The Fading Halo of Religious Elites:

A Comparative Study of the Effects of Religious Motivation on Nonviolence and Democratic Stability in Poland and Egypt

Unislawa Williams

Abstract *Why has the democratic transition in Egypt stalled? The nonviolent nature of successful uprisings may be an important cause of the subsequent religious radicalisation and volatility of the new regimes. Nonviolent opposition can attract, and be sustained by, the involvement of religious elites. While such involvement can enhance the viability of a movement, it also builds the political capital of the religious elites, who can then influence the politics of the new regime. This is not a feature of Islam or of Middle Eastern or of North African politics, but of nonviolent movements more generally. This study tests the logic of the argument on the dynamic that took hold during the Polish transition following the fall of communism. Even in Poland, where the Western-style democratic model was highly popular and the international context was embracing, the support that the religious elites provided to the opposition translated into an active role for religion in the post-transition politics. Seen from this perspective, what appeared to be a religious radicalisation in countries such as Egypt may have actually been a temporary consequence of the nonviolent opposition. This is dubbed here as the "fading halo effect." While popularity built during the opposition decays over time, it reaches its apex when the nascent institutional structures of the new regime are being formed. As a result, the influence of religious elites may be difficult to limit later putting pressure on the democratic process. This may be one of the key reasons why*

the democratic transition in Egypt has stalled.

Keywords: Egypt, Islam, Poland, religion, religious elites, religious radicalisation, non-violent protest, transition

Introduction

The "Arab Spring" appeared to be driven by democratic, or even centrist, mass protests concerned with unemployment, poverty, inequality and corruption.[1] Implicit in the media was the question of how, so soon after the Tahrir Square demonstrations, did it turn to religious radicalisation and Islam.[2] But while the popular media may have been surprised by the religious turn in the post-revolutionary politics, the scholarly community long-analysed the Islamist political movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, and their role in nonviolent opposition to the deposed autocratic regime.[3] Despite this focus, few ready predictions existed as to what role these religious organisations would take on in the transition from authoritarianism to democracy.[4] This role, however, may have been shaped by the years of nonviolent opposition and may explain why the Egyptian transition to democracy has stalled.

This study argues that the chances of success of nonviolent opposition increase in cases when religious elites are involved. A religious call to action can build not only mass support for the opposition but also for its nonviolent means, the use of which has been shown to increase the chances of success.[5] It can motivate a public to face fears and persist in nonviolent opposition even in case of violent oppression. Religious elites are defined as people whose status enables them to influence religious norm-setting processes more effectively than the average believer – for example, members of the official clergy, the leaders of religious movements and sects, and influential missionaries.[6] Such elites legitimate a principled or a religious call to action. This call to action may not *sui generis* be nonviolent but it likely conforms to the characteristics of the opposition movement more generally. Hence, nonviolent opposition likely involves religious elites whose message also promotes nonviolence. Nonviolence is understood here to mean a commitment from the opposition to use nonviolent means of protest. But while the involvement of religious elites can enhance the success of nonviolence, it also alters the political landscape post-transition.

By becoming involved in the political process, religious elites affect

how the public perceives the role of religion in the public sphere. Weak public support for the democratic principle of separation of religion and state is not a feature of Islam.[7] However, it may be a feature of religiously encouraged and successful nonviolent movements, which may lead the public to view religious elites as politically effective and beneficial. However, as the memory of the repressive era, under which the political popularity of religious elites is built, fades and becomes a more distant political history, so does the political popularity of the religious elites, a phenomenon dubbed here the *fading halo effect*. Hence, transitions present a political opportunity for the religious elites but ones that also quickly dissipate. Anticipating the fading halo effect, religious elites are likely to push for the rules of the new regime to codify a role for religion and for religious elites quickly after the transition. Should they be successful, the rules of the new regime are likely to become increasingly unpopular and potentially even destabilising to the new regime. Hence, an extensive public role for religious elites may be popular shortly after the transition, but codifying that role into the foundational framework of the state may take away from the longer-term public support for the regime.

The subsequent section explores the logic behind the fading halo effect and shows why successful nonviolent opposition may produce states that are more religious in nature and often more religiously extreme than either their predecessor regimes or similar states that have emerged from a violent struggle. Most importantly, such involvement of religious elites may produce states that are more religious than even their own public supports, straining the democratic underpinnings of the new regime. To test the logic of the argument, the study explores the influence of the Catholic Church in promoting the nonviolent struggle against the communist regime in Poland. Research has underscored the importance of developing robust theoretical linkages between Middle East and other comparative cases, pointing to the East Central European transitions from communism as an especially fertile ground for comparison.[8] In fact, focusing on a state with a largely Christian population helps to isolate the logic of the argument from potentially conflating factors such as the role of Islam in the current transitions in the Middle East and North Africa.

