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Egypt's National Interest.  
A 'Sociology of Power' Analysis

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. The abnormality of the Arab world...**

Arab world has been related to the notions of authoritarianism, dictatorship, underdevelopment, illiteracy, violence, and of course Islam. But mainly, these countries are seen as exotic and extraordinary or 'abnormal' cases. The 'particular' character of Arab states pushes scholars to develop alternative or different theories regarding the social and political phenomenon of these countries. The recent developments in the Arab world not only did not alter their 'bizarre' image but in fact had the contrary effects.

The 'Arab spring' is not the only wave of social uprising that the region has witnessed. During the 80s and 90s, popular protests sparked in different places of the Arab world, consequence of the states' declining legitimacy and power (whether due to a decrease in the price of oil or their debt limit being reached). The decrease in aid, social services, wages and other mechanisms of income distribution generated popular mobilisation, which gave rise to the so-called 'food' or 'bread' riots.

The social unrest of the 80s and 90s in many Arab countries created euphoria among the scholars, foreseeing a more democratic future for these countries. Soon, however, it became clear that political transition was not to occur in this region. Despite the dynamics of internal opposition, most of the Arab autocrats managed to remain in power, using every available resource at their disposal to prevent a true opening of the system, even if in some cases opposition groups achieved to increase their influence. Authoritarian regimes responded in an effective way, by applying repression and, in the case of the 'allied' countries, counting on the support of Western governments, interested also to preserve *status quo*.

In the context of euphoria, however, a group of authors underlined the existence of some cautious processes of liberalisation in these countries, and even spoke of a 'mini-wave' of democratisation<sup>1</sup> (Norton, 1993). Thus, at the beginning of the 90s, some experts turned to existing literature dedicated to the study of transitions towards liberal democratic systems<sup>2</sup>, in an attempt to apply it to the Arab world. However, with the failure of the Arab world's 'democratisation', it soon became very clear that the dynamics of transition in Southern and Eastern Europe as well as in Latin America were very different from those occurring in the

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\* This part of the research is based on a previous work (Izquierdo and Kemou, 2009).

<sup>1</sup> These dynamics would be a result of a series of confluent factors, such as: a greater presence and effectiveness of socio-economic organisations, civil society in clear expansion (related to both massive schooling and the emergence of new middle classes), and actions of foreign policy driven by some Western states, as well as by governmental and non-governmental international organisations.

<sup>2</sup> (Rustow, 1970); (O'Donnell et al., 1986); (Schmitter, 1999); (Przeworski, 1991); (Huntington, 1991).

Middle East and North Africa.

The past failure of transitions and ‘transitology’ (Camau, 1999) put Arab societies in the condition of exceptionality. In parallel, the need to understand these societies paved the path for academic debates, regarding, among others, the ‘correctness’ of applying or not Western-tailored concepts on societies with such different traditions (Camau, 1971) (Leca, 1994). The ‘Arab spring’ increased this need of many scholars among them, ours, in order to understand and analyse this new wave of ‘democratisation’.

From our point of view, the difficulties in analysing these transitions bear more relation to the limitations of theoretical approaches used than to the ‘abnormality’ of the Arab societies. Therefore, we sustain that there is not a need to develop specific theories in order to advance our understanding on the Arab world. On the contrary, we uphold that there is a need to develop a universal theoretical perspective which takes into account the particular features of the society in study.

From our perspective, the most important obstacle of political transition in Arab societies is found on the primacy of the ‘State’. All other resources of power, material or non material, such as Capital, Information, Coercive Apparatuses, Ideology etc. have a secondary role on the power structure since they are strictly connected with the control of the State. Consequently, in contrast to other societies, a political opening will not only imply the introduction of new actors but the expulsion of the actual ones in all sectors of the society.

The centrality of the ‘State’ and the dynamics generated by this feature, e.g. the elimination of the actual elites, in case of a real political opening, does not impose the need to develop an alternative theoretical approach. Yet it is necessary to take into consideration the particularities of the Arab states, or those of the respective case in study. Therefore, we find necessary to develop a theoretical framework which takes into account the particular features of the society in study, this however having a common theoretical corpus for a wide range of cases.

The hypothesis of the present work therefore is that Arab world cannot and should not be analysed by the application of specific theories, but it is necessary to develop a universal theoretical perspective applicable to all hierarchical societies. With this in mind and following the path already initiated by the studies of Salamé, Norton, Khader, Brynen, Perthes, Korany and Noble, as well as by reports on human development in the Arab world by the UNDP<sup>3</sup>, and of course the works of Izquierdo and Lampridi-Kemou<sup>4</sup>, the present PhD research aims to develop a theoretical framework which can be applicable to different cases, whether these belong to the western societies or those of the international periphery, using Egypt as study case.

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<sup>3</sup> (Salamé, 1994a), (Norton, 1995), (Khader, 1997), (Brynen et al., 1995), (Perthes, 2004), (PNUD. REGIONAL BUREAU FOR ARAB STATES, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> (Izquierdo, 2009), (Izquierdo and Farrés, 2008), (Izquierdo and Kemou, 2009).

The present theoretical framework represents, thus, an effort to systemise the analysis of power relations that condition any society<sup>5</sup>, by using the Egyptian case as example. According to Waltz, “*reality emerges from our selection and organisation of materials that are available in infinite quantity*” (Waltz, 1954: 5). The infinity of possible objects of study, forces us, on the one hand, to isolate particular aspects of reality and, on the other, simplify in order to underline the essential aspects of the case study and to identify the basic relations of cause and interdependency.

Theory’s objective, therefore, is to construct a reality in which it is possible to pursue the goals of the research. Nevertheless, this construction has to be close to ‘reality’ because, on the contrary case, the analysis and the wanted predictions<sup>6</sup> are not possible. On the same time, a great gap between ‘reality’ and ‘created reality’ limits considerable theory’s value. In parallel, oversimplification neglects actors and relations which have an important role on the analysis.

Having in mind the above, we sustain that any social system is composed by actors who have the capacity to interfere in power relations. The analysis, thus, has to identify which of these actors are relevant of analysis, the power resources that they dispose, the dynamics which rule their relations and, finally, the structure that shapes the system. In order to identify the mentioned aspects of a social system is necessary to identify actors’ real objectives<sup>7</sup> in their relations.

The present research, based on Izquierdo’s *Sociology of Power*, tries to offer an alternative frame of analysis aiming to overpass the problems of comparison. We are aware of course that such task overpasses our capacities and the limits of PhD thesis. Still, we consider that our work, despite its limitations, can constitute a solid basis for further research.

## ***1.2. ...and the Egyptian case***

Egypt has been, since the Arab invasion in the seventh century, the centre of the Arab and Muslim world. Its geographic position as a land bridge between the African and Asian continent and the ‘crossroad’ of three seas, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, determined the Egyptian profile as being subject to the influence of different cultures and civilisations. Mohammed Ali, under the Ottoman Empire, determined the identity of Egypt with a whole series of reforms with the aim of entering the country in the modern/developed world.

In the recent history, Egypt, being the first country to obtain official

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<sup>5</sup> Indicative work regarding comparison among countries having different degree of economic and political development is (Álvarez-Ossorio and Izquierdo, 2007) and (Izquierdo, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> We uphold that predictions do not represent an essential element of academic research. Rather, we believe that scholars’ task is limited in analysis. Still, predictions frequently form part of our work in order to find a “*raison d’être*”.

<sup>7</sup> This imperative obliges us to avoid leaders’ discourse, considering that their real intentions are almost never explicit.

independency from Great Britain, has managed to become an important centre in the Middle East. From a realist point of view, Egypt represents the most populated state of the Arab world, with a homogenous population and it is considered to be an important military power in the region, which participated in all Arab military conflicts against Israel. Its soft power has been tremendous in the Arab world as, since the end of the First World War, Cairo had been feeding the region with cultural products of music, cinema and television programs. Additionally, the Al-Azhar mosque has spread Egypt's influence all around the Muslim world. Moreover, the country's participation in various international and intergovernmental institutions such as the Arab League, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the Non Aligned Movement, the United Nations, the WTO, the G-15, the ILO, the IMF, to mention some of them, demonstrates the significant role of the country from a liberal point of view. Finally, from a constructivist spectrum, the recognition of Cairo's pivot role in the area from the neighbour states and the international society in general is demonstrated, firstly, by its role as a mediator in various regional or extra-regional conflicts, and secondly, by the installation of the headquarters of several International Organisations in Cairo.

Egypt has also been the homeland of the contemporary fundamental ideologies of the Arab world: Islamism, pan-Arabism and Liberalism (Martín Muñoz, 2006). It was in this country that the famous spiritual leader and founder of the Muslim Brotherhood Hassan-Al Banna and his later Qutb developed the bases of Islamism. The pan-Arabism, even though born in the neighbour country of Syria, has been strictly related to the Egyptian rais Gamal Abdel Nasser, who influenced the expanded region in various ways. Under the pan-Arab doctrine, Nasser managed to unify but at the same time to deeply divide the Arab world. Moreover, it was under Nasser that both the first political victory of the Arabs against Israel (1956) as well as their second most devastating defeat (1967) was achieved.

Some years later, Nasser's successor, Anwar al-Sadat, introduced the bases of the liberal dogma by turning his back to the Soviet bloc and making Egypt the first Arab state to sign a peace treaty with Israel. The 'betrayal' increased the economic sources of the country as, since then, Egypt became the second biggest receptor of the largest American economic aid, civil and military. Also, it isolated the country, as Cairo was expelled from the Arab League and the Organisation of Islamic Conference.

Under the leadership of Hosni Mubarak, Cairo recuperated some of its glory at the regional arena. Mubarak adopting a liberal authoritarian model of governance managed to preserve social calmness and regional stability for a long period. The democratic façade of the Egyptian regime promoted Cairo to model country to the rest of the Arab states.

All the above underline the importance of Egypt in the Arab world and its particular features, which triggered our interest on the Egyptian case and raised many questions: How the respective regimes of Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak

managed to remain on power? Was Egypt one man's stooge? Why Egyptians remained docile for so many years? Why opposition forces are seen incapable of challenging the authoritarian rule? Is Muslim Brotherhood a real opposition force? Why and how Cairo remains Washington's closest ally?

The 'third Egyptian revolution' put an end Mubarak's authoritarian rule. Inspired by the Tunisian revolt, Egyptians took to the streets with the slogan: "*Tunisia is not better than Egypt*", and after 18 days of massive protests Egyptians managed the unthinkable: oust their *rais*. These recent developments added more questions: What are the factors that permitted Mubarak's fall? Did the 'days of anger' put an end to the authoritarianism? Which are the democratic forces of the actual Egypt? And finally, is the democratic transition attainable?

In order to give answers to these questions we are going to develop a theoretical framework, which is going to be applied on the Egyptian case. Since the validity of the present theoretical proposal is going to be checked on Egypt, special emphasis will be given to specific theoretical elements, while others will be less treated. Thus, we are going to dedicate part of this work on 'State', while capital will occupy less 'space', since its importance has been limited in contemporary Egypt.

### **1.3. Methodological Framework**

Our research is based in the study of existing bibliographic material produced by several social sciences. Due to the large amount of the academic regarding the theoretical topics of our research as well as the case of Egypt, a selection of bibliographic references was inevitable. However, we feel that the selection covers an important part of the existing studies. Furthermore, the present work is based on a field research, developed during the three months stay in Egypt, hosted by Cairo University, Faculty of Economics and Political Science (Euro Med Studies Programme). The research therefore has been enriched though out personal observation and interviews.

Before proceeding to our task, we feel that a few comments concerning the structure of the present study will be necessary. More specifically, the present work is divided into ten chapters in addition to the theoretical one, each one representing a separate section. The demarcation line of the case study is drawn by significant historic events of the Egyptian modern history, from 1952 until 2010. This chronological division, which represents only one of the possible choices to structure the research, was introduced so as to facilitate our work and also the task of the readers.

In each chapter, the main interests of the principal elites are examined. In the internal level, after identifying the principal agents and the power resources that each one of them controls, we try to furnish explanations of the different coalitions and rivalries formed inside the Egyptian scene. This task, offers all the necessary information in order to comprehend the policies adopted, whether

those are national or foreign.

In the international field, our main focus is to relate these policies, product of the interest of the primary elites to the interests of the foreign elites. As Egypt forms part of the 'periphery' relying heavily on central powers, the power capabilities of the Egyptian elites are strongly related to their relations with foreign-international elites. Therefore, the Egyptian elites, usually deprived of the necessary power to control extra national power resources, are obliged to exploit the international conjuncture so as to further their aims.

At this point, a last comment should be made. The analysis used in the domestic scene, with reference to the interests, conflicts and policies of elites and not of institutions, is also adopted in the regional and the international scene. However, an in-depth study of the decomposition of foreign elites interacting with the Egyptian regime overpasses the limits of this study. Thus, to facilitate our task, the references to the foreign elites will be expressed as if they formed a homogeneous corpus. Still, the reader has to keep in mind that the use of this terminology is applied to the afore mentioned reasons and does not imply a diversifying orientation for the relations formed at an extraterritorial or international level.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**



## **2.1. Power and its three dimensions**

Power has been one of the main interests not only on the academic field but on the everyday life. Therefore, the questioning of and over the concept of power is certainly not new. However, since in the present study the term occupies a protagonist role, we are obliged to dedicate a part of our research on power's notion, even though we are aware that our contribution will remain relatively poor<sup>8</sup>. This brief overview regarding the notion of power, an essentially contested concept, will enable us to understand the complexity and confusion existing around the term. This wide divergence among the specialists resides in multiple reasons, the most important of which is, according to Wittgenstein<sup>9</sup>, that power is a 'family resemblance' concept, overlapping set of meanings without the existence of a single core essence.

We can question the nature of power as relative or absolute quantifiable, the forms of power's exercise (in its hard form: authority, coercion and violence, and its soft: cultural hegemony, persuasion), as well as the question of legitimate and illegitimate use of power. Also, we can consider aspects of the distribution of power among the actors (hegemony, equilibrium, domination etc) or the sources of power.

The importance of power's concept in social sciences<sup>10</sup> and the consequent vital interest of the scholars oblige to some sort of classification of the distinctive modes of power's conceptualisation. One mode to classify the diverse concepts of power is to distinguish between normative and realist approaches. The first approach, is found in the long tradition of political philosophy and seeks to trace out how power should be organised. This approach attempts to rationally deduce the ideal arrangement of power from ideal criteria such as fairness, justice or equality. The second approach, inspired by Machiavelli, instead of asking how power should be organised, asks how power is organised and exercised, how people gain and maintain power, and how the powerful vanquish others. This realist approach usually derives from empirical observations of actual examples of particularly successful or woeful uses of power.

Another way of classifying different approaches over power's concept, used

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<sup>8</sup> There is a plethora of academic works dedicated to power's notion. Indicatively, we can mention the works of (Lukes, 1974), (Clegg, 1989) and (Haugaard, 1997), which offer a coherent overview over power's concept.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in (Haugaard, 1997:2)

<sup>10</sup> Power has also been an important concept on the International Relations and has divided scholars. For Realist power is found on the base on the international system. According to Guzzini in traditional *realism* "power has often been held conceal an essentially circular argument both for the assessment of the outcome and for the amount of power" because on the one hand power is considered the "main criterion for the explanation of outcomes. On the other, in some cases the outcomes are the main criterion for the assessment of power" (Guzzini and Leander, 2006: 449).

broadly in social sciences, is this existing between scholars comprehending power as a relational variable (power over) and those promoting power as capacity (power to). In the first category we can classify to classic authors Hobbes and Weber. Following Weber, *“by power is meant every opportunity existing within a social relationship which permits one to carry out one's own will even against resistance and regardless of the basis on which this opportunity rests”* (Weber, 1993: 63). It becomes obvious that in this definition the relational aspect is primordial.

More recently, the same approximation of power, i.e. power over, was adopted and analysed by Mills (1956), Dahl (1968), Bachrach and Baratz (1962), Lukes (1974), Mann (1986) Poggi (2001). For Dahl power is something that an actor A has over someone else B *‘to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do’* (Dahl, 1961: 203). Once more, power is not a capacity but rather an observable behaviour. Furthermore, Dahl’s understanding of power is causal, insofar it involves the behaviours of one person (the powerful) causing the behaviour of another (the powerless); episodic, involving actual and observable behavioural episodes and situational as an actor has power in some particular situations and spheres and not in other spheres (Anderson and Herr, 2007).

Power as the capacity to act in concrete, i.e. power to, is adopted by Arendt (1970), Parsons (1963), Barnes (1990). For Parsons power is defined as *“a generalised capacity to serve the performance of binding obligations by units in a system of collective organisation when the obligations are legitimised with reference to their bearing of collective goals”* (Parsons, 1963). Following this author, power is generated by a social system as wealth was generated in the productive organisation of the economy. Consequently, as money has not intrinsic utility but has a ‘value’ only in so far it is commonly recognised and it is accepted as a standard form of exchange, power has value as long there is an agreement of the society’s members to legitimise leadership’s position.

This reasoning inevitably implies the absence of illegitimate power. Thus, following Giddens (1995), Parsons’ definition helped to overcome the problem of confusion between power and coercive imposition. However, Giddens argues, Parsons forgets the hierarchical character of power and the division of interests as well as that power is always exercised over someone. Thus, power for Parsons *“became simply an extension of consensus, the means which a society used to attain its goals”* (Giddens, 1995: 213).

Another scholar who dedicated important part of her work on power is Arendt. According to the author, power is understood as capacity: *“Power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert. Power is never the priority of an individual, it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together. When we say of somebody that he is ‘in power’ we actually refer to his being empowered by certain number of people to act in their name”* (Arendt, 1970: 44).

Power *to* and power *over* gave birth to another approach of the concept this which tried to combine these two different perceptions. This view is adopted by Foucault (1979, 1981), Giddens (1984), Clegg (1989) and Haugaard (2003), each one adopting his own analysis over the concept of power.

The normative-realist and over-to conceptualisation of power represent probably the most generally accepted division. However, authors have adopted different criterions to classify the distinctive definitions. Lukes (1979) in his work *Power. A radical view*, engaged only with power over, adopts another mode to classify the different approaches of power: one dimensional, two dimensional and three dimensional. In the first typology, known also as pluralist, Lukes classifies authors like Dahl, Polsby and Wolfinger, all of them putting emphasis on the behaviour of the actors at the moment to take decisions over problems which generate observable conflicts.

The second approach, deals basically with Bachrach and Baratz's (1962) *Two faces of power*. The two authors in their criticism Dahl's definition<sup>11</sup> sustained that the direct exercise of power, such as decision making, is only one 'face' of power (Bachrach and Baratz, 1994: 948). Nevertheless, power has another largely hidden 'face' this of 'non-decision making', which involves attempts by powerful groups to limit discussion and decision making to 'safe' issues. While Bachrach and Baratz certainly advanced the analysis of power's conceptualisation by recognising the deeper norms and values which structure power, their analysis present limits. According to different authors, among them Lukes (1979) and Clegg (1976), this approach maintains the same behavioural character of Dahl's definition.

The third approach is developed by Lukes. The author upheld that power involves not only the aspects of decision making and non-decision making, but also a third dimension, not necessary reducible to the behaviour of the actors but also to the capability of an actor to shape the preferences of others (Lukes, 1974). This perception represents similarities with this of Dahrendorf (1959). In his work *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*, the author introduced the element of latent conflicts (Dahrendorf, 1959). These conflicts occur without the actor being conscious, having interiorise a particular discourse which make impossible the comprehending what his interests are (Dahl, 1961).

The interiorisation of the discourse brings us inevitably to another kind of the conceptualisation of power, closely related with knowledge, this latter comprehended either as a social knowledge that actors share either as truth. Barnes' work *Nature of power* is certainly inscribed in this approach, as his main

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<sup>11</sup> More concretely the two authors sustained that Dahl's model "takes no account the fact that power may be, and often is, exercised by confining the scope of decision-making to relatively 'safe' issues. The other is that the model provides no objective criteria for distinguishing between 'important' and 'unimportant' issues arising in the political arena [...] can a sound concept of power be predicated on the assumption that power is totally embodied and fully reflected in 'concrete decisions' or in activity bearing upon their making?" (Bachrach and Baratz, 1994: 949).

concern is to develop the concept of social knowledge as to further the analysis on power. *"In speaking of knowledge and of power [...] we are referring to one and the same thing. A society by virtue of being a distribution of knowledge is an ordered array of power"* (Barnes, 1988: 169).

According to Barnes power<sup>12</sup> is comprehended as the added capacity that the persons accumulate through the distribution of knowledge inside a given society, existing independently of its use, as the motor of a car (Barnes, 1990). Barnes' approach on power has been criticised for offering an idealised model explaining particular facets of power (Haugaard, 1997).

Power and knowledge inevitably bring us to Foucault. This relationship between the two is for the author a really tight one up to the point that he could not see the possibility of a society without power, since this would be a society without knowledge: *"There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of the association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth"* (Foucault and Gordon, 1980: 93).

Another important aspect of Foucault's analysis of power is the introduction of a 'positive' definition. In his period of *Genealogy*<sup>13</sup>, Foucault developed two concepts of power: repressive and positive that there are both generalised and particular<sup>14</sup> models (Haugaard, 1997: 65). Regarding power's positive notion Foucault underlined<sup>15</sup> *"We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks' it 'conceals'. In fact power produces; it produces realities; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth"*.

Foucault's approach generated criticism, which gave birth to new theories and perceptions over the concept of power: those underlining the generative mechanisms that produce power relations such as bureaucracy, institutional arrangements and markets; those inspired by Actor Network Theory, focusing on how power relations are the outcome of the fragile arrangement of 'actants' which may include objects, technologies, texts and people; those stimulated by Social

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<sup>12</sup> According to Barnes *"Any specific distribution of knowledge confers a generalized capacity for action upon those individuals who carry and constitute it and that capacity of action is their social power, the power of the society they constitute by bearing and sharing the knowledge in question. Social power is the added capacity for action that accrues to individuals through their constituting a distribution of knowledge and thereby a society"* (Barnes, 1988: 57).

<sup>13</sup> Foucault's work is divided in three predominant phases: archaeology, genealogy and the care of self. As he sustained his goal is to *"create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects"* by three modes: *"objectivizing of the speaking subject in grammar générale, philosophy and linguistics"*; *"dividing practices"* and *"the way a human being turns himself into a subject"* (Foucault, 1982: 777-778).

<sup>14</sup> Generalised in the sense that is applicable in all societies and at the same time particular manifestations of certain historical periods.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in (Dews, 1984).

Movement theory examines how power is produced through the ongoing interplay between dynamics of social struggles and the fragile social settlements.

Clegg (1989) also argued that power has positive productive force. Adopting a postmodern approach, Clegg proposed a theory of 'circuits of power' through which he sustained that power is neither the strictly the episodic power of agency, the dispositional institutional power embedded in rules and practices or the facilitative structural power of a dominating system. For Clegg, all the previous are levels in the circuits of power, serving as obligatory passage points through which actors move in order to realise their goals.

The previous help us to integrate another dimension of power: structural power. This approach has once more divided scholars of socio-political sciences and gave the spark for new debates and theoretical advances<sup>16</sup>. In the discipline of International Relations, the pioneer scholars who dedicated important part of their work on the concept of structural power were James Caporaso<sup>17</sup> (1978), Stephen Krasner<sup>18</sup> (1985), Stephen Gill and David Law (1988), Susan Strange (1988).

For Strange structural power is on the one hand the ability to shape the structures of knowledge, production, security and finance and on the other the increasingly diffused sources and agents<sup>19</sup> that contribute to the functioning of the global political economy (Strange, 1988). In another way Gill and Law focused in three dimensions of power: overt, covert and structural, the first two referring to the actors' decisions and nondecisions in the pursuing of their interests (Gill and Law, 1988). The third dimension of power, structural power, is represented by the *"material and normative aspects, such that patterns of incentives and constraints are systematically created"*.

This brief overview over the concept of power enables us to comprehend that power is a controversial term. Our interest is laying on distinguishing three dimensions of power in all systems. We consider, thus, that power has a three-dimensional character whose aspects are important to determine in order to analyse any social system. We can therefore distinguish the relational aspect, the capacity aspect and the structural one. Thus, analysis should focus on the relations established between actors, power resources and power structure, i.e. the constraints and the possibilities given to the actors by a given structure.

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<sup>16</sup> Indicatively we can mention the debate among researchers in International Relations. According to Guzzini *"Concepts of structural power are but the latest in a series of attacks on realism through conceptual critiques of power"*(Guzzini and Leander, 2006: 448).

<sup>17</sup> In a similar way Caporaso defines structural power as *"the ability to manipulate the choices, capabilities, alliance opportunities, and pay-offs that actors may utilize"* (Caporaso, 1978: 33).

<sup>18</sup> For Krasner *"[...] meta-power behavior refers to efforts to change the institutions themselves. [...] Meta-power refers to the ability to change the rules of the game. Outcomes can be changed both by altering the resources available to individual actors and by changing the regimes that condition action"* (Krasner, 1985: 14).

<sup>19</sup> In the present study the terms 'actor' and 'agent' are treated as synonymous.

## ***2.2. Sociology of Power: an overview***

Throughout history most societies have generated models of hierarchical organisation within their political, social and economic relations. A hierarchical society is a social system that inevitably divides and categorises its members, according to their capacity to use given resources. Therefore, in order to analyse the power structure of a given hierarchical society it is necessary to analyse the typology of the actors involved and their relevance to it, the dynamics that govern their relationships, the power resources they have at their disposal and their respective position in society.

With regards to the actors, the creation of hierarchies inevitably implies a division between those members of society who govern and those who are governed or, as we define it within our theoretical framework, between elites and people. The division between the elites and people is founded on the distinct objectives and interests of each category. On one hand, the elites' interest is defined in terms of power; their main objective will always be to improve their position in the hierarchy, competing against other elites. The relation established between elites is one of unceasing circular competition, since their aspirations are always relative and constantly measured in terms of the position of the other actors. The elites' interest is therefore what we define as a 'differential accumulation of power', i.e. to accumulate more power than their competitors.

The competition to accumulate power takes place in all areas of society. Moreover, the formation of elites inevitably leads to competition for control over power resources, whether political, economic, informative, coercive, ideological or of any other nature. In line with this analysis, our notion of power is linked to the competitive process itself, since, from our point of view, power concerns everything that is used for further accumulation of power<sup>20</sup>.

Conversely, we define 'linear power relations' as the relations established by people, when they can consciously identify their needs and mobilise their capacities to fulfil them. In this case, contrary to the elites' case, the objectives of people as an actor are not relative, and therefore, when they are met, the relation of power comes to an end. The linear aspect derives, therefore, from the fact that we can identify a beginning i.e. the moment in which the process of awareness evolves into a collective action, and an end i.e. when the mobilisation is successful and the claims have been recognised, or when there is a defeat and the action is abandoned.

Therefore, the analysis of social systems requires the identification of power

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<sup>20</sup> In his classic 'The power elite', Wright Mills mainly focuses on the elites who control the State, the corporations and the Army (Wright Mills, 2000 [1956]). However, we believe it is necessary to analyse the competition for control over all power resources, as depending on the context, resources such as ideology, information or technology may be even more decisive.

relations -that is whether those are linear or circular. In other words, it is necessary to identify when the actors have aims or specific interests with regards to their living conditions, and when the actors have differential accumulation as their main objective. In this respect, and in the context of social analysis, we can deduce that although the linear relations are those which shape progress and transformation, it is the circular relations which prevail, governed by elites who hold on to their positions of power and contributing to long periods of continuity and stagnation through history.

From the above it becomes evident that the constant competition among the actors does not derive from their malicious nature, but from their position in the society as elites, the maintenance of which depends on their capacity to accumulate more power<sup>21</sup>. Even though we centre our analysis on the individual actors we do not embrace Waltz's first image<sup>22</sup> (1954). System's dynamic is not characterised by the human nature but by the hierarchical character of the system. It is neither egoism or ambition nor the thirst for power that forces elites to compete for differential accumulation of power but their position in the system. In a similar way, we can consider that the motive of people's mobilisation to improve their living conditions is found on the unjust character of the system.

Another fundamental element in the Sociology of Power, is that the resources available to the elites in their competition for differential accumulation of power and those used by people to attain their objectives, vary according to the system or structure in question. The principal resources in the majority of contemporary systems are the State, capital, ideology, information, coercion and the population itself. Nevertheless, this does not imply that there are no other resources; for example, political parties or corporations, which in some systems may eventually play a central role. The importance of each resource, according to the circumstances and accumulation processes at that moment, determines their primary or secondary status.

These different elements shape the power structure of a society, whether it belongs to the Arab world or to any other geographic area. Consequently, in order to understand the dynamics of change and continuity of a given society it is necessary to analyse the different elements shaping its power structure.

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<sup>21</sup> According to our perspective, man does not live permanently dominated by his thirst for power. It is the system that generates the struggle, in which leaders must participate in order to remain in the upper strata of the hierarchy. Therefore, power in the form of influence or control is only the spark that ignites the eternal circular game. Afterwards, the actors' main objective will be competition itself.

<sup>22</sup> In his *Man, the State, and War*, Waltz proposes a three-images view of looking at international relations behaviour: the individual and human nature, the nation-state, and the international system. According to the author's first image, wars result from selfishness, from misdirected aggressive impulses, from stupidity (Waltz, 1954: 16).

### **2.2.1. Circular power relations**

The fundamental principle of the Sociology of Power lies in the elites' accumulative function. We identify the relations among elites these of permanent competition, both of power and for power. And as we have pointed out, their objectives will always be relative and subjected to their rivals' accumulation capacity.

Furthermore, each actor's survival as elite depends on his/her<sup>23</sup> capacity for differential accumulation of power i.e. the accumulation of more power than the rest of the actors. The power capacities of each elite are always measured in relation with the other elites; therefore the resulting relations form a system in which competition never stops. This competitive dynamic is typical of hierarchic systems, entailing that whoever finds himself in a position of elite will have to compete or otherwise lose his power. This dynamic of constant competition becomes fiercer as power capacities of the elites increase and it can be extended to all power resources. Consequently, the position of each elite depends on the type of the resources that he controls, his power capacities and alliances he forms.

On the other hand, in the analysis of a society's power structure it is important to take into account power's multidimensionality, as well as the multiplicity of actors and the fact we are dealing with a competition in which all elites are involved and mutually influencing one another. Since power resources are multidimensional and under multiple actors' control, each elite is therefore under the others' influence.

Since power is not an abstraction the actors involved in a power relationship cannot be abstract entities as 'nation' or 'state', rather individuals or social groups viewed as an alliance between individuals, and thus analysis must focus exclusively on human beings. Consequently, when we refer to the State, corporations, the Church, political parties and other institutions, we must bear in mind that we are in fact referring to the elites in control of these institutions. In a similar way, when we refer to people as an actor, what we mean is an alliance of individuals with common objectives.

In order to understand better this 'selfish' comportment of the elites we have to precise their main interest: differential accumulation power. As we shall demonstrate in the following paragraphs, elite's notion is strictly connected with the notion of power, and from our point of view, elites' main objective is the constant increase of their respective power capacities. This strict interrelation of the two notions, power and elite, determines actors' behaviour in the pursuing of their goal.

Based on our previous analysis on power, we conclude that power cannot be measured in absolute but only in relative terms<sup>24</sup>. Consequently, the power

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<sup>23</sup> In order to facilitate our task and these of the readers hence forward we are going to use the masculine pronoun refereeing to elite.

<sup>24</sup> This acceptation detaches us from the neo-liberal doctrine and brings us closer to the neo-



capabilities of an elite can be measured only in relation with those of the rest of the elites. As F. Izquierdo upheld: *“La posición de los agentes depende directamente de la posición de los demás, con lo que su objetivo será siempre acrecentar la diferencia respecto a los demás si está dominando el juego, o disminuir esta diferencia si está perdiendo. Y lo que medirá el poder de cada uno de los agentes no serán los recursos en términos absolutos sino la diferencia de la capacidad de control sobre los recursos de poder”* (Izquierdo, 2008: 52).

Power’s relative nature and the consequent lack of absolute maximisation impose an endless race for the elites, aiming not just the simple increase of their power capabilities but an increase in comparison to the power capacities of the others. This dynamic generates elites’ main interests, which is the differential accumulation of power. Nitzan and Bichler have determined this interest with reference to the capital: *“To accumulate differentially is to increase your share of total profit and capitalisation. And to increase your distributive share of these magnitudes is to increase your relative power to shape the process of social change. The source of such power is the ability of owners to strategically limit, or ‘sabotage’ the process of social reproduction. [...]”* (Nitzan and Bichler, 2002: 36-37).

In this frame, the differential accumulation of power it can be defined as the increase of power capabilities of an agent in comparison to the power of his competitors, those being the ensemble of the elites. It becomes obvious, that the capacity of an agent is not limited in his capability to accumulate power but also in this of disrupting his rivals of attaining more power. That is because more important than the power itself is the participation at the competition, as it is this participation that qualifies the agents as elites. The impossibility of an actor to increase his power capabilities will determine his expulsion as the distance between him and the rest will constantly increase, reducing his capabilities to compete.

The previous analysis demonstrates clearly the absence of cohesion among the different actors. The interest of differential accumulation of power leaves no margin of any kind of solidarity among elites, as the survival of each one depends exclusively on his capacity to increase or reduce, depending on his position, the distance that separates him with the rest of the actors. Consequently, this need of the actors for differential accumulation of power, serving to secure their role, determines the conflictive character of the intra-elite relations, characterised as competitive and circular.

The importance of conflict in the power structure has been underlined clearly by Mosca: *“One might say, indeed, that the whole history of civilized mankind comes down to a conflict between the tendency of dominant elements to*

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realist one, since the former considers that the agents are interested in maximising the level of their absolute gains while the later considers that the agents are interested in reaching a superior to that of their rivals’ position (Baldwin, 1993).

*monopolize political power and transmit possession of it by inheritance, and the tendency toward a dislocation of old forces and an insurgence of new forces” (Mosca, 1939: 65).*

According to Izquierdo, the nature of power and the interest of the agents for differential accumulation of power establish circular relations among the actors, as they constantly struggle against their competitors, the ensemble of the agents, for furthering their aim (Izquierdo, 2008: 6). Consequently, the relation among the elites becomes a competitive one, at a permanent basis, as the survival and the positioning of an actor depends directly on the positioning of the rest of the actors.

The acceptance of the constant competitiveness among actors does not imply the inexistence of cooperation among them. On the contrary, we uphold that the alliance among agents is not only possible, but depending on the context indispensable, as the power capacities of the distinctive agents are not equally distributed. And it is due to this asymmetry that the cooperation and the alliances between the agents are formed.

The rule under which an actor decides whether he will form a coalition or not resides always in the calculation of his **relative** gains: what will be the gains in comparison to the losses in front of his allies or adversaries. In other words the decision of an agent to form an alliance with other actors will be taken exclusively under the prism of whether the difference of power capabilities existing among him and the rest of the competitors will increase while his position vis-à-vis the rest of the actors will not deteriorate.

Therefore, the formation of an alliance among elites does not imply the disappearance of the competition among the allies, as those will continue targeting the improvement of their positioning not only in relation with the non-allies but with their allies. Therefore, inside of an alliance, the decisions of the individual actors will be taken always under the rule of relative gains, and once an actor appreciates that his position is deteriorating in front of this of his allies he will step out.

Following once more Izquierdo “[...] *cooperación y conflicto van unidos, pues en todo sistema de relaciones entre distintos actores se dan permanentemente situaciones de alianzas entre actores en confrontación con otros, al tiempo que no se detiene la competencia entre ellos*” (Izquierdo, 2008: 45).

### **2.2.2. Linear power relations**

Even though most of the time power relations are dominated by circular ones, there are moments that power relations are generated by people. In hierarchical societies, it is not easy for individuals to become aware of their own interests and to work out how to improve their welfare. Even when they manage it, they are faced with the difficult task of getting themselves mobilised in order to fight for a concrete objective, since on most occasions, it implies facing elites who

are resistant to status quo transformation. But when a group of people does succeed in mobilising itself, it generates a very different kind of power relation to that of the elites' internal competition. In these cases the individuals' objectives are specific and when they are met, the power relation comes to an end. For this reason we can qualify this type of relations as linear that originate in the process of awareness and come to an end if mobilisation is successful and demands are met or they are abandoned.

People perceived as a social group is accustomed to being used as a resource by the elites. People's daily lives are generally based on handing over their decision-making capacity, – whether this be a conscious, unconscious or forced action. Representative democracy, relations of production, the State itself, ideologies, control of information, coercion – are all instruments in the hands of the elites, to extract and accumulate the people's power.

Nevertheless, when an important segment of the population establishes linear power relations to achieve its own objectives, this group becomes a transforming agent with the capacity to bring about changes in society. These changes, defined by the objectives sought by people, can be minor and circumstantial, for instance in the case of a collective agreement in a company; or they can be important and structural, such as the demand for rights and freedom against a dictatorship.

The notion of people-actor, therefore, regards those individuals who use their capacities in order to pursue their goals, these always being related with the improvement of their living conditions. People, in contrast to elites, regard the sum of individuals found in inferior position of a given society, whose nature as actor depends on their capacity to establish linear relations.

People's interests are, from our point of view, always related with the improvement of their welfare, this latter not comprehended or limited in individual terms. For Locke "*The commonwealth seems to me to be a society of men constituted only for the procuring, preserving and advancing of their own civil interests*<sup>25</sup>"(Locke, 1983: 146). The search of better living conditions, in a broad sense, is therefore the prime mover of acting in a collective<sup>26</sup> form, concerning a limited community or a more extent one.

Process of social change takes place only when people struggle for their own interests, thus becoming an actor and no longer a resource in the hands of the elites. Nevertheless, this does not mean that cooperation between people and elites cannot be established when the interests of both parties coincide, as we will see further on.

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<sup>25</sup> For Locke civil interests were "[...] life, liberty, health and indolency of body; and the possession of outward things, such as money, lands, houses, furniture and the like"(Locke, 1983).

<sup>26</sup> The individual forms of action, even though of equal importance, are not to our interest in the present study. We shall limit our scope into collective or social forms of action, these regarding actions of an actor when are oriented or related to the actions of another.

When and only when people are becoming agents they can establish linear relations. The establishment of linear relations can provoke “*procesos revolucionarios, de transformacion de las condiciones de vida de las personas y de cambio social [...]*” contrary to the *status quo* tendency which characterises the circular relations between the elites competing for the differential accumulation of power (Izquierdo, 2008: 6).

Another important element that characterises the people-actor is the relations of alliance among them. When different individuals act together in order to fulfil a target, the relation among them are those of allies and not of competitors. The alliance is formed in order to obtain the wanted objective, the fulfilment of which result gains for all components.

In order to achieve the fulfilment of a particular objective, people use their personal capacities (physical and intellectual ones), resources of power (political parties and other sorts of organisations) and also the competitive relations existing among the elites.

In the following paragraphs we shall focus to each category of actors in order to develop a rigorous theoretical frame that will enable us to analyse the Egyptian case. Still, we consider that the present theoretical framework, based on Sociology of Power, can be applied in all societies, without neglecting however the particular features of each case.

### **2.3. Actors**

A broad definition of the term ‘actor’ is that of an individual or social group that affects the decision process within a power system. Action distinguishes what people do as opposed to what happen to them. Action in social theory is usually contrasted with the term structure, this last interpreted as action’s limitation, by reducing the range of possibilities available to an actor or by predetermining the actors possibilities and deeds beyond their free choice.

Following Sewell “*to be an agent means to be capable of exerting some degree of control over the social relations in which one is enmeshed, which in turn implies the ability to transform those social relations to some degree*” (Sewell, 1992: 20). The capacity of agency is inherited in all humans but agency’s forms “*vary enormously and are culturally and historically determined*” (Barnett, 1998). Consequently, all individuals have the potentiality of becoming actors. However, not all humans are actors.

From our point of view, the quality of actor concerns those individuals who have the capacity to interfere in the power relations. Thus, all individuals who in a relatively conscious pursuing of their interests, whether in latent or manifesting mode, accomplish to alter or influence power relations are qualified as actors. Our definition implies some indispensable elements: it is applicable only to human beings, whose action is characterised by a certain degree of consciousness and intentionality and has as outcome the modification of power relations.

We can differentiate among two principal categories of actors: elites and people. This division ensues from two basic elements: one regarding the interest and the other the power relations established in the pursuing of their respective interests. On one hand, elites' interest is found in the differential accumulation of power and the power relations established in the process of this accumulation are circular, demonstrating the lack of a concrete objective. On the other hand, people's interests refer always to the improvement of their living conditions. The power relations established in the pursuing of their interests are linear, indicating the tangible character of their objectives. A third element differentiating the two typologies of actors, deriving from the previous refers to the relations among equals: in the first case the relations among the elites are always competitive even in moments of cooperation, whereas in the case of people there is no competition among the allied individuals.

In order to be more comprehensive we are going to focus on these two categories of actors, beginning from elites. Thus, we are going to centre our attention on the definition of elites and people, their respective primary interests and the relations established among them.

### **2.3.1. Elites**

The term 'elite' derives from the Latin word *eligere*, and it was used in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to describe commodities of particular excellence and later to refer to superior social groups. But, it was not until late 19<sup>th</sup> century that the term was widely employed in the political and social writings (Bottomore, 1993). In its broad and ordinary use, the concept makes reference to a group of persons with a superior office in a given society. Thus, the notion regards a reduced group of individuals, who enjoy privileges in comparison to the rest of the individuals, frequently named mass or simply non elites.

The majority of the literature regarding elites has focused on the concept either from a moral or from a functional view. The normative approaches of the concept elite *"are based on the assumption that some functions are, or will be, of particular importance to the community and that elites are, or should be, composed of the individuals or the groups who can best perform these functions"* (Clifford-Vaughan, 1960: 319). On the other hand, the descriptive studies outline the behaviour and the relations regarding elites in a given society<sup>27</sup>.

Furthermore, we can distinguish studies regarding the concept of elite focusing either on one unique elite such as Aristotle(1988), Mosca (1939), Pareto (1991), or those who defended the coexistence of more than one elites, such as Saint-Simon (1976), Mannheim (1940), Aron (1950), Mills (2000). This difference created a division among the scholars, the formers classified as elitist and the

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<sup>27</sup> Indicative works of this approach are: those of (Aaronovitch, 1961), (Hunter, 1959), (Galbraith, 1973), (Dahl, 1961).

latter as pluralists.

Saint-Simon described elite as performing indispensable tasks for the economic prosperity and the scientific progress (Hart, 1964). For Pareto elites are the necessary consequence of natural differentiation among men and those who are best in a given activity or field (Pareto, 1991). Mannheim<sup>28</sup> in his work *Man and Society in the Age of Reconstruction* has defined the function of the political and organisational elites as the one “to sublimate those physic energies which society, in the daily struggle for existence, does not fully exhaust” (Mannheim, 1940: 63).

It becomes obvious that the notion of elite gave birth to different approaches, having all in common the reservation of the term to a limited number of individuals. Following Machiavelli, “In a city whatsoever, in whatsoever manner organized, never do more than forty or fifty persons attain positions of command” (Machiavelli, 1513-1517). Moreover, all of them, whether implicitly or explicitly, correlate the notion of elite with that of power. As Lasswell upheld “The study of politics is the study of influence and the influential [...]. The influential are those who get the most of what there is to get [...]. Those who get the most are elite; the rest are mass” (Lasswell, 1936: 13).

From our point of view, the term ‘elite’ is reserved to these individuals who have the capacity to pursuit their goals through relations of competition with other actors, whether in a latent or manifesting mode, inside a given society. In other words, the term ‘elite’ regards the sum of individuals fund in superior position of the society, whose survival as such depends on their capacity to compete for differential accumulation of power. Therefore, we will move away from notions of class or privilege<sup>29</sup> in order to focus on the idea of competition for differential accumulation of power.

Our approximation, therefore, concerns those individuals found in the top levels of a stratified society, conceived as a range of pyramids. We coincide thus with the pluralist approach, according to which there is a plurality of elites in a given society and not a single one, even though there are cases, especially in authoritarian societies, where the power resources are highly concentrated. Moreover, we reserve the role of elites to those individuals who have the effective and not the potential capacity to determine the socio-political environment and decide over the use of the sources of power<sup>30</sup>. Consequently, we are concerned

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<sup>28</sup> Mannheim (1940) has distinguished different type of elites: political, organising, intellectual, artist, moral and religious.

<sup>29</sup> At this point we distance ourselves from Veblen who centres his study on the elites around the distinction between the ‘leisure class’ and the rest of the population. From our perspective, the driving force of the system is the competition between elites and not their distinction from the masses (Veblen, 1971 [1899]).

<sup>30</sup> This matter, effective and potential capacity, has concerned many authors and represents an important point of criticism of pluralists such Dahl (1961) towards the classical elitist as Mosca (1939) and Pareto (1991). Mills has been one of the elitist who partially recognised that those who have pivotal positions do not necessarily use their power capacities to determine the course of the

with these persons who actually use their power capacities to further their interests and not with those who have the potentiality to pursue them.

### 2.3.1.1. Elite versus Class:

The basic opposition between elitists and pluralists, the former retaining the existence of a unique elite whereas the latter the coexistence of a plurality<sup>31</sup> of elites, generates many others. To what is our concern here, one of the significant disputes between the two schools refers to what Meisel calls '*the three C's*' referring to the group's consciousness, coherence and conspiracy<sup>32</sup> (Meisel, 1958). As Friedrich underlined one of the most problematic parts of the elite doctrine is the assumption of the men in power do consist a cohesive group (Friedrich, 1950).

We reject this implicit or explicit assumption of elite's coherence. Following Sampson<sup>33</sup> "*The rulers are not at all close-knit or united. They are not so much in the centre of a solar system, as in the cluster of interlocking circles, each one largely preoccupied with its own professionalism and expertise, and touching others only at one edge [...] There are not a single Establishment but a ring of Establishments, with slender connections. [...] No man can stand in the centre, for there is no centre*" (Sampson, 1962: 624).

The elite's cohesiveness recalls to Marxist and Marxian theories<sup>34</sup> and drives inevitably to the notion of 'class'. This term and its relation with this of elites has been studied and analysed by many authors, such as Saint-Simon (1976) Pareto (1991), Mosca (1939), Mannheim (1940), Aron (1950), but according to Keller the results of their efforts are not satisfactory (Keller, 1971: 20-24).

Following the Marxian theory, 'social class' refers to the ensemble of individuals having a determined rapport with the means of production, are conscious of their common situation and interests, and they are organised in such a way as to defend them. According to Poulantzas (1971), the rapport with the means of production in its pure form divide societies in two classes throughout history: slaves and masters, seniors and servers, bourgeois and proletariat, whereas in non Marxist terms of Pareto (1991) and Mosca (1939), societies has always been divided in two classes: those who rule and those who are ruled.

Even though, we have explicitly agreed on a general division of the society between elites and non elites, we disagree, however, with the aspect of the class cohesion, which includes the development of collective consciousness inside the 'ruling' or bourgeoisie class, arising from the common status sharing the

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events (Mills, 2000).

<sup>31</sup> For further information regarding the debate between pluralists see (Stanworth and Giddens, 1974) and (Parry, 1988).

<sup>32</sup> Conspiracy in the sense of common will for action.

<sup>33</sup> Regarding the interactions among the different elites we do not share the same views with this author, an important aspect of our thesis discussed later.

<sup>34</sup> Marxist theory is this developed by Marx whereas marxians are those theories inspired by Marx's theory.

individuals, based on material or other elements.

More specifically, apart from the almost material exclusiveness of the classic Marxism<sup>35</sup>, one of the main elements departing us from the term of class in a Marxist and Marxian sense is the postulation of a perpetual alliance and the existence of the common interests. From our point of view, the elites may share a common interest to preserve a specific *status quo* which enables them to maintain their power capacities, especially in moments of socio-political changes. However, the preservation of the *status quo*<sup>36</sup>, in broad sense, does not constitute neither the only nor the principal interest of the actors, and thus cannot constitute the element of the elites' cohesion, even if they share common backgrounds, education or social status.

From our point of view, the main interest of each individual forming part of the elite is the raise of his personal power capacities and not a general interest of the dominant class. This becomes more clear, if we take into consideration that, from our point of view, elites are not exclusively defined by their rapport with the means of production. For us, the notion of class represents a stable alliance between actors that control production means, without this implying the end of competition among them.

The 'selfish' comportment of the actors is explained by the system's character deriving from hierarchies. As we analysed previously elites' main interest is the differential accumulation power.

### **2.3.1.2. Scope of influence**

Power is not a concrete notion, in the sense that it cannot be limited in a specific sector. As Foucault<sup>37</sup> upheld, "*power is everywhere [...] because it comes from everywhere*". Therefore, the competition among elites for further accumulation of power is diffused to all actors of a society for the control of all elements that serve as power resource, such as capital, ideology, State, information, population, coercion.

The 'scope' of influence has divided once more elitists and pluralists, whether is there an overlap between the political, economic and social sub-systems within the overall system and which sub-system has the greatest influence (Parry, 1988 134). The pluralists such as Dalh (1961) and Keller (1971) sustain that the different elites act in a specific issue-area more or less disconnected from the other areas, contrary to the elitists' point of view.

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<sup>35</sup> The mono-causal economic interpretation of history and the separation of politic and economic spheres is another point of divergence with the Marxist theory, although Marx never denied the interference of other factors in the social changes.

<sup>36</sup> The term here is used to refer to general characteristics of a society which determine the hierarchy of power resources, in *longue durée*. In this context, we accept the existence of a common interest among the feudalists to maintain the importance of the resource 'land' in front of the threat of 'capital' introduced by bourgeoisie.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in (Newman, 2003).



For us, the limits of actuation depend on the power structure of each society. Thus, in polyarchic societies elites' power capabilities are more connected with a specific power resource, whereas in more autocratic societies this separation is less evident. However, the complete separation or the absolute integration of power areas is unlikely to appear in the contemporary societies.

Elites' competitive relation for differential accumulation of power does not leave margins for distinction between sectors, because their role as elites inevitably introduces a generalised competition for the control over power resources, whether political, economic, coercive, ideological etc. In this way, we cannot separate competition among economic and political elites because it concerns the totality of elites, independently of their specialisation.

The degree of power's concentration or diffusion is relevant to system's analysis. A system structured on few primary elites will tend towards oligarchy, i.e. towards autocracy in its political dimension and towards monopoly in its economic dimension. The greater number of elites participating in the competition the tougher it will be, and the greater number of opportunities for the population to establish linear relations for its own interests. As Mannheim points out, the more elites there are in a society, the more each individual elite tends to lose his function and influence as a leader, since each elite compensates the other. In a democratic mass society, particularly one where social mobilisation is important, no group can succeed in deeply influencing the whole society (Mannheim, 1940). Thus, a system structured around a large diversity of primary elites will tend towards polyarchy, due to a more open competition. Nonetheless we should not associate polyarchy with democracy<sup>38</sup>.

As we shall see in this study, Egypt has been an example of a highly concentrated structure; a reduced group of people controls the main power resources and, most importantly, upholds an autocratic relationship with the State. However, this does not mean that the ruler exerts absolute control over all resources. Within the regime, the ruler is accustomed to competing with other elites who control the Army or the private capital.

Analysis of the elites and their competition for differential accumulation of power must take into account factors such as the sphere which they come from (social, professional, educational, corporate, state administration, etc.) or the mechanisms by which they access control over power resources (inheritance, nepotism, clientelism, conquest, revolution, etc.). In the recent history of the Arab world and this of Egypt, new cases of independence and various coups enabled access to resources for those elites related to the groups responsible for political change. After that, as the elites established themselves and continued to grow,

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<sup>38</sup> The example of Lebanon is useful in this context. Although the Lebanese elites form a notably more polyarchic system than those existent in Arab societies, their confessional political system cannot disguise the fact that the elites' accumulation process, within their respective religious communities, is not democratic at all. George Corm even compares the Lebanese system to one of totalitarianism (Corm, 2003).

nepotism and clientelism became the mechanisms most frequently used. With the passing of time, generational change opened the door to inheritance, not only within the monarchies, but also in republican regimes and in all spheres of power<sup>39</sup>.

The elites' background has an important influence on the homogeneity of the ruling group. Cohesion, as well as capacity to generate alliances within the elites can be made easier or more difficult according to the degree of homogeneity between them. Giddens distinguishes between moral integration and social integration. The former refers to the ideas and values shared by the elites and to their degree of consciousness of the ties of solidarity they share. The latter refers to the frequency and nature of the contacts and relationships between them (Stanworth and Giddens, 1974).

Differences in the elites' moral or social integration are reflected in their capacity to generate alliances. Homogeneity helps create similar interests and perceptions towards society, which facilitate the formation of alliances between elites (Whitley, 1974). Therefore, alliances against third parties are likely to be more easily formed and to last longer, or competition for power to be better regulated and less conflictive, when formed within a homogeneous elite. In the opposite sense, we see that elites' heterogeneity can cause instability and even have bloody consequences<sup>40</sup>.

We must also take into account the extent to which other actors have either open or obstructed access to enter the power competition. If an elite group is closed off it is generally more homogeneous and competition is therefore less conflictive. However, a closed system may also lead other competitors external to the group to employ more dramatic methods in order to gain access to it, causing major changes to the system structure. On the contrary, a more open political system could open up new elites' access, in a controlled fashion, to state control – thus reducing the risk of instability and violence. However, this would clearly weaken the current leaders, who could lose their power, in turn causing the dominant elites to do everything possible to prevent the access of other competitors to control of the State.

The elites' position in the system and their accumulation capacity is also linked to the resources they control. Obviously, not all systems are structured in the same way; in some, the essential resource can be the State; in others, capital; and in some systems, coercion or ideology, or a combination of several.

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<sup>39</sup> Syria under Assad's leadership and Egypt during Mubarak's mandate provide the most obvious examples of a dynamic, which is not only restricted to the most important rulers but can also be seen in other elites, as in the case of some of the 'new guard' in Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco and other countries, where we find the established elites' children challenging the 'old guard' for political and economic power.

<sup>40</sup> An example is in the case of Lebanon where control over some of the power resources has led to armed confrontations which, on some occasions, turned into civil war.

### 2.3.1.3. Primary and Secondary Elites:

In stratified societies, where elites are those actors who control power resources and through circular relations among them further their interest for differential accumulation of power, the power capabilities are not equally distributed and, as we mentioned earlier, it is this asymmetry that dictates cooperation among the agents. Furthermore, this asymmetry implies also a classification of the elites regarding their power capacities.

Analysis over elites enables us to see that although they all participate in the competition for differential accumulation of power their action impacts differently the system. On one hand, the primary elites have capacity to compete for the control of resources that constantly allow for the greatest accumulation, whilst also delimiting the power balance which structures the system, by establishing relationships with one another. On the other hand, secondary elites, even if they also intervene in the competition, they evolve in a structure generated by the primary elites, therefore occupy subordinate posts in the hierarchy; their access to resources will henceforth depend on their alliances with the primary elites. We can, therefore, distinguish between primary and secondary elites, the first characterised by their capacity to generate the competition among elites and the seconds those who move inside the structure created by the firsts.

An elite's primary or secondary position may vary according to changes in the system structure, either because of a new equilibrium, or due to revolutionary changes among the resources or the actors involved. For instance in the Arab world as the states were being established, the tribal elites lost their power and on many occasions began to depend on the state elites, since the distribution of social benefits, work and privileges depends on who controls foreign revenue. Therefore the role played by tribal elites was no longer primary as it had been in the past, when the tribe was the foundation of all social, political and economic organisation; as the State became the centre of the power accumulation process, the tribe became secondary resource.

A way of determining an elites' position in the system is by analysing whether they are easily replaceable or not when it comes to forming alliances without causing a significant decrease in the power held by their allied elites. A primary actor can easily substitute his alliance with a secondary actor without affecting his accumulation capacity whereas a secondary actor depends on his alliance with the primary one<sup>41</sup>. On the contrary, changes in alliances between primary actors are part of the 'big game' and have direct repercussions on the system's balance of power and therefore on its structure.

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<sup>41</sup> An example of this is when an elite from an Arab country state decides to replace the director of a company, or decides to redistribute income to other tribes or to the same tribe but through another Sheik or dignitary. We must also point out that primary elites will always establish their relationships with secondary elites in an attempt to prevent the latter from gaining access to the main power resources. In this respect, Ayubi highlights that alliances with a distributive basis will economically include the elites allied to the regime but exclude them politically (Ayubi, 2000: 307).

Capacity to be an actor therefore depends directly on the power one succeeds in accumulating. For this reason, an actor must be analysed in the context of the subsystem over which they exert influence. Different contexts generate different systems with different structures. Therefore in the context of the global system, we will only take into account the actors with capacity to use 'global' resources such as state power, big transnational corporations, hegemonies and global ideologies (i.e. the Great Religions, Neo-liberalism, Socialism or Communism, but not the nationalist ideologies which are only useful as power resources in national spheres), international coercion or information capacity, international rules and institution. But there may also be regional, state and local systems, which include those relating to institutions such as a church, political party or corporation, etc. In this way, actors who are primary within an inferior system can be secondary within the superior system. For instance, if we analyse the tribal system in an Arab country then Sheiks will be primary actors, but if we analyse the country's system, Sheiks will occupy a position secondary to the elites who control the State.

### 2.3.2. **People**

People constitute the second category of the actors. This category, however, presents more difficulties than the elites. The main difficulty derives from the very same nature of people. Their nature, as human beings and not institutions or material elements of value, grants the opportunity to become agents. Therefore, agency is a potential feature inherited to all human beings. Yet an individual becomes an actor when and only when he interferes on power relations. Consequently, people's nature does not automatically guarantee their role as actors.

People can be actors but also they constitute a power resource at the elites' disposal. In a similar mode, Inglehart (1977) distinguishes between elite-directed and elite-challenging forms of participation. In the first case, he refers to the large mass of citizens who in general are politically unprepared, and guided by a small number of leaders, usually through parties, syndicates, churches or other institutions. The elite challenging is more issue-oriented and is "*based less on established or bureaucratic organisation than on ad-hoc groups; it aims at affecting specific policy changes*", and requires relatively high level of political skill (Inglehart, 1977: 300).

The basic condition that people should fulfil in order to become actors is being relatively conscious of what their interests are. Having however in mind the function of ideology in its broad sense, it becomes obvious that any action is restricted and subscribed in a particular ideological frame. Even though the ideology's impacts never disappear completely from power relations, whether lineal or circular, there are moments that people obtain a higher degree of consciousness regarding specific issues. How then we can differentiate collective

acts between those that are pure ideological manipulation-where people in fact are not actors but objects of a power relation-from those that the ideological influence is circumvented by actor's personal judgment, dictated by the particular interests and necessities and in this way enabling people to become an object of a power relation?

In order to be able to distinguish when people are an object or subject of a power relation, or in other words if they have the role of actor or this power resource, is necessary to analyse the objective of mobilisation. Following Kornhauser the mass behaviour implies among others a remote attention from personal experience (Kornhauser, 1959). Therefore, the more concrete is the objective of the people the less are the possibilities of people becoming a mere power resource. Consequently, when people's goals are connected to their interests in terms of their welfare improvement, we can identify linear power relations wherein people have a role of subject.

People usually move on an axis which progresses from zero consciousness of their own interests -due to some elites' ideological manipulation-to claims for improvement in their living conditions and the mobilisation required to achieve them. According to their position on that axis, people can constitute a simple power resource on the disposal of elites or they can become an actor undertaking reactive actions against elites' interventions that pose a threat to their well-being, or even to undertake proactive actions to redefine and achieve their true objectives.

On the same time, the relation between elites and people is defined also by the position that the latter has on this axis. More conscious people are of their living conditions, the more elites' efforts will focus on legitimating their action and decisions, thus entailing an effect on their accumulation capacity in view of the need to respond to the population's interests and objectives.

It becomes evident that the higher the degree of consciousness lesser is the possibility that people constitute a simple power resource. Moreover, the degree of self awareness regarding people's interests establishes different types of actions. Following Tilly we can differentiate between reactive and proactive actions. Reactive collective actions "*[...] consist of group efforts to reassert established claims when someone else challenges or violates them*". On the other hand, "*Proactive actions assert group claims which have not previously been exercised*" (Tilly, 1976: 367-368).

Reactive actions are more frequent and common. This means that in most of the cases initiative belongs to elites and the role of people is limited in reacting against elite's action giving them a defensive character. When there is a clear awareness of their interests, people can have the initiative and act in order to achieve their specific goals, breaking the limits imposed by elites. Once more following Tilly, in such cases, proactive action claims rights which have not

previously been exercised. On these occasions, movement<sup>42</sup> becomes a transformation motor of social reality. However, in such cases, people's mobilisation proves to be more difficult, since first people must become conscious of their situation and then consider the changes necessary to improve it, in addition to uniting in order to fight for such changes.

Important element of mobilisation is the collective action. Following Przeworski the real threat of authoritarian regimes is not the loss of legitimacy but the organisation of a counter hegemony- the existence of a collective project comprehended as future alternative (Przeworski, 1991).

People's main power resource in the pursuing of their interest is their personal mobilisation through actions of protest, opposition or resistance. Yet, this is neither the only resource available nor the most common. Often people use the elites' competition as resource to attain their goals, when elites need support of social groups. In such cases people obtain negotiation capacity but their capacity depends on the elites' specific interests. Thus, they remain mostly an object of power relation.

The presence of vanguard may also be a power resource for the fulfilment of people's aims. Vanguard groups can emerge from civil society's organisations, such as syndicates or political organisations, if these defend the majority's interests; their action capacity is linked to their impact on people and their potential to mobilise them. However, frequently these organisations experience important tensions if they gain access to control of power resources, since the people's objectives may clash with the organisation leaders' needs. In these cases, leaders will lose the vanguard role they played in the linear relationship, in order to assume their new role as elites in the circular relationship.

People do not act always in the same intensity and we can thus identify different degrees. Reactive actions are mostly specific protests and enjoy a certain degree of spontaneity. They are either movements in response to concrete facts, or claims resulting from a great pressure exerted on the population to the point where it has become difficult for the people bear it any longer. Opposition is different from protest because it is more structured. We can distinguish it from resistance if it is carried out from within the system, obeying 'the rules of the game'. It is usually led by political or religious organisations, or legal or paralegal (non-clandestine) organisations belonging to civil society.

Finally, social revolutions represent the maximum expression of linear relations. As it was underlined by Skocpol social revolutions are different from other forms of transformative process due to the presence of two coincidences:

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<sup>42</sup> According to Tilly, "A social movement is a kind of campaign [...] (which) demands righting of a wrong, most often a wrong suffered by a well specified population". "Social movements involve collective claims on authorities. A social movement consists of a sustained challenge to powerholders in the name of a population living under the jurisdiction of those powerholders by means of repeated public displays of that population's numbers, commitment, unity and worthiness" (Tilly, 1998: 467-469).

societal structural change with class upheaval and political and social transformation (Skocpol, 1979: 4).

Attempts to transform the system or some of its aspects have a deeper dimension than those of protest and opposition. Resistance movements are only strong in a regime's moments of fragility. Whereas the regimes' response to protests and opposition may oscillate between repression or negotiation and concession to increase its legitimacy, in the case of resistance movements coercion is manifest, since what they question is the permanence of the elites and their control over power resources, and henceforth their very existence.

As we saw in Inglehart (1977), people's actions can also be studied according to its relationship with the elites: it can either be directed by them or question and even threaten their existence; however both elements often appear in the same mobilisation. In the first case, after people's actions have been directed by the elites, on many occasions we can find stable and hierarchical groups which serve as a resource to the rulers in their competition for accumulation. In the second case, mobilisations establish linear relations and the groups are usually non-hierarchical and less stable, disappearing or modifying their campaign when the specific objective at the origin of the mobilisation has been met.

When this last type of mobilisations, i.e. those questioning elites' existence, take place on a lasting scale, which happens frequently in struggles for major social transformations, controversy revolves around the role of the vanguard. It is likely that with time, the groups which originally formed the mobilisation become hierarchical and their vanguard plays a role ever closer to that of the elites. This can lead to the emergence of political parties or, once the original objective is met, to a situation where some leaders refuse to withdraw and instead try to take advantage of the mobilisation's success to position themselves within the elite. It can also be the case that this vanguard, once transformed into the elite, tries to modify people's initial objectives for their own benefit. In both cases, these leaders will have abandoned their vanguard role within the linear relation in order to acquire their role in the elite, which uses population as a resource in the competition for differential accumulation of power.

Moreover, as we have already seen, the existence of linear relations does not automatically imply the disappearance of circular relations. In many cases where the masses become an actor they are also a resource for some of the elites who take advantage of mobilisation for their own benefit. On these occasions, the more the elites respond to the population's demands, the more power they achieve.

In more general terms, mobilisation of citizens is sporadic and mainly limited to actions of protest. And when they are not serving as mere instruments at the service of their leaders' power accumulation, civil society organisations are scarce and weak, and syndicates and political parties act more and more frequently as an 'opposition' that does not call into question the status quo.

## 2.4. Power resources

The resources elites may use in their competition to accumulate power shape another determinant factor of the system structure. The impact of these diverse resources is linked to circumstance and accumulation processes; control over each resource generates a variety of interests and policies which are, in many cases, opposed.

The prevalence of the State as a power resource in the Arab world and consequently in Egypt entails our main focus on it. However, attention will be given to other power resources even though the extent of the analysis depends on the weight that these resources have on Egypt's case. Extension of analysis is also influenced by the difficulty we consider that each of the resource presents in attaining our goal.

### 2.4.1. State

The western academic literature of the social sciences has shown a special interest in the concept of the state. Social anthropology has centred on the genesis of the state, whereas sociology and political science have been more concerned with questions of how the state works or what we understand as 'state'. International Relations discipline has been occupied either with normative questions or with the primacy of the state as agent. Recently, some scholars introduced new questions in this discipline concerning state's nature calling for a 'social theory of the state' (Wendt, 2009).

In the Arab world, the thematic of the state began to attract the intellectuals in the '80s, up to then more concerned with the notions of the '*Islamic umma*' or '*Arab nationalism*' (Ayubi, 2006: 4). A similar idea is sustained by Korany who upheld that the systematic study of the Arab states was still nascent by that time and that the existing literature "*shows the domination of two approaches: political psychology (i.e. the personalisation of the state) and religion (i.e. Islam)*" (Korany, 1987: 47).

Our theoretical approach forces us to make reference to different definitions of the state produced in the social and political sciences. The most popular and frequently used definition of the state has been that of Weber. According to the author, the modern state becomes purely the synonym of an abstract '*ce qui doit être*', "*le groupement politique qui revendique avec succès le monopole de la contrainte physique légitime*" (Weber, 1971: 57). In the same spirit Hegel<sup>43</sup> has defined the state as "*the actuality of the ethical idea*".

For a structuralist point of view Skocpol defines state as "*a set of administrative, policing, and military organizations headed, and more or less well coordinated by, an executive authority. Any state first and fundamentally extracts resources from society and deploys these to create and support coercive and*

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<sup>43</sup> Quoted in (Korany, 1987: 51).



*administrative organizations*" (Skocpol, 1985: 59).

According to Radcliffe-Brown<sup>44</sup> the state is "a collection of individual human beings connected by a complex system of relations. Within that organisation different individuals have different roles, and some are in possession of power or authority". Nordlinger highlights that "The state refers to all those individuals who occupy offices that authorize them, and them alone, to make and apply decisions that are binding upon any and all segments of society. Quite simply, the state is made up of and limited to those individuals who are endowed with society-wide decisionmaking authority" (Nordlinger, 1981: 11).

For Stepan "The state must be considered as more than the 'government'. It is the continuous administrative, legal, bureaucratic and coercive system that attempts not only to structure relationships between civil society and public authority in a polity but also to structure many crucial relationships within the civil society as well" (Stepan, 1978: xii).

The previous quotations help us to understand that there is an extended variety on state's definitions. Indicatively we can mention that in 1951, the American Political Science Review identified 151 separate definitions of the state. In the *International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences* in the entry 'state' (143-157) it is written "at present [...] conflict among parochialism (among approaches) overshadow harmony and the search of common denominators. As a result it is impossible to offer a united definition of the state that would be satisfactory even to a majority of those seriously concerned with the problem".

Why it is so difficult to define the dominant political organisation of our times? According to Mann the confusion of the state's definition derives from the existence of two different levels of analysis, one functional (what the state does) and one institutional (what the state seems) with a predomination of the institutional one (Mann, 1986).

From our point of view, the problem resides on the *nature* of state and also the functions attributed to it. This reasoning brings as closely to Wendt and his *Social Theory of International Politics*. However, our coincidence remains exclusively to the questing of state's nature. Divergent from our standpoint, the author upholds that states are not 'as if' but they are *really* persons and that their anthropomorphisation is not just a helpful metaphor (Wendt, 1999).

Wendt and his theory have generated important debates in the discipline of the International Relation<sup>45</sup>. We consider that a theoretical confrontation with Wendt's perception of the state overpasses the limits of our objectives. However, we want to underline, following Miliband (1983: 60-61), that "To speak of 'the state' in this manner [...] can be misleading. The reference is to certain people who

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<sup>44</sup> Quoted in (Claessen and Skalnvc, 1978: 4).

<sup>45</sup> Wendt's theory opened a vivid debate between scholars of different disciplines and the author. For further information see (Wendt, 1999), (Guzzini and Leander, 2006) including an auto critic of Wendt, (Jacson et al., 2004) and (Lomas, 2005).

*are in charge of the executive power of the state [...]. But this assumes a unity of views and interests which may not exist: great divisions between the people concerned are very common [...]*".

Our hypothesis is that the state, as well as other socio-political hierarchical organisations, is an institution wherein significant power capabilities are enclosed. These capabilities convert the state to a significant power resource at the disposal of those agents, physical persons, who have the capacity to control it or to compete over its control. Therefore, the state can only be comprehended as power resource, or power structure<sup>46</sup>, and the role of agent can be only attributed to individuals or groups of them and not to some impersonal entity with separate interests *per se*. As it was said by the very same king of France, Louis XIV, "*l'état c'est moi*". We coincide therefore with Gilpin who underlines that only individuals and alliances of them can be actors (Gilpin, 1995).

To the above a remark should be made. The power capabilities enclosed in the resource 'state' are subscribed in a *longue durée* accumulative process, following the specific features of each society and its pre-existing forms of polity that determined its historical path. Therefore, we believe that it is more adequate to refer to states in plural than state, as the historical context of each society is particular to it. This acceptation helps us to understand the divergence on functions and characteristics describing the contemporary states and the problems of communication among theorists and political actors.

#### 2.4.1.1. State genesis

In order to argument over the validity of our hypothesis we shall resort to the origins of the state formation, or as it will be held to the origins of particular polities. Following Poulantzas "*[Encore qu'] il ne suffise pas d'en (état et pouvoir) parler. Il s'agit d'essayer de comprendre, de connaître et d'expliquer. Pour ce faire, il ne faut pas hésiter à saisir, sans retour, les problèmes à la racine. Il convient aussi d'en prendre les moyens et ne pas céder aux facilités d'un langage analogique et métaphorique [...]*" (Poulantzas, 1971).

There is an extensive corpus of scientific works destined to the analysis and search of state's origins. However, usually we are found in front of a problem: scholars in their effort to develop a theory, applicable to a large scale of cases, resort to generalisation. This kind of practice in social sciences is not only

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<sup>46</sup>The state can also be perceived as structure. Following Katzenstein "*The state is a structure of domination. Its institutional features and legal norms define political authority in society. Governments rather than states are actors. There exists a close relationship between state structures and government actors. States are of great importance for the interests and purposes of governments. Alternatively, through the policies they enact governments reproduce and alter state structures. In contrast to neorealism the conception of state structure differentiates analytically between structure and actor. It views the states as part of social structures. State interests and capacities become the object of empirical work. And since the state is understood in its historical context, voluntarist conceptions of politics in an atomistic society are analyzed as no more than one particular historical case among many*" (Katzenstein, 1990: 11,14).

acceptable but also necessary in the effort to construct a theory. However, there are or there should be limits to this process because frequently the silenced information may disorient and therefore alter the substance of the analysis.

The 'original sin' of the scholar, excessive generalisation, has been repeatedly committed in the case of the state, especially in the analysis related to state's origins. From our point of view the state represents particular form of socio-political organisation. As Engels underlined, "*The state [...] has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies which have managed without it, which had no notion of the state or state power*" (Engels, 1972: 232). Therefore, even though nowadays the state represents the unique form of political organisation recognisable internationally, the past of this polity is neither common nor similar.

For our research, the existence of different types of polities previous to the state does not impose particular problems. From our point of view, all forms of socio-political organisation, founded on stratified society, with a sufficient number of subjects<sup>47</sup> and characterised by a certain centralisation, represent a power resource at the disposal of those who can control it. Paraphrasing Fried<sup>48</sup>, we can determine stratified society one in which members of the same sex and equivalent age status do not have access to the same opportunities, whether political, social or economic. There is, therefore, a division of an organised society in, at least, two groups, the ruled and rulers, and, by consequence, a specific hierarchy. At the same time, there is a kind of organisational centralisation, the control of which is attributed to a person or a group of persons and a minimum size of citizens that makes impossible the subjects' control over their rulers.

It becomes obvious that this definition is not exclusive to the state but it can be valid for different types of hierarchical polities. However, it excludes a lot of them. As our aim is to demonstrate the *nature* of the modern state as power resource by tracing back to its origins, nothing deters us to include other forms of polities, which satisfy the criteria mentioned above. Thus the theoretical tools of sociology and anthropology are not only acceptable but also indispensable.

There are many hypotheses regarding the origins and the development of earlier hierarchical polities, named by the different authors as state, or proto state, early state. Engels has attributed the state genesis to the necessity to protect the developing private propriety "*As the state arose from the need to keep class antagonisms in check, but also arose in the thick of the fight between the classes, it is normally the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which by its means becomes also the politically dominant class and so acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class [...]*" (Engels, 1972: 231).

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<sup>47</sup> Many authors have underlined the factor of demography for the state formation. Lenski sustained that pre-state societies were composed by a number of individuals inferior of 1500 per settlement, whereas the early states were composed by 200 times more people, accompanied by higher intensity per square mile (Lenski, 1984: 145-146).

<sup>48</sup> Following Fried "*Stratified society is one in which members of the same sex and equivalent age status do not have equal access to the basic resources that sustain life*" (Fried, 1967: 186).

Marx dedicated part of his work on the historical development of the state in extra-European countries such as India, China, Persia and some other Islamic countries<sup>49</sup>. According to Claessen, Marx's central point was that the exploitation in these societies was not based on the "*existence of private ownership of the land, but mostly on the allegiance to a deified and despotic ruler who personified the state*" (Claessen and Skalnvk, 1978: 8).

Another hypothesis concerning the state genesis, sustained by Oppenheimer in his work *De Staat*, presents conquest as the main cause of state formation, as the conquerors-pastoral populations-subordinated the conquered-agricultural ones (Oppenheimer, 1975: 42). Similar is the view presented from Alí al-Wardi. The author sustained that the totality of the Arab societies have experienced conflicts between two kind of groups, nomad (*badawa*) and urban (*hadara*) ones, the domination of one over the other or their symbiosis determined the actual morphology of the Arab states (Ayubi, 2000: 84). On the opposite of these theories is found Lowie (1962) with his work *The origin of the state*, who argued that the conquest cannot represent the causal factor of the state creation but rather the association.

A different approach of the matter was presented by the anthropologist Steward who sustained the idea that the need for irrigation led to the creation of the state (Steward, 1972), a view also shared by Wittfogel making reference to the 'hydraulic economy' (Wittfogel, 1957). A relative multicausal opinion of state's origins was presented by Caneriro in his work *A theory of the origins of the state*, where the state is presented as the result of population pressure in combination with war and conquest (Carneiro, 1970).

The hypothesis over the 'state' creation cannot be exhausted or homogenous. However, it seems to be a general acceptance that the 'state' *genesis*, weather responding to internal or external threats or to organisational necessities of the society, is strictly connected, as result or as a cause<sup>50</sup>, with the subordination of important part of the population under relatively small ruling group.

Following Balandier, "*L'État traditionnelle permet effectivement a une minorité d'exercer une domination durable ; les luttes pour le pouvoir au sein de cette derrière - auxquelles on réduit souvent la politique en ces sociétés - contribuent plus a renforcer la domination exercée qu'a l'affaiblir. [...] Le pouvoir et l'autorité sont si fortement personnalisés que l'intérêt public, propre à la fonction, se sépare difficilement de l'intérêt privé de celui qui l'assume*" (Balandier, 1999: 176-177).

Thus the 'early state', or better said the polities pre-existing the state, represent one of the mechanisms through which a group, separated or superior of

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<sup>49</sup> However, his works were not completed and they were continued and further developed by other scholars, such as Krader (1975).

<sup>50</sup> Of course there is an important difference between the two that means the state comprehended as cause or result of specific factors. However, our aim is to argue over the nature of the state as resource of power and not over the causes that helped or determined its creation.

the society which is funded acquired power. In other words, it constituted a political organisation through which a limited group of individuals, the rulers, under the pretext for protection or organisational necessities, accomplished to extract important power capacities through the subordination of the rest of the society's members. Following Cohen<sup>51</sup> *"From Rousseau to Marx and Engels, through to contemporary writers such as Fried, early states are defined as governmental systems of control in which ruling groups use and create the state as a means for maintaining themselves in power over other subordinated classes in the society"*. It becomes obvious, that this hierarchical mode of socio-political organisation permitted mainly the accumulation and consequent appropriation of power capabilities social, political or economic ones, on the hands of a limited number of people, those described as elites.

#### 2.4.1.2. Modern state

Up to now we have argued that specific polities pre-existing the state represent a power resource at the disposal of limited group of people. However, what is the connection between those polities and the modern state?

The main idea is that history is important in order to comprehend the present, as there are strong patterns of continuity between the present and the past<sup>52</sup>. Therefore, following Lukes *"Men make their own history but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past"* (Lukes, 1974: 22).

In the case of the modern state, we believe that despite the changes introduced there is connection between it and the previous polity. As it was underlined by Badie, the modern state was build over the feudalist system, as the king had in his disposal of competences that we can place on the origins of the state (Badie, 1986).

The institutional phenomenon of modern state has its fundamentals in the Western Europe of the XVI century, and particularly at the Westphalia Treaty (1648). According to different sources the term 'state' (*stato*) was firstly used by Machiavelli in *The Prince* (1532), and the term was developed later by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Bodin. However, as Classen sustained, it was not until Engels that a empirical analysis was made, as the formers had *"mainly theorized from a self-conceived past to a wished-for future, or tried to explain only half-known phenomena with data that were totally inadequate for that purpose"* (Claessen and Skalnvk, 1978: 6).

Related to the formation of western European state, Tilly has been one of the scholars to dedicate various scientific works on the European state formation.

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<sup>51</sup> Quoted in (Claessen and Skalnvk, 1978).

<sup>52</sup> However, it has to be cleared that from our point of view there are moments of ruptures in the historical path.

According to the author, European national states were created through the effectuation of the war, producing a parallel accumulation of capital<sup>53</sup>(Tilly, 2006).

Poulantzas defended that the passage from a feudal state to a capitalist one experienced a period of transition under the absolutist state. In the authors own words, *“cette présence spécifique dans l’État absolutiste, du type capitaliste d’état, n’est pas due, non plus, à une alliance politique entre noblesse foncière politiquement dominante et bourgeoisie économiquement dominante. Pendant cette phase, la contradiction principale se situe précisément entre la noblesse et la bourgeoisie”* (Poulantzas, 1971: 170).

As it becomes obvious the modern state is a western creation. At this point, it is useful to clarify briefly our position *vis-à-vis* the debate in the question of the modern state and its exclusivity or not in the western European region. Following Badie *“[...] les modèles occidentaux de gouvernement s’imposent comme universels de manière tautologique, puisque de tous les ordres politiques, seul l’ordre étatique s’autoproclame universel, par recours à un postulat dont il peut d’autant moins se défaire qu’il est reçu par tous comme constitutif de sa propre définition [...] La référence à Weber et à Durkheim conduisait à reléguer la culture dans l’interprétation des formes prémodernes de gouvernement”* (Badie, 1992: 69-71).

The socio-political past of the contemporary states is not common, as we have already underlined. The colonisation marked important changes in the globe, one of them being the establishment of the western state as the only mode of political organisation. Thus, there are not few authors who sustain that the term ‘state’ should be applied only to the occidental ones, as the societies of the ‘developing or underdeveloped’ world do not accomplish the necessary request to be called states<sup>54</sup>. Furthermore, there is an important part of the academic literature presenting the non western societies as a passive element where upon the western political order was imposed<sup>55</sup>.

From our point of view, the different societies have developed different forms of political organisation above which and under different types of ‘exportation’<sup>56</sup> the European modern state was adopted, in different historical

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<sup>53</sup> Tilly also underlines that the possessors of power did not act aiming the creation of national states-centralised, differentiate, autonomous, organised politically. On the contrary, they were fighting with the intention to halt or to dominate their rivals and by this way take advantage the power in a secure territory or in an extend one, by forming alliances among them, result of mutual dependence (Giddens, 1976).

<sup>54</sup> Nettl, for instance, argued that by accepting different degrees of ‘stateness’, based on criteria that he exposed, we can adopt universally the term, even though he believed that the term could not be applied to the developing countries (Nettl 1967).

<sup>55</sup> Following Amin, *“La société ivoirienne n’a pas d’autonomie propre, elle ne se comprend pas sans la société européenne qui la domine: si le prolétariat est africain, la bourgeoisie véritable est absente, domiciliée dans l’Europe qui fournit capitaux et cadres”*. In the same spirit, Badie and Birnbaum upheld *“[...] l’État reste en Afrique comme en Asie un pur produit d’importation, une pâle copie des systèmes politiques et sociaux européens les plus opposés, un corps étranger de surcroît lourd inefficace et source de violence”*. Quoted in (Bayart, 1989: 26-27),

<sup>56</sup> Badie analyses the different practices of state’s exportation, varying from the particular socio-

moments. As Badie (1986: 41) underlined, the political order of Islam was based *“sur des bases no seulement différentes, mais à l'inverse de celles qui marquent l'histoire occidentale”* (Badie, 1986: 41). In the same context Kazancigil<sup>57</sup> (1986) sustained that the imposition of the state polity globally is partly attributed to colonial powers and partly to the cultural diffusion. Harik upheld that the majority of the Arab states are not only quite old but *“product of regional and indigenous forces and mostly unrelated to the European colonialism, and in most cases predate it”* (Harik, 1987: 22).

We sustain that there are different typologies of the state<sup>58</sup>, the result of a dynamic interaction: the diverse socio-economic paths that each society has followed and the ‘imposition’ of the ‘western state’, as the only possible way of political organisation. We agree, therefore, with Bayart (1989: 41) when he comments, alluding to the societies of the African continent, that *“Ces sociétés n'ont jamais été, ne peuvent être les objets passifs de leur mise en dépendance, fut-ce après leur défaite militaire. La colonisation n'a pas radicalement édulcoré leur capacité à poursuivre des stratégies globales de production de leur modernité”*.

Therefore, there is not an uniformity concerning the form of state and we can still refer to states in plural, as there are important differences among the states, not only between *centre and periphery* but also among the very European states, reflecting the distinctive historical paths. However, there are similarities between the states of centre and the periphery, due mainly the colonisation process. Following Martin Muñoz *“La colonización abrió una doble dinámica, de imposición y de imitación, de los valores modernos en el mundo colonizado. De imposición porque el etnocentrismo cultural del colonizador dejó sin valor el corpus tradición [...]. De imitación, porque la asunción de ese modelo respondía también al deseo de las elites nacionalistas [árabes] de la época que se inspiraron en los valores occidentales dominados por la idea de que siguiendo el modelo europeo alcanzarían el desarrollo y auge que los países de Europa habían logrado”* (Martín Muñoz, 1999: 69). Important element deriving from the author's comment is that also in the case of the Arab state formation the interests of the ruling elites were determinant.

In the Arab world, and according to Alí al-Wardi<sup>59</sup>, we can distinguish three different typologies of Arab states, despite the existence of common elements. As it is analysed by the author we can verify actually states: a) where nomad groups

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political path of the colonial power (Badie, 1992).

<sup>57</sup> The author goes further sustaining that another factor that attributed to the imposition of the state as the unique mode of organisation was the voluntary mimicry of non-western elites. Quoted in (Ayubi, 2006: 11).

<sup>58</sup> It is interesting to underline the contextual differences of the notion state in different linguistic families: in the languages where the notion is originate from Latin refers to stability and continuity. In Greek *kratos* makes reference to maintenance, hold. In Arab *Dawla* is connected with flows and changes of power and fortune (Ayubi, 2000: 36).

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in (Ayubi, 2000: 84).

(*badawa*) and urban ones (*hadara*) coexisted, representing according to the author the majority of the Arab countries; b) where the nomad groups became dominant, the case of the states in the Arab peninsula; and c) where the urban groups became dominant, the case of Egypt.

Another kind of classification of the Arab states has been made by Harik mentioning five typologies: a) the imam-chief system, b) the alliance system of chiefs and imams, c) traditional secular system, d) bureaucratic-military oligarchy type and e) the colonial created system (Harik, 1987). Ayubi (2006) in his work *Over-stating the Arab State* sustains that specific political economy and culture of the Arab region determined the creation of weak states lacking infrastructural power, in Mann's terms and cultural hegemony in Gramscian terms. From a less generalised spectrum, Salamé (1996: 59) upheld that, contrary to the rest of the Arab countries, the post-colonial state of Morocco and Egypt was based on a 'tradition of power', the *makhzen*<sup>60</sup> in the first case and the pharaonic and Islamic in the second.

The state formation in the geographical region of the Ottoman Empire and Persia, in comparison with the western one, is described by Badie in his book *Les deux États. Pouvoir et société en Occident et en terre d'Islam*, providing valuable information regarding the differences in the two neighbour regions all along history. According to this author the centre construction in the Ottoman Empire was the result of two different dynamics "*Le jeu du sultan était de reprendre le contrôle direct des terres à la faveur d'un nouveau code foncier; celui des ayān<sup>61</sup> était d'obtenir que leur nouvelle puissance fut officialisée, en faisant reconnaître leur droit à la appropriation privée*". "*Tout d'abord, l'action centraliste dut affronter des forces sociales, et surtout une puissante élite des notables qui, loin de s'accommoder de la reconstruction d'un centre y trouvait la raison d'un mécontentement qu'elle était pleinement en mesure d'exprimer*" (Badie, 1986: 169-170).

All the above help us to comprehend that the modern state is not an homogeneous political organisation, not even in a specific geographical area. However, the western influence and domination has made of the state the dominant hierarchical structure of the contemporary world. Furthermore, we can appreciate that despite the differences existing there is a certain continuity between the organisational form of the pre-modern societies with the contemporary ones. Consequently, we can sustain that if state genesis permitted the accumulation and consequent appropriation of power capabilities on the hands of a limited number of people, the modern state cannot be perceived

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<sup>60</sup>Makhzen is a concept that often appears in Moroccan literature and commonly used in Moroccan political culture. Until the end of the nineteenth century the term Makhzen indicated the Moroccan government. After independence, Makhzen lost its official use but remained in the socio-political life. Currently, as a structure can be grasped as a practice of government and as a set of institutions.

<sup>61</sup> Local nobles.



differently.

### 2.4.1.3. Marxist school

The academic literature of the Marxist school has been also occupied with the *nature* of the state. As Engels<sup>62</sup> underlined, it was in Athens “*la forme la plus pure, la plus classique sous laquelle l'état naît directement à partir des antagonismes déjà présents dans la société à gens. [...] L'état se constitue au-dessus des divisions de la société en classes et au profit de celle d'entre elles qui possède la prépondérance et les moyennes d'exploitation*”. In a similar line, Proudhon<sup>63</sup> adopts the idea that “*l'état procède de la vie sociale. Expriment et instituant un rapport social de hiérarchie et d'inégalité, il émane de la société dont il s'approprie la puissance, en lui restant extérieur, et accomplit un véritable accaparement de la 'force collective'*”.

We do not pretend that the authors subscribed in the Marxist and Marxian theory are characterised by an absolute accord between them. However, there is among them a general acceptance considering the state as the institution of organised violence, used by the ruling class to maintain the conditions of its rule. In Lenin's own words “*The state is a product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonism objectively cannot be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable*” (Lenin, 1992).

This acceptance seems closer to our point of view, as the state is conceived as an instrument used by the dominant class to further its interests. However, we disagree mainly in two points: the class notion and the strong correlation between capitalism and state. Related to the first point our position is clarified in a previous paragraph. Here we are going to justify our position *vis-à-vis* the correlation between capital and state.

There is a significant number of theorists who connect the genesis of the state with the one of the capitalist mode of production. Even though, there is a chronological coincidence this does not necessary means that the two particular ways of organisation, one refereeing to the political *champ*<sup>64</sup> (field) and the other to the economic one, are synonymous. The capital, as well as the state, is a power resource introduced through the adoption and development of a capitalist mode of production. The elites having based their power capabilities over ‘capital’ and those who based it over ‘state’ might had shared the same competitors at the time. However, the common ‘enemies’ does no presuppose the equitation of the actors.

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<sup>62</sup> Quoted in (Balandier, 1999: 183-184).

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in (Balandier, 1999: 150-151).

<sup>64</sup> As it was defined by Bourdieu, the *champ* social is structural place-space of position where the owners depend on their position in these places/spaces and these latter can be analysed independently of the characteristics of those who occupy them. The *champ* is a place where the relations of power and domination are organised, not between individuals but between classes and fraction of classes. It is a place of an unequal/unbalanced distribution of power (Braud, 2000).

There has been a lot of discussion, among Marxists and others, about the nature of the constraints and pressures that 'oblige' the state to serve the needs of capital. Giddens upheld that the creation of capitalist state it is not only a product of the extension in large scale of the production of merchandises. Some of the early capitalist companies were really detached from the creation of the state, whereas powerful states, formed very early, were not important centres of the capitalist development, especially in periods of the absolutist states (Giddens, 1987).

Miliband (1983), in his article "State Power and Class Interests", approaches the question of the state autonomy<sup>65</sup> in a capitalist society from the side of interests concluding that the capitalist interest is not necessary identical to the state interest<sup>66</sup>. Skocpol (1979: 27) does not only suggest that the state has interests of its own but she argues that the Marxist view makes it "*virtually impossible even to raise the possibility that fundamental conflicts of interest might arise between the existing dominant class or set of groups, on the one hand, and the state rulers on the other*".

From our point of view, alliances between actors controlling the resource state or capital, are not only possible but in a lot of cases frequent, depending on their relative gains. Even more, as we have underlined previously, elites' competitive relation for differential accumulation of power does not leave margins for distinction between sectors. Consequently, we cannot separate competition among economic and political elites because the game concerns the totality of elites, independently of their specialisation. In this frame, depending of the characteristics of the society we can even appreciate an identification of state holders and capitalists. However, this cannot be considered as the rule but rather an exceptional case.

#### 2.4.1.4. Rentier state

Important aspect of the establishment of power authority is legitimacy, a concept dating since the days of Thucydides in the *History of the Peloponnesian war* (423 BC). At different historical periods and different societies, the rulers adopted different methods to extract the necessary popular consensus, in order to legitimate their authority. However, following to Zelditch legitimacy is "*auxiliary to some other process [...] which [it] increases the acceptance of, or reduces the resistance to*" (Zelditch, 2001: 5).

Arab world is characterised by many scholars, among them Ayubi, by the

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<sup>65</sup> Poulantzas was the one to explore most the question of the autonomy of the State.

<sup>66</sup> According to Miliband the dynamic of capitalism is the reproduction and accumulation of capital and the maximization of long term profit for each individual firm, soothing that cannot be the interest of the state which will be the defence of the existing social order against any internal challenge and against commercial, military and ideological competition from other states (Miliband, 1983).

lack of ‘cultural hegemony’<sup>67</sup> in Gramscian terms, meaning the lack of an universalised belief system which establishes the interests of a certain ‘sector’ to be accepted as beneficial for the whole society (Ayubi, 2006). The elites’ incapacity to generate hegemony over society is clearly reflected by the legitimacy crisis, which is analysed by Martín Muñoz: *“La legitimidad histórica —haber dirigido la independencia— constituyó el elemento sustancial que dotó a los gobernantes poscoloniales del reconocimiento de sus poblaciones; dicha legitimación se prolongó con la promesa de lograr la independencia política y el desarrollo económico. (...) A medida que [las élites poscoloniales] tenían que dismantelar el pacto social que sustentaba el Estado protector, sin haber cumplido sus promesas de no dependencia y desarrollo económico (legitimidad nacionalista), el malestar de la ciudadanía se polarizó en la falta de participación y representación sociopolítica (legitimidad democrática) y en la necesidad de recuperación cultural de los valores islámicos propios (legitimidad islámica) frente a los exógenos (...). La sequía progresiva de todas esas fuentes de legitimación lleva hasta el momento actual, en que el contrato social, el modelo político y la identidad cultural están en crisis”* (Martín Muñoz, 1999: 19). For this reason, unlike what has happened in western societies, authority in Arab countries must rely more heavily on coercive mechanisms.

The fragile legitimacy of the Arab elites controlling states is among others reflected in the way in which some resources are extracted from society. Absence of ideological hegemony and the consequent lack of legitimacy make the accumulation process difficult for the elites due to institutional mechanisms, for instance through tax collection. This lack of legitimacy entails the appearance of other processes such as corruption, and above all the appropriation of resources (natural resources, external income or external debt) before the population can access them. Once power is gained over income generating resources, the relationship established with citizens is no longer one of collection but this of distribution, which enormously weakens people’s negotiation capacity as well as strengthens the elites’ power and authority. In this way the state becomes an instrument for ‘illegitimate’ appropriation of the population’s resources, rather than the product of a social agreement. Thus, elites who control the state seek their stability through three main strategies: distribution of ‘income’ obtained through appropriation of resources, co-optation of secondary elites and repression.

The appropriation of natural resource inevitably directs us to the notion of rent, which has been introduced very early in the economic science by Adam Smith. According to this author, rent *“enters into the composition of the price of the commodities in a different way from wages and profit”* (Smith and Sutherland, 1998). For Beblawi a rent *“is not merely an income for the landlords but generally a reward for ownership of all natural resources”* (Beblawi, 1984: 25).

Analysis of the political economies of oil producing countries have

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<sup>67</sup> Cultural hegemony is going to be treated in the following paragraphs.

converged in the conceptualisation of rentier economies. Following once more Beblawi rent is not a characteristic of particular economies but forms part of all economies. However, according to the same author the difference resides on its magnitude, that is to say on how much space rent occupies in relation to the rest of the income receipts (Beblawi, 1984).

Mañé and De la Cámara define oil-rentier economies as *“las de aquellos territorios en los que la gestión del sector de los hidrocarburos se lleva a cabo con el objetivo —político— de lograr el máximo posible de renta del subsuelo para los ciudadanos nacionales”* (Mañé and De la Cámara, 2005). The authors focus their analysis on rent produced by resource extraction, but we may extend the rentier mechanisms to include external debt and aid received by certain states<sup>68</sup>. These two mechanisms make it possible for rentier ties to be maintained between the population and Arab states in non-oil producing countries, as long as these have a debt servicing capacity and the capacity to receive aid. Government public intervention is based on revenue obtained from external income meaning that budgetary policies consist mainly of spending policies and aim at regime's legitimacy. This dynamic leads to the development of an unproductive economy based on rent, which sustains consumer goods and services sectors principally with imported products. The consequence of this situation is the economy and regimes' direct dependence on oil prices or on their capacity to obtain credit and external aid.

State and rent thus merge as power resources in the hands of the elites that can control them. As a result, these elites accumulate a level of power disproportionate to other periods of time or other contemporary elites. While external rent is plentiful, distributive capacity generated by income is sufficient to control the population, and at the same time, to convert groups competing for power accumulation into clients.

The majority of Arab states, whether rich or poor in oil, have entered into this rentier dynamic to a greater or lesser degree. Regimes without oil took advantage of the strategic importance of their proximity to oil wells in order to obtain external income, as much from those who wanted them as allies as from those prepared to pay to protect their position. For this reason, since oil generates external and internal threats as well as vulnerability, whilst nonetheless enabling army, police and Mukhabarat budgets to be increased, regimes become highly militarised and turn into some of the most important clients of the arms industry (Beblawi, 1984).

The present theoretical framework helps us to identify the main agents, their objectives and the function of resources at their disposal. Oil producing

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<sup>68</sup> An analysis of the rentier states from the Sociology of Power perspective can be found in (Izquierdo Brichs, 2007).

states are often presented as failures for not meeting the objective of economic development or being unable to consolidate their independence in relation to the Western corporations. Similar criticisms are also expressed regarding the states which depend on rent tied to external aid or external debt. However, this idea of failure derives from two false assumptions: the first that a state has its own objectives and the second that priority is given by these states' governments to economic and social development. Contrary to the official discourse that presents the regimes' economic activity as a path towards development, in reality such development would have been counterproductive for the primary elites controlling these states. The real development of Arab societies and their respective economies would have facilitated the emergence of other independent elites, as well as the appearance of sectors of the population willing to and capable of making their voices heard, which would have in turn resulted in accumulation losses for the elites controlling the state<sup>69</sup>. We should not forget that the elites' priority objective is accumulation; therefore the success of the policies they apply must be measured in relation to that objective. For this reason, what we observe here is not failure but, on the contrary, great achievement - since power in the hands of the elites in rentier countries is much more significant than in other societies.

From our point of view, dominant elites in a rentier state cannot be considered as a bourgeoisie who accumulate power in the form of capital but rather as a rentier aristocracy, since their position in the accumulation process depends on their capacity to control the state. In turn, the rentier aristocracy itself depends directly on the international bourgeoisie and global elites' support. However, in parallel to the consolidation of the state's rulers, a bourgeoisie directly connected to the regime's power also emerged. This emergence was due to several factors: on occasions, because the state institutionally provided some individuals with the means to invest, as in the case of Libya and Saudi Arabia; on other occasions, because well-positioned senior officials diverted resources to the private sector for their own benefit, for example in Algeria, Syria, Iraq and the majority of the Arab states; and on other occasions because some businessmen took advantage of rent and the demand generated by oil in order to invest in sectors with no deficit, a situation repeated in all Arab countries. As a general rule, the bourgeoisie who usually belongs to the latter group tend to feel out of place and mistreated by the regime, as they perceive a disloyal competition with the other two groups, which share advantages the bourgeoisie do not enjoy (Vielle, 1984).

The rentier state has therefore become a power resource and an essential structural feature of contemporary Arab regimes. Times of strength when oil

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<sup>69</sup> The 'third Egyptian revolution' of 2011 is indicative to this point. Regime's internal division between 'capitalist' and 'statist' elites significantly contributed to Mubarak's expulsion (Lampridi-Kemou, 2011c).

prices are high or when there are more possibilities to obtain aid and be granted credit or times of weakness when the opposite occurs, are immediately reflected in the primary elites' power and stability.

### 2.4.2. **Capital**

The transition from feudalism to industrialism introduced a new power resource in the processes of accumulation that would be proven central in the future: the capital. Since its nascence capital has been one of the core elements of modernity's economic and political tensions.

Without entering into a debate about the definition of capital, it is nonetheless important not to confuse this resource with either wealth or profit. Among economists, the debate on capital is still open, which means that there are serious problems to agree even on what should be the basis of their analysis<sup>70</sup>.

From our point of view, when we refer to capital we actually refer to a form of power resource that generates a competitive relationship, in which the objective is no longer the economic 'benefit', but the power, because the position of the actors in this relationship depends on the accumulation of power in relation to others. The capital thus is considered as power resource, as state, information, coercion, ideology, and so on.

John Kenneth Galbraith denounced what he calls 'the economics of innocent fraud'. One of the frauds he speaks refers capitalism and its replacement by the market system: *"Hablar de sistema de mercado como alternativa benigna al capitalismo es presentarlo bajo un disfraz anodino que oculta la realidad más profunda: el poder del productor para influir, e incluso controlar, la demanda del consumidor. Sin embargo, éste es un hecho que no es conveniente mencionar. Y esto explica por qué no se le concede ninguna importancia en las discusiones y la enseñanza económica contemporáneas. [...] Hoy se cree que las empresas y los capitalistas particulares carecen de poder; y el hecho de que el mercado esté sujeto a una dirección corporativa hábil y completa ni siquiera se menciona en la mayor parte de los cursos de economía. En esto reside el fraude"* (Galbraith, 2004: 23-25). In this way, one of the leading economists of the last century relates capital directly to power.

In another work the same economist wrote: *"When the modern corporation acquires power over markets, power in the community, power over the state, power over belief, it is a political instrument different in form and degree but not in kind from the state itself"* (Galbraith, 1973: 6). In this frame it becomes obvious the importance of capital on power relations. Yet this protagonism is more relevant to the western economies and to international relations than to the Arab states.

The above help us to understand that capital in circular relations represents nothing more and nothing less than a form of power. Following Nitzan and Bichler

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<sup>70</sup> This debate is treated by (Nitzan and Bichler, 2002).

who make reference to Veblen, “*The key to accumulation lies in what makes such profit grow, and according to Veblen this has to do not with production, but with the control of production. From this perspective, capital incorporates power as well as productivity*” (Nitzan and Bichler, 2002: 78).

In the context of political economy, we concur with the conclusion presented by Nitzan and Bichler, who also introduce the idea of differential accumulation: “the accumulation of capital represents neither material wealth, nor a productive amalgamate of ‘dead labor’, but rather the *commodification of power*. Capitalists accumulate not things carried over from the past, but vendible power titles projected into the future. In this sense, their capitalised profit represents a claim not for a share of the output, but for a *share of control over the social process*. Now, whereas capitalist power is exerted over society, it is measured *relative* to the power of other owners. [...] In short, the real issue is not absolute accumulation, but *differential* accumulation. [...] The connection between differential accumulation and power should now become clearer. To accumulate differentially is to increase your share of total profit and capitalisation. And to increase your distributive share of these magnitudes is to increase your relative power to shape the process of social change. The source of such power is the ability of owners to strategically limit, or ‘sabotage’ the process of social reproduction” (Nitzan and Bichler, 2002 36-38).

From this definition we can understand that ‘capital’ will be everything that serves to accumulate increased ‘merchandising power’. For this reason, it is necessary to differentiate, for instance, capital from rent, and whether the latter is the product of oil exportation, received aid or contracted debt. The function of this income in most Arab countries is not to generate more accumulation in the form of capital but in the form of state control, clientelism and legitimacy in the eyes of the population.

It also important to underline that capital and corporation are not synonyms. It is therefore necessary to distinguish between capital accumulation and corporate power accumulation. Giddens distinguishes between elites who own organisations and those who control them. Modern corporations have evolved from being owner-controlled to director-controlled, and these two sectors can have different interests (Stanworth and Giddens, 1974: 9). Galbraith also warned of the power of corporate bureaucracy (Galbraith, 2004), and of corporate dominance over capitalist economy, incorrectly termed ‘market economy’ (Galbraith, 2004).

Capital and corporations have achieved a fundamental place in the accumulation processes of developed countries and within the global system. Following Keynesian politics, prior to and after the Second World War, neoliberalism of the eighties and nineties further accentuated the power accumulation capacity of capitalist and corporate elites. In the Arab world however, despite exceptional cases such as that of Hariri in Lebanon, we can see that both capital accumulation and corporate activity in equal measure continue

to depend largely on the State or multinational corporations, which explains why in the majority of cases, capitalist and corporate Arab elites hold a secondary position.

### 2.4.3. **Ideology**

The notion of ideology is difficult to define. Ideology, just as all social concepts, is comprehended in different ways throughout the different disciplines and scholars that serve them, in philosophy political science, sociology, history. Following Abercrombie *"[I]t is widely agreed that the notion of 'ideology' has given rise to more analytical and conceptual difficulties than almost any other term in the social sciences"* (Abercrombie et al., 1990: 187). Moreover, and following Minar, *"ideology's meaning has often been assumed rather than examined insofar its connotations for political affairs are concerned"* (Minar, 1961: 319).

Probably, the most important difficulties of defining ideology derive from the very same nature of the concept interweaved with the personal 'ideology' of the scholar. As ideologies do not only describe 'reality' but they also designate the boundaries of the thought, it becomes clear that the main difficulty derives from the nature of the notion itself. Following Gramsci, *"el científico-experimentador es también un obrero, no un pensador puro, y su pensar es controlado por la práctica y viceversa [...]"* (Gramsci, 1985: 36). In fact, the interest of the social scientists for 'ideology' was for the 'impediments' of thought which blocked an objective social analysis (Minar, 1961).

There is a plethora of definitions trying to enclose the notion of ideology: *"A typical dogmatic, i.e., rigid and impermeable, approach to politics"* (Sartori, 1969: 402); *"The reflection of process and structure of those involved - the product of action"* (Nettl 1967: 100), *"An organization of opinions, attitudes, and values - a way of thinking about man and society"* (Adorno et al., 1950: 2), *"Maps of problematic social reality and matrices for the creation of collective conscience"* (Geertz, 1985: 220); *"[...] ideology is a system (with its own logic and rigour) of representations (images, myths, ideas or concepts depending on the case) endowed with a historical existence and role within a given society"* (Althusser, 1969: 231-232).

Marx's intellectual contribution on ideology and its relation with the material aspects of reality is significant. According to Marx *"The production of ideas<sup>71</sup>, of conceptions of consciousness, is above all directly interwoven into the material activity and the material interaction of people - and as such is the language of the real life. Conceptions, thought, the intellectual interaction of people are still at this stage the direct emanation of their material behaviour. [...] The fact that the whole of ideology, people and their relationships appear upside down as in*

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<sup>71</sup> Van Dijk underlines his preference of the term beliefs over ideas. For more details information see (Van Dijk, 1998: 15-52).



*a camera obscura, arises from their historical life-process, just as the intervention of objects on the retina does from their physical life process*" (Marx and Engels, 1976: 36).

Once more, our aim is not an encyclopaedic one but to define the functional role of ideology as power resource<sup>72</sup>. As Thompson underlined to study ideology is to study the relations of domination, or in our sense, of power relations (Thompson, 1984: 132). According Eagleton it is possible to define ideology in six different ways: "the general material process of production of ideas, beliefs and values in social life"; "ideas and beliefs (whether true or false) which symbolize the conditions and life-experiences of a specific, socially significant group or class"; "the promotion and legitimation of the interests of such social groups in the face of opposing interests"; the promotion and legitimation when carried out by a "dominant social power"; "ideas and beliefs which help to legitimate the interests of a ruling group or class specifically by distortion and dissimulation"; similar false and deceptive beliefs which arise "not from the interests of a dominant class but from the material structure of society as a whole" (Eagleton, 1991: 28-30).

Minar has classified 'ideology' in three categories: by its content or structure "*as a 'belief in' something [...] [or] in terms of form it takes*", by its function "*ideas which are developed, either consciously or subconsciously to rationalize either life condition or action [...] (or) ideas that interpret an organization to relevant audiences in the social world [...] (or) as verbal symbols [...] utilized in social relations for purposes of persuasion*", and by its locus "*on the basis of the nature of its subject-source*" (Minar, 1961: 321-324).

Another kind of division in the written literature of sociology concerning the notion of ideology has been proposed by Lewnis: the functional and that of content<sup>73</sup> (Lewins, 1989). The first one could be simply a definition of the functions that ideology has to the subjects, and the second referring to what it should be consider as ideology.

We can define ideology "*[as] a system of conceptions which explicitly or implicitly claims to be absolutely true, that is to say which is based on a distorted, objectivist consciousness*"<sup>74</sup> in all its forms, discursive and non discursive ones. The acceptance of this definition leaves no room for a division of ideologies between positive and negative<sup>75</sup> or, in gramscian terms, organic and arbitrary

<sup>72</sup> Over the debate on ideology in the various social sciences and different traditions of thought see the two volumes of (Duprat, 1980).

<sup>73</sup> For a more extend analysis over the content definition of ideology see the article of (Lewins, 1989).

<sup>74</sup> Quoted in (Weinsheimer, 1985).

<sup>75</sup> Marx makes a distinction between positive and negative ideology, the latter referring to some kind of distorted thought whereas the former one to the construction of the social consciousness. The negative ideology is 'the language of real life', in which the ideas produced by subordinate classes express and reproduce the dominant material relations and the interests associated therewith (Marx, 1966: 31).

ideologies (Gramsci, 1978: 368), the first replying to the necessity of a specific structure to organise the mass and the second offering answers in ‘personal’ questionings.

Following Flakser, ideology *“presents its views not as a hypothesis but as an accepted thesis. People cannot afford not to have definite opinions and answers to their basic social problems. They are convinced that they embrace the full truth. They refuse to admit that there is a difference between reality ‘as is’ and the way that reality is reflected in their consciousness, even when they are aware that their analysis are subordinated to desired ends and steeped in bygone realities. To satisfy the need for an aggregate view, man universalizes a speck of truth”* (Flakser, 1971: 25). Therefore, all kind of ideology, whether political or religious, is restricting the personal explanatory process.

#### 2.4.3.1. Ideology’s three levels

Ideologies represent a certain complex of views, opinions or beliefs, an interpretation of the present or past ‘realities’, what is called representation. Thus, they are rationally constructed systems of beliefs, frequently based, especially in cases of political ideologies, on ‘scientific-rational’ like criteria and methods in order to convince for their ‘truth’, which determine a way of thinking, experiencing and speaking.

The scientific character of ideologies is questioned by Parsons. Following the author, *“the essential criterion of ideology is deviation from scientific objectivity...the problem of ideology arises when there is a contradiction between what one believes and what can be established as scientifically correct”* (Parsons, 1970: 34). In this sense, religious ideology presents on this aspect a particularity: the absence of rationalism. Religion, thus, is extended from metaphysical abstractions to ‘meticulously detailed moral presentations’ (Eagleton, 1991).

We can distinguish three different levels of ideology in its broad sense. On the first level, which impregnates all social relationships and that we could define as what Foucault calls the ‘regime of truth’, we find unconscious mechanisms which cause us to accept or reject ideas, values and discourses<sup>76</sup>. On the second level, defined by Gramsci as ‘cultural hegemony’, a class or social group succeeds in having its group interests assumed as the general interest of the whole population. The third level is more concrete and immediate; it consists of political, social and religious belief systems pronounced and diffused by the elites to ‘convince’ the audience for their rightness. We sustain that the first two levels represent aspects of structure, since the totality of the actors move inside this frame which cannot alter as they wish, while the third level represents a power resource.

The regime of truth is linked to Foucault: *“Each society has its regime of truth,*

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<sup>76</sup> Discourse *“refers to the individual social networks of communication through the medium of language or non-verbal sign-systems”* (Purvis and Hunt, 1993: 485).

*its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and the instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true"* (Foucault and Gordon, 1980: 93).

It becomes evident that this reasoning goes beyond of the limits of ideology in narrow sense, enclosing not only beliefs describing 'reality', but has a broader context, both in terms of the practices, not only discursive ones, and alternative proposals for the future, referring to utopias. The two concepts, ideology and utopia, find their *raison d'être* in social groups' necessity to share elements of their subjective reality or the desired one and both made reference to the *signs* of reality/actuality.

To be more comprehensive we have to resort to Saussure (1974) and to his course of *General Linguistics*. As he presented to his students "*the sign has two elements, the signified (the thought or the mental image) and the signifier (a sound or visible image such as spoken or written word or phrase). The connection between signified and signifier is never fixed in that the sign is always to a greater or lesser extent arbitrary*"<sup>77</sup>. The signified, the mental image, is therefore important at the moment to construct a consciousness of the reality and proposals for the future. Thus, the 'truth' constitutes the immaterial structure of the society, inside which ideologies and cultural hegemonies and counter-hegemonies as well as opposition and resistance programs are developed. Therefore, the 'regime of truth' can only be modified with the passing of time and the evolution of social relations and thus it cannot be used by the elites as they wish. Yet elites can take advantage the 'regime of truth' to improve their position in the competition for power.

Gramsci's concept of 'cultural hegemony' is difficult to define, and following Fontana the concept is not an absolute mono-dimensional, as it describes "*the movement from the economic-corporative to the political [...], the progressive formation of alliances centred around a given social group*" (Fontana, 2000: 311). Cultural hegemony is defined by Gramsci "*the 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and the function in the world of production*" (Hoare and Smith, 1971). It is evident that the notion includes non discursive practices, as well as rhetorical utterances, and overpasses ideology in narrow sense but is more restricted in than Foucault's 'truth'.

The notion of cultural hegemony is strictly connected with domination, considering that people are not ruled exclusively by force but also by ideas. Since the term of cultural hegemony is identified by Gramsci on terms of closeness to

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<sup>77</sup> Quoted in (Purvis and Hunt, 1993: 485).

the common sense<sup>78</sup>, it is evident that hegemonies are characterised by a steadiness, since the creation of counter hegemonies can alter significantly the *status quo*.

Cultural hegemony, therefore, is a universalised belief system which establishes the interests of a certain sector to be accepted as beneficial for the entire society. Capacity to have their own interests accepted as universal, enables elites to impose their 'agenda' as advantageous for the entire society. Thus, cultural hegemony implies the creation of a world view, which appeals to wide range of groups and at the same time creates a feeling that the interests deriving from this world view are synonymous with the 'general' interest, e.g. national interest. Following Lears, "[...] a given symbolic universe, if it becomes hegemonic, can serve the interests of some groups better than others. Subordinate groups may participate in maintaining a symbolic universe, even if it serves to legitimate their domination. In other words, they can share a kind of half-conscious complicity in their own victimization" (Lears, 1985: 573). This idea confirms also our previous assumption that structure, whether in its material or immaterial form, can be present constraints to some actors but opportunities for others.

Even though actors cannot interfere directly, 'truth', cultural hegemonies and counter hegemonies are important to the actors, serving as 'opportunities' to assure their position in the hierarchical polities, extracting a general consensus and thus an implicit support of their rule and role. By consequence, they serve as to offer (dominant) or deprive (revolutionary) legitimacy over the present and the past and thus put the fundamentals for the future 'reality'. As Foucault sustained "*discours n'est pas simplement ce qui traduit les luttes ou le système de domination, mais ce pour quoi, ce par quoi on lutte, le pouvoir dont on cherche à s'emparer*" (Foucault, 1971: 12).

We sustain therefore that 'cultural hegemony' and 'truth', the immaterial aspects of structure, are not the intended outcome of actors' actions. Following Collins "*Human beings have the capacity to create and negotiate whatever they can at any moment in time. But they always act in a structured situation, so that the consequences and conditions of their creativity and negotiation are nevertheless patterned by larger relationships beyond their control*" (Collins, 1988: 412). Therefore, actors interact inside a relatively rigid frame, which is reproduced by their action, however without always a conscious aspiration to maintain the existing patters. Structure thus is not established accidentally. And as we underlined previously, structure offers opportunities to many actors to increase their power, many of their actions target the preservation of the status quo.

Ideology, in its narrow sense, constitutes one of the main mechanisms,

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<sup>78</sup> Common sense is defined by Gramsci as "[folklore is the ideology] of subaltern groups, is not completely mindless nor it is completely negative, it is the way that they learn to rationalise and survive under conditions of hardship but it is not self conscious nor critical". Quoted in (Landy, 1986: 57).

which transform people from subjects to objects, or in our terms from actors to power resource. Thus, it can be interpreted as the non material link that unites a social group, sharing beliefs, offering the sentiment of having clearly established the ideas of how reality is and why, and how it should be. And therefore through ideology is defined the 'correct', establishing the pattern of behaviour.

This third level of ideology represents system of beliefs and is reduced to a more narrow sense of the term, the discursive practices. And it is at this level that elites compete in order to extract the maximum popular support, trying to convince for their 'rightness'. In other words ideology in its narrow sense is used directly in the power competition and is where we find rival political and religious ideologies or disputes over the control of such ideologies. Inevitably, these confrontations take place, mostly within the structure established by the 'regime of truth' and 'cultural hegemony'.

The direct use of ideology as power resource has as main target the extraction of consensus. People, as we analysed earlier, are actors as long as they reach a relatively high degree of consciousness of their needs and personal interests. Consequently, competition for the control over ideologies, especially for those having significant weight on masses, is equally important as the competition over material resources.

The adoption of a *prêt a porter* belief system distorts, to smaller or greater degree, the personal criterion of judgement over their subjective situation. As Gramsci<sup>79</sup> underlined "*(ideologies) are not an instrument for understanding the reality but rather a set of moral principles for orienting practical actions and human behaviour*". The criterion of judgment is not completely dissolved, since there is the personal interpretation which remains particular to each individual. However, population's objectives become blur and consequently, people come closer to the role of object instead of subject.

Ideologies are, therefore, an instrument used to serve specific purposes. Thus, elites in their struggle to extract further power capacities they pronounce and expose a specific ideological discourse. The use of a specific ideological discourse, comprehended as a discursive instrument, is adopted to serve directly on elite's power competition. And this since "[a]ll discourses-are ideologically positioned; none are neutral" (Macdonell, 1986).

To all the above a last remark should be made. Elites' actions are motivated and subscribed in their own ideological framework. However, elites' own ideological frame is not necessary identical or even compatible with the discourse they pronounce. From our point of view, the analysis of power relations obliges us to avoid leaders' discourse, considering that their real intentions are almost never declared. Thus the personal ideological beliefs do not interfere at the discourse they pronounce. Consequently, ideologies in its narrow sense can be in contradiction with the belief system of the elites that pronounce them. This latter

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<sup>79</sup> Quoted in (Fadlallah, 1995: 7).

helps us to understand the contradiction among the ideological frame of a political party and the followed practices.

Education and its narrow form, this of schooling, is an instrument of ideology's diffusion or impediment, mainly at the disposal of the ruling elites. The compulsory character of education serves exactly this purpose: familiarising future adult citizens with the values of the society that they belong to. Following Friedman *"A stable and democratic society is impossible without a minimum degree of literacy and knowledge on the part of most citizens and without widespread acceptance in common set of values"* (Friedman, 2007: 194).

Education and its role on society have been occupying philosophers since antiquity. For Isocrates and other philosophers of the ancient Greece the main attention was on education's function on democracy. For Plato and Aristotle public education, inexistent at that time, *"was essential to a just and well run society"* (Curren, 2007: 8). Education and schooling thus allows the creation of common system of values and beliefs.

Schooling serves therefore as an instrument of training and education of the citizens<sup>80</sup>. Thus, in hierarchical societies education, in its narrow sense, includes among others the reproduction of its hierarchical<sup>81</sup> structures, norms and belief systems.

#### **2.4.4. Coercion**

Coercion as power resource can be conceived as the mixture between physical violence and elevated threat of severe punishment in case of no-obedience with the dictations of the powerful component of the relation. This means that the coercion can be used against individuals or groups of them through different mechanisms, in order to obtain the wanted behaviour. Held (1967: 50-51) has defined coercion as *"the activity of causing someone to do something against his will, or of bringing someone about his doing what he does against his will"* (Held, 2006: 50-51). For Lasswell and Kaplan coercion *"is a high degree of constraint and/or inducement"* (Lasswell and Kaplan, 1950). For Bay is the *"application of sanctions sufficiently strong to make the individual to abandon a course of action or inaction dictated by his own strong and enduring motives or desires"* (Bay, 1970: 93).

For Anderson *"[...] coercion is an act of an agent (the coercer) who aims to*

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<sup>80</sup> 'Democratic' education means democracy on the ends and means of education. According to Gutmann *"The end of democratic education is to create democratic citizens, people who are willing and able to govern their own lives and share in governing their society. And the means of educational governance are a complex balancing of parental, professional and public authority, a combination consistent with the political ideals of representative democracy, which support the basic liberties of all adult members of a society"* (Gutmann, 2007: 159).

<sup>81</sup> Bowles and Gintis underlined that the system reproduces class inequality in the sense that children from privileged class back-grounds are able to get more and better schooling which, in turn, enables them to acquire privileged class positions themselves (Bowles and Gintis, 1977: 8).

