

# Why Did Islamist Parties Win, and What Does It Mean?

Danish Institute for International Studies

October 30 2012

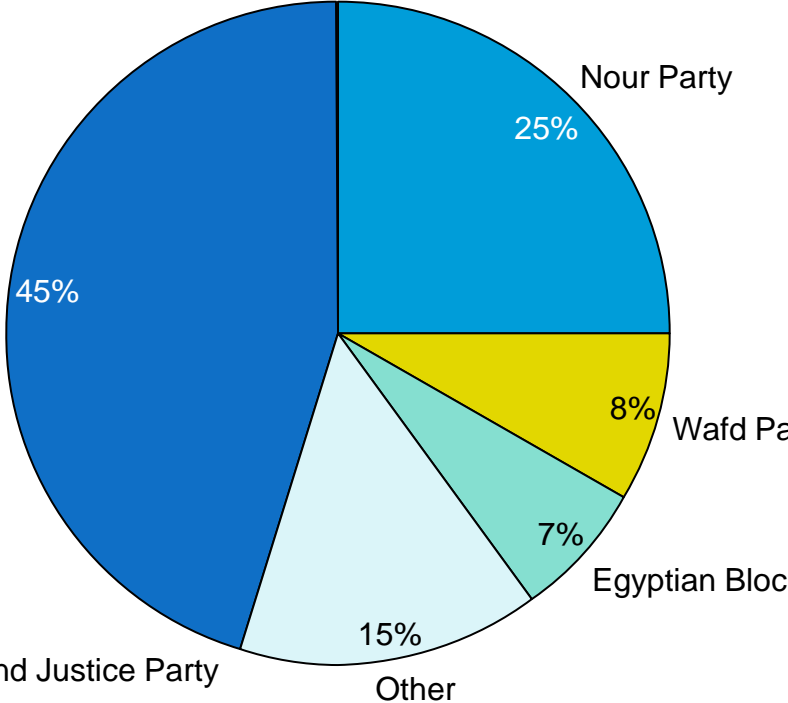
Ellen Lust

Gamal Soltan

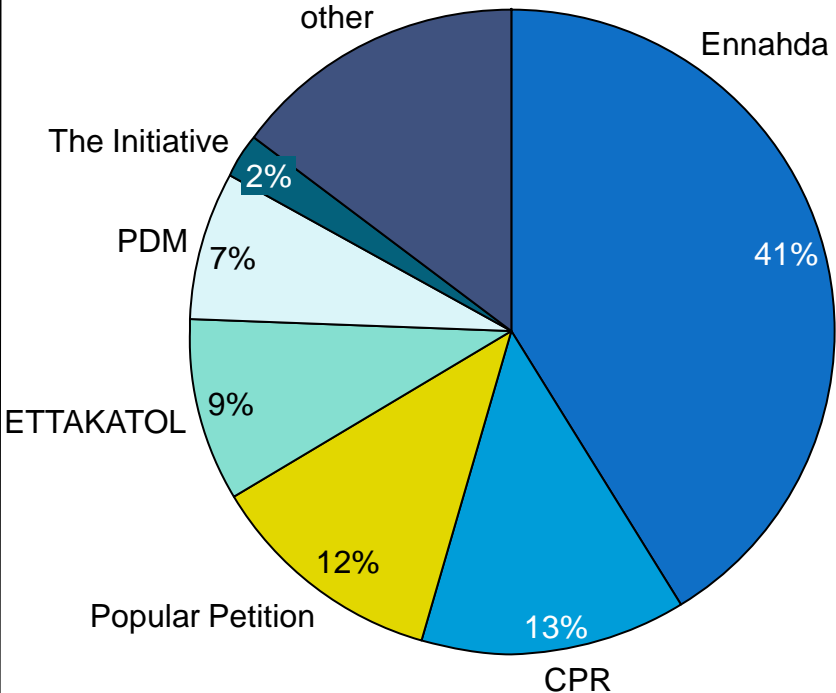
Jakob Wichmann

# The Islamist won the elections in Egypt and Tunisia

## Egyptian Election



## Tunisian Election



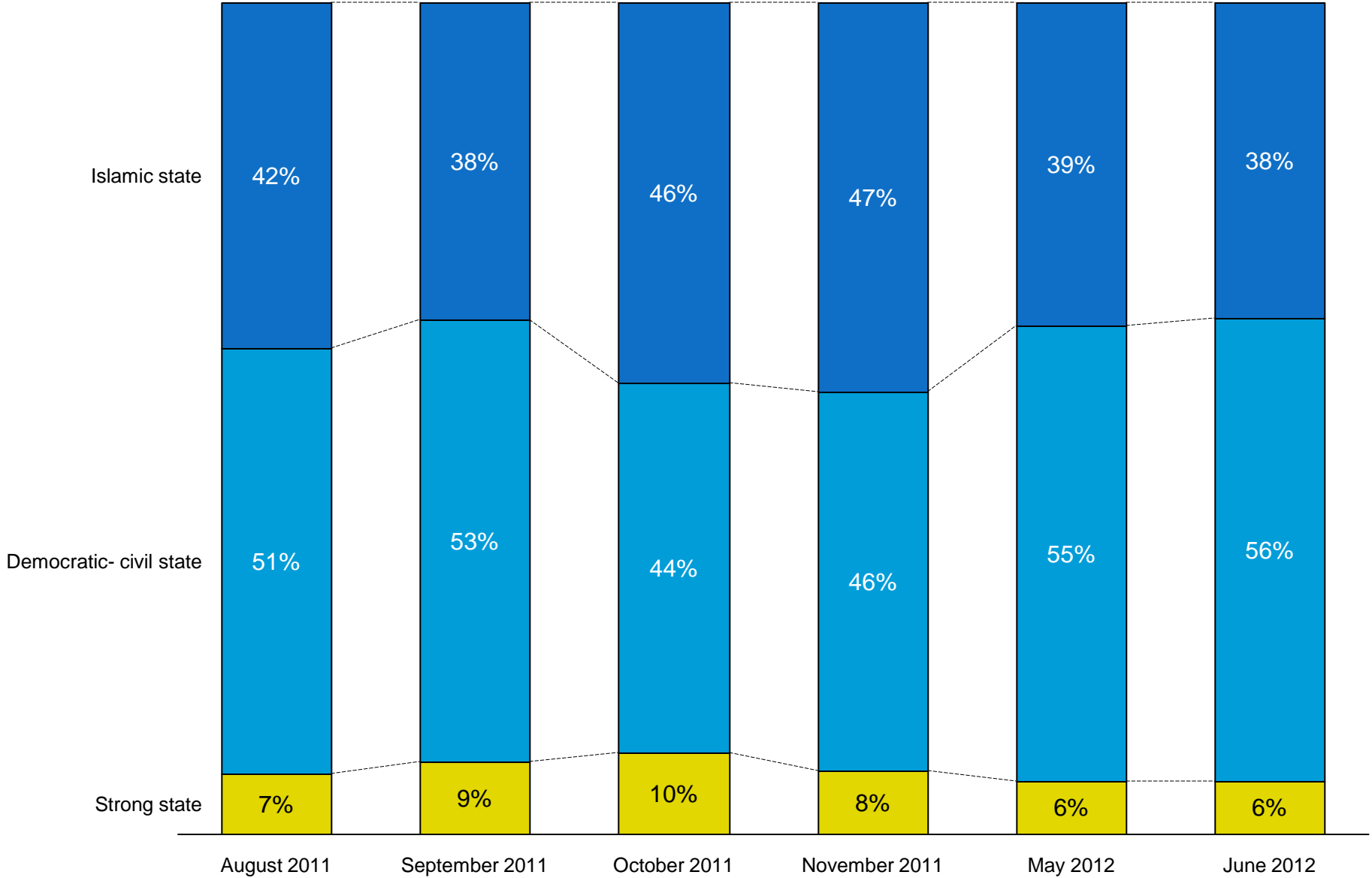
