Coptic Papacy and Power in a Changing Post-Mubarak Egypt

THESIS

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Abstract

On November 4, 2012 the Coptic Orthodox Church elected a new pope, Tawadros II, to replace Pope Shenouda III who passed away in April of the same year. Shenouda III had led the church for over forty years and had firmly established his role and himself in the authority structure of the church and in an Egyptian society that had become accustomed to authoritarian state rule. Immediately prior to Shenouda III’s passing and selection of the new pope, however, Egypt experienced its greatest political and societal change since the Nasser revolution of the 1950s as the events of the “Arab Spring” unfolded. It was against this backdrop that the Coptic Church selected its new pope. This thesis explores the ways in which the power-sharing relationship between the Coptic Church as represented by its new pope, the state and the Coptic laity will change in this time of transition.
Dedication

This document is dedicated to those who graciously shared with me their thoughts and perspectives on their country and Church.
Acknowledgments

The idea of researching the Coptic community in Egypt was with me long before I began my studies at The Ohio State University. I have been fortunate enough over the years to be invited into the homes and churches of many Coptic Christians in Egypt. My time spent with this community has been enriching and these friends have served as the inspiration for my study. Inspiration does not produce a thesis unless properly guided. It is for that guidance that I thank my advisor, Dr. Youssef Yacoubi and committee members, Dr. Morgan Liu and Dr. Parvaneh Pourshariati. These people helped to sharpen the arguments in this study. I owe additional gratitude to the faculty of Malone College who trained me to be able to do graduate work and continue to encourage me in my academic pursuits. I particularly want to acknowledge Dr. Scott Waalkes, Dr. Jacci Welling, Dr. Marcia Everett, Dr. Diane Chambers, Dr. Gregory Miller and Dr. Geoffrey Bowden who have been a never-ending source of scholarly motivation and encouragement. Finally, my family deserves the most recognition for being incredibly supportive of my efforts and tolerating this tired and often grumpy graduate student. Edith Blackburn, Dr. Betty Jane and Esquire Donald Cataldi and Jim and Brenda Smith, this thesis would not have been possible without you.
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Introduction

On November 4, 2012 the Coptic Orthodox Church elected a new pope, Tawadros II, to replace Pope Shenouda III who passed away in April of the same year. Shenouda III had led the church for over forty years and had firmly established his role and himself in the authority structure of the church and in an Egyptian society that had become accustomed to authoritarian state rule. \(^1\) Immediately prior to Shenouda III’s passing and selection of the new pope, however, Egypt experienced its greatest political and societal change since the Nasser revolution of the 1950s. The church’s selection of its leader occurred against the backdrop of what has become known as the ‘Arab Spring’ and, later, popular election of many Muslim Brotherhood candidates to national offices, including the presidency. \(^2\)

Shenouda III had fixed the role of the papacy in former old power structures of the church and state. After four decades, little was left to question about how he would interact with the church laity and leadership, the majority of which was selected by him, and the state which Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had governed for three decades. The announcement of the new pope, Tawadros II, raised questions about how he would

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\(^1\) Since the end of colonialism in Egypt (1956 Suez crisis), Egypt has had a series of leaders that have relied on the heavy-hand of the military and state to maintain authority. For more on post-colonial authoritarianism in Egypt see Stephen Humphreys, *Between Memory and Desire*, (Berkley: University of California Press, 1999), 23-59.

interact with Coptic laity as well as other church and state leaders. How would he negotiate his role in those structures? How would he understand his own power that had been conferred on him by virtue of the papal office? How would a changing Egypt, the Coptic Church and a new pope reimagine and reform the power-sharing relationships that had long been established by the former occupants of key offices of power? These questions are the questions for which Egyptians and other observers are waiting to learn the answers.3

Whereas the questions posed above might appear to only be relevant to Egyptians, maybe even only the Copts, who will be directly impacted by how they are answered, these questions have much broader regional, political and ecclesial significance. In terms of regional significance, the way in which the Copts and the Egyptian state interact could serve as a model for how other Christian communities interact with other Arab states in this era of history. The Copts represent the largest Christian group by population in the Middle East which, by virtue of their relative size, gives them regional significance.4 Regarding the political significance of the questions, the interaction between church and state, or religious institution and state, is a perennial question in political discourse. Each individual case adds to the overall understanding of the complexities of this relationship.

Finally, these questions are important for the church, not only the church in Egypt but the global church. The Coptic Orthodox community is not the only community which wrestles with how to interact with the state. Neither is it the only community that

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3 After the process of this study was underway, a program was aired on Al Jazeera’s Inside Story echoing these same questions. “What role can Copts play in a changing Egypt,” Inside Story, Al Jazeera, November 5, 2012, http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestory/2012/11/2012115901620362.html.
struggles with how the clergy and the laity are to interact with one another in relation to the state. The Coptic Orthodox case during this era reopens debate on what the role and nature of church authority is not only in its interaction with the state but also its interaction with laity. In regards to the laity, it is left with the tension of taking the initiative to make its own decisions and respecting those who have been placed in positions of church leadership. These issues are particularly significant during periods of leadership change within Christian communities like the current one and are relevant to not only Orthodox communities but also Catholic and Protestant. Again, the way in which the Coptic Church, the clergy and the laity together, work through their current situation could be instructive for other Christian communities.

Although this current situation may very well prove to be a defining moment for the Coptic Church, it is by no means the first time that the Coptic Church, in its nearly two-thousand-year history, has faced a defining moment. To the contrary, the Coptic Church and the power-sharing relationships of its pope have undergone significant changes. The current vicissitudes must be understood in light of those changes. What is proper is to acknowledge the uniqueness of this particular moment, to investigate the ways it will transform the relationships of the pope with various other entities and to explore the implications of these changes on the broader Coptic community. Through historical analysis, giving particular attention to the period of the 1919 revolution and following years, this thesis will examine shifts in the power-sharing relationships of the pope since the advent of the modern era starting with Muhammad Ali in the early
nineteenth century in Egypt in order to contextualize the current shifts. Moreover, by using various tools of cultural analysis including interviews with stakeholders in the Coptic community, this thesis will consider the direction these relationships will go with the election of the new pope in November 2012 and the political, social and ecclesial implications for the broader Coptic community.

Additionally, this thesis will demonstrate a parallel relationship between the political and ecclesial transitions in Egypt. More specifically, it will demonstrate that when the state claims more authority in relations to its citizens the church, as an institution headed by the pope and bishops, claims more authority in relation to the laity. In terms of church-state relations, the church takes a more representative role for the laity vis-à-vis the state.

Terminology

A term used in the preceding section, “power-sharing relationship,” warrants greater elucidation. The power at stake between these entities can be defined as the authority to speak for, make decisions on behalf of and provide direction to the Coptic community. To what extent is the state able to do these functions? And, to what extent is the church, meaning the institution headed by the patriarch, capable of performing these functions? Finally, to what extent does the community desire to do these functions for itself, as small groups within the community or as individuals?

The first question one might raise is the perceived source and scope of authority for the three entities pertinent to this discussion. In regards to the state, its authority over people is in many ways assumed. For the ancient political philosopher, Aristotle, the idea that people band together and create a civil structure that has some authority over them is natural.\(^6\) The civil structures can vary in form and size, but the nation-state is what is currently globally used.\(^7\) The scope of state authority also varies by case, and in the case of Egypt, particularly since British rule in the late nineteenth century, the authority granted the state has been vast.\(^8\) Egypt, for the majority of the years since British occupation, has operated under martial law which has allowed the executive to expand and contract its powers with very few limits.\(^9\)

The authority of the pope traces its source back to canon law and church tradition.\(^10\) The theological idea of apostolic succession can help to understand the spiritual authority of the pope. In church tradition, each patriarch throughout history constitutes a link in an unbroken chain back to the original apostles of Jesus Christ who

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\(^7\) This thesis will use “state” to mean the body politic of sovereign power; by using state in the broadest sense of the meaning, it will allow me to be consistent in my terminology as I analyze various time periods.


\(^9\) Ibid.

\(^10\) Fiona McCallum, “Role of the Patriarch in the Contemporary Middle East,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 6, (2007): 927. Regarding canon law, the Coptic Church, unlike other Christian churches, does not have a single codified source that constitutes its law. Rather, Copts have a series of sources from which they can pull to provide the church direction. One of the reasons for the absence of a unified codex is precisely because the role of the pope has had to change over the years given different systems of civil rule. Sometimes papal authority is expanded to governing taxes, marriages, intra-communal law suits, etc. Other periods in history have seen this power constricted. The absence of a fixed law adds to the importance of the present inquiry as to how the current pope will negotiate his power-sharing relationship with the state and laity. For more on canon law see René-Georges Coquin, “Canon Law,” *Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia*, ed. Karen J. Torjesen and Gawdat Gebra, Claremont Colleges Digital Library, accessed February 2013, http://ccdl.libraries.claremont.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/cce.
was the source of spiritual authority. Through this chain, spiritual authority over the community is passed from one leader to the next. The extent to which that authority is exercised changes with each person who holds the office. The spiritual authority of the pope, however, is much less controversial than the civil authority he exercises. In part, this controversy is due to the fact that there is often not a clean delineation between what is in the “civil realm” and what is in the “spiritual realm.” One example is the issue of marriage which is a sacrament for the church, but is a civil contract for the state. Further complicating the issue of papal authority for the Coptic Church is the fact that historically the state has tasked the pope with administering various civil matters on behalf of the community. The situation has left each pope with the assignment of redefining the scope of not only his spiritual authority but also his civil authority.

Ultimately, both of these entities are concerned with having authority over some of the same people—Coptic Christians located in Egypt. These Christians have agency and can ultimately decide to what extent they will allow the church and the state to speak for, make decisions on behalf of and provide direction to them. It will be demonstrated in the following chapters that the Coptic community is capable of making its voice heard by both the church and state authorities if the community believes the situation calls for their intervention. Different than when the community makes its concerns known to the state,

12 Coquin, “Canon Law.”
13 It is worth noting that the state and the church are concerned with having authority over other groups as well. Much has been written about the state and Egyptian-Muslim relations. Little, however, has been written on the relationship, particularly the power-sharing relationship, between the church as an institution based in Cairo, and the immigrant Coptic community or non-Egyptian Coptic Christians, or those of other nationalities who have joined the Coptic Orthodox Church. This is certainly an area that needs to be explored in greater depth.
when it makes its concerns known to church officials, it attempts to maintain a balance between exercising agency in decision making and respect for church authority.

In addition to clarifying the term power-sharing relationship, the terms church, state and pope must also be addressed. This thesis will use the term “church” most often in reference to the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt. It will be specified whether the term is being used to describe only the institutional head of the organization, the pope and bishops, or if it is being used as an inclusive term referring to the laity as well. On occasion the term will also be used in the context of “church-state relations” in which it will refer to a general type of relationship.

The term “state,” for the purposes of this study, will be used broadly to refer to the body politic in Egyptian society. Because of Egypt’s long history and its many governing bodies, the term state, in this context, could be used to refer to the Ottoman Empire to British colonial rulers. Like the term church, state may also be used adjectively when describing a specific type of relationship. Context will help to clarify the meaning.

Finally, regarding the term “pope,” it will most often be used in reference to the pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church. The title was introduced into the vocabulary of Egyptian Copts during the tenure of Dionysius as Bishop of Alexandria in reference to the bishop prior to him, Heracles.\textsuperscript{14} The Bishop of Alexandria was a term used immediately following the formation of the church in the city.\textsuperscript{15} As the church grew outward to the surrounding area including Cairo, Nubia, the Sudan, and others, those

\textsuperscript{14} Otto Meinardus, \textit{Christians In Egypt: Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant Communities Past and Present}, (New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2006), 35. The first use of the title pope in reference to the Bishop of Alexandria was fifty years prior to the first use of the term in Rome.

\textsuperscript{15} Later variants of the title include “archbishop” and “metropolitan” as the Church grew in its organizational administration.
areas came under the leadership of the Bishop of Alexandria. Still at this time, the connection with the church in other cities was much stronger and the bishops in each of those cities were equal in terms of authority over the community in their locations. After the fifth century, the archbishops in the sees that were established by apostles, including Alexandria, were given the title of patriarch. For this study Bishop of Alexandria, patriarch and pope will all be used to designate the same essential position, and the choice of which term is used will depend on the time period being referenced.

**Methodology**

Investigating the direction the new pope will take his relationship with the state, the way the Egyptian state will interact with him and what the role of the Coptic laity will be in this new relationship are important areas of consideration for those in Coptic studies and modern Egyptian studies. Analyzing these areas of interest require that the researcher carefully consider the research tools with which to probe these questions.

For this study, tools of historical analysis are used to provide context to the current situation in Egypt. There have been a number of works that have compiled vast amounts of primary historical data on the Coptic Church and papacy since its early beginnings. Each author has worked the event into the historical narrative he or she wishes to convey, and in doing so, has necessarily not elaborated on the parts of the

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history that are irrelevant to the author’s story. I will use those secondary sources and draw out the narrative of the shifting balance-of-power between the Coptic pope, Egyptian state and laity embedded in the historical events that have been relayed providing another lens through which to view the history. In addition to the secondary sources, my study consults primary sources to uncover details in the narrative that may have been overlooked.

Regarding recent events including the Arab Spring, this study joins primary sources such as newspaper articles and television programs with academic analysis in order to fully explore the themes related to power. Like with the historical work on the Coptic Church and papacy, there have been a limited number of early studies on the Arab Spring. These works provide analysis on the contemporary state of Egypt, but do not specifically consider the Coptic Church’s interaction with the state or the new pope’s projected interaction with the state. It is hoped that this study will begin to fill this void in scholarship.

The historical analysis provides the framework and requisite background knowledge for the latter part of the study which addresses the primary research question about the direction the new pope may take his interaction with the state and other actors in Egyptian society as well as assess the direction the laity might take in its interactions with the state and pope. In order to gain leverage on this question, the study uses the tools of cultural analysis. Data for cultural analysts can include audio/visual media such as television news commentaries, print media including books and newspapers, as well as

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online sources such as public blogs and social media sites.\textsuperscript{19} The goal in using these varied sources is to sift through the information to draw out common themes or distill from the sources their unique perspectives on a given theme.\textsuperscript{20} The data analysis for this chapter is similar to that in historical analysis although the sources of data are different.\textsuperscript{21}

In order to enhance the analysis on texts, written and audio/visual, interviews with various stakeholders within the Coptic Church and participant observation are used in this project. This research took place primarily in Cairo, Egypt and the surrounding rural areas during the beginning of March 2013.\textsuperscript{22} It primarily relies on interviews with various highly involved members of the Coptic community. The population that was drawn from for the interviews is members of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Particularly, this study conscientiously selected members of the church who participated in the election of the pope (approximately 2,400 persons). This population was given preference in the selection for these interviews because, having been selected to participate in the election, the individuals were in a position in which they were called upon to thoughtfully consider who would best lead the church in the twenty-first century. Presumably, these people are familiar with the biography of the new pope, the public statements he has made and his positions on a range of issues. Within the Coptic Church, voting for the pope is a

\textsuperscript{20} Sometimes this process is known within the area of cultural analysis as “unriddling.” See Alasuutari, \textit{Researching Culture}, 16.
\textsuperscript{21} Alasuutari, \textit{Researching Culture}, 13.
\textsuperscript{22} Some interviews were conducted in the United States as the interviewees were high-level members of the Coptic Church and were conducting church business with the congregations abroad.
privilege and not a right conferred upon all members.23 Elections only occur upon the
death of the sitting pope, meaning the election prior to the one conducted in November
2012 was over forty years ago. Those who participated can reasonably have a sense that
they participated in an important historical moment and likely took research for the vote
seriously.

In addition to interviewing those who participated in the selection process, a small
number of other active and engaged members of the Coptic Church were interviewed.
Because those who participated in the election may be less willing to voice candid
thoughts on the direction of the church due to their position of authority within the
institution, these additional interviewees were included. As stated before, these additional
participants only include those who are engaged fully, active in lay leadership and
committed to the church. In other words, these participants are not “lapsed Copts;” they
are not apathetic toward the church; they have an interest in preserving the institution and
are highly knowledgeable about its internal administrative workings. What sets them
apart from many of the voting members included in this study is the fact that they do not
take a salary from the church or report, in an employee-manager type relationship, to a
member of the paid-clergy. This simple distinction may allow these individuals to be
more candid in their assessment of the direction of the church for the researcher who is
outside of the community.

http://www.egyptindependent.com/opinion/new-pope-new-approach. Sedra points out that reform of the
voting process could become part of the new Pope’s agenda because the “electoral college” of the church is
limited based on socio-economic factors.
Participants for the interviews have been identified using a common method in anthropology called chain of referral. From the number of potential interview candidates seven have been interviewed for this study. All participants were given the option of whether or not to participate in the study. In certain cases potential interviewees were permitted to preview the questions that they would be asked in the interview in order to help them decide whether or not he or she would like to participate. Because for many years discussing politics openly was not customary in Egypt and only since the Arab Spring has it become common place in public forums, all interactions with participants were approached with great care. Participants were assured their identities would be protected.

Regarding the interviews, they were semi-structured using a standard set of questions as a starting point for conversation; however, when participants would offer information that would lead to other relative points of interest, those avenues were explored in order to illicit the most information from the interviewee. Participants were always given the option of whether or not to answer all interview questions. Although allowing participants to not answer questions threatens one of the more concrete, objective aspects of this ethnographic research, it was essential that participants’ sense of security was maintained as a matter of respect.

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24 Seymour Sudman and Graham Kalton, "New Developments in the Sampling of Special Populations". Annual Review of Sociology. 12, 401-429.
It is important to address potential concerns about the randomization in selection of participants. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, church-state relations, it is necessary that potential participants feel protected in sharing their thoughts. Having a connection and rapport with each informant was essential. Developing a random sample for interviewing from the 2,400 people who participated in the election and then trying to establish a rapport with those individuals was simply not practical. While every effort was made to draw from a broad spectrum of voters—young and old, female and male, urbanites and those from rural areas—the sample is not random.

