

Egypt: Divide and Conquer?

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Since the onset of the recent turmoil that is once again enveloping Egypt, (read: military coup) a long-standing current within political discourse has surrounded, and inevitably started to dominate the debate. False dichotomies attached to regional and national disputes in the Middle East by commentators and media organs have provided an unending "analysis" of specific events based on the opinions of predominantly either of two "sides" within any given conflict; regardless of the disparity of, and number of belligerents.

This almost-religious concentration on false dichotomies within media occurs regardless of whether either of the two predominant "sides" enjoys a popular or distinct amount of support within respective communities or populations, while also ignoring, or actively marginalizing certain factions within conflicts whose opinions or doctrines do not coincide with either of the dominant narratives emanating from the media; which in turn are controlled by corporate and ruling elite entities who determine editorial restrictions.

In the case of Egypt, post-military coup, the media narrative seems to be transforming into a conflict between "Secularist Liberals" and "Islamists". Yet contrary to this simplistic, and overtly sectarian narrative, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia – a Wahhabi Monarchy that many would describe as "Islamist" – [was the first party to congratulate](#) the Egyptian military's "wisdom and moderation" for overthrowing a democratically elected and supposedly Islamist President. Media reports have also quickly forgotten that the Salafist Nour Party – who could also be described as "Islamist" – initially supported the military overthrow of Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Nuance and conflicting opinions such as those above are omitted within media to uphold the dominant simplistic narratives of warring factions of society – as opposed to the reality of warring factions of Elites manipulating larger factions of society's legitimate dissent for their own ends. Manufacturing conflict and division is a long-standing policy of any modern government or dominant structure. Divide and Rule social policies have provided the ideal tool for Elites to keep the masses downtrodden and reliant for centuries on end.

Within Western dominant structures the false two-party masquerade of corporate politics that has engulfed the United States, the UK, and increasingly Europe are testament to the lengths the ruling Elite will go – and indeed the apathetic masses are willing to accept – to create the illusion of democracy and political pluralism. Furthermore, within modern societies – including those in the supposed "enlightened world" – ethnic and sectarian division is possibly the most successful tool in any ruling elites repertoire.

Dominant structures go to great lengths to build social divisions in which enslaved and impoverished masses find solace in the knowledge they belong to a "side" that continually provide them false hope and ineffective leadership. But a "side" nonetheless, and with many

“sides” there are always “others” to blame and deflect the ruling Elites failures. Accordingly, large swathes of populations become consumed and subverted by identity politics – whilst simultaneously being drawn further and further away from what exactly “the masses” are yearning for: self-determination, an end to oppression, economic impoverishment, elite corruption, and unrepresentative governments/dominant structures.

Although the Muslim Brotherhood have been illegally overthrown, and were indeed “democratically elected”; the Brotherhood itself does not represent a democratic political entity. Evidently, the Brotherhood does not represent massive parts of Egyptian society either, including “Islamists”. The Brotherhood have a long and documented history of sedition, violence and an intolerant, misogynistic ideology verging on Salafism. The Brotherhoods short reign of power was mired in controversy, incompetence, attempted power-grabs and a tendency toward sectarianism, including the incitement of Egyptian youth to Holy War in Syria.

On the other hand, General Sisi and the Egyptian military – who also have a long and very recent history of violence, corruption and oppression – are not a democratic entity in any sense of the word either. They are a military leadership funded in part, and trained by the United States, who have upheld a domestically unpopular peace treaty with Israel for decades to empower themselves economically, whilst helping to oppress the Palestinians (which has also taken on a dramatic increase since Sisi’s “revolution”).

And have just engaged in an unlawful coup of a democratically elected President. Yet in turn, these actors have fraudulently become the representatives of the whole of a supposed “Islamist” branch of Egyptian society on the one hand, and the opposition “Secularist Liberal” movement on the other; predominantly as a result of various branches of media portraying them to be so. There is no room left in the debate for any other public opinion or political party: “you’re either with us or against us”.

As a result of this media control and manipulation, any grass-roots movement or actual collective public voice outside of the two dominant belligerents is marginalised, whilst civil movements that become effective in relaying the message of opposing mass-movements are quickly hijacked or oppressed by dominant power, ie: powerful religious/social organisations or the military/political/corporate elite. Accordingly, the political doctrines and demands – and indeed the actual political and civil courses of action taken – are manipulated and led in directions that meet the dominant structures needs to survive or increase its relative power. In this type of Elitist structured media debate, the “people” can only be represented by a particular “side” of a very limited amount of parties – often portrayed from extreme ends of the respective political spectrum. These “sides” are predominantly made-up of corporate relics of regimes and power-structures of the past; (feloul and the Brotherhood in Egypt’s case) who in turn control the levers to mainstream political discourse.

In Egypt’s current and ongoing crisis since the fall of the Mubarak regime, it was initially the Muslim Brotherhood, with the aid of the Qatari Monarchy and its mouthpiece Al Jazeera, that usurped the Egyptian publics oppression and subsequent dissent; (while them and their supporters have also suffered much oppression of their own) eventually riding an anti-Mubarakist/Military sentiment to power in a low turn-out election. Merely a year later it appears the Mubarak bourgeoisie, behind the cover of the massive popular dissent directed at the Brotherhood’s inability to change policies and rule effectively, have inserted themselves to the throne of representation; primarily due to their respective ability to

manipulate the debate and its ensuing political consequences, along with those that dominate it (corporate media) propagating them to such positions.

Whether you agree with the coup or not, the public's voice, and in turn its civil actions and political consequences have been hijacked, and replaced by that of dominant Elitists that claim to represent them, in this case the military. The media vehicles that propagate that unending dynamic enable dominant parties to hold on to power by promoting figureheads and political actors that suit their owners' needs, (both foreign and domestic) before the needs and collective demands of the public.

The longer the dominant power structures are able to control and manipulate the media and mainstream political discourse to create illusory, and real, divisions within any impoverished and subservient society (including "the West"); the longer those power structures will remain dominant; be they the Muslim Brotherhood, or the Egyptian military.

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