*secure complying action or activity from another (the coercee), and who does so either by using force or violence to directly alter the behavior of the coercee, or else by imposing a practical necessity upon the coercee by showing the willingness and ability to use force or violence to undermine the coercee's ability to satisfy his or her basic needs" (Anderson, 2002: 12).*

Coercion, thus, regards all kinds of human relations and endorses the use of violence and/or the threat of its use. Moreover, coercion does not imply the absence of a choice but underlines the unbeneficial character of the choice for the coercee. Vis-à-vis the social relations inside of a particular political structure, for instance this of the state<sup>82</sup>, we have to remember that according to Weber's notion of the state, coercion is a common and fundamental 'ingredient' of state's existence, independently of the particular political system of state, democratic, authoritarian or totalitarian. Consequently, the complete absence of coercion at the state level is contradictory with the essence of the state itself. However, there are differences among different societies. In our view, there are three main elements that differentiate societies on what regards coercion<sup>83</sup>: the degree of legitimacy of the coercer, the form that coercion is exercised and the frequency of its use.

In the present study, coercion is treated as power resource. More specifically we are interested in seeing how coercion is used by the actors in their competition for the accumulation of differential power. We consider, thus, coercion as the any action or threat of an action of an actor against an individual or a group of individuals actors or not, aiming to obtain a concrete behaviour or outcome when the choice for the coercee is always a disadvantageous one. In other words, the adoption of coercive practices in all its forms has always as objective to extract a specific behaviour or non behaviour of the person being coerced.

The notion of coercion seems close to other notions such as political violence, political repression and terrorism. The difference resides mainly on coercer's political and social position as well as his degree of legitimacy. Political violence comprises "collective attacks within a political community against a political regime"(Gurr, 1970: 3-4). In other words, political violence connotes exertion of physical force tending to injure, damage, or abuse against individuals for political purposes. Regarding terrorism Laqueur wrote that "*Terrorism*

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<sup>82</sup> A representative example of governmental extensive and systematic use of psychological coercion is this carried out from the People's Republic China during the "Thought Reform" campaign, carried out partly at "revolutionary universities" and partly within prisons. The techniques used by the Chinese authorities included standard group psychotherapy aimed at forcing the victims, generally intellectuals, to produce detailed and sincere ideological "confessions" (Lifton, 1989).

<sup>83</sup> Of course we can take into consideration other aspects of coercion. For instance the hierarchical position of the actor against whom the coercion is exercised. The violence exercised from a parent against his child demonstrates less power capacities that the violence exercised between two adults.

*constitutes the illegitimate use of force to achieve a political objective when innocent people are targeted*" (Laqueur, 1987: 27). In another spirit, Rodin commented *"Terrorism is the deliberate, negligent, or reckless use of force against noncombatants, by state or nonstate actors for ideological ends and in the absence of a substantively just legal process"* (Rodin, 2004).

Political repression, on the other hand, includes restrictions on the rights of citizens to criticise the government, the freedom of press and the rights of opposition parties to campaign against the government and the outright prohibition of groups, associations or political parties opposed to the government (Wintrobe, 1990: 851). At the same time, for purposes of effectiveness the previous restrictions must be accompanied by monitoring of the population and by sanctions of in cases of non-obedience (imprisonment, torture, internment in mental hospitals, execution). As Stockdill<sup>84</sup> defined repression *"any actions taken authorities to impede mobilization, harass and intimidate activists, divide organizations, and physically assault, arrest, imprison and/or kill movement participants"*.

Legitimacy of the actor using coercion is therefore the element distinguishing the different forms of political violent actions. However, we have to keep in mind that what is legitimate for a given society probably is not to another<sup>85</sup>. Consequently, legitimacy is inevitably based on the creation of a particular 'truth' and cultural hegemony. As it was underlined by Bourdieu, legitimacy is the capacity to be recognised as superior to the rest and by this way to be accepted as reference from the ensemble of the population (Bourdieu, 1984). However, the globalisation or the opening of relations among different and many societies boosted a minimum of accordance regarding legitimate coercion. In other words, through the interaction and power patterns, there are generally accepted rules that restrict the arbitrariness of the actors on the use of coercive methods<sup>86</sup>.

The institutionalisation of coercion has been one of the policies applied as to extract an elevated degree of legitimacy. The exercise of coercion from part of the police forces of a state against 'violent' opponents is legitimated whereas the same behaviour from part of the protesters. Thus, the enactment of laws and the institutionalisation of organs establish who is legitimate to exercise coercion<sup>87</sup>. A

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<sup>84</sup> Quoted in (Earl, 2003: 45).

<sup>85</sup> For instance, gender discrimination is illegitimate in many western societies, whereas in other remains still legitimate.

<sup>86</sup> To facilitate their task, persons dealing with similar issues use as basis the convention of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) taken under the umbrella of the United Nations, upon which the political and civil rights were declared later.

<sup>87</sup> This is the *raison d'être* of the 'emergency' law active in Egypt since 1981. Under the pretext of terrorism the actual political regime, managed to crack down important 'enemies', enjoying at the same time a certain degree of legitimacy, at the international sphere. In the same spirit, the enactment of laws protecting the private propriety represents the securitisation of specific elites to coerce whoever is threatening specific interests.



last comment regarding legitimacy should be made regarding the actor and the action. Not all action made by legitimate actors are legitimate. Thus, police maybe the legitimate force to secure social order but not all policemen's action are legitimate one<sup>88</sup>.

The majority of hierarchic organisations have at their disposal coercive mechanisms to impose respect for the authority of ruling elites when hegemonic mechanisms, such as legitimacy and ideology, fail. Direct repression is usually the last resource that regimes resort to ensure their survival.

Coercion in all its forms has an 'educational' function, warning the potential breakers of the imposed norms about their punishment. As an Argentine general<sup>89</sup> said when he was asked why the repression continued even after the defeat of the guerrilla "[...] a terrorist is not just someone with a gun or a bomb, but also someone who spreads ideas that are contrary to Western and Christian civilization". Coercion adopted by the governments, represents an effort "to influence the course of the domestic challenge but also to signal to those within as well as outside the country that (despite threats) authorities still exert control over their territorial jurisdiction" (Christian Davenport and Armstrong, 2004: 540). Thus, the coercion serves among others to the creation of *habitus*, in a macro level.

Besides coercion's 'educational' character and its outcome on micro level, there are also direct effects of coercion's use or the threat of its use. On direct level, if we consider that coercion means, among others, the existence of choices for the coerced, which choices, however, are always non-beneficial for the coerced, we can easily understand that this endorses the coercer with elevated power capabilities. The objective of the actors using the coercion as power resource is of course the accumulation of power capabilities, through the sabotage. This means that the actor creates power through a negative function: by limiting the capacities of his competitors. Thus, the imprisonment of political rivals of the regime before the elections offers to the dominant party the capacity to win the elections with less concurrence, at a virtual level. The same logic concerns the closing of newspapers of opposition exercising criticism against the (potential) coercer. Thus, the aim of the coercion is to extract the power capabilities of the power competitors in a direct way.

Coercion is a main feature of all societies. However, this does not imply that its weight is identical to all societies but there are elements which mark differences: the degree of legitimacy of the coercer, the form that coercion is exercised and the frequency of its use, as we previously underlined.

The institutionalisation of coercion has been one of the policies applied as to

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<sup>88</sup> Representative is the case of policemen abuses practiced in the police departments of Corts in Barcelona. More recently, in June 2011, we can mention the cases of police brutality in Athens and in Barcelona during pacific protests against Greek and Spanish *indignados* respectively, images that shocked the western public opinion.

<sup>89</sup> Quoted in (Pion-Berlin, 1986: 51).

extract an elevated degree of legitimacy, as we underlined previously, especially at the state level. In general legitimacy and coercion, are positively correlated. The more legitimate the actor more limited the capacity of the coerced to circumvent coercion and thus more the power capabilities attributed to the coercer. Therefore, the absence/presence as well as the degree of legitimacy are important elements to the coercion comprehended power resource.

The second aspect, which differentiates societies in regards to coercion, is whether it is actually exercised or maintains a form of threat. Thus, the continuous threat 'motivating' the almost totality of a western society to respect norms resides in the fear of punishment and not to the practice of violence exercised by the authorities, fact that demonstrates an interiorisation of fear. When the status quo needs the actual use of violence, psychological or physical, to extract the wanted outcomes, the costs are elevated and the danger grows bigger for dominant elites.

Another important aspect of coercion regards the frequency of its use. The frequent use of coercive methods denotes the relative high potentiality of people to pursue their goals, the realisation of which would threaten the survival of actors who can exercise coercion. In the same context, the use of coercion, either as threat either as practice implies the capacity of competitor elites to prejudice the power capacities of the dominant ones. A combination of the two is also possible. Thus, the frequent or generalised resort to coercion demarks a degree of debilitation at structural level. As Arendt underlined "*El dominio por la pura violencia entra en juego allí donde se está perdiendo el poder[...]*" (Arendt, 1970: 73).

Coercion in its political form is an ingredient of all modern societies. In the Arab world, the degree of political violence and repression is considered relatively high. In the majority of the Arab countries violence inflicted on the population is much more present than in liberal democracies. Imprisonment, torture and even the death penalty are not sporadic incidences<sup>90</sup>. However, despite being the most visible element, coercive capacity is not solely reflected by the use of violence but also by the use of threat and punishment, through non-violent means, to reaffirm authority.

The elevated degree of coercion in the Arab world has its bases, among others, on the historical role of the army. Struggles for independence and regional conflicts have reinforced the power of the Army and militarisation of the system in Arab countries<sup>91</sup>. What is more, the common perception of its historic role as the institution responsible for achieving and maintaining independence, and as

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<sup>90</sup> Recently, during the rebellions all over the Arab world, we can add the direct violence of the state's coercive apparatuses against civilians.

<sup>91</sup> Egypt, Algeria, Syria and Mauritania are clear examples of the Armed Forces' predominant role in the configuration of their regimes. In Lebanon, we can see the importance of the armed forces in the role played by militia and at present by Hezbollah, even in their quest for legitimacy in the eyes of the population. In the other countries, the Army upholds a fundamental role.

the defender of security in a region with so many open conflicts, has led to a positive image of the Army amongst the population. This contributes to increased legitimacy, immunity and budget for the military elites. Even where the generals do not rule directly, the civilian political elites do everything they can to keep the military satisfied, and at the same time under control. And when this does not prove possible, competition for power explodes in the form of coups d'état or depuration within the Army. Another consequence of the militarisation of Arab systems has been that almost all armies in the region have assumed ultimate responsibility for maintaining the regimes, either because power is controlled by the military or as a result of its alliances with the regimes' elites.

In parallel Arab regimes rely heavily on fear. Within this approach we again find the Secret Service playing the central role, effectively creating the permanent presence of a 'Big Brother' state. Intelligence Services constitute one of the mechanisms related with collection of information from part of the state elites. The famous *Mukhabarat* has an important role to this sense. As in all authoritarian regimes, control over rivals as well as over citizens is a special weapon at the disposal of the ruling elites. Here we find that the resource of coercion is linked to that of information, in order to keep the population subdued<sup>92</sup>. The omnipresent intelligence services have a determinant dissuasive effect on many people, blatantly reducing the number of demonstrations of popular discontent as well as managing to cause great mistrust within the heart of protest, opposition or resistance groups and movements, due to suspicions of infiltration by members of the Service. Equally this tool is used to undermine the capacities of adversary elites.

#### **2.4.5. Information**

The importance of information as a power resource is reflected at the great efforts made by different actors to control it. Information as a power resource manifests itself in two ways: on one hand, as control over the information received by citizens; on the other hand, as information kept about citizens and other actors, treated in the previous section.

Regarding the first form of information, this received by citizens, we consider that the main instrument of information's diffusion is media. Consequently, when we are speaking about information there are three dimensions we should take into consideration: diffusion of ideology, diffusion of information, and impediment of information. These three aspects are not the only ones regarding information, however, we consider that they represent the main corpus of information considered as power resource, the control of which enables

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<sup>92</sup> As Boualem Sansal in his novel *The German Mujahid* highlighted for the Algerian case, "The leader's police and the religion of Allah go hand in hand to make life unbearable all together and individually" (personal translation from the Greek edition)(Sansal, 2009).

its holders to increase their power capabilities.

Principal instrument of information's diffusion and/or impediment are the media, the control of which becomes day by day more important reflecting the interests and the perspectives of dominant groups. At this point it is necessary to define mass media. Following Wimmer "Mass media refers to any form of communication that simultaneously reaches a large number of people, including but not limited to radio, TV, newspapers, the Internet, billboards, films, recordings and books" (Wimmer and Dominick, 2005: 2). Consequently, and what to is our interest in the present research, we refer to information diffused on amplified number of people. Therefore, we should mainly focus on the function of information through the mass media and not through alternative sources of information that concerns a limited number of citizens.

The role of mass media in hierarchical societies is underlined by Lang: "The mass media force attention to certain issues. [...] They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about, have feelings about" (Lang and Lang, 1966: 468). Accepting Lang's remark we can easily understand the importance of information's control<sup>93</sup>. Similarly, Page referring to media organisations and their executives, highlights that they may seek for public policies of particular concern to themselves by making campaign contributions just like other group interests (Page, 1996). At the same time, they have an indirect role using their publications or broadcasts for trying to change the beliefs and policy preferences of mass and/or elite audiences, which in consequence affect policy decisions.

The demagogic and/or propagandistic role of information is important for elites' power capacities. Free access on information can become dangerous because more diffused and independent are the mass media, more pluralist and independent is the information received by the citizens and therefore lesser the degree of alienation from their real needs<sup>94</sup> and interests and thus more capable of becoming objects in power relations<sup>95</sup>.

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<sup>93</sup> The importance of the media in political sphere is not new. We can mention indicatively the case of workers' movement in Great Britain. In the middle of XIX century alternative press connected with the movement disappeared from the scene, consequence of the development of new technologies of the sector. Power accumulation on elites who had the capacity to use these new technologies had as result the practical disappearance of the press connected with workers' interests. Consequently, one of the indispensable instruments for workers' struggle and union weaken their position (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 3-4).

<sup>94</sup> Important role to this has played publicity, in the sense of unifying people's desires and choices between the offered products, services and finally needs. As Schramm highlighted "There is an essential difference between the act of 'manipulating' people and the carrying of facts, discussion, persuasion, and argument, which are parts of the process by which consensus is attained in any free society. Obviously, communication can be used to some extent for manipulation, if the owners of the channels use them for that purpose. But just as obviously, the greater and freer the flow of information, the less likely it is that manipulative communication will have any effect" (Schramm, 1964: 36).

<sup>95</sup> Proposals regarding democracy in mass media see: (Chester and Larson, 2002) <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20020805/larson20020723> viewed in 23 July 2002.

Agenda setting is another important function of media<sup>96</sup> and this is not to be neglected. On the contrary, *“media agenda seems to have direct, sometimes strong, influence upon the policy agenda of elite decision makers”* (Rogers and Dearing, 1994: 91). Consequently, mass media controllers can divert public’s interests at specific issues and silence others. Following McCombs *“In choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position. In reflecting what candidates are saying during a campaign, the mass media may well determine the important issues—that is, the media may set the ‘agenda’ of the campaign”*(McCombs and Shaw, 1972: 176).

Many scholars have been occupied with how mass media shape public’s perception by drawing and/or silencing news<sup>97</sup>. Silencing specific issues or impediment of information inevitably helps specific actors to increase their power capabilities, by avoiding for instance people’s reactions. The extent given to a question in newspapers or non print media is therefore important. Consequently, the complete absence of information regarding an issue can, under specific circumstances, make it disappear and avoid in this way reactions coming from below.

Impediment of unwanted information and diffusion of controlled information therefore has as result the establishment of people’s preferences throughout the given knowledge. This, along with the diffusion of ‘correct’ or non dangerous ideologies increases the degree of people’s alienation. However, it is important to underline the relativity of this process, as mass media rather reaffirm or crystallise an opinion than change it (McCormack, 1961: 489). On the same time, mass media can form public opinion on specific issues that public lacks personal experience or knowledge.

Regarding analysis of the media, there are several factors which must be taken into account: firstly, the degree of media concentration; secondly, censorship; and thirdly, the media’s independence, i.e. if its directors are primary or secondary elites connected to the State, a church, political party or corporation, etc. The high degree of media’s concentration and its consequence are reflected at the words of McChesney *“[...] so long as the media are in corporate hands, the task of social change will be vastly more difficult, if not impossible [ ...]”*(McChesney, 1997: 71).

In a worldwide scale, we can appreciate a high degree of information’s control into a limited number of elites. On the same time, we observe a tight

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<sup>96</sup> Two articles that challenged the traditional model of agenda setting at the time that they were published regarding media’s influence on foreign and domestic issues are these of (Edwards and Wood, 1999) and (Wood and Peake, 1998).

<sup>97</sup> Indicatively we can mention the works of: (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987); (Iyengar et al., 1982); (MacKuen and Coombs, 1981); (McCombs, 1993); (McCombs and Shaw, 1972);(Rogers and Dearing, 1994).

connection between mass media holders with politicians. Having in mind the importance of publicity during electoral processes, we can easily understand how important information's correlation with politics is. The relations between elites that control media with political ones or even their identification are not exceptional but a frequent situation, and, of course, do not represent an exclusive characteristic of autocracies<sup>98</sup>.

Communication and information when they are controlled by a small number of elites lose their role to furnish information and become instead one of the major tools of propaganda in favour of these elites that they control them. What is more dangerous in the oligarchy on this power resource is that this capacity remains unknown to the public precisely because they control information and communication.

The development of new technologies such as internet<sup>99</sup> and mobile phones and their associated tools introduced changes globally, in western and non western countries. Still, these developments altered slightly the panorama<sup>100</sup>, if we take into consideration that only two search engines Google and Yahoo are the providers of 60% of the searches and five of them Google, Yahoo, MSM, AOL and Ask) the 90%<sup>101</sup>.

Rheingold sustained that text-messaging for instance enables activists to overcome obstacles of mobilisation imposed by authoritarian regimes<sup>102</sup> (Rheingold, 2003). In a similar context, Shirky sustains that 'social tools' facilitate collective action and removes "*two old obstacles –locality of information, and barriers to group reaction*" (Shirky, 2008: 153). On the other hand, there are scholars who recognise the positive effects of new technologies, mainly the reduction of organising and communication costs but they remain sceptical about their effectiveness on altering authoritarian regimes (Faris and Etling, 2008).

The importance of control over information in the Arab world is evident by the level of media concentration and its secondary position vis-à-vis the elites who control the State. In most of the Arab countries non print media are under the direct control of the primary elites, as laws guarantee the monopoly of the government over audiovisual media. Throughout recent history, the non print

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<sup>98</sup> Indicative of the symbiosis is the Spanish case of Villalonga, president of Telefonica and close associate of Jose Maria Aznar who at the time was controlling also Antena 3. For the Japanese case see (Akhavan-Majid, 1990).

<sup>99</sup> The case of South Korea, one of the most 'connected' to Internet heralds a growing influence of the media network. Even so, traditional media remain dominant, which means that societies less connected the road ahead is very long (Kim and Johnson, 2006).

<sup>100</sup> Indymedia represents an indicative case of free information on the net.

<sup>101</sup> Source: (Sullivan, 2005) available at <http://searchenginewatch.com/reports/article.php/2156431>.

<sup>102</sup> Similar function we can identify in western societies. Indicative of new technologies' impact on communication is what followed the attacks of 11 of March in Madrid. Through mobile phones call for demonstrations against the lies of the Popular Party government (FEITO, Óscar y MURGUÍA, Fernando, "De l'11-M al 14-M: la revolta dels mòbils", *Trenta Minuts*, TV3, 2004).

media are used by primary elites as means to promote their politico-economic and religious programs and to control information (Kamalipour and Mowlana, 1994). The non print have a major demagogic role were the illiteracy percentage is more elevated than in western societies.

In some countries, information seemed to have undergone a slight liberalisation, as could be seen in Morocco, Jordan or Egypt. But then censorship comes back into play, establishing lines of red tape around the regimes that cannot be crossed without severe punishment. Therefore, although constitutions in the Arab world clearly guarantee freedom of expression along with other general freedoms, the laws also usually include numerous restrictions which enable governmental censorship (Napoli and Amin, 1997). The case of *Al-Jazeera*, the Qatari satellite television channel, is a paradigm that helps to illustrate the concern caused by independent information in Arab regimes.

Consequently, mass media have a clear use as propaganda tool in order to legitimate policies taken. Technological changes and the introduction of internet have also relatively small impact in the Arab world, due the limited access on the net. However, it is important to re-underline that new technologies have facilitated communication among the activists. Following Hofheinz, *“Along with other forms of new media like satellite TV, it can be argued that the Internet helps eradicate states’ “hegemonic control over the flow of information”* (Hofheinz, 2005: 78). On the same time, internet allowed the information about torture and abuses of power etc to cross national borders and inform foreign activists and people about the socio-political situation of authoritarian countries. Consequently, *“Information no longer flows only in one direction, from North to South, but also in the opposite direction, from South to North”* (Amin, 1999).

Structural constraints of the Arab world’s political systems and the long exercised censorship<sup>103</sup> produce phenomena of indirect control coming either from editors and publishers or by the very same journalists’ self-censorship. Following Amin *“Arguments for limited freedom of expression in the region usually cluster around one reason: the preservation of the state. In such cases of self-censorship, journalists are no different from the authoritarians who take on the role of protectors of the state”* (Amin, 2002: 128). Equally, censorship can be exercised by elites controlling other resources of power, such as religious actors.

## **2.5. System structure**

The notion of structure has attracted, and still attracts, the interest of many scholars, among them: Levi-Strauss, Durkheim, Parsons, Weber, Marx, Merton. One of the issues at the core of Social Science is the debate of actor versus

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<sup>103</sup> Censorship is stricter in issues that affect directly the state leaders, as journalists can be fined or imprisoned for insulting the president of the state or top government officials. Consequently, and in order to secure the absence of criticism penal codes are put in practice.

structure. Even though both approaches recognise the existence of the two notions, their difference resides on what drives the human behaviour or where preferences of individuals come from. On one hand, the perspective that defends the role of structure as fundamental, considers the interests and behaviour of actors to be defined by the framework in which they evolve. On the other hand, those who defend the actors' primacy consider structure to be the result of action from individuals with maximising objectives. In general terms therefore, structures are viewed either as constraints or as the product of individual decisions.

Structuralists differ on their perception of structure. Blau (1975) in his work *Approaches to the study of Social Structure* identifies three major approaches of social structure: as configuration of social relations and positions, as substratum that underlines social life and history and as a "multidimensional space of the differentiated social positions of the people in a society or other collectivity" (Blau, 1975: 14). Porpora recognises four most common uses of structure: 'patterns of aggregate behaviour stable over the time', 'law-like regularities that govern the behaviour of social facts', 'collective rules and resources that structure behaviour', 'systems of human relationships among social positions' (Porpora, 1998: 195). To these four, Wight adds one more, this of relations of difference that constitute and define the properties of elements (Wight, 2006).

Despite the differences existing, we can probably discern a common element: the notion of structure describes the tendency of specific patterns, whether behavioural, relational or ideological, to remain stable over time. We can define structure thus as the framework in which power relations evolve.

In what regards our analysis, we consider that actors continuously produce and reproduce the characteristics of a society, and that their activity does not always evolve within the conditions they have chosen. Actors' decisions are not fully determined by structure, but nor are they always taken within a framework that the actors<sup>104</sup> fully control. Following Bhaskar and Giddens we can therefore affirm that structure is dual (Bhaskar, 1979), (Giddens, 1984).

With regards to the practices that constitute social systems, Giddens declares that structure is both the environment in which they develop and their result (Giddens, 1981). Expressing this duality, Dessler commented that "*structure is a medium of activity that in principle can be altered through that activity. Any given action will reproduce or transform some part of the social structure; the structural product itself may be intended or unintended. In general, social action is both a product (an intended action) and a by-product (the reproduction of rules and resources implicated in the intended action)*" (Dessler, 1989: 461). Thus actors and

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<sup>104</sup> From the sociology of power perspective however, we think it is important not to confuse systemic game with structure. The system is based on linear and circular power relations. Elites' decisions cannot escape the competition for differential power accumulation; if they abandon their priority to maximise power they will lose their position as elites. Nevertheless, the competition is carried out in a structure that differs in every system.



structures are not opposing concepts; rather each implies the other's existence.

From our point of view, structure is two-dimensional system. The first refers to circular relations, which represent the static element. The elites cannot escape the dynamics of competition for the differential accumulation of power and thus they move inside framework that they try to preserve. The second dimension of structure regards linear relations and resources which are submitted to changes. Since power structure is linked also to these changes, this second aspect represents structure's dynamic element.

In power competition, actors do not have the capacity to directly affect the factors defining structure. This possibility only exists in times of revolutionary change usually accompanied by the population's linear mobilisation. For this reason, one of the characteristics that enables us to discern whether a pattern is structural or circumstantial, is precisely the actors' difficulty in influencing it directly.

As previously mentioned, we could define structure as the framework in which agents act. It is necessary to remember that structure determines not only the actors' constraints, but also their opportunities (Giddens, 1976). Thus in the competitive game, constraints for some actors will be advantages for others; actors who have to fight against certain structural constraints have a limited margin of action, whereas those who can take advantage of opportunities will have greater accumulation capacity.

Wight goes beyond this and presents two theoretical traditions in structure analysis. In the first one, structure is considered as the environment in which actors evolve, generating constraints and opportunities. In the second, collective representations of social facts are added (Wight, 2006 126). We thus find different types of constraints or possibilities which can come from: a) the pressures of the population or diverse communities who are capable of generating linear relations, which obligate elites to carry out certain actions and forbid others; b) Other elites' pressures, which will forge power equilibrium in the system; c) Pressures from institutions and rules, for example the state, constitutional laws, customs, etc<sup>105</sup>; d) pressures from values and ideologies, particularly related to what we have defined as the Foucauldian and Gramscian levels -regime of truth and cultural hegemony.

Power structure is neither identical in all societies nor fixed over time. According to Sewell the most important problem of structuralist approaches is their tendency to rigid determinism in social life, as impervious to human agency, to exist apart but to determine the social life and by this way reduce actors to programmed automatons. In this way change becomes 'awkward'. *"In structural discourse, change is commonly located outside of structures, either in a telos of history, in notions of breakdown, or in influences exogenous to the system in*

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<sup>105</sup> An extreme but compelling example of these pressures is the acceptance of war as a legal institution when practiced through the state, but not when other institutions are implicated.

*question*" (Sewell, 1992: 3). Homans, who conceived social structures as emerging from elementary forms of behaviour, upheld that structures change over time responding by this way to changes in this behaviour by aggregates (Homans, 1973). The acceptance of change bring us close to Durkheim's idea that society shapes the individual, but, at the same time, depends entirely upon the actions and dispositions of individuals for its own existence.

The questing of structural change makes necessary the reference to Bhaskar and Giddens (1976, 1979, 1981, 1984) who saw structures as dual, as we highlighted previously. According to the latter author structures are "*both the medium and the outcome of the practices which constitute social systems*" (Giddens, 1981: 27). Structures shape people's practices, but are also people's practices that create and reproduce structures. From our perspective, changes in power structure of a system result from changes in actors, resources, relations of power or in the ideological environment.

In the case of resources, the transforming factor of the power structure is the change in a resource's usefulness for power accumulation. For instance, the position of the state elites who control foreign income in relation to the directors of large oil corporations, or to the leaders of financial or state institutions providing credit; their position is not fix and oscillates from dependence to alliance, according to their capacity for power accumulation or to the system structure itself. Therefore taking the rentier state based on oil exportation as an example, we can observe how the power structure considerably changed over time. At first, during the years of decolonisation, state elites were weak in the face of the seven large petrol corporations that functioned as a cartel. Later on, during the 70s, the state elites who had nationalised resources and created the OPEC, achieved power and capacity to act in the global system, but in subsequent years were confronted again with crisis and weakness as a result of the decrease in oil prices and IMF pressures. We can see at present that these elites have regained power thanks to the increase in oil prices and diversification of competition for demand, with the arrival of Chinese corporations on the scene. Henceforth the state elites' dependence on corporate elites became a relation of alliance and competition, admittedly with its ups and downs, but overall much more stable. As we mentioned when analysing the actors, the clearest manifestation of the power balance between primary actors in the power structure is its tendency towards oligarchy or polyarchy. In the Arab world, with the exception of Lebanon, we come across structures where there is a large concentration of power in very few hands.

The value of a power resource is not an intrinsic property; rather it depends on the competition's circumstances. Valid resources during one period of time may be useless in another; therefore those who can use them in the following era will displace the elites who originally had them at their disposal. As we have previously described, the emergence of state apparatus in the Arab world led to the decline of tribal elites to a dependent, secondary position. Another very

important contemporary example is the huge value acquired by control over ideology as a resource (in the past, nationalist – currently, Islamist), as much for opposition groups as for the regimes themselves.

In the case of power relations, the factor with the potential to modify the structure of a given society will be the eruption of linear relations. Massive popular mobilisation can weaken some elites, but it can also give strength to those who might have capacity to take advantage of the impetus provided by popular movement. Linear relations may eventually have revolutionary consequences, to the point of modifying the rules of play, eliminating some of the existing elites and generating new ones, or bringing to the fore power resources which were not previously useful for the competition. This phenomenon will depend on the capacity of the population's important communities for consciousness and mobilization. According to Skocpol, social revolutions differ from other transformation processes in the presence of two dynamics: structural change of society with class unrest and social and political transformations (Skocpol, 1979).

Up to the Arab spring of 2011, the contemporary Arab world had witnessed this process in the 'bread riots' of the 80s and 90s, during the Palestinian resistance against Israeli occupation and above all in the fight against colonial domination. In conjunction with some of the elites, fighting against colonial powers was doubtless the only moment in which the population was capable of developing a resistance movement strong enough to cause structural change.

Changes at the level of collective representations of social facts, what we have already determined as Foucauldian and Gramscian ideological levels, are also possible. Changes in this 'regime of truth' are extremely slow and in this context, structure is thus an element of continuity and a strong paralysing factor in favour of the status quo. Thus, the 'regime of truth' is only modified with the passing of time and the evolution of social relations. On the level defined by Gramsci as 'cultural hegemony', changes at this level can only come through the weakening of hegemonies and/or through the establishment of counter-hegemonies. Furthermore, elites' incapacity to generate cultural hegemonies in the Gramscian sense can be destabilising factors of a given power structure.

Autocratic Arab regimes have benefited from the strength of authoritarianism on the ideological level of the Foucauldian 'regime of truth'. As Ghassan Salamé points out, in the Arab and Muslim world we find a particular insistence on order and authority that we do not find in the western societies (Salamé, 1994b). This does not imply that in our analysis we shall adopt a culturalistic vision and join those who claim that the Islamic world is incompatible with democracy, but we view it as an element that must be taken into account to analyse resources owned by the different elites and principally by the regimes in power. Authoritarian elites find in this dominant 'truth' an important supporting factor to justify their form of government and also weaken voices demanding democratisation.

On the Foucauldian level we find a series of social, familial and community

relationships that rely on authoritarianism assumed by the great majority of the population. The respect of youngsters for their elders, of children for their parents, of tribes' members for the Sheiks, of wives for their husbands, of students for their teachers, of citizens for civil servants... all entail a submissive component which works in favour of authoritarian relations of power. Paradoxically the main opposition members' discourse, ranging from nationalism to Islamism, has not weakened that authoritarian truth, since they do not concern themselves with democracy nor with citizen participation in government. On the contrary, national elites were able to take advantage of this authoritarianism to become established in power when given access to it. Nonetheless, Islamists are today in an increasingly contradictory position, since their main opportunity to come to power would exist only through defeating autocracy and implementing an antiauthoritarian, democratic system, which is not on their current agenda. By not facing up to authoritarian truth they lose strength when confronting the regimes.

Considering another dimension in our analysis, power structure of a given system is also linked to superior systems and to the changes that may take place within them. In this respect we find competitive subsystems existing within main systems, and the alliances of elites in one subsystem with those in a superior system will be, accordingly, a common power resource. For example, power competition in a tribe will be partly shaped by the alliance capacity of determined tribal elites with elites who control the state. Or, at a higher level, the alliance of elites on the global periphery with global elites will constitute a power resource that ensures the position of the former.

In the Arab world, the ruling caste is largely independent of production processes and social class, but heavily dependent on the outside world (Ayubi, 2000). The globalisation of relations of production gave rise to bourgeois and political elites who largely depend on the core elites. As the power accumulation of peripheral elites in the globalised system depends partly on their function as intermediaries with core elites, the main objectives of both will be to keep these societies in a state of pre-modernity. This encourages dependence of pre-modern societies on the modernity developed at the core of the global system, thus paralysing their modernising capacity. This dependence on and alliance with core elites is also reflected in cultural terms, with an important westernisation of the elites in contrast with the more 'oriental' popular classes.

### **3. Modification of the power structure 1952-1956**

The period, starting with the coup d'état, is characterised by a process of 'primitive accumulation' of power for a new power group. To establish itself, the new regime brings into line the existing social forces. Lacking control and power capacities the newcomers are forced to collaborate with part of existing elites. On the same time, the new group clashes with members of the old regime, whose interests are inevitably harmed by the introduction of the new figures. Consequently, along with the 'primitive accumulation' of power, there is a redistribution of power capabilities between new and old elites.

The asymmetric concentration of power in the hands of specific figures has as outcome the expulsion of some agents from the power centres and the establishment of hegemonic figures.

### 3.1. Army

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of July 1952, a group of officers staged a bloodless military coup that overthrew the Egyptian King Farouk. The putsch altered the Egyptian *status quo* by introducing the Free Officers in the political scene. As the Free Officers represented only the 6 % of the army and the highest rank that they occupied was that of the colonel (Beattie, 1994), one of their priorities was the consolidation of their power and influence in the army. Army's control was fundamental, since it represented the primary source of power for the new group. This consolidation of their position would enable Free Officers to negotiate with other elites and form coalitions in order to fulfil their aim to expand their power in other fields of the Egyptian society.

In order to understand the limited control which the Free Officers wielded, a brief review of the historic evolution of the army is necessary. Until 1936, when the Anglo-Egyptian treaty<sup>106</sup> was signed, the army apparatus had been under the Britain's control with a British officer commander. Thereafter, the control of limited sized army, composed by members of wealthy families with military tradition, passed to the King who personally approved the superior officers (Laurens, 1991). However, since 1940, the King started to lose control of the military apparatus which was transferred to the political elites of the party in power. In this way, *Wafd*<sup>107</sup> could check the entries in the Military Academy and consequently control in an extensive degree the apparatus. Even though the King had lost the absolute control over the army, he preserved some influence especially towards the senior officers and his own group, the Iron Guard (Richmond, 1977).

The new rules<sup>108</sup> changed considerably the composition of the officers. The new entrants in the Military Academy were, from that time onwards, coming from Egyptian middle class families<sup>109</sup>. Free Officers were forming part of this generation and, thus, their influence towards the higher military ranks was limited. Additionally, if we bear in mind that the organisation of the Free Officers was kept secret so as to avoid its crashing, it is easily understood that their power

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<sup>106</sup> "The Treaty of Alliance between His Majesty, in Respect of the United Kingdom, and His Majesty the King of Egypt".

<sup>107</sup> The term *wafd* refers to a 'delegation', and more specifically the one that had the direct goal of achieving the complete independence of Egypt. This delegation hoped to gain representation at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, which was strictly denied by the British High Commissioner. This led to the formation of the Wafd Party, with Saad Zaghlul as its democratically elected leader (Martín Muñoz, 1999).

<sup>108</sup> One of the changes in the entry process in the Military Academy was the requirement of recommendation letters from eminent men (BEATTIE, J.B., 1994: 44).

<sup>109</sup> Following Martín Muñoz, the changes in the entry process in the Military Academy were ascribed to the necessities of London to empower the Egyptian Army before the fear of an Italian attack coming from Ethiopia (Martin-Muñoz, 1992: 214).

over the institution of army was restricted.

The establishment of Free Officers' rule inside the army was imposed by the fear that others could follow their example to gain power through a new coup. It is important to mention that the six month period preceding the coup was characterised by instability<sup>110</sup>. Controlling the army meant that they could facilitate their permanence in the power by putting down any popular or political reaction.

The control of the army was therefore fundamental and, for achieving this, there were two things to be done. The first one was the purification of the military apparatus and the second one its modernisation. Following Perlmutter, "*The more the army was modernised the more its composition [...] constituted a radical criticism of the existing political system*" (Perlmutter, 1967: 55).

The policy for cleansing the army of figures connected with the old regime, royalist officers and pro Wafd elements, was a direct one. In the first two months that followed the coup, approximately 450 officers of all ranks were dismissed<sup>111</sup> and among them the totality of the high command was arrested (Bill, 1969).

However, Free Officers' authority inside the army was also challenged by the Muslim Brotherhood, an organisation of religious vocation. As mentioned by Beattie, the interest of the Brotherhood in the military affairs started in 1938, when "*Hassan al-Banna*<sup>112</sup> and other Brothers obtained the right to preach to military units on religious occasions and exploited this access to create 'military units' tied directly to MB" (Beattie, 1994: 47).

The contacts between the two groups had started in the days of the war of 1948, when members of the Free Officers<sup>113</sup> integrated in the Brotherhood, while others were friendly to *Ikhwan's* ideas. The Brotherhood's Secret Apparatus was an important tool<sup>114</sup> for the Free Officers at the time of the coup, indicating the strong alliance between them. Their capabilities were probably reinforced by British military equipment. As mentioned by Tignor, in the period 1951-1954 there were many thefts of British military property (Tignor, 1987: 500).

The purification enterprise continued by following the patterns of the alliances of the military regime. Thus, the rupture of the alliance between Nasser and the Muslim Brotherhood, once the former established himself as the leader of

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<sup>110</sup> The period which preceded the coup was characterised by guerrilla actions against the British military bases and the foreign figures. The government had responded with massive arrests and the application of the martial law. For more information see (Richmond, 1977), (Laurens, 1991, Abdel-Malek, 1967).

<sup>111</sup> Additionally, the civil police was completely dismissed and its functions were practiced by militaries.

<sup>112</sup> He was the founder and spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood until his assassination in 1948.

<sup>113</sup> Some authors, among them Martín Muñoz (1992) and Al-Sayyid Marsot (1985), claim that even Nasser joined the Brotherhood.

<sup>114</sup> The Brotherhood was asked to protect military centres and embassies the day of the coup (Beattie, 1994).

the Free Officers group, led to the expulsion of pro-Brotherhood figures.

The neutralisation of the army from rival elements was only one part of the Free Officers' task regarding the army. The junta had also to gain the soldier's support. The base of the military apparatus was composed by soldiers coming from the peasant and working class, illiterate in their majority. Some of them had received a primary education inside the army from their officers<sup>115</sup> who nourished them with the adequate nationalist ideology (Khadduri, 1953). The economic and social status of the soldiers facilitated Free Officers' task to gain support through the adoption of populist policies<sup>116</sup>. The offer of a decent job in a context of high poverty and unemployment was a useful instrument at the junta's disposal for gaining support and avoiding uprisings and/or questionings.

The modernisation and construction of a capable Egyptian army represented also a precondition to achieve the British evacuation. The new group in power had to attain a solution on the British occupation both for populist and for selfish interests. The colonial control of the United Kingdom constituted an obstacle to the expansion of the Free Officers' rule. Even though, a direct conflict with the British was out of the question for the time being, the Officers had to be prepared for a future clash.

Despite the internal challenges that the group had to face, we have to keep in mind the regional context. In 1948, the Arab world experienced a devastating loss: the creation of Israel. The defeat of the 1948 war was not simply a painful memory but also the blunt reality. *Nakba*<sup>117</sup> personally affected the Free Officers who had participated in the war. In Nasser's (1973: 31) own words, "[T]his story<sup>118</sup> reminded me of the case of the Egyptian army in Palestine. A defeat had been suffered in Palestine just as a crime had been committed in the film story. [...] But in the tragedy in which we lived in Palestine the terrible incubus lasted for six years".

Leaving aside the realist arguments of the important function of the army, as the institution entrusted with the protection of the state's sovereignty, and the personal wounds of the Officers, the threat of Israel was important to the new regime. A strong Egyptian army capable of challenging or at least being respected by Tel Aviv would offer to the new regime popular support and legitimacy.

The modernisation and the armament of the military apparatus, discussed later, ought to pass through a "transnational cooperation" which meant military help from foreign elites that were dominating the military domain. The new group in power was in necessity of modern equipment equivalent to that of the

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<sup>115</sup> Nasser and Kemal al-Din Hussein were instructors in the Military Academy and they had probably used their posts to proselytise the young officers.

<sup>116</sup> Voting rights were attributed to the totality of the military corpus (Martin-Muñoz, 1992).

<sup>117</sup> The war of 1948 was named by the Arabs as the catastrophe.

<sup>118</sup> He was referring to a movie where a villain commits murder but plans his crime in such a way that suspicion is thrown on an innocent man.



industrial states, aiming at demonstrating its capacity to integrate the country in the modern world to the population and the military sectors, which were already versed in the western technology due to the British presence.

The Czech arms deal and the signing of different defence pacts with other Arab states, as a response to the Baghdad Pact covered to an important extent the necessities of the junta. On the one hand, by reinforcing the capabilities and the moral of the military officers, the group was assuring their support and, simultaneously, it was expanding the power capacities of the army as an institution. On the other hand, Free Officers were gaining popular support not only from the rest of the officers, but also from the rest of the Egyptian society, as the building up of a strong army raised the feelings of the national pride. Following Corm, in parts of the 'underdeveloped' world the army represents the symbol of the modernity and the progress (Corm, 2003: 245).

### **3.2. State**

At the time that the coup took place, the state was totally under the control of the old regime. The Officers had to form a new government aiming for the control of the Egyptian state. Thus, the Revolution Command Council was created to perform the duties of the government, composed by Free Officers and Gamal Abdel Nasser heading the Council.

However, the new group lacked eminent men to staff the state apparatus<sup>119</sup>. The need for political backing imposed the formation of alliances with political agents of the old regime. The Free Officers had developed relations with Wafd in army. Although present in the Egyptian political scene since the official independence of the country, Wafd had intermittently governed the country for only seven years. The failure of the party to negotiate better terms for Egypt in the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936<sup>120</sup>, its imposition in government under the threat of British arms in February 1942 and the defeat of 1948 had seriously damaged its image in the eyes of the people (Richmond, 1977).

The contacts between Wafd and the Free Officers were, nevertheless, limited due to the inverted relation of power between the two groups. The presence of the Free Officers in the Egyptian scene and the increase of their power meant a respective decline of the Wafd's influence, connected to the old *status quo*.

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<sup>119</sup> Anwar al-Sadat was the only popular known Free Officer due to his terrorist past. In the summer of 1942, when German General Erwin Rommel's Africa corps was poised to march into Cairo, Anwar Sadat, Gamal Nasser and their colleagues were in close touch with the attacking force and –with help from the Muslim Brotherhood – were preparing an anti-British uprising in Egypt's capital. A treaty with Germany had been drafted by Sadat. When Rommel's push east failed in the fall of 1942, Sadat and several of his co-conspirators were arrested by the British and sat out much of the remainder of the war in jail.

<sup>120</sup> The treaty required from UK to withdraw all troops from Egypt except from 10.000 troops plus auxiliary personnel who were necessary for protecting the Suez Canal and its surroundings. The UK would also supply and train Egypt's army and assist in its defence in case of war. The treaty was signed on August 26<sup>th</sup>, ratified on December 22<sup>nd</sup> and was to last for 20 years.

Due to the inexistence of common interests with political agents of the old regime, the junta had to collaborate with small radical political parties, not strong enough to challenge their hegemony but with more political experience and thirst to participate in governance. The small parties, such as the Sa'ad and leftists parties<sup>121</sup>, were therefore used as a reserve for the necessities of the new regime. Lacking political power and popular support<sup>122</sup>, having appetite to participate in the political arena and missing significant ideological differences with the new group in power, they were more than interested to be employed.

The different alliances, formed to serve the invigoration of the Free Officers' power, were not the only adopted strategy. The group had to weaken the political opposition that logically constituted a constant danger for the longevity of the regime. The policy adopted for weakening the power of the old parties was to implant internal conflicts. The concept of the political purification of Egypt and the law which prohibited the life time political leaders, gave the spark for the internal quarrel. A new guard found through these reforms the way to amplify its participation in the political arena in the expense of the old political agents. On their turn, the Free Officers had the opportunity to destabilise the political rivals from the inside<sup>123</sup>.

The new regime needed to demonstrate determination to change the economic-political situation of the Egyptians to gain their support. King Farouk<sup>124</sup> (1936-1952) was to be the scapegoat. In three days time he was obliged to leave the country. However, the decision to expulse the King and not to execute him demonstrated the intentions of the new regime to avoid a radical attitude.

A few months after the coup, in January 1953, the Revolution Command Council, formed by eleven members, ordered the dissolution of the political parties, took over their funds, arrested political figures and declared a period of transition which would last three years (Martin-Muñoz, 1992). Co-instantaneous to this decision was the creation of the Liberation Rally, a mass organisation destined to gather all necessary political elements from the dismissed parties.

The political cleansing of extra-group rivals and the formation of alliances were fundamental for the Free Officers. However, the new regime had to set the state apparatus in function. The need for purification of the state was essential as in the case of the army. Thus, since the mid-1953, the police, the army and

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<sup>121</sup> Eight to ten Officers of the group were members of leftist parties.

<sup>122</sup> The political parties with Marxists vocation were mainly elitists ones, by the participation of middle and upper class intellectuals, foreigners and *mutamarsi*. The lack of popular support was justified also by the religiosity of the society and thus its hostility to the atheistic doctrines. Moreover, the limited influence of these parties was due to the limited number of industrial workers (Hopwood, 1993).

<sup>123</sup> In Wafd's case, the offer of ministry posts to some of the leaders of the party had as a result a further fragmentation of the party (Beattie, 1994).

<sup>124</sup> Farouk, at the beginning of his mandate, was regarded with hope. But since the mid '40's he had managed to be regarded as a synonym of corruption and British control for the people and therefore undesirable by the Egyptian and the British elites.

important ministries<sup>125</sup>, such as those of education and internal affairs, were headed by Officers.

As the Free Officers were lacking 'personnel', they had to be really attentive by placing the right person in the right place or, even better, not to put the wrong person in the wrong place. So, the members whose preferences were doubtful, especially pro-Muslim Brotherhood figures, were carefully removed from key positions as it was the case of the old regime elements (Beattie, 1994).

The new regime had also to settle political issues as that referring to the temporary length of the military rule. The matter provoked intense conflicts inside the Free Officers group as the majority, headed by Abdel Latif Boghadi, was in favour of a ten year military rule. To the opposite side, Nasser was supporting a six month period during which purifying policies would be applied. The first round of the internal conflict ended with Nasser as a winner, although his proposal was rejected (Beattie, 1994).

The internal conflict is better understood in terms of clash between the different agents having interests or not to neutralise the potent elements of the old regime. A long stay of a military rule could accomplish much more radically and quickly what in a democracy would require a lot of time.

The appointment of General Mohammad Nagib<sup>126</sup> as the first president of the Republic, after the official ending of monarchy<sup>127</sup>, revived the internal quarrels. The effort of gathering the necessary political figures amplified the camp for political participation and consequently created additional problems. Moreover, the gradual isolation of the Brotherhood from the power centres deepened the problems of the Free Officers.

The split between the Free Officers was constantly increasing. On the one side, there was Nagib<sup>128</sup>, gathering around him the army elements connected with Wafd, as well as other political agents of the old regime, the betrayed Muslim Brotherhood and Marxists, along with the popular approval (Abdel-Malek, 1967). On the other side there was Nasser, at the time head of the Revolution Command Council and minister of Interior, and his close ally Abdel Hakim Amer, Commander of the Armed Forces. As mentioned by Beattie, at the time "*both major instruments of state coercion were now in the hands of Nasser and his closest friend*" (Beattie, 1994: 90). Additionally, Nasser was enjoying the Washington's support.

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<sup>125</sup> After the coup, Maher was named Prime Minister, who had occupied the same post in 1936 in a national unity government and he was known for his anti-British positions, and General Nagib was appointed chief of the armed forces, who was not a member of the Free Officers. His election had been based on his popular image due to his performance on the Palestinian war.

<sup>126</sup> Maher had resigned from his post after the failed efforts to avoid the land reform that harmed the interests of the wealthier landowners (Martín Muñoz, 1999).

<sup>127</sup> The monarchy was officially ended on 18<sup>th</sup> of June 1953.

<sup>128</sup> Nagib had reacted against Nasser's decision to ban the Muslim Brotherhood without first consulting him because he was supported by them (Laurens, 1991).

The confrontation of the two men, which was also fed by the media, provoked Nagib's resignation on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 1954. Nevertheless, the reaction of Nagib's allies, the split of the army and the fear of a complete loss of power obliged Nasser to re-establish Nagib two days later.

Nasser had lost the battle but not the war. A series of measures<sup>129</sup> were adopted by Nasser's group aiming to demonstrate the necessity to maintain the military rule and the immature political decision to turn into democracy. Additionally, there was an effort to break down the alliance formed between the Brotherhood, the Marxists and Wafd elements. The efforts were intensified after signing the treaty with the British, when the regime was criticised for negotiating with the 'enemy' under unacceptable conditions, as the British could reoccupy the canal base for the next seven years.

Nagib was finally released from his duties<sup>130</sup> after Nasser's assassination attempt<sup>131</sup>. Nasser was becoming the leading figure in the regime, resuming all powers by appointing friendly persons in key positions. As mentioned by Laurens, since March 1954 there was no number two in the group (Laurens, 1991: 110). The quarrels between the Free Officers continued even after the dismissal of Nagib, but the fear of a complete loss of power obliged them to a silent confrontation.

The establishment of Nasser as regime's leading figure was demonstrated by the adoption of unilateral decisions aiming at the expansion of his personal power<sup>132</sup>. In January 1956 the provisional constitution<sup>133</sup> was presented, with the automatic dissolution of the Revolution Command Council, which was attributing all its powers to Nasser, and the replacement of the Liberation Rally by the National Union. In June of the same year, Nasser was elected president of Egypt with 98% of the votes.

The new regime, firstly officially headed by Nagib and later by Nasser, aside from the other policies, had to expand the role of the state apparatus. The expansion of the state under the group's authority would simultaneously increase the power of the individual agents and the group in its totality. The different economic policies, such as the land reform<sup>134</sup> and the nationalisation of the Suez

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<sup>129</sup> After Nasser's death it became known that he had organised explosions in Cairo and he had financed antidemocratic manifestations aiming for the creation of a tense social environment so as to demonstrate the necessity of a military rule (Beattie, 1994).

<sup>130</sup> His dismissal had repercussions in the Sudanese problem as Nagib had Sudanese origins which made him really popular in the neighbour country.

<sup>131</sup> The attempt of Nasser's assassination was prepared and effectuated from another group but with the collaboration of the Brothers.

<sup>132</sup> From March 1954 till July 1956 Nasser was occupying the posts of President of the Revolution Command Council, Prime Minister and Commander of the Armed Forces (Azaola, 2006).

<sup>133</sup> This constitution established extensive powers for the President of the Republic. The article 121 introduced the ratification of the President through a referendum. For more information see (Martin-Muñoz, 1992: 255-257).

<sup>134</sup> A part of the sequestered land remained on the 'state's' disposal. Further information is

Canal, were aiming for the extension of the state activities in the economic field. In this way, the lack of economic power of the new group was reinforced and at the same time new elites were starting to be formed, so as to replace the old ones. These elites would base their power in the state apparatus, acquiring more power by the 'socialist' orientation of the regime and by the international aid destined to the Egyptian state.

The expansion of the state apparatus was also serving the strategy of the popular seduction. As mentioned before, the popular support was indispensable for the Free Officers out of fear of social uprisings. Thus, in the mid 1954, Nasser, along with his effort to consolidate his power, began to adopt different populist measures, such as the creation of a minimal welfare state and job opportunities in the public sector. The need for purification and new demands of the public sector introduced changes to the qualification of the civil servants. The personnel would be of a technocratic formation, as opposed to the policy followed until then by the old regime, which made provision for juridical formatted staff (Ajami, 1974).

### ***3.3. Rent and Capital***

The survival and the permanence of the junta made the control of other power resources of power necessary. The control of the economic power, partially accomplished by the expansion of the economic activities of the state, was fundamental for the group. Lacking direct control, Free Officers had to form coalitions with other elites. At the time, the majority of the capital was connected to the land. Big landholders were controlling the vast majority of the country's capital. To be more precise, the 6 % of land owners controlled the 65% of the Egyptian land (Vatikiotis, 1991). The royal family by itself disposed 175.000 *feddans*<sup>135</sup>.

The fact that the majority of the capital was concentrated to landholders did not exclude the presence of other economic elites, less powerful but still present, with their interests linked to the industrial, banking and commercial sectors. These sectors were principally in the hands of foreigners or *mutamarsi*<sup>136</sup> with a limited presence of natives. Indicatively, we can mention that in 1951 the 32% of the industrial and commercial company directors were Egyptian, 38% Europeans, 18% Jewish and 11% Syrio- Lebanese (Waterbury, 1983).

Meanwhile, the British were losing capacity to govern their colonies in the traditional way. The Second World War had as a result a certain strengthening of the industrial elites that was now urging for more political participation. Moreover, the new-born native Muslim elite, adopting a nationalist discourse, was

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furnished in the next chapter.

<sup>135</sup> One hundred *feddans* are equivalent to 42 hectares.

<sup>136</sup> Term employed to characterise the foreigners usually born and raised in Egypt who retained their socio-cultural differences or/and passport from another country.

threatening the interests of foreigners (Tignor, 1980). Thus, the British, facing economic problems<sup>137</sup>, had to find way to keep exploiting the resources of their colonies but in an indirect way.

The British interests were, of course, heterogeneous and there were some of them who needed to maintain the actual status of control. Those ones were obviously sharing the same interests with the old political and economic Egyptian elite, the big landholders and the important political parties.

The industrial economic sectors were looking for a way to satisfy their interests and Free Officers were appropriate for this task. On one hand, the change of their relational status was necessary, however, in a bloodless manner, avoiding a direct clash with the landowners who prevented the development of the 'capitalistic production' (Chaichian, 1988). On the other hand, the Free Officers, lacking the characteristics of the bourgeoisie<sup>138</sup>, needed economic support.

This alliance shared the same common enemy: the elite composed by wealthy landholders who had to be weakened economically and politically. However, the fragility of the Free Officers obliged them to a soft attitude towards the landholders. In this spirit the agricultural reform<sup>139</sup> was adopted, designed so as to affect only the wealthiest landowners. The land reform, by establishing the ceiling on individual landholdings at 200 *feddans*<sup>140</sup>, touched only 6% of the total cultivated land (Sheman, 1957). The affected ones, with the exception of the royal family, received government bonds as compensations. Thus, although the economic and political power was diminished some of them were able to preserve their economic resources (Beinin and Goldberg, 1982).

Furthermore, the land reform served another aim: the fulfilment of the necessity for a change, to demonstrate socially that the group was disposed to offer new perspectives for the 'petit bourgeoisie'. Thus, according to Chaichian, the reform aimed at the avoidance of revolutionary efforts as it increased the number of small landholders (Chaichian, 1988: 35).

The land reform and its parallel effects, along with a series of miscellaneous measures, mostly referring to loans but also to the exclusion of the industrial enterprises from the norms of the land reform, were adopted so as to stimulate the domestic capital to invest to industrial activities in order to strengthen the industrial elite (Abdel-Malek, 1967). Through the boosting of the opportunities for the industrial sector, the Free Officers hoped to secure the collaboration of the interested parts.

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<sup>137</sup> The British had also debts to the Egyptian state £ 405 millions (Abdel-Malek, 1967).

<sup>138</sup> The majority of the bourgeoisie was composed by Christians, Jews, Armenian, Greek, Syrian, Lebanese (Sheman, 1957).

<sup>139</sup> Law No 178, 9<sup>th</sup> of September 1952.

<sup>140</sup> However, the reform permitted the landowners to dispose 100 more *feddans* to those having two or more children (Martin-Muñoz, 1992).

As mentioned before, the part of capital connected to the sector of industry and banking was at the hands of foreigners. Aiming at stimulating their participation in the Egyptian economy and encouraging the industrial development a series of measures, such as tax exemption on profit for five to seven years, were adopted during the period 1952-'54 (Ibrahim, 2002b). Additionally, a week after the coup, the Free Officers decided the reduction of the obligatory participation of the Egyptian capital in the joint-stock companies from 51% to 49% <sup>141</sup> (Abdel-Malek, 1967).

The development of the industrial sector presupposed growing necessities of energy. It was, therefore, necessary to find supplementary energetic resources. The plan of the construction of the High Dam of Aswan was serving among others the bolster of hydroelectric power. Additionally, it would irrigate millions of hectares which were indispensable for the survival of the population in demographic explosion (Shupe et al., 1980). To accomplish this operation economic and technical help was necessary. West was perceived the most importunate lender. At first, Washington, the World Bank and London accepted the financing of the construction of the High Dam.

Despite the efforts of the new regime to boost the development of the industrial sector, its performances were not satisfactory. The refusal of the agricultural elites to collaborate intensified the problems. Used to controlling the political apparatus, they denied cooperating and investing to the industrial sector. Simultaneously, the industrial elites, associates of the new regime, refused to help dynamically, as they were excluded from the political power centres, which were reserved for the militaries (Abdel-Malek, 1967).

### **3.4. Religion**

Before the military coup the religion field was divided into two principal doctrines. On the one side, there was this represented by Al-Azhar<sup>142</sup>, defending the strict application of the religious concepts, and on the other side, the ones urging to adopt the western model of secularism while respecting Islam as a basic element of the society. The latter were encouraged by the influential foreign Christian and Jews minorities of the country (Beattie, 1994).

Muslim Brotherhood (*al-ikhwān al-muslimūn*) embraced the first doctrine. By the time that the coup had taken place, the Brotherhood was experiencing a

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<sup>141</sup> The only societies excluded from this new law were those related to the security and the armed forces.

<sup>142</sup> Al-Azhar was considered by most Sunni Muslims to be the most prestigious school of Islamic learning, and its scholars were seen as some of the most reputable scholars in the Muslim world. The mosque was built in 969 taking its name after Fatima Az-Zahraa the daughter of the prophet Muhammad. However, the governmental control over the institution harmed its credibility. The mosque is connected with the Al-Azhar University.

popular support for their active role in the Palestinian war of 1948<sup>143</sup> and also for their charity action, due to the state's absence on the field. Their power was so immense that Hassan Al-Banna came really close to assume power in the state. However, the oligarchy had managed to suppress the movement, but not in its totality (Khadduri, 1953).

The ties between the Free Officers and the Brotherhood were close ones. As it was mentioned earlier, their contacts had started in the days of the war of 1948 and members of the Free Officers were integrated in the Brotherhood. The support of Muslim Brotherhood was of absolute necessity to the Free Officers, since religious organisations of this kind were used in the Arab world so as to mediate between the people and the new established regimes<sup>144</sup> (Kepel, 2003). Moreover, their Secret Apparatus helped the practical effectuation of the coup. On the other hand, the Brotherhood had interest on this collaboration as means to expand their influence.

The alliance between the two groups imposed a co-management of the state. Thus, during the first months following the coup, the allied forces came to the negotiating table and several political moves were done. The establishment of Nagib as Prime Minister of Egypt was approved by the Brotherhood. Therefore, during his mandate the Brothers were called to participate in the new government. Due to their internal conflict<sup>145</sup>, however, the Brothers that did not toe the line of Hudaibi<sup>146</sup> and collaborated with the new regime were thrown out of the organisation (Laurens, 1991).

Moreover, the new regime took measures to weaken the *status quo* of the religious elites. The abolishment of the *waqfs*<sup>147</sup>, through the agrarian reform, and later through the submission of economic resources of institutional Islam under the state's control by the creation of a Ministry enabled governmental elites to administrate the donations without the permission of the donors (Pioppi, 2004). In this way the state could control<sup>148</sup> the *ulema* and their fortunes, as they now received a state salary (Kepel, 2003).

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<sup>143</sup> The Brothers were the first to participate in the war of 1948 as volunteers due to the fact that the Egyptian army could not enter a war, not until the English mandate was expired (Richmond, 1977). The organization was founded in 1928 in Ismailiyya, a city characterised by Europeanization and strong British presence, due to the central office of the International Maritime Suez Canal Company which was situated in the city (Martín Muñoz, 1999).

<sup>144</sup> The discreet support of religious movement so as to control and stabilise the region and in this way to mobilise the Muslim world against the soviet threat was a policy adopted by USA (Corm, 2003).

<sup>145</sup> Since the assassination of Al-Banna the group was experiencing difficulties to name his successor due to the clash between the different leaders.

<sup>146</sup> He was Al-Banna's successor in the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood.

<sup>147</sup> 'Goods of God' coming from donations of individuals so as to gain a place in paradise. In practice it was the principal income of the *ulema*, Muslim clerics.

<sup>148</sup> The state control over the Egyptian religious authorities damaged seriously their prestige. Since 1954, the centre of the fundamentalist thought, until then held by the Egyptian *ulemas*, in the Muslim world was transferred to Pakistan (Heikal, 1983).



The conflict between Nasser and Nagib perturbed power balance. The coalition formed between Nagib and the Brotherhood was, of course, against Nasser's ambitions. Searching for the increase of his personal power, Nasser avoided giving power to the Brothers by promising a gradual reform compatible with the desires of the Brotherhood (Beattie, 1994).

Their communication became inconstant with the expected disappointment of the Brotherhood. The expulsion of Nagib and the establishment of Nasser inside the Free Officers group as the leading figure signalled the countdown for the Brotherhood. The tentative for their removal was however gradual. The first step was, as in the case of the political parties, to destroy the organisation's coherence by creating an internal conflict between the old and the new guard. The in-house crisis of the Brotherhood and the dismissal of the Secret Apparatus restricted their influence and power.

The attempt on Nasser's life on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 1954 and the official uncovering of a new coup with the collaboration of the British<sup>149</sup> gave Nasser the official pretext for proceeding to massive arrests and repression towards Muslim Brotherhood, ten months after official banding of the organisation.

Nasser, in order to counterbalance the power of the Brotherhood, tried to raise the control over the religious institutions and, in this way, to gain the role of the official defender of Islam. In 1955, he abolished the autonomous *Sharia* courts and unified the judicial system. Additionally, there was an effort to put all mosques and all the other activities of the religious establishments under the Ministry of the Religious Endowments (Kodmani, 2005).

Along with these policies, Nasser tried to take advantage of Al-Azhar's role in the Muslim community beyond Egypt, so as to promote his role in the Arab and Islamic nations (Tamir, 2001). Additionally, the provisional constitution of 1956 set the Islamic religion as the official religion of the state. Despite all his efforts, Nasser did not avoid the harsh criticism of the Brotherhood and the Wafd for his western orientation, which was considered harmful for the Islamic customs and traditions (Laurens, 1991).

### **3.5. Media**

Since the beginning of the coup, the new regime tried to control the media, an important power resource and dangerous instrument in the hands of rivals, by placing officers in key positions. In the period 1952-1954 the relationship between the new regime and the 'press' was unstable, swinging between censorship and limited freedom<sup>150</sup>. Since the first months of 1953 Nasser began to

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<sup>149</sup> The Brotherhood was accused of having contacts with the British, something that was denied in the first place but later they affirmed that their contacts took place under Nasser's demand.

<sup>150</sup> A censor- a young officer- was put in every newspaper so as to re-educate the journalists and to censor the news (Dabus, 1993).

develop personal relations with major editors. The newspapers, leaned towards different political parties, were shut down when political parties were dissolved. Similar was the fate of Brotherhood's daily later on (Beattie, 1994).

The censorship of the media was a constant characteristic of Nasser's mandate, until 1967. The lapse of freedom of speech had to find a way to be counterbalanced. Following Shehata's view *"When open political expression became dangerous in Egypt political joke emerged as a vehicle of criticism [...]"*. The following political joke expresses with humour the situation<sup>151</sup>: *Once someone saw a man with his nose banded and asked him, 'Why is your nose banded?' The man said, 'I had a tooth removed'. The first man said, 'Why didn't you have it removed from your mouth?' whereupon the reply was, 'Can anyone in this country open his mouth?'"*(Shehata, 1992: 75).

The prohibition of the freedom of speech had as a result the creation of clandestine or illegal radio stations through which the criticism was exercised. However, the longevity of such efforts was really limited as the authorities quickly discovered them (Dougherty, 1959).

The personal relations that Nasser had developed and the state media were used in different occasions so as to defend the policies of the regime. Additionally, the media played a propagandistic role so as to manipulate the public opinion. The creation of the broadcast 'voice of Arabs'<sup>152</sup> was a constant instrument in Nasser's policy, both inside and outside the country. Indicatively, we should mention the use of media during the clash between Nagib and Nasser or the defence of the neutral policy transmitted by the radio. At an extraterritorial level, Nasser used the radio propaganda, among others, so as to prevent the Iraqi integration in the Baghdad Pact<sup>153</sup> (Laurens, 1991).

In 1954 Nasser started purging the Press Syndicate and under the pretext of the *"press frivolity, [he] launched three organs of the Revolution [...]"* (Crabbs Jr, 1975: 392). In April of the same year he decided the dissolution of the Syndicate and its functions passed to the Ministry of National Guidance.

### **3.6. Ideological Discourse**

The Free Officers had to develop a political discourse aiming at gaining popular support and convincing different centres of power to collaborate with them. Due to the absence of a strong base and the heterogeneity of the group, their discourse had to be vague and flexible. In Boghadi's<sup>154</sup> own words: *"out of fear of a difference of opinion among ourselves, and so not to cause a split or create*

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<sup>151</sup> Quoted in (Shehata, 1992: 81).

<sup>152</sup> The first to use the radio for propagandistic purposes in the Arab world was the Syrian Chichacli (Laurens, 1991).

<sup>153</sup> Nuri Said of Iraq had been characterised as traitor of the Arabs.

<sup>154</sup> Quoted in (Beattie, 1994: 52).

*division at a time when we were in greatest need of cohesion and solidarity to achieve our higher goal”.*

Before the coup took place, the political elites in power were used to appeal for the uniqueness of Egypt<sup>155</sup> as being an independent state since the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The Free Officers, at their first steps, followed the same pattern appealing to the Egyptian nationalism. The necessity of the group to establish itself inside the country, made the reference to the patriotism of the Egyptians indispensable. Therefore, following Vatikiotis, the Officers auto reclaimed themselves as the first Egyptians to run the country after centuries (Vatikiotis, 1991).

At this point, the Free Officers were competing with different rivals for popular support and legitimacy. On the one hand, they had to struggle with Wafd. The party, although weakened by its political errors, was still an important rival. Its political discourse, fundamentally based on the anti-imperialistic struggle and the adoption of liberal democracy as well as the secularism, presented similarities with that of the Free Officers.

On the other hand, the new regime had to compete with the religious vocation of the Muslim Brotherhood, the most dangerous adversary due to its massive popular support. The alliance with the Brotherhood, formed in the first two years, had given the opportunity to the Free Officers to mobilise a religious discourse<sup>156</sup>.

However, the appeal to religious feelings had to be modest for two main reasons: firstly, for fear that the establishment of a junta with a religious vocation could provoke outside interference, and secondly, for avoiding a greater strengthening of the Muslim Brotherhood. When the relations between the two groups were cut off, the state became the only legitimate defender of Islam, although adopting a laic<sup>157</sup> model of governance.

The Free Officers had also to find a way of justifying the maintenance of the military rule, necessary for safeguarding their power. Their argumentation was based on the idea that the liberal model, applied previously, had been manipulated by the colonialists and the King (Al-Sayyid Marsot, 1985). Therefore, a period of transition before returning to the democratic rule was necessary.

Nasser's establishment as leader of the group introduced changes in the political discourse of the regime. Lacking popularity, contrary to his rival Nagib, Nasser was obliged to find a way to approach the people. Being an Egyptian, son of a people full of humiliation and poverty, he was the first Arab politician to speak in a language that combined wisdom and rhetoric with the popular idiom

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<sup>155</sup> Farouk for instance was referring to the Egyptian nation. When he was named King of Sudan he appealed to the Egyptian and Sudanese people under the Egyptian crown (Kienle, 1995).

<sup>156</sup> It is important to remember the homogeneity that characterised the Egyptian population in religious field as almost 90% of the population was and is Muslims.

<sup>157</sup> The term must not be confused with the western interpretation. As mentioned by G. Kepel the religion always played an important role in the Arab States but there is a differentiation based on the degree of power and autonomy that was reserved in the religious elite (Kepel, 2003: 101).

(Corm, 2003).

An important change in the political discourse came right after the signing of the Baghdad pact. Nasser, urging to expand his influence outside the Egyptian borders, began to use the word *umma* (nation) referring to the totality of the Arabs and not only to the Egyptians (Kienle, 1995). The Egyptian nationalism was replaced with the discourse of pan Arabism, broadcasted from the emission 'Voice of Arabs' in many Arab countries.

Following Dekmejian<sup>158</sup>, *"Jusqu'en 1954, Nasser avait été satisfait de parler au nom de l'Égypte ; depuis, il assumait le rôle de porte-parole attitré et de champion du 'peuple arabe'. Nasser soutient à partir de 1954 que tous les Arabes, tous les 'vrais' nationalistes en Afrique-Asie, sont naturellement neutralistes. [...] Depuis 1954, l'Égypte était devenue une terre d'asile pour tous les nationalistes arabes mécontents et pour plusieurs autres nationalistes dissidents"*.

The campaign against Israel was Nasser's major instrument for the Arab unity (Dougherty, 1959). For Nasser, as well as for other Arab leaders, the Jewish State offered in different occasions an important tool for manipulating and disorientating the public from the internal problems. Moreover, the existence of a common enemy could assemble the Arab population under the leadership of an agent, since the socioeconomic problems concerning several Arab citizens in different states, although common in their substance, were particular in each state.

In Nasser's<sup>159</sup> own words *"[A]nd when the Palestine crisis loomed on the horizon I was firmly convinced that the fighting in Palestine was not fighting on a foreign territory. Nor was it inspired by sentiment. It was a duty imposed by self defence"*.

### **3.7. People**

An important precondition for the new group's survival was popular support. The necessity was principally imposed by the hostile social environment preceding the coup. As the social mobilisation was strong, the negligence on behalf of the group to aim for social appease could cost them their expulsion either by the use of the population by their rivals or by a real revolution.

Their task was not a really difficult one if we consider the general popular disappointment before the coup. The Free Officers were seen as the first Egyptian power group to rule the country, because they came from native Egyptians and they were sharing the same religion and language with the majority of the population. Moreover, in the first period that followed the coup, the alliance between the Free Officers and the Muslim Brotherhood offered to the regime a strong base for achieving popular support. Since the majority of the population

<sup>158</sup> Quoted in (Flory et al., 1990: 162).

<sup>159</sup> President Nasser on Zionism and Israel. Quoted in (Laqueur and Rubbin, 1991: 138).

was rural and analphabetic, the Brotherhood, particularly present in the rural areas, listened to the needs of the poor population<sup>160</sup>. This popular approval was transferred to the Free Officers, through the alliance between the two groups. To this, the Brotherhood's aid to abolish the student unions, which were under the guidance of the Wafd and the communist influence, has to be added (Martin-Muñoz, 1992).

The rupture of the alliance with the Brotherhood and the expulsion of Nagib generated, as it was expected, popular discontent. Nasser's unpopularity was equilibrated through different policies, one of them being the introduction of his populist discourse through which a special relation was progressively developed between him and 'his' people. He was the first Arab politician to use a language comprehensible to the mass, transmitting a feeling of political participation. Moreover, Nasser, through the constitution of 1956, reinforced officially the political rights, by diminishing the electors' age to 19 from 21 years old and by institutionalising the voting right to the feminine population (Martin-Muñoz, 1992).

The victory against the British occupation, with the signing of the Bagdad treaty and later with the nationalisation of the Suez Company, had an enormous impact to the Egyptians, a fact that legitimated the junta towards the population. The general frustration for the external interference had widely spread the idea that the development of Egypt could not be realised until the withdrawal of the foreign domination.

The land reform had also an important impact to the population by creating fruitless hopes of better economic conditions for the poor population<sup>161</sup>. The seductive policies were basic instrument of the Officers' rule, especially after Nasser came in to power. The creation of basic functions of welfare state and the job opportunities in the public sector mentioned before, aimed at the popular support. Additionally, there was a provision of free or highly subsidized services and commodities distributed to the 60% of the poorest population (Waterbury, 1983).

The benefits of higher living standards for the population, by the construction of the Aswan Dam, represented another populist policy. Once completed, it would increase the area of cultivable land by 30% and in this way it could respond to the increasing necessities of the expanding population, diminishing the flood damage and creating 10 billion kilowatt hours of electricity to power new industries (Dougherty, 1959).

Moreover, the building of a strong Egyptian army, mentioned earlier, raised

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<sup>160</sup> With the time, the rapid grow of the urban population introduced by the effort of the industrial development, will narrow the influence of this kind of organisations that in their turn will be obliged to change structure and functions (Kepel, 2003).

<sup>161</sup> Part of the sequestrated lands was to be distributed to the small farmers in a horizon of five years. However, the limited size of the land touched by the reform beneficiated only 750.000 farmers from a total of 14.6 millions (Waterbury, 1983).

the national pride of the population. As the army represents the apparatus with the capacity to protect the country from any external threat, the Egyptians were feeling for the first time since the official independency of their country that Egypt had become truly a sovereign state. The Israeli provocations, in February 1955, demonstrating the incapacity of the Egyptian army was carefully covered by the regime through spectacular political moves like the nationalisation of Suez Canal.

### **3.8. International Friends**

Free Officers, aiming at the consolidation and the expansion of their power, needed to form coalitions not only with national, but also with foreign agents. In the Egyptian case, as well as in other cases that had been under colonial rule, formal or informal, this necessity is even more elevated. Just like the domestic allies, 'international friends' had to share interests with Free Officers or share foes. Having in mind the international context, according to which the Cold War had divided the world in the East and West blocs, Free Officers had to choose side. However, the question was rhetorical, since the Middle East was for the moment exclusively under the western influence<sup>162</sup>.

The British were the first ones to be preoccupied with the coup of the Officers as their interests were under an immediate threat. The new regime was obviously menacing the *status quo* which safeguarded important British interests. Free Officers however could not afford collaboration with the British. As we have already mentioned, by the time that the coup took place, there was a strong anti-British movement, reacting to their presence and their colonial policy. The presence of 80.000 British troops all along the Suez Canal<sup>163</sup> and all around the Egyptian soil was difficult to oversee. An alliance between Free Officers and the British ruling elites would give a valuable pretext to the enemies of the new regime of criticism that would inevitably rebound on Officer's popular appeal. On the contrary, the 'solution' to the British occupation would offer popular legitimacy to the junta.

As it was mentioned earlier, the British elites were facing a lot of difficulties to keep up with the traditional way of colonisation. The consequences of the Second World War and the new international situation imposed new strategies. The maintenance of the troops was becoming expensive and the guerrilla attacks were becoming a constant element (Dougherty, 1959). Moreover, the hostile, anti-British environment was generating problems to the foreign business and the foreign habitants of Egypt<sup>164</sup>. A solution had to be found as soon as possible. The

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<sup>162</sup> The Soviet Union saw the creation of the Israel as an opportunity to get involved in the region as the Arabs were under the exclusive influence of the West.

<sup>163</sup> At the time, Suez Canal was the larger military base outside Britain.

<sup>164</sup> In 1954, 47 British service men were killed and 7 more were missing. Additionally, the total value of the military equipment destroyed or stolen was 837.000 English pounds (Tignor, 1987).

Free Officers could be the answer.

Nevertheless, it has to be kept in mind that a part of the British was satisfied with the previous status quo. A coalition with the Free Officers would provoke tension among the British elites which were connected with the old Egyptian elites. Furthermore, a strong alliance with the Egyptian Officers would harm the traditionally friendly relations of the UK with the Hashemite monarchies, Iraq and Jordan<sup>165</sup>. Therefore, it is easy to understand that an alliance between the Free Officers and the British was presenting difficulties. Similar reasons made difficult visible alliance with Paris, having also a colonial identity and a strong presence in the Egyptian economy<sup>166</sup>.

The previous acceptance does not suggest that the contacts between them and the Free Officers were inexistent. On the contrary, the new group had to collaborate<sup>167</sup> with London and Paris due to the strong colonial ties that had become part of the Egyptian identity and also because of the mere fact that the Officers did not have substantial power capacities to battle simultaneously against all powerful rivals. Their weakness did not leave margin for radical policies. They had to be careful and try to gain as much support as they could find<sup>168</sup>.

Since April 1953, Free Officers began negotiating for achieving some compromise. While the official negotiations were taking place, unofficial ones were held by the Muslim Brotherhood (Beattie, 1994). The negotiations were intensified and, on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1954, the interested parties agreed upon a progressive evacuation of Suez Canal<sup>169</sup>. London would retire its troops in twenty months time after the ratification of the treaty. This move had a double effect: it reinforced the new group in the eyes of the Egyptians and also boosted England's image in the Middle East.

Despite the popular acceptance, the treaty gave the opportunity to the internal rivals of the junta for criticism as the dialogue with the 'enemy' was unacceptable, especially because according to the treaty the British could reoccupy the canal base for the next seven years in case of aggression by a third country to any state member of the Arab League or Turkey (Selak, 1995). On the same time, there was a price to be paid for the British concession. The Egyptian 'independency' was passing through Sudan<sup>170</sup>. The decision of the Free Officers to

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<sup>165</sup> The strict relations with the monarchs of the two states dated since the end of the British mandates (Laurens, 1991).

<sup>166</sup> France had occupied Egypt for a small period but there were still strong residues of her colonial past as she was controlling the Suez Company and other companies in the banking and insurance sectors.

<sup>167</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood had contacts with UK before the coup so as to reassure their not interference to protect Farouk (Beattie, 1994).

<sup>168</sup> The indirect collaboration was evidenced by the different economic measures adopted by the Free Officers.

<sup>169</sup> The treaty improved the situation for the British business (Tignor, 1987).

<sup>170</sup> The neighbour country had been since 1898 under an Anglo-Egyptian condominium. The Egyptian role was formal even though the treaty of 1936 officially reinforced Egypt's role. The

let the Sudanese decide their future status ended with the British victory, as Sudanese opposed to the union of the two countries. The Egyptian junta hoped for a positive decision from the Sudanese part (Calvocoressi, 1982). The conflict with Nagib<sup>171</sup> and the back stage intervention of the interested parts taking advantage of the internal conflict between southern and northern part of the country concluded with Sudan's decision to secede from Egypt.

A coalition with the American governmental elites seemed by the time as more profitable. Urging for a more active role in the region so as to restrain London and Paris and to reinforce its own presence in the region, Washington was more than interested to provide help to the Free Officers. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the American diplomacy considered that Middle East was dangerously exposed to the soviet threat<sup>172</sup> after the "*vide de pouissance*" from England and France (Corm, 2003: 61).

According to Nedelmann, Washington had at the time three main objectives in the region: the containment of the communism, avoid direct conflict between the two superpowers, and finally the maintenance of the balance of power between Arabs and Israel (Nedelmann, 1982: 436). However, it seems that one of the priorities of the American government was the restriction of the European colonial powers in the region.

The geographic placement of Middle East's oil, that was becoming important for the western economies, imposed an access in the Mediterranean Sea. Washington considered at the time that the colonial approach of London was harming the western interests and, by consequence, its own interests could not be fulfilled by imperialistic approaches but through multilateral alliances (Laurens, 1991). Therefore, it is easy to understand that the American elites had a lot to gain by supporting the Free Officers' movement, although, they had to be careful so as not to jeopardise their relations with the other Western elites.

From the Officers point of view, Washington, deprived of a colonial identity and representing a strong pole of the international system, could offer them political, economic and military help in order to consolidate their regime against domestic and foreign rivals. The Free Officers saw the opportunity to use the Americans for the British evacuation. Thus early in 1953 they were asking for Washington's mediation for the British evacuation of the Suez, at the same time that the British were asking from USA not to furnish them military equipment (Izquierdo, 2005).

The contacts between the Free Officers and CIA as well as with other USA

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appointment of Farouk as king of Sudan in 1950, had given hopes to the Egyptians for the unification of the Nile valley (Calvocoressi, 1982).

<sup>171</sup> Nagib had origins from Sudan so his removal had an impact towards the Sudanese people.

<sup>172</sup> It is interesting to mention that the land reform was proposed by USA as an arm against the communistic influence in the underdeveloped countries (Abdel-Malek, 1967). Also Washington was offering discreet support to religious movements opposed to the atheistic ideology of USSR.



officials started before the coup<sup>173</sup> and continued after they have taken over the power<sup>174</sup>. The willingness of the new regime to collaborate with Washington was evident since its first steps. The confrontation between Nasser and Nagib found Washington on Nasser's side. The American government, as Nasser's group, was opposed to the immediate establishment of democracy since the aim of changing the distribution of power in the country had not been accomplished yet. As a return to the Washington's support, Nasser appointed in key posts persons in accordance with the American preferences (Beattie, 1994).

The relations between Washington and Cairo in the period 1952-55<sup>175</sup> were characterised as 'honeymoon' by John Badeau<sup>176</sup> or 'seduction' by Mohamed Heikal<sup>177</sup>. During the first two years of the Eisenhower administration, the aim of the American policy was to establish Egypt as the cornerstone of their Arab policy disconnecting itself from the Franco-British colonialist approach and adopting a 'neutral' position to the Arab-Israeli confrontation, so as to increase its influence to the Arab world (Dougherty, 1959).

At the moment that the Egyptian coup took place, Moscow, another potential international friend, had little interest in the region, following a Stalinist policy that left Middle East under the exclusive control of the West bloc. Moscow regarded the Free Officers coup as a 'reactionary officers group linked with USA' (Ismael, 1986: 170). Stalin's death in 1953 provoked changes to USSR's foreign policy that since then Moscow became more open to the newly formed states.

On the Free Officers' part, the collaboration with the Soviet elites was complicated, due to the limited interest that Moscow had shown for the region until then. Furthermore, the religious components of the group could harm the already limited power of the Free Officers. Additionally, Moscow had supported the creation of the Zionist state since the beginning as it was an opportunity to appear to the region until then reserved for the European colonial powers and their colonial ties with the Arabs. Therefore, the argument sustained by several authors, among them Rubbin, that the Free Officers wanted to avoid the communist expansion does not seem to have a strong base (Rubbin, 1982). Moreover, the limited influence of the communist parties inside Egypt has to be remembered.

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<sup>173</sup> American Officers were informed about the coup a few months earlier (Rubbin, 1982). Vatikiotis also mentions the different rumours, between them those of Maraghi, minister of Interior 1952, about the CIA's role in the coup (Vatikiotis, 1991: 337).

<sup>174</sup> On July 22<sup>nd</sup> -25<sup>th</sup> 1952, Farouk asked for an American help that was never given (Vatikiotis, 1991).

<sup>175</sup> The alliance between Free Officers and American elites can be seen from several gestures. On August 5<sup>th</sup> 1954, Nasser declared to the American journalists that Egypt desired to receive American help and that counted on the military help (Laurens, 1991). Also the American scholarships Fulbright were multiplied and the economic aid increased from 6 to 40 million dollars in the period 1952-1954 (Abdel-Malek, 1967).

<sup>176</sup> He was the American ambassador in Egypt.

<sup>177</sup> Editor of Al Ahram and Nasser's confidant.

### **3.9. Baghdad Pact**

Meanwhile Washington and London were sharing some interests principally to circumvent a possible expansion of the soviet influence in the region. The pact of Baghdad was an English initiative but compatible with the American policy<sup>178</sup> of the enforcement of Northern Tier against the communist presence. The treaty of NATO of 1949 and the SEATO treaty of 1954<sup>179</sup> were practically the fulfilment of Washington's policy which assured the western interests. The front that had to be protected was the one expanding from Turkey to Pakistan. In 1955, the Baghdad Pact<sup>180</sup> was signed between UK, Iran, Iraq<sup>181</sup>, Pakistan and Turkey. The region was under Western control but Nasser was escaping the western hegemony since he refused to sign the Pact. The response of Nasser to the Baghdad Pact was the signing of two pacts of mutual help with Syria and Saudi Arabia. In October 1955, Syria and Egypt signed a military accord by which Amer became Commander of the two armies. Additionally, Nasser signed a defence pact with Yemen by which Egyptian officers would train the army (Witty, 2001).

At the time, Nasser was looking for an arms supplier so as to modernise his army, aiming at raising the moral of the soldiers and the Egyptians and also to achieve the collaboration of the military officers. The task obliged him for a transnational cooperation with governmental agents controlling the arms commerce. He turned firstly to the West: France, United Kingdom and USA<sup>182</sup>. However, all three refused to help him using the Tripartite Declaration<sup>183</sup> as pretext. Their refusal can be interpreted as a punishment to Nasser's refusal to enter formally in the West Bloc by signing the Baghdad Pact.

Nasser's denial to pact with the West preoccupied the American government, thus Foster Dulles was sent personally to Egypt. However, his report held that the regions near USSR were, for the time being, more important and that Arabs were

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<sup>178</sup> The pact was attributed to the 'pactomanie' of the Secretary of the State John Foster Dulles and his conviction 'Tout Etat membre de la communauté internationale qui ne s'associe pas au système d'alliance pro-occidental est considéré comme faisant partie du camp adverse pro-communiste' (Flory et al., 1990: 57).

<sup>179</sup> The Southeast Asia treaty Organisation was signed between USA, France, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Philippines and Pakistan.

<sup>180</sup> The announcement of Jordan to integrate the country to the Baghdad Pact provoked manifestations inside the country, which had as result the denouncement of the integration (Derriennic, 1980).

<sup>181</sup> After Iraq's coup the country was withdrawn from the treaty, at the period named Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO).

<sup>182</sup> Egypt was trying to purchase American weaponry since the Second World War but the quantity that they were getting was less than the expected one (Dougherty, 1959).

<sup>183</sup> The Tripartite Declaration was signed between France, U.K and USA to set the severe restrictions to arms sales in the Middle East maintaining the status quo in favour of Israel (Izquierdo, 2005).

more concerned with Zionism than Communism<sup>184</sup>. Moreover, the American refusal for aid towards Cairo was also explained by 'the fear among the southern Congressmen that American cotton interests would be damaged by the Egyptian competition' (Al-Marayati, 1984: 129).

On the other hand, Nasser's refusal to contract with UK in the frame of Baghdad Pact can be justified by his supreme need for popular legitimacy and his efforts to avoid giving pretext to the internal rivals<sup>185</sup> to criticise his policy with arguments difficult to rebut. The signing of the Pact meant the permanence of the British troops in the Egyptian soil, a fact that could not be easily justified to the people. Any official pact with the British would be equivalent to the perpetuation of the colonial rule that had cost the demolition of the old regime. At the same time, the Pact preserved a pivot role for Iraq<sup>186</sup> and Nuri Said, being friendlier to UK interests. In Heikal's words<sup>187</sup> *"les effets du nouvel accord étaient juridiques plus que pratiques. En d'autres termes, bien que la souveraineté comme moyen légal de propriété soit transférée à l'Iraq, l'utilisation effective (des installations) par la Grande-Bretagne demeurait largement intacte"*.

Paris was hostile to the Baghdad Pact and saw in Nasser's refusal the opportunity to counterattack London. Nasser, who was in need of armaments and international support preferably by the West bloc, was interested to collaborate with the French. Nevertheless, the enterprise was not an easy one as France had been since 1954 the secret arms furnisher of Israel. At the same time, the Franco-Algerian hostilities were in process, something which made the arms deal between France and Nasser difficult, since Nasser offered a refuge to Ben Bella and weapons to National Liberation Front, along with his verbal and political support (Ismael, 1986).

Despite their differences, the efforts for a collaboration continued. In March

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<sup>184</sup> The conversation between Nasser and Dulles is enlightening:

- 'Mais pourquoi l'Union Soviétique?, questionne Nasser... L'URSS est distante de nous de 7 500 km et je n'ai pas d'ennuis avec les Russes. Ils nous ont jamais attaqués...ils n'ont jamais établi de base sur notre territoire, alors que les Anglais ont 'campé ici' pendant soixante-dix ans.'

- 'D'accord' fait Dulles..., 'mais selon les règles du pacte, les Anglais qui resteront dans la base d'ici n'auront pas le droit de hisser l' 'Union Jack', ils seront sous les couleurs du pacte'.

-(Nasser) 'Si je vais de ce pas rapporter à mon peuple que le statut des Anglais ici est sur le point de passer de celui d'occupants à celui d'associés, et ceci grâce à un simple changement de drapeau, il me tournera en dérision...comment pourrais-je lui dire que je néglige un tueur armé situé à 90 km de moi, sur le canal de Suez, pour me préoccuper de quelqu'un, doté d'une armée blanche, sis à 7 500 km de nos frontières?'. Quoted in (Flory et al., 1990: 60).

<sup>185</sup> Remember the criticism by the Muslim Brotherhood and Wafd for the western orientation of the regime.

<sup>186</sup> Iraq, being a richer country due to its oil resources, was receiving more military equipment from the West and could be potent enough as to minimise Egypt's role. The privileged treatment of Iraq from UK reassured the anglophile attitude of Nuri. However, the signing of the pact in a period of strong anti-imperialistic sentiments, stimulated by the appropriate propaganda coming also from Nasser, provoked problems inside Iraq that concluded with the dismissal of the parliament (Dougherty, 1959).

<sup>187</sup> Quoted in (Flory et al., 1990: 151).

1956, the French Foreign minister Pineau visited Egypt for negotiating with Nasser the latter's aid to National Liberation Front in exchange of the limitation of arms sales to Israel and the creation of a common front against the Baghdad Pact (Laurens, 1991). The negotiations turned out to be fruitless due to the hard French repression in Algeria, which froze communication between Paris and Nasser<sup>188</sup>.

The negation of the West to supply the new Egyptian regime with the required military equipment forced Nasser to search for another source. He turned to Moscow which could offer military equipment in exchange of marine facilities in the Mediterranean Sea. Free Officers were trying to purchase soviet arms since 1953 but Moscow was skeptical. Following Murad Ghahad<sup>189</sup>: *"The instructions (to the Egyptian ambassador to Moscow) delineated first and foremost the question of arms and the issue of supplying us with oil in the case of clash between the revolution and the British imperialism [...] In regard to oil the Soviet Union responded positively immediately; but on the question of arms, the Soviet response was that they needed time to consider it"*.

In the meantime, Nasser had already initiated contacts with the different leaders of the newly decolonised countries, which were going to form later on the Non Alignment Movement. The alliance with the Afro-Asiatic governmental elites produced new inspirations to Nasser for independency *vis a vis* the great powers. In April 1955, the Bandung Conference took place in Indonesia, where the bases of the Non-Alignment Movement were put. There Nasser succeeded in entering in the category of the grand of the third world, a fact that would enable the expansion of his influence outside the Egyptian boundaries. This alliance would facilitate Nasser to play between the two bands of the international conflict: West and East. Following Rubbin, the policy of no alignment was a mean of strengthening for Nasser and not an end (Rubbin, 1982: 35). The new political orientation facilitated Nasser to collaborate officially with the communist bloc and negotiate better terms with the West.

Nevertheless, the Egyptian junta was still lacking military equipment, especially after the signing of the Baghdad Pact which was followed by Israeli provocations in Gaza, where 37 Egyptians died. The anger of the Egyptians and Palestinian refugees obliged Nasser to take action and respond to Israel. In May 1955, Free Officers began secret negotiations which concluded to the arms sales with Czechoslovakia<sup>190</sup>. The arms deal improved Nasser's image on popular level and attracted international attention.

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<sup>188</sup> Nasser was named by Paris as a new Hitler (Laurens, 1991).

<sup>189</sup> Nasser's ambassador in Moscow and minister of Foreign Affairs, under Sadat. The text is quoted in (Ismael, 1986: 173).

<sup>190</sup> The arms deal was realized with Czechoslovakia, as Moscow wanted to avoid jeopardising the "esprit de Genève", an optimistic situation created among London, Paris, Washington and Moscow after their Summit, on July 1955 (Heikal, 1980).

### 3.10. *Israel and Palestine*

The Palestinian question was an important source of legitimacy for all Arab leaders. Each one was using this matter to expand his influence and degree of legitimacy without showing any interest for the creation of a Palestinian state that would deprive them of the accomplishment of their inspirations. Thus, *'Palestina y el conflicto árabe-israelí se convirtieron en el núcleo de las relaciones interárabes y del mundo árabe hacia el exterior'* (Izquierdo, 2005: 60). The Palestinian question was also used by the Arab elites in power to disorientate the population from the internal problems. The defeat of 1948 had left painful memories not only to the Arab population but also to the military and political elites<sup>191</sup>. In the case of Egypt, its geographic proximity to Israel and the strong presence of the Palestinian refugees made the situation more complex.

In the first period after the coup, the junta was mostly preoccupied with its stabilisation inside the country. The internal fronts were too important, thus there were not any forces left for the external matters. Once they felt that the internal power was somehow consolidated they turned their look to Israel. Or even better, as mentioned by Laurens, it was the foreign affairs, especially the Israeli ones that entered in the internal politics of Egypt (Laurens, 1991: 115).

From the Israeli side, Tel Aviv seemed satisfied with the Egyptian coup, especially when they saw that Israel was not a principal preoccupation of Nagib. Ben Gurion congratulated the new regime, expressing at the same time his hopes for collaboration (Tal, 1996). Indicative to this is the secret telegram that the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent on September 17th 1952 to the Israeli embassies<sup>192</sup>: *"Nous considérons avec du bon œil le nouveau régime égyptien. Sa priorité c'est la solution des problèmes sociaux et la corruption en Égypte [...]"*.

Since the beginning of the coup, the Free Officers held secret negotiations with Israeli figures in Europe through intermediaries. The new group in power was trying by all means to avoid a clash with Israel, knowing the cost of a second defeat, as the army was not prepared. Nasser was playing for time. In May 1953 Nasser<sup>193</sup> signed the following text *"Israël doit faire prévue de compréhension envers l'attitude du gouvernement égyptien qui fait face à son opinion publique et à celle d'autres pays arabes. [...] Dans la situation actuelle, nous évitons les déclarations belliqueuses contre Israël [...] Je répète mon assurance que nous n'avons aucune intention agressive contre Israël"*.

The secret contacts served for Nasser another aim: the Israeli mediation for the American support to the British matter<sup>194</sup>. From Israel's point of view, Egypt with the help of the Free Officers could constitute the first Arab state to make

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<sup>191</sup> It has to be mentioned that the military and political agents in power were accused by the opposition of betrayal in the war of 1948.

<sup>192</sup> Quoted in (Enderlin, 1997: 165-166).

<sup>193</sup> Quoted in (Enderlin, 1997: 169).

<sup>194</sup> Ben-Gurion offered secretly technical aid to Egypt (Rubbin, 1982).

peace with Israel and in this way recognise to its state<sup>195</sup>. Nasser's collaborative spirit towards Israel was materialised by a hard repression on behalf of the Egyptian soldiers towards any Palestinian organisation, either political or military (Izquierdo, 2005).

However, the friendly relations between the Free Officers and Washington were starting to preoccupy Tel Aviv for fear of a potential collaboration against its interests. The Eisenhower administration seemed disposed to help Nasser to establish his hegemony on the region. In parallel, the direct American governmental aid towards Israel began to decline along with the refusal of new deliveries of weaponry<sup>196</sup> (Dougherty, 1959). Tel Aviv felt that it was losing its privileges being the only ally of Washington, something that could generate important changes. There was also another Israeli preoccupation: the eventual evacuation of the British troops would leave the entire infrastructure to the Egyptian army<sup>197</sup>. The boosting of the Egyptian air force was dangerous for the Israeli State. The announcement of the Czech arms deal preoccupied even more the Israeli authorities, who felt that the balance of power in the region was in process of changing.

The change of the American policy, in its attempt to avoid the conflict by mediating<sup>198</sup> between Cairo and Tel Aviv by refusing to furnish more weaponry to the Israeli band, came out of fear for a larger involvement of Moscow in the region. The more Nasser collaborated with Moscow the more the western support to Israel was ensured. Following Laurens *"Israël pourra se présenter comme le principal atout occidental dans la région. Si paradoxal que cela puisse paraître, Israël a besoin d'une certaine menace soviétique pour assurer une sécurité fondée sur l'aide extérieur"* (Laurens, 1991: 138).

The Israeli elections, in July 1955, and the win of Ben Gurion's party<sup>199</sup> signalled a more aggressive Israeli policy in the aftermath of the 'Lavon Affair'<sup>200</sup>. The Israeli attack at the end of February 1955 revealed the incapacity of the Egyptian army and by consequence of the Free Officers group, to respond to the Israeli provocation. Nasser in order to context under his limited military

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<sup>195</sup> Future verified these aspirations.

<sup>196</sup> The Israeli necessities for military equipment were ultimately covered by Paris by violating the Tripartite Declaration.

<sup>197</sup> Israel mobilised the Jewish Community of Egypt to effectuate attacks to American and British buildings so as to create a tense atmosphere, but the responsible were soon detected (Al-Sayyid Marsot, 1985).

<sup>198</sup> In the end of 1954, the Washington and London were preparing the 'plan Alpha' a pact of non-aggression between Egypt and Israel (Laurens, 1991).

<sup>199</sup> In December 1953 Ben Gurion decided to leave the political scene and he was then replaced by a more moderate Moshe Sharett (Derriennic, 1980).

<sup>200</sup> The Lavon Affair refers to the scandal over a failed Israeli covert operation in Egypt known as Operation Suzannah, in which U.S. and U.K. targets in Egypt were bombed. It became known as the Lavon Affair after the Israeli Defence minister Pinhas Lavon, who was forced to resign because of the incident which ultimately led to the retirement of David Ben-Gurion from active political life.

capacities promoted guerrilla operations of the Palestinians. The tension was further heated<sup>201</sup> when the new Egyptian regime expanded the list of the products considered as war material destined to Israel passing through Suez Canal. The issue went to the Security Council of the United Nations which took a decision in favour of Tel Aviv. Moscow positioned in favour of the Free Officers by exercising its right of veto<sup>202</sup>.

### **3.11. Nationalisation of the International Maritime Suez Canal Company**

The answer from the West to Nasser's arms deal, the recognition of the Communist China and the trade unions with communist countries was clear: cancellation of the funding of the Aswan Dam<sup>203</sup>. Washington was thinking that since Moscow could not fund the Dam, they could force Nasser to accept their terms. But they were proved wrong. As Johnson underlines, *"It was essential to the success of Khrushchev's class that the USSR extended its influence outside the Eastern bloc, but given its weakness and its relatively underdevelopment in relation to the Western bourgeoisies, it was more willing than the latter to give low interest loans and to help any country with "demonstration projects" which would help overcome the scepticism and fear of Third World ruling classes"* (Johnson, 1972: 5).

The decision of the cancellation also served another purpose. The amount of the economic assistance for the Dam's construction could generate the reaction of the other allies such as Turkey and Pakistan, since until then, no Asian state had been given so much assistance without having a military pact with the West (Dougherty, 1959).

The decision of the British government to release only £5 out of the £15 million owed to the Egyptian state since the Second World War, as to exercise pressure to the Egyptian regime, made things even worse<sup>204</sup>. Additionally, the strict terms for the financing of the High Dam, the Anglo-American control of the Egyptian economy and the prohibition of any collaboration with the Soviets hardened Nasser's attitude. Especially, after having received internal criticism for signing the Treaty with the 'enemies', could not afford a further 'humiliation'.

Up to this point, Nasser had succeeded in being the only powerful person

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<sup>201</sup> Also, the denial on behalf of the Arab League of the Johnson plan in 1955 to administrate the waters of Jordan, accepted by Tel-Aviv due to its necessities for hydraulic resources to develop the agricultural sector, tensed the atmosphere (Derriennic, 1980).

<sup>202</sup> After the soviet veto Israel sent a commercial ship targeting the perturbation of the situation, which was held by the Egyptian authorities (Laurens, 1991).

<sup>203</sup> The amount destined to the construction of the High Dam was expected to be \$400.000.000 from the USA, UK and the World Bank (Dougherty, 1959).

<sup>204</sup> Keep in mind the division between the British elites. The decision not to release the £10 million was harming the British business interests (Tignor, 1987).

inside the group and being recognized at regional and international level, had still needs to expand his power that was not totally assured. He had managed to impose his rule by destroying his political rivals inside the country, neutralising the powerful group of the Muslim Brotherhood, controlling important part of the army, receiving a limited economic support from the industrial elites. However, he needed additional economic funds so as to put in function the state apparatus, compete with his rivals and buy additional military equipment. Furthermore, he was looking for a way to expand his influence outside Egypt, a process that had started with his participation in the Bandung Conference and the Czech arms deal.

The nationalisation of Suez was serving the financing of Nasser's project, as it was a state inside the state, controlled by foreigners<sup>205</sup>. For many authors, this decision was a 'spontaneous' reaction to the West's refusal to finance the construction of the Aswan Dam. Others, like Dougherty, profess that the nationalisation was an already prepared plan<sup>206</sup>(Dougherty, 1959: 42). The International Company of Suez was representing the enslavement of Egypt since the 19<sup>th</sup> century as its financing became one of the essential causes of the country's indebt. The idea of its nationalisation was certainly not new. Al-Banna from the Muslim Brotherhood and the Socialist party had previously declared the Egyptian property of the Suez Canal (Abdelnasser, 1994).

Corm describes the moment of nationalisation's announcement: "*De joie et d'émotion, le président égyptien rit. A-t-on jamais vu des Arabes rire? Le chef d'état césarien d'un peuple millénairement opprimé, qui rit au milieu d'un grand discours politique*" (Corm, 2003: 243-244). Suez Canal became the symbol of Egypt's entrance into the modern world, 'the world of prosperity and progress'.

The announcement of Suez's nationalisation provoked enthusiasm not only to the Egyptians but also all over the Arab world<sup>207</sup>. The decision was criticised by some imprisoned leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood, accusing Nasser for the new obligations of the Egyptian state<sup>208</sup> as the Company was to return to Egypt in 1968 with the expire of the concession (Abdelnasser, 1994). Naturally, the enterprise was not positively perceived by Paris and London, major stockers of the company<sup>209</sup>. Nasser's decision however market a new era for the country and the Arab world.

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<sup>205</sup> Since its construction the western powers had managed to create an international status so as to have access in the Mediterranean Sea. The English government had an important part of the company's capital and the rest was a French property (Laurens, 1991).

<sup>206</sup> Before proceeding to the enterprise, Nasser had made sure that the English troops couldn't react immediately (Laurens, 1991).

<sup>207</sup> Even Nuri el-Said of Iraq congratulated Nasser (Dougherty, 1959).

<sup>208</sup> The Egyptian state had to pay for the next 12 years compensation to the British and French governments (Derriennic, 1980).

<sup>209</sup> By the time of the nationalisation the company's value was £ 36.457.450 (Tignor, 1987).



#### **4. Expansion of the Nasserist regime 1956-1961**

The new *status quo* and the relative consolidation of the regime, did not occasion the obliteration of the power struggle or the cessation of the redistribution of power capacities between the new and the old agents. The relative consolidation, via the control of different power resources, enables the regime to extend its influence.

This dynamic has two main outcomes: On the one hand, the extension of power struggle in different sectors both inside and outside the national borders produce the need for new alliances and rivalries. On the other hand, we appreciate an intensification of power competition among the agents, fighting for their stay on the power circle, in front of an increasing imbalance of power.

### **4.1. Army**

The relative consolidation of the Nasserist regime in the Egyptian scene and the expansion of their authority in different fields did not decrease their interest for the control over the army, which continued to be one of the most important power resources. Having gained the cooperation of the majority of the military officers through the purification of the apparatus, the modernisation of the armament and the appointment of Abdel Hakim Amer<sup>210</sup> as Commander of the Armed Forces, Nasser achieved becoming the number one in his regime.

The constant interest of the agents for differential accumulation of power did not eliminate the competition between the allies. The inter group conflict among the Free Officers had left some of them displeased. Nonetheless, the fear that a direct clash could deprive them of the conquered power required a silent compromise.

Nasser in order to reimburse the allied officers for their support and to avoid any future increase of their power that would pose a threat offered them civil posts. The vacancies created by the withdrawal of the foreigners along with the *egyptialisation* of different economic sectors, which followed the nationalisation of Suez Canal Company, offered opportunities to the retired officers. In this way, Nasser assured their cooperation by keeping them satisfied, expanded his influence on other fields and minimised the risks of dodgy increase of their power. The ex-military officers cooperating with agents of the former private economic sector would take advantage of the largess of the malfunctioning of the public sector in order to increase their power and they would constitute new powerful elites.

In the military field, the partial modernisation through the Czech arms deal offered Nasser the desired military support. However, the Israeli provocations in Gaza Strip had clearly demonstrated the necessity for additional military equipment. The tripartite aggression, a European response to the nationalisation of the Suez Company increased the military necessities. As it is historically known, at a military level Nasser had lost the war with important losses for the Egyptian army. However, the political victory overshadowed the military defeat but Nasser and his military allies were aware of their capacities as well as their rivals.

Thus, the necessity for more armaments was still valid and crucial. As it is mentioned by Hinnebusch, under Nasser the defence expenditure was geared to match Israel's, equal to the defence expenses of Iraq, Syria and Jordan. New arms deals with international allies and the creation of the Arab Socialist Union with Syria served the rise of the military capabilities of the Nasserist regime (Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, 2002: 92).

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<sup>210</sup> Nasser and Amer were also connected with family ties.

The outbreak of hostilities in October 1956 increased the soviet military aid both in number and intensity. Cairo and Damascus became, by that time, the main costumers of the soviet military equipment in terms of quantity and value (Ramazani 1959). To be more precise in numbers Egypt received \$ 100 million per year in military aid in the period 1955-1961 (Efrat, 1983). The military equipment to both countries was accompanied by the construction of the necessary infrastructure and a delegation of soviet officers<sup>211</sup>.

The constant increase of military expenditures offered Amer the opportunity to raise his personal power inside the army and progressively to expand his influence in other fields. The military defeat of Suez war did not deprive him of his post as it did to others. On the contrary, he was appointed top official of the Egyptian administration in Syria and he remained Commander of the Armed Forces after the secession of Syria. The relations that he enjoyed with CIA officers made his stay in a key position important (Beattie, 1994). Moreover, his friendly relations with the high military ranks assured Nasser's control of the army. However, as we shall see, Nasser miscalculated his friend's capabilities and ambitions.

#### **4.2. State**

The relative stabilisation of the junta and the relaxation of the internal conflict between the Free Officers and their allies through Nasser's consolidation as a leader opened new horizons for the regime. The nationalisations of different economic societies which were inaugurated with the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company, led to the expansion of the state activities through which Nasser and his allies could amplify their power. Additionally, the public economic reserves financed Nasser's obligations created by the nationalisations and the construction of the High Dam<sup>212</sup>.

The extension of state economic activities furnished Nasser and his allies with the necessary capabilities to struggle against their rivals at the economic field. The Egyptian capital was under the control partly of the agrarian elites, rival to Nasser's interests, and partly of the industrial ones which he had formed alliances with. However, the cooperation with several economic sectors was not offering Nasser the control of their power resources. Thus, the state intervention in the Egyptian economy was not imposed by the incapacity of the Egyptian bourgeoisie to surpass the problems of the colonial capitalism and the dominance of the agrarian capitalism as Abdel-Malek has suggested. It was rather the main

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<sup>211</sup> More information about the soviet military aid towards Egypt and Syria until 1959 is furnished in the text of (Ramazani 1959). At this point we can mention that up to the date of the article's publication the military credits were calculated to be \$ 250 million for Egypt and \$ 100 for Syria. Additionally, the text of (Efrat, 1983) offers supplementary information.

<sup>212</sup> Egypt was obliged to compensate the shareholders of the Suez Company. Moreover, the Egyptian state had to compensate Sudan for the Nubians' displacement for the necessities of the construction of the High Dam (Waterbury, 1983).

interest of Nasser and his allies to control economy (Abdel-Malek, 1967: 139).

The first wave of nationalisation provided the Nasserist regime with the opportunity to gather important benefits. The vacancies created in the economic societies by the expulsion of the foreigners and the increased necessities for managerial personnel introduced by the expansion of the public sector, gave room for the creation of a new potentially powerful group. The new group was mainly composed by military officers and elites of the former private sector. Their capabilities were reinforced not only by the economic and political power but also by intermarriages with aristocratic families of the old times that still preserved power and social status (Beattie, 1994). The permanence of the latter in the Egyptian scene demonstrated their power capacities and at the same time the necessity of the new regime to cooperate with them so as to increase the latter's power.

The creation of the Economic Organisation<sup>213</sup> in January 1957, an assembly of ministries and societies, was the institutional instrument to reinforce the state presence in the economic field. Additionally, the economic capabilities of Nasser and his allies were increased due to the large amounts of money that were received under the formula of international economic aid. The policy of positive neutrality at economical level gave Nasser's regime a great deal of help<sup>214</sup>.

Nasser for avoiding risky accumulation of power to the hands of the new political and economic agents, tried to enact measures at this aim. Thus, he adopted norms such as the restriction for the directors of the public companies to occupy no more than one public position (Waterbury, 1983). Despite the safety valves, the new elite was gaining more power every day and progressively became one of the most important agents inside Egypt. Nevertheless, the return to 'democracy' would deprive them of significant power due to the lack of relations with the grassroots. On the contrary, the old elites were still maintaining influence over the population. As Nasser said<sup>215</sup> *"If we give them [to the capitalists] the chance to be elected now, it would be as if the Revolution had never happened"*.

Therefore, the creation of a political formula was fundamental. The National Union<sup>216</sup> would constitute the institutionalised link between the new group and the people. The participation of different political and economic elites of the old and new era, product of the formed alliances, helped Nasser to weaken the opposition inside the country. Under the appeal for national unity the different participants composing the organisation were disorientated from their conflict against the regime hoping for greater opportunities once the democracy was established.

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<sup>213</sup> In 1960, the Economic Organisation had incorporated sixty-four companies.

<sup>214</sup> In the period of late 50's early 60's, Nasser received \$500 million in soviet military help and approximately \$50 million from USA and United Kingdom (Beattie, 1994).

<sup>215</sup> Quoted in (Beattie, 1994: 127).

<sup>216</sup> Sadat was appointed General Secretary.

The presence of old elites however, was not limited only to the National Union. After the celebration of the first elections, the *majlis* remained under the influence of the big landowners who were representing the 23.3% (Beattie, 1994). The formation of United Arab Republic gave Nasser the opportunity, with the pretext of a necessary participation of Syrian representatives, to reorganise the institution and eliminate undesirable and rival elements. From that time onwards the members would be all appointed by Nasser. Additionally, a new law attributed to the president the capacity to name the local governors (Abdel-Malek, 1967). Through these policies, Nasser managed to control more efficiently the political field.

The expansion of the state sector provided Nasser the possibility to amplify the state role as a provider of employment opportunities. The new necessities on human resources due to the extension<sup>217</sup> of the state activities were covered by the Egyptian population, still in bad economic conditions in its majority, and consequently offered greater popular support to the regime. Moreover, a part of the state budget was used for financing one of the most important policies of Nasser, the food subsidies<sup>218</sup>. The increasing importance of the state mechanism is demonstrated by numbers. The percentage of Gross National Product dedicated to the General Government, Social Security and Public Enterprises was increased from 17.6 % to 29.7% in the fiscal years 1948-50 and 1959-60 respectively (Moore, 1974).

The public educational system, being in the Egyptian case strictly related with the state apparatus and therefore at the disposal of the ruling elites, was certainly not neglected by the regime. The school books suffered the necessary corrections to be compatible with the regime's ideological discourse. Thus, in 1957 in the school books of history, Egypt was referred as 'part of the Arab nation<sup>219</sup>' (Kienle, 1995: 64). The 'independent' educational sectors, such as al-Azhar, maintained in this period a relative autonomy as opposed to the three hundred foreign schools that passed directly to the state's control. To this latter an arabisation of their program was also introduced (Mansfield, 1969).

Nasser also dedicated special attention to the universities by controlling the student movements which were deprived of autonomy. The fear of an expansion of critical voices generated the dismissal of several professors and the expulsion of students were characterised as anti-regime elements (Mansfield, 1969). These policies were intensified in the period 1959-1961 against professors of leftist vocation.

All these reforms of the public sector increased Nasser's power to different

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<sup>217</sup> A lot of foreigners, who in their majority were a skilful personnel, had left the country due to the hostile environment. The vacancies were filled by Egyptians lacking adequate qualification.

<sup>218</sup> This type of policies were not new in Egypt since they were implemented since the Second World War to cover the necessities of population in kerosene, sugar, cotton, tea etc.

<sup>219</sup> Until then the governmental elites of the old regime preferred to emphasise Egypt's uniqueness.

fields and gave him the opportunity to sabotage his rivals' efforts for further accumulation of power.

### ***4.3. Rent and Capital***

At the economic field, Nasser's decision to nationalise Suez Canal Company marked a 'u' turn in the coalitions formed since 1952. The cooperation with the foreign elites propelled in the first period was now put into margin. The reorientation of the policies was not groundless. At the beginning, Free Officers needed their support so as to consolidate the regime inside the country, for reasons already explained. Nevertheless, this collaboration presupposed an outlay to be paid. The alliance with foreign power groups was becoming expensive and at the same time it was depriving Nasser power mainly connected to the capital.

The nationalisation of the Suez Canal and the egyptialisation of other important companies of the assurance and bank sector had political and also economic finalities. The amounts of economic capital, until then held by foreign elites, were passing to Nasser's control through the state. Therefore, the 'socialist' orientation of the policies adopted by the regime was the result of Nasser's incapacity to control by liberal policies the capital.

The nationalisation of important economic sectors weakened the foreign elites' capacities and opened new opportunities to the Egyptian capital. In the first month of 1957, Nasser adopted three laws according to which the societies in the banking and insurance sector had to possess an Egyptian capital and be directed by an Egyptian management. The nationalisation attacked mainly the foreigners<sup>220</sup> who were still holding a large part of the capital in the Egyptian economy. In August 1958, the law of 1947 that guaranteed the majority of the Egyptian participation into companies was reactivated (Beattie, 1994). On the other hand, the nationalisations gave room for the state to become an economic force. In this way, Nasser increased his control in the economic resources and, simultaneously, he was funding the bases for the creation of economic elites in close proximity to his interests.

All these policies created, as it was expected, a hostile economic environment for the westerners that were unwilling to invest for fear of further nationalisations. The cold relations with the West were compensated by the intensification of the relations with Socialist countries<sup>221</sup>, the creation of unions with Arab states and the economic relations with the African ones. The new wave of nationalisations provoked more uncertainty which was extended to the domestic economic circles.

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<sup>220</sup> The 40 % of the societies touched by these laws were French.

<sup>221</sup> In 1960, the 43.3% of the exportations were absorbed from Socialist countries. In 1952 the exportations in Europe and America represented the 57% and in 1961 the 22%. The same period the importations were respectively 66% and 52% (Abdel-Malek, 1967).

The alliance formed with different economic agents with interests in the industrial sector remained problematic as the allies were escaping his control by demanding a larger participation in the political arena. Furthermore, as we have already seen, the elites, whose interests were connected to the land, was still present although less potent than before. Therefore, the reinforcement of new power groups in the economic sector would facilitate Nasser's plans.

The alliance between Nasser and Osman Ahmed Osman, 'the man who built Aswan' and president of the Misr<sup>222</sup> group, was an important one. Osman Ahmed has been the figure to personify the sector of construction and the symbiosis between public and private sector through the Arab Contractors Company. In 1960, the nationalisations of important banks, among which that of the Misr group, demonstrate the importance of the alliance. The Misr group was the most benefited and in Abdel-Malek's words it turned to be a monopolist centre (Abdel-Malek, 1967: 141). The managers of the group, as well as this of the National Bank, were the only ones to remain untouched but covered under the 'organisation of Misr' (Waterbury, 1983).

The unification of Egypt with Syria, under the United Arab Republic, was an additional effort of Nasser's regime to accumulate further economic capital. The rich Syrian economic elites offered to Nasser and his allies an important supplementary capital by the nationalisations imposed to Syria. However, the colonial<sup>223</sup> approach of Nasser towards Syria and the conflict between Nasser and Ba'ath<sup>224</sup> predetermined the secession of Syria from the UAR, in July of 1961. The new Egyptian nationalisations aimed at a compensation for the loss of the Syrian capital and the weakening of the private economic actors. The 'revolt' of the Syrian economic elites constituted a dangerous example for the Egyptian elites.

#### **4.4. Religion**

The diplomatic win of the Suez war in 1956 was recognised by imprisoned leaders of the Brotherhood, who sent congratulation letters to the Egyptian leader (Beattie, 1994). This gesture can be explained as an effort to regain some of their lost power, by collaborating with Nasser<sup>225</sup>. The regime's consolidation and the

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<sup>222</sup> Keep in mind that Misr is the name of Egypt in Arabic. By the time the group controlled the petrol products and 25% of the Egyptian textiles. Later the Misr group will be incorporated at least partially into the Economic Organisation. The group of Osman is still present in the Egyptian scene. It is one of the leading private enterprise groups operating actively in Egypt and abroad, working in four main sectors attracting major investments mainly in Specialized Industries Construction and real Estate.

<sup>223</sup> One of the different policies that demonstrate the selfish character of the measures applied was the protectionism of the newly born Egyptian industries.

<sup>224</sup> The Ba'ath, was a political party firstly formed in Syria, an ideologically-based organisation appealing to the intelligentsia, the petty bourgeoisie and the working class.

<sup>225</sup> Indicative of the limited collaboration is that the Al-Da'wa, Brotherhood's magazine, continued to appear sporadically, although its size was maximum two pages.

constant desire for popular recognition gave room for sporadic releases of the repentant members of the Brotherhood. However, a significant number of Brothers, the 'radical' ones, refused to collaborate and thus remained in prison until Sadat's mandate.

Despite their weakness inside the country, the power of the Brotherhood was not evaporated. After the group became outlawed, important members and leaders of the organisation had been moved to Syria, which became their geographical centre until the formation of the United Arab Republic that prohibited legally the group's existence.

Another part migrated or auto exiled to Saudi Arabia where they offered to Saudis their intellectual experience (Kepel, 1984). The inter-Arab conflict, reinforced by the increasing importance of oil and other regional dynamics, was expanded in the sector of religion. The religious authorities trying to maintain their power as the nationalistic discourse was gaining field collaborated with several Arab elites as well as with the Egyptian figures of the former regime, sharing a common interest in circumventing Nasser's secularism.

#### **4.5. Media**

At an institutional level, the Constitution of 1956 in the article 45 stated<sup>226</sup> *"Freedom of press, publications and copyright is safeguarded in the interest of public welfare and within the limits of law"*. Of course this freedom was never put in place. Military officers closely related to Nasser were put in key positions in the sector of media so as to reassure the control of the 'forth power'.

By 1957, three<sup>227</sup> of the five important news papers of Egypt were in the hands of ex-military officers. In July of the same year Heikal, a close friend of Nasser, became editor of al -Ahram and al- Akhbar, the last two 'independent' newspapers. Additionally, there was a significant reduction in the size of the papers that now devoted less space in international information. To avoid mass suspicion and promote an image of impartiality, the press, from time to time, was publishing articles against several public personalities participating to the regime and some light criticism (Dabus, 1993).

Additionally, the Egyptian television which was inaugurated in 1960 had, by 1969, three channels that were transmitting for 30 hours per day (Mansfield, 1969). Thus, the regime had at its disposal new instruments to manipulate and control information. The absolute control of the no-print media, in a country of 70% of illiterates, was giving the possibility to Nasser's regime to manipulate the public opinion and create a friendly environment inside the country. The rivals of the regime, deprived of any access to this sector, were incapable of balancing Nasser's influence on the sector. The propagandistic role of the media was

<sup>226</sup> Quoted in (Dabus, 1993:106).