As stated, some of these interviews took place at Coptic Churches, monasteries and clergy members’ homes. Recognizing that these places were provided opportunities for meaningful research insights that stemmed from day-to-day interactions in the Coptic community in churches, some of the research used in this study comes from observing that daily life of Copts in and around Coptic Churches and monasteries. In Egypt, Coptic Churches and monasteries serve as hubs for members of the Coptic community. The courtyards are areas of informal meetings for women and children during the day, high school students after school and university students when classes end. These courtyards are set up to foster these informal meetings with snack bars, picnic style seating and shops selling Coptic paraphernalia.26

Like other disciplines ethnographic methods of participant observation and interviews gather data and analyze it searching for common themes.27 Drawing out

themes in the interviews, listening to participants and the language use to describe their perspective on the current situation in Egypt and tying all of that to field observations would fall into the methodological category of discourse analysis. In her study on women’s role in the Islamic revival in Egypt, Saba Mahmood exemplifies this method of data analysis. Instead of specific individuals as cases she spends time at six different mosques in greater Cairo, attends women’s events and analyzes the messages given at those events. Her goal is to identify the commonalities and posit what those mean for the population as well as draw out the differences between her experiences to better understand the limitations of her generalizations.

29 Ibid. In the opening section of chapter two she explains her methodology.
Chapter 1: Contextualizing the Coptic Church

In November 2012 the Orthodox Copts, the largest Christian group in Egypt belonging to the Coptic Orthodox Church, selected their 118th patriarch, a patriarch who follows a line of patriarchs going back to Saint Mark the Evangelist who is credited with starting the church in Alexandria in the mid-first century.\(^{30}\) This group of Christians has held its place in Egyptian society despite early hardships including three successive and systematic persecutions of the community while living under the rule of the Roman Empire, the most devastating of which was under the Emperor Diocletian from 303 to 311.\(^{31}\) It has been argued that these very early periods of persecution and power struggles with the political authorities solidified the Coptic Church’s place in Egyptian society even though the population has dwindled significantly since its early days.\(^{32}\) Current data estimates the population of Coptic Christians in Egypt to be between 6% and 25% of the total population depending on who is giving the estimate. The most likely estimates,

\(^{30}\) There are also Catholic and Protestant Copts, this paper however will only refer to Orthodox Copts who represent the majority of the Coptic population. Additionally, it is acknowledged that the historical evidence establishing Saint Mark’s presence in Alexandria is lacking; there is no gospel mention of Mark’s mission to Alexandria and the first evidence of Mark’s presences in Alexandria is not until Eusibus’s History of the Church written in 325. See Davis, The Early Coptic Papacy. Despite the dearth of historical material, this is a part of the Coptic community’s narrative and is foundational to the self-understanding of the community.

\(^{31}\) Davis, The Early Coptic Papacy, 21.

however, are between 5% and 6% of the population.\(^{33}\) This is approximately the same level as during the Mamluke period of Egyptian history (1250-1517).\(^{34}\)

At the outset of this study it is important to examine the notable features of the Coptic community. The following will outline some of those features as an introduction to the group and highlight some of the main topics addressed by modern scholarship dealing with the Coptic community keeping in mind their relationship to the issue of power-sharing. As stated previously, the church is historically known for the persecutions it endured and power struggles in which it engaged throughout its first three hundred years of existence. Resulting from these periods of persecution the Coptic Church also became known as the “Church of the Martyrs.”\(^{35}\) This legacy of martyrdom is made explicit in many areas of Coptic life from the stories of the saints circulated through the church to the calendar of the church which is based on the ancient Egyptian calendar and adds to it the “Era of Martyrs.” Martyrdom and persecution are central themes in many studies relating to Copts and serve as a framework for some members of the Coptic Church in their individual quests to understand the church and its power-sharing relationship with the state even into modern times. This point is evidenced in the writing of Bishop Angaelos of the Coptic Orthodox church in the United Kingdom in his comments on martyrdom,


\(^{35}\) Naguib, “The Era of Martyrs,” 124.
The original martyrdom was about people who loved God so much and were so deeply committed to their faith that they would not deny their faith, even if doing so put them in great peril…this type of commitment, this martyrdom, is what kept the faith alive. We, I mean here the Coptic Church, have never been a state church. We have never been an institutional church. We have lived one form of persecution or another (Greeks, Romans, various empires, Turkish rule, the Islamic invasion of the 7th century, and so on and so forth). But it is precisely this form of witness that has kept the church alive—and keeps it fervent today.\textsuperscript{36}

What are notable about these comments by the bishop are his references to both the church past and present. For him, the martyrdom is just as much a part of the historical church’s experience as it is the modern church’s experience. Although Bishop Angaelos does not explicitly state that the modern system in Egypt has resulted in the church’s persecution, one could reasonably infer that from his comments.

The Coptic Church has not exclusively suffered at the hand of those whose religion is not Christianity. Some of the greatest instances of suffering the Coptic Church has experienced has been inflicted by other Christians. Historically, and particularly within theological discourse, the Copts are known for their support of the position which stated that Christ had only one nature at the Council of Chalcedon, thus, earning them the epithet \textit{monophysite} (“one-naturist”).\textsuperscript{37} This stance was in opposition to what the council ultimately decided about the true nature of Christ—that he had two natures both human and divine—and what became the official position of the Byzantine Empire of which the Egyptian Church was a part. Accordingly, the Coptic Church would start to distance itself from its Western counterparts after the Council of Chalcedon taking an “anti-Chalcedonian” stance. Hence, one of the Coptic Church’s earlier international relationships was characterized by a power struggle. According to historian, Stephen

\textsuperscript{37} Davis, \textit{The Early Coptic Papacy}, 87.
Davis, after the council, the pro-Chalcedonian church alongside of the Byzantine Empire took actions—legal, military and economic—to pressure the anti-Chalcedonian church to conform to the council’s stance and to create a base of support for the Chalcedonian position in Alexandria.\footnote{Ibid.} Davis describes these actions as a form of “ecclesiastical colonialism,” a description which appropriately conjures up images of a power struggle.\footnote{Ibid.} The tension between the churches would continue well into the future and even after the fall of the Byzantine Empire.\footnote{This theme can be traced in Stephen J. Davis and Gawdat Gabra, eds. The Popes of Egypt, 3 vols. Cairo, New York: The American University Press, 2004.} Traces of this tension can be seen in modern scholarship as the term monophysite is still used even though it carries a quite negative connotation.\footnote{Ibid. Davis replaces monophysite in his own writing with “anti-Chalcedonian Coptic community.” Notably, Davis draws a connection between the use of this term by the Melkite or “Imperial” Church as well as by modern Western scholars, “heirs to Chalcedonian tradition.” Davis’s writing makes clear the power dimension to this historical event. For examples of the use of the term in modern scholarship see Joseph Maila, “The Arab Christians: From the eastern questions to the recent political situation of the minorities,” in Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East, ed. Andrea Pacini, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 31.} Although Western scholars recognize this term and believe it to point to a theological and historical truth, one is left to wonder whether the term actually speaks more to the power struggle between the two churches as opposed to the theological stance of the Coptic Church. The Coptic Church officially maintains that its position on the nature(s) of Christ is not incommensurate with other Chalcedonian churches and has made continued efforts to reconcile with those churches even into the modern era.\footnote{Davis, The Early Coptic Papacy, 88; Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, The Emergence, 183.} Mentioning this theological and historical point serves two purposes. First, it introduces the reader to one of the prominent topics of scholarship in relation to the Copts. It also demonstrates Coptic exclusion from the Western church and draws attention to some of the important global
power dynamics involving the Coptic and Western churches. These themes will be examined in greater detail particularly in the following chapter of this study.

Just as the church played a role on the international stage during the time of the Byzantine Empire, the church’s international role has become one of the major themes discussed in modern Coptic Church studies. In this set of works, the topic of the church’s expansion abroad is often discussed in the context of revival within the Coptic Church particularly among the youth. Although these two themes are of great importance on their own, in modern Coptic studies they often get overshadowed by the concerns and questions surrounding Muslim-Christian relations in Egypt; this is the third major theme in modern Coptic Church studies. These questions and concerns have become not only prevalent in academic writing, but even more so in journalistic and editorial writing. Often in these writings, the Coptic Church is identified with the incursions it has suffered at the hands of some extreme factions of Muslim Egyptians. Another common theme in these writings is the discussion over the role the church will play in the modern state of Egypt which has and continues to debate the role of Islam as the religion of the majority at the state level and within the constitution. Unfortunately, when these incursions become the focus of the piece or study, their context within the broader landscape of modern scholarship on the Coptic Church is lost and the result is writing deficient in its analysis of the Coptic community’s affairs. It is important to give appropriate attention to all three of these themes in order to contextualize any discussion of modern Coptic Church affairs.
First, it is important to consider the church’s international presence. Once relatively confined to Egypt and the immediately surrounding area, the Copts are now worldwide. In 2008 the number of Coptic churches outside of Egypt reached 450 in countries as close as Libya and as far as Japan. More than just individual churches outside of Egypt, there are whole dioceses as well as monasteries. The growth of Coptic communities abroad stems from both immigration as well as missionary activity. In terms of immigration to other states, Copts did not begin to migrate in large numbers until after the 1960s when emigration restrictions from Egypt loosened and then opened up even more after 1970. Under Nasser there were a number of Copts who migrated to neighboring Arab states, and then under Sadat there was a wave of immigration westward. Missionary activity also contributed to the growth of the Coptic community abroad. The majority of this activity was in sub-Saharan Africa where there are over sixty individual churches under the Coptic Church in Africa. These instances of migration have not just been a fact without consequence for the Coptic Church but have raised fundamental theological questions as well as questions about how the church operates on a day-to-day level with so many of its faithful outside of Egypt. Theologically, the church must address the issue of translating the liturgy and whether to give preference to the local language or Arabic as the language of the liturgy. In terms of operations, just as recently as the papal election to replace Shenouda III, the international nature of the

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43 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, *The Emergence*, 179.
44 Ibid.
46 Stene, “Into the Lands,” 255.
47 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, *The Emergence*, 182.
Coptic Church had to be addressed and provisions made for those who would not be able to return to Egypt in order to cast their ballots. Although no studies have been done on the topic as far as I am aware, there are likely power-sharing issues that have accompanied this transition into being a more global church. What does the power-sharing relationship look like with states other than Egypt? What shape have the internal relationships taken between the administrative head of the church in Cairo and the dioceses geographically far from the center of administration? Do some of the international churches, for example those established as a result of migration, have a different experience in terms of their relationships to the administrative seat of the church, as opposed to those formed as a result of missionary activity amongst non-Egyptians?

The revival or renewal that the church has seen in the past century has been of particular interest to scholars. In the introduction to his work on the Coptic Church during the Ottoman period, Magdi Guirguis relates a story of his own upbringing in the Coptic Church in 1984. Making a point about the disconnect between villagers and the institution of the Coptic Church, he recalls how some Christian villagers had never seen a priest and when asked to recite the “Lord’s Prayer” they could only manage to come up with the first surah of the Qur’an. The point he makes is that villagers at this time are disconnected from the church. His story, however, can be also be used to demonstrate how radically the church has changed even since 1984. When Shenouda III was selected

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48 Interview with a bishop who participated in the planning and execution of the papal election; الأهرام. تصريح الصميم الأخير في انتخابات البابا الـ118 http://ahram.org.eg/archive/1042/2012/10/4/12/175131/219.aspx
49 This topic will also be touched upon by one interviewee in chapter 4.
50 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, The Emergence, 6.
as pope there were twenty-five dioceses, now there are fifty.\textsuperscript{51} In forty years the number of monks went from 206 to 1,200.\textsuperscript{52} Although statistics can never give the full picture of what has happened in the Coptic Church since Shenouda III took his position as pope in 1971, the statistics make more concrete this nebulous idea of church “revival.” No longer is the institution bound to Alexandria, Cairo and other population centers. Dina El-Khawaga describes how since the 1940s the institution has “clericalized” the laity in an effort to reach out to populations previously separated or disenfranchised from the church.\textsuperscript{53} Moreover, the church has been able to use social media to reach out to Coptic Christians in Egypt and around the world.\textsuperscript{54}

The revival, though, has not come without raising significant questions of authority for the church. An energized population—a clericalized laity—has ideas about how the organization should operate. They want to be involved in the decision-making process, particularly as the decisions made by those at the top of the organizational structure affect their own daily lives. The rise of the Coptic laity since the advent of the nineteenth century is well-documented in the literature on the church. One of the more organized and historically powerful bodies comprised of lay-members in the Coptic Church was the \textit{majlis al-milli}, the communal council. As a result of an Ottoman Empire decree in 1856 encouraging constitutionalism, representation and equality and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{51}] Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, \textit{The Emergence}, 174.
\item[\textsuperscript{52}] Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, \textit{The Emergence}, 173.
\item[\textsuperscript{53}] Dina el-Khawaga, “The Laity at the Heart of the Coptic Clerical Reform,” \textit{Between Desert and City}.
\item[\textsuperscript{54}] It is not uncommon for diocesan bishops to have their own Facebook page such as the Bishop of Shubra al-Khaima and that of the Bishop of Zagazig
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
specifically stating that each *millah*, religious community, needed its own communal organization to handle personal status issues, the *majlis al-milli* was created.\(^{55}\)

Although the council received early support from the pope at the time, Kryillos V, there would later be a backlash against the institution spearheaded by members of the clergy.\(^{56}\) This would result in a long and public power struggle between a powerful group of laity and a divided clergy. Both groups would appeal to the state in order to gain the upper hand on its adversary thus creating a triangular power struggle.\(^{57}\) In the following chapter of this study this incident will be analyzed in depth, but it is sufficient to state at this point that revival within the Coptic community has had significant implications on the pope’s power-sharing relationships. Displaying an ability to reclaim papal authority, a significant part of the popes’ legacies since the mid-twentieth century were their ability to draw those lay-members who wanted a part in the decision-making processes into the leadership structure of the church and under papal purview in ways the laity found to be acceptable.\(^{58}\)

In addition to the literature addressing the global expansion of the Coptic Church and its revival, there is another body of literature that addresses modern tensions between Christians and Muslims and the (potentially compromised) status of the Coptic Church in the Egyptian state which has seen a rise in the prominence of the Muslim Brotherhood as

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\(^{55}\) Ibrahim, *The Copts of Egypt*, 33.


\(^{57}\) Ibid.

\(^{58}\) Dina El Khawaga, “Political Dynamics of the Copts,” in *Christian Communities*, 184.
well as Salafism over the past half-century.\textsuperscript{59} These analyses understand the primary power-sharing relationship of the church and its pope to be with either Egyptian Muslims \textit{or} with what is often termed in these writings as “political Islam” as embodied by groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood or the Salafists. In order to address some of the conceptual issues present in the larger body of literature, the present study will consider one widely cited work on Coptic issues in Egypt called \textit{Christians Versus Muslims in Modern Egypt}.\textsuperscript{60} The title, \textit{Christians Versus Muslims in Modern Egypt}, itself is significant because it signals to the reader that there is a power-struggle between the two groups. From the title alone, the discussion is framed as a competition between two groups not allowing for the possibility that the groups could cooperate with each other or, even more unbelievable, the possibility that these two religious groups’ identity as Egyptians is more unifying than their religious difference is separating.

The opening line of Sana Hasan’s \textit{Christians Versus Muslims in Modern Egypt} dolefully reads,

\begin{quote}
Though the problems faced by the Christian minority are for many Egyptians a taboo subject, there can be no doubt that the condition of the Copts steadily deteriorated, during the second half of the twentieth century, as Egypt was ineluctably drawn into the Islamic orbit.\textsuperscript{61}
\end{quote}

In the same opening paragraph the author states the church is bracing to “confront the danger posed by the resurgence of Islamic militancy” as well as describing the church as a “safe haven, outside the reach of the Muslim state.”\textsuperscript{62} In the very first page of her analysis, the author presents a number of complicated subjects and uses a litany of

\textsuperscript{59} For more information on the rise of these groups in Egypt see Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, \textit{Mobilizing Islam: Religion, activism and political change in Egypt}, (New York: Columbia University Press) 2002.
\textsuperscript{61} Hasan, \textit{Christians Versus Muslims}, 3.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
controversial terms to do so. Her treatment, however, of these topics is a perfect example of the all-too-typical tenor of dialogue around Christian-Muslim relations in Egypt; the discourse is filled with fear, divisiveness and mistrust. It is important to appropriately complicate these issues raised in this first paragraph of Hasan’s work for the purpose of the present study in order to repair the carless and outdated framework.

First, the author refers to the Christians in Egypt as a “minority.” Hasan’s claim is significant and it helps to locate her within a larger body of work on Coptic issues. Vivian Ibrahim in her work, *The Copts of Egypt: The challenges of modernization and identity*, claims that there are two dominate frameworks for how to understand the modern Coptic community. The first framework is the “minority under threat” and the second is “national unity.” According to Ibrahim, both frameworks are flawed, but the works that fall into the former are more numerous than those that make claims of a strong national unity binding together both Christians and Muslims.

It is clear from the first chapter of Hasan’s work that it can be located within the framework of “minority under threat.” But what is the problem with the term “minority” to describe the Copts? One problem is that implicit in the term is that they are readily distinguishable from a majority community as a cohesive whole. This, however, is not the case. As Rachel Scott notes in responding to the problems of the *millah* system, “In the case of Egypt, Copts and Muslims had a long history of living together as part of a centralized geographical and cultural entity called Egypt.”

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64 Ibid.
understood during the Ottoman period in Egypt, was used to describe a distinguishable religious community which would be granted a certain amount of legal autonomy under its own leadership. What Scott and others regard as the problem with this system as applied to Egypt is that it fails to recognize that there are numerous and important ways in which the communities cannot be distinguished from one another like other religious minorities in other places may be able to be distinguished.

In addition to recalling the legacy of the millah system, the term minority is contentious for other reasons. In its November 1994 report on Egypt, Human Rights Watch notes that labeling the Copts as a “minority” was objectionable to Christian and Muslim intellectuals as well as to Shenouda III. In fact, in 1994 when a conference hosted by the Ibn Khaldun Center for Developmental Studies convened in Cairo with the expressed purpose of discussing “minority rights” in the Middle East and including among those minorities the Copts, the conference drew massive objection from a number of religious and state actors. The concern in using this term to describe Copts is that it is “divisive” and threatens the “historically and highly valued concept of Egyptian national unity.” Moreover, the term applied to Egypt and throughout the Middle East is understood as a continuation of a colonial strategy of divide and rule.

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68 Ami Ayalon, “Egypt’s Coptic Pandora’s Box,” in *Minorities and the State in the Arab World*, ed. Ofra Bengio and Gabriel Ben-Dor (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999), 63.
70 Ibid.
relationships of power within the country whether it is a conscious decision or not. For some, the term indicates an unequal power relationship between Muslims and Christians, and for others it evokes the memory of the unequal power relationship between colonial states and the populations they oppressed.

