# State and civil society in Egypt: 2011-2015

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This study aims to investigate the nature of the relationship between the state and civil society after the 2011 uprising.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The study adopted Mygdal's approach to analyze the relationship between the state and civil society and identify their ability to control the rules of the political game. The study also draws on the theoretical framework of the hypotheses introduced by a number of scholars on the forms of potential relations between the state and civil society, and the impact of these forms on advancing the process of democratization.

**Findings** – This study argues that despite some important changes in favor of civil society *vis-à-vis* the state, it is too early to conclude that a dramatic change has occurred in this relationship, due to a discernable unbalanced power in favor of the state. The state revealed after 2011 that these organizations acted against the state's stability and against its fundamentals.

**Originality/value** – To the best of the author's knowledge, this research is the first to study the relationship between the state and the civil society in Egypt after 2011 events.

**Keywords** Civil society, State, Egypt, January 2011 events, Negotiating position

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Introduction

The discussion of the relationship between state and civil society[1] gained a new momentum after people upsurges had swept the Arab world in the second decade of the third millennium. For many years, studies excluded the possibility of a remarkable change in the balance of power between state and society in this part of the world so as to allow society to compete with the state in the public sphere (Plaetzer, 2014). However, this perspective changed dramatically upon the eruption of people upheavals there, and it became obvious that states are no more the sole hegemons in the public sphere: other social groups were apparently on the rise, and great expectations flourished to the extent that some hailed the start of a new stage, where civil society organizations will contribute strongly to the process of democratic transition and democratic consolidation (Forbrig, 2002). According to these expectations, such contribution would be reflected in a greater strength for these groups in the face of the state so as to weaken the domination of the latter over the public sphere (Reddel, 2006).

Many researchers foresaw this to happen in Egypt when January demonstrations took place in Tahrir square in 2011. However, and though events showed the ascendance of civil society groups competing with state over the public sphere, this study claims that it is still early to speak about qualitative change in the relationship between state and civil society in Egypt in the way portrayed by hasty analysts; a vibrant civil society comparable to that in the western model will be probably long

awaited. A strong state is still holding strings, having the upper hand in running the public sphere analyses and the process of democratic transition (Seib, 2012). To elucidate this view, the study will rely on Joel Mygdal discussion of social control, and also on other analyses that elaborated on his discussion.

*1.1 Theoretical framework: the relationship between state and civil society*
Mygdal defines social control as "[. . .] the currency over which organizations in an environment of conflict battle one another." With high levels of social control, states can mobilize their societies to face either external or internal foes standing in the way of enforcing state rules. Social control – and the words are to Mygdal – can be rely on a scale of three indicators, these are:

(1) compliance: which means gaining people conformance to state demands (through controlling a broad scope of resources);

(2) participation: which refers to organize population specialized tasks into state institutions; and

(3) legitimation: which points to the population acceptance of the state rules of the game – or its social control – as true and right.

Mygdal summarizes his point by stating that the "[. . .] more currency (compliance, participation and legitimation) available to state leaders, the higher the level of social control to achieve state goals" (Mygdal, 1988).

Graeme Gill elaborated on Mygdal's view when discussing the role of both the state and civil society in the process of democratic transition and consolidation. According to Gill, the regime (representing the state) may lag behind with regard to compliance or participation or even legitimation, but as long as regime leaders are able to keep their unity and restore it quickly and efficiently, civil society organizations won't be in the position to participate easily – let alone peacefully – in the process of transition to democracy (not to say its consolidation). The contrary stands when the regime gets segmented or divided; and only then, civil society may have a chance to contribute to the democratization process, especially if its groups/organizations prove strength and efficiency in mobilizing their members (Gill, 2000).

Other analysts further elaborated on Mygdal and Gill ideas and stated that state–civil society relations may take one of the following forms: "state-centric," where the state has the upper hand in the relationship with civil society, "society-centric," where civil society enjoys a strong and influential status vis-a-vis the state and, finally, "mutual empowerment" relationship, where state and civil society exchange mutual respect of each other's domain of influence and find it fruitful to cooperate to achieve more effectiveness in their activities for the benefit of the society as a whole (Tidmoor and Bell, 2009).

