



الباروميتر العربي  
ARAB BAROMETER

# Arab Barometer V

## Egypt Country Report



2019

## Executive summary

Egyptians with different levels of income and education seem to have incredibly disparate perceptions of the Egyptian reality. Richer and better educated Egyptians are systematically more optimistic about the future of the economy, report higher satisfaction with the current government's performance, and demonstrate higher levels of trust in the private sector. That Egypt suffers from inequality of income and opportunity is no surprise: research indicates that inequality in Egypt, as captured by the Gini Index, is generally underestimated, and is exacerbated by tightening financial conditions. As Egypt continues to undergo fundamental changes to its economic and political paradigms, it is imperative that the poorest and most vulnerable are provided with infrastructures of support.

In the past three years, Egypt's economic trajectory has been largely dictated by the conditionalities imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under the Extended Facility Fund (EFF), inaugurated in November 2016 to provide the Egyptian government with 12 billion US dollars in aid. Ordinary Egyptians continue to grapple with the consequences of this deal, but nevertheless appear generally optimistic about the present and future of Egypt's economy, with the caveat that richer and better educated Egyptians appear to be faring much better under the current economic regime than their poorer and less educated counterparts.

Trust in governmental institutions, particularly institutions tasked with ensuring law and order, remains high in Egypt. Support for the army, government, and judiciary appears to be nearly unanimous. However, it appears that poorer and less educated Egyptians harbor little to no trust in the private sector. With the IMF pushing Egypt towards privatizing much of its economic activity, it is important to ensure that economically vulnerable Egyptians are not marginalized in the process.

A third of all Egyptians are generally satisfied with government performance, although richer and better educated Egyptians report higher levels of satisfaction, particularly in the areas of health and education. It is also interesting to note that Egyptians that are more well off are more likely to think that the government is doing a good job of keeping prices down and providing opportunities of employment.

Regardless of income or education, the status of women in Egypt remains dire. More than half of Egyptian women report being subjected to verbal or physical harassment within the past 12 months. The practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), although illegal, is still accepted by a third of all Egyptians. Clearly, there is still much to be achieved in the area of women's rights and gender

equality.

Egyptians, regardless of wealth and education, continue to have a complex relationship with political Islam, but support for the involvement of religious leaders in the political process is generally in decline. Nevertheless, Egyptians prefer political leaders that are religious despite the fact that more than half believe religious leaders are as corrupt as those who are not religious.

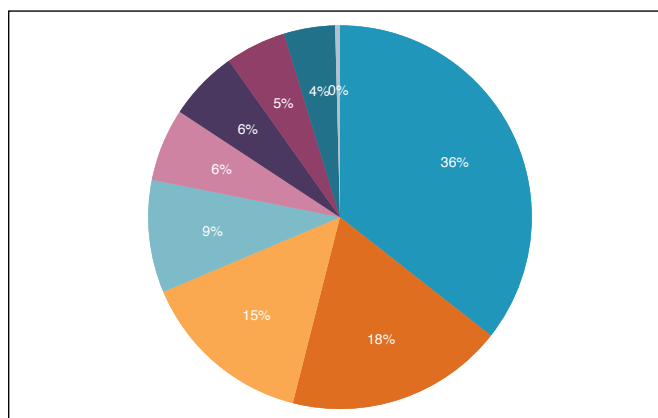
These are among the key findings from a nationally representative public opinion survey conducted in Egypt by the Arab Barometer from 13 October 2018 to 11 November 2018. The survey is comprised of 2,400 computer assisted personal, face-to-face interviews, with a margin of error of  $\pm 2$  percent.

## Economic Issues

In November of 2016, the IMF approved a three-year arrangement under the Extended Facility Fund (EFF) for the Arab Republic of Egypt. This USD 12-billion deal entailed the introduction of a battery of economic reforms, aimed at the rectification of severe macroeconomic disequilibria; for the Egyptian government, this translated into the devaluation of the Egyptian Pound, slashing of energy and food subsidies, concerted efforts to control core inflation, measures to encourage investment in the private sector, and the overall stimulation of growth.

Under these circumstances, Egyptians continue to be perennially preoccupied with economic issues: more than a third (36 percent) of Egyptians report that the most important issue facing the government is the economy. Nevertheless, 37 percent of Egyptians think their country is heading in the right direction, and 41 percent rate the economy as good or very good, representing an 11-point increase since 2016. However, those who are better educated and wealthier are more likely to hold these views. Furthermore, 40 percent of Egyptians are optimistic that the economy will improve in the next few years.