Another deficiency in the Hasan’s analysis is that “the threat of Islamic militancy” and the danger of the “Muslim state” are connected, both having a negative effect on the church. First, these terms need to be addressed. How does the author understand “Islamic militancy” in the Egyptian context? When Hasan uses the term “Islamic militancy,” it is most often connected to a series of incidents that took place during the 1970s in Egypt. These incidents were undertaken by various groups including Shabab Muhammad, al-Takfir wa al-Hijra and the Muslim Brotherhood. The careful reader must raise questions as to if these various groups should be put together under one broad heading of “Islamic militants,” and if it was a part of each group’s agenda to destroy the Christian community in Egypt or if their agendas were broader. This point is important for the author’s case particularly when “Islamic militancy” is connected to the “Muslim state” or to the current Muslim Brotherhood elected to high offices in the Egyptian government. The term “Islamic militants” is laden with many connotations and the definition of it should be clear.

In her discussion of the threat of Islamic militancy, Hasan highlights incidents of sectarian violence marked by chapel burnings and faults the government for lending its

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tacit support to those groups that mounted the attacks.\textsuperscript{72} Additionally she points out clashes among university youth divided along religious lines.\textsuperscript{73} At the same time, the author highlights attacks undertaken by militants against the state itself.\textsuperscript{74} The fact that both the Christian community and the Egyptian government were in the crosshairs of these various groups suggests that Christians were not the sole target of the groups. Is it possible that the groups’ violence stemmed from systemic problems in the country under the leadership of Sadat and Mubarak as opposed to a narrowly defined campaign against the Christian community? From the perspective of those adhering to a national unity framework, is the violence better understood as an attack on Egypt and Egyptians? By raising these questions the intent is not to minimize the suffering of the Coptic community during what was clearly a turbulent and painful time in Egyptian history. These questions are raised in order to better understand the causes of the violence and to point out that more nuances are required when discussing the issues the author raised. The church burning was real as were the attacks against the government; real people were harmed. It is for that reason it is important to attempt to understand the violence and what led up to it with careful attention to detail and context.

In addition to the problems with the author’s discussion of “Islamic militancy” are problems with the discussion of the “Muslim state.” Hasan uses the term “Muslim state” both in the introductory paragraphs to the book as well as in a chapter heading. The church’s reaction to the “Muslim state” is a reoccurring theme in the work, but what

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{72} Hasan, \textit{Christians Versus Muslims}, 106.
\item \textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{74} Hasan, \textit{Christians Versus Muslims}, 107.
\end{itemize}
exactly is meant by the term is illusive. The term seems to be most applied to Egypt under former President Anwar Sadat who, as she notes, called himself the “devout President.” The description of this “Muslim state” seems to be based on the presence of “Islamic militancy.” It is difficult to discern, however, exactly what the author intends when she uses this term. If “Muslim state” merely means a state in which Muslims reside, then to suggest that there is an inherent threat to Christians by the fact Muslims are present in large numbers is perhaps audacious. However, if the author intends the term to mean that Islam as a belief system undergirds state governance, then it is important to elucidate what this looks like in the Egyptian context, and for her thesis, how that threatens Christians.

The author’s treatment of these two concepts typifies one of the problems associated with this type of analysis—conflating and connecting the concepts of “Muslim state” and “Islamic militancy” without defining terms carefully and addressing the nuances of subjects. By treating these topics without the appropriate nuance, the potential of her readers (which may include policy-makers and other influential figures) misunderstanding the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Egypt increases.

In the latter part of Hasan’s opening paragraph, she shifts her attention from the actions of outside groups toward the Copts to considering the communities internal workings. Although the author states that the renaissance of the Coptic Church is not “just a reaction to Islamic belligerence,” she still frames her analysis with references to

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75 Hasan, Christians Versus Muslims, 105.
76 Hasan “Dealing with the Muslim State” in Christians Versus Muslims, 103-20.
77 Hasan, Christians Versus Muslims, 3.
tensions between Muslims and Christians as well as Christians and the Muslim state.\textsuperscript{78}

The majority of Hasan’s book highlights this renaissance and the internal workings of the Coptic Church, yet the title and the introduction might lead one to believe that the book primarily addresses the conflict. While one reviewer notes that this title is “misleading” since the book is “not primarily an account of interreligious conflict,” the title is not a mistake.\textsuperscript{79} The title is consistent with the nature and tenor of the discourse within the minority under threat subgenre of works regarding Coptic affairs. All occurrences within the Coptic Church and community are viewed through the prism of sectarian struggles.

Hasan is echoed by some colleagues and journalists who describe violence in Egypt undertaken by those linked to “Islamic militant groups” and supported by a sympathetic “Muslim state.”\textsuperscript{80} They follow the narrative of an eminent Islamic threat like that of Hasan without considering other factors that could have contributed to violence, the larger narrative of Coptic revival or even that Muslims, like Christians, were affected by the violence undertaken by some groups. In the minority under threat subgenre, the more nuanced portrayals of the modern political situation faced by Coptic Christians in Egypt separates the challenge the state poses for Coptic Christians and the challenge of “Islamic militancy,” but, nonetheless, paints a dismal picture for the future of Copts in

\begin{quotation}
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
\end{quotation}
Egypt and their relationship with their Muslim compatriots. often these pieces focus on the acts of violence carried out by Muslims against the Copts or acts of injustice toward Copts undertaken by the state. Observing the trends in scholarly and journalistic writing on the Copts, Paul Sedra writes

> The overriding concern of both scholars and journalists with the ‘Islamist phenomenon,’ this narrow focus of analysis…is again hardly surprising. The unfortunate result, however, is that the Copts have figured only has a ‘symbol’, most often as an inert ‘victim’, in the story the scholars and journalists have sought to tell—that of the struggle of the government and Islamists for control of the state.

Connected to this type of literature is another group of writings that explore the relationship between historical martyrdom with the modern tension between some groups of Christians and Muslims in Egypt.

Clearly the framework of minority under threat is seriously flawed. It is important to understand the flaws in order to understand why this thesis will operate more out of the national unity framework. Recognizing all frameworks for understanding have their inadequacies, I will be careful to address those associated with the national unity framework throughout the study.

Despite the fact the minority under threat framework is seriously flawed, it is nonetheless prevalent. It is for this reason this introduction to the Coptic community has focused on this body of literature as well as incorporating some of the major areas of Coptic studies historically. Although no short introduction can do justice to all that is

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83 Naguib, “The Era of Martyrs.”
written on the Copts, this one has attempted to address the most relevant pieces of scholarship for this study as well as draw attention to a variety of questions.
Chapter 2: Historical Analysis

The Coptic Church is an institution that prides itself on its adherence to tradition dating back to Saint Mark’s establishment of the church in the years shortly after the death of Jesus Christ. For the Copts the past informs the present through ritual such as feast day traditions and reciting the liturgy as well as through the remembrance of what important Coptic figures have done in and for the community. Patriarchs earn a special place in the history and, like the recently deceased Shenouda III, are enshrined in the hagiography of the church. History matters to Egyptian Copts. Illustrating the significance of history for the Coptic community Bishop Angaelos writes,

So we educate our young people...We want them to understand they are but links in a chain. We receive, we internalize, and we live and we present for the future. We receive from the past, with faithfulness, with understanding, with depth. We live and we internalize that faith and that understanding today, and we present it for the future...It is through the faithful handing down from one generation to the next that we can present to people an understanding of life.

For Bishop Angaelos the past is not just names and dates, but it is representative of the religious faithfulness of the forebears in his community. The past always informs the present. When studying communities that sacralize their own past, the role of history has greater weight.


\[85\] Bishop Angaelos, “The Coptic Orthodox Church,” 9.
In order to answer the complex questions the Coptic Church faces about the direction the new Coptic pope will take the church in a changing Egypt, this chapter will examine how the power-sharing relationships of the pope with various stake-holders in the Egyptian community have changed over time. In particular, the analysis will settle on 1919 and the role of the patriarch and church in an Egypt that was caught up in the excitement and uncertainty of a revolution aiming to oust British colonial rule.

**Historical Overview**

The relationship between the pope and the state, the laity, the clergy and other actors has been far from immutable. Whereas some of these relationships have managed to settle into established patterns, the particular relationship between the pope and the state has been one in which the balance-of-power has remained in a constant state of flux even from its outset. The pope, acting as a symbol of church authority, has at different points throughout history struggled with the government for authority over his community. Given the length of the history of the Coptic Church in Egypt and the number of phases in the papal-state relationship, when the church’s past is critically examined, the extreme tipping of this balance-of-power can be clearly seen.

Early in the Coptic Church’s history the Bishop of Alexandria, representing his community, came into very clear conflict with the Roman government which controlled Egypt. From 202 to 311 the church experienced three waves of severe persecution often

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86 The Bishop of Alexandria was the title for the position that would later become Pope of the Coptic Church see Davis, *The Early Coptic Papacy*, 27-28.
forcing the Bishop of Alexandria to guide his people from his place of hiding.\textsuperscript{87} The most severe instance of persecution during this period was from 303 to 311 under the Emperor Diocletian. The instance of “the Diocletian,” as it is called, is clearly an instance in which the Bishop of Alexandria, acting as a symbol of the church and its authority in front of the state, has little room to negotiate directly with the state as he was in hiding.\textsuperscript{88} This, however, should not be understood as an instance of the Bishop of Alexandria relinquishing absolute authority over his community to the state. In fact, one might argue that during his time in hiding the Bishop of Alexandria asserted his authority. Even from his place of hiding, Peter I of Alexandria continued to have a great influence over the community even to the point of entering debates over how church leadership should function during times when a significant number of bishops were imprisoned.\textsuperscript{89} Despite Diocletian’s efforts to strip the church of its leadership structure, the Bishop of Alexandria continued to assert his authority over the community even while there was a literal assault on it.\textsuperscript{90}

After the years of persecution of the church carried out by non-Christian emperors, Constantine, a Christian, took the supreme position of authority over the Roman Empire.\textsuperscript{91} It would be incorrect, however, to assume that the Bishop of Alexandria would easily fit into the newly Christianized empire’s authority structure and

\textsuperscript{88} Davis, \textit{The Early Coptic Papacy}, 36.
\textsuperscript{89} Davis, \textit{The Early Coptic Papacy}, 37.
\textsuperscript{90} Davis, \textit{The Early Coptic Papacy}, 40. Peter I would eventually be martyred which raises a number of potential questions regarding martyrdom as an assertion of power.
\textsuperscript{91} Davis, \textit{The Early Coptic Papacy}, 43. Constantine started his reign in 306; however, he did not become the sole leader of the empire until 324. For more see Averil Cameron, “Constantine and the ‘Peace of the Church,’” in \textit{The Cambridge History of Christianity, Vol. 1}, 538-51.
that there would be no power struggles between the state and the bishop. To the contrary, the power struggles continued. Unlike their predecessors, these Christian emperors took a greater responsibility for how exactly the church, as a social and religious institution, would operate within the empire. Not only did these emperors make decisions that affected the Coptic community as citizens, they also intervened in theological debates and affected the Coptic community as parishioners. The emperors would use their positions as civil authorities to influence the outcome of some of the greatest theological debates of Christian history including the Arian controversy, Origenist controversy and the Christological controversy. It was the Christological controversy that severely impacted the relationship of the pope to the state, and ultimately, the place of Copts in the empire.92

The controversy that placed Alexandria on the outside of the locus-of-power in Constantinople traces its origins back to earlier debates, but the climax occurred during Dioscorus I’s tenure as Bishop of Alexandria.93 The Christological controversy had been building for years and through convicted and savvy political maneuvering Dioscorus I managed to secure for himself a place of great stature and influence with the Emperor of Rome, Theodosius II.94 When the emperor’s life came to an end in 450, so did the

92 For more on emperor involvement in the Arian controversy see Davis, The Early Coptic Papacy, 50. For more on emperor involvement in the Origenist controversy see Davis, The Early Coptic Papacy, 64. For more on involvement in Chalcedonian controversy see Davis, The Early Coptic Papacy, 76-84. Also see William Harmless, Desert Christians: An introduction to the literature of early monasticism, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
93 Dioscorus I was Bishop of Alexandria from 444 – 454. Ten years prior to the Christological controversy at hand, there was another controversy in which proponents debated a number of the same theological issues. That debate was settled peacefully and all sides reconciled in 433. See Davis, The Early Coptic Papacy, 80.
94 Davis, The Early Coptic Papacy, 82. In the years prior to Dioscorus I there was great controversy regarding the divinity of Jesus Christ. The controversy brewing during Dioscorus I’s tenure as the Bishop
Dioscorus I’s secure position of power.\textsuperscript{95} The new empress, Plucheria and the Emperor Marcian favored the Bishop of Alexandria’s theological opponents whom he had gravely offended (and even had physically harmed) a few years earlier.\textsuperscript{96} At the outset of her rule, the empress invalidated the theological position of Dioscorus I that had been affirmed by the empire-sponsored theological council just prior to her tenure in power. Using her position of civil authority, she convened a new council, the Council of Chalcedon (451), at which Dioscorus I was deposed from his position as the Bishop of Alexandria and the theology he supported condemned.\textsuperscript{97}

In addition to the ecclesial and theological assertions of authority by the empress, in a more political vein she sent Dioscorus I into exile. This last action was to the great consternation of Egyptian Christians.\textsuperscript{98} The empress appointed a new bishop who supported the position of the new council, the Chalcedonian position. The new bishop was unable to gain the trust and support of his newly acquired parishioners, and they rejected the notion of him having authority over them.\textsuperscript{99} For Copts, this state action taken against the Dioscorus I touched the painful collective memory of state action against them and their bishop during the Diocletian. Just as during the Diocletian, when the

\textsuperscript{95} Davis, \textit{The Early Coptic Papacy}, 83; Harmless, \textit{Desert Christians}, 43.
\textsuperscript{97} Davis, \textit{The Early Coptic Papacy}, 83-84.
\textsuperscript{98} Davis, \textit{The Early Coptic Papacy}, 84. Harmless, \textit{Desert Christians}, 43.
\textsuperscript{99} Davis, \textit{The Early Coptic Papacy}, 84.
Bishop of Alexandria found himself on the outside of the center of political power, his standing within the Coptic community did not wane. Although Dioscorus I lost power in Constantinople, he gained it in Alexandria and in every city down the Nile. The Coptic community stayed loyal to Dioscorus I. The incident with Dioscorus I has enduring significance. Fiona McCallum writes,

> The patriarch is more than the head of the church. He is the father of the flock, symbol of the faith and figurehead of the community. In the Coptic Orthodox case, loyalty to the patriarch led to the eventual establishment of an independent church…The church in Egypt remained loyal to the deposed patriarch of Alexandria and refused to recognize any patriarch imposed on them from Constantinople.

The Coptic community demonstrates in this incident its acceptance of the pope and his essential role and place of authority within the community. It also demonstrates that the Coptic community has agency in choosing what authority it will accept; it accepted Dioscorus I but not the imposed religious authority from the outside. For McCallum, this is one of those moments that is seared into Coptic communal memory and help explain how the modern pope is able to enjoy the support of his community in acting as a political representative.

After Chalcedon the Coptic Church became the minority Christian group among the majority Chalcedonian Christian group in the Byzantine Empire. Davis writes, “Marginalized under the political rule of Constantinople, the Coptic Church and its patriarchs soon became exiles in their own land.” Constantinople continued to place imperial patriarchs over Coptic churches while the Coptic community elected its own

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100 Davis, *The Early Coptic Papacy*, 85.
101 McCallum, “Role of the Patriarch,” 926.
102 Davis, *The Early Coptic Papacy*, 84.
patriarchs. Violent clashes and increased hostility between the two groups ensued.\textsuperscript{103}

Also after the Council of Chalcedon, the Coptic Christians were given the epithet, \textit{monophysite}, or one-nature, Christians. The name highlighted what supporters of Chalcedon believed to be the group’s heretical belief.\textsuperscript{104} Due to this series of events, the Coptic Church fell out of communion with Constantinople and ultimately lost the chance for any position of power within the political structure of the empire.

This early history of the Coptic pope and church with the state is important for various reasons. First, the early history demonstrates that the Coptic pope held the informal position of communal representative to the state as well as community representative to the empire-wide church councils. Even from these earliest days, one can see this dual role being played out. One of the implications of this seems to have been the development of a communal understanding that an action taken against pope was an action taken against the community; the community was devoted to the pope. Moreover, the history demonstrates that the struggle between the church and state has long roots and is not limited to particular personalities or governments. This note is particularly important as this study moves into the modern era. There is a temptation in some areas of scholarship (as noted in chapter one) to claim that struggle between the state and the church is to be properly understood as a “Muslim-Christian” conflict. This narrative is subtly woven into academic and journalistic pieces that the role of Islam in the Egyptian state is the main challenge in Egyptian church-state relations.\textsuperscript{105} However, an

\textsuperscript{103} Davis, \textit{The Early Coptic Papacy}, 88.
\textsuperscript{104} Davis, \textit{The Early Coptic Papacy}, 87.
\textsuperscript{105} See footnote 80 in chapter 1.
interpretation that takes into account the long history of the church in Egypt might suggest that there could be a broader explanation for the challenges having more to do with the big question of religious institutions in civil structures as opposed to the narrow question of the church in a majority-Muslim state.  

*Multi-party power-sharing relationships*

In the previous chapter concerning the early history of the church in the state, two main actors were the focus of the analysis. Concerning the history of the last three hundred years, questions regarding the relationship between the church and the state become more complicated as the role of the laity within both church and society becomes greater. Commenting on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Nelly Van Doorn-Harder states that Coptic popes “wrestled for their ecclesial power with Coptic notables, laity, dissenters, foreign missionaries and emissaries and on and off with the Egyptian government.”  

Although many new actors enter the picture, the particular dynamic between the state, the pope and the laity becomes the most important dynamic for understanding church-state relations during the decline of the Ottoman Empire and in the wake of nationalism.

The roots of this modern dynamic began in the seventeenth century and early eighteenth centuries. During that time Egypt officially was under Ottoman control;

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106 Confirming the presence of real questions regarding how the church and state relate to one another appropriately, there is an abundance of literature treating these very questions across time and in many cultural contexts. The question is perennial and appears in multiple cultural contexts because the claims that the Christianity and the church make on members’ lives are comprehensive. The same can be said for any religious doctrine or philosophy that makes absolute claims on follower’s lives. Philosopher John Rawls treats this issue in his work *Justice as Fairness*. Although his work specifically addresses the role of religion in the liberal state, the challenges he treats are nonetheless similar even in states that are not liberal.  