Based on the above analyses, this study argues that despite obvious signs of civil society development in Egypt (especially post-2011 and after a long period of state control), the relation between civil society and state is still of state-centric nature; a "unified" state vis-a-vis an atomized civil society organizations can be easily noticed, and aspects of social control by the unified state can also be discerned. This argument will be explored mainly during the period extending from 2011 to 2018; 2011 signaling a turning point in the relationship between the state and civil society in Egypt, while 2018 is the year that witnessed the issuing of a new law for NGOs, a law claimed to introduce important changes in favor of civil society organizations compared to that of 2002.

## 2. State and civil society in Egypt before 2011

It is worth noting that tracking the history of the nature of the state–civil society relationship in Egypt is important because civil society organizations began to emerge a long time before 2011.

Back in the late eighteenth century, the social system in Egypt was formed of communities (carpenters, coppersmiths, etc.) where the expression of interests was through "elders." At the beginning of the liberal era (1923-1952), the Wafd Party was established in 1919, the Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1923, as well as professional and labor unions were formed (Hanna, 2002). This era also witnessed the growth of civil activities and expansion of civil society, the promulgation of the 1923 Constitution which stipulated the freedom to form civil associations, thus providing an appropriate political climate for voluntary civil initiatives[2].

In the post-1952 period, the relationship between the state, on the one hand, and trade unions and social organizations, on the other hand, underwent a number of changes, ranging from tight control in the 1950s and 1960s to more liberalization starting from the 1970s. The following decades witnessed remarkable developments in the role of civil society organizations (particularly the ones with religious background) to help the state with its socio-economic tasks among the grass roots. This helped make way for more independent action by civil state organizations (Kandil, 2006).

Early signs of changes away from a state-centric relationship to more society-centric one occurred in the first years of the third millennium. In 2005, the Egyptian Movement of Change "Kefaya" (Aoude and Ibrahim, 2013)[3] (meaning "Enough") was established in 2004 called for civil society, supervising of the electoral process and started reporting about human rights situation in Egypt (Beinin, 2011). In 2006, worker protests erupted in Mahalla spinning company and workers went on strike (Beinin, 2011). The event was supported by a newly born social movement named after the strike date, the 6th of April [4] (El-Mahdi, 2011). Starting from 2008, there was a remarkable escalation in protests, especially those taking place next to the Parliament and Council of Ministers buildings. Though protests were mainly revolving around socio-economic demands (Fawzy, 2010), both the 6th of April Movement (essentially active on social networks) and Kefaya Movement highlighted the political aspects of these protests, and stressed the necessity of introducing political changes and blocking Mubarak's son's ambition to seize power (Joya, 2011)[5].

In the same time, sporadic news spread from time to time about the heir's behavior toward "old guards" in state institution. This news raised doubts about the elite unity and its consensus with regard to the succession issue[6] (Lynch, 2011). This unity obviously came to an end when the army took the side of demonstrators on the 25th and 28th of January till the demise of Mubarak rule on the 12th of February, paving the way for a new era where civil society organizations will be among the most influential actors in the Egyptian political scene (Howard and Walters, 2014).

## 3. State and civil society in Egypt post-2011

*3.1 January 2011-June 2012: civil society on the offensive*

The 25th of January upheaval revived hopes in the possibility of reforming the relationship between the state and society in Egypt (Kandil, 2011). Within the context of the transitional period, the Constitutional Declaration of March 2011 guaranteed the right for citizens to establish voluntary organizations as defined by law (Joya, 2011). Both Kefaya and 6th April were very active in mobilizing masses, especially the youth (Bush, 2011).