### What is the most important challenge facing Egypt today?



- economy
- fighting terrorism
- public services
- other
- religious extremism
- corruption
- security
- foreign interference
- don't know/refused

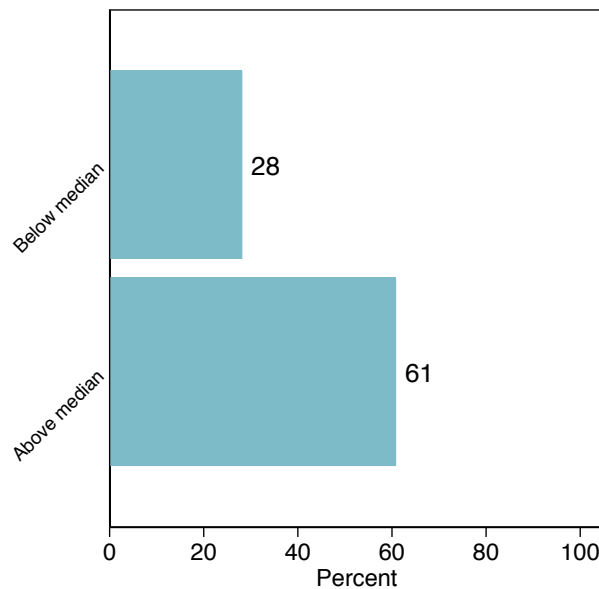
Note: Weighted estimates.  
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Meanwhile, views about the country's overall future are strongly linked with levels of education and income. For example, only 31 percent of Egyptians with basic education hold the view that Egypt is moving in the right direction, while

half of Egyptians with higher education say the same. Similarly, only 29 percent of Egyptians earning an income below the median agree that Egypt is heading in the right direction; on the other hand, half (49 percent) of Egyptians earning incomes above the median agree with the statement.

**What do you think the economic situation in Egypt will be in the next few years?**

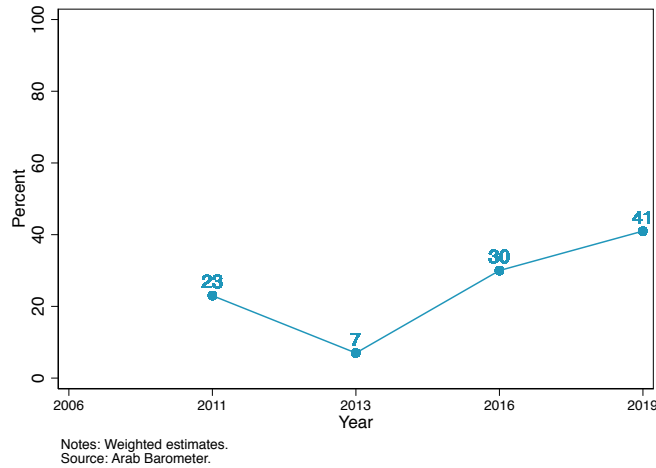
*% saying the economy will be much or somewhat better in 2-3 years.*



Notes: Weighted estimates.  
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Similarly, better educated and wealthier Egyptians are more likely to agree with the sentiment that the economy is currently good or very good. Better educated and wealthier Egyptians are also much more likely to hold the belief that the economic situation in Egypt will be much or somewhat better in the future; only 28 percent of Egyptians earning an income below the median share the sentiment, while 61 percent of Egyptians earning incomes above the median share the sentiment.

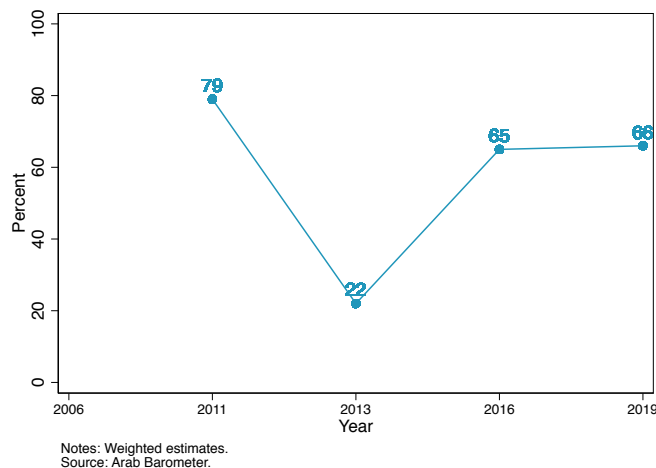
### How would you evaluate the current economic situation in Egypt? *% saying the current economy is very good or good.*



## Institutional Trust

Despite the political upheavals of the last eight years in Egyptian history, trust in governmental institutions in Egypt remains high. Around 66 percent of Egyptians in 2018 report having a great deal or quite a lot of trust in the government; this sentiment is uniformly shared by Egyptians across gender and educational barriers.

