

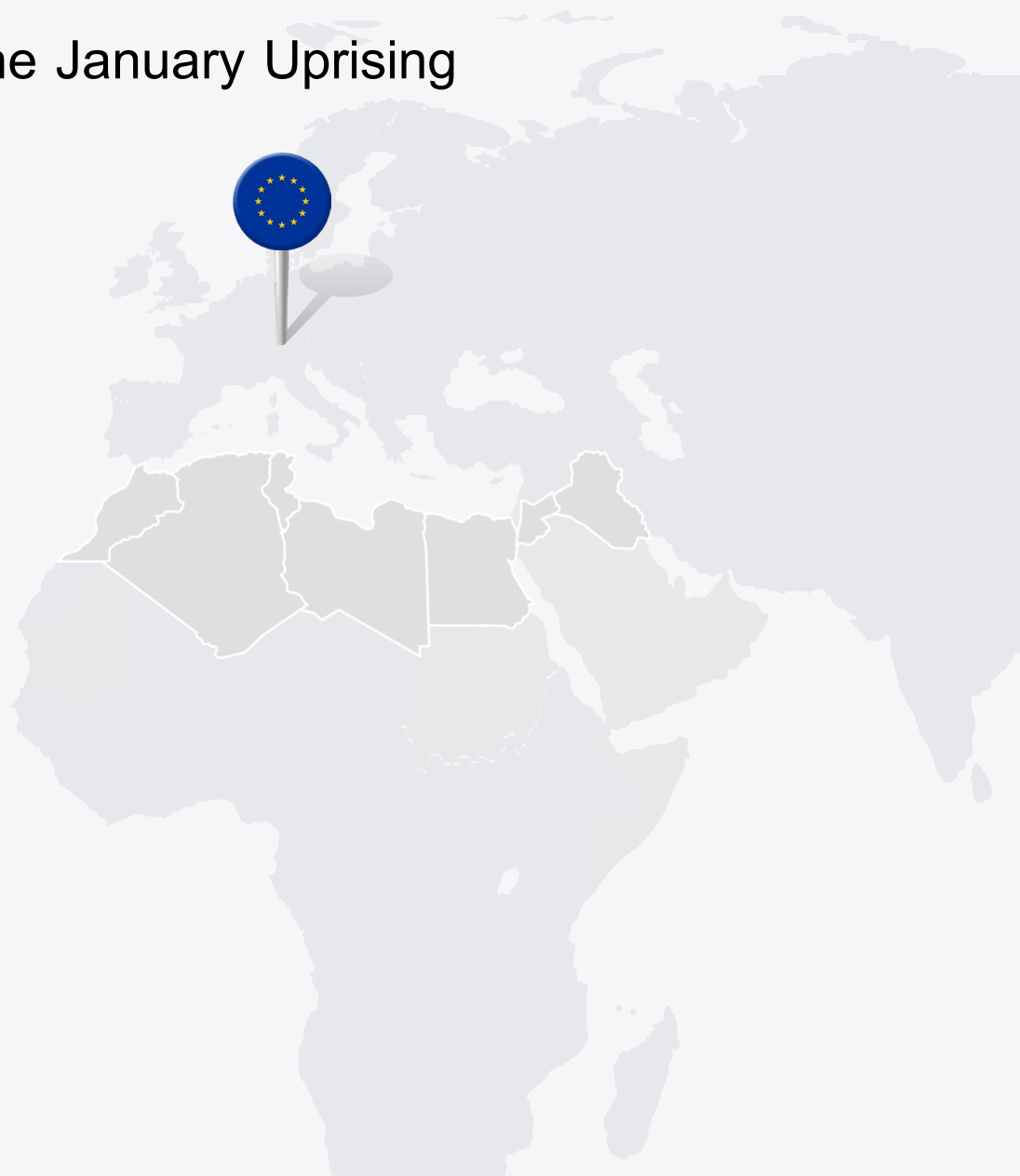
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Political and Social Change in Egypt: Preludes to the January Uprising

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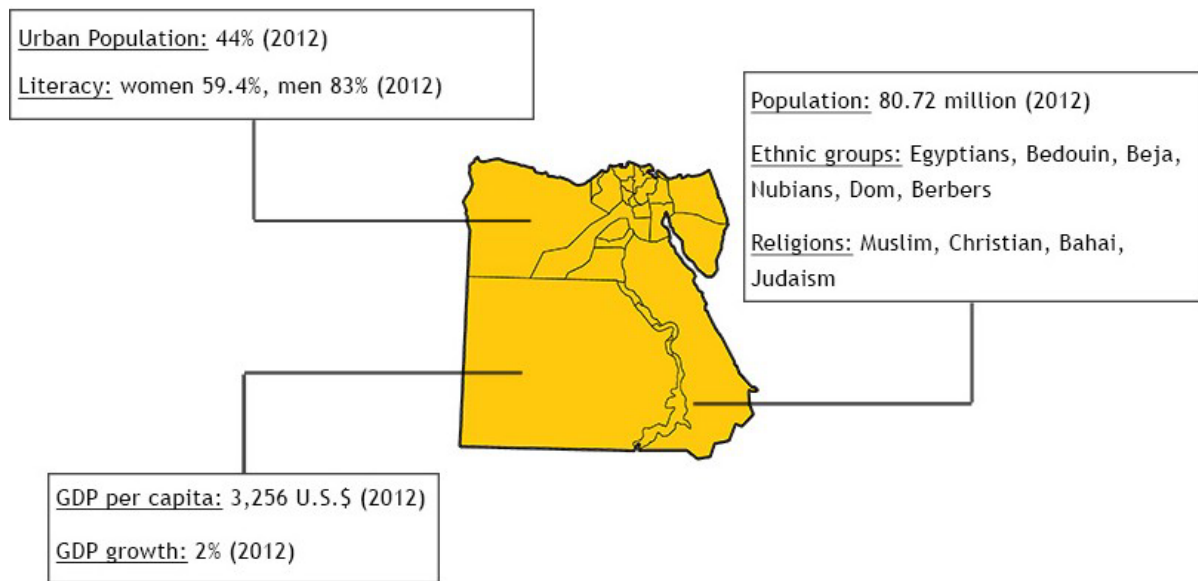
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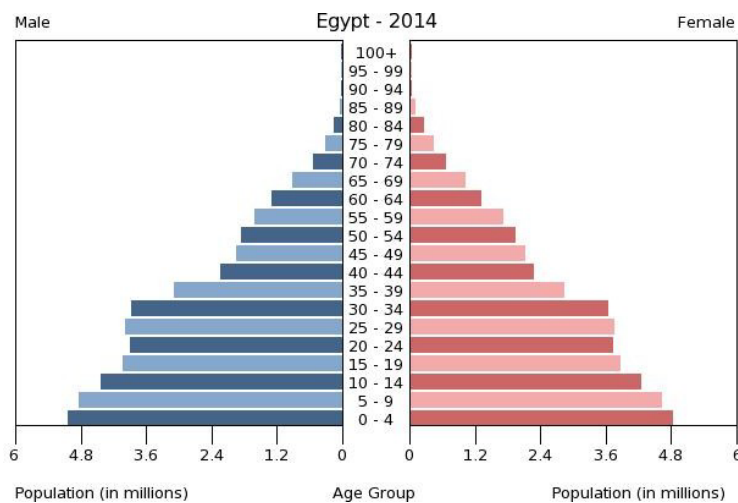
1 Country Overview

1.1 Demography

Most data concerning Egypt's demography are approximations. The population is estimated between 86,895,099 (July 2014 est., *CIA World Factbook*). Its two largest cities are Cairo (11,169,000) and Alexandria (4,500,000). Overall, 43.7% of the country's population lives in major urban areas (2013 est. *World Bank*) with an urbanization rate estimated at 2.04% (*CIA World Factbook*). The Nile Delta region, which includes these cities, has one of the highest population densities in the world and contains most of Egypt's population. Significant population concentrations outside this area occur only along the Suez Canal and the Gulfs of Aqaba and Suez.



Egypt's population distribution is overwhelmingly young, with 31% below 14, and 63% between 15-64, most of which is under 35.



Egypt's population is highly homogenous both ethnically and religiously. The 2006 census puts ethnic Egyptians at around 99.6% of the population, with minorities of Sudanese, Syrian, Bedouin, Nubian, Palestinian, Berber, Beja, Armenian, and Greek. Religiously, Egypt is 90% Muslim

(predominantly Sunni) 90%, and 10% Christian (majority Coptic Orthodox, with small minorities of Armenian Apostolic, Catholic, Maronite, Orthodox, and Anglican) (2012 est., *CIA World Factbook*). The official language is Arabic, with small portions of the population also speaking Nubian, Sudanese, Berber, and French and English also used as trading languages. Egypt's adult literacy rate is estimated at 73.86% (2013 *World Bank*).

Official statistics put 2013 youth unemployment at 35.7% (*World Bank*), although this is almost certainly a considerable underestimation.