At the beginning of the transitional period when Supreme Council of Armed forces (SCAF) took the lead after Mubarak demise, social movements were on good terms with the post-revolutionary regime because of the support of the army. However, tensions started to occur when 6th April Movement voiced its disapproval of the constitutional declaration put to vote by SCAF in March 2011 (Abdullah, 2012). The declaration specified conditions for both presidential and parliamentary elections, stating that the latter should take place prior to the writing of the new constitution (Singermon, 2013).

Mutual accusations started to occur between SCAF and 6th April Movement. The former expressed its suspicions toward the movement activities which were said to encourage incitement against state institution – the army atop of these – a situation threating with a sweeping chaos. As for the movement, the enduring rule of SCAF meant the abortion of any attempt to real change toward achieving the goals of the revolution. However, tensions did not emanate only from the outside; internal cleavages also started to occur when Ahmed Maher – the leader of 6th April Movement – was charged with autocratic behavior toward members and colleagues (Gheytanchi and Moghadam, 2014). Splits took place and the movement witnessed early divisions that began in August 2011 and continued till the actual demise of the movement in 2014 (Abdel Rahman, 2011)[7].

On the other hand, human rights organizations (which used to work in a context of relative liberalization during Mubarak era) took actions in documenting violations toward protestors, accusing SCAF of delaying the process of transition to democracy and maneuvering to keep an upper hand over the course of events at the expense of revolutionaries (Stork, 2012). Criticism by these organizations was much more raised as a response to statements made by Fayza Aboul Naga[8] about the illegal funding received by those organizations (especially from the USA) to activate work against state institutions. Aboul Naga stressed that the revolutionary fervor after January 2011 caused a destabilized atmosphere which was exploited externally to encourage further destabilization at the hands of some NGOs and human rights organizations based in Egypt. When some members were arrested and then released shortly after, it was said that the Egyptian authorities fell under pressure from the USA in favor of human rights organizations (Morayef, 2015). Though this had negative implication on SCAF image[9], it had the obvious impact to direct attention to the possibly dangerous and doubtful external liaisons of these NGOs, something that was to be highlighted later to restrict their role and limit their influence vis-a-vis the state[10] (The Arab Strategic Report, 2011).

### 3.2 June 2012-June 2013: transition to democracy, but no big change?

The year 2012 signaled the end of the transitional period to democracy when parliamentary and presidential elections took place with debatable results in the overall[11]. When the newly elected president removed the Field Marshal Hussein Tantawy – Minister of Defense – with his Deputy Lieutenant General Sami Anan and referred both to retirement, the step was hailed by NGOs (Human Rights Organizations in particular) as inaugurating a new phase in the modern history of Egypt where civilians take the lead instead of the military (Abbasi, 2012). Mohamed Morsi took further steps to dissolve the inherited state institutions, which – according to him – were highly corrupt, inefficient and inappropriate for putting the "revolutionary targets" into effective implementation. News came out with declarations about the necessity to re-design these institutions totally and recruit new people who are loyal to the revolution[12] (Gunaratna, 2015).

A new project for nation construction "Mashrou' Al Nahda" was launched, and the elected president promised Egyptians to expect remarkable improvement in security and economy in 100 days. However, conditions of life worsened and sentiments of frustration aroused among people. When harsh criticisms started to occur against the newly elected political elite, accusations were brought by the latter toward the "deep state establishments" [13] which was said to undermine the power of both the revolutionaries and their elected representatives (Asad, 2015). To protect the new elite from such offenses, hasty measures were taken to issue the final draft of the "constitution of the revolution" to put it to vote in referendum. The peak of such measures was the issuing of a constitutional declaration in November 2012, where all executive legislative and judicial powers were concentrated in the hands of the elected president. When protestors headed for the presidential palace, they were brutally beaten and seriously injured by the president supporters from Muslim Brotherhood (Sallam, 2015). Two consultants of the president resigned condemning violence against sitters, popular criticism mounted and fears aggravated especially when the president declared that sacrificing the lives of some is a cheap price for protecting both revolution and democracy. Although the year from 2012 to 2013 witnessed a big surge in the number of newly established NGOs – and this should have been considered as a positive signal of civil society empowerment vis-a-vis the state – most of these organizations were still to fall within the control of the new regime (an interview with Dr Ayman Abdel Wahab on 23/6/2016)[14]. In addition, there were trials in the Criminal Court for 43 persons working in NGOs and accused of receiving illegal funds from foreign countries[15]; in June 2013, verdicts ranged from one year to five years prison. Conditions were no better for syndicates which enjoyed less and less independence (Morayef, 2015).