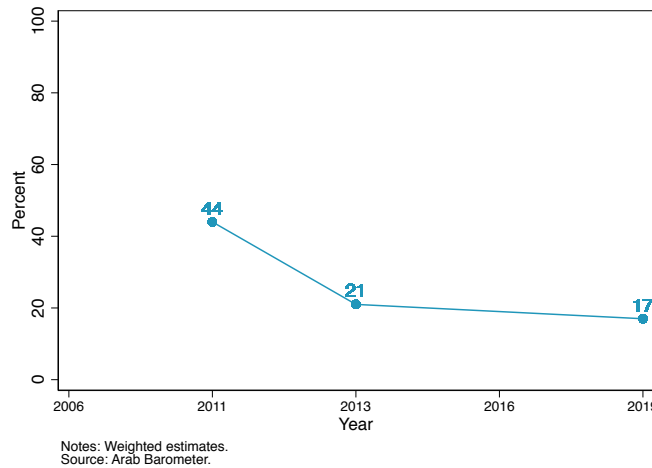
### How much trust do you have in the government? *% saying they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust.*



However, Egyptians with incomes above the median are 12 points more likely to have a great deal or quite a lot of trust in the government than Egyptians

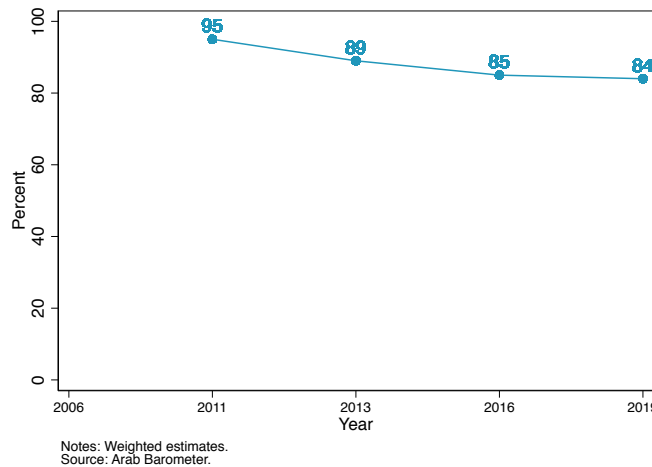
with incomes below the median. Similarly, older Egyptians tend to trust the government more than younger Egyptians.

**How much trust do you have in the Muslim Brotherhood?**  
*% saying they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust.*



While trust in the judiciary, the police, and the army remains incredibly high, trust in the parliament, religious leaders, political parties, and the Muslim Brotherhood is highly fraught.

**How much trust do you have in the army?**  
*% saying they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust.*

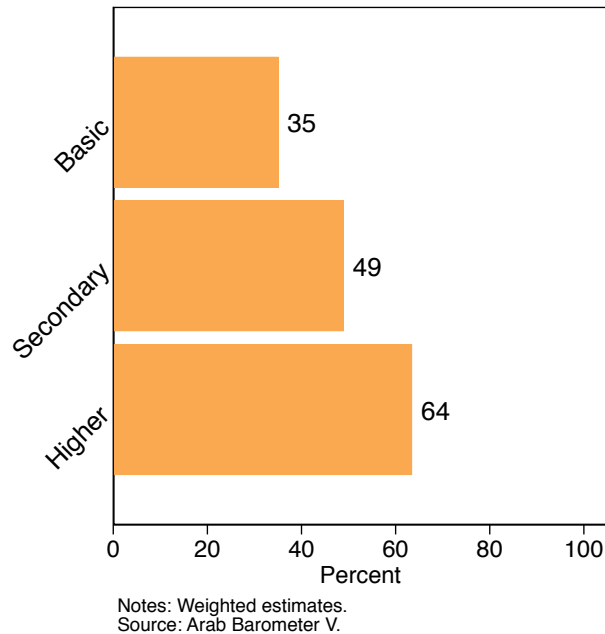


Although the government's current agreement with the IMF entails the transfer of much of its economic operations into the hands of the private sector, trust in the private sector and private institutions, in general, varies greatly according to the level of education. For example, only 35 percent of Egyptians with basic

education trust private banks, while 64 percent of Egyptians with higher education harbor trust for private banks. Similarly, only 34 percent of Egyptians with a basic education trust domestic business people, while half or 50 percent of Egyptians with higher education trust domestic business people.