<sup>227</sup> Al-Gumhuriyya, Al- Shab and Al-Masa.



expanded in all fields. Indicatively, the state was presented as the true guardians of Islam while the Muslim Brotherhood as a group of fanatics.

An additional blow on media sector came in May 1960, with law stipulating that all press would come to the ownership of the National Union with parallel restrictions to the journalist's profession. From that point, the profession of journalism was exclusive to members of the National Union (Abdel-Malek, 1967). This policy gave to Nasser's regime the total control of the media. In Amin's<sup>228</sup> words "*Not a single editor, with the exception of Muhammad Heikal, has avoided being either exiled, imprisoned, arrested, banned from the writing or dismissed*".

#### **4.6. Ideological Discourse**

The basic ideological instrument of this period is the pan-Arab discourse which met Nasser's needs for expansion of his power. The discourse offered to Nasser's regime the support of the population and an instrument to achieve coalition with other Arab-revolutionary elites.

The Egyptian *rais* had already managed to attract the attention in the region, especially after the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, his role in the Bandung conference and the Czech arms deal<sup>229</sup>. However, his desire to attract petrodollars from the rich Arab elites required an ideological cover.

In Nasser's own words in the public speech referring to UAR: <sup>230</sup>*"Aujourd'hui, frères compatriotes, le nationalisme arabe, qui était proclamations et slogans, est devenu une réalité concrète: le peuple arabe de Syrie s'est uni au peuple arabe d'Egypte pour former la République Arabe Unie. Cette république unie sera un appui et une force pour les Arabes. Elle s'opposera à ceux qui l'attaqueront, vivre en paix avec ceux qui seront en paix avec elle. Elle suivra une politique émanant de la propre volonté et conscience"*.

Moreover, the use of a nationalistic pan-Arab discourse<sup>231</sup>, borrowed from Ba'ath, was applied for competing against the religious influence in a regional scale, and not, as in the Pakistani case, for mobilising the 'Muslim nationalism' (Kepel, 2003: 128). Nasser, after the direct conflict with the Muslim Brotherhood, had limited his possibilities for alliance with elites of religious vocation. Moreover, the religious elites of Egypt were hostile to Nasser's policies as they had been deprived of substantial power. The Arab monarchies, rich in oil reserves and rivals to Nasser's doctrine, were maintaining the monopole of the religious discourse.

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<sup>228</sup> Mustafa Amin was the first publisher to write about the important role of Nasser on the coup. Until then very few knew Nasser's leading role. Quoted in (Dabus, 1993: 108).

<sup>229</sup> It is interesting to mention that Nasser announced officially the deal during the inauguration of a photo exposition, in front of a public composed, in its majority, by photographers (Heikal, 1980).

<sup>230</sup> Nasser's speech on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1958. Quoted in (Nasr, 1987: 36).

<sup>231</sup> Nasser was identified with the pan-Arab discourse to such an extent that frequently the term Nasserist discourse is used to refer to the pan Arab one.

At an international level, Nasser intensified his commitment for positive neutrality<sup>232</sup>: “[...] *Notre expérience de la révolution patriotique a été formulée et précisé dans la doctrine de la neutralité positive, voie vers la paix mondiale. Notre expérience de la révolution arabe a été formulée dans la doctrine du nationalisme arabe, voie vers la unité arabe. Notre expérience de la révolution sociale a été formulée dans la doctrine du socialisme démocratique coopérativiste, voie vers la justice sociale.*”

His anti-imperialistic discourse through the Non Alignment Movement helped Nasser to expand his influence towards the newly born African states, presenting himself as defender of his neighbours. In Nasser’s *Philosophy of the Revolution*<sup>233</sup>, “*The UAR cannot leave its leading role as a progressive, developed African state. It can participate in the liberation of the African continent [...] and help them in all fields of political, economic and social life.*”

Nasser’s fear of a complete breach with the West due to his ‘socialist’ policies and his actions called for prudence. As Nasser<sup>234</sup> said “*Our people do not have to like communism, to feel friendship or sympathy for Russia.*”

#### **4.7. People**

The nationalisation of Suez Canal had a tremendous impact to the Egyptian people who appreciated this gesture as an Egyptian victory. Nasser’s speech<sup>235</sup> on the day of nationalisation was certainly aiming for popular demagoguery “*Le canal nous appartient, ses bénéfices seront les nôtres pour l’avenir. Le canal a été construit par des Égyptiens. Cent vingt mille Égyptiens sont morts en le creusant. [...] Le canal sera dirigé par des Égyptiens! des Égyptiens! des Égyptiens! Vous m’entendez? Égyptiens?*”. Moreover, the win of the October war was perceived by the population as an accomplishment of the regime’s promises for a strong army, capable of protecting the national integrity.

The populist policies continued contributing to the popular image of Nasser and his regime. The increase of the public expenditures and the different ‘socialist’ policies were applied so as to maintain the popular support. The decent job opportunities in the public sector due to evacuation of different posts, occupied until then by foreigners, and the expansion of state activities was an important instrument of regime to achieve popular consensus. Furthermore, the policies of food subsidies covering the basic necessities of the population in demographic explosion in kerosene, sugar, cotton, tea, were added to the populist policies. The constructions of schools and the extension of health centres had also a positive impact (Beattie, 1994).

<sup>232</sup> Nasser’s speech on June 9<sup>th</sup> 1960. Quoted in (Nasr, 1987: 29).

<sup>233</sup> Quoted in (Akinsaya, 1976: 513).

<sup>234</sup> Quoted in (Mazrui, 1964: 133).

<sup>235</sup> Quoted in (Enderlin, 1997: 190).

The unification with Syria was deeply appreciated by the Arab population as they saw that the promises of their leader for Arab unity were possible. Consequently, the secession of Syria from the United Arab Republic provoked deception.

The absence of the democratic rule and the political repression was covered with the sporadic releases of political rivals and the soft criticism towards personalities of the regime in the press. Additionally, the creation of the National Union, where officially all citizens over sixteen years old could participate (Martin-Muñoz, 1992), gave the impression of democratic demarches.

However, the repression towards the anti-regime elements was not abandoned<sup>236</sup>. The nationalisations and Nasser's anti-imperialistic discourse gave some freedom of action to the Marxist followers. Nevertheless, the truce period did not last long. The Iraqi revolution generated fears for the future role of the Egyptian communists. This fear had as a chain reaction the massive arrests of leaders and members of the Communist party, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1959 (Johnson, 1972). Parallel was the fate of the non-collaborating adherents of the Muslim Brotherhood.

#### ***4.8. International Friends***

The Nationalisation of Suez Canal signalled changes to the relations with foreign elites. The tripartite attack from Israel, France and United Kingdom a few months later, determined the end of the relative pacific relations between the Egyptian junta and the aggressors. The hostile western European reaction towards Nasser's move was expected not only for the mere fact of the loss of the direct control of the Suez Company. The European industrial economies were depending on the shipping of the oil coming from the Gulf, *'so the Canal was regarded as a lifeline and any threat to it represented a direct threat to their interests and their well-being'* (Al-Sayyid Marsot, 1985: 113).

The British Prime Minister said respectively to this<sup>237</sup> *"The continuing supply of fuel, which was vital source of power to the economy of Britain, was now subject to Colonel Nasser's whim. The oilfields of Middle East were then producing about 145 million tons a year. Nearly 70 mill tons of oil had passed through the Suez Canal in 1955, almost all of it destined for Western Europe. Another 40 million tons of oil reached the ports of Levant by pipelines running through the territories Egypt's then allies Syria and Saudi Arabia. More than half of Britain's annual imports of oil came through the Canal"*.

The immediate reaction of the British government was the freezing the

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<sup>236</sup> During the period 11/2/1957-3/21/1964 there were 1288 arrests of communists and owners of sequestrated companies while the arrests during the period 11/1/1956-1/1/19757 when the Suez war took place were 411 (Waterbury, 1983).

<sup>237</sup> Quoted in (Ismael, 1986: 23).

sterling balances and the withdrawal of the technical personnel employed in the Company<sup>238</sup> (Nimer, 1959). Paris<sup>239</sup> adopted a similar attitude. Nasser's arrogance called for an exemplary punishment. The already declining power of the ex-colonial powers in the region could be further damaged as other agents could follow Nasser's example<sup>240</sup>. Guy Mollet said<sup>241</sup> on September 14th to the Foreign minister of Norway *"We want international control of Suez, of course. But more important, we think it desirable that a defeat should be inflicted upon Nasser which will result in his disappearance so that the other Arab states will have a chance of withdrawing from Egyptian hegemony"*.

London and Paris were in strict collaboration preparing their forces for a military attack against Nasser. From July 29th until August 2nd there were tripartite talks in London, between British, French and American representatives, for the resolution of the Canal question. The international alert continued with two conferences held in London<sup>242</sup>. The diplomatic *via* did not satisfy the harassed Europeans, whereas Washington was against military operation. Indicative of the western schism was the declaration of Dulles<sup>243</sup>: *"There is some difference in our approach to the Suez Canal Problem. That difference relates to perhaps some fundamental things. In some areas we are bound together by treaty, certain areas as the Atlantic Pact area, we are bound by treaty to protect. We stand together there and I hope and believe always will stand absolutely together. Other problems relate to other areas and touch the so-called problem of colonialism in some way or other. On these problems the United States plays a somewhat independent role"*.

Despite the American attitude, Paris and London continued their efforts and collaboration to undermine Nasser by preparing a military attack and mobilising

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<sup>238</sup> The latter policy was aiming at the humiliation of Nasser once he proved himself incapable of running the Canal. However, they failed as Nasser managed to achieve the good function of the Suez, once cleaned by the residues of the war.

<sup>239</sup> The problems between France and Nasser were also intensified by the continuing active support of the latter towards Algeria. In October 1956, a ship of 70 tons of arms and ammunition from Egypt destined to National Liberation Front was intercepted by French authorities (Ismael, 1986).

<sup>240</sup> Once more in Eden's own words, "We had to deal with the canal not only for its own importance, but because Nasser's seizure of it affected the whole position of the Middle East and Africa. The canal was not a problem that could be isolated from the many other manifestations of Arab nationalism and Egyptian ambitions". Quoted in (Matthews, 1967: 85).

<sup>241</sup> Quoted in (Matthews, 1967: 86).

<sup>242</sup> The first was held in 16 August with representatives of 22 maritime nations. The alliance between Nasser and Nehru bore fruits as the latter defended Egypt's right for the nationalisation opposed to any economic sanctions as the Americans had proposed. The Prime Minister of India represented himself as an unofficial spokesman of Nasser as he refused to attend both Conferences. The American side was represented by Dulles who proposed the establishment of an international agency disconnected from national politics. The first conference left Paris and London dissatisfied thus they appealed for a second one. With the participation of 18 countries where was reaffirmed the principle of international cooperation. The second conference ended by accusation from British and French against USA for betrayal (Nimer, 1959).

<sup>243</sup> Quoted in (Nimer, 1959: 794).

Nasser's Arab rivals. The tripartite aggression from UK, France and Israel came three months later. Israel was already preparing a military aggression against Egypt, as means to overcome future Egyptian threats. At the beginning, London did not want the involvement of Israel government which would deteriorate the British image in the Middle East (Laurens, 1991). The plan of the separate attack helped them to reconsider the Tel-Aviv's participation. Israel was to conquest Sinai until the Suez Canal. Once reached the Suez the Franco-British armies would interfere as to protect the Canal and impose the cease fire. By this way the Europeans could regain the wanted control.

However, Washington was against the military aggression. The American intervention on Nasser's side to pressure the three aggressors was justifiable since its principal interest was to keep the Suez Canal open, as they did not have any direct interests connected with the Company. Under the new status they could win a larger share and at the same time limit UK capacities without a direct clash. To this, another factor, equally important, that determined the American attitude has to be added. By the time that the tripartite intervention took place, there were elections in USA. Eisenhower electoral campaign was built in the image of the '*homme de la paix*' (Laurens, 1991: 152). The tripartite attack was contested by Washington's demands for an Israeli withdrawal from the Egyptian territory threatening for economic sanctions.

The harshening of the measures by the British and French governments towards Nasser had as a result their marginalisation not only inside Egypt but all over the region<sup>244</sup>. Nasser's provocations and 'arrogance' enabled other Arab elites to reconsider their opportunities and negotiate under different terms. Progressively, British and French elites occupied less space in the Egyptian political and economic field<sup>245</sup>.

Nasser had won the war mainly due to the American intervention. Nevertheless, the American government limited officially its support to Nasser to the Suez affair. The relations between Nasser and Washington<sup>246</sup> in the period 1955-58 were characterised by 'isolation' or 'punishment'. Later, during the period 1958-61, they were transformed to 'cool but correct' or these of 'containment'<sup>247</sup>. Nasser's attitude was becoming dangerous for Washington as other leaders of periphery could follow his example.

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<sup>244</sup> After the Suez tripartite intervention, Syria and Saudi Arabia broke their relations with UK. In 3 November 1956 Syria stopped the flow of oil from Iraq to Mediterranean through the Iraqi Petroleum Company pipeline and the 2/3 of the supply of the European oil was interrupted (Ismael, 1986).

<sup>245</sup> Nasser agreed to pay to the two Western states £ E 27.5 millions in compensation for the Suez nationalisation over the period 1958-1962. Later he was obliged to pay to United Kingdom £ E 25 million for the followed nationalisations (Waterbury, 1983).

<sup>246</sup> In 1957, the British prepared a coup against Nasser also with Washington's help (RUBBIN, B., 1982: 89).

<sup>247</sup> Terms used by Badeau and Heikal. Quoted in (Nedelmann, 1982).

The new refusal of USA for military help deprived the modernisation of the Egyptian army. The Eisenhower doctrine<sup>248</sup> in 1957 determined the new attitude of USA in the region, now centred to the replacement of the old colonialist powers by the American one. Unilateral relations with different Arab states were inaugurated aiming at Nasser's isolation and restriction of his influence on the region (Hopwood, 1993). The principal American ally in the region became Saudi Arabia which was controlling a big part of an important resource: the oil.

Moscow urging to increase its influence in the region continued its efforts by reinforcing its ties with countries of the 'Third World'. By the time that the Suez affair took place USSR was facing problems with the Hungarian revolution. Although friendly to Nasser's policies, which gave space for a more active role to the Soviet elites, Moscow hesitated to clearly express a position. The soviet support towards Nasser's regime would be partially appreciated in the Arab world, a fact which could be translated as a larger participation in the area. However, the Soviets were conscious that an official positive position would mean an active role in a military conflict. The Soviet military intervention would provoke as a chain reaction the American one. But the communistic pole of the international system was falling short in front of the American military capabilities<sup>249</sup>. So before taking any action Moscow had to wait for the American reaction (Smolansky, 1965). Consequently, after the official American reaction, Bulganine<sup>250</sup> sent the following advertisement to the aggressors: "[...] *le gouvernement soviétique est pleinement résolu à recourir à l'emploi de la force pour écraser les agresseurs et rétablir la paix en Orient*".

The cold relations between Nasser and Washington<sup>251</sup> and the frozen ones with the two European powers gave the Soviets the chance to stretch their alliance with Nasser, although the Egyptian president was trying to avoid strict relations. The western economic 'embargo' was waged partially by the soviet financial aid. In January 1958, Nasser and Moscow settled a credit agreement of 700 million roubles with limitations in the use of the credit. Ten months later, Moscow gave \$100 million loan<sup>252</sup> for the first stage of the High Dam of Aswan.

Nevertheless, the relations between the two were still ambivalent. Nasser continued with his 'neutral' policy refusing to integrate Egypt into the East bloc. To avoid a strict application of a communist doctrine he compensated for the different shareholders touched by the nationalisations and sequestrations with

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<sup>248</sup> Eisenhower's plan made provision for an offer of assistance to all countries which asked for help, provided that they were threatened by a pro-communist country. Countries like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Israel were adhered to that plan.

<sup>249</sup> USSR had just introduced (1955) nuclear weapons in its weaponry (Schoenberg and Reich, 1975).

<sup>250</sup> Prime Minister of the Soviet Union. Quoted in (Enderlin, 1997: 201).

<sup>251</sup> The American economic help was interrupted in 1956.

<sup>252</sup> The agreement was signed in December with the conditions of the repayment in 12 years in Egyptian pounds with 2.5% interest (Schoenberg and Reich, 1975).

registered titles<sup>253</sup>(Abdel-Malek, 1967). Additionally, he continued to repress the communists inside the country as to demonstrate his commitment to the non aligned policy.

Moscow, in front of Nasser's negation to adhere in the Communist Bloc, tried to create a regional pole opposite to Nasser. Iraq and Syria were the more appropriate clients. The communist parties in the two countries had developed strong ties with Moscow so they could serve to this aim. Despite these efforts, Moscow did not want to cut off its relations with Nasser, as he was now presented as a leader in the Arab world. Thus, it used different kinds of instruments to reinforce its ties with Nasser, one of them being the use of Muslim soviet elements to convince for the possibility of coexistence between socialism and Islam (Laurens, 1991).

Following Khrushchev's interview at the New York Times<sup>254</sup> "You know of course, that many Arabs [...] are very remote from communist ideas. In Egypt, for instance, many communists are held in prison [...] [but] we do not pressure any objectives but one, that the peoples be freed from colonial dependence [...] Is Nasir<sup>255</sup> a communist? Certainly not. But nevertheless we support Nasir. We do not want to turn him into a communist and he does not want to turn us into nationalists".

The Soviet effort to create a pole against the Egyptian leader did not had a success after the Egyptian unification with Syria, through which Nasser took control over foreign relations, prohibited the communist party in Syria along with the communists' repression in Egypt. Furthermore, the creation of United Arab Republic further deteriorated the relations between Nasser and Moscow, as the communist party with the help of the Soviets was preparing a coup. On the contrary, UAR was positively perceived from Washington, since it limited the soviet influence.

The problems between Nasser and Moscow, and Tito's<sup>256</sup> influence on the Egyptian *rais*, could be verified by the first's speech on January 23rd 1958, accusing Syrian communists to collaborate against United Arab Republic. It was the first time that he identified the communism with imperialism and later, in April 1959, when he accused USSR for interference in the internal affairs of various Arab states (Smolansky, 1965).

The change of the American attitude came as soon as Nasser's relations with Kremlin began to mark a progressive deterioration. Eisenhower approached Nasser and offered economic help which was accepted. This resulted in the

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<sup>253</sup> The policy can also be interpreted as Nasser willingness to avoid further complications and maintain allies in the sector of private economy.

<sup>254</sup> October 10 1957. The text is quoted in (Dawisha, 1983: 169).

<sup>255</sup> Nasser.

<sup>256</sup> Keep in mind the friction between Tito and Moscow which generated among others the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform.

improvement of the relations with the conservative Arab states and also with Iraq (Abdel-Malek, 1967).

#### ***4.9. Arab and African Circle***

Nasser's increasing popularity after the Czech arms deal and Bandung conference and of course the Canal's nationalisation, gave him the opportunity to expand his power in the African and Arab region. The appeal of Nasser for collaboration between the Arab states under the cover of pan-Arabism had as objective the reinforcement of Nasser, maximum representative of the Egyptian state in the Arab region. The collaboration with other Arab elites was justified by different reasons. The regional proximity, the religion and language, as well as the common interests deriving from common experience of suffering and humiliation (Range, 1959).

The real motives of pan-Arabism were clear. Nasser had to find a way to compensate his allies inside his regime for the losses of the European markets. In fact Nasser was interested in the petrodollars of the Arab countries. He needed to form coalitions due to the penury of Egypt in economic resources, precondition to satisfy his ambitions.

The alliance with the newly independent African states was subscribed under Nasser's convocation for independency and anti-imperialistic struggle. Sudan's independence had signalled the expansion of Nasser's activities in Africa. The nationalistic movements created in the African continent were regarded as potential bases of influence under the hegemony of Nasser (Ismael, 1968 [b]). Egypt became the refuge of many African leaders, to whom Nasser offered material, logistic and moral support. Through the Non Aligned Movement Nasser could expand further his influence in the weak African states<sup>257</sup>.

The interest on the African affairs<sup>258</sup> was giving Nasser the opportunity to demonstrate his loyalty to the anti-imperialist struggle. Additionally, the neighbour African countries could help the Egyptian leader to find a solution to the overpopulation by the migration of Egyptians (Ismael, 1968 [b]). Moreover, the industrialised Egyptian economy, relatively developed, could see the African states on one hand as a new market by substituting the European ones and on the other hand as a raw material source.

Nonetheless, the Afro-Egyptian alliance did not last long as Nasser's strict involvement to the Arab circle became more vital and exigent. Moreover, his official anti-western policy and cooperation with the communist bloc undermined even more the coalition. The colonial ties of the African states were strong and

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<sup>257</sup> In the Bandung Conference Nasser presented himself as a spokesman of the African states. The task was easy, as Ethiopia was the only one non-Arab independent state present in the Conference.

<sup>258</sup> Nasser signed commercial, cultural and loan agreements with many African states.



thus difficult to brake. To all this, the rivalries with African leaders<sup>259</sup> can be added.

The nationalisation of Suez Canal Company and the political victory in the aftermath of the war had a tremendous impact in the Arab world. At the time, the Arab world was divided between radical and conservative<sup>260</sup> states with the latter ones aligned with the West. Yet, in the first conference of Arab League<sup>261</sup> held in London, it was declared that any aggression against Egypt would be regarded as an attack on each League member (Nimer, 1959).

Nasser had 'won' the war without the Arab help, which he never asked for. His decision, despite the defence pacts signed with Syria, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, to respond to the tripartite attack only with the Egyptian forces was probably a way to booster his image in the region. A victory accomplished only by Egyptians would increase his prestige as leader of the Egyptian state. The aim was achieved at least on popular level, since the Arab leaders were aware that the win of the war was a result of the American pressure towards the aggressors.

In different parts of the Arab world, political parties were created inspired by the Egyptian Arab leader. The appearance of these parties facilitated the alliances between different elites in different parts of the region and at the same time generated important conflicts especially with groups using the same ideological discourse of the Arab unity.

The intra-Arab cooperation was concretised by economic unions in the frame of the Arab League adopting policies for the abolition of restrictions between the Arab countries. These unions covered the intention of the governmental groups for a concurrence of power outside the national frontiers. Nevertheless, the economic hegemony of Egypt provoked fear to the other Arab states like Lebanon, Iraq and Tunisia, thus the project was abandoned (Abdel-Malek, 1967).

#### **4.10. *Israel and Palestine***

The war of 1956 had two objectives from the Israeli side: first to neutralise Gaza and the fedayins and second to achieve the free navigation to Eliat. Additionally and more importantly, Israeli elites were looking for a way to overpass the internal problems and reassure the western friendship. After secret negotiations between Israel, France and UK the attack took place in October 29<sup>th</sup> 1956 and lasted two days, after which Israel occupied Gaza and Sinai.

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<sup>259</sup> Mainly with the leader of Ghana Nkrumah who maintained good relationships with western elites and Israeli ones, in the economic and military field. The conflict between the two men was propagated by the radio where Nasser accused his rival for his cooperation with Israel and the latter for his communist policy (Akinsaya, 1976).

<sup>260</sup> Countries like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco, Libya and pre-revolutionary Iraq.

<sup>261</sup> The Arab League was a British creation after the Second World War to ensure their influence in the Arab world and therefore was seen with suspicion (Woodward, 1987).

The second military win of Israel in only eight years gave her the chance to a victorious discourse from her side. Ben Gurion<sup>262</sup> said “[...] *Nous sommes prêts à négocier une paix durable avec l’Égypte et chacun des autres pays arabes, mais nous acceptons sous aucune condition qu’une armée étrangère, quelle que soit, se déploie à l’intérieur de nos frontières ou dans aucun des territoires que nous occupons*”.

However, the festive atmosphere did not last long. Washington was not in front of the Israeli aggression. The message of Eisenhower<sup>263</sup> sent to the Israeli Prime Minister was clear “[...] *Un refus d’Israël de se retirer du Sinaï serait interprété comme un expression de mépris de l’opinion publique américaine, et conduirait inévitablement à des mesures sévères: la fin de l’aide publique et privée à Israël, des sanctions internationales, voire l’expulsion des Nations unies*”.

The resolutions of the United Nations obliging the withdrawal of the Israeli army from all the occupied territories gave Nasser a political win, despite the efforts of Tel Aviv to avoid an Egyptian administration on Gaza.

Nevertheless, the military victory of Israel had brought the internal stabilisation in the Jewish state and the humiliation of the Egyptian army. The presence of the UNEF forces demonstrated the incapacity of the Egyptian army. Additionally, Tel Aviv managed to control the actions of the fedayins in Gaza, the free pass of the Suez Canal and the destruction of the Egyptian army. Consequently, Israeli governmental elites managed to achieve stability inside and outside the country. Her economy was performing very well giving the opportunity to raise the quality of life for her citizens. Moreover, Egypt since 1957 exercised a tough control over the Palestinians in Gaza so as to avoid hostilities with Israel. The same policy is followed by Hussein in Jordan (Derriennic, 1980). Therefore, Israeli side in this period enjoyed relatively pacific relations with her neighbours, fact that gave Nasser the opportunity to focus his attention in other issues.

The Palestinian front was facing additional problems, after the second military win of Israel and the continuous Arab repression from the Egyptian and Jordanian armies. The Palestinian fragility intensified the dependency of the Palestinian elites on foreign Arab elites and the need for a close collaboration. In 1957, the mufti Amin al Husayni asked the integration of Palestine in United Arab Republic and consequently Nasser’s aid. However, the latter refused as he did not want to engage further his regime, as this commitment would inevitably increase problems.

Despite Nasser’s refusal for a strict official cooperation with the Palestinian authorities, the Palestinian question became an important instrument of Nasser’s regional policy as well as for his regional rivals. The Iraqi Qassem found the opportunity to weaken Nasser’s prestige and influence by supporting the Palestinian mufti and proposing the proclamation of the Palestinian Republic in

<sup>262</sup> Quoted in (Enderlin, 1997: 203).

<sup>263</sup> Quoted in (Enderlin, 1997: 203-204).

the totality of the Palestinian territories of the British mandate. Additionally, he accused Hussein and Nasser as Israel's collaborators as they were the ones administrating the Palestinian territories (Laurens, 1991). Nasser as a response began to question the authority of the mufti, which was attributed to him since September 1948.

#### **4.11. The United Arab Republic**

The Union with Syria, in January 1<sup>st</sup> 1958, came after a lot of thought and pressure. The Syrian elites were experiencing important problems of internal instability since the independency of the country, in 1946. The Syrian instability, fruit of the internal conflicts between military and economic elites along with the growing communist influence, made a coalition between heterogeneous elites necessary. Damascus problems were intensified by its encirclement by hostile pro-western states. The aggressive attitude of Turkey, with territorial disputes over the region of Sanjak,<sup>264</sup> was followed with the placed troops in its frontiers with Syria, which woke up hostile memories for the old occupation and demanded support from the Arab states (Derriennic, 1980).

The Syrian demand for unification with Egypt came under the necessity of the Syrian regime to consolidate itself. Ba'ath party, participating in the regime, despite its leftist nationalistic convocation, was lacking popular support as it represented a political coalition of big landowners (Flory et al., 1990). The official alliance with Nasser offered Ba'ath the needed popular support by taking advantage of Nasser's popularity.

Nasser, on the other hand, wanted to avoid a strict union with Syria mainly due to the instability which the Syrian regime was experiencing that could rebound inside his regime and ultimately, deprive him of his solidity and hegemony. Nevertheless, his attitude changed after receiving pressures from the military and economic components of his regime, who saw interest in such a perspective (Johnson, 1972). After all, there were economic ties with the Syrian elites and their prosperity and parallel weakness would raise the power of Egyptian elites.

Nasser's pan-Arabism discourse at this point became a handicap for the Egyptian rais. His continuous refusal for a union could jeopardise his power as his rivals would be able to demonstrate his inconsistency between words and deeds. Moreover, Nasser was preoccupied with the raise of the Saudi and Communist influence in Syria. For Nasser and for *Ba'ath* the communists were taught competitors. A deeper involvement of Moscow in Syria, possible in case of non-alliance between the two Arab states, could provoke a complete break with the West (Smolansky, 1965). On the contrary, his efforts to limit the Soviet presence

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<sup>264</sup> Province of Alexandrite.

would be appreciated by West, mainly by Washington, as it actually did. Last but not least, Ba'ath, being an Arab and not a strictly Syrian party with influence in other Arab countries<sup>265</sup>, could boost Nasser's influence.

All these factors gave birth to the United Arab Union between Egypt and Syria, where later Yemen was integrated<sup>266</sup>. Nasser, being the powerful component of the alliance<sup>267</sup> managed to impose his terms. Thus, the dissolution of the political parties and the prohibition of the Muslim Brotherhood were adopted after Nasser's demands. Additionally, nationalisations and an agrarian reform were put in to action (Flory et al., 1990). In this way, the two important groups of power, Nasserists and Ba'ath, hoped to eliminate their rivals, the most dangerous of whom at that time were the Communists (Laurens, 1991).

Nonetheless, the ambitious plan of Ba'ath and Nasser ended as a failure. The new *coup d'état* organised by the army imposed the abrogation of the union treaty. The causes should be searched in the bad preparation of such a big step and mainly in the competition between Nasser and Ba'ath, as well as the dissatisfaction of the economic Syrian elites who had supported the alliance but found themselves deprived of their economic power under an Egyptian 'colonisation'.

At the beginning, the Syrian elites were given important places in the institutions of the United Arab Republic<sup>268</sup> which progressively were taken back. The already limited role of the Syrian elites was restricted with the new organisation of the UAR in August 1961 (Abdel-Malek, 1967). The new Council of United Arab Republic had only two representatives from Syria and the economic and political Syrian elites saw their role being limited day by day in favour of the Egyptian ones.

The economic policies<sup>269</sup> imposed by Nasser's group weakened the economic power of the Syrians elites and the economic situation of the Syrian population. Furthermore, the external interferences only worsen the situation. On the one hand, there was Moscow, disturbed by the creation of the UAR and the dissolution of the communist party of Syria. On the other hand, there were the Arab conservative pro-western elites. The United Arab Republic demarche provoked the reaction of other Arab governmental elites fearing the expansion of Nasser's power. The Hashemite monarchies, Jordan<sup>270</sup> and Iraq created, in 14

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<sup>265</sup> Ba'ath's influence was extended in Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan.

<sup>266</sup> On March 8<sup>th</sup> 1958, Yemen entered UAR but its entrance was limited in a formal level.

<sup>267</sup> Nasser was elected president by a referendum held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 1958 with 91.75% Syrian votes and 98.31% Egyptian ones (Martin-Muñoz, 1992).

<sup>268</sup> The Parliament of the UAR established in Cairo was composed by six hundred members, two hundred coming from Syria and the rest from Egypt, following proportionally to the demographic differences of the two countries (Martin-Muñoz, 1992).

<sup>269</sup> The costume tariffs adopted so as to protect the newly born industries of the south province (Egypt) were harming the interests of the Syrian industrial elite (Derriennic, 1980).

<sup>270</sup> In 1957, Hussein dismissed the pro-Nasserist parliament.

February 1958, a union so as to balance and limit Nasser's power. But the Iraqi military revolution, only a few months later, vaporised the effort.

The increasing competition between Ba'ath and Nasser was becoming everyday more evident. The secession of Syria, in September 1961, came after a coup sponsored by Saudi Arabia<sup>271</sup> (Woodward, 1987). The end of the institutional unification with Syria damaged Nasser's image<sup>272</sup> and gave space to his rivals for accusations.

Earlier, the coup in Iraq<sup>273</sup> had generated new inspirations for Nasser and his Syrian allies. The new regime, a coalition between Abdul Salam Arif, representing Ba'ath, and Abdul Karim Qassem seemed friendly towards UAR. The Iraqi coup was supported by Nasser, hoping for an alliance with the elites controlling one of the richest in oil reserves states of the region.

However, the conflict between the two Iraqi components of the regime, using the internal ethnic divisions<sup>274</sup>, ended with the establishment of Qassem and the imprisonment of the defeated. Aref's removal from the regime put an end to the plan of Iraq's integration in the UAR. Qassem, in his effort to assure his power, eliminated all pro-Nasser<sup>275</sup> elements, integrated principally in the army.

#### **4.12. Petrol**

By this time the petrol became an important power resource in the region. Until the war of 1956, the 78% of the western European petrol was coming from Middle East (Ismael, 1986). Consequently, the western economies began to have an additional interest in the region, as the low cost of the region's petrol propitiously favoured its use<sup>276</sup>. This interest generated the formation of new elites in the producer countries that amplified the circle of power, having in mind that the exploitation of petrol was not limited only in its extraction process but also in the search, the transport, the commercialisation and its distribution.

In 1959, the Arab League held its meeting in Cairo in the first Arab congress for the petrol with the participation of Iran<sup>277</sup>. By this time the countries-

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<sup>271</sup> Earlier Riyadh contacted Sarraj, intelligence chief, to kill Nasser so as to prevent the creation of UAR Syrian.

<sup>272</sup> Nasser avoidance of a military response to re-establish the union can be explained as a policy for avoiding further criticism as he would attack Arab 'brothers'.

<sup>273</sup> In the 50's Iraq was characterised by its pro-western policy and the raise of its incomes by petrol. However, the absence of distributive policies provoked popular dissatisfaction. The social frustration was easily used by rivals of the regime.

<sup>274</sup> Keep in mind the strong heterogeneity of the state used by the different agents so as to divide the population. Aref was supported by the Sunni elites and Qassem by the Shi'as ones and different minorities (Flory et al., 1990).

<sup>275</sup> Nasser organised a new coup in Iraq but he failed and the effort became known (Woodward, 1992).

<sup>276</sup> The average sale price of petrol in the period 1945-1970 was \$2 /barrel (Corm, 2003).

<sup>277</sup> In 1951, Mossadegh nationalised the Iranian petrol.

producers of petrol were experiencing problems due to the excessive offer that over passed the demand and so kept the oil prices down. The creation of OPEC<sup>278</sup> in 15 September 1960 was aiming to change the inconvenient situation by forming strong coalitions.

The raising importance of oil<sup>279</sup> as power resource provoked new conflicts in the region, where domestic and foreign elites involved. Nasser was one of the agents who wanted to take advantage of the richness of the area due to the penury of Egypt on economic resources, trying to create alliances with elites controlling the black gold. Nevertheless, the strong international elites, mainly the western ones, having important interests connected to the oil and the interregional conflict between Nasser and the opposite Arab elites, either basing their power in a religious context (Saudi Arabia) or in a nationalist one (Iraq), limited Nasser's possibilities to access oil's control.

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<sup>278</sup> The Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries consists of 11 nations, including seven Arab countries but also other major petroleum-exporting countries like Iran and Venezuela. It was formed to protest pressure by major oil companies, mostly owned by U.S.A, British, and Dutch nationals, to reduce oil prices and payments to producers.

<sup>279</sup> The production of petrol was in a continual raise: In 1940 414 thousands of barrels, 1950 1198 thousands and 1960 3848 thousands (Ismael, 1986).

## **5. Bipolarisation of the regime 1961-1967**

The expansion of the regime outside the national borders and the consequent increase of power, in terms of capacities, boost the intra-group rivalries. Strong alliances formed since the beginning of the coup are, therefore, questioned and re-examined.

Progressively two main poles are created. Regime's bipolarisation presents a threat for the preservation of its leading position in the power structure. Therefore, the most important figures of the regime are forced to maintain regime's cohesion, so as to avoid their primary role. The outcome of this dynamic is the adoption of contradictory policies, as means to secure the power capacities of the two rival groups. In this context the support of secondary elites and foreign support becomes vital.

### **5.1. Army**

The split of the United Arab Republic<sup>280</sup> undermined Nasser's authority not only in a regional but also in an internal level. Amer<sup>281</sup>, the closest ally of Nasser, managed to disconnect himself from Nasser's authority, assuming progressively the control of the military apparatus. Although the fraction of the regime was not widely known, Nasser had lost one of his principal power resources, since the stability of his regime was based on the army. In the beginning of 1962, Nasser was complaining that there were two states in the country: the military and the rest (Beattie, 1994). The importance of the army can be proved by the percentage of military officers serving as ministers, which was oscillating between 36.4 % (1956) to 65.5% (1967). Moreover, in 1961, 22 out of 26 provincial governors were ex-militaries (Flory et al., 1990).

Amer, occupying the post of the Commander of the Armed Forces, had managed to gain the control and support inside the army by checking the promotion process. Adopting a more corrupt profile, by taking advantage of his official post, he had managed to develop a clientelist relation with important agents of the political and economic field. His importance inside the regime had given him the opportunity to place his people on managerial positions of the public sector, on the diplomatic corpus and also on the provincial governments (Waterbury, 1983).

Nasser could not afford a direct clash with Amer, as he was lacking sufficient guarantees for a victory. His self-centred policy had logically generated the indignation of certain members of his own group who were searching for a way to disconnect themselves from Nasser's auspices. Moreover, an evident schism between the components of the Nasserist regime could be aid their internal and foreign rivals, since they had created significant enemies not only in number but mostly in power capacities. Even though the group had been in power approximately for a decade, the equilibrium was fragile.

Nasser's lack of control over the army was counterbalanced on one hand by the support of elites which had their interests connected to his 'socialist' policies and on the other hand by the popular support. Additionally, the dissolution of the United Arab Republic had stricken the military and state elites, who had pushed Nasser to effectuate such enterprise, and consequently had limited the capabilities of Amer's allies. Thus, this situation, wherein a radical clash was not an option, obliged the two competitors to maintain their alliance. From that time and forth the two men maintained their own sources of influence.

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<sup>280</sup> Despite the secession of Syria from the UAR, Egypt kept the name United Arab Republic and the flag until Sadat changed the name to Arab Republic of Egypt.

<sup>281</sup> Amer, after the withdrawal of Syria from the United Arab Republic, was approached by a leading Egyptian personality proposing him the removal of Nasser (Waterbury, 1983).



In spite of this compromise, which was necessary for their survival, Nasser adopted different measures to undermine his rival's power. In 1963, Nasser's efforts were materialised by the reform on the promotion and the appointment mechanism. The authority of the procedure passed to the Presidential Council, where Amer was only one of the twelve members. The distortion of army's role in the 'Egyptian Revolution' represented another effort to reduce Amer's influence. This is proved by the text of the National Chart (1962), where it was stated that the Revolution was not a military fruit but the product of Egyptian people (Abdel-Malek, 1967). However, Nasser's efforts to limit his rival's capabilities were blocked by the reaction of Amer's allies<sup>282</sup>. The fear that this tension would drive the country in a civil war pushed Nasser to appoint Amer first vice president, in March 1964 (Moore, 1974).

Meanwhile, in 1962, Yemen's civil war started and 20.000 to 40.000 Egyptian troops were sent to help the 'revolutionists' to gain control of the country. The decision served several interests, which will be discussed later. Following Witty, Amer used the war to consolidate himself, as the increase of the military expenses<sup>283</sup> and the aspirations for a possible victory boosted his capacities (Witty, 2001: 417). However, Amer overestimated his army's capabilities as it was demonstrated by the embarrassing defeat from Israel in 1967. In the case of Yemen, there were also miscalculations mainly regarding the duration of the Egyptian permanence<sup>284</sup>.

Besides the direct implications of the Egyptian involvement, the intervention provoked complaints of the soldiers serving in Yemen and questions on behalf of the Egyptian population about the legitimacy of a war against Muslims. In order to avoid criticism and probably due to Amer's pressure, Nasser, who was strictly involved to the war as head of the state, offered special privileges<sup>285</sup> to the troops serving in Yemen.

Nevertheless, before the war of 1967 took place, Amer had considerably expanded his power. He was vice president of the Republic, vice supreme president of the armed forces, president of the Higher Economic Committee, president of the High Dam, president for the Liquidation of Feudalism, president of the Soccer Federation and he also had the control in different economic activities. In this context, Nasser tried to gain the support of civilian agents by creating different political organisations and preserving the special relation that he had developed with the population.

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<sup>282</sup> Nasser was informed that pro-Amer military elements were disposed to kill him if he tried to dismiss Amer (Beattie, 1994).

<sup>283</sup> In this period the military aid coming from USSR was \$ 169 million per year (Efrat, 1983).

<sup>284</sup> The Egyptian authorities were calculating that their intervention would last approximately three months.

<sup>285</sup> Besides the military awards, there were also salary raises, appointment of soldier's relatives in public sector, etc. (Witty, 2001).

## 5.2. State

The loss of the army's control pushed Nasser to search for other sources of power as to equilibrate the situation. His choice was to orientate his alliances towards civilian sectors. On November 1961, Nasser announced the creation of a Committee, whose members would be named by him and whose official fundamental task was to prepare the National Charter. The principal aim of this measure was to increase the institutionalisation of his authority. The return to 'democracy' was serving Nasser's necessities for legitimacy and consolidation of his authority. It is interesting to mention that eight out of ten chapters of the Chart were dedicated to the internal policy.

The Committee also decided the creation of the Arab Socialist Union<sup>286</sup>, a political organisation perceived as the continuation of the National Union that had replaced the Liberation Rally. As in the National Union, half of its members had to be workers and farmers (Azaola, 2008). Nasser's idea was that the Arab Socialist Union could constitute the base for recruiting his allies. Being member of this organisation was the necessary precondition for participating in any formal institution. Although it was a mass party, the 'exploiters' of the old regime were deprived of participation (Woodward, 1987). However, Nasser failed to accomplish his aim. During the period 1952-1968, only two out of one hundred and thirty one ministers were already members of the party, and eighty three of them were integrated into the Union afterwards (Moore, 1974).

Thus Nasser's efforts to reinforce his power through a civilian organisation did not have the expected results. Therefore, Nasser passed to more radical measures and, in 1964, he promoted a provisional constitution through which his institutional capabilities were reinforced. In 1966, the creation of an organisation leading the institutionalisation of the regime's authorities and the parallel reorganisation of the state apparatus by changing ministers<sup>287</sup> helped Nasser to gain the control of Arab Socialist Union that desperately needed. The positive results of Nasser's policy to move the basis of the regime from the military to the civic level was reflected by the fact that, in 1967, only 370 out of 18.000 civil servants of the ministry of interior were militaries (Waterbury, 1983).

Besides the constitutional and political reforms, Nasser lanced, in 1963, the formation of the secret Vanguard Organisation<sup>288</sup> and the Youth Organisation. The first one could be considered Nasser's personal party, the existence of which remained unknown to all Revolution Command Council members with the exception of Amer (Beattie, 1994).

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<sup>286</sup> However, the Arab Socialist Union was weak as an institution, a fact that facilitated Sadat to abolish it (Laurens, 1991).

<sup>287</sup> During the period 1952-1970, the number of ministers was doubled (Flory et al., 1990).

<sup>288</sup> The organization had its own journal the Socialist Vanguard circulated in members by ID number only (Waterbury, 1983).

The Youth Organisation<sup>289</sup> was a heterogenic organisation whose aim was the ideological training closely to Nasser's ideas. The organisation was kept secret until 1965 and later became a mass organisation<sup>290</sup>. The creation of the Higher Institute of Social Studies in 1965, with the participation of the Youth Organisation members, had as objective to diffuse a new orientation of the scientific principles and, of course, to establish a connection between the particular 'socialist' policies of the regime and the society<sup>291</sup>. The purification of the field that had started by the expulsion of unwanted professors was reinforced by the presence of Youth Organisation members, with the regime controlling four<sup>292</sup> of the biggest universities of Egypt (Waterbury, 1983).

Nasser's efforts to debilitate Amer were expanded also in other sectors. In 1966, the Committee for Liquidation of Feudalism<sup>293</sup> was created to investigate all cases of violation of the agrarian reforms. As Waterbury sustains, the decision to name Amer president was an attempt to embarrass him, as he and his loyal officers were big landowners (Waterbury, 1983: 279).

The new wave of nationalisations, in 1961, increased the economical power of Nasser and his allies and the popular supports. In December 1961, the Economic Organisation was replaced by thirty-nine General Organisations<sup>294</sup>, grouping four-hundred companies. These economic policies reinforced also the state elites which replaced the gap that was created by the demolition of the old ones. However, the thirst for further accumulation of power divided the elite in two basic groups. On the one hand, there were those whose necessities and interests were fulfilled through 'socialist' policies. This meant further state control in the different spheres of the political and economic life of the country. On the other hand, there were those for whom the fulfilment of their interests presupposed a liberalisation of the Egyptian policies. Their interests could be accomplished by the creation of new private circuits which would increase their economic power. The ending of the nationalisations and the relaxation of the state control were preconditions for additional accumulation of power.

The nationalisations of economic enterprises in 1964 demonstrated the victory of the pro 'socialist' group. By 1965, the state apparatus had reached the maximum of its expansion and its economic rates<sup>295</sup>. Under the state cover, the

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<sup>289</sup> The members, in 1966 almost 32.000, were in their majority students but also public sector workers and some bureaucrats and peasants (Beattie, 1994).

<sup>290</sup> Amer in order to limit Nasser's efforts to form a new elite devoted to him imposed his will to head the Youth Organisation. However, the war of 1967 came and the decision was not taken (Beattie, 1994).

<sup>291</sup> Aiming at expanding his influence outside the Egyptian boundaries, Nasser reinforced the policy of scholarships inviting foreign students to study in Egypt (Tamir, 2001).

<sup>292</sup> Cairo University, Ain Shams, Alexandria, Al-Azhar.

<sup>293</sup> The committee seized 6.000 *feddans*. After the defeat of 1967 Nasser announced a widespread abuse of the seizures (Waterbury, 1983).

<sup>294</sup> The General Organisations were diffused in different ministries following their domain.

<sup>295</sup> In the period 1961-1965 the state payroll was doubled and the percentage of the Gross

regime's allies controlled all foreign trade, banking and insurance, newspapers, and the most profitable industries, hotels and cinemas (Woodward, 1987).

The public expenditures were doubled in the period 1960-66. The government employees who in 1952 were 325.000, in the period 1966-67 rose to 1.035.000 (Woodward, 1987). Parallel to the expansion of the 'welfare state' was the development of the educational system<sup>296</sup> at all levels. The policy of free education<sup>297</sup> adopted by the regime gave the opportunity to many Egyptians to educate their children. These policies were even more reinforced by the new measure by which, since 1962, all graduate university students were guaranteed employment.

In this period, the regime began to face economic difficulties as a result of the increasing military expenditures and the discontinuance of the American aid. In the period 1964-1967, the state enterprises were neglected and the sector was characterised by important corruption due to the conflict between state elites and private economic sectors for a larger share to economy's control. Consequently, early in 1965 several factories were shut down (Waterbury, 1983). These problems reinforced the pro liberal elites who began pressing Nasser to reconsider the desirability of the private sector. However, the effort of progressive economic liberalisation and the consequent restriction of the populist economic policies generated social mobilisations, expressed by strikes, and obliged the temporally suspension of the plan (Cooper, 1982).

### ***5.3. Rent and Capital***

The withdrawal of Syria from United Arab Republic represented a win of the Syrian private capital, seriously attacked by Nasser and his allies. This victory alarmed Nasser out of fear that the Egyptian economic elites could follow the example. He, therefore, proceeded to nationalisations, sequestrations of enterprises and even arrests of economic agents<sup>298</sup>. A new era of harsh repression started, where six-hundred economic and political rivals were deprived of their political rights. Moreover, the second agrarian<sup>299</sup> reform, which was limiting the ceiling of individual landholdings at 100 *feddans*, was adopted to weaken even more the agrarian elite.

The institutionalisation of the alliance between the state and specific private economic elites, through the Economic Organisation, limited, on one hand, the

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National Product rendered to the General Government, Social Security and Public Enterprises was 37.3% for the fiscal year 1962-1963 (Moore, 1974).

<sup>296</sup> The part of budget dedicated to the education in Egyptian pounds increased from 40.2 million in 1951 to 96.5 million in 1964 (Mansfield, 1969).

<sup>297</sup> From 1953 to 1967 the number of the students in primary and secondary schools raised from 15.000 to 100.000 and this of the universities from 38.000 (1951) to 144.981 (Mansfield, 1969).

<sup>298</sup> In 1961, 167 reactionary capitalists were arrested (Woodward, 1992).

<sup>299</sup> This reform touched 10 % of the cultivable land (Hussein, 1975).

margins of the private capital and, on the other, reinforced all state elites. Indicatively, the percentage of the industry controlled by the private sector declined, from 56% in 1962 to 20% in 1963 (Johnson, 1972).

The new wave of nationalisations of 1964, leaving untouched the agrarian sector, demonstrated the increasing economic needs of the regime and the growing influence of the pro-socialist sectors of the state elite. An immediate consequence was that a part of the disappointed entrepreneurs left the country, taking with them capital and skilled work (Beattie, 1994). The economic stagnation was every day more evident and so intense that Egypt came close to bankruptcy<sup>300</sup>.

Meanwhile, the pro-liberal group of the state elites stretched their collaboration with figures of the old regime, especially economic ones. The latter, mainly in the sectors of construction and internal commerce, along with rich countryman, who had preserved their capitals due to Nasser's compensations, found the way to increase their power, through an alliance with the pro-liberal fraction. Their cooperation with components of the regime offered them the possibility to exercise a certain influence in future policies that could harm their interests. Equally, the foreign elites excluded from power, between them the American ones, found in this fraction of the state elite a link to reappear in the Egyptian scene (Hussein, 1975).

The growing pressures from 'capitalist' sectors obliged Nasser to reconsider the orientation of his economic policies. The materialisation of this change can be underlined in the evolution of loan percentage given to private sector. In the period 1966-1967, the sector received only 18% in loans of the total £ E 4.5 million. The next year this percentage rose up to 34% and in 1969-70 reached the 71%. Moreover, in 1966 the regime prepared a legislation measure that would transform Port Said in a free zone to attract foreign investment<sup>301</sup> (Waterbury, 1983).

#### ***5.4. Religion***

Nasser's efforts to increase his power in the civilian scene, vis-à-vis Amer's authority, were also expanded in the religious field. In 1961, Nasser introduced an important reform and Al-Azhar became directly controlled by the state<sup>302</sup>, through the law 103 of May 5th 1961. The reorganisation of the Al-Azhar placed the religious institution under the formal jurisdiction of the Ministry of

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<sup>300</sup> In 1964, Khrushchev approved a loan of \$ 277 million to enable Nasser to meet the debts with USSR (Waterbury, 1983).

<sup>301</sup> However, the war of 1967 cancelled the plan as the city was evacuated for security reasons.

<sup>302</sup> The grand Sheikh of Al -Azhar was to be appointed by the President and not by his peers as it was previously the case.

Endowments<sup>303</sup> and the economic resources of the institution passed on the state control. Moreover, Nasser promoted state officials over Al-Azhar functions and the institution expanded its influence to secular colleges (Tamir, 2001). Nasser's move demonstrated clearly the necessity to control the power of the *ulema*, not only as elites but also their educational role<sup>304</sup>.

The reform was aiming to eliminate elements hostile to the regime, to control other fields connected to the institution and also to demonstrate the compatibility between religion and his doctrine of Socialism<sup>305</sup>. Following Zeghal: “[...] Nasser's modernization of al- Azhar was a way for the rais to control closely the religious institution and to appropriate religion, without making it disappear from the public sphere” (Zeghal, 1999: 373). The reorganisation of Al-Azhar undermined the institution's credibility, as being too strongly controlled by the regime, and it was never regained (Kepel, 2003).

The capacity of Nasser to mobilise the people through his nationalistic discourse and appoint himself as a defender of the state and the faith obliged the Sheikhs to collaborate with his regime as they were weak and had no possibility to challenge his power (Kodmani, 2005). Thus, a coalition between Nasser and the progressive Sheikhs was promoted. This alliance naturally provoked tensions inside the religious field<sup>306</sup>. The announcement of the National Charter based on secular principles gave the opportunity to the ‘conservative’ elements to reaction. Some 5.000 persons were gathered outside Al-Azhar to demonstrate their objection (Beattie, 1994).

Despite the general repression towards rival elements that characterised this period, as a gesture of a good will and to appease the criticism for Yemen war, Nasser released a number of members and leaders of Muslim Brotherhood. Between them was Qutb<sup>307</sup>, the charismatic spiritual leader of the Brotherhood who was liberated after ten years of prison. His permanence in prison had radicalised his discourse and, by consequence, the attitude of his followers. In his book *Signposts*, written during his stay in prison, Qutb described the Nasserist regime in particularly severe terms. The Nasserist state, he argued, belonged to the Islamic category of *jahiliyya*, or pre-Islamic barbarism. The attacks against the Nasserist regime were answered by *ulema* and various Muslim dignitaries, linked to the regime, who officially condemned the book of Qutb as ‘abomination and heresy’ (Kepel, 2003).

Muslim Brotherhood took advantage of the economic problems of the

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<sup>303</sup> During 1952-1966 Al- Azhar's budget increased more than four times.

<sup>304</sup> Al-Azhar University is one of the oldest operating universities of the world. The school of theology, *Madrasah*, connected with mosque was founded 988 as an Ismaili Shia school, but it later became a Sunni school, an orientation it retains to this day.

<sup>305</sup> Indicative of the impact of the reform is the new dress code of the students wearing military uniforms marching with officers in official parades (Kepel, 2003).

<sup>306</sup> The reaction of Riyadh in front of Nasser's move was the creation of the Islamic World League.

<sup>307</sup> For his release the Iraqi Abd al-Salam Arif had intervened (Kepel, 2003).

Egyptians to criticise the regime arguing that the root of such penuries was found on the secular policies and the consequent lapse from the religion. The financial and moral support received from the Saudis<sup>308</sup> and also from the CIA increased the organisations capacities. The demonstration of the power capabilities of the Brotherhood in several occasions, as the funeral of Nahhas<sup>309</sup>, inevitably generated a new wave of repression.

The plot organised by the Brotherhood in the summer of 1965 to overthrow Nasser had as an outcome the massive arrests of Brotherhood's members among them of Qutb. These arrests had not been directed only towards members of the Brotherhood, which had been released, but also towards an entire generation of members who had escaped imprisonment. The majority of the victims of police raids were young and students. Despite the reactions of the Muslim community, Qutb and two other members of the organisation were hanged one year later. The action demonstrated the insecurity of the Egyptian regime and the increasing rivalries with Riyadh.

### **5.5. Media**

The freedom of the press stipulated at the new Constitution<sup>310</sup> of 1964 was once more limited in official documents. The control over the media was continually reinforced by the regime, especially after the nationalisations of major editorial houses and the obligatory membership of the journalists to the Arab Socialist Union, as precondition to exercise the profession. Moreover, in 1964, Nasser dissolved the press boards of directors and appointed as chairmen in every public house persons that were close to his ideas. Through these policies Nasser's control over the media sector was complete (Crabbs Jr, 1975). The importance of media's control and the consequent distortion of the reality were underlined by a survey<sup>311</sup> showing that the Egyptian newspapers were mostly read by people of low educational level and income interested mostly in trivial issues, such as gossip and football.

Nasser justified censorship publicly<sup>312</sup>: "The press for a certain period, was subjected to censorship. Then, we lifted the censorship [...]. We established boards of directors for the press, gave them authority and left them. We wanted to see varied views. We don't want to wake up to find the three newspapers identical

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<sup>308</sup> After the hard repression of 1954, many brothers had moved to Saudi Arabia (Laurens, 1991).

<sup>309</sup> Mustafa an-Nahhas Pasha served as Prime Minister several times and he helped in founding the Wafd party and the Arab League.

<sup>310</sup> "Freedom of opinion and scientific research is guaranteed. Every individual has the right to express his opinion and publicise it verbally or in a writing or by photography or by means within the limits of the law". Quoted in (Dabus, 1993: 108).

<sup>311</sup> The survey was effectuated in the summer of 1965 by the Arab Research and Administration Centre (ARAC).

<sup>312</sup> MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, *Nasser's speeches*, Cairo, March, 1965.

copies of each, with what is written in one, written in the other. This would kill the press. [...]Our guidance is general. We do not tell papers to say such and such about such and such.[...] We leave room for every individual criticism. We have every means of control. The National Assembly has its means of checking facts. [...] We therefore care about who manages the public sector”.

In 1965, the Deputy Prime Minister of Cultural and National Guidance was named Press director with the parallel establishment of secretariats such as that of Propaganda and Socialist thought. Their main objective was to ‘mobilise public opinion so that the socialist transformation would be smoothly accomplished’ (Dabus, 1993). The radio program ‘Voice of Arabs’ continued to serve Nasser’s policies and transmitted his regional propaganda against his rivals. In 1963, the program was transmitted in twenty four languages for 755 hours per week (Tamir, 2001).

### **5.6. Ideological Discourse**

Nasser’s political discourse presented many similarities with Marxism. However, Nasser refused its ideological bases referring to the conflict between the classes and to the historic materialism, aiming to avoid a more strict alignment with Moscow which would introduce a complete break with the western elites. The alienation from a pure Marxist doctrine was more necessary in a period where the nationalisations and the socialist policies were intensified. Moreover, the religiousness of the Egyptians and the Arabs made indispensable the rejection of a Marxist orthodoxy. Therefore, Nasser appealed for a democratic and just system adjusted to the Arab necessities and not a mere copy of the Soviet or Western model (Laurens, 1991).

At a regional level, Nasser was competing with Ba’ath over the pan-Arab discourse and their conflict was increased in the aftermath of Damascus’ departure UAR. The failed attempt for unification needed an official justification and, thus, Nasser sustained that the secession of Syria was a consequence of the reactionary leaders collaborating with the imperialists. Referring to this, Nasser stated<sup>313</sup> *“Nous avons promulgué les décrets socialistes pour instaurer une démocratie sociale afin que nul individu ne puisse dominer les autres. Mais, frères compatriotes, les milieux opportunistes ont réussi, grâce à l’argent versé par les groupes de cinq<sup>314</sup> à acheter quelques gens pour assujettir le peuple syrien à la dictature du capital et à la domination de la réaction et de la faction minoritaire qui dominait dans le passé et réalisait du profit ”.*

The reference to religion gave Nasser the possibility to compete with other rivals, such as the Saudis, counterbalancing the critics about his atheist profile. However, Nasser’s policies and the hard repression towards the Muslim

<sup>313</sup> Nasser’s speech on October 16<sup>th</sup> 1961. Quoted in (Nasr, 1987: 39).

<sup>314</sup> Five persons who according to Nasser controlled Syria.



Brotherhood limited his capacity to divest the Saudis one of the most important power resource. For this reason, Nasser push for a coalition with the Egyptian Sheikhs, introduced by the reform of Al-Azhar, appointing the former as a defender of the faith.

In relation to this, Nasser declared<sup>315</sup>“[...] Les forces réactionnaires ne retourneront jamais au pouvoir dans le monde arabe. Même quand elles semblent se mettre en mouvement, elles finissent par s’effondrer. La réaction est condamnée à la défaite car elle ne peut combattre le socialisme, l’autarcie et la justice. Rien ne lui sert de combattre sous le couvert de la religion. La religion n’encourage pas l’exploitation, ni l’esclavage. La religion fait appel à l’égalité. Elle veut que les biens des musulmans appartiennent aux musulmans. Tel est le credo du socialisme, alors que la réaction prétend que les biens des musulmans appartiennent aux rois musulmans.[...] Le socialisme s’accorde avec la religion, et le peuple musulman arabe a foi en l’Islam ”.

The pan-Arab discourse was boosted by the Yemen war, were Egypt was fighting against imperialistic powers. As Nasser declared to the Egyptian soldiers<sup>316</sup>“*Le combat du Yémen représente le combat de la nation arabe toute entière. Si la nation arabe proclame la liberté, la lutte du Yémen avait pour objectif la liberté. Si la nation arabe proclame la fin de l’exploitation, la lutte entreprise au Yémen par les forces révolutionnaires tendait désespérément à mettre fin à l’exploitation. Si la nation arabe proclame la justice pour l’homme arabe, la lutte du Yémen revendiquait le droit à la justice et le droit à la vie. Si la nation arabe proclame le droit des peuples à l’autodétermination loin des tyrans détenteurs de trônes décadents, le peuple yéménite luttait pour le même objectif [...]*”.

The leaking power of the regime obliged new references so as to obtain popular support. For the first time since the coup, Nasser began to make reference to different Egyptian personalities, between them Saad Zaghlul<sup>317</sup> founder of the Wafd party, and their role to the liberation of Egypt, although attributing the majority of his accomplishments to the Egyptian people (Abdel-Malek, 1967).

## 5.7. People

Nasser intensified his efforts for attracting popular support as means to counterbalance his rival’s influence in other sectors. It is said that during this period Nasser’s ‘real’ power derived from his relation with the population (Laurens, 1991). The tremendous expansion of the state apparatus offering job opportunities to the Egyptians became one of the fundamental arms of Nasser.

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<sup>315</sup> Nasser’s speech on March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1966. Quoted in (Nasr, 1987: 45-46).

<sup>316</sup> Nasser’s speech on August 11<sup>th</sup> 1963. Quoted in (Nasr, 1987: 31).

<sup>317</sup> Saad Zaghlul served as Prime Minister of Egypt. He was strictly connected with the Egyptian independence, as his exile to Malta provoked what is called from many Egyptians called the *First revolution*, in March 9<sup>th</sup> 1919.

This is underlined by the evolution in the number of civil servants. The government employees increased from 325.000 in 1952 to 1.035.000 in 1967 (Woodward, 1987). Furthermore, in this period a reduction of the working hours was adopted from 48 to 42 hours per week. Additionally, a highly progressive taxation was introduced aiming to weaken the economic power of the upper classes, cover the necessities of food subsidies and achieve a more equal distribution of the wealth (Waterbury, 1983).

The new nationalisations and the economic closure to the foreigners was appreciated by the people still believing that the solution to their problems presupposed the evacuation of foreigners from their country (Laurens, 1991). Additionally, the road and train infrastructure, compatible to the western one, increased the prestige of the country and consequently improved Nasser's image (Abdalla, 1984).

In this period, there were also efforts for family planning and expansion of health programs and increase of educational opportunities for the Egyptians. The law by which the state was obligated to offer employment to all graduates of universities, despite the absence of real policies to match the needs of the bureaucracy to the school or university program, had also a positive impact to the Egyptians. Furthermore, the virtual implementation of democracy by the creation of the Arab Socialist Union, half of whose members were coming from the middle and low classes, along with the sporadic releases of anti-regime elements quieted down the popular questioning and gave the impression of a democratic opening.

Despite all the efforts of Nasser's regime, the economical and social problems that the people were facing continued to create reactions. The level of the salaries in the public sector remained low, even though the existence of a basic welfare state balanced the situation (Beattie, 1994). The expansion of the system of food subsidy in the decade 1960-1970 as a measure to compensate for the rapid growth of population and urbanisation was not enough to cover the necessities, due to the economic penury, increased also by the suspension of the American Public Law 480<sup>318</sup>. As Waterbury sustained, *"it has become a given of the Egyptian politics the bread subsidy cannot be touched except at the peril of the regime"* (Waterbury, 1983: 230).

The temporary relaxation towards the Muslim Brotherhood generated popular disturbance, as the Brothers grabbed the opportunity to exercise criticism to the regime. The murder of a member of the Arab Socialist Union by a big landowner family demonstrated the tensed situation (Beattie, 1994). A new era of harsh repression started with the military police as protagonist. The popular reaction (1965-66), expressed with strikes, was answered not only with arrests but by the banning of strikes and the dissolution of unions (Woodward, 1987). The Six Day War destructed temporally the popular discontent.

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<sup>318</sup> In 1954 the Foreign Agriculture Service approved the aid for the less developed countries under the 'food for peace act' program.

### 5.8. International Friends

At the international level, Nasser continued his role as one of the main ambassadors of the Non Aligned Movement and neutral policy. In September 1961 the first formal meeting of the movement took place in Belgrade. There, important leaders as Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Indonesian Sukarno stated for once more their main lines. The principal goals of the movement are summarised in preservation of international peace and security, effective international cooperation and independence of the people and their development towards a better and happier future. The Belgrade Declaration determined the goals mostly focused in the subject of colonialism, imperialism and disarmament<sup>319</sup>: *“the immediate and unconditional, total and final abolition of colonialism and imperialist domination in all its forms and manifestations”, “[abolish] economic imbalance inherited from colonialism and imperialism”, “The participants in the Conference consider that disarmament is an imperative need and most urgent task of the mankind. A radical solution of this problem, which has become an urgent necessity in the present state of armaments, in the unanimous view of participating countries, can be achieved only by means of a general, complete, and strictly and international controlled disarmament”*.

The next two conferences<sup>320</sup> of the Non Alignment Movement were held in Cairo, demonstrating the leading role of Nasser. The directive lines of the NAM were applied mostly to criticise the governmental policy of the two superpowers and particularly the American one. Nasser and the other leaders of the movement did not feel obliged to determine their foreign policies aligned to the principles of the movement. The interference of Nasser in the Yemen war was a clear manifestation of this incompatibility.

The neutralist policy did help Nasser to collaborate with the distinctive elites of the two great powers, covering mainly his economic and military necessities. The pressure of the domestic elites, pro-socialist and pro-liberal, and the necessity of a relative internal equilibrium intensify the need for ‘neutrality’. His task was further helped by the change in the international scene and the Cuban crisis<sup>321</sup>. The two grand rivals, Moscow and Washington, were now more inclined to avoid direct conflict and thus to tolerate Nasser’s neutralism.

Washington, that had grabbed the opportunity to re-establish its relations with Nasser when the latter was facing problems with Moscow, was now offering

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<sup>319</sup> Quoted in (Kumar, 1983, 451, 453).

<sup>320</sup> The first conference was held in July 1962 and the second in 1964.

<sup>321</sup> The American invasion in the Bay of Pigs in April 1961 and the install of intermediate-range missiles on Cuba, illustrated that the Cold War could result to a tragedy for the humanity (Lundestad, 1999).

economic help to Nasser's regime. The election of Kennedy<sup>322</sup> as president of the USA gave new possibilities for the development of the relations between Nasser and Washington under a 'de-politicised policy' (Nedelmann, 1982: 438). The friendly relations were demonstrated, between others, by the important economic aid destined to Egypt. In the period 1962-1966, the American government furnished \$ 466.5 million for civil aid, which was over-passing the Soviet one (Abdalla, 1982). American elites were trying to stretch their presence inside Egypt by using the pro-capitalist state elite, as we previously saw. Nasser accepted the American aid and the consequent cooperation so as to satisfy the demands of the pro-capitalist elite. As compensation, he calmed down his critics towards Washington, mainly in international matters such as the crisis of Cuba. However, the softness of his attitude was criticised by his Arab rivals and the pro-soviet components of his regime.

The relations with Moscow were also re-warmed<sup>323</sup> after the period of coldness, fruit of Nasser's effort to limit the Communist expansion in the region, notably by the creation of the UAR. The new wave of nationalisations in 1964 also attributed to this. The visit of Khrushchev to inaugurate the second part of the High Dam was accompanied by secret negotiations for the participation of Marxists in the Arab Socialist Union and the auto dissolution of the Communist Party, in April 1965. Thus, Moscow continued its economic and military aid towards Nasser<sup>324</sup>. However, the dependency of the Nasserist regime towards Moscow, especially for purposes of military aid- indispensable for the military operations in Yemen, started to become problematic. Thus progressively High Dam replaced the Suez Canal as symbol of foreign debt (Johnson, 1972).

The friendly relations between Nasser and Washington did not last long. The participation of the Egyptian army in the Yemen civil war harmed the relations with Washington, having interests on maintaining the conservative regimes<sup>325</sup> in the Gulf which guaranteed the supply of oil. At the beginning, the American government did want to get involved in the Yemen question. Their decision was taken under Nasser's assurances not to hassle Saudi Arabia or the British settled

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<sup>322</sup> In 1961, Kennedy offered \$10.000 million to rescue Abu Simbel and in this way recognised the movement of Arab Nationalism (Little, 1988). Kennedy also managed to get approval for food assistance towards Egypt, the Public Law 180 that was held later due to the pressure exercise by the pro-Israeli American lobby.

<sup>323</sup> The collaboration with USSR was also amplified in the area of culture when the dancers of the classical ballet were sent to the Soviet Union for practice and there first appearance in 1966-1967 (Mansfield, 1969).

<sup>324</sup> It has to be kept in mind that after the death of Khrushchev, October 1964, and by the mid-65 Nehru, Sukarno, Ben Bella had disappeared from the political scene, leaving Nasser as the only powerful ally in the extend region. Additionally, the Soviets were trying to limit the influence of China that was offering economic aid to Egypt.

<sup>325</sup> Keep in mind that the year of 1966 is characterised by a general repression of the West towards the 'radical' states such as Cuba, Ghana, Congo (Woodward, 1987).

in Aden<sup>326</sup>.

Nevertheless, the American official position changed soon, consequence of pressures coming from different sectors. Early in 1963, Saudi technocrats began to exercise pressures to ARAMCO<sup>327</sup> threatening for drastic changes concerning the four-hundred thousand square-mile concession (Little, 1988). Following the Little, these threats generated pressures by H. Roosevelt and Ch. Herter, representing the American oil lobby, to 'convince' Kennedy to harden his policy towards Nasser (Little, 1988: 518). To these pressures, those coming from the pro-Israeli American lobby should be added.

Nasser, feeling the dangers and being subject to pressures from the pro-liberal sectors of the Egyptian scene tried to demonstrate his good intentions. Thus, as we previously saw, he undertook measures especially to the economic field aiming to demonstrate to Washington his will for collaboration. However, the other strong pole of the regime, Amer and the pro-socialist sectors sabotaged these efforts. Amer and his 'commitment' to the war deprived Nasser of the possibility to satisfy the American demands for a withdrawal from Yemen.

The refusal of the Nasserist regime to comply with the specific demands marked the end of the economic help offered by Kennedy, also including the food aid, in June 1966<sup>328</sup>. The new American government was now friendlier to Tel-Aviv and the conservative Arab governmental elites. This position became clear by the announcement of a major arms deal with Saudi Arabia, coming also from Britain (Nedelmann, 1982).

The new American policy towards Cairo is summarised in president's Johnson words "Egypt has dominated the Arab world since Nasser came to leadership in 1954. For a time in the early 1960s, we hoped that he was beginning to concentrate instead on improving the lot of his own people. On this assumption, we gave substantial aid to Egypt, mainly wheat to feed the people in its teeming cities. In the end Nasser persisted in his imperial dreams. While his strained economy slowed down, he sent troops into Yemen to support revolutionaries trying to take over the country. To support his ambitions, he became increasingly dependent on Soviet arms. Nasser's attitude toward the United States grew more and more hostile and his speeches more inflammatory. It became impossible to maintain congressional support for even token assistance to Egypt" (Johnson, 1971: 289-290).

From the European side, there were also some significant changes. Paris that had been the principal arms seller to Israel started to lose its leading role by the American military sectors. The end of hostilities in Algeria generated the

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<sup>326</sup> Yemen became independent of the Ottoman Empire in 1918. However, the British had set up a protective area around the southern port of Aden in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the port's convenient position on the sea route between India and Europe. Aden's control had been made indispensable, especially after the loss of the Suez Canal, as it became the main base in the region for the British.

<sup>327</sup> American-owned oil consortium based in Dhahran.

<sup>328</sup> During 1961-64, there was a \$700 million of food aid from USA (LAURENS, H., 1991: 175).

preconditions for the improvement of the relations between the French government and Nasser. In this framework, De Gaulle began negotiations with Nasser in order to compensate for the Israeli loss. During this period London was collaborating closely with the American administration, maintaining positive relations with the conservative Arab head states, since a radical change of the *status quo* was not in its favour. The role of the United Kingdom, however, had been less important in the region, but the oil reserves continued to attract the British interests.

Therefore, on the eve of the Six day war, the foreign interests were once more divided. Washington was clearly in favour of the Israeli side, as Nasser was refusing to adopt a clear pro-western position, even though there were signs of his effort to approach Washington<sup>329</sup>. Early in 1967, Sadat, who was sent to Washington, returned with a message from Johnson calling Nasser for quiet diplomacy towards Israel. Nasser replied<sup>330</sup> that the quiet diplomacy would suit USA which has *“money and atom bombs, riches and power without limit”* but *“would not suit us because I would be cut off from the support of my masses”*.

Moscow continued its ‘unconditional’ help towards Nasser offering economic and military help, but trying to avoid direct hostilities with Washington. Nevertheless, the complications in Vietnam, with the Americans bombarding constantly the North of the country, made a distraction of American attention necessary (Derriennic, 1980). The false information that Moscow gave to Damascus, regarding the mobilisation of the Israeli troops to the Syrian frontier, were serving this purpose.

### **5.9. Arab and African Circle**

By the time that the United Arab Republic came to its end, the Arab world was deeply divided between ‘progressive’ and ‘conservative’ states. Thus, the Arab region was divided as the different elites were pursuing their own interests by forming alliances between them but also with foreign elites that continued to covet the region’s petrol. The dissolution of UAR, backed by Saudi and Syrian elites, significantly weakened Nasser’s prestige in the Arab world. Moreover, Nasser’s approaching on the Communist Bloc perturbed his relations with the elites of conservative Arab States<sup>331</sup>.

The coup in Yemen<sup>332</sup>, following Nasser’s steps against the regime of

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<sup>329</sup> Besides the appointment of Zaharia Mohiedin, known for his pro-western attitude, as prime minister in 1965, Nasser, in February 1966, asked the limitation of the Soviet presence inside Egypt and the non permanence of the soviet officers. Additionally, he accepted the visits of the Turkish, American and French fleets (Laurens, 1991).

<sup>330</sup>Quoted in (Mor, 1991: 368).

<sup>331</sup> Syria (1961-63), Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Royalist Yemen.

<sup>332</sup> In December 1961, Yemen announced its decision to end the union with Egypt. Some authors, like J.P. Derriennic, mention a probable indirect participation of Nasser to the Yemen’s

theocratic model, marked the beginning of the Arab 'Cold War'. The 'revolutionists' of Yemen needed principally military help and political support. Thus, they turned to Nasser as a leader of one of the most important Arab armies and also as a sympathiser of such attempts. Nasser saw his interference as the opportunity to extract oil resources (Woodward, 1987). Moreover, he could demonstrate his commitment to the pan-Arab cause. The failure of UAR demanded a victory in Yemen for Nasser. On the other hand, Amer, heading the Egyptian armed forces and being deprived of the important power resources since the Syrian secession, was more than interested in a military intervention, for reasons already exposed.

However, the war of Yemen turned to be Nasser's Vietnam, despite the calculations for a three months military intervention (Witty, 2001). The situation was changed when the Saudi elite entered the conflict. It has to be remembered that the fundamental power resource of the Saudis were the religious discourse and the black gold<sup>333</sup>. Opposed to the Nasserist dogma that was jeopardising their power, they had to prevent further expansion of his influence. Hence, they took the royalist side out of fear that the presence of Nasser could destabilise their authority. The interference of external agents in the Yemen war had as outcome the long duration of the conflict with enormous costs for all parts, especially for Nasserist regime<sup>334</sup>. However, the internal Egyptian rivalry did not leave margins for reconsiderations, as parts of the army needed the war to stretch their power (Hussein, 1975).

The amplification of the problems imposed negotiations between the rival parts, and more specifically between Nasser and Faisal<sup>335</sup>. However, the interests at stake and the division of the Nasserist regime obstructed the compromise. On August 24th 1965, Faisal and Nasser agreed to end the hostilities, with Faisal stopping provide help to the royalists and Nasser withdrawing the Egyptian military forces from Yemen. In a few days the Egyptian withdrawal started with the plan of a total evacuation within ten months (Witty, 2001). However, the British announcement by which the mandate over Aden was to end no later that 1968 changed Nasser's decision. The negotiations stopped and the end of the hostilities came only after the war of 1967 under 'common threat'.

The exigencies of the Arab circle left no space to Nasser for an active role in the African issues. Indicatively, the National Chart of 1962 qualified the African circle as a matter of foreign affairs, contrary to the Arab issues that were integrated in the internal policy (Ismael, 1968 [b]).

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coup(Derriennic, 1980: 177).

<sup>333</sup> Saudi Arabia from 1950 to 1962 raised the petrol production from 28 to 85 million tons and respectively the income of petrol from 56 to 140 million dollars (Derriennic, 1980).

<sup>334</sup> Apart from the economic problems, Nasser, as we previously saw, had also to face the complaints and the questions of the soldiers in Yemen.

<sup>335</sup> One meeting was held in Alexandria in September 1964 and the second in Saudi Arabia in August 1965.

The conflict between the Arab governmental elites was expanding in all fields. The usage of the religion became important especially between Nasser and Faisal. Nasser, to counterbalance Saudi influence based in the religious discourse, effectuated the reform of Al-Azhar and some sporadic releases of members of the Brotherhood. Riyadh's answer came in 1962, by the creation of the Islamic World League. However, the hanging of Qutb, regardless of the propaganda against the Muslim Brotherhood as fanatics, revealed the inconstancy of Nasser towards the religion issues.

Early in 1963, the new coups in Syria and Iraq<sup>336</sup> rekindled the inspirations for an institutionalised Arab union. Both countries, under the dominance of Ba'ath parties, were seeking for Nasser's help to stabilise their authority inside the respective countries. The new tentative for regional union failed once more, due to the conflict between Ba'athists and Nasserists, each one looking to maximize their power (Laurens, 1991). Nasser's on collaborating with the Ba'athist regimes imposed problems of justification in the frame of pan-Arabism. The internal instability of Iraq and Syria saved Nasser's prestige.

Meanwhile, during 1965-1966, parallel to the efforts for a solution in Yemen, Nasser, Faisal and Hussein were trying to calm down the inter-Arab hostilities and, at the same time, to find a way to compromise with Israel (Dawn, 1968). However, the efforts were not successful as Ba'ath of Syria was characterising any initiative as a betrayal, due to their relations with Fatah<sup>337</sup> and hoping to stabilise itself inside the country (Derriennic, 1980). On the same time, the actuations of the fedayins were irritating Tel-Aviv, while the relations between Nasser and Hussein were characterised by hostility<sup>338</sup>.

### **5.10. Israel and Palestine**

The Kennedy's government and his policy towards Nasser did not imply any deterioration in the relations with the Israeli government. His election was strictly related to the Jewish American lobby and Kennedy repaid them by raising the American help toward Israel. As Kennedy said to Ben Gurion<sup>339</sup> *"I know I was elected by the votes of the American Jews. I owe them my elections. Tell me, is there something I can do for the Jewish people?"*.

During this period, Israel was building her army with international back up. Besides the American aid, Tel Aviv was also receiving arms from West Germany<sup>340</sup>,

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<sup>336</sup> Aref, who had previously collaborated with Nasser, took power. The coup in Iraq in 1963 was supported by Nasser and the Kurds feared of the arabisation of the country (Derriennic, 1980).

<sup>337</sup> Fatah was controlled by Syria since 1964.

<sup>338</sup> Nasser accused Hussein for breaking his relations with Palestinian Liberation Organisation and latter responded with accusations for UNEF forces presence in Sinai.

<sup>339</sup> Quoted in (Lukacs, 1992: 217-218).

<sup>340</sup> In 1965 West Germany inaugurated its official relations which provoked the break with its relations with Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Egypt (Ismael, 1986).



as compensation for the Second World War crimes against the Jewish community, and from United Kingdom and France, even though the aid of the latter had considerably declined after the end of hostilities in Algeria.

London's position towards Israel is well expressed by the words of the Foreign Secretary, M. Stewart<sup>341</sup> in 1966: *"We see no prospect that the Arabs will be willing to make peace on terms which you can accept in the foreseeable future, or any means of compelling with them to. You must be realistic about the strength of the Arab feeling on this. You must also recognise that it is important to western interests-which are extremely important to your own survival- for us to maintain tolerable relations and some influence with the Arabs. You must not, therefore, expect us to take sides, or to appear to take sides, with you against the Arabs. For our part, we will see that you are able to acquire weapons for your defence [...]"*.

And towards the Arabs *"...Some day you will have to come to terms with reality and face the consequences of this, instead of wasting your substance and energies in this fruitless pursuit of what you might have got twenty years ago. There is no prospect that Israel will make any substantial concessions now or in the future, and there is no prospect of you being able to force them to; sooner or later you must swallow your pride and settle for the status quo with (American) compensation for the refugees. Meanwhile, you are your own masters. We shall not compel you to make peace and we shall oppose any attempt by either side to upset the status quo by the use of force"*.

As it was mentioned before, after the war of 1956, Israel was enjoying internal and external stability. The situation changed when in 1965-1966 Israel started to face economic problems. Furthermore, for the first time since her creation, Israel began to face real problems with unemployment, a fact that made a large number<sup>342</sup> of people to leave the country (Derriennic, 1980). The fact was preoccupying the government of a state whose citizens constituted a minority *vis a vis* to its enemies. Parallel to this, there were political rivalries with Ben Gurion, who created his own political party.

Meanwhile, in 1963, Tel Aviv started to provoke the Arabs by the detour of Jordan's water, which resulted in the first meeting of the Arab leaders in Cairo as to determine the Arab policy in front of the new Israeli position<sup>343</sup>. The meeting was transformed in a battle field as Nasser announced the creation of Palestinian Liberation Organisation that would be under his control and this of the Egyptian secret services (Derriennic, 1980). Nasser's initiative aiming at controlling the Palestinians provoked the reaction of the Arab leaders<sup>344</sup>.

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<sup>341</sup> Quoted in (McNamara, 2000: 620).

<sup>342</sup> The number of emigrants was superior to that of the immigrants.

<sup>343</sup> The meeting was principally an attempt to approach Saudi Arabia by the use an external enemy so as to pacify the inter-Arab hostility (Kepel, 2003).

<sup>344</sup> For Hussein the PLO could threaten his sovereignty over the West bank and the Palestinians in Jordan. The Syrian leader opposed to Nasser's plan by proposing the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. Faisal proposed the creation of Palestinian government on the exile.

Moreover, in the meeting Nasser clearly defended that the war with Israel was not an option and, since Egyptian army was by far the most important one, his decision was respected<sup>345</sup>. At the same time, Nasser officially declared to Cairo Radio broadcast, December 17th 1963<sup>346</sup>, *“The UAR will not let itself be pressured into the adventure of a war against Israel as long as the Arab States are not unified”*.

At the time, Jordan was trying by all means to avoid the infiltrations to Israel, in such an intensity that there were more Palestinian casualties from the Jordan soldiers than the Israeli ones (Izquierdo, 2005). In April 1965, Bourguiba of Tunisia proposed direct negotiations with Israel. All these political actions demonstrated the willingness of the Arab leaders to control the Palestinian actions and avoid the war with Israel.

In May 1964, the 1<sup>st</sup> National Congress of Palestine took place in Jerusalem, where, among others, the creation of an army with the participation of militaries of the Arab countries was decided. The Palestinian Liberation Organisation, now being the official representative of Palestine and strictly related to Nasser, was urging for military support. Nasser’s denial to furnish military aid harmed their relations, deteriorated Nasser’s image and, at the same time, increased Syria’s<sup>347</sup> role in the Palestinian question (Woodward, 1987).

The situation was under tension and the young Palestinians, radicalised due to the propaganda of different Arab elites and the Israeli policy, destabilised the situation with their actions. To the above mentioned, the efforts of Fatah to radicalise the population as to extort the Arab governments to increase their material and political support must be added. *“Now the [Arab] governments either will support us against the Israelis, or will fight us. If they fight us, the people will support us. (...) We wanted to create a climate and the atmosphere of the spirit of struggle in the Arab Nation, so that they can have the will of fighting, and I'm sorry to say that we failed”*<sup>348</sup>.

The Syrian propaganda against Israel, aiming to calm down the internal crisis, was also helped by Israel’s provocations, hoping to disorient its own population from domestic crisis. On May 11<sup>th</sup> 1967, the latter sent a memorandum to the Security Council declaring that she was prepared to answer to the Syrian attacks (Dawn, 1968).

In this context, Nasser under no circumstances was willing to enter into a war with Israel<sup>349</sup>, as the defeat was more than certain. The internal instability

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Bourguiba and Ben Bella supported the creation of a movement for national liberation (Nassar, 1991).

<sup>345</sup> Nasser was opposed to the Syrian proposals in the Arab Summits 1964-1965 to launch large scale guerrillas (Mor, 1991).

<sup>346</sup> Quoted in (McNamara, 2000: 621).

<sup>347</sup> The new regime of Syria (1966) tried to offer the wanted arms to the Palestinian Liberation Organisation despite the defence pact signed with Egypt aiming to control these efforts by Nasser.

<sup>348</sup> Testimony to Khaled Hassan. Quoted in (Izquierdo, 2005: 78).

<sup>349</sup> Nasser’s determination to avoid a clash with Israel was so strong that in 1962 declared in Gaza

due to his rivalry with Amer and the increasing gap between the interests of different sectors, along with the unpreparedness of the Egyptian army, were preconditioning the military defeat. In 1964, Heikal had described the conditions that Nasser thought necessary under which a war against Israel could be won: Arab unity, Arab military superiority and isolation of Israel (Mor, 1991). As we have seen none of the conditions was valid in 1967.

The unwillingness of Nasser was proved, between others, by the declaration of the Commander of the ground forces General Murtaja on May 20th 1967<sup>350</sup>: *“Fighting on the frontiers will not begin unless Israel launches a serious attack. Thus, action will not begin on the mere firing of a simple shot, but only with the launching of a serious attack”*. The negation of Nasser to enter into a war was recognised also by Rabin, in 1968, who said that Nasser did not have offensive intentions in 1967 (Hart, 1994).

Despite Nasser’s unwillingness to enter to war hostilities he did needed this war with different gestures. Nasser indeed asked for the removal of the UNEF forces from the Suez Canal and the closure of Aqaba<sup>351</sup> to Israel. However, Nasser’s moves were serving principally two purposes and they were undertaken by the hope for an international intervention<sup>352</sup> to prevent a military clash. On the one hand, Nasser did not want to see the Syrian regime out of scene, as he feared the establishment of a more conservative government. Nasser, experiencing problems to control his own regime and being an important figure of the Arab cold war, did not want to lose another ‘ally’. On the other hand, he was answering to the accusations of Faisal and Hussein of having betrayed the pan Arab causes, due to his passivity towards the Israeli provocations.

A few months before the war, on 22nd February, Nasser declared<sup>353</sup> “Deux ans après la sécession (Syria), la lutte arabe imposa une nouvelle forme d’unité. J’appelai alors en décembre 1963 à l’Unité d’Action Arabe pour la Palestine et invitai à réunir des conférences au sommet arabes [...]. L’Unité d’Action Arabe réalisa par l’intermédiaire des conférences au sommet l’Organisation de Libération de la Palestine, l’Armée de Libération de la Palestine, elle réussit à donner corps à l’entité palestinienne pour la première fois depuis 1948. En même temps le Commandement Arabe Unifié fut mis sur pied [...] Mais les ennemies de l’Unité commencèrent à liquider cette action, Bourguiba et le roi Fayçal ; Fayçal se mit à œuvrer pour l’Alliance islamique, une Alliance islamique au service des États-Unies d’Amérique et au service des intérêts de l’Angleterre, et il s’abrita

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that neither he nor the Arab states had a plan for Palestine’s liberation (Izquierdo, 2005).

<sup>350</sup> Quoted in (Dawn, 1968: 216).

<sup>351</sup> The closure of the Eliat was important for Israel both for political and economic reasons. Her necessities for petrol were covered by importations from Iran passing through Eliat (Derriennic, 1980).

<sup>352</sup> The mobilisation of Nasser was also helped by the information offered by the Syrians that USSR was willing to help the Arabs in the case of a war (Dawn, 1968).

<sup>353</sup> Quoted in (Nasr, 1987: 32).

derrière les conférences au sommet pour mener son action”.

Nasser had not reacted to the attack of Samou village in Jordan, in November 1966, and to the partial destruction of the Syrian air force in April 1967, despite the defence agreement with Syria and, of course, the detour of the waters of Jordan river. Moreover, the creation of the group Saika, formed by Palestinians to counterbalance Nasser's influence in the PLO supported by Damascus, forced Nasser to radicalise his discourse and to proceed in the stated actions demonstrating his commitment to the Arab cause (Izquierdo, 2005).

## **6. Disappearance of the *raison d'être* 1967-1970**

Regional dynamics produced significant changes in the regime. On one hand, the impact of the external events debilitates the regime, depriving it of its control over specific power resources. On the other hand, these changes create propitious conditions to end of the regime's bipolarisation. The eviction of the main rival elements, as well as the absorption of their power resources permitted the winner's re-consolidation.

Despite the obliteration of the main inter-regime rival, there were still competitors left, harming the hegemony of the benefited elites. This situation compels the reorientation of strategies, necessary for the formation of new alliances, which will eventually consolidate a new power equilibrium.

## 6.1. Army

The Six Day War of 1967 had tremendous impacts on the Egyptian army, wherein the 80% of the military equipment was destroyed<sup>354</sup>. The losses in human and material capital of the two wars, in Yemen and that of 1967, along with the conflict between Nasser and Amer predetermined the army's decay.

The reasons for the military defeat can be found in different fields. First of all, the Egyptian army was not prepared nor adequately equipped. The economic penuries that the Egyptian regime was facing since 1965 had limited the military capacities, with the reduction of the arms race (James, 2005). The war of Yemen, mainly effectuated in a guerrilla style, and the tiredness of the soldiers were important factors that preconditioned this devastating. Furthermore, the military equipment, a Soviet product, was not adequate for the geographic conditions of the region, and the Egyptian army, composed principally of peasants, lacked training and technological knowledge (Al-Sayyid Marsot, 1985). The bad communication between the military units added another factor for the devastating defeat (Laurens, 1991).

The military defeat distorted the *status quo*, not only of the region but also this of the Nasserist regime. The outcome of the war had harmed Nasser's hegemony in the Arab world, but at the same time secured his power in the Egyptian scene. Amer<sup>355</sup>, his dangerous rival and Commander of the Egyptian Armed Forces, was the principal loser of the war. The relative gain of Nasser was not prescheduled. As we underlined in the previous chapter, Nasser had tried by all means to avoid the military clash with Israel. Despite his provocative moves, the specific interests of different elites subscribed in the particular conjuncture condemned his efforts to failure. The defeat and its consequences were unquestionable facts that Nasser and his enemies could not oversee. However, this defeat could be partially transformed into victory and its devastating consequences could be minimised.

The aftermath of the war imposed the removal of the responsible leaders, one of them being Nasser himself and, of course, Amer. Nonetheless, as it is historically known, Nasser's resignation from his posts was withdrawn immediately. The fate of his rival was not the same<sup>356</sup>, as he was released from his military duties. Amer, comprehending that his power was dissolving, tried to resist. On the one hand, he attempted to undermine Nasser's authority in the

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<sup>354</sup> 15.000 men were killed and another 5.500 were imprisoned (Flory et al., 1990).

<sup>355</sup> Some authors as L. James sustain that Amer had misinformed Nasser for the army's capabilities (James, 2005).

<sup>356</sup> Despite the decision that Amer and Nasser had taken to accept both the responsibility for the loss, Nasser returned to his office leaving Amer to take the blame. Nasser proposed him the possibility of the exile that Amer refused.

political scene, by advocating for greater democracy, freedom of press and by formatting an opposition party (Waterbury, 1983). On the other hand he tried to regain his power by the preparation of a military coup, counting on the officers help (Laurens, 1991). Nevertheless, his miscalculations and hasty actions revealed his intentions and furnished Nasser the opportunity to expulse Amer from the scene.

However, the control and the collaboration of the military officers were not automatically gained. Immediately after Amer's removal as Chief Commander, ten to fifteen officers petitioned Nasser to restore him. Their demand was not accepted and they were later 'retired', accompanied by other 600-850 officers (Waterbury, 1983). Finally, Amer's death<sup>357</sup>, under suspicious circumstances, facilitated Nasser to gain a partial control of the army. With some of the old friends and rivals out of scene, Nasser, out of fear for a new Amer, kept for himself the chief post of the Armed Forces. In his words<sup>358</sup> *"The armed forces command is the brain that directs the battle and fighting"*.

The reorganisation of the army presupposed formation of new coalitions and new negotiations, as well as a purification process. In February 1968, the High Military Court sentenced the officers responsible for the military outcome of the war. The light castigation, attributed to the high ranks of the army, aimed for the avoidance of further fragmentation of the armed forces. Additionally, a harsh punishment would imply questionings for Nasser, being responsible for the defeat as he had officially admitted.

Nevertheless, the issue of the war demanded an expiatory victim. As the high rank officers were released from a harsh punishment, the low ranking officers were the opportune candidates. The military courts, therefore, charged them with severe sentences (Kepel, 2003). This discrepancy of the sentences, unjustified to the Egyptian people, provoked popular anger expressed with massive manifestations.

The reconstruction of the army became, once more, Nasser's priority, as an instrument to negotiate with the military officers, who were now deprived of equipment and prestige. *"We all know the situation of our army (Egyptian) after the aggression and the cease-fire decision. [...] First of all we were in need of arms, then we needed reorganisation, then we needed hard training. [...] When we speak about the reconstruction of the armed forces, we mean that we are reconstructing an army in whose arming, organisation, training and command we have confidence"*<sup>359</sup>.

As in the past, Nasser had to build a powerful army capable of challenging

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<sup>357</sup> He was put under house surveillance until his suicide, on 14 September 1967.

<sup>358</sup> Nasser's speech to the Arab Socialist Union (March 27, 1969). Quoted in (Laqueur and Rubbin, 1991: 401).

<sup>359</sup> Nasser's speech to the Arab Socialist Union, (March 27, 1969). Quoted in (Laqueur and Rubbin, 1991: 401).

the Israeli one, aiming to recuperate the popular support, especially now that his discourse had to change from pan-Arab to anti Zionist. The war of Attrition, initiated by Nasser the last year of his mandate by taking advantage of the arithmetic superiority of his army, served this aim. Nasser needed desperately to regain Sinai and Gaza, in order to recover part of his lost 'dignity' in front of the Arab people and leaders. The task was fruitfully accomplished, since Nasser regained the wanted support from the military and civilian sectors (Bar-Siman-Tov, 1984).

The restoration of the military equipment presupposed, once more, external military aid. As Washington was officially Israel's furnisher, Moscow constituted consequently Nasser's appropriate supplier. Following M. Efrat, in the period 1967-1973 Egypt received \$ 894 million per year in soviet military aid accompanied by an important presence of soviet officers (Efrat, 1983: 448). The intensity of the soviet aid was so important that in a short period all loses in equipment had been fully replaced.

Nasser's priority to gain the military and popular support through the army apparatus is proved also by the percentage of the state budget dedicated to this institution. In 1970, these expenditures represented the 19% of the national GDB (Derriennic, 1980).

## 6.2. State

After the official broadcast of the defeat, Nasser announced in the television his decision of resigning from head of the Egyptian state. *"[...] Now we arrive at an important point in this heartsearching by asking ourselves: does this mean that we do not bear responsibility for the consequences of the setback? I tell you truthfully and despite any factors on which I might have based my attitude during the crisis, that I am ready to bear the whole responsibility. I have taken the decision in which I want you all to help me. I decided to give up completely and finally every official post and every political role and return to the ranks of the masses and do my duty with them like every other citizen"*<sup>360</sup>.

Nasser's broadcasted resignation can only be interpreted as a strategic move aiming at various objectives. First of all, he wanted to implicitly reject the responsibility of the defeat. In the same speech of his resignation, Nasser, by naming the factors that determined the outcome, certainly did not take the blame but he rather attributed the responsibility to external factors<sup>361</sup>. Moreover, his gesture was aiming to mobilise the popular support that would enable him to

<sup>360</sup> Nasser's Resignation Broadcast (June 9, 1967). Quoted in (Laqueur and Rubbin, 1991: 193).

<sup>361</sup> "There is clear evidence of imperialistic collusion [...]", "(enemies') facilities exceeding his own capacity and his own calculated strength[...]", "(enemy) relying on some force other than his own[...]", "[...] accurate calculations were made of enemies strength[...]", "[...] Before us there were several factors-national, Arab and international[...]" Nasser's Resignation Broadcast (June 9, 1967). Quoted in (Laqueur and Rubbin, 1991: 190).



proceed to the necessary reforms. The 'spontaneous' popular<sup>362</sup> reaction was aided by measures, such as free passage on trains, to ease the transportation of those wanting to counteract against their leader's decision (Beattie, 1994).

Another important element of Nasser's decision to resign was the well designed election of his successor, Zahariya. Since the days of the coup, Zahariya was known for his pro-American position. It has to be underlined that he was the basic link between the new established regime and the CIA officers. By this election, Nasser was clearly demonstrating to Washington his willingness to re-establish relations. The popular reaction towards Nasser's resignation was reinforced by Zahariya's unpopularity, due to the restrictive economic policy followed during his mandate as head of the government, in 1965 (Cooper, 1979).

As we previously saw, Nasser was receiving internal pressures from groups of the state elite that were looking for a way to liberalise the regime. The military defeat, translated as an American victory in cold war era, was a confirmation for the necessity of policies' reorientation. An alignment with American elites seemed indispensable, imposed also by regional pressures, mainly from Saudi Arabia, and by the new *status quo*.

However, the re-establishment of Nasser, under popular pressure, demonstrated that the pro-socialist elements of the regime were not completely defeated. The pro-American Zahariya would have certainly harmed their interests, as he proposed closing down the public sector and giving opportunities to the private one (Waterbury, 1983). Nevertheless, the pressures from Moscow and the military officers, needing equipment, did not favour such a revolutionary change.

In the last period of his rule, Nasser redefined his strategies and coalitions in an effort to maintain his power. The new 'liberal' policies, with Zahariya organising the economic sector, can be considered as a prologue of Sadat's *infitah*<sup>363</sup>. These policies were aiming at the satisfaction of the interests of the state elites, through which Nasser would reassured economic support from private capital and, at the same time, demonstrate to Washington his will for collaboration.

This political orientation was expanded in all sectors of the Egyptian society through the introduction of political reforms. In this way, Nasser made an appeal to different agents to collaborate with him. The new elections, in January 1969, integrated 'new blood' in the Egyptian scene<sup>364</sup>. The reforms adopted in this period revitalised the Egyptian political scene with the appointment of fourteen new ministers, all being civilians (Dabus, 1993). From the old corpus of the Free Officers, there were only Hussein Shafei, as vice president, and Anwar al-Sadat, as

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<sup>362</sup> The mobilisation of the popular support had also an implicit finality: to demonstrate to his rivals his power and, by this, oblige them to compromise. Following Johnson, after his return to power Nasser gained tremendous independency inside the regime (Johnson, 1972: 10).

<sup>363</sup> Open door policy is a term used to characterise Sadat's liberal policies.

<sup>364</sup> Nasser had previously adopted a reform by which the members of the Arab Socialist Union would be elected.

speaker of the National Assembly and vice president since 1969 (Woodward, 1987). Of course, Nasser was not ready to give up his power and leave the 'democratic' forces gain more power than he had. Thus, the new reforms, under the cover of the democratic elections, attributed all powers to the President<sup>365</sup> (Laurens, 1991).

As in the past, the state was a basic mechanism of Nasser's regime to maintain the internal stability and limit the power of his rivals. The welfare state was a way to create better conditions for the Egyptian people, still living in very poor conditions. The absence of this mechanism would give the opportunity to other groups, like the Muslim Brotherhood, to expand their influence. However, the devastating economic situation of Egypt obliged for the reorientation of the regime through restrictive economic policies, result of the new alliance, and consequently imposed the restriction of populist measures. During the period 1967-1974, there was an important reduction of all state's economic activities, a contraction of the welfare state and a negligence of infrastructures (Waterbury, 1983). Moreover, the plans for nationalisations programmed in 1966-1967 were abandoned and the third agrarian reform, through which there would be a further reduction of the ceiling on individual landholding at 50 *feddans*, was announced mainly for 'cosmetic' reasons.

The socioeconomic perturbation of the Egyptian society was also reflected in the universities. The obligation of the state to offer employment to all graduates of universities, adopted in 1962, was difficult to be fulfilled, as consequence of the new policies. Thus, in 1968 a restriction of the university admissions to 35.000 was therefore decided. The measure provoked students' anger, exploited by the Muslim Brotherhood (Waterbury, 1983). The new generation of the Egyptians, without personal memory of the British occupation and the political situation preceding the coup of the Free Officers, were an easy target for regime's rivals, especially for Muslim Brotherhood. The overpopulation of the amphitheatres and the consequent deterioration of the quality and the facilities of the universities helped the Muslim Brotherhood to attract the unsatisfied students (Beattie, 1994). The increasing influence of the Brotherhood was also helped by the moral defeat of the nationalistic discourse that consequently reinforced the religious one.

### **6.3. Rent and Capital**

The defeat of 1967 obviously impacted the Egyptian economic sectors. More precisely, the Nasserist regime lost important economic resources coming from Suez Canal<sup>366</sup>, oil, industry and tourism. The devastating economic situation, the internal and external pressures and the need for capital called for an economic opening, the preamble to the Sadat's *infitah*. In the Khartoum Conference, Riyadh

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<sup>365</sup> After the war Nasser was Prime Minister, President and High Commander of the Arm Forces.

<sup>366</sup> The Suez Canal remained close until 1975.

launched the new rules. The important economic aid that the rich Arab states<sup>367</sup> would give to Nasser as compensation for the defeat was not unconditional. His 'socialist' economic policies had to be replaced by an opening to the foreign capital.

The new economic policy of Nasser's regime was reflected on his minister's of Economy and Foreign Trade<sup>368</sup> words, on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1968: *"First, foreign residents in the country, and UAR subjects who have migrated, as well as those who have been working abroad for more than 5 years have been allowed to open accounts in foreign currencies with local banks, were they may deposit their earnings. They have the right to draw on these accounts either wholly or in part, and dispose of them any way, without permission from foreign currency authorities and without any controls or restrictions"*.

In the summer of 1967 began the de-sequestration of companies and by the mid-1968 there were also some denationalisations by which some small enterprises returned to their old owners, despite the unpopularity of the policy (Abdalla, 1984). However, the measures were not adopted so as to confront the economic crisis, as Beinín and Golberg sustain, but they were serving the interests of Nasser's allies and his necessities (Beinín and Goldberg, 1982: 26). It has to be remembered that a 'liberalisation' of the economy had been indented before the Six Day War.

Moreover, Nasser's new economic policies can be also viewed as a way to appeal to the foreign elites, mostly Washington. The 'authoritarian' regimes, rival to Washington's interests, were punished all over the world. It was the time of the 'democratic' and 'liberal' regimes to receive greater help. As a direct demonstration of Nasser's will to collaborate was not possible he had to find indirect methods.

Nasser's alienation from the 'socialist' policies and the new petro-alliance, initiated in the Khartoum conference, are clarified by his own words in the Rabat Summit Conference, on September 1969<sup>369</sup>, *"Focusing a centralized effort toward the cooperation of the search of petroleum since [...] petroleum can give the effort of complete development bountiful possibilities [...]. Distributing individual incentives, honouring the value of work on the one hand, and maintaining for the nation its human potential and expanding the desired opportunities before it [...]. Realizing the placing of the right man in the right position"*.

The elites acquiring power from the private capital and collaborating with the pro-liberal elements of the state elite were the benefited ones from the new

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<sup>367</sup> In Khartoum, it was agreed that Libya, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were to pay to Egypt \$250 million/year for its losses from Suez in exchange to the withdrawal of its troops from Yemen (Barnett, 1998).

<sup>368</sup> Quoted in (Cooper, 1979: 486).

<sup>369</sup> Quoted in (Cooper, 1979: 484).

economic orientation and the petrodollar coalition<sup>370</sup>. In parallel the opening towards the agrarian elites was promoted. By Nasser's death, in 1970, all but 3.117 *feddans*, sized by the Committee of Liquidation, were returned to their owners and the rest during Sadat's mandate (Johnson, 1972). Thus, the old landowners that had been deprived of their economic powers returned to the economic scene.

#### **6.4. Religion**

The new order established after the Khartoum Conference and the defeat of the nationalist discourse imposed a turn to the religion to fill the gap created (Flory et al., 1990). The Muslim Brotherhood found, at the time, the prosperous conditions to re-enter dynamically in the political scene. Their strong relations with Riyadh, providing them money and necessary support, reinforced their role. The universities became now the main ground of their propaganda. However, a lot of Brothers were still in prison who stayed imprisoned until Sadat's mandate. The number of Brotherhood prisoners reached the 7700<sup>371</sup> in the period 1964-1971 (Waterbury, 1983).

The revitalisation of the Brotherhood's power was demonstrated in the public manifestations. For instance, the Brothers were the ones who led the manifestation in Mansura city against the university reform that stipulated a reduction in the number of students in an effort to ease the state burden (Kepel, 2003).

The alignment with Faisal, principal agent mobilising the religious discourse in the region, and the consequent increase of the Muslim Brotherhood's power obliged Nasser to compete with them through the necessary alliances. Thus, he reinforced his relations with religious elites, in his effort to gain some of the glory of their discourse.

The relations between Nasser and Sheikh Sha'rawi became vital as the Sheikh was exercising an important influence on the people. In a public speech, the latter "*thanked God for a traumatizing defeat that served to awaken the nation from its engagement on the wrong path, by having left religion aside*" (Kodmani, 2005).

Nevertheless, the efforts of Nasser to use the *ulemas* were not really fruitful, as the different policies adopted through the years of his mandate had weakened significantly their prestige. As mentioned by Kepel, by the end of 1960 the *ulemas* had lost their influence in the Arab World, with the exception of Saudi Arabia (Kepel, 2003).

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<sup>370</sup> It has to be remembered the case of Osman that later will be Sadat's important ally.

<sup>371</sup> However, this number also includes the imprisoned feudalists.

### **6.5. Media**

The communication media continued being under the control of the regime. However, a relaxation of the censorship was almost imposed by the big fiasco of the Six Day War and by the false information transmitted during its conduct (Woodward, 1987). Indicative to the degree of manipulation of the Egyptian information was the fact that in the period preceding the war the radio was transmitting information about the closure of the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli ships. The paradox was that the majority of the population ignored the free pass of Israeli ships, after the Suez war of 1956 (Dabus, 1993).

Moreover, the appeasement of censorship towards the media was integrated in the general policies of the opening and in the preparation of the Egyptian people to the new political order. On the same time, the weakness of Nasser's authority gave the opportunity to the domestic rivals to establish relations with agents connected to the media sector and, therefore, they managed to exercise a certain criticism towards the regime.

Thus, the years before Nasser's death were characterised by an effort for an opening in this sector as well. The first important attack towards the regime was effectuated by Heikal, one of the closest allies of Nasser, who on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1968 criticised the military security and its organisation (Dabus, 1993). However, the hard repression of the past had created an implicit auto censorship to the journalists.

### **6.6. Ideological Discourse**

The *raison d'être* of the Nasserist regime had been vanished after the defeat of 1967. The idea of a united Arab world against the 'imperialist' forces came to its end and it signalled the end of the radical Nasserist discourse. The outcome of war was accurately described by Nasser 372 "*Après cette grande catastrophe..., nous étions comme un homme qui, marchant dans la rue, est frappé par un tram ou une voiture et reste à la fois immobile et inconscient sur le sol...comme un homme dans un désert, qui, entouré par des sables en mouvement, ne sais pas si, en esquissant un mouvement, il sera englouti par les sables ou trouvera le bon chemin*".

The different economic problems, the loss of the war with Israel and Yemen, and the heterogeneity inside Nasser's group weakened the regime and gave the possibility to old and new rivals to react. The choc of the Six Day War gave the pretext to different elites to mobilise arguments for harming Nasser's authority. For the leftist groups the defeat was a consequence for not applying the orthodox Marxist policy. For those of the religious vocation the reasons were to be found in the departure of the Islamic principles. For the liberals the loss was a consequence of the communist policy.

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<sup>372</sup> Quoted in (Flory et al., 1990: 170).

Nasser had to reply to the accusations so as to fade the arguments of his rivals and regain the confidence of the people. "The Egyptian people have not stood alone facing war, danger and terror during this admirable and historic period. The entire Arab nation has been beside them, fulfilling its role in the struggle while recognizing its right to assume the greater part of the costs of the battle for the future. Above all there were the masses, confident in the knowledge that the freedom of the Arab nation was the only objective, and victory for that freedom the only requirement. The Arab masses were aware of every step taken; they rejected all attempts to divert them and remained faithfully committed to their own fundamental freedom. In the first and last resort, this cause, this freedom, this imperative need for victory belongs to them. [...] The Arab masses did not simply observe all this passively; they did everything they could to help while they awaited results [...]"<sup>373</sup>.

The strict alliance with Moscow needed also a justification<sup>374</sup> "*Had it not been for these arms (Soviet) we could not have succeeded in attaining a position from which we could answer or repel the enemy. [...] The Soviet Union is supplying us with arms without exerting pressure on our current financial resources. [...] we have not yet paid a single penny for all arms we have received so far from the Soviet Union.*".

Additionally, Nasser tried to cushion the humiliating defeat by the following declaration<sup>375</sup> "*So, since we did not have the opportunity to enter the war we cannot say that we have lost. [...] What happened was that an attempt was made to defame our armed forces so that the people would lose their confidence in the armed forces and so that the armed forces would lose confidence in themselves*".

Inside Egypt, Nasser had to justify his *infitah* policies under slogan 'No socialism without freedom'<sup>376</sup>. His necessities for national unity, using the threat of the external enemy, was demonstrated by in speech on April 15th 1968<sup>377</sup> : "*Aujourd'hui la nation arabe lutte pour passer de l'étape de la résistance à celle de la victoire et lorsque nous évoquons le patriotisme arabe ou nationalisme arabe, nous devons oublier en cette étape d'autres contradictions. Le patriote de droite est égal au patriote de gauche, car lorsque Israël a occupé la rive ouest du Jourdain, elle n'a pas fait de distinction entre les deux [...]*".

However, his weakness towards Israel, demonstrated by the continuous military defeats, and his need to compromise obliged him to show elements of good will<sup>378</sup> "*Les juifs ont vécu avec nous des milliers d'années et n'ont jamais été*

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<sup>373</sup> Nasser's speech, 23 July 1970. Available at <http://southmovement.alphalink.com.au/southnews/nasser.htm>, viewed 23/07/06.

<sup>374</sup> Nasser's speech, March 27, 1969. Quoted in (Lukacs, 1992: 404).

<sup>375</sup> Nasser, March 27, 1969. Quoted in (Lukacs, 1992: 402).

<sup>376</sup> Quoted in (Woodward, 1992: 115).

<sup>377</sup> Nasser's speech on April 15 1968. Quoted in (Nasr, 1987: 41).

<sup>378</sup> Nasser's speech on July 23 1970. Quoted in (Nasr, 1987: 35).

*l'objet de massacres ou de persécutions. La cause de la situation actuelle est du fait qu'Israël a occupé la Palestine et a chassé le peuple palestinien de son territoire, tout en reniant ses droits et a décidé de recourir à une politique de la force en tuant femmes et enfants afin de terroriser le peuple ”.*

### **6.7. People**

The defeat of the Six Day War had a tremendous impact to the Arab people and of course to Egyptians. Since the coup of the Free Officers, they were nourished with the idea of the independency from the 'imperialist' forces and the disappearance of the Zionist State. Now all hopes were dissolved. The defeat seemed more humiliating, as the mass media in the preceding years had convinced the Egyptian people for the weakness of the Israeli army (James, 2005). The victory of Israel and the presence of Soviet officers made evaporate the glory that was given by the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company and the political win in the war of 1956.

Despite the general disappointment, the Egyptians reacted massively against Nasser's decision to demission. Fifteen years of propaganda had their results. In popular imaginary, Nasser was the Egyptian leader who had given them dignity, independency from the British occupation, improvement of their welfare and justice. He was the one who distributed land to the poor farmers, who ended the monarchy, who nationalised the Suez Canal, who gave the power to the Egyptians, who spoke to them in their language; he was an Egyptian.

Nevertheless, the popular consensus given to Nasser did not last long. The new policies adopted by the regime and the economic penury produced popular indignation. Nasser, in his effort to gain the popular support, adopted new populist policies such as the rise of salaries in the public sector. Following Beattie, this policy can be also read as Nasser's effort to break the popular cohesion, by creating an economic division separating the poor from the poorest (Beattie, 1994: 189).

These measures brought a temporally calm in the country. However, the situation was complicated and the empty state purse limited the margins for action. The decline of the American aid and the economic conjuncture compelled new restrictions of the populist policies. Thus policies of distribution of ration cards and a parallel reduction of food subsidies was applied.

In 1968, a massive manifestation<sup>379</sup> took place in Heliwan, near Cairo, where workers of the military industries demonstrated their anger for the gentle treatment of the Military Court towards the air force officers. Following Kepel, *"[I]t was the first demonstration in more than a decade that organized masses, unsupervised by government supporters, had taken to the streets in a demonstration*

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<sup>379</sup> It was the first large demonstration since Nagib incident.

whose aim was not to express people's unconditional support for the president's latest initiative"(Kepel, 2003: 131).

Nasser's answer in this manifestation was a populist one<sup>380</sup>, taking the demonstrators side against the police who attacked them (Dabus, 1993). In autumn of the same year, there was another manifestation, with an important presence of the Muslim Brotherhood. In this context, a third agrarian reform was announced, accompanied with different strategies such as Nasser's self-criticism<sup>381</sup>, aiming to regain the confidence of people.

Nevertheless, Nasser's main card was Israel. He had, at least, to demonstrate some effort to re-conquer the Egyptian territory, occupied by the Israeli forces. The War of Attrition helped the *rais* to regain some of his lost credibility. As mentioned by Waterbury, the war of Attrition was "*in part [a] ploy to deflect popular scrutiny from the domestic scene and appeal to national unity*"(Waterbury, 1983: 331).

The death of Nasser, on September 28<sup>th</sup> 1970, the day of the ninth anniversary of the dissolution of United Arab Republic, shocked the Egyptian people. His loss signalled the end of an era that had filled the Egyptians with pride. The announcement of his death from Sadat filled the streets of Cairo with people crying and at the same time screaming: "*Abu Khaled, you are still alive!*" (Lacouture, 1973).

## **6.8. International Friends**

The war of 1967 changed the balance of power in the region, with the increase of the Soviet moral prestige and the drop of the American one<sup>382</sup>. The American government, the closest ally of Israel, was now perceived as an imperialist or neo-colonial power by the Arab population. The policy adopted at the beginning of the 50's by the American administrations, under the 'principle' of the right of the auto-determination for the nations, was left to the past. Once the influence of the European 'allies' had been limited, the American centres of power could pursue their own colonial policy, adopting a new pattern. The *vide de puissance* left by the decline of the European influence gave to Washington the opportunity to become the western leader in the region.

Despite the negative image of Washington, for the Arab elites the message of the defeat on the Six Day War was the triumph of Washington and their friends against Moscow and the 'radical' Arab regimes. It became more clear than ever that the collaboration with Washington was indispensable (Johnson, 1972). The

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<sup>380</sup> Nasser also promised raise of salaries (Waterbury, 1983).

<sup>381</sup> On March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1968, Nasser criticised himself for having allowed the development of a parasite class of military politicians who were responsible for the problems (Laurens, 1991).

<sup>382</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Mauritania, Yemen Republic broke their official relations with USA (Al-Marayati, 1984).



maintenance of the Arab leader's power was passing obligatorily through an alignment with the American administration.

In this context, Nasser being officially vanquished by the military conflict with Israel and, at the same time, facing important internal and external pressures had to revise his relations with Washington. Furthermore, his weakness towards Israel made the American diplomatic support indispensable, as the American government was the necessary component for the peace, contrary to Moscow that was the key agent of the war.

However, the American help did not come and, furthermore, in this occasion Washington did not force Israel to withdraw its troops from the occupied territories, as it did after the 1956 war. This time, the American interests and priorities were different and the closure of Suez Canal was now in their benefit. This, since the Suez Canal constituted the principal way of the Soviet help to Vietnam<sup>383</sup>, one of the main external preoccupations of the American government (Laurens, 1991). Moreover, the temporally limited oil embargo imposed by the Arab leaders did not really harm the American interests, since there was not an American dependency to the Arab oil, by the time (McNamara, 2000). On the contrary, Washington increased the oil supplies to Western Europe and England that were touched by the relative raise of oil's price.

The pressures on behalf of the American pro-Israeli lobby increased, due to the Israeli dependency towards the American related sectors for politic, military and economic aid. This dependency was particularly reinforced on account of the coldness of the relations between Tel Aviv and Paris. The weapon sales became a prosperous business for the military American elites and, at the same time, the Israeli wars constituted an excellent testing campus for the American military equipment (Zunes, 1996).

The strict positive relation between Washington's and Tel Aviv's interests limited Nasser's margins to obtain the American official help. His already damaged image in the region could be worsened by a direct call to the American government. Until his death, Nasser used several indirect ways<sup>384</sup> to approach Washington. The rigid American position towards Nasser was extended in different areas, among others by limiting the already decreased economic help. In the period 1968-1972, Washington gave only \$ 9.9 million to the Egyptian government (Abdalla, 1982).

Nasser's incapacity to obtain an American help forced him to turn, for once more, to Moscow. As we have underlined previously, Moscow had used the hostilities between the different regional elites to distract Washington's attention,

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<sup>383</sup> After the Six Day War, the American government restored its attention towards the Middle East region as a fruitful way to disorientate the public opinion from the Vietnam War (Izquierdo, 2005).

<sup>384</sup> Besides the policies of *infitah*, that represented an indirect appeal to Washington, Nasser reopened his relations with the British (November 1967) hoping to warm his relations with the Americans (Woodward, 1992).

hoping that the latter would relax its actions in Vietnam. Despite the defeat of its allies and the clear demonstration of the Soviet military inferiority, the aftermath of the war had benefited Moscow. The Soviet government remained the unique provider of military and political support towards the Arab states (Izquierdo, 2005). However, Moscow's decision to cut off its relations with Israel was, following Hinnebusch, a tremendous mistake, as the American government was left as the only superpower to maintain relations with both parts (Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, 2002: 183).

In this period, the extension of the Soviet influence inside Egypt was tremendous. The increasing necessities of Nasser, along with his isolation from Washington, transformed the old relationship of alliance between Nasser and the Soviet government to one of dependency<sup>385</sup>. Nasser, in his aim to extract the maximum Soviet help, tried to attribute the defeat of his army to Moscow, his military furnisher.

Nasser's political reorientation, due to the internal pressures and the regional context, preoccupied Moscow for an eventual isolation from the Egyptian scene and, consequently, from the regional one. Therefore, the Soviets started mobilising different strategies to reassure their influence, one of them being to project the Muslim elements of the Soviet Union so as to demonstrate a non-atheistic identity<sup>386</sup>.

The consequent Soviet aid was not limited to military and economic level but also resulted in the important presence of Soviet experts<sup>387</sup>. The size of the Soviet military aid was so significant that, by the end of 1968, all Egyptian losses had been restored. Nevertheless, as Corm underlines, the military help offered to Nasser was mainly a defensive one (Corm, 2003: 274).

Nasser's alignment with Moscow was declared officially after the war<sup>388</sup> *"[...] our policies were, in fact, based in our national interest and the principles of non-alignment which allow for friendship with the Soviet Union. Now we have seen Israel attack us and occupy our territories, with the consent of the United States [...] we feel it is not logical to maintain neutrality between those who strike us and those who help us"*.

The aftermath of the war helped the French government to restore partially its moral image in the region. Earlier, on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, De Gaulle had declared<sup>389</sup> *"Any nation, anywhere in the world, that uses arms first will have neither [France's] approval nor its support"*. De Gaulle refused to honour his obligation towards

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<sup>385</sup> Another factor that has to be considered was Nasser's medical condition known only to the Soviets as he had visited twice the Soviet hospitals for treatment (Beattie, 1994).

<sup>386</sup> The grand Mufti of Tashkent was sent to Cairo to speak in al-Azhar emphasising the solidarity of the Soviet Islamic community with the Arab brothers.

