

Negentropy in the Face of Excogitation

Order Amidst Planning

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Egypt is in the process of revising its government and its culture. With the advent of members of the Muslim Brotherhood in parliament and in Mohamed Morsi, its newly elected president, Egypt faces the difficult task of constructing a new constitution. Battles are heating up over the sections covering women's rights and Islamic law as well as executive power and the role of government. The argument is being pressured to create an Islamic state which, of necessity, would include the addition of Sharia Law. Since Egypt's economy largely depends upon tourism, an Islamic state would hinder this as it does not allow for the sale or consumption of alcohol.

Following the revolution which occurred in February 2001 and which ousted the nearly three decade ruler, Hosni Mubarak, Egyptian leaders are struggling to create and maintain order. Egypt has long been recognized as having a negentropic approach to governing. The people are accustomed to living in an orderly and strict environment loaded with bureaucracy. The challenges largely stem from little education and experience in building the individual. Under Mubarak's rule, police brutality was the norm, elections could be counted on to be rigged, and corruption had infiltrated everything. Poverty rates climbed as the gap between the rich and the poor grew larger.



According to the Central Agency for Organization & Administration, as much as 2/3 of Egyptians who are governmental employees have little to no work to do. This is attributed to the lack of managerial skills within its labor force. Additionally, there is a great deal of mistrust between the workers and the management. Corruption, special interest groups, and bribery appear to have long controlled any processes.

Egyptians have learned to be fatalists in their dependence upon the state for employment, services, and education. There is a lack of organization, planning, discipline, personal accountability, and most importantly, a lack of the value of time. There is a great need for excogitation at the crossroads which this country is now facing.

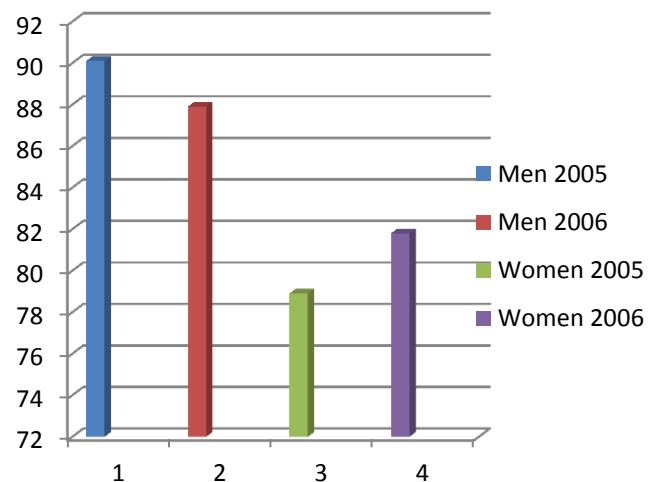


Figure 1. Literacy Rates for Ages 15-21

As you can see from the graph, the literacy rates have improved from the tragically low 35% literacy rates in 1980; however, it is interesting to note that the numbers are decreasing for men and increasing for women.¹ Egypt's educational concerns are evident in the per capita income which is equivalent to \$2,265 USD. While this is terribly low compared to U.S. standards, it is a far cry from the 1978 income of \$280.²

On September 11, the anniversary of significant events in our country, Egyptians stormed the U.S. Embassy replacing the American flag with an Islamic flag. The flag of the United States was destroyed amidst a cheering audience. In the face of an on looking global community, Morsi delivered what was interpreted to be a mild rebuke; however, Facebook posts called for additional protests on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood.

These events are challenging in light of the fact that Egypt is strategic for international relations with the U.S. Not only is it the most populated country within the Arab world (83 million), but it is also a key ally and it has a peace treaty with Israel.

Announced last week, the Coptic Christian Church in Egypt anointed a new pope to lead the 10% of Egyptians who are Christian and understandably skeptical of the new leadership.

Morsi has vowed to work with them, but a long history of discrimination filled with violent clashes reminds the Christians to be apprehensive in believing such a statement. In recent memory, Copts are mindful of the armored vehicles which were driven by soldiers last fall into a crowd of Copt protestors who were rallying for the protection of their rights which had been ignored. 26 people were killed.

President Obama announced the release of \$1 billion of the debt Egypt owes to America (the total debt owed to the U.S. is more than \$3 billion) and is supporting Egypt's plea for a \$4.8 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund. There is an underlying understanding that Egypt must get its people under control and protect its relationship with the United States.

If Egypt is unable to create peace and stability, the human resources and the economic resources will simply continue to be wasted. Training of its people is paramount to its success.

Economic progress needs to be built upon basic freedoms and human dignity. In building its governmental construct, Egypt cannot afford to neglect building its individuals.



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