### How much trust do you have in private banks?

*% saying they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust by level of education.*



This trend is apparent across other sectors, including education and health care: only half of Egyptians with basic education trust private hospitals, while more than three-quarters of Egyptians with higher education trust private hospitals. Only a fifth of Egyptians with basic education trust private universities, while more than three-quarters of Egyptians with higher education trust private universities.

## Government Performance

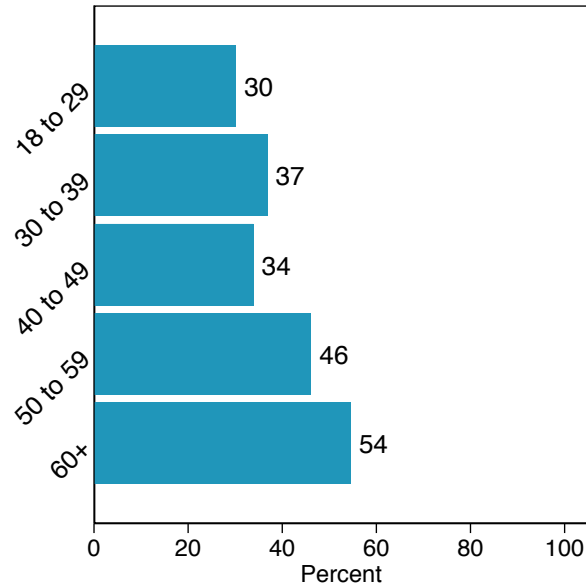
Overall, nearly a third (31 percent) of Egyptians are satisfied with government performance. While younger Egyptians are less likely to be satisfied with government performance than older Egyptians, satisfaction with government performance appears to be uniform across educational and income barriers. Meanwhile, 37 percent of Egyptians are satisfied with the educational system, representing a 12-percent increase since 2016. Interestingly, only 30 percent of Egyptians at the ages of 18 to 29 years old, some of whom are the actual



recipients of educational services in Egypt, are satisfied with the current educational system. However, more than half of Egyptians aged 60 and above are satisfaction with the education.

**How satisfied are you with the educational system in our country?**

*% saying completely satisfied or satisfied by age.*

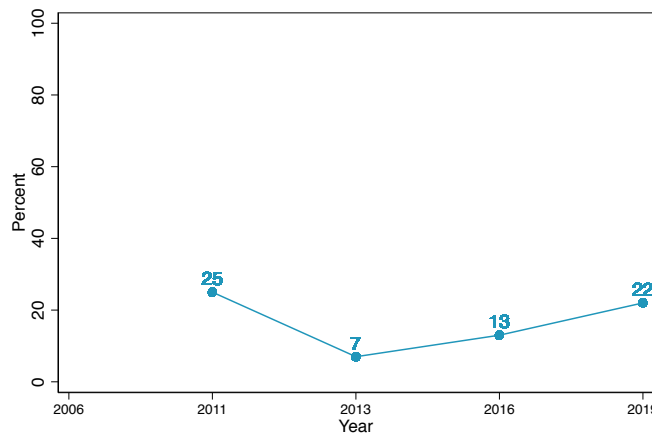


Notes: Weighted estimates.  
Source: Arab Barometer V.

A similar percentage of Egyptians are satisfied with the healthcare system, although Egyptians earning incomes above the median are 10 percent more likely than Egyptians earning incomes below the median hold this view.

**How would you evaluate the current government's performance on creating employment opportunities?**

*% saying very good or good.*

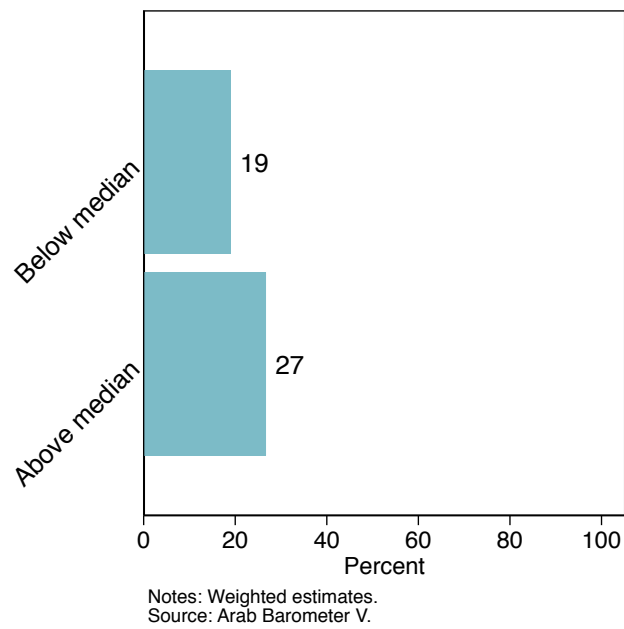


Notes: Weighted estimates.  
Source: Arab Barometer.

