Christian; so I reject political Islam in power. I support the civil state, which respects the right of citizens to enjoy their rights and fulfil their duties, and protects the equal treatment among citizens".

⁽¹²⁾ Concerning that the respondents have mentioned the fatwa of Sheikh "Yasser Borhamy, the vice president of the Salafi dawah", which says: "the Copts in the viewpoint of Islam are considered infidels".

⁽¹³⁾ In this matter, the most repeated saying of the interviewees is, "during Mubark regime the Copts were usually suffering to obtain permits to build or renovate the churches, I think in the light of political Islam rule, The matter will be very difficult".

positions, Islamic political movements adopt the principle of general mandate in the state administration, which says "no mandate of a non-Muslim over a Muslim". Therefore, they will never accept the Copts both in public positions and the presidency⁽¹⁴⁾, they are also refusing the Copts to take over the ministries, provinces and leadership positions in the state⁽¹⁵⁾. This atmosphere will lead to social and political marginalization of the Copts, moreover they will also feel as they are strangers in their homeland, as they do not participate in the government⁽¹⁶⁾, thus they will move to an alienation status within the society.

Concerning *the Media role*, after the uprising of 25th January, in shaping the image of political Islam in the mind of the Copts, there are two different views: the first view is of the liberal Muslims and the Copts, which emphasized that the media educates the population regarding the ideas of political Islam. When the official media or the private media of liberal currents discuss the ideas of Islamists concerning the community and governance issues, they always ask the moderate scholars, from al-Azher, to interpret the issues for the audiences. They are also presenting the ideas and acts of political Islam groups objectively and far from bias. The speech of private Islamic media are mostly biased towards political Islam, instills fanaticism and intolerance against the other and against the civil state, it might intimidate and frighten the others. The second view belongs to Muslims of Islamic ideology, it says both official and private liberal media have always attached each attack or

⁽¹⁴⁾ Liberal Muslims interviewees said there is no problem for a Copt to be a president of the state; under the democracy principles if a Copt nominates to presidential elections and won, this is neither a disaster nor a sin. Democracy is the foundation and law is the rule.

⁽¹⁵⁾ The most obvious example in this regard is the appointment of a Copt, Emad Shehata, as a governor in Qena in April 2011, after the 25th January uprising. The appointment faced significant objections from the Islamists in the governorate, who mobilized the ordinary Muslims to protest against the appointment decision. At the end the government bowed to them, and appointed another governor.

⁽¹⁶⁾ The most frequent answers on this matter is: "during Mubarak regime the Copts were relatively marginalized in leading positions; thus in the presence of political Islam rule, they will be entirely marginalized".

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infringement on the churches to political Islam. They have usually depicted every problem against the Copts as being due to the Islamists, so that the acts of violence, murder and attacks on churches have become, in the mind of the Copts, from acts of political Islam. The media turns political Islam through coverage its news to be a system of signs constantly repeat, represented in: people with long beard, veiled women, and hands held high often stuck to slogans of jihad and martyrdom, intolerant and militant people. The Coptic media shows the Copts as a persecuted community from Muslims, and are permanently suffering from threats of political Islam. The role of media in shaping the image of political Islam is clearly appearing in the headlines of media, which cover the news of political Islam; such headlines contain: Islamic group training camps, terrorist attack of Islamic group, al-Qaeda organization, Daesh⁽¹⁷⁾ terrorism, Islamic terrorist operations, fanatical Islamists, Muslim extremists, terrorist group of Muslim Brotherhood⁽¹⁸⁾.

Regarding to *the Church's relationship with political Islam* after the uprising of January, all interviewees agreed that the Mubarak regime was seeking to strain the relationship between the Church and Islamists, considering them as a threat for the Copts⁽¹⁹⁾. Whereas, after the uprising they divided the relationship into phases: (a) partial betterment phase, in the wake of the 25th January uprising, the church has often sought to treat with the situations pragmatically; so it tried to improve its relations with the powers that have an influence on the scene, on top of these powers the stream of political Islam. Thus after the uprising, the Church has cautiously converged with some wings of political Islam, particularly Brotherhood, because at that time its speech towards the Copts was moderate. So the Church's relation

⁽¹⁷⁾ Daesh is the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

⁽¹⁸⁾ After the June 30th uprising Muslim Brotherhood was described as a terrorist group by the Egyptian government. While during Mubarak era, Muslim Brotherhood was described as the forbidden group.

⁽¹⁹⁾ In this regard the interviewees mentioned that the regime of Mubark was arranging some incidents on churches and was pasting them to Islamists, for example, al-kadseen church incident in Alexandria in 2011, before the 25th January uprising.

with political Islam, has become better ⁽²⁰⁾, but this betterment in relations did not last long. (b) Partial tension phase, the tensions of church's relations with political Islam wings, after the January uprising, has firstly started with the Salafi movements, because the fatwas and opinions of some Salafist sheikhs concerning the Copts and their role in state administration ⁽²¹⁾. The violence towards some churches from some Islamists also provoked the disturbance of relations. As well as the Copts lineup alongside the liberal and secular movements against the rule of political Islam, Morsi, has clearly played a role in destabilizing the relations. In addition to the foregoing, political Islam powers could not provide real assurances to maintain civil order and freedom of belief, since the political Islam did not develop its speech. (c) High tension phase, after the 30th June uprising, the relations between Church and political Islam have completely soured and cut off; the Islamist powers are attacking and accusing the Church as it, in their opinions, participated in undermining the democratic experiment of political Islam in Egypt ⁽²²⁾.