"Rebel" campaign [16] was soon launched in April 2013 calling for early presidential elections, gathering signatures from all over the country to put pressure on Morsi and his supporters. The campaign was met with big success gathering over 23 million signatures, and this gave momentum to popular mobilization versus the political regime which obviously lacked the support of its previous allies in addition to divisions in its own ranks. Protestors swept Altahrir square for three consecutive days (starting from the 30th of the June till the 3rd of July 2013) under the protection of army troops. The army specified a 48-h time limit for Morsi to rethink early election proposal. When no response occurred, the military intervened in the scene to topple Mohamed Morsi and declare Adly Mansour – president of Supreme Constitutional Court – as temporary president in a new transitional phase (Brown, 2012).

### 3.3 July 2013–June 2018: the state regains its power vis-a-vis civil society?

With the demise of Mohamed Morsi rule, two intertwined processes have been unfolding gradually: the exclusion of Muslim Brotherhood and its figures from the political scene, on the one hand[17], and the state consolidation of its unity and the restoration of major aspects of its social control, on the other hand (Woltering, 2014). Amidst these two processes, civil society organizations lost most of their momentum and witnessed noticeable retreat in both status and impact with regard to issues debated in the public sphere. The new regime benefited from both the legitimacy it gained after the dethroning of Morsi and the divisions within civil society to tighten its grip on the course of events (Abdou and Skalli, 2018).

The first measure was the issuing of the "law of demonstration"` by the interim president Adly Mansour[18] in November 2013. The new law specified new restrictions on demonstration activities: license should be sought three days before the marching of a demonstration, and timing and place must be approved by local security authorities; in case of possible threats by demonstrations to order and laws, the minister of interior has

all the rights to cancel them (Archive, 2013). In an act of challenge to the new law, the leaders of 6th April called for demonstrations against it. The authorities responded by arresting the movement leaders, sentencing three of them to three years of prison in line with the articles of demonstration law. When the bombing of Cairo and Daqahliyya security directorates happened on 24/1/2014 and 24/12/2013, respectively (AlMasry AlYoum, 2014), Muslim Brotherhood was declared as terrorist organization, and all groups and organizations calling for demonstrations were accused of inciting chaos and disorder. A TV show called "The Black Box" started in the first quarter of 2014 to release leaks[19] about 6th April movement, leaks that caused great harm to its public image (Mogeb, 2013). Rumors were spread then that these leaks would not have been publicized without the help and consent of the security parties which were in turn accused by the movement members and supporters of illegal violation of private lives (Thabet, 2016). However, the TV anchor defended his program by insisting that the leaks were not about "private" lives; they were about people discussing "public" issues, and thus their discussions should be made public too (AlMasry AlYoum, 2014). Regardless of the heated debate, the harm was already done, and conditions got worse when some Western leaders [20] called for the immediate release of the detained activists of 6th April Movement, and affiliates to Muslim Brotherhood did the same[21]. By this time, the general mood in Egypt was not welcoming to such calls which rose suspicions about dangerous liaisons between the movement, the terrorist Muslim Brotherhood and the external parties, all seen as willing to see more of "revolutionary chaos," disorder and instability (Tabaar, 2013). When the movement members called for boycotting presidential elections in June 2014 – at a time when AL Sisi popularity was at its highest, this added much to its negative image and further splits started to occur in its ranks. Parliamentary elections were launched in September 2015; some prominent members of the movement participated as "independent" candidates, not affiliated any more to 6th April group[22]. It was easy then for the government to confiscate the movement properties and headquarters without facing significant opposition (ElWatan News, 2014).