# Why Islamists Won?

## Three Potential Explanations

- 1. Islam Resonates with Arab, Muslim Voters**
- 2. Islamist Parties provide Social Welfare Services in the Absence of the State**
- 3. Islamist Parties were Better Organized During the Campaign**



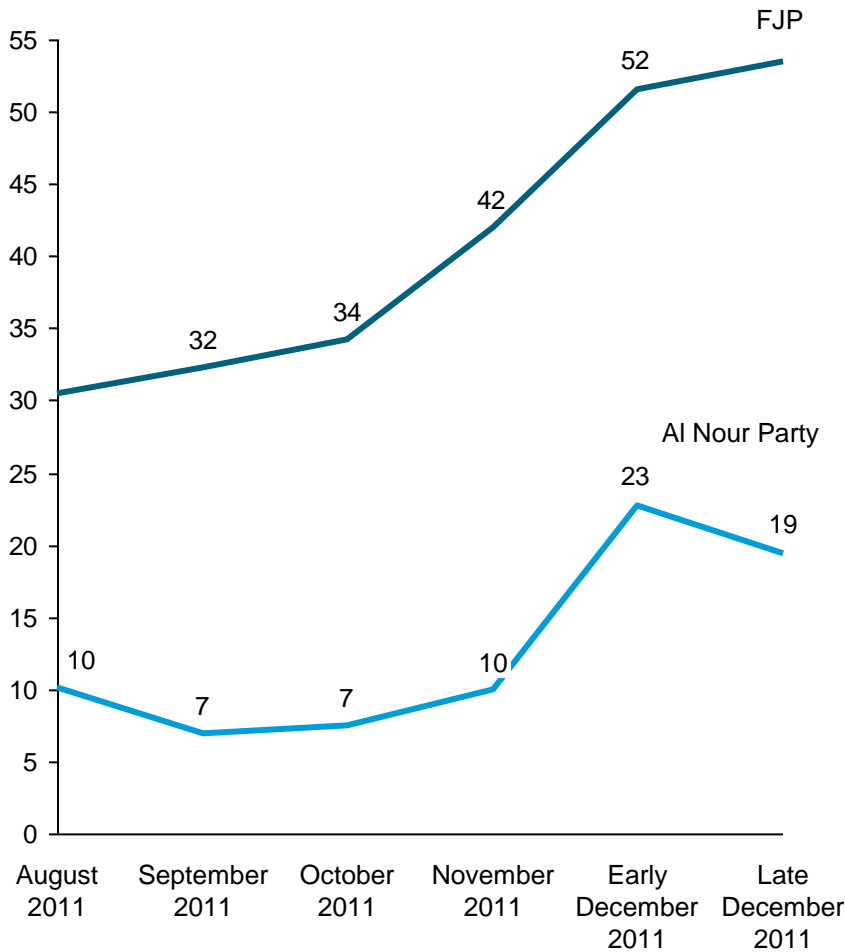
# Although values appear stable over past year: Preferences for Islamic, democratic and strong state model