Concerning *the Acceptance of political Islam in the power*, there are three divergent views. The first is belonged to Muslims of Islamic ideology, it is, of course, in favor of the existence of political Islam in power, as they seek to apply the political Islamic system. They have strongly justified their viewpoint that the principles of Islam work to

⁽²⁰⁾After the 25th January uprising, the newspapers spoke about the significant improvement in the relations between the Copts and the Muslim Brotherhood; They highlighted the visit of the general guide of the Brotherhood, Dr. M. Badea, to the Pope, Shenouda III, at the cathedral.

⁽²¹⁾ The interviewees mentioned that some Salafist sheikhs have said, after the 25th January uprising, some fatwas concerning the Copts participation in the government, such: "the Copts cannot nominated to parliament or the presidency, since there are no mandate for the Copts in Islamic state".

⁽²²⁾ In this regard the participants mentioned that the islamists said: "the Copts have been politically exploited against Morsi, they represented nearly 60-70% of the protests against Morsi, since the church has mobilized the Copts to demonstrate in 30th June to topple the Islamic president".

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maintaining the rights of others in Dar al-Islam; and hence there is no fear from political Islam, since it will certainly preserve the rights of the Copts in Egypt. The second viewpoint reverts to a group contains few of the Copts and few of the liberal Muslims, it has announced the acceptance of political Islam in power ⁽²³⁾, but linked this issue with the presence of some important conditions, are: (a) renew the speech of political Islam towards the other, in order rectify, modify and improve its image, which took place in the minds since long period; moreover to send a message of reassurance for the Copts; (b) open a joint dialogue and exchange of views concerning the contentious matters, such: freedom of belief, civil state, building worship places, and equal access to leading positions; (c) build trust bridges with the Copts based on the idea of citizenship, since it is only path to bridge polarization in society; (d) state agencies have to work to promote common coexistence, furthermore build a strong civil society with all its wings: parties, syndicates and other non-governmental organizations; (e) activation the law and applying strict punishments for the behaviors and actions that harm the foundations of coexistence and the citizenship, and consider them as the crimes of national security. The third viewpoint returns to a group includes most of the Copts and most of the liberal Muslims, they have rejected political Islam in power; they have justified the immense difficulty to live with political Islam in power, depending on the perception of political Islam concerning the civil state.

1-3- Sectarian violence

According to Scruton, R. (2007, 722) violence is a property of force. A force is violent if it violates, or if it breaks and destroys that to which it is applied. This means the violence, generally, refers to the use of force to give rise to deterioration, harm and damage to something or to injure or abuse someone; intense or destructive action of force (Herbst, 2003, 180). Violence is the most extreme expression of power, containing the ultimate potential of total power,

⁽²³⁾ This group have frequently said: "political Islam in power is not a big threat, because the vast majority of Egyptian Muslims do not belong to it; therefore they will be eager to confront any cons from the rulers, like what happened in 30th June".

the physical destruction of one social actor by another. Violence may be a spontaneous expression of power relations, or a planned, instrumental maximization of power (Turner, 2006, 652). At the level of relations among population within the state, the core meaning of violence is the deliberate infliction of bodily violation or harm on one individual human being by another; therefore the violence is more than just what we do to the other —another race, or ethnic, religious, linguistic, or political group. It is prior to violent behavior—it is “the very construction of the other” (Herbst, 2003, 181).

Because of endemic inequalities of power, violence is a general potentiality of socio-spatial relations, even if in many types of relationship this remains latent for long periods. Studies have considered violence as a result of political, racial, class and religious conflicts; furthermore as a result of social and political transformation, especially in revolution and protest actions. So the violence represents part of a larger matrix of socio-spatial power struggles (Gregory et al., 2009, 798).

Sectarianism refers to the concern for the interests of one group, either religious, racial, linguistic or political in preference to other groups. The word is sometimes used more loosely, to denote any kind of group, where the group possesses a special identity (Scruton, 2007, 622). The sectarian violence represents the violent image of socio-spatial relations between groups within the state, it occurs in the existence of sectarian deviations and behaviors, as some groups may express their antagonism towards the others violently, depending on the base of their identities; thus the sectarian violence has been mainly seen as an expression of collective socio-spatial conflict.

The Egyptian arena, after the 25th January uprising till June 2016, has seen nearly 94 incidents of sectarian violence (Appendix 2); the spatial distribution of this violence (Figure 3), explains that: the governorates of Upper Egypt have witnessed around 64 incidents, in 9 governorates; while the governorates of Lower Egypt have seen about 30 incidents, in 9 governorates. During that period only 9 governorates are free of sectarian violence. Approximately 40

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incidents are Clash, scuffle and quarrel among population; whereas almost 54 incidents are attacks on a church or a monastery, majority of these attacks were occurred after ending the sit-ins of Morsi supporters in Rabaa and al-Nahda, in Cairo, in August 2013.

Mental image of the sectarian violence in perceptions of the interviewees is a pattern of bullying acts based on an ideology, may be religious, political or ethnic or class or other; it represents a form of social behaviors, which could be described as bullying sectarianism. Sectarian violence also represents the idea of assault the other in any way, both moral and physical; as well as threatening the others regarding grant or deny their rights either political, social, economic or cultural. The interviewees have emphasized that the mental image of violence in Egypt returns to: (a) sectarianism which stems mainly from the circle of religious belief, leading to intolerance between communities within the state; (b) exaggerate by the society for simple matters such as a scuffle, quarrel and dispute between a Muslims and a Christian for a very simple reasons.