<sup>387</sup> The military aid was accompanied by 3000 advisers (Woodward, 1992).

<sup>388</sup> Quoted in (Ismael, 1986: 178-179).

<sup>389</sup> Quoted in (Rondot, 1987: 88).

Israel and her rights to the Aqaba gulf, out of fear that a war would provoke spill over effects to Maghreb, belonging in France's sphere of influence, and maybe to the black Africa. Thus, he announced his neutrality towards the war and, later, did not recognise the occupied territories of Israel.

The declining French aid towards Israel was totally stopped after the war. The change of attitude came as a component of different reasons. On the one hand, there was the American monopoly on the Israeli military affairs. On the other hand, Paris was facing internal economic and social problems, which forced the government to diminish the military expenses, among which the nuclear program. As it is mentioned by McNamara, *"The French no longer needed Israeli help for their own nuclear project. The end of the Algerian war had seen France's relationship with the Arab world improved dramatically. Israel had also lessened her dependence on French arms with much of her military equipment sourced from the USA and Britain"* ((McNamara, 2000: 266-267). Abandoning the Israeli ties, Paris had the opportunity to improve her relations, especially the economic ones, with the Arabs.

The war had certainly harmed the British interests. The closure of Suez Canal provoked many economic problems to the Kingdom, which, by the end of 1967, abandoned its role to the Middle East.

Nasser's necessities were rising, since he had to confront with internal problems and regain his prestige. The fulfilment of his aim was passing through a victory towards Israel. The war of Attrition served this aim and simultaneously presupposed a greater Soviet help. Moreover, through this military operation Nasser was hoping to attract to the region the attention of the great powers. The reinforcement of the Soviet presence in the region preoccupied Washington, a fact that enabled Nasser to negotiate in better terms with them. Therefore, the task was accomplished, even though none of them could persuade Israel to negotiate with the affected Arabs (Izquierdo, 2005).

The negotiations between Moscow and Washington started in April 1969, with a limited participation of Paris and London (Ismael, 1986). The negotiations were focused on American pressures towards Israel to halt the bombings, as Moscow was preoccupied that the conflict could provoke a clash between the two superpowers. In this context, Rogers plan was proposed in December 1969. The plan was an American interpretation of the United Nations' resolution 242390 *"[...] our policy is to encourage the Arabs to accept a permanent peace based on a binding agreement and to urge the Israelis to withdraw from occupied territories when their territorial integrity is assured as envisaged by the Security Council resolution. [...] The Security Council resolution neither endorses nor precludes these armistice lines [those of 1949] as the definitive political boundaries. However, it calls for withdrawal from occupied territories, the nonacquisition of territory by war, and*

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<sup>390</sup> "The Rogers Plan: Address by Secretary of State Rogers, Washington, D.C., 9 December, 1969". Quoted in (Lukacs, 1992: 44).

*the establishment of secure and recognized boundaries. We believe that while recognized boundaries must be established, and agreed upon by the parties, any changes in the pre-existing lines should not reflect the weight of conquest and should be confined to insubstantial alterations required for mutual security. We do not support expansionism. We believe troops must be withdrawn as the resolution provides [...]”.*

However, Washington’s attitude was limited in proposals avoiding to enforce the Israeli withdrawal from the territories, by leaving formally the matter to the United Nations. The only exceptions to this were the cancelling of the plane sales<sup>391</sup> to Israel, in March 1970, by Nixon and the non interference of the Americans into the War of Attrition, after the Soviet intervention<sup>392</sup>. These gestures can be interpreted as a demonstration of Washington’s intentions to reward Nasser’s efforts (Bar-Siman-Tov, 1984).

The last year of his life, Nasser was appealing openly to the American government for aid. The acceptance of the Rogers Plan by Nasser<sup>393</sup>, despite the rejection of the Arab Socialist Union, was one of the many efforts he made, so as to approach Washington. Moreover, this was also a way to end the war of Attrition that had important costs for his regime<sup>394</sup>.

However, the non-cooperation of Tel Aviv and the incapacity of Washington to force its collaboration increased Nasser’s needs in military equipment. In January 1970, Nasser visited secretly Moscow for a new arms deal<sup>395</sup>. In exchange, Nasser offered to Moscow a naval base in the Mediterranean Sea (Al-Sayyid Marsot, 1985). By his death, the Soviet officers were involved in all levels of defence planning and the Soviet presence in Egypt was superior to the British one in 1954 (Derriennic, 1980). However, Nasser’s opening to Washington prepared the field to Sadat’s pro-American policies.

## **6.9. Arab Circle**

The defeat of 1967 changed the balance of power in the region. Although the war was effectuated mainly by Jordan and Egypt<sup>396</sup>, it was perceived as an Arab *nakba*<sup>397</sup>. The disastrous outcome of the war left no margins for accusations of

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<sup>391</sup> However, Washington gave \$100 million in counterbalance (Quandt, 1971).

<sup>392</sup> Soviet intervention was materialized by the operational handling of missile sites.

<sup>393</sup> M. Heikal sustained that Nasser accepted the plan because he knew that Israel would reject as it deprived her of all her conquests(Heikal, 1980).

<sup>394</sup> Between others one million habitants in the zone of Suez Canal were obliged to leave their homes as a consequence of the Israeli attacks.

<sup>395</sup> Moscow accepted a further help after Nasser’s threat to resign (Bar-Siman-Tov, 1984).

<sup>396</sup> On the 1<sup>st</sup> of June Jordan had signed a defence pact with Egypt so as to avoid the civil war. Three days later, Iraq also signed a pact with Egypt, even though the Iraqi participation in the war was really limited (Laurens, 1991).

<sup>397</sup> The loss of 1948 was named Naksa, the disaster.

treason<sup>398</sup> between the king of Jordan and Nasser.

Two months after the official cease of fire, the Arab leaders were gathered in Khartoum to examine the situation and to negotiate in new terms. The meeting signalled the official ending of the Arab Cold War and a new era in the intra-Arab relations. Moreover, the conference underlined the victory of the conservative Arab regimes and the demolition of the discourse of the Arab nationalism, promoted mainly by Nasser<sup>399</sup>. The terms were imposed by the conservative elites, headed by Faisal. He had been the Arab winner of the war<sup>400</sup>, as his power and influence were reinforced.

Nasser had not been a victor of the Arab arena. He was accused by the Arab rivals for his arrogant attitude and his lapse of faith and Islamic tradition (Kepel, 2003). One of the first negative outcomes was the removal of the Egyptian army from Yemen. However, probably Nasser needed a way to unblock himself from the disastrous consequence of the Yemen war. The removal of the Egyptian army from Yemen offered him a minimal basis to negotiate with Faisal. Moreover, Nasser's dependency on petrodollars obliged him to change his radical discourse to anti-Zionist one, following Faisal's exigencies. However, his change was a progressive one. Later, the acceptance of UN's Resolution 242<sup>401</sup> from Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, against the Palestinian opinion, weakened the pan-Arabic discourse even more (Kepel, 2003).

One of the important results of the meeting was the decision of using the oil as the principal instrument of political pressure to the Western powers. This policy was not really welcomed by the petrodollar leaders, but they could not afford the eventual reactions of the Arab population regarding their leaders' passivity. The measure, therefore, was adopted for a limited period under the pretext that the continuation of the policy would constitute a *casus belli* for the West (Corm, 2003).

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<sup>398</sup> Nasser or Amer had falsely informed the Hussein about the war situation as they had done with the Egyptian people (Laurens, 1991).

<sup>399</sup> Following Martín Muñoz, the outcome of the war signalled the moral victory of the Syrian Ba'ath for the leadership of the nationalist discourse (Martin-Muñoz, 1992: 228).

<sup>400</sup> The raise of the importance of petrol augmented Faisal's power. In 1964 Saudi Arabia's revenue coming from petrol was \$ 0.5 milliard and in 1970 another \$1.1 milliard was added to these (Corm, 2003).

<sup>401</sup> The Resolution 242 of the Security Council (S/Res/242), November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1967, was voted on November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1967 by unanimity of the members of the Security Council. The principal elements of the resolution were:

" [...] the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles:

i) Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied (in the French language: des territoires occupés) in the recent conflict;

ii) Termination of all claims of states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force [...]".

Heikal, referring to the Khartoum Conference, said in 1975<sup>402</sup> *“Une formule pour arriver a la fin des hostilités au Yémen fut préparée et les pays producteurs convieront qu’au lieu d’interrompre leurs livraison de pétrole a l’Ouest -comme l’avait suggéré les partisans de l’usage de l’armée du pétrole –ils feraient mieux de soutenir financièrement les pays qui ont souffert de l’agression israélienne [...]”*. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were to pay £ 135 million to the states principally affected by the war, out of which Egypt would take £ 95 millions (Woodward, 1992).

*Nakba* and the Khartoum Conference united the previously divided Arab world under the pretext of the Israeli threat. In this context, the policy decided by the Arab leaders against Tel Aviv can be summarised into three no: no peace with Israel, no direct negotiations with Israel and no recognition of the Israeli State. Despite the official three ‘no’, the Arab League was implicitly accepting and recognising the Jewish state, inside the limits of the green line, and the necessity to collaborate with Washington (Johnson, 1972).

In the dawn of the war Nasser and Hussein began to collaborate, since both were suffering from the common humiliation towards their people and from similar problems. The acceptance of Rogers<sup>403</sup> plan from Hussein, which was promoting bilateral relations between the interested parties, generated social unrest inside Jordan, particularly in the regions controlled by the Palestinians. Hussein, to avoid further problems with Tel Aviv, tried to control the situation looking for a pretext to effectuate his move.

The pretext for Hussein was given, on September 6<sup>th</sup> 1970, when three planes were obliged to return to Zarka, in Jordan (Derriennic, 1980). For twelve days, Jordan<sup>404</sup> was under a civil war. The Black September, where 3.000 Palestinians were slaughtered, ended with the total elimination of the Palestinian guerrillas of Jordan, in June 1971. The incident represented an important strike for the Arab unity, mostly for the Arab people. It was an Arab state, and not the Zionist one, that caused one of the major losses to the Palestinian nation (Kepel, 2003). The Arab leaders officially disapproved Hussein’s actions but no state offered official help to the Palestinians<sup>405</sup>.

## **6.10. Israel and Palestine**

By the time that the Six Day War took place, Israel was facing internal

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<sup>402</sup> Quoted in (Flory et al., 1990: 174).

<sup>403</sup> Nasser was, since June 1967, recommending Hussein to negotiate with Washington the Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, aiming to facilitate the process of regaining Sinai.

<sup>404</sup> Hussein also received American help. The sixth fleet was mobilized so as to communicate the Soviets to pressure Syria not to interfere. Also Kissinger offered guarantees that Israel would not take advantage of the situation for attacking Jordan (Izquierdo, 2005).

<sup>405</sup> However, Iraq and Syrian army interfered with their tanks having the mark of the Palestinian Liberation Army (Quandt, 1971).

problems<sup>406</sup> and the war was used as a strategy to disorientate the population, as the Israeli authorities were assured of the limited military capacities of their rivals. The defeated Arab armies were surprised by the velocity and efficiency of the Israeli army to destroy their aerial forces, fact that provoked suspicions for an American and British participation. Washington had agreed with the war enterprise, partially as a way to damage Nasser's image. However, it had not agreed for Golan and West Bank occupation. Therefore, the incident of *Liberty*<sup>407</sup> can be only justified as Tel Aviv's effort to avoid further complications from the American side, as they had not approved the occupation of the latter territories.

Israel's victory stimulated the religious feelings, as finally the saint city of Jerusalem was under the Jewish occupation<sup>408</sup>. At an international level, besides the indirect Arab recognition of the Israeli State, the Israeli military victory was seen as the '*pequeño David israelí, aliado del bloque occidental, asediado por el terrible Goliat árabe, que estaba apoyado por el enemigo soviético*' (Izquierdo, 2005: 67). In the aftermath of the war, Israel was occupying territories of Egypt and Jordan. Additionally, Tel Aviv continued to provoke the Arab regimes demonstrating their incapacity to respond to a fundamental task of any government: preserve its sovereignty in its frontiers.

The Israeli provocations and Nasser's incapacity to react, as the international agents refused their help, were depriving the latter from one of his basic tools to consolidate his power in a domestic but also in a regional level. The Palestinian question constituted Nasser's basic instrument of policy. However, the Khartoum Conference, where the Palestinian Liberation Organisation had been established as an independent agent and Nasser's previous refusal for a strict collaboration deprived him of the control over the Palestinian elites. The defeat had introduced changes inside PLO, where Fatah and other Palestinian guerrillas groups increased their influence.

In June of 1968, the fourth National Palestinian Council in Cairo confirmed the radicalisation of the Palestinian policy<sup>409</sup>. The article 9 defined "*Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine and is therefore a strategy and not tactics. The Palestinian Arab people affirms its absolute resolution and abiding determination to pursue the armed struggle and to march forward towards the armed popular revolution, to liberate its homeland and return to it [to maintain] its right to a natural life in it, and to exercise its right of self-determination in it and*

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<sup>406</sup> There were rumours that the government of Eshkol would fall (McNamara, 2000).

<sup>407</sup> Following F. Izquierdo, the attack of Liberty was one of the most bizarre episodes in the relations between Israel and USA. On June 8<sup>th</sup> Israeli forces attacked the American ship aiming at the destruction of the evidences of the Israeli provocations towards Jordan and Syrians. Washington did not react at all and also tried to cover the incident (Izquierdo, 2005: 101).

<sup>408</sup> The victory had also positive results to the economic sectors on the one hand due to the confidence of the economic circles to invest and the cheap work force offered by the Palestinians on the occupied territories (Derriennic, 1980).

<sup>409</sup> "The Palestinian National Covenant, 1968". Quoted in (Lukacs, 1992: 292).

*sovereignty over it*". One year later, Arafat was elected as president of PLO.

The establishment of PLO as agent in the Palestinian question generated problems to Israel, until now negotiating mostly with the Egyptian and Jordan governments, and obliged Tel Aviv to deal with an organisation not disposed to be diplomatic. The main objectives of Fatah and PLO, after the defeat of 1967, were the retirement of Israel from the occupied territories and the avoidance of the peace treaty by the Arab states with Israel (Izquierdo, 2005). As Arafat once told<sup>410</sup>: *"They should have withdrawn (Israel) [...] All of the regimes would have made peace on those terms if they had been offered it. [...] We should have been finished (Fatah and the movement of the Palestinian Liberation) and our cause would have been lost"*.

The War of Attrition against Israel, initiated by Nasser in March 1969 taking advantage of his numerical superiority, helped Nasser's regime to recover a part of its lost prestige. Despite, once more, the military defeat<sup>411</sup>, Nasser won the battle at the political level. Israel replied by attacking civilian infrastructure<sup>412</sup>, aiming to weaken Nasser, but the strategy had the opposite results, as the Egyptians were coiled to Nasser.

Eventually, Tel Aviv's dependency towards the American government finally obliged it to accept the cease fire decision (Bar-Siman-Tov, 1984). Nevertheless, the Israeli compromise was limited, as Rogers plan, proposed on the bases of an Israeli defeat, was rejected by Tel Aviv. The plan was soliciting the withdrawal of the Israeli troops from the occupied territories, the mutual administration of Jerusalem by Israel and Jordan and peace negotiations without territorial conditions. The absence of real American pressures gave Israel the opportunity to continue his no-compromising policy.

The Palestinians were, in this period, a significant problem, especially since 400.000 refugees in Jordan became more radical after the guerrilla operations turned out to be fruitful (Woodward, 1992). The creation of Palestinian military bases in the south of Lebanon, since the end of 1968, was accelerating the instability in the country. The attack on an Israeli plane in Athens, in December of 1968, provoked the reaction of Israel, who bombed the international airport of Beirut. The incident produced internal problems in Lebanon but, contrary to the Israeli wishes, reinforced the Palestinians (Derriennic, 1980).

Simultaneously, Fatah effectuated attacks towards Israeli targets from their military installations in Jordan. In May of 1968, Israeli attacks against Karrame found a strong Arab resistance, formed by Palestinians and the Jordan army<sup>413</sup>.

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<sup>410</sup> Quoted in (Izquierdo, 2005: 91).

<sup>411</sup> The war of Attrition had marked important losses to the two bands similar to these of the war of 1967 (Derriennic, 1980).

<sup>412</sup> The aerial attacks of Israel led to the evacuation of the cities in close proximity to the Canal of Suez and approximately one million inhabitants were forced to abandon the area.

<sup>413</sup> The incident was celebrated as an Arab victory and Hussein declared his solidarity to the fedayins.



Fatah and other small groups had replaced the vacuum of the Nasserism, fact that offered them a relative independency. This freedom of actuation, along with the military capacity demonstrated by the Palestinian guerrillas, generated harsh Israeli reprisals towards Jordan.

In this context, Nasser's acceptance of Rogers Plan deteriorated his relations with PLO, since the latter conceived the plan as an effort to isolate the Palestinian question from the conflict. The Palestinian rejection of the plan and the criticism followed amplified the gap between Nasser and PLO<sup>414</sup> (Brown, 1988). This gap of communication occasioned Nasser's approval for Hussein's attack, with the Israeli and American help.

However, Nasser continued, until the end of his life, exercising his role as father of the Arab union, trying to mediate the reconciliation between the Palestinian authorities and the Lebanese and Jordanian ones. These efforts were materialised in the meetings of Cairo, in November 1969, with the Lebanese and Arafat, and the 27<sup>th</sup> September 1970, with Arafat and Hussein.

Nevertheless, Nasser was conscious that a solution to the Palestinian matter was going to be late. At the end of the summer of 1970, Nasser told with irony to Arafat<sup>415</sup> *"Combien d'années vous faudra-t-il pour détruire l'État sioniste et édifier un nouvel État unifié et démocratique sur l'ensemble de la Palestine libre? Vous menez une politique irréaliste et un mini-État en Cisjordanie et a Gaza vaut mieux que rien"*.

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<sup>414</sup> Nasser, to avoid further criticism, shut down the radio of PLO in Cairo.

<sup>415</sup> Quoted in (Iyad, 1978: 130).

## **7. The counter revolution 1970-1973**

The sudden death of the regime's leading figure increases the competitive dynamic among primary actors struggling to fill the power empty created. On the same time, the primary elites try to preserve the status quo in order to avoid radical changes on power distribution. Consequently, collaboration among these elites becomes once more indispensable.

This process enables different secondary elites to increase their influence, while others are evicted from the power competition. Progressively a new hegemonic elite group is formed, composed by figures of the previous and the new regime. Regional events become important factors of the consolidation of a new hegemonic figure.

### **7.1. Army**

In the aftermath of the 1967 war, Israel was occupying important part of the Egyptian territory, practically the totality of the Sinai Peninsula. The War of Attrition preserved temporarily Nasser's prestige but Sinai's recovery remained an open issue. This reality represented an important handicap for Cairo, due to the economic losses but not less due to the humiliating situation as well as the high degree of alert caused by the military Israeli presence on the Egyptian territory.

The Egyptian regime was therefore in the need of an immediate solution in regards to the Israeli occupation. On the one hand, Sinai's recovery would satisfy the officers by regaining the army's prestige and, on the other hand, regime's leader would obtain popular support, by accomplishing the main role of the state and the army, this of protecting the territorial integrity of the country. Moreover, Sinai's recuperation would bring to a halt the economic drain caused by the closure of Suez Canal, the lost of oil fields and the economic burden coming from army's military activity.

The military defeat of 1967 humiliated the Egyptian army domestically and internationally, and war produced important changes in the military ranks. Amer's elimination, which was followed by the removal of his supporters, gave the leading role to Nasser's allies, closer to a leftist orientation. On the same time, Nasser's need to recover a part of the military prestige by effectuating limited but continuous military operations against Israel had opened widely the doors to Moscow. Under the absence of alternative provider of military equipment, this move had as main result the increase of the dependency of Cairo on Moscow, highlighted among others by the important presence of Russian officers inside the Egyptian territory.

In this context came the nomination of Anwar al-Sadat as the new President of the Republic and Supreme Commander of the Armed forces. Sadat's appointment was not base only in constitutional provisions. His nomination was the outcome of an agreement between the two main fractions of regime, pro-liberal and pro-socialist, despite Sadat's anti-communist fame. The agreement on Sadat's leadership was based on the assumption that the new president could be easily controlled, since up to then Anwar al-Sadat had shown limited dynamism (Hinnebusch, 1985).

At the beginning of the new president's mandate there was an apparent continuity of Nasser's policies, giving time to the main competitors to regroup and form alliances. Another reason for this apparent continuity was the need of the regime's main components to preserve a high degree of cooperation as means to maintain control. For this reason many of the institutional figures, among them General Mohamed Fawzi- Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and the Minister of Defence and Military Production, remained on their position, despite

their 'communist' profile.

The initial general agreement on Sadat's presidency did not purge the power competition among the different elites, since the main actors continued to act in order to increase their respective power capacities. Consequently, at the beginning of Sadat's mandate the two main fractions of the regime continued to compete but on the same time preserved a high degree of coherence: On the one hand, there was Ali Sabri<sup>416</sup> and Fawzi who had the main control over the Egyptian coercive apparatuses, aiming the continuation of the 'socialist' orientation. On the other hand, there was Sadat with General Sadiq Minister of War and opponent of Nasser's socialist orientation<sup>417</sup>, and the pro-liberal fraction who were trying to gain field opting for a more liberal profile of Egypt.

The right wing and Sadat found a common interest in limiting the 'leftist' influence. Therefore, the new *rais* collaborated with the 'liberal' officers, who had lost field after Amer's elimination, as means to increase his influence. Their collaboration was not automatically gained. Sadat in order to achieve the support from the part of the officers and progressively install his control over the military apparatus, restored most of the 1.000 officers held responsible for *naksa* (Beattie, 2000: 48). In this way, Sadat returning them their official posts could receive their gratitude and collaboration.

However, this move could not secure Sadat's control over the army, because those held responsible for the defeat were second-ranking officers. Therefore, other strategies had to be applied, such as promises for the autonomy of the military apparatus with a parallel increase of army's prestige. On the same time, and in order to gain influence at the police apparatus, Sadat tried to connect the second-rank officers with the Minister of Interior and promoted anti-Sabri elements in high positions (Hinnebusch, 1985: 43). In parallel, the new *rais* increased the economic capacities of the army and worked on persuading the officers for an immediate military activity against Israel.

The antagonism between the two main fractions was expressed, among others, by different positions regarding military action against Israel. On the one hand, the Sabri's group was in favour of reopening the War of Attrition. Being aware that a direct and generalised military victory against Israel was feasible, they opted for limited military action, an already tasted practice. On the other hand, Sadat and his allies were orientated in the prolongation of 'no war-no peace' situation. Sadat's attitude was explained by the limited support in the military field. Victories of the Egyptian army would mean increase of the power capabilities of his intra-regime rivals, who were controlling in a large degree the military apparatus. On the contrary, a new defeat would have also negative effects

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<sup>416</sup> Ali Sabri was officer of the Egyptian army and Nasser's close associate. He was appointed Secretary General of the Arab Socialist Union in 1965 and he was heading the Executive Bureaus. Ali Sabri became vice-president after Sadat took the presidency (Ansari, 1986).

<sup>417</sup> General Sadiq was member of an influential landowner family.

on Sadat's survival, because he would be held responsible. In this context, the new president decided the renewal of the ceasefire with Israel<sup>418</sup>.

Two main episodes aided Sadat and his allies to change the balance of power on their favour: the discovery of a plot prepared by Sabri's allies and the negative feelings created inside the military corpus by the presence of Soviet officers. The reveal of the plot, real or false<sup>419</sup>, enabled Sadat to effectuate his famous 'palace coup' by jailing the Minister of War Muhammad Fawzi under the accusation of preparing putsch (Chartouni-Dubarry, 2001: 38). In this way, Sadat and the pro-liberal wing of the regime managed to limit the role of Sabri and his allies inside the military apparatus, increasing on the same time the 'liberal' influence.

The expulsion of the Soviets, 15.000-20.000 technical and military personal, was a move targeting the officers' collaboration, who in their majority were annoyed by the presence of the Russian officers<sup>420</sup>. The decision humiliated publicly the Moscow and on the same time raised Sadat's prestige not only in the military field but also on a popular level as the presence and the attitude of the Russians was irrigating the Egyptians.

Sadat's decision had another target also. According to Heikal the expulsion was made after secret the negotiations between Cairo and Washington (Heikal, 1980: 285). This testimony highlights Sadat's urge to send a clear message to Washington of what his intentions were, e.g. dissociate Cairo from Moscow's control with the parallel increase of the collaboration with Washington.

Sadat's move on expulsing the Soviet experts had many positive effects. On the one hand, Washington seemed satisfied from the president's decision. On the other, Moscow as means to avoid complete break with Cairo, in the aftermath of the expulsion furnished important military equipment. Moscow's gesture along with Sadat's move helped the rais to increase his influence on the military field.

The progressive control over the military apparatus altered the president's interests and policies. The arrogance of the Israeli side, denying any concession regarding Sinai Peninsula along with the Egyptian frustration on the matter prepared the field for a military attack against the Israeli forces<sup>421</sup>. A military clash was now on Sadat's favour, as a probable victory would increase his power capabilities.

Despite Sadat's necessity to gain support from the military ranks the president was suspicious of the officers' support and their future capacities. Therefore, during his mandate he tried to reduce the military presence at least at

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<sup>418</sup> After intense negotiations with the Israeli and American representatives, which concluded to a generous American reward of \$500 million, Anwar al-Sadat renewed the ceasefire for 90 days and later for another month (Hartley et al., 2004).

<sup>419</sup> The rumours of the putsch against Sadat were never verified. For more information see (Beattie, 2000: 62-67) and (Heikal, 1983: 47).

<sup>420</sup> Earlier, a group of officers, headed by the War Minister, communicated clearly to Sadat their will to end the soviet control (Hinnebusch, 1985).

<sup>421</sup> The few officers opposed to the war scenario were replaced (Uri, 2006: 547).

the civilian field. Indicative to the matter is that in the new cabinet of January 1972 the military presence was the lowest since 1952 and continued to decline with the exception of the year 1973 (Cooper, 1982: 208).

## 7.2. State

Nasser's sudden death did not cause institutional problems. Following the constitutional provisions, vice-president Anwar al-Sadat was named the new president of Egypt. However, the institutional arrangements could not guarantee Sadat's permanence. His nomination was fruit of an agreement between the two main fractions of the regime as we mentioned previously: from the one side there were those headed by Ali Sabri<sup>422</sup>, member of the Free Officers group, senior member of the Arab Socialist Union and recently appointed vice-president, gathering around him pro-socialist orientated elites and counting on the support of the majority of the Free Officers, important ministers, Ahmad Kamel chief of the police, Sami Sharif minister of Presidential Affairs, War Minister Mohamed Fawzi (Hinnebusch, 1985: 40-41). On the other side, there was the pro-liberal fraction of the Egyptian regime headed by Anwar al-Sadat<sup>423</sup>, president of the country also member of the Free Officers' group, having the support of more conservative centres of the regime such as Hussein Shafai<sup>424</sup>, General Sadiq Minister of War and the liberal economic elites.

As we have already underscored, according to different scholars Sadat's presidency was accepted due to his reputation as 'yes-man', becoming an easy figure to control and manipulate<sup>425</sup>. Following Vatikiotis "*[w]hen Nasser died, his Mafia assumed that his successor, Sadat, could be brought under their control. They believed they could govern effectively with him as their front man*" (Vatikiotis, 1972: 85). This view is confirmed also by Hinnebusch's comments that the different groups that supported Sadat did so under the condition that there will be no continuation of Nasser's individualistic style of governance proposing "*a collective leadership in which the President would be held closely accountable to the rest of power elite, especially to the Supreme Executive Committee of ASU*" (Hinnebusch, 1985: 41). Sadat's presidency was officially confirmed by a national referendum held on 15 October 1970, with 90.4% of the voters approving the new *rais*.

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<sup>422</sup> In July 1969, Sabri had been caught of trying to bring in Egypt valuables from Soviet Union, which was according to Beattie the cause of non nomination as president of Egypt (Beattie, 2000).

<sup>423</sup> Sadat was the one to announce to the Egyptians the military seizing of power of 1952. He also served as deputy speaker (1958-1960), speaker of joint parliament of the United Arab Republic (1960-1961), speaker of the Egyptian National Assembly, chairman of the Islamic Conference Organisation, among other offices.

<sup>424</sup> Vice president of Egypt at the time.

<sup>425</sup> Regarding to this it is illustrating Hamdi Faud's opinion, chief foreign corresponded with Al-Ahram: "On one occasion in Sadat's absence, 'Ali Sabri was having tea with Soviet President Nikolai Podgornoy during his visit to Egypt. Someone spoke of the president [Sadat] and Sabri said, jokingly, 'What president?'"'. Quoted in (Beattie, 2000:45).

The predictions of Sadat's competitors regarding the president's docility were not confirmed, as it is historically known. During the first three years of his mandate Anwar al-Sadat accomplished to establish himself as one of the main actors of the Egyptian scene, challenging in the way his competitors. In the political field, Sadat followed the same policies as in the military: eliminating progressively his rivals forming in parallel coalitions with less influential political figures who had lost their importance during Nasser's mandate. In this way, Sadat's allies increased their influence raising on the same time the president's power capacities.

The efforts of Sabri's group to limit Sadat's institutional authorities and in this way maintain a relative equilibrium between the two groups were proven fruitless. As soon as Sadat's relative control over the military apparatus was achieved he moved on Sabri's removal from the office of vice-president. The attacked group responded with massive resignations aiming at an institutional crisis, which would oblige Sadat and his allies to compromise (Hinnebusch, 1985: 42). Yet nor this strategy was effective, and Sadat accomplished avoiding the crisis and eliminate some of the intra-regime rivals by the arrest of the 'dangerous' figures. His task was further facilitated by the reveal of a plot prepared by Sabri and his allies, as we previously saw.

Sadat's consolidation was progressive. Contrary to Beattie's view (2000: 39) that "*In less than eight months, he [Sadat] was in sole possession of all powers*", Sadat's control over the different resources of power was achieved only in the aftermath of the 1973 war. The official expulsion of Sabri did not automatically establish the control of Sadat and his allies. For instance the unique political party remained under the control of Sabri's group<sup>426</sup>. Therefore Sadat's group in order to limit the presence of their competitors and increase the presidential authorities proposed the creation of Federation of Arab Republics (FAR), composed by Egypt, Syria and Libya, in April 1971 (Bechtold, 1973). As it is upheld by Heikal, the plan of federation among the three countries, and later Sudan, was used by Sadat in order to change the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) institutionally (Heikal and Haykal, 1975). The creation of a federation could serve as valid pretext for the reorganisation of the political institutions, a practice also used by Nasser and the union with Syria.

Even though the plan of federation failed<sup>427</sup> Sadat accomplished partially his aims. He managed to recompose the ASU by controlled elections of the Central Committee, whose new members, having diverse political orientations, were positive in a progressive return to a multiparty political system. Moreover,

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<sup>426</sup> Our assumption is verified by Fahmy who underlined that one of Sadat's main political strategies in the power struggle with his competitors was the "*shifting of power from the governmental party (ASU) to the National Assembly and vice versa*" (Fahmy, 2001: 61).

<sup>427</sup> The federation was not compatible with Moscow's interests that viewed Qaddafi as a threat to the soviet influence (Goldschmidt, 2004: 160).

anticipated elections<sup>428</sup> took place aiming the expulsion of rival elements from the Majlis. Indicative is that about 200 members were not re-elected (Beattie, 2000:72).

Change was the main strategy of Sadat. Thus, just few months after his nomination, Sadat proceeded to institutional reforms: named the country from United Arab Republic to Arab Republic of Egypt, Majlis al-Umma became Majlis al-Sha'b, and introduced a new permanent constitution. The new constitution approved by referendum (99.8%) was reinforcing the presidential authorities<sup>429</sup>, guarantying the participation in the Majlis al-Sha'b of workers and peasants in 50% and opening the way for the reconstruction of the political system (Cooper, 1982 208).

'Communists' and 'nasserists' represented the most dangerous competitors for Sadat and his allies. The competition was not based on ideological differences but on the competitive interests of the two elite groups. Aiming the limitation of the 'nasserists' Sadat and his allies chose to counterbalance their influence through the collaboration with actors who were not welcomed by the previous regime. Sadat thus emphasised on the relations with deprived or weakened actors. He ousted thus leftist elements from the Arab Socialist Union, media sector and universities in his effort to avoid future implications. 'Communists' persecution, whether elites or simple sympathisers of socialism, was facilitated by the generalised anti-Soviet sentiments<sup>430</sup>.

Sadat's 'corrective revolution' in May 1971 was another strategy to purge rival figures. Though this initiative, power capabilities were redistributed by the return of the 'sequestered' properties, in 20<sup>th</sup> of December 1970, and the abolishment of the political restriction regarding wealthy families of the pre-1952 period. Moreover, the 'revolution' was accompanied by a significant relaxation of the political and civil repression, aiming the satisfaction of the allies and of course popular support. However, many of the repressive measures remained active along with constitutional arrangements increasing the presidential authorities (Martin-Muñoz, 1992: 297).

Furthermore, soon as Sadat took power he announced through the Interior Minister the end of the political isolation by the of 13.000 individuals, including members of islamist groups (Beattie, 2000: 81). Among the released were members of the Ikhwan a gesture which was appreciated as the beginning of

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<sup>428</sup> In those elections the participation touched the 45.1% (Martin-Muñoz, 1992: 299).

<sup>429</sup> The president of the Republic exercised the executive power (art. 137), the president continued to be elected with the at least 2/3 of the Assembly's votes and the decision was under rectification by referendum (art. 76). Also the president had the authority to name and relieve the ministers, the Prime minister and the Vice Presidents (art.141) and this of the Chief of the Armed Forces and the Police (art. 148-184) (Martin-Muñoz, 1992: 296).

<sup>430</sup> The negative image of the Soviets was also nourished with their personal behaviour, i.e. consuming alcohol in public view etc (Heikal and Haykal, 1975).



collaboration with Muslim Brotherhood<sup>431</sup>. Important outcome of Sadat's alliance with Brotherhood's leadership as well as his alliance with the Saudi King was the modification of constitution's second article which established Islam as *principal* resource of legislation, maintaining however sovereignty to the people.

### **7.3. Rent and Capital**

On the economic sphere, Sadat's efforts focused on attracting the pro-liberal economic elites on his side, already strong in the Egyptian scene, through the reintroduction of important landholders of the pre-1952 period. This kind of coalition had its basis mainly on two factors: firstly the pro-communist elites had connected their interests with Sabri and secondly the elites deprived from power during the Nasserist period were more interested in collaborating with Sadat in order to regain and/or increase their influence.

Elites connected with the private capital therefore were going to be Sadat's major allies, consolidating a long and lasting symbiosis between the private and public sector in Egypt. Sadat's nomination as President was immediately followed by the return of certain property seized through Nasser's agrarian reforms, as means to secure the support of the wealthy landowners and demonstrate his intentions for economy's liberalisation<sup>432</sup>. Thus, in 1971 nearly one million *feddans* had been distributed to almost 350.000 families (Hopwood, 1993: 126). Additionally, the new Plan for National Action was announced in June of the same year, drawing the socioeconomic pattern that Egypt was to follow in the next twenty years.

Sadat's personal ties<sup>433</sup> with wealthy landowners of pre-revolution era helped him to establish solid coalitions with important members of this sector, such as Sayyid Marei and Mohammed Hamid Mahmud, close associates of the president. The weight that particular members of this sector had on the Egyptian politics was demonstrated by their capacity to rebut all proposed policies that harmed their profits<sup>434</sup>. Furthermore, important were the loans given to private enterprises, which in just one fiscal year (1970-71) received the 71% of loans, a really high percentage, especially taking into consideration that this percentage was 18% in 1966-67<sup>435</sup> (Waterbury, 1983).

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<sup>431</sup> Additionally, Sadat appointed as head of the Youth Organisation Kemal Abu Al-Magd, Muslim Brotherhood's sympathiser.

<sup>432</sup> As it was underlined in the previous chapter, the policy of de-sequestration and the relative opening of the Egyptian economy had been started in the aftermath of Khartoum Conference.

<sup>433</sup> Indicatively it can be mentioned that Sadat's brother-in-law, Mahmud Abu Wafia, came from a wealthy landowning family.

<sup>434</sup> For instance the Agricultural Affairs Committee managed to increase land rent and to block the proposal of taxing the fruit trees in 1972, a very lucrative enterprise at the time (Hinnebusch, 1985: 149).

<sup>435</sup> Parallel was also the increase of illegal imports, up to 1973 were estimated up to £E 100 million per year (Waterbury, 1983:175).

The regime's interest in promoting coalitions with pro-liberal elements was not the only explicatory factor for the boosting of the private sector. The important economic aid coming from conservative Arab leaders, after the Khartoum Conference, demanded a price to be paid for their 'commitment' toward the Egyptian fellows. Facilitating private foreign investment and dismantling the 'socialist' orientation of Egypt were few signs of the Egyptian gratitude.

More particularly, foreign investment had been discouraged the previous years by limitations imposed to the benefits of foreign investors. For instance, in the sector of oil the foreign partner had to contract with the Egyptian Petroleum Company. In cases that oil was found the investor had to split gains with the Egyptian company after the covering of the expenses and in cases that no oil was found the foreign company absorbed the losses (Waterbury, 1983: 129).

Along with regime's efforts to stimulate private economic activities was the permanence of important companies under state's control. The dual character of the economic policies had its roots in regime's interest to ensure direct economic power and in parallel maintain state's clientelist functions. At the same time, especially in the first period of Sadat's mandate, the preservation of public companies was demonstrating the permanence of strong pro-socialist elements. This latter had expanded their activities also in private sectors, such as manufactory and artisanry, making important exportations towards the socialist countries<sup>436</sup>. In this way, Sadat's was to formulate new frame for the foreign investors satisfying the foreign and domestic demands for an economic opening, controlling on the same time the Egyptian economic activity through the public companies.

The limited and rushed economic measures taken by the new regime, did not alter the devastating the economic situation of Egypt and the average annual growth of GNP in the period 1966-1973 was less than 1% (Hamed, 1981: 1). The significant military burden<sup>437</sup> of the consecutive wars (Yemen, 1967, War of Attrition), the loss of Sinai's oil reserves, the closure of Suez and the absence of tourism due to the bellicose environment, were suffocating the Egyptian economy.

Sadat's decision to enter into war in 1973 was serving among others, a way out for the economic obstacles of the new Egyptian regime. It is not to oversee the plan of Port Said becoming a free zone and the project Suez- Mediterranean Pipeline (Sumed)<sup>438</sup> under consideration since 1968, both constrained by the Israeli military presence. As it was underlined by Sadat himself<sup>439</sup>, on 9th

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<sup>436</sup>During this period these exportation rose from £E 14 million to £E 50 million (Waterbury, 1983: 171).When Sadat ended the agreements with the socialist countries destroyed their profits.

<sup>437</sup> According to Waterbury, the annual cost for military expenditures was touching \$ 1.5 billion, representing more than the double of Egypt's exports (Waterbury, 1978).

<sup>438</sup> The project began in December 1973 capitalising \$400 million, with the Egyptian Petroleum Company inversing \$120 million and of the money came from the Gulf Countries.

<sup>439</sup> Quoted in (Waterbury, 1983: 128).

October 1974, “[before the war] we had reached the ‘zero stage’ economically in every sense of the term. What this meant in concrete terms was that I could not have paid a penny toward our debt instalments falling due on January 1 [1974]; nor could I have bought a grain of wheat in 1974. There wouldn’t have been bread for the people, that’s the least one can say [...] But soon as the battle was over, our Arab brethren came to our aid with \$500 million [...] and this sum would never have come had we not taken effective action as regards the battle”.

#### 7.4. Religion

Sadat passed through history as the religious president. Personally devoted, Sadat was praying regularly in mosques and he was bearing the dark forehead mark. However, his personal religiosity was not the driving force for the president’s policies regarding religion. Sadat’s attitude and strategy were rather underling the new president’s efforts to extract major power benefits. Keen in dissociating himself from Nasser’s legacy, Sadat focused on religion as means to counterbalance the ‘leftist’ influence. His strategy had as outcome the increase of ‘religion’ a in all fields of the Egyptian society.

Sadat’s strategy was facilitated by the religiosity created in Egypt after the military defeat of 1967. As it was underlined by Flory the empty created after the Nasserism was filled with an Islamic response, something that Sadat cleverly used (Flory et al., 1990). On the same time, the need for economic backing from the wealthy Arab states, particularly from Riyadh, had forced Nasser’s regime to abandon the secular profile permitting the ‘return’ of the religious forces. It is not to forget that for Faisal the ‘communism’ was more dangerous enemy than Jewish state.

In this context, Sadat chose to collaborate with actors connected to Islam. The Muslim Brotherhood, who had already reappeared in the Egyptian scene, became a strong supporter of Sadat’s regime. Despite the systematic cracking by the Nasserist regime, Muslim Brotherhood had already partially restored its presence in the Egyptian scene, as one of the consequence of the Khartoum conference.

Therefore, the coalition between Muslim Brotherhood and Sadat’s regime boosted. The new *rais* as sign of good will released, as we saw, many of the imprisoned members, after the commitment of the Brotherhood not to use violence against his regime (Ibrahim, 2002a). On the same time, Sadat promoted the establishment of *Sharia* as major source of legislation, opening the margins for greater participation for the Muslim actors in societal affairs<sup>440</sup>.

However, the organisation at the time was divided in different groups, something that regime ignored. The two main groups of the Muslim Brotherhood

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<sup>440</sup> According sources, Sadat also proposed Muslim Brotherhood a legal status in a frame of NGO but his proposal was refused (Abdelrahman, 2004: 138).

had their differences based on generational aspects: the generation who were politically active during Nasserist regime and had lived personally Nasser's persecution and torturing in the concentration camps, such as Zaynab al Ghazali<sup>441</sup>, and those who were at the point to become politically active as Mustafa Chukri<sup>442</sup> (Kepel, 1988:83). This division was to become a serious problem for the Egyptian regime, through their acts of terrorist.

The Brothers were not the only religious actors to increase influence in Egypt. The estrangement from the Islamic values and the atheistic approximation of the previous regime had determined the *naksa*<sup>443</sup>, as it was sustained by Nasser's rivals. Thus, in order to regain the Sinai and the Egyptian dignity, the return to religiosity was essential requirement. The policies of stimulating the religious feelings gave the opportunity to different actors to increase their influence.

Consequently, in this period we observe an important increase of the religious influence coming from different sectors. Mainly we can distinguish among the official and the non-official religious actors. In terms of ideological differences resided according to Ansari "[to] the rules according to which the society is governed, the link between personal belief and the exercise of authority; the legitimacy of armed revolt against the established government; and conduct toward and relations with non-Muslims" (Ansari, 1984:136).

Official ulema became also important allies of Sadat's regime, who offered support in exchange of boosting their prestige. Moreover, king Faisal was offering substantial aid to the official institutions of Islam and particularly to Al-Azhar, furnishing \$ 100 million to its rector in order to finance his campaign against atheism, in 1971 (Heikal, 1983 113).

The 'islamisation' of the Egyptian policies created hostile environment for the Copts. Up to then, the regime's 'secular' character had protected the Coptic minority. The new policies and the increasing role and influence of Muslim actors, as well as the confrontations between the two communities, inevitably were perceived as threatening from the Coptic side. The situation was further complicated after the nomination of the new patriarch of the Coptic Church, in November 1971, Shenouda III. The internal conflict between modernisers and traditionalists change the power equilibrium, with Shenouda searching for a more active role in the Egyptian society (Vatikiotis, 1991). Sadat's interests to protect

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<sup>441</sup> Zaynab al-Ghazali (2 January 1917 – 8 August 2005) was a worldwide Islamic activist and founder of the 'Muslim Women's Association'.

<sup>442</sup> Chukri was liberated in 16 October 1971 after Sadat's amnesty and he dedicated his activities in the rural Egypt in small villages attracting the young people. Chukri after his released disconnected himself from the Muslim Brotherhood and became leader of the extremist Islamist group Takfir wal-Hijra. This group was financed mainly by the remittances of the emigrant bothers in the Gulf States.

<sup>443</sup> After the defeat there was the rumour among Copts and Muslim that they had seen the Virgin hovering over the church in a Cairo's suburb.

social peace and his alliance with Islamic actors imposed the president's cooperation with Shenouda's competitors, fact that created a hostile relation between the two men and sectarian (Beattie, 2000: 108).

The tensed situation among the two communities was not benefiting the new regime. Yet the 'National Unity Law' which foresaw punishment for any action *'that expose national unity to danger by resort to violence threats or any other illegal means to thwart the official policies of the state or to affect its political and constitutional institutions [...]* did little to appease the situation. The gravity of the situation drew regime's attention on the sectarian conflict, supporting Coptic side (Waterbury, 1983: 360).

Sadat however, was in need of the Egyptian's religiousness as means to debilitate his internal rivals and gain popular support. The Muslim feelings of the Egyptian were further stimulated as the military operation against Israel was nearing (Kodmani, 2005). As Muslim Right proclaimed<sup>444</sup> *"[...] the Holy City could never be liberated with atheist weapons*. Not coincidentally 'Alah Akbar' became the main battle cry in the October war.

### **7.5. Ideological Discourse**

Sadat's nomination as head of the Egyptian state introduced changes at all levels including the political discourse<sup>445</sup>. Contrary to Nasser's appeal to his brothers<sup>446</sup>, Anwar al-Sadat adopted a more paternalistic style, presenting himself as father of the Egyptians. Following Dimbleby, in his personal speeches Sadat was referring to the political system as if it was his own property, naming himself as the 'father' or the 'lord' of the Egyptian family (Dimbleby, 1977). Sadat also followed a more luxurious style, leaving behind the Nasser's simplicity and austerity.

Sadat's speech to the newly elected Majlis was underlying the changes to come. Without directly opposing to Gamal Abdel Nasser, Sadat wanted to demonstrate his will to disconnect his regime from the previous one<sup>447</sup>: *"For me, as I understood Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser, the 23 July revolution's objectives and all the rectification operations which arose to correct and reguide the course [...] have many meanings and values. [...] Therefore, we must reject any abstract logic"*.

The new style of discourse of course was not merely reflecting the change of

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<sup>444</sup> Quoted in "(Hinnebusch, 1985:52).

<sup>445</sup> You can consult the speeches of Anwar al Sadat at the website The Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development available at <http://sadat.umd.edu/archives/speeches.htm>

<sup>446</sup> Regarding Sadat's attitude on Nasserist policies indicative is the following joke: Sadat enter into the presidential limousine, and when asked by the chauffeur where he wanted to go, Sadat replied: "Take me the way Gamal [Nasser] used to go". In a fork of the road the chauffeur stopped and asked for further directions. "Would Gamal have gone left or right here?" Sadat asked. "Left, sir". "Very well" replied Sadat "signal left but turn right". Quoted in (Goldschmidt, 2004: 159).

<sup>447</sup> Quoted in (ArabReportandRecord, 1971).

personalities but mainly the new alliances and rivalries, as well as the different regional and international situation. The necessity of the new regime to mark the beginning of a new era, for internal but also for extra-national motives, was accompanied with more visible changes, as we mentioned earlier: new institutional name of the country, new name of the Majlis, new flag, new national anthem.

Important was also the return to Egypt's uniqueness, a discourse used by Wafd before the Free Officers' coup. In his memoirs Sadat wrote *"The Egyptian people differ from many other peoples, even within the Arab world [...]. Our cultural depths are there; our cultural roots are alive, as vigorous as ever after more than 7.000 years [...]. Our Egyptian civilization [...] has always been aspired by man's love and attachment to the land"* (Sadat, 1978: 121).

The change from socialism to liberalism came under regional but also international influences. It is necessary to bear in mind that at the time in the Arab world the only remaining leftist group was on a part of the Lebanese youth friendly to the Palestinian resistance and South Yemen, and *"[l]e gauchisme meurt, lui, en 1968-1969 dans les jungles d'Amérique Latin, dans les rues de Paris et dans la sénilité de Mao-Zédong"* (Corm, 2003:295). On the one hand, Sadat wanted to minimise the influence of his rivals, pronouncing a 'communist' discourse. Thus, his main slogan in the internal affairs became the 'science and faith' integrating the religious element. On the other hand, Sadat's use of religion was covering his necessity to align with king Faisal.

Regarding to the two superpowers in his well-publicised speech to the People's Assembly on February 4<sup>th</sup> 1971, Sadat declared<sup>448</sup> *"I sent a message to President Nixon and I have received the reply to it. I regret to say that America's position remains as it was-complete bias for Israel". On the other hand "the people and leaders of the Soviet Union have stood up for us as honest men and militant revolutionaries supporting our right and consolidating our line with honor and determination. Neither our history nor our future generations will forget its honorable stand toward our just cause"*.

A couple of months before the military attack against Israel, in August 1973, the Arab Socialist Union and the parliament published the Dialogue Paper<sup>449</sup>: *"The policy of global détente between the superpowers has led the US to be more daring in its military, political and economic support of Israel, and more open in its enmity toward the Arabs in its denial of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the UN Charter. It disregarded for the public opinion is aimed at blocking all paths to a just political settlement." [...] "Our reliance upon external forces, no matter how determined we are to nurture our relations with them, has become in the context of global détente, less effective and of reduced scope"*.

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<sup>448</sup> Quoted in (Lippman, 1989: 16).

<sup>449</sup> Quoted in (Waterbury, 1983: 125).

## 7.6. Media

The establishment of the new regime impacted also in the media sector. As we commented in the previous chapter, the criticism coming from the media had already started during Nasser's mandate. The policy of 'renewal' of the chief editors and journalists was therefore necessary, since the sector was in a large degree controlled by Nasser's associates. Thus, during the first year of Sadat's mandate the directors of the major press were removed and Abd al-Qader Hatem, member of the Free Officers and known for his anti-communist attitude, was named Minister of Information (Beattie, 2000:121).

In this period important newspapers of the country continued to exercise their propagandistic role in favour of the interest of the regime's components. For instance during the period that Sadat wanted to weaken the role of Arab Socialist Union, Heikal, his close ally wrote that "the ASU was killing the political life of Egypt"<sup>450</sup>. Another strategy of the regime in order to gain the sector's 'sympathy' was the progressive freedom, dictated also by the need to present pro-liberal character inside and outside the country.

The relaxation of censorship gave the possibility to the anti-regime forces to express their disapproval regarding Sadat's policies. These voices were rising in parallel with the prolongation of 'no war- no peace' situation, criticising Sadat's for its passivity towards Israel<sup>451</sup>. Thus, before the Egyptian attack against Israeli forces many articles made their appearance in the Egyptian press calling for military action against the Jewish conquerer.

Media, therefore, not only continued to exercise an important role for legitimating regime's policies but their role increased. The president of the country became a star of the Egyptian media, making frequent televised appearances. Following Haykal, Sadat was "*the first Egyptian Pharaoh to come before his people armed with a camera; he was also the first Egyptian Pharaoh to be killed by his own people. He was the hero of electronic revolution, but also its victim. When his face was no longer to be seen on the television screen, it was as if the eleven years of his rule had vanished with a switch of the control knob*"(Haykal, 1983:16).

## 7.7. People

Nasser's death was a shock to the Egyptians. As we saw in the previous chapter, Nasser had managed to restore his popularity after *naksa*. The strong relationship between Abdel Nasser and his brothers, i.e. Egyptian population, could not be automatically transferred to the new *rais*. Despite Nasser's

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<sup>450</sup> Source: Neewsweek January 12<sup>th</sup>, 1971.

<sup>451</sup> Sadat's policies were criticised by important intellectuals such as Tewfic al-Hakim, Louis Awad and Naguib Mahfouz, who were called for questioning in office of the Minister of Information after their positioning in favour of the student protests.

repressive policies that the majority had tasted along with deception deriving from Nasser's strategies, Gamal Abdel Nasser had been their beloved Egyptian president.

People continued to represent an important power resource. However, its importance was not reflecting a high degree of ability to become an actor but rather its importance as resource of legitimacy for the governmental elites. This idea is verified by Hinnebusch who sustained that Sabri and his allies tried to use the Egyptian population as pressure element against Sadat during their internal struggle, an effort that according to the author failed due to the Arab Socialist Union's lack of an effective elite-mass linkage (Hinnebusch, 1985: 45).

The new president therefore needed popular support in order to defeat his main rival, Sabri. His task was difficult, because Sadat had a double target: disconnect himself from Nasser's legacy without however provoking Egyptian's fury. Aiming to extract popular acceptance Sadat at the beginning of his mandate focused on demonstrating his loyalty to Nasser. Thus, the apparent continuity of the two regimes was used among others to this aim.

Nevertheless, these efforts had to end soon because it was fundamental for the new *rais* to disconnect himself from Nasser's legacy, in a high competitive context with the pro-communist wing of the regime. The relaxation of repressive policies was targeting the Egyptians' approval on the new president and his cabinet. Furthermore, Sadat's 'corrective revolution', including releases of the political prisoners gave the impression of 'democratic' era, after the Nasser's long authoritarian rule. Last but certainly not least Sadat, followed also the already well performed populist policies of the previous regime regarding wage and pension increases of civil servants (Hinnebusch, 1985: 50). Additionally, the liberalisation of emigration was activated in 1971 in order to appease future problems deriving from the devastating economic conditions of the country.

These policies had the wanted results as Sadat established himself as the father of the Egyptian people. Yet, the economic conditions that the Egyptians had to confront due the important military expenditures and the halt of significant entries generated massive protests. The first challenge that the new regime had to face was the big strike of 10.000 workers of metallurgic company in Helwan for labour questions in August 1971, which continued until 1972. The new regime reacted with the traditional measures of repression along with partial concessions.

In parallel of the labour mobilisation came this of the students. The lowering of admission criteria at universities had transformed the classrooms in really crowded places (Beattie, 2000: 95). This in combination with the relative relaxation of the political and social restrictions, and of course the removal of police guards from university campuses, gave room to the student movements to act.

Marxists groups were at the time the most influential ideological group. In order to counterbalance their influence in the student movement, Sadat started to



promote religious groups to which he offered underground support and facilities. Different policies were applied to diffuse religion in the young generations, most of them regarding the promotion of religious activities at the university campuses, as well as special services to the devoted Muslim students (Sullivan and Abdel-Kotob, 1999: 73).

The student movement enjoyed its glory days in this period, especially when demonstrations of hundreds of thousands filled Tahrir square of Cairo. In 1972, the manifestations were integrating students and workers of different political orientation, as well as junior officers demanding further political opening and military action against Israel<sup>452</sup>. The politicisation of the Egyptians is underlined by El-Khawaga who sustained that during these manifestations the demands were not at all concerning student issues but they were touching also social ones (El-Khawaga, 1995: 273). The regime responded once more with the use of repressive methods however less harsh than the previous years. Additionally, in front of the massiveness of the protests Sadat appointed a new government, headed by Aziz Sadqi, as a sign of good will, but in few months he assumed the post of Prime Minister himself, as the former seemed suspicious of creating his own bases (Hinnebusch, 1985:53).

The growing mobilisation of the youth was becoming threatening for Sadat's regime. The generalised demands for military action against Israel was underlying that the heated situation could only be appeased through some short of victory against Israel (Samak, 1977).

### ***7.8. International Friends***

The outcome of the 1967 war between Arabs and Jewish state had underlined the key role of the American administration in the region and the secondary role of Moscow. This situation was recognised by Gamal Abdel Nasser, who made considerable efforts to obtain the American aid until his death without however remarkable results. The acceptance of the Rogers plan was a clear demonstration from Cairo's side of its will to collaborate with Washington, even though this gesture did not produce the wanted results, i.e. a pressure towards Tel Aviv.

Approaching Washington was therefore necessary precondition for regime's consolidation, especially after Cairo had lost its regional leading role. The need for foreign politico-economic aid, the necessity for a solution in the Egypt- Israeli conflict, and the imperative for disconnection from the soviet dependency were priorities for Cairo at the time.

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<sup>452</sup> The demonstrations of 1972, despite the participation of citizens coming from different political backgrounds where attributed to 'communists', a policy followed throughout the entire mandate of Sadat. Furthermore, the president sustained that PLO's leadership promoted these demonstrations (Selim, 1984: 233).

Sadat's nomination was perceived with scepticism from both blocs, East and West. His pro-American position during his office at the vice-presidency was not enough to attract American aid or to ensure support. Therefore, the two superpowers did not proceed in radical gestures, since both of them were interested in seeing Sadat's ability to remain in power and his capacity to secure Egypt's stability.

From Washington's side, the Egyptian friendship was not presenting a high priority at the time, even though Cairo's stability was important. Soon after Nasser's funeral Sadat met with Eliot Richardson, heading the American delegation, in order to clarify his position<sup>453</sup>: "*All I want is peace [...] I am prepared to go to any lengths to achieve it*". For Sadat, Washington held the 'key to peace' and '99% of the cards of the game'. However, the American administration was not sure of Sadat's role in the new regime. Kissinger's idea over Sadat was significant for Washington's 'neutral' policy in the first years of Sadat's mandate<sup>454</sup>. As Golda Meier<sup>455</sup> recalled for Kissinger Sadat was "*Un imbécile, un clown, un bouffon ...*".

The American attitude of 'wait and see' was not based on Kissinger's personal beliefs but on the important divergence existing in the American administration at the time. To be more specific, Henry Kissinger, National Security Advisor, and William Pierce Rogers, Secretary of the State, had different ideas of how to handle the conflict and the other issues of the Middle East. On the one hand, Kissinger, promoter of Realpolitik, considered the conflicts in the region of Middle East as forming part of the bipolar conflict, and thus he was contrary to any Israeli conciliatory policies, because they would be perceived as soviet victory. On the other hand, Rogers was in favour of a partial withdrawal, in order to extract major benefits (Álvarez-Ossorio, 1999: 90). This dichotomy in the American administration towards Middle East had inevitable consequences in Cairo, since the Egyptian regime was interested in the American mediation for resolving its problems with Tel Aviv.

Moscow, on the other side, was not pleased with Sadat's nomination, as his preferences for an alignment with Washington were well known<sup>456</sup>. Moscow's dissatisfaction with Sadat's nomination on the presidency was also based on the Sabri's alliance with Kremlin, dating since 1964 (Beattie, 2000: 86). However, Kremlin was not to abandon Cairo, especially since Sadat's stay at presidency was not perceived as a *fait accompli*. Therefore, Kosygin<sup>457</sup> went to Nasser's funeral in

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<sup>453</sup> Quoted in (Beattie, 2000: 52).

<sup>454</sup> Quoted in (Golan, 1974: 114).

<sup>455</sup> Quoted in (Enderlin, 1997).

<sup>456</sup> Sadat has been many times accused of having secretly received funds from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) during the 60's and the early 70's, something that has never been proven (Beattie, 2000: 51).

<sup>457</sup> When Khrushchev was dismissed from the Soviet leadership in October 1964, Kosygin took over Khrushchev's position as Soviet Premier.

order to examine *in situ* the current situation regarding the successor and the military activity against Israel (Heikal, 1980: 256-257).

The internal competition between the two wings of the Egyptian regime and Sadat's 'corrective revolution' was followed by the removal of the pro-communist figures and Sabri's expulsion. The situation alerted Kremlin and on the same time verified the suspicions regarding Sadat's intentions to reconsider Cairo's alliances with foreign actors. Sadat was aware of Moscow's preferences: "*The Soviets are not happy about anything which happened in Egypt after [Nasser]*"; "*I'm not their man. Moreover, I have eliminated their men*"<sup>458</sup>.

Yet the mutual resentment was a secondary issue in front of the common interests. On the one hand, Moscow was not keen in losing an Arab ally and in this way shrunk further its influence. On the other hand, Sadat ought to use the soviet aid in order to consolidate his position as Moscow was Cairo's main military furnisher in a bellicose period. We have to keep in mind that Sadat's need to maintain 'friendly' relations with Moscow was forced among others by the protection offered by the soviet air missiles (SAMs) against Israel. Furthermore, Sadat was trying to attract Washington's support by showing that an unwillingness of the American side to aid Cairo would necessarily push Sadat to a more strict collaboration with Kremlin.

Sadat's urge to secure Moscow's aid was the reason that forced Cairo to sign a treaty of friendship, on May 1971<sup>459</sup>. Following Laurens the treaty served also a mechanism of pressure towards Washington and Tel Aviv (Laurens, 1991:247). The dependency relations between Cairo and Moscow, especially in military issues, obliged Sadat to proceed to further concessions regarding the Soviet demands<sup>460</sup>. Thus, after the visit to Moscow of the Egyptian Prime Minister, Aziz Sidqi, in October 1972, the anti-Soviet General Sadiq was dropped from the post of Minister of War and the supply of soviet military equipment restarted (Quandt, 1977:381).

The friendship treaty and the concessions on the soviet demands by the Egyptian regime were not of course signs of reconsideration of who the international allies should be. Sadat, trapped by the necessities of his regime for soviet military aid, had to move carefully in order to obtain Washington's support. Thus, the alignment with the West followed two main lines: on the one hand, progressive weakening and elimination of regime's pro-soviet elites and on the other continuous strengthening of the ties with pro-west Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran (Vatikiotis, 1991).

Nevertheless, Sadat was conscious that the American aid would only come

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<sup>458</sup> Quoted in (Karawan, 1994: 254).

<sup>459</sup> You can consult the entire text of the treaty at the United Nations web site available at [http://untreaty.un.org/unts/1\\_60000/23/7/00044350.pdf](http://untreaty.un.org/unts/1_60000/23/7/00044350.pdf)

<sup>460</sup> Many sustained that Sadat prolonged the ceasefire with Israel, aiming among others to satisfy partially Moscow, which wanted to avoid a military clash. As his initiatives did not give particular fruits Sadat went secretly to USSR with his Minister of War (Heikal, 1980: 262).

after 'real' demonstrations of his will to disconnect Cairo from the Soviet influence. For Sadat the Soviets were part of the problem and not of the solution. The decision to expel the Soviet military advisors thus had a double aim: one the one hand, to give Moscow a message that "[...] *Egyptian alliance could not survive disregard of Egypt's most vital interest, the liberation of its land*" and at the same time demonstrate to Washington the will to disconnect Egypt from the soviet influence (Hinnebusch, 1985: 48). On the other hand, Sadat move was targeting officers' support, who had already demonstrated their dissatisfaction and frustration deriving from the soviet control.

The expulsion of the Soviet military advisors, in 1972, distanced further Cairo and Moscow, and came after the no satisfaction of the Egyptian demands for weapon deliveries and the parallel Soviet military aid towards India in the dawn of the India-Pakistan war (Laurens, 1991: 252). Immediately after Sadat's decision Brezhnev, General Secretary of Communist Party's Central Committee (CC), sent a letter to the Egyptian president stating the Soviet annoyance. Sadat in his reply tried to appaise the tension "[...] *Je vous ai dit que nous étions animés par deux principes essentiels: primo, nous désirons que notre combat ne soit mené par personne d'autre que notre armée; secundo: nous ne voulions pas que notre bataille soit l'occasion d'une confrontation entre l'Union Soviétique et les Etats-Unis, sachant bien qu'un tel affrontement serait un désastre pour le monde entière [...]*" (El-Sadate, 1978: 73).

Moscow, however, was left with limited options of allies<sup>461</sup>, consequence of the Arab disappointment in front of its incapacity to defend its Middle Eastern allies, and thus continued to support military the Egyptian regime. From Cairo's side, the soviet military aid was not a choice but a one way out since Moscow was the only possible furnisher of military equipment. Since Washington<sup>462</sup> was the main military provider to Tel Aviv, showing no interest to offer military aid to the Egyptian regime, Sadat had by all means reassure Moscow's aid in order to gain the support from the military circles and to prepare the military attack against Israel.

Meanwhile, Sadat continued his efforts to approach Washington, as, in Heikal's view<sup>463</sup>, Egypt could not achieve a victory against Israel without reducing "[...] *the scope of the military and political support to Israel, and the major source of this support is the United States*". The communication channel between Sadat and Washington had been already established after Sabri's expulsion, which determined in a large degree Sadat's staying at the Egyptian presidency. Washington was aware of Sadat's interests and position, as Ambassador Donald

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<sup>461</sup> Practically, the region was under the American influence. There were rumours that Syria would expel the soviet advisors after Faisal's promises for huge economic aid (Quandt, 1977: 383). Gaddafi had also expressed the Arab dissatisfaction vis-à-vis Moscow at the 4<sup>th</sup> conference of NAM in Algiers (Corm, 2003 345).

<sup>462</sup> Sadat had previously asked Washington for military aid (Laurens, 1991:252).

<sup>463</sup> Source: Al Ahram, March 19, 1971.

Bergus' mail to the State Department, on 3rd October 1970<sup>464</sup>, stated: *"Throughout conversation Sadat stressed his and UAR's feeling of friendship towards America. We talk about very difficult matters and as friends, and that Israel problem [is the] only real obstacle to close relations between two governments"*.

In the eve of 1973 war, Sadat had managed therefore to clarify his preferences to both blocs. Yet the Egyptian president was conscious that Cairo needed some sort of victory against Israel. The expulsion of the Soviet advisors, and the cleansing of the regime, paved the way for the military preparations since Moscow had demonstrated clearly its unwillingness to support a military conflict against Tel Aviv.

### **7.9. Arab Circle**

When Anwar al-Sadat became president of Egypt, Cairo had already lost its central position in the Arab circle. The outcome of the Six Day War, with Israel occupying the Sinai Peninsula, was an unquestionable fact of Cairo's humiliating defeat. Israel's new victory demonstrated the incapacity of Cairo and the rest of the Arab states to defend themselves in front of Israeli threat and of course their inability to offer any help to the Palestinians. Furthermore, the ideological empty created by the defeat of Nasser's doctrine gave Faisal the opportunity to expand his influence and role in the Arab region, by the substitution of the pan-Arab discourse with the pan-Islamist one. Following Ajami *"With the defeat in 1967, charisma turned to ashes and the conservative oil states made their financial help contingent upon a new style and kind of politics"* (Ajami, 1992: 146).

The military defeat, thus, modified the balance of power in Middle East, with the establishment of Riyadh as major regional actor. However, Faisal's hegemonic aspirations were not unchallenged. Teheran, a conservative monarchy, began to expand its influence, emphasising in military equipment in order to defend its borders and oilfields through the Gulf, becoming in this way a predominant power in the region (Crecelius, 1975 580).

In this regional context, with two Islamic powers, Teheran and Riyadh, having the main role and capacities to control regional power resources, and Tel Aviv in charge of the middle-eastern conflict, Cairo had limited changes to exercise a regional role. Consequently, the Egyptian regime lacking capacities to compete with regional actors was forced to develop a more Egyptian centric policy. Furthermore, the internal challenges that Sadat was facing at the beginning of his mandate left no option for an active regional role. An active attitude in the regional arena would increase Sadat's problems regarding his power capacities as he would have to face competition with powerful regional elites.

Having said that, we partially disagree with Dessouki, who

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<sup>464</sup> Quoted in (Beattie, 2000: 53).

underlined: "Contrary to Nasser, who saw the Arab World as Egypt's natural sphere of influence and leadership and as the main arena for an active foreign policy, Sadat saw Egypt's leadership position as structural property, not a behavioral attribute, as a property that could not be challenged or taken away. Consequently, he did not feel the need to pursue an activist foreign policy to maintain this leadership" (Dessouki, 1984: 130). Sadat's choice was not free but it was based on the regional power equilibrium, which made particularly difficult an active regional policy. Contrary to his predecessor, the usage of the regional dynamics to stabilise his rule inside the Egyptian scene was limited.

On the pro-communist Arab bloc we can identify also some changes during this period. In Syria, a new military coup took place in November 1970 headed by Hafez al-Assad. The interests of the new Syrian regime and the progressive weakness of Moscow at the international arena, as well as the new status quo in the region of Middle East generated modifications in the Soviet-Syrian bilateral relations. Hafez al-Assad conscious of the problems imposed by the Syrian isolation, made considerable efforts to distance his regime from Moscow's influence, among others by refusing to sign a friendship treaty. This attitude helped the Egyptian regime in its relations with Moscow, as Kremlin wanted to avoid a complete break with the Arab world. On the contrary, Baghdad closely related to Kremlin signed the friendship treaty with Moscow, fact that introduced problems with his Arab neighbours and particularly with Riyadh<sup>465</sup>.

The progressive opening of the Syrian regime enabled a limited collaboration between Cairo and Damascus. Sadat, as we mentioned earlier, proposed the institutionalisation of their collaboration through the creation of United Arab Republics, composed by Egypt, Syria and Libya. This plan had as main objective to limit Sabri's influence, through the reorganisation of the political institutions. However, the federation could be used as weapon against a future Israeli attack, obliging the two allied countries to protect militarily Egypt. Another motive was Sadat's expectation for economic aid coming from rich in oil reserves Libya. The project was abandoned, although Sadat managed to accomplish his first aim.

Still, the new Egyptian regime tried to consolidate alliances with Arab head states. The main regional ally of Cairo during this period became Riyadh. Sadat's choice was not based on abstract common visions regarding the Arab world. Rather the choice of the Egyptian president was based on his limited capacities to alter the equilibrium established in the aftermath of the Six Day War. It is essential to keep in mind that Faisal had not only become one of the most powerful regional actors but he was also financing Egypt as a reward for Nasser's moderation.

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<sup>465</sup> The Saudi kingdom was also facing threats coming from its borders with Iraq. Baghdad during this period was dedicated to force demonstrations of Iraq in order to threaten Teheran and the support of 'communist' guerrillas of Oman.

The tight relations between Cairo and Riyadh impacted all levels of the Egyptian policies. At the internal level, the collaboration between the two Arab leaders facilitated Muslim Brotherhood's increase of influence in the Egyptian scene, since Faisal was personally trying to improve the relations between Sadat and Ikhwan (Heikal, 1983). Sadat's positive attitude towards the Brotherhood was recognised not only from the Saudi King but also from the exiled members of the organisation, who early in 1971 reassured the Egyptian president for their support in his intra-regime conflict (Beattie, 2000: 82).

The collaboration between Cairo and Riyadh influenced also the Egyptian foreign policy. Since the beginning of Sadat's mandate, the Saudi king, through his close associate Kamal Adham<sup>466</sup>, tried to convince the Egyptian president for breaking Cairo's ties with Moscow and aligning with Washington (Cooley, 2002). As we have already seen, Sadat followed Faisal's advice and expelled the Soviet advisers advancing in parallel his contacts with the American administration.

The expulsion of the Soviet advisers armoured the relations between Faisal and Sadat, the former considering his main threats Tel Aviv and Moscow, since the Saudi King saw connection between Communism and Zionism, as Karl Marx was a Jew (Ajami, 1992: 78). In practical terms, the decision of Anwar al-Sadat helped Cairo on military questions, since in January 1973, Faisal offered to Sadat \$500 million for the purchasing of Soviet military equipment (Anderson et al., 1992). Faisal's aid on its turn enabled Cairo to proceed on military action against Tel Aviv.

### **7.10. Israel-Palestine**

The humiliation of the Arab armies in the aftermath of 1967 war had as outcome the character change of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Following Álvarez-Ossorio *"[...]la guerra de los Seis Días marca una línea divisoria entre la 'arabización' del conflicto con Israel y su posterior 'palestinización'. Paradójicamente en el primer periodo, cuando los únicos territorios ocupados por Israel se localizaron dentro de las fronteras históricas de Palestina, los gobiernos árabes se disputaron el papel de defensores de la causa palestina y el conflicto se circunscribió a su dimensión árabe-israelí. No es hasta 1967, precisamente cuando Israel ocupa por primera vez territorios sirios, jordanos y egipcios, cuando la controversia árabe-israelí se 'palestiniza' y pierde su carácter estrictamente árabe"* (Álvarez-Ossorio, 1999: 23).

The 'palestinisation' of the conflict enabled Tel Aviv to become more inflexible to its demands. The new balance of power and the Washington's support allowed Tel Aviv to adopt a more arrogant attitude, summarised in the following: no to the return of the pre-war boundaries, no to the return of the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem, division between Palestinian land and

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<sup>466</sup> Sheikh Kamal Adham was the first ethnic non Arab chief of the Saudi intelligence.

population, functional division of the occupied territories, partial collaboration with Amman, marginalisation of the Palestinian actor and integration of the refugees in the neighbour states (Álvarez-Ossorio, 2001).

Tel Aviv's arrogant attitude was also helped by the creation of international 'sympathy'. As consequence the foreign investments followed an upward course. Similarly, emigration of Jews from different parts of the world augmented, as it is believed that Israel had become a secure country. Nevertheless, power competition inside the regime was mounting, covering important divisions between religious and laic sectors in front of the new situation created and the future of the occupied territories (Izquierdo, 2005). Along with the competition, problems at the Israeli society began to make their appearance expressed with manifestations second-generation Jewish immigrants from Morocco and other Middle Eastern countries led by the Black Panthers<sup>467</sup> (Enderlin, 1997: 315).

The palestinisation of the conflict weakened more the Palestinians and their elites. Furthermore, the division between the traditional elites, targeting negotiations with Israeli authorities for the future of the occupied territories, and the Diaspora thinking a possible symbiosis with the Jewish inside Palestine, undermined Palestinian capacities (Álvarez-Ossorio, 1999:52). The Palestinian resistance<sup>468</sup> incapable of engaging the Arab armies to a military conflict against Israel, proceeded to the international operations of terrorism, like the one of Olympic Games in Munich in 1972<sup>469</sup>.

The defeat of the Nasserism and Nasser's death had an important impact in the relations of Cairo with the Palestinian elites. The new Egyptian president was aware that disconnecting Egypt from the Palestinian question had to become a priority. Nasser's active role had determined Cairo's humiliating defeat and had introduced important burdens for Cairo. Additionally, the militancy of the Palestinian resistance was a source of problems to the neighbor Arab countries, i.e. in Lebanon 1969 and in Jordan in 1970 and a possible one for Egypt. Furthermore, Tel Aviv had already demonstrated its unwillingness to embrace a solution toward the Palestinian question. In this frame, Cairo having a large segment of its territory occupied by the Israeli forces focused on its disconnecting

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<sup>467</sup> One of the biggest demonstrations was this of 18 May 1971, known as 'The Night of the Panthers'. Approximately 5.000-7.000 demonstrators gathered in Zion Square in Jerusalem to protest against the racial discrimination, without previous police permission. The square was transformed in a battle field between demonstrators and security forces.

<sup>468</sup> Previously, the Palestinians had succeeded to obtain the right of having weapons in certain areas of Lebanon and to effectuate military operations against Israel from the south territories of the country, confirmed with a treaty signed in Cairo between PLO and the Lebanese army under the auspices of Nasser (Corm, 2003: 330).

<sup>469</sup> During the Olympic Games in Munich, Black September Palestinian group kidnapped members of the Israeli Olympic team and killed eleven Israeli athletes and coaches and one German police officer. Five of the eight terrorists were killed by police officers while the rest of the kidnappers were captured. However, the arrested were later released following the hijacking of a Lufthansa airliner. Israel responded violently organising the Operation Spring of Youth and Operation Wrath of God, a series air strikes and assassinations of Palestinians.



from future obligations toward the Palestinians, especially in the absence of powerful 'international' interests<sup>470</sup> in favor of the Palestinian cause.

The task of disconnection was not easy one. Sadat had to be careful not to provoke the Egyptian indignation. Therefore, in order to present an active role in the Palestinian question, Sadat, in October 1972, proposed the creation of a provisional Palestinian government in exile with the participation of different organisations in order to coordinate their actions with the rest of Arab counties. Sadat's proposal was rejected by PLO interpreting this move as a new effort of Cairo to interfere in the 'domestic' affairs' (Izquierdo, 2005).

In the same spirit had come the proposal of Amman few months earlier announcing the project of the United Arab Kingdom (RAU), according to which a federation of the two parts of the Palestinian territories was proposed: west Palestinian territories with Jerusalem as capital to which future liberated territories could be annexed and the eastern side with Amman as capital. The plan was obviously rejected by all Palestinian organisations. Ironically, Cairo broke its relations with the Jordanian Kingdom, with the Egyptian president stating that the plan reflected the American position on the Palestinian question, which saw it as a mere problem of borders (Israeli, 1979).

The Palestinian elites were found therefore without Cairo's backup. In this frame the Palestinian leaders were forced to reconsider their alliances, hoping to extract political and economic aid from their Arab brothers. Therefore Yasser Arafat, president of PLO, stretched his relations with Faisal, subsidising the alignment of his predecessor, Ahmad al-Shuqayri, with Nasser<sup>471</sup>.

For the Egyptian regime the Israeli occupation of the Egyptian territory was a priority. Lacking capacities to enter to a new military clash, Sadat hopped finding a solution through diplomatic, which was proven fruitless. The proposal for clearing the Suez Canal and renewing the ceasefire under the previous Israeli withdrawal in the pre-war borders, coming in different moments from Cairo and Tel Aviv, was serving respective interests but without any real will from the Israel side to compromise.

Dayan's<sup>472</sup> proposal, for opening Suez without a total withdraw of the Israeli forces from the Egyptian territory was made under the belief that Cairo would not accept such offer. However, the positive reaction of Cairo was followed by the

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<sup>470</sup> Regarding the European attitude in front of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Paris of Pompidou had been the only leader to at the time to declare that the Palestinian question was not a mere problem of refugees but a political one that had to be resolved. Later, in 1972 the EC's foreign ministers signed a common text adopting the same posture.

<sup>471</sup> According to Izquierdo The relations between Fatah and Riyadh engaging economic aid toward the Palestinian organisation, were satisfying Faisal's four main objectives: reduction the laic influence inside PLO, expansion of the Saudi influence on PLO's decisions, promotion of his influence in the Islamic and Arab sphere and support for the solution on the Palestinian question based on the recognition of the Palestinian national rights and the existence of Israel (Izquierdo, 2005).

<sup>472</sup> Moshe Dayan was at the time Israeli Minister of Defence.

blocking of the process from Tel Aviv's side, since not all Israeli powerful elites were positive towards to peace (Enderlin, 1997: 314). From the Egyptian side, Sadat's initiative of the 4<sup>th</sup> February 1971, after Dayan's proposal, was representing a part of a strategy to gain international support in front of Israel (Riad, 1981:187).

As it is historically known, Sadat's proposition did not have any serious impact from the official Israeli nor from the American side. Thus as means to pressure things Sadat declined the renewal of cease fire. In front of the Israeli unwillingness to collaborate, the American passivity and the internal Egyptian social unrest military clash became the only option for Cairo, even though officially the negotiations between the implicated parts continued under the auspices of Washington but without any real progress<sup>473</sup>.

### **7.11. Yom-Kippur**

The October War became the only possible way for the Egyptian regime, especially after the social protests against the regime's passivity. However, there were other reasons that pushed Sadat to undertake action against Israel. As we commented earlier, Sabri and his allies wanted the war to get started sooner. Their hurry was justified by the increase of their capacities whatever the outcome of the war: in case of victory secure their position as the main allies of Sabri's group were in the military field. In case of loss the group would also be benefited as they could easily 'eliminate' Sadat, held responsible of the new military defeat.

Sadat aware of the consequences of an immediate war wanted to delay or even avoid military action against Israel. The presence of the Soviet experts represented a handicap for the Egyptian regime, since the new president of Egypt knew the unwillingness of Moscow to back Egypt militarily and economically. The soviet stance was justified by the fact that Moscow was already involved in other war enterprises -Vietnam, Indo-Pakistani- trying at the same time to maintain the superpower détente. The soviet unwillingness was further fed by the fear that another Arab defeat would undermine Moscow's influence in the region.

Therefore in order to gain time and consolidate his position, Sadat followed the "no war-no peace" strategy, renewing the ceasefire and in 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1971. In parallel, the Egyptian president announced his willingness to clear the Suez Canal and expand the ceasefire if the Israeli side was to withdraw from the east side of the canal<sup>474</sup>, proposals that he had not communicate previously to the rest of the governmental components of his regime. In this way and using the diplomatic via hopping that Washington would show interest in resolving the

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<sup>473</sup> On the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1973, Meir went to Washington in order to secure new military equipment for Israel than to negotiate over the Egyptian proposals for an agreement (Uri, 2006: 550).

<sup>474</sup> Earlier Dayan had made the same proposal to Cairo.

situation, Sadat and his allies managed to gain time and prepare the field for a possible military action against Israel.

“No war-no peace” strategy was compatible with the regional context. Before the war none of the Arab states seemed disposed to enter in a military conflict against Israel: Syria with the Assad was trying to eliminate his ‘radical’ adversaries, struggling for the consolidation of his position, and also for ending the isolation of Syria in regional and international sphere. Baghdad despite the rhetoric gestures, such as refusing the resolution 242, did not seem dispose to undertake any action on the Palestinian question as it was proven by its passivity in Jordanian Black September. In the same spirit was moving the Libyan Colonel Gaddafi who wanted by all means to avoid a strict relation with the Palestinian question. Furthermore, Amman was uninterested in any serious implication to the Palestinian question, especially since the king Hussein was enjoying a period of stability after Black September that had as outcome the transfer of the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon(Corm, 2003).

The prolongation of the ceasefire increased the general fear that the more time passed with the lines of armistice the more the risk of this becoming the international borders. This generalised feeling created negative reactions at popular and elite level. Therefore, once Sadat started to face challenges inside Egypt, and after weakening of Sabri’s group, reconsidered the question of military clash. A possible victory would consolidate his regime, as Sadat would gain support from the military circles and popular recognition. At the same time, a war enterprise would attract the American interests in the region, since it had become clear that the American peace initiatives in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict were absent in no-war no-peace periods but present in periods of violence (Álvarez-Ossorio, 1999 80:).

In this frame, Sadat expelled the Soviets advisers, in July 1972. This decision, taken also by the Egyptian frustration created by the delay of the arms delivery, was beneficial for the Egyptian regime. On the one hand, the Egyptian military officers, pleased by the decision of their leader to unshackle them from the soviet control, obtained freedom of action to start the military preparations. On the other hand, Sadat’s move was welcomed by Washington which was waiting a clear demonstration from the Egyptian side to disconnect Cairo from Moscow’s influence. Additionally, the expulsion of the Soviet experts provided all necessary elements for relaxation in Tel Aviv.

Even so, Sadat did not manage to extract further gains regarding Tel Aviv. The Israeli side being confident for its superior military capabilities and not facing threatening internal pressures connected to Cairo was not disposed in accepting any kind of compromise towards the Arab neighbours. The Israeli arrogance was further facilitated by the strong ties with Washington, which was seen incapable of persuading Tel Aviv for positive gestures towards the conflict.

Cairo thus was forced to undertake military action. In 6<sup>th</sup> of October 1973 the Egyptian and Syrian armies proceeded to a simultaneous surprise attacks in

Sinai and Golan Heights against Israel, a war named Kippur for the Jewish side and Ramadan from the Muslim one<sup>475</sup>. The war was mainly effectuated by Syria and Egypt with the support of Saudi Arabia<sup>476</sup> and last minute entrance of Jordanian army<sup>477</sup> in the Syrian front and this of the Iraqi army, after consulting Moscow.

The surprise factor and the simultaneous action were determined for the outcome of the war. Yet different factors<sup>478</sup> contributed to what is considered the first Arab victory against the Jewish state. The bravery that Egyptian soldiers showed was important. It is noteworthy that the Israeli officer Ariel Sharon stated<sup>479</sup> *"I have been fighting for 25 years [...] and all the rest were just battles. This was a real war"*.

The collaboration between the Arabs was also significant. Following Crecelius in this war the *"Arab states were united into a single front as never before; and the oil states, through a sudden escalation in the price they demanded for their product, emerged almost within weeks as financial giants in the international money market. A dramatic redistribution of wealth and power in the world got under way"* (Crecelius, 1975: 281).

Even if the war it was mainly effectuated by the Syrian and the Egyptian army, great powers played also an important role. Washington implicit aid was determining since it halted American airlifts of supplies "so as deliberately to forestall an imminent Egyptian defeat" and assure in this way the controlled intervention of Washington and Moscow (Tibi, 1998). However, Washington's aid towards Cairo was limited to this incident, among others due to Tel Aviv's threat for using all necessary elements to protect their country, insinuating nuclear weapons.

Moscow even though knew about the war preparations of Syria and Egypt, it was not informed about the exact date. As it is historically known, Kremlin helped its allies, while it was trying to convince USA for a peaceful settlement (Quandt, 1977: 383). Some scholars have also interpreted the Soviet participation on the war 1973 as a function of an internal struggle for power among the Soviet leadership. By the time the war took place there was an important division among the soviet elites, especially between Podgorny, Brezhnev and Kosygin, over the foreign policy and consequently over the Middle East (Anderson et al., 1992).

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<sup>475</sup> The names were given after the respective religious feast the Jewish Day of Atonement and the Muslim anniversary of the Badr battle, i.e. Muhammad's victory over the Mecca pagans.

<sup>476</sup> Before entering to the battle Sadat had received assurances from Faisal for help that in case of long continuation of the military conflict he would use the weapon of petrol (Laurens, 1991:255).

<sup>477</sup> It is reported that king Hussein made a visit to Israel on 25<sup>th</sup> of September and gave information that Syria was preparing a military attack (Enderlin, 1997: 323).

<sup>478</sup> Many scholars underline the weather conditions and the geographical position of the Egyptian soldiers and the time chosen as the sun was blinding the Israeli soldiers.

<sup>479</sup> Quoted in (Tibi, 1998: 111).

Whatever were the reasons that forced Moscow to back the Arab allies, the war signalled the first Arab military victory: 100.000 soldiers, 1.000 tanks and 13.500 vehicles crossed the Suez Canal and the destruction of Bar-Lev line<sup>480</sup>. Nevertheless, the victory was limited to the canal crossing. The Israelis more concerned with the Syrian front centred their operations there, furnishing in this way the victory to the Egyptians and their new *rais*.

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<sup>480</sup> Bar-Lev line was the defensive wall built with sand by the Israeli soldiers named after General Bar-Lev.

## **8. The fragile hegemonic rule 1973-1977**

Major regional events and outside help, enables the consolidation of hegemonic figures. Regime's establishment is followed by the reinforcement of primary and secondary elites who collaborate with the ruling elite. In parallel, there is a clear effort to weaken rival elites through direct and indirect policies. Progressively, new actors increase their influence in different sectors, becoming in this way the driving force of the policies adopted. However, the new regime is lacking power capacities vis-à-vis regional rivals, fact that makes indispensable the foreign backup. In this context, linear relations obtain momentarily a significant weight, threatening regime's rule.

### **8.1. Army**

The war of Ramadan was, in military terms, another defeat for the Arab side, because the Egyptian army accomplished to cross the Suez Canal without accomplishing a real recuperation of the Egyptian territory. Nevertheless, the outcome was considered as the first Arab victory against Israel from both sides, Israeli and Arab. The surprise factor, the training of the soldiers and the synchronisation of the enterprises between the Syrian and the Egyptian army were important elements for this victory, which came with 'Allah's help'.

Inside Egypt, the outcome of the October war consolidated Sadat's control over the military apparatus. The partial recuperation of the army's prestige satisfied the officers and offered Sadat the needed collaboration from officers' side. This support was considered necessary as means to consolidate Sadat's control not only over the army but also over different sectors of the Egyptian society. In this context, rivals elements against the regime, old and new, were removed from their posts<sup>481</sup>.

The new equilibrium created in the region in aftermath of the October war determined a new era for the Egyptian army, putting an end on its strictly military functions. The Egyptian side as well as the rest of the interested elites knew that another 'victory' against Tel Aviv was science fiction scenario, mainly due to the absence of furnisher interested in or capable of providing the Egyptian army adequate military equipment<sup>482</sup>. The braking of the relations with Moscow and Washington's friendship with Tel Aviv made impossible for Cairo to build an army capable of challenging Israel. Additionally, Cairo's interest to ally with Washington in order to extract the American support was imposing at least the end of military hostilities between Egypt and Israel.

In this context, Cairo was forced to abandon any future plans for generalised military action. This change inevitably introduced changes of the officers' role, highlighted by a progressive 'demilitarisation' of the Egyptian politics, at least at visible level. In this way, the ministers with military background represented less than 13%, touching the minimum in Sadat's last cabinet with only two officers occupying ministerial portfolios, this of defence and foreign affairs (Springbord, 1987: 5). In parallel, the right of voting was deprived to the officers and all

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<sup>481</sup> During the October war there was an important divergence among the elites having capacity to decide over the strategy that the Egyptian army had to follow. The main dispute regarded the continuation of the attacks and the acceptance of ceasefire between Sa'ad al-Shazli the Chief of Staff, on the one side, and Sadat with Minister of the War, Ahmad Ismail, on the other (Fahmy, 2001: 39). Thus, in December 1973, the Chief in Staff was dismissed without any reaction of his colleagues, despite his popularity among the officers (Hinnebusch, 1985:60).

<sup>482</sup> During the October war the Egyptian casualties were: 12.000 dead, 35.000 wounded and 8.400 prisoners. In military terms, during this war Egypt lost 1.000 tanks, 227 aircraft, 50 SAM batteries, 7 missile boats, 4 torpedo boats as well as more light military equipment (Dunstan and Lyles, 2003).

members of the Armed Forces<sup>483</sup>, as means to minimise possibilities of officers' uncontrollable power increase.

The 'demilitarisation' of the Egyptian regime was covering different needs. According to Abdalla "[Sadat's] drive for Egyptian-Israeli settlement required more diplomats and a stronger diplomatic apparatus, which was hitherto dominated by military men. His drive to liberalize the economy, through the policy of Infitah, required more businessmen in the private sector and civilian managers in the public sector, which was dominated in its upper echelons by military men. Finally, his reluctant drive for limited political liberalization still required politicians and a political class of some kind, albeit under control" (Abdalla, 2001: 51).

The importance that the military apparatus had gained after the coup of 1952, made difficult such task and it had to be accompanied with rewards to the military elites. The loss of the traditional functions of the military apparatus and their limited role in politics were to be substituted by the important 'civil' activities. Under this imperative, many officers were offered posts in public companies (Beattie, 2000: 144). However, the job offer was not the only measure taken to please the military actors. Thus, in 1975 the Egyptian arms industry, created by Nasser, began to operate major projects under the Arab Industrialisation Authority, a joint-venture with western companies financed also from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and UAE.

In parallel, Sadat tried by all means to maintain in high levels the army's military equipment. Even though the army was to lose its traditional role<sup>484</sup>, this did not mean reduction military weaponry. The military expenditures remained at high levels, having reached its peak during the war of 1973<sup>485</sup>, as means to keep satisfied the military wing of the Egyptian regime. The military necessities of Sadat's regime were covered in a significant degree by France (Crececius, 1975: 582).

The unilateral abrogation of the Friendship Treaty with USSR, in 1976, decreased further the military aid coming from Moscow but on the same time increased the aid coming from Washington. However, the change from Soviet to American weaponry was not direct, as Washington needed assurances for the use of Egypt's military equipment, not to be used against its main ally, Tel Aviv, and a complete disconnection of Cairo from Moscow. Thus, massive military American aid came only after the signing of the two Sinai agreements and the abrogation of the Friendship Treaty with Moscow.

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<sup>483</sup> Law no 76 of 1976.

<sup>484</sup> During this period Cairo had to respond militarily to Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi. Hostilities between Libya and Egypt increased in April-May 1977. An exchange of gunfire along the Libyan-Egyptian border on July generated a four-day mini war. The ceasefire came after the intervention of Algeria's president on July 24, but both sides suffered heavy losses of men and material.

<sup>485</sup> For more information you can consult the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers, Various issues.



The call of the army to restore the social order in the food riots of 1977, besides the fragility of the regime, highlighted army's new role in the Egyptian scene, the loyal safeguard of the Egyptian regime, regime's defender inside the Egyptian borders. This function of the army was to be determining for the country's future and Egypt's stability in the years to come.

Thus, despite the common acceptance that after the 1973 Egypt was characterised by a demilitarisation of its politics it becomes obvious that this was part of the story. The army continued to play an important role but in a covered way. The military expenditures even though began to decline progressively the economic assets of the military apparatus increased through the 'civilian' economic activities of the army.

## 8.2. State

The outcome of the war had of course repercussions in all Egyptian fields. The popular legitimacy obtained by the first victory against Israel and the support coming from different Egyptian elites gave the *rais* the necessary backup to increase his power capabilities. Regime's main objectives in this period were: economic opening, controlled aperture of the political system, alignment with the West, mainly with Washington, and peace with Israel (Ibrahim, 2002e). The new socio-political orientation permitted Sadat to reinforce his control in different sectors by the removal of his rivals and the reward of his allies.

Regime's priorities were motivated by its interest to consolidate its position and longevity. The *infitah*<sup>486</sup> policies was covering regime's needs: The opening of the political arena was aiming the redistribution of power capabilities of the political actors, the weakening of the remaining pro-Nasserist elements and the consequent empowerment of the pro-liberal elements more interested in collaborating with Sadat. At the same time, these measures serve as means to demonstrate Washington the commitment of the regime to unblock itself from the Communist bloc.

Opening policies in the economic and political field were therefore put in place. Through the re-orientation of Egypt's policies pro-liberal figures were placed in the most important governmental posts. Consequently, almost all participants of the Nasserist regime were 'retired' and replaced by 'October Heroes', among them Hosni Mubarak, who was named Vice President. On the same time, power groups of the pre-52 regime, mostly big landowners, who remained in the scene during the Nasserist period, increased their influence (Martin-Muñoz, 1992: 303). Following Hinnebusch *"His [Sadat's] attempts to manipulate [the global forces] produced a foreign policy opening to the West and a corresponding economic Infitah which altered the balance of power in state and society, permitting a virtual 'restoration' of the bourgeoisie"* (Hinnebusch, 1985:

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<sup>486</sup> The term *infitah* was first used by the Minister of Finance, in 23 April 1973, during the presentation of the economic program in the parliament (Waterbury, 1983: 126).

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The new politico-economic orientation of the regime was institutionalised by the law 43<sup>487</sup> of 1974, and it was further promoted by the laws no 118 of 1975, no 97 in 1976 and no 32 in 1977 (Fahmy, 1988). In the strictly political sphere, the 'October Paper'<sup>488</sup> put the bases for the return to multiparty system and few months later the Committee for Formulating the Political System of Egypt was formed. The return to multiparty system was serving, mainly, the dismissal of the ASU as power centre, which Sadat previously had managed to increase his influence but his control was not secured.

As it is expected, regime's new politico-economical orientation harmed the interests of its pro-communist wing. Sadat and his allies in order to avoid a tough conflict did not precede to a direct criticism on socialist policies, depriving this way his rivals the possibility of accusing them "*of selling the socialist experiment or of willingly falling captive to neo-imperialist interests*" (Waterbury, 1983: 134-136).

After long negotiations between the implicated parts, it was agreed, in March 1976, the creation of three platforms within ASU, the Right, Centre and Left<sup>489</sup>. The Left one, later named Nationalist Progressive Unionist Grouping (NPUG), was headed by a Free Officer Khalid Muhi-Al Din. The Centre, named later Arab Socialist Organisation (EASO) was headed by the Prime Minister Mahmud Salim and the Right, Liberal Socialist Organisation, led by another Free Officer, Kemal Murad. In this way the future political parties will be characterised by a disconnection from the grassroots, since the return to multi-party came from above. In parallel with the political opening came the civilian. Indicatively, we can mention that during this period women's rights were put under reconsideration under the western influence and Jihan Sadat's<sup>490</sup> active role. However, as this was

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<sup>487</sup> The law No 43 set the priorities for investment, mostly the foreign and more importantly put an end to the public sector monopoly of banking. This law presented the bases of the internal debate between Sadat and the pro-communist members of the parliament but finally was approved with very few amendments.

<sup>488</sup> The 'October Paper' was representing the new economic and political orientation of the regime introduced in April 1974 and it was approved by referendum in 15 May 1974 by 99.95 %.

<sup>489</sup> Initially, were formed 40 political platforms there, some of them in religious basis. For more information relative to the platforms see (Martin-Muñoz, 1992: 310-311).

<sup>490</sup> Jihan Sadat is considered by many an important figure during Sadat's mandate, 'Egypt's first lady', official title that her husband gave her, re-grouping around her wives of important actors of Egypt (Heikal, 1983: 46). Jihan's importance in the Egyptian political scene is reflected on the quantity of jokes with her as main protagonist. "Suzanne [Mubarak's wife] asked Mubarak why it was that in the days of Sadat Egypt would get much more money from the Americans. Mubarak said, 'Because Jihan would go to America and Carter would kiss her here and here [pointing to both cheeks] and give Egypt two billion dollars'. Mubarak said, 'You should go to America to help Egypt'. Suzanne said, 'Isn't it forbidden?'. Mubarak said, 'No it isn't, but when you come back to Egypt go to the Nile and wipe both cheeks with Nile water immediately'. Suzanne went to America and the American President kissed her twice and gave Egypt a cheek for two billion dollars. When she came back to Egypt she went to the Nile and washed her cheeks, whereupon she saw Zaki Badr [minister of the interior] washing his bottom. She asked, "where did you come from?" He said, 'Saudi Arabia'".

not a bottom-up process, but rather a decision serving elites' interests, in order to demonstrate the westernised democratic profile to foreign actors, the effort had limited exit.

In the economic field, the liberalisation of the Egyptian economy did not introduce the dismantling of the public sector. The number of the state employees continued to rise and it was almost doubled during Sadat's mandate (Waterbury, 1985). Contrary to Beattie's position (2000:139) the preservation of the public sector was not imposed by the presence of pro-socialist ministers, but from Sadat's need to maintain a mechanism of social stability. Sadat's 'failure' to promote a real economic development was representing the regime's efforts to preserve state's rentier role and at the same time to maintain regime's control over private capital. Following Ayubi, *infatih* was "a policy shift developed by a segment of the Egyptian state bourgeoisie in order to maintain the State's etatist role, under changing domestic, regional and international conditions" (Ayubi, 1991: 299). And as the regime, due to its economic dependency towards the foreign investors, could not afford to go against them moved to block the domestic ones. Consequently, the anti-private sector regulations continued during the first years of Sadat's mandate.

Corruption became an important feature of Sadat's regime, especially for governmental elites, without missing cases involving public employs and their families, since the main negotiations were made under the table with important economic benefits for the implicated parts<sup>491</sup>. We can mention the case of Misr Import-Export in 1976-7, in which the Administrative Control Authority found that the public company was marketing for a commission 1-5%, engines, cranes, tractors and vehicles to other public companies "for the benefit of private sector suppliers selling the equipment for 400% of the normal prices" (Ayubi, 1991:15).

The elections of 1976 represented a test for the return to political pluralism. Different measures were taken in order to assure the victory of the centrist platform<sup>492</sup>, controlled by Sadat and his allies, among them the reorganisation of the local government. Following Martin-Muñoz "Si bien existió por primera vez en veinte años una oferta alternativa de programas, la escasa conciencia de ello en muchos votantes, empujados por la inercia de responder siempre a favor del gobierno, y el favoritismo administrativo y radio-televisivo hacia el grupo gubernamental, cuando no las irregularidades que sin duda se cometieron en el escrutinio, configuraron unos comicios no competitivos que en definitiva eran un paso más del proyecto político bosquejado por el Presidente Sadat" (Martin-Muñoz, 1992: 321). The electoral outcome, which assured regime's control over Majlis, put forward the transformation of the platforms into political parties.

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<sup>491</sup> Heikal gives the illustrative examples of the Boeing sales for Misrair, the public buses, the projects for the development of telephonic net etc (Heikal, 1983: 172-173).

<sup>492</sup> For a detailed analysis on these elections see (Martin-Muñoz, 1992: 318-323).

### 8.3. Rent and Capital

The military victory against Israel rose important aspirations for the Egyptian economic perspectives. The recovery of oil-fields from Sinai, the reopening of Suez Canal (mid-1975), the restarting of the tourism, and the remittances of the Egyptian emigrants<sup>493</sup> were seen as factors that could raise the economic capacities of the regime and could push the Egyptian economy. The economic spring, however, was not synonym of economic development or growth. In the years that followed the war, the economy of the country remained stagnant, and the foreign debt was calculated between \$ 4-10 billion (Hinnebusch, 1985: 58).

The 'October Paper' demonstrated clearly the role of the private sectors: "[...] *el sector privado tiene un papel que desempeñar en el desarrollo. Debemos admitir que no es posible impedir al sector privado la posibilidad de multiplicar su actividad económica. Pero algunos decretos contradictorios obstruyen su capacidad productiva [...] ya es tiempo de hacer desaparecer esas condiciones y dar seguridad al sector privado que puede ser productivo y satisfacer las demandas de la sociedad*"<sup>494</sup>.

The economic *infitah* had according to Waterbury the following goals: attract Arab investment capital, attract western technology and investment through joint ventures, promote Egyptian exports and to stimulate the private sector, bring Egypt's trade with convertible currency economies more nearly into balance, promote rejuvenation and competitiveness of public sector (Waterbury, 1985: 70). However, the main objective of this policy was to reinforce Sadat's allies, foreign and domestic ones, whose power was connected with the private capital. And this, as important participants of the regime, who controlled the main sectors of the economy through the nationalisations of the Nasserist period were ready to return to the private property, however with all necessary precautions.

Sadat efforts to attract foreign investment in order to cover the economic necessities of his regime were concretise by different laws<sup>495</sup>, inserted by the 'October Paper', and the creation of different organisations such as the Agency for Arab and International Cooperation. The efforts for an international cooperation were imposed by the devastating economic situation as the two main international donors, Moscow and Washington, in the year 1974 refused to back up economically Sadat's regime. Moreover, the enforcement of the economic opening was responding to the weak results, in terms of foreign investment, promoted previously.

Meanwhile, the Arab victory against Israel and oil embargo had raised the

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<sup>493</sup> After the war many Egyptians emigrated towards the oil-rich countries to find better job opportunities.

<sup>494</sup> Quoted in (Martin-Muñoz, 1992: 304).

<sup>495</sup> These laws were including exception of foreign investors from import duties, five to ten years of tax exception, guarantees against sequestrations, ending of high incomes taxation, opening of foreign banks.

revenues of the rich oil countries and consequently increased the economic help towards Cairo. The petrodollar investments along with the recovery of Sinai oil-fields, opening of Suez and the restarting of the tourism created a positive economic environment, attracting western economic circles and exiled entrepreneurs (Hinnebusch, 1985: 59). All these factors in parallel with a series of economic policies enabled the emergence of 'fat cats', allies of Sadat. Indicative of the situation is the general opinion regarding this period "if you didn't get rich when Sadat was president, you could forget about it"<sup>496</sup>.

The emergence of 'fat cats' and their activities are well described by Heikal (Heikal, 1983: 171-188)<sup>497</sup>. It is sustained that in 1974 there were about 187 millionaires in the country (Waterbury, 1983). Osman Ahmed Osman continued his economic activities, as one of the main actors in the Egyptian scene and close friend of Sadat, who was also named Minister of Housing and Construction<sup>498</sup>. Another illustrative example of the Egyptian version of the 'American dream' and the strong ties between the politic and economic field is this of Sadat's brother who, in a few years became rich, due to his contraband activities or the this of Merei's case, Minister of Agriculture whose son married Sadat's daughter.

The liberalisation of the economy had political rather than economic objectives and thus it was not responding to the economic necessities of the Egyptian society. The symbiosis of private and public sector was beneficial for the implicated parts. As Sadowski upheld, none of the actors of the private sector were positive to a complete absence of the state intervention "*[...] businessman and reformers, even the most liberal ones, resist the idea of cutting the state's budget and reducing its centrality in the economy. They believe that the private sector is still too weak to prosper on its own and that requires massive government support and public investment to develop [...]*" (Sadowski, 1991: 163).

The bad performance in economic terms did not lack opportunities for many, as lot of businessmen managed to create big fortunes during this period, taking advantage the economy's dual character. However, not all domestic actors were benefited by the infitah policies as the laws adopted regarding the foreign enterprises did not concern the Egyptian ones and there were not missing the calls of the Egyptian entrepreneurs to be given the same facilities. Following Stork "*Sadat and his ruling clique of landowners, technocrats and tycoons have exploited [Nasser's socialist] failure, and consolidated their class leadership in Egypt and international capitalist control over the country's economy*" (Stork, 1977: 8).

As it is widely accept the policies of infitah impacted different sectors but none of the official proclaimed objectives was fulfilled as the economic differences

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<sup>496</sup> Quoted in (Beattie, 2000: 151).

<sup>497</sup> The names of Osman Ahmed Osman and this of Sadat's brother Esmat have a leading role.

<sup>498</sup> Osman's activities were expanded in different sectors: construction, food production, banking, tourism, insurance etc, and in the majority of big national projects. The reconstruction of the destroyed cities in Sinai was made by Osman's company. The relations among the two men, Osman and Sadat were sealed by the marriage of their children in 1975.

continued to rise, corruption touched its highest levels and the foreign debt increased significantly. The negative effects of the bad economic performance soon became obvious. Cairo's economic dependency on international donors limited the regime's margins of actuation. Thus, in 1976, there is an important turnover in top economic managers, in order to pursue the demands of IMF and World Bank. The incompatibility of the regime's goals with the imperatives of the foreign donors became more evident with the decision to cut subsidies, forced by international private bankers and public lenders, in order to reduce the balance of payments deficit, in exchange billions of dollars.

The measures taken by the regime in order to satisfy foreign donors were proven dangerous for the regime's stability. The announcement of significant cut offs in subsidies in many basic items generated massive reactions that put in danger the regime's survival and thus they were immediately withdrawn, even though social calmness came only after army's calling for the restoration of social order.

#### **8.4. Religion**

The victory against Israel was attributed to the Egypt's return to the religion, as the war took place during the Ramadan<sup>499</sup>, with Egyptian soldiers shouting '*Allah Akbar*' instead of secular cry '*air, sea, land*' of the June war. "*After all, some soldiers had even seen angels riding on the shoulders of their comrades as the miraculous canal crossing unfolded*" (Beattie, 2000: 135). The spiritual interpretation of the victory reinforced all religious actors<sup>500</sup> and increased their competition.

Previously the establishment of the *Sharia* as main resource of legislation and the increasing role of the ulema and the collaboration with Muslim Brotherhood had helped the regime on this direction. The support offered by Sadat and his allies to specific religious elites and institutions as means to circumvent the nasserist influence was implemented in all fields. In this context came the fatwa issued by Sheikh of al-Azhar<sup>501</sup>, according to which "*communism is impiety (kufr) and those who support it have no faith*".

Sheikh Adb al-Halim Mahmud, al-Azhar's Sheikh, became an important ally of Sadat's religious plans, along with Sheikh Mohammed Metwalli Sharawi, a popular cleric. During his office at al-Azhar (1973-1978) Adb al-Halim Mahmud played an important role in the expansion of al-Azhar's influence, among others through the establishment of primary and secondary institutes, connected with the prestigious Egyptian mosque. His projects and activities were also financed by

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<sup>499</sup> Of course the war was not decided to take place in this period for religious reasons but for climatic ones.

<sup>500</sup> After the war of 1973, many imprisoned Islamists were liberated among them sympathisers of Shukri Mustafa (1942-1978), spiritual leader of Takfir wal-Hijra (Kepel, 1988:88)

<sup>501</sup> Quoted in (Zeghal, 1999:381).

foreign donors mainly from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The financial aid is calculated at \$3 million but the real aid is believed to be greater (Zeghal, 1999: 378).

The economic aid coming from the Gulf monarchies was not based at feelings of Muslim solidarity. Rather this aid was a way of attaching the Egyptian official ulema on the Saudi doctrine. At a regional level, in this period the Islamic movement was divided between a more conservative doctrine adopted and promoted mostly by Saudi Arabia, the Iranian doctrine compatible but competitive to the Saudi one and a modernist approach promoted mostly by Houari Boumediene of Algeria (Corm, 2003: 375). The competition for the leading role on the religious discourse at regional level was therefore what pushed the generous economic aid from the Gulf monarchies, interested in dominating the most populated Arab country. The strict alliance between Sadat with King Faisal bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud in different levels was another reason for the financial aid offered to al-Azhar.

The religious legitimacy that the institutional elites were offering to Sadat's regime soon became problematic for the ulema. The increasing influence of non official religious actors, especial of the Muslim Brotherhood, was a clear sign of ulema's weak appeal to the Egyptian Muslims (Kodmani, 2005). Thus, the official religious elites began to realise that their close association with Sadat and his regime was not as beneficial. Consequently, the relations between the Sheikh of Al-Azhar and Sadat entered in a period of hostility. The relations worsen after Sadat's move in July 1974, to authorise a decree through which the authority of the Sheikh was submitted under the ministry of Wafqs. Adb al-Halim Mahmud's reaction, who threaten Sadat with his resignation, forced the Egyptian president to withdraw the decree (Zeghal, 1999:383), probably fearing for Riyadh's response.

Important criticism against Sadat's regime was made during this period by Sheikh Abdul Hamid Kishk Nachricht. The influence of this Sheikh was so significant that Kepel wrote *"In the last years of the Sadat's presidency, it was impossible to walk the streets of Cairo without hearing [Kishk's] stentorian voice. Climb into a collective service-taxi and the driver is listening to one of Sheikh Kishk's recorded sermons... They listen to Kishk in Cairo, in Casablanca, and in the North African district of Marseilles. A Saudi-funded magazine has dubbed him 'the star of Islamic preaching'... none commands his incomparable vocal cords, his panoramic Muslim culture, his phenomenal capacity for improvisation, and his acerbic humour in criticizing infidel regimes, military dictatorship, the peace treaty with Israel, or the complicity of al-Azhar..."* (Kepel, 1984: 172). Due his severe criticism along with his popularity the regime boycotted his preaching on state owned media<sup>502</sup>.

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<sup>502</sup> The Sheikh was shortly before Sadat's assassination, but he was released in 1982 by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak under the commitment that he will remain publicly silent (Esposito, 2004).

Muslim Brotherhood continued to expand its influence as their collaboration with Sadat had been consolidated<sup>503</sup>. Their journal Al-Dawa, reappeared in 1976, controlled by the neo Muslim Brotherhood integrated in the economic Egyptian circles. Important was also the economic back up coming from wealthy businessmen. Osman Ahmed Osman role was vital also in this field. According to his own testimony he was a member of Muslim Brotherhood: *"I was a full member of the Muslim Brotherhood in Isma'iliyya [...] I never left it except after my graduation in university. [...] But my relationship with the group remained a spiritual connection on the one hand, and a material connection via regular dues payments on the other"*<sup>504</sup>. His close ties with the organisation included also job opportunities for the members.

The rise of the Islamic influence<sup>505</sup> however, had its side effects as it opened a 'Pandora's box' (Hopwood, 1993: 117). As we mentioned in the previous chapter, part of the collaborating Islamic groups disconnect themselves from the regime's auspices and start to act autonomously in order to increase their power capabilities. The poor economic condition of the majority Egyptians and the declining 'morality' of their leadership<sup>506</sup> helped to rejection of the regime and increase of the non official religious ideology, 'radical' and 'moderate'. The important nets of social action of the islamist groups in poor urban neighbourhoods or in villages (Martin-Muñoz, 1988), were helpful for the Egyptians' 'persuasion'. These nets substituting the absence of welfare state will be proven significant in the future, immediate and not for the people support.

The islamisation of public life was becoming more obvious day by day, as many women started to cover themselves with the Islamic clothing and the men leaving long beards<sup>507</sup>. Parallel was the proliferation of Muslim newspapers, representing an open channel of communication between different religious groups and the Egyptian society (Araf Lufti, 1984: 549). Additionally, universities continued to be mainly controlled by Islamist groups, covering among other education expanses for some of their members (Singerman, 2004).

It is easily understood that the different religious groups were not characterised by homogeneity. On the contrary, during this period each group was following different dogmas and practices, fact that generated competition among them. In this context many radical groups were formed using or planning

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<sup>503</sup> The communication between Muslim Brotherhood and Sadat was direct. Heikal mentions that during that period there were negotiations between the Egyptian President and Muslim Brotherhood's leadership, which included the withdrawal of the guardian at Nasser's grave(Heikal, 1983: 115).

<sup>504</sup> Quoted in (Beattie, 2000:164).

<sup>505</sup> The return to religiosity was helped further increase of the permissions to the Egyptians to perform their religious duties to Mecca.

<sup>506</sup> During this period Egypt and especially Cairo had become the capital of Muslim moral liberty. Gambling, drugs and prostitution were attracting many 'devoted' Muslims.

<sup>507</sup> The Muslim clothing became more present between others for its cheapest.



to use violence against their 'adversaries'. Private mosques<sup>508</sup> according to different testimonies were serving as places of recruitment for militants (Ansari, 1984: 129). The majority of 'radical' Islamists were found in the Upper Egypt, students in the age 21-30<sup>509</sup>, coming from middle and lower-middle class mostly rural or first generation urban class.

Indicative of the growing 'radicalism' was the assassination attempt against the Egyptian president. In 1974 the group Islamic Liberation Party', formed by members who run 'normal' life in order to avoid the regime's attention and headed by the Palestinian Salih Sirriya<sup>510</sup> tried to assassinate Sadat (Kepel, 1988:105). However, the regime probably saw the case as exceptional since no particular measures were taken.

### ***8.5. Ideological Discourse***

Anwar al-Sadat, the 'Hero of the Crossing' managed finally to circumvent Nasser's legacy. However, the complete destruction of Nasser's image and the consequent debilitation of Nasser's allies, being Sadat's rivals, needed some pushing. Thus, in 1974-5, Sadat started the 'de-nasserisation campaign' presenting himself as neutral arbiter, giving a clear message to his right wing allies to crash Nasser's image<sup>511</sup>. In this context particular emphasis on Nasser's dictatorial rule was given. The political opponents of Sadat, adverting for the problems of *infatih* and the importance of public sector, were found in incommode position as they could not deny the repression exercised during Nasser's years.

In the fifth anniversary of Nasser's death Sadat, in an effort to dismantle indirectly his predecessor legacy, he stated <sup>512</sup> *"Abdel Nasser was a human being, so it is not belittling to say that he did right things and he did wrong things. There were goals which he achieved and goals that he did not achieved. The July 23 revolution had its negative aspects. I am exercising self criticism from a position of responsibility. Yes, there have been deviations and there have also been prisons and*

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<sup>508</sup> There are two kinds of mosques in Egypt as well as at the totality of the Muslim world: the public ones (*hukumi*) depending and being controlled by the minister of Wafqs were the preacher is public employee and the private ones (*ahli*) created by private founds and independent of the state.

<sup>509</sup> Regarding the geographical distribution, age and occupation of the Islamist militants you can consult (Ansari, 1984).

<sup>510</sup> He was working in the headquarters of the Arab League in the department of education.

<sup>511</sup> The freedom of criticising the Nasserist period produced inevitably political jokes: "Nasser reached into a pocket for his golden fountain pen but couldn't find it. He tells his security chief it is missing, whereupon the officer orders a citywide roundup of suspects. An hour later, Nasser calls the security chief and begins to say 'About my pen...' when the officer interrupts: 'Yes, Mr. President, 23 criminals are now confessing to the nation on television that they stole the pen as part of terror campaign to over through the government'. 'Hold it, hold it' Nasser replies. 'What I wanted to tell you was that I found it in my other suit'". Quoted in (Lippman, 1989:39).

<sup>512</sup> Quoted in (Lippman, 1989: 48).

*detention camps. And though exceptional measures are naturally adopted by any revolution, those of July 23 revolution remained longer than they should have and were extended to fields where they should not have reached”.*

The victory against Israel was deeply exploited by Sadat as means to increase its popularity. After the war Sadat declared<sup>513</sup>“[...] *what we have achieved in 11 days of the most important and gravest-in fact the greatest and the most glorious-days in our history[...] We have fought for the sake of peace [...] We do not fight to attack the territory of others, but we fought and will continue to fight for two objectives: (a) to restore our territory which was occupied in 1967; and (b) to find ways and means to restore and to obtain respect for the legitimate rights of the people of Palestine [...]”.*

Regarding his the orientation of his policies and particularly infitah the October Paper issued<sup>514</sup>: “*We realize that the burden of progress and construction falls essentially upon the shoulders of the Egyptian people. But whatever the extent of the resources we are able to mobilize locally, we are stile in dire need of external resources. The circumstances of the world today permit us to have access to these resources in a way that strengthens our economy and promotes growth. It is on this basis that we call for the economic open door, and it is a call based, on the one hand, on Egypt’s economic needs, and, on the other, available external financing”.*

In the same document were evident Sadat’s efforts to prepare the ‘public opinion’ for the solitary way that Egypt was going to follow regarding the rest of the region’s Arab countries. The victory against Israel was not of Arabs but of the Egyptians, a people existing since seven thousand years and Sadat adopted a more pharaoh image (Laurens, 1991: 290). To this means Sadat made an appeal to the Egyptian chauvinism, to prepare the field for a future agreement with Israel, because since the 40s Egyptians had been brought up with anti-Zionist ideology (Ibrahim, 2002e).

Sadat declared Moscow Sadat avoid to recognise any merit for their aid<sup>515</sup> “The October war was the first war which we started on our own initiative, away from the fear of Israel’s domination, the inclination of foreign countries and considerations of international foreign power. We have succeeded in breaking those shackles and have proved that we can choose freely and impose our will as far as issues of our country are concerned. The opportunity which the Arab world has been seeking since its renaissance in the modern age is now at hand, and it has only to gasp its significance, to hold on and rise to the level of its exigencies”.

## **8.6. Media**

The state owned media continued to be under the control and at the service of the regime. In January 1974, Sadat announced the end of the press censorship

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<sup>513</sup> Quoted in (Laqueur and Rubbin, 1991: 461-472).

<sup>514</sup> Quoted in (Waterbury, 1985: 70).

<sup>515</sup> Quoted in (Lippman, 1989 198).

in national and foreign press and in May 1975, a new Supreme Press Council was formed. In the context of the promotion of religion the appearance of articles related to Islamic issues by different religious authorities became frequent<sup>516</sup> with a parallel reduction of the 'communist' ones, whose newspapers were submitted to restrictions<sup>517</sup>. Furthermore, the Egyptian television, under state control, served as a manipulative instrument in favour of Sadat's regime.

The declared end of censorship did not eliminate the regime's efforts to control the field. Press freedom was reduced to the freedom in criticising what was permitted by the regime, mainly Nasser and his legacy. As Mustafa Amin sustained "*Freedom of the press, to Sadat, did not mean freedom to criticise him*". Despite the limitations remained, there was indeed an important relaxation of the restrictions imposed by Nasser.

Besides selective censorship, the regime promoted friendly figures in key posts. Mohamed Heikal, editor of al-Ahram and close associate of Nasser and Sadat, was a victim of Sadat's victory. His criticism regarding the president's foreign policy, notably the alignment with Washington, cost him his expulsion from the category of Sadat's confidants. His post was taken by Mustafa Amin<sup>518</sup>, known for his pro-liberal and pro-American preferences.

The 'Hero of the Crossing', name attributed to Sadat after the 'victory' against Israel, managed to extract the wanted popular acceptance and overpass Nasser's fame, as his popularity was comparable with this of Nasser's after the Suez's nationalisation. However, regime's political and economic orientation needed special handling in order to avoid generalised popular discontent. Written and audiovisual media were valuable tools to this aim. Consequently, criticism towards the old regime regarding mostly the repression exercised during Nasser's mandate facilitated the task of the promoters.

In this context, public debates regarding the repressive policies of the previous regime were encouraged by Sadat. As it underlined by Ayubi "*To write about him [Nasser], whether in praise or in condemnation, became one of the best ways of attracting people's attention [...]*" (Ayubi, 1991: 9). The strategy followed facilitated regime's task on distorting Nasser's image as means to impulse policies, not compatible with the ones pronounced and promoted during the Nasserist period, as we commented previously.

In January 1974, the Minister of Culture announced the de-nationalisation of cinema industry, nationalised by Nasser, which signalled the end of the film censorship. The new kind of cinema in Egypt cannot be separated from the larger challenge of transforming the whole society socially, politically and culturally. In

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<sup>516</sup> In June 1976 the weakly al -Da'wa, of the Muslim Brotherhood, was given permission to publication.