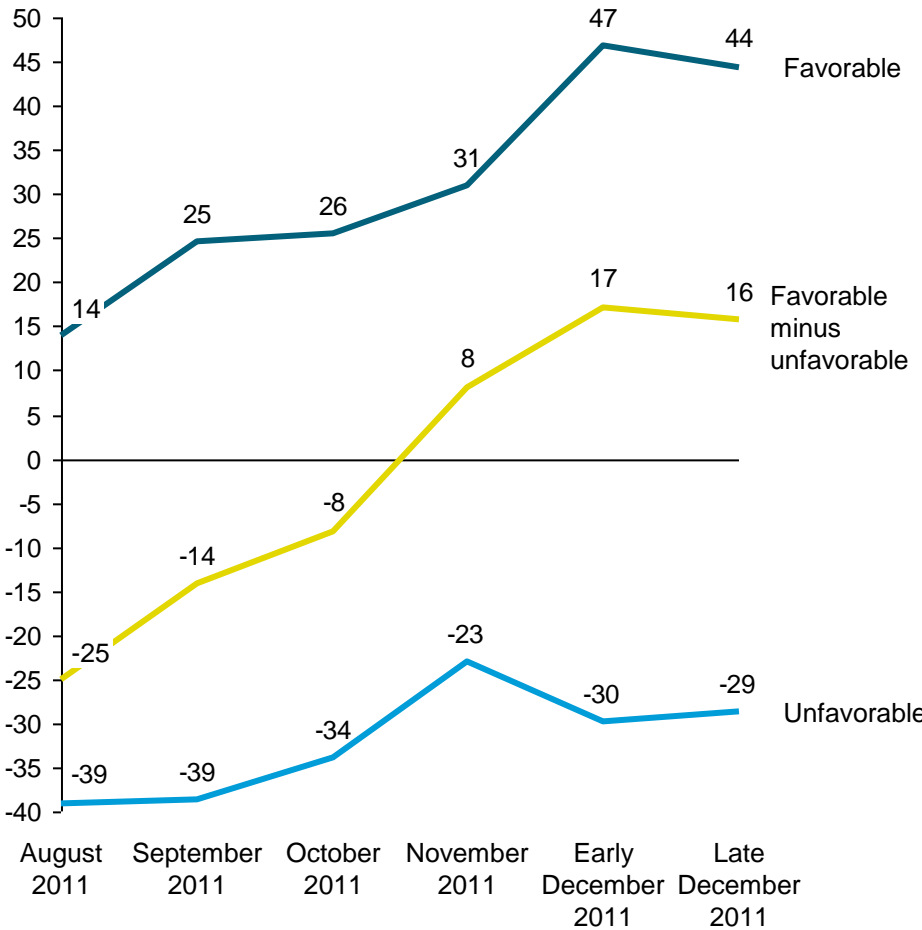
Source: Parliamentary survey 1,2,3 4,5 & 6. Presidential survey 1, 2

# In stark contrast, support for Islamist parties grew in the lead-up to the election

1 Support for Islamist Parties



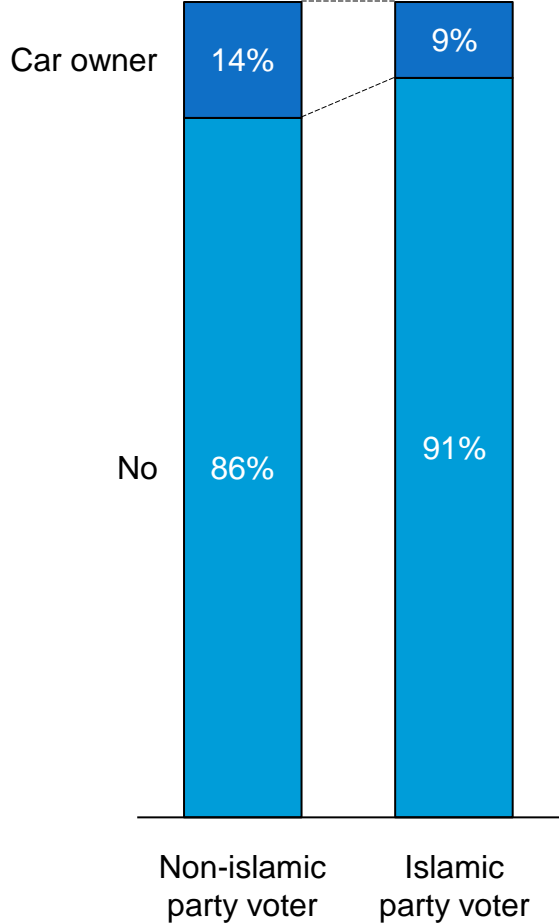
2 Citizens' view of the Nour Party



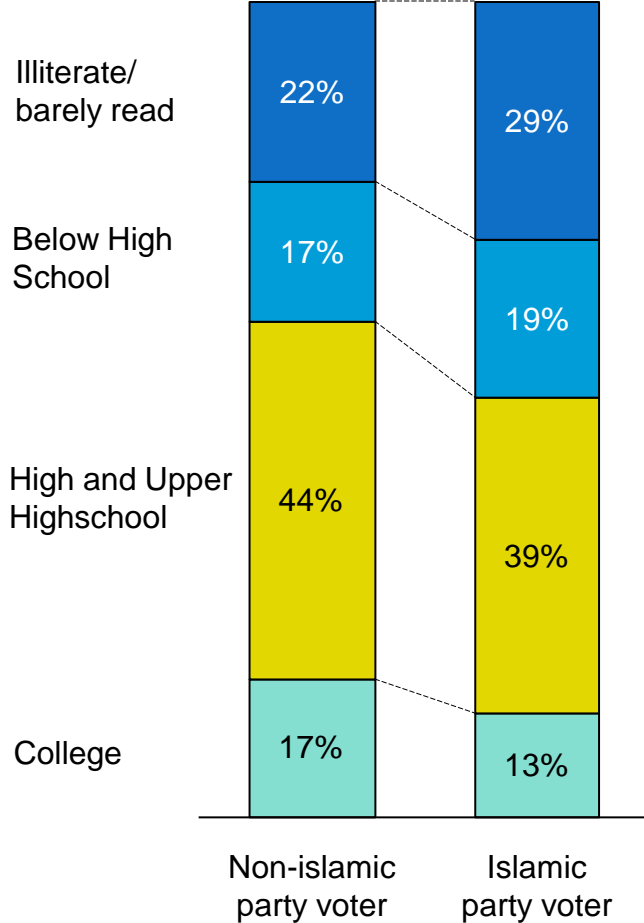
Source: Parliamentary survey 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6.