The types of sectarian violence after the uprising of January, the respondents have already categorized the violence between the Copts and Muslims into two broad categories are: (1) the social violence, includes: (a) scuffle or quarrel between two people from the Copts and Muslims leading to sectarian clashes; (b) revenge after a rumor of rape of a Muslim girl by a Christian man or vice versa, a rumor about an illicit love affair between a Muslim boy and a Coptic girl or vice versa. (2) The religious violence, involves: (a) attacking of the churches or monasteries; (b) attack related to do the religious rituals in a building not dedicated to that. Thus according to the Norwegian peace researcher Johann Galtung, the Copts in Egypt suffer from the direct violence, or personal injury and cultural violence ⁽²⁴⁾.

⁽²⁴⁾ The Norwegian peace researcher Johann Galtung has defined violence as tripartite: (1) as direct violence, or personal injury; (2) as structural violence, where structures of social injustice violate or endanger the right to life of individuals or groups of people in a society or a nation; and (3) as cultural violence, in which any aspect of culture, such as language, religion, ideology or art, is used to legitimize direct or structural violence" (Gregory et al., 2009, 799).

The reasons and motives of sectarian violence in Egypt after the two uprisings are: (a) spread of illiteracy among the population, about 26.1% of the Egyptians are illiterate (Jahan et al., 2015, 243);

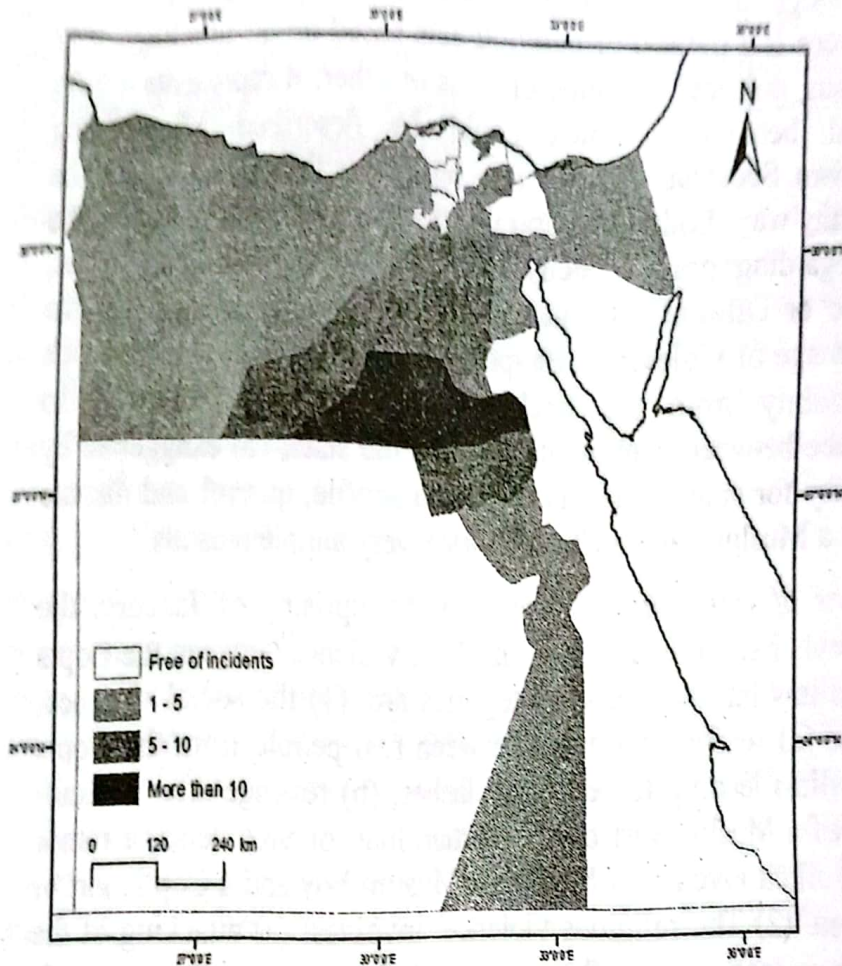


Figure 3: Sectarian violence in Egypt (January 2011 - June 2016)

moreover the low quality of education helps to accept radical ideas and hardline interpretation for the Quran texts; (b) poor understanding of religion, militant religious language, radical and

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extremist groups, and fatwas that incite to hate the other ⁽²⁵⁾; (c) widespread unemployment, especially among young people, approximately 35.7 % of the youth without work i.e. serves as the unemployed (Jahan et al., 2015, 255); d) poverty and low standard of living take the population to hunker down religion, nearly 25.2% of Egyptians live under the level of poverty line (Jahan et al., 2015, 228); (e) inaction of state officials to address the issues affecting the Copts ⁽²⁶⁾, (f) security persecution to the followers of political Islam leads to resentment those followers towards the other; therefore, some considered power is the cause of discord between Muslims and Copts, (g) sectarian bickering as a result of the issue of religious conversion from Islam to Christianity and vice versa (Islamization and Christianization); (h) religious TV stations that broadcast an extremist discourse carries misleading ideas, which incite sectarianism and violence towards the other ⁽²⁷⁾.

The interviewees have identified *the dangers of sectarian violence*, after the January uprising, in two main issues are: (a) state's instability, the sectarian violence threatens the social cohesion and community compatibility, which serve as a part of national security of Egypt, the violence leads to fragment the national unity, and thus disturb the stability of the state; (b) the Copts' persecution sensation, sectarian violence creates in the minds of the Copts a sense that they

⁽²⁵⁾ In this regard the interviewees mentioned some fatwas of the Salafist sheikhs, after the 25th January uprising, about the Copts such: a) "It is forbidden for Muslims to Congratulate the Christians during their celebration by Christmas and other holidays"; b) "it is not permissible for a Muslim to donate for building the churches, because church is infidelity".

⁽²⁶⁾ In this regard, the Coptic interviewees have mentioned the example of a church renovation in Minya governorate. When the Copts asked the governor for a permit to repair and renovation an old church; the governor delayed the permit until hold a meeting with the Salafists in the governorate, who have had some terms, such as: it should not put neither Cross nor bell on the building, the height of the church has to be only two-floors no more.