In April 2016, and on the occasion of border demarcation between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, movement members reappeared again to call for protest against "selling Egyptian territories" (Alhramain, 2016). The close converge between Muslim Brotherhood and the movement on this issue made it possible again for state institutions to attack both, especially when the elected parliament approved the Egyptian–Saudi agreement[23]. This convergence also occurred with regard to some serious events that struck the country, something that led many to conclude that the movement has been standing in the same trench with Muslim Brotherhood in inciting chaos and stimulating instability[24]. It has been possible also for the state to portray the 6th April Movement as a public enemy because of another important reason. Since 2014, several measures have been taken to improve economic and social conditions in Egypt and success news were reported not only internally but internationally; economic reforms led to a sizable increase in foreign exchange reserves; external loans and grants have been used to start huge development in infrastructure; tourism recovered because of overall stability and security; and policies to improve the lives of the poor were also recorded[25] (Economic Review Publication Documents, 2019). The army took responsibility for pushing productive activities in some areas in addition to its remarkable contribution to housing and infrastructure projects, and the recording of an annual economic growth that amounts to 6 per cent, being one of the highest in MENA region and even the world (Economic Review Publication Documents, 2019). The Egyptian state has been regaining vital aspects of its social control, and this undoubtedly has helped it to stand firm with regard to pressures coming from civil society groups. Kefaya Movement (Enough) was in no better position than the 6th

April Movement. The former chose to refrain from participation in public sphere debates since 2014 and stressed only that state policies must always consider and work in line with the "revolutionary targets" (Morayef, 2015).

In addition to the increasing social control practised during this period, the state managed to keep the unity of its main institutions under Al Sisi strong leadership (Helal, 2015). Not only these institutions worked harmoniously, but also no serious splits were allowed to find way to them[26]. Though this contributed substantially to ensuring a stronger position of the state vis-a-vis civil society organizations, the regime did not rely wholly on this. Actually, there were steps taken to modify laws regulating civil work, so as to alleviate some of the restrictions that set limits on this work in the past years, especially during the turbulent times that followed 2011 events[27] (Abdel Wahab, 2016). The main modifications were about the measures that must be followed by NGOs to get licenses for work[28]; the fees that should be paid[29]; the minimum and maximum bank deposits necessary to fund their activities; the receiving of grants from external parts[30]; and the penalties implemented[31] [. . .] all to witness important changes toward more liberalization of NGOs work. These measures were generally welcomed internally and internationally something that strengthened aspects of social control by the Egyptian state (Fahmi, 2019).

## 4. Conclusion

Though the first months that followed 2011 upheaval showed a surge in the activities of some civil society organizations, this by no means meant qualitative change in the relationship between the state and civil society in Egypt, which has been state-centric in nature. During the period extending from 2013 to 2018, the Egyptian state has witnessed gradual improvement in meeting the aspects of social control explained by Mygdal; improving its ability to control resources and direct them to achieve state's goals, attracting increasing number of the population to contribute to the achievement of national goals[32] and ensuring overall acceptance of its rules of the game because of improving records of socio-economic performance. Re-establishing and preserving state unity has been an additional success vis-a-vis recently born and increasingly splitted civil society organizations, something that favored an overall state dominance over public sphere issues[33]. Concessions made by the Egyptian state with regard to civil society are still seen as insufficient by civil society organizations; however – and speaking about the short and medium term – the image of a state-centric relationship between state and civil society won't change much because of the reasons already discussed.

## Notes

1. Civil society is a group of relatively independent voluntary organizations that fill the public sphere between the family and the state for the benefit of its members or the collective benefit of society as a whole. It is committed to the values and standards of respect, accord and peaceful management of diversity and difference (Sills, 1986). This study will focus mainly on social movements and human rights organizations as they were the most influential civil society agents during the studied period.