The popularity of the Western-style democratic model of governance was particularly high in East Central Europe immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and arguably much higher than it is today in

the "Arab Spring" states. In addition, the external environment at the time was more conducive to the transition.[9] Despite the great interest in emulating the Western-style democratic model and supportive international context, Poland nonetheless transitioned into a form of governance that accepted a much more porous separation of religion and state than other democracies; a model that is increasingly criticized by the country's own public. The lessons from the Polish case help to explain the recent events in the Egyptian transition to democracy; specifically, why this seemingly centrist nonviolent movement turned to religious principles so quickly after the transition and why this religious turn may have destabilised the newly forged democracy.

Religion and Nonviolence

Studies show that nonviolent protests can build sympathy domestically and abroad by appearing less extreme than violent ones.[10] However, perceptions that the new regimes may be more centrist can often be dismayed once the new governments are formed. At least with respect to international actors, the new regimes may not only appear extreme but even more extreme than their predecessors—albeit in a different way. Specifically, they appear religiously radical. One explanation for this lies with the motivations of the opposition engaged in nonviolence.

In conflicts that are violent in nature, religious elites have been shown to have an amplifying effect. In particular, de Juan and Vüllers argue that religious elites can play a mobilising role, making it more likely that combatants will be ready to kill and to die for the cause.[11] However, such involvement may not lead to an eventual success of the combatants' cause, since violent opposition rarely succeeds. Much more successful is nonviolent opposition.[12] In the context of nonviolent opposition, the role of religious elites is less well studied. However, religious elites involved in nonviolent struggles can also play an amplifying role.

Religious elites involved in nonviolent struggles can increase the likelihood that protesters continue to resist the regime peacefully even in case of oppression by the target regime. Studies show that the more true the protesters stay to the nonviolent tactics, the more likely these tactics are to succeed.[13] Hence, the involvement of religious elites increases the strength and durability of the nonviolent resistance, and as a result, it can significantly contribute to the success of the nonviolent

cause. Religious elites involved in nonviolent struggles may even play a role more critical to the success of the cause than their religious counterparts involved in violent struggles. Specifically, the motivational role of religious elites in nonviolent movements can strike a more popular note than analogous involvement in violent ones. Whereas in the violent movements that role is to legitimate killing, in nonviolent ones that role is to motivate peaceful resistance against oppression and even killing. Assuming that on average a person is more likely to be motivated by the second call, the involvement of religious elites may increase the chances of success of the opposition even in nonviolent cases.

In addition, a selection effect can make nonviolent oppositions that involve religious elites appear to be more successful than their more secular counterparts. Motivating nonviolent opposition may be easier if the government limits religious expression. Some portion of the public may be particularly motivated by a religious message. Such protesters are more likely to be spurred to action if they hold a grievance on religious grounds against the existing government. In effect, the less the predecessor authorities espouse religious principles, the more vulnerable they are to a religious critique and hence the more likely they are to be overturned by the nonviolent movements. On the other hand, the more the predecessor authorities espouse religious principles, the less vulnerable they are to a religious critique and hence the less likely they are to be overturned by the nonviolent movements. This implies that the more secular the oppressive regime, be it located in the Middle East and North Africa or elsewhere, the more likely it is to be toppled by a nonviolent opposition. And if we observe a successful nonviolent overthrow, it most likely includes the involvement of religious elites. This selection bias may suggest that the involvement of religious elites may be a common feature across a broad spectrum of successful nonviolent transitions.

However, the critical role of religious elites in the opposition also serves to accumulate their political capital. The public is likely to perceive their political involvement as effective and beneficial and hence, is also likely to support it post-transition. This public support may stand in sharp contrast to the democratic principle of separation of religion and state and may undermine the grassroots support for it. Such principles may even be perceived as foreign or alien in the context of the most recent domestic politics. Rather than harbouring mistrust

toward religious involvement in political life, the public may have a sense of gratitude for their participation. Hence, the public may even support more than continued political involvement and may be prepared to accept political measures that reward or compensate religious elites for their past oppression. In effect, religious elites are likely to emerge from nonviolent struggle wearing a halo of political popularity. However, this political popularity is likely fleeting. As the memory of the repressive regime fades, the political support for religious elites also begins to dissolve. This phenomenon is referred to in the analysis as a fading halo effect.