# Support for Islamist parties stronger among those in need

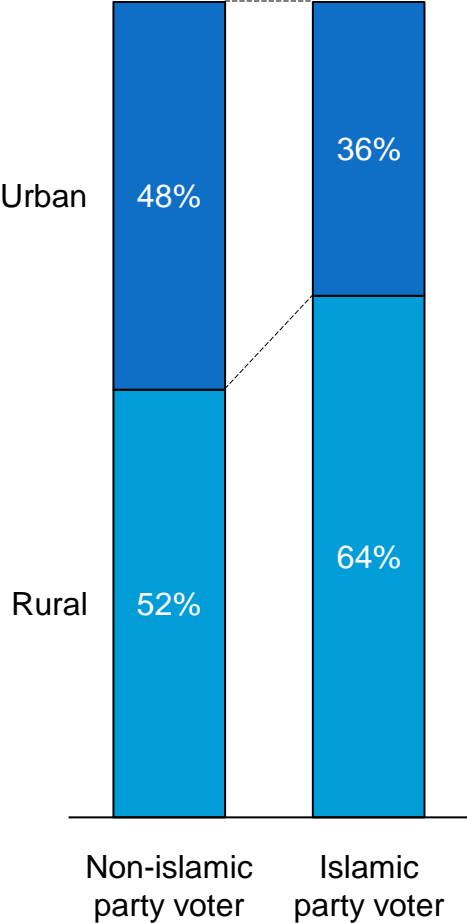
1 Islamists more likely to be poor



2 Less Educated



3 More Rural

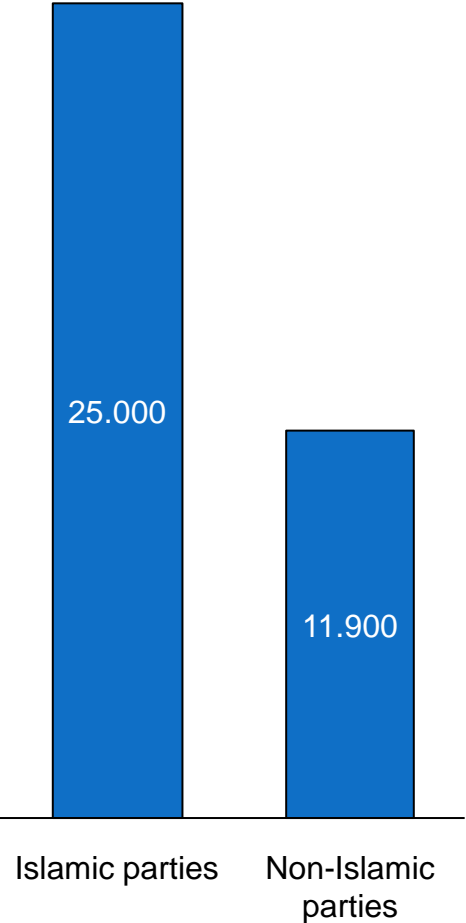


Source: Parliamentary survey 4, 5 & 6.