107 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, *The Emergence*, 57.
however, it was functioning almost as an independent region under the larger Ottoman banner. During these centuries the power structure within the Ottoman Empire experienced a shift moving from a centralized authority structure to a decentralized structure. This shift paralleled a shift in the Coptic Church. Some historians, in fact, have suggested a causal relationship between a decentralizing of the state and the rise in the role of the wealthy Copts within the church.

When the state began to decentralize in terms of its structure of governance, local authorities began forging relationships with wealthy, land-owning Copts. These elite parishioner-citizens, known as the arakhina, began to challenge the pope. The wealthy group of Copts took over as the power-brokers for the community at the state level becoming the liaisons between the Coptic community and the state that the pope once was. The arakhina used their positions of influence to further the interests of their community particularly in the area of church repair and renovation. Additionally, they sponsored art and education for Coptic Christians. For that reason they were well-respected by the rest of the Coptic laity.

These lay members established themselves as a formal group with a leadership structure and method for transferring power from one generation to the next. Additionally, they built strong relationships with the local priests, poorer members of the

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108 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, The Emergence, 32. This period is often described as the “Mamluk period.”
109 Ibid.
111 Ibid.
112 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, The Emergence, 42.
113 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, The Emergence, 46.
114 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, The Emergence, 36.
laity and even their Muslim counterparts creating for themselves a base of popular support. At the height of their power, they were the group solely responsible for selecting the pope (a job that at one point belonged to the bishops alone) from 1646 to 1726. As elite Christians gained influence with local officials, the pope lost his position as sole representative for his community to the government and only legitimate civil leader within his own community.

The increased power and influence the members of the laity started to experience, however, would be soon lost. The nineteenth century brought with it greater recognition at the state level for traditional authority structures. When the French entered Egypt in 1798, they were keen to rely on established institutions like the church. Their successor, Muhammad Ali, also chose to work with the pope and bishops as opposed to the wealthy, land-owning Christians. Even though there was a revival of traditional institutions, it did not cause the death of the emerging role of the laity within the Coptic and broader Egyptian community. Throughout this brief revival of traditional institutions, the groundwork was being laid in two key ways for the resurgence of the laity seeking to reclaim an influential position.

First, Copts were being educated in greater numbers. Three forces were behind the increased access to education: papal initiative, missionary activity and Muhammad Ali’s policies. Pope Kyrillos IV (1854-1861), one of the most influential popes in modern Coptic history, devoted himself to the promotion of education. One author writes “his

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115 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, The Emergence, 35.
116 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, The Emergence, 38.
117 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, The Emergence, 65. Part of this is due to the fact Muhammad Ali massacred the ruling Mamluk families who had hired a number of Coptic notables to manage their finances.
name became synonymous with educational reform."118 He introduced modern schooling to the Coptic community opening boys’ and girls’ schools. Some have said the impetus to start these schools was provided by the strong presence of missionary schools.119 One of the main missionary schools was started by the Christian Missionary Society. The CMS’s main missionary goal was not to proselytize Egyptians; rather, it was to build up Coptic institutions such as schools.120

Combining with the church’s own effort and missionary efforts, official state policy was helping to pave the way for Copts to receive more education. One of Ali’s goals in building the modern state was to increase access to education. Early in his term, Ali opened schools, but he only opened them to Muslims because the schools served a military training purpose. Under the *dhimmi* system, a system through which Muslims in governance accord hospitality and protection to those of another faith in return for their recognition of the authority of Islam, the protected class of Christians was not permitted to serve in the military, thus they did not receive the education.121 Later in his career, however, he began to consider benefits to education outside of its military use and expanded the access to these schools to include Copts. This educated Coptic community would be more willing to question institutional and papal authority.122

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118 Mounir Shoucri, “Cyril IV,” *Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia.*
122 Some of this willingness to question institutional authority could also be attributed to the contact the Copts had with the missionaries who were at the same time doctrinally Christian like them but were not involved with the same hierarchical ecclesial structures. Whether intentional or not, these missionaries brought with them more than support for Coptic institutions; they brought a foreign ecclesial philosophy as well. This line of thought is consistent with Sedra’s case that the missionaries were not only seeking to
The second key that helped contribute to a resurgence of the laity in relation to the state and the church was an Ottoman decree, the Reform Edict of 1856, which called for the development of a community council within each *millah* to handle administration of *waqf* lands as well as legal issues particular to each community such as divorce.\(^{123}\) The main goal of the decree was to ensure equality and representation in the Ottoman Empire as part of a broad group of reforms called *tanzimat*.\(^{124}\) Although the decree was made in 1856, it was not until 1874 that the council for Copts was established and called the *majlis al-milli*.\(^{125}\) After the death of Pope Demetrius II, the council was convened by an influential bishop in order to help administer church affairs during the interim between the popes.\(^{126}\) The council was comprised of educated and elite members of the Coptic community who could bring the skills and resources they gained in their professions to be used by the church.\(^{127}\)

After the *majlis al-milli* was convened, it did not disband even after Kyrillos V was chosen as pope to replace the void since Demetrius II’s death. To the contrary, it moved to be recognized officially by the state despite Kyrillos V’s effort to counteract the council’s efforts in front of state authorities.\(^{128}\) Throughout Kyrillos V’s papacy, he and convert the Copts to their version of Christianity, but were seeking conversions “of a far greater depth.” They were really concerned with “the colonization of the Coptic mind.” See Paul Sedra, “John Leider and his Mission in Egypt,” *Journal of Religious History*, 28, No. 3 (2004): 225.

\(^{123}\) For an explanation of the *millah* system see Section II. *Waqf* is a term used in Islamic jurisprudence roughly meaning charitable trust. These charitable trusts were established, in part, to fund religious and social networks. For more see “Wakf,” *Encyclopedia of Islam*; Ibrahim, *The Copts of Egypt*, 20;

\(^{124}\) Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, *The Emergence*, 70.

\(^{125}\) Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, *The Emergence*, 89.

\(^{126}\) Ibrahim, *The Copts of Egypt*, 33.

\(^{127}\) Ibrahim, *The Copts of Egypt*, 34; Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, *The Emergence*, 89.

the majlis al-milli struggled with one another for authority using the state as an arbiter. In 1883, the conflict between the two climaxed with both parties taking their cases against the other to the state. The state formally sided with the majlis al-milli and recognized the lay organization legally. After this legal ruling, thanks to the pope’s persistent efforts to hinder its work, the council became severely weakened and almost entirely disbanded for a few years. In 1891, attempting to further weaken the body, the pope brought a complaint before the state against the majlis al-milli for acting against church tradition. The majlis al-milli countered the pope accusing him also of violating church tradition. The state responded, siding with the majlis al-milli and dismissing Kyrillos V as the pope.

Even the state and the laity working together, however, were not able to strip the pope of all his power. Despite the action taken against the pope, the community in time recognized the ecclesial importance of his position and the religious authority that went with it. After the state dismissed the pope, the lay members could not receive the Eucharist, were not able to be married, were not baptized and were not absolved of their sin. The remainder of the clergy refused to perform these functions without the church prescribed authority structure in place. Although the majlis al-milli and the state could assume parts of the pope’s role for the larger body of the laity and particularly those pertaining to his civil authority, they could not take from him his authority over the

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129 Ibrahim, The Copts of Egypt, 36; Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, The Emergence, 90-1.
130 Ibrahim, The Copts of Egypt, 36; Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, The Emergence, 90.
131 Ibid.
132 Ibrahim, The Copts of Egypt, 119; Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, The Emergence, 91. After this incident the Pope even resorted to appealing to foreign powers and other churches to help him but did not find support.
133 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, The Emergence, 91.
clergy or authority to perform and direct functions specific to aspects of the religious life of these Christians.\textsuperscript{134} The state responded to the ecclesial crisis by reinstating the pope. He was received warmly by the laity that had exchanged his leadership for that of the elite and educated among them.\textsuperscript{135}

This incident between members of the laity and the pope is significant for many reasons. First, this incident indicates that pope, the state and the lay council all recognize themselves as having both an authority over the Coptic community and a responsibility to represent the Coptic community. The institutions of the papacy and the state had long recognized their authority as evidenced by the early church history. When the laity formed the institution of the \textit{majlis al-milli}, they became willing to enter into disputes, in a formal way, with the pope and state over that authority.\textsuperscript{136} Second, at this point in Egypt’s history and prior to any popular revolution, the state, bound by the \textit{millah} system, has an interest and responsibility to recognize a representative for the community. The presence of lay organizations was the best mechanism the Coptic community to establish a more direct representation to the state. The rise of nationalism in conjunction with the 1919 revolution, however, would change the dynamics of the relationship between the Coptic laity, the pope and the state drastically.

\textit{Nationalism and the 1919 Revolution}

The earliest signs of nationalism appeared in Egypt during the mid-to-late nineteenth century when historians identify the first self-conscious expressions of Egypt

\textsuperscript{134} Ibrahim, \textit{The Copts of Egypt}, 121; Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, \textit{The Emergence}, 91.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{136} Afifi, “The State and the Church,” 279.
being a unique and well-defined place with a distinct people in the writings of Rifa’a Rafi’. The Egyptian nationalist framework, however, was not the only framework for understanding society. It competed with the older, traditional and religiously defined frameworks for understanding society in the late nineteenth century. At the same time the nationalist framework was starting to establish itself, new life was breathed into the religious framework. Also during the late nineteenth century the Ottoman Sultan reasserted his title *caliph* and called for support from the entire Muslim community both in and outside of the Ottoman Empire. The title the Sultan reasserted, *caliph*, is a term that has both a religious and political connotations. It is religious in the sense that it refers to one who succeeds the Prophet Muhammad in leadership of the Muslim community, and it is political in the sense that in the many years since the death of the Prophet Muhammad the role became formal and institutionalized as just one part of a broader hierarchical system of governance. Using this political title laden with religious significance combined with a call for the support of Muslims world-wide, the Sultan emphasized the Islamic character of the Ottoman Empire. In so doing, he reinforced the perceived division between religious communities that was already present from the *millah* system.

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138 Gershoni and Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam*, 5. It is important not to neglect the significant role that Europe played in this reassertion. Since the late eighteenth century, predominantly Muslim communities globally and even within the Ottoman Empire had faced military challenges and occupation from European states seeking to grow their global presence. The Ottoman Empire for its part was strategizing how it could retain its global influence and thus utilized the religious angle. The title caliph, the sovereign Islamic leader, would hold greater significance in that it would carry some authority even outside of the Ottoman Empire. For more on the title caliph and this historical event see Peter Holt, "Khalifa," *Encyclopedia of Islam*.
139 Holt, "Khalifa."
Despite the challenge it had in the late nineteenth century, the early twentieth century saw the rise of nationalism. Nationalism fundamentally challenged the religious divisions in Egyptian society which had been re-emphasized by the Ottoman Empire under pressure from colonial powers. It exchanged the idea that society is comprised of various *millahs* each with its own structure, history and traditions for that of the “imagined political community” in which there was no “Copt” or “Muslim” only Egyptians.\(^{141}\) Clearly, the shift in perspective would profoundly affect the dynamic between Muslims and Copts in Egypt. This shift in perspective on the part of many members of the Coptic community also contributed greatly to changes in the dynamic between the pope, laity and the state throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The greatest contribution of nationalism, however, was the role it played in providing a philosophical and ideological base for the 1919 revolution.

It is this philosophical underpinning that set the 1919 revolution apart from other revolutions in Egypt’s history. When the January 25, 2011 revolution broke out some commentators noted that Egypt is on track to have a revolution every forty to fifty years. Starting with the Urabi in 1882, followed by the 1919 revolution led by Zaghlul, then the 1952 “Free Officers’” revolution, Egypt has seen its share of political change. A case can certainly be made for a connection between each of these historical events, but there is a particularly strong connection between the 1919 revolution and the January 25 revolution. The two main ways the 1919 and January 25 revolutions can be distinguished from the Urabi and Free Officers’ revolutions are that their roots are in a similar type of

Egyptian nationalism and they were not undertaken by military figures. The Urabi revolution, named for the General Ahmed Urabi, had a certain nationalist flavor. The revolution called for Egyptians to band together in opposition of the European colonial powers.¹⁴² At the same time, however, it called for Egyptians to stand in solidarity with the Ottoman Empire which, like the European colonial powers, had its own interests in Egypt.¹⁴³ The Free Officers’ revolution like the Urabi revolution was spearheaded by a military figure, Colonel Gamal Abd al-Nasser and a group of officers who coalesced around him.¹⁴⁴ Whereas there was a strong nationalist drive to this revolution seeking to end the British occupation, in the revolution’s crosshairs were also “Egyptian collaborators,” Egyptians who were seen as conspiring with the British.¹⁴⁵ In other words, a whole class of Egyptian citizens was left out of this revolution and was actually the target of the revolution. Moreover, the revolution, although secular in name, did little to include, in an active way, the various faith communities in Egypt.¹⁴⁶

The 1919 Revolution was a particular moment of significance in modern Egyptian history. In many ways it was the forerunner to the most recent revolution particularly in regards to the circumstances that sparked the revolution, nature of the revolution and place of the Coptic community during and in the immediate aftermath of the revolution. Similar to the time immediately preceding the January 25 revolution, the years prior to 1919 posed particular challenges for Egyptians coming from a broad range of social and religious groups. As a result of World War I, the Egyptian economy weakened and

¹⁴³ Ibid.
¹⁴⁶ Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, *The Emergence*, 134.
Egyptians faced daily concerns of scarcity, unemployment and high prices on essential goods.\textsuperscript{147} The economic hardships were compounded by an increase in Coptic-Muslim strife which climaxed in the assassination of Boutrous Ghali, a prominent figure in the Coptic community and Prime Minister.\textsuperscript{148} Adding to these two blights on Egyptian society the British imposed strict media censorship and declared martial law effective in November of 1914 which remained in effect for eight continuous years.\textsuperscript{149} Moreover, Great Britain asserted itself sovereign over Egypt and declared war on the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{150} These moves by the imperial power helped to secure resentment for the British among Egyptians.\textsuperscript{151}

This tenuous situation in Egypt prior to the 1919 revolution was the backdrop against which the nationalist movement and Sa’d Zaghlul gained momentum. Zaghlul was a politician who served as minister of education and minister of justice.\textsuperscript{152} Having been influenced by Egyptianist politics in addition to the national self-determination and popular sovereignty ideas of the early 1900s, Zaghlul started a movement that pushed for an independent Egypt.\textsuperscript{153} Zaghlul’s movement sought to attract a large cross-section of

\textsuperscript{147} Ziad Fahmy, \textit{Ordinary Egyptians}, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 120. Fahmy describes how the economic crisis was approached by Egyptians through humor. This is a point of comparison between the 1919 and 2011 revolutions. For more on the role of humor in the January 25 revolution see Iman Mersal, “Revolutionary Humor,” \textit{Globilizations}, 8, No.5 (2011).

\textsuperscript{148} Fahmy, \textit{Ordinary Egyptians}, 105. Ghali became quite unpopular after chairing a special tribunal to deal with the Dinshaway incident. His ruling sentenced four of the Egyptian villagers to death.

\textsuperscript{149} Fahmy, \textit{Ordinary Egyptians}, 118. For more on the history of martial law in Egypt and the similarities in its application from 1914 to present see Reza, “Endless Emergency.”

\textsuperscript{150} Fahmy, \textit{Ordinary Egyptians}, 118.


\textsuperscript{152} Botman, \textit{Egypt from Independence}, 26.

\textsuperscript{153} Gershoni and Jankowski, \textit{Egypt, Islam}, 43.
Egyptian society by appealing to the idea of an Egyptian territory—a geographical space—and a shared, unique history of the people in that space.  

After gaining popular support from Egyptians, Zaghlul petitioned British authorities for complete independence for Egyptians and the right of the Egyptian people to self-rule. He gave speeches to crowds urging Egyptians to activism. His requests were met with strong imperial resistance, and Zaghlul along with some of his compatriots were arrested and exiled in March of 1919. Zaghlul’s arrest by the British is considered to have been the event that sparked mass demonstrations; however, the years of hardship suffered by Egyptians at the hands of non-Egyptian powers, particularly Great Britain, was the fuel that kept the demonstrations going.

In the days immediately following the arrest and exile of Zaghlul, Egyptians from every sector of the society poured into the streets and public squares throughout the country from Alexandria to Upper Egypt. In the early days of the revolution, the goal was twofold. The immediate goal was the return of Zaghlul, but the broader goal that would last past his return was the withdrawal of the British from Egypt. The crowds that gathered included elite women and men, lower-class women and men, Muslims, Christians, Jews and people from all different ages and social classes; they filled the streets with flag-waving, dancing and patriotic songs making the atmosphere like that of a

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157 Ibid.  
carnival.\textsuperscript{160} Benefiting from the large public squares, this diverse group of people was able to come together, to set aside religious and cultural differences and to coalesce around national goals.\textsuperscript{161} Muslims and Christians together exercised their own authority to challenge the state governing authorities.

One of the most notable features of the 1919 revolution is the supportive position that the Coptic Church, as an institution, and Kyrillos V personally took for the goals and activities of the revolution. Through his statements and actions the pope demonstrated his support. This marriage of revolutionaries and religious institutions was able to occur for two main reasons. First, it was the revolution’s founders’ intentionality in building a broad coalition based on a nationalist, not religious, ideology against the British.\textsuperscript{162} Second, and equally as important, was Kyrillos V’s willingness to take the risk of potential repercussions from British authorities for opposing them were the revolution to not be successful.\textsuperscript{163} The British were interested in co-opting the Coptic Church in order to have an ally in the country. Lord Cromer even went so far as to approach the pope and offer the church protection at the start of the revolution. The pope famously responded to Cromer saying,

\begin{quote}
Oh my son, Copts and Muslims have lived side by side for centuries, sharing a house together. In matters of unity they share desks; they eat in one room from the same good earth; they drink from the same Nile; for better or for worse they are one in all matters of life. They cannot do without the other so we the Copts will not require protection except from God and from the throne of Egypt.
\end{quote}

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\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{161} Fahmy, \textit{Ordinary Egyptians}, 139-144.
\textsuperscript{162} Gershoni and Jankowski, \textit{Egypt, Islam}, 8, 41, 43. Gershoni and Jankowski demonstrate how Zaghlul’s movement had its roots in the Umma party which was created immediately prior to World War I. One of the primary premises of the party was the idea of territorial unity for a people as opposed to religious unity.
\textsuperscript{163} Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, \textit{The Emergence}, 103.
\textsuperscript{164} Quoted in Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, \textit{The Emergence}, 103.
\end{footnotes}
Although the Coptic community, the laity and the institutional figures, could have lost standing with the Crown, both were willing to stand behind nationalist goals. The pope’s comment demonstrates that, particularly in the face of British imperialism, there was a connection between Egyptian Christians and Muslims rooted in their shared history living together in a particular location, Egypt. Zaghlul’s nationalist message based on shared territory and history was echoed in the words of the pope.