The Fading Halo of Religious Elites

Anticipating the fading halo effect, religious elites have an incentive to push for a role for religion and for religious elites in the foundational structures of the new regime, thus preserving some of their present political influence for the future. By becoming involved in the foundational work of the new regime, the religious elites can help to ensure a continued legacy for their contributions in toppling the repressive government. The result is that the newly formed regime may be based on laws that support only a weak separation of religion and state. It may also include substantive clauses that are based on religious principles, legalising behaviour the religious elites support and prohibiting behaviour they condemn. It may include material advantages for the religious elites, such as restitution policies of property confiscated under the repressive regime and other key political measures. In sum, their fleeting popularity pushes religious elites toward making oversized demands that help enshrine their current popularity in the foundational framework of the new regime.

Furthermore, making such oversized political demands is made easier by the political savvy of the religious elites post-transition. First, the more politically active the religious elites are during the opposition, the more likely they are to know how to seek a political role and build popular support. Second, they often have a network of grassroots organizations that can make political activity easier. Third, they are likely to know who are the main political actors, what motivates them, and be aware of whatever political manoeuvring taking place. The result is that at the time when the new regime is taking place, not only do religious elites enjoy political legitimacy but also can effectively implement their political agenda. Whatever the effect of any one religion, culture or tradition on the eventual shape of the new government, the nature of the nonviolent struggle itself can make the new government

more susceptible to religious influence than it would be without the nonviolent opposition.

Nonviolent opposition movements may appear to lead to governments even more religiously extreme than their counterparts once engaged in a violent struggle. This can be partly explained with the low-success rate of the violent protests. With so few cases of new states liberated through violent struggle, the motivations that drive these movements can be more idiosyncratic than religious. Furthermore, even when religious elites are involved in successful violent struggles, their role may be perceived by the public as more problematic than that of their nonviolent counterparts. Again assuming that sanctioning killing is a harder sell for the public than resisting oppression and killing, religious elites involved in violent struggle may have a weaker claim to broad-based popularity and legitimacy. If they take an extensive role in shaping the new regime, that regime is unlikely to have broad public legitimacy, which hurts its chances of establishing democratic principles. In sum, if we observe a birth of a religiously extreme form of democratic regime, it likely emerged from a nonviolent struggle.

The degree to which the new democratic regimes that emerged from nonviolent struggles are religiously extreme can extend to other comparisons. First, these states are less likely than other comparable democracies to embrace a strong principle of separation of religion and state and may initially accept a more active involvement of religious elites in politics. Second, the extensive role of religious elites in politics is likely to contrast sharply with the predecessor regimes, likely to have been repressive of religious political expression. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the oversized role of religion is likely to contrast with what the country's own public may be willing to support in the long-term, as the fading halo effect takes hold. This implies that the extensive role of religious elites in building the foundational structure of the new system ultimately may undermine the democratic stability of that system. Thus, the nature of the nonviolent protest can have implications for the shape of the newly formed regimes, as well as for the stability of the new democratic politics.

The Nonviolent Resistance in Poland in the 1980's

The role of nonviolence in promoting transitions toward more religiously-oriented states is not confined to the "Arab Spring" or the

Middle East and North Africa region. The same dynamic playing out in Egypt also took root during the Polish nonviolent struggle against the communist regime. The Catholic Church was not only supportive but active in the struggle, which lead to a broad public sense that it deserved to play a political role post-transition. It would be trite to argue that the new regime was more religious than its predecessor: the communist authorities it replaced actively strived to limit and even eliminate religious practice.[14] The new regime that had emerged post transition was, nonetheless, more religious than other comparable Western democracies.

By the 1980's, Solidarity was a deeply embedded oppositional force in the Polish political landscape.[15] A year earlier and shortly after his election as the first Polish pope, John Paul II visited the country, preaching to those who attended his masses not to be afraid. His message of human dignity and nonviolence resonated powerfully and was continually sustained by the Church throughout the subsequent struggle. The Solidarity movement organised nonviolent protests and numerous strikes, gaining broad public support and membership. To varying degrees, many founding figures in the movement have credited John Paul II for sparking and energising their resistance.