1.2 Geography

Of the country's total surface area (1,002,000km²) population is concentrated along the banks of the Nile and in the northern Delta region, with lesser concentrations along eastern coastal areas. Both major cities, Cairo and Alexandria, are located in the Nile region. This region gives way to the 'Libyan' desert to the west, the Sahara el-Sharqiya (Eastern Desert), the Sudan to the South, and the Sinai peninsula to the East of the mainland. The Suez Canal, which demarcates the border between the Sinai and the mainland, is the country's second key geographical feature, which is also of crucial importance to Egypt's economy and to the country's strategic significance. Roughly 10% of world trade passes through the Suez Canal, making it one of the most valuable economic and strategic assets in the world, and generating a substantial portion of Egypt's national income. Finally, Sinai's eastern borders are shared with Gaza and with Israel, making Egypt a key actor in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

1.3 History

The Arab Republic of Egypt covers territory previously dominated by some of the world's most important ancient civilisations, including Pharaonic and Ptolemaic Egypt. The territory was then taken over by the Romans first and eventually by the Muslim Caliphate expanding out of the Arabian peninsula during the 7th century. It remained part of the Islamic Caliphate in its various evolutions – Arab (641-969), Fatimid (969-1171), Ayyubid (1171-1250), and Mamluk (125-1517) – until the Ottoman period (1517-1914). During the 19th century, starting with Albanian Turkish commander Muhammad Ali who is now considered the founder of modern Egypt, Egypt's viceroys attempted to wrest the province from Ottoman control, reforming agriculture to boost the economy and establishing a standing army. The Ottomans resisted Egypt's rising military and economic power, defeating its invasion force with the help of European powers in 1841. Ali's successor, Suleiman, saw the completion of the Suez Canal, but in 1876 bankrupted the country in profligate attempts to buy greater independence from the Ottoman Porte. In response, Egypt's creditors invoked the support of Britain and France, which pressed the Egyptian government to establish the so-called Dual Control, a power of oversight and veto over Egyptian government spending by British and French officials. This, local elites perceived as interference in Egyptian affairs by foreign powers, and in 1881, the nationalist colonel Ahmad Urabi rode a wave of discontent and was appointed prime minister by the Viceroy. Urabi's opposition eventually led the British, with some French support, to invade Egypt, defeating Urabi's forces definitively at Tel el-Kebir in 1882. Although intended as a short-term presence, British troops would not leave Egyptian soil until 1953, proving a more or less constant source of political radicalisation.

1.3.1 *Interwar Period: Formal Independence, De Facto Colonialism, and Political radicalisation*

During World War 1 Egypt was declared a British Protectorate. After the Great War, Britain denied Egypt independence, to be met with a popular uprising, the so-called '1919 Revolution' which

eventually forced the UK to recognize independence in 1922. However, the British retained control over so-called 'reserved points', including troop presence in the Canal Zone ostensibly to protect the Canal, and the right to intervene militarily in Egyptian politics should Britain's 'vital interests' be compromised. This *de facto* continuation of the Protectorate continued to radicalize national politics during the interwar period, which saw the domination of the nationalist Wafd party – which had been the main force behind the 1919 revolution – in parliamentary politics, but constant attempts by the British and by the King to undermine parliamentary politics. Partly for this reason, the 1920s and 1930s see the emergence of radical paramilitary groups associated with the main political forces, including the Muslim Brotherhood (founded in 1928 as a charitable organization, albeit with the ultimately political goal of 'Islamising' Egyptian society 'from below'). The interwar period also sees the rise of the 'Palestinian Question' and particularly of the fate of Jerusalem, which mobilizes Egyptian public opinion. Political actors including the King, political parties and social movements like the Brotherhood all take position on the issue, for the most part opposing both Zionist colonialism and British unwillingness to oppose it. As the British were *de facto* colonial power in both Palestine and Egypt, Palestine is not only highly symbolic in religious terms (Jerusalem is Islam's third holiest city) but also politically symbolic of the British occupation of Egypt. World War 2 once again put a 'lid' on local politics, but after the war the same structural issues mobilise Egyptian politics: the British occupation, the King's resistance to popular demands, and the nationalist Wafd party being undermined by the first two in translating its popular and populist demands into policy despite repeated election victories. This impasse in the formal political arena created the conditions for political radicalisation, specifically the emergence of both radical nationalism (Egyptian and Arab) and radical Islamism.

1.3.2 *The Rise of Arab Nationalism*

In this context, the Egyptian army's defeat in the 1948-49 wars with Zionist forces which resulted in the establishment of the state of Israel had a traumatic effect both on the army specifically and on national politics generally, leaving political actors' legitimacy badly damaged in the eyes of public opinion whose expectations they had raised.

The Free Officers, a secret society of mostly young nationalist army cadres, came together and eventually organized a successful and largely bloodless coup on July 25th, 1952. The Free Officers included General Neguib, the 'elder statesman' and public face of the coup, Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser who would become its charismatic leader, and Anwar Sadat, later to be chosen by Nasser as Vice President because he was perceived as politically unthreatening. The Free Officers were broadly speaking nationalist, but comprised a wide range of political and religious sensitivities, and were primarily largely pragmatic and motivated by the combination of colonialism and a perceived corrupt monarchy. The UK and particularly US response to their goals drove them into Soviet orbit and left a perception of the US as an imperialist power which lasts – and radicalizes politics – to this day. Until 1954/1955, the Free Officers negotiated for US support, with Nasser actively leading negotiations with both State Department and US intelligence for funding and leverage against the British. However, a combination of US hesitations and British pressure eventually drove Nasser and the Free Officers to strike a deal for arms supplies – which the army badly needed to rebuild its strength and prestige after defeat in 1949 – with Czechoslovakia. It is during this period that Egypt's new leadership formed its perception of the US as an imperialist power. The 1956 Suez Crisis – Britain's last gasp attempt to salvage its interests through repression of local sentiment rather than responding to it – consolidated Egypt's move towards the Soviet orbit and the perception of an imperialist US, despite the fact that the UK, France and Israel did not seek US support and both the US and the USSR pressured both French and British into withdrawing. The Suez Crisis provided Nasser with exceptional legitimacy, having been perceived to have defeated the very embodiment of European colonialism in the Middle East: Britain, France, and Israel. This legitimacy not only

consolidated Nasser's rule domestically, but instantly made him a player of both regional and global significance: it is only after Suez that Nasser begins portraying himself as an *Arab* leader first and foremost.

The second key feature of the Nasser period was the socio-economic reforms he undertook. Lacking a political base, the Free Officers needed public support to legitimize their 'revolution', and to do this Nasser chose to focus on redistributive, pro-poor reforms such as his land reform which broke up the larger latifundia, commitments to provide jobs for university graduates, price controls on staples such as cooking oil, bread and petrol, etc. These policies formed the 'revolutionary' welfarist social contract which was a key plank of Nasser's legitimacy. The flaws, failures and gradual reversal of these commitments has also been a crucial factor in the delegitimisation of Nasser's successors. Both Sadat first and Mubarak later gradually undermined portions of this social contract in favour of Egypt's state and business elites.

1.3.3 The Decline of Arab Nationalism and the Emergence of the Contemporary System

Nasser's use of the Suez Crisis also constrained him: his new Arab nationalist, unionist and anti-imperialist rhetoric elicited offers of unification from Syria, for example, which eventually resulted in the short-lived United Arab Republic (1958-1961). The UAR seemed to be harbinger of further unification with other Arab states (Iraq and Lebanon entered into unity talks) earning Nasser the moniker of the 'Arab Bismarck' in Western press. These talks came to nothing, as local elites were unwilling to relinquish control to Nasser. Moreover, fearful of Syria's instability, Nasser moved to centralise the UAR, which alienated not only Syrians themselves, but also elites in other potential partners. The break-up of the UAR with Syrian secession in 1961 was not only a blow to Nasser's legitimacy, but also increased the war of words between Arab states – particularly Egypt, Syria and Iraq – over their respective revolutionary credentials. The period between 1961 and 1967 was marked in turns by radicalisation of anti-imperialist – and anti-Israeli – rhetoric, and attempt to pull back from a vicious circle Nasser feared – correctly – would lead to war. Defeat in the 1967 June War (aka Six-Day War) and the Israeli capture of Sinai in the process was a devastating body-blow for Nasser's legitimacy and for Arab Nationalism, as well as for Egypt's economy which depended heavily on revenues from the Suez Canal. His death in September 1970 brought to power his Vice-President, Anwar Sadat. Sadat sought to move Egypt away from the Soviet orbit and towards the US both for personal dislike of communism and because his principal leadership rival, Ali Sabry, was close to Moscow and head of Nasser's single party, the Arab Socialist Union. The US and Israel, however, were unresponsive to Sadat's requests to negotiate a return of Sinai in exchange for a deal on the Palestinian question, leading Sadat to build a coalition and eventually attacking Israel in October 1973.

The October War was designed to legitimise Sadat's still weak domestic position and to bring Israel and the US to the negotiating table, in which purposes it was ultimately successful: Sadat eventually signed the 'Camp David Accords' with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin returning Sinai to Egypt and effectively eliminating Egypt from the Arab nationalist front that had been championing the Palestinian cause. Ostracised by Arab partners, ever since 1979 Sadat received in exchange US aid greater than any other country except Israel. Internally, while the October War bestowed legitimacy upon Sadat, negotiations with Israel undermined it. To compensate, and to attack his Nasserist rivals, Sadat attempted to use the Muslim Brotherhood. Persecuted under Nasser, Brotherhood leaders and activists were freed in the 1970s and allowed to challenge Nasserists particularly in universities. However, the attempt to keep Islamists under control alienated and radicalised some of these groups also, with some turning to violence (the Brotherhood itself rejected violence and sought to change Egyptian society 'from below', effectively accepting the compromise Sadat offered them). By the end of his decade in power, Sadat had shifted Egypt into the US orbit, but at the price of profound internal disaffection. Indeed, in January 1977, his attempt to remove price controls on

staples met with a massive uprising resulting in 900 dead in two days before Sadat announced a policy reversal. Such discontent and successive waves of crackdowns on both leftist and Islamist activists was a key determinant in his assassination in 1981.

1.3.4 Egypt Under Mubarak: Clientelism and 'Neoliberalism'

The regime's first response to Sadat's assassination was an emergency law which granted security services extraordinary powers to detain, question, charge and try anyone accused of 'terrorism'. Renewed every two years, the powers of this 'state of emergency' became a central plank of Mubarak's 'security state', regularly used to target any significant form of dissent, both amongst Islamists and liberal and leftist activists. It also became a rallying point for activists and ordinary Egyptians subject to the security forces' routine abuse of power.