The church not only backed the revolution through the endorsement of the revolution’s ideals, but it went beyond ideological support by offering space in churches for revolutionaries to hold their meetings. Moreover, Coptic leaders visited Al-Azhar during Ramadan to bring good wishes on behalf of Copts with the underlying message that Christians and Muslims could not be separated by an occupation.

In 1922 the British unilaterally declared Egyptian independence and discussions regarding how the state would function swirled around Egypt. The church for its part remained supportive of nationalist goals. Kyrillos V was among those who welcomed Zaghlul after a second exile to Seychelles. After his return from exile, Zaghlul became the Prime Minister of Egypt.

At the level of the laity, Copts were very involved with the unity building agenda of the revolution and politics. In addition to participation in street demonstrations, in the

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165 Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptians*, 147.
169 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, *The Emergence*, 101; Gershoni and Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam*, 43. According to Gershoni and Jankowski two of the six who the British deported along with Zaghlul were Copts as well as others who were condemned to death by the British for their involvement with the revolution.
post-demonstration days, Copts strongly participated in national debates on governance, specifically parliamentary representation. After the 1922 declaration of independence Copts were vocal in rejecting a proportional representation for minorities wherein they would end up being allotted a certain number of seats based on their population. Moreover, the Copts rejected a British idea of giving them more than proportional representation arguing that Egyptian Coptic interests were no different than other Egyptians’ interests. During the 1920s the notion of separate communities was flatly rejected; Egyptians did not want the *millah* system any longer. Confirming this general sentiment within Egypt, Copts actually ended up taking more seats in the parliament than if they would have had under a proportional representation system. Copts did not need to be represented by the pope to the state; they were able to represent themselves.

In the environment of the 1919 revolution, the evidence suggests that both the institutional church headed by the pope as well as the church in the sense of the laity from which it is comprised cooperated and were highly involved with the revolutionary activity and early governance of the Egyptian state. However, in her work on the Coptic church and community, Vivian Ibrahim cautions against understanding Copts’ position towards the revolution and the independent state monolithically. In other words, according to Ibrahim, not all Copts were supportive of Egyptian independence. She also criticizes descriptions of the revolution that liberally use the symbol of the cross and crescent intertwined stating that this may not have been an often used symbol during that

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173 Ibid.
At the same time she presents this caution of interpreting history through rose-colored glasses, she continues to build the case for the unity interpretation. She cites news sources from the era describing the cross and crescent flags and provides little evidence of Coptic voices in opposition to the revolutionary and nationalist agenda. Even a historian skeptical of overly optimistic interpretations of the revolution acknowledges the body of evidence suggesting that the nationalist rhetoric of unity and a common Egypt was a strong force in the country.

Although Kyrillos V and the laity seemed to have come to consensus in supporting the aims of the revolution, there continued to be mistrust between the majlis al-milli and the pope stemming from earlier conflicts. Throughout the revolution and afterward, the pope’s relationship with the laity continued to become more complicated with the continual addition of more lay organizations. One of the greatest developments of this time was Coptic benevolent societies. The function of these societies was to play a social and political role providing for the material needs and education of Copts. Serving the community in this way, as Ibrahim notes, necessarily sets up the societies as a challenge to both the traditional institutional church and Egyptian state. The societies were started by elite Copts who regarded it as both a religious and national obligation to take care of the poor. This latter type of obligation coincided well with the philosophy behind the revolution which called for Egyptian self-determination.

175 Ibrahim, *The Copts of Egypt*, 60.
177 Ibid.
178 Ibid.
The revolutionary and post-revolutionary years around 1919 offer observers of the Coptic Church and Egyptian state insights into the dynamic between the state, church and laity. First, it indicates that the Coptic laity is interested in active participation in decision making at both the church and state level. The creation of the majlis al-milli in addition to philanthropic societies demonstrates that the laity is not interested in being passively governed at the hands of an authoritarian pope. The laity also does not want to be merely governed by the state authorities. In this era the laity asserted its authority and expressed clearly that it wanted to play an active role and participate in the bodies that made decisions for how members of the Coptic community were to live their lives.

This time period also had an effect on the office of the papacy. In many ways these years demonstrated clearly the tension that the twenty and twenty-first century popes would experience. Kyrillos V showed personal support for the revolution and for Zaghlul. He did not instruct his community to withdraw from revolutionary activity. Many Copts were at the very forefront of the nationalist movement. One might suggest that the pope and the Coptic community broadly would benefit from Copts being involved with the state. There was wisdom in the pope supporting the nationalist movement. Papal support for values such as national self-determination has its consequences for the internal operations of the church. Copts empowered to govern themselves at the state level also desire say and right at the ecclesial level. At the time when Kyrillos V was installed as pope in 1874 a lay population concerned with self-governance was a novel concept. Kyrillos V, leading the church for fifty-three years, witnessed great developments both at the state level and in the mindset of the Egyptian
Having no models before him in regards to some of these challenges, he was left to navigate his own way through this tension. The example he left would be instructive for the popes who would follow him.

Finally, there are some particularly notable developments during this time in Egyptian history in regards to the state. First, the way the Egyptian state operates can change. The state and state governance is not immutable. One revolution does significantly alter the overall landscape and can affect not only the people in power but also a people’s collective mindset. Second, 1919 and the following years would put an end to the *millah* system for a period, allowing for citizens to represent their own needs to the state through national channels as opposed to religious channels. The state, in many ways, would become more accessible to people of all faiths. Finally, the 1919 revolution demonstrates that Muslims and Copts can work together under the banner of nationalism when it comes to creating a shared vision for the state. Unfortunately, in the years following the revolution this alliance would deteriorate. Sources are in overwhelming agreement that the electoral politics of the late 1920s was the beginning of the end of this national cooperation. Although unity at a national level in many ways came to an end, the 1919 revolution left an impression on the collective memory of Egyptians and made clear that Egypt was for all, Copts and Muslims.

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180 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, *The Emergence*, 101.
Chapter 3: The Legacy of Shenouda III

Pope Shenouda III, elected in 1971, served the Coptic Church for over forty years leading it through two Egyptian presidents and into the January 25, 2011 revolution. Although highly regarded within the Coptic Church, Shenouda III was not without his critics drawing his critiques from those outside and within the church for his political activity. Even with opposition, Shenouda III’s impact on the church and on the community is wide-reaching. The growth and expansion of the church led by Shenouda III was introduced in chapter one. However, in order to fully appreciate the magnitude of what has happened within the Coptic Church—between the pope and the laity—and between the church and state during Shenouda III’s tenure, it is necessary to examine in greater detail particular instances and developments for the church over the past forty years.

When Shenouda III assumed the papal seat, he was relatively young, only in his late forties, and, by some accounts, he was not the popular choice of the Coptic community. ¹⁸² That stated, Shenouda III did not hesitate to take an active stance toward reform and aggressively addressed issues of concern for the community.¹⁸³ One of the ways in which Shenouda III changed daily church operation was through the “clericalization” of the laity as termed by Khawaga and mentioned in chapter one. The

¹⁸³ Ibid.
project of folding the service that lay members were already doing into the organizational structure of the church was started under the leadership of Kyrillos VI who immediately preceded Shenouda III.\textsuperscript{184}

The service of Coptic women was one area that was brought under the central institution. Coptic women had long been involved with community service and had banned together creating “unofficial” groups for such activity. Prior to Shenouda III, Kyrillos VI, attempting to draw the laity into the church and further its renewal, encouraged the creation of these groups and blessed them.\textsuperscript{185} Recalling the sacred historical church and the central role women played in it, Shenouda III forged ahead in his part of the renewal project to bring under the institutional purview disparate Coptic women’s groups.\textsuperscript{186} The groups were ranked into levels of service, with performing service in one being a pre-requisite to service in the next.\textsuperscript{187} The activity of these groups ranges from offering literacy classes to caring for drug addicts and unwed mothers.\textsuperscript{188}

Another demographic within the church that was brought under the central institution was the young people. According to Khawaga, the process of bringing the youth under the umbrella of the institution was “not seen as an excessive burden” to the Coptic clergy.\textsuperscript{189} During the 1960s Coptic youth started to become more interested and involved in church activity, a phenomenon which Khawaga attributes to general search

\textsuperscript{184} Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, \textit{The Emergence}, 156. For more on the role of Kyrillos VI in the area of Church reform see Nelly van Doorn-Harder, “Kyrillos VI (1902-1971): Planner, Patriarch and Saint,” in \textit{Between Desert and City}.

\textsuperscript{185} Van Doorn-Harder, “Kyrillos VI,” 237; Khawaga, “The Laity,” 160.

\textsuperscript{186} Khawaga, “The Laity,” 160.

\textsuperscript{187} Khawaga, “The Laity,” 161.

\textsuperscript{188} Khawaga, “The Laity,” 159.

\textsuperscript{189} Khawaga, “The Laity,” 155.
for meaning in life among Egyptian youth after the 1967 Egyptian military defeat to Israel.\textsuperscript{190} The increased numbers resulted in more religiously aware students in the universities in the 1970s. Faced with the growth of zealous Muslim student associations, Coptic youth appealed to the church.\textsuperscript{191} The church, as an institution headed by the patriarch, built residences for Coptic youth around the university and lent them financial support.\textsuperscript{192} By 1980 the church recognized the need to establish a bishopric for youth which still serves as the institutional body that organizes youth activity and gives it institutional legitimacy.\textsuperscript{193}

One of the key lay bodies that had in the past stood in opposition to the institution of the church was the majlis al-milli. Bringing this body into line with the institutional vision and under papal authority was something that had proven difficult for the pope as evidenced by their past battles, mainly over the question of who had authority over the community, as described in chapter two. Whereas the clericalization of the youth grew organically out of circumstances in which the church and the Coptic youth found themselves, the process by which the majlis al-milli was drawn in appears to be politically calculated by the pope and bishops in order to forestall future challenges to their activity.\textsuperscript{194} In 1973 the state called for an election for the majlis al-milli. In response, the clergy, namely the bishops and Shenouda III, constructed an information campaign. The campaign first described the historical conflicts between the clergy and the council insinuating the council’s responsibility for those conflicts, and then vowed the clergy

\textsuperscript{190} Khawaga, “The Laity,” 154; Vatikiotis, History of Modern Egypt, 420. 
\textsuperscript{191} Vatikiotis, History of Modern Egypt, 420. 
\textsuperscript{192} Khawaga, “The Laity,” 155. 
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid. 
\textsuperscript{194} Khawaga, “The Laity,” 151.
would work with the new council.\textsuperscript{195} The clergy then began a campaign of advocating for the candidates who are most responsive to the hierarchy’s vision for reform.\textsuperscript{196} Finally, when the \textit{majlis al-milli} was confirmed, Shenouda III ordained them all as deacons and tasked them with various administrative roles in the church.\textsuperscript{197} In giving these lay groups institutional recognition and providing them with \textit{specific} tasks, the church leadership has in essence made them the legitimate outlet for service within the church.\textsuperscript{198}

In addition to drawing the laity into the church’s ministry through the institutionalization of their organizations, Shenouda III also pulled the laity into the institutional center by making church leadership more accessible and responsive to them. John Watson notes, 

Pope Shenouda’s residence is as hectic today. He tries to be accessible. On any one morning there may be foreign visitors, immigrant Copts, monks, nuns, priests, politicians, diplomats and bishops, and, at times, the sick seeking a blessing. Anba (father) Shenouda’s involvement with them all is very clearly that of a spiritual father and not of hierarch.\textsuperscript{199}

Opening up the physical doors of the papal residence was not the only way in which Shenouda III made the office of the pope and the institution close to the people. For those members of the Coptic Church abroad, Shenouda III made a strong effort to connect with them averaging a visit to one \textit{new} country per year of his tenure.\textsuperscript{200} Shenouda III used the technology at his disposal to reach out with his voice recordings streaming around-the-clock on his website as well as regularly appearing on the two Coptic satellite channels in

\begin{footnotes}
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\textsuperscript{195} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{196} Khawaga, “The Laity,” 152.
\textsuperscript{197} Khawaga, “The Laity,” 153.
\textsuperscript{198} Khawaga, “The Laity,” 161.
\textsuperscript{199} Watson, “Signposts,” 252.
\textsuperscript{200} Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, \textit{The Emergence}, 156.
\end{footnotes}
Egypt.\textsuperscript{201} He also communicated regularly with the laity through the publication of the magazine \textit{Al-Keraza} which updated members of the laity on the happenings within the church.\textsuperscript{202}

There is no doubt that Shenouda III amassed a great deal of authority over the Coptic community. He successfully brought under papal purview the \textit{majlis al-milli}, various other women and youth Coptic groups as well as establishing for himself the role of chief-representative to the state for the Coptic community. Given this information, it would be easy to villainize Shenouda III’s actions and write him as a power-hungry politico. However, it would fail to recognize the reality in which he operated. By weaving the \textit{majlis al-milli} into the institutional fabric of the church, Shenouda III avoided the divisive conflicts that plagued his predecessors. Moreover, in pulling the women and youth toward the church’s center, he avoided creating an institution that kept these populations at the margins. The critiques of Shenouda III’s activities must always be tempered with the recognition that he is still highly regarded by the very members of the Coptic community, who might be seen as “victims” of papal authority if his actions are not understood within his own context.

Much attention has been paid to Shenouda III’s personal piety noting his role of spiritual father, the years he spent in the desert pursuing the monastic life and his theological study, but his political side has garnered an equal amount of attention, if not

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\textsuperscript{201} Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, \textit{The Emergence}, 157.
\textsuperscript{202} An archive of newsletters can be accessed at www.copticpope.org/category/الكرزة/\
\end{flushright}
more.\textsuperscript{203} The attention has not been entirely positive. Alaa Aswany, Egyptian writer and social commentator wrote of Shenouda III,

First, Pope Shenouda represents a spiritual rather than political authority as the spiritual head of the Copts and not their political leader. He is exceeding his authority when he speaks politically on behalf of the Copts...he has used his religious status to impose his political position on the Copts, thereby usurping their right to express their political opinions.\textsuperscript{204}

Reacting primarily to the church busing parishioners to polling stations to vote in elections that were widely regarded as being rigged, Aswany was incredulous toward this activity.\textsuperscript{205} In Aswany’s assessment, the pope is someone who should not play a part in the political theater in Egypt. As someone outside of the church, Aswany takes the view that Copts, as citizens, are capable of making their own political judgments without the need for an institutional mediator. At the other end of the analytical spectrum, Watson writes,

The Coptic pope occupies a unique place in Egyptian public life. He is the spokesman for an entire community. Pope Shenouda has always had his critics. He is, inevitably attacked for being too soft as the mediator between the Copts and the government.\textsuperscript{206}

Watson takes it for granted that the role of the Coptic pope is political and acknowledges that in many ways Shenouda III is seen to have failed in his capacity as politician-in-chief for the Coptic community. Similarly, Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder write, “He [Shenouda III] has also had to act as a skilled politician in order to respond to local political vicissitudes.”\textsuperscript{207} Again, it is taken for granted that the pope is to be a political representative for his religious community. Shenouda III’s long career indicates that he

\textsuperscript{203} Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, \textit{The Emergence}, 155.
\textsuperscript{206} Watson, “Signposts,” 248.
\textsuperscript{207} Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, \textit{The Emergence}, 155.
internally experienced this tug-of-war between competing views on how the pope was to act in the socio-political realm. From the 1970s to the early 2000s Shenouda III’s political stance went from one of vociferous opposition of the Egyptian government to a more passive acceptance of and cooperation with the state.

First, it is important to address how the Coptic community went from active participation in the political sphere independent of the institution of the church and the pope to considering the pope to be the primary spokesperson and representative for the community. After Kyrillos V’s death, the pope in particular saw a decline in political power as the Wafd party which was led by Copts assumed the role of political leadership for the community. However, the Wafd party did not retain its politically powerful position of the post-revolution days in the 1920s and 1930s. Regarding Coptic communal involvement in politics Khawaga writes,

However, the recoil from any kind of political involvement in ideological and political debates since Egyptian independence constitutes a distinctive feature of the Copts’ relationship with politics since the 1950s and 1960s. There has been no active mobilizations—collectively—in the political parties whether in government or opposition, no credible collective expression on a community of ‘para-community’ level, no public intervention on problems concerning economic situation, trade unions, education or anything else.

It is into this void of lay action—in any form—in the political realm the Coptic pope has had the opportunity to enter. Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, more concerned with the historical development of the papacy state,

The community was not all that was in transition—the character and role of the papacy had also changed. Now that the Coptic gentry and the once-powerful Community Council had lost much of their influence, the church’s political and social roles were expanding and Pope Shenouda was firmly ensconced as the church’s foremost political representative.

208 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, The Emergence, 108.
210 Khawaga, “Political Dynamics of the Copts,” 172.
211 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, The Emergence, 158.
The legacy of Shenouda III makes it clear that, for better or worse, the pope plays a political role. Shenouda III worked with two presidents during his tenure and the approach he took in each of his relationships with these individuals was starkly different. As a result, those who examine his legacy have two examples of how a pope might negotiate his relationship with the President and by extension the state.