In response to the growing success of the nonviolent protests, the communist authorities declared martial law in 1981.[16] The state of emergency lasted for over a year and dramatically curbed civil liberties, outlawed Solidarity, and lead to the arrest of many of the Solidarity's members. As the communist regime became more oppressive, the role of the Catholic Church became more active, providing shelter to dissidents and to an unknown extent also financing to the movement. A defining moment of the era was a brutal murder of a famous Polish priest, Father Popiełuszko, by the domestic security forces. Father Popiełuszko had grown to prominence, organising regular masses for the liberation of the country and prayers that were transmitted nationwide via Radio Free Europe. Like the religious elites more generally, Father Popiełuszko stressed nonviolence and human dignity. His murder galvanized the opposition and embarrassed the regime, significantly stripping it of popular support.

The Solidarity movement and the religious elites became increasingly intertwined through the opposition, which lasted for nearly a decade and persisted in its nonviolence. The movement contributed to the eventual ouster of the Polish communist authorities, who ulti-

mately relinquished control peacefully in the late 1980's through a process called the Round Table Discussions.[17] The Round Table brought representatives from all sides to negotiate over the shape of the first free elections. Alongside the communist government officials sat leaders of Solidarity as well as Church representatives. Just like the Solidarity members, the Church became a foundational member in the new political order.

The first free elections were a resounding success for Solidarity, which took control over the government. Portraits of communist leaders were promptly replaced by crosses in various public spaces and offices. Church property, amounting to many tens of millions of dollars that had been confiscated by the communist regime, began to be returned, sometimes in the form of real estate, sometimes in the form of cash. In fact, the religious elites, though not exclusively the Catholic Church, would become singularly successful in the restitution process, while the cause of many other claimants would become tied up in courts or simply would fall by the wayside. The Catholic Church also took a prominent and visible role in social life, blessing new public buildings and providing representatives and speakers for nearly all kids of social or political gatherings and forums.

In 1993, the Polish authorities signed a Concordat with the Vatican, which was subsequently reaffirmed by the Polish constitution.[18] Among other points the agreement would require Polish authorities to provide Catholic religious education in public schools. It also reaffirmed financial obligations of the public sector toward the Church.[19] For example, it supported a fund called the Fundusz Kościelny, which made public resources available to the work of the Church, including missionary work, nunneries and monasteries. Public funds would be available for projects such as renovations of Church properties and for Catholic education, from schools to seminaries and even departments of theology at the country's public universities. Taken together, the new Polish government committed to a significant and lasting financial obligation vis-à-vis the Polish Catholic Church.

The extent to which the role of the Church in public life in Poland contrasted with that of comparable countries was highlighted by the first post-transition Prime Minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, seen as the architect of contemporary Polish church-state relations. Mazowiecki would later describe his views on the separation of religion and state as a continuum, on one end of which countries, such as France, espouse

complete separation, and on the other Poland espouses friendly/cooperative separation.[20] The principle behind the Polish model, according to Mazowiecki, was the sense that beliefs can affect citizens and as such are not confined to the private sphere. The moral support the opposition received during the communist era appears to have influenced the public understanding of good governance, which in turn played a role in shaping the post-transition state. This occurred in spite of what at the time of the transition was a high level of support among the Polish public for emulating the Western democratic model.

Today, however, the role of the Church in public life is increasingly controversial in Poland. Not only has the public become more secular, with somewhat declining (yet still high by European standards) religious attendance, while critics of the Church have also gained increasing prominence. Their criticism often returns to how much the Church benefited from the transition and the degree to which the state committed its resources to the Church over the long term. Many see the benefits that have flowed to the Church post-transition as unfair.[21] Hence, this more secular counter-response to the religious undertones of the Polish model of democracy may be seen as a consequence of the nonviolent process of liberation and it may shed light on the role of religion in the states affected by the "Arab Spring."

Comparison with Egypt

The parallels between the Egyptian and the Polish opposition have not been made by academics alone.[22] In his visit to Poland in May of 2011, President Obama identified the country as an example for the Arab nations undergoing the political transition and urged these nations to quickly put in place institutions that would codify democratic principles.[23] In fact, the new regime did not waste any time in drafting a new constitution. But the principles on which it was based in many ways drew from religious components. This common feature in both transitions bears further analysis. It shows that religious elites may enjoy an oversized political advantage immediately after the ouster of the repressive regime because of the motivational role they have played during the opposition period.