<sup>517</sup> During this period many leftist authors were forbidden to write and there were sporadic seizures of newspapers.

<sup>518</sup> Mustafa Amin was one of the important journalists silenced during Nasser's mandate.

the frame of de-nasserisation, the seventh art was used to dismantle Nasser's image. Indicatively the film *Karnak* based on a 'fiction' story<sup>519</sup> of Naguib Mahfouz, in which the secret police actuations during the Nasserist period were criticised (Lippman, 1989 35). At the same time there were publications of books regarding the torture during Nasser's years such as the book of Amin *The first Year in Prison*, published in 1974<sup>520</sup>.

### 8.7. People

The popularity of the 'Hero of the Crossing' reached its zenith in the aftermath of the war, as we have already underlined. However, the period of 'honey moon' between Sadat and 'his sons' did not last long, consequence of the important economic penuries that the majority of the Egyptians had to face during this period. The economic *infitah*, with the exception of the first year after the war, not only did not improve the economic conditions of the Egyptians but on the contrary deteriorate them. Indicative of the worsening situation was the important increase of the annual import of wheat, basic ingredient of the Egyptian diet, which doubled 1960 in less than two decades (Dethier and Funk, 1987).

The differences in economic terms between rich and poor grow bigger and more evident<sup>521</sup>. The significant raise of the luxury products and the appearance of black markets were signs of the asymmetrical distribution of wealth. In parallel there was a significant decline of employment opportunities, consequence of the stagnant economy, the population growth estimated at 2.2%, with the absorption rate of new entrants in job market declining from 80-50 % in the period 1967-74 (Hinnebusch, 1985: 62). As Ayubi held "*Under Sadat's open door policy [...] the Egyptian market was flooded with luxury items, most of which were well beyond the reach of the average government employee. [...] No less than one-third of the respondents in the Al-Ahram survey [...] were primed to seek positions in either the private sector or the Gulf*" (Ayubi, 1980: 9).

In order to avoid generalised mobilisation, Sadat increased the flow of resources in welfare programmes<sup>522</sup>, mainly in the domains of health and education, which however were virtual, due to the increasing inflation. The

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<sup>519</sup> As Naguib Mahfuz commented "Hay un vinculo sólido entre la vida social y yo, por una parte, y el contenido de mis novelas y los acontecimientos sociales por otra. Incluso si las novelas parecen imaginarias, simbólicas o históricas, el setenta y cinco por ciento de ellas tratan de hechos actuales inspirados por la sociedad y el veinticinco por ciento de deseos patológicos metafísicos, tal vez inspirados también por la propia sociedad".

<sup>520</sup> In this period and after many books have been written regarding Nasser and his policies. On the criticism Sami Jawhar, 1975, *The salient speak* and on pro-nasserist Abdallah Imam, 1978, *Nasser's file* and neutral Luis Awad, 1976, *The seven masks of Nasirism*, all of them in Arabic language (Ayubi, 1991: 9).

<sup>521</sup> In the period 1967-1973, the 60% of the rural families were living beneath the poverty threshold (Waterbury, 1983).

<sup>522</sup> For instance the fix rates for housing rents remained active throughout Sadat's mandate, but this was applied to all Egyptians without discrimination between rich and poor.

subsidies for all kinds of commodities increased from E£ 661.4 millions in 1971 to E£ 1.289.6 millions in 1976. Important were also the indirect subsidies regarding mainly petroleum and gas products in 1976 E£ 206 million to E£310 million the next year (Waterbury, 1983: 213-224).

In parallel, the state continued to furnish the best job opportunities<sup>523</sup> in terms of earnings and other types of benefits, with the exception of higher skilled jobs, and there were continuous salary rises. In period 1971-1979 the civil services' nominal wage increased approximately 25% per annum, but having in mind the inflation, in reality the wages decreased (Waterbury, 1983: 244). The incapacity of the Egyptians to make ends meet obliged them to search for solutions as double job<sup>524</sup>, activities implicating corruption or emigration. As the Egyptian Minister of Planning, Al-Imam<sup>525</sup>, said *"Egypt just kept the subsidies to bribe the people and maintained the public sector while dismantling it"*.

The rentier policies were not sufficient in improving the living conditions of the population, fact that generated indignation, expressed with sporadic manifestations during the years 1975-76 *"Where is our breakfast, oh Hero of the Crossing"* was one of the main chants of the protesters (Shukr, 1979). Despite the generalised deception and the relative free environment to act, the Egyptians did not accomplish to use it in order to improve their situation, which according to Hinnebusch was in part fruit of the *"authoritarian- bureaucratic nature of the political system"*. At the same time, as it was underlined by the same author, this situation *"probable made Egypt more vulnerable to foreign demands, because the absence of countervailing internal pressures on decision-makers [...]"* (Hinnebusch, 1985: 63-65).

Sadat in order to relax the tensed situation proceeded in visual changes, forcing the prime minister and his cabinet to resignation. The new cabinet was composed mostly by pro-Sadat figure, with Mamduh Salim at the head of the executive. As it was expected, the new cabinet was more prone to liberalism, and thus disposed and interested in pushing the opening of the Egyptian economy, in order to satisfy the foreign and domestic 'allies' and secure further economic aid<sup>526</sup>. This aid was between others used to cover all kinds of economic necessities of the regime, including its rentier mechanisms.

The deterioration of the living conditions for the majority of the Egyptians, found echo partially in small radical political groups and there were not canalised by the political organisations, consequence of the control that the regime exercised over the newly formed political parties. Indicative, was the limited

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<sup>523</sup> In 1980, one third of the Egyptian work force was on the public payroll without taking into account those in the armed forces (Waterbury, 1983: 242).

<sup>524</sup> Also in this period it was developed the surveillance by ordinary people getting paid with a few piasters (Lippman, 1989:44).

<sup>525</sup> Quoted in (Beattie, 2000:217).

<sup>526</sup> In this period was also adopted the law 111 through which the General Organisation for Industrialisation was abolished and gave more autonomy to the public sector companies.

participation on the elections of 1976, where only the 43% of the total number registered on the election list participated (Fahmy, 2002 ). Consequently, during this period we can no identify any political process in strict sense that increased Egyptians' capacity to interfere on power relations, even though we cannot deny the ending of the dictatorial practices regarding the opponents of the regime.

Sadat's reforms did not convince the international donors. The pressing of the IMF and World Bank, forced Cairo to proceed in important cut offs of the state budget. The massive popular unrest triggered by provisions to cut back sharply and eliminate the subsidies that have protected the Egyptian masses from the escalating costs of basic food commodities, most of them imported. The famous food riots in 1977, where 160 persons lost their life after the calling of the army to crack down the manifestations, marked an important red line for the regime and for the future ones: regime's survival passes through subsidies system. All over the country people went out the street shouting<sup>527</sup> *"Down with the Khedive", "Your daughter is living in a splendour and we are ten to a room" "Nasser, Nasser"*.

The majority of scholars among them Lippman (1989) agree that the food riots of 1977 *"were a spontaneous and popular uprising"*. The reaction of the Egyptians was so intense that the government was forced to withdraw the decision. The call of the army, first time after '52, and the imposition of the state emergency demonstrated the fragility of the regime<sup>528</sup>.

The manifestations were once more attributed to 'communists'<sup>529</sup> and answered by police repression and arrests. However, as reactions grew spontaneously, the participants were not a homogeneous ideological group. Islamic organisations played a significant role, with Islamic associations of the university constituting the only organised mass movement (Kepel, 1988: 144). Their anti-regime activities broke in 1977 the 'gentlemen's agreement' between the regime and the Islamic associations.

The social order came with the calling of the army along with government's decision to withdraw its proposal. The social victory underlined the limits of the regime's policies but on the same time consolidated the regime's rentier functions and the clientelist relationship between the state and the citizens.

### ***8.8. International Friends***

The Egyptian and Syrian attack was practically a surprise to both international rival blocs, Moscow and Washington, even though the Soviet side was aware of the Syrian preparations. The expulsion of the Soviet experts had

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<sup>527</sup> Quoted in (Lippman, 1989: 116).

<sup>528</sup> According to Heikal Sadat and his family had a plane ready to take them to Iran if the army was not capable to restore the order (Heikal, 1983).

<sup>529</sup> Earlier, in 1<sup>st</sup> May of 1975 the communist party reorganised in clandestine way and named itself "The Group with No Name" (Beattie, 2000:160). The theory of communist conspiracy was also aided by the slogans of the students accusing Sadat for "selling of the country to the imperialists".

been read as a sign of Cairo's non military action against Tel Aviv. The surprise factor was determinant for the Egyptian 'victory', which in its turn fulfilled one of Sadat's main objectives: convince Washington for Cairo's goals and achieve the American support. Sadat's idea was fed by Henry Kissinger's statement before the war *"You [Egypt] have to change the status quo, the situation that you're in; but I'm not inviting Sadat to change the situation military. If he tries that, Israel will win another time by an even greater measure than she won in June 1967"* (Kissinger, 1979). Kissinger's words underlined the common idea that Egypt was seen unable to accomplish any kind of victory against Israel. Another element resulting from this statement is that Washington since that period was incapable and unwilling to pressure Tel Aviv for concessions towards the Arabs.

The outcome of the military conflict, even though it was perceived as an Arab victory from both sides, was not sufficient factor to convince Tel Aviv to enter in negotiations. In this context, negotiations for the ceasefire between the military adversaries, Cairo and Damascus on the one hand and Tel Aviv on the other, came after the interference of the two international powers. Sadat preoccupied for the possibility of another humiliating defeat, especially after the massive American military support towards Tel Aviv, tried by all means to find a way out proposing an immediate ceasefire under the condition of an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories with international guarantees. Sadat's proposal was of course rejected from the Israeli side and thus not adopted from Washington.

Washington's attitude towards the negotiations was also affected by the Watergate scandal. Following Mahmoud Riad, at the time Secretary-General of the Arab League, *"Nixon wanted to project the image of a strong man who refuses to bow pressure; he shocked the world and his allies in Western Europe by declaring a state of extreme emergency in the US army on 25 October which meant a state of nuclear alertness in all US bases in the US and Europe"* (Riad, 1981: 254).

The decision of the Arab League to proceed to monthly reduction of the oil production until Tel Aviv's withdrawal from the occupied territories change Washington's attitude (Laurens, 1991). The oil embargo alarmed the western elites not for the immediate costs<sup>530</sup> but mainly for the future ones, something that placed the Arab-Israeli conflict at the international agenda. The two great powers started immediate negotiations for ceasefire and Kissinger went to Moscow on October 20<sup>th</sup> where the Resolution 338<sup>531</sup> of the Security Council proposed by the two international adversaries.

The American role and Sadat's moves sealed a new era for the Middle East.

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<sup>530</sup> In this period USA was importing 25% of its oil.

<sup>531</sup> According to the Resolution 338, "The Security Council: 1. Calls upon all parties to the present fighting to cease all firing and terminate all military activity immediately [...] in the positions they now occupy; [...] 3. decides that, immediately and concurrently with the ceasefire, negotiations shall start between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East".

Following Korany “[...] *in addition to Egypt’s unilateral ceasefire decision without even consulting with her Syrian partner, the oil embargo was finally lifted before its declared objectives were attained (Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 lines). In this sense, these decisions were crucial in indicating subsequent Arab orientation in the global system, and the increasing Pax-Americana in regional and even national affairs*” (Korany, 1984: 70).

The European side, also affected by the oil embargo, kept different attitude during the war hostilities from Washington. Thus, in order to separate their position from the American one the European leaders refused to open NATO bases, serving the military aid to Israel. As Laurens stressed “*Ce ‘découplage’ entre l’Europe et les Etats-Unis sur la question du Moyen-Orient est une revanche ironique de l’histoire par rapport aux années cinquante où les Etats-Unis critiquaient le colonialisme attardé de leurs alliés européens*” (Laurens, 1991: 261).

During the negotiations, Moscow tried in vain to increase its role in the mediating process. For Kremlin the Arab victory was interpreted as victory of its allies. However, despite the air bridge Moscow-Cairo-Damascus and the general military aid of Moscow there was no sign of ‘gratitude’ from the Egyptian. Nor Cairo appreciated Moscow’s decisive role when the Tel Aviv broke the ceasefire and encircled the third Egyptian army, when Brezhnev threaten Washington to proceed into unilateral steps if US did not stop its client (Dawisha, 1997: 39). After all, Sadat’s decision to expel the Soviet experts was motivated by his will to disconnect a possible Egyptian victory from Moscow. Yet, the soviet influence towards Damascus and PLO forced Washington to accept the soviet participation in the peace negotiations, in order to press its allies.

In the Geneva Conference, in December 1973, Kissinger adopted his *step by step* policy. Washington was not in favour of another military clash between the Arabs and Israel in order to avoid a new implication of Moscow in the region<sup>532</sup> and probable reactions from the oil monarchies of the region. Thus, Kissinger as means to circumvent a complete collapse of the negotiations centred the discussions on the separation of the military forces, avoiding the matter of the Israeli withdrawal.

From the Soviet site, a new clash in the Middle East was not desirable either since Moscow wanted to avoid an escalation of the conflict in the international scene. Despite the common will of Washington and Moscow to find a relative compromise between the implicated parts, the former seemed incapable convincing Israel to proceed to some kind of concession towards the Arab demands. The Israeli arrogance deriving from the fact that Tel Aviv had already secured important and unconditional aid from Washington. Consequently, there was no particular development regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict, apart that represented the first official time that Arabs and Israelis were sat together.

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<sup>532</sup> The war was indirectly a military clash between the two superpowers as each one established air bridges to supply their respective allies.



In November 1973, Sadat made his first official meeting with Kissinger and one year later the first Egyptian-Israeli Disengagement Agreement was signed, under the auspices of Washington. According to the agreement Tel Aviv accepted its withdrawal from both sides of Suez Canal, under the supervision of UN. The American intervention was determinant and came after Sadat's positive intervention for ending the oil embargo (Izquierdo, 2005: 117). Sadat's good behaviour was further rewarded by Washington, through the reactivation of the official economic aid<sup>533</sup> and the re-opening of US Public Law (PL 480) after 10 years of pause<sup>534</sup> (Ibrahim, 2002b).

Meanwhile, the Watergate scandal deprived Nixon the American presidency before getting the approval from the congress to increase the aid towards Cairo. Gerald Rudolph Ford's succession at the American presidency was negatively perceived, since the new president was seen more committed to Tel Aviv. However, the Israeli intransigence was not helping, forcing the American president to declare during the National Security meeting in March 1975<sup>535</sup> *"I have never been so disappointed as to see people I respect unable to see that we are trying to do something for their interests as well as for our own. But in the final analysis our commitment is to the United States"*.

The relations between Moscow and Cairo were reaching the worst moment. The Soviet economic help towards Egypt, as Kremlin refused to help any further Sadat and consequently did not provide any weaponry to substitute the losses caused by the war nor the expected economic aid. In 1974 economic aid from USSR dropped to \$76 million, and the debt to eastern and western donors had reached \$132 million (Stork, 1977: 8).

Soviet unwillingness to provide substantial economic aid towards Sadat's regime was consequence of Cairo's attitude not to reward politically Moscow for its support and Sadat's clear stance to disconnect Cairo from the Soviet influence. Sadat's open criticism on Moscow in the early 1974 put forward the ending of the bilateral relations (Ibrahim, 1982). The freezing of the relations came in March 1976 when People's Assembly decided the abrogation of the friendship treaty with USSR, and the withdrawal of naval facilities to the Soviets<sup>536</sup>, with Sadat characterising this treaty 'a worthless piece of paper'.

The abrogation of the treaty was imposed by the absolute necessity of the Egyptian regime to gain the American and Arab economic aid. The petrol aid and the 'Arab Marshall Plan'<sup>537</sup> were to be given under the perquisite of the control of

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<sup>533</sup> The economic aid towards Egypt was also materialised by the SUMED pipeline financed by American and Arab donors.

<sup>534</sup> The pro-American feelings were stimulated by the 'American dream' as the Egyptians perceived that for instance working on an American enterprise was more rentable than an Egyptian one.

<sup>535</sup> Quoted in (Beattie, 2000:177)

<sup>536</sup> In October 1977 the Egyptian loans contracted with USSR were suspended.

<sup>537</sup> Up to 1978 Egypt was the largest OPEAC recipient and in the period 1973-78 Egypt received \$7

Egyptian economy by International lending agencies and the termination of the soviet influence (Stork, 1977: 9). The alignment with Washington and the parallel coldness with Moscow put the basis for a dependency relationship towards Washington for Sadat and his allies, in the absence of an alternative international powerful actor. It is important to underline that the foreign debt in this period was tripled, fact that made more vulnerable Sadat's regime (Hinnebusch, 1985 58).

The economic conditions that Egypt was facing needed an immediate economic sponsor, as the ending of bilateral relations with Moscow was not matched by an immediate and significant increase by the west nor Arab countries (Stork, 1977 8). Six months before the abrogation of the treaty, Sadat had made his first official visit to USA in order to pressure for military and economic aid. Finally, the wanted economic aid came accompanied with several economic agreements. During the period 1975-79, seven agreements were signed with USA<sup>538</sup> involving loans of \$215.9 million for industrial investment and development as well as West European loans concerning projects in many areas (Ayubi, 1991:35).

### **8.9. Arab Circle**

The October war united the Arabs as never before. However, the spirit of collaboration soon came to end since the end of the military hostilities uncovered the differences between the two principal allies of the war: Sadat and Assad. The two leaders had different goals to pursue and thus dissimilar strategies to follow. Their divergent paths were underlined by the declarations of the two men: on the one hand Sadat was declaring<sup>539</sup> *"We have fought for the sake of peace [...]"*, whereas Assad<sup>540</sup> was stating: *"I am anxious to point out that our steadfastness in the war of liberation has begun to give the slogan 'pan-Arabism of the battle', a practical and real meaning [...]. The hour of decisiveness has come. Let us adapt ourselves to continue the war of liberation to its victorious end [...]"*.

The talks between the Arab leaders in Alger in order to negotiate the 'Arab' position in the Geneva Conference, divided further the Arab front. Hussein of Jordan had been already isolated due his non contribution during the war. The opponent interests of Sadat and Assad were once more evident: Sadat was looking after Egypt's peace, whereas Assad<sup>541</sup> was targeting a general solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The position of Damascus was deriving from the fact that

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billion from Saudi Arabia (Ayubi, 1991: 324).

<sup>538</sup> The American banks were operating in Egypt as well as the American oil companies were bidding for exploration rights.

<sup>539</sup> 16 October 1973. Quoted in (Laqueur and Rubbin, 1991: 472).

<sup>540</sup> 15 October 1973. Quoted in (Laqueur and Rubbin, 1991: 460).

<sup>541</sup> The Syrian side announced its abstention in case there was not a previous Israeli withdrawal of the Golan Heights.

negotiations did not include the Syrian Golan Heights or the Palestinian question that interested Assad due his close ties with PLO (Izquierdo, 2005: 127). On the other hand, Sadat wanted to resolve the problems with Israel as he believed that the optimal situation created after the war could not be repeated as Egypt could not be involved in another military clash with Israel.

The Syrian military loss determined Damascus isolation. Sadat's clear anti-Soviet stance along with his willingness to dissociate the Palestinian question from the Egyptian-Israeli conflict was positively perceived from Washington. The implicit American support aided Cairo to achieve progressively the recuperation of the Egyptian territories and become an integrated part of the Arab scene. On the contrary, Assad of Syria was found isolated in the Arab arena, signalling one of the successes of Kissinger's policy, punishing the Syrian pro-soviet attitude<sup>542</sup>.

The relations among Cairo and the 'radical' Arab regimes reached its worst moment with the signing of the Sinai Interim Agreement (Sinai II) in September 1974, which provoked reactions in Syria, Iraq, Algeria, Libya, as well as in the opposition inside Egypt.

The decision for an oil embargo helped Sadat to negotiate the Israeli withdrawal from the two sides of the Suez Canal, as we underlined previously. The oil embargo had in fact more political than economic impact. As Corm underlines the decision over rise of prices came few days earlier from the embargo, among the five producer countries of Gulf and Iran<sup>543</sup>(Corm, 2003: 343-355). According to the same scholar, the real impact of the of the oil embargo was: the creation of a hostile environment towards the Arabs, the formation of the International Agency of Energy-Kissinger's initiative to counterbalance OPEP- and the future pro-western attitude of Riyadh as means to atone for its embargo policy. In this context, Riyadh was forced to proceed to arrangements of the petrol prices under American pressures and out of fear for the development of alternative sources of energy in the western societies<sup>544</sup>. It is important however to underline that the Saudi decision was taken after Sadat's intermediation and the previous sign of Disengagement Agreement for the Golan Heights, which was similar to the Egyptian-Israeli<sup>545</sup>.

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<sup>542</sup> During this period Washington was trying to weaken the pro-soviet Arab states. In 1974, Kissinger authorised CIA to collaborate with Iran in promoting a Kurdish revolt in Iraq in order to keep busy the Iraqi army and prevent its implication in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

<sup>543</sup> The price of oil raised in two months time, October 16<sup>th</sup> to December 23, from \$5.11/barrel to \$11.65/barrel in 1973(Corm, 2003: 300). Riyadh had, earlier, refused the idea of a monthly oil reduction 5% of the oil production proposed by Kuwait, fearing implications with Washington. Its attitude changed mainly by the rise of military and economic American aid towards Tel Aviv, by proposing the complete oil embargo towards USA and latter to Holland (Laurens, 1991 261).

<sup>544</sup> At the time, Paris was examining the possibility of substituting its oil dependency with the development of nuclear energy.

<sup>545</sup> In May 1974, Syria signed an armistice treaty with Israel after violent confrontations between the two armies, without entering however into direct negotiations with Tel Aviv, but under the international intermediation.

The oil embargo policy reinforced political and economically the petromonarchies, particularly Faisal, and established them temporally as the sixth power of the system. The defeat of '67 strengthened the conservative Arab regimes politically while the victory of '73 empowered them economically (Ibrahim, 1996). Faisal's decision regarding the embargo along with his increasing economic capacities<sup>546</sup> offered him the possibility to raise his prestige among 'progressive' or 'militant' states dependent upon Moscow, and proportioned him the necessary conditions to installed Pax Saudiana in the region (Ayubi, 1991: 323).

In the aftermath of the October War the relations between Faisal and Sadat became closer. From Faisal's side, the Egyptian friendship was ensuring his control in the lower Red Sea threaten by 'radical' regimes<sup>547</sup> and an exit to invest the surplus created by the increase of the oil revenues. His support toward Sadat was also motivated by Riyadh's interests to end Arab hostilities with Israel, since the Arab-Israeli settlement was a precondition for massive investment of capital in the region. Following Hamed, *"After all, economic rationalism tells us that Saudi Arabia and Kuwait would rather make productive investments of capital in Egypt and Syria, with their potential high returns, than place their money in Western banks to be eaten by inflation, if they are assured that their investments would be safe and their returns guaranteed"* (Hamed, 1981: 1).

Besides the direct political and economic support that Cairo received from his Arab fellows, significant was also the economic contribution coming from the Arab tourism. In this period, Egypt became an important tourist destination for the rich businessman of the Arab peninsula, mainly for the country's tolerance towards the prohibit pleasures, such alcohol, gamble, sex, drugs<sup>548</sup>. Faisal's assassination, in 25 March 1975, did not introduce particular problems for Sadat as the new Saudi leader, Khalid bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, tried to maintain his ancestor foreign policy.

The regional context, marked by the pax Americana along with Moscow's marginalisation, and the clear position of Sadat to disconnect himself from the regional conflict put the basis for Egypt's future marginalisation from the Arab circle. The regional instability was further disturbed by the beginning of the Lebanese civil war, during which Syria entered in the Lebanese territory, on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1976, after communication with the Sunni leader Karamé and the Maronite leader Frangié. It is important to underline that the Syrian initiative was backed from Washington that gave its official approval as means to avoid the possibility of Lebanon becoming a country controlled by the Palestinian resistance.

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<sup>546</sup> The revenues coming from the oil in Saudi Arabia rose from \$ 1.1 billion in 1970 to \$27.8 in 1974(Corm, 2003: 313).

<sup>547</sup> In 1973, the Islamic Bank of Development was created under Riyadh's initiative, aiming the finance of the 'war' against the soviet influence.

<sup>548</sup> The entry in places that such activities were taking place was forbidden to ordinary Egyptians.

### 8.10. *Israel-Palestine*

The outcome of the war had important consequences for Tel Aviv and the Israeli-Egyptian bilateral relations. Following Lippman: “[the outcome] restored the shattered pride of the Egyptian people and their army; it traumatized the Israelis; it gave Sadat the strength to negotiate peace with Israel over the protests of other Arabs because it was he, not they, who had engaged the enemy successfully; and it secured the involvement of the United States in the negotiations, not as a representative of Israeli interests but as a mediator” (Lippman, 1989: 10-11).

The aftermath of Yom-Kippur war impacted also the Israeli internal scene. First and foremost, the feeling of security created in the aftermath of the Six Day War was now put in question along with the idea of auto sufficiency, which was replaced by this of dependency towards USA (Izquierdo, 2005: 139). Furthermore, the Israeli military loss and the insecurity inevitably produced changes on the power balance inside Israel. The internal problems<sup>549</sup> after the war and fear among Israeli elites of losing the monopoly of the American friendship, increased after Sadat’s interference for halting the oil embargo, radicalised the official Israeli attitude and generated important pressures towards Washington from the pro-Israeli lobby<sup>550</sup>. It was indicative that Sinai II was more an Israel-American negotiation than one between Cairo and Tel-Aviv, through which Tel Aviv achieved economic and political aid of *longue durée*, frequent contacts between the two governments, Israeli and American and five years guarantee for oil supply. Furthermore, the signing of agreements with Cairo was a way for Tel Aviv to minimise its political losses. Having accomplished to eliminate the possibility of returning Palestinian and Syrian occupied territories, Tel Aviv focused its efforts in Cairo having two main objectives: disconnect Damascus from Cairo and avoid a future alliance between Sadat and Moscow (Laurens, 1991: 271-273).

Even so, the ceasefire signed by Israel and Egypt on 18 January 1974 signalled an important change: for the first time since 1948, Israel was to evacuate occupied territories, fact that underlined a certain change regarding the regional power relationships, up to then not favourable for the Arabs (Corm, 2003: 371). The Israeli army withdrew 30 kilometres from the Suez Canal<sup>551</sup> and also evacuated Kuneitra, capital of the Golan<sup>552</sup>.

The war of 1973 and its aftermath had important repercussions also in the Palestinian front and to what is to our interest here to the relations between Cairo and the Palestinian authorities. The retirement of the only capable army of

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<sup>549</sup> The political crisis continued and Golda Meir resigned from the post of Prime Minister and she was succeeded by Yitzhak Rabin.

<sup>550</sup> In 1976, the United Nations General Assembly assimilated the Zionism as a racist form.

<sup>551</sup> Israel maintained its presence in strategic points of Mitla and Giddi in west Sinai.

<sup>552</sup> The relative pressure that Washington exercised to Tel Aviv in order to proceed to some concession regarding Syria was ‘rewarded’ by Sadat’s support to halt the oil embargo.

challenging the Israeli one, at least in numerical terms, and the general feeling created, disregarding the possibility of a future military clash against Israel presumably for protecting the Palestinian rights, left no real margins for absolutism<sup>553</sup>. Consequently, the Arab 'victory' of 1973 did not improve the situation of the Palestinians, since the war had not liberated an inch of the Palestinian territory. Furthermore, the practical exclusion of PLO<sup>554</sup>, already established as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians, from the negation process marked the end of the Palestinian inspirations<sup>555</sup>, along with the diplomatic activity recognising de facto the Jewish state.

In front of this situation and having in mind the Israeli superiority and the American back-up, PLO started to adopt a realist option towards the creation of a bi-national state. This realist attitude coming mainly from Fatah divided the Palestinians, not only those living in the Palestinian territories but also those of the Diaspora, each one having different interests and needs. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine became in the period 1974-5 the most active in terms of guerrillas without however accomplish to circumvent the leading role of Fatah, this latter having the support of the Arab states, political and economic one (Izquierdo, 2005: 151).

There were, however, few positive developments regarding the Palestinians, without changing in real terms their conditions. Firstly, we have to underline the change of attitude towards Israel from the 'international community'. Arafat's speech at the General Assembly of UN, where he proposed the creation of secular state wherein all Jewish living in Palestine could remain signalled a change for the international community, which started to perceive the Palestinian question as more than a mere problem of frontiers and refugees<sup>556</sup> (Izquierdo, 2005: 152). This positive attitude was probably pushed by the European fears on oil supply. It does not seem a coincidence that on 28 October 1973, after the rises of oil prices, the foreign ministers of European Community called for a settlement in the region

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<sup>553</sup> The passivity of the Palestinian authorities was counterbalanced by radical actions from militant groups. For instance in 1975 Carlos the Jackal, a Venezuelan militant volunteered for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine raid on the OPEC headquarters in Vienna took over sixty hostages and killed three people.

<sup>554</sup> In the Islamic Conference of Lahore, 22-24 February 1974, PLO was recognised as the only representative of the Palestinians by 37 states, including Jordan. Two years later, PLO became full member of the Arab League in 1976.

<sup>555</sup> The Palestinian exclusion in the Geneva Conference was decided under possible problems that its participation would generate: Israeli boycott, Egyptian and Jordanian dissatisfaction as well as other implications deriving from the election of the Palestinian delegation (Álvarez-Ossorio, 1999: 137-138). The only favourable in a Palestinian participation was Moscow. Later, in 1975, PLO was called to participate at the United Nations General Assembly as representative of the Palestinians with the acceptance of 105 votes and only four against (USA, Israel, Bolivia and Dominican Republic).

<sup>556</sup> Paris also agreed to open a PLO office in exchange of Yasser Arafat's clear statement supporting the independence and the territorial integrity of Lebanon (Gorce, 1997: 10). This change was facilitated by the work of the Arab media, especially in Beirut, city that became a big information centre for the Palestinian cause.

of Middle East, proposing among others the recognition of all states, including Israel, and withdrawal from the occupied territories and the consideration of the Palestinian rights.

Besides the improvement of the Palestinian image in Europe, a communication channel started between Washington and the Palestinians that created illusions for the creation of a mini Palestinian state. These contacts alarmed Tel Aviv which proceeded to different methods<sup>557</sup> to put an end (Álvarez-Ossorio, 1999: 145-146). Moscow thus remained the only real ally.

The agreement Sinai II marked the ending of military clash not only between Egypt and Tel Aviv but for the totality of the Arab world, as biggest Arab army was out of the game. The agreement provoked the reaction of the Palestinians as it comprehended Sadat's effort to disconnect Cairo from the Palestinian matter. The Sinai II<sup>558</sup> stated: *"The conflict between them [Egypt and Israel] and in the Middle East shall not be resolved by military force but with peaceful means [...]". "The parties hereby undertake no to resort to the threat or use of force or military blockade against each other"*.

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<sup>557</sup> Among others measures taken by the Israeli side in order to block the communication between Palestinians and US authorities was the assassination of Ali Hassan Salame, main interlocutor of the Americans by an Israeli commando in Beirut.

<sup>558</sup> You can consult the entire agreement at <http://www.ibiblio.org/sullivan/docs/SinaiII.html>

## **9. Creation of a pharaohian counter-myth 1977-1981**

The use of direct repression to obstacle the dynamic of linear power relations demonstrates regime's fragility. In this context, popular support becomes one of the regime's priorities along with the necessity to extract collaboration of foreign and national elites. Spectacular gestures serve this aim. However, such moves have secondary effects, which introduce new challenges for the regime. Thus, while there is an empowerment of the ruling elites on the same time there is an increase of internal threats.

External dynamics become also a valuable tool for regime's stability. Yet the limited power capacities of the Egyptian ruling elites constrain the benefits, since they are forced to accept the decisions of powerful regional and international 'allies'.



### 9.1. Army

The food riots and the call of the army to establish the social order demonstrated principally the regime's fragility. The efforts of rationalising the state's expenditures implying inevitably a significant reduction of its rentier policies put in danger regime's survival. In this frame, the military apparatus increased its importance as power resource and consequently the military wing of the regime amplified its power capacities vis-à-vis its civilian competitors.

The important presence and weight of the military actors in the Egyptian regime explains the paradox of the army's attitude: instead of grasping the opportunity to effectuate a military coup on the contrary the army under the orders of its leadership protected Sadat's power. Following Chartouni-Dubarry *"[...] rather than taking the opportunity to seize direct power, the Army proved its loyalty to the incumbent ruler, despite his reported apprehension about a coup when the military leaders brought him from his winter resort in Aswan"* (Chartouni-Dubarry, 2001: 62).

Why the officers did not seize power? The answer probably resides on the fact that the officers' and actors capable of effectuating a military coup were already forming part of the Egyptian regime and there were interested in preserving a 'democratic' and civilian profile. Furthermore, a military coup inevitably would have produced certain instability, undesirable at the time of negotiations, in a moment where peace among Cairo and Tel Aviv was seen closer than ever.

For these reasons, the military coup did not take place. However, Sadat and his allies took precautions to avoid a future possibility of a military take over. Thus after the incident, almost the totality of the officers who had participated in the war of 1973 was replaced by a new military elite of American formation, which will dominate the sector in the 80s (Martin-Muñoz, 1992: 306). The American training of the officers was serving among others to a more stretch collaboration between Cairo and Washington.

Another important change on the coercive apparatuses regarded the police. Army's intervention during the riots revealed police's incapacity to handle crucial situations. Under this situation, and throughout the rest of Sadat's mandate, there were significant efforts to reinforce and control the police corpus. Therefore, Al-Nabawi, close friend of Osman Ahmed Osman, was named Minister of Interior (Beattie, 2000: 222).

According to many authors the aftermath of the 1973 war, was characterised by an accelerated demilitarisation of the regime. It is indicative that Sadat's last cabinet only the portfolios of defence and foreign affairs were held by those with military training (Springbord, 1987: 5). However, as it is underlined by Beattie, this was a virtual phenomenon, because the majority of the officers participating in the regime occulted their military formation by their additional

academic or professional formation (Beattie, 2000). Even so, this practice underlined Sadat's efforts to create a civilian profile for his regime.

The official ending of the military clashes between Egypt and Israel after the Sinai I and II and the forthcoming peace treaty demanded new perspectives for the military apparatus and for the officers, in order to counterbalance their losses. In this frame, the National Service Projects Organisation was created in 1978 and three years later the Military Organisation for Civic Projects in order to promote the civil activities of the army, such as the construction of civic infrastructure and programs of 'food security' (Ayubi, 1991: 259). In this way the officers balanced their reduced military role promoting on the same time a civilian profile of the army, in order to develop more active and role in the Egyptian society. Additionally, there was an important increase of military expenditures reaching 152% even though the share representing in the total public expenditure decreased from 22.6 to 18.2%, with a parallel increase in army's human resources from 298.000 (1975) to 448.000 in 1984 (Ayubi, 1991: 270, 255). This raise was facilitated by the American economic aid and of course the so long waited military aid<sup>559</sup>.

The Camp David treaty between Israel and Egypt put an end to any aspiration coming from the military ranks for a reconsideration of Sadat's choices. The signing of the treaty generated frictions in the military elite, with the Minister of the War Abd-al Ghani al Gamasi and his Chief of Staff Ali Fahmi opposing and thus there were quickly replaced (Chartouni-Dubarry, 2001: 39). However, the treaty had its benefits for the military ranks. After the separate peace treaty of Camp David common American-Egyptian military manoeuvres began, which help Sadat's regime to promote a new role for the Egyptian army (Hinnebusch, 1985: 69).

## **9.2. State**

The activation of the constitutional law no 74 regarding the protection of national security along with the decision not to proceed into cut offs of the subsidies that had as outcome massive riots underlined the limited power capacities of the Egyptian regime. The fears regarded mainly the anger of the Egyptian population and opposition forces since the regime did not proceed to a general political reshuffle. The riots therefore were perceived as a message from the Egyptian population that there was a red line that the ruling elites could not cross without jeopardising their survival.

Uninterested and probably incapable of reconsidering infitah policies that had increased the economic burdens of the Egyptian population and generated the agitation, Sadat and his allies chose to canalise the social frustration through the official return to the multi party system, in June 1977. The Political Parties

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<sup>559</sup> The arms sales rose from \$ 68.4 million in 1976 to \$ 937. 3 million in 1978 (Dessouki, 1984: 140).

Law 40<sup>560</sup>, inaugurated the political opening of the Egyptian regime, which was satisfying Washington and his domestic allies, interested in more 'democratic' façade. Besides the Nationalist Progressive Unionist Grouping (NPUG), the Arab Socialist Organisation (EASO) and the Liberal Socialist Organisation, three more parties were created in 1978: the National Democratic Party (NDP) - official decedent of ASU, the Socialist Labour Party (SLP), the Liberal Party and New Wafd.

As it is easily understood the return to the multipartidism was designed in such way that the parties' would not become an important power resource or the elites controlling them would turn into dangerous competitors. Sadat's fears for the 'communists', were evident since the beginning of his mandate, as we have already seen. To those, were added also his worries for the Islamic threat. Thus, political parties based on religious grounds, social class and geographic bases<sup>561</sup> where forbidden.

From the political scene were excluded those political figures existed during the Egyptian monarchy. But frequently as it happened, this prohibition regarded only those that the regime was afraid of or did not had the capacity to block. Thus, the Wafd party, banned after the coup of 1952, re-appeared in the political scene under the name New Wafd and the leadership of Siraj al-Din<sup>562</sup>. The regime initially accepted its reestablishment, due to the important presence of economic actors interested in supporting Sadat's policies<sup>563</sup>.

Another way of controlling the political opening was the careful election of the parties' key figures. Indicative is the case of SLP, representing Sadat's effort to weaken the National Progressive Unionist Grouping (NPUG), considered at the time the only real opposition force<sup>564</sup>. The party's president was named Ibrahim Sukri<sup>565</sup>, and the second most important figure Mahmud Abu Wafiyya, Sadat's brother-in-law. Besides the personal ties that both men had with the *rais*

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<sup>560</sup> In general terms the law foresaw that the establishment of any party would have to be approved by the Central Committee, have the adherence of twenty deputies in the People's Assembly, half of its founders should be farmers and workers, have a platform different from the existing parties. For more details see (Martin-Muñoz, 1992: 325).

<sup>561</sup> The prohibition of political parties on geographical basis was probably another effort to limit the Islamic groups, concentrated in particular geographical areas of the country.

<sup>562</sup> Siraj al-Din was member of an important landowner family and leading member of the Wafd party (Reid, 1980).

<sup>563</sup> Probably the approval of the New Wafd party was also forced by the fear of new protests. As Reid retained al- Din "selected the time and the place for his [first] speech with care [...]. The date for the speech was 23 August 1977, the fifth anniversary of the death of Sa'd Zaghlul and the twelfth anniversary of the death of Mustafa al-Nahas. [...] Suspecting that this would be no ordinary occasion, a large crowd gathered at the Bar Association [bastion of Wafd before 1952]" (Reid, 1979: 393).

<sup>564</sup> NPUG was the only party that officially opposed to Sadat's visit in Jerusalem stating that "it was not opposed to a peaceful solution in principle", but "such a solution [...] does not add to Arab strength"(Jiryis, 1978: 28).

<sup>565</sup> The close relations between Sukri and Sadat had negative effects for the president of SLP in terms of legitimacy. It is indicative that Sukri had declared "*my biggest problem [was...] how to disconnect myself from the NDP*" (Beattie, 2000: 241).

important element for their appointment was the fact that they were members of wealthy landowning families.

Corruption remained an essential characteristic of Sadat's regime. The policies followed enabled different elites, primary and secondary, to increase their influence, through the extension of the clientelist relations at all levels of the Egyptian power structure. Along with came corruption came the frequent scandals, such as the Pyramids Oasis<sup>566</sup>. The tolerance of this kind of policies made evident regime's efforts to maintain the protagonist role by making clientelism.

The direct and indirect control over political elites had the expected results. Sadat's visit to Jerusalem was made in a situation of general satisfaction since the majority of the regime's components welcomed Sadat's initiative. However, there were those opposed to his initiative, inside and outside the regime<sup>567</sup>. This was the case of the Foreign Minister Fahmi who decided to resign instead of supporting Sadat's initiative<sup>568</sup>.

The visit to Jerusalem was responding to Sadat's need for *grande geste* towards internal and external elites for the new era of peace and prosperity. His trip probably came after secret talks with American agents. It is not seems a coincidence that few weeks before his visit, important American companies, such as Coca Cola, Colgate-Palmolive, Ford Motor Company and Xerox, were ready to enter the Egyptian market (Beattie, 2000: 220).

Despite the welcoming of this gesture, Sadat's internal honey moon did not last long due to the rising social and economic problems, which demonstrated the regime's inconsistency between words and deeds regarding prosperity. The opposition forces, left and right, began to exercise harsh criticism against the regime. As response in May 1978, Sadat decided to ban all 'atheist' and pre-1952 politicians through referendum<sup>569</sup>. New Wafd voluntarily to suspend its activities, as means to avoid future problems.

In this frame came Sadat's new initiative towards Tel Aviv, the peace treaty of Camp David<sup>570</sup>. In contrast with his visit to Jerusalem, this decision was criticised not only form opposition groups but also from governmental elites. This was the case of the Defence Minister, Gamasi, and the Chief of Staff Muhamed Ali

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<sup>566</sup> The deal was regarding a plan to develop areas close to the pyramids into major tourist complex by a foreign investor. The land of the Pyramids Plateau was leased to the foreign firm without approval of the Assembly and the criticism from opposing groups gained the popular support that obliged the Egyptian government to cancel the original agreement.

<sup>567</sup> Besides the NPUG criticism arouse also from some Islamist groups who characterised Sadat's trip as illegitimate (Sullivan and Abdel-Kotob, 1999: 74)

<sup>568</sup> Fahmi was in favour of balancing strategy between USSR and USA. He was replaced by Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

<sup>569</sup> Later the law on parties prohibited the creation of political parties opposed to the peace treaty. The constitutional court canceled this paragraph, in May 1988 as it was considered opposed to the principle of liberty of expression (Bernard-Maugiron and Ibrahim, 2000: 131).

<sup>570</sup> The referendum regarding the peace treaty was approved by 99%.

Fahmi who were immediately dismissed from their posts. Additionally, two foreign ministers resigned in one year time (Dessouki, 1991: 170).

Sadat, under the pressures coming from inside of his regime responded with the replacement of the governmental cabinet and appointed himself president of the National Democratic Party (NDP). Furthermore, in the elections held after the signing of the treaty, under a generalised repression<sup>571</sup>, Sadat “*made sure that no deputy which had opposed to the treaty was returned*” (Hinnebusch, 1985: 75).

The already tensed situation was further complicated with introduction of new economic measures. In May 1980 Sadat announced a “*new economic policy which aims at easing the sufferings of the masses and tackling the problems of inflation*” through which the basic commodities were scheduled to be reduced with a parallel raise on wages of civil servants and public industry workers (Lippman, 1989: 121). The schizophrenia of the economic policies revealed once more the problems of the regime in maintaining power, without populist methods<sup>572</sup>, along with regime’s efforts to satisfy the foreign demands.

The new economic measures for decrease on public expenditures generated once more popular anger that obliged the regime to drop a part of them. The new social unrest along with the rising criticism towards the provocative separate peace treaty put on alarm Sadat, who tried to control the situation through authoritarian policies. Thus during the last year of Sadat’s mandate important reforms took place: the constitutional reform lifting the two terms of presidency and the creation of the senate like Majlis al-Shura whose membership controlled by the president (Beattie, 2000:263). In parallel came Sadat’s auto nomination as Prime Minister. All these gestures demonstrated that Sadat was losing control. His last effort to secure his position came just one month before his assassination, proceeding in massive arrests of political leaders and other rival actors, including the Coptic Pope.

### **9.3. Rent and Capital**

The infitah policies continued and they were further intensified, giving the possibility to many Egyptian and foreign businessmen to increase considerably their wealth, especial in the sectors of real estate, commerce, imports, tourism. Of course, as we pointed out, the benefits mostly concerned the allies of the regime and its members, even though the economic environment facilitated others to increase their economic resources.

These policies helped Sadat to create a new politico-economic elite

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<sup>571</sup> In the elections of June 1979, there was massive repression, materialised in threats towards workers of losing their jobs, arrests of political figures etc. The results gave the majority to Sadat’s party, the NDP won 320 seats (88.28%) the SLP 29 (8.28%), the Liberal Party 3 seats (0.85%), and the NPUG none (Mirel, 1982). During this elections it was adopted the clause of minimum representation 30 women in the parliament, ‘revealing’ the western profile of the regime.

<sup>572</sup> In the period 1977-1981 the employment in the public sector increased 29.6 % (Ayubi, 1991: 268).

connected directly with him in order to assure its support and loyalty. In exchange for their collaboration Sadat legislated in their favour. In 1977, the law 32 was adopted, representing the revision of law 43 (1974) regarding the Arab and Foreign Investment code. By this law, the privileges granted for foreign investors were given to domestic ones, such as exemptions from prevailing labour legislation, exemptions from corporate profit tax for eight years, exemption from taxes on all foreign currency loans, the right to export directly without permission etc (Waterbury, 1983: 170). However, the Egyptian regime wanted to secure its control over these newly formed elites. Thus, guarantees against nationalisation were not given to the Egyptian investors. These practices revealed that the friendly environment was only regarding those disposed to collaborate, and in case of no-cooperation the 'state' would retain its right to penalise them. Similar policies were adopted for the agrarian elites. By the end of Sadat's mandate 20.000 feddans out of the 40.000 that had been de-sequestered and returned to their original owners (Lippman, 1989: 47). Furthermore and in order to avoid a clash with the big landowners connected with New Wafd, Sadat declared that the land ownership would be raised in 200 *feddans*.

In parallel with the policies for the boosting of private capital Sadat tried by all means to preserve the economic role of the Egyptian public sector. In 1978, the Investment Authority, the principal governmental authority concerned with regulating and facilitating investment, had approved 134 projects, with value £E 440 million of the total £E 1.66 billion for the public sector, number that rose up to £E 920 million in two years' time (Waterbury, 1983: 142). The interest in preserving an hermaphrodite model of economic model is highlighted by the statement of NDP's economic committee of NDP in 1980: *"Concerning the open-door policy, it neither a return to capitalism and the principles of the economic freedom held prior to the revolution nor a shift from the social democratic direction emphasized by the public sector's control of the basic sources of production"* (Hopwood, 1993: 131).

The *infatih* policies put solid bases for the present and future relations between the 'state' and the private capital. The Egyptian regime of liberal orientation was to have the upper hand in all economic issues. In this frame, even though in economic terms the opening of the Egyptian economy did not accomplish to fulfil the declared aims, the success of such policies was tremendous: creation of dependency relation of the private sector on the regime which generated strong correlation among state apparatus and private capital, especially if we take into consideration the presence of the same actors in both sectors. The Egyptian Society of Businessmen (ESB) funded by Sadat, wherein only Egyptians were participating, represented one of the institutional expressions of this task (Ibrahim, 1996).

The entrance of important economic magnates after Sadat's trip to Israel gave a significant push on the Egyptian economy, even though this was limited in terms of time. The significant rise of the American aid after the Camp David treaty

gave the opportunity to the regime increase its economic capacities along with the re-entrance Suez's revenues<sup>573</sup>, estimated in 1980 at \$1.000 million (Hopwood, 1993:134). The American aid however did not match with the Arab and European<sup>574</sup> losses. The Arab allies, principally Gulf's monarchs suspended their economic aid towards Cairo as means to underline their opposition to Sadat's peace initiative. The situation was further deteriorated, consequence of the freezing of bilateral relations with Moscow, major importer of Egyptian goods.

The cooperation between Cairo and Washington in the economic field followed an upward course, and its institutionalisation came with the creation of the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt (ACCE), representing the lobby for promoting Egyptian and American economic and political links. The cooperation however was not among equal partners, fact that enabled Washington to become the external stabiliser of the Egyptian regime. Cairo's growing foreign debt was a determinant factor for the Egyptian submission on Washington's demands: in the begging of Sadat's mandate the debt of Egypt was \$ 1.5 billion and at the end this raised up to \$ 29 billion (Ibrahim, 2002e).

#### **9.4. Religion**

Parallel to the reform of the political system, was the effort of further islamisation of the political environment, through the preparation of new laws by the Ministry of Justice<sup>575</sup>, reflecting the significant influence that the religious sectors had on Sadat. The paradox, on the one hand the efforts to limit the presence of Islamic actors in the political scene with the law prohibiting the formation of religious parties and on the other hand the further institutional islamisation of the country, demonstrated the necessity of the regime to maintain cooperative relations with specific religious actors, who were however perceived as dangerous in terms of power competition.

The failed effort of an islamist coup revealed the gravity of the Islamic threat. Yet the 'political' acts of such groups did not stop. In summer 1977, the group Society of Muslims<sup>576</sup> (al-Takfir wa'l-Hijra) murdered the Minister of Wafqs, Muhammad Hussein al-Dahabi, representing the moderate wing of the clerics, after the negation of the regime to satisfy the group's demands<sup>577</sup>. The regime

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<sup>573</sup> The Suez Canal reopened in 1975.

<sup>574</sup> Western economies decreased the economic aid towards Cairo since they found no interest in financing an isolated Arab country.

<sup>575</sup> Through these proposals apostasy was established as capital offence, prohibition of the alcohol, amputation for theft etc. In the opposite direction, in 1979 it was adopted the "Jihan law" regarding the family matters that disappointed the al-Azhar circles (Zeghal, 1999: 387).

<sup>576</sup> Kepel sustains that the group responsible for the murder was Muslim Brotherhood (Kepel, 1988: 88).

<sup>577</sup> The group among others demanded: amnesty and immediate liberation of their *brothers*, E£200.000 in cash, official and public apologies from the newspapers Al Ahbar, Al Ahram, Al Humhurriya and the magazines Ahir Sa'a, Uctubir, Mahallat and al-Azhar for their lies, authorization for the appearance of their magazine and the creation of cleric's committee to

replied by massive arrest of members of Islamist groups<sup>578</sup>. Additionally preventive measures were put in place in order to avoid similar incidents. To this aim, the Egyptian government outlawed the activities of the jama'at organisation at the universities<sup>579</sup> and summer youth camps were shut down by the Central Security Forces (Sullivan and Abdel-Kotob, 1999: 74).

The threatening presence of Islamic and Islamist groups was counterbalanced with the stretching the country's 'theocratisation', a policy of rewarding allies of the sector, whether representatives of official Islam, such as the Sheikh of Al-Azhar for their significant contribution in the economic relations between Cairo and Riyadh (Baker, 1978), or other figures, as Osman Ahmed Osman<sup>580</sup> who, according different sources was the figure behind the islamisation policies. Thus during the 70s and the 80s the number of mosques increased significantly, encouraged between others by a law that exempted of taxation the religious establishments<sup>581</sup> (Wickham, 2002: 98). Additionally, Islamic companies were benefited from the economic policies. In 1977, it was created the Islamic Bank Faisal of Egypt (BIFE) through the special law no 48 offering special privileges, which became 'a state inside the state', having as major partner Osman Ahmed Osman important (Galloux, 1997: 56).

The opening of channel communication between Cairo and Tel Aviv was criticised by the radical Islamists and some of the moderate voices of Islam. This was the case of Sheikh Ashur Nasr-who was expelled from the parliament for denouncing Sadat- Sheikh Abdel Hamid Kishk, a popular cleric and Omar Tilmassani, Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, who were imprisoned (Lippman, 1989: 243-245).

The negative reactions over the peace treaty coming from different fields forced Sadat to use the aid of the official ulema in order to gain some legitimacy over his decision. Al-Azhar's fatwa on peace the treaty stated<sup>582</sup>: *"Egypt is an Islamic country, and it is the duty of its guardian to ensure its protection. If he considers that the interest of the Muslim lies in being gentle towards their enemies, this is permissible because he is responsible in matters of peace and war [...] and more knowledgeable about the affairs of its subjects [...] The existence of treaties*

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control the state etc (Kepel, 1988: 108-109).

<sup>578</sup> There were 620 arrests but finally 54 members of the organisation went on trial for the assassination. The leader of the group Shukri Ahmed Mustafa was executed with other four members in March 1978.

<sup>579</sup> Contrary to the western view diffusing a strong correlation between poverty and terrorism, during the 70s the profile of the Islamist militants was: young qualified mostly in science without particular problems of professional integration (Pommier, 2008: 64).

<sup>580</sup> Heikal sustained that besides the job opportunities offered by Osman to the Bothers, he and Osman Ismail-general secretary of the ASU-were providing money and weapons to various Islamist groups (Heikal, 1983: 128).

<sup>581</sup> The Islamic NGO in relation to the totality of NGO rose from 17.3% in the 60s to 31% in the 70s (Abdelrahman, 2004: 99).

<sup>582</sup> Quoted in (Hopwood, 1993:119).



*between Muslims and their enemies is governed by clear regulations established by Islam [...] The al-Azhar ulama are of the opinion that Egyptian-Israeli treaty was concluded within the context of Islamic judgment”.*

The rising Muslim influence in the Egyptian society, stimulated also by the Lebanese civil war, generated frictions in the relations between the Coptic and the Muslim *umma*, expressed, among others, with clashes between members of the two communities<sup>583</sup>. This situation made the relations between Shenouda and Sadat<sup>584</sup> more antagonistic. The unfavourable environment for the Coptic religious elites<sup>585</sup>, needed an external back-up. To this aim the power of the Coptic American community was activated<sup>586</sup>. Sadat in order to relax American pressures threatened Shenouda<sup>587</sup> for more severe measures if he did not calm down the tensed situation, in exchange of the withdrawal of the draft law regarding apostasy (Beattie, 2000: 226). Additionally, Sadat nominated 10 Copts in the parliament, under his presidential right.

The hostile environment between the regime and the Islamist movements was further heated after the Camp David treaty, the supply of political asylum to the Iranian Shah and the new aspirations that the Islamic Iranian Revolution generated. The radicalisation of the Islamic movement inevitably increased the tension between the two religious communities. In 1979 there was an important outbreak of religious demonstrations and the following year Coptic properties were attacked in several parts of the country (Vatikiotis, 1991:422). In this context, Sadat accused islamists groups as *“a state inside the state that he would no longer tolerate”* (Hinnebusch, 1985: 76). Just one month before the rais' assassination the repression reached its top with massive arrests, seizures and

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<sup>583</sup> Egyptian radical groups were receiving substantial aid from foreigners, weather political figures, such as Qaddafi, or economic ones, such as Osama Bin Ladin (Beattie, 2000:254).

<sup>584</sup> The non friendly relations between Shenouda and Sadat were well-known. Indicative is the existing of jokes describing clearly their relations: Sadat, Pope Shenouda and Sheikh of al-Azhar are on a plane. Suddenly the pilot informs Sadat that there is a problem and the plane is about to crash and in order to avoid the accident a passenger has to be dropped. Sadat says to the two other passengers *“Of course, is not me to be the one. To be just I’m going to ask each one of you a question. The one that won’t answer he is going to be the one to jump”*. He asks first the Sheikh *“How many Egyptians live in Egypt?”* *“47 millions”* replies the Sheikh. Sadat turns then to Shenouda *“what are their names?”*. Quoted in (Le Lac, 1985).

<sup>585</sup> The unequal treatment of the two communities is underlined also by the laws regulating the creation of religious establishments. Contrary to what concerns the Muslim mosques, there is a maximum number of churches to be built every year requiring special permission for every new church. Thus during the 70s many Coptic NGOs served among others as underground churches (Abdelrahman, 2004: 142). Many were soon discovered and were closed down either by the state or by civilians. The majority of their assets come from foreign Coptic communities, especially USA, Canada Australia.

<sup>586</sup> During the meeting between Carter and the Egyptian Foreign Affairs Minister in USA, the American Coptic community protested against the repression exercised in Egypt towards their Coptic brothers. This situation was repeated in August 1981, during Sadat’s visit to Washington.

<sup>587</sup> Shenouda in his effort to gain support inside the Egyptian society and change the hostile environment against the Coptic community forbidden the Copts to visit the occupied Jerusalem and suspended all public celebrations.

obligatory control of Wafq over the totality of mosques<sup>588</sup> (Dawisha, 1983). Among the arrested members was Pope Shenouda, put under house arrest.

In the anniversary of the October war the religious president was assassinated in front of the eyes of the Egyptians and the international community. The plan of his assassination was accompanied by a plan of Islamic revolution, which failed.

*'I killed the Pharaoh'* were Khalid Islambuli's<sup>589</sup> words!

### **9.5. Ideological Discourse**

The use of the political discourse continued to be an important instrument of legitimacy and demagoguery for Sadat's regime. The complete break with Nasser's policies was reflected to the president's public comments, officially separating himself from Nasser's choices. Ironically Sadat wrote in his memoirs "*[when Sadat took power] There was no real Foreign Ministry, no studied or properly planned policy; only the president himself. I find my position in this connection diametrically opposed to Nasser's*".

However, the regime tried to maintain a balance between the past and the present regime. Hosni Mubarak's declarations on the 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nasser's death, at the time vice president, are indicative to the matter<sup>590</sup>: "*[Nasser was] a unique Egyptian and a genuine Arab who, with his companions, carried out the revolution that is considered by all criteria as one of the prominent revolutions in modern history. The effect of this revolution did not stop at the boundary of beloved Egypt but extended to the great Arab homeland and to the entire Third World. It was enough that Abdel Nasser was the first Egyptian ruler to come from the soil of this homeland in two thousand years*". For Sadat October war which "*represents a crossing from despondency to hope and from the humiliation of defeat to the honor of victory; the historic peace initiative represents a crossing with the Arab cause from the phase of lost opportunities and the method of uttering hopes and slogans to the phase of true achievement that will liberate the Arab lands by deeds and not words [...]*".

Regime's worries on popular frustration was also contested by public speeches, since during this period Sadat and his cabinet became subjects of criticism not only for the regime's political choices and decisions but also to their lifestyle. Under these conditions and after the mobilisation against the plateau Pyramids incident, Sadat was seen forced to defend himself as well as his collaborators' choices in a public speech (Hinnebusch, 1985 73).

The separate peace treaty and the following expulsion of Egypt from the

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<sup>588</sup> In 1981, the number of the private mosques had doubled in comparison with 1970, and only the 6.000 of the totality of 46.000 of the mosques were public (Ansari, 1984:129)

<sup>589</sup> Khalid Islambuli was brother of Muhammad, leader of a student jama'at of the University of Asiut, arrested and tortured by Sadat's regime, in 1981.

<sup>590</sup> Quoted in (Lippman, 1989: 32).

Arab club were issues that demanded an official response and justification. Thus, the questioning of the country's Arabity was contested by the uniqueness of the Egyptian civilisation forming part of the Mediterranean culture, closer to the Greco-Roman culture than the Arab-Islamic (Aly, 1988: 71). 'Egypt first' became the main slogan of Sadat during the last period of his mandate. According to the president Anwar al-Sadat<sup>591</sup> *"Without Egypt, the Arabs are zero". "Egypt is the heart and mind of the Arab world and for the next generations to come they will never catch up with Egypt and is not oil that builds Egypt, no. The fortune of Egypt is not like Saudi Arabia and the others, it is here a complete economy of agriculture, industry, assets, all this. And the biggest asset in Egypt is the human being, the Egyptian man, who is a doctor, engineer, laborer, teacher, with 13 universities here and with the pride and heritage of seven thousand years"*.

On the same time, Cairo tried to project the neutral-Swiss style- character of the country, in order to appease internal and external criticism (Martínez Carreras, 1991: 17). Additionally, Sadat hoping to minimise his losses deriving from the Arab rejection, began to criticise the rest of the Arab countries<sup>592</sup>: *"Our Arab brothers, led by the rejectionist front and our Saudi brothers, are squandering whatever assets they have had with us [...]. We know the rejectionist front. The attitude of Syria [...] is one of hatred, bitterness, inability and ignorance. The attitude of Iraqis is worse. All of you know the foolish child of Libya [...] I am not including South Yemen because it is not worth wasting time on it"*.

### 9.6. Media

This period is characterised by direct and indirect policies of the regime to keep under its control the Egyptian media. The main objective is to silence criticism, coming from anti-regime forces. To this aim journalists<sup>593</sup> who exercised a severe criticism towards the governmental elites were arrested. Additionally, a series of other direct or indirect policies were applied since the direct censorship is not sufficient to quit down the harmful criticism. Consequently the persecution of anti-regime journalists was followed by the closer of major leftist journals or by the reorientation of their activities to extra political issues.

Sadat was a political figure that had developed a special 'relationship' with the media. Following Mohamed Heikal "[Sadat was] the first Egyptian Pharaoh to come before his people armed with a camera; he was also the first Egyptian Pharaoh to be killed by his own people. He was a hero of the electronic revolution,

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<sup>591</sup> Quoted in (Lippman, 1989: 262).

<sup>592</sup> Quoted in (Hopwood, 1993: 121).

<sup>593</sup> For more information on detention of journalists as well as other questions regarding human rights see Inform of Amnesty International (1980), available at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/POL10/003/1980/en/4eaa8da9-d3b3-46f4-b429-8cf536834e07/POL100031980eng.pdf>.

but also its victim. When his face was no longer to be seen on the television screen, it was as if the eleven years of his rule had vanished with a switch of the control knob” (Haykal, 1983).

The official establishment of multiparty system introduced changes on the media sector, as the return to multipartism was followed by the appearance of party press, with the appearance of weekly issues of *Misr*, *al-Ahrar*, *al-Sha'b*. The liberty of opposition party press had of course its limits. Restrictions were imposed indirectly as the newspapers were subsidised along with other kinds of restrictions (Beattie, 2000: 244). Despite the efforts for indirect censorship, the political press gained important role and became an important tool for criticism on different issues: corruption of the political elite, the damage of economic liberalisation, separate peace with Israel, the maintenance of emergency laws, the deterioration of public services, the growing repression against the opposition etc (Singerman, 2004).

In order to counterbalance the raising criticism the state media exercised their propagandist role. For instance state owned media publicised<sup>594</sup> the advantages of the Infitah policies, highlighting the Egyptian liberation from the soviet dependence and their beneficial role for economic development (Azim, 1989: 11). An indicative example of how state owned audiovisual media treated controversial issues is the official communiqué over Sadat’s visit in Israel transmitted by Radio Cairo<sup>595</sup> *“Le président Sadat a accepté de se rendre à Jérusalem samedi soir 19 novembre après avoir reçu une lettre du président Carter contenant l’invitation du gouvernement israélien.[...] Le président Sadat a accepté l’invitation à se rendre à Jérusalem en assumant sa responsabilité nationale, en écartant tout complexe pour affronter ses adversaires, et en étant convaincu que le fait d’exposer directement les réalités devant les membres de la Knesseth dimanche après-midi aura un impact plus puissant que si elles était exposées d’une manière indirecte et tortueuse”*.

The growing criticism against the regime, especially after Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem, was directly contested by the regime. On the grounds of ‘irresponsible criticism’ Sadat proposed the ‘code of ethics’ which secured the president and his family from criticism. The ‘law of Shame’<sup>596</sup>, adopted in 22 May 1980, through which ‘the prosecution of the basic values of the society was the duty of each citizen’ paved the way for the ‘arbitrary of thoughts’ (Heikal, 1983:110), another measure aiming to secure regime’s stability.

The general alert that the regime was put during the last months of Sadat’s mandate inevitably impacted the media sector. In April 1981, few months before

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<sup>594</sup> The URTE became a state monopoly by the law no 13 of 1979 which was controlled directly by the ministry of information (Guaaybess, 1999: 37).

<sup>595</sup> Quoted in (Desjardins, 1981: 455).

<sup>596</sup> This law was stipulating the formation of the Court of Ethics in order to prosecute ‘antisocial’ behaviour, considering as such any action or criticism against the regime’s policies.

Sadat's assassination the Egyptian radio was reorganised administratively in order, according to the Ministry of information, to respond to the increasing influence of videocassettes, popular foreign radio programs and the changes in the tastes of listeners (Boyd, 1993: 33). However, behind this initiative it was hidden the regime's efforts to control by all means it could afford the growing tension.

### **9.7. People**

The riots of 1977, even though they did not alter significantly the power relations, marked a red line for the Egyptian governmental elites. The reinforcement of the purely coercive mechanisms revealed regime's fears. Indicative of Sadat's fears is the placement of armoured vehicles in the major cities (Beattie, 2000: 223). Besides preventive coercive measures, Sadat made use of populist policies, such as job offer in the public sector<sup>597</sup> and of course the maintenance of subsidies system<sup>598</sup>. Additionally, the migration process helped the regime to preserve a certain social peace as the poor and unemployed Egyptians preferred to 'exit' than 'rebel'. Emigrants' remittances represented an additional aid to Sadat's regime, pushing economy at micro-level and enabling an important segment of the Egyptian population to cover vital needs. Additionally the bad reception of the hosting Gulf countries reinforced the negative image of the Arab brothers, raising in this way the nationalist feelings, promoted also by regime's interests to disconnect Egypt from the rest of the Arabs.

The worsening of living conditions, accelerated by the increasing inflation, made the Egyptians more vulnerable to manipulation, exercised not only from the opposition groups but also from the government. Clientelism became thus an important characteristic of the Egyptian politics (Lampridi-Kemou, 2009). The foreign aid, especially coming from Washington, was used to finance such practices. The terrorist attacks, the rise of salaries and economic benefits to public sector employees, reinforced the public support to Sadat. Yet the growing economic divergences between low and upper strata of the Egyptian society, gave space for more active political opposition and plurality (Baker, 1978). The return to the multiparty system however, did not gain the support of the Egyptians, because of the evident control of the regime over the newly created parties<sup>599</sup>. Thus, the professional colleges, the syndicates of lawyers and of journalists, and in lesser degree this of engineers and the doctors, became the real opposition for the regime.

Sadat's trip to Jerusalem was welcomed by the Egyptians who received him

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<sup>597</sup> In the period 1977-1981 employment in the public sector increased 10% per year which represented four times the rate of population growth (Abdelrahman, 2004: 100).

<sup>598</sup> The subsidies economic burden in 1979 was \$1.500 million (Hopwood, 1993 135).

<sup>599</sup> The law regarding the political parties maintained the rule under which the 50% presentation of the workers and peasants for fear of a negative reaction by socio-political forces.

as 'Peace Hero'. Many Egyptians 'spontaneously' went out to street to welcome Sadat demonstrating their relief and satisfaction for ending the bellicose situation of the country after 30 years. On the contrary, the Camp David Agreement was not so positively perceived<sup>600</sup>, especially after the efforts of the regime to achieve the normalisation<sup>601</sup> of bilateral relations between Cairo and Tel Aviv. The emerging social rage was directly contested by the regime, through threats, massive arrests, interrogations, and official isolation of the opponents. Additionally, in May 1980, a further protocol was signed between Egypt and Israel, determining among others criminal offence opposition to the treaty.

The common felling of rejection on the peace treaty united opposition forces. During 1979-80 we observe, the formation of a national coalition, wherein political activists participated under the common demand for democratisation and the rejection of the Camp David treaty. The effort, however, failed due the divergence existing among them (Beattie, 2000: 260). Political activism became stronger at universities. The growing number of entries in universities from 40% in early 70s to 60% in early 80s increasing the annual output from 42.000 to 116.000 graduates approximately (Wickham, 2002: 38), inevitably permitted political activation. In 1979, the government in an effort to clip the students' wings pass a new law forbidding student political activity. The decision transformed the universities in battle fields, and the confrontation between students and police were no longer fought in the main streets of the capital, but at the university gates, usually far away from the rest of the population (Schemm, 2002).

### ***9.8. International Friends***

The Arab-Israeli conflict became the core of power relations among Cairo and international actors. The same month of the massive food riots in Egypt, Carter became the new American president. His commitment to the Israeli lobby became evident immediately since one of his first decisions regarded the aid economic towards Israel. American foreign policy thus was focused during this period on the Arab-Israeli conflict in terms of beneficiating principally Tel Aviv. Important aspect of this process was the definite peace settlement between Cairo and Tel Aviv. This task was facilitated by the fact that the three main actors in the peace process, Carter, Begin and Sadat, did not agree with the step by step policy of Kissinger (Izquierdo, 2005: 122).

In this context and after secret negotiations among the implicated parts,

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<sup>600</sup> Indicative of Sadat's negative image is the attempt of Cairo's governor to rename Liberation Square after Sadat that never gained popular acceptance (Goldschmidt, 2004: 191).

<sup>601</sup> 'Normalisation of cultural relations meant: exchange of visit between university delegates, international conferences, joint publishing ventures, establishment of Israeli research institutes (Harlow, 1986 36).

Washington and Moscow made a joint statement , in 1st October 1977, calling for a global solution of the Israel-Arab conflict in the frame of Geneva Conference<sup>602</sup>: *“Article 1: Both governments are convinced that vital interests of the peoples of this area, as well as the interests of strengthening peace and international security in general, urgently dictate the necessity of achieving, as soon as possible, a just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict [...]. Article 2: The United States and the Soviet Union believe that the only right and effective way for achieving a fundamental solution in the Middle East problem in its entirety is by negotiations within the framework of Geneva Peace Conference, specially convened for these purposes, with the participation in its work of the representatives of all parties involved in the conflict including those of the Palestinian people [...]”*.

Palestinians were once more excluded from the negotiations as Carter’s administration received many pressures to accept the Israeli veto regarding the Palestinian representation (Laurens, 1991: 294). The Palestinian absence underlined the real intentions of the process: proceed to a settlement that would be beneficial only for the Israeli side. Washington’s protagonist role at the international arena and on this of the Middle East was blocking any possibility for a just and fair solution.

Cairo’s interests to achieve American support for internal and external reasons consolidated the bilateral relations between Washington and Sadat’s regime. This cooperation was covering all levels. The interest of Washington to close the file Egyptian-Israeli conflict was underlined by the enormous infusions of aid as means to keep the two sides into negotiations, which reached the \$2 billion in 1980 (Waterbury, 1983).

The Soviet-Egyptian relations continued the free fall and marked its bottom this period with the expulsion of the Soviet ambassador in 1981. Sadat’s decision consolidated further the Egyptian dependency on Washington, becoming the second largest receptor of American economic aid. The minor role of USSR in the Middle East was also conditioned by its intervention in Afghanistan<sup>603</sup> and the violent resistance and its support to the anti-regime forces of Iranian revolution. Consequently, Moscow reduced its role as principal sponsor of PLO and Syria, as well as of the Iraqi regime.

The neighbouring of Egypt with communist countries, Libya and Ethiopia helped Sadat to obtain the major American military aid, as means to combat the communist threat. The Iranian revolution and the reception of Shah<sup>604</sup> in Cairo, Washington’s major ally, was also proved beneficial for Cairo, as Sadat was rewarded for his valuable aid. However, Washington extracted major benefits

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<sup>602</sup> Quoted in (Lukacs, 1992: 16).

<sup>603</sup> Moscow decided to intervene militarily in Afghanistan in order to preserve the communist regime, having fears for further implication of Washington in the country and in the region, in December 1979. The soviet invasion aggravated the relations between East and West.

<sup>604</sup> The Iranian revolution was criticised by Sadat as incompatible with the Islamic principles (Dawisha, 1983).

from this incident. According to Woodward, CIA after the Iranian revolution increased its networks in Egypt, as well as in other countries, under the pretext of offering to Sadat information regarding complots against his regime which in fact increased the CIA control in the Egyptian politics and society (Woodward, 1987: 28).

Sadat's commitment on Washington was underlined among others by opening of air and naval facilities to USA after the soviet invasion of Afghanistan in order to extract more military and economic aid, by using the superpower's rivalry (Lippman, 1989: 18). The change on the leadership of the American administration with the ascendance of Reagan at the presidency had a negative impact on Cairo, since the new president seemed less disposed to support Sadat's regime. As Reagan said getting Sinai back was all what Egypt could expect for (Beattie, 2000: 272). Under this incommode for Cairo situation and in order to extract aid and support from the western bloc, the last semester of Sadat's mandate, the Egyptian President and Hosni Mubarak visited various times USA and different European capitals (Vatikiotis, 1991).

### **9.9. Arab Circle**

Sadat's visit in Jerusalem was inevitably followed by changes in regards to his relations with the rest of the Arab leaders, marking a new era for Cairo. Sadat decision surprised all regional actors, choosing to make the public announcement of his trip two days before the meeting of the Arab foreign in Tunisia (Karawan, 1994: 256).

Few weeks after Sadat's grand gesture the 'radical' Arab head states were met in Tripoli to decide over Sadat's move: <sup>605</sup>"The conference also discussed the visit made by President el-Sadat to the Zionist entity as being a link in the framework of the implementation of the hostile scenes. The conference reviewed the results of the visit, which constitute a flagrant violation of the principles and objectives of the pan-Arab struggle against the Zionist enemy, a squandering of the rights of the Palestinian Arab people, a departure of the Arab summit conference and the withdrawing of Arab Egypt from the front of the conflict with the Zionist enemy- a matter which the conference considered a great service by the President el- Sadat to Zionism and American imperialism and their designs and a consecration of the Zionist entity, which is their tool and base in the Arab area". In continuation Algeria, Libya, PLO, Syria and North Yemen broke their official relations with Cairo. The 'liberal' Arab states, mainly Saudi Arabia and Jordan on the contrary were not opposite to Sadat's visit. However, the internal pressures that those countries faced pushed Riyadh and Amman to officially rejected Sadat's initiative (Izquierdo, 2005:130).

Sadat's initiative was a gesture towards Washington, as we previously

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<sup>605</sup> Arab League Summit Declaration, 5 December 1977. Quoted in (Lukacs, 1992: 446-447).



commented. On the same time, Sadat was expecting that Hussein of Jordan will follow his steps sharing similar problems as Cairo. However, even if Hussein was interested in unblocking his kingdom from the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Jordanian king was facing important challenges coming from Muslim Brotherhood and Palestinians living in Jordan. The fears for social uprising<sup>606</sup> thus pushed Hussein to dissociate himself from Sadat's practices.

Cairo's progressive isolation from the Arab and Muslim circles impacted the politics of Middle East. Sadat's evident effort to proceed in a separate peace with Israel introduced a radical change in regional alliances and the reinforcement of the axe Palestine-Syria-Jordan (Lesch and Middle East, 1980). Cairo's irreversible exit of Egypt from the Arab-Israeli conflict gave a major weight to Damascus in the regional sphere, as it presented itself as the only defender of the Arab cause. Its leading role however demanded outside support. Thus, in October 1980 al-Asad signed a treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union which had previously resisted.

The Camp David treaty was followed by total official rejection of the Arab League<sup>607</sup>: *"The Arab League Council, on the level of foreign ministers, has decided the following: 1 A. to withdraw the ambassadors of the Arab States from Egypt immediately. B. To recommend the severance of political and economic relations with the Egyptian Government. The Arab Governments will adopt the necessary measures to apply this recommendation within a maximum period of 1 month [...]. 2. to consider the suspension of the Egyptian Government's membership in the Arab League [...]. 3. A. to make the city of Tunis [...] the temporary headquarters of the Arab League [...]"*.

The rejection of the peace initiative was an expected outcome. The 'communist' Arab bloc, especially Damascus, would not support a settlement with the Jewish state occupying its territory. Furthermore, having the leading role in the defence of the Palestinian cause al-Assad increased its influence by condemning such treaty. For similar reasons, Bagdad criticised strongly Sadat's separate peace accord. Iraqi President Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr in the Bagdad summit 1-5 November 1978 stated: *"We will not argue about the right of every ruler to act within the framework of his sovereignty in his own land. However, we cannot, under any circumstances, consider the action taken by the Egyptian head of state as merely an act of sovereignty and ignore the great truth that the struggle between the Arabs and the Zionist enemy is not a regional dispute confined to the Arab states whose territory was occupied in 1967 and not a mere territorial or border dispute or a war of defense of national sovereignty[...]. Therefore, and without encroaching upon the right of any Arab ruler, we do not agree that such a ruler*

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<sup>606</sup> In many Arab countries, especially Beirut, Damascus, Bagdad, Aden, Tripoli and Algiers popular demonstrations took place against Sadat's initiative (Jiryis, 1978: 26).

<sup>607</sup> Arab League Summit Conference Resolutions, Bagdad 31 March 1979. Quoted in (Lukacs, 1992: 474).

*should arrogate himself the right to deal with such a struggle and to end it according to his own will ”.*

Washington's evident interests in supporting the peace treaty and those supporting it, pushed the Arab leaders<sup>608</sup> to reconsider their option, including the possibility of the creation of an alternative front under the leadership of Moscow opposite to the *pax-Americana*. However, as it was underlined by Álvarez-Ossorio “*en ningún momento se llega a alcanzar un grado de cooperación suficiente para crear un eje Moscú-Damasco-Riad que hiciese frente a la entente Washington-Tel Aviv-El Cairo*” (Álvarez-Ossorio, 1999:169).

Sadat's initiative displeased Saudi Arabia not for the peace itself, as there were long aspirations for regional peace but for the fact that Sadat did not consult Riyadh first, as its purposes was to create a centre-periphery relationship (Hamed, 1981: 6). Thus, Riyadh initially did not openly criticised Sadat's move arguing that it would be impossible to isolate Egypt as it was the heart and soul of the Arab world. Kuwait sustained the same attitude and Oman publicly supported the accords. However, soon under the fear of being characterised traitors by their people they changed attitude (Barnett, 1998: 195). Despite the braking of the official relations with Egypt and the Arab boycott, the dismantling of the arms manufacturing, the Industrialisation Organisation and the deposits in Egyptian banks in Gulf were not recalled nor the Egyptian immigrants working in the Gulf Countries were expelled (Ayubi, 1991:325).

Nevertheless, the formal isolation of Egypt from the Arab and Islamic circles was harmful for Cairo. Sadat as means to minimise losses in the regional but also in domestic scene tried to emphasise Egypt's uniqueness and differentiation from the rest of the Arab states questioning on the same time Arab League's legitimacy. On the same time, he accused the rich-oil countries as arrogant and incapable of understanding Egypt's necessities and problems (Dawisha, 1983). Yet Sadat was aware that Cairo's isolation was harmful. Thus he tried to extract the support of the pro-American head states by presenting Cairo as the cornerstone of the American strategy in the Middle East<sup>609</sup>.

The attacks made by the Israeli Air Forces against Iraq and Lebanon only 48 hours before Sadat's meeting with Begin made more difficult Sadat's position, towards the Arab but also inside the Egypt. Cairo's isolation and the peace treaty that neutralised permanently the largest Arab army in military conflicts against Israel preconditioned the Israeli invasion of Lebanon (Ibrahim, 2002b).

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<sup>608</sup> During the summit of the Arab League, in Baghdad (1978), there had been a partial and arbitrary rejection of the *pax-Americana* under which it was decided the economic aid to the countries maintaining the confrontation with Israel that reached \$3.5 million (Álvarez-Ossorio, 1999: 165).

<sup>609</sup> In this context Sadat interfered in favour of Saudi Arabia for the American sales of AWACS surveillance aircraft (Ayubi, 1991: 328).

### 9.10. *Israel- Palestine*

Cairo's regional policies determined a new era for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The negotiation process between Cairo and Tel Aviv and Sadat's clear desire to follow Washington's instructions enabled Tel Aviv to adopt a more arrogant and inflexible attitude on the Arab issues. On the one hand, Sadat's regime had already made clear that peace was desired from the Egyptian side. On the other, the breaking of the relations with Moscow and Sadat's interest to align with Washington made Tel Aviv more confident about Egypt's intentions.

The regional changes were followed with internal ones. The Israeli elections, in 1977, gave the victory to Likud, which was interested in more radical domestic and foreign policies. The Israeli invasion in Lebanon, in 1978, and the bombing of Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1980 were clear demonstrations of the new orientation.

Tel Aviv's radicalisation increased the Palestinian problems, since the Jewish state intensified its settlement activity in the Palestinian territory, especially after the Sinai II. In parallel there were additional practices to debilitate Palestinian front. The economic and political Israeli support towards the Popular League, composed by rural Palestinian elites, Likud's proposal for autonomy of the occupied territories giving on the same time the possibility for the Arabs to choose between Israeli or Jordanian citizenship<sup>610</sup> were practices aiming to break the already limited Palestinian cohesion.

Cairo's exit from the Palestinian question left Palestinian elites with no real options, as Damascus became the only regional actor capable and interested in furnishing support, and in a more limited degree Amman. However, the interests of the Arab brothers did not include a real solution of the Palestinian issue since al-Assad wanted to maintain under its control the PLO, and Hussein of Jordan was by all means against the creation of a Palestinian state.

Sadat's visit on Jerusalem was not expected by the Israeli authorities, as the preparation for the official visit only started two days before (Shoufani, 1978: 3). "[...] I come to you today on solid ground to shape a new life and to establish peace. We all love this land, the land of God, we all, Moslems, Christian and Jewish." Sadat's speech on the Knesset, broadcasted internationally fulfilled Cairo's aims: attract the western public opinion<sup>611</sup>, clearly showing its commitment to achieve peace in order to force Tel Aviv to compromise (Hinnebusch, 1985: 66). Sadat's visit had as a direct political outcome the first official Arab recognition of Israeli state and the inauguration of unilateral agreements between an Arab state and Tel Aviv. In this frame, the Egyptian *rais'* visit broke the 'psychological barriers' in Sadat's words regarding the Israeli-Arab relations.

As it is expected, Sadat's visit provoked the Palestinian fury making Sadat PLO's 'archenemy' (Selim, 1984: 233). The Egyptian decision not only to abandon

<sup>610</sup> This proposal was rejected by Arabs, Sadat and Israeli laborists.

<sup>611</sup> For this reason Sadat allowed "prominent American television journalists to travel with him on his plane from Cairo to Tel Aviv" (Lippman, 1989: 11).

the Palestinian cause but also to undermine further the Palestinian role in negotiations<sup>612</sup> inevitably generated the Palestinian anger. The terrorist attacks against Egyptian targets<sup>613</sup> were a way of showing Sadat that his election to abandon the Arab cause had a price to be paid. In response Sadat started to question PLO legitimacy as representative of the Palestinians, condemning at the same time *fedayeen's* raids inside Israel. The disconnection of Cairo from the Palestinian question was revealed by Sadat's declaration in a press conference<sup>614</sup> "*désormais, il n'y avait plus de lien entre les négociations sur la normalisation entre l'Égypte et Israël et les négociations sur l'autonomie des Palestiniens*".

As it is expected the withdrawal of any Egyptian support towards the Palestinians limited the capacities of the latter, since one of their powerful regional allies had disappeared from the scene. Hence forward, the Palestinian question was to be resolved on political level and not at a military one. Consequently, Palestinians elites began to realise that their demands were forced to greater compromises. Thus, in March 1977, at the 13<sup>th</sup> National Palestinian Congress, Arafat adopted the idea of the creation of Palestinian state inside marking in this way the first official defeat of the 'maximalists' (Corm, 2003: 401).

As we have already commented the abandoning of the Palestinian cause from Cairo's side forced the Palestinian elites to focus on their relations with the rest of neighbour countries, Jordan, Syria and Iraq. Damascus became thus the main 'ally', since al-Assad's influence was growing in parallel with his 'support' to the Palestinian brothers. However, the friendly environment already tensed after the clashes in Lebanon, between Syrian and Palestinian forces, did not last long, as al-Assad in order to achieve a relative tranquillity started to repress the Palestinians after the Israeli invasion in Lebanon in 1978 and 1982 (Izquierdo, 2005: 154).

The only positive evolution for the Palestinians came once more from the European side, which however limited its support in diplomatic declarations, as it was the Venice Declaration which stated<sup>615</sup>: "*[...] the time has come to promote the recognition and implementation of the two principles universally accepted by the international community; the right to the existence and the security of all states in the region, including Israel, and justice for all the peoples, which implies the*

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<sup>612</sup> An important outcome of the treaty was that Cairo and Amman were to be the main interlocutors at the negotiations on the final status of the Palestinians. In this way "*Los palestinos deberían formar parte de las delegaciones árabes y no podrían ni tan siquiera presentar sus propias iniciativas sin la aceptación previa de las delegaciones en que se integrasen. Tampoco se ofrecía a los palestinos la oportunidad de rechazar los acuerdos árabe-israelíes en el caso de que se considerasen que perjudicaban sus intereses*" (Álvarez-Ossorio, 2001: 115).

<sup>613</sup> For instance we can mention the assassination of Yusuf Sabai, one of Sadat's confidant, by a Palestinian group.

<sup>614</sup> Quoted in (Desjardins, 1981: 503).

<sup>615</sup> The Venice European Declaration, 13 June 1980. Quoted in (Lukacs, 1992: 18).

*recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people”; “A just solution must finally be found to the Palestinian problem, which is not simply one of refugees. The Palestinian people, which is conscious of existing as such, must be placed in a position, by an appropriate process defined within the framework of the comprehensive peace settlement, to exercise fully its right to self-determination”.*

The separate peace between Egypt and Israel killed all aspirations for the Palestinians and their future, leaving them at the mercy of the American and Israeli interests, with only help the underground and limited from the ‘radical’ Arab brothers and Moscow and the diplomatic friendship from the European side.

### **9.11. Camp David**

Few would deny that the Camp David Accords change the course of the events in the Middle East. The conference of Camp David<sup>616</sup> took place 5-17 September 1978, despite the provisions for three month negotiations, deriving from Carter’s a hurry to achieve results before the presidential elections and Sadat’s rash to arrange internal problems. The conference concluded at two framework agreements, a Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel and a Framework for Peace in the Middle East, regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Sadat’s decision to proceed into a separate peace treaty came after his absolute need to secure its position using ‘foreign policy’ issues to bring internal stability. The social uprising of 1977 had been the outcome of the declining economic conditions of the Egyptian population. The continuation of the bellicose environment would inevitably increase and multiply problems, as the economic elites supporting Sadat’s regime would eventually withdraw their support, generating problems of stability. Sadat as well as the rest of the Egyptian elites in power knew that the gross foreign investment and American aid would not enter massively at the Egyptian territory without guarantees on peaceful environment.

Sadat’s interests on peace with Israel were highlighted by the president Carter twenty five years later<sup>617</sup>: *“What Sadat wanted was very clear. He wanted good relations with the United States, which Begin also wanted. He wanted his sovereign territory returned. That was something on which he would not deviate at all. He wanted peace with Israel for many reasons so that he could deal with other challenges to his own regime. There were some very important and serious challenges, for instance, from Libya against Egypt at that time, and Sadat wanted to be looked upon at the end of the whole discussion as making a strong attempt to protect the rights of the Palestinians”.*

Another factor making peace treaty with Israel a one way out was the

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<sup>616</sup> Before the peace treaty there were secret negotiations between Egyptians and Israelis though the intermediation of King of Morocco and Ceausescu of Rumania, which were followed by direct ones (Laurens, 1991: 293).

<sup>617</sup> <http://www.cartercenter.org/news/documents/doc1482.html>

Cairo's complete disconnection with Moscow. A future military clash with Israel would have found Egypt unarmed in the absence of military supplier. Thus, contrary to Telhami's<sup>618</sup> view Cairo and Tel Aviv found common interests in proceeding to a long lasting treaty (Telhami, 1992-1993: 631).

Of course Cairo's needs were not the determined factor for the treaty. Carter's personal interests were significant for the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty. The American president was in a hurry to achieve evident results on the Middle Eastern problems in order to win presidential elections (Laurens, 1991: 298). Important also was the need of the Carter administration to break with Kissinger's step by step policy, as we have already underlined.

The interests of Carter administration to achieve immediate results on the Middle East question were not followed by American pressures towards Tel Aviv. The absence of serious pressures towards the Israeli side to proceed on concessions for the West Bank as a condition for the peace treaty, which was an Egyptian demand, had important negative outcomes for Cairo (Hinnebusch, 1985: 68). Contrary to Sadat's inspirations hoping to become a key actor on the resolution of the long lasting conflict in the Middle East, Camp David Accords established the Egyptian president as traitor of the Palestinian cause. The urge of Sadat to close open issues and the awareness that his negotiate capacity was limited to Washington's interests, forced the Egyptian president to abandon any plans for Israeli concessions on the Palestinian question and the rest of the Arab issues. Sadat's decision therefore was conditioned by the dilemma of separate peace or not peace at all, in front of the Israeli intransigence.

From the above it becomes clear that at the beginning of the negotiations the implicated parts, Cairo and Tel Aviv, had different visions and inspirations for the outcomes of the treaty. Sadat was hoping for a total Israeli withdrawal from the Arab territories, occupied in 1967 war, the dismantling of the Israeli settlements as well as the an interim solution for the Palestinians foreseeing the right of auto determination in five years period. On the contrary, the Israeli side was not disposed to negotiate the totality of the occupied Arab territories or the complete dismantling of the Israeli settlements, including those of Sinai (Álvarez-Ossorio, 2001).

As it is historically known Sadat put in priority the survival of his regime in front of the Arab solidarity and obligations. The Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel concluded<sup>619</sup>: *"1.Egypt and Israel undertake not to resort to the threat or the use of force to settle disputes. Any disputes shall be settled by peaceful means in accordance with the provisions of*

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<sup>618</sup> The author upheld that there were four conflictive issues between Cairo and Tel Aviv: The Israeli side wanted long lasting treaty, maximum demilitarisation of Sinai, minimum linkage between normalisation and Palestinian issues and not a priori general agreements, whereas Cairo had the opposed position.

<sup>619</sup> Camp David Accords, September 17, 1978.

*Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations*. “2. In order to achieve peace between them, the parties agree to negotiate in good faith with a goal of concluding within three months from the signing of this Framework a peace treaty between them, while inviting the other parties to the conflict to proceed simultaneously to negotiate and conclude similar peace treaties with a view to achieving a comprehensive peace in the area...”

The separate peace treaty between Egypt and Israel<sup>620</sup> imposed in fact a military Egyptian neutralisation towards Israel without any real concession from Tel Aviv, besides the progressive return of Sinai (Corm, 2003: 485). The agreement was thus another Israeli victory closing the Egyptian front and consequently eliminating the possibility for an elevated threat from the Arabs due to the retirement one of the biggest Arab army. Besides the neutralisation of the Egyptian army, Tel Aviv gained recognition and official diplomatic relations<sup>621</sup> with an Arab country, free circulation of persons, products and navigation of Suez and Aqaba, and the capacity to purchase Egyptian oil.

Tel Aviv was aware of its accomplishment. As Carter recalls in his memoirs, Menachem Begin told him that during the negotiations Camp David “*had to be two agreements, the most important was between the United States and Israel, and the other, of secondary importance but obviously also crucial, was between Israel and Egypt [...]*” (Carter, 1992: 630). Sadat tried to pressure for more benefits for the Egyptian side using the threat of leaving the negotiations. His move did not produce positive results with Carter stating that if Sadat left “*it will mean first of all an end to the relationship between United States and Egypt*” (Telhami, 1992-1993: 630).

Despite the obvious benefits of the treaty for the Israeli side, the accords divided the Israeli government with the most radical fractions, headed by Yitzhak Shamir, Moshe Arens and Ariel Sharon, opposing the treaty. On the other hand, Begin and Perez show the treaty as necessary precondition for achieving international recognition and the control over the Eretz Yisrael<sup>622</sup>. This fragmentation had important impacts inside Israel one of them the radicalisation of the colonial movement and the consequent clashes with the movement Peace Now<sup>623</sup> (Izquierdo, 2005:142).

The agreement was beneficial for the American administration, as it raised Washington’s mediator role in the Arab-Israeli conflict, even though the American partiality in favour of Israel pushed the Arab leaders to reconsider their options regarding Moscow. Additionally, the peace treaty satisfied partially the American

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<sup>620</sup> The definite treaty was signed in Washington on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1979.

<sup>621</sup> On February 1981, the Israeli embassy opened in Cairo.

<sup>622</sup> Land of Israel.

<sup>623</sup> ‘Peace Now’ is an Israeli grassroots movement, created in the aftermath of Sadat’s visit in Jerusalem dedicated to promote peace process. For more information see <http://peacenow.org.il/eng/content/who-we-are>

president's goals as "even [Carter's] his domestic critics gave him high marks for Camp David" (Quandt, 1986: 359). However, the Accords did not ensure Carter's reelection in 1980, representing one of his main interests, as we previously saw.

For the Egyptian side the direct gains were limited as we previously saw: Sinai was going to be return to the Egyptian control in two years time, however without the withdrawal of the international forces separating the two neighbour states. The unbalanced gains for the two sides were the outcome of the unequal power capacities. As Boutros Boutros Ghali<sup>624</sup> stated Egypt was '*pursuing peace not out of altruism, but out of necessity*'.

More importantly the treaty secured the American backup to Cairo, economic<sup>625</sup>, political and military, one of the main interests of Cairo. Sadat, closing the chapter Israel, could from now on focus in strictly internal matters, with the help of Washington. Additionally, Sadat managed to create the image of a hero in the western public opinion<sup>626</sup> and demonstrated to his 'sons' his commitment for prosper and peaceful Egypt. The progressive Israeli withdrawal from Sinai was welcomed by the Egyptian people, who had long suffered from the military clashes with the Jewish state. Sadat's assassination, which among others had been motivated by the Camp David Accords, deprived him from assisting the complete return of Sinai to Egypt.

The Egyptian concessions did not stop in the signing of the treaty. In the aftermath Cairo ought to work on the normalisation of the Israel-Egyptian relations among others because the criteria of US AID were including regional activities which should: involve Arab and Israeli participation, bring people together in order to increase knowledge and understanding. Consequently, Cairo, the weak part of the treaty had to make significant efforts to moderate the Israeli image inside the country. Thus, in parallel with the political<sup>627</sup> process of normalisation, "*Egyptian writers, intellectuals, artists, and university professors were even more immediately concerned with the direct call for a 'normalisation of cultural relations'*" (Harlow, 1986 36).

The price to be paid: isolation from the Arab club. Sadat hopped that the rest of the Arab states, geographically proximate to Israel, would eventually sign a similar peace treaty. His was proven wrong<sup>628</sup>, as in the Baghdad Conference, called after the Camp David treaty, the totality of the Arab head states condemned

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<sup>624</sup> Quoted in (Tripp, 1989: 164).

<sup>625</sup> The "Special International Security Assistance Act" of 1979 authorised \$4.8 billion to support the Camp David peace accord, consisting of \$300 million in economic aid and \$1.5 billion in military one (Ruttan, 1996).

<sup>626</sup> The West attributed to Sadat the image of '*home de la paix exceptionnel*' and he received it jointly with the Prime Minister of Israel a Peace Nobel Prize.

<sup>627</sup> Symbolic was also the appointment of Boutros Boutros-Ghali as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Copt lawyer married to a Jew.

<sup>628</sup> Previously, as ultimate effort they tried to buy off Sadat by promising billion of dollars in case he did not pact with Tel Aviv (Beattie, 2000: 229).



Sadat's decision and broke their official relations with Egypt. Additionally, some the joint enterprises and the economic aid were suspended and as a symbolic gesture for this punishment the headquarters of the Arab League were translated in Tunis, and Egypt was expelled from the Arab League and the Islamic Conference<sup>629</sup>, under questioning the Egypt's 'Arabity'.

The Arab rejection was serving different interest. As we previously mentioned Riyadh was not entirely opposed to the treaty but found itself obliged to adopted the position of the other Arab states in order to avoid further fragmentation at regional level and quit down domestic criticism. Damascus had all interests on rejecting the treaty as in the aftermath increased its influence in PLO, Lebanon and Jordan in order to eliminate the possibility of another unilateral agreement. The definite retirement of Cairo from the Palestinian question and the temporal one from Arab scene intensified the competition among the Arabs leaders for the leadership role.

The Palestinian opposition was an expected outcome as Camp David as the treaty ignored the Palestinian right of auto determination, did not recognise PLO as their representative, did not made any reference for the future to the settlements in the Occupied Territories and treated the question of occupation as different from that of the Palestinians of the exile (Lukacs, 1992). Palestinians thus were abandoned to their faith. Following Izquierdo the Camp David treaty *"decantó definitivamente la relación de poder hacia Israel. La nueva situación permitió a Tel Aviv desplazar las zonas de fricción con los árabes mas allá de las fronteras israelíes, dentro en los propios países árabes, como en Líbano"* (Izquierdo, 2005: 203). As the Egyptian politicians say<sup>630</sup> *"No war can be launched in the Middle East without Egypt; and no peace can be gained in the Middle East without Egypt"*.

The general frustration created at the elite but also at popular level put the bases for the first Palestinian *Intifada* and it was materialise by terrorist attacks against Egyptian targets, inside and outside Egypt. The Israeli attacks against Lebanon and Iraq make things even more difficult for Sadat to justify his policies, increasing the prestige of his domestic and regional competitors.

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<sup>629</sup> Sadat tried to equilibrate Egypt's expulsion from the basic organisation of the region with the creation the League of Islamic and Arab Peoples, which never gained support.

<sup>630</sup> For instance Kamal Hasan Ali, former prime minister. Quoted in (Ayubi, 1991: 291).

## **10. Searching for the third way 1981-1989**

The disappearance of the *rais* from the power circle and the establishment of new figures on high institutional posts altered the power balance of the Egyptian regime. The lack of solid alliances imposes cooperation between primary and secondary elites and a cooperative attitude of the newcomers. In this context, the ruling elites choose middle way policies as means to satisfy different and sometimes contradictory interests. The growing competition and the progressive power concentration on primary elites have as an outcome the ousting of rival figures and the gradual shaping of a new hegemonic rule. In parallel linear relations remained weak but sometimes threatening for the new regime.

### **10.1. Army**

The assassination of Anwar al-Sadat was a shock to the Egyptian society. Sadat, the Crossing Hero who led the first Arab 'victory' against Israel was assassinated ironically the day of commemoration of 'his victory'. A lot of conspiracy theories exist until nowadays regarding his assassination, implicating even Hosni Mubarak<sup>631</sup>. We cannot verify or reject such theories but it is curious that the corps of the army was not put under regime's microscope, especially if we take into consideration that the president's murderer was found Khalid Istambouli, a lieutenant of the Egyptian army. Paradoxically, Istambouli's military career did not raise questions on the army's loyalty. On the contrary, in the aftermath of the president's assassination the military apparatus was put in the service of safeguarding the regime. Military officers had for second time in four years the opportunity to seize power and yet they choose to impose social stability. This 'paradox' can only be explained by the fact that powerful officers were already a strong component of the Egyptian regime and not just its 'coercive' tool.

The 'autumn of the fury' was followed by the reactivation of the 'emergency state'<sup>632</sup> giving substantial power to the military officers, depriving on the same time important freedoms of the Egyptian citizens. More specifically, the emergency law made permanent officers' intervention on civilian functions, since among others the law gave the right to establish exceptional courts, composed with officers -law no. 560/1981 article 7/4.

Not by coincidence, the new president of Egyptian Republic<sup>633</sup> and consequently Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces was named Muhammad Hosni Mubarak<sup>634</sup>, who was enjoying the support of military ranks (Mirel, 1982: 260). The election of Hosni Mubarak confirmed the importance of the military in the Egyptian politics. Even though his nomination was institutionally forced,

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<sup>631</sup> Talaat al-Sadat, nephew of the former president claimed that the assassination was an international conspiracy. On 31 October 2006, he was sentenced to a year in prison for defaming Egypt's armed forces, and less than a month after he gave an interview accusing Egyptian generals of masterminding Sadat's assassination. In another interview at a Saudi television channel, he also claimed both the United States and Israel were involved: *"No one from the special personal protection group of the late president fired a single shot during the killing, and not one of them has been put on trial"* said Talaat.

<sup>632</sup> The emergency law No. 162/1958, temporarily lifted by Anwar al-Sadat, was renewed by a temporary resolution no. 560/1981 for one year but it was extended continuously throughout Mubarak's mandate.

<sup>633</sup> Immediately after Sadat's assassination the position was filled by the parliamentary speaker Sofi Abu Taleb.

<sup>634</sup> Mubarak had taught for seven years at the Air Force Academy. He was Commandant of the Air Force Academy, Air Force Chief of Staff, and Deputy War Minister and Commander-in-Chief of Egypt's Air Force before and during the October War. For his performance he received three highest military medals.

being at the time of the assassination vice-president of Egypt, his long stay in power confirms the assumption.

The new *rais* was member of the 'October generation' and organiser of the Egyptian aviation, which had brought the Egyptian victory against Israel, experience that furnished Mubarak popularity. Mubarak's involvement in the two last wars of Egypt, one under the political leadership of Nasser, War of Attrition, and one under Sadat, facilitated the formation of alliances with military elites who had different backgrounds and ideological orientations. Furthermore, the fact that the new *rais* was not member of the Free Officers, made easier his disconnection from negative aspects of Nasser's regime.

The control over the army apparatus continued to be indispensable for regime's accumulative process. As we underlined earlier, the Egyptian military apparatus had modified its traditional role, one of the outcomes of the peace treaty with Israel. In this context, the army obtained functions of an internal coercive apparatus, whose capabilities were used for the direct protection of the regime's components and not for external threats. Yet the increasing role of the army on the internal matters and the important presence of military officers became a handicap for some important components of regime<sup>635</sup>.

As soon as Mubarak took power he stated<sup>636</sup>: *"We opt for peace in order to prevent the continued wastage of funds used for the purchase of arms and ammunition. Such funds could now be spent for the welfare and prosperity of the Egyptian people, who have long suffered from the horrors of the war in both psychological and material terms"*.

Mubarak's declarations were rational, taking into consideration the limited external threats that the country faced after Camp David Accords: Israel was now formally a non hostile country, and the southern and western borders with Sudan and Libya<sup>637</sup> represented a minor threat at military level. But was it possible to reduce the role of the army and its budget, especially after its vital intervention?

Regime's discordance between words and deeds is clear. The armed forces continued to grow: from 298.000 personnel in 1975 to 460.000 in 1984 dropping marginally in 1989, and 8.5 %average percentage of its budget during the 80s<sup>638</sup>. Egypt continued to have one of the best trained and most highly skilled armies in the region and the largest in Arab world and Africa. The increasing military numbers demonstrated officers' important role in the politics and at the same

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<sup>635</sup> In the following chapters we are going to see in detail the problems that Hosni Mubarak faced in nominating his son Gamal Mubarak, as his successor among others due to Gamal's non military profile.

<sup>636</sup> Quoted in (Kassem, 1999:65).

<sup>637</sup> However, following Ayubi the officers managed to keep elevated the budget destined to the army by using the possible military threat of Libya and the relative instability in the Gulf (Ayubi, 2006).

<sup>638</sup> Information obtained at International Institute for Strategic Studies, the Military Balance 1989-1990, available at <http://www.iiss.org/>.

time regime's insecurity, needing a military backup to secure its position. On the same, the growing number of army's personnel<sup>639</sup> served as façade of high unemployment.

Key element in understanding the increasing influence of the military circles was the intra-regime competition between the President of Republic and the Minister of Defence Abu Ghazala, appointed to this post in 1981 by former president Anwar al-Sadat. Ghazala's role was decisive for army's growing capabilities since he "*managed to persuade the politicians to keep the military budget at high levels*" (Ayubi, 1991: 256). The competition between the two men, Hosni Mubarak and Abu Ghazala, was tough. According to al-Ahram weekly in an article published after Ghazala's death, in September 2008<sup>640</sup>, "*The two frontrunners for the [presidential] post were Mubarak and Abu Ghazala [...]*". The negotiations among the main actors gave the highest office to Hosni Mubarak reserving on the same time an important role to his main competitor.

The long stay of the Minister of Defence at his office reflected clearly the continuity between the two regimes, and the lack of Mubarak's absolute control over the main power resources, due to Ghazala's significant influence over important military fractions and ex-officers (Ayubi, 1991: 262), and his privileged relations with Washington and multinationals companies. Significant was probably the connection of Ghazala with political actors as he was high member of the National Democratic Party. Moreover, Ghazala was enjoying the support of religious authorities, projecting a religious profile in the mass media<sup>641</sup> (Springbord, 1987: 4).

Ghazala's power was growing parallel with the posts he occupied. In September 1982, he was named Deputy Prime Minister keeping his ministerial post in the defence and war production<sup>642</sup>, and chairman of the ministerial Public Policy Commission. Additionally, he expanded further his sphere of influence in the extra-military field, controlling with his ministry the police forces, this latter being hold responsible for unrest that broke out after Sadat's assassination<sup>643</sup>. The cooperation between the two coercive apparatuses militarised the internal security of the country and rigged the police forces with adequate military equipment, rising, at the same time, the policemen presence in problematic regions (Fahmy, 2001: 40).

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<sup>639</sup> In 1989, there were 448.000 active members of the armed forces in total- including 250.000 conscripts, 604.000 reserves and 374.000 paramilitary members (Ayubi, 2006).

<sup>640</sup> According to the same article Ghazala gave his concession to Mubarak's nomination to the Prime Minister Fouad Mohieddin. Soon after Sadat's assassination Mohieddin asked Abu Ghazala "*We have two candidates, you and Mubarak, which one is it going to be?*"(Nassar, 2008).

<sup>641</sup> Indicative of Ghazala's religiousness was the Islamic dressing of his wife always wearing a jibab, at the time not a common dressing attitude.

<sup>642</sup> Ghazala proposed also the creation of a post of Vice President Officer describing the post for himself.

<sup>643</sup> Mohammed Nabawi Ismail, Interior Minister at the moment of Sadat's assassination, was hold responsible for not ensuring domestic security.

In spite of the growing influence of the officers in Egypt, the new regime continued the virtual demilitarisation of the Egyptian politics, since Mubarak's first three cabinets less than the 10% had a military career background (Abdelnasser, 2004: 120). However, officers' marginalisation in the strictly political sphere had to be counterbalanced with privileges. Thus, the military sector expanded further its economic and civil activities becoming progressively semi-autonomous with a rapidly developing arms industry. Indicative is the case of Arab Military Armaments Organisation (AMIO), at that date exclusively Egyptian, produced \$40 million worth arms, in 1981, (Dessouki, 1991: 164). In parallel, the Military Organisation for Civil Projects continued the infrastructure projects, telecommunication, housing facilities and land reclamation.

Additionally, the special privileges given to the retired and active officers, introduced under Sadat and preserved by Mubarak ensured a model the clientelist relations between the higher elite circles and their leaders. This kind of activities *"engaged a class of military entrepreneurs whose loyalties are ambiguous, to say at least, and whose professional links are more likely to be with other entrepreneurs than with the army they serve"* (Owen, 1987: 8).

In 1985, the objectives of the army's economic activity were published in al-Ahram, among them: reach a high level of auto-sustainment; production of sophisticated military products to cover the army's necessities; improve and stabilise the market prices; help the state at the difficult sectors where the private sector interference is limited (Droz-Vincent, 2001: 89). Officers' economic activities permitted therefore the control of the Egyptian regime over significant segments of capital. In micro level, this interconnection allowed officers and lower members of the army to become more prone to corruptive activities, mainly regarding commissions for the buying of military equipment.

The friendly relations between Cairo and Washington and the cordial relations that Ghazala shared with the different economic-political and military American sectors stretched even more the collaboration of the two countries in the military field including military aid, training, military equipment and joint military operations<sup>644</sup>, occasionally suspended after the *Achille Lauro* Affair<sup>645</sup> in 1985. Nevertheless, the complaints from the Egyptian side towards Washington did not lack regarding inadequate volumes, slow deliveries, less sophistication of

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<sup>644</sup> Representative is Operation Bright Star stated in 1981 and is repeated in odd-number years. These joint exercises offer the American Army the opportunity to familiarise with the Middle Eastern deserts. The operations do not take publicity to avoid popular discontent.

<sup>645</sup> On October 7, 1985 members of the Palestinian Liberation Front hijacked an Italian ship demanding the release of Palestinian prisoners of Israel, killing an American-Jewish citizen. Once American found out the murder an American F-14s intercepted an Egyptian airliner carrying the hijackers to Tunis where PLO would put them to trial. The plane was directed to NATO base in Sicily and the hijackers were arrested by the Italian authorities. The incident temporally froze the relations between Cairo and Washington, due to the discovery that Washington had bugged Mubarak's telephone and the Egyptian public opinion's reaction demanding an apology from the U.S. for violating the Egyptian sovereignty.

the equipment than the Israeli one etc (Eilts, 1988: 144).

In parallel, after the re-establishment of the diplomatic relations with the majority of the Arab countries, began the joint investment in military industries with Gulf countries, which gave to Cairo substantial financial aid in order to repay some of its debts (Ayubi, 1991: 258). The Arab Industrialisation authority was reorganised in 1987, in which some 15.000 Egyptian were employed. The rapid growth of this sector positioned Egypt as the second largest manufacturer of arms after Israel in the region. The Egyptian military industry continued to flourish especially during the Iran-Iraq hostilities, with the Egyptian side making important arms sales to Iraq, regarding mostly old soviet equipment.

In 1986, the threatening revolt of Central Security Forces (CSF) took place. The paramilitary corpus, under the authority of the Interior Ministry and responsible for guarding public buildings, hotels, strategic sites, foreign embassies, was composed of those who were not accepted in army, in order to counterbalance the officers' power. The members of CSF protested for their low salaries and labour conditions, when a rumour spread that their term of service would be extended from three years to four years. The menacing situation obliged the calling of the army, underlying once more its decisive role for the regime's survival<sup>646</sup>.

The growing role of the military apparatus in different sectors increased substantially Ghazala's power capacities<sup>647</sup>, whose aspirations were not a secret, making him the number one threat for Mubarak. The president thus focused at his rival's expulsion. The first step to neutralise Ghazala regarded the sabotaging the minister's relations with Washington. As we have already underlined, Ghazala held special relations with the American administration and American economic sectors. Mubarak thus tried to gain the American collaboration for 'neutralising' Ghazala, assuring that the relations between the two countries will continue as usual. Washington thus made public the arrest of Abdel-Qader Helmi, an Egyptian-American rocket scientist, for attempting to export banned material to Egypt. The arrested scientist supposedly acting on Ghazala's orders and one year later, Helmi pleaded guilty to the charge of the illegal exporting of 420 pounds of the banned material.

The accusations held by Helmi had as result the calling of Ghazala in a US court for questioning. In 1988, Abu Ghazala was accused of smuggling American military goods and arrested in USA. For questions of 'touchiness' and

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<sup>646</sup> The army restored the order after four days of rioting in different Egyptian cities. The outcome of this unrest was hundreds of people dead or wounded, and about 8,000 CSF conscripts missing. The government subsequently promised a series of reforms in the CSF, and continued to use the CSF as the main force for dealing with student disturbances, intimidating strikers and demonstrators.

<sup>647</sup> After the *Achille Lauro* affair, there were rumours from foreign media regarding Abu Ghazala's collaboration with the American authorities in this operation, which enabled Mubarak to reduce his rival's influence. On the contrary, the CFS riots helped Ghazala to recuperate the lost field under the threat that the regime was facing (Springbord, 1987: 7).

transparency Ghazala was immediately dismissed from his post and in April 1989 he left the Defence Ministry to become assistant to the president, a post that carried no executive powers.

Mubarak of course did not succeed in expulsing his rival without inside help. The expansion of the officers' activities had divided the sector in those who were strictly connected with the military field and those who, in their majority retired officers<sup>648</sup> had their interests related to the economic sphere. Mubarak allied with the formers in order to counterbalance Ghazala's influence. In the end of 80s the active officers were the winners of the internal rivalry (Droz-Vincent, 1999: 32).

After almost a decade at the presidency, Hosni Mubarak accomplished to place himself at the pyramid of the Egyptian power structure, eliminating a major internal competitor, securing in this way the control over coercive apparatus, by winning the collaboration of military officers. Meanwhile, the role of certain military officers grew further but not in a visible way. Following Bill *"With the development of military-industrial complexes, the military's influence over policy is becoming more diffused, broadly based and substantive. Officers do not have to be in cabinets or parliaments nor stage coups d'état to have significant influence over important economic and political decisions"* (Bill and Springborg, 1990: 268).

## **10.2. State**

By the end of Sadat's era, Egypt had really become an *état-raïs* (Mirel, 1982: 242), with all executive authorities attributed to the president who: appointed the Cabinet, he was the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and the chief policy maker in matters of security, leader of diplomacy and economic matters, and controller of arms purchasing.

Mohammed Hosni Mubarak, however, could not adopt the pharaoh style of the former president<sup>649</sup>, mainly because he was lacking solid personal control over power recourses, as we saw. This lack obligated him to collaborate with the rest of primary actors and thus project a non authoritarian profile. Additionally, the new regime had to be careful because the last four years of Sadat's mandate Egyptians had demonstrated their anger towards to the luxurious and despotic style of the previous leading elite.

The new regime needed popular acceptance, aiming not only to secure its authority but also to assure the social peace. Even though Sadat's assassination was effectuated by 'fanatic' Islamists the dangers of a popular unrest were not trivial. The populist concessions at the beginning of the mandate of each president were already a tasted tradition along with the 'emergency law', which

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<sup>648</sup> The lobbies of the retired officers were organised in Cherkat al Nasr lil-khedmat wa al Siyaha and Jama'iyat al-Muharabin al-Qadimin.

<sup>649</sup> Progressively after Sadat's assassination the portraits of the former president that were covering Cairo disappeared giving their place in the following years to those of Mubarak. In parallel, Nasser's reputation was resurrected.



proportioned the regime necessary instruments to keep controlled not only the society but also its rivals.

The 'play it safe' strategy, coupled with Mubarak's unsecured position permitted the proliferation of power centres at the highest level of the state (Shukrallah, 1989: 96). The new regime, an amalgam of Nasserist and Sadatist, opted for the middle way policies, not too capitalist orientated nor too interventionists, satisfying on this way the different parts of its components. Following Hinnebusch: "*Mubarak inherited a regime lacking a credible legitimating ideology or leading a personality capable of attaching mass loyalties to the state, and a faltering experiment in political liberalization. Indicative of the regime's bankruptcy were its attempts to depict itself as both Nasserist and Islamist, all the while following Sadatist policies*" (Hinnebusch, 1990: 198). This ambiguous politico-economic profile and the regime's multipolar structure enabled a certain opening of the Egyptian politics.

The lack of credibility and support pushed the new regime to demonstrate its determination to end the general corruption, which had tempered Egyptians. In parallel this strategy had other benefits: on the one hand, this strategy was serving the interest of specific elites who wanted to increase their control over economic sector. On the other hand, the tactic served as pretext to remove unwanted figures, some of the strongest fractions of the Sadat's era. Indicative were the cases of Osman Rachad<sup>650</sup>, Mustafa Khalil and Mahmoud Sulayman, characterised as 'parasitic bourgeoisie' for their implication in huge corruption scandals (Kassem, 1999: 78), or this of Vice Prime minister, Abdel Razzak Abdel Meguib, responsible for the economy and financing<sup>651</sup>. All of them were accused for illegal behaviour and activities and consequently were removed from their official posts.

The referendum held on 13 October 1981 approved the candidature of Mubarak who stated the next day in the Egyptian parliament<sup>652</sup> "*Je jure devant le Seigneur tout-puissant de préserver le système républicain, la Constitution et la légalité, de défendre résolument les intérêts du peuple ainsi que la indépendance et intégrité de la patrie*". Since one of the main priorities of regime's new figures were to consolidate their position and to (re)gain popular and political acceptance, one of Mubarak's first moves as head of the Egyptian state was the release of Sadat's imprisoned leaders<sup>653</sup>: Copts, Marxists and Islamist figures, among them Omar Tilmissani, Muslim Brotherhood's Spiritual Guide, who officially offered his support to Mubarak's presidency.

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<sup>650</sup> Osman had earlier published a book regarding Nasser and Sadat removed him of his office something that facilitated Mubarak to expel him and take off his parliamentary immunity.

<sup>651</sup> He was accused of acting for Osman Ahmed Osman profit (Mirel, 1982: 258).

<sup>652</sup> Quoted in (Mirel, 1982: 259),

<sup>653</sup> Some of the released went directly to the Presidential Palace for an official reception (Goldschmidt, 2004: 187).

The official opposition gave its support to Mubarak with the exception of National Progressive Unionist Party (tagammu). Ibrahim Shukri, leader of Labour Party stated<sup>654</sup>: *"The opposition welcomes the principles set forth by the President Mubarak, particularly his call for political participation [...]"*. In the same context the leader of New Wafd party, Fu'ad Serag al-Din declared<sup>655</sup> *"One fact I am sure of now that I will have full confidence in [Mubarak's] courage is that we will, together with God's help, surmount the plight of our country [...] because he respects the freedom of opinion [...] speech and political parties [...] President Mubarak wants to create a civilised democratic country in accordance with internationally established concepts"*. In the spirit of political conciliation<sup>656</sup> even Mubarak was believed to have disconnected himself from the National Democratic Party<sup>657</sup>, representing himself as arbitrator between all the parties, promoting the National Dialogue. The officially declared support of the opposition leaders to Mubarak's regime marked their secondary role whose main function was limited in proportioning a democratic façade of an authoritarian regime.

The projection of the national coalition between different political forces, and the conciliatory policies, enabled the new regime to collaborate with actors of different backgrounds and on the same time create progressively new hegemonic figures. One of these figures was Youssef Wali, minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, an important ally of Mubarak who remained in the Egyptian cabinet until 2004<sup>658</sup>.

The elections of 1984 were held under a new electoral law-no 114/1983, based on proportional representation. According to this law no parties were allowed representation in parliament without reaching 8% of the votes<sup>659</sup>. The law also raised the number of seats from 390 to 448 preserving the 50 % membership in the Assembly 50 % of peasants and workers<sup>660</sup>. In this way, Mubarak and the National Democratic Party kept controlled the Egyptian parliament, reserved a minimal role to the opposition parties, and reinforced the 'democratic' profile for his regime.

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<sup>654</sup> Quoted in (Kassem, 1999: 50)

<sup>655</sup> Quoted in (Kassem, 1999: 50).

<sup>656</sup> Mubarak's cabinet headed by Faud Mohieddine who had collaborated with Nasser in the sixties but also with Sadat after Camp David, was consisted of personalities that were not initially National Democratic Party members (Ezzedine, 1999).

<sup>657</sup> Mubarak had been named in 1978, vice president of the National Democratic Party and in January 1982, Mubarak accepted NDP's leadership.

<sup>658</sup> 23 years later Youssef Wali was hold responsible for 'fertilizer scandal' importing 10,000 tons of contaminated fertilizers that cause cancer. Youssef Wali was considered by some as the Godfather of Egypt's normalisation relations with Israel and one of the basic coordinators for the Egyptian policy towards the Sudan.

<sup>659</sup> The votes given to parties with less than 8% were automatically given to the first party, i.e. NDP.

<sup>660</sup> As it is underlined by (Ebeid, 1989b: 28) *"In many instances [...] 'worker' and 'peasant' status was more formal than real and reflected more about what the individuals were than what they are, thus allowing for many irregularities"*.

Under the fear of exclusion an electoral coalition took place between the secular New Wafd<sup>661</sup> and the Muslim Brotherhood. Besides the obvious reason of such coalition, obtain the 8% of the votes, there were other reasons for this electoral collaboration. On the one hand, the Brotherhood deprived of a political status needed an authorised party to run in the parliamentary elections, because the new electoral law imposed election by party list precisely targeting Muslim Brotherhood (Kassem, 1999: 95). On the other hand, New Wafd<sup>662</sup> lacking popularity, due to its absence from the political scene and the elitist basis, found in the Brotherhood an opportune ally. The coalition provoked inevitably conflicts inside New Wafd, being a secular party with an important presence of Copts. Consequently, some of its members left in order to form another political party, which did not obtain licence. The internal clash as well as the regime's attacks cost the party loss of voters<sup>663</sup>.