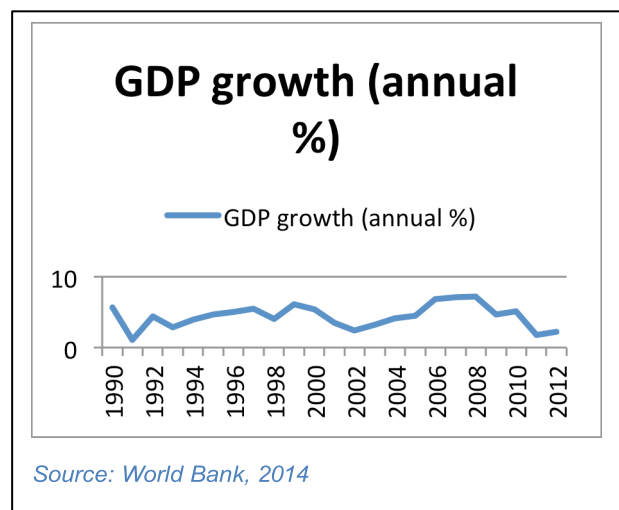
Nonetheless, Mubarak was initially relatively popular, due to his slowing the pace of economic reforms, reversing some of Sadat's repressive excesses, and the allowing *de facto* participation of Islamist forces in party politics by permitting candidates to run as independents or under the banner of other parties. For more radical Islamist fringes, the Egyptian regime encouraged a US-sanctioned migration to Afghanistan, to join the ranks of the anti-Soviet *mujahiddeen*, from the ranks of which eventually both the Taliban and Al-Qaeda emerged. The fragility of consensus behind Mubarak was demonstrated with the

First Intifada, sparked in 1987, in which pro-Palestinian public protest effectively provided cover for anti-government demonstrations, since Egypt had become instrumental in policing Gazan Palestinians ever since the Camp David accords. In 1991, Egypt's allegiance to US regional positions lead it to support collective action against Saddam Hussein's Iraq in response to the annexation of Kuwait – as did virtually all other Arab states – while again public opinion in Egypt as in other Arab countries opposed this perceived instance of US imperialism as well as the Egyptian regime's domestic authoritarianism and pliability to Washington's interests.

The early 1990s also see the beginning of IMF-style economic reform: relaxing price controls, attracting foreign investment (often through tax breaks or labour reform), and facilitating privatization of state assets. These reforms continued in the 2000s, and were indeed accelerated under the government of Ahmad Nazif, a close ally of the President's son and businessman, Gamal Mubarak. GDP growth rates between 1991 and 2010 are rarely below 3% and often 5-7%. However, income and wealth polarisation proceeded apace with economic reform, such that by 2010 about 40% of the population were living at or below the \$2 poverty line.

These reforms, driven in part by a series of IMF loans and structural adjustment policies, further eroded the Nasser-era welfarist social contract.

This had the unintended effect of increasing the regime's reliance on services provided by Islamist charitable organisations, a substantial portion of which – e.g. in education and public health – were controlled by or affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood or the increasingly significant Salafi *Da'wa* (Call) movement. The Mubarak regime therefore trod a fine line between tolerance of the Brotherhood to benefit from its charitable services and repression of its overtly political manifestation. Brotherhood leaders were generally happy to accept the continuation of this compromise, reached with Sadat.



The reforms also consolidated another trend evident in the Mubarak era: the relative marginalisation of the Army within the ruling regime. This took place along two directions: the rise of internal security forces, and the emergence of a new generation of businessmen linked to Mubarak's son Gamal. Internal security forces gradually grew in numbers and in political importance in response to the domestic security challenges of the 1970s and then of the 1990s, with Ministry of Interior personnel eventually overtaking the armed forces in terms of sheer manpower. In parallel, IMF-style economic reforms – particularly the privatization of state assets and service contracts – allowed the emergence of a new class of businessmen, linked to Gamal Mubarak, like steel magnate Ahmad Ezz. This group attempted to wrest control of Mubarak's National Democratic Party in the 2000s from the party's 'old guard' and, in a country ranked around 127th in the world for 'ease of doing business', use their position of privilege to obtain government contracts internally and act as privileged counterparts for foreign investors. This trend threatened the Armed forces in a second sense, providing the possibility of competition for access to business, both with the state and with foreign investors. More generally, the NDP 'old guard', the Armed forces and broad sections of the popular opposition sought to resist the 'inheritance' (*tawrih*) of power which Mubarak seemed to be preparing for his son – an issue that became a lightning rod for popular dissatisfaction with the regime.

1.3.5 *The Road to Revolution: 2000-2010*

The tension between the regime's international commitments and public opinion built throughout the 1990s. Early the following decade, it began transforming into overt internal dissent with many of the activists involved later being central to the uprising of January-February 2011. With the Oslo Accords turning into an impasse in the late-1990s, pro-Palestinian protest again served also as a forum for anti-government dissent. The US government's decision to attack the Taleban regime in response to the '9/11' attacks and its decision to invade Iraq in 2003 again galvanised domestic opposition. Increasingly, although demonstrations were often small, especially in Cairo, domestic political issues became part of protesters' repertoire, until explicitly domestic initiatives began emerging, *Shayfeenkum!* (*We see you!*) and *Kifaya!* (*Enough!*) being the most prominent of these, crossing one of the regime's 'red lines': explicitly targeting the Mubarak family. What motivated these protests was the effect of economic reforms, which while increasing GDP per capita also worsened the country's already dire income and wealth inequality, which in particular began pauperising the lower middle classes (e.g. teachers). The basic problem for the regime was that in the past it had weathered economic difficulties by allowing greater political participation, and used periods of economic good fortune to restrict protest: however, 'liberalising' reforms had a negative economic impact and also required repression of political dissent. The so-called 'Cairo Spring' of 2005 epitomised this impasse: after the 2004 Nazif government had accelerated reforms and elicited public protest, Mubarak responded by 'liberalising' the political arena, holding parliamentary elections, promising an end to the emergency law, and reforming the constitution to allow for competitive presidential elections. The parliamentary elections, however, were marred by bloody repression of the main opposition force, the Muslim Brotherhood, and by NDP infighting between the 'old guard' and 'Gamalites'. The much-vaunted presidential elections resulted in a two-horse race between Mubarak and Ayman Nour, after which Nour, who lost with barely 7.5%, was imprisoned on trumped-up charges. In the meantime, economic reforms had also elicited protest from workers' movements: increasingly dissatisfied with the state-controlled Egyptian Trade Union Federation, workers organised and protested locally against ever-worsening terms of employment. Epitome of this trend was the nationwide general strike called for on April 6th, 2008, motivated by the combination of harsh police repression and worsening economic circumstances after the Nazif government budgets of 2005, 2006, and 2007. In Mahalla, the strike gave rise to a week-long strike and running battles between tens of thousands of demonstrators and the police, with the regime's symbols – e.g. posters of Mubarak – torn down in exactly the iconoclasm later seen in January-February 2011.

The same lines of tension emerged in the 2010 parliamentary elections, barely a month before the 'January Uprising'. The Brotherhood was harshly repressed, the demands of workers and civil society opposition ignored, and intra-NDP competition led to the party being unable to make even perfunctory concessions to the 'cosmetic opposition', resulting in it taking over 93% of seats in the lower house (Teti and Gervasio, 2011a).

1.3.6 *The January Revolution and post-Mubarak politics*

On January 25th, national police day, a coalition of civil society groups opposed to the regime called for nationwide protests against the regime. The combination of a crescendo of political protest over the previous decade and the game-changing example of the Tunisian revolution resulted in unexpectedly massive and nation-wide participation (Teti and Gervasio, 2011, 2011b). Across the country, internal security forces seemed caught off-guard by the scale of protests, as well as by organisational tactics, and in Cairo were spectacularly beaten by the sheer volume of protesters converging into the city's central Liberation (*Tahrir*) Square (El-Ghobashi, 2011). Conventional political forces were taken by surprise as much as the regime, with the Muslim Brotherhood, the Salafi Da'wa movement, the traditionalist and state-controlled Azhar university, and the Coptic Pope all instructing their followers to abstain from protesting. After two days of nationwide demonstrations, conventional political actors eventually backed what was clearly going to be a major protest, the 'day of anger' called for Friday, January 28th. A combination of internal security forces' inability to deal with protest, the army's non-intervention, and the sheer scale of protests increased pressure on Mubarak, and after 18 days the army forced the President to step down. The army acted opportunistically to leverage its own interests and use protest to reconfigure the balance of power within the regime in a way that earned it considerable popularity. Its transition plans, however, were fuzzy at best. It disbanded parliament, and issued an 8-point 'constitutional declaration' which was put to a referendum in March. It gained overwhelming approval with around 75% of voters – a massive 41% of the electorate compared to paltry turnouts during the Mubarak era. However, the army's behaviour since then – from turning the 8-point declaration into a much expanded *de facto* constitution, to the repression it aimed at any form of public protest since Mubarak's deposition – soon earned it popular rancour. The military had taken over both executive and legislative functions, as well as sanctioning the use of military courts to try civilians, used to clamp down on protest. Dissatisfaction eventually simmered over, first in popular protests leading to the appointment of an interim government under Essam Sharaf, and later in the so-called 'Battle of Muhammad Mahmoud' in November 2011, which effectively forced the ruling military to concede parliamentary elections and – it was hoped – transition to civilian rule.