In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood represented the largest and best organised opposition force to the authoritarian rule. Although it had a long and more radical history, by the time President Hosni Mubarak took office in the early 1980s the organisation was committed to nonvi-

olence and to peaceful reform.[24] Their political objectives appeared relatively centrist and supportive of democratic principles. The exception was an unpublished policy document written by the Brotherhood's key leadership figures that argued Christians and women should be denied the right to run for the presidential office.[25] Despite its commitment to nonviolence, the political activities of the Muslim Brotherhood were largely suppressed by the state, sometimes brutally so.[26] The Mubarak regime prohibited the participation of the Muslim Brotherhood in electoral politics, imprisoned key figures of the movement and even turned violent at times against them. In spite of the repression, the organisation enjoyed wide-spread support and political popularity and continued to be the key opposition group.

Immediately after the transition, the Muslim Brotherhood was poised to benefit the most of all the opposition forces, even though it played only a participatory role during the "Arab Spring" protests and largely stayed away from leading the uprising.[27] Despite the relatively demure role during the "Arab Spring" protests, the Brotherhood's history of long-standing opposition to the Mubarak regime meant that it was well-organized politically and well-known among the new electorate.[28] A key measure of their political popularity was their strong showing in the first free parliamentary elections in over sixty years, which were held in January of 2012. The Muslim Brotherhood won about 47% of the parliamentary seats (with the other Islamist parties winning the second largest share of about 25 per cent) – in sum, religiously linked parties won over 70% of the seats, a showing which was interpreted by the press as indicative of deep cultural conservatism of the Egyptian public.[29] However, a deep cultural connection with Islam may not have been the only explanation for the strong showing.

The role the religious elites had in opposing the repressive regime may have been a key source of their political popularity post-transition. The extent to which such political popularity was derived from the cultural conservatism of the public would imply that popularity would remain relatively constant, while the extent to which it was derived from their role in opposing the repressive regime would imply it would decay over time. As the memory of the repressive regime would fade, so would the political popularity of those who opposed it. In fact, in the presidential elections that were held only a few months later, the Muslim Brotherhood did much worse than in the parliamentary elections. While the Muslim Brotherhood got 10 million votes in the

parliamentary elections, in the presidential elections that number was halved—a showing that was bemoaned publically even by key figures of the movement.[30] The electoral support for Islamist party and its candidates would also continue to steadily decline through the year.[31] Nonetheless, Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood narrowly won the first free Presidential elections with 51.7% of the popular vote. Having taken office he resigned from the Brotherhood, per campaign promise to serve as the President of all Egyptians.[32] That commitment would soon be tested but it also highlighted the extent to which the Muslim Brotherhood continued to be relatively moderate.

Their relatively moderate position did not limit the extent to which religious elites embraced a religiously motivated political agenda. By October 2012, the 100-member constituent assembly was deep at work drafting the country's new constitution. The most controversial points in the process had to do with the role of religion and religious elites in the new state. Specifically, the points discussed included women's rights and the rights of religious minorities, Islamic Shariah law, and the ways religious elites would be employed to adjudicate conflict between religious rulings and secular rights.[33] In boycott of the religious slant, the secular members of the constituent assembly, as well as Coptic Christians – together representing roughly a quarter of the assembly – withdrew from the proceedings.[34] Under the potential threat of its work being annulled by the courts, the assembly hurried to nonetheless pass the draft constitution – albeit in a more moderate form – and the President assumed emergency powers calling for almost an immediate referendum on the draft. In December of 2012 the referendum was held and the draft constitution was approved.[35] However, the moves toward the passage brought about the return of mass rallies and protests.

Not only did the oversized role of religion in the public life ultimately prove unpopular, it also undermined the democratic transition. The political drama would increasingly be played out outside of the democratic context with supporters of President Morsi physically clashing with the opponents and supporters of democracy caught in many ways in between. The large role prescribed to the religious elites in the political life of the nascent democracy appeared to have not only galvanised criticism but was destabilising the democratic politics. Rather than wait for the elections to decide the competing claims, Egyptians would choose to express their political grievances again through street

protests. The army stepped in, arresting Morsi and suspending the constitution.[36] In the months that followed the military forces brutally repressed the pro-Islamist rallies, killing protesters and the Egyptian courts outlawed all activities of the Muslim Brotherhood, confiscating the Brotherhood's funds.[37] In many ways, whatever extent the democratic transition had reached, it has been halted following the removal of President Morsi.