# Islamist parties have superior organizational resources

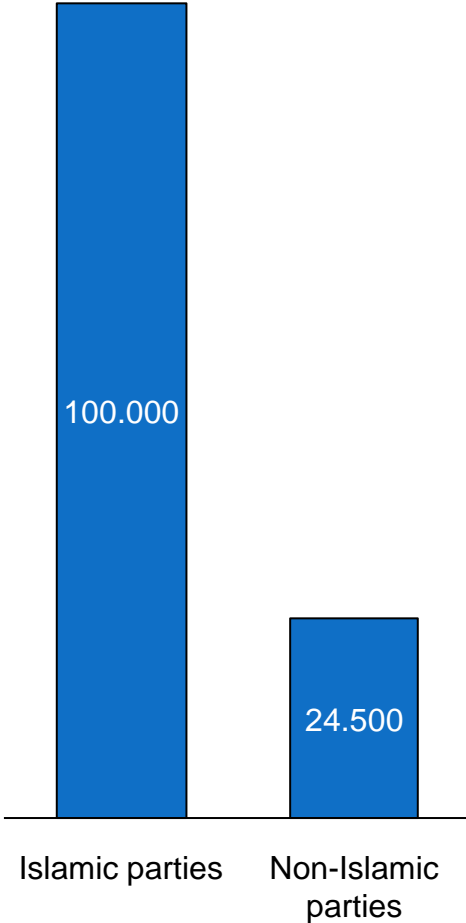
1 More campaign volunteers

Total number of campaign volunteers



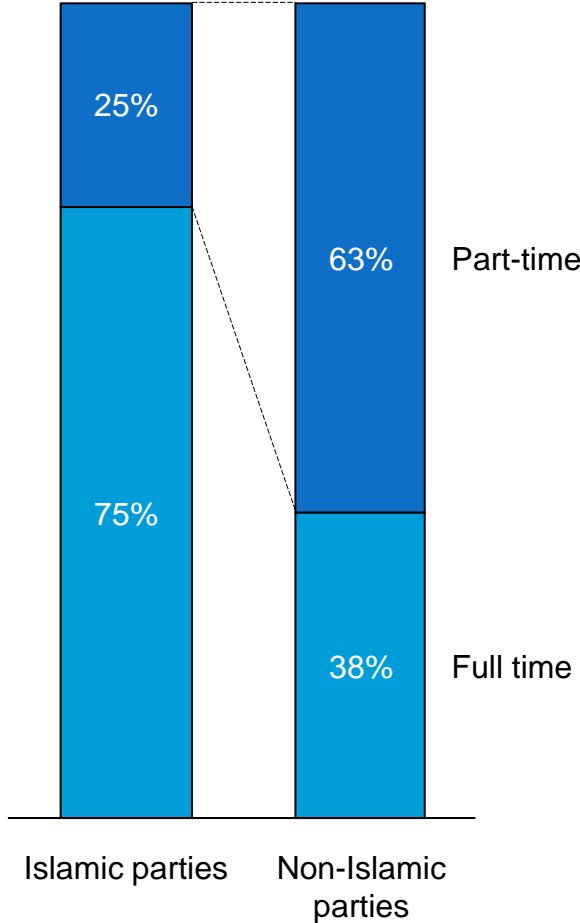
2 More active members

Total number of active members



3 More full time staff

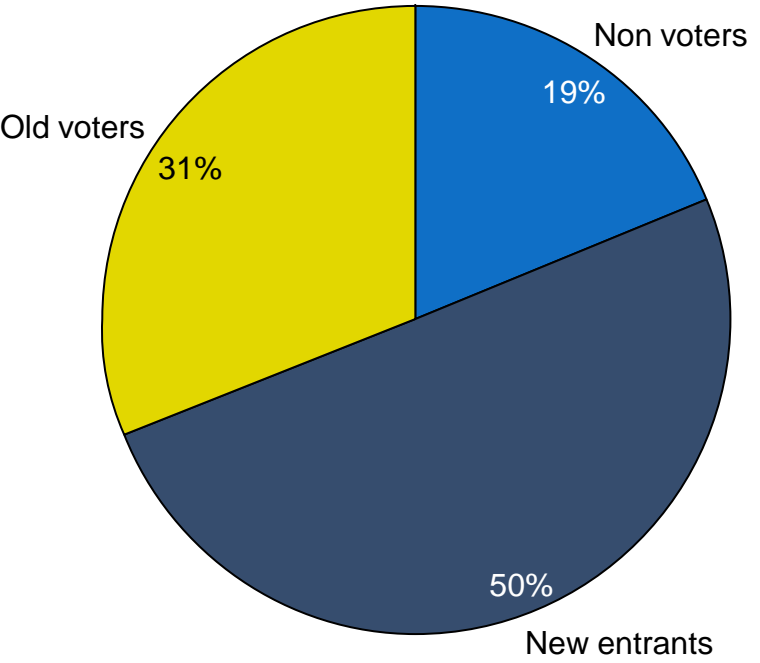
Type of staff in parties



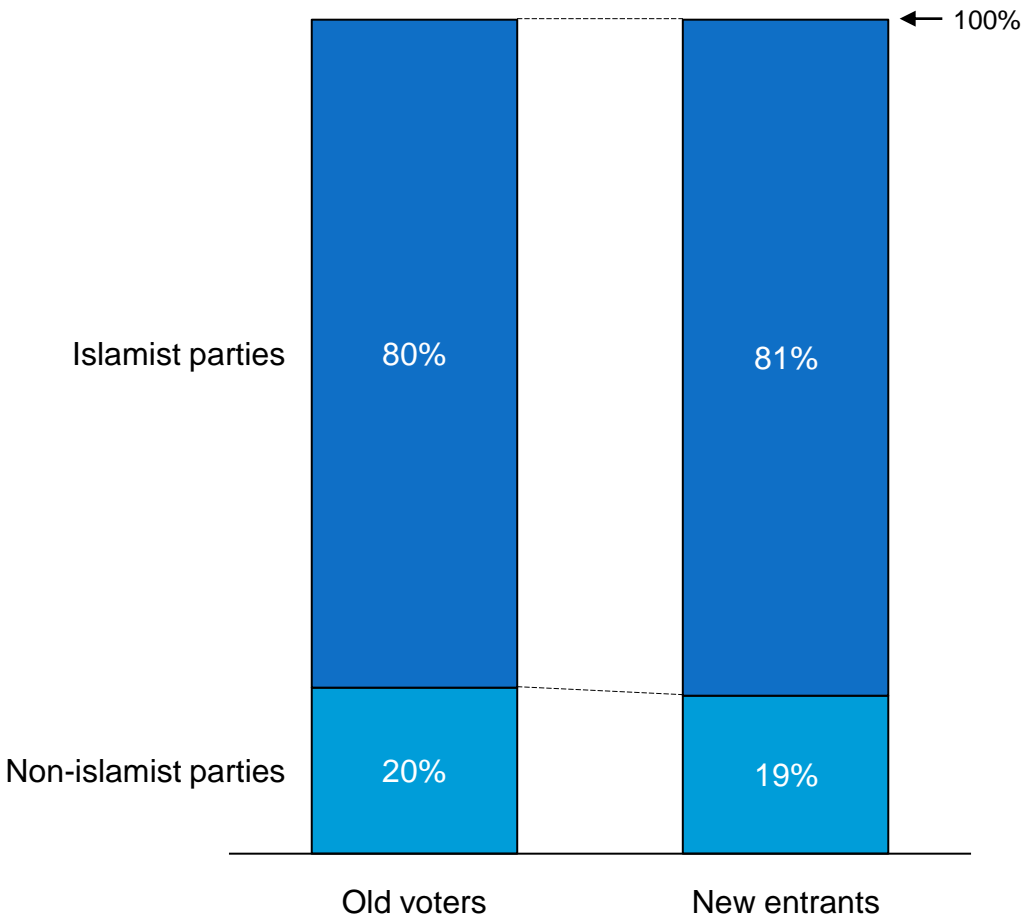
Source: Interview with 7 political parties in Egypt, August – September 2012