The 2012 parliamentary and elections saw the overwhelming victory of Islamist parties, primarily the Muslim Brotherhood's *Freedom and Justice Party* (37.5%) and the Salafist *Nour* (Light) Party (27.8%). This victory made the outcome of the Presidential elections surprising: the first round saw the top four candidates within 7% of each other: the FJP's Muhammad Morsi (24.78%), Air Force General Ahmad Shafiq (23.66%), Leftist Hamdeen Sabbahi (20.72%) and progressive Islamist Abdel Mounim Aboul Futouh (17.47%). The run-off between Morsi and Shafiq polarised opinion between Islamists and some 'revolutionaries' voting for Morsi as a token of change (despite misgivings about the conservative Brotherhood) and conservative secular nationalists and some 'revolutionaries' who would accept anything in lieu of the Brotherhood. Morsi eventually won with a bare 51.73%.

This victory lulled the Brotherhood into a false sense of security, leading it to an alliance with the Nour Party to impose an 'Islamist' constitutional draft. Despite deep misgivings about the process and despite Morsi handing himself dangerously sweeping – if temporary – powers in November and December 2012 which met with widespread anti-Ikhwan street protests, the constitutional draft was approved by a landslide (63.83%, turnout: 32.86%) in December. The FJP's rule was marred by attempts to strike deals with the armed forces and internal security while repressing the opposition.

This led to a groundswell of popular opposition culminating in support for the so-called *Tamarrod* (Rebellion) movement, which collected signatures demanding Morsi's removal and called for an anti-Morsi protest on June 28th [?]. The Army again intervened opportunistically, and on July 3rd arrested Morsi, repressed subsequent protests in blood (over 1,000 estimated to have been killed by security forces since), and decapitating the Brotherhood as an organisation (41,000 detained, including the Brotherhood's top three leadership tiers).

General Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, head of SCAF, was presented as saviour of the nation by an alliance of the armed forces and friendly media within both the state and private sectors. Despite this, the Presidential elections scheduled for May 26-27 and widely expected to rubber-stamp his presidency, saw such a low turnout that on May 27th, the Presidential Elections Commission (PEC) arbitrarily added a third day of voting, decided on a 500LE (€51) fine for non-voters – in addition to certain shopping centres being closed down in order to encourage people to vote.

Beyond the result of the Presidential elections, Egypt remains in a *de facto* state of exception insofar as there is as yet no lower house of parliament. The most important political-economic actors are currently jostling for position in the new regime. It seems highly likely that this regime will be authoritarian, that it will be unable to address the basic demands of the January 2011 uprising ('bread, freedom and social justice') and that it will not be able to rely on the same degree of demobilization that conferred the Mubarak regime with an aura of stability.

2 Political context: analysis of internal dynamics and institutions

2.1 Political institutions and systems

Egypt's political and institutional landscape has changed several times during the post-Mubarak period, and remains ill-defined. The May 2014 presidential elections sanctioned the Army's renewed grip on power, but the country remains without a functioning parliament. However, Egypt has been living in a *de facto* 'state of exception' since February 2011, in which the country's informal power system – the so-called 'deep state' has been far more important in determining political dynamics than any of its formal institutions and processes. (Gervasio et al. 2014)

There were several demands put forward by protesters during and after the January 2001 uprising which can be used as litmus tests of Egypt's claims to a transition towards democracy. Amongst these is the use of emergency legislation and specifically the power to use military and State Security courts to try civilians. Under Mubarak, this had rallied opposition to the regime, and its abolition was one of the key demands of the January uprising. Contrary to expectations, the number of prosecutions – more often than not against pro-democracy and anti-regime protesters – ballooned reaching an estimated 12,000 civilians by September. SCAF repeated its commitment to end military trials for civilians, except for "those who attack army soldiers," at a meeting with representatives of 47 political parties on September 18th. Another litmus test of the military junta's disposition has been the prosecution of former regime members. Hosni Mubarak, his sons, and reviled former Interior Minister Habib al-Adly: some high-ranking former members of the regime have been tried and fairly swiftly convicted (e.g. former Information Minister Anas al-Fiqqi, former Egyptian Radio and TV Union chief Osama al-Sheikh and businessman and former Tourism Minister Zoheir Garanah were sentenced to 7, 5 and 3 years respectively for corruption; Gamal Mubarak's closest ally, Ahmad Ezz, was sentenced to 10 years for misuse of public funds). But the Mubaraks eventually got off very lightly with sentences of 3-4 years for crimes ranging from ordering the killing of civilians to corruption, while pro-democracy activists were sentenced to 2-4 years for far smaller 'crimes' (protest criminalised by legislation). The way these and other issues have been dealt with by the military as the country's *de facto* legislative as well as executive power suggest little confidence in either a transition towards democracy or in the independence of institutions emerging from the current wave of constitutional reform.

- *Executive power:* Throughout the Republican period, formally, Egypt has remained a Presidential Republic. The President's formal executive powers are vast under both the current constitution and its predecessors, all based on Sadat's 1971 text. Under new arrangements, executive power is held primarily by the President, who under previous arrangements based on the 1971 constitution, the President could dissolve the People's Assembly, appointed 10 members of the PA and 88 members of the Consultative Council. According to the new constitution, the Presidency retains the power to dissolve parliament and appoint the Prime Minister, appoints 5% of the new unicameral parliament, appoints Supreme Court judges, can pass emergency measures that need ratification within 15 days, must seek national defence council (army) and House of Rep approval to declare war, and represents the State in foreign treaties and ratify after Parliamentary approval. Between July 2013 and May 2014, after the army coup of July 3rd, the military allowed Constitutional Court President Adly Mansour to take on the functions of interim President, in line with the 1971 Constitution.
- *Legislative power:* Both pre- and post-9152 legislatures have been weak in Egypt. Under the 1971 constitution and its successors, the country was given a bicameral legislative system, with a weak upper house many of whose members were appointed by the President. The Upper House was nonetheless a crucial tool of political control insofar as it appointed the Political parties commission from its ranks, which had the authority to decide on applications for new political parties to be established. Under Mubarak, it routinely denied these

applications, and what new parties were established owed their existence to recourse to the Supreme Constitutional Court. After Mubarak was removed, the newly-elected lower house was disbanded, and the country remained without a formal legislative organ of state until late 2011, when parliamentary elections were held for the Lower House, the People's Assembly (PA, *Majlis ash-Sha'b*) (elections for the upper house, the Consultative Council (CC, *Majlis ash-Shura*) were held later in two rounds in early 2012). The Supreme constitutional court, however, dissolved the bicameral legislature on 14 June 2012, on a ruling of unconstitutionality of the electoral law. This was widely perceived to be a reaction by elements of the former regime to the large majority which Islamist parties had gained in the Lower House. The powers of the new uni-cameral House of Representatives (*Majlis Al-Nowwab*) are defined in Chapter Five of the new Constitution: its role is to pass legislation; review and approve agreements, treaties and State plan and budget; maintain oversight of Executive; pass amendments to the Constitution; and can demand the resignation of the cabinet. There are, however, few indications that the new Assembly will benefit from greater autonomy than its Mubarak-era predecessors, not to mention its immediate Islamist-dominated predecessor.

- *Judicial Power*: Overall, among Arab countries, Egypt's judiciary has a reputation for relative independence from political power and a strong jurisprudential tradition. However, this cannot be said about parts of its upper echelons, particularly in posts appointed by the Executive, such as the Attorney General. Under the new constitution, the judiciary's two main branches remain the Court of Cassation and the Supreme Constitutional Court. The Court of Cassation: interprets the law and acts as the highest court of appeal and has jurisdiction over judges' actions. The Supreme Constitutional court, which has remained the highest state power since the removal of President Morsi and the previous disbandment of the Lower House of Parliament by the Court itself, adjudicates on the constitutionality of legislation, settles intra-court disputes and oversees elections. However, there remain significant question marks over judicial independence. Widely criticized Judicial Authority Law 142/2006 subjected the judiciary to considerable influence from the Interior Ministry, by allowing the Ministry to appoint 'judicial councils' to supervise elections among other things. This law has not been repealed.
- *The Armed Forces*: The armed forces obtained a constitutional commitment that their independence remain unchecked by civilian oversight, including its vast budget [see 2.2 below]

2.2 Main socio-political actors

Egypt's main socio-political forces and civil society actors can be divided into state- and non-state-related/affiliated. In terms of influence, it is necessary to distinguish between groups that are capable of direct influence over the formal political arena and particularly administrative processes (ranging from jobs to public works contracts to market regulation) and those groups that are influential in society more broadly but hold limited sway in the formal process.

2.2.1 State-related actors

Actors can be divided in two categories depending on their influence on the political process. The first group constitutes the 'hard core' of the regime and is composed by the following institutions:

- a) *The Armed Forces*: The armed forces in Egypt have always played a central role in internal security as well as national defence, and since the 'July Revolution' of 1952 they have also benefited from widespread respect. Since Sadat in the 1970s, however, the army was slowly but surely sidelined within the regime by the growth of internal security forces, developed as a direct result of the instability which Sadat's foreign and domestic policies – most of these continued by Mubarak – caused. One of the counterparts for this decreasing domestic role, which was also offered as a way of decreasing the armed forces' budgetary impact, was the ability to engage in business directly. The Army remained central even under Mubarak and

has returned to centrality in the post-Mubarak era: it has always controlled the Ministry of Defence (which heads the armed forces) and the Ministry of Military Production, which sits atop the Army's economic empire. This empire is estimated at anywhere between 2% and 60% of GDP (World Bank 2013, Deutsche Welle 2014) making anything from bottled water to infrastructure projects. The Army officer corps also extends its influence on local administration through the appointment of local bureaucrats (e.g. Governors). Its budget is ringfenced and unaccountable to civilian oversight, making the army essentially a state within the state. In December of 2011 when state foreign currency reserves were running dangerously low, the armed forces offered central government a loan of \$1bn. Since the January Revolution, the Army has sought further protections for its position, and obtained from successive governments – particularly Morsi's presidency – the constitutional enshrining of its privileges. According to the current constitution, the armed forces budget cannot be questioned or even scrutinised by government or parliament, much less the general public.