Ex post it may seem that the Muslim Brotherhood may have been short-sighted in pushing for an extensive role for religious elites in the public life. For example, it could be asked whether a narrower role would have been more acceptable to the other parties and hence could have preserved not only the political power of the Muslim Brotherhood but also the democratic regime that was slowly emerging. However, *ex ante* there is no reason to believe that the decision to seek an extensive role was not indeed optimal for the Muslim Brotherhood. Carving out a large political role for religious elites promised to be advantageous for years to come, whereas a political backlash that would threaten the continuation of the democratic transition was a risk, not a certain outcome. The extent to which that risk materialised may not necessarily invalidate the decision of Egypt's religious elites to include a strong role for themselves and for religion in the country's constitutional framework. Their strategy to do so quickly would put the other actors in the situation of *fait accompli*.

In this context, however, Obama's prescription to put in place a legal structure that would ensure democratic institutions in Egypt as quickly as possible may have been exactly the wrong advice for democracy. To the extent that religious elites can benefit most from the success of the opposition right after the transition, putting a constitutional framework in place quickly can strengthen the hand of the religious elites and can shape the regime to their advantage. In effect, Egypt's quick transition to democracy bolstered the role of religious elites and undermined the longer-term stability of the democratic regime. A number of scholars would argue that the US's policy, as well as French and European policy in the region, is generally aimed at limiting the potential of Islamist ascendance to power.[38] Ironically, at least publically, the United States had promoted (perhaps unknowingly so) not only the ascendance of Islamist power but also destabilisation of the nascent democratic system. Furthermore, whatever the extent of the West's involvement in pushing for a quick transition, such transition

has had long-lasting effects on the political life in Egypt and its prospects for democracy.

Discussion and Conclusion

The Fading Halo of Religious Elites

This work argued that the nonviolent nature of opposition can be enhanced by active involvement of religious elites. Religious elites can strengthen the public will to resist oppression, particularly violent oppression by the target regime. This implies that *ceteris paribus* nonviolent measures are more likely to succeed in opposing relatively secular, authoritarian regimes because these governments are more susceptible to a critique forwarded by religious elites. In effect, authoritarian regimes that allow for religious expression are more resilient than their secular counterparts. This may perhaps explain why the more secular authoritarian regimes in the Middle East were more likely to have successful nonviolent revolutions than the less secular ones. The more secular authoritarian regimes that outlaw religious expression have left themselves open to a critique made by religiously-linked nonviolent movements. In effect, this study argues that religious elites can significantly influence the success of nonviolence, and nonviolence has been shown to be an effective strategy against the target repressive regimes.[39]

However, the involvement of religious elites in successful opposition movements also bears importantly on the post-transition politics because it implies that the governments that come to power as a result of nonviolent opposition are more likely to take a religious turn. Furthermore, they are likely to include in the foundational framework of the new regime a role for religion and religious elites that in retrospect can have weak political support even domestically. This is because politically active religious elites, anticipating the fading halo of their popularity, are likely to push for a maximum role for themselves and for religion in the new state while their popularity is at its apex. As a result, the new regime may appear religiously extreme. This often contrasts with the perceptions of the mass-based opposition movements as democratic or as centrist.

In the Egyptian context, the fading halo effect may partly explain the initial religious radicalisation of Egyptian politics and the subsequent popular resistance against it. Within a year of the electoral success of Mohamed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood, a new wave of protesters occupied Tahrir Square in Cairo. The common complaints were

against the oversized role of religion in the new Constitutional framework and the overly strengthened role of religious elites in the public life. The extent of this opposition ultimately significantly destabilized the democratic forces slowly taking place in Egypt. But the fading halo effect does not imply that the new regimes will necessarily be unstable. The successful Polish democratic transition is a case in point. Whether the speed of the transition distinguished the depth of the home-grown resistance in the Polish case from the Egyptian one is an important question for future research.

The fading halo effect has policy implications as well. Shortly after the "Arab Spring," the US called for Egypt to quickly put in-place a democratic constitutional framework, presumably to preserve and affix the prevailing democratic mood. However, the rush to do just that in fact only bolstered the influence of the Islamist religious elites, who would clamber to secure a lasting legacy based on their oversized post-transition popularity. In general, a policy push for a quick transition may undermine the democratic mood, such as that which prevailed in Egypt following the 'Arab Spring' and that may prevail in future nonviolent transitions.