The first state leader with whom Shenouda III interacted was President Anwar Sadat (president from 1970-1981). In the early days of his papacy, it was thought that Shenouda III could have been Sadat’s pick for pope. Their relationship was amicable and based on mutual trust for the first few years of Shenouda III’s papacy; however, it deteriorated as both negotiated the changing political realities in Egypt. Two main factors can be identified as the source of the conflict between Shenouda III and Sadat. First, in an attempt to counter Nasserist political forces, Sadat appealed to political groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood, that were ostracized by the Nasser government. One way in which the Sadat government did this was in a 1971 declaration which stated that the principles of Islamic law would constitute a basic source of legislation. This declaration later led to the 1977 draft law in the legislature seeking to apply the death penalty for cases of Muslim apostasy and subsequent 1980 action making Islamic law the primary source of legislation. The application of the death

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213 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, The Emergence, 159.
215 Farah, Religious Strife, 1.
penalty for a Muslim renouncing his or her religion is significant in that would not allow
for Christians who may have converted to Islam in order to be granted a divorce (which
the Coptic Church only allows for under the strictest of conditions) to convert back to his
or her faith of origin.217

In addition to appealing to these political and religious groups through legislative
action, Sadat appealed to them by releasing from prison many Muslim Brothers who
advocated the return of Egypt to its Islamic roots.218 This act was perceived as a threat to
the Coptic community by Shenouda III who had watched his community experience the
effects of and engage in communal violence with their neighbors throughout the 1970s.219
Shenouda III responded to these actions of Sadat through the organization of conferences
to protest the constitutional change.220 The organization of the conferences resulted in the
escalation of the tension.221

The second source of the conflict was the change in the stance of the church vis-à-
vis the state. Kyrillos VI took a non-confrontational stance with the state.222 Shenouda III,
however, was much more interested in engaging state politicians on behalf of the Coptic
community.223 Sadat was not prepared for the pope to take an aggressive stance with the

217 Scott, The Challenge of Political Islam, 84. Since the death of Shenouda III a Coptic activist group has
begun to lobby the Church in order to have these restrictions on divorce relaxed. See “Coptic Christians
call for divorce law relaxation,” Ahram Online, April 23, 2012,
http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/39993/Egypt/Politics-/Coptic-Christians-call-for-divorce-
law-relaxation.aspx.
218 Farah, Religious Strife, 4.
219 Vatikiotis, History of Modern Egypt, 420.
221 Sedra, “Class Cleavages,” 226.
222 Farah, Religious Strife, 1.
223 Ibid.
state catching the new president off guard. Moreover, Shenouda III was supported by a strong Coptic middle class which was much more vocal in their opposition to state activity than their predecessors had been.

The combination of Sadat and Shenouda III’s mutually confrontational actions came to a head in September of 1981 when Sadat ordered the suspension of Shenouda III from his office. Shenouda III was placed under house arrest at a monastery in Wadi Natrun. During the exile a committee of bishops was appointed to assume the role of pope; however, the committee struggled with their position. Sadat, the president, said that Shenouda III was no longer pope. The committee maintained that because Shenouda III was still alive he was in fact still pope. The laity affirmed their support for Shenouda III and after his ousting they lined the streets yelling with “with our Spirits, with our blood we will vindicate you.” Some may understand their cry as a call to violence; however, it might be more accurately interpreted through the lens of a collective memory of martyrdom and persecution at the hands of the state. Like in the time of papal exile during the Diocletian the pope will remain the spiritual head of the church, and the people while being killed and oppressed will remain faithful to him and his guidance.

Sadat’s actions were not without an immediate context. The two years leading up to the pope’s banishment were particularly eventful, more eventful than even the previous years.

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224 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, *The Emergence*, 160.
225 Sedra, “Class Cleavages,” 226.
227 McCallum, “Muslim-Christian,” 70; Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, *The Emergence*, 164.
228 Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, *The Emergence*, 164.
229 Ibid.
230 For more on the idea of the present being interpreted through the lens of the past and martyrdom see Naguib, “The Era of Martyrs.”
decade of strife. Communal violence had reached a boiling point. There were church arsons, attacks on priests and clashes between Muslims and Christians.\textsuperscript{231} This resulted in Coptic demonstrations in both Egypt and the United States against the Egyptian state for not providing security.\textsuperscript{232} In the legislature there was a move to make Islam \textit{the} basic source of legislation which provoked the Coptic community.\textsuperscript{233} In order to silence Coptic resistance to this legislative action, Sadat alleged that the source of religious conflict in the state can be traced back to Shenouda III.\textsuperscript{234} Moreover, he accused Shenouda III of attempting to establish a Coptic state within the state of Egypt.\textsuperscript{235}

In addition to the Muslim-Christian issues Sadat was facing and sometimes creating, he was also being challenged on other fronts within his state. In 1979, Sadat arrested members of the Communist and United Progressive Party.\textsuperscript{236} On top of his political challenges with various groups, he also was being challenged by journalists; he arrested them as well.\textsuperscript{237} Finally, Sadat was being challenged by militant groups. These militant groups engaged in both armed attacks against government institutions and kidnappings.\textsuperscript{238} Days prior to the deposing of Shenouda III Sadat arrested over 1,500 dissidents of varying religious and political persuasions.

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\textsuperscript{231} Farah, \textit{Religious Strife}, 3; McCallum, “Muslim-Christian,” 69.
\textsuperscript{232} McCallum, “Muslim-Christian,” 70.
\textsuperscript{233} Farah, \textit{Religious Strife}, 3.
\textsuperscript{234} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{236} Vatikiotis, \textit{History of Modern Egypt}, 420.
\textsuperscript{237} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{238} Vatikiotis, \textit{History of Modern Egypt}, 422.
\end{footnotes}
According to Watson, the main issue that brought Shenouda III into confrontation with Sadat and later led to his arrest was the issue of church building and repair.\(^{239}\) McCallum broadens this by adding to the issue Watson raised political participation and representation, religious intolerance as well as a personality clash between Shenouda III and Sadat.\(^{240}\) Watson is accurate in stating that the issue of church building and repair historically and even currently is one of debate in Egypt. McCallum is also partially accurate in her assessment of the conflict. However, the tension between Sadat and Shenouda III was likely not based on their disagreement over a particular issue pertinent to the Coptic community or even a set of issues. Two broader issues are more likely at the heart of the conflict than these specific issues enumerated by Watson and McCallum. The first of the broader issues is who has authority over the Coptic community, an issue which McCallum comes just short of stating. The second, what does the historical precedent suggest the answer to this question of authority is. Clearly, Shenouda III, based on his actions, believed he had the authority to make decisions for and speak for his community at the state level. Sadat, on his part, believed otherwise likely based on the immediate historical precedent of popes acquiescing to state authority executed by the president.

In October of 1981 Sadat was assassinated and Mubarak became the new president of Egypt.\(^{241}\) Under Mubarak, Shenouda III was reinstated after a total 1,213 days of house arrest and he was given a second opportunity to interact with a head-of-

\(^{239}\) Watson, “Signposts,” 249.  
\(^{240}\) McCallum, “Muslim-Christian,” 69; Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, The Emergence, 167.  
\(^{241}\) Vatikiotis, History of Modern Egypt, 438.
state.\textsuperscript{242} Despite the fact that communal violence was still prevalent, Shenouda III remained unwaveringly supportive of Mubarak.\textsuperscript{243} Shenouda III hosted holiday celebration dinners during the month of Ramadan and led dioceses across Egypt to do the same.\textsuperscript{244} Shenouda III praised Mubarak in public addresses, employed the language of national unity and encouraged Copts to participate in the elections that were widely regarded as fraudulent.\textsuperscript{245}

Mubarak, for his part, also made overtures toward the Coptic community. First, of course, was his release of Shenouda III from house arrest. In addition to that, he cracked down on religio-political groups that had in the past acted violently toward Copts.\textsuperscript{246} Moreover, the Mubarak-led government made a concerted effort to weave the Copts into the national narrative highlighting the way in which Copts and Muslims have historically worked together on national causes and declared Coptic holy sites as part of Egypt’s national heritage.\textsuperscript{247}

The contrast between Shenouda III’s relationship with Sadat and his relationship with Mubarak was stark. In his analysis of Shenouda III’s change in approach toward the state, Sedra states,

\begin{quote}
As Shenouda languished under hours arrest at the Monastery of Bishoy…he reconsidered his approach to leadership of the Coptic community…The patriarch looked back at the millah partnership his predecessor, Kyrillos, had developed with Nasser, and decided to model his relationship with Egypt’s new leader—Sadat’s Vice-President, Husni Mubarak—thereon. He would adopt a low profile, cooperate with the regime, embrace the rhetoric of national unity,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{242} Vatikiotis, \textit{History of Modern Egypt}, 451.  
\textsuperscript{243} Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, \textit{The Emergence}, 167.  
\textsuperscript{244} Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, \textit{The Emergence}, 168.  
\textsuperscript{245} Khawaga, “Political Dynamics,” 174; see note 9 as well.  
\textsuperscript{246} Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, \textit{The Emergence}, 168.  
\textsuperscript{247} Ibid.
negotiate with the government behind the scenes, avoid public confrontation at all costs, and consolidate his power within the church.248

What is significant about Shenouda III’s change in approach is his willingness to compromise with the state in order to retain some authority over his community. All-out opposition to state authority and challenging the political structure earned Shenouda III exile in the desert and left his community without a shepherd. It is clear that Shenouda III and the state, represented by Mubarak, decided that the defacto millah system would serve them both by allowing each to maintain an adequate level of authority.

Taking this compromise, however, was understood by some in the Coptic community as Shenouda III and Mubarak reverting back to the millah system—a system which, in the Egyptian context, had allowed Christian communities within a Muslim state (and ultimately subject to Muslim rule) to operate by their own rules on certain matters under the authority of their clergy. The choice the pope and the state made at this juncture was reminiscent of the choice Egyptian citizens were faced with at the beginning of the twentieth century. Would they understand Egyptian society and their roles in it from a religious or nationalist framework? In choosing to not voice complaints to the state on behalf of his community in quite the same vociferous manner as he did under Sadat, Shenouda III in effect accepted a disadvantaged status for his community. He accepted a position wherein the Christian community was to remain both under his authority and at the same time subject to the whims of the state. Members of the Coptic community were left with no outlet to voice social and political concern either through a representative Coptic pope or directly to the state.

248 Sedra,“Class Cleavages,” 227.
An additional problem of the system accepted by Shenouda III and Mubarak is that it sets up a hierarchy between the communities. Whether or not this political landscape is commiserate with the desires of Egyptian citizens—Muslims and Christians—during Mubarak’s tenure in office is questionable. Given that Egyptians ousted Mubarak and called for an end to his government suggests that at least some Egyptians were not satisfied with the millah system to which Mubarak and Shenouda III reverted. The position that Shenouda III accepted though afforded him authority to make decisions for his community even if at the same time it claimed an inferior status for the Copts.

The shift in Shenouda III’s stance did not go unnoticed by the Coptic community. Writing in 1999 Sedra noted that the Coptic middle class believed Shenouda III to have abandoned the cause for their rights for which he had once vehemently fought.\(^{249}\) Communal violence did not stop under Mubarak. There was still a sense among the Coptic community that the government, like during the Sadat years, was not protecting the Copts when they were targeted in violent attacks.\(^{250}\) After a round of particularly violent attacks against Copts in 2010, the community began voicing its dissatisfaction with the relationship Shenouda III had come to have with the state and his new conciliatory position. Since Shenouda III would not speak the message they wanted to send to the state, they developed a voice of their own. Guirguis and Van-Doorn Harder write,

> Here, entering the second decade of the new millennium, it is easy to see how a Coptic citizenry with new priorities and new ways to show its discontent has emerged. These groups and

\(^{249}\) Sedra, “Class Cleavages,” 228.  
\(^{250}\) Guirguis and Van Doorn-Harder, *The Emergence*, 170.
individuals even include some Coptic clerics who are no longer willing to let the church speak on
their behalf, but instead wish to exercise their political and civil rights unhindered.251

Not only was the Coptic laity becoming increasingly dissatisfied with Shenouda III’s
political stance toward the end of his tenure, but there was also a general recognition that
Shenouda III’s “iron grip” on the church was preventing the laity from reforming
religious institutions in the way they would have liked to reform them.252

The message the Coptic laity was sending seemed to be heard in the latter days of
Shenouda III’s tenure. Marking incidents in 2006 and 2007 as turning points in the
Shenouda III Mubarak relationship, Mariz Tadros suggests that Shenouda III withdrew
his unconditional support for the Mubarak government at that point.253 Citing protest
letters and retreats of protest to the St. Bishoy monastery in Wadi Natrun, Tadros
demonstrates the ways in which Shenouda III was returning to his activity and stances he
held under Sadat.

Desire for reform was not limited to the Coptic community or the church, but
islah, reform, was part of the language used by those who met on January 25, 2011 in
Tahrir Square and those who eventually ousted Mubarak. Understandably cautious at the
outset of the revolution, like Kyrillos V supported the revolutionaries during the 1919
revolution, Shenouda III congratulated those who participated in the January 25
revolution. He also expressed hope that Egypt would become a democratic state.254

251 Ibid.
252 Sedra, “Class Cleavages,” 228.
253 Mariz Tadros, “Vicissitudes in the Entente between the Coptic Church and the State in Egypt (1952-
254 Essam Fadl, “Pope Shenouda expresses support for revolution, hopes for democracy,” Daily News
Egypt, February 16, 2011, http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2011/02/16/pope-shenouda-expresses-support-
for-revolution-hopes-for-democracy/
Shenouda III, however, did not live long enough to see the democratic elections in Egypt that brought Muhammad Morsi to the presidency. It would be up to the next pope to establish a relationship with the new President and set a precedent for church-state relations in a democratic Egypt.
Chapter 4: The Arab Spring and a New Pope

In exploring the power-sharing relationships between the church as an institution, the state and the laity, this study has focused on the nature of the relationship historically and in the immediate past with the precedent of Shenouda III. It is necessary to consider now how the power-sharing relationship will change in post-Mubarak Egypt and under new papal leadership. Will the transitions that occurred in the country with the ousting of Mubarak have any effect on the church and if so, what? Will the new pope, Tawadros II, continue to act as the sole representative for the church to the state? Will the laity, as in the early twentieth century, demand more authority within the church and state?

January 25, 2011 is a day that will be remembered by Egyptians as the day the Mubarak regime started to crumble apart and the power he had in his capacity as president was claimed by the crowds gathered in Tahrir Square and around the rest of the country.\textsuperscript{255} This revolution in Egypt is embedded in a series of events and popular uprisings termed as the “Arab Spring” starting in Tunisia with Muhammad Bouazizi’s self-immolation resulting from his humiliation at the hands of the police, notably a woman police officer, and subsequent disregard by city officials when he attempted to report the incident.\textsuperscript{256} In context, the incident of police brutality that provoked Bouazizi’s

\textsuperscript{255} Talhami, “Preface: The Arab Revolution”, ix.
suicide was one instance in series of encounters with police and “bureaucratic tyranny.” The series of events undertaken by “the disempowered elements of society” seeking to change the balance-of-power by directly challenging their oppressive regimes took root in countries from Tunisia to Bahrain. People who once had no authority were now claiming it.

The revolution that took place in Egypt particularly reflected that sense that the “disempowered” were asserting their desire to restructure the system in a way that shifted power and authority toward them. Their goals, broadly stated, were to guarantee “life, freedom, dignity and humanity” for Egyptian citizens. These goals can be translated into basic provisions like fair wages for work, employment opportunities and a justice system that worked for all citizens. To the citizens, a government that was corrupt combined with policies that allowed the government to take arbitrary legal action against citizens was a major obstacle to realizing the broader aims of those who participated in the revolution. As far as the Egyptians who took to the streets of Cairo, Alexandria and other cities were concerned, the ruling Hosni Mubarak had to be relieved of his presidential duties and release his stronghold on the country.

When Mubarak stepped down from his position less than three weeks after popular protests began, it became evident that the Egyptian populace would play a greater role in governance. Approximately one year after Mubarak’s overthrow, Shenouda III passed away. The question now is raised, what would that mean for the new pope

257 Ryan, “The Tragic Life.”
258 Ibid.
installed less than two years after the overthrow of the Mubarak government? Shenouda III worked with President Mubarak. With whom would Tawadros II work and would that relationship be similar to that of Shenouda III and Mubarak?

In many ways reminiscent of the Egyptian revolution in 1919 that aimed to oust the British occupiers, Egyptian citizens from various social classes, Christians and Muslims took to the public squares and streets. In April of 1919 during one of the revolutionary processions through the streets of Cairo, a young man emerged at the front of the procession carrying a flag, on it a cross and crescent symbolizing the unity between the two faiths within the context of the nation. These same flags along with the 1919 music calling Egyptians of all faiths to gather together reappeared on Cairo’s streets in 2011.

Febe Aramnios, a Coptic historian notes,

The events in 1919 were truly an interreligious collaboration. Muslim preachers were coming into churches to mobilize Christians, and Christian leaders spoke to Muslim audiences. The unified spirit was one of religious collaboration and support, and among the Copts, both church and lay representatives strongly believed in mobilization against the British occupation.

Far from looking for the pope or church leadership to represent their particular interests in the public squares during the revolution, it is clear that lay Coptic Christians were able to represent themselves, as individuals and as a community, to the state. More than representing themselves as some sort of disenfranchised minority group to a state, by gathering for the revolution they understood themselves to have the right and agency in creating the state of their choosing as equal citizens. What does this mean for a new pope?

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260 Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptians*, 140.

261 Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptians*, 141.


in a new Egypt taking over for a pope who understood one of his primary roles as acting as a representative to the state?

Unlike the revolution of 1919, the current revolution elected its own president, Muhammad Morsi from the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood. The 1919 revolution was little able to shed the colonial power it was seeking to overthrow. Despite the nationalist’s efforts, the British stayed in Egypt decades after the revolution. However, it is clear that the Mubarak era has passed. The election of a new president presents a number of new questions for the new pope.

Given the history of the Muslim Brotherhood, it might be tempting to focus on the Islamic orientation of the political party in power as it relates to the church. Historically, the Muslim Brotherhood is known for its vocal opposition to a series of Egyptian leaders, but the historic Muslim Brotherhood must be distinguished from the new political arm of the organization, the FJP. Whereas the FJP affirms the religious and ideological base of the Muslim Brotherhood, the policy platform of the party appeals to a broad-base of Egyptians as it is socially aware and concerned. Moreover, it stands firmly against corruption which was the ultimate problem that led to Mubarak’s ouster.

According to Carrie Wickham, in her interviews with senior leaders in the organization over a ten-year period the number one stated priority of the party was the “expansion of

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265 Peter Mansfield, The British in Egypt, (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1972). From a British Foreign Service officer’s perspective Mansfield demonstrates that the British were intimately involved in Egyptian politics until the time of Nasser.
267 Ibid.
public freedoms.”268 Because of this focus on public freedoms, the Islamic roots are less important for this study. Moreover, the context in which they came to power, in many ways, makes the FJP as a group less significant for the purposes of this study. Elections brought the FJP to power and elections can bring another government to power. The concern, for this study, is not what the power-sharing relationship looks like between the new pope and the FJP specifically, but what might the relationship look like with the new pope and any elected government? What does the fact that there are now democratic elections in Egypt mean for the pope’s ability to represent Copts at the state level? Alternatively stated, how does the fact that a democratic system put this new state authority into power change the nature of the power-sharing relationship between the pope and the state?