- b) *Internal Security forces*: Internal Security forces are headed by the powerful Ministry of Interior. Like the army they are built on a vast and poorly paid conscript base, pressed into the primary function of repressing all forms of dissent. Like the armed forces, they also control a financial empire, although again the size of these interests is unknown. Observers agree Security Sector Reform is a vital step in any transition towards democracy: although security forces are vital in guaranteeing the rule of law, under Mubarak they regularly abused their power. Unfortunately, their reform since Mubarak's removal has been merely cosmetic.
- c) *The Government*: The government controls vast financial resources and is the country's largest employer. It controls planning, implementing and proposing laws before the Parliament. The executive also appoints a broad range of state officials including Governors and local administrators, although in most cases this has translated into a vehicle for ex-armed forces and ex-Interior Ministry personnel to be appointed to key positions. Although primary executive power rests with the President, and the Prime Minister's job is to execute the political choices sanctioned by the President, the government groups together several powerful ministerial posts. Prime among these are the Ministers of Defence and Military Production (see above), the Minister of the Interior (see above), the Minister for Social Affairs (MoSA) whose tasks include the registration and administration of CSOs, effectively becoming with the Interior Ministry the primary tools through which the regime controls the opposition (which is constituted mostly of CSOs, while political parties are largely either powerless or co-opted into the regime as 'loyal opposition'). The Ministry of Manpower also plays such a role, controlling as it does the state-sanctioned Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF), which individual unions must be members of in order to be legal, and whose mostly government-appointed leadership has the power to veto individual strikes.

The second group is composed by institutions considered as having a medium influence and serving an auxiliary or subordinate role in Egypt's power dynamics with respect to the institutions above:

- a) *The Parliament*: Parliament cannot be said to constitute an independent branch of government in Egypt. Rather, it functions as a locus for intra-elite dispute resolution and a mechanism through which patronage can be extended from the executive to MPs, and from these to their constituents. As such, it constitutes a subordinate but nonetheless important part of the Egyptian regime. Its lower house, the People's Assembly (*Majlis ash-Sha'b*) remains disbanded, with elections expected for late 2014 but no date yet set.
- b) *Political parties*: Parliamentary parties function largely within the clientelistic logic noted above. In the post-Mubarak era, three phases can be distinguished. In the **first phase**, between Mubarak's removal and the 2012 Lower House elections, high levels of political mobilization brought the establishment of new political parties with what was perceived to be a realistic chance of influencing the political process by replacing the disbanded and discredited National Democratic Party (Teti 2011). Because no law had been passed proscribing former regime members from running for political office, in those elections there was considerable concern that *felool* (defeated remnants) of the old order might re-organise and be a force to be reckoned with in the new parliament, having the advantage of experience organising and running campaigns as well as that of the levers of local patronage. However, *felool* were largely unsuccessful and the parliament was widely

regarded as made up of genuinely new political forces – with the partial exception of the Brotherhood, and despite Islamist parties' domination. It should be noted that Islamist parties – primarily the FJP and Nour – were largely seen as proxies of their mother organisations, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafi Da'wa. The **second phase** commenced with the 2012 parliamentary elections and lasted until the disbanding of the Lower House as a result of a ruling by the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC) that ruled the electoral law through which the House had been elected unconstitutional. During this phase, parliamentary debate was dominated by Islamist parties and highlighted several problems (e.g. grandstanding by specific MPs). The **third phase** began with the disbanding of the Lower House and continues to date. Legislative power is theoretically held by the Upper House, but remains extremely limited, and in practice the military and the government rule by decree.

- c) *Judiciary*: [see 2.1 above].

2.2.2 *Non-state actors*

In this section we group the non-state actors that retain significant influence. We first consider the social forces divided in three groups in descending order based on their importance. We then consider more proper civil society organizations, grouping them too in three sections in descending order based on their influence.

2.2.2.1 *Social forces*

Social forces can be gathered in three groups depending on their influence. The first is composed by:

- a) *Business elites*: A distinction can be made between businessmen who chose to link themselves to the regime and those army and internal security officers who became businessmen through the regime. Within the former there are those such as Ahmad Ezz who took an active role in politics – such as Ahmad Ezz, who became Gamal Mubarak's closest ally, or Ibrahim Mahlab, army-favourite current Prime Minister – as well as those who reach a modus vivendi with the regime such as the Sawiris brothers. The latter represent a category which presented itself as 'liberal' or 'revolutionary' through their support of the 2011 uprising: owners of OnTV, they allowed it to broadcast on an anti-Mubarak line. However, they immediately reached accommodation with the new army-led regime once Morsi's presidency ran into trouble. A third category of businessmen exemplified by Khairat al-Shatir, *eminence grise* of the Muslim Brotherhood, are affiliated with religious movements – the Brotherhood or the Salafi Da'wa – are often referred to as the 'pious bourgeoisie'.
- b) *The media*: Freedom of speech was gradually clawed back under the late Mubarak regime by opposition organisation who slowly became more assertive. However, both print and television media have historically been pliant to the wishes of the regime. Temporary and partial exceptions are Al-Jazeera Arabic Service and Egyptian private media after Mubarak's removal and before the July 3rd 2013 coup. Al-Jazeera Arabic Service before the January Uprising broadcast hard-hitting factual and debate-based programmes in a style Arabic-speaking audiences were previously infrequently accustomed to. Particularly after the launch of its sister channel *Al-Jazeera Mubashir Misr* (Al-Jazeera Live Egypt) and Qatar's strategic decision to back the Brotherhood, AJMM and AJ became noticeably partisan – to the point that AJMM was nicknamed *Al-Jazeera Mubashir Morsi*. During and after the 'eighteen days' of protests against Mubarak, Egyptian private media – channels like Naguib Sawiris' OnTV – eventually largely backed protesters. However, under the push factor of increasing Brotherhood one-sidedness and the pull factor of the re-organisation of the 'old regime' (particularly the armed forces) most such media eventually switched sides to back the army once more.
- c) *The Salafi Da'wa Movement*: The Salafist movement, until the 2011 uprising, explicitly avoided the formal political arena, instead preferring to concentrate on charitable activities and the moral and religious 'education' of the population so as to change society indirectly. The virtually non-existent levels of state provision of basic services such as welfare, health,

and education guaranteed demand for the services they offered and thus an audience receptive to their message. The Salafist movement is not unified in a single organisation and cannot be thought of as speaking with a single voice, but has generally adopted similar tactics: an apolitical stance before January 2011, the choice of political engagement – if tardy – in the revolution, and the attempt to form a political party representative of the Da'wa's interests (the Nour Party). Their funding is diverse, and comes in part from charitable donations from the 'pious bourgeoisie', but a significant portion of their funding comes from both state and non-state donors in the Gulf, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Governmental funding from these sources has been redirected away from the Brotherhood, perceived to be too dissimilar from their donors religiously and too independent politically. Since the Brotherhood's removal from office, the Salafist movement has attempted to position itself as the alternative to the pre-uprising Brotherhood for the regime: capable of supplying welfare in exchange for influence over social policy and a modicum of political power. However, both debates internal to the movement and the fluidity of the current situation do not make this a foregone conclusion.

- d) *Muslim Brotherhood*: Formed in 1928, the Brotherhood is the oldest and best-organised political organisation in Egypt. It has historically aimed to change society 'from below' in a similar way as described for the Salafist movement above, although within it there have been regular debates about the possibility of engaging more directly in the formal political arena. The leadership has regularly rejected these, the latter episode being the expulsion of Abdel Mounim Aboul Futouh, who ran for the presidency on an independent ticket, coming fourth with 17.47% of the vote, barely 7% less than the first stage winner, Muhammad Morsi. Although the most obvious feature of the Brotherhood's political stance is its agenda to 'Islamize' society, its ability to build a modus vivendi with successive regimes was based on the twin pillars of its acceptance of a secondary political role (under Mubarak, it never ran for a majority of seats in parliament, clearly indicating it did not intend to challenge the regime) and the compatibility of its economic agenda with the regime's. In the 2010 parliamentary elections, the Brotherhood's economic manifesto was indistinguishable from the NDP's, and its actions in government were entirely coherent with the former regime's strategy of privatization and patronage. Its attempt to develop part of the Suez Canal, however, is indicated by some observers as a red line motivating the army to move against the Brotherhood. Since July 2013, the Brotherhood has been subjected to a sustained attempt to decapitate and incapacitate the organisation politically: it has been defined as a 'terrorist organisation', its assets have been seized, the top three tiers of the organisation have been either arrested or driven into exile, and tens of thousands of activists have been detained. Its long-term future will depend much on the combination of its continuing funding from abroad, the degree to which the regime will keep up this level of repression (including harassment of its commercial activities), and the willingness of the 'pious bourgeoisie' to keep supporting the organisation financially.
- e) *'Liberal elites'*: Albeit not forming a coherent or institutionalised group of any kind, Egypt's elites are highly influential both economically and politically. A portion of these supported the 2011 revolution, although most remained sceptical or fearful for the implications for their own positions of protesters' calls for social justice, for example.