***

Unislawa Williams is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Spelman College and may be reached at: uwilliams@spelman.edu.

Notes

1 Pete Moore (2013), 'The Bread Revolutions of 2011: Teaching Political Economies of the Middle East,' *PS: Political Science and Politics* 46: 2, pp. 225-229.

2 Omar Sacirbey (2013), 'Poll Says Muslim Brotherhood has Soured Americans on Egypt,' *The Washington* Post, <http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-04-12/national/38487665_1_muslim-brotherhood-mohamed-morsi-coptic> (accessed 4 October 2013).

3 Steven A. Cook (2013), *The Struggle for Egypt: From Nasser to Tahrir Square.* New York: A Council on Foreign Relations Book, Oxford University Press.

4 Peter Mandaville (2013), 'Islam and Exceptionalism in American Political Discourse,' *PS: Political Science and Politics* 46: 2, pp. 235-39; Khalid Mustafa Medani (2013), 'Teaching the 'New Middle East:' Beyond Authoritarianism,' *PS: Political Science and Politics* 46:2, pp. 222-224.

5 Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth (2008), 'Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict,' *International Security*

33: 1, pp. 7–44.

6 Alexander de Juan and Johannes Vüllers (2010), 'Religious Peace Activism – The Rational Element of Religious Elites' Decision-Making Processes,' *GIGA Research Programme: Violence and Security* No. 130, p. 6.

7 Mohammed Ayoob (2007), *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

8 Agnieszka Paczynska (2013), 'Cross-Regional Comparisons: The Arab Uprisings as Political Transitions and Social Movements,' *PS: Political Science and Politics* 46: 2, pp. 217-21.

9 Lucan Way (2011), 'The Lessons of 1989,' *Journal of Democracy* 22: 4, pp. 17-27.

10 Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth (2008), 'Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict,' *International Security* 33: 1, pp. 7–44.

11 Alexander de Juan and Johannes Vüllers (2010), 'Religious Peace Activism – The Rational Element of Religious Elites' Decision-Making Processes,' *GIGA Research Programme: Violence and Security* No. 130.

12 Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth (2008), 'Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict,' *International Security* 33: 1, pp. 7–44.

13 Ibid.

14 The communist policy of denying religious practice and oppressing religious elites was not specific to Poland and was in fact an integral part of the communist governance in the region. Therefore, it may be surprising that the Polish regime that emerged post-transition was comparably more religious than the other new democracies in the area. A number of factors may have contributed to this outcome but it is also worth noting that the opposition in Poland at that time had been comparably well-organized and had particularly close ties with the religious elites. For a discussion of the communist oppression of religious elites in the 1980's Central Europe see Marie Homerova (2008), 'Personal Experience from the Years of the 'Late Normalisation,' 1980's: "Study at SS Cyril and Method's Theological Faculty in Litomerice,' *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies* 2: 2 pp. 123-28.

15 Andrzej Paczkowski (2003), *The Spring Will be Ours: Poland and the Poles from Occupation to Freedom,* trans. from Polish by Jane Cave. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press; Anita Prażmowska (2010), *Poland, A Modern History.* London: I. B. Tauris.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Gavin Rae Anglo (2008), *Poland's Return to Capitalism: From the Socialist Bloc to the European Union.* London: Tauris Academic Studies. Also for a discussion of the support for the Concordat by the different political parties see Frances Millard (2010), *Democratic Elections in Poland, 1991-2007.* London: Routledge.

19 Gavin Rae Anglo (2008), *Poland's Return to Capitalism: From the Socialist Bloc to the European Union.* London: Tauris Academic Studies; Katarzyna

Wiśniewska (2013), 'Ile Pieniędzy Dostanie Kościół z Podatków Polaków?' *Gazeta Wyborcza*, <http://wyborcza.pl/1,75478,13359642,Ile_pieniedzy_dostanie_Kosciol_z_podatkow_Polakow_.html> (accessed 4 October 2013).

20 Tadeusz Mazowiecki (2011), 'Krótki Oddech, Miałkość Spraw to Nie Jest Polityka,' *Gazeta Wyborcza,* author translation, < http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,10608172,Krotki_oddech__mialkosc_spraw_to_nie_jest_polityka.html> (accessed 4 October 2013).

21 Katarzyna Wiśniewska (2012), 'Poza Wszelką Kontrolą,' *Gazeta Wyborcza*, <http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,11164163,Poza_wszelka_kontrola.html> (accessed 4 October 2013).