The electoral outcome of 1984<sup>664</sup> and the electoral victory of the Muslim Brotherhood allied with New Wafd worried Mubarak. The Labour Party<sup>665</sup> and the Tagammu did not reach the necessary 8% to enter the parliament. Mubarak, hoping to tie these two groups with clientelist practices and underline his democratic profile, under his right to nominate ten members of the Assembly, included at his parliament Ibrahim Shukri, leader of the Labour party and other two members, and Milad Hanna member of Tagammu, who refused Mubarak's offer.

As it was underlined by Ebeid in these elections *"Powerful interest groups with the same socio-economic interests within the three fractions represented in parliament- the ruling NDP, the Wafd and the Muslim Brethren-were working towards the establishment of a tripartite coalition, with the support of some Arab and international forces who had an interest in the emergence of a conservative social force as a strong base for the post-Sadat era"* (Ebeid, 1989b: 25). The new regime accomplished to undermine further the role of opposition leaders and political parties.

Meanwhile, the regime had to face the important challenge of the Security Forces' riot. Besides the direct application of force the incident demanded a scapegoat. Ahmad Rushdi, Minister of Interior (1984-86), was well respected among the Egyptians for his policies<sup>666</sup>. However, the minister's popularity was

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<sup>661</sup> New Wafd was allowed to resume its activities in 1983 gathering Copts, nasserists, businessmen, old officers, middle class and of course landowners.

<sup>662</sup> The main political slogan of the New Wafd was the cancellation of the Camp David treaty since Israel had repeatedly violated the agreement notably regarding the right of self-determination of the Palestinians.

<sup>663</sup> Personal interview with Essam Shiha, member of the New Wafd Party's high board.

<sup>664</sup> NDP 72.9% of the votes and 87% of the seats, New Wafd 15% votes and 13% of seats and the Labour Socialist Party 7.73% votes and no seats. The participation reached the 43% of the enlisted.

<sup>665</sup> At the time called Socialist Labour Party.

<sup>666</sup> Ahmad Rushdi's policies regarded mainly the stopping of unjustified arrests, improving traffic

not well perceived from Mubarak, who probably saw a potential dangerous rival<sup>667</sup>. Thus, Rushid was forced to resignation, in Mubarak's effort to establish progressively a loyal group of ministers, and counterbalance Ghazala's influence<sup>668</sup>. His removal caused the anger of many Egyptians, mainly from the university circles.

In December 1986, the constitutional crisis<sup>669</sup> provoked by the appeal of the Supreme Constitutional Court of the unconstitutionality of 1984 electoral law imposed the dissolution of the parliament and anticipated elections. The elections aided Mubarak to re-compose his parliament. On the same time, the insecurity of opposition leaders and their moves in order to remain in power competition aided further the regime to dominate the Egyptian political scene. One day after Mubarak's called for parliament's dissolution, the opposition parties agreed on unifying forces and present all together a common list under New Wafd aiming to challenge the NDP. However, the plan did not flourish as the High Council of New Wafd rejected the idea (Ebeid, 1989a: 422). Furthermore New Wafd's leadership put considerable effort to estrange its former allies, Muslim Brotherhood, among others by re-using the slogan "*Religion for God and homeland for all*", hoping to re-attract its disappointed voters and members. Probably backstage deals with the regime supported the idea of non collaboration with the rest of the opposition forces.

The Muslim Brotherhood opted not to run with independent candidates but to form Islamic coalition with Socialist Labour Party and the Socialist Liberal Party in order to assure parliamentary representation under the motto: "*Islam is the solution*" and "*Give your vote to Allah, give it to Muslim Brotherhood*", as the electoral law foresaw that each independent must obtain 20% support in any of the 48 constituencies instead of 8% of the votes regarding the political parties,. The 'Islamic Alliance' won 57 seats, of which 36 went to the Brotherhood, fact that put the basis for another competitive frame of relations, weakening the opposition forces altogether. The electoral process of 1987 took place under rumours regarding 'correction' of electoral returns<sup>670</sup>, with the leader of New

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in Cairo, drug commerce etc. He was never implicated personally in a torture case.

<sup>667</sup> Some said also that the riots were fabricated in order to embarrass him (Wickham, 2002:81-82).

<sup>668</sup> The successor of Rushdi, Zaki Badr, lacked clean political profile as his name was connected with illegal activities and drug dealing.

<sup>669</sup> A number of advisers for the constitutional court reviewed the case of the lawyer Kamal Khaled to prove unconstitutional the law that prevented him from running as independent candidate in the elections. The Committee decided that the party law as well as the electoral law contained unconstitutional items. Moreover the committee eliminated the item regarding a seat in each electoral district to a woman and establish that independents can run to the elections. The amended electoral law imposed the parties which did not gather the 8% their percentage would be distributed to all successful parties and not just to the first as it was before. Moreover the parliamentary quota of 35 seats for women introduced during 1979-84 was also declared unconstitutional.

<sup>670</sup> The electoral results were: NDP 359 seats, Alliance 57 seats, New Wafd 34 seats and

Wafd characterised them as the “*largest forgery on the people’s will*”<sup>671</sup>. Even so, the NDP won fewer seats and few months later, in October 1987, Mubarak was re-elected for a second term with 97.1% in a nationwide referendum.

The main competition of the political arena was not taking place between the governmental party and the opposition but between opposition figures, in parallel with the intra regime competition. Thus, up to 1989 there was a general consensus on ‘national’ issues between the government and the opposition leaders: the no normalisation of relations with Israel, combating corruption, the maintenance of the subsidies system, the preservation of civilian character of the regime and the parallel recognition of *sharia* as one of the source of law as well as the demilitarisation of the political process (Ebeid, 1989b: 26). This collaborative spirit was steaming from the primary and secondary political elites’ need to secure their respective position. Thus, as soon as primary elites felt capable of having established a new hegemonic rule, this collaboration took end.

For many scholars, among them Ayubi (1991), the real Mubarak era started in May 1984, with the electoral winning of NDP. However, as we have already demonstrated, the regime up to 1989 continued to experience a deep division, summarised in the personalities of Mubarak and Ghazala. For this reason, up to Ghazala’s neutralisation, Mubarak did not use the extensive presidential powers, he did not change radically the composition of the ruling elite and he did not proceed in significant socio-economic changes. However, during this period Mubarak progressively centralised his power by replacing his ministers with weaker ones (Gauch, 1991:41).

### **10.3. Rent and Capital**

By the time Mubarak came into power the major private economic circles of Egypt were experiencing important difficulties. The open door policy had created high expectative to the business circles, which were proven futile for those aspiring a real economic opening. However, the gains for the ‘parasitic bourgeoisie’, composed of prominent businessmen of the private sector related to Sadat and highly placed public employees were more than satisfactory.

In the economic field the new regime had to face thus a rising discontent coming from economic elites not beneficiated from Sadat’s policies, as well as the popular displeasure created by the economic penuries that the *infitah* policies implicated. More importantly, Mubarak and his allies had to limit the power capacities of the rival figures, due to the lack of solid power basis. Consequently, Mubarak classed different economic actors, whereas, others were left untouched to continue their activities, either because they were difficult to be reached or because they allied with the new regime.

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Independents 8 seats. In 1989 there were six official political parties in Egypt: NDP, New Wafd, Socialist Labour Party, National Unionist Progressive Party, the Liberal Party and the Umma Party.

<sup>671</sup> Al-Ahram, 8 April 1987.

The two objectives, limitation of the rivals' capacities and partial satisfaction of the malcontent forces, including the Egyptian population, were attained through policies of cleansing. Thus, many case of corruption took publicity, targeting personal friends and relatives of Sadat, including Sadat's brothers Esmat and Tarek. On the same time, other economic figures, allied either with Mubarak or with Ghazala, continued their profitable business, using the political backup and/or the public enterprises to increase their power capacities based on private capital, as it was the case of many retired officers. Mubarak's interventionist policies were further aided by the negative image that the liberalisation process had taken during Sadat's mandate.

Important was also the rupture of the relations with the powerful Osman Ahmed Osman, who had expanded his activities, and influence, in such degree that many were talking for the '*osmanisation*' of the economy (Mirel, 1982: 257). As it was commented by a minister of Sadat's cabinet<sup>672</sup> "*During Sadat's mandate] Toute la politique économique est fait par une seule personne[...]: Osman Ahmed Osman qui assiste constamment le rais, monte des dizaines de sociétés et pousse à la création de banques locales, de fonds de sécurité alimentaire, etc., pour contrôler le maximum d'entreprises et de circuits. Au point que l'économie est devenue sa chose*". Mubarak thus put an end of the privileged dealings with Osman as well as with Marei, two of the main economic allies of Sadat.

Balancing virtually between socialism and capitalism, Mubarak obviously chose a liberal model and policies beneficiating the friendly economic circles, preserving on the same time the interventionist role of the state. Thus, in 1983, the Supreme Constitutional Court annulated Nasser's decision to suspend compensation payments to owners whose land had been confiscated and invalidated the land seizures. Later, in 1986, the government proposed to 'review the law which governs the relations between owners and lessees of agricultural land so that no one dominates the other'. However, the riots of the Central Security Forces, one month later postpone the initiative (Springborg, 1991: 234). The expected reactions of the Egyptians was prevented through governmental media projecting the benefits of such policy, judging tenancy laws counterproductive due to the lack of resources of tenants to invest in modernisation.

It is important to underline here the absence of any real objection and criticism coming from the opposition. Nor Muslim Brotherhood or New Wafd took a clear position regarding the issue being both groups were composed by elites connected with private capital, mainly landowners. This attitude verifies the speculation regarding the alignment of the main political forces of the Egyptian scenery, and the important role of the landowners in the Egyptian politics.

Elites connected with private capital were not a group sharing a 'class' interest. At this period in Egypt there were three competing 'capitalist' elites:

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<sup>672</sup> Quoted in (Mirel, 1982: 257).

state bourgeoisie, embryonic private entrepreneurs, connected mainly investment sectors, and 'parasitic mafia' (currency dealers, speculators, black marketers etc) (Ayubi, 1991: 231). All three of them allied with political elites under the imperative to secure and hopefully increase their respective power capacities.

Due to the competitive interests we can understand the struggle that took place among the government and the 'parasitic mafia' connected with Islamic financial institutions. The growing influence of these figures in parallel with the violence coming from Islamist sectors became threatening for the new regime which replied by attacking their economic organisations. It was not a coincidence that Islamic economic sector had begun to increase its capital during this period, calculated between \$4-6 billion, with the Islamic banks becoming the largest recipient of Egyptian savings, blocking the control of the regime in this field (Quandt, 1988[b]).

As we saw in the previous chapter, the law no 48 of 1977 had opened the way for the development of the Islamic sector, beginning with the Faisal Bank<sup>673</sup> and followed by International Islamic Bank of Investment and Development with exclusively Egyptian capital, in 1980. This type of banks, connected with important financial groups of Saudi Arabia<sup>674</sup>, claiming to operate according to the principles of *Sharia*, attracted an important number of clients by paying dividends that vastly exceeded local bank interest rates. Thus, different entities such as those headed by El-Rayyan, El-Sherif and El-Hoda managed to increase their capital especially by attracting the savings of the Egyptian workers in the oil-rich Gulf States, who were depositing billions of pounds.

During this period economic opportunities improved temporally, when petro money re-entered in Egypt, consequence of the improvement of the relations between Cairo and the fellow Arab states (Vatikiotis, 1991: 441-442). The Egyptian oil sector began to gain weight with major profits for American oil and banking, which had been already associated with Sadat's 'fat cats' (Eilts, 1988: 141). Yet, the injection of the Arab money did not aid 'Egypt' to overcome its basic economic problems and in the mid-80s the inflation reached 20-30 % per annum. The collapse of world oil prices in 1986 and the halt of remittances produced a slowdown of the economy in the mid-80s. The crisis inevitably affected Islamic financial institutions that marked tremendous losses<sup>675</sup>, fact that alarmed the depositors.

At this moment, elites of the Egyptian regime grabbed the opportunity to attack the rival businessmen of the sector under the pretext of protecting the

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<sup>673</sup> Faisal Bank was created in a joint-venture model.

<sup>674</sup> Two main groups of Saudi origin, giants of Islamic financing were: Dar al-mal al-islami founded in 1981 by Mohammed Faisal and al-Baraka Investment and Development Company created by Salah Kamil in 1982.

<sup>675</sup> Al-Rayyan alone lost, almost overnight, \$1.43 billion.

Egyptians' interests. The Investment Companies Law 146 of 1988, issuing that only joint stock venture could receive public money, obliging them in this way either to submit to rigid regulation or go into liquidation and repay depositors, was obviously targeting the control of the sector by the 'political institutions'. Incapable of repaying their clients many prominent businessmen, leading such companies, were arrested, served sentences and eventually rescheduled their debts<sup>676</sup>, among them Fathi and Ahmed Tawfik Al-Rayyan, Ashraf Saad, Abd El-Fattah Al Sherif and Hoda Abdel-Meneim<sup>677</sup>.

The economic crisis in 1987, mainly regarding the foreign debt<sup>678</sup> implied difficult negotiations with the executives of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and different westerner governments to reschedule the payments. As consequence, major monetary reforms were announced, as well as the decision to sell all loss-making and public companies in tourism and domestic trade. However, Mubarak could not afford radical cut off's of the public expenditures that the international economic institutions proposed, as he knew the costs of such measures in terms of popular displeasure. Additionally, a 'rationalisation' of the Egyptian economy would decrease his influence in the economic sectors and his direct control over capital.

Mubarak's economic 'middle way' is shown in numbers. At the end of the 80s the public sector was responsible for the 70% of the total investments, 80% of exports of manufactured products and 55% of Gross National Product (Galloux, 1997: 81). Egypt's annual growth 8%, regarding mainly oil and foreign aid, permitted Mubarak to refuse radical reforms of economic liberalisation (Glasser, 2001: 5). The contradiction between IMF and WB demands in along with the American aid given to Mubarak's regime, underlines the existence of contradictory interests at the international arena also. Mubarak taking advantage the foreign interests in safeguarding Egypt's internal stability managed to preserve state's primary role as power resource reinforcing progressively private capital. However, the necessities of the public sector's feeding had as consequence the radical increase of the country's foreign - from 5\$ billion in the 70s, to 30\$ billion in the 80s, and to 48 \$ billion in the 90s, representing the 150 % GDP, the highest in the modern history (Ibrahim, 2002c). The increasing debt of the country to foreign sponsors made more vulnerable the Egyptian elites to foreign demands. On the same time, state's primacy over other power resources enabled the Egyptian regime to have a strong cart at the moment of negotiations with its foreign allies.

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<sup>676</sup> The scandal took large dimension that the government prohibited newspapers from reporting further details of its investigation, an inquiry that may reach into the higher echelons of Egyptian society.

<sup>677</sup> Hoda Abdel Meneim, known also as the 'iron woman', was arrested in September 2009 after her 20 years stay abroad Egypt.

<sup>678</sup> By 1988, the aggregate debt exceeded 115% of GDP (Richards, 1991: 1724).



### 10.4. Religion

Radical Islamist groups, or a fraction of them, had undermined the political stability of the state, and thus the new governmental elite had to take measures to avoid future problems. Many analysts agree on the idea that during the first decade of Mubarak's mandate, he and his allies adopted a clever strategy regarding the Islamist competitors, in Bianchi's words 'selective accommodation and selective repression': distinguishing between moderate and radical and collaborating with the former in order to debilitate the latter, bolstering up the clash between the two groups (Bianchi, 1989: 93-94). The new regime resumed, thus, the relations with the moderate Muslim Brotherhood, while he cracked down the 'extremists' wings of Islamism. This tactic legitimised the Brotherhood and "*allowed it to resurface and promote openly its political and economic agendas*" (Sullivan and Abdel-Kotob, 1999: 22).

The new regime let, as we saw, the Brothers to participate in the electoral process however camouflaging the permission through coalitions with authorised political parties. In exchange of the freedom to act, Muslim Brotherhood voiced down its criticism with Tilmissani welcoming the new president, describing Mubarak as intelligent, clear person. The group's disavowal of political violence and its participation in the political system inaugurated a new era in its relations not only with the regime but with all the political actors.

Brotherhood's electoral collaborations with New Wafd in 1984 and Islamic alliance in 1987, enabled the Brothers to overcome the legal and practical obstacles and permitted their allies to increase their parliamentary presence using Brotherhood's popularity. Nevertheless, in both cases, the cooperation introduced problems to the allied forces, due to the Brotherhood's superior gains in votes and influence. This unequal distribution of gains, as well as the repression that the society faced the following years, blocked any lasting cooperation with opposition parties (Lampridi-Kemou, 2011d).

The rising power of the Brotherhood was not limited to the electoral results. In *Who Owns Egypt* Sa'id Imam<sup>679</sup> highlighted that in late 80s the private economy of Egypt was controlled by 18 families and their associates, eight of whom were associated with the Muslim Brotherhood. Additionally, the same study upheld that the Brotherhood controlled more than 40% of all economic ventures. In addition, the organisation expanded its influence outside the Egyptian borders, with the creation of International organisation<sup>680</sup>, in July 1982 (Ternisien, 2007: 69).

Nevertheless and despite the efforts to avoid doing so, regime's embracement of moderate Islam permitted all sorts of Islamist and Islamic groups

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<sup>679</sup> Quoted in (Wickham, 2002: 91)

<sup>680</sup> In reality the basis of the international organisation of Muslim Brotherhood was solidified during the Nasserist years, as lot of Brothers were forced to abandon Egypt and to find a refuge in other counties mainly in Saudi Arabia and the and the Gulf countries but also in Europe.

to gain space in Egypt, reaching the top of their independence. Islamic entities, i.e. associations, banks and investment corporations, were allowed to operate by providing profitable interest-free investments, as we saw earlier. The economic sources of these sectors became an additional resource for the elites connected with Islam.

Faisal Bank 'a state inside the state' headed by Mohammed Faisal, was offering economic support to the ulema of Al-Azhar, who continued to be under governmental control. This economic backing and the progressive islamisation of the Egyptian society increased the degree of independency of the official ulema on the Egyptian governmental elites, pushing for policies that would raise their prestige. Indicative was the case of women rights restriction under the ulema's pressing in 1985, who accomplished the amendment regarding divorce and custody (Faksh, 1997: 53), or the temporary withdrawal of Jihan's law<sup>681</sup>.

In parallel, constitutional voices of Islam were demanding supplementary policies reinforcing the religious character of the Egyptian state, as it was the case of Sheikh Hafiz Salama, preacher in al-Nur mosque in Cairo, pressing the government for immediate application of Sharia (Ayubi, 1991: 235). Regime's position was to balance between partial satisfaction and careful negation, fearing for a complete break with the religious 'moderate' authorities, which would introduce further complication.

The fears for 'radical' islamists' grew more acute, especially in mid-80s were we witness a significant escalation of violence, including explosions in Cairo and Upper Egypt, attempts against official figures as this against the ex-minister of Interior, accused of torturing leaders of Islamic organisation, American and Israeli diplomats, and other figures considered hostile, such as the editor of al-Masawwar magazine for opposing to the 'radical' Islamists through the magazine's publications.

Indicative of the regime's fears regarding the radicalisation of 'militant' Islamists were the sentences on the Jihad members, accused for Sadat's assassination and their failed plan to overthrow the regime. As it was highlighted by (Sullivan and Abdel-Kotob, 1999: 81) "*These sentences [...] were considered unusually lenient and stirred speculations that the regime of Hosni Mubarak did not want to risk antagonising the militant al- Jihad organization*". Even so, immediately, after the release of the non convicted members, sympathisers of the group staged a demonstration outside the prison, chanting 'Islamic revolution is coming'.

Insecurity was fed also by the idea coming from certain Islamic circles that the failure to establish an Islamic state, immediately after Sadat's assassination was due the lack of organisation and/or society's unpreparedness for such a demarche. Thus, in order to 'prepare' society the Islamic welfare institutions

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<sup>681</sup> Jihan's law took the name after the wife of Anwar al-Sadat. In general terms the law was referring to women's rights on divorce, children's custody, alimony etc.

proliferated<sup>682</sup> and expanded their activities, with the economic support of different economic agents based inside and outside the Egyptian borders. Creation of 'Islamised spaces' not controlled by the state, mainly in poor neighbourhoods in Cairo and small towns and villages in the Upper Egypt, providing significant social and economic support, created problems for the regime<sup>683</sup>.

The policy of 'divide and conquer' regarding the Islamist groups came eventually to an end. In 1988, the regime crackdown on Islamic investing companies, nongovernment for profit Islamic organisations, as we saw. In April 1989, Interior Minister Zaki Badr declared<sup>684</sup> that *"the extremists are in fact a secret organisation of the Muslim Brotherhood for assassinations. There is no conflict between the two tendencies, as some want to believe, and they are in fact a single association"*. The increasing power of the 'moderate' Islamists in the economic, political and social fields had become threatening for the regime. *"For it was the aftermath of Sadat's assassination that the balance of forces within the Islamic movement began to shift from the radical sections of the movement, such as the Jihad, to the 'moderate' Brotherhood"* (Shukrallah, 1989: 98).

At the end of the decade, Muslim Brotherhood began to create solid bases on the political sphere and a leading role on the Islamist arena and other Islamic spaces. On the same time, muddling up the different wings of Islamism, Mubarak managed to create competitive interests on the religious field in his effort to impede dangerous power accumulation.

### **10.5. Media**

The institutional control over the media, printed and audiovisual, was handed since Sadat's mandate, to the Supreme Council of Press, in 1975, and to Majlis al-Shura, in 1980. The declaration of the 'emergency state' inevitably impacted media sector<sup>685</sup>, even if the new regime, during the first period of its rule, chose not to impose a direct censorship, in the frame of conciliatory policies. Consequently, Mubarak, few months after coming into the presidency, lifted many of the direct press restrictions and restored thirty journalists, even though the opposition press was not given an immediate authority to reappear (Mirel, 1982:

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<sup>682</sup> The economic resources served among others to the construction private mosques, financing of religious students in need, hospitals and Islamic associations.

<sup>683</sup> During 1987 Islamist groups, confronted with the security forces with entire villages and neighbourhoods under siege (Faksh, 1997: 49-50).

<sup>684</sup> Quoted in (Campagna, 1996: 285).

<sup>685</sup> The intervention of military officers were also extended on the press, as according to article 3 of the emergency law a military ruler or his deputy has the power to monitor the newspapers, booklets and other publications of expressing opinion and if necessary power to confiscate and stop the circulation of publications.

262). Soon, in spring 1982, opposition party newspapers<sup>686</sup> reappeared exercising limited criticism against the governmental policies and, in 1984, the restrictions regarding religious publications, imposed the last months of Sadat were lifted.

The lifting of direct restrictions over the Egyptian press was recognised internationally, as in 1983, the International Press Institute reported that the Egyptian press was experiencing the highest level of press freedom since the establishment of the Egyptian Republic (Rugh, 2004: 157). However, representative of this virtual<sup>687</sup> freedom was the positioning of armed forces and tanks outside the building of the Radio and Television building in Cairo (Mattelart et al., 1988).

During this decade, therefore, the Egyptian regime tried to control the media sector through indirect policies by appointing progressively the friendly and controllable figures at high posts of the governmental press institutions and authorities and by safeguarding the state monopoly over the non printed media, protected by the law 13 of 1979. The importance of this monopoly takes greater dimensions, if we take into consideration that at the time, the percentage of illiteracy was 70 % (Ebeid, 1989b: 40). Moreover, and according to official data commissioned by the Egyptian Ministry of Information<sup>688</sup> at the end of the 80s the 60% of the Egyptians viewed television in average 3 hours and 49 minutes per day.

The importance of having access on the audiovisual sector was of course in the interest of non regime elites. Yet the monopoly of Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU), over the sector was blocking such possibility for the anti-regime elements. This obstacle was in a significant degree bypassed by the illegal traffic of videocassettes through informal networks, uncontrollable by the regime, which offered an alternative to the state run television (Amin and Boyd, 1993:10-11).

The regime used the audiovisual and printing sector to exercise its propagandist role, especially in religious field. During the 80s there was the significant increase of religious programs in the Egyptian television: Recitations of the Quran opened and closed the television day, program interruptions for the call to prayer, and televised Friday mosque prayers. Moreover, there were numerous religious discussions and programs and religious television serials, however these lasts having a didactic character regarding the early days of Islam, in the classical Arabic, language not understood by the Egyptian masses (Abu-Lughod, 1993:499).

Indicative of the television role and particularly of the television serial<sup>689</sup>

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<sup>686</sup> At the time there were five party weeklies four of the opposition and one of the government, with a circulation over 100.000 each (Rugh, 2004: 158).

<sup>687</sup> At the time and up to 2001, auto-censorship represented the main mechanism guarantying information's limits. Personal interview with Bashir Abdel Fattah, political analyst of Al-Ahram Strategic Studies and editor of Democracy Review.

<sup>688</sup> Quoted in (Boyd et al., 1989: 64).

<sup>689</sup> Two popular serials at the time were 'The White Flag' and 'the Journey of Mr. Abu al-'Ela al-

were the words of Mamduh al-Laythy<sup>690</sup>, film director and a police officer turned screenwriter: *“Our most important goal in relation to the citizens is to help individuals become cultured. We must educate them, teach them the basics of morality and religious duty. The individual needs direction. He needs information and we need to inculcate the spirit of patriotism, morality, religion, courage, and enterprise. We have found that the best means to reach the individual is through drama. It works like magic”*.

In the mid-80s Mubarak started building up or re-establishing the images of his predecessors in order to legitimise his middle way policies. The popular serial ‘Hilmiyya Nights’, narrating the life of rich and poor families in a popular quarter of Cairo, Hilmiyya, from the days of King Farouk up to the present, was describing positively the Nasserist era. On the same time, the American film ‘Sadat’ was banned<sup>691</sup> by the Egyptian Minister of Culture on the grounds that the film did not reflect the real role of the former president in Egypt and because Sadat was played by a black actor(Boyd et al., 1989: 73).

The Egyptian television sector was also used in the other policies needing popular acceptance, as it was the controversial matter of the peace treaty with Israel. Anis Mansour a close confidant of Sadat and one of the most prominent Egyptian authors and journalists wrote in 1982<sup>692</sup>: *“There is not a single pen in Egypt which has not cursed Israel. There is not a single voice in Egypt that has not disavowed its previous faith in the possibility of total peace with Israel [...]”*. The popular serial ‘Ra’fat al-Haggan’, emitted during the months of Ramadan in 1989 and 1990, was serving to conciliate the Egyptians with the peace treaty and to inspire national pride with the glorification of the Egyptian Intelligence Service<sup>693</sup>.

By this period, Egypt had become one of the giants of the audiovisual sector in the Arab world, by producing and exporting films and television programs, besides the radio emissions<sup>694</sup> heard all over the region. The economic and political importance of this activities were underlined by the publishing of a fatwa on the arts, on July 1988, stating that “Islam does not forbid entertainment or enjoyment”, respecting, however, Islam’s principles. The increasing influence and weight of the Egyptian audiovisual sector attracted foreign actors as in the late

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Bishry’ both criticising Egypt during the mid-1970s and both lacking reference to religion, broken only to mock(Abu-Lughod, 1993: 498).

<sup>690</sup> Quoted in (Abu-Lughod, 1993: 500).

<sup>691</sup> The Egyptian regime also prohibited Columbia Pictures, distributor of the film, to show any of its films.

<sup>692</sup> Quoted in (Ibrahim, 1988: 19).

<sup>693</sup> The story, claimed to be true, regarded an Egyptian spy successfully planted in Israel for twenty years beginning in the 1950. Making almost no reference on the Egyptian internal politics nor to the history of the Palestine conflict, even though our hero is living in Israel, the serial portrayed the Israelis as normal persons and, in the case of women, quite attractive people(Abu-Lughod, 1993: 502).

<sup>694</sup> According to BBC during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait the Radio Cairo was the third most listen after BBC and Radio Monte Carlo.

80s it was announced the Sixth October TV Centre, a new studio with Riyadh's financing. However, the plan was not materialised due to the economic problems faced by the economic sponsors (Boyd, 1993: 46).

### 10.6. *Ideological Discourse*

The use of political discourse continued to have its importance. Yet Hosni Mubarak did not have the charisma of his predecessors. This is revealed by the lack of studies on Mubarak's discourse.

Mubarak soon after he became President addressing to the Majlis al-Sha'b and Majlis al-Shura 8 November 1981<sup>695</sup> stated: *"The philosophy on which we should guide our work is that Egypt stands above all. Egypt is not a society of privileged minority which monopolises power [...]. Egypt is for all her sons who, with their thought and toil built their own country on the basis of equal opportunity and equality in shouldering burdens"*.

His cooperative profile was also projected by Mubarak<sup>696</sup> *"Democracy is a firm fact on which no one can cast doubt. Democracy is not only essential in itself but also predicts stability and ensures prosperity [...]. It is a requisite for the growth of the economy and the welfare of the people. The regime is for everyone and the opposition is an indivisible part of it because Egypt is the homeland of all Egyptians"*.

The exclusion of Egypt from the Arab circle imposed a national discourse rather than pan-Arab one. In June 1984 Mubarak stated to the Egyptian Parliament: *"Egypt will always remain the bastion of freedom, calling for peace, justice and equality among nations; standing up to foreign intervention and rejecting theories of spheres of influence [...], military pacts and [foreign] bases, and will be in the vanguard of those who struggle for the right of peoples to live"*.

Since one of the priorities of the new regime was to reassure foreign and domestic forces for his commitment on securing peace the new rais rushed in clearing his position on Camp David treaty<sup>697</sup>: *"Egypt, the state and the people, is continuing along the road to a lasting and comprehensive peace based upon the framework that has been agreed upon at Camp David and that is based on the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in letter and in spirit. Egypt, the state and the people will spare no effort or time in continuing the autonomy talks until we put the Palestinian people along the beginning of the correct course for achieving their legitimate rights"; "The result of the referendum on my assumption of the responsibility on Sadat's road is the best evidence of the will and decision of the Egyptian people. It is a will of peace and it is a decision of peace"*.

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<sup>695</sup> Quoted in (Kassem, 1999: 49).

<sup>696</sup> Hosni Mubarak, Inaugural Address on taking office for a second term as president of Egypt, October 12, 1987. Quoted in (Ebeid, 1989a: 423).

<sup>697</sup> Mubarak's inaugural address, October 14, 1981. Quoted in (Laqueur and Rubbin, 1991: 632-633).

As means to quite down criticism on his liberal policies implemented by IMF Mubarak<sup>698</sup> stated: “[...] it would have been ridiculous to do what the FMI says- no-one could implemented [...] the FMI’s conditions spring from an economist viewpoint which does not suit our conditions. Political stability is more important to us [...] and you cannot burden people with more than they can bear”.

In the same time president’s need to preserve a strong public sector along with a progressive consolidation of private economy demanded justification<sup>699</sup>: “The previous plan called for the modernisation of factories in order to increase production of public sector and, consequently, promote revenues. While most factories recorded losses in the past, now only 11% of them do. Although this figure is still high, we should not seek to get rid of the public sector. Anyway, I will not allow this, because it is the sole guarantee allowing the poor people to purchase their basic needs”.

At the same time he was stating regarding the private economy “My interest to the private sector is similar to my interest in the public sector. This is because the public sector can never meet all of the needs of the citizens. The private sector bears the brunt in meeting those needs which the public sector cannot. It is a sound concept that the two sectors are two sides of one coin, and that there are vast opportunities for each one to expand [...]. It is unacceptable to arose this controversy at a time when all states in the East and West are pursuing a practical course that does not adhere to rigid ideological moulds”.

## 10.7. People

Two days after Sadat’s assassination 70 policemen were killed in Asyut. The protection of social order demanded the activation of the Law No 162 of 1958 was declaring the ‘emergency state’. Under this legal frame the president re-obtained the right to issue a written or vocal degree imposing restrictions on the freedom to associate or to be in certain places in certain times and arrest who is consider as threat to the national security. The continuous renovations of the emergency state constitute a violation of the Egyptian constitution regarding personal freedom (art41), sanctity of houses (art42) of movement (art50), association (54) .

Mubarak took power in a crucial moment, during which the regime’s stability was on a certain degree under attack. However, the Egyptian population, used not to question its leaders’ decisions accepted Mubarak as head of the state, verifying its will through the two presidential referendums, 1982 and 1987. The acceptance of Mubarak as president of the country was not followed by respect since the new *rais* was frequently called ‘*la vache qui rit*’<sup>700</sup>.

<sup>698</sup> Interview of Mubarak in Al-Sharq al- Awsat, 9 April 1987. Quoted in (Ayubi, 1991: 302).

<sup>699</sup> Quoted in (Lippman, 1989: 102)

<sup>700</sup> The folk jokes are indicative to this matter: “Passez-moi la boîte de fromage qui est derrière vous, demande un client à son épicier. –Mais quelle boîte?-Mais bon Dieu celle qui est derrière

Egyptian docility was 'rewarded' and further cultivated by the leadership. The need to secure popular acceptance and legitimacy pushed the new regime to exhibit actions mainly regarding the 'war' against corruption. Even though the real reason behind these actions was the sabotaging of rival elites, the public character was certainly targeting Egyptians' acceptance. Demolitions of luxurious villas constructed during Sadat's mandate, including Sadat's rest house, and accusations against Sadat's wife Jihan made an important impact (Goldschmidt, 2004: 187). Progressively, the image of the new president was improved through the promotion of great projects, improving the living conditions of the certain Egyptians, such as drainage systems in agriculture, more efficient use of water resources, construction of large highways but having a visual impact to larger segments of the society.

Absence of food aid continued to be a threat for Egypt's stability. In September 1984, the doubling of the price of bread triggered violent events in the Kafr al- Dawwar, in Delta, with one dead and 29 injured according to official reports, and 89 arrests, among them members of the progressive rally accused of animating this revolts with their publications<sup>701</sup>. The popular manifestations continued during 1984, mainly organised by students including those of al-Azhar.

Under the primary necessity of social tranquillity the regime continued its traditional rentier role. Government subsidies on basic goods in 1983-4 represented more than one third of the total budgetary deficit. Few years later, in 1988, Mubarak admitted for the first time in public that the subsidy expenses had reached E £10 million (Harik, 1992: 487).

In 1986-7, the state employees were 5 million out of 13 million of total labour force<sup>702</sup>, and even though this figure is very controversial and probably exaggerated, demonstrates the weight of the public sector as job supplier. As consequence, by the end of '80s Egypt had one of the largest public sectors in the developing world producing the 40% of GDP and employing the 36% of the working population (Abdelrahman, 2004: 105). On the same time, unemployment continued rising: official figures<sup>703</sup> from 7.7% in 1976 to 12% in 1986, making unemployment, particularly of the educated Egyptians, a subject of public debate.

The poor conditions that the majority of the Egyptians were facing, made

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votre tête!-Mais quelle?-Je vous le dirai pas, je ne fais pas de politique". Quoted in (Le Lac, 1985: 151).

<sup>701</sup> Up to 1990 it was one of the few cases that arrested members of legal party using the emergency law (Ayubi, 1991: 229).

<sup>702</sup> However, the salaries of government employees fall more than 50% in 1987 regarding the year 1973. The low salaries of the public employees probably served to discourage the Egyptians from seeking employment in the public sector, besides the economic difficulties that the regime had to respond to higher salaries.

<sup>703</sup> The regime controls the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS) that previously was headed by an ex-army general. The control of this data bank is significant as all projects need statistical information and all statistic studies have to get the approval of this institution.



them an easy target for Islamist groups, who had sufficient economic capacities to appease their economic and welfare burdens. The role of the Muslim Brotherhood in this domain was significant, as the organisation encouraged many members and sympathisers to set up Islamic economic institutions, which provided job to young Egyptians (Ibrahim, 2002d: 60). On the same time, the Islamist trend remained the most important force in the universities, enjoying logistic and economic support from the Islamists groups and offering 'political' alternatives, despite the regime's efforts to control their activities. The welfare activities of the Islamist groups improved their image on popular level and progressively pushed society's 'religiosity'.

The increasing importance of the tourist sector in Egypt and the disconnection of this with the Egyptian population created social problems and questionings, as Egyptians were shocked by the luxury and the western 'immoral' behaviour. The mass demonstrations in February 1987 that destroyed three tourist hotels near Giza Pyramids "*they eat meat, we eat bread*", was one of the symptoms of this unequal cultural and economic distribution, accompanied by terrorists attacks against tourists.

The social upraising regarding mainly strictly economic questions<sup>704</sup> demonstrated the anger of Egyptians. The sporadic concessions of the regime and the parallel repression under the 'emergency state' weaken further the capacity of the Egyptians to become subjects of power relations. The reduced popular support to the political parties, due to their inability to reach the masses, and the social work of the Islamic organisations added more obstacles to the social mobilisation.

Meanwhile, Mubarak tried to extract popular support by using the national pride. The foreign policies followed by Mubarak's regime, regarding the Arab circle and particularly Cairo's attitude towards the Israeli invasion in Lebanon and the supposedly active role on the Palestinian question, helped Mubarak to gain popular acceptance and legitimacy. The return of the totality of the Egyptian territory occupied by Israel, in 1989, raised further Mubarak's prestige in the Egyptian society and helped him to stabilise his rule.

### **10.8. International friends**

The international arena witnessed historical changes reaching its peak, at least in a symbolic level, with Berlin's wall downfall. When Hosni Mubarak took power the world was entering at the last period of the Cold War. Cairo's influence outside the Egyptian borders had been reduced significantly in regards to Nasser's period, especially after the 1967 war. The already weekend role of Cairo

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<sup>704</sup> In 1989, there were important clashes between police and workers at the Helwan Iron and Steel Works.

was further curtailed with the signing of the Camp David treaty<sup>705</sup>. The peace treaty between Egypt and Israel had as outcome the entrance of Cairo in the group of Washington's stable Arab allies.

The long lasting friendship enabled president Mubarak and his allies to establish a solid regime with Washington's aid, interested in a secure and stable Egypt. However, this friendship consolidated strong dependency relation from Cairo's side, in the absence of other foreign elites capable and interested in supporting the Egyptian regime. For thirty years Cairo enjoyed substantial back up from Washington, which proportioned Mubarak's regime international legitimacy.

This period of Cold War, especially the first three years of the decade, was seen as the worst since Cuban crisis in regards to the competition between the East and the West (Nutti, 2009). The relations of the two rival fronts, Washington and Moscow re-became aggressive as the period of *détente*<sup>706</sup> had come to its end. Reagan's nomination as president of the United States<sup>707</sup> and Konstantin Chernenko's election, who succeeded Andropov in the post of General Secretary of the communist party in February 1984, increased further the tension between the foes. The Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI)<sup>708</sup> was one of the outcomes of the increasing rivalry.

Reagan's administration put a considerable effort to the decrease the influence of 'evil empire', which had expanded in different parts of the 'third' world. Reagan Doctrine was Washington's strategy for the communist expansion, supplying arms and logistic support to anti-communist resistance movements- Contras- all over the world<sup>709</sup>. Reagan's anti-communist campaign and Moscow's internal problems, due among others to the frequent rotation<sup>710</sup> of its leaders and of course the economic burdens, limited Kremlin's capacity to act with firmness on the side of its foreign comrades.

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<sup>705</sup> Following Quandt, "By 1985 all architects of the Camp David Accords had passed from the scene"; and "[s]omewhat ironically, those who shunned Camp David [...] were still in positions of authority [...]" (Quandt, 1986: 367-368).

<sup>706</sup> According to Lundestad the detent policy regarded mainly Europe (Lundestad, 1999: 128).

<sup>707</sup> In the period preceded Reagan's presidency, U.S society was experiencing problems related energy crisis, high unemployment, high inflation and escalating interest rates.

<sup>708</sup> Strategic Defence Initiative, signed in March 1983, was a multi-billion dollar research project for a missile defence system that could shoot down incoming Soviet missiles and eliminate the need for mutually assured destruction.

<sup>709</sup> Indicatively, in African continent Washington intervened on the side of insurgent groups Renamo in Mozambique and Unita in Angola, supplying each group with covert military and humanitarian aid who were resisting to Marxist-Leninist Frelimo and Mpla dictatorships of Mozambique and Angola. Similar action was taken in countries of Latin America, receiving special attention due to the geographical proximity and Cuba's example. Important was American support to mujahidin in Afghanistan as means to circumvent the Soviet control over the county.

<sup>710</sup> In November 1982 Leonid Brezhnev died and he was succeeded by Yuri Andropov who stayed at the office of the Secretary General until February 1984 and he was followed by Konstantin Chernenko who headed the Soviet Union approximately for one year and he was succeeded by Mikhail Gorbachev.

Western Europe did not share Washington's views regarding Moscow, as the European leaders had interest in continuing détente policy, in order to dissociate themselves from the superpowers competition and accelerate the European integration process. In December 1985, the Single European Act was approved targeting a further cooperation in three fields: internal market (area without boundaries and free movement of goods, people, services and capital), cooperation in different sectors such as environment, social reforms, research and development, and modification of the use of veto right in favour of majority voting of decisions. Additionally, the European continent had to face historical changes taking place in the European territory<sup>711</sup>, fact that limited the margins of action in the Middle East region.

Despite the euro centrism of this period, Arab leaders were hoping for a more active role of the European elites. Indicatively, we can mention that just one day after the nomination of Miguel Angel Moratinos as permanent observer of the peace process, Mubarak and King Hussein of Jordan, met with the newly appointed Moratinos in Sharm al-Sheikh. After the meeting in a joint press conference King Hussein stated<sup>712</sup> *"I believe that Europe has an important role to play, especially since it is close to our region and favours the resumption of the peace process,"* while Mubarak noted that *"Europe does not want a role contradictory to the U.S. role, but complementary"*.

When Hosni Mubarak was nominated president of the Egyptian Republic, the options for Cairo were thus clear: preserve the American friendship in order to consolidate power. Mubarak was well known in Washington, having served as vice president under Anwar Sadat's presidency, which enabled him to develop personal contacts with the American administration. The personal ties of Mubarak with the American administration helped the new *rais* to remain at the presidency. Washington's acceptance<sup>713</sup> of Mubarak and its will to avoid Egyptian instability<sup>714</sup> was shown by Carter's televised declaration the day after the Sadat's assassination: *"He [Sadat] told me that he wanted to step down from the presidency next year, and Vice President Mubarak would undoubtedly succeed him"*.

The American support on Mubarak's presidency came as need to secure Egypt's stability and Cairo's loyalty. Yet Hosni Mubarak's nomination did not

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<sup>711</sup> At the time important changes took place at the European continent, among them: Poland elected Lech Walesa the first non-communist government in the East Bloc; Hungary established a multi-party political system and free elections; Romanian Revolution through which Nicolae Ceausescu was executed.

<sup>712</sup> Quoted in (de La Gorce, 1997).

<sup>713</sup> However, preoccupations from the American side did not lack, fearing for Egyptian complaints. According to Woodward CIA was preoccupied with the new president as its agents had trained the personal guard of Sadat who did not prevent the assassination, despite the well connected networks that the American Secret Services had (Woodward, 1987: 149).

<sup>714</sup> Similar attitude was adopted by president Barak Obama in February 2011 by accepting the nomination of Omar Suleiman as vice-president of Egypt and later the decision of the officers to take power after Mubarak's resignation.

come without internal frictions, as saw. The rivalry between Ghazala and Mubarak divided Washington as each actor was enjoying support from important American power centres. Besides Mubarak, Ghazala also had developed personal nets and contacts with American governmental and military elites to whom he was particularly popular.

Relations with foreign actors with influence on the international arena represented a priority for the new Egyptian regime<sup>715</sup>. According to Dessouki the main objectives of Cairo under the first decade of Mubarak's leadership were: mend the breach with the Arab and Islamic countries, reinforce the role of Cairo in the frame of Non Alignment Movement, resume relations with Moscow and Eastern Bloc, and promote close ties with Western Europe and Japan(Dessouki, 1991: 157). It seems however that these objectives were secondary and probably underline Mubarak's efforts to increase Cairo's ties with other foreign actors in order to keep his options open. Yet resuming relations with Arab elites represented one of Mubarak's priorities, as means to extract popular acceptance and increase regime's economic assets, at a moment that rentier mechanisms should be applied to secure internal peace.

Under these imperatives, and always targeting principally the consolidation of the regime in the internal scene, Cairo focused on preserving Washington's aid, by all means including resuming relations Moscow, as means maintain active Washington's interest<sup>716</sup>. The American preoccupation regarding Moscow was reflected in Reagan's words<sup>717</sup>: *"There are two basic issues we had to address. First, there was the strategic threat to the region posed by the Soviet Union and its surrogates [...] and second, the peace process between Israel and its Arab neighbours. With regard to the Soviet threat, we have strengthen our efforts to develop with our friends and allies a joint policy to deter the Soviets and their surrogates from further expansion in the region, and, if necessary, to defend against it"*.

Moscow and Cairo, thus, found common interest in a limited collaboration. From the Egyptian side, reconciliation with Moscow would alarm Washington fearing for a possible 'dangerous' collaboration of Cairo's regime with Kremlin. Cairo was hoping that the opening to the soviet influence could change the role of Cairo, seen from Reagan's administration as a 'secondary link' even though it was possible to 'take a front-line position in the defence of Western security issues' (Reagan, 1979). On the soviet side, reestablishment of relations<sup>718</sup> with Cairo

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<sup>715</sup> The foreign policy of Egypt during the 80s was officially organised by two foreign ministers: Kamal Hassan Ali, of a military background and Esmat Abdel Meguid a carrier diplomat. The different curriculums of the two ministers were showing among others the symbolic civil turn of the Egyptian regime.

<sup>716</sup> There are rumours indicating that Washington was concerned with Mubarak's soviet ties, as the president had received part of his military training in Soviet Union.

<sup>717</sup> Reagan Pan September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1982. Source: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, available at <http://www.reaganfoundation.org/>.

<sup>718</sup> The respective ambassadors returned to their office in 1984.

provided a more active role in the Middle East, without particular engagement and obligations.

Moreover Mubarak had more concrete gains from a limited cooperation, since he managed to reschedule Egypt's massive debts towards Moscow. By 1986, Egypt became the largest trade partner of Soviet Union in the Arab world and the second in the 'third world' after India (Aly, 1988: 89). In 1987, the two countries signed an agreement for the reschedule of Egyptian debts of 25 years period with 6 years grace without interest. One year later, the Egyptian Foreign minister visited Moscow and the restrictions imposed in the diplomatic activities were lifted and soviet cultural centre in Cairo reopened. Moscow's gains were limited as Kremlin did not manage to secure a solid Egyptian friendship.

Washington remained the main supplier of economic and military aid to Cairo and its principle foreign ally, leaving a secondary role for Moscow. The American friendship had specific aims. Following Stone<sup>719</sup> "*The purpose of the United States assistance program in Egypt is unmistakable. We believe that a stronger Egypt is better able to [...] provide effective leadership in the peace process in the Middle East and [...] to be strong friend of its allies*".

The large amounts of money and the military support towards Cairo were the price for the Egyptian loyalty. But the aid was not destined exclusively to Cairo. The majority of the American economic aid was dedicated in payments of American weapons, capital goods and food and in a lesser degree to infrastructural projects i.e. telephone network, water and sewer system in Cairo etc. During the period 1975-1989 the 58% of the economic assistance to Egypt was spent directly in USA and the remaining 42% to US contractors working in Egypt (Mitchell, 1995). On the military field, in addition to the supply of weaponry there were the joint military operations, through which the Egyptian army was trained by the American experts.

The American economic and military aid to Cairo increased substantially Washington's influence inside the Egyptian regime. The weight of the American presence was so strong as AID's offices in central Cairo made seem that there were two governments in the country (Goldschmidt, 2004: 189). This significant American presence was not seen positively by the Egyptians. This probably explains Mubarak's denial on the creation of a permanent American military base at Ras Banas. The permanent presence of US militaries would damage the 'neutral' image of the country that Mubarak wanted to project, and could provoke internal problems, giving to several groups pretext for terrorist attacks.

Cairo's disobedience was punished as Washington frequently used the threat in order to maintain controlled the Egyptian regime. During 1986-7 tough negotiations took place between International Monetary Fund and Cairo, pushing for liberalisation of the Egyptian economy. In spring of 1987, an agreement allowed Mubarak to reschedule Egypt's debts and reduce its annual debt service

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<sup>719</sup> Quoted at (Ayubi, 1991: 338).

payments, with a price to pay. In the same year, the American administration issued at the Congress the 'Gramm-Rudman- Holdings Balancing Package Act'<sup>720</sup> proposing a reduction of the military aid towards Mubarak's regime. The foreign threats of Egypt, Qaddafi hostile regime, the unstable Sudan and the deployment of Egyptian troops to the Persian Gulf did not seem to the Congressmen sufficient reasons to continue such elevated military aid to Cairo. Yet, Ghazala's personal relations with senior Department of Defence officials help the Egyptian regime to maintain at high levels the American aid (Eilts, 1988: 144).

The rise of Mikhail Gorbachev relaxed tension between Washington and Moscow. A group of Soviets elites began to realise that the only way of remaining on the power competition was to re-orientate their strategy, due to the vast economic, political and social problems that USSR was experiencing. The economic restructuring (perestroika), a shift from planned economic policies to open market and democratisation (glasnost) or rather a controlled opening of political arena were the main pillars of their policies. The new policy of Gorbachev was underlined by himself in his book 'Perestroika'(Gorbachev, 1987) *"The war danger grows. To make international relations more human is the only way out-and that is difficult to do. This is how we pose the question: it is essential to rise above ideological differences. Let everyone make his own choice, and let us all respect that choice"*.

However, the countdown had already started, and the major players of the international arena were preparing the field for a new era. By the time the iron curtain fell down, November 1989, signalling formally the end of the bipolar system and Cold War, during which the 'third world' was deeply affected with dozens of conflicts taken place and approximately 20 million people lost their lives (Luard, 1988). Western liberalism became the victorious ideology marking the 'End of the history'. *"What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government"*(Fukuyama, 2006).

At regional level by the fall of Berlin Wall, Middle East and its fate became completely blocked at the hands of Washington. The regional elites who had chosen the victorious bloc were relatively benefited, since they remained trapped in a dependency relation in order to secure their position.

### **10.9. Arab Circle**

In the 80s the Arab 'solidarity' had reached its bottom<sup>721</sup>. Following Halim

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<sup>720</sup> According to U.S. Senator Phil Gramm of Texas, 'Gramm-Rudman- Holdings Balancing Package Act' was "the first binding constraint imposed on federal spending".

<sup>721</sup> Between the years 1949-1967 the Arab states had approximately ten militarised disputes

Khaddam, Syrian Foreign Minister<sup>722</sup>, *“If we look at the map of the Arab homeland, we can hardly find two countries without conflicts. These conflicts have already erupted or are explosive. We can hardly find two countries who are not in a state of war or on the road to war”*. Indicative of the popular view of the Arab solidarity is the following joke<sup>723</sup>: a young man is sitting outside Arab League’s<sup>724</sup> headquarters with a trumpet in his hand. A friend of his passing by asks him “What are you doing?”. The young man replies “This is my new job; to wait for Arab unity and then blow with the trumpet to declare it to the world when it is achieved. I get 50 pounds per month.” “That’s a miserable salary,” his friend says. “Yes, but it’s a lifetime job.”

The peace treaty between Egypt and Israel was a *fait accompli* for the new Egyptian president. Not being directly responsible for the Egyptian betrayal in front of the Arab brothers, Mubarak tried to establish a new equilibrium between his obligations toward Tel Aviv and the Arab identity of his regime. Thus, he opted for a ‘cold peace’, in terms of Butros Ghali<sup>725</sup>: respect towards the treaty and the deriving obligations but coldness to proceed in further concessions at least at official level. Mubarak’s strategy was helped by the Arab leaders’ practical realisation that recognition of Israel was one way out. In this context and without renouncing Sadat’s peace treaty Mubarak achieved to restore progressively diplomatic relations with many of the Arab states, who implicitly validated Egypt’s peace treaty (Goldschmidt, 2004: 189).

The deeper division of the Arab world was one of the outcomes of the peace treaty. Following Zoubir *“One of the outcomes of the Camp David initiative was the exclusion of the Soviet Union from any Middle East peace process [...] and to divide the Arab world by attempting to isolate the radicals”* (Zoubir, 1988: 298). Searching for a minimum of collaboration the Arab leaders dedicated the Arab summits to counter threats on the non-Arab periphery<sup>726</sup>, e.g. Israel and Iran. Yet, the ‘external’ threats in the 80s in order to unite the Arab world polarised it into two main rival blocs: A ‘moderate’ pro-western bloc with Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and

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whereas in the period 1967-1989 nineteen (Barnett, 1998:203). Indicative of the division of the Arab world are organisational forms of the Arab states during that period: Gulf Cooperation Council (Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, created in May 1981 uniting the neighbor states under the Iranian threat, Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) Iraq, Jordan, Yemen, Egypt (February 1989) and Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia (1989).

<sup>722</sup> Source: FBIS-Damascus Domestic Office “Khaddam Address” November 21, 1980.

<sup>723</sup> Quoted in (Lippman, 1989).

<sup>724</sup> The limited role of the Arab League in terms of power was demonstrated among others by the decision of Hosni Mubarak to ‘promote’ Amr Mousa, one of his possible successors at the Egyptian presidency, at the head of the Arab organisation in order to restrict his power capacities.

<sup>725</sup> Egypt’s Minister of State for Foreign Affairs from 1977 until early 1991 and latter Secretary-General of the United Nations from January 1992 to December 1996.

<sup>726</sup> Indicative was Saddam’s proposal, in 1982, for the creation of a common front between Iran and Iraq against Israeli invaders of Lebanon. His efforts were proven vain as Khomeini refused, declaring that the road to Jerusalem passed from Baghdad. This negation had more sense after the reveal that Tel Aviv was furnishing arms to Teheran.

the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), northern Yemen and Jordan and the 'Steadfastness Front' with Libya, Democratic Yemen, Algeria and Syria (Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, 2002: 47).

Power capabilities between the two Arab rival blocs were not equally distributed, due among others to the foreign support that the regional elites were enjoying. The soviet influence<sup>727</sup> at the Middle East was clearly inferior of the American, consequence of the Moscow's failure to satisfy its regional allies' demands in economic, military and logistic terms. Yet Kremlin's necessity to preserve a certain influence was valuable to its regional allies. The decision of Andropov, just two months after taking power, to sent military aid to his Syrian ally Assad, "*weapons which had never before been deployed outside the Soviet bloc*" (Freedman, 1988: 277) reflected not just the urge of Moscow in preserving ties with the Middle East but also the different policies followed by the General Secretaries<sup>728</sup> of the Communist Party.

The Iran-Iraq war<sup>729</sup>, almost one year before Mubarak's assumption of the presidency, contributed significantly at Cairo's re-entrance at the Arab circle. The head states of rich oil countries, lacking military force looked at Cairo in order to halt the Teheran, considered more dangerous than the Jewish threat. Following Dessouki "*[...]the Iran-Iraq war created the suitable environment for the return of relations between Egypt and the Arab countries-with Iraq and Gulf states seeking Egyptian support[...]*"(Dessouki, 1991: 183). Cairo's help<sup>730</sup> to Saddam Hussein, who was enjoying also the support of the American administration, as he was opposing to the 'revolutionary' regime of Teheran, was proven helpful for Mubarak. Indicative is that whereas in 1980 only three of the twenty five members of Arab League maintained relations with Cairo in six weeks time nine more countries restored their bilateral relations(Rajae, 1997).

Polarisation of the Arab world and the non Arab threats helped Mubarak to secure his ties with the 'moderate' Arab bloc, as means to halt 'radical' influence in the region. Riyadh remained thus one of Cairo's main allies even if officially formal relations between the two countries were broken. The American friendship and Washington's interest in establishing a solid pro-American pole in the region contributed significantly to consolidation of Cairo and Riyadh and put the basis of stable collaboration between the two Arab regimes.

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<sup>727</sup> In an effort to improve Moscow's relations with the Muslim leaders, especially after Afghanistan's invasion, Kremlin used the religious element to dispel the atheist image by organising Islamic conferences and sending delegations to Arab countries (Zoubir, 1988: 301).

<sup>728</sup> From mid-60s to the mid-80s Syrian-USSR relations where marked with many ups and downs and since the mid 80s by rupture (Seale, 1997: 49)

<sup>729</sup> In 22September 1980 the Iran-Iraq war started the bloodiest war since 1945 in the region. Saddam Hussein received important aid from Reagan administration and other thirty countries in order to prevent an expansion of the Iranian influence.

<sup>730</sup> Cairo offered military equipment to Saddam Hussein to restore its losses and human resources, soldiers and volunteers as well as Egyptian pilots (Rajae, 1997).



However, the strong ties with the American administration had negative effects for Mubarak and the King Fahd: increase of domestic opposition (Gerner and Schwedler, 2004:183). The domestic opposition was expressed in many forms, the most threatening of which being the terrorist attacks. The common threats contributed further to the reconciliation of Cairo and Riyadh. The continuity of the pro-American attitude of the two Arab leaders allowed the formation and the consolidation of militant groups in the Egyptian and Saudi territory<sup>731</sup> that progressively expanded their action outside their countries. Thus, after 1979, we observe the emergence of transnational Islamist networks dedicated in terrorist acts (Hudson, 2005: 293). In this context, Islamist terrorism became a common slogan for the cooperation among Washington, Cairo and Riyadh.

Another Arab ally for Cairo became Saddam Hussein, since the Egyptian regime became Baghdad's furnisher of valuable aid at the Iran-Iraq military conflict<sup>732</sup>. The cooperation between the two neighbours concluded beneficial for Cairo's re-entrance in the Arab circle, as we mentioned earlier. The bilateral relations between Cairo and Baghdad were institutionalised through the creation of Arab Cooperation Council, in 1981, a customs union between Egypt and Iraq as reward for Egypt's assistance in the war against Iran wherein Jordan was later adhered (Rajaei, 1997).

Amman remained one of Cairo's allies and the first Arab country to restore diplomatic relations with the Egyptian regime, in 1984. The Jordanian 'disobedience' of the Arab boycott against Cairo was compatible with Riyadh's desires, which understood the necessity to find a way to re-enter Egypt in the Arab circle. King Hussein however had personal interests on resuming relations with Cairo. During the period 1979-1981 economic interaction between the two Arab economies had declined<sup>733</sup> significantly, even though they were never completely halt (Brand, 1994). The direct economic losses weighted heavier after the joint decision of the Arab League to take measures against Egypt that included blocking Egyptian work force on Arab countries, on which several Jordanian and Iraqi economic sectors depended in a great degree.

In the same period Mubarak tried to maintain friendly relations with the southern neighbour, Sudan. In 1982, treaty was signed between Egypt and Soudan for economic collaboration aiming a federation between the two countries.

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<sup>731</sup> In Saudi Arabia, a group of radical *salafi* clerics started to ask for reforms accusing their leaders for their western orientation, among them Osama bin Laden. Progressively, the attacks started to concern Washington and the European leaders as action was directed to western territories, for instance in the Jewish neighbourhood of Paris during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and western citizens.

<sup>732</sup> Cairo extracted significant economic gains of this collaboration, taking into consideration that Egyptian arm sells to Iraq, were estimated in \$ 3.000 million (Tripp, 1989: 177).

<sup>733</sup> In just one year the exports and imports of Jordan to Egypt declined at 50%.

The coup in Sudan<sup>734</sup> in April 1985 supported by Qaddafi, cancelled such initiative, fact that increased tension between Tripoli and Cairo. In the same year Qaddafi expelled 100.000 Egyptians working in Libya as reaction of the Egyptian decision to close the Egyptian labour market to the Libyan workers.

The relations between Qaddafi's regime and Cairo were characterised by hostility, despite underground collaboration<sup>735</sup>, imposed by the geographical proximity of the two countries. Cairo's anti-Qaddafi attitude was subscribed on in the frame of Washington's interests. Indicative of the American influence on Mubarak's attitude towards Tripoli were Washington's pressures to undertake joint military operation against Qaddafi's regime<sup>736</sup>. However, the American administration did not managed to convince Mubarak since the latter could not afford another anti-Arab move.

Besides Washington's interests in blocking Qaddafi's influence in the region, there were Egyptian interests that imposed hostile relations with Tripoli. The Egyptian regime was suspicious of the support that the Libyan President was giving to anti-regime groups and small Palestinian groups, opposed to Cairo's policies, in a period that terrorism was presenting a major concern for Mubarak's regime. Bilateral relations came to a critical point after the hijack of an Egyptian aircraft by Palestinians in Malta. Mubarak accused Qaddafi as the main responsible for placing in alert the air defence and initiating a serious of military manoeuvres along in the Libyan border (Tripp, 1989: 182).

Finally, after ten years of Cairo's official isolation from the Arab arena, Egypt was readmitted in the Arab League in May 1989 with Arafat welcoming Mubarak. At the first Arab Summit after Egypt's expulsion Mubarak stated<sup>737</sup>: "*[...] we should be strictly committed to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of each other, because the people of each country knows [...] better than others what realises their own interests and are more capable of defining their path at the internal level*".

### **10.10. Israel-Palestine**

The peace treaty between Cairo and Tel Aviv alter radically the Egyptian attitude towards Tel Aviv but not to the Palestinians. The disarmament of the Egyptian army from future conflicts with Israel put an end to all hopes for a just solution to the Palestinian question. In the absence of a strong and organised

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<sup>734</sup> During Sudan's civil war Cairo was the arms furnisher to the Sudanese government whereas was helping Nimayri, oppositor to the Sudanese regime.

<sup>735</sup> Sudan, Egypt and Iraq offered secret support to the Qaddafi's rivals, the Nation Salvation Front (Woodward, 1987: 331).

<sup>736</sup> Washington was trying to force Cairo to take action against the hostile Qaddafi's regime since 1983 but did not accomplish to achieve the implication of the Egyptian army. For more detailed information see (Quandt, 1986).

<sup>737</sup> Source: FBIS, "Mubarak Addresses Meeting" May 23, 1989.

army to challenge Tel Aviv, Palestinians became a pawn at the chessboard of the powerful Israeli interests. Following Izquierdo *“El tratado de paz con Egipto devolvió a Israel la libertad de movimientos que deseaba en los territorios ocupados...”* (Izquierdo, 2005: 145).

The Israeli intransigence toward the Palestinian question and the Arab hostile neighbours became harder as Washington had no interest in pressing Tel Aviv. The American control over the region of the Middle East and the declining influence of Moscow limited the possibilities of the Palestinians to extract foreign aid that would push Tel Aviv to concessions. Ronald Reagan’s ascension to the American presidency<sup>738</sup>, aided further Tel Aviv as no president had proven a truer ‘friend of Israel’ (Clarke, 1988: 224).

In spite of the new regional order and the peace treaty, governmental Egyptian elites continued to use the Palestinian question in order to extract popular support. The official re-entrance of Egypt at the Arab League after Arafat’s welcoming was an indicator of the importance of the Palestinian question in terms of legitimacy. The rejection of ‘normalisation’ (tatbia) with the Israel from the Egyptian society forced the new regime to be really careful in his policies towards Tel Aviv. The anxiety was not groundless. In 1987, an Egyptian policeman<sup>739</sup> killed Israeli tourists and became a folk hero, demonstrating the division between politics and Egyptian feelings<sup>740</sup>.

Abrogation of the treaty was not an option for Mubarak’s regime since the two main reasons that had imposed signing of the treaty remained valid: need for politico-economic American backup, and disconnection of the Egyptian army from military clashes with Israel, especially in the absence of an alternative international furnisher of military equipment. The imperative of preserving the peace process was further consolidated since the new regime, strictly connected with the previous, was composed by military officers and economic agents, private or public, attached to the peace as means to increase their capabilities. Army’s new orientation focusing at the lucrative economic activities of civil and military sectors left limited interests for a military conflict against Israel. Moreover, a war against Israel would have limited the independency of the officers as the need for military equipment was to be covered by Washington. On the contrary, the entry of American military equipment, under the preservation of peace, increased the officers’ power capacities. To these factors, the necessity of a

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<sup>738</sup> The stance of Carter had also helped Tel Aviv to become uncontrolled as the president since the mid-1979 was occupied with his re-election exercising thus no pressures towards Tel Aviv.

<sup>739</sup> Suleiman Khater’s case became famous and Egypt’s most prominent lawyers stood on his defence. He was sentenced to death by a military court, decision that generated popular protest. The government was saved by Khater’s ‘suicide’ few days in his cell.

<sup>740</sup> Attacks against Israeli officials were repeated in 1984 and 1985 when two Israeli attachés were shot and in 1986 when an embassy car was attacked by the group ‘Revolution of Egypt Organisation’ involving 20 civilian and military men among them the son of Nasser, Khaled Gamal (Dessouki, 1988: 99).

democratic and stable country has to be added in order to secure the regime's longevity and valuable foreign friendships.

Another factor not less important was Cairo's interest in regaining the totality of the Egyptian territory<sup>741</sup>, in order to extract the benefits of the peace treaty. Recuperation of Sinai was not only a question of national dignity but a profitable business for its oil reserves and the tourist development. Mubarak thus opted for a 'cold peace'<sup>742</sup> in order to satisfy his goals while he encouraged moves that might push Israel to negotiate the future of the Palestinians, especially in the late 80s.

The Palestinian question thus continued to be a handicap for Cairo but on the same time a legitimacy tool for Cairo. Israeli attitude towards his Arab neighbours was not helpful for Mubarak. The Egyptian regime, thus frequently found itself in an incommode situation due to the hostile gestures of Tel Aviv, especially in the cases of Lebanon's invasion (1982), the bombing of PLO's headquarters in Tunisia (1985) and the first Palestinian Intifada (1987-8), all three generating Egyptian popular indignation, which escalated during the intifada.

Washington's position towards Tel Aviv and the Palestinians was not helping Cairo either. Reagan's Plan<sup>743</sup>, in 1 September 1982, his first and only major speech on the Arab-Israeli conflict, underlined *"With respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict, we have embraced the Camp David framework as the only way to proceed. We have also recognized, however, that solving the Arab-Israeli conflict, in and of itself, cannot assure peace throughout a region as vast and troubled as the Middle East"*. In regards to the Palestinian autonomy, the President of the US showed more precise views underlining *"[...] it is clear to me that peace cannot be achieved by the formation of an independent Palestinian state in those territories. Nor is it achievable on the basis of Israeli sovereignty or permanent control over the West Bank and Gaza. So the US will not support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in West Bank and Gaza, and we will not support annexation or permanent control by Israel[...] But it is the firm view of US that self-government by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan offers the best chance for a durable, just and lasting peace"*.

Sinai's recuperation was a relief for Cairo, as the sacrifices of the Egyptians

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<sup>741</sup> Cairo's objective to recuperate Peninsula was attained, in 25 April 1982, with the exception of Taba.

<sup>742</sup> Indicative of Mubarak's careful position is that he avoided by all means any personal official visit to Israel.

<sup>743</sup> The Plan Reagan was rejected directly from the Israeli government, which underlined its refusal by announcing its intention to establish new settlements in the occupied territories. Palestinians on the other hand saw two positive aspects in the Reagan Plan, namely, its rejection of Israel's claim of sovereignty or control over the West Bank and Gaza and the call for a freeze on settlements, but they did not accept its other provisions. You can consult Reagan's peace proposal at [www.cfr.org/israel/reagan-plan-us-policy-peace-middle-east/p14140](http://www.cfr.org/israel/reagan-plan-us-policy-peace-middle-east/p14140)

did not fall into empty. Yet the Israeli withdrawal<sup>744</sup> did not come without questioning from the Israeli side. During that period, Israel had to face internal challenges, since the country was equally divided between those who were in favour of a permanent Israeli retention in West Bank and Gaza<sup>745</sup> and those who were ready to make a territorial concession to the Palestinians in exchange of a peace settlement (Tessler, 1989[b]: 26). Even though Tel Aviv was the strongest actor at the Palestinian question the preservation of peace with Cairo was representing a necessity. Finally, the withdrawal took place without any serious challenges followed by the declaration<sup>746</sup> *“we are living Sinai for our own sake, for the sake of our children, and for future generations, to try to find a way other than the way of war”*.

Israeli invasion of Lebanon and its outcome generated problems not only between Cairo and Tel Aviv, expressed by the withdrawal of the Egyptian ambassador from Tel Aviv but also inside Israel. Israel's internal situation was complicated after the electoral outcome of 1984 and the establishment of National Unity government. The parity of power in Knesset between Likud and the Labour Party increased the influence of the religious components and altered the power balance, generating also reactions in the Israeli society (Izquierdo, 2005). The internal Israeli competition had implications for Cairo as Taba, the last part of Sinai to be returned in Egypt became an internal matter with Peres pressing Shamir to accept Mubarak's proposal for international arbitration. Finally, in September 1986, Likud was convinced, under Peres' threat to bring down the government (Tripp, 1989: 168).

Ironically, the Palestinians continued to have a minor role in the Palestinian question, without any real capacity to make hear their demands and convince Tel Aviv for a minimum of concession, with the unique exception of Peres, in 1985, being the first Israeli Prime Minister since 1977 who did not ruled out automatically the 'territory for peace' principle. Mubarak and the other leaders of the Arab world continued their rhetoric aid, limited in proposals that were rejected by the main players of the game, Washington and Tel Aviv, as it was the case of the Fez plan<sup>747</sup>.

Arafat's visit to Cairo signalled the countdown for Cairo's return into the Arab circle, starting officially with the readmission of Egypt in the Islamic Conference Organisation, in 1984. The head of PLO left without the support of Damascus and Amman, in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, turned

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<sup>744</sup> Earlier, in December 1981, the government of Likud had annexed the Golan Heights.

<sup>745</sup> Regarding Sinai issue, Jewish militants had created the 'Stop the withdrawal from Sinai Movement' that worried Israeli government for possible civil disorder.

<sup>746</sup> Words of the Israeli commander in Sharm al-Sheikh the day of official Israeli withdrawal. Quoted in (Tessler, 1989[b]: 25).

<sup>747</sup> The Fez plan, proposed by the Arab leaders, was calling for direct negotiations between PLO and Tel Aviv. The plan was not rejected by the American administration, as one of the possible solutions but discarded from the Israeli side.

to Mubarak, whom characterised as moderate leader fighting for the national rights of the Palestinians<sup>748</sup>. The meeting between Arafat and Mubarak provoked the indignation inside PLO, Damascus and Tel Aviv (Laurens, 1991: 341).

Meanwhile, Tel Aviv was trying to halt PLO's capacities by providing underground support to the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood. The Jewish state helped the development of the Brethren, allowing activities that denied the PLO (Ternisien, 2007). This strategy, however, became boomerang as the attitude of Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood changed radically in the mid-80s. The first Intifada<sup>749</sup> played significant role to the division of the Palestinians, with the newly formed Hamas<sup>750</sup>, Muslim Brotherhood's descendent, adopting a radical position against the Jewish state negating its right of existence, while PLO was negotiating with the Israeli authorities.

The Palestinian uprising<sup>751</sup> surprised even PLO and by January 1988 the Israeli authorities were admitting that they were found in an unprecedented situation. The Palestinian uprising created doubts for first time in Washington of Tel Aviv's capacity to control the situation in the Middle East, especially after the extension of the uprising in Jordan (Izquierdo, 2005: 160). The cruel reaction of the Israeli army shocked even the American society and the Defence minister Yitzhak Rabin publicly sanctioned the army's activities.

Under the unrecorded Palestinian unrest and after exploring the ideas of the implicated parties (Syria, USSR, some Palestinians, Jordan and Israel) Shultz, secretary of the state, formulated what is called 'Shultz initiative': a comprehensive peace to be achieved through bilateral negotiations based on Resolutions 242<sup>752</sup> and 338<sup>753</sup>, including bilateral negotiations between Israel and

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<sup>748</sup> Earlier Mubarak had tried to demonstrate a more active role in the Palestinian question through a common initiative with Paris to amend the resolution 242 regarding the recognition of the national rights of the Palestinians, besides his seven point plan in Fez Summit, in 1982.

<sup>749</sup> Intifada, uprising in Arabic, started in 8 of December 1987, during the funeral of 4 Palestinians having been killed in a traffic accident provoked, according to rumours, voluntarily by Jewish colons as revenge of the death of a Jewish by Palestinians few days earlier. Soon the uprising of the young Palestinians was expended spontaneously to the totality of the occupied territories. For further information see (Ab Amr and Passia, 1989).

<sup>750</sup> Indicative of the Islamisation of the Palestinian society is the number of mosques between 67-87 in west bank 400-750 and Gaza 200-600 (Ab Amr, 1994).

<sup>751</sup> Up to the intifada, and despite the various problems facing Israeli and Palestinian populations, there was a general normality of everyday life and some 100.000 Palestinians working in the Israeli economy.

<sup>752</sup> The resolution 242 of the United Nations was adopted unanimously by the UN Security Council on November 22, 1967, in the aftermath of the Six Day War. The resolution deals with five principles; withdrawal of Israeli forces, 'peace within secure and recognised boundaries', freedom of navigation, a just settlement of the refugee problem and security measures including demilitarized zones. It also asserted the appointment of a Special Representative to promote agreement on a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the resolution.

<sup>753</sup> The resolution 338, adopted on October 22, 1973, called for a ceasefire in the Yom Kippur War in accordance with a joint proposal by the United States and the Soviet Union and the implementation of Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) in all of its parts.

a Palestinian-Jordan delegation with a preceding international conference.

The American initiative was pushed by: information regarding the softening of the Israeli position toward the 'autonomy' for the Palestinians, pressures from Jewish lobby and Israeli politicians to become more involved and Mubarak's suggestions that the American inactivity would generate radicalisation in the entire region (Quandt, 1988[a]: 376). The plan was rejected by Tel Aviv, and the PLO for its secondary role, king Hussein of Jordan<sup>754</sup> and Moscow.

The necessity of Mubarak to promote an active role on the Palestinian question pushed Cairo to continue its initiatives. Thus, the Egyptian president proposed in 1988 a 10 point plan put forward in summer 1989, calling for elections in the Occupied territories with the participation of all habitants of West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. The Plan was accepted by Labour party but rejected by the Palestinians and Likud. The return of Taba in 1989, the last Egyptian territory occupied by Israel, closed formally the Egyptian-Israeli file and improved Mubarak's prestige inside Egypt as well as in the regional and international scene.

### **10.11. Operation Peace of the Galilee**

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon, in 6<sup>th</sup> June 1982, and under the commandment of Ariel Sharon created new problems for the regional and international actors implicated, as well as for population affected. Since the 1967 war Lebanon had become the territorial base of PLO's military operations against Israel, making Lebanon 'a battlefield on which the Palestinians, Israelis, and Syrians fought each other' (Gerges, 1997: 91). Tensions began early in 1981, with clashes between Israeli forces and PLO across the northern borders of Israel. The temporary halt came after the American intervention.

Despite the unprecedented calm installed between July 1981 and June 1982 in the Lebanese-Israeli border, the Israeli side was searching for the reappraisal of war since it was interested in the removal of the Syrian forces<sup>755</sup> from the Lebanese territory, the crashing of PLO and the establishment of a friendly government<sup>756</sup>. Yet Tel Aviv was waiting for an official pretext to start hostilities because Haig, at the time Secretary of the State, had informed Tel Aviv that Washington would understand a military action only as response to an

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<sup>754</sup> Earlier Amman had rejected the Reagan plan, which was putting emphasis on Amman in regards to the Palestinian question. Hussein's denial and his unsuccessful efforts to compose Jordan- Palestinian delegation in an exploratory meeting with the American administration, had as outcome Washington's refusal to furnish the Jordanian kingdom with military equipment.

<sup>755</sup> The Syrian forces were installed in the Lebanese territory, as one of the main peacekeepers of Lebanon after the civil war.

<sup>756</sup> For years the Israelis were developing relations with Bashir Gemayal, leader of Christian Lebanese militias. The Lebanese presidential elections in 1982 thought Tel Aviv help him to bring their man in power but his death changed the plans and obliged a further staying in the Lebanese territory.

'internationally recognised provocation' (Quandt, 1988[a]: 364). The operation was negatively seen by the Israeli opposition forces, underling that this action was serving the strengthening of Sharon and Begin's position, since PLO had moderated its position (Tessler, 1989[b]:37).

The invasion had an implicit support of Washington since its interests were compatible with the Israeli ones, as the PLO considered for both of them a terrorist group with its revolutionary discourse and its relations with radical movements and European leftist. Thus, the Israeli army was left free to act during 70 days before the American diplomatic intervention with Habib Plan<sup>757</sup>. Still, the American proposal foresaw the Palestinian and Syrian evacuation Lebanon but not an Israeli one and the establishment of a multinational force, composed of American, French and Italian armies which remained until the evacuation, in 1985, five months after the Beirut barracks bombing<sup>758</sup>.

In front of the Israeli aggression the divided Arab world was not in position to contest. The military weakness of the Arab countries was one of the reasons of the Arab passivity. The Egyptian neutralisation and the Iraqi military operations<sup>759</sup> in the Iranian front, was making impossible the participation of Arab armies on the Lebanese side, leaving PLO and Syria by themselves to halt Israeli army. The Arab side was left, thus, at the American mercy with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia urging through telephonic calls the American president to establish the potable water in Beirut, only nine months after Faisal's symbolic oil embargo (Corm, 2003: 510).

Israeli invasion on southern Lebanon, soon after the return of the Sinai, outraged the Egyptians, expressed with massive manifestations after the Friday prayer, which were blocked by the Central Security Forces. Cairo, under its imperative to honour its obligations deriving from the Camp David treaty, had to limit its reactions in the withdrawal of the Egyptian ambassador from Tel Aviv<sup>760</sup>, without breaking the diplomatic or economic<sup>761</sup>relations. Officially and publicly, the Egyptian government condemned the Israeli invasion, sending medical and other supplies but not volunteers, and calling for an Arab summit to handle the

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<sup>757</sup> The plan was named after the American mediator of Beirut.

<sup>758</sup> In Beirut barracks 299 French and American members of Lebanon's multinational Force were killed when two truck bombs of the Islamic Jihad struck separate buildings housing. The incident pushed Washington to withdraw the international forces from Lebanon four months later, despite the previous official declarations from Paris and Washington that forces would be not withdrawn.

<sup>759</sup> Damascus in April 1982 in a critical moment for the Iraqi regime closed the pipeline passing through the Syrian territory and the Iraqi petroleum in the Mediterranean see increasing Saddam's penuries (Corm, 2003: 503).

<sup>760</sup> The Egyptian ambassador returned in 1986 after four years of American pressure. The return of the Egyptian ambassador to Tel Aviv was reconsidered after American 'gift' of a new \$360 million economic aid package and promises of reconsideration of Egypt's military debt (Lesch, 1989[a]: 44).

<sup>761</sup> Egypt became in this period the biggest supplier of crude oil to Israel. Sadat had agreed to sell oil to Israel, 2 million tons per year after the Iranian revolution that banned oil sales to Israel (Lesch, 1989[b]: 69).



new crisis. Paradoxically, the invasion of Lebanon helped improve Mubarak's image, as his statements were seen by Arab citizens and some Palestinians more decent than the hypocrisy displayed by the other Arab leaders (Tessler, 1989[b]: 41).

The 'Operation Peace of the Galilee' had negative and unexpected outcomes for Tel Aviv. At the regional context, the Palestinian resistance in the occupied territories increased and Arafat's alliance with pro-American states, mainly with Cairo and Amman. In addition, the atrocities in Sabra and Shatila<sup>762</sup> had as result the creation of international sympathy toward the Palestinian cause (Corm, 2003). At the internal level the invasion of Lebanon interrupted the up to then general concession of the military clashes of the country against foreign threats and introduced division even in the military field (Izquierdo, 2005: 148). Moreover, the invasion motivated the creation of pacifist Israeli organisations against the war, which alter the domestic equilibrium and forced the withdrawal of the Israeli army in Lebanon.

The Israeli invasion provoked changes to the inter-Arab relations, in particularly those between PLO and Damascus. The communication between the two was profoundly damaged, especially after the Syrian victory in Lebanon in 1983-4, as Damascus was determined to block any negotiations over the Palestinian issue without its previous agreement declaring Arafat *persona non grata*. This hostility divided the Palestinian leaders and population even though the majority coiled behind Arafat (Quandt, 1986: 368).

Moscow did not take any active position in Lebanon because at the time Brezhnev was preoccupied with Afghanistan and Poland<sup>763</sup> and wanted by all means avoid a confrontation with Washington, especially in a period that his illness had initiated succession process in Kremlin. Its inactivity was according to Simens<sup>764</sup> also explained by "a feeling in Moscow that in the long-run the Israeli invasion of Lebanon would become a major embarrassment for the U.S [...]. The Soviet leaders may have reasoned, let the Arabs see for themselves how little they could expect from the United States; sooner or later they would realize that while the Soviet Union might not be able to deliver them military victory, the United States was unable to bring them peace on minimal acceptable terms".

Moscow's passive attitude had a negative impact of the Soviet-Syrian relations as the former was seen incapable of protecting its main ally, denying the furnishing of additional military equipment to Syria. Finally, after Assad personal visit in Moscow military aid was given to Assad, which enabled him to impose the

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<sup>762</sup> Units of Lebanese Forces militia, under the eyes of their Israeli allies, systematically murdered 800 Palestinians. Sharon and other Israeli officers were censured and removed from their posts five months later for not preventing the massacres (Quandt, 1988[a]: 366).

<sup>763</sup> In August 1980, important strikes took place in Poland that brought together an institutionalised cooperation, *Solidarity*, between workers and intellectuals, under the leadership of Lech Walesa.

<sup>764</sup> Quoted in (Zoubir, 1988).

abrogation of the treaty signed between Israel and Lebanon<sup>765</sup>. Nevertheless, this victory did not benefit Moscow in the Middle East region, due to Damascus isolation from the Arab scene and the internal competition for Assad's successor, after the health problems.

Thus, in the end of the military hostilities Lebanon was left in Damascus control<sup>766</sup>, marking the Syrian era in the neighbour country. On the same time, Washington accomplished to increase further its influence in broad region due to Moscow's incapacity to mediate the PLO's departure from Beirut (Freedman, 1988: 276) and its disconnection with Assad. In 1988, the appointment of Djerejian as US ambassador in Syrian opened a channel of communication between Damascus and Washington. The Syrian initiative was deriving from the fear to be left all alone as Assad had already understood Gorbachev was not positive in continuing the 'traditional' role of USSR to the region and to Syria (Seale, 1997: 73). He was proven right regarding his speculation as the 'anti-Jewish' era of Brezhnev was followed by the normalisation of relations with Israel and massive emigration of Soviet Jewish.

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<sup>765</sup> The agreement was signed in 17<sup>th</sup> of May 1983 by Bashir's brother, Amin Geymal, foreseeing an Israeli withdrawal after a Syrian one from the Lebanese territory. But Amin Geymal soon had to turn to Assad in order to remain in power in return of the abrogation of the treaty.

<sup>766</sup> By the time there were 7.000 Soviet advisers in Syria (Lundestad, 1999: 144).

## **11. The authoritarian reversal 1990-2000**

This period is characterised by the consolidation of the regime as main actor on the power structure. The previous conciliation policies came to an end as soon as the main figures of the regime accomplished to establish their control over the main power resources of the country.

This dynamic put forward the re-establishment of highly hierarchical structure in which primary actors concentrate substantial power capacities. On the same time, a plethora of secondary actors began to lose influence, while new figures entered the scene through the empowerment of capital. Additionally, changes in superior power structures increase the dependency relations. In this context linear relations remain weak even though we can appreciate sporadic efforts to obstruct the deterioration of their living conditions.

### 11.1. Army

The threatening situation that Mubarak experienced with Abu Ghazala forced more careful selection of the armed forces leadership. New Minister of Defence was named General Mohamed Hussein Tantawi Soliman. Tantawi's election was based on his relations with Mubarak, as the latter was in the personal security of the President<sup>767</sup>. His nomination inevitably provoked officers' dissatisfaction because their new superior was considered a 'relatively undistinguished general' (Cassandra, 1995). In the same spirit Springborg sustained that Tantawi is a '*coreless, presidential loyalist, who by many accounts, lacks broad popularity in the officer corpus*' (Springborg and Sfakianakis, 2001: 68). Yet Ghazala's neutralisation had proportioned Mubarak the capacity to control the army apparatus and officers<sup>768</sup>. In the absence of actors capable of challenging the president's hegemony, Mubarak managed to appoint personally the high posts of his regime, including those of the military apparatus, creating in this way a highly personalistic style of his authority.

Putting loyal figures at the highest post of the armed forces could not guarantee by itself the control over the military apparatus. Therefore, further measures were adopted to avoid new phenomena of dangerous accumulation of power because as it was underlined by a retired Egyptian general<sup>769</sup> "*the regime knows that only the army can change the government [...]*". Consequently, the Soviet model structure was adopted which dictated separate and rival corps and the air forces that control Surface to Air Missiles (SAM), in order to decrease possibilities of collaboration among the officers. Moreover, targeting always the control of the army's leadership, the promotion from the brigadier rank became an exclusive task of President of the Republic, who applied regular and frequent rotations as means to avoid the creation of clientelist nets between the officers and the local population (Droz-Vincent, 1999: 25).

The creation of separate and rival corps and the control of promotion process at the higher posts of the army, furnished Hosni Mubarak a certain 'tranquillity', since the commander-in-chief's authorities regarded mainly tasks of dealing with budgetary, administrative, industrial and policy matters. In this context Mubarak in collaboration with a council of military officers, unknown to the public, were in control of the military apparatus.

The changes in the army's leadership did not imply modifications on the

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<sup>767</sup> Almost twenty years later Anthony H. Cordesman, an expert on the Egyptian military at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies wrote at the New York Times: "Tantawi has a reputation for basically being Mubarak's shadow", "He's loyal without making waves or shaking structures." Quoted at (Shanker and Schmitt, 2011).

<sup>768</sup> It is also important to keep in mind the military past of Mubarak before becoming President that provided him the opportunity to have personal ties with the senior generals.

<sup>769</sup> Quoted at (Ibrahim, 1995).

objectives to be attained in the military apparatus. The new Minister of Defence and War Production reemphasised the goals of the previous one. Once more these goals were not reduced in the military field, e.g. protection of the territorial integrity and independence of the state, but there were expanded to different economic sectors of country, such as agricultural projects<sup>770</sup> but also in other activities such as poultry farms, cattle feedlots, fisheries etc. The economic activities of the military apparatus thus prospered, not only due the privileged relations with state and economic actors but also due their capacity to use soldiers-a cheap work force for its industries- as well as due state subventions. In parallel, during this period the Tanks Production and Repair Company (Factory 200) opened, the largest industrial installation in the Middle East, in which \$2.5 billion of American aid was diverted in addition of \$450 million of state budget<sup>771</sup>.

The officers' role in Egyptian regime as well as the need to dispose a highly developed coercive apparatus was among others demonstrated by the increasing military budget reaching the 22%<sup>772</sup> of all central government expenditures, despite FMI's continual demands to reduce the deficit (Hinnebusch, 1993). The costly policies regarding the military apparatus, were justified by president Mubarak<sup>773</sup>: *"in general, the level of our armed forces is a source of pride for us all, and [they] are capable of deterring any danger threatening our national security". "The call to weaken the Egyptian army is misleading. We have to maintain a military power capable of deterring at the same time we work for peace"*.

The officers continued to enjoy considerable freedom on the economic questions, as the military budget was not subjected to parliamentary control, but is approved in its totality without any detailed information. Moreover, the officers administrated directly the American aid and the foreign acquisition of weapons (Droz-Vincent, 1999: 26). The implication of military actors at economic activities furnished high professional formation to the officers. The military profile proportioned officers, retired and active, opportunities to work in foreign enterprises as well as in USAID, mainly for their capacity to overcome the administrative obstacles, due to their familiarisation with the bureaucratic mechanisms and inside connections.

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<sup>770</sup> The reclamation of lands had been a lucrative enterprise as the army was able shelling the land in double price of this that it had been bought. Al-Salam canal, which will feed Nile water into the Sinai Peninsula and the Southern Valley project through which water will be carried in the Toshke canal from Lake Nasser, are both projects that will be realised by the army.

<sup>771</sup> In 1999, there were sixteen military factories employing 75.000 workers and 40 % regarded civil production (Droz-Vincent, 1999: 21).

<sup>772</sup> The weight of defence expenditures is difficult to assess because the military does not make this information public, not even to the People's Assembly. According to estimates published in The Military Balance, 1989-1990 by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, Egypt's military expenditures are much higher than official figures. According to SIPRI this period the military expenditures of this decade 4.7-3.2 % GDP. Yet it is important to interline that *"SIPRI military expenditure data is based on open sources only, including a SIPRI questionnaire which is sent out annually to all countries included in the database"*. [www.sipri.org/](http://www.sipri.org/)

<sup>773</sup> Source: FBIS-NES 95-087, November 14, 1995.

The civil activities of the army had another effect on the Egyptian scene. The involvement of the army in building schools, roads and railways, fire fighting, rescue operations, telephone-line extension etc, and the frequent appearance of officers in the Egyptian television, portrayed a positive image regarding the role and the importance of military apparatus (Kechichian and Nazimek, 1997). Such policies created a new role for the army considered as internal stabiliser, visible in ordinary life, creating on the same time a militarised<sup>774</sup> environment of the country. The internal security activities were increased during the escalation of the terrorist attacks. As the Minister of Defence underlined *"It is the right of the state in [Egypt] to confront this phenomenon with all decisiveness [...]"* (Kechichian and Nazimek, 1993).

The military dependency of Cairo upon Washington continued during this decade. The purchasing of military equipment<sup>775</sup> and military aid was facilitated by the sometimes hostile relations with Khartoum and Tripoli. Under the pretext of protection of the national borders, Mubarak in his "Request for Military Assistance", in 1997, stated Cairo's objectives that included the modernisation of the military equipment a necessary aspect of continuing reductions in force size. However, in 1999, the Egyptian army counted with 420.000-450.000 men of whom the 45.000 were officers plus another 270.000 who do service once every 3 years (Droz-Vincent, 1999: 17).

The continual and progressive islamisation of the country inevitably infected the military apparatus. The participation of two cadets and a reservist along with fifty 50 Egyptians, members of the 'Vanguards of the New Jihad' at the killing attempt of the Interior Minister, in August 1993<sup>776</sup> was a sign that soldiers were also subjects of islamist influence. Even though the profile of the police and military entrants was checked profoundly, the Egyptian leadership considered that it had to increase its efforts in order to secure the soldiers correct ideological and religious profile<sup>777</sup>. In this view, in 1994, the law 127 of 1980 was reinforced raising the educational requirements for the conscripts. Nevertheless as it was underlined by Frisch *"Egyptian military does not always recruit at the level it would like"*, because even if the army facilitates upward mobility, the majority of the army's members come from rural areas and have less well-educated profile (Frisch, 2001). Furthermore, Tantawi integrated obligatory lessons of 'correct religion' on soldiers' education. The regime made also considerable efforts to isolate the members of the Armed Forces from the 'politics' with the

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<sup>774</sup> From the twelve divisions of the army all but one is armoured.

<sup>775</sup> Only in 1997, the army received 540 TOW-2 launchers, French Hot-3 missiles, and 1,000 Hellfire-2 laser-guided anti-tank missiles.

<sup>776</sup> During their trial the defendants shouted from their courtroom cages: "Where are you, men of the armed forces? Where are you to defend the Islamic ideology and the message of Muhammad? They are killing us, they are torturing us! Move and raise the banner of Islam!". Quoted in (Kechichian and Nazimek, 1997)

<sup>777</sup> Personal interview with Rafik Sedhom, retired military officer.

constitutional prohibition to participate in the electoral process, either as voters or candidates (Martin-Muñoz, 1992), along with the physical separation from the civilians through the construction of seventeen military cities.

The prohibition to have a political activity had another benefit: the direct virtual demilitarisation of the Egyptian politics. Not few scholars, among them (Droz-Vincent, 1999: 24), underlined the non implication of military in political affairs. Yet as history proved this opinion was far from the truth, as Egypt continued to be controlled by a group of military officers, without however a visible signs of their role.

### **11.2. State**

The previous decade -the first period of Mubarak's mandate- was characterised by a certain consensus between the opposition and the regime, as we have already underlined. This cooperation was steaming from regime's lack of substantial capacity to control by itself the totality or majority of power resources. The 'opposition' elites on the other hand were found imprisoned in a power structure which did not permit the creation of strong anti-regime power centres capable of challenging the regime's primary role. During the first decade thus there was a general idea that the President showed respect for the constitution, putting considerable effort to avoid adopting Sadat's 'pharaoh' styled. As Hudson wrote at the beginning of the 90s *"there have been some remarkable rumblings of political liberalism and even democratisation in the past several years [...] Egypt under President Hosni Mubarak is perhaps the 'trail-blazing' case"* (Hudson, 1991: 66).

The symptoms of the return to the authoritarian rule started to become visible with the Anti-terrorism Law of 1992<sup>778</sup>, permitting among others the state authorities to kill citizens connected to terrorist groups. Once Mubarak felt confident or better said, accumulated substantial power he changed his cooperative profile. Ghazala's neutralisation and the progressive establishment of friendly figures in key posts, along with Cairo's victories in the foreign issues- e.g. recuperation of the Egyptian soil from Israel and re-entrance in the Arab circle, paved the way for the personalisation of power. Indicative was the change of this attitude on the presidential terms. At the beginning of his mandate the President positioned himself favourably on two terms presidency stating in 1984<sup>779</sup>: *"I do not conceal from you the fact that I believe that the assumption of the office of the*

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<sup>778</sup> The Law No. 97 of 1992 included a host of amendments to the Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and other existing laws for the purpose of combating terrorism. This law further expanded the powers enjoyed by security forces to circumvent constitutional protections for privacy, due process and fair trial, and introduced for the first time a broad and vaguely worded definition of the crime of terrorism into the Penal Code. For more on Egypt's counter-terrorism experience, see (EIPR, 2007).

<sup>779</sup> Source: BBC SWB, Summary of World Broadcasts, 26 June 1984.

*Presidency by any one of us should not exceed two terms.* "It pleases me that I shall be the first President to whom this rule will be apply". However, as Sadat did, Mubarak soon forgot his commitment on the grounds of his duty to overpass the difficult work that the presidency implies<sup>780</sup>.

Mubarak's control was extended to the main political party of Egypt, National Democratic Party, representing the basis of recruitment for all main political and administrative posts in the country. As it was underlined by Kassem *"President Mubarak's efforts to prevent the emergence of powerful and thus potentially challenging leaders within the NDP is further reflected in the fact that all senior posts within the Party continue to be presidential appointments"* (Kassem, 1999:79).

The loyalty to *rais* was rewarded in different ways, one of them being the long stay in offices. This was the case of the Prime Minister Atef Sidqi, who remained in the same post for a decade (1986-96), the longest stay since 1914. Yet Mubarak's fears regarding the creation of rival figures that could jeopardise his primary role remained demonstrated by the fact that until his fall in February 2011, he never appointed a vice-president, on the grounds that he didn't want to impose his choice on the Egyptians.

Despite Mubarak's clear role at the governmental party, the president continued to project the image of impartial political leader. In May Day 1989, Mubarak<sup>781</sup> called *"all democratic parties and groups to put aside, even momentarily, their differences over public work so that all patriotic efforts could be focused on positive cooperation to achieve the undisputable national goals, over which people should not differ"*. The calls for national unity were not heard, since opposition parties began to realise that their visible cooperative attitude and docility towards the regime was not beneficial anymore. The intense public criticism regarding the disconnection of the opposition parties from the mass in early 90s was a clear prove of the popular disregard.

Opposition leaders' change of attitude was highlighted in the parliamentary elections of 1990<sup>782</sup>, which were boycotted from all opposition parties, which objected to the supervision of polling-stations and ballot count by Interior Ministry<sup>783</sup> as well as to the continuation of Emergency State. Under this

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<sup>780</sup> Regarding the capacity of Mubarak to control the electoral process there is a political joke: In the 1990s, Bill Clinton visited Mubarak in Egypt and commented on the President's popularity in Egypt and how he won re-election so easily again and again. "Mubarak," Clinton asks, "I'm running for re-election. Can you send your advisors to Washington and have them help me run my campaign?" Mubarak agrees, sends his men to the USA, and they campaign for Clinton. On Election Day, the vote tallies are 90% in favour of re-electing Hosni Mubarak.

<sup>781</sup> Quoted in (Wickham, 2002: 67).

<sup>782</sup> The supreme Constitutional Court ruled in 1990 that the electoral law of 1986 was unconstitutional and thus the individual candidacy system returned.

<sup>783</sup> Earlier, in January 1990, the Minister of Interior, Zaki Badr, had admitted tampering the results of 1987 and he was removed. Behind this decision was camouflaged another rivalry between Mubarak and his minister who was considered as potential dangerous rival (Kassem, 1999:102 ).



inconvenient for his regime situation, Mubarak tried to convince the parties by indirect contacts to participate, because the complete absence of the political opposition from process in a 'democratic' state would embarrass his regime, especially at international level.

The regime's credibility was saved by the Tagammu's<sup>784</sup> participation. The party's decision to participate was justified on the grounds that they wanted to avoid the complete absence of opposition in the political process<sup>785</sup>. It is clear that the decision was taken under other criterions: On the one hand, there was the competition between Tagammu and New Wafd party. New Wafd's leading role at the boycotting was beneficiating the liberal party in front of the 'communist' Taggamu. On the other, hand the Tagammu, which had earlier rejected collaboration with Mubarak, found an opportunity to extract substantial benefits, by helping the regime to a needing moment. In this way "*Tagammu became the first opposition party to enter into the regime's clientelist structure*"<sup>786</sup> (Kassem, 1999:103).

The parliamentary elections of 1995 took place in an escalated electoral violence with particular attention to the Muslim Brotherhood, which was gaining progressively field in all sectors of civil society, as we are going to see afterwards. The terrorist attacks coming from islamist groups and the raising power of the Brothers, put in alarm the regime, which proceeded to massive arrests of prominent members of the Muslim Brotherhood on the grounds of illegal activities and immediate closure of the organisation's official headquarters<sup>787</sup>.

Regime's violent persecution of the Muslim Brotherhood inevitably worried the political parties that had previously collaborated with the organisation, who rushed into dissociate clearly themselves from Ikhwan, in order to avoid regime's repression<sup>788</sup>. To this aim New Wafd nominated thirty Copt candidates the largest number since 1978, demonstrating its non-Islamic character. Moreover, the party readmitted the expelled members for having accepted the presidential nomination in Majlis al-Shura<sup>789</sup>, demonstrating that direct collaboration with

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<sup>784</sup> National Progressive Unionist Party, in Arabic the entire name is Hizb al Tagammu' al Watani al Taqadomi al Wahdawi.

<sup>785</sup> Tagammu's participation at the parliamentary elections created internal frictions as many leading members opposed to the committee's decision, among them Abdel-Ghaffar Shokr, veteran member of Tagammu'. Personal interview

<sup>786</sup> In 1995 Tagammu, continued collaborating with the regime by accepting the presidential nomination of its Secretary General, Rifat Sa'id to Shura Council.

<sup>787</sup> The Mubarak's attack on the Muslim Brotherhood pushed the organisation to find a legal way to form a political party, as the Wasat had probably in the beginning the Brotherhood's support (Ternisien, 2007: 53). However, until 2010 Wasat had been unable to obtain legal status by the Committee of the Political Parties.

<sup>788</sup> The efforts of the Liberal party to disconnect itself from the Brotherhood were not sufficient as the Secretary General of Labour Party was arrested before the elections and he was released without charges few months later.

<sup>789</sup> Some members of New Wafd had accepted the presidential nomination in 1990 and the party had decided to deprive them the party membership.

Mubarak was no longer unacceptable.

The growing influence of Muslim Brotherhood at the political scene and the electoral law of 1990, allowing individuals to participate in the elections as independent candidates created an environment of hostility between the Islamist organisation and the legalised opposition parties. In the absence of grassroots and power resources to increase their influence, opposition parties began to adopt a hostile attitude toward Muslim Brothers avoiding by all means collaboration and on the same time attacking the organisation politically in order to undermine Brotherhoods political role.

The growing influence and power of the Brotherhood was demonstrated, among others, by the electoral winning, under a relatively free process, of the Islamic Trend, organisation's branch, on Lawyers' Association, in 1992. Mubarak's decision to permit free elections came under the necessity to appease opposition's demands. In this way, the regime managed to block Muslim Brotherhood from directly challenging its power in the street through organisation's agreement to play by regime's rules (Wickham, 2002).

Syndicates' control was important to the Brotherhood. As Ahmad al-Nahas, Brother and Treasurer of the engineers syndicate in Alexandria commented<sup>790</sup> *"Syndicates provided us with a political platform, with legal power and with a media organisation. Through them we could publish as many newspapers and magazines as we wished, without the complications of having otherwise to have a license. It was facilities and privileges such as these that made the syndicates act as our political spokesmen for at least eighty per cent of the time"*.

The unexpected electoral results, the escalation of terrorism in Egypt<sup>791</sup>, as well as the electoral success of the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria increased Mubarak's fears on Brotherhood's future role. Thus, in 1993, a new law for professional associations was issued, establishing a minimum of 50 percent participation at the elections, under the justification of protecting democratic procedures and preventing the imposition of an 'organised minority'. The proposal provoked the reaction of many associations, mainly controlled by the Brotherhood, expressed also with demonstrations. Yet the tension between secular opposition and Muslim Brotherhood benefited the regime, as the formers supported the NDP's proposal over the Unified Law for syndicates. The need of the opposition parties to undermine Brotherhood's influence by approving the law generated the organisation's harsh criticism accusing opposition parties of collaborating with Mubarak (Abdelrahman, 2004: 115). In this way the Egyptian regime managed to oppose secular and Islamist opposition and empower the direct governmental intervention at the professional syndicates.

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<sup>790</sup> Quoted in (Al-Awadi, 2004).

<sup>791</sup> The terrorist acts were raised by the return of 'Afghan Arabs', those who went to combat the Soviet invasion and started to return to their homes in the beginning of the 1990. In 1995, there was also an attempt against Mubarak's life in Ethiopia.

Regime's strategy and Muslim Brotherhood's integration at the electoral process as well as the rivalry between secular and Islamist opposition made almost impossible the creation of a legalised political party capable of competing with the NDP and the Brotherhood. These two, having at their disposal sufficient resources to use, the first mainly the rentier functions of the state apparatus as well as other mechanisms of persuasion and coercion, and the second its economic and social backup, consolidated clientelism of the Egyptian politics.

Meanwhile, new figures began to appear in the political scene. Amr Musa Mubarak's Foreign Minister (1991-2001) increased progressively his influence not only at the power circle but also at a popular level, considered in the forthcoming years as regime's 'number two' (Abdelnasser, 2004: 131). In the same period, the name of Gamal Mubarak, the younger son of the *rais* started to appear on the political circles, with reports regarding the formation of a new political party al-Mustaqbal<sup>792</sup> (the future).

The symptoms of the long stay authoritarian rule became evident. The frequent scandals regarding Mubarak's ministers and associates were a clear demonstration of that. Yet Mubarak and his allies were not seen preoccupied for the popular reactions that the continuation of their policies would bring. Indicative is that the government formed after the elections of 2000 was composed by the same members of the previous, despite the scandals that some of them were facing, as it was the case of Yusuf Wali<sup>793</sup> who was accused for permitting the importation of rot meat. Regime's arrogance in front of its competitors and the Egyptian population became a catalyst factor for its debilitation the following decade.

### **11.3. Rent and Capital**

Private capital continued to be a power resource controlled in its majority by the state elites. This undesirable hegemony for economic elites pushed for a tough struggle. Following Norton *"The end result of the private sector's interaction with the state through a set of autonomous and semi-autonomous economic and political organisations was the growing pressure for political liberalisation"* as it have been the case in Turkey and pre-revolutionary Iran (Norton, 2005: 141).

Mubarak since the beginning of his mandate tried to balance the interests of

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<sup>792</sup> It is said that Gamal Mubarak's initiative to form a new political party The Future (Al-Mustaqbal) was blocked by officers' rejection (Springborg and Sfakianakis, 2001: 71). In 1999, the Egyptian press released reports forecasting the possible formation of The Future party. Even though, Al-Mustaqbal did not become a party Gamal served as board chairman of a voluntary civic association of the same name, having as members wealthy businessmen.

<sup>793</sup> Yusuf Wali was also accused by the opposition press as traitor in favour of Israel and Mossad's collaborator. The three implicated journalists were condemned in 2 years prison and E £20 000 for acting against the general interest acting with bad intention and over passing the limits of reasonable criticism (Bernard-Maugiron and Ibrahim, 2000: 134)

the two fractions even though he always showed a preference toward the state elites, demonstrated also by the fact that the new government in 1997 there was only one pro-liberal minister participated Youssef Boutros Ghali<sup>794</sup>, Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade, forming part of the new generation and being in favour of liberalisation (Barreda, 1998: 68). Political control over private capital was underlined by an official of the American Chamber of Commerce, Shafiq Gabr, who stated in 1993<sup>795</sup> *“Decisions [on trade and investment] were always made between political leaders and not between businessmen [...]. We decided that we are no longer going to look at the commission’s heads by prime ministers. We will have our own groups”*.

The tight relations between politics and capital enabled business lobby of the private sector, and trade unions of public sector to pressure for a greater role at the political sphere. For instance at this period there was a settlement regarding the quota workers and peasants at the peoples’ assembly on business lobby favour (Abdelnasser, 2004: 122). Collaboration between private and public economic sectors was probably another effort of the regime to answer to capitalists’ pressures. The Toshka project in 1997 was considered one of the most important projects of the country, *Egypt’s forth pyramid* targeting the creation of a second Nile Valley in Egypt’s western Desert<sup>796</sup>. The mega project included the participation of private investors, foreign and Egyptians.

The terrorist attacks against tourist targets were certainly not at the benefit of the private economic circles neither those of the regime. The economic and political costs demanded an effective handling of the situation, in order to secure stability. Thus, the Emergency Law was welcomed by the interested parts, giving on the same time a valuable pretext for the control of the officers at the Egyptian society.

Internal pressures were not the only ones exercised towards Mubarak. American actors interested in the liberalisation of the Egyptian economy found a common interest with their Egyptian fellows. In May 1991, the Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program (ERSAP) called for macroeconomic policies including removal of subsidies on consumers’ goods, foreign trade liberalisation, reform of labour legislation and privatisation of state-owned enterprises. The alliance between foreign actors with Egyptian ones is underlined by Abdelrahman, who sustained that businessmen associations derived their power from their connections with international corporations and the background of their members (Abdelrahman, 2004: 146).

The demands of FMI and WB calling for reduction of the public deficit,

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<sup>794</sup> Youssef is nephew of Boutros Boutros Ghali, former Secretary-General of the United Nations. He remained at ministerial posts until the fall of Hosni Mubarak, February 2011.

<sup>795</sup> Quoted in (Murphy, 1995).

<sup>796</sup> The project involves diverting Nile waters through a 360-kilometer-long canal, into the desert, to create the basis for thousands of hectares of new agricultural land, and new towns for hundreds of thousands of people.

however, were not heard by Mubarak and his allies who opted for social peace and the continuation of state's predominance over capital. Yet internal and external pressures had to be contested in order to avoid dangerous frictions. Thus, in 1991 Law 203 it was announced that 314 state owned enterprises were eligible for privatisation. In five years period however, only forty of the announced public enterprises had been sold. Thus, in the beginning of 90s there was no real difference with 60s, as public sector was responsible for 70% of investment, 80% of foreign trade, 90% for banking 95% of insurance and 65% for add value<sup>797</sup>.

In spite of Mubarak's interests to preserve the protagonist role for state elites, he was forced to precede to some policies beneficiating the capitalist fraction of his allies. Thus, policies were progressively taken as it was the law of labour in 1999 relaxing the regulation on workers' rights, facilitating the employment cessation. Similar decisions were taken for public servants, proposing the cancelation of Nasser's law guarantying work for life. The strikes followed in rejection to this law were answered with repression and partial concessions (Barreda, 1998: 69)

In the mid-90s the President of the Egyptian Federation Industries, Dr. Gazarin said<sup>798</sup>: *the failure of the public sector stems from "excessive control over the public sector [...] Interference by the many supervisory levels at each stage of the production process (which) alienated managers and limited their capacity to run state-owned enterprises effectively[...]. Public sector firms were not even free to use their accumulated profits as they wished, since such profits were appropriated by the treasury, with successful public sector firms being subject to the same restrictions as ailing ones"*.

The policies followed, permitted the integration of wealthy businessmen at the Egyptian regime, with important economic tycoons supporting the Mubarak's leadership. Ahmad Ezz and Mohamed Farid Khamis are two representative cases. The first one, the king of iron market, managed progressively to become an important figure of the Egyptian scene being a close associate of Gamal Mubarak, son of Hosni Mubarak. Mohamed Farid Khamis another business mogul in manufacture of carpets and petrol chemistry, also Hosni Mubarak's close associate<sup>799</sup>.

By the end of this decade, prominent businessmen had increased substantially their influence inside the Egyptian political scene. In parallel with their influence were growing the scandals regarding economic elites. As means to secure his position and avoid popular unrest Mubarak in the mid-90's gathered prominent businessman and told them<sup>800</sup> *"one day the public will express its wrath*

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<sup>797</sup> Source: Financial times Survey, Egypt 13 May 1997.

<sup>798</sup> Quoted in (Abdelrahman, 2004: 106).

<sup>799</sup> Mohamed Farid Khamis years later was ordered to testify before the prosecution-general on alleged bribery charges involving two lawyers in one of his companies.

<sup>800</sup> Quoted in (Al-Awadi, 2004:185)

*against the wealth you have accumulated. They will vandalise your expensive black Mercedes cars that they are parked outside if you are not careful, and you might not even been able to afford bicycles to ride”.*

In 1998, Gamal Mubarak founded a non profit association Foundation of Future Generation, starting to create a public image. According to the very same association<sup>801</sup>: *“The Future Generation Foundation (FGF) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization formed in 1998 by key leading members of the private sector with a clear objective of developing our country's business sector thus enabling it to compete in the global arena. FGF aims to transform the culture of the private sector and reorient it to international levels of excellence and achievement through the development of its human resource sector”.* The appearance of Gamal Mubarak in the public scene marked the beginning of new era for Egypt.

#### **11.4. Religion**

The strategy of divide and conquer had worked the previous period but soon the problems of society's islamisation and the radicalisation of several groups appeared. By the time the regime was put in alarm about the Islamist threat Islamic sectors had expand their activities in many sectors of the Egyptian society. Indicative of regime's perception over radical islamist influence were the words of the Minister of Education in 1994, Hussein Kamal Baha ad-Din<sup>802</sup> *“The terrorists have been targeting schools for years [...]”.* *“We have found schools where students are told not to salute the flag, sing the national anthem or talk or study with Christian students”.*

However, the regime was seen incapable of controlling the situation mainly, according to Wickham to three factors: the decentralisation of the Islamic sector, the alliances formed between state and Islamists sectors and the structural deficiencies of the state apparatus (Wickham, 2002: 104-106). The regional context contributed significantly, as during this decade a general renaissance of Islam in all Arab countries was characterised by an important competition between the Saudi dogma and the Iranian, a more radical form.

The terrorist acts were raised by the return of 'Afghan Arabs', those who went to combat the Soviet invasion and now returned to their homelands. Additionally, the Algerian Military coup, in 1992, reinforced the idea of having to fight their way to power. The attacks against Mubarak's regime<sup>803</sup> were harming important interests, since there were effectuated in touristic areas, damaging

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<sup>801</sup> The official site of Future Generation Foundation is available at <http://www.fgf.org.eg/>

<sup>802</sup> Quoted in (Wickham, 2002: 110).

<sup>803</sup> We can mention the following attacks: in August 1993, there was assassination attempt on Interior Minister Hassan al-Alfi, in April 1993 Islamic Group attempted to assassinate Information Minister Safwat al-Sherif and in 1995 there was an attempt by Jaamat against Mubarak in Ethiopia. Two years earlier Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman was accused for the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York.

economically the regime and its allies, since the incomes from tourism were \$ 3 billion in hard currency per year (Sullivan and Abdel-Kotob, 1999: 71).

The Egyptian participation at the military western aggression against Iraq served as valuable argument against the Egyptian regime, proportioning more popular support to Mubarak's enemies. In the early 90s *"the most advanced sectors of public life in Egypt enjoying high status and speaking with autonomous and respected voice"* (Zubaida, 1992) was under the of Islamists groups, particularly under Muslim Brotherhood. The position of the Muslim circles was reflected to Jihad's leader Omar Abdel-Rahman, the same who was accused for World Trade Centre's bombing, who stated that it was impermissible for Muslims to use foreign aid. In this occasion the regime replied by using the state religious authorities, stating that the invitation of foreign troops was not against the Islamic law (Azzam, 1991: 480-481).

The radicalisation of Islamism inevitably produced clashes the two Egyptian *umma*, reflecting a degree of polarisation of the Egyptian society and the discriminative policies toward the two religious communities<sup>804</sup>.

The big earthquake in Cairo, in October 1992, seen as a message from above, ironically demonstrated the state's incapacity to respond at *emergency* situation and increased Islamic prestige. Islamic NGOs<sup>805</sup> were proven more efficient than the Egyptian state, providing valuable support and practical aid to the victims. This disaster demonstrated clearly the priorities of the regime capable of clashing down the popular mobilisation but absent in the moments of necessity.

Regime's efforts to halt the influence of Islamic and Islamist sectors were materialised in different policies. In December 1992, the government announced new measures in order to put under control private mosques, some 140.000, under *"the duty [...] to be a source of security and stability for the country [...] They should not be allowed to become centres for extremism activities"*<sup>806</sup>. However, it was impossible to put in practice the announced measures mainly due the economic burden that this imposed and the lack of personnel, as they included the placing of an official imam in each mosque. Moreover, many 'dangerous' mosques were having their activities in basements or other places impossible to be checked.

The escalation of violence<sup>807</sup> produced by Islamists forced the regime to

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<sup>804</sup> Indicative of the discriminative policies is the fact that there was a maximum number of non Muslim religious establishments to be built every year requiring also particular permission for every new church.

<sup>805</sup> Religious NGOs, whether Islamic or Coptic, have a high level of independency from the state control their assets were not subject of states control. The Coptic NGOs, although lesser in number, represent some of the largest NGO because of their size and operational extend and some of them try to hold a secular profile (Abdelrahman, 2004: 141).

<sup>806</sup> Words of the Minister of Religious Endowments. Quoted in (Sullivan and Abdel-Kotob, 1999: 128).

<sup>807</sup> In 1994, Jama'at had under siege Assiut and the government responded by sending of 3.000 policemen with armoured cars. In this occasion civilians were shot and many Islamist arrested or were put under house arrest (Goldschmidt, 2004: 187). Two years later the regime demonstrating

follow different practises in order to halt the threatening situation. Besides repression and other efforts to control radical groups using Mukhabarat's services, Mubarak tried to find allies in his war against terrorism<sup>808</sup>. Thus, he turned into the domestic mafia asking their help in exchange of liberty of actuation. This collaboration benefited the regime but soon problems came up as Mubarak's new allies became uncontrollable<sup>809</sup>. Furthermore, always under the imperative to control radical Islamist groups, the government through the Ministry of Agriculture began replacing the sugar cane with beets with parallel reimburses for the agricultures revenue, in order to destroy Islamist visual cover offered by the canes(Sullivan and Abdel-Kotob, 1999: 88).

Meanwhile, the Muslim Brotherhood started to exercise more severe criticism towards the regime and its influence<sup>810</sup> was growing not only to poor classes but in the higher ones, as it was demonstrated by the electoral victory of the Islamic Trend, Muslim Brotherhood branch, in 1992, at Lawyer's Association. The victory in Lawyer syndicate alarmed as we saw Mubarak's regime and, in February 1993, a new law for professional associations was proposed by NDP, establishing a minimum of 50% participation in the elections. The law on syndicates found support from opposition parties who felt that this could increase their influence. Parties' attitude had as a result the increase of competition between secular and religious opposition forces that debilitated more people's capacities.

Different methods were applied in order to avoid further expansion of the Muslim Brotherhood's power, such as arrests<sup>811</sup> of prominent members just before the elections. The actions were so intense that only in one operation 200 members were arrested. Among them many Islamic leaders were imprisoned, coming mainly from middle generation of Muslim Brotherhood, such as Isam al-Iryan and Abu-l-Futuh, including former members of parliament, doctors, and professors. Their trials were covered by the media in order to demonstrate to the public the evil face of Muslim Brotherhood<sup>812</sup>with Mubarak characterising in his public speeches Ikhwan as illegal organisation (Wickham, 2002: 201).

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its commitment to crash such activities decided to hang six militants.

<sup>808</sup> The regime also cut the direct dial telephone service to Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan in order to add difficulties the communication among radical Islamists. Additionally, Mubarak accomplished to convince Saudi Arabia to impose restrictions on the private donations towards Egypt (Murphy, 1994: 81). In 1991 Islamic Faisal Bank gave EE 492.241 to Islamic NGOs (Abdelrahman, 2004: 139).

<sup>809</sup> Indicative is the incident in a small village of Asyut governorate, where the special forces were fighting with Awlad Hanafi's men during a week (Pommier, 2008: 107).

<sup>810</sup> It was calculated that the Brotherhood counted with 100.000-500.000 active members, in 1992(Pommier, 2008: 224).

<sup>811</sup> According to Minister of Interior, in August 1994 ten thousand detainees were held in the Egyptian prisons (Sullivan and Abdel-Kotob, 1999:87)

<sup>812</sup> They were judged in military courts and many received sentences up to five years of hard labour.



Criticism towards Muslim Brotherhood was not coming only from secular forces. The participation of the organisation at the political process was criticised inside and outside the Egyptian borders. The West feared that the Muslim Brotherhood used the electoral process in order to gain power and establish an Islamic state. Domestically other Islamist groups accused them for collaborating with the regime and for abandoning the Jihad<sup>813</sup>. The Muslim Brotherhood's passivity in Islamic questions generated one of the first crisis in the international net of Muslim Brotherhood<sup>814</sup>, as the Kuwaiti Brothers perceived weak the reaction of the Egyptian Brothers towards Saddam and thus abandoned the structure (Ternisien, 2007: 70).

Criticism and regime's repression inevitably created tensions and divisions inside the organisation. The death of the Supreme Guide Hamid Abu Nasr in 1996 widen the break between older and younger Brothers, as new Guide Mustafa Mashhur represented the interests of the old generation. The immediate and most shocking reaction was the decision of some members of the middle generation to form a political party Wasat<sup>815</sup> (centre) headed by Abou Elela Mady, member of the Muslim Brotherhood, wherein also Copts participated.

Violence coming from Islamist circles reached its peak at the Luxor attack, in November 1997. In this incident 62 persons lost their lives between them 59 tourists, shocking the international and the Egyptian public opinion. The gravity of the attack<sup>816</sup> and the economic costs, especially in the tourist sectors imposed an immediate and effective solution. Arrests and repression as well as other practices mentioned above helped the regime to gain control. Negotiations were also put in place, through which radical groups were forced to dissolve their respective groups in exchange of liberty<sup>817</sup>. Finally, two years after the attack in Luxor, the regime managed to extract the wanted ceasefire from the radical Islamists.

### **11.5. Media**

Freedom of the press followed the previous years began to lose territory. The relative liberty that the press sector enjoyed by exercising limited criticism to government policy (Springborg, 1991:239) began to be restrained. This change of attitude came as an answer to the criticism that Mubarak and his regime received

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<sup>813</sup> This criticism cost to the Brotherhood the elections of 1992 in the Upper Egypt.

<sup>814</sup> In the beginnings of 90s it was created the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe (FIOE) that integrates 27 organisations. The relations between Muslim Brotherhood and the Federation were not formal but interpersonal.

<sup>815</sup> There are voice sustaining that at the beginning it was not clear if the party was independent from Muslim Brotherhood on the grounds that figures of the middle generation cooperated with Brotherhood's old guard (Wickham, 2002: 219).

<sup>816</sup> The Minister of Interior Hassan al-Alfi became the scapegoat as he lost his post after the Luxor attack.