Since 2016, the percentage of Egyptians reporting satisfaction with the government’s ability to create employment opportunities has increased by around 10 percent; nevertheless, Egyptians earning incomes above the median are almost twice as likely than Egyptians earning incomes below the median to report their satisfaction in this area. Similarly, richer Egyptians are more likely to agree that the government is doing a good job of narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor and keeping prices down.

### How would you evaluate the current government’s performance on keeping prices down?

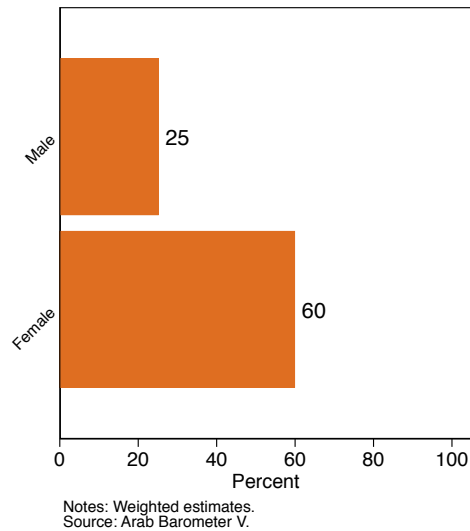
*% saying very good or good by income.*



## Status of Women

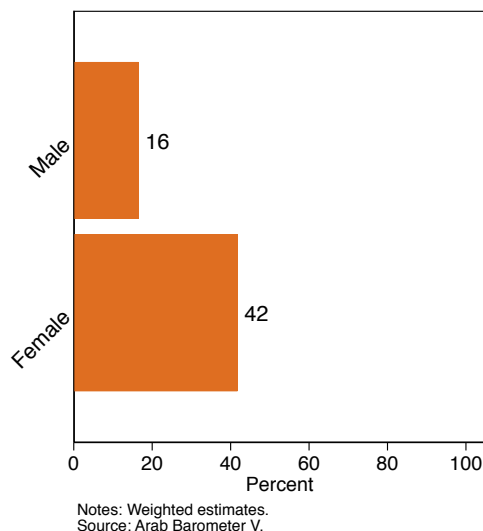
According to a study promulgated by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in 2013, virtually all Egyptian women have been subjected to sexual harassment.

**In the past 12 months, how often have you personally experienced unwanted sexual remarks, whistling, or gestures in public places, such as on the streets, on public transportation, or in shopping malls?**  
*% saying they have experienced being verbally sexually harassed.*



This disturbing finding is corroborated by the latest wave of Arab Barometer data, which illustrates that 60 percent of Egyptian women say they have experienced verbal sexual harassment in the past 12 months, while 42 percent of Egyptian women report experiencing physical sexual harassment in the past 12 months.

**How often have you experienced unwanted sexual advances, like being touched in public places, in the past 12 months?**  
*% saying they have experienced being physically sexually harassed.*



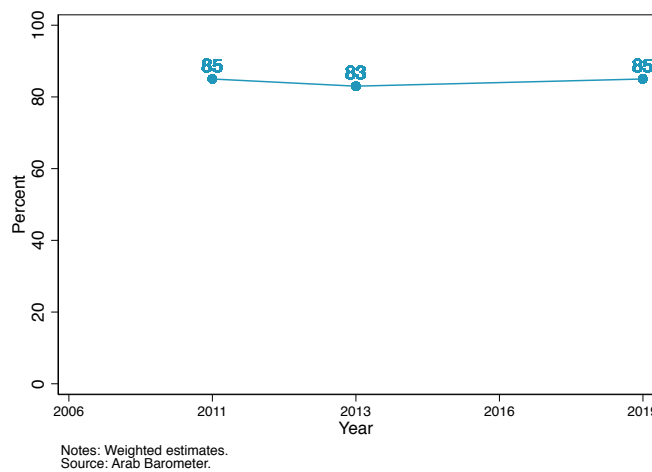
In June of 2008, the Egyptian Parliament criminalized the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM), and instated penalties of up to two years in prison and 5,000 LE in fines for health practitioners performing the procedure. Nevertheless, according to the Demographic and Health Surveys in 2014, in Egypt, 92 percent of women and girls aged 15-49 have undergone some form of FGM. Support for the practice of FGM remains high in the country, with at least a third of Egyptians (32 percent) reporting their acceptance of the practice.