2. Only associations of a military nature were strictly prohibited by the law no. 17 issued in 1938.

3. The movement called for ending the monopoly of power, opening the door for power rotation, upholding the rule of law, stressing the independence of the judiciary and putting an end to the monopoly of wealth.

4. The "April 6th Youth" Movement was a movement led by some bloggers who became affiliated to it via Facebook. The movement succeeded in attracting a large number of young internet activists who had no previous political experience (Shehata, 2011).

5. This ambition was made possible by the constitutional amendment of article 76 of the Egyptian constitution about the process of running for presidency. The amendment seemed to open the way for other candidates rather than the president to compete for presidency. However, by stating that a candidate must get first the approval of two-thirds of parliamentary members, chances for possible candidates were obviously meager, especially in the presence of Gmal Mubarak, the president's son.

6. In 2006, Gmal Mubarak attended the special opening ceremony of "Yacobian Building" movie. The movie based on a story by the Egyptian novelist – Alaa El Aswany – portrayed some prominent "old guard" figures around Mubarak, the father, as vicious and corrupt. It was said then that this step signaled a muffled struggle within the elite ranks (www.alarabiya.net; June 20, 2006). Divisions became more evident when gossips spread about a dissatisfaction in the army with regard to the disrespectful behavior that Mubarak's son exhibits toward army leaders (www.almasryalyoum.com/; 4/5/2011).

7. The most important being the emergence of "Democratic Front." The front members said the split was also because of the corrupt leadership of Ahmed Maher and his close circle; there was no transparency with regard to how funds were used for the benefit of movement goals (Clarke, 2014).

8. Minister for international cooperation during Mubarak era and the transition period. She was also a former renowned UN officer.

9. Especially when all convicted American working in cooperation with these organizations left Egypt on American planes (www.humanrights/monitor.org, 19/3/2012).

10. In an interview with Hend Mohamed who was in charge of the file of Human Rights Organization in the Ministry of Solidarity, she confirmed that this issue was real and that these organizations worked in Egypt without permission or a license; they worked under the cover of other licensed NGOs, something that had to be penalized and legally forbidden (Interview on 23/6/2016).

11. Claims of electoral fraud were present, however, especially when news reported that MB prevented voters from AL Minya governorate (with a sizable Christian population) from voting, in addition to issuing two million electoral cards with the name of Morsi to be put in ballot boxes to make his winning certain in the second round (www.books.google.com.eg, 10/7/2012). When this claims happened, no further investigations were done with regard to these issues (www.copts-united.com, 5/7/2012).

12. Actually, all the new recruits came from Muslim Brotherhood, Salafits and people supporting both. A famous TV show by the Egyptian anchor Lamees AlHadidy discussed this issue in detail and provided documented information about it (Hona Al Asssema, 16th of February 2013).

13. And though Morsi kept saying that freedoms of opinion and press were guaranteed and protected, his supporters organized sieges encircling the Supreme Constitutional Court (www.archive.arabic.cnn.com, 1/1/2013) and the City of Media Production (www.m.akhbaralyom.com, 12/9/2015), and they threatened judges and media personnel overly. Both sieges and threats went unpenalized and complaints were totally ignored after Morsi had won.

14. Out of 4,500 newly established NGOs in the years 2011 and 2012, almost 3,000 were affiliated to both Muslim Brotherhood and Salafites; these were concentrated mainly in upper Egypt poorest villages where islamists can easily establish electoral strongholds. The period extending from 2011 to 2014 also saw an unprecedented increase in the number of established NGOs, a number that amounted to 15,000 (Ayman Abdel-Wahab, Between the Risks and Negatives of Civil Society Religious Employment, The Case of Egypt, Issue 6 May 2014. Cairo: Regional Center for Strategic Studies, 2014, p.8).

15. Fayza Aboul Naga was called as a witness. She confirmed the receiving of illegal funding by some NGOs to encourage incitement against state institutions, the army atop of these.

16. "Rebel" was an independent youth movement not affiliated to any political party and was established on 28/4/2013 by a group of young people. The movement was collecting signatures from people to withdraw confidence from the former president Mohamed Morsi.