22 For examples of the academic comparisons see Lucan Way (2011), 'The Lessons of 1989,' *Journal of Democracy* 22: 4, pp. 17-27; Agnieszka Paczynska (2013), 'Cross-Regional Comparisons: The Arab Uprisings as Political Transitions and Social Movements,' *PS: Political Science and Politics* 46: 2, pp. 217-21.

23 Mark Landler (2011), 'Obama Cites Poland as Model for Arab Shift,' The *New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/29/world/europe/29prexy.html?gwh=4597E5152C4055558BD97554C987B978> (accessed 4 October 2013).

24 Sharon Erickson Nepstad (2011), 'Nonviolent Resistance in the Arab Spring: The Critical Role of Military-Opposition Alliances,' *Swiss Political Science Review* 17: 4, pp. 485-491.

25 Charles Levinson, Matt Bradley and Tamer El-Ghobashy (2012), 'Islamist Wins Egyptian Vote,' *The Wall Street Journal,* <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304458604577486420858304122.html> (accessed 6 October 2013).

26 Steven A. Cook (2013), *The Struggle for Egypt: From Nasser to Tahrir Square.* New York: A Council on Foreign Relations Book, Oxford University Press.

27 Opposition groups not linked to religion also developed under the Mubarak regime but they did not succed in developing organisational structures that would compete with the Muslim Brotherhood. As a result, these groups played a smaller role than the Brotherhood in the first free parliamentary and presidential elections.

28 Miron Lakomy (2012), 'The 'Arab Spring' in French Foreign Policy,' *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies* 6: 3, pp. 68-87.

29 David D. Kirkpatrick (2012), 'Islamists Win 70% of Seats in the Egyptian Parliament,' *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/22/world/middleeast/muslim-brotherhood-wins-47-of-egypt-assembly-seats.html?_r=0> (accessed 6 October 2013).

30 Al Arabiya (2012), 'Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood Losing Popular Support: Former Supreme Guide,' *Al Arabiya News*, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/05/28/217032.html> (accessed 6 October 2013).

31 Anonymous (2012), 'Egypt's Constitutional Referendum, A Dubious Yes,' *The Economist*, <http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21568756-flawed-constitution-will-be-endorsed-argument-far-over> (accessed 6 October 2013).

32 Joshua Davidovich and AP (2012), 'Mohammed Morsi Declared Egypt's

First Democratically Elected President,' *The Times of Israel,* <http://www.timesofisrael.com/announced-as-president-of-egypt/> (accessed 6 October 2013).

33 Kareem Fahim and Mayy El Sheikh (2012), 'Egyptian Court Declines to Rule on the Legality of Drafting a New Constitution,' *The New York Times,* <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/24/world/middleeast/egypt-court-wont-halt-drafting-of-constitution.html> (accessed 6 October 2013).

34 David D. Kirkpatrick (2012), 'Egyptian Islamists Approve Draft Constitution Despite Objections,' *The New York Times,* <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/30/world/middleeast/panel-drafting-egypts-constitution-prepares-quick-vote.html > (accessed 6 October 2013).

35 Anonymous (2012), 'Egypt's Constitutional Referendum, A Dubious Yes,' *The Economist*, <http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21568756-flawed-constitution-will-be-endorsed-argument-far-over> (accessed 6 October 2013).

36 David D. Kirkpatrick (2012), 'Army Ousts Egypt's President; Morsi Is Taken Into Military Custody,' *The New York Times*, < http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/04/world/middleeast/egypt.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0> (accessed 6 October 2013).

37 David D. Kirkpatrick (2013), 'Hundreds Die as Egyptian Forces Attack Islamist Protesters,' *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/15/world/middleeast/egypt.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed 6 October 2013); Shadia Nasralla, Michael Georgy and Mike Collett-White (2012), 'Egypt Court Bans All Muslim Brotherhood Activities,' *Reuters*, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/23/us-egypt-brotherhood-urgent-idUSBRE98M0HL20130923> (accessed 6 October 2013).

38 For discussion on US policy see Jason Brownlee (2012), *Democracy Prevention: The Politics of U.S.-Egyptian Alliance*. New York: Cambridge University Press. For a discussion of French and European policy see Miron Lakomy (2012), 'The 'Arab Spring' in French Foreign Policy,' *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies* 6: 3, pp. 68-87.

39 Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth (2008), 'Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict,' *International Security* 33: 1, pp. 7–44.