<sup>817</sup> Personal interview with Abdel Aziz, Director of the South Centre of Human Rights.

from opposition forces through print media, since in the early 90s the newspaper became the main connection between the mass and the parties. Following Mahmud Abaza, former chairman of the New Wafd party<sup>818</sup> *"The newspaper takes all our energy; it is our spoiled child. Without it the party would fall. It is our only permitted connection with the masses."*

Thus, in early 90s restrictions on opposition media started to appear followed by all sorts of limits on the public activities of the parties. In May 1995 was adopted "la loi du massacre de la presse" authorising among others the preventive detention of journalists involved in crimes of the press. The Law 93 of 1995 foresaw the publication of 'false' information was punishable by imprisonment of five years and E£20.000 fine. However, the law was cancelled one year later, and it was appreciated as victory of the journalist syndicate and their chairman, Nafie Ibrahim who supported otherwise Mubarak (Sullivan and Abdel-Kotob, 1999: 130). Despite this victory, the regime continued to imprison journalists who were voicing non welcomed opinions, criticising members and policies of the regime. This was the case of Gamal Fahmi Houssein journalist of Al-arabi, mouthpiece of the nasserist party who was accused for defamation of member of Majlis al-Shura.

Meanwhile the independent private press made its appearance with the creation of the first private daily, al-Dustur edited in Cyprus with exclusively Egyptian capital and 100.000 issues. One year later appeared al-Usbu'a edited in Egypt with exclusively Egyptian capital. According to Barreda Mubarak opened the door of press to the Egyptian businessmen in order to facilitate their business by denouncing corruption (Barreda, 1998: 65-66). The growing influence of the 'independent' newspapers pushed the regime to proceed to radical measures. The harming of interests of the corrupted state elites and the criticism against businessmen were the reason behind the decision of the Egyptian government to shutdown 41 of 200 publications having Cyprus, among them al-Dustur.

The non print media<sup>819</sup> remained until the end of the decade under the state's authority as it was the case for all Arab states with the exception of Libya and Qatar. Egyptian TV followed the pattern of what Umberto Eco name as "paléo-television" whose role is pedagogic and didactic. Representative is the use of television on Mubarak's war against terrorism. Many films and television programs were transmitted at the time in order to highlight to the Egyptian the dangers of Islamism creating an image of threat to the personal freedom (Sullivan and Abdel-Kotob, 1999: 89). Additionally, and as counterweigh there was the projection of mainstream religious dogma promoted through TV and radio programs as well as through print press and other forms of publication. On the contrary articles regarding the terrorist attacks were censored.

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<sup>818</sup> Quoted in (Wickham, 2002:71).

<sup>819</sup> In 1992 Cable Network Egypt was created, transmitting light American programs such as Baywatch or video clips of MTV.

At the end of the decade journalists had been trained once more to the auto censorship, making possible the control over the diffusion of information. This view is shared by Bashir Abdel-Fattah, writing in the official daily Al-Ahram journalist<sup>820</sup>. Yet the introduction of new technologies and the expansion of the internet were limiting the absolute control of the regime over information.

### **11.6. Ideological Discourse**

Political discourse of the president continued to have a more pedagogic role than a political saying. President's public speeches diffused by public audiovisual and written sector had as target to appeal to the Egyptian's sentimentalism. The interest of Mubarak over the public opinion is underlined by the President himself. For instance making reference to the Israeli intransigence he declared (1996) *"In July I told him [Binyamin Netanyahu], 'I'm telling the people to give you a chance. Please do something.' Then came August, September, October. No progress. What can I tell public opinion?"*.

In another context and in an effort to decrease reactions deriving from the liberal policies, Mubarak in May Day 1990 called FMI as "Fund of Misery" and in July 1992 during his televised speech he stated: *"When we started the five-year plan in 1982, many economists told me during our meetings: Mr President, the situation requires a courageous step. What short of courageous step? They said: Cancel subsidies, cancel free education, lay off 25% of government's employees. Oh no! Reduce the Army, they said. The Egyptian Army supports every citizen; it backs the Egyptian people... Who makes up the Army but our own sons? If you were to reduce the Army, what would you really be doing? You would be dismissing your own sons. People have sons and brothers in the Army. These sons would have nothing to do outside the Army and would become unemployed. What would you do then?"*.

The populist discourse was of course applied to all contexts and by all representatives. In a pre electoral gathering of NDP, al-Sayyed addressing to the voters stated<sup>821</sup> in 1995: *"You must remember that your interest lies on the government party, the National Party. You must also remember that the State is not stingy; it helps you. It does everything it can for you and you must not forget that. Finally, I will not forget, and you must not forget, that the NDP, headed by President Mubarak, has paid for all your services"*.

Mubarak used his public speeches to convince his people for the rightness of his acts regarding the undemocratic situation of Egypt. Criticism exercised by opposition parties as well as the pressures coming for economic sectors asking for liberalisation of the economic and political scene, were forcing Mubarak to justify his policies.

In his speech in Alexandria University in July 1992, Mubarak stated<sup>822</sup>: *"We*

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<sup>820</sup> Personal interview.

<sup>821</sup> Quoted in (Kassem, 1999: 81).

<sup>822</sup> Quoted in (Wickham, 2002: 67).

*are suffering from irresponsible political party activity. I understand that political party activity must be for the homeland's and the citizens' benefit. The party that does not act for the good of the citizens and to improve their living standards-to tell you the truth- does not deserve to live. In our democracy we exploit the citizens' simplicity. We have a high rate of uneducated people. Because of this simplicity and the high rate of uneducated people, we can infuse very dangerous ideas into the people's minds. Democracy can be soundly established when you have educated people, people who can read and write. Are you asking me to open the door wide with the illiteracy rate I have here? If this will work, please tell us".*

Terrorism was one of the main questions of Egypt at this decade. The Luxor attack one of the bloodiest attacks which took place in Egypt against western citizens outraged the Egyptian president as the terrorists burlesqued his regime internationally. In 23 November 1997, in a television interview Mubarak declared<sup>823</sup> *"Dialogue with the Islamists is no longer an option. The late President Sadat tries this and he got nowhere so he got rid of three-quarters of them. We have tried to dialogue with them but as soon as they started to get strong they no longer wanted dialogue so I took the decision in 1993 to have no more of that".*

Armed forces retained their positive image, in a militarised environment. Mubarak thus frequently made mentions at the necessity of a developed military sector. Indicatively in October 1996, Mubarak linked Egyptian deterrence with the need to preserve the Arab-Israeli peace process, saying that a strong Egyptian army helped preserve regional stability and the chance of reaching peace. According to the official summary of the statement<sup>824</sup>, *"History has taught us that the cause behind many wars is the weakness of one side and the increase and growth of military power of the other side. This prompts the second side to attack, as has happened and is happening around us now. Therefore, peace and stability must exist under the umbrella of a military force that protects and preserves them".*

### **11.7. People**

The Egyptian society continued having a marginalised role, imprisoned in clientist relations and regime's repressive policies. Yet this period was not characterised by a complete lack of labour and political activism. The progressive reduction of state's social role, including the decline of subsidies on basic commodities, education, health and housing, were factors that pushed Egyptians to search for a more active role. Besides protests during the first Gulf, in the 90s important strikes took place in Egypt, in which strikers were contested with regime's brutality. Following Atef Said<sup>825</sup> *"In some cases, the police killed workers such as the case of the steel mill workers' strike in 1989. Strike leaders were arrested*

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<sup>823</sup> Quoted in (Kassem, 1999:121).

<sup>824</sup> Source: FBIS-TAC-96-010. MENA broadcast, October 5, 1996.

<sup>825</sup> Information obtained at <http://www.solidarity-us.org/current/about>

*and brutally tortured over several weeks. Other examples include attacking the textile and spinning workers in Kafr al-Dawar in 1994”.*

The state apparatus maintained its role as job supplier, even though the Law 203 of 1991 on privatisation, reduced the number of public sector workers by 1.3 million to around 0.5 million, while increasing the workforce in the private sector to 1.5 million. Regime’s socialist character had two main objectives: on the one hand a developed state apparatus was in the interests of the strong components of the regime, as we previously saw. On the other hand, such practice was used as a tool to avoid social unrest. Representative is the statement of a senior administrator at the Cabinet Information and Decision Support Centre on the dismissal of the surplus of the civil servants said<sup>826</sup>: *“Absolutely not. That could not happen. Ultimately, what determines decisions here is a political, and not an economic, logic”.*

Even so, state apparatus and the boosting of private economy could not cover the needs of the totality of the Egyptians, since unemployment oscillated 15-20% during the 90s (Goldschmidt, 2004:193). Even though the state offered 100.000 new jobs per year it would be needed 750 000 to match the demographic increase. Thus, in parallel with the subsidies still active since Nasser’s days, other policies were put in place in order to appease the popular discontent or better said to seduce Egyptians. Mubarak and his allies put in place big projects of infrastructure such as, telephone network, water and sewer system in Cairo etc, giving the impression of a new era of glory and prosperity of Egypt, making Egyptians feel proud of their country and president, even though the percentage of poverty remained high, touching the 39% in 1990, 48% in 1995 and 42% in 2000<sup>827</sup>. Furthermore, appreciating that young Egyptians would be a problem for the future in this period the government announced plans for the housing of young, previewing the construction of 50.000 until 2017. Through the construction of such projects Mubarak satisfied also the interests of his allies, foreign and domestic, in public and private sectors.

Political clientelism was diffused in the Egyptian society. Representatives are the words of an ordinary citizen (1995)<sup>828</sup> *“Sometimes we go to listen to an opposition candidate sometimes they come to visit us at the coffee-house [...]. Their views are sometimes very interesting. But even if we agree with the views of one contestant, this is not a reason enough to vote him. To vote for someone, you must know who he is so that if you need a favour you will know where to find him[...] it’s silly to vote for a complete stranger because if he wins you will never see him again”.*

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<sup>826</sup> Quoted in (Wickham, 2002: 48).

<sup>827</sup> These ratios is by using the Upper Poverty Line that allows identification for inefficiencies and waste in satisfying food needs in additional to consumption of what society feels are non-food necessities such as for transport, medical care, recreation, etc. By using the Lower Poverty Line which measures only minimal food, clothing and housing, the ratios at the three dates were 24%, 19% and 16.7%. Source: (EconomicResearchForum, 2005).

<sup>828</sup> Quoted in (Kassem, 1999: 143).

In parallel, the Egyptian regime tried to obstruct all possible alternatives for the Egyptian population. Relations between the regime and the opposition parties as well as these between Muslim Brotherhood were blocking possibilities for massive expression of dissent. The legal obstacles imposed through the emergency law and other laws blocking the activity of opposition parties contributed significantly to the parties' disconnection with grassroots.

Other organised structures of the civil society were put at the time under governmental control, as it was the case of NGOs which fell within the competence of the Ministry of Social Affairs<sup>829</sup>. Thus up to 1991, very few associations were not related to the regime (Al-Sayyid, 1993: 237), most of them dedicated to health services of the low income population, offered by religious NGO's. In May 1999 a new law (no 153) on associations tightened the state's control over the NGOs and prohibited to carry any political activity but it was overruled by the Constitutional Court few months later (Abdelrahman, 2004: 131)

Anti-regime attitude of some NGOs, criticising the regime's policies, were quickly contested with different methods, i.e. accusations of corruption. Indicative was the case of the Arab Women's Solidarity Association (AWSA) dissolved in 1991, as the *"took a stance against the Gulf War, the Egyptian government closed its headquarters in Egypt. AWSA took the government to court but no court decision was ever reached"*<sup>830</sup>. The assets of the association were transferred to another NGO, Women of Islam Organisation, the director of which coincidentally was General Director of Ministry of Social Affairs.

Blocking free elections on syndicates was another blow for the Egyptians, a policy supported by the opposition parties. The Unified Law for syndicates in 1993 opposed secular and Islamist opposition, as we saw, fact that debilitated further the Egyptian society<sup>831</sup>. Furthermore, the control over the civil society was secured by the appointment of allied figures at high posts as it was the case of Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF) created 1957 and representing 23 unions, which since 1991 was headed by Sayyed Rashid also speaker of People's Assembly<sup>832</sup>.

As we mentioned earlier, youth became one of the main preoccupations of

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<sup>829</sup> The limits of associational activities were marked by two laws: Law 32 of 1964 on citizens societies and Law 40 of 1977 on political parties: the first imposed the registration of all societies to the Ministry of Social Affairs, giving to this latter the authority to suspend the activities of a society or replace elected leaders. The second Law banned any party on religious, class or atheist bases and they had to be in conformity with the July Revolution and the Corrective revolution of Sadat (Al-Sayyid, 1993: 237). According to the ministry of Social Affairs, in 1991 there were 12.832 associations, concerned mainly with providing social services.

<sup>830</sup> <http://www.awsa.net/profile/index.html>

<sup>831</sup> In 1995 the elections of the syndicates of physicians, engineers and dentist were indefinitely postponed as in the same year it was given to the judiciary the power to interfere to the syndicates' elections.

<sup>832</sup> ETUF was appreciated as "a governmental institution, not a federation of genuine trade unions. The fact that Sayyed Rashid, was leading ETUF "pledged the support of Egypt's 17 million workers for the election of Mubarak in 2005". <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/node/227915>

the regime. The younger generations seemed less disposed to continue their parents' docility. Their age in combination with absence of hope regarding the improvement of their living conditions made them more prone to activism (Azaola, 2008). In the university there were particular efforts from regime's side to reverse the Islamisation process: males were forbidden to grow beard and both sexes to wear Islamic clothing, and prohibition of the covered women to enter to the university campuses (Goldschmidt, 2004: 187).

Egyptians' reaction on the Gulf War (August 2, 1990 – February 28, 1991) was one of the challenges that the regime had to contest at this period, even though the Egyptians remained calm until the ground attacks started (Gauch, 1991: 39). On popular level they were massive pro-Iraq demonstration in Jordan and Morocco, with one of the largest demonstration since the country's independence. Egypt did not live similar situation at the beginning of the war. Egyptians' passivity was steaming from Iraqis' stand toward Egyptian immigrant workers<sup>833</sup>. Mubarak's decision, however, to send Egyptian troops against Iraq weaken up feelings of solidarity expressed through massive manifestations. Protests continued and became stronger, especially from students side. The end of Operation Desert Storm calmed the Egyptians activists and rescued the regime (Azzam, 1991: 477).

### **11.8. International Friends**

The end of Cold War and the collapse of Soviet Union put formally an end to the bipolar system, establishing Washington the unique global power and making liberalism the only viable doctrine, leaving the periphery at the 'mercy' of the American dominant interests. As consequence, Washington verified its protagonist role in the region of the Middle East. The importance of the region for the American administration was highlighted by Ambrose: *"For American policymakers the Middle East has often been a headache, sometimes a nightmare, as each President has tried in his own way, pursue an even-handed policy, if only because he needed both oil and Jewish campaign contributions"* (Ambrose and Brinkley, 1993: 258).

One of the main outcomes of the Soviet collapse was therefore Washington's liberty to pursuit one of its main interest connected to the region, keeping the oil production low and establishing 'reasonable prices' as the threat of communism had disappeared, enabling Washington to become more selective to its friends (Halliday, 1997: 21)

In parallel, Washington's main non Arab ally, Tel Aviv, was certainly benefited by the collapse of the Soviet Union. The influence of the pro-Israeli lobby and the industrial-military complex in Washington's policies was evidenced

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<sup>833</sup> During Gulf War 38.000 workers were forced to return to Egypt (Hinnebusch, 1990).

by the maintenance of the actual status quo without any real steps in the solution in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

On the contrary, Moscow's regional allies were found without support. At the end of the Cold War, the military relations with the Middle Eastern clients continued through arms sales, which had been reduced since the days of Gorbachev in his effort to increase economic relations with Western Europe. Russian policy in the post-Soviet era was commented Alexei Pushkov an international affairs columnist at the influential daily *Nezavissimaya Gazeta*. *"To understand Russian foreign policy" [...] "we have to go back to 1991. At that time, our goal was to be integrated into the West, and we adopted a pro-Western foreign policy. That may never have been a realistic option. But realistic or not, the West decided it did not want us and made this clear when it expanded NATO to include three former Warsaw Pact countries"*(Gresh, 1998).

After the dissolution of USSR, Russian sources admitted that the main interest in of USSR in the region was to build influence and not to build effective Arab military power (Seale, 1997: 64). The position of Moscow towards the region is underlined by the Deputy Foreign Minister Posuvalyuk<sup>834</sup>: *"Everything that happens there [in the Middle East] affects us. It is true that we are in weaker position and our financial resources are limited. We can no longer extend unlimited credit to our allies. Nor do we have a mandate from the Russian people to supply endless quantities of arms. But we do have a number of advantages"*.

A new element of this period was the entrance of a new regional actor on the game. Ankara, which during the Cold War period had remained silent and avoided any involvement in inter-Arab disputes, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and other regional conflicts decided to pursuit a more active role in the Middle East. The geographical proximity, the common history and of course Islam helped Ankara to this aim.

Cairo's relations with foreign elites did not present any surprise during this decade. Mubarak, who had already established himself the main figure of the Egyptian scene, was conscious that Washington's friendship had to be preserved by all costs. Cairo's alignment with the west bloc since the days of Sadat facilitated the long stay of Mubarak's regime. Following Glasser, massive foreign aid towards Cairo have helped to preserve the regime, which had as an outcome the establishment of pro-West geopolitical order (Glasser, 2001). The economic and military aid that Cairo received from Washington was serving this aim. Furthermore, the strong ties between the two offered Mubarak international legitimacy.

In the aftermath of the Cold War *"[...]changes in the international environment, particularly the demise of the Soviet empire, contributed significantly*

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<sup>834</sup> Quoted in (Gresh, 1998: 70). Posuvalyuk was appointed deputy foreign minister in November 1994. Earlier that year, he was named President Boris Yeltsin's Middle East peace envoy, and in recent years, he has played a key role in negotiations with Iraq.



to a perceptible decrease in Egypt's options and opportunities at the global level"(Dawisha, 1997: 45). However, as we commented earlier such opportunity had been already lost since Moscow<sup>835</sup> could not match the American aid toward Cairo, fact that contributed to the consolidation of Mubarak's dependency on Washington. Yet this relation was understood from both sides, making Cairo anxious to block its foreign ally's cooperation. Therefore, a valuable pretext was necessary in order to secure this friendship furnishing Mubarak's regime margins of liberty. The necessity increased with the nomination of Bill Clinton as US president who since the beginning of his mandate seemed positive to proceed in important cut offs of the American military aid towards Egypt pressing on the same time for substitution of the soviet equipment with American one(Droz-Vincent, 1999: 19).

One of the main preoccupations of the American administration at the period was terrorism coming from Islamist circles. CIA officials started since the mid-1990s to track down and dismantle militant Islamic organisations in the Middle East. According to Clinton administration official Richard Clarke: *"extraordinary renditions', were operations to apprehend terrorists abroad, usually without the knowledge of and almost always without public acknowledgment of the host government.... The first time I proposed a snatch, in 1993, the White House Counsel, Lloyd Cutler, demanded a meeting with the President to explain how it violated international law. Clinton had seemed to be siding with Cutler until Al Gore belatedly joined the meeting, having just flown overnight from South Africa. Clinton recapped the arguments on both sides for Gore: "Lloyd says this. Dick says that. Gore laughed and said, 'That's a no-brainer. Of course it's a violation of international law, that's why it's a covert action. The guy is a terrorist. Go grab his ass'"(Clarke, 2004: 43-44).*

The core of the bilateral relations was fixed on the Islamic terrorism, as Egypt represented one of the main countries of terrorist export, including USA. Mubarak facing terrorist activity against his own regime took advantage of Washington's worries to consolidate the American aid. One of the unquestionable signs of the collaboration of the two governments on terrorism was that in 1997, Mubarak authorised FBI to open an office in order with Minister of Interior Hasan al- Alfi declaring that this fight was demanding an international cooperation (Sullivan and Abdel-Kotob, 1999: 86). American aid gave an internationally legitimate pretext to Mubarak's regime to consolidate its authoritarian rule against the totality of the Egyptian society.

Despite the collaboration between Washington and Cairo this relation had its bad moments. The Gulf War was a test. The western war to save Kuwait<sup>836</sup> was

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<sup>835</sup> 1990 Mubarak visited Moscow and the same year the two parts signed an agreement on trade and economic cooperation as well as the first tourism agreement.

<sup>836</sup> The 'liberation' of Kuwait became profitable for many American companies of the 'civil' sector as the reconstruction of the country was given to private American agents (Corm, 2003: 755).

*“the first-but not the last- major US military action<sup>837</sup> in the Arab world”* (Hudson, 2005: 293). Washington’s interests in the Gulf had been underlined almost a decade earlier, through the Carter Doctrine, as the president had stated<sup>838</sup> *“any attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States. It will be repelled by the use of any means necessary, including military force”*.

The first Gulf war had UN approval<sup>839</sup> as well as this of Moscow, which collaborated against its former ally, Saddam Hussein. The American side aiming to justify its military action on a foreign territory made considerable efforts to build a negative image for Saddam, presenting the Iraqi leader as the reincarnation of Stalin, Hitler or even Nebuchadnezzar. Gulf War had as immediate result the direct control of the region’s oil.

The media campaign against Saddam was contested by few as Arthur Schlesinger<sup>840</sup> who wrote: *“Ne nous abandonnons donc pas à la panique par de vagues peurs d’une disparition du pétrole et n’envoyons pas des Américains mourir pour ramener le prix à 20 dollars le baril”. “L’Arabie Saoudite a un régime barbare ou les femmes prises en flagrant délit d’adultère sont lapidées jusqu’à ce que mort s’ensuive cependant que les voleurs ont les mains coupées. L’émir du Koweït que nous avons promis de ramener sur son trône est impopulaire dans tout le monde arabe. La défense de ces despotismes médiévaux ne vaut sûrement pas une seule vie américaine”*.

The Gulf War paved the way for a more active policy in the Arab world from Ankara’s side. The Turkish support on the allied coalition signalled the beginning of a new era for the Turkish diplomacy in the region of Middle East. Following Sayari *“By shutting off the twin pipelines that carried Iraq’s oil exports and permitting U.S. use of Incir-lik airbase in southeastern Turkey for strikes into northern Iraq, Turkey played a key role in the UN-backed military and economic campaign against Saddam Hussein’s regime”* (Sayari, 1997).

Egypt’s participation in the Gulf War did not improve Cairo’s position in front of its American allies and by 1993-4 the US Congress began to question the huge economic aid toward Egypt which had now as main reasoning the Islamic threat. Meanwhile, Mubarak’s participation against Iraq generated reactions inside Egypt, with Egyptian’s accusing their president as an American spy.

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<sup>837</sup> London participated in the coalition in an effort to reconstruct its colonial past with the new international order and convinced its European partners to participate, with the exception of Germany due to the constitutional prohibition of sending its troops in a foreign field. The images of the Israeli army distributing gas masks to the population, recalling the Nazi experience, helped the European leaders and population to join the US military force against Saddam (Corm, 2003: 611,615).

<sup>838</sup> Quoted in (Lundestad, 1999: 141).

<sup>839</sup> The UNSC Resolution 678 gave the green light for the ‘liberation’ of Kuwait in 29 November 1991, with the 12 votes in favour two against (Yemen and Cuba) and China’s abstention.

<sup>840</sup> Arthur Schlesinger (1917-2007) was a Pulitzer Prize awarded and American historian and social critic. Quoted in (Corm, 2003 : 609).

One of the main interests of Cairo remained the foreign economic aid in order to secure internal stability. Persian Gulf crisis had affected deeply Egyptian economic situation, due to lost remittances coming from Egyptian immigrants, exports to Kuwait and Iraq, tourism income and Suez Canal tolls. The aid that Mubarak offered on the war helped him to overcome economic difficulties as a large proportion of Egypt's debt obligations were forgiven after the war. United States forgave about \$7 billion in Egyptian debt as well as Paris Club, which recognised similarly the Egyptian contribution. *"This package has been in the works for some time and is Egypt's reward for having given legitimacy to the American intervention in the gulf"* said Yahya Sadowski<sup>841</sup>, a scholar at the Brookings Institution.

The economic rewards were not enough for the Egyptian regime, whose needs on economic aid increased, since the regime had to compensate its components, coming from military and economic sectors, and finance its rentier and clientelist functions. This urge made Mubarak to negotiate his future collaboration in several issues as means to pressure for the American aid. Thus, in 1995, Amr Moussa, the Egyptian foreign minister warned that Egypt would not sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) without previous commitment of Israel. The Egyptian threat did not had the wanted results as it is historically known Washington did not take into consideration Egypt's objection and Mubarak was humiliated by signing finally the treaty. Later Mubarak did not participate in the Multilateral Economic Conference in Doha, as protest to Netanyahu obstruction of the Oslo Peace Accords, nor did he agree against the sanctions to Iraq in late 90s.

Meanwhile, European Community became European Union with the signing of Maastricht treaty. The institutional progress on the inter-European collaboration helped European actors to push for a greater cooperation with the southern neighbours<sup>842</sup>. Thus, in 1995, Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) was established between EU and Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestinian Authority and Turkey, as means to promote democracy on the southern countries.

The focus of European Union at soft security issues and socioeconomic strategies and the capacities of the European actors left no margins for close cooperation with the Arab leaders. Even if Egypt was one of the main receptors of Barcelona Process, this did not constitute a solid basis of collaboration. And soon enough problems started to emerge from this partnership which had basically as a main target the satisfaction of specific economic interests of the European side underlined by the complaints coming from Maghreb states and Egypt of being disadvantaged especially in the agricultural sector (Hollis, 2005: 320).

The internal threats that Mubarak was facing worried Washington, fearing

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<sup>841</sup> Quoted in (Farnsworth, 1991).

<sup>842</sup> Earlier, in December 1990 European Community had adopted a "New Mediterranean Policy" aiming to reinforce the existing trade and aid agreements promoting also economic reforms.

for popular unrest. Thus, the American administration in 2000 rose to \$1.3 billions the military aid and \$735 millions the economic one, as means to preserve the pro-American Egyptian regime, by sponsoring Mubarak's economic necessities.

### **11.9. Arab Circle**

The first Gulf War was a considerable blow for the region of Middle East. Just one year after the official ending of the Cold War, Washington was demonstrating its unquestionable leading role, as thirty-four states under the umbrella of United Nation and the American leadership coiled against Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi nation. Between them the many of Arab leaders supported UN decision to punish Saddam Hussein for his arrogant attitude. Saddam efforts to connect the aggression against his regime with the Palestinian question demanding a previous application of United Nations' resolutions from Israel did little on practical level. The launching of missiles to Israeli territory aiming to provoke an Israeli reaction and gain Arab support was in vain as Tel Aviv after Washington's request remained calm (Waldman, 2004). In the aftermath of the Gulf War, Israel became more confident, since the possibility of a Syrian-Iraqi coalition against Israel became impossible scenario, minimising the military threats coming from the neighbour countries (Seale, 1997: 75).

Riyadh hesitated to open its territory to the coalition against Saddam due to the treaty between the two countries of non-aggression. However, quickly overcame such hesitations and opened the way for the American troops on Arab soil. The aid offered to the Gulf monarchies introduced economic burdens, especially in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia who had repay Egypt, Syria and Morocco for their assistance and buy new American military equipment. In the end of 1995 the total debt of the region was \$206, 5 billions (Corm, 2003: 793).

Each Arab leader had personal interests on joining the coalition. However the reaction of the Arab citizens opposed to foreign intervention, forced their leaders to be careful on the handling of the situation. The frequent use of anti-American feelings that the Arab regimes made in order to canalise popular frustration was now a factor blocking their decision to satisfy the American allies. The protests taking place all over the Arab countries in different intensity worried the Arab head states for generalised popular unrest, especially after Washington's decision to send American troops to Saudi Arabia. Thus, even though they supported the UN decision at domestic level *"called for a Muslim or Arab solution, then for an equitable solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and for the immediate withdrawal of foreign forces once the crisis was resolved"* (Azzam, 1991: 479).

The Arab leaders who did not participate in Iraq's invasion, Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria, Yemen and Palestine also took their decision under the fear of popular rage. At the beginning of the crisis the king Hussein, Washington's close ally, opted for a neutral position hoping to balance the two opposite interests:

friendship of Washington and social calm. However, the massive reactions of the opposition forces on the American led war, which was based on the historical relations between the two countries and consolidation of collaboration between Jordan and Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war, terrified the regime fearing for growing influence of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood. Thus, soon the king Hussein condemned the US intervention. Similar was the case of the Palestinian territories (Azzam, 1991).

The most striking attitude was this of Damascus. Syria had also interests on joining the American led coalition not only due the historical hostility between the two Ba'ath parties, but also due Assad's support on Iran side during Iraq-Iran war which had turn Saddam and Assad in vengeful enemies. After all Damascus was afraid that if Saddam got away with Kuwait Syria would be next. So Syria sent troops to defend Saudi Arabia, but abstained the UN coalition against Iraq. Kuwait's invasion broke the Syrian isolation from the Arab arena and established its communication with the West, as Hafez Assad was one of the first Arab leaders to oppose to the Iraqi aggression.

Cairo, as we already saw, was a leading member of US led aggression against Saddam Hussein's regime. The minor uprisings which took place at beginning of the attacks permitted Mubarak to join military operations. In parallel, during the invasion of Kuwait, Mubarak tried to play a role of mediator between Iraq and Kuwait however unsuccessfully. Saddam's surprise attack united Mubarak with other Arab leaders against Iraq to protect Saudi Arabia and liberate Kuwait with 40.000 Egyptian troops taking part in 'Operation Desert Storm'. This aid enabled Mubarak to continue sending Egyptian workers to the Gulf States<sup>843</sup>, a process which was never halt, even when Sadat signed the peace treaty<sup>844</sup>.

The growing protests however in coupled with terrorist attacks inside Egypt put in alarm Mubarak. Yet the benefits of the Egyptian regime emerging from its participation were greater, on economic but also on political terms. Besides the cancelation of an important part of Egypt foreign debts and the international recognition of the Egyptian loyalty, the sending of Egyptian troops in 1991 fully restored the Egyptian relations with Saudi Arabia (Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, 2002: 110). Furthermore, the common attitude of Damascus and Cairo served to the restoration of their relations, making Syria the last Arab country to restore relations with Egypt in the spring of 1990. The death of Hafez Assad in June 2000, however halt this opening (Corm, 2003: 786).

Mubarak continued his efforts to present himself as Arab leader with

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<sup>843</sup> The Palestinians and Yemenis who supported Iraq were forbidden to immigrate to those countries.

<sup>844</sup> During the war Mubarak in the Damascus Declaration expressed a plan of a new Arab security system and Egypt and Syria offered to sent peacekeeping troops in exchange of major economic aid but Kuwait concluded security agreements with USA and thus the Egyptian and Syrian troops were invited to leave.

Washington's support. In one of his public speeches Mubarak stated<sup>845</sup>: *"Our problem in the Arab nation is that if you express your opinion, and this opinion is different from someone else's, you are considered an enemy. In other words, if someone expresses an opinion that is different from mine, we become enemies. There are different opinions throughout the world. But the principle of difference of opinion is not a basis for enmity. Brother, I tell you my opinion, and you tell me yours. I tell you: Beware, you are an Arab state. Your affairs are of interest to me. I care that your country should not be overthrown. I care about your country's standard of living. I care about peace in the area. When I express my opinion, this should not provide a basis for you to say that Egypt is hostile"*.

In parallel Mubarak tried to advance his collaboration with the Arab leaders, under his urge to halt the influence of Islamism on the Egyptian territory<sup>846</sup>. Thus he appealed to the rich Gulf states not to provide any support to the Islamists and launched a regional security cooperation between Tunisia, Algeria, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to coordinate their actions in order to limit radicals' influence (Faksh, 1997: 51). Furthermore as means to underline his mediating role and to alleviate the economic burdens which would increase the influence of his internal rivals he proposed in November 1996, the lifting of economic sanctions against Libya<sup>847</sup> from UN, since the neighbour country was an important destination of Egyptian workers.

### **11.10. Israel-Palestine**

The first Gulf war impacted also the Palestinian question. On the one hand, Washington's victory consolidated further its control on the region, among others by the permanent stay of American troops in Saudi Arabia<sup>848</sup>. The control over the oil either directly or through the allied monarchies of the region, representing one of the main interests of Washington, was therefore established. Consequently, the maintenance of the status quo became one of Washington's priorities fact that implied changes in its relations with Tel Aviv. Following Izquierdo at the end of the Cold War Tel Aviv's enemies were not the same with those of Washington, without this meaning a reduction of American support towards Tel Aviv (Izquierdo, 2005: 163).

On the other hand, the position of Tel Aviv and the Palestinian

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<sup>845</sup> Source: FBIS- Near East and South Asia, August 10, 1990.

<sup>846</sup> Besides the internal problems the Egyptian regime was preoccupied for the advancement of the Islamists all over the Arab world. The assassination of the Algerian president Boudiaf by one of his bodyguards, eliminating the 'impious' leader in order to establish an Islamic state was not to oversee.

<sup>847</sup> Libya was in international isolation with UNSC resolution 742 imposing economic sanctions and abstention of all air companies to reach the Libyan territory.

<sup>848</sup> Washington had been trying since the 70s to obtain military control on the Saudi territory (Corm, 2003: 355).

representatives towards the foreign intervention introduced changes at least on terms of international public opinion. The images of the terrified Israeli's wearing gas masks during Saddam's attacks certainly sparked sympathy emotions. To this the non military interference on the UN operation against the Iraqi regime, after the American pressures, improved further Tel Aviv's image. Yet this prohibition demonstrated to the Tel Aviv its limits, not forming part of the political family of the West.

The popular Palestinian support on Iraq during the Gulf War dismantled their sympathy image created to the West after intifada broke. On the political level, Arafat's ambiguous position, imprisoned between the popular demands and the western positioning, debilitated his authority. The Palestinian leader thus was forced to make further concession in front of Israel. In parallel, the Palestinian pro-Iraqi position generated Israeli reactions, including land expropriations, decrease of permissions for Palestinian workers in Israel, further obstacles to the Palestinian mobility and to the agricultural Palestinian products, demolitions of houses etc. To these measures those of the Arab leaders should be added, who responded to the pro-Iraqi Palestinian support with economic cut offs towards Jordan and the Palestinians<sup>849</sup>, expulsion of 3000 Palestinians living in Kuwait and blocking of the remittances of the Palestinian workers in Kuwait(Gatti, 1991).

The victory of the Republicans and the nomination of George Bush as U.S. president and Baker as Secretary of the State impacted also the Palestinian question since both political figures were not known for their pro-Israeli position, having their interests connected with the petro-monarchies. In this frame, Washington accepted finally an international conference for multilateral and not bilateral negotiations regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict with the presence of Moscow. Washington's initiative created the Israeli discontent, especially to the governmental party, Likud, whose position was 'peace against peace' (Corm, 2003: 645).

In October 1991, thus Madrid Conference took place co-sponsored by the USA and the USSR with the participation of Israeli, Syrian, Lebanese and Jordanian delegations in order to advance communication between the participants for the Palestinian issue. Ironically PLO was excluded from the conference under the pretext of supporting the Iraqi invasion. Palestinians thus were represented by residents of Gaza and West Strip as a joint part of the Jordan delegation. Tel Aviv participated after Washington's pressures interested in showing its commitment to move forward on the Palestinian question. Tel Aviv's participation was rewarded: restoration of the diplomatic relations with Moscow, de facto recognition from the Arab states and reorientation of the negotiations at a

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<sup>849</sup> PLO was receiving important economic aid from the oil monarchies, calculated, during the 1980s, in \$400 millions. However, after the signing of the Oslo Accords, PLO began to receive international aid, which enabled its cleantelist practices serving to maintain Fatah's its protagonist role in the Palestinian society.

bilateral level without recognition of PLO (Izquierdo, 2005: 175).

The Palestinian question had since the Camp David Treaty (I) lost importance in the Egyptian politics. For Mubarak and his allies, under the peace treaty with Israel and the American conditional aid, the use of the Palestinians, by all means a problem without solution, introduced more problems than benefits. Cairo's official readmission in the Arab circle, one of the main objectives of Mubarak and an important one for Washington, left no need to for Mubarak's implication in Israel's affairs<sup>850</sup>. Thus, Cairo verified its role of ceremonial mediator between Palestinians and Tel Aviv, welcoming the majority of the bilateral agreements and negotiations in the Egyptian territory, at the famous Sharm al Sheikh, projecting by this way the democratic and conciliatory image to the international arena, the Arabs and the Egyptian people.

Yet for Mubarak's competitors the Palestinian question continued to be used as tool to extract popular support. Regarding the Madrid Conference, the Supreme Guide of Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood Abu al-Nasr stated<sup>851</sup>: *"The eagerness many Arab leaders are showing to attend the conference for the sell-out of Palestine is alarming. It shows the state to which we have to descend at the hands of these leaders as a result of their departure from Islam and their attempt to keep it out of the battle. If they take part in this conference and sign its unjust resolutions, they will be held responsible at present and before the coming generations for abandoning the Palestinian issue and the al-Aqsa mosque and will bear the guilt of keeping them under occupation"*.

### **11.11. The peace process**

The changes in the international system had an impact in the Israeli elites by a deep division of their interests: on the one hand, there was a part of the high and middle class was interested in the economic liberalisation and their connection with the world trade something that was obviously passing through the ending of the colonialist policies (Yoav Peled and Shafir, 1996: 408-410) and the opening of peace process. On the other hand, another part of Israeli elites appreciated the opening as threatening for their interest being thus favourable in not finding some short of solution.

The Israeli elections of 1992 and the winning of Labour party gave a limited precedence to the elites having interests in promoting the peace process, demonstrating the consensus of the Israeli society to go ahead with the 'territory for peace' process. However, the ascendance of Bill Clinton at the American presidency aided the interests of the second group, since Clinton promised Tel Aviv that the American aid would be constant and disconnected from the

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<sup>850</sup> Mubarak during the conference proposed the freezing of the settlements in exchange of lifting the Arab economic boycott towards Tel Aviv. The offer was not accepted by Tel Aviv but no Arab head state objected Mubarak's proposal (Gazit, 1992).

<sup>851</sup> Quoted in (Campagna, 1996: 287).



colonisation policies (Izquierdo, 2005: 163).

In this context Oslo accords took place, in 1993, after secret negotiations between the Labour Party-Rabin Yitzhak<sup>852</sup>, Simon Peres and the foreign minister Yossi Beilin- and PLO regarding mainly: the future of Jerusalem, security issues, the settlements, borders, refugees and the relations with the neighbour countries. The priorities for each side were not the same as each part had different views, power capacities and interests to serve. Thus the Israelis side with Peres held the idea of 'Gaza first' since the withdrawal from Gaza would not generate significant discontent among the Israelis and at the same time would demonstrate Tel Aviv's good will to collaborate. Arafat on the other hand, contra proposed Jericho first. The two parts found a compromise with Rabin accepting Arafat's proposals under the condition that the rest of the West Bank would be Israeli controlled territory.

The accords, making no big Israeli concessions, were a mixture of the Camp David accords foreseeing administrative Palestinian autonomy and a reduced Allon Plan<sup>853</sup> regarding the territorial terms. However, a big step was taken in these accords by opening the official dialogue between Tel Aviv and PLO, after the previous secret negotiations of the two parts in order to avoid negative Israeli reactions<sup>854</sup>.

Another important product of the accords was that for the first time the two sides, Israeli and Palestinian, were referred to the same peace and to the same solution (Beilin, 1994). With the Oslo accord the two parts mutually recognised PLO and Israel. An additional outcome of this accord was that some members of the Arab League and more particularly Tunisia and Saudi Arabia began to consider the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations with Israel, starting from ending the economic boycott (Shlaim, 2005: 248). As Rabin wrote to Arafat<sup>855</sup>: *"I believe" he said "there is a great opportunity of changing not only the relations between the Palestinians and Israel, but to expand it to the solution of the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries and other Arab peoples"*.

The Oslo accords were not welcomed in the respective internal scenes. Inside Israel, Likud naturally opposed<sup>856</sup> even though the majority of Israelis

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<sup>852</sup> Ironic as it may seem, Rabin, a hero of the Six Days War which ended with the occupation of East Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza, was now negotiating with Arafat, the leader of the Palestinian aspirations.

<sup>853</sup> The Allon Plan named after Yigal Allon, the foreign minister of Israel was proposed in the aftermath of the Six Day War. The Allon Plan designed a new map for Israel allowing a greater military deployment and expansion of the battlefield away from Israeli urban centers. Allon's proposal also included the return of non-strategic areas to Arab states disposed to negotiate peace, while securing the permanent integration of strategic areas to Israel. For more information see (Izquierdo, 2005)

<sup>854</sup> It is important to underline that the contacts with PLO were forbidden by the Israeli law up to January 1993.

<sup>855</sup> Source: International Herald Tribune, 11-12 Sept 1993.

<sup>856</sup> The Israeli colons opposed to the accords, and in the following weeks they made clear their

welcomed Rabin's initiative (Shlaim, 2005: 249). After all according to Álvarez-Ossorio by recognising the existence of Israel in the 78% of the Palestinian original territory of the British mandate, the Palestinians made an 'historic compromise' and Tel Aviv obtained a legal frame for the occupation at least during a period (Álvarez-Ossorio, 2001: 207-208). In the Palestinian front, the accords generated negative reactions also inside the PLO, accusing mainly Arafat for not having accomplished the guarantee of an independent state<sup>857</sup>. However, there were those who perceived the accords as a step forward to the creation of a Palestinian state. The Oslo Treaty raised the prestige of Hamas<sup>858</sup> which was further increased during the second Palestinian intifada (Ternisien, 2007).

The Oslo agreement of course was welcomed in Cairo, since the agreement was practically verifying the rightness of the Egyptian elites to sign the Camp David treaty, as progressively all Arab leaders, including the Palestinians began to realise that Israel's recognition was the only way out.

The Syrian position towards Oslo was to criticise Arafat for his concession because Assad was not in a hurry to find a peace settlement, as the war with Israel was legitimising the Syrian regime and the Syrian presence in Lebanon<sup>859</sup> (Izquierdo, 2005: 198). The Jordan position was similar to the Syrian one as Amman wanted to avoid direct negotiations between PLO and Tel Aviv<sup>860</sup>. Yet Jordanian economic dependency on Washington became a factor of persuasion on accepting the Oslo.

Two years after the Oslo accords Rabin stated in Knesset the two possibilities that the Jewish state had<sup>861</sup> *"The first possibility is to perpetuate the situation as it is, to make proposals with no partner –there never were, and there is no settlement without a partner, to try and eternalize the rule of other people; to continue on a course of never-ending violence and terrorism, which will bring about a political impasse. The second option is to try and find a political solution"*.

In September 1995 Oslo II was signed in Washington, the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Rabin and Arafat in the presence of Clinton, Mubarak and King Hussein of Jordan. The agreement divided

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position through protests and other actions, as attacking Palestinian properties, blocking streets etc, a reaction that it was characterised by some as the Jewish Intifada.

<sup>857</sup> The Palestinian newspapers in Damascus criticised the Oslo Accords characterising them as a loss for the Palestinian national battle and a historical victory of Zionism (Álvarez-Ossorio, 2001: 211).

<sup>858</sup> At the time there were two fractions of Hamas one closed to Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and another who had a more radical attitude.

<sup>859</sup> In the second half of 1993, Tel Aviv came close to a deal with Damascus, which included withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Nevertheless, the parts did not finally come into an agreement, as the Israeli side wanted also normalisation of relations between the two countries and security agreements.

<sup>860</sup> Even so Tel Aviv managed to formally stabilise its relations with Amman signing peace treaty in the Arava desert on 26 October 1994.

<sup>861</sup> Yitzhak Rabin, speech to Knesset 18 April 1994.

the territories into three areas A, B, C; A, exclusively under Palestinian control, C under Israeli control and B under Palestinian civilian control and Israeli security control<sup>862</sup>. Important aspect of this agreement was the transfer of new territories<sup>863</sup> and responsibilities to the Palestinian Authority (PA).

The new negotiations and the accords between Tel Aviv and Palestinians were not welcomed by all Israeli actors<sup>864</sup> or citizens. In 4th of November 1995 Rabin was assassinated<sup>865</sup> by a Jewish extremist 'in the name of God'. Rabin's assassination and the electoral defeat of Peres<sup>866</sup> in May 1996 put an end to Tel Aviv's limited concessions. Victory of Likud with Netanyahu marked "*un antes y un después en el proceso de paz que pasa de la etapa de 'paz a cambio de territorios' a la de 'paz con seguridad'*" (Álvarez-Ossorio, 2001: 249).

The Israeli attitude found a valuable pretext on the Palestinian side as Hamas and Islamic Jihad started to 'sabotage' the peace process with terrorist attacks, targeting Israel's security issue<sup>867</sup>. The terrorist attacks found a common basis of collaboration between Cairo, Tel Aviv and Washington, all of them having placed terrorism as one of their priorities. In this frame, Israeli, Palestinian and American authorities called for an antiterrorist meeting in Sharm al Sheikh demanding the Palestinian Authority to stop such practices.

Indicative to the Israeli preoccupations is the statement of Peres, in 1998, "*[..] la question palestinienne-prétexte des attaques contre Israël-constitue jusqu'à nos jours le danger principal qui pèse sur sa sécurité. [...] Sans deux Etats séparés, un Etat binational sera formé, à la grande frustration des deux peuples. Une tragédie binational surviendra qui, le temps passant, obligera Israël à demeurer armé face*

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<sup>862</sup> Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements: within two months Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho and complete removal within 4 months. A Palestinian pro-Arafat police force would be responsible for internal security, whereas Israel would maintain the handling of external and foreign affairs. The Palestinians in the West Bank would have control over education, health, social welfare, direct taxation and tourism and the forthcoming two years would start negotiations for final agreement over the Territories (Shlaim, 2005: 246).

<sup>863</sup> However, the territory controlled exclusively from PA was representing the 3% of the West Bank.

<sup>864</sup> During the speech of Rabin in the Knesset over the Oslo II, two Likud members opened their black umbrellas, "symbols of Neville Chamberlain's appeasement of Hitler in Munich".

<sup>865</sup> After the Oslo Accords, the extremist rabbis had dissolved the execution of the Israeli Prime Minister for having violated the divine law by giving part of Israel to the Arabs. Rabin's assassination came five day after the Accord Beilin- Abu Mazen, foreseeing the creation of a Palestinian state under the condition of the ending the conflict and it was followed by threats to other pro-peace personalities. Consequently, and in view of Israeli elections, the accord remained secret to avoid electoral losses for Simon Peres.

<sup>866</sup> One of the controversial decisions of Simon Peres, substituting Rabin, was to postpone the Israeli withdrawal from Hebron, fixed in the beginnings of 1996, violating in this way the Oslo Accords. Moreover, one month before the elections decided to increase the Israeli settlements in the West Jerusalem.

<sup>867</sup> After the assassination of Fathi al-Shiqaqi, leader of Islamic Jihad, Hamas responded with a suicide attack in a bus causing 26 deaths and 46 injured in Jerusalem. Few months later, another attack cost the life of 18 persons and 10 injured and a day later Jihad attacked a commercial center in Tel Aviv provoking the death of 14 persons and the injury of another 157.

*aux Palestiniens, dont l'armature pourrait conduire au renouveau du terrorisme*". Of course Peres declarations were not heard, especially since had been replaced in the Presidency of the Labour Party by Ehud Barak.

The necessity to present an advance on the Palestinian question as the attacks of Hamas and other Islamic fraction were continuing, forced first agreement between Likud and Palestinians<sup>868</sup>, with the Hebron Protocol in 15 January 1997, which divided Jerusalem in two parts representing and the second agreement of Wye River Memorandum which foresaw the Israeli withdrawal of 13% of the West Bank.

Meanwhile, the western stance on the Palestinian question had changed once more in favour of the Arab side. In 1996, President Jacques Chirac open criticism on the Israeli attitude towards the Palestinians was welcomed in Ramallah by the Palestinians provoking on the same time the Israeli indignation. As a consequence in the meeting convened in Washington by Bill Clinton the European representation was excluded. (Hollis, 1997: 21). Three years later, European Union decided to declare officially its support to the Palestinians, proposing the creation of an independent Palestinian state, fruit of negotiations between the implicated parts<sup>869</sup>, which ended with the Berlin Declaration<sup>870</sup>.

The European declarations and the political statements had no real impact. The victory of Labour Party in May 1999 victory of Ehud Barak increased the settlement activity. The Camp David II<sup>871</sup> accords was a complete failure as it is historically known, having the only point in common between Palestinians and the Jewish state the recognition on both sides of the necessity for the creation of a Palestinian 'state' in the final agreement, yet each actor having different views on the matter. The basic idea of the Camp David was a possible creation of Palestinian state with Palestinian administrative control but not territorial one, marking a weak possibilities of its survival that would have ended by unifying with Jordan, maintenance of Jerusalem's annexation, control of aerial space and maintenance of the main Israeli settlements.

Israel's position was clear: no return to the 1967 lines, no destruction of the settlements of the 1967 lines, no recognition of a right of return for Palestinian refugees, no removal from the parts of Jerusalem taken in the 1967 war. On the other hand the Palestinian side continued to have its inspirations high, demanding

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<sup>868</sup> In 20 January 1996, elections in the Occupied Territories took place after twenty years, through which Arafat verified his position in front of his only rival Samiha Jalil, receiving 88% of the votes.

<sup>869</sup> Miguel Angel Moratinos, representing UE in the Peace Process of Middle East stated that "una proclamación del Estado palestino en el contexto actual podría condicionar el futuro del proceso de paz. Estamos preparados a ayudar a la AP (Palestinian Authority) y a ofrecerle nuestro apoyo moral y político". Quoted in (Álvarez-Ossorio, 2001: 269).

<sup>870</sup> You can consult the Berlin Declaration at [http://www.eu2007.de/de/News/download\\_docs/Maerz/0324-RAA/English.pdf](http://www.eu2007.de/de/News/download_docs/Maerz/0324-RAA/English.pdf)

<sup>871</sup> Camp David II was an effort of the American administration to overcome the 'Monica Affair' with Bill Clinton using the peace process as means to overcome the internal problems that the scandal had generated.

withdrawal from all occupied territory, including East Jerusalem, creation of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as capital, and recognition of the Palestinian refugees and their right to return to their homes and be compensated.

The different views had as result the mutual denial on a new interim agreement. Once more the failure to find a progressive solution on the matter was attributed to the Palestinians with president Clinton announcing the end of the summit with an implicitly accusation for the Palestinian inflexibility(Hudson, 2005). Clinton's attitude coiled the Palestinians to Arafat, as he stood firm against American and Israeli pressures. It is indicative that Arafat was welcomed as hero by the Palestinians while Barak was criticised for his incapacity to protect the 'Israeli interests'.

The internal completion of the Israeli actors put further obstacles to a limited understanding between the two parts. Ariel Sharon's visit of the Temple Mount generated massive popular Palestinian reactions, known as the intifada al-Aqsa. The brutality with which the Israeli army responded to the new Palestinian uprising and the parallel measures taken- prohibition of commercial transactions, restriction to the basic goods, destruction of the agriculture, and the closing of the Yasser Arafat airport in Gaza- underlined once more the unequal capacities of the two implicated parts.

The Egyptian stance during the negotiations on the Palestinian question continued to be superficial and false. Mubarak presented by Washington as the only Arab leader with real interests in promoting the collaboration between the two sides, continued to exercise his mediating role, welcoming in the Egyptian territory Palestinian- Israeli such as this of 1994, establishing the Israeli gradual withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho in 3 months period or in 1999 the Sharm el Sheikh memorandum , an effort to implement the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Oslo II) as well as all other agreements between the PLO and Israel since September 1993. Yet it seems that the impartiality of the Egyptian regime was not real as in 1999 the Egyptian government authorised for the first time the exportation of Egyptian gas to Israel. The collaboration of the Egyptian side with Tel Aviv in different levels with the parallel Israeli attitude towards the Palestinians demonstrated clearly the real intentions of Cairo.

The victory of George W. Bush signalled the victory of the pro-Israeli lobby and a new golden era of Israel. In this context, the newly elected president did not hesitate to name Ariel Sharon "*homme de la paix*" (Corm, 2003: 890).

## **12. Breaking the fear**

### 12.1. Introduction

Since 2000, Egypt has entered in a new era, with the introduction of new actors on the power competition as well as the increasing importance of capital as power resource. The advanced age and health problems of Hosni Mubarak, led to the questioning of his succession, emerging for the first time in the history of the Egyptian republic. Against this backdrop, since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the regime's internal balance had changed as a result of the deep division of the regime into two main rival groups, competing to preserve their role in Egyptian politics: one made up mainly of bureaucrats and officials, headed by Omar Suleiman, head of the powerful *mukhabarat*, and another that included the main business stakeholders, under the apparent leadership of Gamal Mubarak, the youngest son of the former rais.

The old guard, along with Omar Suleiman, opposed to the nomination of Gamal Mubarak, given that the interests of the former were linked with the preservation of the interventionist state. On the other hand, the new guard was struggling to increase its power capacities, mainly connected to private capital, pushing for the liberalisation of the Egyptian economy.

The competition between these two fractions was subscribed in a frame of alliance, since both groups were aware of the power losses in case of complete partition. Therefore the two groups had a common interest in maintaining regime's hegemonic role, and this could only be assured through collaboration between the two.

The two guards 'old' and 'new' had to share power not only among them but with other forces in order to remain active in power competition. Consequently, other extra-regime forces will increase their presence, at least for near future. Following Brysk: *"When power-holders lose legitimacy, other power-holders withdraw support, institutions lose cohesion and subordinates may directly confront authority figures. This can lead to attempts at various types of social change, from pre-emptive reform to civil disobedience to revolution"* (Brysk, 1995: 581). This necessary symbiosis increased the intensity of power competition which determined the weakening of the Egyptian regime.

Along with regime's internal competition came this of the Muslim Brotherhood, the other primary power group of Egypt. The disarray of opinions inside the organisation as well as its increasing role in the Egyptian society raised the competition among Brotherhood's leadership. Brotherhood's 'conservative' and 'reformist' wings feeded a strong competition, with the two groups struggling in order to maintain or increase their respective influence. Thus, on the one hand we found the leading figures of the organisation interested in maintaining the status quo and on the other hand, the reformist fraction proposing the separation between preaching and politics as means to increase its influence on the

organisation.

Besides the internal power competition and sometimes because of it, during this decade Egypt witnessed major incidents and changes. Firstly we can mention major national tragedies of Egypt. In February hundreds of people died when a fire broke out on a train, killing more than 370 people. Almost four years later, in August 2006, at least 58 people were killed and nearly 150 injured in a collision between two rush-hour trains. Six months earlier one of the deadliest accidents took place, when a ferry carrying about 1,400 passengers from Saudi Arabia to Egypt sank in the Red Sea, causing the death to more than 1,000 people.

During this decade the terrorist attacks did not lack, affecting mostly Egyptians and tourists and not the regime since all of them were effectuated in touristic areas, provoking temporally limited halt of tourism, without however devastating consequences. The major terrorist attacks on Egyptian soil were this in Sinai Peninsula against Israeli tourists (2004); in the Red Sea resort of Sharm al-Sheikh (2005); in the resort of Dahab (2006); in Cairo (2009).

In parallel came the sectarian classes, not an unknown phenomenon in the country of Nile but in escalation during the last years of this decade. The repression that the Egyptians were submitted along with the international context created in the aftermath of 11-S attacks in New York inevitably radicalised parts of the Egyptian society.

The bombing of the al-Qidiseen church in Alexandria in New Years Eve in which twenty one Copts were killed and almost a hundred were injured was one of the biggest attacks against the Coptic minority, marking the highest death toll since the massacre of Copts at the village of El-Kosheh on 1st January 2000. Other sectarian classes took place, as it was the case of Naj Hammadi, where a car pulled up and gunfire was sprayed into the crowd or this in Saint Mary's Coptic Church in Giza where at least six Coptic Christians and a security official were killed. In parallel came the clashes between security forces and Bedouins in Sinai, which left several tribesmen dead.

Meanwhile, the Egyptians began to 'blossom'. Starting with the Second Palestinian intifada, Egyptians began showing signs of their will to improve their living conditions and obtain progressively an active role on power relations. In Cairo as well as in different cities of the country, important efforts were made in this decade targeting on the one hand improvement of the working conditions and on the other the political opening of the country. The creation of Kefaya and other political platforms as well as National 'National Association for Change' represented the concretisation of the Egyptians' efforts to overcome regime's obstacles and become subjects in power relations.

During this decade we witnessed also institutional changes though the celebration of the first presidential elections in the history of the Egyptian republic with multiple candidates, institutionalised though the constitutional amendments of 25 May 2005. Two years later another constitutional reform took place with the amendment of 34 articles of the Egyptian constitution. Though this



regime's control over the Egyptian society was intensified putting an end to the political opening initiated the previous years.

In this last decade of Mubarak's mandate two parliamentary elections took place. The first in 2005 were characterised as relatively free process through which Muslim Brotherhood participating with independent candidates won 20% of the parliamentary seats, seats despite the obstacles imposed by the regime. Five years later elections took place in an atmosphere of violence, fraud and low turnout.

All the above were subscribed in an international context deeply altered after the attacks on the American territory, attributed to Muslim fanatics of the al-Qaeda. George W. Bush's doctrine and his three wars against Afghanistan, terrorism, and Iraq marked a new era for the world and put the basis for a 'clash of civilisations'.

The American invasion of Iraq and the unnailing of Saddam Hussein marked important changes in the Middle East in the absence of strong regime in the region. In this context, Teheran increased its influence in the Muslim World through provocative actions. The reinforcement of the 'evil' actors of the Middle East, Hezbollah and Hamas, gave a valuable pretext to Tel Aviv to put forward a military attack against Lebanon and increase its authoritarianism against Palestinians. The American pronounced goals to reinforce democracy to Arab states without however accepting democratic procedures increased Tel Aviv's capacities in the absence of a regional power capable of responding to the Israeli arrogance. Thus, besides the Israeli attack against Lebanon and the genocide practices against Palestinians, the world witness the Israeli raid against six ships of the "Gaza Freedom Flotilla" on 31 May 2010 in international waters of the Mediterranean Sea, in which nine activists were killed and dozens were injured.

The death of the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in 2004 impacted also the region. Mahmud Abbas' lack of power increased the problems of the already weak Palestinians among others through the violent clashes between Hamas and Fatah in addition to Israeli attacks. The construction of the separation wall and the foreclosure of the Gaza strip, controlled by Hamas, deteriorated further the inhuman conditions that Palestinian population had been facing.

To the Palestinian tragedy we can add this of the Sudanese and the Iraqis people all of them being victims of military clashes, covered under the pretext of democracy, independency or justice. And let us not forget the crimes against civilians all over the region in the name of stability of their authoritarian regimes.

After this brief review we can move on to the analysis of power relations of Egypt during the last decade of Mubarak's mandate. In the present chapter our aim is to apply once more the already exposed theoretical framework in the Egyptian case. In difference to the previous chapters, we are not to follow a chronological order, as means to emphasis on power dynamics. Moreover, the analysis will be structured on actors and not on power resources.

## 12.2. *Egyptian Elites*

### 12.2.1. Mubarak's regime

Until Mubarak's fall, the Egyptian power scene had been dominated by a limited number of elites related to the President of the Republic, Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, who ruled the country for 30 years. He and his allies controlled almost the totality of the significant power resources, mainly through the control of the state. The political system was highly concentrated on the President of the Republic who was both head of state and head of government, as well as head of the governmental National Democratic Party (NDP), the direct heir of the Arab Socialist Union (ASU).

The main power resource for Mubarak and his allies was to be found in the control over the state apparatus. Executive and legislative power had been monopolised by the president as a result of the centralised presidential system and emergency law that was applied without cessation after Sadat's assassination. Regarding the judiciary power, the law 66/1943, amended by the law 35/1984 affirmed its independence, though establishing a series of restrictions<sup>872</sup>.

The two chambers of the Egyptian parliament, People's Assembly (Majlis al Sha'b) and the Consultative Assembly (Majlis al-Shura) are under the almost exclusive control of Mubarak and his allies through the NDP. The presence of opposition parties at the Egyptian parliament had been particularly limited and touched one of its lowest levels since the elections of 2010, in which opposition forces in their totality occupy the 3 percent of the parliamentary seats<sup>873</sup>.

During his long stay in power, Mubarak had been using different kinds of mechanisms in order to safeguard the loyalty of his political allies, who were occupying a secondary position on the power hierarchy. One way of achieving his goal was by putting unpopular ministers on public trials, as means to keep under his personal control NDP's political actors. Scandals were serving as valuable pretext to oust unwanted political actors. This was the case of the ex-Minister of

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\* Part of this chapter is already published (Kemou and Azaola, 2009).

<sup>872</sup> According to the article 9/4, the minister of justice has the last word regarding the assignation or renewal of the conditions of judges' in the Tribunal of Appellations. The same law (art.78) establishes the existence of a department of judiciary inspection in the ministry of justice to control the judges' actions, their promotions and transfers, under the minister's control (Gohar, 2006).

<sup>873</sup> The limited presence of opposition parties at the Parliament of 2010 was the result of generalised fraud as well as the boycotting of the process by many opposition parties. According to the final results NDP won 440 seats out of 508 seats. New Wafd Party, which officially withdrew from the run-offs, occupies six, Tagammu Party five seats and the parties Al-Ghad, Al-Gil, Al-Salam and Social Justice won one seat each. Finally, Muslim Brotherhood won a seat for Mohamed Ashour, who had entered the run-offs despite the group's decision to withdraw.

You can consult the results at [www.observatorioelectoral.es/en/EstadoCliente.aspx?IdEstado=20&pagina=estadoPerfilCliente](http://www.observatorioelectoral.es/en/EstadoCliente.aspx?IdEstado=20&pagina=estadoPerfilCliente)

Agriculture, Youssef Wali, one of the longest lived ministers (1982-2004), who sentenced to 15 years of prison for permitting the importation of carcinogenic pesticide<sup>874</sup>, known as the 'fertilizer scandal'. Hosni Mubarak declared "*no one in Egypt is above the law. The rule of law, must apply to all kinds of officials, whether they are members of the National Democratic Party (NDP) or not, as long as charges are being levelled against them*", opening practically the way to investigate the ex minister.

Indicative is also the case of Amr Moussa<sup>875</sup>, who became dangerous for Mubarak's plans of succession. The popularity of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, due to his 'aggressive' attitude towards Tel Aviv<sup>876</sup>, made many to consider Moussa as the 'number two' of the regime (Abdelnasser, 2004: 131). The growing popular support of the Minister followed by rumours, foreign and domestic, that if the Egyptian could really choose for a president they would choose Moussa, preoccupied Mubarak. Thus, in 2002, Mubarak's colleague was 'promoted' Secretary General of the Arab League, a post giving no real power.

Control over the administration had been favoured by a policy of expansion of public employment, which permitted the incorporation of new graduates into the job market by guaranteeing a post in the administration on finishing the university studies<sup>877</sup>. Although this state obligation disappeared *de facto* in 1990, a post at the public sector continued to be the dream for many Egyptians in a country of high rate of unemployment and poverty. Mubarak's regime thus relied on the gratitude of civil servants and their families' networks to maintain relative social peace and certain control over the population. The offer of employment to a significant number of Egyptians<sup>878</sup>, as well as the job offer at the army furnished a fix salary at the employees and on the same time provided the regime with social support, because Egyptian imaginary still reserves an important role for public officials, residual of colonisation era (Ayubi, 2006).

Furthermore, and in spite of the pressures from the international banking entities, a system of subsidies for alimentary products of staple necessity had been maintained, representing one of the tools used by the regime to avoid social unrest. Another power resource used by Mubarak's regime had been the management and clientelistic distribution of foreign aid, especially from the USA and the Gulf countries, Egypt being the second largest recipient of American aid after Israel.

The impetus provided by the receipts of the Bretton Woods institutions and

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<sup>874</sup> For more information see <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/755/feature.htm>

<sup>875</sup> Amr Moussa publically stated his will to present himself as candidate at the first presidential elections in the post Mubarak era.

<sup>876</sup> The Moussa mania took huge dimensions with the song of the Egyptian pop singer, Shaaban Abdel Rahim, "*I hate Israel and I love Moussa*", which became a popular hit in Egypt.

<sup>877</sup> Decree 425/1962 which became law 85/1973.

<sup>878</sup> In 2001, more than 5.2 millions of Egyptian were working at the public sector.

the economic reforms of the *Infitah* policy fostered by president Sadat, led to the emergence of new economic actors linked to the private sector, as we have been able to see in the previous chapters. Mubarak, following Sadat's steps, had been trying to exert control over these new economic elites, whose importance was in continuous increase along with the privatisation process.

The attempt to liberalise the Egyptian market intensified in the 1990s, as we saw, without however entailing the complete disappearance of public companies. Egypt has been a country that had been undergoing a constant growth of bureaucratisation<sup>879</sup> and Mubarak, aware of the importance of maintaining control over the public sector for the stability of the regime, had managed to combine the liberalising policies established by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) whilst preserving the importance of the public sector.

Bureaucratisation and liberalisation led to the symbiosis of two parallel systems: one relating to the state machinery and the other, linked to sectors of private capital. The boundary between the two had been ambiguous and entailed a tight relation between the respective elites since the prosperity of the economic elites based on private capital depended on their relations with the state holders. This practice was giving the regime the capacity to preserve the control over private capital and the elites connected to it.

Control over the press and the principal media had been used by the regime as a tool to ensure control over society. Egyptian radio and television had been under almost total state ownership. In an attempt to regain the audience that had been lost by the pan-Arab channel, in 1998 Mubarak launched the first Arab satellite, the Nilesat 101, which became Nilesat 102 in 2000 and was broadcasting around 400 channels by 2007. In addition, private channels appeared in 2001 that have managed to elude some degree of governmental control, among them: *Dream TV* –in which the Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU) participates–, *Al Mehwar* and *Rotana*. Yet all private channels were limited to the domain of entertainment broadcasting mainly shop operas and video clips.

However, the monopoly over visual information was broken by the introduction of the *Al Jazeera* channel via satellite in the 1990s. The channel which was funded by the Emir and the Qatar royal family has been considered as the first 'free' television in the Arab world on account of its programs of open debates on political and social matters (Guaaybess, 2005). Indicative of the fears that generated the 'free' information is the meeting of the Ministers of Communication in the frame of the Arab League, in February 2008. Seeing that the national measures to fight against a transnational media were ineffective, the

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<sup>879</sup> Ayubi calculates this growth according to four criteria: the increase of the number of administrative units, of the number of civil servants, the increase of ordinary public expenses and of civil servants' wages (Ayubi, 2006).

twenty two ministers, with the exception of the Lebanese and the Qatari, met up in order to coordinate their actions and adopted a protocol according to which channels cannot '*offend the leaders, or the national and religious symbols*' nor '*threaten national peace, national unity, public order and traditional values*'<sup>880</sup>.

The written press had always been strongly controlled by the regime ever since Nasser's rule. Despite the plurality of the written press, Mubarak's regime hadn't hesitated to use different tactics to ensure control over information, from applying the legislation provided by the emergency law that allows journalists' imprisonment for libel against the president and his family<sup>881</sup>, to imposing censorship on subjects considered taboo or closing down newspapers for 'threatening social peace' and 'endangering national security'.

Education was another tool used by the regime to strengthen its control over Egyptian society. Egyptian university had been a space for political activism and protest that the regime was trying to keep under control. Its classrooms and corridors reflect the political climate experienced at a national scale (Azaola, 2006). Public ownership of all education centres was affected by the emergence of private schools and universities under Mubarak's<sup>882</sup> mandate. The creation of ten new private universities in the last decade was aiming the satisfaction of market's needs on executives in the private sector.

The above underlined regime's primary role on power structure. Up to Mubarak's fall the president and his allies had been controlling directly the state apparatus and the main economic reserves of the country. On the same time the ousted president was able to control the secondary elites through mechanisms of sabotage. Last but certainly not least though different clientelist mechanisms the regime managed to obtain social support at an elevated degree.

### **12.2.2. Political Actors**

Political scene was dominated by Hosni Mubarak and his close allies, through a highly concentrated political system. Egypt counted with a bicameral parliament consisting of a partially elected upper house, the Shura Council (*Majlis al-Shura*) and a mostly elected lower house, the People's Assembly (*Majlis al-Sha'b*)<sup>883</sup>, both submitted under the control of NDP. Following Abou Elela Mady<sup>884</sup>,

<sup>880</sup> *El País*, February 15<sup>th</sup> 2008 information obtained at

[www.elpais.com/articulo/internacional/Cerrojaso/paises/arabes/televisiones/jazeera/elpepuint/20080215elpepiint\\_12/Tes](http://www.elpais.com/articulo/internacional/Cerrojaso/paises/arabes/televisiones/jazeera/elpepuint/20080215elpepiint_12/Tes)

<sup>881</sup> Indicative of this are the sentences of 13 September 2007, including four editors were sentenced for the crime of insult and slander to one year in prison "*for defaming the president and his son Gamal*".

<sup>882</sup> According to law nº 101/1992, Egyptian private universities must be founded by presidential decree after approval by the Council of Ministers, and more than half of its capital must be Egyptian (Azaola, 2006).

<sup>883</sup> You can consult the legislature regarding the two cameras at [http://www.cabinet.gov.eg/AboutEgypt/Egyptian\\_constitution.aspx](http://www.cabinet.gov.eg/AboutEgypt/Egyptian_constitution.aspx)

members of the parliament had been without real role, and thus forced to accept all government's proposals.

Egypt also counted with a multiparty system, established by the former President Anwar el-Sadat. Because the return to the multiparty system came, as we saw in the previous chapters, under Sadat's necessity to secure Washington's support and to dismantle the rival power centre of the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), opposition parties had been lacking ever since their foundation autonomy. Up to January 2011, Egypt counted with approximately 25 political parties, the majority of which were practically inexistent<sup>885</sup>. The most important parties, besides the NDP, were: New Wafd, Tagammu', Nasserist party, and Al-Ghad.

The opposition parties and their leaders were not occupying a primary role on power competition. Considered by many as 'one man show', parties did not represent an important power resource<sup>886</sup>. Political leaders' limited capacities was the outcome of many and different factors. Firstly we can underline the restrictions that the political parties had been facing all along Mubarak's mandate. The emergency state, imposed by Nasser and only temporally lifted the last year of Sadat's mandate, was cancelling all possibilities for the opposition leaders to acquire an active role. Among others, the emergency law: imposed restrictions on the freedom of assembly, permitted the military ruler the power to monitor the newspapers, booklets and other publications of expressing opinion, and in case that it was considered necessary, to confiscate and stop circulating these publications, and authorised the arrest and detention of suspects without the need to follow the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code<sup>887</sup>.

In addition to the emergency state, the political parties were subjected to the Political Parties law, which determined among others the financial resources of the political parties. According to the law<sup>888</sup> *"The resources of the party shall consist in subscriptions of its members, financial support received from the State and the donations by Egyptian natural persons"*. Regarding the financial support provided by the state the law determined *"1. LE 100,000 annually for every party for 10 years. Beyond this period, for a party to be eligible to such amount, it shall have at least one seat won by one of its candidates in the elections of the People's Assembly or the Shura Council;"* and *"2. LE 5,000 for every seat won by the party's candidate in the elections of the People's Assembly or the Shura Council up to a*

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<sup>884</sup> Personal interview with Abou Elela Mady, founder of Wasat party and co-founder of the Kefaya movement.

<sup>885</sup> You can consult the complete list of the political parties in Egypt <http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Politics/Parties/Parties/>

<sup>886</sup> According to Abou Elela Mady, founder of Wasat party and co-founder of the Kefaya movement, NDP is also a weak party. Personal interview.

<sup>887</sup> You can consult the emergency law in English at <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2010/09/09/emergency-law>

<sup>888</sup> <http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Politics/PElection/election/Laws/040202040000000005.htm> Source

*maximum of 500,000 for each party*". Finally, regarding the private finance *"The party may not accept any contribution, privilege or benefit from any foreigner, any foreign or international body or from any judicial person type even if it enjoys Egyptian citizenship"*.

It is needless to underline that such restrictions were applied exclusively to the opposition parties. As Al-Mashat commented in regards to use of public buildings and transportation *"the reality is that all those facilities were fully utilized by the NDP in presidential, legislative as well as local elections"* (Al-Mashat, 2008). The unequal treatment of the parties was deriving from regime's control over the Committee of Political Parties Affairs, organ responsible for supervising the 'correct' behaviour of the parties. This Committee was composed by the head of the Majlis al-Shura, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Interior, the Minister of Majlis al-Sha'b and three ex-judges or their deputies who were not affiliated to any political party and were chosen by the President of the Republic. The direct control of Mubarak over the committee was therefore guaranteed.

The Committee of Political Parties Affairs had been also responsible for approving the formation of parties, as well as the suspension of a party's activities. Consequently, unwanted parties could be blocked before to begin their activities as it the case of Wasat party<sup>889</sup>. Descendent of the Muslim Brotherhood, Wasat had been trying in vanity since 1996 to acquire permission in order to create the first Islamist party and cover according to his official founder, Abou Elela Mady, the lack of the modern Islamist trend in Egyptian politics<sup>890</sup>. However, the party's application had been continuously rejected on 'legal' grounds of 'failing to add to existing parties' or lacking the necessary number of members. The continuous denial towards Wasat underlined not only regime's control over politics but also Muslim Brotherhood's influence on the regime.

Another representative example is the case of the Labour party, whose activities were suspended as well as the publication of the party's mouthpiece<sup>891</sup>, on the grounds that the party had been facing internal disputes. It is not a coincidence that the decision of the Parties' Committee came after the criticism that the party was exercising against the Minister of Culture<sup>892</sup> Hosni Farouk, close associate of the Mubarak family.

The restrictions that the political parties had been facing made difficult their connection with the grassroots. In a country wherein the audiovisual sector remains under state's control the opposition parties had unequal opportunities to

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<sup>889</sup> Wasat in April 2000 obtained the status of NGO.

<sup>890</sup> Personal interview with Abou Elela Mady, founder of the Wasat party and co-founder of Kefaya movement.

<sup>891</sup> Al Shaab has only electronic format after the closing of the newspaper from the regime.

<sup>892</sup> The Minister of Culture declared that hijab, "is a step backward for Egyptian women" a statement that provoked a lot of reactions inside Egypt. See <http://arabist.net/archives/2006/11/22/farouk-hosni-wont-step-out-of-his-house/>

reach the masses<sup>893</sup>. Indicatively, we can mention the media coverage of the political parties during the parliamentary elections of 2005. The NDP candidates reached 69% cover while candidates of Tagammu', Al-Ghad and New Wafd received only 9%, 6% and 1% respectively<sup>894</sup>. Consequently, the opposition parties had to rely on their own newspapers, whose impact is particularly limited. New Wafd's mouthpiece, Al-Wafd, which is the most diffused after the state controlled ones, reaches only the 3.4% of the population<sup>895</sup> (ABDEL-MEGID, 2005). It is easily understood that the diffusion of *Al Ahaly* (Tagammu'), *Al Araby* (Nasserist) and *Al Shaab* (Labour Party) was even more marginalised.

Besides the obstacles imposed by the regime, there were other factors contributing to the parties' weakness. Fahmy highlights the following internal factors: leadership longevity, lack of democracy and the authoritarian style of leadership, internal divisions and fractionalisation, intolerance and repressive character of political parties, inability to unite in their stand against the government, inability produce the needed political cadres, failure to establish communication channels with the grassroots, inability to develop specific ideologies and political outlooks etc(Fahmy, 2002 : 95-97).

Clientelist relation between opposition leaders and the regime represented an important factor of political actors' weakness. Offering no real alternatives the majority of the parties had in different times gave their support to the regime<sup>896</sup>, in order to remain active in the political scene. This was the case of Tagammu' in 1990, the only party that accepted to participate in the parliamentary elections, despite the general agreement of the totality of the opposition forces to boycott the elections, as means to embarrass the regime. In this way "*Tagammu became the first opposition party to enter into the regime's clientelist structure*" (Kassem, 1999:103). According, Shokr<sup>897</sup>, veteran member of Tagammu' and one of the members that opposed to the party's collaboration, during the decade of the 90s all parties collaborated with the regime.

Repetition is the mother of learning. In the parliamentary elections of 2010, the calls of ElBaredei and the National Association for Change fell into empty when the major opposition parties and Muslim Brotherhood announced their respective official decision to participate in the electoral race<sup>898</sup>. The electoral

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<sup>893</sup> It is useful to underline that the percentage of illiteracy in Egypt is relatively low and it was calculated at 39.4 % in 2007. However, it is strange that the previous year (2006) this percentage was considerably lower according to OECD.

<sup>894</sup> The bias regards publicly and private media.

<sup>895</sup> The number of the readers is probably more elevated, if we take into consideration that the newspaper is 'public' good, e.g. one copy is read by more than one reader.

<sup>896</sup> Essam Shiha, member of the New Wafd's Supreme Council, admitted that the only difference between New Wafd and the NDP is found in the priorities of the two parties. The former considers that the political reform has to precede the economic one, whereas the NDP see the economic reform as the first step for the political. Personal interview.

<sup>897</sup> Personal interview with Abdel-Ghaffar Shokr.

<sup>898</sup> <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2010/1007/eg5.htm>



fraud and violence that characterised the first electoral round pushed New Wafd and Muslim Brotherhood the last minute withdrawal from the runoffs. Even so the breaking of coalition had been already achieved, increasing at the same time the Egyptians' deception.

Another case of collaboration between the regime and opposition leaders was this of the newly formed al-Ghad party. Ayman Nour, the president of the party and ex-member of the New Wafd, had been accused by many of dealing with the regime to contest Hosni Mubarak at the presidential elections as means to weaken New Wafd's candidate<sup>899</sup>. Suspicious seems also Washington's interest on Nour's case, presented by the American press and research centres<sup>900</sup> as the secular alternative, while many Egyptian journalists and politicians<sup>901</sup>, consider Nour a bluff, for his inconstant political credos. The secondary role of Ayman Nour was proven by his disappearance from the media's attention once a new political figure, Mohamed ElBaradei<sup>902</sup>, made his entrance at the Egyptian political scene.

The internal conflicts were also facilitating the regime to remain the main actor of the political game. Almost the totality of the political parties in Egypt had faced internal divisions that took extensive publicity, cleverly used by the regime. As Ammar Ali Hassan<sup>903</sup>, director Middle East Studies and Research Centre of Cairo commented *"Bien sûr le régime profite de ces dissensions. Et cela soit pour occuper l'opinion publique soit pour donner aux formations d'opposition l'image de partis incapables de jouer un rôle efficace dans la vie politique. C'est pourquoi, l'intervention gouvernementale a toujours tendance à maintenir le statu quo et non à résoudre les problèmes"*.

All the above contributed to the complete disconnection of the legalised opposition parties with the Egyptian people, which determined on its turn their limited presence on the Egyptian parliament. Salah Eissa<sup>904</sup>, head of the opposition parties' coordination committee in 2000 said: *"The fact that the electorate chose to vote for individuals and not parties reflects a lack of trust in all political parties. This, I believe, is due to the appalling performance of the opposition in the outgoing parliament, where it seemed to have been tamed by the government"*. However, the problem did not regard mainly the performance of the parties inside the parliament but their field work and their dis-connection with the grassroots.

The increasing number of independent candidates demonstrates the lack of trust towards the political parties but also the tradition of personification of

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<sup>899</sup> Personal interview with Essam Shiha, member of the New Wafd's Supreme Council.

<sup>900</sup> See for instance (Lee, 2006)

<sup>901</sup> Personal interview with Wagdi Abdel Aziz, Director of the South Centre of Human Rights.

<sup>902</sup> Mohamed Mustafa ElBaradei is a former Egyptian diplomat, having served in Egypt's Ministry of Foreign Service before joining the IAEA in 1984. Latter he became was the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) from December 1997 to November 2009. He was also awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005.

<sup>903</sup> Source <http://hebdo.ahram.org.eg/arab/ahram/2008/7/30/doss2.htm>

<sup>904</sup> Quoted in (Abdel-Latif, 2000).

politics. The independent candidates were either popular or charismatic in their district, or backed by specific groups mainly tribes or their rich enough to conduct a luxurious electoral campaign (Fahmy, 2002 : 91).

The presence of wealthy businessmen at the Egyptian parliament had been facilitated by their economic resources. According to al-Ahram<sup>905</sup> citing a report, the price rate for gaining a seat on the parliament of 2005 was between E£3 million and E£15 million, in addition to substantial sums offered to the NDP in the form of donations. Representative is the case of NDP's Mustafa El-Sallab, who was running as candidate in Nasr City. Al Ahram weekly wrote<sup>906</sup>: *"Dressed in green<sup>907</sup>, holding El-Sallab's picture and dancing to music, the supporters waved at passers-by and urged them to stop and vote. They also handed out posters and flyers promoting the prominent businessman. Buses parked on the adjacent road unloaded workers from El-Sallab's factories, who hastily voted for their boss"*.

In Mubarak's Egypt therefore the only political elites who had the capacity to modify the political rules were those who are connected with the regime, either members of the NDP or 'independents' who after their election collaborated with the regime. 'Outsiders' sometimes appeared in the political scene, influencing in small degree, the rules of the game. This seems to be the case of Mohamed ElBaradei. The former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency and Nobel Peace Prize winner returned to Egypt in February 2010 with aspirations of becoming the next president of the Egyptian Republic. Since his arrival, ElBaradei managed to attract the interest of political actors and the Egyptian and foreign public opinion. Under the umbrella of 'National Association for Change' in few months he accomplished congregating the major opposition groups, including Muslim Brotherhood, and all opposition parties, with the exception of New Wafd, Nasserist and Tagammu'.

Silencing political actors was a method frequently used against the regime's rivals. Talaat El-Sadat, independent MP and a nephew of former president Anwar El-Sadat. Being member of the opposition, Talaat El- Sadat was sentenced to one year in prison for defaming the Egyptian armed forces. More precisely Sadat blamed the Egyptian army and its officers for not preventing his uncle's assassination (Sharp, 2007). The regime's response to such accusations<sup>908</sup> was to strip off Sadat of his parliamentary immunity and he was sent to trail before a military court<sup>909</sup>.

All the above demonstrate that political field, in its narrow sense, had been controlled by a reduce number of elites, while we can identify more plurality on

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<sup>905</sup> Available at <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2007/831/eg13.htm>

<sup>906</sup> Available at [weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/769/eg1.htm](http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/769/eg1.htm)

<sup>907</sup> It has to be remembered that green is the colour of Islam.

<sup>908</sup> Remember the rumours regarding Mubarak's role on Sadat's assassination.

<sup>909</sup> Three years later, in June 2010 the Mohamed Anwar Esmat el-Sadat, Talaat's brother, was denied license from Parties Committee to form 'Reform and development' party.

what regards secondary elites. In other words, the number of figures who had the effective capacity to determine the political scene was very limited, determining in this way a highly hierarchical structure. More particularly we can refer to Mubarak and his close allies who are the main players of the game, forming an oligarchic structure. Following Kassem *“Indeed, as the case of Mubarak’s Egypt illustrates, an authoritarian regime, monopoly of various forms of patronage can provide it with the flexibility to utilise even a potentially threatening process such as multi-party elections very much to its own advantage”* (Kassem, 1999: 183).

### 12.2.3. Economic Actors

Egypt is one of the first Arab countries to follow the economic liberalism, starting officially with Sadat’s *infitah*. Nevertheless, after almost forty years of economic ‘opening’ there are still no clear borders between private capital and state, due the severe control of state elites over private capital. This control inevitably gave a secondary role to economic elites and consequently decreased the importance of private capital as power resource. Following Fu’ad Mursi<sup>910</sup>, *“In all human societies, wealth is usually source of power, in Egypt it is power that is usually the source of wealth”*.

Interweaved relations between state and capital, and state’s supremacy as power resource, is one of the main characteristics of the Egyptian power structure. However, the capacity of state holders to control the rest of the actors had been fading over the years. Foreign pressure for liberalising Egyptian economy, coming mainly from Washington, is regarded as one of the main reasons for this dynamic. Yet Mubarak’s regime was resisting firmly in maintaining state’s primary role on power structure.

Regime’s capacities and interests is demonstrated among others by the fact that since 1991 that the privatisation programme was implemented until the end of 2004, only the 38% from the 314 public companies were privatised<sup>911</sup>(Kenawy, 2009). The government, always under the presumable imperative to preserve the social and political stability, decided that public firms connected with national security, situated in areas with high rate of unemployment or those producing public goods of high necessity, have a monopoly position considered to be strategic.

Thus, until 2005 when the name of Gamal Mubarak as successor in the Egyptian presidency began to be pronounced clearly, Egyptian government found necessary to maintain the public control over the oil sector, the Suez Canal, the telecommunication network, the railways, the military industry, Egypt Air,

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<sup>910</sup> Egyptian Marxist. Quoted in (AYUBI, N., 2006: 48).

<sup>911</sup> The main organ responsible for the privatisation of the public companies was the Ministry of Public Companies, whose authorities were transferred to the Ministry of Investment (2004) under the Rachid Mohamed Rachid, close associate of Gamal Mubarak, who took over the entire Asset Management Programme.

insurance companies and the banks. These public companies held about 85% of the total assets of the private sector. Curiously, the pillars of Egyptian economy, in terms of national income were: raw materials rents coming mainly from oil and gas<sup>912</sup>, location rents regarding primarily Suez Canal<sup>913</sup> and SUMED pipeline, foreign rent mostly referred to military and budgetary aid, workers' remittances and tourism revenues<sup>914</sup>.

Egyptian regime had been able, therefore, to preserve its primary role, under the threat of instability. Liberalisation of the Egyptian economy was contrasted with political stability, a necessary precondition for the furthering the interests of the main elites, including the economic ones. As Magda Shahin<sup>915</sup> observed, *"Egypt has never tried the shock therapy"* because the country cannot afford instability for the sake of Egypt but also of the region.

The secondary role of private capital vis-à-vis state controllers had not impeded the creation of powerful 'capitalists' with important economic wealth on their disposal. Indicative is the case of Naguib Sawiris who was at the first rank of Africa's most wealthy persons and at the 62<sup>nd</sup> position in a world wide scale, in 2007<sup>916</sup>. Needless to underline that the family Sawiris maintained close relations with the President Hosni Mubarak.

The entry of Gamal Mubarak at the power competition accelerated the privatisation of state owned enterprises. The selling of Bank of Alexandria (BOA) to the Italian Sanpaolo IMI (70.25%) was the first privatisation in Egypt of a state-owned bank. Government's decision was criticised severely by members of the Egyptian parliament. Observers questioned the government's decisions wondering *'on the potential for a large number of bank employees being laid off, the lack of transparency in the privatization procedures and the nationality of the bidders'*<sup>917</sup>. The internal competition and the dissatisfaction of the old guard, as well as the reactions of opposition<sup>918</sup> blocked in the following years the

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<sup>912</sup> The economic importance of the gas sector increased significantly with the founding of reserves at the Delta of Nil, in 2006, positioning Egypt the 6<sup>th</sup> exporter of liquid gas in the world (Marcou, 2008: 55).

<sup>913</sup> Admiral Ahmed Ali Fadel, the head of the Suez Canal Authority, stated that Suez Canal revenues during September 2010 amounted to \$410.2 million.

<sup>914</sup> Regarding tourism and the importance that the sector took over the years we can mention the receipts of the sector rose from \$304 million in 1982-83 to \$6.429 billion in the period 2004-05, making the tourism the most important source of foreign exchange for Egypt (Richter and Steiner, 2007).

<sup>915</sup> Personal interview with Magda Shahin, director of Trade-Related Assistance Centre in AMCHAM.

<sup>916</sup> Information obtained at [www.forbes.com/lists/2007/10/07billionaires\\_Naguib-Sawiris\\_4MRK.html](http://www.forbes.com/lists/2007/10/07billionaires_Naguib-Sawiris_4MRK.html)

<sup>917</sup> Information taken from Bank Information Center, available at <http://www.bicusa.org/en/Article.3455.aspx>

<sup>918</sup> The social reactions against the shelling of the Banque du Caire were important. Yehia Hussein Abdel-Hadi was an ex-governmental employee, the man in charge of Banzione, sister company to the Omar Effendi store group and founder of the anti -government group "No to selling Egypt". He

privatisation of the Banque du Caire, Egypt's third largest Bank.

Capital thus in Mubarak's Egypt had its importance as power resource but remained connected with the state. This interconnection was the product of the economic actors' secondary role, which imposed constant cooperation with the Egyptian regime. Up to a certain point, this alliance had been profitable for both sides because the prominent, but also to the middle and small range, businessmen obtained the possibility to operate in a 'friendly environment', whereas the regime kept in check the competition in the sphere of private capital<sup>919</sup>. It becomes thus difficult to draw a demarcation line between the elites whose main source of power resides on capital and those who control the state, a dynamic underlined previously by the growing presence of economic elites in the strictly political scene.

The prominent economic businessmen were organised in different economic organisations the most important of which are Egyptian Business Association (EBA) and the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt (AMCHAM). The role of EBA<sup>920</sup> is reflected on the words of its chairman Gamal al-Nazar<sup>921</sup> *"We are a small group of the most prominent businessmen. We are the leaders of the private sector. When we meet with the government officials, they can be certain that the views we express are an accurate reflexion of what is actually happening in the private sector"*.

AMCHAM represent the institution wherein Egyptian and American economic interests were crossed<sup>922</sup>. The intervention of AMCHAM in the foreign and domestic issues is denied by the executive staff. However, Magda Shahin<sup>923</sup> mentions that Minister of Finance visits on monthly basis AMCHAM in Cairo and once a year in USA. Recently, the Egyptian Junior Business Association was created, gathering the young entrepreneurs of the country, in conformity with the new wave of political reformists and Gamal's aspirations. This organisation

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and the members of the movement as well as many opposition parties opposed the bank's privatisation accusing the government for selling Egypt to the foreigners. It is interesting to mention that the Banque du Caire was founded three months before the 23 July Revolution and that government's announcement to sell the bank coincided with the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Revolution.

<sup>919</sup> The use of economic resources into politics is also demonstrated by the generous dominations of NDP's candidates during the electoral campaigns. Ezz funded President Mubarak's presidential election campaign. Following Amr Hashem Rabie, a political analyst with Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, says *"When businessmen spend huge amounts of money on the NDP and election campaigns they expect a return"* (El-Din, 2007a).

<sup>920</sup> In 2005, EBA counted with 450 members, the value of the companies' members was calculated in E£ 22 billion, in 2004 employing over 300.000 employees.

<sup>921</sup> Quoted in (Rutherford, 2008: 205).

<sup>922</sup> The AMCHAM embodies the most profitable and companies of Egypt who are somehow connected with United States, whether American citizens who have companies in Egypt or Egyptian companies that collaborate with American ones.

<sup>923</sup> Personal interview with Magda Shahin, director of Trade-Related Assistance Centre in AMCHAM.

gathers entrepreneurs between 25-45 years old who meet with the Minister of finance twice a year<sup>924</sup>.

The existence of mutual benefits between the regime and the 'capitalists' did not cancel the competition among them. On the one hand, the elites controlling the state apparatus were interested in preserving the supremacy of their main power resource. On the other hand, economic elites were seeking the disconnection of the private capital from the 'state control', in order to gain their independency in front of the state holders. Therefore, we can appreciate a constant rivalry among those who had been trying to disconnect the two resources of power, state and capital, and those who had been seeking the continuity of this symbiosis.

The effort to boost the importance of the capital as power resource is demonstrated by the rising number of businessmen in legislative bodies, almost tripled in the last ten years. From 37 members of the Majlis al Sha'b in 1995 (8.1%), the number increased to 77 members in 2000 (17%) and 90 in 2005 (22%) (Ouda et al., 2001)<sup>925</sup>. This increase had been compatible with the new politico-economic orientations of the regime and the new guard. In the words of the former Prime Minister, Ahmed Nazif "*Businessmen have the privilege of mixing administrative experience with a forward-looking and global mentality*" (Zahid, 2008: 377).

The entry of 'capitalists' in the legislative bodies introduced significant changes in the balance of power, between regime's old and new guard. The importance of the competition is demonstrated also by the struggles among NDP's candidates to gain the nomination of the party for the parliamentary elections of 2010. Indicative is the case of two candidates in Nasr city, Alaa al-Sawi and Mohie Georgi, both declaring being pressured by ranking party members of the party to give up their nomination to allow Petroleum Minister Sameh Fahmi to run in their stead (Gharib, 2010).

The emergence of the new guard had permitted the creation of important economic figures as it is the case of Ahmed Ezz, a close ally of Gamal Mubarak, frequently named as 'the most powerful man in Egypt'. Besides monopolising the market of steel and iron, Ezz was a senior member of the NDP, and party's secretary for organisational affairs, in charge of selecting NDP's candidates for municipal and parliamentary elections. Moreover, he was member of the People's Assembly, where he chaired the planning and budget committee<sup>926</sup>.

The increasing presence of 'capitalists' on Egyptian politics had been related to Hosni Mubarak's efforts to transfer his power, institutional and real, to his

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<sup>924</sup> Personal interview with Ahmad El Mahmoudy Business Environment Coordinator of Egyptian Junior Business Association.

<sup>925</sup> See also (Shokr, 2008).

<sup>926</sup> Ezz's importance during the last years of Mubarak's mandate is underlined by the fact that he was one of the first to be dragged into trial on suspicion of wasting public funds.

younger son, Gamal Mubarak. However, the state's primary role blocked Gamal's ascendance on power. Gamal was supported by regime's new guard, composed by a group of technocrats and businessmen whose power capacities were connected with private capital. The old guard, controlling mainly the state apparatus, resisted firmly to this power transfer knowing that this would harm their interests. Consequently, a tough competition was taking place during the last period of Mubarak's mandate. As it was reported by Roll *"For the first time in Egypt's modern history, the business elite are playing a role in the succession question, but it is still not clear whether that role will be decisive"* (Roll, 2010).

The new guard's role and the monopoly of the governmental party over politics generated interests to the individual businessmen in supporting regime's political party, NDP. Consequently, there were not a lot of businessmen willing to back opposition parties, with the exception of al-Wafd. As it is underlined by Kassem<sup>927</sup> for al-Ghad's case, *"No serious businessman outside of the party donated towards Ayman's campaign. They were too afraid of offending the government and Mubarak"*. Therefore, at parliamentary elections of 2005, the majority of multi-millionaire candidates were either officially nominated by NDP, or were NDP members who decided to run independently.

The paradox of being member of the NDP and to run independently is explained by the urge of the businessmen to maintain a profitable equilibrium. As an upcoming businessman<sup>928</sup> upheld, there were a lot of entrepreneurs who prefer not to come in public for their connections with the regime because it is harmful for their interests. On the same time, they have to remain loyal to the regime supporting on every way they can, in order to avoid complications.

The increasing influence of regime's 'new guard' generated changes in all levels. Thus, in parallel of the public discourses of the government underling the necessity to protect the public sector, there were frequent references from the governmental and parliamentarian members emphasising that bureaucracy and the size of public sector is the main problem of the country's failure to reach the development goal (Harik, 1997: 36).

The entrance at the Egyptian parliament was profitable businesses for the MP entrepreneurs, despite the existence article no 95 of the Egyptian constitution, which prohibited the members of parliament to enter into business deals with the government<sup>929</sup>. The case of Hani Sorour, Minister of Health is indicative to this matter<sup>930</sup>. Sorour, Chief Executive Officer of Hayedelena for Advanced Medical

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<sup>927</sup> Quoted in (Stacher, 2008).

<sup>928</sup> Personal interview with Hany, who preferred to stay anonymous.

<sup>929</sup> However, there are not relative articles stipulating punishments for those members who are found guilty of using their parliamentary status for making deals with the government.

<sup>930</sup> For the case of ministers the article no. 158 of the Egyptian Constitution stipulates: During the term of his office, the Minister shall not practice a self-employed or any commercial, financial or industrial enterprise, nor buy or rent any State property, or lease or sell to or barter with the State any of his own property. You can consult the Egyptian Constitution at

Industries Company used his post to exercise pressures to the Ministry in accepting his company's blood bags. The case would have remained unnoticed if the scandal defected blood had not become public. The Minister of Health was accused of supplying his Ministry with 300,000 defective blood bags, and it *"is reported to have offered bribes and kickbacks to a number of senior Health Ministry officials to accept the bags which ministry officials have told the prosecutor-general contain bacteria and fungi likely to harm patients in the event of transfusion"* (El-Din, 2007a).

Hisham Talaat Mostafa, Minister of Housing, represents another case of interweaved interests. In an attempt to break the recession facing the real estate market, during the tenure of Ibrahim Suleiman, the Minister of Housing enacted a market activation policy that granted 'real estate developers' opportunities to acquire land with the objective of encouraging investments in return for building residential units that were to be allocated for State-sponsored housing projects. Coincidentally, the Minister of Housing<sup>931</sup> was the main constructor of the Rehab city, a new satellite city near Cairo created to allocate middle and upper class Egyptians.

The abuse of authority was frequent. According to al-Ahram *"In 2000 several businessmen MPs, dubbed the 'loan deputies', were sentenced to ten years in jail after being found guilty of exploiting their parliamentary membership to obtain loans from state-owned banks"*. The official punishment of corruption cases, took public character as means to purify the image of the regime and particular of Hosni Mubarak<sup>932</sup>.

Marriage between wealth and politics had other benefits because being a member of parliament offers the advantages of immunity. Representative is the case of Mahmud Ismail, owner of the ferry *Al Salam Boccaccio 98*. The ferry sank in the Red Sea, drawing more than 1400 Egyptian emigrants and pilgrims of Mecca (EFE, 2006). The court found the owner of the ship Mamdouh Ismail not guilty whereas Alaaeddin Shahine, the captain of the passing by ferry, was sentenced to six months in jail and a fine of E£10.000, for failing to show 'compassion' and not offering assistance to the sinking ship. The evident discrimination on the two cases is result of Ismail's connection with the regime, as he was a former appointed member of the Shura Council and member of the NDP.

The destruction of the economic basis of the regime's rivals had been a well tasted practice. Kalmbach analyses the case of J. Sainsbury P.L.C the British

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[www.egypt.gov.eg/english/laws/Constitution/default.aspx](http://www.egypt.gov.eg/english/laws/Constitution/default.aspx)

<sup>931</sup> Some years later the former housing minister was accused of squandering LE300 billion of state funds to benefit business magnate Hisham Talaat Mustafa, who was sentenced to death for hiring a hitman to kill Lebanese singer Suzanne Tamim.

<sup>932</sup> Such efforts take many forms. The popular film *The president's cook* follows this pattern, as the protagonist, president of a country, is represented as a good person who tries to understand the problems of the citizens. However, he is encircled by incapable and malicious ministers, who are blocking the president's good will.



supermarket chain that in two years time was obliged to abandon Egypt, after having investing \$150 million, launching 200 stores in Cairo and employing more than 2.500 persons. The regime having all interest to preserve the control over the market and probably keep satisfy the Egyptian businessmen whose interest were at stake<sup>933</sup>, cleverly used the anti-Jewish protest during the second *intifada*, spreading rumours that the owner of the chain was donating money to Israel. The attacks against the stores and the boycotting generated important loses for the foreign owners who decided to sell their share (80%) to their Egyptian partner, el-Nasharty. The following year, el-Nasharty flew out the country in order to escape imprisonment of 30 years for swindling the National Bank of Egypt (Kalmbach, 2004).

Sabotaging economic capacities of regime's rivals was a frequently used method. The conflict between the regime and the Muslim Brotherhood was taking place therefore also in the economic field. The regime often attacked the economic basis of the organisation or this of its members in order to weaken the organisation's economic capacities, necessary tool for financing their welfare activities and political campaigns.

Brotherhood's electoral victory, in 2005, intensified such practices. Hassan Malek and his software company, Salsabeal, is one of these cases. According to Malek and Brotherhood's official English web site<sup>934</sup>, his company was one of the most important in the sector permitting him to expand his activities in other fields, inside and outside the Egyptian borders, offering job in more than 400 employees. The regime frozen his assets and arrested Malek without directing any concrete charges against him. Similar is the case of Khairat Al-Shater, Brotherhood's third most senior figure, who was accused of translating Quran without necessary permission by the Islamic Publishing House.

Until Mubarak's forced resignation, economic elites had been gaining progressively field on the Egyptian power structure. Yet the longstanding primary role of state elites was blocking the process of 'capitalists' independence. This dynamic had as result the development of a strong competition between the two groups. The direct outcome of this competition was the incapacity of the new guard to consolidate its presence impeding in this way Gamal Mubarak's ascendance<sup>935</sup> on power, fact that weakened regime's power capacities.

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<sup>933</sup> Sainsbury being a large company managed to reduce the prices of basic products, such as milk, vegetable oil, flour and clarified butter below the cost, harming directly the business of many small shopkeepers. For more information see (Kalmbach, 2004).

<sup>934</sup> <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/index.php>

<sup>935</sup> The uncertainty regarding the president's succession was underlined by the position of NDP members on the question regarding Gamal's future role. For instance in a personal interview with Mohamed Kamal, education and training secretary of NDP and well known supporter and ally of Gamal Mubarak, in the question he refused to make any comments.

#### 12.2.4. Military and Police Actors

The importance of coercive apparatuses as power resource was and still is major in actual Egypt, demonstrated among others by the nomination of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, as the responsible organ to lead the transitory period in post-Mubarak era. Officers' importance had been valuable during Mubarak's mandate. Following former President's speech<sup>936</sup> on the 30th anniversary of the Camp David Treaty *"Our Armed Forces are the deterrence. They are the homeland's fortress and sword, and will remain defending Egypt's land and national security"*.

An indirect way of understanding the role of military and police forces in Egypt is by looking the infrastructure allocated to them. Who visits Egypt cannot miss the importance given to security forces. Huge areas reserved for their facilities with imposing and modern buildings covering different necessities, (education, training, residence). Moreover, officers and their families enjoy a lot of privileges and facilities regarding services and consumers goods (cars, club, housing facilities, holiday complexes and consumers shops) (Cook, 2007).

The role of the army had changed significantly since the Camp David Accord. The lack of military functions has been compensated by the increasing participation of the military apparatus in civil activities, mainly economic ones. Army is involved in building railways, telecommunication networks and other engineering projects, as well as in leasing vast areas (Ayubi, 2006: 275). The military engineers were participating in the infrastructural projects and agricultural projects using the soldiers as cheap working force. Furthermore, we can mention that the participation of the Egyptian army in projects involving state subventions (Pommier, 2008: 96). Moreover, the many retired officers were serving in civilian governmental posts as well as at the economic sector<sup>937</sup>.

The importance of the military officers is also demonstrated by their autonomy in front of the legislative, since among others the exportations and importations of military equipment was escaping parliament's control since 1974 (Droz-Vincent, 2001: 85). The annual budget destined to the army remained elevated despite the recommendations of International Monetary Fund and World Bank for general decrease of the state expenditures, without neglecting that there had been important cut offs since the 70s<sup>938</sup>. We can indicatively mention that

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<sup>936</sup> Quoted in Al Masry Al Youm 24/04/2009.

<sup>937</sup> Having a military experience provides the retired officers (really young) job opportunities especially in the economic sector. The academic formation of the military and army officers provides them the necessary tools for their entrance in civil posts. The students of the military and police academies receive academic education and many of them are in position of master's degree and PhD with studies in foreign universities. Personal interview with police officer.

<sup>938</sup> The military budget as percentage of the gross domestic product was on a constant decrease from 6.9% in 1988 at 2.3% in 2009. Yet in constant prices the amount of money destined to the army has not marked a significant decrease. Data obtain from Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) <http://milexdata.sipri.org/result.php4>

only in 3 years period (2001-2004), Egypt paid \$6.5 billion in arms transfer agreements, \$5.7 billion of which was used to purchase U.S. weaponry (Grimmett, 2005: 28).

Besides the economic activities and assets, the officers had an important intervention on traditionally civilian sectors, consequence of the emergency state. Under this law the citizens considered dangerous for the country's security were trailed in military courts, where judiciary power was exercised by military officers. The lifting of the emergency state would have inevitably decreases officers' institutional powers. Consequently, we can hypothesise that its maintenance underlined the role of military officers on Egypt, without excluding other reasons related to the regime's fears.

The above demonstrate the significant weight of officers in Egypt, during Mubarak's era. Our stand contradicts with the idea of many scholars defending a demilitarisation of the Egyptian politics. We uphold that rather of a demilitarisation of politics is more accurate to speak of the 'civilisation' of the army. The presence of officers in governmental and ministerial posts would be a clear manifestation of our thesis. However, it is not possible to have information regarding the military career of the regime's members and consequently understand their weight on the Egyptian power structure<sup>939</sup>. The difficulty to discover the military past of the Egyptian actors resides on the existence of decree issued by Minister of the Defence which forbids the retired officers to mention their military past<sup>940</sup>.

Besides the President of the Republic, Hosni Mubarak, there were other members of the regime having military or police formation. We can mention the cases of the Minister of Investment Mahmoud Safwat Mohyee El-Din who started his carrier in Mukhabarat and ranked to the degree of General. Another case is this of Safwat el-Sherif, speaker of Majlis al-Shura and founding member of the NDP, who it is said that he received a military formation. At a lower place of the institutional hierarchy this of Egypt's governments the majority of the country's governors are military and police Generals (Abdalla, 2001: 54). Consequently, Egypt under Mubarak's mandate continued to be a military regime, as according to Wintrobe *"Military regime is the one that the highest governmental officers have served or serve in the armed forces and the governors are mostly depending on the support of the officer corps for the retention of power"* (Wintrobe, 1990: 860).

The decisive role of officers was underlined by some specialists. Springborg highlighted the existence of informal group of senior officers that has an important role in the regime, composed by 12-15 officers (Springborg and

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<sup>939</sup> Silencing information on military officers characterises post-revolutionary Egypt. It is indicative that there is no clear information on the members of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces.

<sup>940</sup> Personal interview with Tewfik Aclimandos political scientist of Centre d'Études et de Documentation Économiques, Juridiques et Sociales (CEDEJ).

Sfakianakis, 2001). In the same spirit, Tewfik Aclimandos<sup>941</sup> underscored the role of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces in Mubarak era, composed by 15-20 Generals, who were facing practical obstacles to meet without the knowledge of Mubarak, making thus practically impossible a move against the Mubarak.

The role of the officers and the importance of the military apparatus for the regime's survival had been balanced by the police corpus and the intelligence services. The two coercive corpus, police and army, were structured to follow a competitive relation. Meanwhile the intelligence services were under the institutional control of different authorities: the General Intelligence who was connected directly to the Presidency, whereas the Military Intelligence<sup>942</sup> to the ministry of Defence and the General Directorate for State Security Investigations (GDSSI)<sup>943</sup>, under direct control of the Minister of Interior.

Up to Mubarak's fall, the threats coming from the security and military apparatuses were successfully contested by the regime, as we have previously underlined with the cases of Amer and Ghazala. Less important incidents were also treated with success. Indicative is the case of Ashraf Marwan an Egyptian billionaire who died in 2007 under peculiar circumstances, in London. Marwan it said to be Nasser's<sup>944</sup> connection with the Intelligence services and chief of staff under Sadat's mandate. He was accused of being a double agent of Mossad and the Egyptian Intelligence (Blum, 2007). It is interesting to mention that his daughter is married to the son of Amr Moussa, the popular minister of Foreign Affairs.

The control over military officers by Hosni Mubarak was progressively lost, especially during Mubarak's last mandate (2005-2011). The uncertainty created regarding the presidential succession supports our argumentation. Most of the authors underlined that the uncertainty towards Gamal was due to the rejection of Gamal's grooming at the presidency by the officers<sup>945</sup>.

The frequent mention of Omar Suleiman's<sup>946</sup> as the main rival on Gamal's succession is underlying the role of certain officers on pre-revolutionary Egypt. There is not a lot of information regarding Suleiman. The chief of the powerful Mukhabarat-Central Intelligence and Security Services- it is said that he save Mubarak's life in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, in 1995<sup>947</sup>.

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<sup>941</sup> Personal interview with Tewfik Aclimandos.

<sup>942</sup> Military Intelligence is responsible for guaranteeing the political reliability of the armed forces. The director of military intelligence ensures military officers support the president and are not Islamic extremists.

<sup>943</sup> State security investigations a secret police branch considered an elite corpus.

<sup>944</sup> Ashraf Marwan was married to Nasser's daughter Mona Gamal Abdel Nasser.

<sup>945</sup> It is said that Gamal Mubarak's initiative to form a new political party The Future (Al-Mustaqbal) was blocked by officers' rejection (Springborg and Sfakianakis, 2001: 71).

<sup>946</sup> Suleiman was not a member of the National Democratic Party and thus he would had to resign from the military and spend a year as a high-ranking party official before he could become a presidential candidate.

<sup>947</sup> Hosni Mubarak and Omar Suleiman were attending the African Summit.

Omar Suleiman has a military background as he studied at the Egyptian military academy and he was trained, as President Mubarak, in Moscow. His fame and capacities made possible his transfer to the Central Intelligence and Security Services and in 1991 became its director<sup>948</sup>. During the 90s Suleiman was the leading figure of the regime's war against the radical Islamists. After the second Intifada in 2000, he became the main mediator between the Palestinian fractions and Israel, overshadowing the role of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Rumours regarding Suleiman's future role took more concrete form in the approaching of parliamentary elections of 2010<sup>949</sup>. In September 2010, the streets of Giza in Cairo were covered with Suleiman's posters. According to press sources the posters were hung up by a group of activists supporting the country's intelligence chief as a possible presidential candidate writing "*The real alternative: Omar Suleiman, President for the Republic*".

Hosni Mubarak's incapacity to impose his will and the parallel importance of officers' role is signalled by the following incident, even though we cannot provide evidence of its reliability. In May 2009, the eldest grandchild of Hosni Mubarak died. The president shocked by the loss stepped back from his duties for a few days, transferring them to Gamal Mubarak. The decision was considered as one test of the President's to check his son's capabilities as well as old guard's reactions. The rehearsal was a failure as according to Hazem Salen<sup>950</sup>, Egyptian activist and researcher of Ibn Khaldoun Centre for Development Studies, the Generals strongly rejected Gamal's authority, forcing in this way Hosni Mubarak to return to his office.

From the above it becomes obvious that actors connected with the coercive apparatuses, especially with the army had a decisive role inside the Egyptian regime. The two guards of the regime, old and new, even though they had contradictory interests they collaborate in order to hold on regime's primary role. Following Cook "*While Egypt's senior command has signalled its qualified support for economic change, there is no indication that the military is willing to allow its own considerable economic interests to be privatized*" (Cook, 2007: 20).

The relation between the two guards is a clear manifestation of the continuous competition among elites. Both groups old and new guard are aware of the necessity not to break their alliance. Yet the capacities of the members of each group increased with the pursuing of different and sometimes contradictory

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<sup>948</sup> The process to join Mukhabarat is unclear. Possible candidates are all Egyptians but mainly those serving to the coercive apparatuses, police and army, whatever their rank is even civilians. Mukhabarat chooses and not the other way around, the possible candidates in regards to their behaviour, personal relations, skills etc after close surveillance. After the candidate is chosen he has to follow a special training in order to be integrated to the Intelligence Services. Information obtained by personal interview with Rafik Sedhom, retired military officer.

<sup>949</sup> The nomination of Omar Suleiman as vice president after the spark of massive protests in January 2011, underlined Suleiman's importance.

<sup>950</sup> Personal interview.

interests. The old guard, composed mainly by military officers, had successfully replied to the new guard's challenges.

### 12.2.5. **Religious actors**

Religious discourse, especially Islamic, represents an important power resource all over the Muslim world, and of course in Egypt. Islam is the official religion of the Egyptian state as it is stipulated at the Egyptian constitution "*Islam is the Religion of the State [...] and Islamic Shari'a is a principal source of legislation*". The growing weight of the religious discourse, fruit of internal as well as international factors, pushed the formation of different elites competing to each other in order to extract legitimacy and popular support.

We can classify the different religious groups on official or institutional actors and non official ones<sup>951</sup>. These two categories can be further divided between 'political correct' or moderate religious elites and radical and/or 'rebel' ones. Islamic elites differ in terms of goals and strategies, but they all agree that the contemporary problems of the Muslim societies can be resolved by the return to religion, individual and/or collective.

Official ulema constitute a heterogeneous group and there are represented mainly by three institutions: al-Azhar, Dar al-Ifta and the Ministry of Religious Endowment<sup>952</sup>, all of them had been under the control of the regime, which had the institutional authority to appoint the leaders. The two most important positions in this group are occupied by Ahmed al-Tayeb, who replaced Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi<sup>953</sup> in March 2010, Sheikh of al-Azhar<sup>954</sup> and Ali Gomaa, the Gran Mufti. Under them there is a plethora of ulema supporting or not the leaders of the official Islam.

During the years, the relationship between the regime and the religious official authorities had been oscillating between forced collaboration and mutual dependency. Collaboration between the regime and the official clerics was based on the common interest of the two elite groups to preserve the *status quo* (Bachar et al., 2006: 3). Meanwhile, each group had its own interests. From clerics' side "*By cooperating with the regime, clerics can receive greater resources, media access, appointments, policy influence, and government assistance in restricting religious competitors, all of which can potentially augment a cleric's authority*" (Taylor, 2008:

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<sup>951</sup> It is important to keep in mind that Muslim religion has not a clear institutional hierarchy, similar to the Christian one. The imam, ulema or sheikhs even though in practice have a higher role of the rest of the believers officially they are just good Muslims who have studied in depth the Islamic texts and due to their knowledge believers turn to them to clear their doubts.

<sup>952</sup> The ministry of Religious Endowments under the authority of Mahmoud Hamdi Zaqzouq administrated the funds of all religious endowments, both Christian and Muslim. In parallel the ministry was in charge of controlling mosques and preventing infiltration by radical preachers. Consequently, one of the main preoccupations of the ministry was the control of the over 150,000 Egyptian mosques.

<sup>953</sup> Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi died in a hospital of Riyadh in 2010 at the age of 82.

<sup>954</sup> Al-Azhar is the establishment authorised to nominate ulema.

45). Consequently, by cooperating with the regime the official ulema were increasing their personal power capabilities, and they were receiving economic and logistical support as well as institutional legitimacy. From regime's side, cooperation with Islamic clerics offered a religious profile and an additional tool to compete the 'fanatic' islamists. Another issue that united the leaders of institutional Islam and the regime was their common interest on limiting Muslim Brotherhood's influence, as the organisation deprived power capacities from both groups.

The frequent emission of *fatwa*<sup>955</sup> in order to legitimise the regime's policies had been one of the basic functions of the official Islam. The representatives of the official religious institutions constantly commented on issues that concerned the general public, from the most trivial to the most serious ones: peace with Israel, suicide bombings and martyrdom, transplant of human organs, smoking in public, relationship between the two sexes, clothing questions, and so on.

The use of Islamic authorities on problematic issues that question the correctness of regime's decisions was frequent. Indicative is al-Azhar's position towards the American invasion of Iraq. Sheikh Tantawi's stance was a careful balance that satisfied the Egyptian popular feelings, without harming the government's interests and attitude. Thus, the period preceded Iraq's invasion, Tantawi was opening his Friday sermons with curses against the Americans and calls for jihad against them, before even the customary curses against Israel and the Jews (Elbendary, 2003). After the war broke out, Tantawi<sup>956</sup> himself clearly gave his blessing to those who wanted to help the Iraqis: "*Combating injustice is a religious duty.*" "*The door of jihad is open until judgment day, [and] whoever wants to go to support the Iraqi people, I welcome that, I welcome that, I welcome that. I say go, peace be with you, and I wish you well. We do not prevent anyone from going to help those who are facing injustice*". However, the growing social agitation forced the Sheikh to state publically that it was forbidden to destroy Egypt as a way of supporting Iraq underlying that the conduct of jihad was a *state responsibility*, not an individual one.

However, the collaboration with the regime had its negative outcomes. Ulema's loyalty towards the regime was frequently criticised by the rest of Islamic actors, mainly anti-regime ones. Thus official clerics' role was rejected by 'radical' circles, who accused them "of abandoning religion in order to serve the interests of 'princes' and to line their own pockets" (Taylor, 2008: 26). Such criticism inevitably had negative consequences on ulema's popular acceptance and legitimacy.

The criticism that official Islam clerics received due to their strict collaboration with Mubarak's regime forced them to find ways to disconnect

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<sup>955</sup> A religious opinion concerning Islamic law issued by an Islamic scholar.

<sup>956</sup> Quoted at (Shehab, 2003).

themselves from regime's control, through different mechanisms. This situation inevitably created frictions between the regime and the official representatives of Islam. Indicative is the following case: After 11-S attacks and under American pressures Mubarak proposed a draft law in order to control the zakat (small percentage of one's possessions to charity). The reactions of the grand Sheikh and the hostility coming from all religious institutions obliged the regime to withdraw the proposal before even this was presented at the parliament.

The dependency relations were also a source of conflict inside the Islamic institutions. The internal competition sometimes times took the form of ideological divergence, i.e. 'moderates' versus 'radicals' or 'reformists' versus 'traditionalists'. Indicative is the dispute between the Sheikh of al-Azhar, Tantawi and the 'activist' ulema. Grouped in al-Azhar Scholar's Front (ASF), the activist clerics opposed to the dependency of the institution on the state. The struggle took a more concrete form in case of the government's efforts to enact a women's personal status law<sup>957</sup>, in January 2000. ASF, headed by Dr. Yahya Ismai'l, allying with Muslim Brotherhood, opposed to the draft of law and Tantawi on religious grounds. The followed mobilisations, organised by those opposed to the law proposal forced changes on the law, embarrassing in this way the Sheikh (Taylor, 2008: 53). Tantawi's reaction was the closure of the newspaper *Al-Sha'b*, controlled by the ASF, a move that radicalised further Yahya Ismail, who verbally attacked Sheikh Tantawi, the Minister of Waqf Dr. Hamdi Zaquzuq, and secular intellectuals<sup>958</sup>. The epigraph of this incident was Tantawi's decision to dissolve the Front<sup>959</sup> altogether and latter dismissed Ismail from his academic post.

From the previous example becomes clear that not all ulema shared the same views and positions. The ulema's disapproval on their leaders' decisions was frequently expressed, even from the clerics having graduated from al-Azhar's university<sup>960</sup>. This lack of loyalty was punished with their 'exile' to periphery or even abroad "*in order to prevent them from forming permanent factions within the establishment*" (Bachar et al., 2006: 6).

Besides the internal conflicts and competition with Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic and islamist groups, whether radical or moderate, the last years official Islamic leaders had been competing with the new phenomenon of telepreachers. Being apolitical in their vast majority, these preachers followed the

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<sup>957</sup> The law would have granted women the right to obtain a divorce and to travel abroad without their husband consent.

<sup>958</sup> Yahya Ismai'l Habloush in 2009 was one of the many Islamic figures that attacked and proposed the death of the secular, liberal Egyptian historian and thinker Sayyid al-Qimni, son of a traditionalist Azhari sheikh.

<sup>959</sup> The ASF does not always speak in one voice. For instance, when Ismai'l published a statement against philosophy professor and thinker Hasan Hanafi in 1997, some of the Front's members denounced it and claimed it was not published on their behalf.

<sup>960</sup> In Egypt there are 6000 educational religious institutions at all levels from primary school to university, most important of which the al-Azhar counting with more than 300.000 students.



example of the American televangelists, adopting an image of young and successful modern westernised men. Amr Khaled<sup>961</sup> formed part of category and he had accomplished to become the most popular preacher in Egypt and the Arab world. His preaching, in colloquial dialect, regards spiritual issues with a modern approach and without political hints. *“Unlike previous traditional modes of preaching in the 1970s and 1980s, Khaled’s message stressed the reconcilability of modern life with Islam, embracing popular culture as a means of achieving his project of societal regeneration through Islam”*(Tartoussieh, 2009: 176). Other cases are those of Khalid al-Gindi, al-Habib Ali, Safwat Higazi and al-Qaradawi.