After having analysed the most influential social forces we now consider the forces retaining medium influence:

- f) *Azhar*: The University of al-Azhar is the oldest institution of higher learning in the world, and despite the fact that its independence has long been curtailed in its relationship with the Egyptian state, it remains a respected centre for religious and legal scholarship across the Muslim world. It is certainly an important tool amongst the Egyptian state's strategies for popular legitimisation. The Azhar's Grand Mufti rarely adopts political positions of any significance at odds with the regime's, and like its counterparts in the Coptic Church (as well as the Brotherhood and the Salafi movement) initially opposed the January 2011 Uprising.
- g) *The Coptic Church*: The Coptic Church is another important element within the regime. It claims to represent the country's 10% Christian population, particularly defending its rights and interests from an often hostile opposition from more radical and conservative Islamists.

The regime in turn presents itself as a bastion for the defence of Coptic rights against Islamist opposition. This claim is also a key element in successive regimes' attempt to legitimise their position with their international supporters in the West: successive authoritarian regimes have claimed, explicitly, that if they are removed Copts will remain at the mercy of Islamists' animus. But ever since Nasser, the regime has also permitted if not actively stoked animosity against Copts, and rarely do security forces and the judiciary intervene in timely and effective fashion to defend Copts in such situations: a certain level of conflict helps keep the Coptic population fearful and thus more likely to accept the state's 'protection' and therefore effectively bolster its legitimacy and stability.

- h) *Professional associations*: In the 1970s and then the 1980s, professional associations – particularly the Lawyers' Club, the Judges' Club, the Doctors' Club and the Journalists' Club – became a key political battleground and litmus test of Egypt's evolving balance of ideological power. With the formal political arena effectively blocked by the regime through its control of the Political Parties' Commission in the Upper House (as well as through direct harassment), elections for office in professional associations became the best weathervane available of public opinion.

The Doctors' Club has been a traditional Brotherhood stronghold: in the late Mubarak period the Brotherhood made inroads in other professional associations such as the Judges' Club. However, both during those years and since then (e.g. under Morsi' presidency) the Brotherhood's aura of invincibility was undermined with several losses or strong challenges by figures independent of both the regime and the Brotherhood.

Finally, amongst the least influential social forces:

- i) *Trade Unions*: The labour movement can be distinguished into two sections: the official and the independent. Legally, unions must be registered with the Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF). The Federation has amongst its functions to rule on members' proposals to strike, but as most of the Board is close to or appointed by the regime, ETUF functions essentially as tool of the state's corporatist strategy, transmitting government central decisions down to its members, and blocking protest or change from its membership directed towards the state centre. As a consequence, independent – which is to say formally illegal – unions have been set up. [for more, see 'Independent Trade Unions' below.]

2.2.2.2 *Civil Society Organizations*

CSOs can be divided into three main groups depending on their influence on the political process and their national or regional scale.

The following groups are considered the most influent:

1. *GONGOs*: 'Governmental NGOs' or GONGOs are an important part of successive regimes' legitimisation strategies, particularly with their international Western counterparts. GONGOs can be broadly divided into two categories: NGOs that ended up being co-opted by the regime (e.g. *Al-Ard*), and those that were set up directly by the regime (e.g. the Suzanne Mubarak Foundation) (For a detailed analysis, see Abderrahman 2004). The former are organisations that often decided to cooperate with the regime directly or with the second type of GONGOs initially for tactical reasons – e.g. to obtain funding or move certain kinds of legislation forward – but found themselves ensnared in a relationship of dependence. This second category of CSOs are essentially direct emanations of the regime. The best-known example of these is the Suzanne Mubarak Foundation (SMF): (formerly) headed by the former President's wife, it works on women's issues generally. However, it is an important part of the regime's legitimisation strategy with Western governments inasmuch as such CSOs allow the regime to present itself as listening to independent voices and especially to demonstrate Egypt's progress on the 'road to transition'. SMF championed women's rights, but in pushing through legislation over the heads of conservative and radical Islamist forces, it alienated these, which in turn stigmatised such legislation as 'Suzanne's Laws', presenting these as the epitome of Western interference, of the regime's pliability to Western demands, and of its authoritarianism. As such, this legislation has come under sustained criticism after the 2011 revolution and particularly when the Brotherhood was in power.

2. *Foreign Donors*: Foreign donors can be divided into international organisation (e.g. UN), state-linked International NGOs (INGOs, e.g. National Democratic Institute, Friedrich Eberhardt Stiftung, etc.), independent INGOs (e.g. Oxfam, Christian Aid, Save the Children, etc.) and international labour organisations (e.g. ITUC). The distinction between the two is clear in terms of sheer volumes of funding channelled into Egypt, but also notably in terms of their disbursement strategies. The former are for a series of reasons ranging from lack of local knowledge to political/ideological priorities particularly vulnerable to enter into cooperation with GONGOs, effectively helping to legitimise and stabilise the ruling regime.

The following organizations are considered as having medium influence in the society:

- a) *Charitable societies*: The weakness of Egypt's social welfare provision is such that charitable organisations – which are primarily Islamic, with some important Coptic organizations – play an essential role in Egyptian society, without which a high percentage of the population would probably find life impossible. As such, although they infrequently play an overtly political role, the erosion of welfare provision has made them crucial in Egyptian politics, and has been a vital element in the legitimisation of Islamist political ideology and of specific political actors such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafi Da'wa.
- b) *Privately owned independent media*: Private media has become a key component in the regime's legitimisation strategy, backing the official line on Egypt's new 'war on terror'. [See sections 2.3.1 and 3.2 for full analysis]

Finally, these two groups are considered the least influential:

- c) *Independent labour movement*: the Independent labour movement can be divided into independent trade unions and other associational forms having similar functions. The first independent trade union, the Real Estate Tax Collectors' Union, was established by current Minister of Manpower Khaled Abu Eita in December 2008. Abu Eita is a doyen of the Egyptian labour movement, having been an activist in the last wave of labour strikes in 1989. Kamal Abbas is another historical leader of the labour movement, also active in 1989, and currently leader of the Helwan-based Centre for Trade Union and Workers' Services (CTUWS). CTUWS is formally a legal firm providing services to workers, particularly legal support in actions against employers. Workers' organisations which are central to the national labour movement also take on other legal forms, particularly CSOs. Prime example of the latter are the Hisham Mubarak Law Centre (HMCL) and the Egyptian Centre for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR) headed by 2012 presidential candidate and former director of HMLC Khaled Ali. Since the 2011 uprising, the numbers of independent trade unions – like the number of strikes – has skyrocketed: their effectiveness, coordination, and the 'depth' of their base remains patchy, and successive governments have consistently refused to change the law forcing unions' registration with ETU.F In opposition, leaders of the labour movement established the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions (EFITU) on January 31st, 2011, lead by Kamal Abbas and Kamal Abu Eita. Following personal and programmatic differences, Abbas established the breakaway Egyptian Democratic Labour Congress (EDLC) although EFITU and EDLC are now in merger talks.
- d) *Advocacy organizations (including Women's organizations)*: CSOs such as the New Woman Foundation, HMLC and CTUWS were established in the 1980s essentially as offshoots partly of an official labour movement that was controlled by the regime (Nasser, then Sadat and Mubarak) and partly of political parties and movements that had been driven out of the formal political arena by those same regimes. Other organisations such as *Kifaya!* (Enough!), *Shayfeenkum* (We See You), the April 6th Youth Movement, the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR), etc. were established more recently and are a direct consequence of the combination of increased political repression and economic polarisation in the later Mubarak period. These organisations increased in activism and popularity, but are also notable for the way their membership and services cut across conventional political and religious lines: legal services organisations such as HMLC, for example, would often defend Brotherhood activists in court (hence also the particular *resentissement* by sections of the former when the latter's rule concentrated on repressing them instead of building a coherent 'revolutionary front' as many had expected). Along with the labour movement, these organisations played a crucial part in

preparing the ground for the 2011 Uprising. Since February 2011, advocacy organisations have been targeted by successive governments – military, civilian and Islamist – through changes in laws governing Associations, media, freedom of speech, assembly and protest, as well as through police harassment, in an attempt to stifle their voice.

2.3 Drivers of change

Drivers of change in Egyptian society and politics can be divided into internal and external, although these are often linked, as will become apparent. In essence, both can be linked to the basic strategies the Nasser regime first and then the Sadat and Mubarak later developed in order to secure their legitimacy and stability. The legacies of these two broad strategies explains the points of tension and social, economic and political cleavages in contemporary Egyptian society.

Unlike most other Arab MENA countries, Egypt displays a considerable degree of linguistic, religious, ethnic/tribal homogeneity. As such, it was not possible to use such cleavages as a basis for a strategy of rule (cf. Gulf and Levantine countries). The Free Officers' initial legitimacy deficit, the US' unwillingness to back the nationalist regime, and the opportunities ultimately afforded by the Suez Crisis contributed to push Nasser in the direction of choosing mass mobilisation through Arab nationalism as a legitimisation. The need to insulate the new regime from internal elite opposition also propelled the regime in a populist direction. The 'Nasserist social contract' based on import substitution-led growth, employment prospects and a social safety net in the minimum form of price controls on staple goods emerged from this context. Nasser's defeat in 1967, combined with Sadat's political isolation on becoming president and his personal dislike for 'socialism' drove the regime in the opposite direction in the 1970s. The so-called 'open door' (*infitah*) policy served the function of stabilising Sadat's rule (by securing the support of elites hard by Nasser's pro-poor policies) while also complying with one of the US' demands in negotiations over the return of Sinai after the 1967 and 1973 wars. But this shift, in addition to the difficulties in Nasser's model of development, which meant loosening the 'social contract', also meant increasing social strife and commensurately decreasing the regime's popular legitimacy and consequently its stability.