# Islamist Parties Mobilized both New and Old Voters

Split of Old and New Voters



Old and New Voter Choices



Source: Presidential survey 1



# What Does it Mean?

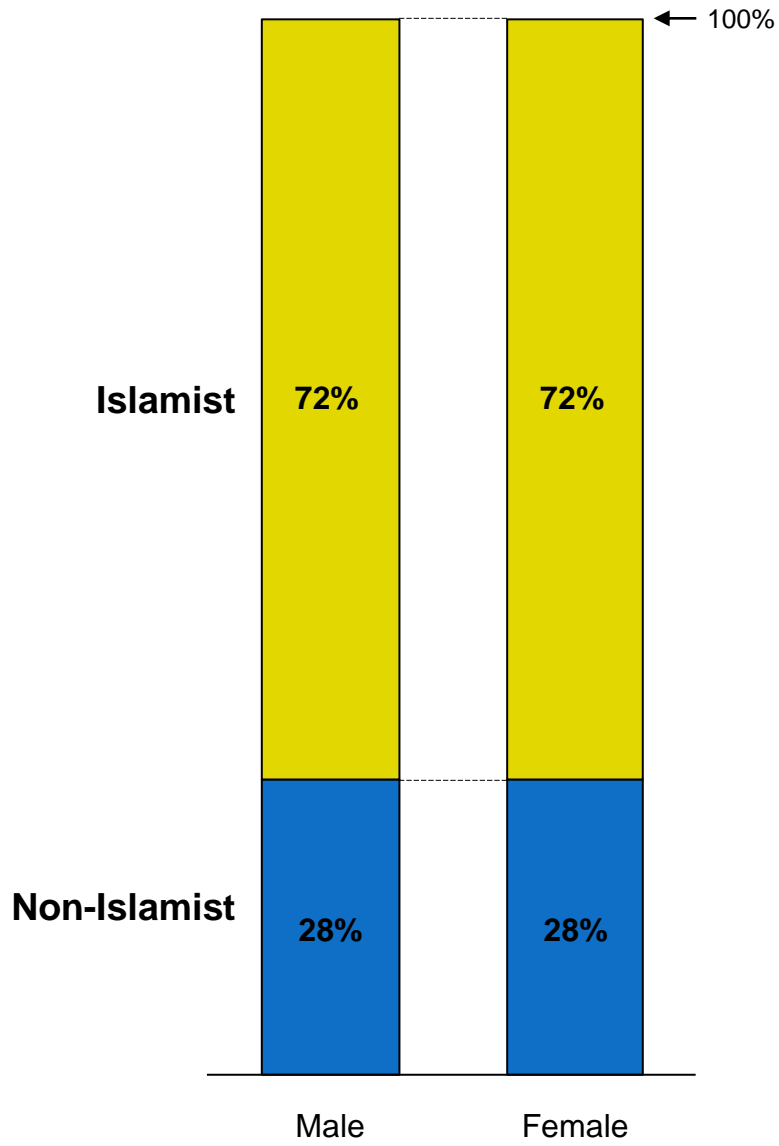
## Implications of Islamists' Victory

- Immediate Impact: Focus on Women
- Long-Term Implications: The Transition Process