The combination of spirituality and modernism and the parallel lack of political elements in their discourse had been fitting perfectly with regime’s aims, which on the one hand relied on the religion to extract legitimacy but on the same time wanted to avoid greater religious influence in politics. Following Abdel Fatah<sup>962</sup>, researcher of Al Ahram, such preachers were used by the regime as balancer in front of Muslim Brotherhood. Indicative of the use that the Egyptian regime made of the modern preachers is this on the electoral parliamentary race. The Minister of Administrative Development and NDP candidate in Alexandria after appealing to Muslim and Christian communities to acquire the support in order to beat his Muslim Brotherhood rival, invited Amr Khaled to deliver a religious sermon(Elmeshad, 2010).

The competition between the ‘traditional’ official ulema and the ‘modern’ telepreachers was inevitable as the latter presenting a new fresh independent image of Islam deprives the already limited appeal to the masses of the official ulema. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, an Egyptian telepreacher living in Qatar<sup>963</sup>, considered being close to the Muslim Brotherhood has more than once criticised al-Azhar’s monopoly over the field of preaching (da’wah) by claiming that is the duty of each and every Muslim according to his abilities. Following al-Qaradawi<sup>964</sup> *“No queremos remplazar las instituciones ya existentes, como la Academia de Investigación de al-Azhar o el consejo intelectual que existe en la Meca. Somos una institución independiente de los gobiernos”*.

The official ulema in an effort to circumvent their influence applied many methods to undermine the telepreachers’ prestige. On the one hand, they frequently attacked them for their superficiality *da’wah diet* (diet preaching) and accused them for being affiliated with the Gama’at organisations. On the other hand, there have been considerable efforts from al-Azhar to modernise its practices and discourse in order to contest the challenge of the modern ulema, by

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<sup>961</sup> Khaled has been barred from preaching in Egypt and thus his preaching is aired on satellite channels and available for sale on DVDs.

<sup>962</sup> Information obtained at (Espinosa, 2005).

<sup>963</sup> Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who was stripped his Egyptian nationality, presents a show in al-Jazeera ‘Sharia and life’.

<sup>964</sup> Quoted in (Ternisien, 2007: 167).

participating on TV shows, where ulema answer people's questions. Additionally, in order to block telepreachers influence inside the official Islam, the rector of university of al-Azhar prohibited his ulemas to collaborate and work with tv preachers.

The militant or radical islamist groups had not represented an important challenge for the regime, during this last period. The majority of these groups had been neutralised by the regime through the second half of the 90s, as we have already exposed in the previous chapters. As Gunaratna upholds *"Although it is a long way for Egypt to reform the ideological orientation of the militants, Egypt's counter-radicalization program is the first and the most extensive of any Arab country"* (Gunaratna and Ali, 2009: 281). The sporadic terrorist attacks<sup>965</sup> that such groups effectuated did not imply a real threat for the regime's stability but rather had been serving as an additional pretext for its repressive policies. Yet, the continuous repression of the 'moderate' islamists, especially members of Muslim Brotherhood's young generation could have been threatening for the regime and the Egyptian society all together. As Sanna al-Banna<sup>966</sup>, granddaughter of Muslim Brotherhood's founder, commented more the group is obliged to work underground more possibilities for radicalisation of the frustrated Brothers.

#### 12.2.5.1. Coptic minority

Regime's policies towards islamist groups had been affecting the symbiosis of the Muslim and Christian communities. The islamisation of the country inevitably contributed to the radicalisation of the Coptic community<sup>967</sup>. *"I can no longer stand the insults and the spitting in my face because I don't wear hijab. I have become a stranger in my own country"* said a young Copt girl from Alexandria<sup>968</sup>. The Copts represent approximately the 10% of the Egyptian population, making them the largest religious minority of the country<sup>969</sup>. Yet there has been a clear unequal treatment between the two religious communities<sup>970</sup>. It is representative

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<sup>965</sup> The major terrorist attacks on Egyptian soil were this of October 2004, in Sinai Peninsula against Israeli tourists, in which 34 people were killed; of July 2005, in the Red Sea resort of Sharm al-Sheikh in which many people were killed; in April 2006 in Dahab in which 20 people were killed; in 2009 bomb attack in Khan al-Khalil in which a French student was killed and 24 people were injured.

<sup>966</sup> Personal interview with Sanna al-Banna.

<sup>967</sup> During the field research in Egypt I had the possibility to talk with many Christian citizens of the county. All of them coincided that they cannot tolerate any more the situation. Ironically, all believed that Hosni Mubarak was the only president that could guarantee a certain tranquillity.

<sup>968</sup> Quoted at (Guindy, 2006).

<sup>969</sup> Other Christians are affiliated with Catholic, Evangelical, Protestant, Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, and other smaller churches.

<sup>970</sup> Indicative is the case of al-Kosheh village in Upper Egypt where 21 Copts were killed, on 2000. The state formally reacted in to protect the Copts by arresting more than one hundred persons. However, *"nobody was found guilty by the lower, appeal, or Cassation courts"* (Guindy, 2006). Another representative incident and more recent is in 2007, where Muslims burn down at least 25 houses, in addition to shops, belonging to Christians in the village of Bamha on the outskirts of

that there is the necessity of a presidential decree for the building of a new church, without public economic aid, unlike the building of mosques. Furthermore, the Copts' presence at the high posts in the army, the police and secret services as well as in judiciary, diplomatic and higher educational posts corps are considerably limited if not inexistent and only 1.5% are public servants (Kristianasen, 2001).

This unequal treatment increased tension between the two communities, which was further complicated by the regime's policies, especially its strategy to use the Coptic minority as pretext for the prohibition of Islamic parties. Even if Islam is the religion of the state article no 46 of the Egyptian constitution stipulates that *"the State shall guarantee the freedom of belief and the freedom of practicing religious rites"* and according to the article no 40 *"All citizens are equal before the law. They have equal public rights and duties without discrimination due to sex, ethnic origin, language, religion or creed"*.

The Coptic Orthodox Church is a conservative institution headed by Pope Shenouda III<sup>971</sup>, who has managed to concentrate a lot of power capacities *"for he has turned into a representative of the Copts, speaking for them, negotiating with the state on their behalf, and defining their political and social options"* (Fawzi, 2006). The important role of the Church toward the believers is underlined also by Hasan who observed that *"the relationship between individual and church is not just pastoral but resembles a citizen-state relationship [...]. He [believer] expects it [church] to not only cater to his spiritual needs but also to help him with educational, occupational, housing, and medical problems"* (Hassan, 2003: 153). As in the rest of organised structures in Egypt, the Coptic Church is characterised by the lack of democratic procedures. For instance we can mention the process of Pope's election, which is regulated by laws that have stayed unchanged since 1957.

The relations between Shenouda and the president Mubarak had been characterised by a certain harmony. Indicative to this is the support of Shenouda to Mubarak's presidency in 2005 even before Mubarak announced his candidature (Shahine, 2005). Or the support on Gamal for who Shenouda declared<sup>972</sup> *"Most Egyptians love Gamal Mubarak and they will vote for him ahead of any other candidate running against him in elections – that is if they find anyone to run against him"*.

The fragile status of the Copts, as well as this of the other Christian minorities<sup>973</sup>, had been forcing their representatives to adopt a loyal profile

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Giza. The attack against took place under the pretext that the Christians were holding prayers in an unauthorised church. The human casualties of this clash were a dozen of injured Copts and 59 arrested Muslims.

<sup>971</sup> Pope Shenouda is the spiritual leader of the Copts all over the world and not just of the Egyptians, having branches in Latin and North America, Europe and Africa.

<sup>972</sup> Quoted at (Hassan, 2009).

<sup>973</sup> Having spoken to many Egyptian Christians, most of them affiliated to the Greek Orthodox

towards the regime. As it was underlined by Abaza *"On the one hand, some community leaders criticized the government for the lack of full equality between Christians and Muslims in Egypt, but on the other hand, some community leaders endorsed Mubarak during the last two decades as a way of countering Islamic extremism"*(Abaza, 2006).

Mubarak's 'gratitude' for the Coptic collaboration was frequently rewarded with the appointment of Copts in the Majlis al-Shura<sup>974</sup>. Such positive environment had been compatible with the interests of wealthy Copts and these of the middle class, positive in supporting Mubarak's regime, and particularly the 'new guard'. In this context, the official leaders of the two religious communities formally had been coexisting peacefully with each other, as Shenouda III annually invites political and religious leaders to the patriarchate to celebrate the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, where religious and patriotic speeches are pronounced by all sides.

The Coptic community of course is not a homogeneous group and some of their prominent members are connected with opposition parties and movements<sup>975</sup>. The most 'rebel' case is that of George Ishaq, leader of Kefaya movement. His anti-regime attitude was punished by the conservative Pope calling him *"no son of the Coptic church"*. Other cases of Copts affiliated with opposition parties are Mounir Abdel-Nour, vice president of the New Wafd Party, and Rafik Habib, a founder of the al-Wasat Party. The collaboration between Shenouda and the Egyptian regime is frequently criticised inside and outside Egypt<sup>976</sup>.

Coptic clerics also are cont characterised by homogeneity. We can mention for instance the case of Father Zakaria Boutrus, living in U.S., who in the weekly show 'Questions About Faith' on Christian Al-Hayat satellite channel, attacked Islam. His severe criticism provoked reactions inside Egypt and forced Shenouda to declare that the station was not connected with the Egyptian church (MEMRI, 2005). It is interesting to underline that in general terms the expatriate Copts, mostly those living in U.S., have been less disposed to support Mubarak's regime<sup>977</sup>. Their stance is of particular importance as Coptic community

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Church, all of them agree that at least President Mubarak offers them a certain security. For all of them their greatest fear is the Muslim Brotherhood.

<sup>974</sup> In the parliamentary elections of 2005, NDP had only two Coptic candidates of which only one was elected.

<sup>975</sup> It is reported that in the presidential elections of 2005 many Copts voted for Ayman Nour, against the Pope's wishes.

<sup>976</sup> For instance you can see the card published at American Coptic Union Site in which Shenouda is accused among others for not protecting the Coptic interests. See <http://www.copts4freedom.com/latestnews.htm>

<sup>977</sup> For instance manifestations took place in Netherlands, France and the U.S., after the violent incidents between Muslim and Copts in Meya caused by the building of a wall surrounding a Coptic monastery in Egypt. The banners were saying "Save Christians in Egypt", "Stop Islamic Terrorism" and "Help! Christians of Egypt are under attack". Information obtained at

economically relies on the contribution of its members, through the religious establishment and the foreign aid coming from the American Copts.

The Pope's health problems, the last years, and his old age initiated the scenarios of his succession. The three most possible candidates are Anba Bishoy, a close associate of the current pope, Anba Moussa, the bishop in charge of youth, and Anba Yoannis, a graduate of the Medical College at Assiut University (Nkrumah, 2007). The rivalry and the different positions among the Coptic Church has been highlighted by Bishoy's comments on the Quran suggesting that certain of its verses had not been recited by the Prophet Mohammad but rather inserted later during the era of Caliph Uthman bin Affan, calling for a thorough study of the verses in question, in order to "abolish those verses that label us [Christians] infidels". Bishoy's comments created reactions from the Muslim community and angered Pope Shenouda III (AlMasryAlYom, 2010).

The Pope's succession probably will not hide big surprises because as Hasan commented *"In the course of a reign spanning more than three decades, the pope had the opportunity to appoint over sixty-four bishops, thereby quadrupling the number of bishops that ruled at his accession"* (Hassan, 2003: 124-125). Consequently, it is likely that the next Pope will not break the actual power circle. Yet, it is interesting that in the decision not only clerics participate but also public figures.

#### 12.2.5.2. Muslim Brothers

Muslim Brotherhood constitutes an influential power group of the Egyptian society<sup>978</sup>. In the year 2008, the organisation's members paying contributions were estimated between 1.000.000-4.000.000<sup>979</sup>. Despite the plurality of literature existing on the organisation, we have to keep in mind that Muslim Brotherhood is on its basis a secret organisation. The proliferation of information regarding Muslim Brotherhood does not fill the gaps on the profile of the members and the way that the organisation operates. Indicatively, we can mention the case of the insertion of five new members on the Guidance Bureau, in the period April-June 2007, after the arrest of two important leaders of the group al Shatir and Bishr. Following Aclimandos *"Ce qui est intéressant, c'est qu'un flou orwellien règne. Pendant une semaine/quinze jours, on ne sait pas vraiment si les élections ont eu lieu ou si les membres ont été nommés. L'on ignore aussi si les 'prisonniers', al Shâtir et Bishr, et les vieux, Hilâl, Abû Shanab (et peut-être al Khatîb) ont été exclus. Il s'avère plus tard que personne n'a été exclu du bureau, que des élections ont eu lieu, mais que des membres du majlis shûra (l'assemblée*

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[http://www.unitedcopts.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=2663&Itemid=83](http://www.unitedcopts.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2663&Itemid=83)

<sup>978</sup> Even though we classify the organisation in the group of religious actors, the political activity of the organisation, accelerated during the last years, makes difficult the determination of its *champ* of actuation.

<sup>979</sup> It is of course impossible to verify the real number but it is believed that is in constant increase especially on the Delta of Nile.

*consultative) ont été tenus à l'écart du processus" (Aclimandos, 2008).*

Muslim Brotherhood's organisation is structured hierarchically. At the top we find the Spiritual Guide, actually under the guidance of Mohammed Badie. Under him, the Guidance Bureau composed by fifteen members. Then it is Majlis al-Shura that since 1995 up to 2007 could not have a reunion because of the regime's harassments. In line we find the department of 'predication and fatwa', 'administrative committee' and the department of 'political committee'. The recruitment of the organisation members follows strict rules and the possible brothers are chosen by the organisation and not the other way around. The last years recruitments regarded mainly university students, especially those who are studying abroad, who are disconnected from their social and family environment finding at Brothers a solution to their loneliness (Aclimandos, 2007).

Even though the analysis of Brotherhood's discourse<sup>980</sup> overpasses the purposes of the present research, we can highlight few basic elements that sketch the organisation's profile making it *"the mother of all centrist Islamist movements"* (Shahin, 2007). On the one hand, the organisation opts for a moderate religious discourse and the clear disavowal of violence with an evident political character. On the other hand, Muslim Brotherhood chooses for a nationalist discourse, abandoning on the way the idea of chalifat.

Brotherhood's moderate profile and discourse, especially during the last years of Mubarak's mandate, had been a well studied choice aiming to distance the organisation from the radical groups. In this way, the Brotherhood had been able to escape the regime's severe clashing and increase the number of its supporters, either because radicalism is less influential as ideology or because the playing by the rules of the regime enabled the organisation to increase its margins of actuation on the Egyptian society. According to Abdel-Kotob *"The Brethren's major strategy was labelled 'accommodation' with the existing political system, for the group has become totally reliant on constitutional channels for instituting the changes they demand. The election process has notably become important both in order to gain parliamentary and professional-association presentation and, perhaps more importantly, to gain access to an unrestricted channel whereby the group's Islamist message can be disseminated to the Egyptian masses"* (Abdel-Kotob, 1995: 336).

Furthermore, Brotherhood's moderate profile had been reflecting the interests of influential Brothers. More particularly, we have to keep in mind the importance of capital on the organisation, as means to cover the organisation's

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<sup>980</sup> According to Aclimandos the texts written by members of the Brotherhood, found at the Islamist bookshop present a lot of differences with the image that the organisation wants to present, or the political and religious texts. Moreover, according to the same scholar the political thinking of the Brotherhood is poor, mainly based on the writings of Qutb (Aclimandos, 2007). Their main political slogan was *"Islam is the solution"* in the 80s, *"Respect for the constitution"* in the 90s and back to the *"Islam is the solution"* in 2010.

necessities. Brotherhood's economic activities<sup>981</sup> are used to increase its clientelist nets by providing job to young-religious Egyptians and welfare activities (Ibrahim, 2002d: 60). Indicative of the economic capacities of Muslim Brotherhood's members is the attack that the regime made in 2007 aiming to destroy the organisation's economic recourses. The arrests of prominent economic actors of the Brotherhood had a negative impact on the Egyptian stock market (Franganillo, 2010). Thus, it is easy to comprehend that the economic interest of senior members and sympathisers<sup>982</sup> of the Brotherhood had a significant weight on the group's moderate profile.

Important resource of power of the Muslim Brotherhood had been the popular support that the group enjoyed, due to the organisation's capacity to adequate its discourse and practices with the demands of the Muslim masse. Besides the influential discourse, the Brotherhood created important social nets. As it was underlined by Esposito the main aspects of Islamism are not 'bombs and hostages' but clinics and schools (Esposito, 1998: 218). The significance of the organisation's activities becomes more important in front of the absence of a welfare state.

The long presence of the Muslim Brotherhood has probably permitted the integration of organisation's members on different fields, 'dangerous' for the security of the regime as it is the army and the police forces. However, it is impossible to confirm such hypothesis. The infiltration of Brothers in the police and army apparatuses is claimed by the very same organisation, according to Aclimandos<sup>983</sup>. Nevertheless, the same scholar underlines the difficulties for such tasks, due to the severe control that these apparatuses are submitted. However, it is certain that the Brotherhood counts with sympathisers at the coercive corpuses<sup>984</sup>.

The events of 11-S had a significant impact on Egypt and inevitably introduced alterations inside the organisation. The social agitation pushed the organisation to adopt a more militant profile, following the demands of the Egyptian population. Because, important factor of the organisation's popular support had been its capacity to 'hear' the population demands, being grassroots group.

The massive protests in support of the second Palestinian intifada and latter against Iraq's invasion, topics that Muslim Brotherhood could not remain passive, inevitably forced the Brothers to participate actively. The social unrest progressively took form of an anti-regime movement, as the presidential elections

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<sup>981</sup> The organisation encouraged many members and sympathisers to set up Islamic economic institutions, helped by those who had accumulated fortunes during their exile in oil rich countries.

<sup>982</sup> Remember the case of Osman Ahmed Osman.

<sup>983</sup> Personal interview with Tewfic Aclimandos.

<sup>984</sup> Through a conversation held with a police officer, for obvious reasons he prefers to stay anonymous, his opinion was that *"even I'm not suppose to say so because we [the police corpus] are against the Brotherhood. Yet personally I consider that they are good people"*.

of 2005 were approaching. Kefaya became the main movement at the time, wherein secular and Islamist militants and intellectuals participated, among them members of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The participation of individual Brothers gave a more massive character to Kefaya and additional popular support to Muslim Brotherhood. The increasing mobilisation of the Egyptians alerted the regime fearing for more generalised reactions. Thus, the regime responded with repressive policies against the totality of the activists. Yet the threatening for the regime situation forced additional tools to appease the anti-regime environment. In this context, an unofficial agreement took place between the leaders of the Brotherhood and the regime.

Senior members of the Brotherhood upheld that in the period September-October 2005 highly-ranked NDP members proposed them to avoid confrontation in exchange for greater freedom of action. Despite Muslim Brotherhood's denial that they accepted such offer, *"many commentators believe that an arrangement of some sort was the only explanation for what in effect was a truce between the Brothers and the government throughout mid-2005"*<sup>985</sup>. Soon after the organisation announced its support on Mubarak's fifth candidature under the justification that the Quran obliges Muslims to obey their leader; few days later fourteen Brothers were liberated (ElAmrani, 2005).

The period of harmony did not last long. The gentlemen's agreement broke when the Muslim Brotherhood crossed the red line, signalled by Brotherhood's electoral victory<sup>986</sup> at the parliamentary elections of 2005, where they participated as independent candidates and won 88 seats (20%) of the parliamentary seats despite the obstacles imposed by the regime, despite the police repression and electoral fraud.

The unexpected electoral victory, both for the regime but also from the Muslim Brotherhood's side (Sullivan, 2009), provoked regime's repressive reaction which included Brothers' massive arrests. The bank al-Taqwa, organisation's principal source of finance, was put under sever control and the economic assets of 29 Brothers were frozen, increasing the problems for Brotherhood, but having also impact on the Egyptian economy, as we underlined previously. Regime's repression with Washington's auspices<sup>987</sup> compelled Brotherhood to adopt a more secular profile<sup>988</sup>, especially after the official

<sup>985</sup> Quoted at (International Crisis Group, 2008)

<sup>986</sup> The electoral results were NDP 311 seats, New Wafd 6, Tagammu 2, al-Ghad 1 seat and independents among them the Muslim Brotherhood 122 seats. Source: TEIM Election Watch <http://www.observatorioelectoral.es/en/Default.aspx>

<sup>987</sup> Remember the electoral victory of Hamas at the Palestinian territories that put in panic not only Washington but all authoritarian Arab regimes. For more information see (Turner, 2006). We have to keep in mind that Hamas was one of the spiritual children of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood but the relations between the two are characterised by an important antagonism due to Hamas' independency from the Egyptian Brothers.

<sup>988</sup> At a conference presenting the newly elected parliamentary bloc, Muslim Brotherhood



declaration of the organisation to form a legal party.

The growing militancy of its younger members along with the general calls for democracy forced the leaders to proceed to the 'democratisation' of the organisation's profile. Thus, in March 2009, the Supreme Guide announced his decision to retire from the office. Even though the announcement of this decision is historical for the Egyptian Brotherhood<sup>989</sup>, because until then the Supreme Guide remained at his post until his death, it seems that the decision served more publicity purposes than a real change. The procedure of electing the new Supreme Guide remained undemocratic, since only the 90 members of the Shura Council had the right to vote<sup>990</sup> and not the totality of the members.

The practical denial of the organisation to open its procedures was due to two main reasons. On the one hand, Brotherhood's 'democratisation' would have meant transparency of the group's actions and procedures, including information about its members and its financial sources. However, this change would have enabled the regime to control further the organisation, because the underground character of the organisation had been used as shield against the regime's attacks. On the other hand, the opening of the organisation's procedures would have introduced changes on power hierarchy inside the Brotherhood.

The elitist electoral process of the Supreme Guide, as well as this of the Guidance Office, generated dissatisfaction on Brotherhood's members, especially the younger generations and the 'reformist' wing and widen the gap among 'reformist' and 'conservative' Brothers<sup>991</sup>. The tensions in the Muslim Brotherhood have long started, becoming more intense with the death of the Supreme Guide, Hamid Abu Nasr, in 1996. A clear demonstration of Brotherhood's internal problems was the decision of some members of the middle generation to form a political party<sup>992</sup>, Wasat, headed by Abou Elela Mady, wherein also Copts

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emphasised its political character with its 88 parliamentarian members affiliated to the organisation, who stood together and chanted "*islah*" (reform) rather than Islamist slogans.

<sup>989</sup> However, such experiment has taken place by the Muslim Brotherhoods of Morocco, Algeria, Yemen, Kuwait and Jordan.

<sup>990</sup> Each one of the 90 members was called to choose three names for the office of the Supreme Guide, excluding himself. The candidate who received the majority of the votes became the next Supreme Guide. Information obtained at <http://islamists2day-e.blogspot.com/>

<sup>991</sup> Other scholars emphasise the generational differences of the Brothers. Indicatively, Khalil Al-Anani identifies four generations inside the organization: the first group is on their 70-80s activists during the Nasserist years, characterised by a general conservatism having as main goal to maintain the organisation's cohesion; the second group is on their 50-60s, consider as pragmatists and strongly engaged in politics; the third generation is on their 40-50s and they are also characterised by conservatism; finally the young generation in their 20-30s are the most political and active members of the organisation. Personal interview with Khalil al-Anani, expert on political Islam and Deputy Editor of Al Siyassa Al Dawliya journal published by Al-Ahram Foundation. For more information see Al-Anani's blog <http://islamists2day-e.blogspot.com/>.

<sup>992</sup> Wasat was mainly formed by ex-member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Abou Elela Mady, founder of the party, was member of the Brotherhood for 18 years. According to Mady, what pushed them to withdraw from the organisation was the denial of their leaders to renew the Brotherhood and form a political party by separating preaching from politics. Wasat until Mubarak's fall had not

participate (Wickham, 2002: 219).

The nomination of the new members of the Guidance Bureau and the following election of the new Spiritual Guide was a clear demonstration of the 'conservative' wing strategy to halt the 'reformist' ascending on the hierarchy<sup>993</sup>. Yet the cleansing of unwanted elements from the decision posts did not erase the internal problems. This later is demonstrated by the disarray of reactions created after Brotherhood's official decision to participate in the parliamentary elections of 2010<sup>994</sup>. The younger and most activist supporters of the organisation opposed clearly to their leaders' decision to abandon the 'National Assembly of Change'<sup>995</sup> and ElBaradei's calls for general boycott. *"This is a ridiculous statement [that the decision was taken under elections]"* said a front member Khaled Dawood, adding that *"the group never conducted any internal opinion polls on the issue"* (Adib and ElWaziry, 2010(a)).

The division of the organisation had been helping the regime, since the organisation's cohesion was in constant decline. Furthermore, the new synthesis of Guidance Bureau was positively perceived by Mubarak's regime since, the older generations were prone to maintain a low profile in politics, characterised by a status quo tendency. Indicative is the stand of Mohammed Badie, the new General Guide, who rushed into reaffirming the basic lines of the group in regards to the regime: the commitment to non violence and their political loyalty to the regime (Nasrawi, 2010).

The collaboration between Muslim Brotherhood and the Egyptian regime was not inexistent, as we have been able to comprehend, even though this is denied from both sides. Following Pommier both players needed each other: the regime for channelling opposition forces to a single movement, and the Brotherhood for having the protagonist role in the opposition forces. On the same time, regime's demonization strategy, increased Brotherhood's legitimacy and its capital of sympathy (Pommier, 2008: 227).

Muslim Brotherhood's attitude, therefore, had been facilitating the Egyptian regime to remain the main player of the game (Lampridi-Kemou, 2011d). The status quo tendency of Brotherhood's leadership and its authoritarian procedures had been helping the regime indirectly to legitimise its authoritarian rule.

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obtained licence to operate as political party. Personal interview with Abou Elela Mady, founder of Wasat party and co-founder of the Kefaya movement.

<sup>993</sup> The partial elections on May 2008 to elect five members of the Guidance Bureau had as result the exclusion of Isam al-Arian, leader of the reformist wing, and the nomination of five new members of the traditionalist-conservative wing. The convenient results made many supporters and members of the organisation to question the transparency of the process. For more information see (Franganillo, 2010).

<sup>994</sup> According to the Supreme Guide, Mohamed Badie, Muslim Brotherhood announced its decision to participate at the parliamentary elections, after internal elections of the Shura Council with 98% votes in favour of the participation.

<sup>995</sup> Muslim Brotherhood had been up to then an integral member of the 'National Coalition for Change' supporting the coalition's proposal for a general boycott.

Furthermore, the organisations role and practices had been reproducing an important characteristic of the Egyptian politics. Even though the basis of the Muslim Brotherhood resides in petit and middle bourgeoisie, the organisation has been enjoying popular support mainly for its welfare activities, as well as for its 'alternative' political proposal. However, the welfare activities had been reproducing the clientelist patron of political relations between the 'voters' and candidates. The mechanisms of voter recruitment, following the steps of NDP but in conformity with the organisation's resources, have contributed at the creation of the Egyptian political culture. The practices of visiting houses and helping with the administrative procedures to register to vote, offering gifts of Islamic context, distribution of school material alleviating the burden of the parents, especially in poor areas, have significant effect on the clientelist pattern. However, such practices guarantee the popular support towards the Brotherhood. Indicative is the position of Muhammad Akif's, former General Guide of the Brotherhood<sup>996</sup> *"If parents do not respond to us, children are still going to remember who gave them goodies at school gates and hopefully this means our message is being slowly passed to the next generation directly[...] We are not in a hurry, our plans are very long term"*.

This dynamic had been reducing the possibility for a strong opposition on a legal frame, as other forces lacked capacities to apply similar methods in order to attract important part of the Egyptian population. Meanwhile, in the context of 'Islamist-terrorist' threat Mubarak had been able to maintain illegal the most popular 'party' with the support of the western liberal democracies. Considered as a radical Islamist group, despite the frequent and official rejection of Jihadist practices, the group was conceived by the liberal democracies as a threat to them and an extra handicap for Egypt's democratic feature. Consequently, under the pretext of protecting the integrity and the unity of a country, Mubarak achieved the long blocking of the creation of Brotherhood's political party and through this way re-legitimise its authoritarian rule.

### ***12.3. Foreign Actors and their relations with the Egyptian ones***

Competition among elites does not take place only among those sharing nationality. As we have already underlined, a given system structure is also linked to superior systems and to the changes that may take place within them. In particular with the Egyptian case, it has become up to now clear that the Egyptian elites have been heavily dependent on the outside world, since power accumulation of peripheral elites in the globalised system depends partly on their

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<sup>996</sup> Quoted in (Kassem, 1999: 145-146).

function as intermediaries with core elites.

The foreign relations of Cairo, thus, have an important weight in power competition. Egyptian elites form part of the periphery and their alliances with foreign actors enables them to increase their power capabilities. On the contrary, the absence of alliances weakens their position. Cooperation with foreign elites, whether core or peripheral ones, serve as additional power resource for the Egyptian actors and potentially increase their power capabilities. On the other hand, the foreign elites' support to Egyptian elites expands their influence inside Egypt and/or to consolidate their position in their sphere of influence.

The end of the Cold War left the primary elites of Middle East under the almost exclusive control of Washington, depriving the regional actors from the possibility to play with the rivalries among central powers. Consequently, Middle Eastern elites, lacking capacity to compete with core elites become dependent on their relations with Washington. In regards to the Egyptian case, Cairo has been since long dependent on its relations with the American administration and other American elites and thus many of the official policies had been taken under Washington's pressures.

The main interests of the different American administrations in the region have not change a lot the last 50 years. Following Sherle Schwenninger, co-director of global economic policy at the New America Foundation, all American presidents have pursued common objectives based in the following lines: *"the subsidisation of the defence of Israel and the promotion of some kind of peace process; the encouragement of pro-US governments in Egypt and Jordan; and the nurturing of a close alliance relationship with the ruling families of the Persian Gulf oil-producing states, especially with the royal family of Saudi"*(Achcar, 2004).

As it is frequently said, the attacks of 11-S in New York had a noteworthy impact on the relations between the West and the Arab countries. The George W. Bush's doctrine, which opened the doors for pre-emptive war strikes<sup>997</sup>, and the rhetorical 'democratisation' of the Arab world, altered the relations between the Arab leaders and Washington. The alleged terrorist attacks on the American territory were used as a pretext for three wars against Afghanistan, terrorism, and Iraq, fact that demonstrated the lack of power in terms of cultural hegemony. This dynamic introduced changes in Washington's relations with the Middle Eastern actors, even though there were not visible changes with Washington's 'loyal' regional allies.

The American decision to invade Iraq and the position of the Arab allies is a clear manifestation of the previous. The American invasion of Iraq in 2003 came under three pretexts: war against terrorism as supposedly Saddam Hussein was

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<sup>997</sup> President George W. Bush on 20 September 2001 declared to a Joint Session of Congress: "We will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbour or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime" (Bush, 2001).

providing help to al Qaida, the existence of weapons of mass destruction, and the necessity to create a democratic Iraq, a model country for the rest of the region. Eight years after, none of them was proven or satisfied, demonstrating that the real reasons of the military aggression were not the declared ones.

The American administration hoped that would gain a regional support at least from its main allies, sharing interests to take down Saddam Hussein. However, the hostile Iraqi regime was proven not so hostile for Washington's regional allies. At regional level, the dismantling of Saddam's regime benefited the anti-American regimes, the Middle Eastern 'axis of evil'<sup>998</sup>-Damascus and Teheran-and its regional allies, the Lebanese Hezbollah and the Palestinian Hamas. As Soler and Zaccara commented "*La ocupación norteamericana de Irak ha comportado, paradójicamente, la emergencia de Irán como una potencia regional que, además de Irak, ejerce cada vez más influencia en el Líbano (a través de Hezbolá), en Palestina (a través de Hamas) y en Siria (gracias a la alianza entre Bashar al-Asad y el gobierno iraní)*" (Soler and Zaccara, 2009: 225).

The benefited regional actors inevitably harmed the interests of the 'moderate' Arab leaders and of course these of Tel Aviv. Washington's allies, depending on the American aid on economic, political and military<sup>999</sup> terms, saw their competitors to increase their influence on the region. Consequently, the new regional threats created compatible interests among the 'moderate' Arab leaders but on the same time damaged the compatibility with the American ones. Washington's necessity to secure its alliances with regional actors gave the chance to its 'traditional' friends to negotiate better terms of 'cooperation'. In parallel, the international war against 'terrorism' helped the authoritarian regimes of the Middle East to legitimate their repressive domestic policies.

From Cairo's side, the important economic benefits for its arms industry were deeply affected from Saddam's 'cashiering', keeping in mind that only for the year 2002 under the 'oil-for-food' programme, approximately \$1.2-2 billion had entered into Egypt (Merzaban, 2003). It is easily understood that in 'democratic' and friendly to Washington Iraq this profitable commerce would be permanently stopped. The losses for the Egyptian regime and the necessity of the American administration to secure at least Cairo's indirect collaboration imposed negotiations between the two sides. The economic losses were covered by the participation of the Egyptian companies at the reconstruction of Iraq, along with an American direct aid touching \$300 million and \$2 billion in loan guarantees (InternationalCrisisGroup, 2003). Additionally, the Egyptian officers would

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<sup>998</sup> The term 'axis of evil' was firstly used by George W. Bush on January 2002 and included the states of Iraq, Iran and North Korea.

<sup>999</sup> We have to keep in mind that in the case of Saudi Arabia since the first Gulf War the American army safeguards the territorial integrity of the country. The presence of the American army inevitably decreases legitimacy of the country's leaders and gives pretext for criticism to their competitors.

participate in the training of the Iraqi security forces. In exchange the Egyptian government allowed the passage of U.S. warships and flights en route to the Persian Gulf through the Egyptian air and water territory. In this way, Mubarak managed to create an image of a leader committed to the Arab solidarity without jeopardising his ties with the American administration, gaining on the same time substantial benefits for his regime, by satisfying the economic and military interests of his domestic allies.

It becomes obvious that the negation of the Egyptian regime to back up officially Bush's administration on the American operation against Bagdad thus, was not based on solidarity feelings but rather on the fact Hussein's dismantling was not in benefit of Mubarak and his domestic allies. Additionally, Cairo had to secure the social tranquillity. The second Palestinian intifada and Washington's pro-Israeli attitude in front of Tel-Aviv's intransigence had already weakened up the Egyptian anti-American feelings. The Egyptian anti-Americanism was further cultivated by Mubarak's regime, as means to canalise the Egyptian frustration towards issues that were not threatening regime's stability. A possible collaboration of Cairo on Iraq's invasion could have lead to massive mobilisations, which could threaten regime's control over the Egyptian society. It is important to underline that at the moment the Egyptian economy was facing financial problems with the floating of the Egyptian pound, which increased considerably the price of basic food commodities, creating solid bases for popular reactions (International Crisis Group, 2003). Both factors, deterioration of economic conditions and the Arab solidarity feelings, would be easily used by anti-regime actors to increase their power capacities.

Therefore, Cairo's official denial to participate in Iraq's invasion was beneficiating in two ways Mubarak and his allies: as means to extract benefits for Washington and as a way to secure social 'stability'. Mubarak used cleverly the anti-American protests: on the one hand, the presence of an external enemy made the Egyptians live aside their real problems and enjoy in parallel an unrecorded freedom of manifestation<sup>1000</sup>. On the other hand, Egyptian growing anti-Americanism worried Washington for generalised popular reactions in the region. The tensed situation all over the region and the implicit refusal of the friendly Arab regimes to control the situation pushed Bush to relax his exigencies from his Arab allies.

Riyadh's denial to join the American military initiative against Saddam Hussein's regime was similarly not based on feelings of Arab solidarity<sup>1001</sup>. Riyadh,

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<sup>1000</sup> It is indicative that the governmental party participated in anti-war protest joining the opposition (International Crisis Group, 2003).

<sup>1001</sup> Bush's democratisation plan did not find support either from Riyadh's side, as the newly appointed king Abdullah, who took power on August 2005, was preoccupied with the consolidation of his position by promoting an alliance with marginalised and discontented princes. Moreover, the social resentment created by the repressive policies and the unequal distribution of wealth had also to be contested by the new regime.

representative of the Wahhabism -austere Sunni sect- did not want to see the expansion of Shiite doctrine on the region, consequence of the disappearance of Iraqi balancer that would increase Teheran's influence in the region, as it actually did. Furthermore, the American mistrust created by the fact that 15 members of the 11-S attacks and the leader of al Qaida<sup>1002</sup> were citizens of the Saudi kingdom, 'forced' partially the Saudi King to adopt a more 'autonomous' foreign policy in the region. The promotion of this Saudi independent agenda was facilitated by the boom of oil prices, basic power recourse of Riyadh applied to expand their influence<sup>1003</sup>.

Consequently, George W. Bush's 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' did find the wanted support neither on regional nor at the international level, with the exception of London and in a smaller degree of Sidney and Warsaw. As it is historically known, the American army and its collaborators managed easily to overthrow Saddam's regime, without finding however weapons of mass distraction. In parallel, Iraq's 'democratisation' became Washington's nightmare creating considerable problems for Bush's administration on terms of accountability.

The 'democratisation' of the Arab world displeased particular Washington's main Arab allies. The authoritarian regimes of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the Gulf countries had been long supported by Washington, in order to guarantee the regional stability. As Garfinkle underlined democracy in the Arab world "*does presuppose either a major shift in US attitudes toward the undemocratic ruling classes in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and others that we have long called our friends; or a permanent condition of blatant diplomatic hypocrisy*"(Garfinkle, 2002). The American calls for a democratic opening were certainly not in benefit of the Arab leaders and as it was proven shortly nor of the American administration.

Mubarak used the threat of 'democratising'<sup>1004</sup> his regime in order to secure the American economic and political aid. It is necessary to keep in mind that Cairo relies in a significant degree on the foreign economic aid, being essentially a rentier state. American annual bilateral economic assistance to Egypt is typically provided in three different ways: (1) as a direct cash transfer to the Egyptian government; (2) as part of the Commodity Import Program, which provides hard currency to the Egyptian private sector to purchase U.S. agricultural goods; and (3)

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<sup>1002</sup> Even though Washington knew that Osama Bin Laden and al Qaida was formed in the opposition of the head leaders of Saudi Arabia, the American administration believed that components of the royal family had facilitated the group's terrorist acts outside the country (Soler and Zaccara, 2009).

<sup>1003</sup> The quadrupled of the oil prices, from 2002 to 2008, permitted Abdullah to consolidate his power inside the country by salary raises for the public employees and infrastructure projects (Yamani, 2009).

<sup>1004</sup> Mubarak's view on democracy is highlighted by his opinion on 'democratic' Iraq. According to an interview on May 2008, classified as confidential and published by wikileaks, the Egyptian president Mubarak recommended the U.S. to "*forget about democracy because the Iraqis are too rough in nature*" suggesting Washington to opt for a 'just dictatorship'.

as funds for USAID programming in Egypt. However, according to Congressional Research Service Report of 2007<sup>1005</sup>, the American Congress had been dedicating considerable efforts to determine the ways the Egyptian government should spend USAID focusing at democracy and educational programs. On the other hand, the Egyptian side for obvious reasons had been trying to have an active role on the way this aid is distributed arguing *“that U.S. assistance programs must be jointly negotiated and cannot be unilaterally dictated by the United States”*.

Mubarak’s partial political opening ‘helped’ Washington to appreciate that a democratic Egypt would not be at its best interest as the main opposition force, Muslim Brotherhood, enjoying at the time popular support, would be less disposed to follow the American exigencies and more importantly incapable of safeguarding Egypt’s stability. American ‘dislike’ on Muslim Brotherhood was connected also with the organisation’s official position toward Israel and the denial to recognise the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty. The contradiction of the American policy between words and deeds is underlined by Madelyn Albright in 2003 who stated<sup>1006</sup> *“We did nudge at times, supporting Kuwaiti leaders in their initiative to give women the vote and encouraging the creation of representative bodies in Bahrain and Jordan. But we did not make it a priority. Arab public opinion, after all, can be rather scary”*.

By using the threat of the establishment of an Islamic democracy in Egypt and the probable consequent regional instability, Mubarak extracted benefits not only from Washington but also inside the country, by restricting the liberties of the Egyptians through the constitutional reform and the preparation of the anti-terrorist law. Following Halliday, Egypt formed part of the group of states that took advantage of US calling for solidarity against terrorism in order to increase their authoritarian rule mainly over the opposition forces (Halliday, 2004). Mubarak’s coercive methods against regime’s opponents were also used by the American administration. According to several reports since September 2001 U.S. Central Intelligence Agency has deported several suspected al Qaeda operatives to Egypt-along with other countries-in order to be interrogated.

The official attitude of Cairo and Riyadh was expressed<sup>1007</sup> by the rejection of *“the imposition of a specific prototype of reform on Arab and Muslim countries from abroad”*. Vicissitudes in the relations between Washington and the leaders of Middle Eastern countries were not limited to Cairo and Riyadh. The effort to gain a relative independence in front of the American demands was expanded also in the Gulf States. The petro-leaders’ opening towards Iran, Lebanon and Fatah was a clear manifestation of their attempt to dissociate themselves from Washington’s control. Having no particular interest to support the clear interventionist American policies on the region, the leaders of Gulf States coordinated their

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<sup>1005</sup> Information obtained at [www.usembassy.it/pdf/other/RL33033.pdf](http://www.usembassy.it/pdf/other/RL33033.pdf)

<sup>1006</sup> Quoted in (Norton, 2005: 136).

<sup>1007</sup> Quoted in (Achcar, 2004).



policies in order to increase their influence.

Cairo's 'autonomisation' in regards to Washington was probably helped from the increasing interest of European Union in the region. The attacks on the European soil, in Madrid and London, the geographical proximity and the energetic dependency of EU countries on Middle East<sup>1008</sup> 'convinced' the European leaders to direct part of the interests on the region. The regional anti-American attitude was helpful for such task. However, the interests of the European actors and their power capacities have not allowed radical changes on the regional power balance.

After the 11-S attacks, the EU policies have been focused on security issues: counterterrorist cooperation with Arab regimes<sup>1009</sup>, immigration controls and also on economic collaboration and promotion of human rights<sup>1010</sup>, supposedly as means to eliminate the factors that lead to terrorism and undocumented immigration. Thus, the European side put in place various programmes in order to promote cooperation with the southern side of Mediterranean. To this means promoted the political and economic agenda in Middle East initiated with EU Barcelona Process<sup>1011</sup> and the Union for the Mediterranean under the rhetoric of democratisation, human rights and regional free trade zone. This cooperative programme however was unsuccessful since its role is limited to the celebration of conferences, the worst of which was this of 2005 where almost there was a complete absence of high representatives from the southern partners-only Turkish and Palestinian representatives participated (VoltaireNet, 2005).

Even though Washington remained the main foreign actor on the region, the economic and political ties between the southern Mediterranean countries and EU as well as the bilateral relation were in constant increase. The relatively limited power capacities of European leaders on the Middle East enabled the Arab regimes to extract mainly economic benefits without particular concessions.

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<sup>1008</sup> We have to underline that EU is the most important destination for exports from North Africa and the Gulf countries on energy terms.

<sup>1009</sup> Since 2007 Euro-Mediterranean Partnership became integral part of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). This initiative underlined the interests of EU actors to enlarge cooperation in the high politics. Yet the security approaches Eurofor and Euromarfor forces and new missile defence system to rebuff threats from Mediterranean, were not welcomed by the southern partners of the Mediterranean who considered the units to be mainly directed against them (Biscop, 2005).

<sup>1010</sup> The MEDA Programme, initiated in 1995 and amended in 2000 (MEDA II), the financial instrument of EU Mediterranean policy, linked economic support to the promotion of human rights, fundamental freedoms and good-neighbourly relations. Nevertheless, as it is highlighted by Lannon "in actual practice conditionality has been very limited if not non-existent" (Lannon et al., 2001). In parallel other agreements were signed in order to reinforce relations among the Mediterranean countries focusing at the economic collaboration such as Agadir Agreement (2004) for the Establishment of a Free Trade Zone between the Arabic Mediterranean Nations (Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan) dismantle the barriers between them for EU aid.

<sup>1011</sup> EU assistance to Egypt in support of economic reform, dialogue on political issues and poverty reduction in the framework of the Barcelona Process is over €1 billion. Information obtained at [europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/egypt/intro/index.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/egypt/intro/index.htm)

Furthermore, the competition between American and European actors became an additional tool for pressure to the elites of the periphery. Indicatively we can mention the case of World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations. Free talks between Washington and Cairo were temporarily suspended after the negation of the Egyptian government to back Washington against EU in series of WTO disputes (Youngs, 2006: 124).

In particular to the Egyptian case, Cairo has been one of the main beneficiaries of EU's support in the region, making Brussels the second largest donor to Egypt. The focus of the €558 million assistance package under the European Neighbourhood Policy was to support the reform process and the implementation of the EU-Egypt ENP Action Plan, adopted on 6 March 2007. However as the numbers demonstrate, EU priorities were not connected with the democratisation of Egypt as from the total €558 million of the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (2007-2011) only €40 million were destined to *Governance and human rights*<sup>1012</sup>.

The changes on regional power balance along with the greater autonomy and the necessity to demonstrate a disconnection from Washington-source of domestic discontent, as well as the need to halt the expansion of the Iranian influence in the region and inside the Kingdom<sup>1013</sup>, pushed the Saudi diplomatic efforts to include Iran in the discussion of regional problems, starting from the conflict of Tel-Aviv and Hezbollah. The dialogue between Teheran and Riyadh continued with King Abdullah confirming his role of mediator<sup>1014</sup>.

The first visible and striking blow on the American interests and its 'democratisation' plan came with the electoral victory of Hezbollah in Lebanon. The anti-American and militant attitude of God's party was certainly not in Washington's interests, which had opted for the Prime Minister Fouad Siniora and the "March 14" alliance<sup>1015</sup>. The entrance of Hezbollah at the Lebanese government<sup>1016</sup> was followed by a hostile American position. However, Washington here also did not find support by its Arab allies, who decided to adopt a policy of conciliation, even though Hezbollah was harming their interests

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<sup>1012</sup> Information obtained at [ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/country-cooperation/egypt/egypt\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/country-cooperation/egypt/egypt_en.htm)

<sup>1013</sup> Since 2003, the Shi minority of Saudi Arabia has been trying to increase its presence inside the country. For further information see (Kapiszewski, 2006).

<sup>1014</sup> The king of Saudi Arabia in an effort to halt Teheran's influence on the region tried to extract regional collaboration at the energy sector. More specifically, in summer 2007, as Iran continued to defy the International Atomic Energy Agency with its declarations regarding nuclear programme, the Saudi king called Teheran and all Gulf leaders proposing them to work together to develop a common facility in a neutral country to provide fuel for the entire region. Even though Teheran rejected the Saudi proposal, this move was significant as the call was highlighting an effort that "countries of the region should tackle issues affecting them all on their own terms, rather than on those of the United States" (Ottaway, 2008).

<sup>1015</sup> Regarding the power competition in Lebanon you can consult (Goenaga and Sánchez, 2009).

<sup>1016</sup> Until 2005 even though Hezbollah was participating at the electoral process the organisation was denying its participation at the Lebanese government.

(Ottaway, 2008).

The war between Hezbollah and Tel Aviv<sup>1017</sup> in the summer of 2006 had as immediate outcome the reinforcement of the former, since Tel Aviv did not manage to extract real gains from the confrontation. The confidence that the leaders of Hezbollah gained after their 'victory' gave them the opportunity to demand a greater role at the Lebanese government. The denial of 'March 14' forces to satisfy Hezbollah's demands, compatible with Washington's desires, led to a violent confrontation between the components of the ruling elites. Finally, and with the mediator role of Doha, the solution came after negotiations including the leaders of the Arab League, with the formation of a national unity government, in which Hezbollah received 11 out of 30 portfolios<sup>1018</sup>.

Another democratic blow for Washington and its regional allies came with the electoral victory of Hamas, who gained 74 out of 132 seats at the Palestinian parliament. However, the electoral outcome should be expected because since 1996 the popular support of Hamas was growing whereas this of Fatah was in constant decrease (Hilal, 2006). The anti-terrorist policies of Tel Aviv in Palestinian territories, along with Washington's policies pushed the Palestinians in 'radicalism'. The death of Yasser Arafat, in 2004, put a final end of the relative Palestinian cohesion, fact that gave the final push for Hamas' ascendance in power.

The Palestinian electoral outcome preoccupied the Israeli government<sup>1019</sup>, Washington and Cairo. The ideological ties between Hamas and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood frighten Mubarak for possible co-ordination of actions between the two Islamist groups, especially after the Israeli unilaterally dismantling of its settlements and the withdrawal of its troops from the Gaza Strip in August and September 2005<sup>1020</sup>. Therefore, Washington, Tel Aviv and Cairo found another common interest: debilitate Hamas. Each actor followed different policies to confront the 'enemy', yet without a complete lack of collaboration<sup>1021</sup>.

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<sup>1017</sup> The Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000 after nearly two decades of occupation altered significantly the internal power balance.

<sup>1018</sup> The victory of Hezbollah enabled the organisation to obtain the 'blocking third', which gave the organisation the veto right over major decisions, a right that Hezbollah was demanding since the 2006 war.

<sup>1019</sup> The entry of Hamas at the Palestinian government benefited the main Israeli elites who have their interests connected with the continuation of the conflict. The government of Olmert and Peretz was formed by two civilian figures, an unusual phenomenon for Israeli politics. Following Álvarez-Ossorio in order to demonstrate their capacities, the two civilian leaders fall into the trap of militarising their policies, satisfying the interests of the military elites. In regards to Palestinian losses, the Israeli attitude weakened further the Palestinian elites and population, adding further complications on internal Palestinian conflict and power competition. Furthermore, the intensification of occupation policies, cancelled practically the control of the Palestinian authorities over life in Palestine (Álvarez-Ossorio and Izquierdo, 2007).

<sup>1020</sup> You can consult the summary of the Israeli-Egyptian border agreement at <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2374>.

<sup>1021</sup> In December 2006, there were several reports indicating that Cairo, with the approval of Tel Aviv, furnished military equipment to Fatah-affiliated groups in the Gaza Strip. Information taken US Department of State, available at [fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/68818.pdf](http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/68818.pdf).

Washington and Tel Aviv chose the radical way: the former along with the rest of Quartet<sup>1022</sup> froze the economic aid towards to the Palestinian Authority and Tel Aviv stopped the transfer of the taxes to the Palestinian Authority<sup>1023</sup> imposed by the Paris Protocol, depriving in this way 85% of the monthly Palestinian revenues (Schmid, 2006). Cairo tried to play the mediator between the two Palestinian fractions, Fatah and Hamas, targeting on the one hand to control the situation in order to avoid problems on the Egyptian territory and on the other to promote a neutral image in the region as well as inside Egypt.

The importance of the Palestinian question for the Egyptian regime, not its solution, was demonstrated by the handing of the file to the Chief of the Intelligence Services, Omar Suleiman. This importance derived from the three main factors: on the one hand the Palestinian question had been a source of legitimacy for the Egyptian regime. The Egyptians had long fought for the Palestinian cause and suffered the consequences. As Samir Awad<sup>1024</sup> commented *"The Arabs want to fight Israel with the last Egyptian soul"*<sup>1025</sup>. On the other hand, the American aid destined to Cairo is connected with Tel Aviv. An Egyptian indifference towards the Palestinian 'troublemakers' would not be appreciated by the Washington and Tel Aviv. Last but certainly not least, Egyptian regime had been always worried for possible collaboration between Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas.

The publication of the American State Department's telegrams by Wikileaks shed light on the position of the American administration towards Cairo's position on the Palestinian issue. The conversation<sup>1026</sup> between Omar Suleiman, main negotiator between Hamas and Fatah, and General Petraeus, chief of United States Central Command, underlined the American fears for the role of Cairo. More concretely, the confidential telegram mentioned that according to Suleiman, Cairo's main objectives were: maintain the calm in Gaza Strip, undermine Hamas and build popular support for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

The existence of common interests did not cancel the official coldness in diplomatic relations between Tel Aviv and Cairo. The Egyptian solidarity at popular level towards the Palestinian 'uprising' and the massiveness of the movement forced the Egyptian government to withdraw its ambassador from Tel Aviv in November 2000, for five years period. In parallel, Mubarak's regime did

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<sup>1022</sup> The Quartet for Middle East is composed by United Nations, United States of America, European Union and Russia.

<sup>1023</sup> In September 2003 started the construction of twenty four foot high wall to separate West Bank from Israel, with cement coming also from Egypt. Information taken from *The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy* (MIFTAH) available at [www.miftah.org/display.cfm?DocId=6628&CategoryId=5](http://www.miftah.org/display.cfm?DocId=6628&CategoryId=5)

<sup>1024</sup> Personal interview with Samir Awad, Copt and employee of Japanese embassy in Cairo.

<sup>1025</sup> It is necessary to underline the contradictive feelings on the Egyptian citizens towards the Palestinians. Following Michalis Grunstein words *"Palestinians are like cancer"*. Personal interview with Michalis Grunstein responsible of press and communication at the Greek embassy of Cairo.

<sup>1026</sup> Available at [//213.251.145.96/cable/2007/05/07CAIRO1417.html](http://213.251.145.96/cable/2007/05/07CAIRO1417.html)

not block the circulation of anti-Israeli publications, aiming to satisfy the popular feeling and more importantly to pressure Washington and Tel Aviv. It is indicative that the American and Israeli complaints regarding the anti-Semitic attitude of the Egyptian media<sup>1027</sup> were ironically contested as consequence of the freedom of press existing in the country (Abdelnasser, 2004: 122).

However, the Egyptian regime needed to balance the anti-Israeli attitude, which was increasing Muslim Brotherhood's influence, opponents of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Mubarak, thus at the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Camp David Peace Treaty declared that he never thought cancelling the peace treaty with Israel and to confirm this he declared<sup>1028</sup> *"Whoever seeks war has never felt what true war is [...]"*. Yet, the Israeli side continued to put Mubarak in uncomfortable position as the minister of foreign affairs, Ividgor Liberman stated<sup>1029</sup> *"Israel has let go since 1977 of lands three times the size of the Golan and peace was still not achieved,"* referring to Sinai. Moreover, Liberman attacked Mubarak for his continuous refusal to visit Israel by stating: *"let him [Mubarak] go to hell"*<sup>1030</sup>.

However, business is business and the political rhetoric can be contradicted by the particular interests, in particular economics. As El Mahmoudy<sup>1031</sup> commented the businessmen are only interested in profit and thus there is no reason to mix business with politics. In June 2005, Egypt and Israel signed an agreement on sales of Egyptian natural gas to the neighbour country, between Israel Electric Corp and. The following year the Eastern Mediterranean Gas signed another agreement with the Israeli Dorad Energy<sup>1032</sup>.

The frictions in the triangle Washington-Cairo-Tel Aviv, consequence of the different interests existing, did not imply a change of the American and Israeli necessity to preserve a leading role for Cairo in the Arab world. This attitude is demonstrated by the declaration of Tzipi Livni *"Peace between Israel and Egypt, the leader of the Arab world"*<sup>1033</sup>, and the relations between the two countries are of strategic importance for both sides [...]. More evident manifestation of such desire was the choice of president Obama to address its message to the Arab and Muslim world from the Egyptian capital, underling Washington's interests on promoting a leading role for Cairo<sup>1034</sup>. Such initiatives however, felt into empty

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<sup>1027</sup> During 2002 many journalist called for boycott against US and Israeli products stirred up by Mustafa Bakri editor in chief of al-Usbuaa.

<sup>1028</sup> Quoted at Haaretz daily in 26 /03/09.

<sup>1029</sup> Source Al Masry Al Youm daily (02/04/09).

<sup>1030</sup> Liberman's declarations obliged the Israeli president, Shimon Perez to apologise officially.

<sup>1031</sup> Personal interview with Ahmad El Mahmoudy, business environment coordinator at the Egyptian Business Association.

<sup>1032</sup> Information obtained from the US Department of State available at [//fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/68818.pdf](http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/68818.pdf)

<sup>1033</sup> Emphasis added. Source Al Jazeera (26/03/09).

<sup>1034</sup> Washington and Tel Aviv are not the only actors interested in promoting Mubarak as regional

since Mubarak was *de facto* rejected as leader of the region.

Mubarak's lack of power to impose his will on the Arab arena was known at the American administration. In February 2009, it became public the report of the U.S National Intelligence Council that concluded that Cairo had lost its leading role in the region and Mubarak was too old to impose his agenda in the region<sup>1035</sup>. The report continued that the two possible candidates for succeeding the actual president, Gamal Mubarak and Omar Suleiman, did not seem capable of taking over the leading role of Cairo in the region. Washington's position on Mubarak's role in the region was revealed also by the telegrams diffused by wikileaks, which stated that Hosni Mubarak had lost influence in the Middle East, and his impact on Arab affairs increasingly limited<sup>1036</sup>.

The interests of Washington on Cairo and its role as main sponsor of Mubarak's regime, gave the American administration the possibility to frequently use threat of economic aid in order to 'convince' Cairo on taking the 'right' side. Following an Egyptian analyst<sup>1037</sup> "*The American Congress is always debating whether to renew the aid, asking whether Egypt is on our side*". Washington's interference had not been limited in questions related to the foreign sphere. The 'American' intervention on the Egyptian domestic policies is demonstrated by different incidents. In 2002, the Administration and Congress rejected \$134 million in new economic assistance for Egypt to protest the imprisonment of Saad Eddin Ibrahim<sup>1038</sup> (International Crisis Group, 2003). Similar was the case of Ayman Nour, the imprisoned leader of al-Ghad party. Here the main tool of pressure was the cancelation of Condoleezza Rice to Cairo (Lee, 2006). Coincidentally, the two Egyptian figures were accused of receiving foreign money, against law's regulations.

Presidential succession was certainly one of the main preoccupations of the American administration. The division of the Egyptian regime between old and new guard and the problematic succession of Mubarak had been a headache for Washington. Until Mubarak's fall, everything showed that the interests of the American actors were divided. On the one hand, the 'alliance for profits' in terms of Waterbury (Waterbury: 27) headed by Gamal Mubarak would have permit a greater liberalisation of the Egyptian economy, of great interest for the American administrations since the 90s. On the other hand, Suleiman and the 'old guard'

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leader but also the very same Egyptian regime. Indicative is the case of the retouched photo, published by the governmental daily Al Ahram, showing Hosni Mubarak opening the way to Barack Obama, followed by Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and King Abdullah of Jordan. Following Pommier the incident "*met en relief le souci du Caire d'apparaître comme un acteur clé sur la scène régionale afin de conforter la légitimité du régime*" (Pommier, 2010: 8).

<sup>1035</sup> The information was published at the Egyptian daily Al Masry Al Youm (25/02/09).

<sup>1036</sup> Source : wikileaks available at [//213.251.145.96/cable/2007/05/07CAIRO1417.html](http://213.251.145.96/cable/2007/05/07CAIRO1417.html)

<sup>1037</sup> Quoted in (Hussein, 2006).

<sup>1038</sup> What is really peculiar with Saad Eddin Ibrahim's case is that he was known to be one of the closest friends of Mubarak's family and professor of Suzan Mubarak, president's wife.

were considered more apt to guarantee the political and social stability of the country, preserving however, the interventionist role of the state.

Washington's position on the Egyptian succession was verified by the leak of confidential telegrams by Wikileaks. American Ambassador Ricciardone starts his report by stating that<sup>1039</sup> *"presidential succession is the elephant in the room of Egyptian politics"*. Ricciardone continues on stating that there is no certainty of who is going to be the successor of the actual president, Gamal Mubarak, Omar Suleiman, Amr Mussa or another unknown military figure. The ambassador concludes that *"whoever ends up as Egypt's next president likely will be politically weaker than Mubarak. Once Mubarak's successor has assumed the post, his first priority will be to build popular support. We expect thus that the new president will likely adopt an anti-American tone in his initial public rhetoric, in an effort to prove his nationalist bona fides to the Egyptian street, and may possibly extend an olive branch to the Muslim Brotherhood, as did previous presidents at the beginning of their terms"*.

The necessity of an American backup had pushed the representatives of each guard to try to secure Washington's support on their race. In October 2007, Suleiman visited USA, officially for the security of Gaza borders. However, there were rumours that the real reason behind this visit was the normalisation of the relations between Cairo and Washington, after the cancellation of \$ 200 million of military aid as sanction for not controlling the traffic of arms in Gaza and the imprisonment of Ayman Nour (El-Din, 2007b). Whatever the reasons of this visit was, it is probable that Suleiman used the opportunity to extract support in his competition with Gamal.

Mubarak's son visited often U.S.A. One of the last visits of Gamal was in March 2009, during which the 'next president' of Egypt held meetings, in their majority closed doors, with American experts at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) as well as with American congressmen. It is interesting to mention that during this visit Gamal Mubarak gave an interview at CNN, during which he was frequently referred to as the possible future president of Egypt<sup>1040</sup>.

The uncertainty regarding Hosni Mubarak's successor compelled American administration to be prepared for different scenarios, including a possible adherence of the Muslim Brotherhood in the government. This hypothesis probably explains the unofficial meetings between members of the Brotherhood and American representatives. One of these initiatives probably took place during the first official visit in Egypt of the American president Barak Obama<sup>1041</sup>.

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<sup>1039</sup> Available at [//213.251.145.96/cable/2007/05/07CAIRO1417.html](http://213.251.145.96/cable/2007/05/07CAIRO1417.html)

<sup>1040</sup> Gamal Mubarak gave an interview at the CNN's programme Global Public Square (GPS) during which the host, Fareed Zakaria, indicated that Gamal was possibly Egypt's next president of the Republic. You can consult the interview at [archives.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0903/08/fzgps.01.html](http://archives.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0903/08/fzgps.01.html)

<sup>1041</sup> The unofficial contacts between the organisation and Washington have started under the Bush administration (El-Din, 2007(a)).

The indirect American recognition of Brotherhood's role was not appreciated by Mubarak. For this reason the Egyptian regime proceeded in arrests of members of the organisation, including parliamentary members. Mohamed Habib, first deputy to the Brotherhood's supreme guide, stated<sup>1042</sup> "[...] *the prospect of the U.S. President opening communications with us angered the regime, which decided to launch a pre-emptive strike*".

Washington was not the only foreign actor who developed contacts with the Muslim Brotherhood. After 11-S, began a dialogue between European diplomats with the members of the Brotherhood, but when this became public they 'got cold feet' and the communication channels were blocked (Youngs, 2006: 123). Officially, European initiatives were subscribed on the frame of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, which inevitably implies the inclusion of moderate Islamists, in order to achieve the declared objectives.

The relations between Muslim Brotherhood and foreign actors go beyond Washington and Brussels. The organisation has been counting with the support of other organisations that follow similar ideological beliefs. In the beginnings of the 90s the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe (FIOE) was created, which integrated 27 organisations, among them the Muslim Brotherhood, and was used as an informal channel of communication among the different groups, even though the organisation is denying the existence of such network<sup>1043</sup>. The ties between the different organisations do not seem to lead to a hierarchy, and each group follow its own practices, adopting a national and not transnational path.

Contacts between 'equals' increased power competition. The death of Mustafa Mashhur, General Guide of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in November 2002, generated frictions deriving from this international cooperation, as the non Egyptian Brothers were in favour of promoting at Brotherhood's leading role Faisal Mawlawi, leader of Gama'at al-Islamiya in Lebanon (Ternisien, 2007: 71). The competition between the leaders of the different organisations remained vital. This latter is underlined by the rumours initiated after the decision of the former Egyptian Supreme Guide of Muslim Brotherhood to abandon his office, indicating the possibility of nominating a non Egyptian for the office, four of who were Syrian and Jordanian<sup>1044</sup>. Finally, aspirations were not fulfilled as Akif was succeeded by the Egyptian Badie.

The organisation has been long developing friendly relations with Riyadh, increasing the religious influence in the Egyptian society in exchange of economic support. However, these relations were significantly altered after the attacks of 11-S. Prince Nayif Bin Abdel Aziz accused the Muslim Brotherhood of being responsible for all problems in the Arab world<sup>1045</sup>. This rupture introduce further

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<sup>1042</sup> Quoted in (Morrow, 2009).

<sup>1043</sup> Personal interview with Sanna al-Banna.

<sup>1044</sup> Source: Al Masry al Youm daily (27/03/2009).

<sup>1045</sup> Riyadh's reaction was probably an effort to make forget that 15 of the terrorists were Saudi



problems to the Egyptian organisation, as Riyadh was providing substantial financial aid through the Islamic League or other channels (Ternisien, 2007: 86).

The relations between the Palestinian Hamas and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood have been losing strength over time, despite the efforts of the regime to demonstrate the contrary as means to attract the American attention against Muslim Brotherhood. The two organisations have been collaborating in order for the Muslim Brotherhood to extract social support and for Hamas to gain as much support as it can get. The existence of compatible interests does not imply the lack of competition among the two groups. Indicative of the competition are the statements of 'autonomy' in regards to the Egyptian Brothers. When the spiritual Guide of Hamas was murdered, in March 2004, the Palestinian Brothers officially announced the their Spiritual Guide a title up to then reserved to the Egyptian leader (Ternisien, 2007: 72).

The ideological support that the organisation offers to Hamas and in Gaza and the denouncing of Cairo's position towards the Palestinian question constituted an issue of conflict between the regime and the Brotherhood, since Mubarak had been trying to avoid further incensement of power for the Palestinian Hamas in order to avoid similar outcomes on the Egyptian side (Hroub, 2009). Mubarak's efforts were also subscribed in his necessity to satisfy Washington's demands that foresee debilitation of Hamas. To complicate things and according to al-Anani<sup>1046</sup>, Hamas was in the need of Cairo's mediation in order to soften Tel Aviv's position<sup>1047</sup>.

It is understood that the map of relations among foreign and Egyptian elites is rather complicated and interconnected. The primary Egyptian elites had a limited capacity of 'persuasion' over foreign actors, especially American ones. On the same time their influence on regional sphere was considerably limited, lacking power in front of other regional actors. Yet alliance with core elites at international level as well as collaboration between regional elites represented an important resource for the differential accumulation of power for the Egyptian elites. In parallel, the primary elites of the international arena were in need of the support coming from the Middle Eastern elites in order to further their interests on their sphere of influence. Even so this interdependence did not weight equally on the two parts, due to the asymmetrical power capacities each one disposes.

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Arabian citizens but on the same time demonstrated the competitive relations between the different dogmas of Islamic and Islamist trends.

<sup>1046</sup> Personal interview with Khalil al-Anani, expert on political Islam and Deputy Editor of Al Siyassa Al Dawliya journal published by Al-Ahram Foundation.

<sup>1047</sup> For instance, Cairo's mediation role with Hamas imposed a ceasefire in the Occupied Territories in 2003.

## 12.4. People

### 12.4.1. ...as power resource

Jamal al-Din Hamdan, a renowned Egyptian historian, wrote<sup>1048</sup> *“In Egypt the ruler is regarded as a God until he falls. He is above criticism, until he departs. He is the history and geography [of Egypt] until he is replaced by someone else. He always fancies Egypt as his private property, his hamlet or his larger village. He is the state and the fatherland. Loyalty to the fatherland is synonymous with loyalty to his regime, and to him personally . . . He regards any criticism of Egypt as criticism of him personally and, hence, an unforgivable treason”*. All along their recent history, Egyptians were used to obey their leaders without really challenging their authority and power. The third Egyptian revolution dismantled this image<sup>1049</sup>. However, it is important to understand the reasons behind this delay and Egyptians long ‘docility’.

The Egyptian society had been submitted in repressive policies, with an emergency law imposed almost without cessation since 1967<sup>1050</sup>. The longue imposition of this authoritarian rule is for many scholars the essence of Egyptians’ passivity. The Egyptian Emergency Law (Law No. 162 of 1958,) had been practically invalidating all personal liberties established by the Egyptian constitution. More particularly, all freedoms of move, of assembly-during also electoral periods-or residence were cancelled. Moreover, the law enabled Egyptian President to transfer any case to an emergency court, composed by members nominated by President, including military officers. Also, it authorised the detention of a suspect for a prolonged period without charge or trial, and the sentences handed down by these courts were considered final and subject only to a presidential review.

The constitutional amendments of 2007 endorsed legally regime’s control over the Egyptian society, as the principles of individual freedom [Article 41(1)], privacy of the home [Article 44], and privacy of correspondence, telephone calls and other form of communication [Article 45(2)], were constitutionally reinforced and permanently violated under the terrorist threat. In 2008, the number of detainees under the emergency law without charge or trial was calculated between 18.000-23.000<sup>1051</sup>. The treatment of the detainees and the torture practices had been worldwide known<sup>1052</sup>, especially after 11-S attacks that Egypt

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<sup>1048</sup> Quoted in (Najjar, 2008 : 1).

<sup>1049</sup> For a brief overview you can consult (Lampridi-Kemou, 2011a).

<sup>1050</sup> The state of emergency was temporally lifted in the period between May 1980 and October 1981.

<sup>1051</sup> Information given by Gamal Eid, director of the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information. You can consult also the site of the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights (EOHR) at <http://en.eohr.org/>

<sup>1052</sup> Torture did not regard only terrorists or dangerous enemies of the regime. During a conversation with a young Egyptian, Ahmed, revealed that he had been torture during one month in a prison of Cairo because he tried to protect a young girl against a policeman’s aggression. He

was “regarded as among the most active torturing countries in the world [...]” (Morehead, 2005: 32).

The repressive policies had been an important obstacle to the Egyptians’ mobilisation, impeding them to become a subject of power relations by demanding the improvement of their social, political and/or economic conditions. Because every action coming from below was automatically perceived as threatening for the regime’s power capacities and thus immediately repressed. As we have underlined at the first chapter, in hierarchical societies it is not easy for individuals to become aware of their own interests and to work out how to improve their welfare. But even when they accomplish it, on most occasions, this implies facing elites who are resistant to status quo transformation.

In the Egyptian case, Mubarak’s regime, besides the direct methods of oppression, it had been using other mechanisms to maintain controlled and calm the Egyptian society, blocking practically all forms of political and social expression. Regarding the institutional social action we can underline that Egypt counted with a significant presence of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and their number in 2005 was approximately 17.000. Yet even if the country counts with an elevated number of NGOs, the majority of them were practically inexistent or they had a really limited scope of action (Abd Al Fatah, 2004). Meanwhile, NGO’s legal frame practically cancelled all kind of autonomy<sup>1053</sup> as the rules shaping NGOs’ action were similar to those of the political parties<sup>1054</sup>, putting them under government’s total control.

The tight legal frame regarding NGOs became stricter under the new law on associations, in 2002, through which the regime could inspect on their leading figures, as well as their financing<sup>1055</sup>. As it is highlighted Egyptian NGO law is considered “one of the most restrictive in the world” (Gubser, 2002: 141). The new restrictions came as a response to the political activism, because some of the NGOs had been hosting political opposition groups in order to avoid the restrictions imposed by the emergency law (Ferrié, 2003). The additional constraints forced the most important, in anti-regime terms, NGOs to adopt the law firm legal frame in order to overpass the problems, according to Gamal Eid<sup>1056</sup>.

Repression and restrictions were not the only techniques applied by the regime in order to maintain calm and docile the Egyptians and consequently

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stayed two months in prison and as he said “I’ll never be the same person that I was before”.

<sup>1053</sup> The governmental control over NGOs did not regard only Egyptian organisations but also foreign, these latter were not allowed to operate in Egypt without securing the permission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>1054</sup> NGOs in Egypt had been governed by the provisions of the Law on Non-Governmental Societies and Organisations (No. 84 of 2002) and the Executive Statute on Law 84 of 2002 (Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs Decree No. 178 of 2002), which implemented the provisions of the parliamentary law.

<sup>1055</sup> You can consult the new law n° 84 of 2002 at [www.egypt.gov.eg/english/laws/ngo/index.asp](http://www.egypt.gov.eg/english/laws/ngo/index.asp)

<sup>1056</sup> Personal interview with Gamal Eid, director of the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information.

safeguard a certain social stability. The Egyptian regime had been resorting to additional techniques based in practices of 'seduction'. The mega infrastructural projects, combined with luxury had been one of the main mechanisms providing popular support to the regime. Any foreigner travelling in Egypt will be astonished by the bridges, new bus-stations, airports, metro etc, infrastructure that some developed countries do not dispose. Egyptians therefore were grateful to their president for the gifts his giving them<sup>1057</sup>, even though this infrastructure was practically reserved to upper classes and tourists. Other practices included reduced tickets for the Egyptian citizens in places connected with the country's glory.

Another method used to extract legitimacy, not exclusive to Egypt, was commemoration of the Egyptian victories, such as the 6 October War, Sinai's liberation etc. A recent initiative of such practices was the announcement of the preparation of a decree issuing the 19 of March, day of Taba's return to Egypt in 1988 as a national holiday in order to "*remind the younger generation the importance of the day*"<sup>1058</sup>(Sayed, 2009).

In parallel the regime made considerable efforts to show a social profile, authentic child of President Nasser<sup>1059</sup>. The public sector thus remained an important job supplier. The total percentage of public employees in Egypt reached approximately the 10%<sup>1060</sup> of the population, including those working at the armed forces. Even if the nominal salary of public employees was in constant decrease<sup>1061</sup>, a job in the public sector was perceived as an opportunity, especially in the lower and middle classes. This use of the public sector was serving among others to appease poverty, avoiding in this way part of protests.

According to Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey<sup>1062</sup> in the period 2004/5, the percentage of Egyptians living under the line of poverty was 40.6%, i.e. 28.1 million people, from whom 2.6 million were defined as extremely poor<sup>1063</sup>, not being able to cover the food necessities. Probably this number as well as other statistical data did not represent the real situation as government controlled the statistic services. To this panorama we can add that official unemployment figures reaches around 12 per cent in the fiscal year

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<sup>1057</sup> Personal interview with an Egyptian living in Cairo.

<sup>1058</sup> On the same day the Minister of Education, Yosri El-Gamal announced lessons in all schools on the Taba issue and its significance.

<sup>1059</sup> We can also mention the continuity of the law dictating that half of the members of Majlis al-Shura and Majlis al-Sha'b must be farmer or worker, even though this is not respected in practice.

<sup>1060</sup> The data is referred to the fiscal year 2000 and it was taken from World Bank's web site, available at [data.worldbank.org/country/egypt-arab-republic](http://data.worldbank.org/country/egypt-arab-republic)

<sup>1061</sup> The inflation rate in the last few years had skyrocketed, reaching 18 per cent in 2008, whereas increases in nominal wages were not kept pace.

<sup>1062</sup> The data is taken from *African Economic Outlook 2008*, available at [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/13/36/40577424.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/13/36/40577424.pdf)

<sup>1063</sup> It is believed that the number of poor is in constant decrease while the number of extreme poverty is rising.

2007/08<sup>1064</sup>.

Another mechanism that provided social stability in the most populated Arab country had been the system of subsidies. Through this mechanism the regime underlined *rais'* benevolent character toward his people and on the same time highlighted the necessity of the president's permanence, provider of these services. In 2007, subsidies accounted for 26.3 per cent of overall expenditures (OECD, 2008). Yet this percentage was in constant decrease due the foreign pressures that Cairo received from its international economic supporters. The gradualism in lifting the system of subsidies had been indispensable for the regime's survival. Following El Amrani *"Aside from the occasional protest over regional events, such as the war on Iraq or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ordinary Egyptians often take to the streets en masse only in defence of one thing: their stomachs"*(ElAmrani, 2004). The partial validity of El Amrani's comment was demonstrated among others by workers mobilisation the last years of Mubarak's mandate, consequence of the deterioration of their economic conditions.

Egyptians' 'docility' did not imply the complete absence of efforts coming from the regime to obtain popular legitimacy and consensus, fearing mainly that other groups could be beneficated from popular dissatisfaction. For instance we can mention the case of the 'referendum express'<sup>1065</sup> held in 2007 regarding the amendment of 34 articles of the Egyptian constitution. Even though forgery was applied in this occasion also, the regime tried to convince the Egyptian citizens for the beneficial effects of the constitutional changes. For this reason the referendum was presented as a choice between the modernisation and security of the country or stagnation and instability<sup>1066</sup>. Moreover, the 'yes' optioned was coloured in green, the colour of Islam, appealing to the religious feelings of the Egyptians and implicitly underling that regime's proposals were compatible with God's will.

The lower classes Egyptians had been facing significant problems in their everyday life. For instance, the collapse of old buildings with hundreds of people killed was not an unusual phenomenon<sup>1067</sup> in Egypt. The situation had been following the path of deterioration, consequence of the incapacity of the Egyptians

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<sup>1064</sup> The data is taken from Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS, 2009), available at: [www.msrintranet.capmas.gov.eg](http://www.msrintranet.capmas.gov.eg)

<sup>1065</sup> The referendum express was called and held in 6 days time, amending 34 articles of the Egyptian Constitution. According to official results, 75.9 per cent of voters was in favour of the reforms, with an official turnout of 27.1 per cent. The key amendments of this referendum were: Article 5, banding the political activity of parties based on religion, Article 88, removing judicial supervision of elections and Article 179, invoking special powers to fight terrorism.

<sup>1066</sup> Similar strategy was followed by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces on the referendum held on 19 March 2011. For more information see (Lampridi-Kemou, 2011b).

<sup>1067</sup> The government's response in such cases was the well publicised construction of new residential neighbourhoods in the periphery that host in their majority middle and upper economic classes. The indifference of the government regarding the old buildings was also a strategy to eliminate unwanted population from central neighbourhoods. The same strategy was applied to small commercial activities, for instance old restaurants in the Nile's shore in Cairo. Personal interview with Andonis Iordanidis, General Secretary of the Greek Community in Cairo.

to press for policies that could improve their welfare and the global economic crisis<sup>1068</sup>. The privatisation process, accelerated since 2004, touched also welfare services, as education and health<sup>1069</sup>, fact that made the Egyptians more vulnerable and keen to clientelist relations towards the actors that can provide such services, mostly the Muslim Brotherhood.

The repression under which the Egyptian society had been submitted all along the country's recent history, as well as the weakness of the political parties and the participation of the Muslim Brotherhood at the political game had contributed to the creation of a political culture that had been preserving the *status quo*. Fear had been one of the main features of the Egyptian political culture.

Egyptians tell a joke about a man who dares to vote against the government in a parliamentary election. On his way home from voting, the man starts to imagine all the terrible things that could happen to him and his family if the authorities find out, so he hurries back to the polling station and speaks to the policeman in charge. "I'm very sorry", he says, "but I think I made a mistake on my ballot paper". "Yes, you did", replies the policeman, "but not to worry. Fortunately we spotted your mistake and have already corrected it. Please be more careful next time".

The second element of the Egyptian political culture was clientelism and more particularly the buy of voting. Following Springborg: *"The list of rewards and punishments [for voting or not the NDP] is almost endless. It includes various forms of distribution of governments largesse, including salary and pension increases, bonuses, relaxation of mandatory crop deliveries required of producers, appointments to public bodies, the discretionary granting of license and permits, and various other inducements offered in the weeks and days prior to elections"* (Springborg, 1989: 189).

The price of the vote depended on the importance of the electoral competition. During the parliamentary elections of 2005, the value of the vote ranged between £E 500-1000, while in some constituencies, the value in the 2007 Shura Council election was far less, around £E 300 (Al-Mashat, 2008). In the parliamentary elections of 2010, the highest price of the vote buying was £E 700<sup>1070</sup>. The lack of economic funds of the political parties, secured the monopoly of the NDP and Muslim Brotherhood's candidates, as well as these of the wealthy businessmen participating as independents<sup>1071</sup>.

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<sup>1068</sup> Remember that the main economic incomes of the country are deeply affected by the international recession, adding problems to the Egyptian economy and consequently to the Egyptian society.

<sup>1069</sup> For more detailed information see (Tadros, 2006).

<sup>1070</sup> Yet at the runoffs the price was significantly lower due to the lack of competition, result of Muslim Brotherhood's and New Wafd's decision to withdraw from the second round.

<sup>1071</sup> This view is confirmed by the revolutionary voices of the post-revolutionary Egypt, who object to the forthcoming parliamentary and presidential elections, scheduled for October and December 2011 respectively, under the argument that immediate elections will beneficiate NDP's and Muslim Brotherhood's candidates.

The two main feature of the Egyptian political culture had a final outcome the indifference of the majority of the Egyptians for the electoral races, as it is demonstrated also by the low voter turnout. Even if it is difficult to confirm the real percentage of the voter's participation this was calculated to 5%,<sup>1072</sup> most of them obliged by the regime to participate either because they were public employees or relatives to these or they were forced by prominent candidates, through bribe or extortion. As it is underlined by Blaydes *"poor, and often illiterate, voters turnout at rates considerably higher than wealthier, and often more literate, voters in Egyptian elections"* (Blaydes, 2006: 18). The higher the social-economic status the less was the interest in politics. Consequently, the vast majority of the voters belonged to lower classes, more vulnerable to the mechanisms of vote recruitment.

The Egyptian indifference on the elections had been also consequence of the parties' disconnection with the masses, for reasons already exposed. The following words of a taxi driver regarding the candidates for the presidential elections of 2005 are indicative to the matter<sup>1073</sup>: *"I never in my life laughed like I laughed today. When I saw the newspaper and the pictures of candidates, I laughed till I cried". "They [the government] brought people no one has ever heard anything of. You'd find that even their mothers haven't heard of them [...]".* It is easily understood that the candidates were unknown to the majority of the Egyptians, who were regularly called to choose their representatives.

In the absence of political forces capable of listening the Egyptians needs and problems, political apathy had been a generalised Egyptian phenomenon. This 'indifference' partially true and partially representing the rejection of the political system, along with the characteristics of the Egyptian culture had been dragging the country in stagnation, where linear relations had been almost inexistent. Yet regime's practices, either of seduction or of punishment, underlined the importance of people as power resource, especially in regime's competition with Muslim Brotherhood.

#### **12.4.2. ...as actor**

Up to the 'Day of Rage' Egyptians were regarded as submissive population due historical, social and political factors (Lampridi-Kemou, 2011c). However, the scenery had been undergoing essential changes since 2000. The second Palestinian Intifada and creation of the Egyptian Popular Committee for the Support of the Palestinian Intifada (EPCSPI) gave the spark for massive mobilisations. The tolerance that the regime showed during these manifestations and those followed against the American invasion of Iraq allowed segments of the population to recuperate their role of actor. According to Shehata the anti-war

<sup>1072</sup> Personal interview with Wagdi Abdel Aziz, director of the South Centre of Human Rights. Similar numbers characterised the electoral race of 2010.

<sup>1073</sup> Quoted in (Khamissi, 2008: 137).

demonstrations that took place 20-21 of March, in 2003, “were the largest that Egypt had seen since the bread riots of 1977” (Shehata, 2008).

The premeditated and unrecorded tolerance that the Egyptian regime showed towards the social agitation, for reason already explained, opened the Pandora’s Box. The creation of the ‘20 of March’ movement, whose main slogans were targeting the authoritarian rule, was only the beginning of the creation of different anti-regime movements, proliferating as the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2005 were approaching<sup>1074</sup>. The different movements took form under the umbrella of *Kefaya*<sup>1075</sup>, wherein activists from different political and ideological backgrounds participated. Leftists, rightists and islamists were gathered in order to confront the regime, by opposing Hosni Mubarak’s fifth candidacy for the Egyptian presidency. Thus, for the first time after a long wait, an important part of the Egyptian society became a subject on power relations.

The appeal and massiveness of these protest groups was product of different factors, along with the temporarily limited relaxation of the regime’s authoritarian practices. Firstly, we can highlight the role of the new technologies, mainly internet<sup>1076</sup> and cell phones. The introduction of the electronic communication tools on the habits of the Egyptians permitted on the one hand the direct information and contact among the protesters. On the other hand, these new technologies helped the activists to overcome the traditional obstacles imposed by the regime, control of telephonic communications<sup>1077</sup>, cut offs<sup>1078</sup>, censorship etc. According to Gamal Eid<sup>1079</sup>, director of the *Arabic Network for Human Rights Information*<sup>1080</sup>, the use of multimedia and internet, especially

<sup>1074</sup> See also (Kemou and Azaola, 2009).

<sup>1075</sup> Kefaya means ‘Enough’ in Arabic. For more detailed information regarding Kefaya see (Shorbagy, 2007).

<sup>1076</sup> In April 2008, there were approximately 160.000 Egyptian blogs, and even if only a small part had a political nature they managed to attract the official and public attention by exercising criticising against the regime, including the president and his son (Shehata, 2008). Indicatively we can mention the following blogs: <http://baheyva.blogspot.com/>; [www.egybloggers.com/](http://www.egybloggers.com/); [www.manalaa.net/](http://www.manalaa.net/); <http://misrdigital.blogspot.com/>; <http://arabist.net/>; <http://arabist.net/arabawy/>; <http://ihoudaiby.blogspot.com/>; <http://ana-ikhwan.blogspot.com/>.

According to Gamal Eid, founder and executive director of the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, in the same period Egypt became the second larger user of *facebook*, after U.S.A. (personal interview).

<sup>1077</sup> The importance of the telecommunications were underlined by the decision of Egypt’s National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (NTRA) to impose restrictions aimed on SMS messaging services one month before the parliamentary elections of 2010. Similar restrictions were applied during the massive protests of January 2011 that ended with the expulsion of Hosni Mubarak.

<sup>1078</sup> The impact of internet terrified the ruling elites. The strange incident of February 2008, when the submarine cables providing internet in the entire region of Middle East were cut off for unknown reason, can be indicative to the matter. What is more interesting is that there were not any problems of connection in Israel and the occupied Iraq.

<sup>1079</sup> Personal interview with Gamal Eid.

<sup>1080</sup> Website <http://www.anhri.net/en/>



*youtube*, was of particular help to inform inside and outside the country with videos of police abuses, torture etc.

A related factor to the previous one that contributed to the politicisation of the Egyptians was the development alternative TV channels, and particularly Al Jazeera<sup>1081</sup>, considered as the first independent Arab television channel, despite the fact that is financed by the Qatari royal family (Guaaybess, 2005). The political debates presented by Al Jazeera and the alternative information contributed to the social awakening of the Arab citizens. Indicative of Al Jazeera's impact was the reaction of the Arab leaders, who gathered, in February of 2008 in order to take measures to confront the danger of the channel's impact<sup>1082</sup>.

The importance of the new media tools is indirectly underlined by Calfano: *"Our findings support the existing literature concerning the effects of older media platforms on political liberalization when those platforms are susceptible to regime control. In particular, television and the number of daily newspapers in each state are found to be significant and have negative influences on political rights in the MENA"* (Calfano and Sahliyah, 2008: 68).

The political (re)vitalisation especially this of younger generations was the fruit of different components. Significant for the political mobilisation was the participation of the young Egyptians<sup>1083</sup>. Assad justifies their presence as consequence of the elevated proportion of youth compared to other age groups<sup>1084</sup>. Another factor was the high unemployment rates that the young generations faced, in particularly the educated part and finally the political exclusion of the youth.

The political spring was not limited to non institutional circles or to the youth. In the same period a part of judges, classified from the western scholars as reformists, joined the movement of Kefaya. The 'reformists' judges were joined under the Hisham Al Bastawisy and Mahmoud Mekki, leading figures of the

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<sup>1081</sup> For more analytical information regarding Al Jazeera's impact at the Arab audience see (Dimitrova and Connolly-Ahern, 2007).

<sup>1082</sup> The twenty-two Arab ministers of Communication, with the exception of the Lebanese and the Qatari, signed a protocol, according to which channels cannot offend leaders, national or religious symbols nor can threaten national peace, national unity, public order or traditional values. *El País*, 15/02/08 ([http://www.elpais.com/articulo/internacional/Cerrojazo/paises/arabes/televisiones/Jazeera/elpepint/20080215elpepint\\_12/Tes](http://www.elpais.com/articulo/internacional/Cerrojazo/paises/arabes/televisiones/Jazeera/elpepint/20080215elpepint_12/Tes)). More recently, in July 2009, the Palestinian Authority prohibited the transmitting of Al-Jazeera in the West Bank after the channel gave information regarding a collaboration between members of Fatah (Abbas and Mohamed Dahlan), Ariel Sharon and William Burns to assassinate Yasser Arafat (Muñoz, 2009).

<sup>1083</sup> These youth movements according Shehata presented the following features in comparison to those in the past: they were formed largely outside the existing parties and movements, they were mainly non-ideological movements, they were inclusive and internally diverse, their activity was taking place mainly outside the university campuses and finally that in these movements Islamic youth played a secondary role (Shehata, 2008: 6-7).

<sup>1084</sup> According to the Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS) the 28% of the Egyptian population was between the ages of 15-29 for the year 2007, representing almost 1/3 of the entire population. Furthermore the 67 % of youth did not have a voting card in 2002.

judges' movement. The group managed to gather more than 1.500 judges, reclaiming reforms that could guarantee the independency of judiciary<sup>1085</sup>. Behind them there were found other pro-reform actors, including members of the Muslim Brotherhood, political parties, Bar Associations, as well as many prominent journalists.

The regime's response in front of the judges' revolt was well calculated. Besides the direct use of violence<sup>1086</sup> the regime's policy followed two strategies: on the one hand they adopted the 'divide-and-rule strategy'. Opposing the loyalist judges grouped on Supreme Judicial Council and the State Council Judges Club against the Judges Club, considering the first as "*the only body authorized to speak on behalf of the judiciary*"<sup>1087</sup>, broke the judges' cohesion (Shehata, 2008). On the other hand, and in order to avoid future problems, the constitutional amendments of 2007, and more particularly this of the article no 88, deprived the main extortion tool of the group, the electoral monitoring<sup>1088</sup>.

The regime's strategy put an end to the judges' 'revolt'. The two main figures of the movement Mekki and Bastawisi were put under disciplinary court for allegedly accusing other judges of committing election fraud (Ottaway et al., 2002). Mekki was not found guilty in contrast with Bastawisi, who was reprimanded and denied his upcoming promotion<sup>1089</sup>. Moreover, the government rushed into appointing loyalist judges on the Clubs, as it was the case of at Alexandria Judges Club. According to weekly al-Ahram<sup>1090</sup> the new president of the Club, El-Basyouni, was "*Widely rumoured to enjoy the support of Justice*

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<sup>1085</sup> The draft law that the Judges Club of Egypt presented to the government, after the convocation an emergency general assembly proposed an independent budget for the judiciary, and the authority to the Supreme Judicial Council, composed by senior judges, to appoint, supervise, and discipline judges rather than the Ministry of Justice. Information available at <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/arb/?fa=show&article=21178>

<sup>1086</sup> The protestors were physically attacked by the Egyptian police during the demonstrations in support of the judges with the parallel announcement that such demonstrations would be deemed illegal (Winstone, 2006).

<sup>1087</sup> To this aim traditional methods were applied, mainly referring to benefits for the corpus. The government offered the State Council one million Egyptian pounds (approximately \$150,000) in annual support for their club, increased the number of monitors from the State Council from 320 to 1,100 judges, allocated new buildings and rest houses for State Council judges, and offered administrative jobs at the Ministry of Justice to family members of State Council.

<sup>1088</sup> The new organ for supervising the legislative elections was High Elections Commission composed by: the Minister of Justice (chairman), three sitting judges whose rank is equivalent to that of Vice-President of the Court of Cassation chosen by the Supreme Judicial Council, three retired and non-partisan judges chosen by parliament, three public and non-partisan figures chosen by parliament and one representative of the Ministry of Interior. According to Zuhur, "*Through the creation of the HEC the regime 'effectively squelch efforts at more open and fair elections'*" (Zuhur, 2007: 102). In regards to the presidential elections the organ responsible would have been the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC). The appointment, in July 2009, of Farouk Sultan by the President of the Republic, Hosni Mubarak, raised questions of the SCC's neutrality.

<sup>1089</sup> Source: Amnesty International "Eu-Egypt Association Council Meeting" [www.idea.int/resources/analysis/upload/Saif\\_paper13.pdf](http://www.idea.int/resources/analysis/upload/Saif_paper13.pdf)

<sup>1090</sup> Available at <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2008/882/eg10.htm>

*Minister Mamdouh Marei, he ousted reformist judge Mahmoud El-Khodeiri, leader of the campaign for greater judicial independence, winning 569 votes to El-Khodeiri's 535".*

The politicisation of the Egyptians along with the foreign calls for 'democratisation' forced the regime to proceed to concessions. Regime's political opening and tolerance was subscribed in this need. However, the electoral outcome of the parliamentary elections of 2005 that proportioned 88 seats out of 444 to the Muslim Brotherhood, and the continuity of political protests put under alert the regime, which decided to respond with firmness against the 'trouble-makers'. The international fears for an unstable Egypt significantly contributed to the legitimacy of Mubarak's response towards the 'rebel' Egyptians.

The reasons for the decline of political activism are thus found principally in the regime's capacity to silence the unwanted voices. However, there were internal factors that contributed to the progressive decline of the political agitation. This was at least the Kefaya's case. The appeasement of the movement's impact was attributed to the internal conflicts among the components of the movement as well as its elitist character (Schlumberger, 2007: 67).

As the events of 2011 demonstrated the decline of the Egyptian politicisation was temporally limited. Thus we cannot oversee that the dynamic initiated in 2000 had a tremendous impact by breaking the fear and putting the basis for an eventually more active role of people. Following Ahmed Fawzi, representative of Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement, *"Now we have larger segments of the Egyptian society that are getting politically engaged. We have workers, professionals and young people"*<sup>1091</sup>.

Important was also the support given to political activists by their comrades. This solidarity took various forms, varying from underground aid to the families of the arrested, to protests and manifestations. For instance we can mention the case of Ahmad Abu Duma, who was sentenced to three months imprisonment for assaulting two policemen. *"Dozens of members of the 6 April opposition movement staged a protest [...] in downtown Cairo to demand the transfer of colleague Ahmad Abu Duma from Al-Qatta Prison to the Damanhur Prison, the latter of which is located closer to his family's home"*<sup>1092</sup>.

Another important impact was the discovery of alternative political action and the direct disdain of political system. Through the creation of political platforms without clear ideological references, Egyptians clearly stated that the improvement of their situation was beyond strictly ideological beliefs. The visible consolidation of this was the formation of 'National Association for Change'. This political platform, under the leading figure of Mohamed ElBaradei, represented

<sup>1091</sup> Source: Al Masry al Youm available at <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/news/eye-elections-egypt%E2%80%99s-opposition-seeks-translate-social-discontent-0>

<sup>1092</sup> Source: Al Masry al Youm available at <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/news/6-april-movement-demands-prison-transfer-jailed-colleague>.

one of the latest efforts of the Egyptians to interfere in power relations. 'National Association for Change' had been active since its creation in political action. Yet, following the report of the Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement<sup>1093</sup> only a few of the 80 political protests of 2010 were affiliated with ElBaradei's demands.

ElBaradei since his return to Egypt<sup>1094</sup> had been trying to unite opposition forces in order to compete against Gamal Mubarak's candidacy for the Egyptian Presidency. Denying the creation of a political party<sup>1095</sup>, he managed to gather around him several opposition parties and movements, including Muslim Brotherhood<sup>1096</sup>. The first real test of 'National Association for Change' in uniting opposition forces however failed. The calls to boycott parliamentary election of November 2010 fell into empty as opposition parties and Muslim Brotherhood announced their decision to participate, despite, their public speeches to boycott election unless the government guarantees fair and free elections. Even so, ElBaradei's action had an impact on political game.

The political activism paved the path for the labour activism. Since 2005, many westerner scholars, academics and journalists began to feel optimistic for the role of the Egyptians in demanding improvement of their living conditions. The Spanish daily *El Pais* published an article titled *Egipto, un volcán a punto de estallar*<sup>1097</sup> underlining the tremendous economic differences among the Egyptian population.

The deterioration of the economic situation, due to the decline of real incomes and the rising prices of the basic products and the former social agitation generated other forms of mobilisation mostly concerned with labour issues. As Nafisa Elsabagh<sup>1098</sup>, an activist journalist commented "*people are fed up [with the current regime] and this appears in different shapes and forms*". The most optimists at the time considered that Egyptians were in a situation of social weakening that progressively would lead to a more generalised social mobilisation. Others, less enthusiastic, recognised their incapacity to approach the masses: we just go where the people are and not the other way around.

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<sup>1093</sup> <http://arabinfomall.bibalex.org/En/showallreports.aspx?OrgID=179>

<sup>1094</sup> The day of ElBaradei's arrival in Cairo International Airport more than 1.000 Egyptians were gathered to welcome him as national hero. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/feb/19/mohamed-elbaradei-egypt-heavy-security>

<sup>1095</sup> The decision not to create a new political party is based in different factors. Firstly, we can mention the Egyptian's mistrust on political parties. Secondly, because according to the current constitution his candidacy for the presidency is impossible. Thus, ElBaradei had to find a way to overpass the constitutional obstacles through a 'popular referendum'. In this aim ElBaradei launched a campaign of signature collection three months before the parliamentary elections of 2010.

<sup>1096</sup> Brotherhood's participation at the platform was significant. It is indicative that the organisation managed to gather more than 100,000 signatures online in just twelve days.

<sup>1097</sup> 11 February 2008

<sup>1098</sup> Personal interview with Nafisa Elsabagh, Egyptian activist.

Labour protests had been in constant increase the last years of Mubarak's mandate, consequence not only of the Egyptians' politicisation but also of the growing economic penuries. In 2007, the number of labour protests was estimated at 756 nationwide<sup>1099</sup>. These numbers gain greater importance if we take into account that manifestations in Egypt were forbidden<sup>1100</sup>.

Starting from strikes and other 'political correct' forms of protest Egyptian workers became a subject on power relations fighting against liberal policies and the deterioration of their economic situation. Alternative and more radical methods were also applied even though they were not common. Indicative is the case of Tanta Flax and Oil Company, recently privatised. Workers of the company threaten to auto gesture it in the case that the government would not interfere on their behalf. *"We neither want the government nor the Saudi investor. We will take over the factory and self manage it"* were the words of a striker<sup>1101</sup>, welcomed by many of its colleagues.

In general terms, in such protests the participants were ordinary citizens as well as members of social movements<sup>1102</sup>. The participation of activists adds a political dimension in such protests, underling on the same time the disconnection of political parties with the ordinary Egyptians. From the above becomes obvious that the main power resource of the social mobilisation had been the action itself.

Absent were also the professional syndicates, which remained under the control of the regime, as well as the Trade Unions housed under the Egyptian Federation of Trade Unions. It is indicative that in 2004 the president of General Federation of Egyptian Syndicates was an old member of the National Democratic Party and member of the Egyptian Parliament. Moreover twenty-one of the twenty-three leaders of the syndicates were also members of the NDP and ten of them were also MP in 2000 (Kassem, 2004: 108). Following Azaola *"En este contexto, las relaciones convencionales de clientelismo entre el gobierno y los líderes sindicales se han ido manteniendo y aumentando con el paso del tiempo. El nivel de control alcanzado por el gobierno se vio reflejado en la actitud pasiva de los sindicatos ante las reestructuraciones económicas iniciadas a partir de 1995"* (Azaola, 2006: 163-164).

Egyptians' efforts on becoming a subject on power relations preoccupied the Egyptian regime, which opted to satisfy some of the economic demands of the protesters. For instance, we can mention the government's decision to provide public sector employees with 30% salary rise in 2008, whereas the previous years

<sup>1099</sup> Source: Land Centre for Human Rights <http://212.12.226.70/55/55.htm#lchr>

<sup>1100</sup> To be more concrete in 2003 under the Unified Labour Law, the right to strike was technically enacted. However, according to the law, all strikes needed a previous approval by the leadership of the General Federation of Egyptian Trade Unions, controlled by NDP (Beinin and Goldberg, 1982).

<sup>1101</sup> Source: Al Masry al Youm (11/07/2009)

<sup>1102</sup> <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/news/activists-protest-rising-food-prices-ministers-council>

such raises were at 10-15%<sup>1103</sup>. *“The pay rise could defuse growing unrest, with a widespread strike threatened for next week”*. Indicative of the regime’s fears was also Mubarak’s move to justify the reduced raises that the public workers received the following year as well as for the impossibility of the government to fulfil its promises to provide 500.000 new jobs per year.

Another sign of the regime’s preoccupation were the efforts to include the new generation on the political field. The ‘opening’ to the youth of NDP<sup>1104</sup> can be interpreted as one of the methods to canalise the youth’s frustration. Similar gestures have been made also by the other political parties. The schism of Muslim Brotherhood and the increasing politicisation of the young Brothers were also subscribed in this context.

Regime’s interest in having a certain popular acceptance was also demonstrated by Gamal’s pre-electoral strategy<sup>1105</sup>. Following the steps of his official adversary, Mohamed ElBaradei, Gamal Mubarak launched his own campaign collecting signatures for his candidacy. Up to mid-September 2010, 100.000 signatures were collected in just four governorates- Kafr al-Sheikh, Daqahlia, Suez and Cairo.

Of course the regime did not abandon the traditional methods of repression. Police clashing of protesters, arrests and harassments continued to have a principal place on the Egyptian politics. The clashes between the regime’s coercive apparatuses at universities<sup>1106</sup> were also frequent. For instance, in September 2010, just two months before the parliamentary elections, the security personnel of Fayoum University and Ain-Shams University clashed young protesters affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood who lanced a campaign in demand of political reform. Similar incidents took place at other universities of the country<sup>1107</sup>. Last and certainly not least we can mention the fact that Mubarak’s regime continued up to the last moment to renew and use the emergency law despite the declarations of its lifting<sup>1108</sup>.

<sup>1103</sup> Source: BBC news, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/7375315.stm>

<sup>1104</sup> According to the NDP’s official site *“The adoption of a national youth policy reflects Egypt’s strong belief in the importance of the role of young people in development. It also reflects Egypt’s strong recognition of the needs of youth. The NDP has pledged in the Youth Policy Paper that was presented to the first annual Conference in September 2003 to start sketching out a national youth policy. The NDP promises to propound this paper for youth-concerned organisations pledging that the opinions of these organisations would be the basis for the final draft of the national youth policy”*. Source <http://www.ndp.org.eg/en/Policies/NationalYouthPolicy.aspx>

<sup>1105</sup> This was also a way of increasing Gamal’s power capacities vis-à-vis his intra-regime competitors.

<sup>1106</sup> Universities control by campus police had been a traditional method of regime’s protection. It has been applied since Nasser’s mandate when the authorities estimated that there was a reason for it. From a personal experience it is a common practice the blocking of the entrance by security personnel controlling student IDs without giving any explanations.

<sup>1107</sup> <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/news/mb-affiliated-students-clash-security-university-campuses>

<sup>1108</sup> The last renewal was made in May 2010 for the next two years, by a 308 MPs voting for and

All the above underline that the last decade of Mubarak's mandate segments of the Egyptian society have been trying to obtain an active role on power relations. Regime's coercive as well as seductive response appeased the force of social action. Yet the events of February 2011 demonstrated that this was a temporarily limited halt.

## **13. Conclusions**



The hypothesis of the present research has been that the application of specific theories does not advance our understanding of the Arab world. On the contrary, we uphold the necessity to develop a universal theoretical perspective applicable to all societies hierarchically structured. In order to achieve this goal firstly we developed a theoretical proposal and then we applied it on Egyptian society, in a long period starting from the Free Officers' revolution in 1952 up to the beginning of the 'third Egyptian revolution'.

Fundamental assumption of our theoretical proposal is that all hierarchic societies present two types of power relations: circular and linear. The first typology regards relations among elites, whereas linear ones refers to those power relations established by a group of individuals when they become aware of their own interests and mobilise their capacities in order to pursue their goals.

In regards to circular relations we upheld that the relations established among elites are those of unceasing competition, since elites' aspirations are always measured in relative terms. More specifically we sustained that elites' interest is what we defined the 'differential accumulation of power', i.e. to accumulate more power than their competitors. This interest is what shapes the circular dynamic of their relations. Since power can be measured only in relative terms there is a constant competitiveness among elites.

The acceptance of the constant competitiveness among elites does not imply the inexistence of cooperation among them. On the contrary, we upheld that the alliance among agents is not only possible, but depending on the context indispensable, as the power capacities are not equally distributed. And it is due to this asymmetry that the cooperation and the alliances between the agents are formed.

In our study we have been able to demonstrate the above. Indicatively we can mention the alliance between the Free Officers and the Muslim Brotherhood at the first period after the coup did not last long. Once he relatively established his presence in the Egyptian scene, Nasser seized the opportunity to oust his former 'allies' from important power centres. In a similar way Mubarak, especially at the beginning of his mandate, used Brotherhood's influence as means to consolidate his power. Once he felt capable of controlling the Egyptian scene he proceeded to the clashing of the organisation. The scenario was repeated many times throughout Mubarak's rule.

The above examples underline that the formation of an alliance among elites does not imply the disappearance of the competition among them, as those will continue targeting the improvement of their positioning not only in relation with the non-allies but with their allies.

The analysis of the Egyptian case underlined also the absence of 'solidarity' among components of the same power group. As we upheld, the interest of an elite is 'selfish', to improve his personal position and not of 'his' group. Therefore in-

house competitions are part of the game. The conflict between Nasser and Nagib for the conquest of the regime's leading role verifies the existence of personal interests. Under the pretext of desirability or not of the democracy, the principal rivals, by forming coalitions and mobilising their own power capabilities, struggled for the expansion of their respective influence.

Anwar al-Sadat faced similar problems at the beginning of his mandate. Ali Sabri leading the pro-socialist fraction of the regime had been one of the most dangerous adversaries of Sadat. Analogous was the case between Hosni Mubarak and the Minister of Defence Abu Ghazala. The ambitious Minister of Defence managed to become number two of the Egyptian regime challenging during almost ten years the hegemonic power of the *rais*.

The in-house competition was not limited to ruling elites, as we have been able to see. The internal quarrels characterised also the leading figures of the majority of the political parties and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Lack of cohesion does not concern only elites of the periphery. The 'behaviour' and/or the interests of the elites remain alike, inside or outside the national boundaries. Consequently, the foreign policies or the international relations cannot be understood and explained differently.

Throughout our study we have been able to see that international elites 'behave' in the same way. Even though most of the times the position of the foreign actors towards the Egyptian decisions are presented as solid and unanimous, for reasons already exposed, we underlined many times this lack of cohesion. For instance, we saw that during the first years that followed Free Officers' coup the interests of the British elites were not only different but also contradictory. Even if London officially opposed Free Officer's coup, since traditional interests were harmed, part of the British elites connected with private capital saw Free Officers' demarche as an opportunity to increase their influence.

In another moment we saw the 'impasse' of American policy during the first period of Sadat's mandate. The American attitude of 'wait and see' was, as we underlined, the outcome of important divergence existing in the American administration and particularly among Henry Kissinger and William Pierce Rogers. The divergent interests were underlined many times in the Israeli case also. Indicative was the Camp David treaty. Despite the obvious benefits of the treaty for the Israeli side, the accords divided the Israeli government between Yitzhak Shamir, Moshe Arens and Ariel Sharon, opposing the treaty, and Menachem Begin and Simon Perez in favour of the treaty.

Another important element of the present theoretical proposal is that competition among elites is not limited to specific sectors. Even though there is some 'specialisation', elites use any element that can increase their respective capacities. Thus, the competition among elites for further accumulation of power is diffused to all actors of a society for the control of all elements that serve as power resource, from their 'scope' of influence independently.

An indicative is the case of the Muslim Brotherhood. The leaders of the

organisation are considered 'specialised' on the field of religion. However, since the very beginning of the organisation's creation their influence on the political field became equally important. On the same time, we saw the tremendous economic power that Brotherhood obtained throughout the years.

The Egyptian economic elites are also an illustrative example. Even though their power capacities derive mainly from capital, their involvement on politics was not minor, especially during the last decade of Mubarak's mandate. Furthermore, we have been able to see that wealthy businessmen expanded their actuation on the media sector.

Main argument of the present research has been that the 'abnormal behaviour' of the Arab societies regarding political transitions is not due their 'exotism'. Rather, we sustained that Arab societies and consequently Egypt, present particular features indeed, the most important of them found on the primacy of the 'State'.

The high degree of concentration on a specific power resource shapes an 'autocratic' society, wherein a limited number of elites control most of power resources. Egypt is a representative case of that. Since the coup of the Free Officers in 1952, Egypt has experienced an asymmetrical accumulation of power in the hands of a reduced elite group that, despite being renewed, has maintained certain continuity on what referred to its core group and its recruitment processes.

State's centrality has as its main outcome that most of the other power resources obtain a secondary role on the power structure. Consequently, throughout the state's control, the ruling elites had been able to control other power resources such as coercion, capital, information etc. In this frame, the rest of the elites not having the capacity to control or to compete for the control of the state maintained a secondary role on the Egyptian power structure.

Even if the state represents the main power resource in Egypt, this does not mean that the ruling elites were uninterested in controlling other power resources. Coercion has been a basic tool of preserving regime's hegemonic rule, with the army being regime's safeguard. Most evident cases have been those in 1977, in 1981 and in 1986. The respective regimes of Gamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar al-Sadat and Hosni Mubarak not only relayed on the officers aid, but their cooperation had been permanent, even if competition was also constant and in some cases it became particularly threatening. The incidents of Abdel Hakim Amer and Abu Ghazala underline clearly the tight relation and the competitive dynamic between state and military elites.

Coercion had been used by the three Presidents towards the Egyptian society but also against elites. During Nasser's mandate coercion was synonymous with authority. As we saw millions of Egyptians, citizens and opponent elites, were imprisoned during that period. Anwar al-Sadat chose a less coercive profile on what regarded political and civil liberties. However, in given moments, the *rais* did not hesitate to apply harsh measures, such as massive imprisonment of political and religious elites. Let us not to forget that he was the first Egyptian president to

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call out the army in order to restore social order during the food riots in 1977.

Hosni Mubarak the longest lived president had frequently resorted to coercive mechanisms, direct and indirect ones. Torture and power abuse against regime's opponents had been a permanent characteristic of Mubarak's rule. The continuous renewal of the emergency law is only one indicator of regime's necessity to rely on coercion.

The necessity to exercise frequently coercive methods is also a sign of regime's incapacity to impose its interests as beneficial for the whole society. As we underlined on the first chapter, Arab societies are characterised by the absence of cultural hegemony, fact that is clearly reflected by the legitimacy crisis. In this frame ruling elites are seen forced to resort frequently to violence as means to protect their position.

Absence of ideological hegemony and the consequent lack of legitimacy introduce another element: the incapacity of the ruling elites to appropriate natural resources through institutional mechanisms. The 'illegitimate' appropriation of the population's resources enormously weakens people's negotiation capacity and strengthens the elites' power. Another outcome of this illegitimate process is the establishment of rentier states, through the control of which the ruling elites check the main economic reserves of the country.

Egypt is a representative case of this, since the ruling elites had been able to control the principal economic and natural resources of the country. Firstly, the regime had the exclusive control over foreign aid, which has been probably the main tool in financing its populist policies. On the same time, through the state ownership over companies in important economic sectors and clientelist mechanisms, the state elites had managed to sabotage the independence of private capital and thus reserve a secondary role for the economic elites.

The establishment of a rentier state and the consequent control over economic elites, enabled the respective Egyptian regimes to secure their protagonist role on the power structure. In this way elites connected to private capital had a secondary role on the power pyramid, since there were seen to move inside the frame created by the rulers. However, the foreign pressures for liberalising the Egyptian economy along with the internal ones, inevitably introduced frictions.

Hosni Mubarak's efforts to promote at the presidential post his son Gamal intensified the internal competition. Economic elites, supporters of Gamal's candidacy, managed to increase their influence over the Egyptian society and in this way harm the interests of the old guard interested in preserving state's primary role. Regime's fragmentation had various outcomes, one of them, and probably the most important one, being the 'success' of the 'third Egyptian revolution'<sup>1109</sup>.

Control over mass media had been also one of regime's main preoccupations.

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<sup>1109</sup> For a brief overview you can consult (Lampridi-Kemou, 2011a)

As we have underlined, free access on information can become dangerous because more diffused and independent are the mass media, more pluralist and independent is the information received by the citizens and therefore lesser the degree of alienation from their real needs and interests and thus more capable of becoming objects in power relations. Therefore, it is not a mere coincidence that until Mubarak's fall the Egyptian constitution safeguarded the monopoly of the state over non-printed media. In parallel, written press had always been strongly controlled by the regime ever since Nasser's rule, as we have already underlined. Similarly, education had been always under the governmental control.

However, some sources of power escaped the regime's dominion. The illegal organisation of Muslim Brotherhood had been controlling ideology at a secondary level, through a political and religious discourse mobilising a significant part of Egyptian society. Exception to this rule had been Nasser's pan-Arabism. As we have been able to see, pan-Arabism became a major tool for the Nasserist regime. Through its use, Nasser and his allies managed to challenge not only national enemies but also regional ones, through the expansion of his influence outside the Egyptian borders. On the contrary, neither Sadat nor Mubarak had been able to control ideological discourse and in both cases this has been mainly controlled by Muslim Brotherhood.

Brotherhood's influential discourse enabled Ikhwan's leadership to secure a primary role on the Egyptian power structure. Nevertheless, this it does not permit them to accumulate power capacity to compete with the regime, for several different reasons: firstly, there is an enormous difference, both qualitative and quantitative, between the power held by the regime and that of the Muslim Brotherhood. Secondly, the national and extra-national ideology in its broad sense, had been favouring the continuity of Mubarak's regime, in which the Brotherhood had to follow already defined patterns of action.

In addition to these two factors we must add the relative weakness that characterises relations between the Brotherhood and the people, based partly on the clientelistic practices, as we saw. The organisation had been offering low cost welfare services in exchange of social support. Last but certainly not least we should take into consideration that Mubarak's regime probably had been projecting an altered image regarding the weight of the organisation. This strategy served as an additional tool for Mubarak's regime in order to obtain greater international support, fearing a possible establishment of a religious regime contrary to Western interests.

Forming part of the international periphery Egyptian elites frequently used the international conjuncture as means to increase their power capabilities. The establishment of a bipolar international system at the end of the Second World War enabled Nasser to extract major benefits. Balancing between the East and the West, the Egyptian *rais* secured economic and political benefits from Washington and Moscow. Additionally, the Nasser's active role at the Non Alignment Movement gave Cairo the opportunity to expand its influence on the 'Third World'.

The expansion of Cairo's influence outside the Egyptian borders inevitably increased its enemies. The devastating defeat of Nasser in 1967 against Israel had tremendous effects not only on Nasser's power capacities but on those of his successor, forcing Anwar al-Sadat to follow a more Egyptian centric policy. The changes at the regional and international arena were also obstacles to Sadat's capacities. However, the 'Crossing Hero' and his policies accomplished the unimaginable: make the Egyptians accept the peace treaty with their worst enemy –the Jewish state.

When Hosni Mubarak took power the world was entering at the last period of the Cold War. Cairo's influence outside the Egyptian borders had been completely curtailed after the signing of the Camp David treaty. However, the first peace treaty between an Arab state and Israel had as outcome the entrance of Cairo in the group of Washington's stable Arab allies, fact that secured valuable political, military and economic aid to Mubarak's regime. Progressively, this alliance along with the regional changes enabled Cairo to recover part of its Arab prestige. The re-entrance of Egypt at the Arab League was an unquestionable demonstration of that.

The end of Cold War and the collapse of Soviet Union put formally an end to the bipolar system, establishing Washington and his regional allies as the winners of the game. The close ties between Mubarak and the American administration offered Mubarak international legitimacy and enabled his long stay in power. Yet this alliance had secondary effects by consolidating a strong dependency relation, forcing Cairo to frequent and important concessions. This dynamic was only sporadically changed. For instance we can mention the impact that the Arab 'indignation' towards Iraq's American invasion had in the bilateral relations of the two allies: Mubarak taking advantage the regional and domestic popular anger was able to 'convince' Washington to relax the American exigencies towards Cairo.

The above underline the validity of our theoretical assumptions regarding circular power relations. Yet we sustained that even though most of the time power relations are dominated by circular ones, there are moments that power relations are generated by people. Linear relations take place when a group of people succeeds in mobilising itself in order to fight for a concrete objective related to their well being. In these cases the individuals' objectives are specific and when they are met, the power relation comes to an end. Therefore, we qualified this type of relations as linear that originate in the process of awareness and come to an end if mobilisation is successful and demands are met or they are abandoned.

The difficulty in establishing linear relations in Egypt relied on many factors. Long-lived authoritarianism together with the patriarchal model of Egyptian society created and recreated a pattern of submission within society. The long-lasting imposition of the emergency law together with a series of laws and practices preventing social claims from being filed had strongly limited people's role, restricting its capacity to establish linear relations and thus become actor. Egyptians thus found themselves trapped in a relation of give and take between the regime and the different opposition groups, in particularly Muslim Brotherhood.

Until the 'day of anger' Egyptians had been regarded as one of the most docile population of the Arab world. Mubarak's limited political opening after Washington's rhetoric calls for Arab world's democratisation, coupled with worsening social and economic conditions had led to the progressive weakening of parts of the Egyptian society. Strikes in specific economic sectors and public demonstrations undertaken in last years of Mubarak's mandate were facilitated by the introduction of independent information that has become accessible thanks to new technologies.

After the Kefaya experiment, civil claims had been related to daily survival problems (housing, salary rises, continuity of subsidies for basic products and privatizations) and Arab and/or Muslim matters (Iraq, Palestine) than to political claims. Thus, up to 25 January of 2011<sup>1110</sup>, Egyptians seemed to be basically imprisoned on their role of object. Yet inspired by the Tunisian revolt, Egyptians took to the streets with the slogan: "Tunisia is not better than Egypt". After 18 days of massive protest in Cairo and other Egyptian cities Egyptians managed the unthinkable: oust their *rais*.

No one can doubt that we have witnessed an historical moment. After years of docility, Egyptians demonstrated that people can be a force for change. Hosni Mubarak's fall is a clear manifestation of that. Many Egyptians united under their will to put an end to Mubarak's dictatorial rule accomplished to be a motor in power relations. Using their physical powers and having no organised structure, the mass was transformed into an actor with a clear demand: the fall of Hosni and Gamal Mubarak. During 18 days Egyptians protested and more the 800 lost their lives fighting for liberty.

However, Mubarak's fall did not bring 'democracy', at least up to now. The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which supposedly will lead the country to a transition period, is certainly not disconnected from the ancién regime, since they have served at the military forces under Mubarak's leadership. Notable among these are: Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi, Minister of Defence and Commander-in-chief of the Egyptian Armed forces since 1991, Lt. Gen. Sami Hafez Anan, Armed Forces Chief of Staff, named Chief of Staff in 2005 and Air Marshal Reda Mahmoud Hafez Mohamed, the air force chief, who occupied several posts including the head of operations of the Air Defence Forces in 2001<sup>1111</sup>.

The limits of the Egyptian upraise are clear<sup>1112</sup> and fortunately visible from the Egyptians themselves. The long lasting asymmetrical accumulation of power on a limited number of elites through state's control continues to represent a handicap for Egypt's political transition.

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<sup>1110</sup> Ironically, the same day sixty years ago Black Saturday took place, which lead-in to the Free Officer's revolution-Egypt's Second Revolution.

<sup>1111</sup> You can consult the entire list of the Council's members at [http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/LastPage.aspx?Category\\_ID=1136](http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/LastPage.aspx?Category_ID=1136)

<sup>1112</sup> For a brief overview you can consult (Lampridi-Kemou, 2011a).

We can therefore conclude that the configuration of Egyptian power system has serious consequences for the political transition and consequently for the future of the Egyptians. Historically Egypt, as well as other Arab regimes, has shown a great capacity of resistance in relation to claims for democratisation or in the face of different opposition movements. Even though groups of Egyptians, especially of the young generation still struggle, circular relations remain the dominant motor of the system without an actor capable of transforming linear relations into a considerable power resource.



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