⁽²⁷⁾ The Egyptian government, after the 30th June uprising, closed the Islamic TV stations that were promoting and encouraging sectarianism, such as: al-Nass, al-Hafez, al-Rahma, and al-Shabab.

are suffering from an oppression and injustice at their homeland, thus some of them

will tend to become isolated from society and live in alienation, and some others tend to emigrate out the country ⁽²⁸⁾.

The factors of remedy the sectarian violence that help to eliminate it from the Egyptian society are: (a) renewal of the religious language to be a moderate, to keep pace with the current developments in the arena; (b) modify the law of oratory practice in mosques, ascending the pulpit and deliver the sermon should only be confined to Azharites, graduates of Al-Azhar University, who were educated and trained for that matter; (c) choose the sermon topics by a specific committee from the Ministry of Awqaf, the topics of current period should be focused on coexistence and tolerance between religions, renounce violence, social peace, common history and national unity; (d) media has to use a national discourse, which calls for national unity and peaceful coexistence, it should carry out meetings and discussions with open-mind and moderates clerics and intellectuals, to educate the population and encourage the affection models; (e) the Church and Al-Azhar must not intervene in any brawls, quarrels or disputes between the Copts and Muslims individuals, the two institutions have to leave the matters to the government to apply the law, as well as the same thing in the incidents of attack on churches; (f) stop and eliminate all forms of the sessions of customary reconciliation committees, which are commonly used in resolving the sectarian violence incidents between the Copts and Muslims; furthermore opening the way for law enforcement; (g) achieve the full citizenship, meaning all citizens have the same rights and duties, are equal before the law, to eliminate discrimination within the

⁽²⁸⁾ concerning the Copts emigration after the 25th January uprising, some news have said that many Copts have emigrated abroad, these news reported that more than 100,000 Copts have emigrated to America, Europe, Canada and Australia, after January especially after Morsi won the presidency. But the Church and the government have denied the figure, and asserted that it is much exaggerated and totally false. Moreover they mentioned that the number of those who emigrated after the 25th uprising is several thousands, so it is not much different than it was before the uprising.

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community; (h) activate the school role by teaching a book about ethics, morals and virtues, which govern a person's or group's behavior, to build open-minded pupils, moreover to create generations have a moderate thought, and carries the flares of enlightenment for the society; (i) the Ministry of Culture should produce cultural materials such: magazines, books, booklets, pamphlets, leaflets, plays and movies, to promote the respect and acceptance the other, and encourage peaceful coexistence, citizenship and national unity; (j) the Ministry of Youth and Sports must organize integration programs that include camps and courses, which should collect all spectrums of society - different religions, different ideologies, different regions etc. - to achieve coexistence and merger between the sons of homeland.

2-Socio-political opportunities

Opportunity refers to a favorable or advantageous circumstance or combination of circumstances should be used by the society; it means a chance for progress or advancement. In other words opportunity is a benefit or need has not yet achieved, the society has the possibility to fulfill it. From the geographical point of view, opportunity is a favorable change, a chance, a benefit or an advantageous circumstance stemming from the surrounding environment, either local, regional or global. At the country level, socio-political opportunities refer to appropriate conditions, which form hope and trust in the prevailing relations among population, and make the groups within the state interact together and engage in the socio-political arena on the base of fairness and satisfaction. After the uprising of 25th January, 2011, the Copts have already obtained some socio-political opportunities, which stimulate and encourage their integration in the state. The opportunities are: the regime change and the elections.

2-1- Regime change

Regime refers to the government or administrative set-up in a country. A number of different types may be recognized, such as democratic system, government by the people through elected representatives; totalitarian system, rule by an individual or by one party and no opposition (Witherick et al., 2001, 205-206). Regime used to denote the actual holders of office within a government, considered independently of the offices which they hold; regime and government may be used synonymously (Scruton, 2007, 568). In short, regime refers to a form of rule, or to a system or style of government. Regime change refers to a change in a country's government made by force by another power; or a change in leadership of a country (Collin, 2004, 208). Another form of regime change can be occurred without a change of government or leadership of the country, as when a ruling party recasts the constitution in order to preserve its power (Scruton, 2007, 568).

It is usually assumed that change of the totalitarian regimes carries better opportunities for societies, because this change always seeks to build a new regime in order to achieve the rule of law and pluralism, as well as building the principle of citizenship. In this context, the 25th January and 30th June uprisings in Egypt led to change the regime, to build the goals of the protesters, such as freedom, social justice, civil state, citizenship and the rule of law. The Copts are not far from these events, they are part of the people, and have their goals and trying to achieve them; so the regime change represents an opportunity for their goals. This part of the study tries to illustrate the influences of regime changes on the Copts goals, in the wake of the uprising of 25th January, 2011, and 30th June 2013.

The interviewees see the regime change as the removal of unsuccessful regime to find a new one, in order to achieve the goals of the nation; regime change refers to the refusal of the political reality, which is administrated by the current regime in all aspects, either political, economic or social; then work to remove this regime, and replace it by another new regime. So regime change portrays the process of transition from a phase into a new one, to reach a better situation, which the population seek to achieve for their state. Thus

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removal of the tyrant and dictator, seeking to find a better regime, fair and democratic, goes in this path. Briefly, regime change denotes replacing the current president and government by a new president and government have a different thought and ideology, in order to develop the country.