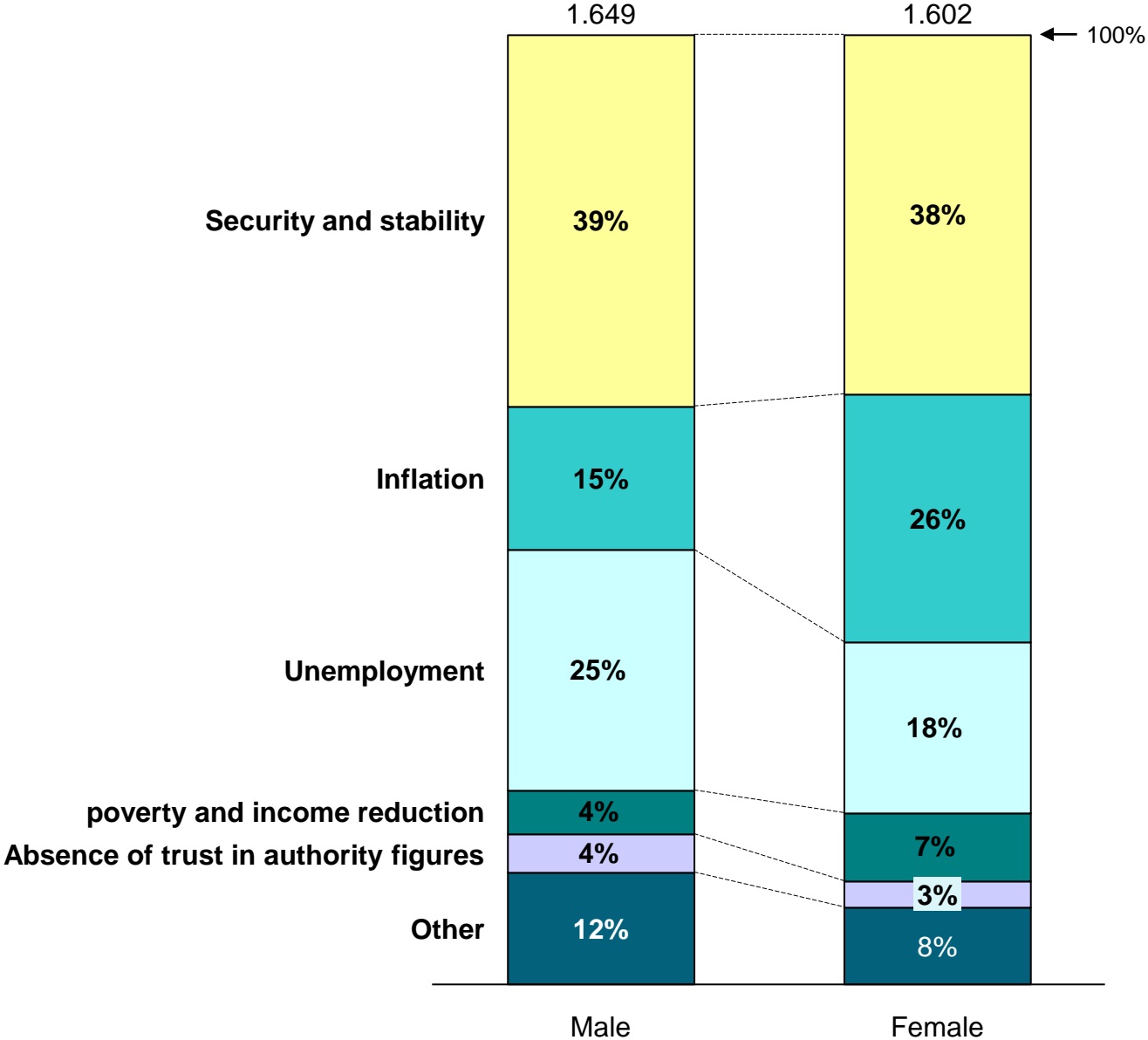
# Not An Outcome Driven by Men

## Women vote as much for Islamists as men



Source: Parliamentary survey 4, Parliamentary survey 5, Parliamentary survey 6

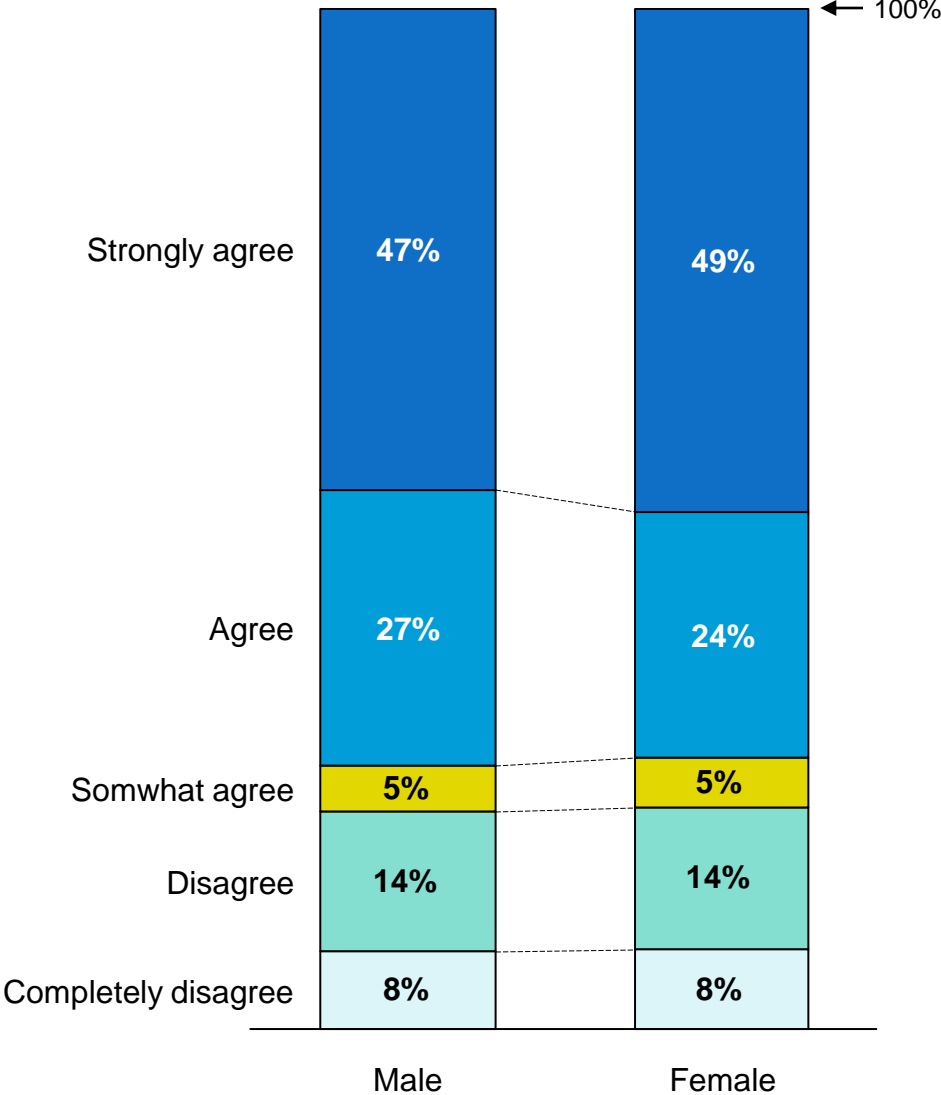
# Men and Women have similar concerns



Source: Parliamentary survey 4, Parliamentary survey 5, Parliamentary survey 6

# Men and women have similar views

Agreement on the statement: "Men have priority over women in employment"



Source: Parliamentary survey 3

# Long-Term Implications for Transitional Politics?

- Secularists – domestic and abroad – tend to view “Islamist takeover” reflecting deep-seated, values
- Fear of spreading message and power prompts support for *illiberal and anti-democratic* policies