## Political Islam

On June 17th, Mohamed Morsi, Egypt’s first civilian president and a top figure in the now banned Muslim Brotherhood, died, after six years of confinement in Egyptian prison facilities. His death served as a reminder of Egypt’s struggle with political Islam and its repercussions in the years following the Arab Spring.

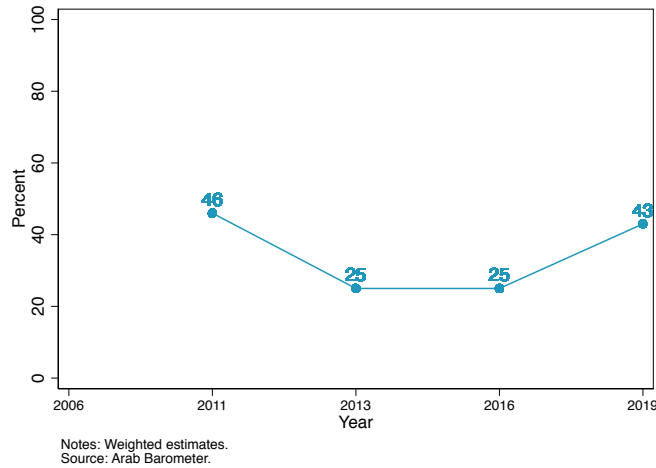
Since then, Egypt’s relationship with political Islam has changed dramatically, acquiring deep nuances, and reflecting a deep suspicion of politically inclined religious leaders—this suspicion does not constitute a wholesale eschewing of religiously motivated politics, however. Nearly all Egyptians (85 percent) agree that religious leaders should stay out of voters’ electoral decisions; this belief is held uniformly across all ages, education levels, and incomes.

**“Religious leaders should not interfere in voters’ decisions in elections.”**  
*% saying they strongly agree or agree.*



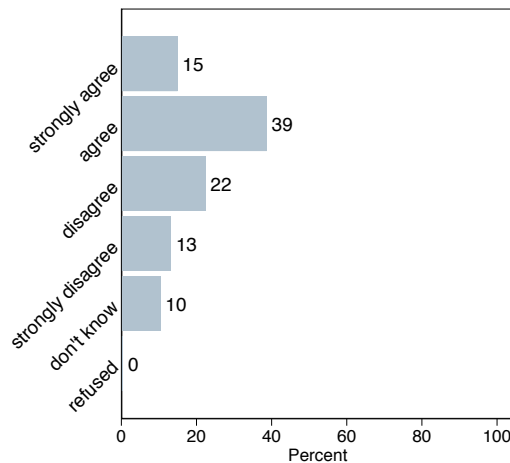
Surprisingly, a fifth of Egyptians agree that religious clerics should have influence over government decisions, although wealthier and better educated Egyptians are less likely to hold that belief. However, an increasing proportion of Egyptians agree the country would be better off if religious people held public positions in the state; this belief is less likely to be held by wealthier and better educated Egyptians.

**“Egypt is better off if religious people hold public positions in the state.”**  
*% saying they strongly agree or agree.*



On the other hand, more than half of Egyptians (54 percent) agree or strongly agree that religious leaders are as likely to be corrupt as non-religious leaders. Clearly, Egyptians have a complicated relationship with political Islam: while they firmly reject the notion of religious clerics influencing the democratic process, they also happen to think that religious leaders are better fit for office, even though they might be just as corrupt as non-religious leaders.

**“Today, religious leaders are as likely to be corrupt as non-religious leaders.”**  
*% who....*





## About Arab Barometer

The Arab Barometer is a nonpartisan research network that provides insights into the social, political, and economic attitudes and values of ordinary citizens across the Arab world.

We have been conducting rigorous, and nationally representative face-to-face public opinion surveys on probability samples of the adult populations across the Arab world since 2006. The margin of error is  $\pm 3$  percent.

The Arab Barometer is the largest repository of publicly available data on the views of men and women in the MENA region. Our findings give a voice to the needs and concerns of Arab publics.



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