17. Aborting attempts to create parallel entities to those of state institutions as it has been the case with the Iranian model.

18. Mansour was the president of the Supreme Constitutional Court and was appointed as the interim president on 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2013. His term ended when Al Sisi became president in June 2014.

19. These leaks showed leaders as opportunists, craving for funds from external parties, childish and shallow with regard to dealing with serious political matter.

20. A top of these was the American president Obama who named Ahmed Maher – the movement leader – and described him as a brave man facing brutality and exposed – like similar activists in other countries – to systematic campaigns aiming at undermining the concept of democracy (Masrway.com, 24 Sept. 2014).

21. Al Wasat Party (the party of the middle).

22. As in the case of Tarek EL Kholy who is now an MP responsible for providing lists with names of detainees to Egyptian authorities to decide about their releasing.

23. In 2016, other leaks were made public, showing the movement mentor – Mohamed EL Baradei – accusing some of its leaders with ignorance and shortsightedness. Other leaks showed Asmaa Mahfouz and Ahmed Maher discussing plans to burn state security buildings in Cairo and Alexandria (www.alwatannews.com, 9 June 2016).

24. When a Russian civilian plane exploded in the Egyptian airspace in October 2015, the movement called for a Post Sisi era (www.raialyoum.com, 8 November 2015). On the occasion of Alexandria Church detonation by Muslim Brotherhood affiliates in December 2016, the movement put all the blame on the Egyptian regime "which is unable to protect Egyptian citizens" (http://m.masralarabia.net, 11 December 2016). The same happened when police and security officers were attacked in the years 2017 and 2018, and the regime was the one to be blamed without any reference to the attackers (http://m.arabia21.com>story, 22 October 2017).

25. Thousands of residents in suburbs slums were transferred to new fully equipped residential areas to ensure better lives for their families (e.g. Asmarat compounds). In addition, social programs were implemented to support the most marginalized people (e.g. Takaful and Karama program, T&K): these social programs provided conditional and unconditional cash transfers to approximately 3 million Egyptian families as of 2018 (www.povertyactionlab.org, Targeting extreme poverty in Egypt: a national priority, 27 March 2019).

26. When generals Samy Anan and Ahmed Shafeek intended to run for presidency in June 2014, it was obvious to all that the army won't let this happen. The former was known to have suspicious relations with the Muslim Brotherhood, and the latter fled to UAE in 2012 when defeated in elections in favor pf Mohamed Morsi, fearing his retaliation. When both announced their candidacy through AL Jazeera channel – a bitter enemy to both Egyptian state and regime – this became a very good reason for authorities to get rid of them: they were accused of encouraging splits in the armed forces and thereby forced to leave the race. When Hisham Guenena – a close supporter of Samy Anan – declared that the latter intends to leak confidential documents about the army if any harm happened to him. Both Anan and Hisham Guenena were arrested and jailed.

27. The latest version of this law with its latest modifications came out in 19/8/2019.

28. Steps were more simplified, so NGOs may be established only by informing the ministry of solidarity. This applied also to foreign NGOs working in Egypt (Law no. 149/2019, article no. 2).

29. Registration fees were reduced from 10,000 to 5,000 Egyptian pounds (Law no. 149/2019, article no. 8).

30. The minimum reduced from 50,000 to 20,000 Egyptian pounds, with no maximum limits, providing the ministry of solidarity is informed. If no objection happens within 60 working days, final approval is accredited automatically (Law no. 149/2019, article no. 91).

31. No more prison sanctions on freedom of expression; only fining penalty (fines were raised from 50,000 to 100,000 Egyptian pounds. Law no. 149/2019, article no. 94).

32. A decrease in unemployment was recorded, and rates fell to 8.1% in the first quarter of 2019, the lowest in 20 years (www.Thearabweekly.com, 26/5/2019. Unemployment down in Egypt, but maintaining trend is a challenge).

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