Tawadros II was selected to be pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church in November 2012, so his short tenure in office does not leave much of a history to judge exactly how these relationships might change, however, there are clues that come in the form of official statements, publications and interviews with members of the Coptic Church. In one of the first interviews with BBC Arabic correspondents shortly after the selection of the new pope, Tawadros II offered some of his first public comments on how he understood his role in relation to the state. He emphasized that he is not a “leader,” he is a “father.” Further clarifying, he commented on the great weight of his responsibilities; he

268 Carrie Wickham, “The Muslim Brotherhood and Democratic Transition in Egypt,” Middle East Law and Governance, 3, (2011): 207. Whereas this was certainly true while the FJP was rising to power, evidence suggests that the FJP may be losing the reputation of being the anti-corruption party. The adage, “absolute power corrupts absolutely,” could be fitting to describe the situation in Egypt currently. For more information see "الإخوان يدفعون ثمن أخطائهم", March 19, 2013, http://www.alkhaleej.ae/portal/b902ef7e-3511-4366-813d-6153804117d0.aspx
specified the responsibilities were not administrative, but spiritual. In another interview shown on CTV, the Christian television station in Egypt, Tawadros II reminded reporters that the church’s role was primarily “spiritual” in nature. He emphasized too that his primary role was to act as a “servant” of the church and of Egyptian society more broadly. When contrasted with the alternatives—“representative” or “leader” or even “head”—the language suggests how the new pope understands his position.

Tawadros II has made and continues to make statements in other ways as well. Like his predecessor, he is continuing the legacy of being connected to the people. He has his own Twitter account through which he daily posts verses from the Bible as well as words of commemoration for historical figures in the Coptic Church as well as condolences for those who have passed away. Thus far, the pope has almost exclusively posted verses from the book of Proverbs which is part of the wisdom literature genre in the Bible. This book is used for imparting wisdom from one generation to the next on both spiritual and practical matters. This suggests that Tawadros II understands his role to be that of a life and spiritual guide.

Although there is evidence to support the idea that he understands himself to primarily be a spiritual father and guide, other statements suggest he may also understand himself to have a political role. Moreover, these statements indicate the possibility of tensions between him and the laity regarding their respective political roles. During late

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270 Interview with a correspondent shown in Arabic on CTV published shortly after the announcement of the new Pope. www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftEmv4hhU. Also see an interviewed aired days after the announcement http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzqxsFbDi4k.
271 Tawadros II can be followed @PopeTawadros
February 2013, in statements to *Asharq al-Awsat*, Tawadros II called on members of his church to not engage in civil disobedience most of which is a reaction to the formation of the constitution and the proposed role of *shari`ah*.²⁷² It was indicated that members of the Coptic community are at the forefront of the calls for disobedience.²⁷³ The calls for disobedience from members of the Coptic community marks a change in the way in which the laity has responded to the state in recent history. Regarding Coptic political activity Khawaga writes,

> The occasions on which they can be found to have intervened in public life during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s are, in fact, very rare. Such interventions have always been carried out exclusively by the church hierarchy and they do not confirm any of the hypotheses, diverse as they are.²⁷⁴

This trend can be corroborated with analysis of other observers of the Coptic Church.

> Whereas a century ago, the Coptic community had a vigorous, politically active lay leadership, the clerical hierarchy has now assumed much of the responsibility for communal leadership that once belonged to the laity.²⁷⁵

Given the rarity of overt Coptic political action taken by the laity in modern history, the fact that the pope had to ask his community to disengage from their behavior is significant in that it indicates a desire on the part of the Coptic laity to claim some political autonomy from the church.

The interviews which I conducted with various stakeholders in the Coptic Church also hint at ways in which the nature of the power-sharing relationship particularly

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²⁷² The words that have been translated as “civil disobedience” are “عصيان مدني.” The literal translation is close to civil disobedience, but the manifestation of this disobedience in the Egyptian context is often a strike combined with protests. 
²⁷⁴ Khawaga, “The Political Dynamics of the Copts,” in *Christian Communities*, 172.
²⁷⁵ Sedra, “A New Pope.”
between the church hierarchy and the laity is changing in the months following the papal election. Throughout the course of the interviews there was a clear distinction between the way in which members of the clergy and members of the laity, voting and non-voting, responded to the interview itself as well as the interview questions. Put generally, there was a remarkable candidness to the interviews with the laity that was not present in those with the clergy.

In one interview conducted with a member of the clergy outside of Cairo, the authority structure within the Coptic Church was evident. The interview took place in the bishopric, a large, ornately decorated residence on church property. The meeting room was long and rectangular lined with French-colonial-style chairs. I entered the room trailing behind the nun who had been tasked with escorting me and my contact who had a personal connection to the bishop. He was seated in the very back of the room waiting for us. Prior to the start of the interview, the bishop gave me my questioning parameters. I was permitted to ask him anything I would like about the churches in his diocese or the laity therein, but I was not permitted to ask him his thoughts about the pope nor larger questions on the direction of the Coptic Church as it was not his place to make such comments. Moreover, he would not answer any questions regarding the state of Egypt.

Whereas the information gleaned from the bishop’s actual responses to my limited questions shed little light on the questions of power-sharing relationships and authority, the context for the interview revealed substantially more about authority. Within the church leadership structure, there is little room to question the pope or speak
outside of one’s ecclesial jurisdiction. The bishop clearly indicated what was in his realm of authority, the authority conferred upon him by the institutional structure of the church.

In an interview with a Coptic priest, his wife and daughter by his side, the same characteristics of the aforementioned bishop’s interview held true. He declined to answer any questions regarding Tawadros II. His answers to my questions were vague and seemed to sidestep what could be more controversial issues. Interestingly, after this particular interview, the priest’s daughter followed me out of the room. Apologetically, she said that she knew her father was avoiding direct answers to my questions. In order to explain his evasiveness she said that he was trying to avoid “confusion” in the church. Were the priest to say something about Tawadros II’s and then Tawadros II do something to contradict that, there could be problems between the priest, the laity who may hear his comments and those members of the clergy who have more authority than him. The evidence would suggest that there is a clear hierarchy within the church, and the pope holds a fairly absolute authority. Moreover, the approach that has been adopted by the clergy is one that avoids a plurality of opinions and approaches. If the clergy can communicate a unified message to the laity, then that leaves little room for debate on church matters within the Coptic community.

This priest’s behavior mirrored that of another priest whom I interviewed. When asked about the challenges facing the church at this time, he responded that there are always challenges facing the church. His answer removed him from any debate on challenges either within or outside of the church. In response to whether this specific time in church history was like any other, he responded with a verse from the Bible, “I have
said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." His answer would suggest that he believes the church to have challenges—tribulations—at this particular moment. However, his answer was crafted so that he would not have to identify any challenges whether within or outside of the church. The priest answered all of the questions diplomatically, but, clearly, avoided some of the specific challenges currently facing the church. Given this was the second experience with a clergy member being slightly evasive, it is reasonable to suggest that part of this evasiveness is due to my position as a researcher from outside of the church.

Similar to the interview previously mentioned, the contact in the church who accompanied me to meet this particular priest said to me after the interview that the priest was not being direct with me by avoiding any discussion of challenges. He indicated as well that the laity is often frustrated with the clergy’s lack of candor regarding issues pertinent to the day implying that the vagueness of his answers was not only for the outsider. The lack of candor toward the laity implies the authoritarian nature of the clergy’s relationship to the people. The relationship could be related to that of a parent and child in which the parent speaks truthfully to the child, but, in an effort to maintain the status of authority figure, never fully divulges the fullest insights or opinions. The laity’s frustration, however, suggests that the clergy’s understanding of its relationship to the people does not correspond with the laity’s desire for its relationship with the clergy.

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276 John 16:33 English Standard Version
The interviews with the clergy are mentioned in this study if only to stand in contrast with those of the laity. My interviews with the members of the laity would indicate that there is an impetus among them to claim or reclaim responsibilities—ecclesial and more broadly social—that were lost during the forty years of Shenouda III’s papacy. One of the most striking interviews was with a deacon of the church. This particular person has been in the church’s service full-time since retirement. The deacon travels from diocese to diocese sharing the skills he gained in a professional context with congregations across the world. His service demonstrates his devotion, and it is no exaggeration to say that he loves the church. That said, he expressed a critique of the church,

I have been serving in my church for fifty-something years, and I serve everywhere, you know. I have never had the opportunity to vote, for example, and I don’t take that personally…I am sure that there were so many, many people like that who could have done a better job with the election and [voicing] their opinions, especially when the church gives them the right to elect their highest authority, their highest power.

But that’s the simple thing democracy.

The word democracy is probably something that needs to be readdressed in a Christian sense…to know how far the clergy or, I mean, the authority in the church…how far it can go because we see some serious consequences happening because of this solitary power.

The deacon’s comments were an overt call for questions of authority within the church to be readdressed. His comments were also a clear call for democracy within the church. His call for democracy would include the laity, a laity that has differing opinions. In expressing a need for democracy, the deacon indirectly acknowledges that there are different opinions regarding church governance among the laity, and possibly even among the clergy. If the laity’s thoughts on these matters were unanimous and aligned with those of the pope and clergy, then there would be no need for an inclusive process.
like democracy. The deacon further elaborated on his thoughts on clerical use of power and authority, particularly recalling the leadership style of Shenouda III.

The church is not only the clergy; it is not about the bishop and the pope. The main church is about the congregation; it is about the people who come to Christ. The clergy, in general, their main role is to serve, to help and to lead their flock to Christ. If there is abuse of power and other stuff, the congregation and the worshiper will pay the price for this kind of monopoly or super-control, control of everything. That will probably end up with serious consequences.

It is important to state at the outset that these comments were in no way delivered harshly. The deacon was not a disgruntled layman; he had enormous respect for church leadership. As evident in his first statement, he acknowledges the authority of the pope and clergy, but still has some misgivings about the extent to which they use authority. Specifically, he had concerns about the way in which this authority was used by Shenouda III.

This deacon’s thoughts were corroborated by another layperson. Regarding the thirty years during which Mubarak and Shenouda III were in their respective positions of authority at the same time, she said,

There had been, definitely in the previous era, a strong intervention of the clergy…They exist in the very details of everything. And that was not welcomed very much by some people. Though, unfortunately, the way it was done caused people to succumb to this idea to the point where some lay people cannot stir without the permission of the clergy—which is really a pity.

Again, this woman echoed the thoughts of the deacon and articulates what exactly the consequence is of clergy “super-control.” The consequence being that the laity does not act apart from the direct guidance of the clergy. If all actions were approved by the clergy, and the clergy did not act or speak outside of what their superiors had approved, then all debate and internal challenges would be avoided. There would be no need of a democratic process because there would be no diversity in approach to how Copts
functioned as a church, as a community. Connecting to the idea of democracy, the laywoman continues her analysis of the situation in the church by exploring the source of this issue,

This is a reflection of what has been going on in the whole Egyptian society. It was not a very positive change, the idea of dictatorship rather than democracy, the idea of a one-man show…Egyptians tend to look for a pharaoh….Unfortunately, the system of education for the past thirty years, whether outside or inside the church, has not allowed for a change of temper to this. That was different maybe before the ’52 revolution. After the ’52 revolution, and worse even with the reign of Mubarak, things went back to the idea of the pharaoh….It spread all over. And the church is part of the society. Why should the church be different?

The laywoman makes several important statements. First, she makes the connection between the political state of Egypt, the condition of Egyptian society and what happens within the Coptic Church. In her words, “the church is a part of society.” She also connects the leadership styles of the Egyptian state and those of the Coptic Church, particularly the authoritarian nature of the relationship. She uses the symbol of the pharaoh to describe a type of leadership in which the very details of life and work are dictated by this absolute authority figure. Finally, the laywoman recalls a time that church and state leadership did not function like it did under the leadership of Shenouda III and Mubarak. In particular she points to a time period prior to 1952. It is the suggestion of this study that 1919 and the years immediately following are those that contrast the most with the time for church under the leadership of Shenouda III and time for the state of Egypt under Mubarak.

The years following the 1919 revolution were certainly a time in which Egyptians rejected the notion of an absolute authority over them, and the time following the January 25, 2011 revolution reflects this same sentiment. The laywoman stated,

277 Pharaoh was an image used to describe Mubarak during the revolution. See Dina Shehata, "The Fall of the Pharaoh," Foreign Affairs, 90, No. 3 (2011).
Radically, now [reflecting on it], after the January 25 revolution, it looks like things are changing inside the church as well. It looks like the situation is different because the whole society is different. Now, the youth are more vocal, and it is very significant in the turn of history that His Holiness Pope Shenouda passed away at just the right time to give way to another attitude, another vision…This is what we can sense even in that short time since Pope Tawadros took over. Still, it is very obvious there is a change of temperament all over, a change of attitude. And this is not to say that Pope Shenouda was bad and this is good. It is just different and the difference is very significant …I don’t think Pope Tawadros would have been very suitable for the previous age but he is just about the right person at this time.

…But now it is different. And it was obvious even a couple of weeks ago when there was a statement ascribed to His Holiness [Tawadros]…a political statement… and they just stood there in front of the papal office and they waited for him and they were very vocal about it. And they asked him very vocally to issue a counterstatement.278

Again, the laywoman connects the state of the larger Egyptian society with the state of the church. Just as there was a revolution in the streets of Cairo there was also a revolution inside the church. Outside the church youth challenged the government and inside the church the youth challenged the pope. The laywoman, understood there to be historical significance in the death of Shenouda III and the governmental transition. As an astute observer of societal trends and trends in the church, she noted that Shenouda III’s leadership style, in many ways, was befitting of the time period during which he was on the Holy See of Saint Mark. The church required that its leader be a strong counterpart to state leadership. Now, the church needs a leader that will be responsive to laypeople’s needs. In her estimation Tawadros II is the right person for this job. In one of the early interviews Tawadros II gave, he indicated that he was in support of the youth being involved in the political structure of the Egyptian state. The individual Coptic youths’

278 إشتروى "أقباط يتظاهرون بالكاتدرائية المرقسية بسبب تصريحات البابا تواضروس السياسية"، February 20, 2013, http://shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=20022013&id=82ecaec8-801a-4788-8aeb-53c0b3e85a47. The demonstration was in reaction to the Pope’s statements discouraging civil disobedience as mentioned above. In a similar instance, the Coptic laity requested that one of the bishops who had been more vocal on political issues stop making political statements. See التيار العلماني القبطي يطالب الأنبا بولا بالابتعاد عن "جمال جرجس السياسة وتشكيل مكتب إعلامي متخصص وإدارة الشئون الدينية العامة عن طريق أساقفة عمومين.. وبيان يدعو لإعادة أساقفة اليوم السابع"، February 27, 2013, http://www1.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=960757&.
participation in political parties was, in his words, important even though the church as an institution has no role in politics.\(^{279}\) Making a general statement about the pope and politics, the laywomen commented,

> They do not want to get involved in politics and I know that for a fact about Pope Tawadros. He is not a person who wants to get involved with the politics knowing that politics is a dirty game and that the clergy should keep away from it, but unfortunately they sometimes get stuck there. It gets imposed upon them.

Likely referring to the Tawadros II’s statements regarding his role in the church, the laywoman was confident that in the post-revolution days the church would experience a change in papal leadership style.\(^{280}\)

In her final comments, the laywoman defined what she believed to be the greatest opportunity for the church in a post-Mubarak Egypt.

> I think the greatest opportunity for the clergy now is to give way to the layman. And, the greatest opportunity for the layman is to be smart enough to make use of this opportunity, giving the clergy the greatest respect, the greatest honor as religious people asking for their prayers all through, but taking over totally every other administrative, non-religious [duty]… Now is the time to give the layman the opportunity to take over the responsibilities that sort of impede a lot of their [the clergy’s] spiritual work with the people.

There are two notable parts of her statement. First, is that she believes that it is the right time for the laity to take control of those “non-spiritual” functions of the church. By adopting these functions, the laity, ultimately, would be aiding the church and freeing the clergy to do other tasks deemed as important and valuable by the laity. Additionally, the laity is to give the clergy the highest honor by soliciting their prayers for the work they adopt. Again, this study emphasizes that the relationship between the laity and the clergy is non-adversarial even though it is in a transitional state. Whereas the relationship

\(^{279}\) See one of the first interviews publically aired with Tawadros II http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= fzqxsFbDi4k.

\(^{280}\) Ibid.
between the Egyptian people and the state was highly contentious, the relationship between the clergy, headed by the pope and the laity remained and is remaining respectful. The laity does not question the authority of the clergy in particular areas, namely those relating to strictly spiritual matters. The question of authority only is an issue in matters that are overtly political, specifically as the clergy—namely the pope—seeks to represent the Coptic community to the state.

It would be essentialist to suggest that Coptic lay opinion is monolithic, particularly in this time of national and ecclesial transition. The lay opinion expressed by the deacons contrasted greatly with those of another member of the laity. This member was highly involved with the church hierarchy and worked closely with Shenouda III. Because of this individual’s very close association with the upper echelons of church leadership, his comments could be understood as a more candid representation of church hierarchy; however, they also represent diversity within Coptic lay opinion.

This particular layman had a divergence of opinion from the other two laypersons mentioned both in regards to his stance on the inner workings of church governance and the way in which the clergy led its people in relation to the state. On the inner workings of the church, he unapologetically affirmed, “Our church is hierarchical in nature and not congregational.” In order to demonstrate this point he related a story about a Coptic congregation in the United States. In the particular area this church was located, local ordinances allowed for congregations to dismiss their leadership by committee. The layman commented,

The Pope [Shenouda III] was quite visibly upset to know that the congregation could have a general assembly meeting and decide that they don’t want this priest. That is totally outside of the
way our church runs. Our church has a head of the church which is the pope and the pope really makes the decision and he can’t just have some members of the congregation upset with the priest and decide to fire the priest.

For this layman, maintenance of church hierarchy is of the utmost importance. Any change in that hierarchical system, even if it would be consistent with the local customs and laws, would be unacceptable. It seems that the congregation in question, in some ways, was torn between two different understandings of church authority that were embedded in two different social and political contexts, Egypt and the United States. In the United States the laws reflected a certain social understanding that the laity has ultimate authority over the clergy. In the Egyptian context and for the Coptic Church clergy, the pope has authority over the laity in matters of church governance. The layman reflected the understanding of church authority that stemmed from the Egyptian Coptic patriarch himself and that is ultimate authority within the Coptic Orthodox Church, based in Egypt, rests with the pope. The pope’s word is the first and final word whether it is in agreement with or against lay opinion.