The respondents divided *the mechanism to change the regime* into two types are: (1) the violent mechanism, which refers to the ways that use the force to change, it include: provoking a civil war between the existing regime and the opposition, which leads to the intervention of a foreign powers to change the regime. Revolution or uprising that is implemented by the population seeking to topple the regime, like the case of Egypt during the two uprisings of 25th January and 30th June. A coup that is carried out by the army. (2) The peaceful mechanism, it denotes the means of the elections and referendum, where the ruling party is replaced by another, as well as a president replaced by another; this change is followed by the restructuring of the state apparatus. This type is always the best for change, since it preserves the social peace, as well as keeps the stability of state.

The interviewees have unequivocally agreed that the regime change has granted the Copts some benefits, and in the same time it has carried many harms for them. The benefits are: (a) political mobility outside the Church, it represents the most important benefit for the Copts from the uprising. Prior the uprising of January, the Church was representing the voice of the Copts, they always demonstrated inside the churches; while after the uprising the Copts moved to demonstrate outside the wall of churches to express about their anger. The uprising gave the Copts their full Egyptianness; it has supported their full integration in the state; the uprising drove the Copts out of isolation behind the walls of church, as they put the homeland prior the church. The uprising has succeeded to achieve the political separation between the Copts and the Church. (b) Activate the socio-political participation, the uprising has contributed to form a lot of Coptic organizations and unions at the political level, which emphasized the political participation of Copts in the arena; moreover

in the wake of the January uprising many Coptic groups ⁽²⁹⁾ were formed, in order to increase the awareness of participation significance in political life; as well as the Copts have contributed to the establishment of several new parties. The harms are the sectarian violence and the rise of political Islam.

During the 25th January uprising the interviewees confirmed that the Church was against regime change, because it was compatible with the Mubarak regime; while in the 30th June uprising the Church played a major role in the regime change, since it has mobilized the Copts masses against Morsi regime, which represents political Islam ideology that is against civil-state in the opinion of Copts. The Church supported the intervention of army to isolate Morsi; the Pope, Tawadros II, took part with the Sheikh of Al-Azhar, Ahmed al-Tayeb, in declaration of the toppling Morsi in July 3, 2013, which has been declared by the minister of defense at that time, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

In the midst of the period after the 25th January uprising *the Church's relation with regime* has dramatically ranged, between compatibility and disharmony. Since the beginnings of the 25th uprising till now the relation has actually seen four phases. (a) The first phase, during the uprising days -Mubarak period, the church was having interests in the political sphere, these interests were: maintaining the institutional independence for the Church in light of state institutions, and monopoly the right of speak on behalf of the Copts. Mubarak's regime already gave these interests for the Church, so it was supporting this regime, as well as was strongly rejecting its toppling in the 25th January uprising. (b) The second phase, the military council period, at the beginning this phase the relation was in a good path, while Maspero events ⁽³⁰⁾ represented milestone in transforming the relation between the Church and the military council. The Church was not satisfied with the regime's policies towards the Copts and

⁽²⁹⁾ Such these groups are "the Copts for the elections, and the Copts for Egypt"

⁽³⁰⁾ Concerning Maspero incident, the most prominent words that were mentioned by the liberal Muslims and the Copts interviewees are: "I wished if the Egyptians - especially Muslims - called for a big demonstration after Maspero events, to denounce what had happened to the Copts; but unfortunately nothing happened".

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vice versa; perhaps one of the most prominent images of church resistance through that period appeared in the large number of priests and pastors, who moved into the political arena, to lead the Copts demonstrations and protests after each event of the violence against the Copts. (c) The third phase, Morsi period, during that phase the church became more active in political arena, was always at odds with the regime; the disagreement has clearly appeared in the Pope-inauguration ceremony, where the president, Morsi, did not attend the ceremony. The church has constantly instigated the Copts against the regime, encouraged its adherents to demonstrate to topple Morsi on June 30. The Church played a major role in regime topple; it supported the army intervention to isolate Morsi, because his regime is a threat to the Church by calling to put the Church funds and endowments under the supervision of the government. (d) The fourth phase, after 30th June uprising, through that phase the church is seeking to re-establish itself as a unified voice of the Copts in Egypt; it supports al-Sisi regime and its policies; as well as it has also asked the expatriate Copts to demonstrate in favor al-Sisi, especially during his visits to the United States and Europe. The Church relation with the regime after 30th June is like the relation before the 25th January, this relation increases isolation of the Copts and reduces their integration; furthermore it makes them lose some of their rights, because many of their demands will solve between the government and the Church head, this may not be in favor for the Copts participation in social and political arena.

2-2- Elections

Election is the process whereby an electorate chooses, by voting, officers either to act on its behalf, or to represent it in an assembly, with a view to government or administration (Scruton, 2007, 203); election is the act of electing, or the act of choosing a representative or representatives (Collin, 2003, 83).

After the events of 25th January, Egypt witnessed many elections, either for the parliament or the presidency; these elections represented an opportunity for the Copts to participate and engage in the political life.

The participants' perception concerning the elections denotes the process of selecting the persons from the rival candidates, in order to represent the public in the legislative institutions, or to choose the president of the state. It is the process of choosing some persons to monitor the government, furthermore to manage legislation for the future. Prior the 25th January uprising, the impression of the participants concerning the elections refers to an unreal process; it was seeming like elections, but its content is empty, because it has vote rigging, illegal interference with the process, moreover the unequal opportunities. Whereas after the January uprising, the elections have become realistic, as it exceeded the pre-January faults.

The fieldwork has shown that the participation varied during the pre-January period comparing to the period after; most interviewees (81%) did not participate in all elections process before January uprising, while all of them participated in all election process after January uprising. The participation is mainly for the desire of change, because the country is heading into a new era. The main feature of the first parliamentary elections after January uprising is political polarization between political Islam and the liberal wings. The Copts and liberal Muslims elected the liberals candidates, which appeared in electoral campaigns under the name of the Egyptian Bloc⁽³¹⁾, since it adopts the principles of citizenship and civil-state; while Muslims of Islamic ideology elected the wings of political Islam.