2.3.1 Internal Drivers

The regular emergence of socio-political tensions has been addressed through a strategy which Hinnebusch (1998) has called 'cycles of compression and decompression' (see also Kienle 1998): during times of hardship economic pressure is relieved by using political liberalisation as a 'safety valve', while during periods of better economic fortune political latitude is withdrawn. However, progressive market 'liberalisation' – which has effectively translated into the privatization of state assets and which has allowed the emergence of a new generation of 'oligarchs', and which has been demanded by Western governments, but is entirely in the interests of Egyptian elites – has also brought a considerable increase in wealth and income inequality. Evidence of this trend is sketchy because official data is either not collected or extremely unreliable, but smaller scale studies and national estimates are congruent with a wealth of more anecdotal evidence, and all point in the same direction. The negative effect of these economic reforms, however, could not be countered through political liberalization, as this would have certainly opposed Egypt's 'oligarchization', putting paid to the regime's claims that aggregate economic growth was benefiting the country as a whole.

Insofar as these reforms required a political clampdown rather than liberalization, the regime reached for alternative measures to stabilize its position. This it has done through classic tactics such as identifying internal and/or external enemies (tactics much in evidence in the post-Mubarak period). Copts, the Muslim Brotherhood, the US (despite being an ally), journalists, activists, Israel, Hamas, Syrians, and even garbage collectors have at different times served this function. However, these tactics can at best paper over structural tensions. However, cycles of repression do nothing to

address the question of police abuse of power and its impact on the ordinary lives of Egyptians, not to mention political activists. This explains the twin motivations – economic and political – behind the massive turnout of protesters on January 25th, 2011, and one of the now famous slogans of that uprising: bread, freedom, and social justice/human dignity. External assistance from both regime-friendly Gulf countries and the US and European governments has helped prop up this state of affairs, but none of this assistance has provided significant incentives for Egyptian elites to change the structure of the regime.

2.3.2 *External Drivers*

Two categories of external drivers can be identified: regional and international. Amongst the former, two are important above all: the strategic relationships with Israel and with Saudi Arabia.

The relationship with Israel is a condition of the Camp David accords, and thus of the funding the Egyptian state and armed forces receive from the US and of the return of Sinai – and thus the Suez Canal, with its revenues – to Egypt after 1967. This has two main effects: first, constrains the Egyptian regime's latitude in making concessions on political protest within the country; secondly, it consequently makes the regime an easy target of criticism for being pro-Zionist and pro-American. This 'price' paid for securing US support and Suez revenues cannot be absorbed through relaxing spaces for political forces, thus requiring internal repression, which further erodes regime legitimacy, commensurately making stability more fragile.

The relationship with Saudi Arabia became one of congruence of interests – if not virtual alliance – not long after 1967. The defeat of Nasserism brought about by the combination of the 1967 war and Sadat's own manoeuvrings placed Egypt on the same anti-Arabist 'side'. In this context, throughout the 1960s-1980s, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf oil producers welcomed a large number of Egyptian workers – from construction workers to engineers – whose remittances constituted a significant source of income and foreign currency for Egypt. Additionally, return migrants brought with them a much more conservative brand of Islam heavily influenced by Saudi Wahabbism.

International drivers partly overlap with regional ones insofar as the alliance with Israel especially and also Saudi Arabia emerged in the context of relations with the US. Relations with the US were forged in the Sadat era and remained cemented in the post-Cold War world. The geostrategic and economic policy implications of this alliance as well as the support it gave to an authoritarian regime transferred onto the US negative perceptions the Egyptian population had of its own government. Relations with European countries and with the EU as a whole follow the same general schema, despite the widespread perception certainly amongst activists and elites that their European counterparts are far more sympathetic to specific issues, particularly Palestine (Teti and Gervasio, *forthcoming*). The main source of political aggravation against the EU is the perception that the Union pursues its commercial interests first and foremost, and is happy to tow the US line in geostrategic terms not least because it suits a certain conception of security, and particularly a fear of migration and of 'Islamist terrorism'.

2.3.3 *Conclusions*

The combination of these drivers and the absence of a viable political alternative in Egyptian domestic politics (as a consequence of the destruction of the Nasserist Left by Sadat) helped generate the hegemony of the conservative and Salafist trend in contemporary Egyptian politics. The lack of an alternative political force to the regime and to the Islamist front, the homogeneity of Egypt's political landscape constitutes perhaps the main difference between Egypt and Tunisia, where for all the country's problems political forces are more balanced, increasing the premium on and thus the likelihood of compromise.

Taken together, this regime typology is brittle, and became very fragile under Mubarak. The structural configuration of the regime leaves vast swathes of the population open to dissatisfaction if not radicalisation. Following Ayubi (1995), it is difficult not to conclude that while such a regime it may have all the trappings of strength, it is more accurately characterised as fierce but ultimately brittle, and as such unstable (Teti and Gervasio, 2011).

2.4 External relations

Egypt's primary international counterparts are the US, Israel, Saudi Arabia and the EU. The US has provided roughly \$1.3bn in direct aid to the military since 1979, and marginally less in different forms of aid to the state. This aid ensures that, in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Egypt does not side with Palestinians: under Nasser, Egypt championed Palestinian rights in a manner that challenged the position of both Israel and Saudi Arabia in the region, as well as US strategic and economic interests (e.g. regarding the Suez Canal). In particular, since the 'Oslo Process', and since its *de facto* failure at the turn of the century, Egypt's function has been to maintain Israel's closure of Gaza.

Egypt maintains good relations with most countries in the region. Its relations with Qatar and with Turkey have been strained, given the former's choice to support the Muslim Brotherhood both financially and through the Arabic language service of Al-Jazeera satellite television in particular. With Iran, despite a period of apparent opening after the January 2011 uprising and during the Morsi presidency, Egypt has a distant but not adversarial relation, a position dictated mostly by Egypt's alignment with Saudi, Israeli and Western positions *viz.* the Islamic Republic. Relations with other regional powers are good, its strongest relations being with Saudi Arabia and with Israel, with which it cooperates closely in attempting to ostracise the Hamas-lead Palestinian Authority in Gaza.

2.4.1 Neighbouring countries

Egypt shares borders with Israel, Gaza, Libya, and the Sudan, and although it does not share a border with Saudi Arabia, they share access to the Red Sea.

- Israel: As outlined elsewhere, Israel has been Egypt's strategic partner in essence since the end of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and the beginning of negotiations that culminated in the 1979 Camp David Accords. Egyptian-Israeli relations have been described as a 'Cold Peace', inasmuch as relations are good only at a diplomatic level. The direct people-to-people relations that the Camp David Accords aimed to build between never materialised. The reason for this is essentially the domestic political price this would entail for the Egyptian regime: already vulnerable to criticism for its *de facto* military-diplomatic alliance with Israel, any Egyptian government would be badly damaged by attempting to build deeper relations with Israel. At the same time, the 'Palestinian Question' has been used in the past in order to deflect public attention from internal problems to an external enemy.
- Gaza/Occupied Palestinian Territory: Egyptian-Palestinian relations have always been laced with ambiguity. In 1948/49, the monarchy intervened in 'support' of the Palestinians against Zionist forces' establishment of the State of Israel at least as much for Egypt's own geopolitical calculations (its ambitions, fears of Jordanian expansionism) as to support Palestinians themselves (Gaza came under Egyptian control after the 1949 armistice). Nasser's disposition to Arab nationalism and to the Palestinian cause also was at least partly instrumental, establishing the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in order to bring Palestinian groups under his control. Sadat and Mubarak made a concerted effort to emphasise Egyptian nationalism over and above Arab nationalism, portraying Palestinians' struggle as essentially ungratefully parasitic of Egyptian efforts and resources. With the rise of Hamas during the First Intifada, Egypt sought also to halt the spread of a newly mobilised and active Islamism. Although it is often claimed that Hamas and the Egyptian Brotherhood are sister organizations with strong bonds, this is far from clear: although many amongst the first generation of Hamas members were university students affiliated to the Gazan Muslim

Brotherhood, this was organisationally distinct from Egypt's, and indeed those members who eventually established Hamas did so in rejection of the Brotherhood's 'quietist' strategy of compromise with power, which in this case meant the Israeli occupation (Hamas stands for 'Organisation of the Islamic *Resistance*').

- **Sudan:** Egypt's relations with Sudan and with upstream Nile countries generally has become tense over the past decade. At issue is the water sharing agreement for the Nile. Some upstream countries have signalled their intention to build dams for hydroelectric purposes and their desire to renegotiate proportions of water allocated to each state. Egypt, which negotiated the original agreement from a position of strength it no longer has, is attempting to resist this renegotiation and the dam projects in particular, fearing their strategic implications.
- **Libya:** Although Libya supported Egypt during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, before and during Ghaddafi's rule, Egyptian-Libyan relations were often tense. Before Ghaddafi's coup – which he and his co-conspirators claimed was inspired by Nasser – Egypt had been attempting to spread its formal and informal influence across the Arab world. Ghaddafi's ascent to power and the discovery of Libya's oil and gas wealth re-balanced the equation.

However, from the mid-1970s, the countries embarked on clearly different courses: Sadat brought Egypt into the US orbit, while Libya sought actively to oppose the US, both directly and in funding armed groups that targeted US interests and citizens. In 1977, Ghaddafi ordered 225,000 Egyptian citizens out of the country, following which there were several skirmishes between armed forces, ending in a truce brokered by Algeria. After the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Western-Libyan rapprochement eased tensions, with considerable collaboration on economic and migration fronts, smoothing relations also with Egypt, some of whose citizens work in the oil-rich state.

2.4.2 Main external state actors

Egypt's main extra-regional counterparts are the US, Saudi Arabia, Israel and the EU [see sections 2.4.2 and 2.5.1 above].