In another statement, the layman offers an explanation for Shenouda III’s handling of church administration,

They often accused the pope of bottleneck because everything had to go by him. And there is so much that one person can do…I had the same problem he had, that I do not delegate unless I know that the person can do the job properly, and that was the problem.

For this person, the tight grip Shenouda III kept on church affairs was justifiable. There were no other suitable actors for the church. Comparing these comments with the other two lay members, the assessment of former clerical leadership is the same. All agree that the authority was highly centralized around the pope and some members of the clergy. However, the former two laypersons disagree with this layman in his assessment that this
highly centralized system worked well for the church. The notion this layman presents, that the lay people would not be competent enough to have more autonomy, is flatly rejected by the other two laypersons.

The layman’s comments on how the church should deal with internal affairs matched how he perceived it should deal with external affairs, politics in particular. The exchange below demonstrates his thoughts on politics and are specific to the context of the Egyptian state.

Researcher: Some people would have said that Pope Shenouda was too political, is that fair?
Interviewee: No….If you are the head of the Copts and you see that they are being abused, you want to defend them.
Researcher: Some people may say they can defend themselves.
Interviewee: No. No they cannot…we all know that they can’t.
Researcher: What limits them from doing that?
Interviewee: They are being discriminated against, they are not given any high position….they cannot build a church…Who is going to defend all those things? How can an ordinary Christian defend against this?
Researcher: What if they are elected to, let’s say, parliament?
Interviewee: Who is elected to parliament? They are not. Not Christians.

Clearly, this person’s opinions on church leadership differ from those of his fellow church members, but are representative of the laity who is inclined toward a strong, institutional hierarchy. Just as there was a group of Egyptians who were inclined toward a strong, state leader and less inclined toward democracy, there are those in the Coptic Church who would support Tawadros II repeating the leadership style of Shenouda III.

In opposition to the other two lay members who commented on the future of the Coptic Church under the new pope optimistically, this layman expressed pessimism. Regarding Tawadros II, he stated,
He is a spiritual man, humble, and I really felt our church could use a great deal of management and administration—it is almost zero. We don’t know how to manage things, organize things… I thought he would be very good in that sense… It doesn’t show so far. It shows the opposite.

It is important to note, for this layman’s, that his pessimism was not in regards to Tawadros II’s personal qualities. He affirmed his spirituality and humility, the weakness for him is the way in which he is handling church administration. Based on the layman’s other statements, one must wonder if this layman is contrasting Shenouda III’s strongly authoritarian leadership style with what appears to be a relaxing of that authority under Tawadros II.

Again, his opinions differ greatly from other lay members and some of those opinions may be attributed to his very close relationship with the clergy. That stated, the overwhelming sentiment of the laity which has been gathered through interviews and observations of the interactions between the laity and clergy, suggests that the Copts are ready to transition into a new phase in which the laity has greater authority particularly in acting as their own representatives at the state level. It appears that the Copts are living the historical moment in which they will reclaim this authority.

When the laywoman was asked about what is the greatest challenge facing the church in 2013, she sat back, thought a moment and replied,

Getting over the thirty years plus. Making this compromise of the clergy keeping their respectable status… I don’t want to use this phrase, but I will…but not poking their noses in everything that does not have to do with their main work.

The laywoman could see what she desires for her church come to fruition. In an interview with a bishop who enjoys a prominent place in the leadership of the church, there was an indication changes could be happening which may allow for a greater role for the laity in issues of church governance. This particular bishop sits on numerous church committees
and is highly involved in the inner workings of church administration. According to him, within the year the church will make a major and historical change which will allow all Copts, regardless of their gender or nationality, to participate in the election of the pope. The allowance for greater participation in selecting the pope, one of the most significant functions of the church, indicates that church hierarchy understands that the laity desires and requires a place in the church which allows them a certain amount of authority. The Egyptian people seized this authority from the Mubarak government. The church hierarchy to its credit may be realizing that just as its laity wanted greater political authority during the January 25 revolution, it also wants greater ecclesial authority, and the church might be ready to give them that authority. Based on the interviews with lower members in the clergy, the transition to greater lay member authority will not be without its struggles, but this is the direction the church, clergy and laity together, is going.
Conclusion

This thesis has explored the changing nature of the power-sharing relationships between the state, the church leadership as headed by the pope and the laity in an effort to understand the current direction those relationships are going in light of recent changes in the Coptic Church and Egypt. To recall, the power at stake is the ability to speak for, make decisions on behalf of and provide direction to the Coptic community. For each of the actors examined—the state, church clergy and the Coptic laity—the power each has varied historically in terms of scope. In examining the history of the Coptic Church and its relationship to the state, this study has demonstrated how papal or clerical authority has expanded and contracted in relation to the state.

Additionally, this study has considered the times in which the Copts, as citizens and as parishioners, have claimed or reclaimed from the clergy and state the authority to speak for and make decisions on behalf of the Coptic community. The 1919 revolution received focused attention as it is the moment in Egyptian history most similar to the current moment in regards to the relationship between the state, church hierarchy and laity. Furthermore, the recent legacy of the late Shenouda III has been considered as well as the precedent he and his state counterpart, Mubarak, set in regards to who spoke for and made decisions on behalf of the Coptic community. In order to gain a sense for the direction these relationships will go in the near future, this thesis questioned Coptic
clergy and laity to offer insights to these to the current pope, Tawadros II, and the post-Mubarak Egyptian state.

Based upon the interviews in addition to other sources, it is clear that there is a parallel and interrelated relationship between the political, social and ecclesial transitions in Egypt. As was evident, particularly in examining the legacy of Shenouda III and Egypt under Mubarak, when the state claims more authority in relations to its citizens the church, as an institution headed by the pope and bishops, claims more authority in relation to the laity. During these times, church leadership takes a more representative role for the laity vis-à-vis the state acting as the Coptic community’s voice and sole decision-maker.

Just as state authority and church authority rise at the same time in relation to the laity, evidence would suggest it falls at the same time in relation to the laity. In this post-Mubarak, post-Shenouda III Egypt, it is clear that the nature of the power-sharing relationships between the Egyptian state, the institutional Coptic Church and Coptic laity is in a state of transition. As in the days of the 1919 revolution, Egyptians, Coptic Christians included, are voicing their own desires for their community. In the case of Coptic Christians in the post-January 25 revolution environment, the Coptic laity is not only demanding to be heard by the Egyptian state as participants in the political sphere, they are also raising their voices as active members in the church. The Coptic laity is expressing a desire to be given more autonomy and more authority, in regards to how the church handles Coptic communal affairs. They are particularly concerned with representing themselves politically. Different than in the days of Shenouda III, based
upon the evidence presented in this study, the Coptic laity does not want the pope to be a political representative for them. Nor do they want the pope and clergy to be strong administrative heads handling affairs the laity believes itself capable of handling. The Coptic laity wants to bring under its authority the non-sacred aspects of communal affairs.

Although there has been a parallel desire for change amongst members of the Coptic community in regards to its relationship with state and church leadership, there was a significant difference in how that desire for change was framed. When Egyptian Copts took to the streets to demand a change in the political system, they did so without reverence for Mubarak, his administration or the system they were trying to change. As stated in the introduction, those who took to the streets did so as disenfranchised citizens who felt oppressed under a corrupt and illegitimate system. Mubarak and his administration garnered little respect from the Egyptian populace who gathered for his ouster. In contrast to Mubarak, Shenouda III and the Coptic clergy he led still enjoys considerable admiration and respect from the Coptic laity even though in many ways he exercised an absolute authority over the Coptic community, an authority they now desire to reclaim. Whereas the absolute authority Mubarak exercised was seen as illegitimate, within the context of the Coptic community and the Coptic Church, the authority Shenouda III exercised, although acknowledged as excessive, was not framed as illegitimate. The laity interviewed indicated that the authority he exercised was appropriate for the time. As evidenced by the interviews, Copts in Egypt and abroad are
wrestling with what church authority ought to look like given particular cultural contexts. How can the laity simultaneously respect their leaders and exercise agency?

Assuming the accuracy of the argument of this study—that the Coptic laity is calling for increased authority in both the political and ecclesial sphere—there will be implications of this fact both in and outside of the Coptic Church. First, within the church, this change in the relationship between the clergy and the laity likely will result in a change in the papal voting system. Sedra, in an article published in *Egypt Independent*, the English counterpart to a popular Arabic newspaper, argues that under the Kyrillos VI and Shenouda III, the church as an institution took communal responsibility away from the laity.\(^{281}\) He argues that it would benefit the current pope to relinquish some of that responsibility and some of that authority. For him an important first step would be to increase the number of voters eligible to vote in the Coptic papal election.\(^{282}\) Currently there are only 2,400 eligible voters including members of the clergy and laity.\(^{283}\) This is a relatively small percentage of the Coptic population making one of the most significant decisions in the life of the church. By increasing this number the Coptic leadership could send the message that all voices within the Coptic community deserve to be heard particularly in regards to one of the most important matters of the Coptic Church, selecting the pope. As stated before, according to one of my interviews with a high level bishop, he indicated that the Coptic clergy is interested in making this change and anticipates within the next year changing the regulations on voting, awarding

\(^{281}\)Sedra, “A New Pope.”
\(^{282}\)Ibid.
\(^{283}\)See Appendix B for the complete breakdown of those voted in this papal election.

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voting privileges to all members of the Coptic Church regardless of their country of origin, residency or gender.

Additionally, the change in the power-sharing relationship could result in an expansion of ministries and community services run by the laity. As discussed in chapter two, during the 1919 revolution and time immediately following there was tremendous growth in the number of lay organizations in the Coptic Church, particularly benevolent societies. To recall, the particular aim of these societies was to fill both a social and political role through providing education and other services to the Coptic faithful. Given the comments made by the laity in the interviews, there is a strong impetus among Copts to once again take control of these functions for their community.

Early evidence might suggest that, at least in the early post-revolution days, the organizations that are forming might have more of a political agenda than the benevolent societies that sprung up after the 1919 revolution. One group that has emerged is the Maspero Youth Union. The group has been in existence since the days of the revolution, but has slowly gained more attention as it calls attention to Coptic political issues. Most recently it has protested the 2013 spring election schedule that has been slated to take place over the Orthodox Easter holiday. Although the group is regularly gathering in protest, the enduring power of the organization is questionable. Given the information the group has made available about itself to the public, it would appear its purpose is to

“counter discrimination.” Despite the broadly stated and surface aim of the organization, its formation is significant and suggests that the laity feels free to create organizations. This organization may just be an early sign of the formation of more groups with more carefully considered missions.

Finally, within the church, this change is likely to foster increased ecumenical activity between the Coptic Church in Egypt and other churches in and outside of Egypt. In the past, particularly under Shenouda III, the Coptic pope spent the majority of his time and energy on political and administrative issues within the church. Certainly, given the complexity of the political situation in Egypt and church administration, the pope likely had little time to devote to other ecclesial issues. Tawadros II, however, has already found time to head the newly formed Council of Egyptian Churches which met for the first time on February 18, 2013. In a statement issued by the council, its goal is not political rather it is to serve the churches and the nation. Although the establishment of this council has long been a goal of the Coptic Church, the fact that the goal is being realized at this particular juncture in history is significant.

The timing of the establishment of the Egyptian Council of Churches is significant. Could it be that the Coptic Church sees it to be more important to connect with other Christian groups that are in the same political and social context they find themselves? Although the Arab Spring and subsequent rise of the Muslim Brotherhood is

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287 For more examples of other political groups see El Din, “Contentious Copts.”
289 Ibid.
not the stated reason for the group’s gathering, the timing suggests that the current political condition of the country may have served as a catalyst to bring the group together. The political motivations of this alliance have yet to be realized, and might never be realized, but the timing of its birth suggests these motivations could exist. If, in fact, this group does have a political agenda, that might raise new issues relating to Coptic Church authority and church authority in general within the Egyptian state.

Outside of the church, the change in power-sharing relationships has the potential to affect the state of Muslim-Christian relations within the country. There are two ways in which the change can be interpreted as it relates to Muslim-Christian relations. The first way would suggest that the shift in the balance-of-power toward the Coptic community as well as the Egyptian public could result in a widening gap between Egyptian Muslims and Christians and increased communal violence. Gregoire Delhaye in his work on Muslim-Christian relations in Egypt argues that tensions between the groups are the result of “parallel, century-old Islamic and Coptic revivals in which both Muslims and Copts are active.” He interprets the era of Mubark and Shenouda III in a relatively positive light citing the government’s handling of sectarian violence, particularly since the early years of the twenty-first century. He writes,

> Police response to sectarian flare-ups has also dramatically changed. As soon as any sign of sectarian conflict emerges, sometimes even before any violence has been reported at all, police forces are deployed to the area. The swiftness and force of the crackdown by the authorities against the Muslim rioters in the port city of Alexandria in 2005 are in that regard to be contrasted with the State’s delayed reaction five years earlier to the violent events in the southern village of El-Kosheh.

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That noted, however, he presents an overall pessimistic view of the future state of Muslim-Christian relations in the post-Mubarak era calling attention to a widening social gap as both the Muslim and Christian communities turn inward. He acknowledges the historical nationalist movement of the 1920s was accompanied by a “golden age” for non-sectarianism, but believes that this is a historically anomalous. Thus, in the current environment of the groups becoming more insular, this nationalist movement is not likely to produce the same cooperation between Muslims and Christians. The ousting of the leader that managed the relations between the two communities and kept relative peace between them does not help the situation.

The alternative to this view is that Christian-Muslim relations have the chance to improve with the decreased institutional church, but particularly decreased state power. Commenting on the role of the Egyptian state in Muslim-Christian relations, David Zeidan writes, “A main element in the unsteady balance of Muslim-Coptic relations in this century has been the tendency of unscrupulous politicians to manipulate the religious divide in order to strengthen their own position.” In her article on how sectarian conflict is portrayed in Egyptian media, Elizabeth Iskander notes that in order to maintain the “national unity narrative,” Egyptian media will find an outside party to blame for any conflict between Muslims and Christians. During the Mubarak presidency, Isakander notes that blame for any inter-communal violence would often be placed on foreign

powers. After the fall of Mubarak, the Egyptian state as run by the generals Mubarak appointed was blamed for problems between Muslims and Christians. The corrupt Egyptian government has taken the place of foreign elements in popular Egyptian discourse on sectarian problems.

Despite the starkly different outcomes predicted after the change in the balance-of-power in Egypt, the two positions actually have a common starting point and that is that Muslim-Christian relations have been managed by the church and the state. Given that there has been significant change in the managers of this relationship, both church and state leadership, combined with the increased role of the laity as well as a more engaged Egyptian civil population, Muslim-Christian relations in the state are likely to be affected. Historical evidence of a period of great cooperation following a national revolution suggests that the days ahead will be positive. However, as Delhaye suggests, the issues associated with the “parallel revivals” in the two communities and the widening social gap between the communities over the past several decades casts a shadow of doubt on the hope that history could replay itself. Whether for better or worse the relationship will change in the coming years.

Certainly, the near future is likely to be a time of great development in the Coptic Church as new groups form and policy--formal policy and the informal “policies” of institutional convention—shift to accommodate the new social and political landscape.

295 Ibid.
296 After the fall of Mubarak images such as those in Appendix C began to appear on Egyptians’ Facebook pages and blogs. Although the theory that Mubarak and the Egyptian government are to blame for sectarian issues has not made it to scholarly works, this is certainly a theory that is popular among Egyptians.
The change will extend to the clergy and the laity as they both work to negotiate their new roles in the changing Egyptian state.
Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview Questions/الأسئلة للمقابلة

• What is the pope’s role in the church? In society?

• What do you believe to be the greatest opportunities in the near future for the Coptic Orthodox Church? For the pope personally?

• What are the greatest challenges the church will face in the near future? What are the greatest challenges the pope will face?

• What position do you believe the pope should take in regard to these challenges? Given what you know about Pope Tawadros II, what position do you believe he will take?

• Are there any challenges the pope will face that are unique to this time period?

• Is this time period for the Coptic Church similar to any time previous time period? If so, could the current pope learn any lessons from that time period?
What position should the pope take in regard to his interactions with the state? Given what you know about Pope Tawadros II, what position do you believe he will take?

ما هو الموقف الذي يجب أن يأخذه البابا فيما يتعلق علاقته مع الدولة؟ و من ما معروف عن نيافة البابا تواضروس الثاني ما هو الموقف تظن أن يأخذه البابا في الأيام القادمة؟
Appendix B: Voters in the Papal Election

Figure 1. Voters in the Coptic Papal Election

The graph above depicts the complete percentage breakdown of those who were able to participate in the papal election. In total 2,412 individuals participated in the election only 54% of whom were members of the laity. This suggests a disproportionate clerical influence in the selection of the Coptic pope when only 954 people are the only representatives of no less than 4 million Copts in Egypt\textsuperscript{297}

\textsuperscript{297} Currently, the \textit{CIA World Factbook} reports that Egypt’s total population is at approximately 85 million. If conservative estimates of the percentage of Copts are used (around 5%) the total number of Coptic
Another interesting fact these numbers suggest is that the population of Copts outside of Egypt in the future may have an increasingly important role on the selection of the pope, and by consequence, have an effect on internal Egyptian affairs if the pendulum swings back to the pope and clergy having a greater role in Egyptian politics.

Orthodox Christians in the country would number over 4 million.
Appendix C: Political Cartoons Circulated During the “Arab Spring”

Figure 2. Political Cartoon 1

Figure 3. Political Cartoon 2

The first image in this appendix depicts three men: a Coptic bishop, a Muslim man and between them a large Egyptian army general. The army general has puppets on both of his hands which he is putting in the face of the two men on either side of him. In the bishop’s face is a puppet of the Muslim man with an alarming look on its face. In the Muslim man’s face the general is holding a puppet of a terrifying bishop. The image clearly portrays that the government’s intention is to misrepresent both religious groups to one another in order to insight fear and thus keep the army in its position of power between the two groups.

The second image depicts a bishop in a steeple and a Muslim in a minaret struggling to reach out to one another with a darkened figure pushing the two towers apart. Again, the message communicated in this cartoon is not the reductionist view that the problem in Egypt is a simple matter of two warring communities, but that there is a third party involved. Whereas in this cartoon, the identity of that third party is concealed, the previous cartoon explicitly depicts the government’s role in the conflict.
References

English Sources


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*Arabic Sources*