In the first elections many *hopes and aspirations* loomed in the imagination of the Copts, such: integration into the political and social life, build the civil-state, the rule of law, achieve citizenship, and preserve the rights and freedoms. However the results of elections after January uprising (Figure 4) did not achieve the hops and aims of the Copts, as the political Islam represented the majority of the parliament members. Moreover the representation of Copts was very low by a few deputies. Then presidential elections resulted in victory

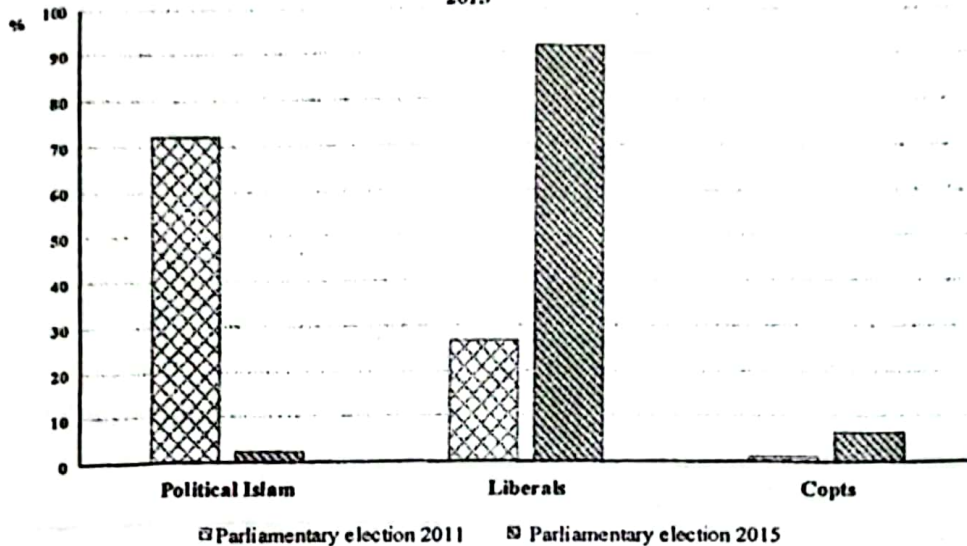
⁽³¹⁾ Egyptian Bloc is an electoral alliance consisted of liberal political parties to face political Islam in parliamentary election after the 25th January uprising.

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of the political Islam candidate, Morsi, who has imposed more difficulties in front of the goal of civil-state.

After 30th June uprising, the parliament elections witnessed increasing the share of the liberal wings, which have represented the majority of parliament, compared to retreat the share of political Islam; as well as the elections has seen increasing in the elected Copts members, which led to increase representation of the Copts in the parliament (Figure 5); this offers more opportunity to build the civil-state. By the same token, the presidential elections led to the victory of president al-Sisi, who seeks to build a civil-state and achieve citizenship, this is in favor of the Copts.

Figure 4: The Coptic elected deputies in the parliamentary elections of 2011 and 2015



Regarding the role of the church in directing the Copts in the elections, it appeared from the fieldwork that there are three views are: (1) the Copts viewpoint, it asserted the Church role in advising the Copts during the elections about the ideologies that will be better for their goals; the church had not imposed on the Copts to elect a particular candidate ⁽³²⁾. (b) The viewpoint of Muslims of Islamic ideology, it has confirmed that some religious leaders encouraged strongly the Copts, in their churches, to vote liberal stream against political Islam ⁽³³⁾. (c) The viewpoint of the liberal Muslims, it said there were no an official policy of the Church concerning voting in

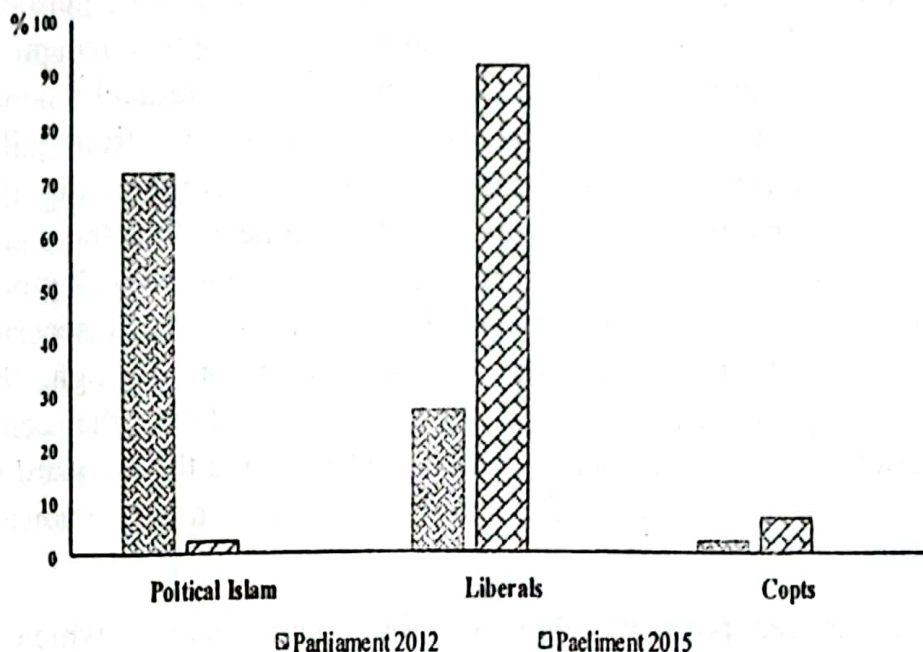
⁽³²⁾ The most frequent responses in this regard from the Copts interviewees is: "after January uprising the candidates for parliament were too many, in the meantime the scene was also unclear; a lot of ordinary Copts did not know how to vote. As well as the situations was during the presidential elections in 2012. So the ordinary Copts have actually needed a guide to explain for them, the church already represented that guide; by organizing groups of youth and parties to carry out political awareness among the ordinary Copts, these groups have explained the advantages and disadvantages of each candidate; but did not impose a particular candidate".