3 Social factors/features

3.1 Main cleavages affecting the society

- **Religious:** The main religiously inflected cleavage in Egyptian society is certainly the Coptic/Muslim divide. It is certainly true that the regime has accepted *de facto* and often *de jure* to place limits on Coptic rights – e.g. in the form of limits on building churches, the proscription of intermarriage and of conversions from Islam, etc. – and the fact that national ID cards display the holder's religion leaves Copts open to harassment by bureaucrats or police services. These difficulties are also faced by other minorities (e.g. Shi'a or Baha'i). However, as outlined in *Section 2.3.g*, this split has been politicised for decades, being used by successive regimes to create a useful – and readily available – source of tension which could apply pressure on the Coptic leadership if necessary, 'demonstrate' to the Coptic community that it needed regime protection (thus bolstering the latter's stability if not legitimacy), and 'demonstrate' to Western governments that Egypt was serious about protecting minority rights and thus about its 'road to democracy'. Certainly, the surprisingly smooth relations between Muslims and Copts during the January 2011 Uprising, particularly coming so soon after a deadly bomb attack on a church in Alexandria that left 31 dead, suggest there is considerably more scope for better Coptic-Muslim relations than regime reports might suggest.
- **Socio-economic cleavages:** In addition to noting the political context and function of Egypt's privatization policies (see Sections 2.2.1.a, 2.3.a, 2.4, 2.4.1), it should be noted that the country's main socio-economic cleavages are between urban and rural areas, along the

lines of class and gender, and between public and private sector employees. Observers agree that although certain trigger factors (e.g. world food price spikes) and certain structural factors (e.g. unemployment) were auxiliary catalytic factors, it was the inequality in wealth and income distributions that were a direct consequence of 'neoliberal' economic policies that drove protest, and in particular that these motivated the participation of the very same middle classes that the Mubarak regime had attempted to cultivate (Kandil, 2012). Another notable economic cleavage responsible for a considerable degree of political mobilization is the growth in Special Economic Zones and in the public/private split in labour conditions. State asset privatization and service contract outsourcing have had a vital counterpart in the weakening of labour protection in the private sector. This, combined with worsening economic polarisation within the country and a downturn in global conditions, produced particular mobilization amongst workers generally. In the years before the 2011 uprising, private sector workers in the Suez Canal and in transportation-related businesses in particular had not only gone on strike and unionized where SEZs come with specific guarantees against unionisation, they also often took direct action against their employers to force them to the negotiating table or to live up to their commitments. The lid of authoritarianism temporarily lifted after Mubarak's removal, workers in both private and public sectors have unionized and used the strike tool far more frequently.

3.1.1 *Media policy*

Since the 1952 'July Revolution', particularly since the Arab nationalist turn and the union with Syria (158-61), the Egyptian media has been dominated by state ownership and control. The monopoly began to fracture in the 2000s, accelerating towards the end of Mubarak's rule. New, privately-owned dailies began to emerge, increasingly competing with the giant state-owned news organizations. This was followed by the emergence of private satellite television channels, which took more viewers away from state-owned television, which had been considerably more government controlled than the print media. State broadcasters also faced competition from the emergent Arab satellite news channels, most notably Al Jazeera since the early 1990s which presented both in-depth investigative journalism and debate programmes as opposed to ideologically-driven monologues. The January 25, 2011 Uprising drove this process along, although terrestrial television remain a state monopoly.

Censorship at least in the private sector weakened further during the immediate post-Mubarak period, although state terrestrial broadcasters and print media remained heavily biased in favour of the military. However, the re-emergence of a previously discredited military during the Morsi period saw the shift of private media back towards the regime side. One of 'independent media's' success stories, *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, provides an excellent example of this, both in the shift in its Arabic edition back towards regime-friendly coverage, and in the exemplary case of censorship of its once-reputable English edition, *Egypt Independent*, which was shut down abruptly in order to avoid printing a controversial issue and to get rid of a team of highly respected and independent journalists.

3.2 Economic context

3.2.1 *Causes:*

Several explanations have been put forward concerning the economic causes of the January 2011 uprising, from world food price spikes to unemployment. In reality, none of these single explanations is sufficient, and the revolution should be viewed as the confluence of a series of factors. Some of these are contingent, such as the Tunisian revolution and the pre-uprising spike in food prices. Many however have broader components. Food prices are a good examples of this: Egypt's vulnerability to such fluctuations increased considerably due to increasing urbanisation and population growth

which reduced available land for cultivation, made Egypt a net importer of wheat, thus contributing both internal and external upward pressure on prices. This price rise also made state subsidies required for price controls far more expensive, increasing their budgetary burden as well as triggering 'bread riots' which were a not infrequent feature of the late Mubarak era.

Others causes of unrest, however, are structural (as suggested by the decline in GDP growth rates in pre-uprising years). Amongst these is certainly the increased income and wealth polarisation which Mubarak-era policies generated, the effect of which is evident in the gradual increase in protest and opposition organisation – from CSOs to labour groups – over the previous decade and which while making the fortunes of a new class of tycoons, brought significant pressure on state resources. The Egyptian economy has very strong rent components: Suez Canal revenues, net exporting of oil and particularly natural gas since the late 1990s, and 'strategic rent' in the form of post-1979 aid transfers from the US for its role viz. Israel all constitute important sources of income. However, these rents were often squandered on private enrichment of state officials or on other unproductive forms of expenditure. During the Nasser era, Canal revenues and foreign aid contributed to underwriting the 'revolutionary social contract' in which, for example, graduates were guaranteed a job in public administration. This skewed higher education choices, but also bloated the bureaucracy and its costs, becoming a significant drain on the economy. Another significant source of pressure on government budgets is the very low rate of taxation particularly on the wealthier sectors of society (10%), and the state's generally low capability in tax collection and law enforcement in this area. In addition, privatization policies were presented both by internal and external actors (government and IMF) as necessary first steps towards market liberalization which in turn would bring both price reductions and increased efficiencies associated with 'free markets' and also eventually encourage political liberalization and thus democratization. However, their actual effect was to give rise to a string of monopolies or oligopolies in several sectors (e.g. construction, telecoms, steel).

3.2.2 Current context and future challenges:

Immediately after Mubarak's removal and in a constant mantra since then, the government and the military in particular has urged the population to halt protests and restore 'calm' and avoid 'chaos', adopting a string of measures (e.g. public order legislation and administrative measures) to increase pressure on protesters to desist. This approach was far from successful at least until the Brotherhood's stint in power, although particularly given Egypt's rapidly worsening economic situation after the 2011 uprising, it did contribute to polarise public opinion. The Brotherhood's period in power increased that polarisation, partly thanks to its leadership's choice to simultaneously antagonise the 'revolutionary' opposition (which was politically understandable since the two sides' political and economic programmes are very different) and compromise with the remnants of the regime, particularly the armed forces, which is also entirely consistent with the Brotherhood leadership's preferred choice of political strategy – accommodation with existing power structures. In the meantime, the army is believed to have put pressure on the Brotherhood in a variety of ways: a shortage which caused extremely long lines at fuel pumps and clogged Cairo's already 'challenging' traffic was widely believed to have been triggered by the army.

This strategy seems to have been effective at least with a part of the population who have supported the army's call to a 'return to stability'. One factor increasing pressure on the population to call for stability is the extremely low (often null) savings held by poorer Egyptian families (40% of the population was estimated to live below the \$2/day poverty lines before the 2011 uprising) which greatly reduces average families' ability to weather economic hardship.

On the budgetary front, the uprising has had a lower impact than might be expected. The uprising and subsequent political unrest have hit the tourism industry extremely hard, with visitors down by 80% at times. However, Egypt's other major sources of income have remained virtually unaffected:

oil and gas supplies have kept flowing uninterrupted, the Suez Canal has been affected only very marginally by labour unrest, and foreign businesses have by and large not left the country. Egypt's foreign reserves have fallen drastically, however, prompting the government to seek IMF support. Successive rounds of negotiations, however, have stalled. This has happened primarily for two sets of reasons. First, IMF lending has been stigmatised – particularly before the Army's removal of Morsi – as at root a form of foreign interference. In the hyper-nationalist and xenophobic atmosphere the armed forces (but also the Brotherhood) contributed to whip up since Mubarak's removal, this made it politically virtually impossible for a government to agree to an IMF loan. Secondly, the IMF has insisted – as it has done since before the Uprising – that the Egyptian government remove price controls. This is also a political impossibility, as poverty levels are such that any such removal would be at minimum very politically risky in the current context (it is worth noting that Sadat first attempted to remove such controls in January 1977, immediately triggering two days of massive nationwide rioting and over 800 killed by security forces before these measures were repealed).

At the moment, investment and loans from Gulf Cooperation Council countries – and primarily Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi – contribute a significant quantity of funds towards maintaining Egypt financially afloat. Saudi Arabia's determination that Egypt should not 'risk' Tunisia's fate was evident already during Mubarak's last days: on February 9th, the Saudis announced in reaction to a discussion in the US Senate committee for foreign affairs on the possibility of linking some US aid to Egypt to human rights conditions, that even if the US were to withdraw the entirety of its aid (over \$3bn) the Saudi government would replace it immediately. KSA, Kuwait and the UAE have committed themselves to a range of aid, investment and loan interventions. It is also worth noting that during one of the deepest moments of crisis, in December 2011, the army itself offered central government a \$1bn loan. This gives some measure of how vast the armed forces' economic empire is, how much profit is made essentially from a combination of state coffers and exploiting cheap and captive labour, and how great a drain on the Egyptian state's budget the armed forces are.

What is clear is that successive governments have provided no solution to Egypt's economic woes save the kinds of policies which contributed to triggering the 2011 uprising. It is clear that unemployment, underemployment, income and wealth polarisation, and patronage-generated waste on a massive scale are crucial economic issues both for sustainable levels of growth and for long-term political stabilisation.

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