*However,*

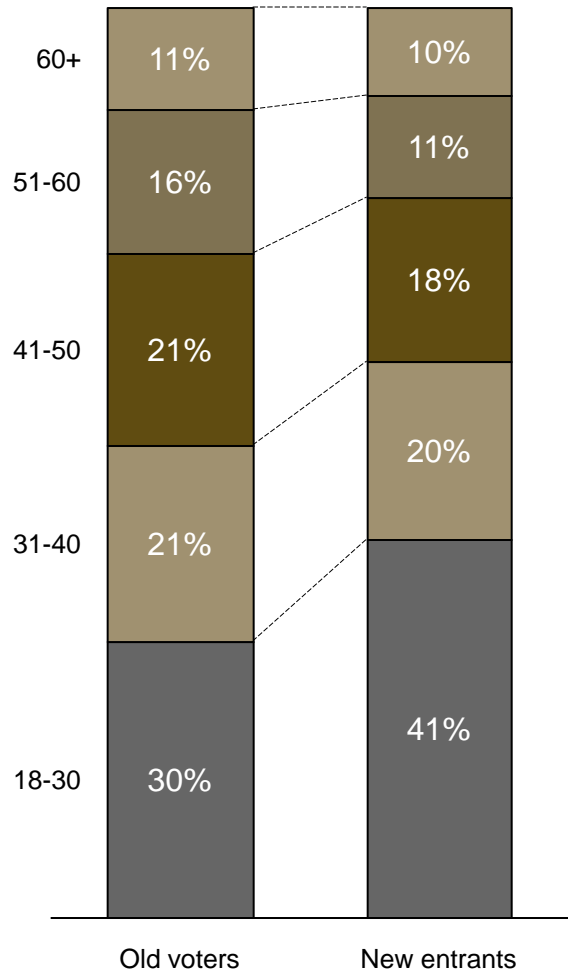
- Illiberal policies have potential for inducing preference falsification that strengthens Islamist parties

# Moving Forward: Recognize Fluidity and Keep the Playing Field Open

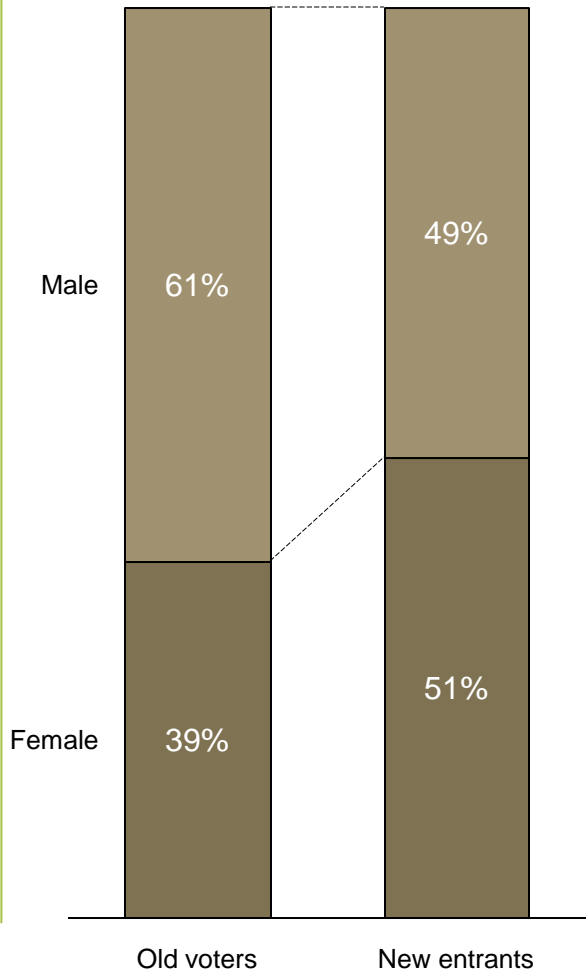
- Need to resist supporting efforts to limit liberal freedoms, discourse
- International actors need to avoid temptation to shore up secularists vs. Islamists
  - Counter-productive
  - Not necessarily more liberal, democratic outcomes
- Respond to the needs of the center
- Need to emphasize iterative processes and seek ways to avoid entrenchment of early winners
  - Roles of local level elections
  - Emphasis on media freedoms, freedom of association, political parties laws, etc.

# The transitional process has made participation in elections more attractive to the youth, women and urbanized voters

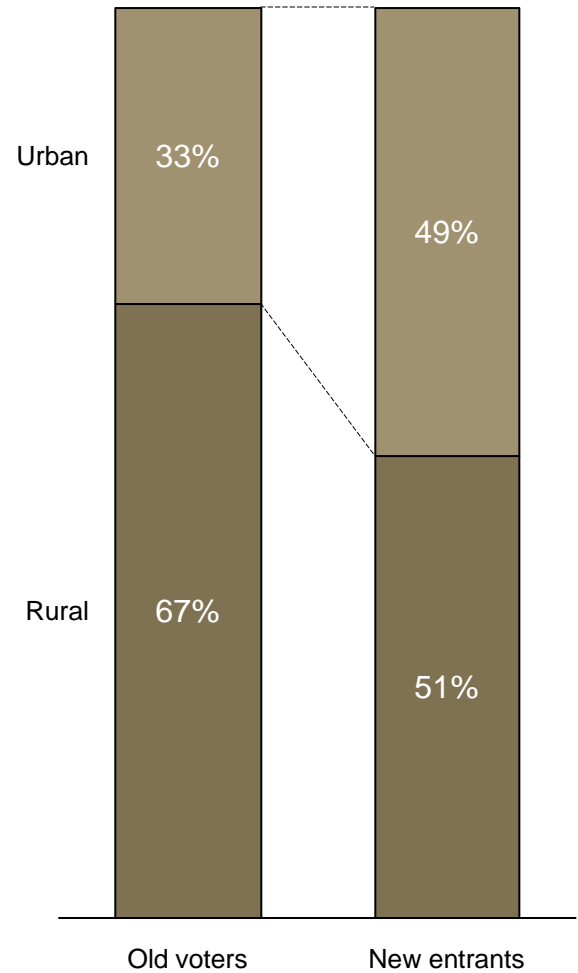
**1** New entrants are younger



**2** New entrants are more likely to be female



**3** New entrants are more urbanized



Source: Presidential survey 1