⁽³³⁾ In this regard, the interviewees of Muslims of Islamic ideology said: "the role of the Church has emerged in the presidential elections in 2012, between Morsi and Shafiq, when the Church mobilized all the monks and nuns, to vote in the runoff in favor for Shafiq".

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the elections. The church confirmed and announced that there was no guidance from its side to vote for a particular candidate; in the same time, the Church has always asked the Copts to participate vigorously

Figure 5: The Coptic deputies in the Egyptian parliaments of 2012 and 2015



in elections, to achieve citizenship and civil-state⁽³⁴⁾.

Conclusion

This study sought to describe and analyze the socio-political challenges, which faced the Copts in Egypt, after the uprisings of 25th January 2011 and 30th June 2013; as well as the opportunities that loomed for them through these uprisings. The results can be summarized as follows:

- The Copts sense concerning the security situations before of 25th January uprising were much better than after the uprising outbreak, since the security forces nearly were absent from the streets. After

⁽³⁴⁾ The common answer of liberal Muslims interviewees in this respect is: "it is logically that the church works to urge the Copts to support the Coptic candidates; as well as to support the Egyptian Bloc, which is a coalition of liberal parties, to confront the Islamic polarization".

30th June uprising, especially after the overthrow Morsi and end the two sit-ins of his supporters in Cairo, the Copts has suffered from insecurity, as many churches, properties and houses were raided. The Copts have suffered from insecurity, after uprisings, more than Muslims. Currently the security situations have actually improved, is heading to a better status than the previous periods. The causes of insecurity after 25th January in the Copts' conception have mainly represented in the clear emergence of radical Islamic groups, especially after the release of their leaders from jails; attacking churches by extremists, which is accompanying the weakness of government control over the scene within the state; considering the Copts as a minority might be seen as a weak group particularly in the circumstances of lawlessness. The insecurity sensation will erode from the Copts' perception through: the government becomes strong and has a tight control over the scene; reduction the levels of unemployment and improve the standard of living; as well as improve the quality of education and eradicate illiteracy.

- The Copts see political Islam as "the Islamic state", which is Caliphate, Dhimmis and Jizya, furthermore injustice for women and minorities. The Copts have considered political Islam as the greatest challenge for the ideas of civic culture, since it threatens the issues: (a) the state identity, civil or religious; the discourse of political Islam asserted the religious identity of the state, by saying "civil-state with a religious reference". The religious identity of the state puts the religious affiliation above the national affiliation, it also eliminates the principle of citizenship. Generally, the Copts are seeking to the civil state and the Egyptian nationalism, away from any religious orientation. (b) Freedom of belief, the speech of political Islam powers in Egypt threatens the freedom of belief; some Sheikhs mention extreme fatwas which prevent the issue of religious conversion from Islam, since the Islamic law applies apostasy; as well as they prevent the construction of churches in the Islamic state. (c) Equal access to leading positions, Islamic movements will never accept the Copts both in public positions and the presidency. Moreover some wings of political Islam are

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also refusing the Copts to take over the ministries, provinces and leadership positions in the state depending on the general mandate principle. This atmosphere will lead to social and political marginalization of the Copts.

- the violence between the Copts and Muslims divided into: (a) the social violence which includes: scuffle or quarrel between a Copt and a Muslim leading to sectarian clashes; and revenge after a rumor of rape of a Muslim girl by a Christian man or vice versa, a rumor about an illicit love affair between a Muslim boy and a Coptic girl or vice versa; (b) the religious violence that involves: attacking of the churches or monasteries; attack related to do the religious rituals in a building not dedicated to that. Meaning the Copts in Egypt suffer from the direct violence, or personal injury and cultural violence. The reasons of sectarian violence are: (a) the illiteracy among population, about one-third of the Egyptians are illiterate; (b) the low quality of education that helps to accept radical ideas and hardline interpretation for the religious texts, and fatwas that incite to hate the other; (c) inaction of state officials to address the issues affecting the Copts; (d) sectarian bickering as a result of the issue of religious conversion from Islam to Christianity and vice versa; (e) religious TV stations that broadcast an extremist discourse carries misleading ideas, which incite sectarianism and violence towards the other.
- The remedy of sectarian violence represents in: (a) renewal of religious language to become a moderate form; (b) modify the law of oratory practice in mosques, delivering the sermon should only be confined to Azharites; (c) choose the sermon topics by the Ministry of Awqaf, focusing on coexistence, tolerance between religions, and renounce violence; (d) media has to use a national discourse, which calls for national unity and peaceful coexistence; (e) the government has to apply the law in the incidents of sectarian violence; (f) eliminate the sessions of customary reconciliation committees, which are commonly used in resolving the sectarian violence incidents; (g) activate the role of school by teaching a book about morals and virtues, which govern a person's

or group's behavior; (i) the Ministry of Culture should produce cultural materials such as: magazines, books, and pamphlets encourage the peaceful coexistence and citizenship; (j) the Ministry of Youth and Sports must organize integration programs.

- The regime change granted the Copts some benefits, and in the same time it carried some harms for them. The benefits are: (a) the political mobility outside the Church, the uprising has succeeded to achieve the political separation between the Copts and the Church; it has supported their full integration in the state, the Copts put the homeland prior the church; (b) activate the socio-political participation, after uprising the Copts has contributed to form a lot of organizations and unions at the political level; moreover in the wake of the January uprising many Coptic groups were formed, to increase the awareness of participation significance in political life; as well as the Copts contributed to establishment of several new parties. The harms of the regime change for the Copts has represented in the sectarian violence and the rise of political Islam.
- The Copts carried many hopes and aspirations in their imagination concerning the elections after January uprising, such as: integration into the political and social life, build the civil-state, the rule of law, and preserve the rights and freedoms. However the results of the first elections after January uprising did not achieve the hops and aims of the Copts, as the political Islam represented the majority of the parliament (70%), and the representation of Copts was very low, only 2.1%. Moreover the presidential elections brought the candidate of political Islam, Morsi. After 30th June, the parliamentary elections resulted increasing the share of the liberal wings, which have represented the majority of parliament; retreat the political Islam, only 2.1%; as well as increasing the Copts' representation, more than 6.5% of the deputies. This offers more opportunity to achieve the goal of civil-state. Furthermore, the presidential election brought a president, al-Sisi, who seeks to build a civil-state and achieve citizenship.

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Appendix (1)

The interview questions

Insecurity

- 1- What does the insecurity mean for you? How did you see the security situation in Egypt after the two uprisings of 25th January and 30th June?
- 2- What are the reasons that led to the insecurity situation?
- 3- What was the role of the Church to reassure the Copts during the lawlessness?
- 4- How do the Copts overcome the sense of insecurity?

Political Islam

- 1- What is the political Islam in the Copts perception? What are the active groups of political Islam on the scene after the 25th January uprising?
- 2- What is the role of media in forming the image of political Islam in the Copts' cognition?
- 3- Does political Islam represent a threat to the Copts? What are the forms of its threat?
- 4- What is the type of the relation between the Church and political Islam after the two uprisings of 25th January and 30th June?
- 5- How do the Copts accept the existence of political Islam in power?

Sectarian violence

- 1- What does the sectarian violence mean in Copts' perception?
- 2- What are the patterns of sectarian violence against Copts in Egypt after the two uprisings of 25th January and 30th June?
- 3- What are the causes of the sectarian violence against Copts after the two uprisings of 25th January and 30th June?
- 4- What are the dangers of sectarian violence on the Copts?
- 5- How can the state overcome and eliminate the sectarian violence?

Regime change

- 1- What does the regime change mean in the Copts conception? What are the ways of this change?
- 2- What are the benefits and harms of regime change, for the Copts, after the two uprisings of 25th January and 30th June?
- 3- What is the preferred regime for the Copts, Morsi regime or al-Sisi? Why?
- 4- What is the pattern of the relation between the Church and the regime after the two uprisings of 25th January and 30th June?

Elections

- 1- What does the elections mean in the Copts' understanding?
- 2- What is the extent of Copts' participation in the elections? What is the prefer ideology they tend to elect?
- 3- Has the Copts' participation in the elections achieved their hopes and goals?
- 4- What is the extent of the Church influence on the Copts in the elections?

Appendix (2)

**Sectarian violence incidents between Muslims and the Copts in Egypt
(25th January, 2011 till 30th June, 2016)**

Governorate	Incidents		Total
	Attack on a church or a monastery	Clash, scuffle, quarrel	
North Sinai	1	1	2
South Sinai	0	0	0
Ismailia	0	0	0
Port Said	0	0	0
Suez	4	0	4
Sharqia	0	1	1
Dakahlia	0	0	0
Damietta	4	1	5
Kafr el-Sheikh	0	0	0
Gharbia	0	0	0
Monufia	0	0	0
Beheira	0	2	2
Alexandria	2	2	4
Matruh	0	1	1
New Valley	0	0	0
Qalyubia	0	2	2
Cairo	0	9	9
Giza	5	2	7
Beni Suef	2	3	5
Faiyum	5	1	6
Minya	17	8	25
Asyut	8	1	9
Sohag	2	1	3
Qena	0	3	3
Luxor	4	0	4
Aswan	0	2	2
Red Sea	0	0	0
Total	54	40	94

Source:

- (1) The researcher had already collected the sectarian incidents in a list since the uprising of 25th January 2011 till June 2016; by following up on the Coptic issue in the Egyptian arena.
- (2) Faress, M. (2013). Map of Brotherhood attacks on churches after ending the sit-ins in Raba and al-Nahda. Al-Youm al-Sabea, Thursday, August 15. Access on 21.08.2013. From <http://www.youm7.com/story/2013/8/15>.
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Appendix (3)

The Coptic elected deputies in the parliamentary elections of 2011 and 2015

Election Ideology	2011		2015	
	Deputies	%	Deputies	%
Islam Political	360	72.29	12	2.11
Liberal	132	26.51	520	91.55
Copts	6	1.2	36	6.34
Total	498	100	568	100

Source: Follow-up by the researcher to declaration of the election results by the Supreme Committee of Elections in 2012 and 2015.

Appendix (4)

The Coptic deputies in the Egyptian parliaments of 2011 and 2015

parliament Ideology	2011		2015	
	Deputies	%	Deputies	%
Islam Political	362	71,26	12	2.02
Liberal	135	26.57	545	91.44
Copts	11	2.17	39	6.54
Total	508	100	568	100

Source:

(1) Website of the Egyptian Parliament. <http://www.parliament.gov.eg/members/> access on 18.02.2016.

(2) Al-masry al-youm (2015). Harvest of two revolutions: deputies by the power of Constitution. Monday 05-10. From <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/821505> access on 15.03.2016.